

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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Before she could finish her sentence, Arabella kicked a leather footstool nearby with such force that it flew across the room and hit Rose squarely in the face.

Rose was instantly dazed, her nose bleeding, a trickle of blood at the corner of her mouth.

"You dare hit her in front of me." Bess was furious, pointing at Arabella, "How could I have a niece like you?"

"Bella, you haven't said why you hit her?" Eunice asked leisurely.

"She disrespected you and my parents, tarnishing your reputations, not a single civil word out of her mouth."

Arabella looked coldly at the figure on the ground, "If not her, then who?"

Eunice held back a smile, glanced at Bess, then looked at Arabella with approval, "Seems like someone didn't teach her manners at home, good job setting her straight, Bella"

Bess was livid.

"Bess, you have two choices now,' Eunice continued, "one, take your people and leave my estate within a minute, or two, I hand you over to Bard and call Calvin to pick you up."

"Eunice." Bess was fuming, about to curse.

"Timekeeper, start the clock." Eunice sat elegantly in the main seat of the living room, her laziness and authority intermingled, exuding an indescribable feminine charm.

Her bodyguard released Bess' arm, and Bess pointed at Eunice's nose, threatening, "You just wait, there will be hell to pay after

Bard personally comes to apologize. I won't let you off the hook! Let's go!"

Bess helped Rose up, while Rose cried pitifully, "Grandma, we can't let that bitch off, look what she did to me."

"Hold on a moment,' Eunice suddenly said.

Bess turned around irritably, "What now? You want to detain someone? I'm telling you."

Eunice approached with grace, "Seems like the lesson from Bella wasn't clear enough, your precious granddaughter hasn't learned her manners."

Before Bess could react, Eunice raised her hand and slapped Rose hard across the face.

"It seems I have to teach you that 'bitch' isn't a word you can throw around."

Rose never expected Eunice to hit her, thinking now everyone felt bold enough to walk all over them?

"Eunice." Bess raised her hand, but before it could land, Eunice caught it.

"At your age, Bess, you shouldn't get angry, or you might throw out your back, and then blame me, which would be unfortunate."

Eunice released her hand.

Bess nearly lost her footing and would have fallen if not for the bodyguard's support.

"You'll pay for this, Eunice, and you!" Bess glared at Arabella furiously, "Just you wait!"

Once everyone had left, the servants cheered.

"She's so badass! Ms. Bella too! Bess and Rose finally got a taste of their own medicine!"

Previously, out of respect for her husband, Eunice had always been accommodating. But today, Bess came to visit under the

guise of concern, only to insult her with insinuations and slanders, as if being dead would be better than bringing shame to the Griffith family's good name.

Eunice approached Arabella, patting her shoulder in approval, "You did well. Don't worry, I will handle the rest."

Arabella looked up, puzzled, "Aunt Eunice, is this how they've always been?"

So bold and unchecked!

"It's always been this way" Eunice was used to it, "But soon, we won't have to tolerate it anymore."

Previously, Eunice had refrained from a confrontation out of respect for their elder status and consideration of Bard.

"Bella, join me tonight, I have a place to go." Eunice smiled, "You, my dear, are becoming more and more likable."

The servants also stole glances at Arabella, not expecting Ms. Bella to be so cool, much like Eunice.

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Evening.

Eunice tapped lightly on Arabella's door, personally delivering a gown for the night's event.

"Tonight's Arlen's birthday bash. Bard's tied up with work, so it's just us"

"This is your dress. We'll head out in thirty minutes."

After descending the stairs, Eunice slipped into a stunning red evening gown made of silk velvet, both warm and luxurious. Her

chic bob made her look elegant and poised, complemented by dazzling earrings and a radiant necklace.

Arabella, dressed and ready, saw Eunice from a distance, looking effortlessly graceful.

Naturally beautiful, Arabella looked even more majestic with the right touch of jewels.

"You're all set?" Eunice, upon hearing Arabella's footsteps, turned with a smile full of admiration and approval.

"Lovely, you look stunning."

