

Arabella 1931

Chapter 1931

Everyone suddenly remembered that Arabella had been bustling around in the kitchen. Given its vast size and each person engrossed with their own culinary creations, hoping to impress Arabella, they had no clue what she had whipped up for them.

The dish presented at the table was a particularly rare and expensive lobster, larger than life, its price tag dwarfing that of other well-known varieties. Originally, the chef had been tasked with preparing this lobster, but Arabella had spotted it earlier in the afternoon and volunteered to take over.

She transformed it into a dish of exquisite beauty, so tantalizing it instantly whetted everyone's appetite.

"Whoa, sis, you can cook lobster???" Clark was utterly astounded, hastily pulling out his phone to snap a flurry of photos.

"Sis, is there anything in this world you can't do?"

Before David could finish his thought, he felt a sharp pinch from Mom on his arm and a stealthy stomp from Dad under the table, all while receiving a barrage of warning glares from around the table.

Confused and in pain, David wondered what he had said wrong.

"It's okay." Arabella just smiled calmly, "Why don't you all give it a try?"

With that, everyone eagerly reached for their forks, chuckling and chatting.

"If Bella made it, it's got to be delicious."

"This is definitely chef-level work."

The chef, overhearing their praises, immediately concurred, "Even a chef with three to five years of experience might not handle a lobster this perfectly, this delicately. Ms. Arabella Collins's culinary skills are truly humbling."

"To hear that from Daniel..." Grandma Belinda said with a beaming smile, "means it's truly high praise.

Bella, your cooking is definitely top-notch."

David was still puzzled about what he had done wrong until he caught Clark's eye. Clark discreetly sent him a text message.

"The only thing sis couldn't do was save Grannie Grace. Let's not bring that up again."

David's mind buzzed with realization; he had inadvertently rubbed salt into his sister's wounds. But his sister didn't blame him. Seeing that he hadn't started eating, she even got up to place a succulent piece of lobster onto his plate.

"Try it, David."

Her face remained serene and sweet, just as gentle and endearing as ever.

David was overwhelmed with guilt, cursing his thoughtless chatter. He resolved never to mention it again.

"Oh, by the way, you boys, why didn't you bring your girlfriends over for dinner tonight?" Grandma Belinda suddenly asked.

Earlier, Louisa had suggested the boys visit their girlfriends' families first to show respect, and then bring them over to join the festive dinner.

"Myrna's family went up to the mountains for a memorial service. They'll have dinner at the ancestral home. It's a long trip, and I didn't want her to have to travel back and forth," Chasel explained first.

"I also agreed with Carol that we'd keep it simple for dinner, and I'll visit her place later," Clark added.

Hans nodded in agreement, "Same for me."

The attention then turned to the two bachelors of the group.

David, who had been enjoying his meal heartily, looked up as the elder's gazes settled on him. After

swallowing his bite, he said, "Sean is ahead of me in line. Nudge him first!"

He couldn't resist adding, "And Sean, when are you going to bring Ophelia home for dinner? Oh, wait, I

should ask, when are you going to win Ophelia over?"

Chapter 1932

"Zip it! Eat your dinner." Sean was clearly irked.

"If you don't know how to woo a lady, just hire me to teach you. I've got plenty of tricks up my sleeve,"

David said with a mischievous grin.

"Oh yeah? How come you're still flying solo?"

"I just don't want a girlfriend right now."

"Enough!" Louisa interjected sharply. "Both of you better bring home girlfriends next year, or I'm

keeping Bella away from you!"

"That harsh?" Sean and David said in unison, taken aback by how their mother had them by the short

hairs.

Meanwhile, Arabella sat to the side, her lips curled into a gentle smile.

The meal ended in high spirits.

Looking at the clock, Arabella noted it was just past six.

"Bella, before you and Romeo head over to Fairfield Manor, I want to give you a gift for the New Year,"

Louisa said, pulling out two bank cards. "Here's yours, may the New Year bring you success and take

you to new heights. And Romeo, this is for you, wishing you prosperity and advancement in the coming

year."

Romeo hadn't expected to be included and thanked her softly.

"Here's mine!" Kenneth also handed them each a bank card. "May all your dreams come true in the

New Year, may your worries vanish, and may your days be merry and free."

The other relatives presented their prepared gifts, one for Arabella and one for Romeo.

"Wishing you both health and safety year after year."

