

5 princes and I Chapter 46-50

Chapter 46 Table Etiquette of the Denver Family

I moved to Dan to whisper something to him. “What is this all about?” I asked. Dan looked nervous when he looked at me. I thought for sure that he would shake his head and move away, not answering my question but he didn’t, which I was thankful for.

Dan leaned down and whispered lowly in my ears. “Nate and his parents...they don’t get along well.”

Don’t get along? What does Dan mean? And why?

I wanted to ask Dan more but servants came and ushered us away to our rooms. I looked hesitant at Dan, but he nodded at me to go. “What about you guys?” I asked.

“We’ll stay here and talk with them for a while.” Ren gestured at Adan and Nate. They were probably gonna talk about something and they don’t want me around to hear it. This must be their way of telling me without hurting my feelings – either way, I don’t mind.

With a nod, I followed the maid. She led me to the second floor where the guest room is. She ushered me inside one of the vacant rooms. As soon as I entered, I immediately doubted that it was a guest room. Inside the room, you can see a nice red carpet, little expensive-looking chandeliers, a queen-sized bed made of mahogany, a side table, a coffee table, and a dresser.

Yeah, the guest room is my b***. I think this is a princess’s room! Boy, they sure don’t save their money beautifying their palace.

As I entered the room, several maids followed me. I nodded my thanks and told them to leave because I wanted to take a shower. One of the maids quickly handed me a clean dress to change. I thanked her as she placed it on the bed.

“Princess, I brought you some food.” One of the maids said. In response, my stomach grumbled, remembering that we haven’t eaten at all since morning.

I glance at them. “Have the others eaten?”

“They have.” She confirmed.

I nodded and started looking at my food. Well, at least I won’t feel guilty about eating without them. I started nibbling on my food, but once I started to eat, I hadn’t realized that I was already wolfing it all down. I guess I was pretty hungry after all.

When I was done eating, one of the maids started to thug my dress off.

“What the?!” I gasped and moved away from her.

“Princess, allow us to assist you in cleaning up.” Said one of the maids. Hey, isn’t there just one maid a while back?

With my hands wrapped around me, I told her. “U-Um...I can handle myself just fine. Thank you. You can leave.” I still feel uncomfortable with the maids in Thalia. I don’t need the maids here to undress me too. They exchanged glances at each other as if hesitating before looking at me; still not leaving. I sighed.

“Seriously, I can handle myself. I’m an independent woman – err – princess. You can leave now. Thank you very much.”

My words must have finally convinced them because they started to leave after that. Well finally!! Now that I was alone, I started to head towards the bathroom. Once I got there and started to look at the white and gold tiles, a large bathtub filled with rose petals, large mirrors, and the chandelier, I started to wonder again if this is, in fact, a guest room. Like seriously!?

Once I finished cleaning up, which took longer than I planned because the scent in the tub made me relax a bit, I started to change into the ‘simple’ white dress. Well, the upper part was plain with the strapless sweetheart tube. The bottom part was what made it..well, ‘not simple’ as I call it.

Starting from the hem of the dress, shiny diamond-like beads decorated the bottom part and went up until it almost faded at the top. Kind of like an ombre design. But despite the design of the dress, it was comfortable to wear. I started to lay down on the bed. Enjoying the feeling as I sunk into the mattress. I hugged one of the pillows and started to doze off. Getting back at the lack of sleep last night from sleeping out on the ground.

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I awoke at the sound of knocking. I had a dreamless dream as if I haven’t slept at all, but I knew that I slept because of the darkening sky outside. I got up and rubbed the sleep from my eyes. I looked around me to an unfamiliar setting until I remembered that I wasn’t in Thalia anymore. I was in Vertez and their so-called ‘guest room’.

“Come in,” I said.

“Are you decent?” Nate’s head poked in, his hands covering his eyes. It might have been a thoughtful gesture if it wasn’t for the gap on his fingers as he peaked.

I crossed my arms over my chest. “I’m in Vertez, Nate. Your home to be exact. You think I’m that careless?”

“Touché.” He leaned against the wall and looked at me. “Fix your hair, love. We’re about to have dinner with the king and queen, a.k.a my mom and dad. And you’re very lucky for I will e***** you.”

Hearing him say the king and queen, I suddenly remembered Dan telling me that Nate and his parents were not getting along. Feeling sad and nervous at what I’m going to say, I started to purse my lips, making Nate laugh. “What?” He said, completely oblivious to what I’m thinking. “Don’t tell me you need help with your hair.” I didn’t move. Nate seemed to take that as a yes for an amused look flashed on his face as he made his way to me. He grabbed my hand and hauled me up, leading me to the dresser and making me sit.

“Here.” He handed me a hairbrush and I took it. “Brush your hair.”

“I thought you were gonna brush my hair?”

Nate chuckled. “You don’t want me touching your hair, Rose. That I can promise you. Now hurry up. We don’t want to keep them waiting.” With a sigh, I brushed my hair as fast as I could. Detangling the ends and parting them at the side before patting them flat.

Nate nodded in approach and he offered me his arm and led the way out of the room and into the dining area. The dining area was almost similar to Thalia, except that it was smaller and it has different designs. But they still have the usual long table but this time, the edges of the tables were curved. I saw Ace, Ren, and Dan sitting together on one side. A man with red hair like Nate’s sat at the father’s seat. He doesn’t look old. He looks about 30 or something, but I suspect that he’s probably around 40 because of the way he acts and moves. Sitting beside the king is a woman with blonde hair. She’s really pretty with her blonde hair, like Adam’s, tied into a neat and tight bun showing off her perfect long neck. Her eyes were a pretty shade of blue that it was a shame that none of the siblings inherited them. Like the king, she looks about 30 but is probably older.

As we entered, Nate stopped just beside the queen as he introduced me. “Mom, Dad, I would like you to meet Princess Rosalie Amber Stan from the Kingdom of Thalia. Rose, meet King Rafael Denver and Queen Anya Denver, the rulers of Vertez.”

“Nice to meet you.” I greeted and curtsied.

I saw the King and Queen smiling at me and nodded. Anya, the queen, gestured for me to sit. “Nice meeting you too, dear.”

I told her my thanks as Nate led me to a chair beside him. He was in between me and Adam, who sat beside the queen and I was more than happy at the distance.

“Nathaniel, what brings you here back in Vertez?” The king asked and for some reason, I started to feel nervous. It sounded like the king wasn’t too happy about us being here. That or it was just Nate being here.

Whether Nate noticed it or not, he didn’t make any reaction. “It’s just for the night, father. Don’t worry. We’ll be leaving soon.”

Okay, I have a feeling that this doesn’t sound good. I looked up in front of me to see Ren. Beside him was Dan and then Ace. Shhh. Don’t say anything unless you are asked. Ren spoke in my mind.

“I heard that you’ll be needing supplies for your trip?” Anya asked, not looking up from her plate as she continued to eat.

“Yes.”

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“Hmm.” Well, this is getting awkward. With the tension in the air, it seems impossible to eat, but I still forced some food down my throat.

“Princess Rosalie, I presume?” Hearing Rafael, the king, say my name I tensed up but quickly regained myself.

“Yes, your highness.” I gave her a small smile.

“Beautiful name. Is it true that you are a foreigner?”

“Yes, your highness.” It seems like it was the only words that I could mutter.

“Smart girl you are. You already know how to address a king properly.” Rafael complimented me.

“Indeed.” Anya agreed. “Not to mention she’s pretty too. Tell me, you don’t have any...problems living in a kingdom with five princes now, don’t you?” When she said ‘problems’ her eyes darted to Nate for a second. It left an uneasy feeling in my gut. When Dan said that Nate and his parents don’t get along, I didn’t expect that it would be to the extent that they would try to embarrass** him like this.

