

Arabella 1861

Chapter 1861

Arabella couldn't help but laugh. "Arguing with them is just a waste of time."

"Absolutely, let's not give them a second of ours. Let them flounder in the abyss. Have you heard that

Yolanda has hit rock bottom."

Hmph!

That's what Yolanda deserved!

She was such a snob when she was the heiress of the Murphys, always picking on Bella.

Without Bella, the Murphys would be nobodies!

"But, what's going on with your family? Do you need my help?" Ophelia couldn't help but ask as she

noticed the swarm of security guards patrolling the grounds. "Just say the word, and I'll have people

here in no time."

Arabella filled her in on Erik's situation and then said, "We're just waiting for the puppet master to walk

right into the trap now."

"I can't believe there's someone out there even worse than the Murphys, more vile and despicable. You

should be careful these next few days."

"Don't worry, with all these people around, and besides, it's not that easy to get to me."

"That's true. With your skills, there aren't many who can stand up to you."

They chatted the night away until the hands of the clock were nearing eleven, and Ophelia finally said goodbye, her voice full of reluctance.

"I'll celebrate with you the day your true identity is revealed."

"Definitely."

As they walked downstairs, Louisa rose from the couch and said warmly, "Ophelia, leaving so soon?

It's still early, why not stay a little longer?"

"No, Auntie, it's quite late already."

"Why don't you stay here for the night, save you the trip back and forth. You'll be attending Bella's homecoming banquet in a few days, right? I'm fond of you. If you stayed, Bella would have company, and I could see you more often."

"Thanks you, Auntie, but Bella's leaving the country tomorrow, so I'd be alone anyway. I'll come visit another time."

"Bella, you're going abroad?" Louisa looked at Arabella in surprise.

"Yeah, I'm escorting Bella tomorrow. Don't worry, she's just delivering some outfits to a client. We'll go and come back the same day, it won't interfere with the upcoming plans."

Sean knew the family wanted to surprise Bella.

"Then you be careful, and take good care of your sister." Louisa was obviously worried about his injury, but it wasn't the right moment to discuss it, so she decided to talk about it later.

Then she turned back to Ophelia, "Dear, when you visit, you don't need to bring anything. It's too formal. Boys, help Ophelia with her things to the car."

The brothers immediately volunteered. One of them said, "Sean's free, he can do it."

Sean was thrilled at the proposal.

"Auntie, you're too kind. It's just a small gift from me."

"Your consideration is appreciated, but we shouldn't accept these gifts. You're still young, how can I take these from a child."

The two continued their polite argument, each insisting.

"Why don't we split it? Take half, and return half." Arabella interjected.

The Collins family could accept half of Ophelia's housewarming gifts and return her with some other items, and the friendly dispute would be solved.

Chapter 1862

"Brilliant idea!" Kenneth had someone to bring over a selection of high-end supplements and beauty products.

Ophelia was even more embarrassed, "Uncle, Auntie. you're really too kind."

"Don't mention it, Ophelia, here is a little something for you." Sean was already holding a gift bag, approaching her with a friendly smile.

Afraid that it would be rude to refuse again, Ophelia accepted his gift with a grateful nod.

"Make sure you visit us again soon, Ophelia. Aunt Louisa will be waiting eagerly, and the whole family welcomes you," Louisa said, walking her out of the main building.

At the right moment, Hans caught his mother's arm and said, "We'll let you go there. Take care,

Ophelia."

"Hans, you're too polite. Stay, Bella." Ophelia was somewhat reluctant to let Arabella go, the key point being, she didn't want Sean to take her there.

"I've got something to handle suddenly; Sean will walk you out. Take care."

"Alright, no problem. Take care and try to get some rest after," Ophelia responded before turning to leave.

Walking beside Ophelia with a pile of gifts, Sean could feel the seconds dragging by, and Ophelia seemed to quicken her pace.

She hadn't paid attention during her arrival, but now the path to the front gate seemed endlessly far.

"So, you and Bella go way back?" Sean suddenly asked.

"Yeah, we've known each other for many years."

"Bella had it rough before, didn't she?"

The question bridged a gap between them, and Ophelia found herself opening up.

"Back in the day, the Murphys, her foster parents, used to neglect her and treated her badly. And after they found Yolanda, Bella became practically invisible."

