Mindwipe Castle

Chapter 9: The truth

“You think someone enslaved Silvia and made her commit the crime on their behalf?” Miranda asked.

“Its… A possibility.” Anne bluffed, she really had no idea what she was doing but as long as they kept talking, maybe something would slip out.

“Well first, we’ll need to establish who can actually enslave others.” Miranda said, “Dominya enslaved Raven, so she could not have take any other slaves since the end of the last trial. Raven attempted to enslave Eliza before being enslaved herself, so she is out as well.”

“Anne, Olivia, and Myself are ordinary humans, so we don’t have the power to enslave others.” She continued, “Which leaves only Misty, who was with me, Holi, and Silvia herself as individuals with the ability to enslave others.”

“Are you accusing Holi of being the villain then?” Miranda asked.

“I had not spoken with Silvia prior to the investigation.” Holi said calmly, “If necessary, I can provide the full log of things I said and heard today.”

“That won’t be necessary.” Miranda said calmly, “Unless you have some evidence for Holi’s guilt, I think we can eliminate this possibility.”

It definitely wasn’t Holi. Her voice sounded nothing like what Mirror Eliza imitated, it was too artificial. If only the voice was more clear… Wait…

The voice was muffled, not distant. That meant… Mirror Eliza was hearing from a pocket mirror, not the one resting against the throne. Who here had a pocket mirror?

She wasn’t sure Dominya’s armor even had pockets, but even if they did, she would recognize that voice anywhere… Raven had no need for a mirror; she couldn’t even see herself. She knew Boss didn’t keep a mirror on her.

Misty couldn’t carry a hidden mirror on her if she wanted to, and Holi had no reason to carry one as far as she knew. That left only one person. Miranda. She had a pocket makeup kit. She remembered watching her use it to take fingerprints from the blowpipe earlier.

“If you have nothing, I think we-”

“It was you!” Anne shouted, probably louder than she should have but she got excited sometimes. “You’re the villain!”

“Excuse me?” Miranda said, her tone was polite but Anne could hear a slight irritation in her voice. “And do you have evidence for that, or are you just accusing everyone today?”

“I don’t have… Evidence… Exactly…” Anne admitted.

Boss looked over at her with a concerned look on her face. She opened her mouth as if to speak, but Miranda beat her to it.

“I see how it is…” Miranda said, “Silvia must have enslaved you at some point before she became the villain. You feel compelled to defend her even if it’s entirely irrational.”

“That would be an impossibility.” Holi said calmly, “Anne could not be enslaved by Silvia.”

“And what is your evidence for that?” Miranda asked, turning her attention towards Holi.

“Because I enslaved her this morning.” Holi said as though she was stating a common fact. “I can provide a log of our interaction if necessary.”

Wait… Holi never enslaved her… Did she? She was with Boss all day, how would Holi manage to-

“Oh, right. Yeah.” Olivia said, “She did. I was there.”

“Then it’s not an instruction from her Mistress that compels her.” Dominya added firmly, “She is perceptive. I suggest we hear her out.”

“I agree with what my Mistress says.” Raven said, her voice hollow and emotionless.

That was a lot to process… She was enslaved? And Boss just watched it happen? It was lucky for her that happened, but she was a little disappointed that she couldn’t remember it. She had momentum now though, and she couldn’t let it go to waste.

“Well… Let me tell you how I think it happened!” Anne said, leaning forward in her chair and raising her voice to project her confidence. She couldn’t let herself get thrown off now…

“Last night, Eliza was laying in bed, sore from her injury and wasn’t able to fall asleep. After Silvia fell asleep, she slipped out of bed, and carefully snuck out of the door. She wanted to continue with her mirror trick, and snuck her way back down to the second floor.”

“At the same time, Miranda was also unable to sleep. She had just been assigned to be villain and was plotting her move when she heard Eliza making pained noises as she walked through the dormitory. She decided to follow Eliza down the stairs to see what she was doing.” Anne continued.

This was beyond speculation. She was trying to build the story from how it must have happened if Miranda was the villain. The only way she could imagine it happening… “She followed Eliza silently down to the first floor, where Eliza was using the mirror to examine the throne. She found some kind of hidden switch and opened the path to the hidden room.”

“Miranda decided in that moment that it would be the perfect crime. Once Eliza had entered the narrow hallway it would be impossible for her to escape with her injury. She would chloroform Eliza and leave her trapped in the secret room. The only problem was… Miranda couldn’t figure out how to close the door again.”

Everyone was staring at her in disbelieve as she told her story. She knew it sounded far fetched but… She couldn’t tell them the truth. The only reason she could even put this together was because of Mirror Eliza telling her things nobody else here knew.

“Eliza in her mindless state was unable to teach Miranda the trick to opening and closing the door. So, Miranda had her strip, and put Eliza’s dress on herself. She then gave her an instruction to make out with the first person who spoke to her and snuck back up to the dormitories and to Silvia’s room. She opened the door and slammed it, then ran for the stairs.”

“Silvia woke from the sound of the door slamming, and noticed Eliza was gone, so she looked outside the dorm in time to see Miranda in Eliza’s dress turning towards the staircase.” Anne continued, “She followed her down the stairs and Miranda ran across the length of the hallway to give Silvia a chance to catch up enough to see her go down the next flight of stairs.”