"May your hearts' desires be fulfilled and good luck follow you."

Arabella flashed a warm smile. "I've also prepared some New Year's gifts for you all. Just give me a

moment. I'll go get them."

She turned and went upstairs.

Romeo then brought his gifts and began to distribute them.

"We can't accept this, dear," Cornelia protested. "We're the elders. We can't take money from the younger generation."

"Grandma, it's just a small token of my appreciation. Please accept it and give me the chance to honor you," Romeo insisted, holding out the gift.

"You're too thoughtful. but we really can't take it. It wouldn't feel right."

"Nothing to feel bad about, it's from your grandson-in-law. Just take it," David interjected, snatching the gift from Romeo's hand and slipping it into Cornelia's pocket. He then helped Romeo hand out the rest to the elders, winking at Romeo, "What about mine?"

"Every brother has one." Romeo passed out the gifts, offering New Year's blessings to each.

David hadn't expected to receive a gift from Romeo this year.

But why's it a toy? And just a toy? For him?

Romeo couldn't be that stingy, can he?

Wait, there's something in it..

While everyone was busy chatting with Romeo, David turned away and sneakily peeked inside the toy,

only to find a check for ten thousand bucks!

A ten-thousand-dollar gift for the New Year!

Romeo really didn't hold back when it came to Arabella's family.

"Here comes Arabella." Clark noticed his sister descending the stairs with an armful of gift boxes and hurried to help her carry them.

Chapter 1933

Sean strode toward Arabella, reaching out to take the gift box from her hands, "Why didn't you ask me to come with you? If I had known you were carrying so much, I would've helped you upstairs."

"It's no big deal, not heavy." Arabella distributed gifts one by one, "Grandma and Grandpa, this is for you. Wishing you a year of good health and everything going your way."

As she handed out the presents and shared her blessings, each elder was visibly delighted.

"When did you manage to sneak all this preparation, hiding it so well that even the cleaning staff didn't notice." Louisa was surprised to see Arabella bringing out so many gifts.

"You've put so much thought into this." Grandma Belinda repeatedly praised, "This year has been so meaningful."

Sean opened his gift box to find a brand-new men's wristwatch inside.

He had lost the watch Serena gave him, and he hadn't anticipated that his sister would notice and buy him a new one.

It had to be said, Arabella's taste was definitely better than Serena's. That old watch he lost? It was worth losing now!

The other brothers received similarly valuable men's watches, each with a different design, be it gold-trimmed, black-edged, silver-bordered, and so on.

David couldn't wait to put his watch on, and after a session of admiring clicks.

"Bella, this watch is gorgeous. I'll wear it forever."

"This watch is way nicer than my old one."

"Thank you, my dear sister."

Arabella handed the remaining gift box to Romeo. He was surprised. He got one too?

The brothers crowded around, curious about his gift. When Romeo opened it, it was indeed a men's watch, but clearly different from what the others had received.

"Why does his look so much nicer?" David couldn't hide his envy. "Romeo, let's trade."

"Everyone has their own style, so the watches reflect that," Romeo wasn't about to let his be traded

away so easily.

Arabella helped Romeo put on his watch, which only made David more envious. If he had known, he wouldn't have been so quick to put on his own.

Romeo's so lazy, he even needed Bella to help him with his watch.

After helping Romeo, Arabella then brought other gifts, handing the first to Edith.

"Edith, thank you for looking after me all these months. I wish you health and that all your wishes come true in the new year."

"Miss Bella, I have a gift, too?" Edith's face lit up with joy and surprise as she took the gift, repeating her thanks, "Thank you, Miss Bella, thank you."

"The rest of these, please distribute them to everyone else at Reflections Villa. Everyone gets one,"

Arabella instructed as she passed the rest to Edith.

"Would you also mind handing these out for me?" Romeo presented his own gifts to Edith. "Make sure everyone gets one."

"Thank you, Mr. McMillian, thank you, Miss Bella. Remembering all of us at Reflections Villa, I'm sure

they'll be thrilled!"

With a warm smile, Arabella spoke up, "Well, Dad, Mom, I'm off to accompany Romeo to Fairfield

Manor now."

"Have fun, dear." Louisa said affectionately.

"Oh, and we've prepared some New Year's gifts for the McMillian family. Please take them with you,"

Kenneth immediately instructed someone to load the car.

