

**A**  
***SHELTERED***  
***LIFE***  
**BOOK ONE**

CHARLOTTE D. HUNT



## A SHELTERED LIFE

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# ***CHAPTER 1***

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*(Present Day)*

*Seven months before the Presidential Election*

It was a gray and rainy day in April when she first knocked on the door of the Caldwell Counseling Center.

She hated the idea of having to ask anyone for help, especially a stranger. However, she had little choice in the matter. If she had any chance to seek the nation's highest office, she had to face her worst fear and make a choice that might cost her everything.

Three months ago, a young female volunteer regretfully admitted she did not complete a task correctly during a campaign meeting.

In anger, the presidential hopeful called the volunteer "Lazy" and stated she lacked the drive to succeed. Then, after shaming and embarrassing the volunteer, she fired her from the campaign.

However, as weeks passed, more volunteers and staff who made minor mistakes or tried to assist the candidate were fired or verbally assaulted.

Once she dismissed the seventh volunteer, her executive staff gave her the choice of seeking help, or they would walk away from her campaign. Although she believed her team overreacted, she decided to see a therapist to prevent them from leaving.

Fifty-six year old, Senator Rachel Evans was determined to be the first female African-American president of the United States. If the cost were a few sessions of venting and hearing feedback from a therapist, she would pay it to make her staff happy.

Vulnerability and tears were for weaker people in her

mind. Besides, Rachel did not have a problem. The problem was other people who did not understand or think the way she did. Thus, Rachel was a victim of other people's failure.

Rachel hated the idea of talking to a stranger about her personal life and pouring out her guts with a person who could use it against her.

For her, seeing a counselor was a necessary process to accomplish a goal. However, it was not something *she* needed personally. After all, Rachel believed African-American people never went to therapy anyway. A strong person knew how to handle their problems.

The Caldwell Counseling Center was ranked one of the best in the country and specialized in high-profile clients. It was known for its discrete work with those wanting to deal with issues hidden from public view. Clients came worldwide to work with Dr. Samantha Caldwell and her innovative techniques and compassionate demeanor.

Samantha was one of the best clinical psychologists in

the business. She was known for her unusual hands-on methods of treatment and passion toward her patients.

She read people like a book and cut to the heart of an issue by asking direct questions that allowed the client to see themselves through a more transparent lens. She helped her patients see past a blurred mirror of pain to a more accurate reflection of their potential.

Samantha was a no-nonsense psychologist who had unusual compassion for her clients, considering the drama that followed most of their lives.

She could listen for extended periods and then profoundly calculate the client's innermost thoughts within a few words. Although she was patient and long-suffering, Samantha could be blunt when needed to help her patients take the next step.

She was a wise counselor who could see past a client's weaknesses to see their possibilities. Samantha's coworkers often referred to her as "A Rose among Thorns" because of her



ability to see the positive in situations above patient's crisis.

Samantha, or "Sam," as her friends called her, was a thirty-eight-year-old clinical psychologist who specialized in childhood trauma and personality disorders for the last eight years. She set up her practice six years ago to focus on celebrity and high-profile political clients.

Although Samantha was a brilliant psychologist, she was keenly aware of her troubled past and how fragments continued to impact areas of her life. That was why she relied heavily on her mentor, Kevin Lakewood, to supply a mirror into her life.

Samantha's work was the passion that drove her life. But, unfortunately, her work left little time for a family or social life, and her marriage failed five years earlier due to her career and her husband's wandering eye.

Her marriage had little chance from the beginning due to her long hours and his constant work trips out of town. In addition, Samantha knew her insecurities from the past added to the problems in their union. Despite the effort, their relationship

grew apart as their work schedules took precedence.

Although her marriage lasted four years, Samantha never made time to have children. Her fears of motherhood and career prevented children from being a priority. However, she was hopeful of a new life and having children with her fiancé of eight months, Michael Hawthorn.

Despite their four-year age gap, she was deeply in love with Michael and believed he would make a wonderful husband and father.

Samantha was not used to dating someone younger but saw great potential in Michael. He was intelligent, charming, and a gentleman. Unlike her ex-husband, Samantha felt secure in Michael's attention and affection.

She learned from her failed marriage to balance her work and life, so Samantha only took clients who were ready to change their lives to get better, not just feel better.

She was selective about the high-profile patients she worked with and how much time she gave them to move toward

change. Finally, Samantha was getting older, and it was time to focus on having the family she always wanted.

Although Samantha had a three-month client waiting list, a personal friend and member of Rachel Evan's executive staff asked her to take on a unique client that would possibly become the nation's next president. So, despite Samantha's reservations, she decided to work with the new client for the nation's sake.

She was aware of Senator Evans from the news media, television commercials, and political gossip but did not know much about her background or life. Samantha heard of the recent death in the senator's family and wondered how that would impact the upcoming election.

Samantha had questions. Something was off about her client in the unnatural way she behaved in front of the camera. Her client had a dark secret. Little did Samantha know that taking on Senator Rachel Evans would not only alter the nation's history but ultimately save her life.