

# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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"How is it, Bella? Is there any hope?" Celeste's eyes were filled with anticipation as she looked at Arabella, waiting for her to deliver a miracle.

Arabella's gaze fell on her, and with a hesitant voice, she said, "Mrs. Temple, there's no sign of life."

"No, no." Celeste shook her head, refusing to believe, "Please check her again. I feel that she's still with us."

If Dr. Bella said she was alive, then she must be! The girl in the coffin, after the undertaker's makeup and grooming, looked like a sleeping princess, no different from usual.

"She really isn't breathing anymore." Arabella said sorrowfully, "She's already gone."

Celeste couldn't handle the blow. Her daughter was still lying there, just like how she remembered from their trip to a popular flower field last year. Her daughter was lying amongst the colorful blooms, eyes closed while they took beautiful pictures.

Her daughter was just like that now, lying amongst the flowers.

She was just sleeping.

She was only sleeping!

"Closing the casket." the funeral director announced.

"No, don't close it. Crystal, don't leave me." Celeste cried out, fainting from the emotional strain.

"Celeste, Celeste." Alger rushed to her, tears streaming down his face, "Someone, call the doctor."

"Let's lay her down. I'll take care of this." Arabella had anticipated this situation and brought the acupuncture kit that Romeo had given her.

"Bella, how's Celeste? Did she faint from excessive grief?" Louisa anxiously asked from the side.

"Yes, an emotional overload can cause insufficient blood supply to the brain, leading to fainting. I'll give her a few acupuncture treatments."

"Okay"

With Arabella's words, Louisa felt somewhat reassured.

After Arabella applied a few needles to Celeste's acupuncture points, she finally opened her eyes. But seeing everyone dressed in black, and remembering her daughter's funeral, tears welled up in her eyes again.

"Celeste, are you feeling better?" Alger asked through his tears, "My heart can't handle another shock. Don't scare me. I lost Crystal. I can't lose you too."

"Alger." Celeste couldn't help but burst into tears holding him.

After a while, the funeral proceeded.

Clark, standing at the side, clenched his fists. He would avenge Crystal, he couldn't let Mr. and Mrs. Temple bear this pain in vain.

After the casket was sealed, four pallbearers carried it forward.

Celeste held her daughter's portrait, following behind in a daze.

Behind her, members of the Temple family were sobbing.

A hundred steps ahead was Crystal's burial site.

"Prepare for burial." With the funeral director's strong voice, the casket was lowered into the grave.

As the soil fell on the casket, it seemed to slowly fill the grave.

Celeste cried out in agony.

Alger knew that once the dirt was in place, he and his daughter would truly be separated by the barrier of life and death. He let out a mournful cry, his grief consuming him.

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The entire congregation was swept up in their grief, tears glistening in their eyes as they watched the casket being lowered, and the gravestone being set.

"Please, everyone, bow to the departed three times."

The officiant's words prompted everyone to bow their heads, time and time again, bidding their final farewell.

With the heavy snowfall, the world turned white. Celeste knelt on the snowy ground, clutching the gravestone, unwilling to leave. Alger knelt beside her, staring at their daughter's portrait on the stone, weeping bitterly.

The Temple family relatives couldn't persuade them to leave, so they thanked the quests on their behalf. The quests left in an orderly manner.

Kenneth and Louisa wanted to stay longer with them.

Clark watched the two kneeling figures from a distance. They seemed to have aged twenty years in an instant, their backs hunched as if crushed by their grief.

"Crystal, I promise to take good care of your parents and ensure their safety; Clark said, looking at Crystal's photo on the gravestone, his eyes welling up with tears. "I'm sorry. I'm truly sorry."

Crystal's portrait on the gravestone smiled brilliantly as always.

Seeing Clark standing in the snow for a long time, like a statue, Arabella couldn't help but approach him. "Clark, let's go. Let them stay with Crystal a bit longer"

There was no use staying. Alger and Celeste just wanted to be alone with their daughter.

All the apologies and guilt were futile.

"Okay."

