

K Lover 42

Chapter 42: Cleaning The South Wing

Rose was covered in dust—her hands, her clothes, and even her lashes weren't spared. Her hair was the worst off; the scarf barely did anything to protect her. Rose had scrubbed, dusted, swept, and polished. The work was grueling, and by midday, her hands were raw, and her back ached, but she had made some progress.

The first few rooms were clean, the curtains washed and hung out to dry. Edna had managed to get some maids to help her, and it was the only way she had been able to make this amount of progress in such a short time. However, she still had the main hall to clean, guest rooms, and more than half of the wing left. There was no way she would be able to finish it in a week if it took this long to clean just a few rooms.

She wiped her hands on her dusty dress as she made her way out of the room she had just finished. She needed a breather, and it was already past lunchtime. She hadn't eaten yet.

Rose pulled open the door and almost dropped the cleaning items she held in fright. "Mistress Edith," Rose called, trying to recover.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

Rose was taken aback, and she wasn't sure if the Mistress was asking because she disapproved of what Rose had done or if she was simply inquiring.

"I just finis'ed wit' this room. The old curtains are hangin' out to dry, and Edna said she would bring the new ones. I want to take a break," she ended up blurting out.

Mistress Edith gave her a look of disapproval, but she didn't stop her. "You can take a break, but remember you only have a week. And with the work you've done, I doubt you'll finish in time."

"I will," she said confidently. If she didn't have help, Rose would never have let those words pass her lips, but knowing that she didn't have to do it all by herself gave her some confidence.

Mistress Edith scoffed. "I'll check on what you've done. If it isn't clean, you'll have to redo it."

Rose nodded and slowly withdrew. She was hungry. She had skipped lunch because she wanted to make some headway. Hopefully, the cook had left something for her, but even if there was nothing to eat, she would just take a little rest and return to cleaning.

Rose carefully made her way to the servants' kitchen. The kitchen wasn't empty, but as soon as she walked in, it immediately went quiet. A pin drop could have been heard in there, but that wasn't the concerning part—it was the fact that it had been loud and bustling before she showed up.

Rose ignored the maids sitting at the table. It was mid-afternoon, so things were a bit lazy before it was time to prepare for dinner and the evening activities. She turned toward the cooking area, and the maids started speaking again, but when she glanced at them, it went quiet.

Rose didn't care as long as they didn't speak to her directly. They could gossip behind her back all they wanted. She smiled at the cook, immediately noticing the empty pot hanging off the hearth, but Rose wasn't about to give up.

"Are t'ere any leftovers?" she asked.

The cook slowly shook her head, and Rose smiled tightly before exiting the kitchen. She sighed as she walked away. She would have to wait until dinnertime. It wasn't a long time to wait, so she knew she could manage. Maybe she should have come during lunch, but if she had interrupted her work then, it would have been a much bigger mess to clean up later.

"Rose," a voice called, alerting her and stopping her from bumping into them.

"Edna," Rose called.

"What are you doing here? I thought you were still very busy."

"Yah," she replied and tried to walk past Edna. "I'll go to the sout' wing now."

"Wait, are you coming from the kitchen?"

"Nothin' to eat. I should have left w'en ye told me to."

"Oh, come with me. I saved some for you," she grinned, grabbing Rose's hand. "I would have brought it to the south wing, but I was worried about all the dust and interrupting your concentration."

"Ye saved me some food?" Rose asked with wide eyes.

"Of course! You've been working all day. Look at your hands—they're so pale and dry. I left it in my room. Come with me."

Rose nodded and let Edna pull her. Her room was located three doors down from Martha's. She pushed the door open, and Rose saw two girls sharing a bed. One was asleep, while the other just lay on her side. Her eyes moved to the door as they walked in, but she didn't say anything. Rose recognized her immediately. It was one of the girls who had helped her clean, but she hadn't helped out much before leaving.

Edna walked toward her bed and gestured for Rose to take a seat. The room was very similar to the one she shared with Martha, but it was more spacious, and Rose wondered if it was because they had a wardrobe and didn't have their things littered about.

"It might be a little cold," Edna was saying as she handed her a covered bowl.

Rose pulled her eyes from the wardrobe and accepted the bowl. "I don't mind," she said with a smile.

She opened the bowl and was met with cold porridge, but Rose ate it like it was the best meal she had ever had—and it did feel like it. When she was done, she picked up the bowl and thanked Edna.

"I 'ave to go. I still 'ave a lot more to do."

Edna nodded. "I'll join you and hopefully find more people to help." She glanced at the girl lying on the floor, but she pretended not to notice.

"Today's almost ended. Ye can continue tomorrow. I'll clean as muc' as I can before it gets dark. Thank ye for the meal."

"Don't mention it," Edna said as she led her to the door. "And don't be late for dinner this time. The cook didn't want to give me extra—I had to plead for it."

"I won't," she replied and went out the door.