

Arabella 1821

Chapter 1821

Two of Martin's men each carried a hefty box, following closely behind as they left the grand estate.

The moment Martin stepped out of the main building, tears betrayed his stoic facade, streaming freely down his face. His steps quickened into a desperate run.

His voice trembled with pain and sorrow, "Serena, hang in there."

No matter what, she had to hang in there!

"I'm Martin. I'm taking you home!" He feared the woman in his arms might slip away with each passing second. He wanted to hold her tight, yet he dreaded causing her more pain.

The RV was parked just outside the villa.

As he sprinted out, the door swung open, welcoming him inside.

Inside the RV lay the most advanced medical equipment, alongside the top-notch doctor he had hired for a fortune.

up!" Martin carefully placed Serena on the

closed, and the doctors immediately began

servants tossing Serena's used linens, clothes, and personal items into

bins were overflowing, with piles of belongings heaped on the ground

and we need to

do you mean?" Martin

been feverish for two or three days now. Her body temperature is so high that her digestive, nervous, and circulatory systems are showing signs of abnormality, which could lead to organ damage. This injury could cause elevated transaminases, a drop in platelets, and

was as if a thunderbolt had struck Martin. He knew that bringing Serena back and keeping her alive had slim chances, but he hadn't expected the

medical attention, the joint has swollen, and she can't straighten her leg. We'll need an X-ray at the hospital to see

are we waiting for then, save her!" Martin was terrified of wasting even a

at the Collins residence, he hadn't taken a good look at her.

is injured, too?"

"It looks like she's taken quite a

Chapter 1822

"Hey Doc, what the heck happened to her forehead? Why are there so many gashes?" Martin asked, pain etching his voice.

"There's a bunch of glass shards in Serena's forehead. doesn't look like they just splashed on her, seems like she was banging her head against something."

Martin was in disbelief, "You're telling me she did this to herself?"

"If she had just fallen face-first, the cuts wouldn't be so deep, cover such a large area. It looks like she repeatedly hit her head to embed the glass deeper into her skin. Some of these wounds look like she

tried to dig out the glass herself, which only made the infection worse. Mr. Cooper, brace yourself, if she pulls through, these scars might be permanent."

And such scars couldn't be removed by laser treatment.

At those words, Martin's heart clenched with agony, unable to fathom the helplessness and pain she must have felt.

Serena always cared so much about her looks, whether in life or death, he couldn't bear the thought of her being scarred.

"Plus, if there's glass in her knee that's been there for a while, even surgery might not spare her from walking problems."

The doctor hadn't finished when Martin's shocked gaze stopped him.

did you just say?" Martin's heart took another hit. Did he mean that his Serena, even

Martin asked,

comprehensive exam at the hospital

couldn't offer a

hospital. All they could do was tend to her wounds

did he notice, her palms and the backs of her hands were a bloody mess, with glass shards

earth did her hands get so

into the glass,

away her clothes, the doctor revealed bruises and cuts all over her

she was beaten

back - no part was

anew, unable to fathom

utterly desperate she must

Back at Reflections Villa.

Chapter 1823

The remnants of Serena's presence in the bedroom had been discarded, piece by piece, until now there was hardly anything left.

The servants hadn't expected Louisa to order the removal of even that lamp.

They dared not disobey, so they quickly took it down and replaced it with an old one from the storage room until they could get a new one.

Louisa's gaze drifted towards the master bedroom, now completely purged of any trace of Serena.

Later, Hans arrived at the gates of Reflections Villa in his assistant's car. He couldn't help but notice the nearby trash bins overflowing with items associated with Serena.

Recalling the tumultuous events at the abandoned construction site, he could imagine his parents' anger and disappointment.

He had planned to catch a flight back home the very day the security footage was exposed, but urgent matters abroad had forced him to stay. Now, three days later, he was finally here.

The lights at Reflections Villa had dimmed, signaling that most had retired for the night.

The security guard at the gate hurried to open it for him, "Welcome back, Mr. Collins."

Hans nodded in acknowledgment,

at all," the guard said with a smile, bowing slightly as he

noticed the servants packing up plants and flowers to be thrown out,

"Mr. Collins."

"Good evening, Mr. Collins."

"Mr. Collins, welcome back."

nodded to each greeting, "Has Bella gone to

time, she should be

or not,

what about the other person?" Hans

heads, "Mr. Cooper has already taken her

surprised. His parents had actually

Serena," one

"You all

Chapter 1824

In the painting, a strapping young lad was pushing a swing for a little girl, her two pigtails dancing in the air.

The girl on the swing was beaming with joy.

With the innocent strokes of a child, Serena scribbled the name "Serena" on the little girl's dress and jotted down "Hans" in wobbly letters across the boy's shirt. Off to the side, Chase, Clark, Sean, and David were having a ball, kicking a soccer around the green field.

The weather in the painting was gloriously sunny, the sun itself had a cheerful grin, the flowers seemed to be smiling, and the faces of the people were alight with happiness.

A caption at the bottom declared: "A Happy Day."

