

Rennillia:Prequel

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I laid across my bed, relieved the house was finally quiet, after listening to my father yell for four straight hours. He was in one of his moods. Who was I kidding, all he ever did was yell. Nothing ever went right for him and nothing was ever good enough for that man. Truthfully, around the hundredth time I heard him tell my mother she ruined his life, I was happy he was so miserable. She wasn't any better. At least he yelled. My mother hardly said a word. No 'I love you' or 'How was your day', just the occasional 'Do what your father tells you.' Maybe, I had ruined both their lives. But with my sixteenth birthday two weeks away and the idea of having only two years of juvenile hell left as a minor, I thought about how wonderful eighteen would be. I would be out of their house and on my own.

Chapter 1

I turned my lamp off and curled up in my comforter. As I drifted off, I heard a knock at my window. Startled at first, I was relieved to see it was Hert standing outside. I turned my lamp on before walking over to

open my window. When I did, he stepped back and motioned for me to come outside.

Climbing out of my window, I whispered, "What are you doing here?"

Shaking his head, Hert informed, "I came to tell you bye."

"Where are you going?"

"My mother can put up with him all she wants but..." he started before I stopped him, suggesting, "Okay, come inside before the neighbors see you."

Hesitant at first, he followed me through the window and into my room.

"Is your father still awake?"

Shaking my head, I looked up at him and gasp, "What happened?"

I hadn't notice outside in the dark, he was beat up.

"What do you think?"

"Are you okay?" I asked as I walked into the bathroom and grabbed a towel.

Scowling at me, he nodded.

"Stay here, I'm gonna get you some ice."

"I don't need it. I came to tell you I was leaving," he stated as he smoothed his messy black hair away from his forehead.

Starting to get upset, I fussed, "You can't leave."

"Well, I am," Hert snapped and turned toward the window.

Thinking quickly, I offered, “Stay with me.”

Turning back toward me, he shook his head, saying, “Your father’s never gonna let me stay here.”

With a smile, I shared, “Then we won’t tell him.”

Hert started to argue with me as I persuaded, “They never come in here and their rooms are all the way on the other side of the house.”

Giving me an unsure expression, he replied, “That’s a really bad idea.”

“I know, but it’ll just be for a little while until we figure something out. Besides I’ll never forgive you for leaving me, I’ll be mad at you forever.”

Narrowing his eyes at me, Hert conceded and sat down on a little bench seat next to my bed.

After quietly leaving the room, I quickly returned with ice for his eye. Hert didn’t say anything about his father or anything else; he just sat there looking angry. Not long after the ice melted we went to sleep.

I slept for a few hours before opening my eyes to look at the clock. It was five thirty, which gave us little time to figure out how to get Hert out of the house before school

started. Sitting up, I looked over at Hert. He had slept sitting up on my bench. His arms were folded tight against his chest. Wishing he would open his eyes, the clear blue always softened his appearance. Smiling slightly as I watched him, I thought he looked angry even in his sleep. No wonder I was his only friend. Most people were put off by Hert, but I liked him. He was quick to argue or get in a fight and most of the time he appeared unhappy. That is what I liked about him though, it made the rare times when he was happy or actually smiled memorable and special.

Picking up one of the smaller pillows off my bed, I threw it at him. Laughing a little when he immediately jumped to his feet, I watched him pick it up and throw it back at me.

Still laughing, I said, “Good Morning Sunshine,” as I watched him walk to my bathroom.

Stretching out on my bed, I thought of a plan.

Although it wasn’t unusual for Hert to show up at school with black eyes or bruises, I thought it might be a good idea for both of us to skip a day.

Hert walked out of the bathroom, asking, “Shouldn’t you be getting ready?”

Shaking my head at him, I replied, “We aren’t going today.”

“Oh, we’re not?”

Smiling wide, I shared, “My father’s leaving for some job thing this morning. He won’t be back for a few days and you know my mother couldn’t care less what I do, so I’m sick.”

Giving me a suspicious look, Hert said, “You don’t look sick.”

Frustrated, he wasn’t excited about my plan, I snapped, “You afraid Carmella’s gonna get mad?”

“What?” he snapped back, appearing surprised.

Shaking my head at him, I explained, “I know you see her.”

“Don’t be stupid, Renni.”

“I’m not stupid, you are for...” I started before I heard my father’s voice.

Quickly hopping off the bed, I warned, “Stay here, I’ll be right back.”

Putting on my best sick face, I slowly walked into the kitchen.

My mother was standing in front of the stove cooking breakfast while my father sat at the table. Slowly pulling out one of the

chairs, I slunk down in it and laid my head down on the table.

“What’s wrong with you?” my father grumbled.

Looking over at him, I pouted, “I don’t feel good.”

“Why not?”

Shrugging my shoulders, I answered, “I just feel sick.”

Ignoring my pretend sickness, my father questioned, “Do you know what that boy did?”

I could have asked what boy, but why pretend. I knew he was talking about Hert. I just shook my head at him.

“That disrespectful teppista got himself into a fight with Charles then ran off,” he shared with an ‘I told you so’ tone.

Even though he was sitting in my room, I asked, “Do they know where he is?”

Still condescending in tone my father assured, “That mother of his is looking for him.”

It was hard for me to keep pretending to be sick when my father was bad mouthing Hert.

Really, I couldn’t see how Hert was wrong? How dare he try to stop his father, Charles, from hitting his mother? As bad as my own father was, I never saw him raise a hand to my mother. I was another story

altogether. It was different with me of course. First, I was his kid and second, I imagine if I silently obeyed my father like my mother did it would be different. I guess I kind of knew my behavior was disrespectful at times but there was only so much respect I was willing to pay someone who wished I wasn't here at all. Except recently, my father seemed pleased to have me as a daughter. All he talked about was some stupid dinner I was ordered to attend with him at the Roberts's house on Friday.

