An Affinity for Lies

Short synopsis • Naria Khan

Princess Cecily feels a dealer's magic leave him through a silver coil. His papers lead to Rochevaux, where Duke Amaury's aunt has felt a similar pull. The king has no authority there, but his sister can take a post as the aunt's secretary. As Miss Sutton, Cecily hears Amaury admit why he once refused to marry her. He chose a woman he loved, and he has no idea who's asking whether he was happy.

When a young woman loses her gift through the clasp of her writing folio, Cecily and Amaury trace the fitting to a mill. She uses her magic to free him from the wreckage when the wheel starts beneath them. They become lovers before she discovers he has withheld the names of physicians who could have copied his family's experiments. He opens the files, and Cecily makes her own colleagues release the evidence they withheld.

The trail leads to Amaury's physician, who needs his daughter Marianne to show a magical gift to keep her stewardship of a trust. Discovering that her father has connected her to unwilling donors, Marianne asks Cecily to take the magic back. Cecily saves all seven and Amaury, but her own gift remains impaired.

When the king revives the royal match, Amaury asks Cecily to be his mistress. She leaves. At the palace he refuses the marriage before the king introduces his sister. Cecily offers to show Amaury what she reported about him. They marry by choice, and she takes charge of intelligence in his duchy.