

## Chapter 71 When Had She Ever Been Alright

"Get rid of those clothes immediately," the head maid, Marilyn, spoke harshly while sending daggers in glares towards Roxanne. Confused, Roxanne looked up at the woman. She was at a loss for both words and actions, and she was also genuinely tired of being here. Nothing she did seemed to please Marilyn, or pacify any of the maids for whatever she had done.

It was crazy. She had never met or spoken to any of them before now. Yet, they collectively seemed to despise her.

After she got here last night, she was made to sleep on the shaky bunk and Roxanne spent all night worrying if the wooden bunk would collapse and send her to the floor. That would be death, she thought. Considering how high the bunk beds were.

It was funny, how she thought she would return to the palace and have a good rest. Little did she know that the worst of it all had been in front, waiting patiently for her.

Roxanne could still remember being woken up by the feeling of cold water being splashed on her face. And when she opened her eyes and jumped up in shock, the head maid sent another bowl of water hurling towards her. Roxanne tried to move away, but the water was faster. Luckily, she was able to dodge the rubber bowl, stopping it from crashing with her forehead. While she was still trying to make sense of it, she caught the

other maids laughing and sneering, while Marilyn wore her normal disgusted stare.

"What do you think you're still doing sleeping by this time? Who do you think is going to do all your work for you?!"

Like that, she was pulled down from the bunk bed, and barely given time to clean herself up. She was still in her night dress when Marilyn forced her to sweep all the rooms on her floor, scrub the floors and dry it up. After sweeping and scrubbing a total of twenty rooms from 9am in the morning till 4pm in the evening, Roxanne staggered back to her room, rid herself of her night dress and forced herself to have a bath in the cramped bathroom. That was difficult, considering the fact that she was mildly claustrophobic.

Now, she was standing in front of her box in black jeans and a black T-shirt, getting ready for her next job; to pick up the trash from the palace garden. If the rumors were true, the royal family had organized a small luncheon with England's most popular and important politicians, introducing them to the soon to be king; which as she knew, would be Lancelot.

She frowned as she thought of him. He had not even thought to see that she was alive, since they returned. Why did it even shock her? The man never cared about anything besides himself!

"Are you suddenly deaf? Glove princess?"

Even Hades knew how much she hated her new nickname. Roxanne snapped out of her range of thoughts and focused on Marilyn's annoying face again.

"This is the simplest thing I could find. I really don't..."

From where she stood, Marilyn picked up a neatly ironed uniform from the bed of one of Roxanne's roommates and sent the dress hurling towards Roxanne. It ended on the floor in front of her, directly on top of her feet.

"Wear it," the head maid snapped. Roxanne knew better than to argue with her. She would do whatever was necessary, until it was time to finally get out of here. Which, according to Peter, would be soon. But, how soon enough was this "soon"?

She sighed as she put on the dress. Roxanne promised herself not to think too much about it. It was only for a few days, once Lancelot was crowned, she would resume her normal duties once again.

Roxanne took off her jeans and shirt and threw on the back dress and put on the white apron that followed it. She adhered to the regulations of the maids and wrapped her hair in a tight bun above her head, before covering the bun with a white scarf.

After that, she was assigned to the palace garden with four other maids to pick up the trash and get the garden ready for tomorrow's festivities; the coronation.

The garden was a few miles away from the servant's quarters. Roxanne walked alone, under the dying evening sun. The other four maids chatted away in front of her, leaving her behind, and lonely.

Alas, when they got to the garden, the maids distanced themselves from her as well, taking the east portion of the garden, and leaving her to the west. She did not complain about this, who could she complain to anyway? She only busied herself with picking up cans of beer and unfinished chicken limbs from the grass and throwing it into her black litter bag; the only companion she has for the evening.

Roxanne engrossed herself in her work, so much that she didn't hear the maids greet the member of the royal family that had walked into the garden. She did not hear him walk up to her, she did not see him stand beside her and she did not even hear him call her name the first time. It wasn't until he lowered himself and tapped her back that she sprung up in shock and fear and glanced at him.

Standing beside her, Reuben had his famous smile on his face, with both hands safely tucked away in his pocket. He seemed to find her shock amusing, and Roxanne couldn't even blame him.

