

5 princes and I By Kiraran Chapter 16 - 20

Chapter 16 Red Haired Flirt

I was jumping on the clouds and enjoying my freedom. The clouds then suddenly turn into those soft mushy cotton candies. I squealed in delight as I flopped down and hugged the sweet candy goodness.

This is heaven, I thought.

I was enjoying my life when suddenly, it started to rain making the cotton candy dissolve. And since I'm floating on one right now...

I started to sprint away from the rain cloud. Wait...a cloud raining on another cloud? That's weird. The thunder started to roar, but instead of the normal BOOM, it decided to call my name.

"ROSE!!"

Lightning suddenly strikes in front of me, making me fall off the grounder cloud. The rain cloud was approaching me, but I couldn't move. I was frozen to the spot from fear and shock. When I looked up, there was a shadow of a man in front of me. I couldn't decipher the face of the man. Heck, I couldn't even see from the darkness of the rain cloud.

I muffled a scream when the man suddenly reached out to me. To make it creepier, he was calling my name. "Rose". I started to scream and tried to slap his hands away from me as he shook me back and forth.

"Rose"

"ROSE!"

My eyes jerked open, only to be met by two green orbs staring at me. I recognize those eyes. Those eyes would only belong to Nate, whose face is currently above mine making me see the red specks in his eyes.

"Well good morning Princess," He said, complete with a smile and all. On reflexes, I screamed and slapped him across the cheek. My palm connected his cheek with a loud smack. My hands throbbed from the impact, which made me sit up and clutch my hand.

"OW!! WHAT THE HECK?!" Both of us screamed.

"Why'd you slap me?" Nate asked while clutching his cheek.

“Cause you startled me!” I snapped at him. One thing to know about me is that I am not a morning person. I grunted as I rubbed my aching palm. “And why do you have such a hard cheek!? What is that made of? Rock?”

At that, Nate’s lips twitch in the tiniest smile that he could. “It hurts huh?” he said with pride as if he was amused that slapping him hurts.

I glared at him. How dare he smile knowing that he injured my palm. Well technically it’s my fault, but hello? He’s the one with a hard face!

“Of course it does. Try slapping yourself to see if it hurts or not.” I said, not easing my glare at him. He rubbed his chin as if he was thinking about it.

“Nope. Sorry. I’m not gonna damage my face by doing that cause I’m pretty sure that my slap is stronger than you, babe. And besides, your slap hurts too you know.” He made a pouty face at me and pointed towards his said cheek. “Now go and kiss it to make it better.”

I ignored him as I pulled the sheets over me, ready to take my sleep once again. “What are you doing here, Nate? Can’t you see that I was in the middle of my sleep?” I yawned to prove my point, but Nate didn’t move away from my bed. He was still sitting on the edge of it. Even though my bed is a queen-sized one, I still prefer to have full space for myself. Call me selfish but that’s just me.

“Oh. I’m sorry to disturb your beautiful rest. I’m guessing the twins must have exhausted you yesterday?” He asked.

“Tell me about it,” I said as I fixed my pillow. “Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going back to dreamland since I was RUDELY interrupted earlier.” I emphasize the word ‘rudely’ just so he could get my point before I gave him one of my sweet-fake smiles. “Bye, Nate.” I then covered myself with the covers.

“Woah Woah Woah. Not so fast, little love.” Nate tried to pull the covers away from me but I held on to it. Not wanting to lose my comfort zone, which is currently this bed. If you thought that Nate had stopped bugging me about waking up, then you are definitely wrong. He’s really pushy as he started to shake me back and forth. “It’s time for your training with me. Now, don’t you want to have quality time with me?”

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“No.”

“Aw come on.” He whined in such a very cute tone that would make you want to pinch his cheeks as you would with a child, but I am so not touching his cheek again. I threw the covers off of my head and looked at Nate. His eyes sparkled with hope as I did so,

but was immediately crushed when I stuck my tongue out at him and covered my head with the sheets again.

“I knew hanging out with the twins was bad for you,” he muttered under his breath, which made me snicker. I can see why the twins like to make fun of Nate now. “Come on, Rose. Get up or I’m gonna cry.” He threatened.

“That’s nice.”

I felt the bed dipped a little at his weight and heard him whisper in my ear. “If you won’t get up now within 5 seconds, I’m going to tell Prince Fred that since you didn’t have your lesson with me that you’re canceling your cla** with him tomorrow too.” He said in his most seductive yet threatening tone. I flinched

Wait. Did he just say what I think he said?

Nate must have felt me flinch when he said. “Fred is a nice guy. I think he’ll understand.” I could tell that he was enjoying this and I could picture him smiling through the covers. “What do you say? Either way. I’m fine with it. But Prince Charming on the other hand...”

Don’t move, Rose. Don’t let him fool you. It’s probably a trick, I thought but I quickly perished it when Nate started to count.

“5”

“...”

“I’m being serious here, Rose. 4.”

“...”

“Still nothing? 3-”

I threw the covers away and made sure to toss them at Nate as I scrambled to my feet. “I’m up! I’m up!” I screamed as I arranged my nightgown and made a beeline to the bathroom. It didn’t help my mood when I heard Nate chuckled outside of the bathroom. The maids were there as usual to help me.

“DON’T TAKE TOO LONG, SWEETHEART!!!” He yelled, which made me hate him now.

30 minutes later, I made sure to take that long, I got out of the tub and put a bathrobe around me. After making sure that the robe is now secured around me, I got out of the room and headed to my closet.

“Ohhhh nice. Very nice. I should come here more often.”

My heart nearly jumped out of my chest when I saw Nate lying on bed and looking at me with approval. I pulled the bathrobe tightly around me and I screamed. “Nate, what are you still doing here?!”

“I was waiting for you and-”

“Please e**** this stranger out,” I asked one of the maids as I pointed towards the door.

“Prince, right this way.” The maid said, showing him the way out of the room. He gave me a sad look as if he was pleading for me to let him stay. He tried that for at least 5 seconds before accepting the fact that I would NEVER let him stay and watch me get dressed.

“Fine. But just so you know. You can wear that robe on our training.” He winked then wiggled his eyes at me.

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“NATE!”

“Alright alright. I’m going.” He got up from the bed and stuffed his hands in his pocket grumpily. I made sure not to leave my eyes off of him as I watched him leave, but when he pa**ed me he muttered, “Killjoy.” I almost laughed at his childish behavior but no. I mustn’t cause he’s a pervert. He left the door with a dramatic ‘humph’ before closing it behind him.

I shook my head as I scanned the closet for something to wear. I decided to go for a mint colored-long sleeved dress that ends just below the knees. I wore my flats since we’re just practicing the proper etiquette. I checked myself in the mirror.

“Thank you!” I told the maids when I left the room.

I saw Nate leaning on the wall probably waiting for me. When he saw me, he pouted in that cute way that would make girls swoon. “I prefer you wearing a little bit more revealing.” He glared at my dress as if it would melt under his gaze.

“Sorry, Nate. I’m not taking any chances with you around.” I smirked at him.

He huffed. “Fine. Let’s go.” He offered me his arm, which I took. We started to walk down the halls. I let Nate guide me through since I know that he’s more familiar with this place more than I do.

While we were walking, we suddenly stopped and scratched his head.

“What’s wrong?” I asked worriedly.

He then began to scratch his cheek in embarrassment. “Umm.....I think we went the wrong way.” He laughed nervously after that.

My jaw dropped at his confession. I take it back. He doesn’t know his way around this castle. The b*****. And I even let this guy with no sense of direction lead me!

“Nate!”

“Umm....oh! I think it’s this way.” He started to pull me to another room.

