

Chapter 13. When it rains...

Elenore had finished getting dressed after being examined. Waiting for the doctor to make a decision seemed to take an eternity. Her mother was resting her eyes in the chair where she sat talking with her most of the night. Granted neither of them got much sleep but they did get a lot off their mutual chests. Though the nightmares still bothered her she was glad that she could talk about them without hiding. Meg opened her eyes as the doctor came in...

Across town in a hotel near the university Kirika was in the bathroom cleaning herself up. Mireille turned on the TV and flipped on the local news. If the Soldats and Enfants made any overt moves on each other it would be on the news. Granted it wouldn't be spun as that, more likely stores like suspicious fires, and gang violence and unsolved murders. Not the shadow war that was playing out on their streets. Anything to cover up the ugly truth and last night was no exception; while they slept a university student was murdered, a shoot out at a nightclub, a rash of break-ins at local businesses occurred. That and a story of a cat that dialed nine one-one to save its owner. "Finally..." Mireille grumbled as Kirika came out and she rushed in...

Nadie looked out from the window to view the city. The view was nice and in the distance she could see Nafrece's copy of the Eifel Tower with the sunrise. Granted they were up to their eyeballs in another problem laden journey but the oldness of the city itself...no this whole continent beckoned her to explore it... Nadie turned to see Ellis waking up and Blueeyes was still in bed. Though Nadie had a nagging feeling but she couldn't guess how much trouble this "magic bracelet" would get them in...

Margaret woke up by herself and unusually early. She couldn't really sleep anyway not after what happened yesterday. She tried pulled the covers over her but that didn't work. Laying there Margaret came to the realization that in one day her universe had changed and she would have to change as well. In one day she learned that some things were best left alone, she learned how unfaithful her father was though she didn't know the full scope, and she learned that even love ones have limits. But on the bright side though she lost a maid she gained a sister. She liked that but she didn't want to get into a fight with Elenore but she knew an understandable confrontation was inevitable. She threw off the covers, got out the bed just as Vanessa came in...

Sitting at an outdoor café Carrosea watched the sun rise. Last night hadn't been the greatest. After he left the hospital following his "confrontation" with Elenore he went to Wangdoodles. All he wanted was some pleasant female company and perhaps get a little information. Neither of those things happened; instead he had to deal with an irate purple haired Soldat and a few of her compatriots. This led to a very messy firefight in the parking lot. He managed to escape but no sooner he thought he was safe; a psychotic little girl with an oversized hatchet (or was a billhook, he wasn't too sure on that) attacked him. Again he managed to escape but the kid was damn persistent until someone else distracted her. He was glad he wasn't that poor slob that she attacked. It took awhile but he managed to get the details from Poupee. From what he told him, he could understand why Elenore was mad and a part of him actually felt sorry for her. He would have to have another talk with Elenore, but he felt there was no need to rush in...

The doctor gave Elenore a clean bill of health but he did tell her to try to relax. Elenore received her discharge papers and soon she left with her mother to her house.

When they arrived they quickly went in.

"I'll get the letter and the restraining order then I'll make some breakfast for us. Sound good sweetie?"

"Sure. Can I please take a shower before we eat?" Elenore asked feeling a little grimy.

"Of course, when you get out, I'll have breakfast ready. Towels are on the rack in the bathroom."

"Thanks." Elenore replied with a smile and Meg showed her to the bathroom.

Twenty minutes later Elenore came out of the bathroom. She could smell sausage as she went to towards the smell. Elenore could hear the sounds of cooking

"I'm still working on the scrambled eggs; they'll be done in a couple minutes. The letter and the orders are on the table." Meg said from the kitchen.

Elenore saw the papers on the table and she went and picked up the letter and read it.

August 5th 2001

Dear Meg

As you well know the Mistress' plane had crashed in Gazth-Sonika two years ago. As soon as the Master found out he sent search parties to look for the plane. It had taken the Master's parties to almost that to find the Mistress. Yes, I'm sure you have heard reports that no one else other than Margaret had returned. But the Master did find the Mistress living with a tribe of natives hiding from the civil war there. At this moment the Mistress is convalescing in a private clinic in Switzerland and may return soon while the Master returns to Gazth-Sonika to supervise our forces there. I am telling you all this, because the Mistress had found out about me sneaking Elenore to see you behind their backs. The Mistress has forbid any further contact with you and I hope I don't have to remind you why.

I know this must be disheartening to you, but I will give Elenore your love and try to give her an explanation.

