

## **Arabella 1781**

### Chapter 1781

Ms. Collins gracefully let bygones be bygones, and Steward could hardly contain his happiness.

Soon enough, Steward brought over a gift box that looked even larger than a cake box, adding, "This is something Sean had specially delivered just now."

It was the fruit of their brainstorming, conceived while they were out in the cold, struggling to come up with the perfect surprise!

Sean approached his sister, presenting the box, "For you."

Arabella, unaccustomed to Sean's newfound politeness and gentleness, reached out to accept the gift and said, "Thanks, Sean."

Hearing his sister repeatedly call him by his first name, Sean suddenly understood why his brothers always rushed home at every opportunity to spend time with her. Her voice had a way of touching one's soul.

Who wouldn't want to be home every day if they had a sister like her? Compared to the agile, cool-faced girl she once was, his sister was now the picture of obedience.

"Bella, go on, open it and see what Sean got you!"

were

big box, surely it's not jewelry

love for betting on stones,

be too heavy for Bella to even

probably had no idea how strong their daughter could kick; despite her slender frame, she could probably

untied the ribbon and lifted the lid of the gift box to reveal

with confused faces. Sean's smile was both wicked and charming, "The best boxing gloves in the

Everyone was rendered speechless.

on her breath, nearly passing out

Sean added, immediately drawing a round of playful jeering

on earth is this gift? Your sister is so

who would hit her brother, now does

least a dress or a pair of shoes, but you, you're going to be the death of

those car keys, house deeds, and

Chapter 1782

After hearing that Sean had also prepared a New Year's gift for Bella, Louisa's discontent finally subsided a bit. Good for him, showing some sincerity.

"Hey, how about we add each other on WhatsApp?" Sean took out his phone.

No matter what, he needed to secure his sister's contact info first, rather than going around cap in hand, with no one willing to cough it up!

Arabella opened her QR code for him to scan. Once they were friended, Sean happily labeled her contact as "Bella" and then asked, "What's your cell number?"

Arabella spoke a string of digits. After Sean called her to confirm, he said with indulgent affection, "This is my number. Hit me up anytime you need something."

"I never thought Sean would be the earliest bird back home this year." Kenneth chuckled, "I was betting on him to be the last one again."

"Mr. Collins, you got it all wrong about Sean. He rushed back just to see Bella, even before he was fully recovered," Steward chimed in with a timely compliment.

Kenneth's mood brightened even further at his words. Turning to Sean, he said, "Since it's New Year, you should take the chance to rest up and spend some quality time with Bella."

plan," Sean was eager to make

on the kitchen crew, see if they

Sean's home. Maybe I should show off my

not risk it. The kid's already hurt; we don't want a case of food poisoning

receded into the distance, Eunice suggested, "Bard, why don't we take Mom and Dad for a little

a while since their last visit, and some parts of the house had

Darren, and Eunice, linking arms with Belinda, left the room, leaving Sean

her in

explosion at the unfinished building, did you get hurt?" Sean fixed his

shielded her during the fall, hitting his head and only catching a blurry glimpse of her bleeding

out. Now, he wondered if it had been a hallucination or if she really

"It's nothing serious."

allowed Sean to zero in, "So, you were really hurt?"

Chapter 1783

Ms. Bella's simple words was able to make him quit smoking?

"You haven't told me, why are you so fixated on that island?" Sean wondered.

That island was nothing but overgrown with weeds, yet his sister seemed oddly interested.

"It's because the island is teeming with rare herbs."

Sean was floored by the revelation.

"Take for example the hairyvein agrimony on the island. I used to need a dozen different plants to mimic 80% of its effects, but that island is full of hairyvein agrimony. No need for me to go through all the trouble of concocting it."