“Hmmm.....yep. This is it, love.” He said and pulled me forward as he opened the door to a room. It had nothing in it except for a single round table and some long tables at the side with white cloths over it. Roses were placed on vases on top of the tables, making them look elegant and presentable.

I stared at the setting in awe. “Wow, Nate. You really took some time preparing this place.”

“Of course. Anything for my beautiful Princess.” He winked at me. “So, do I kiss?” He bit his lips and made a seductive face at me.

“No”

“My heart can’t take any more rejection.” He put his hands to his heart to prove his point.

I smirked at Nate and shrugged my shoulders. “Oh poor you.” I let go of his arm and started to walk to the table to examine the roses and daffodils on the vase. When I looked up to Nate, he was starring at me for quite a long time, not saying anything.

Finally, he spoke. “Am I not good-looking?” He asked.

I raised an eyebrow in confusion at him. What is this freak talking about? “All girls can’t be interested in you, Nate. Just accept the fact that someone might be better than you.”

Nate gasped dramatically. “Is it because of this Fred guy?” He asked in a fake angry tone which made me laugh. “It’s him isn’t it?!” He said in a tone that boyfriends would use when they are jealous. But his acting was very sloppy.

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I decided to join in humohumor. I placed a hand to my chest as I said with all the fake sincerity that I had. “Oh, Nate. I’m so sorry. It’s not me, it’s you.” Wait. wasn’t that the other way around?

“It’s the cape isn’t it?” He looked back towards his cape which was hanging onto his back.

“That and the ridiculous look on your face.”

“What face? This s**y little thing?” He raised an eyebrow and puckered his face in a s**y pose. I laughed harder if that was even possible. “Alright. Time to get serious and start this training.” He clapped his hands and rubbed them together in excitement.

“Nate, you’re the only one who’s fooling around you know,” I said after I caught my breath. I whipped the exes tears away from my eyes.

“True, but I know that you loved it.” He said as he went towards me. He moved the chair in front of the table back and motioned for me to sit in a gentleman-like gesture. I sat while I watched Nate delicately arranging the utensils in front of me. He picked up the smallest sp*** of the group and showed it to me. “This here is a teasp***. It’s used to stir tea or coffee.” He said and placed it back on the table. His finger glided to another one just beside the teasp***. This time, he took a sp*** that is in between the size of a normal sp*** and a teasp***. “This is the dessert sp***. This is used for eating desserts. Its size is larger than the teasp*** so don’t mistake it as one. Okay?”

“Noted,” I confirmed.

He picked up another one which is of normal size this time. “Now this is our regular sp***.” He said. “I don’t think I need to explain what this is used for since you probably know it, right?” He looked at me for confirmation which I gave a nod to.

Something that I noticed while Nate was explaining is that he always makes sure that you understand what he’s talking about. And the way that he talks to you gives you that vibe that you could easily ask him for anything without him snapping at you.

Unlike a certain PRINCE that I know of.

Nate continued to explain the dos and don’ts in eating. Like – don’t lean your elbows on the table, don’t chew loudly, don’t stuff yourself, don’t slouch, don’t burp in front of the table, say ‘excuse me’ when you’re leaving the table, and even your eating pace with the others so you’ll finish the same time as them. Nate also showed me the proper ways on how to use the knife and how to properly hold the sp***s.

“Now you see? This is the proper way to cut. You use your knife to cut through so we could avoid the flying meats.” He teased. I pouted at him as I remembered the time when I attempted to cut the meat and a piece of it went flying towards Ace’s plate.

“Forget about it!” I was too flustered to make up an excuse about that time.

He chuckled at my childlike behavior and patted my head. "Oh sure, love. Whatever you say. But just remember that if you needed an assistant to cut your food for you, you know who to ask." He winked.

Just as I was about to say a smart comment, we heard a knock at the door. Nate stood up and walked towards it and opened one of the large double doors of the room. He smiled at the person behind it before nodding his head and opening the door wide. As soon as he opened it, a bunch of servants came rushing in holding a tray of what I assume is something edible. Smells of freshly cooked meat wafted in the room making me drool and my stomach screaming in protest, reminded me that I forgot to eat my breakfast thanks to a certain someone.

The servants piled the trays on the long tables at the side and arranged them. They moved in perfect sync as if they had done this a bunch of times already, which I'm probably thinking that they did. A minute later and they were done. As soon as they disappeared behind the doors, I was left with Nate and the delicious smell of the food a few feet in front of me.

I saw Nate smile from the corner of my eyes as he looked at me with amusement as I drooled. He strode towards me and offered me his hand and pulled me up to my feet. He handed me a plate and led me to the table. "Let's start our lesson. Now come on and fill your plate. Remember what I said." He said and nodded for me to start. I didn't waste any time as I filled my plate, ready to feed my growling stomach.

By the time that I was done, you couldn't see a vacant space on my plate anymore. All was covered with mashed potatoes, beef, a slice of pork, and many more. I looked at my plate in approval and satisfaction.

I'm pretty sure that this would do the trick, I thought.

As I was about to head to my table, Nate stood in front of me, stopping me from moving further. He looked at my plate and shook his head in disapproval. I gave him a look. "Um, Nate? I'm about to eat lunch now so can you please move?"

"This won't do." He said, still looking at my plate.

Chapter 17 Proper Table But No Manners

"What do you mean?" I asked with a confused look on my face and a tint of an annoyance since he's blocking my way to heaven right now. Before I could protest at him, he took my plate out of my hand.

"Hey!"

"This plate is too full. I told you to only take what you can eat and not to fill your plate." He said and eyed the plate with distaste.

“Give it back!” I yelled as I reached for it, but he held it over his head making it harder for me to reach it. “Nate! What’s the deal?!”

He didn’t respond to me and pointed to the table once again. “Go get another plate and fill it up. This time don’t stuff it all up.” He ordered. My jaw dropped at him.

He can’t be serious right?

“But what about-”

“Start filling your plate up or else you won’t get anything to eat.” He said with finality.

“Ugh!” I glared at him as I stomped my way to the table and grabbed a new plate. I started to fill it in, but this time I only put some small portions in it. Nate came to my side and examined my plate.

“Mmhm. That’ll do.” He said in approval. “Now you can go and eat your lunch now.” He ushered me to the table. I didn’t move and looked at my poorly filled plate.

This won’t do.

I looked at the tray beside me. Nate saw me and gave me a warning look. “No. Don’t even think about it.” He warned. I gave him my best pleading look and even went as far as biting my lip.

“Please? I’m so hungry. I didn’t eat my breakfast this morning.” I pleaded.

“Aw. Really?” I nodded. My mind was cheering in the thought that Nate might feel sorry for me and let me add more to my plate. “I’m sorry darling but I can’t do that.” At those words, my hope was completely crushed.

I started to feign crying. Nate looked surprised at me and I could tell that he was confused about what to do with me. “I-I just...want something to...e-eat.”

“Err....umm....W-why don’t you go to your table and eat what you have? It might help.” He said and looked away from me as he said it.

I started to hiccup for more effect. “I-I’m gonna tell everyone what a big bully you are for starving a girl like me. I’ll make sure to tell the twins to tell Fred to tell the Queen to tell the King to tell the-”

“N-No! Don’t do that!”

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“To tell your mom to tell your dad-”

“Fine! Just a little so shut up!!” He said in an annoyed voice, but you could tell that he was about to lose it. Heck, he might want to kill me right now.

I lifted my eyes at him. “Really?” I asked. His response was a weak nod, telling me that he was either forced to say that or was unsure of his answer. I took that as my signal and grinned widely at him. All my acting completely vanished as I cheered.

“Thanks, Natie pool!” I squealed and added the food to my plate before I hopped towards the table. I sat on the chair happily and licked my lips in anticipation.

Nate joined me at the table with his own plate. I grabbed her sp*** and fork and was about to dig in when he cleared his throat loudly. “Ehem!”

