

Princess, choose me

"Arabella, love. Don't you think it's time for you to get married?"

"M- Ma- Married?! Mother, you must be joking... Right? Please tell me this is a joke. You know my thoughts on this!"

Arabella Mirielle ↓



Long wavy pink hair

Blue eyes

Princess(probably wearing an expensive and luxurious gown)

Grew up very loved and is confident and self assured as a result

Free spirited and almost always is smiling

Looks like a goddess from the heavens

Arabella Mirielle. The name Arabella meaning answered prayer, she was exactly that for the emperor and empress. Their precious one and only daughter. Although she was undoubtedly a princess, she was also reckless and free spirited, forever sneaking out and walking around town. Her mother and father couldn't bear to scold her, and even if they tried, one tear from her blue eyes or one apology from her lips was all it took for them to melt and forgive her instantaneously. Her older brothers were the same. The beloved princess could do whatever she liked except one. Avoiding marriage. Her older brother was originally heir to the throne, but that was only because it was believed the empress was infertile. When Arabella was born, she, as the child of the empress, not a concubine like her twin older brothers, was automatically made next heir to the throne instead of her brother. Why is this important, you might be asking? Because that's the reason I have to get married all of a sudden, now that I'm officially 18! What's worse, I've never even met my potential suitors. Now I have to choose from one of them in 3 months?! This is crazy! Well, it's not like anyone knows me because my mom and dad lock me up and keep me a secret to the people. I also temporarily dye my hair to black and dress as a man when

I sneak out. Of course, I wash off the dye once I get back. I love the color of my lovely pink hair. It'd just make it way too obvious I was the princess if I went out with my pink hair on full display. No one has unusual hair color if they're a commoner. Me with my hair would stand out like a sore thumb. Everyone also kept commenting about how I was a girl and girls should just stay home and learn to cook and clean like a good future housewife. That's why I dressed as a man. I'm a princess, but what good is being a princess if I can't help my people? But if I show up as a princess, people will get scared and start bowing, which I don't want. Dressing up as the opposite gender and hiding any distinctive features is the only way.

"Bella, we've talked about this. Come now, mother has chosen only the best suitors for you. They're from the 4 dukedoms."

I just stared at my mom with an expression that read "Are you crazy?". I could tell she was beginning to get flustered at my clear refusal. And before you think I'm some demon spawn from hell who only exists to make my parents' lives difficult who thinks she can do whatever she wants because I'm their only daughter, I'm not. While it's true I can be willful and disobedient at times, I'm generally a very good girl who does what my parents ask of me. Music, art, academics, etc. I have excelled in all they asked me to do. My tutors have all praised me, saying I'm intelligent and talented. I also adore my older brothers and treat both of them very well, so I don't discriminate against them in any way.

"You can go now, I'll call for you soon."

"Yes, thank you, mother. I shall take my leave then."

I bow respectfully and leave the room. I then flop down on my bed. I know this is not how a princess of royal blood should be acting, my etiquette teacher said I should always behave with propriety befitting the position of the royal family, but I can't believe what just happened! My own parents are planning to marry me off, not marry *me* off. If anything, the parents of my suitors are marrying their sons off, but whatever! I don't want to get married at all! Why can't I rule alone as queen? I'm sure some kings ruled with no queen for a couple years! Why can't I do the same? Oh, right. Because girls aren't fit to rule alone and need a man. Great.

"Belle? Oh dear, you don't seem to be in a very good mood today. Did something happen, my dear sister?"

"Brother..."

"Now, tell your big brother, okay?"

"Mom and dad want me to get married!"

"Married...? Belle, darling, it's not that bad."

I feel tears welling up in my eyes. Why can't anyone understand how I feel?! My brothers see the tears and their eyes widen. I cry often, but it's rarely because of me. When I cry, it's generally for others. Like the time I cried for a baby bird who fell out of its nest. I nursed it back to health and put it back in its nest when it was all healed up. In other words, me crying in a situation like this is extremely rare. The older of the two, Adrian, walks over and gently lays my head in his lap.

"Belle..."

He looks conflicted. The younger, Darian, starts braiding my hair and decorating each braid with flowers from the garden. My brothers are 25, so 7 years older than me. When I was little, they used to support me in anything. If I were to run to them crying, saying mom and dad won't let me do something, they'd give me permission instead. I was young back then, but looking back on it now, I can't help but think how mature they were. They had their title stripped from them overnight, but despite all that, they still cherished and loved me as their little sister. They are still extremely supportive of me usually, but it seems both know me avoiding marriage isn't the way. As the years passed, they started dividing what I can do and what I can't do. Sneaking out? Sure, knock yourself out. Just don't get killed or injured too badly. Marriage? Sorry, sis. Can't help you out. That's a must. After a few moments of silence, Darian breaks it gently.

"Belle."

