

Arabella 1901

Chapter 1901

Nobody would be fawning over her, gathering around to please her.

"Let's try something different, honey. This dress would look stunning on you, Serena. Why don't you give it a go?"

With a gentle nudge from Dora, Serena eventually slipped into a crisp white New Year's outfit.

The reason for avoiding a colorful one was a somber one; her biological parents had passed away not too long ago.

June knelt down to help her into a pair of chic new shoes.

Serena was surprised that Martin even knew her shoe size.

With the help of Dora and June, she settled into her wheelchair, and they wheeled her down to the dining room for breakfast.

After they finished, Dora casually suggested, "Serena, Mr. Martin isn't back yet. How about I push you out to the garden for some fresh air, maybe take in the garden a bit?"

Serena nodded. Upon reaching the garden, she was astonished to find flower beds brimming with blooms as exquisite as those found in the Collins family's estate.

"How did Martin know I loved these flowers?"

She was bewildered. Could it be that he had paid particular attention during his visits to the Collins'?

But that couldn't be right. The Collins estate housed countless plants; how could he possibly discern

which ones she favored?

"Mr. Martin said these were discarded by the Collins family, just left outside. He picked them up." Dora

spoke truthfully. "That same night, along with these flowers, there were many other things delivered, all

related to you, Serena."

"What?" Serena's eyes widened in shock. "Show me."

Dora pushed the wheelchair to a guest room. As the door swung open, Serena's gaze fell upon the

shelves lined with trophies, medals, and certificates she had earned throughout her life.

These things, once thrown away by the Collins family, had reappeared here, spotless, as if this was

where they truly belonged.

Among them were gifts she had given to the Collins' over the years: drawings for her brother, letters,

handmade birthday cards.

Not a single thing was missing; they were all here.

"Is everything here discarded by the Collins?" Tears streamed down Serena's cheeks as she was unable to believe that they had thrown it all away.

With her trembling fingers, she picked up a drawing she had made for her brother. Probably because it had been left outside, the drawing was stained with marks that couldn't be erased.

They could never be reclaimed, just like the happy memories with her brothers.

Everything was ruined.

"Yes," Dora confirmed. "They threw these away. It was Mr. Martin who sent for them to be collected."

Serena gazed at the things she had once gifted to the Collins family: watches, lighters, trinkets.

Memories of the past enveloped her.

Her tears flowed unchecked—how could they do this? How could they bear to?

Even if she had made mistakes, her kindness as a child was genuine and heartfelt.

They could reject the person she had become, but how could they deny her past innocence and purity, when all she had in her eyes and heart was them?

Back then, she truly saw them as family. Whether it was those drawings or the handmade birthday

cards, it was all her sincere affection.

How could they trample on it like this?

Chapter 1902

"What's wrong?"

Martin had rushed over as soon as he finished his business, and upon seeing Serena clutching her old paintings, sobbing her heart out, he couldn't help but scold the servants nearby, "Who thought it was a good idea to bring Serena here?"

These things were part of Serena's cherished memories, and he couldn't bear the thought of the Collins family tossing them away like trash. He didn't want Serena to see them discarded, so he had kept them safe for her.

He had planned to wait until Serena was feeling better before he broke the news to her.

But the servants had brought her here too soon. Wasn't this just rubbing salt in her wounds, making her feel even worse?

"I'm so sorry, sir, we had no idea these things would upset Serena." Dora and June quickly apologized sincerely with regret.

"Everyone, out." Martin didn't want to see them anymore. He knelt gently in front of Serena, tenderly wiping away her tears, at a loss for words.

Serena gazed at her childhood painting of a sunflower, remembering how Sean had proudly displayed it on his bedroom wall, treasuring it so dearly.

But now, Sean just abandoned it.

Between sobs, Serena also discovered the gifts she had once given to her grandparents - emerald rings and bracelets, all piled up here.

"Did they throw these away, too?" Serena's heart ached unbearably. They just disposed of such precious, high-quality jewels without a second thought.

Had even her grandparents given up on her completely?

In the past, these things were inseparable from her grandparents, who cherished them daily, always wearing them.

