

Chapter 30. Praying while we sin

Elenore got up momentarily forgetting that she wasn't in her own room. She got composed herself and looked at the bed next to hers. Susan was tossing and turning wildly. Elenore got the impression that Susan did this a lot, much like her. Then she put on her maid's uniform making sure that it was neat and immaculate. She put on her gun belt then her apron over it and went out to the West wing's kitchen. She compassionately looked at Susan before she left the room.

While she was cooking breakfast she heard Vanessa making her presence known.

"Elenore, about last night..." Vanessa began.

Without stopping Elenore replied. "I know you're concerned and I appreciate it, but please let me deal with things in my own way. And yes I will be seeing a therapist, my mom and I made arrangements. Also I am sorry I snapped at you."

"You brought up a good point. What could I have done? I really gave it some thought last night."

"What did you come up with?"

"Nothing...there was nothing I could do...I just didn't want to admit that I was powerless to help you."

Elenore stopped briefly and looked at Vanessa. She could see the downtrodden look on her face.

She shut off the burners and walked over to Vanessa.

"If anything I do know how that feels. I've felt helpless to help either you or Margaret and I'm sorry if I've thrown it in your face." Elenore said in an apologetic tone.

Vanessa hugged Elenore "When you mentioned my death last night I could hear the sorrow in those words. I didn't stop to realize that I've never really asked you about your feelings. Granted I've asked if you had any friends outside either Margaret or me. But never about any part of your life that I didn't already know. But I want that to change and I do want you to ask me the same."

"Elenore hugged Vanessa in return. "I can do that."

"So how do you feel?"

"I feel sad, nervous, scared knowing what I have to do today."

"Do you really have to talk to this woman?"

"Yes I do. It will be the only time I will ever have. After that I won't be able to nor will anyone else."

"I see, but why wear your maid's uniform?"

"That's what we were going to ask." Meg said with Madlax and Margaret nearby.

"Considering that he's going to be there as well this is a psychological ploy on my part. -Elenore said as she pulled out her glasses and put them on. - As well as a request."

"A request? By who?" Margaret asked.

Meg smiled and chuckled to herself. "She wants to talk to them as well doesn't she?" Meg asked figuring it out.

"Yes she does." Elenore replied noticing the look on Meg's face.

"Who does?" Madlax asked.

"Kind of obvious, her grandmother does." Limelda chimed in as she walked up and looked at Elenore.

"Oh..." Both Margaret and Madlax said the same time.

Elenore chuckled as she noticed the looks on their faces "I'll get breakfast set up. Could somebody get Susan up please?"

"I'll go." Meg said as she left the kitchen.

"As for the rest of you, could you please either help or please leave the kitchen."

Margaret volunteered to help as the rest went to the West wing's dining hall.

The mood around the table was somber as they discussed possible strategies for defense.

After breakfast and clean up Elenore found her mother praying at the altar in the chapel.

"I'm about to leave mom." Elenore said then getting on her knees and prayed a short prayer.

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"You two please be careful out there." Meg said after Elenore had finished her prayer.

"We will." Elenore replied hugging her mother then getting up.

When Elenore left the chapel Meg said one last prayer before she got up. "Mother, please watch over them both."

Elenore went to get Madlax who was checking her pistols.

"Are you ready to go Madlax?" Elenore asked as Madlax holstered her pistols.

"Before we go I have something important to say that you need to hear." Madlax said pulling the note out of her pocket.

"What is it?" Elenore asked looking at the note in Madlax's hand.

"Love can kill but hatred never saved anyone. The note said you would know what that means." Madlax said handing Elenore the note.

Elenore read the note and smiled. "Yes I do Madlax. Thank you for reminding me." Elenore said then she hugged Madlax. Madlax was a bit thrown off but she returned the hug.

With the power of the ring, Elenore etched Kirika's motto into the slide of the pistol she got from the armory, and then she turned off the safeties on her pistols before holstering them. "I have the feeling that we're going to be in a fight when we get there."

"Got the same feeling when you asked me to load up on clips. Let's go, the sooner we get this done the faster we can get back before the attack."

"Agreed." Elenore said and they headed out the front door.

When they got outside Madlax turned to Elenore. "I just thought of something, where are we going?"

"Don't worry, I know where we're going. Now please let me concentrate." Elenore answered, and then she whispered to herself. "Thank you, Kirika..."

A cloud of black feathers surrounded them and a murder of crows and ravens flew into the sky.

Vanessa watched as the murder rose from the front yard.

"Be careful you two and hurry home." She said as she heard Margaret behind her.

"They just left didn't they?" Margaret asked.

"They did." Vanessa said, and then they heard the front door open and they looked out the window to see Three-Speed and three men with him. One of them was clearly Badgis.

"Thanks for coming, Roy." Meg said as Roy came towards her.

"I had to convince my superior that Walter might show up here. It's pretty much Badgis, Ghost friendly and Gaston, the few people I could trust."

"Where's Val?"

Three-Speed paused before answering. "They found her car or what was left of it four miles from here. It was full of bullet holes. The last message we got from her was that she spotted Walter's car."

"Did they find her?" Meg asked horrified.

"They found some blood near the scene but her body hasn't been found."

Meg did her best to keep her composure. "Well let's go inside and we'll fill you in on what's going on."

Meg said, inside she was saddened and angry. She didn't want to assume the worse but as things stood Valerie may be dead or dying somewhere. *"I don't care where you bastards are coming from...you took away somebody I cared about and now I'm going to make you pay dearly for it....God help you if it's you Walter..."* She thought angrily to herself as they went into the mansion.

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