

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1011

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Chapter 1011

The clash of titans left everyone in awe, with the two opponents evenly matched from the get-go, keeping the audience on the edge of their seats.

This was the essence of a chess game!

This was what made it interesting!

Mr. Eugene was reveling in the competition, and his spirits lifted.

On the other hand, Arabella was not as aloof as she had been with Alma. She was deeply engaged, her eyes sparkling with

interest as if playing with an old friend, watching Mr. Eugene, the charming old man, with an air of casual amusement.

“Ha-ha! Got you!” Mr. Eugene was elated. Capturing one of Arabella’s pieces felt more rewarding than capturing a hundred from

someone else!

Arabella couldn't help but smile. One piece, and the old man was over the moon. She wondered how long it had been since he had last tasted victory.

Everyone thought Arabella would be defeated, yet as the minutes ticked by, they remained on equal footing, their skills evenly matched.

Who was this Arabella, and from whom did she learn to play?

How could she stand her ground against Mr. Eugene for so long?

Was she even human?

The spectators from Westerly College were stunned. Their top-ranked student was holding her own against Mr. Eugene!

The game had been going on for half an hour, and neither of them had gained an upper hand. They had captured the same number of pieces!

How did she manage that?

Mr. Eugene was secretly delighted. He had not practiced in vain all these months to be able to hold his own against this young lady!

“Considering how busy you've been lately, you've neglected your training.

Look at you now, you're rusty."

With Arabella's skills, she should have been able to beat him within half an hour.

But now.

Just as Mr. Eugene felt smug, Arabella captured three pieces. Surprised, He gaped at her, "You!"

"What's the matter?"

Mr. Eugene stared at the chessboard, suddenly realizing he had overlooked a key detail, allowing Arabella to exploit a weakness!

From then on, he put all his focus on the game.

Meanwhile.

Andrew, the president of the Westerly College student union, glanced at the clock, a bit worried. Arabella's companions should have finished their matches by now, but they hadn't shown up.

Could they have suffered a complete defeat, losing so badly that Arabella had stayed back to console the tearful group?

With this thought, he sent Arabella a WhatsApp message, [Done yet? Need any help?]

Mya clung to Joyce's arm, her nervousness apparent, "Why hasn't Arabella come yet? I'm getting anxious."

"Me too."

Their turn was coming up soon. Arabella had promised to come and cheer for them before their matches.

But now, Arabella hadn't replied to their WhatsApp messages or answered their calls. Could it be because they were losing badly?

“Oh no, no, no.” Mr. Eugene watched in disbelief as Arabella captured another one of his pieces.

Although Arabella hadn't been practicing at home lately, she understood Mr.

Eugene's strategies, knowing the defenses he would set.

So, she purposely let Mr. Eugene think he was successful in defending his pieces. Instead, she attacked from a different angle, targeting his undefended pieces.

The old man regretted his previous move, wishing he hadn't made it!

After another half hour, Arabella clinched the win by a single piece.

The audience was stunned into silence, refraining from applauding for fear of hurting Mr. Eugene's pride.

He had lost to Arabella?

Just as Mr. Eugene was about to voice his admiration for a well-play game, a young woman stepped forward with a challenge.

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Chapter 1012

“Impossible! When Arabella beat Alma just now, I already felt something was off. Now that she's beaten Mr. Eugene, don't tell me you guys aren't suspicious?”

The girl's words ignited a spark of doubt among the crowd.

“Exactly, Arabella is just a student. How could she possibly beat Mr. Eugene?”

"Mr. Eugene is a renowned Master of chess."

"I find it strange, too. Arabella must have cheated! She must have an AI helping her!"

"A while ago, there was news about a chess player who cheated using artificial intelligence and got caught, right? But his methods were pretty amateurish. He used a tiny camera to capture the chessboard and sent it to his accomplices. They used computer AI to analyze the game, then sent him the next move."

"Arabella must have used some sort of smart chip. I demand a body search!"

"If Arabella really did stoop so low to beat Mr. Eugene, I believe she owes Mr. Eugene an apology, and Alma, too!"

