

Chapter 16 Then Run, I Shall

Dinner the previous night had been many things but eventful. Lancelot had retired to his room with his half-empty bottle of vodka spirit. And he had drank all of it that night, right before falling asleep on the floor, right by his king-sized bed. The pressure was too much for him. How did everyone expect him to fit into the huge shoes they had prepared for him? While half of the Dankworth family looked up to him, it was clear from yesterday's dinner that a greater half resented him and expected nothing but failure from him.

How was he to disappoint them all? He had been working, training and schooling toward this period for fourteen years of his life. Yet, it still felt as though he wasn't ready.

It was one thing to be born for power, it was another thing to be forced into accepting this power. It was now going to be a part of him whether he liked it or not.

He now had a responsibility to the whole of London Pride pack, he couldn't afford to make one mistake. Just like he had done for more than half of his life, Lancelot understood that he had to be perfect. Or at least, walk around with a false sense of perfection.

It was much more than he had ever asked for. He didn't want any of this, but he didn't have a choice.

If only Bran had not...

He stopped there, he would not think about him, not tonight, not anymore.

After emptying the content of the bottle, he had fallen so deeply asleep that he had forgotten to lock his room door.

It was the only way Ava could gain access into his room without first knocking. When she stepped into the dark room, she was taken aback by the smell of alcohol. Before the sight of Lancelot sprawled on the floor caused her to jump.

Her slight scream caused him to jerk and wake up. Quickly, he sat up in defense mode. Whoever it was that had made it into his room without his permission, he was more than ready to beat the person up make a mess of him... Or her. When his eyes cleared and he saw Ava standing above him, Lancelot sighed and rose to his feet.

He staggered slightly, Ava rushed to help him but he raised a hand up. Warning her not to come any closer.

"My Lord, are you okay?" she asked aloud, looking over him once again. Her eyes fell to the empty bottle of vodka sprawled on the floor.

Lancelot looked over at her and nodded.

What the hell was she doing here? How had he been careless enough to leave his door open? Why was she the one standing in front of him and not Lee?

With all these questions in his mind, Lancelot's blue eyes rested on her soft blue ones. They were oval and deep, showed a faint sense of innocence and so much viciousness. Despite her soft stares and soft voice that could put a grown man to sleep with just a lullaby, Lancelot felt in his heart that there was more to Ava Relish, daughter of Count Danbury Relish, than anyone of them knew.

"Why are you here?" Lancelot asked. His irritation carefully hidden in his bored tone.

"I thought I should attend to your needs today my Lord..."

"Please..." Lancelot cut in, with a wave of his hand.

"Just call me Lancelot."

When he spoke, she blushed and bowed her head. Did she really have to be so... English?

"Since when did being English like become a problem for you?" He heard Ziko ask within him. Lancelot ignored his wolf and continued to watch Ava carefully.

"Yes, Lancelot."

With that, he rose up and walked past her. Standing in front of the floor to the ceiling glass mirror that was built into the left side of his wall. Ava looked behind her to the man she had always been in love with.

While she had been trained to become Luna queen all her life, she could not have been happier to be betrothed to him. Lancelot Dankworth was the most beautiful man she had ever set her eyes on. He was cold, aloof and mysterious. Almost like a puzzle that was begging to be solved... No, not begging. Nothing about Lancelot begged, it commanded, it dared, and it ordered.

She wanted to get close to him. She wanted to unravel him and see what really lay behind the cold and bored stares he gave to the rest of the world. More still, she wanted to be under him, in his bed.

Her body yearned for him just as her heart did, even more. He was worth rejecting her mate for. And now, she would do just about anything to make sure that she married him. She would make him fall for her, however long it took. "Where is Lee?" his thick baritone brought her back to the present. Startled, she turned to him and smiled curtly.

"He is attending to the other guests in the house. I thought I would cater for you myself today."

Lancelot felt himself cringe. The last thing he needed was Ava anywhere close to him.

She had already crossed her boundary by coming into his room. He had to make sure to put her in check before she got any more interesting and... helpful ideas.

"Don't worry about that. My assistant would see to it," he said flatly. Hoping she would get the hint and leave him alone.

He would hate to have to spell it out to her. Not because he cared, but because he just hoped she would be smart enough to see that he didn't need her here. Or want her here either.

