

# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1491

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"Do I need a referral to show up here?" That was when Roxanne got the picture: this girl had no clue what a "referral" even was. Probably wasn't formally asked to come, she thought. "So, what's your deal with Mr. Albright?" asked Roxanne nosily, "My granddad and Mr. Albright are best friends, which practically makes me just like Mr. Albright's granddaughter. That's how I got to score an invite to his birthday bash. And you? How do you know Mr. Albright?"

Arabella was puzzled, could anyone claim to be Grandpa Eugene's granddaughter like that?

"Well, I guess that makes me like his granddaughter too."

If any Jane Doe could be Grandpa Eugene's "granddaughter", why not her?

"You??" Roxanne bristled, "Your granddad's pals with Mr. Albright? Which venerable old gent might that be? Do I know him?"

"Nope, you don't," Arabella cut the conversation short and moved on.

"What's with her attitude?" Roxanne muttered to Phyllis, feeling slighted, "She says she's like Mr. Albright's granddaughter?"

"Ridiculous. Everyone knows Mr. Albright doesn't just make granddaughters out of thin air. At least your

granddad's an actual friend of his. Not like her, can't even say who invited her, probably scared of revealing too much, trying to bluff her way through. I smell trouble."

Phyllis always trusted in her own beauty, but seeing Arabella, she felt an unwelcome sting of rivalry.

Could it be that Arabella's face was the product of a surgeon's craft?

After all, could such a naturally beautiful face even exist?

Back in school, it was Phyllis who prided herself on her looks, never expecting to be overshadowed.

When Arabella reached the main building, it was just as expected - the table was laid with all her favorite treats.

She picked up a pastry and was just about to take a bite when her phone buzzed. Taking it out, she saw a

string of messages from a group of her grandpa and his friends.

Grandpa Eugene, [Wondering what's keeping Bella. She hasn't replied to my messages. Maybe she's caught up in something urgent tonight and can't make it.]

Nelson. [LOL. Why do I suddenly feel like laughing?]

Beck. [If she can't make it, she can't make it. You're not only living for this year, you know. There will be more birthdays. We're not getting any younger, why so sentimental? If not today, there's always tomorrow.]

Grandpa Eugene. [Would you be this cavalier if Bella missed your birthday?]

Beck. [Exactly, because it's not my birthday, I can afford to be cheeky! Don't be down, I'm on my way to cheer you up. Wait for me!]

Grandpa Eugene. [Who needs you.]

Exiting the chat, he checked his WhatsApp and saw Arabella still hadn't replied. The network must be patchy where she is, he thought, and then he fired off another message.

"Pumpkin, where are you? Haven't been to the estate in a while, huh? Forgot the way? If you're nearby, let your granddad pick you up!"

Reading the message, Arabella almost laughed.

She was about to reply when a new message from Charles popped up.

[Bella, are you already there, just letting Eugene stew a bit? Take my advice, make him wait a little longer.

The old man needs to learn patience, always huffing and puffing...at his age, he should be taking it easy.]

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Arabella shot back with a grin, [Maybe I should give you the runaround as well, eh?]

[Oh no, no, no. You know how patient I am, kiddo. Even for my own birthday bash, I take things slow and steady.]

Arabella chuckled, [Haven't left the house yet?]

[Any minute now.]

[Drive safe.]

Those words from Arabella made Charles' day. He couldn't help but snap a screenshot and share it with his buddies in their group chat.

[Just look at the angel, so thoughtful. She's all grown up now, and cares for me!]

He added a smug emoji for good measure.

Grandpa Eugene, [I texted her and didn't even get a single exclamation mark in reply! Is that screenshot from ages ago, or what?]

Beck chimed in, [Must be my lousy internet here. Still waiting on that sweet message from her.]

Nelson quipped, [Just drove through a tunnel, bad reception, you know?]

Jarvis, [You two are fooling yourselves.  
Messages going out but none coming in?

Who you trying to kid?

Wake up, the girl didn't text you.]

Beck, [@Tanner, sounds like she's texting  
you though.]

To prove Arabella's message was fresh,  
Charles posted a new screenshot with the  
timestamp.

That stirred things up among the elders.

Grandpa Eugene, [She's playing  
favorites!]

Beck, [She's so biased!]

Nelson, [Why does Charles get a  
message and not me? @Bella]

Jarvis, [@Bella, did Charles coerce you?

