

Arabella 1981

Chapter 1981

"Stop scrolling," Martin took Serena's phone gently, and gently reassured her, "I know you're bummed out. Let's hit the mall tomorrow, take a little breather."

The next morning.

Martin was with Serena at Summerfield's biggest mall. Before they even stepped inside, his phone rang.

"Dad."

Whatever the man on the other end said, Martin's face twisted with difficulty. He glanced at Serena and patted her shoulder, signaling that he needed a moment to talk.

Serena knew it must be his family causing trouble again. Though she was inwardly seething, she managed a tender nod.

Martin stepped aside, whispering, "I'll be there as soon as I wrap this up."

The man on the phone seemed furious. Martin's eyes clouded with complexity. He saw Dora waiting patiently with a girl in a wheelchair, her silhouette tinged with loneliness. He'd been neglecting her lately, and guilt gnawed at him.

“Dad, like I said.”

The man cut him off, his voice harsh. Martin could only suppress his frustration, replying, “Understood.”

After hanging up, Martin collected himself and walked back to Serena. She spoke up before he could start.

“You go handle your business; Dora’s got me.”

Her words deepened Martin’s remorse. “Serena.”

“It’s alright. We’ve got a lifetime ahead. If you can’t stick around this time, just make it up to me later.”

She softened her voice, “Kneel down for a sec.”

Martin knelt beside her.

In the next moment, Serena kissed him lightly, “Don’t worry about me, I’ll head home after shopping.”

The clouds in Martin’s heart scattered.

“Let’s roll, Dora.”

Dora, witnessing their sweet exchange, smiled as she pushed the wheelchair, “Don’t fret, Sir. I’ll take good care of Serena.”

“Call me if you need anything,” Martin reminded them as they moved away.

“Will do.”

The mall was alive with cheerful holiday tunes, a festive spirit in the air.

Dora wheeled Serena to the directory. “Let’s check out the second floor.”

“Holly,” Serena wasn’t pleased, but she kept her grace, “Can't you see me?”

Holly turned, slightly surprised, “Serena? Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't notice you. With the hat and sunglasses,

I didn't recognize you.”

Serena bristled at being addressed so informally. “Any new arrivals?”

“Holly, I recall you being far more accommodating on my previous visits.”

Chapter 1982

Serena's presence left Holly at a loss for words. Even putting aside everything else, just looking at

Serena in her wheelchair, with a plainly dressed "relative" in tow, Holly wondered how much money

Serena could possibly have to spend in their boutique after being cut off from the Collins family wealth.

Not that Holly wanted her money anyway.

The Collins family's prodigal daughter's homecoming banquet was live-streamed yesterday, and

everyone at the store had watched with a mix of fascination and disdain for Serena's shameless

actions.

Though Holly was just an average sales associate trying to make sales and earn a little extra cash for her family, she didn't want a dime of Serena's money!

Just then, the store manager approached. "Holly, what seems to be the problem here?"

"Manager." Holly started with a hint of resignation, "Serena's here."

Upon hearing this, the manager gave Serena a thorough once-over. "With that getup, Serena, anyone would think you've done something shady and can't show your face."

Serena bristled at that. "What are you implying?"

"Come on, we all saw the Collins family's live stream yesterday. I just don't get how you have the nerve to show up here shopping today. The Collins took care of you for eighteen years and you tried to take down the true heiress of family. We don't welcome customers like you. Please, leave immediately!"

Serena was fuming. "What, is this your store? You think you can just refuse service to me?"

"You're welcome to file a complaint with our headquarters if you like, but let me tell you, RY has had several partnerships with QY. Let's see if they give you the time of day."

"How dare you!?"

"Blacklist her. She's not welcome in this store anymore." With that, the manager spun on her heel and left.

"Yes, Manager." Holly bowed slightly in acknowledgement, feeling a mix of satisfaction and feigned sympathy. "I'm very sorry, Serena."

"Dora, let's go!" Serena had no desire to stay a moment longer.

Dora hurriedly wheeled her out, indignant. "This is outrageous, Serena! The customer is always supposed to be right. How could they treat you like this? I'll tell Mr. Martin and he'll sort this out."

"As if I need this shop to survive!" Serena scoffed, directing Dora to another destination—a high-end jewelry store called SHINING STAR.

