

Bounce()

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Bounce()

by [hecleretical](#)

Summary

“Did you.....did you commission matching outfits. For our secret organization?”

“Yes?”

He blinked again. “Is that prudent?”

royce and sybil have a moment before a camerata outing. written for underwater-ukulele on tumblr for the 2020 supergiant secret santa!

"It's not-- it's not murder," Royce said, from behind the folding screen. It was one of Sybil's favorite pieces-- lacquered gold and green, it made a little impromptu dressing room in the corner of her tiny (yet immaculate) apartment. When you were as busy as Sybil Reisz, you didn't need much space.

"It's not murder," he repeated. "It's, just....doing what we need to do."

"Can't commit murder if you're not cute," Sybil muttered under her breath, sharpening the pencil she had been using for her brows. She made a face into the mirror. Her usual look, which took about an hour to put on and was carefully crafted to make it look like she was only wearing eyeliner. Mascara, eyeliner, a simple neutral color on her eyelids, and-- a thought struck her. "Royce! Red or pink?"

"What?"

"Red or pink lipstick, Royce? I need to look my best tonight."

A pause. "I have no idea why you'd ask me of all people."

Sybil sighed. She was about to make a cutting remark when he hummed under his breath. "Nothing," he said. "Or a very subtle, ah, very subtle pink. Want to look professional, professional but not suspicious, not really time for a glam look I'd think. Like we have a serious cause, not like we're committing a murder."

She blinked. "That was surprisingly cogent for you, Royce," she admitted, and then, "You said it wasn't a murder."

"Well, it's a murder in the, in the traditional sense. In the contemporary sense. You could say." He hummed again, as if he were thinking. "You and I, we know that it's not, uh, not all that, but I think our friend would have a rather, rather dimmer view."

Sybil's reflection in the mirror made another face. Wave Tennegan. Their second target. She knew him, of course; had appeared on his broadcasts many times promoting her events, had a rapport with him. He hadn't been her suggestion. Royce's, actually. But it was Sybil who knew him, Sybil who had contacted him first, and Sybil who had persuaded him to meet them. What happened next was her personal responsibility, and if there was anything her Selections had taught her, it was about the importance of taking responsibility.

"Is Grant here yet?" Royce asked again, still behind the folding screen.

"He and Asher are meeting us on the way there." Sybil puckered her lips. A simple nude gloss, he was right-- polished, but inconspicuous. "They said they had something to take care of."

A grumble. "Just hope they're, just hope they're not late."

"Well, you're the one with--" She stopped.

"With the Transistor." There was an odd tone to his voice. The same there always was, when he talked about it. "It's okay, you can, uh, say it."

It was leaning up against the corner, just outside of her dressing area; Royce had refused to let it out of his sight. She still hadn't gotten used to it. In Fairview, in Royce's studio, it was one thing; but in her tiny Highrise apartment it was **real** and permanent in a way she hadn't expected a glowing blue greatsword-- she'd always thought of it as a sword-- to be. Its single red eye caught her gaze in the mirror, stared at her.

"With the Transistor," she said.

Royce hummed again, almost affectionate.

Her face was done; a perfectly poised Sybil Resiz now looked back at her. Satisfied, she began tidying up her dressing table. "Are you finished? Let me look at you."

She could see his reflection in her mirror without turning around, but she did anyway, clasping her manicured hands together in delight. "Oh," she breathed. "You look *wonderful*."

The Royce Bracket that had emerged from behind the screen was a far cry from his usual self. Gone was the rumpled, blue-green checked suit; gone was that absolutely horrid tie. In their place he wore tailored perfection: black trousers, red cummerbund, a crisp, stand-collared shirt and black tie under a sleek white waistcoat. The colors suited him. Made him look tanner than he was, brought out those startling blue-green eyes. The fit was sleek, too; Royce somehow both looked taller than his six feet three inches *and* finally had sleeves and pant legs that were the proper length. She could only hope that the suit jacket would have the same luck.

A normal person would have responded to her compliment, been pleased, done a little twirl perhaps. Royce just blinked at her. At her clothing, she realized. The same red, black and white he wore, a simple off-the-shoulder affair with a high waist and a wide belt.

