

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1456

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Chapter 1456

Arabella knew in her heart that this was more complicated than it seemed.

The fact that KT Skincare was being used as a scapegoat meant that the puppet master was no small-time player.

Reporters flocked to Arabella for a statement, eager for a juicy soundbite.

With earnest eyes, Arabella said, "If you've used a skincare product that seems miraculously effective but then experience

allergies or dermatitis, stop using it immediately.

Delaying could worsen your condition. Even if the redness and itching subside,

you might face hyperpigmentation, darkening of the skin, or infections. And trust me, that's a whole other can of worms to deal with."

The reporters were taken aback. Wasn't she supposed to slam her competitor's underhanded tactics and plug her own brand at the same time?

But there she was, each word dripping with genuine concern for consumers.

“When shopping for products, make sure they're approved by regulatory authorities and have a full list of ingredients. If not, don't buy them. And be extra cautious with those viral products sold on the internet or Facebook.

Think twice before you click 'buy:'”

After she finished, the media were momentarily stunned.

Online spectators were won over by her approach. Even with her products selling out, they kept placing orders, willing to wait for restock.

Once the media dispersed, Eunice invited Romeo over for dinner.

To avoid drawing attention, they took separate cars to leave.

Back at the office, Arabella's staff gossiped eagerly.

“Romeo's so hot! Standing next to President Arabella, they looked like a perfect match!”

“I thought I was the only one who thought that! Especially when he stood up for the Ar-BI-Clear Group, it was like he was

protecting his own girlfriend"

"For the first time, I saw President Arabella in person. She's younger than me, while I'm still single and working my tail off.

Arabella was the first to arrive back at the manor. Darren and Belinda, armed with a platter of fruit, pastries, and coffee, rushed over, showering her with concern.

"Sweetheart, you must be so shaken. That dreadful KT Skincare is just jealous of your success, resorting to such foul play.

They'll get what's coming to them!"

Belinda skewered a piece of fruit and held it to her granddaughter's lips, wanting to soothe her.

"I was watching the news. The police found that several of KT's products contain harmful hormones, causing severe

inflammation in consumers. KT had been hushing it up with money, but now the truth is out. They're trying to smear others while

wallowing in their own filth. It's despicable!"

Darren was fuming but didn't forget to offer his granddaughter some food.

"This is like the Ar-BI-Clear Group got a free ad out of it. We lost out in one corner, but we gained in another, Arabella said with a light smile, not the least bit upset.

The grandparents suddenly realized their worries were superfluous.

Arabella's vision and capacity had long surpassed the ordinary. She wouldn't be running such a vast business otherwise.

To her, this was just a light drizzle, hardly worth the fuss.

Right then, another news bulletin flickered on the television screen.

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Send ·

Chapter 1457

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The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1457

• • •

Chapter 1457

Scores of consumers, whose faces painfully inflamed after using KT skincare products, flocked to the reception desk of the Ar-BI-Clear Group, desperate to find out if purchasing the company's products could prompt the group's executives to treat their skin.

Their faces were in such bad shape, some horribly disfigured, which was a truly harrowing sight.

"These people's faces," Belinda was at a loss for words, "it's horrifying, you can only conclude that KT has completely lost its conscience, harming people to this extent."

"How's Bella got time to treat so many people, huh?" Darren couldn't help but say, "If she had that time, she might as well open a hospital."

Arabella watched the tearful consumers on TV with a heavy heart.

She knew just how important a face was to a woman.

But now, their faces were so damaged, akin to disfigurement, looking particularly horrifying.

At that moment, Arabella's phone began to vibrate.

"Boss, I really didn't want to bother you, but a lot of consumers stormed our front desk, begging for your help to treat their faces.

They're willing to pay ten times, even a hundred times the price for the Ar-BI-Clear Group's products."

"I've seen the news,' Arabella replied coolly.

"You, with your busy schedule, have time to watch the news?" Her subordinate was surprised, but

quickly added, "So what do we

do now? Do we help them? But there are too many people. It showed today's count to be one thousand one hundred thirty-six.

Subtracting our internal staff and the journalists from earlier, there are over four hundred people gathering at our front desk."

The number was daunting. If Arabella was to treat each person, it would take an enormous amount of her time.

And it was crucial to consider how much Arabella could earn treating one person versus the earnings from the Ar-BI-Clear Group's products.

"Tell them that the Ar-BI-Clear Group will be launching a new line of skin regeneration products soon, designed to address various symptoms, and they should be on the market in about two weeks."

"That's a great idea! It helps them and we are able to make money at the same time." Her subordinate began, then hesitated,

"But, boss, do you have the time?"

"I'll make time."

"That's fantastic! I'll spread the good news and launch a pre-order link online, so they can place orders in advance."

"Good"

After hanging up, Eunice arrived, and Darren and Belinda praised her again for her staunch support of the Ar-BI-Clear Group.

