

The Dragon's Fated Bride Chapter 22 - A MOTH TO THE FLAME - PART 1

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The upstairs corridor looked empty as Faye emerged from the bedchamber. After taking a refreshing sponge bath and following Sterling's instructions to dress in the clothing Helena had provided, Faye wandered through the rustic farmhouse, unsure of where everyone was.

She walked aimlessly, listening to the patter of her footsteps echoing off the wooden floorboards. The place carried a natural warmth. It was a family home and decorated sparsely, which made her feel at ease.

1

Suddenly, her breath hitched as she turned a corner and was taken aback to find herself face-to-face with one of Sterling's knights. He was guarding the stairs. Faye guessed Sterling had placed him there to watch over her and make sure she did not escape.

The knight was a towering figure, just like Sterling, with broad shoulders and bulging biceps. Faye couldn't help but notice the sound of his heavy breathing as he stood motionless, his menacing, dark brown eyes fixed on her. She knew these knights had spent a lot of time in combat, and it showed in their demeanor and chiseled physiques.

As she stood there, taking in the sight of the knight, she couldn't help but feel a sense of awe and admiration. They actually did not intimidate her. Faye kept her ground, not backing away from his lethal glare, curiously observing the paladin before her. She had lived with a knight, her father, who had been a fierce combatant, but that was only his outer shell. On the inside, his heart had held a treasure trove of love for her and her mother.

She noticed the knight's armor had the same blood-red draconian badge as Sterlings. Her mouth felt dry as a wave of anxiety washed over her, making her stomach feel uneasy. Seeing the emblem made Faye frown as it brought back a flood of unsettling memories she wished to keep buried.

1

Her eyes scanned the armor. Though slightly rusted in the hinged joints and dinged from being well used, it still gleamed under the sun's rays. Faye unconsciously raised her hand. She felt a sudden urge to touch it and feel the cold smoothness of the metal against her fingertips. Faye stopped and withdrew her hand before touching the man. She knew it was impolite.

She was jolted from her wayward thought when the knight knelt before her and introduced himself.

"Good Morning, Duchess. I would like to present myself. I am your personal guard. My name is Andre." He had a slight accent she had not heard before.

3

Faye stammered as she replied to his greeting.

"T-thank you, I-I am Faye Mont...I mean—I am. Gah!"

She clamped her mouth shut. Blushing. Faye felt embarrassed by her own words.

"..."

She sighed and gave him a sincere smile.

"Never mind, you already know who I am. Sorry."

Andre let out a soft chuckle as he gazed at the petite lady before him. The sound of her high-pitched voice filled the room, and her bright, infectious smile illuminated the space around her.

He knew he was going to enjoy this assignment. As he watched her animated gestures, he could feel the corners of his mouth curving upward, and he expected there would be many laughs and smiles she will bring to his days as her protector.

2

"Um... Where is Sterling?" She asked.

"This way, Duchess. He is getting the horse ready for a trip into town. The commander said there were a few errands he needed to take care of."

With a chivalrous gesture, Andre offered his hand covered in a metal gauntlet, and Faye took it as he guided her down the stairs. The paladin loomed large over her as they ambled side by side through the wide open space of the home toward the back of the place.

There they entered a cozy, simple little kitchen. Helena was seated at the table, mending some clothing and drinking her morning tea. She raised her head and gave Faye an amused smile.

2

"Morning, sweet girl. Are you doing better today?"

Faye nodded and returned her friendly greeting. "Yes, I'm feeling much better today. Thank you for asking."

"Oh! that is glorious news. Now, have a seat and drink your tea." Helena gestured, with a nod of her head, to the chair across from her. "You must take the medicine."

Faye's face scrunched up at the thought of drinking the elixir. It tasted bitter and made her drowsy. She did not want to run around the town of Easthaven with Sterling, her head floating in the clouds, struggling to keep her eyes open.

Helena inquired, "What's wrong, Faye? Don't you want to stay well?" She took in the look of apprehension on Faye's face.

"No, ma'am, it is not that at all. It's... I don't want the tonic to make me feel sleepy."

Helena giggled at Faye's admission of why she was hesitant to take the drink.

"It is fine, Faye. I have removed the skullcap berries from this batch of potion. I knew it would make you too sleepy."

A realization dawned on Faye. She did not know what day it was or how long she had been slumbering.

"Helena? How long did I sleep?"

The old widow woman answered. "I would estimate a little under a full day."

Faye's shoulders drooped under the stress of the news, the air thick with the disappointment that hung around her. She had seen the look of eagerness that Sterling had worn when he had talked about returning to Everton, the thought of it reminding her of the illness that had caused their delay.

Faye felt guilty for causing her husband so much aggravation. She should have listened and stayed in that carriage.

When she saw him again, she would apologize and also for accusing him of being inappropriate. She had been wrong in her accusations, and she had the distinct feeling it had wounded his pride.

3

Especially when she heard his last words to her before leaving the bedchamber.

Faye reached out and obediently accepted her cup of tea from Helena, and swallowed with haste. She did not need to bring any more conflict to those around her.

The sound of Sterling's booming voice calling from behind, it filled the kitchen as he walked in from the pasture entry. Making Faye jump at his presence.

"Good, you are ready. Let us be on our way."

2

The_Sweet_Sparrow

Thank you to all the readers and fans for supporting TDFB. And welcome to all the ones. If you have the opportunity, please leave a review for this novel. It can assist in letting others know if the book is being enjoyed.

I appreciate all of you. The comments make me smile every time I see them.