



Interview with the Guardians Part 2 - Soulmates

Just as I sit back down on the bar stool, the leading ladies of the Guardian mansion stroll into the entertainment room, laughing and chatting as though they've known each other forever. Tayla spots me first and pulls me in for a hug, followed by Willow.

Willow: It's so good to see you.

Me: You, too. I'm super excited to chat with you all again. It feels like forever.

Tayla: How'd it go with the Guardians? Raven said they behaved like a bunch of idiots.

Me: (laughs) That about sums it up.

Hailee carries a tray of cupcakes to the coffee table before waving me over to sit beside her on the sofa.

Hailee: (offers me a cupcake with a strawberry on top) Cole must be here. There's a few missing.

Me: (accepts the yummy treat) He is. EJ gave him shit about eating all your

cupcakes. And Aric grumbled that he didn't share.

Hailee: (rolls eyes) That sounds like them.

I take a bite of the cake while Hailee passes one to Tayla and Willow. It's delicious, I totally get why Cole steals them.

Tayla: So, Raven said the readers have questions for us. I'm surprised to be honest. I figured the questions would all be for the Guardians.

Me: (swallows mouthful) The readers would like some insights into life as a soulmate. You know, so we can live vicariously through your answers.

Willow: (smiles softly) We are lucky. Few immortals or mortals find their soulmates.

Tayla: And then get to live an eternity with them.

Me: (exhales a happy sigh). Spending an eternity with your soulmate sounds rather blissful.

I place the remaining half of my cupcake on a plate and lean to one side to pull the list from my pocket. This is so much more civilized than interviewing the Guardians.

Me: Okay, Tayla, the first question is for you. Was it scary—

The door swings open and EJ sneaks in the room with a hand covering one side of his face as though it hides him. Spoiler alert: it doesn't. He heads straight behind the bar.

Hailee: We can see you, you know!

EJ: (swears under his breath) I thought you'd all like drinks.

Hailee: Oh, sure. I bet you just want to hear our answers.

EJ: (gasps, hand on chest) I'm shocked you'd even think such a thing, sweetness.

Hailee: (rolls eyes)

EJ: Just pretend I'm not even here.

Hailee: (grins) Great idea. (settles back in sofa) What was the question again? Who has a secret daily ritual he'd like to share with everyone?

A glass drops behind the bar, thankfully it doesn't shatter. We all turn to EJ.

EJ: (hands up) Fine. I get it, I'll make drinks and then go.

Everyone giggles. We wait while EJ places four drinks on the coffee table with an exaggerated huff. I recognize the cocktail he made me earlier, though now it's topped with a miniature umbrella. I can't help but smile. This guy is so adorable. Before he leaves, he leans over the back of the sofa and whispers something in Hailee's ear that makes her blush.

Tayla: (waits until EJ closes the door behind him) He thinks no one knows where he goes every morning, but we all do.

Hailee: (laughs) Imagine how much he'd freak out if he knew it wasn't a secret.

Willow: Aw, let him have his secret. He deserves the peace it brings him.

Hailee: (nods) Besides having to wake up early, it truly is a beautiful time of the day.

Me: (grabs drink and sits back) Okay, where were we? (looks at list) Oh, that's right. Tayla, was it scary being in the Heavens?

Tayla: (sips her red wine while considering the question) Kind of. I'm not sure how to explain it. That doesn't really answer your question. (chuckles) It was scary

realizing I was dead, that's for sure. But being in the Heavens was different. It was...

Willow: Peaceful.

Tayla: (nods at Willow) Yes. Peaceful.

Me: (grins at the next question) Um, the readers want to know if you'd consider a sexy Guardian calendar? Aussie firefighters make a shirtless calendar each year to raise money for various charities. Maybe one like that?

Hailee: (laughs) Could you imagine it? EJ would probably want a whole calendar devoted to himself and Stella.

Willow: Aric would have a fit and make me mist him somewhere no one could find him.

Tayla: Raven would be right there with Aric. (laughs) You know who would love to do a calendar?

All three in unison: River.

Lots of laughter, especially from me as I imagine a sexy calendar of River in bright floral shirts. I startle as the door bursts open and Raine storms in, halting at the sofa facing me.

Raine: He's at it again.

Me: (confused) Who?

Raine glares at me and I suddenly have vivid images of a throwing star shooting towards me. Then, I remember what EJ said about making Raine the center of attention and it all makes sense.

Me: Oh...*him*.

Raine: Make him dead already.

Me: (leans forward, lowers voice) Is that really what you want?

Raine: (shoots imaginary sharp objects at me)... (growls and storms out)

Me: (looks to the others) Should I...?

Willow: (shakes head) Let her be. She'll be fine. She'll eventually realize it's worth it.

Me: I hope so.

I take a long sip of my cocktail and settle back in the sofa, making a mental note to check in on Raine later.

Me: Okay, where were we, again? (looks at list) Oh, right, this question is from me. How do you celebrate the holidays?

Tayla: Raven absolutely loves mortal traditions. He has this obsession with celebrating each of them at least once. This holiday period is his favorite, and this year he convinced the household to put up a tree. I'm so excited.

Willow: Aric cut it down yesterday and lugged it into the living room ready to decorate.

Me: He does like using an axe. (looks to Willow) Is that weird for you though, cutting down trees?

Willow: (softly smiles) Not if it's for a purpose. I used my Ariel magic to grow the white pine just for this occasion, and I rejuvenated another in its place when Aric cut it down.

Hailee: I've been busy with Ellen baking cakes and treats. (laughs) EJ insisted on helping this morning. It was a total disaster. Ellen had to step in before he burned down the mansion.

Tayla: (snorts) Raven banned him from ever entering the kitchen again.

We all laugh. Poor EJ.

Me: All right, last question, does anyone have any dirt on the Guardians.

Particularly if someone sleeps with a blankie or stuffed toy. (chuckles)

Hailee: EJ has this weird relationship with his car, but that's no secret. (tilts head to one side) Come to think of it, has anyone seen inside River's room?

Tayla and Willow shake their heads.

Tayla: You know who I reckon sleeps with a teddy? Blaine. (laughs) A cute and fluffy bear or something. (laughs harder)

Willow almost chokes on her cupcake, but Hailee stiffens beside me.

Hailee: If I don't see Blaine again this century, it'll be too soon.

Me: The readers are obsessed with him. I don't get it.

Willow: Do they have questions for him?

Me: (nods) I'm heading over to meet with him after this.

Tayla: Does Raven know?

Me: He's coming with me.

Hailee: Good.

We settle into a comfortable conversation about Hailee’s latest book boyfriend, and how Tayla is at a loss for what to watch since *Supernatural* ended. Just as I’m about to suggest a TV show, someone knocks on the door before it opens. Raven pokes his head through the gap and looks at me.

Raven: Ready to head out?

Me: Sure.

Raven: I’ll meet you out front.

He closes the door again. I shove the last of the cupcake in my mouth before standing. One by one, I thank them for answering the questions and give them a hug goodbye. When I’m out in the hallway, Hailee catches up with me.

Hailee: If you see Ebony...

Me: I’ll let you know.

Hailee: (nods) Thanks.

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