

Chapter 34. Europa

Elenore and Meg had finished moving the pews to the sides of the room when Madlax came into the chapel.

"They're back." Madlax said.

"Okay, we'll meet them in the living room." Elenore replied.

Once Madlax had left she turned to her mother. "I kind of feel ashamed to look at Laetitia considering what Alice did to her. Granted I'm still not happy about her or Margaret running around in my mind but I have forgiven them."

"I don't think she'll hold it against you but I do understand you being upset about someone looking through your thoughts."

"Thanks mom, we better get down to the living room. We still have to figure out how to word these wishes and memorize the ritual." Elenore said heading out of the chapel door.

The pair went down to the living room where they all were assembled. Elenore stood at the entrance briefly and looked at Laetitia. "Welcome home Laetitia. How are you feeling?" Elenore asked trying not to sound cold but it came off that way.

"I'm fine, thank you." Laetitia said without looking at Elenore.

Elenore gave a slight sigh and then sat down as did Meg.

"I've got the ritual memorized so it's up to you three for your parts." Meg said trying to break the tension.

"Why can't we just read off from the paper, does the ritual say we can't?" Margaret asked thankful that Meg averted a potential confrontation.

Meg looked at the sheets and re-read them and then answered. "You know, that is a good point. The ritual doesn't say either way. You can have a note with your part on it. Most of the ritual has to be done by me."

"That's a good idea. I'll get some paper and pens." Margaret said getting up, happy that she didn't have to memorize anything.

"We have that covered, so how are we going to word these wishes?" Vanessa asked, looking over her part.

"I thought we covered that." Limelda chimed in, as Margaret came back with paper and pens.

"So did I. Do we all have to be there?" Madlax replied.

"I don't see why not, only we and my mother can present the wishes." Elenore said.

"If that's the case then how did Peter Burton make his wishes?" Vanessa asked a bit confused.

"My great grandpa transferred power to him according to Elsa's account." Elenore replied.

"One word of warning; no one is supposed to neither enter nor exit the circle once the ritual has started. From what Elsa has written here some dire consequences will happen if the circle is broken." Meg said looking at all of them.

"Understood, lets write down our parts and head to the chapel." Elenore said.

"The sooner the better...ummm no offence." Margaret said touching the Torc and getting a slight chuckle.

After they wrote their parts down all of them went to the chapel.

Carrossea, Laetitia, Limelda and Madlax sat on a pew on the far end of the wall near the door while the others got into position. Madlax and the others noticed that a large chalk circle had been drawn in the middle of the room.

Meg started the ritual by calling upon the elemental forces at each cardinal direction and then she went next to Elenore.

With her left hand out stretched towards Vanessa, Elenore spoke. "I unlock the door of war, death and the future."

Then, Vanessa held out her right hand, touching Elenore's left hand and speaking. "I unlock the door of peace, life and the past."

Then, Elenore and Vanessa held out their remaining hands to Margaret and before joining them she spoke. "I unlock the door of balance, truth and the present."

When all three held each other's hands Meg spoke again solemnly.

"As the three doors of the world are unlocked, I humbly ask that you, Lady Europa, come forth and bless us with your presence!"

At the end of Meg's summons the artifacts glowed brightly and came off. They then flew to the center of the circle and they merged together and in a huge flash of light a tall ebon haired woman with blue eyes and an athletic build appeared. She was wearing all three artifacts and dressed in the latest fashion business suit. Everyone in the room felt the sense of divinity emanating and they all kneeled. She silently bade them all to rise and then spoke thus.

"I am the Goddess Europa! I am the essence of the Goddess who watch over this continent. You who have gathered the three treasures, speak to me of your desires but be warned some desires can come with a price."

Margaret respectfully walked in front of Europa and, mustering all the courage she could, asked.

"Lady Europa, I would like to ask what the purpose of the treasures is."