"Her violin performance just now might also have been AI-assisted"

Everyone's speculative chatter reached Arabella's ears. She smirked, amused at the comparison of her brain to an AI.

"Maybe all her previous contests, including the SATs, were rigged too. If that's the case, I demand we involve the police!"

"I also demand we call the police and revoke her eligibility for all contests."

"I hope that Westerly College will take a firm stance and expel her. We can't let a fraud like her continue her education."

"You're just hurling baseless accusations!"

The folks from Westerly College came forward to defend Arabella, their faces flushed with indignation.

"Every move Arabella made was witnessed by all of us. How could she have cheated? And how would she have done it?"

"You all keep mentioning Al, but can you provide any proof?"

"We can't right now. That's why we want to involve the police."

"Brazen enough to cheat but not brave enough to be accused?"

"So, this is how Westerly College teaches you? Winning by any means necessary?"

The crowd seemed convinced of Arabella's guilt, looking at her with disdain.

The people from Westerly College were fuming yet unable to defend her. "If you can't provide any proof, it's defamation! Arabella can sue you!"

"Sue us? Great, but first, let's call the police! Once they're here, the truth will come to light."

The people from Westerly College were livid. They turned to Arabella and said with a mix of anger and helplessness, "Arabella, they're going too far."

"Go ahead and call the police if you want to. Those who can't provide proof, I'll sue each one of you. Also, I will demand a public apology from Summerfield College and a major demerit"

Arabella's defiant attitude infuriated the people from Summerfield College.

Did she think they couldn't provide any proof, and that's why she was acting so high and mighty?

She was the one who cheated, yet she was talking with such arrogance!

She wouldn't know what hit her until it was too late!

Their vice principal was right here!

Did this girl have no respect for authority?

She was demanding Summerfield College?

On what grounds was she demanding Summerfield College?

Who did she think she was?

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Chapter 1013

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Sitting nearby, a frown settled on Leopold's face as he eyed the students with irritation.

Regardless of how highly Principal Charles thought of Arabella, it was clear that given her academic prowess and standing, she would never stoop so low as to cheat.

"Was that what you're learning at Summerfield University?" Leopold asked sternly, his hands folded behind his back. "Accusing classmates without any evidence?"

"Well, Sir" one student began, it's a serious matter if she's straying from the path. We just hope that Arabella doesn't tarnish her image."

"We hope that people at Westerly University see her true colors and not be deceived."

“And if her perfect SAT scores were obtained by cheating. Don't you think it's unfair to those who study hard?”

“Yeah, she easily beat everyone using AI.”

“Enough!” Leopold rebuked, “You're all so articulate when it comes to slander, but where was that eloquence when it came to academics? You are a disgrace to Summerfield University!”

“Apologies for the spectacle, Mr. Eugene, Leopold then turned to Mr. Eugene with a smile, “I'll be sure to address this issue with each of them. If they fail to show remorse, I'll invite their parents to discuss their future at the university.” After all, Summerfield University valued a student's character more than their grades.

“Vice Principal.

The students were confused. Why was their own Vice Principal siding with an outsider?

Was it because Arabella was pretty? Or was it because he wanted to impress Mr. Eugene by defending Arabella?

In the crowd, Serena let out a sigh of relief. So, Arabella had used some tactics to win the competition.

Perhaps even her title ‘Maestro Melody’ was fraudulently obtained.

And her medical skills, maybe she had just copied from the internet or had an AI guiding her.

Elsewhere, Alma felt a wave of satisfaction. So, Arabella had won the competition by unfair means. She always knew that no one could match her violin skills or chess ability among their peers, not even the foolish Serena.

Now, it was Arabella's turn to face the music!

"Hahaha." Mr. Eugene laughed heartily, apparently not affected by the situation at all.

"I've been teaching this young lady chess for over ten years now, and she's become better than her teacher. I should be proud, right?"

What?

Everyone was taken aback. What did Mr. Eugene just say?

Arabella was his student? For over ten years?

