THORNS 41

Chapter 41: Tempest Fury

"You know, that was a pretty nice thing you did back there."

Dominik and Kurt were walking up the hilled road that led to Future Academy when Dominik brought up the topic of what Kurt had done back at the orphanage.

"It’s nothing really. Just did what felt right."

"You call paying for extra security and two kids’ school fees nothing? Most people would’ve just dropped them off at the orphanage and called it a day. Some might’ve straight up just ignored them completely. That’s one big heart you got in your chest."

"Now you’re just exaggerating."

"Nuh uh! You can’t fool me, Kurt. I got special eyes you see, and they told me that you’re one of the good ones. Clearly, they weren’t mistaken."

"You got special eyes?" Kurt looked at Dominik’s golden pupils.

"D-Damn, you don’t have to look at me like that dude! I was only messing with you. It’s just a gut feeling I had, is all."

"Oh... And here I thought I could yoink those eyes for myself."

"Huh?" Dominik paused.

"What? I was only messing with you." Kurt turned back and shrugged his shoulders.

"... Haha. For some reason it felt like you were being serious. You gotta work on your humor."

"Well, I thought it was pretty funny. One of my favourite shows has this guy taking peoples special eyes and using it for himself. He's dead though. Good riddance."

"Sounds... *gulp* intense. You watch some interesting things."

"I'd let you watch it too. I bet you would've loved it since the main character basically has the same ability as you by reading people. But sadly, it's lost."

"Lost? Must be an old show."

"Yeah." 'Lost to time that is.'

They both reached a stopping point at the top of the hill where there were two arrowed signs that pointed up and right.

"Up for the academy." Kurt started.

"And right for the dormitory." Dominik finished.

"So, where to first? You think Emelie is at the dorms or is she still at the academy?"

"Hmm... The academy did end about thirty minutes ago so she could be at the dorms, but if I were to guess, I'd say she's still at the academy!" Dominik snapped his fingers.

"Why'd you guess that?"

"Well duh! It's obviously because she's preparing for the tournament. She's probably training her ass off so as to not let her teammates down. She's not called 'The Best' for nothing y'know?"

"Alright alright! Enough with the glazing. To the academy we go."

They both then walked straight ahead for the academy in order to find Emelie.

Once the front gates came into view, they saw two girls who looked strikingly similar to each other and were standing by it as if waiting for someone. One of them looked particularly pissed off while the other looked like they were on the verge of crying.

"Kurt, look! It's the Wingard sisters!" Dominik nudged at him.

"The who?"

"Of course you don't know," Dominik looked disappointed but then immediately turned excited again. "They're the youngest to be part of the Eldoria's representatives!"

"Woow. That sounds like quite the accomplishment. Good for them." Kurt said dryly, not really caring about who they are.

"Hold on! Let me just..." Dominik reached into his robes and grabbed a poster with the two sisters on it.

"What the hell is that?"

"My autograph poster. I knew we were coming here today so I brought a bunch of posters for the ten representatives to sign. Gotta strike while the iron's hot." He flashed Kurt a dashing smile and a thumbs up.

"Oh boy..."

As they got closer, they could hear that an argument was going on between them. Or rather, a one-sided argument as only one of them was yelling.

"Argh! How could you forget to tell the butler that we were ending classes early, Summer!? I told you to tell him, didn't I? Now we look like idiots waiting here!"

"You did. I-I'm sorry, Autumn. But I only forgot since *sniff* y-you were rushing me this morning..."

"Oh, so it's my fault, is it?! You knew that this would be the last day we get to see Emelie before the tournament, but you still decided to stay up late cooking, causing you to oversleep!"

"Well w-why didn't you just tell the butler that we'll be out early? B-Besides you also stayed up late while training. The way I see it, w-we're both at fault."

"That's why I was also in a rush!"

"Excuse me, girls." Kurt interrupted them.

"What do you want, ugly!?"

"U-Ugly??" Kurt was stunned.

"Pfft heh heh heh..." Dominik snickered.

"I-I'm so sorry about my sister!" Summer profusely bowed up and down. "She's in a really bad mood as you can see."

"I-It's okay, I understand. My friend and I were hoping to ask you something."

