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**HOTEL STOCKHOLM**

by

**Allan Havis**

**Stockholm, Sweden – a small luxury hotel 2019**

**Amanda, Sam - a middle aged married couple**

**Camille - a middle aged attractive woman**

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**ACT ONE**  
**SCENE ONE**  
**(A quiet restaurant inside the Hotel Stockholm. Early evening**  
**in October)**

AMANDA: In a word. Opaque.

SAM: One word?

AMANDA: You're the most opaque man I ever met.

SAM: Thank you.

AMANDA: It's not a compliment.

SAM: I thought it was.

AMANDA: You're the most handsome man also.

SAM: I'm not schizoid.

AMANDA: I didn't say you were.

SAM: You think I'm often insane.

AMANDA: Look how you're dressed. Your pirate shirts.

SAM: You prefer silk?

AMANDA: Anything but Egyptian cotton.

SAM: All things Egyptian . . . in length, in durability . . .

AMANDA: But falling in love . . . .

SAM: Falling in love . . .

AMANDA/SAM: Love . . .

AMANDA: Yes.

SAM: Falling.

AMANDA: Yes. I so do love you.

SAM: Thank God.

AMANDA: Falling in love is a medieval Christian notion.

SAM: I'm not Christian.

AMANDA: I'm not medieval.

SAM: How perfect!

AMANDA: I'm free of old fetishes.

SAM: I've noticed. And new.

AMANDA: I fell deeply in love with you last year.

SAM: Napa? Or Sonoma?

AMANDA: Sonoma.

SAM: It happened to us both.

AMANDA: Falling in love means in certain circles to fall from grace.

SAM: And grace is divine. Love should be divine.

AMANDA: Grace is innocence. And to fall in love . . . .

SAM: Like a parachutist?

AMANDA: Like a jumper without a fucking parachute.

SAM: Like the tragedy of 9/11's Trade Towers.

AMANDA: Falling faster than 32 ft. per second per second.

AMANDA: So becoming intoxicated with the flesh, Sam, feels like a . . .

SAM: Like a forbidden drug . . .

AMANDA: Like a moment of immortality but also a sentence of damnation.

SAM: That's so sexy, Amanda. Really. D. H. Lawrence once wrote: "We start off self-conscious, *with sex in the head*. We find a woman who is the same. We marry because we are 'pals.'"

AMANDA: We're not pals.

SAM: We're newlyweds.

AMANDA: You were once like a bird with a broken wing, Sam.

SAM: A broken wing? A broken heart?

AMANDA: How did it break?

SAM: A jinx? A curse? My unvarnished stupidity?

AMANDA: (Sweetly) Say it for Christ's sake.

SAM: Say what?

AMANDA: What you feel now.

SAM: Peace of mind. I fell in love with you. And I fell hard. My work stopped dead. Work became irrelevant.

AMANDA: And this is forever. Love.

SAM: This is forever.

(They kiss passionately)

AMANDA: I like. Your taste. Very much.

SAM: I inherited these wonderful ancestral features.

AMANDA: My Golden Retriever Lancelot taught me how to kiss, when I was a little girl. Age six.

SAM: I thought you're allergic to dogs?

AMANDA: I am now but wasn't as a child.

SAM: That's so Amanda . . .

AMANDA: Yes, so Amanda. It's a lovely boutique hotel. The sleek Swedish design. The natural wood.

SAM: A friend's recommendation.

AMANDA: Which friend, Sam?

SAM: Which? From work at headquarters.

AMANDA: One of your good friends? One of your bad friends?

SAM: I discarded all my bad friends.

AMANDA: Did you?

SAM: Clancy.

AMANDA: I haven't met him yet.

SAM: You won't be meeting him.

AMANDA: Because he's with the NSA?

SAM: He's dead darling. Neither good nor bad.

AMANDA: I'm sorry.

SAM: Car accident. Near Martha's Vineyard. Driver jumped the double yellow line. Head on. I told you about Clancy.

AMANDA: You went to college with him.

SAM: That's right. Cornell. Undergrad. He was a farm boy from upstate.

AMANDA: I've lost all my friends from college days.

SAM: Clancy was a genius. He could hold 1200 algorithms in his head at any time. A brilliant cryptologist But couldn't hold his booze.

AMANDA: Algorithms aren't meant to be memorized, right?