Alma and Serena thought they had misheard, but the shocked expressions on everyone's faces told them otherwise. How on

earth did Arabella get so close to Mr. Eugene to become his student for ten years?

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The Vice Principal next to them laughed in a respectful and courteous manner, "These students sure don't know how to behave.

I'll definitely teach them a lesson later. Hope you weren't bothered, Mr. Eugene."

Mr. Eugene was in high spirits, not the least bit bothered by the people or things around him. He said, relishing the moment,

"Well, this trip was certainly worthwhile!"

It was worth it to get to play chess with Bella and have a whole new perspective.

He looked at Arabella and patted her shoulder, "You might want to consider taking up your grandpa's mantle."

Everyone was taken aback once again.

What did Mr. Eugene mean by that?

Had he already picked his successor long ago? And that person was Arabella, not Alma??

Everyone instinctively looked at Alma.

At this moment, Alma's face was filled with shock, looking extremely surprised.

Had Arabella turned down Mr. Eugene earlier?

Oh God. How could that be?

Was there such a fool in this world?

That was Mr. Eugene!

The absolute pinnacle of the chess world, inheriting his legacy would be a dream come true.

But Arabella just gave a light smile. The old man was playing tricks, trying to pressure her in front of everyone, thinking she would hesitate to refuse in order not to embarrass him.

"It's time for you to head back."

Arabella did not mention anything about the inheritance, and she simply changed the subject with a single line.

"Ha ha ha, alright. Do visit me more often and give me a call once in a while."

Don't always let me be the one to reach out to you and not get a response!"

The old man's tone was somewhat complaining, but the others around were green with envy.

"IL know.

"Well, I'm heading back now" Mr. Eugene was about to leave when he suddenly remembered the old man always posting photos

in the group chat to provoke everyone when he was conducting experiments with the young lady.

He used to think that behavior was absolutely outrageous! So pointless! So vexing!

But now, he cheerfully said to Arabella, "Shall we take a photo together?"

Everyone around widened their eyes in disbelief as they watched Mr. Eugene pull Arabella in for a photo. This Arabella was way

too lucky to get such recognition from Mr. Eugene!

"I've got to go.

After taking the photo, Arabella checked the time, knowing the competition was about to start, and said, "See you later."

"See you later, kiddo." Mr. Eugene looked at the photo on his phone, grinning ear to ear.

He sent a dozen photos to the group chat in one go, and in those photos, he was grinning so wide that his eyes were almost

shut. Arabella, on the other hand, was as elegant as a lotus. Such a beauty. That McMillian boy was so lucky!

Humph, this marriage thing, even he, as a grandpa, had yet to give his blessing!

He had to see the boy's character and sincerity. If he's not up to snuff, there's no way he would agree! Just as Arabella was leaving, she suddenly received a call from David.

Surprised, she answered, "David?"

"Bella, David's world tour concert is kicking off in Summerfield. I've reserved two VIP tickets for you and Romeo. Don't forget to come. The tickets are already on your phone."

David Collins' sunny voice came through the phone, filled with 100% affection.

He sent Arabella electronic tickets with QR codes on them that could be scanned for entry at the venue.

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"Thanks, David."

"Look at you, all formal with me again after some time apart! We're family.

Forget about concert tickets. If you ever wanted me to serenade just for you, I'd be more than happy to!

Any time of the day,
even at 3 a.m."

Arabella, "Thanks, David. But that's really not necessary."

"I heard Clark's back in town. Has he been giving you a hard time? If so, I'm going to have a word with him!"

Arabella smirked, "You think you can take on Clark?"

Despite Clark's lack of combat skills, he probably had the upper hand against David, right?

"Don't underestimate me. Even if I can't beat Clark, I won't let him bully you.

Whoever messes with you, I won't let them get away with it. Just tell me if Clark's done anything that's made you uncomfortable so I can settle the score!"

"No, Clark's been pretty good to me."

"Well, that's a relief." David sighed a hint of sourness in his heart. "I've got a concert tour coming up, so I won't be able to be with

you for a while. You should hang out with your friends more. If any of them happen to be fans of me and want a signed photo or ticket, just say yes. I will give them as many as they want, as long as they're genuinely nice to you."

