

The Princess and the Pauper (Arabella)

Chapter 1241

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"Such a coincidence, the same last name as Mr. Collins?"

Naturally, there were many people in the world with the surname Collins. It was nothing unusual. But the way Mr. Collins

emphasizes "the first time" seemed to suggest a long-standing dissatisfaction with Arabella.

"Looks like everyone didn't have enough for lunch."

Upon hearing Hans' remark, the room burst into applause. Yet nobody seemed to realize the underlying meaning, thinking that

Mr. Collins was about to give Arabella a piece of his mind, a stern warning.

"Arabella's absence from the meeting is with my approval."

Hans' next statement left everyone dumbfounded, staring at him in disbelief.

"She didn't clock in at the office. That was my decision"

This statement sent shockwaves through the crowd again. They couldn't believe what they were hearing.

"Delegating minor tasks to an assistant was my suggestion to her."

Once again, people in the room were stunned. All faces turned to stone.

So, Mr. Collins knew all along.

"Let me introduce you to my sister, Arabella. She'll be taking over more than half of the company's operations in the future.

Please, be gentle with her. After all, she's still in school and can't spare much time."

Upon hearing this, everyone was speechless.

This seemingly arrogant young lady was Mr. Collins' sister.

Nobody had ever heard about another girl in the Collins family.

When did she come into the picture?

Was she kept hidden by the Collins family, being secretly groomed as a successor?

And she was still in school! No wonder she looked so young!

Mr. Collins even stated that she would be responsible for over half of the company's operations in the future.

What kind of abilities must she have, and how much trust must Mr. Collins have in her to make such a statement?

So she might become the company's second-in-command, or even the head.

God, they'd just completely offended her!

They were screwed.

Meanwhile, Arabella was left with several questions.

When did she agree to take over more than half of the company's

operations? Was Hans making decisions without consulting her? Not leaving her an out?

And why did he reveal her identity so soon? She hadn't fully dealt with these hidden powers.

"Until we, the Collins family, decide to publicly announce her identity, I don't want to hear any rumors or gossip outside. I hope everyone can respect this."

Hans' words left everyone stunned for a moment before they collectively responded, "Yes!"

"Bella, say hello to everyone." When Hans looked at his sister, his eyes were filled with warmth, a stark contrast to his earlier demeanor.

Everyone realized then that Mr. Collins' previous tenderness wasn't the calm before the storm, but the affection and concern of a brother for his sister!

The reason Arabella was seated next to Mr. Collins was not some hidden agenda, but simply because she was his sister!

"Hello everyone, I'm Arabella. Looking forward to working with you all in the future." Arabella's eyes sparkled with a hint of nonchalance and curiosity.

Mr. Armand, seeing her expression and hearing her words, could barely stay on his feet, "Ms. Bennett, I apologize for my earlier rudeness. Please forgive me."

"I failed to recognize your importance earlier, Ms. Bennett. Please, let bygones be bygones and consider it a joke." Mr. Carter also stood up awkwardly to apologize, fearing Arabella might hold a grudge against him.

"Ms. Bennett, I'm truly sorry for offending you earlier. I hope you can forgive me!" Mr. Baldwin also looked mortified, wishing he could disappear into thin air. He blamed himself for his thoughtless remarks.

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“Never mind, that's all water under the bridge.”

Arabella didn't want to waste her time with them, so she turned her gaze towards

Hans.

Getting the hint from his sister, Hans finally declared the meeting open.

Perhaps it was due to Arabella's new position, the meeting seemed more tense than usual. Few dared to speak, each of them

quietly contemplating if Arabella would use her power to settle personal scores.

Everyone was on pins and needles, even those reporting on their work were unusually subdued, not daring to steal Arabella's thunder.

When it was Arabella's turn to report on the progress of her work, she was composed, speaking about the recent accomplishments of the company one by one, instantly earning a round of hearty applause. The achievements of this young lady were truly more dazzling than any of theirs. There was no need for them to deliberately give way.

Who would have thought that such a young lady could take the company to a new level?

After the applause, Hans added, "All these great achievements of the company are due to Ms.

Bennett who regularly conducts remote meetings and instructs the staff. The biggest credit goes to Ms. Bennett. Let's give another round of applause to her."

