"If you know something bad is going to happen. . . ." I pause, letting the words linger on the air, full of music from the ballroom behind me. To my right, Sebastian rests his hands on the ivy-twined balcony railing, expression grave. I draw in a breath and finish: "Do you have to try and stop it?"

"I just got here, Bea." Sebastian's smile is dry, a little weary. "Can't we enjoy five minutes of an ordinary party for once?"

I exhale, smoothing my hands over my skirt. It does nothing to dispel the sweat clinging to my palms. "I had another vision. About five minutes before you arrived."

Sebastian's smile fades, and he turns to survey the wide garden below. His profile is serious, almost stern. I miss his carefree smiles, miss the childhood where he was my playmate and not my husband. "Do you ever wish," he says in a low voice, "that things could be normal—just once?"

I chuckle, massaging the back of my neck. My typical post-vision headache is beginning—nothing serious, but the music does nothing to help. "All the time. But it's all right." I reach for Sebastian's hand, give it a reassuring squeeze. "We both knew what we signed up for."

He doesn't answer immediately. "What did you see, Beatrice?"

I resist the urge to chew on my bottom lip. It's raw enough as it is. "The High Chancellor suspects Pierre."

Sebastian exhales, his shoulders bowing as he leans against the railing. "He has been reckless."

"He was never one to submit quietly."

Sebastian turns to me, eyebrows flicking up. "Publicly insulting the king rather defeats the purpose of an underground resistance, you know."

"I know." I rest a hand on his back as he turns back to the garden. A delicate minuet trills through the air behind us, and I swallow down a flash of resentment. We should be in there dancing with the rest of the guests. . . .

Sebastian inhales and turns towards me. His face is calmer now, less tense than before. "Yes."

I blink at him. Given that I've known Sebastian practically my whole life, he can be remarkably confusing at times. "Yes, what?"

His eyes flick towards the ballroom. "If you know that something is going to happen . . . yes."

I follow his gaze to the middle of the dance floor, where Pierre is twirling with a pretty young noblewoman in his arms. His expression is happy, almost exultant. A shiver steals up my spine, and I shift closer to Sebastian. His arm settles around me as I whisper, "He's not going to listen to me."

Sebastian's arm tightens, pulling me against his side. "I'll talk to him."

My eyes settle on the far side of the ballroom, on a clean-shaven man in a dark, well-cut suit. His eyes are riveted on Pierre. I swallow, hard. "The High Chancellor will notice. Maybe if I dance with Pierre. . . ."

Sebastian is quiet for a moment. "I suppose it's the best we can do."

I nod and step forward as the music draws to a close, but I hesitate on the threshold of the ballroom. "And if he doesn't listen to me?"

Sebastian's voice is grave, almost bland. "Then at least you'll have tried."

I nod and step towards the dispersing dancers, pasting on a smile. I've had enough practice that it's rather convincing by now, and Pierre doesn't seem to suspect a thing as he approaches me, cheeks glowing pink with exertion.

"Beatrice! You look lovely tonight. How are you? When did you arrive? Where's Sebastian?"

I can't help laughing at the rapid-fire questions. "On the balcony getting some air, about half an hour ago, and I'm quite well, thank you."

He grins, offering me his hand. “Seeing as Sebastian has abandoned his lovely bride, I suppose I may claim her for this dance?”

“Of course you may.” I take his hand, too preoccupied to register which dance is next. Thankfully, he’s a skillful dancer, and I follow his lead as we spin around the tiled floor. After several moments, I say, “I had another vision.”

Pierre looks amused. “Aren’t you always?”

“Of you.”

The smile slips off his face. It’s back again in a moment. “I suppose you’re here to warn me.”

I catch a glimpse of the Lord Chancellor as we whirl past. “Yes.”

Pierre laughs lightly. “I’m not afraid of what he’ll do to me.”

My fingers tighten convulsively on his shoulder. “Think of the rest of us. It’s not just your own life you’re throwing away.”

His smile fades. “You’ve never really needed me, Bea. Your gift . . . Sebastian’s organizational skills . . . Adele’s connections . . . all of you are necessary. I?” He lifts one shoulder in a careless shrug. “I’m just a bored marquis with a penchant for rebellion.”

Pierre steps back as the dance ends, and my breath catches in my throat. I cling to his sleeve—I still might convince him. . . . “Don’t throw away your life like this.”

He tugs free and studies me, expression more thoughtful than I’ve ever seen it before. “What use has my life ever been to the world? Tell me honestly, is there one worthwhile thing I’ve ever done? At least this way, I’ll make it count . . . before the end comes.”

“Pierre—”

“Let me do this, Beatrice.” He meets my eyes as he lifts my gloved hand to his lips. “You’re not the only one who loves your country.”

“I didn’t—”

Pierre smiles and drops my hand. “Sebastian will be looking for you,” he says lightly.

He walks away, step light and jaunty, as Sebastian comes up behind me. I fumble for his hand and hold it tight when I find it.

“Should I go after him?” I whisper.

For a moment, Sebastian is silent. Then, his voice resigned, he says, “Just because you can see the future doesn’t mean you can change it.”