

What hasn't been told

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Kapitel 4: Flashback 4

And there he was, lying on his bed, staring at the ceiling.

Replaced once again, he thought with a bitter laugh. It was ridiculous. Maybe it would have turned out different, if he had chosen to go back to Baticul. But he hadn't. *It is better for her this way...*, he kept telling himself, still pondering about the past few weeks...

Right after their arrival in Sheridan, Asch had run off to the inn. Now sitting on the bed he tried to get rid of all the chaotic thoughts circling through his mind. Sending off the Dark Wings to gather information had become futile by now. Noelle had informed her brother pretty well about everything going on in the Capital of Light. She had gotten quiet close to the group in his absence. Even though nothing was officially announced until now, Natalia had told her about everything.

Maybe it would have been better, if he had gone straight to Baticul as Luke and Ginji had suggested. Trying to calm the anger he felt rising, he started wandering around in the small room. He was already mentally prepared for a situation like this, but being honest to himself, he had been hoping he wouldn't have to face it. Ever since he had seen that replica replacing him about ten years ago, he had sworn to leave everything behind. Not only for himself but for his friends and family.

Even if it isn't me... it's fine..., it echoed through his mind. Clenching his fists he pushed away the painful memories. But what if everything repeated itself? What if Natalia had already chosen someone else, someone new she wanted to be with?

If that was the case he would only make her suffer by showing himself to her.

Taking a deep breath he closed his eyes, intensely concentrating. He needed to know. Natalia was the only person he had not been able to forget. As hard as he had tried, she always came back to his mind. Especially since he had met her again after their long time of separation. There was no doubt. It didn't matter if he wanted to or not. He still loved her.

Come on, replica, he thought, focusing on his opened fon slots. Suddenly his foggy sight cleared and he was looking right into a young man's face through his replicas eyes. Silently he kept watching. It took him a moment to realize Luke was talking to Guy.

"Luke? Are you all right?", he heard him ask with a worried look, followed by a wince and a nod on Luke's side.

"You still have those headaches?"

Luke rubbed his temples. "Actually this is the first time since I came back here.", he murmured. "I guess I'd better get some rest."

Guy nodded in agreement. "I'll be leaving then. See you later."

With that he left Luke's room.

Luke seemed to be waiting for him to be out of hearing range, then he relaxed.

"Asch?", he asked a little insecure. "Is that you?"

No, this is Emperor Peony. - Of course it's me! Who else?!", his original answered, clearly annoyed by the stupid question. He had accepted Luke as a separate being after their fight on Eldrant. But that still didn't make him less annoying in some points.

"Don't be so mean.", Luke pouted. "Anyways, what do you want?"

Suddenly unsure about his precipitous action he fell silent.

Well-, he began and nervously ran a hand through his hair. *Ginji told me that the King is ill. How is he now?*

"Uncle feels a little better. But he's still very weak."

Asch paused for a moment, biting his lower lip.

What about Natalia?..., he finally managed to ask, making it sound as casual as he could. Luke frowned.

"There wasn't much time for me to talk to her. She is very busy taking over most of her father's work.", he answered, his usually cheerful voice laced with worry.

"I've seen her wandering around in the castle a couple of times though. She looks really tired and kind of... sad. When I came back she really seemed to be happy for a short time. But since then... it almost feels like she is avoiding me for some reason."

As Asch stayed silent, Luke continued his report.

"Well, I guess since Guy is comforting her from time to time she will be okay."

*Guy is doing **what?**!*

Startled by his original's sudden outburst Luke raised his eyebrows.

"Comforting her? Well, like cheering her up, I guess. He visits her quite often."

I know what comforting means, you dreck! Are you really that stupid?!, Asch snapped back.

"Well, it must be the genes.", Luke countered.

Oh just shut up!, Asch snarled at his replica and cut off the connection.

Fighting down his rising anger he clenched his fist and hit the wall.

"Guy Cecil?! Why he of all people?!", he growled. Sinking back on his bed his anger turned into desperation. What in Lorelei's name was he supposed to do now?...