Clark eventually looked away, leaving the cemetery with a heavy heart.

"Clark, I found a few leads last night, related to those people. I sent them to your WhatsApp;" Arabella said, knowing that what

Clark wanted most at this moment was to avenge Crystal.

"Same here. I sent you the details from my guys; Romeo added, forwarding all the information he'd received to Clark.

"I've also found a few leads. Hopefully, this time, we can get them all" Clark said, his voice filled with grief and outrage. "You guys go ahead, I'll leave in a bit."

He still wanted to stay outside the cemetery, to spend a little more time with Crystal.

Arabella nodded and left with Romeo. They didn't go to the wake but went back to Reflections Villa.

"When Mom and Dad get back, I'll ask for Grandpa's address. We might need to travel abroad," Arabella volunteered.

Romeo wrapped a scarf around her neck and said gently, "Alright. Let me know what's up."

“Be careful on the road.” Arabella took off the scarf he had just put on her and put it back on him, “It's cold outside and I'm almost home. I don't need it.”

Romeo had never had Arabella help him with his scarf before, and watching her intent and beautiful eyes made him smile gently.

"Get inside. It's snowing," Romeo said indulgently.

“I'll leave after you're inside.”

"You go ahead."

“I want to see you go in.

In the end, Arabella couldn't argue with him any longer. Seeing the snow getting heavier, she quickly entered Reflections Villa.

Romeo knew that Arabella was hurrying because she didn't want him to be out in the cold any longer.

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Arabella strolled towards the main building of Reflections Villa. As she glanced back, she noticed the snowflakes landing on a man's figure. He lifted his hand, seemingly waving goodbye.

Arabella waved back and proceeded into the house.

"Bella, I was wrong!"

Suddenly, Serena appeared before her, bowing deeply in a sincere manner, "Hans punished me yesterday, and I know I was wrong. I shouldn't have badmouthed you behind your back. Please forgive my immature behavior. I'm sorry, and I promise to improve."

Arabella's gaze shifted towards the household staff cleaning in the background. Was this an act for her benefit?

Did Serena want them as her witnesses to prove that she had apologized?

"So, what did you do wrong?" Arabella asked, her eyes gleaming with interest.

"I shouldn't have badmouthed you in front of my friends."

"How exactly did you badmouth me?"

"Don't you want to forgive me, Bella?" Serena bit her lip, 'Don't you believe that I truly realize my mistake?"

"I'm not quite convinced. Tell me, what exactly did you do?"

Serena was reluctant to share her embarrassing story in front of the staff. She feigned a cough, hoping to divert the topic.

"Ms. Bella, Serena is sincerely apologizing to you. She fell ill yesterday and is still recovering. She has been waiting here for you since the crack of dawn. All the staff here can vouch for her."

Serena coughed a few times, her face pale, "It's okay. If you're still mad, I'll apologize again. Bella, what can I do to earn your forgiveness?"

"Didn't you hear my question?"

Arabella's assertive demeanor made Serena bite her lip, almost on the verge of tears.

"If you're afraid to say it, I'll say it for you." Arabella didn't give her any chance to playact, "In front of outsiders, you claimed that

you were the daughter of the Collins family. You said that being with Romeo was too stressful, so you forced him to break up with you. Unexpectedly, he found a new love in me to provoke you, hoping you would change your mind." The staff were astounded.

Could Serena come up with such a lie?

As an adopted daughter, how could she have the audacity to say such things?

"So, Hans had to step in to set the record straight. Are you here apologizing to me because you fear losing your position?"

Arabella looked at her disdainfully, "Am I right?"

The staff looked incredulously at Serena, who could feel their piercing stares.

"Ms. Bella, Serena is sincerely apologizing to you."

"Did I ask you anything? Can't she speak for herself?" Arabella shot back a cold glare, like a gust of icy wind.

The staff were in awe of Ms. Bella's imposing aura. Martha was seething inside. If it wasn't for keeping up the act, she wouldn't have held her tongue against this insolent girl!

