

Her Unwanted Mate On The Throne By Caroline

Chapter 36 I need her to come with me

Doris felt his warm breath caress the back of her neck when she woke the next morning. His arm was draped across her, but no longer held her

STTM he did the night before. She silently wondered how she would get herself out of this bed without waking the beast. She was positive the moment he remembered what happened last night, he would shove her out of his bed with disgust. He had a moment of something that felt like a sort of kindness, but it wasn't something she trusted. Though, not once in the night had she woken from fear like she expected to. She slept... peacefully. She was certain she would wake and realize it was all one big dream. A sharp knock startled the prince awake. His sleepy

eyes raked over her once before he pushed himself up and out of bed. Doris quickly rolled out of his sheets and straightened her clothes as best she could. It wasn't odd for her to be found in his room since she was serving him for the night, but it would be odd to be found in his bed. The last thing she needed was more rumors about her intentions. With Prince William.. Doris hurried to the door while Prince William draped a morning cloak over his night clothes. She winced a little as the pain ignited after a few steps and opened the door. "Good morn—" Doris almost choked on her words when she saw the king himself standing on the other side of the door. Doris bowed her head low. "Good morning, your highness."

"Father. He said. Doris hastily pulled the straightened herself and went to make his bed, what do laws the pleasure of this early visit? King Charles lifted his chin as he stared at Prince William who had still not invited him inside. He stepped in anyway and closed the door behind him. Doris wished she had woken earlier, then perhaps she wouldn't have been here when the king arrived. "I came to ask when you plan to leave for the north." "I have to be gone by nightfall" Prince William said as he leaned against the mantle of the fireplace across from his father: If Prince William wasn't so pompous, she would have admired how handsome he looked fresh out of bed. A part of her started to crave the small glimpses where he looked a little rogue. His hair was a mess and his clothes were wrinkled from sleep, she felt her face heat as she tore her gaze away from him before she started to notice the lines of his muscles again. Doris quickly busied herself by preparing tea for the two royals. "You don't have to do this, 501. It's not safe to travel to the north with your title. You know how desperate the rogue packs would be to get their hands on you." Prince William scoffed. "You think Luni Queen will stop trying to pin the blame on everyone she sees if I don't? Clearly Martin and Jack are safe from her accusations, she'd never pin the blame on her own sons. Have you thought about Daniel and I? I heard Prince Jack was asking around to know if I had anything to do with the poisoning! And not to mention what he did to Doris"

Prince William stopped short, his gaze flickered over to Doris and hardened the second she looked at him. Doris quickly looked away when King Charles turned his own curious gaze towards her. Why would he bother bring up what Jack did to

her? She supposed it only further proved what a monster Prince Jack was, but she doubted the king cared what had happened to her. "If Jack was willing to torture a maid for false information because Luna asked him to, who knows what else he will do to get an answer." Doris could already tell Prince William's mood was darkening from just his tone. King Charles stated himself on one of Prince William's velvet chairs. Doris took the opportunity to serve them both a cup of tea while it was still hot. "You shouldn't travel alone, I'll make sure some of the best guards accompany you." Prince William sat across from King Charles and took a long sip of tea. King Charles nodded his head in thanks to Doris when she carefully handed him his own. "You know, I think it would be a good idea for Doris here to go back to the library full time. I heard some of the books miss her." The king said with a slight smile towards Doris. She flushed under his kindness and smiled widely. Prince William slammed his cup on the table so hard, she was surprised it didn't crack in half. "Since when do you care what a maid does?" Prince William's features turned to stone as he stood. "Did Martin suggest she return to the library?" King Charles watched him calmly as if he were just a child having a tantrum. "Would it matter who did, son?" Prince William's eyes flickered to Doris, she furrowed her brows when he frowned at her. "I need her to come with me to the north."

Doris Wanglad she wasn't holding anything because would have mil certainly dropped it from his words. King Charles tilted his head slightly in question "Why are you requesting a maid join you on your damous journey to the north?"

