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ESCORIAL CONSPIRACY

In the royal Court of Philip II in the late 16th Century, the House of Alba is fighting to regain the King's favor and displace the rival faction of the House of Mendoza, led by the ambitious Ana de Mendoza, Princess of Éboli, whose extraordinary beauty is as dangerous as her ambition.

The Duke of Alba, who despite his 71 years has not lost a whit of his legendary energy and vigor, has for some time been relegated to a lesser role in the Court, due to the growing power of the King's most influential secretary, Prime Minister Antonio Pérez.

The situation in Flanders, under the command of the King's charismatic illegitimate half-brother, is extremely delicate. William of Orange and England with its still dormant Protestant heresy make the Low Countries an inhospitable place which is in constant conflict and where those who possess privileged information can acquire immense fortunes.

John of Austria has sent his personal secretary, Juan de Escobedo, to intercede before the King, Philip II. Juan de Escobedo, presumptuous and arrogant, has returned to El Escorial on a mission to demand money from the King to finance the liberation of Mary, Queen of Scots, and thus begin a new royal line by marrying her to John of Austria.

As chance would have it, Escobedo becomes witness to the dark and passionate romance between the Princess of Éboli and Prime Minister Antonio Pérez. He also learns of their secret plan to block the sending of any aid to the Flemish territories, since that would harm their own financial interests.

From that moment on, Juan de Escobedo becomes the target of a series of failed attempts on his life and on the night of Easter Monday, 1578, paid assassins ambush and kill him. Mateo Vázquez, a priest and incorruptible official in the King's service, is charged with the investigation of his murder....









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