

Chapter 825 Disinterest

Elliana answered Adah's remark with a light, amused shrug.

Adah had always walked her own path. Others' expectations meant nothing to her, and men like Allan never drew her attention. She preferred gentle, soft-hearted types like Lance. Despite Allan's status, he had never stirred even a flicker of interest in her. She hadn't cared for Allan from the start, and nothing had changed. Disinterest was disinterest.

Elliana decided to let Allan put on whatever show he wanted. She had no intention of involving herself.

Just then, Katrina bounced into the study. Ever since her incident, she had lived in a bright, childlike haze, clinging to Adah with confusing intensity. She would trail behind Adah whenever she went. No one understood the pull, but it was always there.

Since Elliana had entrusted Katrina to her, Adah never pushed Katrina away—no matter how annoying the constant following became.

"Adah!" Katrina chirped. Then, her eyes drifted to Elliana. She hesitated before offering a quiet greeting. "Elliana."

Elliana's lips lifted in a soft smile. Even with her mind stuck in childhood, Katrina still seemed to fear her on some instinctive level and always appeared intimidated in her presence, rarely daring to meet her gaze.

Elliana had been so caught up in Yruzias that Katrina had slipped to the back of her mind. Seeing Katrina now reminded her of Katrina's parents—and their request. Why hadn't Davin come to take Katrina home yet? Maxine's funeral should have ended by now.

As if summoned by her thoughts, Damian entered. "Davin has arrived and requests a talk with you."

Elliana raised an eyebrow. What a coincidence—she had just been thinking of him, and here he was.

"Let him in," Elliana said.

Damian bowed and left.

Moments later, Davin stepped inside and greeted her with a respectful bow.

Katrina blinked at him, and then her face lit up. "Davin?"

Davin had served the Griffiths family for decades and watched Katrina grow up. Even with her memories tangled, she knew him instantly.

Davin smiled gently. "Katrina."

Katrina pointed at Elliana with innocent confusion. "Why did you show her with reverence?"

"Maxine passed away," Davin said softly. "Elliana is now the head of the Griffiths family. You didn't know before, but now you do. So you must pay proper respects to the new leader."

The children of the Griffiths family were schooled in ancient royal etiquette from a young age. Katrina knew exactly what ceremony was due to the clan leader. Though she didn't fully grasp why Elliana had suddenly taken the position, she immediately performed a formal bow the moment Davin finished speaking.

Etiquette, it seemed, had a powerful way of governing one's instincts.

Recently, under Adah's influence, Katrina had become as free-spirited as the wind, wandering around for fun. Yet, before Elliana, as the new family head, she instantly straightened, performing the formal rites with flawless grace.

Elliana didn't care for rigid ceremonies, but she couldn't help admiring the transformation. Katrina might not match her in ability or mind, but Maxine had chosen Katrina as heiress for a reason. Katrina was no ordinary girl.

Now that the title of the new clan head rested on her own shoulders, Elliana saw no reason to hold Katrina's past behavior against her.

Katrina leaned to Davin and whispered, "I was supposed to be the heiress. Now that Maxine is gone, shouldn't I take over? Why did it go to an

outsider?"

Her voice was soft, but Elliana caught every word.

Davin shot a nervous glance at Elliana, terrified that Katrina's question might offend her.

But Elliana simply smiled and said, "Before Maxine died, she begged me to take the position, and I agreed. But if you want it, I can hand it over to you."

"No, no!" Katrina flailed her hands. "You misunderstood! I was only curious. I'm not fighting you for anything—I am not cut out for the position!"

She paused and then asked shyly, "Does this mean I don't have to be the heiress anymore? That I don't have to go through all that awful training?"

Elliana saw straight through Katrina. Maxine's harsh expectations had crushed Katrina; Katrina only wanted freedom. "If you don't want it, you never have to," Elliana said gently.

Katrina let out a long breath of relief. "Thank you!"

Davin relaxed. Elliana was far kinder than he had expected.

Elliana said, "Katrina, it's time to go home. I promised your parents I would return you to them. Davin is here to take you back."

Katrina had missed her parents deeply. She had only stayed here to avoid Maxine. Now that Maxine was gone and nothing in the Griffiths family frightened her anymore, she was eager to return. "Thank you!" she said again, her face bright with joy.

Damian returned just then. "Charles and Cutler have arrived and want to talk to you."

The Henderson brothers were here. Elliana looked at Katrina with a warm smile. "Seems you'll see some old friends before you leave."