SHINING STAR was known for its exquisite jewelry, where even the simplest necklace came with a hefty price tag. Serena had been a regular spender here, but it was surprising to see a dozen or so customers still in the store, considering it was just after the holiday.

As Dora pushed Serena inside, one of the sales associates spotted her and seemed to recognize her but chose to pretend to be busy arranging the display instead of greeting them. The other associates

were occupied with other clients, leaving Serena and Dora unattended in the awkward silence.

Dora was annoyed. If Martin were here, the sales staff would have flocked over.

"Isn't Gladys here?" Serena asked for a specific associate, drawing curious glances.

Of course, a few of the salespeople did recognize her but chose to keep quiet. None of them wanted to deal with her and acted as if she were invisible.

The sales associate, Amy, who had pretended to be busy with the jewelry, reluctantly responded,

"Gladys is off for the holiday."

Chapter 1983

A few days ago, the Collins family had already revoked Serena's VIP status at this boutique.

Regardless of her financial capability to shop here, her actions towards the Collins family meant that being too welcoming to her might spell trouble for the store.

"Sorry, you're no longer a VIP at our establishment. You're welcome to browse this area, but the VIP

lounge is reserved for VIP members only."

Amy's words drew the attention of several onlookers.

Serena felt embarrassed. That's right, she remembered now. When the Collins family had grounded

her, they also canceled her VIP status at all the luxury stores.

"I think your staff is well aware of my spending habits. The kind of VIP status I had before, I could easily regain it with just a few purchases today."

Amy didn't respond further, pretending not to hear, and continued organizing the jewelry display.

Serena spotted an emerald necklace behind the glass and pointed, "Let me try that one on."

Seeing Serena addressing her, Amy reluctantly responded, "I'm sorry, but that piece has already been reserved by another customer. It's being picked up tomorrow."

"What about that one?"

"That's a sample. It's been pre-ordered by three customers already. You'd have to wait three months."

"Gladys never made me wait, not even for a day."

"That was then."

Amy's words left Serena seething. What, she wasn't the Collins family's darling anymore, and now even a lowly sales associate dared to step on her?

The sales associate at RY ignored her, and now this SHINING STAR clerk dared treat her this way?

"Do you believe I can have you fired from here?"

"Is this the real Serena?"

Amy's remark caused many in the store to turn and stare at Serena.

"Serena? Isn't she the fake heiress who was kicked to the curb by the Collins family? Oh wait, Serena."

"That looks like her. Why is she in a wheelchair? Did she commit so many wrongs that the Collins family broke her legs?"

"If that's true, then she must have done something truly monstrous. Good riddance!"

"Didn't Louisa say in the livestream yesterday that this person is ungrateful and oblivious, given countless chances and still never correcting her mistakes, repeatedly harming Arabella."

"How does she have the nerve to go shopping?"

"Thinking a hat and sunglasses would make her unrecognizable?"

"Dressed like that, she must know she's done wrong."

Hearing the whispers around her, Serena felt increasingly mortified.

She had wanted to splurge today, to vent her frustrations, but she hadn't anticipated such a wretched experience.

Chapter 1984

"Dora, let's get out of here."

Even though Dora knew they were being unreasonably snubbed, the mall was buzzing with chatter

and, to avoid any further negative attention that might tarnish Serena's already fragile reputation, she

pushed the wheelchair away without speaking further.

As they passed by an upscale handbag boutique, a stylishly dressed middle-aged woman was just

stepping out, swinging two shopping bags from her recent spree.

"Mrs. Bright?" Serena caught sight of her and instinctively called out.

Over the years, Mrs. Bright's family business had flourished thanks to the benevolence of the Collins

family, so she frequently showed up at their doorstep with expensive gifts as a token of gratitude.

During occasions like Christmas, Mrs. Bright would go the extra mile to present Serena with two

designer handbags, each starting at a value of \$200,000, all in the hopes that Serena would put in a

good word for the Brights with Kenneth and Louisa.

Nicola, who had just made a purchase at the fashion boutique, glanced in their direction. Despite the

hat and sunglasses disguising the girl in the wheelchair, she recognized Serena's figure and voice.

Without pausing or even acknowledging the greeting, Nicola shifted her gaze and continued on her

way, acting as if nothing had happened.

"Who was that? She clearly saw you saying 'hello' but ignored you. I wonder where she's rushing off to with such bad manners!"

