

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Sage explains a bit more. Rachel is still dead set though.

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The awkward silence drags on just long enough for Rachel to fear that Sage's answer will be 'no'. After all, the other woman would be taking a big risk on her, a relative unknown. But fortunately...

"Say that I agree to help you... you do understand it's not as simple as convincing Emma to abandon the Hellfire Club just because Shaw is dead, right? In fact, it's more difficult than ever now."

Rachel frowns at that. More difficult? Why? Reading her confusion on her face, Sage rolls her eyes.

"Think about it... the Hellfire Club has neither a White nor Black King at the moment. And the Black Queen has gone completely off the grid, albeit with stated intentions of coming back and turning things into a fight eventually. Still, at this point, Emma Frost leads the Hellfire Club in all but name."

That... huh. Rachel hadn't thought about it that way. If Sebastian Shaw was dead and the White King position was vacant... okay yeah, she could see where Sage was coming from. Still, there had to be a way to get Emma on the right path! She was one of Rachel's favorite Professors after all, and the idea of leaving any version of Emma Frost languishing in villainy didn't sit well with her.

"Just because it's difficult doesn't mean we can just give up. If everyone only ever did things that were easy, nothing worth doing would ever get done!"

Sage tilts her head to the side, studying Rachel in a calculating manner for a moment... before finally nodding.

“Very well. Though you won’t be able to peel Emma away from the Hellfire Club alone. You’ll have to convince both her and Thaddeus or the venture is doomed to fail from the start.”

Really? The White Knight who had killed Apocalypse? Admittedly, she HAD been shocked when he’d singlehandedly defeated En Sabah Nur. Especially since... well, Rachel had literally never heard of the guy before.

“Are they really that close?”

Sage gives her a peculiar look at that.

“Yes. They are. Are they not in your future?”

Here Rachel tries not to squirm... and largely fails. But hey, Sage is an ally right? So it’s worth just being a little more honest with her.

“The future I come from doesn’t have a Thaddeus Cummings... among other rather dramatic changes to be honest. I don’t know anything about this ‘White Knight’ or what he’s like... I just know that Emma can do better than the likes of Hellfire.”

Nodding slowly once more, Sage makes a curious noise in the back of her throat.

“Intriguing. Well, suffice to say that in THIS timeline, Thaddeus Cummings and Emma Frost are so thoroughly intertwined that you will never convince one to move without the other. He’s the reason she’s able to control the Phoenix Force with such ease, for instance.”

Rachel’s eyes widen at that and whether Sage realized it or not, she picks up on even more from the other woman’s words than just what is said. Because... well, Rachel knows the Phoenix better than most. She knows what the Phoenix is like and what it seeks.

If Thaddeus Cummings is the reason a Phoenix-possessed Emma Frost is in full control of her faculties... then the love between the two of them must be enough to ignite stars.

It causes a faint blush to spread across Rachel's face just thinking about it. That kind of love... okay yeah, Sage is right. It's going to have to be both of them or none of them, isn't it?

"Alright so how do we convince both Emma and Thaddeus to leave the Hellfire Club behind?"

Sage tilts her head to the side, seeming to ponder the question.

"... It will not be easy. But I suppose the simplest way to get their collective ear would be to join them in bed."

Wait, what? Rachel's mouth opens... and then closes as she blushes a lot harder at that idea.

"E-Excuse me?"

But Sage doesn't walk back her words, simply shrugging in response.

"It's Thaddeus' mutation. He empowers himself and those he's intimate with through sex. He has literal sex powers. Most women who wind up in their orbit eventually wind up in his and Emma's bed as well... or just his bed. Either way, if you want their attention, you need to speak their language."

Ah, that was... Rachel's blush only grows as she finds herself contemplating what Sage is saying. Was that why Thaddeus was so powerful? Was that why Emma Frost felt like the fucking sun to Rachel's psychic senses? Not just because she was hosting the Phoenix, but because she was powerful in her own right?