"That Yolanda, such a manipulative thing, always played the sweet girl in front of their parents but turned into a bully behind their backs... Poor Bella suffered a lot!"

"Bella always tried to keep the peace for the sake of family harmony and to avoid worrying her sick

Grannie Grace. She even cleaned up messes for the Murphys. but they just took more and more advantage of her kindness."

Sean hadn't expected the girl to share so much. What had seemed like a long walk ended in almost an instant, as they reached the front gate.

Ophelia pressed the car's unlock button, and Sean opened the trunk to place the gifts inside.

"Drive safe, and may the wind be at your back." Sean said.

"Thanks."

Ophelia got into the car and buckled up, ready to leave, when suddenly Sean tapped on her window.

"Hold on." He quickly pulled out his phone. "I'm escorting Bella to Belloria tomorrow, and I'm not sure what might happen. It would be best if I had a way to contact you, just in case. You know her well."

Ophelia considered his words and found them reasonable. Pulling out her phone, she opened her contacts and let him scan the QR code.

Sean tried to hide his smile as he added her on WhatsApp, maintaining a calm voice as he said,

"Goodbye."

"Bye," Ophelia replied, starting the car and pressing the accelerator.

Her car sped away into the distance.

Sean watched her leave, his heart soaring with joy—he finally had the girl's contact info!

He owed his sister a great deal!

Indeed, his sister was the family's lucky star, the beacon of fortune. Ever since she came into their

lives, things seemed to go smoothly...

In his phone, he labeled the contact: Ophelia.

After a pause, he changed it to: Lucky Girl as his sister referred to her. Perfect!

Back inside the living room.

Chapter 1863

Louisa couldn't help herself, "Ophelia is such a looker, just like our little Bella—both of them have top-notch features and charm."

Sean's eyebrows lifted at the compliment. After all, they were talking about his crush—of course she was exceptional!

"It's not just her looks or aura; but she's also been raised well. After all, she was the daughter of the Almonds. She's got all the best qualities."

"I think she'd be quite the match for David!" Louisa chuckled conspiratorially.

Sean's face darkened at the remark. What were their parents even thinking!

"You agree? From the moment I laid eyes on her, I just knew she and David would hit it off! David's as lively and cheerful as they come, and Ophelia's got a great personality too. They'd be just."

Before Kenneth could finish, Sean walked out to interrupt, "How can they be a match?"

"You went back so soon?" Louisa hadn't expected him to return so quickly from dropping off their guest,

"What's wrong with them as a pair? Ophelia is stellar, and David's the heartthrob everyone knows."

"David's still a kid, he's not the caretaker type."

"Who says that? He's super attentive and caring with his sister, way more than you ever were!" Louisa

retorted, turning to Arabella, "Bella, don't you agree?"

"Bella, do you think your friend would be a perfect match for your brother David? Be your sister-in-

law?" Kenneth looked at Arabella expectantly.

What?

Sister-in-law?!

Sean couldn't stomach the title and was ready to interject, when Arabella spoke up.

"I actually think Sean would be a good match for her."

Kenneth and Louisa were taken aback, then both turned to look at Sean.

Now, Sean's face lit up with a victorious smile!

See that? His sister had a good eye!

Hear that? He and Ophelia were the real dream team!

"That's nonsense," Louisa denied quickly, "Sean could scare away a young girl with just one look and you expect him to take care of someone?"

"David's the better fit, he's gentle and considerate."

Sean cut Kenneth off before he could finish, "Am I your real son?"

Always praising others, they never had a good word for him!

Kenneth and Louisa glanced at him, words failing them. They wanted to praise him, but the truth was hard to ignore: David's personality was indeed more approachable and thoughtful than Sean's.

"I'm going to take a shower!"

Sean headed upstairs, passing by grandma's room when he suddenly overheard her on the phone.

"My dear, when are you coming home? I met a girl tonight, so beautiful, just perfect, and I think of you.

You are the only one in the house that is still single. I think you two would be well-suited."

Sean froze, his grandma wasn't talking to David, was she??

What did she mean, saying David was the only one without a girlfriend?

Wasn't he, Sean, single too?

Or did she think he was not worthy of a girl?!

With that thought, he knocked and entered the room.

