

Chapter 471 Seeing Her Like A Sister

Gabrielle lay in bed, sleepless. She tried to call Westley several times with the satellite phone. However, she had to stop trying to contact him in fear of Bain finding out.

The dark circles under her eyes did not come as a surprise. After all, she woke up at dawn.

The moment she opened the door, the sight of Rose welcomed her. She had a bag on her hand.

"Good morning! You went to bed quite late last night. Why are you up so early? I brought you breakfast!" Rose handed Gabrielle the bag as she looked intently into her eyes.

"Thanks, Rose." She took the bag gratefully. Although Rose was Bain's spy, she treated Gabrielle and Lance well.

"You're welcome. Do you want to come

hunting with me after breakfast?" Rose asked. She looked at her expectantly.

"Why do we have to hunt?" Gabrielle wanted to know why Rose was asking her to come hunting with her.

"I thought you liked chicken?" Rose asked.

Her invitation was nothing out of the ordinary. After all, Gabrielle did enjoy eating chicken.

It was not Gabrielle's intention to turn her down. She was just worried that Rose would be suspicious if she constantly turned her down. In the end, Gabrielle agreed to keep her company.

Coming to the forest was like a survival training boot camp for Gabrielle. She even learned how to hunt pheasants.

"Where are we going to hunt pheasants later?" Gabrielle asked as she drank milk.

"What is this talk about pheasant hunting?" Lance emerged from the stairs and asked.

He happened to hear their conversation

as he descended the stairs. Curiosity got the better of him. Lance was wary of Rose. He always felt like Rose had a hidden agenda whenever she spent time with Gabrielle. It was only natural for him to not want Rose to spend some time alone with Gabrielle.

"You're awake! I'm taking Gabrielle with me to the woods. We're going hunting. She likes chicken so I want to take her with me. She's going to enjoy it. Won't you, Gabrielle?" Rose asked as she winked at her.

"Hmmm... I think it's nice. I want to experience it," Gabrielle replied. She had a feeling that Rose wanted something else and that hunting was just an excuse to spend some alone time with her. She could only find out when they left.

"I don't have anything else to do today. I can come with. Besides, you're women. I should be there to protect you and do the heavy lifting," Lance offered.

Rose nodded at him.

"He's right. It would be more convenient to have him around. Lance, hurry up and

have some breakfast. We'll leave after you eat," Rose said. There was a sense of urgency in the tone of her voice.

When breakfast was over, Rose waited for the two of them to finish changing into combat clothing. She gave each of them a silencer pistol.

"Gabrielle, have you seen this before?" Rose took a crossbow out and showed it to Gabrielle.

"Only on television," she replied. Gabrielle did not expect Rose to show her something like that. She had never laid her hands on a crossbow before. Gabrielle had only seen it on TV. During the olden times, it was a glorified weapon. She did not expect to see one in the forest.

The operation was supposed to be simple. After all, using it looked so easy on TV.

"It doesn't matter. I'll teach you. I swear it's easy! I'll show you how to use it once then you can go ahead and try. Don't worry if you don't get it on your first try. I can show you how to do it

again." Rose took an arrow and made a shot.

It made a thumping sound as it hit a small tree nearby.

The powerful force from her aim caused the arrow to pierce through the trunk.

"Rose... You're amazing!" Gabrielle couldn't help herself from clapping her hands. She was in awe at how precise Rose was.

"Give it a try." Rose handed the crossbow to Gabrielle. Rose knew that it wasn't right to take Gabrielle hunting with her without minimal survival knowledge. It would've been deemed irresponsible.

Rose purposefully took Gabrielle to the woods with her. She couldn't let Gabrielle risk her life.

"You really think I can do it?" Not only did it look easy on TV, Rose also did it without a hint of difficulty. Gabrielle was worried that she wouldn't be able to do it. After all, it was her first time to try such a thing.

"Don't be nervous. It won't be too difficult. Go ahead. Give it a try. I will teach you again if you can't do it the first time," Rose encouraged Gabrielle.

The moment Gabrielle saw the crossbow, she immediately wanted to try it. After all it was her first time seeing one in real life. She couldn't let herself pass up on the chance of learning how to use it.

