THORNS 43

Chapter 43: Secrets Shared

Shut!

"Why did you have to go and say that!?" Emelie stomped up and down with her hands on her head.

"To be honest I thought it'd be kinda funny, and boy oh boy were their reactions priceless heh heh."

"I already have enough people bothering me. Now I have to deal with this too? Fuck that! You better clear up this misunderstanding before you leave!"

"Yeesh. Trust me, if you go back and listen to what I said you'd see it wasn't that bad and that you're just overreacting. But sure, I'll clear it up. Want me to go right now?"

"... No. If you go back in now, you'll only cause another ruckus. Also like you said, we need to finish that conversation we had back then. It's more important."

"Glad to see your heads on straight. Let's head somewhere more private since it looks like the glass door might break with those kid's faces plastered on like that." Kurt pointed to the door and indeed it looked like a bunch of zombies wanting to break through.

"... Yes. Let's." They both walked away from the prying eyes.

"Emelie noooooooo!"

"Whyyyyyy!"

...

"Here should be fine." She said as she stood next to a swing.

"Such a big open field behind the dorms. Plus, a recreational park? You guys sure are spoiled."

"It’s the best academy in the whole continent. This is nothing compared to the facilities we have at school." Emelie bragged as she popped a piece of candy in her mouth.

"You want?" She offered.

"Sure. He took a ball of chewing gum and ate it.

After standing in silence while looking at nothing in particular, Emelie moved.

"Kurt." She suddenly stood right in front of him with a serious look on her face.

"Yeah?"

"I... I’ve decided to trust you in telling this secret because I believe we can help each other."

"Does this have anything to do about why you’re so weary of me?"

"This has everything to do with why I’m so weary of you. Once I tell you, it will all make sense, but I need you to give me your word that you won’t tell anyone else. My plans are already going down the shitter thanks to you. I don’t need another anomaly."

"... What if I don’t? What’s going to happen?"

"I’ll let you leave here and we’ll pretend like today never happened. But Kurt, I swear that if our paths cross again and you’ve somehow interfered with my plans, I’ll kill you. They don’t call me ’The Best’ for nothing."

When Kurt looked into her eyes, he saw that there was absolutely no life in them. Her hands twitched slightly and there was an unnatural pulse in the air.

’She’s dead serious. Hell, she must’ve purposefully gotten stabbed back then in order to feel the situation out. There must be something deeply broken in her to give off this kind of aura.’

He met her resolve with his own and gave her one clear cut answer.

"I have my word."

"... Thank you, Kurt." She smiled, bringing life back to her eyes.

"So what’s the big secret?"

"I... I’m what you would call... a regressor."

A chilling wind blew past them both as she revealed her secret.

"... You... Are you dumb? I’m sorry. I didn’t know..."

"Not that kind of regressor you idiot! Pfft ahaha!"

"Woah! Why’re you laughing all of a sudden?" Kurt smiled.

"S-Sorry, ha ha." She rubbed her eyes from the tears that were welling up. "It’s just that that wasn’t the reply I was expecting. Especially with the whole serious vibe in the air."

Out on the distant rooftops of the dorms, three nerdy students were spying on Emelie and Kurt through their binoculars.

"L-Look at how she’s laughing!" A nerd with big square glasses spoke in absolute shock.

"Let me see!" A lanky nerd with long rectangle glasses and buck teeth took the binoculars next. "N-No! My queen! I-I’ve never seen her with such a joyful expression before."

"Stop hogging and let me see!" A chubby nerd with a freckled face took the binoculars last. "E-Emelie why must you look so! I-I know I can make you just as happy if you just give me the chance..."

Turning attention back to the field, Emelie has finally stopped laughing and started explaining what she meant."

"By regressor I mean that I’ve travelled back in time."

"Back in time? So, you’re from the future?"

"Yes."

"Okay so you’re from the future. But that doesn’t explain why you were so weary of me. Just because you came back doesn’t mean things can’t change and be different from what you know."

"I became weary of you because I’m currently on my 100th regression." Emelie dropped the bombshell.

"... What? 100th? How?"

