

ROSES HAVE THORNS

Chapter 26: Chapter 26 - Punishment

"So, what do you want to do now?" Dominik asked.

"Well in case you didn't notice I'm still wearing your clothes so let's get that sorted."

"Sure. Looking for anything in particular?"

"Suits. Tailor made."

"Fancy."

"Do you know of any places?"

"Yeah, there's this place Mia always takes me to get my measurements when we have to go to an event or party. Follow me." He gestured.

"After we're done there, I want you to take me to the church." Kurt mentioned when walking beside him.

"Which one? There's a lot."

"The one where Tobias works at."

"The bishop? That's one of the biggest churches in Eldoria."

"What's the biggest?"

"The one with the Pope, obviously. He's the one who receives divinations from Goddess Bula and relays them to the people."

"That's a dangerous privilege to have for one person. From what I've seen, people are very religious here. What would happen if the Pope made up some fake divination, say a prophecy, will the people just consume and believe whatever they've been told?"

"You're thinking too much, Kurt. Every Pope has to make an oath to the goddess statue at Eden. After their initiation, their souls become linked to the divine. So, if they were to ever lie or lead the people astray, their souls would be crushed, and they'd forever be sentenced to the depths of hell."

"How do you know all this?"

"We learned it in kindergarten and school, duh. If you're still confused about anything, just ask the Pope himself. Heck if you're lucky you can ask the Saintess when she arrives here to watch the tournament."

"The Saintess... Is she, like, the highest-ranking clergy?"

"Yep. She receives direct power and divinity from Goddess Bula. There's a whole cathedral dedicated to her and those that come after her at Eden. Here's a fun fact for you Mr. Clueless, did you know that Eden was the place where Goddess Bula first descended on Earth."

"I didn't know that. Cool fact."

"Heh," Dominik rubbed his nose in satisfaction, "Just doing my job to help and inform civilians. Oh! I see the shop just up ahead." He pointed as they approached the store

"Want me to go in with you?" Dominik asked when they stood out front the tailor shop.

"Sure." Kurt replied.

"Wait, I was joking. Don't tell me you actually need me to hold your hand?"

"No. I was thinking that since you come here semi frequently that they should know you. Maybe I could snag a discount with you there with me."

"Pfft! Don't count on it..." They entered together.

ring ring

"DOMINIK! My favourite customer! How are you doing, mon ami? Mwah mwah!" A very eccentric looking man with blonde hair tied in a ponytail and lipstick grabbed Dominik's face and kissed both his cheeks.

"Where's my other favourite customer, Mia, hmm?"

"L-let go Raphael!" Dominik struggled to pull away. "She's not here. I'm here for my friend, not myself! Arrgh! How are you so strong!?"

"Your friend?" Raphael let go and looked at Kurt.

"Waah!" Dominik flew backwards, into a clothing rack, because of the force he was using to pull himself free.

Crash

"Ouch." Kurt cringed. "Still alive there, Dom?"

"Mm'kay..." He raised his thumb.

"Ahh, so you must be the friend Dominik mentioned? Hmm I see..." Raphael inspected Kurt's body with a keen eye.

"Erhm... is everything alright, Mr. Raphael?"

"Shh! Be quiet Monsieur. I'm in a moment of inspiration."

"Sorry but I don't have time for your eccentricness. I have money and I'm looking to get my measurements taken. So are we in business or do I have to look elsewhere." Kurt drew a fine line.

'Seriously, I still have other places to be, and the day is nearly over. I still want to have dinner at Sophie's.'

"A paying customer is always welcomed here, monsieur Kurt." He turned serious.

"Good. Let's get it then."

While Kurt was getting his measurements taken, Dominik was busy picking up and packing away the clothes he knocked over. By the time he was finished, Kurt also came out of the dressing room ready to leave.

"I will have your new suits delivered at City View Hotel on Friday, mon ami."

'In two days? That's surprisingly fast.'

"Thank you, Raphael. And sorry if I came off as rude earlier. It's just that I'm in a rush and you just kept on staring at me."

"Ahh, it's no problem, Kurt. Your body shape and muscles gave me a rush of inspiration so expect magnificent suits tailored just for you." He winked.

"Okaay... See you around, mon ami." Kurt copied him.

"Oh! Monsieur Kurt~" Raphael held his breath and ran up to him.

"Oh shoot! Let's go Dom!"

"Huh? Whooaa!"

Kurt grabbed Dominik as they both ran out the store.

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Once they were in the clear they both stopped to catch their breath.

"That was terrifying."

"You're telling me? I usually just let Mia handle the talking when we're there."

"Of course you do." Kurt said as he stretched his back. "Now that that's taken care of, let's go to the church, shall we?"

"Finally, some action."

"No. No action just yet. I just wanna scout the place from a distance. See if anything fishy is going on."

"Why not just storm the place? I'll arrest them on the spot."

"With what evidence?" Kurt shook his head. "Today, we observe. Tomorrow, well.... I have a feeling tomorrow's going to be interesting."

'Isn't that right, Emelie. Heh hehehehe.'

'Uwaah. Does he know that he's practically laughing out loud?' Dominik thought when looking at him with tinge disgust.