“Silvia went straight down the stairs next to her, while Miranda stopped halfway down the staircase and began to change her clothes again. Silvia found the secret passage and approached Eliza from behind. As soon as she was close enough to speak to her, Eliza jumped her.”

“Unwilling to cause Eliza injury, Silvia was effectively trapped there, with her back facing the entrance to the hall. Miranda snuck into the hallway, and placed her dress and the enslavement tool down in the middle of the hall, then snuck back out before she could be seen.”

Anne paused briefly, reconstructing this whole scenario was difficult… she was borrowing a lot from Silvia’s side of the story but… If Silvia was innocent, what she experienced had to be true anyway, right?

“After that, Miranda went back up to the dining hall on the second floor and invited Misty to look for hidden passages with her. She lead Misty down to the first floor where she pretended to discover Silvia and Eliza for the first time. That’s when she sent Misty up to wake everyone and bring us all down to catch Silvia red handed.”

“That’s impossible!” Miranda objected, slamming a hand down on the table “How do you even know that?”

She caught herself just a moment after she spoke, leaning back and blushing slightly “I mean, how would you even know that? …If it even was true.”

“That’s just…” Anne said slowly, she didn’t have any evidence to back her story up… No real evidence… “What makes the most sense to me.”

“Also…” Anne said softly “I don’t think Silvia would have done it. She wouldn’t enslave someone when they were injured.”

“WELL YOU’RE WRONG!!!” Miranda shouted, slamming her hands on the table “SHE DID IT TO ME!”

What was… That? “Miranda…? Are you… Okay?” Anne asked, she’d never heard Miranda react like that before to anything…

Miranda let out a sigh and slumped back into her chair. “…No. I am not.”

“I-I’m sorry…” Silvia said softly, her voice barely a squeak “I-It was wrong… But… I didn’t want you to hurt yourself…”

“Am I… Missing something here?” Anne asked. She really didn’t see any of this coming…

“L-Last night…” Silvia said softly “Miranda tried to keep working on her case. I found out when Misty stopped by our dorm.”

“I went to check on her and she looked terrible. She had been trying to instruct Misty to investigate the castle for her, when she should have been sleeping.” Silvia continued “She tried to deny it… And… She tried to turn me away. So… I cast a spell on her to make her agree to let me take care of her.”

Miranda cut in, “I didn’t know until the trial ended and her spell’s effect was removed. She had me eating out the palm of her hand. Literally! Plucking fruits from her hand like she was treating a wounded animal! It was… Insulting…”

Miranda sighed. “You only got one thing wrong.” She said, looking at Anne “I could figure out how to close the doorway just fine. But… I wanted to frame Silvia. I wanted her to feel the embarrassment of being caught red handed with someone under her care.”

“So… You…” Anne asked slowly…

“Yeah. I did it. I was the villain.” Miranda said with a sigh. “There’s no need to vote. I confess.”

“Wow. That was impressive!” The green haired woman said. Everyone looked over at the screen. “I don’t even know how you managed to pull that off, Anne, but I’m sure glad I decided to grab you while I was grabbing… Oops… Just forget I said that!”

“Now, for Miranda. There’s a box under the table in front of you! I bet you know what’s in it!”

Miranda reached below the table and pulled out the box. She opened it and inside was a single rag. She looked down at it with a sigh. “So… You want me to do it myself or do one of you want to do it?”

“Its up to you!” The green haired woman said cheerfully.

“Fine. I’ll do it myself.” Miranda said, lifting the rag and putting it to her face. She inhaled deeply and then a moment later her arms slumped to her sides as her head leaned back. Her expression now frozen in a blank smile.

“Last but not least!” The woman with green hair said “I’m going to free all the slaves.”

She raised her hand once more, and there was another green glow like the last trial… But… Anne didn’t feel any different. She blinked and looked around in confusion.

She saw Raven flailing her arms on the opposite side of the table while Dominya gripped the top of her head. It seemed like she had been freed at least. Well… At least momentarily. As Dominya’s palm glowed red, Raven’s struggling ceased and she returned to being docile again…

“Wait… I thought I was enslaved? Why didn’t anything happen to me?” She asked.

Holi looked over to her with a smile. “That was a fabrication. I did not enslave you.”

Wait… What? She didn’t understand… “Hold on. Boss? Didn’t you say…”

Olivia smiled “I played along with her as soon as I heard her lie. Didn’t want her to get caught if they actually did demand to listen to her records.”

“But… Why would you lie for me like that?” Anne asked.

“Your behavior was not irrational.” Holi said, her tone friendly and calm. “I calculated high probability that your opinion was based on information you had failed to successfully convey. I wished to give you the chance to convey that information.”

“But what if I was Silvia’s slave? Maybe everything I said could have been a lie.” Anne protested.

“That was a possibility.” Holi replied, “In such a case, I would have disbelieved your story once fully presented.”

“This is all very fascinating.” The green haired woman said suddenly “But I do need to ask you all to step out of the dungeon. Its off limits when the trial is over.”

“Oh. Yes, sorry.” Anne said, standing up and walking alongside Holi and her Boss towards the exit. Somehow… She managed to pull it off. And without spreading Eliza’s curse too…