

# SUBSTITUTE BRIDE: UTTERLY PAMPERED BY HER BILLIONAIRE HUSBAND

## Chapter 1: Stand-In Bride for a Fortunate Marriage

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In the fall of 2015, Serena Sterling sat on a train traveling from the countryside to Bayside.

When she was nine years old, she was sent away to the countryside, and only today was she brought back for one reason: the Sterling family wanted to marry their daughter off to The Elysian Manor to ward off disaster.

It's said that the groom at The Elysian Manor is already gravely ill. The Sterling family has two daughters, neither willing to marry, so they brought her back from the countryside to wed in her place.

Serena Sterling sat on the sleeper bed, holding a book in her hand. Suddenly, the door was pushed open, and an icy gust of wind accompanied by a sweet, metallic scent of blood rushed in.

Serena looked up to see a tall, handsome figure collapse from outside.

He had fallen unconscious.

Quickly, several men in black barged in. "Boss, no one's around now, let's send him to the underworld."

"Who said no one's here?"

The scar-faced man leading them looked at Serena Sterling.

Serena hadn't expected sudden danger to arrive. The man who collapsed into her cabin brought deadly peril. The scar-faced man's eyes were filled with intent to kill, clearly aiming to eliminate witnesses.

Without a trace of panic, Serena glanced at their weapons, then quickly feigned panic and pleaded, "Don't harm me, I didn't see anything."

The scar-faced man stepped forward, eyeing Serena's face. A veil covered her true features, but a pair of captivating bright eyes peeked through.

Those eyes were exceptionally clear, moving like dancing lights.

The scar-faced man had never seen such striking eyes. Instantly captivated, having not been with a woman for days, he let lust take over.

"Little beauty, we can spare you, but you have to satisfy my men."

Serena's long lashes quivered as she pitifully said, "I don't want to die, I'm so scared. As long as you don't hurt me, I'll serve you well."

The girl's soft pleas were more than the scar-faced man could resist. He lunged, pinning Serena beneath him.

"Boss, you go first, and we'll send him off, then have some fun ourselves."

Amidst sleazy laughter and the scent of a woman's warmth, the scar-faced man laid down his weapon and reached to unbutton Serena's clothes.

But in the next second, a slender, fair hand grasped his.

The scar-faced man looked up, directly meeting the girl's captivating eyes. Not a trace of panic remained, they glittered fiercely and coldly.

"You!"

He tried to speak, but Serena swiftly and deftly pierced a silver needle into the scar-faced man's head.

The scar-faced man closed his eyes, collapsing directly to the ground.

"Boss!"

The men in black were startled, wanting to advance, but the man who had fallen on the ground suddenly opened his eyes, reaching out to seize the weapon from one of them.

One by one, the men in black fell to the ground.

It happened with lightning speed.

Serena sat up, having known all along this man was pretending to be unconscious, and the blood on him was someone else's.

Serena looked up at the man, who was also watching her. He had extremely deep, narrow eyes, sharp as a hawk's, each eye holding a small abyss, ready to draw anyone looking into them.

"Young master, we were late."

The rescuers arrived, systematically beginning to clean up, and a close subordinate handed the man a clean handkerchief.

The man elegantly wiped his hands, then walked steadily to Serena, his defined fingers pinching her delicate chin.

He assessed her with narrowed eyes, voice low and magnetic, "How do you think I'll deal with you?"

With her chin caught by his calloused fingers, Serena had to look up at him. He was tall and upright, extraordinarily handsome, with an aura as imposing and cold as the night.

Even though he had wiped his hands, she still sensed that sweet metallic scent and icy brutality.

Seeing something she shouldn't have, it would be hard to walk away unscathed.

This man was incredibly dangerous.

Slap!

Serena slapped away his hand, speaking solemnly, "Presumptuous, I am the bride-to-be of The Elysian Manor!"

The bride-to-be of The Elysian Manor?

The man raised a brow, intrigued. His...bride?

"Are you from Bayside? Then you should know that the Sterling family's daughter is to marry into The Elysian Manor. This wedding is the talk of the town, and I am that bride. If anything happens to me, do you think you'll face even bigger trouble? Let me go, I saw nothing, and I won't say a word!"

Serena now truly felt like thanking her stepmother Lillian Sterling; Lillian brought her back to Bayside, only letting her take a cheap train. But this wedding was lavish and extravagant to build her good reputation.

The Sterling family's daughter marrying into The Elysian Manor was Bayside's biggest gossip, and Serena was betting that this man didn't want trouble.

The man looked at her with interest. Today, he had been ambushed by business rivals, and meeting this girl was an accident.

She seemed no more than 20 years old, her face pale, clothes disheveled, but her bright eyes were clear and intelligent, sparkling brilliantly.

The key part was, she was his bride.

The man withdrew his gaze and led his men away.

Serena's tightly clenched fingers slowly relaxed.

At that moment, the man ahead glanced back at her, mouthing words she could understand, "We'll meet very soon."

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The Elysian Manor, today was the wedding of the Sterling family held here.

In the bride's lounge, Vanessa looked at her half-sister Serena Sterling.  
"Serena, you lost your mother when you were nine, and then pushed grandpa down the stairs. Even fortune tellers said you were a jinx, so dad sent you to the countryside. If it weren't for needing you back to ward off disaster, you wouldn't have come back for life. Know your place, you're not the Sterling family's cherished daughter, you're just a dog the Sterling family keeps!"

Serena sat at the dressing table, speaking calmly, "Which dog is barking now?"

Vanessa put her hands on her hips, "It's barking at you!"

Serena smiled, "I see, so you don't need to bark anymore."

Vanessa realized Serena had talked circles around her. She looked at Serena's clear, bright eyes; all along, Serena had worn a veil, revealing just those eyes, which at a glance made one feel she was a stunning beauty.

Vanessa felt extremely jealous, wishing she could gouge out Serena's captivating eyes. How could this country bumpkin from the countryside be a beauty? It must be a trick, she's clearly an ugly girl!

"Serena, it's time, let's go!" Gregory and Lillian Sterling entered with a group of distinguished guests.