Cornelia was on the phone with David. Assuming Sean needed something, she said, "We'll talk when you get back, come home soon, everyone's here but you, yes, even Sean's arrived! Alright, goodnight, sleep tight."

After hanging up, Cornelia looked up at Sean with a warm smile, "Did you drop the young lady off? Tell

me, she's quite beautiful, isn't she?"

Chapter 1864

Before Sean could answer, the old lady queried again, "Is it true that Ophelia and David are a perfect match?"

“Grandma,” Sean asked with a hint of annoyance, “why are you up worrying about this stuff at this hour?”

David and Ophelia? A match?

Not even close!

“That young lady is just too charming and she seems so well-mannered. Most importantly, she’s completely devoted to Bella. I won’t lie, the first time I laid eyes on her, I hoped she’d be my granddaughter-in-law.”

Cornelia’s smile was so wide it almost split her face, “I wonder when that girl will visit again. I didn’t get nearly enough time to chat with her tonight.”

The one who didn’t get enough time to chat was him, Sean, right??

This evening, everyone had been fussing over Ophelia with warm greetings, even Hans, Chasel and Clark had quite the conversation with her. Yet, every time he tried to speak to Ophelia, it ended in a misunderstanding! He barely exchanged a few words with her.

He had lesser interaction with Ophelia than all of the others!

“There’s more than one bachelor in this house!” Sean muttered discontentedly.

Cornelia paused, realizing she had overlooked her dear grandson Sean!

“Oh, that’s right, you too. I’m getting forgetful.” She quickly pulled out her smartphone and tapped on a photo sent by a contact, “What do you think of this girl? She looks pretty innocent and elegant.”

“She’s like a budget version of Serena Lott,” Sean clearly wasn’t interested.

“How about this one? She’s both sultry and classy. She seems like a determined person too.”

Sean’s frown deepened; he was clearly displeased.

“Then take a look at these ones; we’ve got the cute type, the elegant type, the artsy type, and the queen bee type.”

“Just introduce them to David.” Sean couldn’t muster any interest but got increasingly irritated.

“You, my boy, are too picky. All these women are highly educated and superior in their looks, careers, and wealth, and yet you fancy none of them.”

At that moment, Bernard came out after a shower, and Sean couldn’t help blurting out, “Grandpa, you should get Grandma to rest. She’s been fussing over nothing all day.”

He couldn’t go on with this conversation, or he’d explode from frustration.

Bernard, noticing his displeasure, asked with a chuckle, "What's wrong?"

"I'm trying to set him up with someone, but he doesn't like any of them!" Cornelia was baffled by her

grandson's difficulty in finding a partner, wondering why he couldn't just find a girlfriend and settle down

like his brothers.

"What kind of girl does Sean like then?" Bernard asked with a twinkle in his eye, "Your grandma's

asked around quite a bit and rounded up all sorts of girls for you, oh wait, we haven't found an Ophelia

type yet."

Upon hearing Ophelia's name being mentioned, Sean perked up, but his hope was dashed in the next

second when Cornelia said, "Ophelia's busy managing the company; she hardly has time for herself. If

she's looking for someone, she needs someone like David who's attentive and considerate, who can

be her safe harbor when she's exhausted."

Not someone with a hot temper like Sean.

"Yes, David is the life of the party, easy-going, bright, and sunny. The moment I saw Ophelia tonight, I

thought she and David were a perfect match."

Sean's heart shattered once again.

He didn't want to listen anymore. Mumbling about being tired, he walked out of the room.

"The kid, I don't know what he's huffing about." Cornelia watched Sean's retreating figure, guessing that none of the girls caught his eye, and that perhaps he felt too young to settle down.

"Let him have his fun for a few more years. As long as both Hans and Chasel settle down, the rest will naturally follow suit when the time is right."

Sean had barely stepped away from his grandmother's room when he heard a noise coming from his novelbin

sister's room.

"Bella."

Chapter 1865

Sean rapped on his sister's door with a casual knock to signal his presence.

He'd been hoping to catch up with her for a bit, so as to get a read on Ophelia's take on the recent events. For example, had the car race they'd attended left a sour taste in Ophelia's mouth? And was Ophelia now harboring a grudge against him for the whole debacle with that project ?

But after a few knocks, there was no answer from within.

Hadn't he heard some noise just moments ago?

Why was it dead silent all of a sudden?

Had she fallen asleep?