The dress she had chosen for Arabella was both elegant and stylish, predominantly in a pale lilac hue. With her hair done up in a simple bun, she exuded an air of cool grace and nobility, like a fairy straight out of an enchanted realm.

Not everyone could pull off such a style and color, but Arabella did so effortlessly.

"The lining of your dress is insulated. With the car and Arlen's place heated, you won't be cold" Eunice said gently. "Tonight, I'll

say this upfront: if anything happens, just make sure you're safe Arabella sensed this was no ordinary gathering and lifted her

gaze to ask, "And what about you, Aunt Eunice?"

"If I wasn't confident, I wouldn't be going," Eunice replied with a confident laugh, her red lips curving into a striking smile.

Just then.

A person stepped out of a car at the villa's entrance. The security guard recognized her immediately, his surprise evident. "Miss

Serena, what brings you here?"

"Why, shouldn't I come?"

Today, Serena was dressed in a chic Chanel tweed suit, radiating poise and beauty.

Despite taking a beating the night before and fiercely protecting her face, there was not a mark to be seen, although only she knew the extent of her pain.

During her bath, she had seen countless bruises on her body, hardly an inch was spared.

"No, no, of course, you're welcome here, Miss Serena. Not just Mr. Griffith and his wife, but I'm delighted too.

But Mr. Griffith's abroad right now, I'll let Mrs. Griffith know."

"No need for that. I want to surprise Aunt Eunice.

Open up, will you?" Serena maintained her composure despite the pain, keeping up the smile of a well-bred lady. "I've brought some gifts in my car, have someone help me with them later."

"You are always so thoughtful, always bringing gifts for them."

"You'll get your share too.

Before arriving, Serena had pondered over the situation. Arabella had likely arrived at their uncle's house first and might have won over the servants.

She couldn't be upstaged!

"We get a share too?" The guard exclaimed joyfully.
"Thanks on behalf of everyone."

As the gates opened, Serena strolled in with an air of nonchalance.

A few servants were cleaning the fountain in the garden.

"Have you heard? Yesterday, a naive rich girl offended Mrs. Griffith on Style Plaza. Mrs. Griffith ordered that no shops should sell anything to her"

"Is that so? Who would be so clueless to upset Mrs. Griffith? That's just asking for trouble, "Exactly. Someone probably spoiled at home, thinking the world should revolve around them, not knowing whose territory this is!"

"She's probably not from around here. Who else would have the gall to step forward, especially when Mrs.

Griffith was out shopping with her niece yesterday, in high spirits, only for someone to act foolish in front of her? Of course, she had to set them straight."

"I wonder who this unfortunate rich lady is. The story's all over the place now, and it might be tough for her to get married after this."

Serena clenched her fists involuntarily.

Many luxury car owners had witnessed the scene, and anyone who could afford to shop on Style Plaza was no ordinary person.

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The gossip was spreading like wildfire, with the potential to circle back home, landing in the ears of teachers and classmates.

If her admirers ever found out, that would be utterly mortifying!

Who knew if some random passerby snapped a photo, or if there's a video secretly making the rounds?

That would be a real headache.

Meanwhile, the household staff continued their hushed conversations.

"Did you guys see the gorgeous clothes, shoes, and bags Mrs. Griffith bought for Ms. Bella yesterday?"

"Mrs. Griffith's taste is impeccable; she's renowned for her fashion sense throughout high society."

"It must've cost a pretty penny, at least a few grand, I reckon. Mrs. Griffith really dotes on Ms. Bella."

"Well, she is her niece by marriage, and it was quite the reunion. How could she not spoil her?"

Upon hearing this, Serena clenched her fists tightly! Suddenly, someone spotted her lurking nearby, and with a start, they stood up straight, bowing respectfully, "Miss Serena, what brings you here?"

The other servants looked over, dropping their chores to bow in turn, "Serena, we're so pleased you've come. Sir and madam will be thrilled."

With a practiced smile, Serena inquired, "Where's Aunt Eunice?"

"She's inside."