Serena's nails dug into her palm, swallowing her humiliation, she was about to reply.

"I don't accept your apology." Arabella passed her by without a second glance.

Serena watched her retreating figure, fuming. This was all Arabella's doing!

Arabella deliberately disclosed the situation, making her a laughing stock among the staff!

She deliberately refused to forgive her, causing her humiliation!

She deliberately demonstrated her arrogance and capability.

Martha was also livid, but she maintained a composed facade, "Serena, Ms. Bella misunderstood you. You're still weak from illness. You should rest upstairs. You can apologize to her later."

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After Serena stomped upstairs, she was seething with anger. "She's way too full of herself!"

"I know, right! Her arrogance is through the roof!"

Martha was just as ticked off. "If it weren't for Hans, who would apologize to

her? You were the one to step back, but she didn't budge an inch. She has no place here!"

"I can't believe this, I really can't." Unable to vent her frustration, Serena threw pillows and stuffed animals all over the room. Still

not satisfied, she threw the tissue box and the remote control on the floor.

Damn it! Just because Hans was on her side, Arabella thought she was all that!

"Hans should know better. You said a few harmless things in front of a friend, and suddenly you're vain and proud, as if you'd

caused her physical harm. You had to apologize to her even though you've been sick! It's too much!"

"And then he penalizes me, and privately warns you, docking a month's salary and your bonus! That's way over the line!"

Martha had been a part of this family for eighteen years! She had worked hard, too!

What did her problem with Arabella have to do with Martha?

Hans even penalized Martha.

She had said a few things against Arabella, without causing her any real harm. Hans was just too harsh!

"Serena, I'm okay. But your standing in Hans's eyes has been greatly diminished by Arabella"

In her anger, Serena suddenly got an idea.

She walked into the kitchen, and the maid, seeing her rummaging around, asked, "Serena, what are you looking for?"

"I want to make a cup of coffee for Bella." Serena gently asked, "Where can I find the coffee beans that she usually likes?"

"They're in this drawer." The maid fetched them.

Looking at the coffee beans, Serena realized that Arabella drank a better quality coffee than she did!

"Yes, Hans bought these a while ago. He said Ms. Bella drinks the same brand at the office. I usually make her coffee, so I'm sure these are the right beans."

Serena felt a pang of jealousy. Hans had been secretly buying Arabella this high-quality coffee, even keeping a stock at the office. He was clearly favoring her.

"I'll make a cup for Martha." Serena took the coffee beans and walked to the coffee machine.

“Serena, let me do it. These beans require a specific brewing method and amount to ensure the best flavor when Ms. Bella drinks it.”

Serena didn't care about the flavor. She just found the whole thing annoying. "Teach me and I'll do it." Seeing that Serena was determined, the maid instructed her.

After the coffee was brewed, Serena carried it upstairs and knocked on Arabella's door.

Serena froze mid-action, suddenly unsure of what to do next.

If she knocked again, it would mean she was inconsiderate. If she spoke, it would mean she was submissive.

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Damn you, Arabella!

Martha, who was lurking nearby, was about to step forward when Serena signaled her to stay back.

Clearing her throat, Serena

began, "Bella, it's me. Can you open the door?"

Arabella knew trouble was brewing, so she didn't even bother to respond.

"Bella." Serena, balancing a cup of coffee, knocked at the door, "Can you hear me?"

Arabella left her hanging for a while before finally opening the door.

"Did you poison this or are you planning to spill this coffee on me?"

Serena hadn't expected her to be this sharp. She quickly put on a smile, "Why would I do that? I genuinely want to apologize."

"Are you trying to apologize or teach me a lesson? Do you think I'm oblivious?"

Arabella had spent eighteen years in the Murphy family, where she'd seen all kinds of tricks, especially since they had found

Yolanda, who was constantly putting on a show.

There wasn't a trick Arabella hadn't seen.

One could say Serena, being a latecomer, had a long way to go.

"Bella, what can I do for you to accept my apology?"

Serena looked at her sincerely, "Anything within my power, I promise to do it."