Serena let out a cold laugh. Now that Arabella was the Collins family's darling, Mrs. Bright was obviously too busy sucking up to the new favorite to bother with someone from the past.

"Dora, let's just go home." Serena had lost all interest in shopping.

"Serena, we're already here, why not treat yourself a little? After all, it was what Mr. Cooper would have wanted."

Persuaded by Dora, Serena considered browsing a little more, but as they neared a watch boutique, a loud voice erupted from within.

"Show me the best and most expensive ladies' watches you have. I'm here to buy a gift."

That voice was...

Serena looked inside and, sure enough, it was her Aunt Rachel!

Rachel's voice was always booming, filled with confidence and authority, and her manner exuded

command – a woman clearly accustomed to being in charge.

"Listen up," she announced to the clerks, "the person I'm buying for today has seen every imaginable luxury, so you'd best bring out the crown jewel of your collection! Don't worry about the price; what matters most is rarity and exclusivity."

Perhaps because of the arrival of such an esteemed customer, a clerk hurried to close the shop, and upon seeing Dora with the wheelchair-bound Serena at the entrance, mistook them for customers and apologized in a hushed tone, "I'm sorry, but we're closing up."

The doors shut swiftly before them.

"What's going on with these stores today? Either they ignore people or they're too busy catering to the VIPs."

Serena seemed unfazed as she explained, "Do you know why the woman inside wanted the best and most expensive watch?"

Dora shook her head.

Dora's eyes widened as the penny dropped.

"So, the woman buying the watch inside, you know her?"

"I did call her 'Rachel' just now."

Realization dawned on Dora.

Chapter 1985

Dora nodded, "All right, I'll wheel you over to the elevator."

As they stood by for the elevator in the lobby, a well-dressed lady emerged from a nearby boutique perfumery, also intending to catch the elevator.

Catching sight of Serena in her wheelchair, she scrutinized her for a moment, then uttered with a hint of uncertainty, "Serena?"

"Octavia." Serena hadn't expected an acquaintance from the Collins circle to acknowledge her.

She was the only person who had deigned to greet her all day!

Ever since Octavia's family business started associating with the Collinsees, they had risen the social ladder. She was deeply indebted to the Collins family, making visits and bringing gifts every holiday season, even treating Serena with presents.

Serena used to adore Octavia, who never held back her compliments, making her feel on top of the world.

"Is it really you?"

Octavia took in Serena's current state, recalling the previous night's banquet where Louisa had branded her an ingrate. Her expression grew instantly icy.

"Now that you're no longer the true blood of the Collins family, I'd like you to return all the gifts I've given you over the years."

Not just Serena, but Dora was taken aback. What? Gifts that were given could be reclaimed?

"The gifts were for the Collins' heiress. Since that's not you, I'd like them returned."

Octavia's words left Serena mortified, struggling to believe that the same woman who used to lavish her with gifts and affection would make such an impertinent request in public.

Serena struggled to maintain her composure, "I recall the gifts you gave me were not particularly valuable."

"They were still bought with my hard-earned money. Twelve bottles of perfume, forty-two lipsticks, four pairs of high-end shoes, two luxury handbags, it all adds up to around fifty thousand."

"How could you?"

Dora was seething, but before she could speak up, Serena handed her a card, "Dora, go to the bank

nearby and withdraw the amount for me."

"Serena?"

"Just go."

Despite her outrage, Dora was primarily worried for Serena, "Wait here for me, I'll be back as quick as I can."

With that, she shot Octavia a contemptuous glance, positioned the wheelchair aside, and took the elevator downstairs.

Back in the lobby.

Serena sat stone-faced, "Octavia, today you've shown me the essence of opportunism."

"Do you think by doing this, the Collins will recognize your loyalty? That they'll offer your family more chances?"

"You're mistaken. I won't use exploit this situation for personal gain from the Collins family. They've already elevated my social status. All I should do is show my gratitude. The Collins family invested years hiring tutors for you, teaching you so much, and yet you turned out this way. It just goes to show,

some people are just born bad, ungrateful to the core!"

Serena's anger flared, and she looked intently at the woman before her.

If she weren't restricted by her wheelchair, she might have given her a slap!

Chapter 1986

Serena's glare was so intense it seemed her eyeballs were on the verge of popping out of their sockets.