But despite my anger, I didn’t show it as I kept a straight face and said, “No, your grace.” My hands were gripping my utensils tightly.

“Good.” She said. The way she was talking to me was more motherly compared to the way she was talking to Nate. Both the parents are and it made my blood boil. How could they just show their anger towards him like that? Especially when we are eating and especially with his friends?

The king then looked at Ace. "Prince Ace, it was been a while since you and your family came to visit." Said the king.

I give my compliments to Ace for keeping a straight and expressionless face as he spoke to the king. "It is, your highness."

"How is Tordis? Are Klaus and Sierra doing well? What if your siblings?"

"Tordis is doing great. Our shipments have increased since the last month or two. My mother and father are also doing well. Father got sick a while back but he's doing great thanks to my mother's healing abilities. Later, as the future king of Tordis, is already training and helping my father with his works. Darem, last time I heard, is training for hand-to-hand combat. As for Nora, she just started dancing lessons before I left."

"How would you know all of that?"

"I do paperwork back home and at Thalia. I also do some reading on papers regarding my kingdom when I have my free time."

"Very good. You're a smart boy, Prince Ace. You'll make a fine king someday." Said the king. "I hope our son could be more like you one day. And I don't mean Adam."

Okay, seriously that was pretty out of the line. I literally wanna punch the king. Who knew Nate has....unusual parents. No wonder he was acting all weird coming here.

Ace frowned. "Prince Nathaniel and I are two different individuals. Naturally, we have different ways of handling things."

"Still," continued Rafael. "It would have been nice to have another son who is as responsible and well mannered as you."

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I saw how Nate's grip on his fork tightened. His eyebrows furrowed and his teeth clenched. Suddenly, he let out a dark laugh that surprised us all. "Well, father, if you want another son then why don't you bed mother?"

Oh boy.

"Nathaniel!!!" Anya dropped her sp*** and looked disapprovingly at Nate. He just shrugged and continued eating.

"Watch your mouth, Nathaniel. It only shows what kind of imbecile you are." Rafael narrowed his eyes at his younger son.

Suddenly, a dark and sinister smile played on the king's lips. "It's no wonder why Kascada left you."

"Father," Adam warned his father as he looked at his brother worriedly.

Nate's dark expression seemed to soften a bit at the mention of the name before a look of hurt and anger crossed his face. If looks could kill, the king would be dead on the spot at how Nate looked at his father. He slapped his knife and fork loudly on the table as he stood up and knocked his chair out in the process. "Don't you dare bring Kascada in the conversation?" He hissed.

The king seemed to enjoy the look on Nate's face because he continued to taunt him more. "Oh really now? Don't tell me you've forgotten her. Lady Kascada Starling." Nate clenched his fist so hard that they started to go white.

I started to reach out to hold his hand but Ren stopped me by nudging my foot.

The king carried on. "Beautiful young lady with long dark hair and pale skin. Daughter of Celeste and Frank-Starling. I remember how you were infatuated by her beauty. The endless pursuit for her affection."

Nate was shaking. "Stop it." His voice laced with venom.

"I recall that you two were about to get married.....that is.....until rumors had spread that you cheated on her with Princess Camille."

"I didn't! And you know it." Nate's voice grew.

"So she left you and married another man far more suitable for her than you could have ever been."

"I SAID STOP IT!!" It happened so fast that my eyes couldn't follow what happened. All I remembered was Nate's face darkened as his fangs elongated before moving to charge his father at lightning speed but he didn't get to reach his father because Adam got up from his seat and stopped Nate from killing their father.

"Nate!!" Adam screamed at his brother, holding on to him tightly as he shook him. "It's not worth it! Come on!!" He tried bringing some sense back into him and luckily it seemed to work. "Just go upstairs and let it pa**." Said his brother more calmly this time. Nate closed his eyes and let out a breath. Slowly, his fangs started to retract and went back to normal. When he opened his eyes, he fixed a glare at his father before saying, "Excuse me." He told us as he shrugged his brother off. "I'm done here." Then he started to walk away and left.

Automatically, I got up from my seat to run after him.

“My dear.” I paused when the king called me. I didn’t look at him. I focused on the spot where Nate had disappeared. “Haven’t you heard that it’s bad manners to leave when everyone is still eating?”

Hearing him say that made it sound so ironic that I have to laugh darkly. “Well,” I started and faced the king with an indignant look. “After what just happened, I thought proper table etiquette doesn’t matter anymore.” I gave him and the queen a sweetly sarcastic smile and mocked curtsy. “Excuse me.” Then I ran and followed Nate.

Chapter 47 His Past

I followed Nathaniel upstairs. He was walking too fast as if he wished to leave the place immediately. Well after what had happened I couldn’t blame him.

His parents were awful. I mean, my parents aren’t perfect either but his parents were too much. If they were that kind of people, then they shouldn’t have kids in the first place. And I thought that Ace has a nasty personality, but the king and queen of Vertez took that t**le easily.

In their eyes, they see Nate as a good for nothing.

Then I saw that Nate went inside one of the rooms. I would a**ume that it is his room. I paused in front of it. Suddenly there was a scream. It sounded angry, painful even. Then there was a loud crash.

I knocked hesitantly. “Nate?” No one answered. “Nate, you there?” I asked and knocked a little louder this time.

“Go away, Rose.” Came his reply.

I paused. Then, like an idiot, I asked, “You....you wanna talk about it?”

“No.” Came his reply. “Just leave me alone, Rose. Please.”

I sighed. “Alright then,” I said and was about to leave when I thought of something. Before coming to Thalia, had Nate always lived like this? Every day being hara**ed by the words of his parents. He gets along with his brother, but he doesn’t try to exactly console him at all.

I can’t just leave this vampire prince in here sulking.

With a frown, I turned back and knocked even louder at his door. “NATE!! OPEN THIS DOOR RIGHT NOW OR SO HELP ME I WILL BREAK IT OPEN!!!” I demanded.

He didn’t answer.

“I know you can hear me, Nathaniel!”

“Zzzzzzz!” Now he was pretending to snore.

Does he take me for a fool?

Alright then. Enough games. Pretty dress or not, I lifted my skirt and started kicking on the door. When the heel broke, I started pounding on it with my fist. My hands were already sore from pounding too much, but I didn’t even think of giving up.

“Ow!” My fist landed on something soft that I had to pause and look at. I saw Nate gripping his nose as he glared down at me. I hid my hands behind my back and gave him a sheepish grin.

“Uh...hehe. Didn’t see you there.”

“What do you want, Rose?”

“I...I-uh.....” I stuttered while looking at the ground. I hadn’t thought of what I was going to say, to be honest. But then something in his room caught my gaze. “What the?” Without his permission, I went past him and into his room. “What happened here?” I ask, looking at the mess on the floor.

“Yeah sure. You can come in. No problem at all.” Nate rolled my eyes as I closed the door. “Rose, you can’t just go barging in on a guy’s room. Especially since you’re a girl.”

“I’m gonna pretend that I didn’t hear s**ism in that statement.” I turned to him. “But wow, Nate. That’s a lot of anger in there.” I pointed at the mess on the floor. “And you know what I think?”

He averted his gaze from me and looked at the ground. “I don’t care at the moment.” He mumbled, which earned a glare from me as a response. “I-I mean to go on.”

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“Nate, I think you are handling it all wrong. You are keeping that anger all to yourself and you are expressing it out physically.”

“Then what do you suggest?”

“Talk.”