"I still don’t know how or why I always return but what I do know is that because of many various events that will take place in the future, the world effectively gets destroyed in 10 years. And at that point, I return."

"10 years huh? That’s not a lot of time."

"I know. And it’s never been more than that."

"So what events are you talking about?"

"I cannot tell you all of them since there are a lot of little things that all fit into the big picture, but what I can say is that one, the cult is heavily involved therefore must be stopped, and two, it will be the return of the Monster Invasion. When they arrive, that is when you know it’s pretty much over."

"I see. So, all those times you question who I was..."

"Is because I’ve never, and I mean ever, seen you before. I tried a lot of things these past 99 cycles. A lot of good things, a lot of selfish things and especially a lot of bad things. I’ve met many good people, and I’ve worked with the worst. I’ve had a lot to live for in many cycles, and I’ve given up many things in others. I cannot begin to count the number of times I thought I’ve won and could finally settle with my loved one only for him to be snatched away from me. I-I had kids that I could love and cherish only for them to be snatched away from me. Nothing I did changed anything. No one I talked to could help me change the fate of this world. Just... nothing. Until, from out of nowhere, you came along."

Kurt was momentarily stunned as she basically poured her heart and guts out, all in one big breath.

"... What makes you think I could be the change to anything?"

"Because Kurt!" She tightly grabbed his arms. "I’ve never seen you before!"

"You’re starting to sound like a mad woman."

"Mad?! Kurt, I’ve jumped over the line of sanity hundreds and hundreds of years ago! You show up out of nowhere and are at places you’re not supposed to be. You also get involved with people with whom I’ve never seen them be with! Dominik was never meant to have a ’best friend’ and Peter was not supposed to die! You even punched royalty for fucks sake! Are you stupid?!"

"Wait, how do you know about that last part?"

"It was in the newspaper! *Huff* *wheeze*" Emelie’s chest expanded and contracted as she tried to calm whatever feeling was growing in her chest. "Kurt, show me your personal tag..."

"...Why?"

"Just please show it to me..."

Kurt complied and showed her his personal tag. He then imbued it with mana, and the holographic popup appeared.

"Kurt... Rossana..." She read slowly. "Rossana? Riverton? Kurt I’ve been all across Riverton and have never heard the family name of Rossana."

"I’m from a secret ninja village?"

"There’s no such thing as a fucking secret ninja village."

’Dammit Dominik! You too Chief Hudson!’

"Since you told me your secret, it’s only fair I tell you mine."

"Se..cret?" Emelie stuttered softly.

"Yes. Similarly to you regressing to the past, I too come from the past. But I’m not talking about some tens or hundreds or even thousands or years in the past. I’m talking about a time before magic was even a thing."

"A time before magic? Bullshit."

"It’s the truth." Kurt shrugged." The short story would be I started seeing things and people from this timeline phase through my reality. I then fainted and woke up at the docks of Eldoria where an old man called Willy said that I’ve been blessed by the Goddess Bula."

"So, you’re not from this timeline?" Emelie asked to confirm.

"Correct."

"And you don’t know how you got here?"

"Also correct."

"Didn’t you have a family or a life before all this? Why are you so calm?"

"Family’s all dead. I got fired the day before I time leaped and I didn’t even have any friends outside of work. So, when I got fired, the friends went with it."

Emelie stared at him in bewilderment and looked for any trace of a lie. And when she couldn’t find anything, she went absolutely ballistic.

"Ha...hahaha! AHAHAHAHAHA! I KNEW IT!" She held his hands and started jumping up and down with tears of joy in her eyes. "I knew you were different! I just knew it! Ahahahaha!"

’Who the hell is this girl?! What happened to the stoic Emelie?!’

Although not many were there to witness it, Emelie had the most beautiful and purest form of a smile she’d ever worn in a very long time.

Chapter 44: High Tensions

"That would be the door to Principal Valentine’s office." Amber pointed. "Will you be alright from here?"

"Yes, thank you President Amber. I didn't tell you this but I'm actually an alumnus of Future Academy, ha ha." Dominik revealed a small tidbit about himself.

