

## S2 Chapter 40

### Samantha's POV

What an unpleasant situation. I came out of the bathroom and ran right into Henry's father, who immediately grabbed me. What a despicable man! I was very nervous but tried to calm down before returning to the table. Catherine was devastated after discovering that that horrible Anna was pregnant with Alexander's baby, and we were there to cheer her up, not to give her more problems.

"Is everything okay, Sam? You took a while," Manu asked as soon as I sat down. This short girl was very observant.

"Yes, Manu. My mom called me," I lied to justify my delay.

"Oh, Sam, I'm dying to meet your mom. Martin is enchanted with her," Melissa said.

"Well, let's plan something at my place," I said, brightening up, and the girls agreed.

After many drinks and lots of conversation, we said our goodbyes. I had already arranged to sleep at Manu's house; I needed to confide in someone about what was happening. When we arrived, she started questioning me right away.

"Sam, what's going on with you?"

"Manu, I'm terrified!"

"What do you mean, Sam?"

"I received two letters from Romulus."



"Wait, but is he allowed to write to you?"

"I spoke with the lawyer today. He explained that the letters I received couldn't have left the prison through normal channels. Someone must have smuggled them out and sent them to me at Romulus's request."

"Do you have any idea who sent them?"

"No, I don't. Anyway, the lawyer will inform the judge. We'll see if anything comes of it."

"What did he write in those letters, Sam?"

"Threats. In the first one, he demanded that I visit him. In the other two, he said he won't leave me alone and that he'll make me pay for sending him to jail."

"That's serious, Sam. Have you talked to Henry and your mom?"

"My friend, my mom is thinking about moving in with her boyfriend. If I tell her, she'll give up on that, and it wouldn't be fair. As for Henry, he's going through a really tough time. I don't want to worry him more."

I told Manu about Henry's father, how nervous he was with his father around. I told her about the lunch at Hebe's house and what happened today at the Club.

"I knew something had happened!" Manu commented. "Why didn't you say anything at the Club, why didn't you tell the girls?"

"Manu, you saw how Catherine is. I don't want to burden her with my problems, she's suffering so much already."

"Sam, friends are there for these things, to share the burdens."



"I know, but Catherine needs us right now. And I can count on you, right?"

"

"Always, friend! But you should tell Henry that his father harassed you."

"No, I won't, Manu. Henry might confront his father, and they could end up fighting. His father is a horrible person, and I don't want Henry to have to defend my honor."

"Sam, it's his father. And you're his girlfriend. He needs to know."

"I know, but I don't want to make things harder for him."

"Sam, you're thinking about everyone else but yourself! Besides, you're keeping the people who love you out of your life. Do you really think you're doing the right thing?"

"Manu, I just don't want to worry anyone with my problems. I have to deal with them."

"But you don't have to do it alone. I'll respect your decision, but think about whether you should let the people around you decide if they want to help you or let you handle it alone," Manu said very seriously, making me think. "But while you're thinking about others, don't forget that I'm here for you."

"Thank you, Manu!" I squeezed her hand affectionately.

Opening up to Manu was really good. Besides listening and supporting me, she gave me advice and offered help. It's good to have a friend's support.

The days were flying by, and Henry and I could barely find time to talk. I was busy with work and the girls, Catherine was in terrible shape, and we were trying to help her. Henry was torn between supporting Alexander

and dealing with his father, who kept making his life hell – Mel told me this because whenever we talked, it was very brief, actually just me talking while he listened. The situation with Henry was making me nervous; things were different, but I couldn't put my finger on what it was.

When Catherine started dating Levy, she got a bit better, and our after-work meetings with the girls went back to happening just once a week, so my evenings and weekends were free again. However, Henry seemed extremely busy.

I'd call his cell phone, but he never answered, always sending a message saying "I'll call you later" and never did. When I called his office, his secretary would say he couldn't come to the phone, always in a meeting or on another call, and "I'll pass along your message." On weekends, he claimed to be working. I knew something was wrong but didn't want to involve others. Then Enzo called me.

"Hi, Auntie, beautiful!" He said excitedly as soon as I answered.

"Sweetie! How are you?"

"Stressed out, Auntie, it's exam week. I'm buried in books, just taking a break for a snack and to call you because I miss you, Auntie. You've disappeared. Seems like you only have time for your friends now."

"Yeah, things were complicated a while back, but they've calmed down for over a week now. Why haven't you and your uncle come by?"

"What do you mean? I was going to ask why you didn't come for Sunday lunch at our place. Uncle said you were with your friends."

"I think your uncle must be confused."



"Auntie, are you two fighting?"

"Not that I know of. But your uncle's been really busy, maybe that's it."

"Is something wrong, Auntie?"

"No, sweetheart, we've just been working a lot."

"Should we plan something for the weekend?"

"Just let me know when."

We talked a bit more, and when I hung up, I was devastated. If I was suspicious before, now I was certain something was wrong, and Henry didn't want to talk to me.

I tried calling Henry, but he didn't answer his cell phone, sending the standard message "I'll call you later." I called the company and got the usual "I'll pass along your message" from the secretary. So I called Melissa, who answered cheerfully.

"Hey, gorgeous! How are things over there?"

"Everything's fine, Mel. Alexander and Catherine are avoiding each other, but she's doing much better since she started dating Levy."

"Yeah, that's been good for her. But what about you? What's with calling me in the middle of the day?"

Now I needed a good excuse, because Melissa wasn't naive. But how could I get the information I needed without her noticing something was wrong?

"Nothing special, Mel, I'm just thinking about planning a surprise for Henry and wanted to check with you which day would be better, since I



know you guys usually work late."

"Thank God we haven't been working late for weeks. Things are so quiet here that Henry even went to spend the afternoon at the mall with Enzo. So, you can pick any day you want."

I was puzzled. What did she mean he was at the mall with Enzo? I had just talked to Enzo, and he was studying for his exams. The secretary told me he was in a meeting. Something was definitely wrong.

"Sam?" I heard Melissa's voice calling from the other end of the line.

"Sorry, Mel, I got an email and need to go. Don't tell Henry I called, it's a surprise."

"Don't worry, gorgeous, if you need me, just let me know."

I said goodbye to Melissa and felt a pang in my heart. I made one more call.

"Manu, if you're near Virginia, move away from her without saying it's me." I spoke quickly when Manu answered.

"Okay. You can talk now, friend. What's wrong? By your voice, it doesn't sound good." Manu said a minute after hearing me.

"It's Henry, Manu. Can I come to your house today so we can talk?"

"I'm going to kill that fake Don Juan. Of course you can, Sam. See you tonight."

"Manu, don't say anything to the girls."

"Don't worry."



I wasn't feeling well at all. I needed a minute and went to the bathroom. A thousand things were running through my head. Had Henry gotten tired of me and was just going to disappear? That would be so low! But I was going to get to the bottom of this, I didn't know how yet, but I would.