

Magenta is back. I know I've stated that she may no longer make an appearance but I've had a change of heart.

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Kisia was in her office, located somewhere inside of the Vlues HQ underground. Officially, she was an ambassador to act as a bridge between the Klisis and the Vlues. This role was given to her due to her marriage with Marglus Vlues. Unofficially though, she was Gair's advisor which she had always been.

In her office, she sat alone with no background music whatsoever. She wasn't doing anything, either. She simply sat there while donning a worried face. There was an alarming concern that had been on her mind for a while. Gair was also made aware of her concern which he reluctantly agreed that he was also beginning to see.

The first clear warning sign she noticed was during Illy O'ren's rampage few decades back. It was when she began to realize the void left by Cecil was progressively encroaching.

In short, there weren't "good enough" people working for Venus government and the wheels were slowly falling apart. Neither Gair nor Kisia was aware until recently that Cecil was quite active in what could only be described as shadow recruitment while he was acting as the imperial master.

In other words, Cecil actively scouted and sought out people to hire and placed them in proper departments. Kisia had known for a long time that, while Cecil was the most powerful ESP, his scariest quality was being able to spot talents in people by just observing them for few minutes.

That was how he was able to gather the members of the Hammers in the first place.

With him gone for more than a hundred years, the void left by him was slowly starting to surface as people he hired began to retire or move on.

Of course, Gair and Kisia did their best to bring in people who they thought they were good enough.

They were good but they weren't as good as those Cecil picked. General processing was getting slower and bureaucratic corruptions were being reported albeit in small numbers.

Additionally, there was a dire matter of lack of core officers. Gair and Kisia were the only remaining members of the Hammers. Everyone else retired. Kisia herself was already past her planned retirement age and Gair was hanging on only because he was the president. He had sons with Nikki but none of them was considered good enough. His elder son would eventually have to take over but Gair was delaying the inevitable as long as possible.

At the moment, the only people they could count as core officers were Brellia, Hiean, and lastly Myelvon. There was also Karveel but she felt he could not be trusted 110% to be invited into the inner circle. She knew he was a decent person though.

All in all, both Gair and Kisia accepted that they would not be able to reproduce what Cecil had been doing. Regardless, they both felt they needed to bring someone in who was capable of great insight. Originally, they wanted someone from their inner circle but there was no one good enough around them.

It had been many days since, and Kisia had been thinking hard to bring in someone, to no avail so far

She spun her brain numerous times for God knows how long until a light bulb popped in her head at last.

“Magenta...!” She uttered in the silent office.

She quickly brought up her computer screen and checked her bio; she was a class A hyper human and was 332 years old. She wasn’t young but wasn’t that old, either, considering she was a hyper human whose life expectancy was at least 600, meaning she’d have few hundreds years left in her tank.

What was more important that she was in charge of recruitment under Admiral Kain. Basically, Magenta had the qualification as well as expertise Venus needed dearly.

Within an hour, Magenta had an informal visit from Kisia in her apartment.

She was quite shocked to see her making an informal visit, meaning Kisia arrived in her apartment alone without any bodyguards.

After making two cups of mild coffee, they sat down at a table and she inquired what was up casually.

Kisia went straight to the topic and expressed her desire to bring her back into the light.

Upon hearing that, Magenta took a deep breath and sipped her coffee. She eventually replied after a good 15 seconds.

“I will answer your call,” She said and added, “I wasn’t going to stay low forever. In fact, I was going to ask to leave Venus but this works just as well.”

“I am glad to hear that,” Kisia said, beaming a smile at her.

“Not so fast though,” She said as her face darkened slightly. “I have a condition.”

To which Kisia nodded.

“I want Len back as well.”

“That’s fine,” Kisia replied right away.

Magenta narrowed her eyes. Her prompt reply surprised her. She did expect her to eventually accept her condition but not promptly like this. Feeling daring, she went ahead and asked Kisia whether it was okay to bring back even Fraser to which Kisia said it was okay.

‘What the hell?’ rang in her mind.

Knowing well what was going on in her mind, Kisia explained, “Cecil rated all three of you highly. He rated you the highest though. He told me that all three of you were too good to be forced into early retirement and rot.”

Magenta talked back, “He hired none of us though.”

“He said all three of you would need a long break and that he stated that his current system would have no need of you at that time.”

She was making some stuff up. It was indeed true that Cecil rated the three highly but he never spoke about the latter part. Ultimately though, none of that mattered. Cecil was gone and she had to stand on her own.