I stared back at myself in confusion. “What?” I asked. “You’re not gonna take my food now, are you?” I made a protective circle around my plate.

He chuckled. “No, sweetheart but I think you are forgetting something.” When I tilted my head in confusion yet again, he turned his gaze at the napkin at the side of my plate to give me a hint. My mouth formed an ‘O’ in understanding.

I gave him a sheepish smile as I dr***d the napkin on my lap before I started to devour the food, but when I saw him giving her a disapproving look I eased my pace in eating.

“I can’t see the reason why the boys were a tad bit stressed when they trained you. You’re very cooperative.” He commented.

“Yeah...” I looked away guiltily. “I wonder why.”

A few minutes later and he got bored so I started to flirt with him again. “You know Rose? I’m kinda hungry. Aren’t you gonna share?” he said and gave me a pouty look.

“No,” I said flatly. Suddenly, he became very quiet. I looked at him to see that he was staring at his plate blankly. “Nate?” I called out. No response.

I tried again. Louder this time. “NATE!!”

He snapped my attention back at me. A moment later and he smirked.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“Huh? Yes, I’m fine. Why’d you ask?”

“You kept on staring at space for quite a while now. I was worried that you might not be feeling ill.” His smile widened. “Aww. You do care!” He exclaimed. “Don’t worry about me, love. Knowing that you care, makes me feel better in an instant.”

“Okay,” I shrugged.

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“What? That’s it! That’s your reaction!?” This girl amazes me all the time.

“Oh and, Nate?” His head perked up. “Please stop calling me with strange nicknames. You sound like a creep.”

“Aw...but that’ll be boring if I don’t call you something, love.” He said. “Oh, and by the way, you got a little something on your upper lip.” He reached out and tried to wipe it away with his thumb. I flinched at the gesture before moving out of his reach. Then I used my napkin to wipe the dirt off my face.

“Are you really not attracted to my face?”

I snapped my eyes at him. “What?” That was such a random question.

“Sorry, let me rephrase it. Is something wrong with the way I look?” I asked again. This time, she understood it.

“Oh.” I set the napkin back on the table. “Hmm. I think I already told you that your attitude bothers me.”

“Yes, you said that but why?” I pressed on and leaned on the table.

I thought about it for quite a while before saying. “I hate flirts.” Nate started laughing.

“What’s so funny?” I asked him. He’s going crazy. Should I leave?

When he was finally able to catch his breath, he rearranged his posture and wiped some tears from his eyes. “You said that you hated flirts. That’s not enough of a reason you know. There must be something more, right?” He said and rested his chin on his knuckles.

“Hmm...” I put a finger to my chin as I thought about it. “I think what I’m really looking for is his personality.”

“Oh really? Then why are you talking to me right now? I thought you hated flirts.”

“Actually. You’re not that bad. Sure, you annoy me to my core with your stupid nicknames, but I don’t think that flirting really is your game.” I noticed that Nate isn’t like any other flirts out there. It’s because he always has this look of doubt in his eyes like he is unsure of what he’s doing. “While you were explaining some stuff to me a while ago you didn’t flirt with me or call me with strange nicknames. I think that side of you is the real you...I think.”

He scoffed. "Really huh."

"Yes. Really, Nate." I insisted. "Any woman would be lucky to have you."

"Ha! Woman. I don't even think that I'll be able to settle down with one. They would either ditch me or find a new lover."

Wow. So bitter

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"How can you say that, you idiot! You can settle down if you want to." I stopped. "Why are we even talking about settling down?"

He grinned. "Because I am 20 and I do not have a fiancé yet."

"Nate," I warned him since I know where this conversation was headed.

"Why don't you marry me instead? That way I can really settle down." He smirked.

"You know what? I think I'm gonna go and get some dessert." I began to stand up.

"Oh great. Get me some choco-"

"You have two hands and two legs so why don't you get them yourself." I retorted.

"You also have them too so why not get me some." He answered back and smirked when I marched towards the dessert table and mumbled some profanities along the way. I heard him chuckle as I continued to mumble about what a big jerk he is. I faintly saw him dr*** something at the back of his chair.

"Nate! What kind of dessert do you want!? Hurry up or I might change my mind!"

"I'll get one of each!" He said. I clicked my tongue together before getting another plate and filling it up. A few seconds later and I was back with two plates. I dropped his plate in front of him and grumpily sat in my chair. He laughed a little.

And just like what he had taught me, I took the dessert sp*** and started to eat. I heard him tsk. "Smaller bites." He said and reached out and started to wipe the chocolate off of my face again, this time I didn't move away since I was busy eating. The desserts are so good. The chocolate simply melts in your mouth.

"There." He said after wiping it all off. I grinned at him and muttered thanks before shoving another bite into my mouth.

“Hey, Nate. If you’re just gonna sit there and stare at me, then I might as well eat your plate of desserts.” I said. He chuckled at my comment.

“No way. I haven’t eaten anything yet and you’re gonna take this away from me? Not fair!” He whined.

He kept staring at me as we ate. “Am I doing something wrong?” I asked. He looked at me and smirked. “Stop looking at me like that, Nate. You look like an old pervert.”

“What? This face? An old pervert? Love, I think something is wrong with your vision there. And I prefer you to call me a YOUNG pervert.” He said. They rolled her eyes at me and continued to eat.

“Seriously, Nate! Eat your food you creep!” I threw my napkin at him, which I easily dodged. He laughed.

Chapter 18 Cape of Doom

I leaned on the table in front of me as I poked the remains of my unfinished food. Don’t get me wrong, I like the food but I think my stomach doesn’t have enough space for them which is a shame.

“Rose, I’m gonna leave you for a bit, okay? I just have some things to handle first.” Nate stood up from his seat in front of me and wiped his mouth with his napkin before setting it on the table. “You be good now while I’m gone, okay?” He looked at me as if begging me to stay put. He probably thinks that I’ll wander off somewhere while he’s not around.

I can’t blame him. Somehow I see a pattern wherein they leave me for a second and trouble seems to appear.

In response to his request, I mocked a salute. “Yes sir! Take all the time you need.” I said. Nate gave me one of those uncertain looks of his before he left the room but not before giving me a warning look before he left the room.

As soon as the door closed behind him, I fist-pumped the air and shouted a “YES!”. Immediately, the door opened once again and Nate’s head appeared behind the door. “Excuse me?” He’s asked with his eyebrow raised.

I gave him a sheepish smile and an innocent look. Not wanting to make it obvious. “Nothing. Have fun!”

He pointed a finger at me and gave me a warning look. “I’m warning you. Behave.” with that, he once again disappeared behind the doors.

What am I? A dog?

I grinned evilly as I thought of ditching this place and going for a hike. Oh yeah!

I stood up rather quickly and, in the process, bumped the table and caused my own plate of dessert to fall on the floor, staining it with chocolate.

Oh *\$%^&*!!

“Nate is gonna kill me!!” I whispered to myself, now in panic mode. See what I mean when I say trouble follows me?

What to do? What to do?

Look for something to wipe it off! Yes! That’s it!

I scanned my surroundings for something big to wipe it clean. My eyes landed on the fabric at the back of Nate’s chair. It was green and silky.

And it was the perfect rag for this mess!!

I reached out and grabbed the fabric and started to wipe the floor clean as fast as I could. Who knows how many minutes/hours I have when Nate comes back?

I wiped the fabric back and forth, making sure the floor is all clean and sparkly once again. When I was already satisfied the floor was once again clean, I threw the fabric on the sofa at the side. Just in time though, because Nate just came back. I quickly stood up from the floor and hid my hands behind my back.

Yes, probably not the best move for the innocent look.

“What were you doing?” Nate asked suspiciously.

