

Chapter 17 At The Golf Course

Lancelot stepped out of Doctor Flinn's office. Peter was seated in one of the chairs in the reception room, eager for his boss's arrival.

When Lancelot cleared his throat and straightened his posture, Peter's eyes rose up from the MacBook on his lap to his boss's tall frame. Lancelot tucked his hands into the pocket of his trousers and leaned against the wall.

"Am I missing something?" Lancelot asked, taking note of the creases formed on Peter's forehead as a result of his frowning.

Peter sighed, packed up his gadgets quietly and rose up.

"Nothing serious. The Alpha King has just requested for your presence at the golf course."

Lancelot scoffed, rolled his eyes and stood straight.

"My father knows I hate golf," he stated. Lancelot had never cared for the game. Golf was simply one of those things his aristocracy demanded that he learnt. And it was very easy to, considering the eight thousand yards of expanse land that served as the Dankworth's golf course.

"So do I sire. However, it is the King's orders..."

"And must be obeyed. Bold of him to cut into my schedule like that," Lancelot replied, walking ahead of Peter, who fought to steady to strap of his heavy shoulder bag on his left shoulder.

He often wondered why Lancelot liked to walk around with a lot of things he never used.

"Perhaps I should go and meet him," Lancelot said. He paused abruptly and turned his back to Peter, catching the young man off guard.

Lancelot's left brow rose up in query.

"Is everything alright?"

No. Nothing was.

But Peter said nothing. Only roughly managed a smile at Lancelot before steadying his composure.

"I would head home before leaving for the golf course..." He paused, appeared thoughtful and shook his head slightly. He wouldn't prepare for it. That way, he could excuse himself and leave the second his father made him uncomfortable. He shrugged and looked over at Peter.

"On second thought, let's us head straight for the golf course."

To this, Peter nodded affirmatively and ushered Lancelot to the black Mercedes parked in front of the facility, just for him.

The drive back to Dankworth estate seemed to take longer this time. Lancelot assumed it was as a result of the evening rush. It was that time of the day when school's closed for the day and parents either rushed to pick their children, rushed to drop their children at home or rushed to hurry back to work.

It took Lancelot on a short trip down the memory lane. When he was a child, hopping into his father's car and watching all the eyes at school rest on he and his brothers. The Dankworth boys had been the desire of every girl and the envy of every boy.

Even now that they had grown into men, not much had changed about either of them.

The metal gates that protected the entrance into the largest Estate in the whole of the city of London, Dankworth Estate, opened up to allow their car entry.

"Are you certain you do not want to have a change of clothes sire?" Peter asked, looking over at Lancelot who continued to stare absentmindedly, out of the window.

"The golf course first, Peter," Lancelot replied, not sparing him a glance.

As they approached the golf course, Lancelot was surprised and annoyed to see a total of seven cars parked in the parking lot. He had thought this was going to be a father and son affair.

All of a sudden, he was very glad he had decided earlier not to come prepared. Now, there was an excuse to leave. From what he saw, Lancelot had a feeling he was going to be out of here quicker than he had expected.

Peter left the heavy bag in the car this time as he followed Lancelot behind. He knew Lancelot didn't need to; considering how good his boss was at everything (besides matters of the heart) whether he wanted to or not. Still, he knew being Lancelot's caddie in today's game would give him an opportunity to watch the beautiful game of golf.

When they got to the Teeing ground, Lancelot took in deep breaths to calm his annoyance. He wasn't about to walk into the crowd of men-even though they were only five-looking like the world had just fallen on his shoulders; despite the fact that it actually had.

"Lancelot dear!" his uncle, Bailey called out. Lancelot forced a smile as he walked towards the older man.

Bailey stood in black shorts and a pink short sleeved shirt. He had his face cap covering his forehead so the sun didn't burn him too much.

On hearing his name, everyone had turned back. Everyone besides James who was preparing his stance for a dive. Lancelot took note of his stride, his club, and his stance.

On reflex, he scoffed.

"I don't think you want to do that brother. Your stance is not right," Lancelot said, standing between his father and his brother after giving the rest of the men curt nods. It was only to Lee that he smiled faintly. Albert replied his curt nod with a cold stare, before focusing his attention on James.

"I know," James called out, without turning to him.

"So is your club, and your stride," he spoke again. Folding his arms across his chest.

James grit his teeth before turning to his older brother.

"And who shows up to a golf course in suit pants? Huh? Brother?" James asked. The tone in which the last word slipped out of his mouth almost made it seem like he regretted the fact, or hated it. Edward scoffed and allowed his gaze to fall to Lancelot.

"Lance obviously." The spite in his voice could not be missed.

