

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1401

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Chapter 1401

"Oh my gosh, they are so adorable together."

"Mr. McMillian seems really into Ms. Bella. Just look at the way he gazes at her. It's like he's trying to sweeten her up with his eyes!"

"When are they getting hitched, for heaven's sake? I can't wait!"

Their excited chatter reached Romeo's ears. He offered a warm smile, lifting his eyes towards them, "I'll make sure you guys get an invitation well in advance."

The staff were gobsmacked, never imagining they'd score an invite to Romeo and Ms. Bella's wedding. The joy was so sudden, they started cheering in excitement.

"Thank you, Mr. McMillian!"

"Mr. McMillian, here's to a lifetime of happiness for you and Ms. Bella, and may you be blessed with a family soon!"

Romeo looked towards Arabella with interest, his eyes all but asking: You hearing this?

"Mr. McMillian and Ms. Bella, wish you a love that's everlasting!"

"May you two find joy and love eternal!"

"To Mr. McMillian and Ms. Bella —- may you grow old together, in unwavering unity!"

Arabella suddenly felt as if she were about to walk down the aisle.

Wasn't all this jubilation a bit premature?

"Thank you." Romeo accepted their well-wishes with the grace and generosity of a true gentleman, his gaze returning to Arabella once again.

The servants nearby were nearly swooning under his tender look. Who would have thought the usually stoic and cold Romeo

had such a warm and gentle side?

Ms. Bella was the lucky one, destined to spend her life with such a handsome face doting on her.

In the garden.

Serena was running so fast she stumbled and fell to the ground.

Martin rushed over to help her up, "Serena, are you alright? Did you hurt yourself?"

"Back off." Serena pushed him away, but her knee was in so much pain, she couldn't stand and had to sit on the grass, sulking on her own.

"Did you hurt your knee?" Martin asked with concern, "Let me have a look."

"I don't need your help."

"Serena!" Seeing her turn her face away, refusing to look at him, he went ahead and scooped her into his arms.

"What are you doing, Martin? Put me down!"

"The ground is cold and damp. You could catch a cold." Martin carried her to a nearby swing seat and gently set her down, insisting, "Wait here and don't move. I'll be right back."

He went back to the house, grabbed a first aid kit from a servant, and returned promptly.

Serena watched him kneel down and start to roll up her pants.

"Martin."

"What's with all these bruises?" Martin worked quickly and noticed the marks on her shin and knee,

"How did you get all banged up? When did this happen? Why didn't you tell me?"

"It's none of your business!"

"You're my girlfriend. If it's not my business, then whose is it?"

The thought that she had gone out with him today carrying all those bruises made Martin's heart ache and sorrow fill him, "Did you fall by yourself, or is there something else going on? Has anyone been giving you trouble?"

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Serena sat in silence, a storm of emotions brewing within her.

"Serena?" Martin, noticing her reluctance to speak, simply opened the first-aid kit and began to tend to her wounds.

As Serena watched his concerned and earnest expression, she couldn't help but retract her foot.

"You know now, I'm not the Collins heiress. Why are you still here? You can leave!"

"Stay still," Martin said, gently pulling her foot back into place and resuming his work.

"I don't deserve you, Mr. Martin, didn't you hear me? Go away!"

Martin paused in his ministrations and looked up, meeting the gaze of the girl perched on the swing chair.

"Having second thoughts?"

Serena was taken aback.

"Did I disappoint you today? Is that it?"

She averted her gaze, confused. Why did Martin always seem to wear his heart on his sleeve, his eyes betraying a wounded forbearance that made her feel unsettled?

"I'm saying that I'm not the Collins heiress. It has nothing to do with how you acted today!"

"So what?" Martin continued treating her wounds, more concerned about the small cut on her foot than her lineage.

Serena was surprised. Seeing Martin so focused on her insignificant injury, she couldn't help but question, "Don't you

understand? I'm not a true Collins. I was switched at birth! My real background is probably very ordinary. I'm not good enough for you, Martin!"

"It's not for you or anyone else to decide who is worthy' Martin said softly, all the while carefully applying medicine to her wounds.

"If I say you are worthy, then you are. I like you, Serena, not your status."

"But your family will never agree."

Martin had not expected her to think so far ahead. He looked up, his voice gentle, "I'll take care of my family."

