

Substitute B 741

Chapter 741: What Kind of Little Monster Did Serena Sterling Give Birth To?

In the hospital.

Jude Crawford arrived in the corridor, and soon he heard the sound of Zelda Willow's crying from inside, crying with deep sorrow, almost with overwhelming grief, like mourning her own sister, "Iris, wake up quickly, get up, open your eyes, why are you so troubled that you swallowed pills to kill yourself? I'm your sister-in-law, I'm here to see you!"

Jude Crawford reached out and pushed open the VIP ward door, walking inside.

Now Iris Crawford was lying on the hospital bed, her complexion had turned pale and bluish, and the heart monitor beside her kept emitting a "ding" alert, Iris Crawford had long lost her heartbeat and breath.

"Jude!" Zelda Willow quickly ran over, her face covered in tears, crying sincerely and intensely, "Jude, you finally came, Iris... she swallowed pills to kill herself, the doctor has already declared Iris's dead... death, you must avenge Iris!"

Jude Crawford stood tall by the bedside, he extended his large hand and slowly grasped Iris Crawford's hand, this hand was already cold and stiff.

Jude Crawford did not let go, but held on tighter, wanting to transmit the warmth from his palm to Iris Crawford's hand.

Zelda Willow knew how much Jude Crawford loved this sister, when something happened to her, it's this brother who was the most distressed and heartbroken.

Zelda Willow grabbed Jude Crawford's sleeve, "Jude, it's all Isabelle's fault! Isabelle went to see Iris, she provoked Iris again, it's Isabelle who harmed Iris!"

"How can Isabelle's heart be so cruel, wasn't it already bad enough how she harmed Iris back then, why does she still want to do this? Jude, Iris is your own sister, you must stand up for Iris!"

Now Zelda Willow wished she could hand a knife to Jude Crawford, so he could go and stab Isabelle Willow.

Jude Crawford showed no expression, he raised his deep and narrow eyes and coolly glanced at Zelda Willow, "Iris is my own sister, then isn't Isabelle also your own sister? Now you're inciting me to take revenge on your own sister, how can your heart be even crueler than Isabelle's."

Zelda Willow froze, "I..."

"Also, how do you know about these things?" Jude Crawford directly interrupted her, his hawk-like sharp gaze scrutinizing Zelda Willow, as if he had already seen through all the scheming and plotting in her heart, "You seem to... know more than I do."

Zelda Willow had prepared a stomach full of drafts, just waiting for Jude Crawford to come so she could put on a show for him, but she completely overlooked that Jude Crawford was not a man with any leisure to listen to acts, he was rather alert, completely like an elegant beast-cum-leopard in the forest, who could pounce and kill.

"I... I..." Zelda Willow panicked, quickly consuming thousands of brain cells, thinking of excuses, "I heard all this... from Beryl by Iris's side, although Isabelle is my sister, her suspicion is the greatest right now, Iris too is my sister, if Isabelle really killed Iris, of course, I would sacrifice my personal feelings for justice!"

Zelda Willow finally managed to cover her tracks.

Jude Crawford casually curled his thin lips, not sure if he was ridiculing her, he did not look at her again but lowered his eyes to focus back on Iris Crawford.

When he wasn't speaking, Zelda Willow couldn't get a grasp on his thoughts, "Jude, Iris is already... dead, we should quickly arrange Iris's funeral, we can't just let Iris lie here."

Zelda Willow wanted to bury Iris Crawford soon to avoid further complications.

At that moment, the ward door was pushed open again, a cold childish voice sounded, "The funeral can't be arranged!"

Zelda Willow turned around and saw little Caden Crawford.

Little Caden Crawford was here!

Zelda Willow really didn't like little Caden Crawford, she even feared him a bit, little Caden Crawford had been extremely intelligent from a young age, and perfectly inherited all the Crawford family's excellent genes, every time she saw little Caden Crawford's growing phoenix eyes, Zelda Willow had an instinct that once he grew up, he might be an even more powerful and terrifying existence than grandpa Jude Crawford and dad Hayden Crawford.

Zelda Willow couldn't understand what Serena Sterling was thinking when she gave birth to such a little monster for Hayden Crawford!

"Ca... Caden, why are you here, come quickly and see your aunt, your aunt she... she... is dead!"

Little Caden Crawford was pampered by the entire Crawford family from birth, including Iris Crawford, although Iris didn't like Hayden Crawford, perhaps because this child was born by Serena Sterling, little Caden Crawford was also the perfect Crawford heir, so Iris Crawford was very fond of little Caden.

In front of the whole Crawford family, Zelda Willow's dislike became insignificant.

Little Caden Crawford came to the bedside, he reached out and covered Iris Crawford with a blanket, as if Iris had just fallen asleep, "My aunt is not dead."

What?

Zelda Willow was shocked as she looked at little Caden Crawford, "Caden, what nonsense are you speaking, your aunt has no breath, the doctor already declared her dead."

Little Caden Crawford furrowed his little brow, "I said, my aunt is not dead, my aunt is just too tired, let her sleep for a while."

Zelda Willow felt there was no point in communicating with little Caden Crawford, was he from Mars, didn't understand Chinese?

Iris Crawford was clearly dead, she had no heartbeat and no breath.

"Jude, Caden's feelings for Iris are too deep, and he can't accept the truth for a while, besides, children may not understand the adult world, you must make a decision quickly, Iris's body can't be left here for long, let's arrange the funeral." Zelda Willow urged Jude Crawford.

Jude Crawford released Iris Crawford's hand and also tucked Iris's hand under the blanket, "Listen to Caden, do whatever Caden says."

"Jude, you're going crazy too!" Zelda Willow was shocked.

"I've made a decision about this, from now on, block all information from the outside world, don't let any news leak out, you, take care of your mouth." Saying this, Jude Crawford went straight out.

Zelda Willow was completely frozen in place, she never expected Iris Crawford's death not only failed to cause a huge sensation but also didn't create any ripple, Jude Crawford even reached out to suppress Iris's death, what was he thinking?

No.

Zelda Willow had a bad feeling, she already sensed something was amiss.

She looked at Iris Crawford on the hospital bed, then slowly reached her fingers under Iris's nose, where it was cold, not a breath.

Zelda Willow recoiled her fingers in fright, that's right, Iris Crawford was already dead.

Jude Crawford and little Caden Crawford, this little monster, what were they planning?

At that moment, two black-suited bodyguards walked in, "The master has given orders, from now on, you are not allowed to enter this ward again, please leave immediately!"

Chapter 742: Trapped by Love for a Lifetime

What, Jude Crawford actually gave orders forbidding her from entering this hospital room, forbidding her from seeing Iris Crawford again?

"Why? I won't leave, I want to stay!"

The two bodyguards in black said nothing, quickly stepped forward, each grabbing one of Zelda Willow's arms and directly escorting her out.

...

In the room, Jude Crawford and little Caden Crawford sat down, the two of them facing each other, creating an atmosphere of negotiation.

Riley Sutton brewed a cup of tea and brought it over. These two were both his new and old bosses; he couldn't afford to offend either of them. He could only serve them carefully.

"Sir, I've sealed off all information according to your orders, but about the old lady..."

"Don't worry about great-grandma, I've arranged for her to retreat to the temple for a few days, where no one can disturb her," little Caden Crawford said.

Jude Crawford picked up a teacup, gracefully taking a sip of tea, then looked up at the cold and aloof little Caden opposite him. "Caden, it seems you've already made arrangements. What do you mean by saying your aunt Iris isn't dead?"

Little Caden Crawford replied, "Just the literal meaning, Aunt Iris isn't dead. Grandpa, I need you to give me three days. I need to wait for my mom to come back!"