"How did you even know that stuff was there?"

hairyvein agrimony floating in the sea after that last mega-storm. Investigations later revealed the island was a

the weeds on that island could be so precious.

of herbs. I want

was why she was after the island - it had real significance. His

difficult for her, refusing to let her get the island too easily, even inviting her to his Island for a 'talk', hoping to scare her and watch her make a fool

Ms. Collins's reaction with a mix

heeding her every command, it was still a prank and

in Belloria who could help Ms. Collins with her herb planting!" Steward blurted out, eager to

a good idea, turning to his sister, "What

heavy or too light a touch and they

other identity that I don't know

Chapter 1784

"Hey, they're all on the house!" Sean was clearly on edge.

"No need. Getting an island from you is a big deal as it is. Thanks for not fleecing me and leaving me in the woods for the beasts to tear me apart."

"Sis." Sean was dying to ask if it wasn't too late to get down on his knees and beg for forgiveness.

In the chilly air, Steward was continuously wiping sweat from his brow, "Ms. Collins, you've got it all wrong. Sean's been digging into that clinic fire all along. Some folks are sly as foxes, hiding their tails.

Just as we were closing in on some clues, you went and rescued that kid from the cage. Truth is, if you hadn't stepped in, Sean would've ordered us to save the kid. We were just waiting for the key suspect to show, and the very next second, we'd have made our move!"

"So, I screwed up your plan?" Arabella quipped, clearly amused.

Steward was a nervous wreck, thinking, man, Ms. Collins can be intimidating. He glanced at Sean, mentally tossing the ball into his court as if to say, "I've lost my voice, man. Your turn."

Sean, panicking, didn't know what to say and snapped at Steward, "What are you talking about? We're the ones who scared her! Besides, she was investigating the fire too, doing her part in secret. She's the unsung hero of the family!"

Turning to Arabella after that, Sean tried to appease her with a desperate charm, "It's all my fault. Hey, you've got those boxing gloves in hand - take a swing at me."

but suppress a smile,

But what if she stayed quiet like this? He was tempted to wire another five million dollars to David and beg for advice

to investigate the clinic fire," Arabella

"Then what were

was spotted

get a medicinal herb, I just

off, "Sis, let me explain; it's not what

was beyond mortified, thinking Sean's reputation was beyond saving

to explain your personal life to me,

woman was trying to drug me; she's a hitman; she

"That exciting, huh?"

Exciting? His sister truly

of enemies out there. He might come off

Chapter 1785

"Hey, you two, wash up. Dinner's ready. Steward, you join us!" Louisa called out from the kitchen.

"C'mon, it's chow time!" Sean said with a skip in his step, trailing behind Arabella, his face lit up with excitement.

Steward let out a sigh of relief and a smile spread across his face.

At the dinner table, everyone gathered around as Sean ladled some soup for Arabella and set the bowl in front of her. At the same time, Arabella scooped up a portion of the mashed potatoes that the housekeeper brought out and placed it in front of Sean.

This simple exchange touched Sean deeply. How could his sister be so sweet, so caring!

"Thanks, sis."

"Alright, let's dig in, everyone. Sean and Steward have been out in the cold for too long, eat up and get warm. Bella, make sure you have plenty too!" Kenneth beamed cheerfully.

a toast first, shall we? It's been ages since mom and dad, and my brother and his wife

others promptly raised their glasses in

sister, and took away the wine glass in front of her, "Kids shouldn't

were empty, Darren served some food, bending over to place

plate when he noticed that everyone had instinctively served her first. By the time his turn came, her plate was piled up like a little mountain, and his piece of chicken had no space to rest - it

from her family. The simple act of serving food clearly

me?" Arabella reached out with her

chicken on her spoon, "For you. What else would you like?

while it's still warm." Arabella responded, then turned her

dining at the table with them. After the journey

teased, "So, how does it taste, eating

hearing it, Sean froze. Steward, mid-bite with cheeks puffed, stared wide-eyed. Ms. Collins was

Chapter 1786

Sean suddenly felt he didn't deserve even passing the mashed potatoes to his sister at the dinner table.

It finally dawned on Steward why Ms. Collins carried herself with such aloof pride when she first walked in - she had the chops to back it up.