Just as Sean was about to walk away, a sudden thought struck him and froze him in his tracks. What if

his sister was in danger?

"Sis, I'm coming in, okay?"

Throwing caution to the wind, he twisted the doorknob and pushed open his sister's bedroom door.

The room was deserted, with the balcony door wide open, curtains billowing in the breeze, and

snowflakes drifting in.

Where was his sister?

He stepped onto the balcony, only to be greeted by a world blanketed in white, with snow piled

everywhere.

There were footprints along the edge of the wall and in the snow below, which were roughly the size of

his sister's feet.

Could his sister have leapt from the balcony to the wall's edge and then down to the ground? Where

was she headed?

Following the direction of the footprints, Sean's eyes landed on a corner of the garden where a few figures seemed to be missing.

Had someone broken in?

With that alarming thought, Sean jumped down, following his sister's trail. He alerted his brothers and sprinted towards the spot where his sister might be.

Moments before, after Arabella had finished her shower, she found something off about the surveillance, whose angles seemed to have been tampered with, and she also noticed that the number of guards in the corner was down by two.

To avoid tipping off the intruder, she leapt from the balcony rail, dodging cameras and rushing towards the corner of the garden. True enough, it wasn't just two guards unconscious under the trees – there were six.

Someone had definitely made their way in.

The intruder had likely aimed to stay under the radar, hence there were no fatalities.

Murdering on a snowy day would leave conspicuous red stains, so the visitor would act with discretion.

Arabella tracked the footprints to the basement and, sure enough, found a group of skilled assassins.

The guards from Reflections Villa were clearly no match for them, and even the seasoned security team under Hans seemed overwhelmed. Within moments, they too crumbled to the ground.

As Arabella drew near, she detected a peculiar scent on the attackers – a custom knockout fragrance that had floored the Collins' guards.

What was this potent concoction?

She'd never encountered this fragrance before.

Luckily, she had been taking a special pill these past few days, which was an antidote for various toxins and fragrances.

The assassins, seeing Arabella still standing, exchanged puzzled looks. By all accounts, the fragrance should have rendered her unconscious upon first whiff.

Yet there she stood, safe and sound, causing a conundrum in their midst.

Chapter 1866

At that moment, Arabella kicked at one of the assailants, and then blocked the entrance to the basement with her slender frame, refusing to let them in.

Had they finally trapped themselves?

It seemed like the mastermind behind the scenes wasn't small-time; not only had they used knockout gas, they had also sent henchmen who were quite skilled.

She was suddenly curious about who was pulling the strings.

The group of hitmen exchanged glances before launching another attack on her.

The substantial security team of the Collins family arrived just in time.

"Don't come any closer," Arabella warned her personal guards, "make sure you take those capsules I distributed earlier first."

The team understood instantly that something was off with these hitmen.

Thankfully, Ms. Bella was prepared.

"Also, don't fall for their diversion tactics."

Arabella's words reminded the head of security, who ordered some men to return to their posts while the rest stayed to provide backup.

Sean was the first to arrive, and seeing so many hitmen, he said excitedly, "Caught in the act, huh?!"

Seeing his sister surrounded, he was about to charge in to help.

The head of security quickly held him back, "Ms. Bella instructed us to take these capsules."

Sean grabbed the capsule from his hand, popped it in his mouth, and rushed to his sister's side.

Soon enough, Hans, Chasel, and Clark arrived swiftly.

With just Chasel's agile moves, these men were no match for him, not to mention the other Collins

brothers.

The four brothers shielded Arabella behind them, leaving her no room to fight.

"Don't worry, Bella, we got you."

"With Chasel here, no one's going to lay a finger on you."

"Clark's going to knock their teeth out."

"Did they touch you? If so, Sean will break their fingers one by one, grind them up, and feed them to

the dogs."

Arabella looked at the dozen or so hitmen, feeling that things couldn't be this simple.

Logically, with so many guards at Reflections Villa, the enemy wouldn't just send these few hitmen.

If they weren't after Erik in the basement, what was their real purpose for storming in on what seemed

like a suicide mission?

They knew they were up against the Collins family, including Hans, Chasel and Clark.

Suddenly, Arabella remembered something and whispered to Sean, "Sean, they arrived shortly after

Ophelia left our place. I don't know if she's safe on the road. Take some men and check on her; make

sure she's safe."

