Chapter 35 : Questions

Sheina woke up to see a starry sky. Waking up? When had she gone to sleep? With her peripheral vision, she could make out the light from the full moon. She felt around. She was lying on grass. Warm grass. She had been laying there for a while. She tried to move in order to see exactly where “there” was. Her body ached as she tried. Why did it ache? She was having a hard time remembering exactly what had happened. Baas! Baas would know. She could ask Baas what had happened. But, where was he?

“Baas?” she mumbled hoping he would hear.

“Yeah?” Baas answered. Startled, she turned to her right quickly to see him sitting there. How long had he been there? As Sheina tried to get up, Baas placed his hand on her right shoulder.

“You can move.” He said. “But don’t push yourself too hard. It was only heat exhaustion, but push any injury too far once it’s healed and it will have negative side effects on the body.”

Sheina continued to sit up but, with Baas’ advice in mind, she moved slowly. Finally, she was sitting up straight. Doing so made her realize that they were actually on a hill. And realizing that made her remember that it was the same hill she was on before she… collapsed. Then, she remembered everything. Then she began to feel embarrassed.

“I guess we wound up stopping anyway.” She said shyly.

“Yep.” Baas responded without looking at her.

Sheina looked around. She noticed that they were alone.

“Where are the others?”

Baas pointed behind himself. His gazed still stayed facing forward.

“They’re on top of the hill. That’s where they made camp. They said they wanted to make it around you, but I convinced them that we could see all enemies from up there.”

“Are they still awake?”

“I believe so.”

Sheina looked at Baas confused. Ever since she had woken up, he had been in the same position, sitting up right with his arms rapped around his knees. His mouth was buried in his arms and his gaze was staring straight. Not once had he looked at Sheina or anywhere else.

“Baas,” she asked. “Is something wrong?”

“Hmm?” Baas asked. He turned to look at Sheina. It seemed he had been in deep thought.

“Are you thinking about something?” Sheina asked.

“Yeah.” Baas said. He turned back to face forward. “The stars. I wonder. What are they?”

“The stars?” Sheina asked.

“Yeah.” Baas said. “Have you ever thought about them? They’re so high up. I wonder if any one has ever really studied them. They emit light, so I’m guessing they’re some sort of power supply. You know, like fire.”

This wasn’t like Baas. He was a prankster, not a thinker. Sheina, however, decided to go with it. Maybe she could snap him out of this thing he was going through.

“Do you think, if someone got high enough, they’d reach up and burn themselves when they grab one?” She asked, hoping to spark a joke.

“No.” Baas said still staring forward. “If I were to keep walking away from here, I would get smaller and smaller. The sky is extremely far away. If we see small stars, they must be much bigger up close. I don’t think anyone could grab one if they tried due to their enormous size.”

Sheina was now intrigued. She had never thought about anything that way.

“Then.” She concluded. “The sun and moon must be really big sources of fuels. They emit light too, but they’re bigger than the stars.”

“I agree about the sun,” Baas said pondering, “but I don’t think the moon is a source of fuel.” Baas then turned his head toward the moon. “Do you see how you can see the moon’s full shape? It’s more like it’s reflecting some other sort of light. Yet a star, and the sun too, spreads out its light. There’s really no real shape to them. Just like fire.”

Sheina understood.

“The real question is though,” Baas continued, “how does everything stay up there? When we go up, we come back down. Yet the stars, sun and moon never come down. In fact, why do we come down in the first place? Why don’t we keep going up?”

Baas was digging deeper into his thoughts.

“Baas, what is wrong with you?” Sheina asked getting concerned. She stood up quickly.

“What are you talking about?” Baas asked turning to Sheina. “And I told you, don’t push…”

“I’m fine Baas, but you’re clearly not. You’re not acting like, your usual… goofy… crazy self. You haven’t said a single joke since I’ve woken up. Did something happen when I was asleep? Why are you suddenly thinking about stars?”

Baas stared at Sheina. He then stared up in the sky. Then, his gaze went back forward.

“Have…” he started. “Have you ever thought about death Sheina?”

“Death?” Sheina asked confused.

“We can lose so many things,” Baas continued, “but anything you lose, you can usually get back. Weapons.

Clothing.