"Oh! Are you a prefect by any chance?" She asked as she noticed Dominik's uniform. "I'd be happy to help you both! My name is Summer Wingard, and this is my sister, Autumn Wingard."

"Hmph!" Autumn looked away, not wanting to deal with them.

"Thank you, Summer. My name’s Kurt."

"And I’m Dominik!"

"We’re actually looking for Emelie Herst. Is she still in school perhaps?" Kurt asked her.

"If you’re looking for Emelie, she went back to the do–"

"What’s it to you, ugly?! What do you want with Emelie?!"

"...What?"

"I said what’s it to you, U.G.L.Y! You fucking deaf too?!"

A vein bulged on Kurt’s head. The more he listened to her, the more it was ready to burst.

"Sorry Autumn but do you mind if I spoke to your sister. I’d rather not listen to a chipmunk that sounds high on helium."

"What did you just call me?!"

"A-Autumn! You don’t have to be so aggressive..."

"Yeah Kurt, just ignore her and move on..."

Both Summer and Dominik tried to calm their side of this feud but sadly, none of them were having it.

"I called you a chipmunk but let’s add another one. You pipsqueak."

"You mother..."

"Autumn don’t! –"

BWOOSH!

"Waaaaah!"

Kurt flew backwards in the air as wind got blasted through his abdomen.

"Oh shit! Kurt!" Dominik shot fire out his feet as flew towards where Kurt would land.

"Autumn! Why would you do that?! They’ve been nothing but nice the whole time!"

"Did you not just hear what he called me! A chipmunk! A pipsqueak!"

"Only because you called him names first!"

On the other side of the road, Dominik just barely managed to catch Kurt. Albeit in a princess carry.

"Got’cha!"

"Urgh! Put me down!"

"Easy there!" Dominik put him down gently. "You alright man? You got sent pretty high up."

"I feel like I’m gonna puke. What the hell did she do?"

"Yeah... I forgot to mention this but those two are extremely proficient in wind magic. So much so that they are called the ’Cyclone Sisters’."

"Cyclone? Not Tornado?"

"No, you heard me right. But that’s only if they use 100% of their magic."

"Jesus..."

"And that’s why they’re a representative despite only being in year one. And why I could never make it..." Dominik looked sadly at the ground.

"Well, what about now?" Kurt snapped him out of his self-deprecation.

"What do you mean?"

"Can you beat someone like them the way you are now?"

"Ha! I’m much smarter and stronger than I was back then so I could probably take them. Why?"

"Cause it looks like we’ve picked ourselves a fight."

Floating slowly towards them was Autumn and Summer. The winds shook violently around them as they came closer and closer.

When Kurt looked at Summer, he could clearly see her mouth the words "I’m sorry".

"Let’s end this quickly, Dom."

"Excuse me, WHAT!? I don’t know if you know this, Kurt, but fire and wind don’t mix well!" Dominik started panicking as he looked at the trees around them which seemed like they might topple over at any time.

"I thought you had water too?!" Kurt started screaming as the winds howling were too loud to be heard over their normal voices.

"What the?! How’d you know?! That was supposed to be my ace in the hole!"

"You showed me back at that sussy neighbourhood, remember?!"

"Oh right, your hand! By the way, is it doing alright?!"

"Who’s the pipsqueak now, you ugly shithead!" Autumn threw a giant ball of concentrated wind at the both of them.

BWOOSH!

""Oh shit!"" They managed to safely dodge it by jumping on opposite ends.

"Dominik! Use smokescreen!" Kurt yelled.

"Please don’t let me get fired, pleeease don’t let me get fired!" As Dominik concentrated, a highly condensed ball of fire and water were being summoned on each of his hands.

"I won’t let you!" Autumn shot another gust of wind, but it was too late.

"Here goes nothing!" Dominik spread his arms out and clapped them hard together, sending a giant wave of smoke around the area.

CLAP!

SHHHHHHHHHHH!

Autumn’s vision was completely obscured, as well as the fumes from the smoke got caught up in her throat.

"You think this smoke will work *cough!* against me?! Well think again!"

She easily managed to gather up all the smoke using her wind abilities and shot it up into the atmosphere. When she looked again at her opponents, however, they were nowhere to be seen.

"KYAA!"

"Summer!" She turned around and saw that Kurt was holding a knife to her throat.

"You fucking bastard! Let go of my sister!"

