

Arabella 841

Chapter 841

"Bella, feeling hot? Fancy a drink?"

Clark wrapped a small fan around the umbrella handle, blowing it toward his sister. Then, he reached into his bag and pulled out a bottle of lemonade, twisted off the cap and handed it over.

"Have a sip first."

Romeo was surprised that Clark had so quickly found this brand of lemonade. While navigating through the thick crowd, he wiped a large rock clean, "Bella, let's sit here for a bit."

The place was packed. They hadn't even made it to the entrance of the glass walkway.

Arabella took a sip, lifting her pretty face to behold the dense crowd in front of her.

Although they hadn't yet ascended the mountain, the scenery at the foot of it was quite pleasant, with lush trees and clear, azure waters.

Suddenly, a scream pierced through the air, scattering the crowd.

"Is that a body?"

my

it wash up from

we call

a large bag on the shore, washed up by the waves. The bag had a hole in it, revealing something quickly pulled

here, I'll

Clark instinctively wanted to

umbrella and fan to Romeo, reminding him to look

up

onlookers formed a semi-circle around the bag on

the size of a person, tied up with a rope that was attached to a large

after receiving a call. Captain Allen's eyes lit up when

all, the Sherlock Holmes of forensics. His investigative skills far

into him today meant this case was likely to

"Professor Clark, you're here too?" Captain Allen hurried over to greet him.

Clark simply nodded, "You guys go ahead."

Captain Allen had his men disperse the crowd, then shot photographs of the opened bag for evidence. The body inside was highly decomposed, the face unrecognizable.

Some tourists couldn't help but retch, others left with their children, leaving only the curious ones who watched from a distance.

"Captain Allen, we found a cell phone. Soaked in water for so long, the victim is probably dead."

"Take it back and check,' Captain Allen said, then turned to Clark, "Professor Clark, what do you think?"

"The victim is male."

This was the clue Clark could discern at a glance. Beyond this, he wasn't certain about anything else.

"Time of death is about six months."

All heads turned toward the source of the voice. When Captain Allen saw the girl in the crowd, he was overjoyed.

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"Bell, fancy meeting you here!"

He dared not call the little girl Dr. Bell, fearing it would give away her identity.

Clark was a bit taken aback. Why was Captain Allen more excited to see his sister than him?

"Bell, are you out for a day's fun?" He finished speaking and then noticed the big shot standing next to Bell. He nearly choked. "Mr.

McMillian, you're here too."

"Hmm." Romeo merely nodded, not showing much emotion.

"Bella, how did you know that the deceased has been dead for about six months?" Clark asked curiously.

"When a body has been in the water for more than three months, a white, wax-like substance forms on the surface, commonly known as adipocere."

"For an adult

can

time of death was far

age to compare with the missing person

you think he was?"

years, it decreases by about 0.47 inches.

victim's height based on

people around her looked at her in awe, finding it hard to

for the
from Captain Allen, put them on, and in front
stunned. Who was this girl
thing was, she seemed to know what
too, and came over to look at the
the deceased's age should be between 35

Everyone was stunned. Even Captain Allen couldn't help but ask, "How can you tell?"

"Look, this part of the skull is the sagittal suture. It starts to fuse at 22 and finishes at 35. This part is the occipital bone. The gap between it and the parietal bone looks lambdoid, which is the lambdoid suture. It starts to fuse at 26 and finishes at 47. In addition, judging by his third molar, we can deduce that the deceased was between 35 and 40."

Captain Allen and his team never expected they would get clues about the deceased's age and height so quickly.

At that moment, Clark suggested, "You can extract DNA from the deceased's rib and compare it with the DNA of the missing persons' relatives. I believe you'll find a match soon."

"Thank you, thank you so much, Professor Clark and Ms. Bell!"

Captain Allen never thought this case would progress so smoothly today. He felt incredibly lucky to run into two experts.

Clark nodded, then added, "Also, there are no signs of struggle on his torso and limbs, which suggests he was killed by someone he knew. As for the victim, that waterlogged cell phone will give you the answer."

"Thank you so much for the tip, Professor Clark."

This clue was crucial for the police investigation. Captain Allen thanked them repeatedly, and only then did Arabella and Clark remove their gloves, sterilize their hands, and leave the scene.

Chapter 843

The crowd was buzzing with curiosity, their eyes darting to Arabella.

"Could they be medical students specializing in forensics?"

They looked young and even somewhat couple-like.

