

Brynna:

Karia, I love you. Like family. But not like sisters, like--agh, no. That's terrible. Karia, I'm in love with you. Like not romantically but in a like-like sort of way. No, that's worse. Karia, I want to be with you. Through the good and the bad, by your side always. I don't want to have to go home at the end of the night if it means I have to leave you. Because you bring so much light into my life and--no, that doesn't work either.

Mason:

Really? I thought that last one was touching.

Brynna:

Jesus Christ! When did you get here?

Mason:

Stealth is one of my finer attributes. We're ready to have you back again. It sounds like your rehearsal time is over.

Brynna:

Sounds like.

(Theme song)

Brynna:

Karia! Oh my gosh, you're okay, thank god. I--I have something to tell you.

Karia:

(seriously) Yes, you do.

Brynna:

Wait, what?

Karia:

Mason said that your mom is at the center of several missing persons cases.

Brynna:

(sighs) That sounds like her.

Karia:

And that James killed a security guard to get the Looking Glass.

Brynna:

I don't really know that part. I never asked where he got it.

Karia:

What I'm really curious about, though, is what Mason said about you.

Brynna:

About me?

Karia:

Yeah, he said that you had a less-than-spotless record yourself. What did he mean by that?

Brynna:

He said that?

Karia:

What did he mean by that, Brynna?

Brynna:

(sighs) When James was being attacked, I came to his aid. By the time I arrived he had killed someone in self-defense. My mother told me to kill any other Anti-Arcanists I came across on sight. I didn't agree with that, but when one attacked me I cast an electric spell to stun him. It turns out he had a pacemaker and the blast fried it to bits. I tried to mend it but it was too late.

Mason:

His name was Fester McKintyre. He had a wife and two young children.

Brynna:

Fuck, how are you still here?

Mason:

Just providing relevant information.

Brynna:

It was an accident, Karia. I didn't want to kill anyone. I'm not my mother.

Karia:

Then why did you lie?

Brynna:

What?

Karia:

I directly asked you if you killed somebody and you said no. Why did you lie to me?

Brynna:

Because it's something I'm not proud of and I was afraid you would look down on me.

Karia:

Well guess what, Brynna? I am now. Not because you made a mistake but because you lied to me about something this important.

Brynna:

Karia--

Karia:

No. How am I supposed to trust you when you won't answer the most basic questions? You're like all the other mages. You only care about yourself and when someone gets in your way you just disappear them, not caring how they fit into the puzzle that is this world or who might need them.

Brynna:

Kari, it was an accident.

Karia:

Lying wasn't. You expect me to trust my life with someone who won't even tell me the truth? I risked everything by coming back here to save you. Brynna, I would have understood. You just didn't trust me. So how am I supposed to trust you back?

Brynna:

I'm sorry.

Karia:

We're done talking now.

Brynna:

But Karia--

Karia:

I said we're done talking now.

Brynna:

Kari, please--

Karia:

I might talk to you again at some point, but not if I hear another word from you right now.

(Brynna sighs.)

Mason:
That was quite the exchange, girls. I appreciate the entertainment. I'll take my leave now.

(In the busy streets of Germany)

Emi:
You've grown unstealthy in your old age, James.

James:
It was not my intention to hide.

Emi:
What do you want?

James:
Just visiting an old friend. One I thought was dead.

Emi:
I could not tell anyone, James. I will not apologize for that.

James:
I knew you wouldn't.

Emi:
So why are you here?

James:
Because your daughter is in peril.

Emi:
My son can handle his own affairs.

James:
You do not have a son, Emi. But your daughter is being held against her will.

Emi:
I am a little busy with my own afterlife, James. After all, I have the Looking Glass to look after. It seems you could not look after it.

James:
You care not for your bloodline at the very least?

Emi:

The one my son ended anyway by taking foreign medications to pervert his body?

James:

The one that includes your daughter, who pursued her own happiness and truth as any good mage would do.

Emi:

He got himself into this mess. He can get himself out of captivity.

James:

When I said she was held I didn't mean by a cell. If it were just about her I would trust her to get out on her own. But they also have her weakness. They will threaten Karia to get her to do their bidding, and she will be powerless against them.

Emi:

A fate he brought on himself by becoming soft.

James:

So she should sacrifice who she loves most to save her own skin?

Emi:

I did it.

James:

Yes, and look how you turned out.

Emi:

What is that supposed to mean?

James:

We both know you changed after you lost Tomas.

Emi:

I did nothing of the sort.

James:

Your denial does not change the facts. Don't let what happened to you happen to your daughter.

