

## Chapter 6: Turks' Pride

"A night with me is something you'll remember all your life." -Reno Lynley

The redheaded man and blonde woman filtered down the gangplank of the ferry with the other passengers, doing their best to blend in with the crowd.

"So where is this safe house?" Dinah asked as she fell into step beside him.

"Not here; that's for sure," Reno replied as they walked through the ferry-station parking lot and emerged onto a well-lit busy street.

"On this continent, then?"

"Yes, on this continent."

"Hmmm... Where would you go where you'd feel safe, that's on this continent?" Dinah mused aloud. "...Midgar! You're from there, right?" She glanced at him for a moment, looking a trifle amused. "With that accent, it can't be anywhere else."

"Right," Reno grumbled.

"And you work there and all of your friends are there"

"You make it sound like there's so many of them. There's actually only four."

"That's not something to be proud of. Your few friends are there, you live and work there, you grow up there... It's only natural that you'd go there," Dinah finished.

"If you figured that out, I think our enemies would too. It'd be stupid for me to bring you there," Reno retorted. Moving along the streets easily, he kept to the shadows and watched the few people walking the sidewalk past them with an ease born of long practice.

"Oh. Right." Those blue-gray eyes were watching him curiously. "Where're we going?"

"An inn that I know of that's nearby." Reno was beginning to lose patience with the slew of questions.

A small smile of the first he had seen on her face appeared. "Good. I'm pretty tired."

"I really don't care," he grumbled.

"Gods, do you have the worst mood swings!" They walked along in silence for several minutes, Dinah swinging her jacket angrily in one hand as she strode a little ways ahead of him.

Then Reno stopped in front of a large building that looked like a nuclear war shelter. It was tall and ugly, made of thick blue-gray concrete. "Welcome to the Hotel Turks' Pride." Reno snickered, and held the door open for her in a mock gesture of servility.

Dinah stomped on his foot as she smiled mock graciously at him and went inside, leaving Reno cursing and limping after her. "You've got to be kidding me about the name."

The inside was almost as ugly as the outside. It was a mix of garish, bright furnishings and a neutral gray paint on the walls,

along with a beige carpet. A large desk was in the back of the ugly lobby, and had a revolving chair with several books stacked on it. The desk had a computer and a little bell of the kind that you ring to get service on its brown, flat surface.

"No, I'm not. The guy that used to own it named it that in the hope that Shinra personnel would stay here when they came to Junon, and the new owner just didn't want to go through all of the paperwork that was needed to change the name."

"Cute," Dinah answered sarcastically as she went up to the front desk and rang the little bell.

A short, fat little man appeared. He was bouncing and humming to himself. That is, until he saw Reno.

"Reno?" he cried out. The little man groaned. "You've got to be kidding me!" He slumped into his chair and against the desk. The books, apparently, were there so he could actually see over the desk.

Reno's mischief-making grin widened. "Why if it ain't Fat Man Palmer!"

"Oh dear Shiva, no..." Palmer seemed to be repeating to himself.

"I take it you two know each other?" Dinah asked, standing with her arms crossed over her chest and looking from Reno to the slumped man at the desk.

Reno turned to her, the grin, if possible, widening. "This is Palmer, the ex-Shinra exec in charge of the Air and Space Department. I always used to enjoy tormenting him."

"You guys can have your little reunion later, after I go to bed. Right now, I just want a room," Dinah replied tiredly. Then she saw the smirk on Reno's face begin to direct itself toward her. "And by room, I mean two completely separate rooms."

"What, you don't want to sleep with me?" Reno asked, a mock hurt expression on his face.

"No," Dinah answered sharply.

"Well, fine, if you feel so strongly about it..."

She didn't need to say a word.

"All right, all right. You don't hafta try an' boil my blood with a look... Palmer, we need two rooms."

"O...okay," Palmer said, seeming to recover. He typed in something on the computer, then took two keys out of a drawer. He dropped one into Reno's outstretched hand, and the other into Dinah's palm. "Third floor, room numbers 34 and 35. Enjoy your stay."

"Hey, wait a minute. Don't you have to pay?" Dinah asked.

It was Reno's turn to shoot her a glare. "Don't remind him!"

Palmer shook his head. "No. It's on me as long as you get out of here first thing in the morning without having harassed me."

The redhead frowned, looking torn. "I can't harass you?"

"Don't you know a good deal when you hear one? Let's go, stupid!" Dinah gave him a shove toward the elevator.

"Stupid? Watch who you're calling stupid, bitch." He walked to the elevator.

"Shove it up your ass, Reno."

They got in the elevator, and Reno punched in the number three, sending the elevator rocketing upward.

"..."

"What are you planning?" Dinah asked suspiciously.

"What?"

"I figure that if you're not talking and insulting me, then you're planning something particularly diabolical and evil. I want to know what it is."

Reno grinned. "I was thinking about what I would have done to Palmer if he hadn't paid for the rooms."

"Ifrit, you are so juvenile." The elevator dinged, then the door slid open. They strode out into the hallway, arguing.

"Hey, I'm not the one who told someone 'shove it up your ass'!" Reno retorted.

"Well, you deserved it!"

"What makes you think that?"

"Gee, I don't know. Maybe the use of the word 'bitch,'" Dinah replied sarcastically.

Reno opened his mouth to say something when the blonde woman reached out and grabbed his arm with enough force to bruise. He stopped walking and rubbed at his arm indignantly. "What the hell'd you do that for?"

She pointed to the room number on the door in front of him. It was number 34, and she was already unlocking the door to 35.

Reno unlocked the door to his room and stepped through. Before closing it, though, he stuck his head out into the hallway. "You sure about this? A night with me is something you'll remember all your life!"

He ducked as a boot narrowly missed his head. The door slammed shut.

"You forgot your shoe," Reno called helpfully.

There was a muffled, inarticulate noise of annoyance and frustration, and he had to shut his door quickly to avoid the second boot.