"Is that so?"

Serena nodded earnestly.

"Then stay away from me, appear less in front of me. And when I close the door later, hold your coffee steady.

Don't purposely spill it on yourself or break the coffee cup and blame me." Arabella said and unceremoniously closed the door.

Serena hadn't expected her last step to be seen through. Watching Arabella's swift and fierce actions, she was left standing awkwardly with the coffee, unsure whether to leave or stay.

Watching from the shadows, Martha hadn't expected the girl to be this smart.

She signaled Serena to leave. Serena looked at the expensive coffee in her hands, and as she walked away, she sighed heavily,

"Since Bella doesn't want to drink it, I guess my sincerity hasn't moved her yet. I'll have to think of another way."

A nearby servant cleaning an antique vase saw this and felt a sudden pang of sympathy for Serena. She had been waiting in the living room since morning to apologize to Ms. Bella, and despite being humiliated, she had made coffee for Ms. Bella, only to be treated with disdain.

In the past, Serena would never have tolerated such humiliation.

All because she cared too much about her reputation, and had made some unfavorable remarks about Ms.

Bella in front of her friends, and now she was paying the price.

"Serena, you're still not well, you should go back to your room and rest.' The servant, Betty, was about the same age as Serena.

Seeing someone on her side, Serena was secretly pleased, but continued to put on a disappointed front.

"It's okay, nothing is more important than getting Bella's forgiveness."

Seeing Serena leave, Betty felt that Serena wasn't that bad, she had just taken a wrong step.

After Serena returned to her room, she immediately changed her demeanor. No longer appearing weak and depressed, she sniffed the coffee in her hand, which smelled even more fragrant than what she usually drank. She had been in this house for eighteen years and had never tasted such expensive coffee. A small cup like this cost around \$200. As she slowly finished the coffee, a new idea began to form in her mind.

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Arabella wrapped up her video call in her room, grabbed her things, and prepared to head out. Barely stepping out of the main building, Serena quickly caught up with her. "Bella, where are you going? When will you be back? I had a go at baking with the chef and made some cupcakes for you. They'll be ready to eat soon."

Arabella didn't expect her to be so obtuse. Turning around, she saw a few staff cleaning up the garden and eyeing the scene curiously. Even in the large floor-to-ceiling windows of the main building, a few window washers were peeking over.

"Don't waste your time on me; Arabella said, realizing that Serena was merely putting on a show for those around them, trying to paint herself as a caring person.

"Bella, won't you give me another chance?" Serena pleaded, grabbing Arabella's hand.

"Wanna pretend to fall when I let go of you?"

"No, that's not it! You've got it all wrong, Bella."

Serena looked as if she was on the verge of tears, but she kept a firm hold on Arabella's hand.

"You there; Arabella called over one of the staff.

The staff member looked surprised but quickly dropped broom and scurried over. "Yes, Ms. Bella. How may I assist you?"

"Unhand her from me, before she tries to pull a fast one."

The staff member was perplexed but followed the order.

Shocked, Serena couldn't believe that Arabella was this cunning. "Bella, what do I have to do to earn your forgiveness? You won't drink the coffee I made for you, you won't eat the cupcakes I baked, and you won't accept my apologies. Should I kneel down and beg?"

She was actually prepared to kneel.

Arabella began counting in her head, one, two, and before she could reach three.

Sure enough, Martha rushed over from somewhere and pulled Serena back just in time.

"Serena, you're still not well."

"Martha, let go. If kneeling can earn Bella's forgiveness, I'll do it, no matter how long it takes!"

Serena's face was desperate, earnest.

"Ms. Bella, won't you forgive her? She only shared a few words with her friends."

"Are you done yet?" Arabella didn't expect them to put on such a performance. The look she gave Serena was even more exasperated.

Serena, feeling the disdain and impatience in Arabella's eyes, pleaded again, "Bella, what do I have to do to earn your forgiveness?"

"Haven't I told you? Stay away from me. Stop putting on a show," Arabella turned around to leave, not wanting to waste any more time on her sister.

