

## The Selection: Bride Of The Dark Dragon Chapter 14 - Tips

MIRA

I am looking at the most gorgeous dress I've ever seen in silver satin and with an intricate pattern at the top and bottom created with black pearls. As in the natural and most expensive ones. I put it down, afraid to ruin it in any way. My family is not poor but we are definitely not that rich. A dress like that can keep our small castle running for a few good months.

I open another box and there is a stunning blue silk gown with a silver thread embroidery. Not that cheap as well. And I do not recognize the work of the artist, although I am pretty sure I know everybody in the kingdom. The next box – a very revealing burgundy dress velvet dress with a plunging neckline and open back, sewn with golden thread... Now I am sure that this has not been made in the Kingdom! That's Gerdian Empire fashion for sure!

And that means.. that means that a gerdian sent that here. For me. Is it for me even?

I look around and after a while, I see that there is a note attached for one of the boxes. Opening it, I read: "For Miradora Freyn". And that's it. Nothing else. I don't even know who is the gerdian who got me all these. Was that Derrien? Or maybe this Ryden guy? Not that I want anything from any of them... But I do need some clothes. However, everything here seems too revealing and extravagant to my taste. I mean, I could wear some of the dresses to a ball or something. But right now my stomach is growling and all I want to do is to get to the dining hall. And maybe some lessons if we have them here... If I appear in one of these, I would look like such a show-off. And the girl would hate me even more. Not to mention that it'll look like some gerdian is already keeping me as his property. And I'd sooner die than give up!

I look through another few boxes and find pairs of shoes in almost every colour possible, but definitely not our fashion – the shape and the height of the heel are different. Then I get to a box that has a wine red garment of some sort, I get it out and can't figure out for quite some time what the chaos is this. I spin it and stretch it, there are too many strings, connecting some pieces of lace... Oh, gods! That's some kind of lingerie, is it? I gasp one more time when I figure out what is going where... How daring! And...and more

importantly, why would someone buy something like this for me? This is crazy! And how dare they!

A knock on the door distracts me once again. Persistent and annoying, so I decide to open, considering there is a barrier protecting me from... well, probably everyone. Or maybe the barrier is there not for protection, but to keep me inside...

With that thought, I open the door and see lord Ryden Dargen again. Looking smug, as he lifts a finger and a few boxes push through the barrier straight into my hands.

"What the...", I bite my lip before I say something inappropriate.

"This shield is only working for alive beings", Ryden explains, "I bought something for you, my lovely la..." His eyes wander to the room behind my back and all the other boxes, some of which are still opened. "Who was it?", he grits through his teeth and I gulp, taking a step back. "Who brought you all these! These are from the empire, so who did this?!"

His eyes go black again and for the second time today, I am truly scared of him.

"I have no idea", I say honestly. Well, ok, I lie. I do have an idea now since I know that's not him. But something tells me, I'd better keep quiet. "The boxes just appeared in flames and there was a note that it's for me. But other than that I have no clue..."

I flap my eyelashes hard and his eyes return to normal.

"Get rid of those", he says dryly, "I'll get more things for you."

"Lord Ryden, there's no need really", I smile apologetically, "I am sure my things would arrive here soon..."

"I'll do what I want", he snaps, "And you will do as I say, lady Mira."

Honestly, that would sound creepier if he could actually enter my room. Not that powerful, are we? However, I simply nod and curtsy. No need to provoke a crazy gerdian now. That battle is better to put off for later.

He eyes my body up and down again and I am lucky that the boxes in my hands are so huge and cover almost everything.

“I’ll see you at dinner, lady Mira”, he says before leaving. And I don’t stop him. Neither do I tell him that I kind of can’t leave here. Let it be a surprise!

I throw the boxes from him onto the sofa and open one out of interest. A very flashy golden dress is inside. Also not cheap and even more revealing than the ones I’ve seen before. If that is this is the fashion in Gerdian Empire then I have even less desire to go there now!