Serena was shocked. Even knowing her true birthright, Martin was surprisingly unfazed.

She had thought that once he learned the truth, he would choose a well-matched heiress and break up with her.

Just then, Martin's phone rang.

He finished treating the last bruise and picked up the call.

"Martin, you're such a jerk. Skipping Grandpa's birthday for some drama queen!"

Diana's angry voice blasted through the phone.

"I'll apologize to him when I get back," Martin replied calmly.

“What time is it now? By the time you get back, Grandpa will be asleep! Don't forget how many eyes in the Cooper family are watching you! Grandpa doesn't just have you for a grandkid! You not showing up tonight just gives those other relatives more to talk about. Mom's livid!”

Diana on the other end was fuming, disappointed and frustrated.

“Martin, don't think that just because your career is looking up, you can stand up to them! You know they're tough cookies. You were Grandpa and Dad's pride and joy, and tonight you let them both down!”

“I'll explain it to them tomorrow.”

“Explain what? That you went all out for a drama queen with a private venue, a sea of flowers, and then got chewed out in public?”

“Were you there?” Martin was surprised.

“If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't believe such behavior came from a Collins!”

Such poor manners!

Martin frowned slightly, not wanting Serena to overhear this, “We'll talk when I get back.”

Diana couldn't believe her brother hung up on her! It must be that drama queen's influence!

She couldn't keep this to herself any longer. If she couldn't handle her brother, it was time for their parents to step in.

They couldn't let Martin make another mistake!

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The Cooper family was going through a rough patch, and Diana's younger brother, the one most capable of turning the tide, simply couldn't afford to drop the ball now!

Martin pocketed his phone and lifted his gaze, a gentle concern in his eyes, "Are you hurt anywhere else? Did you injure your hands?"

In that moment, Serena felt a rush of emotion. For a split second, she thought the boy before her wasn't half bad. He seemed genuinely caring.

"No, I'm fine." Serena averted her gaze, avoiding his eyes, "If you've got stuff to do, you can go. Don't worry about me."

"I'll stay a bit longer." Martin sat beside her, looking at her tenderly, "You haven't told me how you got hurt.

"It was snowy, the pavement was slippery, and I just fell."

She didn't dare mention that it was her clumsiness that had caused her grandpa to fall.

"Where did you fall?" Martin asked with concern.

"In the garden."

"Was it yesterday?"

"Today"

Then it clicked for Martin, "So you were feeling down and wanted to get out? Is that why you asked me to hang out?"

No wonder she had reached out.

It was because she was in pain, felt wronged, and wanted someone to be there with her.

Martin rebuked himself, "I didn't know you were hurt, and I had you walking so much today — through the lavender fields, by the Emerald Tower, and even when we left Luminescent Brook to walk to the parking lot. If I had known, I would've carried you."

"You dare?" Serena warned with a playful smile. For some unknown reason, knowing that Martin didn't despise her brought a sweet sensation to her heart.

"Take a good rest at home tomorrow." Martin didn't want her walking too much, especially since her knee was scraped.

But at the mention of staying home, Serena suddenly became petulant, "If you don't want to see me, just say it.

Why beat around the bush?"

She tried to leave the swing but her foot ached too much, and she nearly stumbled.

Martin quickly steadied her, "You've got it all wrong, I just don't want you to overexert yourself."

"So you do mind, don't you?" Serena pushed him away, angry.

Martin was confused.

"If you don't want to be together, just say it. Why make excuses?"

Martin finally grasped her point, "I've told you, your background doesn't matter to me. What's important is having you by my side!

If you don't believe me, tomorrow I'll plan a date where we don't have to walk, okay?"

Serena couldn't help but smirk, "Who wants to date you? Besides, is there even such a thing as a date without walking?"

When Serena smiled, Martin's tension eased, and he chuckled along, "There is. I'll take care of tomorrow's plans, and I promise it won't be disappointing like today"

Serena, moved by his sincerity, lightened up and smiled, "I'm done talking to you. I need to go to sleep."

"I'll take you." Without hesitation, Martin swept her into a romantic bridal carry.

As Serena observed his profile, she realized he might not have Romeo's looks, but he wasn't too shabby either.

Smooth skin, a jawline with a chiseled contour, eyes clear and bright.

