

19. Nin's Idea

Boz rose with a sore heart and head. Despite his determination yesterday while rowing back with Jonathan, he'd spent the night worrying about all the disappointments he'd be delivering.

"What is your problem?" Dan said. "You tossing and turning all night I hardly slept a wink."

"Sorry," Boz said. "Got to talk with Drew before anything."

"Before breakfast, even? He'll be bearish," Dan said.

Drew was cooking breakfast. "What'll you have? Eggs? Sausages? One of each?"



"Not hungry," Boz said. "Can you give that job to someone else? We need to talk."

"My office hours start at 8.30 AM, as you well know!"

"We need to be ready to step on board when Robby comes by and I'm expecting him by about 8 AM."

"What is it with you?" Drew answered himself, "Always expecting the impossible. Trish, can you take over for a minute?" He made way for her in front of the stove but held onto the egg flip. "A pair of sunny-sides for Tim."

He followed Boz to the little terrace at the rear of the canteen.



"I suppose this is about your long face yesterday? You should've shared then," Drew said.

Boz started diffidently. "The Hardware Store is pulling up stakes."

"Why?"

"The powers-that-be are taking out the water gates."

"Stop. I don't want to hear any more malicious rumors. I'm expecting Wendy any day with our house."

"You and Wendy?" Boz was gob-smacked.

"Not Wendy and me an item! We're friends like everyone else is friends with Wendy? It'll be a share house."

"This house ...?" Boz started to try to make sense of it. "It's coming on a raft?"

"A flat pack that we've invested in. Wendy will be travelling with the kit and arriving in the next couple of days. I expect all of us to then help us put it together."



"A flat pack?" Boz echoed. "You never thought to let me know?"

"Why? I'm an equal partner?" Drew started back toward the canteen entrance.

"Where are you intending to build? What foundations?" Boz called after him.

"We're not stupid," Drew said over his shoulder. "She's bringing a kit for foundations too."

Boz snapped shut his mouth. He was flummoxed. *Second time in two days.* His mind roiled. *Robby supposedly deals in malicious rumors? Huh. Not what I suspect. This is my brother's cup running over.*

Dan rounded the corner. "So, Boss? Drew's bearish, right?"

"Yes, he is. And he just put his head in the sand as well."

Dan ignored that mystery. "You told him the two of you would be travelling by 8 AM and he's refusing?"

"That's about right."

"It's a nice low-tide and I feel like taking my truck for a run. Coming?"

"Could be the last time," Boz said.

Dan rolled his eyes. Another riddle! "I'll pick us up a bit of breakfast since I'm still okay with the chef, and meet you in the truck."

Boz collected his paperwork and rolled up both their swags. Took them down to the garage.

Nin Wizard swayed there as if he waited for Boz. "It's true," the old man said. "Not a rumor."



“Well good,” Boz said. “I mean, good to get it confirmed. How do you know?”

“My brother, you know him?”

Boz nodded. “*The Stone Dragon*. The tea-room.”

“He overheard, guests signing their contracts with each other. You have a plan?”

“Kind of,” Boz said.

“We should keep the store, in-fill it with stones.”

“I am astounded!” Boz said. “Third time in 24 hours!”

Nin chuckled in his shivery way. “Not just a wrinkly face,” he said about himself.

“Ha, no. Never thought that. Your idea is foundational!” Boz laughed. “Means we can build on it.”

Nin hopped excitedly.

Tim came in with Dan.



"Everything okay?" Tim said.

"It is now," Boz said. He disconnected Drew's tech-deck from the runabout and put the tech-deck and the paperwork in Dan's waterproof locker in the truck tray.

"So that's a yes on we're going out," Dan said, nodding at the swags in the truck tray. He passed Boz an egg sandwich.

"I think probably for about a week," Boz said. "Lot of people to see. Tim, consider yourself and Nin in charge. Don't let anybody touch the Hardware Store however you do it. Though they can take their furniture of course, and welcome to it."

"Right," Tim said. "But the work on getting the apartments up? Nin told me the future?"

"Well, I can't instantly arrange an alternative," Boz said. "So yes. The apartments should be raised."

Dan switched on the ignition and further talk was lost in the roar of the truck engine.

Jed stopped the take-off by standing in front of the truck, pack at his feet. "Whatever you plan to do, you're going to need a crane right? You could take me with you and we'll iron it out for once and for all."



"Tch, standing room only," Dan said. "You getting in?"

When they got up out of the swamp, Jed knocked on the cabin roof. "Let me off here. I'm parked just up the road. Friends. Guess you can't pay me here and now?"

Dan, taking his cue from Boz, stayed silent.

But then Boz surprised them both. "Jackie's crane? I'll pay Jackie," Boz said. "Pay *you* for taking it to the site."

"Suits me," Jed said. "When?"

"Have a chat with Drew when you get there with the crane, he's the accountant."

Jed frowned. "Where will you be?"

"You see the direction we're driving in? That's where we'll be."

Jed sneered. "I'll be laughing at you all perched on your little kingdom in the middle of the flood when I'm making it trucking." He hitched up his pack and walked away.

"Now we get going?" Dan said.

Boz nodded.

