

## Chapter 56 It Most Certainly Is

Roxanne could only but curse the noise both inside and outside the palace for her inability to sleep at night. The eerie silence of the day when they arrived, was a sharp contrast from the hullabaloo of the night. It was almost as though everyone slept during the day and went about their daily activities at night, like nocturnal animals. And Roxanne found it extremely weird and very unpleasant. Guards walked outside the palace, the laughter of maidens could be heard and she was left to toss and turn and savor the little sleep she could get.

It was bad enough that she spent most of her night listening to footsteps go to and fro her door, while she sat inside, hoping that she was safe. After her encounter with the strange king, Roxanne knew that she would have to be very wary of her movements in this palace.

"Stick to my side at all times," Peter had said. Well, she would do just that.

Now, the little sleep she had managed to get after hours of staring from ceiling to door to window was interrupted by the sound of a knock on her door.

Roxanne groaned in frustration as she sat up. Her eyes came face to face with her reflection in the circular mirror by the wall, in front of her bed. Her eyes were red and underneath them were heavy bags gotten from lack of sleep.

The knock came once again, and she had to take the pains of placing her feet on the ground and rising from the soft mattress. Peter must have come to assign her duties for the day. She wondered how he had been able to sleep and wake up so early. Had he not been affected from all the noise in the palace, like she was? Anyway, she would not know until she asked him.

Roxanne took slow strides to the door and opened it slowly, until it was wide open in front of her.

Her jaw dropped. Confusion caused her to arch her left brow, before surprise and faint annoyance flooded her expression. In front of her were three ladies that had to be maids or servants; they were dressed as such and shared the same makeup of smoky eye brows and pale lips.

This place only got creepier by the minute.

The first lady had a red cloth neatly folded in her hands. She tried to smile, but the smile still looked gloomy and forced.

"A dress from the king." When the lady spoke, her voice came out like a whisper, and not like she was really talking. Roxanne heard her and did not bother to ask her to repeat herself.

She looked down at the dress with scrutiny. Then, she opened her mouth to protest after forcing a smile.

"Thank you, but I really don't..."

"Want to refuse a gift from the king," the first lady spoke.

Roxanne tilted her head to side in faint amusement. Where these ladies really serious?

"I must plead with you to excuse us." It was the second lady's turn to speak or rather, whisper and Roxanne watched in awe as they brushed past her and made their way into her room. Her brows squinted. They were really serious. She turned around to look at them. One placed the red cloth on

the bed, and Roxanne could see that it was a red dress, and a very beautiful one.

The maid walking towards her stole her eyes from the gown. Roxanne watched in silence as the lady pulled her to the chair in front of the mirror. She placed a hand on Roxanne's cheeks and corked her head to the sides; left and right. The lady frowned slightly and looked up to her colleagues.

"Not ready yet. Must have a bath."

It was an instruction. Immediately, the other maids hurried into the bathroom, and Roxanne could only hear the sound of running water, and breathe in the scent of Ixora petals. The woman in front of her would not stop looking at her, and Roxanne felt herself cringe time and time again.

"Very beautiful, you."

Roxanne fixed her eyes on her reflection in the mirror. She did not want to look up at the strange woman who seemed to have a small problem with sentence construction. But, she had just been complimented, so Roxanne smiled without looking at her.

"Thank you," she muttered. The maid nodded with a brief smile, Roxanne did not see her.

For the next thirty minutes, Roxanne went into the bathroom, soaked herself in a tub of clear water, aloe vera gel and ixora petals, had her hair and back scrubbed by the maids, her feet massaged and scrubbed afterwards, and she was given a brief session of facials.

She stepped out of the bathtub feeling like a bride being prepared for her wedding ceremony. Which was very strange. Last she checked, she was here to work. Roxanne could not help but wonder what would be going on with Lancelot at that point, and why Peter wasn't in her room yet to explain what was happening.

Her brunette hair was dried, her skin was massaged with scented oil. She was allowed to put on the dress by herself - thank the universe. When she

looked up at her image in the mirror, Roxanne was smitten by her very own self.

