



# CHUCKLES AND GIGGLES

VOLUME FOUR

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# Chapter

# 60

"I...just...no." Giggles looked gobsmacked.

"That's what I said." Crusader Mark agreed.

A massive tank being piloted by Mobster Marion was tearing the suburbs of Pleasantville apart.

"What set her off THIS time?" Chuckles asked.

"We beat her little boyfriend to the stash of diamonds that was being held at one of the banks." Crusader Roger grinned. "So she's furious she's not going to get her ring AGAIN."

"YOU ROBBED A BANK AND WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT IT?!" Chuckles and Giggles yelled.

"We're a bit more sophisticated than just using brute strength all the time. Besides, we can't afford it like the Mob can." Crusader Mark pointed out. "I'd love to know how they're constantly paying for all of this though."

"Although those diamonds did fetch a good price." Crusader Roger grinned at his co-conspirator.

"Quit with the back-slapping, we have to stop her from destroying the city!" Giggles took to the sky to try and stop the tank, and only succeeded in getting fired at.

"Heh. I think we should leave the HEROES to this." Crusader Roger clapped Crusader Mark on the shoulder.

"I agree. Have fun punks!" Crusader Mark smirked as he and Crusader Roger made themselves scarce.

"Darn them!" Chuckles groaned. He was disturbed by the fact that one of the banks had been robbed and no one seemed to know about it. The March Hill Crusaders definitely knew what they were doing, and it was scary.

Giggles had finally landed on the tank and was trying to remove Mobster Marion from the cockpit. It was difficult work though.

"IT'S MINE AND YOU CAN'T HAVE IT!" Mobster Marion screamed.

"Play with it elsewhere!" Giggles snapped back, dodging another swing from the sword that Mobster Marion had with her.

"I'm coming Giggles!" Chuckles ran towards the tank, but was stopped by machine gun fire. "You're on your own mate!"

"Well thanks for nothing." Giggles rolled her eyes. Just then, she heard a familiar shuddering noise.

"Your Backpack?" Mobster Marion asked.

"Yup." Giggles sighed.

"Wow." Mobster Marion looked amused as Giggles landed on her bottom (again).

"Now. You die." Mobster Marion jumped from the tank and prepared to strike the finishing blow with her sword. Giggles groaned. The only way out of this was to kill the Mobster, but Giggles wasn't prepared to do that.

A loud clang assured her though that she was safe for now, and she looked up to see-

"THE DRAGONS SCALE SCYTHE?" Giggles cried.

"No, it's not, it's just a replica I made. Pretty good though right?" Sir Lionheart grinned, forcing Mobster Marion's sword back with his new blade. Giggles quickly scooted away, just as the replica went flying, leaving Sir Lionheart in a bit of a pickle.

"Now leave me alone, I was having fun before you lot showed up." Mobster Marion gave an injured sniff, leaning on her tank.

"Is this because you didn't get those diamonds?" Giggles raised an eyebrow.

"All I want is pretty things, is that so wrong?!" Mobster Marion sobbed loudly.

"You're pregnant, aren't you?" Lady Luck came over and leaned on the side of the tank as well.

"NO! How could you even think that?! I'm no where near as fat as you!" Mobster Marion screeched.

It took Sir Dark, Lady Courage, Sir Hyper and Chuckles to hold Lady Luck back.

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"So next week how about we go for the coal lines next? Could be some big money in stopping the trains from reaching Brisvegas." Crusader Mark said as he and Crusader Roger drove back to their hideout that was hidden in Pleasant Gorge, the wind running through their hair as the convertible sped along.

"It could work, but we'd be provoking the Last Order, not to mention the DVM would be on our case. I'm certain that Councillor Jofrey is on the Mobs payroll, and she owns the trains that run through the city." Crusader Mark pointed out. "There's so much junk on this road." He added offhandedly as they drove past what looked like some degraded old plywood boards and old baby carriage wheels discarded at the bottom of the cliff.

"I'm sure we can deal with the Order, and as for the Mob, if we cut off one of their biggest money-spinners then all the more better for us." Crusader Roger pointed out.

Both men jumped. A lone Emerald Mobster had landed on the bonnet of their car, forcing Crusader Mark to brake heavily.

"What do YOU want?" Crusader Roger pulled the Dragons Scale Scythe out of the back of the car.

The Emerald Mobster merely scowled under her mask. Her long blonde hair was loose and her eyes were aquamarine. Crusader Mark was tempted to guess that she was a relation of Mobster Marion.

But Mobster Marion didn't have any living relations left...

"Can you speak, wretch?" Crusader Roger held the Dragon Scale Scythe to the Emerald Mobsters throat. Suddenly her hand snapped out and grabbed the handle, leaning back as she yanked the weapon from its masters grasp. Enraged, Crusader Roger tried to pull the weapon back, and wore an Emerald Dagger to the shoulder for his trouble. He lost his grip on the weapon, and it was gone.

Meanwhile, Crusader Mark was trying to get the Mystic Eight Gun from its holster, which was caught in the seatbelt. The Emerald Mobster sliced the seatbelt in half, just as Crusader Mark got the gun loose. It dropped to the floor.

Crusader Mark reached for it, and almost had it when he felt a numbing pain around his neck - the Emerald Mobster had smacked the back of his head with the butt of the Dragon Scale Scythe, stunning him. She kicked his hand away and took the Mystic Eight Gun for herself.

"By the way," She turned back to them as she prepared to head back to the tank. "My name is Sidewinder."

She jumped from the bonnet of the car and disappeared.

"Turn this thing around and go and get her!" Crusader Roger felt the feeling return to his arm as Crusader Mark turned the car around.

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"AND THEN HE SOLD MY PUPPY!" Mobster Marion wailed.

"That must have been awful." Lady Courage tried to sound sympathetic. The other Knights were lounging around waiting for the authorities to arrive, while Giggles was trying to tell Chuckles about some of the other weapons of lore.

"I am NOT interested." Chuckles tried.

"And then, he gave all the family assets away and said I couldn't have them!" Mobster Marion continued to sob. She was sat on the edge of the tank, feeling sorry for herself.

"How did you ever manage?" Sir Hyper commented dryly.

That was enough to set the Mobster off again. She ran screaming at Sir Hyper, swinging her sword fiercely and accurately. He managed to dodge the first blow, but had to be saved by Lady Courage for the second.

"I do like that baseball bat. Even if a cricket bat would be more culturally appropriate."  
Chuckles grinned.

"HELP!" Lady Courage struggled, Mobster Marions sword beginning to dent the baseball bat.

Giggles aimed the Lucky Seven Gun at the sword and fired, shattering the sword and sending Mobster Marion into a fresh fury.

"WHY DO YOU DESTROY EVERYTHING I HAVE?!" She cried. She made to rush back to the tank, but it was already rolling away.

"I am CERTAIN I put on the handbrake!" Mobster Marion looked confused.

"You did. We're just stealing it. Consider it payment for your Sidewinder taking the Dragons Scale and the Mystic Eight!" Crusader Mark poked his head out of the top of the tank, grinning.

"ARGH!!!!" Screamed Mobster Marion, throwing the now broken sword at her rival. It hit the tank with a loud clang, as it headed away from the city and back towards Pleasant Cliffs. She sighed, then grimaced.

"I'm going to kill her. I am going to slaughter her." Mobster Marion stalked away. "Stupid SIDEWINDER!"

The Noble Knights of the Last Order looked confused as they watched her retreating back. Giggles blinked, and turned to Chuckles.

"Who's Sidewinder?" She asked.

"That would be me."

Giggles barely had a split second to dodge as the Dragons Scale Scythe scratched her helmet, as the Emerald Mobster known as Sidewinder landed between them.

**Chapter**

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"Not cool!" Chuckles unsheathed the Lions Claw Blade and pointed it at Sidewinder. "You could have seriously hurt Giggles!"

"I was aiming to kill. But I'll take what I can get." She pulled out the Mystic Eight Gun. Sir Lionheart gasped.

"HOW did you manage to steal THAT?!" He asked, picking up the fallen replica that he'd made.

Sidewinder didn't answer, instead firing three rounds at the group, who scattered. Giggles fired a round back, making Sidewinder laugh.

"Why do you bother firing that thing with no intent to kill or harm?" She asked, swinging the Dragons Scale Scythe at her and instead colliding with the replica scythe that Sir Lionheart was using.

"Maybe because she's a decent human being who recognises the basic rights of other human beings?" He fought back, swinging at Sidewinders midsection and narrowly missing.

"There ARE no rights in this world, only privileges, and you have to fight for those, including the privilege to survive." Sidewinder brought the Dragon Scale Scythe down onto Sir Lionhearts head, the move being narrowly blocked by the replica. The green glow of Emerald Power began to envelope Sidewinders hands and Sir Lionheart felt the two blades beginning to weigh down towards him despite his massive strength. The eyes of his opponent seemed to drill into his own, her long blonde hair touching his face, the blade of her scythe beginning to push into his shoulder.

"Sir Lionheart!" Sir Dark cried. The other Knights of the Last Order had rushed back to help their leader, all of them grabbing onto the replica scythe and pushing back and hard as they could, Lady Silent scrambling onto her brothers back to be tall enough to reach, and Lady Courage and Lady Luck standing on their toes.

Giggles flew up above them, pointing the Lucky Seven Gun at the real Dragon Scale Scythe while Chuckles pointed the Lions Claw Blade at Sidewinders back.

Seeing she was outnumbered for the time being, Sidewinder lurched and threw the Knights of the Last Order aside, all of them landing on each other. She rolled out of the way of the Lions Claw Blade and fired another shot from the Mystic Eight Gun at Giggles, scratching the heroes arm.

Sir Lionheart glared at her.

"We're leaving, the cops should be here soon." He said. "C'mon guys."

The Noble Knights of the Last Order left, Giggles flying backwards with the Lucky Seven Gun and her Desert Eagle trained on the Emerald Mobster until they were out of sight and the Backpack gave out again, leading to her landing on everyone and causing an argument.

"Bunch of cowards." Sidewinder smirked to herself. She holstered the Mystic Eight Gun, shouldered the Dragons Scale Scythe and headed back to the Council building.

--

"Why, why, WHY do things insist on getting worse for us?!" Belle groaned, sitting on an old chair with her helmet in her lap as Petunia tended to the scratch on her arm. They were back at the tip, and they were all confused.

"I have no idea where this Sidewinder came from!" Tammy pulled off her Lady Silent mask and went to her laptop. "She's definitely NOT a regular Emerald Mobster, that's for certain. She's just as skilled as Marion."

"Perhaps even more skilled than Marion, especially if she was able to steal the Dragon Scale and the Mystic Eight. No wonder Mark and Roger were angry, they've both been humiliated by the Mob." TJ pointed out. "Hey, Danny, you okay?"

"Hmm? Oh, I'm fine. I'm just glad my replica held out. It's badly damaged though, unfortunately the timber mill doesn't have the best wood." Daniel looked at his weapon, the wooden handle badly chipped and in some places worn through completely.

"You tried, that's all that really matters." Sunny smiled. She checked her phone. "Uh, I gotta go, Melody has bitten another child at daycare again."

"Sounds like her mother." Petunia said dryly, remembering when she had gone to daycare with Sunny and had been bitten. Sunny looked sheepish.

"Speaking of Marion, did you notice the blonde hair and aquamarine eyes that Sidewinder had?" Charlie said thoughtfully. "She's definitely a relation of Marions."

"Not possible. The last living relative of Marion was Mobster Marcus, her father, and he died the same day that Masked Revolver did." Belle began to lecture. "The Misneach family are interesting in that they only ever have one heir, in order to stop infighting over who owns what. The only time this went wrong was 150 years ago when they were first branching out into Ostraya."

"Why is this relevant to us?" Charlie asked.

"It's not really. It IS interesting to know though!" Belle replied.

"No, it's not, so shut up." Charlie deadpanned.

--

"Sidewinder? Never heard of her." Peter said back at the Masters residence as Petunia wrapped Charlie's toe in gauze. "And I know a lot of the Mobsters, they're always prowling around the office."

"OWCH!" Charlie cried. "So you don't know any Mobsters with blonde hair and aqua eyes?"

"Nope, only Mobster Marion." Peter mused.

"OWW!" Charlie cried again.

"You really shouldn't antagonise Belle, then things like this wouldn't happen." Petunia pointed out.

"Worth it!" Charlie replied.

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Daniel lifted another small log from the conveyor belt and threw it into the woodchipper. He winced - the small cut from the Dragons Scale Scythe still stung if he over-exerted himself, even though it had been a few days since he'd gotten it. Petunia had forced him to cover it with a dressing while he was at work, complaining that he shouldn't risk getting sawdust in it.

"Just take a day off work!" She scolded.

Not possible. The bosses were working them to the bone, trying to make the place look profitable to prospective buyers. Any days off would be heavily scrutinized, either losing Daniel his job or getting Sir Lionheart and the rest of the Knights of the Last Order discovered.

Of course, this meant risking damage to his "Lionheart" tattoo, but sacrifices had to be made.

He looked back at the conveyor belt, adjusting the larger logs to make sure they didn't jam while going through the saws and removing any small logs that were too small for building - they were used for paper manufacture.

"GOSH DARN IT!" He heard a cry from further back up the conveyor belt. That idiot Sawyer had dropped a log from the crane onto the feed outside, smashing the conveyor belt again.

"Why hasn't he been fired yet!?" Daniels direct supervisor groaned.

"His family are pretty close to the Misneachs." The guy manning the saws replied. "If he got fired this place would be destroyed."

"Swell." Daniel sighed. He looked towards the catwalk, and nearly fell over.

"What's Councillor Jofrey doing here?" He hissed to the man at the saws.

"I think she wants to buy the place. She's got a huge portfolio already." He replied, looking at her suspiciously.

"She's pretty young to have a portfolio that big." Another worker came over to join the conversation.

"She inherited most of it." Daniel pointed out.

"OI! Get your arses back to work you slackers!" They heard a loud yell from the catwalk.

Councillor Judith Jofrey had walked into the office, and the manager was now glaring furiously.