“Nothing suspicious. I promise.” I said and added a sweet smile to it. LIAR!

“Okay,” Nate said uncertainly. “Did you have enough rest? Are you ready for the next lesson?” He asked. Instead of answering, I gave him a nod.

Throughout the whole afternoon, Nate just taught me how to respond and act when there’s a guest and how to talk to them properly. He told me that when someone asks me a question and when my mouth is still full, I would either nod, if the question is a yes or no, or swallow my food first before answering.

“Aren’t you tired of this practice?” I asked.

“What?” Nate asked in confusion.

I gestured towards the table. "This. Isn't it very tiring to always have to do this? Be polite and act like a lady/gentleman?"

Nate stared at me for a moment before he chuckled in amus****t. "When you put it that way, I guess. But when you have lived through all your life doing this then I guess it's pretty normal."

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"Well, that s***s for me then," I muttered under my breath pretty low for a human ear, but I guess it wasn't as low as I suspected since Nate started to chuckle.

"I guess you'll just have to get used to it then, right?" Nate smiled, but not his usual flirty smile but one of pure amus****t. He got up from his chair and went to the dinner table and picked up a plate as he started to fill it in. When he came back, he set down a huge slice of steak in front of me. "Get your knife and fork and start practicing on how to cut." He ordered.

"What? But didn't you already see me cutting my steak when I was eating my lunch?"

"You could have fooled me. I saw you using your fingers while you were cutting it. You even stabbed it multiple times while I wasn't looking. That's called cheating, you know?"

"Darn! And I thought that you really weren't looking." I muttered. I knew I should have brought some scissors!

"It's not that I wasn't looking. I just did it on purpose since you were having a hard time eating so I just made an exemption." He smirked as he said it. "Now go and start cutting."

I let out an exasperated sigh as I grabbed my fork and knife on the table and started to cut through the meat. Not a moment later and I was already stabbing it in frustration. Nate, on the other hand, was busy laughing his b*** off at my frustration.

Nate whipped some tears from his eyes before he spoke. "I could watch you all day and won't get enough of it."

"Aha ha. Very funny. Glad to know that you're enjoying seeing me struggle."

"Indeed I am." Nate chuckled once more. "But that's because you're doing it all wrong. That meat is already dead. No need to kill it a second time. And besides, I already showed you how to do it, but apparently, you were not listening, am I right?"

I didn't say anything and instead faced my now murdered steak. I did pay attention, but it's easier said than done.

“Hold the steak with your fork then use the knife to cut through it at an angle. Move your knife back and forth to slice through it neatly. Don’t stab it. No stabbing on the tables. You’ll scare your table mates.” He instructed.

I rolled my eyes at him and started to follow his instruction and moved my knife back and forth.

“Good. And gently push your knife to the steak,” he said.

“Good. Now gently push your knife to the steak.” I mocked and earned a playful glare from Nate as I did what he said. Not a second later and I successfully sliced the meat. “I did it!” I cheered and raised the fork with a slice of meat on it and wiggled it in front of Nate, showing it to him. “Ha! I did it! Lowisimos! I did it!”

“Yeah yeah.” Nate waved his hand at me. “So you had cut it. That’s good but you mustn’t wave it to a person as if it’s a weapon.” He smirked and watched me with amus****t.

“Who cares?! Now I’m gonna have a taste of this victory!” I was about to put the slice of meat towards my mouth when Nate stopped my hand from doing so. He gave me one of those adorable smiles.

“Aren’t you gonna share your victory? I was the one who told you the technique.”

No one is stealing my food.

“No. This is MINE. I cut it. Go and cut your own. Now shoo!” Using both of my hands, I pulled the fork towards me, fighting against Nate’s strong grip.

“Oh no, you won’t! Not if you’re not gonna share!” Now Nate was using both of his hands as well as he fought for that piece of meat on the fork.

All these for that piece of meat...

“It’s mine!” I screamed and started to pull it towards me. If ever, I think Nate was going easy on me since he was pretty much enjoying himself. In fact, he was laughing.

Going to my last resort, I bit his fist.

“Ow!” Nate flinched but didn’t loosen his grip. Instead, he also bit my fist hand but a little gently.

“Eww! Nate.” I glared at him.

“What? You bit me first!” He whined.

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“But that doesn’t mean that you also have to bite me!”

“Then what am I supposed to do then?”

“Nothing! Just let go of my food damn it!” I pulled at the sp*** with all my might, but the b***** was too strong.

“Let me share your victory too!”

“Are we really fighting for just this piece of meat?”

“Hey. I’m just going with the flow over here,” he said as if he just realized what we were doing just now.

A few minutes later Nate and I decided to just share the meat. He said that since neither one of us likes to give in, they might as well part it in half. After all the silly drama of ours, we decided to continue our lesson. But after a while, Nate got carried away and started to tell me some funny stories during his experiences at parties.

“So there was this guy who was drinking his wine at the table while I was telling a story, I think he was Duke from another family.” He started. “As you might know, I really hate it when someone does that to me, you know? Doing other things instead of paying attention to me.”

I scoffed at him. “In love with yourself much?”

“Hey, if you’re as good-looking as me then you won’t be surprised.” He defended.

“Anyways, while he was drinking, I decided to take that opportunity as I said, ‘The more you talk, the thicker your double chin becomes’.”

I gasped. “You didn’t! That is rude.”

He grinned at my reaction. “Oh yes, I did. And let me tell you that he choked on his wine that time. It was really funny. Everyone from our table was laughing, except for the man of course.”

I laughed at that. “Obviously. So what did he do? Did he punch you or something?”

“Do I look like the person who’ll let someone ruin his face? NO.” He said in a duh tone.

“And besides, before he could do anything to me, I told him that I was just kidding.”

“And? What did he say?” I asked, suddenly interested.

“Well, he didn’t say anything but I could tell that he was pissed off at me.” He shrugged as if it really doesn’t matter to him.

“And he still is pissed off at me whenever we meet.”

I burst out laughing. Well duh. Who wouldn’t be pissed at what he just said? As I was laughing my b*** off, one of the two double doors suddenly opened, and in came both Dan and Ren. They had their arms crossed and were raising their eyebrows at us, a perfect mirror of each other. “What’s going on?” They asked.

Nate got up and wiped his hands on his lap as he faced the twins. “Nothing. We were just talking. Is all.” He said, then he eyes the two sus***iously. “What are you guys doing here?”

“The Queen asked us to fetch you two. It’s almost time for dinner.” Ren said, still eyeing Nate. While Dan was grinning at me and waving. “Hello, Princess!”

“Hey.” I waved back.

“Come on, Rose. Let’s go. You two can go ahead. We’ll be right there.” Nate said to the twins. While Dan was happily whistling while walking towards the door, Ren had an annoyed look on his face as they left. As soon as they left, Nate had a confused look on his face and eyed the back of the chair. He scratched his head and started to look for something. “Have you seen a green cloth here somewhere?” He asked.

I started to think back and then remembered something. “Oh, It’s on that sofa over there,” I said and pointed towards it. Nate followed my finger and a sigh of relief appeared on his lips. He walked towards it, picked the cloth up, and started to tie it around him with the golden chains on it.

My jaw dropped as I watched Nate tying the cloth around the collar of his suit.

That was Nate’s cape!? I used a Prince’s cape as a rag! I murdered it. No wonder it was too pretty in the first place!!

“What’s wrong, Rose? You look pale.” Nate asked as he looked at my face, which was probably pale as he said.

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“Huh? I’m fine! Nothings wrong! What? Do you see something wrong? Nothing right? So why are you asking me!? I did nothing wrong!!!” Okay, I may have sounded a little defensive there but I wasn’t thinking clearly.

