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Chapter 52: Asking to Be Provoked

Samantha realized that the scumbag was always able to rile her up despite her best efforts to try and ignore him.

It made her feel that Timothy actually remembered her birthday, but because he hated her so much, he decided to piss her off by deliberately bringing back another woman!

She put the sliced piece of steak into her mouth, chewed it vigorously, then swallowed it. After that, she raised her head with a smile and replied, "Well, Mr. Barker, you've acted so swiftly that I doubt whether you still need to recuperate."

There was hardly any noticeable difficulty in his leg movements.

Timothy cocked an eyebrow. "What's the matter? Do I need to show it to you?"

"No thanks." Samantha's lips curled up even more. "There are other people who will show concern about your injury, Mr. Barker. I, for one, am not interested!"

Timothy's eyes sank and his expression became as cold as a blade.

Samantha was not at all daunted when she made eye contact with him and chased him away unceremoniously. "If that's all, Mr. Barker, please make yourself at home. I'm going to continue having my dinner."

When she said that, Timothy's gaze landed on the two steaks and two glasses of red wine on the table. He smirked yet again.

Could he have thought that she prepared it for him?

Ah!

Samantha immediately reached out for the plate in front of him and placed that steak directly on her plate. Next was the glass of red wine: she took it, raised her head, and drank it all in one gulp.

Those actions would probably suffice to dispel his delusion that she did it all for him!

She would rather eat until she vomited than give him a single bite!

Seeing the woman's provocative gaze, Timothy's eyes sank but it was still as unemotive as before. In the end, he merely got up and walked out of the dining hall.

...

After touring the villa, Tiana walked back to Timothy with a beaming smile. She raised her hand, tucked her hair behind her ear, and asked softly, “Mr. Barker, which room will I be staying in?”

Timothy squinted at the dining room from the corner of his eyes and withdrew his gaze. In his ever-lukewarm voice, he replied, “You can choose whichever.”

That would mean Tiana could stay in any room she liked. She was so excited that her heart could not stop throbbing.

From the moment she started working at the Barker Group and first laid eyes on Timothy, she had already fallen head over heels for him. After working under him and witnessing his capability and boldness first-hand, she became even more obsessed with him.

She frequently thought about being his woman and would be happy even if it was only for a short time.

During the past few years, however, Penelope was always around Timothy and kept a very close watch on him, thereby preventing Tiana from getting any chance. Another factor was Timothy’s daunting character—he had a strong aversion to being approached by other people.

She had witnessed the countless number of idiotic women trying to seduce him in the company—all of them eventually disappeared from the social circle. For that reason, Tiana would not have made a move so hastily if she was not completely confident.

In the end, it was clear that the heavens rewarded those who were determined. Penelope was no longer worthy of Timothy due to those scandals. With Timothy suffering from an injury, her daily inquiries on his well-being must have touched his heart, which was why he chose her to take care of him.

He not only brought her back to his private residence, but was even willing to let her choose whichever room she wanted. Timothy had already looked at her in a different light, and the opportunity she longed for had finally arrived!

Tiana was determined to put on a good performance and become Timothy’s woman!

...

The villa was so quiet that every single word of their conversation was picked up clearly in Samantha’s ears. She clenched her hands very tightly, with the blue veins on the back of her hands popping up into view.

Her eye sockets stung all of a sudden and she felt something choking her airways. She raised her head, took a few deep breaths, and suppressed her emotions as best as she could.

She continued her meal and finished her steaks bit by bit. Half a bottle of wine was gone by then!

Samantha even raised her wine glass, clinked it with the air, and said softly to herself, "Happy birthday, Sammy!"

Her voice was slightly hoarse.

After satiating herself with food and drink, Samantha cleaned up and did the dishes. She stood in the kitchen in deep thought, then decided that she would head upstairs to pack up some clothes so she could stay somewhere else for a few days.

Out of sight, out of mind! There was no point making life difficult for herself!

If that scumbag wanted to humiliate her like that, he could try in the next life!

Once Samantha had that thought, she adjusted her mood right away, then walked out of the kitchen and went upstairs.

She walked to the door of the master bedroom and saw that the light inside was turned on. Her first thought was that Timothy had returned to the room. She wanted to turn around and leave. Seeing him was the last thing on her mind, and she wanted to wait for him to come out before going in there.

To her surprise, she looked in through the half-open door and saw Tiana's figure instead. More importantly, she even saw the clothes that Tiana was wearing.

Samantha froze right away as her black pupils contracted. Unable to take it anymore, she pushed the door open and strode in.

She barged in so abruptly that it caught Tiana by surprise. Though Tiana was startled at first, her expression soon turned to that of arrogance and disgust when she saw Samantha. "Ms. Larsson, did no one teach you any manners? Don't you know how to knock on the door before entering someone else's room?"

Deep down, Tiana felt that Samantha really did fit the character of a rich family's daughter who had fallen from grace. If basic manners were all forgotten just like that, it was no surprise that Timothy despised her!

'Someone else's room? As if!'

Samantha was so angry that she smiled and even spoke in a very calm voice. “Did Timothy agree to let you stay in this room?”

Tiana smiled triumphantly and said as-a-matter-of-factly, “Mr. Barker said that I can stay in whichever room I like, so of course he would agree to let me stay in this room!”

She knew that was the master bedroom, where Timothy slept in. Although she never definitively asked Timothy for permission, she felt that it was not necessary to spell it out.

Samantha clenched her hands and looked at Tiana’s nightdress again. It belonged to her, so she asked, “In that case, did Timothy give you permission to wear that nightdress?”

Her expression and voice were so calm that Tiana could not ascertain what kind of mood Samantha was in. For some reason however, she felt that Samantha’s words were very scathing, making her feel exceptionally uncomfortable.

Why would an abandoned woman be worthy of talking to her?

Tiana straightened her body to display her assets and looked impatiently at Samantha. She then said coldly, “Am I obliged to answer your questions, Ms. Larsson? You’re just a guest taking up lodging here. What grounds do you have for asking so many questions?”

She said all that while beaming with a condescending smile. “Ms. Larsson, do you really think you’re the host here? Don’t invite yourself to get snubbed. Mr. Barker and I are going to spend a marvelous evening together. It’ll be a pitiful scene once he comes back and chases you out.”

Samantha felt nauseated and was thoroughly repulsed!

Since she and Timothy were an estranged couple, she initially felt that she had no right to bother about Timothy’s misdeeds—not that she cared about it in the first place. Tiana, however, seemed to find joy in provoking her...

Samantha’s lips twitched slightly, and a cold glimmer surfaced slowly from the bottom of her eyes. “I’ll give you two choices....”

Chapter 53: Divorce

“Either you take off this nightdress and get out of this villa on your own accord, or I’ll beat you out of here!”

Tiana scoffed at Samantha's words. That woman was definitely nuts! Did she have the guts to say all that because she was unaware of whose turf they were on?

Aside from being unmoved, Tiana became even more condescending and arrogant. She no longer pretended to be polite and courteous with Samantha, but instead remarked bitterly, "Ms. Larsson, this isn't the time and place for you to display such bad behavior. The person who is supposed to leave isn't m— Ahhhhh—"

Samantha did not even wait for Tiana to finish that sentence. She moved quickly and grabbed the latter's hair, eliciting a painful shriek.

Having already shown enough courtesy earlier, it was time for some violence.

Tiana had been given a choice, and since she had chosen the latter, Samantha was more than happy to comply!

Samantha's hand reached for Tiana's nightdress, pulling it and sending it falling to the ground.

Tiana did not expect Samantha to have such an immense fighting spirit. In the blink of an eye, she was stripped completely naked and screamed yet again before trying her best to cover her exposed body.

Samantha glanced at Tiana's clothes on the bed. She walked over swiftly, picked the clothes up, then threw them over to Tiana. She then grabbed Tiana's wrist and pulled her out of the master bedroom.

At the end of the day, Tiana still wanted to keep what little dignity she had remaining. Despite putting on her clothes in a hurry, her face had turned red with anger.