Prince Jack and Luna Queen still see that as guilty. "I think it would only be right for her to have to come along and prove her innocence." Doris parted her lips to object, but no sound came out. She wouldn't dare deny a prince in front of the king but her insides were screaming at her to say no. Why would he want her to go? She would only slow the trip down, if anything. Doris cleared her throat, both men looked at her. "I -Excuse me for speaking out of turn, but I don't have any clothing suited for the show to visit the marth = "Nonsense, we have plenty of clothing for you to use in the palace." Prince William waved away her words and turned his attention back to his father

"We're leaving tonight, so you can tell your son to find a new pretty thing to stare at while he wastes his days in the library." King Charles looked almost amused at his son's words. She was sure he was used to his disrespectful manner. Doris didn't think she would ever be. Why would he even care if Prince Martini had requested her back to the library? He probably only did so because he'd felt bad for all Doris had been through these last few weeks. "I hope you know what you're doing son." King Charles said and stood with a grunt. Doris quickly cleared away the dishes just to give her hands something to do. "Will you be here for dinner, at least?"

"That depends on how long our visit with my

mother will inice.

Supposed to come with him to visit his mother Han cleared his throat and strughened his cloak Teli your mother hello for me and I hope she's doing

*You could tell her yourself sometime." Prince William started to raise his tone but cooled it at the last second. King Charles narrowed his eyes a little before he turned to leave. Prince William's shoulders deflated a little as if he'd released the rest of the fight inside him as he watched his father go. It was odd to witness such intimate moments for the prince, it almost made her see him more like a person rather than just a nasty beast. Almost. King Charles stopped at the door and took one last long look at Prince William. "Stay safe, son." Neither of them said anything when the door clicked shut. Doris was unsure what she should even say-what could she say? He just demanded Doris to join him on one of the most dangerous trips anyone could think of taking and she wasn't allowed to object. Prince William finally turned to look at her. "What are you just standing there for? Go ready yourself and huiy back before the hour is up."

Chapter 37 The man you're walking into danger with

The first thing Beth did when Doris walked through the door was force her to take a dose of her medicines expected

Why didn't you bring it with you. Doris? The doctor said you weren't supposed to miss a single helping of it From now on, it goes in your pocket!" Heth planted her hands on her hips as if she intended to hold Doris for hours. Doris swallowed the Hquid and made a face before she rummaged through her drawers. "I have to change and meet Prince William in less than an hour "Where are you going with him?" Kath leaned against the dresser and curiously watched as she pulled out a simple blue dress that didn't require a corset. It wasn't her usual uniform she reached for everyday. this one almost made her feel like a normal girl when she wore it. "He... wants me to meet lady Katherine with him." Beth gasped and gripped her hands. "He also wants me to go with him to the north." Beth's delighted expression fell immediately, "What? No he can't make you go to the north! They'll kill both of you there! Why on earth would he have you go with him?" "I-I think he wants me to help find who poisoned Melady." Doris disappeared behind a tall curtain as she washed up and changed her dress. "Is that why he wants you to meet his foster mother, too?" Doris heard the bed creak as Beth

TUTTI

"Hin Ros mother..." Doris repeated silently to herself. She'd heard Beth mention her before but she never talked about the entire story. Prince William had always seemed like a dark fairytale to Doris Now that she knew him a little bit, he was so much worse on the surface

Can't you pretend you're sick to get out of it?" Beth asked, pulling Doris from her thoughts. "When are you leaving "I tried but he told the king himself that I was to go with him. He intends to leave tonight by

