

The Crown, a Short Story

It was ten years ago that I disappeared into the night, leaving the kingdom to the rule of my parents. Today was the day of my sister's coronation and I showed up just to ruin it. I sat on the edge of one of the large windows located in the back of the Great Room; the room was one of the largest rooms within the castle. It had marble floors, and crown molding. The walls were a light gold and thick curtains hung near the windows. Today the windows were open, allowing for me to sneak into the coronation undetected. Even though it had been ten years since I had fled from Renen, everything was still the same.

The people that walked along the dirt acted the same as they did ten years ago, they still dressed in a tunic and a set of trousers. The women still sold as many of their homemade items as possible, trying to earn a living as best as they could, and the men still bought the women's knitted scarfs, ignoring the fact that their own wives had made them more than could fit in the cupboard. Everybody on the streets were just trying to get by, while the rich and royal dined on more food than would ever fit on the table.

I stayed crouched upon the window seal. The walls were so tall that nobody could spot me, the young prince, as I slid down the royal red curtains, my sword silently clanking against the sides of my fighting leathers. They were all too focused on the Queen as she talked; the crown she was about to pass down was resting upon a purple pillow, it's gold shining in the florescent lighting.

"Thank you for allowing me to guide our Kingdom to greatness for the past sixty years," my mother started, her lips painted the color of wine, "But it is now my daughter's job." My mother gestured to where my sister, Reagan, stood. Reagan flattened the top of her skirts down as she walked toward the throne, she was wearing a beautiful forest green dress, her red hair braided down her back. She held a smile on her face as she walked, but her eyes showed sadness—longing of some sort.

As Reagan sat upon the throne, I stepped out of the rows of people and ran a hand through my hair. I heard a few people near me gasp, but whether that was directed at myself or at my sister, I couldn't tell. I made it a point to make my steps obnoxiously loud, the heel of my combat boots hitting the tiled floor in the right places. Everybody's attention shifted my way, and the more rows I passed, the more people gasped.

My mother whipped her head in my direction, her grey hair falling out of its bun. I gave her a cheeky wave, mischief glinting within my eyes. I came to a stop near the end of the dais, enjoying the shock and annoyance coming from the face of my mother.

"Mother," I started, "it's been a long time, hasn't it?"

"Roman?" She asked, her voice dripping with surprise but I saw the horror in her blue eyes. Her heels clicked against the floor as she stepped off the dais, wrapping her arms around my shoulders. I pulled out of her hug, enjoying the gasps from behind me, and hesitantly made my way towards my sister. I hadn't seen her since she was eight, and when we made eye contact, her lips turned upwards into a smile, her left dimple showing off quite proudly.

We met each other in the middle, wrapping our arms around the other. I took a deep breath and the smell of raspberries filled my nostrils.

Once we pulled away, I said, "I've missed you."

She chuckled before nodding her head in agreement, a tear sliding down her cheek. "What made you return?" She asked.

"Besides you?" I said with a smirk, "I came because I discovered some truly terrible things."

"What have you discovered, Brother?" Reagan asked, waving her hand toward the people in a way of dismissal.

Once everybody, including the guards, had left I started talking about that night ten years ago. "Father came to my room that night, all those years ago, and he informed me on how he ruled Renen behind the scenes. I left because I was horrified, I didn't want to rule this country how he did, but I knew he would want me to, and so, I left."

"How did he tell you he was ruling?" My mother asked, but Reagan cut her off.

"That's horrible!"

"Reagan, he's lying," She seethed, "He has been missing for ten years! We can't trust him."

"He is my brother," Reagan said toward our mother before directing her attention back toward me, "What do you need me to do to help?"

"I have planned a way to fix Renen from father's rule, but I need you for it to come full circle."

"Okay," was all Reaghan responded, and after waiting two days for her to pack, we climbed into a horse-drawn carriage and started our journey. Throughout the trip, Reaghan hadn't even bothered to ask where we would be going, she simply looked out the carriage and watched the scenery.

"I love the town people," Reaghan spoke a few hours after we had left the castle.

I felt a pang in my heart, but just nodded my head in response.

It took seven days for us to reach our destination, and each night Reaghan and I slept in an inn, we told stories from when we were younger and played games that were popular to Renen's children.

After seven restless nights, the coachman stopped in front of the cottage I had been living in for seven years. The house was surrounded by plants, and stones lined the way to the front door.

"This place is beautiful, Roman," Reaghan said, a smile on her face as she reached the front door.

"What if you came and lived with me then?" I asked.

"I would love to Roman, but I can't abandon Renen. Not when they need me."

I let out a sigh before saying, "Then I'm sorry to have to do this."

She looked at me as if I had grown two heads, "What do-" Her words were cut short when a metal object made contact with the back of her head. I quickly thanked the coachman before I carried my sister into the cellar.

After an hour of waiting for Reaghan to wake, her green eyes fluttered open.

"I'm sorry you have to be a part of this," I blurted out.

"Wha-What do you mean? What's going on, Roman?" Reaghan asked as her voice shook with fear.

"I had tried to complete my plan before your coronation, but it wasn't enough time. Before I knew it, I was crouching on the edge of a window waiting for the perfect time to strike."

"Roman, what are you talking about!" She struggled to move her limbs, she wasn't tied up, but I had used chemistry on her so she lost the use of her limbs.

"I'm talking about love, Reaghan! I had been in love with a girl named Evelyn. I met her when I was sixteen, I was walking around the market, holding a handful of scarves I would never use when I accidentally tripped her. I dropped all of the scarves to catch her," I said with a smile as I remembered that day. "A few weeks before I was supposed to be crowned King of Renen, I had asked Evelyn to marry me. I had asked, not because she was carrying my child, but because I loved her."

"What happened?"

"Mother and Father. I introduced her to them one night, told them about the baby and our engagement, and they..." I trailed off as a tear slid down my cheek, "They had her killed."

"It wasn't a good look, they said. They told me my child would result in a scandal if it was born. So, neither of them lived. I mourned them for days. I had cried myself to sleep each night, and I would wake up hearing a child crying only to find out that the cries were my own. I couldn't live with myself. On the night I left, I sneaked into our parents' room and killed Father, but I didn't care. I didn't feel an inch of regret, not only was he a terrible King but he was a horrible person. I had planned on ending both of their lives, but Mother had awoken before I could, and she called for guards, so I fled. I traveled for a few years before I settled into this home. The only thing I regretted was leaving you."

"You said you knew how to fix Renen!" Reaghan yelled, her angelic voice bouncing off the walls of the cellar.

I shook my head as I walked toward her, some part of me knew that what I was about to do was terrible and that I would regret it later, but I pushed it away before saying, "You can't fix a Kingdom that's already broken."