

An Understated Dominance (Dustin Rhys)

Chapter 2684

A chill crept down Matthias' spine at the thought. If the mastermind behind the purge was Grace, then the situation had taken a dire turn.

As a staunch royalist, she had never involved herself in government politics.

Her unexpected involvement and the massive disruption it caused raised alarming questions.

What could she possibly be plotting? Had she already chosen a side? Did she know their father's days were numbered and decide to secure her future?

The more Matthias pondered these possibilities, the more his heart raced with dread.

Grace commanded an intelligence organization with immense resources and networks. She could easily cut off his sources and deny him access to vital information. If that happened, he would find himself at a severe disadvantage before the succession battle even began.

Seamus said calmly, "Your focus has always been on your two brothers. You see them as enemies and spend all your time competing against them and trying to bring them down.

"But you never thought about the Princess of Ariella, who had been silently building her network behind the scenes. Now she has enough influence to shift the entire political landscape."

Before last night's great purge, Seamus had never given Grace a second thought either. To him, she had always maintained such a low profile in daily affairs.

She never displayed any ambition and consistently served the crown loyally. Plus, she also avoided conflicts, never took sides, and didn't attract anyone's attention. It was as if she didn't even exist.

It wasn't until last night that this invisible figure finally revealed her true capabilities. Only then did Seamus realize that among all the competing princes, such a remarkable woman of both wisdom and courage had been hidden in plain sight.

"Who would've thought Grace was so shrewd?" Matthias frowned. "Uncle Seamus, what should we do now? She seems like she's up to something."

"Regardless of her intentions, you must contact her," Seamus said calmly. "Start by gathering intelligence, then get to know her, and finally figure out how to win her over.

"No matter how much influence she wields or how exceptional her abilities are, she won't threaten your position. What you should be worried about is whether she'll throw her support behind another prince."

As a woman, Grace could never inherit the throne. But with the influence she had, she possessed the ability to reshape the political landscape entirely. That made her a force they couldn't afford to ignore.

"Got it. I'll see to it immediately,"

Matthias responded with a nod and left without saying anything else.

He had always been a man of action. Once he set his sights on a goal, he would achieve it by any means necessary.

"Godfather..." Anders began.

As soon as Matthias left, he stepped into the garden. He had been eavesdropping by the door and already understood the situation at hand.

"What is it?" Seamus raised an eyebrow slightly.

"It seems you're already aware of last night's incident in Oakvale. I'm concerned that if Matthias handles this poorly and makes the wrong move, what then?"

Anders asked with a grave expression.

He went on, "One wrong move at a time like this could ruin everything. I just don't trust someone as reckless as him."

Seamus smiled as he asked, "And what brilliant strategy do you propose?"

"I believe we shouldn't put all our eggs in one basket," Anders said, lowering his voice. "Though Matthias commands great influence, he's still a brute. Going up against Nathaniel won't be easy. If he fails, we'll be dragged down with him."

"Great rewards demand great sacrifices. In the fight for the throne, risk is inevitable," Seamus replied evenly.

"I understand this principle," Anders said. "I admit that brute Matthias is easier to control. If he takes the throne, we'll have a tighter grip on power and a bigger share of the rewards.

"However, the risks are equally high. If he fails, our entire family will fall with him. It's risky to bet everything on this brutish fool. If possible, we should explore another option."

"What option are you proposing?" Seamus pressed.

Anders explained with growing enthusiasm, "It's simple. You maintain your support for Matthias without changing your stance, while I pursue separate allegiance with Nathaniel.

"That way, we'll be covered no matter who takes the crown. We hedge our bets instead of risking everything."

"There's some merit to that reasoning, but how can you gain Nathaniel's trust?" Seamus asked as he took a sip from his teacup.

He went on, "You know better than anyone how cautious he is. You're my adopted son, and I'm supporting Matthias. What makes you think Nathaniel would trust you, let alone appoint you to a key role?"

"Earning his trust isn't that hard. I already have a plan, though it requires your complete cooperation, Godfather," Anders said with a smile.

"Oh? Let's hear it. What do you need me to do?" Seamus looked interested.

"It's simple. We stage a falling-out, then you disown me publicly. This will sever our bond entirely. It won't affect your standing with Matthias, nor will it hinder my approach to Nathaniel," Anders explained.

"It appears you've planned this thoroughly. If I refused to support you now, I would seem unreasonable," Seamus said thoughtfully.

"Godfather, please don't misunderstand. I'd never betray you," Anders declared earnestly.

He went on, "You raised me all these years, so your kindness means everything to me, and I'll never forget it. This plan is designed solely to secure a retreat for you. If you find it unsuitable, then forget I ever spoke these words."

"Relax. I'm not questioning your loyalty," Seamus chuckled. "Your proposal has merit. I do need a fallback plan, so we'll proceed as you suggest. Handle it however you see fit."

Upon hearing that, Anders's face brightened with joy. "Thank you, Godfather."