He scoffed. “Sorry, love. Not the sharing-your-emotion type of person.” He said. I narrowed my eyes at him. I marched up to him and pinch his ear.

“Ow! What do you think you are doing!?”

"It's for your good." I dragged him to a couch and made him sit beside me. He tried to get up but I placed my hand on his shoulder and forced him down again. "Nate! I'm trying to help you as a friend," I said calmly.

"Babe, I thought we were more than that!"

I cracked my knuckles. I was getting impatient at how uncooperative he was.

"Alright fine!" He said tiredly. "What do you want to talk about?"

"I want you to talk to me about...who.....Kascada is." That person must have been important to him. I remember back at the ball that the fairy princess mentioned a name and Nate had the same reaction.

Nate winced. "Why would you want to know?"

Seeing his reaction, I was debating on whether or not I should even be asking this, but I think it's the main cause of his problems. "Well," I started. "I figured she must....be the source of your.....current predicament."

Nate was quiet for a moment. It was as if he was either preparing himself or he just doesn't want to say it. "Just one question." He said. "If I say no you will still force me to speak, won't you?"

My response was quick. "Yep."

He gave me a small smile. "Alright then. I'll tell you." He fiddled with his hands as he looked at the ceiling. "Two years ago, I met a beautiful lady who stole my heart. Lady Kascada Starling."

Nathaniel

"Prince Nathaniel, we are almost at Duke Frank's home." Announce one of the guards beside me. I nodded at him in acknowledgment as I petted Ryde, my horse. Most of the time, I enjoy riding with him, but today was different. I hate it. Not because I was being e*****ed by our castle guards but because this trip will be my very last ride of freedom.

All because of the arranged marriage that my father and the king of Fae made. According to him, I am supposed to marry that whinny and spoiled fairy princess named Camille. At first, I didn't mind the fact that my future was being decided for me by my father, but after meeting my so-called future wife, it makes me want to kill myself. As I have said – she's bossy, spoiled, rude, and very...attached to me. Most of the time if I might add. Am*** the both of us, she was the only one who's happy about the arrangement.

Princess Camille and I were each given a contract that we must take to each Duke and Duchess of our kingdom for them to sign as witnesses. According to the rule, all the Duchess and Dukes should sign the contract for the proposal to commence. So far, everyone has signed the contract and is congratulating me on my marriage. I, of course, gave them my thanks and pretended that I was as thrilled as them. Sometimes even faking to be in love with the witch. According to my father, princess Camille already finished getting the signatures for her contract – I'm not even surprised.

As for me, I only have one signature left to fetch before my fate is sealed with Camille: Frank Starling's signature. To be honest, I could just throw the contract away and pretend that a wolf ate it or something, but I won't. It was the decision of my father and I must respect it.

Finally – or should I say, unfortunately – we arrive at Duke Frank's home. After one of the guards announced our arrival, a servant came and ushered me in. She told me to sit on the couch and wait while she called for her master. I didn't complain, just sat there as I counted the seconds that pa**ed by.

A few minutes later and I heard footsteps going down the stairs. I immediately stood up when I thought that it was him, but it wasn't. A tall, slim, and dark-haired girl descended from the stairs. She was so beautiful that I had to watch in awe as she made her way to me. Her light grey eyes locked into mine as she smiled and curtsied. "Prince Nathaniel Denver, we are honored for your arrival. My father will arrive any minute now and has sent me here to tell you out of respect." She said and started to fidget nervously.

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I gulped. "I – uh" I stuttered and quickly looked away as I cleared my throat. What are you doing, Nate? Focus!! "Um...Your father?....Er..what's your name?" I stuttered.

She blushed at my question. "Oh no! I am so sorry! I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Kascada Starling, daughter of Frank-Starling. My apologies for my rudeness, your highness."

"Oh no no no!!" I quickly said feeling embarra**ed myself. "Please, do not apologize. It was a simple mistake, lady Kascada." Her name sounded so beautiful that I want to repeat it over and over again.

Lady Kascada paused and looked at me. Then she caught me off guard when she smiled. "Thank you, Prince Nathaniel." She said softly that it almost made me forget the whole reason why I was here in the first place. As if reading my mind, she asked me, "If you don't mind me asking, my prince, what a**istance do you need my father for?"

My throat went dry and I quickly hid the contract behind me. I don't know why but for some reason I don't want her to know of it. Her gaze followed my movement and I feared that she'd find out what I came for so I acted fast. "Uhhh...I was just...gonna ask

how your father has been. Yes. You see, with the large cases of undead lurking around in the neighborhood I was worried about his safety. You haven't seen any undead around here, right?"

Lady Kascada tilted her head to the side. "Uhhh....no."

"Excellent!! That's all I needed to hear. Send your father my regards, alright? I must get going. Nice meeting you, lady Kascada." I said hurriedly before I made my way to the exit with an unsigned contract. It was the first time that I disobeyed my father's orders.

The next day, I hid the contract in one of my drawers. It wasn't needed until Camille turns 18 next year. My father did ask if I had the contract sign in which I had to lie and say yes. Lucky for me that he didn't ask me to see it.

As of now, I was lurking in the trees and looking out at Duke Frank's house in hopes of seeing that girl again – Kascada. For some reason, I have this sudden urge that I wanted to see her again. To see her beautiful face and those gorgeous gray orbs of hers.

I felt like a stalker.

Ryde let out a whine and nudged me at the back. "Not now, Ryde," I told him without looking as I continued to have a lookout for a certain beauty.

"So. Ryde is his name, huh?"

I jumped in surprise and turned to look at the intruder. I was about to draw my sword when I saw that it was Kascada. I quickly straightened up and cleared my throat. "Lady Kascada!! What a surprise!! Didn't expect to see you here." I said and let out a nervous laugh. What am I saying?

Kascada raised an eyebrow at me. "I live here, Prince Nathaniel." She said. "And if I may ask, what are you doing here?"

"I was just uhh...looking out for rogue undead!! Yes! I just wanted to make sure that this area is safe."

"How noble and brave of you, your highness."

I grinned at the compliment and almost didn't feel bad about lying. I saw her carrying a basket full of flowers. "What's with the flowers?" I asked.

"Oh, these?" She held up her bouquet to me. "I was just picking up flowers for my father. These are his favorite. He said that it helps lessen out his stress. Here, your highness, I think you should have one too." She handed me one of the flowers that she picked.

"Thank you," I said as I took it and felt myself smile. "You know. I think I understand what your father feels. I don't think that it's the flowers that take away his stress, but the one who's giving it."

She blushed at my words and looked at the ground. "Thank you, your highness."

I smiled. She was so adorable. "Please. Call me Nate."

This time, she looked at me with wide eyes. "But I can't possibly do that, your highness."

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"Nate." I held her hand. "My name is Nate." I gave her an encouraging nod.

She looked hesitant at first but eventually, she said it. "N-Nate." Her face was as red as a tomato as of the moment that I just wanted to touch her cheek. "U-um...y-you can also call me Kascada...., Nate."

By now I was grinning like a fool. "Kascada it is."

Kascada and I started to hang out more and more after that. I would sneak out of the castle or pretend that I would take Ryde for a run. The more time I spent with her, the more I found out that we have a lot in common. We both like animals, especially horses. But according to her, her father won't allow her to have a horse of her own because he feared that it would be too dangerous for her, so I took it with me to teach her how to ride.

For the very first time in my life, it felt like I was finally alive, normal, and not a prince of some kingdom. I was happy. I was in love. No one knew of our secret meeting because, during those times, it was our private world.

"Nate, I-I think we should stop meeting up." She told me this one day and it broke my heart to hear her say it.

"What? Why? Have I done something to offend you?" I asked.

