

# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1451

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The crowd was in an uproar, their accusations flying like daggers at Arabella.

"You know, when a big mess like this pops up, the least the Ar-BI-Clear Group could do is apologize" one woman huffed, her voice dripping with disdain.

"We must've been silly to buy your products!"

"Not even a hint of sorry, not a flicker of remorse when you saw our faces looking like a bad pizza" another chimed in, her arms folded across her chest.

"Looks to me like it's not just your products that are rotten. Ar-BI-Clear's got some serious internal issues!"

"We want compensation!"

"A public apology, all over social media!"

"Ar-BI-Clear Group, get out of Dawnstar!"

Through the chaos, Arabella stood her ground, allowing their cries to wash over her. Suddenly, she reached out and grabbed the hand of a woman with curly hair.

"What do you think you're doing?" the curly-haired woman snapped back, yanking her hand away. "Are you gonna hit me in front of all these cameras and reporters?"

"You claim you bought our skin-lightening cream on December 15th and only realized there was a problem after a month. But the inflammation on your face has been there for over six months."

"What are you implying?" the woman faltered, then quickly retorted, "And you can tell how long just by looking? What are you, some kind of clairvoyant?"

Anyway, we're here for a payout from the Ar-BI-Clear Group, and we want that press conference apology to consumers! Or else, I swear, I'll end it right here!"

In a shocking move, the woman pulled a small knife from her clothing and pressed it to her own throat.

"My face is ruined and the doctors say it's hopeless. I don't even want to live anymore!"

Just then, a car approached, its arrival turning every head in the direction of the familiar license plate.

"Is that Romeo's ride?"

"Romeo's here?"

"What's he doing at the Ar-BI-Clear Group? Is it just a coincidence or?"

The reporters didn't wait for an answer. They dashed toward him immediately.

The car came to a halt, and out stepped Romeo, tall and imposing, commanding the space around him with an aura of authority.

"Mr. McMillian, are you just passing by, or are you privy to some insider info?"

"Have you heard about today's fiasco? Some consumers got facial burns from the Ar-BI-Clear Group's skincare. What's your take on this?"

"The Ar-BI-Clear Group is a well-known brand in Dawnstar. Do you think they would disregard consumer safety for profit?"

Romeo, surrounded by a barrage of questions from over twenty media outlets, spoke with confidence.

"I've been using the Ar-BI-Clear Group's men's skincare and have had no issues."

The crowd was taken aback. No one expected the business tycoon to indulge in skincare, let alone come to Ar-BI-Clear's defense, especially since the two companies had never crossed paths before.

"I'll stand by the Ar-BI-Clear Group's products with my personal guarantee. If there is an issue, I will personally compensate each affected individual a million dollars. In cash."

The flash from the cameras intensified, and a glimmer of hope flickered in the eyes of the disfigured.

"However Romeo continued, his voice cutting through the noise, "if anyone is found spreading false allegations, trying to tarnish the Ar-BI-Clear Group's reputation, and Ar-BI-Clear chooses not to pursue, I will seek justice on their behalf. Anyone found guilty will owe a million dollars. Each".

The hopeful glint in the victims' eyes dimmed, replaced by a wave of panic.

"I've already reported this to the police on behalf of the Ar-BI-Clear Group. All your receipts, surveillance screenshots, and test results will serve as evidence in court."

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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A red sports car roared into view, drawing closer with every second. Behind the wheel was a woman with cascading curls and lips painted a fierce red.

She exuded a charm that was both captivating and rhythmic in its allure.

Whispers rippled through the crowd as she stepped out. Wasn't that Bard's wife, Eunice, who had vanished from the social scene for so long?

What was she doing here?

And looking even more stunning and flamboyant than before.

Eunice gracefully alighted from her vehicle, her high heels clicking on the pavement. She carried herself with an elegance that

sparked envy in the hearts of onlookers. She was like a dazzling pearl, impossible to ignore, no matter how much time had passed.

"Bring those cameras over here,' she commanded, her presence never faltering in front of anyone. "And bring the mics a little closer, will you?"

The journalists and cameramen, upon hearing Eunice's voice, hesitated for a mere second before scrambling to get closer to her.

Once all the mics were pointed her way and the cameras were rolling, Eunice began, "I'm here on behalf of the Griffith Group to make a statement. If there's any issue with a product from the the Ar-BI-Clear Group, you're welcome to pick any skincare product from the Griffith Group's collection, on the house, for a lifetime."

Her announcement sent shockwaves through the crowd. Bard's influence in Dawnstar was unparalleled, and the Griffith Group held significant clout. Now his wife was standing up for the the Ar-BI-Clear Group.

This was a clear indication of their commitment to the the Ar-BI-Clear Group! "But let me be clear, if anyone is trying to cause

trouble and slander the the Ar-BI-Clear Group, they won't just have to answer to McMllian Corporation. The Griffith Group will not let it slide either!"

The curly-haired woman who had been causing a scene began to shrink back in fear, her bravado fading in the wake of Eunice's commanding tone.

Meanwhile, Serena was fuming as she watched the news. Romeo had rushed to Arabella's side instantly, and even his aunt had joined in! Two major conglomerates were openly supporting a smaller company.