"Are they a couple, perhaps?"

Upon hearing the word 'couple', Romeo glanced back at the crowd, a look that was enough to silence their whispers.

This stern-faced gentleman and the lady must be a couple.

The warning in his gaze was unmistakable.

Due to the murder case, the usual influx of tourists had lessened significantly. The trio found themselves alone, strolling along the glass pathway after taking the cable car up the mountain.

"Clark, it's amusing that you're scared of ghosts but not of corpses."

Arabella couldn't help but chuckle at the irony.

"Watch your words. Clark fears nothing! Last night was just an unexpected incident,' Clark defended himself, trying to save face.

"And you, young as you are, seem to fear neither man nor beast."

was

lot and is accustomed to

zone', each

meant that Arabella was wise beyond

he hadn't come across anyone more exceptional than Arabella. Her nonchalance

In the living room.

warmly, "They seem to

were kids." Celeste, with a tender smile on her face, gestured to Arabella, "Bella, come sit

coming back, we thought about what to get you. We heard that girls love this

the "QY" on the

but chuckle, "Celeste, you

was founded by

"You're saying QY was founded by Bella? So this necklace was

taken aback

smiled lightly, "From now on, you will get a 30% discount

amazing surprise, and her smile

Serena watched this scene, her

garden, and now Celeste, handing gifts and chatting closely with Arabella. In the past, she was

Clark returned, "It's getting a bit chilly out. You guys continue chatting, and I have some work to take

knowing that he was Astronisia's top hacker. She watched his retreating figure, then turned to Crystal,

Clark is really nice, and we talked a lot." Under Crystal's curved brows, a pair of sparkling eyes were full of spirit, "Since Clark has work to do,

was straightforward and cheerful, unlike Serena, who was always

handling a skull, her mental strength, and her medical expertise were unmatched.

"The living may lie, but the dead do not. Every part of a deceased body tells a truthful story,' Arabella shared, her tone serene.

"Speaking the truth for the departed is the shared goal of all forensic scientists. So, Clark, your profession is sacred and commendable."

Arabella's praise took Clark by surprise. His career choice had been a frequent subject of his mother's disapproval. He dealt with charred, decomposed, mutilated, and odorous bodies.

His mother found it horrifying and dangerous, saying it was stressful and detrimental to one's mental health.

Yet, providing closure for the deceased, comfort for their families, and justice for society was exactly what his job was about.

In their work, forensic scientists had to eliminate all distractions to unearth the singular truth for the deceased. Every deduction could impact the direction of the investigation. A tiny mistake could lead to a huge discrepancy.

Sometimes, the nightmarish scenes of his workday would invade his dreams.

"Do you think this field is good?" Clark asked.

Arabella nodded. "Medical practitioners aim to save lives. While I save the living, you help the dead. We both uphold justice in our own ways."

For society, they quietly contributed their humble efforts.

Looking at Arabella, Clark suddenly realized how much more outstanding she was compared to girls her age. If it were Serena, she would probably be hiding behind him, scared and eager to leave the scene.

But Bella, with her calm demeanor and professional knowledge, had helped the dead find justice.

"Romeo, see this? My sister is so accomplished. If you dare mistreat her in this lifetime, I will make sure you pay, he warned.

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Romeo flashed a reassuring grin. "Don't worry, Clark. The only person who can ditch me in this lifetime is Bella."

"What are you talking about? You're making my sister sound like some heartbreaker!"

At the end of the clear glass walkway, they stood side by side in a huge heart-shaped structure, chatting and laughing as they admired the distant scenery.

That evening, as Romeo dropped the siblings off at the Reflections Villa, he noticed a Rolls-Royce parked at the entrance.

There must be guests.

"I guess I should leave then. Don't want to intrude on your folks,"

Romeo addressed Bella before him with a tender smile. "Get some rest."

"Sure, drive safe."

"Will do."

Clark suddenly

beaming smile. "Crystal, you look even prettier than

too kind.' Crystal Temple lit up the room with her vivacious energy. "Actually, without makeup, you're naturally

are like a goddess descending

thoroughly flattered. "Your silver tongue never fails

a candle to you, Louisa. A blooming bud lacks your grace and elegance, a fully bloomed flower isn't

Louisa laughed heartily.

and intelligent. She brings joy to everyone around her, Kenneth proudly shared with his old friend Alger Temple. "Having her at home is like having a warm coat on a

'warm coat' has some leaks, I'm afraid. Just graduated, and

laughed heartily. "He went out with his sister

finished speaking, a servant reported, "Mr. Clark and Miss Bella

anticipation as she turned towards the villa

appear. Allow me to introduce you

and introduced her to the Temples. "Bella, this

is older than you, so you should call her

Crystal, it's a pleasure to meet you all"

Temple scanned Arabella from head to toe, clearly pleased

marry into the McMillian family? She and Romeo would make a perfect couple.

