

Chapter 11

You wake the next morning feeling surprisingly rested. A yawn escapes your lips as you sit up and stretch. Heading over to the window, you open the curtains to look outside and greet the day. Outside is just as you expected: grey and sad. Wait...

“Mira, get up!!” you say excitedly.

“What,” Mira responds, not too happy about starting the day yet.

“Come, look!”

She gets up groggily and heads over to you. “What am I looking at?”

You point to the sky, and her eyes follow your finger.

“It’s the sky,” she shrugs, clearly not understanding what you’re getting at.

“Yes, but look!” You say again, pointing. “There’s an opening in the clouds there!”

She looks again, and finally she sees the small amount of light seeping through a tiny gap in the clouds. “You’re right!”

“So that means we’re doing something right, right? We’re getting closer?” The gap really isn’t big, but the fact that it’s there at all must mean something, you’re sure of it.

“We can always hope,” Mira says, turning back towards her bed and sits down, rubbing her eyes. “So today, we head over to Fomo right? No detours?”

You hesitate, looking away from her. She narrows her eyes at you. “You wanna take a detour, don’t you...” She rolls her eyes at your innocent smile.

“The man from the hut said the captain at Morph has been out of drift. Maybe there’s something I can do to help. It’s not that far out of the way.”

“Pernille, please...”

“And who knows, if we help them, then maybe they can sail us out and we don’t have to go all the way Fomo!”

Mira rubs her temples, then sighs. “Fine.”

Monnika and Chanandler are already in the kitchen when you get there. You take in the delicious scent of eggs, bacon and coffee. On the kitchen counter stands a few bottles of Christmas ale.

“Good morning,” Monnika says, pouring you both a cup of coffee. You sit down at their dining table and you graciously accept. In the corner of the kitchen, you notice a crate of Christmas ornaments. Chanandler notices and says, “We weren’t actually gonna decorate this year, but you coming here yesterday and us making Christmas ale... well, I guess you inspired us.” That sends a warmth

through you and you can't help but smile. Monnika hands you both a plate of eggs, toast and bacon each, your stomach grumbling as they're sat down in front of you.

"This is delicious, thank you!" Mira says, mouth full of food already. You take a bite as well and it tastes better than anything you have ever gotten at the castle. Still, nothing can compare to your grandmother's cooking.

Monnika picks up the bottles and sets them down next to you. "These are for Ronn. The ones you made yesterday won't be ready for days. You can give me your address if you'd like, then we can ship you a few bottles when they're ready."

"Oh no, that's alright, you need them for your orders." You say, waving off her suggestion. You hear Mira mutter a "Speak for yourself," next to you.

"Nonsense," Chanandler says, taking a sip of his own coffee. "We can spare a few bottles. Of course you have to taste what you made!"

Last time you taste ale, you didn't like it, but you had to admit it would be fun to taste the ale you made.

After breakfast and getting ready, you head out to Morph. You place the bottles away from each other in your bag so they won't clink together as you walk. This time, you made sure to invite all three of them to the Christmas party before you left.

"We keep getting food from other people," Mira chuckles. "At this point, the food you brought is gonna go bad"

"We're just going to have to get better at snacking on the road then," you laugh. You look at Mira, taking in her attire. She's not wearing any bag or satchel or anything to carry stuff in. All she's got is her adventure clothes and her green cloak. "What did you bring? Did you prepare anything for the road?"

"Of course I did. I have my essentials in my pockets."

"You have food in your pockets?"

Mira shakes her head. "I said essentials. And maybe some other less essential things."

"Food is essential, Mira."

"Yes, but it's not something you have to bring. Well, maybe you do, but I've usually done well with things I can find on the way. I like to travel lightly," she smiles.

"Things you can find, or things you can steal?"

"Same, same."



Morph is an old looking town, with wooden houses that look like they could use a touch up. A large monument standing tall is the first thing you see when you enter the town. Curious, you check to see if there's a plaque you can read. You find one at the bottom of the monument, but the lettering is worn out and impossible to read. Moving on, you spot the docks, but there's no people working them. You decide to head to the largest building you see in the hopes of finding the captain in there. It's the only building made of stone instead of wood. Entering the building, you see a few people walking around, some sitting around tables and drinking. There's a bar at the far wall of the room, and a woman is sitting on a stool in front of it. She's got gorgeous, black hair, falling in curls past her shoulders. As you approach her, you see she's clutching a large glass of beer.