"You startled me, Your Grace," she finally spoke, after catching her breath. Reuben's bright eyes sparkled as he chuckled.

"Just the same way you startled me when I saw you for the first time. Had me wondering who it was that had caught my eyes so effortlessly."

If Roxanne had been in the right frame of mind, she would have blushed. But, in her current position, nothing seemed funny; not even the cruel joke her life had slowly turned into. So, she feigned a chuckle and stopped at that. "You flatter me, Your Grace," she replied to his compliment.

Reuben glanced over her. Even in the maid's uniform, she was extremely pretty. However, he knew better than to ask why she was in one of those.

"I have barely seen you since Lancelot's return. I bless the universe for my coming to the garden this evening, or I might not have seen you still..."

"Hey! Glove princess! We have to leave now. Our time here has elapsed."

Her colleague's voice cut Reuben's sentence short, and Roxanne's lips spread into a thin smile.

"I do hope you understand why now."

Reuben's bright eyes dimmed a bit, and his smile softened, his glare turned from flirtatious to sympathetic. He gave her a gentleman's nod and stepped back.

"Of course, I do."

With that, Roxanne turned her back towards him, picked up her bag of litter and began to drag it out of the garden, on top the damp grass. Her colleagues had gone ahead of her, but she knew it was of no use the call out to them. She was even surprised that they had alerted her when they

wanted to leave. It would have only been typical of them to leave her behind.

When she got to the end of the garden, she lowered herself and picked up the litter bag like every other maid did and placed it in front of her chest. Hers was light, as it was filled with nothing besides empty cans and pieces of bones. So, she was able to hold it comfortably, even if it blocked most of her vision of the front.

Roxanne continued to walk behind the other maids, even though they had gone fairly ahead of her. She didn't want to, but she could not stop herself from wondering what life would have been like if she had never come here. One thing was certain, she would not have held trash so close to her body, or even been putting on this hilarious uniform, or working with people who saw her as nothing but an entity to be ignored completely. No matter what, she would have had the company of her best friend, who would have been there, no matter...

Roxanne stopped thinking when her body came in contact with a wall, a very soft wall. As she collided with the wall, her nylon litter bag burst open, most of the contents spilling on the body of the...

Her eyes flickered up when she had freed herself of the bag. This was no wall! It couldn't have been a wall, the surface was too soft. Instead, a tall, now furious and stained with dirt, Marilyn stood above her. Roxanne's limbs froze in fear. She had touched the tail of the lioness, and now, the lioness was going to bite.

However, Marilyn did not bite. What did she do? She sent her palm to crash with Roxanne's left cheek, with a force that sent Roxanne to the ground.

Roxanne's body landed on the cold grass, her right cheek was buried in the dirt, while her left cheek burned from the effect of the slap. Hot tears gathered in Roxanne's eyelids.

"You stupid clumsy girl! Can you see the mess you've created?"

"I'm...sorry..." she whimpered, shivering on the floor. Marilyn didn't listen, she moved forward and lifted her right leg, with the intention of digging it into Roxanne's stomach, before a high-pitched feminine voice stopped her. "Stop! Immediately!"

Marilyn seemed to freeze and take few steps backwards. Roxanne was too dazed to lift up her eyes, but she could hear Marilyn speak, and see her bow.

"Your Grace," Marilyn stammered.

"Are you crazy? What are you doing?!" the female voice cried out again, and rushed to Roxanne.

From where she lay, she could feel warm hands graze her shoulder and her cheek that burned. "Are you alright?"

The softness of the voice gave Roxanne the courage to look up. She could not say for sure where she had seen it, but she was sure she had. Suddenly, the photo album Peter once presented to her came to memory. Of course! This was the beautiful princess Elizabeth!

The princess's eyes left her and returned to Marilyn.

"Get out of this place before I lose temper. And get someone to clean this mess up!" her soft voice turned stern as she admonished the head maid.

Roxanne heard Marilyn stutter, before she ran off. She saw Elizabeth's eyes fall to hers once more, laddered with care and concern.

"Can you stand? Are you alright?" she asked again.

In that moment, Roxanne could not stop herself from scoffing bitterly. When had she ever been alright?