Seeing this, Serena stomped her foot in frustration and chased after her. In her haste, she tripped and fell forward.

"Serena!" Martha rushed to help her.

Serena quickly waved Martha off and, after a glance at the cold and indifferent figure in front of her, rose and continued her pursuit.

"Serena, your hand is bleeding! Serena. Oh!" Martha could only follow her.

The staff watched the scene with a touch of sympathy.

"It looks like Serena genuinely wants to apologize to Ms. Bella."

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"Ms. Bella is usually pretty easy-going, but this time, for some reason, she seems to be giving Serena the cold shoulder."

"I agree Serena's been a bit too candid in front of friends, which isn't cool, but Ms. Bella doesn't have to hold a grudge, especially when Serena is sick."

"Is this the first time Serena's done something to upset Ms. Bella? I heard that last night Hans punished her by withholding dinner and cutting off her allowance and designer brand supplies. That seems a bit harsh for Serena."

As Serena ran, she coughed and appeared weak. Seeing Arabella getting into the car, she called out, "Bella. wait for me!"

Arabella started the car and hit the gas, leaving Serena in her dust.

Serena chased the car until she tripped and fell.

Martha was stunned to see Serena act so harshly towards herself, tripping twice in a row!

This time, Serena's palms and wrists were scraped and bleeding from the fall, and she had cuts on her forehead and chin. Her

whole body ached so much that she couldn't get up.

"Serena, Serena." Martha hurriedly came over to help.

"It hurts." Serena's chin was so painful that she couldn't speak, her face twisted in agony.

"You even scraped your chin. Serena, why are you so hard on yourself? No one is watching you out here .

There's no need to hurt yourself like this."

Serena wanted to say she didn't mean to fall, but her chin hurt so much she didn't want to speak.

Martha quickly called for help from the other house staff and brought over a wheelchair.

Seeing how badly Serena had hurt herself, the other staff felt a greater sympathy for her.

In his office, Hans checked the time. He had called a meeting with the heads of a few subsidiary companies, and Arabella should've been in attendance by now.

He was worried that she might still be driving, so he called home to check if she had left yet.

"Ms. Bella just left." The house staff reported, then whispered as someone else entered the house, "Dr. Lee, Serena is in her room."

"Serena's still not well?" Hans was surprised to hear that Dr. Lee had come again, "Has her condition worsened?"

"Yes." The staff hesitated to tell the whole story.

"But you can tell me."

"Serena sat in the living room for two or three hours this morning, wanting to apologize to Ms. Bella, but Ms.

Bella didn't come home"

Hans knew about this, and replied indifferently, "She went to a funeral."

The staff member didn't expect that Ms. Bella had been gone so long because she was attending a funeral.

They had initially thought that Ms. Bella was intentionally ignoring Serena, and now felt guilty for their misunderstanding.

"When Ms. Bella came back, Serena tried to apologize, but Ms. Bella wouldn't accept it."

"Later, Serena made a pot of coffee and personally brought it to Ms. Bella, but she wouldn't drink it."

"When Serena saw Ms. Bella getting ready to leave, she ran after her, wanting to keep her home because she had baked a cake for her that would be ready soon."

"But Ms. Bella was in a hurry to leave and didn't stay. Serena chased after her, falling twice. The first fall scraped her palms, and the second was worse, scraping her forehead and chin. That's why we called Dr. Lee""

"Even though Ms. Bella's car was already far away, Serena still chased after it."

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Hans wore a complicated expression as he heard the news.

Just then, Julian knocked and entered. Hans hung up the phone to hear Julian report, "Miss Bella's car just pulled into the garage, Mr. Collins. Some of the subsidiary heads have concerns about Miss Bella never attending the regular meetings. Should

I address it before she arrives?"

"No need," Hans replied in a nonchalant tone, "I will explain."

"I'll go get Miss Bella now: It would be helpful for someone to guide Arabella on her first visit to the corporation.

"I will go."

Hans rose and left the office immediately.

