

Chapter 74 Fortified Coronation

The throne room was filled to the brim of its capacity. A group of entertainers and dancers performed in the center of the room, while chairs and tables were arranged around them. On each of these tables were the finest of grape fruit, strawberries, cakes, lemonade drinks, wine and champagne in all of Europe.

The event had begun in full swing. Alpha Edward had given his welcome toast, the Luna queen had already read her welcome speech, before the entertainment began. This was the last performance before it would be time for Edward to pass the crown to his son, Lancelot Dankworth.

Members of the Dankworth royal family were seated around one table, all dressed in glamorous attires they had prepared for this occasion. From Madeline, to her husband, to sons and other members of their extended family. Every eye in the room could see that the Dankworth's had prepared for this occasion all their lives.

The hall was filled with dignitaries from all over the continent. Alphas and Lunas of various packs were present. Representatives of different realms; including the witches and the fairies were present, just as they had promised.

Elders of different pack councils, ranging from provincial to regional were present; some with their spouses and children, others alone.

From where he stood, hidden behind dark blue curtains because his mother had insisted that he made sure no one got a glimpse of his face before the crowning ceremony; just in case there were any assassins amongst them, Lancelot peeped at the throne room to watch the dancers, much to his disdain.

He was not a bit interested in dance or entertainment, but it was all he had to keep himself busy since Peter had skillfully avoided any form of verbal or eye contact with him, since this morning. His assistant had snuck out times without number to either pick, or answer a call. It started from the random message this morning, continued while Lancelot had breakfast, while he dressed, and even until he was called from his chambers to be escorted to the throne room. Peter didn't walk beside him, he didn't make side remarks that made Lancelot roll his eyes, even the joy Lancelot had seen in him early this morning was gone.

The only thing that seemed to lurk in Peter's eyes were concern, caution and fear. Lancelot was not so sure what it was, but he was certain Peter was hiding something from him. Lancelot was determined to find out what it was and before he was crowned.

So, as he peeped at the dancers through the linen drapes, he watched from the corner of his eyes as Peter returned and stood by the door of the throne room. It was swamped with guards, who tried to fight reporters and unlicensed photographers away from the event. Lancelot watched Peter carefully. His eyes were fixed on the phone, and they were laddered with the same frightened expression Lancelot had seen all morning. Enough was enough, he thought.

Lancelot stood up straight, adjusting his crown of "princehood" on his head and walked past the swarm of guards until he was inches away from Peter.

Peter seemed to have sensed and heard his footsteps, because immediately he was close enough to reach for the phone, Peter took his eyes away from

it and plastered a fake smile on his face. Lancelot could see through the smile like it was a glass door.

"Sir, you should be at the front, getting ready for the precession," Peter spoke up, trying to drift Lancelot's mind away from whatever it was he had been doing. And he could tell from the look on Lancelot's stoic face that he was not buying it. Peter would just have to try harder, or lie better.

"Let me see it," Lancelot growled, with a stern look in his eyes that told Peter he wasn't joking.

His assistant thought it best to string him along for a while. At least, until the trumpet inviting him into the throne room for his precession was sounded. After the coronation, he would tell Lancelot everything; it would only be after the coronation, not even a second before.

"See what sir?"

"What you were looking at. Let me see it, now."

Peter's frightened eyes looked over Lancelot shoulder. He wished the trumpet would just sound right now, so Lancelot could leave and forget about this until it was all over.

"A video of cats dancing? Oh no sir, there is no need to waste your time with..."

Lancelot did not wait for Peter to complete his sentence. The moment he saw Peter drop his guard on the phone, he stretched his hand and snatched it away from him.

Peter's eyes widened in horror as he gasped and tried to reach out for the phone to seize it, but it was too late. Lancelot's grip of the phone had tightened, and his back was turned to him. There was no way Peter could snatch it back without creating a scene.

However, the same thing, or even worse, might happen if Lancelot saw the video.

Lancelot clicked the home button, and his eyes were immediately greeted by the sight of very familiar eyes. But, there was nothing familiar about the horror and defeat in her eyes, the blood dropping from her face, and her broken nose. He was ensnared, there was no way his eyes deceived him even though he wanted it to.

He stood and watched as Roxanne was being struck on the head and slapped on the face at the same time. Her shirt was torn at the right side, revealing the right side of her cleavage.

She was tied to the chair and whimpering. One man continued to strike her on the head while yelling questions over her head, but Roxanne seemed too weak to answer. Her eyes lost the brightness in them, and she looked like she would drop dead any minute. The second man made it his point of duty to tear her clothes from her body.

Lancelot's jaw hardened, his teeth clenched and his face contorted with rage.

"Poor Juliet, let's see how long it will take your Romeo to come find you. Or if he will at all! Once we get word that his coronation is over, you're of no use to us."

Lancelot shot Peter a hostile glare, one that sent his back crashing with the hard wall. Lancelot took few steps forward, covering the distance between them. His eyes were fuming with rage and for the first time ever, Peter saw a faint resemblance of fear in Lancelot's eyes.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"I... I was going to tell you sir, believe me."

