

S.P.E.C.T.O.R 433

Chapter 433: Philips' request

"You really do care for her, don't you?" Rowena asked with a smile.

"Wasn't that obvious?" Adam replied.

"Perhaps," Rowena replied as she stared at Adam for a few moments until he asked, "Can you please explain what you meant when you said 'Stacey claimed that she was almost killed'?"

"Honestly, no one is really sure what happened," Rowena replied with an apologetic look.

"What?" Adam asked with a frown.

"Allow me to try and explain," Rowena replied before she began. "As is customary every year, I, along with Philip, went to attend the Festival of Blood in the capital city, as did many other members of the Nosferatu family.

The past few years, Stacey had always accompanied Philip and me to the festival; this time, however, Philip had requested that we go to the festival as just the two of us, as a date. Since it had been so long since the two of us had been on a date, I happily accepted after making sure that Stacey's parents would take her to the festival.

As it turned out, I should never have accepted Philips' request and Stacey's parents failed to keep their word."

"You mean they didn't take her to the festival?" Adam asked before adding, "What's the deal with her parents? She has never told me about them."

"You must understand, but I didn't realise it until later, that my son, James, Stacey's father, is a truly terrible father.

Stacey is an only child. It was only later that I found out that the reason Stacey's parents never had any more children was that James had only conceived Stacey with his wife because he wanted to experience what having a child was like."

"He only conceived Stacey as an experiment?" Adam asked in an appalled tone.

"Apparently," Rowean replied sadly.

"Does Stacey know this? And why didn't her mother do or say anything?"

"I honestly don't know if Stacey is aware. I have always been too afraid to broach the subject with her. As for her mother, Sarah, well, her one goal in life is to live comfortably.

She comes from a Terran family that is not overly well off and somehow managed to attract James's attention. They dated for a while before they were married. It was only later, after everything had happened, that I discovered that Sarah would do anything James asked, as long as she got to live in comfort, while James only married Sarah because she agreed to do everything he told her."

"So she's essentially his slave?" Adam asked.

"In a way, I suppose, just without the implant," Rowean replied.

"Implant?" Adam asked curiously.

"Slavery isn't an uncommon thing in the universe. Since slavery has never been outlawed in the Universal Senate, it is up to the respective galaxies and planets to decide whether to allow slavery, and many do.

In order to control these slaves and guarantee obedience from them. They each have a micro-explosive implant inserted into the skulls. Should the slave ever attempt to kill their owner, the micro explosive will detonate, destroying the brain. Of course, the owner is free to detonate it themselves if they so wish."

“I honestly don’t know how to feel about that,” Adam replied.

“I take it slavery isn’t a thing on Earth?” Rowean asked.

“It was in the past. But every country on Earth has since outlawed it, though things like human trafficking still exist,” Adam replied before adding, “But please, carry on with what you were saying.”

“Because my Nosferatu family is one of the top Brood families, we are very rich, powerful and have a lot of influence over the rest of Brood society. This allows Sarah to live the life of luxury and comfort she has always wanted.

James, on the other hand, has always been very ambitious, which is probably why he wanted a wife who would do whatever he said, since I believe he enjoys being above others and aims to take over the family one day.

So the day of the festival came and as we had agreed upon, Philip and I went on our date to the festival as planned, or so I thought. While it started off fun and enjoyable, that soon changed as we reached the Temple of Blood.”

“The Temple of Blood?” Adam asked with a raised eyebrow.

“It’s a temple created to honour our progenitor, as it stands on the land where the progenitor brought the first Brood into existence.

While the progenitor’s presence is not mandatory at the festival of blood, since no one can make any demands of him, should he wish to appear during the festival, which he has done on many occasions, it is at the temple of blood that he will honour us with his presence.

It is also a great honour and privilege for a Brood to wed within the temple of blood, whether a normal marriage or the life-bind ceremony.

In fact, the greatest honour a marrying Brood can receive is for the progenitor to oversee the wedding himself.”

“Let me guess, the progenitor honoured you all with his presence that year and Philip begged you to ask the progenitor to preside over your life-bind ceremony?” Adam remarked.

“Was it that obvious?” Rowena asked with a sad smile.

“From what you have already told me, yes,” Adam nodded.

“Well, it’s as you guessed, but also worse,” Rowena said with a sad sigh as she continued. “The progenitor graced us with his presence and every Brood in attendance was thrilled while those that were elsewhere in the city rushed towards the temple of blood as soon as they heard the news.

Philip could not resist asking me to make the request of the progenitor to oversee our life-bind ceremony and then his turning. I naturally refused, as I had been doing for weeks now, every time he asked me.

This time, however, Philip went too far. He directly ignored my refusal and called out to the progenitor, asking him to oversee our ceremony.”

“You’re kidding?” Adam asked in shock before adding, “I understand that he was desperate to survive. But going against your wishes and in front of the creator of your race, no less.”

“Agreed. Unfortunately for me, the progenitor happened to hear Philips’ request, and since I was already acquainted with the progenitor at that time, he happily approached and said he would be honoured to preside over our ceremony, causing the enormous crowd that had gathered to cheer loudly.”

“Ouch, talk about pressure,” Adam remarked.

“Right, I now had to choose to either publicly refuse and humiliate Philip in front of the giant crowd, or succumb to the pressure and go through with the ritual.”

"I can already guess what response you gave, seeing as Philip is deceased, how you have my sympathies because it can't have been hard when he put you under such pressure. He basically forced your hand."

"It was hard and thank you."

"Still, if he tried to force you to do something against your will, then he didn't deserve to perform the life-bind ceremony with you, be turned by you or honestly even marry you. So I'm glad that you refused him, although I imagine he didn't take it well."

"Not well at all," Rowena said while shaking her head before continuing, "As I once again explained why I was unwilling to perform the life-bind ceremony with him, the progenitor nodded in understanding and went to address some other Brood when Philip lost his cool and started openly shouting at me. Claiming that I had never loved him, that I was unfaithful and openly cursing me before the progenitor and the enormous crowd. It was naturally the most embarrassing moment of my long life and eventually I could take no more and left the temple as countless people, including the progenitor, looked at me and Philip's curses continued to echo within."

"I'm sorry you had to go through that. I'm guessing the fact that he was cursing within the temple didn't go down too well?" Adam asked.

"Not at all. I later heard that after I left, Philip was arrested by the security services and thrown into prison for the remainder of the festival."

"So what about Stacey? Did something happen to her at the festival?" Adam asked.

"No. In the end, James and Sarah decided not to take Stacey to the festival and went with some friends instead, even though they told me they would. Stacey was left back at the family residence and during this time, she claims she was attacked."

"She claims?" Adam asked with a frown before adding, "You don't believe her?"

"I do," Rowena nodded before continuing, "I mean, I saw the pool of her blood, except the whole thing makes no sense."

“What do you mean?” Adam asked, confused.

“Stacey claims that she was stabbed in the back where her heart was while she was out walking in the garden. Yet you have seen her back; there is no evidence that a stab wound was ever there.”