

Substitute B 147

Chapter 147: He Won't Be Coming Back Tonight

It's really a simple matter, Serena Sterling doesn't understand why everyone reacted so strongly.

The old lady was momentarily stunned, but quickly accepted it; this matter was unexpected, but after thinking it through, it was actually quite reasonable. How could Seraphina Linden's daughter be ordinary?

The old lady fondly patted Serena Sterling's little hand, "Serena, you've truly surprised your grandma. Are there any other things you're hiding from me?"

Serena Sterling stuck her tongue out, a bit aggrieved, and coquettishly said, "Grandma, I don't know exactly what you want to hear. I'm really not familiar with my aunt, and I haven't studied at The St. Lyra Academy, so there's nothing much to talk about. As for some other things and people, I feel there's no need to mention them."

After saying this, the old lady understood that she must indeed have some other matters which might be secrets in other people's eyes, but for this blessed girl, perhaps like Iris, there's no need to mention them.

The old lady suddenly realized the radiance exuding from this girl, Serena Sterling, Seraphina Linden's daughter, was like a shining pearl, glowing from a very young age.

The old lady held Serena's little hand tightly, praising her endlessly, "Oh my, a 15-year-old postdoctoral researcher! No wonder Iris said you've set a new historical record in the medical world. My Iris has very high standards; you must be the first girl she's ever admired."

While saying this, the old lady looked at Hayden Crawford and teasingly said, "Hayden, you lucked out! Serena is so brilliant, you must be doubly good to her in the future."

Serena Sterling looked up at Hayden Crawford, who was standing tall in the living room, casually unbuttoning the silver cuff on his shirt sleeve. Upon hearing the conversation, he looked up, his deep, narrow eyes falling on her.

Their eyes met, but Hayden Crawford quickly shifted his gaze away, "Grandma, I'm going to the study to handle some paperwork."

Hayden Crawford strode upstairs.

Watching his towering figure disappear from her view, Serena murmured with a lowered head, "Grandma, I'll go upstairs too."

"Alright, go ahead, take a shower and come down for dinner. Beryl has prepared all your favorite dishes today," the old lady said lovingly.

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In the study.

Hayden Crawford was sitting in a chair, holding a cigarette between his slender fingers, smoking. Documents were scattered across the desk, but he wasn't reviewing them, instead opting to appease himself with the clouds of smoke, his expression weary.

Soon, a layer of cigarette butts covered the ashtray. Hayden Crawford rose and went to the bedroom door.

He placed his large hand on the door handle, intending to push the door open, but suddenly halted his movement, standing silently outside the door for a moment, then taking his coat and leaving.

The old lady in the living room quickly stopped him, "Hayden, where are you going so late?"

Hayden Crawford lowered his handsome eyelids, his deep and magnetic voice devoid of emotional change, "There's an urgent matter at the company I need to handle, Grandma, I won't be coming back tonight."

"You don't need to tell me that you won't be coming back tonight. Did you tell Serena?"

Hayden Crawford pressed his lips together, remaining silent.

"Is Zane interested in Serena?" The old lady was astute, immediately spotting the nuances between the two and could easily surmise.

Hayden Crawford glanced at the old lady, "Not sure, most likely."

"Zane is proud, renowned as a talented scholar. Now, thinking about it, Serena is indeed his type. It's perfectly normal for him to fancy Serena," the old lady said.

Hayden Crawford took the car keys, unwilling to discuss the topic further, "Grandma, I'm heading to the company."

"Hayden," the old lady called out, "Serena is a good girl, don't leave her alone like this. Love and marriage require mutual effort. Serena has never resented your illness; on the contrary, she's been striving for your sake, trying to make you better. With Serena like this, why do you hesitate? If you miss Serena, you won't meet another girl like her. One of life's greatest fears is missing out."

Hayden Crawford stood at the door, not turning back, standing there for a long while. The retro hallway lantern elongated his silhouette, casting an inexplicable shadow of solitude.

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Hayden Crawford left after all. The old lady remained seated on the sofa in the living room, Butler Felix softly remarking, "Old Lady, the current situation is quite tricky. The Young Mistress is too exceptional. If her background is revealed and the Crawford family finds out the Young Mistress is Zane's fiancée, I sense many will join the scene to compete for the Young Mistress."

The old lady held Ronda, trimming her soft fur, and hummed softly, "Don't worry, as long as I'm here, there won't be chaos, but..."

The old lady held Ronda in her lap, almost muttering to herself, "Their marriage is theirs alone, as long as they don't let go, no one can tear them apart. But if they themselves let go, no one can save them."

Butler Felix seemed to understand partially. Just then, Serena Sterling opened the room door and came downstairs.

Meow~

Seeing her owner, Ronda quickly jumped down from the old lady's embrace and ran to Serena's feet, meowing sweetly.

Serena Sterling crouched down to pick Ronda up, her lips curling into a smile, "Ronda, did you miss me?"

Meow~

The old lady laughed, "Serena, are you hungry? Come on, let's have dinner."

Serena Sterling had just showered, her clear, long black hair carrying a hint of damp mist hanging over her shoulders. Without her veil, her small exquisite face was clean and bright.

"Grandma," Serena called to the old lady, her bright eyes glancing towards the study upstairs, "Should we wait a bit longer? Mr. Crawford... hasn't come down yet."

"Hayden just left, said there's some urgent matter at the company he needs to handle, he also said he won't be back tonight."

What?

Serena Sterling's long feathers trembled; she didn't know he had gone out, she didn't know he wouldn't be home tonight, and he hadn't told her a word. He had never spent a night away from home before.

Serena held Ronda in her arms, her head lowered, feeling aggrieved. What exactly was he upset about, or was he still suspicious of her and Zane Crawford?

Nothing has happened between her and Zane Crawford.

At this point, the old lady came over, gently caressing Serena's little head, "Serena, love is easy to find but hard to maintain. Marriage requires adaptation; Hayden is a very solitary person, only I've been by his side all these years. Do you know what he needs most? That's...security."

"Tonight, you were too dazzling, making him feel insecure. He wants to hold you tightly in his hand, but he fears...squeezing you too hard."