

Kakri: A Birthright Secrets Story

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DEDICATION

To my husband and son for being the constant voices of support in the chaos that is writing a story and wearing so many hats. Thanks to the both of you for giving me the time to do what I need to do for this dream.

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CHAPTER 1

Liz, soon to be Queen of Segennya, stormed through the halls of the palace, blind to where she was going. The insufferable fools she had just left had pushed her too far, causing her to walk out of the meetings completely. Whether they remained, waiting for her once she felt like returning she didn't care. She didn't even know if she would return. The same issue kept being brought up, some leaders, mostly those who found themselves able to take up the mantle for the first time and had arranged the meeting in the first place. They kept requesting her to order the official size of cities, towns and villages that had survived Durj down by half and force those in the newly abandoned sections to follow them. The villages would be left for any foreseeable future like that as the people moved; it was something she just couldn't justify or see the reason for ordering in the first place.

What she could understand was their desire to have something to call their own and have places in this new world, but how they were going about it was all wrong. They wanted these people to follow them into the unknown, to areas where information had been lost as to what might lie there and live their lives. Why force them into that adventure when plenty would probably seek the same thing? After all, the thrill would be enough to draw most since who knew what fortunes could await. This lesson she had learned well given her own journey into the unknown. Now she lived in a palace and was set to rule over an entire country. Their terms were ridiculous so she had declined to issue the orders, giving them the advice of seeking

volunteers among those who lost everything to settle new places.

The matter refused to drop however. Every topic, whether it was simply what projects were being done first, or making sure towns had enough supplies like food, it followed. It was often offered as a partial solution, especially on the subject of food and other needs that would maybe benefit from a lesser population. In the end she had walked out of the meeting tired of not having anything productive done. Turning a corner into a still unused room she slammed the door behind her sending a cascade of dust down to the floor in her wake. The end of her skirt was becoming dirty as she went but she didn't care. Walking over to the window and she rested her forehead against it sighing, staring out at the grounds below where a heavy rain fell from a dark grey sky and lightning streaked overhead.

Fitting, she thought bitterly staring at it. She turned so her back was against the window and looked up toward the ceiling. *They simply will not listen to me, and I cannot think of a way to make them do it. I was right when I told Kellin I was not cut out to be a ruler. I should turn this over to someone like my mother who would be able to make it work. Try as I might, I do not think this is a promise I can fulfill.*

"Then make them listen," a quiet voice broke the silence. Liz whirled around to see a woman leaning against the wall a few windows over. "Giving up already does not seem like you."

Liz felt along the window's edge for anything she could use to defend herself, cursing that she didn't have something on her before now. Her hands met a piece of metal she could break off in a decent chunk. Concentrating, she called on her ability, bringing the newly formed weapons up and well into view of the woman. The woman's eyes widened but she smiled as though bemused at her actions. The eyes were a vivid sky blue that almost seemed to glow in the dim light. They struck Liz as even more exotic than any Eiren's she had seen and more unnerving than her own. She took a step forward despite Liz having weapons trained on her. The light from the storm outside fell on her Liz saw that her hair and gown seemed to be almost constantly in motion. It was like a breeze or strong draft was blowing through the room though there was none Liz could feel. Both gown and hair were as white as the snow that was atop the mountains around Brookcavern, floating around her body. "Who are you?" Liz asked shifting the daggers to warn off further approach.

The woman laughed heartily. "I am Kakri, and I suppose your

heart isn't completely lost yet. That's good, very good. That means there is still a chance to stop you from being stupid and ending your reign before it has even begun."

"How did you know what I was thinking of doing?"

"I know who you are, Cianien, daughter of Essarnis and Asirran. You are heir to the realm and throne of Segennya. In other words the heir to *my* realm. Or do you prefer Liz these days?" Kakri laughed at her dumbstruck expression. "I really must speak with your mother after this. You don't know who I am at all. Seriously, is this any way to have the future Queen of Segennya greet the Goddess of her family's House and country?"

Liz looked around frantically blushing, almost dropping her weapons. "I should bow or something now, I think."

Kakri looked about to double over in laughter, the sheer material of her gown blowing around even more. "Don't worry this time young one; I'll let it pass this time. Now, to business," she collected herself, clapping her hands causing the windows to rattle as the sound echoed throughout the room. "Oops, sorry about that." Her expression hardened a bit, "As you might have suspected, I do not like what I have been observing here."

"What do you mean?"

"Besides the thoughts of quitting, I am tired of you letting them walk all over you! Since I doubt you will listen to the mortals you call your friends and family, I will step in now to knock some sense in you. Stop thinking like Cianien, unsure heir or Liz of Lower Quarter, who was best at taking orders already! I know that you have it in you," her voice rose to sound like a low fierce wind blowing. "Give them a piece of who you really are! Tell them to shove off on this idiotic plan and thought of theirs, to just forget it like you told them to already!"

