

## **Substitute B 296**

Chapter 296: Do You Dare Accept My Challenge?

She left.

Beryl stood there watching Serena Sterling's delicate figure, full of reluctance. "Serena left so quickly. I thought she would stay for a few more days. She left so suddenly, my heart feels empty."

Beryl's eyes reddened as she spoke.

The old lady was the one who least wanted Serena Sterling to leave, but she did not ask her to stay because she knew if she did, Serena definitely would.

However, she no longer had the face to ask.

Serena Sterling had once died for Hayden Crawford—how could she allow the Crawford family to become her burden again?

She was no longer Mrs. Crawford. The Crawford family hadn't provided her with equal protection and honor, so on what grounds should she continue giving here?

No one could stop this girl; she should go farther and become an even better version of herself.

The old lady looked at Hayden Crawford across from her, "Hayden, go see Serena off. I'm healthy now, but you haven't settled Serena's wages, have you? Serena isn't part of our family; she has no obligation to work for us for free."

Hayden Crawford remained silent for two seconds before getting up to leave.

...

Serena Sterling walked on the lawn when steady footsteps approached from behind, and a large hand reached out and grabbed her slender wrist.

Serena stopped, turned around, and Hayden Crawford's exquisite handsome face suddenly enlarged in her view. He was looking at her deeply displeased.

"Say whatever you have to say and let go of me!" Serena forcefully tried to pull back her wrist.

But she failed because Hayden Crawford held her tightly, "Are you really going to leave?"

"Grandma's health has improved significantly, and I don't have any reason to stay anymore."

Hayden Crawford looked at her palm-sized exquisite face. Apart from grandma, was there really nothing else, nothing that made her want to stay?

Hayden Crawford took out a gilded black card and placed it into her tender white palm, "This is your payment. You deserve it; take it."

Serena lowered her eyes to look at the gilded black card, remembering that Mr. Crawford had once given her such a card too. "I don't want this card. It's inconvenient to withdraw cash with it. I was only here a few days—just give me a thousand yuan. Once you have cash, it's enough to give me cash."

Serena handed the gilded black card back to him and turned to leave.

Hayden Crawford stood frozen, watching as the girl's delicate figure gradually disappeared from his sight. She was destined to leave because she wasn't his anyone; she didn't want to be with him. But he didn't expect her to leave so fast, catching him off guard.

As someone who had seen numerous ships sail and navigated the business world since his teens, Hayden Crawford should understand that this was, at most, just an affair. The two couldn't agree, and she left without leaving a trace. He should continue living his life. But...

But why did his heart suddenly feel empty, aching and uncomfortable?

Hayden Crawford lifted his leg and kicked the trash can, which made a loud "bang".

He lowered his handsome eyes, panting heavily. Only then did he feel like he could breathe.

...

Serena Sterling went straight to school. Upon arriving at A University's entrance, she saw many students gathered there as if waiting for someone.

"Serena, you're finally here! We've been waiting for you!" Tiana Ford was the first to notice Serena Sterling, and she quickly led everyone to run over.

Serena looked at Tiana, "Tiana, what happened? Why are you all waiting for me?"

"Yes, Serena. Let me tell you some bad news. Today, the Academy of Sciences issued a notice saying that schools that don't rank in the top five in this year's joint exam will lose the qualification to be recruited by the Academy!"

What?

Serena's bright pupils slightly contracted. Over the years, the Academy of Sciences had always conducted interviews and assessments in the major medical schools of Aethelgard. She came to A University because she wanted to join the Academy.

But she hadn't expected the Academy to suddenly change its usual rules this year—something she hadn't foreseen.

"Tiana, where have we ranked in past joint exams?" Serena asked.

Tiana Ford shyly stuck out her tongue, "We've always been at the bottom, probably around ten or so..."

In the past years, very few from A University were recruited by the Academy of Sciences, but at least there was a chance. Now, with the Academy's sudden announcement this year, it's like A University has been directly excluded.

This notice was so sudden. We just won the basketball championship yesterday; I even suspect someone is deliberately targeting us!

Serena frowned slightly at this very reasonable suspicion. But for someone to be able to influence the Academy of Sciences, they must be no ordinary person.

Serena suddenly thought of someone—Anabelle Rathborne!

At this time, a group of people walked over from the front, students from T University, with Anabelle Rathborne being surrounded in front. With Annette leading T University people, they encountered Serena Sterling here.

Anabelle looked at Serena with a sweet smile on her beautiful face, "Serena, what are you all gathered here for at A University? Has something big happened?"

T University students quickly echoed,

Oh, Annette, don't you know? Early this morning, the Academy of Sciences issued a notice saying that schools not in the top five in the joint exam would be excluded.

T University's ranking is outside the top ten, meaning they're passed.

Last night, some people won the championship on the basketball court; how happy they were! But how come today they've been turned back to where they started? If you have skills, make it into the top five in the joint exam this time.

You really expect too much of A University. If they make it to the top five, I'll write my name backward!

Yesterday, T University lost on the court, which also led to William Alden's scandal of injuring someone, nearly causing T University's reputation to plummet instantly. But now, with the Academy of Sciences' notice issued today and the joint exam approaching, T University people quickly regained their home ground and confidence, contemptuously looking down on A University.

A University's students blushed fiercely, ready to fight back, "Who are you talking about so sarcastically? Believe it or not, I'll punch you!"

The two sides faced off, tensions rising, the scene was on the verge of spiraling out of control.

Serena quickly stood out, her bright, watery eyes falling on Anabelle Rathborne, "Annette, I've heard that you're not only T University's campus belle but also T University's top student. You ranked first in last year's joint exam."

Anabelle revealed a proud look, "Yes, seems like you care a lot about me. Girls should read more books instead of dressing up all the time and getting distracted. Now, with the joint exam, some people are going to be revealed. If they're a fool, it'll be embarrassing then."

Serena laughed. Dressing up all the time—not sure who that's referring to!

"Annette, this joint exam, I officially challenge you—do you dare to accept my challenge?"