Chapter 17

The doors to Discrete B’s room slid open. Discrete B looked up from his book. Only two people ever came through those doors. This time, it was not Discrete A.

“Discrete B.” The man called out. He was much older than the Discrete he was searching for, but due to his genetics he appeared to be the same age. His voice too showed signs of adolescence despite being over thirty years old. He wore the same black outfit that all Discretes did, as well as the same purge visors; his slid further down his face, allowing his blue eyes to be seen. His blond hair was much longer than Discrete B cared for.

“Discrete B, where are you?”

“I am not hiding C.” The Discrete answered. Discrete C looked under the table that was right in front of him. There Discrete B sat, book in hand.

“You could’ve fooled me. I thought you were the expert at hiding.”

Discrete C had a uniqueness about the way he spoke. Unlike other Discretes, his tone said exactly how he felt. The only other Discrete who spoke this way was Discrete A. It always unnerved Discrete B to be surrounded by the only two Discretes who spoke this way. Even Discrete D hid his emotions when he spoke.

Discrete C was not in a good mood. He rarely was when he entered Discrete B’s room.

“I just got word that another Discrete has died to the hands of the Greens.”

Discrete B climbed up from under the table. “I take it the news was not pleasant to hear. I’m sure Discrete L would be glad to know you had such high concern for him.”

“A waste of life is always a shame, Discrete B, and that’s what this is, nothing but a waste. The Greens continue to grow stronger and you keep me from the battle. Not only that, but you only allow scouts in singular groups to leave our base. Are you trying to lose us this war?”

“Explaining my methods to you would be unsuccessful. Discrete A understands and agrees. She is the only person I answer to.”

Discrete C breathed heavily through his nose.

“You talk down to me like some child and hide behind a rank. If it weren’t for Discrete A, you wouldn’t be talking so high and mighty. Discretes have always challenged each other to determine whose capable of being in charge. It makes no sense for her to promote you to Discrete B and then immediately forbid anyone from challenging you for your title.”

“Discrete A simply believes that at my prime, I surpass the rest of you. She sees no reason to go back and forth in some ridiculous power struggle.”

“She broke a heavy tradition, one of many she’s attempted to make ever since she took over.”

“Is that jealousy I sense?” It was rare for a Discrete to smile, but Discrete B could feel an impulse in himself to do so. “This would not be the first time. Tell me Discrete C, how can you criticize A for breaking traditions, when you yourself are adamant about breaking one of our most upheld traditions? Your choice to embrace your emotions is one of the most distracting things Discretes have seen in years.”

“Someone like you, whose only been alive for a couple of years, wouldn’t understand. We’ve always been taught not to let our emotions compromise our judgment, but for too long Discretes have interpreted that to mean to abandon emotions completely. No matter how much we push them down, emotions are still there. I don’t let emotions compromise me Discrete B, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to hide from them like the rest of you.”

“Well, you aren’t the only one. Discrete A can be pretty emotional as well. All that time spent on the surface, I imagine. In fact, I’m sure she’d be pretty… ‘emotional’ if she knew how strongly you felt.”

“I’ve told Discrete A many times of the stupidity of her decisions. The lesser Discretes might be afraid of her, but I’ve earned my right to speak.”

“Speaking will only get you so far. If you really believe in what you say, you will act on it.”

Discrete C was silent for a moment.

“What are you proposing?”

“Fight me, Discrete C. Challenge me for my rank. You believe yourself to be stronger, faster, better. Don’t speak of your superiority, prove it. Proving things has always been the Discrete way.”

Discrete C once again grew quiet. Then, a smirk appeared on his face. Smiles on Discrete C were not as rare as the rest.

“For a moment there, you tempted me. I may believe myself to be stronger than you, but I know I cannot defeat Discrete A in battle. That makes her the superior one. I told you, I may express my emotions, but I do not let them overcome my judgment. Once we start rebelling, we’re no different than the humans we’ve been protecting all these years. I will obey orders from Discrete A, even if it means I have to obey orders from you, Discrete B, as shameful to the title as you may be.”

This time, Discrete B couldn’t help it. A smirk appeared on his face as well. He turned away from the man.

“Then I don’t expect to hear complaints from you again. Discretes will stay on the patrol schedules I’ve marked. Until the Greens are weakened to a point where I am satisfied, we do not attack in full force.”

Discrete C glared in fury. “You…”

“Now that I know your emotions won’t cause you to rebel, I can say this with satisfaction. A higher authority has issued a command. You need not agree with it, only obey.”

Chapter 17 end