How dare a woman that fell from grace and lived off the Barkers dare to treat her like that? Tiana raised her hand in an attempt to deliver a big slap.

However, Samantha's vision was sharp enough and she immediately intercepted that slap. Then, Tiana frantically tried to grab Samantha's hair, only to receive a sneer in return.

She locked Tiana's hands behind her back and kicked her behind the knee. It was painful enough to draw out a cry from Tiana, causing her to kneel right on the spot.

"Samantha, you shameless b*tch! Wh*re!" Tiana could not free herself and started cursing.

Samantha could not be bothered to entertain her and grabbed her hair again, dragging her all the way down the stairs and into the hallway. Once at the door, she shoved her out and slammed the door hard.

Tiana could only watch as the door closed in front of her, almost slamming into her newly-done nose job. Tiana was already raring to rip Samantha to shreds!

The stars had aligned for Tiana that night and it would all be complete but for her sexy time with Timothy. One could imagine how difficult it was for Tiana to face the fact that she had been thrown out by Samantha.

Her cell phone was still inside the house and there was no way for her to call Timothy. All she could do was hit the door vigorously and yell at the top of her lungs. "Mr. Barker, are you there? Help me, Ms. Larsson wants to kill me!"

Samantha grinned even wider when she heard Tiana's shouts from inside the house.

With Tiana out of the way, her next target was that scumbag, Timothy!

Samantha closed her eyes and calmed herself down for a couple of seconds before opening her eyes again. She then started walking upstairs.

The first thing she did was go back to the master bedroom where she picked up her laptop. Her fingers flew across the keyboard as she typed out a whole page of words, then she went to the study room and printed out a document with the printer.

She picked up a pen and signed her name swiftly at the signing column. With the document in hand, she immediately walked out of the study.

...

After Timothy finished his call, he walked away from the balcony and headed back into the house, where he saw Samantha approaching him confrontationally.

He cocked his eyebrows slightly, but before he could speak, Samantha went up to him and raised her hand, throwing that piece of paper at him.

The pages flapped against his face and fell to the ground. He looked down and saw the big bold words—Divorce Agreement.

The glow in Timothy's eyes dimmed and he looked up to see Samantha's angry eyes.

Samantha was unsure whether she was feeling disgusted or heartbroken, but the drunkenness had gotten to her and she spilled out everything she had in her heart, "Timothy, I understand what this whole marriage between us is about, so I won't chastise you or ask you anything. How you enjoy yourself and how many women you have is your business.

"But you brought another woman back to parade her and anger me. Do you really take me for someone without a temper? Someone you can easily bully? I agreed to this

arrangement with you and kept up with this entire charade. What we have is a relationship based on cooperation, and the least we can do is show each other some respect during this period of cooperation, don't you think?

"If you want to sleep with someone else, do it outside. Your business enterprises are huge and you have real estate everywhere! You don't really have to insist on this villa, do you?"

Samantha took a deep breath and her tone became extremely sarcastic, "Of course, if you've found true love and feel like spending your whole life with another woman, just be upfront with it. I'll make room for you guys. I've already prepared the divorce agreement and signed it. You just need to sign it and I'll move out right this instant! I won't even stay here a second longer!"

Samantha tried her best to control her emotions, but after she said everything that was on her mind, there was an uncontrollable tingling in her nose and her eyes became slightly red.

What sin did she commit that would justify Timothy's actions toward her?

Murder would have put an end to her misery, but all he seemed to do was torture her to no end. She had enough of it!

In the past, 99.9% of her reason to agree with Timothy's deal was because of her little brother Corey. However, she could not ignore what little hope she still had in her heart.

All that wishful thinking simply ended up being crushed to bits.

Timothy's dark gaze stared deeply into Samantha's eyes. All of her emotions and reactions were picked up with crystal clear clarity in his eyes.

He saw from her reddened eyes not only anger but sadness too.

However, her posture was too straight, her lips were very tightly pressed, and she was extremely good at controlling her emotions. Those factors made him doubt the accuracy of his judgment.

Before he could speak, Tiana could be heard screaming and slamming the door downstairs.

"Mr. Barker, I'm outside, please open the door for me! Mr. Barker!!!"

Timothy's black eyes narrowed slightly. His thin lips opened up and he uttered two words in a low and deep voice, "Follow me."

He did not give Samantha a chance to refute either. His big palm grabbed her wrist and started walking, leading her downstairs by force. Once they reached the door, Timothy opened it.

Tiana, who was bawling her eyes out at the door, looked at Timothy with tears rolling down her face like a broken string of pearls. She put away all that viciousness she had earlier and replaced it with a pitiful look. “Mr. Barker, I don’t know why, but Ms. Larsson stripped me all of a sudden and hit me. She even threw me out of the door, sob sob...”

Samantha’s lips twitched. Rather than admitting she was wrong, she looked at Timothy and said slowly, “That’s not the whole story. I didn’t just strip her.. I kicked her feet, pulled her hair, and dragged her downstairs, then finally pushed her out. Is that detailed enough for you?”

Chapter 54: Who is Mrs. Barker?

After that, Samantha turned around to see a dumbfounded Tiana and had a mocking grin on her face. “You don’t even know how to make a proper complaint and you have the decency to try and act as though you’re pure at heart?”

“You... You...” Tiana never expected Samantha to respond like that. Those words halted whatever argument she was about to retort.

However, Samantha’s madness worked very much in her favor. She did not need to fight with Samantha because she simply needed to win Timothy’s pity and have him help her.

Tiana’s face turned pale and she let the floodgates loose with her tears. She looked at Timothy standing silently at one side and cried out grievously, “Mr. Barker, you asked me to come over and take care of you. My responsibility is to do just that. I don’t know what I did to offend Ms. Larsson and why she has to treat me like this...”

She bit her lower lip lightly as her voice became hoarse again. “Mr. Barker, I... I don’t think I can stay here and care for you properly if she’s around.”

Samantha could discern Tiana’s implication that the former was being a hindrance and so Timothy should chase her out.

Tiana had grown some brains after Samantha’s pointers earlier and finally knew how to make a convincing complaint.

Unfortunately, Samantha was the kind of person who could go both ways—she could either be amicable and ignore the people who did not mess with her, or she could show

that she was no pushover if that person insisted on looking for trouble and stubbornly set foot into that minefield!

Why would she be afraid of Tiana if she did not fear Timothy at all?

She leaned against the door, crossed her hands in front of her chest, then said calmly, "Oh? So, Mr. Barker invited you back here specifically to take care of him, is that it? I thought he asked you over to sleep with you! I mean, why else were you so excited to go into the master bedroom and wear someone else's nightdress?"

Tiana's fake crying expression froze abruptly.

She went to the master bedroom and changed into the nightdress for the sole purpose of seducing Timothy. She never thought that Samantha could be so self-indulgent in front of Timothy and mention all of that.

Panic appeared in her eyes and she explained vaguely, "Mr. Barker, I... I didn't. It's just, you let me choose whichever room I wanted, so I just went into a random room. I can explain why I changed into a nightdress. I poured some water onto my clothes by accident, and I only changed into the nightdress after seeing some women's clothes in the closet. I didn't know it was someone else's.

"It really was just an ordinary nightdress..."

Samantha felt repulsed yet again, almost as though the steak she had just eaten would be vomited out.

She would have simply viewed Tiana with disdain if Tiana did not act like such a tramp, but each and every one of Tiana's words and actions made Samantha nauseous.

Samantha gazed down at Tiana and asked coldly, "Ms. Reece, do you know who's the owner of that 'ordinary nightdress' you speak of?"

"Who?" Tiana did not take it seriously. The nightdress was plain and conservative, and she would not have changed into it if she had brought her own over.

Old Madam Barker lived in that villa as well, so Tiana's first thought was that it belonged to the old lady. The servant must have sorted the clothes by mistake and placed them into the master bedroom's closet.

Having seen through Tiana's thoughts, Samantha smiled and said clearly, "It belongs to Mrs. Barker!"

