

## Substitute B 369

### Chapter 369: Serena Sterling's First Dance

Old Mrs. Rathborne had only one son, Julian Rathborne. She initially hoped he would continue the family line, but he was naturally uninterested in women. So when Yvonne Knight got pregnant, Old Mrs. Rathborne had no choice but to agree.

Later, Yvonne had an affair, and Julian Rathborne rarely returned home as he kept busy with work outside. As Anabelle Rathborne grew up, Old Mrs. Rathborne also wanted Julian to divorce Yvonne, so he could find a good woman and maybe have a child or two.

But Julian didn't care at all; he disliked women, and to him, it didn't matter who was Mrs. Rathborne.

Old Mrs. Rathborne was relentless on this matter. For years, she'd been sending people to inquire about Julian's private life, only to find that there were really no women around him, not even a female mosquito.

Old Mrs. Rathborne walked over and picked up the phone, "Hello."

Soon, Julian's deep, magnetic voice came from the other end, "Hello, Mom, happy birthday, forever eighteen."

Old Mrs. Rathborne snorted, "For me to stay forever eighteen, you need to put some effort into it. So, have you met anyone you like out there?"

Every time they spoke on the phone, Old Mrs. Rathborne brought this up, to which Julian responded, "...Mom, I'm busy, I'll hang up first."

"Julian Rathborne, if you dislike women so much, then you shouldn't have slept with Yvonne in the first place!" Old Mrs. Rathborne said angrily.

Julian paused on the other end, staying silent.

Old Mrs. Rathborne, being quite savvy and knowing her son well, immediately detected a disruption in Julian's breathing. She squinted her eyes, "Why, still can't forget that night? Yvonne is still your wife; you can relive the past anytime."

"...Mom, I'm really hanging up now." Julian motioned to end the call.

"Wait, I have something important to say," Old Mrs. Rathborne stopped him.

"Mom, what is it?"

"Some time ago, I went to Bayside, remember, when I was saved by a little fairy? That little fairy is Serena, and I really like her. I want to adopt her as my granddaughter. I don't want Serena to feel wronged, so when can you find time to come back? I want to officially recognize Serena as part of our family."

Old Mrs. Rathborne had high standards, and there hadn't been anyone she fancied over the years. Meeting someone she liked this much, Julian naturally agreed, understanding he hadn't fulfilled his mother's hopes of continuing the family line, "Alright, I'll wrap up my work and return soon. As long as Mom is happy."

...

In the party hall, Zane Crawford walked up and wrapped his arm around Serena Sterling's slender waist.

Since the matriarch had made her intentions clear, everyone knew the Rathborne family's dynamics might change. The favored granddaughter Anabelle Rathborne had lost her standing; it was Serena Sterling who was favored now. So, everyone gathered around Serena and Zane, flattering them,

When I first saw Miss Serena, I thought she was extraordinary. Turns out it was someone the matriarch favored!

Not only that, but Miss Serena also caught the eye of the Crawfords' second young master. His taste is impeccable!

It just goes to show, the matriarch is still the matriarch; both of the Crawford family's prodigies are vying to be her acknowledged grandsons-in-law!

Serena didn't like socializing with these people. Gracefully, she offered a polite smile. At this moment, Zane noticed her discomfort. With his calm, handsome eyes cast downward, he said, "Serena, shall we go dance?"

It was dancing time, and everyone was pairing up to dance.

Serena nodded, "Alright."

The two were about to glide into the dance floor when suddenly a tall, imposing figure came into view: Hayden Crawford had arrived.

Hayden directly blocked their path.

This scene quickly attracted the attention of many. People watched in surprise, whispering among themselves about why Mr. Crawford had blocked his younger brother's way.

Serena's bright eyes fell on Hayden's handsome face, her delicate brows furrowing slightly. Although she hadn't looked at him, she could feel Hayden's gaze on her ever since she entered the hall.

His gaze was incredibly intense, difficult to ignore.

What did he want now, blocking their way in front of everyone, what was his intention?

Zane stopped and gently held Serena in his arms, then raised his eyes to look at Hayden, "Brother, do you want to ask your fiancée to dance? You've taken the wrong path; your fiancée, Anabelle Rathborne, is behind you."

In front of so many people, Zane was very considerate of Serena's reputation, so he subtly reminded Hayden that his fiancée, Anabelle, was just behind him.

Anabelle was indeed behind them, and seeing Hayden use his towering presence to block Zane and Serena's path, she quickly became angry, clenching her teeth. What on earth was Hayden doing?

On Hayden's exquisite face, there wasn't the slightest wave of emotion. His deep, narrow eyes moved from Zane's face to Serena's breathtakingly beautiful face, then curled his thin lips, "I didn't take the wrong path; I don't want to invite my fiancée Anabelle to dance right now. I only want to invite Serena Sterling to dance!"

What?

The onlookers felt like they had a juicy piece of gossip. Hayden wanted to invite his brother's fiancée, Serena, to dance?

What was going on?

Zane's calm black eyes suddenly grew cold, his whole being exuding a chill, looking at Hayden, "Brother, I don't understand what you mean."

Hayden raised his dashing eyebrows, a mischievous curve forming on his thin lips, "No need to be nervous; once you both get married, Miss Serena will be my sister-in-law. I'm merely inviting my future sister-in-law to a dance now, shouldn't be too much, right?"

The crowd, ...

It's not inappropriate, it's very inappropriate!

Serena's first dance rightfully belonged to her fiancé, Zane; now Hayden, abandoning his own fiancée, was inviting his future sister-in-law for the first dance. Tsk, tsk, didn't anyone notice Anabelle in the back was practically fuming?

Zane looked at Hayden, the Crawford family's two prodigious young masters suddenly at odds, sparks flying, "Brother, what if I say no?"

Hayden's deep, narrow eyes suddenly narrowed, then he focused his gaze on Serena's face, slowly extending his large hand toward her, "Serena Sterling, come over here!"

He called her by name, demanding she come over!

Serena furrowed her brows deeper, not knowing what kind of antics Hayden was pulling today.

Seeing Serena not move, Hayden directly reached out his large hand.