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'Hi, my name is Austin and right now I am currently sitting in the principal's office awaiting judgment.'

'Now you might be wondering, "But Austin, why would you get punished? You're basically the main character of this world! You did nothing wrong!" Well, my dear readers it would seem that justice can sometimes miss its mark.'

"Austin." Diana spoke when reading a piece of paper. "I've received complaints from the dorm mother that you were shouting and screaming at her to let you in the dorm building last night. Even though it was past curfew. Is that true?"

"Y-yes."

'There you have it folks. That's why I'm in trouble. I stayed out late and had to sleep outside on the cold floor.'

"It also says here that you called the dorm mother, and I quote, "A stupid old cow who will never find a husband". Is that also true?"

"W-what" Austin stuttered. "I-I never called her—"

"YOU STUPID OLD COW!" A recording began playing. "THAT'S WHY YOU'RE STILL SINGLE AND WILL NEVER FIND A HUSBAND!"

Through the recording tag that Diana took out, Austin could be heard shouting and banging his fist against the door. Calling it a tantrum would be an understatement.

"BUT DON'T WORRY," The recording continued, "I PROMISE IF YOU LET ME IN I'LL LET YOU JOIN MY HAREM ONCE I BECOME KING! DO YOU HEAR ME!? *BANG* *BANG* OPEN THE DOOR! OPEN IT NOW! YOU FILTHY BIT-"

Diana stopped it.

"Do you want me to continue playing it? Apparently, it gets worse."

"N-no, Principal Valentine." *'There was a fucking recording?!'*

"I'm back, Principal." Mia entered the room. When she noticed Austin kneeling on the floor she didn't say anything and returned to her desk.

'Oh shit! Is that Mia?! Look at that juicy body, hehe. No wonder the devs added her as dlc to the first game. Even though you had to cuck her boyfriend to get her, I could definitely see the vision.'

"Austin," Diana snapped him out of his delusions, "The dorm mother has requested that you be expelled from the dorms. And I'm inclined to expel you from the academy all together."

'What!? But that'd be a game over! I can't have that!'

With his back against the wall, Austin did the only thing he could think of that would save his skin.

Cry.

"I-I *sob* I'm sorry... I-I didn't *sniffle* mean to—"

"Stop with the crocodile tears. They won't work on me."

'Damn.'

"Haaa, you just transferred here recently so it would've been so easy to give you the boot, however it would seem you got lucky."

"W-what do you mean?"

"I mean, a representative has vouched for you to stay. They said if you were to leave, they'd leave." Diana rubbed her temple. "And I can't have that especially with the tournament starting next week."

"A representative vouched for me? Who?" Austin was confused since he never went out of his way to become friendly with any of them.

"They wished for their identity to remain a secret so let's leave it at that. Now for your punishment."

'Here we go...'

"You will not be kicked out of the dorms however your monthly student allowance will be significantly cut and starting tomorrow afternoon you will work for the dorm mother. Free of charge."

'What!?'

"Additionally for the rest of this year you will stay behind for after class cleaning duties."

'But my free time! How am I to build up my relationship points?!"

"Lastly,"

'There's more!?"

"After the tournament next week, you are to stay behind and help the cleaning crew. Did I make myself clear?"

'Just you wait, Diana. Soon you'll be putty in my hands and once you are...'

"....."

"Austin."

"Y-yes ma'am. Understood."

"Good. Now go and apologise to the dorm mother. You're dismissed."

Austin, now defeated in spirit, stood up and left the room with his shoulders dropped low.

".... What happened with him?" Mia asked.

"You don't want to know."

Chapter 27: Chapter 27 - Promise

"By the way Mia, I apologise if you felt uncomfortable about what happened this afternoon."

"This afternoon?"

"The meeting with the bishop. I saw the way he looked at you. Those were the eyes of someone who is stalking his prey."

"Oh... I'd nearly completely forgotten about that. Thanks for reminding me."

"Forgotten? How'd you nearly forget?"

"Thanks to you sending me to the prefect station, I got to recharge my lovey-dovey meter with Dominik~" She hugged herself and wiggled her body. "It really heals the soul to have someone to dote on."

"Ah yes," Diana got back to work. "I'm sooo happy for you."

"Also," Mia added, "It seems that Dominik is already working on a case that involves the bishop."

"Really? So, something **is** going on with him?"

"Possibly. Remember that rumor we heard of the crazy person? Turns out he got involved with the bishop and now they're both investigating him. He's actually a really nice guy. Dominik even made friends with him."

"Dominik made a friend? Didn't you always tell me that he doesn't like approaching strangers first? And that it's always the other way around?"

"I know right?! That's what I said! I was so shocked when he said he made a new friend. Oh, his name is Kurt by the way."

"Kurt..." She said softly.

"Diana."

"Yes?"

"You should totally try going on a date with him!" Mia ran up to her. "You two give off almost the same vibes."

"Mia..." She got ready to her the same old speech about how she was not interested, but Mia did not give her the chance to.

"No, Diana, listen to me. I've got a really, *really* good feeling about this guy. Not to mention he's handsome to boot. Also, when I looked into his eye, I saw a lonely man filled with passion~" she said dramatically.

"His 'eye'. Only one eye?" Diana scoffed.

