

Mindwipe Castle

Chapter 14: A friendly duel

“Boss. Boss!” Anne urged, trying to get her boss’s attention, but she just kept staring up at Raven like a sad puppy. She couldn’t stand seeing her like this but what could she do about it?

“We need you to participate. We need everyone we can get.” She urged. Really, Olivia was so biased she probably wouldn’t contribute much but... She just wanted to see her do anything else but this.

“W-Will you help defend Raven?” She suggested “Nobody else here likes her as much as you do.”

That finally got her attention. Olivia turned her attention towards Anne, her depression melting into determination. “Y-Yes. I’ll do it. I’ll... Defend my Mistress!”

Finally, Olivia rose from the floor, taking a seat across from Anne, and looking directly at her. “So. Should I repeat my witness testimony?”

“No, we were all there when you told it the first time.” Anne said “I think what we need to do first is figure out what the tool was.”

“It had to be a water balloon!” Olivia said, “We found bits of rubber on them and Mistress was soaked!”

“That does sound reasonable.” Anne agreed, “And it would explain why they both were affected. They were both so close together, when the balloon popped, it sprayed over both of them.”

Anne paused, “I guess the reason you weren’t affected as well is because you had been pushed out of the way just before it happened.”

“It must have been my Mistress!” Olivia said “She pushed me out of the way to save me from Dominya’s attack!”

“There is no way that’s what happened.” Eliza said, before clapping her hands over her mouth again.

“What do you mean?! You think she wouldn’t save me?” Olivia demanded “You don’t know my Mistress like I do! She’s the most wonderful person in the world!”

Eliza held her hands over her mouth as she spoke, though her voice came through clearly. Was this... Mirror Eliza again? “If Raven saw it coming, she could have grabbed you and ran all the way to the other end of the barracks before the balloon had a chance to pop. I should know, I saw how fast she could move when she tried to enslave Eli- ...Me.”

“Besides that, you had cuts on your shirt and stomach!” Anne called out in a hurry to cover up Mirror Eliza’s slip. “Dominya had to be the one to push you, and the sharp tips of her gauntlets must have dug into your skin.”

“Of course...” Olivia said, sounding like she had made some kind of discovery. “If it had been my mistress she wouldn’t have accidentally scratched me. She is too precise and perfect to have slipped up like that!”

“I agree as well.” Silvia said “Her arm was outstretched at the time we found her. She must have gone blank before she could lower her arm.”

Dominya was frozen in the exact moment of impact, but Raven had gone completely limp. Why was that? “Hey Boss. Could you help me with something real quick?”

“What?” Her boss said sharply. She didn’t seem to have much patience right now...

“I’m curious why Dominya was frozen when Raven wasn’t. Could you help me try to lift her arm?”

“Fine.” She said, standing and walking around the table to the seat Dominya was at. Dominya had walked to the dungeon when the trial was set to start but had not moved an inch since. Dominya was also oddly still last night...

Anne and Olivia took hold of Dominya’s hand, trying to avoid any sharp edges and began to pull... But it did not move. Anne pulled out her wrench and wedged it under her wrist, but even with Olivia helping, they couldn’t even lever up the hand.

“Yeah... That’s kind of what I thought...” Anne said, walking over to raven and lifting her limp wrist off the arm of her chair with ease. “She’s totally rela-”

“Don’t you dare touch her!” Olivia snapped “You do not have her permission!”

Anne was startled, and quickly stepped back, putting her hands up defensively “S-Sorry! I just needed to make sure!”

“If anyone will touch the Mistress, it will be me. No one else!” Olivia growled, “You aren’t worthy of touching her.”

“Okay okay, I’m sorry!” Anne said, slowly backing away from Raven. Whatever she did to Olivia must have been intense... She couldn’t remember anything Boss had ever gotten this defensive over. She didn’t even get this angry over her teasing...

“You’d better be.” She grumbled, taking her seat next to Raven once more. Anne returned to her seat as well.

“So... I think what this means is that Dominya’s armor only moves when she wills it to.” Anne explained, “As soon as Dominya’s mind went blank, her armor held her in place.”

“So then, Dominya could not have done it.” Silvia concluded, “One of her hands was occupied shoving Olivia, and the other holding Raven... She had no hand free for the balloon.”

“That’s not true!” Olivia said firmly. “There is no reason to believe using the balloon was the last action she took!”

“Why do you think that?” Anne asked. Did she actually know something or was this another blind defense of her Mistress?

“We don’t know how long it took for her mind to go blank!” Olivia argued “Maybe she shoved me after she was already starting to go blank!”

“If the balloon already popped, you would have been hit too.” Anne said, “She had to have pushed you before the balloon popped.”

“Maybe she popped it and shoved me quickly, before the water could spray out!” Olivia argued.

“No that’s not right either.” Anne corrected “Her only free hand was the one she shoved you with, if she did that her gauntlet would have pushed the water onto you. If you want to defend her, you need to think more rationally. Being this defensive isn’t helping!”

“You think I’m being irrational?” Olivia said indignantly, “Maybe you just can’t handle someone disagreeing with you!”

“That’s not it!” Anne replied, “You’re under Raven’s influence so you’re the one who needs to-”

“So you think I’m being dumb just because I have a Mistress?” Olivia accused.

“No, I’m just saying-” Anne began before being quickly cut off.

“This is just like with Leader!”

“What?”

“You think you’re smarter than me just because you helped Leader enslave me. You didn’t outsmart me! The only mistake I made was trusting you!” Olivia shouted pointedly.