SAM: Clancy had that sort of mind. Built like a family guy

AMANDA: He has grown kids?

SAM: Yes. One at Yale. One finishing high school.

AMANDA: Oh, that must be tough on his wife.

SAM: I write checks for the older boy. Covers the books and his housing needs.

AMANDA: Sam . . .

SAM: Clancy would do the same for me. We were like brothers. He knew I made out like a bandit with an aggressive investment portfolio.

AMANDA: Then why do you really need to work?

SAM: What do you mean?

AMANDA: How wealthy are you?

SAM: How wealthy are we?

AMANDA: Yes.

SAM: I didn't put a prenup under your nose.

AMANDA: Your mother joked that you would.

SAM: My Brazilian mother's a creature from a demented *telenovela*. South American women are operatic when angry.

(Pause)

We will never be in need.

AMANDA: How fortunate to never be in need.

(Kissing again like love birds in flight)

Aren't you cold?

SAM: No.

AMANDA: I am.

SAM: It's not chilly, Amanda.

AMANDA: Look at the thermostat. Below 20. Celsius. Who invented Celsius?

SAM: A Swede. Anders Celsius. What do I win by answering correctly?

AMANDA: You can remove my dress.

SAM: I love this slinky black thing.

AMANDA: It's a Nicole Miller.

SAM: She designed it for you?

AMANDA: Fuck no.

SAM: Certainly looks like she did. You know Miller.

AMANDA: I never met her.

SAM: I thought you said you had.

AMANDA: My sister . . . not me.

SAM: I met her. In Paris. During the Yellow Jacket riots one Saturday in November.

SAM: Turn off the air conditioner, darling.

AMANDA: But you like it cool.

SAM: Do I?

AMANDA: When we make love . . .

SAM: Oh. . .

AMANDA: Otherwise your sweat produces an odd odor.

SAM: Odd?

AMANDA: A good odor, Sam. But peculiar none the less. The science of pheromones goes both ways. Attracting the opposite sex, repelling the opposite sex.

SAM: This isn't great foreplay, Amanda.

AMANDA: You think I don't know you well?

SAM: You know me very well.

AMANDA: Kiss, kiss.

SAM: Kiss, kiss.

(And now after saying the words like a game, they do kiss passionately)

AMANDA: Evergreen.

SAM: Mountain cool.

AMANDA: A hundred years ago there were many aphrodisiacs.

SAM: Really?

AMANDA: I read that in *Elle* magazine.

SAM: A very fine magazine.

AMANDA: Or was it Oprah's magazine? Today there are less than a dozen effective aphrodisiacs.

SAM: I blame the FDA.

AMANDA: Of course you would.

SAM: I thought you gave up on women magazines?

AMANDA: I love women magazines that are glossy. I loathe online editions. I love Oprah. I loathe Martha Stewart.

SAM: I met Martha Stewart after she left prison.

AMANDA: Was she really in prison?

SAM: Yes. Insider trading.

AMANDA: Martha Stewart? Why did you meet her?

SAM: I don't know why. At a hotel ballroom reception.

AMANDA: Where?

SAM: Where? Overseas. France.

AMANDA: In Paris?

SAM: Yes. In Paris. 5th arrondissement.

AMANDA: Paris. Always Paris. Everyone's choice for the perfect city. I didn't like my first wedding night. In Paris . Île Saint-Louis. Didn't like my first marriage.

SAM: Nor did I. On Maui.

AMANDA: Hawaii, Sam, is where we should be right now.

SAM: You're serious?

AMANDA: I am. But we are here and I accept Sweden's charm.

SAM: Good.

AMANDA: You became a widower under a dozen years. And you entered the witness protection program in half that time.

SAM: That's very funny.

AMANDA: Is it?

SAM: Time can't be measured like inches and miles. My ex's ghost won't hunt us down. You know that as fact.

(He strokes her hair)

I grew to become a romantic. I wasn't born one

AMANDA: In flannel pajamas, you're a romantic.

SAM: Like you, I was too young to get married.

AMANDA: But that didn't stop you.

SAM: No, there were preternatural forces at work.

AMANDA: Preternatural?

SAM: Am I using the word incorrectly?

AMANDA: I think you are. You probably mean paranormal.

SAM: Okay.

AMANDA; And she proposed.

