

## K Lover 143

### Chapter 143: For The Best

Rose wasn't surprised when the crown prince requested her presence in his room when nightfall came. She was surprised by who brought the message. It was just after she had eaten dinner when a knock lifted her from her bed.

Rose didn't think much of it, as the maids usually came around this time and they tended to wait for her to open the door before they walked in. Rose didn't mind; she preferred it. Other than it being an excuse to move around, it also gave her the chance to prepare to receive them. Not that she was usually doing anything unruly, but it was nice to have the option.

"Mister 'Enry," Rose called as she opened the door, her voice held as much surprise as her face did. She had not seen the steward in a while and was almost certain he was avoiding her. The last time she had seen him was in the crown prince's room when she showed up unannounced. He hadn't said a word to her, but there was neither the time nor the opportunity for that, so she couldn't fault him.

"Rose," he whispered. His voice sounded thicker than usual as though speech was a little difficult.

She curtsied in response. Was it just her, or did he look older? Has it been that long since she last saw him? Rose decided it was probably the torches playing tricks on her eyes. It was too late to see in the first place.

"I thank the 'eavens that you're doing fine, Mister 'Enry," she added to her curtsy before slowly standing to her full height.

"So am I," he whispered, smiling. The corners of his eyes crinkled and he looked at her meekly.

Rose did her best to return his smile, but she couldn't help but think about Martha. She almost felt bad for the steward; she knew how badly he wanted to help his niece. Almost, though. Rose didn't feel an iota of guilt or sympathy in respect to Martha. In her opinion, compared to what she had to go through, the maid might have gotten off easy.

She had been lucky. Things could have easily gone south with the kidnapping—she could have ended up dead—but Rose had decided not to think about the bad things that didn't happen.

Her smile froze on her face as she waited for him to say what he was here for. "Would you like to come in?" she offered, more from a lack of knowing what else to say.

"No, no, no. There is no need for that. I simply bring word from the crown prince to you. Usually, I would tell the maids, but I haven't seen you in a while."

Rose nodded. "I know I am at fault in that too. You must be busy with work while I do nothing but lie in bed all day."

"No, no. I know you have only just gotten better, and I apologize for not coming to visit you while you were sick. I had personal matters to take care of."

Rose nodded, and knowing she couldn't avoid the subject any longer, she brought it up. "I heard about Martha. I know—"

"If it's an apology, I should be the one apologizing to you. You even protected her by keeping the incident with the coat a secret. Perhaps, I should have let you tell the crown prince then. Maybe if she had been punished, she wouldn't have done something so unforgiving. I apologize—not for her—but for making things even more difficult for you."

"That is not true, Mister 'Enry. I am very grateful you're nice to me. Things would 'ave been so much worse for me, and I know your niece's actions do not reflect you. I wish there 'ad been some way for things to work out for all of us."

Mister 'Enry shook his head. "This is for the best. Hopefully, she's learned her lesson this time. If there is anything you need, do let me know."

Rose's face brightened immediately. "I don't want to impose, but is there perhaps something I can have to while away time in the room? I would really appreciate it."

"Ah, of course. I can get you some books. The castle has more than enough of that. I am surprised there aren't any in you—" Henry's words dried up as he looked at Rose's face.

"I am sorry, Mister 'Enry, but I cannot read."

"No, don't apologize. It is my fault. I will find something else. Perhaps some board games. I am sure I can find something if I look hard enough. Chess, hmm?"

Rose nodded awkwardly. "Yes, I would prefer that very much. Thank you."

She didn't know how to play chess, but she didn't have the heart to tell him that when Mister 'Enry was this embarrassed for her. He was red up to his ears and spoke a little faster than he usually would.

"Wonderful, I shall find a board that no one would notice is missing. Is there anything else?" he asked.

Rose shook her head. "You've done more than I deserve," she smiled at him.

She thought about complaining about her other problems to him, but there was really no need. She didn't want to trouble the old man who was trying to make amends for his evil niece. Just him treating her this nicely was more than enough.

"I wish you the best, child. I will try to bring the games as soon as I can."

Rose nodded. "Thank you, Mister 'Enry."

"The maid will be here shortly," he said as he took a step back. "Should any of them bother you, do let me know and I will set that straight."

"No need for that, Mister 'Enry. They have all been so nice," she lied through her teeth.

Mister Henry didn't look like he believed her, but he withdrew without another word, and Rose retreated into the room. But she was not alone for too long. Not long after he left, the maid came into the room, preparing her to meet the crown prince.