

## K Lover 126

### Chapter 126: The Man In The Top Hat

A man wearing a black top hat that dipped low enough to cover his eyes sat in a dark room close to the fireplace. The fireplace was the only light source in the room, casting shadows onto the man who sat a little too close to the fire.

He was dressed in all black, and even though he was indoors, he still wore his coat. His gaze was locked on the fire as he listened to it crackle, sparks flying about. He watched a spark fly off toward the rug, but it was already dead before it hit the ground.

King Gaius coughed, and the man lifted his gaze from the fireplace. "I didn't expect you to get here so quickly," King Gaius said, breaking the long silence.

"You gave me no choice, Your Majesty. Not with your message. You spoil the boy a little too much," he said and slowly returned his gaze to the fireplace.

King Gaius narrowed his eyes. "You should have known better."

"At the masked auction, we don't turn anyone away. Anything is for sale. I certainly wouldn't have passed up such an opportunity."

"Well, not anymore. It would be best for you to do this, and the tax won't be noticeable. Only a small percentage."

"Your Majesty," he said coldly, "don't fault me if something goes wrong."

"You can still have your little auction," Gaius said and coughed some more.

"You're getting even sicker, Your Majesty. Do the herbs not work?"

King Gaius gave him a dark look. "You should leave. The prisoners have been released, and you can have your auction again."

"Just with limitations. We do not like that, Your Majesty."

"Unfortunately, neither of us has a say in this matter."

"All because of a whore," the man smirked and stood to his feet. He touched the tip of his hat and slightly bent his head toward the King. "Your Majesty," he whispered.

King Gaius watched the man walk toward the shelf of books. He moved a particular book and pressed his palm on the wood behind it. He took a step back just as the shelf started to move on its own, revealing a passageway behind.

The man walked into it without a glance back, and the shelf moved back into place. The sound of it settling was a little loud. King Gaius watched all this without saying a word, and when the man was finally gone, he turned his gaze away.

He reached a hand for the cup of tea next to him. Gaius strained as his hand shook endlessly, but he was determined. He picked up the cup, but it wouldn't stop shaking. The closer he brought it to himself, the harder it shook until he spilled the tea all over himself. Gaius tossed the ceramic against the wall in anger. It smashed as it made contact.

The sound was loud enough to attract his physicians, who were right outside the door, and they came running in. "Your Majesty."

They took in the scene, immediately understanding what was going on as orders were meted out to clean up the King. Thankfully, the tea was already cold, so other than being wet and embarrassed, there was truly no harm done.

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It had been practically a week since Rose arrived back at the castle, and for the past five days, not once had the crown prince stepped through the doors of her room, nor had she heard a word from him. What annoyed her to no end was the fact that his absence didn't make her feel better. In fact, it put her more on edge.

She jumped thinking that he might walk through the doors at any moment—or that he might never walk through those doors, and she might be left to rot here. The latter sounded appealing, but she'd rather go home.

She knew he was aware of the contents of the jar. Yet since her discovery of his knowledge, she had not laid eyes on him. Not only that, but it felt like she was cut off from the world, secluded in this room. Her only interaction was Edna. The young woman was the only reason Rose hadn't partially lost her mind.

The bleeding had completely stopped over two days ago, and she didn't need to wear anything protective. There was also no pain, and the only reason she was still taking the herbs was because of Edna. The maid didn't want to take any chances and insisted that as long as there were still herbs to boil, she would keep giving them to Rose until there was nothing left.

Surely, there was no way the crown prince didn't know about it. She couldn't help but find it strange that he had not called on her. It wasn't that she wanted him to—rather, she felt uneasy about the fact that he knew. She was still unsure how he would react to it.

"I'm off to go get our dinner," Edna said, pulling Rose out of her thoughts.

"Hmm," she hummed as she sat on the chair.

Edna laughed. "I'll be right back."

Rose nodded and watched her leave the room. This was pretty much their routine for the day. Edna would leave when she woke up and would often return with their food and the herbs. This would happen for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

However, now that she was well, she knew that Edna couldn't remain here in the room with her, and somehow she dreaded when Edna would have to leave. But for now, the maid had not spoken about it, and Rose intended to keep it that way for as long as she could.

She heard a knock but didn't stir. It wasn't unusual for Edna to knock, but usually, she would walk into the room immediately after. Edna did take a little longer than normal to get back but it was hard to gauge the time as Rose had been lost in her thoughts.

However, whoever was behind the door didn't walk in. Rather, they knocked again until Rose was forced to get out of the seat and walk to the door. She pulled it open and could barely hide the shock on her face at who was behind it.