"Yeah. He wears an eyepatch. It really adds to his mysterious charm."

'An eyepatch?' She thought back on the man she saw at the diner. 'No, it's probably just a coincidence.'

"Besides," Mia broke her thoughts, "He already promised me he'd meet with you. Tehee~" She stuck her tongue out and bonked her head.

"What? Are you sure you didn't force this on him with your incessant nagging?"

"Nagging? Who? Me? Never. I totally, 100%, got him to agree to meet with you of his own volition."

"I somehow doubt that."

"Come on Diana~" Mia leaned on her chair. "Pleeeease~ Please go on one blind date with him. Pretty please~"

Mia looked at Diana with those o so deadly puppy eyes she used on Kurt.

"Ergh! F-fine! Just stop looking at me like that already!" Diana turned her face away after getting embarrassed.

"Yay! I finally got her to agree to go on a date! Woohoo!" Mia celebrated as she jumped for joy.

"Hey! Tone it down! You're still at work in case you've forgotten."

"Oops! Sorry hehe." She covered her mouth. "Wait till your parents hear about this. They're gonna be so happy... Oh~"

"Wait what?! You report to my parents about this? I thought you were on my side?"

"I am on your side." Mia smiled softly. "It's just, we all know you could be so much happier if you had a significant other. Being cooped up all alone in that big mansion is a sure-fire way for you to end up as an old cat lady. And nobody wants to see that."

"Excuse me? I'll have you know that I'm surrounded by my trusted workers and maids. Wendy, especially, keeps me great company."

"Wendy's in on it too."

"...Huh?" Diana let out a cute sound.

"Yep. She's our insider informant. A piece of information I found particularly interesting is how you like to lay in the bath, sip on wine while reading romance novels."

"You what?!" Her voice squeaked, "B-but that's fairly normal, don't you think? There's nothing wrong with—"

"Diana," Mia put her hand on Diana's shoulder, "We both know that that's not all you're doing in the bath..."

"What do mea—"

"You pleasure yourself while reading those books."

"....."

In that moment Diana's whole face spiked up red from the embarrassment.

"Mi... MIAAAAAAA!"

"Oh, would you look at the time! Shift's over for today, see you tomorrow. Bye!"

Shut!

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"You sure we're allowed to be up here? Going up those back stairs felt kinda sketchy"

Away from the desolate screams of Diana, Kurt and Dominik were standing atop the roof of an empty building.

"It's fine. Sure, no one is allowed to be in or go up this abandoned building but I'm a prefect. Me being here is considered work."

'Abandoned 'you say? I do love me an abandoned building. Thinking about all the "fun" I could do here has got me... itching. Hehehe.'

"Kurt."

"What?"

"Stop doing that."

"Stop doing what?"

"That creepy laugh you do from time to time. Is your head okay? Need a doctor? I know a place where you can get a prescription."

"I'm fine Dom, jeez. Just thought of something funny is all."

"Really? Share it with the class then."

"You wouldn't get my humor."

"Probably not. Oh, I see the church." Dominik pointed.

Kurt looked over to where he was pointing and true to what he said, the church was indeed massive.

"Whoa, you weren't lying when you said it was the biggest church."

"Second biggest. The biggest one is right over there." Dominik pointed to the massive clock tower that stood deeper in the city.

"That massive tower is part of the church? Damn."

"Yep, and behind the tower, further out in the distance, surrounded by an impenetrable stone wall lies the King's castle of Maxwell Dorothy."

"Ah yes, the place where you should've worked as a royal guard~ R.I.P."

"Arrgh! Don't remind me..." Dominik fell deflatingly.

"Get up." Kurt hoisted him to his feet. "I was only joking. Come on, let's get down to business."

Dominik reluctantly got up and together they both stood at the edge of the building overseeing the church.

"Hmm... Doesn't look as busy as I thought." Kurt pointed out.

"Well, it is Wednesday my dude. The sun's about to set as well"

"What the..." Kurt quickly turned his head to Dominik. "How do you know that saying?"

"What saying?"

"It's Wednesday my dude."

"But it is Wednesday."

".... I see. So, you don't know after all. Haaa, you nearly gave me a heart attack." Kurt resumed scouting the church.

"For what? Saying it's Wednesday? You sure you don't need a docto—"

"Hey! Who's that?" Kurt pointed at a kid dressed who was dressed in all white and holding what looked to be a bible, walk out the church

Dominik's focus shifted as he looked to see what Kurt was talking about. "That's probably a kid from the church's orphanage going back."

"The church has an orphanage?"

"Yeah. Every Wednesday and Friday from 16:00pm to 18:00pm, they hold classes that teach and prepare them to become priests and priestesses."

Soon after, more kids exited the church wearing the same clothes and holding the same book.

"Peter had a similar book. Although theirs looks slightly different. What is it?"

"Ahh, that's a book that contains special scriptures and spells that only people belonging to the church have. I'm guessing those kids hold the beginner's manual whereas people like Peter have the upgraded version."

"Right right," Kurt nodded, "Going off what you're saying that means the higher your rank in the church the better your spell book is."

"Yep."

"Hmm. Tell me, Dominik. Are those kids forced into taking these classes and becoming a member of the church?"