The crowd erupted into another round of applause, this time even more enthusiastic than before.

"Ms. Bennett really knows how to juggle her studies and work."

"Such a young age, and her ability is so outstanding, she is definitely a talent for the future."

"The Collins family really produces talents, the corporation has achieved unprecedented glory under the leadership of Mr.

Collins, and with the help of Ms. Bennett in the future, it will be even more powerful."

“Looking forward to Collins Corporation stepping onto a bigger, higher stage.”

The flattering comments made Arabella feel bored. Before they knew about her identity, they were baring their fangs at her, now they were praising her as a talent.

“Any other questions?” Hans looked at everyone present. Seeing them shake their heads, having nothing else to say, he declared, "Meeting adjourned"

Everyone got up, before leaving the room, they each came to Arabella.

“Ms. Bennett, I didn't get a chance to introduce myself earlier, I'm Dorothy, in charge of the Collins Mineral Water Co., Ltd. in Summerfield.”

“Hi, Ms. Dorothy.” Arabella shook her hand.

“I'm Erica, in charge of the Collins Corporation's furniture company in Summerfield.”

“Hello, Ms. Erica.” Arabella nodded, shaking her hand as well.

“My name is Patricia, in charge of the Collins Corporation's cosmetic company in Summerfield. I'm delighted to meet you today.”

“Nice to meet you, Ms. Patricia.” Arabella shook her hand in a polite manner.

After a flurry of people tried to get closer to Arabella, she said, "Thank you all for your enthusiasm. I have other matters to attend to, so we'll chat another time."

Only then did they stop crowding around her and bid her goodbye.

When everyone had left, Hans invited his sister to rest in his office.

Walking towards the office, Arabella looked up and asked, "Hans, when did I agree to take over more than half of the corporation's business? Is this a spur-of-the-moment decision, or have you been planning this for a while?"

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The corners of Hans' mouth curled into a gentle smile.

"You've been doing such a fabulous job running the company. I figured I might as well hand over a chunk of the conglomerate to you. I've seen you handle several businesses efficiently, so I thought, what's one more? I trust you, Bella."

So, Hans didn't mind her juggling multiple businesses and even believed she could handle more. Should she feel flattered or overwhelmed?

"Also, we're planning to announce your identity to the world." Hans shared this in the elevator, looking at his sister affectionately.

"Oh." Arabella's reaction was nonchalant, as if she had been expecting this news for a long time. Her expression remained calm.

Hans seemed a bit surprised. Did Arabella not want her identity to be known to the world? Or had she been anticipating this for so long that the initial excitement had worn off?

“We messed up,’ Hans confessed. “We were initially worried about how our grandparents would take it, and we didn't want a massive influx of relatives and friends disturbing you, so we kept it under wraps.”

Arabella's concerns were elsewhere. The power forces behind the scenes hadn't been completely eradicated.

With less than a month until the announcement.

“What are you thinking, Bella?” Hans asked, noticing her deep in thought.

“Nothing.’ Arabella shifted her gaze. She would have to deal with whatever came her way. She knew Clark was probably speeding up his own plans.

As the elevator doors slid open, Arabella followed Hans through the well-lit, spacious corridor that showcased the grandeur of the Collins Group. Every corner, every piece of decor, spoke volumes about their lofty status and refined taste.

Hans pushed open the door to his office and gestured for Bella to enter. Julian was at the door.

“Miss Bella, I'll make you a cup of coffee. Mr. Collins has stocked up on so many coffee beans, they're almost teaching their

expiry date! And Mr. Collins was planning on picking you up before the meeting, but when he reached the garage, your car was

already there, and you'd already headed out."

Hans hadn't expected such a chatty Julian. He gave him a side glance and Julian stifled his laughter.

"Hans, you were going to pick me up?" Arabella asked, her eyes gleaming. "I know my way around. There was no need."

"Just thought I'd help out since it's your first day here." Hans guided her over to the seating area.

"Come sit here."

Arabella settled into the couch, taking in the ambiance of Hans' office. The stately, yet understated decor mirrored Hans' personality.

The office was even more spacious and tastefully decorated than her office at Queen Abby.

"We've got your favorite snacks here" Hans suddenly stood up to fetch them. "Take a look and see which one you want. I'll help you open it."