"Tonight? Oh, no!" Beth asked, Doris snatched over the light fabric and came out from behind the curtain. How long did she have left until she was due to meet him again? "The king was there when he asked you?" Beth stood and followed Doris as she grabbed her shoes, Doris glanced up to see Beth slip her medicine in her cloak pocket "He didn't ask me, he told me I was going and nothing I could say would've changed his mind." Doris huffed as she pulled on her boots. "You

better not repeat this to anyone, Beth. I know how you like your gossip." A flash of hurt crossed her features, Doris immediately regretted her words. "I would never gossip about you, Doris. I only want you to be safe and careful. I don't know why he wants you to go with him, but I wish he didn't. The north is no place for a girl like you-or anyone for that matter." Doris let out a small breath and brushed her long hair before she pinned some of it back. It'd become a bit tangled from when she slept in his bed. The thoughts made her blush, Beth tilted her head to

ein

What did he have you do all night she asked innocently, it only made Danis's blush deepen. Det

DHESH her bald hinds against her warm cheeks to his wand of the heat. The last thing she handed him in

be blushing fool in front of Prince William. He'd only get the wrong idea again. "I served him tea and then he went to bed." "Lloes he sleep naked?" Leth grinned widely "Beth! Why would you? Someone cleared their throat by the door, both girls immediately stood and saw it was Prince William. Beth turned bright red as she bowed. As usual, Prince William was hint to his emotions but Doris still felt embarrassed of their conversation anyway. "Your majesty! I apologize, we must not have heard you." "I'm sure." His blue eyes looked almost annoyed when they met with Doris's, she curtsied. "I was just finishing up your majesty. Sorry I kept you." Doris clasped her cloak over her shoulders and followed him out of the room with one last nervous glance to Beth. He walked a bit ahead of her part of her wondered if he didn't want to be seen walking with a maid. Doris wiped her damp hands against her cloak as she tried to keep up. She followed him outside of the palace and down the grand steps. A guard followed along with them once they passed the garden. A small row of cottages were set behind the palace. Usually old lovers of mistresses were set to live out here-away from the prying eyes of everyone else. A lot of the people that ended up in one of them never tried to show their faces inside the palace, usually they were too embarrassed or shamed to have been

thrown away by one of the royal members and couldn't handle the gossip. Others simply liked the privacy. Nonetheless, they were all taken care of well enough and had a nice roof over their heads. Prince William stopped in front of one of the larger cottages and knocked on the door. After a moment, an older woman pulled it open and a smile immediately lit up her face when she saw Prince William. "Oh, William! I didn't know you were coming today!" She pulled him into a hug. Doris watched as the prince gratefully returned it. She hadn't really imagined him the type to want to hug anyone, he seemed too stiff and angry for that. "I would have made us some lunch if-oh hello." Doris flushed when her attention landed on Doris. She smiled kindly and glanced up at Prince William "This is Doris, she's one of the maids in the palace." He answered. Doris curtsied and Lady Katherine laughed a little. "No need for that, my dear. I don't think William has ever brought a girl to see me before! Please, come in."

"She's a maid, mother." Prince William's face reddened a little as he let Doris walk in first. It was the only sign that he had any emotion at all for what was happening. "I wanted to see you before we leave to the north." Lady Katherine froze for a moment before she turned back to him. "What do you mean you're

going to the north? Does your father know about this?" Prince William's jaw tensed. "Yes. He says hi." Lady Katherine scoffed and turned to pour tea in 1

pot.

"May I help?- Doris offered.

Laris wited until Prince William sit on one of the Douches before she teak the chair by the window. The one by the fireplace seemed to be favored by

Lady Katherine placed the tray of tea and cookies on the small table in front of them, Prince William showed no interest in it so Doris poured a cup for

"What on earth are you going to the north for? And why are you taking this poor girl? Doris wished she could hide behind her cup, but she also wanted to know why. Prince William leaned back against the couch and looked around the room as if he were searching for something more interesting to focus on. "I have to find wha tried to poison Luna Queen, the herb that will used is only available on the blackmarket in the north. They think it was Ders who poisoned her, so I want her to come with me in case they try to throw her in jail again." Despite his emotionless töne, his words almost warmed her. He wanted her to come because he wanted to make sure she wouldn't be thrown in jail

Lady Katherine hummed to herself and set down her cup of tea. Her green eyes flickered between the both of them. It almost made Doris uncomfortable.