How many women had Thaddeus Cummings fucked? A jolt runs through her as she reads the underlying subtext beneath Sage's words and realizes that the

undercover psychic has definitely 'wound up' in their bed before. That's... this is all a bit beyond what Rachel was thinking! What, had she wound up in some sort of Porn Universe or something?!

... No, her own experiences with violation aside, things had been far too... *real* so far for it to be a Porn Universe. En Sabah Nur's attack, her capture, the fighting... and yet, Sage is completely serious as she secondhand propositions Rachel to go and have sex with Emma Frost and Thaddeus Cummings.

Then again, would it really be so bad? Rachel's blush becomes downright atomic as she finds herself considering the idea with more... seriousness. Thaddeus is an attractive giant of a man; there's no doubt about that. She likes all sorts of guys, but it would be a lie to say he wasn't one of her 'types'.

And Emma was... well, Rachel would also be lying if she said she'd never been 'hot for teacher' before. Emma Frost was a femme fatale and a half, a complete and utter diva who deserved to be a diva with how fucking hot and sexy she was.

Presented with an opportunity to not only bed a version of her favorite Professor but also use that bedding to try and turn Emma and Thaddeus to the path of heroism... well, Rachel would be making a monumental mistake if she passed on it, right? This was... this was just what she had to do.

"O-Okay. I'm... I'm game. How do we do this?"

Sage looks at her for another long moment before smirking slightly.

"Well... you're nothing if not committed. As for the 'how', it won't exactly be difficult. Proposition them and they'll almost certainly take you up on your offer this very night."

T-That easy?!

"The hard part won't be bedding them you know... the hard part will be avoiding being caught up in their pace. You're going to have to keep your wits about you

if you think you'll be able to turn them away from the Hellfire Club. Otherwise... you'll just wind up as another of their conquests."

Rachel flushes, the innuendo making her squirm. At the same time though, her eyes flash and her jaw sets in determination.

"That won't happen. I'm stronger than you know!"

Sage hums, smiling and nodding approvingly.

"I suppose we'll see, won't we? Now come... let's rejoin the others."

Ah... right... they've honestly been talking for so long that Rachel's hair has gone from damp to pretty much dry. And they've had this entire conversation in the middle of a hallway... frankly, they were lucky they hadn't been caught. Biting her lower lip, Rachel follows Sage down the hall and back to the rest of the penthouse apartment... just in time to hear a raised, distressed voice.

"What do you mean my 'position is hereby revoked'?! You can't do this; I was a *victim!*"

Rachel blinks as she steps out into the penthouse common area to see Dr. Dane speaking into a phone, clearly very agitated. She winces at the sight of the poor woman pacing back and forth. In her timeline, Lorna, otherwise known as Polaris, had already tried and failed the whole 'be normal' thing and ultimately returned to where she belonged among her own kind.

She'd gotten the impression before that this one clearly hadn't though... and it was obvious that Apocalypse snagging her from her mundane life was causing it to implode in the worst way possible.

"No, I can't promise it won't happen again! I didn't make it happen the first time! I don't have control over what crazies do!"

The truth was, for a woman of Polaris' power... conflict was inevitable. There would always be someone who saw her decision to stay out of their world as weakness worthy of being exploited.

"But that's not fair, I-!"

The green-haired woman cuts herself off and pulls the phone away to stare at it in disbelief for a long moment.

"... They hung up on me."

With a rumble, Thaddeus steps forward. Absently, Lorna hands the phone off to him, having clearly been loaned it, while staring off into space.

"I'm sorry to hear that. Is there anything else we can do to help?"

"... The University fired me. Said they can't have staff members who are 'prone to being targeted' like I was. As though it was my fault that that bastard came after me like that..."

Rachel watches on as Thaddeus looks genuinely concerned for Lorna, placing a hand on her shoulder.

"It wasn't. And they were wrong to give up on you that easily... they'll regret losing you."

Lorna looks away, scoffing.