"No....no you haven't." She shook her head. Her face looked pained and it hurts me to see her like that. "You haven't done anything wrong."

"Then why don't you want to see me again?" I was hurt beyond words. I grabbed her shoulder and tried to make her look at me. "Kascada."

"Please, Nate. It's....wrong. Please."

"Wrong? What's so wrong with us meeting each other? Is that a crime now?"

This time I saw tears dripping down her face. "It's wrong when you already have a fiancé and still we are meeting each other!" She screamed. I was taken aback by her words. The moment that I feared finally came about her knowledge of my engagement. Kascada looked at me. "It's true, isn't it? That was the reason why you came here two months ago. To have the arrangement be approved by my dad."

When I didn't answer, her face contorted into pain once again and she cried even harder. I want to wrap my arms around her and beg her to stop. It was killing me seeing her like this. I don't want her to hurt. "Gosh, I am so stupid!!" She sniffed and moved away from me. I tried pulling her back but she moved away and let out a laugh.

"Kas..."

"No. NO! Stay away from me, Nate. Please." She started to hug herself. "Don't make this any harder for me. Don't give me nice things or even act nice to me please." She sobbed. "Don't make me fall for you deeper than I already am."

Her words shocked me and despite our current situation, I felt hope. My heart pounded in my chest. "Kas, what did you just say?" I cautiously made my way to her.

"I-I like you, Nate." She said in between sobs. "I might even love you that it hurts so much." And that was it. That was all I needed to hear. I closed the gap between us and kissed her. It was a long one and we broke off, I wiped her tears away and made her look at me.

"Screw my engagement," I told her. "I don't love princess Camille. I love you, Kascada. Since the very first time, I saw you. It's you whom I want to marry and not her. If you will allow me, I will prove myself to you. So please...don't push me away and give us both a chance for whatever life has to give."

"B-but what about your parents?"

"I'll take care of it. I promise." I assured her. "Now, what do you say? My engagement contract is not even official." I grinned.

She hesitated at first but then she smiled at me. A genuine smile. "Yes."

Chapter 48 His long Trauma

Nathaniel

"You fool!" My father screamed at me before he punched me in the face with a force that sent me to the ground." How dare you break off your engagement! Do you know what that will do to our reputation!?"

I grunted and pulled myself up as I faced my father. "I....don't love Camille!!"

My father glowered at me. "And yet you love that....that girl!?" The way he said it was so insulting that I want to grab him by his neck then and there.

"That girl's name is Kascada, father. And I love her."

He narrowed his gaze at me and I could feel that he's going to strike again. "YOU INGRATE!!!" I was ready for the blow that was about to come when Adam stopped him.

"Father stop!"

My father glared at him. "Don't try and stop me, Adam! Your brother needs to be taught a lesson. He wants to cancel his wedding with Princess Camille because he is in love with another woman. Do you know what sort of embarra**ment that will bring to our family!?"

Adam paused and he looked at him. Surprised evident on his face. "Really?" He asked me. I nodded.

For a second there, I thought he would let father continue his blow on me but he didn't. Instead, I saw him smile. "That's great!!" Then he turned to father. "Father, you have to let him." Father and I were both shocked at Adam.

"Haven't you heard what I said!?"

"No father, I heard. But you see." Adam paused and gave me a pleased look before turning to father again. "Little brother here is always following your orders and wishes all his life. Not once had he disobeyed you. Heck, he almost dedicated his life and future just to please you. Why not this once give him the chance to make his own choice. I mean, father, it's his life, his future. Be a father for him once and let him choose his bride."

I was surprised at Adam for saying that but knowing their father, he would not hear it. That was why I was surprised when my father gave me one last look before sighing. "Fine." He said. "But just so you know, I will let her live here but I will never acknowledge her as a family." With that, he was gone leaving me with Adam.

True to his words, my father canceled my arranged marriage with Camille. The king and queen were both understandings. The only one who was not okay with it is princess Camille. But who cares about her opinion? Not me that is for sure.

Soon I introduced Kascada to my family. It wasn't long until our relationship became the talk of the kingdom.

Prince Nathaniel broke off the engagement for the sake of true love.

It sounded cheesy but it was the truth that I won't deny. Kascada and I have dated for almost a year and a half now. And with time, it was clear that it was she with whom I want to spend the rest of my life. That was why I planned the perfect proposal for her. I know how fond Kascada was of table arrangement. So one afternoon, I invited her into one of the vacant rooms with a single table at the center.

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I pulled her in front of the table. "Kas, I need your help," I told her and pretended to look worried.

"Sure, Nate. What do you want me to do?" She asked me. Her face looking determined to help that I have to fight the urge to pull her in for a kiss. It'll come later.

I beamed at her and gestured at the table where four names were written on paper. "Tonight, I will have four guests: You, me, Will, and Marry. Can you please arrange our seats?"

She gave me a weird outlook at my request. "Uhh...sure? But I don't know why you called me here for help when you can arrange them by yourself."

"Just arranged them for me, will you?"

"Fine." She sighed and started to pick the paper and arrange them. "There. Me, you, Marry, and Will."

"I don't like it. Try again."

"What?" She pouted at me. I chuckled and kissed her cheek.

"Just try again."

This time she thought for a while. "Marry, me, will, and you."

"Oh! Close. Try again."

"Will, you, marry, me." As soon as she realized it, she let out a gasp and turned to me. I kissed her forehead before I got down on one knee and brought out the ring. Its strap was pure gold with lapis lazuli embedded on the side. On the center of the ring is a heart-shaped diamond. I only bought the best ring for the best girl.

"Lady Kascada Starling, you are the only one for me. The only girl that I would cherish and love. My heart is yours and yours only. So saying, will you do me the honor of becoming my bride?"

"Yes...Oh my gosh YES, Nate, YES!!!" She cried.

“Yes?”

“Yes!”

“YES!” I got up, grabbed her by the waist, and twirled her around before planting a kiss on her lips. Then I slipped the ring on her ring finger and we kissed again.

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The marriage was in a week or so. The whole Kingdom was ecstatic and it was the only talk of the people. I have never felt so thrilled about my future. Before, I thought that I would be following my father’s orders till the day I die but look at me now. I made my own decision on who I am to marry. And that is all I could ask for. I was the happiest man alive.

Or so I thought.

Just a week before our big wedding, Camille came since my mother invited her for dinner. Kascada wasn’t around that time since we were spending the time with her dad. It struck me as odd when Camille acted so friendly and calm about the whole news. She looked happy to me. She even gave me her regards to my future wife. While my mother, father, and brother were busy talking, Camille handed me a gla** of wine.

“Cheers for your wedding.” She said.

I was hesitant. My gut told me not to but since it would be rude not to accept, I accepted it. “Cheers.” Then I drank my wine.

Instantly, I felt dizzy so I excused myself and headed for my room. I was feeling hot so I took my shirt and went to bed. I felt someone sneaking into my room. By her scent I could tell that it’s a girl, but not my Kascada. I would know it if it was her. The girl tried kissing me, but despite my drunken state. I was able to fight her off.

Suddenly, I heard my door open. I just have about enough strength in me to see who was at the door. But I didn’t have to look who was there since I already caught a whiff of her scent.

“Kascada.” It was like a spell was broken and I was sober again. I pushed the girl, who was Camille, off of me. I ran after her and was able to catch her thanks to my vampire speed. “It’s not what you think!”

Worthlessly, she slapped me. “It’s not what you think!?” She yelled. “Nate, I saw what I saw! Do you think I’m blind!?” Angry tears started to fill her eyes.

“Let me explain.”