Nate gave me a weird look. “Okay?”

After that, Nate and I walked to the dining hall. The whole time Nate kept trying to open up a conversation with me but I would just keep my mouth shut. Not allowing the conversation to flow in case I'll mention the cape thing.

And to my defense. It is their fault for wearing capes! I mean, why would they wear those? They're not Superman or Batman anyways. Got my point there?

It's not my fault!

"Are you really okay?"

"Yeah."

"Why aren't you talking?"

"Sure."

"Are you even listening?"

"That's cool."

"I'm a virgin."

"Great."

Nate threw his hands up in the air in frustration. "I give up!!"

"Yeah...sure."

Nate didn't say anything after that and instead, focused on finding our way to the dining hall. As we entered the room, I immediately made my way and sat beside Dan and Ren. I know for sure that these two would protect me. Nate sat beside Fred, which I was thankful for because I know that he would be able to stop Nate from jumping at me WHEN he finds out.

Dan and Ren gave me curious glances as I sat quietly on my chair with my back straight and cutting my meat on the plate. I took a sneak peek at Nate who was doing the same. The cape on his shoulders had chocolate stains on it, which was really obvious. Fred seemed to notice it too and tried his best not to stare. The twins only noticed it when they saw me looking at Nate with a nervous look. They followed my gaze and almost burst out laughing until I stepped on their foot. A sign to tell them to keep their mouths shut.

I was on my best behavior to distract them from Nate's cape.

Look at me. I am an angel. A very well-mannered angelic princess!

“Why Rose. It seems that you’re doing well on your lesson with Nate.” The queen commented as she watched me applying the proper etiquette on eating. “Good job, Nate.” The Queen praised him before her eyes darted on Nate’s cape. Her mouth opened to comment on it but I pa**ed her a plate of salad. “Eat.” I told her with a tight smile that says ‘don’t even mention it. The queen shut her mouth and went back to eating.

I almost sighed in relief, but then Ace went to the room. “Your highness, I’m sorry I’m late. I had a lot of-” he stopped and looked at Nate’s back. “Nate, what happened to your cape?”

As soon as Ace said that, the twins burst out laughing while I screamed.

“What do you mean what’s wrong with my cape? It’s perfectly-” Nate stopped in mid-sentence when he saw the chocolate stain on his cape by his shoulders. His jaw dropped as he detached it from his back and examined the damage I had inflicted on it. “This was my favorite cape...”

I took that time as I slowly got up from my chair and made my exit like a ninja. I even crawled on the floor!

“ROSE!!”

“I’m sorry!” I yelled back as I covered my face in embarra**ment and fear.

Chapter 19 Dance with A Charm

Today was my dancing lesson with Prince Fred and I wanted to wear something light.

Hmm...which dress would suit me better?

Lime or turquoise blue? I don’t have time for this. I have to get dressed and fix my hair like a normal human being. I cannot embarra** myself again. I already did with the last four of them.’

I reached out and s*****ed the blue one and the maids helped me get dressed. I checked myself in the mirror and found it satisfying. The dress compliments my blue eyes perfectly.

Someone knocked at my door and I hurriedly went towards it. Nope. I am not excited. I opened the door and revealed Fred in all his majestic glory in his suit.

Now, this is a sight to behold. I shook the thoughts out of my head as soon as they appeared.

He smiled, adding a sparkle to his already hot image. “Morning.”

Why am I suddenly seeing flowers?

“Morning.” I nodded back at him. Why do these guys look like models anyway? It’s so unrealistic!

“You look nice today, Princess.” He complimented making my cheeks flush in embarrassment. Why was it so easy to hate Ace, to feel annoyed with the twins and Nate? But so hard to do it on Fred? Maybe fact that he was the only one with a gentle ambience with him.

“Thanks” was all I managed to say.

You have to admit that he really looked good. “Uhm...are you okay? he asked. giving me a weird look.

“Why do you ask?”

“Your face. It looks like you have murderous intent.” Do I really look like that? I suddenly became conscious and shook my head as I grabbed Fred’s arm and started to pull him. “Come on. Let’s go.”

I heard him chuckle as I dragged him away. Damn. How embarrassing. Why do I have to be so weird?

Fred started to offer his arm to me. I linked mine with him and he started to lead the way.

I hope I can manage this lesson without getting too flustered. Or cause any more trouble.

Fred led me to a large ballroom like the one that you see in fairy tales. Multiple chandeliers hang from the roof that lightens the room giving it a golden glow. I feel like I’m inside the castle in Beauty and The Beast. But this time, I am the beast and this prince is the beauty. My face is probably as pretty as his b***.

Near one of the floor-to-ceiling windows stood five men holding some instruments. They all nodded at me and Fred as we entered the room. Is there some kind of concert? I looked at Fred and saw him looking at me too.

“What?” I asked.

“Nothing. You just look like a lost pup.” Then he started to chuckle.

Is he laughing at me? I frowned.

“So what now?” I asked him as soon as he was done laughing at me. He looked 100 times better when he laughed, but of course, I know my limits. This is all a part of the Queen’s plan.

Well...a little late for that I guess.

“Sorry.” He said and composed himself and grinned at the men holding the instruments. He nodded at them and soon, they started to play. The music was slow and melodic. The kind that soothes your mind and helps you relax. Imagine that you are mad with someone and then you heard a song and it easily takes your bad mood away

From the corner of my eyes, I saw Fred approaching me and offered a hand to me. I only looked at his palm. I know that he wanted me to take it, but I decided to play dumb and raised a questioning eyebrow at him. “What am I supposed to do with it?” I asked and still didn’t take his hand.

“You take it. Because today I am going to teach you how to dance.” I was caught off guard when he was the one who took my hand because I didn’t even make a move to take it. He slowly took hold of my right hand and placed my left hand on his shoulder, then he placed his right hand on my hip which startled me. I was uncomfortable with how little the space was between us that I took little steps back, but he pulled me back afterward. “Rose, don’t move too far from me.” He said and held me in place.

“F-fine. Just get on with it.” I said and looked away. I could feel his stare and his breath on my cheeks.

“Why? Are you uncomfortable?” He looked worried.

“No, I’m not.” I defended myself. “I’m just making sure that you won’t get too comfortable with this. Who knows?”

He laughed. “Too late I guess.”

“Excuse me?”

He gave me a side unsure smile. I guess he’s a bit worried about my state. “Setting that aside. Let us start. You really don’t have to do anything here. You just have to follow me.” He said and adjusted my hold on his shoulder, which became loose, and elevated his right arm so it was level with his shoulder. His right hand was on my back. “In dancing, the male is always the one who leads. The female just has to follow. If I step my right foot forward, you step back with your left. Do the mirror of me.” I only nodded as a response to him.

Taking that as a response, he took one step forward and I did the same using my left. Resulting in me stepping on his right foot. "Ow," He said and I immediately took my foot off of his and muttered a low 'oops'.

"That's okay." He said. "Let's try again." Then he stepped his right foot forward again. This time, I made sure to step back with my left.

"Okay. That's it. Now I'm gonna do the same with my left. Just try to follow me and you'll soon get it."

"Okay," I said. I sounded a little skeptical.

For one hour and a half, we practiced. And the majority of those times was me stepping on his foot. It's as if his face wasn't enough of a distraction and here he goes adding a smile that seems to summon those imaginary flowers.

What's with those!?

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I keep looking away. Fred raised a hand to the musicians to signal them to stop. The music died. He then led me to a chair to sit. "Let's have a break for a while." He said then turned his back to wipe the sweat off of his forehead and went to the band. He said something to them that made them leave the room. Probably telling them to have a break too. Once the band left, he didn't acknowledge my presence or even bothered to speak to me as he stood there by the window and gazed at the scenery outside.