"I think I'll go give her a surprise. Carry on with your work."

As Serena gracefully made her exit, the servants wanted to mention something but couldn't get the words out in time.

Serena was unaware that Eunice and Ms. Bella were off to a birthday celebration.

Pushing aside her displeasure, Serena tiptoed into the living room, where she saw Eunice laughing and chatting away. Bursting with excitement, she leaped out, exclaiming, "Aunt Eunice."

Her smile froze as she spotted Arabella, also decked out in formal attire, standing opposite her aunt.

They were obviously heading out, but to where?

"Serena? You're here!"

Eunice had heard about her arrival at Dawnstar the night before and wasn't surprised to see her now but greeted her with an affectionate smile.

"It's been a while, and you're as mischievous as ever, jumping out to startle me."

Chuckling, Serena turned to Arabella and sweetly called her.

Arabella ignored her, but Eunice, sharp as ever, caught the slight and smoothly interjected, "Why didn't you let me send a car for you?"

"Aunt Eunice." Serena suddenly clung to her, her voice filled with emotion, "If you weren't standing right here, I wouldn't believe I could ever hug you again. It's so wonderful you're back!"

Her voice quivered as she continued, "Aunt Eunice, I've missed you. Seems like all those church visits weren't in vain. My prayers have been answered. Seeing you here, safe and sound, it's all worth it."

"You've been praying for me in church?" Eunice looked down at her, smiling, "Why are you crying now?"

"It's nothing." Serena quickly turned her tears into a beam, "I'm just overjoyed to see you again, couldn't help it"

"You silly child," Eunice chuckled.

"Aunt Eunice, you and sister are all dressed up; where are you heading?" Serena clung to Eunice's hand like a child, "Can you take me with you? I'm so bored all by myself."

"We're off to Arlen's birthday bash. Your sister and I just need to drop by, Eunice explained with a smile.

"Why don't you pick a room to rest in? We'll be back before you know it." There was an important matter to attend to tonight, and it wouldn't be appropriate to bring her along.

Serena had been pampered all her life, and tonight's event was not the place for her.

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"Is it Arlen's birthday today?" Serena's eyes sparkled with surprise and joy. "Well, they say the early bird catches the worm. I

simply must go and celebrate with him!"

Before Eunice could object, Serena chimed in, "I've got a few dresses in my suitcase, and for a birthday gift. I'll pick something

from the presents I brought for Uncle Bard. It's the thought that counts, right?"

Seeing Serena's enthusiasm, Eunice smiled with her glossy red lips and said, "Serena, honey, your sister and I will handle it

tonight. You just stay home and take it easy, okay?"

Serena hadn't expected Aunt Eunice to turn her down again, and her eyes betrayed a hint of hurt.

"There will be plenty of other birthday parties to attend, but we'll skip this one for tonight,' Eunice said, then turned to Arabella,

"We should get going. It's getting late."

"Okay." Arabella followed Aunt Eunice, passing by Serena, who couldn't help but sense Serena's boiling resentment and jealousy.

That girl never seemed to learn from her past mistakes.

Serena watched Eunice leave the main house and couldn't hold back any longer. She hurried after her, quickly catching up and taking Eunice's hand with a firm grip.

"Aunt Eunice, let me at least see you off.

Though she said "you,' Serena clung to Eunice's hand with an almost possessive air, as if to assert her territory over Arabella or deliberately leave her out in the cold.

Normally, Serena would sprinkle the conversation with sweet nothings, like "I must not be doing as well as my sister; that's why Aunt Eunice prefers her company. After all, I'm not really a Collins by blood; it's only right that I shouldn't go"

But Aunt Eunice was sharp as a tack, so Serena dared not lay it on too thick.

Instead, she just clung to Eunice's hand, playing the sentimentality card.

"Aunt Eunice, it's been so long since we've had a chat, and now you're leaving again. I just want to walk you out; at least that way, I can spend a little more time with you."

Eunice laughed, "Since when did you become such a clingy kid?"