Europa smiled and answered warmly. ***"It has been a very long while since I was asked that question. Since the dawn of human civilization unrecorded by modern man these treasures have served as a way for the Gods to see where mankind is at in its development and test it. Every five hundred years the artifacts appear as the first part of the test to see what is done with them. Other than a corrected mistake I'm pleased that you all fought to keep the hands of evil off of them. You have used them wisely. I am also pleased that you all envisioned me in modern garb, for that I thank you. Now let us see what your desires are and judge accordingly"***

"For our first wish. I wish that Poupee be brought into this dimension with all legitimate legal documentation that he will have need of." Margaret began respectfully.

Europa smiled and spoke thus. ***"That is a thoughtful wish. The wish is granted. Speak your second desire."***

Poupee appeared next to Margaret with a bundle of papers in his hands. Margaret bent down and whispered in his ear and he quietly stood as the rest spoke.

Then Vanessa spoke. "I wish that the enemies of all in this house would leave us alone to live in peace."

"Self preservation is not selfish; it is the right of all living things. Your current enemies will not trouble you for now on. But as the river of life and time shall flow you shall make new enemies. That is not a curse but life itself. The wish is granted. Speak your third desire." Europa spoke in response.

Elenore hesitated as she tried to think how to word the wish. "Please forgive me, I don't want this wish to sound or be selfish but part of me fears that it might be." Elenore spoke.

Europa spoke warmly as she read Elenore's heart. ***"Let me be the judge of that. Please speak your desire."***

"My wish is that Chloe be fully resurrected." Elenore spoke with some apprehension.

Europa smiled and warmly spoke. ***"Your wish that a comrade will have a second chance to redeem and heal herself is a noble and unselfish one. It is not selfish to want to talk with this person as well the other two saplings. The wish is granted. Speak your fourth desire."***

Meg stepped forward and spoke. "For the fourth desire, I wish that the current wars would end peacefully." Meg said wondering if she had worded it right and it would end the conflict in Gazth-Sonika.

Europa smiled reading Meg's intentions and spoke thus. ***"Wishing for the end of wars and of peace is not selfish. But it is the nature of man for now to engage in conflict. But for now the weapons of war shall be silent. The wish is granted. Speak your final desire."***

On this one Meg was a little unsure on how to word it then she remembered Susan.

"For my final desire, I wish that the situation regarding the ship that crashed here resolve itself peacefully." Meg looked at Europa wondering why she couldn't wish for Susan to be cured.

Europa read Meg's heart and looked upon her with warmth and compassion as she spoke.

"I know of the desire to cure your grandchild. But know that your desire is not in vain. Your grandchild and many other children and adults will be healed by the technology on that ship. Peaceful talks between this worlds leaders and the crew of the Fortress Vigilant shall begin. The wish is granted. I am pleased, for your desires have been unselfish and thoughtful. For that I'm pleased to grant this blessing upon all of you."

Europa waved her hand and all of them glowed briefly and spoke again.

"Now I must go and sleep for another five hundred years. When I once again awaken, I truly pray that humanity then has the compassion and wisdom you have shown me this day. Fare well!"

Then in a flash of light Europa and three artifacts were gone. Meg undid the circle as they all looked at each other.

"Ummm...is the ritual over?" Margaret asked looking toward the door.

"Yes it is. It ended when I dismissed the last elemental force." Meg answered.

"Thanks, please excuse me. I have to go to the bathroom." Margaret said and she rushed out the door and to the bathroom.

"Who do I give these to?" Poupee asked still holding the bundle of papers.

"I can take them for now Poupee." Elenore said and when Poupee handed the papers to her Laetitia rushed and glomped herself unto Poupee.

"Oh Poupee! You're here! You're finally here!" Laetitia said tearfully as she held Poupee.

"I'm here..." Poupee replied quietly as he held her in return.

As Elenore looked over the documents Susan came up to her with scared and sad look on her face.

"Mommy..."

"What's wrong?" Elenore asked.

"Is it true? Am I sick too? Am I going to die like Margaret?"

