

## **The Dragon's Fated Bride Chapter 39 - AN UNTOLD STORY - PART 2**

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Everyone finished their food and left the kitchen to ready the horses at the back of the farmhouse. Helena stayed at the sink. Faye stood beside her and leaned her head onto Helena's shoulder. She felt sad that she had to leave this warm and welcoming place. The old woman held a special spot in Faye's heart.

After fussing around the kitchen for a moment, Helena wrapped a tight hug around Faye. Her smile shone brightly as she looked into the young Duchess' brilliant blue eyes, feeling the softness of the new winter cloak under her aged, work-weary fingers. The old woman spoke reassuringly to Faye.

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"Everything will be alright, my sweet girl. ... Don't fret. I know the Duke will care for you after what I saw. Be a good wife to him and he will cherish you. Although; I suspect he already does."

"Oh! Before I forget, this is for you." Helena handed Faye two tiny bottles with cork stoppers.

"I have made two potions for you if the fire lung returns. The Duke requested it. They are labeled and will instruct you on how to use them. Remember...the one in the blue bottle will make you sleepy, so be cautious with it."

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Faye took the bottles, hugged Helena tight one last time, and released her. She moved toward the door to leave and suddenly remembered her locket and dress.

"Helena, do you have my dress? The one I was brought here in."

The old woman gave Faye a perplexed look of apprehension. Then answered her.

"I burned it. There was nothing left of the dress but rags."

As Helena observed, Faye's face went from beaming to ghostly white in a matter of seconds. Faye let out a piercing screech, causing the old woman to jump.

"Where!...Where—did—you; burn it!"

"Behind the old bar in the rubbish pile. There was nothing left of it."

Faye bolted out of the kitchen. The sound of her footsteps resonated off the wooden floor. She charged through the back door. Faye ran so fast that she missed a step on the stairs and tumbled to the ground, scraping her already injured palms.

She quickly recovered and scrambled toward the barn. Faye could see the faint sign of smoke behind it. The men working in the distance paused. The sound of their saddles jingling halted as they heard the widow call out for Faye.

"Stop, Milady... It's too late. I have already burned it."

Upon hearing the commotion, Sterling's eyes followed the swift movements of his wife as she darted through the tall grass in the field, her body frantically propelling her toward the backside of the barn.

The rustling of the grass and the sound of her pounding footsteps filled the air, accompanied by the nervous clomping of Helios' hooves. Andre's hands gripped tightly onto the reins of the commander's horse as he saw him run after Faye.

Sterling streaked after his wife, his heart racing with apprehension. He was unsure of why she looked so upset. Everything had been fine at breakfast. He felt a jolt of adrenaline running through his body as she vanished behind the barn.

As he caught up to her and rounded the corner of the old barn, he moved closer to Faye. Sterling could see the expression of despair etched deeply into her face as she dropped to her knees and dug furiously through the fire and ash of the burn pile.

Seeing her insane action spurred him with great urgency to get his hands on her before she hurt herself further.

"Faye! Stop it! You're burning your hands!"

Sterling hurriedly moved in and wrapped his brawny arms around her waist, pulling her into a tight embrace. As she fought to escape, they tumbled to the ground, the soft grass cushioning their fall.

The Duke wrestled her to her back and straddled Faye's body, pinning her wrists in his enormous hands. His grip was firm yet gentle. The weight of his hold made her stop struggling. She was powerless against his immense build.

Sterling cursed at Faye. He was caught up in the adrenaline rush, and his words were terse. "Damn it, woman! What in the hell is going through your mind, sticking your hands in a fire like that? Are you f\*cking insane?"

Faye shrieked and twisted, trying to free herself when he screamed in her face.

"LET—ME—GO!!! My mother's necklace is in the fire!"

Andre and several others had gathered and looked on as the Duke restrained Faye. Sterling noticed and glowered at the men as he shouted for Andre. "Come get her! I have to see if I can find something in the fire pit. The rest of you... get back to your duty!"

The Duke drug Faye up by her scrawny arms and shoved her frail body into Andre's, who quickly held her arms, not letting her run after Sterling. They both watched as the Duke stared into the fire.

Sterling walked around the edge of the fire pit. He watched the grey ash settle into the glowing embers. There was not much left except a burnt remnant or two of Faye's old dress. Then, as he was about to give up searching, something interesting caught the light in the fire.

He fixed his gaze on the strange piece. It was a gold necklace, and, surprisingly; it was clean. There were no scorch marks or burnt spots on the locket. However, if he had to guess, anything inside of it would have been destroyed in the fire.

Sterling reached his hand into the smoldering crater and, with his fingers, he quickly plucked up the chain and locket.

Sterling looked up at Faye and Andre, showing them the necklace in his hands.

"I found it. You can let her go now, Andre. Please, finish readying the horses."

Faye eagerly dashed towards Sterling, determined to take her necklace. As she approached him, she could see the shiny gold locket as it shimmered in the sunlight, nestled in the palm of his hand.

Sterling wasn't ready to hand it over yet. Instead, he scrutinized it meticulously, turning it over and examining every intricate detail. Suddenly, his eyes widened in astonishment as he spotted the elaborate engraving of Morgan le Fay on the front.

It was identical to the bracelet he had gifted Faye just the day before. But there was something else that caught his attention. As he held the necklace, he could sense an unusual energy emanating from it - the same energy he had felt when they were ambushed in the dense Terrewell thicket.

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The Duke wondered if there was a link between Faye, her mother's locket, and the strange force surrounding them.

He was curious if something in the locket was the cause.

As Sterling pressed the latch on the engraved piece, it made a satisfying, tiny click as it released.

When he opened it, Faye observed that a small, pearly white iridescent dragon scale dropped from inside, into Sterling's soot-stained palm. She saw his eyes grow wide as his hand trembled.

Sterling felt his blood run cold as his heart thundered in his ears. What he held was precious. It was the heart scale of a dragon. An extraordinary magical scale that was sought after by men and mages alike.

The holder could have unlimited magical powers, and it was even better if the one who possessed it was a mage or knew how to use arcana. Many men would kill to have one. Now he understood the reason for the protective barrier that surrounded Faye.

It was the scale.

As they stood in the field, Faye watched Sterling's expression. It went from neutral to something dark and sinister. She felt a chill in her spine as he narrowed his eyes and threw a bitter look at her. The red irises had vanished, and they were now black as coal.

The Duke glared at Faye as if she was the enemy he was about to slay.

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A/N: Today is the monthly re-set. Please consider voting for the novel with your golden tickets!

Thank you!