

Part 1: Chapter 6: One Starry Night

"If that's settled, then we will meet this weekend in front of the faculty at 8 a.m sharp. Bring all the gear you think you'll need. It is important that you think things through before going on this field exercise. Your life may depend on it."

Miss Eliza glanced at her wristwatch. It has been an hour after she had demonstrated in front of the class how the exercise given earlier should be done.

"Understood?" she scanned through each and every face in the Training Facility.

"Yes, Miss Eliza!" all of them answered firmly.

"Ok, that's it for tonight's class. Good night" Miss Eliza packed up her things and left.

"So, Razz, pick you up at the library tomorrow okay?" Alan smiled, patted Razz on the shoulder and headed for the exit.

"Hey, wait up! You're supposed to send me back to the dorm remember?" Emelda rushed to chase after Alan. "See you tomorrow Razz!" she smiled cheerfully, waving her hand.

Razz stretched his arms. Feeling kind of tired he exited the facility and headed to the locker room to take some of the things he had left earlier before the tutorial. Razz saw someone in front of him on the corridor toward the locker room. It was Dmitri. He was just standing there and from Razz's point of view, seemed like he was browsing through a book.

"Hey, not going back yet?" Razz smiled as he approached the locker room entrance.

"Nah, I think I'd like to pray first before heading back." Dmitri smiled back, adjusting his glasses.

"Great, we could perform the prayer together then?" Razz suggested.

"Wait for me at the prayer room okay?"

"Okay, see you there." Dmitri headed of towards the prayer room.

Razz wasn't really that close to Dmitri. All the things he knew about Dmitri was as a result of Dmitri's interest in Helena. It's been almost a year since he knew that Dmitri had that big crush on Helena, and it was almost that length of a time that he and Dmitri have been friends.

Dmitri waited for Razz at the prayer room. Something had been on his mind lately and he thought he ought to get it out of his chest tonight so he could really concentrate for the coming field exercise.

11 p.m, Training Facility walkway.

"I can't believe Miss Eliza put us in one group with that new girl Maya" Dmitri said with a grin.

"Well, I can't believe she put me in the same group with you" Razz smiled. "Remember what happened on her basic training last year?"

"Which one?"

"The one where we lose half our eyebrow. Remember?"

Dmitri chuckled.

"Yeah, I remembered that one, we had to use a black marker to draw our lost eyebrow until it grew back" Dmitri said, slinging his backpack to his left. "A lot of things had happened since then too." he looked down on the walkway.

Razz felt the sudden silence engulfing them. Dmitri fixed his gaze forward. Feeling uneasy, Razz punched him lightly on his right shoulder.

"That again huh?" Razz raised his right eyebrow. "Hey look, my right eyebrow looked quite okay right now" He tried to lighten up the mood.

Dmitri just smiled, a stale smile.

"Come on Dmitri, I know you've probably heard this a thousand times now, but hey, get over her man."

Dmitri looked on the far left of the walkway. Their dormitory was only a couple of hundred meters away. In between the male and female dormitory, there was a big playground and picnic spot where visiting families would go if they come to visit the students here.

"Hey, Razz, let's hang out in the playground for a while" Dmitri jogged towards the playground.

Razz just smiled and followed him from behind. Upon arriving, Dmitri rode one of the swings there. Razz just sat on the wooden bench situated closely just on the right of the swing. Dmitri was drowning in his own thoughts.

"Remember how we used to be Razz?" Dmitri broke his silence.

Razz raised his right eyebrow. It was a habit he developed after his right eyebrow got burned. Usually, it was to subconsciously state a question to a particular statement that he required further elaboration to.

Dmitri sighed.

"You know, you, me, Helena, and the guys. We used to hang out together to do stuff." Dmitri stopped his swing.

Razz placed his sling back on the left of the bench and started to lie down. He stared at the star lit sky above. It was a beautiful sight.

"You know something Dmitri, before I entered the academy, I used to spend my nights watching the skies and looked at the stars. It would started out with just a few obvious ones that we could see. But if you continue to look at the sky, more and more stars will be visible for you to see. Have you ever tried it Dmitri?"

"Huh? No. I was never much into star gazing" He nodded his head at nothing. One of Dmitri's habit which Razz thought was kind of odd sometimes. "You know what I get from it Dmitri?"

"What? An orgasm?"

Razz chuckled. He continued.

"It made me think that if when we look things through, we could see much more things unraveled to us, just like the night sky. And...as much as the stars that we may have seen the first time we gaze upon it, there are many more that will be shown to us from time to time."

"I missed those times Razz. Things were very much simpler then. Whenever we felt like it, we just go. We waited for the bus just at the junction there..." Dmitri pointed towards the bus stop right in front of the student's dormitory administration office about a stone's throw away from where they were.

"Hey, you said that as if it was ages ago. It was just a few month back wasn't it?" Razz grinned; his eyes stared into the night sky.

"Yeah, but it was about 7 month ago." Dmitri sighed again.

"Well, no use thinking about it Dmitri. Life goes on. We can't keep holding on to something that we have no control over. Besides..." Razz paused.

"Besides, what?" Dmitri asked, standing up.

"Nothing..." Razz continued.

"What?" Dmitri asked again. One thing about Razz that he sometimes found irritating was that he never liked to finish some of his sentences.

"No, really nothing to be concern of. My mind just wandered off. Hey, what do you think of Maya huh? She's going to be in the same group with us. That should make you think about something else right? Besides "that"?" Razz gestured the quote and unquote symbol with his fingers.

"I don't think I'd ever think about anything or anyone else besides "that"." Dmitri answered.

"Yeah, yeah. Everybody said that the first time "that" happened to them. Believe me, you'll get over it. It's just a matter of time." Razz got up and hugged his legs. "By the way, you never did answer me honestly why did you liked her in the first place?"

"I don't know Razz. Because she's friendly? Independent? Cute? Cheerful kind of person?"

Razz smiled. That answer was just about the standard answer he would hear every time from anybody who ever took interest in Helena.

"Why are you smiling?" Dmitri sat on the grass by the bench.

"I just remembered someone once told me. Be careful when you love somebody too much. Because when someday the wheel suddenly turned, you would hate her just as much. And..." Razz stopped in his words took his sling bag and prepared to leave.

"When you said you love a person because she is independent, do you really love her for being able to take care of herself...or you find that more convenient for you if you couldn't give her the love and attention that she might have needed in future?"

Razz raised his right eyebrow, smiled.

"Remember it Dmitri. However independent or strong a girl can be...still, she is still a person that needed the emotional and loving support her other half could give her. There is no shortcut there is no cheat code...okay I think I'd better stop before I sounded too much like that guy in the motivational show. Let's head back, I'm dead tired."