Romeo was about to decline, but Arabella interjected, "Take them, it's from my mom and dad." "Drive

safely, and take it slow," Louisa called out, waving them off from the driveway.

Chapter 1934

Fairfield Manor.

Phillip glanced at his watch; it was nearly seven o'clock. Here he was again, standing at the front gate,

craning his neck in anticipation, but the one he was waiting for was nowhere to be seen.

Why hasn't Bella arrived yet.

"Mr. Phillip, you might want to head inside. It's quite chilly out here." Brodie suggested with a smile,

standing nearby. "As soon as Romeo's car arrives, I'll come and let you know."

"I'll wait a bit longer." Phillip stood for another ten minutes, but still no sign of Arabella. He muttered to

himself, "Wonder if they've even set off yet."

He couldn't just text Romeo. He didn't want the Collins family to think they were being rushed.

But oh, how he longed to see Bella.

It had been such a long time since she last visited.

"Still not here?"

At that moment, Shirley stepped forward to drape a coat over Phillip, following his gaze into the empty street. Not a car in sight.

"Your hands are a bit cold, aren't they?" Phillip turned and took Shirley's hands into his, noticing the chill. "You go on inside. I'll let you know when they arrive."

"It's alright, I'm not cold."

"Well, let me warm them up for you." Phillip held her hands, tucking them into his pockets.

Back in the living room.

A young heiress, bored of scrolling through her smartphone, complained, "She's not even a member of the McMillian family and she's already pulling rank, making all of us wait on her. If she gets any more

comfortable, her head will be in the clouds."

"Enough, Cathy." A refined young man spoke up. "Show some respect to your future sister-in-law."

"Jeffrey!" Cathy sounded even more dissatisfied. "We usually start our dinner at five-thirty, and now we're waiting until seven just for her! If she had any respect for us, she'd be here by now. Just because Romeo fancies her, she thinks she can skip the pleasantries. I don't even see what he sees in her."

"That's enough." Jeffrey gave her a reproachful look. "She has her own family dinner too. Didn't Romeo say they'd come right after? If you're hungry, there are appetizers on the table."

"Who wants to eat that stuff?" Cathy pouted. "I don't get why Grandpa and Grandma insisted on making her favorite treats. I heard tonight's dinner menu caters to her tastes, all seafood!"

It was downright absurd! Over the top!

Even if they wanted to spoil a future granddaughter-in-law, there was no need to go to such lengths!

And why involve everyone in accommodating her?

What a joke!

As Cathy fumed, she suddenly noticed her sister Luna engrossed in a video game.

"Luna! Don't you have an opinion on this?" Cathy couldn't help but move closer, complaining, "My

stomach is growling here. Aren't you hungry?"

"Didn't brother tell you? There are appetizers on the table." The gaming sister replied with icy indifference, her eyes glued to her phone screen. "Go away."

"Luna!" Cathy was not pleased. "We need to take her down a peg or two, or life will be unbearable!"

"They're here, they're here! Mr. Romeo and Ms. Bella have arrived!" A servant announced excitedly as she came in.

Cathy rolled her eyes at her. What's there to be thrilled about? It was so late. Did no one value punctuality anymore?

Arabella wasn't even part of the McMillian family yet, and the McMillian staff was already this fond of her?

Intimidated by Cathy's glare, the servant quickly tempered her excitement, not daring to make another peep.

Chapter 1935

"My sweet pea, there you are at last!" Shirley exclaimed as she saw Arabella step out of the car, rushing to clasp her hand. "We've been looking forward to this moment forever!"

"Having you here to share dinner with us old folks fills us with such joy," Phillip chimed in as he followed Arabella inside, his face creased with a warm smile.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Grandma and Grandpa. Happy New Year," Arabella said with a warm smile.

"Your presence is the best gift we could ask for."

Meanwhile, Romeo, who alighted from the car as well, felt thoroughly overlooked.

He retrieved the presents the Collins family had prepared from the trunk and approached, "Grandma, Grandpa, these are from Bella's parents, a token of their affection for you."

"Oh, you brought so many gifts." Phillip and Shirley were surprised to see their grandson carrying quite a few items. "You shouldn't have."

"Bella has some gifts for you too, we'll give them to you after dinner."

"You got us presents too?" Phillip was flabbergasted and touched, "You're too thoughtful, kiddo. It's us who should be giving you the gift, not the other way around. After dinner, we'll give you your gift."

