

# MY SCYTHE-WIELDING HUSBAND

## Chapter 9 - Death by Flying

A black limousine pulled over the curb just as Meridith entered the kitchen. She had just finished attending to AC's needs in his bedroom when she decided to prepare snacks for Solene on the road. Sure there would be more food inside the plane, tastier and fancier ones even, but Solene preferred her cooking, and she loved the tuna sandwich she always whipped up.

Some minutes later, she heard the doorbell rang. She wiped her hands clean and sashayed towards the main door.

"Madame St. Fair, good morning," a Caucasian man wearing an MIB-inspired suit greeted once Meridith opened the door. He had a perpetual passive look on his face that said he wasn't here for leisure. There was no hint of a smile nor a grin, just a signature straight face that she knew came from a certain family.

'Right on time,' her mind commented. She expected no less from the staff of the Rantzen Household.

"My daughter will be down in a moment. Do you guys want to sit down? It's hot out there." She looked past the first man to his companion standing just a few inches behind him, his arms crossed over his chest. He had an overall aura similar to that of the Caucasian man, except he wasn't giving her any notice. He was too preoccupied looking around the street for who knows what. Meridith didn't mind. He was probably concerned with paparazzi considering the popularity of their boss's name.

"We are fine here, Madame," the first man said, pulling Meridith's focus to him. "Our Lord has stressed the importance of time."

She nodded once. Quite a subtle way to say 'hurry up.'

“I see,” she said, turning sideways. “Well then, I’d better start saying my goodbyes to my daughter.” Her words were met with a single nod of approval from the man.

After closing the door, she headed for her daughter’s room, leaving the two men to wait under the hot sun.

Upstairs, Solene had just finished arranging her desk when her mother walked in.

“Hey, the representatives of the Rantzen Household are here,” she informed.

Solene released a bitter sigh and turned to her mother wearing a weak smile. “This is it then.”

“Dear, I’ll see you on your wedding day,” Meridith stated, her eyes glowing with warmth as she took her daughter’s hand in between hers.

“Yes, I know. Bring pops and nana, Mom. I want to see them when I walk down the aisle.” As much as she disliked undergoing the ceremony, she wanted it to be proper, and having her whole family present would do just that.

Meridith nodded. “Yes, I will. Have a safe trip,” she stared at her daughter sternly and continued, “And I mean it.”

Solene stifled a laugh.

“Nothing’s going to happen, Mom. If Fate doesn’t want me to wed into this family then I would have been dead many years ago with all the accidents I had been through.”

“That’s the simplest way to put it dear,” Meridith sighed. She embraced her daughter then—the warmest, tightest embrace she could give—and kissed her forehead.

“Bye Mom,” Solene planted a kiss on her mother’s cheek.

On the doorway, Solene’s adoptive little brother emerged. He was holding his favorite Gundam toy, cuddling it close to his chest.

Solene approached him with a reassuring smile. “AC, you behave okay?” she stated whilst patting his head.

The boy, despite his saddened expression, bobbed his head up and down.

“I will, Sisi.”

The three of them embraced for the last time until their grandfather and grandmother stepped in.

“Take care of yourself, child. Stay within the estate’s gates if you must,” Solene’s grandfather advised. She found it odd why he said those words but wasn’t able to reflect on it more because her grandmother interrupted them.

Riza touched Solene’s shoulder to capture her attention. “What your grandfather means is you must behave inside the Rantzen House. Follow their rules. You are an intelligent woman. I’m sure you’ll do well there.”

“I understand, grandma. Thank you for the tip.” Solene stretched her arms wide and gave the two old people a hug.

It was a bittersweet goodbye for the family mostly because it was the first time Solene had to leave them to fly to a different country. Her life had always mainly consisted of house, school, supermarket, park, and library. Her mother, grandparents, and brother had been accustomed to her constant presence in their lives, and so did Solene. In the end, the promise was expected to be upheld and so not one of them dared to stop it.

After Meridith gave her the tuna sandwich snack, Solene went together with the two men and rode the limousine. She was teary-eyed during the

whole ride towards the airport and at one point, tears really did fall, but when they arrived inside a restricted hangar, she had already freshened herself up, no trace of tears visible on her cheeks.

“You may choose whatever seat you want, Ms. St. Fair,” a tall, curly-haired flight stewardess informed with a practiced smile as Solene entered the plane.