Gabrielle held the crossbow in her hand.

"Is it heavy?"

"Not really."

"This one was modified. It's lightweight so it's more suitable for women."

"I guess that's good."

"Try shooting an arrow." Rose placed an arrow against the bow and asked Gabrielle to pull it back.

With a whoosh, the arrow ripped through the air but missed the tree she was aiming for. Despite missing the target, it was a good shot for her first try.

"Rose, I missed the target." Gabrielle felt

quite disappointed.

"Gabrielle... That was impressive! You just shot an arrow on your first try! You shouldn't feel disappointed. I'm sure you would be able to hit the target if you practice a few more times," Rose said, cheering her on.

Gabrielle was hooked. When she heard of Rose's encouragement, Gabrielle burned with determination. She tried shooting a few more times. Each shot more precise than the last. It almost made Gabrielle jump with joy.

When she was finally able to hit the center of the trunk, she was overwhelmed with glee. "Rose, look! I did it!"

"That's great. I told you it was easy! Besides, you seem like a natural. It wouldn't take long before you have a mastery for it," Rose praised.

Everybody liked compliments. Gabrielle was ecstatic when she heard Rose's words. A huge smile adorned her face.

"Rose, you don't have to praise me so

much. I am quite inexperienced. I'm just happy that I'm able to shoot an arrow. I didn't expect that I could hit the target." Gabrielle could not contain her excitement. She didn't think she could do it.

After all, it was her first time.

"You can exercise your new-found skill when we hunt pheasants later." However, that was not Rose's intention for teaching her how to shoot. She wanted Gabrielle to enjoy the experience and have something to defend herself with.

"Okay. I'll try my best." Gabrielle was eager to practice. She was excited to get into the woods so she could shoot some more.

"When we get to the woods, you can just shoot the prey right away. However, we don't have an unlimited supply of arrows so use them carefully. If you run out of them trying to shoot pheasants, you wouldn't have anything left to protect yourself with if we chance upon some wolves. Do you understand?" Rose asked as she glanced at Gabrielle.

She was hinting something with her words but she was afraid that Gabrielle didn't get it. After all, Gabrielle wasn't like them. She was naïve and could very easily be deceived.

The moment Rose laid her eyes on Gabrielle, she was reminded of her dead sister. Her sister was as innocent and pure as Gabrielle. They both had gentle eyes. People would always feel the urge to protect the likes of them.

"Yeah, I understand." Gabrielle obediently nodded. She should have taken the hint from Rose's words. If someone were to look into it, Rose was trying to tell her that the arrow should be aimed at a worthy target. So were her actions. Rose wanted to let Gabrielle know that she should always be vigilant.

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A rough idea grew in Rose's heart as she gazed at the confidence and excitement on Gabrielle's face. No matter what happened, as long as Gabrielle understood what she said, it was enough. Getting along with a woman of intelligence wasn't difficult. It didn't take her long to understand things.

"It's good that you understand. I told you, you're a smart woman. I can't be wrong about that." The corners of Rose's lips curled with a faint smile.

"That's because you taught me well." Gabrielle meant every word. She liked the crossbow the most. With it in her hand, she felt like a gallant hero from the ancient times.

"This one might be a little difficult for you. Have you played with this one before?" Rose took something from her waist and showed it to Gabrielle.

Gabrielle took a deep breath the moment

she caught a glimpse of it. It was a grenade. One wrong move and someone would most definitely be killed.

On top of that, getting one wasn't easy at all. It was even rarer in Antawood. Ordinary people would not have the chance to see it, let alone have the opportunity to use one.

It was way too dangerous. Gabrielle had never laid her hands on one before.

"I've taught her how to use one before we came here. After all, I am not in good terms with some of the people here. Self-defense is a must," Lance answered Rose's question for Gabrielle.

Rose was reeling Gabrielle in with her aggressive-defensive strategy. She tried to instill some ideas into Gabrielle's mind as they chatted casually. This way, Gabrielle might unconsciously blurt out the truth if she let her guard down.