Hey, when I was in the Center I lost you, yet I got you back. But…

if a person loses their life, they can’t get it back. Seeing you, collapsed on the ground, even though I knew you’d be okay, made me wonder, “what happens when someone loses a life?” And I thought, maybe they become a star. Then I began to notice that that was impossible because stars had certain characteristics. And… I guess that’s how I got to thinking of stars.”

Sheina did not understand. Who was this person holding his knees? It certainly wasn’t the Baas she knew. All because he was scared she might die.

“Baas. I’m sorry I got you thinking about death, but I’m fine. Next time, I’ll make sure to take proper breaks.” Sheina smiled hoping Baas would too. Instead, Baas sank lower into his slump position.

“Baas, did you hear me? I said…”

“You weren’t what made me think of death.”

Now Sheina was just confused.

“But, you said…”

“Death has been on the back of my mind ever since we first saw Diablo in the woods. Just seeing you collapsed made it hit closer to home.”

Before continuing, Baas let out a sigh. He did not want to say what was on his mind, but he felt this conversation would eventually lead to it eventually anyway.

“You… you remember how I was saved by Miss Vanes… I mean, by one of Diablo’s friends?”

“Yeah.” Sheina replied. “Atsuma talked about it. He said it was great how you made yourself a distraction but it was extremely risky. I agree by the way. Next time just finish the guy yourself.”

“That’s just it Sheina, I… I can’t.”

Baas hesitated again before continuing. “That arrow didn’t kill the guy first because I wouldn’t kill him. It was because I couldn’t kill him. When I tried to, my body froze. I just kept thinking about what Diablo told me.”

Baas then let his voice get low like Diablo’s.

“‘If you think so badly of death, why have you spent your life learning how to give it to others?’”

Sheina giggled.

“You actually sound like him.”

Baas still did not laugh nor did he lift his head from his knees.

“The thing is, I’m not sure if he was serious or if he was just looking for a good comeback to what I had said, but even if he wasn’t serious, he has a point. Life is a precious thing. Who are we to take it away from someone? Those guys on that boat, they talked to each other just like Atsuma and I did. What made them so bad that we had to kill them? What makes anyone so bad? Just because they’re part of another country? If someone took something away from me that I could replace, I would be extremely upset. Imagine taking something that couldn’t be replaced. And yet, that’s what we do. That’s what everyone in Wig has been trained to do. Ever since I was little, I dreamed of my first kill. Now, I’m thinking I was a sick little child.”

“That’s a deep thought.”

“I’ve been thinking about a lot of things lately. This one just happens to change how I view life.”

Nothing, absolutely nothing Sheina said was getting to Baas. He seemed really in a slump. What could she do? What could she say? At that moment, she was willing to do anything to see his annoying smile. But getting depressed about it with Baas certainly wouldn’t help the situation. Baas had had a dream, and now that dream was lost. After thinking about it for a little while, Sheina let a soft smile appear on her face. She would just have to replace it with another dream. Something else Baas wanted. She just had to get him to realize what that was.

“So tell me Baas,” she asked him, “if you could stop fighting, what would you do?”

“I’d become a grey band, of course. Or even worse, a black band.”

He was still thinking logically and negatively. Sheina had to get his brain in a positive, creative mood.

“No, that’s not what I meant. I mean, if you could do anything you wanted and have no consequences in life, what would you choose to do?”

Baas looked up from his knees at Sheina. It was a question worth thinking about. He had never thought he could do anything but fight. If he could choose to do anything…

“I would go off with you.”

Sheina’s heart almost stopped when she heard that. What did he mean by that?

“Don’t get me wrong, Atsuma and the others are great and I would never let them down. But I can live without them as long as I knew they were okay. If I were to leave and have my own life, there’s no way I’d be able to leave you.”

What was Baas saying? Was that what he really wanted? Could it be that he actually…

“And then…” Baas continued. At this moment, he finally lifted his head. A big smile came across his face. He turned and looked at Sheina. “And then, you and I would go off and find Vatti.”

Upon hearing that, Sheina began to feel a little let down. Of course.

Baas sat back to lean on his arms. His imagination began to soar into the future.

“I know she’s out there somewhere Sheina. Still alive. It would take a lot more than a simple war like this to kill her. If you, me, and her could meet up again and be on the same team… Man that would be some fun. And then, we’d be team Baas, with yours truly as leading the group.”

Sheina raised an eyebrow. “How would the Leader with the least experience wind up being in charge?”

“Because I’m so ridiculously awesome, that’s why.”

