

## Chapter 68 Glove Princess

"I would hurry up and get those out of there if I were you. But if you want to spend all day here, then be my guest." The huge woman thundered above a dumbstruck Roxanne, who was still trying to make sense of it all, in her head. She blinked twice, trying to ask herself how it came to this. How did she go from having everything she had ever wanted, to slaving away in someone's kitchen? Life had really done a number on her. But, this was one hurdle that she had to cross. She had crossed so many before and had come out victorious, therefore, some stale plates and contaminated water in the kitchen sink was not going to break her. Not at all.

With that thought, Roxanne swallowed hard. She took one long and pitiful glance at her white suit, knowing very well that this might be the last day she would ever get to use it, before heaving a sigh, while mentally bidding the dress farewell. She looked up at Marilyn and managed a forced smile.

"Can I get gloves?" she asked, trying her best to be as polite and as civil as she could. Even though no one here had bothered to be any of those, to her.

She could hear murmurs and short mocking laughter from all around her. Even Marilyn stared down at her with an amused and irked look on her face.

"Hear that girls?" Marilyn called out, her voice was unusually deep for that of a lady, but it was one of the things that caused the maids to fear and respect her.

"Our golden lady here needs a glove!" She said it as though it was something funny, and all the maids in the kitchen laughed. Even the ones who had just come in to get another round of drinks.

Roxanne continued to stare at all of them. She had only asked for rubber gloves to get the dishes washed, why did they act like she had done something really stupid? Or amusing?

As the girls laughed, two maids walked up to the sink and dumped another series of dirty plates. Before they brushed past her, they looked down on her, as though she were equal to the dirty dishes in the sink - nothing but filth.

Her lips began to quiver; a slow effect from all the tears she was holding back. She had tried to convince herself that she was strong enough to deal with all the hate she was getting, but the truth was that, she wasn't. No amount of betrayal she had suffered back in America had prepared her for this moment; the moment the eyes of people would reduce her to nothing.

She was about to let it all out, scream at the top of her voice, curse this woman, and all the girls around her who were hating on her for no reason, storm out of this kitchen, pick up her passport and head straight to the airport, back to her home. But, the male voice at the door of the large kitchen stopped her.

"Hello ladies."

All eyes in the room turned to the slim man standing by the door. Clad in a black suit and an equally black shade of tie, was Peter. Roxanne blinked thrice, fighting her tears back into her eyes. Peter was here now, he was going to make everything alright.

Or, so she thought.

Marilyn tore her stern eyes away from Roxanne and rested it on Peter as she walked to the door.

"Is there a problem, Sir Peter?"

Peter adjusted the cuffs of his sleeves, cleared his throat and stood tall. Marilyn's size and stance was intimidating, even for men like him.

"I need to speak with Miss Roxanne."

Marilyn frowned, folding her arms across her chest.

"I do not know who that is."

Peter fought the urge to roll his eyes, and only let out a breathless sigh, looking over her.

"The lady in the white suit," he spat out.

The lady's scowl seemed to deepen.

"She's busy," she spat.

"I just need five minutes."

Marilyn eyed him in scrutiny, before turning her head towards the kitchen.

"Hey! Glove princess."

At the mention of that name, the maidens broke into mocking and wicked laughs once more. They sounded like screeching tires in Roxanne's ears, and she battled the urge to press her palms against her ears. She knew Marilyn was referring to her, there was no use denying it. So, she walked briskly, past rows of laughing and taunting maidens all dressed in black dresses and white aprons. Roxanne did not stop until she was standing in front of Peter's calm and friendly face.

Then, she looked around her to make sure no one was eaves dropping, before crying out.

"Peter!" Her eyes were filled with relief on seeing him.

"I'm so glad you're here! These people, they were..."

"I am very sorry Roxanne. You might just have to remain here until the ceremony is over."

Roxanne wanted to laugh out loud and pinch his chest playfully, before telling him not to play with her in such a way again. Peter had to be joking. But, there was nothing in his expression, or his stance to tell her she was being pranked. She shook her head and took two steps backwards. The desperation in her eyes turned to hurt, severe hurt.

"The Queen's orders. Believe me Roxanne, it is just for a while. The atmosphere is ceremonious so a lot of things would be happening and they would really need extra hands. I assure you, once Sir Lancelot is crowned, all of this would cease to happen, I promise."

Peter's words fell on doubtful ears. Roxanne could not believe Peter was telling her to endure all of this.

"Relax Roxanne, it's just kitchen work," she said to herself, over and over, while taking deep breaths in and out to calm her anxiety and steady her temper.

"Roxanne..." Peter called out, but Roxanne couldn't endure another word from him. So, she feigned a smile and cut his sentence short. "It's okay Peter, I understand."

