

## K Lover 170

### Chapter 170: A Clever Take

Rose stood in the middle of the room, having what one would call a face-off with the crown prince. He had just come into the room with the steward and three other servants. He raised an eyebrow as the stare lasted longer than it should, and Rose realized she hadn't paid her respects.

"Your Majesty." She bent her head and gave a curtsy.

She couldn't believe she had just glared at the crown prince, but her mind had been on other things, and even if she wouldn't admit it, she was very nervous about what had happened earlier and was sure the consequences were coming sooner rather than later.

Caius didn't acknowledge her greeting. In fact, he went as far as to pretend she wasn't there. "Henry," he called, his tone dry.

"Your Highness," he said with a bow. "The servants have already drawn a bath."

Caius nodded and walked further into the room, leaving Rose, Henry, and the servants who rushed about doing their tasks.

"Mister 'Enry," Rose called as soon as they were alone.

"What?" Henry replied, bewildered that she would speak to him in such a situation. He kept his gaze straight as he monitored the servants and didn't look at her.

"Do you know if I am in trouble?" she whispered, moving closer so she wouldn't have to speak so loudly.

Mister Henry turned to look at her, his eyes filled with horror. "How would I know? Now, step away, Rose. You don't want to anger the crown prince."

Rose nodded in agreement and moved back to where she stood. It was excruciating to wait. She had been waiting all day but got nothing other than her meals. No message from the crown prince, and Thomas hadn't returned either.

Rose stood in the corner, unmoving, as the crown prince stepped back into the room and was quickly dressed by the servants. Not that he needed much help wearing the singular robe he tended to adorn once she was here.

As soon as they were done, the servants quickly made themselves scarce, leaving only the steward. Rose didn't fail to notice that the entire time, Caius had not paid her any mind.

"Your Highness," Henry bent his head low as the crown prince stood in front of him.

"You may leave," Caius said. "I will call you if I need you."

"Yes, Your Highness," he said and lifted his head before turning around and exiting the room.

Rose felt a twist in her stomach, and it was almost like the temperature in the room dropped. Caius took his time turning to face her, not a single expression on his face—just a bland look as his eyes trailed from her face to her abdomen and then back up.

Rose shuffled on her feet, wondering what she should do or say. "Your Highness," she eventually mumbled.

Caius watched Rose squirm under his stare. She had seemed a little anxious since he walked in, and something told him it might have to do with earlier today. Unable to help it, he had decided to play into it, and her reaction was not disappointing.

He took a step forward, and she took a step back. He turned away from her and walked towards the chessboard on the carpet. He noticed it hadn't been reset, and the last game from the night before was still on the board.

Rose noticed his gaze and immediately rushed to the chessboard to rectify this. She dropped to her knees and started to arrange the board while Caius just stood next to her, towering over her.

She pulled her hand away from the board after she was done and rested it on her lap. His behavior was stressing her out. If he had something to say or do, she would feel much better if he did instead of this glum air around him.

"You placed the queen wrong," he said.

Rose jerked her head to look at the board, and sure enough, he was right. She had placed the queen on the opposite side, switching its position with the king. It was a terrible mistake.

She heard Caius snicker as she tried to fix it. He walked past her and lay on the floor as he had the night before, but this time around, he was dressed in a robe that barely covered any part of his body.

Rose's eyes narrowed as she unwillingly stared. His chest was completely exposed as the robe made an upside-down triangle shape toward his abdomen, which was then tied in a very, very loose knot.

The robe covered most of his legs, which Rose was grateful for, revealing only part of his calf—the one with the scar. Rose tried her best not to stare but failed as the crown prince lay down without a care in the world.

"Go on, then," he said when she didn't move, the usual smirk on his face.

Rose tried not to glower at him. This couldn't possibly be enjoyable—playing a game with someone less skilled. She didn't think the crown prince was teaching her. Not in the slightest. She was certain he enjoyed humiliating her in every aspect.

Rose moved her pawn, and the crown prince did the same. He was playing simple moves that she could keep up with, but not enough to capture any of his pieces. As she had also found out, if any of his chess pieces were close enough to capture, it was a trap.

"Why did you refuse Thomas?" Caius asked.

He asked the question so suddenly that her hand shook as she reached to pick up a chess piece that she ended up knocking over, along with two other pieces. Her eyes widened in fright, and she immediately tried to fix it.

"I am so sorry," she quickly apologized.

"Hmm," Caius said, studying her with an odd expression. He didn't say anything as she rearranged the chess pieces and made her move.

He picked up a pawn, and instead of playing, he just held it up, forcing Rose to lift her head. When her eyes rested on his face behind the pawn, he smiled. "You didn't answer my question," he said, still holding it up.

"I didn't refuse him. I just didn't want to go against the order you gave me," she said. She gripped her dress tight, glad that the board hid this.

She had expected he would bring up the topic early, so his bringing it up now caught her completely off guard. She had forgotten all the excuses she had thought of saying. Not that there were many. Usually, he would punish her without hearing her side of the story, so this was new.

Caius raised a brow and dropped the pawn. "And what would this order be?" he asked.

"Not to leave the room," she whispered as she made her move. Rose was lying—she knew—but she had already told Thomas this, and she was sure he told the crown prince. It wasn't a lie if she believed it too.

Caius tilted his head as it rested on his elbow. "I do not recall giving you such an order," he said, his voice cold.

Rose jerked a little, but she found that she wasn't terrified. Yes, she was a little scared, but the crown prince didn't exactly sound like she was in trouble. She would know—the last time she was in trouble, there was no conversation.

"You didn't say I could leave the room," she replied.

Caius froze as he moved his hand to pick up a chess piece. "What did you say?" he asked. He had heard her clearly, but he needed her to repeat herself.

"You didn't say I could leave the room."

Caius blinked. He knew what she meant. He didn't say she could leave the room, which essentially meant she couldn't. It was such a clever take, he was caught off guard. He threw his head back and laughed.

For some reason, this reminded him of the time she had ridden through the trees to get to him to save her father. Rose had a way of getting out of the box he tended to put her in.

Rose gripped her dress tighter. She didn't know if this was a good thing, but the crown prince was laughing, so it couldn't be a bad thing. She couldn't figure out what she had said that was so funny. His laugh didn't make her feel better—it made her even more uneasy.

"You're right," he replied after laughing for a few moments. "Aside from coming to my room, I don't think I have said that you may leave your room."

Rose let out the breath she didn't even know she was holding. She wasn't going to get punished. She couldn't help the smile that escaped her lips. Perhaps his laughter wasn't a bad thing.

Caius raised a brow when he saw her relaxed expression. "However, it doesn't change the fact that you didn't obey a direct order."

Rose felt cold—cold enough to turn to ice. Caius's words had a threat to them. He was warning her.