

## **Substitute B 106**

Chapter 106: Placing Her Small Hand in His Palm

Serena Sterling said Hayden Crawford is my lawful husband.

Piper Pace was startled and jumped up from her chair, looking at Serena Sterling in disbelief; what was she saying?

The director on the other end, Vincent Terry, wasn't surprised. Medical researchers aren't usually interested in personal scandals, "Haha, good! I never expected Mr. Crawford of The Crawford Group to have such an eye for things. But Serena, don't get too caught up in romantic affairs. We're here to achieve great things; relationships with men are just entertainment, they're all external."

Piper, "..."

Serena Sterling handed the phone to the stunned Piper Pace. The director returned to his usual stern and authoritative demeanor, changing expressions faster than flipping a book, "Director Pace, I'm leaving all the messy stuff at the institute for you to deal with. Don't let anyone disturb Serena Sterling, okay?"

"Director, I... I understand."

Piper hung up the phone, unable to come back to her senses—one shocking news after another; she needed time to digest it all.

Piper took another good look at Serena Sterling, not understanding what sort of magic this girl had to receive such affection and admiration from the director. She was even more puzzled about the relationship between Serena Sterling and Hayden Crawford.

"Serena Sterling, you say Hayden Crawford is your lawful husband, so what's going on with the person at Orchid Court?" Piper felt her mind wasn't processing.

Serena Sterling's bright eyes looked at Piper Pace, "Director Pace, actually it's simple. Everyone in Bayside knows I married into Orchid Court, but none of you know, the owner of Orchid Court is Hayden Crawford!"

Oh my!

Piper was shocked; so the sickly ghost husband at Orchid Court is... Hayden Crawford?

"Serena Sterling, all of this is too sudden for me. I can't just take your word for it. Since you claim Mr. Crawford is your lawful husband, then please have Mr. Crawford come to the institute. I need to hear it from him in person."

"Alright."

Serena Sterling took out her phone and dialed Hayden Crawford's number.

The phone on the other end rang once, then it was leisurely answered, Hayden Crawford's deep, magnetic voice resonated, "Miss me so soon?"

Serena Sterling briefly curled her red lips but quickly smoothed them, saying seriously, "Mr. Crawford, are you free now? Director Pace would like you to come to the institute."

"Why, is Mrs. Crawford finally giving me recognition?"

"..."

The forum event at the institute stirred quite a commotion; he surely knew but still gave her enough freedom and space to handle it on her own.

"Mr. Crawford, are you coming or not?"

"Just wait, I'll be there soon."

...

The office corridor was already surrounded by onlookers eagerly waiting to see Director Pace's decision, wondering if Serena Sterling would be thrown out.

Yasmine Sterling was also waiting outside, full of confidence that this time Serena Sterling wouldn't escape being kicked out.

Word was the feud had paused, and Serena Sterling had called Mr. Crawford to support her.

No way, would Mr. Crawford really come?

Yasmine, do you think Mr. Crawford will come?

Everyone crowded around Yasmine Sterling.

Yasmine Sterling smiled softly, "Now that Serena is caught in a scandal, right at the peak of the storm, I don't think Mr. Crawford will come. Sometimes men might go after novelty and fall for temptation, but once they regain their senses, they'll quickly cut the abnormal ties, and some people will return to their original selves."

Yasmine was indirectly implying to these people that Serena Sterling seduced Hayden Crawford, which was indeed what she believed. Otherwise, she couldn't understand how Serena Sterling got together with Hayden Crawford.

The onlookers nodded in agreement,

Our Mr. Crawford is a powerful business magnate in Bayside, controlling the skies and seas with a flick of the wrist. How could he come and go at Serena Sterling's call? Mr. Crawford definitely won't come!

Serena Sterling seems to have quite the means to seduce Mr. Crawford.

When Serena Sterling gets kicked out, it will probably be the day Mr. Crawford abandons her...

Listening to the agreement among the crowd, Yasmine Sterling smiled smugly.

Then, someone suddenly looked at Yasmine Sterling with a rather odd expression, "Yasmine, look..."

Yasmine Sterling, "What's the matter?"

"Mr. Crawford...Mr. Crawford is here!"

What?

Yasmine's heart skipped a beat, she quickly turned around, only to see a world-class luxury car, the Rolls-Royce Phantom, smoothly driving into the institute, imposing and domineering in everyone's view. Then the driver's seat door opened and a tall, handsome figure stepped out.

Hayden Crawford had arrived.

Today, Hayden Crawford wore a handmade black suit, handsome and exceptional, exuding an extraordinary demeanor. Standing at six-foot-two, he was a stunning sight, not to mention the elite aura soaring through high society and the business world emanating from his presence, making him the king of the scene.

Countless eyes fell on him simultaneously, with exclamations of admiration, amazement, reverence, and even fear... all sorts of emotions.

Yasmine Sterling's pupils contracted; she absolutely didn't expect Hayden Crawford to come.

He came for Serena Sterling!

Hayden Crawford closed the car door, walked forward holding the car keys in one hand. His gaze focused somewhere, reaching out his hand, "Come here."

Everyone turned their heads, finding Serena Sterling standing by the door.

The crowd automatically parted, leaving a path. Serena Sterling walked forward, raising her dark eyes to look at Hayden Crawford's handsome face, her small hand reaching for his, as she jumped into his arms, clearly meaning "Catch your little darling now."

Hayden Crawford held her soft, supple hand, gently squeezing it, then led her into Piper Pace's office with long strides.

The atmosphere was so quiet you couldn't hear a single breath; what just happened? Was this showing affection? Were they unexpectedly fed a mouthful of PDA?

Yasmine Sterling felt as though a cold bucket of water poured down on her, chilling her to the core. Hayden Crawford actually came!

Why?

Why?

What went wrong, how did Serena Sterling hook up with Hayden Crawford, when Yasmine couldn't even find a clue or trace to follow?

How did Hayden Crawford become so captivated by Serena Sterling?

...

Hayden Crawford's arrival explained it all; Piper Pace sent everyone off politely. The onlookers were eager for some intel, "Director Pace, this Serena Sterling is too amazing..."

"Get going, go back to your posts. If you've got what it takes, you go seduce Hayden Crawford; next time the amazing one might be you!" Piper Pace said sharply.

The crowd, "..."

Yasmine Sterling's face turned a little pale, she weakly called out, "Director Pace..."

Piper Pace actually favored Yasmine Sterling. She recalled that the Sterling family originally intended for a daughter not Serena Sterling to marry into Orchid Court to counter some bad luck. If there hadn't been a substitution, Yasmine would've been the one to marry in.

Yasmine Sterling didn't realize she was so close, nearly missed being Mrs. Crawford.