The idea of it was quite ingenious. Lance knew it. After all, he had experienced it first hand. He was afraid that Gabrielle might not be aware of it since she had never crossed paths with Rose's kind

before. To her, Rose wasn't an enemy and it was very easy for her to not be vigilant.

If they took Gabrielle by force, they had no assurance that she would spit out a word. However, this way of persuasion might let them find out some things once she had let her guard down.

"Alright. I guess I don't have to teach her anymore. Let's go." Rose said nothing more. She proceeded to walk with a camouflage bag on her back.

Gabrielle and Lance also had backpacks with them. In addition to a crossbow, there were a million other things one needed to survive the outdoors.

"Gabrielle, let me carry your bag." Lance took her bag from her hands and put it on his back. He had one bag on both of his shoulders.

"It's fine. My bag isn't that heavy anyway. I can carry it myself," Gabrielle said.

"Come on. We still have a long way to go before we reach the place we hunt

pheasants at. Wild animals are wary of the village since they know that they will be in grave danger once they get close. That's why we have to go deep into the woods. Unless we're lucky enough to meet some by the village," Lance explained.

"I know. It's just like when they beat that hare near the fence, right?" Gabrielle asked out of curiosity.

"Yes but that rarely happens. We should go further into the forest today. Stay close so you don't get lost," Lance warned. He was worried about Gabrielle.

If they got lost deep into the woods, they might not be able to find a way out.

"Yeah... I know. But I get this feeling that Rose has an ulterior motive for taking us hunting with her," Gabrielle whispered. Anxiety filled her veins.

Whether it was her sensitivity or intuition, she had always felt like things were not as simple as they seemed.

'Bain had me under surveillance before. It's odd for him to let Rose take us out of

the village. Is she plotting something?' Gabrielle thought.

Everything triggered Gabrielle's anxiety.

If things went on like this, she felt like she would collapse even before Bain did anything to her. It was incredibly torturous.

"Rose isn't in the mood to hunt pheasants. She won't even come out of the village if she could help it. Originally, Rose had planned on taking you with her alone. This is her scheme. Be careful. No matter what happens, stay by side. I'm the only person you can trust here," Lance said in a whisper.

Gabrielle knew what Rose meant even if Lance didn't tell her.

It wasn't Rose's job to hunt pheasants.

"I know. Hurry up. Let's not go too far behind Rose." Gabrielle took wide strides to chase after Rose.

"You guys are too slow. We didn't come here for a walk. We're hunting. We might not be able to find anything if we

get there too late." Rose turned to glance at them.

"I'm sorry. In Antawood, I travel by car. Very rarely do I walk this much. It's hard for me to catch up. I'm sorry I dragged Lance with me," Gabrielle explained as she walked up to Rose.

"It's fine. I don't know if you would be able to make it there. It's an hour's worth of travel," Rose reminded.

"It's okay. I can hold on. It's not that far." Gabrielle nodded to assure her.

"Let's go. I know you're not pretentious. If you really can't walk, just tell me. You two follow me carefully. The path I know is the safest way to get there. Bain has set up a lot of traps around this place. You might get hurt if you take the wrong way." Rose continued to walk forward.

Gabrielle had expected the traps.

However, hearing that the traps could kill frightened her a little.

In an instant, she understood why Rose took them into the woods. It was to

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remind them not to run away without permission. A deathly path awaited them if they acted rashly.

'Why would I act impulsively?' Gabrielle thought to herself. She was reminded of what Lance had told her yesterday. He wanted to arrange her escape. Now, that plan sounded ridiculously impossible.

Escaping Bain's village wasn't an easy job.

Gabrielle took a cautious glance at Lance. He knew exactly what she meant.

"Gabrielle... Let's wait it out. We will come up with a plan once Bryce wakes up." Lance despised the feeling of being under someone else's control. It was reminiscent of having a knife against his neck. He could hardly breathe. It made him feel powerless.

After all, as the eldest son of the Carter family and the CEO of the Carter Group, Lance had always had the power over everything.

However, now, his life was in the hands of someone else. His carelessness could

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cost him his life.