The long dress clung to the body like second skin, and rolled all the way down to her heels. The right side of the dress had a thigh high slit. The dress had only one sleeve; the one on the left and a curved collar. She looked like a queen! She felt like a queen!

And it was a strange feeling.

The maids were obviously happy with their work, but they weren't done yet.

They moved her into the seat again, and turned her away from the mirror.

"You must trust us to make you look beautiful," one of them said, after noticing the questions in her glare.

Roxanne couldn't keep the next question to herself either.

"Why?"

"It is for the big fight." The woman's Italian accent took a toll on her English, but Roxanne found it sweet.

But, the answer only seemed to confuse her the more.

What big fight? She wanted to ask. But decided against it and kept still.

She sat on the chair and said nothing as the maids "worked miracles on her face" according to what one of them had called it.

Just then, she heard another knock on the door. Roxanne fought the urge to roll her eyes. Who could it be now? A nutritionist to get her ready for the fight? What in the name of the globe was even going on here?

"Come in!" he called out loud, when she had finally silenced her thoughts.

The door opened and closed to reveal a rather astonished Peter standing in front of her.

Finally! She thought, breathing down with relief. There was nothing she needed more than a familiar face to tell her what was going on. But, when she cast a questioning glare at Peter, he seemed to be more confused than she was. Still looking at him, Roxanne mouthed an inaudible "Are you serious right now?" with a scowl on her face. After Peter threw her a taunting smile, he said whispered something between the lines of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." And that was a good joke, because they were actually in Rome.

She scoffed and looked away from him. Peter leaned into the door and gave appropriate nods to the maids who greeted him.

Both Roxanne and Peter stayed silent until the maids finished their duty and left. Roxanne rose from the chair and planted herself in front of the mirror. She was simply astonished.

Her brows were neatly drawn, her face was glowing and the red on her lips was just as sharp as the red on her body.

She giggled and turned to Peter.

"I look hot!"

Peter chuckled as he examined her carefully. She really did, but he would not tell her that, of course.

"They said it was for the big fight," Roxanne spoke up, leering at Peter.

He nodded in reply. Peter knew Roxanne did not know anything about the fight. After all, she had been told that she was here on a business trip. But, the fight was the business and he had to explain it to her. "Yes, it is," he replied curtly.

"What?" she sounded genuinely lost, which she actually was. Peter heaved a sigh and walked to the side of her bed.

"You'll see. But, first of all, pack your things if you bothered to unpack, we leave immediately after the show."

Roxanne was still not understanding anything. However, she was going to follow every of Peter's orders, just to be safe. "Well, it's a good thing I didn't unpack." She threw over her shoulder.

Peter nodded.

"Indeed it is." He glanced down at his leather wristwatch and took in deep breaths.

"It's time."

Roxanne was left to wonder why that statement came out of his mouth like a death sentence, even as she walked beside him, out of the room.

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Lancelot took another look at his muscular image in the mirror in front of him. Within him, he was boiling with rage and Ziko was more furious.

Aztec, the horny bastard, had set another wager and sealed it with his demonic blood.

Whoever won today was going to win Roxanne as well. And the stupid elders of his council had all agreed. Now, Lancelot was left with no other option than to send Aztec Rold to his grave with his bare hands; since he wasn't allowed to shape shift into his wolf and for this, Aztec was not allowed to use his super speed as a vampire.

Not that Lancelot was going to have a problem beating Aztec to a pulp, but he thought for a fleeting moment what it would be like to lose, and leave Roxanne for the dirty scoundrel.

Ziko howled in fury at the thought.

No, there was absolutely no way.

Wolf or no wolf, speed or no speed, Lancelot was going to make sure Aztec never recovers the balls to set his eyes on another female.

It was not a threat, it was a promise.

There was a knock on his door, and Lancelot called for the person to come in.

It was Aztec's chief guard, and captain of his soldiers. The man looked over at Lancelot with faint disdain and frowned.

"It is time."

Lancelot's jaw hardened. He thought of a million ways to end Aztec's life, if he was given the chance.

"It most certainly is."