For Magenta, her excuse made sense.

It was understandable, given how they were all former important members of the Bau and that United Sol had just collapsed. She was well aware of it. In fact, she didn't even need to ask. After being in thoughts briefly, she ruled out making Fraser come back. She felt he wouldn't even accept anyway.

"What will be my primary role?" She inquired.

Kisia explained that she wanted her to take over Venus cosmetic division which she was once in charge of. There had been no head of the department ever since her departure and that her primary role would be recruitment.

"That's a pretty high ranking seat right from get-go. Are you sure about this?"

"Yes, I felt you'd be a good fit for the job, and the seat has been vacant for some years now."

"How many years exactly?"

"More than few decades to be honest."

Magenta was shocked to hear that. "And you let your former seat be vacant for that long?"

Beaming a grin, Kisia explained, "The department is pretty much autonomous. And my role wasn't really overseeing them. I was doing my own things and they were doing their own."

After a brief moment of silence between them, Kisia asked her once more.

"Will you accept?"

Magenta had no reason to refuse the offer. Besides, she wouldn't receive a job offer anything close to this level elsewhere.

Having made up her mind, she told Kisia with a nod, "I will do my best."

"No, don't."

"Pardon?"

"Don't do your best. Do what is proper."

She was confused for a moment, and Kisia explained to her, "That's what Cecil had always told us. He told us to never do our best and do what's proper."

The mention of Cecil brought up a question in her mind.

"I haven't seen Cecil for a while. Is he dead?"

It wasn't a rude question. Cecil, at this point, was reaching 2,000 years old. No ESP lived for that long. It was a record which the media wouldn't dare mentioning since they feared him.

"Don't know. He has left a while ago."

"He left? For what?"

"I do not know."

Magenta sounded genuinely concerned as she folded her arms. "Venus without Cecil... The public will find out eventually...."

Kisia responded with a voice of content, "They will. Doesn't matter though. We will still rule how we've been ruling."

"Can you tell me about Cecil?"

She knew much about Cecil but her knowledge came from public records and some classified documents, all of which painted him as some soft of maniac.

There was no doubt that he was an interesting character but there was no way to know more about him without strong bias against him.

When Magenta briefly told her about documents she read about him, Kisia chuckled.

“They aren’t entirely false,” She explained. “The deeds he has done, he has indeed done it which would make me a mass murderer and very likely a lunatic.” She added that she wasn’t there when he had done such things but claimed that he probably had a valid reason.

To which Magenta replied somewhat aggressively, “Would there be a valid reason to kill millions?”

“There would be,” She replied. “Though you’d have to ask him that. In my experience, he has never killed anyone without a reason. His reasons may not warrant their deaths in our views, but if he decided to kill someone, it was usually for the better in the grand scheme.”

At this point, she recalled a lawsuit incident with a human rights group when Kain was still alive. Cecil had a large influence in forcing the final outcome as he murdered judges and civilians to force the matter to close in favor of Kain’s view where he claimed the national security was more important than pirates’ rights as humans. She felt Kain would have lost in court if things went the way he did as the human rights group lobbied heavily. And, if Kain did lose, there was a good chance that Suu would have failed to keep Outer Sol secure.

The price was lives of over a million of pirates and its outcome was security of Outer Sol which helped overall economy of United Sol during its dire times and general happiness among people living in Outer Sol.

She was heavily against Kain at that time. However, looking back now, Cecil's arbitrary actions could have well prolonged the federation and put food on dinner tables for hundreds of millions.

Overall, she saw a point in Cecil's actions. He may have not given a damn about laws and whatnot, but he prevented a potential crisis.

Taking a deep breath, she inquired Kisia, "Has anyone asked him why he does what he does?"

She nodded and replied, "Three did as far as I know: Masu the sage, Ssilen, and the last one would be me."

"You?" Magenta sounded surprised. She was actually glad. "What event was it? And what was his reply?"

At this point, she had to ask, "You are awfully interested in him. Why?"

"He is, or was, the universe's most interesting person. No one really understood him. I, for one, want to know what he was really thinking over events he has done."

"You have a point but his time is over. We should move on." Having said so, Kisia stood up and offered a handshake to which Magenta shook her hand.

She continued, "I won't answer your last question but others may although there aren't many left to tell you. Myelvon is in charge of the tax division. A twin, Hiean and Brellia, are in charge of the military division. The President, Gair, is in charge of the civilization division. You will know where to find me in case you need me."