Arabella was moved by his words.

"If they want to chat with me over a voice call or even video call, I'm up for it.

I'm even willing to treat them to dinner and take photos with them. As long as you're happy, I'm up for anything."

"David, you're so kind."

"It's you who's kind. I'm proud to have a sister like you. You're such a sweetheart."

David could imagine his sister's sweet and adorable face even over the phone.

"Feel free to call or text me anytime."

He had lost sleep over this, always feeling like he had done something wrong, that he had lost his place in his sister's heart, that

Clark had taken advantage of his absence.

"I'll message or call you whenever I'm free,' Arabella promised.

"Alright, I won't bother you anymore then. Take care of yourself at school, okay? You hang up first."

David could hear the lively chatter on her end. She was probably with her friends, so he didn't want to hold her up.

"Okay"

After Arabella hung up, someone asked, "Arabella, how many siblings do you have? How many did your mom give birth to?"

It sounded like she had a lot.

"Not too many, Arabella evaded the question with a noncommittal response.

But someone said, "You know, Serena from the Collins family, the heiress? I heard she has five brothers, and she's the only daughter. She's the apple of her family's eye!"

"[think she has a captivating air about her; definitely looks like a rich girl. But I don't really like her."

"Me neither. She seems so out of reach."

"Hey Arabella, you share the same last name with Alma, who just called you sister. Are you guys related?"

"Really?"

Everyone was just curious and gossiping. After all, they didn't think Arabella had any connection with the Collins family.

There were many people with the surname Collins, including some celebrities, like the popular young heartthrob David.

"Your violin playing just now was better than Serena's," Arabella suddenly complimented a short-haired girl.

"Really?" The girl was taken aback. "Really? But my overall score isn't as high as hers."

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"You have more talent than her, and you just haven't put in as many hours practicing.' Arabella stated , If you apply yourself and

practice diligently, chances are you'll surpass her."

"Then I'll definitely practice more, strive to take a big leap forward."

The short-haired girl was surprised that she had received Arabella's approval, and a spark of motivation ignited within her.

Surpassing Serena, something she wouldn't have dared to dream of before!

"So, Arabella, how did you find my saxophone performance just now?"

"How was my piano performance?"

"My flute playing was okay, right?"

Many were surrounding Arabella, seeking her assessment and validation.

Meanwhile.

Serena watched Arabella, her figure bathed in adoration, and she was stunned. Even after the crowd dispersed, she was still rooted to the spot, unable to believe what she had witnessed.

Arabella had been receiving guidance from Mr. Eugene since she was a child, for over a decade.

It was known that the famous chess master, Morgan, had only received a month of guidance from Mr. Eugene.

What kind of merit did Arabella possess to be able to be so close to Mr. Eugene and to be so beloved by him.

It was clear today that Mr. Eugene had intentionally come to challenge her to a game of chess.

According to Mr. Eugene, she ignored his calls and not responding to his WhatsApp messages.

How could she be so arrogant?

But then again, she seemed to have always been like that, so aloof, as if always standing in the clouds, unwilling to mingle with mere mortals.

Just then, a group of girls came over to Serena.

"Serena, what are you thinking about? You seem so focused."

"Your violin performance was amazing earlier. I think the judges are tone-deaf. Your score should have been higher than Alma's."

"Exactly, I think Alma's violin skills are not as good as yours, and her performance was really grating."

"I didn't like it either:

Serena knew these girls were trying to comfort her, but their words did lift her spirits a bit. She smiled and said, "It's okay. Alma is

also part of the Collins family. If she wins, it's a collective glory for our family. I'm proud of her."

"Serena, you have such a broad perspective, truly magnanimous:

"That's the upbringing of a wealthy heiress. We should learn from you."

"Gh, right, Serena, you promised us concert tickets earlier."

Several expectant gazes were directed at her.

Serena smiled lightly, "I'll call David right now.

"That's great! We knew Serena always treated us like sisters."