It made me wonder if he was pissed off at me for repeatedly stepping on him?

I started drumming my feet absentmindedly to a tune back from Earth. Without thinking, I started humming the tune. "That's a nice song. Did you compose it yourself?" I jumped back. Fred now stood beside me. His eyes regarded me curiously.

"No. It's a song back in my world." I said.

"It's unique. And you sing pretty well."

"I hardly call that singing."

"I'm curious. Does dancing exist in your world?"

"They do." I laughed. His question sounds silly. "Although we don't usually do the dances that you do. There are all sorts of dancing. You can dance in groups, pairs, or solo."

I saw Fred's eyes sparkled with interest. "Tell me, what form of dance do you do?"

“Um...” I hesitated. I rarely dance. And when I do, I do it while taking a shower. “Well, I sort of did a group and a pair dance. But only because our school requires it.”

“A school?”

“An institution where kids and teens like me go to learn.”

“Interesting concept. The people in your world seem smart.”

I laughed nervously. “Yeah...I must be from a different planet then.” I mumbled.

Fred seems to sense my discomfort and thankfully change the topic. “So, you’ve done a pair dance?”

“Yeah. During prom.”

“What’s a prom?” he asked. Looking confused. Great. Now how am I supposed to tell him what a prom is?

“Um...let’s see.” I rubbed my chin as if I have an imaginary mustache as I think for the right words to say. “It’s some sort of event where...teenagers gather to socialize. The males would wear tuxedos while the females would wear dresses.”

He smiled. “I’m interested in the dances that involve a partner in your world. Can you teach me? Maybe that way I’ll know your style and find a better way to teach you our style.”

I looked away because I only know how to do those cha moves when in a pair dance. I tried to imagine Fred dancing the cha-cha and I have to stop myself from laughing. “Oh my God,” I whispered.

“Is there a problem?” Fred tilted his head to the side. Fred would do good in a waltz, but I don’t think that dancing the cha would suit his image.

I averted my gaze yet again. Should I? I have to admit that I also want to see what he would do. Pursing my lips to hide my grin, I got up. “Okay.” My voice cracked.

“Are you sure? You’re shaking, Rose.”

“Of course!”

Fred and I went back to the center of the room. “Uh...let us resume the position we did earlier,” I instructed. He followed and took my left hand then placed his right hand at my back. “Alright, Fred. this time, follow my lead. I’ll count.”

I started to count. "Fred, step your right foot forward, tap it shortly two times and then step it back again," I said. He nodded and followed my instruction. It was a little awkward at first so I showed him how to do the stepping.

"Now do the same with your left foot, but this time tap back two times then a step forward." I bit my lips at how robotic he looks with the movement.

"Keep up with me Fred. The steps are just the same." Fred nodded and focused his eyes on mine. "Okay." I saw him struggle a bit, but he was slowly starting to get it. "Um, this is actually both a solo and a pair dance," I admitted. "And I really can't remember what the other steps are, maybe you can just add to it. Either way, what we did was the base of that dance."

Fred chuckled. "As I said, your world is interesting."

We basically did the steps over and over again. Before I knew it, it was Fred who was leading the dance. He laughed a melodic one. "Well, this is fun. I thought at first that this would be hard."

"What are you talking about? You practically mastered it. You're even leading the dance right now." That comment brought a smile to his face. "Well, that's because I have a good trainer." He said proudly, making me look away in embarrassment.

The dance ended and we paused. He gave me a smile which I avoided. I was about to let go when Fred gestured to a song from the musicians.

The sound of the violin once again filled the room. It was sweet and slow. Elegant and alluring. But the emotion in it seemed off.

Fred pulled me towards him with an amused expression. "I think it's time for me to teach you again."

"O-okay." I stuttered. We swayed to the music. Fred led the dance as I struggled to keep up with him. All the time he was looking at me while I looked at anywhere but him. He sighed. "Rose, you should look at your partner when you dance."

"No" I frowned. I lowkey miss our cha session. Fred sprouts fewer imaginary flowers when he's struggling.

Every time Fred takes a step towards me, I would quickly back up. "Remember what I told you? Don't put too much space between you and your partner." He said and pulled me back towards him when he noticed that I created a new space between us again.

Don't put too much space between you and your partner! I swear he was so close that I could feel his breathing. "I kind of like this song. What is it called?" I asked in a desperate attempt to fill in the awkward situation.

“Setting Valley.” He answered. When I looked up, I saw him smile. “It’s an original. Composed by myself.”

“Really? I didn’t know you can write a song.”

“I do. I gave a copy of the musician earlier. I thought it would be perfect.”

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“The song is amazing, Prince Fred. Is there anything that you can’t do?” I asked in admiration. “The tune is just right. I slow down so that it helps me coordinate with the dance but...” I trailed off.

“But?” I pursed my lips in hesitation. Fred gave me an encouraging smile. “Go on. You can tell me.”

Fred led us in a circle as we explored the room while still holding on to each other as we danced. For some reason, I think his steps are getting wider and wider. That’s why I also widened my steps so as not to be that close to him.

I even think that this is the reason why we were able to consume the room as we danced. I even glanced at him as soon as I realized what he was doing.

“The song. Why is it lonely?”

“Really?” He suddenly twirled me, which was weird since the step was off the tune.

“Really.”

“Must be your imagination.” He twirled me again.

“Do we really have to do the twirl this much?” I asked. Feeling dizzy all of the sudden.

“Nope. I just find it amusing that you’re actually quite flexible and cooperative.” He chuckled.

I frowned and looked away. This jerk.

“You’re not looking at me and moving away. Why?”

“...” I feel like puking all of a sudden.

“Rose?”

“Nothing.”

“Come on. tell me why.”

“Shut up.”

“Come on. You can tell me!” He whined, which was so out of character for him.

“You’re so annoying!” I feel sick. And even though Fred was charming, we weren’t helping my current situation. “Fine! You’re b*** ugly.”

Wait. What did I just say?

I gasped in horror as I realized what I said and turned to look at him. He looked shocked and sad. “Really?” He looked like a puppy. His eyes dropped. “I’m that ugly?”

“What!?! You actually believe what I said?” Guilt was creeping in.

“I’m sorry. You may not look at me.” He dropped his head and his bangs covered his eyes. Still, he was being professional seeing as how we were still dancing.

“No! I didn’t mean it that way. You’re handsome. Really handsome!” I insisted. I bent my head down to look at his face. In return, he looked away. I couldn’t see his expression. “In fact, you’re more handsome than the rest of the princes! Really really good-looking. If you were in my world, you would be a model.” I showered him with compliments.

I cursed at how sensitive these guys are with their looks. I called him ugly once and now he’s acting like this.

I heard him snort.

“Fred?”

A melancholic laugh echoed in the room. There was a small pause as Fred laughed. And I swear that I saw sunflowers blooming and rained all over him.

WTF. Is wrong with this world that is making me see things?!

I stood there frozen and I kept seeing flower petals.

“I’m so sorry. You looked really adorable.” He apologized while wiping tears from his face. Then he leaned in close. “Sorry I avoided your gaze. Can you see me now?”

It was a sudden movement that I got caught off guard. I took a quick step back and tripped on my other foot. I closed my eyes and waited for my fall. But that didn’t happen as I felt Fred’s hand on my backing, pulling me back to him.

I dared to sneak a peek and saw him looking at me with a tiny smirk on his face.

“Are you alright?” He looked at me worriedly.

I frowned and waved my hand over his head. Fred gave me a weird look. “Something there?”

“Flowers,” I said the words as if I were cursing. “I’m making sure that they won’t appear.”

“Flowers?” He asked as he pulled me up.

“Yes,” I said seriously. Good. It didn’t appear.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”

We suddenly ended up in a slow dance as the music almost come to an end.