"C'mon, let's get back to work." The saw-manager groaned. Daniel looked up at the catwalk one last time.

She was pretty, with her short mousey brown hair and aquamarine eyes, her high cheekbones, long eyelashes and slender body. She was also strangely familiar.

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"Judith Jofrey is going to try and buy with timber mill?" Peter looked concerned.

"That's what Dan said. Why?" Charlie spooned another helping of Bills mushroom gravy onto his mothers roast beef.

"Because the only person who owns more of Pleasantville is Mayor Jones." Bill pointed out.

"And it looks like he might now have a rival."

"Are you saying...?" Belle perked up.

Thomas grinned.

"I think it's time we invited Judith Jofrey over for dinner." He said.

"NO!" Was the reply from Peter Masters, who looked horrified at the prospect. "Don't go inviting my evil boss over!"

# Chapter

# 62

"Who gave you an Emerald Suit?" Mobster Marion glared at Sidewinder from across the large dinnertable.

"I took Marks old one that he left behind when he defected to the Crusaders." Sidewinder replied.

"Why are you doing this Sidewinder? Your task is to maintain the Mobs position on the Council and to be the legal name on all the Misneach assets! If anyone finds out that you're my sister and thus a part of the Mob, you'll lose everything and we'll be sorely under-represented on the Council board!" Mobster Marion scowled.

"Oh we will not, just about every Councillor on that board has been either paid off or scared into submission!" Sidewinder smirked, her long blonde hair flowing freely over her shoulder.

"Not all of them. That interfering idiot Peter Masters is getting into their ears, and HE'S got those pests Chuckles and Giggles on his side, along with the Last Order." Demon Jones pointed out.

"While we DO appreciate that you have the Dragon Scale and the Mystic Eight for us now, please keep your head down. Those assets and that title are your birthright, you need to protect them." Mobster Marion tried. She loved very, very few things in this world, and her sister was one of them.

"My birthright, that'll end up going to YOUR second child." Sidewinder sneered. "And if you think you're getting your hands on my new toys, you can just forget it!"

"SIDEWINDER!" Mobster Marion cried. Her sister got up and stormed off; she'd had enough of this for one day.

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Two dark brown eyes gazed into the opposing aquamarine ones. Two highly unimpressed brown eyes.

"We're TRYING to play cricket here!" Belle scowled at Judith Jofrey, who had walked right through the middle of their game on her way to the Masters front door.

"Oh is that what you're doing? I assumed you were all drunk and behaving disorderly." Judith looked down her nose at the shorter woman.

"Well..." Belle had to admit the older woman with her short-cut brown hair had a point. Charlie currently had Daniel in a headlock, whilst being punched by Sam, who was about to be tackled by Petunia, who was being held back by TJ, who was having his ankle twisted by Tammy who was having her hair pulled by Sunny, whom Belle had dragged to the ground.

"It's a very involved sport." Daniel tried to explain, throwing Charlie off and straightening himself up. "I'm Daniel."

"Charming." Judith scowled. "Is Mr. Masters home?"

"Sure is. OZZIE!" Called Belle. Sure enough, seven-year-old Oscar Masters-Vargus came running out.

"You called?" He grinned at his older sister, guessing the joke.

"I meant Peter!" Judith yelled angrily. "I wouldn't be so jovial if I were you Miss Masters, I believe that you've been suspended AGAIN for causing a disturbance in the Court?"

"What about it?" Belles temper flared.

"Hey, no need to start attacking each other now, let's all just be friends huh?" Daniel tried to step in. Behind him, he could hear contained laughter and was pretty sure TJ was elbowing Sam in the ribs and pointing at his back.

Judith sneered.

"If you ever want to see the inside of a courtroom again Miss Masters, I suggest staying on my right side. Consider yourself warned." She stalked towards the front door, where Lara was about to step out to do some shopping.

"Is Peter Masters home?" Judith asked her.

"Sure, let me show you where he is." Lara said, praying that her husband had put a shirt on since she'd left him drinking with Thomas.

Once Judith had left, the laughter let loose.

"Someone's got a crush!" Petunia giggled uncontrollably.

"Next time I'll be nicer to your girlfriend Danny." Belle couldn't stay upright she was laughing so hard.

"Shut. Up." Daniel glared at the hysterical group. "Or shall we talk about how SOME people like to step on their own wicket?"

Laughter over.

--

"Peter." Judith looked down her nose at the two men who were happily drinking beer, lounging around the back yard.

"Councillor Jofrey!" Peter leapt to his feet and grabbed for his shirt as Thomas fell out of his hammock. "How can I help you today?"

"I'm here to discuss your continued employment with the Pleasantville Council." Judith continued, not at all impressed with what she was seeing. "And how your professional values and beliefs line up with those of the Council."

"What that's supposed to mean?" Peter finished pulling on his shirt and looked Judith in the eye.

"It means that you're stepping into business that does not concern you. You're a prosecutor, that's IT. You have no place making your little "recommendations" to the more gullible members of the Council." Judith glared back. "Remember your place, Masters, or you will lose your position and your job."

"Is that a threat Miss Jofrey?" Peter scowled.

"Why would I have any need for threats?" Judith smirked. "You know you lose the protection of the Mob if you're not employed by the Council - otherwise you'd be in huge trouble."

"If you think I'm worried about the Mob you have another thing coming." Peter growled.

"You think that your little friends Chuckles and Giggles will protect you and your family?" Judith scoffed.

"Actually, yes, we're 100% certain that Chuckles, Giggles and the Noble Knights of the Last Order are enough to take care of us." Thomas piped up.  
Judith couldn't help but smirk.

"Tom, you have to admit that even though the Knights are able to hold their own, they're not exactly the most reliable." Peter pointed out. The gleam in his best friends eyes suddenly made his stomach drop. "Don't you dare-,"

"What seems to be the issue here?" Giggles landed between Peter and Judith, making the woman jump back and Peter facepalm. "This man is under the protection of Chuckles and Giggles, your threats from an impotent Council have no power here."

"I hate everyone." Peter declared, as he walked inside. "Especially YOU." He directed a glare at Thomas who was laughing.

"What the hell did I just walk into?!" Judiths eyes darted between the three figures.

"Issues. Lots and lots of unresolved issues. I don't suggest trying to understand it, too much brain-hurtiness for one day." Giggles shrugged as Thomas fell off his hammock again.

"By the way, would you like to stay for dinner?" Thomas picked himself up, looking sheepishly at the Councillor.

"NO!" Was the resounding reply from Judith, Peter and Giggles.

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"I'd like to introduce you to our new boss, Miss Judith Jofrey!" Daniels supervisor announced a few days later at work. Daniel frowned but joined in the clapping.

Judith smiled icily at her new employees. "You probably won't see much of me around, as I have quite a few places to be, but I know that you'll all continue to work hard and make this



the best business decision I've made yet!" Her eyes met Daniels and he felt his breath catch in his throat. She smirked and was about to continue, when her phone went off very loudly.

"What is it?" She growled impatiently. Her expression went from annoyed to furious when she heard whatever was being said on the end of the line. "THOSE BASTARDS BETTER LEAVE MY TRAINS ALONE!"

She turned back to the mill workers. "I'm sorry, but I have to tend to an emergency down at the train yards. Have the rest of the day off." She waved them all off, leaving Daniel suspicious. He hung back as everyone else vacated the building, waiting until he was sure he was alone.

He pulled out his own phone. "TJ? Get the rest of the Knights and meet at the train yards. I think the March Hill Crusaders are making a move."

"Can confirm that. I've been left back at the station while the others go out to the scene. Do you think they brought the tank with them?" TJ asked, lounging back in his desk chair, surveying his empty office.

"Wouldn't surprise me." Daniel grabbed his replica Dragon Scale Scythe out from underneath a rusty old machine that wasn't used anymore.

It wasn't the most noble thing in the world, but Daniel was looking forward to being able to defend Judith Jofrey.

# Chapter 63

It was too late. The train yard was a complete mess.

"My guess is that with the tank they managed to strike from a distance." Giggles flew over the wreckage. Down below, Sir Lionheart was talking with Sir Dark about Judith Jofrey.

"She's pretty furious." Sir Lionheart said, leaning against the remains of a blown-up train.

"Do you MIND?!" Sir Dark shooed him off, and went to inspect the wreckage. "You're damaging evidence!"

"The police have already been through already, what evidence is there left?" Sir Lionheart pointed out.

"You seriously think my co-workers did their job properly?" Sir Dark raised an eyebrow.

"Fair point."

"Anyway, why are you so wrapped up in Jofrey anyway?" Sir Dark continued to browse the area.

"I am not!" Sir Lionheart protested.

"Mate, the five of us have known each other since we were tiny. I think we might be able to tell when one of us is falling in love." Sir Dark raised an eyebrow at his best friend.

"Remember how much crap you, Sam and Tammy gave Petunia and I until we finally got together?"

"Totally different!" Sir Lionheart snapped.

"Find anything yet?" Chuckles walked over as Giggles landed beside him.

"Plenty. I'm almost certain you're right about the tank being used, it was probably fired from Pleasant Ridge over there." Sir Dark pointed to the Ridge in the distance. "They're so much smarter than the DVM, Marion would have simply bulldozed the place with the tank, giving us a chance to stop her."

"Calculating is the word you're looking for Sir Dark." Giggles sighed. "Marion's smart enough, but she allows her selfish desire and emotions to get the better of her. Master Revolver should have thought twice about merging the Death Valley Gang."

"But look at all the power he has now." Chuckles pointed out. "And all he has to do is keep Marion happy."

The others all raised their eyebrows at him.

"Fair point." He agreed. "That woman is impossible."

"WHAT did you say about my sister?!"

"Sidewinder!" The four friends jumped a mile. Sir Lionheart gripped his replica Scythe tightly as Sidewinder twirled the original around in her fingers.

"I called her impossible. Which even you have to admit is true." Chuckles pointed out.

"She can be difficult, yes." Sidewinder shrugged.

"But you ARE Marions sister! I thought she had no siblings!" Giggles yelled.

Sidewinder groaned. She hadn't meant for anyone to find out about that!

"So what if I am? You guys had better get out of here before I hurt you all. Badly." Sidewinder pulled out the Mystic Eight Gun. "Scram."

"We have as much right to be here as you do!" Sir Dark protested.

Sir Lionheart knew he should back his fellow Knight, but he was entranced by the eyes of the Emerald Mobster. Something in those eyes stirred something in him.

"We're leaving Sir Dark." He finally said.

"You're...what?" Chuckles and Giggles looked dumbfounded at their friend.

"If we're going to take on an Emerald Mobster who has the power of the Mystic Eight Gun and the Dragon Scale Scythe on her side then I want the power of the whole Order behind me." Sir Lionheart tried to rationalise his position, sweat beading on his forehead.

"Oh you're not getting away that easily sugarpie." Sidewinder grinned. She leapt from the train she was standing on and landed in front of the leader of the Noble Knights of the Last Order.

"Draw." She held the Dragon Scale Scythe to his throat.

Thinking quickly, Sir Lionheart swung the blade of the replica at the hands of Sidewinder, very nearly removing them. The two blades clashed, before Sidewinder kicked at the unprotected shins of Sir Lionheart. He dropped to his knee, and it was only the intervention of the Lions Claw Blade that stopped his head from being removed. Sidewinder smirked.

"His head is already in a bucket, all it needs is removing." She said, poking fun at the fact that Sir Lionheart had been wearing the same bucket on his head since Masked Revolver died.

Sir Lionheart groaned.

"Let's get out of here." He muttered to Chuckles. Chuckles looked up at Giggles, who sighed.

"Why do I always have to be the distraction?!" She whined.

"Just do it." Chuckles narrowed his eyes at her.

Giggles sighed again and started divebombing Sidewinder from the sky.

"Are. You. Serious?!" Sidewinder tried to swat Giggles away with the Dragon Scale Scythe.

"I'm not exactly thrilled about this either." Giggles deadpanned, firing a shot from the Desert Eagle at Sidewinders foot, narrowly missing her toes.

"FINE then, I'll GO!" Sidewinder stamped her feet, before stalking off in a huff.

"Definitely a relative of Marion." Chuckles grinned.

--

"We probably do need new outfits." Sunny agreed, looking at her old gas mask, a present from the late Joe Masters.

"I can get some stuff from work, no one will notice it's gone." TJ looked at his old hockey mask, which was being barely held together with tape. "This old thing has had it."

"I want to keep my mask though!" Petunia piped up.

"I LOVE your new hairdo by the way!" Tammy grinned at her friends new blue 'do. "I'm not so fussed on my outfit, but I would probably prefer to stay away from the fighting. I've already had one life-altering injury, I don't need another."

Sam put an arm around his twin sister. Her voice still croaked, no matter how strong it sounded now.

"Why are you so worried about what Sidewinder says anyway? I thought you were all about Judy Jofrey?" He grinned slyly at Daniel, who glared at him.

"Poor, confused Danny." TJ laughed, dodging a blow from the older man.

"I wonder what Sidewinder was at the train yard for?" Sunny mused. "Why would the Mob be worried about the trains for?"

"Who cares?" Sam shrugged. "The Mob are weird."

"It may have something to do with their influence over the Council." TJ pointed out. "Maybe Dannys little crush on Judy can help us."

"Are you serious?" Daniel glowered at his fellow Knights, who were all giggling. "How old are you guys?!"

--

"I cannot believe I'm going to do this." Daniel muttered the next day at work, pulling small logs off the conveyor belt. Sure enough, Judith was back, looking very harrassed and micro-managing anything she saw.

"You look a little stressed." He said to her as she walked past.

She looked at him for a second.

"You were at the Masters place. Daniel, wasn't it?" Judith asked.

"Yeah. What happened at the train yard? I heard it was destroyed." Daniel ventured.

"The Crusaders sniped it with the tank they got from the Mob." Judith growled. Daniel frowned.

"Bastards." He sighed. "That's going to affect us isn't it? Our wood comes in via train."

"We have a truck route too, so it shouldn't be too bad. I have contingencies." Judith smirked. Daniel laughed.