"Serena, you're So nice, you always help me when I can't get concert tickets."

"I'm so jealous that you have a superstar brother. He's an A-lister in the entertainment industry, and he's so handsome"

"Serena, everyone in your family is so attractive, especially you"

One by one, they heaped praises on Serena.

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Serena dialed David's number in front of her friends, and the onlookers couldn't help but comment, "How lucky, Serena, to have a pop star's number."

The call was picked up quickly on the other end.

"David, any chance you could spare a few concert tickets for me?" Serena asked with a smile, her friends watching eagerly. "You

see, my girlfriends are big fans, and they're dying to see your show, but they couldn't get any tickets.

You're just too popular."

Perhaps fearing David's refusal, Serena added,

"They've been begging me for a while now. I hate to turn them down, but I don't want to put you on the spot."

David, feeling a bit apologetic, responded, "Serena, I just gave the last of my tickets away. Next time, I promise, I'll save more for you guys."

"What? You're out of tickets?" Serena's words were met with a palpable tension from her friends.

Their pleading eyes were turned to her, hoping she could persuade David.

"L originally had a dozen or so tickets," David explained. "But I promised my manager that I'd save about seven or eight for family and friends. The rest were given to thank those who've helped me out."

Although the tickets he'd given away weren't the best seats.

The best ones had already been given to Arabella and Romeo.

"Tell your friends I'm sorry, okay? Next time, I'll be sure to save more for you guys," David said just as someone called for him.

"I've got to head to rehearsal. We'll talk later"

"Wait, David." Serena began, but the call had already ended.

She looked at her friends, their eyes filled with anticipation and disappointment. "David had a dozen or so tickets," she explained,

"but he promised his manager he'd save most of them for family and friends. The rest were given away, so there's none left"

"Not even one?"

"But his first show is in Summerfield, and I really want to go!"

"Serena, can't you ask David to sneak us in?"

Celebrities did it all the time.

"Please, Serena" The pleading started again.

Serena knew that David was a stickler for rules. He wouldn't allow people to roam around backstage, let alone sneak into his concert.

She'd known this for a long time.

"I just spoke to him, and he asked me to apologize to you guys. He said he'll save more tickets for you next time. I'm really sorry, and I should have called him earlier"

The others were visibly upset, blaming Serena.

She could have called David again and sweet-talked him into letting them in.

It was such a simple thing, yet she refused to help.

If she wasn't willing to help, why did she promise them in the first place?!

Wasn't she just trying to show off that she has a famous brother?

"Serena, I don't want a concert ticket. You know I've always admired your brother Hans. I heard he's attending a charity ball in Summerfield next Monday and he needs a date. Could you recommend me?"

One of the girls, a brunette heiress, asked.

Worried that Serena might refuse, she added,

"Serena, I understand that David's tickets are in high demand, but your brother Hans is always alone.

Can you call him and see if he has a date? If not, you could recommend me."

"Serena, you should help her. If she becomes your sister-in-law, she'll ensure Hans gives you more pocket money."

"Pocket money? He should give stock shares."

The brunette heiress quickly pledged her loyalty, "If I become Hans' wife, any shares he gives me, I'll give to you."

Although Serena was a bit speechless at their requests, the feeling of being needed prompted her to pick up her phone.

Soon, she was dialing Hans' number.

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"Serena,' Hans' warm voice echoed from the other end of the phone.

Serena gripped her phone, her subconscious nerves kicking in.

For some reason, whenever she called Hans, she felt anxious and pressured.

"Hans, I heard you're attending a charity gala next Monday and need a plus one. My friend happens to be free. Why don't you take her?"

"No need," Hans detected the underlying meaning in her words and declined nonchalantly, "I already have someone in mind"

Could it be Molly? Serena thought. Taking such a girl to such a high-profile event would be a disgrace to the Collins family and to Hans, wouldn't it?

Seeing her short-haired friend pleadingly clasping her hands together, Serena had no choice but to say, "Do you have any free time in the next couple of days? I'd like to have dinner with you."