Is he right there, holding your phone,  
pretending to be you?]

Poor Eugene felt the most dejected.

He stared at the chat, hoping for a reply  
from Arabella. When he finally got one, he  
almost jumped for joy.



[Grandpa, I'm here.]

He quickly took a screenshot and bragged to the group, [Just got this from her. She's here now, see? You

can tell who's the most important to her!]

Arabella saw the group getting rowdy again and was about to tell them to calm down when someone

bumped her arm, reaching for some grub.

Lindsay grabbed herself a cupcake and

said to a friend, "Some folks have no shame, like that actress all

over the tabloids, always the one chasing after other people's husband. Heard all three of her affairs were

with guys who are married."

Madeline was there too, tagging along with her grandpa to get a taste of high society. She nodded in

agreement with Lindsay, "Some are proud to be a home wrecker, flaunting it in the wife's face, so

arrogant."

"People think they're so charming, totally oblivious to how revolting their actions are. That wife was a real lady from a noble family, a perfect match for marriage, not like some broke interloper," Lindsay sneered, and as she walked away with her cupcake, she bumped Arabella on purpose.

"Stop."

Arabella wasn't going to let that slide.

"Easy to judge others, huh? And what about you, doing it on purpose?"

Arabella's cold gaze bore into Lindsay, her narrowed eyes glinting with icy resolve, "I don't believe we've met."

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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Although Lindsay was a lady from a renowned family, Arabella's commanding presence had her cornered.

"What's the problem? It's not like I bumped into you on purpose."

"Did I say you bumped into me?"

Lindsay was suddenly at a loss for words.

"So you know you bumped into someone, apologize," Arabella didn't want to make a scene. It wasn't

every day that Grandpa Eugene threw a birthday bash, and she didn't want to ruin his celebration.

But Lindsay, with her defiant demeanor, didn't seem inclined to apologize.

"Can't even say sorry? Or should I take matters into my own hands?"

"I'm a guest invited by Mr. Albright. I dare you."

Arabella stepped forward, her icy glare making Lindsay instinctively step back.

"Grandpa Eugene invited you?"

Another step from Arabella, and Lindsay's resolve wavered as she took another step back.

"He would bother to invite someone like you?"

"What do you mean?" Lindsay met Arabella's gaze, but her courage faltered after just a couple of seconds and she backed down, "That comment is an insult to Mr. Albright's judgment."

"I'm talking about your poor character."  
Lindsay, facing this kind of confrontation for the first time, became frustrated, "It was just a small bump, no need to be so aggressive. It's not like you're missing a piece of flesh."

Arabella stepped forward again, leaving Lindsay with nowhere to go but the corner.

Arabella stepped on her foot, cutting off Lindsay's complaint, "It's just a step, not like you're missing a piece of flesh."

Lindsay tried to break free, but she was clearly no match for Arabella, "Ouch, get your foot off."

Madeline, a friend nearby, quickly tried to defuse the situation, "Today's Mr. Albright's birthday, and we're all here as his invited guests. Let's not make a scene. Please let Lindsay go. It was an accident, and you

two are even now."

"She bumped into me twice, and I only stepped on her once. Are we even?"

Arabella wouldn't budge, her cold eyes fixed on Lindsay.

"Lindsay, just apologize to her," Madeline sensed Arabella was not someone to be trifled with, "Don't forget we have important thing to attend to today!"

They were there to seek mentorship, and it wouldn't do to make a fool of themselves in front of the masters.

Although Lindsay had no desire to apologize to Arabella, the thought of the mentorship spurred her to grudgingly mutter, "I'm sorry, okay?"

"Not good enough."

"What do you want, then?"

"Don't you know how to offer a sincere apology? Didn't anyone at home teach you? Need me to show you how?"

Lindsay bit her lip. Seeing Eugene rushing over, she didn't want to embarrass herself and quickly blurted out, "I'm sorry. I did it on purpose earlier. It won't happen again."

"Was that so hard?" Arabella shot her a callous look and turned to walk away.

Lindsay watched her walk off, tears welling up, ready to play the victim in front of Eugene, hoping he would take her side.

After all, she had "accidentally" bumped into Arabella, and Arabella had insisted on stepping on her foot and demanding an apology.

If Eugene knew how petty and narrow-minded Arabella was.