But now...

"They auctioned them off, donating all the proceeds to charity, saying they wanted to do something good." Though it pained him, Martin revealed the truth, "I had someone bid on these for me."

It was inappropriate for him to appear in person.

At the auction two days ago, he had made sure to buy back all these things.

Serena hadn't realized Martin had done so much for her behind the scenes and couldn't help but embrace him.

In the whole wide world, it seemed no one else could love her like he did.

After crying for a while, as if all hope was lost, she finally said resignedly, "Martin, when you have time, help me take all the identification info and certificate I have at the Collins family."

At this point, she no longer wanted to stay where she was unwelcome.

By leaving on her own terms, she could at least maintain some dignity.

"It's already been done. To be precise, it was Mr. and Mrs. Collins who removed you first."

Serena's eyes widened in disbelief, not knowing about this at all.

"Also, your bank accounts have been frozen. The Collins family said they've given you enough over the years, and that money was theirs. They're going to leave it to Arabella."

Serena was utterly shocked. She never imagined that all the money from selling her properties, cars,

clothes, bags, and more, painstakingly handled by her and Martha, was now frozen, and eventually, it would all go to Arabella.

Was she now left with nothing?

"But don't worry, you can use my cards. Every dime I earn is yours." Martin reassured her.

Chapter 1903

Serena stood numbly in the dimly lit room, her mind a chaotic swirl of disbelief and betrayal. The

Collins family, to whom she had given her loyalty and love, had cut her off without a second thought upon discovering she was not their flesh and blood. It was more than she could bear.

After what felt like an eternity, she managed to lift her gaze towards Martin and asked with a voice tinged with desperation, "Is there anything else you're keeping from me? What else don't I know?"

Ever since she had woken up to this nightmare, it had been one shocking revelation after another. She felt like she was living in a bad dream, her reality crumbling around her.

Martin hesitated, knowing the fragility of Serena's state. Finally, he locked eyes with her and confessed,

"There is one more thing. Do you remember when you thought Alma had you beaten up, shoved into a sack? Well, I had someone take care of her in return, but her wounds healed, and her mother's been digging around. She confronted me recently."

"Beverly came after you? Does she know you did it?" Serena couldn't imagine how Beverly, despite her cunning, had managed to trace it back to Martin so quickly.

"Not exactly," he replied. "She just told me it wasn't Alma who had you beaten up. We got the wrong person."

Serena scoffed in disbelief. Who else could despise her enough to do such a thing?

After a moment, Martin added gravely, "She claimed it was Romeo who ordered it."

The room spun as Serena tried to process what she'd just heard. It couldn't be true.

"She said there's proof, it was Romeo," Martin continued, watching her closely, concerned she might crumble under the weight of this revelation. She had loved Romeo so passionately.

"No, it can't be." Serena shook her head, refusing to accept it. How could Romeo, who she had adored, be behind such a cruel act?

"That night, you upset Arabella, and Romeo wanted revenge for her. It's not surprising."

Martin recalled the incident, knowing that even with his influence, he couldn't touch Romeo. Besides,

Serena had been in the wrong.

"Is it really him?" Serena's hands, like heavy paws, clung to Martin as she sought a sliver of hope, "Is the evidence real?"

Martin nodded solemnly, confirming her worst fears.

Serena's hands fell limp by her side, the harsh truth sinking in. Romeo's disdain for her ran so deep.

She had once thought it was Arabella who kept Romeo at arm's length, but now she understood the bitter truth. It was her own presence that he detested.

"Given the past ties between the Collins and the McMillian families, Romeo never confronted you openly. But things are different now. You've severed ties with the Collins. We need to keep a low profile and focus on healing. Let the past go," Martin advised gently, guiding her away from the room that symbolized her pain.

As he locked the door behind them, he added, "I'm locking away your past. From now on, you must look forward."

Tears streamed down Serena's cheeks, her emotions indescribable.

At Reflections Villa, Arabella had brought joy to her brothers and the staff the evening before, distributing skincare products and ointments like treasures. Their gratitude and happiness were a stark

contrast to Serena's heartache.