"No they won't. I was a dime a dozen, clearly. So easily replaced... I never mattered to them at all, really. But... now what am I going to do? Without that job, its not like I can afford to keep living where I was living. I'm going to have to move, find new work... and if word of what happened to me spreads to the other universities, not a single one is going to be willing to hire me."

Here, Emma steps in.

“I wouldn’t worry too much about that. I can step in for you.”

Rachel stiffens and tries to share a glance with Sage at that. This was Emma being the White Queen, wasn’t it? This was Emma Frost as practically the defacto leader of the Hellfire Club! Rachel begins to frown as Lorna looks gobsmacked.

“Wha- step in for me? What do you mean?”

Smiling softly, Emma gestures to Thaddeus.

“Thaddeus here attends Empire State University thanks to my efforts... and his own to secure a football scholarship of course. Still, suffice to say I have significant connections with ESU... and I will be happy to use them to get you a position among their staff if that is what you desire. It won’t be any trouble to help you out... or if there’s something else you’d rather do instead, I’d be happy to help make that a reality as well.”

Yep, this was a recruitment. Rachel was watching the White Queen attempt to recruit Polaris to the Hellfire Club in real time, wasn’t she?

“I... I couldn’t possibly...”

But Thaddeus’ hand is still on Lorna’s shoulder and he gives it a comforting squeeze.

“We said before we would help you out in whatever way we could, didn’t we? This is just an extension of that. We’re not going to leave you out in the cold, Lorna. You said it yourself... you were a victim in all of this. But you don’t have to be. We’ll make sure you don’t just survive what Apocalypse did to you... but bounce back entirely and *thrive*.”

Hooly shit. Emma and Thaddeus were dangerous together. Rachel could see now what Sage meant about how most women in their orbit wound up in bed with them. Not only were they both extremely physically attractive, but they knew it and knew how to use it too.

Rachel could see Lorna melting in real time, looking at Thaddeus like he was a gift from God himself and very obviously wavering. However, Rachel knew what Lorna didn't... that these offers would almost certainly come with strings attached. If Lorna accepted Emma's help, then it was almost certain that she would eventually be called upon by the White Queen of the Hellfire Club...

She couldn't let that happen. Not before she had a chance to flip Emma and Thaddeus to the side of good! If Rachel was being honest, she hadn't been entirely sure that she would do as Sage suggested and proposition Emma and Thaddeus immediately or anything like that. She might have wanted to feel them both out a bit more first, wait a couple days, take some time to gird herself.

But... no, she has to step in here before Polaris makes a mistake she'll regret!

"You should really sleep on it!"

Rachel's sudden interjection draws all eyes to her... but she's nothing if not self-confident even in front of a crowd. Striding forward, she flashes a grin.

"Big decisions should never be made so soon after traumatic experiences, right? I'm sure nobody would mind if you just took a night to sleep on it and made your decision in the morning."

Emma is giving Rachel a bemused look, while Lorna looks uncertain. But Thaddeus... Thaddeus slowly nods as he lowers his hand from Lorna's shoulder.

"She's right. And we have plenty of guest bedrooms if you'd rather not be portaled home right now. Feel free to take one and get some rest... you probably need it."

At hearing Thaddeus in agreement, Lorna lets out a drawn out sigh.

"... I suppose you're right. I need to get my thoughts in order and figure out what to do next. Thank you... for everything."

That last part is directed at Emma, causing the blonde to smile sweetly and bob her head.

“Of course.”

With that, Sage takes Lorna to a guest bedroom. Meanwhile, it's not difficult to get Thaddeus and Emma alone... all Rachel has to do is ask and they're happy to oblige. Soon it's just the three of them together... and at that point, Rachel figures she might as well just shoot her shot. Hm, how to best frame it though? Well...

“So I've heard you have sex powers.”

Thaddeus blinks as she directs that bit at him. Rachel just grins and runs a hand down her body.

“Wanna fuck?”

... Nailed it.

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A/N: Rachel after watching Thaddeus and Emma effortlessly seduce Lorna in like 5 seconds flat: “Nah, I'd win.”

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