Had she been too hard on him before, constantly comparing him to Romeo?

In truth, he was already far more exceptional than his peers.

But before she could entertain this thought for more than half a minute, Serena caught sight of Romeo pinning Arabella against a tree in a passionate embrace. That domineering yet fiery demeanor was the ideal partner she had envisioned.

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Romeo was the very definition of a dashing enigma, carrying an air of aristocratic grace and a touch of aloofness that seemed etched into his very being.

When his gaze fell upon strangers, it held an untamed wildness paired with a lofty indifference. Yet, when he looked upon the one he cherished, his eyes softened into a tender caress.

This stark contrast had Serena utterly captivated. She relished Romeo's icy dominance, his powerful aura that seemed to tower above the rest, his statuesque figure, and his impeccably handsome features.

Everything about Romeo was an object of her affection.

In comparison, Martin seemed so utterly ordinary. In that moment, Serena found herself a touch envious of Arabella, who was the recipient of Romeo's fervent kisses, his intense affection.

Before Romeo's lips could tire, Arabella's phone buzzed to life, his eyes lingering with a hint of desire yet to be sated.

It was her grandmother calling.

"Bella, your uncle is driving me up the wall. I can't talk sense into him!"

Belinda's voice came through the phone, laden with complaint, "You deal with him!"

Arabella tried to suppress a chuckle, but before she could offer a few soothing words, she heard Sampson's resigned voice,

"Bella."

"Uncle Sampson," Arabella replied with a light laugh,

"Are you stirring up trouble with Grandma again?"

"She wants to visit your grandpa, but I'm swamped with work and can't spare the time."

Sampson's explanation was cut short by Belinda's irritated interjection, "When are you ever not busy? May can take me. I can't wait for you forever."

The mention of her grandmother's impatience brought a smile to Arabella's face.

"I'd like to see Dad too. Let me wrap up some things here, and we'll go together."

"I don't need you to come with me! Bella said I'm well enough to travel on my own, didn't you, dear?"

Belinda pulled her granddaughter into the conversation, asserting, "She even said a long-haul flight wouldn't be an issue for me."

Sampson immediately saw through the ruse, "Bella would never say something so irresponsible. Can you just wait a few days for me?"

As the mother-son duo continued their debate, Arabella intervened with a laugh, "I think Grandma's idea is sound. With May for company and using the family jet to land directly at the estate's airstrip, it's quite safe."

"Still, I worry about her health."

"I've looked at Grandma's recovery stats recently. A trip won't hurt her."

"Did you hear that? Bella says it's fine!" Belinda's voice was tinged with irrepressible joy, "May, start packing! Bella gave the green light!"

Sampson, realizing her determination, resignedly said to Arabella, "This means you'll have to look after both of them."

He worried that if his parents caught even a minor cold, it would all fall on Arabella's shoulders.

Others might help with simple tasks, but none would take the burden of acupuncture or surgery.

"Don't worry, let Grandma come. A good mood is key to a faster recovery."

Assured by her words, Sampson replied with a laugh, "Alright, I'll listen to you."

And how's Bard? Has he been treating you well?"

Arabella smiled back, "Uncle Bard and Aunt Eunice have been wonderful. But when are you going to give me a new aunt, dear uncle?"

"You too, with the matchmaking." Sampson chuckled, "You'd do better to pay attention to those closer to you."

"You mean Romeo?" Arabella looked up at the young man before her.

Romeo, ever doting and curious, leaned in closer, his handsome face inches from hers, eager to catch the words floating from her phone.

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"The McMillian lad is quite the catch. I'm looking forward to raising a glass at your wedding someday soon."

Romeo's eyes softened as he gazed at the girl before him, her long eyelashes framing her bright, smiling eyes.

"Uncle Sampson, Romeo and I are also looking forward to celebrating your big day,' Arabella interjected before he could respond, "But enough about that for now, I've got to run."

Sampson chuckled, turning to his excited mother who was already busy packing for tomorrow's trip. It was clear that it had been a long while since she'd been this happy.

"Is Grandma coming over tomorrow?" Romeo asked quietly after they had hung up.

"Yeah, she should be here by noon,' Arabella put her phone away. "It's getting late, you should head back."

"You're kicking me out already?" Romeo feigned disappointment, knowing that once Grandma arrived, it might be hard to spend time with Arabella. He wondered when they would see each other next.