Serena grinned sweetly, "Ever since last time, when I thought I might never see you again, I've been kicking myself for not making more time for the people I care about.

Auntie, when was the last time we had a proper walk together like this."

"It's been a while, Eunice admitted, stopping in her tracks to turn and wave Arabella over, "What's taking you so long? Hurry up."

As Arabella caught up, Eunice took her hand and said, "There'll be a bunch of relatives at Arlen's place. Don't be nervous, I'll

introduce you to each one."

"Okay."

"My sister's not one to get stage fright easily, Serena said, her voice bright with admiration. "She's a lot like you, Aunt Eunice. I

need to learn from both of you."

Eunice smiled but noticed that Arabella was very quiet, not joining in the laughter, as if she hadn't heard Serena at all.

Serena walked them to the driveway, her voice tinged with reluctance, "Auntie, you and my sister come back early. Otherwise, I'll miss you."

"Sure thing, Eunice replied as she opened the car door for Arabella to get in before instructing, "If you get hungry or thirsty, just tell the staff what you want"

"Don't worry, Aunt Eunice, it's not my first rodeo here!" Serena flashed a sweet smile. "Goodbye, Aunt Eunice.

Goodbye, Bella. Have a smooth ride."

Arabella couldn't help but feel speechless. Just yesterday, Serena had drenched her with two bottles of wine, and yet today, she could smile and say goodbye as if nothing had happened.

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As if nothing had ever happened.

That mental fortitude was impressive.

Along the way.

Eunice glanced at the quietly composed girl beside her and asked, "Bella, aren't you curious why, out of everyone, I chose to

bring only you to tonight's birthday bash, and not Serena?"

"Is it because she's not the right fit?" Arabella guessed, "Or is it because you want me to get to know what kind of people Mom's side of the family are?"

“Yes, but that's not the main reason.” Eunice smiled, her gaze fixed ahead, her red lips curling, “You must have heard enough rumors by now. Take a guess, why have I been by Alexander's side for so long without ever thinking of leaving?”

Arabella sensed something in her words.

“Figured it out?” Eunice saw a flicker of insight in Arabella's eyes and her smile grew even more beautiful, “So quick to catch on, you truly are my dear niece.”

Arabella wasn't entirely sure, but she ventured her guess.

“You were hurt and Mr. Elliot brought you to Alexander. Normally, the first thing upon waking would be to leave, to find a way back to Uncle Bard, because I can tell, you and Uncle Bard truly love each other, you can't live without one another.”

“But you didn't leave, you stayed, and even took the opportunity to win over a number of Alexander's men.

Those men are fiercely loyal to you. It wouldn't have been difficult for any of them to send a message to Uncle Bard, but you didn't do that. This means there's something there worth staying for. You mentioned true love with Uncle Bard, and that's a big

reason for your staying."

Eunice urged her on with her deepening smile, "Go on"

"Uncle Bard's power is unassailable in Dawnstar. Logically, there's nothing that would require your personal intervention, just a word to him would suffice to settle it, unless it's something Uncle Bard himself hasn't noticed, something you stumbled upon unexpectedly."

"It must be no small matter, likely concerning Uncle Bard's safety, or perhaps the safety of my grandparents.

Otherwise, it wouldn't be worth the risk for you to stay."

"As far as I know, Uncle Bard and the Mafia Rock have always kept to their own turfs, no crossover. But for you to remain so long at Mafia Rock, under Alexander's roof, it can only mean one thing — Alexander has something you want. As for what that something is, I haven't guessed it. Please, Aunt Eunice, enlighten me."

Eunice laughed, amazed at her niece's sharpness, "You've done well to guess this much." Outside, they were all talking, saying she was tainted, that she had no business returning to Bard's side.

“You see things differently than they do,” Arabella said coolly, aware of the “others” Eunice referred to. If all she did was scratch the surface, what kind of leader would she be?

“I envy Louisa for having such a clever and beautiful daughter.” Eunice beamed, “You're right, while at Alexanders, I inadvertently discovered someone from the Griffith family in contact with him, plotting to have your grandfather and Bard killed. I found it suspicious and decided to stay and gather evidence.”

