

## Under The Oak Tree

### *Under the Oak Tree, Chapter 1 – His Return*

Maximilian Calypse nervously paced around the drawing room.

She was so tense that she didn't even recognize that she was biting her nails until the Duke of Cross came inside. When she heard his cane hitting the floor, Max hurriedly hid her hands behind her back.

"Didn't I warn you a thousand times about that nasty habit?"

"Sorry, sorry..."

Max bowed her head at her father's cold voice. The duke clicked his tongue as he looked at the scene.

"Don't embarrass me. You've got more luck than you deserve. I won't forgive you if you cause trouble to our family with your dirty behavior."

Cold sweat dripped behind her back. She stiffened in fear and opened her mouth with difficulty.

"I will do everything that you say father. I will... he, as soon, as he comes..."

She could tell what her father's face was without looking up. When she spoke, he always had a disgusted look directed towards her. Max tried to carry on with her words as calmly as she could.

"Father, I'll try, I'll try. This, this marriage, this..."

"Stop!"

The Duke of Cross hit the floor firmly with his cane.

"Even for today... but no. Can't you just be calm for a few hours? Who the hell would want a wife like you who stutters like a horse!"

"I-I..."

"Riftan Calypse is no longer a low-ranking knight! He has become one of the sword masters on the continent, and the 'bold warrior' who has defeated the Red Dragon! If he wants to, the temple will consent to a divorce permit."

Just imagining it was horrible, and he breathed loudly, his forehead creasing.

“For the spirit of the Cross family you should not be divorced by a knight from the heavens! You can’t let the family become a laughingstock because of their stupid daughter.”

””” ”

She bit her lips. The objection that it wasn’t her fault soared to her throat. She had never wanted to marry Riftan Calypse and she knew he felt the same way. Wasn’t it the duke himself who pushed ahead with the marriage that no one asked for?

Whether he had read her rebellious thoughts or not, her father remained icy.

“If you were half as beautiful as Rosetta...No, at the very least as normal. I wouldn’t have taken this road to please him!”

When she remembered her half-sister, whose beauty was comparable to a rose, her arguments faded away like sand. Looking down at her pale, weary face, the duke of Cross added ruthlessly.

“Even if King Ruben wants to welcome him as his son-in-law, he’ll be fine even if the other party refuses! It’s all because you couldn’t win his heart!”

“B-but...he-he, on the wedding, the-the next day he’s gone....”

She was about to argue it was not about capturing his heart b\*\*t that she never had the chance to have a proper conversation with him. Before such words could be uttered, Max was struck on the side with the cane, and she crouched with a gasp. She reeled from the immense pain, unable to release a scream.

“Don’t even think about talking back to me. Just thinking about your horrible habit makes me incensed!”

She nodded hurriedly for fear of the wood flying a second time. The duke, who had his lips pressed as if to pour more poison, withdrew at the sound of a knock on the door. The quiet voice of the maid could be heard.

“Lord, the Knights of Remdragon have arrived.”

“Guide him to the drawing room!”

Max looked up at his father in terror. He threatened furiously with his gnashed teeth.

“Make it clear to Calypse that you can’t annul your marriage! Once again, if you insult the family, you’ll pay heavily!”

Then he went out of the drawing room leaving behind Max. She stood up with difficulty and leaned back against the window, waiting breathlessly for the pain to pass.

The pouring autumn sunlight pierced her eyes in her painful state. Still, she managed to swallow her tears. Her situation never improves even if she cried. Instead, it will only make her look more miserable than she already is.

Max clasped her trembling hand tightly. She had to keep her head straight. For a woman in this society, divorce was tantamount to a death sentence. It was not just a matter of being ridiculed, but it was an irrevocable disgrace to the family.

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