

## **Arabella 2015**

### Chapter 2015

"Look, Martin, you don't get a say in this." The voice on the other end of the phone didn't bother with Martin's questions, instead dropping a heavy threat, "I can bring Serena back from the brink, and just as easily make her wish she hadn't. You have no room to negotiate. If you don't take the fall for this within a day, you're going to regret it!"

Martin hung up without a second thought, dismissing the ominous caller.

In the study.

Serena was still sitting in her wheelchair, crying.

Martin knelt down beside her, about to offer words of comfort, when Serena reached out and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Martin, did you see the news blowing up online? Do you hate me now, think I'm awful." Her sobs made her words jagged, "I admit I've made mistakes in the past, but I want to make things right, to have a good life with you."

His heart softened, and he gently stroked her hair. "What news? I haven't seen anything. Is that why you're crying?"

She nodded, her eyes as vulnerable as a child's, "You've been so distant these past few days."

Martin let out a soft chuckle, realizing the misunderstanding. "I've been caught up in a lot lately."

He was juggling family expectations, managing his own corporation, and now someone was trying to smear his name.

Despite being stretched thin, he had made every effort to carve out time for her, but it seemed she still felt neglected.

"Don't worry, no matter what the world says, your past doesn't matter to me anymore. You're Serena Lott, not Serena Collins. Their opinions don't count; my liking you is all that matters." Martin reached out and wiped the tears from her cheeks.

Serena's voice turned playful, "Then hold me."

Martin hadn't expected her to be so endearing today, so uncharacteristically forward.

He lifted her into his arms and settled onto the nearby loveseat. "Is this what you wanted to talk about today?"

She nodded, then hesitated, "There's something else."

She knew Martin had mistakenly hit Alma the last time in a fit of rage defending her. So, in retaliation,

Alma had cornered her in a shopping mall and gave her a taste of her own medicine. Aside from a

verbal warning, Martin couldn't really do much to Alma; after all, he was the one who had made the first

mistake.

So, she wanted to use this incident to get Martin to propose to her.

"Martin, I want us to get engaged."

"When the Collins family locked me in the basement, you were the one who rescued me. When I was

drowning in negative press, you stood by me, unwavering, facing it all with me. I've thought it over, I

want to spend my life with you. Will you say yes?"

Serena lifted her gaze to meet Martin's, eyes filled with hopeful shyness.