

Chapter 43 The Large Family Tree

She felt a faint sense of relief when her eyelids finally parted. For one, she had gotten rid of the awful dream she had just had.

Roxanne saw herself standing in front of a huge black werewolf, and it appeared to be hell bent on eating her up! Luckily, she woke up right before then.

Who knows? Maybe she wouldn't have woken up at all. Roxanne recalled the rather famous myth that said if a person died in their dream, they also died in real life. The thought frightened her terribly.

When she struggled to sit up, she felt very hot, despite the air conditioner in the room. Beads of sweat trickled down her forehead and she wiped it with the back of her palm. When she did so, she looked around the room. Two things came to her notice.

Firstly, the splitting headache that had caused her to go back to bed was gone. Now, she felt well rested and stronger than she did before. The tea the maids served her must have worked their magic, and she was grateful for it. Secondly, there was a strange scent in the room. Strange, but oddly familiar. It was the rich sense of Arabian fragrance, with a weird mixture of aloe vera gel, and...

She paused to sniff the air.

Shaving cream?

The scent was strong, and she knew who it belonged to.

Lancelot.

The thought of him caused her stomach to turn. And when she remembered how he had dismissed her without even giving her a short glance when she was at the hospital, her heart broke all over again.

Did she miss him so much that she could now scent him in her room? She had thought coming to London and walking under him would bring them closer. But it seemed like all it had done so far was drive them further apart.

His face flashed through her mind again. Back at the hospital, he had looked displeased, like something was bothering him, especially when he spoke to his mother. Did her presence irritate him? Had she done something wrong? Or did he now consider her incompetent?

Roxanne continued to think about all the worst things that could have earned her Lancelot's hatred, but nothing seemed to make any sense to her.

In her sad mood, she decided she would place a call to her best friend, Emily. They had not spoken in a while and Roxanne could really use Emily's advice right now.

Within her, Roxanne prayed that the decision to come to London was not a mistake.

As her eyes scanned her room for her mobile phone, she heard a knock on the door. Her face brightened. Perhaps, it was Lancelot finally coming to see her! So, he did not hate her after all!

Roxanne cleared her throat and adjusted her posture in the bed, so as not to seem too excited, she didn't want him to think she had been hoping for his arrival all along.

The knock came a second time, and she called at the top of her voice, for the speaker to come in. With her heart pounding against her chest, she watched as the door knob turned and the door opened. She could not help her excitement at seeing Lancelot, but she could control the look on her face.

And so, when Peter and the young man from earlier in the morning walked in, instead of Lancelot, Roxanne managed to hide her disappointment as well. But she did not do it fast enough, Peter caught sight of it.

"Peter!" She had hoped to sound more excited, but her forced enthusiasm betrayed itself.

He wore a wide spread grin on his face as he walked towards her.

"Forgive me, Miss Harvey, were you expecting someone else?"

Roxanne's cheeks turned an embarrassing shade of red as she looked away from him.

"No, no, of course not, please come in," he said, fighting to keep her eyes away from his face. At least, until her blushing stopped.

Peter walked in, Arthur followed closely behind him.

"I am sorry that I did not introduce his grace to you earlier this morning. There was a lot going on in the palace, and with your health as well," he said as he moved away from Arthur's front, putting the young man on display before Roxanne. "Miss Harvey, meet his highness, Arthur Dankworth." He turned to Arthur and bowed, "Your Grace, this is Miss Roxanne Harvey, she would be assisting me in assisting your older brother, Prince Lancelot."

Roxanne looked over the boy once more, taking note of his innocent eyes and his soft smile. His aura was very different from Lancelot and Roxanne couldn't help but be happy for him. At least, the boy did not always appear as though he was at war with the whole world.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, my lady," Arthur spoke, bowing in courtesy.

A smile crept up to Roxanne's face. The boy was so sweet.

She returned his bow. "The pleasure is all mine Your Grace."

After their short interaction, Peter decided it was best for him to cut in.

"Well, his grace wanted to make sure that you were okay, on behalf of Prince Lancelot." Peter hated that he had to lie so much in one day, but he did not want Roxanne to feel as though Lancelot did not care about her well-being. Not because of whatever romantic feelings the two seemed to have or not to have between them, but because she was Lancelot's employee who also lived in his house. Therefore, he had to make sure she believed she was in safe hands. Even though right now, it was far from the truth.

However, he had to get to the main reason he was here. But Arthur had something to say first.

"Now that you are alright, I must convey the message to my brother," he said the second part of the sentence as he turned to Peter with a look that screamed 'What the hell?' but Peter forced a smile and turned away from him. "Do take care, Miss Harvey."

"I certainly will, Your Grace."

With that, Arthur turned around, shot Peter a glare and walked out of the room.

Roxanne's eyes followed him behind.

"He is such a sweet boy," she commented, after he had closed the door behind him.

Peter looked back, nodding affirmatively.

"Indeed, he is."

When Roxanne looked back up at him, she still had her smile on her face.

"Did you also come to see how I am doing? I am actually very well, that tea you asked to maids to serve me worked wonders. My headache is gone, and I suddenly feel so strong, also I..."

"That is amazing!" Peter cut in. He could not bear to listen to her appreciate and praise him, not after all he had done to her and all the lies he told her.

Roxanne was taken aback by this action, but she said nothing. She stayed quiet and leaned into the headboard as she listened to him.

