

Chapter 95 The Slideshow

Lancelot got into his car and drove steadily, yet hastily, with one goal and one goal only; to find out the truth about Roxanne's kidnap. There were so many theories that could be made by looking at the video, Lancelot needed to be sure exactly what it was that happened, and to do that, he needed a plan.

In ten minutes, he was behind his mother's car, and driving past the gate of the palace. The palace environment looked empty now; a signal that most of the guests had left and returned to their various homes. The big ceremony was over, whatever was left to do now, was for close friends and family.

He couldn't help but wonder if it was his aunt, Hermione. But, he did not think his aunt had it in her to kidnap and torture an innocent person in such a way. That personality belonged more to his mother, Madeline, than his aunt. However, he had doubts that it was his mother, there was no hint in her eyes that she had been the one responsible when she saw Roxanne. Lancelot had stayed away from her fight with Doctor Flinn to watch her carefully, but he had found nothing. At that point, Lancelot figured only Elizabeth could tell him the truth. So, he was going to make her speak, one way or another.

By his side, his mother's car came to a halt, and Madeline and James alighted from the car, while guards bowed to them. Lancelot got the same reception when he stepped out of his. Madeline tilted her head slightly to

look over Lancelot. Without speaking, she hissed and looked ahead before walking away, a guard faithfully followed her behind.

Now, it was just James and Lancelot in the car park, and neither was ready to cause a scene in the presence of guards, in fact, Lancelot was not ready for a scene at all. He neither had the time, nor the interest.

Lancelot walked ahead, out of the car park, while James followed him behind, as though he was trying to ambush Lancelot.

However, that turned out to be the case. Immediately Lancelot took a step inside the palace, James was behind him to rain fire and brimstone.

"And what exactly was that supposed to mean brother?!" James thundered, as he stood firm behind Lancelot. Madeline, who was halfway up the stairs, looked down at her sons.

"You would not speak to your brother like that James, he is the king," she called out, with a calm and disinterested tone. It told her sons that she only spoke because she ought to. Not because she intended to resolve whatever conflict was about to sprout up between her sons.

Both James and Lancelot knew this, but James was the one determined to take advantage of it. He stepped forward, so that he was standing in front of Lancelot, before staring straight into his brother's distant eyes.

"To hell with you and your crown Lancelot. If you would not respect the throne you're sitting on, how do you expect your subjects to do that?"

Lancelot stayed quiet and continued to stare down at James, with eyes that seemed to see through him. James was infuriated by Lancelot's stare. It made it seem as though he were a ghost.

He scoffed bitterly and eyed Lancelot in anger.

"That measly thing disrespected me, and disrespected mother, just in case you didn't know! She looked mother in the eyes and insulted her! The queen dowager of this pack! Your mother! And you do nothing about. She

spits on my authority as your younger brother, still you do nothing about it..." James's rage was evident in the redness of his eyes and the veins protruding from his forehead and his arms.

"...and when she disrespected you, you still said nothing about it! For the goddess's sake Lancelot, that you're mated to one of them should be enough disgrace to this palace, do not drag the likes of her into this kingdom more and more!" Lancelot's teeth grazed each other inside his mouth. He had to stay quiet so that James could stop talking. Lancelot wasn't sure that he could stop the words that hovered in his head if he opened his mouth.

James saw his brother's stillness and silence, and sighed in frustration.

"What you do on that throne is none of my business brother. But, if I should see that human anywhere near this palace, I swear that you won't even be able to find the remains of her bones."

Flashes of red sparked up in Lancelot's furious eyes. Did his younger brother just threaten him? Was James right? Of course he wasn't right about Emily, but, was Lancelot really losing order? It had only been few hours since he was Alpha King, and yet, everything was becoming extremely overwhelming.

"Is that a threat, James?" Lancelot finally spoke, amidst his gritted teeth. James looked over his brother, his eyes laced with disdain one more time.

"It is a promise."

With that, James turned on his heels and turned his back towards Lancelot as he matched up the stairs. Lancelot stood there, rigid with anger.

A lot of things had already happened this morning and he was slowly losing his mind. However, he could not afford to do that. He needed his mind, and his head in alignment if he was going to solve all his problems. He had three days to choose or reject Roxanne before the entire cabinet, and exactly one week before his mistress selection ceremony. He knew

what he wanted now, he wanted to be with Roxanne, more than anything else in the world.

But, how he was going to do it, still proved to be a problem. It was sickening and fresh to him at the same time. Lancelot hated his confusion, still, it felt good to have someone and something to fight for.

He had to speak to Peter and...wait, where was Peter anyway? He had not been the one to drop Emily at the hospital, yet, he had not called in for duty. It was very unlikely that his personal assistant had slept in late, since Lancelot failed to see him at the ritual. So, where could Peter be?

"Your Highness."

Speak of the devil, and he makes a grand entrance, Lancelot thought as he looked up the stairs, to see Peter walking briskly towards him.

"I could swear that I heard your voice from the library," Peter spoke, when he finally stood in front of Lancelot, with his head bowed; more to give him time to mask the pain on his face, than in courtesy of Lancelot's presence.

