Willow and Robert have been engaged for two months and have been getting to know each other further. They grow closer day by day. The official announcement of their engagement is set for a few days from now…However, will Robert’s trust issues ruin their relationship before they can make it down the aisle?

Notes

I wrote this week’s ago before the last half of the season aired but am finally getting around to posting it here and not just on my tumblr. Enjoy! I hope to write more Rillow/Willobert fanfic, so let me know if anyone has any ideas! :)

---

Things had been going quite well between Willow and Robert these past few months. Robert would like to think that everyday they get closer to having something real, as Willow had put it. They would go about their work during the day, and then they would seek each other out at night where sometimes they would just sit in his office and talk for hours getting to know one another. Sometimes it was just superficial discussions about what had transpired throughout their days, and other times they went deeper and talked about more personal things- their childhoods, their hopes, dreams and what have you.

Soon their flirtation turned into something more comfortable, sweeter. It began with lingering glances across the room, secret smiles, a touch of a hand here and there. Then slowly they began to naturally gravitate toward one another. They began to stand closer to each other, Robert’s hand on the small of her back, hands held as they walked through the palace, and lately their once chaste kisses have turned deeper.
They were beginning to feel like a real couple, and it showed. Now that the rapport was there, they could officially announce their engagement to the world. All they had to do was get through this bloody luncheon that his mother planned to mend fences between parliament and the monarchy. Relationships had been strained ever since the blackout in London a few months ago, and mother was trying to get them back on our side.

Robert excused himself from a conversation with the Prime Minister’s husband in order to find Willow and see if he could convince her to sneak out of this stuffy luncheon with him. As he rounded the corner, he stopped abruptly and hung back as he saw Willow and a man he didn't recognize come out of Willow’s office together. Apparently he had said something amusing because Willow threw her head back and laughed that sweet laugh that was distinctively hers. The man touched her arm longer than was appropriate, kissed her cheek, and told her that he couldn't wait to finish what they started later. He winked at her and then made his way back to the party.

Robert couldn't believe it. Willow was having an affair. He thought things were going well between the two of them, that they were connecting. It wasn't love just yet, but he could feel himself starting to fall for Willow, and he thought the feeling was mutual. He thought Willow was the one person he might be able to trust. Apparently he was mistaken.

Angrily he made his way back to his office and slammed the door. He poured himself a generous glass of scotch and slumped into his desk chair, brooding as he stared blankly out the window.

---

About an hour later he could see the last of the guests make their way from the palace and into their cars. By this point Robert had worked himself up to the point that his anger was practically rolling off him in waves. Just then the door opened and Willow walked in with a sigh.

“There you are!” She said happily. “I've been looking for you everywhere.” Willow made her way across the room and poured herself a drink as well.

“Well you found me,” Robert said flatly, somewhat slurring his words. He finished off the last of his drink and winced slightly.

Willow walked over to where he stood and looped her arm around his and leaned her head on his shoulder.

“The guests are all gone, and it's finally just you and me,” she said smiling happily. Willow got up on her tiptoes to give him a peck on the cheek, but Robert turned away from her, gently rebuffing her. He walked over to the drink cart and liberally poured himself another glass of scotch.

Willow’s face fell, and her eyebrows scrunched together in confusion.

“What’s the matter? Are you worried about how the luncheon went? I mean not everything can be fixed with one little soirée, but it's a start! Plus-”

Robert cut her off, “I don't give a damn about the bloody event,” he exclaimed.

Willow was taken aback by his outburst but tentatively made her way over to him.

“Alright. Well, something is obviously bothering you, so why don't you tell me what it is. Maybe I can help,” Willow said.
Robert closed his eyes tiredly not wanting Willow to see the hurt in his eyes. “It's nothing,” he said through gritted teeth.

Willow crossed her arms and stared at him dubiously.

“Robert. Come on, tell me what's going on. You know you can trust me,” she said sincerely.


Willow stood straighter and sputtered, “Of course you can trust me! Where is this coming from?”

“I saw you today, alright! I saw you with that man coming out of your office. I saw the way you laughed, the way he touched you. How he couldn't wait to see you later and finish what you started,” he spat out bringing up his hands in mock quotation marks for the last part.

