Side Story Growth

The Guildhall was as rowdy as ever a young Rebbecca stalked its halls watching everyone from a distance. She had only been here for about a year, but she believed she was doing well for herself. Her boss's words echo in the back of her mind. “Make a name for yourself for our efforts, but do not make our organization known.” That is all he said before stranding her here on Porta Nexus. She looked around at the chaos that was The Guild.

Her gaze drifted over the crowded halls, filled with shouting, laughter, and the occasional clash of steel. The Guild was a strange place, a mess of honor and opportunism. Some of its members claimed loyalty to the Guild, their chests puffed up with pride, but Rebbecca didn’t buy it. Their real loyalty was to their wallets. It was both disgusting and, in a way, admirable. At least greed was simple. There were no elaborate plans or lofty ideals just a brutal, honest kind of self-interest.

She saw a gathering of a few of the members peaking through the door taking notice of her as the noise kept intensifying. “Oh hey, you're that Hacker kid, right? Everyone's been talking about you.” One of the men said smiling. “What's going on in there?” She asked. “Oh well come see yourself.” He said moving out of the way so her short frame could see. Caerith the right hand of the guild was their sword drawn, as a kid with bright orange hair swung at him with all the might she could muster. His

strikes seemed interesting and powerful but Caerith had no issue blocking each one of them.

“Oh, it's her,” Rebbecca said mildly interested. “Yeah, she shows up now and then,” the man said, scratching his head. “The Guild masters seem to like her for some reason, but she never sticks around long. I think her name’s Reagan or something.” Rebbecca rubbed her chin, narrowing her eyes as she studied the fiery-haired girl. She’d caught glimpses of her before but never enough to get a proper read. Now, watching her fight, Rebbecca sized her up in every way. There was something about her, something raw and unpolished, but undeniably magnetic. She couldn’t deny it: something about this girl drew her in.

The man seemed to take notice right away. “Oh, what this looks like someone got a little crush.” He joked. Rebbecca blushed shaking her head her cadence thrown off by his sudden statement. “I'm simply gauging the competition.” She said defending herself. “Right.” The man said as they both turned their attention back to the fight. The young Raleigh had not let up in the slightest every attack was fierce and full of power but the seasoned mastery of Caerith's skills seemed like an imovible object. “You have done well and grown much stronger. Let's call it here.”

Raleigh sighs seemingly disappointed she failed to land even a little hit but not wanting to speak up. “So, does that mean you'll let me take on jobs?” She asked right away. The elf sighs. “I won't deny you have become strong, but taking on jobs is dangerous and unpredictable its not a controlled environment like this one. Raleigh just gave him a look asking if he was serious but with a hint of desperation. “Right, I suppose you aren't a stranger to that.” He said trying to find the right words knowing she was on the run all the time from the empire.

“It's not that I don't think you can handle yourself. I know you can hold your own against others, but running from trouble, and seeking it out are two different things. There is also a chance you will make more enemies that way. We will give you the means and skills to fight, but we can not support you further as long as you aren't a member you know this. I'm sorry, but this was Garrick's choice.” Caerith said as her face lowered offering no retort. Caerith frowns not seeming to like that he

had to say it leaving.

The people around the door were all scattered other than Rebbecca. He walks past her without a word. A smile forms on her face she seems to have hatched a plan. She vanishes in the crowd watching to see what Raleigh will do next. She simply walked into the main hall ordering some food and taking it to a corner looking sad. Rebbecca pops up next to her tired of waiting. “What's with all the moping? You look like one of those dramatic brooding guys from a video game.” She said teasing her as she slid closer to her. She offered no response.

“Come on, it can’t be that bad,” Rebbecca pressed, her voice laced with mock sympathy. “Why do you want a job so badly, anyway?” Raleigh finally muttered, “I need money,” her tone flat and devoid of bravado. Rebbecca sighed, clearly unimpressed. “Wow, riveting stuff. You should be a motivational speaker.” She shifted closer, her tone softening slightly. “Look, maybe we can help each other. You’re not allowed to register with the Guild, right? Don’t worry, I won’t pry. But I could use someone with your skills on a mission. Here’s the deal: you help me with the job, I take credit for it, and we split the money. Simple.”

Raleigh was paying more attention now. “You... You mean it?” She said with more hopeful eyes. “What's your angle, you must have some other motive?” She asked seeming to fall back into her more guarded persona. “Alright, you got me. You see I want to be a hacker right? I have the skills, but not the rank. You have to be pretty high up there to get that kind of mission, but if I do this mission it will bring me closer to that end.” She explains.

