

An Understated Dominance (Dustin Rhys)

Chapter 2696

Grace's messengers quickly delivered the plague prevention prescription to Tristan, Matthias, and Nathaniel, though each reacted quite differently.

Tristan was naturally overjoyed. He immediately consulted with Icarus and Lenora to review the prescription. When both praised its effectiveness, he put it into action without delay.

His team began preparing the tonic and distributing it to patients. While it wasn't a complete cure, it helped alleviate the symptoms and kept conditions from worsening. In a race against time, even this level of relief was a tremendous help in his eyes.

Matthias, on the other hand, couldn't tell whether the prescription was genuine or not when he first received it. None of the people around him could make sense of it, either.

Given the circumstances, he decided to give it a shot. To his surprise, the prescription proved remarkably effective. He quickly ordered it to be distributed across the city and arranged large-scale purchases of the necessary medicinal herbs.

To his surprise, the herbs he had intended to distribute for free ended up in the hands of Thornwick's bureaucratic officials, who quickly turned them into a means of personal profit.

Instead of handing them out, the corrupt officials began selling them at inflated prices. The outbreak in Thornwick was already spiraling out of control, and their profiteering only fueled the chaos.

As news spread, panic buying broke out across the city. Wealthy merchants and capitalists began hoarding the herbs and reselling them at outrageous prices.

Under these circumstances, ordinary people couldn't afford even basic preventative medicine. Even those already infected were unable to access timely treatment.

Anyone looking to buy medicinal herbs faced prices dozens-sometimes hundreds – of times higher than the regular price. Those who couldn't afford them were left with no choice but to wait for death at home.

In this climate of fear and greed, Matthias not only failed to contain the plague but also inadvertently fueled widespread panic and suffering throughout the city. By the time reports reached him, Thornwick was already in turmoil.

Furious, he ordered the execution of over a dozen corrupt officials who had profited from the crisis. Even the wealthy merchants who had inflated prices and taken advantage of the national emergency were arrested and imprisoned.

The harsh punishments finally put an end to the corruption, but they created a new set of problems.

With so many officials arrested, Thornwick's government could barely function. The administrative breakdown only accelerated the outbreak's spread, leaving Matthias scrambling to restore order amid the chaos.

In contrast, Nathaniel handled the crisis far more effectively. He had not only brought his own medical team but had also assigned his most trusted aides across Sommertown on the day of his arrival.

Their task was to monitor local officials and issue stern warnings against corruption. As a result, when the outbreak began spreading, most of Sommertown's officials cooperated fully.

Unlike Tristan and Matthias, Nathaniel didn't rush to use the prescription.

Instead, he had his medical team begin developing their own antidote. His decision wasn't driven purely by distrust but by deeper strategic reasons behind it.

As Grace was checking on the patients in the warehouse the following morning, Sadie suddenly walked in.

"Ms. Linsor, we've captured Lauren. Do you want to interrogate her?" she asked.

Grace nodded approvingly. "Well done.

Take me to her."

Since the outbreak in Reedcrest had originated from Lauren, Grace intended to interrogate her thoroughly.

"Right this way, Ms. Linsor."

Without saying much, Sadie led Grace out of the building and through several security checkpoints. Eventually, they arrived at a sealed-off, secluded cabin. Several squads of soldiers stood guard

around it to prevent anyone from getting close.

Sadie pushed open the heavy iron door. It creaked loudly, and sunlight streamed into the dim space.

Grace stepped inside to find Lauren bound tightly to a chair.

She was beautiful, slim, and looked completely harmless. Anyone unaware of her background would've easily let their guard down around her.

"Remove her blindfold," Grace ordered.

Sadie motioned to a soldier wearing a biohazard suit and respirator. He came forward and yanked away Lauren's blindfold. The sudden brightness made her squint reflexively until her vision adjusted to the light.

"You're Lauren Stephan?" Grace asked coolly.

"Who are you?" Laura asked, terrified and anxious. "Why did you bring me here? I didn't do anything."

Grace's expression remained stone-cold as she replied, "We're with law enforcement, and we've already investigated your background thoroughly. I suggest you drop the act."

"Law enforcement? Why did you arrest me? I didn't commit any crime. You must have the wrong person," Lauren said, stunned.

"Enough with the act!" Sadie snapped. " You think we dragged you here just to let you cry your way out of it?"

"I don't understand what you're talking about. Are you abducting me? Look, I'm broke. You're not going to get any ransom money out of me." Lauren's voice trembled.

"Still pretending, huh? Fine. Looks like we'll have to do this the hard way before you'll tell the truth." Sadie had heard enough. She turned and ordered, " Someone get in here and make her talk."