THORNS 55

Chapter 55: The Cursed Cave

"Gooraahh!"

"Grahgoogeh!"

The two other hobgoblins who were brutally violating the poor women dropped them like a sad sack of meat and charged at Kurt.

"You could've at least dropped them down gently you evil bastard!" Kurt charged at them as well and threw his stone dagger right at the hobgoblin's piss hole.

Thhwuck!

"GRAAAAHH!!" The hobgoblin fell on his back as the dagger lodged itself right on target.

Kurt wasted little time and slammed his wooden club down on the dagger. It tore and sliced through not only its dick but also right through its pelvis and onto the ground below.

He then picked up the much bigger wooden club and swung it down on the hobgoblin's face.

"Next."

"G-Grooaah... Graah! Graah!" The hobgoblin covered his dick for dear life and ran at the other two who were supposed to be drinking around the fire. Yes, they were 'supposed to be' but when it turned to them it saw that Diana had already killed them and was taking out her blade from their necks.

Now being the only one left, the colour drained from the hobgoblin's face as it kneeled to the ground in surrender.

"Groah graah..."

"Hmm, what was that? You give up?" Kurt asked in a sweet voice.

"Graah! Graah!" He enthusiastically nodded his head as he grabbed a woman nearby and offered her to Kurt.

".....Pfft hahaha. Ahahahaha!"

The hobgoblin was confused as to why Kurt was laughing when he suddenly heard Diana's voice from behind.

"Rosie." She coldly said as she walked slowly while dragging her blade on the ground.

"Hahaha! Haaaaaa... I'll start by cutting his stupid dick off~" He picked up a stone machete which was lying near the cage of dead bodies.

"And I'll finish him once he feels enough pain. I can't stand being in this cave any longer so let's make this quick."

"Roger that!" Kurt positioned himself and dashed forward with a suffocating killing intent.

"Groogah! Geeeh!" The hobgoblin threw the body away and was about to run and attempt to make his escape. However, it was futile.

Stab!

Looking down at the source of this sudden pain the hobgoblin saw that a crimson blade had been stabbed through his back and right out his chest. Struggling as he might he could not move nor pull the blade out.

Slash!

He felt another source of pain from the front this time.

Thud!

It was the feeling of his dick being cut off in one strike and hitting the floor.

Gussshhh!

"GRAAAAAA!!!"

"Ahahahaha! Squeal louder piggy~!" Kurt, who was loving every single moment of this, yelled at him. "Here! I'll even cut your balls off!"

"GRA GRA GRA–"

Slash! Thud! Gussshhh!

"GRAAAAAA!!!"

"AHAHAHAHAHA!! That's what you get, you worthless green bastard!"

Diana, who was watching all this with no remorse nor sympathy for the hobgoblin couldn't, help but smile at seeing how happy Kurt was.

"Hehehehe! Hey Ana~ You know what would be even funnier~?"

"And what is that, Rosie~?"

"How about we ram his own dick up his ass and shove his balls down his throat~? Let him have a taste of his own medicine."

"Ew no. I'm not touching that. And neither are you." She ripped her blade free and with one precision cut, lopped off its head.

"... I guess that is a bit too far. Not to mention disgusting." Kurt came down from his high as he watched the hobgoblin's head roll.

"Come on Rosie, let's get these women out of here." She dismissed her sword and walked to the cage of women that were still alive.

"Hi." She kneeled down and greeted them in a soothing manner.

However no one responded to her call and all bundled closer to each other.

"How's it looking?" Kurt asked.

"AAHHHH! PLEASE STAY AWAY! I DON'T WANT TO GO!! PLEASE! MOMMY! DADDY!"

"What the–"

"I'm sorry! Please don't take me! Please don't take me!"

They all quivered in fear when they heard Kurt speak.

He then promptly moved away to see if they were indeed reacting to him.

"...."

’Dammit... This is messed up... but understandable I guess.’ He thought when watching them calm down once he was out of sight.

"P-Principal Valentine?" A familiar voice could be heard from somewhere in the cage.

"Who’s calling for me?" Diana held the wooden bars as she searched for that voice.

"P-Principal Valentine! It really is you! It’s me! It’s me! Mrs. Cooper!"

"Mrs. Cooper?! Hold on, I’ll free you now!"

Diana stomped on the wooden lock and broke open the cage. However, nobody wanted to leave in fear of what might happen to them.

"Excuse me! Please make way.... Oh, it really is you Principal Valentine!" Mrs. Cooper, who looked completely disheveled with her messy hair and torn clothes, lunged at Diana and hugged her.

"I’m so glad you’re here! Goddess Bula really is watching over us all *sniff* *sob*."

"Mrs. Cooper, what happened to you? How did you get here? We just saw each other the other day."

"I-I *sniff* We *sniff* at the hospital *sob* F-Father Tobias..."

"Tobias?" Her eyes widened at that name.

"Psst, Diana." Kurt whispered in her ear. "Can you teleport these women out of here?"

"No. Too many people. And I’d be wasting too much mana by taking them all one by one and making round trips from in and out the cave."