"Thank you, Grandma and Grandpa."

The old couple couldn't hide their delight.

Just then, Jennifer, hearing of Arabella's arrival, dashed over, apron still on.

"My darling girl!" Jennifer embraced Arabella tightly, overjoyed. "So glad you've made it! I've just whipped up your favorite dish, come on in, and no need to take off your shoes."

"Bella's here? Now the gang's all here. I'll tell them to start serving the meal!" George announced happily.

Arabella greeted each of them in turn and as she entered, noticed some other guests in the living room.

"Let me introduce you, this is Tomas and Donna," Romeo said, wrapping an arm around Arabella's waist as he introduced her gently.

"Happy New Year!" Arabella said politely to the two elders rising from the couch.

"So you're the girl Romeo's fond of? You are quite beautiful, and you have an outstanding presence," remarked the woman, Donna, dressed in elegance and grace, her skin radiant and actions exuding the demeanor of a woman from a distinguished family.

"It's a pleasure to have you, I'm Tomas," said Tomas, George's brother, whose dignified bearing commanded respect, clearly the result of years of cultivated poise and presence.

"And this is my cousin Jeffrey."

"Hello, Bella, it's a pleasure to meet you," Jeffrey said, his handsome and dashing appearance complemented by a noble air that seemed innate, his every action reflecting his good upbringing.

"Hello," Arabella greeted him with a friendly nod.

"And this is my cousin Luna."

"Hello, Bella," Luna greeted, her beauty serene and tranquil like an autumn lake, her features finely drawn.

"Hello," Arabella responded softly.

"And here's little cousin Cathy."

Cathy was a blend of cuteness and spirit, shining like a bright pearl.

With Romeo present, Cathy still greeted Arabella, "Hello, Bella, I'm so glad to finally meet you."

She hadn't expected Arabella to be this striking in person.

Previously, Cathy had thought her sister Luna was the most beautiful person in the world, with her unique, cool beauty and noble grace.

Chapter 1936

But today, when she laid eyes on Arabella, she realized that there was always someone out there, ready to take the crown.

Arabella's features were like a breath of fresh air, her ethereal beauty lit up the room, and she carried

an air of sophistication that was impossible to ignore, even when she tried to tone it down.

She had a kind of beauty that seemed untouched by the mundane world, both aloof and regal.

It was no wonder Romeo was smitten. She was even more stunning than her own sister, Luna.

"Hey there," Arabella said, picking up on the thinly veiled hostility emanating from Cathy. Cathy was

smiling, sure, but her eyes were laced with arrogance and disdain, as if Arabella's presence was less

than welcome.

"Bella, let's go have the feast—wait till you try my cooking!" Jennifer tugged Arabella towards the

kitchen.

Cathy tried to follow but was stopped short by Romeo's firm grip.

"Romeo." Cathy wobbled like a chick caught by the scruff.

"You got a problem with my fiancée?"

"No." Cathy rushed to clarify, "She's under your wing, Romeo, I wouldn't dare."

"So, you do have a problem then?"

"Romeo." Seeing the tension, Jeffery quickly stepped in, "Cathy didn't mean it like that. If she disrespected your girl, I'd be the first to set her straight."

"Think I can't see for myself?" Romeo's voice was frosty as he turned to Cathy, "Did I keep you waiting? Are you upset?"

"No." Cathy was taken aback by Romeo's familiar coldness, "I just..."

"Romeo." Arabella, noticing Romeo hadn't followed, looked back.

Romeo instantly let go, and to hide any sign of the altercation from Arabella, he casually slung an arm around Jeffery's shoulder. "Just gonna catch up with Jeff here, be right over."

Arabella nodded, sensing the weird vibes but choosing not to pry.

"Wait up, Bella!" Cathy suddenly called out, eager to join them.

Romeo, unimpressed by her quick move, commanded sharply, "Stop right there."

His glare was clear: Did I say you could go?

Cathy was on the verge of tears. Couldn't she just show the future sister-in-law around? Couldn't she try to be friendly?

"I'll deal with you after I'm done talking to Jeff. Stay here," Romeo said, leaving Cathy fighting back

tears.

"Just let them be," Jennifer reassured Arabella as they walked away, "The siblings don't get to see each other that often. Don't worry, with me here, you can make yourself at home. No need to be on edge."

