

## Arabella 1605

### Chapter 1605

"Serena, time for lunch," Betty said cheerfully as she set the lunch tray down, arranging the dishes one by one on the dining table.

Serena latched onto her words like a lifeline. "Where are Mom and Dad? What have they been up to all morning?"

Betty jumped when Serena grabbed her hand.

"After I brought your breakfast, I got caught up helping clear away branches. The gardener decided every tree in the estate needed pruning." Betty paused, glancing at the clock. "I didn't get back to the main house until almost noon, and I saw your folks coming in from a stroll in the garden. They plopped down on the couch and started sending voice messages on WhatsApp to."

Betty hesitated, afraid to continue.

"To who?" Serena pressed, her voice tinged with urgency. "Come on, spill it. No secrets."

Swallowing hard, Betty confessed, "They were checking in on Ms. Bella. Asking if she'd had lunch yet, telling her not to work too hard, and offering to have the chef make something special to be delivered right to her door. They seemed really concerned about Ms. Bella."

jolt of shock and disbelief. "Did you see

'ping' as they sent them. Ms. Bella even replied." Betty couldn't grasp why Serena's face was etched with such defeat and despondency. "Serena, are you feeling better today? Did the fever

the only person who seemed to care about her was Betty,

Serena's lips, a mix of bitterness and

"I saw it with my own eyes. They

they do after sending the messages?" Serena

phones. I only knew because I overheard their

time for news and warm chats with Arabella but couldn't spare a single punctuation mark

been feverish last night when Martha suggested a plan, which seemed good at the time. Bravely, she had typed out

waited until this morning to send

She thought maybe they were busy and hadn't seen the messages, or couldn't reply just yet.

But no, they had seen them and simply chose not to respond.

"Serena, what's wrong?" Betty asked, seeing Serena push her food around the plate. "The food's getting cold, and this table doesn't have a heating function. Serena, it's better to eat while it's warm. It won't taste as good once it gets cold."

Serena managed a hollow laugh, feeling utterly abandoned. In just a few days, she had gone from the beloved daughter, the jewel of the Collins family, to a forgotten wretch—like a queen fallen from grace, banished to a lonely, sunless palace, wondering when she might regain her freedom.

"Serena, Serena?" Betty called softly again.

With a heart heavy with sorrow, Serena whispered, "Betty, please leave me be for a while. I need some time alone."

At that moment, Serena knew what it felt like to be cast aside, forsaken by the parents who once adored her, left to wither in the shadows of the Collins family's indifference.