"After she was dead?!" Lancelot cried out loud, between his clenched teeth.

Peter shook his head vehemently.

"I needed that wait for your coronation to end. I summoned hunters, they are searching London for her right now. She couldn't have been taken far away from the city..."

"Bullshit!" Lancelot barked, and Peter shut his eyes in fear.

"Everyone is seated here, Your Grace. If you walk out of this coronation now, the damage would be unfixable. And your mother would have my head!" Peter had to try to reason with him. If Lancelot abandoned his coronation today, it would be the end of everything.

In that moment, the trumpet signifying the start of his precession was sounded. He could hear chairs shuffle on the ground as people in the throne room rose to their feet. None of that mattered to him. Not now, when the woman he had sworn to protect his mate was helpless in the hands of men who had sworn to kill her the second he was crowned.

The crown, and everything it stood for, could burn to ashes.

"Your head is all hers," he spat, before turning on his heels and dashing out of the throne room. Molten rage rolled through him as flashes of the video he had watched went through his mind. Anger pricked his flesh, causing all the hairs on his body to stand. Lancelot rid himself of the cape, and didn't care when his onyx crown fell to the ground. His blood ran cold, and his lips quivered in fear and anger.

He charged towards the guest chambers, with Peter running behind him. When he stood in front of her door, he kicked it open, and the door slid apart immediately. When he stepped in, he realized the room was empty. There was not a sign that she had ever been here.

Panic seized his chest and sent daggers into his ribs. Lancelot fought the urge to grip his chest hard.

He turned towards Peter, who was still trying to catch his breath.

"It's empty."

"Sir..." He paused to breathe, sweat trickled down his forehead from all the running he had done to keep up with Lancelot's fast paced walk.

"You have to return back to the hall. We can fix this before it gets out of hand."

In anger, Lancelot gripped Peter's collar, threatening to choke him.

"Why are her things not here? Did she runaway? Where did she go? What else are you not fucking telling me?!"

"She...was.....sent...to the maid's chambers," Peter spoke in muffled tones. Sent to the what?! He released Peter's collar and pulled him by the hand.

"Take me to her room, Now!"

"This shouldn't be your concern now sir. I know you care about her, but allow me to handle the situation..."

"I have made that mistake so many times before, I would not do it again," Lancelot sneered at Peter, blinded with rage and clouded with panic. He dragged Peter all the way from the guest chambers to the servant's quarters, and Peter pushed himself to the front to lead Lancelot to Roxanne's room. The quarters was empty as all servants were busy with the coronation.

Immediately he stepped into the room, her familiar lavender scent enveloped his nostrils. It was a proof that she had been here. As he walked in, her scent grew stronger and was irresistible when he stood in front of a broken bunk bed. It had to be hers.

Lancelot looked down and found a box by the side. A black shirt lay on it, and he recognized it as one of hers. Instantly, he picked it up and sniffed all over it.

She was his mate, he could track her scent down from meters away. And that was what he would do. Track her, find her and make those bastards pay with their blood.

He held on to the black shirt and walked out of the room, brushing past Peter who nearly fell to the ground.

"Sir, please. You cannot leave through the front!"

Indeed, he couldn't. He stormed out of the servant's quarters and headed towards the car park. Peter continued to run after his master, hoping that he could stop him just in time for damage control. But it was of no use, he was no match for Lancelot's temper, speed or agility.

If Madeline found out Lancelot was gone...

"Where is he going? Guards, stop him!"

Peter had never thought he would be so relieved to hear the queen's voice. As he turned to the direction of the voice, he saw Madeline standing by the fountain in her royal robe. She must have come out to check on Lancelot once the trumpet sounded and he was nowhere to be found.

Lancelot heard his mother's voice, but ignored it completely. She could have been the one behind this, no one else hated Roxanne enough to do such things to her.

With that anger, he charged towards the royal blue Tesla, opened the door and flung himself into it. Peter stood by the side, trying to open the passenger door, but Lancelot had sealed all the doors from inside.

Madeline stood indignant. She continued to scream and other guards to seize Lancelot, but it was too late. He started the engine and pressed his foot on the accelerator pad, sky rocketing the speed of the car.

He drove past Peter with force that sent him tumbling down to the ground. Lancelot did not look back, he kept his hands on the steering wheel and

his eyes narrowed on the road in front of him. He drove towards the back gate of the palace, since the front was impossible to go through.

"Do not open the gates! Block the gates god damn it!" Madeline screamed at the top of her voice.

Eight guards mounted themselves in front of the iron gate, on her command. Lancelot ignored them and hit the accelerator again, the car's speed increased. The guards saw that he wasn't going to stop and fled the gates in scattered directions, fearing for their lives.

In that moment, realizing he only had one shot and getting past this gate and saving Roxanne, he held his foot on to the accelerator, gripped the steering wheel with force. Adrenaline coursed through his veins.

The front of the car burst through the gates, shattering the iron rails to pieces.

His grip lessened. Lancelot's eyes drifted to the black shirt on the seat beside him.

He would find them, and make them pay.