"Dominik, now!" Kurt signaled him.

Dominik came flying down from the sky and quickly managed to subdue and cuff her.

"Sorry about this Ms. Wingard. These cuffs are only meant to be used on criminals, but I fear this is the only way I could calm you down."

"Errgh! My magic! What did you do?!" She yelled on the floor as she struggled to summon any more wind.

"What is going on here!?" From the front gates came another two students to see what the commotion was.

"Amber! Victor! Help me!" Autumn screamed.

Chapter 42: To The Dorms!

"Autumn! Why are you being arrested by a prefect!?" Amber came running to try and sort this mess out.

"My sister! They got my sister! Help her!"

"Your sister looks fine." Victor pointed at Kurt who'd long since removed the knife from her throat.

"I'm sorry, Autumn. But this was the only way to distract you long enough for the prefect to take you down."

"Summer you... you played me?! I thought you'd say you'd help me!?"

"I am helping you!"

"By siding with the enemy?!"

"By calming you down! You're the one who picked a fight with them first! Why couldn't you just *sniff* let me *sob* handle it." Tears ran down her face when she saw that Autumn wasn't listening to her.

"No no no, don't cry Summer! Hey! Let me out of this thing!" She struggled to turn her head towards Dominik who was holding her down.

"You promise you won't throw another fit?"

"Argh, yes, I promise! Just let me out already!"

When Dominik released the cuffs, Autumn immediately spirited to Summer and held her in a tight embrace.

"I’m sorry Summer. I... I’m sorry I yelled at you. You know when you cry *sniff* I start crying..."

’What is even happening...’ Kurt looked at this somewhat emotional scene with a deadpan face.

"So, I take it this was all a misunderstanding?" Amber walked up and asked Kurt.

"Erm... yes. We only ever wanted to know where we could find Emelie Herst. One thing led to another and...well... this is how things ended up." Kurt pointed his head to the two sisters who were full on sobbing in each other’s arms.

"I’d like to apologise as well, ha ha." Dominik chimed in.

"I see." Amber nodded. She then whispered to both of them so as to let herself be heard from by sisters.

"I can guess that Autumn must’ve lost her temper when you mentioned the name ’Emelie’. She’s got this... competitive side to her that lights up and runs loose whenever she hears that name brought up in any way."

"That’s exactly what happened." Kurt whispered back.

"I knew it! Oh, that child can be such a handful at times. If that’s the case, then there’s no need to apologise since you weren’t in the wrong."

"I understand. I also forgive her."

"But Kurt. didn’t you also call her a bunch of nam– Oof!"

Kurt elbowed Dominik right in the ribs to stop him from talking.

"Be careful Dom. I saw a mosquito landing on your clothes. I got it though so you're all good.

"Oh my, Mr. Prefect! Are you alright?" Amber hurried to check on him.

"I-It's nothing. T-Thanks Kurt. I don't know what I would've done without you."

"You're welcome."

"Oh wow. You two must be close friends huh? This will certainly fill my creative ideas when writing my new novel, hehehe"

"President Amber Strongwill, I've led the two sisters inside the building and called their family butler. He should be soon since he was in the nearby area."

"O-Oh *slrrp*" Amber wiped the drool from her mouth, "Good work Victor. That's why you're my Vice President. Always so focused."

"Thank you, President. Your praise always lifts my spirits."

"Now," she turned her attention back to the matter at hand, "You said that you were looking for Emelie Herst, correct? If I may be so bold as to ask, is she in any trouble?"

"I'm afraid this is something private that only she may hear about. But if it puts your mind at ease then what I can say is that she is not in any trouble. In fact, it's the opposite. She may be able to help us solve this particular piece of trouble." Dominik answered her vaguely.

"That's all I needed to hear, Mr. Prefect." Amber clapped her hands once in delight. "Emelie is currently at the dorms right now. Although you might want to hurry, as she might be leaving for her family's residence soon so that she can properly prepare for the tournament."

Kurt looked at Dominik with the face of ridicule. "So much for 'She's training at the academy'. What if she's already gone? C'mon dude, we gotta hurry." He turned back and got ready to run down the hill.

"Actually. Can I leave this to you? I have some business here at the academy I'd like to get done before I leave."

"Suit yourself. Just don't be long."