"Of course, you'd have to be smart to be a Councillor. Unlike layabouts like me." He did his best to flirt. It must have worked, because she chuckled.

"How about you have lunch with me? My break is at noon." Daniel ventured, his heart pounding in his chest. Judith was shocked. No one had ever dared ask her out to lunch before.

"Sure, I'd like that." She stammered, beginning to feel a nervousness she had never felt before.

"Okay...I guess I'd better get back to work I suppose..." Daniel tripped over his own words trying to keep his excitement under control. "See you at lunch time!"

"See you at lunch time!" Judith echoed, with a small smile.

Daniel grinned as he went back to work. Life was grand!

# Chapter 64

Daniel walked into Bills restaurant, Judith by his side. He figured he'd go somewhere he knew well, and especially where he knew the owner and could show off a bit. He picked a seat near one of the windows that overlooked Lake Pleasant, the view beautiful and tranquil.

He pulled out a seat for Judith, who smiled politely and sat down, placing her bag on the ground next to her. It was only as Daniel sat down himself that he heard poorly disguised snorts coming from near the kitchen.

His beloved friends were having lunch here too it seemed. Juveniles.

"Do you come here often?" Judith asked to be polite, and kicking herself because it was plainly obvious that he was a friend of the Masters clan, one of whom ran the establishment.

"As often as I can. The food here is great." Daniel replied, trying to sound nonchalant. The laughter was intensifying. There could only be one thing that could possibly be worse, and that would be-

"Can I take your order Sir?" Lizzy Begly approached the table, notebook in hand and poorly disguised smirk on her face.

Daniel groaned inwardly. Of course it would be Sams girlfriend, she worked here when she wasn't at school. "Hi Lizzy. I'll just have wedges and aioli please." He tried to sound authoritative, but if the chuckles and giggles he could hear were any indication, he failed.

"I'll have the same, thank you." Judith smiled. "And water please."

"Make that double." Daniel piped up. Lizzy looked ready to explode, which irritated him no end.

"Of course Sir." She quickly escaped back to the kitchen where Daniel swore he could hear multiple people giggling.

"It's a really nice place here." Judith sat, looking out of the window.

"Bill got it as a bargain. No one wanted it after what happened." Daniel told her, fiddling with his napkin. He could distinctly hear the whispered voice of one TJ muttering with one Sam, and the pair both snickering behind their hands.

"What happened?" Judith perked up, interested. Grateful for Belles everlasting lectures from books for the first time in his life, Daniel replied.

"It was one of the last acts of the Haunted Maze Troupe, who to be honest never really got a foothold in Pleasantville the same way that the Death Valley Gang, the Silent Hill Gang, the March Hill Crusaders or the Mobsters of Misneach did." Daniel almost repeated word for word what Belle had said, which caused an explosion of laughter from what sounded like Sunny. "They came in here when it was a laundromat and brutally murdered everyone in the building, stealing everything they had."

"People who use laundromats probably wouldn't have much to steal anyway." Judith mused, which made Daniel laugh.



"Like I said, they never really got a foothold. They were slaughtered by the DVG just before Masked Revolver died." Daniel continued. "This place was abandoned for a long time after that."

"You seem to know a lot about the history of the crime syndicates." Judith raised an eyebrow.

"A friend of mine is a bookworm and lectures us at any given opportunity about fixing the culture of the city and how it's up to the people to decide how the city is run." Daniel grinned, starting to feel at ease.

"Ah, young Miss Masters I presume." Judith smiled.

"Yeah, Belle. Sounds funny to hear her referred to as "Miss Masters" though, she's definitely not a Miss!" Daniel decided a little payback was in order. "She and the other girls are such princesses."

"The other girls?" Judith perked up. That wasn't jealousy she was starting to feel, was it?

"Sunny is the "mother" of the group, she's the only one of us who has a child. She's getting married soon, and constantly reminds us while she's henpecking us. Petunia married one of my two best friends, TJ (an idiot), and she's a nurse who will never do anything fun. Tammy is the twin of my other best friend Sam, and they're both pains." Daniel smirked as the laughter stopped and was replaced with death-stares.

"Sounds like you have a cute little group of friends, when you're not trying to kill each other." Judith laughed, making Daniel feel good and the others frown.

Lizzy came out with their meals, and quickly rushed back to the kitchen before she could burst out into laughter. As he ate, Daniel could hear Bill Masters come out of the kitchen and talk to the group, who all immediately got out of their chairs and left.

"Your watch is flashing." Judith pointed to Sir Lionhearts watch. Daniel panicked slightly.

"It does that sometimes. A bit faulty; it's only supposed to do that when I get a phone call." Daniel brushed it off. "How's your meal?"

"This is great!" Judith beamed, making Daniel melt.

Out of the corner of his eye, Daniel noticed Giggles flying backwards across the Lake, firing madly at a speedboat containing Master Revolver.

"So how did you become a Councilor?" Daniel asked, feeling much more at ease.

"I inherited it from my Uncle." Judith sipped her water.

"So you were the favourite niece?"

"Not quite...it's complicated how things in my family work. I guess he owed my father. What about your family?"

"I don't have much, just my grandparents. My Mum and Dad were killed in the crossfire between the Death Valley Gang and the Mob when I was about five years old."

"Was that the battle of Silent Lake?"

"Yeah, that one."

"I was there that day. I was eight. It wasn't a pretty sight."

Outside, Master Revolver had Chuckles in a headlock, Giggles was now running away from the speedboat dodging Emerald Shards, Sir Hyper was hanging onto the back of the speedboat for dear life with Lady Courage trying to help him aboard and Sir Dark was trying to separate Lady Luck and Mobster Marion.

"I'm sorry to hear about your parents. I was seventeen when my Dad died." Judith pushed the ice around in her drink.

"How did he die?" Daniel asked.

"There was a bank robbery and he was killed."

"I'm sorry to hear that. What about your mother?"

"She hasn't spoken to us in years."

"Us?"

"Myself and my older sister." Judith flinched, realizing she'd just messed up.

"I thought you were an only child." Daniel raised an eyebrow.

"My sister...well, she's less than savoury." Judith tried to explain. "So I just pretend I don't have one."

"Wow, that's a bit messed up." Daniel said, surprised. He looked at her, and noticed something. "That's a pretty necklace you have on."

"My sister gave it to me when we were kids, when we were still best friends." Judith fingered the star pendant, made with beautiful diamonds. Inside the star was a rainbow made from coloured gems and a mother-of-pearl cloud.

Meanwhile, Giggles had managed to blast a hole in the speedboat. Chuckles and the rest of the Noble Knights of the Last Order were monkey-chained to her feet, causing Giggles to sway dangerously. Master Revolver was roaring in fury as he sank with his ship, and Mobster Marion was crying.

"I would have loved to have had siblings, but when I was born there were complications and Mum needed an operation which meant she couldn't have any more kids." Daniel sighed.

"That's why I take care of my friends so much."

"They're all younger than you?"

"Yup, although Charlie Begly is only six months younger than me."

"How did you become friends with the Masters clan anyway?"

Daniel froze.

"Accident I guess." He shrugged.

Speaking of which, guess whose Backpack cut out, plunging the entire group into the freezing depths of Pleasant Lake?

--

"Are you serious?" Daryl Jones laughed loudly as his father recounted what the Death Valley Mobsters had done.

"I honestly have NO idea how they ended up the dominant power in this city, they're a pair of foolish buffoons!" Demon Jones slammed his fist down on his desk. "This is getting out of control."

"Unfortunately there's not much you can do. Judy owns far too many assets in the city, and if we lose her, we run the risk of losing control." Daryl pointed out, making his father grimace.

"What I wouldn't give to get those assets away from their control." He looked out of the window. "They'd be out of here in a heartbeat."

"If only there was a way to separate them!" Daryl groaned. Demon Jones smirked.

"Neither Marion nor Judith have heirs yet. Maybe it's time to get rid of them permanently and align ourselves with a smarter force." He turned to his son, who grinned back.

"Now THAT sounds smart Dad." Daryl took his feet off his fathers desk. "Who, what, when, how?"

"We'll give it a little more time. Marion might be an idiot, but Judith is a lot smarter. She might be worth keeping around yet." Demon put a hand on his sons shoulder.

# Chapter 65

"Did you kiss her?"

"No."

"Did she kiss you?"

"NO."

"Was there any kissing at all?"

"NO!"

"Second date then?"

"It WASN'T a date!"

"Pretty sure it was a date."

"It WASN'T!"

"Then why are you going red?"

"Will you lot quit it already!" Daniel groaned as his fellow Knights of the Last Order grilled him about his lunch with the Councillor Judith Jofrey.

"She looked like she was really enjoying herself." Sam volunteered.

"Yeah, she was smiling and looked really interested in what you were saying!" Petunia agreed.

"Just...drop it, okay?" Daniel frowned at them. "Besides, you guys ran off half way through lunch, what would you know?"

"We got back in time to see you escort her out." Sunny pointed out.

"Thanks for ditching us by the way, oh-fearless-leader." TJ deadpanned.

The group were sitting at the tip again, on a bright and clear Saturday morning. They were waiting for Belle and Charlie, and then they were all going to go fishing together.

"Speaking of Judy...I kind of invited her to come out with us today." Daniel finally admitted.

Dead silence. Then:

"WE'RE GOING OUT WITH THE MASTERS CLAN AND YOU INVITE HER?"

"Daniel Lighthead, what WERE you thinking?!"

"Are you INSANE?"

"There's going to be arguments!"

"And she's not fond of the Begly Clan either!"

"It will be FINE!" Daniel tried to calm his friends down. "She's promised she won't say a thing about work."

"It still won't end well." Sunny warned.

--

If there was ever any doubt that Belle was Peter's daughter, they were instantly put to rest that day. Both of them wore identical scowls and twitching right eyes.

The little girls Melody and Madeliene were splashing by the shore under the watchful eyes of Ozzie and their mothers. TJ and Petunia were diving for mussels, which they were handing to Thomas who was putting them in a bucket. Lizzy and Tammy were trying to badger Sam into getting into the water (which he was still scared of) and Daniel was gently trying to teach Judith how to fish.

"I can NOT believe he thought this was a good idea." Belle glowered.

"Tell me about it. It's just sucked the fun right out of today." Peter also glowered.

"LOOK OUT BELOW!" Charlie swung past them on the rope swing, flying into the creek with a splash. "Will you two sad sacks cheer up and join in the fun?" He poked his head out of the water.

"No!" Was the sullen reply.

"It's only because he thinks she's hot." Charlie tried to explain.

"Bloody idiot." Peter shook his head and sat down on one of the picnic rugs. "This is like working on the weekend, an absolute travesty."

"Tell me about it." Belle sat down next to her father and started pulling the grass out of the ground.

"It's all in the wrist action." Daniel was demonstrating how to cast the fishing line. "A quick flick-," His line expertly flew across the air into the creek. "And then you sit back and wait."

"You make it look so easy." Judith admitted. "I've never been fishing before."

"Are you serious?" Daniel looked surprised. "Why not?"

"Too busy studying." Judith admitted. "*Also my parents never had much time for me as the second-born.*" she silently added.

"We go fishing all the time together. You should come with us more often." Daniel smiled at her.

"Really?" Judith's cheeks went pale pink.

"NO!" Was the loud objection from the Masters clan.

Just then, Peter's phone began to ring. "Hey Bill. You're kidding me...the truck yard? I'll tell Judith."

He couldn't help but smirk slightly. This meant that annoying Councillor would have to leave! On the down side it meant that the others would have to go to, but if it got rid of Judith, it was worth it.

"JUDITH! Your truck yard is under fire from the Crusaders!" Peter yelled.

"What?!" Judith dropped her fishing line and bolted towards her bag. She grabbed out her phone and made a quick call, which involved a lot of language unfit for print.

"I'm sorry guys, but I have to go sort out this mess. I'll see you later!" Judith grabbed her things and ran off, much to the satisfaction of the Masters Clan.

Daniel ran over to the others as soon as she was gone. "I have to go and get the scythe from the timber mill, I'll see you guys at the truck yard?"

"Absolutely." TJ nodded. "Let's go Knights!"

Daniel got into his beat-up old ute and drove to the timber mill, cursing his poor planning. If only he'd known...

--

Daniel tiptoed through the timber mill, feeling like he wasn't alone. He tried to shake it off, thinking it was adrenaline from being prepared for another battle.

He opened up his locker and pulled on his old "armour", which was nothing more than old bits of steel salvaged from the tip and fashioned by Tammy. It was badly worn by time and repeated blows from the Lucky Seven Gun and the Lions Claw Blade when they were in the hands of Master Revolver and Mobster Marion.

It was definitely time for an upgrade.

He was about to pull on his helmet when something crashed in the office upstairs. Judith's office.

He pulled on his helmet and crept up the stairs, trying his best to be quiet. If the March Hill Crusaders were here, he was doomed. There was no way he would survive long enough for the rest of the Knights to arrive.

He made up to the top of the stairs and was about to open the door to Judiths office, when it was flung open from the inside and the Dragons Scale Scythe held at his throat.

"SIDEWINDER!" Sir Lionheart groaned. He tightened his grip on the replica scythe. "What are YOU doing here?"

"I could ask you the same thing Bucket-Head." Sidewinder snarled. She lurched back to slash the Knights throat, giving Sir Lionheart time to get his scythe up to block the blow. He forced Sidewinder back into the office with his brute strength, hoping to get her off-balance.

"Why were you in Councillor Jofreys office?!" Sir Lionheart demanded.

"None of your business, peasant." Sidewinder pulled out the Mystic Eight Gun and fired, clipping Sir Lionhearts bucket-helmet. He was able to dodge, but the distraction enabled Sidewinder to stab him with an Emerald Shard in the chest.

Gagging, Sir Lionheart stumbled back. Sidewinder tried to shoot him again, but Sir Lionheart was able to recover fast enough to knock the gun from her hand.

He prepared to strike her chest core, when he saw it.

Judiths necklace.

The one her sister had given her.

He looked into those violent blue eyes. There was no doubt.