"Oh! No wonder you didn't seem too lost when walking through the building. I just chalked it up to you visiting here before, but that would be strange since I'd know about it. I have a very good memory, you see."

"I'd imagine so. Not just anyone could be the student council president of Future Academy."

"Hehe, you flatter me." Amber blushed at the compliment. "Now if you'll excuse me, I have other matters to attend to. It was nice meeting you, Prefect Dominik."

"You too." They both shook hands and went opposite ways.

"Oh wait! President Amber! Hold on! I forgot something!" Dominik ran back to her.

"Yes?" She turned back.

Dominik rummaged through his robe in order to find something.

"Found it!" He took out a marker and a poster of Amber.

"I'm actually a big fan of the ten representatives. Do you mind if I have your autograph? I didn't really get the chance to ask the Wingard twins, and the Vice President was already gone by the time I wanted to ask him. So could you spare me this opportunity and at least sign this one?"

"Of course. It's no problem at all." She took the marker and elegantly signed the poster. "There you go."

"Thank you so much!" He looked at it like it was a piece of sacred treasure.

"You know I should be the one asking you for an autograph. The way you easily handled the Wingard twins was very impressive."

’She was watching the whole time? Why didn’t she step in earlier then?’

"You’re probably wondering why I didn’t intervene much sooner if I had been there all that time. Truth is I wanted to see what a prefect is capable of and the results were very satisfying to see. I didn’t even have to use force to stop them. It makes me confident knowing we have people like you keeping our streets safe."

"O-Oh. That was mostly thanks to my friend."

"No. I just don’t see how he would’ve won if you weren’t there. So don’t put yourself down like that. You’re strong. Very strong. So much so that if you were still attending this academy, I bet you would’ve easily become a representative."

"... Thank you for saying that."

"Hehe, I just don’t like seeing people not get the credit they deserve. Also, I like strong people. It’s in my name you see." Amber winked at him.

"Ha, Amber Strongwill. Nice one."

"Now for real this time I must get going. Otherwise, my Vice President might throw a hissy fit."

"Dont let me keep you. And good luck with your preparations for the upcoming tournament."

They once again said their farewells and Dominik headed for the principal’s office.

Knock Knock

"It’s open." Called a voice from inside.

When he opened the door, he saw Mia and Diana completely absorbed in whatever paperwork they were busy with. To the uninitiated it would look like two beautiful but mostly professional ladies diligently working at their desk, but to Dominik he could see the writing on the wall. This silence was a necessity needed in order to stop whatever floodgate was ready to burst.

’Oof. The air in here is stifling. Sorry in advance for breaking whatever fickle peace was left remaining in this room.’

"Hi Mia. Good afternoon Principal Valentine." He greeted them.

"Dominik?" Mia pushed her chair back and stood up. "Dominik! What a nice surprise!" She then ran up to him and hugged him.

"Woah there hahaha!" He caught her midair and spun her sound before putting her back on her feet.

"Ehem!" Diana cleared her throat. "What brings you here Dominik?"

"Y-Yes! I’m actually here to speak to you about Bishop Tobias. Mia," He whispered to her, "you need to let go of me. I’m here for work."

"Think of this as revenge for hugging me back at the station. I was also there for work but that didn’t stop you hehe." She giggled as she whispered back.

"Mia. Let go of him."

"Yes ma’am." Hearing that no nonsense tone from Diana made her immediately get off him and walk back to her desk.

"Dominik, you were saying something about the bishop?"

"Yes." He sat on the guest chair. "I heard the way Mia spoke of him. Said she felt there was something off about him. I wanted to confirm from you if you got the same feeling."

"Yes, I did. There was something deeply... disturbing about his character."

"If you don't mind me asking, why did you proceed with your contract knowing there was something suspicious about him?"

"Because whatever is going on with him does not equate to everyone at the church. I only ever needed his signature since he is a high-ranking member of the clergy. If something were to happen to him, it would not affect my contract with the church. They have excellent healers in which I would gladly hire for the tournament."

"I see," Dominik said to himself. "Even if the bishop were out of the picture, it wouldn't affect you. That's great."

"Why? Is there something I should know about?"