After a pause, she kindly added, "You're thinking of Old Madam Barker, but I'm not referring to her. I'm talking about Timothy's wife, the Barker's rightful madam. That Mrs. Barker!"

Tiana's eyes widened suddenly and she looked at Samantha in disbelief. The next second, she looked at Timothy again.

Was Timothy married? Unlikely... Tiana never heard such rumors, but Samantha seemed to be so confident that she could not help asking, "Is that true, Mr. Barker?"

Samantha's dark eyes turned to Timothy as well and she looked at his handsome face.

She had quietly stretched her hand into her pocket and activated the recording function on her cell phone.

Her intention was to record what Timothy said. If he refused to sign the divorce agreement, then she would bring the recording to the old lady. She wanted to make sure his life was just as difficult as hers!

Timothy's black eyes met Samantha's gaze. One of his heartstrings was tugged when she said 'Mrs. Barker' earlier, and his thin lips moved slightly as he finally opened his mouth.

His answer shook both Samantha and Tiana.

It was but a one-word monotonous reply, "Yes."

Tiana's head went blank. Timothy had gotten married in secret? Who was Mrs. Barker? Could it be Penelope? Then again, it would not have been that hush-hush if the Barkers and the Schmidts got married. If it was not Penelope, who else could it be?

She mulled over it but could not figure out who it could possibly be. Her gaze then swept to Samantha and a sudden thought occurred to her, further increasing the panic in her eyes.

Could it be...Samantha?

Impossible!

It was definitely not the case. Samantha said it herself that she was merely a guest that Old Madam Barker invited and it was clear she was staying there shamelessly. Timothy had publicly broken off his marriage with her two years ago, so why else would he take a liking to her again?

Samantha probably knew about Mrs. Barker because the old lady told her.

Mrs. Barker's existence was of no importance to Tiana at that moment. Samantha had humiliated her so terribly that day and ruined her plan, so she had to teach Samantha a lesson. At the very least, she wanted to see Timothy kick Samantha out of the villa and nip those social climbing thoughts in the bud!

Tiana adjusted her mood immediately and lowered her face, as though she was a delicate flower floating in the wind. “Mr. Barker, I didn’t know that the nightdress belonged to...Mrs. Barker. It was my mistake. If anyone has the right to be angry, it’s Mrs. Barker. What does it have to do with Ms. Larsson? What right does she have to insult me? Could she be that eager to overstep her place because she wants to be your wife?”

While saying that, Tiana pretended to act helpless and wanted to lean against Timothy’s body.

Timothy did not hide the disgust in his eyes and took a step back. Unable to grab hold of him, Tiana staggered and nearly fell.

He opened his lips to speak once more, and his voice was so cold it could pierce through one’s hearts. “Ms. Reece, hand in your resignation letter tomorrow and disappear. Don’t ever let me see you again.”

Tiana thought she had heard him wrongly and asked in a daze. “Are you talking to me, Mr. Barker?”

Timothy was supposed to dispose of that malicious vixen Samantha! Why did he suddenly tell her to resign and just disappear?

“No... Wait, Mr. Barker, I... Was I wrong? Why are you doing this to me?” Tiana asked anxiously before Timothy could speak.

Tiana was not the only one who was puzzled—even the dumbstruck Samantha could not comprehend why he said that.. She turned to look at Timothy, waiting for his answer.

Chapter 55: Are You Jealous?

In the past, Timothy would not bother to say another word or offer any explanation. However, he opened his mouth once more and explained clearly, “You answered my call without authorization and deleted the call records to hide that fact. Your dereliction of duty at work has already reached a standard that would necessitate expulsion.”

Tiana never expected Timothy to know that she had secretly answered the call. She knew that she had done it very carefully.

“I, Mr. Barker...I, I...” She opened her mouth to explain and secure a lifeline for herself.

Before she could even think of a reason, she heard Timothy's merciless sentence. "More importantly, you went into Mrs. Barker's room, wore her pajamas, and seduced her husband before her very eyes."

"Get lost. Don't make me repeat it a second time."

'Before her very eyes?

'Mrs. Barker...?'

Tiana felt like she had been struck by lightning. She turned her neck abruptly and looked stiffly at Samantha.

Timothy really was married...and his wife really was Samantha...

'But how?!'

Tiana's knees softened and she slumped onto the floor, unable to say another word.

...

The door slammed shut.

Timothy lowered his eyes and looked at still-stunned Samantha. There was a hint of joy that was not easily detectable in her deep eyes.

The man's voice resonated throughout the quiet villa. The slightly hoarse timbre was particularly pleasing to the ear. "Are you satisfied with the way this was handled, Mrs. Barker?"

Samantha had not been able to react yet and remained silent for some time.

The corner of Timothy's lips curled up in a smile as well. He took one step toward Samantha and closed in the distance between them. He bent down slightly, lowered his head, and practically pressed his thin lips against her earlobe. His voice became more and more muffled and he said, "When you made all those requests to me earlier, did you do so in the capacity as my wife? As Mrs. Barker?"

His warm breaths caressed her entire ear.

Samantha's consciousness snapped right back and her eyelashes trembled fiercely as she listened to him.

She took a step back quickly and distanced herself from Timothy.

The tables were turned in a way that was truly unexpected and she was bamboozled at that moment. She thought that Timothy deliberately brought someone else back on the day of her lunar calendar birthday to anger her, but it turned out not to be the case?

What were his intentions then?

Then there was the question he asked... She somehow had a bad feeling about it.

Speaking before clarifying the situation would only open up avenues for error. Samantha suddenly covered her head and acted drunk. Her expression became hazy and she asked instead of answering, "What did I say? Did I say anything? I... I'm drunk. I don't remember anything. Argh, my head hurts like hell. I'm going to sleep..."

She even burped while she spoke and lifted her feet to try and leave.

Despite the many solutions she could use to handle the situation, leaving was the best of them all!

Timothy, however, seemed to see through her thoughts. His big palm reached out for her wrist, after which he applied some force to push her against the shoe cabinet in the hallway.

He propped his hands on both sides of her waist, locking her firmly in front of him.

Timothy did not allow her to escape and his black eyes stared luminously on her face. The next sentence he said was clear and the pronunciation was very articulate. "You forbid me from bringing another woman back here and even threw that big of a fit at me. Are you jealous, Mrs. Barker?"

Jealousy...

Samantha's black pupils shrank suddenly and her fingers pressed hard against the door of the shoe cabinet.

She exerted a lot of effort to suppress the panic in her eyes and forced herself to feign composure.

Then, she smiled sweetly at Timothy and wrapped her hands over his neck all of a sudden, tiptoeing and leaning her red lips against his ear.

She spoke in a voice that was charmingly gentle. "You're right, I'm jealous."

Timothy's straight, towering figure trembled abruptly and an unusual light flickered deep in his eyes.

Samantha paused for a second and succinctly added four more words, "In your dreams, maybe!"

Seizing his momentary daze, she pushed Timothy forcefully and ran straight upstairs.

Timothy was taken by surprise and ended up being pushed two steps back. By the time he raised his gaze and looked over, Samantha had long vanished from his line of sight.

...

Samantha ran back to the master bedroom, closed the door, and locked it. After leaning against the door panel, she covered her heart and felt it beating extremely fast.

She had nearly...nearly exposed her true emotions to Timothy.

She continued to breathe deeply and calm her emotions as she perked her ears and listened to the movement outside. It was only when she was sure that Timothy did not chase her that she felt relieved.

After about ten minutes, Samantha finally calmed herself down.

She looked at the nightdress on the floor and could not help but feel nauseous again. After picking it up and tossing it into the trash can, she grabbed some air freshener and sprayed the entire room. She even changed the bedsheet and put a new one, lying down only when she had thoroughly cleared Tiana's lingering scent.

She could not help but recall everything that happened that night and analyzed Timothy's thoughts. A sudden realization came to her and she sat up abruptly on the bed.

Was Timothy's intention not to disgust her, but to use other women to test whether she still had feelings for him?

Furthermore, she would easily be provoked into revealing her true thoughts because it was a special day.