"Has he told you about me?" Lady Katherine asked Doris "Oh! We don't really have those sort of conversations, my lady." Doris said quickly. She set down her tea cup. Lady Katherine's eyebrows shot up in question "You're bringing her to the north and she knows

Eat were

on the journey. Moreover, you know

L W everything already." He replied lazily. "It's not

like I spill my secrets out la every maid ise."

You brought this maid to me, so I suppose she's not just any mand, is she?" Prince William rolled his eyes and stay at the fireplace is the flames flickered. Lady Katherine turned her kind me on Doris 1 *Where should i start? I think you should at least know more about the man you're walking into

Chapter 38 You truly hate the idea of a mate

"Is this really necessary?" Prince William grumbled. Doris raised her brows and glanced over at him. He wasn't looking at either of them, but he didn't seem to care enough to stop Lady Katherine from telling her anything. If she was honest, she would've expected him to scream at Lady Katherine for even suggesting telling Doris anything before he stormed out of the house. But he didn't. He sat

there calmly, perhaps a bit moody, and allowed her to tease him as she wished. It was obvious he had a softness for the woman, something strong and unbreakable. Doris had to admit she was more than curious to hear more about the cruel prince and where his heart of stone came from. So far, everything she'd heard of him had been from gossip or assumptions. Neither of which are liable on someones actual life. There had to be a reason he was always angry right? "I think it is," Lady Katherine took a long sip of her tea and cleared her throat. "He's not as rough on the inside as he is on the outside." Doris shifted a little, Lady Katherine smiled when she noticed. "I know it seems hard to believe, but I swear there is a softer version of him somewhere in there." "You'd have to dig pretty deep." Prince William leaned forward to snag a cookie off the plate and shove it into his mouth. It startled Doris, she had to bite her lip to keep from laughing, she'd never seen a prince eat so aggressively but somehow it made sense for Prince William. Lady Katherine made a face at him before she

You truly hate the idea of a mate turned her attention back to Doris. "I suppose we should start from the top then, as he suggested." Prince William snorted, Lady Katherine only ignored him. "His mother, his birth mother I mean, had passed away only a few months after he was born leaving him with no one but his inconsolable father and a staff full of emotionless servants that only cared about what the king wanted." "Oh, that's terrible." Doris brushed her hair behind her ear. "I heard she grew quite ill from one of the other maids when I first came here." Doris saw Prince William tense from the corner of her eye, Lady Katherine only sighed. "Yes, well there have been many theories on how she'd become so sick but we won't dwell on that today." She set down her tea cup gently before she continued. "After the tragedy, no one stepped forward to be his mother figure until me. His two brothers Martin and Jack were showered with love their entire lives from their mother Luna. Daniel was as well when he was bom from one of the king's mistresses, but William was the only one that was left out in the cold. "William's mother was the king's fated mate, so when his father met her—Luna Queen was pushed to the side. He flaunted their love across the kingdom and soon William was born as the result. Once she died—the king changed." Lady Katherine glanced at Prince William but he still had his gaze on the fire. "He sees a lot of his mate in William, I think." "By that she means he pretends I don't exist most of the time." Prince William said bitterly. "Yes, well." Lady Katherine frowned. "It's difficult for him to look at William without seeing her. He'll never see his mate again—"

1. ur.
1

1 . 3.1-1 — L- — — -11—1—

You truly hate the idea of a mate Doris asked. Prince William shot his gaze to her and she blushed. "I apologize" "Don't be sorry, my dear. You're free to speak as you wish here, don't let his emotions scare you." She smiled kindly. "But yes, he neglected William a lot when he was a boy. Often he would have me watch him and I could never have a child of my own-no matter how much I wanted one. William quickly became that light for me." Lady Katherine leaned forward to squeeze Prince William's hand . "He was the cutest little boy I'd ever seen, I fell in love with him immediately and raised him as my own when the other mistresses refused. I always thought how foolish they were not to lend their heart to such a lovely boy, but some people in the castle care more about politics than love."