"Hmm, yes. I do believe you have the right to know. Although not confirmed, we have reasons to believe that Tobias is working for and is a part of the cult."

"What!?" Mia got up from her desk and sat next to him.

"Is that true? What reasons could that be?"

"Recently we got our hands on a potential member of the cult and were currently in the middle of interrogating him. If this goes well then it could open massive doors in the ongoing case."

"How did you manage to find this cult member?" Diana asked.

"Heh hee!" Dominik rubbed his nose in pride. "It's all thanks to my new buddy Kurt. The guy has been nothing but a massive stroke of good luck. Right now he's even... errr what's with that look Principal?"

Diana stared at Dominik wide eyed and completely flushed in the face with embarrassment.

"I-I-It’s nothing Dominik! Just ignore what he said Diana." Mia quickly covered his mouth.

"Mmm?! Mmm mmmm mm???"

"D-Did you just say Kurt?" Diana let out a cute voice as she asked him.

"Mm? Mmhm." He nodded.

"Dominik no–"

Diana teleported to Dominik and grabbed him away from Mia then teleported both him and herself to behind her desk again.

"You’re friends with him ~?"

’What’s with this cutesy voice?! Am I going crazy?!’ Dominik internally panicked.

"Y-Yes I am. Dare I say we’re best friends haha..."

"Did... Did he talk about me ~?"

"Why would he talk about you?"

"Why?! Because he... because we... k-k-ki... and I-I I lo.... v..." She looked to the ground, too embarrassed to even speak.

Dominik looked to Mia as he was confused about what was going on.

Mia on the other hand could only sigh in defeat as she walked over to take Diana away from him.

"Come on Diana. You're scarring Dominik. You can talk all about whatever happened between you two after you go on your date together."

"Y-You're right... I-I should wait."

"Oooouu... about that..." Dominik said quietly.

"What? What is it?" Diana immediately appeared in front of Dominik again.

'Shit! Did I say that out loud?!'

"I didn't say anything!" He waved both his hands up and shook his head.

"No. I heard you. It sounded like you had something to say. Well, go on. Say it."

"Uhm... It's really not my place to say anything." 'Mia help me...'

He desperately looked at her

"No, say it. I'm kinda curious about it too." Mia held her chin in a thinking position.

"I really shouldn't..."

"Dominik." Diana grabbed him by his black scarf and pulled him in close. "Say what you were going to say and I just might not teleport you into the ocean."

’Eeeeek! I’m sorry Kurt! I promise to make it up to you somehow!’

"A-About that date you were supposed to have...well... Kurt c-cancelled it." Dominik shut his eyes and held his breath as he expected to be surrounded by water.

Instead, he felt Diana let go of him and took a couple steps back.

"W-Why? Why would he cancel?"

"B-Because he already found somebody he likes. He felt going on a date with you after he found somebody would be bothersome."

"Bothersome? Someone he already likes? After everything we did?" A single tear ran down her face as she held her chest.

"W-Who does he like?" She asked.

"I don’t know. He didn’t really say..."

Diana fell to her knees as she held her chest even harder. Her hair obscured her face as she looked down.

"Diana?!" Mia ran to her in order to comfort her.

’Holy shit... Why is she so affected by him? They didn’t even meet. Was she really looking forward to the date that much?’ Dominik tried processing what was happening but couldn’t figure out why she’s acting like this.

She suddenly stood up and slowly walked to Dominik. When she stopped, she was at an uncomfortable distance to his face.

"Where is he?" She asked.

"Excuse... me?"

"I’m asking where Kurt is. Don’t make me ask again."

There was something dangerous in the way she looked at him. The single tear had died up and there was no life in her eyes.

"H-He’s at the student dorms... He went there to–"

SHWOOSH!

".... Oh shit!" Dominik ran to the window.

"Dominik?! What are you doing?!" Mia panicked.

"I gotta get to Kurt fast! This is all my fault! Oh Goddess above, please keep him safe until I get there!"

Dominik jumped out the window as fire burst from his feet and hands. He flew as fast as he could to the dorms all while praying that he’d make it in time.

’Please make it in time! Please make it in time!’