"It's the only thing we could do now. Rose took us out here to give us an idea of the situation. If we leave without permission, we are going to face imminent death." Gabrielle was not a fool. She knew exactly what was going on.

And even if she wasn't smart, Rose's hint was too obvious. Nobody could possibly miss her indications.

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Feeling even guiltier for what happened, Lance regretted bringing Gabrielle to the forest once again. He didn't mind putting himself in danger, as long as Gabrielle would be safe. If anything bad would happen to her, he wouldn't forgive himself.

"I'm sorry, Gabrielle... it's all my fault. I never should have brought you here."

"Don't say that, Lance. All I want now is to go back to Westley safely. Stop blaming yourself." Gabrielle had to keep herself strong despite being nervous and scared during her stay here.

After all, one wrong move would cost her life. She couldn't be careless.

"Okay, I will send you back to him safe and sound," Lance promised.

Since way back, he had always hated Westley for chasing after Gabrielle with no regard for her feelings. He could

never think of him as her husband. But now, he could see that Gabrielle really cared for Westley so much. If she truly loved him, then Lance would let her go now and give them his blessing.

He needed to send her back soon, so she could be safe and live a happy life.

"Let's go hunt pheasants first, Lance. Rose would be disappointed if we don't join her." Gabrielle noticed Rose had glanced over her shoulders a couple of times.

She didn't want to lag behind and whisper, but Rose was able to speak and understand several languages, including Gabrielle's mother language.

Gabrielle really didn't know how many languages Rose exactly spoke or understood, but she had to be careful. She had no clue what Rose could be thinking.

"You guys are so slow. By the way, don't wander too much and stick close. We're going into the deeper part of the forest, so expect thorny vines along the way. You'll get hurt if you're not careful."

Rose reminded them and gestured to hurry up.

"We're coming." Gabrielle dashed to speed things up. She was fine with hunting pheasants in the woods. She only hoped to gain Bain's trust through this.

"We'll reach the river in about half an hour. If you get thirsty, you can drink the spring water from the mountain," Rose said, leading the way.

"I'm not thirsty," Gabrielle flat-out refused, not minding what was said.

Rose stayed quiet. After half an hour, they were finally able to reach the river across the forest. It was large, about ten meters wide. Up ahead, they could see a rickety wooden bridge that looked like it could be only crossed by one person at a time.

"Gabrielle, the bridge is a little narrow. You have to go slowly so you won't fall down. There are poisonous snakes in this river. If you get bitten, you might die." Rose warned her.

Hearing that there were poisonous snakes below, Gabrielle couldn't help but look into the river. To her surprise, the water was very clear.

"You have to remember the tracks. This is the safest path to the village. If you don't, you could get lost and it's much more dangerous since there are other animals that live here. You could get eaten by wolves and no one would know," Rose explained nonchalantly. It may have sounded intimidating, but she looked like she was talking about the weather.

Gabrielle knew about their struggles. The dangerous situations they faced helped them gain courage and power to overcome fear. That was why Rose was so calm.

"Okay. I'll be careful." She followed in Rose's footsteps.

After they got to the other side, Rose stopped in her tracks.

"Rose, is this it?" Suddenly, a cold breeze blew over them. The trees swayed and

howled. Gabrielle looked up to the sky, feeling uneasy.

Without Rose and Lance, she would have gotten scared to death in this remote forest. It was deserted and unsafe.

But it was a better choice for people on the run.

"Well, this is where we'll be hunting pheasants today." Rose placed her things under the nearest tree. After setting up a trap, she prepared the crossbow.

"What do we need to do?" Gabrielle was curious about how it worked. She was inexperienced and lacked knowledge about hunting.

It was also her first time seeing the crossbow. Rose handled it like a professional. Gabrielle was amazed watching her play with it like a toy.

"Don't do anything for the time being. You should find a place to hide in the bushes. I'll go lure the pheasants first," Rose explained.

Gabrielle and Lance just stayed put.

Lance was here to assist them, but he was also unaware of what to do.

"Before I forget, don't run around or make any noise. There are traps everywhere and it's going to be bad if any of you step on them. I'll come back later." Rose had to make sure they were well-prepared.

