

Part 1: Chapter 2: Helena

After class, Razz was permitted to leave the lecture hall only after every other student has left. He placed the shoulder strap of his backpack right on his left shoulder. He didn't dare to look at Miss Eliza who was there getting things organized and preparing to leave. He approached the door, a big strong door made from really thick glass.

"Mr. Razlan," he heard Miss Eliza's voice from behind him.

"Yes, Miss Eliza?" he turned his head towards her and replied lazily.

"Don't forget about our lab tutorial tomorrow evening. It's very important," she continued while finishing up gathering her materials. Razz nodded and proceeds to open the door. "And make sure you will be punctual this time, understood?" she continued.

Razz signaled the "ok" sign with his hand and went out the door.

Outside, Razz looked around. His eyes made a brief sweep of the faculty's lecture dome. He stretched his arms briefly trying to ward off his fatigue. His eyes took in pretty much the same scenery he had seen every time he is here.

The enormous dome structure is shaped like a big cylinder with a diameter of a hundred meters. It was composed of four separate lecture hall, two on each wing; with each hall able to carry a capacity of about five hundred students. In the middle of the dome, there is a very beautiful water fountain where people could sit around it. The lecture dome is also inter-connected to the Training and Tutorial Dome of the same size on the east by a very beautiful garden. There are two sets of elevator on each floor that could take the students to the upper level Lecture Hall and its adjoining Training and Tutorial Dome.

The garden was where all the students and everyone bought their food, discussed or just pretty much sit around and meet in-between lectures. It was called the garden because that what it was, a big garden with lush green surrounding encased in thick glass wall and roof on each side so the sun could shine in.

Razz just remembered that he had promised his friend to meet there right after Miss Eliza's morning lecture. He walked past the fountain

towards the garden entrance. Rummaging through his backpack while walking, he finally found what he was looking for. He took out his cell phone and dialed the number. A dial tone was heard.

"Razz?" the voice on the other end asked.

"Hey you..." he smiled while talking on the phone. "I'm on my way to meet you right now."

"Where exactly are you?" the voice sounded annoyed.

"I'm right near the entrance. Wave your hand so I could see you. There's so many people right now, I might not be able to find you in this crowd."

"Oh, all right..." the voice responded "Make it fast okay? I'm starving here, haven't had anything to eat since last night."

Razz scanned the food court area in the garden to find his friend. Most of the seats there are already taken. After a while of looking from one seat to another, he saw his friend waving on the very far end of the food court, right beside a small pine tree.

"Okay, saw you. Wait while I buy something okay?" he said while waving back.

"All right, I'm hanging up now."

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Ten minutes later, Razz took a seat right in front of his friend.

"Okay Helena, food's ready. I hoped you really are starving right now." he smiled while placing the tray on the table.

"Great!! I thought I was going to starve to death here." Helena replied with a big smile while rubbing the palm of her hands together. "and Razz..." she continued.

"What?" Razz raised his right eyebrow.

"How many times have I told you not to call me by that name?"

"I know, but somehow, that name just popped up when I try to call you by name." he smiled sheepishly.

Helena pouted her lips, trying to look annoyed. She took the fork and spoon from the tray Razz has brought over and took a sip of iced cold Chocolate drink she bought earlier.

"Here's your fried noodles, with egg and sliced cucumber on top. Eat up okay?" handing over the plate, Razz took the tray and placed it on an empty seat between them. For himself, Razz just bought a mug of barley drink.

"You're not eating anything?" Helena asked when she saw what he was having. She forked up the noodles right after.

"Nah, already had something this morning at the dorm." Razz took a sip of his drink. "Besides.." he paused. "I was only here to treat you for some breakfast for the help you gave me yesterday"

"You know what?" Helena pointed the fork she was using towards Razz as if she was casting a spell, waving it up and down. "Actually, a plate of noodle is not enough for that; you should have seen what I've got to go through to get that thing for you."

Razz scratched his head.

"Well, that's the only thing I could treat you to right now." Razz answered, smiling.

"I'm just kidding okay?" Helena smiled. "You shouldn't trouble yourself for that, really! It just so happens that I had my hands on that thing, so I guess, why not right?" she forked in another spoonful of noodles.

Razz smiled. Holding the mug in his hands he took another look at the girl in front of him. He had met Helena the year before during Fire Elemental 101, and the thing he remembered most about her was that she didn't seem like any typical girl he knew before, and perhaps even now. She always seemed friendly, energetic and full of energy, when she was not hungry of course. She was never hesitant to talk her mind, and that kind of honesty, even though Razz found it hard to swallow at first, is the very thing that made him enjoy their time together as friends. He smiled when he remembered some of the crazy things they have done the previous year; the kind of things that can make a very good campfire story and even the kind of good stories told to children right before bedtime.

"You've got to teach me how to cast that spell again." Razz suddenly remembered something.

"What spell? For God's sake Razz, people don't have to remember spells nowadays. They just typed it in the computer, embedded it in casting shells and voila! Cast away."

Although they are about the same age, Helena was one year ahead of Razz in terms of academic year. They only met in Fire Elemental 101 last year because Helena flunked it during her first attempt and had to retake the class.

"You know how Miss Eliza is right? You know how she is with all this techie-thingie," he crossed his arms and then lowered his voice in an attempt to impersonate Miss Eliza. "You have to learn to do things the natural way where spells are concerned, trust your instinct, trust in your own abilities, for when everything else is gone, all you got to rely on, is yourself!!"

They both laughed. Razz took another sip of his drink.

"So can you help me with spell casting this evening after class?" Razz said, looking at Helena with anticipation.

Helena hesitated, "Okay, meet me at the Training Centre at 8 p.m." She pointed her fork towards Razz again. "But this time, it'll cost you a lot more than a plate of these you know, at least a whole set of gourmet meal wouldn't hurt". Smiled.

"By the way..." he put the mug down, looking at the half empty plate of fried noodles Helena was eating. "What's that name again?"

Helena's eyes widened. Putting the fork and spoon on the plate, she wiped the corners of her mouth with the paper napkin beside it. Although she seemed like a tomboyish girl at times, still, she is very proper in her appearance and manner.

"What?" she asked.

"Your name...how do you like to be called again?"

"Oh.... it's Lene, you old geezer" she smiled. "And don't go around and forget about it again, or I'll cast some nasty shock spell on you!!" she snapped her fingers and a light spark flashed between them.

Laughter broke between the two of them.