Baas’ smile was now huge. He was back to his old self. Sheina was happy. He had found what he really wanted to do. Despite the fact that it was an impossible dream, it was still a dream and something to take his mind off of the seriousness it had been through. Still, for a minute, she had wished his dream would have been to…

“Hey.” Baas said interrupting her thoughts. “If you’re feeling okay, we can go up with the others now. It’s best that we stick together since we’re in Gold territory.”

Sheina nodded. The two stood up and began to head up the hill.

The three at the top sat in a circle some ways from each other. As Baas and Sheina came up, they turned their attention away from each other and toward them. As they approached where the rest of the group was, Baas immediately noticed that they were all awake.

“Why are you guys still up?” he said putting his crossing his arms. “I told you I could handle guard duty by myself.”

“Relax kid.” Atsuma said with a smirk. “Us staying up has nothing to do with you.”

“We’re all just anxious for tomorrow that’s all.” Pandora agreed.

“Yeah right.” Baas said not believing them. He and Sheina sat down next to each other in between Atsuma and Pandora.

“You’ve really got a smart mouth kid. You know that?” Atsuma said with a smirk.

Baas smiled. “I get it from my superior.”

“There you go, talking about Panda again.”

Everyone giggled at the joke.

“You guys do act alike.” Pandora noticed. “If I didn’t know any better, Atsuma, I’d think you were Baas’…”

Before she could finished, the sentence she was about to say reminded Pandora of something. Something she was extremely concerned about but had forgotten.

“Atsuma!” she replied quickly. “You never told us about what happened to Sean.”

Upon hearing the name, Atsuma became extremely uncomfortable.

“Oh yeah!” Koroko spoke up as anxious as Pandora. “What did Diablo mean when he was talking about him?”

Atsuma took a deep breath quickly. This was not a story he wanted to talk about. It was suppose to remain a secret forever. How did Diablo find out?

“I don’t want to talk about it guys.” He said.

“I don’t care if you want to talk about it.” Koroko stood up. “We care about Sean too! We have a right to…”

“WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE?!” Atsuma shouted. He stood up to meet Koroko. “Just because you care about someone, doesn’t give you a right to their life!”

Koroko was shocked that Atsuma got so upset, but he was not threatened.

“Atsuma, you’re hiding something…”

“And I’ll continue to hide it!” Atsuma interrupted. “Everybody doesn’t need to know everything about my life!”

“But this isn’t about you!” Koroko retorted getting as loud as Atsuma. “This is about Sean.”

“Who is my responsibility! Not yours.”

“Was… your responsibility. Now he’s another fighter whom you’re no longer in charge of. But that won’t stop you from caring about him and it won’t stop us either. Now tell me, what happened to Sean?”

The two friends stared each other in the face. Intensity had reached a new level there. Baas and Sheina were unsure what to do. This was an argument amongst not only two people of more experience, but two friends. Who were they to get in the middle? They didn’t want to see them fight seriously, but they weren’t experienced enough to do anything about it.

“Hey!” Pandora stood up interjecting. “That’s enough. This isn’t going to get us anywhere except in a fight.”

“Well maybe that’s what we want…” Koroko started but was interrupted when he was suddenly grabbed by the ear by Pandora. “Ow. Ow. Ow”

“What was that Koroko?” Pandora asked.

“I said, ‘maybe that’s what we… OW!”

Pandora pinched harder.

“I’m a Far Koroko. My fingers are incredibly strong and sturdy. If you want, I can make your ear change color.”

“Bring it on.” Koroko smiled. “I’m not afraid of a little… OW!!!”

Pandora’s grip on Koroko’s ear increased. As he watched his two friends go back and forth, Atsuma couldn’t help but smile. And then laugh.

“Oh you think this is funny?” Koroko asked.

“Yeah.” Atsuma answered. “When it’s not happening to me. Plus, I know better than to make Panda squeeze harder.”

“Oh ha ha ha.” Koroko laughed sarcastically. “You’re a Leader. Make her stop.”

“That’s more like it.” Pandora said still holding Koroko’s ear. “If you two are going to argue, do it like friends. Don’t become enemies. Understand?”

Atsuma lifted one eyebrow. “Whatever.”He said shrugging.

“No I don’t understand.” Koroko rebelled. “You’re not a Leader. You can’t tell me what to do. If I want to fight with Ats, then I’ll fight with… whoa!”