Robert laughed humorlessly and rubbed his hands over his face in exasperation.

“I can't believe that I trusted you! I shared things with you that I haven't shared with anyone! I don't know how you could betray me like this,” he said angrily.

After a beat of silence, Willow started to laugh. Robert’s head snapped up and his eyes went wide.

“You're laughing,” he said incredulously. “I expose your affair, and you laugh in my face?”

Willow stopped laughing, but the mirth was still visible in her eyes. “I'm sorry,” she said, “but I can't help it when you're acting utterly ridiculous.”

Robert opened his mouth to protest, but Willow held up a hand to stop him.

“Just let me explain okay?” She said soothingly. He nodded hesitantly.

“I am most definitely not having an affair! The man you saw me with was Peter Hughes the philanthropist. Most of his charity work involves animals. We had a conversation earlier about his plans to open a sanctuary for endangered animals in Africa. It was supposed to be a surprise, an official engagement present, but you've obviously ruined it with your overreaction,” Willow said as she rolled her eyes.

“I invited Mr. Hughes into my office to try and broker a deal. I proposed that we contribute to the project and in return the sanctuary would focus on saving the lions and elephants in particular. I thought it would be somewhere special for you and I to visit once it's completed. It could be a reminder of the conversation we had when you gave me my elephant necklace,” Willow said as she absentmindedly thumbed the aforementioned necklace around her neck.

Robert’s face softened a bit. “I remember,” he said. “You told me about how elephants practice altruism, and I said that's why the lion is the king of the jungle.” He smiled weakly.

“That conversation was the start of something for me Robert, and so I thought this sanctuary would not only do so much good for these animals, but it would be symbolic. Something just you and me would understand. The lion and the elephant side by side ruling the jungle together,” Willow said wistfully.

Willow cleared her throat. “Anyway, Mr. Hughes was more than happy to help with a gift for the King. We agreed to iron out the details later, so I'm assuming that's what you overheard. As for the touching and what not, it was not romantic in the slightest. I mean I don't think his husband would be too thrilled if it had been.” Willow smiled as she took a sip from her drink.
Robert looked up at Willow sheepishly. “I am quite the idiot aren't I?”

“I mean you said it not me,” Willow smirked as she held her arms up in defense.

Robert made his way over to stand in front of Willow. He dipped his head lower to look her in the eyes and cupped Willow’s cheek.

“I'm...I'm sorry Willow. I'm embarrassed, truly. Do you think you can forgive me?” he asked hopefully.

Willow tilted her head, “I want to, but first I want to understand why in the hell you thought that I would ever cheat on you? I know our relationship started out...differently than most, but I thought that we’d been growing closer, haven't we? I mean I agreed to marry you for god’s sake! That's not something I'd just do on a whim. I'm committed to you, to us.”

Robert nodded. He led her to two chairs facing the fireplace and motioned for her to take a seat. She sat down and waited for him speak.

Robert opened his mouth and then closed it again not knowing where to begin. Willow grabbed his hand in hers and gently caresseded it, trying to ease his nerves.

Robert took a deep breath and looked down. “Willow, if you haven't guessed it yet, I have some rather large trust issues,” he murmured.

“Of course. With everything that happened between Liam and Kathryn how could you not be hesitant to trust people,” Willow said sympathetically.

“But I'm not Kathryn. I would never betray you like that. I thought that you knew me better than that,” Willow said sadly.

“That's the problem Willow. I do trust you. You're the first person in a long time that I feel like I can depend on.”

“How is that a problem?” she asked, confused.

“Every time I start to trust someone, they betray me, and everything that’s supposed to be mine is taken away from me. So when I saw you tonight with that man, I thought that yet again something of mine was being taken away from me. That I was betrayed once more.”

Robert shook his head and ran his fingers roughly through his hair.

“I know what you're thinking,” he said. “This bastard could really benefit from some therapy.”

Robert smirked sadly and took another sip from his glass.

“Couldn't we all,” Willow said. “We've all got our demons Robert.”

“True,” he said softly. “You know you're going pretty easy on me I should think.”

