**Chapter 29**

“So this is the meeting place.” Magatha said. She stared at the tall building in front of her.

“What’s so special about it that you all chose this location?”

“Nothing.” Zordo answered. He proceeded to walk inside. “That’s exactly why D chose it. Though, according to Eve, it used to be a meeting place. She found records suggesting the First met here quite frequently.”

Magatha followed him in. “That’s not nothing, Zordo. It’s actually an obvious meeting place.”

“If you think we should move locations, you’re welcome to bring that concern up.”

“Why haven’t you suggested.”

“I’ve convinced myself that if it were so obvious, the Discretes would’ve found it by now.”

Magatha sighed. “My first meeting as a general, and I can already foresee the headaches you’re going to give me.”

Magatha and Zordo walked into the dimly lit room. The other generals and Discrete D were already sitting at the table.

“Magatha?” Savvi said. “Oh that’s right, she’s a general now.”

“That explains why you took so long.” Vatti said. “Can we get this over with?”

Zordo sat down in his usual spot next to Discrete D.

“Zordo.” Decson said. “Aren’t you going to get a seat for Magatha.”

“Don’t worry about me.” Magatha assured. “I’m just here to watch. This is my first meeting and if I embarrass Zordo by doing things out of order, he’ll surely have a heart attack.”

She leaned up against the wall in the darkness.

“We can start now.” Discrete D said. “Zordo will be going last once again. Decson proceed.”

Magatha observed as the meeting went on. Each general gave a thorough report of their respective areas. They discussed, they teased, they shared files on their Displays. Everyone but Vatti, who rushed anyone who took a slightly longer than she liked, seemed to actually be enjoying the meeting. Finally, it was Zordo’s turn to speak.

“The Ascencion of the recruits is here. Do you all have your final reports?” All the generals, including Magatha, pressed a few buttons on their Displays and waited as Zordo retrieved the data.

“We’ll discuss your recommendations. You all have a say, but as I stated, I will make the final decision. We’ll start with Magatha.” Zordo opened the file she send him. “No teams?”

“All the teams were taught under your command, Zordo.” Magatha said “I plan on drastically changing the curriculum once the current teams ascend. If I take on any of your students, they’ll constantly have your curriculum in mind. Some of them might even question my methods.”

“Noted. Savvi, you’ve only requested one team?”

“Well, yeah, I mean… look, they’re all impressive and a good many of them are capable of making some great inventions. But there was only one group that had that certain… something.”

“Noted. Decson, you’ve…” Zordo hesitated in speaking.

“Is something wrong with my choices.” Decson asked.

“Not necessarily. I’m just having trouble following you’re reasoning. Of all people, I didn’t expect you to choose these teams. You honestly believe they’ll make good medical staff?”

“I’m in a similar situation to Savvi. I’m sure that any of your students could treat a minor injury, else you wouldn’t be allowing them to ascend. I was looking for certain other traits. As unusual as those groups are, they are the kind of people I want to be mentoring.”

“Noted. Eve, from what you’ve told me, I expected your list to be smaller. Almost every team is on here.”

“I was being conservative before. I inevitably decided to be selfish. They may not all fit in perfectly, but I can use a good many of them to my own needs.”

“Well, I can’t promise you’ll be getting all of these.”

“That’s the tactic of running a store, Zordo. You ask for more than what you want, so you can negotiate down to your expected price.”

“Last is you, Vatti. The file you’ve sent me also has no team names on it.”

Vatti hadn’t seen a problem with her actions, but as soon as Zordo said that she sensed the mood of everyone.

“What?” She asked. “Magatha did the same thing.”

“You never actually went to the Department of Education, did you?” Savvi asked.

“Well… no, but...”

“Oh no. Vatti!” Decson whined.

“I was busy actually doing what we’re supposed to be doing, training to take down the Discretes. Besides, less recruits for me means more for Eve, right?”

Eve giggled. It grew into a large laughter.

“You’ve absolutely no clue. That is the funniest thing I’ve seen in a while.”

“Vatti, you’re at the top of the student’s wish lists.” Decson exclaimed. “Most of the students there want to join your department. There was one girl who was specifically trying to get noticed just so we’d talk to you her.”

“Was it that girl in group 3?” Savvi asked. “I remember her. She made this really interesting gun, but wow was she obnoxious.”

“She was very physically fit.” Eve said. “But, she didn’t hide her intentions as well as she thought.”

“The point is, Vatti, you mean a lot more to these recruits than you think.” Zordo said. “They were all trained specifically to fight, Discretes and that’s your departments specialty. If Green stands any chance of defeating the Discretes and freeing Wig-Or-Log, we must take care of the future soldiers. It is unacceptable for you to ignore them.”

“Fine!” Vatti shouted. “Just… give me the one with the greatest fighter.”

“Noted.” Zordo pushed buttons on his Display. “I’m sending you all the finalized list. Let me know if you have any objections.”

The generals and Discrete D checked their Displays.

“I got the most.” Eve said. “Does that make me the winner?”

“Well, you’re also the only one who didn’t get exactly what she wanted?” Zordo said.

Eve’s smirk faded when she heard that.

“Wait a minute, Zordo, you can’t be serious.” Magatha said. “The Department of Intelligence requires a team?”

“’Require’ isn’t quite the word I’d use, but I don’t think any Departments require new recruits. I do think it’s best for Green that I take some of the recruits with me.”

“I was debriefed on what exactly the Department of Intelligence does, are you sure this is the best group suited for what you have planned?”

“Absolutely.”

Eve leaned back up against the wall in silence. With her concerns dealt with, Zordo addressed the room.

“The Ascension of the cadets will take place in less than a month. After this meeting, I’ll need all of you to come with me.”

“All of us traveling together?” Decson asked. “Isn’t that a bit risky.”

“Indeed it is, but it is necessary. The cadets, who at the time will officially be soldiers, will need safe escort to your Departments.”

“You didn’t train them to navigate?”

“Yes, but there are several minor factors that add up. Point being, it is crucial that all the Generals are there.”

“Absolutely not!” Vatti screamed.

“And it starts.” Eve commented.

“First you want us to test them and now you want us to escort them? I thought these were soldiers! I have better things to do with my time than babysit!”

“I assure you, you do not.”

“Zordo, I didn’t join you guys to play babysitter. I made it very clear that I’m here to take down the Discretes.”

“And I made it clear that your goals are only important as long as they support ours.” The tone in Zordo’s voice had shifted. It showed… emotion. Not sarcasm, but he was genuinely angry. Vatti had never seen this before.

“Vatti, you can take down the Discretes with us or without us. If you think you stand a chance without our weapons, without our facilities and without our armies, than you are free to leave at any time. But we aren’t just trying to take down the Discretes. We’re trying to make a new world for everyone in Wig-Or-Log. These new soldiers are one of the most important parts of that future. If you don’t start treating them with the respect they need, I will guarantee you will lose your general rank, and if I have to, expel you out of Green myself. Am I understood?”

Vatti stood where she was. Her instincts told her that in this moment she should stand firm, yet she could feel her body shaking. Zordo had often talked her out of her ways of thinking, but this was the first time he was using force. Vatti had fought Discretes time and time again and had not hesitated for a moment, but here, in front of her old trainer, she felt fear she thought she had long outgrew. Slowly, she sank down into her chair and answered.

“Yes. I understand.”

“Good. You will all follow me to my Department now. This meeting is dismissed.”

Chapter 29 End