"That is easier said than done, I cannot upset those who will have a role in what will happen with my court." Liz sighed. "This is why I did not want this job in the first place! Too many constricting things, too many games to play and I knew my past would be used against me."

"Then do not let it! Who will lead if you do not?"

Liz shrugged, "Maybe my mother, or someone else the leaders will find fitting. Someone will be found though."

"How are you so sure?"

“Because that was what would have happened had I not agreed in the first place to this. I doubt my mother would want the title herself anymore, without my father, since it was mainly through him she was Queen here.”

“Exactly!” Kakri shouted. “It was through him, and I tell you what will happen if you do let them bully you out of position. The same thing that has happened for the last half a century, you mortals will not learn after all. Unless there is someone in that position who has lived through it as you have, and is someone who has not been a leader but lead. It is only because you are set to rule I can even appear before you anyway. Well, actually it’s rather complicated as to why it happened and something for another time. Seriously though, are you going to let them bully you out and give up?”

Liz lowered her daggers completely, “Truly you cannot be serious, you are a Goddess, and so are your siblings.” Kakri nodded a dramatic tragic expression across her face. “And you mean to tell me, that you came all this way to simply tell me to simply deal with it.”

Kakri grinned, “Yeah that pretty much covers it. I also came to be polite before meddling in things too much; it gets dull in my realm. I’ll be popping in from time to time, so behave yourself. Sometimes you need someone besides your close friends and family to give you perspective.” A knock came from the door, and both women heard Kellin call for Liz. “Sounds like we have company, so I’ll be off, unless you have the mind to keep considering this insane idea seriously and need my presence more.”

“No, but I will not stop thinking it from time to time,” Liz smiled. “Still do not have any idea how to stop them from raising this issue though, and it will stop me from doing anything it seems.”

“Tell them,” Kakri replied. “You rule here and it is as simple as that. I noticed you didn’t fight me when I said you were to keep ruling.”

“Even someone of my education has enough common sense to know better than to fight a Goddess on something like this.”

“Smart girl, if only more were like you.” Kakri pointed at a window which opened. Her body faded away carried on a breeze. “Now put those smarts to work.”

Liz stood in the newly empty room as the window banged shut once more for several moments. *Like it or not, it appears that I am stuck, and now apparently at the whim of the Gods as well.* She shook her head,

calling out to Kellin as she walked to the door. *It will keep life interesting to say the least.*

Without saying much more, she reentered the hallway and started walking back to the meeting room, Kelling falling in step behind her.

“So what happened that took you so long to answer me?”

Liz remained silent picking up her pace slightly as she and the entourage behind her rounded a corner and sped down a long corridor. Reaching the doors, she didn’t wait for the footmen to open them but instead flung them open with all her might. Striding in she took in the shocked looks all around the table then smirked as she retook her seat.

“Where were we ladies and gentlemen?”

“Discussing the food problem which we offered a solution to ...”

Liz raised a hand causing him to go silent. “Ahh yes, well, let me repeat for what is going to be the last time, we will not be doing that plan. There is no reason to draw more boundaries and force families that have lived where they have lived for decades out of their homes. Now,” she glared at them as a couple of them opened their mouths a couple times, as though they wanted to protest. “Let me be clear on this and if I hear anything else on this I will not allow you into this room for a long, long time. Seek out those who only share your vision to find new horizons, chances are given the situation you will have plenty of volunteers. Anything else is unacceptable. Understood?”

The men around the table nodded, some gulping at the tone of her voice. “Now let us carry on with what projects are being done before the cold sets in and we are forced to limit what can be done.” She shuffled some of the parchment on the table until she found the ones she wanted. She motioned for them to take their seats.

The meeting went by with little problems after that, in they seemed much more eager to help in any way possible before the cold was on them fully. Those who had been pressing for people to join them in their new ventures in exploring promised to send back resources to assist as they were uncovered. Liz dismissed them smiling, almost tempted to say, “Now was that so hard?” She restrained herself though, choosing to simply bask a bit in this small victory in silence, feeling confident on things for the first time in a

long time. Kellin hung back as the last of them left the room, gesturing for the door to be shut as the last passed through it.

“Okay, what gives Liz?”

Liz blinked in her seat, her face falling slightly. “I thought it went rather well. All it took was me storming off to get what I wanted.”

“That’s just it; you went from hesitant woman, to all in charge leader in a matter of something like a quarter hour. When you led us back you were all quiet then just gave them what they probably deserved but still.”

“I had a unique... perspective given to me in that time.” She glanced around as though debating elaborating more. “Let us go down the hall to my chambers and I will tell you everything.”

Kellin looked doubtful but gestured for her to lead on. At the very least this would be an interesting discussion.