But the next moment, Eugene approached like a joyful child, making a beeline towards them.

Even the other guests who wanted to greet him were ignored in his excitement.

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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"My dear, you finally made it!" Eugene exclaimed joyfully, rushing over to Arabella. He affectionately ruffled her hair and said, "I've been waiting for ages. Thought you'd stood me up." Lindsay's tears lingered in her eye sockets, while Madeline stood there, dumbfounded. What was this twist? Was Arabella personally invited by Eugene? They seemed so close.

"All these pastries are my treat for you; they're all your favorites. How's that? From now on, you reply to my messages first, and forget the other grandpas!"

Lindsay was not going to feign pity for sympathy, as it was clear that Eugene was very fond of Arabella.

Just moments ago, she had been foolishly hoping Eugene would take her side and teach Arabella a lesson. What a daydream that was!

Even Madeline felt a twinge of fear - had they inadvertently crossed someone they shouldn't have?

"Were you snacking over here just now?" Eugene inquired.

He hadn't seen her earlier, as guests were milling about everywhere, blocking his view. He could only catch a fleeting glimpse of Arabella's silhouette, but that didn't stop him from running towards her.

"Where's my present?"

Eugene rarely ever asked for gifts directly. Lindsay and Madeline couldn't believe their eyes. Eugene and Arabella seemed to be on such good terms.

Other guests, though unaware of the specifics of Eugene and Arabella's conversation, could tell from his affectionate gestures - patting her head, beaming smiles - that Eugene held this girl in special regard.

It appeared he was quite fond of her. "Here," Arabella didn't want to dampen his spirits by bringing up any earlier unpleasantness, so she simply handed him a neatly wrapped little gift box.

Eugene was over the moon, cradling the box gingerly as he tried to guess its contents, "Let's see if I can guess what this is."

Many guests, noticing the small size of Arabella's gift yet Eugene's evident joy, moved in closer, curious to see if her present was more valuable than theirs. If it was more precious, then there would be a problem!

As the crowd around Eugene grew, the guessing game among the guests intensified.

"Given the size of the box, could it be a wristwatch?"

"A watch would be fitting, wouldn't it? It's classy, befitting Mr. Albright's stature, and so practical."

"I'm thinking it might be something like a lighter."

"At Mr. Albright's milestone 60th birthday, would a lighter be appropriate? I bet it's something like a tie."

"Mr. Eugene enjoys chess; could it be a set of chess pieces?"

While the guests speculated, Eugene kept his eyes on Arabella, gauging her reactions. Seeing her calm demeanor, he knew they were all off the mark. His curiosity piqued, he couldn't help but ask, "What on earth is it?"

"Why don't you open it and see?" Arabella played coy.

The guests leaned in, alongside Eugene, their gazes fixed on the small box, anxious about the possibility

that Arabella's gift might outshine their own in rarity or value.

As the lid was lifted, to everyone's surprise, inside was a rolled-up drawing! Eugene unfurled it to see a modestly-sized piece, slightly larger than a letter-sized paper, depicting an elder and a child playing chess by a waterfall.

They were seated on a rock, with a chessboard between them.

Even though it was a black-and-white ink drawing, the strokes were bold and sweeping, capturing the grandeur of the scene with a vivacity that brought the figures to life.

Who could possess such exquisite taste and remarkable artistic talent to create something of this caliber?

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Eugene paid a continuous compliment upon appreciating the drawing, "Brilliant, just brilliant."

It was like a snapshot from the past when he used to teach Arabella how to play chess. The waterfall was there in the distance, its gentle murmuring still echoing in his ears, the mountains rising majestically

around them, and the weather clear and bright. They would lose themselves in the game for hours on end.

It touched him that she remembered, his eyes growing misty with emotion.

The chess game Arabella had depicted was no random sketch.

Eugene saw her intention; aware of his irritation with the numerous guests vying to become his mentee, the clever girl had presented him with the most challenging chess problem in history, encapsulated within her artwork.