Chapter 1904

This morning, Arabella woke to a chorus of voices echoing through the grand foyer of the mansion.

"Miss Bella's awake!"

"Miss Bella's getting up!"

"Miss Bella's donning her New Year's outfit!"

Confusion danced across Arabella's mind. She was greeted by a servant beaming with excitement,

"Miss Bella, could you please join us on the terrace? Everyone's waiting for you!"

With a subtle curve of her lips, Arabella replied, "Sure."

Dressed in her festive attire, Arabella stepped onto the sprawling terrace where her grandparents,

aunts, uncles, parents, and five brothers—all decked out in matching red holiday sweaters—were

waiting for her with smiles that could light up the night sky.

Their outfits varied in style, but the vivid color unified them, exuding an aura of joy and celebration.

"Bella looks so adorable in that outfit!"

"Our little sis can make any look work. She's stunning without even trying. Imagine the splash she'll

make when we reveal her identity tomorrow."

"Good morning, Bella."

"Come over here, they're about to arrive!"

The family parted, granting Arabella the center stage at the very front of the terrace.

In her view stretched two long lines of firecrackers, spanning from the top of the villa all the way to the gates.

At the signal, the servants outside ignited the firecrackers, and the crackling sounds swiftly filled the air with the essence of the New Year.

David covered his sister's ears, concerned the noise might be too loud for her.

A chilly breeze whisked by, and Hans slipped a pair of warm gloves onto Arabella's hands—one of which was playfully snatched by Chasel to help her with the other.

Clark wrapped a cozy scarf around Arabella's neck.

Sean shrugged off his coat and draped it over his sister to shield her from the cold.

As the firecrackers burned their way to the end, music filled the air, heralding the arrival of two dance troupes. The performers, clad in their vibrant costumes, danced through the thick smoke left by the

firecrackers, making a majestic entrance through the mansion gates.

Arabella had not expected to witness a dance celebration at this time of year. The dancers leaped and moved with rhythm and grace, executing acrobatic feats that drew laughter and cheers from the spectating family.

The dancers approached, dancing beneath them, bringing with them blessings for the new year.

Louisa watched, utterly captivated, her applause echoing, "This is spectacular, Bella, isn't it amazing?"

"It is," Arabella responded, her eyes wide with wonder. It was a stark contrast to the quiet New Year celebrations she had with Grannie Grace back at the Murphy household.

Such grandeur and festivity were a first for her.

The dancers simultaneously unfurled banners with New Year's greetings.

The applause erupted once more.

As the dance concluded, the performers removed their costumes with a sense of ceremony and called out to those on the second-floor terrace, "We wish you all happy New Year, and all the best."

Chapter 1905

"Thank you!" Louisa beamed, her smile so wide her cheeks might split. She motioned to the servants to

hand out the New Year's bonuses.

Then they went into the house.

"Bella, cool or what?" David squeezed in beside Arabella to her left, asking, "Mom and Dad said you probably haven't seen a traditional dance before, so they arranged a special show right at our doorstep."

"Bella hasn't missed out on much," Clark interjected from her right, "Hungry? Let's head down for some breakfast."

Arabella could sense the festive spirit and the bustle. She smiled softly and asked, "Why's everyone up so early today? Did you plot this together?"

She herself wasn't one to sleep in, and she had risen quite early today, only to find everyone else was up even earlier.

"We made a pact to wear matching family outfits as a surprise for you." David chuckled, "You wouldn't believe how hard it used to be to get them to wear matching outfits in the past! But now, wanting to look

more like a family with you, they couldn't wait to put them on! Clark was up at the crack of dawn, even

took a shower, just to slip into these new threads."

"Like you didn't shower," Clark laughed, "but the real shocker must be Hans and Sean. You could have held a knife to their throats in years past and they still wouldn't have worn matching outfits. Especially not in such a bright color. But this year, without any arm-twisting, Mom and Dad managed to get them into the gear."

"I look mighty spry in this get-up, don't I?" Cornelia smoothly edged Clark aside, linking arms with Arabella, "Don't I look dapper?"

Arabella's gaze fell on her grandmother and said to her, "You look stunning."