"Could it be that everything was arranged in advance by your mom?"

"Yes."

"Where has your mom gone?"

Little Caden Crawford looked at Jude Crawford, "My mom has gone to find Dylan Gardner; she plans to bring him back..."

As soon as the words fell, with a "bang," Jude Crawford directly threw the teacup in his hand heavily on the table in front of him.

The collision between the teacup and the table produced a piercing sound, all the tea spilled out, and the atmosphere in the entire room suddenly dropped to freezing point.

Riley Sutton wiped his cold sweat furiously, stepping forward to clean up the mess on the table, while secretly glancing at little Caden Crawford, thinking, you really hit the sore spot!

The name "Dylan Gardner" had been the biggest taboo in Jude Crawford's heart for a long time, a thorn lodged between him and Iris. Just brushing against it caused heart-wrenching pain, and even though Dylan Gardner had disappeared on his own back then in City of Aethelgard, Jude Crawford would never allow his existence again; he never wanted to see Dylan Gardner in his life.

However, now Serena Sterling intends to bring Dylan Gardner back.

Knowing it's impossible, yet going against the tide anyway, this is truly Serena Sterling's usual style.

Little Caden Crawford looked at Jude Crawford's face, which had already turned as dark as water, and sighed deeply, "Grandpa, I know you'll be angry, but you can be mad at me, just don't be mad at my mom!"

He was truly a protective mom fan. The little one was afraid that when his mom came back, his grandpa would make it difficult for her, so he was giving a preemptive warning.

Jude Crawford's deep and handsome face showed little emotional fluctuation, but he looked incredibly cold and composed, causing fear and trepidation. "Caden Crawford, you shouldn't spoil women this way; they'll get spoiled."

Little Caden Crawford glanced at Jude Crawford's slippers, "I can't help it. I'm a child of the Crawford family. Crawford men all spoil their women, this trait I inherited from grandpa!"

"..."

Jude Crawford silently retracted his foot in the slipper with a cold snort, "I know Dylan Gardner too well. He's a weak character, lacking a sense of responsibility and accountability. When Iris got into trouble, he didn't think of how to make amends, but ran away first. He doesn't dare to face the mistakes he's made in the past, so no matter what your mom says to him, even with her silver tongue, it's impossible to bring Dylan Gardner back."

Jude Crawford, with his keen insight, had thoroughly seen through Dylan Gardner, which is why he was sure Serena Sterling would return empty-handed this time.

But little Caden Crawford wasn't worried at all, "Grandpa, that's my mom's business, you don't need to worry about it. Let's first think about how to catch the ghost."

"Catch the ghost?" Jude Crawford suddenly narrowed his deep eyes, leisurely chewing on the word.

"Young master, you mean... there's a traitor in the Crawford family?" Riley Sutton asked.

Little Caden Crawford nodded, "Grandpa, you've been smart all your life, but you've lost in matters of love. Have you ever thought that you've always been deceived by others?"

Jude Crawford looked at little Caden Crawford, stayed silent for a few seconds, then said, "Are you referring to... Zelda Willow?"

"That's right, a long time ago Zelda Willow colluded with outsiders to create a shocking conspiracy that changed the entire fate of the Crawford family. Unbeknownst to you, a mysterious and powerful force had already forcefully invaded the Crawford family."

Riley Sutton was shocked; the Crawford family, a prominent family in Aethelgard, standing at the pinnacle of power, was untouchable, yet a dark force had invaded long ago, dramatically changing the fate of the Crawford family, casting a shadow over them.

Where exactly did this force come from, and what is its purpose?

Truthfully, with Jude Crawford's vigilance, it's easy to detect all this. However, for years he was plagued by unrequited love, blindsided by it, not only failing to notice the intricate chessboard this dark force had set for him but also becoming a piece on their board.

Something quickly stirred in Jude Crawford's deep, narrow eyes, and he pursed his lips, "Caden Crawford, what do you plan to do?"

Little Caden Crawford sat upright on the sofa, "Nothing needs to be done. If we do nothing now, those people will become like ants on a hot pan, revealing their flaws. We wait and see."

Jude Crawford's expression improved a bit; he leaned his stiff back into the sofa and leisurely sipped tea.

Riley Sutton saw that the two bigwigs had ended their negotiation, and he himself let out a sigh of relief. He didn't know what this dark force was, only that they should be cautious. The Crawford family twenty years later is no longer what it used to be. It's not the Crawford family you remember; it now has Serena Sterling managing its affairs as the matriarch, and two more little eccentric young masters. You better brace yourselves!

...

Zelda Willow was indeed like an ant on a hot pan, watching as a day passed, two days passed... but there was no movement from Jude Crawford's side.

Due to the travel restrictions, she also didn't know how things were going with Iris Crawford, which was completely different from the original plan.

The plan was that Iris Crawford's death would stir up a storm, but now the whole world was quiet, so quiet that there wasn't a single sound.

Iris Crawford was already dead; this opportunity couldn't be missed.

On the third day, Zelda Willow could no longer sit still; she had to contact the mysterious man.

Chapter 743: The Truth

Zelda Willow took out her phone and sent a message: Something happened!

In another room, young Caden Crawford sat on an office chair with a laptop in front of him. Now, strings of numbers were rapidly bouncing across the computer screen, making one dizzy.

Jude Crawford stood steadily and upright beside young Caden Crawford, while Riley Sutton respectfully lowered his voice, "Sir, just now Zelda Willow sent out a message."

These past few days, Zelda Willow has been restricted, and her every move monitored.

"Sir, I just checked but couldn't find anything. The number Zelda Willow sent the message to seems to not exist. It's too strange."

Jude Crawford pursed his thin lips and his deep, narrow eyes fell on young Caden Crawford. By this time, young Caden Crawford had already broken the protection wall of that phone number, and the printer quickly spat out a sheet of information. Young Caden Crawford handed the sheet to Jude Crawford, "Grandfather, take a look, this is the timeline of Zelda Willow's contact with this mysterious number over the years."

Riley Sutton glanced at it, astonished, "Sir, Zelda Willow has been contacting this mysterious number for over thirty years! My goodness, if I remember correctly, these contact times coincide with the incidents concerning the Crawford family. This is too coincidental!"

Over the years, the Crawford family has experienced many incidents, and even Riley Sutton, as a personal secretary, remembers them clearly. The fact that Zelda Willow maintained contact with a mysterious number right before and after incidents is highly suspicious.

Jude Crawford quickly scanned the information, his brow furrowing. The issue Riley Sutton noticed, he also detected immediately.

Jude Crawford threw the information onto the office desk, "Caden Crawford, can you locate this number? Just who has such a long hand, daring to reach into the Crawford family? I must have a good look!"

Young Caden Crawford shook his head, "This number has been specially processed, if I force a location, it might alert them."

Young Caden Crawford then turned to Jude Crawford, "They should know I excel in tracking, so they are well prepared. Now, Aunt Iris is the biggest bait, and we can entirely use this opportunity to hook them, we must not alert them."

Jude Crawford looked at his most proud grandson and slowly curled his thin lips, "Is this all taught by your mommy before she left?"

"No, my mommy just told me that if Iris Aunt faces any accident during her absence, not to panic. This unexpected event might be a turning point, and we can use this turning point to uncover those behind the scenes, trace them and eradicate them."

Jude Crawford nodded in approval. Over four years ago, when he first went to Bayside to meet Serena Sterling, he knew this girl was dazzling, too radiant. She was insightful, extremely intelligent, and had no challenge she couldn't overcome.

