

An Understated Dominance (Dustin Rhys)

Chapter 2694

“Put the city on lockdown?” Neville was momentarily stunned, then quickly nodded. “I understand, Your Highness. I’ll handle it right away.”

As a soldier, following orders was his sacred duty. Whatever command Matthias issued, he would carry it out without hesitation.

“Hold on.”

Just as Neville prepared to leave, Matthias stopped him.

He said, “This outbreak is no ordinary crisis. All information must be completely contained, and we can’t have any more leaks.

“If any officials in Thornwick refuse to cooperate or act like they’re following orders while secretly disobeying them, they’ll be removed from their positions immediately and investigated. Anyone who stirs up trouble will be thrown straight into prison.”

“Yes, Your Highness,” Neville responded, then hurried off.

With direct orders from Matthias, he could finally act without restraint. He’d long been fed up with Thornwick’s officials-backstabbing their superiors, misleading their underlings, and playing everyone with phony politeness

When there were benefits to grab, they were the first in line. But when trouble arose, they made excuses and did nothing.

If it weren’t for these people getting in the way, the outbreak in Thornwick wouldn’t have gotten this bad.

Previously, Neville had restrained himself out of concern for disrupting Matthias’ plans. But now things were different. Anyone who dared to obstruct military orders or play games behind the scenes would face immediate consequences.

At best, they’d be stripped of their position. At worst, they’d end up in prison. There would be no room for negotiation.

While the outbreak in Thornwick was spiraling out of control, Sommertown, where Nathaniel had been dispatched, wasn’t faring any better.

He’d been working tirelessly since arriving the night before. Unlike Matthias’ reckless approach, Nathaniel was much more strategic.

Since he knew his mission involved containing the outbreak, he had assembled a medical team in advance. He immediately ordered them to collect samples of the pathogen for research and antidote development.

Nathaniel was even willing to use live test subjects to speed up the process. In addition to having his medical team work on an antidote, he had also clamped down on all information flow. The goal was to prevent panic that could cause people to flee and spread the plague further.

Despite doing everything right, he’d underestimated how quickly the plague would spread. In just one night, the number of infected had jumped from around 30 to over 100. Unfortunately, several infected individuals had escaped and were now spreading the virus.

Left with no choice, Nathaniel ordered lockdowns of all surrounding towns and sealed off every major entry and exit point.

Inside a hastily commandeered hospital, he sat in the director’s office listening to status reports from his subordinates. The news filled him with mounting rage.

“What the hell is wrong with you people? How hard can it be to catch a few plague carriers? It’s been a whole day and still nothing?” he shouted at his subordinate.

The subordinate lowered his head and explained, “Your Highness, those people seem to know our every move. It’s like they’re playing cat and mouse with us. They’re so cunning that every time we arrive at a location, they’ve already cleared out.”

“Wait... Are you telling me we have a mole in our ranks?” Nathaniel caught on immediately.

“It’s the only explanation, Your Highness. Otherwise, we would’ve caught them by now. But there’s something else. I believe this outbreak wasn’t the result of natural causes. It was man-made.” The subordinate dropped the bombshell.

“Man-made?” Nathaniel narrowed his eyes slightly. “Are you suggesting foreign operatives are behind this?”

“Whoever they are, they know how to stay hidden. We haven’t been able to track them down yet.” The subordinate shook his head.

“Then stop wasting my time with theories. Get out there and find them!” Nathaniel barked.

“Yes, Your Highness.” The subordinate didn’t dare to linger and bolted from the room.

“I had a feeling this outbreak was too convenient to be natural. So, someone was really behind it.” Nathaniel rested his crossed arms on the table, frowning in deep thought.

He wasn’t the only one tasked with handling the crisis. Even Tristan and Matthias had received similar missions. Though they were in different cities, the circumstances were remarkably similar across all three regions.

This outbreak response wasn’t just about saving lives, but a test. It was about proving who had the capabilities and who had the connections.

At first, Nathaniel hadn’t given it much thought. He just focused solely on completing the mission quickly. But his subordinate’s report revealed layers of complexity he hadn’t considered.

If the plague was man-made, then treating the symptoms would never end the crisis. Now, that was the real mission he needed to focus on.

With that realization, he reached for his phone and dialed an encrypted number.

“Gather your team and get to Sommertown immediately. I have an important mission for you,” he said.

As evening fell over Ashwillow Village in Reedcrest, Sadie delivered her comprehensive report to Grace.

“Ms. Linsor, we’ve quarantined all the new plague cases. The news is still under wraps, and we’ve got the situation under control for now.

“The renowned doctors from Oakvale have arrived, and they’re working with Mr. Rhys to learn his treatment methods. We should start seeing results soon.

“Given the current situation, as long as no new sources of infection appear, we should be able to fully contain the outbreak in Reedcrest.”

Though the morning had brought over 100 new cases, their swift response had paid off. Thanks to timely intervention and excellent intelligence work, they’d managed to isolate every new case within half a day.

With Dustin’s expertise combined with the assistance of more than a dozen skilled doctors, treating the hundred-plus infected patients seemed well within their capabilities. At least for now, they could finally catch their breath.