By all accounts, Ophelia should have been home by now, but she hadn't sent a single message to

check in.

Arabella's reminder made Sean realize that Ophelia might be in danger. He immediately said, "Then

take care of yourself. Leave these goons for me to handle when I get back. Don't dirty your hands with

their blood."

Chapter 1867

"Sure thing." Arabella nodded in agreement on the surface, but not long after Sean had left the room,

she had a switchblade pressed against one of the hitman's throats.

The hitman was tough as nails; not even glancing at Arabella, he said with eyes closed, "Do it."

He was a prisoner at her mercy, yet there was no begging for his life. To be killed or slashed, he left his

fate in her hands.

With a quick swipe of her blade, the hitman's throat gushed with blood.

The other hitmen were clearly startled; they hadn't expected her to actually go through with it.

"I'm only asking once. Who's pulling your strings?" Arabella didn't finish him off with that cut, but nicked him to draw blood, yet it was enough to terrify the others.

Some of the hitmen thought about taking their own lives, but Chasel, sharp as ever, caught on quickly and crushed that hope.

"As you guys fell into our hands, you've got only one way out, and that's a fate worse than death,"

Chasel said with a cold voice which was devoid of any emotion. "Answer my sister's question. Who sent you?"

Seeing that they remained silent, Arabella flashed her blade to streak across the throats of three more hitmen, with a demeanor as cold as a heartless she-devil.

The remaining hitmen couldn't believe this young girl was so ruthlessly formidable, even colder than them.

Finally, the fourth hitman couldn't take it anymore and spilled, "No one sent us. We acted on our own,

trying to save our boss Erik. That's all we know."

Arabella clearly didn't buy his story, and her knife moved towards him again.

She was a medical student, so she knew just how much it would take before causing a fatality. Hans

had noticed this too—his sister wasn't out for their lives, but to scare them into giving up an answer.

The fifth hitman, realizing just how resolute she was, decided to come clean, "At this point, we've got

no reason to lie to you. Our boss Erik did have contacts with some mystery go-between, but he never

revealed their identity. Whenever he met with this contact, he'd send us away; he even went abroad for

the meeting, couldn't be more cautious!"

"We were just following orders, you know? The boss said that not telling us about it was for our own

good."

"We had a crew of one hundred and forty-two, but we lost thirty-three in Belloria. Lately, many others

have disappeared. We're worried that the go-between is wiping us out from behind the scenes, so we

wanted to get Erik out to figure out what to do."

"Even if you kill us all, we don't know who the go-between is."

Seeing that they truly didn't know, Arabella turned to her brothers.

"Lock them up for now," Hans commanded, and the head of security immediately motioned for his men to move in.

"Hold up," Arabella whispered to the security chief, "check the place for bugs."

It struck her that the hitmen could have been here ahead of her and possibly left behind some nasty surprises.

Hadn't expected Ms. Bella to be so vigilant, the security chief nodded and said, "Right away."

"Let's step outside." Arabella suggested, leading the way out of the basement to avoid any chance of eavesdropping.

In the garden.

Hans spoke in a calm tone, "Looks like this puppet master is cautious; he guessed right it was a trap and didn't jump in. Instead, they've stirred up panic among the hitmen, pushing them to break out their boss Erik to deal with the mess while he watches from the shadows."

"If these hitmen managed to free Erik, the puppet master could reap the benefits and sweep them all up in one go. If the hitmen failed, and fell into our hands, it's no real loss to the puppet master," Chasel

analyzed.

"If Erik won't show up, and the Collins family remains in the dark about the truth behind that fire accident after a while, the puppet master will figure out that Erik is either dead—because dead men tell no tales—or has keeping his mouth shut for his daughter Serena's sake. Either way, the puppet master won't show up easily," Sean added, "then we'll be exposed while our enemy keeps hiding in the shadows, leaving us vulnerable on all fronts."

Chapter 1868

"You got it spot on," Arabella chimed in, "Next up, the puppet master's gonna be peeping at our every move. What we gotta do ain't to mess up our own game, but to lock up these hitmen and keep spreading the word that Erik's hanging by a thread and ready to spill the beans on the past at any moment. That'll make them antsy enough to slip up."