"However, my mommy didn't tell me how to seize this turning point. She just said Aunt Iris cares for me the most, so to protect those who love me well. She also said she fully entrusts Aunt Iris's safety to me and asked me to wait for her return."

Jude Crawford raised his sword-like eyebrows. No matter how high young Caden Crawford's IQ was, he was still just a three-year-old. Serena Sterling truly dared to leave this place to a little guy.

However, a satisfied smile flickered in Jude Crawford's deep, narrow eyes. This was truly the direct descendant of the Crawford family, taught by Serena Sterling, who at such a young age already started showing his brilliance. Who knows how he will overturn the heavens and earth in the future?

Thus, he felt assured. Hayden is luckier and happier than he is. In the future, Serena Sterling will marry into the Crawford family to manage affairs, becoming a great matriarch, leading the family to greater prosperity in their hands.

"Caden Crawford, what do you plan to do now?" Jude Crawford felt he could retire to the background as their era had arrived.

Young Caden Crawford thought for a while, "I still say, we do nothing. Now they are the ones in panic, and if things don't go wrong, tonight there will be an unexpected visitor at the hospital, bringing excitement."

Riley Sutton's eyes brightened, he looked at his little boss with full admiration.

Jude Crawford sat on the sofa, picked up a teacup, and elegantly sipped a mouthful of tea before glancing at his expensive steel watch. "It's already eight o'clock now, four hours until midnight. Caden Crawford, your mommy is still out of touch. If she doesn't return by midnight, Iris cannot be saved."

Riley Sutton also checked the time; the previously agreed upon three days had quickly passed. The gold pill Serena Sterling left behind would lose its effectiveness at midnight tonight. If she doesn't return, Iris Crawford would transition from false death to real death.

In these three days, there's been no news from Serena Sterling, and Jude Crawford has already said she won't be able to bring back Dylan Gardner.

It's apparent that things aren't going smoothly with Dylan Gardner's group, and Serena Sterling's return date remains unknown.

Young Caden Crawford also raised his small head, looking at the clock on the wall. Now, time was ticking away urgently, and he spoke, "My mommy's journey attaches Aunt Iris's life to herself. This task is significant and arduous. My mommy isn't afraid, Grandfather, what's there for us to fear?"

...

Zelda Willow edited a message: "Something happened" and sent it, but somehow, the message failed to send.

What's going on?

Could it be...is the signal here bad?

Or perhaps...the mysterious person already knows something and has abandoned her?

Zelda Willow's heart became anxious, fearful, and uneasy. She didn't dare to make a big commotion, afraid of Jude Crawford noticing.

Night deepened, the hospital's ancient clock struck, reaching eleven at night. The whole world was silent to the point of no sound, resembling the calm before a storm, instilling disquieting fear.

Zelda Willow didn't dare to leave, remaining in the hospital. Yet, she couldn't sleep; an ominous feeling grew stronger in her heart.

At this moment, "creak," the room door was suddenly pushed open, and a shadow slipped silently inside.

Who?

Zelda Willow jolted upright, turning on the desk lamp. In front was...Beryl.

"Beryl, why are you here?" Zelda Willow asked in surprise.

Beryl placed her finger on her lips, making a "shh" gesture, and whispered, "What happened? Why is there no movement concerning Iris Crawford's death, and why is the Crawford family keeping it secret?"

Zelda Willow was shocked; she scrutinized Beryl several times, "Beryl, are you? Could you be...the mysterious person?"

Chapter 744: Serena Sterling Returns, Conquering Stars and Moon!

Zelda Willow had never met that mysterious person, and now seeing Beryl, she was stunned.

Beryl did not answer the question. In the dim light, her wrinkled old face looked extremely grim and terrifying. She had been lurking beside Iris Crawford for so long, personally plotting Iris Crawford's death, just waiting for this storm. But who knew she would wait and wait, only to find a void, losing contact with Zelda Willow, and hearing nothing from the Crawford family.

The three days felt incredibly long, as if a century had passed. Now in the dead of night, she could only risk coming here.

"I...I don't know what happened either. Jude Crawford suppressed all the news from the outside, and wouldn't let me get near Iris Crawford... Then there's Caden Crawford, that little psycho, who came and kept babbling nonsense, saying Iris Crawford wasn't dead at all..."

Beryl was shocked, her face changed drastically. She immediately reached out and grabbed Zelda Willow's collar, "What did you say, Caden Crawford said Iris Crawford isn't dead?"

"Yes, that's what that little psycho Caden Crawford said, but... but I clearly saw Iris Crawford dead..."

"Damn it! I've been tricked!" Beryl released Zelda Willow and turned to leave; she needed to get out of there quickly.

But as soon as she opened the door, the corridor outside was brightly lit, and a group of burly bodyguards in black had already surrounded the place, making it impossible for her to escape.

Beryl's heart instantly sank to the bottom. At this moment, she heard steady footsteps approaching; Jude Crawford had arrived.

Beside Jude Crawford was little Caden Crawford; they appeared together, the big and the small.

"Beryl, since you're here, where do you think you're going?" Little Caden Crawford asked in a childish voice.

Zelda Willow was also frightened by such a grand scene, and she quickly explained, "Sir... Sir Jude, don't misunderstand, I'm not familiar with this Beryl. She suddenly came to find me; I thought she was concerned about Iris, so I said a few words to her..."

At this point, Beryl looked at Zelda Willow and directly interrupted her, "Fool! Don't explain, they know everything. Can't you see they've used you as bait to lure me in? They've already figured out you're the mole!"

What?

Zelda Willow's legs went weak, and she collapsed onto the bed, looking at Jude Crawford in shock and fear.

Jude Crawford lightly raised his handsome eyelids and gave her a glance that was light yet filled with an overwhelming depth of anger and icy menace.

Zelda Willow's mind exploded with a "boom," forgetting how to think. She never expected her exposure to come so quickly.

It's over.

She's finished!

Jude Crawford's dark, narrow eyes fell on Beryl's face as he slightly parted his thin lips, "Who are you?"

Beryl knew she couldn't escape. Her face twisted and contorted, "Is it Serena Sterling? Is it Serena Sterling again? Did Serena Sterling give Iris Crawford some pill to keep her heart pulse, allowing her to survive? Is that so?"

Little Caden Crawford let out a "hmm," "Yes."

"Serena Sterling! Serena Sterling, why is it you again? I really hate you!" Beryl clenched her fists, her eyes bloodshot. The immense hatred and unwillingness made her look extremely terrifying.

"I won't tell you anything. You can give up. Ha, haha," Beryl began to laugh wildly and pointed at the wall clock in the room, "This kind of pill that protects the heart can only last for 72 hours; 12 o'clock is coming

soon. Where is Serena Sterling? Hasn't she returned yet? The outcome remains the same; Iris Crawford will still die. But this time, it's Serena Sterling who caused Iris Crawford's death. If you want to hate someone, hate Serena Sterling, haha."

At this moment, Riley Sutton silently approached and whispered, "Sir, it's almost 12 o'clock."

Jude Crawford pursed his thin lips, his expression murky and unclear.

o'clock was approaching; where is Serena Sterling now?

Did she really fail to make it back in time?

Just then, with a "boom," the front door of the corridor was suddenly pushed open.

Everyone quickly looked up, only to see a slender and stunning figure breaking into their view. Serena Sterling braved the stars and moon, returning once more with a body full of wind and frost.

The night outside was dark. Serena Sterling wore a black cape and a hat as she walked in from the darkness outside to the brilliantly lit area. Then, she raised her two small hands to remove the hat, revealing a face of enchanting beauty.

Her red lips curled upwards, and her bright, alert eyes slowly scanned the people in front of her. Her clear voice was like pearls, strong and vibrant, "Just now, I kept feeling someone was thinking of me on the way here. I wonder who wants to see me so badly."