"Okay. I remember seeing a wagon outside the cave. I’m gonna go get it while you try to make these women come to their senses."

"Just be quick, please Also while you’re out there bring as many stone daggers that you can find. We’re probably going to need it..."

"...Got’cha." After checking on the ladies one more time with a sad expression he sprinted to the exit.

"That man is?" Mrs. Cooper asked as she watched him leave.

"My lover. Due to a misunderstanding we ended up on this island together."

"Your lover? *sniff* Oh my, it would seem that many hearts are going to be broken when they find out, ha ha.... Wait, island?"

"Yes. Do you not know where you are?"

"N-No..."

"... Mrs. Cooper, are you able to tell me what happened to you?"

"Y-Yes but..." She looked at the traumatic sight of these women and the dead goblins. "Can we please just leave this first? I-I’m not comfortable being here."

"No problem. I’m going to check and see if there are any others who can still move. Also the three recent victims of those... creatures, I want to check if they’re still alive."

"L-Let me come with you. They might listen to me since I was with them during this sad time. Some has come to lean on me for support, you see."

Diana agreed, and together they checked on the three women of whom they've come to discover have died, and went to calm the remaining survivors.

Soon enough when they all heard the sound of a wagon approaching, Diana rounded them all up and got ready to leave.

Kurt tried standing some distance away from them but Diana stopped him. Telling him that she already told them that he is not a threat here to hurt them and that he's friendly.

Roughly out of the twenty survivors, only five got on the wagon. The rest of the women, who were all pregnant with what they considered to be devil's spawn, saw no future waiting for them and decided to stay behind in order to end their own lives.

They each took a stone dagger that Kurt brought and thanked both him and Diana before they left.

"I'll pull with you..." Diana stood next to him and together they left that awful place.

About 30 minutes had passed when they finally got out of the jungle and arrived at the beach. They all sat around the makeshift camp that Kurt and Diana made when they first got here and Mrs. Cooper began to explain what happened to her.

"It all started on that day when you and those three students from Kirstenbell had come to the hospital to apologise for what happened to my Dale. After you all left, my husband had to leave for work so I decided to stay a while longer with my youngest daughter. And that's when he came."

"Bishop Tobias..." Diana spoke softly.

'Tobias?' Kurt, who was listening, never expected to hear that name be brought up here.

"Yes." Mrs. Cooper continued. "He said that he knew a person that could and would heal my Dale of his injuries much faster. And that person was the Saintess."

"The Saintess? I guess it would make sense that he has a connection with her."

"That was my thought exactly, Principal Valentine. However he gave me a condition. That condition was I had to give up my youngest daughter to him so that she could train and serve the prophesied child in the future."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Cooper but does your youngest daughter perhaps have crystal blue eyes and golden blonde hair?"

"Yes erhm... sorry I didn't get your name young man."

"It's Kurt. I too apologise for the late introduction."

"It's alright. And yes, although not precisely, she does have similar shades of those colours. When I told him that I refuse to give up my child it looked like he respected my decision and so he politely said his greetings and left. Little did I know that later that night my whole life would change for the worst..."

Chapter 56: Clear Goals

"My husband was still out that night." Mrs. Cooper recalled as she looked into the campfire.

"He had to stay at work and overtime in order to make up for the time lost during our meeting at that diner and the visit to the hospital. I had just tucked my daughter in bed inside of her room on the second floor when I heard footsteps downstairs.

I thought it was my husband since it was so late but that was not the footsteps of one person. Then I thought that my husband must've brought over his colleagues for a drink but I remembered that I already warned him not to do that since the kids don't like it.

I quickly grabbed anything I could find to use as a weapon and then took a peek over the railing. That's when I saw them: three men wearing thick black robes and a hood covering their faces. The hood had this crude design of red eyes, which were crying out tears of blood that leaked all the way down to the ends of their robes.

This wasn’t a situation I could defend myself from. Maybe if I had my Dale with me, I could’ve somehow gotten away in time with my daughter and run to our neighbour to warn him about the intruders. My neighbour is a prefect, you see.

Sadly, that was not the case. I can still remember the fear I felt when a hand tapped on my shoulder. A fourth intruder had somehow sneaked up behind me and in his arms was my precious daughter who was still sleeping. Before I could so much as move or scream, the other three had already grabbed and dragged me downstairs all while letting out this hideous laugh.

It turned out that the fourth intruder was F-Father Tobias. He told me that if I had complied, none of this would’ve happened and our family could have walked away with plenty of money...

Before taking me away he told me that he was going to kill my son at the hospital... He also told his men to stay behind and wait for my husband to return so that they can kill him too. I-I was powerless to do anything... I-I’m *sob* I’m such a failure as a mother and a wife!"

Diana held her close and soothingly rubbed her back. The other four women also began to tear up when listening to her, as her situation heavily resonated with what had happened to them.

"Shh, it’s okay. You couldn’t have known that any of this was going to happen. There’s no sin nor shame in not knowing. Please don’t put yourself down like that."

After Diana calmed her down, Mrs. Cooper. told the rest of what happened.