Sidewinder was Judith Jofrey. He had no idea how she fixed her hair to make it short and brown, but he knew that he had to get out of there.

He bolted out of the office and ran down the stairs. Bullets from the Mystic Eight Gun ricocheted around him, and he dodged them all before making it out of the building.

At least Sidewinder couldn't fly without the help of the Ruby Suit, Sir Lionheart thought bitterly. He felt betrayed and angry and confused.

No wonder Judith didn't want to talk about her family. Her father had been Mobster Marcus, killed when he'd tried to overrun a bank. Of course she'd been there for the battle of Silent Lake. Between her family and the Death Valley Gang, they'd brutally slaughtered the last of the Silent Lake Gang before turning on each other.

Sir Lionheart looked to the sky as he headed out to the other battle, which he now had no desire to join. What a mess.

What a complete and total mess.



**Chapter**

**66**

"Danny!" Sunny waved as Daniel approached the hideout of the Noble Knights of the Last Order. In her lap was Melody, and next to her was Patrick, who was looking pretty happy. "Look at what Patrick and Tammy were able to do!"

Tammy grinned. "It wasn't much, but we managed to make better armour for everyone!"

"With some help from Teej of course." Patrick motioned to TJ, who took a small bow.

"He managed to get some old bullet-proof vests for us all." Petunia smiled up at her husband.

"And with the Beglys help, we worked it all into some new armour so you guys don't look like complete junkyard rejects anymore." Patrick laughed, earning him six glares. "What? You did!"

"ANYWAY." Tammy quickly stepped in to diffuse the situation. "We can debut this stuff next time the DVM or the Crusaders decide to start trouble."

"Or the next time you guys decide foot-faults don't exist." Sam muttered under his breath.

Cue pointless argument about cricket that in no way advances the plot whatsoever.

"ANYWAY!" Tammy growled loudly. "You guys should try on your new outfits to make sure they fit."

Unfortunately, her voice is still several decibels below that of a normal human being. The argument raged on, with insults ranging from being compared to the Great Nations team of well, forever, to being called another Ian Chappell.

Tammy sighed. She supposed they'd have to notice her and her work eventually, but it still sucked to still be so quiet that she couldn't be heard.

--

It played on her mind one day as she sat at the library computer doing her Disability Studies degree. The lecturer was talking about "being a voice for those who don't have one."

How could someone who couldn't be heard be a voice for someone else? Who could she fight for when she wasn't a fighter?

Her thoughts mingled with the tapping of her pen, when she noticed Judith Jofrey walking past. The two women shared a stare briefly before pretending they hadn't seen each other. Despite what she knew about Daniels feelings for the City Councilor, Tammy could not bring herself to trust Judith. The older woman was hiding something, and Tammy worried that whatever it was would hurt Daniel.

Daniel had been her brother for as long as she could remember. The five of them had been inseparable from such a young age, all of them against the world. When they had formed the Knighthood, that bond had only gotten stronger.

"Hey Tammy!"

Tammy cringed as she heard her loud brother make his way through the library. She could imagine the filthy looks he was getting and could hear the librarian shushing him.

"Sorry." He grinned sheepishly. He turned to his sister.

"We're going out to the movies, come on!" He began to pull her arm.

"Sam, I've got assignments to do!" Tammy tried to resist him. She wanted some time to herself.

"You can do that any time Tammy, come on!" Sammy started to pack up her stuff.

"Sam!" Tammy gave up. She felt so small and powerless compared to the big personality of her brother.

As she was dragged from the library, she noticed the look of pity from Judith.

Just what she needed.

--

After that unwanted trip to the movies, Tammy finally retreated to her apartment, glad to have some time to herself. It wasn't that she didn't love her brother and her friends, it's just that sometimes she needed time to herself.

She dumped her bag on the counter and settled down on her futon with a good book. She would never be the bookworm Belle is, but Tammy was definitely always in the mood for a good mystery book.

She was just getting to the part where the heroine fell in love with a character who Tammy was pretty certain was the murderer, when she noticed something out of the window.

It was the chestnut-haired beauty from downstairs heading to the shared laundry. Tammy watched her as she carried her washing-basket across the courtyard, wishing like mad she had the courage to say something to the gorgeous young lady.

Tammy sighed as the figure disappeared from view. She returned to her book. It wasn't like anyone would ever notice Tammy anyway. Not when she was nothing but a shadow of her brother.

--

"REVOLVER!" Giggles roared as she flew after the gunman. "Give those watches back!"

"MAKE ME!" Master Revolver shouted back, firing his gun erratically.

"DON'T MAKE ME COME OVER THERE!"

"JUST TRY AND CATCH ME!"

"I LOVE your new outfits by the way!" Mobster Marion said as she parried blows from Sir Lionheart while Chuckles pulled a splinter from his foot.

"Really?" Sir Lionheart asked.

"Of course not. You're still idiots!" Mobster Marion used her sword to lever the scythe from Sir Lionheart's hands. Her killing blow was only deflected by the riot shield of Sir Dark, who had thrown himself in front of his best friend.

"Oh groovy." Mobster Marion groaned as Sir Lionheart ran to get his scythe. She blinked as Chuckles poked her lightly with the Lions Claw Blade. "I'm not even going to dignify that with a response." Mobster Marion stormed off.

Lady Silent sighed, and watched the scene in front of her. What was the point of her being here? What did she contribute?

She was fiddling with her watch when she overheard a few of the Emerald Mobsters talking.

"Do you think the others are finished with the lolly store yet? This is getting boring." One asked.

"I hope so, this is getting embarrassing." The other replied.

Lady Silent felt her eye twitch.

"I'm right HERE, I can HEAR your stupid plans!" She cried in fury.

"Did you hear something?" The first Mobster asked.

"I think so...?" The other replied.

Lady Silent roared in anger before storming off.

"Wait, isn't that one of the Knights?"

"I dunno, which one?"

Lady Silent wanted to scream, but she knew no one would hear her, because she was silent.

--

"Are you quite pleased you ruined my investment?" Sidewinder glared at her sister across the table where they sat.

"How was I supposed to know you'd gone and bought a lolly store?" Mobster Marion twirled her glass of wine around, admiring the deep crimson colour. "And why would you do such a thing?"

“Without legitimate business to keep this city afloat, YOU would be in big trouble.” Sidewinder growled. “Do you think you'd be allowed to ply your trade in Brisvegas so easily?”

“Quit worrying brat, we'll be fine.” Mobster Marion brushed her younger sister off. “Just make sure to stay out of our way in future and your little investments will be fine.”

Sidewinder fumed. How dare her sister just cast her concerns aside like that?!

# Chapter 67

Tammy walked dejectedly down the street. People pushed past her, not even noticing she was there. She was invisible, a nobody, a nothing. Why was she even a Knight of the Last Order, no one noticed Lady Silent, no one cared if she was there or not.

She was just Sammys shadow, an echo of her younger, more boisterous twin. She reached for the scar on her throat, that her stupid drunk uncle had caused. She hadn't been strapped into the seat properly, so when the crash happened her throat paid the price. She had paid a high price for her uncles stupidity.

*Hey, that's not fair. Sammy has suffered too. She tried to tell herself. Sammy is terrified of water now.*

But Sammy still had a voice. He was still heard. People still acknowledged him.

She shuffled dejectedly past an alleyway, where she overheard some March Hill Crusaders talking about destroying a local florist who they suspected as being a front for the Death Valley Mobsters.

*Swell. More work for us.*

Tammy made her way to Bill's restaurant, and pushed her way through the doors. Suddenly, she was knocked aside by her brother, who raced out with Daniel, TJ and Charlie on his heels.

“Whoops, sorry Tam!” Charlie grinned at her before shooting off, laughing. Tammy sighed, and sat down where Petunia had Melody on her lap while Sunny desperately tried to get some food into her daughter.

“Kiddo, I love you dearly but will you just EAT!” Sunny tried to poke a spoon full of mashed pumpkin into her daughters mouth.

“Ucky!” Melody spat it right back out again.

Tammy sighed as she watched the two women get overpowered by a baby.

“Oh, sorry Tam, didn't see you there!” Petunia looked over at her best friend while she tried to hold the squirming baby. “Melody, please!”

“I give up. Starve to death for all I care kiddo.” Sunny gave up, putting the spoon back into the bowl of mashed pumpkin. Melody immediately grabbed the spoon and began feeding herself.

Petunia laughed while Tammy smiled. Sunny groaned, but it was obvious she was amused too.

“What are you up to today Tammy? You look a little glum.” Petunia noticed the younger girl was a bit down in the dumps.

Tammy bit her lip, not really ready to talk about her problems with being a shadow. Thankfully, a convenient excuse came up.

“While I was walking here I heard a couple of Crusaders talking about taking out a florist. The last thing we need.” Tammy stretched.

Petunia and Sunny glanced at each other, before quickly smacking their watch-faces.

“This had better be good, I was in the middle of a really interesting chapter about the Quadroon Four and the Elephants Tusk Spear!” Belle stormed out of the kitchen, clutching at her book.

“Tammy overheard some Crusaders planning their next move!” Sunny told her.

“Yeah, I'd say that counts as good. Let's go!” Belle shot off towards the tip, ready to don her Giggles outfit once more.

Tammy sighed again, and slowly got up, feeling more invisible than ever until she heard Sunny.

“Nice work by the way Tammy. You have a real knack for being in the right place at the right time.”

Sunny was right. Chuckles, Giggles and the Noble Knights of the Last Order were able to head off the attack before it even got started.

“You mean...awww.” Crusader Mark looked dejectedly at the crowd that was standing in front of the florist, ready to defend the flowers. “Can I at LEAST go in to by my mother a birthday present?”

(He ended up getting her roses)

--

Feeling more confident after her success that day, Tammy decided that she was going to approach her chestnut-haired beauty and see if she could at least make a new friend, if not score a date.

After she got home to her apartment and had a good, quick shower, she had kept an eye on the window and waited until she saw her crush walking to the laundry again. Sure enough, the young lady had washing to do. Tammy waited until she was inside, before grabbing her own laundry and making her way down to the laundry room.

Tammy walked into the laundry room trying to look as invisible as possible (“*Should be easy enough.*” she thought bitterly) and put her washing in the machine closest to the door. She then settled down on the nearby bench with her mystery book.

“*I really didn't plan this well, did I?*” Tammy groaned inwardly. The chestnut-haired beauty was even more beautiful up close, and Tammy found it hard to muster up the courage to speak to her.

So, naturally, she hid in her mystery book.

“You read mysteries too?”

Tammy nearly fell off her seat.

“Y-yeah, I love mysteries. It's a nice change from textbooks.” Tammy tried to joke with her new friend.

“My name is Rose. I live on the first floor.” The chestnut-haired beauty introduced herself.

“I'm Tammy, I live on the second floor.” Tammy put her book down.

“I know. I've been...well...I kinda noticed you.” Rose went a little pink.



Tammy couldn't help but smile. Maybe she wasn't so invisible after all!

--

A few days later, Tammy had finally managed to shake her twin off, begging Lizzy Begly to take Sammy out for a while. Lizzy, being a twin herself, understood completely and was happy to take her boyfriend out for the day.

So Tammy had a full day at the library, and she was relishing the peace.

Tammy had done a lot of thinking over the days since Sunny had told her she had a knack for being in the right place at the right time. Tammy knew she would always resent being invisible, just a little bit, but that being silent was her greatest strength – Lady Silent could find out things that her louder, more noticeable friends would never be able to, and she planned to use that to her advantage as much as she could.

But first, her education.

She'd gotten one of her assignments out of the way, and was trying to focus on another one when Judith Jofrey slithered in.

Tammy watched the older woman with interest. Judith looked her way, and for a second they made eye-contact. Then Judith went to the back of the library.

Tammy tried not to scream with frustration. She was one of Daniels BEST FRIENDS, how could Judith not recognise her?! How did Emerald Mobsters not recognise Lady Silent?!

*Hold it. She settled herself. This could be your opportunity to find out what's going on with the Council. Head down, tail up, don't draw attention to yourself Lady Silent.*

Tammy focused on her studies, keeping half an ear out for anything interesting. Soon enough, she got it. Two Emerald Mobsters walked in, trying to keep themselves inconspicuous.

*Hard to keep a low profile when your street clothes barely cover the Emerald Suits.* Tammy thought snidely.

“What do you want?” Judith said quietly, looking harassed.

“Your sister is getting annoyed at your insistence on getting into trouble.” One of the Emerald Mobsters said.

“Me? I've been good recently.” Judith looked as innocent as possible.

*I thought Judith said that she didn't have anything to do with her sister?* Tammy found her brain ticking over. Why did the Emerald Mobsters know Judith's sister? Why did Judith lie about it?

“She knows you're planning something.” The other Emerald Mobster said.

“I want a bit of payback for losing my trains. Is that so bad?” Judith leaned back in her chair. “Go away. I'm trying to read.”

*Something isn't adding up here. Tammy thought furiously. What is Judith hiding?!*

“Marion isn't going to be happy.” The first Emerald Mobster pointed out.

Tammy nearly fell off her seat. She buried herself in a book. *It can't be. Sidewinder has blonde hair, Judith has dark hair. It's impossible.*

Then Tammy looked closer at Judith, who was getting annoyed. She saw a stray wisp of blonde hair that had come loose and had to choke back a gasp. *That...that's definitely a wig! No! It can't be!*

“My sister is never happy. Now go.” Judith ended the conversation.

Tammy felt sick. Judith Jofrey was none other than Sidewinder, the sister of Mobster Marion and currently the biggest threat to the Noble Knights of the Last Order.

*Daniel is NOT going to be happy when he hears this!*

# Chapter

# 68

"I already know." Daniel deadpanned after Tammy told him what she'd found out about Judith Jofrey being Sidewinder.

Silence reigned over the tip. Charlie opened his mouth to say something, but then thought better of it and closed his mouth. Soon after, Sammy had a thought, but decided not to share it. Belle raised her finger ready to say something too, but even she couldn't bring herself to make a noise.

Awkward factor times a million.

"This is okay. We can work with this." TJ finally said.

"Totally. Especially as Danny is dating Judith." Petunia agreed.