"Sean's no slouch either. He's got a Midas touch with international economies, a sharp eye for investments, and he's got connections in the legal field and the underground world. Plus, he's into racing, skydiving, rock climbing, you name it, he does it. Extreme sports are like kids' play to him. Birds of a feather flock together, right? Hahaha."

Steward meant to sing Sean's praises, but a look from Sean shut him up. That look said it all, "Zip it!" Compared to his sister, who was a top dog in every field, his hobbies sounded frivolously unserious.

"Always fooling around with this and that. You're her brother, time to show some gravitas," Louisa chided gently yet fondly told Arabella, "Bella, have some more."

"Sean's already making waves back in Belloria, his reputation's thunderous - puts my younger self to shame," Bard lifted his glass to drink with his nephew, eyes shimmering with pride and recognition.

"The achievements I and Bard had at our age, Sean's managed at his - and all by himself," Eunice arched her crimson lips into a stunning smile, drinking with Sean. How many could make the legal and underground worlds stand at attention at such a young age?

her glass of lemonade for

sister, and he drained his glass in one

in the rough,"

or women, each one is a young achiever," Belinda's smile was

Mr. Kenneth Collins and Mrs. Louisa Collins's meticulous guidance, has been exceptional

blue, caused Kenneth and Louisa's smiles to freeze on their faces. Not just them. Even Darren, Belinda, Bard, and Eunice lost

the adopted daughter was raised so well,

going on? Did he say something wrong?

at Sean, as if asking, "What's

said, "How

Chapter 1787

Why did he have to mention Serena? It was clear he hadn't thought before he spoke.

After an anxiety-filled dinner, where Steward barely managed to keep his composure, he risked a glance at Sean, who seemed to have a lightbulb moment and surmised, "Is it about the whole mess with Martha and Bella's kidnapping?"

The others were caught off guard by his quick connection of the dots.

"Indeed, it is related." Kenneth nodded, "Come to the study with me."

He didn't want to rehash the footage from that unfinished construction site again. No need to upset the rest.

Sean, sensing the gravity of the situation, stood up to follow his father.

He remembered when he'd gone to that derelict building looking for Bella, they had told him she was dead, had fallen from the building. He was so enraged; he wanted to blow the place sky-high. But before he could act on that impulse, he had hoped to find his sister's body.

building. He wondered, why was a servant of the Collins family like Martha

was alive and that, aside from his own plans, another group had also rigged the building with explosives set to detonate soon. He didn't think twice;

with a moment to reflect, he wondered when had Martha left the

Sean; after all, this was a family

couldn't believe the extent of suffering Bella had endured before

He was livid to realize that since the day his sister had returned home, Martha and Serena had harbored ill intentions, targeting her at every turn. Worse, when Martha decided to scar Bella's face, Serena didn't intervene. Instead, she ordered Martha to carve deeper and demanded

desk with explosive fury, like a pressure cooker on

Kenneth concluded, making it clear that not just he but the entire family was deeply disappointed in Serena. They no longer wanted this

Sean asked, anger lacing his

Kenneth could answer,

called out, "Sean, where

guarding the basement, trembled at the sight of Sean's uncontrollable

Chapter 1788

Sometimes Sean would think that she was a bit manipulative, but she was his sister after all, so he let it slide. Who could have imagined the face on the surveillance footage?

When his biological sister first came back to the family, he thought all sisters were like Serena, all mind games and clinginess, maybe even relentless. Fresh to high society, she likely felt timid and out of place.

At that time, he was nursing a serious injury, hanging onto life by a thread, and had no energy to deal with her or cater to her feelings.

He dreaded a girl's tears - what if she was a crybaby?

As word got around that she was becoming the family's darling, he figured she must be playing a game more sophisticated than Serena's. Otherwise, how could she have won everyone over so quickly?

Turned out his sis had real skills, a unique charm that captivated everyone. She was nothing like the "sister" in his head.