Julian hadn't expected Hans to take care of even this small matter personally. It seemed he truly spoiled his sister.

After parking her car, Arabella received a call from Jack.

"Miss Bella, we've found out about Carol's family background. I've sent the information to you. If our people got it right, this is definitely her family."

Arabella was swamped with work, and to make things worse, Serena had been giving her trouble these past few days.

"Miss Bella, are you going overseas again? This time it's?"

"My grandfather's illness."

Jack understood and didn't inquire further, but he was contemplating how to extract her grandfather's address from her, so he could secretly arrange for protection.

After all, as long as that group of people remained, every day held danger for Arabella.

"No need to arrange for anyone, I can handle it myself." Arabella said, ending the call before Jack could protest.

There were many elevators from the parking lot to the upper floors. Arabella took the closest one, C2, and according to the floor guide inside the elevator, she directly went to the 20th floor.

Even though she had visited the McMillian Corporation before, the Collins Corporation impressed her on her first visit. It was grand and beautiful.

Meanwhile, Hans had descended to the basement from the C1 exclusive elevator, seeing that his sister's car was parked there, he assumed she had gone upstairs.

Julian was surprised at Miss Bella's speed. Seeing the C2 elevator stopped on the 20th floor, he knew without a doubt that Miss

Bella was heading straight to the conference room.

"Mr. Collins, shall we proceed to the conference room?"

"Hmm.

As Arabella stepped into the conference room, all eyes turned towards her.

The conference room was spacious and well lit.

Over twenty subsidiary heads sat around an oval table, these were the highest ranking officials of the Collins Corporation's subsidiaries in Summerfield.

The heads of other subsidiaries in national and international cities would join the meeting at the corporation at different times, not participating in today's meeting.

Arabella hadn't expected everyone besides her and Hans to be present, let alone that her seat was right next to Hans's.

As soon as she sat down, the snide comments began.

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Chapter 1239

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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"So this is the notorious Ms. Bennett? It's a pleasure to finally meet you in person.

"Young people sure do things differently. I heard you rarely show up at the office yet, but you still draw a salary every month."

"Not even attending regular meetings, I wonder, how does one get such treatment?"

"We here are always working day in and day out, like spinning tops. Everyone is either losing hair or gaining weight. You seem to

be in quite good shape, your work must be relaxing." At the entrance, Hans, his eyes suddenly icy, didn't expect this crowd to dare speak about his sister in such a way!

Julian, too, was surprised at the number of people who had turned against Ms. Bella. He was about to intervene when a lazy voice rang out from inside.

Arabella's gaze swept over everyone, stating nonchalantly, "There are many reasons for hair loss, and weight gain just means you're eating too much. If you want better treatment, work harder, stop being so two-faced.

When you make progress, the people around you will realize that. Besides, whether I am in good shape or not has nothing to do with whether I am lazy. If you guys are spending so much time at work, it just means you're not competent enough."

Hearing this, Julian was surprised but also secretly gave Ms. Bella a thumbs-up in his heart!

Indeed, she had the same aura as anyone from the Collins family.

Hans was also surprised at his sister's eloquence, his eyes softening.

But the rest of the crowd was not pleased. They all stood up in anger!

"You little brat! Speaking so audaciously, are you implying that you're better than us?"

"Have you achieved more than us?"

"Do you dare to say we eat too much and move too little? We were working before you were even born!"

"I've been around for a long time, which means I've been with this corporation for many years. My abilities have been recognized by Mr. Collins, that's why I've been able to hold this position for so long. And you, a little kid, dare to talk to me like this? Where are your manners? Has no one ever taught you manners?"

In the face of everyone's criticism, Arabella remained as calm as ever.

"Respect is mutual. From the moment I stepped into this meeting room, which one of you have shown me any respect? You are all older than me, yet you're giving me a hard time. In terms of experience, you're giving a hard time to a newcomer. You have more experience than me, but it seems that maturity and wisdom have nothing to do with age, it depends on the person: As

Arabella finished speaking, the room went silent.