Emi:

I must protect the Looking Glass. I have no time to concern myself with these matters.

James:
Not even for an old friend who pleads with you to reconsider.

Emi:
Not even.

James:
Very well. Then you have lost one more person from your life, Emi. I wish you the best.

Emi:
Goodbye, James. I know not what you plan to do, but enjoy your course.

James:
I wish I could return the sentiment, but I have nothing to say to you. If you won't, then I'm going to protect *her*. At least use her pronouns when you neglect your only child.

(Karia and Brynna sit in silence.)

Karia:
Why?

Brynna:
What?

Karia:
Why did you leave that out? You joke about killing all the time. Why wouldn't you tell me about the time you actually did?

Brynna:
I don't joke. I wanted to understand how a mage thinks so you would be prepared to enter this world. And I told you, I was ashamed.

Karia:
You've never kept secrets from me. Even the most shameful ones. Why start now?

Brynna:
(sighs) Because this was painful for more than one reason.

Karia:
What do you mean?

Brynna:

I've never forgiven myself for killing that man. Apparently his name was Fester. I didn't know he had a family. So when I had the chance to take down another Anti-Arcanist I let him escape. My mother was furious and refused to talk to me. I was still a kid when it happened and she didn't say a word to me until weeks ago when she faked her own death.

Karia:

(softening) Brynna.

Brynna:

I lost my mom that day because I was soft.

Karia:

That's not your fault. That's on her.

Brynna:

That's not the way she saw it, and she made it abundantly clear she felt that way.

Karia:

You're her child! She's supposed to be the grown-up here.

Brynna:

Well she believed leaving me alone was the mature thing to do. And maybe she was right to punish me.

Karia:

No, Brynna, you don't deserve to be punished. You were brave and acted according to your conscience. That's something to be proud of.

Brynna:

Is it?

Karia:

Yes.

Brynna:

Well, if I hadn't saved that man, we wouldn't be in any of this mess.

Karia:

What do you mean?

Brynna:

That person I saved? His name was Mason.

Karia:
This Mason?

Brynna:
The one interrogating us, yeah.

Karia:
Brynna, what Mason does isn't your responsibility. His hands are the ones that are dirty. And even if he was gone, someone else would have taken his place.

Brynna:
Still, I never wanted you to get tied up in this mess.

Karia:
I'm the one who came back.

Brynna:
And you shouldn't have done that.

Karia:
Why not?

Brynna:
Because I love you.

Karia:
I love you too, Brynna. That's why I came back.

Brynna:
No, Karia. I--

(Brynna sighs.)

Brynna:
When I say I love you, I don't mean it the way two friends say it. I mean it as something else.

Karia:
What do you mean?

Brynna:
I mean that I'm *in* love with you, Karia. And I don't know what that means because I don't normally feel this kind of thing. I've never felt the desire to settle down. I never wanted to run

away with somebody or jump into someone's arms to kiss them in the rain. But when I'm with you I feel safe. When I see you smile I feel like I could do anything. Karia, when I look at you...I'm home.

Karia:
I--wow.

Brynna:
Wow?

Karia:
Yeah, wow.

Brynna:
Why wow?

Karia:
Because I feel the same way.

Brynna:
Really?

Karia:
Yeah. Brynna, when we played house as kids, I felt like that's how I wanted my life to be. Living with you, cooking with you, crying with you. And when you came out as aro and I came out as ace I was terrified it would never work. It broke my heart.

Brynna:
I felt the same way.

Karia:
We fill each other's gaps.

Brynna:
We finish each other's

Karia:
Hot pockets.

Brynna:
You stay away from my hot pockets.

Karia:

I make no promises.

Brynna:

So what does this make us? Friends? Girlfriends? Friends with different benefits?

Karia:

What if it just makes us Brynna and Karia? We don't need to put a label on it. We're just us, and that's enough.

Brynna:

Yeah, as long as I'm with you, that's enough.

Karia:

(After a pause) I love you, Brynna.

Brynna:

I love you too, Karia. Does this mean you forgive me for lying to you?

Karia:

I'll get there probably. I'm sorry your mom is such a piece of shit. I met her and I can see her doing all that.

Brynna:

It is what it is, but thank you.

Karia:

Now there is one thing you can do to help me forgive you.

Brynna:

What?

Karia:

Get us out of here.

Brynna:

How?

Karia:

I need you to come up with a plan of getting out of here after we leave this room.

Brynna:

After?

Karia:

Yes, come up with something we can do from that point forward.

Brynna:

You can get us that far?

Karia:

(smiling) Leave it to me.