

The Secret of Their Friendship

By: MNT



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Prologue

Leading up to June 6th, 1998, a lot occurred that pushed me to abandon my family. My son, Omaru, was born four years prior exactly, but uncontrollable issues tore apart what should've been a joyous moment. Although I tried to push it aside and accept what fate offered me, I couldn't allow myself to return to the lifestyle I abandoned long ago. Eventually, my resentment for my newborn son reached the point where I wanted nothing more than to abandon him and start over again. I planned my fresh attempt at life, persuading my wife with only a fraction of the truth. Fast-forward to September 30, 1997, and our daughter, Lily, was born. In my eyes, she's perfect--everything I wanted and didn't get with my son. My wife Cedina, however, realized my true intentions shortly after. The truth reignited our fights over the fate of our failure. On my son's fourth birthday I snapped, unable to accept the existence of my son...

Part One: Before the War

“Please, dear, it’ll work out!” My wife begged, stretching her arms towards me.

“You say that every time, Cedina, and nothing’s changed!” I smacked her outreached hands away, glaring down at the frail boy staring up in horror at me. “It won’t change until we get rid of him!”

She shook her head at me, horrified by my words. “He isn’t the problem-”

“I’ve had enough of this,” I snapped, stomping towards the front door. As I swung it open, I faced Cedina again, spitting out my built-up thoughts, “I refuse to live here and be happy when that little piece of **** is still with us. I’m leaving, Cedina, and I’m never coming back, I swear it!” As I slammed the door behind me, I heard her burst into sobs from within the house. I stormed down the sidewalk, some small doubts crept their way up to the forefront. *I don’t want to ruin things for Lily and Cedina, but...* I recalled the image of my son, remembering all of the suffering he’d brought forth from the moment he was born. In the first few months following his birth, I didn’t want to blame him for what happened, but after he continuously brought misery to us, I gave up on that naive idea. I couldn’t even bear to look at him anymore, much less live with him. As I wandered about the town, planning what steps I could take next, the people around me spoke about the recent news.

“Did you hear? The Gerekan and Eregonian governments signed an alliance together. I heard they specifically mentioned setting up naval forces around the Kerlan Ocean.”

“Really? Sounds like they’re really serious about controlling the international waters.”

“Yeah. Hopefully it all blows over peacefully. We’d lose so many over such a huge issue. Especially with how dead-set the Tagains and Leikinians are on killing each other.”

The other man nodded, adding on his disgust with the ancient dispute between my people and the Tagains.

I refrained from lashing out at his ignorant opinion for the moment, realizing that their main concern could become an opportunity for me. The countries of the world could dream of a peaceful resolution as much as they wanted, but a war encroached quickly, inevitably, especially considering the recent creation of KOCF, a control force dedicated to restricting the availability of the Kerlan Ocean. *I guess I don’t have many choices now. It’s either live on the streets or sell my service to the army.* I couldn’t stand the thought of being in the same situation I lived in long ago in my home country, so I reached a conclusion quickly. *Maybe after all’s said and done, that failure of a child will be gone and I can live the rest of my life peacefully with Cedina and Lily...*

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After a few weeks of testing, the recruiters returned to me with a smile plastered on their faces.

“Congratulations, Mr. Kakiria,” the man rifled through some papers, handing me one, “your training starts tomorrow promptly at 6 A.M. at the Maievera Navy Academy.”

I accepted the paper, glancing down at it only momentarily, “the Navy?”

The man nodded, “that’s what the higher ups have determined for your abilities.” He gestured behind him, “you can take the train up to the city if you don’t have a car, but just know we won’t take any excuses for being late.”

I studied the paper closer, mumbling a response to his statement. Scrawling down the paper was a general letter of acceptance, along with a list of the perks that would come with being a soldier. One reward in particular caught my eye: the veteran’s pension. I knew just as well as anyone else that a war was inevitable at this point, one that I’d undoubtedly be thrown into. Even if I wasn’t disabled, the pension would be something I’d be eligible for. *And then I really could go back home and be happy.* I closed the hotel door behind the recruiters and sat down on the worn bed tucked away in the corner. I skimmed over the papers one more time before deciding to get some rest. *It’s going to be a long day tomorrow.*

Part Two: The War

AS I suspected, the KOCF, which grew in membership over the past three years, pushed the other countries too much. In retaliation, Anasteria joined forces with Tagaida, Coralistaire, and Aenego and established the IFTW last year to fight the opposing countries. I sighed as I tugged on my uniform, the insignia of my rank carefully stitched into the fabric. Even after I trained, and having fought in some minor skirmishes that broke out during the first year of the war, I still held lingering doubts. I didn't care about dying or losing limbs, but more so the idea of fighting my people. Already many people, my commanding officers and the average soldiers, questioned me and taunted me about being a Leikinian. I stood my ground against them, but internally I understood where their thoughts laid. I left my family behind in Erego for a reason, the **** loving fools. My parents, my sisters and brothers, they were good people, but their content with our lifestyle drove me crazy--so I left them behind. *Because of him though, I'm back to where I was back at home.* I stepped out of the room, striding down to the docks. I climbed the ranks to sergeant, and the squad assigned to me waited on the naval battleship that would ferry us. Men and women stood at attention, saluting me after I approached them. I glanced over them--most of them kept a straight face, but one of the men wore a crooked grin. I glared at him and demanded, "we're not here to have a good time so keep your smile to yourself."

His grin melted for the most part, but his lime green eyes continued to sparkle with eagerness. "Yes, Sergeant Kakiria," he answered, his voice thick with an accent.

A Coralistarian. I brushed off his naivety and guided my squad onto the ship awaiting more troops. After boarding and finalizing some paperwork, I sat down with the people I would entrust my back to for the next few years or more. Most of them quietly studied me and the others, but the Coralistarian broke the silence.

“We can be a little informal between us all, right? I’m Pierre Lenderne,” he offered everyone a grand smile, “I fight for my home and my family. How about you all?”

Everyone redirected their stares to me for confirmation to speak.

“If you so wish to talk, then go ahead. I won’t,” I leaned against the wall, my gruff voice instilling hesitance in them.

Quietly, some of them spoke up. Soon enough all of them announced to each other their names, introducing themselves. “I’m Johnny Triache”, “I’m Amelia Ferlzets”, “I’m Tedur E’vonsav” rang out in the somewhat small room, and eventually the names transformed into chit-chat.

Uninterested in talking, I stood up and stepped over to the door, but the accented voice called out for me.

“Hey, Sarge--” He paused, sheepishly scratching his head, “er, sorry sir, I mean Sergeant Kakiria.” He tugged out his smile again but the friendly gesture offered nothing to me. “Why don’t you tell us more about yourself? Doesn’t have to be anything big.”

I stared at him, slightly incredulous but also disgusted by his overly jovial attitude.

“There’s nothing to tell.”

His eyes widened at my statement, confusion coloring his irises. He shook his head, "I mean no disrespect sir, but I doubt that's true."

I shook my head, frowning at him, "as I said, I have nothing to tell. Now, as you were."

I slipped through the opened door, leaving him and the other squad members to themselves. I wandered out onto the deck of the ship; The night sky enveloped the world, the stars and moon twinkling brightly. Such a sight so peaceful despite the amount of death the nations faced in the coming years.