"Told you! That outfit would get compliments anywhere. It really is a winner, no foolin'." Belinda also nudged David aside, taking Arabella's other arm as she spoke to Cornelia, "See, even Bella agrees. She wouldn't lie. You truly look fabulous!"

"I think you look even more charming, so elegant and fitting." Cornelia lavished praise in return.

David and Clark, seeing the mutual admiration fest, were at a loss for words. Why push them out of the way to compliment each other?

But then, Louisa squeezed in front of them, eager to be closer to her daughter. "Bella, what do you

think of my outfit?"

"And mine! You haven't complimented me yet!" Kenneth elbowed his two sons even further away.

Eventually, all the elders surrounded Arabella, insisting on riding the elevator with her.

Outside, the five brothers were left waiting, resigned to catch the next one.

"Hans, don't you think our elevator's a bit on the small side? Should we get a bigger one installed?" one joked.

"I'm taking the stairs. I'm sitting next to Bella for breakfast!"

"Wait for me, I'm coming too!"

As David and Clark sprinted down, Hans remarked dryly, "Lucky if we're not squeezed out to the kids' table, let alone sit next to Bella."

Sure enough.

By the time David and Clark made it downstairs, the seats around Arabella were already claimed by Cornelia and Belinda.

Kenneth and Louisa aimed to sit beside the two, but two even older relatives had beat them to it.

"Ah, I'm finally close to Bella," Bernard said with a twinkle in his eye. "I don't get much time with Bella usually. Gotta take these few days to spoil our darling, serve her a bit more."

"We can't be sitting too far off, else reaching over to Bella will be quite the stretch..." Darren added.

With no choice left, Kenneth and Louisa tried to sit next to them, only to hear Eunice say, "We're not often around, and as uncles and aunts, we ought to be near our niece, shouldn't we? The rest of you lot have plenty of chances to dote on Bella, right?"

Chapter 1906

In the end, Kenneth and Louisa could only snag seats further away.

David and Clark exchanged a look, both utterly dumbfounded.

All they wanted was to join Bella for a casual breakfast. Was it really necessary to compete for seats like this?

Sean wasn't ready to back down. He stepped forward and said, "Grandpa, at your age, it's impressive enough that you can serve yourself. Let me help Bella with her plate."

"You little rascal, using your concern for my age just to snag a better seat." Bernard feigned anger.

"I meant you should just serve yourself..."

"Go sit over there with the young ones!" Bernard wouldn't listen.

Sean tried to argue his point, "But Bella is one of the younger generation too."

"In our house, Bella gets the VIP treatment! Move along."

With Bernard's word, the brothers had no choice but to sit farther away... casting envious glances as everyone else made a fuss over Bella.

"I can already picture the family photo later." Clark sighed, feeling his chances slip away.

"Forget the family photo, Mom and Dad said we're all decorating together after breakfast, pitching in to decorate the home. If you want to be next to Bella, it looks like you're out of luck." Chasel lamented as well.

"Maybe later you two can distract them. We could take turns keeping Bella company for five minutes each?" David suggested. "You guys could take the grandparents to decorate in a different room, and we can stay with Bella to decorate."

"In your dreams!" Clark wasn't falling for that one.

At Forena Villa.

Martin sat at the dining table, decorating a gingerbread house for Serena.

Serena sat beside him, watching as he meticulously added icing to the structure and couldn't help but praise, "You're really good at this."

It was the first time Martin had tried his hand at gingerbread house decoration, learning alongside the chef. The chefs nearby were assisting with the icing, ensuring each design was Serena's favorite.

"I've never seen him decorate a gingerbread house for anyone before," Dora couldn't resist saying.

"You really are something special to him, Serena. He's broken so many of his own rules for you!"

"Who knew he would nail gingerbread decorating on his first attempt? He seems to succeed in everything he does. Serena's quite lucky," June chimed in with praise.

Just as Martin was about to respond, his phone on the table began to ring. He glanced at the screen, his expression clouding over momentarily before he wiped his hands and said to Serena, "I need to take this call."

Serena nodded in understanding.

