

CHAPTER FOUR:

'Desire At The End Of A Blade'

.....'Back at the soldiers debriefing.'

L.T.Sythe: "Lord Reigh asked you a question, now answer him -that's an order!"

Soldier: "I... I don't know... I'm sorry Sir I walked out -saw the other two dead and the A.I. Down, the next thing I knew I was at gun point by a little girl... It just happened so fast."

Reigh: "Sorries cost lives! I picked all of you because you came alone and have no known family left... And because I thought you've earned it. This makes me look foolish -dead soldiers and you held at gun-point... by a little girl!"

Soldier: "I know Sir, I'm sorry for my teams failings."

Reigh: "Not yet you're not, congrats 'cadet' you're back at the bottom -if you show improvement maybe I'll re-promote you to 'grunt' a bit quicker... Remember the next time I may not be so forgiving... Now I'm sick of the sight of you."

L.T.Sythe: "You heard Lord Reigh -go!"

Soldier: "Sir-yes-Sir!"

L.T.Sythe: "I don't understand 'my lord,' why not just toss the kids in the brig' and take what's needed?"

Reigh: "I know you don't, you see if I can persuade them -there's less risk of any losses and maybe even gain a few more hands to help."

L.T.Sythe: "And if they choose to not cooperate?"

Reigh: "I trust that you can convince them."

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.....'Housing Sector.'

Gwen: "I pulled some strings and got you guys a four bedroom suite. Here are the keys and I hope you enjoy your stay, I'll leave so everyone can get settled in -by the way if you need anything at all there is a working com-line and here is a slip of the numbers and connected names."

The four stopped and listened for the sound of Gwens footsteps to fade then they collapsed, each sitting on a section of floor except for Momo who just stood there.

Danny: "So how about it Andrya -have you ever found any kind of data chip in your bag?"

Andrya: "No, I've been through this backpack hundreds -if not thousands of times and never found anything like that."

Momo: "Did your father leave you with anything personal or meaningful to you?"

Andrya: "No, but here -I'll dump it out and... damn pen ripped open a couple of my dehydrated meals, I don't even know why it's in here."

James: "An ink pen? Why would your dad put a pen in your bag, I don't even know anyone who uses those anymore."

Andrya: "This is one of my fathers personal pens, his office was at home so he had tons of these, it probably fell out of his shirt when he rushed me out the door."

Danny: "Mind if I see for a second...?"

Andrya: "Here, go nuts."

Danny marked himself with it before twisting the pen apart and placing the shell on the floor, he then twisted the inner metal pen and a glass vial dropped out -shattering on the floor.

There in the small pile of shards sat a small black memory card. As everyone sat and looked at it lost in thought -Momo was looking at Danny.

Danny: "What?"

Momo: "You know if you guys want to know if these people are 'for real' we'll have to snoop around right?"

James and Andrya looked at Danny as he paused.

Danny: ".....Dammit -you're right."

.....'Earlier at the home of Reigh.'

Gwen walks in to her fathers study to him pouring himself a scotch on the rocks in the glow of the flickering flames of the fireplace.

Reigh: 'You've done well my dear.'

Gwen: "It will be tough enough to get the data from the girl, that's if she has it. I fear it will be even harder to get them to stay long enough to convince them to hand the data over."

Reigh: "Everything in it's own time -you have no need for worry. On another note what do you think of that Danny boy? -I saw you take notice of him."

Gwen: "Is it a crime to notice? Besides he's just that -a boy."

Reigh: "Oh, but he's much -much more my dear, I see that boy almost a man, almost a soldier, almost -a fearless leader. I see it in his eyes... A favour my dear Gwenith, stay near him -call on him... And just -talk."

Gwen: "Am I to understand you would wish to see us together?"

Reigh: "I wish nothing more than your happiness so if you two are to feel for each other then so be it. You will know if he's the one or not -just never forget where your honour and duty lie... With your family."

Gwen: "But of course father."

As she leaves the room she passes an unseen L.T.Sythe hidden in the shadows of the hall -angered by what he's overheard, angered because of the love he has for Gwen -a love that has yet to be shown to him in return.

L.T.Sythe: "If that boy thinks he can come in here and take claim to what I've worked my ass off for than he's in for a rude awakening. You're no longer playing with the mindless dead -I'm your new -true waking nightmare Danny-boy."

..... 'Back at the suite.'

Danny and Momo were working on a plan for the two of them to sneak around the island gathering any unshared information as Andrya and James worked on a plan of distraction in case someone stops by before they returned, but as they continue planning there's a knock at the door.

James looked through the peephole of the door before opening it. "It's Gwen."

Gwen: "Mind if I borrow Danny?"

He paused for a second then walked into the hallway shutting the door behind him.