"No." He shook his head. "Well, I mean, the classes are mandatory, but the profession isn't. Why?"

"Just wondering." Kurt said as he watched the kids enter the orphanage.

"Where's Tobias? I don't see him anywhere." Dominik noted.

"In my experience, he's probably trying to cook up a plan on what he's going to do about the whole Peter and me situation."

"Why you?"

"I'm a witness to Peter's death and I saw who killed him. His lackey must've reported to him that I got arrested so maybe he thinks I'm in a cell facing jail time. He might try to come and silence me so expect a visit from him soon at the station."

"Oh wow. You've got this whole thing figured out, don't you?"

"Not everything. Come on, we're done here." Kurt turned to leave.

"Already? That was quick. Not that I'm complaining" Dominik caught up to him as they both walked down the stairs they came up from.

"Like I told you, I just wanted to scout the place. Besides, I still want to have dinner before Sophie's place closes."

"Damn. You really took my recommendation to heart? I was mostly just kidding when I told you about it. I've only been there once, but from what I heard that place is almost always empty."

"I've been wondering about that. Why is it so barren? The food there is so good."

"Poor marketing maybe? I got no clue."

"Huh? I should ask Sophie when I get there."

When they reached the ground floor they both turned to each other and shook hands.

"Well Kurt, it's been a fun first day working with you. Here's to many more."

"You too, Dom. See you tomorrow."

"See ya."

Once they were about ten feet apart, Kurt heard Dominik yell,
"Ooooh Mia! Here I come! Dommy's about to collect what was promised! Yahoooo!"
'Dommy?' Kurt looked back but he was already gone.

Chapter 28: Chapter 28 - Man Meets Woman

ring ring

"Welcome! Oh, hi Kurt!"

The time was 18:30pm when Kurt entered Sophie's Diner.

"Good evening, Cindy." He greeted. "I'll be honest I didn't think you guys would still be open."

"Haha... We were supposed to close at six, but Sophie insisted we wait another two hours for you."

"Just for me? Wow, I don't know if I should feel honoured or if I should feel bad."

"You should feel lucky." Sophie said as she exited the kitchen. "If you had arrived any later than this or if you were a no show, I would've hunted you down."

Judging from the tone of her voice Kurt could only assume that she was joking.

'But then again she does seem like the type who would follow through with it.'

"So?" Sophie asked. "Are you eating or not? I'm sure Cindy told you, but we only stay open until six."

"Yes." Kurt answered. "I'm here to eat."

"Good. Then take your seat. I'll bring you something. Cindy, you can go home, I'll lock up."

"Ok!" Cindy ran to the breakroom, grabbed her things and left the diner. "Bye, Kurt! See you tomorrow boss!"

"Always so energetic, that girl..." Sophie smiled.

"Say, I didn't even order, but you said you're bringing me something. What is it?"

"Just a little experiment I've been working on. And you're going to be my guinea pig. Think of it as compensation for keeping us waiting."

"Well now I have to eat it. I don't want to make my favourite chef angry now do I?" Kurt flashed her a beautiful smile.

"Smooth tongue you got there. Just don't try that charming nonsense with the wrong girl or you might end up waking up the next morning with a knife in your stomach."

"Oooou the challenge excites me~"

"Hmph, don't say I didn't warn you." Sophie said lastly before entering the kitchen to prepare his food.

While she was busy, Kurt spent the rest of his time fiddling with a silver coin while watching people walk by from out the window.

meow

"Hmm?" He heard a familiar sound.

meow

Kurt stood up and tried to get a good look out the window.

'I hear him, but I don't see him.'

scratch scratch

'Oh, he's just out the door.'

"Hey Sophie!" Kurt yelled into the kitchen. "I'm just gonna step outside for a bit to say hello to my little cat friend! Call me when you're finished!"

Through the sounds of fire burning and pots turning, Kurt could barely hear her response. But what he could make out was her screaming back, "Sure! Whatever!"

And with that he went to open the door.

'I wonder how the little guy's doing. I haven't seen him since yesterday.'

ring ring

What Kurt opened the door to, however, was not the cat. What greeted him instead was a sight he knew he had to face eventually. It was the whole reason he made that deal with Sophie

But not like this.

And certainly not in this unexpected way with no prior preparation.

'D-DIANA?!'

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As soon as Mia left the office Diana plopped down in her seat with her hands covering her face. The thought of Mia knowing one of her secrets like that embarrassed her to such an end that she couldn't concentrate on work and decided to leave early.

'I need to see what Wendy has to say for herself.'

After gathering her things, she locked the door from the inside and teleported to her mansion.

SHWOOSH

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She arrived at her front door where Wendy stood almost as if expecting her.

"Welcome back Ms. Valentine." She bowed. "I'm happy to see you back home early despite being so busy."

"Wendy... Please come to my room in about 10 minutes. I need to speak with you about something.... Important." Although her mouth was smiling, her eyes certainly were not as she spoke.

"My oh my~" Wendy giggled, "I wonder what this could be about for you to look so distressed."

Not wanting to hear her little remarks, Diana stormed up the stairs that leads to her room.