"Sure."

Kurt then headed down the hill and ran for the dorms.

"You have business here Mr. Prefect? Is there anything I could help you with?" Amber asked Dominik.

"Not with the council but rather with Principal Valentine. However, I would appreciate it if you could escort me there."

"Certainly. Although if this was an official visit, I'd imagine that Secretary Mia would've come to collect you."

"Oh, you know my girlfriend hey~"

"You're girlfriend?? But I thought you and Kurt... nevermind... it seems it was just my delusions wanting to overwrite what is reality..."

"Hmm?" Dominik looked at her confusingly wondering what she meant to say.

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"Excuse me young man!"

"Yeah? What is it? I'm kinda in a hurry so could you make it quick?" Kurt stopped running but continued to spot jog when an old man riding a coach pulled up beside him.

"Sorry to disturb you on your run but did you just come from Future Academy?"

"Yes."

"And were the Wingard sisters waiting at the front gate?"

"Yes."

"And... How were they? Particularly the one with the braided pigtails?"

"Pissy."

"Oh dear Goddess above, have mercy on my soul. Thank you for the honesty, young man. I came as fast as I could when I received the call, but it looks like I'm in for a whirl of nagging."

"My condolences. Is that all?"

"Yes. That would be all."

"Cool." Kurt ran on and took the turn that led to the dorms.

"... It would seem that Father Time is playing tricks with all of us." The coachman watched him quickly disappear from sight; he then cracked the whip for the horses to hurry to his own destination.

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"Haaa haaaa, made it." Kurt panted and stopped in front of the dorms. He first fixed his clothes then steadied his breathing before knocking on the door.

’It’s a glass door though? So shouldn’t they be able to see me?’ He looked through the door and sure enough a bunch of students were relaxing in what looked to be the common room.

When one of them noticed him, they tapped on the rest of their friends and pointed at Kurt.

’Just open the door instead of looking at me like I’m some sort of zoo animal.’ He thought as he waved to them.

Finally, a girl got up from her seat and went to open the door.

"Good afternoon, sir. Is there something you need? If you’re looking for the academy, then believe you took the wrong turn. This is the student dormitory you see."

"Good afternoon. And no, this is exactly where I should be."

"I-It is?"

The way Kurt was looking at her made it seem like there was a handsome filter around him. This, however, was just a delusion that she created.

"I’m actually here looking for someone. It’s very important and I hope I’m not too late."

"N-No. I believe she was waiting for you all this time." Her eyes grew wider at the anticipation.

"Really? That’s great! Then, can you call Emelie Herst for me?"

The delusion immediately shattered when she heard that name.

"Oh... Emelie huh? Ha ha..."

"You know her? What am I saying, of course you do. Who doesn't know Emelie Herst, amirite?" Kurt tried making light of the situation seeing how suddenly her mood dropped.

"Y-yeah... who doesn't ha ha... She's also my opposite door roommate. Come inside. I'll call her."

"Thank you. You're a lifesaver." Kurt stood inside by the counter while the girl went upstairs to call Emelie.

"Oh my, who's this handsome guest?"

"Hmm?"

The dorm mother came out of the kitchen to greet him. She was holding two heavy bottles filled with water and even though the other students didn't notice it, Kurt saw the struggle her hands were in and offered to help her.

"Here, I got this." He took one bottle from her.

"Thank you," She relaxed her shoulder as the tension was released. "I was supposed to have someone helping me with this, but it looks like he ditched work. Maybe I was going too easy on him and an even harsher punishment is necessary."

"Ha ha. Suck to be him I guess."

"Kurt?" Emelie called him from up the stairs.

"Emelie! Good afternoon." Kurt was relieved to know that she was still here.

"What are you doing here?" She rushed down the stairs to meet with him.

"I’m here to continue the conversation we had when you dragged me to the corner of that building the other day, remember?"

"NANI THE FUCK?!"

"Emelie dragged a man away!?"

"The Emelie Herst is interested in someone!?"

"Nooooo! My hopes and dreams..."

The students around them all started going into a frenzy when they heard what he said.

"Stop misunderstanding you idiots! And you, come with me!" She took Kurt by the arm and pulled him along with her.

"She’s dragging him away just like he said!"

"What meaning is there to life when I know that she’s taken..."