Serena Sterling was back before 12 o'clock!

Jude Crawford's cold, stern brow instantly relaxed at this moment. Riley Sutton let out a long sigh, as if finding their backbone.

Beryl froze entirely, standing stiffly in place. She looked at Serena Sterling in utter shock. Serena Sterling stood there spiritedly, with a trustworthy and reassuring smile, exuding elegance.

Little Caden Crawford immediately dashed over, "Mommy, it's me, I missed you~"

The intellect-unchallenged little lord Caden Crawford instantly turned into a little bundle of joy in front of his mommy, and everyone else was left speechless.

Serena Sterling hugged little Caden Crawford and kissed his soft, pretty cheeks vigorously, "Caden, Mommy missed you too."

"Serena Sterling, it's you! Why is it you again?" Beryl seemed triggered upon seeing Serena Sterling. She wanted to break free from the black-clad bodyguards' grip and rush towards Serena Sterling.

Serena Sterling took off her black cloak and handed it to Cherie beside her, then took little Caden Crawford's hand and walked forward step by step. Her gauzy dress swung into dazzling arcs with her light steps, possessing a calm and poised aura akin to a queen's return.

Coming face to face with Beryl, Serena Sterling smirked, "Are you... Consort Willow?"

Beryl froze. She hadn't expected Serena Sterling to recognize her so quickly.

At this moment, Serena Sterling reached out, directly towards her face.

Beryl wanted to avoid it, but Serena Sterling was too fast. With a "hiss," Serena Sterling ripped off the human skin mask on her face.

Beryl revealed her true identity; she was Consort Willow.

"I didn't expect us to find you after all this time. You've been lurking beside Aunt Iris. Consort Willow, long time no see." Serena Sterling's bright eyes emanated with intelligent and confident smiles, captivating in her every glance.

Jude Crawford stepped forward and stood beside Serena Sterling, "She is a member of the Merfolk Clan?"

Serena Sterling nodded, her voice clear and pleasant, "That's right. She is indeed from the Merfolk Clan. It seems the dark hand hidden behind the Crawford family came from the Merfolk Clan. When Yara was adrift in the City of Aethelgard, the Merfolk Clan's influence also infiltrated the Crawford family. It was them who orchestrated all of this, forcibly rewriting the entire history of the Crawford family."

Chapter 745: I'll Sing My Love to You

Consort Willow looked at Serena with terrified eyes, suddenly realizing that with her exposure, the infiltration of the Merfolk Clan into the Crawford family had also been revealed.

"No, it's not like that, Serena Sterling, I just wanted to retaliate against you, don't overthink it!" Consort Willow quickly denied.

Serena looked at Consort Willow, playfully blinking her long lashes, "What, are you scared?"

"Scared? What should I be scared of?"

"Because you alone brought the Merfolk Clan's forces to the surface, all your hard work and detailed plans over the years are now ruined in an instant, losing Zelda Willow as your insider means you're a fighter short, why do you think you're scared?" Serena said with a graceful smile.

Consort Willow gasped, looking anxiously at Serena, now more fearful, she opened her mouth to say something, but nothing came out.

Serena didn't look at Consort Willow anymore, because she had more important things to do. She turned to Jude Crawford beside her, "Uncle Jude, make sure Consort Willow and Zelda Willow are watched closely, the matter with the Merfolk Clan is far from simple, I need to investigate thoroughly, but for now, I need to see Aunt Iris."

Jude Crawford nodded, and glanced at Riley Sutton beside him, "Go do it."

Riley Sutton's gaze towards Serena became increasingly respectful.

Serena and Jude Crawford walked toward the hospital room, Jude Crawford curled his thin lips with interest, "Where is Dylan Gardner, didn't you bring him back?"

Serena smiled without replying.

Jude Crawford's gaze was profound, "Dylan Gardner is like a turtle hiding in its shell, he dares not come back, he hides himself tightly to avoid facing his past mistakes as a form of protection, so I'm sure you couldn't bring him back."

Arriving at the hospital room door, Serena paused, her clear eyes filled with twinkling laughter, like stars shining in the dim corridor lights, "Uncle Jude, I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed, because I have already brought Dylan Gardner back."

This left Jude Crawford stunned.

Serena reached out a slender hand to push open the hospital room door, and went inside.

Little Caden Crawford raised his perfectly sculpted little face to look at his grandpa, "Grandpa, this time you lost, my mommy is still the best."

"..." Jude Crawford raised his large hand to fondly touch Little Caden Crawford's head, "Alright, your mommy is great, your mommy is the greatest."

...

In the hospital room, Jude Crawford walked in, Serena had already put away the Golden Needle, the heart monitor showed everything normal, Iris Crawford had regained her breathing and heartbeat, but her face was extremely pale, she lay there, not yet awake.

"When will Iris wake up?" Jude Crawford asked quietly.

Serena tucked Iris Crawford in with a blanket, shaking her head, "Aunt Iris's health is fine, the poison from the Merfolk Clan has been neutralized by me, but Aunt Iris is too tired, when she wakes up depends on... when she wants to wake."

Just then, the hospital room door was pushed open again, and someone appeared at the doorstep, it was... Dylan Gardner, not seen for many years.

Dylan Gardner and Iris Crawford from the City of Aethelgard were truly a match made in heaven, not seen for years, Dylan Gardner who had been teaching in mountain areas carried a quiet and weathered presence.

Dylan Gardner stood at the doorstep, his eyes landing on Iris Crawford.

After a long time, he moved his stiffened legs to Iris's bedside, his fingertips trembling as he touched Iris's cold hand, slowly kneeling beside her, his eyes red, lowering his head, already choking with sobs.

Jude Crawford looked at Dylan Gardner with cold eyes, delayed affection is worth less than grass, he pursed his lips into a grim line, fists clenched as he stepped forward.

But a slender hand reached out, directly blocking his path.

Jude Crawford lowered his gaze, looking at Serena.

Serena faced him, slowly shaking her head.

Jude Crawford looked again at the sleeping Iris Crawford, but two tears suddenly slid quickly down from her eye corners, instantly disappearing into her hair.

Jude Crawford's tight fists quickly loosened.

Serena looked at Dylan Gardner, "Mr. Garner, you've taught and nurtured many excellent children in the mountain areas over the years, who knows if you've obtained self-redemption during these times, I've brought you back this time to save someone... someone you should have saved many years ago but chose not to see, perhaps only by saving her, can you save yourself."

The dim lights cast a fine jade-like glow on Serena's flawless little face, hearing her words, Dylan Gardner's heavy, weathered shoulders collapsed instantly, he cried uncontrollably beside Iris Crawford.

...

Jude Crawford left the hospital, standing on the early morning street, the cold wind blowing the coat tail of his black coat briskly.

Light footsteps sounded beside him, Serena arrived.

Jude Crawford didn't turn around, he spoke in a low voice, "How did you manage to bring Dylan Gardner back?"

Serena stood beside Jude Crawford, "It's simple, the longer someone hides inside their turtle shell, the less likely they will come out, the only way is... breaking their shell, leaving them nowhere to hide, I knocked him unconscious and shipped him back directly!"

Jude Crawford turned his head to give Serena a look, "You really have guts."

"Thank you for the compliment, Uncle Jude."

Then, several black-clad bodyguards brought out Consort Willow, Serena said, "Uncle Jude, I'll take Consort Willow away."

Jude Crawford pressed his thin lips, "You can hand this person over to me, after all, it's an old Crawford family matter, you may not know the details."