Putting my need to defend my friend to the side, I realized, I had a great idea.

"I'm really worried," I pouted, still trying to sound sick.

Angry, my father yelled, "You don't need to worry about that boy!"

Shaking my head at him, I whined, "Not about that. I'm feeling really sick, what if I'm not better by Friday?"

My father's tone changed instantly as he ordered, "I'll be home Friday morning; I don't want you going to school until I get back."

Nodding, I asked, "Can I just eat in my room then?"

"Fix your plate then go back to bed," he stated as he waited for my mother to serve him.

Making it way more dramatic than necessary, I filled a plate with eggs, sausage and biscuits before slowly shuffling back to my room.

Closing my door and locking it behind myself, I smiled wide.

“We’re good. I don’t have to go to school until Friday.”

Hert took the plate as I handed it to him, asking, “Is this for me?”

Nodding, I grabbed a biscuit and sat down next to him.

In between bites, Hert asked, “So how did you pull that off?”

“Cause, I’m a genius.”

Rolling his eyes at me, Hert finished his breakfast.

When he was done, I took the plate and set it on my dresser.

“Do you wanna take a shower?” I asked, noticing he was pretty dirty.

Shrugging, he said, “Yea, but...” before I interrupted him, saying, “I think I have some of your clothes in my drawer from the last time we were out at the pond. I’ll throw your dirty clothes in the washer.”

“Your mother won’t wonder why you’re washing my clothes?”

“No. Whenever he leaves she just stays in her room. I think she’s depressed or something. I know I would be if I were married to that man.”

Nodding, Hert stood up and walked to my bathroom.

After his shower, I handed him his clean clothes and took his dirty ones to the laundry room. When I got back to my room, Hert was stretched out across my bed asleep. Thinking, a little nap wouldn’t hurt me either, I carefully laid down next to him.

I watched him sleeping for a while, thinking how much I would miss him if he really did leave. The majority of our time was spent arguing or being mad at each other but we were the same. Well, he was considerably more responsible than me but usually I could talk him into almost anything. On the one hand, it was exciting to be so close to freedom but on the other hand, I worried what would happen when we did grow up. Carmella wasn’t his girlfriend but he did see her. Although he had said once it was just a thing, which meant they didn’t go out, he just slept with her now and then. I wondered if that was true, and if it was, for how long? I had never even had an actual

boyfriend and Hert was already sleeping with someone.

All boyfriend/girlfriend conversations were banned after I told Hert that when Jimmy Marcello kissed me he grabbed my butt and Hert beat him up at school the next day. After that, we agreed it was best not to share everything. Technically, I wasn't allowed to date. Something about how young ladies are supposed to behave and some other stupid thing my father made up about waiting for the right opportunity to make my life miserable. However, I didn't really care. I didn't want a boyfriend. It all seemed like too much trouble. The girls in class were always saying how their boyfriend's liked this or didn't like that and how they wanted them to dress. Hert was better than a boyfriend. I never had to pretend with him. The longer I spent dwelling on it, the more I realized I wasn't going to get any sleep.

I must have watched Hert sleep for about an hour before he opened his eyes.

"Were you watching me sleep?" he mumbled as he sat up.

"Sorta, I was thinking."

Making a disturbed face at me, he said, "That's not creepy."

Shaking my head, I rolled my eyes, asking, “Why do you see Carmella?”

“Don’t start Renni,” he fussed before I snapped at him, “I was seriously asking. I mean what if you get her pregnant? Is she someone you’d want to marry?”

Making a face at me, he said, “She’s not going to get pregnant.”

“Oh, you know that for a fact?”

Appearing serious, Hert assured, “Yes, I do.”

“I just don’t understand, I mean...” before Hert cut me off, saying, “I know how you feel about sex because of your parents, but seriously you’re not even curious? I mean are you really gonna go your whole life without it?”

Shrugging, I replied, “It just doesn’t seem like it’s worth ruining lives. What’s wrong with just not? I would rather grow up and be friends with you than be married and have kids.”

“I’m never getting married but that’s different.”

“How is it different?”

With a shrug Hert said, “It’s hard to explain.”

Feeling inspired, I sat up and announced, “You and I should live together after graduation.”

“What? Where did that come from?”

Smiling wide, I said, “Just think, it would be perfect. If neither of us are getting married then why not. I’ll cook for you and listen to you complain and you’ll work and let me smack you around every now and then, you know, so it feels like home.”

“Oh you’re real funny,” he laughed as he tackled me.

Rolling around on my bed, he held my arms as I tried to break free. Laughing too, I stopped struggling for a moment. There was a time when we were more evenly matched but now that we were older it was easy for him to out muscle me.

“Now what are you gonna do?” he laughed.

With a wicked smile, I leaned up and licked him right across his face. Immediately letting go, he jumped off the bed wiping his face off with his arm.

“That’s just sick Renni,” he fussed as I rolled onto my stomach and laughed into my pillow.

More at a giggle now, I patronized, “Aww, did I upset you.”

“Now I know why you’ve never had a boyfriend,” he smirked.

His comment stung a little so I snapped, “I’m just a little more selective then some people.”

I was pleased my comment made him mad.

We didn't say a word to each other for the rest of the day. As it got to be later in the evening, I made us sandwiches. After throwing a blanket on the floor for Hert to lie on, I went to sleep thinking of different ways to irritate him the next day.

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