Hans, catching onto her intentions, replied lightly, "You're pretty free lately? Your studies aren't too taxing?"

Was she really that concerned about his personal affairs?

"Hans, I just want to have dinner with you.' Serena guessed that Hans knew her intentions and quickly added, "I haven't seen you in a long time."

"Don't harbour unnecessary thoughts. If you're too idle, I can hire a few more tutors for you."

"Hans"

"I have a meeting."

Hans' meeting time had arrived. He was always punctual. At this moment, he hung up the cail and sat at the conference table, his gaze icy cold.

Serena could hardly believe that she was hung up on by two of her brothers today!

Seeing her short-haired friend's hopeful gaze, Serena had to grit her teeth and lie, "Hans said he would ask his assistant to check his schedule, and I'll bring you along to have dinner with him when he's free."

"Really??" Her friend was overjoyed, jumping up and hugging Serena, "I knew you would find a way!"

Serena smiled, but inside, she was wondering how she could trick Hans into having dinner with her.

Meanwhile.

Alma finally recovered from her shock when her phone rang.

She checked it and saw it was her mother, Beverly, calling.

"Alma, I heard Mr. Eugene is in Summerfield. Your grandpa can arrange a meeting for us tonight. Come back home now, I'll send

the driver to pick you up. Dress up and meet him at the coffee shop tonight. Try to get him to play a game of chess with you.

Remember, don't make him lose face, but don't appear too foolish, either. You need just the right balance."

She had to catch Mr. Eugene's attention while also showing him she had potential. Only then would she have a chance to gain his favor and advice.

"Mom, I don't want to go."

Alma was already upset about this matter, and now, her mother's call was like another blow.

Beverly sat in their home garden, sipping her tea elegantly, her tone casual, "What's wrong?"

Chess had always been her daughter's pride and joy, but now, it seemed like she had taken a hit.

"Mr. Eugene came to Summerfield College today. I lost to Arabella in front of him."

"What did you say?" Beverly paused mid-sip, her gaze somewhat incredulous.

"Arabella's chess skills are incredible. Mr. Eugene personally said that he has known Arabella for over ten years, and he taught her chess. Also, he publicly asked Arabella to reconsider taking up his mantle."

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Alma recounted the day's events in a nutshell, not forgetting to add a few sarcastic remarks.

"Mom, do you think Arabella's lost her marbles? She's got such a great opportunity in front of her, and she doesn't know how to appreciate it. Either she's really sick in the head, or she's just putting on airs, dangling Mr. Eugene like a carrot, thinking she's something special."

Maybe she really thought she's a gem. That's why she liked to put on that aloof, disdainful demeanor.

"Bloody fool." Beverly poured herself another cup of coffee and took a slow sip before asking, "With so many people present, why do you think Mr.

Eugene deliberately brought up the subject of succession?"

"What else could it be? He just wants everyone to know that Arabella has him as a strong backing, so they can't offend her

easily!" Alma was even more exasperated at that point. She couldn't understand why Mr. Eugene had set his sights on Arabella.

Beverly spoke with a refined air, "No, his real goal is only one, and that is to put indirect pressure on Arabella. He was certain

Arabella wouldn't embarrass him by refusing in front of everyone, so he deliberately brought it up."

But what he didn't expect was that Arabella didn't talk about succession or refusal. She just sidetracked the conversation.

Beverly thought, that girl was quite interesting, facing such an olive branch and dealing with it in such a manner.

"She's not stupid. Either she has too many olive branches to handle, or she doesn't need anyone else's help."

In Beverly's opinion, Arabella was a person who kept her cards close to her chest. She had previously warned her daughter not to mess with Arabella unnecessarily.

With her daughter's level of sophistication, she was no match for Arabella.

Like today's situation, her other strong backing, Mr. Eugene was revealed in front of everyone.

How many more were there that haven't come out? No one knew.

"But Mom, I don't understand why did Mr. Eugene choose her?"

Alma thought she had some talent for playing chess. Her previous teachers all praised her as intelligent and capable, a person with great potential. They said that she could definitely make a name for herself in the chess world in the future.

