

Immaculate Spirit

Chapter 60

Resuming his walk after Maggie called, he continued to visit stand after stand. Some were there just for the new students to have fun and bond with each other while others were representing clubs and associations that wanted to recruit new members. He was asked a couple of times already but he had turned all of them down. He wanted to see all of what Columbia has to offer before making a decision.

Based on what he was seeing the new students were welcomed warmly everywhere, conveying efficiently the concept of community that seemed so important to the school. Even if he was not joining any club yet, everyone was nice to him which was pleasant to see to the eye.

Hearing raucous laughter and whistling ahead Nathaniel got curious and came closer to the stand where the noise was coming from. There were at least twenty students both boys and girls in front of a table. Behind the table was a twenty year old guy who was playing with a deck of cards. Looking at the table and the three cards on it Nathaniel recognized the betting game 'Find the Lady' easily. The game could be found in every market and every country on the planet. It was a game where you put three cards on the table. Two jacks and one queen. The goal was to find the queen after the guy moved the cards around. It was a known scam where it usually ended with the queen replaced during the moving of the cards.

Observing the scene, he could see that no money was involved and that they were playing just for fun. The guy moving the cards was quite an entertainer but his movement technic was basic at best and the person chosen to find the lady was often finding it. On and on, it was fun and even Nathaniel laughed with the crowd.

"Okay, I see that my client here has found out my trick so it's time to make a change. Who wants to try to FIND... THE... LADY?"

Immediately a number of hands shot up, wanting to be next. Looking attentively at the crowd in front of him with a smile his eyes landed on

Nathaniel who did not raise his hand but seemed to have fun. He did not know why but something about that student made him pause.

"Okay okay! I found our next guest, you there the blond with the blue shirt, come over here!" He said pointing his finger at Nathaniel.

Surprised to be picked and cheered on by the crowd, Nathaniel made his way to the front of the table.

"Okay, are you familiar with the game?"

"Yeah, I saw it once or twice before so I'm good!" Nathaniel said.

"Great, are you ready to FIND THE LADY?" He said, moving the card around under the YES of the crowd.

"Okay, where is it now?" He asked once he finished.

"Right!" Nathaniel said immediately.

Turning the card in question, the queen appear making the crowd cheer again.

"That was the beginner luck! Another round!"

"Left!"

"Middle!"

"Left!"

"Right!"

At each round Nathaniel could see that the guy in front of him was upping his game but he was still too slow to fool him.

"And this time, where it is?" The guy asked with a smirk.

"Right sleeve!" Nathaniel answered again, smiling.

"What the hell!" The guy exclaimed.

He was sure that he had got him this time. Picking the queen of heart out of his right sleeve, he was booed playfully by the crowd.

"I didn't know that you were this good, my name is Mark." He said, extending his hand.

"Nathaniel. That was not a big deal, I'm not bad at those kind of tricks myself." He said, shaking hands.

"Really? Want to take my place and show us something?"

"Not a problem."

"OK. Who wants Nathaniel to show a new trick?" He asked getting a loud YES from the crowd.

They were impressed by his ability to find the queen each time and wanted to see what he could do. Nathaniel picked a new deck of cards that was present and started shuffling it.

"Okay, this time you all are going to play! So be attentive!" Nathaniel said placing three cards on the table. The queen of heart in the center escorted by two jacks.

"Ready?"

"YES!"

"It's on."

Nathaniel began moving the cards around under the scrutinizing gazes of thirty people with swift hands. A few seconds later he stopped.

"Okay, raise your hands the ones who think the queen is on the right!" Twelves hands shot up immediately.

"Alright, all of you move on that side!" He said pointing on the right.

"Raise your hands the ones who think the queen is on the left?" This time only

nine people put their hands up. Mark choose to stay in the middle with the rest of the students who did not pick sides..

"Okay, move to that side then."

Seeing that everyone was in position, he looked at each group and was satisfied to see a man in all three of the groups.

"Since we are looking for a queen we need a courageous knight. Left group, who is your Queen investigator?" The group looked at each other almost timidly until one of the taller guys put his hand up.

"I'm the queen investigator!"

"Good, come over here and turn your card." Nathaniel say encouragingly. Coming over, the guy picked the card and turned it over. Seeing a queen the guy jumped in joy showing it to his group who cheered until Mark realised something.

"Wait! This is not the queen of heart!" Hearing that everyone looked attentively at the card and realized he was right. It was not the queen of hearts but the queen of diamonds. The left group stopped cheering and the guy put the card down.

"Even if your quest was not successful, you still managed to save a queen. Come on guys, this valiant knight is worth some applause!" Nathaniel exhorted the crowd who started clapping almost instantly. The guy came back to his group and was even clapped on the shoulder a few times by his mates.

"Ok middle group, have you nominated your queen investigator?" He asked and a few second later, Mark approached the table. Taking the card and turning it around a queen of clubs appears in front of the middle group who sighed.

"Noble knight sometimes it's not the results that matter but the road traveled. Middle group, cheer for your valiant soldier!" Nathaniel said, quickly follow by clapping.

"Right group! Our entire crusade now rests on your shoulders! Pick your knight wisely!" A second later a rather attractive man walked out of the right group and took position in front of the card. Picking it up and turning it, the whole crowd sighed seeing the queen of spades.

"But where is the queen of heart?" The last knight asked, a question that was quickly echoed among the students present. The group of thirty people had gone up to almost fifty now as the trick began to gather more and more attention. Nathaniel took on an expression of being deep in thought for a moment before opening his eyes wide.

"I know, it's a ritual! Knight, put the queen of clubs first face down, then the queen of diamonds and last the queen of spades. Make them touch each other perfectly, that's crucial!" Nathaniel ordered. The guys put them neatly in the order asked of him and then looked at Nathaniel. Seeing that everything was perfect he approached the cards and tapped the stack with his finger once.

"The ritual is now completed, you can pick up the card knight. Show us our queen."

Doubtful, the man took the card and turned it around so that the crowd behind him could see it. Seeing the queen of heart, his jaw almost touched the floor. He could not comprehend how Nathaniel did it as he was so close. His reaction was mirroring the crowd perfectly who had mixed expressions of awe and disbelief.

"Thank you." Nathaniel said making a bow which seemed to wake the crowd up who gave him a thunderous applause. Leaving the deck on the table he exited the stand after being high fived a couple of times by some of the students.

At that moment, a third year student came close to Mark who was still eyeing the queen of heart on the table, shocked.

"Who the hell was that?"

"I have no fuc*ing idea."