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Chapter 97: A Dark Blot

Caius reacted quickly, supporting Rose with his body and his second hand to prevent her from falling to the ground. Her head hit his chest with a soft thud, and his hand went around her waist, holding her to himself to keep her from sliding down.

Caius grunted—it was more from irritation than from stopping her fall. "Get her off me," he said to the guards.

He couldn't believe she would rather faint than answer his questions. He didn't want to believe that something was wrong—after all, Lady Delphine had already said she nursed Rose back to full health.

Guards moved closer, but only one of them took Rose, carrying her in his arms. Caius's eyes narrowed as he watched this, wondering why it irked him even more, but he didn't dwell on the thought. He just turned around to walk to the front doors.

"Wake her up and bring her to my chambers," he ordered with his back to them.

"As you wish, Your Highness," Henry replied, finding his voice. He was anxious and worried, but somehow relieved he was not the subject of the Crown Prince's anger right now.

"Your Highness," a different guard called, his voice a bit unsure.

"What?" Caius asked, turning around, his eyes blazing at the disruption.

"I think that's blood," the guard said softly, pointing to the ground.

Caius looked where he was pointing, and sure enough, there was a dark blot on the ground where Rose had just stood. His forehead creased, and he turned to look at her.

Caius's eyes scanned Rose as the guard held her. His jaw tightened when he saw the stain spreading at the bottom back of her dress—dark and wet. The irritation he'd felt seconds ago evaporated, replaced by a swift, consuming urgency.

"She's bleeding," he said flatly, but his voice carried a new tension that made every man around him straighten.

"Get the physician!" he barked, louder this time.

The guard holding her adjusted his grip carefully. He didn't want to move her too much, as he wasn't sure where she was bleeding from.

Caius moved back toward her, reaching her in two long strides, his earlier decision to distance himself forgotten. His gaze flicked from the blood on her gown to the paling color of her face.

She was unconscious, but her forehead creased in pain, and she twitched slightly. Her lips were dry and slightly parted. Her freckles were more prominent with the lack of color on her face. As Caius studied her, worry made his brows crease more.

Henry stepped forward, wringing his hands. "She mentioned she had fallen ill... but Lady Delphine said she'd fully recovered. However, this does not look like illness. I think it might be her time of the month."

Caius shot a glare at Henry. "Enough to make her faint?" he asked.

"I have heard of extreme cases, Your Highness. She might be one of them."

Caius didn't seem to believe this, especially when he looked to the floor and noticed the blood trailing into the carriage. This was a worrisome amount of blood to lose, and by the looks of things, she was still bleeding.

"Take her to a room in my wing. Have the physician look at her there and inform me immediately."

"Yes, Your Highness," Henry said with a bow.

Caius took one last slow look at Rose—she still lay unmoving in the guard's arms—before he turned around and walked toward the front doors.

"Move," Henry yelled at the guard holding Rose as soon as Caius went through the door.

Someone had already gone to fetch the physician as soon as the Crown Prince gave the order. Henry, however, still had to get her to the wing, but her bleeding over the floor was a huge concern.

"Get the maids and tell them to bring towels," Henry ordered as the guard holding Rose walked toward the doors. However, he didn't go in immediately and had to wait at the entrance.

Fortunately, the maids were quick to appear, with Edna leading the crew. "Rose," she cried, rushing toward her as she lay in the guard's arms.

"Quick," Henry cut in. "Get her into the castle and into a room in the Crown Prince's wing."

"The Crown Prince's wing?" a different maid asked in shock.

"We don't have time to ask questions. Move her now. The rest of you, clean up the mess."

The guard walked through the doors while Edna walked close, wrapping Rose with a towel, making sure there wasn't a trail of blood as they walked in. She could not believe this was Rose—and in such a state.

She had so many questions to ask, but anyone could see now was not the time. Right now, taking care of Rose was more important than anything else.

They walked into the castle, took the turn leading to the Crown Prince's wing and went up the flight of stairs.

"Are we putting her on the same floor as the Crown Prince?" another maid asked in surprise as they reached the top of the stairs.

"Yes," Edna was the one who replied. "Most of the rooms on the ground floor are unused. There should be at least one already prepared room on the same floor as the Crown Prince's chambers. It will be better to put her there. We don't have time to prepare the rooms."

The maid turned to Henry, who shrugged. "The Crown Prince didn't say where to put her. I'm sure anywhere other than his bedchambers should be fine. We can always move her later. Right now, getting her there is more important."

Edna smiled and nodded. "You, get more clean towels and a change of clothes. Also, get smaller pieces of cloth we can use."

"Okay," the maid replied and withdrew.

Edna watched her go. She knew she didn't have to get into too many details—the maids would understand immediately. Besides, the commotion they were making was waking up the household, and Edna wanted to minimize how many people would see Rose in such a state.

She was sure the news of Rose's appearance had already spread through the castle. She wondered what Martha was thinking. But that didn't matter. As soon as Rose woke up, she was sure to get the full story. Making sure she woke up was all that mattered now.