Everyone nodded.

"You guys ARE allowed to be mad at me for keeping it from you." Daniel rolled his eyes.

That's when it started.

"How COULD you Dan?!" TJ cried. "Sammy and I are you brothers!"

"I know you think she's hot, but she's MARIONS SISTER!" Sunny fumed.

"She's TRIED TO KILL US MULTIPLE TIMES!" Sammy yelped.

"Hang on guys." Belle looked thoughtful. "Let's roll back a bit and think."

"What's there to think about?!" Petunia wailed. "Danny KNEW that Judith is Mobster Marions sister, he KNEW that she is Sidewinder, a woman who has tried to kill us, and he didn't tell us?!"

"How would you feel if someone you were starting to grow feelings for was suddenly revealed to be one of the bad guys?" Belle asked them. "Remember Webster and Tate?"

"Wasn't THAT a complete and total trainwreck and three quarters." Tammy muttered to Petunia.

"At the very least Dan hasn't started brutally murdering people en masse." Belle pointed out.

"Like I would!" Daniel looked insulted.

"See?" Belle said triumphantly.

"Besides, getting mad isn't going to get us anywhere." Charlie pointed out. "We need to figure out what to do with this information."

"We should probably talk to my Dad." Belle suggested. "He'll know what to do."

--

Evil gleamed in the eyes of Peter Masters.

"Dad, we're the good guys remember?" Belle tugged at his sleeve as he sat at the Masters table. "No blackmailing your boss with what we've just told you."

“You ruin everything Beauty.” Peter sighed as Meow jumped up and licked his face.

“Still, it's partially a good idea.” Bill pointed out as he wiped a glass and put it away. “If Sidewinder gets wind of the fact that the Noble Knights plus Chuckles and Giggles know that she's Judith Jofrey, then it might be enough to keep the DVM under control.”

“It might be.” Peter mused. “Then we have Jones under our thumb too. It could be our chance to re-educate the people of this city without the fear of retribution undoing all of the good work.”

“We finally have our break!” Charlie grinned.

“If she doesn't try to kill us first.” Belle deadpanned.

“It'll be fine.” Charlie patted her head.

Naturally, she bit his elbow in retaliation. Being short isn't funny. Please don't pick on your short friends.

“Belle, spit that out, you don't know where it's been.” Sunny chided her. “You're as bad as Melody.”

“One thing though, how are we going to convince Sidewinder we have proof?” Peter rubbed his chin as Belle spat out Charlie's elbow. “We don't want to implicate Dan.”

“Otherwise they'll just retaliate by telling everyone who we are, then we're dead.” TJ frowned, sitting in front of the couch where Sammy lay, reading a comic.

All of them pondered the question for a minute. Belle got up and grabbed a book.

“Belle, honestly, can't you stay focused on current issues for a minute?!” Charlie groaned as Belle started investigating the book.

“Hush, pleb.” Belle fired, shutting Charlie up. “I think I might have an idea.”

“Going to share it?” Petunia asked.

“What, and spoil the surprise?” Belle flicked a page over.

Everyone groaned.

--

While we wait for Belle to finish reading, let's have a look at the latest spat from Mobster Marion.

“No flowers, no appreciation, no support, no love, no NOTHING!” She broke another sword against the tree, which was looking much worse for wear.

“You still haven't done anything about getting payback for my trains!” Judith Jofrey growled angrily.

“Why should I? No one gives ME what I want!” Mobster Marion threw the broken sword away. “Demon's been cagey recently and it's making it hard for us to rule this city!”

“If you weren't such a greedy guts with the fuse of a toddler then there wouldn't be an issue!” Judith snapped. “But noooo, because YOU can't control your constant gluttony, you're constantly at the mercy of Chuckles and Giggles. No wonder Demon wants us out.”

“Excuse me?!” Mobster Marion rounded on her sister.

“The only reason he has anything to do with us at all is because of what I own. The moment I lose our legitimate assets the Mobsters of Misneach and the Death Valley Gang will be going the way of the crime groups of old!” Judith advised her sister snidely. “And you know what the March Hill Crusaders are capable of.”

“They haven't proven a thing.” Mobster Marion shot back. “They can't even get rid of those punks and the Noble Knights of the Last Order.”

“Lucky for you they can't.” Judith muttered.

--

“So, what you're saying is we can follow all these links through history back to the Mobsters of Misneach?” Petunia looked over Belles shoulder.

They were sitting around a table at Bills restaurant, eating nachos and listening to Belle.

“It was almost their signature move back when they first established, if anyone had bothered to connect the dots.” Belle pointed to the page she was on.

“Raid a business, lower it's value, then have someone who looks completely unconnected to the Mob come in and buy them out.” Charlie looked disgusted. “No wonder crime managed to get such a foothold in this city.”

“They own most of the businesses here, although the last few generations haven't been so wise. Mobster Marion seems to get her issues from her father.” Belle mused.

Daniel looked at one of the pages Belle had scribbled on. “And it looks like we have further proof. Judith said that she inherited everything from her Uncle. Officially though, it says he was her father. So there's a lie we can catch her on.”

“From what I've read, the second child of the family was raised seperately from the oldest one, with the oldest getting the Mob and the youngest getting the assets. Then when the next heir to the Mob was born, their younger sibling would inherit the assets.” Belle showed everyone her notes. “Of course, there were a few false starts with siblings getting resentful, but they were often murdered by the Death Valley Gang as part of the agreement with the Mob to take out the March Hill Crusaders.”

“Wow. Just...wow.” Peter looked through the notes. “So what's the plan?”

Everyone looked at Daniel.

“Why do I have come up with the plan?!” Daniel cried.

“Because she's YOUR girlfriend.” TJ said.

“Because YOU know her best.” Tammy added.

“Because YOU'RE the one with the most contact with her.” Sunny pointed out.

“Because YOU'RE the oldest.” Sammy grinned.

“And because YOU'RE our fearless leader.” Petunia finished.

“Technically he's not our leader.” Charlie pointed to himself and Belle, who nodded.

“Guys, please. You'll go along with whatever Dan decides, because Dan's got this, right?” Sammy looked up at his hero.

“Yeah!” The Noble Knights of the Last Order crowded around Daniel, who looked pale.

“Uhhh...”

# Chapter

# 69



"I don't get it." Giggles frowned as she hid behind a train.

"I don't either, but apparently Judith is going to be here soon." Chuckles shrugged. "Something about insurance inspection."

"And Lionheart thought we'd catch her here?" Giggles shook her head. "I don't like the idea of some insurance assessor getting involved. They might blab if they hear anything."

"Hey, it's better than nothing." Chuckles pointed out.

The pair looked over to where they knew Lady Silent and Lady Courage were crouched low out of sight. Lady Silent, using her ability to blend into the background and hear things that she shouldn't, had overheard Mobster Marion talking about the train yard being insured and needing inspecting. She had relayed that information to Sir Lionheart, who had casually asked about the destroyed train yard on a date one morning. Through that, he had found out that Judith Jofrey, the sister of Mobster Marion and the Emerald Mobster known as Sidewinder, was going to go through the property with an insurance assessor that afternoon.

Sir Lionheart was lying beneath a train carriage with Sir Hyper, who, as usual, wouldn't be quiet.

"I don't know what you see in her anyway." Sir Hyper babbled on, as Sir Lionheart (who usually didn't mind Sir Hyper constantly talking) groaned. "I mean, okay she's not a murderous psychopath like her sister, but she's still a Marion-enabler. She's still a Mobster."

"She's not though. She's starting to get thoroughly sick of her sister." Sir Lionheart pointed out.

"I mean, we lucked out with Lady Courage, but I don't think lightening will strike twice. Could you imagine Sidewinder being a Knight of the Last Order?" Sir Hyper continued.

Sir Lionheart didn't even want to think about it.

"I don't know how Sir Dark and Lady Luck do it. They must worry about each other a lot." Sir Hyper mused.

Sir Dark and Lady Luck weren't worried about each other at all, as they were both hidden quite comfortably in the guards shack, where they'd be able to coordinate their friends once Judith and the insurance assessor arrived.

"Hmmm..." Lady Luck scrolled through her phone. "Pasta or rice?"

"Well, we had risotto last week, so pasta this week." Sir Dark replied. He smiled at her. "You're the best food-prepper I know. How you can make the same meal taste awesome for an entire week..."

"It's an acquired skill." Lady Luck smiled back at him. "Especially when you're trying to stay healthy."

"You make it easy." Sir Dark told her.

"Are you SURE there's going to be an inspection? We've been here half an hour already and there's no sign of Judith or any insurance guys!" Lady Courage complained, bored with the stakeout already.

"I just found out this place was insured. It was Sir Lionheart who found out the inspection was today. Go and talk to him." Lady Silent grumbled back, starting to get sick of Lady Courage complaining.

"I could have gone to my hair appointment." Lady Courage groaned. "Melody and I were supposed to do a Mummy/Daughter day!"

"Isn't Melody a bit young for that?" Lady Silent asked.

"She's three!" Lady Courage protested.

Lady Silent raised an eyebrow.

"And it was only a few years after THAT, that Lone Revolver defeated Crusader Roger and finished off the March Hill Crusaders for good...at least, until Rogers great-grandson revived them with the help of ex-Mobster Mark." Giggles was lecturing Chuckles, who looked ready to take the Lions Claw Blade to his ears.

"WHY do I need to know this rubbish?" Chuckles asked.

"Because it's our city history!" Giggles protested.

"C'mon, c'mon, c'mon...!" Sir Lionheart and Sir Hyper were watching the Bris Vegas Leos play the Silver Coast Sharks on Sir Hyper's phone. The siren sounded to end the quarter, and the two men grinned at each other.

"I can't believe we actually kicked straight for a quarter." Sir Lionheart said.

"Good thing too, we only got one scoring shot!" Sir Hyper agreed.

"Judith is a Leos fan. I wonder if Marion is?"

"I highly doubt it mate."

"And if we pay the phone this week, we should have enough for the mortgage and the water bill next month." Sir Dark was going through his phone, looking at bills.

"I'm SO glad we went with solar power. That cuts at least one bill." Lady Luck breathed a sigh of relief. "Even if it did cut into the wedding budget."

"We still had a lovely wedding though." Sir Dark pointed out. "You looked stunning, I swear I forgot how to breathe when I first saw you in that dress."

Lady Luck blushed slightly. "You're always handsome." She replied softly.

"So BORED!!!!!!!!!!!!!" Lady Courage groaned. She looked at the control panel in front of her. "If it weren't for the fact that I know this train is half-blown up, I'd be tempted to give it a whirl."

"Yeah...I don't think there's any working trains left here." Lady Silent sighed. "Even if there were, can you imagine the hell that Lionheart and the others would put us through?"

"Yeah, I know." Lady Courage looked out the window in front of them. The driver's cabin of the

train had been interesting for about fifteen minutes, but now an hour and a half had passed and it was really getting monotonous. "How is your course going?"

"Pretty good. Soon I'll be ready for work placement. I can't wait to see how I go." Lady Silent beamed.

"Good to hear." Lady Courage smiled. "I've actually been thinking about getting into work, I've only done bits and pieces since Melody was born."

"Seriously? That would be awesome." Lady Silent approved.

"And we won't even begin to get into what the Mob and the DVG did to Laker Barrett and the rest of the Silent Lake Gang." Giggles continued on, oblivious to the fact that Chuckles was pretending to be asleep. "Sir Lionheart told me his parents were killed in the crossfire, so I went and had a look. 32 innocent people were killed that day, 5 of them children."

Chuckles yawned loudly, desperate to make his point. Then he saw two cars approaching the train yard.

"We're on!" He hit the face of his watch to alert the others. Lady Silent and Lady Courage dropped down so they couldn't be seen through the window of the train. Lady Luck and Sir Dark hid in an old cupboard, waiting for someone to walk in.

The cars parked in the middle of the train yard. Out of the nicer car stepped Judith Jofrey, and out of the old station wagon stumbled a portly man with a prominent bald spot who was sweating profusely. He pulled out a briefcase full of paperwork and struggled to catch up with Judith, who was looking sadly at one of her trains, now ruined.

"We'll need to check the serial numbers of all of these trains and do a count." The assessor said.

"Fine." Judith reached out to the train, where Lady Silent and Lady Courage were hiding. Her fingers touched the cold, charred steel, her fingers trailing sadly down the remains of one of her beloved trains.

She walked to the nose of the train, and called out the number that she read there. The assessor ticked off his pad, and they walked over to the train that Chuckles and Giggles were hidden behind. Judith read out the number again, and again it was ticked off. Then she walked over to another train that didn't look too badly damaged, but would never move again.

"We're going to wait until they're finished, aren't we?" Sir Hyper groaned as Sir Lionheart buried his face in his hands.

"I don't see that we have any choice." Giggles sighed in reply to Chuckles whining.

"You've gotta be kidding. Every single train?!" Sir Dark couldn't believe it.

"I'm going to die of boredom before they're done!" Lady Silent let her head fall on Lady Courage's shoulder.

Judith called out another train serial number. This time the assessor shook his head. "From our report, that train was just coming out of BrisVegas when the attack happened."

“Are you kidding me?!” Judith rounded on the assessor. The hiding Knights and Chuckles and Giggles groaned. “Check your bloody paper again dingle-brain, your figures are out!”

“She reminds me of Marion when she gets angry.” Lady Courage sighed as Judith verbally beat the poor assessor into submission.

“I don't know what Lionheart sees in her.” Lady Silent agreed.

“Are they going to spend forever arguing over every little mistake?!” Giggles groaned.

“It's not so much an argument as it is a complete and total destruction.” Chuckles replied dryly. “She rants longer than you!”

“What was that noise?” The assessor heard what sounded like a yelp of pain.

“It was a stupid animal, will you focus on these trains?!” Judith thundered. She then stormed up to another train and read out the serial number.

“Make it end. Please.” Sir Dark groaned. Lady Luck just sighed.

“RIGHT, now that we've finished getting the serial numbers, let's assess the damage.” Judith finally finished checking the trains. The assessor was near tears. “I think most of these are write-offs, although the ones over here could possibly be repaired.”