"Bella, you're even prettier than Starmoon, the girl who broke the internet on Facebook a while ago. I'm so happy to meet you. I'm a friend of your brother, Clark."

So this Crystal was here for Clark?

"Alger, Celeste, long time no see." Clark gave Crystal a brief look.

"Made it, huh?"

"I didn't know you were so protective of your sister." Crystal's smile was radiant. "Heard you took her out?"

"I just went along for the ride, really. Played the role of the third wheel."

"It's been a while, but Clark, you've become even more handsome."

Celeste's eyes twinkled with amusement. "I bet there are many girls chasing after you."

"I'm usually busy with work." was all Clark could say.

"Crystal has also been busy with her studies. Now that she's graduated, she wants to return home to help run our business.

Since she's our only daughter, Alger and I plan to groom her to be our successor."

Chapter 845

The moment Clark heard that, he realized the implication was that she intended to stay in the States for an extended period.

"Clark, it's been a while since Crystal visited us. Why don't you show her around our garden? We've planted a variety of new flowers lately. Maybe Crystal will find a few varieties she likes and can take some back to cultivate."

Clark could only respond, "I promised my sister, Bella, that I would take a walk with her, right, Bella?"

Arabella was speechless.

Since when?

Clark's pleading gaze fell upon Arabella.

Louisa was half-skeptical, "Didn't you just finish walking with your sister?"

"No worries, I can accompany Bella for a walk too; Crystal chimed in, causing Clark to pause in surprise.

should get going. I'll have the staff turn on

linked arms with Arabella, "Bella, I heard you just moved back. How are you

by Crystal's warm demeanor,

been ages since my last visit. Maybe we could go

her aid, "Between school, other commitments, and a

then?" Crystal looked up at

"I'm rather busy myself."

maintained her hold on Arabella's hand, grinning, "We

just as her phone began to vibrate, "Excuse me, I need to take

but seeing that the caller was Romeo, he could only plead with his eyes for her to return as whole situation amusing. Was Clark intentionally avoiding Crystal? Was he the initiative again. "I heard there have been

spending time with my

you can invite me along. I promise to make sure Bella has a great

"You really plan to return and settle down here?" Clark asked again.

"Yes, this place is my home. I was always planning to return."

Clark didn't know what to say to her. As he was in deep thought, Crystal asked again, "Do you guys have any plans for tomorrow?"

"Not sure yet."

"What does Bella like?" Crystal continued to inquire, "Are there any places she's been wanting to visit? Or anything she's particularly interested in?"

Clark was stumped by the sudden barrage of questions.

"Don't tell me you don't even know what your sister likes?"

In Clark's memory, the only thing that genuinely piqued Bella's interest was Romeo. Only when Romeo's name was mentioned did her eyes light up. No one else or anything else could stir a ripple in her heart.

"It seems like you don't know much. I'll ask her myself later on."

Chapter 846

As soon as Arabella hung up the phone, she saw her mother waving at her, signaling her to come over.

Arabella strolled over with a puzzled look, only to be hushed by her mother, Louisa, "How is it going with Clark?"

Arabella glanced at the distant figures and whispered, "Are you trying to set them up?"

I've watched her grow up. She's so innocent, brilliant, and smart. You couldn't find a single flaw in her background, character, or

she wanted to marry Clark when she grew up. We thought it was just a child's innocent words, but after all these years, she only has eyes for Clark. I think they

like Clark

else he's going to be

of Clark in the distance, pulling out his phone to send a message. In a

are you? Hurry up.]

"Let's go, we shouldn't intrude on them." Louisa pulled Arabella away, "Let's give them some time together."

Arabella gave a sympathetic look at the distant figures and replied, [Mom and I are going inside.]

Clark was speechless.

Chapter 847

"Mind if we exchange digits?"

"Sure.

Arabella offered her number. Crystal entered it into her contact list then said, "Well, we'd better get going. You guys should get some rest. I'll stop by again soon."

"Um, okay." Louisa and Kenneth stood up to see them out.