"can do it myself" Arabella was surprised to find that Hans had stocked up on so many of her favorite snacks.

It reminded her of her visit to Romeo's office, where he had a whole cabinet full of snacks waiting for her.

It was clear that Hans had been looking forward to her visit.

With that thought, her eyes softened. She opened a snack, tasted one and then offered it to Hans. "Try one"

Hans usually didn't indulge in snacks, but seeing the invitation in Bella's eyes, he accepted and took a bite, his gaze filled with affection.

"How's everything with the Temple family?" Hans asked casually. "Did Crystal's parents seem to be feeling any better when you visited?"

"Losing their only daughter has been hard on them. They're still grieving. Celeste has fainted a few times from crying, and Alger almost collapsed' Bella shared honestly.

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Arabella figured that Hans must've known she was involved, but he was blissfully ignorant of the depth and breadth of those people's influence.

She didn't want to drag anyone else into this mess, so she simply said, "You'd better ask Clark, Hans. He knows more than I do."

Seeing his sister's innocent and adorable demeanor, Hans didn't push, "Alright. If you see Clark causing trouble, just let me know. Don't get yourself involved."

"Okay"

Little did Hans know just how wild she could be. Meanwhile.

Serena, lying in bed, was in so much pain that tears were streaming down her face, "It hurts. It hurts so much."

When Dr. Lee was disinfecting her wounds, Serena felt as if her bones were on fire, her face twisted in unbearable pain.

"Dr. Lee, please be gentle!" Martha was so worried, "If it's too painful for her, can we wait a bit and apply the medicine later?"

Martha wanted to keep the wound as it was, to show Serena's mother and Hans.

When they saw Serena in such pain, their hearts would surely soften.

"Serena's wound is severe. We can't wait any longer,' Dr. Lee said as he disinfected the wound on her forehead, "Every minute we delay increases the risk of infection."

Martha sighed inwardly. What a missed opportunity! But then she remembered she could record a video of this and show it to Madam and Hans later.

"Dr. Lee, it really hurts." Serena's speech was slurred due to the pain in her chin.

"I know. If you fall like this, it's bound to hurt. Your chin and forehead are injured, how come your nose is fine?"

Dr. Lee asked casually.

"When Serena fell, she instinctively used her hands to protect her face, but she only managed to shield her nose and mouth. Her palms got scraped and started bleeding."

Dr. Lee nodded, understanding the situation.

Just then, Betty came in with news, "Hans just called"

Martha assumed Hans was calling to check on Serena, but it turned out he was inquiring about Arabella's arrival at his place!

Hearing this, Serena was flustered and furious. She hadn't expected that sneaky Arabella to run to Hans and spill the beans!

After Dr. Lee finished applying the medicine, Serena clenched her fists, "I'm going to see Hans too!"

Martha widened her eyes, "Are you going now?"

Yeah, why didn't she think of that? Despite her injuries, Serena could bring some comfort food to Hans and 'accidentally' bump

into Arabella. She could apologize to Arabella in front of Hans, and if Arabella reacted poorly, she would come across as petty and vindictive in Hans's eyes.

Serena's plan was brilliant!

"Serena, I'll help you to the cloakroom."

Serena changed into a long black dress, paired with a loose, long coat, and a pretty hat, effortlessly creating an image of a gentle and sophisticated heiress.

She took the family car to the company's entrance, and the security guards let her in immediately, out of respect.

Several receptionists saw the bandages on her forehead and chin and rushed to ask what had happened.

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“No worries, just had a little tumble” Serena maintained her poised, heiress demeanor, even in pain.

Everyone had to admire her. Even when injured, she managed to maintain an air of elegance, without a trace of disarray.

"Has Hans been busy? It's been a while since I last saw him. I made him some snacks."

The receptionist, unaware of the incidents in the conference room, replied gently, "Mr. Collins just finished a meeting. He should be in his office now. I can call him for you."

"No need. I'll surprise him."

With Serena insisting, the receptionists didn't dare to stop her and agreed with smiles.

Just then, Dorothy, Erica, and Patricia, who were just leaving the corporation after the meeting, overheard Serena's conversation with the receptionist, and their expressions were taken aback.

Did Serena not know that her sister was also here?