After all, she was the one who took them to hunt. It was her responsibility to bring them back safely.

"Okay, we understand," Gabrielle answered firmly.

"Good. Wait for me." Rose left right away, her figure disappearing into the depths of the forest.

Gabrielle squatted down behind a tree and Lance sat beside her. "Are you scared? Don't worry, Gabrielle. The forest isn't as terrible as Rose makes it to be."

"I can't calm down. What if they set us up?" Gabrielle didn't want to think of the worst, but what would be the reason Rose brought them here to hunt

pheasants?

Rose was probably testing them, seeing if they could get out of the forest by themselves. Once they did, they might get caught in a trap, killed, or get shot by someone.

Gabrielle couldn't get it off her mind.

"You're right, we can't risk it. It's not wise to get ourselves in trouble. We shouldn't do anything stupid because they still have Bryce," Lance said.

Gabrielle had no intention of running away. If people from the Campbell Family were outside and Westley was coming to take her, he would find a way no matter what. But she couldn't abandon her brother. She even risked her life just to see Bryce and take him back.

Westley was quite a force and she believed in his abilities. All she needed to do was wait for him to come. She shouldn't do anything that could harm Westley in any way.

"Lance... I just realized something."

Gabrielle looked at him.

Lance's eyes widened in confusion.
"What is it?"

"What if... Rose was giving us hints? She asked us to remember every little detail of the path we took earlier to be able to go back to the village safely. Was it her telling us that we could leave when we get the chance?" Gabrielle sounded hopeful.

Gabrielle thought Rose was just very meticulous at first.

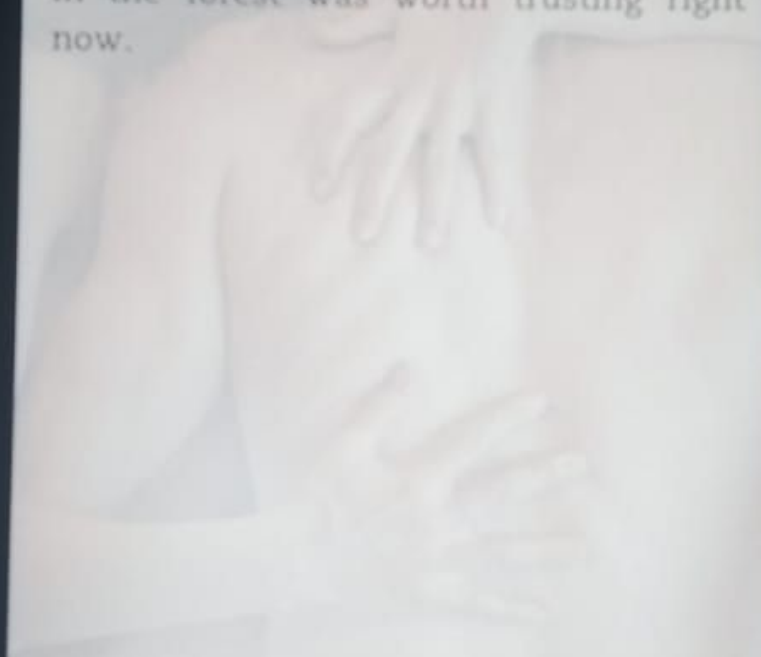
She slowly realized Rose could have purposely told her to remember. It wasn't safe to assume because Rose was still working for Bain, but she seemed to have a soft spot for Gabrielle. She always felt that Rose was helping her.

"It does make sense, but why do you think she'd do that? She has no reason to help us. We don't even know if she's telling the truth or not." Lance didn't want to believe it at all. Rose was unreadable.

After all, Rose worked for Bain. No one

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in the forest was worth trusting right now.



Chapter 474 Help You Leave

Lance had his reservations about the people living here. He barely knew them so Lance had a hard time trusting them. His carelessness could cost him his life.

"Lance... Do you remember which way the river flows?" Gabrielle turned to look at him and asked. She wanted to know where the river led. It was the only way to confirm whether or not Rose really helped them out.