With all the many praises she heard from her family’s mouth about the Rantzen Family, she wasn’t surprised to find that her plane was a private one. It was luxurious, probably of the latest model judging from the sleek, modern interior and customized Italian leather seats. They ran in two rows along the aisles that were carpeted with royal blue. At the back, there was a bar with all the wine flutes stored upside down on the ceiling and wine bottles secured against the wall-mounted shelf. There was a coffee maker, an espresso machine, a juicer, and a blender – all available for her to use. She was internally thankful for it.

With a nod on the flight stewardess’s way, Solene picked a seat with a good view of the outside and the nearest one to the bathroom.

“Call me Solene, please, and thank you,” she stated once she sat.

“In a few minutes, we will be flying, so you may arrange yourself during that time, Ms. Solene. I am Arlene by the way and I’ll be attending to your needs during the flight.”

“How long is the flying time from here to Portugal?” Solene asked, her anxiety coming to the fore. She remembered about her recent accidents and hoped that this time, thirty-five thousand feet from the ground, it wouldn’t manifest. She sure wanted to land safely in a country that was one of her bucket lists.

“About eight hours,” Arlene responded.

“Oh, I see,” Solene stared out into the massive wing of the plane whilst taking a deep sigh. “It seems it’s going to be a long flight. Do you have a

bedroom then? For napping? I get drowsy whenever I fly.” It was half-truth, but the real reason was that she felt safer in bed than sitting on the chair with possible turbulence coming their way.

Arlene unconsciously made an unsure face. She glanced at the hallway towards the said room and answered, “We have one Miss, but...” She paused and averted her eyes on the floor.

“Hm?” Solene waited with anticipation.

“It’s occupied as of the moment,” the flight stewardess finally revealed.

“Oh, really?”

“Yes, uhm... I’ll leave you for now Miss. Once we’re in the sky, I’ll attend to your needs again.”

Solene knotted her brows as she watched Arlene retreat to the front cabin near the cockpit door. It sure was unusual for her to suddenly act that way as if the topic of the plane’s bedroom was off-limits.

Or maybe, Solene thought, it wasn’t the bedroom itself but the one occupying it.

With her curiosity piqued, she turned sideways and glanced at the bedroom’s closed door located some distance away from her, wondering about the identity of her elusive companion that got the flight stewardess cowering like a mouse.

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Forty minutes later since lift-off, Solene heard the opening and closing of a door. Easily, she knew it was the bedroom door and with that thought, she consciously straightened on her seat and cleared her throat, ready to give a smile to whoever was about to meet her.

“Arlene, the Master is awake. He wants a cup of espresso,” a male voice said, cutting through the silence of the plane’s interior.

Solene noted every word this man used as the flight stewardess frantically ran to the bedroom with the cart of refreshments in tow.

'Did he say ‘Master’ just now?' her mind stressed. Master who? Could it be that inside that bedroom was the Master of the Rantzen Family? Henri...no, LORD Henri Rantzen? Her soon-to-be-husband?

Solene’s mind reeled at the big possibility. She grabbed the arm-handle and tightly gripped on it like she was holding for dear life. Never had she expected she would soon meet him, all the more of them sharing the same aircraft!

“Hi, we haven’t been introduced yet,” that same male voice, now closer, stated and then a hand darted in front of Solene’s face. “I’m Reynold Sangris, assistant head of the Rantzen Family.”

Solene successfully kept her surprise to herself and glanced towards the man’s way.

“Solene St. Fair,” she replied calmly whilst giving his long, bony hands a shake. “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Sangris.”

Reynold Sangris, for her, was the typical bespectacled, middle-aged, suit-wearing, successful businessman on his way to Wall Street, but he had all the aura of a loyal, by-the-book-kind of a servant in a rich family. He wasn’t smiling on her way, but he sure looked like he was with how his brows were weirdly cut so that it would angle up instead of down. His brown hair was brushed up to the back and he had sideburns like that of Elvis.

“The pleasure is all mine, Madame St. Fair.” Mr. Reynold bowed regally in front of her as if she was a queen. “You are after all the Master’s bride.” Well, being the bride of their master was commensurate to being queen.

“Yes, uhm...” Taking advantage of the chance before her, she quickly jumped right into inquiring, “You mentioned ‘Master’ earlier. Are you talking about the Lord of the Rantzen Family?”

Mr. Reynold cocked his head to the side and studied her. “You mean your future husband?” he corrected.

“Oh, well...that’s one way to put it but yes, him, my groom,” Solene frantically answered.

