

Substitute B 242

Chapter 242: Raised Her with His Own Hands

Hayden Crawford's tall and handsome figure stiffened, his ears filled with the girl's soft and sweet voice. She said, "Mr. Crawford, let's go on a five-day honeymoon trip."

It was like a feather gently brushed across his heart, causing ripples to spread. Her slender wrist was still in his palm, her skin smooth as silk, as soft as a boneless doll, just like the champagne-colored slip dress hidden between the sheets. After a long time, he spoke hoarsely, "Have you... found something out?"

His nature was vigilant; he had long sensed her abnormality.

Serena nodded. "Yes, I've found out everything I need to know."

Hayden's narrow eyes were like ink being splashed, harboring a turbulent storm within, unpredictable. He quickly gritted his teeth, his voice fierce and cold, "Who told you? I'll go find them!"

He released her and was about to leave.

"Hayden!" Serena called out from behind him, "Go ahead, leave, and you'll never see me again!"

Hayden halted, then turned around, crashing into her reddened eyes. Her bright eyes were already steaming with a layer of glittering mist.

She was about to cry.

Hayden strode over, grabbing her slender arm and pulling her forcefully into his embrace. His handsome face buried in her long hair, he greedily took in the scent of her, his voice low and obscure, "Serena, I wish you

knew nothing. I've used all my strength to push you away, you should be in the City of Aethelgard, you should be detoxifying."

Serena lowered her long eyelashes, burying her tear-streaked face in his neck, wrapping her small hands around his fit waist, "I want to leave too. But, Mr. Crawford, I can't bear to part with you."

Hayden tightened his strong arms, almost wishing to meld her into his bone and flesh, "Serena, don't linger on me anymore. Don't let me see that you still love me, or else I'll be driven mad."

With that, Hayden forced himself to let go of her. He took her small hand in his palm and started dragging her forward, "Come on, let's go back to Bayside, to the airport, I'll put you on a plane and send you away."

His steps were large, and Serena stumbled and staggered following behind him. Her vision blurred by tears, she looked at his cold, hard, white side profile, sobbing softly, "If I leave, what about you? How many sleeping pills will you take this time?"

Hayden pressed his thin lips, "I already have a sickness, it's unrelated to you. Don't waste your time on me anymore."

"Oh." Serena nodded, her delicate nose turning red, her voice choked, "Give me five days, just five days, please. I promise after that I'll fly straight to the City of Aethelgard, and from then on, your life will have nothing to do with me. I won't come to find you again, and you'll never see me again, just five days, Mr. Crawford, do you want this honeymoon trip or not?"

Hayden's steps slowly halting, unable to move them anymore, he turned to look at the girl's tear-filled little face.

He had already exhausted all his strength and self-control to push her away, but she was softly insisting on a honeymoon trip with him, and all the barriers in his heart suddenly collapsed, defeated before her.

He lost.

He admitted her coaxing again rekindled his selfishness and possessiveness; he had been dreaming about it for these five days!

How could he not want it?

He never had any resistance to her.

After a long time, Hayden hoarsely said one word, "Yes."

...

Serena stood in the kitchen preparing breakfast, "Mr. Crawford, shall we have noodles for breakfast? You just woke up, so it's better to eat something light."

Hayden leaned against the doorframe, watching her busy little figure in the kitchen. He still felt like he was dreaming, "Okay."

"Mr. Crawford, can you bring me a bowl?"

Hayden walked over to get a bowl, but as he held it, his eyelid twitched.

This bowl was a blue-and-white porcelain bowl, a vessel used by the Qing dynasty royal palace, now a privately collected antique, the kind commonly auctioned off.

This bowl was worth a fortune.

Hayden glanced around; not only were there royal palace bowls here, the chopsticks were ivory white, a pair costing six figures.

Having just awakened, Hayden hadn't initially noticed these things; now he carefully examined this house, with its rosewood carved tables and chairs, vintage palace lamps, even the knives on the chopping board being German craftsmanship. Plainly speaking, everything here was understated and lavishly built with real gold and silver, to such a degree it was stunningly extravagant.

"Mr. Crawford, what are you doing staring at that bowl? Do you like it? If so, I'll give it to you, take it." Serena looked over at that moment.

Hayden's handsome face showed no emotional fluctuation, he simply curled his thin lips slightly and asked nonchalantly, "Who prepared this bowl... and the furnishings here?"

"I have no idea. When I was sent to the countryside, all of this was already here."

She knew nothing.

Hayden surveyed the place where she grew up; she was sent to the countryside at the age of nine and nurtured by this land there.

Apart from this seemingly simple and ordinary yet actually ubiquitous luxury house, outside was a massive garden, serene and beautiful like an earthly paradise beyond the materialistic urban world.

The gardens outside were too vast, stretching endlessly. Hayden spoke, "Are those vegetables and fruits outside all planted by you?"

"Oh, that..." Serena quickly showed a shy look, "Do you think I could handle all of that alone? The neighbor ladies help me manage them."

Hayden saw several middle-aged women in the garden, agile and diligent, weeding and fertilizing.

"You have vegetables and fruits. What about if you want to eat meat?"

"The uncles in the neighbor ladies' families raise pigs, ducks, chickens, cattle, sheep, and other animals. If I want to, they'll share with me."

"And if you want seafood?"

"The uncles go to the sea. Fish, shrimp, shellfish, any kind of seafood."

"..."

Hayden was speechless, having grown up in a wealthy family with a silver spoon in his mouth. Serena couldn't understand, but he could see it at once.

She drank water flowing down from the mountains; the vegetables and fruits were natural, when she wanted meat, they'd slaughter a pig, when she wanted seafood, someone would go to the sea...

Hayden looked at the busy girl; he had always felt he didn't understand her. She carried many mysteries—for example, who had created this tender, luxurious place outside of the world for her, shielding her from all storms and nurturing her into adulthood?

"Serena, was your return to the countryside arranged by your dad?"

"Yes." Serena suddenly thought of something, turning to look at Hayden, "Though not entirely, there's a connection with Seth Sullivan too."

Seth Sullivan?

Her ex-fiancé?

Seth Sullivan was the one who had silently nurtured her into the most tender rose in the world, raising her single-handedly all these years.