Then she simply left.

Magenta wasn't offended by the lack of an answer because she expected no answer.

The very next day, when Magenta arrived at what she thought was the cosmetic division HQ, she was welcomed by its two security guards at a gate, saluting and informing her that they were expecting her.

Then she was guided into her office which was a rather small vacant office. Since the office was located deep underground, there was no window. It was just a really barren office with nothing at all in it other than a mandatory desk and a chair.

“Was this Lady Kisia’s office?” She asked to which a security guard behind her answered promptly, “Yes, madam, the very same office.”

“I see. Thank you. You may leave now.”

Saluting, he turned around at once and left.

It was quite a small office, and she felt its size was unfit for the rank. However, she realized quickly that she was thinking the Bau way.

She spent half an hour setting up her computer with new login and password as well as bringing in few stuff to the office. This was where she found out how to contact Kisia because her contact was automatically added as soon as she set up her profile. Then she immediately asked to summon Len to her office.

In less than 10 minutes, Len was brought in by two guards. He looked concerned as he was brought in but his face showed a mixture of relief as well as confusion when she saw Magenta.

“Magenta?”

“That’s my name, yes,” She replied sarcastically.

“Why are you here?”

She waved the guards away and explained to him how she got here and she asked Len to join her.

“To work for Venus?” He raised his voice.

“Why not?” She replied innocently. Her next statement carried more sincerity.

“You need to get over it. Besides, the Bau as well as United Sol deserved to be destroyed.”

He was silenced for a short moment before he told her that he read her books.

“I’ve read the books, the trilogy.”

“Yeah? Thanks for supporting me.”

“I ... didn’t know you had to go through that. I am sorry.”

She gave a stoic response. “That means nothing to me. I am sorry, Len, but that’s how it is.”

He beamed a weak bittersweet smile at her. “I suppose so, yeah.”

Indeed, his apology would change nothing.

“Though I suppose you can now understand why I shed tears of joy when Cecil bombed the shit out of the Bau.”

He made no comment on that.

“Let’s not talk about it,” She said with a sigh. “The dead won’t come back. My husband won’t back. My friends won’t come back. You need to answer me on this though. Will you work for Venus?”

After a good ten seconds, Len nodded and told her, “I will.”

The truth was that he was bored, too bored. He simply couldn't see himself living like a bum for the rest of his life.

For Magenta, she needed someone she could fully trust with. In the end, both of them needed Venus more than Venus needed them.

After setting up Len's profile and assigning his own office, she asked him.

"How is uncle doing, Len?"

"I haven't met him for a while. It's been some years now. The last time I met him though, he was living a content life. I think he games a lot now."

She almost chuckled. "He's a gamer now?"

"Well, both of us have been leading really boring lives."

"How has Venus government treated you?"

He shrugged. "Nothing I can say really. An agent gave us a job along with a cash card for each of us to start with and that was the last time any agents made a contact."

"Any money problems?"

"No, not really. The pay wasn't excellent but wasn't low, either. In fact, I've saved up a bit."

Magenta crossed her fingers and took a more serious tone this time.

She said, "Venus is not democracy, Len. But the people here seem far better off than those on Earth, Luna, and elsewhere."

Shaking head and signing, Len responded, "I hate to admit, but that is true. This planet is really well-run. There is no election and its citizens are barred from public offices. Other than that, everything else is running like well-oiled machine."

Magenta folded her arms, took a deep breath, and told Len, "In my opinion, I think Cecil had a vision when he chose not to succeed the late President Mirren. And this was probably his vision."

He noticed the past tense. "Did Cecil die?"

She briefly told him that he was just "gone".

"He is almost two thousand years old, you know. I suppose he went to find a place to die. He doesn't deserve peaceful death though," He said while slightly gritting his teeth."

What he said was true. However, Magenta had a feeling that Cecil didn't leave to die.

Len inquired, "Anyway, do you intent to follow his vision?"

She hesitated to answer. Eventually though, she replied, "I recall how the house was run by the Bau. Every day was filled with corruptions. Every night was full of fundraising parties. Party-line politics and whatnot."

He nodded, and she continued, "Now that I am in a high position, I will be able to see how Venus government is really run. If it is run like how the Bau ran the house, then I will attempt to change it. If not, I will stick to Cecil's vision."

