

K Lover 70

Chapter 70: Rose Is Missing

Mister Henry walked with brisk steps. He had already told the guards to search for Rose, and now he had to go and inform the crown prince she was missing. He had half hoped someone would tell him they had found her before he reached the crown prince but that was clearly not going to happen.

He was also very tempted to not tell the crown prince and instead join in the search for Rose, but if she had been missing since morning and the crown prince didn't find out until the afternoon, Henry was already at risk of losing his position—not to mention if the crown prince didn't find out until he requested her, then he might just lose his head.

Henry stood in front of the crown prince's private study and knocked twice. He knew he was not to be bothered, as the crown prince and Prince Rylen were currently busy with matters that concerned the kingdom. He didn't know many details about it, but his concerns were of the castle, not the kingdom, except when it somehow intersected with his duties.

A guard opened the door, and Henry walked into the private study. His palms were sweaty now, and the handkerchief was soaked. He tucked it into his pockets since it didn't do much anymore.

They were seated at the desk, with Prince Rylen seated across from the crown prince, his head glued to the desk and even Henry's presence didn't change that. There were papers spread around the desk and a map. Caius held up a paper but pulled it away from his face as Henry walked in.

"Your Highness," Henry said with a bow and kept his head as low as possible.

"You know I am quite busy, Henry," Caius drawled.

Henry nodded. The crown prince seemed to be in a good mood. Henry had noticed this since this morning, and he was certain the news he was about to share would completely change that.

"Yes, Your Highness." There was still a lot of space between Henry and where the crown prince was seated, but Henry didn't move closer. It was best to be near the door.

"This had better be important. Is this about my mother? Tell her I am busy, and I will come to see her before dinner."

Henry shook his head. "I am afraid, Your Highness, this has nothing to do with Her Majesty, the Queen."

"Well, then speak. I haven't got all day."

Henry nodded and slowly raised his head but kept his gaze to the ground. "R-ro..." He paused, clearing his throat.

Caius carefully placed the paper down. Something told him he wasn't going to like the next words that would leave the steward's mouth. Maybe it was the way his arm lay straight beside his body, or perhaps it was the way his voice shook as he started to speak.

"Speak!" Caius yelled, feeling his patience run thin.

"Rose is missing," Henry blurted out as he shut his eyes.

"What?" Caius said. Then he leaned back into his chair. "Then find her."

"We have been searching since this morning," he said, though he didn't like that he lied—it was Edna who had looked for her. But anything to dwindle the crown prince's anger. "But that is not all, Your Highness. We have reason to believe she might have run away."

Caius laughed. "She tried that last time. There is no way she can escape from the castle. I am infuriated that you would even let her run away in the first place, but there is still time before I need her. Make sure you find her before then. Now get out!"

Mister Henry bowed and retreated. That went better than he thought, but only because the crown prince didn't believe for one bit that Rose would be able to escape the castle. But what if she had? What would happen then? Henry tried not to think about it as he sped down the hallway. Since the crown prince was quite forgiving, he shouldn't waste this opportunity. He should find her as soon as possible.

Rose stirred, feeling a sharp pain in her head, back, and neck. She almost woke up screaming. The pain was intense, and Rose had to fight to open her eyes despite how much pain she was in.

She groaned, grabbing her head as she adjusted to an upright position. Her head felt like it was too heavy for her neck, and she grabbed it, supporting it with her hand. That was when Rose realized she was not alone.

Rose jerked, moving backward, and her back hit the wall. She didn't react because she was scared but because she was surprised. There were about seven other girls in the cage with her. A few looked to be around her age, but two looked even younger.

They were staring at her oddly. A girl had a cut on her lips and some ripped clothes. Some had dirt all over them, and they clustered together. However, they all had the same expression—they were clearly scared.

Rose's eyes looked around. She was in some kind of prison. It reminded her of the dungeons in the castle. There was barely any light coming through, but at least it was enough to see. The space also smelled of feces and urine. She looked to a corner and saw the girls had made it their designated section. Rose pinched the bridge of her nose.

The cell she was in wasn't the only one there. There was another cell that held boys, but they were younger, prepubescent.

She heard a lion growl and jerked, her eyes bulging out of her skull. Was that a wild animal?

A quick look around told her that wasn't the only wild animal in there. There were leopards, some monkeys, a wolf, and her cubs—or was it not the mother? Rose wasn't sure. However, one thing she was sure of was that she had absolutely no idea where she was.

"W-where am I?" she asked no one in particular.