"I am very glad you're doing well. Which is a good thing, because you would be dining with the royal family, tonight!" Peter said aloud, a broad smile on his face.

Roxanne's eyes shot open as she looked at him. Her jaw dropped, so her surprise was obvious.

Did he just say she would be eating dinner with the royal family?

It was then she noticed the brown file in Peter's hands. He walked to her and dropped it by her bedside drawer. Roxanne's eyes followed him with every step he took, she had not found the words to speak yet.

"Do make sure to dress very corporately. The entire royal family would be there. There would be maids to attend to your hair and whatever thing it is you might need to present yourself. The queen and the dowager are very particular about physical appearance," he spoke. She had to be dressed like the employee she was, they did not need anybody thinking otherwise.

When he looked at her, Peter could see the numerous questions in her eyes. He watched as her mouth moved, she was struggling to say something, but couldn't find the words to put it.

He chuckled.

"His grace just wants to introduce you to the family as my assistant. You have nothing to fear."

"Oh," Roxanne finally managed to mutter. She did not know what she had been expecting, but Peter's revelation seemed to disappoint her.

Peter noticed this. While he smiled sadly within him, he made sure that his smile was reassuring to her. And it seemed to work, because she heaved a sigh of relief.

"You must also be on your best behavior. No matter what anyone at that table says to you, you cannot be very expressive about your emotions. They are all aristocrats, and they have their own way of judging character." Roxanne's face softened when she heard his explanation. It made little sense, but she did get his point.

"I see," she spoke. Roxanne stretched her hand to the file, opened it and drew out the thin booklet inside.

"Like I said, a comprehensive list, with pictures as well, for easy identification," Peter noted. Roxanne nodded without looking at him. She was interested in learning his family.

Her eyes caught sight of the king first. He appeared to be an older version of Lancelot. Her eyes moved to the picture of the woman by his side, she could recognize her from this morning. "Edward and Madeline Dankworth," she read aloud.

"The King and the Queen. Very interesting people," Peter added.

Roxanne said nothing, her eyes continued to skin the booklet. She noticed that the family tree was particularly large, she didn't know when she made a comment about it.

"There are so many people in this family," she sounded amazed, Peter smiled.

"It is a large one. And a very dramatic one I must add. They are different, from the usual family setting. There is love and there is hatred."

Roxanne found herself comparing it to her small family of six.

She caught sight of the Dankworth sons, and Lancelot's face stood out once again.

"Lancelot, James and Arthur Dankworth," she read aloud.

"The three princes. You have met two, you shall see James at the dinner," Peter cut in again.

When she looked below them, a picture of a woman and who Roxanne assumed to be her children, a young man and woman, was there. The young lady was very beautiful, with green eyes that caused Roxanne to smile. She looked under the picture for their names.

"Hermione, Albert and Elizabeth Wessex..." The last name was unfamiliar. Roxanne looked up at Peter for an explanation.

"The King's sister and her children. Lancelot's aunty and cousins, very interesting people."

Roxanne smiled at the girl's picture.

"She is really beautiful."

Peter nodded.

"Indeed, she is."

She returned her eyes to the booklet.

Two older women followed next.

"Marion Dankworth..."

"Lancelot's grandmother. She's a very strict woman," Peter cut in.

"Eloise Dankworth."

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"Ahh! Lancelot's grandaunt. I find her the most interesting of them all. You must be careful around her, she has the ability to sniff out lies and treachery from even the most secret of souls." This revelation seemed to puzzle Roxanne, she looked up at him.

"Really?"

Peter realized himself and cleared his throat. He could not believe the mistake he had almost made. Eloise had that ability because she was a white wolf, but he surely couldn't say that to Roxanne. "Of course. She possesses very strong instincts," he said, smiling nervously.

Roxanne looked back into the booklet. The next pictures were of two men; one had a striking resemblance to Lancelot's mother, and the other to his father.

"Lord Bailey Morrison and Lord Richard Dankworth."

Peter smiled. "My personal favorites. The brothers of the queen and king respectively. Each has an interesting personality of their own."

She flipped the page over, and noticed the picture of a young lady. She had bright eyes and an innocent, yet beautiful and delicate face.

"Ava Relish..." she read aloud. "A part of the family?" she asked, looking up at Peter. Something about the picture seemed to unnerve her, she didn't know why. Peter buried his eyes into the booklet and looked back at her.

"No, not yet. But she would be soon."

Roxanne's left brow rose, silently pleading for an explanation.

"She would be getting married to Lancelot soon," he spat out. He hated to be the one to tell her, but it was important she knew now.

"Oh," she mouthed, burying her eyes into the booklet again.

Roxanne's heart seemed to squeeze against her chest. She had never imagined that Lancelot was betrothed, to be married. For all she knew, she had hoped...

She stopped her thoughts from going any further. How could she have hoped anything would happen between them? The difference in their social status was too evident to look past.

"I would leave you to get ready now, do take care Miss Harvey," Peter said aloud. He noticed the sadness in her eyes, but chose to say nothing about it.

She looked up at Peter, struggling to mask her disappointment with a chuckle.

"I most definitely would. Thank you very much, for everything."

In front of her, Peter nodded.

"You're welcome."

She nodded, quite forcefully.

Peter turned away from her and walked towards the room door, her eyes continued to follow him until he was out of the door.

Her eyes returned to the booklet in her hands as the door closed.

Lancelot is engaged, was all she could think about.

And it hurt her, for reasons she refused to accept.