By "change", it meant that she would attempt to bring democracy back.

For next several weeks, Magenta and Len interviewed hundreds of applicants to fill empty positions within her own division. The days passed by so fast that she initially wasn't even aware that weeks had passed.

It was only when Myelvon paid a visit that alerted her of how much time had passed.

“Aunite told me that a new girl arrived and told me that she was hot. She was right! You are hot, even hotter than the twins’ mother!” was his first comment when he met Magenta for the first time.

Slightly disgusted at his remark, Len frowned while he introduced him to Magenta.

“This is Myelvon, the head of the tax division.”

She already knew. Her first impression of Myelvon was a cross between a heavy metal singer and a cowboy. It was also very apparent that he liked women very much.

“Welcome, my name is Magenta.” Putting on her professional smile, she greeted him with a handshake.

“It’s not every day that you meet someone whose name is her hair color,” Myelvon remarked with glee.

“Mr. O’ren, what brings you here?” Len inquired.

Myelvon O’ren was the youngest child of Scheer O’ren and Dante. The couple had seven children and only Myelvon chose to work for the Klisis. His other siblings chose to work for the O’ren which was logical in every sense. In his defense, he explained that he needed to get out of his comfort bubble to be successful.

“I’ve come to check out the new girl. My secondary objective is that my division requires more men. Here is an exact list of personnel I need,” He placed a chip onto the desk in front of him. He added, “Uncle and auntie used to do the job you are doing out of their spare time. It’s good that we now finally have someone dedicated to it.”

Both Magenta and Len wanted to ask who “uncle and aunite” were but chose not to. She had a loose feeling that “auntie” was Kisia though.

“That shall be done, sir, anything else?” Magenta told him while beaming with a smile.

“No, that’s it. I kind of want to ask you out but I have girls, so too bad. See ya later.”

Then he simply left.

“Girls? Plural?” She wondered. Once he left, she asked someone around her whether he knew what Myelvon was talking about.

The worker snickered and replied joyfully, “Mr. O’ren is going out with the twin sisters, Hiean and Brellia. He wanted to go out with just one but the girls insisted that they were one package. VNN did some coverage on their personal life a while back. You should watch it.”

And she did just that. She looked up and VNN had indeed covered their personal life few years back. Apparently, they even slept together, all three of them together.

“Len, did you know about this?”

“I, uh..., didn’t try to pay attention to any news related to the government, so no.”

“Well, funny stuff and I find it amusing that a media outlet was allowed to cover this. Anyway, what’s on the disk he brought?”

Len inserted the disk into his tablet and looked up. “It says he needs 76 new people in his division. It lists skill requirements.” His face darkened. “It looks like he is looking for combatants rather than just public workers.”

“It’s the tax division after all,” She replied with a grim look on her face.” That division is notorious for assassinations.”

“This shouldn’t be allowed though,” He insisted.

“This is Venus, Len. We need to get used to it.”

As for Myelvon going out with two women who happened to be twins, quite frankly, Magenta had no problems. Although it wasn’t mentioned publicly, rich and powerful Bau men had numerous mistresses. Additionally, she was fine with Kain having one or two mistresses even.

“Oh, fuck,” Len blurted out of blue. He normally didn’t swear. Thus, this alarmed her.

“What’s wrong?”

“You should look at the girls’ profile.”

So, she did. Nothing seemed out of place until -

“Their mother is Devon?!” She, too, exclaimed with a shock.

Devon was former United Sol President Gvew’s daughter. It was known that she fled to Venus after her father was assassinated. After that, any further news on her was literally blank. The Bau attempted to get her back but all failed and they eventually gave up.

“Fate works in a mysterious ways. Who’d have thought...,” She said, not finishing her sentence intentionally.

Len, on the other hand, dropped his face. “I firmly believed that Venus government would assassinate her eventually. I guess I was wrong.”

“I want to meet her,” She said out loudly, to which Len opposed.

“No, you shouldn’t. Why do you want to meet her?”

“The database says she is alive. It doesn’t mean she is actually alive. It may be lying. So, I want to meet her in person.”

He actually agreed after hearing her reason.

About half an hour later, lo and behold, Devon appeared in front of them, wearing casual clothes, which were a tight pair of jeans and a white turtle neck sweater, but still had her signature pistol on her belt along with her ammunition. Devon was a beautiful woman back then in her prime. She still was. So was Magenta but their dressing codes were quite opposite. Devon used to wear revealing tight leather suit. Magenta would never wear such.