At that moment, Pandora pulled her arm down, and Koroko with it, to slam his body on to the floor.

“Yeah yeah Koroko.” She said brushing her hands off.

Atsuma laughed. Then, with a smirk on his face, he began to give orders.

“Well this was fun guys, but we need to get some sleep. We have to wake up early incase it rains before noon tomorrow. We should be able to reach the grey territory before then.”

Koroko picked himself up.

“Don’t think you’re off the hook Ats.”

“Yeah yeah Koroko.” Atsuma said preparing to sleep in the grass.

“Hmf.” Was the last thing Koroko said, before leaving to take his turn on guard duty.

The rest of the group all followed Atsuma’s example and began to prepare for sleep.

Baas, however, felt there was something he needed to know before he’d be able to rest peacefully. Otherwise, his curiosity might keep him up pondering about it. He intentionally laid near where Atsuma was so he could talk to him without anyone else hearing. Atsuma had his back turned toward Baas, so he didn’t know he was there.

“Atsuma.” Baas spoke quietly. Atsuma immediately knew who it was. He spoke without turning to face Baas.

“Kid, if you’re trying to snuggle me I will punch you in the face.”

Baas chuckled. He could take a joke.

“No, uh, I was actually wondering… who exactly is Sean?”

Atsuma was quiet. Baas could not tell what he was thinking as he was stilled turned away.

Finally, Atsuma settled himself in and simply replied, “No more questions Baas. Go to sleep.”

Baas understood. Whoever Sean was, he brought up a painful memory. He turned his back and closed his eyes preparing to go to sleep. Before he did, however, he heard Atsuma’s final words before he himself went to sleep.

“He was my son.”

Chapter 35 End

**Chapter 35 : Questions**

**Sheina woke up to see a starry sky. Waking up? When had she gone to sleep? With her peripheral vision, she could make out the light from the full moon. She felt around. She was lying on grass. Warm grass. She had been laying there for a while. She tried to move in order to see exactly where “there” was. Her body ached as she tried. Why did it ache? She was having a hard time remembering exactly what had happened. Baas! Baas would know. She could ask Baas what had happened. But, where was he?  
  
"Baas?" she mumbled hoping he would hear.   
"Yeah?" Baas answered. Startled, she turned to her right quickly to see him sitting there. How long had he been there? As Sheina tried to get up, Baas placed his hand on her right shoulder.  "You can move." He said. "But don’t push yourself too hard. It was only heat exhaustion, but push any injury too far once it’s healed and it will have negative side effects on the body."  
  
Sheina continued to sit up but, with Baas’ advice in mind, she moved slowly. Finally, she was sitting up straight. Doing so made her realize that they were actually on a hill. And realizing that made her remember that it was the same hill she was on before she… collapsed. Then, she remembered everything. Then she began to feel embarrassed.   
  
"I guess we wound up stopping anyway." She said shyly.    
  
"Yep." Baas responded without looking at her.    
  
Sheina looked around. She noticed that they were alone.    
"Where are the others?"  Baas pointed behind himself. His gazed still stayed facing forward.    
  
"They’re on top of the hill. That’s where they made camp. They said they wanted to make it around you, but I convinced them that we could see all enemies from up there."  
  
"Are they still awake?"  
   
"I believe so."   
  
Sheina looked at Baas confused. Ever since she had woken up, he had been in the same position, sitting up right with his arms rapped around his knees. His mouth was buried in his arms and his gaze was staring straight. Not once had he looked at Sheina or anywhere else.  
  
"Baas," she asked. "Is something wrong?"  
  
"Hmm?" Baas asked. He turned to look at Sheina. It seemed he had been in deep thought.    
  
"Are you thinking about something?" Sheina asked.  
  
"Yeah." Baas said. He turned back to face forward. "The stars. I wonder. What are they?"   
  
"The stars?”"Sheina asked.    
  
"Yeah." Baas said. "Have you ever thought about them? They’re so high up. I wonder if any one has ever really studied them. They emit light, so I’m guessing they’re some sort of power supply. You know, like fire."  
  
This wasn’t like Baas. He was a prankster, not a thinker. Sheina, however, decided to go with it. Maybe she could snap him out of this thing he was going through.  
"Do you think, if someone got high enough, they’d reach up and burn themselves when they grab one?" She asked, hoping to spark a joke.    
  