This was a piece Serena had created back in kindergarten, a treasured keepsake not just for him, but for each "brother" who had received their own unique scene. Those days were so simply beautiful.

Tucked away with this painting in the cabinet were many other mementos.

There was the red envelope she had fashioned from an A4 sheet of paper during the holidays, opened to reveal her drawings of dollars and sketches of New Year's outfits, along with wishes for the new year.

were letters Serena had written to him, handmade birthday cards, including

suit and shirt she bought

kept everything

with memories, he ultimately tossed

Meanwhile.

sent him with utmost speed. Fresh

but admire how much better his sister's designs looked on him compared to his old haute couture – they were leagues

about to send it to his sister when a knock came

"Who's there?"

knocking at his

person outside didn't respond but knocked again, steadily and

text, and opened the door, only to be

and exclaimed in surprise, "Hans?? When did you get

stern, his tone icy, "Time to settle the score for messing

Chapter 1825

"So you're a grown man and still mooching off your own family?"

Hans thought, "Always having your sister send you stuff, aren't you ashamed?"

"It's my sister's way of showing she cares. Besides, I'll be giving her a credit card soon so she can shop to her heart's content."

"You haven't been taking advantage of her, have you?" Hans eyed him with a mix of skepticism and distrust.

He thought, "If you weren't, why did David say you upset her?"

"It was just a bit of a misunderstanding. It's a long story, but now we're getting along great. The surgery I had was done by her. If you lay a hand on me, you're going to have to answer to her!" Sean played the sister card to defend himself.

At that, Hans's concern flickered, "You got hurt? When did that happen?"

"Not too long ago." Sean dodged the details, smirking instead, "These stitches were sewn by our sis. She told me to take it easy for a while, so even if you want to hit me, Hans, you'll have to wait until I'm all healed up."

his fist, "I'll talk to her tomorrow. If you really did bully her, I

even told me if you like my pajamas. Got a minute?

turned back,

quickly shut the

his room, pulling out his

The next morning.

to find Serena's old room getting a fresh coat of paint, and even the flowers in the garden were

a large box with a lamp

in a soft

When did that happen?

had picked out a pretty lamp at the store a while back, and the lady had it installed in their room. Last night she couldn't stand looking at it

understanding, "Carry on,

"Yes, Ms. Bella."

"Bella."

Chapter 1826

According to Bella, Sean didn't take her cash in the end. Instead, he dropped a cool \$5 million on candy for her.

"Good for him, showing some sense." Hans loaded up his sister's plate with more breakfast delights, explaining, "I meant to come home to check on you three days back, but this nasty business abroad popped up and I had to stick around to handle it."

His sister had been rattled by that mess with the derelict building, and here he was, only now showing his concern. He felt a twinge of guilt and self-reproach.

"You have got your hands full, lots of irons in the fire - it's normal. Don't sweat it, I'm grown up now, don't need to be babied."

Arabella understood where Hans was coming from, his situation, his feelings.

Take her, for example, she had her own pile of stuff to sift through, often too swamped to catch a break. Like the company Grandpa Alberto left her to inherit, she hadn't even had the chance to pop over there once. And with the New Year around the bend, she hadn't even had the Princess's gown tailored.

"The first time I came home to see you after you returned, I spotted Serena's low-key shenanigans right off the bat." Hans said while peeling a boiled egg for her.

"I had a sit-down with her back then, but the way she was all jittery and scared, I thought she'd straighten out."

Arabella hadn't realized Hans had taken Serena aside. He had seen through her a long time ago, no wonder he'd sometimes expose her little tricks in front of everyone, even with a hint of reproach in his voice.

remained calm as ever, "I even warned Martha. Never thought those two

Arabella said, "Don't beat yourself up, Hans. Even if we could roll back time, our family would

family's character, not to mention their wealth, supporting a foster daughter was no

toss aside a foster child when your own daughter comes

of everything. Her principles, her experiences, her breadth of heart, and her grace – Serena couldn't

Serena had another go at life, she wouldn't reach the heights or the depth of insight

I deliberately fell into Martha's hands, and I engaged her on

your feet. You

on her side, and it

Without him, I wouldn't have gotten out so quickly. So, let's not

gently, "But if he ever dares to

"Will do."

her into the study and sent out a message, [You can come

appeared on the study's balcony, moving so fast Arabella

sister, Arabella Collins," Hans introduced her in his

Chapter 1827

The incident had him worried sick about his sister possibly facing danger.

He couldn't stand the thought of anything happening to her.

"And what about you?" Arabella's gaze shifted towards Hans, "You've given me all your most trusted and capable guys. What about you, Hans?"

"There are others at my disposal, don't worry about me," Hans replied before turning to Lone Wolf, "From now on, whatever Bella asks of you, you do it. No need to report back to me. Stick with her and you'll be fine."

"Understood." Lone Wolf nodded, bowing slightly to Arabella as a sign of his allegiance, "I'll follow Ms. Collins' lead from here on out."

Just then, Hans heard footsteps outside and glanced at Arabella.