“I care about you. I want you to feel comfortable opening up to me. I just want to understand you. Which is why I think you're not being completely honest with me. Your trust issues didn't just start with the whole Liam and Kathryn mess, did it?”

Robert glanced over at Willow’s patient face. “I suppose you're right,” Robert acquiesced.

“Of course I am,” she teased. “You better get used to saying those words. I hear that they're vital in maintaining a happy marriage.”
Robert chuckled.

“But seriously Robert what has made you feel so insecure?”

“My father,” Robert whispered seemingly ashamed.

“I’m not quite sure I follow,” Willow said.

“I’m the first born son of King Simon and Queen Helena. I was raised to be the next king of England since the day I was born. My father was always instructing me and molding me into the future king. All my life I worked so damn hard to please my father and to prove myself worthy of taking his place. Yet it was never enough, I wasn't enough,” he sighed.

“Of course you're enough!” Willow exclaimed. “Your father, your whole family was so distraught when they believed you were dead. King Simon was going to disband the monarchy without you there to take his place. He believed in you desperately Robert.”

“I wish you were right, but you couldn't be more wrong. My father always intended to end the monarchy. He told me so himself,” Robert admitted.

“What?! Why?!” Willow cried out.

“He told me that I had all the qualities of a king that could be taught but none that could not be. He didn't believe that I could make a good king.”

Robert’s eyes filled with tears, and he turned away from Willow to wipe a stray tear that tried to make an escape.

Willow’s heart clenched. She couldn't bear to see the pain etched on Robert’s face.

“I fear that no matter what I do, no matter how hard I try I will fail my people just like my father thought I would. I'm afraid that my crown will be taken from me, and tonight I feared you would be taken from me and I'd be left alone with nothing.”

Willow got up from her chair and grabbed Robert’s face between her hands.

“I need you to know that your father was wrong, in so many ways,” she said with absolute resolution.

“It was wrong for him as a father to tell you that you wouldn't make a good king. Who would crush their child’s spirit like that?! He had no true way of knowing how you would do as king. He never gave you a chance to prove yourself, and that is a shame because I happen to believe that you are a great king, one that your father would be proud of.”

“Do you really think so?” Robert asked shyly.

Willow smiled. “I don't say things that I don't mean.”

“If I remember correctly,” Robert started, “you were once #KingLiam. What's changed?”

“Ah, another reason you were hesitant to trust in me,” Willow sighed.

“Well I won't apologize for supporting Liam. He is my friend, and I believed in him at the time. He was filled with so much passion and desire to do right by the people. At the time I believed that he could be a good king. Besides, I didn't know you at all at the time, and the only other alternative was Cyrus. And honestly, no matter how you feel about Liam, even you can admit he'd be a better
Robert got up out of his chair to stand in front of the fire, hands in the pockets of his trousers.

“Again, you are correct,” he said reluctantly.

“So we've been engaged unofficially for a few months, and now you completely support me 100%?” Robert questioned still not completely convinced.

“Yes. You are the best of Liam and Cyrus,” Willow proclaimed.

Robert spun around to face Willow and scoffed, “Okay darling, now you've lost me.”

Willow smirked, “Let me try to explain. Do you remember the childrens’ story of Goldilocks and The Three Bears?” Willow asked in all seriousness.

Robert raised a brow skeptically. “Yes, where is this going Willow?”

“Shushhh and just let me finish!” Willow waved his objections aside.

“So, if you remember, Goldilocks at one point in the story tried out all the beds in the bears’ house. One was too soft, one too hard, and the last was just right.” Willow waited for him to respond.

“You're losing me darling “ Robert said.

“In the story Liam is the bed that's too soft, and Cyrus is the bed that is too hard! Liam is lovely. He cares deeply for the people of this country which is admirable, but he doesn't have what it takes to make the tough decisions. He's too soft. As for Cyrus, well, he certainly doesn't care much for the people he's too hard, but he is good at making tough decisions and using his cunning in order to get things done. It's a necessary part of the job. Both of them have bits and pieces of what makes a good king, but not everything,” Willow explained.