Normally, Martin would take calls without leaving her side.

But this time, he walked over to the floor-to-ceiling window, slid his finger across the screen, and whispered, "Mom."

Serena could guess who was calling just by reading his lips, but she kept her face serene and unruffled.

The voice on the other end seemed furious, and Martin, fearing Serena might overhear, turned to glance back at her.

Serena's gaze remained fixed on him, a look of empathetic kindness on her face.

Martin tried to keep his expression calm, not wanting to let her catch on to any trouble.

"Mom, I'll be there soon."

As soon as Martin finished his sentence, the person on the other end of the line completely lost her patience and handed the phone to someone else. Martin heard his father's voice and had to whisper,

"Dad."

The man on the phone scolded him hard and brought up some issues, ultimately leaving Martin no

choice but to concede, "I'm on my way now."

Chapter 1907

The call ended with a series of beeps.

Martin glanced at his phone screen before finally approaching Serena, unsure of how to start the

conversation.

He had already told his parents about Serena, along with the close call she had with death and her eventual refuge at the estate.

His intention was to take good care of Serena, to spend the holidays with her, and to skip the slew of New Year's events with his extended family.

His mother had already formed a less than favorable impression of Serena, and to preserve her reputation, he had refrained from discussing Serena's biological parents and their questionable actions.

But fate had other plans.

Two nights ago, his parents encountered Eunice at an auction. Eunice didn't hold back, revealing all about Serena's behavior over the past six months, as well as Erik and Martha's despicable tactics...

This revelation had his parents seething on the spot.

During the drive home, they took turns calling him, implying that he must break up with Serena!

Not only did he refuse, but he also planned to miss the New Year dinner.

How could his parents accept this?

On the phone just now, they insisted he either join the family for a lively celebration or they would come

over personally to drive Serena out.

For Serena's sake, Martin had to compromise.

But now, he didn't know how to explain to Serena.

Seeing his troubled look, Serena guessed what was on his mind and asked gently, "Do you have something urgent to take care of? It's okay, you go. I have Dora and June with me. I won't be lonely."

"Serena." Martin struggled to articulate, managing only to say, "I do have something I must attend to.

But I'll rush back to be with you for dinner, okay?"

Worst case, he would eat at both dinners, hurrying from one to rejoin Serena.

"Sure." Serena nodded gently, without a trace of blame in her eyes. Instead, she reached out with her warm hand, caressing Martin's face. "You go take care of your things. We live together now, right? Any time is good for dinner."

Hearing her understanding words, Martin felt even more guilty. He was about to instruct the staff to present the gingerbread house he had prepared, so he could at least accompany Serena for a few bites before leaving.

Serena had been waiting since morning, her stomach growling, looking forward to a meaningful breakfast of his homemade gingerbread house.

But just then, his phone rang with a message.

His parents had given him only half an hour; even rushing there was cutting it close, let alone accompanying Serena for breakfast.

Martin was torn once more.

"Is it an emergency?" Serena urged with kindness, "Go handle it, don't worry about me!"

Martin felt a deeper pang of guilt, "Serena."

"Go, please."

"You guys start cooking for Serena. I'll be back in no time," Martin instructed before caressing Serena's face again. "Wait for me, okay? I'll be home soon."

Serena nodded, feeling a touch of disappointment.

As she watched Martin's hurried departure, Serena understood that in her current situation, the Coopers would surely think she wasn't good enough for Martin.

With no powerful family background or relatives to support her, winning Martin's heart was her only

chance to turn her life around!

She wouldn't allow anyone to ruin her plans.

Chapter 1908

Reflections Villa.

After finishing breakfast, the housemaid brought over a stack of beautiful window decals. "These are all static clings. Just wipe the window with a damp cloth, and they'll stick right on."

"I'll take some; I want to help Bella put them up."

"Me too."

"I'm with Bella!"

"Bella, I will clean the windows for you. You can put them anywhere you like," said Arabella's grandpa.

"Don't worry about me being too old. I can stand on a chair. Just tell me where you like them, and I'll stick them on for you!" said her grandma.