“As long as I don’t see them damn flowers again,” I said through gritted teeth. He laughed but didn’t ask about them again.

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The song finally ended and we did a short curtsy. Fred smiled when the song ended. “Very nice, Princess Rose. As your tutor, I’m very proud. Not once did you step on my foot?”

Then it dawned on me. I was dancing!?

Fred looked up as if he was thinking. “Although you still need a LOT of improvement when it comes to eye contact and space.” He came to me and messed my hair up. “Rest for a while, Princess. Wouldn’t want you to trip again and see those flowers now, don’t we?” He said and laughed again when I started to waved my hands at his sides when I saw a ray of sunshine where the flowers usually appear.

“I think it is time for you to rest.” He said and guided me back to where I was resting before. But I stopped when something caught my eye. I stared at the window. Without thinking, I headed for the window and looked at the scenery behind it. It was a garden!

I heard Fred walking towards me and paused. “Do you want to go out?” I stiffen and looked at him with wide eyes.

Did he just...

I could tell that my face was red. “W-What did you just say?” I asked. He pointed at the window, specifically to the garden, and asked me again. “Outside. Do you want to come with me there?” he asked me and smiled.

Finally, my mind seemed to process what he said. "Oh. I thought you said – never mind." I shook her head. "Sure. I'll come."

Of course. He meant literally. I slapped a hand to my face for being so ridiculous. I should get a hold of myself. I wouldn't want to be a pawn of the queen, right?

"Out of curiosity. What were you thinking earlier?" He asked.

"Nothing! Let's go." I yelled and quickly made my way to the door. Behind me, I heard him chuckle.

Once we were out in the garden, I couldn't help but notice a slight pain in my ankle. Did I sprain it?

"Hey, what's wrong with you?" He looked worried.

Great. Why can't I get through one day without causing any problems? Poor Fred had to be involved with this too. I shook my head in response and smiled at him.

"Nothing," I said and began to walk. On the way to the small garden pavilion, I forced myself to walk as normally as I could and keep a straight face.

Of all the reasons to sprain my ankle, it has to be while I was dancing. And I wasn't even wearing really high heels. Only an inch high. How embarra**ing.

I suddenly felt a presence behind me. Without any warning, I was swooped off of my feet. I let out a yelp as Prince Fred carried me. He didn't say anything or even joked with me as he walked towards the pavilion at the center of the garden. He sat me on one of the rails surrounding the pavilion and removed one of my shoes with the swollen ankle. It was my first time seeing it. It wasn't that bad? At least that's what I think.

"Your ankle is swollen. You even have a small cut."

"Seriously, Fred. I'm okay."

"Why didn't you say you were hurt?"

"Overreacting much? It doesn't hurt that bad."

He raised a brow and poked my ankle. "Ow! Fred."

He chuckled. "I thought it didn't hurt?" I only let out a 'humph' and looked away. There's no one to blame but my own clumsiness. I wonder how long would it heal?

“Just leave it alone.” I insisted and tried to move my foot away.

“It looks like it hurts.” He said and gently touched the swollen skin. Fred was still looking at my foot. He looked so focused for some reason. Well, I have no idea why he would bother about it that much. It will take some time to heal, but it will heal on its own.

It was embarrassing though. He was still looking at it. “Let go?”

“No.” He said firmly. “Just stay still.”

“I said I am fine.” I snapped. I want out of this awkward situation. I don’t want anyone to see us.

“I said stay still.” He insisted.

I grumbled in frustration at how stubborn he was. Stupid Prince. All of them are stupid. I might as well throw a bomb at them. Ace is a big arrogant jerk. The twins are a pain in the b***. Nate is a flirt. Fred is too nice. The Queen is crazy and the King couldn’t do a thing about it. I sighed

Wait. Speaking of Fred, he suddenly turned quiet. What is he doing with my foot anyway?

“Yo, what are you doing?” I look down at him.

He looked up at me and smiled. “Nothing.” He simply said.

I was about to ask him again when we heard Nate calling out to us. “Fred! Rose!” He said and came running to us. He paused when he saw Fred holding my foot and the two of them had a short staring contest before Nate broke up and looked at me.

“The Queen wanted to talk to us inside. She told me to call the both of you.”

Now, what does the crazy queen want? Now?

I smiled at him. “Okie Dokie. Wait up.” I jumped down from where I was sitting. When I landed, I couldn’t help but notice that the pain from my foot wasn’t there anymore. Surprised, I looked at Fred for an explanation but he only smiled and offered me his arm. I took it after I put on my shoes. We followed Nate to the castle.

While we were walking, I couldn’t help but think of what Fred had done to my foot. I was sure that I had a small cut at the back.

Something was definitely wrong.

Chapter 20 Silent Conversations

Nate was leading us into the castle. Fred was still beside me, not looking nor talking to me. He was just looking straight.

I still can't get my mind off of what happened earlier. How was he able to heal my foot?

I swear it was pretty swollen and it hurts to walk. Wheels were turning inside my head until we came to a stop in front of the entrance of the castle. I noticed that Nate had also stopped. He took a deep breath before he let it out. Something was bothering him.

As if reading my mind, Nate looked back at us and smiled at me. "You go on ahead, Rose. I have to speak with Prince Fred first. The Queen and the others are expecting you at the dining area. I assume that you know your way there?" he asked.

I looked from Nate then to Fred, who only gave me a nod. "Um...sure. But don't take too long guys." I said uncertainty.

That made Nate smirk. "Miss me already? Don't worry. I'll be sure to sit by your side later." Nate then winked. Hearing his flirty self again made me relax a little, but it didn't stop me from frowning at him, which made Fred laugh at our exchange.

"That's great. I'll be sure to reserve you a seat beside me." I said sarcastically and stuck my tongue out childishly at him before I left. Those two have some important matters to discuss. Might as well leave those two to settle it here.

MEANWHILE

Prince Nathaniel waited for Rose to leave and out of earshot before facing Prince Fred. He wasn't even bothered by the look that Nathaniel was giving him. Nathaniel knows and he saw what he did a while back and he wasn't happy about it.

"Fred, did you just use your magic?" He asked him. The blonde-haired prince didn't give him a response immediately, which only made him furious. Of all the things that he hates is when they ignore him especially when they are the ones who did something.

"Fred answer me!"

Fred seemed to have sensed his mood because he let out a sigh before answering. "Yes."

"Why? Didn't we talk about this? We wouldn't reveal anything until we are certain that she won't freak out."

"It's not like I revealed who I was to her. Besides, she already knows that the Queen is a Fae. What makes us so different?" he asks.

"You know why. She's only a human. Their kind has a different image from our kind. She has to be ready before we can expose our true identity. You of all people should have known that!" He nearly yelled at him, but then lowered his voice in case Rose was still nearby.

Fred didn't seem to appreciate his outburst because his fist started to clench. Sparks running along his arms. "I know that! But she was hurt. What do you want me to do? Let her walk in while limping? It looked like she was in pain. She even tried to hide it." He looked away as he whispered the last part as if he was recalling a memory.

"You could have called us first!" He argued.

"Well I'm sorry but what's done is done. We couldn't take that back anymore. Unless you want me to erase her memory of it."

Nathaniel was suddenly tense at what he said and couldn't help but let out a warning hiss at him. "Don't you dare?" He wouldn't let him use his magic to erase Rose's memory. Magic is unpredictable if you are not experienced in using it. It could wipe out all of your memory. Even worse, you'll go crazy. They all know that.

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The spark on Fred's arm died. He shook his head tiredly. When he looked up, Nate saw that he had a ghost of a smile on his lips. "Don't worry about it. I wouldn't do that to her," he said and walked past him and into the castle. Nate could only stare at his back for a few seconds before he followed the other prince.

