

Substitute B 76

Chapter 76: Serena Said, I Will Protect You!

Of course, she doesn't have any male friends either.

Sure enough, as soon as she arrived at The Concordiat Research Institute, his "monitoring call" came in.

Serena Sterling pinched her phone, deliberately teasing him, "Yeah, there are so many handsome guys at the institute, I met several today..."

The other side seemed to stop breathing suddenly, and after a long while, he let out a low, seductive chuckle, "Heh, go on."

Serena knew he was already upset, and she dared not poke the tiger, so she wisely laughed it off, "Just kidding, Mr. Crawford, I looked around, none of them are as handsome as you!"

Only then did Hayden Crawford's gentle breathing come through, his low, tender voice tinged with a pampering smile, "Little liar, getting bolder, aren't you? Up for a lesson?"

"Mr. Crawford, I want to tell you, in my eyes, you're the most handsome. With you around, other handsome guys don't even catch my eye. So you must behave, Mr. Crawford, and don't be petty," Serena declared her loyalty to him with heart unflattered and breath steady.

Hayden just felt this girl truly knew how to be endearing; all this chatter was simply so she could keep him from meddling in her affairs.

Yet she's so emotionally intelligent, beautiful, and sweet-tongued, he simply couldn't refuse her.

"Serena." He called her softly.

Serena rarely heard him call her "Serena." He usually called her "Mrs. Crawford," only when caught up in emotions, like kissing her, would he murmur magnetically as "Serena."

"Why are you calling me?" Serena responded.

"Serena, I don't like guys who study medicine. Don't get too close to them."

"Oh, Mr. Crawford doesn't like guys who study medicine but likes girls who do. Very normal preference!"
Serena laughed.

"Serena, I'm serious. My younger brother studies medicine; he's been a medical genius since childhood, quite outstanding."

It was the first time Serena heard him talk about his family. Leah had told her Hayden came to Bayside six or seven years ago. He's quite low-key and mysterious, living with Mrs. Crawford at Orchid Court. She thought Mrs. Crawford was his only relative.

"Mr. Crawford, you have a brother?"

"Half-brother. My mother passed away very early. The current Mrs. Crawford is my stepmother; they are the real family."

Serena's long lashes fluttered. She never expected Hayden's family background to be so similar to hers.

So his father, stepmother, and that quite outstanding medical genius brother live together, while he lives in Bayside with his grandmother?

Hayden had always been a mature and reserved man, never having revealed these things. Yet now, with just a few words, especially that last sentence—they are the real family... it made Serena's heart throb with a hidden ache for him.

"Mr. Crawford..."

"I don't want to hear you talk now. Get back to work. Bye." Hayden directly hung up her call.

Serena listened to the "beep beep" inside, wishing she could kick him. What does he mean, calling her then hanging up on her?

Annoyed, Serena put away her phone. Just as she looked up, that man who loved sleeping was back!

He had vanished earlier, and now he returned silent as a shadow. Serena was startled again. Does he make no sound when he walks?

Then Serena noticed something new beside his hand—instant noodles.

The noodles had been opened, with hot water poured inside, steaming.

Serena's stomach embarrassingly growled.

She had eaten very little at noon, spent the whole afternoon tidying up, and hadn't had dinner yet—she was really hungry.

Serena saw the man reading a book, a medical book. His fingers were pale and slender, quite beautiful. Hands like these belonged either to pianists or doctors.

What's his background?

Serena wasn't interested in that; she was interested in... the bowl of instant noodles.

The noodles were soaking there, and he didn't seem to be in a hurry to eat.

Serena got up and went to his side, "Um... excuse me, are you going to eat this bowl of noodles? I haven't had dinner yet, could I... borrow your noodles? I'll return them to you tomorrow."

The man didn't look up. His wavy bangs covered his dark eyes, and dressed in a white shirt, he looked as dashing and cool as a Korean drama lead.

He slowly said, "Take it."

So, he could speak.

Serena hugged the instant noodles with many thanks, then returned to her chair to enjoy them.

Just then, a melodious ringtone sounded; another call for Serena.

It's Mr. Crawford again.

Serena quickly pressed to answer, "Hello, Mr. Crawford."

Hayden's deep, magnetic voice came faintly, just two words, "Come out."

He wanted her to come out.

Could it be...

Serena's eyes lit up. She quickly put down the little fork in her hand and hurried out.

As she exited the gates of The Concordiat Research Institute, Serena saw the luxury car Rolls-Royce Phantom by the roadside, Hayden Crawford's ride.

He's here.

Serena stopped and watched him. Hayden had gotten out, now lazily leaning against the luxury car's body, wearing a gray shirt, the streetlights draping his handsome, chiseled profile in a breathtaking allure.

She hadn't lied; he's the most handsome man she'd ever seen, no exceptions.

"Mr. Crawford, I'm here!" Serena called out.

Hayden turned to the side, standing straight, and the girl in the magenta sweater, pure and charming, dashed into his line of sight.

Serena sprinted over, hurling herself directly into his arms.

Almost instantly, Hayden stretched his hands, embracing her delicate, sweet little body.

Serena rubbed her stunning face on his chest like a kitten, acting spoiled, "Mr. Crawford, why did you hang up on me earlier? Were you afraid I'd comfort you, pity you?"

In all the time they'd known each other, Hayden had rarely experienced such active moments from her. Now, her clear, luminous eyes looked up at him, and Hayden pursed his thin lips, "Whatever I said earlier on the phone, I've forgotten. You should too."

Serena nodded obediently, "Okay, since you said to forget, I'll forget. Mr. Crawford, what I'm saying next you can't forget. I'm not here to comfort or pity you. I'm here to tell you I'll protect you in the future!"

Hayden firmly tightened his grip on her soft, slender waist, "Protect me, you?"

"Mr. Crawford, don't look down on me. They may be three, but Grandma, you, and I, make three as well. Speaking of medical geniuses, I'm not afraid to go head-to-head. If they dare bully you, I'll definitely protect you!"