Signed

John Baker

Elenore stared at the letter in disbelief. It was in her grandfather's writing alright but it was one lie after another and it seemed so cold. She guessed that her mother's defense of her uncle felt like a another betrayal and this letter was more or less telling her that he had washed his hands of her. Then she looked through the pile of restraining orders. They stretched nearly twenty years. Ten of them were filed by Anna Burton herself and then by a lawyer proxy after her death. She wanted to crumple them but she controlled herself. This would be another thing she would discuss with Margaret when she got home. She placed them on a nearby end table as her mother brought out breakfast.

Meg noticed the sad look on Elenore's face as began eating. "I'm sorry I should've shown those after breakfast."

"It's okay. Is it all right if I took a couple to show Margaret? Maybe she can have it cancelled."

"I can make copies of them to take with you."

"Thanks. I appreciate that." Elenore replied and they continued breakfast.

After breakfast Meg made copies of the restraining orders and handed them to Elenore along with a small compact and a tube of lipstick.

"Why did you give me these?" Elenore asked referring to the compact and lipstick.

"You may or may not wear makeup. But these could come in handy. Anyways I'll give you a ride home."

Elenore nodded then responded. "Wouldn't you get in trouble? The order says five hundred yards and I don't want you to get into trouble now that you've come back into my life. Just drop me off at the edge and I can walk home from there."

"Okay, then let's go sweetie." Meg said they went out...

Kirika turned off the TV as Mireille came out of the bathroom and began to dress.

"We're not packing up?" Kirika asked in usual quiet tone.

"Since the Soldats have the routes blocked it would be pointless."

"Any plans?"

"I've got my suspicions but some information wouldn't hurt."

"You're still thinking of Breffort?"

"At the moment he's the only one that we know in the Soldat leadership."

"With this many, you'll think Altena is after us."

Mireille stopped dressing and looked at Kirika in horror.

"If you meant that as joke it's not very funny."

"I didn't mean it as a joke."

"You should let go of ghosts of the past. Altena is dead and so is Chloe, nothing is going to change that. Right now our main concern should be staying alive." Mireille said crossly.

"Have you let go?"

Mireille briefly stared at Kirika.

"Of course, but you may have a point. It could be someone from Altena's faction that wasn't at the Manor that day."

"Revenge?"

"It could be but until we have more information we won't know for sure."

While she was talking with Mireille, Kirika grasped the ring. The tip of her pinky touched the inside of the ring.

For a moment the world flashed; she saw a medical file, Altena standing with her face bloodied, and Chloe walking away.

"Kirika..." A faint voice called to her.

"Kirika!" Mireille yelled and Kirika found herself back in the real world her pinky no longer touching the ring.

"Don't fall asleep on me."

"Oh sorry. You were saying?"

"I said we need more information." Mireille said with some sympathy. Their running around was starting to wear on them.

"So where are we going to get this information?"

"I have an idea, but it means we have to wander around the city for while."

Kirika's stomach grumbled loudly.

"I suppose we can't run around on an empty stomach."

Kirika nodded in agreement.

Mireille grabbed her handbag and they headed out...

"Morning Ellis." Nadie said as Ellis got out of bed and then gave huge yawn.

"Morning Nadie..." Ellis replied.

"Any more dreams or stuff like that?" Nadie asked.

"Nope."

"Well, isn't that great. It tells us to come here and then it falls asleep." Nadie said with some annoyance while looking at the bracelet.

Ellis shook her arm up and down a few times.

"What are you doing?" Nadie asked wondering what Ellis was doing.

"I'm trying to wake it up."

"I don't think it works like that."

"Oh..." Ellis said dejectedly.

They heard Blueeyes chuckling nearby.

"About time you got up." Nadie said.

"Ever think of sleeping in for once?" Blueeyes responded.

"Not without a good reason..." Nadie replied without sarcasm.

Jodie sighed deeply. "Still no response from the bracelet?"

"No and I tried to wake it up." Ellis answered.

"I noticed..." Jodie said with a grin as she rose.

"So what do we do now?" Nadie asked.

"Until the bracelet reacts again nothing much. You could explore the city, maybe it will react with something." Jodie answered.

"Well that's better than sitting around here. You up for some exploring Ellis?" Nadie chimed in glancing toward the window.

Ellis beamed. "Sure."

"I guess it's settled then. Let's get ready then." Nadie said.

"Yes sir." Ellis replied.

Ten minutes later both of them were ready. Jodie had ordered room service and the trio had breakfast then she gave them some spending money.

"Before you head out, just make sure you don't whip out your gun in public. People here don't like that." Jodie said as Nadie opened the door.

"Yeah Yeah I know. We'll be careful." Nadie said after Ellis had exited. Then she closed the door leaving Jodie alone.

Jodie lay back down on the bed and threw the covers over her head. At least she could sleep a little more without being interrupted or that was what she thought.

The phone rang for a little bit all the while Jodie wished it would stop.

She picked up the receiver. "Hello..."