“Explain what!?” She wiped her eyes. “You know how much I hate cheaters, you know that!! My mom left my father and me because she cheated on him, Nate.” She shook her head and I hated the look of disappointment in her eyes.

“Kasaca-” I reached out for her.

“Don’t!” She moved away from me. “Stay away, Nate. Please.” She begged and with that, she left. Watching her leave like that tore something inside of me.

The next few days were torture. I tried going to her house to explain but she wouldn’t let me. What happened with her parents had traumatized her about being left alone, but I won’t do that. I won’t. I won’t give up on her. Day by day I would come and wait for hours. But she still would not come out. On the fifth day, she finally came out. There was a string of hope when I saw her at the door walking towards me. Quickly, I dusted my pants as I tried to look presentable.

“Kas, I’m so glad-” Before I could finish what I was about to say, she held up a hand to shut me up. Then wordlessly, she took my hand in hers. To be honest, it felt good holding her hand again.

But then that feeling suddenly changed when she placed the engagement ring on my hand. I looked at her. Begging. “Kas....”

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She shook her head. “It’s over, Nate. I’m sorry. Don’t make this....difficult.” My heart parted at her world and suddenly I couldn’t breathe.

I grabbed her hand just as she was about to go. “Kas, please don’t do this. Please. I-I’ll die if you do.”

The next thing that happened traumatized me for life and changed me. Kascada looked at me with a stone-cold look. “Then die.” That was all she said before leaving me there, stunned at her words towards me.

The wedding was called off. I stayed in my room for who knows how long. I didn’t eat or sleep. I would just sit on a chair and stare at the wall. Sometimes I would break things. I was going crazy. I didn’t dare open my curtains for I was afraid that the sun would light up my room and bring up unwanted memories with it – both the good and the bad.

It was like I was living dead for a couple of months especially when I heard that Kascada was to be married to another man. I wanted to die. Kill me for being so stupid and letting go of the only girl I loved. I also wanted to kill Camille for bringing this to me, especially my father whom I found out had planned all this to break me and Kascada, but no, I can’t kill them because I know that it would be wrong to do so. I guess I still have some sanity left in me.

“Nate, get up.” Adam talked to me one day.

“I am.”

“But you’ve barely touched your food.”

I shrugged. “At least I still eat.”

Adam got up from his feet and threw the tray of food at the wall. “That’s it!” Adam angrily marched to me and grabbed my collar. “You’ve got to stop this!! I can understand that you are broken because of what happened with you and Cascada, but do you have to stay like that forever!? Let it go, Nate!!”

What he said struck a nerve that I managed to muster up enough strength to get away from his grip. “You think it was that easy!? Adam, she was the only girl for me! And she was easily taken away! How do you expect me to let it go?”

“That’s just one girl, Nate. There are others out there. If she moved on from you just like that then she is not the one for you.”

“Well too bad, because she is the only one for me,” I muttered.

“Wake up, Nate! You have a whole life going on for you. Don’t just end it because of her.” Adam sighed as if he was growing tired of me. I’m not surprised. It always seems that way. People get tired of me and leave. “Just....please. Don’t waste your life on this. Move on. Use this experience as a lesson for you.” With that, Adam left.

I sat wordlessly on my seat as I thought of Adam’s words. He was right, I should use this experience as a lesson: Serious relationships only bring you pain and suffering. If Cascada thinks that I’m the type of man who cheats then so be it.

I will be that type of man.

Chapter 49 The Flirt Who Must Move On

Once Nate finished his story, I felt that all of his tension eased up. I was ducking my head and wiping tears from my eyes. I couldn’t let him see that I was crying so I pretended to sleep.

Nate chuckled and tucked a stray hair behind my ear. “Thank you for being a good listener.” He whispered and I felt him carrying me to a bed and covered me with a blanket.

“Goodnight, princess.” He said and suddenly, lights dimmed.

I opened one of my eyes and saw Nate heading for the couch and used his cape as a blanket. I suddenly felt bad for taking his bed from him. He needs it more than me.

But after his story, I just couldn't say anything to him. I mean what would I say? What happened to him wasn't a normal situation in my world. I covered myself with the blanket and thought of things to say to him.

To be honest, I wasn't able to get enough sleep last night. I sat up from the bed and turned to my right to see a still sleeping Nate on the couch. Seeing him there made me realize something. Despite his cheerful and flirty self is the opposite of what he truly feels.

The person with the brightest smile hurts the most.

I felt pain. I didn't realize that he had been through all of that. No wonder he looked at Princess Camille the way he did at the ball. He loved Kascada and I think that he still does. I realize that when Nate loves, he loves a person wholeheartedly. So much that it drove him to be the person that he is now.

I looked around in his room which was shrouded with darkness. A complete epitome of Nate's reality. And it's a reality that I want to change. I got up, slipped on my shoes, and headed for the curtains. I looked back hesitantly at Nate before I parted it open.

Bright morning light immediately flowed through the gla** windows and lit up his room in a wonderful hue.

"What are you doing!?" I gasped when I heard Nate behind me. His face was disheveled and sticking out in different places. He squinted his eyes at the light and was about to close it again when I stopped him.

"No, don't," I told him. "Keep it open."

Nate grunted. "But I hate seeing my room. Close it."

"Psh, please! It's not like you are going to die from this. Look, I know the reason why you keep your room in the dark, but do you think that it is wise to always hide from it? Face it, Nate. At this point, you do resemble the stories of vampires from my world." I grinned.

He looked away and closed his eyes as if he were in pain. "If you know the reason why I keep it in the dark, then you will understand that there are painful memories that I wish to hide."

I shook my head and placed a hand on his cheek to make him look at me. "You can't escape from your memories, but you can use them as a tool to be better – both the good and the bad ones. You have to move on, Nate. Think about the future. About what it might bring." He didn't say anything for a moment and I thought for sure that it was too early for him. "B-But if you're not ready then – I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done this." I said in defeat and was about to close the curtains when Nate stopped me. I looked up at him in surprise and found him giving me a small smile.

"What? You're stuttering now? Don't tell me my charms are starting to affect you." He said and with one hard yank, he was able to rip the curtains down and the sunlight entered through the now naked windows. He looked back at me, grinning.

"How's that, love?" Hearing him be his flirty old self made me smile in contentment since I know that he was once again back to his old self.

I smiled warmly and hugged him in a comforting manner. "Better." Nate seemed surprised by the action but he returned the hug nonetheless.

The door suddenly burst open and the twins came in painting. "Nate! We have an emergency." Said Dan as Ren continued.

"We can't find Rose anywhere!" As soon as they said it, they paused and turned in my direction. As soon as they saw me, I gave them both a wave.

"Rose!" Both said at the same time and ran in my direction. I almost lost my balance when they engulfed me in a tight hug.

"Guys, can't breath," I said. Immediately, they stepped back after apologizing.

Once that was over they turned to look at Nate before turning their gazes back at me. Their eyebrows raised in wonder. "What are you doing here in Nate's room anyway?" Asked Ren.

I shrugged. "I fell asleep here."

"What!?" The twins exclaimed with a look of disbelief and horror on their faces. Then, very slowly, their expression turned into anger as they turned slowly to Nate.

"What have you done!!"

"I'm going to kill you!!"

Uhm...okay? I'm guessing that this isn't going very well.

Nate, now being the center of attention, held his hand out in front of him as a sort of 'calm down' gesture. "Woah Woah, wolf twins. Calm down. Nothing happened. I slept with the couch."

"You slept with the couch!?!?" Ren gave him a disgusted look. My mind processed what Ren just said and I have to slap a hand over my mouth to cover my laugh because trust me, now is not the right time to find this all amusing.