“You King Robert are Goldilocks finding that perfect bed. You are strong and pragmatic willing to do what needs to be done. Yes, sometimes you go about things the wrong way like the way you split up Jasper and Eleanor, for instance.” Willow paused and gave Robert a pointed look.

“How in the world did you..?” Robert sputtered.

“Okay fine, maybe. The delivery of my metaphor might not be perfect, but you understand what I'm trying to say! You are the king that is just right” Willow rolls her eyes.

“Not to nitpick but in your story wouldn't I be the comfortable bed and Goldilocks be the people of England who find said bed to be the right fit for them?” Robert smiled at her and said, “I'm here for you to lean on. I'm here when you need advice. We are supposed to be a team.” Willow looked at him pleadingly.

Robert chuckled then turned more serious. “No, but really, I appreciate what you said and for listening to me.”

Willow nodded. “Now I realize that it's going to be difficult for you to always open up to me, and to trust me because you've been burned before. But I need you to want to, to try. Because if we can't have a partnership, then this marriage is over before it starts.”
Willow made her way over to the door and turned back to Robert.

“I have a few things to finish up before dinner. In the meantime think really hard about what I said. If you can't trust me then what's the point. I won't marry someone who can't give me a real marriage.”

Robert stumbled to his feet and across the room in a panic. “Willow-”

Willow stopped him there and placed her hand over his heart. “I want this to work, I'm in. So just take some time and think. Listen to your gut, your heart, and then come and find me.”

Willow then grabbed his face and kissed him firmly then turned around and left his office.

---

Later that evening Robert found Willow sitting out in the gardens waiting for the coming sunset. He silently sat down next to her and slipped a velvet jewelry box between them.

Willow side eyed Robert and the box. She then picked it up and opened the box to find a pair of delicate diamond earrings.

Willow started to get up. “You can't just buy me expensive jewelry expecting it to fix our problems.”

Robert took a hold of her hand and pulled her back down to the bench next to him. “No no no no. You misunderstand. Let me explain,” he said pleadingly.

“These earrings were supposed to be your engagement present, and since my overreaction forced you into spoiling your gift for me, I thought it only fair to spoil yours as well,” he smiled sheepishly.

“These earrings mean even more to me now though. They are a symbolic thank you for lending me a sympathetic ear today and everyday. A thank you for listening to my insecurities, my fears and not judging me but instead accepting me as a work in progress.”

He paused then continued, “I thought about what we discussed, and I'm ready. I'm in this. I want this to be real, to trust you, and to lead with you by my side. I can't promise that I won't have moments of weakness, but I can promise that when I do I will come to you. What do you say love?”

Willow sniffled a bit with tears in her eyes. “Well that was quite the speech.”

He shrugged. “I mean I am the king, so I've had some practice in grand speeches.” He grinned at her.

“And full of himself I see,” she teased. “It's a good thing you're so handsome, or else I don't know how I'd survive this marriage!” She threw her head back and laughed.

He looked at her seriously, “So does this mean we're okay?”

Willow smiled brightly. “Yes. Let's do this. Let's give the people a royal wedding.”

Robert laughed. “Alright then. We'll announce the engagement Friday.”
Robert leaned in and brushed Willow’s hair behind her right ear then softly kissed her parted lips. Willow then wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him in closer and deepened the kiss. They broke apart with foreheads still touching. “Shall we go back inside now? It's starting to get a bit chilly out here,” Robert said softly.

Willow replied, “No, let's stay here a while and just watch the sunset.”

Robert nodded and slipped off his suit jacket and draped it over Willow’s shoulders. He then wrapped his arm around her pulling her close to his chest.

“Tomorrow will be a better day,” Robert muttered.

“Of course it will,” Willow threw back at him. “You've got me by your side remember? Together the lion and the elephant can take on the world.”

She snuck a look at him and scolded him, “But don’t take that literally okay darling?”

He laughed heartily, feeling lighter than he had in a long time.

“I mean it,” she said. “Dictatorship is not a good look on you.”

“Duly noted.”

Robert smiled and kissed her temple. They then sat in amiable silence as they watched the last rays of sunlight dip below the skyline.

------

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!