"Bella, Bella!" Clark called quietly from the staircase, waving at Arabella. "Come up."

Once she was upstairs, Clark hooked an arm over her shoulder and whispered, "Did Mom ask you to give us some alone time?"

didn't exactly put it that way.' Arabella raised her eyes to his,

her more as

"Does she know that?"

into that girl who gave

surprised. "How did

that charm. The night you lost it, you looked so anxious, like you lost something really

to him, that thing was the

between him and

melancholy in Clark's eyes, Arabella

floor, staring at the distant scenery with a faintly self-mocking tone, "After breaking up with me,

the distance, his eyes filled with a subtle

looking for a needle in a haystack to find someone.

in his words. "Did

fought. But near the end, she started to drift away. Eventually, she told me she didn't have

"Did she really find someone else?"

"Probably." Clark wasn't sure, but how could she be so heartless if not?

"Does Crystal know about you two?" Arabella asked again.

"Yeah. She confessed her feelings to me when I was at my lowest, right after she left."

"And you turned her down?"

"Yeah." Clark looked off into the distance again. "Crystal's a good girl, but I'm just not into her. I didn't want to lead her on."

Arabella understood now. After a moment of silence, she asked, "Aren't you one of Astronisia's top hackers? Couldn't you find out anything?"

"No, I tried everything. It's like she never existed. Sometimes, I wonder if everything that happened between us was just a dream."

Chapter 848

Arabella gazed at Clark's profile, a sudden wave of sympathy washing over her. "What's her name? Maybe I can help."

Clark looked at Arabella in surprise, then realized with a jolt that his sister's hacking skills trumped his own. Maybe she could indeed find her.

"Send me her personal details later," Arabella said, her gaze falling on the road ahead. "If she's doing well, there's no need to disturb her. But if she's in any sort of trouble, you could use this opportunity to clear things up."

Clark looked at his sister's profile, finally agreeing, "Alright."

Serena, lurking in the shadows, was taken aback. She hadn't realized that Clark had such a deep and haunting past. His family always assumed he was single.

But why had he only told Arabella.

her, his

knew that someone was eavesdropping from the shadows. Serena was the only one who would stoop to

Arabella

orphanage, was adopted at the age of 6 by a family and moved to 111 Stardust Lane in

in the picture had an aloof and indifferent air

"Got it."

one to her subordinate, [Find this person for me as quickly as you

many beautiful girls in the world, but I've only ever seen two with this kind of aura. One is you, and

air, her cool

like

do it, and stop talking.] Arabella sent

The next morning.

Arabella planned to visit 111 Stardust Lane.

As she was leaving, she overheard the servants discussing how Clark had sat on the balcony all night, not sleeping. They suspected he was upset.

Arabella glanced at Clark's bedroom. The balcony was now empty.

She chose a car from the garage and followed the GPS to Golden Fields. After finding a parking spot, she walked to Stardust Lane.

Stardust Lane was a small neighborhood. On the left were fish ponds, in the middle was a small road for pedestrians, and on the right were rows of houses.

Arabella followed the rusted, faded house numbers, searching from one house to the next.

Many villagers ran businesses from their homes. Some sold fruit, others ran convenience stores, and a few sold vegetables.

Number 110 was a breakfast stall. The owner had set up a small tent at the front, selling piping hot breakfast.

Chapter 849

tent at the front, selling piping hot breakfast.

Quite a few people frequented his stall, the tables and chairs even spilling over to the front of number 111.

"Boss, one hot milk, please." Arabella approached the stall and noticed that the tables and chairs in front of number 111 were all occupied. She couldn't help but ask, "Boss, doesn't this obstruct the neighbors' entrance?"

"Ah, I can tell you're new here. You're not from this village, are you?"

The owner filled a cup with hot milk, giving Arabella a once-over.

There wasn't a girl this pretty in the village.

"I'm here to find a classmate, and it's my first time visiting."

Seeing Arabella's candidness, the shop owner didn't hold back.

"Next door is Professor Earwood's place. He and his wife quit their jobs to look for their daughter. They've been gone for a couple of months now."

"Their daughter is missing?"

to have found her birth parents a year ago, planning to settle abroad. After that, she lost contact with them. No matter how many calls or messages Mr. and Mrs. Earwood

Arabella's eyes deepened.

She wouldn't just leave like that. Supposedly, she found her birth parents, but those birth parents never showed themselves. Mr. and Mrs. Earwood felt that something must have happened to her, so they decided to quit their jobs and go to Iridia to find out."