Arabella continued, "With holidays coming, both kin and business associates are likely to drop by—especially after my identity's out in the open—we'll have even more visitors. If our mystery foe wants to check if Erik's really kicked the bucket, they'll probably come snooping around themselves."

With a sly smile, she added, "Then, we'll see who's too curious about Erik, and who wants to sneak

down to the basement. That's when they'll show their true colors."

"You're right on the money," Hans agreed, "With New Year around the corner, I reckon they won't stir the pot in the next couple days, so as not to raise any alarms."

Chasel grinned, "Just as sis said, we wait for them to come knocking during the festivities, and everything will be clear as day."

After all, those who didn't know them had no reason to harm them. It had to be someone close who planned the clinic fire back in the day.

What the mastermind had aimed to snuff out were Kenneth and Louisa.

Arabella was just an unintended pawn in this conspiracy, which led to a whole series of events.

"As we nabbed all the hitmen today, they'll know we are gonna beef up security, and would definitely not waltz in here to meet their maker in the next few days," Clark confirmed.

"Now, we just need to hear how Sean's holding up."

No sooner had Arabella finished speaking than the head of security stepped forward, "Ms. Bella, we've thoroughly checked the basement; it's clean of any bugs. We've scoured the place inside and out, multiple times."

Arabella nodded and whispered her next instructions.

Hearing Ms. Bella's plan, the security chief was impressed with her smarts and promptly saluted,

"Understood."

"Sis, your noggin's sharper than a tack. They'll likely buy into it." Clark patted Arabella's head, amazed

at her calm and strategic mind in the face of danger.

Meanwhile.

Ophelia had just left the Collins residence when she realized she was being tailed.

As a pro race car driver, she spotted seven or eight cars doggedly pursuing her. Though she managed

to shake off a few, the rest clung on stubbornly.

While passing under a bridge under construction, her car skidded after a silenced shot took out her tire,

and crashed into a bridge column. Glass shattered all around her.

The airbag deployed just in time, but a shard nicked her forehead.

A dozen hitmen jumped out, firing at her car relentlessly.

Ophelia unbuckled and ducked low, as bullets turned her car's interior to swiss cheese.

Someone tossed a smoke grenade inside. The smoke was thin, but it made her drowsy. She tried covering her nose, but the fatigue was relentless.

She saw the potted plants Bella had given her had toppled over, soil scattered all over. She reached out, but as her bun was peeked out by the hitmen, she got shot and was forced back down.

Suddenly, more vehicles approached fast and stopped nearby.

Ophelia knew her luck had run out.

She pulled out her phone wearily, and the first contact was Bella.

She sent Arabella a voice message, "Bella, looks like your plants won't make it. Next time, bring me something cheaper, or I'll feel bad. Drop by my folks, and marry Romeo soon. Live a safe and happy life and no more dangerous stunts"

Including avenging her.

Ophelia released the button and sent her voice message. As footsteps approached, she knew it was the end.

Chapter 1869

The acrid smoke filled her lungs, leaving her as helpless as a fish on a cutting board, which was ready for the taking.

If it weren't for the disorienting fumes and her complete lack of weaponry, she could have easily slipped away with her skills.

The car door swung open, and Ophelia, drained of strength, closed her eyes when she faintly heard someone calling out to her.

“Ophelia??”

It was a voice laden with urgency.

“Ophelia??”

The tone was tender and cautious.

“Ophelia???”

The very next moment, she felt herself being lifted.

Who would be calling her Ophelia??

Barely managing to pry her eyelids apart, she saw Sean's face.

Why was she thinking of Sean on the brink of death? It must be that this man left such a dark mark on her.

“Snap out of it!!” Sean cradled Ophelia in his arms; seeing her eyelids drooping, his eyes were ablaze with a bloodthirsty frenzy.

His underlings had already captured a dozen or so hitmen.

Staring at the defeated thugs before him, he said with a voice thundering with fury, “What did you do to her??”

Sean kicked the closest hitman, sending him flying several feet, “What the hell did you do to her??”

Still, no answer.

He brutally kicked another in the face, turning the man's features into a bloody pulp. As the hitman fell,

Sean delivered another savage kick to his head.

The scene was gruesome; the remaining hitmen hadn't anticipated the legendary Mr. Collins to be so violently unhinged.