Watching Serena, he suddenly realized that Serena was leagues behind. Bella was subtle yet formidable, wise and resolute, with solid morals and integrity. Serena, on the other hand, was two-faced, malicious, and morally bankrupt.

"Your real mom humiliated my sister, and now that she's gone, you'll pay her debts."

such ruthless words from Sean, Serena looked stunned and hurt. She was already down, unable to get up, and here he was, ready

her resentment towards

is asking for twenty slaps

stranger, death would be too kind, but considering they lived

turned to Betty, "Ever

her head in

your chance. Go on, get some practice," Sean couldn't be bothered to do it himself; he had grapes to

was; if he said to do

actions despicable, she hesitated to strike. After all, she had once seen Serena as her

knew she was an outsider to this family. Even after

pleading was useless; tears streamed down as she weakly cried out,

for?" Sean's patience was

Chapter 1789

Once upon a time, Sean had showered her with the same affection, but then.

When he found out she wasn't his real sister, was this the treatment she deserved? Did that mean if Arabella ever made a mistake in the future, or if it turned out she wasn't his real sister, there was a good chance she'd end up receiving the same harsh treatment??

"I'm just here for the show."

Arabella's sudden interjection caught everyone off guard.

"Carry on."

Arabella had no intention of pleading for Serena. Instead, she stood outside the door, a cool and detached observer of the unfolding drama.

Steward looked at Arabella with admiration. Ms. Collins was truly one of a kind.

Serena was seething. If only Arabella had put on a show of pleading on her behalf, she wouldn't seem so despicable.

a lesson for you." Sean patted Arabella on the head before turning to Steward, "You

tears. She had used

no stranger to meting out punishment, and he knew how to deliver

supposed sister Serena, Steward couldn't help but speculate. Had Serena committed

building kidnapping case?

to start or

command, Steward stepped forward and

few slaps alone were enough to draw blood from Serena's mouth, ringing

face swelled with bruises, and in

"Sean, she's out cold."

had only

outdoor fountain? Fetch some and throw it on

freezing, and some of the fountain water had turned to crushed ice. Betty filled a bucket and took it inside, riding the elevator down to the basement. Louisa saw her but said nothing, as

Chapter 1790

Sean finished his warning, and as he turned back to Arabella, his gaze softened into pure adoration, "Come on, let's head upstairs for some fruit."

Arabella nodded, following Sean closely.

The basement door locked behind them, and Serena lay submerged in the icy water, her fists clenched in humiliation as tears overflowed from her eyes.

In the living room.

Sean carefully peeled the skin off a grape, trying his best to be gentle, yet the surface of the fruit still ended up looking pitted and rough - not smooth at all.

He had never peeled fruit for himself before. Firstly, because he found it bothersome, and secondly, because the servants usually prepared the fruit, peeling it and presenting it ready to eat.

He hadn't even peeled the likes of lychees before.

"What a mess," Sean was dissatisfied with his peeled grape, and tossed it into the trash before attempting another.

Peeling grapes was proving to be much trickier than dealing with people. At the rate he was going, he could have taken down a few foes.

also peeling grapes for Arabella, her movements swift. In no time at all, she had a small pile of perfectly peeled grapes, smooth and shiny, which she placed onto Arabella's glass fruit plate. Without

Bella rotten with peeled fruit. Now that I'm back, can't you let me shine for

"Dad, after dinner, can't you and mom

was worried about keeping

a walk in ages. With the family visiting, let's all go for a walk after dinner. Get

might help us stay in shape." Sean added, "We've got Bella's wedding reception to think about. It would be a real shame if you two showed up with a beer

wedding reception but also for the grand welcome-back party they wanted to throw for Bella during the holidays. A potbelly was

her waiting." Louisa advised before standing up to leave, "I'll

coat; it's chilly outside,"

and Steward remained in the living

time, said timidly, "So Sean, if there's

waiting for me

glanced at Arabella, "Well,

"Take care."

Steward left, only the siblings were