CHAPTER 2

Kakri floated down to land upon on of the top parapet of the palace, invisible to mortal eyes. Despite the odd and brief nature of their conversation, she rather liked Segennya's newest ruler. The goddess lifted her head and listened to the breeze as it whistled past, its tidings were the same to her ears, change, but it was the occasional tones that interested her. Today it had hints of secrets and danger, faint but they chilled her to her incorporeal bones. She tried to push the wind for more answers, her efforts caused it gust, tossing the bare tree branches around in a frenzy of movement. Frowning after several minutes of the constant wind she released her hold on it allowing it to come and go in more natural patterns but not before her temper sparked and forced a miniature gale. A couple of frail branches fell on the streets and a couple houses causing the occupants to rush out, and the few people who were braving the temperatures to look up worried.

Kakri winced at their looks but turned away and launched herself east over the forests that spanned the distance, occasionally dotted with villages or clearings. She banked eventually to south to skirt the Boradi Mountain range and land upon one of its tallest peaks. She had mostly shaken that feeling in her stomach in her trip, as she stood and listened to what the wind had to say once more. It still warned of something hidden, but refused stubbornly to enlighten her. *Perhaps it is simply this place getting used to dealing with us again and I am simply anxious to have a new leader to train.* Satisfied with that conclusion she simply decided to sit on the mountain top and look over the

landscape. So much had changed and yet was ageless since she last graced this land. *Enough of this for now, time to go home.* Stretching she gazed at a sight only for her and those like her, a spectacular lightshow dancing on the horizon. It was somewhat a pity mortals couldn't see the entrance into her world she often thought. Grinning, she pulled one of her hands to be outstretched behind her and popped up in the air to catch another gust of wind soaring toward the light. As she got closer, the dance of colors became a swirling vortex that appeared quite turbulent. Kakri crossed the threshold unafraid, and blinked as her view changed and her eyes needed to get used to this new realm. The colors were clearer, more vivid here and auras of life faintly flared up everywhere, not easy to eyes coming from the muted mortal realm.

Rising high above the trees, she could just make out a few of the more earthy Gods wandering about their vast homes, carved out of mountains that almost mirrored the ones she just left. A loud rumble filled the air as rocks tumbled toward the base from one side of one of these homes causing Kakri to smile.

Are they ever satisfied with how they look? she wondered. To her right, she could see in the distance the massive sea spreading out across the horizon. Her destination was neither of these areas; the sky was her domain and hers alone. None of the others, regardless of the belief system that had helped shape their power shared her love of the sky. Soaring through it she skimmed along the clouds, moisture gathering on the hem of her gown until she reached her home which was a large cloud palace. It rose high above her head as she landed on the walkway that was lined by tall columns, which supported the roof that provided necessary shade being this close to the sunlight. Despite being made of the cloud the structure was quite solid, as she took a step forward she saw a couple sprites that attended her rushing up. Instead of making them walk the whole way she quickened her pace to meet them in the middle.

"Mistress," one greeted, its voice was a squeak as they bowed low. "Lord Ahiel has been waiting."

"Where is he?"

"In the main garden."

With a wave of her hand she sent them back about their duties and to leave her alone as she went to see what Ahiel wanted. She stuck to the outside paths of her home, wanting to take as much time

as possible while she thought over what brought him here this soon after her return. She squinted as the sun glared off a reflecting pool and hit her eyes. *It is almost as though he was waiting for me, but why? Usually if someone wishes to meet with me they simply ask to do it in the forest below or in their homes, not wanting to make the trip up here. It must be special if he came all this way.*

Kakri rounded a corner and went through an open corridor that would lead her to the garden. Several more sprites wandered about their duties here taking a moment to bow to her as she passed, but she paid them no attention. It was something she knew she would have to rectify later as several scurried away and out of sight so that none of them thought they had done something to displease her that caused her silence. Eventually the passage opened up. Several trees and bushes lined clear, cloudy paths rising high with lush green or blue foliage. Flowers dotted the landscape among the trees, and at the center of the garden a waterfall rushed to the earth coming over the wall from high above. The water landed into a rapid creek that flowed until it disappeared into the cloud as it reached the other side's foundation. A small sitting area was placed near this creek with two chairs next to a small table which had a good size pitcher of pink liquid and two glass goblets resting on it. A man in long black robes sat in one of the chairs sipping from one. The robe seemed to be billowing smoke though nothing appeared to be on fire. He physically appeared Eiren but was more muscular than their usual build with dark skin that was almost as black as his robes; most notably he had their characteristic silver-grey eyes.

"Lord Ahiel," Kakri greeted as she approached, sitting across from him.

Ahiel gave her a glance and set his glass upon the table. "Lady Kakri, where might you have been?"

Kakri sighed inwardly. "Ravenwood, if you must know."

"Ravenwood?" he repeated. "Why in the realms were you there?"

Kakri's expression deepened to a scowl and her eyes turned a stormy blue-grey. "I was peeking in on Segennya's newest ruler. Doesn't hurt for the realm's Goddess to know who they are dealing with now does it?"

He laughed, causing his robes to billow with the movement and almost obscure him from sight. "Why bother? She'll be gone soon

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