"Slept on the couch. Minor mistake." Explained Nate and rubbed his head. "It's too early in the morning to deal with you two."

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Dan shook his head in dismay. "Shame on you, Nate. Because of that, we're going to have to kill you." He said and turned to his brother. "Brother, find something sharp to stab him."

Ren nodded and randomly picked something on the table beside him. "Here."

Dan stared at the object in Ren's hands before looking at him. "A b***er knife? Seriously??" Despite Dan's hesitation about the b***er knife Ren, on the other hand, looked determined.

"It's more painful when you stab it compared to a sharp object." He grinned evilly.

Dan pointed at his brother. "That is the most disturbing and the most horrible idea ever." He laughed but stopped quickly as he looked at Ren with a serious expression. "Do it." He said darkly.

With one swift move, Dan now stood behind Nate as he held him from the back. "What the!? You two are sick!" Yelled Nate as he struggled to get away from Dan's grip. Meanwhile, Ren smirks and starts to approach Nate while waving the knife in the air. "You guys are serious!? Hey, this is a crime punishable by death!"

Dan shrugged. "Oh, no worries. Ren will take full responsibility."

By then, Ren stopped in his tracks and looked at Dan furiously. "What!? Why me? It was your idea."

"True. But you're the oldest so you take full responsibility."

"Only by a minute!!"

"Alright enough," I interjected. "Who's the eldest, who's the youngest I can tell you guys one thing. NO ONE CARES!!" I yelled at them and they paused. I smirked and

straightened up. "Okay, now that that is out of the way, can you two please just calm down? You make it sound like a girl crashing in a guy's room is a crime."

There was a sudden pause as Dan released Nate from his hold. They were now giving me looks of disbelief in which I have no idea why.

"She's kidding, right?"

"What a simpleton."

"Did she just say that?"

"Hey! I'm right here you know!!" I crossed my arms over my chest and gave them all a dirty look. Honestly, I found their statements very offensive and rude.

"It's not like that, Rose." Ren sighed and scratched the back of his head tiredly. "You see.....it's not proper for a lady to stay in another man's room unless they are in a relationship or are married."

"Exactly." Dan agreed. "And just so you know, my brother's room is just a couple of rooms to the left of Nate's." He winked, earning a slap at the back of his head from Ren along with a dirty look. "Ow! What?"

"You're not helping, brother."

Dan laughed. "If only you knew, brother. I am helping."

My eyebrow twitched in annoyance. So I am not supposed to stay in a guy's room because I'm a girl? Wow. What do they think of female popularity? Weak? In my annoyance, I started to head for the door.

"Rose? Where are you going?" Nate asked.

"To a place away from you lot."

"Oh? And where is that?"

"To the guest room." After saying it, I paused when I reached the door. Sweat dripped from my face as I realized that I have no idea where the guest room is. I gulped and started to turn back with my head held high in confidence. "And since I am a princess. Someone should walk me to my room."

The princes exchanged looks before looking back at me with an almost amused look. "You," Ren pointed at me. "Don't know the way, do you?" Finished Dan.

I blushed in embarrassment but still held my ground. "No." I denied. The twins both gave me mischievous grins and started teasing me and poking my cheeks.

"Alright, you two. Cut it out." Said Nate which I was glad for. "Why don't the two of you escort our princess to her room?" As Nate made his emphasis he looked at me with a teasing grin. He's no better after all.

"We are taking her to her room not because you ask us to but because we want to," Dan told Nate as he gave him a look. He then looked at me, his expression now became jolly. "What do you say, princess? Shall we go?"

I nodded.

"Good. Now," Dan looked at his brother with a frown. "Don't just stand there you idiot! Offer your arm, sorry excuse a gentleman!"

"What?" Ren looked taken aback and gave his brother a weird outlook. "Why the heck are you telling me that? What about you?"

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"The oldest has to escort the lady all the time."

"You're just making that up." Muttered Ren before looking at me with a faint smile before he winked. He looked at his brother now with a wicked grin as he walked behind me.

"Well if that is the case, brother," I yelped when Ren swooped me off of my feet in a princess carry. "Then we'll have to make a run for it!" Ren yelled as he ran away from his brother while carrying me.

"Hey!" Dan said and ran after us.

"Lemme go you two legged wolf!!" I screamed at him and started to grab his shirt as I shook him back and forth. "I don't appreciate being carried when I have two fine legs to do that for me!!!"

"Hey hey hey!!" Ren protested when I continued to struggle. "You're ruining my shirt!! And stop that. Dan is catching up."

"Well, you best put me down so you can run faster. I don't want to get involved with you guys." I crossed my arms over my chest and gave Ren a stern look.

"But you already are, princess!!" Called Dan from behind us.

Ren smirked. "Oh? Did you just call yourself fat?" I frowned at him and he laughed. In my annoyance, I punched him at his hard chest. It doesn't seem to affect him because he started to laugh, which only added fuel to the flames. I struggled and tried to get out

of his grip. As I did so, I felt one of my shoes falls making the Ren trip. “Holy crap!!” Just as we were about to fall, Ren used his body as he moved me on top of him and cushioning my fall.

I laughed and started clapping my hands. “Do it again!” I said in excitement. Dan hollered in laughter as well.

Ren ignored his brother as he looked at me worriedly. “Are you alright?” He asked. I was lying on top of him, our faces inches apart that I could see the perfect shades of brown on his eyes. I nodded at him and he looked relieved. I got off of him and into a sitting position. “Well, that was fun. Turns out that wolves cannot run on two legs.” I chuckled. Ren glared.

“Man, my back hurts. Ow.” Grunted Ren as he sat up and rubbed his back.

I suddenly felt another presence close by so I looked up behind Ren and saw him standing there. When Ren noticed me looking behind him, he turned around and followed my gaze. As soon as Ren saw Ace, he quickly stood up and offered a hand to me in which I took as he helped me up. Dan came to stand beside us and gave Ace a nervous wave. “Um...hehehe. Morning?”

Despite his greeting, Ace – like the rude person that he is – ignored him as he gave us a long cold look. “We’re leaving in an hour to best get ready.” That was all he said then he left leaving the three of us standing there and looking after him.

We exchanged glances. “What was that all about?” I asked.

Ren shrugged. “Beats me, but I think we should take you to your room now so you can change.”

“Good idea.”

After the twins left me, I quickly took a quick dip in the tub and changed into some clean clothes that the maids prepared for me, which I was surprised since I thought that Nate’s parents must have found my behavior offending that they would make me wear rags instead. When I saw done, the maids guided me around the castle and to the lower level of the castle where the princes were waiting.

Once we were all gathered, a guard came in and told us that everything was ready for our departure. We started to head out when I heard someone call my name.

“Princess Rosalie.” We all turned around to see who it was. You could only imagine our surprise when we found out that it was queen Anya.

“Mother?” Nate stood beside me. At first, he looked shocked at seeing his mother, but when he met my gaze, he started to frown. “What do you want from Rose?” He asked.

“I have no business with you, my son. I only wish to speak with princess Rosalie.”

I took a side glance at Nate and saw him clench his fist. “Do you think I’ll leave you alone with her? Mother, what kind of idiot do you think I am?!”

“Nate!!” Adam called up as he ran towards Nate. “Stop it. You might wake father.”

Queen Anya looked at me. Her eyes went soft as she did. “Please.” There was a look of urgency and sincerity in her eyes that almost made me forget what a horrible mother she was at Nate yesterday. Also, whatever she wanted to talk to me about seemed important.

“Alright. But just for a minute.” I said. Nate gave me a bewildered look.

“Rose, no. We’re leaving.”

I shook my head at him. “It’ll be over quickly. Wait for me outside.” I told him and then turned towards the others as I addressed them. “All of you.”