“You'd need a technician to look at them, but from here they look salvageable. Just let me just double-check their serial numbers.” The assessor quickly composed himself. They walked towards the trains that looked like they could be repaired. Seeing the coast was clear, the Knights of the Last Order quickly converged with Chuckles and Giggles.

“This is STUPID, we've been here forever and there's no telling if we'll even get a chance at her!” Lady Courage complained.

“It doesn't look likely.” Giggles added.

“Look, we have to confront her eventually, it might as well be sooner rather than later.” Sir Lionheart grumbled.

“Look, I know she's your girlfriend and you don't want her to be a bad guy, but you can't drag us all into your emotional problems.” Lady Luck put her arm around her friend.

“Actually he's moody because the Leos are losing again.” Sir Hyper looked dejected.

There was a collective sigh of defeat around the group.

“Look, if I'm wrong, I'll shout everyone dinner. With dessert.” Sir Lionheart promised.

“You'd better.” Chuckles grumbled.

“I will!” Sir Lionheart protested.

“Scatter!” Lady Silent saw that Judith and the insurance assessor were coming back. The group scatted as the pair returned, deep in conversation.

“So you'll put in a request for a tech? Completely covered?” Judith asked.

“Provided at least one train gets back on the tracks, everything will be covered.” The assessor made some notes on his pad. “We'll also cover any product that you produced that was destroyed.”

“Thank you.” Judith looked prim.

“We just need a few signatures from you.” The assessor was about to set his pad on Judith's car, until she shot him a filthy look. He moved over to his car and put the pad there instead. He pulled a shiny silver pen out of his pocket, and handed it to Judith. He pointed for her to sign a page, and she did, with a careful signature.

“This is getting a bit beyond a joke, even for me.” Chuckles hissed to Sir Hyper, whom he was now hiding with. “How long does a few signatures take?!”

“A while, apparently.” Sir Hyper said drily.

Meanwhile, Giggles was with Sir Lionheart.

“I just want you to know that even though I've found this afternoon as boring as anything, I still believe in you.” Giggles said as they watched Judith sign even MORE forms.

“Thanks. That means a lot.” Sir Lionheart replied.

Finally, Judith finished signing the forms. The assessor took back his pen, put the forms away neatly in his briefcase, placed the briefcase carefully on the back seat of his car, turned and shook hands with Judith, got into his car, adjusted the air conditioner and the radio, and slowly backed out of the ruined train yard.

“He's almost gone!” Lady Silent and Lady Luck pressed their noses to the window of the small hut they were hidden in.

Judith turned and sighed. She placed her hand against another train and bowed her head. “If only she hadn't gone mad, maybe then there wouldn't be any Crusaders and my beloved trains would still be here.”

“And he's gone!” Lady Courage grinned at Sir Dark.

“If only I had been stronger...If only they didn't always bow to her demands, getting her that dumb tank. If only...”

Suddenly, Judith found herself surrounded by the Noble Knights of the Last Order. She spun around, suspicious and confused.

“To what do I owe the pleasure?” She asked cautiously.

“You know what we want, Sidewinder.”

Judith looked up to see Chuckles and Giggles on the train above her.

# Chapter

# 70

Judith Jofrey narrowed her eyes at the pair who stood on the train. Chuckles and Giggles both glared back, pointing the Lions Claw Blade and the Lucky Seven Gun respectively at her.

“We have proof. Your family and their little scheme of keeping one member of the family separate to hold a legitimate front.” Lady Courage walked towards Judith.

“Buying businesses after they've been crippled by the criminal families, when the owners have no choice but to sell to survive.” Sir Hyper added.

“Tightening your control over the city piece by piece.” Sir Lionheart growled.

“Then passing on the control to your niece or nephew.” Lady Luck joined her fellow Knights.

Judith raised an eyebrow. “Fantasy.”

“You sure about that?” Giggles asked. “Do you want to see our notes?”

“Anyone with half a brain will see the connection. All the information is in the Council building, where anyone can see it.” Sir Dark pointed out.

“And it's also kept in a vault in BrisVegas, so there's no destroying the evidence.” Chuckles grinned.

Judith let out a low growl. The gig was up. If Marion knew, she'd make sure to get rid of her sister.

She backed towards her car, where she opened the door and reached in, grabbing her Mystic Eight Gun and the Dragons Scale Scythe.

The Noble Knights of the Last Order closed in as Judith removed her wig, revealing her long blonde hair. She stood before them, and there was no doubt that Judith Jofrey was the sister of Mobster Marion, the Emerald Mobster dubbed Sidewinder.

“Well done. Now die!” She attacked, firing rounds at Chuckles and Giggles while swinging the Dragon Scale Scythe at the Knights.

Alas for Sidewinder, she didn't have her Emerald Suit, so she was at an extreme disadvantage. Without Emerald Power to fortify her weapons and attacks, she was easily overwhelmed by numbers. Chuckles and Giggles didn't even need to get involved as the Noble Knights of the Last Order overpowered Sidewinder, disarming her and forcing her back against one of the trains.

“You won't kill me.” Sidewinder hissed as the group surrounded her. She didn't sound so certain though, and looked especially wary when Chuckles and Giggles landed in front of her.

“Nah, we won't kill you.” Giggles said. “As long as you behave yourself.”

“And what is THAT supposed to mean?!” Sidewinder snapped.

“Lay off Peter and Belle Masters. Stop trying to scare the city into submission.” Sir Lionheart told her sternly.

“Like hell. You won't get me to turn on my family.” Sidewinder shot. She looked carefully at Sir Lionheart, something familiar about him.

"If you don't, you'll be exposed, and your family will lose everything." Giggles snapped. "I happen to know your balance of power is in big trouble as it is."

"You know nothing!" Sidewinder scoffed.

"Try me." Giggles glared back.

"Face it Judith, you either behave or you lose it all." Chuckles said.

"And we have eyes everywhere. We'll be watching you." Sir Hyper warned.

"Count on it." Lady Courage added.

Sidewinder growled in uncontrollable fury. How DARE they?! How had they found out?! How had they gotten proof?!

She took one last look at Sir Lionheart before snatching her weapons off Sir Dark and Lady Silent and storming back to her car. The tyres screeched as she sped off.

"I think she took it well." Chuckles grinned.

Judith could barely breathe she was so furious and upset. How DARE they?!

She could hear their mocking voices. She could see them looking down on her, so certain they'd won, because they had. Hundreds of years of the Mobsters of Misneach, and it was all going to end with her.

She HATED them! She hated each and every one of them!

Realizing she probably wasn't the safest driver in the world at that time, Judith pulled over near Pleasantville Dam. She stepped out of the car and onto the walkway to watch the water and calm down.

*I'm sorry Marion. I'm so sorry.*

Judith felt hot, angry, guilty tears run down her face. She had failed.

"How COULD they? How could they have known? How could they have found out? How could..."

Suddenly she remembered their voices. She remembered Sir Lionheart. Hadn't she heard his voice so many times before? On dates with Daniel?

Her blood started to run cold. He couldn't be. He wouldn't.

Then she remembered Giggles. Her voice. Her voice that sounded EXACTLY like that meddling Belle Masters.

That would make sense. Belle was smart enough to figure it out, and if Daniel was Sir Lionheart, he'd already seen her at the timber mill getting changed.

Judith gasped. She'd figured it out. She knew who her adversaries were.



She had to tell her sister!

--

“You're joking. I can't believe he'd do that!” Mobster Marion narrowed her eyes at Master Revolver.

“Well, he's done it. I saw them come out of his office.” Master Revolver replied, looking serious.

They were sitting in the Misneach living room, which was quite ornately decorated in white, black and gold. Suddenly, Judith Jofrey burst in, looking harried.

“What's the matter with you? Did something go wrong with the insurance assessment?” Mobster Marion raised her eyebrow. “You look like you need a bath and a champers.”

“You're not going to believe it.” Judith panted. “Just wait until I tell you what I found out!”

**Chapter**

**71**

“What are you talking about?” Mobster Marion raised her eyebrow at her sister.

“It's Chuckles and Giggles!” Judith Jofrey cried. “They're Charlie Begly and Belle Masters!”

Mobster Marion blinked. Master Revolver cleared his throat.

“And how did you find this out?” Mobster Marion asked, sipping on her champagne.

Judith gulped. She couldn't tell them that without revealing that she'd been caught as Sidewinder.

“I just know, okay?” She snapped.

Master Revolver gave a small cough. He got up and walked to the rumpus room. Mobster Marion motioned for Judith to sit down. Judith sat on the sofa across from Marion, who poured a drink for her sister.

“I'm telling the truth.” Judith tried to convince her sister.

“Could you be mistaken?” Marion asked gently. “Belle Masters especially is the LAST person you'd expect to be flying around Pleasantville. She's too bookish.”

“I know, okay?” Judith groaned. “But I swear it's true!”

Marion sighed. She loved her sister, and knew that her judgement was usually sound. However, recently she'd been...troublesome.

“Judith...” She sighed again. She wanted to believe her sister, but there was simply no way that Belle Masters, junior lawyer, could be the agile gunslinger Giggles. There was no way a blacksmith like Charlie Begly could be the deadly swordsman Chuckles.

“We'll talk about it tomorrow, okay?” Marion smiled. Judith pouted. “C'mon, I have some gold chocolate truffle you'll absolutely LOVE.”

Judith sighed, and sipped at her drink. Maybe sleeping on it would be a good idea.

--

Belle Masters had her nose firmly in a book as she walked back to her desk in the Pleasantville Council building. Mobster Marion watched her.

“See Judes? No way could Belle be Giggles, she hasn't crashed!” Marion chuckled.

Belle pricked up her ears. Oh no...

Marion patted Judith's arm, before walking back into Mayor Jones' office, while Judith Jofrey followed behind dejectedly.

Of course, right after they walked into the office, Belle completely missed her chair and ended up on the ground.

“That's not really a reason why Belle can't be Giggles.” Judith frowned as Marion helped herself to Jones' whisky stash.

“Judith...” Marion was starting to get irritated.

“Besides, everyone knows Belle is a regular at the shooting range.” Judith tried, almost pleading.

“So is half the bloody city!” Marion snapped. “I've tried to be nice about this Judes, but you're really pissing me off.”

“You're pissing ME off! I'm your SISTER, remember?!” Judith fired back.

“Keep it down idiot!” Marion hissed. “Do you want anyone to find out who you are?!”

Judith went slightly pale. “I'm sorry.” She swallowed. “But-,”

“Enough.” Marion snapped. “Do you want me to take you to the metalworks? You can see how Charlie Begly lumbers around carrying metal, without any of the finesse required to wield the Lions Claw Blade?”

Judith grimaced and stalked out of the office. Marion raised her eyebrow at her retreating form. For whatever reason, she'd gotten this idea in her head. If she would just tell Marion where the idea came from then she might be inclined to believe her. For some reason though, Judith was keeping mum on the subject.

Not for the first time, Marion wondered if Judith was plotting to take over the Mobsters of Misneach, breaking up the Death Valley Mobsters. It would spell disaster though, surely Judith wouldn't be that stupid? Maybe Judith was thinking of taking the Mobster assets for herself?

Marion knew that her Uncle had been killed because he'd wanted more power than he was owed. He wanted to keep the assets for himself, and not hand them over to his niece. She didn't want to have to get Master Revolver to kill Judith, least of all because she didn't have an heir yet.

There was also another issue brewing.

“Demon.” Marion narrowed her eyes at Mayor Jones as he walked into his office.

“Marion.” The Mayor of Pleasantville, Demon, glared back. “Do what do I owe the honour?”

“I want to know why Mark and Roger were in here.” Marion got straight to the point. “What business to you have with the March Hill Crusaders?”

“Nothing that concerns you.” Demon sat at his desk. “Now get out of my sight.”

“I warn you, if you betray us, you lose half of Pleasantville.” Marion warned him as she walked out.

Demon watched as the door slammed behind her.

--

“I have good news and bad news.” Belle ran to her friends after work that day as they sat at the tip. “Judith's figured out who we are, but Marion won't believe her.”

“WHAT?!” The others cried.

“She must have recognised my voice!” Daniel cried.

“And then she put two and two together, which helped her recognise my voice.” Belle groaned.

“But you said Marion didn't believe her?” Charlie raised an eyebrow.

Belle couldn't help it. She started laughing.

“She was after me all day, trying to prove it without giving it away to me that she knew.” She grinned. “But she didn't realise I'd overheard Marion flapping her gums!”

Everyone else saw the funny side of it too.

“Is Marion REALLY that idiotic?!” Sammy laughed.

“The power must really have gotten to her head if she's being so arrogant as to ignore her sister!” Petunia added.

“I wish I'd been there!” Charlie slapped Belle on the back.

“You should have seen Judith's face when she realised no one believed her!” Belle roared with laughter.

“She's probably going to try following us around with cameras now.” TJ grinned. “And if she does, we just remind her what's at stake!”

“She's gotta be furious.” Tammy grinned.

Sammy was about to join in, but then he noticed Daniel looking a little distracted. “Dan? What's up?”

“Nothing.” Daniel said, not paying attention.

“You seem very interested in that old car.” Sammy pressed. “Going to try and put us a vehicle together again?”

“After last time? We don't need another Chuckles and Giggles annoying us.” Daniel quipped.

“Don't be a dork!” Charlie shoved him off the bonnet he was sitting on.

The group laughed.

“I'm thinking if I can patch things up with Judy, if I can somehow influence her, and in turn, Marion.” Daniel told them. “They own half the city and if we can get them to turn on Demon, he's in big trouble at the next election.”

“It'll be difficult though. It's really hard to go against your family.” Sunny said, as Melody slept against her chest. “Especially when it's what you've been raised to believe.”

“And yet you did it.” Belle put an arm around her friend.

Sunny shook her head.

“I was...I was being abused. It's easy to turn on someone when they're mistreating you.” She sighed. “Judith and Marion are close. It's going to be really hard to get between them. I mean, if it were easy, I could have talked Dad around before he took over the city...”