There was nothing left for the brothers. The housemaid said awkwardly, "We have more decals with fireworks and Happy New Year coming soon."

"Come on, Bella, let's go put up the decals." The elders were already escorting Arabella away with

laughter and chatter.

"Hans, this isn't working!" Clark blurted out anxiously, "We finally made time to come home and spend it

with Bella, and from the moment we got up, we've barely exchanged a few words with her."

Before he could finish, the elders had shooed them aside.

Their presence was barely acknowledged!

"Now I have to sacrifice myself." David decided, taking a few steps forward and then letting out a loud, exaggerated groan as he pretended to trip.

But the elders ahead were deep in their merry conversation and didn't even notice him.

Clark couldn't help but laugh, reaching out to the pitiful David, "They didn't even notice you."

David never imagined there'd be a day when even his hundreds of millions of fans couldn't save him.

"Spending this year putting up window decals with our darling Bella is sure to bring a smooth sailing next year."

"In the past, every New Year, the housemaids would put the decals up early in the morning, and we'd wake up to see them. But this year is different. Being able to do this with Bella really makes it feel like

home."

"Exactly, I feel like these activities are only meaningful when the whole family does them together."

The brothers watched the elders and Arabella laughing and talking as they adorned the large floor-to-ceiling windows with various decals, feeling envious.

David cheekily squeezed through. "Grandpa, aren't you tired? Let me help. Leave this to us young folks. Come on down; it's dangerous standing on that chair!"

"I'm still strong and fit. I'm not tired from sticking one decal, let alone a hundred! Step aside, and don't block Bella. Bella, is this the spot you mentioned?"

David quickly intervened, "That's not a good spot; it's too low. Let me do it! The decals should be placed higher to look better."

"Bella decides what's best. What do you know?"

Arabella, feeling a bit sorry for David, handed him a decal. David was just about to celebrate when he heard their grandma say, "David, you go stick it over there. Bella, wherever you want to put it, I can help you too."

Eventually, David took a single decal back to his brothers, gazing longingly at his sister in the crowd.

There was a distance between them, not of life and death, but the fact that despite Bella standing right before them, they couldn't get close.

At that moment, a housemaid approached Louisa to report, "Ma'am, the photography team has arrived."

"Perfect timing to capture this moment. Invite them in," Louisa instructed, then turned to Arabella.

"Bella, there will be a photography team taking pictures and recording all day. If you feel uncomfortable, just tell me."

"Ms. Bella, we'll try to keep our distance and stay as unobtrusive as possible." the photographer assured.

"Bella's no stranger to cameras. She's received so much acclaim on stage, singing and playing piano.

These cameras are nothing out of the ordinary for her."

Grandma's words reminded Louisa, "Right, of course."

Chapter 1909

Bella had seen it all.

The hustle and bustle of decorating was in full swing as the servants brought out a stack of decals.

Quick as a flash, David snatched up at least half of them.

"Come on, sis, let's go!" Clark tugged at Arabella's sleeve, dragging her outside.

Hans and Chasel stepped forward, blocking the way.

"Let the elders take a break. We young folks can handle the decorations," they declared.

"Since when did you guys start working together like this." the elders murmured in surprise, not expecting such unity for their beloved sister.

Finally, David got to indulge in his joy of decorating with Arabella, chattering away.

"David, could you pipe down for a sec? We wanna hear what Bella has to say," the others intervened.

Arabella was just about to speak when a servant's cry of alarm broke through the noise, her anxiety so palpable you could almost see her stamping her feet in distress.

"Oh no, what to do? What to do?" The servant was on the verge of tears.

"What's wrong?" Arabella looked toward the sound to find the servant.

"Ms. Bella, I accidentally tore the banners outside the main gate." She held in her hands two long

banners, "It's mainly because these banners can't be folded, they are too long and big. With a gust of

wind, I don't know how they got torn. What should we do? The outside gate is huge, these banners are

specifically customized, and we had a calligrapher write them."

At the mention of "calligrapher," the brothers, who had been busy with the main door, all paused and looked towards Arabella.

When it came to calligraphy, who could outshine Bella?

They had seen Bella's calligraphy before – it was bold and magnificent, taking one's breath away.