Was that why he asked her whether or not she was angry and jealous?

Although she denied it, her behavior was far from convincing.

Why did he have to test her though?

She asked herself whether she had been cautious enough during that period and answered in the affirmative. She had avoided coming into contact with him insofar as it was possible for her to do so and avoided him to the best of her ability.

Could he have been trying to prove his charm after getting upset over the way she eluded him and viewed him with disdain?

It was not that Samantha was unwilling to consider the good side of things, but rather, she dared not due to the lessons she learned in the past. How insensitive toward pain did she have to be in order to stop hurting herself?

After thinking about it a few times over, she still felt that Timothy had no good intentions irrespective of what his thoughts were!

Fortunately... Fortunately, Samantha had finally calmed herself down.

...

Inside the study.

Timothy's phone rang and he glanced at the caller ID before answering, "Yes."

Zachary's loud voice blasted from the speaker. "Hey, Timmy! What're you up to? Come out for a drink or two. Jonny's here too."

"I'm busy." Timothy refused without a second thought. After a brief pause, he said again, "I'm spending time at home with my wife."

Zachary inhaled sharply. "You've got to be kidding? Timmy... Blink twice if Samantha kidnapped you."

Before Timothy could speak, Jonathan's cold voice rang again. "What did you do, Tim?"

He was rarely one for gossip.

Timothy narrowed his eyes, opened his mouth awkwardly, and briefly explained everything that happened that day.

Upon hearing that, Jonathan asked again, "And it worked? I should try too."

When one taught, the other learned.

Zachary could not tolerate it any longer and said, "You're a perv, Timmy! And you're even more of a perv, Jonny!"

After taking a deep breath, Zachary's tone became serious all of a sudden. "That's a lot of stupid stuff you did, Timmy. Have you....fallen for Samantha again?"

Chapter 56: Was She Ever Sincere toward Him?

Timothy was silent on the other end.

Zachary could not help but feel apprehensive, as if a large hand was strangling his fate by the throat. He knew better than anyone else that Samantha was like an Achilles heel for Timothy. No one was allowed to casually mention what happened two years ago, and he would not have dared to bring it up if he was not anxious himself.

Things seemed to be going south and he had the feeling that Timothy was about to send someone over to kill him.

He was about to open his mouth and say something to save his own skin, but he heard Timothy's slightly puzzled voice. "Stupid stuff?"

Zachary's words were stuck in his throat.

He did not expect Timothy's attention to be fixated on the words 'silly stuff' after Zachary had trampled on Timothy's forbidden area.

Zachary was done for...

Jonathan, ever the wise man who usually had things planned out and within his control, casually extended his slender fingers to adjust his gold-framed spectacles on the bridge of his nose. He looked at Zachary curiously and asked the same thing, "Stupid stuff?"

Zachary was speechless.

Compared to the other two, he had long been at the bottom of the food chain below them. It was the first time he ever had such a bright moment.

Zachary felt rather smug and puffed out his chest. With his face raised at a 45-degree angle, he put on an air of elitism and spoke as if he was the beacon of enlightenment, "Alright, time for Professor Summer to give you guys a little lesson. When it comes to feelings between two people, one must never ever involve a third party. That's a no-no. Doesn't matter what your justification is. Not only will the consequence be uncondusive to developing feelings, it's also counterproductive! You'll only push her farther and farther!

"Remember, when it comes to conflicts between two people, it's always best to shut the door and talk it out with each other. That's the way to go!"

Jonathan frowned after listening to it and roasted him mercilessly, "Your method is even stupider."

On the other end, Timothy added salt to the wound, "It's really stupid."

Jonathan added, "All a single man can do is make statements that are useless in practice."

Timothy then said, "After all, we're both already married and he isn't. Theories that aren't put into practice are worthless."

'And yet he has the gall to act all high and mighty?'

Zachary nearly vomited blood after the other two's song and dance.

He slammed the table and stood up, gritting his teeth while saying to Timothy and Jonathan, "The both of you may be married, but you might as well be single. One of you lives separately in the long-term, while the other has a sham marriage. Where did you get the decency to mock me?"

"I might not be married, but I'm well-versed in matters that have to do with the heart. As someone who has been mingling with women for many years, I'm second to none when it comes to understanding women!"

As soon as he spoke, he saw Jonathan's disdainful and skeptical look. Although Timothy kept quiet on the other end of the phone, his attitude made it clear that he was similarly disdainful and skeptical of Zachary!

Zachary felt that his dignity had been challenged. He took a glass of wine, drank it, and said, "I might not be as good as you guys when it comes to other stuff, but I'm the one you should listen to when it comes to women."

"Timmy, Jonny, if the both of you still have feelings for your wives, then you should be treating them well. Don't just do things without an aim. Women need to be spoiled, to be cheered up, not to be provoked or be pissed off! If you don't do that, I bet you'll all become like me soon enough. As single as a dollar bill!"

...

After hanging up the phone, Timothy's lips twitched and he put Zachary's useless remarks to the back of his mind.

If nothing else, he finally saw some changes in Samantha's mood, rather than being as cold or as stagnant as before. In the past, he did not know where to even start.

Samantha's irate demeanor appeared subconsciously in his mind, as well as the way she finally admitted that she was Mrs. Barker. It was such a vivid scene, as if he had been transported into the past.

It was as though time had never passed and they were still stuck in the past.

As he thought about that, the corners of his lips curled up unknowingly.

Late into the night, the clock on the wall quietly pointed to 12. Timothy snapped out of his reminiscing and got up to leave the study.

The villa was quiet and he could hear his own footsteps clearly. He walked slowly toward the master bedroom.

Standing in front of the door of the master bedroom, Timothy stretched out his hand and opened the door. He twisted the doorknob and realized it was locked.

Timothy frowned slightly and turned around to fetch the key. Once he unlocked the door, he saw the dim light inside from the warm yellow glow of a bedside lamp.

Samantha's petite body lay on top of the bed. Her breathing was even and she was already fast asleep.

Timothy stepped in and subconsciously slowed his movements for fear of waking her up. From the corner of his eyes, he caught a glimpse of the nightdress that had been thrown into the trash can. It further brightened the radiant glimmer in his eyes.

He walked to the bed, looked down, and locked his gaze on Samantha's delicate face. The innocence she had when she was asleep could elicit feelings of pity from men.

That was the reason why he was once so deeply attracted to her. He loved her uncontrollably, and even his grandmother who raised him since young was shocked that a heartless person like him would have so much affection for someone else.

It was not just his grandmother who was shocked—he could never wrap his head around it either.

For him, 'love' was a luxury. He was well aware of the need to be calm and measured, but he was stupidly drawn to her like a moth to a flame. Despite being clear-headed, he watched as he sank bit-by-bit into the abyss.

He originally thought that she felt the same way for him, but in the end, all the things Samantha did to him really were merciless.

An agonizing pain started to appear in Timothy's eyes and he closed them while clenching his hands firmly. The blue veins on the back of his hands continued to throb and his breathing became extremely suffocated.

Over the past two years, that familiar feeling of agony appeared without warning, torturing and destroying him severely.

It took him about ten minutes to forcefully suppress the pain. His breathing recovered slowly and he opened his eyes again, but it had turned bloodshot and made for a ghastly sight.

During that moment, he really wanted to take out Samantha's heart and have a good look at it. He wanted to know if she ever had feelings for him.

Perhaps a little?

With the night getting darker, cold wind blew in from outside, causing the curtains to flutter in the breeze.

A low whisper escaped Samantha's mouth. Her red lips opened slightly and she called out, "Timothy..."

Her voice was so soft, and since there was also the sound of the wind blowing in, Timothy could not know for sure whether he was hearing things or whether Samantha really did call out his name in her sleep.

He trembled uncontrollably and he still could not believe what he heard. He bent down and leaned his handsome face closer to Samantha's, wanting to hear her more clearly.

Timothy's face was very close to Samantha's and his dark eyes stared at her lips firmly. It was then that he saw her lips moving. Her voice was heard saying once again, "Timothy...."