"Head maid Wendy, is something the matter with Lady Valentine?" A concerned maid walked up to her and asked.

"It's nothing for you to worry about. Though I will advise you all to prepare yourself, for we might be seeing big changes around here."

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"Arrgh!" Diana launched herself onto the bed as she groaned in frustration.

'Calm down Diana. You need to calm down so that you don't scare any of your workers...'

"...."

"Nnngahhh!" As she thought about Mia and Wendy, two of her closest friends, plotting against her, she threw her pillow to the side and instantly felt embarrassed again.

"I need a drink! Now!" She plopped up from the bed and reached into the back of the bed dresser to grab her secret stash of red wine.

She popped the lid with a suspicious ease and started gulping it in one go.

- 10 minutes later -

knock knock

"Ms. Valentine I'm here as requested."

She waited for a response, but none came.

"I'm coming in Ms."

When she entered the room, she noticed that her bed was a mess.

The bed sheets hung loose off the bed, some pillows were missing and the side dresser was wide open.

"Oh my, it would seem that the Lady's 'secret' wine stash appears to be missing."

She looked at the bathroom door, which was ever so slightly open, and walked to it. As she got closer, she could hear a faint hum coming from inside

When she opened the door, she saw her red blazer lying on the ground and a drunken Diana laying in an empty bathtub with her pillows, sipping on an empty bottle.

"Oh Ms. Valentine..."

"Heey! Look who it is! My favourite tattletale!" She waved the empty bottle in the air.

Wendy took the bottle out of her hands and helped lift her out of the tub.

"Why would you go and do this, my lady. It's very unbecoming."

"Do you know what else is unbecoming, Wendy?"

Wendy helped guide her to the bed where she could lay down but Diana instead leaned closer and whispered in her ears.

"Spilling about my most private moments to Mia. I'd say that's very unbecoming. Wouldn't you agree?"

"Ms. Valentine I only thought to do what was best for you..."

"I trusted you!" She pulled herself out of Wendy's arms. "How many other people know about this?! And how many other dirty secrets have you told them about me?!"

"...It's just Mia, myself and your mother. As for how many secrets we have, well your mother has compiled nearly a whole book's worth. For your future boyfriend/husband."

"My... mother... she... what?" Diana took a few steps back in disbelief. "For how long? When did this all start?"

".... It all started when your mother approached me five years ago."

And so, Wendy began telling the story of how this all started. From when her mother proposed to form a secret group amongst themselves and how Mia was later added to the group in order to jot notes of how she acts at work.

Another job of Mia's was to always brag about her relationship with Dominik. So that hopefully Diana would eventually grow jealous of her and finally push herself into finding a partner of her own.

"So, you're saying that my mother is the ringleader of your little club, hey? Ha ha ahahah..."

With all that wine flowing through her system, Diana has lost all reason.

"Ms. Valentine, you don't look so well. Perhaps you should lay down while I prepare a meal for yo-"

SHWOOSH

"... Oh dear...."

.....

Diana appeared in front of a wealthy estate gate deep inside the city.

"L-Lady Valentine!" A guardsman called. "We weren't expecting to see you today."

"Is my mother inside?"

"E-excuse me, my lady?" The guardsman was so distracted by the cleavage of her near-fully opened black shirt that her words flew right over his head.

"My mother!" She yelled. "Is. She. Here!?"

Y-yes, my lady! I'll call her right away!" He left in a hurry.

So, after, a mature looking woman wearing a silky purple nightgown who had the same red eyes and platinum hair that was tied in a neat bun came out the door.

"Diana! What are you doing here screaming like that? You're making a scene!"

"Hello mother."

"Mother? You never call me that. Are you drunk?" She asked when she noticed Diana's flushed face.

"I know about your little club, mother."

"Club? Oh- Ooohh." She smiled and held her hand. "Diana sweetie, why don't you come inside. I bet you haven't eaten yet."

"No!" She pulled her hand back. "Give me the book! I won't leave this place until you give it to me!" She crossed her arm which pushed up her shapely breasts.

"Diana please, you're being indecent."

"Give. Me. The. Book!"

"Okay okay, here." She took out a book from between her humongous breasts and gave it to her.

"Why'd you keep it in there!?"

"So that nobody will take it, silly." She giggled.

"Whatever! Not that I care." She held the book in her right hand as she cast a spell to burn it to ashes.

"There see, the book is gone now so why don't you come inside and we can-"

"No." Diana interrupted her, "I'm hungry. I'm going to Sophie."

SHWOOSH

".... Silly girl didn't even check what was written." Her mother pulled out another book. "She doesn't know that she burned a fake." She giggled as she triumphantly walked back into the estate's mansion.

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Diana appeared in front of Sophie's Diner where she saw a cat scratching on the front door.

'What a cutie.'

Right as she was about to open the door, another person came out from the other side who, in her mind, was the cause of all this drama.

"You—"

Chapter 29: Chapter 29 - First Kiss

"You... This is all your fault!"

"Excuse me— Wah!"

Diana grabbed him by the shirt and tackled him to the ground.

She then straddled him by the waist and locked her legs to his sides as she held his shirt tightly.

"It's all because of you that..." She leaned closer to him.

"Wait wait wait! Your breasts! They're about to spill out!" Kurt panicked.