"Who knows? Maybe Grandma will want to see you tomorrow and we'll meet up again,' Arabella reassured him, seemingly reading his thoughts.

"What does Grandma like? I want to prepare a gift, just in case I get the chance to give it to her in person," Romeo said, then added, "And what about your grandpa, uncle, and aunt?"

"Trying to charm the whole family in one go?"

"Well, if I'm going to take their precious granddaughter, niece under my wing, I've got to make a good impression." Romeo's gaze was tender as he looked at Arabella.

From her room, Serena watched through the gap in the curtains as Romeo held Arabella in a lingering embrace, his hands refusing to leave her for even a second.

He seemed so enamored with her.

A pang of envy struck Serena. She wondered what magic Arabella had cast to hold Romec's heart so firmly.

If only Arabella would share her secret.

Meanwhile, Romeo walked Arabella back towards the main house. As they strolled, Arabella's gaze lifted to the branches above, and whatever she said made Romeo crouch down so she could sit atop his shoulders and reach for the blossoms.

Serena was stunned. A man of Romeo's stature, allowing a girl to perch on his shoulders.

Arabella plucked a small branch of blossoms, several flowers adorning it, and softly asked to be let down.

"If it's pretty, take more,' Romeo indulged her. "If you like, we can plant some in our future home."

Arabella laughed, "Are you talking about Moon Villa or Bella Villa?"

"Whichever you want. If you like Moon Villa, we'll plant them there. If you prefer Bella Villa, then there. But if you don't like either."

"Then we'll find a new place, as long as you love it" she finished his thought.

"That's right. Now, let me help you down. Is it uncomfortable?"

"I just want to get down."

Romeo crouched to let her off, "Take it easy."

Once on the ground, Arabella's hand was once again clasped in his as they continued their walk, fading from Serena's sight. In just half a year, their relationship had grown so close, so intimate.

Jealousy seethed within Serena. Without Arabella, maybe Romeo would have taken a liking to her. She even believed she could win him over.

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Chapter 1406

"Alright, you head on back now."

Arabella was well aware that Romeo had a few loose ends to tie up in Dawnstar, and he had already taken time out of his busy day to be with her.

The poor guy hadn't had a moment's rest.

"Get some sleep early, alright? And call me anytime, Romeo said, his eyes brimming with reluctance. He leaned in, his lips

lingering on hers for a while before he whispered softly, "I'll text you when I get home."

"Sure, drive safe, and take it slow,' Arabella urged, her gaze lingering on him longer than she intended, "Just be careful, okay?"

"You care about me now.' The satisfaction in Romeo's eyes was undeniable.

It seemed his long-held affection was finally being reciprocated.

After he left, several of the household staff quickly surrounded Arabella, effectively blocking her path.

"Ms. Bella, I'm just dying to know. What's it like dating the one and only Romeo?"

"How on earth did you manage to snag him? Spill the beans, will you? You've got us all curious!"

"What did you do to make him so utterly devoted to you? You must have some secret. Oh! Mr. McMillian."

They certainly hadn't expected Romeo to come back, and the staff quickly ducked their heads and stepped back.

Romeo was surprised to find the staff so close to Arabella, and even more surprised to see the warmth in her eyes when they surrounded her. He remembered when he first met her, she rarely showed such a tender side.

She was always so cool and detached.

Had she changed, or had he just never really known her?

"I just remembered, I have a gift for you that I haven't given yet." Romeo pulled out a small box from his coat pocket.

The staff peeked curiously. It was a small, square box, about the size of a palm. Could it be that Mr. McMillian was going to propose?

With that thought, their faces lit up with knowing grins, wondering if Ms. Bella would say 'yes' right then and there.

Inside the box, Arabella found a chocolate molded into the shape of The Emerald Tower, with "I love you" inscribed on it.

The staff craned their necks to see that it wasn't a ring, but the declaration of love on the chocolate made them giggle even more.

Romeo sure knew how to play the romance card.

"When did you buy this?" Arabella was surprised. He seemed to have a magic touch, always pulling out gifts from thin air.

"I had it custom-made in advance. Not too shabby, right? I thought you'd like it." Romeo said, and without a second glance at the others, tenderly stroked her hair, "I'll head back now."

