

K Lover 123

Chapter 123: The Raid

There was a knock on Caius' bedchamber, which was immediately followed by another knock before the door was opened, and Rylen appeared. Though it was almost midnight, he was still dressed in day clothes and looked like he had hurried to meet the crown prince.

"Your Grace," Rylen said upon entering, bowing toward the bed.

"Here," a voice called from the opposite direction.

Rylen lifted his head to see that Caius was not in bed; rather, he was by his desk scanning through some documents. He was shirtless, with the table hiding half of his body.

"Your Grace," Rylen called, unable to hide his shock. "You're awake?"

Caius kept his expression neutral as he slowly lifted his head from the paper he held. "Why are you shocked? Didn't you come here expecting me to be awake?"

"Well, not only are you awake, but you seem busy."

Caius narrowed his eyes at Rylen, more because his shock couldn't be faulted. Caius avoided working unless it was something that couldn't be done by anyone else. This was not something he was required to do—he could have assigned it to Rylen and asked for the summary later.

However, he had to do this recently as it was great for taking his mind off things. His days were currently busy with preparations for Lord Leopold to leave with guards; it was the nights that were troublesome. It annoyed him to no end that she was right across the hall and yet, here he was tending to bookings.

"Just state your business, Rylen," Caius said instead.

He could already guess why his cousin was here. Tonight was when the masked auction would be raided. Since Prince Rylen was here, there was no doubt he brought news—whether good or bad was left to be seen.

"Thomas has returned," Rylen announced.

Caius raised a brow. "Faster than I thought. What news does he bring?" Caius asked.

"Mostly good news. The raid was successful. They carried out your orders to the fullest. The animals will be released into the wild, and as for the children, their parents will be found, and depending on how they got to the auction, punishments will be meted out."

"Good. You said 'mostly.' I don't see what's wrong."

"Well," Rylen cleared his throat. "A few managed to escape—the masked auctioneer and a few other guards."

Caius couldn't hide his disappointment. As much as the goal wasn't the masked auctioneer, he knew that would be a step closer to finding who was in charge of the masked auction. Regardless of the loss, cards had already been put in place. He didn't expect them to fail.

"But," Rylen said when Caius didn't say anything, "the bookkeeper was found, and many documents were acquired. We don't know if they'll be useful or not."

Caius frowned. He didn't care for past cases. All he wanted to know was who was involved in Rose getting to the masked auction and how they had known to auction her at such a high price. Nobody would believe it was her unless they had seen her before—like Lady Delphine had. Caius had expected the ball to roll the instant he kicked it, but never did he believe it would lead him in this direction.

"Interrogate them about Rose. Find out all that you can, and if possible, get the name of their employer." Caius doubted this would be easy. They were simply underlings—he doubted they even dealt with the lord directly.

"Okay, Your Grace."

"Good," Caius said and returned his attention to the document.

His father wouldn't hear about this until tomorrow. That should give them enough time to find as much information as they could possibly get. Caius didn't have high hopes, and the purpose of the attack was more about his father's reaction than anything else.

Rylen bowed and left the room, leaving Caius to his devices. However, excitement made it hard to concentrate, and he left the documents and decided to go to sleep. Surprisingly, it was easier for him to fall asleep.

Caius woke to the sound of knocking. He slowly opened his eyes. A good sleep wasn't rare these days—the nightmares were almost nonexistent. He slowly rose to a sitting position, cracking his neck.

He picked up his robe and draped it around his shoulders but didn't bother to tie the sash. It was too early for him to be bothered, but if someone was knocking now, it meant it was important.

"Come in," he mumbled loud enough to be heard outside the door as he rose to his feet.

The door opened and Rylen walked in. There was a bright look on his face and his hair looked tousled. There were also dark circles under his eyes. Caius was unsure if he had just woken up or hadn't gotten any sleep at all.

"I have some news, Your Grace," he said as the door closed behind him. "We were able to find the names of the culprits that sold her off."

Caius yawned. From the light seeping through the curtain, dawn wasn't fully here yet. The sky was brightening but still had that grey-blue color associated with nighttime. He could have slept longer.

"Go on," he said, walking to the long chair by the fireplace which had long gone out. "What are their names?"

"Torin and Grim."

Caius sat upright. Those names were familiar, but he couldn't place them. Suspecting Caius' confusion, Rylen was quick to offer more information.

"They were the ones we found at that certain place—the ones we thought were framed but kept locked up because of lack of information and with hopes that they might remember who asked them to go there."

Caius narrowed his eyes as the memory came pouring in. "The King was willing to release criminals suspected of treason just to get rid of Rose?" He found this a little hard to believe.

Rylen slowly nodded his head. "They've been here for too long, and I don't think the situation would change much. I think this is why Maximus decided to let them go. It was clear from the start that they were too foolish to do anything."

This just got even more interesting—but at the same time, it was equally a mess. Caius didn't understand the head or tail of this, but it was clear something was going on.

"Anything else?" he asked.

"We didn't really find anything about Rose, other than she was bought for two hundred coins and the masked auctioneer was how they knew she was worth a lot of money. He was the only one who believed what Torin and Grim were saying and offered them the amount. They accepted it with plans to leave the kingdom."

"Don't let them leave!" Caius stated.

"Should we send guards after them?" Rylen asked in horror. "I don't think that's a good idea."

"It has only been a week—they couldn't have left the kingdom in such a short time."

"True, but the trail is already too cold now, Your Grace. We won't find anything."

"You will find something," Caius said. "Search for them."

Rylen looked exasperated but simply nodded. "Yes, Your Grace. What about the men from the masked auction? Do you have further use for them, or should we let them go?"

"Let them go?" Caius asked in disbelief. "Of course not. Leave them. I shall give orders about them later."

"Alright," Rylen said with a yawn. "Your Grace will have to forgive me, but I don't think I'll be available for most of the morning. I didn't get much sleep last night."

"Sleep as much as you want. I doubt I'll need you for anything else this morning." Caius lay back on the couch with his hands behind his head.

The servants would be here soon to get him ready for the day, and there was a chance he would be summoned to the King's bedchamber before then. That was the part he was looking forward to.

Rylen watched Caius closely before retreating from the room. It was hard to know what the crown prince was thinking, but it had been a little over three years now, and as much as he didn't like Caius' methods, he had learned to trust them. The crown prince always got things done, and if he suspected something was wrong, then it was.

This must be what it meant to be the heir to the throne. The next King.

Rylen's father didn't like anything that had to do with the royal family. Though he was the King's brother, he had nothing to do with the kingdom's politics or how it was governed.

Rylen heard it used to be different; however, it all changed when he was born and his mother died not long after. The physician said it might have been postpartum depression.

His father never recovered because he blamed himself for not being there for his wife. He had taken them to the mountains where his mother was buried and had remained there, away from the royal family. It wasn't until Rylen was eighteen that he could leave.