"What are you focusing on! Look at me!" She yanked his head towards her.

When Kurt looked in her eyes, he became mesmerised. The way there was a slight tear forming in her fiery-red eyes because of her embarrassment. The way her cheeks were rosy because of her drunken state. The way she breathed erratically that let out the faint smell of wine and the way her hair fell over her shoulders and into his face.

He simply couldn't look away.

"You're beautiful..." He moved her hair out of her face to get a proper look at her.

Her eyes widened as she heard those words. Yes, she hears those same words a countless number of times from all types of people but for some reason her heart fluttered faster when she heard it from him.

The only answer she could come up with was because she was drunk, right?

"Ha!" She laughed. "You think I haven't heard that before?! What makes you so special that my heart beats like this?! Huh!"

"My heart's also beating like crazy right now." Kurt too became red from embarrassment.

"Oh yeah?!" She smiled like a crazy person losing all rational thought. "Well, mine's only beating so fast because I'm drunk and NOT because I think you're cute!"

"Y-you think I'm cute?"

"NO! Not cute!" She pulled his head closer to hers. "And who does Mia think she is!? Always bragging about her boyfriend like that. What's so good about having one, huh?!"

"M-Mia?" Kurt was confused as to what was going on. He couldn't think straight with her being so close to him.

"I know! She must be making fun of me since I never had one, right?! I don't even know what a kiss feels like! I bet her and Dominik must be laughing behind my back..."

"B-boyfriend?! K-kiss?!" Kurt was lost.

Suddenly, as if a wicked idea sprang into her mind, Diana looked at Kurt's embarrassed and confused face then turned her attention to his lips.

"You... You'll take responsibility for all this trouble you've caused, won't you?"

"I-I'd do anything for you..." Kurt blurted out almost unconsciously.

"Good~" She had the smile of a seductress that was about to consume her prey.

She let go of his head to let it rest on the ground.

Then she leaned down, her ample breasts pressed against his chest. Her mouth slowly making its way towards his.

'W-wait, is she really going to—'

"Mmmm~" She kissed him.

She held that position for a good 10 seconds before backing away and letting go.

"Haa haa." She breathed deeply. "There. Ha ha ha. That wasn't such a big deal... Ha ha"

Kurt's mind had completely lost touch with reality. His lips were now covered with the same red lipstick Diana has.

He stared at her beautiful and triumphant smile and then he said as softly as a whisper, "Again..."

Diana stopped laughing and leaned closer to hear him. "What was that?" She asked.

"Kiss me again..."

She looked at his lips again. The mark she left behind was screaming at her to claim it. The way Kurt looked at her, with those hungry eyes, made her heart spike up again.

Although her mind wouldn't admit it, her heart only knows just how good that kiss felt. And so, temptation won.

"Mmmm~!"

Kurt and Diana quickly pulled into each other's embrace and kissed.

Both their hands reached for the other's hair as their lips made wet kissing sounds.

Without even realising it, their tongues interlocked as the kiss got deeper. Not that either of them cared.

"Mmmmwah slruuurp~ Chu squalch mmch~!"

Lost in their own world, neither of them cared for what was happening nor where they were.

After a minute of wet kissing action, Diana stopped and slowly backed away. A trail of saliva still connected the two as they were both gasping for air.

She put her hands on Kurt's chest to support herself up and not fall over.

'It's hard... and firm.' She thought when feeling his pecs.

And then once again, almost as if begging, Kurt's deep voice reverberated through her as he softly said,

"Again..."

".... Yes. Again." She whispered and leaned in for more.

Right as their lips touched, however, the sounds of plates slamming against the table snapped them both out of their daze. But they quickly ignored whatever it was and went right back to it.

"What are you two doing!" Sophie screamed. "Diana, get off him!"

Sophie tried yanking Diana off of Kurt, but it proved to be a bit of a challenge with her legs so tightly locked around him.

"What do you think you're doing in my shop, you drunk! Stop that!"

After much struggle, mostly on Diana's part, she finally managed to separate them and put some distance between them before whatever magnetic pull that was connecting the two could bring them together again.

"Diana, why are you so drunk? And Kurt, didn't you say you were going outside? This isn't some love hotel where you two can shack up! What if somebody saw you?!"

Kurt, who was still lying on the floor, had no reaction and just kept staring at Diana in a trance.

Diana, meanwhile, had her fingers feeling her lips as she also stared at Kurt.

"DIANA!" Sophie turned her head.

"Huh? Sophie?" Her brain registered her presence as she snapped back to reality.
"What are you doing here?"

"Me?! What am I doing here?! What are **you** doing here?"

"Me? I came here to eat when..." She looked at Kurt and soon all the moments they just shared with each other rushed through her mind.

"What did I just.... No no no no no... This is all his fault! I didn't mean to... I mean I did but.... U-uwwwahh!" She covered her face and,

SWHOOSH!

"Diana wait—" Sophie called but she was already gone.

"....."

"Kurt, you mind explaining to me what happened while I was in the kitchen."

"... I... love... her." Kurt said while still in a daze.

"Haaaa. Goddess above have mercy on my soul." She sighed in defeat.