"Bard is so blessed to have a wife like you.' Belinda was full of admiration.

"Today, Romeo was also there to show support, first one on the scene, arriving even earlier than us."

Darren suddenly felt the

boy was genuine, truly fond of his granddaughter.

"Romeo hasn't arrived yet?" Eunice glanced around, casually mentioning to her in-laws, "I invited him over for dinner.

"Oh? He accepted? Then we better tell the kitchen to prepare extra dishes.

We can't show any slight on him." Belinda said as she hurried to the kitchen, looking quite delighted.

"I'm coming too." Darren quickly followed his wife,

"Need to have some fruit ready for after dinner. Not sure if the boy drinks, I'll

select a few low-alcohol options to have a toast with him"

"I bet it's you who wants a drink"

After they left, Eunice spoke softly to Arabella, "I know this isn't as simple as it seems. KT is just a fall guy, and the real mastermind hasn't shown their face yet. I will definitely get to the bottom of this, won't let them get away with slandering the Ar-BI-Clear Group."

Arabella's gaze softened, "You needn't trouble yourself, Aunt Eunice. I can handle this myself."

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Send ·

Chapter 1458

fl

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1458

• • •

Chapter 1458

"On my turf, no one can mess with my niece. I'm gonna make sure everyone knows that the Ar-BI-Clear Group is under the Griffith Group's wing. Anyone who crosses her, crosses us."

As Eunice spoke, she patted Arabella's back with a reassuring smile, "I'll give your Uncle a buzz, tell him to come home for dinner, roll out the red carpet for Romeo"

"Isn't Uncle Bard supposed to have a meeting tonight?" Arabella recalled her uncle mentioning a work commitment and not planning to return for dinner.

She wanted to say that it wasn't a big deal, just dinner, no need for all the fuss.

But Eunice uttered, "Meetings ain't as important as Romeo. Tonight, we're gonna treat him like royalty, all of us together!"

As for Martin.

Eunice's mind drifted back to the last time Serena got plastered and took a swing at Martin Cooper. She wondered if Serena ever properly apologized.

The thought of Serena possibly slipping something into Arabella's drink to embarrass her made Eunice's blood boil.

"Let's invite Martin some other time. Tonight, it's just Romeo." Having said her piece, she went off to make the call.

Then, the maid approached with news, "Miss. Collins, Mr. McMillian has arrived, and he's brought a bunch of presents"

Arabella hadn't expected Romeo to be late just because he was picking out gifts. Seeing him arrive, arms laden with offerings, she couldn't help but chuckle, "Is all this necessary?" Romeo always went here with numerous gifts; his intentions couldn't be more transparent.

Grinning, Romeo asked, "Did they like the last gifts I brought?"

But someone beat her to the punch, "Loved them! They absolutely loved the gifts you brought last time. Grandma, grandpa, your aunt, and uncle were all thrilled."

Hearing this, Romeo and Arabella found Darren, with a beaming smile, was striding towards them.

"But those gifts were too extravagant. It just doesn't sit right with me. And now you've brought even more? No, no, after we eat, you'll have to take these back with you!"

Darren set the gifts on the coffee table before clapping Romeo on the back in appreciation, "Good job, kid, looking solid. Do you work out regularly?"

Romeo glanced at Arabella affectionately before nodding, "Yes."

He wanted to make sure Arabella felt secure, so no matter how busy, he always found time for the gym. Darren looked him over approvingly, "Have a seat, have a seat. You youngsters must enjoy coffee, right? I'll ask them to bring our finest brew."

"I'll have whatever Bella's having. I've switched to lemonade and tea these days"

"Good choices! I'm a fan of drinking tea also! Lemonade's too sour for my teeth." Darren chuckled, "Let's get the best tea we have"

"Thank you, grandpa Darren, for the hospitality."

"Thank me? We're family" Darren said, contentedly eyeing Romeo, "You've met Bella's folks, right?" Romeo nodded, "i have."

"I didn't catch wind of you two dating before." Darren was cut short as Belinda walked in from the kitchen, joining in, "You were bedridden. Even if they mentioned it, you wouldn't have heard."

When Romeo saw her, he politely stood up to greet her, "Grandma Belinda"

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Send ·

Chapter 1459

fl

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1459

• • •

Chapter 1459

"Romeo's here? Have a seat, make yourself at home!" Belinda beamed with warmth, "I caught the news today. That mess at the Ar-BI-Clear Group, and you were the first on the scene. You're such a hero."

Hidden on the second floor, Serena watched as her grandparents fussed over Romeo, bringing him tea and pastries, clearly over the moon with their grandson-in-law. Serena couldn't help but clench her fist in frustration. Was all this really necessary?

Her aunt was so blatantly biased, inviting Romeo over for dinner but not Martin! Was it just because she thought Martin wasn't graceful enough to sit with them?

With these thoughts swirling, she covertly snapped a photo of the scene and sent it to Martin.