The princes exchanged glances. They seemed very hesitant to leave but when I gave them all a nod, they left and were practically dragging Nate with them. As soon as they were gone, I approached the queen in a few strides. “What is it, your grace?” it almost looked like I was being respectful if I hadn’t crossed my arms over my chest.

“Thank you.” She said and gave me a genuine smile.

I was taken aback by her action that I lost my ‘I-don’t-like-you’ look. “What?” Is she thanking me for being rude?

“Thank you for taking this time to talk to me.” She said and stared at the door where the princes had gone. She sighed. “I...I know you think that I’m a horrible person and I can understand that. The way I treated Nathaniel yesterday was proof of it.” I was confused. Is it me or am I just hearing regret from her tone? “But despite the way I acted, I love my son. Both of them.”

“Well, you sure have a weird way of showing it.”

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“I know.” She whispered and looked at the ground for a second before returning her gaze at me. “But whatever I’m doing is all for the sake of his well-being.”

I tilted my head to the side. “What do you mean?”

“Nate is-”

“Rose!! The minute is done! We’re leaving!!” Dan yelled outside. “Ren is dying over here missing you – of!!”

“Er...” I looked at the queen awkwardly and started to fidget. “I-I think I have to go now. Sorry.” I said apologetically. The queen only gave me a faint smile as she nodded. Just before I could turn around, she grabbed my hand.

“Wait.” I looked back at the queen. She smiled. The way a mother would to her child. “For what it’s worth, I’m happy that Nathaniel went to Thalia and had the chance of meeting you and the princes. Please, take care of him for me.”

I was speechless at her words that all I could do at that time was nod. That seemed to satisfy her as she bid me farewell.

As I got out of the castle, my mind was swirling with thoughts. What just happened? Was Nate’s mother not as bad as I think she is? And what was she trying to tell me about her protecting Nate? Is he in a gang or something?

“Hey.....Rose?.....HEY!!” Ren snapped his fingers in front of my face to get my attention.

“What?”

He smirked. “You look troubled. Was it something Nate’s mother said?”

“No. No, it’s not.” I denied. “Speaking of Nate where is he?” I asked. Trying to change the subject.

“Wow, I didn’t know you’ll miss me that much to look for me.” I looked up to the sound of his voice and spotted Nate making his way towards us as he pulled a beautiful white horse with him. He stopped right in front of us and gave me a wide smile. “Here.” He handed me the reins.

I stared at the reins then towards him. “Huh?”

Nate chuckled. “She’s all yours silly. Take her.” he handed me the reins again, which I slowly took this time as I gave him a tentative glance.

I looked at the horse. Dazzled by her beauty as I started petting her. “Wow, I don’t know what to say, Nate,” I whispered still looking at the horse and not the giver.

“Well, you could just say thank you.” He said. “You know. She was supposed to be my wedding gift for Kascada once we’re married. But since it didn’t work out, I kept her to myself. She doesn’t have a name yet though.”

At his words, I paused and turned to stare at Nate. I let out a gasp and dramatically I said, "Wait. Wedding gift? You don't mean....Oh no, Nate. If this is your way of proposing to me I swear-

"Proposal? What? No! She's a gift, Rose."

"WHO'S PROPOSING TO WHO!?!?" Dan screamed somewhere in the background.

"Really huh? Why give her to me than of all people?" I narrowed my gaze at Nate suspiciously.

"She's a thank you gift, Rose. For helping me." Said Nate tiredly. "I thought about what you said about moving on." He shrugged. "As of now, I am still healing. I don't even think that I can have a relationship as of the moment; a serious one. But since old habits die hard, so I'll warn you that I might still...have my flirty attitude so excuse me in advance if I make a move on you."

"Honesty appreciated." I smiled. "And don't worry I'll help you to get over that habit by punching you in the face when you do. Oh and I love her, Nate. I'll take good care of her. Thank you."

Nate grinned. "Thank you. Wouldn't have it any other way." He said and turned his attention back at the horse. "Now, I think it's about time that we give her a name. What do you think?"

I looked back at the horse and glided my finger to her mane as I wondered. "I think I want to name her Cloud."

"Cloud?"

"Yeah, because she's as white as a cloud. Her hair is soft too."

Nate grinned and stroked Cloud's mane affectionately. "Cloud it is."

Just then, Ace came to our side riding his horse. He looked down at us with a scowl. "If you two won't get on your damn horses I swear that we'll leave you two behind." Then just like that, he left. Nate and I exchanged glances before we laughed.

"Okay. I assume you already know the basics of riding from Ren?" I nodded. Nate grinned. "Very well then. Let's get you on Cloud."

Nate grabbed my waist and hauled me up to ride on Cloud. Suddenly I felt something. "Nate! Where do you think you are touching, you animal!" There was a loud smack as I slapped him.

Chapter 50 Twin Idiots

I woke up in the middle of the night. It was our second night sleeping out in the woods ever since we left the kingdom of Vertez and I'm still not getting used to the loud snoring of the twins. Like seriously, can't they sleep peacefully?

It's bad enough that they are loud when they are awake and now I can't get any proper sleep!!

I sat up and glared at the twins through the fire before looking bitterly at Nate, who doesn't seem to mind the noise and was sleeping peacefully. Well if you count sleeping like a model who was pursing his lips and smiling creepily. I'd say he was having a good dream.

I was getting tired from being deprived of my entry to dreamland that I picked up a stick and was thinking of hurling it at the twins when I heard someone cough. I looked to my other side and saw PRINCE Ace sitting on the ground with his back resting on one of the trees. His brow creased in pain and sweat forming on his forehead as he held his head while he groaned silently.

I moved my body so that I was fully facing him. "Ace? What's wrong?" I asked worriedly in a hushed voice. Hey, even though the guy was the prince of the underworld, I don't want him to die.

Ace looked up and he breathed deeply and sat up. A second later and the pained look on his face vanished and he looked at me with a frown. "I told you it's PRINCE Ace." He said and he looked away. "And I'm fine. Go back to bed."

"But-

"I said go to sleep! I'm taking my first watch." He said firmly without looking at me.

Well then, if he's still a jerk I think he's going to live. Still, I can't shake off the feeling that something is wrong with him. Is he sick or something? But whatever it is, I have a feeling that he doesn't want to talk about it.

I averted my gaze from him and turned to the sleeping pigs. I sighed. "As much as I would love to do that I can't," I said while glaring at the twins once again.

Ace seemed to follow my gaze. Wordlessly he got up from his spot and walked towards me. He stopped right in front of me as he took off his coat and threw it at my face without a warning. I pulled it off of my face and gave him an annoyed look.

"Use that to cover your ears. Its material is thick so it should drown down their pig-like snore a bit." He said before walking back without letting me say thank you since I was

still too stunned by his action. He sat back down on his tree and when he still saw me looking, he frowned. "What are you still looking at?! Go to sleep!" He growled.

I gulp and clutched the coat tighter before making it as my pillow and using the sleeves to cover my ears. Ace was right, the material was thick enough that I could almost not hear the snoring at all. But despite the help of his coat, it took me a while to fall asleep because I kept thinking that this sort of action was more likely to be done by another certain prince instead of Ace.

"Wakey wakey princess!!" I groaned and turned to my side as I tried to block out the sun and the voice of Dan. I need more sleep!

"Good morning princess! It's time to get up." Ren joined in and suddenly I felt them poking my cheeks to wake me.

Irritated by their actions, I sprang up from my makeshift bed and glared murderously at them for waking me. Instantly, I grabbed their cheeks and started to pull them. "Good morning? What's good about the freaking morning?!" I yelled at their ears and they flinched.