"No." Baas said still staring forward. "If I were to keep walking away from here, I would get smaller and smaller. The sky is extremely far away. If we see small stars, they must be much bigger up close. I don’t think anyone could grab one if they tried due to their enormous size."  
  
Sheina was now intrigued. She had never thought about anything that way.    
"Then," She concluded, "the sun and moon must be really big sources of fuels. They emit light too, but they’re bigger than the stars."  
  
"I agree about the sun," Baas said pondering, "but I don’t think the moon is a source of fuel." Baas then turned his head toward the moon. "Do you see how you can see the moon’s full shape? It’s more like it’s reflecting some other sort of light. Yet a star, and the sun too, spreads out its light. There’s really no real shape to them. Just like fire."  
   
Sheina understood.  "The real question is though," Baas continued, "'how does everything stay up there?' When we go up, we come back down. Yet the stars, sun and moon never come down. In fact, why do we come down in the first place? Why don’t we keep going up?"   
  
Baas was digging deeper into his thoughts.    
  
"Baas, what is wrong with you?" Sheina asked getting concerned. She stood up quickly.    
  
"What are you talking about?" Baas asked turning to Sheina. "And I told you, don’t push..."    
  
"I’m fine Baas, but you’re clearly not. You’re not acting like, your usual… goofy... crazy self. You haven’t said a single joke since I’ve woken up. Did something happen when I was asleep? Why are you suddenly thinking about stars?"   
   
Baas stared at Sheina. He then stared up in the sky. Then, his gaze went back forward.    
"Have..." he started. "Have you ever thought about death Sheina?"  
    
"Death?" Sheina asked confused.  "We can lose so many things," Baas continued, "but anything you lose, you can usually get back. Weapons.  Clothing.   Hey, when I was in the Center I lost you, yet I got you back. But…  if a person loses their life, they can’t get it back. Seeing you, collapsed on the ground, even though I knew you’d be okay, made me wonder, “what happens when someone loses a life?” And I thought, maybe they become a star. Then I began to notice that that was impossible because stars had certain characteristics. And… I guess that’s how I got to thinking of stars."    
  
Sheina did not understand. Who was this person holding his knees? It certainly wasn’t the Baas she knew. All because he was scared she might die.    
  
"Baas. I’m sorry I got you thinking about death, but I’m fine. Next time, I’ll make sure to take proper breaks."   
  
Sheina smiled hoping Baas would too. Instead, Baas sank lower into his slump position.    
  
"Baas, did you hear me? I said..."    
  
"You weren’t what made me think of death."  Now Sheina was just confused.  "But, you said..."  
  
"Death has been on the back of my mind ever since we first saw Diablo in the woods. Just seeing you collapsed made it hit closer to home. I'm rather ashamed of myself actually. I'm live my life in war. Death is all around yet I choose now to start thinking about it."    
  
Before continuing, Baas let out a sigh. He did not want to say what was on his mind, but he felt this conversation would eventually lead to it eventually anyway.    
"You... you remember how I was saved by Miss Vanes... I mean, by one of Diablo’s friends?"    
  
"Yeah." Sheina replied. "Atsuma talked about it. He said it was great how you made yourself a distraction but it was extremely risky. I agree by the way. Next time just finish the guy yourself."  
    
"That’s just it Sheina. I... I can’t."  Baas hesitated again before continuing. "That arrow didn’t kill the guy first because I wouldn’t kill him. It was because I couldn’t kill him. When I tried to, my body froze. I just kept thinking about what Diablo told me."    
Baas then let his voice get low like Diablo’s.    
  
"‘If you think so badly of death, why have you spent your life learning how to give it to others?’"    
  
Sheina giggled.  "You actually sound like him."    
Baas still did not laugh nor did he lift his head from his knees.    
"The thing is, I’m not sure if he was serious or if he was just looking for a good comeback to what I had said, but even if he wasn’t serious, he has a point. Life is a precious thing. Who are we to take it away from someone? Those guys on that boat, they talked to each other just like Atsuma and I did. What made them so bad that we had to kill them? What makes anyone so bad? Just because they’re part of another country? If someone took something away from me that I could replace, I would be extremely upset. Imagine taking something that couldn’t be replaced. And yet, that’s what we do. That’s what everyone in Wig has been trained to do. Ever since I was little, I dreamed of my first kill. Now, I’m thinking I was a sick little child."  
  
"That’s a deep thought."  
   
"I’ve been thinking about a lot of things lately. This one just happens to change how I view life."    
  
