

## MY SCYTHER-WIELDING HUSBAND

### Chapter 4 - Death by Studying

“You’re late, ” an old man sitting on a couch pointed out the moment Solene walked through the front door. For a seventy-five-year-old senior, he still had a thick mass of gray hair and could still walk properly without the aid of a cane.

Solene dipped her head shyly and approached her grandfather.

“Sorry pops. I’m on a tight schedule with my school work.” She stooped low and placed a quick kiss on his forehead.

Her grandfather cringed.

“Seriously, you’re the only college student I know who goes to the library almost every day, ” he commented.

Solene didn’t see it as a complaint though. She just chuckled and walked towards a bookshelf near the kitchen.

“All part of a student life pops, ” she answered whilst placing her newly acquired books on the shelf.

“Bah!” her grandfather waved a dismissive hand and clucked his tongue. “When I was your age, I was gallivanting around school looking for a fun time! Your grandmother too. Oh, yes, she was a party beast. How come you didn’t inherit that from us?!”

“Because dad, I brought her up like the studious girl that she should be, ” came the reply of Solene’s mother as she walked out of the kitchen.

“Hi mom, ” Solene leaned in and kissed her cheek.

“You’re late, ” her mother gave her a pointed glare.

“Sorry. I’ll be early next time, ” Solene promised.

“Urgh, nonsense, ” her grandfather interrupted. “Death by studying, ” he ground out, not looking at the television anymore but to the two women snickering to themselves. “Yes, I’m pretty sure Solene’s going to end up with that if she won’t stop reading.”

“Father, you are spoiling your granddaughter, ” Meridith sighed and neared him, placing a quick kiss on his forehead too when the old man continued shaking his head.

“Thanks pops. I’ll take note of your advice, ” Solene grinned and thereafter went to the kitchen.

“Hi AC! Come here you, ” she immediately crouched down when she saw her ten-year-old adoptive-brother playing Legos under the dining table. She hoisted the boy up and gave him a cuddle before the boy decided it was enough.

“Is grandma coming?” Solene asked when AC slipped from her hold and went back under the table.

Meridith nodded at her.

“Yes, ” she turned to the cupboards and pulled out four plates. “She’ll arrive before—” But then she paused after realizing her mistake.

“Before?” Solene parroted, quick to notice her mother’s unusual lack of words. She gave her mother an arched brow, sensing something wrong.

“Before we have a mother-daughter talk, ” Meridith continued.

“Why? What’s wrong Ma?” A sudden spark of anxiety surfaced inside her. She hoped her mother would answer, but Meridith only gave her the four plates and said:

“Let’s eat first.”

By the time their dinner had ended, Solene's anxiety had grown a hundredfold. She felt she was the center of everyone's attention when she sat at the far end of the living room where the outside playground of her adoptive brother could be seen.

Inside the living room was her grandparents and her mother all looking pensive. She could feel the atmosphere around her different from the usual daily evenings they had. It was always cheery and light, but now, it almost looked like someone was being sent to the guillotine.

"It's time Solene," Meridith proclaimed without a heartbeat.

Based on the weight of her mother's gaze, Solene immediately knew exactly what she meant.

She sighed and as oppose to earlier where her shoulders were stiff as a board, now it had sunk.

"I was hoping you had forgotten about it," she said, glancing down the wood floor.

Meridith shook her head and frowned. "You know I can't. It was your father's last wish."

"Yes, I know," Solene cut in. She looked at her grandparents who chose to stay silent and then to her mother looking for approval. "But maybe I can request the Rantzen family to...you know...cancel the agreement?"

"Solene," Meridith's voice lowered, a silent warning coming from it.

"Or maybe to give me a few years more?" she added, feeling her throat tightening.

"Solene, honey, you're turning twenty-one within a month. You know exactly that's the deadline," her mother answered.

“It’s just that I don’t understand why I have to marry into that family. I haven’t even seen my betrothed.” Solene stood up and crossed her arms to her chest. “He, whoever he is, hasn’t even had an inkling to check on me, or maybe even introduce himself, maybe establish rapport, or create a friendly relationship first? I mean he has the whole twelve years of my life to do that and yet he didn’t.”

“There must be a good reason for that, Solene,” her grandmother chimed in. “This family is after all the most prominent in Basque.”

In contrast to her grandfather’s happy-go-lucky attitude, her grandmother was all by-the-book kind of woman. She was prim and proper. She had the cleanest bun on her head and wore the most well-ironed dress. It looked as if she was a seasoned governess of some royal family. What his grandfather said with her being a party beast somehow couldn’t be believed.

“Still...” Solene managed to say. She could feel her grandmother’s eyes reading her like she always does ever since she picked up that weird book of her father.

It unnerved her sometimes, but still, her grandmother was family. She could never hate it.

“A representative of the Rantzen Family has called in yesterday and said that someone is going to get you on Saturday afternoon. They already made arrangements for your university and their sister university in Portugal. In that way, your studies won’t be affected.”

“That’s thoughtful of them.” Solene hid a scoff.

Meridith stood up, approached her daughter, and squeezed her shoulders.

“You will be fine, Honey. Everything’s going to be fine.”

Solene bit her lip and took in a good amount of air. There was no other way but to relent. She knew this day would come. She had come to terms with it since she hit her teen years where first kisses and first dates should have been experienced. She had already mentally prepared herself with it. She loved her father and she will fulfill his wish.

“May I at least know the name of my groom?” she broke out after a few seconds. “Or even that tidbit they didn’t share.”

Riza, her grandmother, stood up and like a Lady of the Water, glided towards her and cupped her chin as if blessing her.

“Your future husband’s name is Lord Henri Rantzen.”