She quickly signaled for Lone Wolf to step back.

Swift as a shadow, Lone Wolf vanished from their presence.

Arabella was impressed. He could move in and out undetected, even with the Collins family's extensive surveillance. His skills were indeed exceptional.

know you've got plenty of guys, but one more can't hurt," Hans said gently, "Got your phone on

"Yes."

her smartphone, and to avoid prying eyes, Hans keyed

Hans cautioned, "I know your phone's secure. Encrypt his number and keep

looked at Hans, feeling a

Meanwhile.

stairs, Sean wore a smile as fresh as

noticed his good spirits and greeted

into Sean

because Serena's not

you see my new

guard, but they quickly complimented him,

nice too. A gift from

That explained it!

to have such a childish and endearing

you are so lucky to have such a thoughtful

Chapter 1828

"Why didn't you wake me up?" he grumbled, annoyance lacing his tone.

The servant bit her lip, struggling for words. In this household, nobody dared to rouse Sean from sleep—nobody but Hans. Yet, she dared not voice this truth, merely replying, "Next time, I'll be sure to wake you, Mr. Sean."

Learning that his sister had already had breakfast, Sean felt his own appetite wane. He nibbled on a few bites before setting off to find her.

At that moment, Arabella and Hans were about to check on Erik, who was locked in the basement, when a servant rushed in with urgent news.

"Mr. Collins, Ms. Collins, Erik's been motionless for quite some time," the servant said, breathless with worry. "We didn't dare to open the door and check, fearing a trick, but from the surveillance, he's been in the same position for so long, it looks like he might be dead."

Without hesitation, Arabella and Hans hurried down to the basement.

There lay Erik, sprawled on the floor. As Arabella moved to check on him, Hans held her back, "Let me go first."

Concerned for his sister's safety, he feared Erik might be faking.

for Erik's breath. It took a moment before

"He died about two hours ago, around six-thirty this morning. Did either of you notice anything unusual at that

looked up, questioning the two servants

servants, visibly shaken,

watch the whole time, saw nothing

accomplices coming to rescue him, they set a trap outside. If someone had slipped him poison, we couldn't have

were near tears, fearing the blame for this oversight. They bowed deeply, trembling, not daring to

entire time? Never

took turns to use the restroom, but one of us always stayed. Ms. Bella,

were bent at

Collins family,

Cooper brought him in last night unconscious. We

Chapter 1829

Arabella's conclusion sent a wave of panic through the two. Poisoned? How could this have happened?

Now they were in deep trouble, and not even the mighty Mississippi could wash away their suspicion.

Under their watch, Erik had been poisoned. But as to when this had happened, they were clueless.

"Let's keep this under wraps for now," Arabella directed, her gaze steady on them. "You two will continue your duties here as if nothing's amiss."

"Yes, Miss," they replied, shivering.

"All right, dry those tears. Take a break over there; but stay out of sight. I'll call you when I'm done."

The basement was expansive, housing not only this room, but also many other rooms like a game room, a home theater, and a storage room.

Besides these, there were two small gardens in the basement, perfectly illuminated by shafts of light from above.

of the gardens," Arabella

they

the body, see what kind of poison leads to his death, maybe we can

you don't need an extra pair

me; I

you're done," Hans said before

and laid out her tools—a

news of Erik's death, her mind reeling with

so he decided to strike first, give him a quick out? Was this a plan Martin and Erik had hatched

might have double-crossed her sent Louisa spiraling into

the surface, Martin proposed a trade, but

the old health clinic—if only he

Chapter 1830

Then his phone rang. Martin glanced at the screen, and saw it was Louisa calling.

"Mrs. Collins," he answered, his voice laced with fatigue but nonetheless respectful.

"Martin, after all the trust the Collins family has placed in you, how could you do something like this? Did you ever intend to deliver Erik to us alive?"

"What are you talking about?" Martin's gaze darkened with surprise and gravity. "How did Erik die? When?"

Before he had handed Erik over, the man had been perfectly fine.

"Don't play dumb with me. Now, I want his daughter back—alive or dead, I need proof!"

"Ma'am, could there be some misunderstanding?" Martin quickly tried to clarify. "When we captured Erik, we indeed used a sedative, but it was only meant to knock him out for a few hours. My team just knocked him out, nothing more. How he died, I implore you to enlighten me."

He had thought that if Erik ended up in the Collinses' hands, his fate would be rough, but at least he'd still have a breath in him.

But he hadn't expected to lose the man overnight.

woke up and asked about her father,

you didn't have a hand in this?"

I had meddled in this, then I, Martin, swear I shall never be with Serena in this life or the next!" He believed it was the most binding oath he could

this, started to waver in her suspicion. "If it

want

your clear judgment. I would stake my life, even the lives of my entire family, to swear that I have no involvement in this

He was innocent!

much he valued his family. But if it wasn't Martin,

The sound of the

couldn't fathom how Erik had

emergency room swung open,

and

caused a systemic infection. Her organs are showing signs of failure. You need to be

of the best doctors in the world? Why can't you save a single person? I'll