

K Lover 183

Chapter 183: One Trapped Pet

They were both tired of swinging at this point. Rose's shoulders hurt as she grabbed the swing ropes like a lifeline. Bits of the rope seemed to be coming off, but it still held steady. Edna wasn't pushing her as fast as before, just a gentle push to enjoy the breeze.

"Is it okay for you to be out 'ere?" Rose asked. It was a little too late to ask the question, but she was curious, and Thomas wasn't within earshot.

He didn't move any closer and just stood at an odd corner, glaring at them. Rose half expected him to end this at any moment, but he let them carry on while he stood with his hand on his sword and his nose in the air. The disgust on his face was clear for all to see. Rose wasn't sure Thomas knew how to have a good time.

"Yeah," Edna said absentmindedly, her voice lower than usual.

"Okay," Rose said with relief. "I 'aven't seen you recently, so I thought you must be very busy. I 'aven't even seen Lily either."

"Lily is busy with the ball preparations. Most of the maids have their hands full with that," Edna said softly.

Except Welma. But Rose didn't say this out loud. She didn't care about her and didn't see the need to bring her up with Edna.

"You mentioned the ball before," Rose replied.

Edna didn't say anything to this, and it almost felt like Rose was pushing the conversation, so she stopped speaking and just looked around.

The castle walls were tall, at least thirty feet. Being this close to them, she had to tilt her head back to see the top, and no matter how high she swung, she couldn't see over them. There were also spikes sticking out of the top of the walls, and it didn't look easy to climb.

Suddenly, Rose saw something move in the bushes. Her eyes flickered to it immediately, and out of the bushes came a beautiful ginger cat. They met eyes instantly, and Rose had to clamp her lips shut to keep from shouting out.

"Edna," she whispered, trying not to startle the cat, who still hadn't looked away.

"What?" Edna answered, her voice a little too loud.

"Ssss!" Rose replied and would have covered Edna's mouth with her hand if she could reach.

"What?" Edna said again and stood to her full height, though she was careful not to be as loud as before.

"A kitten," she said. It wasn't a baby cat, but it was not an adult yet. However, it was clearly old enough to be on its own.

The cat walked closer to the stream of water. It was on the other side. It brought its head down, lapping gently at the water as it stood on the stones, but it never really took its eyes off them.

"Oh," Edna said when she caught sight of it. "We have a lot of those around the castle."

Rose jerked her head toward Edna. "Really?" She had always loved animals, never really kept one but would feed them any chance she got.

"Yes. If you're around the castle, you'll see a few. They let them live a little freely because they hunt the rats and the dogs make sure they are never overpopulated. I guess it's a satisfactory system."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. If you stay out more, I guess you'd see them, though they mostly come out more at night."

Rose nodded, still staring at the cat as it gently drank from the stream. "It's beautiful," she whispered.

"Yes, it is. It's still quite young. You can keep it in your room if you want," Edna joked.

Rose shook her head, her face serious. "No, one trapped pet is enough. Besides, the cat looks happier out here."

As soon as she said the words, the cat finished drinking and slipped back into the bushes just as it had appeared. The rustling stopped immediately, and the cat was just gone.

"I am leaving, Rose," Edna suddenly said.

Rose turned her head in Edna's direction and slowly started to get off the swing. "Yes, you should. I can't believe I kept you outside with me for this long. Thank you for showing me this. It really is pretty. I doubt..." she paused with an eye roll, doing a glance in Thomas's direction, "he would let me come back 'ere, but I am glad I saw it."

"No," Edna said, looking at the ground. She fiddled with a leaf at her feet before slowly lifting her head. "That's not what I mean."

Rose suddenly felt chilly, and the autumn winds felt too strong. She knew what Edna meant. Someone else had told her, though how they did so wasn't very pleasant.

"What do you mean?" Rose asked.

"I am leaving the castle," she whispered.

"Why?" Rose asked, even though she already knew the answer.

"My wedding is in a few days."

"You will be back, right?" Rose asked, even though she already knew the answer once again.

Edna shook her head. "No," she whispered. "It has already been decided that I won't work in the castle after I get married. My fiancé is traveling, and I'm going to join him."

"When are you leaving?" Rose asked.

"In a few days," she whispered.

Rose nodded and turned to look away. She surprisingly didn't have anything to say. Perhaps it wasn't so cruel that Lily had told her beforehand. It was also a good thing that Edna was going away. The Queen didn't like her, and Rose was not stupid enough to think the Queen had let the issue go without doing anything.

"That's very close. When's the wedding?" she asked.

"In four days, a day after the ball. I will leave in two days."

Rose's eyes nearly bulged out of her skull. When Edna had said a few days, she had thought they had at least five days, but the wedding was even sooner, and Edna was leaving the day after next.

"That's so close," Rose whispered, doing her best to keep her voice steady.

"I'm so sorry," Edna said immediately. "I should have told you before now, but there just wasn't any opportunity, and I just didn't have the—"

Rose laughed and sat back on the swing. She grabbed the ropes tight and propelled herself forward, stretching out her legs in a straight line and keeping them close.

"What are you talking about, Edna? You 'ave nothing to apologize for." She bent her head backward as she started to swing back, bending her legs this time.

"I do..." she started to say, but Rose didn't let her.

She dragged the tips of her feet on the ground, instantly halting her movement. "No, you don't," she said and looked at Edna. "I wish you a blissful marriage. I wish I could see you get married in person. I truly wish you the best."

She rested her head on the rope of the swing as she stared in place. Rose did her best to keep the tears at bay. It was silly she even had the urge to cry.

"Thank you. And I wish you will get away from the crown prince." Edna's jaw hardened as she said this.

Rose opened her mouth to speak, but a louder voice covered her words.

"That's enough!" Thomas yelled, approaching the swing. "I have condoned this long enough. Get up! We're going back to the castle."

"You're right," Rose said and stood to her feet, dusting the imaginary dust off her dress. "We should go into the castle."

"Rose," Edna called, her voice cracking. "I don't think I'll be able to see you again before I leave. That's why I was really glad when you called for me—"

"We should go in, Edna. Lord Thomas is about to 'ave a fit," Rose said, not caring that Thomas was right in front of her.

"Who the hell do you think you a—" The rest of his words dried up when Rose just passed him without even looking at him while Edna stood back with a sad look on her face.

Thomas looked from Rose back to Edna. She didn't move a muscle, and she was gripping the sides of her dress a little too hard. Thomas frowned as he wondered if there was something he missed. They had seemed inseparable a moment ago.

"Aren't you both coming?" Rose asked as she stood away from the shade of the sycamore tree, directly under the sun. She was facing them and had a hand over her eyes as she stood.

She was sparkling. The rays of the sun hit her red hair just right, and it looked like at any moment it would ignite into flames. Her dress blew in the light wind, intensified by the trees around. She took her hand away from her face, and Thomas could swear he could see a glimmer of tears but he was distracted by her freckles.

"Coming," Edna called.

Edna's voice snapped Thomas out of his thoughts, and he shook his head. He must have lost his mind. He followed behind them and was quiet through the rest of the journey back to the castle.