

## Substitute B 217

### Chapter 217: Serena Sterling's Origins—Stolen Genes

Serena Sterling couldn't understand what her grandfather was saying. She tightly held her grandfather's aged hand, tears glistening in her eyes as she lay by the bed, "Grandpa, do you not remember me?"

Mr. Sterling affectionately reached out and patted Serena's little head, "Serena, in the blink of an eye, you've grown so much. You were just a tiny thing before, but now you've grown up."

"Yes, Grandpa, I've grown up. You slept for such a long time."

"Since you have grown up, there are things you need to know. Actually, your mom was my eldest lady, and you're my little lady."

Serena was taken aback, "Grandpa, what are you talking about? I don't understand."

"Serena, actually, I was your mom's steward. To hide your mom's identity, I had your mom falsely marry my son, Gregory. You're not Gregory's daughter at all!"

It was the first time Serena heard about her true background, and she was stunned. She wasn't Gregory Sterling's daughter?

"Grandpa, then who is my dad?"

Mr. Sterling reminisced for a moment, "I'm not sure about that. I only know that the young lady wanted a daughter to play with after having her fun. She mentioned her best friend's child was already grown up, and she couldn't delay much longer. Shortly after saying that, she got pregnant."

Mr. Sterling had been in a vegetative state for more than a decade and couldn't recall the name of the young lady's best friend.

"..."

Serena was thunderstruck, so her mom had her simply because she wanted a daughter to play with?

"But rest assured, my little lady, the genes chosen by the young lady must be exceptional. Your dad must be a powerful man."

Suddenly, Serena felt that her grandfather's tone was very similar to Aunt Jacqueline's; both were quite arrogant.

"Grandpa, are you suggesting that... Mom had a one-night stand with Dad, and she... stole his genes?"

Mr. Sterling coughed. He would not allow anyone to speak ill of his young lady, "How could it be stealing? That was an honor. The young lady chose your dad and graced him for a night, giving him a daughter like you. I think that's enough for him to brag about for a lifetime."

Serena was speechless, "Grandpa, how did Mom really die? Was it Lillian Sterling and Yasmine who did something, were they the ones who pushed you down the stairs?"

"I was indeed pushed by them, but Serena, they couldn't get close to the young lady; they weren't her match. Her death has nothing to do with them."

This was beyond Serena's expectations. She had thought her mom's death was related to Lillian and Yasmine, but hearing her grandfather's tone, her mom didn't even see that mother-daughter pair as a threat.

"Grandpa, then how exactly did my mom die?"

Mr. Sterling hesitated for a moment, "My little lady, rather than saying the young lady died, it's better to say she just disappeared."

Serena's mind buzzed with disbelief, "Grandpa, are you saying my mom didn't die?"

Mr. Sterling nodded, showing blind admiration, "That's what I believe. Someone as brilliant as the young lady, unless she wanted to die herself, even the King of Hell couldn't take her away. But I don't know the specifics. The incident happened too suddenly, and then I was pushed down by Lillian and Yasmine. Now you're all grown up, and there are no clues left."

Although there were no clues, Serena was filled with excitement because there was a possibility her mom might not have died!

"Grandpa, I want to find Mom."

Mr. Sterling patted Serena's little head again, "Then go to Aethelgard. That's where you'll find traces of your mom."

Aethelgard, hmm?

Serena nodded vigorously, "Yes, Grandpa, once you get better, I'll take you to the City of Aethelgard."

Mr. Sterling shook his head lovingly, a pair of cloudy eyes accepting the end, "Serena, where's Gregory, has he come?"

"I've already called him. He should be here soon."

Just as Serena finished speaking, the door to the hospital room swung open, and Gregory Sterling hurried in.

"Dad, my dear father, you've finally awakened. I missed you so much!" Gregory quickly collapsed by the bed, holding Mr. Sterling's hand, crying both joyfully and excitedly.

Serena was pushed aside. In contrast to Gregory, she felt like an unfilial granddaughter, given her calm reaction when her grandfather awoke.

However, Gregory was indeed dutiful. When Mr. Sterling was the head of the household, Gregory was a rich second-generation heir, never lacking in anything as the Sterling family prospered.

After Mr. Sterling became a vegetative state suddenly, Gregory was forced to mature, continuously relying on others. First, his wife supported him, then his daughter Yasmine, and later Serena, his most troublesome daughter, returning from the countryside. His life was like a roller coaster, fully experiencing the warmth and coldness of human relationships. Now seeing his father, he still felt his dad treated him best.

Seeing Gregory, Mr. Sterling was exasperated, and he raised his hand to hit him twice, "Worthless thing, how could someone like me, the steward to the young lady, raise such a fool!"

"Dad, don't hit me, Serena! You secretly brought Mr. Sterling here without telling me, and I haven't settled accounts with you yet." Gregory looked at Serena.

Serena curled her lips, "Gregory, Grandpa is right. You are hopelessly foolish. If I didn't bring Grandpa away, were we supposed to wait for Lillian and Yasmine to plan and push Grandpa a second time?"

"What?" Gregory was stunned, his face changing drastically, "Serena, wasn't it you who pushed Mr. Sterling down the stairs over a decade ago? How can you now accuse Lillian and her daughter? I would never believe they pushed Mr. Sterling."

Serena really didn't want to waste words with Gregory, "You can ask Grandpa yourself."

"Dad, what is going on here?" Gregory asked.

Mr. Sterling wanted to speak, but at that moment, he suddenly coughed up blood.

"Dad!" Gregory was terrified.

Serena's pupils shrank. She quickly ran up to feel Mr. Sterling's pulse. He was poisoned and wouldn't make it.

"Grandpa, don't be afraid, it's all right. I'll give you a needle now!" Serena reached for her needle. Her delicate, white fingers were cold and trembling.

Mr. Sterling held Serena's hand, weakly shaking his head, "My little lady, no need to struggle. I'm leaving. I failed in my duty, not being there as you grew up. But seeing how well you've turned out, with your eyes looking so much like the young lady's spirit, I feel comforted."