

K Lover 104

Chapter 104: The Melody

Caius knew what room she had been put in; it was two rooms away from his. Henry didn't follow after him, which he thought was good reasoning on Henry's part. He didn't think he could control his reaction right now.

The hall was quiet as he walked, but as he got closer, he could hear the sounds of a flute. It was low, but it was a pretty clear tune. Caius was puzzled, he knew no one in the castle could play the flute.

There were a few bards, but they mostly used the lute and harp. Flutes interfered with singing. However, it didn't mean there weren't any flutists, but Caius was certain they weren't as good.

He found himself listening a little too deeply as he ventured towards the bedchamber Rose was in, and he noticed the tune increase. The tune was melancholic, and it made him remember some dark nights, but somehow it wasn't so depressing. It almost felt like if he had this tune to listen to, it would have been a little easier to bear.

His footsteps picked up, and the guards who walked with him had to increase their pace to keep up. Caius soon got in front of the door and stopped abruptly. He didn't hesitate as his hand reached for the handle and he opened the door.

Rose immediately stopped playing, and Edna rose to her feet; the chair she had been comfortably sitting in fell backward. Fear had them frozen—Rose because she was being loud, and Edna because she was sitting down when the chair was clearly only meant for nobles.

Edna snapped out of it first, because regardless of the offense, failing to greet the crown prince was an even bigger offense. She bent her head low enough to touch the bed, and her hand gripped the side of her dress a little too tightly as she curtsied.

Caius stepped in, and Rose started to move out of the bed. "Don't move!"

"Yer Majesty," Rose called. She was petrified. She wanted nothing more than to flee the space.

Caius narrowed his eyes. "Leave us," he said to Edna.

Edna looked at Rose, and Rose tried to keep a straight face, but she failed, and her lower lip quivered a little. Edna nodded and quickly left the room, keeping her head bent as she walked out.

The door closed, and she jerked, realizing that she was left alone with him. Caius watched Rose's every move. He could clearly remember the scene he had walked into—she had smile lines around her eyes as she blew the flute while Edna nodded enthusiastically. But as soon as he appeared, all traces of that disappeared.

Caius walked slower. Rose held the flute close to her chest, moving her neck to follow his movements. He didn't say a word the whole time. He just walked to her side of the bed, lifted the chair that had fallen, and sat on it himself.

"Continue," he said and leaned back into the seat, his arms resting on the armrest.

"The flute?" she asked.

Caius raised a brow. "Was there anything else you were doing?"

"Nay," she said and quickly brought the flute to her lips.

It was hard to keep her hands from shaking, but this was on the crown prince's order—there was no reason to be scared. She steadied her fingers, took a deep breath, and started to play. Rose picked up from where she stopped; she was already halfway through the tune.

The melody was something her mother used to hum—as were most of the tunes she played—and she had expanded on it. Her mother said it was a song but she had forgotten the lyrics. Now all she had was the tune in her head. It was also Rose's favorite flute piece to play when she was sad. Though somber, the melody was surprisingly comforting.

She emptied her mind as she played it—the melody was the only thing she could hear. Her worries forgotten, her audience forgotten. She played, remembering her mother and her father sitting close together by the hearth in winter. Her father held onto her mother and the two of them listened as she played.

It was a tune that brought them comfort in the cold, in the face of her mother's illness.

Rose played like she might never play again, feeling the tears pour down her face but having no urge to stop.

Caius watched and listened. Her lashes shined with both shed and unshed tears. They rested beautifully on her cheeks, her freckles littered across her face, over her nose and her cheeks. Her full lips pouted as she blew into the flute, her fingers elegant as they skillfully moved across it. Her fiery red hair, catching the rays of the sun from the window, fluttered almost in tune with the melody.

She was beautiful.

He knew this, but for some reason, he could tell this memory would be stuck in his head forever.

When the flute piece ended, he felt sorrowful and wished it had gone on for just a little bit longer.

Rose pulled the flute from her lips and wiped at her tears. "I apologize, Your Majesty. I seem to 'ave gotten a little carried away."

"No need to apologize," he said and leaned forward to touch her face. She froze but didn't pull away. He wiped at her face, cleaning the tears she had missed. "It was a beautiful piece."

"T-thank you, Your Majesty."

He pulled back. "How do you feel?" he asked.

"I'm better," she replied. "I'm sorry for the inconvenience."

"Hmm," Caius said and rose to his feet. He still had some time, but he found that he didn't have anything else to say to her, and it was getting increasingly awkward.

As much as he hated to say it, anyone could see now was not the time to interrogate her. Besides, he could get his answers from other people.

"Get some rest," Caius said and stood to his feet. He stared at her for a bit, his eyes trailing down her body to the part hidden by the covers.

Rose shivered. It took everything for her not to try to hide her body with her hands. Caius noticed this and his eyes narrowed. However, he left the room without another word.

Outside the room stood Edna. She hadn't left; rather, she remained outside waiting. "Your Highness," she bowed again as she noticed the crown prince.

"Don't leave her side," he said without looking at her. "Let me know as soon as something is wrong."

"As you wish, Your Highness," Edna remained bent and didn't move until she was sure the crown prince was out of range. Only then did she raise her head and rush into the room, worry written all over her face.

"Edna," Rose said with a bright smile.

The maid closed the door behind her and walked closer to Rose. "What happened?"

"Nothing. He just asked me to play the flute, asked about my 'ealth, and left."

"He told me not to leave you alone," she whispered, looking at the door as though expecting him to come barging in again.

Rose looked at the door, not saying anything.

"I think he came to check on you," Edna ventured.

"Yes, to check if I can still work as his toy. I am sure all that bleeding 'ad him worried," Rose said, her sarcasm clear as that

Edna didn't know what to say to that, and she didn't know the crown prince well enough to say that wasn't true.

"I almost never want to get better," Rose blurted.

"Don't say that," Edna replied. "We can't have you bleeding forever." She wished she had more comforting things to say, but she didn't, and she didn't want to say anything insensitive.

"I know," Rose said softly and looked at the flute. As much as she wanted to play, she was worried that it might attract the prince again, and she didn't want that.

"Would you like something to eat? Or better still, I can find you some—" The rest of Edna's words were interrupted by the sound of knocking.

Rose froze, but considering the way the crown prince had entered, she doubted he would knock. "Are you expecting anyone?" Rose asked.

"What? Of course not! I will go check who it is," she said and started for the door.

She opened it to see Lily on the other side. "Lily!" Edna called, clearly annoyed. "You couldn't come in after knocking?"

"The Queen is asking for you," Lily said without answering Edna's question.

"I can't. The crown prince has asked me to attend to Rose."

"I'm sure she is fine enough to be by herself for some time. You're one of her personal attendants and she has called for you."

"I don't attend to her all the time—I didn't even attend to her last night. What about Martha?"

Lily went quiet. "I don't know what happened, but the Queen is refusing her services, refusing to even see her."

Edna raised a brow and turned around to look at Rose, wondering if she had heard this. "I'm sorry, but I can't disobey the crown prince's direct order. You can tell her you didn't find me."

"She knows you're here," Lily said immediately.