

An Understated Dominance (Dustin Rhys)

Chapter 2687

That afternoon in a private room of Soluna Hall, events unfolded exactly as Grace had anticipated.

After dealing with Tristan in the morning and Matthias at midday, Nathaniel now appeared before her. Within one day, all three of the most powerful princes came to see her one after another.

Tristan had asked her to investigate the mastermind behind the recent events, while Matthias had inquired whether she was that mastermind. As for Nathaniel, he was probing to see if a hidden master was backing her.

All three harbored the same suspicions, though each focused on different aspects of the mystery.

Grace could only choose to deflect with vague responses and stall for time. She didn't give any clear responses to any of them. She was aware that such matters couldn't be admitted. Otherwise, that would only invite more trouble down the line.

She naturally understood that no matter how carefully the news was contained, eventually it would leak out. In just a few more days, she bet her brothers would likely piece everything together.

Grace let out a weary sigh, sensing the dull throb of an approaching headache. Her original plan was to take advantage of Dustin's breakthrough, then attack the unprepared Hall of Gods forces and wipe them out in a single coordinated strike.

Her plan had succeeded, but it had also brought her a new problem.

She had previously kept a low profile, quietly developing her strength and making money discreetly. But now, she had thrust herself into the spotlight, where avoiding attention was impossible.

"What could possibly trouble the Princess of Ariella? Seeing you sigh like this is quite the novelty," Dustin said from behind her.

Grace turned and said helplessly, "Please don't tease me right now. I'm dealing with a headache because my three brothers' eyes are on me now. Nothing but trouble awaits."

"Let them be," he said with a grin. "You've kept a low profile long enough. Maybe it's time they see what you're really capable of.

She shook her head. "I prefer to make my money on the down-low. I'd rather avoid the whole power struggle if possible."

"Your passiveness won't protect you from other people's ambitions. They will come for your piece of the pie eventually," Dustin said as he sat leisurely and picked up a pastry.

He went on, "Have you considered what happens when one of your three brothers takes the throne? None of them will allow you to control such a big intelligence organization.

"They'll strip away everything you've built, regardless of whether you resist. Worse yet, they might even place you under house arrest with constant surveillance."

Grace fell silent at those words.

These possibilities had crossed her mind before. Under Valon's reign, she could wield power with confidence and use her authority to serve both her country and her father. But once a new ruler ascended, her protected position would crumble.

At that time, her authority would be stripped away, and the intelligence organization would also be reshuffled. Still, she could live with that since she had never been one to crave power.

Grace was aware that even surrendering everything might not guarantee her safety because her mere existence would threaten the new ruler.

Based on her understanding of her three brothers, house arrest would be a merciful alternative. It was better than them fabricating charges to throw her in prison or simply making her disappear entirely.

She wasn't being cynical about human nature after having witnessed too much darkness and understood the true character of rulers. Throughout history, most rulers have been regarded as heartless and untrustworthy.

"Ms. Linsor!"

Just then, a trusted aide suddenly knocked on the door and entered with a grave expression.

"We just received a report that there's been an outbreak of plague in Ashen Coast. It's spreading rapidly, and many civilians have already fallen ill."

"A plague?" Grace frowned upon hearing that. "Ashen Coast has always been peaceful with no wars or conflicts. How could a plague suddenly appear there?"

"According to our investigation, this plague may be connected to the Skull Covenant from 30 years ago," the aide replied.

"The Skull Covenant?" Grace's expression changed. "I thought they were wiped out. Don't tell me there are still remnants alive.

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Back when Valon was still a prince 30 years ago, the Skull Covenant was causing chaos everywhere, so he was ordered to lead an expedition. He brought 200,000 troops into the Ashen Coast, sealed bridges and blocked roads, and besieged the Skull Covenant for three whole months.

Over 10,000 Skull Covenant followers and hundreds of core members were killed, which left the guild permanently crippled.

Afterward, Valon dispatched numerous elite squads to hunt down the remaining Skull Covenant remnants throughout the land. His goal was to eliminate the threat once and for all.

Since then, they had vanished entirely from the world. For 30 years, they had never heard any news about them.

However, Grace never expected that at this critical moment, the Skull Covenant that had been destroyed 30 years ago would rise from the ashes and begin causing trouble in the Ashen Coast again.

"We need more time to investigate the specific situation. Right now, the plague continues to spread, and we must find a way to contain it. Otherwise, more than a dozen cities in the Ashen Coast will be affected," the aide warned.

"Organize personnel immediately and use every resource at our disposal. We must control this plague and minimize casualties," Grace ordered.

She didn't say much and tossed her badge to her trusted aide.

"Yes, ma'am," the aide acknowledged and departed swiftly.

"Dustin, it looks like we have trouble," Grace said with a frown.

She continued, "The Skull Covenant has risen from the ashes and begun secretly causing chaos again. Who knows how many people will die this time?"

"The Skull Covenant?" Dustin's eyes narrowed slightly. He found the timing of their return felt too convenient to be coincidental.