"Yeah, okay.' Arabella watched him walk away.

"Now Mr. McMillian won't be popping back unexpectedly, right?"

"Ms. Bella, does the chocolate have anything written on the other three sides? I caught a glimpse of one side, and it was all written up. It's not some condensed version of a love letter, is it?"

Arabella's gaze landed on her, "You have quite the eye for detail."

"It's just the angle. I swear I wasn't snooping! It was totally by chance."

The staff were eager to gossip more, but then Arabella asked, "Do we have any spare vases?"

In her other hand, she held a sprig of blossom, several pure white flowers bloomed on the branch, looking particularly fresh and elegant.

"Of course! Mrs. Griffith loves flowers. We've got vases of all sorts" One of the staff hurried off to fetch one for her.

Arabella took the vase to her room, filled it with water, and placed the blossoms inside. Her eyes softened as she admired them.

The next morning dawned bright and early.

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Serena was the first to rise, her morning stillness interrupted by the sight of a maid tidying up the room. It was only upon inquiry that she learned her grandmother was coming for a visit.

Apparently, Arabella had received the news the previous night but had kept it to herself!

Damn it!

Was she trying to score some brownie points with Grandma?

She didn't even tell Serena.

She must be afraid of Serena stealing the spotlight!

Serena's teeth were practically itching with irritation.

She checked the opening hours of the nearby luxury shopping haven, which

opened at 10 a.m. After gobbling down some breakfast and grabbing the credit card Martin had given her, she hurried out the door.

The Street was an upscale avenue that had developed more recently. It didn't have the renown of the most luxury street in the world, but it boasted all the luxury brands one could wish for.

By the time Serena arrived, it was already 10:30 a.m. The first store to catch her eye was QY, a towering three-story fashion temple with an impressive facade that screamed high aesthetics and status.

Serena felt a pang of discomfort. Why should a brand founded by a mere teenager stand its ground on this street, shoulder to shoulder with the big international players?

As she eyed the dazzling array of merchandise, she stepped inside, heels clicking assertively on the polished floor.

"Welcome to QY! All of us here are thrilled to see you. What can I assist you with today? My name is Jessie, your personal shopping assistant," Jessie greeted with a polite bow, at a forty-five-degree angle.

Hearing the arrival of a customer, the other sales associates also turned and bowed in Serena's direction, creating a welcoming atmosphere.

But to Serena, this was nothing more than a ploy by QY to get customers to open their wallets—a far cry from sophistication.

She asked haughtily, “Where's the most expensive section?”

At her words, a few of the other shoppers turned their gazes towards her.

Jessie replied with a smile, "Right this way, please. Our priciest collections are inside. There are three sections: women's to the

left, men's to the right, and lifestyle in the center."

Serena headed to the women's section, her eyes lighting up at the sight of exquisite dresses, stunning heels, and uniquely

designed handbags. She could hardly believe it and asked incredulously, "Were all of these designed by your in-house designers?"

"Every item here is the brainchild of our founder, Queen Abby. There's no other hand in their creation,' Jessie informed her.

"And QY specializes in uniqueness, with only one piece per design. Can your founder handle all that designing?" Serena's tone

was skeptical and even slightly disrespectful.

Jessie maintained a polite smile, “Our founder is incredibly gifted. Inspiration flows abundantly, so it’s not a problem.”

"Are they really all her creations?" Doubt still lingered in Serena's mind. Take Arabella's dual role as Melody and the miracle doctor, for instance. She had to compose music, heal the sick, study, and still found time to flit about in front of her.

Where did Arabella find all the time?

"Yes, Jessie responded courteously, "all designs are indeed personally crafted by our founder, guaranteed authentic"

A mix of awe and envy seeped into Serena as her fingers grazed over one dress after another, each design striking a chord with her, making her itch to swipe the card and take them all home.

But then she remembered that these were Arabella's creations. Imagine Arabella's sneer if she saw Serena wearing them.

Reluctantly, Serena pulled her hand back, forcing herself to look away, to not buy.

Yet her feet seemed glued to the spot. She couldn't even leave the women's section. She kept telling herself it was just windowshopping, nothing more.

So, she continued to browse, but with each step, she regretted it. Damn it, why did everything have to look so appealing?

