

***Ellie and Royce***

*Author Notes: The scene was cut because as much as I loved part of the conversation, it is redundant and the weaker of the three scenes that dealt with these issues.*

**SPOILER ALERT!**

*This was originally the fourth to last scene. If you don't want spoilers don't keep reading this!*

ELLIE WASN'T SURE WHAT TO do with Clarissa's warning so while Caroline finger-painted, she called the infirmary. There was no answer. Fearing it might fall into the wrong hands, she didn't dare leave a message. As she struggled to decide what the best course of action, the other children ran into the room. Trying not to worry about the danger, she began their lessons. The children were a pleasant diversion, but the hours ticked by slowly.

After their parents picked them up, she hurried to the infirmary. Ian was busy with a patient, but Royce was in the office, taking inventory.

Knocking on the door, she quickly entered and with a low voice and warned him to warn Ian about another threat.

Royce just shook his head. "There are always such rumors. My son says the two of you are in some sort of lovers spat."

"If that were the case, I'd work it out," Ellie said sadly.

“Forgive me, my dear, but now I’m retired I have nothing to do but run medical supplies and interfere in my son’s love life.”

Ella smiled. “I love him. Unfortunately, the feeling isn’t mutual. There’s nothing really to speak about.”

“There certainly is. I haven’t seen you for months. How soon do you need to get back for the adult class?”

“At the top of the hour.”

“Let me get you some dinner.”

“What about Ian?”

Royce replied, “He’s still working and I’m hungry. Where would you like to go?”

Ellie shrugged.

“I went to the pub last night with Ian and Theodore. I thoroughly enjoyed the beef, but Theodore had the porkloin last night, it looked very tender. Mind if we go there?”

“That’s fine.”

Ellie did not understand Royce’s companionship, but she was glad she had it. His hand gently holding her forearm, just the way Ian held her arm when they walked down the corridor. *Did that mean he*

*still cared for her? That he didn't hate her though she married his son?*

As Ian did, Royce pulled out her chair gallantly. Unlike Ian, he asked about her day.

“Well, the kids were in good spirits, but I’ve been worried about Ian, so I fear I might have been short-tempered.” She told him about some of the interesting things which has had learned since she began teaching. He listened so intently and patiently that she almost felt like weeping with relief. He didn’t hate her.

After a time, he said, “There’s something I’ve been wanting to tell you. A young doctor has options - even here. He sees goodness in you and finds freedom in your company. If he didn’t, he would have looked harder to find someone else.”

Ellie shook her head. “I’d be happy if that were true, but its not. And since we’ve been married, I’ve just been a disappointment. He needs someone like Olivia—not me.”

“Olivia gave him the price of marrying her. He refused. Don’t mistake a boy’s crush for a man’s true love.” Royce clasped her hands. “Ellie, don’t give up, you’re his match. You’re the only person on the

station that came here with dreams of building a utopia. Not for money. Not for greed.”

“You didn’t come for money.”

“I came for my son’s friendship. After Grace died, he was all I had to live for. Like Ian, I often have trouble making friends—I don’t mean acquaintances, patients, or people who need me—but true friends. Friends who will stand beside me. He will come around if you give him time.”

“But...” Ellie said. She shook her head.

“No matter what happens, I will take you to Seattle to see your brothers when you are ready to go... Your family is important and they need to know about your marriage,” Royce said.

Shocked, she stuttered out. “I can’t afford to leave the station...and the school...”

“Until you divorce, you’re my daughter-in-law, however, no matter what happens, we are friends, aren’t we?”

“Yes.”

“Good.” He patted her hand. “I loved Grace with my whole heart...and I can see you love Ian the same way. Though it took some

prodding, Ian clarified why he married you without my knowledge or blessing.”

“I’m sorry, Royce.”

“You’ve nothing to be sorry for—but Vasili-Gaston-Rosalind-Dureau might not know how to deal with the guilt.”

“Their guilt would be different.”

“Different how?”

“The four would feel it differently. Vasili wouldn’t feel guilt over protecting the girl, neither would Gaston, but Rosalind would. I don’t know about Dureau.”

“That might be the answer in itself. The personalities might be warring over each other,” he said sadly. “Still, I don’t really know. Human life and artificial life are vastly different at the molecular level. Still it seems to me that when the battle is over, they might awake.”

Ellie nodded and looked down at her dinner. She wanted Royce to be right about Ian loving her. She wanted him to be right about that one day Vasili-Gaston-Rosalind-Dureau would awaken from their trance. But she didn’t believe him.

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