Another persistent knock on the door. Gods, is this Ryden guy going to give me a break today?

I slam the door open and meet eyes with a very shocked Sir Tristan.

“Gods, what are you doing here?”, I wrap myself into my silver curtain tighter.

“Lady Mira”, he bows eyes on me at all times, “I apologize for the intrusion. I just found out about everything that happened yesterday...”

“Then you work very slow, sir Tristan”, I can’t help saying. A part of me still wants to hurt him at least one bit. I also can’t help noticing that he also has a few boxes in his hands. What is it today? Did all the men get the same idea? Is it a collective brain or something?

“I apologize”, he says slowly, keeping his posture and face as always, “I failed to protect you. And I am only glad that it wasn’t you who got killed but some other girl. Here I bought you a few pieces from your favourite shop...”

“Her name was Bella!”, I interrupt him, “And she was an amazing person! Sweet, kind, and beautiful! And you failed her! Not me!”

My eyes are all teary and I hate this momentary weakness. I also hate that I am showing it in front of my ex-fiancé of all the people.

“I am really sorry about your roommate”, Tristan sighs and tries to take a step forward but the barrier stops him. He slides his free hand across it, testing it and I just roll my eyes.

“As you can see, I am trapped here. And”, I step to the side so that he can have a better view of the room with all the boxes, “Everything has been taken care of already.”

He is silent for a moment and it seems like different emotions surface in his eyes, but in the end, he is his usual gathered and indifferent self. He puts the boxes on the floor and moves them with his foot inside the room. And when I look questioningly at him, he says, “I just thought you wouldn’t get used to gerdians’ fashion so fast and picked something similar to what you like. So that at least you could be comfortable here.”

“How the chaos would you even know what I like?”, I close my eyes, signing.

“Mira,” he clenches his lips, “Sometimes I think that you have a completely wrong idea of who I am just because I never wanted to push you or scare you...”

My lips part as I do not know what to reply to that. Is he kidding me now?

“I’ll find out what the deal is with the barrier”, he says finally, changing the subject, “No one should keep you hostage. There are rules.”

“By the way”, I say, “I wish to get a copy of those to know my rights. No one even bothered to inform me.”

“I’ll deal with it. You will have everything you need!”, he bows and turns. For a second he hesitates, but then moves at his usually quick and confident pace.

After he is gone, I check the insides of one of the boxes purely out of curiosity and find a dress from my favourite seamstress. One of a kind. To get a dress from her you need to stay in a queue for a while. And I was only able to get her designs because I was Tristan’s fiancée. Even though it was on paper only.

I get the dress out – it’s dark green with golden embroidery, modest yet elegant. Very me.

But how did he know? Tristan is definitely not a fashion expert and he never cared about me in the first place to know what kind of clothes I like...

I am probably overthinking it and he just went to the best place and bought the best available already made dress... Yes, must be it.

Sighing, I decide that it's time to get dressed up. At least before I have the next unexpected visitor. There are far too many!

In the end, I chose the dress that Tristan brought, even though I hate the fact that it's from him. But, honestly, the other girls would kill me if they see me in a gerdian dress. And Tristan bought it for me out of guilt, not implying anything as I am now someone else's property. And I can't say the same thing for the dark lords. Their intentions are still unclear. So, it was the safest choice for me really.

After I am done, I wait and I wait... then I check the barrier... and then wait some more.

My stomach is rumbling as I am crazy-hungry. But no one remembers about me.

I lay on the bed fully dressed trying not to think of food. However, unsuccessfully. And then I hear the sound of the flames rising in the living room. I run there and almost bump into Derrien.

"Lord Derwood!", I curtsy and open my mouth to ask him to let me out, when I hear...

"What the chaos are you wearing, Mira?!"

The dark lord of the Gerdian Empire is furious, his eyes with sparks of dark magic are piercing through me...