Elenore bent down to Susan's level and put Poupee's papers to one side and answered.

"Yes, you have the same disease as your sister but it's dormant for the moment. And no, you're not going to die. Not if I can help it."

"Okay..."

Elenore got back up after grabbing the papers; she put a comforting hand on Susan's shoulder as she walked off. Elenore couldn't help remembering the vision and the sticky note as Susan left the room.

"That was cold of me..." Elenore said to herself.

"No it wasn't. You told her the truth without coddling her. But I do hope whoever is on that ship can cure her." Meg said in a matter of fact tone.

Then both women heard a thump as something hit the floor.

Elenore rushed out to see Susan sprawled out on the floor. "SUSAN! VANESSA WE HAVE TO GET HER TO THE SHIP NOW!" Elenore yelled loudly as she picked up Susan from the ground.

"I'll get the car!" Vanessa said as she rushed past Elenore and went down the stairs in a hurry.

"Thanks, mom please keep an eye on things here." Elenore said hurriedly as she rushed toward the front doors nearly flying down the stairs.

"Please let me get there in time...please don't die Susan..." Elenore thought to herself as Vanessa drove up. Elenore gently put Susan in and then she got in. Then they sped off.

Margaret came out of the bathroom in a hurry, her hands dripping wet.

"Madlax, what happened? What was Elenore yelling about?"

"Susan collapsed on the floor. Elenore and Vanessa are taking her to the ship." Madlax answered looking at Meg who was sitting on a pew in shock and mentally kicking herself.

Margaret was going to approach Meg when Madlax stopped her. "Don't Margaret. Let me handle it. I've seen her like this before."

"Okay, but I feel bad. We knew that Susan would have to go to the ship but not this soon. But what do you mean "you've seen her like this before?" Margaret said wiping her hands on her skirt.

"When Duvie had just the one picture of Elenore she would look at it for hours and she would sit there with the look she has now. I'm sure she's kicking herself hard under her breath." Madlax replied looking at Meg sympathically.

"She's worried for them, that I understand and so am I. I also understand why Lady Europa wanted Elenore and Susan to go to the ship." Margaret said looking at Meg then at Madlax.

Madlax pondered at Margaret's last statement. "It does have advanced technology and they have the cure that Susan needs." She said thinking that was the gist Margaret was getting at.

"Not quite what I was thinking."

"That what?" Madlax asked.

"It's not something but someone."

"Who? That guy with the funny haircut?" Madlax asked a bit confused at that last comment.

Margaret shivered a bit. "No, not him but somebody else."

"Okay, I guess we let it all play out and hope for the best for Susan. Oh, before I forget Margaret there's something I would like to ask you."

"Sure what is it?"

"Limelda and I are teaming up to look for a job in Nafrece. So I was wondering if we could stay here till we can get an apartment or something." Madlax asked.

"Sure, I don't mind. Limelda has been a great help so it would be rude not to show her gratitude. Plus I still owe you and her for your services anyways."

"Elenore was the one who hired me."

"I know but Elenore was my personal assistant. So she handled things like that." Margaret said with a smile as she went to get Poupee's papers.

"Thanks Margaret." Madlax said as she headed towards Meg.

Vanessa had driven as close she could. They saw the soldiers blocking the road. She parked the car on the side of the road and they got out. Elenore gently picked up Susan they started walking to the checkpoint.

"Please see us..." Elenore thought as she walked with Vanessa right beside her.

On the Vigilant's bridge Doctor Samantha "Sammy" Leeds was looking at the monitors along with the captain. She and the captain were good friends and he trusted her advice. Her eyes lit up as she saw Elenore and Vanessa being stopped at the checkpoint.

"Captain, there's Elenore and Vanessa! Or at least this worlds version of them." Sammy said pointing to a monitor.

Charlie looked at the monitor and noticed Elenore has holding something. He pressed a button and noticed that Elenore was holding a child.