"If it weren't for your stupidity, you'd be the one lounging on the Collins family's plush sofa right now, enjoying the comfort of family, living the high life with designer clothing and gourmet food. If I were you,

I would have cozied up to Arabella the moment she stepped back into this place. Not for anything else, but simply because she's better than me, and worth learning from."

Serena let out a cold laugh, "She won't befriend just anyone. You don't know her at all."

"Really?" Octavia skeptically didn't buy it, her smile widening, "At yesterday's live stream, her friends

occupied several tables. I guess it's only you who can't reconcile with the idea that someone's

outshining you, who can't bear to see someone doing better, who refuses to make friends with the top dogs."

Serena was fuming with humiliation and anger.

Just then, a sneering voice drifted over.

“Octavia, why waste your breath on a lost cause?”

Hearing that voice, Serena had a sinking feeling.

Alma and her entourage, laden with shopping bags, were heading their way. Upon spotting Serena,

their faces twisted into smug smirks.

“Alma, are you out shopping too?” Octavia turned and her expression softened instantly.

“It's the holiday season, how could I not pick up a little something for my Bella?” Alma approached

Serena, looking down on her with disdain, “What happened to the high-and-mighty girl of yesteryear?

How did you end up like this?”

Serena turned her face away, not wanting to engage.

“What's the matter, did you break your leg? Have you become a cripple? No servants to escort you out

and about?”

Alma's words prompted a chorus of giggles from her friends.

“Oh, Alma, you're well aware as we do, she was kicked out by the Collins family. How would she get

servants from now.”

“She’s probably struggling just to make ends meet. You did say her birth parents were nothing more than a butler and a maid.”

“You know, the nerve of some poor folks these days. To give their daughter a better life, they’ll go to great lengths.”

“Look at her in this mall, not buying a single thing, likely just here to reminisce about the once lavish lifestyle of her days as a rich debutante.”

“Alma, for old time's sake, since she once called you sister, why don’t you help her out? Give her a little something. Otherwise, how will she get by?”

Pretending to be sympathetic, Alma responded, “All right, since you all insist.”

She opened her wallet, pulled out a hundred-dollar bill, and tossed it at Serena's face with contempt.

Serena instinctively swatted it away, and the bill fluttered to the ground.

“Oh, Alma, she’s accustomed to living like a princess, one hundred bucks is nothing to her.”

“She’s longing for jewelry, designer dresses, and handbags.”

“Desiring the life of a princess without the pedigree.”

“She should hydrate more and reflect on her character when she reflects in the water.”

The group erupted in laughter.

Serena couldn't bear to swallow her pride. She reached for the control on her wheelchair, set to wheel away.

But in the next instant, Alma kicked her wheelchair, spinning her back to her starting point.

“She's angry, hahaha.” they jeered, refusing to budge, eager to see her flushed with indignation.

Chapter 1987

"Alma, we truly want to help your sister, but she seems so ungrateful."

"Oh, I remember now, didn't Mrs. Collins say it just yesterday? She's an ingrate, no matter how nice everyone is to her, it's all in vain."

"Alma, it just came to me, the last time you were seriously hurt, wasn't it because she was scheming behind your back?"

"It must have been her. That's why you've only just recovered to go shopping with us."

"She's the one who had people beat you up."

Upon hearing this, a sense of dread washed over Serena. She pressed the switch on her wheelchair to

flee, only to be kicked back into place by Alma.

"Alma, what the heck do you want?!" Serena was downright furious now.

"Well, when they threw you out, I didn't get the chance to properly say goodbye."

Serena suddenly felt scared.

"Looks like today's your lucky day, Alma. The stars have aligned to hear your prayers. She's not going anywhere fast, and we'll help you out. It's the perfect opportunity for some quality sister time."

"Yeah, it's been ages since you've seen each other; there's got to be so much you want to talk about."

Two of the friends each grabbed one of Serena's arms, while a third opened the door to the fire escape, and the fourth pushed the wheelchair, steering Serena into the stairwell.

"What are you doing? This is a mall. Ah. Alma! You bunch of little witches, how dare you."

Serena's screams of anger echoed through the stairwell.

After withdrawing some money, Dora returned to find Serena gone, and she urgently asked Octavia,

"Where's my lady?"

Octavia, who had been lounging on a trendy bench by the elevator, gracefully stood up, took the money

from Dora, and said without expression, "She ran into some old friends and went to the stairwell to catch up."