Eunice narrated everything in detail.

“Alexander was cautious, always covering his tracks. It took me a long time to gather some evidence, and just when I did, Bard discovered I was still alive and mounted a surprise attack, wiping Alexander out.”

“I understand now,” Arabella’s eyes widened in realization, “But the trail didn’t end there!”

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"Why's that?" Eunice asked with a playful smile.

"If there truly is a mole within the Griffith family, they'd be terrified of getting caught if they've been undermining Uncle Bard

behind his back. Rumors have it that Alexander is quite fond of you. Since you spent such a long time there and suddenly

returned, the mole must be worried that Alexander has shared some secrets with you.

They're scared you'll spill the beans to Grandpa and Uncle Bard. So, your attendance at the birthday bash is basically bait!"

Eunice's eyes sparkled with admiration and approval.

"Tonight is undoubtedly their best chance to act.

Catch whoever takes a swing at you, and we've got our mole!"

Eunice's laughter was as radiant as her beauty,
"You're truly my clever niece, thinking layers deep.
You're certainly not just any
college kid. Is there something else about you,
something your auntie doesn't know?"

"It's nothing much." Arabella played it down, and
Eunice didn't pry further, sensing that this girl was
sharp and far from ordinary.

"I brought you along because you're clever and
quick-witted, ready to adapt on the fly. If things go
south and I can't get out in
time, with your skills and smarts, you can still get a
message out for me," Eunice explained with a laugh,
"If I brought Serena
along, she'd probably end up in tears."

That's also why she didn't bring Serena.

"And you can guess why I didn't bring your uncle,
right?"

"You want to draw the mole out into making a move
on you. If Uncle was there, they'd be cautious,
maybe too scared to act. So,
you purposely kept Uncle Bard busy elsewhere?"

"Not exactly on purpose." Eunice's laugh was
enigmatic, leaving things unsaid.

"Don't worry, Auntie. I've got this."

Arabella knew tonight's birthday celebration held
danger, but she didn't know who exactly might be
targeting Grandpa and Uncle

Bard.

Why did it have to come to this within one family.

Thirty minutes later.

They drove up towards the hilltop mansion, which shone like a beacon in the night with its glittering grandeur.

The driveway was lined with dozens of luxury cars, a testament to the wealth and status of the attendees.

The driver opened the door for them and followed, carrying the gifts Eunice had prepared in advance.

In the garden, guests chatted in small groups, enjoying the evening.

Some guests did a double-take upon seeing Eunice.

"How did she get an invite?"

"I heard Alexander was smitten with her, that she wasn't out of the picture. Seeing her now, it seems true."

"What was Bard thinking, keeping a woman like that around?"

"And letting her come to tonight's birthday soiree."

"How can she be the lady of the Griffith family?"

Arabella overheard their snide comments from a distance and frowned, "These people are so rude."

"You get used to it." Eunice's stride was confident, her red dress accentuating her commanding presence. She ignored the murmurs, striding past them into the main building.

The other women felt a pang of irritation. That damn Eunice, treating them like they were invisible.

What was there to be proud of, for a woman who had been toyed with?

Inside the mansion.

Relatives surrounded an elderly man, keeping him chuckling and in high spirits. He looked vigorous, his charm undiminished by age, a birthday hat placed humorously atop his head.

The driver handed the gifts to Eunice and Arabella, with Eunice stepping forward with a beaming smile to lead the way.

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"Happy birthday, Arlen. This is just a little something from Bard and me," Eunice said as she handed over a gift.

Arlen's butler stepped forward to take it immediately. "You folks might not be aware of Bella's true identity. Allow me to introduce her. She's the long-lost daughter of Louisa, Arabella Collins, who has only recently been found. Bella, this is your Arlen."

"Mr. Arlen, I wish you a happy birthday and many a hearty laugh" Arabella said, offering her gift. Eunice added, "This is the girl's way of showing her respect."