“I haven’t been called in for over a hundred of years. What’s up and who are you?”

Magenta and Len looked at each other. They both agreed that it was indeed Devon. She looked identical to the photo they had seen. Additionally, a fact that she was allowed inside with her weapon meant it wasn’t likely her first time coming here. The guards knew her and let her in.

“Ma’am, my name is Magenta. It’s a long story but the reason I called you here today is ...”

She briefly told Devon her story. But even the short version took more than ten minutes of straight talking.

Once her explanation was concluded, she bluntly told her, “I won’t lie. I called you because I wanted to ensure that the database wasn’t misleading us.”

Devon chuckled out loudly. Putting her hand on her waist, she nodded.

“I see. Makes perfect sense really. It would take one brave Bau member to admit that what Cecil has been doing is correct. Yes, I am alive as you can see. And, yes, President Gvew was my father. Reed is my elder brother. I married and gave birth to my twin daughters. Anything else to ask?”

At this moment, it came to Magenta that she would be one of few who met Cecil in person. Thus, she asked.

“What is your opinion on Cecil?”

Devon’s eyes gazed into the air as if she was recalling memories from deep down. She sighed deeply afterwards and it took her a moment to say something.

“When I arrived here after my father’s assassination, I was told bluntly by him that it was him who ordered his assassination.”

Both Magenta and Len raised their eyebrows upon hearing the sudden confession.

She continued, “I think I raged hard and jumped on him. I was knocked out by him shortly afterwards though. After I woke up, he called me up and explained to me why he had made such an order.”

Down casting her eyes, she paused for a moment before resuming.

“I think I simply cursed at him at that moment. But I eventually accepted his explanation. I feel he was correct in his assessment.”

“What was his assessment? Please tell me,” Magenta pressed and Len gulped in anticipation.

“He told me that he was better off dead than alive. And that his assassination would at least save my face and life.” Sighing, she added, “If he lived on, the flame

would have fallen on me as well. He was already done for, he told me. Might as well save me at the least, he said.”

Len tried to say something but he just couldn't get words out. As for Magenta, after a quick consideration, she agreed with Cecil's assessment.

Had Gvew lived on, he would have faced endless trials regarding his order to shoot down hundreds of millions of refugees. And, since Devon was working directly under him, she wouldn't have escaped criminal charges, either.

Of course, that was if -

“You mean you had nothing to do with your father's decision?” She inquired gravely.

Devon replied stoically, “I no longer care whether you believe me or not. The only thing I knew was that things were going horribly wrong, and when I went up to meet father, I found him shot in his head. I am sure you know the rest.”

Magenta felt that Devon had no incentives to lie at this point.

She shrugged and complained, “I am not even sure why I told you people. You two are from the Bau, I reckon. You wouldn't understand. You wouldn't even try to understand.”

Magenta changed the subject, “I've just been appointed to be the head of this division. I just happened to see your name in the database and wanted to check that it was really you.”

And Len added, “Are you surprised that we are here? After all, we are former members of the Bau.”

She snickered in response. “Nope, Bau exiles have been coming here for as long as I recall. I think Karin Bau was the first guy to arrive here though.”

Neither had no idea who he was. Thus, they bought up his profile from database. At this point, Devon said she was leaving and she simply left. Neither Magenta nor Len dared stopping her as she swaggered her way out of the office.

One thing was clear. A lot had been happening during Cecil's regime and the Bau was completely oblivious to it.

"I am not even sure what to say anymore," Len remarked while he searched the database. A search result was showing tens of thousands of people whose previous lastname was Bau. He was livid because he was specifically told by United Sol Earth intel division that no one was defecting.

"Well, Len, we can't go on with the witch hunting anymore. Let's move on, shall we?"

He showed no further objection.

Both Magenta and Len observed how Venus government was run. While Len wouldn't have known, Magenta had worked for the government before and she was glad that nothing was really altered. Despite Cecil's absence, the government was running like before, almost. She could see some aspects for improvements and she was keen on getting it done.

For Len, it was a culture shock, the efficiency was over the roof in his eyes. In the Ark, he had to squeeze people to get things done. Even then, it'd take years to get something done. Here on Venus, though, things were getting done without having to do anything and in days if not weeks. Departments were largely autonomous and made reports only when something was needed to be reported.

And that was with one tenth of people employed compared to the Ark.

Fin