"And I could swear that I haven't seen you since last night. Where have you been?" Lancelot asked, looking over Peter in scrutiny. Everything about his anger toward his brother disappeared, Peter still had a way of lighting up Lancelot's mood, even when his mood was down.

Lancelot could tell that there was something wrong with Peter. His eyes were unusually hollow and his smile seemed staged.

"Running around in the background. There were a lot of things to put in place yesterday, and even today."

"You are my assistant Peter, not the palace's event planner. My mother was there for that, and you're not her assistant either," Lancelot retorted, and Peter chuckled, taking hold of the coat Lancelot pulled off his body and handed over to him.

"Still, it was my responsibility, whether directly or indirectly. You need rest now sir."

Lancelot looked over him once more, waiting to see if a hint of what was truly wrong with him would slip out of his mouth.

"Roxanne's friend arrived this morning, you were to pick her up. She ended up clashing heads with my mother and James." There was a hint of accusation in Lancelot's voice, one which Peter caught very easily.

"My apologies, I was wrapped up in guest departures."

Lancelot did not question him any further, he walked up the stairs while heading to his room and Peter followed him behind in silence.

When Lancelot got to his room, he ordered Peter to close the door behind him, and his assistant did. Lancelot slipped his hand into his pocket, put on his phone, stood in the center of his room and ordered Peter to come to him. As usual, Peter did as he was told, although, his heart was pounding furiously against his chest. Lancelot had been extremely nosy about his whereabouts earlier. Peter had almost thought Lancelot was trying his best to get the truth out of him, because he already knew it. And now, he was about to show him something on his phone. What if someone had captured a picture of him and Hera? How would he explain it to Lancelot?

Peter's heart and mind relaxed when he caught sight of the video on Lancelot's screen. It was nothing about him and Hera, instead, Roxanne and Elizabeth stood at the background, soon enough, they turned and began to head out of the courtyard.

"This was few hours before the morning of my coronation. It was the last time Roxanne was seen in this palace," Lancelot spoke up, Peter's eyes met his with doubt.

"Your Grace, you're saying Elizabeth is responsible?"

"I'm saying she is the closest link we have to finding out who is. Whoever hurt Roxanne is in this palace, and may, or may not be directly linked to Elizabeth. That's why we have to get the truth out of them."

Peter's eyes narrowed on Lancelot.

"But how sir?"

Lancelot's lips spread into a thin smile.

"By ambushing them, letting them know that we know. That's the best psychological punishment. But, how do we do that? We need a setting where the whole family is together. I need to be able to watch all their faces closely." Peter's eyes lit up as an idea came to his mind. "Dinner tonight!"

Lancelot arched his right brow, and Peter cleared his throat.

"The queen spoke yesterday about having a slideshow display, capturing moments from when you were a child to yesterday, when you were crowned. We can use that avenue to showcase the video. Everyone would be at the table then, it would be a perfect opportunity. I have no doubt I would be the one to set up."

Lancelot's lips spread out in a grin, one that Peter was surprised to see.

"How much is your salary again?" he asked, and Peter chuckled, this time, it was genuine.

Just as Peter had said, Madeline asked him to prepare the dining room for the slide show. While the table was being set, and members of the royal household were in their various rooms, preparing for the feast, Peter was in the dining hall, with some other technicians preparing the projector for the display.

Alas, at exactly 8:30pm, the dining hall was filled with everyone. From the Dankworth nuclear family, to their extended relations, including Reuben and Madeline's brother, Bailey. Everyone was seated around the

table, and as usual, the table was filled with all sorts of meals, desserts, and drinks.

As they ate and merried, Lancelot continued to look over his shoulder to Peter, just to make sure that everything was set in place. Every time he looked, Peter gave him a curt nod, to assure him that everything was in the right place. Finally, Madeline rose to speak, and everyone's eyes focused on her.

"Attention everyone. As we can all see, there is a slideshow presentation about to take place, tilted Lancelot. And it pictures moments, from when my darling boy was a child, to yesterday, when he made us all proud." As she spoke, the dining room erupted into cheers and round of applause, Ava sat beside Lancelot and flashed him a smile. But, he had other things in mind.

Madeline turned towards Peter and gave him a curt nod, signaling for him to begin. The display screen was placed on the wall, so that everyone on the room could see it clearly.

Peter and Lancelot exchanged one last look, before Peter set the ball rolling.

Everyone stared at the screen in anticipation, waiting to smile and laugh at Lancelot's baby pictures, including Madeline herself. No one was ready for the shock they were about to face, absolutely no one.

In front of the whole family, the video of Roxanne and Elizabeth popped up on the screen. Elizabeth could be seen talking and smiling at Roxanne. Lancelot's eyes began to roam round the room, taking not of everyone's faces. Madeline's left brow raised in query as she turned towards Elizabeth. Hermione, who saw it before her daughter, tapped her furiously. Elizabeth looked up from her glass of champagne and focused her eyes on the screen. Panic swept over her with the force of a hurricane and her champagne glass slipped out of her fingers, shattering into pieces as it touched the ground.