"They probably wanted one of the other princes to look after since my father actually loved them." Prince William looked down at their hands as he spoke. Doris felt a small part of her heart soften for him. She could hear his sadness drip in even when he tried to hide it. Doris was naive to think he had a grand childhood just because he was a prince. There was a difference between happiness and fortune, she never knew he was deprived of one and filled with the other. "You must have felt so alone," Doris said gently, he raised his eyes to hers and for once they looked like a calm sea. "Did you get along with your brothers when you were younger?" "My brother Martin was the one that was held the highest above us since he was the crowned prince. He was always in a lesson or being pampered by the royal staff at all hours of the day. We never really had a chance to bond. Though, I don't believe we would have anyway. We're complete opposites." Prince William ran his fingers through his hair and

You truly hate the idea of a mate sighed. "Jack was kept separate by Luna Queen, she wanted him safe above all else. He acted as if he already owned the castle and everyone in it by the time he was ten. Needless to say, we didn't get along in the slightest. He always made sure I remembered what happened to my mother and that his was still alive." "How awful!" Doris said, the side of Prince William's mouth almost lifted. It shouldn't have been a surprise to hear Prince Jack was just as rotten as a little boy as he was as an adult. "As for Daniel... he was innocent and happy his entire life. No tragedy touched him and I think I resented him a lot for that. He never showed interest in building a bond, but he was always kind enough to me. More than the others, I suppose. Still, he preferred other company even when we were younger. I think he knew how our brothers felt about me and decided to keep his distance as well." Doris frowned and shifted her body more towards him. For once she wasn't afraid to be soft with him. It wasn't as though he was completely undone in front of her, but he was far from the Prince William that kept his wall up higher than she could stand. She wondered if he'd ever shared any of this with Melody. "None of your brothers were there for you when you were a kid?" "They knew I was different, they knew our father held some of his own resentment for me so they treated me as the black sheep of the group. It was obvious from a young age that they expected nothing from me. My father refused to even give me a territory because he thinks I'm irresponsible which was one of the greatest shames that a prince could suffer." Prince William broke eye contact and shook his head. "None of them stood up for me or vouched in my honor. I know they all expect me to

You truly hate the idea of a mate fail and be nothing. For a long time, I was almost ready to be exactly what they all expected." Doris placed her hand over her heart, he watched her movements with curiosity. She couldn't believe Prince William was shunned from his own family at such a young age-just because his mother had passed away. If anything, Doris would have thought he would've been the one to be the ruler of the pack. His mother was the fated mate of the king, but the king only saw his own misery in the prince. "I think they're why William despises the idea of fated mates and falling in love." Lady Katherine said sadly as she watched him. Doris felt his eyes immediately shift back onto her. Doris couldn't help but flush, she almost went to itch the mark on her neck but she didn't want to draw attention to it. A part of her was still unsure if he even saw her mark the night he tore her dress off. In the moment, she was positive he saw it. But thankfully, he hadn't said a word about it since. "You truly hate the idea of a mate? What about Melody?"

Her Unwanted Mate on the Thr

Chapter 39 Don't make me come looking for you

"She... Never mind." Prince William paused, he looked back at the fire as if it would answer for him. Lady Katherine leaned forward and patted his knee in a motherly fashion, it almost made Doris smile. "It's not his favorite subject to talk about. The only reason I know is because I raised him and I've seen how he's gone through mistresses almost as fast as his father did." "Oh, I just didn't realize he resented the idea of a fated mate." Doris shifted uncomfortably. It was a dangerous topic, she knew she shouldn't tread anywhere near it but she couldn't help herself. There might not be another opportunity for her to learn about how he truly felt about having a mate. Prince William slowly turned his blue gaze back to her. She silently held her breath and wished he wouldn't look at her as if he could see right through her every thought. "It made my father weak." Prince William finally admitted. "He loved her more than anything, he wanted her more than any woman in the land and when he lost her—no one else would ever do. To this day he refuses to give his heart away again." "Loving someone doesn't make you weak." Doris said quietly, Prince William shook his head in annoyance. "My father can't even look at me without thinking of his mate. He goes through life as if it's a chore instead of living it because he lost her. He treats his – on 1:1, tana vatham hol l .

