

K Lover 200

Chapter 200: Lord Elrod

Lady Delphine kept her head bent as her husband's son spouted foul words at her. She stood completely rooted to the spot; her mind was surprisingly clear, which only made it clearer how terrible she felt. His presence knocked the wine out of her system and she was no longer feeling the drowsiness of being drunk.

She had noticed him sitting with the rest of the important lords and had done her best to make sure her eyes didn't drift there again. Lord Elrod was only a marquis, but he was highly respected in the castle and the council because he was distantly related to the royal family.

Her late husband, Hendrix, didn't like to talk much about their family history, and Delphine was never one to poke her head where she wasn't supposed to—it was the reason she had survived this long. She could take a hint.

However, Lord Elrod's power in the castle was not why she froze. It was for a completely different reason. He had never liked her, not from the moment her father introduced her to his two children. His younger sister was married to some faraway lord and barely made the journey to the castle.

The current Marquis of Haiyes' hatred for her only seemed to grow with time, and when their father died, he quickly stripped her of all the benefits of being married to a nobleman. She had not been allowed any money and, more importantly, she could not use the family name.

The manor was the only thing left, and it was not because his father left it for her that he didn't take that away too. Rather, it was because he was too disgusted to live there. Lady Delphine's brows furrowed as though she were in pain. The memory was not one she liked to remember.

It wasn't easy to keep up a manor without any money, and she knew she couldn't sell it and get a smaller house that would be easier to manage. Perhaps even remarry—but the Marquis of Haiyes made that exceedingly difficult for her.

With nothing else to do, she had turned to this, but it only made his hatred for her even stronger. At least she could pay her bills, that was the only good thing. She had feared he would one day chase her out of the manor, or perhaps set the manor ablaze with her in it, but he never did that.

However, he did show up at her manor one odd night, drunk to his boots, spouting curses as he was now—calling her a whore and demanding her service. Lady Delphine knew he was just trying to belittle her.

It was also shocking, as the lord never addressed her directly. Not once had he ever spoken to her, even when his father was alive. But whenever he was drunk, as he was now, he would do this.

What stopped Lady Delphine from doing anything about it—what had also stopped her from chasing him away from the manor that night, and instead made her hide in the manor until he left—was that he looked exactly like his father.

Even in Hendrix's old age, the resemblance between them was uncanny, and right now, it felt like she was in the presence of her dead husband. He was looking at her with those eyes, and she couldn't take it.

The original goblet she held fell from her hand, and the sound didn't even register—but the Lord of Haiyes' voice was as clear as day.

"Have you come to this ball to find more customers?"

Lady Delphine shut her eyes tight, but she couldn't shut her ears. It didn't help that she knew the exact look he had on his face.

Rose didn't know what to do. She looked from Lady Delphine to the lord. She thought he looked a little familiar, especially his voice, but she couldn't quite place it. However, she was almost certain he had been in the assembly hall the day the crown prince had called for her.

She noticed the crowd didn't try to stop it. But not only that—there seemed to be some form of commotion closer to the front. That was when Rose noticed the crown prince had stepped down from the podium. Her heart dropped. She hoped he hadn't noticed what was happening in this corner, as she had tried to stay very hidden after the Queen appeared. Rose knew he would only make this worse.

The lord was still spouting such cruel words when he suddenly took a gulp and frowned at the contents. The look of disapproval on his face was clear. He had clearly thought it was wine, but it wasn't.

Suddenly, a nasty smile appeared on his face, and Rose moved in front of Lady Delphine without thinking—just as room-temperature wine poured down the front of her dress. She immediately felt it seep into her clothes and cringed at the unpleasant feel of wet fabric.

"Rose!" Lady Delphine called from behind her; her voice seemed to be filled with worry. She seemed to have snapped out of her daze.

Rose glared at him. "I am fine, Lady Delphine."

"Your dress!" she said, sliding from behind her, staring at Rose's dress in horror. The front of it was wet.

"Don't worry about it. It's the same color as the wine—no one will notice." As she spoke, she didn't take her eyes off him as she wondered what the lord would do next. If he could easily try to spill wine on Lady Delphine, Rose had to make sure to keep her away from him.

She quickly moved so she was in front of Lady Delphine again while still glaring at him, but the lord seemed to be over it as he staggered away, the cup falling from his hand. Rose sighed as she watched him go. The little crowd around them had completely forgotten about them at this point, as the prince was currently dancing with the first daughter of the Marquis of Stonegate.

Rose couldn't see from where she was, as the crowd made that a little difficult, but she had overheard someone say it. Not that she cared—right now, Lady Delphine was all that mattered.