"Do we have any more banners at home? Cut it to size, and I'll handle the writing."

Hope flickered in the servant's eyes at Arabella's offer. Indeed, Ms. Bella was a renowned calligrapher – her writing was worth much more than the original banners!

"Thank you, Ms. Bella, thank you." Jenny bobbed with gratitude, hurrying off to prepare.

After Arabella and her brothers finished adorning the main house with festive ornaments on the doorknobs, they moved on to decorate the mansion's main gate.

Then, the servant had everything ready for Arabella.

Arabella mixed the gold powder just right, dipped her brush, and crafted a banner right there and then.

The family gathered around, murmuring praise.

"Bella's writing is incredible, blows that calligrapher out of the water!"

"If someone saw these banners, they'd think we'd bought them for a fortune."

"Such face we'll have with these up! Bella, you're amazing," the servants applauded.

Grandpa looked on, endlessly praising the work.

With the family's help, Arabella's handcrafted banners were placed on the main gate. The entrance

now spoke of elegance, all thanks to Ms. Bella's touch.

Chapter 1910

"Let's take a family photo right here, shall we?" Louisa suggested with a hopeful glint in her eyes.

"Absolutely." The crowd bustled together, cheerfully shuffling Arabella to center stage while they

crowded around her.

The five tall and broad-shouldered brothers could only fit at the back.

"It's supposed to be a family photo, but we're missing someone this year." Kenneth trailed off as a sleek

black car approached from a distance. The man stepping out was none other than Sampson Griffith!

"Uncle Sam!"

Arabella and her five brothers greeted him in unison.

Sampson's smile was as refreshing as a spring breeze. "Sorry, I'm a bit late."

He was laden with gifts, and the servants hurried to assist him.

After exchanging pleasantries with the elders and explaining his delayed arrival due to urgent business overseas, the family was finally complete. Louisa's family had all gathered.

Only Kenneth's side was missing a few.

"Bella, Lucas said they'd join us for the dinner. Your aunt's family will come over for the welcome-back party on Jan. 1st," Grandpa explained to Arabella.

Arabella nodded, unfazed. "That's fine."

"Alright, everyone, look at the camera and say 'cheese'."

After a heartwarming photo session, the crowd dispersed, and Louisa couldn't help but embrace Arabella.

"Bella. I'm so grateful you came back to us. It's my first time since I got married to have mom, dad, my brothers and sisters-in-law, and my little brother here with me for the holidays."

In previous years, she would connect with her family, but never like this year, where they had all come to stay at Reflections Villa in advance.

This long-missed sense of joy brought tears to her eyes.

"It's all thanks to you." Louisa knew it was her beloved daughter's presence that had brought the family closer.

Arabella's smile brightened, "It's definitely more festive when we're all together."

At that moment, the head of security caught Arabella's eye and made his way over.

David noticed that the head of security wanted a word with Arabella and promptly stepped forward to draw Louisa away.

"Ms. Bella," the head of security began, seeing that the other adults were engrossed in their conversations and not paying attention to them. "The two that escaped from Reflections Villa have gone off the radar, just as you predicted. It seems whoever is behind this has been keeping tabs on us, and those two are likely to have been killed by now."

"He's getting restless." Arabella's lips curled up slightly. "We'll have a lot of guests arriving soon. Keep a close eye on everyone coming in and out of Reflections Villa, including their bodyguards and servants. The person we're looking for is among them, and I'm intrigued to see who's managed to hide for so long."

"Understood!"

The security chief acknowledged the order, ready to slip away discreetly when Arabella added, "What about the things I told you to discard?"

"Yes, the blood-stained bandages are deliberately thrown out every day."

These were the blood samples Arabella collected and used to convince the puppet master, with the toxicity purposefully reduced.

The sight of the bloodied bandages would make others believe Erik was injured, possibly from being tortured for information.

The puppet master had intended for Erik to die at the Collins family's hands by poisoning, but now that the poison in his blood was reduced, it was clear proof that Arabella had nearly healed him.

With the puppet master growing impatient, it was certain he would send someone to the door.