“Why do you need me at all then? If you are really that good.” She asked not sold that she did. “You never can have too much help. Trust me it will be worth your while.” Rebbecca reassured her. Raleigh sighed not fully trusting her, but knowing the money she had was dwindling and she soon wouldn't even have enough to fuel her ship. “Alright, I'm in.” She said coldly. “Perfect!” Rebbecca said clapping her hands together like this was always the outcome she expected.

Raleigh steels herself ready for everything, but when she blinks and is suddenly surrounded by

a small army of goons she realizes she had no idea what she was getting into and Rebbecca is nowhere in sight. “The hell are you doing here kid?” One of the men said with anger. “I'm not so sure myself.” She said under her breath. “You think just because you're a brat we won't beat the breaks off of you. We don't fuck around.” Another one of them said as they all pulled out their weapons Raleigh sighed doing the same.

From the rooftop overlooking the scene, Rebbecca smiled, her eyes glinting with amusement. “She’s doing fine,” she muttered, watching Raleigh hold off the group with only moderate trouble. A few heavy swings sent the nearest goons sprawling, and her movements were quick, deliberate, and far more impressive than Rebbecca had expected. “Not bad for a stray,” she mused, slipping down through an open window.

Inside, Rebbecca found herself in the office of a rundown building, her corded robotic arm unspooling with a faint hum. A man behind the desk, his shirt half-unbuttoned and a cigarette dangling from his lips, raised an eyebrow at her sudden appearance. “The hell are you?” he asked, leaning forward slightly. Rebbecca’s smile widened, a dangerous glint in her eye. “Just the messenger,” she said sweetly, the cords from her arm snapping forward in an instant. They coiled around his neck with a mechanical hiss, cutting off his next breath. “And you’ve got a message to deliver.”

“Who hired you?” The man said gasping for air. “That's not important. They want you either dead or ruined, which one do you prefer?” She asked as the man shook his head pleading for his life with his motions. She smirks knowing now they can talk for real.

Back down with Raleigh she is still holding her own but starting to run out of steam with such a large group. “Who is this little brat?” One of the men asked a little terrified. Rebbecca joins the fray grabbing onto Raleigh's hand and running off. “Time to go. Wow, you took out a lot more people than I expected.” She commented impressed with her. All the men chased after them. “You threw me to the wolves,” Raleigh said with slight anger. “Prefer the term distraction.” She said in protest. Raleigh grunted in annoyance pulling her hand away but following.

They round a corner only to be met with another large group of men. “There they are!” One of them said chasing after them too as they narrowly avoided being hit. “Nice plan,” Raleigh said mocking her. “Oh look at you was that banter? You'd be a lot more likable if you made quipy remarks like me. Lighten up.” Rebbecca said finding a grate to duck into. Both of them crawled through it seemingly out of danger now. “Don't lie to me. You may put on this face, but I can tell you are just as sad as me.” Raleigh said to her causing Rebbecca's face to drop.

She turned to face her with a bit of anger. “You think you know anything about me?” “You think to think you have everyone else figured out.” Raleigh mocked. Rebbecca exhaled sharply, her anger giving way to something more resigned. “You’re strangely perceptive,” she admitted with a bitter edge. She leaned against the tunnel wall, her voice softer now. “It’s not just about putting on a show. Acting this way it’s not just for fun. It’s a great way to break people’s guard, even if it’s not the whole truth.”

They keep moving not speaking another word until they find a way out of the crawl space. Unfortunately, it would seem the group figured out their location and now they were even more surrounded than before. The boss from the office points at Rebbecca. “It's her she took it all. If we don't get it back we are finished.” He said in desperation all the men closing in more. Without hesitation, Raleigh transforms her tool into a massive Hammer and starts to spin around knocking men down like pins.

“Death it is!” Rebbecca said releasing her cords once more as the end of them opened up with a sharp blade making the man almost piss himself in fear running away from the little girl. She then wrapped her cords around one of the men's legs and flung them at another making them all fall. “Guess this is one of those times where the only real choice is the fight our way out.” She smiled looking at Raleigh, she initially frowned before doing the same. It was tough but they managed to beat them all back and get out of there.

Rebbecca went up to the counter collecting her reward after turning in what she had taken from

the man. “What exactly did you take?” Raleigh asked curious. “Everything.” She explained. Only leads to more questions. “Right... this has been... enlightening but I don't think we should make this a regular thing.” She said holding out her hand for her half. “Rebbecca handed her a quarter instead. “It wasn't that bad.” She said only for Raleigh to keep her hand out waiting for the rest. “Fine, fine. Here.” She said relenting giving it to her.

Raleigh turns away ready to walk off but stopping herself. “I think I still learned something maybe your words should be considered thanks for that.” She said but before she could respond Raleigh bolted. The White-Haired Reaper had appeared before them both and started chasing her down like he always did. Rebbecca smiled. “I hope we meet again.”