Anne slunk back in her seat. Was that... How she really felt about her teasing? Or was it just Raven’s influence making her say that? She knew Olivia got upset at her teasing sometimes, but she always thought it was a playful kind of upset...

“I’m sorry Boss-” She began, but was cut off again.

“I have a NAME!” Olivia shouted “Do you even know it?”

Of course she knew it! But... Boss was just Boss to her. Boss gave her her first job... Taught her everything she knew about engines... And when Leader enslaved her, she wanted to share that experience with her Boss.

Did she... Think she was being distant by calling her Boss? She only did it because she thought so highly of her. She looked down and sighed. She felt like her motivation was completely gone. “I-I’m sorry... Olivia...” She said softly.

“Now then.” Olivia said, an authoritative and confident tone in her voice. “I think it’s pretty clear what happened. Dominya was selected to be the villain, which was why she insisted on taking me from my Mistress this morning.”

“She intended to enslave me while we were alone together, but Misty was flying through the hallway on our way down from the dorms. So, she couldn’t do it on the way down. We ate breakfast, and Anne rudely interrupted our meal, delaying my return to my Mistress.” She continued, glaring daggers into Anne as she spoke the last sentence.

“Because of that delay, Mistress worried about me and came down to check on me. They got into an argument and in her anger, Dominya grabbed my Mistress and popped the balloon in her face. She then realized that I was still standing too close, so rather than moving herself out of the way, she pushed me out of the way so she wouldn’t have broken any rules. Because of that, I was spared from the balloon, and she sealed her own fate.”

Anne still didn’t like the story but... She was exhausted. She just wanted this to be over now. If... If they lost now... It could be over and she wouldn’t need to worry anymore.

“So how did she carry it?” Eliza said curiously.

“What do you mean?”

“Well... I’ve played with water balloons since coming to Earth.” Eliza said, “So, I kind of know what they’re like?”

“What is your argument?” Olivia asked, sounding like she was losing her patience.

“Well it’s just... Like... Wouldn’t her pointy gloves pop it right away?”

“I... I guess so?” Olivia said, sounding off balance now.

“And she doesn’t have any pockets or anything. And her armor’s all stiff and hard. I dunno how she could carry it all morning and not pop it.”

“W-Well maybe it’s magic!” Olivia stammered, “Maybe it only pops when you want it to!”

“I don’t believe so...” Silvia said softly “It doesn’t make much sense, thematically.”

“What are you talking about?” Olivia demanded.

“The magician, Samantha, got a tool that was designed to fit an optical illusion.” Silvia said. “The detective, Miranda, got a tool commonly used in detective and spy stories. And the android, Holi, got a program for her hard light system.”

“The tools are all thematically appropriate for their matching villain.” Silvia concluded “So why would Dominya get a tool she couldn’t possibly even hold without magical intervention? Especially since Holy Water would be thematically ironic for a Vampire to use?”

“That’s... I mean... You... You can’t be serious?” Olivia stammered, half in disbelief, half in desperation to find something to cling to.

“Here is how I see it.” Silvia continued, “Dominya demanded to bring you downstairs for breakfast, because her one focus this entire game has been on keeping everyone safe and healthy. In... Her own way.”

“While Raven was alone, she got the Villain assignment, and realized that in a few minutes, you and Dominya would be coming back towards the dorms together. She waited for you two to be on your way back, then approached Dominya with the water balloon behind her back.”

“She started an argument with Dominya in the hopes of getting her too angry and distracted to notice when she shoved the balloon in Dominya’s face. Because she was overly excited, she shoved the balloon too fast and it tore open in the middle of her swing.” Silvia explained, “Dominya saw the water beginning to spray out and realized that she couldn’t get out of the way in time, but she could at least push you out of the way. So... She did.”

“That... Makes the most sense to me.” Eliza said softly.

“Me too! That sounds way better!” Misty chimed in.

“No! No there... I’m sure there’s something...” Olivia stammered “It must be something else. Maybe it happened another way!”

“No...” Silvia said gently. “It didn’t. Its over, Olivia. I’m sorry.”

“B-But... Mistress...” She looked over at Raven “Mistress... I-I’m sorry... I... I failed you...”

“Its time to vote.” Silvia said gently. “All in favor of voting Raven guilty raise your hands.”

Silvia raised her hand first in demonstration, followed by Eliza, then Misty. Reluctantly, Anne lifted her hand as well.

“Very well... It seems that we have decided. We accuse Raven of being guilty of enslaving Dominya.” Silvia said. Her voice still as gentle as ever...

“Your verdict is accepted!” The green haired woman said from the television screen. “And the results are... You’re right! Raven is guilty!”

“Noooo!” Olivia cried out, sliding down from her chair and onto her knees again. “I’m sorry Mistress! I’m so sorry!”

“Anyways, I’ll go ahead and free all slaves from the last round now.” The green haired woman said, raising her hand once more.

A green glow filled the room and in a moment, Olivia slowly stood from the ground.

“I... Oh.” She said softly.

“Welcome back Bo- Uh... Olivia...” Anne said softly.

“Anne? I... I’m sorry I was too harsh there.” Olivia said in reply, averting her eyes.

“Its... I understand.” Anne said “I... Think I need to be alone for a bit...”

She turned away from the others and paused for a moment. They... Still needed to win the game... If it even was a game anymore.

“Go... Go to the secret room, all of you. You need to see what’s in there.” She said softly “I’m... Going to check upstairs...”