

The Dragon's Fated Bride Chapter 27 - NOT LIKE OTHER MEN - PART 1

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Sterling guided Faye from the jeweler's store. He glared at her with a menacing expression and raised his eyebrow.

"Here is your first lesson in life, Faye. You should only believe half of what you see and none of what you hear. The tale that old man told you is a scheme to get you to buy the jewelry. Don't be foolish and accept everything you hear at face value. Do you understand?"

Faye's timid expression gave away her nervousness, as she nodded in agreement.

"Excellent, then it is time for us to leave."

Sterling opened the door and let Faye exit first he and Andre followed behind.

Sterling, Faye, and Andre stepped into the street and looked around the town. An unsettled silence fell upon them. Andre finally broke the tension and spoke first.

The dark eyes of the man flicked briefly in Sterling's direction.

"I have to go to the smithy to get a new dagger because the hilt on my old one is broken."

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With a simple nod, Sterling conveyed his agreement.

"Take Faye with you. I need to visit the barber in town, and it's not a suitable place for a lady."

They said their goodbyes to Sterling. Faye diligently followed Andre through the bustling town square. Staying close to his side.

Soon they arrived at the edge of the settlement, where the woods began. Her eyes were drawn to the towering pine trees swaying in the breeze that bordered the village. As they approached, Faye could see the smoke from the forge fires billowing up into the sky, creating a hazy, oily cloud.

The pungent scent of burning coals and molten iron filled the air, making Faye's nose tingle. She listened to the rhythmic clanking sound of the hammers as they pounded against the red-hot metal, creating a symphony of metallic notes.

Every strike sent a shower of sparks flying in all directions, each one twinkling like a tiny firefly before extinguishing. Faye's eyes roamed through the workshop, taking in the sight of sweaty men with blackened skin and nostrils, their muscles bulging with every swing of the hammer. The heat radiating from the forge was intense, making Faye's skin prickle with sweat.

When the workers saw Andre and Duchess Thayer, they fell silent. The men gathered outside and bowed to Faye, which surprised her. She realized that they already knew her title, and it felt daunting. This once more made her understand why Sterling disliked the honorifics that came with his status.

A gruff but friendly voice sounded out over the noise of the forge, and Faye noticed a bald, portly middle-age man step forward to greet Andre with an outstretched hand.

"Sir Andre, what brings you to see me today?"

Faye caught the corners of Andre's lips curl into a mischievous smirk as he answered the smithy. She thought he was going to show him a broken dagger, but he never drew the blade from its sheath. Instead, he jutted his head towards her and said, "It is not for me. The duchess has a request."

The older man ambled closer to Faye, squinting his beady black eyes as he tried to make out her face. Then he inquired.

"Well. What would a duchess want from a smithy? Hmm..."

Faye felt her mouth run dry as she tried to swallow, then she mustered up the words.

"Spurs, I would like a set of spurs."

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The hefty man howled with laughter at her request. Then he gave her a severe look.

"I cannot sell iron to you. You are not a knight of the empire under the service of king Minbury. It would be treason if I were to sell you spurs. The title of Duchess has no bearing on that rule."

Faye huffed at the tubby man and, with pride, puffed up her chest. She stepped closer to him so they were now toe to toe. Andre's eyes grew wide as he watched the showdown between the petite Faye and the glowering smithy.

"Then let me make things simple for you. The spurs are not for me. The money is not mine. It is the gold from Duke Thayer's coffers that is purchasing the spurs and he is a knight and serves King Minbury to protect this entire empire from the monsters and demons that curse these lands. So you see..."

She pushed her white gloved finger into his grimy chest.

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"You are selling them to the hero of the empire. It is not treason!"

Faye wanted to make it clear to the man that her husband was not just any knight serving the king. Nor was he like other men; he was extraordinary.

Even though things had not started well between them, she still held Sterling in high regard and she felt others should, too.

Andre's body tensed as his hand made a move for his sword to prepare to defend Faye's life. Although he didn't want to kill his longtime friend, he'd had no choice if he threatened the duchess. Andre prayed silently, hoping the smithy wouldn't lose his temper because of Faye's aggressive attitude.

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He watched as the man calmly scratched at his beard, contemplating seriously on what Faye had expressed. She was correct. If it was for Duke Thayer and his gold paying, then it was not treason or theft of iron from the king. The Duchess was right; her husband was the glorious hero and protector of the empire. It would not look good on him if he denied her the spurs.

"Please, wait here. I am aware of the type of spurs that the Duke prefers. I always have a set ready for him."

"Wait!" She shouted at his retreating. "This request goes one step further. I want something engraved on them."

The smithy halted mid stride and spun around to face Faye. He had an inquisitive expression on his face.

He asked, furrowing his brows. "What do you mean? Engraved."

Faye explained.

"Around the heel plate, I would like it to say—My heart is loyal to you."

"I see," he shouted over his shoulder to the back of the forge.

"BOY!"

The sound of running footsteps intensified as a scrawny, unkempt young man raced towards Faye and the smithy. His body was covered in a thick layer of soot, making him appear as though he had just escaped a raging inferno. She studied him closely and estimated that he was probably about sixteen years old, if not younger. He smelled of the acrid scent of sweat and smoke from the forge, causing Faye's nose to wrinkle.

The_Sweet_Sparrow

This girl is impressive with knowing so little. Faye has picked up how important Sterling's position is in the empire.

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