

K Lover 197

Chapter 197: Unfortunate Mistake

Rose looked up and immediately locked eyes with the crown prince. He was at least ten yards away, and there were many nobles between her and him, but as soon as she lifted her eyes, they locked eyes.

Rose felt her heart skip a beat, but she told herself it was because of how handsome the crown prince looked and the shock of seeing him—nothing else. Besides, being in this ball alone was enough to make her a nervous wreck.

The crown prince was dressed in white and gold. Rose knew these were part of the royal colors, along with blue, red, and purple. His trousers, also white, were tucked neatly into polished black leather boots, their tops folded and stitched with gold filigree.

He grabbed the hilt of his sword as he stood tall at the top of the stairs. He didn't wear a crown; rather, he wore a circlet of gold. The gold band on his forehead made it clear to everyone that he was unmistakably royal. Not Caius needed a crown. Rose thought he exuded royalty even when he was in nothing but his offensive robe.

Beside him, Rylen stood in servitude. He wore almost identical clothing to the crown prince, but somehow even though placed side by side, it was clear who was the heir to the throne. Crown Prince Caius just had a way of carrying himself, and right now, his eyes were locked on Rose.

She shivered and forced herself to look away just as the royal Herald started to introduce the crown prince.

"His Highness, Crown Prince Caius Ravenor..."

Lady Delphine nudged her, drawing her attention away from Caius. "I told you he would make it," she said with a knowing smile.

Rose nodded, but his presence didn't exactly make things better—in fact, she felt worse. This was the part where she would have found a way to sneak away from the party now that he had seen her. Rose was sure he had. He had held her gaze longer than a glance.

Amid the crowd, he had found her with just a simple look. Rose narrowed her eyes at the thought. She would have to ask Lady Delphine when she intended to leave so she could too. She doubted things would go as smoothly as they had.

She vaguely heard them announce Prince Rylen too, as the two of them headed down the stairs toward the podium that held the chairs. Caius took the one on the left and sat down, and Prince Rylen stood behind him, the middle and the chair on the right empty. Rylen bent to whisper something into the crown prince's ear.

Rose realized she was staring hard when she saw the corner of the crown prince's left lip lift in a smile while his eyes locked in her direction. Rose nearly jumped out of her skin. There was no way he could see her from this distance.

As soon as Rylen lifted his head and stood upright, it was like the crowd had been set off. A couple of nobles ventured toward them to pay their respects to the crown prince.

"Do we 'ave to do that?" Rose asked.

"No. If everyone went to the crown prince, we'd be here all night. Besides, now that the crown prince is here, Her Majesty should make her appearance soon."

As soon as Lady Delphine said these words, another trumpet rang out, and Rose lifted her head to see the Queen standing where the crown prince had just been. She was with her ladies-in-waiting, the three of them lined up behind her in identical dresses.

Rose felt her stomach squeeze as she stared at the Queen, and by the look on Lady Delphine's face when she turned to stare at her, she clearly had the same thought. Rose heard someone whisper and then turned to look in Rose's direction.

Rose wanted the ground to open and swallow her. She instinctively retreated toward the pillar in hopes that the shadow would hide her. The Queen didn't seem to notice, and Rose hoped it would remain that way until she could sneak away.

"Is that the same dress?" Lady Delphine finally whispered.

Rose shut her eyes. It wasn't, but it was similar enough to think so. It was almost like it had been made from the same fabric—the same wine-colored pattern with golden embroidery. The styles were very different, and the skirt of the Queen's was more voluminous; the ladies had to stand some distance apart from her.

Rose finally opened her eyes. The Queen must not see her, and neither should any of her ladies-in-waiting. She couldn't even begin to imagine the horror.

The Queen walked down the stairs, her neck filled with necklaces, and the large crown she wore on her head seemed to almost crush it, but despite this, no one could deny her elegance.

Rose looked down at her dress. Surely, this wasn't some coincidence, was it? How did she end up dressed in the same manner as the Queen? What would happen to her when the Queen saw this?

"I hope not," Rose mumbled. Her throat felt very dry, and she was almost tempted to snatch the wine from Lady Delphine's grip.

"It might be the lighting," the lady whispered, but they both didn't believe the words.

Rose nodded and stepped even further into the dark. The Queen was seated now, and even more people hurried to the front to pay their respects to her. Rose prayed she would be able to hide in the crowd.

She looked up and once again met eyes with the crown prince. It was almost like there was a twinkle in them. Did he know? Rose shook her head. There was no way. This was just an unfortunate coincidence.

She didn't get her dress until this evening, and she was certain the Queen didn't just have one dress. There must be at least ten at her disposal. She had more than one seamstress, and all of them worked solely for the Queen. This was just an unfortunate mistake.