

## **VILLAIN 37**

### Chapter 37 Aegon Valerion (2)

Eventually, we arrived at a secluded balcony, where a pristine table and two comfortable chairs had been arranged.

A man in black servant attire stood nearby.

"Everything has been prepared, my lord."

The servant bowed, and Aegon gave a satisfied smile.

"Good work, Albert. Bring the usual for me and my esteemed guest."

"As you wish."

Albert left, leaving me alone with the prince.

"Don't be shy. Have a seat."

Aegon gestured toward the chair across from him as he sat down.

I nodded and did as he said.

Moments later, Albert returned, carrying two cups and an assortment of appetizers.

They were placed elegantly on the table.

The prince... He had planned this in advance, down to the smallest detail.

"My apologies. I wasn't sure about your preferences, so I ordered what I usually drink."

"It's fine. I can go with anything."

I picked up the cup of tea placed before me.

I hesitated for a moment before taking a sip—but realistically, there was no benefit for him in poisoning me.

The taste was exquisite. As expected from the royal family.

Aegon swirled his cup before speaking.

"Tell me, Frey Starlight, do you know why you're here?"

I met his gaze, hesitating for a moment before deciding to be direct. There was no point in playing dumb before someone like him.

"I assume it has something to do with your conflict with the princess."

He nodded in satisfaction.

"I'm glad... You're not a complete idiot after all~"

"Excuse me?"

Did he just call me an idiot?

Aegon didn't seem to care about my reaction as he idly played with his teacup.

"You see, Frey... don't you think everyone has their own story?"

"What are you talking about?"

I didn't understand his point at first, but he continued anyway.

"I've always loved stories, you know... They were far more entertaining than those idiotic bedtime tales I was told as a child."

He took another sip of tea before gesturing toward me.

"And yours, Lord Frey... your story in particular intrigued me~"

"It started with a despised noble causing trouble here and there... I especially enjoyed hearing about how you tormented the maids."

I leaned forward slightly, resting my arms on the table.

"So the prince has been watching me."

"Indeed~"

He didn't even bother denying it.

"No need to worry, Frey... After all, I watch everyone."

"I must say, that incident with the girl from the Moonlight family was my favorite. I still remember the commotion it caused."

Aegon laughed, but his words struck a nerve.

I knew exactly which incident he was referring to—the one that made Frey Starlight infamous.

It happened years ago when he dared to use a Seduction skill on Seris Moonlight.

I never wrote much detail about that event. Even I didn't know exactly what had happened that day.

All I knew was that Frey had barely escaped with his life, and when the incident leaked to the public, it caused an enormous uproar.

That was how the world came to know Frey Starlight.

"The prince certainly knows a lot about me."

I humored Aegon, who finally set his cup down.

"Oh, I do. But you see, Frey... your story was boring."

"Just another third-rate villain, consumed by lust. It wasn't interesting in the slightest."

"Is that how you see me?"

In response, Aegon chuckled.

"Not at all... because your story took a turn—one I never expected."

"A year ago, you vanished completely. Do you have any idea how unsettling it was when one of my precious pieces suddenly disappeared? I searched for you everywhere... but you were nowhere to be found."

"What an interesting way to phrase it. Pieces? Is that how you see me? How you see everyone around you?"

"That's right, Frey... I told you already. Everything is a story, and you—my precious pieces—are the ones who shape it."

I let out a small laugh.

"Is it really wise to show your true colors so openly? Who would have thought the esteemed prince refers to everyone else as pieces?"

His confident smile never wavered.

"It's fine. After all... you're different. You're special~"

"Special?"

"Yes. The young man who returned from death after an entire year in the Nightmare Lands... The one who caused Leonidas Starlight, the Immortal Lion, an endless headache... Isn't that fascinating!?"

His words sent a chill through me.

Just how far does Aegon's reach extend to know about the affairs of House Starlight?

Carefully, I played along, gathering as much information from him as I could.

"Do you really believe the story of my survival for an entire year in the Nightmare Lands?"

He nodded.

"I do... Don't underestimate me, Frey. There's nowhere to hide from me in this empire."

"That's terrifying, Your Highness..."

In response to my words, he continued laughing.

"No point in pretending to be scared... Now tell me, how did a young man survive in that hell for so long? Your story has truly become an obsession of mine."

With a blank expression, I replied.

"I was lucky."

"Luck, huh?"

Aegon idly played with his fingers.

"No matter... That mystery is what makes you so interesting, Frey."

He picked up his cup before asking,

"Tell me... in your opinion, what's the most important thing in a story?"

I leaned back, considering my answer. Was he expecting something specific from me? Or was he testing me?

Either way, I simply spoke the first thing that came to mind.

"I don't know. Your question has too many possible answers... After all, many factors determine whether a story succeeds or not."