[Seeing this just makes me feel sour. Aunt Belinda invited Romeo for dinner. I wish she'd invite you too." Maybe because I'm not a true Collins by blood, they don't pay me much mind, and that's spilling over to you. Martin, when will we ever get some respect from this family?]

Her message was loaded with implications.

It was as though Eunice didn't value Serena and thought Martin wasn't good enough, intentionally excluding him.

Martin quickly replied, [It's my fault for not making more money, for not being able to hold my head high in front of your family.

Before I was too proud, too arrogant, thinking that making money by myself would be enough to provide a good life for you. I see

now that was naive. From now on, I'll seize every Opportunity to give you the life you deserve]

Serena felt a twinge of irritation reading his words.

No matter how hard he tried, he wouldn't surpass Romeo in just a few

months.

Still, she pretended to be encouraging, [No, I need to talk to Aunt Belinda about this, and try to get you invited over for dinner!]

[It's alright, Serena. Your aunt can invite me whenever she finds it appropriate. It doesn't have to be today.) Martin didn't want her getting into a family squabble over him. After not hearing back from her for a while, he texted again, [Serena, please don't. Just listen to me.]

Serena left him hanging for a long time.

Eventually, she sent a crying emoji, lamenting, [Aunt Belinda said tonight's dinner is just for Romeo. I raised some objections, and she snapped back saying she'll invite whoever she wants into her home.]

Martin couldn't help but call her, his voice filled with concern, "It's okay, Serena. The fact that you even spoke to your aunt about it means so much to me. I'm touched. I'm just not there yet, but I promise I'll work harder to win their approval. Don't upset yourself"

"Uncle Bard just arrived." Serena whispered as she saw Bard return, greeting Romeo with utmost civility, "He's praising Romeo,

saying how relieved they are to have someone so capable for my sister. I bet it's because Romeo brought another fancy gift!"

Serena said it with a pout, trying to hint that Martin should step up his gift game next time to outshine Romeo.

But Martin counseled, "Serena, your uncle's a wise man. He wouldn't heap praise on Romeo just for some gifts. There must be something about him.

Don't be upset. I assure you, I'll work even harder to gain their respect.

Serena pouted, pretending to be moved, but inwardly she was full of disdain.

Promises for the future, who knew how long that would take.

She quickly found an excuse to hang up and retreated to her spying post on the second floor.

Every so often, Romeo's gaze would drift to Arabella, filled with adoration and affection, and Serena watched, filled with both envy and jealousy.

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Send ·

Chapter 1460

fl

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1460

• • •

Chapter 1460

At that moment, Romeo's phone rang.

Serena watched as he stood up and strolled towards the backyard. She hurried down the stairs and followed him stealthily, her mind whirring with secret calculations.

After ending the call, Romeo suddenly heard a voice call out, "Romeo.

He didn't need to turn around to know who it was.

"Romeo, I owe you an apology. What happened last time was my fault."

Serena's words hung in the air as she saw Romeo pocket his phone and stride past her without so much as a sideways glance.

Feeling humiliated, Serena raised her voice, "Don't you even have the patience to listen to me?"

Romeo didn't break his stride.

"Someone must have put you up to this. In my memory, you weren't the heartless kind"

Before Serena could finish, she saw Romeo stop in his tracks, his eyes narrowing sharply, "Have I been too kind to you?"

An aura of displeasure radiated from him, his icy gaze cutting through her like a knife, as if he wanted to flay her alive.

"In my presence, you dare slander my fiancée? Are you tired of your cozy life with the Collins family?"

"Ever since you've been with my sister, you've treated me worse and worse."

Tears welled up in Serena's eyes, a picture of profound grievance.

Romeo's eyes were tinged with scorn at her words, "Who the hell do you think you are?"

Serena's face changed instantly.

"Do I need to show any respect to someone like you? Speaking one word to you disgusts me"

"Would you dare repeat that to grandma and grandpa?" Serena retorted, biting her lip in feigned innocence, "After all, I'm their beloved granddaughter"

Romeo's scorn deepened, "To me, you are nothing."

"What did you say?" Serena was incredulous, staring at the man she once adored, momentarily frozen.

"It seems you're not only lacking in brains but in hearing too." Romeo withdrew his gaze, unwilling to waste another second on her, and walked away.

Serena stood there; it took her a while to gather her wits, her humiliation reaching its peak.

Romeo had gone too far! She was a lady, after all! How could he speak to her like that?

Didn't he realize how awkward, how hurt she felt?

Hidden in the shadows, Eunice's eyes narrowed as she watched the scene unfold. It was clear that

Romeo had a strong dislike

for Serena, and Serena seemed to harbor some special feelings for Romeo.

Could it be that her scheming heart was still at work, trying to capture Romeo's attention?

With this thought, a flicker of displeasure crossed Eunice's eyes.

Back at the dining table.

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