“It's not your fault Demon is a jerk.” Charlie said. “Just like it's not your fault he killed my grandfather.”

Sunny looked at Charlie. That wound might have healed, but it had left a very painful scar. Sunny had to marvel that he'd even considered dating her at one stage after what her father had done.

“Push comes to shove, Danny'll just have to knock Judith up.” TJ grinned.

That suggestion was greeted with loud boos and jeers. Stay classy TJ.

# Chapter

# 72

“And THAT, my good fellows, is how Sir Lionheart conquered the heart of the fair Sidewinder and got himself a pretty decent new girlfriend.” Daniel bragged as the Noble Knights of the Last Order played a game of cricket by the creek (I think we all know where this is going). “After we talked about me being a Noble Knight and her being a Mobster, she agreed to at least not work against us. I think I'm a genius.”

“I'm happy for you. Now will you bowl please?! I don't want us to get done for slow over rate!” Sammy groaned.

“You're already two overs behind.” Petunia deadpanned.

Annoyed, Daniel bowled, nearly taking off Tammys head.

“WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!” Sammy was ready to strangle Daniel.

“Are you okay Tammy?” Sunny rushed to her friends side.

“Guys, break it up!” Patrick tried to stop Sammy and Daniel from destroying each other as Melody laughed. “Seriously, you're as bad as Belle and Charlie!”

“Don't compare us to those two lovebirds!” Sammy jumped back.

“Well, stop squabbling.” Patrick said firmly.

“Are they even a thing yet?” TJ asked. “I mean, it's fairly obvious they're into each other.”

“They're 'best friends', remember?” Sunny said, the slightest suggestion of jealousy in her voice. She picked up Melody and hugged her.

“They awfully close for 'best friends' though.” Daniel sat down. “Have you ever noticed how affectionate they are with each other?”

“They've always been like that.” Tammy pointed out. “They're both from naturally affectionate families.”

“True, I mean, have you ever known Belle to turn down a hug? Or Charlie for that matter?” TJ mused. “But still, they're extremely close.”

“Maybe all they need is a little push. It WOULD be lovely if they were together.” Petunia smiled.

“Maybe...” TJ agreed. “After all, didn't we need one?”

“You two needed to be glued together before you got it.” Sunny said dryly, earning dirty looks.

--

Belle had her nose firmly planted in a book while her pumpkin soup cooled off. Across the table, Sunny, Tammy and Petunia watched her.

It was a beautiful sunny day in Pleasantville, and they could have been outside, except that Belle wanted to read. So they were at Bills Resturant, and the girls were trying to figure out how to broach the subject of Charlie to Belle.



“So, read anything interesting?” Tammy started. Sunny and Petunia looked horrified.

Belle slowly lifted her head from the book, and looked suspiciously at Tammy.

“I mean, surely you've come across something that WON'T put us to sleep, right?” Tammy tried to dig herself out of the hole she'd gotten herself in.

Sunny groaned. Petunia rolled her eyes.

Belle returned to her book.

“Seriously Belle-Belle, can't you get your nose out of that long enough to acknowledge our existences?!” Sunny groaned.

“We spent the last hour gossiping!” Belle fired back, exasperated. “And before THAT we spent two hours shopping, with a brief scuffle with the Crusaders to make things fun.”

(Seriously, don't try and destroy a shopping mall when there's a 50% storewide sale on. You will lose.)

“It's just that we feel like we don't spend enough time together, us girls.” Petunia said, trying to get the conversation back on track.

“We see each other literally every day.” Belle narrowed her eyes again.

“Yeah, but even when you're with us most of your attention is on Charlie.” Tammy muttered.

“We've been best friends since we were little, we're next door neighbours AND our fathers are best friends, AND his sister works for my uncle.” Belle rolled her eyes, putting the book down and testing the temperature of her soup. “Oooh, yummy.”

“You ARE pretty close.” Sunny said wistfully.

Belle glared at her. Tammy and Petunia tensed up. Not this argument again!

--

Meanwhile, the boys were also out and about. They were still shopping.

“Tammy LOVES this Chocolate River colour, and Lizzy often goes for Strawberry Wishes.” Sammy held up two containers of lip gloss.

“Tuney loves Blueberry Passion. Goes with her rotating hair colours.” TJ held up a lip gloss that looked purple and blue.

“Do you know what Belle wears Charlie?” Daniel asked innocently, looking at some eyeshadows for Judith.

“No idea. I don't know why she wears makeup anyway, her face is always buried in a book or paperwork.” Charlie laughed.

“Don't you wish she'd get out of those books sometimes?” Sammy asked.

“Nope.” Charlie shook his head. “Even though I roast her about it, I know that the knowledge she's getting from those books is going to save Pleasantville one day. Count on it.”

Charlie went back to looking at shoes while the others looked at each other, defeated. How on earth were they going to get Charlie to talk about his feelings for Belle?

“I guess you'd know better than any of us, you two spend a lot of time together.” Daniel decided to go a more direct approach.

“Well we ARE best friends. We also live next door to each other. Our fathers are best friends, plus Lizzy works for her uncle.” Charlie pointed out. He looked at a pair of high heels. “How Marion can be a competent swordswoman in these things I'll never know.”

Daniel looked at TJ and Sammy. Sammy shook his head and TJ shrugged.

It was IMPOSSIBLE!

--

“Well, we had absolutely no hope with Charlie, how about you guys?” Sammy flopped down on the sofa in Sunnys house.

“Belle had her nose in a book.” Petunia sighed. “And Sunny nearly started a fight.”

“REALLY Sunny?” Daniel groaned.

“I didn't mean too!” Sunny sighed. “It's just that I still get a smidge jealous sometimes and even though I try to hide it, it still leaks out a little bit.”

“It's okay.” Tammy put an arm around her. “But we're still at square one when it comes to the romance of Chuckles and Giggles.”

“They're just impossible!” Petunia groaned. “They're so smart when it comes to fighting crime, but bloody thick when it comes to their own love!”

“What are we going to do?” TJ sighed.

“Maybe we need to switch things up a bit.” Daniel suddenly had an idea. “I mean, Sunny and Belle have history, and Sammy is dating Charlie's little sister. Maybe we can swap teams for the next assault.”

“Or, y'know, we could let things take their natural course.” Tammy pointed out.

There was a brief silence.

“Nah.”

Suddenly Daniel got a message on his phone. “Guys, problem, apparently the city has been brought to a standstill by weirdly dressed guys standing in the middle of the street.” He flicked through the message. “Multiple streets even.”

“Who NOW?” TJ groaned.

“Nevermind who, let's go Knights!” Daniel commanded.

The Noble Knights of the Last Order headed to the tip, suited up, and headed to face Pleasantvilles newest threat.

# Chapter 73

Chuckles and Giggles faced the cloaked man or woman who was in the middle of the street. Around them lay several police, all of them completely zoned out.

“Don't get too close, they've got a powerful drug on them and if you breathe that in you'll be out like those police.” Chuckles warned.

“I'm wearing a helmet, Chuckles.” Giggles groaned.

“And a very nice one too.” Chuckles grinned.

The man/woman in the cloak said nothing. His/her face was covered with a mask that looked like a baby, only the entire thing had been painted blue. Around the city, there were more people wearing the exact same mask, only painted in different colours.

Giggles kept the Lucky Seven Gun trained on them, while Chuckles had the Lions Claw Blade at the ready. The person in front of them didn't move, they just stared blankly ahead.

“Who are you?” Chuckles tightened his grip on the Lions Claw Blade.

No answer, just silence and the same blank stare.

“I know who they are.” Giggles said quietly.

Chuckles tensed up. “Another one of the old crime syndicates come back from the dead?”

“Yup.” Giggles replied. “I'll bet you any money you like that the Haunted Maze Troupe is back.”

“Very good fool!” A male voice said, before the cloaked person attacked!

He pulled two knives from his cloak and went for Chuckles. Chuckles blocked the attack with the Lions Claw Blade, and Giggles grabbed him before he could inhale any of the drug. She fired the Lucky Seven Gun to stop the Trouper from following them.

“That was too close.” Chuckles gritted his teeth.

“If only we knew how he was putting out that drug.” Giggles sighed.

Chuckles took one look at the man and bolted back at him.

“When will I learn?” Giggles groaned. She flew after Chuckles to provide support.

Chuckles had noticed a bit of smoke around the knives of the Trouper. Using the Lions Claw Blade for distance, he slashed at the Trouper, knocking one of the knives free. The Trouper quickly backed off.

“Don't follow him Chuckles!” Giggles cried, but it was too late. Groaning, she flew to rescue her friend, just as the Trouper detonated a small smoke bomb.

--

Chuckles awoke on the side of the street, head throbbing.

“I can do without THAT happening again.” He groaned, before realising where he was. He quickly jumped up, the Lions Claw Blade at the ready. However, there was no one around.

Chuckles felt confused, then worried, then angry, then confused again. It was peak hour in Pleasantville, where WAS everyone? Where was Giggles? Why hadn't the Lions Claw Blade been taken while he was knocked out?

“Hello?” He called out. His voice echoed eerily around him, almost unnaturally. Keeping a firm hand on the Lions Claw Blade, he reached to his hip where his grappling hook and rope were ready. With a bit of work (“This is SO much easier with Giggles to fly me up!”) he managed to get to the top of a building. He then used the grappling hook and rope to get up to the tallest building in Pleasantville, where he looked around and saw no one.

“This is wrong. This is VERY wrong. What have the Haunted Maze Troupe DONE?” He wondered. He began to worry. What about the Knights of the Last Order? What about his employees? Their families? HIS family?

What about Giggles?

He slapped the face of his watch, hoping at least SOMEONE would still be around to see it. Then, in a small moment of inspiration, he decided to head towards the tip. Maybe everyone had met up there.

--

“Giggles! Hey GIGGLES! Wake up!”

Giggles felt groggy as her father shook her awake in the Council building break room.

“Are you okay Giggles?” Peter Masters looked at his daughter, concerned.

Giggles was about to answer, when she noticed that her helmet was still on.

“I'm fine. I need to go and find Chuckles.” She said, trying to get up. Her head hurt, and she was dizzy.

“You need to rest. Get that helmet off and I'll bring you something to drink.” Peter told her, before heading into the kitchenette.

Giggles took the opportunity to get out of there. Clearly, there had been something in that smoke bomb that was messing around with her head, and now she was hallucinating. Why else would her father have called her Giggles and not removed her helmet?

Sure enough, the entire Council building was empty, and the city appeared deserted. A LOT of things were wrong with this scenario. What was in the smoke that was in that smoke-bomb? Was it addictive? Would there be any long-term side effects? What was going on in the real world? Had they already been unmasked and arrested?

“So many questions, and I don't think I'm ready to give you the answers.”

Giggles spun around. The Haunted Maze Trouper was standing there, ready for a fight.

“What have you done?” Giggles asked.

“Aren't you going to draw your weapon?” Asked the Trouper.

“Not when I'm under the influence of your drug. I could accidentally hurt an innocent.” Giggles replied. “What is this drug?”

“It's a joint-hallucination compound. Something we found overseas which we thought would be useful in getting Pleasantville to bow to us.” The Trouper told her.

“You were hoping either Chuckles or I would accidentally reveal ourselves.” Giggles growled. “Where is he?”

“Depends. You see, as long as I have this,” The Trouper held up a small device with several buttons. “I can do anything to your reality that I like.”

He pushed a button. The buildings began to shimmer as a low sound came from the device.

“It influences the brain with sound.” Giggles smirked. “I guess I have the advantage, I didn't breathe in as much of your drug because of my helmet, and the helmet also blocks most of the sound too.”

The Trouper moved his head slightly. “It doesn't matter, your friend copped the full blast, so he's much easier to manipulate.” There was annoyance in his voice, but certainty too.

“Chuckles isn't stupid.” Giggles fired.

“Maybe. Maybe not. Depends what we do to him, and if you can find him in time.” The Trouper chuckled, before pressing some more buttons.

“Darn it!” Giggles groaned, as the city around her began to flicker into a thick jungle.

# Chapter

# 74



“They're all out cold. Darn it!” Lady Courage groaned as she tried to keep her fellow Knights safe. The drug had gotten them all, and now they were all in trouble.

“I've got Sir Dark, Lady Luck and Sir Hyper.” Patrick pulled up in an unmarked old station wagon with no back seats. He wore a black scarf around his face. “I'm so glad you wear that gas mask.”

“It was a present from someone who protected me.” Lady Courage replied, thinking of the late Joe Masters who had treated her like his own grand-daughter. “Where are Chuckles and Giggles?”

“Load those two into the back, then we'll go look for them.” Patrick replied.

“Good idea Sir Motor.” Lady Courage grinned beneath the mask which had protected her from the poison gas. With a bit of difficulty, she loaded Sir Lionheart and Lady Silent into the back of the car, both of them unconscious.

“Looking for these?”

Lady Courage spun around. Sidewinder had a small wagon, where Chuckles and Giggles were loaded.

“I'm only helping because I don't want the Mob threatened. I'm hunting down any Troupers that haven't been gassed and chasing them out of town. No killing.” Sidewinder spat.

“Thanks Sidewinder. We won't forget this.” Lady Courage smiled at her.

“Oh won't DAD be pleased when he sees this!” They heard another voice, a much slimier, nastier voice!

“Ruby.” Lady Courage glared at her brother. Ruby Daryl floated above them, looking pleased with himself.

“What do YOU want you little sneak?” Sidewinder snarled.

“Aww, c'mon Wine-dy, don't be like THAT.” Ruby grinned. “I just want a little peek under the hoods of your cargo there.”

“Of course you do.” Sidewinder snarled.

“I mean, weren't YOU going around claiming that Belle Masters and Charlie Begly were our worst foes?” Ruby continued to gloat. “You wouldn't happen to want to keep them hidden because you're WRONG would you?”

“Shut up!” Sidewinder lashed out with an Emerald Shard, which did nothing against the Ruby Suit.

“Nice try, but the Emerald Suits have NOTHING on the power of the Ruby Suit!” Ruby laughed, skewering Sidewinder through the shoulder with a Ruby Spear.