Weren't they worried about becoming the laughingstock of the town?

Just then, the sound of police sirens approached from a distance.

No one had expected a dozen police cars to show up for such a minor incident. The media was stunned into silence until

someone finally started snapping photos furiously.

As the shutters clicked, the rest of the journalists snapped to attention and hurried over to get their scoop.

The police chief stepped out of his car, an authoritative figure who commanded respect. The other officers followed suit, exuding an air of command.

Ignoring the questions from the reporters, the chief made his way straight to Romeo.

"Mr. McMillian,' greeted the chief respectfully. "Did you call this in?"

"Yes, Romeo replied, standing tall with an air of aristocracy that dominated the atmosphere around him.

"The deputy director of the Ar-BI-Clear Group will brief you on the details. At this moment, I suggest we hold a press conference to reveal the investigation process and its results, thereby clearing the Ar-BI-Clear Group's name."

The crowd was stunned.

Just how confident was Romeo in the Ar-BI-Clear Group to suggest waiting on-site for a result.

"IL agree,' Eunice added, her arms folded elegantly across her chest, her beauty undeniable. "Behind-the-scenes investigations can be easily manipulated by those with ulterior motives. Presenting the entire process in public will make the truth evident to all."

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A few disfigured folks never expected the stir they caused to blow up like this. Not only did Romeo show up, but Bard's wife made an appearance too.

Their eyes began to dart about, avoiding direct contact.

"Let's all head over to the the Ar-BI-Clear Group's staff cafeteria, shall we?"

Arabella suggested.

The place was spacious and had an artsy vibe, capable of accommodating a large crowd at once. All the journalists, cameraman Hans, and the onlookers were invited over to sample the delicious fare on the house.

People were surprised at how well a skincare company treated its employees. A different main course every day for half a month, and an endless array of tasty snacks, afternoon pastries, and fancy coffees.

This wasn't a cafeteria. It was a foodie's paradise! The police had already started their investigations in shifts. The few remaining officers stayed because Arabella had some questions for the disfigured individuals.

"Try some of our group's coffee and pastries, they're just as good as anything you'll find out there."

Catharina, personally brought refreshments to the disfigured group, naturally taking a seat next to them. "In the Ar-BI-Clear Group, we wear our hearts on our sleeves for both our employees and our customers. I don't know why you smeared our company, but now that the police are involved, I'd advise you to come clean. Don't ruin your futures or worry your families."

The disfigured individuals stared at the pastries in front of them, silent.

Arabella cut right to the chase, "Is it because of the Ar-BI-Clear Group that your faces look like this?"

All the disfigured people remained silent, avoiding Arabella's gaze.

Had they known her backing was so strong, no amount of money would have enticed them. Crossing Eunice in Dawnstas was tantamount to crossing Bard. There would be severe consequences.

But crossing Romeo meant they could kiss their chances goodbye outside of Dawnstar as well.

And now, both bigwigs were present.

“Even though I'm not sure who's pulling your strings to throw mud at the Ar-BI-Clear Group, I can restore your looks. In fact, I

can guarantee that your skin will be in better condition than before,’ Arabella offered.

At Arabella's words, the disfigured group lifted their heads in surprise.

"Can you do that?"

“Even the dermatologists at the hospital couldn't help us, and you think you can fix it? With what? How many years will it take?"

"We became like this because of using your products. Do you really think we'd trust you again?"

"If it weren't for your products, our faces wouldn't be in such a state"

As they all chimed in with their opinions, Arabella waited before responding calmly, “If you had really used products from the Ar-

BI-Clear Group, you wouldn't be saying they're ineffective. Our products improve skin condition for any skin type. Such a drastic negative reaction is impossible, unless you didn't use our products."

The guilty looks that flashed through the disfigured individuals' eyes didn't go unnoticed.

Arabella bluntly stated, "I can tell you're lying."

Now, the disfigured were even more uneasy, unable to meet Arabella's eyes, let alone look in her direction.

"I'm confident that no one in the world, except for me, can restore your skin, and even if there were one or two renowned doctors who could, their services wouldn't come cheap,' Arabella said coolly. "You might want to think about it because once this opportunity passes, there won't be another."

The disfigured folks remained silent, but Arabella noticed a young college girl in her early twenties nervously fiddling with her nails, seemingly weighing something in her mind. Arabella continued, "Even if you say nothing, the police will find out the truth.

Whether the receipts you have are genuine, whether the products you used are indeed from the Ar-BI-Clear Group, whether the

test results are real or fake, it will all come to light. And if it turns out you've been chasing shadows, you'll be the ones left emptyhanded"

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A few disfigured individuals seemed to stir, exchanging glances with one another.

"You're all staring down the barrel of a massive lawsuit, with damages up to a million bucks each. How much did you pocket under the table? Is it really worth your silence?"

Arabella coaxed them gently, "When no one's there to fix your faces, you'll have to live with that mug for the rest of your life. If

you end up behind bars on top of that, broke and disfigured, is it worth it?"

The disfigured group's eyes wavered, but no one spoke up.