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Chapter 1408

Not only were the clothes and shoes a treat for the eyes, but the jewelry and watches were outrageously stunning too.

If it weren't for the fact that Arabella was the designer behind these pieces, she would have swiped her card without a second thought!

"These are your priciest items?" Serena couldn't hide her disdain as she looked away, her voice dripping with condescension. "It

seems the talent of your founder doesn't quite stack up to that of the designers at top-tier brands."

"Our brand has ascended to the international top-tier, and the prime spot we occupy on the Street is a testament to our solid

brand strength,' Jessie responded with a gentle tone. "Not only that, but even some of the leading international designers have admitted to being outshone by our founder.

They've been on the news talking about wanting to apprentice under her, yet they lament never getting the chance."

Ever since QY burst onto the scene, more than one designer had praised Queen Abby's overflowing talent in front of the media,

some even harboring dreams of studying under her, if only they could meet her.

"I grew up wearing nothing but top-tier brands, and I'm not particularly impressed by these designs,'

Serena said haughtily,

drawing from her past experiences as she criticized, "Take this coat, for example. If it were designed by someone at Chanel, it

would definitely be a tweed suit, which would better complement rich girls' elegance."

"If every designer copied Chanel's style, then the world would be overrun with Chanels,' Jessie

retorted. "We'd never see the

birth of new brands or styles.

QY aims to be different. Our founder's designs are versatile—sweet or sassy, gentle or bold—suitable for a broad age range."

"So, the real target audience for QY is people like you? Only those at the bottom can appreciate it, Serena scoffed dismissively.

"You simply don't understand the needs of the true elite. Enough talk."

After having her say, Serena was ready to leave when she heard a voice call out, "Hold on."

She turned to see a distinguished-looking lady in her forties, draped in high-end brands from head to toe, yet Serena couldn't

place her. "You are entitled to dislike any brand, but please refrain from being offensive.

Everyone deserves respect, and I think you owe this sales associate an apology."

Serena couldn't identify the woman and sneered cold-heartedly, "Who are you to her, her mother? Why are you sticking up for her?"

The lady seemed taken aback by such insolence, especially coming from someone so young. It was a lack of manners she hadn't encountered before.

"And you're not my mother, so why bother? Do you think we are all your children and have to listen to you?" Serena rolled her eyes and turned to leave, making a point to say as she stepped out, "Not only are the products unimpressive here, but so is the clientele!"

Jessie, the sales associate, had to bite her tongue in frustration. She had never encountered such an arrogantly rich girl, insulting her and dragging the entire QY brand and its customers through the mud. If it wasn't for the store manager's teachings to remain calm and consider the brand's image at all times, she would have confronted the woman directly.

"What terrible manners that girl has! It's true what they say, when something gets famous, it invites trouble," the lady said

indignantly, "Dressed in all those designer labels, you'd never guess her upbringing was so poor."

"Mrs. Cooper, thank you for speaking up for me," Jessie said, expressing her gratitude politely. "I'm sorry it spoiled your mood, let me get you a cup of tea to calm your nerves."

Unaware of whom she had just offended, Serena moved on to another luxury store catering to a more mature clientele. The

styles here were tailored for the older generation, and many high-society ladies preferred to shop here. Serena quickly took a liking to a brooch that suited her grandmother's taste without compromising her status. The clincher was the free bracelet that came with the brooch. She planned to gift it to May, after all, May was her uncle's favorite. As she headed to the checkout, she caught a glimpse of a familiar person. It was the same distinguished lady from before!

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She was browsing the same boutique!

Serena took a second look at her, realizing that the most valuable thing on her wasn't the designer clothes or the jewelry—it was that Hermés bag on her arm. Clearly, she came from a well-off family. Serena couldn't help but wonder why someone like her would be such a busybody.

As the well-to-do lady examined a wristwatch, Serena whispered to the sales associate, "I want what she's holding."

The sales associate followed Serena's gaze and frowned slightly, "That watch is a hot item in our store, and that's the last piece we have."

"Well, what are you waiting for? Wrap it up for me!"

"But." the sales associate hesitated, "That lady saw it first"

"Did she say she's buying it? She's just looking. Who knows if she'll even purchase it?" Serena put on an air of superiority, "If you're not interested in making a sale, maybe I should find another associate who is."

