

Substitute B 390

Chapter 390: A Heavy Slap in the Face

Zane didn't announce it earlier or later, but chose to announce when Serena got into trouble. It was like dropping a bomb, causing the whole room to erupt.

Academician Crawford, when did you break off the engagement? Serena is currently at the center of controversy. Are you saying this to deliberately protect her?

Academician Crawford, are you trying to clear Serena's name with this statement?

Zane looked into the camera, unflinchingly, "Serena and I broke off the engagement a long time ago. It's not Serena's fault; it's mine. I lost interest and already have a new girlfriend."

Gasp.

The entire room sucked in a breath, staring at Zane in disbelief. What on earth was he saying?

Serena suddenly looked up, gazing at Zane next to her. Why would he say something like that?

He gained fame at a young age, making a name for himself in Aethelgard, a prodigy in the field of medicine known for his cold and aloof demeanor. His private life was clean, and he was the first love of many socialites in Aethelgard.

With a reputation spotless, he was now saying he cheated and had a new girlfriend just to protect her.

Were you unfaithful during your engagement, Academician Crawford? Is that what you mean?

A reporter asked, shocked.

No!

Serena shook her head quickly, "No, he..."

But she didn't finish her sentence because Zane was already leading her away, his arm around her shoulders, not allowing her to speak.

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The silver Maybach sped smoothly down the road, with Serena in the passenger seat glancing at Zane beside her, "Zane, you shouldn't have said that. You'll soon be on the entertainment headlines, attracting criticism. I know how the entertainment world works; they'll accuse you of hypocrisy and a broken facade."

Zane focused ahead, "Serena, this is my own business. You shouldn't worry about it."

"No, Zane. I'm not worth this sacrifice from you. I'll clarify things to the reporters..."

Zane interrupted her, "Serena, no need to clarify. I really do have a girlfriend."

Serena paused, and a few seconds later spoke softly, "Zane, don't do this. The more you do, the more guilty I feel."

Just then, a melodious phone ringtone sounded; Zane had a call.

Zane pressed a button to answer, and the voice on the other end was Zelda Willow.

Zelda's voice came through clearly, furious, "Zane, where are you now? Come home immediately, I have questions for you."

Zane furrowed his brows; he didn't care about anyone's opinion, but Zelda was his mother, who gave birth to him, nurtured him, and loved him wholeheartedly.

Zane knew what kind of person his mother is. Zelda had always been competing, wanting him to replace Hayden Crawford as the heir. He didn't like that; the family atmosphere was too oppressive, so he left home at a young age and devoted himself to medicine.

But he couldn't abandon Zelda. He knew his father and grandmother favored Hayden because Hayden was Isabelle Willow's only son, who was a legend of their time. He only had Zelda's love, though Aunt Iris was also very good to him.

Zane felt sympathy towards his mother. They say Isabelle was Zelda's shadow; Isabelle died without leaving a name, yet Zelda lived as Isabelle's shadow throughout her life, miserably suffering in silence. She only had the shiny appearance of a forced-loving family, and her only real possession was him, her son.

Zane furrowed his brows, "Mom, I'm really busy now. I'll return tomorrow."

This comment only added fuel to the fire, and Zelda angrily replied, "Zane, you've grown up now, not listening to your mother. Regardless of what urgent matter you have, you must drop it. Come home immediately!"

"Okay, I'll be back soon." Zane hung up the call.

Serena knew Zelda figured out Zane was sacrificing his reputation and disapproved of Zelda personally, yet acknowledged her as a dedicated mother. Serena furrowed her brows, "Zane, I'll go to the Crawford family with you."

Zane shook his head, "That's not necessary."

"It's my matter too, and even if we've broken off our engagement, I should explain things to your parents." Serena insisted.

Zane finally nodded but advised, "When we're at the Crawford family, don't say anything. I'll explain everything. Also, Serena, don't feel guilty towards me; loving you has always been my own choice."

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The Crawford family.

Zane brought Serena inside, where Jude Crawford and Zelda were.

Jude remained composed, his emotions hard to read, while Zelda's face had grown terribly grim.

Seeing Zane back with Serena, Zelda quickly stood up, glaring at Serena intently, "Serena, I ask you, are those scandals with Hayden true? Did Zane say he cheated and had a new girlfriend to protect you?"

Serena tried to speak, but Zane already pulled her behind himself, "Mom, everything I said is true. I already have a girlfriend."

"Where's your girlfriend then?"

Zane pursed his lips slightly, "If you want to meet her, I'll bring her tomorrow."

As soon as the words fell, Zelda stepped forward and slapped Zane hard.

Smack.

The sharp sound of the slap echoed throughout the living room, as Zane's handsome face turned sideways from the impact.

Zelda's hand trembled, her eyes red with fury.

Serena stepped up, "Mrs. Crawford, this matter..."

"Enough!" Zane interrupted Serena, "Anyway, Serena and I have already broken off the engagement. That's all there is to it."

"You!" Zelda contained her rage from erupting then and there, "Zane, come upstairs with me!"

She wanted to speak alone with Zane.

Zane released Serena; the white print of a slap already marked his elegant face, clearly showing Zelda's full force just now. "Serena, I'll go upstairs for a while. Don't say anything or wander off. I'll send you home afterward."

Serena had much to say but merely replied, "I understand. I'll wait for you here."

"Okay." Zane followed Zelda upstairs.

Once the mother and son left, only Serena and Jude remained in the living room. Jude hadn't intervened earlier, and now pointed to the sofa opposite him with his gaze, "Miss Sterling, please sit."

Serena walked over and sat down opposite Jude Crawford.