

## K Lover 48

### Chapter 48: A Whore In The Royal Palace

Rose had never been to this part of the castle before, and she wouldn't have known the way if a guard hadn't accompanied her. She figured he was the one who came to call on her. He didn't say anything to her, just walked silently with a helmet covering his face.

They were stopped a couple of times by other guards inquiring where they were headed, but as soon as the guard said he had orders from the crown prince, they were allowed to pass. The guards and servants working around this area all looked at her suspiciously, and she wondered if someone would eventually say she didn't belong here — but no one did.

Rose looked up at the ceiling. The kingdom's crest was painted boldly on it as they passed through the hall. She glanced around, noting the tall pillars and the colored windows. She wondered what this space was used for because it was really huge.

"This way!" A voice said curtly, and Rose realized she had stopped walking to stare.

There was a path at the end of the hall, almost hidden from view. Rose rushed after the guard, trying to catch up with him. This section of the castle was completely different from the others. She knew the castle was big from the outside, but she had completely underestimated it.

The turn led them to even more guards, and the one leading her just kept walking. Suddenly, he stopped, and the guards in front of a set of doors gave both of them an odd look. Even through their helmets, Rose could tell they were displeased by the interruption.

"What's this?" One of them asked, looking ready to attack.

Rose found his phrasing odd but she didn't think too much about it and just kept her head bent as the guard as usual replied to questions about their presence in this wing.

"The crown prince requested her," the guard repeated — the same line he had already said at least five times at this point.

They were allowed entrance into the assembly, but the guards' disapproval was as clear as day. Rose's heart dropped to her stomach. Why would the crown prince want her here — during a meeting? Even before the doors were open she knew it wasn't empty.

As soon as the door opened, Rose knew she shouldn't be here. There were clearly dignitaries of the Kingdom of Velmount — nobles and political heads. All of them turned to look at the door at the intrusion, and Rose immediately bent her head, lowering into a respectful bow.

"Go on then," the guard said without taking a step forward.

Rose's eyes widened. She was going to walk in there alone? What was going on? She gripped the hem of her dress as her hands shook, and she slowly walked forward. The door closed with a loud thud plunging her into despair.

There was a huge round table in the middle of the room, and more than half the seats were taken. The tallest seat, almost similar to a throne, stood out. Gold rimmed the top and the arms. The other chairs were made in a similar fashion, but they were smaller.

The tallest was empty, but beside it sat Caius, watching Rose closely with a hint of a smirk on his face. Rylen sat next to him, glancing back and forth between Rose and Caius, just as lost as the rest of the nobles. Only Henry didn't look surprised — just exhausted.

"What do you think you're doing?" a loud voice demanded. "Get out!"

Rose jerked as the voice rang in her ears, stopping in her tracks. Sweat trickled down her back, and her palms shook, causing her dress to slip from her grip. She couldn't even move to grab the hem again.

"Lord Charles," Caius said softly, "she's here on my orders."

"What is going on here?" another lord asked, slamming his hand on the table with a loud bang. "Did you summon a servant to interrupt this meeting?"

"What meeting?" Caius asked, his voice light with mock innocence. "We're done here."

"Your Highness—"

Caius turned to him. "We've discussed all there is."

"I see the rumors are true," the Duke of Hartfield stated with a sneer on his lips. Hartfield was a town right next to Hearthgale, but the Duke spent most of his time in the capital, close to the king.

Caius reluctantly turned his gaze on him, briefly recalling how the lord had kept him up the night before. "What rumors?" Caius asked, his smile unwavering.

"That you've brought a whore into the royal palace and you parade her for all to see."

Caius grinned. "These rumors are preposterous."

Rose was rooted to the spot as the conversation continued. She was unsure if she should take a step forward, remain where she was, or better still — run away. She shouldn't be here, she knew that much. She could feel all their eyes on her. Why would the crown prince put her on display like this?

"Are you saying my eyes lie?" Lord Nicholas, Duke of Hartfield, asked. He looked a little older than the crown prince, but for a duke, he was still relatively young.

Caius shrugged. "I have no idea what it is you think you see."

"Your Grace," Rylen called, hoping to salvage the situation.

Caius didn't respond. Instead, he turned to Rose, his gaze darkening. "Come."

Angry voices echoed around the room as Rose slowly took a step forward. With each step, she was sure she would trip and fall over — or better yet, the floor would finally answer her silent prayers and swallow her whole. But with every step, it only grew more horrifying that she was still here.

"I can't believe his highness is doing this!"

"What is His Majesty thinking?"

"Is this the man who will be our next king?"

The words rang in Rose's head with each step. She couldn't lift her head. They were all pointing at her, yelling at her. She flinched as the voices grew louder and louder, until finally, she reached the crown prince.

Rose knew she couldn't dare stand above him, so she dropped to her knees. His brown eyes glinted, catching the light streaming in through the windows onto the table. Even though Rose couldn't see this as she kept her head as low as her neck could allow, it didn't stop the goosebumps on her skin and the taste of bile in the back of her throat.