Just then, Arabella received a message.

After reading it, she turned to the college girl, "Did you say you took out a loan for nine hundred and fifty bucks to buy products from the Ar-BI-Clear Group?"

The college girl's eyes shot up, nodding in alarm.

"As far as I know, you didn't use them yourself but gave them as a wedding gift to your sister. Soon after, you saw a reseller on

Facebook peddling knock-off products, claiming they had the same effects as the Ar-BI-Clear Group's premium line, supposedly

straight from their factory. So, you bought a hydrating spray and a jar of face cream. After using them for just two days, your face

reacted badly. A week later, still using the products, you confronted the reseller for an explanation. She kept assuring you there

was nothing wrong with them, so you continued using them until you asked for compensation and got blocked. Strapped for cash

and scared your face might rot, you jumped at the chance to smear the Ar-BI-Clear Group for a quick buck. Am I right?"

The college girl was staggeringly shocked. How could all this have been dug up so fast—and so accurately?

Seeing her reaction, the disfigured group didn't need to guess; Arabella had hit the nail on the head.

"I told you, even if you don't say a word, the cops will eventually find all this out."

Arabella fixed her gaze on the college girl, appealing to both emotion and reason, "I can see your allergic reaction is less than a

month old, not as severe as the others. If you trust me, you'll be back to normal within a week."

"Really?" The college girl was a mix of excitement and anxiety, "And how much will that cost me?"

"Nothing. I'll even throw in a set of the Ar-BI-Clear Group products for you to experience the real deal, as long as you spill

everything you know. I promise to treat you, free of charge, and gift each of you a set of Ar-BI-Clear skincare"

Tempted, the college girl knew the prognosis for her facial dermatitis was bleak. But now, someone was offering her a free

recovery in less than a week, She spilled the beans, no longer holding back.

The rest of the disfigured group knew the score. They had better to work with this young lady than to cross Romeo and Bard and burn their bridges. At least she was offering to fix their faces for free and gift them some pricey skincare products.

If they kept mum, they might end up with nothing to show for their troubles.

Finally, they made up their minds.

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The media reporters at the scene captured the commotion, planning to stream it live on the official website.

But a single call from Bard, and the editors in the back room had no choice but to cut out every single shot of Arabella's face.

What the online audience ended up seeing was a version where several disfigured protesters caused a scene at the Ar-BI-Clear

Group headquarters, drawing a crowd of reporters and police.

Later, a representative from the Ar-BI-Clear Group made an appearance, but with no clear shot of their face, just a silhouette,

and even their voice had been digitally altered.

They faced off for a while before moving to the employee cafeteria, where the representative still only showed their back, yet seemed to be quite young.

Under their persuasion, the disfigured protesters one by one approached the police to give their statements, revealing the truth behind the incident.

The woman with curly hair confessed, "The receipts for products purchased at your store weren't mine. Someone advised me to

buy them at a high price from someone else, just to make this lie seem more believable, more robust to scrutiny".

She continued honestly, "My face was ruined by a conscienceless beautician at an unlicensed beauty salon. She recommended all sorts of skincare products which caused my face to become allergic and swollen. She told me it was the skin's natural renewal process, and I believed her. I spent over twenty thousand dollars there, and if that salon hadn't been shut down, I would have never realized I'd been scammed."

The police officers compiled the statements and reported the latest developments to the online viewers.

These women, desperate due to their rapidly deteriorating faces, had accepted bribes to smear the Ar-BI-Clear Group.

As for the mastermind behind the scenes, further investigation was needed.

Meanwhile, other officers verified that the disfigured protesters' accounts matched their true experiences.

The curly-haired woman did indeed spend a fortune on counterfeit products at the beauty salon, ruining her face and, out of desperation to save

it, accepted a bribe to defame the Ar-BI-Clear Group.

Another woman with short hair had provided CCTV footage, claiming that using the Ar-BI-Clear Group's facial masks three times

a week at home had damaged her skin. However, the footage merely showed her applying a mask, with no indication of the brand.

Yet another woman had taken the Ar-BI-Clear Group's products to the authoritative testing facility Dawnstar CCT for analysis.

The results purportedly revealed multiple banned substances in the Ar-BI-Clear Group's skincare line. Following the trail, the police discovered that the CCT employee who conducted the test had been bribed with a hundred thousand dollars to fake the results.

But the facility's official seal on the report was genuine.

The online onlookers never expected these women to go to such lengths to slander the Ar-BI-Clear Group.

Then, the police uncovered that the person buying off the disfigured protesters was from KT Skincare, a company that had once

been in competition with the Ar-BI-Clear Group.

Both had started as obscure, bottom-tier brands.

But as the Ar-BI-Clear Group soared like a runaway stallion, garnering attention, KT remained stagnant. The more the Ar-BII-Clear Group was adored in Dawnstar, the more KT despised them, wishing nothing more than to drag them down and take their place.

The public outcry was deafening when the police revealed this information, with the online community lashing out at KT, while support for the Ar-BI-Clear Group soared.

This news became the best advertisement for the Ar-BI-Clear Group, and within an hour, all their product lines were completely sold out.

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