Nothing, absolutely nothing Sheina said was getting to Baas. He seemed really in a slump. What could she do? What could she say? At that moment, she was willing to do anything to see his annoying smile. But getting depressed about it with Baas certainly wouldn’t help the situation. Baas had had a dream, and now that dream was lost. After thinking about it for a little while, Sheina let a soft smile appear on her face. She would just have to replace it with another dream. Something else Baas wanted. She just had to get him to realize what that was.  
    
"So tell me Baas," she asked him, "if you could stop fighting in the war, what would you do?"  
    
"I’d become a grey band, of course. Or even worse, a black band."    
He was still thinking logically and negatively. Sheina had to get his brain in a positive, creative mood.    
  
"No, that’s not what I meant. I mean, if you could do anything you wanted and have no consequences in life, what would you choose to do?"    
  
Baas looked up from his knees at Sheina. It was a question worth thinking about. He had never thought he could do anything but fight. If he could choose to do anything…    
  
"I would go off with you."    
  
Sheina lost her smile. Her heart almost stopped when she heard that. What did he mean by it?    
  
"Don’t get me wrong, Atsuma and the others are great and I would never let them down. But I can live without them as long as I knew they were okay. If I were to leave and have my own life, there’s no way I’d be able to leave you."  
   
 What was Baas saying? Was that what he really wanted? Could it be that he actually...    
  
"And then..." Baas continued. At this moment, he finally lifted his head. A big smile came across his face. He turned and looked at Sheina. "And then, you and I would go off and find Vatti."   
  
Upon hearing that, Sheina began to feel a little let down. Of course.    
  
Baas sat back to lean on his arms. His imagination began to soar into the future.    
"I know she’s out there somewhere Sheina. Still alive. It would take a lot more than a simple war like this to kill her. If you, me, and her could meet up again and be on the same team... Man that would be some fun. And then, we’d be team Baas, with yours truly as leading the group."    
  
Sheina raised an eyebrow.   
"How would the Leader with the least experience wind up being in charge?"    
  
"Because I’m so ridiculously awesome, that’s why.”  Baas’ smile was now huge. He was back to his old self. Sheina was happy. He had found what he really wanted to do. Despite the fact that it was an impossible dream, it was still a dream and something to take his mind off of the seriousness it had been through. Still, for a minute, she had wished his dream would have been to...    
  
"Hey." Baas said interrupting her thoughts. "If you’re feeling okay, we can go up with the others now. It’s best that we stick together since we’re in Gold territory."    
  
Sheina nodded. The two stood up and began to head up the hill.    
  
The three at the top sat in a circle some ways from each other. As Baas and Sheina came up, they turned their attention away from each other and toward them. As they approached where the rest of the group was, Baas immediately noticed that they were all awake.    
  
"Why are you guys still up?" he asked his crossing his arms. "I told you I could handle guard duty by myself."    
  
"Relax kid." Atsuma said with a smirk. "Us staying up has nothing to do with you."    
  
"We’re all just anxious for tomorrow that’s all." Pandora agreed.    
  
"Yeah right." Baas said not believing them. He and Sheina sat down next to each other in between Atsuma and Pandora.    
"You’ve really got a smart mouth kid. You know that?" Atsuma said not losing his smirk.    
  
Baas smiled. "I get it from my superior."    
  
"There you go, talking about Panda again."   
  
Everyone laughed at the joke.    
  
"You guys do act alike." Pandora noticed. "If I didn’t know any better, Atsuma, I’d think you were Baas’..."  Before she could finished, the sentence she was about to say reminded Pandora of something. Something she was extremely concerned about but had forgotten.    
  
"Atsuma!" she replied quickly leaning forward. "You never told us about what happened to Sean."  
    
Upon hearing the name, Atsuma became extremely uncomfortable.    
  
"Oh yeah!" Koroko spoke up as anxious as Pandora. "What did Diablo mean when he was talking about him?"    
  
Atsuma took a deep breath quickly. This was not a story he wanted to talk about. It was suppose to remain a secret forever. How did Diablo find out?    
  
"I don’t want to talk about it guys." He said.    
  
"I don’t care if you want to talk about it." Koroko stood up. "We care about Sean too! We have a right to..."    
  
"WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE?!” Atsuma shouted. He stood up to meet Koroko. "Just because you care about someone, doesn’t give you a right to their life!"    
  
