

## SUBSTITUTE BRIDE: UTTERLY PAMPERED BY HER BILLIONAIRE HUSBAND

### Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Gripping Her Throat

At this moment, the sound of knocking echoed, followed by the voice of Butler Felix outside the door, "Young Master."

Hayden Crawford slightly parted his thin lips, "Come in."

Butler Felix pushed the door open and entered, "Young Master, what should be done with the young madam...?"

Hayden stood handsomely by the bed, a towering figure of one eighty-seven, clad simply in a white shirt and black pants, yet the expensive fabric seemed custom-made, accentuating his tall, jade-like stature and exceptional bearing.

With his eyes lowered, Hayden skillfully turned the bright silver cufflink on his shirt sleeve with his fingers. He glanced at Serena Sterling nonchalantly, "You might not know this yet, but there are two wolves kept in the backyard of Orchid Court. How about... I throw you in there to feed them?"

Serena's heart tightened—this marriage was arranged by the older generation. Bayside's four great families: Crawford, Gu, Huo, and Su.

The head of the Crawford family was said to be the youngest and most handsome business mogul of the generation, though no one had ever seen his true face, making him quite mysterious.

Orchid Court, located in a remote area, doesn't seem like a place of the wealthy. The Sterling family had people investigate Orchid Court, only to discover that it housed a grandfather and grandson. That grandson was supposedly this seriously ill ghostly groom of a legend.

Lillian Sterling's greatest wish was to marry her two daughters into one of Bayside's four great families. The outcome of Orchid Court made her so furious that she wanted to dig up the Sterling family's ancestral grave to ask how the older generation agreed to this ghost marriage in the first place.

Lillian didn't want her daughter to marry, but Gregory Sterling was conservative and filial, unwilling to break the marriage arranged by the older generation.

Since her daughter couldn't wed, Lillian thought of Serena and thus brought her back to marry in place as a form of blessing.

In Serena's understanding, the man before her was definitely not some noble, but now she was confused.

This man in front of her exuded a sense of superiority in his every move, with a cold elegance flowing from his bones, like a king issuing commands, making one submissively admire him.

Moreover, he kept wolves in the backyard—but having wolves isn't a pastime for ordinary people.

Serena wanted to speak, but at that moment, the man suddenly placed both hands on the table, his handsome eyes lightly shut, revealing a look of pain.

The butler's face changed dramatically, quickly saying, "Young Master, I'll call the doctor immediately!"

Serena's clear eyes moved downward; the large hands he rested on the table already showed bulging veins, a sign of an episode.

He was ill?

And it was a very frightening disease.

At this point, Serena met the man's pair of crimson narrow eyes. Hayden turned to look at her, speaking to the butler, "Make her leave!"

The butler quickly said, "Young Madam, please leave quickly."

Serena knew she couldn't leave; she returned to the Sterling family with a purpose and needed the identity of the Orchid Court bride.

Serena's clear eyes looked towards Hayden, without a trace of evasion, "You're ill; what kind of illness? I know a bit of medicine, skilled in acupuncture, and can treat your illness."

Hayden's thin lips formed a cold line, almost squeezing out a word from his throat, "Get out!"

Not only did Serena not leave, but she also stepped closer, "Just now I smelled the scent of lily, poria, gastrodia, and other valuable herbs on you. These are all Chinese medicines for treating insomnia. If I'm not mistaken, you should have a sleep disorder, unable to sleep at night."

The butler stared at Serena in shock, "Young Madam, you..."

Serena's bright eyes fell on Hayden's handsome face, "To what extent has your sleep disorder reached? When a sleep disorder progresses deeply, it severely affects one's mental state. The body is utterly exhausted but gets no rest or relaxation, creating another version of yourself inside, dark, irritable, terrifying, almost pathological."

Hayden's long narrow eyes grew redder, and a layer of gloom covered his handsome brow. He reached out and grabbed Serena's neck.

The girl's rosy neck was very delicate; just a slight squeeze, and she would lose her life.

"Young Madam, don't provoke the young master anymore! Young Master, quickly let go of the young madam!" The butler was so anxious he almost rushed up.

The fresh air available became increasingly scarce, Serena's small face slowly turning red, but she swiftly turned her small hand, quickly inserting a silver needle into Hayden's acupuncture point.

Hayden's hand relaxed, and he sat on the sofa.

Serena gasped for air; she didn't intend to lose her life here upon returning. She was indeed afraid just now.

This man before her was too dangerous; his mysterious identity aside, just the sleep disorder alone could transform him from a graceful, noble man into a monster at any moment.

However, she had no retreat left, so she could only take a gamble.

Serena adjusted her breathing, came behind him, then raised her slender white fingers to his temples to massage him.

Hayden closed his handsome eyes, concealing the crimson in his eyes, "Your treatment is to help me massage?"

"Be glad; you're the first man I've ever massaged."

"As if you're not the first woman to be lucky enough to massage me."

"..."

No way to continue the conversation.

"Keep me, let's coexist peacefully. You don't interfere in my private affairs, I'll help you act in front of grandma, and I can also help you treat your insomnia. How about it?"

Hayden said nothing.

When Serena inserted a thin silver needle into Hayden's cranial acupuncture point, Hayden closed his eyes, his head falling against the sofa.

Serena quickly reached out, gently and tenderly catching his fallen handsome face.

He fell asleep.

The butler on the side was already drenched in sweat. Others might not know the young master's identity, but how could he not? His young master was the heir of the Crawford family, a prodigy, playing the business world at only a teen, creating the myth of The Crawford Group single-handedly.

No one had ever dared to negotiate with the young master like this, let alone a girl.

All the girls fortunate enough to see the young master over the years had eyes brimming with pink bubbles of admiration, love, yearning to throw themselves into the young master's arms.

This young madam before him was so unique, calm, frank, and wise even in front of the ailing young master.

More astonishing still, the young master fell asleep!

The young master hadn't slept for a long time!

Top-ranked masters in treating insomnia had no effect, yet the young master slept in the young madam's palm!

"Young Madam..." the butler spoke.

Serena put her fingers to her lips, making a "shush" gesture, "Leave, I'll handle it here."

For some reason, the butler felt a reassuring strength from this young madam, and he obediently withdrew.

...

The room fell silent.

Serena let him rest in her palm for a moment, and when he fell into a deep sleep, she laid him into the sofa and covered him with a blanket.

After handling everything, Serena lay in bed, falling into a dream.

At this moment, Hayden on the sofa slowly opened his eyes, awake.

Hayden rose and came to the bedside, reaching out his slender fingers to lift the veil off Serena's face.