

Chapter 45 Reuben Morrison Is Here

On her way to the dining room, while walking beside Peter, Roxanne did not know what she was to expect. She had been told how to address each and every member of the royal house, and to be on her best behavior. Yet, she found it hard to shake off the nerve wracking feeling in her stomach.

No matter how confident she tried to appear, she couldn't deny the fact that she was nervous.

As they approached the door of the dining room, Peter walked ahead of her. The large mahogany doors were spread apart from each other, ushering them into the exquisite and luxurious room with a long rectangular table standing still in the middle.

Roxanne's eyes drank in the sight of the place. From the antique chandeliers on the roof, to the brown silk draperies, portraits and iron sculptures, everything about the room screamed English aristocracy.

Peter turned to her, and took one step forward into the room. Roxanne felt her heart pound against her chest, threatening to burst out. The room was filled with no less than fifteen people, including the servants who set the table.

She took sight of everyone. But they were all too cut up in their chatters to notice her. Peter seemed to see how uneasy she was, so he moved closer to her and whispered in her left ear.

"Remember, you do not want them to know that you are nervous. Chin up, hold your head high."

Roxanne's gaze flickered to him. He turned away from her immediately and walked closer to the table. Roxanne followed him closely behind.

Madeline was the first to set her eyes on them. She had been talking in hushed tones to Edward when she heard the clinging of heels against the marble floor. She looked up to see Roxanne, the human woman, clad in a red suit pant and black lace long sleeve. Her hair was held up in a tight pony tail above her head, allowing the long brown strands the fall to her back.

Madeline's scrutinizing eyes continued to dance over Roxanne's frame. Everyone noticed her stare and followed her eyes carefully.

At that moment, when all eyes were on Roxanne, her heels threatened to buckle under her. She bit her lower lip softly to stop herself from cursing out loud.

"Best behavior," she muttered to herself, casting an anxious look on Peter. He barely had any emotions on his face. Roxanne envied his ability to be so straight faced, but she couldn't be surprised, he had been with this family longer than she was.

Her eyes travelled around the room and rested on Lancelot's face. Once again, she felt breathless. He was carelessly handsome in his green shirt. As she continued to look at him, he looked up from the plate of roasted chicken in front of him. When their eyes met, Roxanne felt all the butterflies in her stomach leap for joy. But, once he tore his gaze away from her, their wings withered away.

"Greetings your majesties," Peter began, when he had finally gotten everyone's attention. He turned his eyes to Lancelot.

"Your secretary, Your Grace." He bowed.

Roxanne watched as he stepped back until he was completely gone from her sight.

Without Peter standing next to her, Roxanne felt suffocated. Every eye in the room was fixed on her, including HIS.

Lancelot rose up from his seat. He looked around the table, a gesture that showed he was about to address everyone in the room.

"Mother, father, everyone..." His eyes fell on Roxanne again. She gulped hard on her saliva.

"Roxanne Harvey, my new secretary." Immediately he spoke, he settled back into his seat and did not take another look at her again.

Roxanne continued to stand there, clueless of what to do next. In desperation, her eyes found Peter standing at a far corner of the room. She was more than grateful when their eyes locked. Peter bowed and Roxanne took it as a signal that she had to greet everyone.

"Your majesties..." She bowed in courtesy.

"It is an honor to meet you all," she continued, plastering a smile on her face as she rose her head up.

"An honor indeed," Madeline muttered, against her champagne flute and Edward shot her a glare. She rolled her eyes and turned away from her husband. She did not want this woman here, so Edward could not expect her to be nice. "Have a seat please..." Edward spoke, when he looked away from Madeline. When she glared at him, he felt it and turned to her.

"Come and dine with us," he said again, his eyes did not leave those of his wife.

Still anxious, she muttered a "thank you" and walked briskly to the first empty seat she saw. It was beside the young prince she had met earlier.

Arthur, that's his name, Roxanne thought. She wanted to smile at him, but he did not turn to her. So, she kept her face forward. Her eyes met with

grey colored ones of an older woman. Roxanne could recognize the face. The woman was Eloise Dankworth, the grandaunt of Lancelot.

Eloise smiled when she caught the violet eyes of the young lady. One look was more than enough for her to see everything; the tension between the young lady and Lancelot, the feelings the young lady had for Lancelot. One thing was extremely clear; this woman wasn't just any secretary, she was Lancelot's mate.

Her eyes narrowed at Roxanne immediately she sensed it. She picked up the glass of red wine in front of her and turned her gaze to Lancelot. He was focused on the chicken wings in front of him. A knowing smile appeared on Eloise's face; something was definitely going on. And she couldn't wait to watch it unravel.

Madeline on the other hand, did not find the idea of Roxanne dining with them pleasant. So, she made it her point of duty to make her as uncomfortable as she could. Plus, it was a very good chance to question the woman who had nearly torn her whole life's work to shreds.

She cleared her throat and sat up.

"So, Miss Roselia..." she started, addressing the girl by another name on purpose.

Roxanne smiled and tried to correct her with a polite smile.

"Roxanne, Your Highness."