“You have a funny side in you, Ms. St. Fair,” Mr. Reynold chuckled and then, adjusted his spectacles, “Well, to answer your question—”

“Sir Reynold, the Master calls for you,” right on time, Arlene emerged from the hallway and unintentionally interrupted their conversation.

He cleared his throat and then lowered his head again. “Excuse me, Ms. St. Fair. I’m needed elsewhere.”

He walked towards the bedroom all the while Solene stared at his back as if boring a hole through it. The curiosity was eating her alive and she desperately wanted to know if her suspicions were correct.

Arlene seemed to be tight-lipped about that topic and there were actually no other people who could give her information about the occupant in the bedroom except for Mr. Reynold himself, unless of course if she asks the pilot but that clearly wasn’t an option.

She decided she would have to play the waiting game again. Sooner or later, he would come out from that room, and then she would pester him into answering her question.

Or better yet, the mysterious so-called Master would come out himself and finally meet her. Sure he knew she was present inside the plane. What groom in his right mind wouldn’t want to meet his bride, right?

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Exactly five and a half hours later, Solene awoke with a gasp, breathing heavily like she was just in a marathon race. Spreading a palm over her chest, she stilled as she recollected all that she could in her dream. Goosebumps erupted on her arms then.

In the dream, the plane she was in was on fire. Flames after flames engulfed the inside of the craft and she saw Arlene on the floor charred to the bone. She heard a deafening sound, it seemed that a part of the plane's wing had been ripped apart, and then she felt her balance vanish as it dived down onto the earth.

The last memory of the dream she registered was seeing herself on fire, flailing her arms everywhere, oxygen dwindling in her lungs as her skin and flesh were slowly seared to the bone...

Shaking her head to erase the dismaying thoughts, Solene decided to turn her attention to the room she was in, her expression that of a confused traveler.

It had appeared that she wasn't in her seat anymore. She was actually lying down on a soft bed with sheets as smooth as silk. The room was basically of medium size, a constant beige motif colored the walls and ceiling, and an elegant light fixture above her illuminated the whole area with warmth. There were no picture frames or other adornments in the room except for a single painting of a scenic landscape in the countryside.

Turning to the right, her eyes caught sight of a single oval-shaped window. Common sense told her it was a typical window for an aircraft, but still, she quickly scooted over the mattress and craned her neck just to see if she could see clouds.

Despite the darkness of the sky, she did see clouds and that told her she was inside the plane still, but how and when had she moved her ass to bed, that was her big question.



‘To bed?!’ her mind shouted, the reality suddenly coming down on her.

Rushing to check herself, Solene released a relieved sigh as she found that her clothes were still intact and her boots were even still attached to her feet. For a moment, it gave her a fright. She thought she was taken advantage of by the occupant of the bedroom without her consent. Why else would he put her here, right?

Her musings were cut off when four consecutive knocks sounded on the door. Unconsciously, she righted her clothes and fixed her hair and then announced, “Yes, you may come in.”

“Good evening, Ms. Solene,” the flight stewardess greeted just as she stepped inside.

“Arlene! Hey!” Solene beamed a smile, thankful that it was her, but a small part of her consciousness actually wanted it to be the Master. She would want to know finally who the man was.

“We will be arriving in Lisbon soon. The Master wishes you come outside and prepare for landing.”

Well, that was a preferable place to meet him, she thought.

“Uhm, Arlene, how did I get here?” she asked, hoping that the stewardess would fill in the information.

Arlene averted her eyes away from her looking somewhat shy and then her cheeks were tinged briefly with red. “You were sleeping when the Master lifted you up and brought you here, Miss,” she replied.

“He did?” Solene’s eyelids fluttered and her body tensed. “May I ask who he is?”

“Of course, Miss Solene,” Arlene nodded. The look on her face showed a mixture of adoration and fear. “The Lord of the Rantzen Family, Miss. Your fiancé. Master Henri Rantzen.”

Upon hearing the man's name loud and clear, her entire body shook. So she was right all along and because of this, it only made her angry; angry that he hadn't even taken the initiative to actually introduce himself earlier before the plane ascended. Was he an entitled prick? Was he too high and mighty that he didn't spare her a minute just to say 'Hi, I'm your groom.' Or was he the silent type, the ones that were brooding and introverted, too secretive and anti-social.

She was mere seconds away to find out the answer.

"Okay, thank you for telling me, Arlene," she stated whilst standing up, ready now to finally meet the man who she'll spend the rest of her life with.