"Have you guys noticed, the assertive Ms. Bennett we saw in the meeting earlier, compared to the gentle and innocent Serena, their characters and attitudes are worlds apart.

Could it be that they were raised separately since childhood? One being the public face of the family and the other secretly groomed to take over the family" Erica speculated.

"That's possible!" Dorothy nodded vigorously, "It really could be, otherwise, their personalities wouldn't be so different. They appear to be about the same age, but Serena never involved herself in the corporation, only appearing in high society. On the

other hand, Ms. Bennett, whose name we had never heard before, suddenly surfaced in the corporation. We never heard of her in high society circles before."

"This must be the deep plot of the Collins family."

Patricia finally caught on.

Serena felt a few people whispering, probably about the wounds on her forehead and chin. She had fallen quite hard today, and even walking was painful.

But for the sake of her image, she walked with elegance and grace. It was only when the elevator doors closed that she hastily checked her appearance in the mirror, afraid of showing any signs of disarray.

Julian just brewed a cup of coffee and was about to take it to the office when he heard the elevator doors open.

Serena was here!

His expression froze, "Serena, what brings you here today? What happened to your forehead and chin?"

"I took a fall." Serena saw the coffee in his hands and smelled the familiar aroma in the air. Her smile froze. It was Arabella.

Arabella was still in Hans's office. She didn't expect Hans to keep Arabella's favorite coffee at the office. She recognized the

scent; it was from those coffee beans. She couldn't have mistaken it!

"Serena, you're here to see Mr. Collins, right? He's in his office now." Julian, unaware of what had transpired between Serena and Arabella, kindly reminded her, "Your sister is here too."

"How long has my sister been here?" Serena feigned ignorance, flashing a gentle smile.

"About an hour, I suppose."

An hour, who knew how many bad things Arabella had said about her to Hans!

Serena forced a smile, "Perfect, I made too much afternoon tea. My sister can have some too. Julian, this is yours."

"Do I get one too?" Julian was about to receive it.

"You're holding coffee. It will be inconvenient. I'll put it on your desk."

"Thank you, Serena, you're so thoughtful."

"No problem."

Julian knocked on the office door, coffee in hand,

"Ms. Bella, your coffee is here. Mr. Collins, Serena is here too."

Hans didn't expect Serena to come. Wasn't she injured? Why did she come here?

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Arabella had not expected to run into her everywhere, just as she was discussing the future development of the company with Hans. Therefore, she got up and said, "I need to pay a visit to the company."

"Bella, you're here. I made afternoon tea for Hans. How about you have some too?" Serena greeted with a sweet smile as soon as she walked through the door.

Despite her injured chin making her smile less radiant than usual, her eyes shone with exceptional sincerity.

"No need."

Arabella was just about to leave when Serena hurriedly blocked her path, looking quite pitiful, "Bella, please don't be angry with me anymore, have some food to cool off." Seeing Serena prepared to stage another performance, Arabella was momentarily speechless. "I apologize for what happened last time. It was my fault. I'm sorry." Serena bowed deeply in front of Hans, "I beg your forgiveness."

Julian was totally confused. What was going on between Ms. Bella and Serena? It seemed like there was some discord between them.

Serena, still bowing, seemed determined not to straighten up until she received Arabella's forgiveness.

She was sure this would soften Arabella. Unexpectedly.

"I have other things to attend to, so I won't be able to stay." Arabella lifted her eyes and said lazily, "Oh, by the way, I just

remembered something. Do you still have that video of Martha? Do you want me to send you a copy?"

Serena's face suddenly turned pale!

That was a long time ago. Martha had sneakily unscrewed the cap of the oil bottle, poured the oil on the floor in an attempt to

make Arabella slip, but ended up hurting herself instead.

Back then, Arabella had kept this evidence!

How could she forget about that?

Thinking that Hans was still next to her, Serena hastily put on a smile, "Since you're busy, I won't interrupt. We'll talk later when you're done."

Arabella raised her victorious gaze, "Hans, I'll be leaving now."

Seeing the tension between them, Hans stood up and said, "I'll see you out."

"Hans, I made you afternoon tea." Serena was a bit reluctant, watching Hans's retreating figure with some resentment. Just for

such a short distance, he had to escort her! How delicate could Arabella be?

