

K Lover 205

Chapter 205: The Dance

"Who is that?" a voice asked.

"I didn't know this was a masquerade ball," a noblewoman said.

"She does look very pretty—and that shade of hair. Who is that?"

"She doesn't look like any lord's daughter."

"I think I saw her standing with Lady Delphine."

"The harlot?"

"Why is she dressed in similar clothes to the Queen?"

"She is. Yes, now that you say it."

"Who is she?"

"The peasant. The one that wiggled her way into the castle like a little worm."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

The whispers floated through the spectators as they watched them. Everyone stopped what they were doing and started whispering amongst themselves as they watched the crown prince step up with an unrecognizable woman. They quickly made way for them, right in the middle.

At this point, Lady Delphine was stepping down from the stairs that led to the balcony, but she stopped on the stairs when she saw the crown prince leading Rose away. It wasn't hard to miss, as the crowd formed a perfect circle around them.

Lady Delphine chuckled to herself and leaned on the wall as she watched. She might just stay until the end of the dance before she went home. After all, business would be slow tonight, as most of her customers were dancing.

Rose could feel her heart beating and she feared it might jump out of her chest. There was no exaggeration when she said all eyes in the room were on her—for they were.

Caius took her hand but didn't let go of her waist; rather, he brought her closer to himself so her front was placed directly against his and her head nearly rested on his chest. If it weren't for her dress, she knew he would have held her even closer.

It was hard to act as though she couldn't feel him against her. She managed to suppress a gasp as he pushed her against himself, but his masculine scent filled her nostrils. It felt like it was all around her—it was the only thing she could breathe in.

"Place your hand on my shoulder and follow my lead."

His voice broke through her thoughts and she nodded. Did they really need to be this close? How would she move like this? Rose glared at him—there was no reason to worry that he might see, as there was a mask on her face—but he immediately looked down at her and smirked.

"Ready?" he asked, but didn't even give her the chance to reply before he started moving to the music.

Caius took a step, leading her with his body—but it was more than just taking an easy step she could follow. Caius was moving her in the direction he wanted her to go.

Rose gasped as he tilted her over his arm, surprised that her body went with it instead of fighting him. His face hovered over hers as she held the position, and she could see the enjoyment on his face.

Was he pleased when she was in misery?

Caius moved again, spinning her. Rose was nimble, and it was surprisingly easy to give control to Caius—more because it was obvious he was a good dancer and also because this was not a fight she could win, so it was best not to fight it.

As much as she didn't care what the lords at the party thought, the last thing she wanted to do was look a fool in front of them. Masked or not. She didn't want to be looked down on.

It was a slow dance, and soon enough Rose had the steps in her head. "One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four," she mumbled in her head.

After the fourth time, a new step was incorporated. "Five, six, seven."

Rose's face started to hurt, and that was when she realized she was smiling too hard. Did she actually like this?

It was easy to forget the people in the background as the crown prince spun her away. His presence was so overwhelming, it drowned out everyone else, and it felt as though it was just the two of them in the room.

Rose hummed to the beat, her body used to the rhythm that she didn't need to count to get it. The crown prince was not lying when he said it was a simple dance routine—as it was, he was just being insulting.

"That was fast," Caius commented, clearly impressed.

"It was nothing," Rose heard herself say. "I dance steps that are much 'arder than these."

"You dance, is that right?"

Rose frowned as she realized she had spoken more than she needed to, but she had been a little annoyed that he thought she would have problems getting the hang of the dance.

"No," Rose replied immediately.

Caius chuckled. "Worried that I might ask that you show just how good of a dancer you are?"

Rose didn't respond to this—mostly because she didn't know what to say, other than something rude. This entire interaction made her feel weird. Still, she couldn't deny that she wasn't having fun.

Caius was a pretty good dancer, and he was surprisingly a better dance teacher than a chess teacher. For a moment, Rose almost thought about saying this out loud, but she didn't let it slip out.

Just because they shared a dance didn't mean anything. Something told her it was another way to humiliate her. She knew better than to trust him.

"A curtsy toward the direction of the Queen," Caius whispered as they finished dancing.

Rose nodded, matching his pace as he bowed and she curtsied. She lifted her head and her chest was still heaving. Even though it was a slow dance, it still took some energy.

The crowd cheered and started to move even closer. Rose tried to pull her hand away from the crown prince's grip, as she knew this was the time to withdraw before she was asked who she was—but Caius didn't let her go.

Thomas walked toward them, reaching them before the nearest lord as though he had been called upon. "Your Highness," he said with a bow.

"Take her," Caius whispered, giving Rose to Thomas, and walked into the path of a lord coming closer to her. Rose didn't hesitate in the slightest, walking right in step with Thomas.