Arlen looked taken aback and stared at Arabella for a good while before asking, "You're Louisa's daughter?"

Before Arabella could respond, he turned to Eunice and asked with uncertainty, "And Kenneth's?"

"who else?" Eunice replied with a confident smile. "How did she end up lost? And you found her in Dawnstar? Did you and Bard take her under your wing?"

"Oh, Arlen, come on. The Collins clan holds Bella dear. How could they bear to have her fostered away? She's here to visit her

grandfather. Hearing of your birthday bash tonight, she made a point to come and celebrate with you." "Ah, well, that's thoughtful. It's good to have you back," Arlen replied with tepid enthusiasm, showing little warmth toward Arabella.

A servant took the birthday present from Arabella's hands.

Rose and Bess watched them with eyes that could kill.

Unable to hold back, Bess snapped, "That red dress of yours is stealing Arlen's thunder. Anyone would think you've come to outshine the birthday boy."

The older women started to posture.

"This is Arlen's home, and today we're celebrating his birthday. Isn't it a bit much for a junior to take center stage?"

"Away for a while and still as showy as ever!"

"Young people just don't know how to be subdued." Eunice's lips curled into a smile, radiant and stunning.

"It's Arlen's birthday, so naturally, I wanted to make a bold statement. Bella and I dressed in those colors to wish Arlen nothing but prosperity and success. But Bess, here you are in black on such a joyous occasion. What message might that convey?"

Bess was itching to tear Eunice's mouth off. Another elder chimed in defensively, "Black signifies modesty. Do you think everyone wants to be as loud as you?"

"In a time of celebration, black is an omen of bad luck, gloom, and misfortune. As an elder, Bess should be aware of such taboos. Or is it intentional?"

Bess was fuming. This brazen girl was becoming more insolent and irritating by the minute!

"Enough, Arlen said, his expression souring.

"Eunice, I heard Bard had to leave on business this afternoon."

"Yes"

"And who's this? What's her name?"

"Bella"

"Fine. Take Bella around, get some food."

"Sure thing. Come on, Bella' Eunice said, leading Arabella away, both still radiating charm.

Bess was seething, "That little hussy. I haven't even settled yesterday's score with her! And today she dares to be so brazen, showing off in front of us elders! Does she really think we won't put her in her place?"

"You knew today was Arlen's birthday, yet you chose such attire, handing others a reason to mock. And now we're the laughing

stock. Go change, or at least throw on a shawl!” Calvin Griffith couldn't help but reprimand her in a low voice.

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"Well, it's not Bess' fault. Eunice has always been disrespectful, never put anyone in her sight," Teresa didn't have much love for that wild child either. Watching her graceful figure walk away, a flicker of disgust passed through her eyes.

"Looks like the relatives here are not the easy-going type." Arabella followed Eunice to the long dinner table.

Eunice handed her a cupcake. "Eat something first." Arabella knew that her aunt was baiting the mole in their midst, certainly planning something to provoke the traitor into a rage, losing their cool enough to attempt murder.

"We'll split up and search in a bit,' Eunice said, lifting her beautiful smile as if she were discussing the latest season's fashion trends, not plotting a sting operation.

"Okay; Arabella responded, lifting a gentle smile of her own.

At that moment, a flustered socialite rushed forward, grasping Eunice's hand, "Isn't this Eunice? You're still alive?"

Eunice recognized the voice and knew the woman was someone who feigned closeness in public but often badmouthed her behind her back.

Smiling, she looked at the woman, "At my young age, how could it be my turn to die? Tiffany, how's you doing lately? Blood pressure still sky-high? Is it because Dave's been out chasing skirts again?"

Mrs. Laurier couldn't help but interject, "What kind of talk is that? Tiffany was genuinely concerned about you, and you respond by taking jabs at her. Men go out and fool around because there are too many loose women like you out there!"

"Enough, Mrs. Laurier. Eunice meant no harm," Tiffany said, her complexion souring.

"Which eye of Mrs. Laurier saw me being loose? Was it when I was being 'loose' that you happened to witness with your very own eyes?"