Chapter 57: Why Don't You Want Me?

Samantha really was calling out Timothy's name...

It felt as if a huge boulder had been thrown right into the lake within Timothy's heart, causing a storm of raging waves. His lips opened gently out of their own volition and he responded in a very low voice. "Yes, I'm here."

Just like before, his answer whenever she called him was 'I'm here'.

The next second, however, Samantha's whispering voice suddenly turned cold and angry. "Go away!"

When she said that, her hands moved in tandem with her words and she raised them, pushing them forward and shoving Timothy away.

Samantha did not have that much strength when she was asleep, but Timothy's body was still resoundingly pushed back. He staggered a couple of steps and could only stand firm after placing his hands on the bedside table.

He felt as though a basin of cold water had doused the embers of hope that had just started to burn.

If Samantha could say such things even in her sleep, one could imagine that she never really had any genuine feelings toward him.

Timothy clenched his hands tightly.

He was well aware of how best to deal with the relationship between him and Samantha. It would not do him any good to keep Samantha around.

He ought to do the same thing he did two years ago—tell her to disappear from his sight and vanish from his world, leaving not a single trace remaining.

That way, he would not need to have his emotions shaken by her again, nor did he have to let himself get hurt.

The solution was plainly obvious and he could be decisive with the snap of a finger. The rationale was there too, but when he looked at her, there was nothing he could do at all.

Zachary asked him whether he had fallen in love with Samantha again.

He wanted to ask himself, 'Did I fall in love with her 'again'? Or...have I always been in love with her?'

He could never let go of what happened to them two years ago.

With Samantha, however, it seemed even more difficult for him to let go.

Despite being hated, resented, and hurt, he still wanted to keep her in his sight.

His lowliness was just ridiculous.

Timothy's lips curled up in a self-deprecating smile. He stumbled, turned around, and walked slowly out of the room.

When he turned around, he was completely oblivious to the tears that started flowing from the corner of Samantha's eyes and down her cheek.

Her voice became even softer and was already very hoarse, but she still whispered, "Come back here, Timothy..."

"I lied. I don't want you to go..."

"Why don't you want me? What did I do wrong?"

"Will you be able to stop hating me if I change...?"

...

Early the next day, rays of sunlight began shining into the room, imbuing warmth within it.

Samantha opened her heavy eyelids and waited for about a minute before slowly sitting up with the blanket still wrapped around her.

The alcohol had gotten to her the previous night and she fell asleep after feeling light-headed. Unfortunately, she did not sleep well at all and felt as though she had been crying endlessly in her dreams.

That feeling was the same as when she stood by her promise two years ago. After flying abroad, she spent half the first month staying alone in her small rented room because she was unfamiliar with the new place.

With the marriage broken off, she was abandoned and chased away as if it was all just a bargaining chip in a business deal. She was instantly deprived of love and affection, and her life became hell overnight.

She cried daily back then and was utterly heartbroken. During that moment, she almost could not bear to live any longer.

It had been very long since she cried like that. She hated that helpless feeling very much because crying was the most useless state one could be in.

She would not have reverted back to that once-fragile person she was if Timothy had not deliberately provoked her the previous night.

That scumbag Timothy! He had better pray that he would not be vanquished in her hands in the future!

Samantha cursed him viciously before getting out of bed and walking to the bathroom to freshen up.

...

After coming down from upstairs, Samantha went straight to the kitchen and prepared to make some breakfast for herself.

She had been so disgusted the night before that she really ended up getting nauseous and vomiting. Come morning, her stomach was already empty and she was so famished that she could eat a horse.

As she opened the refrigerator while thinking about what she wanted to cook, the sound of footsteps came from behind her.

Samantha was slightly surprised. Was Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia back already? So quickly?

She turned around subconsciously and looked over only to see a man's slender figure. Her gaze was then fixed onto Timothy's handsome face.

However, she was not in the mood to appreciate his face at the moment and even had the urge to punch it.

He was the one who made her cry in her dreams. She woke up crying because of him, and he was the reason her head was dizzy and she felt wobbly.

Why was he still there?! What else did he want? A defensive and vigilant look immediately appeared in her eyes.

Timothy noticed all her emotions and could not help but feel a stabbing pain in his heart. Even his footsteps had halted as he was walking toward her.

The distance between them was a mere three feet.

Timothy kept quiet and merely stared solemnly at Samantha. She felt a little chill up her spine from the way he looked at him and would rather he make his move instead of merely looking at her silently. She felt her hair stand on end when he gazed at her like that.

It was not as though she could not avoid him if he was being difficult.

If push comes to shove, she could just order takeout or head out to eat.

Once that thought occurred to Samantha, she closed the door to the refrigerator and started walking outside.

When she brushed past Timothy, however, he grabbed her wrist all of a sudden and pulled her back, pressing her against the refrigerator door.

Samantha's eyes widened in an instant and she knew that the scumbag Timothy did not have any good intentions in mind and only wanted to continue bullying her!

She pressed her hand firmly against Timothy's chest, glared at him angrily, and said sternly, "What more do you want, Timothy?"

'What do I want?'

Timothy's eyes traveled downward. He felt a strange sense of satisfaction when he stared at the woman trapped between the refrigerator and his body.

After leaving the master bedroom the previous night, he went to the balcony and smoked for nearly the entire night, but still was unable to figure out what exactly he wanted to do.

Just as he was about to leave his sight, he grabbed her instinctively and did not want her to leave from his vision.

That was it.

Indeed, that was all there was to it.

Samantha watched as the glimmer in Timothy's eyes began to flicker. She was clueless as to what nasty ideas he had in mind again and felt a little nervous as a result.

If she gave Timothy an inch and he went overboard by taking a mile, she was not going to continue taking it lying down.

Ten or so seconds later, Timothy's lips started to move. His voice became low and slightly hoarse as he said, "Samantha, you...chased away my caregiver yesterday."

Was he going to bring up what happened the previous night and use it against her?

There was no use crying over spilled milk and Samantha would be the first to admit that she would do it again if given the chance!

Samantha smiled, looked at him fearlessly, and even opened her mouth provocatively, "You bet I did. What of it? Huh? Are you going to the same with me, Mr. Barker? Do you want to chase me out too?"

She would be more than happy to leave!

Samantha had no idea which part of her sentence was funny, but Timothy smiled and chuckled before repeating what she said to him yesterday, "In your dreams, maybe!"

After a pause, Timothy narrowed his black eyes and lowered his voice, saying word for word, "I want you..."

Chapter 58: A Glutton for Punishment

Those three words caused Samantha's hands to immediately clench into fists. If Timothy's suggestion was her to make it up to him in bed or something shameless like that, she would definitely reward him with a couple of punches!

Timothy locked his gaze on her dainty face and saw that she was thinking of something inappropriate, so he said slowly, "Be my caregiver in Tiana's stead."

Samantha was slightly surprised. "That's it?"

Timothy cocked an eyebrow. "What else is there? Or could it be...you want to make it up to me in bed?"

He deliberately emphasized his last two words beside her ear, enunciating them slowly. The heat from his breath warmed her ears up, causing them to turn red and betray her emotions.

Samantha pushed him away as hard as she could, increasing the distance between the two of them. She retorted diffidently, "Did... Did anyone say anything about making it up to you in bed?"

Unfortunately, her reddened face made her look somewhat guilty. How could that scumbag know what was on her mind?

She lowered her eyes to avoid Timothy's teasing gaze and surreptitiously took a deep breath. With her emotions finally calming, she was about to refuse when her words stopped short of escaping her lips. A sudden thought had occurred to her and she paused once more.

Samantha remembered Ronald calling her two days ago, saying that he wanted her to take care of Timothy. That time, she refused without hesitation.

Could that have been Timothy's second reason for coming home with Tiana, aside from wanting to test Samantha?

Was he pissed that she refused to be his caregiver, and therefore he went about the situation in such a roundabout manner just to force her to submit to him and obediently allow him to enslave her?

Judging from Timothy's self-righteous, insufferably arrogant, and vindictive character, there was no way he could tolerate it when she did not do as he wanted. The sum of all that made Samantha confident that her guess was 100% valid!