"I thought this was supposed to be a family affair," Lancelot spoke, focusing his gaze on his father who did but anything to make sure his eyes didn't meet Lancelot's.

"We are all the men of this family, so I called us all here," Edward spoke, still not risking a glance at Lancelot.

In his heart, Bailey sought for a topic of discussion to ease the tension. When he caught sight of the way Lancelot's nostrils twitched violently, he sighed.

"Say Lance, you're starting to over work yourself these days. You need to come out and have a drink sometime," Bailey called out, playfully punching his nephew's arm. Lancelot's cold gaze fell on his.

"Yes brother." James was standing in front of him now.

"You should come have a drink with me. In the club, bang some whores..." James paused for a while, feigning a thoughtful expression before his lips folded with pity.

"Ouch. Forgive me brother. I seemed to have forgotten that you have decided to tie Bran's chosen mate to your bed..." The words rolled out of James's tongue with all the venom that had arranged the words in his head. In front of him, Lancelot's fists rolled into balls, tight balls.

"I mean, I had known you would inherit all that belonged to him, but his woman? I thought better of you Lance." It was Albert's voice that caused Lancelot to look away from James's face.

By God, if he heard one more word about his older brother, he was going to...

"Boys!"

Edward's voice called all of them back to order.

"Now I don't know what is going on here, but I would advice that you all save the beast you are about to unleash on yourselves, for the hunt!" Edward scolded in anger. How many more years until they learnt to see eye to eye? If they didn't get along now, what would happen after he is gone?

He focused his gaze on his now eldest son. With his stance, Edward could tell that if he had not stopped them from talking, James would have been on the floor with blood oozing out of his nose.

"Lance, you should know better. Your coronation is barely a month away and the hunt is even closer! Just two barely three weeks away! You know how important the ritual is to your coronation. My father and his father before him set a record that I lived up to, one that I am expecting you to surpass!..." He stopped to look over at the three young men.

"You should be training together, not devising new means to tear each other apart!"

"Everything would be easier if Lancelot remembered his place," James spoke up again, stubbornly looking straight into Lancelot's eyes.

Self control. Self control. Self control. Lancelot continued to repeat the words to himself. If he threw the kind of punch he sought to throw at James's face, he was certain his brother would lose his nose and his two middle incisors for life. "James!"

"No father! Let me speak." James tore his gaze from Lancelot and fixed it on Edward's.

"Lancelot needs to understand that he has to stop trying so hard to fit into shoes that do not belong to him. These shoes do not belong to you!"

Bitter. His brother was filled with bitterness. And now, looking him in his eyes, Lancelot knew why.

It wasn't about Bran. It had never been about Bran.

Lancelot chuckled. A gesture that infuriated James all the more.

"Why don't you stop acting like all of this is about Bran? You and I know it isn't and it has never been," Lancelot spoke. The calm edge of his tone caused James to look like an angry fool standing in front of him. A forced chuckled came from James.

"There you go again brother, acting like you know every goddamn thing."

"Perhaps, after I beat you at today's game and reduce you to nothing but a pup at the hunt, you would understand that I, as a matter of fact, do know everything."

It was there in James's gaze and stance. The defeat, the sudden humility and subtle humiliation. He stepped away from Lancelot and tightened his grip on his club.

If there was anything he knew about his brother, it was that Lancelot was never one to make empty threats.

Albert, who had been silently watching the display by the two brothers, was triggered by Lancelot's last statement.

"You might want to lessen the words that come out of your mouth Lancelot, so that there won't be too many words to swallow," he spoke, slowly walking towards the part of the field Lancelot stood. Lancelot drank in the sight of his cousin. The one person that resembled him in height and beauty. Albert also had the same domineering presence around him, but his was always forced. Lancelot's lips curved in a one sided smile. Albert was not worth battling words with.

"Now, I am not one to gamble, but would you put your money on it?" Albert asked with a smirk. He was openly challenging Lancelot, in front of all the men in the family.

If his catch turned out to be greater than Lancelot's, it would be a great win for him. And he desired and craved that win more than anything else. However, Lancelot had a better idea.

"You and I know that money lost won't mean anything to the both of us. But, I'll place the bet," Lancelot spoke, moving closer to Albert, so he stood face to face with him. "When I win you, I would own sixty percent of your properties. And if you win, you can have seventy percent of mine."

Albert's eyes narrowed at Lancelot, who threw him a flashy smile. Albert wanted to back out, but his pride would not let him.

"It's a bet."

"Very well gentlemen. We have our bet." He looked around him, before narrowing his eyes at his cousin.

"Be warned Albert. I would show you absolutely no mercy."