Serena tilted her little head, "Uncle Jude, you're invulnerable in front of others, but defenseless before Aunt Yara, years ago the Merfolk Clan set up a delicate chess game for you in the name of love, unfortunately you never saw through it, since that's the case, I can only sing you a love song and put on a grand play for you all."

Jude Crawford's gaze fell on Serena's face, Serena smiled gracefully, with intelligent and composed lights flickering in her clear eyes.

Jude Crawford withdrew his gaze, not speaking.

The next second, a deep, magnetic voice sounded beside him, "It's so late, people who don't know might think you two are sharing a romantic moment standing together."

Oh, a strong air of jealousy, like someone broke an entire jar of vinegar from a certain household, Jude Crawford didn't need to turn around to know who it was.

Serena turned around, seeing a familiar tall figure under the dim streetlights, Hayden Crawford arrived.

Chapter 746: Zane Crawford's Return

Tonight, Hayden Crawford wore a black wool coat, looking handsome and noble. The sky started to drizzle, with him holding a black umbrella, standing quietly under the dim streetlight. The umbrella and the man seem to be part of a painting.

Now Hayden Crawford's deep and narrow eyes fell on her and Jude Crawford, with a slight furrow of his sword-like brows, revealing a touch of displeasure.

He actually came, arriving in the deep night.

But, what did he say just now?

Serena trembled slightly, batting her long lashes, and obediently called out, "Mr. Crawford~"

Hayden Crawford strode over, extending his strong arm to wrap around her slender waist and pulled her forcefully into his embrace, "Do you still have Mr. Crawford in your eyes? I saw you chatting happily with Mr. Old Crawford just now!"

"..." Serena was speechless. He was actually jealous of her father?

"Mr. Old Crawford," Jude Crawford cast a faint glance at Hayden Crawford, then turned and left, meaning "make a fuss if you want", not bothering to deal with it!

Jude Crawford got into the luxury car and sped away.

Hayden Crawford was even more displeased because he already felt the full contempt and malice from "Mr. Old Crawford." He immediately wanted to chase, "Mr. Old Crawford, what does that mean? Please make it clear."

Serena quickly reached out to grab Hayden Crawford, "Mr. Crawford, what are you doing, have you gone mad? That's your father!"

Hayden looked at Serena's delicate and stunning face, and after not seeing her for a few days, he found her even more beautiful. This made him feel increasingly uneasy—in agreement with other men, having a beautiful wife is so worrisome.

"Serena," his voice lowered, filled with displeasure, "Are you now protecting him? Are you protecting me, or him?"

"...Protecting you, alright?" Serena even raised her small hand to pat his firm back, meaning "don't be angry anymore, baby~"

Hayden snorted, "Then why didn't you come to find me as soon as you returned?"

Saying this, he reached out and pinched her soft little face, "Serena, have you not thought of me these days while you've been gone?"

Serena's skin was tender, and her face quickly showed red marks from his pinching. Somehow, she felt this man before her was... acting spoiled?

"Mr. Crawford, I've missed you~" Serena quickly skipped forward two steps, throwing herself into his embrace, with the intention of saying, "ding-ding, your cutie is online, catch her quickly."

Hayden immediately opened his arms, holding her steadily in his embrace. Serena used her little hands to hug his firm waist, her small head buried against his heart in a spoiled manner, rubbing it. Her voice was soft and sweet, "Mr. Crawford, I miss you so much that I can't sleep at night. Have you thought of me?"

Speaking of acting spoiled, who hasn't used that before?

The frustration and dissatisfaction from being neglected and the jealousy in Hayden's chest vanished instantly. In this world, the one thing he couldn't stand was Serena acting spoiled.

He bowed his head, his thin lips landed on Serena's hair, kissing strongly, inside and outside. Even his voice became somewhat hoarse, "Same here, thinking of you at night until my whole body aches, don't believe me... feel it yourself."

Serena quickly reached out her little hand to cover his mouth, forbidding him from saying anything reckless. Hey, hey, hey, this is the street, have some decency, Mr. Crawford!

Hayden looked at her shining eyes, inside a bashful little deer bouncing around. He reached his hand around her slender waist, "Let's go home."

"Home, which one?"

"You decide, shall I sleep at your place tonight, or you at mine?"

Serena took a few seconds to understand what he meant, and she immediately broke free from his strong arm, turned around, and ran away, "No, I just came back, I need to be with the kids tonight."

Hayden chased after her, neither of them got into the car. The specialized frame of the Rolls-Royce Phantom followed them all the way, while the two laughed all along as they chased each other on the street.

What they didn't know was that across the street, a silver Maybach slowly stopped, its rear window sliding down to reveal a serene and graceful handsome face.

It was Zane Crawford, whom they hadn't seen for more than three years.

Zane Crawford had returned.

Tonight, Zane Crawford wore an English style plaid coat, his face stunningly handsome, his black eyes exceedingly bright. Over these years, his temperament had grown even colder, the white shirt wrapping his wrist cleanly and neatly. His long hands were truly beautiful, naturally made for holding a scalpel, exhibiting elegance that drew all eyes.

As time passed, Zane Crawford is now 28 years old, the golden phase of a man's maturity. Now his car is quietly stationed by the roadside, his eyes lifted to look forward, watching Hayden Crawford and Serena.

His gaze persistently pursued Serena's delicate figure, the girl he loved most in his lifetime.

Wade watched their young master from the driver's seat, having just come from the Medicine Summit Forum, traveling a great distance, because there were news of Serena here.

Wade glanced at the two people flirting in front of him, truly puzzled, was their young master seeking misery?

At night, a large serving of dog food.

"Young Master, if you want to see Miss Serena, why not go up and say hello? Miss Serena and Mr. Old Crawford are visibly walking away." Wade said.

Zane Crawford looked at Serena ahead, slowly shaking his head, softly saying, "She's very happy now, the best way for me to be good to her is... not to disturb her. Just seeing her, I'm already content."

In her heart, she deeply loves Hayden Crawford, the three adorable kids are growing up too. In terms of relationship, she is his sister-in-law, and now the best way for him is not to disturb her, letting her relax, let no worries trouble her, just let her... continue to be happy.

In the future, him loving her would be unbeknownst to her, it's enough for him to know.

Soon, Hayden Crawford and Serena's figures disappeared from sight.

Wade felt incredibly sorry for their young master. It is often said, the men of the Crawfords are devoted souls, and this was truly not false, "Young Master, should we check on the lady and hear about the trouble she stirred up by colluding with The Merfolk Clan?"

Zane Crawford gazed at the direction where Serena vanished, softly curling his thin lips, "If indeed the trouble is great, even if I went, it wouldn't help, but might give Mother false hope, not thinking to repent."

Wade thought that made sense; the young master was the lady's biggest reliance. As long as the young master was present, the lady would never reconsider, might as well ignore her. Since the young master is still here, the Crawford family would not go as far as to take the lady's life.

"Young Master, I heard Lady Yara has returned, should we... go and meet her?"

Chapter 747: Go to the Hotel, Get a Room!

Mrs. Willow?

Isabelle Willow...

Hearing that name, Zane Crawford's handsome eyelids slightly moved. When he was very young, he had seen a portrait of Isabelle Willow in his father's study.

His mother, Zelda Willow, and Isabelle Willow looked very similar, but at that time, he could immediately see the differences between the two. Isabelle Willow was stunning with a celestial grace, her eyebrows and eyes exuded a cool elegance that made her seem like an ethereal fairy, while in comparison, Zelda Willow was as different as the earth to the sky. This similar face was not a plus, but rather underscored the disparity.

He was shocked at the time. He raised his tiny hand, wanting to touch the face in the painting.

