Chapter 20 Twenty

"How was Premonitions?" Liam asked outside their classroom, where he'd been waiting for them. "I found it confusing in my first class. Wouldn't have been able to tell what I was looking at if Hexena and Theo didn't help me."

"How many cards did you get?" Reida asked, willing her eyes to stay on her cousin and not stray to a dark purple-suited figure coming their way.

"Four, one of the most."

Aurora was striding past them and snickered at Liam's response, prompting Reida to explain, "She had the most in our class – six."

Eyes bulging wide, Liam's sights pinned on her retreating figure and sent a silent thanks to Goddess before he muttered, "That's just... wow. How many did you get?"

"Only two. Three was the common number, though."

"It always is – every year," the now-familiar lilt skated across the space smoother than melted butter spread over bread. "Though three cards are also almost always the dullest," Theo muttered.

"What makes you say that?" Reida bypassed greetings and questioned.

Theo's eyes fixed on hers, perplexity had his brows drawn in while amusement had his lips slightly quirked. "Threes are normally predictable: past, present, and future. If there are more or less than three, one would have to guess which ones fell into each of those three categories, bringing about confusion, but also intrigue – chapter three."

Liam sighed. "You're the only crazy one who'll read three chapters ahead of the class, you show-off."

"Then you clearly don't know your own cousin." Theo smirked like he had the upper hand. "I'm still in the last bit of chapter one. But she gave an elaborated answer with the contents of the fourth chapter in Lethal Potions just two days ago."

"You did what?" Liam exclaimed, eyes popping out of their sockets as he took a step back from Reida like she had a repelling spell around her.

+120 Points at most

Reida's hands raised in surrender. "I didn't know he expected a shorter answer, and I thought we're expected to read ahead of classes."

Brows dipping Liam said. "We are expected to read ahead, but not that far ahead. Four chapters? Really, Ri? Do you sleep at all?"

"Ri," Theo mouthed, soundless but noticeable. The lifted corner of his lips was now a contemplative flat line, the purple eyes that shone in humor now held depths of intrigue The single syllable became a siren's call, one that blinded him to everything and everyone else around him, robbing him of all thought and putting his self-restraint to the test. A yearning flared from within him, bright and undeniable, true yet irrational.

"I only got one card," Lámia's monotonous, chilly voice cuts through Theo's trance as she got everyone's attention when she looked straight at the Lethal Potions master. "And I'm happy to report there's a high likelihood I'll be your student next term, Professor."

She doesn't look or sound happy, not by a long spell. With those flat lips and steely stare, you'd think Theo killed her puppy when she was a child and she never forgave him for it.

As Theo regained his cognitive abilities, he said, "I'm starting to feel your ... interest in the subject may be steering slightly too close toward obsession, Ms. Mavros."

"All geniuses are obsessive one way or another."

Liam snickered at her comeback, and Theo shoved him just as he did back when they were students but – like when they were students – Liam didn't move more than an inch before regaining his footing since he was the physically brawnier one.

Giving the wraith his full attention once more, Theo replied, "That's true. But I doubt any of the greatest minds were this persistent in getting into a class."

Lámia allowed herself a single blink, and responded, "Thank you for the compliment."

"The what?" Theo's brows shot to his hair.

"If even the greatest minds weren't as persistent as I am right now, then by common sensical calculations, I'd say that my chances of being a great mind myself are higher than the average being."

By their side, Ianne murmured to Reida, "Gotta love her confidence."

+120 Points at most

"She might give Uncle Greg a run for his money," Reida agreed.

Knowing he was going to get nowhere with Lámia, Theo merely said, "Now that I think about it, I probably shouldn't be seen fraternizing with students, so..."

"Only Reida is your student," Lámia reminded, eyes narrowing just slightly.

"And her presence is enough," Theo insisted.

"You're putting this on me now?" Reida questioned.

The wizard speedily uttered, "For whatever reason, you're better in navigating your way around her than I am, so I'm going to use everything at my disposal, including you, to see myself off."

Something began shimmering at Liam's pocket and the sensation had everyone turning to the various colors of faery dust gathering there before Liam extracted his wand and gave it a gentle shake. "Just a reminder. Got to go. Got a class to teach."

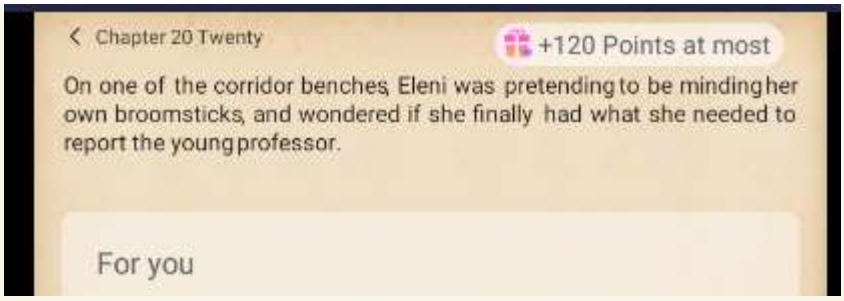
"And I have to walk him to class," Theo said, took one step away from the ladies before immediately turning back, his hand landing squarely on Liam's shoulder to make him pause as well. "By the way," he began, looking directly at Reida. "How do you feel about surprises?"

Wariness seeped into her lilac eyes despite her deepening blushes when she managed to ask, "What kind of surprises?"

Theo took a moment to admire her flushed cheeks. He'd seen them so many times by now, but every single time, he'd convince himself that it wasn't him who brought the rosiness to her face. He'd tell himself it was because Reida may still be unfamiliar with him or that she was simply embarrassed, though he could never justify his reasoning since there was never anything for her to be embarrassed about.

Now, he wondered if – and hoped that – he had some effect on her, at least a drop of the ocean of desire he was already harboring for her, a desire he wouldn't be able to act on until she was no longer his student. For now, all he could say was, "You'll see."

There was a glint in his eye that got her animal wagging its tail like it was about to open a present. And the glint jolted Reida's heart in a way that sent an electrical rush through her bloodstream even though Theo broke eye contact right after dropping the hint with his signature smile and left with Liam.


Chapter 20 Twenty
+120 Points at most
On one of the corridor benches, Eleni was pretending to be minding her own broomsticks, and wondered if she finally had what she needed to report the young professor.
For you