"That'll be a dime."

detailed address, finding someone is like searching for a needle in a haystack." Arabella paid, she was in some place called 'Lida'. The name was too long, and I didn't remember

"Lidaria."

educated folks are so clever.

customer arrived at the breakfast stand,

situation, to raise a child only for her to leave with her birth parents. It's practically

Carol wasn't heartless. Do you think she might have been scammed abroad?"

have found her birth parents. Think about it, Carol's been fluent in different foreign languages since she was little. She must be living well abroad, and

quiet, but I

she had an air about her, unlike anyone from

in this

to discuss amongst

Arabella found a spot to sit, sipping her hot milk in silence.

"Do you think it could be related to those people who visited our village a while back?"

Arabella lifted her gaze to the woman who spoke.

"Who knows, Professor Earwood says we shouldn't blow this out of proportion. Best not to bring it up again."

"True, if Carol really found her birth parents and has no plans of returning, bringing it up would just be rubbing salt in Professor Earwood's wounds. Better to drop it."

Arabella continued sipping her hot milk. When she noticed the woman who'd spoken earlier leaving after buying her breakfast, she got up and followed her.

The woman was walking home with her breakfast when she heard someone calling her.

"Excuse me, could you tell me more about those people you mentioned earlier?" Arabella explained sincerely. "Carol is my senior at school, and she's been very helpful to me in the past. I borrowed some books from her, but I can't get in touch with her.

I'm worried something might have happened."

Seeing the genuine concern in Arabella's eyes, the woman didn't think she was a wrong person and decided to share. "That happened a few months ago. One night, a group of people burst into Professor Earwood's house around two or three in the morning. My roof was leaking that night, and the rain was dripping onto my bed. My husband saw them when he went to fix the roof."

Chapter 850

"What kind of people were they?"

"It was in the dead of night so that I couldn't see clearly, but there seemed to be about seven or eight people in the yard. After that night, Professor Earwood didn't open his door for four or five days.

When I finally saw him, I asked him what was going on, and he said he was visited by relatives. Who has that many relatives visiting in the middle of the night? In the rain, they were all wandering around the yard. It was strange."

Arabella continued her inquiry, "Could it be that Professor Earwood made some enemies?"

"Unlikely. He and his wife are kind people, and they never leave this small town. They get along well with everyone. I think it might have something to do with Carol. Shortly after this incident, they both resigned and went to find Carol."

A hint of sadness filled Arabella's eyes, "I wonder when I will see Carol again."

"Well, it's hard to say. If they had any news, Professor Earwood would have brought her back by now. But there has been no word from them. I wonder how the search abroad is going."

"Thank you, ma'am," Arabella expressed her gratitude. "It seems I will have to wait until next time to return the book to Carol."

a good kid, coming all this way to return a book." The woman glanced at Arabella's backpack, no slipped around to the back of house number 111. Seeing no one around, she hopped over the wilted plants, indicating that no one had

her backpack and sprayed it on

could detect traces of blood diluted

was cleaned up thoroughly, as long as there was Luminol, the blood traces could be

either the injured person wasn't seriously hurt or this wasn't the primary crime

Arabella noticed that the locks had been tampered with. She took a fingerprint flashlight from her bag and shone it on the lock. There were no

if Professor Earwood had locked the door

was clean,

had been here after Mr. and Mrs. Earwood locked the door and

Mrs. Earwood, but someone else who was cautious

the door open. The living room was neat and tidy, with a layer of dust indicating a lack of glasses she had developed a while ago. After putting them on, she quickly spotted a dot was the light emitted by a camera, indicating that someone had installed a surveillance camera. She quickly moved, observing other areas, and eventually found a total of six cameras in the living room. Clearly, this was not the work of Mr. and Mrs. Earwood.

The cameras were all hidden in discreet locations, like multiple pairs of eyes spying on everything in the house.

Arabella quickly dismantled the cameras. Her phone vibrated at that moment. It was a call from Romeo.

"What's up?" Arabella hung up the call and texted him.

Romeo's voice conveyed a longing hint, "I'm at Reflections Villa.

Edith said you left early. Where did you go?"

"Handling some stuff" Arabella replied, "I'll tell you later."

"Okay, let me know when you're free. I'll come find you."

"Sure."

Arabella put away her phone and took out a detector, discovering several bugging devices installed in the room.