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"What have I done!" Diana appeared at her mansion in the hills. "There's a limit to how drunk and stupid one can be but that was too much!"

"Ms. Valentine! There you are!" Wendy came running out the door.

"... Wendy~ *sob*"

"Oh dear, look at you." She wiped her tears. "Your hair's a mess and your clothes are so disheveled. What happened?"

"I-I *sniff* I kiss- *sob* I kissed a *sniff* my first- *growl*" Everything hit her all at once. Her tiredness from work, her drunken escapade, the kiss and finally her hunger.

"It would seem that you're still a bit drunk, Ms." She gently guided Diana inside the mansion, "Come, let's get you inside. You can take a bath while the chefs prepare your food, ok."

"O-ok *sniff*."

"Once you sober up and calmed down you can tell me what happened."

After helping Diana undress and taking her to the bathroom, Wendy left and instructed some maids to help her sober up while she instructed the chefs on what to prepare for her.

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"Your head finally landed on Earth?" Sophie asked Kurt as he stared out the window.

She gathered and put the food she prepared for him gently on the table then sat opposite him.

"Looks good." He complimented it.

"That's not what I asked about."

"Oh, Sophie. Can you just let me have a moment of repose?"

"No." She furrowed her brows and crossed her arms.

"So cranky..."

"Imagine you were me and you walked into such a scene in your very own store. How would you feel?"

"I'd quietly go back into the kitchen and pretend I didn't see anything."

"Ha! You wish. Now tell me what happened."

"Well, I was about to open the door to say hi to my little cat friend. But instead of seeing him I saw Diana, red in the face drunk. She screamed at me saying 'It's all my fault' then tackled me to the ground. Afterwards she spoke cryptically about 'Mia', 'boyfriend', and 'kisses'. To which she proceeded to kiss me. Again, and again."

Sophie stared at Kurt in disbelief. Yes, Diana can be a little... sporadic at times but this sounded too far-fetched even for her.

"It's true! You don't have to look at me like that" Kurt shouted. "Didn't you see her? She was all over me."

"... She did seem a little out of it." Sophie closed her eyes and recalled how Diana behaved.

"Whatever." She got up. "You're lucky this happened after hours or you would've seriously gotten it."

"Not like you get any customers anyway." He muttered under his breath.

"Huh!?"

"Nothing!!" He rushed to eat his food. "Wow this is really good ha ha..."

"*tsk* Cheeky brat. Guess I'll have to wait for Diana to hear her side." She said as she walked back to the kitchen.

Kurt stared once again out the window in a daze.

'Damn. Talk about a first kiss.'

meow

"Oh hey, my lucky charm!" Kurt grabbed the cat out from under his table. "Who's a good kitty~ You are~ Yes you are~"

meow *purr*

Chapter 30: Chapter 30 - Morning Run

Beep Beep

Click

Emelie woke up at her usual time of 5am.

She looked over to see if her roommate, Amy, was still asleep and sure enough she was. Albeit all her blankets laid on the floor while she slept half naked with her hands in her pants.

'Same old Amy. Old habits die hard no matter the timeline.'

She stood up and covered her with the blankets that was dropped and headed for the shower.

This is the part of the day Emelie enjoys most. Early morning showers when everyone is still asleep as the sun begins to rise.

Here she can be alone in her thoughts and prepare for whatever day has in store for her. However, this particular morning her mind was filled with one thing.

'Kurt...'

Even though she knows that he is different, that he was not supposed to be here and screwing with whatever changes fate has planned in advance. She couldn't help but smile.

Because from what she's seen, Kurt is strong which meant this was a chance. A chance to make things right. A chance to save a lot of people. But most importantly, a chance to save *him*.

She turned off the shower and covered herself with a towel. In the bedroom Amy shifted in her sleep and barely opened her eyes when she noticed Emelie changing into her running gear.

"Emelie," Her voice was still raspy from the sleep, "Good morning. You're up so early again?"

"Morning Amy. And yes, I need to be in tip-top shape for next weekend."

"Ah yes, training. I guess they don't call you the best for nothing. I could never see myself being so energetic in the morning."

Emelie put her chain with two tags around her neck. One contained her personal info and the other contained her student info. She then grabbed a separate tag which contained all of her music which also acted as a recording device and wore it around her wrist band.

When she was finished getting ready she stood by the door and put on her running shoes.

"I'll be back in an hour. You can still catch up on some sleep if you need it. I'll be here to wake you up when I get back."

"Okaaay~" Amy responded lazily and went back to sleep.

Emelie left the room and headed to the common room where she would normally greet the dorm mother. What she found instead was a student wearing what looked to be a cleaning hat and an apron who was sweeping the floor. When she got closer, she immediately recognised that irritating mug which she'd rather not see.

"Austin?"

"E-Emelie!" He dropped the broom.

"Be quiet you idiot. Unless you want to receive another complaint."

"O-oh. S-sorry I didn't mean to—"

"Emelie. Good morning. This little servant of mine didn't bother you did he?" The dorm mother entered the common room and greeted her.

"Good morning dorm mother and..." she looked at Austin who was practically shaking in his boots. She smirked mischievously and said, "Yes. Austin was making quite the ruckus when I arrived."