I don't answer, but fix my eyes on him to indicate I'm listening. He starts playing with a strand of his blond hair as if not sure how to explain this. Haha... Darian has no problem talking to me, but he's terrible when it comes to conversing with people outside of direct family. His best friends are books and scrolls, not counting his twin brother and I. Although both my brothers have blond hair and green eyes, brother Darian has longer hair and glasses over his eyes. He's also more academically gifted. On the other hand, brother Adrian is more physically gifted and is good at swordsmanship. He's also better at talking to people. Darian clears his throat and starts again.

"Belle, my darling little sister. Please listen. Since, unlike us, you are the direct descendant of the emperor and empress, you are next in line for the throne, right?"

I nodded. Of course I know that!

"However, our society is very patriarchal. Even if you are fully equipped to rule, the people won't respect a female monarch. You've experienced it first hand, have you not? That's why you dress as a man. Belle. Just tell me this one thing. Do you want to rule this country? Yes or no?"

I nodded. I do want to rule, but... I just feel marriage is way too soon!

"Haha, right. As expected of Belle. You can never stand by and watch while injustice happens. That's why you sneak out and help people, even in disguise. That's why you want to rule, right? To put a stop to the crimes and injustice you see."

Honestly... Brother Darian knows me way too well. He's absolutely correct.

"But Belle. All that, all your dreams won't come to fruition if there's no king. Even after you marry, you'll still be the one with royal blood. You will still have power. So... How about you marry, even just for show?"

I pout. I understand, I understand it all, but... For brother Darian to say this?

"But brother..."

"Yes, Belle?"

"Do you remember how you used to read me bedtime stories every night?"

"Of course I do. Why do you ask?"

"Well... In all those stories, a wedding was a once in a lifetime special day, a union celebrating the love between 2 people... Right? So... Why can't I marry for love?"

Brother Darian stiffens, a bit stunned. Well, he's the one that made me a bit of an idealist. Meanwhile, brother Adrian bursts out laughing at our exchange.

"Don't laugh, help me! You're better at talking to people than me!"

"Normally, yes. With our sister, no. She loves us both the same, but she's always trusted you more than I. While I was busy with crown prince duties, you were doing her hair, reading her bedtime stories, teaching her how to read and write, etc. Sure, I was the one that took her out to festivals and parties, but she was more on the introverted side, making her closer to you because you understood her more."

In the unfortunate case I was unable to take the throne, brother Adrian would be heir, so he retained crown prince status, if only in name, when I was too young to take crown princess classes. While he was off doing that, brother Darian would come and spend time with me. Anyway, Darian continues sending SOS signals with his eyes, making Adrian sigh. He suddenly lifts me up princess style, surprising me. He then slowly traces the salty trails on my cheeks with his fingers.

"There, there. Our baby sister, are you that upset with mother and father?"

"That's not helping!"

"You asked for my help, so just watch! This is how I comfort our little sister. You've had your chance already."

Seeing my brothers try so hard to comfort me, I felt guilty, so I ended up agreeing. How bad can it be? Besides, I can just reject them all if push comes to shove. I rush out the door to go see mother.

- After Arabella left

"You know, brother... Despite my words, I don't like the fact that Belle's getting married. I kind of feel like no one's good enough for our little sister in a way."

"Well, yeah. That's normal because no one is good enough. I'm also worried she'll be used for her power."

"Ah, right. The power only true royals have, which is why we can't wield it. Healing power. I believe Belle's power could even restore the health of a person on their deathbed, right?"

"Right. The most powerful healing magic ever seen in the royal family. The catch being she can't use it on herself."

Adrian Mirielle ↓



Golden hair that's around halfway down his back  
Blue eyes  
Confident, very at ease  
A prince

Darian Mirielle ↓



Long golden hair that's a little longer than his waist  
Green- blue eyes  
Gentle and calm demeanor  
Also a prince

With Arabella

"Mother!"

"Arabella? Is anything wrong?"

"I accept the marriage."

"A- Are you sure?"

"Yes. Call my suitors here next week. For now, please give me their profiles so I can get to know them before meeting them."

"Here you are, Ara."

"Thank you, mother."

Let me see here... They're all my age or older... 18 to 20 years old.

The Rosenfield dukedom. My potential marriage partner is 19. He's known as the headache of the whole family...?! Apparently, he's always going out and refuses to study. A person who knows nothing but swordsmanship.

Iravan Rosenfield ↓



Long dark hair

Generally has a sword attached to his waist

Dark eyes

The Winterglass household. They're so famous even I know of it. They're said to be perfect in every single way possible. Academics, swordsmanship, music, art, you name it, they're perfect at it. My marriage partner is 20. Hands down the most attractive guy I've seen, perfect in every way, be it academics, fighting, etc.

Artemio Winterglass ↓



Silky silver hair

“Perfect”

Light blue eyes

This is where I lose interest. The rest aren't really notable candidates. I set up a date with them, but they're already out of the running. I'll focus on these two.