Don't make me come looking for you left of her." "Perhaps he's scared to lose you one day." Doris said softly. She wanted to reach her hand out and hold his own as a friend might, but she knew he would never let her. "He might be trying to selfishly protect his own heart by keeping you away. "Selfish is all my father knows how to be." Prince William rolled his eyes to the ceiling, "He knows no other way to live, why should I?" "William," Lady Katherine frowned. "Why don't you admit the true reason and stop dancing around the subject?" Prince William only ignored her, Lady Katherine turned towards Doris. "He's afraid his mate will die and he'll never recover like his father He thinks if his father had never met her, he wouldn't have ended up how he is today." Doris's lips parted, but she couldn't find any words. Suddenly, his horrible attitude towards everyone he met made a bit more sense. He was trying to push them away as much as he could and only keep around people that didn't matter. It wouldn't destroy him if any of them died, but it would if his mate did. Perhaps that was why he was going through all this trouble for Melody, he wanted to make sure whoever had hurt his mate paid for it. She wondered why he hadn't brought her up again yet, unless the topic hurt too much to talk about Doris fought the urge to rub her mark again when he sat there watching her. He clearly still believed Melody was his mate, there was no way it could've been Doris anyway when she had no wolf inside her. Still, she found herself touching her own mark often when he wasn't near. Doris felt her blood heat under Prince William's gaze, he leaned forward to rest his elbows on his knees. "As for your earlier statement, I suppose I'll

Don't make me come looking for you Doris furrowed her brows and glanced at Lady Katherine. She only shrugged, "Please excuse me for asking, your majesty-but do you think pushing people away is worth it?" "They don't care for me, Doris. They care for what I am or how I look. They care for my title despite the fact that my father doesn't. Once they get close enough, they eventually see there's nothing to love or wrap their arms around to hold onto. There's only more layers of the cold person I've always been." Prince William leaned back again. "Who would want to love a beast when there's a prince more worth it around the corner." Doris frowned. "We're all capable of true love." "I think it would be impossible for someone to be true for me." "Everyone is worthy of love" "Not

me," Prince William stood as his mood darkened again, Doris stood as well and watched as his eyes flickered over her every movement. It was almost as if he had the nerve to look amused at her slight frustration. Doris remembered herself and let out a small breath. "Not everyone cares about a title or looks." "I've yet to find a woman who cares for who I am behind my title." Prince William snapped. "Then you're not truly looking." Doris couldn't help herself, she knew she should stop talking and stay silent as she always did. "Sometimes you have to allow people in and risk getting hurt." Prince William's eyes turned a little stormy as he stared at her. Her insides made her want to shrink away and remind herself he was nothing but a rotten prince who had drunkenly attacked her by mistake. Sometimes she had sparks of-something for him until she remembered what it felt like to

Don't make me come looking for you feel as if she were about to die at his hands when he marked her as his own. But she wasn't his. Part of her heart understood him more, but inside she knew she would never belong to him. She would never belong to anyone but herself, and no prince could change that for her. Prince William's gaze flickered to Lady Katherine, who only looked amused. "We're leaving now, mother." "Oh, already? You barely touched your tea!" Lady Katherine quickly stood and went to hold his hand. "Tell me you'll be safe. How many guards are joining you?" "I'm not sure yet. I wanted to travel light so we can get the trip over with as soon as possible. A bigger party might delay us further." Prince William's face softened a little as he looked at his mother. Doris couldn't help but smile this time. He hadn't lost his temper once in her presence, even when she saw he was close to it. "We will be safe, you have my word." "What's your word if you don't return?" Lady Katherine said with a crack in her tone. "He could send anyone else to investigate, it doesn't have to be you." "I offered to do it myself. I want to find the answer before they try to make up the answer for themselves."