Arabella leaned back, radiating an aura of authority.

"You all represent the highest authority of the subsidiaries of the Collins Corporation, yet you behave like impulsive teenagers.

Shouldn't you be more cautious?"

"If you feel that I have better treatment and you're not satisfied, why not express your feelings to the higher-ups? Do you think I

can give you a raise or approve your holiday?"

"Those who are brave enough, why not just quit instead of wasting time here?"

Standing at the door, Julian was surprised by Ms. Bella's audacity. She had left the crowd speechless.

Hans also didn't expect his sister to have such courage and authority. No wonder she could manage her subordinates so well, those veterans were no match for her.

"Moreover, to my knowledge, some of you have clawed your way up from the bottom of the company over the course of decades

to reach your current positions. Some of you have been transferred from the group to subsidiary companies and have been in

charge for seven or eight years. To my understanding, the achievements you've made during your tenure are indeed not as brilliant as mine in the past six months."

As she spoke, all eyes turned to her, surprised at her audacity!

Indeed, ever since she took over the Group, she had made one big move after another.

Under her leadership, the company had transformed from a state of near-death to an industry benchmark.

Its Net profit each

month was higher than their companies, leading them to once suspect she was fabricating data.

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# The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

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But they were, after all, her elders and seniors. Yet she dared to speak to them in such a manner, she had no respect for them at

all!

"If you want my kind of pay, you'll have to surpass me first."

Then Arabella left them fuming in silence.

They had mistaken her for a pushover.

It turned out she was a porcupine in disguise!

Hans concealed his smirk and finally stepped inside.

Julian followed suit, struggling to suppress his laughter.

"Mr. Collins!"

As soon as Hans appeared, everyone immediately rose, putting on their best demeanor to greet him.

The room was in silence when Hans came in.

Arabella smirked, stood up, and joined the others in greeting, "Mr.

Collins'.

Hans's gaze shifted to her, "You're here."

Everyone was taken aback that Mr. Collins would show concern for a company head who never attended meetings, and his tone

was even gentle. This must be the calm before the storm!

After all, Mr. Collins was never known to be easygoing!

In his eyes, anyone who did not abide by the group's rules and regulations had to leave the group!

The fact that this young lady was seated next to Mr. Collins must be part of his plan, right?

The real show was about to begin.

“Sit!

With one word from Hans, everyone sat neatly again, straightening their backs and looking at Hans, daring not to even breathe.

After Hans took his seat, he remained silent, his gaze sweeping over everyone present. His eyes were like a heavy burden, pressing directly onto each person.

A few heads of subsidiaries speculated that Mr. Collins' silence might indicate his dissatisfaction with Arabella's absence from meetings. They hoped someone would start the discussion to set the stage for him.

Mr. Baldwin thought for a while and was the first to speak, "Mr. Collins, before the meeting begins, I would like to raise an issue.

Ms. Bennett, the head of the Collins Fashion Group, has never attended any meetings. I believe this seriously violates the group's rules and regulations and should be punished."

"I agree." Another subsidiary head, Mr. Armand, stood up to speak, "If everyone disregards the group's rules and regulations, then the whole group will be like a plateful of sand. How can you manage the company? How can others accept this?"

"Moreover, reliable sources say that Ms. Bennett never clocks in at the company. She leaves all matters, big or small, to her assistant, yet she still draws her salary every month. I find this unacceptable!" The speaker was Mr. Carter.

Hans glanced at the three of them and asked calmly, "Anyone else has an opinion?"

"Me."

"Mel"

"Mel"

"Mr. Collins, I also have an opinion,"

"So do I!"

Many people raised their hands to express their dissent. All present, except Arabella, raised their hands!

Julian didn't expect this bunch to be so fearless. Once they found out about Ms. Bella's identity, they might start begging for mercy.

"Since you all have objections, before discussing this matter, I'd like you all to give a warm round of applause to Arabella Collins, for her first-ever meeting attendance."

As Hans finished speaking, the sparse applause accompanied by puzzled looks. Was she a member of the Collins family?

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