Pure fury rushed through the veins of Lady Courage. She HATED Daryl, her older brother who had helped her father treat her like dirt!

“Sidewinder, get Chuckles and Giggles into the car and protect Sir Motor. Get them out of here.” She said.

“Are you nuts?! There's no WAY you can take on Ruby by yourself!” Sidewinder cried.

“This isn't your battle.” Lady Courage told her. “I have my own problems with the Jones family.”

Sidewinder looked at her funny, before helping Sir Motor load Chuckles and Giggles into the van.

“Not so fast!” Ruby went to attack as they drove off, but he was stopped by a baseball bat to the chest by Lady Courage.

“Owwwww!” He choked.

“Your fight is with ME, Ruby.” Lady Courage squared up to her brother.

--

“CHUCKLES!”

Chuckles stopped again. He could hear Giggles calling him, but he couldn't see her.

“GIGGLES!” He called out.

“DON'T LET THEM KNOW YOUR NAME!” He heard. “CHUCKLES!!!”

“WOULD HELP IF YOU WEREN'T SCREAMING MY NAME OUT FOR EVERYONE TO HEAR!” Chuckles retorted.

“CHUCKLES!!!” He heard her voice again. Either she couldn't hear him or (more likely) she was ignoring him.

He ran towards her voice. Suddenly, something flew out in front of him, smacking him in the face and knocking him out cold.

--

The world was filled with joy and laughter. The water was perfect, the sun was warm, the breeze had the slightest suggestion of jasmine...and it was fading.

“Ugh...” Sir Dark sat up in the back of the moving station wagon.

“You guys were drugged.” Patrick told him. “Smoke bomb.”

“Why is Sidewinder outside?” Sir Dark looked out of the window and onto the roof.

“Because she's helping save your butts.” Patrick replied. “She really must have a thing for Lionheart.”

Sir Dark chortled.

“NOPE!” Patrick suddenly swerved. “Oh not good, not, NOT good!”

“You keep driving, I'll take care of the Crusaders!” Sidewinder leapt off the car and into the path of

the advancing March Hill Crusaders. Patrick quickly pulled a 300-point turn, before shooting down a side-street.

“Why are you protecting them?” Crusader Roger aimed his new bayonet at her.

“Because they happen to be our best weapon against YOU.” Sidewinder aimed the Mystic Eight Gun back at him.

--

“CHUCKLES!” Giggles cried, desperately trying to make her way through the thickening forest.

She could hear the Haunted Maze Trouper laughing at her. “You can't save him little girl. Pull off your helmet and I'll let him live.”

“He'd never forgive me if I did!” Giggles fired back, angry. She fired the Lucky Seven Gun at a branch, which fell, allowing her to fly upwards. Alas, as she flew up, the forest grew up with her!

“Your little deus ex machina won't save you now little girl!” She heard the Trouper gloat. Two vines shot out and grabbed her feet. She shot them away, pulling out the Desert Eagle. More vines shot out, and Giggles dodged them, heading to ground before running through the thickening undergrowth. The vines shot after her, and she knew it was only a matter of time before they got her.

--

“C'mon guys, wake up!” Sir Dark shook Sir Hyper and Lady Silent. Lady Luck and Sir Lionheart were awake and groggy, and Sir Motor nearly had them at the tip.

“Where's Sidewinder?” Sir Lionheart rubbed his eyes. “What happened?”

“I think it was a group hallucination.” Lady Luck told him.

“Sidewinder is taking care of the Crusaders.” Sir Dark added. “This is bad. If we now have enemies that can take us out en masse like that, then we're in big trouble. We're just lucky none of us had our identities exposed.”

“Thanks Patrick.” Lady Luck smiled. “Where's Sunny?”

“Taking on her brother.” Patrick replied bitterly.

“Damn! We have to help her!” Sir Lionheart cried as Lady Silent started to come around.

“You guys aren't in any condition to help anyone. Plus, this is HER fight.” Patrick told them.

Meanwhile, Lady Courage and Ruby Daryl were falling from a building together, locked in a death grip. Seeing Lady Courage was serious, Ruby quickly pulled them up and threw Lady Courage to the side. She landed on her feet and glared at him.

The siblings were fighting to the death.

# Chapter 75

"I wonder what Demon will think when he hears about your treachery?" Crusader Mark smirked, wiping the new cut on his cheek.

"You can't do anything. The Mobsters of Misneach have ruled Pleasantville for decades. You belong back in the past." Sidewinder told him as she reloaded the Mystic Eight Gun.

"That's not what Demon thinks." Crusader Roger stood up shakily. "Your days are numbered, Mobster."

"Not if I have anything to do with it."

Sidewinder spun around. Master Revolver walked over, looking quite pleased.

"Well done Sidewinder. I'll take it from here." Master Revolver pointed his shotgun at Roger. Sidewinder swallowed hard, before backing off and running away.

"You wouldn't dare." Roger looked horrified at him.

"Oh wouldn't I just?" Revolver grinned.

It happened quickly. Master Revolver kicked Roger to the ground easily. Roger tried to scramble away, but Revolver stepped on his ankle, ready to make the kill. At the last moment though, Mark shoved his fellow Crusader out of the way, the bullet going straight through his back.

Blood spewed out of Marks mouth. "Run Roge. Get out of here while you still can."

Another bullet got him through his lower back, going through his stomach. Roger looked equal parts horrified, disgusted and devastated.

"You're the descendant of the original March Hill Crusaders! You have to live! GO!" Mark cried with his dying breath. Roger took his chance and ran as fast as he could as Master Revolver finished Mark off with a shot to the head.

"That will keep Marion happy. Just a shame I didn't get the other one." Revolver said to himself as Crusader Roger stole a motorcycle and escaped.

--

Lady Courage ducked as another Ruby Shard whizzed past. She used her baseball bat to destroy another one.

"Stop it! How about you just lay down and DIE already?!" Ruby Daryl roared.

*"Why don't you just DIE already, nobody wants you anyway! Unwanted bastard!"*

"How about you just give up on your little temper tantrum already?" Lady Courage jumped onto a nearby car and tried to jump high enough to take a swipe at her brother. She missed, and he laughed.

--

Chuckles woke up with a start.

“Am I still in crazy town?!” He looked around. Sure enough the street was empty.

“Time to die little man!”

Chuckles cried out and dodged as the Haunted Maze Trouper attacked. Steadying the Lucky Seven Gun, he fired at the Trouper, who disappeared into a haze of smoke.

“Wait...this isn't right!” Chuckles cried, throwing the Lucky Seven away.

--

Chuckles woke up again.

“Black and white? REALLY? You're not doing well if you want me to start questioning reality.” He groaned as the world around him appeared in monochrome colours.

--

Chuckles woke up yet again, this time in the Council building.

“Hey Chuckles.” Said Peter Masters.

“You're not Peter Masters.” Chuckles said drily, getting up. He ran out of the building and through the empty city, ending up at Pleasant Lake. What on earth was going on?!

“Sink or swim, coward!” The Trouper appeared, shoving Chuckles into the water. He felt like lead. He tried to get out of the water but he kept sinking.

*Giggles!*

--

Giggles couldn't escape the vines. They wrapped themselves around her throat, her arms, her legs.

She kept shooting with the Lucky Seven Gun and the Desert Eagle, but finally she dropped them, unable to hold them anymore as the oxygen left her body.

*Chuckles!*

--

Whiteness. A dark figure in the distance.

*I'd never leave you.*

*Never ever!*

Struggling. Trying to break through...

*I'd never ignore you. Except when you're annoying.*

*YOU'RE annoying!*

Reaching out...

*It doesn't matter though.*

*Not in the slightest.*

Getting closer...

*Nothing can get between us!*

*We won't let it!*

Fingertips against fingertips...

*We're best friends!*

*We're always best friends!*

*And we'll-*

*ALWAYS!*

*Be,*

***Together!***

# Chapter 76



Giggles woke up.

“Belle! You're okay!” Petunia hugged her friend.

Belle felt her face. Her Giggles helmet was gone, and she was at the tip.

“It was a group hallucination controlled by the Haunted Maze Troupe!” She cried. “They had a little noise-device thing that they used to control it!”

“Explains a lot.” TJ said bitterly.

“Where's Charlie!?” Belle suddenly looked around for her best friend.

“Well...he's okay...but...” Petunia looked uncomfortable.

“Phew. Wait, where's Sunny?” Belle looked around.

“Facing off against Ruby Daryl.” TJ told her.

--

Lady Courage was slammed into a brick wall, and only just got her countenance back in time to dodge a Ruby Whip. Her left arm was already dead thanks to a Ruby Dagger, and the fight had turned against her.

“I don't know what it is about you, but I hate you more than I hate any of the other Knights.” Ruby Daryl told her. His eye was blackening fast, and he was certain that the little witch in front of him had left quite a few other bruises over his body.

“The feeling is mutual, jerk.” Lady Courage replied. This boy, her brother, had tried his best to ruin her life along with her father, just because she had been an unplanned pregnancy, and had been born a girl. He hadn't been a true older brother at all. He had never protected her, he had never believed in her or showed her things or loved her.

As far as Lady Courage was concerned, Daryl and Sunny Jones weren't siblings at all.

She flew at him with her baseball bat, which he dodged. He counter-attacked with a Ruby Spear, which nicked her foot, making it tingle but not quite enough to numb it completely. She spun around and clocked him fair in the shoulder.

He screamed angrily. In his fury, he fired a Ruby Blast. It threw the siblings in opposite directions, Lady Courage hitting the side of a van and Ruby able to stop himself with the Ruby Suit.

Lady Courage felt sore and defeated as Ruby advanced on her.

“You're finished Knight.” He said hoarsely, forming a final Ruby Blast.

There was a gunshot, and suddenly the Power Box on Ruby's shoulder was shattered, the Ruby Blast dissolving harmlessly to the ground!

“Wha-?” Ruby looked around, confused, before copping a knee to the head, Giggles-style!

“DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH MY SISTER AGAIN!” Giggles roared in fury.

“Giggles!” Lady Courage cried in joy.

“Darn it!” Ruby growled. Not only was Giggles armed with the Lucky Seven Gun and the ability to fly, she was also immune to the Ruby Power. Ruby wasn't going to stick around, he got out of there quickly.

“Thanks Giggles!” Lady Courage grinned as Giggles helped her up and flew both of them into the sky towards the tip.

“Any time.” Giggles grinned back. “Uh-oh...”

As proof that the drug had worn off and Giggles was in fact back to reality, the Backpack cut out, dropping both women in Pleasant Lake.

“Now I get why Chuckles hates flying.” Lady Courage groaned as the pair finally got airborne again. “Where IS Chuckles by the way?”

“Well...” Giggles hesitated.

“Is this real life?! What if it's just fantasy again?! What if I'm still in the dream?! What's going on?!” Charlie cried, rocking in the fetal position as the Noble Knights of the Last Order looked bemused.

“It's a fault of the family.” Thomas Begly told them later as he helped load Charlie into his car. “We tend to overthink sometimes.”

“By the way...Belle...what you said before to Ruby...” Sunny asked as the pair got into the back of the car.

“You're as much my sister as Madels is.” Belle said firmly. “Don't worry about it.”

Sunny beamed all the way home.

--

It took three hours to finally convince Charlie that everything was okay (a quick spin on the Backpack fixed things).

“It's kinda scary to think we now have enemies that can do that to us.” He said as the group sat at Bills restaurant eating roast chicken with thick gravy and vegetables.

“Maybe we should up our breathing protection. Just in case.” Daniel shovelled down his dinner. “I mean, who knows what the side effects of that drug are?”

“I swabbed some from Belles helmet.” Peter Masters told them. “From the looks of things it's not addictive, but you'll probably be having some weird dreams for a few days.”

“How on earth do you get access to things like that?” Sammy asked.

“Being a prosecutor means access to labs and people who can run those labs.” Peter winked at him.

Just then, Judith Jofrey in her wig walked in looking harrassed.

“Judy, you okay?” Peter got up and offered her his chair. She sat down, frazzled.

“Revolver...he killed Mark...and I just walked away and let him.” She shook with emotion.

There was silence around the table.

“This is getting out of control. Especially now that the Haunted Maze Troupe is back.” Sunny held Melody tightly.

“Pleasantville is a warzone, and Demon is encouraging it for his own profits.” Tammy growled.

Lara held Madeliene, and looked at Belle and Ozzy. “I wish I could have been born elsewhere sometimes.”

“I don't blame you.” Betty had her mouth set in a thin line.

“Judith, I know you're in a bad place, but if you truly love your sister you need to join us. We can help you guys keep some sort of control until we can get a decent Mayor in to clean the city up.” Peter told her.

“Betray my sister?!” Judiths eyes snapped up with fire.

“If you don't, she could be the next one dead.” Thomas said darkly. “Especially if Jones is in bed with the March Hill Crusaders. They're going to want blood.”

“Marion and I are on thin ice anyway. If she gets even a sniff that I'm working with you, she'll kill me.” Judith groaned. “Especially now that Daryl has pretty much told everyone I'm a liar.”

“Do you see now why we want to end crime in Pleasantville?” Belle asked her gently. “If you weren't part of a crime syndicate, you and Marion would just be regular old sisters.”

Judith looked away. “It doesn't matter right now.”

There was a brief silence.

“I'll tell you what DOES matter, and that's Belle and Charlie!” TJ suddenly spat out.

“Huh?” Belle and Charlie looked at each other.

“You two!” Petunia groaned. “You OBVIOUSLY have feelings for each other!”

“Huh?”

“You keep up with all this 'best friend' stuff but you two CLEARLY belong together!” Sammy added.

“Huh?”

“Guys, they're oblivious. Just drop it, it's never going to work.” Sunny groaned.

Judith looked around, before turning to Peter, confused.

“Just...go with it...” He recommended.

--

Later on, Charlie and Belle were in their tree, looking up through the leaves to the stars, listening to the creek flow.

“I can't believe them.” Belle sighed.

“Yeah.” Charlie agreed. “We know what we have.”

“Exactly.” Belle smiled.

They were together, and that was all that mattered.