"What! No i didn't—"

"Austin. It seems that cleaning the foyer wasn't enough morning punishment for you. Go clean the kitchen for me and make sure you're done before the academy starts."

"But I didn't—"

"Now."

"... Yes ma'am." He walked away with his head down.

"Good grief, will that boy ever lift up his socks and start acting proper?"

"No." Emelie glared at his retreating back and said quietly to herself. "He won't."

She turned to the door and put her student tag on the scanner. It then made a beeping sound to indicate that the door was now unlocked.

"Have fun on your run." The dorm mother waved.

Emelie nodded in response and, after some light stretches, began jogging.

Normally the route she would have taken followed a predetermined path that would start from the high hills of the dormitory all the way down into the city where she would then run straight down the main road and to the commercial district and back.

Although this type of challenge would leave anyone winded after only making it down to the city, for Emelie this was child's play.

That would've been what she'd done but this time she decided to take a different path.

When she made it to the city she decided instead to run along a path of where Kurt had been, if she had to guess based on rumors and facts.

She first arrived at the river where he knocked out Maxwell Junior while supposedly chasing a member of the cult and being covered in blood. The river was calm as she ran alongside it and the people were getting ready to open business.

'Same old, same old.' She thought and continued on.

Next, she arrived at the park where Peter died. The park itself, however, was closed and taped up.

'It's obviously still under investigation. Not that they'd find anything.'

She briefly looked at the place then without stopping her pace carried on.

Next, she arrived at the gate of the alleyway where she first met Kurt. She remembered that day very clearly as it was the first time she'd seen something happen that wasn't supposed to.

'If Diana hadn't left for whatever meeting she had to go to then the robbers would've made the deal with that cultist and been killed in the process. The cultist would've left the cleanup to his 'brothers and sisters' while he leaves the alleyway through this gate as a priest in disguise.'

But it was Kurt who walked out this gate instead, and although there were small traces of blood on him there were no signs of a fight nor any bodies...'

She then ran past the City View hotel, without knowing that it was the place where he was actually staying, and also ran past the place where Amy said she first met Kurt.

When she turned the corner she saw a familiar face which she hadn't met in this cycle yet.

'Cindy...'

Upon seeing Cindy enter Sophie's Diner, she decided that she had completed her morning run and that it was time for a light breakfast. Emelie then quickly cooled off her sweat using magic and entered the diner.

ring ring

"Welcome customer!" Cindy energetically greeted. "Table for one? Or are you expecting someone?"

"For one please."

"Got'cha! Right this way if you would." She grabbed the menu from the counter and led Emelie to her seat.

"Is there anything you'd like to drink in the meantime?"

"No need to wait. I'll be quick." Emelie quickly surfed through the pages of the menu.

'Looks like this is the same at least.'

She closed the booklet and handed it to Cindy. "I'll have Forktail bacon and Cockatrice scrambled egg."

"And how would you like your toast?"

"Golden brown. As for the drink, a medium sized water."

"Got it!" She closed her little notebook. "I'll be back in 10 minutes with your breakfast."

The time was currently 06:45am. The city's early risers and work goers could be seen starting and going about their day.

Everything looked... normal.

'For now, that is.'

Cindy arrived 10 minutes later and set down her food and water.

"If there's anything else you need, don't hesitate to call me." She smiled politely

"Will do."

Nothing of note happened for the rest of her time in the city. She ate, paid for her food and jogged back to the dorms.

She arrived back at the dorms at 07:30am.

Austin, as expected, was grumbling to himself as he cleaned the entrance walkway.

"This shit should've been that old hag's job. Why the fuck do I have to do this."

Emelie briefly looked at him in disgust before going inside.

When she got to her room, she found Amy's blankets once again on the floor while she slept in a weird snow angel position.

"Amy, get up. Academy starts in an hour."

"Zzz... mmm... Emelie... happy Thrust-day."

"It's Thursday not Thrust-day, whatever that means. Now wake up. I'm going to take another shower."

"Why do you always take two showers in the morning?" Amy asked as she got up from bed and picked up her blankets.

"First shower is to wake me up. Second is to wash off the sweat."

"Oof. Just listening to you is making me drained for the day."

"I would love it if you could join me in the mornings." Emelie smirked. "Maybe then you would actually catch the next thief who tries to rob you."

"No. Thank. You." She crossed her arms into a X. "That's why people like you and Kurt exist. To save us lowly people in our time of need."

"But what if I'm not there for you?" She paused at the bathroom door.

"Pfft! When has that ever happened?"

'More times than I'd like to admit.' She thought with a slightly sad face. Luckily Amy didn't see it.

Once they were both finished with their morning routines, they headed for the academy.

"By the way Emy I according to my intel Dale has woken up from his coma and will be returning next Monday."

"Dale?"

"Yeah. Isn't he from your class? How come you don't remember him? He even challenged you for your representative spot."

"Sorry. My mind's been occupied with other things."

"Let me guess." She turned to get a closer at Emelie's face. "It's Kurt, right! I still remember how you were practically on edge around him, hahaha!"

Following the girls from a few paces behind was Austin, who tried his best to listen in on what they were saying.

'Again with that name! Seriously, who the hell is Kurt?!'