After a moment of being visibly moved, Eugene finally said, "I love this birthday gift. I've turned sixty this year, as you all know, and I've been on the lookout for a talented protege to carry on my legacy. Today,

Arabella has laid out the chess problem. Anyone here who wishes to become my protege, if you can solve this puzzle, I will take you under my wing!" The crowd was stunned, a ripple of excitement spreading through them. No one had anticipated Mr. Eugene would choose his mentee in such a manner. They then turned their gazes to Arabella, wondering just how difficult a chess problem a young girl could conjure. With confidence swelling within them, they eagerly awaited Eugene to fully unveil the drawing. "Twenty minutes. Consider this as gaiety added to the bash," With a smile, Eugene asked someone to unfurl the drawing. The artwork depicted a game with no clear victor; the board seemed to be at a stalemate!



The attendees hadn't expected such a lifelike and challenging problem to come from a young girl's hand.

"How about it, Phyllis, feeling confident?"

Mr. Gardner whispered to his granddaughter.

Phyllis stared intently at the chessboard,

"Grandpa, please be quiet."

She got utterly puzzled.

Was this enigma truly solvable, or had Arabella simply scribbled a random arrangement?

Seeing even his prideful granddaughter stumped, Mr. Gardner realized the complexity of the challenge and fell silent, observing the rest of the guests.

Anxiety was etched on the faces of the attendees. Some were fixated on the problem, eyes unwavering; others murmured to themselves, and a few whispered to their neighbors.

Eugene wasn't worried about them sharing answers; after all, even he had to ponder the problem for a good while to find a solution.

It could only be said that Arabella was too clever, effectively stumping them all.

Arabella gave Eugene a sly smile, as if to say, "I've done you a big favor. How will you thank me?"

Eugene returned the smile, his eyes conveying a reply, "That's my granddaughter! Let's talk about it later."

Using this method to dissuade the throng was sheer brilliance on the part of his precious granddaughter.

"Lindsay, still no solution?" Bluno asked with a hint of urgency. He could see Mabel was also at a loss. He hoped his daughter would outwit Mabel and vindicate her earlier frustration.

Lindsay was genuinely astonished that Arabella had devised such a complex chess problem. Where on earth had she learned it?

It was an impressive feat, and whoever had come up with the problem was a true master.

"Dad, give me another moment," Lindsay stared at the board with growing desperation.

"Think faster, you need to beat everyone to it," Bluno urged, wishing his daughter could triumph over all.

Mabel, Madeline, Roxanne, and even the renowned chess masters present were all at a loss, their minds racing for a breakthrough.

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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Alma stood amidst the crowd, her mind a whirl of confusion.

The chess game had reached a point where it seemed to be at a dead end.

Regardless of which side made the next move, it appeared there was no correct play to be made.

At the previous university tournament, Alma had boldly challenged Arabella to a game of chess, only to be

utterly defeated within moments.

It was then that Mr. Albright graced the backstage, engaging Arabella in a game that left the onlookers in

utter disbelief. To everyone's astonishment, Arabella bested Mr.

Albright, the undisputed chess maestro.

Even more astonishing was when Mr.

Albright openly praised Arabella's

exceptional talent, admitting that

she had surpassed her mentor and even considering her as his potential

successor.

The level of Arabella's chess play had

shocked Alma then, but now, as she

gazed upon the complex board

Arabella had devised, the sense of awe

washed over her with even greater

intensity.

If Arabella had indeed concocted this

intricate game on her own, her

unfathomable skill far surpassed that

of all the chess masters present, combined.

The thought of her previous victory over Mr. Albright didn't seem so surprising anymore.

With only two minutes left, Mr. Albright, wearing a contented smile, signaled his servant to bring forth his favorite chess set. Carefully placing the pieces according to Arabella's design, he crafted the enigmatic scenario on the board.

"Time is up." Mr. Albright announced cheerily, addressing the guests, "Would anyone care to step up and give it a try?"

The guests exchanged glances, none daring to approach the daunting chess puzzle before them.

Many of them dreamed of becoming his sole mentee, but this challenge was clearly beyond them.

"Lindsay, go on up," urged Bluno, Lindsay's father and a successful man. His life's experiences had taught him the importance of seizing opportunities.

Now, with no one presenting a solution, if his daughter dared to try, even without a strategy, her courage alone might draw Mr. Albright's attention.

"Dad, I'm truly at a loss," Lindsay's words was not of modesty but of genuine cluelessness.

"Can't you make even one move?" Bluno couldn't understand why placing a single piece on the board was such a difficult task.

"Mr. Albright is a celebrated chess legend; don't worry about embarrassing yourself. You're young. It's normal to face puzzles you can't solve. The main thing is to get noticed by him."