Hans followed Arabella out of the office, whispering, "What's the meaning of Martha's video? Did something else happen between you and Serena?"

"Nothing." Arabella pressed the elevator button, "Hans, I'll send you the future development plan tonight."

"Bella." Hans had a vague feeling that his sister was hiding something from him, and that in this matter, Martha was the one at fault.

Otherwise, Serena wouldn't have had that expression just now.

"Let's go."

Seeing the elevator door open, Arabella stepped inside. Hans quickly asked, "Bella, has Martha bullied you before?"

Seeing that Hans wouldn't give up until he got to the bottom of things, Arabella lifted her gaze and said, "It's not exactly bullying.

She was just trying to be smart, but ended up outsmarting herself. It's not a big deal."

As the elevator doors closed, Hans had a rough idea of what had happened. It seemed that Martha had tried to pull something, but it backfired on her.

It seemed her intentions were not pure, and she couldn't be kept around any longer.

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When Hans returned to the office, he found Serena clumsily opening a lunch box with her bandaged hands, revealing the delicate pastries inside.

"Hans, you're back? Come, try the pastries I made!" Serena greeted with a smile, "I made them before I got injured. I left some at home for mom and dad, and for Clark too."

"You made these?" Hans asked, looking at the two dozen delicate pastries before him.

"Yes, the chef taught me!" Serena looked at him expectantly, "Try them."

"You've not fully recovered from your cold. You need rest more." Hans picked up a piece of honey cake and took a bite, "Not bad."

While it was not on par with a professional chef, for a first attempt, it was quite good.

"Really?" Serena was even happier. She also picked up a piece of honey cake, about to take a bite, but her jerk of mouth

opening caused the pain on her chin.

"You haven't told me what happened to you?" Hans suddenly asked.

Serena froze for a moment, thinking that Hans must have heard from the servants that she was chasing after Arabella to

apologize and accidentally got hurt. Now he was asking this deliberately, surely he wanted to see if she'd take the opportunity to bad-mouth Arabella.

But Serena wouldn't fall for that!

So she put on a mature and understanding look, and calmly said, "I fell by accident."

She didn't mention Arabella at all.

"That's it?" Hans asked again.

"Yes, I was walking too fast." Serena quickly changed the subject, picked up a fancy four-section lunch box, and handed it to

Hans, "Hans, try these. These are green bean cakes. Did I do a good job?"

"They look good," Hans gave a positive answer, and picked up another piece to try, "taste good too"

"With your praise, Hans, I'll strive to do even better!"

Serena grinned, a pure and beautiful smile, "Next time I'll make more

delicious treats for you. Hans, there's juice here."

Seeing Hans eating, Serena suddenly sighed, "Hans, it feels so good to sit with you and have afternoon tea. We haven't chatted and laughed like this in a long time. Thank you for caring me for so many years."

Hans looked up and said, "Then tell me, what's the deal with Martha's video?"

Serena was stunned by his words, and a bit guilty, "What do you mean, Hans? I don't know what you're talking about."

"I can see it, Martha has something on Bella. Tell me the truth, if it's not serious, I can consider letting it go."

Serena didn't believe it. She had just said a few bad words about Arabella to her friends, and Hans had punished her so

severely, even including Martha, who had been deducted her salary and year-end bonus.

If Hans found out that Martha had spilled oil in an attempt to make Arabella slip, Martha would surely end up far from good!

"Hans, it's a misunderstanding. It was a short video, nothing important. She just asked if I had kept it~ Hans clearly didn't believe

her, "You're trying to fool me with such an excuse?"

"It's really nothing. If you don't believe me, ask her."

Serena was sure that with Arabella's character, she wouldn't gossip behind

her back.

Hans was silent for a moment, then looked at the girl in front of him, "Serena, did Martha teach you all this kind of things?"

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"Hans, how could you possibly think that? Martha has been taking care of me diligently for eighteen years. She has done a lot of hard work."

Serena explained sincerely, "I know it's wrong of me to bad-mouth Arabella to friends, but this really has nothing to do with

Martha. Hans, no matter what happens in the future, if you're upset, vent it on me. Don't involve Martha."

"You seem to have a deep bond with her" Hans looked into the girl's eyes, his expression somewhat complex.