"If my memory serves me correctly, the river passes through the forest. I don't remember much about the upstream but the downstream would lead to a big village." Lance tried to remember the direction of the river.

In the past, he would come visit this place because he had a good relationship with Bain then. After all, he had been of great help to Bain. Bain was loyal and even treated Lance as his own brother.

Lance could remember that there was a time when Bain took him to a bay downstream to go fishing. He told Lance that there was a village just outside the dense forest.

The residents of that village knew that the dense forest was Bain's territory so they seldom passed by it. The people working for Bain never bothered their village either.

For so many years, the villagers and Bain had lived in peace and harmony.

"Lance, if we follow the downstream, it would lead to the village. Why did Rose put emphasis on the location of the river?" Gabrielle asked curiously.

"Gabrielle, leave it alone," Lance replied, urging Gabrielle to put a stop to her words. He knew exactly what she was going to say.

"The river is the safest way out of the dense forest," Gabrielle continued.

Lance was certain that Gabrielle wanted to escape. She was not just poking fun at him. It would do her well if she managed

to escape successfully. However, if she failed, she would die in the hands of Bain's men. Lance couldn't let Gabrielle take the risk.

"Gabrielle, its safety has nothing to do with you. Don't even think about taking a risk. There are snakes and crocodiles in the river," Lance warned. He was speaking the truth.

"I'm just letting you know what I think. I'm not going to do anything stupid. I haven't figured out Rose's intentions yet. I can't tell if it's a test or if she really wants to help me out. Why would I take the risk when I could just wait for Westley to come save me?" Gabrielle would rather wait for Westley to rescue her than to put herself in danger by acting rashly.

After all, she barely knew anything about this place. If she acted out of impulse, she would only be putting herself in danger.

"Alright. That's good. You should keep on thinking that way. Listen to me... Do not take a risk. It's not worth it. If

something happens to you I..."

"I'm impressed that you guys found the place. I've brought the pheasants here." Rose's arrival interrupted Lance's speech. She showed up out of the blue.

"Rose! You're here! Is your arm alright?" Gabrielle noticed that Rose had taken her black jacket off. She was now donning a black vest, exposing her injured arm. The blood on her would had dried up.

"It's not that big of a deal. My clothes are hanging someplace else to scare the pheasants. They can be too clever sometimes. It's hard to lure them," Rose explained as she took another crossbow out from her bag. She handed it to Lance.

"Here you go. Go find a bush to hide in. I will stay with Gabrielle. Will you be fine by yourself?" Rose asked.

"Of course. Look after Gabrielle." Without saying any more, Lance took the crossbow and left. He hid behind a grove just across from where they were.

Not long after that, they heard a noise

approach them.

"They're almost here. Don't move," Rose warned Gabrielle.

"Rose... How did you end up here? How do you know Bain?" Gabrielle couldn't help but ask. She knew her question was a little out there but she asked anyway.

"Why are you interested?" Rose eyed Gabrielle suspiciously.

A look of guilt took over Gabrielle's face.

"I'm just a little curious. You don't have to tell me if you don't want to." Gabrielle did not want Rose to think that she was intruding.

After all, the things that had happened on Bain's territory was not something one casually talked about.

"Not really. When I was in Middle East, I got myself into trouble. My enemies came after my family. Bain saved me from my impending death. He's the reason why I'm still alive. I could never betray him." There was an emphasis on Rose's last sentence.

Her story made Gabrielle's heart sink.

'What do I say?' Gabrielle asked herself.

Gabrielle had struck a nerve. Bain saved Rose's life. He was her benefactor. It was only natural that she stayed by his side like a loyal dog.

No matter what Bain asked her to do, Rose would do it without a doubt.

"Gabrielle, I have a sister. She looks exactly like you. Especially your eyes. There is innocence and kindness in them," Rose reminisced.

That was the reason why Rose paid so much attention to her.

From the very start, she wanted to be nice to Gabrielle. Rose wanted Gabrielle to have all the love she had to give.

However, Bain wouldn't spare Gabrielle if she really had something to do with the Campbell Family.

"Sister?" Gabrielle was taken aback by this revelation.