Danny: "Is there something wrong?"

Gwen: "Yes, it's night -I'm not ready to go back home yet and I would like some company, if you're not too busy that is."

Danny stood there with less than nothing to say because fighting and living next door to the dead doesn't give you the best conversational skills with beautiful young women.

Gwen: "You don't have too if you don't want to you know."

Danny: "Ah-mhmm, sorry you kind of caught me off guard -just give me a minute please."

He went back into the room and shut the door behind him and stood there for a second.

James: "Danny?"

Danny: "S-she just asked me to keep her company... Just me..."

Momo: "This is better than we could have hoped for."

Andrya: "How could a girl liking Danny be helping us?"

Momo: "Easy, that Gwen girl is Reighs daughter -all he has to do is get to know her and earn trust, then there will be no need to sneak around as much to find out what we are not being told by these people."

Danny: "I don't think that's..."

Momo: "there's no time to think, she's waiting for you."

James: "She's right -just go, you never know you might even have some fun."

Danny just gave them a puzzled look and shook his head before heading out to see Gwen waiting further down the hall. "Looks like I'm free to keep you company."

Gwen: "I'm pleased to hear it."

Danny: "So did you want to go for a walk or something."

Gwen: "A walk? -You've spent over what?-- two years fighting those creatures and the best you can do is a walk..?"

Danny: "Why? -What did you have in mind?"

Gwen: "I want to see what you've got, I want to see the fight in you."

Danny: "-And how do you suppose we do that."

She smiled at Danny while getting down on one knee -reaching into her boot and slowly pulling out a small blade.

He stood -hesitant and unsure as she slowly rose, Gwen took the blade and cut her dress near the knee then ripped it upward allowing her more mobility.

She then flicked the blade into the floor by Dannys foot followed with a spin kick to his chest knocking him back.

"Tag! -You'rw it!" Gwen said before heading towards the stairs going in a round and downward pattern by each of the fifteen floors.

"Tag? -Really?" Danny just brushed it off, put the blade in his back pocket and ran after her.

Gwen got two floors down by the time he reached the stairs, Danny grabbed the first railing, hopped over dropping down and grabbing onto the railing of the next floor down.

Danny caught up to her by the time they had got four floors down. Gwen went through a door and down the hall and Danny followed in suit.

She got around the corner of the hallway and did a quick stop and peered around the corner to an empty hall, seconds later a 'CrreeEEK' is heard from above, Danny dropped out of the air-ducts crouching by her waist, pulled the blade out and stuck her dress to the wall with it.

"Tag! -You're it!" He said with a grin before running back towards the stairs.

Gwen pulled out the blade added with the frustration of being caught off guard and put it back into her boot before heading after him. She got to the stairs to seeing Danny gripping onto a railing three floors down so she hung off the railing and followed him the same way, Gwen caught up by skipping two floors at once and almost slipping.

Both of them dropped down floor by floor, Gwen lands one boot on the railing right near Dannys hand, then taps his hand with her other boot "Tag! - You're it!"

Danny looked up but did not see Gwen before she dropped by the railing and ran through another door, he decided to continue to drop himself down the last few floors and ran out to the side of the building. At the same time Gwen opened an emergency hatch and slid down a slanted ladder shoot, slowing herself down to stop at the bottom only to feel a poke in the back of her shoulder.

Danny: "You're it."

Gwen walks passed him to the street. "You got lucky, don't let it go to your head."

"Perish the thought." Danny said as he caught up to her walking down the street through the regular night crowd towards the sight of the water front.

Danny: "So your dad ...does he really want to find the ultimate cure to help everyone?"

Gwen: "Can't you just enjoy the moment?"

Danny: "Sorry I didn't mean to..."

Gwen: "It's okay, I just..."

Just then someone passing by bumped in to Danny throwing him off balance, he found himself with his hands on Gwens waist -they made eye contact and for a moment -nothing else existed around them.

An explosion at the water front interrupted them, it was a second explosion that went off in the same place as the first explosion that blew up the underground facility Danny and the others escaped from. The two of them moved closer to the side of the ship while everyone else moved away not caring how far from land they were. A quick flame shot into the air followed by an erupting entanglement of oversized greenery that over-took every building and piece of land with a forest of green, purple, orange, and blue for as far as the eye could see in a matter of minutes.

Once the sound of the explosions and loud creeks and cracks of the fast growing plant life had faded off. A chilling harmonic moan over took the other fading sounds then slowly quieted into the surrounding night.

Both Danny and Gwen looked at each other and said. "I'm sorry I have to go tell my..." -with just that said, they both understood and took off in separate directions to inform the others of what they had just saw.

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Not long after getting back to the main building -Gwen caught up to her father in a hallway on the third floor.