"When dad was busy with the company, mom was often accompanying him. It was Martha who stayed by my side. No matter if I

had a fever, fell ill or whatever, during every bleak and peak moment of my life in the past eighteen years, it was Martha who was with me."

"So, is she better than family?"

"She's as good as family. Hans, don't think so poorly of her. She has been genuinely good to me." Serena said, sounding a bit

distressful, "You've deducted her pay and year-end bonus after a month of her hard work. Hans, please, don't do this again."

At this moment, Julian knocked on the door, "Mr. Collins, the person in charge of the jewelry company, Mr.

Ferber is here."

"Let him in."

"Yes."

Julian ushered Bruno Ferber in. Seeing Serena's poor state, he couldn't help but jest, "What brings you here, Serena? What happened to you?"

"I fell accidentally. Did you come to laugh at me, Mr. Ferber?" Serena retorted jokingly.

"Hahaha. My future boss, I wouldn't dare laugh at you. I'd be afraid you'd fire me." Mr. Ferber laughed heartily.

Serena was a bit confused and immediately turned to Hans. What did he mean? His future boss? She didn't understand.

Seeing her reaction, Mr. Ferber chuckled and turned to Hans, "Mr. Collins, haven't you told Serena yet that she's going to be managing the jewelry company?"

Upon Serena heard this, her eyes widened in surprise. Managing the jewelry company? Hans wanted her to manage it?

Really??

She used to be envious that Arabella could inherit her family's clothing company, but she didn't expect that she would also have

a share, and the value of the jewelry company was much more than that of the clothing company.

Hans still cared about her.

"Seems like Serena genuinely didn't know." Mr. Ferber guffawed, "Mr. Collins has already paved the way for you, cleared the obstacles, and is just waiting for you to graduate so that I and..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Hans interrupted calmly, "That was the previous plan." The moment Mr. Ferber heard this, he froze. What did he mean by that??

Serena was also puzzled. Had Hans decided not to let her manage it?

"The future is unpredictable. The plan is now canceled." Hans's expression was calm as he looked at Bruno, "I asked you here today to tell you this. You and the others can stop any activities for it."

Hans had initially asked him and several other senior executives, planning to support Serena to taking over the position. The plan was all set; obstacles were cleared one by one. But Serena had disappointed him this time.

Mr. Ferber was confused. Looking at Hans, it didn't seem like he was joking. Then he looked at Serena; her expression seemed very disappointed.

Mr. Ferber couldn't help saying, "Mr. Collins, this plan is already halfway through."

Wouldn't it be a bit inappropriate to cancel it now??

“Serena is still young. Let's talk about it later in the future.”

Seeing that Hans had made a decision, Mr. Ferber didn't dare to utter anything more.

“Serena, Mr. Ferber and I have other things to discuss. Why don't you go home and rest?”

“Okay.” Serena didn't know how she managed to stand up and leave Hans's office.

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She would have never guessed that when she joked about running the company like her sister to Hans, he was actually orchestrating it all behind the scenes.

But what she also didn't anticipate was that the punishment for talking behind Arabella's back would be so severe. Not only was her allowance gone, her brand suppliers were cut off, and now even the opportunity to inherit the company was lost.

How could Hans do this?!

A few bad words wouldn't kill anyone!

Why was Hans being so biased!!

On her way home, Serena was increasingly saddened and angered by these thoughts, even believing that Arabella should never have come back to this family.

Upon her return, Serena shut herself in her room and refused to open the door no matter how much Martha knocked, leaving Martha at a loss.

Did Arabella badmouth her to Hans?

With this thought, Martha sent a video of Serena changing her bandages today to Hans, feigning to get anxious, "Mr. Collins, Serena locked herself in her room as soon as she got home and wouldn't let me in to change her bandages. Did something

happen over there? Serena was crying from the pain while I was changing the bandages today. It really broke my heart to see

her like this, hoping she'll get better soon"

Seeing no response from Hans, Martha choked up,

"Mr. Collins, what time are you coming home

tonight? Can you check up on

Serena when you get back? She'll definitely listen to you."

After Hans finished his meeting with Mr. Ferber and the latter left, he finally checked his phone and

watched the video Martha

sent.

In the video, Serena was in so much pain that her voice was muffled from crying.

Seeing Martha's message, Hans immediately called

her, "Bella showed me a video. Do you have

anything to say about it?"