"Sorry, do you know where I can find the captain?" you ask carefully. The woman looks up at you briefly, then back at her beer.

"What captain?" her voice is deeper than you expected. You realise that you don't actually know who you're looking for. You don't know any captains apart from the one mentioned by the man at the hut. He's in Fomo though, so that doesn't help you here.

"I don't know," you say uncertainly. "Any captain, I guess."

She shakes her head. "There's only one captain in this town. But he's hardly a captain anymore." You realise her earlier question had been sarcastic.

"Well, can you tell us where we can find him?"

She fully turns to face you, resting her elbow on the bar. "What do you want with him?" This woman is so intimidating that your heart races when she talks to you.

"We just wanted to see if we could help him in any way." You look to Mira for support, but she's lost in thought. You swear you see a hint of a flush in her cheeks.

The woman studies you for a moment, then nods her head towards the stairs leading up to a second floor. "He's up in his office. Good luck getting in."

"Thank you," you say and turn to make your way up the stairs. But as you turn around, you see Mira has sat down next to the woman, handing her a bottle.

"Try this instead. It's so much better," she says. You notice that the bottle is the same bottle you got from Monnika. When was she in your bag?

"I'm Mira, by the way."

The woman looks at her sceptically, then opens the bottle and tastes it. Her face lights up, and looks at it. "Where did you get this?"

"Backslide. You're welcome," Mira winks.

"Roza," she grins and takes another sip.

"Mira..." you say, not bothering to hide your annoyance.

Mira looks at you, then gives Roza a nod. "Pleasure," she says and gets up.

"That ale was for Ronn," you whisper as you head towards the stairs.

"Calm down, we have more. He doesn't know how many we got."

"Still, please stay out of my bag without my permission." The stairs creak as you ascend them.

"Fine, sorry."

You forget the matter and give Mira a knowing look, then a grin. "So, Roza?"

"What? You can't deny she was cool! She deserved the good ale."

"You haven't even tasted it," you chuckle.

Mira shrugs. "Who doesn't like to gamble every now and then?"

Outside the office door sits a woman behind a desk. Her legs are resting on the desk and she's brushing her fingers through her ginger hair. "Can I help you?" she asks lazily.

"We'd like to speak with the captain please," you say politely.

"No can do, he's not accepting visitors at the moment." She doesn't look at you as she replies. Instead, she looks at her nails.

"If we could just..." you start, but Mira interrupts you.

"This is the princess you're talking to, and you will show her some respect," the woman looks up, surprise written on her face. "We are here by royal decree, and if your captain refuses to see us, we have cause to..." then she is interrupted by the woman yelling "Captain Kollt! You have visitors!". Apparently, no one here knows to wait their turn.

“No, Jeena. I have clearly stated I don’t want visitors.” A deep voice is heard from inside the office.

“There was a better way of handling that. You didn’t need to tell them who I am,” you whisper to Mira as Jeena and the captain argues back and forth.

“Stop being afraid of your status! There are times when you shouldn’t use it, and there are times when you absolutely should. This was clearly the quickest way to do this.”

“But now he feels obligated to see me,” you say, displeased with this situation.

“They should. We didn’t come here for nothing.”

Jeena turns to you. “The captain will see you now.”

You enter the office and see a man behind a desk with stacks of paper. The room is sparsely furnished and a captain’s uniform hangs from the ceiling.

“I don’t sail these days, if that’s what you’re hoping for,” he says as you approach his desk.

“Oh, no. We’ve heard about that. We’re actually here to see if there’s anything we can do to help?” you say genuinely.

“Unless you can find my Gouda, there’s nothing you can do.” He says sadly.

“Your Gouda, captain?”

“My dog, my heart,” he clutches his chest as if something has been torn out of it.

You and Mira look at each other warily.

“Is he by any chance a cute little corgi?” His eyes light up at your question. “And is he maybe wearing a pink bow?”

Koltt nods eagerly, “Yes! Have you seen him?”

You nod sadly. “He’s down in Backslide. He was found by some really nice people, so he’s been in good hands.”

He quickly gets up and picks up his uniform. “I will go immediately. Thank you!” He says and he’s out the door before you can say anything else.

“I guess he won’t be sailing us out,” Mira says, disappointed.

Downstairs, Roza eyes you curiously. “What happened?” she asks.

“We fixed the problem. I think,” Mira replies.

You head out, but not before inviting Roza and Jeena to the Christmas party, then telling them to invite Captain Holtt as well when he returns. Then, you set off.