It was the first time that Rose talked about her family.

People like Rose willingly abandoned their past and everything that had ever become part of them when they entered the forest. They had no family. No friends. Everyone in that wretched place started from scratch.

That was the only way they could stop longing for the past.

"I had a sister who was five years younger than I was. Unfortunately, she died at a young age. She was only fifteen. There was blood all over her body as she lay in my arms. My sister was determined to protect me until the very end." Rose choked on her tears as she narrated her story to Gabrielle.

Gabrielle hated to see such a strong and cold woman suffer. She couldn't help but reach out and hold Rose in her arms. Gabrielle was, perhaps, the only person in the damned forest to be friends with Rose.

"Shhhh... Don't be upset. I'm certain that your sister is happy in heaven now.

"She's lucky to have such a good sister like you," Gabrielle comforted Rose.

She knew that saying those words did nothing. Gabrielle was aware that she did not have the talent of giving comfort to those in need.

"Gabrielle... If you want to leave, I can help you go safely." Rose finally said what she had been dying to say all day.

In order to let Gabrielle escape, Rose had to take her out of the village and into the dense forest. 3

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Gabrielle was taken aback by Rose's suggestion. She freed Rose from her arms and looked at her in disbelief. After a moment, she came to her senses. She looked at Rose with uneasiness in her eyes.

"Rose... What are you talking about?"

"Gabrielle, I know you want to leave. Let me help you." The look of determination on Rose's face made it feel like she was ready to risk everything. Rose couldn't bear to think about the possibility of Gabrielle dying in Bain's hands because she looked like her dead sister.

"But Rose, what would happen to you if you betray Bain?" There was no elation on Gabrielle's face. Rose's offer made her feel uneasy.

"Death, I guess," Rose calmly replied.

'Death?'

That mention of that word stunned Gabrielle. She had expected once betrayal to Bain to be expensive but she did not anticipate that it would cost one's life.

The price to pay was not worth the return. Gabrielle could not stomach to let Rose go through that misery. Besides, she had no idea why Rose said such a thing. Gabrielle wasn't sure if it was a test or if Rose really wanted to help her escape.

Confusion ran in Gabrielle's nerves. She fancied Rose but that was all. If she placed her hopes of survival all on Rose's palm, she might be caught in a trap. That was why Gabrielle had her reservations when Rose offered to help her.

Rose owed her life to Bain. It was hard to believe that Rose was willing to risk everything she had just to help Gabrielle escape.

"Rose, I don't have to go. I didn't do anything wrong. Why would I run away? I'm going back to the village with you,"

Gabrielle replied as she tried to regain her composure.

"What are you two doing? The pheasants are here," Lance called their attention from where he was hiding.

Rose stuck her head out to take a peek at the pheasants.

"Attack! Lance!" Rose did not say anything more. She jumped out and set an arrow on her crossbow. Her movements were spectacular.

Gabrielle did the same thing. She aimed the arrow towards the pheasants.

Gabrielle had no experience with hunting. To top it all off, the pheasants were moving targets so it was even harder to get an aim at them.

Rose and Lance finished the hunting. Gabrielle did not catch anything.

"Put the crossbow away, Gabrielle. We're done. Let's grill the pheasants by the river," Rose said as she turned to look at Gabrielle.

Gabrielle felt lousy. She did not even

catch one pheasant. She carried her backpack and helped them out.

They managed to kill eight pheasants. That much was enough for dinner. One could say that it was a successful hunting.

"Did you have fun?" Rose asked Gabrielle.

The pheasant that Gabrielle had in her hand was adorned with majestic feathers. However, the blood in her hands made her feel sick.

"Let's go. We can wash our hands when we get to the river," Rose said as she took the pheasant in her hand.

"Gabrielle, are you okay?" Lance took a few pieces of tissue from his backpack and wiped her hands.

"I'm fine. It was my first time doing something like this. I was too slow. Let's go." Gabrielle was terrified.

She did not want to say anything more. Gabrielle walked forward with a heavy heart.

"Gabrielle, did Rose say something to you? Why do you look agitated?" Lance couldn't help himself from getting worried when he saw how pale her face was.