Peter seemed to be a bit relieved, even though he knew that the smile on her face was fake. He only hoped that she indeed understood.

"Very well then, I would come take you back to your room when everything is over. Until then, you must not leave."

Instructions, instructions, and more instructions. Roxanne was growing tired of being bounced like a fucking tennis ball!

She was about to say something when Marilyn's voice thundered behind them.

"Five minutes is over Sir Peter! She has to return to work."

Roxanne rolled her eyes so hard her sockets hurt, while Peter looked at her with pity and concern.

"I must leave now," he said, turning his back to her without so much as a second glance. Roxanne did not stop him, she watched him walk away and desert her, the same way almost everyone in her life had done.

Finally, she turned her back to the kitchen, ready to face her hell with a bold face and chin up. She walked straight towards the plate, ignoring Marilyn's bants, and turned deaf ears to the side remarks of the other maids. Roxanne stood in front of the sink and closed her eyes shortly, before dipping her hands into the grease filled sink to drain it of all the dirty water. Her fingers found the drainage hole and she began to push the grains of rice and chunks of bone away from it, allowing the water to sieve through.

Roxanne held her breath and continued with her work, until something sharp pricked gently slashed the tip of her index finger.

Immediately, she squealed in pain and flung her hands out of the water. In attempt to do so, she accidentally slapped down two ceramic plates from the sink and sent them crashing into pieces on the floor.

An eerie silence fell upon the kitchen immediately. Roxanne did not hear anything apart from the loud footsteps of Marilyn, stomping towards her. Her eyes glance at the pieces of expensive and fine looking ceramics on the floor, before it moves to her bleeding finger. In that moment, she is confused of which to attend to first; the royal plates, or her bleeding finger.

Marilyn arrives in front of her just in time for that question to be answered. The woman pushes Roxanne by the shoulders and sends her back to the wall. Roxanne winced in pain, and gripped her injured finger with the free fingers of her other hand.

Marilyn stood in front of her, fuming with rage and disgust. Her round and wide eyes were even wider now, and her nostrils seemed to have expanded.

"Silly girl! Do you have any idea what you've done?!" she thundered, and Roxanne pressed her back against the wall.

"I'm so sorry..."

"Would your apologies account for these wares?! What am I supposed to tell the queen?!"

But, there were just two ceramic plates, she thought. The royal family had more than enough of them, why would two matter to the queen so much? They wouldn't, Roxanne answered herself. The head maid was just choosing to be cruel to her.

"You would fix this mess as soon as possible! Pick it up now!" she thundered once more.

Roxanne looked around for a brush and dirt packer, and Marilyn seemed to sense this. "With your bare hands," she snapped.

Roxanne stared at her in disbelief.

"I am injured," she begged, her voice shaky with tears she wouldn't let out. She was losing so much blood, and no one was paying attention to her. "Pick. Them. Up."

Roxanne did not protest anymore. She lowered herself to the floor and picked up the pieces of glass carefully. She got two more cuts from it, but

said nothing. She disposed of the shards of glass in the dustbin and found three small pieces of rags to tie her bleeding hands with.

They still stung, but she managed to clear the plates quietly. All the while she did that, she continued to ask herself how she had gotten this far. She had thought London would be her restoration. She had thought Europe would give her the breathing space she needed. But all she had ever gotten since she came here, was hatred, spiteful looks and rejection. Roxanne regretted ever leaving home. Then, she remembered her advance pay check. A small smile crept into her lips.

It was the only good thing that had come out of her journey here. And she imagined, just for a brief moment, what absconding with it would feel like. Finally, the plates stopped hurling in, and Roxanne felt her breathing pattern return to normal. Finally, she could return to her luxurious bed, and... "Hey! Glove princess."

Roxanne shuddered under the voice, her hands froze on the plate she was currently scrubbing. Only her face turned and her neck managed to support her head when she looked up at Marilyn. "Madam..." Roxanne stuttered, and Marilyn's lips thinned in a grin. It was no secret she was pleased with the lady's frustration. Therefore, she did not spare any chance to frustrate her more.

"An instruction from the queen. After now, you would pack your things from the guest chambers and move them to the servant's quarters where you would be given a room with the rest of the maids."

Roxanne flinched. This was too much. She did not mind doing dirty dishes, or being yelled at for accidentally breaking two ceramic plates. But this was going too far, she was being moved to the servant's quarters! The contract she signed with Lancelot had promised her own home! What was she still doing here?

Of course, she could not tell any of these to Marilyn. The only one who was to blame was Lancelot, and maybe herself, for harboring false hopes. Still, it helped to put all the blame on him.

Roxanne mustered every bone of self control in her body, and every part that was not consumed with rage, annoyance and regret to nod curtly.

"Of course," she replied.

The tears in her voice had disappeared. All that was left now was deep rooted anger.