Lady Katherine frowned as she leaned up to give him a long hug. She smoothed back his hair when she pulled away and turned to look at Doris. "Don't be afraid to put him in his place when he deserves it." She teased "I wouldn't dare, my lady." Doris quickly curtsied before she followed Prince William out. 3 Doris wished Lady Katherine would always be in the room when she was with the prince. It was so much

Don't make me come looking for you easier to talk to him without fearing he was about to snap at her or threaten her. He clearly had a loving respect for the woman and it softened Doris's heart to see he was able to have those sort of feelings for someone. For some reason, it just didn't fit right with what she'd thought of him before. Once they stepped outside the door and it closed behind him-his back stiffened and a stony mask fell over his face once more. Doris almost flinched when he turned to look at her, it was as if he melted from the person he was a second ago. "I had the palace pack you some clothes fit for the north. I have one more thing to do before we leave so I need you to check on our supplies and meet me in the stables before the hour is up." "Yes, your majesty." Doris bowed her head and turned to leave. "Doris?" He said, she stilled and glanced back at him.

"Don't make me come looking for you." a

Her Unwanted Mate On The Three

Chapter 40 I might never be free

"Is this too tight?" The seamstress asked when she yanked on the laces of a winter corset. Doris held her breath and quickly nodded to indicate that it was. The seamstress huffed and loosened it. "How about now?" Doris released her breath and nodded. "It's fine, thank you." "I have several dresses like this one for your trip, all suitable for winter. It's not proper for a maid traveling with a prince to wear pants, but I did include them in case of an emergency." Doris frowned, what sort of emergency would need pants? Unless she was referring to the freezing temperatures. Doris might end up wearing them beneath her dress just so her legs didn't chill. "Are all of them corseted? Will I be able to get out of them by myself?" Doris asked. The taller woman gave Doris a long, curious look and shook her head. "I suppose if you lace it a little looser you might be able to squeeze yourself out of it, though it would be much easier if someone were to help you." "There's no one on the trip that would be able—" The woman raised her brows, Doris blushed for no reason other than her strange stares. "I prefer dresses I can easily get out of on my own." "You're about to travel with a prince and he has asked me to find you suitable clothing, I can't have you looking like you were when you first came in here and the only dresses I have on hand all require corsets." Narin riched and t od und to look at havnelfin

The dress was quite stunning, it was a dark blue shade in a fabric similar to the ones she'd seen Prince William wear. It hugged at her waist and brought out a bit more of her figure while also being thicker than anything she owned. It looked nice enough for a lady to wear not a maid. She supposed they wouldn't have anything for a maid going where she was going this clothing most likely was designed for a lady. A flash of Melody's furious face crossed her mind. Oh, Doris could only imagine what she would say if she saw her wear a dress suited for a lady. She would probably rip it right off her and make her walk naked in the snow. Better yet, she probably would insist Doris sleep out in the snow too, Doris frowned. She hadn't once thought to ask if Melody had pulled through or how she was doing No one around her had brought her up either Doris was a bit afraid to even ask. Not even Beth had brought her up since everything happened, and she normally would have told Doris everything she'd heard about the gossip. "Do you like it?" The seamstress asked. "Oh, yes. Thank you for finding me something in such short notice, I know it must have been a challenge." The seamstress waved away her words. "These clothes sit all year, none of the ladies have asked to use them. While it may snow here during the winter, it never gets as cold as it does in the north. These will make you sweat after half an hour if it's not freezing where you're going." "Should I wait until we get there to change into this?" Doris itched her arm, already she was starting to feel a bit hot. "No, you most likely won't have an opportunity to