Old friends catching up in the stairwell?

With a sinking feeling, Dora hurried to the fire escape door.

What she saw horrified her: Serena lay crumpled with the wheelchair toppled over her. She was crying and unable to get up.

The so-called old friends were nowhere to be seen.

Only Serena was left alone in the stairwell!

"Serena."

Dora rushed down to help her up.

Had someone actually dumped garbage on her?

Dora tried to help her up, but touching her anywhere only made her shriek in pain.

Her clothes were stamped with footprints.

Looking at Serena's hair, it seemed damp; the blood had been coming from there.

Dora was petrified and quickly pulled out her phone to dial Martin's number.

"Sir, it's horrible, there's been an accident! Serena's badly hurt, you must come quickly."

Chapter 1988

Elsewhere.

Ever since Arabella's identity was revealed, the number of guests visiting had surged, and Reflections

Villa was bustling for days on end.

That day, a couple breezed through the front door, showering Arabella with compliments from head to

toe.

"Bella, these sweet-talkers are Gustave and Odelia," Louisa said with a beaming smile, "They're our

family's business partners; we have been working together for over a decade."

Arabella caught on quickly, greeting them politely, "Hello Gustave, hello Odelia."

"My, what a sweet child, not only beautiful and with a lovely voice! You two hit the jackpot with her—

she's absolutely perfect!"

Odelia, all smiles, rummaged through her bag and pulled out two cards, insisting on giving them to

Arabella.

"Odelia, you're too kind. Bella's all grown up now."

"This is just a token of our affection from Gustave and me; please accept it."

"Bella, since it's a gesture from Gustave and Odelia, you should take it."

Knowing it was vain to refuse, Arabella graciously accepted, "Thank you, Gustave. Thank you, Odelia."

"Oh, what a polite child." Odelia continued, her joy evident as she presented a beautifully wrapped gift

to Arabella, "This is for the New Year. May the coming year bring you joy and success in all you do."

"You've already given her cards, and now a gift? It's too much!" Louisa said with laughter in her cheeks.

"It's our first private meeting with Bella, and we already feel bad for not preparing an additional

gift. After all, she's just so lovable; it's only a small present. Don't make us feel like outsiders!"

"Bella, don't forget to thank Gustave and Odelia for their kindness."

"Thank you, Gustave and Odelia."

"She's so well-mannered. I suddenly feel the McMillian family is so lucky, imagining one day Bella will

marry into their family."

Just then, a family of three arrived.

"You're here?" Louisa stood to greet them, her face alight with joy.

"We wanted to come here a couple of days ago, but seeing so many cars parked outside Reflections

Villa, we didn't want to overwhelm you and Kenneth. So we decided to visit early today, and look, I guessed it right; it's less crowded now," Penny explained, then greeted Gustave and turned her attention to Arabella.

"Let me introduce you, Bella. This is Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton, and their daughter, Macy," Louisa said, smiling.

"Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton. Hello, Macy."

"Hi Bella," Macy greeted in return.

Penny handed Arabella the gifts, noticeably larger than the ones from Gustave and Odelia, and they felt a bit uneasy.

Louisa nodded at Arabella, who accepted with thanks, "Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton. I also wish you a New Year filled with prosperity and happiness."

Chapter 1989

"The child is just too adorable; we've also prepared little gifts for her." Gabriel Stapleton set down the shopping bags on the coffee table. Gustave and his companion were somewhat anxious, because they had given Arabella a small token of affection, but Stapleton had brought two considerable presents.

"Oh, you are all too kind."

Soon after, seven or eight more guests arrived, and Arabella was kept busy with the ceremony of accepting gifts over and over again, not to mention the mountain of presents piling up.

“Bella, your phone’s been buzzing nonstop; it looks like someone’s trying to reach you. Why don’t you go on up and check?” David came downstairs, greeted the guests, and skillfully diverted their attention from his sister.

All the guests’ attention then turned to David, praising him for his soaring popularity, his pleasant singing voice, and his impressive dance moves—in short, they had nothing but high praise for him.

Arabella knew that David was giving her an out, a chance to catch her breath. In truth, her phone was in her pocket the whole time, not upstairs.

Once back in her room, Arabella casually placed the stack of gift cards onto her desk, which was already overflowing with them, all forcefully bestowed upon her by guests over the past few days.

