

Brilliance Unmasked: The Cold-Blooded Tycoon Wants His Vengeful Queen

Chapter 1 Welcome Home

"You've weathered countless storms over the years. Welcome home, Arabella."

At the celebratory dinner, a young man in a perfectly tailored suit found himself unwilling to look away from Arabella Stanley.

She possessed an otherworldly beauty, her sharp features sculpted with precision and wrapped in an aura of cool detachment. Her piercing eyes revealed nothing of her inner thoughts, and when she spoke, her voice carried the same arctic chill. "I'm leaving now."

Joshua Willis, the young man, seized the moment without hesitation. "Allow me to drive you home."

Arabella offered no resistance.

The car glided through the night. The city lights blurred past as Joshua stole glances at her profile. "When do you plan to return to the company? Our empire continues to flourish."

Their partnership had begun years ago through a chance project, and Joshua had witnessed Arabella's brilliance firsthand. He had persuaded her to join forces, and together they had forged a company that now dominated the entire industry.

Arabella maintained her measured tone. "I'll decide when the time feels right. For now, I simply want to reach home."

"Understood completely. You must be eager to reunite with Daisy. She's undoubtedly thriving. I've been directing all the premium projects to your aunt's husband throughout these years." Joshua's grin widened as he angled for recognition.

Arabella and her twin sister Daisy Stanley had lost their parents at the tender age of six, and their aunt Meagan Tucker had stepped in to care for them both.

Arabella acknowledged him with a subtle nod. "I appreciate that."

Her delicate fingers found the cherry blossom pendant resting against her throat, clicking it open to reveal a treasured photograph of herself and Daisy.

Arabella's expression remained stoic in the image, but Daisy's smile blazed with pure joy.

Studying her sister's radiant face, Arabella felt an unfamiliar warmth soften her features.

After their parents' tragic death, Arabella and Daisy had become each other's entire world. Daisy had always been their family's ray of sunshine, illuminating every room she entered.

At twelve, Arabella had been handpicked by the government for a classified operation that consumed seven years of her life. Now that the mission had concluded, she could finally return to Daisy.

She had forwarded nearly every government paycheck to her sister, ensuring Daisy lived in comfort and security.

Joshua's eyes widened in amazement as he witnessed Arabella's smile.

The legendary ice queen was actually smiling?

His curiosity about Arabella's sister intensified dramatically.

The car approached an upscale residential community, where each house boasted its own meticulously maintained garden.

The vehicle glided to a stop in front of a house.

This was the home Arabella's parents had bequeathed to them, now shared between Meagan and Daisy.

The estate glowed with warm light, alive with the sound of cheerful laughter.

Daisy seemed to be flourishing beautifully.

With that thought in mind, Arabella preserved her gentle smile as she crossed into the front yard.

A weathered doghouse sat in the corner of the property.

Someone knelt beside it in the shadows.

Through the dim evening light, Arabella couldn't distinguish the person's features, but she watched them scooping food directly from the bowl placed on the ground.

Why would someone be eating beside the doghouse?

Concern creased her brow as Arabella approached cautiously.

The figure appeared startled and scrambled quickly into the doghouse.

Arabella's bewilderment deepened. Then a soft, trembling voice drifted from within the shelter. "Please don't strike me again. I won't make any mistakes. I'll be so much more careful..."

That voice belonged to Daisy.

Arabella's heart shattered instantly. She lunged forward, pulling the figure from the doghouse. Even in the pale moonlight, she recognized her beloved sister immediately.

Daisy stared back, her eyes swimming with disbelief. "You..." she breathed, as though she feared her mind was playing cruel tricks on her.

"Daisy, is that truly you?" Arabella's voice trembled with disbelief.

When Daisy nodded weakly, a glacial fury erupted within Arabella, her eyes igniting with volcanic rage.

"Bella..." Daisy whispered, still trapped in shock. "You've actually come back?"

The moment felt impossibly surreal to Daisy, like a vision conjured from desperate longing.

Arabella, sensing something terribly wrong, reached out to touch Daisy's forehead. Her skin burned with fever. Before Arabella could process this discovery, Daisy crumpled into her arms like a broken doll.

Arabella cradled her sister, whose body felt heartbreakingly frail and ice-cold despite the raging fever consuming her.

Arabella's heart crystallized into something harder than diamond.

The front door of the house suddenly burst open with violent force.

"Daisy, you worthless creature! It's been several minutes, and you're still not finished eating? Get inside immediately and wash those dishes!" Meagan's voice sliced through the night air like a blade.

Arabella pivoted slowly, her predatory gaze locking onto her target.

Meagan had transformed dramatically over the years. Once haggard and perpetually exhausted, she now radiated wealth and privilege, adorned in an expensive designer coat and gleaming jewelry that caught the porch light, presenting herself as the very embodiment of refined elegance.

Meagan's blood turned to ice under Arabella's lethal stare. "You... Arabella? When did you arrive?"

"What have you done to her?" Arabella advanced with calculated steps, her voice dropping to a menacing whisper.

Meagan instinctively retreated, unsettled by the predatory intensity burning in Arabella's eyes. But she quickly rallied her confidence, reminding herself that Arabella was still just a young woman.

She twisted her lips into a cruel sneer. "Daisy shattered a dish, so I administered appropriate punishment. You've been absent for years. Do you possess any understanding of how challenging life has been here? I never allowed her to starve or sleep without shelter. If you weren't my brother's daughters, I wouldn't have wasted my time with either of you."

In one fluid motion, Arabella's hand shot out and seized Meagan by the throat, her expression transforming into something carved from arctic stone. Meagan gasped desperately, clawing at Arabella's iron grip. "Let... me... go..."

"This is my house," Arabella declared, her voice carrying the finality of a death sentence, her eyes radiating lethal intent. "You forced Daisy to perform menial labor. You made her sleep in that doghouse like an animal. You possess remarkable audacity, Meagan."

In the warm light streaming from the house, Arabella finally saw what Daisy had been consuming. It was the leftover food.

Holding her sister, who felt as weightless as a dying bird and appeared ghostly pale and utterly drained, Arabella felt her heart shatter into countless pieces.

Her precious sister had endured this nightmare!

"Meagan," Arabella said, her voice saturated with deadly promise, "when you moved into our home, you swore a sacred oath that you would care for Daisy."

Meagan bristled at Arabella's bold use of her first name, the disrespect cutting deep.

But she shrank backward when she witnessed the murderous gleam dancing in Arabella's eyes.

Arabella had always been fundamentally different from other children. She was cold and fearlessly bold. When Arabella had lived here, Meagan had performed the role of a dutiful aunt, though barely meeting even the lowest standards.

But the moment Arabella departed, Meagan had seized absolute control, systematically crushing the gentle-spirited Daisy beneath her cruel authority.

She had never imagined Arabella would return to witness her crimes.

"I did take care of Daisy! She made a mistake, so I disciplined her accordingly. What's so terrible about that?" Meagan's words died in her throat as Arabella's grip tightened mercilessly, making her feel as though death itself was reaching for her soul.

"Arabella?" The violent commotion finally drew the attention of the people inside. Meagan's husband and daughter noticed the deadly confrontation unfolding at their door.

Through the wide open front door, Arabella observed them living luxuriously in a spacious and magnificently decorated villa, with a table overflowing with exquisite delicacies. The people inside wore expensive clothing that spoke of comfort and abundance.

Meanwhile, Daisy had been sleeping in a doghouse, consuming leftovers. Arabella's eyes burned with unshed tears as the devastating truth crashed over her with overwhelming force.