How childish! Did he have nothing better to do?

Samantha frowned for a moment before curling her lips in a smile. She raised her eyes, looked at his profound gaze, then said, "You're right, Mr. Barker. I chased your caregiver away and it's only right that I make sure that she has a replacement.

"Since you hold me in such high regard and entrusted me with this important task, it would be impolite of me to refuse.

"Alright then, I shall be your caregiver for the next few days and take good care of you!"

Timothy did not expect her to agree without hesitation and there was a hint of surprise flashing in the depths of his eyes. He looked at her glimmering black pupils and the cheeky, sly glow within them—it was just like the mischievous look she once had in the past.

He knew that some naughty ideas must have popped up in her mind again.

In spite of that, the way she was then made him really happy.

Timothy pretended not to know anything and replied, "I can't wait."

Samantha still had something to say, but her stomach growled in hunger before she could say anything.

Her words became stuck in her throat and she could not help but cover her stomach awkwardly. What a blow to her spirits.

Timothy's gaze shifted downward and he glanced at Samantha's stomach. His lips curled up into a smile, making Samantha feel even more embarrassed.

The man opened his mouth and said, "I'm hungry too. My caregiver, Samantha, should make some breakfast for me."

After saying that, Timothy immediately turned around and walked out of the kitchen.

Samantha stood there for almost half a minute before returning to her senses. She thought Timothy would make some cutting remark to make fun of her, so she was somewhat surprised to see him being 'overly merciful'.

Even so, that little bit of kindness paled by a mile compared to his bad behavior!

'He wants breakfast, does he? Alright, I'll let him enjoy the special breakfast that I'm going to make for him!'

Samantha grinned coldly. She turned around, opened the refrigerator, and took out some ingredients.

Timothy always ate Western-style breakfast, but she was not going to make Western-style breakfast for him. Instead, she boiled some noodles and added some simple ingredients such as vegetables and eggs.

Having gotten used to doing everything by herself abroad, she had acquired a bit of skill and could therefore whip up a big bowl of aromatic noodles with ease.

She took a small bowl and divided a small portion for herself, which she devoured in a couple of bites. The rest was poured into a big bowl, whereupon she rolled up her sleeves and added all kinds of seasonings into it!

Samantha stirred it with her chopsticks, looked at the 'insidious breakfast' before her, then nodded in satisfaction.

"Breakfast is served."

She walked out carrying the noodles, set them down on the dining table, and pushed them in front of Timothy. Then, she handed the chopstick and spoon to him in a manner rivaling the most excellent of service, and said with a smile, "Please enjoy, Mr. Barker."

Timothy first looked at her courteous expression, then at the bowl of noodles. The plethora of various seasonings appeared quite horrendous!

At a glance, it was obvious that the meal would be hard to stomach.

Timothy's expression became somewhat indescribable.

Samantha watched his mien and could not help but feel elated deep down. She knew Timothy all too well. It was impossible that he could eat something like that because of how picky he was. After all, he had been living like a prince since he was young and ate only the best delicacies one could offer.

Samantha's large eyes blinked a couple of times and she said innocently, "Why aren't you tucking in, Mr. Barker? Doesn't it suit your tastes? I took great care to cook this, but my cooking skills can only go so far. If you're not satisfied, you can always look for someone more qualified than I am."

She knew that Timothy had the means to come up with more heinous tricks to bully her if she continued to refuse his request, so she decided to just comply with it.

Unfortunately, he could dream on if he wanted her to take good care of him. What she wanted was to make it clear to him that he would have to suffer the same amount of suffering as she did if he were to enslave her.

Either he could retreat on his own, or they would hold out until the bitter end! It was a game of chicken!

Her bet was that Timothy would find such maltreatment to be utterly unbearable and therefore be the first to lose the battle. As she was fantasizing about it, she raised her head and saw a sight that made her widen her eyes in bewilderment.

Timothy picked up the chopsticks and ate the noodles gracefully.

His handsome face was so calm and composed that he did not even frown. He looked more like he was eating a dish from a Michelin star restaurant, rather than the 'insidious breakfast' she prepared.

Samantha watched as he gulped it down with every bite. His expression hardly changed at all when he drank some of the soup! He then placed the chopsticks down and commented, "Not bad."

Samantha's red lips opened slightly in her surprise and she was unable to close it.

What was going on? She was bamboozled all of a sudden.

Timothy took a napkin and wiped the corners of his lips. Then, he got up and walked out of the dining hall.

It was not until his footsteps disappeared from Samantha's ears that she looked at the big bowl. There was only some soup left.

She was not hallucinating! He really did finish his meal!

Could it be because Timothy had no sense of taste? Or could she be so talented that she was capable of making delicious noodles even after adding a random array of seasonings?

Samantha unknowingly reached for the spoon that Timothy had put down earlier.. She scooped up a spoonful of soup, brought it to her mouth, and drank it.

Chapter 59: Doubting Everything in Her Life

The next second, Samantha's face scrunched up once that strange smell assaulted her senses. She spat the soup back out immediately.

The taste was just disgusting!

Samantha glanced in the direction that Timothy went. How could a man as picky as him manage to stomach all that?

She thought about it for some time but still could not figure out why. She guessed that he wanted to achieve his purpose of enslaving her at all costs!

In that case, she wanted to see just how long he would be able to hold out!

Samantha cleared the table, did the dishes, and walked out of the kitchen.

A man's voice rang from above. "Ms. Samantha."

Samantha looked up and saw Timothy standing on the second-floor railing with one hand on the rails. He looked at her and requested, "Bring me a cup of coffee."

'Hehe, he's really taking every chance he can to order me around.'

Samantha smiled back at him and replied, "Okay, Mr. Barker. Coffee's coming right up!"

She turned and went back to the kitchen.

Timothy had always preferred americanos. He hated sweet stuff so he always made sure no sugar was added into his coffee.

Once Samantha made the coffee, she filled two-thirds of the cup with sugar and stirred it well.

Just to make sure, she picked it up and tasted it slightly. At that moment, it was so sweet that she felt as though her teeth would have melted.

Samantha hurriedly drank a glass of water to wash it down.

'Let's see if you can handle this sweetness!'

...

Samantha carried the coffee up and walked into the study.

Timothy was sitting behind the large desk. His dark gaze was looking at the computer as his slender fingers tapped quickly across the keyboard. It seemed to be some important business.

Samantha looked at his focused side profile, and for a brief second, was nearly smitten by his charming appearance.

His tall nose, light pink lips, and sexy jawbone were all masterpieces carved by the hands of God.

The reasons she liked him so much in the past owed a large part due to his angelic looks.

“Am I that good to look at?”

The sudden question prompted Samantha to instinctually reply, “Ye—”

Before she could complete the word ‘yeah’, she suddenly realized and instantly snapped back from her absent-mindedness to look at Timothy.

His attention had been shifted onto her at some point and he was gazing at her teasingly.

Samantha poured scorn on herself deep down. She was playing a game of chicken with Timothy and she should never let herself be fooled by her enemy’s beauty.

A scumbag with good looks was no less a scumbag!

Samantha placed the coffee cup on the table and said respectfully, “Your coffee is ready, Mr. Barker.”

“Thanks,” Timothy answered faintly. He did not drink it immediately but simply said, “You may leave.”

‘He learned from his lesson, did he?’

Samantha was not going to leave that easily. She reached out and pushed the cup forward to Timothy, saying, “You should drink it while it’s hot, Mr. Barker. This is the perfect temperature to savor its aroma.”

Timothy’s fingers continued tapping for a brief moment against the keyboard keys. He then looked up at Samantha and immediately spotted her calculative intentions.

“Sure,” he replied.

He held the cup and immediately took a big sip. The sickly-sweet taste filled his mouth, but his face remained as indifferent as before with hardly any other emotions present.

Samantha looked at Timothy without blinking out of eagerness to see him make a fool of himself, but none of that happened at all.

She glared at him resentfully and continued to stare at him.