"Did you.....did you commission matching outfits. For our secret organization?"

"Yes?"

He blinked again. "Is that prudent?"

"Grant and Asher have some, too," she said proudly.

"That's not....that's not, that proves my point--"

"Really, dear--" she only called him dear when she was trying to irritate him-- "I don't see what you mean. We're the Camerata. We showed up to-- to meet Ms. Chien looking so *drab*." Sybil smoothed the front of her dress in what was usually an anxious gesture. "We should look the part if we're to be serious about this."

"We're serious about it, we're, but also *nobody is supposed to know*."

“We’ll only wear them when we’re on business. Your new shoes are in that box over there, and your coat is hanging up in the bag on the back of the door.” He scrunched up his nose and went to put on his awful glasses. “No, don’t do that. I had contacts specially made to your prescription. They’re with your tie pin in the bag on top of the shoe box.”

“I, ah, hate contacts.”

Sybil sniffed. “You should think about that next time you go to buy glasses frames. Those things are hideous. They make you look like you’re attending Traverson Hall on a scholarship and you have to actually sit in on lectures to pass.”

“Where did you even get all these?”

“Maximilias Darzi,” she said proudly. “A special commission.”

To her surprise he pursed his lips. “The one on the list.”

“I...yes.”

“How much does he know?” Those eyes were boring into her, now; as much as Sybil had gotten to know Royce, to view him as a hopeless nerd maybe even a rather disheveled older brother figure, she was reminded suddenly that the architect who’d rebuilt Cloudbank from the ground up cared very little for things that disrupted his perfectly-laid plans. And it was his plan, as much as it was Grant’s, as much as Grant would have thought otherwise.

“Nothing, honestly,” she said. “I told him they were for a costume party.”

Another long look; then he hums under his breath and turns away. “Better, uh, better explain that to Grant, I’d think. When he gets here.”

“I just...” Damn this. She was Sybil Reisz, Cloudbank’s social mastermind extraordinaire. She was not-- not whatever this feeling was, whatever instinct’d made her need something as trivial (she would privately admit) as matching costumes. She turned back to her mirror. “....I was nervous,” she admitted. “Last time was awful. I wanted something to make us feel like a group, like we were doing something we were supposed to, not just...murderers.”

A long silence. She spent it hating herself for saying it.

His reflection appeared over her shoulder and she flinched, just barely-- but it was only to lean down and put in his contacts, grimacing as he did so. His coat looked good on him-- white again, with red and black detailing, almost like a lab coat in a way that completed his look and persona nicely. It also had their logo on the shoulder. He’d sketched it on a napkin, and she’d recreated it as best she could for Darzi. If Royce had noticed it, noticed the damning breach of secrecy, he chose mercifully to remain silent.

“Do you want to see something?” he asked.

“What is it?”

“It’s, the, uh....I thought you might like to see. What it is we’ve been working for, I mean.”

“The Transistor?”

A gleam in his eye. “Inside the Transistor.”

He picked it up, hefted it up effortlessly over his shoulder like it was nothing. Her mind began to race. Surely he couldn’t mean--? But no, his posture was relaxed, his expression as friendly as it got, *Royce would never do that to her*, so she stood smoothly from where she’d still sat at her dressing table, bunched her fists in the folds of her dress to keep them from shaking. Took his outstretched offered hand.

“Does this place, uh, have a roof? I mean, I know it has a roof, buildings typically have roofs yes, I meant--”

She grinned. “I have access to the rooftop and it has a semi-private garden.”

“Walls?”

“A few.”

“Destructible objects?”

“I-- What?”

He showed her what he meant, when they got up there. Showed her the function. All of what it could do, not just bounce around destroying things. His plans for it, how it could shape the city in their image, how the sacrifice behind it wouldn’t ever be in vain. The things they could do with that energy, that moral compass. The things they’d be able to do with Tennegan’s drive and wit.

They were doing the right thing.

Weren’t they?

By the time Grant rings the doorbell to her apartment and she has to rush back downstairs to let him in, Sybil Reisz believes it.

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