"I'm fine. Let's go." Gabrielle wasn't in the mood to talk about it when Rose had just told her about her dead sister.

"Okay."

Rose put her coat on as she walked forward without a care.

When they got to the river, Rose lit up a fire to burn the feathers off of the pheasants. After getting rid of all of their hair, she went to the river to clean them with a dagger. Her movements were as fast as lightning. It was as if she had been doing it her whole life. Finally, she grilled the pheasants on the open fire.

"Gabrielle, don't put too much wood into the fire. You will burn the meat," Rose warned as she rummaged for spices in her bag.

Gabrielle was a little surprised to see

that Rose had brought a lot of things with her. It was rare to see someone be so ready that she even brought seasonings with her.

"Do you always keep these things with you?" Gabrielle asked in utter surprise.

"I don't. Unless I know I'm going into the wild." Rose rubbed some oil onto the meat.

"You know so much, Rose. It's impressive. You're very good at survival." Gabrielle looked up to her hunting prowess. There weren't a lot of people like her.

"Living in the wild is the norm for us. If we don't learn how to do these things, we will starve to death," Rose said indifferently. Her hands were kept busy as she spoke.

Rose rotated the chicken and re-applied some seasonings every once in a while. Not long after that, the aroma of the roasted chicken wafted through the air.

"Gabrielle, I know how much you love chicken. Come have the drumstick."

Rose tore the chicken leg off of the roast and handed it to Gabrielle.

Her actions made it seem like she was a big sister taking care of her younger sibling. Perhaps it was because Gabrielle reminded her of her dead sister.

"Thank you, Rose." Gabrielle gratefully accepted the drumstick in Rose's hand and took a bite of it. It tasted phenomenal.

"How is it?" Rose asked.

"It's amazing! You're a great cook, Rose." Gabrielle did not say those things just to get on Rose's good side. She meant every word.

Rose smiled at the sound of her words. "If you like it so much then you should have more."

Gabrielle didn't refuse. She carried on with her meal. Suddenly, Rose's offer of helping her escape crossed her mind.

'Can I really leave this place?'

The thought of it tempted Gabrielle. If she could manage to follow the path of

the river, she would be able to make it past the forest. The further she was from the village, the weaker their defense would be. She knew she was right about that.

"Gabrielle, why aren't you eating?" Rose asked when she noticed Gabrielle spacing out.

"I am eating," Gabrielle replied and continued to eat.

Out of the blue, Rose's phone rang. She immediately picked up. It was Doctor Maniac. The two of them didn't exactly have the best relationship. Doctor Maniac hated how tough Rose was. On the other hand, Rose disliked how immersed he was in medicine and yet, he sucked in real life.

His call put Rose in an awful mood.

"What's the matter?"

"Where's Lance? His cousin woke up. I went to their place but they weren't there. Did they leave?"

"Alright. I'll take them back now," Rose

said and hung up.

Gabrielle and Lance looked at her anxiously. After all, 'I'll take them back' could mean just about anything.

"Was that Bain?" Gabrielle asked.

"No. It was Doctor Maniac. Bryce is awake. He's looking for you." She tore the other drumstick off of the chicken and gave it to Gabrielle.

"You should eat more. You will need the energy for when we travel back. Your brother has woken up," Rose reminded Gabrielle.

"He is?!" Gabrielle could not believe what she said. Especially when she was just contemplating whether or not she should run away. It was like fate.

Even if she had the opportunity to escape, she had to go back and see Bryce first. After all, she had to hear something from him.

"Yeah. We're leaving after we eat," Rose replied calmly.

Bryce wasn't related to Rose. She

couldn't care less about him.

However, Gabrielle was beyond excited. She quickly devoured the piece of chicken in her hand. She grabbed her backpack and looked ready to head back.

"We should leave," Gabrielle said in a hurry.

"You two must have a really good relationship. You look excited," Rose said as she hastily carried her backpack.

Gabrielle couldn't wait to go back sooner. She was eager to confirm something. It had nothing to do with their relationship.

"Let's go." Rose extinguished the fire just before they left.