Bluno's point was clear: even if his daughter had no ideas, she could at least make an impression before anyone else did.

Lindsay lacked the courage to step forward. She looked towards Arabella, questioning whether the game's design was indeed her own creation.

Mabel's grandmother turned to her granddaughter, "Still no ideas?"

"I'm afraid so." Mabel, feeling the weight of the challenge, was at a loss for a solution as she peered at the board.

"Christine, what about you?" Madeline's family whispered to their child.

Madeline shook her head, obviously not up to the task.

"Roxanne, why so quiet?" Roxanne's mother probed her daughter, "You can't figure it out either?"

"Yes."



A couple of veteran chess masters in attendance, whose lives were steeped in the game, had never encountered such a scenario.

Was there really a solution?

"It seems Bella is the only candidate for my protege," Mr. Albright remarked with a twinkle in his eye,

leaving the statement open-ended.

He was aware of Arabella's busy life and her likely inability to take on the mantle, so he did not press her

to commit in front of everyone.

Instead, he implied that she was his choice in his heart, leaving the final decision to her.

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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The crowd turned their eyes towards Arabella, a mix of envy, frustration, and jealousy simmering in their gaze.

Bagging a compliment from Mr. Albright was something many had only dreamed of!

"Mr. Albright, is there really a solution to this puzzle?" someone asked with a hint of grievance in their voice, "How do you know she can solve it?"

Eugene, with a gleam in his eye and a smile playing on his lips, said, "The puzzle was crafted by her own hand; of course, she can solve it."

"But who's to say she didn't just scribble something random?"

"If she really did draw it, maybe she's known the answer all along."

"Mr. Albright, does she even understand chess? If she's that good, why not have her demonstrate for us?"

"Yeah, we've got time. How about it, miss? Show us how to solve this game."

"I want to see this."

"Me too."

The crowd was skeptical. How could this young lady outshine many chess masters present and unravel such a complex game?

Eugene looked at Arabella with a smile and gracefully gestured for her to take a seat at the chessboard.

Arabella knew that Grandpa Eugene wanted her to dazzle the crowd, to blind them with her brilliance.

Although she found the whole show a bit childish, it was the old man's birthday, so she decided to indulge him.

Settling into her seat, Arabella said, "Assuming I'm playing white, my first move would be here."

As Arabella placed a white piece on the board, Mr. Albright swiftly captured the surrounding pieces.

Arabella continued with her second move, then the third, and the fourth. As expected, each was swiftly countered.

The crowd was befuddled.

"Do you even know what you're doing?"

"Is this supposed to be impressive?"

Anyone can make these moves. Are you messing with us?"

"It was an even game, but after your four moves, you've lost quite a few pieces.

With your strategy, even someone clueless about chess could come here and play randomly."

"You're ruining a perfectly good game."

"We thought you were skilled."

They had expected prowess but found her first four moves easily countered.

Was this it? And she aspired to be Mr. Albright's protege?

These were the reactions Arabella wanted. She made her fifth move, still seemingly at a disadvantage.

Then came the sixth, the seventh, the eighth.

The grumbling in the crowd ceased, replaced by shock and awe.

Only now did they begin to comprehend Arabella's initial five moves; each one was a trap.

She had sacrificed pieces deliberately, luring her opponent into a false sense of security. As the opponent unwittingly fell deeper into her web, she was safeguarding her other pieces and setting up further snares.

By the time her opponent realized what was happening, it was too late. Arabella had anticipated each of their moves well in advance.

The crowd watched as Arabella's plan unfolded, her counterattacks swift and decisive, like a predator that had been lying in wait, suddenly pouncing on its prey with ferocity.

In less than five minutes, the outcome became clear; white had taken a commanding lead, leaving black in disarray.

Three minutes later, white emerged victorious, and everyone in the room inhaled sharply at the sight.

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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The once mocking crowd was now showing an expression of incredulity. As young was she, she showcased her incredible prowess, which was utterly impressive. The guests

erupted into applause, but there was still someone who felt unconvinced, questioning, "How would you fare with the black pieces?"

Surely, victory wouldn't come as easily with the disadvantage of the black pieces. Arabella reset the board to the scenario depicted in her painting, this time assuming command of the black pieces. Her explanation was crisp, insightful, and within ten minutes, she had navigated the black pieces to victory.