"Lancelot, it is really not a problem, I can..."

"Ava," he said sternly. If she refused to understand, he would spell it out for her, and very clearly so she never misunderstood him again.

"I do not need you taking care of me. I pay people lots of money for that. Now excuse yourself and don't ever step in here without my permission again."

The hurt and the anger were evident in her gaze. But if she was going to win his heart, Ava knew she was going to have to be patient. Lancelot was different from other men who groveled at her feet, amazed by her beauty and charm. He was beauty and charm itself. She had never expected it to be easy. Lancelot was a challenge she would win.

So, she smiled and walked away.

Lancelot stood and watched her leave. In no time, Peter was in his room.

After having breakfast alone in his room, Lancelot prepared himself for the meeting with his therapist: Doctor Mrs. Flinn.

"Where is my mother?" he asked Peter, over his shoulder as he walked down the flight of stairs.

"Out on a tour around the city with Lady Marion and Lady Eloise."

"Hermione and her daughter?"

"Still in their Chambers, I presume." Lancelot heaved a sigh.

"By God, they had better be."

Behind him, Peter allowed a chuckle escaped his lips. Lancelot was always one to make him laugh. It was only a pity his boss never laughed himself.

The ride from the Palace to his therapist took about forty-five minutes. Throughout the journey, Lancelot wondered exactly what he would tell the older woman about today. Would he tell her that he had not been able to get a scrawny woman out of his mind, or would he tell her about the nightmare.

Fuck. It definitely had to be the nightmare. Roxanne couldn't be a problem for him, he would stop thinking about her the moment he spoke to Doctor Flinn; he knew it.

Or he wish he did.

Doctor Flinn was more than happy to see him. She welcomed him with a handshake; knowing how much he hated embraces and physical contact with people.

After ushering him a seat and serving him milk, she was ready to listen to him. It had been so long since she was able to speak freely. After his mother had threatened her about making her son weak, Flinn thought it was best she and Lancelot met in secret. It had been that way for three years. Still, she would never give up on him.

"How have you been Lance?" she asked, seating in a comfortable couch across him.

Lancelot shifted to the edge of his seat. Only now that she asked the question, did he know how unnerved the events of the past few days had made him.

"Just a bit shaken from the nightmares," he said. He would not say any further.

Doctor Flinn's grey eyes narrowed at him.

"You had a nightmare again?"

He sighed, looking over the woman. She was stunning, despite her old age, in her white suit. It matched with the walls of her office.

"Yes. I forgot to turn the lights on."

She was skeptical. He knew she didn't believe him, but it didn't matter.

"Is that all?"

He shrugged, resting his gaze on her.

"Yes."

"So what is the problem?"

Lancelot wondered as well. He didn't even know what it was. Frankly, everything was a problem.

"I saw him again. Bran. It had been so long since he appeared in any of my nightmares. This time was very scary. He was there, suddenly he wasn't..." He stopped to catch his breath.

He was visibly shaking. Subconsciously holding on to the arms of the chair at the thought of his dream.

"And you're certain it's only because you left the light on. Lance, I can't help you if you won't let me."

Her question caused him to become still. She was becoming too nosy, it was starting to annoy him.

"Yes."

"I am asking because mental stress can contribute to these things. Have you been overworking yourself? Thinking too much? Perhaps you saw something... Or someone that triggered his memories recently?" She was now leaning out of the chair. Her focused and intentional gaze fixed on his eyes.

Someone. Someone. Someone.

Lancelot could think of nobody else but her. Her violet eyes and her lavender scent.

But he would not talk about her. Not today, not ever.

"No. Maybe I have been overworking myself. I would make sure I take it easy."

Defeated, Flinn leaned into her chair. If he wasn't going to tell her the truth, she wasn't going to force him.

"Well then. I suggest you take good care of yourself. Also, you might want to take Ziko on a run, clear your head. Empty your thoughts and your heart. It's going to help."

He sighed. Roaming his eyes around the room.

"Then run, I shall."

His statement caused Flinn to laugh. She had known Lancelot from his years as a struggling teenager. It was amazing how strong willed and bright he had grown to be. Still, he struggled with the same issues he had been with since he was young. She only wished she could be of more help.

But one thing was certain, as long as he needed her, she would always be here for him.