Upon hearing this, Martha was taken aback. She

couldn't believe that Bella showed that video to

Hans?!

"Mr. Collins, I don't know what you're talking about."

Martha instinctively gripped her phone, her heart racing.

"Do you need me to send the video to you so you

can see what you've done?" Hans asked, his voice

icy.

Martha was so scared that her legs gave out. She never would have thought that the wench actually showed the video to Hans!

Oh no, oh no!!

What now?

Wait, this didn't seem like something Arabella would do. What if Hans was just trying to trick her?

So Martha defended herself, "Mr. Collins, I really don't understand what you're talking about, what video? What did I do to give

you the wrong impression? I can explain it to you."

Hans didn't expect her to be so cunning, he coldly retorted, "So you're saying you're not admitting it?"

Martha was even more unsure. Did Hans really see the video? Otherwise, he wouldn't be talking to her in such a certain and cold tone.

But what if, he hasn't seen it, and he was just bluffing.

What to do??

Admit it or not?

In a split second, Martha knew her answer. No, she couldn't admit it, not unless Hans sent the video to her.

It wouldn't be too late to feign remorse then.

What if Hans didn't have the video???

Right, she couldn't panic. She wouldn't be fooled by Hans.

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"Mr. Collins, I honestly have no idea what you're talking about,' Martha stubbornly insisted, "I'm getting on in years and my memory isn't what it used to be. If you're accusing me of something, at least remind me of what I did or said. Otherwise, I

honestly don't know what you're referring to."

Seeing her refusal to admit any wrongdoing, Hans replied coldly, "It seems like you've been bullying Bella behind my back in

addition to what happened in that video. Pack your things, Martha. Serena is all grown up now. She doesn't need you anymore."

Martha was taken aback by Hans's words. Before she could react, he had already hung up the phone. Hans was firing her?

He was kicking her out of the house?!

Martha couldn't believe what she had heard. It took her a while to recover from the shock before she could call Hans back.

Hans didn't pick up her calls.

After a few failed attempts, Martha, trembling, sent Hans a voice message.

"Mr. Collins, I've been loyal and diligent in this house for eighteen years. Now you want to fire me just like that?"

What exactly happened that led to such a severe misunderstanding? I can explain"

Five minutes passed.

Half an hour passed.

Hans didn't respond. Not even a single punctuation mark.

Martha clutched her phone, her heart pounding.

Hans must have seen that video. Otherwise, he wouldn't have decided to fire her so abruptly!

She remembered the incident which still made her restless.

It was a long time ago.

Holly, one of the maids, had just finished washing the garden's pavement. She maliciously spilled two buckets of cooking oil on the wet ground, hoping to send Arabella sprawling when she returned home from work.

Under the sunlight, the large area of oil looked just like water, blending perfectly with the other puddles on the ground. Unless

someone looked closely, it was hard to tell which was oil and which was water.

She thought she had executed her plan flawlessly. But half an hour later, Arabella returned home from work and walked through the garden's main path into the main house, unscathed.

Martha and Serena were watching from behind the curtains. Both of them couldn't believe that Arabella had managed to avoid slipping and had safely reached them.

Arabella told Serena that Mr. McMillian was waiting outside the house, wanting to have a word with her. Serena was overjoyed because back then, she dreamed of even exchanging a few words with Mr. McMillian.

Afraid that Serena might slip, Martha followed her footsteps. Even though they treaded carefully, they inevitably fell.

Serena was the first to slip, and when Martha tried to catch her, she failed and fell as well.

In the end, they were carried into the living room, where they laid on the couch, wailing in pain.

This incident alarmed Mr. and Mrs. Collins.

At first, Mrs. Collins felt distressed towards Serena's injury, but when Holly and Lily implied that the person behind Serena's fall

should be found and pointed the finger at Bella, Mrs. Collins lost her temper.

Martha never expected that Arabella would be able to recover the deleted surveillance footage!

Who knew what kind of tricks she had learned outside!

The surveillance footage later proved Arabella's innocence. It was Martha who had accidentally tripped over the doorstep and

spilled the oil, causing both her and Serena to fall.

Because of this, Mrs. Collins docked a month's worth of Martha's salary. Lily and Holly were also fired.

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