Timothy drank half the cup, placed it back down, and commented, "Not bad."

Samantha was speechless.

As she went out of the study, she did not give up and continued to lay against the door of the study. Peeking in through the crack of the door, all she saw was Timothy drinking the rest of the coffee in one gulp.

She more or less started to doubt everything in her life.

...

For the next few days, Timothy continued ordering Samantha around at every opportunity he had.

At times, he would ask her to massage his shoulders, slice some fruits for him, or act as his secretary to read out the documents for him. At other times, she served as his support when he walked in the yard...

Throughout the day, all her plans to mess with Timothy were taken by him in stride. It made her feel powerless because nothing she did seemed to work.

She not only failed to irritate him, but ended up making herself tired and confused.

It was not until Timothy had to do a video conference that she managed to get some time for herself and slump on the sofa.

She took out her cell phone and searched angrily for the Barker Group.

In her mind, the Barker Group must have been on the verge of bankruptcy if Timothy could do wicked things to her in such a leisurely manner.

However, her search results on Bidoo showed that the Barker Group's performance was on a daily rise rather than going bust. She was nearly blinded by the company's value on the market.

Timothy's net worth was much, much, much higher than two years ago!

Samantha was so angry that she wanted to smash her cell phone. She became so poor after the marriage was broken off, but that scumbag became richer instead. How unfair of God to show such kindness toward a heinous man!

In the end, she could not bring herself to smash her phone because she was too poor. If her phone was destroyed, she would have no money to buy a new one.

Night soon came.

Samantha finished showering and came out, sitting in front of the dressing table to dry her hair. After doing her skincare routine, she was about to go to bed when Timothy walked in.

A frown appeared across her forehead and she wondered how she could have forgotten to lock the door.

In order to prevent Timothy from requesting more stuff from her, Samantha preempted him and said, "Mr. Barker, even a caregiver has designated work hours. My working hours today have exceeded the standard, and I have to rest now. If you have any requests, save them for tomorrow!"

Timothy did not stop walking and continued until he was inside. His black pupils stared at her and he said, "A caregiver must be on standby for twenty-four hours."

She knew that the scumbag was being shameless and only wanted to exploit her all the time.

Samantha laughed despite her anger. "And? Do you want me to accompany you in bed at night?"

Timothy did away with the courtesies and nodded, "That's the correct understanding. That's the most convenient way for you to handle any problems at any time."

'Dream on!'

She had to sleep with him in the same room and the same bed when Old Madam Barker was around, but since it was one of those rare occasions that Old Madam Barker was not around, what reason did she have to sleep with him?

Was she supposed to get a free pass to a night of nightmares by sleeping next to him?

Samantha agreed to be a caregiver to mess with Timothy, not to add more trouble for herself. For that reason, she would never agree to his request!

She stood up, looked into his black eyes, and said with a forced smile. "I'm sorry, Mr. Barker, but I'm unable to comply with your request. I'm really exhausted after an entire day's work and I need to rest. If you're not satisfied, my advice to you is still the same as before: you are free to look for someone more qualified than me!

"Good night, Mr. Barker. Sweet dreams!"

'Or not! Better for you to have endless nightmares!'

As soon as she said that, she took a few steps forward, picked up her pillow from the bed, and headed straight out of the master bedroom.

Samantha was not expecting him to give up the master bedroom for her, and being the mature adult that she was, there was no point in being petty with him. She could just go to the guest room and sleep.

The man did not stop her at all and merely stood there lazily. He watched as she walked past him, headed straight to the door, and was about to leave the room.

Timothy's thin lips parted slightly and he spoke coldly, with a hint of provocation and mockery. "Are you afraid of sleeping with me, Samantha?"

Chapter 60: Fallen for Her Once Again

Samantha's footsteps halted all of a sudden.

She knew that it was clearly his way of using reverse psychology, but those words sounded particularly...harsh.

"Forget about it then, if you're afraid," Timothy continued in a leisurely manner. "Don't forget to close the door on your way out."

Samantha clenched her hands into fists as her arms hung by her body, and a fire began burning in the depths of her eyes.

He really had intimate knowledge of how to push her buttons.

Samantha raised her leg, but instead of going out, she turned her body using her toes as a pivot and walked back. It was not until she headed straight to bed that she raised her chin and asked, "Why would I be afraid!"

It was not as if she never slept there before. The bed was huge, so there was no big deal!

Samantha did as Timothy had done before and switched off all the lights in the bedroom with a snap. The room immediately plunged into darkness, whereupon she pulled the blanket and immediately lay down.

Inside that darkness, Timothy's gaze landed slowly onto that petite figure on the bed and his lips curled into a slight grin.

About a minute later, Samantha heard Timothy taking off his jacket, followed by his footsteps to the bed and the sound of the blanket being lifted.

She could then feel the mattress sinking on the other side, signaling that the man had laid down.

Although her statements were quite stubborn earlier, she actually felt nervous and somewhat regretful when Timothy laid down on the bed.

If Timothy really intended to do anything funny to her on the bed, she would definitely lose out in terms of their huge strength difference.

Samantha turned her back to him but remained vigilant at the same time. On the off-chance Timothy actually did something, she could easily fight back right away.

Amazingly, Timothy really did seem to purely want to sleep. He lay there quietly, saying nothing else and making no additional movements.

Samantha found it to be a little strange.

Timothy deliberately provoked her just to have her accompany him in bed and make it easier for her to take care of him?

Although she could bear with it for some time, curiosity eventually got the better of her. She turned around at the slowest of speeds and did so very carefully.

She opened her eyes slightly and glanced at Timothy, who was sleeping on the other end.

He was lying there properly and nothing seemed to be amiss. His breathing was stable too, and he really did seem to be sleeping.

Samantha let out a sigh of relief and let down her vigilance as well. Her day had been very tiring to begin with and she was immediately overcome with exhaustion as soon as her body relaxed. Her eyelids felt heavy and she soon entered into a deep sleep.

Her breathing became more drawn-out after some time, and Timothy—who was initially asleep—opened his eyes.

He moved gently and delicately as he turned his body to Samantha. Despite the darkness of the room, his gaze managed to land on her face.

As blurry as everything was in the darkness, he could easily observe her eyebrows, dainty nose, pink lips, and delicate chin.

Every inch of her was perfect, suiting his tastes to a T.

He had encountered many beautiful women before, but for some reason, Samantha was the only one who had him in the palm of her hand. It came to a point where he still could not leave her even after what she did to him!

Timothy stretched out his hand slowly and hugged Samantha in his arms. Rather than resisting, she willingly nestled herself in his arms and subconsciously sought to get into a comfortable position. Her hands and feet were resting on his body and she hugged him back in return, curling her lips up in contentment soon after.

Their bodies entwined perfectly with each other, like every hug they once had in the past.

Timothy gazed at the woman sleeping soundly in his arms. All he felt was the huge void in his heart—which had developed over the past two years—filling back up little by little.

Samantha's cooking was terrible, her coffee was so nauseatingly sweet, and she deliberately elbowed him while she was supporting him so he would fall. With all those devious intentions in her mind, she frequently connived against him and tried to anger him...

He could easily count every single thing about her that he disliked and hated, but none of that could compare to that one unknowing hug she gave him.

She was like a spell inside his heart. He tried so hard to rid himself of her, but he allowed her to come back so easily.

Timothy closed his eyes and hid the bitter smile in his eyes.

'So, it seems...you really did fall for her again, Timothy.'

...

Early the next morning.

It was one of those rare nights Samantha did not have any dreams. She slept very peacefully and did not wake up until dawn.

She sighed in satisfaction was getting ready to stretch, but as soon as she moved her hand, she came into contact with something firm.

A frown appeared on her face and she subconsciously touched it a couple more times. All of a sudden, she came to a realization and opened her eyes abruptly.

Before her eyes was Timothy's chest, and her hands happened to be holding his abdominal muscles...

Samantha retracted her hands as if she had touched a hot potato, hiding them behind her right away. Despite that, her earlobes had unwittingly turned red.