Everyone was already seated when Fred and Nate arrived. They seemed to be awfully quiet as they sat on the chair opposite of Rose.

Ren and Dan were beside her while Ace was sitting beside Ren. Once everyone was all settled, the Queen started to talk. "Now that we are all here, I would like to make some announcements. A week from now, we will be having a ball."

Why will there be a ball? Is there a tournament here? And what kind of ball? A basketball or a volleyball ball? Rose wondered.

As if hearing her thoughts, Nate was the one who asked. "Pardon me, your highness. But may I ask what the ball is for?"

The Queen smiled approvingly at him. "We are celebrating the arrival of our new family in this castle." Her eyes then landed on Rose. As well as the others. Now they were all looking at her. "It would be the perfect opportunity to introduce you to the other rulers of other kingdoms and to officially introduce the king candidates."

The twins, Nate, and Fred all tense when the Queen said this.

"B-But your majesty-" Ren stopped when he saw Rose looking at him. Instead, he only focused his eyes on the Queen as if having a silent conversation with her. Ren moved his face so Rose couldn't see how his eyes glowered and locked gazes with the queen

'She's a human, your majesty. What would the others do if they find out about this?' Being a new generation of wolves, who was blessed by the lunar light, the twins can telepathically communicate with other supernatural races. As long as they have eye contact with the opposite party that is.

The Queen sighed. "So you already knew? All of you?" She asked and looked at every one of the princes. They all nodded at her. The queen only smiled. "Oh well, this makes it easier for me then. Perhaps if you guys help her understand then I might give you an explanation." Every second that pa**es, Rose becomes more and more confused.

What the heck are they talking about? She wondered.

There was a slight pressure on her shoulder. She looked to her right and saw Dan giving her an apologetic smile. "Don't mind them. They're having crazy people conversation," he whispered the last part so only the two of them could hear. She couldn't help but giggle.

He reached out and placed several meals on her plate. "Eat up while Nate isn't looking," he whispered and she smiled at him. He knows that she couldn't stuff her plate like what she's doing now when Nate is nearby.

Dan really doesn't like where this conversation is going. Rose doesn't even know what they are and here goes the Queen, throwing a ball full of other supernatural beings.

Ren, Fred, Nate, Ace, and Dan all agreed that they wouldn't reveal who and what they are to Rose yet. Even though she acts as if she's alright, Ren and Dan could still smell her fear and uncertainty. They know that Fred and Nate know of that too. As for Ace, they think he can read it through her face. Dan can tell that she's still freaked out of all this magic and fairies. She doesn't need to add them to add to her bucket list.

Looking at Ren, he could tell that he's talking to the Queen through his mind. He doesn't want Rose to hear anything of what he's saying. And neither does he.

He couldn't help but notice the puzzled look on Rose's face right now. She looked so confused and left out that he decided to entertain her so she couldn't listen to the conversation that they were having.

"Hey. How's the training going with you and Fred?" He asked her. She nearly choked on her food. He panicked and slapped her back gently. He grabbed his gla** of water and offered it to her. All the while, listening to the conversation as Rose took the water from him.

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"I don't want to be rude, your highness. But don't you think that it's too early to throw a ball? Knowing that Rose -" Fred was cut off when the Queen waved her hand. I looked at the King at the End of the table. No one seems to mind him though.

"Nonsense. It will be the perfect time for a ball. I trust that all of you will be able to explain all of this to her before the time comes. Consider this as a part of the test for the throne. Plus, we don't have much of a choice. The other factions are demanding the official king candidates to be announced. If we don't have a ball, then the factions will get restless and might spread unwanted rumors. Having a ball will reduce that risk and avoid unwanted visitors, who would use that excuse to visit." said the Queen. He couldn't help but feel anger towards her. He knows that she's the Queen but she acts as if this was all a game. Especially when Rose is involved. The queen sighed tiredly. "If only I could do more, but it seems that we are being pushed to a corner. I never expected things to get out of hand this fast. The least I could do is also announce my adoption of Rose. At least a fake adoption to filter out the rumors of her."

Of course, the princes know that rumors aren't easily dismissed with her adoption. But at least it can potentially avoid most of the bad rumors.

"Thanks." He snapped my attention back to Rose, who seemed to have recovered. He took the gla** of water from her and set it down on the table. He rubs her back just in case.

For his brother, he'll take care of Rose.

'Ren, please be careful of your choice of words. Remember that I only have Rose distracted, but it doesn't prevent her from hearing things. Knowing her, she'll jump to conclusions.' He spoke through our link.

'I know that!' Ren snapped. 'Why do you think that I use the Alpha link on the Queen to tell her this?!'

'Chill out. I'm just reminding you.'

Dan looked around the table to see that all of them, except Rose who kept on eating, seemed a bit tense. After a moment of silence, the Queen had finally spoken.

"Well now that it is settled, I want everyone's attention now. Including you, Rose." Said the Queen.

Rose stopped eating. When she looked up, Dan couldn't suppress his grin. Her mouth was stuffed with food making her look like a chipmunk. Nate glared at her in disapproval.

“Hmm?” That was all she managed to say.

“Starting tomorrow, your training will be intense. You’ll train with the five of them. You’ll spend the morning with Ace, Spend lunch with Nate, And divide the afternoon with the twins and Fred.” the Queen said gleefully as if the idea excited her.

Rose swallowed her food and stared agape at the Queen.

Dan silently counted.

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“YOU WANT ME TO WHAT!?” Rose yelled and stood up while slamming the table with such force that it caused it to rattle.

Oh well. There goes our fun dinner night.

“Rose be reason-”

“You should be the one who’s reasonable!” Rose-cut the Queen off before she could even manage to say anything. Of all the people that Dan knows, he thinks that Rose is the only one who could do that. “One day for each of them is already enough! Now you want me to spend each day with all of them?! This is...” She paused and rubbed her eyes. Ren looked up at her. They could smell the tears that she’s desperately hiding. “Aren’t you controlling my life too much?” She whispered.

Ouch. Does that mean that she doesn’t want to spend any day with us? Dan thought

“No offense to the princes.” She added quickly before facing the Queen once again. The Queen only shook her head. “I’m going to let your insult pa** because I can understand that you are upset.”

“Upset is an understatement. I’m furious, thanks for asking.” Rose had her head down the entire time as she spoke. She took a deep breath before her eyes met the Queen. “I’m done eating,” she said and made a mocking curtsy at the Queen before stomping out.

The Queen sighed sadly. “At least she now knows how to curtsy.”

ROSE

Who does she think she is?! My mom?! I would rather have a cow as a mom. Why does she always control my life? It's not like I'm from this world or anything. Nor do I intend on staying.

After dinner, I stomped towards my room and slammed the door shut behind me. I walk towards my vanity table and watch the magical ball that the Queen gave me. The white mist has increased but it's still not close to being full yet. I cursed.

How long will it be until it's full?

I looked at it sadly. I sighed and laid down on my bed for a few minutes. After that, I decided to take a shower first and put on some clean clothes. I tried to fall asleep but my brain wouldn't let me.

I decided to visit the library to look for books that I could read. When I got there, I started to search the shelves. The library was huge and full of books so it took me some time to actually find something interesting to read. I settle for an old leather-bound book with golden details at the side. I didn't bother to read the t**le. In my situation, you wouldn't be so picky about books. And somehow, the smell of it was comforting.

After I got what I needed, I headed back to my room and laid there with the book on my lap. I started to read the words but my mind couldn't seem to process anything. I was still pissed at the Queen. The bubbling range of emotion was disrupting my concentration.

I read the same line over and over again, trying to make something out of it but it was no use. Finally deciding that reading wouldn't help, I just closed my eyes. I didn't even notice that I had already gone to sleep.