

An Understated Dominance (Dustin Rhys)

Chapter 2682

“Dustin, you’re not joking, are you?” Grace frowned slightly. His answer had caught her completely off guard, leaving her momentarily speechless.

“How could I joke about something like this?” Dustin smiled faintly.

He went on, “Your brothers are hopeless.

They can’t shoulder this burden, but you’re different. You’ve got both brains and strength, courage and vision. And you actually care about the people. If you took the throne, you could lead Dragonmarsh to greatness.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.” Grace shook her head. “I’m merely a woman. How could I be fit to rule a nation?”

“What’s wrong with being a woman? What makes it impossible?” Dustin countered.

He continued eloquently, “Looking back over a thousand years, wasn’t there a woman who became ruler? People still speak of her with admiration to this day.”

“That’s different.” She shook her head again.

“Don’t worry about whether it’s possible-just tell me if you want it. If you do, I’ll help you make it happen. I believe under your rule, this nation would grow stronger and more prosperous,” Dustin said bluntly.

“I…” Grace frowned slightly.

The thought had crossed her mind before, but she’d quickly dismissed it as unrealistic.

Regardless of her capabilities or worthiness, her gender alone made the throne impossible to claim. The prejudices of the nation ran deeper than any river, and gender often mattered more than ability when it came to matters of succession.

The people of Dragonmarsh would never accept a queen regnant. The legendary Queen Morwyn had been a singular figure in history-a once-in-a-millennium ruler impossible to replicate.

In the kingdom’s entire history, she remained the sole woman to hold sovereign power. What hubris would it take for Grace to even dream of following in those footsteps?

“You don’t have to answer me now. Think it over carefully, and decide when you’re ready. Whatever you choose, I’ll stand with you. Whoever you support, I’ll support.” Dustin made his stance clear.

He had never been one to meddle in affairs that weren’t his concern. If forced to choose among the princes, he would rather choose no one at all. He raised this topic only because he truly believed Grace would make an exceptional ruler.

“I’m going to see Tristan.” She didn’t say anything else, nodded, and left the room.

She was far from being a selfless saint without desires of her own. She burned with ambition, but hers was a nobler fire, one that centered on the nation and its people. For these noble goals, she had made countless sacrifices and shouldered tremendous burdens.

Whether running the intelligence network or risking her life alongside Dustin, everything she did served the greater good. She had always been content to work from the shadows and pull strings behind the scenes.

But now, Dustin’s words stirred something within her heart. Should she truly reach for the throne herself?

Inside the Luna Suite, Tristan sat quietly, gazing at the steam rising from his untouched tea. Behind him, Milton stood quietly with his head bowed and hands at his sides.

Just then, the door suddenly swung open, and Grace entered with a bright smile.

Tristan immediately rose to greet her, displaying proper deference. After all, he needed her help, and naturally, he had to stay humble.

“Tristan, you wouldn’t visit without good reason. What brings you here so early in the morning?” she asked.

She gestured for him to sit, then settled into the chair across from him.

“Since we’re siblings, I won’t beat around the bush.” Tristan cleared his throat. “You must have heard about last night’s upheaval in Dragonmarsh’s underground factions?”

“Of course.” Grace nodded. “The foreign elements led by the Hall of Gods have all been purged. For Dragonmarsh, it’s actually a good thing.”

“You control the largest intelligence network in Dragonmarsh. It shouldn’t be difficult for you to investigate this matter thoroughly, right?” he pressed.

“What’s got you so curious all of a sudden? Could it be that the reshuffle of the underground factions has caused you to suffer dearly?” She raised an eyebrow.

“I wouldn’t say dearly, though there’s been some impact. My main concern is that this mysterious force appeared too suddenly. Without understanding who they are, I fear they could pose a threat to our nation. It weighs heavily on my mind.”

Tristan’s words sounded noble. He spoke of serving the country’s interests while harboring his own hidden agenda.

“I see.” Grace smiled. “Your noble service to the nation and people sets the example we all aspire to.”

“Ha! I wouldn’t dare claim to be an example. I’m simply doing what I can.” He waved his hand dismissively with a laugh.

“Very well then. Since you’ve asked, I’ll have my people look into this matter thoroughly,” she agreed without hesitation.

“If I may ask. How long might such an investigation take?”

“It’s hard to say. I’ll notify you the moment we learn anything.” Grace’s answer remained deliberately vague.

“Fair enough.” Tristan nodded thoughtfully. “Though I’d prefer this matter remain between us. No need to complicate things unnecessarily.”

“Of course.” She smiled in acknowledgment.

“Great. I won’t take up any more of your time. Farewell.”

With that, he rose from his seat.

“Tristan, I’ll walk you out.”

Grace gestured toward the entrance and walked alongside him as they left Soluna Hall.

She didn’t let her smile drop until his car had disappeared down the road. Just as she’d expected, he’d come because of last night’s incident.

Now that Tristan had shown up, it was only a matter of time before Matthias and Nathaniel followed. She couldn’t help but think this had turned into a mess.