If she had received guidance from Mr. Eugene when she was younger, she might not be any worse than Arabella now!

"Sometimes, timing, location, and people are all important factors." Beverly still insisted, "Come back, let's try again tonight."

Such a good opportunity was in front of them, and they couldn't just give up knowing the difficulties. Arabella hasn't given Mr. Eugene a definite answer yet, Mr. Eugene could still be looking for better candidates.

Nothing was set in stone yet.

Alma didn't necessarily have to be better than Arabella, but if she was indeed talented and diligent, why would Mr. Eugene refuse her?

Even if she couldn't become his favorite student, having guidance from Mr.

Eugene would still be much better than guidance from anyone else.

After hearing her mother's words, Alma also thought it made sense, "I'll go back right away."

When she passed the backstage, she happened to see Serena, surrounded by a group of friends, being the center of attention.

Serena was in a great mood initially, but when she received a WhatsApp message from Martha, learning that David had given the concert tickets to Arabella, she almost dropped her phone.

[I just found out, too. The lady wanted a ticket for her best friend's daughter.

She called David, and David said he had given them away. When she asked who to, it turns out it was Arabella.]

"Serena, you look so pale. Do you want to go to the infirmary?"

"Are you okay? Your smile looks forced. If you're not feeling well, don't push yourself."

"Shall I take you to the infirmary?"

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The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1020

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"I'm alright."

Serena forced herself to steady her emotions, quickly shooting a message to Martha.

(Martha, are you certain? Did David really give the concert tickets to Arabella?)

(I was right there when your mom called, no doubt about it! Not only did David give Arabella the ticket, he gave her the best seats!]

Perhaps sensing Serena's heartache, Martha couldn't help but express her outrage.

[David's being totally out of line. He tells you there are no tickets left and then just turns around and hands them to his own little sister. He's not considering your feelings at all!]

The term "little sister" pierced Serena's heart like a dagger.

She couldn't believe that David, who had been so gentle on the phone just moments ago, had lied to her!

[You mentioned earlier that Hans already has a date for the charity dinner next week. It's not Arabella, is it?] Martha messaged again.

Serena hesitated. It couldn't be.

(Serena, I don't know if you've noticed, but Arabella's status in their eyes seems to be getting higher and higher while you are becoming less and less important]

Unable to keep her emotions in check, Serena excused herself to the restroom, leaving her friends in a state of confusion.

"Is Serena on her period?"

"I guess so. She's gone pale. Let's wait for her here."

"To be honest, I think that Arabella at Westerly College plays the violin like a true virtuoso. it's just mesmerizing!"

"Me too. The moment her music started playing, I was completely blown away. She's better than my private tutor!"

"Hush, keep your voices down. Do you want Serena to hear? We still need her to get close to her brothers!"

Everyone made a shushing gesture before starting to whisper again.

"If you become her sister-in-law, and I become her sister-in-law. We could hang out often! Just like now.

"Look, Alma is heading to the restroom. Do you think she's going to make trouble for Serena?"

"Should we go help Serena?"

One of the girls with curly hair wanted to help but was held back by her friends.

"Don't! You forgot about the time Serena mentioned that Alma beat her up on the staircase at the hospital when they were visiting their grandmother?"

We're not strong enough to be of any help. What if we end up with bruised faces. How would we face people?"

"Exactly, what if we have to dine with Hans next, with a bruised face."

"I have to attend David's concert, and I can't show up looking like that."

Even though they knew Alma would most likely cause trouble for Serena, the group of girls didn't dare to intervene. They even wandered off to a further location, feigning ignorance.

As soon as Alma entered the restroom, she could hear Serena's anxious voice on the phone, even sounding a little tearful.

"How did it come to this. Why?" Serena was close to tears, but upon catching sight of Alma in the mirror, she gripped her phone tighter. She had no idea how long the sly Alma had been eavesdropping, but she quickly ended the call. With her arms crossed over her chest, Alma watched Serena's flustered and angry state with an air of nonchalance.

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