Cathy watched Arabella disappearing into the distance, her last shred of hope extinguishing.

Romeo was daunting, and Cathy's confidence wavered, "Romeo. just let me explain."

Ever since they were kids, Romeo had been the one to instill fear in them. He had always been the one they were afraid of.

Chapter 1937

"Come here," Romeo's voice was lighthearted yet commanding, causing Cathy to shrink back a little.

"My legs have gone numb, I can't move." she protested weakly.

"Weren't you sprinting just moments ago?"

"Now I'm stuck."

Seeing she wouldn't come to him, Romeo started walking towards her.

This terrified Cathy, and with a sudden burst of energy, she sprang to her feet and dashed behind her

older brother, gripping the hem of his shirt as she pleaded, "Jeffrey, save me."

"Romeo," Jeffrey interjected, trying to smooth things over, "Cathy's just being silly. She was out of line

earlier, I'll have her write the house rules a hundred times and send you a snapshot."

"Jeffrey?" Cathy's eyes widened in disbelief. It was the New Year! Their family's house rules were so

extensive that even writing them once or twice could cramp her hand, let alone a hundred times.

She felt utterly betrayed by her own flesh and blood.

"She seems quite reluctant," Romeo observed, his gaze resting on Cathy.

"Romeo, can I just write it once, please." Cathy's eyes brimmed with a pitiful plea, "I promise to be the

most welcoming, friendly, and sincere person later! Just watch me!"

"You could also try not being welcoming, friendly, or sincere."

"No, no, no, I'll be all that and more!" Cathy begged, her eyes pleading with Romeo.

"Finish writing it a hundred times and email it to me, and if there's a single typo, start over."

"Romeo?" As her brother walked away, Cathy hurried after him. "Listen to me, I was just hungry, okay?

I have nothing against your fiancée, she's so beautiful and elegant, such a perfect match for you. Why

would I have any issue with her? Plus, her voice is so lovely, and she's got such a great figure, all tall

and slim."

"Make it fifty times. Send it when you're done."

Cathy paused, then quickly followed him, "Romeo, I'm not finished. The moment I saw your fiancée, I was stunned by her beauty. Not a single word can be used to describe her allure. Her looks are the most beautiful, unique, and distinct I've ever seen!"

Seeing that her brother wasn't stopping, she added, "Such a stunning, lovely fairy joining us for the New Year dinner, I must bring my A-game, treat her right, and make sure she feels the warmth and love of our family!"

Her brother kept walking, so Cathy quickly added, "Before I met her, I always thought Serena wasn't good enough for you, but from the moment I saw your fiancée today, I felt like it was fate, that she was meant for you. She outshines Serena in every aspect, it's like she was born to be with you. You two look so good together, like a perfect match! Let me be the first to wish you both a lifetime of happiness and unity."

"Ten times."

"Thank you, Romeo, but can we do less." Cathy saw her chance as he lowered the count, pleading,

"After dinner, we're supposed to watch the show and fireworks with her, right? If I'm absent, she might think I don't like her. Just let me write it once, one time is already a lot, a hundred rules, you know."

"Any more bargaining and you won't reduce a single word."

"Romeo." Cathy watched helplessly as her brother entered the dining room, feeling defeated. Ten times, she'd be writing until who knows when.

At the dinner table, Phillip and Shirley sat on either side of Arabella, fussing over her and urging her to eat more.

Tomas and Donna had never seen their parents shower so much affection on a younger relative before.

Even Jennifer, who was usually so aloof and shrewd, had lowered her guard. She seemed eager to heap every delicacy on the table into Arabella's plate.

Chapter 1938

"Sweetheart, be a good girl and eat more, okay?" Jennifer was still serving dishes to Arabella.

"These two dishes were made by me, you should give them a try too," George spoke to her in an indulgent tone. It was the first time they saw George show such affection to someone other than

Jennifer, especially to a junior.

"These dishes were made by Grandpa and Grandma, give them a taste, okay?"

"Thank you, Grandpa and Grandma, but there's too much, I can't finish it all," Arabella's bowl was piled high with food.

"Bella, you performed the heart surgery for Grandpa, and cured Grandma's illness. We will never forget this kindness. We both toast to you." Tomas and Donna stood up, raising their glasses.

"Bella is still young, she can't drink," Phillip and Shirley said simultaneously.