"What's up with you? Did you wake up on the wrong side of the bed?" Dan asked.

"Okay, first, we don't have a bed. And second, WHO'S FAULT DO YOU THINK THIS IS!?!?!" This time I screamed and threw a thick cloth at them. Ren caught it in mid-air before he looked at it curiously.

"Hey, isn't this Prince Ace's coat?" He wondered as he held it up.

Dan looked at it too and sniffed. "Hey, you're right brother." Then he lifted his eyes to look at me. "Why do you have it?" He asked. There was a glimmer in his eyes as he threw me the question.

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I opened my mouth to speak but was cut off when someone beat me to it. "She took it." Said Ace who suddenly appeared behind them. He s*****ed his coat from Ren before looking at me. "I'll let this slide for now." He said and gave me a long hard look before he left.

Did...did he just accuse me of stealing his coat? That liar!! He lent it to me last night! I did not take anything! That walking b*****!

Someone then placed a hand on my head. I looked up to see Nate smiling at me as he handed me bread. "Breakfast?"

"Thanks," I said while taking the bread from him. "What about you guys?"

Nate chuckled. "We're fine. We had ours a while ago while you were sleeping."

"Why didn't you wake me up?"

"We could." Said Dan as Ren continued for his brother. "But Ace said to let you sleep for a few more minutes."

I stared at them for a few seconds before I laughed. "I think you guys are delusional. Did you not get enough sleep? That guy is a monster with two large horns and a tail growing at his b***." I said and took a bite from the bread and munching angrily.

The three princes gave me curious looks before they shook their heads. "Well, I say that from here on out, we'll have to hunt for our food." Said Ace as he made his way towards us. "That was our last bread."

"Hey, I'm all hunting." Agreed Ren. "But does anyone know how to clean and skin our loot?"

Silence.

I watched as the princes exchanged glances.

"No."

"I don't know."

"That's disgusting."

"Maybe Ace knows how," I suggested.

Ace threw daggers at me with his eyes. "And what makes you say that?"

I crossed my arms over my chest as I gave him a pointed look. "Because you look like someone who has done it before. And I don't mean the animals."

"I haven't." He said. "But I could try practicing it on you."

"Woah. No one is skinning anyone alive." Nate said and stood between us. Once he was sure that none of us would say anything anymore, he grinned. "Alright, now that that is out of the way I think-

"We're all gonna die!" Screamed Dan. "We're gonna starve to death! None of us knows how to skin! We've been spoiled rotten!"

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“S-Shut up, Dan,” Ren said, his voice sounded a bit shaky. “We’ll be fine. After all, Rose is a girl and I bet she knows how to skin. Right, Rose?”

Suddenly all heads turned towards me expectantly. A feeling of dread started to settle at the pit of my stomach as soon as I realized that they were clinging onto hope that somehow I know how to skin an animal. I gulped. “I-I don’t know! I don’t know!! I’m sorry!!” I said as I was on the verge of panic. I suddenly felt sorry for myself as I was ignorant of these things. “I’m so sorry!! In my world, we do-don’t usually hunt and the loot is already packed in cellophane and...and....” I stuttered.

“We’re dead! We are so dead.” Nate declared as he turned around and ran both hands through his hair. He was frustrated.

“But I can’t die yet! I haven’t pulled enough pranks on the castle guards and I still have a mission to help my idiotic brother!!”

“What does that even mean!?”

By now, everyone seems to be panicking especially the twins who were running around in circles. I couldn’t blame them though. I feel like crying myself. “I-I still have my bread. Maybe we could ration it for a while.” I offered. The twins stopped running as they eyed the bread.

“Food!” Dan said maniacally and took it from my hands.

“Dan, that is Rose’s! Give that back.” Ren said and tried to take the bread from his brother, but unfortunately, Dan was stubborn. They were having a tug of war when suddenly, the bread fell from their hands and fell on the ground.

“No!!” Nate, Ren, Dan, and I screamed as we grieved at the now fallen bread.

“It’s too late!”

“It’s over. It was a short and good life at least.”

“I still want to live and go to college!!” I cried.

“It’s not over yet!” Declared Ren. He ran to his stuff and got a bow and arrow in hand. In a flash, he shot it up towards the sky, and a second later, a bird fell with the arrow that Ren launched. He picked it up from the ground and held it up. “We’ll learn by ourselves starting now!! Who wants to go first?”

“Ew! Not me!”

“He’s crazy!”

“We’re all gonna be!”

“Who shall go first!?!” Ren said again, still offering his kill. He was looking at us until his eyes found Dan and he grinned evilly. Dan looked pretty scared as Ren came up to him with the dead bird.

“Would you like to try, brother?”

“What? No! You’re crazy!” And with that, they started chasing each other.

While Ren was busy pushing his kill to Dan I looked away. I was so grossed out by the idea of de-feathering the bird that I feel like puking. But as I looked the other way I saw Ace packing his stuff as he loaded them all to his horse. He looked like he was ready to leave.

Unconsciously, I called out to him. “Ace, where are you going?”

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Ace paused what he was doing and turned to me. “I am going somewhere where we can get supplies.” He said calmly.

“Are you leaving without us?” Asked Dan.

“As much as I want to I can’t. You two are needed to where we’re going.” Ace said as he looked at the twins.

The twins exchanged confused glances. “Huh?”

Ace sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose. “We are going to Sanver, you idiots! How can you not know that?! We’re practically near the borders of your kingdom!” Ace looked like he was about to slit their throats out and I can’t say that I might not stop him.

That left the twins to stop and take a good look around them.

“Now that you’ve mentioned it....” Ren trailed off.

“...this part of the forest does look familiar.” Dan continued.

“Hang on.” Said Nate as he looked at the twins. “You mean to tell me that you haven’t noticed that we are practically at the doorstep of your kingdom and you guys didn’t notice?”

“Pretty much,” Ren admitted as he and his brother grinned sheepishly.

Nate leaned down to whisper to me. "Hold my hand so I wouldn't slap them at the back of their head so hard that it would detach from their body." He said to me.

"I will but I can't promise you that I would stop you if you do that," I said as I stared at the twins tiredly. Is it me or are they getting dumber by the minute?

"Why don't you all shut up and get on your horses so we can get going?" By the tone of his voice, Ace was either having another PMS or he's getting irritated. I'm guessing the latter.

Wordlessly, we started to move. I got up and started to fold my blanket as I headed towards Cloud. Lately, Ren has been teaching me how to ride on my own. There were times where I almost fell while riding her and thought about quitting. Luckily, he was able to convince me to try again, and soon I was able to ride on my own. I'm still unsteady though but I think I'm getting used to it.

"Need a hand with those?" Nate asks appeared beside me. He took my blanket and gently folded it and placed it into the satchel on my horse.

I looked at him disapprovingly. "I got it. Thank you very much." I said. As much as I appreciate his gentlemanly manner, I hate it. It's like they are showing me that I am helpless. "Step aside," I told him as I got onto Cloud. She let out a snort as I settled myself.

Meanwhile, Nate was wiping off imaginary tears and he sniffed. "Our little princess is growing too fast. She's becoming more independent."

"Shut up, Nate," I said through gritted teeth.

"Nathaniel, get on your horse or so help me we'll leave you behind!" I chuckled when I saw Nate's expression fell as he heard Ace. And as quick as a bullet, Nate made his way to Ryde.

But Ace wasn't done talking. "Renevier and Daniel, you take the lead. I assume that you know where Sanver is, right?" The twins nodded in unison which seemed to satisfy Ace. He beckoned them forward to take the lead and soon, we were following their lead.