

K Lover 169

Chapter 169: Disrespectful

Caius was meeting with his father's advisors when a knock could be heard at the door. No one in the room stirred, nor did they act as though they had heard the knock. Conversations continued as usual, which was the advisors mostly telling him what his father wanted and Rylen briefing them on what they had done.

There was rarely ever a need for his input, but unfortunately, this was not a meeting he could refuse to attend, even though he thought it was unnecessary and a little roundabout. Thankfully, it didn't happen often enough for him to lose his marbles.

Caius watched as one of the guards walked toward the door after some time to see who was interrupting the meeting. The guards present at the meeting were not stationed here by him. Only he and Rylen were allowed to attend on his end; everyone else was assigned by his father.

Caius didn't care about those tiny details. He was only here because it couldn't be avoided. If his father had decided to bring in the circus for this meeting, he would still feel the same way, he'd rather be somewhere else.

The guard in question opened the door, and Caius caught sight of the knight Thomas. Caius raised a brow as he immediately stopped listening, wondering why Thomas was here, not that he was listening much to begin with. He had given Thomas a task, and yet the boy was here when, by the timing, he should still be busy with Rose.

The fact that he was here instead meant he wasn't with Rose. Caius found himself curious as to what had gone wrong. The meeting was suddenly uninteresting—not that it ever had been. If Rylen wasn't here to give the report, he would probably make sure never to attend, but his cousin made things much easier for him.

The guard shut the door as he stepped out of the meeting room and took some time before returning. When he did, he headed straight for the crown prince, making sure not to draw any attention to himself. Once close enough, he leaned forward and whispered into Caius's left ear.

"Thomas said she refused to come with him and just slammed the door in his face," the guard said, and pulled away after giving the crown prince the message.

Caius threw his head back and laughed. Why did that not surprise him? He hadn't expected her to refuse, but at the same time, he wasn't surprised.

He turned his attention to the table to see that Rylen, who was seated across from him, had stopped speaking mid-sentence and was now staring at him, as were the rest of the people in the meeting room. His loud laugh had interrupted them.

"Your Highness?" Rylen called, a concerned look on his face that bordered on annoyance.

"Carry on," Caius said, waving his hand dismissively at Rylen.

Rylen nodded and resumed speaking, while Caius couldn't believe she had refused his kind offer. But his disbelief stemmed more from amusement than annoyance.

Since when has everything she has done become so enjoyable? he pondered. He wasn't sure if he liked this or not.

"Your Highness," the guard called, pulling Caius out of his thoughts and reminding him that he was still standing and waiting for his message.

"Tell Thomas to go for now. I shall call him later to hear all about it."

The guard bowed and retreated to give the information to Thomas. He walked to the door and stepped out, closing it behind him.

"His Highness said you should leave. He will summon you at a later time," the guard said, his voice gruff.

"Was that all?" Thomas asked with an impatient look in his eyes. "Did the crown prince say anything about punishing her?"

The guard looked at him with an odd expression. "I am not the one to ask," he said coldly. "Now make yourself scarce."

Thomas's gaze darkened. He didn't like the tone the guard used, but there was nothing he could do about it. The guards here were directly under the king and took orders from no one else. The only reason the guard had taken Thomas's message to the crown prince was that he was a knight and knew it must be important if Thomas was willing to interrupt such a meeting.

The meeting ended up dragging on longer than Caius would have liked, and it wasn't until almost noon that he was able to return to his private study, sitting in the high-backed chair where he tended to spend most of his time.

"Thomas," Caius called as Thomas walked through the doors. He had sent a servant to get him as soon as he was out of the meeting.

Thomas bowed to Caius with one hand on his chest and the other on his sword. "Your Highness."

"Come, come," Caius said. "What is it you have to tell me?"

Thomas raised his head and walked closer to the crown prince. Rylen sat in front of the desk, his chair slightly turned so he could see both the crown prince and Thomas as he walked into the private study.

"I went to the wenc—I went to her room as you asked, Your Highness," Thomas began. "She didn't want to come with me because, according to her, you gave strict orders that she shouldn't leave the room. No matter how many times I said I was there on your orders, she wouldn't listen. Then she loudly said no and slammed the door in my face!"

"Is that so?" Caius asked, clearly intrigued.

Thomas's brows furrowed; he clearly didn't like the crown prince's reaction. He had expected an angry response. Hell, he had even expected the crown prince to end the meeting to deal with the little wench. However, it was clear none of that was going to happen.

"Yes," Rylen slowly mumbled in response.

"Did she say anything else?" Caius asked, resting his chin on the back of his palm.

"No," Thomas said and shook his head.

"All right, you may leave," Caius said, immediately turning his attention to Prince Rylen, clearly dismissing Thomas.

Thomas's brows furrowed, and his right hand formed into a fist, but he was not planning to let this go.

"Would Your Highness want me to bring her here?"

"What?" Caius asked, forcing his gaze from Rylen back to Thomas. He had just been about to speak to Rylen.

"Bring her here for being disrespectful," Thomas said.

"Disrespectful?"

"To you, Your Highness," Thomas said softly. "She refused a direct order."

"Hmm, I suppose you're right. I'll take care of that," Caius said simply.

Thomas looked like he was about to protest, but there was nothing he could say when the crown prince had just said he would handle it.

"Okay, Your Highness," Thomas said with a bow. "I shall take my leave."

"Why do you have that look on your face?" Rylen asked as the door shut.

"What look?" Caius asked, though he was still smirking.

"Like you're pretty pleased with yourself," Rylen replied.

"Aren't I?" he asked, still smirking.

Rylen shook his head. He had no plans to get involved in whatever this was—it was sure to concern a certain redhead. No matter how Rylen tried to distance himself from the situation, she always seemed to wiggle her way into conversations between him and the crown prince.

"A letter arrived from the Futherfield, right after the meeting," Rylen said, changing the subject. "While you were busy with Thomas, I took the liberty of going through it." Rylen's tone wasn't free of mockery.

"That was quick. I didn't think we would get a letter so soon," Caius replied, his voice turning serious.

Rylen was grateful that it wasn't hard to get Caius's full attention, considering how easily he got distracted. At least it seemed he could put aside the matter about Rose and deal with this.

"Well, it's not good news," Rylen said. "But I suppose it's too early to hear anything good."

"What does the letter say?" Caius asked, with a dark look in his eyes.

Rylen nodded as he prepared to give Caius the summary. Regardless of what the lords would like to think, Rylen knew Caius took this very seriously and wasn't simply talking to quiet the lords when he said he would go himself should the guards fail.

"There has been almost no progress, as they can't seem to track the bandits' movements, but they will take stronger measures in the next few days and hopefully put an end to them."

Caius's eyes narrowed; he didn't like the sound of that. A few bandits shouldn't be this much trouble. It sounded like they might be a little skilled.

"Your Grace," Rylen called when he didn't respond.

"I see," Caius said. "Tell Leopold to keep me updated on the tiniest bit of information."

"Do you think you might have to go to Futherfield?" Rylen suddenly asked.

"I'd rather not, but it doesn't look like I can avoid it," Caius said, staring off into a spot in the room.

"Don't be pessimistic. I'm sure the guards can handle it," Rylen said.

"That's not what I'm worried about," Caius replied.