Romeo poured a little lemon water into Arabella's empty glass, not too much, fearing it might upset her stomach before dinner.

Arabella stood up and, seeing the two elders finish their drinks in front of her, said gently, "You're too kind. Saving lives and healing the wounded is my duty. I'll raise a toast to you both." She drank the lemon water in one gulp. Tomas and Donna smiled, satisfied with her response.

Everyone urged Arabella to eat more in a lively atmosphere.

"Bella, try this dish. I wish you a prosperous life, successful studies, and everything going well in the

coming year. May it be as flourishing as fire." Cathy stood up and served Arabella two big prawns.

"And these dishes..." Cathy served all the other dishes to Arabella, saying, "I wish you a year full of laughter, good luck, successful endeavors, happiness, and most importantly, may your relationship with my eldest brother deepen and become sweeter."

"Thank you," Arabella noticed that Cathy's hostility had disappeared, replaced by respect and admiration. Could it be because of Romeo just now?

Arabella's gaze fell on Romeo, whose expression seemed normal.

"Bella, please try them. If they're not good, I'll serve you something else." Cathy hoped Arabella would accept her goodwill and show it to her eldest brother.

"Wow, Cathy, you're so sweet today," Shirley chuckled. "Speaking of which, you should learn more from your sister-in-law. Her virtues are like the stars in the sky, countless."

"When I saw her for the first time tonight, I knew she was extraordinary!"

Cathy hadn't finished speaking when she saw her eldest brother personally peeling shrimp for Arabella.

Indeed, she wasn't an ordinary person to make her eldest brother peel shrimp for her.

After peeling the shrimp, Romeo fed it to Arabella.

"It's delicious."

Cathy finally breathed a sigh of relief. Did this mean Arabella approved of the dishes she served?

"Bella, I can peel shrimp too. Let me peel two for you." Cathy wiped her hands clean and started

peeling the shrimp. "The shrimp I peel is no worse than Romeo's."

"Bella, eat more," Jeffery and Luna warmly invited.

"You guys should eat too."

Arabella served everyone and also served some to Romeo.

Chapter 1939

"Bella, I just learned that you're both Dr. Bell and the perfect scorer."

Donna's words made Cathy pause mid-peel on her shrimp. Perfect-scorer? What?

The whole family knew about Arabella being Dr. Bell, but none had any clue about her other accolade.

And a perfect-scorer at that!

Cathy knew how tough the tests were back home, and she never imagined her sister-in-law, of all

people, could nail a perfect score. Aside from her big brother, Bella was the second person in recent

years to achieve such a feat. They both were just too impressive.

"Guess what else Bella does?" Phillip chimed in, grinning ear to ear as he played the tease. After several wrong guesses from the crowd, he couldn't help but spill, "My favorite artist, Mirabelle, and the calligrapher Labella—it's her!"

All of them present were doubly surprised.

Even the usually composed Luna and the always cool-headed Jeffery were taken aback by Bella's dual identity.

"And that's not all, Bella is also Maestro Melody." Shirley said with a beaming smile, "The ringtone on my phone? She composed it just for me."

"My ringtone's her work too," Phillip couldn't hide his joy, reminiscing about the time Shirley had Arabella's piano composition as her ringtone and he didn't, feeling a tad bit jealous. But Arabella had promised to create a special piece for him, and sure enough, she sent him a delightful melody not long after.

"All my chess and golf buddies rave about it, always asking for the title, and I tell them it's a unique piece composed by my granddaughter-in-law, impossible to find online. They're green with envy!"

Phillip boasted with pride.

This was a tune crafted for him by Bella herself!

Unique to him alone!

"Bella is truly extraordinary. So young, yet so learned and talented. A real bright spark." Donna's smile was warm and inviting, "Having such a wonderful girl join the McMillian family is indeed a blessing for us."

"You can say that again. So capable and yet so modest. I've really taken a shine to her." Jennifer piled more food onto Arabella's plate, "Darling, eat while it's hot, have a little more."

Jeffery couldn't believe that this elegant woman before him had so many personas.

He too often listened to Melody's piano works and admired Mirabelle's paintings, never imagining they were created by the same person.

How many times had he been captivated by the brilliance in those paintings, or enchanted by the latest piano composition, wishing to meet these masterful artists?

Little did he know, these masters were one and the same, and his future sister-in-law at that.