"T-Thank you, Principal *sniff*. Once that... evil man was done speaking, he told two of his men to take me to the boat. They then knocked me out and when I awoke I not only found out that the night had passed but also that I was in the middle of a jungle being dragged away by those vile monsters.

They then took me into a cave with those five other monsters and threw me in that cage of women. I’m sure you could guess how the rest of the story went... I’m sorry, but I do not wish to go into that specific detail. And although I was only in that cave for what felt like a day and a half, I knew that if you had not come sooner, I would have been next..."

"Thank you for sharing Mrs. Cooper. I know it couldn't have been easy. And just to check with you four, does Bishop Tobias also have something to do with why you're here?"

They all nodded at Diana's question.

"... H-He also wanted to take my child and when I refused he..."

"... Me too..."

"... Y-Yes..."

The last woman just kept staring at the fire in a daze while rocking back and forth.

"I see..." Diana said quietly. "Rosie, is there anything you'd like to ask them?"

"... Yes. But it's something only these four women could answer. Is that alright?"

The woman staring into the fire flinched when she heard him speak and quickly ran to Mrs. Cooper's side.

"I'm sorry Mr. Kurt but please understand that she is a victim to those... things, and your deep voice must've triggered her. We'll go stand by the ocean while you ask them your questions."

Kurt nodded at her suggestion and together the two left.

"Alright then, first question. How long have you all been inside that cave?"

"I–I don't know. There was no light source to indicate how long it had been and I've long since lost my sense of time while I was in there."

The other women also agreed with what she said.

’Dammit, if that’s the case then I’m guessing they won’t know how frequently more women were being brought in. And if they don’t know that then we won’t know when the next boat will be arriving...’

"Diana, could you also ask the same thing to her." He pointed to the woman who was now playing in the water. "If she does know then could you gradually ask her questions that could hint at when the next boat will arrive?"

"Sure." She got up from her seat and went to talk with her.

After about ten minutes she came back with a serious look on her face.

"And? What did she say?"

"Tonight is when the next boat will come." Diana crossed her arms and looked out at the sea.

"How does she know this?"

"She..." The grip on her arm was being tightened as she finished her sentence. "She’s been counting. Her arms... For every hour that has passed she would cut a little mark on her arm."

"She’d do what? And how long has she been here?"

"A little over two weeks. Her arms are in a horrendous state. The cuts it will leave permanent scars..."

"...." Kurt couldn’t say anything but feel bad when he looked over to her playing so innocently in the water.

"As for how I know they’ll be here tonight, it would seem that for every two days that go by, she would make a special circle around that mark. Apparently, it’s to indicate a new woman had entered the cave.

Mrs. Coopers was the last one to be brought in two days ago, so if what was shown to me is true, then yes, another boat should be coming."

"Do you think Tobias will be on that boat?"

"No. He will be too busy preparing for the arrival of the Saintess."

"Lucky prick *tsk!*." He kicked the sand below him in frustration.

"I know what you're thinking but," she leaned in close and held his hand, "isn't this the perfect evidence needed for the prefects to arrest him? The bishop is a very important man who has a lot of people working under him. Innocent and guilty. We can't just kill him."

"But what if he has connections in the bureau that could free him? Like you said, he's an important man. My suggestion is we torture that lowlife for names and kill him right after."

"Then we warn the king himself. Maxwell Dorothy despises the cult more than anyone. There's also another reason we can't Tobias just yet."

"What's that?"

"Did you forget already? It's the whole reason why you went on this investigation with Dominik."

"... The missing kids..." Kurt realised.

"Exactly. What if you torture him and he gives you the names of his accomplices as well as the location of the kids, but they turn out to be all false. We need him alive to verify the information."

"... You're right. Damn it, I'm not used to all this. Normally I get told 'Hey, go here and kill this person' and its mission complete. I never had to think of the consequences since I was just a weapon. A means to an end. Now that I'm personally involved in all this, everything feels... complicated."

"Rosie..." She stood in front of him and caressed his cheek. "You know you could walk away from this if you want."

"... What are you talking about?"

"Think about how much you've already helped. If it wasn't for you, then we wouldn't have found these women. If it wasn't for you, then Tristan and Rupee would've still been homeless and the shady dealings happening in that neighbourhood would've never been investigated. If it wasn't for you, then Tobias would've never been on our radar until it would've been too late."

'Heh, it's funny she's saying this because I bet Emelie would've done something about all this... probably.'

"Rosie?"

"It's nothing. You're right, I could walk away from all this, but I won't. I'm already in too deep and I'm not about to stop halfway."

"Wow~"

"Not like that, haha."

"I'm glad to see you got your head all cleared."

"Yeah. It's just, thinking about what that sick bishop is doing has got me itching to just end him... But I'll wait."

"That's right. We got more than enough evidence to take him away. Now we just need to wait for that boat and get out of here."

"Mmhm. Actually, before that I want to go back to that monster camp and see if there are any valuables I could take. You cool with staying here?"

"More like I have to. Someone has to be here to keep them safe."

"Sweet. Oh and *smooch* Thanks for the small boost of confidence." He kissed her before running back into the jungle.

"Y-You’re welcome~"