Mrs. Laurier was taken aback by her brazenness, "Everyone knows you've been delivered to the owner of Mafia Rock, and here you are, still pretending in front of us. Only a fool like Bard would fall for your tricks!"

"Whether Bard was fooled by me is none of Mrs. Laurier's business. You seem to have a lot to say, Mrs. Laurier.

But wasn't it when you were being 'not so chaste' that my people caught you red-handed? I wonder what Mr.

Laurier would think if he saw some of the videos I have "You're spouting nonsense!" Mrs. Laurier's face changed colors as if she had been stepped on, warning, "Don't talk rubbish without evidence!"

That's when Arabella accidentally spilled her orange juice all over Mrs. Laurier's trailing gown.

"I'm so sorry, I was just so engrossed in the conversation, I wasn't paying attention."

Mrs. Laurier hadn't expected the young girl next to Eunice to dare douse her with orange juice, "Who are you?"

"She's Kenneth and Louisa's daughter. Why, you want to take it up with them? You probably don't have their contact, but maybe I should send them a quick video." Eunice said with a smile.

Kenneth and Louisa's daughter?

Mrs. Laurier's expression shifted. Had that girl grown up so much?

Although she looked somewhat unfamiliar, the facial features indeed bore a resemblance to Louisa.

And who didn't know that Kenneth and Louisa were famously doting parents?

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The Collins were known to treat their daughter like a princess, spoiling her with every whim and fancy.

"You just wait!" Mrs. Laurier fumed, her skirts billowing dramatically as she stormed off.

Tiffany wanted to call her back but felt powerless; she could only turn to Eunice. "Eunice, you usually play your pranks, and I

chalk it up to Bard spoiling you rotten. But today is Arlen's birthday. Can't you at least save face for his friends? If you cause a scene, it won't look good for either side."

"Thanks for the heads-up, Tiffany, replied Eunice with a smirk. "I also have a video of Dave. Do you want to see it?"

Tiffany's face flushed with anger as she clicked away in her heels.

Arabella, nearby, couldn't help but smile. "Why can't they just take a hint? They've probably never managed to get the better of

you, and now they're just asking for trouble."

"Some people are just full of themselves, thinking they're invincible,' Eunice said elegantly, finishing her champagne. "I'm going to take a walk outside."

"Sure," Arabella said, watching her leave. She grabbed a quick bite from the table and was about to leave when a girl suddenly came up close, pretending to be bumped by Arabella's shoulder, dropping her cupcake on the floor.

"Arabella!" Rose exclaimed, her voice filled with anger. "It was bad enough you bullied me yesterday, but today, on Arlen's birthday, he just wanted a taste of that mint chocolate chip cupcake, and you can't even grant him that small pleasure! What is your problem?"

The other guests couldn't help but look over. Speaking was Rose Griffith, the cherished granddaughter of Calvin and Bess. Their eyes then drifted to the girl opposite her. She was beautiful but somewhat unfamiliar.

"Think you can do whatever you want just because you're Kenneth and Louisa's daughter?" Rose deliberately made her identity known.

The crowd had a moment of realization. She's Kenneth and Louisa's daughter? They hadn't seen her for years, and she'd grown up so lovely, resembling Louisa.

Though her temperament seemed troublesome.

"Are you brain-damaged?" Arabella was too tired to argue. "Look up. What do you see in the corner?"

At events like this, there were always cameras.

Rose had anticipated the surveillance argument.

"Fine, since you won't admit it, let's check the tapes.

If it turns out you bumped

into me first, I expect an apology in front of everyone here!"

Arabella saw Rose's confidence and smiled faintly.

"Seems you've erased the footage."

Rose was caught off guard by her quick assumption, a flicker of guilt crossing her face before she

composed herself and

retorted, "I'm right in front of you. How could I erase it?"

At that moment, Bess walked over on cue. "Rose, what's all this about?"

"Grandma, don't worry about it. This is a personal matter between us. Since she won't respect Arlen or any of the elders here, I

have to stand up for myself. Someone, check the surveillance footage!"