He didn't know what was happening to him, as if there was a call from the depths of his soul. He had an overwhelming desire to get close to the person in the painting.

But before his little hand could touch it, the door of the study was pushed open, and his father appeared.

He still remembers his father's cold, frosty expression. His father sternly said to him a few words, "Get out! Remember, this person in the painting is not someone you can touch!"

As a little child, he was thus awkwardly driven out. At that time, his aunt had just returned, and he stood outside, listening to his aunt and father having a big argument in the study.

So, from a very young age, Zane Crawford knew that his father loved only one woman in his life, a woman named Isabelle Willow.

Since he was the son of his mother, who was not favored, his father also did not like him, and he didn't even have the right to touch Isabelle Willow.

His mother often told him to compete, to fight, claiming that since he was also a descendant of the Crawford family, why should he have nothing?

In fact, it wasn't that he had nothing, but that he wanted nothing. From a young age, he had longed for that unattainable fatherly love but had grown afraid.

He is a doctor, but all these years he has been healing himself. Some people spend their entire lives healing their childhoods.

Hayden Crawford was much luckier than him because Hayden met Serena Sterling. Serena extended a hand, offering him redemption, giving him boundless love.

But he, ultimately, was too late.

He met Serena Sterling too late, and all the youthful amazement and heart-pounding feelings turned into his deepest regret. Perhaps one day he would marry, have children, become a husband, become a father, but as time settles and the years pass, none could ever replace her.

He never forgot that more than four years ago, in the underground medical research base, her soft little hand reached out to him, her eyes full of light as she told him, "Zane, I'm here."

He once said, loving her was the most beautiful thing he did in his life.

The tenderness she gave made him feel that the world was also treating him kindly. He was willing to slowly try to be forgiving, to let go, to move on.

In the end, she said to him, "Zane, I look forward to meeting a better you at the next stop."

For that sentence, he dared not let his steps stop for more than four years. With someone as wonderful as her, how could he be extraordinary enough to stand by her side?

Now, suddenly hearing the name "Isabelle Willow," there was a moment of daze in Zane Crawford's bright black eyes. He quickly said, "No need, I'm not familiar with her, there's no need to meet."

...

On the street, Hayden Crawford embraced the fleeing Serena from behind, his brows and eyes filled with laughter, "Serena, what's more important, spending time with the kids or spending time with me, hmm?"

His warm breath sprayed onto her tender skin, tickling her slightly. Serena laughed as she dodged, "Mr. Crawford, aren't you too old for this? You've been jealous of my dad, now you're jealous of the kids."

Hayden pinched her soft waist, "Think carefully, where have you been spending your time lately? If I don't cause some trouble, will you just forget me?"

Serena turned her head, her bright gaze landing on his handsome, well-defined features, "Mr. Crawford, hasn't that little white flower, Caroline Sloan, been with you all along? You shouldn't be bored."

"Jealous?" Hayden raised his heroic eyebrows, his mood slightly uplifted.

"I'm not." Serena turned to flee.

But Hayden pinned her glistening shoulder, directly pressing her domineeringly against the wall, his clean, crisp masculine scent enveloping her completely. His tall figure quickly encompassed her in his arms, "Serena, tonight I have a lot of 'dues' to hand over to you, this should very well prove my innocence."

Serena quickly understood the meaning of the word "dues." Her pretty face turned red, "Mr. Crawford, have some shame."

In fact, Hayden had no shame at all. He lowered his eyes, directly capturing her red lips with his own.

The two of them were still on the street, but it was the middle of the night and there weren't many people. He trapped her in his embrace, passionately kissing her.

Serena tilted her fair neck, passively enduring it. Her soft white fingertips landed on his body, trying to push him away, but his muscles were hot and hard, as if burning, clearly showing it had been a long time since he'd been with a woman.

Serena curled her fingers, wanting to retract her small hand, but Hayden grabbed her little hand, slowly guiding her downward...

No.

Serena refused, but Hayden nuzzled the tip of her small nose, his voice raspy as he called her, "Serena..."

Serena quickly closed her eyes, her small face already as red as a cooked shrimp. Why did she feel Hayden was such a fatal man?

Her fingers loosened, no longer resisting.

Hayden's prominent Adam's apple moved up and down. Tonight, he neither wanted to take her home nor go to her place because he couldn't wait any longer.

He looked up, seeing a hotel in the distance, and pulled Serena's small hand, directly leading her there.

"Mr. Crawford, where are we going?"

"To the hotel, to get a room."

Serena's long lashes trembled, he!

What Hayden decided was impossible to change. Serena stumbled as he led her inside. He was too eager, and this was not a star-rated hotel but a small motel. The receptionist was a middle-aged woman who was watching TV.

Hayden held her hand with one hand, while with the other, he lifted his finger, tapping it rhythmically and powerfully on the counter.

The receptionist quickly looked up, and when she saw Hayden, her eyes lit up, "S-sir, would you like a room?"

The receptionist never had the chance to see a man of Hayden's caliber in such a small hotel, and now Hayden's presence left her dumbstruck.

Hayden's handsome face showed no expression, he said calmly, "Get a room, just one."

Getting one room, the receptionist quickly glanced towards Serena.

Chapter 748: Hayden Crawford's Low Chuckle—Little Liar

Serena's small hand was held in Hayden Crawford's palm, her face was flushed, and she looked shy and bashful.

The receptionist was stunned for a moment. She had been in the business for so many years and had seen all sorts of men and women, "Sir, who is this young lady to you? I say this only because you are exceptionally handsome - we can't do anything illegal here."

Hayden Crawford frowned slightly, "What do you mean?"

"Do I need to spell it out? There are many perverted old men these days who love preying on young girls."

"..." Hayden Crawford's handsome face turned dark. This was the first time in his life he had been mistaken for a perverted old man!

At this point, the receptionist looked at Serena, her eyes filled with encouragement. "Young lady, if you're being forced, just blink your eyes."

Serena's long eyelashes trembled, and at that moment, she felt a pain in her hand because Hayden squeezed it hard.

"Serena, tell her, who am I to you!"

Serena saw that he was a bit upset. This man was always dominant in such matters, and tonight was no exception.

"Miss, you misunderstood, he's my...husband," Serena said.

Hearing her shy and soft call him "husband," Hayden Crawford's expression quickly improved, and he lovingly squeezed her soft little hand a couple of times.

The receptionist's mouth dropped open in shock. She realized she had made a mistake and promptly opened a room for them.

...

At the hotel room door, Hayden Crawford opened the door, looked at the petite woman beside him, and said in a low voice, "Go inside."

Though Serena had given birth to triplets, her heart was still as shy as a young girl. They say absence makes the heart grow fonder, and she could feel Hayden Crawford's burgeoning passion. Her face turned as red as a boiled shrimp.

They had been together before, but they had never stayed in a hotel room.

This seemed like the first time.

Serena walked in.

Soon, there was a "click" sound as the door behind her was kicked shut by the man, and in the next instant, two muscular arms reached over from behind to eagerly embrace her.

"Mr. Crawford, wait a minute, you should go take a shower first," Serena struggled.

Hayden Crawford's thin lips landed forcefully on her face and moved to her snow-white neck, "I'll shower later."

"No, you have to shower first," Serena insisted.

The "impatient" Hayden, with one arm around her slender waist, took a few steps forward, half-pushing and half-hugging her onto the room's soft bed, then his sharp fingers moved to unbutton his shirt one by one, leaning down over her, "Serena, don't you really want me?"

This "want" was no longer a normal longing, but carried a hint of lust.

Serena placed her small hands against his firm shoulders, her eyes brimming with watery innocence as she looked at him, "I don't want to."