SAM: Yes, Linda proposed, like a charging bison.

AMANDA: Idiot.

SAM: Me or Linda?

AMANDA: You're not an idiot, darling.

SAM: Every birthday I think I am.

AMANDA: That gives you most of the year to enjoy self-esteem. Linda was the classic idiot.

SAM: She was infinitely rich. And I benefited by her death. Not as most people imagined and most of her estate circumvented me as declared in her will.

AMANDA: You're an honest man, Sam. I hated my first wedding as much as going to the prom.

SAM: I know.

AMANDA: Hotel Pierre in Manhattan. Hated my honeymoon.

SAM: You told me.

AMANDA: There is nothing good about the photos from our honeymoon. (Silence) Hated having a family with him.

SAM: But things are different now.

AMANDA: Things are different. Yes. And I love my daughter.

SAM: I love you, Amanda.

AMANDA: I know.

SAM: Love you more than life itself.

AMANDA: Kiss, kiss.

SAM: Kiss, kiss.  
(Another sustained caring kiss)

AMANDA: The joke . . .

SAM: We share it . . .

AMANDA: Something wet . . . Sam . . .  
(He comes in for a very sustained, tight body grope)

SAM: Okay.

AMANDA: Don't stop.

SAM: I can't stop.

AMANDA: Don't talk.

SAM: I love to talk. Silence kills me.

AMANDA: Do you need another drink?

SAM: Yes.

(He kisses her again and forces her to the wall. She likes it like an old 40s movie)

AMANDA: Good.

SAM: Good?

AMANDA: Yes.

SAM: Tomorrow.

AMANDA: All week.

SAM: All night.

AMANDA: Not long enough.

SAM: Why did you tell me you would quit your job?

AMANDA: Because I don't like my profession and you have tons of money.

SAM: I told you that?

AMANDA: Your mother did. May I call her Antônia?

SAM: Call her anything but by her given name. And she would never say shit like that.

AMANDA: You don't know her well, Sam.

SAM: My mother never talks about money.

AMANDA: Your friends have told me too.

SAM: My friends?

AMANDA: (Sweetly) A mountain of money.

SAM: Does money matter?

AMANDA: Of course not. Honeymoons are a creation of hotels to survive after the Great Depression. Did you know that, Sam?

SAM: No. I didn't know that.

AMANDA: Did you know that Viagra was named after Niagara Falls?

SAM: That's so wonderfully funny, darling.

AMANDA: I heard that on a podcast. Viagra has two "A"s and Niagara has three.

SAM: Maharajah has four "A"s.

AMANDA: You're my Hindu prince.

SAM: I'll never be your prince.

AMANDA: Did you know the Marilyn Monroe film *Niagara*?

SAM: No, I don't.

AMANDA: It was so much my personal story, Sam.

SAM: Should I order room service?

AMANDA: More champagne and caviar.

SAM: You love caviar.

AMANDA: I love champagne.

SAM: Niagara Falls straddles Canada and the U.S.

AMANDA: Straddling is a very erotic word.

SAM: Is it?

AMANDA: 1953 was Marilyn's breakout year.

SAM: I wouldn't know.

AMANDA: What do you know?

SAM: We're too old for birth control.

AMANDA: Why would you bring up birth control?

SAM: Most women can't conceive in the mid 40s.

AMANDA: But you want to play roulette?

SAM: Gambling is a gamble.

AMANDA: I wish I could just read your mind.

(Pause)

You don't like podcasts, do you?

SAM: That's such funny question, Amanda.

AMANDA: Why did we elope?

SAM: You said no public wedding. No Hotel Pierre. No Waldorf-Astoria.

AMANDA: I never said that.

SAM: You said it a moment ago. You texted me a million times about this.

AMANDA: We could have secured a yacht and invited a dozen decadent couples.

SAM: Yachts are so unsafe.

AMANDA: I said no large conventional family wedding. That didn't preempt a beautiful yacht and open blue seas.

SAM: Do you want to get married formally? In a large traditional ceremony and the U.S. Navy watching?

AMANDA: With you in a white tux?

SAM: With me in a starched white tux.

AMANDA: Yes.

SAM: A \$100,000 public wedding. With a bright notice in the Sunday New York Times.

AMANDA: Yes. And my Uncle Horace would write the piece in elegant prose.