Aegon chuckled at my response.

"An interesting answer... but you're wrong."

For the first time, I found myself on high alert as his smile vanished completely, replaced by something unsettling.

"There is only one correct answer, Frey."

He let the cup slip from his grasp.

The porcelain shattered into dozens of fragments upon impact with the floor.

"The most important thing in a story... is the ending."

Aegon slammed his fist against the table as he continued.

"The ending is all that matters. And my sister's story... was supposed to end in death."

Seeing his sudden shift in demeanor, I couldn't help but ask,

"What are you talking about?"

"She was supposed to die, Frey... Sansa."

Suddenly, the pieces started coming together, and I found myself instinctively rejecting the conclusion forming in my mind.

Could it be...?

"Ever since she was kidnapped along with her mother... they were both meant to die. But somehow, she returned... She ruined the ending that was supposed to happen."

For the first time, I felt true fear toward the person sitting across from me.

Was Aegon Valeryon somehow involved in Sansa's abduction?

And what was even more terrifying... was the way he spoke about it so casually.

As if he was telling me, Even if you know the truth... it won't change anything.

Completely unfazed by my silent turmoil, Aegon continued speaking.

"She was supposed to die... Yet she still lives. She returned to stand in my way."

I knew they weren't full siblings, born from different mothers but sharing the same father.

But to think that he would actually try to kill her...

No, what am I thinking?

This is Aegon Valeryon... He'll do anything to get what he wants.

"No matter... no matter... all I have to do now is create a new ending. A proper one."

Aegon's lips curled into a twisted smile as he extended a hand toward me.

"I will bring everything to its rightful conclusion, Frey... So join me."

"Join you?"

He nodded.

"Yes. I have a good eye, Frey Starlight... You're the most important piece in this puzzle. The one who will bring everything crashing down. So swear your loyalty to me... I can give you anything you desire."

At his last words, I laughed.

It had become a habit of mine—to laugh whenever I heard something absurd.

Anything I desire? Sorry... but you can't. After all, what I truly want... is to return to my own world.

"Sorry, but I'd rather stay out of this succession war as much as possible."

Even after hearing my rejection, he didn't seem bothered.

"Don't pretend, Frey... You're an opportunist. There's no such thing as a person who wants nothing in this world."

Smiling, I shook my head.

"Then I'll have to take back my previous statement..."

I rose from my chair at that moment.

"Because you don't know me at all, Aegon Valeryon."

He frowned slightly before quickly regaining his usual composure.

"Could it be... that you've sworn allegiance to Sansa? You were childhood friends, after all."

I shoved my hands into my pockets as I turned to leave.

"Not at all. Even if she was my childhood friend... as I said, I want nothing to do with this succession war."

Reaching the balcony door, I bid him farewell.

"Goodbye... and thanks for the tea."

I had just stepped outside when his voice stopped me.

"Then how about we become friends?"

I turned around instinctively, caught off guard by those words.

"Friends?"

"Yes. After all... how many people have ever dared to speak to me the way you do?"

He laughed as he stood up.

"I like that arrogance of yours, Frey... That enigma that surrounds you. You're one of a kind. So... be my friend."

At that moment, my smile faltered slightly, unable to fully conceal my unease under Aegon Valeryon's piercing golden gaze.

But somehow, I managed to respond.

"It would be an honor."

"Excellent!"

He waved at me with one hand.

"Then, I'll see you later~ my friend."

I nodded before walking away from him.

"Damn it..."

I cursed under my breath as I reflected on what had just transpired.

"I've just gained the most dangerous friend possible..."

From someone with no friends... to the friend of a mad prince who sees everything as mere pieces on a board.

"What a development..."

I sighed.

I'd have to play along... at least for now.

I was still deep in thought when my entire body screamed in warning.

Everything happened in an instant—an eerie chill ran down my spine as I realized what had just occurred.

Turning my head, I saw a pale-skinned boy with a slender frame and a gloomy demeanor walking past me. His jet-black hair contrasted starkly against his ghostly complexion.

As he passed by, he lifted his sharp eyes to glance at me before continuing on his way.

I stood still, watching him disappear into the distance.

"I felt nothing..."

From the moment he approached to the second he was right next to me...

I didn't feel a thing.

If he had wanted to kill me just now, I would have struggled to even react.

I let out a quiet chuckle before resuming my path.

Naturally, I recognized him.

One of the main characters—Ghost Umbra.

The son of the most lethal assassin, Mist Umbra, the man with a thousand faces.

"This won't be easy..."

I'd be a fool to think that Snow, the story's protagonist, was the only obstacle standing between me and victory in the Victoriad.

After all... this place was filled with monsters.

No matter. It doesn't matter who stands in my way.

A prince or a hero... an assassin or anyone else...

I will crush everything in my path.