The crowd clapped, their earlier doubts washed away by the revelation of her skill.

"This painting - it's her own creation. Perhaps some chess master prepped her in secret. I'm not saying that I don't believe her competence. There are a lot of masters here who haven't thought of a solution,



while as a young lady, she's able to resolve it in two different ways. How could it be?"

He could accept it if she had come up with one, yet she was capable of winning a victory no matter which piece she employed. Was it obvious that she had already known the answer in advance?

It was Bluno voicing, the man who had arrived at the birthday bash with the sole purpose of persuading Mr. Albright to take his daughter Lindsay as a protege.

But Arabella's unexpected interference had rattled him. In his eyes, Lindsay was a chess talent with a string of accolades to her name. For a man like him, wealth was secondary to the prestige his daughter

could gain as Mr. Albright's chosen protege - an honor that would set her apart in high society.

"Let's be frank, many of us came with the hope of securing that coveted spot as Mr. Albright's protege. Yet, here stands a young girl, outplaying us and becoming a chosen one with a pre-painted board. It's hard to accept." spoke Vivian, Roxanne's mother, "I think my daughter is good as well. I'd like to let my daughter to play another round with her."

"I believe my granddaughter also has great potential." Mabel's grandmother chimed in, "If this Bella agrees, I'd like her to face my granddaughter in a match."

"Since she wants to become Mr. Albright's protege, she needs to beat all of us. But there are many people

here, and if each of all starts a match with her, we won't see the end maybe even until tomorrow." Mr.

Gardner, brimming with confidence in his granddaughter, boasted, "My granddaughter has won more chess awards than anyone here, especially the Solterra Youth Championship this year - she's the champion. Surely, she's the most qualified to challenge this girl."

Phyllis herself added, "Please give me the chance. If I win, it doesn't mean I'll automatically become Mr.

Albright's protege, but I'm willing to compete fairly with everyone."

Arabella found the whole ordeal amusing. Her chess setup, which they were scrutinizing so seriously, was a spur-of-the-moment creation - no master needed for such a straightforward game. She herself was able

to make a few or even dozens of different chess problems at any time.

Eugene, seeing Bella challenged, declared with a smile, "Alright, I'll make the call. Phyllis will represent everyone in a match against Bella."

Phyllis beamed, thinking Mr. Albright had set his sights on her, while Mr. Gardner felt a swell of pride. As

Eugene's old friend, his words still carried weight.

Arabella glanced at the clock, it wasn't even eight. Alright, let's play along.

Phyllis, brimming with eagerness, made the first move. Arabella responded casually, her moves effortless.

Eugene could tell Bella was holding back, not even showing a tenth of her true skill against Phyllis.

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Barely a minute had passed, and the outcome was painfully clear. Arabella kept gobbling up Phyllis's pieces, which left her opponent's defenses in tatters.

Even Mr. Gardner couldn't believe his eyes. His granddaughter, the pride of his lineage, was being utterly trounced by the girl?

Another minute ticked by, and Arabella had won.

It was now apparent to everyone: Arabella hadn't been coached by some master in secret; she genuinely possessed the skill!

There she was, casually sipping lemonade, served by a hovering butler, taking delicate bites of pastries when Phyllis was lost in thought; so effortlessly, so insouciantly, she had conquered Phyllis.

Phyllis sat stunned, her gaze fixed on the scene that had unfolded on the chessboard, unable to come back to her senses for a couple of long seconds.

Eugene's laughter boomed with delight, "This birthday bash is absolutely delightful! It's not your granddaughter's fault. Bella is simply leagues above us."

His words made everyone do a double take. They looked from him to Arabella, their eyes wide with disbelief.

What was Mr. Albright saying?

Arabella's skill surpassed everyone's, including Mr. Albright himself?

Impossible!

"Phyllis's losing to her doesn't surprise me one bit. I lost to her last time too, hahaha."

Eugene's admission

sent another shockwave through the crowd.

What did that mean?

Arabella's chess prowess was greater than Mr. Albright's?

But if that weren't so, why would Mr. Albright humble himself to heap such praise on her?

"She has been my chess protege for over a decade." Eugene said with a broad, proud smile, "She's

surpassed her mentor, which fills me with immense pride. Her level of play could give any artificial intelligence a run for its money, and as her mentor, I couldn't be happier."