The voice on the other end shocked her.

"Good Morning Miss Hayward..."

"Is this some kind of sick joke?"

"I assure you Miss Hayward this is no joke."

"But how?! I saw you get shot!"

"I believe the phrase "I got better" would suffice."

"So what do you want?"

"You'll have to come and find out won't you. Just be at Café Train D'abeille at twelve..." Then the line went dead. Jodie hung up the receiver with a huge frown. She was curious though.

"I didn't want to but it looks like I'm going out..."

“Oh I was about to wake you Margaret.” Vanessa said as she came in and saw that Margaret had gotten up already.

“I couldn’t sleep anyways.” Margaret replied as she began to get ready.

“All right then I’ll get Laetitia up then.” Vanessa said as she turned to exit the room.

“Are you angry with me too?” Margaret asking trying ascertain Vanessa’s mood.

Vanessa stopped. “No. Granted I’m not happy that you misused the Torc. But I do understand your intent. I’m more hurt than anything. I really thought Elenore could trust me to say what was really on her mind.” Vanessa turned to Margaret. “Am I that much of a stranger to her?”

Margaret shook her head. “Nope. She doesn’t want to burden the people she loves with her problems, but you already know that. But there is something...when she opened the door just a second before the flash I got a vision of a medical file. I don’t how or why but I know it’s a medical file and it’s important.”

“How long ago was she pregnant? She shows all the signs of a previous pregnancy but we can’t find it in our records.” Vanessa remembered the doctor saying. “If Elenore had a baby, it wasn’t at that hospital. The record has to be somewhere...hmmm.”

“Etou?” Margaret asked a bit confused.

“If that record still exists it has be stored somewhere either in a computer or as a hard copy. It’s going to cost me another dinner but it’s worth it.” Vanessa said her mood improving.

“You’re going ask your friend Mr. Badgis?”

“Yes I’m going to ask for his help on this and the Torc.”

I really hate going behind her back but this has to stay between you and me for now. That means telling no one we don’t who else might be listening.”

“Right.” Margaret agreed. “Umm...Vanessa...? I hate to ask...”

“It’s okay Margaret. I figured with Elenore in the hospital I’ll help out. What do you need?”

“Could you make breakfast while I get Laetitia up for school?” Margaret asked a bit sheepishly.

“Well the best I can manage in that department is toast and cold cereal.”

“Thanks Vanessa.” Margaret said with a warm smile as they exited the room.

Margaret went into Laetitia’s room and gently woke her up. Laetitia rubbed her eyes and got out of bed with little enthusiasm. She had a sad tired look on her face.

“Worried about Elenore?” Margaret asked and Laetitia gave a silent nod.

Margaret bent down to Laetitia and warmly hugged her. “She’s okay and she’ll be home later today. I’m sure Elenore has calmed down but she does want to have a talk to you.”

“I don’t know if she’ll forgive me...” Laetitia said as Margaret helped her get dressed

“Don’t be silly, of course she’ll forgive you. We’re family and she does love you...”

Laetitia gave a faint smile as Margaret helped her get ready for school.

After getting Laetitia ready Margaret headed to exit the room. Laetitia stood there with a look of dread on her face.

Margaret stopped and turned her head. “What’s wrong?”

“I don’t feel so good.” Laetitia answered looking at Margaret.

“You’re fine, if you’re still worried about Elenore. She’ll be more likely yelling at me than you if she yells at all. So let’s get some breakfast, I hear Vanessa makes some mean toast.” Margaret said trying to get Laetitia to smile.

Laetitia couldn’t shake the feeling of dread as she went out...

Carrossea read the paper as he drank his coffee. Apparently he wasn't the only one who was busy last night. A number of jewelry and antique stores along with one of the city museums were broken into. Though the authorities found it odd; that nothing was taken even though there were millions of Yurs worth jewelry and antiques for the taking.

"I guess they didn't find what they were looking for." Carrossea thought with a grin.

He scanned the paper till he found an article that reported a suspicious fire last night. Carrossea read the article and gave a muffled snicker when he read the address; that was an Enfant safe house.

"About time somebody burned that dump down."

He put down the paper and continued to drink his coffee.

"Even though watching Enfant and the Soldats play Punch and Judy is fun. Sooner or later either one or both of them are going to target Margaret. I guess I'm making that social call sooner than I thought."

Carrossea thought then he sighed. *"That will also mean my talk with Elenore will happen sooner than I thought."* He dreaded having an argument with Elenore in front of Margaret, especially if last night was any indication. Though he did smile when he remembered seeing her naked breasts; when she leaned too far to yell at him.

He motioned to the waiter and a few moments later he got up.

"I can't sit here all day, time to head out..." He quietly said to himself as headed in the direction of the Burton Manor.