With such a commission on the line—who wouldn't want it? It was the kind of sale that could match a month's worth of work!

"I'll go and talk to her."

Soon enough, the sales associate secured the watch for Serena.

Serena glanced at the lady with a smug look that seemed to say: That's what you get for meddling in other people's business!

The lady was taken aback. The girl's family must be doing well. The watch was priced at thirty grand, and she didn't hesitate to buy it.

However, the watch was bedecked with some gems and jewels, clearly not matching the taste or preferences of a girl her age.

Was this girl competing with her on purpose? Just because of their earlier encounter?

After that, anything the lady showed interest in, the girl would snatch away.

Initially, Florence simply thought the girl came from a wealthy family and could buy anything she fancied. But then, she saw the girl pull out a familiar-looking gold card.

That card was an exclusive gold card from East Banner Bank, given to her son to encourage him to deposit his substantial cash into their private banking services. There was only one such card in all of Dawnstar!

Why did this girl have it?

Could it be?

Was this girl her son's girlfriend?

He had a girlfriend?

When did this happen, and how did she not know about it?

Lost in her thoughts, Florence was stunned, struggling to believe it.

Serena snatched quite a few items and, on her way out, she cast a mocking glance at Florence, "If you can't afford it, don't window shop. Picking and choosing like that, you'd think we were at a farmer's market. You look like some old lady haggling over onions."

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Chapter 1410

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The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1410

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Chapter 1410

Florence watched as Serena prepared to leave and quickly asked, "Is that gold card really yours?"

"What's it to you?" Serena replied with a scowl.

"I recognize that card. There's only one in all of Dawnstar, and it's not yours."

Hearing this, Serena gave the lady a second look, her features unfamiliar, then snapped, "None of your business!"

As Florence watched Serena strut away in her heels, she all but confirmed the card didn't belong to her.

Could it really belong to her son?

When did her son start dating this girl? And this girl's so rude and uncultured.

She had to get to the bottom of this.

She wouldn't let anyone of questionable character step foot into the Cooper family home!

The Cooper family was in the midst of turbulent times, and if this girl really was her son's girlfriend, Florence would be the first to object!

"Pete, start the car, we're heading over to Martin's" Meanwhile.

After Serena finished her shopping spree, she soon learned that her grandmother's plane had landed at the apron, and the household staff had all gone to welcome her.

Serena, not one to miss out, got dolled up and hurried over to cozy up to her.

Arabella had been out running errands that morning and upon her return, she saw Serena clutching her grandmother's hand,

cooing, "Granny, what do you think of this brooch? It symbolizes peace and good fortune. I bought it with the prize money from a

competition, just for you. Do you like it?"

"That brand is my favorite, isn't it? That brooch must have cost a pretty penny. You've won another competition, haven't you?"

Belinda was touched and impressed by Serena's thoughtfulness, not only for her parents and brother but also for remembering her dear old granny.

"It's from competitions a while back, the prize money added up."

Arabella's lips twitched in skepticism. What competitions could possibly accumulate enough to afford a KCY brooch.

The lies didn't even seem to require preparation.

Just as she was about to enter the house, she heard Serena say, "May, this is for you!"

May was a favored servant by Sampson's side and someone Belinda trusted implicitly, sharp and savvy. But ever since Serena posted on Facebook, flaunting gifts she'd received, including calligraphy from the master artist Labella.

She'd mentioned everyone who gave her a gift—parents, brother, etc.—except for her own sister, Arabella.

So May didn't think too highly of her.

Serena had accepted Arabella's gift but only seemed interested in showing off its value, not in letting people know the real relationship between her and Arabella, which felt rather calculating.

"Serena, I appreciate the thought,' May declined gently, "but this bracelet is quite expensive, and I'd be uneasy accepting it.

Please take it back."

"What's wrong? Don't like the style?" Serena knew May was close to Arabella.

Was her refusal a way of taking a stand? Did she only recognize Arabella as her mistress?

The thought made Serena uncomfortable. Could Arabella be bribing May on the side?

"It's not about the style. Madam, you know me best, please speak for me,"

May implored, turning to the matriarch for support.

Belinda beamed warmly, "You know May's character. If you give her such an expensive gift, she won't be able to sleep at night, feeling guilty. Put it away. It's enough that May knows you thought of her"

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