

My Husband Chose Her Over Me Novel

Chapter 6

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My gaze remained fixed on the letter clenched in my trembling hands. The parchment, though finely crafted, quivered like a fragile leaf caught in a storm. I read it again, each word etching itself into my mind with unnerving finality.

A princess.

I was a princess.

The words tasted foreign in my mouth—like ash and gold at once. The daughter of *King Dorian of Verdana*. A lie I had never questioned unraveled itself before me in looping, royal script.

“This can’t be real,” I whispered hoarsely, my voice nearly lost in the thick silence of the room. I scanned the letter once more, hoping some hidden line might refute the absurdity.

My fingers clenched tighter, the letter crinkling under the pressure. “It’s impossible.”

Yet even as I said it, the memories surged forward—fleeting, fragmented. My supposed father’s vague murmurs about our “unusual ties” to the royal line. The quiet but lavish support that had appeared just in time to fund my education. And the marriage proposal—the inexplicable urgency with which the royal family had chosen *me* over the daughters of dukes and allies, far more politically suitable.

“They knew?” I whispered, the realization crashing into me like a rising tide breaking against the shore. My knees weakened beneath the weight of it all. “All this time, they knew.”

I staggered back a step, my heart pounding in my chest. Did Caden know? Or was this a secret buried deep beneath layers even he hadn’t unraveled?

And if he didn’t... why had I found this in his *father’s* chambers?

The sudden sound of the door creaking open behind me jolted me out of my thoughts. Panic surged. I shoved the letter into my bodice, the edges scraping against my skin, and spun around, already crafting an excuse.

Caden stood there, tall and composed, his presence casting a shadow across the threshold. His expression flickered briefly—surprise, suspicion—before his features arranged themselves into the familiar mask of composed royalty.

“Elara,” he said, voice steady but distant, “what are you doing in my father’s chambers?”

My pulse thundered in my ears. “Your mother sent me,” I replied, gesturing stiffly toward the folio on the desk. “She needed these documents delivered.”

His gaze flicked to the desk, then back to me. “She sent *you*? Not a page or attendant?”

“She was quite insistent,” I offered with a strained smile. “You know how she enjoys assigning me trivial errands.”

Caden stepped inside, the door closing with a soft click behind him. His presence made the room feel suddenly smaller, the air heavier.

“You shouldn’t be here,” he said tightly. “My father—”

“Is at the council meeting,” I cut in, already moving toward the door. “Yes, I know. I was just leaving.”

But he didn’t move. His body blocked the exit like a wall.

“What’s that?” His gaze dropped to my bodice, sharp eyes catching the edge of parchment peeking out despite my efforts.

My hand flew up instinctively, covering it. “Nothing,” I said too quickly.

“Elara.” His voice hardened, taking on the authority of a prince. “What have you taken?”

“It’s nothing important,” I repeated, backing a step away.

“Show me,” he ordered.

For three years, I had obeyed that tone, out of duty, fear, and the foolish love I once held for him. But something inside me shifted. Solidified.

“No,” I said. Just that. No explanation. No apology.

His brow furrowed. “No?”

I met his gaze evenly. “Caden, I waited for you last night. I waited so we could talk... but you didn’t come.”

He flinched, just slightly, but said nothing.

“I wanted to ask,” I continued, voice low but unwavering, “if you were still going through with the wedding to her.”

“Yes.” The word came swiftly. Too swiftly.

My throat tightened, but I gave a slow nod. That was it, then. The confirmation I had dreaded but already known in my bones.

“I understand,” I said, lifting my chin. “I truly do.”

I let the silence stretch between us, let him see the steel settling in my spine.

“I’m not your pawn anymore, Caden.” My voice grew stronger with every word. “You kept me here for three years—three years of marriage without love, without truth. And now you plan to take a second wife without even the decency to discuss it with the one you already have.”

His expression shuttered, the warmth in his eyes vanishing like mist. “We’ve talked about this before. You knew what this arrangement—”

“Was supposed to be?” I cut him off, stepping closer. “An arrangement? That’s what you still call this?”

“Elara, stop—”

“No, *you* stop,” I snapped. “You think I’ll stay quiet, accept scraps of affection and a crown I never asked for, while you move on with someone else?”

He opened his mouth, but I didn’t let him speak.

“I won’t be a prisoner to this farce of a marriage any longer. I want a divorce, Caden.”

The silence that followed was instant and cold.

“What?!” His voice cracked slightly, disbelief cutting through his polished composure.

“I want a divorce,” I repeated, the words ringing clear and final.