The crowd of onlookers grew, and Arabella watched Rose's charade with a bored expression. True to form, a servant pretended to panic, "Rose, the footage from 11 minutes ago has mysteriously disappeared"

"How could it be missing?" Rose turned to Arabella, accusingly saying, "Did you bump into me and, out of fear of being exposed, have someone delete it? Oh, I remember now, you came with your aunt today. Did you ask her to delete it?"

Arabella looked on, almost nostalgic for the days of Yolanda, who, at the very least, slandered with a bit more skill than Rose's lackluster performance.

Before the crowd could react, Arabella lazily restored the surveillance footage and projected it onto the large screen for all to see.

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Chapter 1340

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The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1340

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Chapter 1340

Rose couldn't believe her eyes. Just moments ago, she had deliberately bumped into Arabella, causing the cupcake she was

holding to fall to the ground, and now the whole debacle was playing out on the big screen.

She stood frozen for a good while before turning to the servant beside her in disbelief.

The servant was terrified; she had deleted the surveillance footage as per Rose's instructions. How on earth had this girl managed to recover it and even project it for all to see?

The guests around them began to murmur and gossip.

"So, it was that young lady who bumped into her on purpose, and then she had the nerve to accuse the other girl of doing it deliberately. Isn't that the pot calling the kettle black?"

"And she demanded a public apology. That's just too much."

"If it weren't for this girl knowing how to recover the surveillance footage, she would never have been able to clear her name, even with a hundred explanations."

"I've heard that Rose has been spoiled rotten since she was little, always acting so high and mighty. This seems like something she would do"

Bess stood nearby, stunned and burning with embarrassment. She couldn't believe that someone Eunice had brought along actually had some skills, even being able to recover surveillance footage.

Calvin, Arlen, and Teresa watched the scene unfold from a distance, each feeling a profound sense of embarrassment.

Trying to frame someone without covering all her bases and now being publicly humiliated?

"It seems to have been a misunderstanding." Bess had to step in, offering a diplomatic smile. "Rose, did you have a bad night's sleep? Maybe you were just a bit distracted and didn't see Arabella there."

Rose had no choice but to take the out given to her, nodding her head pitifully. "Maybe I just remembered it wrong. I've been so

forgetful lately."

"You mentioned Arlen wanted a lemon bar, right? Why don't you go get a couple more and bring them to him so he doesn't have to wait?"

Arabella, not willing to let them off the hook so easily, said coldly, "Framing someone and not even apologizing?"

Before Bess could speak, Arabella continued with an icy expression, "Is this how Teresa teaches her granddaughter? To do wrong and then just run away with an excuse?" Bess hadn't expected her niece to be so petty and unforgiving.

"I'm sorry for misunderstanding you earlier." Rose, seeking to keep the peace, admitted her fault reluctantly. "I didn't mean to bump into you."

"All these people saw that you were the one who initiated the contact. You say it wasn't on purpose? Then what would you call intentional?"

Faced with Arabella's retort, Rose was at a loss for words.

"Exactly, it was clearly intentional."

"It's so obvious, even a fool could see it."

"That's just bullying!"

"If the young one doesn't know any better, shouldn't the older one?"

As the criticisms around them grew louder, Bess found herself in a difficult position and finally said, "Rose was in the wrong, and as her grandmother, I apologize on her behalf." Rose clenched her teeth and lowered her head, "I'm sorry, I'll be more careful in the future."

Only then did Arabella give them a nonchalant glance and walk away.

Outside the villa was a beautiful garden.

Arabella wanted to look around for any clues, but she had only taken a few steps when she was stopped.

"Hi, I don't think I've seen you around before. Who are you here with?"

The young man speaking held a sincere and shy gaze as he introduced himself, "My name's Burnell Sullivan. I'm here with my mom for Mr. Arlen's birthday party. Are you Mr. Arlen's granddaughter?"

"Noy Arabella replied tersely. "Darren Griffith's my grandpa."

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