over your normal dress once you get there. You'd be surprised how freezing it gets within minutes of entering the north." "Oh my, have you ever been? Doris asked as she stepped down from the small platform the seamstress made her stand while she tied her corset. "I have once, but—" The seamstress hesitated. * Never again. Just be careful out there and stay close to those that will guard you." "I think they'll be more concerned about the prince, but I'll try." Doris said more to herself. The seamstress laughed a little. "I think that's one of his favorite colors." She gestured to Doris's dress. For a moment, she wanted to take it off and burn it but the feeling passed a lot quicker than it would have the day before. Some of their conversation still swirled in her mind no matter how much she wanted to focus on something else.

Doris took a dose of her medicine before she left the hallway across from the seamstress. Luckily, a guard was nearby and offered to carry the bags to the stables to be loaded when he saw Doris's injured hand. At least there was still some sort of kindness at the palace, even if most of the guards now made her flinch whenever they approached her. The kitchens had already sent the bags of food they prepared for their journey to the stables by the time she'd gotten there to check. There was only one last thing she needed to do before she left, and that was say goodbye to her friend. Who knew how long she would be gone for or if Beth would even still be here

when she returned. Unfortunately, Beth was no where to be found when she entered their room. She didn't want to leave without seeing her friend, but she knew Prince William would keep true to his word and come looking for her if she didn't return to the stables soon. Doris wrote a short and sweet note to her friend before she packed a few of her personal items in a small bag-as well as the poetry book Prince Martin had given her-before she headed out the door. Her nerves were on high with worry when her thoughts wouldn't calm. If there was anywhere worse than the palace, it was the north. Doris had only ever heard terrible stories surrounding the area, of all the vicious things they did to outsiders or people they didn't trust. There was no one they hated more than the royals and she was about to travel with one straight through it. Every step she took made her more nauseous at the thought. What would they do to her if they caught her alone? Would Prince William even bother protecting her, or would she be thrown to the wolves as a distraction for him to get away? She didn't doubt for a second that the guards would use her as bait if they needed to get away Doris almost bumped right into Beth the moment she stepped out of the palace. "Oh! Beth, I just came from our room looking for you! Where have you been?" Beth's eyes were wide and a bit watery, Doris frowned. "What is it? What are you doing out here so late! You'll catch a cold." "I had to talk to you before you left." Beth said with a shaky voice, she looked as if she were about to cry. UT1T1. - :3

—11.3

her friend's arm and glanced towards the stables, Surely, he could wait a minute or two while she attended to her friend. If not, she would gladly face his wrath to spare her friend a few minutes. "You'll come back, won't you?" Beth asked, she pushed her hair from her wet eyes. "Of course I will." Doris hesitated. "If I don't get eaten by the wolves out there, I suppose." Beth didn't smile or laugh, part of Doris wondered if it was because she was worried about just that exact thing happening to her. "Don't say such a thing. Beth said weakly. "Those are awful packs out there, Doris. I wish you didn't have to go. I wish

I wish anyone else would go for you or he would go alone." "I wish so too," Doris whispered and glanced around them to make sure Prince William wasn't around to overhear their conversation this time. When she glanced back at Beth, she had thick tears rolling down her cheek. "Oh, please don't worry about me so much, Beth. I'm sure you'll be gone before I even get back!" "What do you mean?" Beth sniffed. "Well, I'm sure the amnesty will be signed by then. I just hope you'll be close by for me to find when I return." Doris smiled and rubbed her friend's arm. She knew they had always planned to leave together, but she didn't want her friend to wait for her to get back if she was free before then. They'd find each other eventually and continue on with their dreams of some far away place that looked nothing like the palace. "That's just it, Doris." Doris furrowed her brow.

"What is?" "Mr. Carson said my name will only be on the list if you come back safely. Otherwise, I might never be

Her Unwanted Mate On The Thr