Gwen: "Father something incredible happened ...an explosion somehow led to an odd over grown forest of colours that consumed the land."

Reigh: "My dear it has nothing to do with us, I assure you it -at this moment is of no importance."

Gwen: "What do you mean? -this world has almost no plant life remaining, and a forest unlike anything I've ever heard of before grew before my own eyes within a few minutes time, and you're telling me -it's of no importance."

Reigh: "Given all we've experienced in our lifetime you should understand... We have no idea if that forest possesses any threat to anyone we'd send to investigate. I've already been informed it stopped at the water so we're not in any danger where we and with everything we need already being here on this island ship -we have no need to take any extra risks."

Gwen: "What if there is something we can use? -I mean it must have taken a lot of energy for those plants to grow as fast as they did, what if we could find out what caused it? -Knowledge is power, isn't that what you always tell me?"

Reigh: "What if? -What if everyone I send there dies? leaving us weaker and unable to defend ourselves against the next problem we run into? -If you feel so strongly about it then talk to the doctor... If you can convince him then I'll send as many of my men as you wish to explore."

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Gwen arrived at Dr. Peirson's lab three floors below labelled 'center section' with the two floors above being 'dead floors' -floors that sort of separated the lab from the rest of the ship.

She walked in to a lab of computer tablets fused to assorted large to small test tubes, some containing full bodied living or dead subjects, a couple half bodies, as well as assorted limbs and organs.

"Dr. Pierson...?" Gwen called as she passed a private monitor station with tons of screens monitoring every floor of the building and the main streets of the ship, one labelled 'live satellite feed' showing a birds eye view of the newly formed forest and a couple others labelled 'tapped feed' which once gave the ability to tap in to the street cameras but now only showed static.

Gwen walked to the back of the lab to a freezer room door, she opened it to the sight of more test subjects behind their own sectioned glass doors on the wall to the left and Dr. Peirson slightly to the right standing over a full bodied subject, strapped to a operating table with vials, tubes, and some surgical tools around him.

Gwen: "Dr. Peirson, I'd like to speak with you."

Dr.Peirson: "Did you know cold slows them down? It doesn't kill them luckily, it makes it easier to study seeing that they can't be sedated like living beings."

Gwen: "Doctor?"

Dr.Peirson: "Can't you see I'm busy!?"

Gwen: "Dr. Peirson, there was an explosion across the water and all of the land was covered in a forest in minutes, I hoped you might show interest towards its study."

She didn't have to explain, he watched it on his monitors as he does everything. The doctor doesn't get out much, he has his mind on his research and his eyes on everything else... Just how he likes it.

Dr. Peirson: "Do you have any idea what these creatures are? For that matter do you know -anything- at all about 'Neo Mitochonrion'!?"

Gwen: "Mitocho-?"

Dr. Peirson: "I thought as much, you see 'Mitochonrion' is a reaction, or ability, the 'V13' gives the host. Much like a caterpillar feeding before it's cocoon, V13 allows the host's brain to reset only allowing basic functions to work. So the host will feed until its Mitochonrion cycle hits its next stage, but even fewer survive the second genetic change. That's what I'm trying to fix. No one else knew about this change because these creatures were killing so rapidly while passing the infection on allowing them to grow in numbers.

...It means the clock is constantly restarting while only a few reach the second stage of the Mitochonrion to begin with, everyone seems to have a different reaction time -the shortest I have on record before this change is a year and eight months...."

Gwen: "But I..."

Dr. Peirson: "Listen to what it is I'm saying!.. There's a whole new world waiting to be born out of this suffering, I myself would just like to understand it -to know it. Your father is hoping I may be able to quicken the Mitochonrion so there would be less of a wait for what could be a stronger, healthier mankind. Where the problem lies is with that -well you've saw the hunger they have, now imagine the possible blood thirst, the hunger, and rage that could come from making that change quicker... Even the chance of total insanity."

Gwen: "... What does that have to do with what I had to say?"

Dr. Peirson: "I'm only one man -I have no time to waste on anything else, do I look like I give a damn about plants or plant-life at all? -even consider the fact that I may not have any interest in life at all?... Look at what I work on -what I'm surrounded by? Now leave me to my work!"

Gwen walked out of the lab and took the elevator back up to her floor and went to her apartment. She shut the door, turned and leaned her back to the wall slowly sliding down till she sat holding her knees.

Gwen: "I just don't understand how that happened? how those plants took over so fast...how...?"

.....'Back at the suite.'

Momo: "You want to know how? -You really want to know how those plants grew over everything so fast!?... Well -I'll tell you how Danny, seeing as it's your fault -you messed up Danny, you blew up the underground facility and... Dr. Kerwahtz was right, they should've listened to him, this is not good."