

## K Lover 114

### Chapter 114: Tardy Duke

"I have a message from the Duke of Futherfield," Henry said. In his hand was a roll of paper.

Rylen adjusted in his seat while Caius didn't even flinch. He just stared at Henry a little too intensely, and Rylen noticed that he might slowly be losing his temper.

"What is the message about?" Rylen asked.

"I do not know, but a messenger brought it," Henry explained. "Unfortunately, the messenger was too exhausted to bring the message to you himself."

"What do you mean, exhausted?" Caius asked with clear irritation. "One would think he ran on foot."

"His Highness is a little spot on," Henry said.

"He ran on foot?" Rylen asked, showing his shock.

"Only for some part of the journey. He did see a horse eventually," Henry tried to explain.

"What do you mean, see a horse? There should be more than enough horses in the Lord's—"

"I don't care about this messenger," Caius interrupted Rylen. "How he got here is irrelevant to the situation. Hand the letter to Rylen. Let's see what's taking the Lord so long."

"Yes, Your Highness," Henry said and bowed again. He took a step towards Rylen and bowed his head low, stretching the paper to him.

Rylen accepted it and immediately started to undo it, noticing the Duke of Futherfield's seal. It was pretty clear it was from the Duke.

"Leave us," Caius said, dismissing Henry.

"Forgive me, Your Highness, but I have one more message to deliver."

"Out with it," Caius said.

"The punishment has been meted out, and Martha has been taken away from the castle."

Caius raised a brow. He didn't care what happened to the maid after he issued the order, but for some reason, Henry felt the need to tell him.

"Okay, you may go now."

Henry looked like he had more to say, but he sealed his lips, bowed again, and retreated.

"What does the letter say?" he asked Rylen after the door closed.

"The Duke won't be able to make it here by noon."

Caius had a look that said I told you so and was about to actually say it when Rylen cut him off.

"However, it's not for the reasons you think. Something terrible happened," Rylen said and took his eyes off the letter.

Caius's expression soured, and he stretched out his hand to Rylen. "Give it to me."

Rylen was quick to hand it to him, and Caius immediately began reading. The letter read thus:

Your Royal Highness,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. I wholly apologize and should have taken more measures to prevent this from happening.

I sought your audience, yet here I am making you wait for me. I hope His Highness can find it in his heart to forgive this tardy Duke.

However, I did not do this on purpose. It would seem the manor was attacked last night. Before I go further, no persons were injured, and we didn't realize the attack until this morning.

The horses were all injured. Sharp pointy objects seemed to have been inserted right into their hooves. It is most unfortunate, and they are in severe pain.

It also seems that the food of both the staff and the horses was meddled with. None of them were alert at the time, and it wasn't until this morning that they woke up.

As I write this letter, I do not have much information about the situation, but I must inform Your Highness. As soon as I get to the castle, I shall provide more details. The journey has been delayed but not forfeited. I shall arrive by evening if the gods would allow.

I hope Your Highness will understand and forgive this.

Lord Leopold Futherfield

Caius crushed the letter, and Rylen bolted from his seat, taking the crushed letter out of his hands.

"Your Grace needs to stop this nasty habit of crushing letters," Rylen said in horror as he tried to straighten the letter out as best he could.

"I have read the contents. I don't see why keeping it is relevant."

"It is," Rylen said, but he didn't push. He knew the Crown Prince also understood the importance of documentation. He must just be that angry.

"Well then?" Rylen asked after confirming that the letter was still usable. "What are you going to do?"

Caius turned to look at Rylen, his eyes blazing. This was no different from the reports. So far, the bandits had only stolen and attacked animals, but something about this attack was very worrisome.

It was calculated—not just that, but it couldn't have been done unless someone had information about Lord Futherfield's residence or they had help.

Lord Futherfield seemed to believe it was orchestrated to stop him from coming to the capital. Caius wasn't so sure about that. It might be, but it clearly wasn't the only goal. Was this their way of saying they could strike close if they wanted to?

"We should hear from the Lord first. Do we know anything about the bandits? How many are there?"

"There isn't any specific number, nor do we know if they are more than one group. Witnesses have mentioned seeing four to five men, but their descriptions don't match."

Caius narrowed his eyes. He already knew this information. "There's also no saying this was the work of the bandits."

"Lord Futherfield didn't say that either. Do you think he knows?"

Things just got even more complicated. He didn't like it. He wanted to slow down and try to guess what the play here was, but with this, the council would push that they do something more final about what was going on.

However, he knew that would not be a good idea. Whoever was behind this was clearly trying to force his hand. However, Caius had all the time and the patience. As long as the attacks weren't costing them, he would sit back and watch.

"I don't know," he said, replying to Rylen's question. "But I suppose we'll find out once he gets here."

Rylen nodded. He didn't know what Caius was thinking, but he knew he didn't have to worry when it came to battle strategies. The King might have been terrible with his actions toward the Crown Prince, but it was clearly for a just cause.