

K Lover 175

Chapter 175: Welma

Rose hesitated. Should she respond to the crown prince's parting words? It felt rude not to. With a soft breath, she gathered the hem of her dress, dipped into a polite curtsy, and said, "Goodnight, Your Majesty." As soon as the words were out of her mouth, she went to the door without looking back.

Caius watched Rose go, silently cursing himself. What was he doing? She was supposed to serve one purpose in the castle, and yet—again—he was letting her walk away. His desire remained unsatisfied, gnawing at him each time she slipped through his fingers.

The ache in his groin was maddening—enough to drive even the most disciplined man to the brink. There was a point to this, he told himself, but right now, he couldn't see it.

The morning came sooner than Rose would like, but thankfully, she got a good enough sleep. The first part of her morning didn't change; the maids brought her breakfast on time. There was no sign of either Lily or Edna, just Welma and one other maid.

Rose was dressed when she opened the door to let them in. She had been ready for some time before they showed up, especially since she knew she might have to deal with Thomas right after.

Welma didn't waste any time before making a comment about Rose. "It is a good thing," Welma said as soon as she walked through the door, "that you're not dead to the world this time. Didn't think you'd answer on the first knock."

Rose was a little caught off guard by her sudden words, but she ignored her. Welma was not worth the trouble, and she didn't really care what the maids said or thought of her.

Welma frowned as she noticed Rose was not going to take the bait. She didn't like this, but she knew better than to say anything that would get her in trouble. The rumors were that Rose told the crown prince everything, and it was best not to get on her bad side.

Besides, even if she didn't, the crown prince had spies placed to keep an eye on Rose, and anything said to Rose would surely reach his ears. As much as she didn't believe this, two maids had been punished because of the pretty redhead.

Welma originally didn't do chores that brought her in contact with the royals until recently, and it had a lot to do with Martha being sent out of the castle and Edna's demotion. She was promoted and was currently one of the Queen's personal maids, along with Lily.

The Queen had recently put her as one of the maids who would keep track of Rose's meals and report to her about her daily activities. She didn't know why, but she was supposed to report even the littlest things.

She didn't know much, as the Queen didn't speak directly to her and only her ladies-in-waiting spoke to her. Even when she attended to the queen, Her Majesty barely looked her in the face.

Welma didn't expect any less, and she knew how big the gap between royals and commoners was. However, here was a commoner enjoying all that privilege simply because she was a pretty face and had spread her legs for the crown prince a few times. It was such a cheap trade-off.

She could wash dishes, attend to the queen, clean floors, and cook all her life, but even that wouldn't bring her close to this level of status the crown prince's plaything currently had.

Besides, everyone knew the crown prince didn't stay too long in a place, but this was starting to seem like the longest one yet. She had heard a few more rumors that she was finding hard to believe. She could understand why the Queen wanted some inside information about Rose.

What Welma felt wasn't jealousy; it was more curiosity. She was the type to do what she had to do to get ahead, but not enough to be harmful. She was also snarky and didn't hesitate to make such comments whenever she could.

"Anything else?" Welma asked when all the items had been placed on the tray.

"No," Rose said. "Thank you."

Welma scoffed loudly and walked towards the door, almost brushing her shoulders with Rose, but Rose saw this quickly and avoided her. Welma narrowed her eyes but didn't stop walking until she was out the door.

Rose didn't think much about the interaction and proceeded to eat her food. The fact that she would have to deal with Thomas again today was enough to keep her mind busy.

Rose ate as much as she could. She was getting used to leaving leftovers. At first, it had bothered her, and she had really tried to eat it all, but it didn't take her long to figure out that was impossible. She looked at the leftovers and shook her head. Her mother would have a fit if there were even as little as a grain of rice left.

Food was not to be wasted. She knew this rule like the back of her hand. Besides, they didn't have extra to begin with. It was just enough, so they couldn't afford to be wasteful. But the castle was different. Not only was there too much food, but even meals she hadn't tasted before.

Rose heard a knock and jerked. It was loud and sounded just like Thomas, but it was too early for it to be him. She groaned as she got out of her seat. She intended to decline today, giving the excuse that she was tired from the day before. However, she was sure Thomas wouldn't buy it.

Rose pulled open the door and was met with Welma. She paused for a moment, her expression puzzled.

"The dishes," Welma said with a tone that indicated Rose was stupid.

Rose moved to the side to let her in. Welma coming to get her dishes was weird; even her constant need to speak to her was enough to make the alarms in her head ring. The maid wasn't being outrightly insulting, but she was being very rude.

Welma was almost as tall as she was, with black hair, her eyes were brown, and she had a locket around her neck. She was dressed in the usual maid's clothes, and she walked with experience. Rose could tell she wasn't all that young, but she wasn't old either.

The maid glanced at her briefly before walking towards the table. She gathered the dishes with her hands, and Rose remained by the door to open it for her.

"If you're going to waste the food, at least let the servants know."

Rose narrowed her eyes and looked at the dishes in her hands. She wasn't being wasteful—she ate a decent amount—but no sane person could finish that amount of food. She was served no less than three different dishes every time. Besides, something told her the maid was just trying to rile her up.

Rose turned away as though she didn't hear her and opened the door, holding it open to let her out. Welma paused, still holding the dishes. She gave Rose a long stare, and it wasn't until the latter turned to look at her when she noticed Welma wasn't moving, that she started walking again.

"Weird," Rose said and closed the door.

She started to walk away when she heard another knock with the same intensity as the first one. Rose stopped and balled her fists. She rushed to the door and opened it, glaring right at Thomas's face.

"Thomas," she said, completely caught off guard.

Thomas frowned as he realized that she could call his name without the dialect. "That's Lord Thomas to you!" he scolded.

"Lord T'omas," she said, and did a quick curtsy. "I'm sorry, I was just surprised to see you."

Thomas didn't appreciate her tone—it sounded casual, and her dialect was also back. "I am sure you're done with breakfast. I have things to do after now. Where do you want to go? His Majesty has suggested I leave that up to you."

"Would it be too much if I asked that we skip today? I am sure we are both tired, and I've barely recovered from the day before," Rose lied. She just didn't want to endure the torture she had last night.

"Absolutely not. Make up your mind, wench! The faster you can make a decision, the better for me."

"Isn't it too early?" she asked. If she couldn't decline, perhaps she could move it to a much later time.
"Besides, I worry I might take much of your time."

Thomas narrowed his eyes. "I will be back after lunch."

"Yes," she whispered.

"What was that?" he asked.

"Nothing," she said curtly and slipped back into the room, closing the door.

Thomas narrowed his eyes, annoyed that he had given in easily. He was not here to make it easy for her. He wanted it to be as awful for her as it was for him, but he did have things to attend to, and he was worried it might end up being too short for the crown prince.