At that moment, she finally realized that she had used Timothy as a large pillow. Her head was lying on his arm, and she was hugging him tightly, taking full advantage of him...

Samantha's cheeks became red too.

Her sleeping posture had obviously been very decent the night before, and she was very aware about it too and never really moved too much the entire night. How could she have ended up getting all restless and moving into Timothy's arms?

She was initially worried that Timothy would become a rascal and have his way with her, but what happened was the exact opposite and she ended up becoming the rascal...

Timothy was probably going to make fun of her again if he saw her like that.

Samantha's pupils trembled as she looked up. Once she saw that Timothy was still asleep, she held her breath and gently freed herself from his arms.

As soon as her feet touched the ground, she felt so guilty that she did not dare to stay in the master bedroom for a second longer. Grabbing her coat, she immediately crept out of the room.

After the door was closed, the man on the bed rolled over without opening his eyes, but the corners of his lips hooked up slightly.

...

Samantha could only suppress her guilt after washing her face and brushing her teeth in the guest bedroom's toilet.

All of a sudden, she felt that she was shooting herself in the foot by promising to take care of Timothy and wanting to punish him at the same time.

Her actions were just too naive.

That would not do! She had to calm herself first and figure out some countermeasures before dealing with him again!

It just so happened that it was time for her to go to the hospital and visit Corey. After changing her clothes and picking up her bag, she exited the guest room and left the villa without looking back.

Upon getting into the car, Samantha first went to a supermarket to buy some fruits and daily necessities. She then took out her cell phone and sent Corey a message to ask him if he needed anything.

Corey did not reply her, probably because he was busy.

With bags of various sizes in her hands, Samantha went back into the car and headed to the hospital.

Upon arriving, she took the elevator like she always did and walked to the door of the ward. When she received no reply after knocking on the door, she decided to just push it open.

“Corey, I—” Samantha called out softly, but the scene she saw inside left her reeling in shock!

Chapter 61: Brandishing Their Authority

The room was completely empty. The blanket and pillows on the hospital bed were arranged neatly and so were the sheets, as if no one had ever slept there before.

Samantha frowned and a bad feeling surfaced in her heart for some reason. The first thing she did was walk in, place everything she had bought on the sofa, then turn around and walk toward the nurse’s station.

She came so often in the past that the nurses knew her well. They greeted her enthusiastically as soon as they saw her, “Ms. Larsson, you’re here to visit your brother again?”

The nurse then realized that something was not quite right and said, “Wait a sec, your brother has been discharged from the hospital the day before yesterday. Why are you here again?”

‘Discharged the day before yesterday?’

Samantha’s expression changed drastically. “Who was the one who handled the discharge procedure for him?”

The nurse noticed Samantha’s puzzled expression but did not dare to ask anything further. She immediately checked the records and replied, “Mr. and Mrs. Larsson were the ones who went through the formalities for his discharge. They were the ones who brought him back too. Weren’t you aware of that?”

Mr. and Mrs. Larsson...were none other than Samantha’s parents.

Although Corey’s health was gradually improving, he had not yet met the appropriate standards to be discharged and his body was still very delicate. He might as well stay

within the safe environment of a hospital if there was difficulty in taking good care of him back home.

Moreover, she knew first-hand how her parents treated her and Corey. She did not believe that they really were so eager to bring Corey home!

Samantha clenched her hands all of a sudden and her eyes sank completely.

The nurse saw Samantha's expression and could not help but exclaim, "Are you alright, Ms. Larsson? Corey will be fine, won't he?"

Corey had been living in the hospital for several years already. As a handsome young man with a mild disposition, his ailing heart drew increased sympathy from the nurses who had been with him and took care of him. They were all just as concerned for him.

"Thanks for your concern. Corey will be fine, and I... I'll make sure nothing will happen to him. Don't worry," Samantha said slowly, comforting both herself and the nurse.

She ran out of the hospital at once and hailed a taxi. After getting in, she provided the driver with the address to the Larsson residence.

On the way, she took out her cell phone and dialed her father Simon's number. No one picked up the call, and the same happened when she called her mother Cynthia. She then called the home number again, but it went unanswered as well.

She sneered and knew that her parents were displaying their authority to her.

After she had been married off and the Larssons obtained her dowry money, they acted as if she was the daughter that never existed. Despite being stigmatized and slandered in the headlines, they remained indifferent and never even sent her a text to comfort her, let alone give her a call.

It was not until later that they started calling her and sending her texts to ask for money, probably because they had squandered all the money from earlier. She ignored them completely.

To make things even worse, they did not spend a single cent of that dowry on Corey!

Why should she give a damn about them when they were so heartless?

She could not possibly continue to be their cash cow and remain constrained to them for the rest of her life. They were not fit to be parents, and thus were not worthy of receiving her support.

Samantha clenched her phone tightly and closed her eyes.

About an hour later, the car arrived at the gate of the Larsson residence. She paid the fare and opened the door to get off.

She stood in front of the luxurious wood-carved gate and looked up at the house in front of her. That was the house she grew up in, but she could hardly feel any warmth, only coldness and deceit.

Samantha took a few deep breaths, held back all her helplessness, and put on a cold face. Taking a step forward, she rang the doorbell.

A servant soon came to open the door and was not at all surprised to see her. “Hi, Miss. Please come on in.”

Samantha raised her head faintly and strode straight in.

...

Simon and Cynthia were sitting on the sofa inside the living room. One was reading the newspaper calmly while the other was enjoying her scented tea.

Samantha walked in and glanced across them, but the chilly feeling still surfaced in her heart.

She opened her lips and cut straight to the chase. “Where’s Corey?”

Simon threw the newspaper in his hand onto the coffee table and looked up, glaring at Samantha. “What kind of attitude is this? You didn’t even greet your parents when you came home. Where’re your manners? Fed it to the dogs?”

Cynthia placed down her teacup and looked at Samantha disappointedly. “We’ve raised you for so many years and this is how you repay us? You never answered our phone calls or our text messages, and you didn’t even show us any respect on this rare occasion that you came home. We’ve been raising you in vain, Sammy!”

Samantha had listened to all that ever since she was young. ‘Our family treats you so well. We spent so much effort nurturing you. You must follow what we’ve arranged for you, and repay us with only the best.’

Those words clamped down on her in the past. She had always been the Larsson’s obedient daughter, doing everything for the family and striving to give them the greatest benefit.

However, they never praised her for it despite all the things she had done for them. They only knew to use her time and time again—she was the good girl and the darling daughter when they stood to gain something from her, but once her usefulness ended, they kicked her away and left her life to fate.

She was a human being, not a machine, but even a machine would spoil easily if treated in such a way.

As much as Timothy let her down and broke her heart, no one else failed her and hurt her more severely than her parents.

It was only then that she realized they never loved her at all—they were just using her.

Years later, they still wanted to use the same methods to force her, chain her, and make her hell-bent on working hard for them.

Samantha's nose felt tingly but she immediately held it back. She sat straight on the one-seater sofa and spoke in a very calm voice. "Get right to the point, Mom and Dad. Stop it with that same old routine. Show a little more sincerity and have some dignity."

Choked by her blunt response, Simon and Cynthia pulled a long face. Whenever they said such things to her in the past, Samantha would always start reflecting on herself, allowing them to manipulate her soon after.

Simon snorted coldly. "I would've expected you no longer need your parents now that you've gotten married to a rich husband."

Cynthia looked at Samantha from head to toe and the anger in her eyes increased a little more. "You look like you're in the pink of health! Must be a good life you have after getting married. How unfilial can you be? You don't care about your parents anymore after you've got it going for you! Don't you ever forget that we're the ones who found this rich man to be your husband. You're nothing without us!"

Samantha's expression remained unchanged, as if she could not hear what they were saying. She asked again, "I'm going to ask one more time. Where's Corey?"

Seeing that none of their words were getting to her, Simon and Cynthia glanced at each other and stopped pretending.

Simon had a bizarre smile and answered her without reference to her earlier question.. "Sammy, we discussed marriage plans with Corey."