Hayden Crawford gave her lip a punishment nibble, and with a husky laugh said, "They say a woman's body is the most honest. Let me see if you're a little liar."

He reached to tug at her dress.

Why was he so rough?

"Mr. Crawford, be gentle, don't tear my clothes," Serena whimpered with a hint of feigned resistance.

Hayden Crawford was already aflame from her actions; they hadn't been together for a long time, and he missed her terribly.

At that moment, Serena felt a warm flow, and she was stunned, realizing something was wrong.

She quickly placed her hand over his large palm, urgently stopping him, "Mr. Crawford, stop quickly, my period is here."

Hayden Crawford looked at her, "What's here?"

"It's that time of the month...", Serena whispered shyly.

Hayden Crawford paused, his narrow eyes scorching as they fixed on her, "Are you serious?"

"Yes, really," Serena nodded earnestly; she was a good girl and wouldn't lie.

"..." Hayden Crawford quickly pressed his lips together, and after a few seconds, he rolled off her, collapsing beside her on the bed.

He stared at the ceiling light and then raised a hand to cover his eyes, flushed with desire, "Serena, are you doing this on purpose, to torment me?"

Serena also felt that this wasn't the right time for her cycle to come. The man's face beside her was full of disappointment and displeasure.

Serena turned to him, like a little kitten, climbing onto his solid chest, "Mr. Crawford, my period is here, and you don't even care about me."

Hayden Crawford felt a bit wronged, "Sorry, I couldn't control it."

"..."

Hayden Crawford moved and got up, "I'll call someone to buy you sanitary pads?"

"Okay." Serena lay on the soft bed with her small hands holding her tummy.

Hayden Crawford took out his phone from his pocket, dialing a number, then gently rubbed his broad palm over her flat little stomach, "Does it hurt?"

Serena frowned slightly, showing a bit of coquettishness, "No, it doesn't hurt."

Hayden Crawford raised an eyebrow, "Then we can have some fun later."

Serena picked up a pillow and smacked it onto the man's handsome and annoying face, "Go take a bath, I don't want to see you right now!"

Hayden bent down to kiss the top of her head, and as she grumbled and pushed at him, he smiled and headed into the bathroom.

...

Five minutes later, the bathroom door opened, and a waft of cool air came out, mixed with the fresh scent of soap. Hayden Crawford walked out wearing a white bathrobe, his bathrobe belt loosely tied, revealing his muscular chest underneath, tan and toned. His short hair was damp on his forehead, giving him an exceptionally youthful and aristocratic appearance compared to usual.

Just then, the "ding-dong" sound of the doorbell rang, and Hayden Crawford walked over to open the door. Outside stood Corvus, who handed him a bag.

Closing the door, Hayden took out the pink sanitary pads from the bag, examining them with his distinct, stylish fingers.

"Mr. Crawford, what's this odd hobby of yours, liking girls' sanitary pads?"

Hayden turned around, his voice low and rich, "This thing is meant to protect you in my place, so of course I need to get to know it."

Protect her?

To hell with protection!

"Mr. Crawford, why are you so adept at making inappropriate jokes? I want to report you and have the police arrest you."

Hayden sat on the edge of the bed, propping himself up with one arm, his sturdy physique looming over her, while his other hand gently massaged her flat lower abdomen, "What crime would they arrest me for, solicitation? Don't joke around, if I'm a client, what are you?"

"..."

Serena was at a loss for words. She extended her soft white hand to tuck her black hair behind her ears, her two alabaster arms propped on the bed as she raised her head, lips red and teeth white, angrily glaring at him.

Chapter 749: Behave Yourself!

Mr. Crawford had just taken a cold shower, but now her glance makes him feel like he needs another one.

He never admits to indulging in beauty or being lost in desire, but at this moment, he's having some doubts about himself.

Mr. Crawford bent down to kiss her hair, enchanted by her sweet scent, "Should I help you with the sanitary pads?"

Serena Sterling was taken aback; could such a powerful man in the business world actually stoop to dealing with women's sanitary pads?

Will he?

"Uh, no need..."

"Then do you want me to help with the washing?"

Washing what?

Underwear?

In Serena's mind flashed an image of her tiny panties being scrubbed in his palm, mortifying.

"I don't need you washing my underwear!" Blushing, she refused, but deep down she felt sweet; this man seemed quite considerate.

Mr. Crawford brushed her cheek with his lips, "Serena, are you overthinking this?"

The woman's delicate face grew red as an apple, tempting one to take a bite; she questioned, "What?"

"There's more than underwear that needs washing... Unless, you don't want to take a shower, I can help you..."

"..."

Serena spent several seconds to realize his implication; he didn't mean washing her underwear, but rather... showering together.

All earlier sweetness vanished, she quickly sat up from the bed, and swung her small fists at him.

Shameless scoundrel, big jerk!

Incredibly lustful guy!

Mr. Crawford caught her tiny fists in his palm, amused, "Sometimes overthinking is simply self-inflicted affection; your panties got stained with blood, washing might not clean them, just toss them—I'll buy you new ones."

Serena was dumbstruck; she had never seen a man offer to buy new panties with such grandiosity as if offering jewels and diamonds!

Serena wished she could scratch his handsome face, her clear eyes glistening with tears, pouting irritably, "Other men buy women jewels and diamonds, Mr. Crawford buys me new panties. Should I say thank you?"

Mr. Crawford knew she was upset; her kitten-like tantrum was utterly charming. He swiftly stood up, tall and upright by the bed, earnestly looking at her, extending his hand, "Do you really want me to wash your panties? It's not impossible but for a man to wash a woman's panties, she'd have to take them off in front of him first. Serena, take them off now, I'll wash them for you."

"..."

Serena's face turned crimson, fine, enough, she admitted defeat; she would never outmatch this man.

Her actions spoke for her; she jumped off the bed and ran into the bathroom.

She wouldn't fall for his trick!

...

Serena showered, changed into clean clothes, and then left the house.

In the room, Mr. Crawford sat tall beside the bed, holding a small spoon, stirring brown sugar water.

"You're just in time, drink the brown sugar water."

Serena climbed onto the bed, her little head leaning close to smell it with her petite nose, then disdainfully furrowed her brows.

She disliked brown sugar water.

Mr. Crawford leaned his tall frame against the bedhead, wrapped his arm around her slender waist, pressing a warm water bag against her, coaxing softly, "Pinch your nose and drink; your stomach will feel better."

Serena pouted, then took two sips of brown sugar water from his big hand.

"It tastes awful, I'm not drinking anymore."

Mr. Crawford regarded her delicate appearance, "Come on, drink a bit more."

Serena pushed his hand away, "I'm not drinking. Do you know how awful brown sugar water tastes... oo!"

Her lips were suddenly sealed shut.

A few minutes later, Mr. Crawford ended the deep kiss, his voice husky, "It's not that bad."

"..."

Two soft white hands pressed against his firm chest, attempting to push him away, but he fed her another mouthful of brown sugar water deeply, forcing her to swallow.

Serena was firmly pinned down by him with not an inch left to resist; soon, her mouth was filled with the slight taste of brown sugar water, but more so his clean, invigorating masculine scent—damn it... smelled good.

A cup of brown sugar water was completely consumed, Mr. Crawford placed the empty cup on the bedside table, "If you want me to feed you directly in the future, just say so."

Serena's red cheeks were delicate enough to squeeze juice from, her tiny hands clutching the neckline of his pajamas as she puffed out her cheeks, "Finding such an elaborate reason just to kiss me."

Mr. Crawford's gaze darkened and heatedly studied her.

Serena's heart skipped as she realized she shouldn't have started this.

She quickly clutched her stomach, "My tummy isn't feeling well, I want to sleep now."