In the midst of this, Ophelia's grip on Sean's coat began to loosen, her hand falling limply to her side.

Sean was frantic, “You can't die! I haven't confessed my love to you yet, and you haven't agreed to be my girl; I forbid you to die, wake up!!”

Ophelia was just weak and craving for sleep, yet Sean's absurd and imperious declaration forced her

eyes open once more. There he was, his face etched with urgency, even with a tinge of sorrow and distress.

What was going on??

Was Sean feeling sorry or upset for her? It couldn't be that. He was the last person to cut her any slack, let alone show compassion.

It must be the hallucinogenic effects of the smoke bomb.

“Yes, that’s it, keep your eyes on me! It’s Sean!” He jostled the girl in his arms, “I like you, damn it, and you can’t die on me!”

The underlings around him were taken aback – even Sean's love confessions were laced with rage.

Ophelia doubted her own ears.

Sean liked her???

What a ludicrous hallucination.

Exhausted, she no longer wanted to waste energy pondering the impossible. She was about to close

her eyes again when Sean bellowed, “You dare die on me, just try it??”

Chapter 1870

The guy wouldn't stop yapping in her ear, which was driving Ophelia nuts!

All she wanted was to catch some z's, but then she heard him snap, "What the hell did you do to her?"

Nobody's answering? Fine, then start slicing off their flesh strip by strip for a good week or two before killing them."

Ophelia couldn't believe her ears: Who's this monster?

When Sean scooped her up to leave, one of the mercenaries finally blurted out, "It was the sleeping gas."

They couldn't figure out why Sean was so on edge.

"Anyone who smells it will zonk out for ten hours and that's it."

As the killer finished, his eyes shifted to the girl in Sean's arms.

Maybe she was still semi-conscious because Sean was too loud, so loud that she couldn't fall asleep right away.

Sleeping gas?

Just puts one to sleep?

That's it?

Then Sean's earlier freak-out was way over the top!

Seeing the tiny cut on Ophelia's forehead, Sean still couldn't shake his worry and decided to bring her back to Reflections Villa.

"Yes, Ophelia's resting at my place. She'll be home tomorrow morning. Thank you. You should get some rest too, goodnight." Arabella hung up the phone after talking to Ophelia's mother and turned to Sean, who was standing nearby.

On the phone, she hadn't mentioned to the Almonds the danger Ophelia had faced. She simply said that the two hadn't seen each other in ages and that she wanted to invite Ophelia to stay over at the Collins' for the night. Ophelia's mother had agreed, as warm and gracious as always.

Sean let out a sigh of relief, "Thanks, sis."

He had brought Ophelia back for a few reasons:

First, he wasn't sure if Ophelia had other injuries that needed Arabella's attention.

Second, he wasn't well-acquainted with Ophelia, and he had no idea how to explain the cut on her forehead to the Almonds without causing them worry.

Third, he feared that there might be more mercenaries after Ophelia, so bringing her home was the safest option.

"You're very considerate," Arabella saw through his excuses.

The Almonds knew about her re-connection with her birth family and hadn't thought twice about Ophelia's visit to the Collins'.

Arabella's gaze then fell on the figure on the couch, whispering, "Let's get her to the guest room. I'll find her some clean clothes, and we can check for other injuries, and treat the cut on her forehead."

At least they were sure that the gas was just a regular sleep agent, which did no harm.

"I'll do it," said Sean, stepping forward to gently lift Ophelia up.

Kenneth and Louisa exchanged knowing looks, and even the brothers couldn't hide their meaningful grins.

Sean carried Ophelia into the guest room and gently laid her on the bed before turning to his sister,

"Thanks for this."

"She's my friend; it's no trouble," Arabella replied; catching the lingering concern in Sean's eyes, she teased, "Something else on your mind, Sean?"

"Just wait here, I'll grab the first-aid kit for you."

"I have my own."

"Then, should I fetch some hot water for you?"

"No need."

"Alright, I'll go tell the kitchen to whip up some late-night snacks, you must be exhausted too." Sean

glanced at Ophelia once more before adding his offer.

"Don't worry, Sean. Once I've checked her out, I'll let you know how she is. On top of that," Arabella

assured him with a steady gaze and a gentle smile, "My touch is light; you can trust me."

"I have no doubt about your skills, sis." With that, Sean finally stepped out, closing the door behind him.