Koroko was shocked that Atsuma got so upset, but he was not threatened.    
  
"Atsuma, you’re hiding something..."    
  
"And I’ll continue to hide it!" Atsuma interrupted. "Everybody doesn’t need to know everything about my life!"    
  
"But this isn’t about you!" Koroko retorted getting as loud as Atsuma. "This is about Sean."    
  
"Who is my responsibility! Not yours."    
  
"Was... your responsibility. Now he’s another fighter whom you’re no longer in charge of. But that won’t stop you from caring about him and it won’t stop us either. Now tell me, what happened to Sean?"    
  
The two friends stared each other in the face. Intensity had reached a new level there. Baas and Sheina were unsure what to do. This was an argument amongst not only two people of more experience, but two friends. Who were they to get in the middle? They didn’t want to see them fight seriously, but they weren’t experienced enough to do anything about it.       
  
"Hey!" Pandora stood up interjecting. "That’s enough. You guys keep yelling like this, and someone will hear us. Plus, this isn’t going to get us anywhere except in a fight."    
  
"Well maybe that’s what we want..." Koroko started but was interrupted when he was suddenly grabbed by the ear by Pandora. "Ow. Ow. Ow"    
  
"What was that Koroko?" Pandora asked.    
  
"I said, ‘maybe that’s what we... OW!"    
  
Pandora pinched harder. "I’m a Far Koroko. My fingers are incredibly strong and sturdy. If you want, I can make your ear change color."    
  
"Bring it on." Koroko smiled, toughing it out. "I’m not afraid of a little... OW!!!"   
  
Pandora’s grip on Koroko’s ear increased. As he watched his two friends go back and forth, Atsuma couldn’t help but smile. And then laugh.    
  
"Oh you think this is funny?" Koroko asked.    
  
"Yeah." Atsuma answered. "When it’s not happening to me. Plus, I know better than to make Panda squeeze harder."    
  
"Oh ha ha ha." Koroko laughed sarcastically. "You’re a Leader. Make her stop."  
  
"I thought you weren't scared of a little pain."  
  
"Oh, I'll show you a little pain."  
  
"That’s more like it." Pandora said still holding Koroko’s ear. "If you two are going to argue, do it like friends. Don’t become enemies. Understand?"  
  
Atsuma lifted one eyebrow.   
"Whatever."He said shrugging.    
  
"No I don’t understand." Koroko rebelled. "You’re not a Leader. You can’t tell me what to do. If I want to fight with Ats, then I’ll fight with... ah!"    
  
At that moment, Pandora pulled her arm down, and Koroko with it, to slam his body on to the floor.    
  
"Yeah yeah Koroko." She said brushing her hands off.    
  
Atsuma laughed. Then, with a smirk on his face, he began to give orders.    
"Well this was fun guys, but we need to get some sleep. We have to wake up early incase it rains before noon tomorrow. We should be able to reach the grey territory before then."    
  
Koroko picked himself up.  "Don’t think you’re off the hook Ats."    
  
"Yeah yeah Koroko." Atsuma said preparing to sleep in the grass.    
  
"Hmf." Was the last thing Koroko said, before leaving to take his turn on guard duty.    
  
The rest of the group all followed Atsuma’s example and began to prepare for sleep.  Baas, however, felt there was something he needed to know before he’d be able to rest peacefully. Otherwise, his curiosity might keep him up pondering about it. He intentionally laid near where Atsuma was so he could talk to him without anyone else hearing. Atsuma had his back turned toward Baas, so he didn’t know he was there.    
  
"Atsuma." Baas spoke quietly. Atsuma immediately knew who it was. He spoke without turning to face Baas.    
  
"Kid, if you’re trying to snuggle me I will punch you in the face." He then lifted his hand and pointed. "The girls are over there. I'm sure one of them will help you get to sleep."    
  
Baas chuckled. He could take a joke.    
"No, uh, I was actually wondering... who exactly is Sean?"  Atsuma was quiet. Baas could not tell what he was thinking as he was stilled turned away.  Finally, Atsuma settled himself in and simply replied, "No more questions Baas. Go to sleep."   
  
Baas understood. Whoever Sean was, he brought up a painful memory. He turned his back and closed his eyes preparing to go to sleep. Before he did, however, he heard Atsuma’s final words before he himself went to sleep.    
  
"He was my son."**

**Chapter 35 End**