Mr. Crawford leaned over, placing his hand wrapped around the warm water bag on her belly, warning darkly, "Behave, don't provoke!"

"I did not, it's you..."

"What's wrong with me taking a tiny advantage of you, endure it, understand?"

"..."

Mr. Crawford felt particularly frustrated; she had been gone for several days without even a message. He eagerly awaited her return, watching till midnight just to rush over, intending to spend some quality time together.

This room was already booked, yet all he could do was chat with her under the covers!

Serena dared not move, nor provoke him, fearing his loss of control.

Mr. Crawford knitted his handsome brows and kissed her again, his hand slipping beneath her sleeping gown...

He inadvertently hurt her.

Serena quickly frowned but dared not utter a sound, enduring aggrievedly.

Suddenly, abnormal sounds began to emanate from the next room, male and female voices intertwined, making anyone's face blush.

Due to this hotel's lack of quality, the soundproofing was poor, quickly transmitting suggestive noises from the adjacent room.

Serena shivered slightly and glanced at the man on top of her.

Mr. Crawford's handsome face had already darkened completely; the neighbors must be doing this intentionally.

He reached out and grabbed something to bang forcefully against the wall.

Thud, a sound.

The noise from the next room quickly reduced.

Serena couldn't hold back, curling her lips into a smile.

Mr. Crawford pinched her soft waist, "What are you laughing at? Don't laugh!"

"Okay." Serena stifled it, but after a while, she laughed again.

Mr. Crawford was about to give her a proper scolding when suddenly his phone began to ring melodically; he had gotten a call.

This late, someone was actually calling him.

"Mr. Crawford, your phone's ringing."

"Ignore it."

Serena grinned at him, "Mr. Crawford, is this call from Caroline Sloan?"

Chapter 750: Sleeping In Together

There was no trace of emotion on Hayden Crawford's handsome face as he kissed Serena Sterling's cheek, "Serena, let's not talk about irrelevant people at this moment."

Serena turned her head, avoiding his kiss. She sat up slowly from the bed, and with a playful smile and raised eyebrows, said, "Mr. Crawford, don't change the subject. Answer the phone quickly, don't keep Lillian waiting."

Hayden sat up too, with a smile playing on his thin lips, "Jealous?"

Serena's eyebrows arched as she smiled, her voice soft and sweet, "Mr. Crawford, you damn well know I'm jealous, and you keep asking?"

"..."

Hayden reached out and pinched her delicate chin with his defined fingers, his handsome eyes filled with a soft indulgence, "Ladies shouldn't cuss."

"Well, it so happens I not only love to cuss, but I also love to fight!" Serena stretched her leg and kicked Hayden off the bed.

Unprepared, Hayden was truly kicked off. Although he didn't fall to the ground, he didn't land as gracefully as he usually did when his feet hit the carpet.

His handsome face turned cold instantly.

Hayden Crawford had never been treated so coldly before, and he frowned, staring at the little woman on the bed, his strong aura radiating out, intimidating others.

Serena raised her eyebrows, looking back at him, her enticing eyes shimmering with a clear, bright light, "Hayden Crawford, let me tell you, I've given you time to deal with Caroline Sloan, not to let her call you in the middle of the night to upset me. I can't stand any sand in my eyes, be careful I'll kick you out and find a new lover. I, Serena Sterling, may lack many things, but men aren't one of them!"

"Lastly, you're not allowed on my bed tonight, go sleep on the sofa!" With that, Serena snuggled into the covers, ignoring him, letting him amuse himself.

"..."

Hayden was frozen in place, his handsome profile taut, this little wildcat!

Just then, the melodious ringtone rang again, with the name "Caroline Sloan" flashing on the phone screen. It really was a call from her.

He didn't answer, but Caroline persisted, calling over and over.

Hayden pressed his thin lips together, then picked up the phone from the nightstand and answered it, "Hello."

Caroline's sweet, harmless voice quickly came through, "Mr. Crawford, am I disturbing your rest by calling so late?"

Hayden's gaze fell on Serena's slender figure, and he spoke calmly, "Is something wrong?"

"I have something, something urgent and important I want to discuss with you, Mr. Crawford. Where are you? Can I come see you now?"

Caroline wanted to come over and discuss something urgent in the middle of the night.

Hayden's deep eyes were obscured by the dim light, and after a few seconds of silence, he said, "Alright, come find me. I'm at XX Hotel, room XXX."

Hayden gave her the address and room number, then hung up the phone.

Throwing the phone aside, Hayden sat on the edge of the bed and gently pushed her, "Serena, turn around and face me!"

He commanded authoritatively.

Serena didn't move, ignoring him completely.

Hayden furrowed his brows, "Serena, are you really going to ignore me? Caroline will be here soon. Don't cry later when I go out to meet her."

"Then go meet her. She can even accompany you for entertainment!" Serena retorted defiantly.

Hayden's handsome brows knitted together, and he grasped her tender shoulder, turning her around.

"Hayden Crawford, let me go!"

"Shut up! If you dare to make me angry again, I'll fight you to the death!" Hayden lowered his head and kissed her red lips.

Fight what battle? Which war?

Serena's pupils shrank, wishing she could kick him again.

Just then, there was a "ding" as a knock sounded at the door.

"Mr. Crawford, it's me..." Caroline had arrived.

Serena didn't expect Caroline to arrive so quickly. She nudged the man, "Lillian's here. Won't you see her?"

In truth, Serena was a bit upset. Caroline wanted to come over so late, and Hayden had passively allowed her to, truly a willing participant.

Hayden's tall, sturdy body didn't move an inch, "Who said I'm going to see her?"

"Didn't you tell her to come over?"

"She wanted to come, so let her. But I never said I'd meet her."

What?

Serena looked at him in surprise. He had made Lillian come all the way over in the middle of the night, just to leave her standing at the door with no intention to see her. His move was harsh.

He was giving Lillian a hard slap in the face, humiliating her.

"Mr. Crawford, that's not nice. Lillian's so fragile, bullying her like this, she'll cry."

Hayden pinched her cheek, "You have time to worry about others. Think about whether I'll make you cry later."

What does he mean?

Serena hadn't processed it all yet when suddenly the world spun, and she found herself in his arms. His strong back lazily propped against the bedhead, settling her onto his lap.

This posture...

"Mr. Crawford, I'm on my period, you can't bully me!"

Hayden pulled her into his embrace, "Ungrateful little thing, who's really bullying who?"

The "ding" knock came again, clearly indicating Caroline realized something was off, "Mr. Crawford, are you in there? I have something urgent and important for you. I want to see you, Mr. Crawford, can you hear me?"

Serena felt Caroline's voice was almost heavenly, like a lifeline, "Hayden Crawford, go see Lillian, let me go."

Hayden aggressively held her in his arms, then impatiently shouted towards the door, "What's all the noise? I'm doing 'A'!"

The noise outside stopped immediately.

Serena was so shocked she forgot to struggle. What did he just say?

Did he really... have no shame?

Such a terrifying person.

Serena tried to climb off his lap, both hands and feet in motion.

But Hayden quickly pulled her back, "Where do you think you're going? Come give me a kiss, I've missed you."

He whispered sweet nothings into her ear.

...

The next morning.

Serena's long eyelashes quivered as she slowly opened her eyes.

It was already past nine o'clock, the brilliant morning light spilling in through the glass window, filling the room with a warm, golden glow.

She now lay in a warm, broad embrace. Looking up, Hayden Crawford's flawless handsome face was magnified in her view.

They went to bed so late last night, Hayden hadn't gotten up either, indulging in a lazy half-day off, holding her as he also slept in.