

## K Lover 80

### Chapter 80: Esme

Rose woke up with a start. She was unsure what she had been dreaming about, but she could vaguely remember running. She hadn't gotten away, and just as she got caught, she woke up.

She sat upright in bed as she tried to gather herself. The candle by the bedside was dead, but she could see the sunlight from the window. It brightened the whole room.

Rose got out of bed immediately and rushed to the window. She pushed it open and took a deep breath, enjoying the feel of the sun on her face. Below her was a stable and a mini barn. Only one horse was out of the stable, with a few cows eating from a stack of hay.

She caught sight of Slade, and the only reason she could recognize him was his very particular cap. It was a flat cap and he wore it a little lower than he needed. He still wore it even as he fetched hay from the storage building next to the stables. He wasn't alone; there was a younger boy with him.

As if realizing someone was looking at him, Slade looked toward her window, and Rose fell to the ground. She didn't know why she was hiding, but it felt like she couldn't let him see her. Still on the ground, she started to crawl away from the window just as someone knocked on her door.

She jumped, scrambling to the door to undo the latch. She was met with the same young girl from last night. In her hand was a shoe. "Miss Esme said I should give this to you. She also said if you're awake and feel like it, you can come out now. She also said Lady Delphine won't be awake till almost noon, so to take your time. I think I said that right," the girl ended her rant with a thoughtful look on her face. It was the same child that was with Kali.

"Thank ye," Rose said and accepted the shoes from the girl.

Happy that she had done what she was sent to do, the child retreated, hopping down the corridor. Rose watched her go for a few moments before she retreated into the room, shoe in hand. She placed the shoes on the bed and slipped her feet into them. They fit perfectly.

Rose paced the room, contemplating whether she should leave it. Deciding there was nothing for her here except her thoughts, she chose to step out. She walked slowly, listening to the creaking sound her feet made on the wood.

She got to the stairs and slowly went down. Halfway through, she had a clear view of the hall and saw someone cleaning it. They were scrubbing the chairs and humming a tune as they worked.

Rose stared for a bit before coming down the stairs. "Ello," she said, startling poor Esme out of her skin.

Esme turned her head to look at Rose with horror in her eyes before letting out a sigh of relief. "It's just you, Rose. I thought one of the men from last night returned. It is always so hard to get rid of them in the morning. Did you sleep well?" she said with a bright smile. Esme was more jovial than Kali, but they were both equally chatty.

"I did," Rose said with a tilt of her head. "Thank ye, and thanks for the shoes."

"Oh, don't thank me. I was only following Lady Delphine's instructions."

Rose nodded, then blurted, "Can I 'elp?"

Esme looked genuinely shocked. "You want to?"

"Aye," she replied.

"Of course! I'll get you a brush, a mop, and a bucket. Usually, the rest of the girls help with cleaning, but last night was our busiest one yet, and Lady Delphine was away for almost half of it. We had so much to do, and the men—ugh. I don't even want to talk about it. Anyway, knowing the rest of the girls, they won't wake up until noon, and there is no way I'll let Lady Delphine see this mess. So, since you're going to help, that would be great. And Beth is too little to do much. She can help with cleaning, but I can't trust her to cook, and she has to stay close to Lady Delphine in case she needs anything. It's usually a lot in the morning, so I really appreciate your help."

"I am 'appy to 'elp," Rose replied. She didn't understand half of what Esme said, but she figured Beth was the young girl who had given her shoes. The part where she had thought Kali and Esme were equally chatty was untrue. Esme was even chattier.

Rose never would have guessed this. Esme didn't have a mean look on her face when they first met, but she had barely said a word. Now, Rose could guess why—it seemed once Esme started to speak, she couldn't stop.

"Good," she continued. "Right now, we need to clean this place, especially the carpets. There will be a few things you don't like. Are you sure you can handle it?"

Rose nodded. She just wanted something to do. She didn't care what.

"Okay. After cleaning, there are still other rooms to clean, but we can take care of them later. Breakfast will be the next thing. I haven't decided what I'll cook yet, but I will need your help with that."

"Aye, anythin' ye need me to do."

"Excellent. This way, then," she said as she started to walk further into the manor. "I will just go to the pantry and get the things you can use. Whatever is too much for you, let me know. I can handle it."

"Okay," Rose said as she followed behind her.

The path Esme led her through was a little darker than the rest of the house, and Rose caught a glimpse of the kitchen. She waited outside as Esme walked into a room, and when she returned, there was a mop in her hands. She handed it to Rose, and the two of them returned to the hall.

By the time they were done with the chores, Rose was sore all over. Her back hurt from all the scrubbing, and her waist hurt from all the lifting, but Esme didn't even look a little bit tired. Rose almost regretted her choice to help. She should have just stayed in her room.