"Is that Margaret or Susan? I can't tell them apart." Charlie asked.

"I think that's Susan and she looks really bad off. Captain please let me go and help the child. If you're worried about diseases, I'm a cyborg remember."

Charlie's commlink activated. "Ross here." He said looking at the monitor and at Sammy.

"The delegation from Nafrece is here sir." The reply from the commlink issued.

"Good bring them to the conference room. Have security escort Dr Leeds outside with a couple of battle suits."

"Sir?"

"Doctor Leeds is giving humanitarian aid. Give her any assistance she needs."

"Yes sir." With that the commlink went dead.

"Well Sammy, you have a patient to go see."

"Thank you Sir." Sammy said as she gave orders to her personnel via her cyber link.

"Look lady. I'm sorry that your kid is sick. We don't know who or what is on that ship. What makes you think they would help you anyways?" A soldier asked Elenore.

Elenore was going to answer when she saw what looked like two metal giants escorting a hover car. The soldiers were staring at what was coming towards them. Fortunately one of them had presence of mind to report this and was told to let the vehicles come near.

As they approached a masculine voice spoke from of the battle suits. "Relax; we're here to have our doctor check out the kid."

The hover car stopped and Sammy got out. She pulled a floating medical stretcher from the vehicle and approached Elenore who was still holding Susan.

"Hi I'm Doctor Leeds. What seems to be the problem?"

"Hello Doctor. My daughter has a genetic disease that's killing her." Elenore responded looking at Sammy and then at Susan.

"Okay, place her on the stretcher and I'll take a look at her."

Elenore placed Susan on to the stretcher.

"Can I have her and your names please?" Sammy asked.

"Her name is Susan Baker and I'm Elenore Baker."

Sammy entered the data on a pad on the stretcher and a gentle beam of light scanned Susan.

"Wow, I knew an Elenore Baker back in my world. She has four children. How many do you have Miss Baker?"

"Only her at the moment. Her sister died when she was born and I'm expecting." Elenore replied a bit sadly but understanding what the doctor was asking.

Sammy looked over the scans. "Your daughter has a lot of DNA damage. It's a miracle that she's survived this long. No offence."

"None taken. Can you help her?"

"Yes, this kind of damage can be reversed. Let me stabilize her first." Sammy pressed a few buttons and robotic arms stretched out to Susan administered treatment.

"May I ask where the father is?" Sammy asked with a tone that she knew something.

"He's dead." Elenore responded looking towards the ship. "I get the impression that you know something."

"In my world; the Elenore I know was attacked by her uncle and that's how she got her first two children. I don't know if this is the same case here but I'm sorry if I've brought up old wounds."

"The same happened here. I take it my analog's children had the same disease?" Elenore said in an understanding tone.

"Yes actually. –Sammy said looking at the screen and then back at Elenore. –Oh good, she stabilized."

"So what happens now doctor?" Elenore asked.

"We need DNA from someone who isn't related to you to replace the damaged strands. Then she'll be fine."

"Will my DNA do, doctor?" Vanessa came forward.

"You are?" Sammy asked with a look that she knew her or at least her analog.

“Vanessa Rene, I’m a family friend.”

Sammy pulled out a medical scanner and scanned Vanessa. She looked at the readout and smiled.

“Yes it will, but I have to ask to for you two to come with me please.”

“Of course.” Elenore said as Sammy loaded the stretcher into the car.

She pointed where Elenore and Vanessa could sit and they got in. Then Sammy got in and then they drove off back towards the ship followed by the battle suits.

One the soldiers looked in disbelief as they drove off.

“How are we going to report this?” He asked wondering what kind of clout or luck Elenore had.

“We don’t. Orders, we keep our mouths shut.” The other soldier said having gotten off the radio with their superiors.

“But...”

“Don’t think about. The less you know the better you sleep. Now get back to your post.” The other soldier said as he turned away from the ship.

The soldier looked briefly at the ship. Then he turned towards the city still trying to forget what he had seen.