The maid, busy tidying the bed, chuckled, “Ms. Bella, you are the record holder for receiving the most New Year’s cards and gifts I’ve ever seen.”

“It’s also the first time I’ve ever had this much.”

“Ms. Bella, you’ve really been through it. That Serena took advantage of your identity for years, raking in all these New Year’s gifts without a hint of gratitude, and even schemed against you, it’s simply outrageous!”

“Let’s not bring her up during the holidays.”

After making the bed, the maid offered with a smile, “Ms. Bella, shall I organize these for you?”

“Sure.” Arabella couldn’t be bothered to organize those gifts. Leaving them in a pile was not a solution.

“Wow, this one feels quite hefty.” The maid picked up one of the gift boxes, opened it, and found two stacks of cash. “It amounts to twenty thousand dollars. Let me just count this.”

Reclining on the sofa, Arabella replied to Romeo’s messages with one hand. Hearing what the maid

had said, she responded languidly, “Don’t trouble yourself with counting, just open them up. I’ll have someone take them to the bank’s counting machine.”

Otherwise, it would be counting forever.

“Alright.” The maid’s smile widened as she progressed opening envelopes. “Ms. Bella, you know what?

The smallest amount in these is ten thousand dollars.”

She couldn’t believe how generous these people were!

“Have you been using the skincare products I gave you?”

At that moment, Edith knocked and came in with a tray of fruit.

“Once Ms. Bella has finished greeting everyone, I’ll mention there’s a call for you and whisk you away.”

“Thanks, Edith.”

“Well, I’ll head down and attend to the guests then.”

“Okay.”

Chapter 1990

Arabella set a plate of assorted fruits before the maid with a warm smile, "Take a break, and share some with me."

The maid was touched, for in the past, Serena would never eat from the same plate with them, as she found it dirty.

But Ms. Bella, she was so approachable, so kind.

As Arabella descended the stairs, a flurry of guests rushed to hand her gifts and boxes stuffed with cash, lavishing her with compliments on her beauty and talent.

A gaggle of relatives shoved their children towards her.

"Bella, I'm Nia, I absolutely adore calligraphy, especially yours. Would you take me as your apprentice?"

"Bella, will you teach me painting? I love painting so much! When I grow up, I want to become an amazing artist, just like you!"

"Bella, can you teach me to play chess?"

"Bella, I've seen your piano videos, they're so inspiring. Would you consider taking me as your protégé? I'm Lana."

Arabella was confronted with seven or eight kids who seemed to appear out of nowhere when even more relatives burst through.

"Step back, kids, what are you crowding around for? Bella, one of my relatives had a stroke and is paralyzed. I heard you can perform miracles, could you look at her?"

"Bella, I've tried everything to clear this scar, including laser treatments, but nothing has worked. I've been using various medicines for years to no avail. You've got your own skincare line, right? Could you suggest something for me?"

"Bella, do you have a treatment for hair loss? I'm losing my hair rapidly."

"Bella, can you treat athlete's foot? Whenever I go to someone's house, I'm afraid to take off my shoes —once I do, the odor is just overpowering."

Kenneth and Louisa had just bid farewell to a group of guests when they saw the crowd surrounding their beloved daughter, clamoring both for apprenticeships and medical cures. They hurried over to help her out.

"Oh, these are all trivial matters. I know quite a few excellent doctors; you should come to me for referrals. Bella is brilliant in surgery, but her expertise is specific," Louisa said as she stepped in to shield Arabella.

Just then, Edith interjected, "Ms. Bella, you have a phone call."

This allowed Arabella to excuse herself from the gathering.

"Excuse me, I must take this," Arabella said, seizing the opportunity to slip away.

"Hey, Bella, don't go! A stroke is not trivial," the woman called after her.

Louisa quickly intercepted her, "Oh, you shouldn't overburden a young girl with such matters. The world may regard her as a miracle doctor, but she's not a deity. The person you mentioned has been

paralyzed for years; expecting her to suddenly walk again is unrealistic."

David, too, was struggling to escape the clutches of the guests.

"You want David of the Collins family should be out there building a career? Do you know what status

he has?"

Caught between the arguing relatives, David felt obliged to intervene, "Please."

"And you should see what your daughter looks like!"

"How dare you! At least my daughter has more class than yours, and she has a lot of suitors at her

school!"