Jeffery averted his gaze from the girl's refined appearance, feeling a tinge of melancholy.

Luna hadn't encountered someone so talented and captivating for a long time. Learning of Bella's many identities, she was surprised but felt an increased fondness.

After snapping out of her daze, Cathy carefully placed a peeled shrimp into Arabella's plate. "Bella, you're so incredible. No wonder Grandma said your virtues are as numerous as the stars in the sky.

She wasn't just being kind. You truly are amazing, utterly admirable."

Initially, Cathy thought Bella was just some nouveau riche heiress from a humble background.

She had no idea she was in the presence of a top-tier boss!

Donna laughed, "All of you should take a leaf out of Bella's book."

As the meal concluded, everyone moved to the living room where Shirley had invited a series of entertainers—a sketch comic, a magician—each taking their turn to perform.

Some acts had everyone in stitches, while the magician's tricks drew gasps of wonder.

Romeo watched the joy on Arabella's face, his own lips curving into an involuntary smile.

Chapter 1940

Half an hour later.

All the performances had come to an end, and Jennifer, linking arms with Arabella, beamed at her,

"Bella, how about we go watch the fireworks? Your Grandma and Grandpa had them set up just for

you."

Arabella's gaze shifted towards Phillip and Shirley, her tone gentle, "Thank you, Grandma and Grandpa."

"I just hope you like them." Phillip helped his wife put on a woolen beanie and a thick coat before they all made their way to the garden.

"It's a bit nippy out here, Bella. Do you have a warmer coat?" A gust of wind made Shirley's neck chill, and she was concerned Arabella might catch a cold.

But in the next second, Romeo draped his overcoat around Arabella's shoulders and meticulously fastened each button, "Wear mine, it'll do."

The black overcoat hung loose on Arabella, accentuating her slender figure even more.

Cathy hadn't expected Arabella to carry off Romeo's overcoat with such a cool vibe.

It seemed like her sister-in-law was a natural clothes horse, the kind who could make even a burlap sack look good.

Romeo, with his arm around Arabella's waist, led her to the garden. No sooner had they found a spot

than twenty magnificent fireworks burst overhead simultaneously, the spectacle grand and visually stunning.

Arabella hadn't expected the McMillians to stage such a splendid and dazzling fireworks show for her.

With one burst fading, another would bloom instantly, leaving onlookers breathless and visually satiated.

Romeo pulled Arabella closer, shielding her from the chilly breeze.

The fireworks lit up the entire night sky, a riot of colors gradually forming various patterns and finally, the words 'Happy New Year' traced in sparks.

After the show, all the elders wished Arabella a Happy New Year. The warm and cheerful atmosphere stirred a sense of warmth and emotion within her.

"Bella!"

As the fireworks display came to an end, everyone started heading back inside. Cathy hurriedly caught up to Arabella and said to Romeo, "I need to ask Bella about something."

After a glance from Arabella, Romeo reluctantly let go of her but shot Cathy a warning look, silently telling her not to stir up trouble.

Cathy pretended not to notice and, clinging to Arabella's hand, whispered, "Bella, can I ask you how you tamed my big brother? He's so gentle around you."

Before she could finish, she quickly added, "I don't mean to tame him, just wish he'd be a bit gentler with us too."

"Cathy." Romeo's voice came from behind them.

Cathy spun around, stammering, "I was just telling sis how gentle you are! She said you're really gentle!"

The sternness in Romeo's demeanor softened into a more gentle presence.

"Romeo really does seem a lot gentler around you!!" Cathy once again murmured in Arabella's ear, "I declare, from this moment on, you're my idol. Whatever you say, I'll do!"

"Speak your mind," Arabella said, seeing right through her little ruse but knowing she bore no malice.

Cathy hadn't expected her sister-in-law to be so much more perceptive than she'd anticipated, and she giggled, slightly embarrassed, "Romeo thinks I've been disrespectful to you and has sentenced me to copy the family code ten times. You have no idea, our family code is foul and lengthy, enough to circle

the Earth! Please, dear Bella, help me talk to him. Wouldn't once be enough?"

Copying it ten times would be the death of her.

Arabella raised an eyebrow, realizing this young girl had cozied up to her, arm in arm, hoping to reduce

her sentence.

"Actually, writing more could benefit you," Arabella teased.

"How so?"

"Your handwriting might improve."