The people in the room was petrified, having never heard a whisper of Mr. Albright taking on a protege, let alone teaching her for over ten years.

This girl had earned Mr. Albright's favor and even outshone his expertise. There could be no other explanation - she was a prodigy.

"Does that mean this young lady has long been the chosen one in your eyes, Mr.

Albright?" Vivian,

Roxanne's mother, maintained a gracious smile as she queried, "Are you planning to pass on your legacy to her?"



"I'd like nothing more." Eugene chuckled again, "But the girl hasn't given her consent. You don't know how long I've been asking her that, and yet she hasn't said yes."

Again, astonished gazes turned to Arabella. Was she out of her mind? To be so highly regarded by Mr. Albright, to be his sole protegee - this was a dream many would kill for.

It signified a future soaring to great heights, a life beyond ordinary.

And yet for years, she hadn't given her assent!

Some in the room were green with envy, while others were practically breathless with incredulity.

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Chapter 1500

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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Envy can be a bitter pill to swallow! Arabella had been blessed with the good fortune of studying chess under the guidance of Mr. Albright for over a decade, starting when she was just a little girl. Was she seven or eight years old? Or could she have been even younger, around five or six?

Having someone to mentor her from such a tender age, no wonder she had surpassed them all in talent.

It was only now that they realized why, despite their overt and covert attempts to persuade Mr. Albright to take on protege, he had always refused. He had his eye on someone all along, and what an exceptional choice Arabella was.

With her by his side, why would Mr. Albright ever consider anyone else? They would have chosen Arabella as their protege too.

They had made fools of themselves, thinking too highly of their own children's abilities.

"Does Arabella have any plans to take on any protege?"

A middle-aged woman stepped forward with great respect and addressed Arabella, "I would love to study

under your guidance. Is there a chance you might accept me?"

Everyone was stunned.

The woman speaking was Mona, a renowned chess player famous nationwide, who had won a multitude of chess championships. It was shocking to see her, a figure of such esteem, willingly step down to learn from Arabella as a protege.

"I can tell your skills surpass mine, and I hope you would grant me the opportunity to learn from you. I truly love chess,"

Before Mona's voice trailed off, another notable figure stepped forward.

"If Arabella isn't considering taking on any protege at the moment, might I at least add you on WhatsApp to get acquainted? I'm Atwood, the secretary-general of the Chess Association, and I greatly admire your

play. The way you handled both offense and defense was nothing short of astonishing."

"Could you possibly give my kid some pointers?" A lady from the crowd approached with her child in tow,

"My daughter has been studying chess for seven years, and every mentor has said she's immensely

talented. You're about the same age; perhaps you could be friends."

"I'd love to learn from you as well."

As the crowd around Arabella grew, she was about to decline politely when a young woman's voice broke through.

"Mr. Albright, I heard that Queena is also attending your birthday party. Has she arrived?"

The speaker was Alma, who smiled with easy confidence, "If Queena has come, I wonder what she would

make of this game. Simple, or intriguing?"

It was then that the rest of the guests remembered this illustrious individual.

"Right, Queenena! I almost forgot about her."

"I heard she's won twelve world chess championships. Whenever she competes internationally, the title is hers for the taking."

"She's known for her aggressive play, pinpointing her opponent's weaknesses and striking swiftly and ruthlessly. Even at a disadvantage, she can turn the situation around in no time."

"I've seen her match videos, and even though you only see her hand moving the pieces, it's such an elegant hand."

"Her game is truly electrifying."

Hearing this, Bluno felt a glimmer of hope that his daughter might have a chance at mentorship, chiming

in, "Such a game would hardly impress her, right? Where is she? Would we have the chance to witness her brilliance?"

"Mr. Albright, if Queena wished to study under you, would you accept her as a protege?"

"Her skills must be far superior to this young lady's, right?"

"Mr. Albright, has Queena arrived?"

"If she could challenge this young lady to a match, that would be the ultimate spectacle!"

The guests thought that if Queena could make Arabella look foolish, they would feel much better.

After all, it was hard to accept being outdone by a young girl, but there were also those who were eagerly anticipating; if Mr. Albright insisted on Arabella as his sole protege, they might still have the chance to

study under Queena.

Rumor had it that in a recent high-profile man-versus-machine match, Queena had defeated an AI, stunning the world and becoming a legend.

However, up until now, very few had ever seen her in person.

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