However, Roxanne's friendly smile was met with a very unfriendly scowl from Madeline. Roxanne shrunk under the woman's glare and Madeline's lips teased in a mocking smile.

"Roxanne. Tell us about yourself. I am really curious about my son's new..." She looked over to Lancelot.

"....secretary." The word was said with more emphasis than normal, and Roxanne found it hard to smile.

Hermione glanced over to Madeline and scoffed. Lady Marion's eyes continued to move from one woman to another. Every other eye in the room rested on Roxanne, patiently waiting for her to speak. She noticed this and cleared her throat, while wiping her sweaty palms on her trouser.

"Well, uhm..." she started.

"My name is Roxanne Harvey, I'm 24 years old. I was born in New York City, to American parents..."

She was interrupted by the sound of Hermione choking on her wine. Roxanne stopped and turned to the woman.

Madeline's jaw dropped in shock.

Did she just say "American"?! It was bad that she was an imposter, but she was also American!

Madeline ignored Hermione and turned back to Roxanne.

"You're...American," Madeline spoke. Roxanne did not catch the spite in her voice. But, she could tell that the last word came out as though it were a curse.

Roxanne nodded in glee.

Richard and Bailey who had been silent ever since, exchanged looks for the first time, before turning to Edward.

No one at the table could believe their ears!

"Yes, Your Highness. Born and bred. Although my parents moved us to Manhattan in our teenage years, I attended college in Houston, Texas."

"How very...interesting," Lady Marion finally spoke. Her eyes rested on Madeline's blue ones which had fury hidden inside of them.

A common American on the same table with her! This was the height of it.

"Very interesting indeed," Madeline muttered, sipping the content of her champagne flute slowly.

Roxanne couldn't help but feel completely out of place. Here she was, under the watchful and scrutinizing gaze of all these people, and Lancelot had not even offered her a nod of encouragement. It was as though he did not even know she was here!

Eloise continued to look at Roxanne. While she felt sorry for the young lady, she could not help the curiosity in her too. Something about her soul was young and pure, and Eloise found herself taking a liking to the young woman. "So..." Madeline placed her flute gently on the table as she spoke.

"What and what have you achieved? I mean, besides being my son's secretary?"

Eloise frowned at Madeline, why was she bent on making a fool out of the young girl?

Roxanne swallowed nervously and cleared her throat.

"I was a sales representative for a company in Manhattan. LexCorp, I worked there for five years."

As she spoke, Roxanne thought she heard the lady beside Lancelot murmur the phrase "low life" but when she turned to her, the lady's eyes were fixed on Lancelot's jaw. A knot formed in Roxanne's stomach when she recognized the face; Ava Relish, Lancelot's bride-to-be. Jealousy forced her to tear her gaze away from her.

"A sales rep?" Madeline asked again, as though she did not believe Roxanne. Oblivious of Madeline's thoughts towards her, Roxanne smiled sweetly while nodding affirmatively.

"How convenient," Hermione said aloud, a chuckle followed it. Madeline could tell Hermione was mocking her.

Lancelot had interrupted one of the biggest nights of his life for a complete nobody. Excellent, just excellent, Madeline thought.

She giggled sarcastically, and turned to Lancelot.

"Did you hear that son? She was a sales rep? Isn't that interesting?"

Lancelot did not look up at his mother, he had nothing to say to her. Roxanne was very confused at this point. She was extremely uncomfortable. Despite the ventilation of the room, she was sweating profusely.

When Arthur sensed that his mother was about to speak again, he knew he had to do something. He feigned a cough, as though he was choking on his wine.

Madeline's eyes softened as she turned to her son. Everyone's eyes fell on Arthur as well. He continued to cough repeatedly, until Madeline called out to him.

"Arthur dear, are you alright?" Her voice was etched with concern, the venom in her tone had completely disappeared.

"Somebody, get him water immediately!" Edward ordered one of the servants who stood by the wall.

As the elderly man rushed towards them, Edward shot Madeline a glare, she ignored it and focused on Arthur.

His jaw tightened, but he sighed and spoke up.

"See what happens when we do not observe table manners? We shall now eat in peace..." He turned to Madeline again.

"No more talking." His tone was definite, Madeline could tell it was an order. She rolled her eyes and watched as Arthur gulped his water.

Silence fell upon the room once again, everyone fixed their eyes into the plates in front of them. Including Roxanne, although, she could barely

bring herself to put anything into her mouth. Not with the tension in the room.

At that moment, there was a knock on the door. Eyes rose up to meet the chief Butler, Lee, standing in front of the door, with his head bowed.

"Lee," Edward spoke up, grateful for whatever form of distraction Lee allowed himself.

The elderly butler walked into the dining room and greeted them all, before focusing his gaze on Edward.

"Your Highness, you have a visitor."

Edward's eyes narrowed in suspicion. He had not been expecting anybody, so who could this visitor be? "Who is he?"

Butler Lee was going to speak, but a louder male voice called from behind him.

"If it isn't my favorite uncle!"

Immediately, all eyes turned to the direction of the voice.

Edward smiled, and Madeline's eyes brightened immediately she caught sight of the speaker.

Reuben Morrison was here...