

# Dark Rising: Part One

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*Can't write a good enough summary without giving the story away. So just read and review.*

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# 1 - The beginning

Prologue: Special delivery

Sonic's POV

NICOLE appeared in front of me, "Hey NICOLE what's up?" it was dusk and I wanted to get a few chili dogs for dinner. I rubbed my arms in an attempt to keep them warm. Autumn had come to the Great Forest and with it cold days and nights.

"I came to see how your scouting went, anything to report?" She said following me as I started walking to my favorite vendor.

"Nothing new looks like those Iron Goons are lying low," I sighed, "pity I was looking for a fight seeing that it'll be winter soon." I reached the vendor and ordered four chili dogs to go along with a cheeseburger.

NICOLE nodded, "Let's hope they don't decide to attack after the snow starts falling."

I shrugged, "They haven't in the past, I don't they'll start anytime soon." I reached into the bag and pulled out a chili dog, I was starving from running all over the Great Forest today and at the sight of it my stomach gave a loud growl. NICOLE chuckled, I blushed and wolfed it down. Somewhat satisfied I said, "Anything else NICOLE?"

"Yes Sally wanted me to let you know that Tails is going to do the scouting tomorrow so you have the rest of the night and all day tomorrow off. Also she said that her spy in the Dominion reported that the Iron Queen and Demitri have been spending more time together in his lab. Translation: not good whatever they are doing maybe the reason they are lying low."

"Yeah you have a point." I said reaching for my house key, "But seeing as we don't know what it is looks like we'll just have to wait and see, not my favorite way of finding things out." I unlocked the door and waved good-bye to NICOLE, "See you around NICOLE."

"See you Sonic remember I'll be offline from Midnight till Dawn to reboot my systems so don't try calling for me."

I nodded and closed the door, my house was your usual bachelor pad. Scattered items all over the place, a few dirty dishes in the sink. I'm horrible at doing dishes and I have the scars to prove it. I went over to the sink and gave a triumphant grin; Sally, Tails and Doctor Quack had gotten me a dishwasher for my birthday. So all I had to do was load it and run it.

After I started it I picked up the rest of the house; which being me took only a few minutes. When I was done, I hopped onto the sofa and turned on the T.V. and kicked off my shoes yawning. I surfed until I

found a showed I liked, a comedy show that had some of the funniest skits that I had ever seen.

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I was asleep when I heard someone at my door, knock, knock, knock. I jumped and sat up, "Yeah, yeah, I'm comin'" I looked at the clock over my T.V., "Whoa midnight, wonder who it is?" I stretched and muttered my response, "Someone who better have an emergency, or the Dominion decided to have a midnight strike!"

I opened the door to find no one there, "Or it was someone with WAY to much time on their hands!" I turned to go back inside thoroughly annoyed at being a victim of Ding Dong Ditch when I heard a soft cry.

I whirled around, ears pricked to see if it happened again. It did and I walked forward ready to throw my shoes on and jet to where the trouble was. I felt a lump hit my foot, I looked down to find myself looking at a small bundle of blankets. Caution took over and I poked it, "Waaaaaaaaah" it was the same cry I had heard before. I picked up what I guessed to be a baby (I was still in caution mode) and opened the blankets holding it out away from me.

A small pink hand shot out of the blankets and went back in. I shivered from the cold night air, "Okay I guess this counts as an emergency." and I went inside.

I sat back down on my sofa and opened the rest of the blankets to reveal a small baby hedgehog, I guessed to be about two months old. "Who would leave you on someone's doorstep?" The baby had lavender fur and when I checked it was a female. After I did this she opened her eyes to show that they were robin's egg blue. Her eyes pretty much said, "Please take care of me I need a home."

All of a sudden she began to cry&#133;loudly, I blinked, "Um are you hungry?" As if she can talk yet. I thought putting her on my couch, I got my shoes on and said, "Be right back." I ran out the door, and a minuet later returned a couple bottles formula diapers and wipes.

"Okay looks like I have everything I need for you to stay for the night." I looked over at NICOLE's monitor which was blank because of her reboot. "Look's like you're staying here till morning, can't have you going to the princess in the morning hungry and dirty." I took off my gloves and took out a bottle and the container of formula, "Okay, 'One scoop per four ounces of water.' Looks easy." A few minuets later I was sitting down bottle in one hand, the baby in the other, "Okay bottoms up kiddo."

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Sunlight streamed through the window waking me up. I looked down and saw the baby was still sleeping. I got up and gently put her down on the couch and walked over to NICOLE's monitor and pushed a button, "NICOLE I need to talk to you." NICOLE appeared next to me.

"Good Morning Sonic what's up?" I nodded over to the couch and she walked over, "Oh my circuits how did you get her?"

"I got her last night when someone left her on my doorstep." I thought of the cliché from the movies of

mothers or strange cloaked figures leaving a baby on some unsuspecting persons doorstep. The only difference was that this wasn't a movie this was real, "Can you tell Sally that I need to talk to her." NICOLE nodded and disappeared. Just then the baby began to cry. I walked over and said, "Well look who's up, good morning." I picked her up and put her on my left shoulder and patted her back a little, all of a sudden I heard a high pitched, bleat and then a soft sigh. I stopped dead, snorted and burst out laughing. "That was unexpected!" I said still chuckling.

There was a knock on the door and Sally came in, "I came as soon as NICOLE told me. What happened?" I told her everything. When I was done she handed me a bottle, "Does she have a name?"

I shook my head, "None that I could find." I was tickling her stomach when her hand grabbed one of my fingers. My eyes softened, "There must be something we can do&#133;"

"I don't see why she can't stay here." Sally said looking at me.

"No! I can't take care of a baby!" I said shocked, "What would happen to her if I never came back from a mission alive or even sane!?"

Sally gave me a stern look, "You know as well as I do that you can do anything and everything. You have done and gone through things that would have killed any of the other Freedom Fighters." I looked away I knew that she was right.

"Yeah well I still couldn't save Eggman."

"Sonic that us one of the weakest arguments I have ever heard."

Again I knew she was right, Eggman's death was unavoidable I sighed, "I guess I can take care of her until we find someone who can give her a normal childhood." I looked down at the baby, "NICOLE how old is she?"

NICOLE appeared, "Let me scan her real quick." There was a flash and then she said, "Time of birth of three AM day 255 year 3241. That makes her exactly two months old today."

So my rough guess was right. Sally looked at me and said, "She needs a name."

I thought for a moment I'm horrible at thinking of names on the spot but one did come to mind, "How about Riley?"

## 2 - Chapter one: Dark Secrets

Chapter one: Dark secrets

Disclaimer: I do not own Sonic the Hedgehog

Eight months later, Sonic POV

"No Riley that doesn't go in your mouth!" I said rushing over holding out my hand, "Give it here young lady." I said sternly holding out my hand. She had manage to open the back of the T.V. remote and one of the batteries half-way to her mouth. When I told her to give it to me she looked up, closed her mouth and handed me the battery. I chuckled as I picked up the remote and put the battery back in it. After I put the remote back onto the top of the T.V. I went to go to the stairs, not surprised that Riley was following me talking to me in baby babble. Our house had two stories and had two bedrooms. Before Riley I would use the second room as a guest room. Now it was Riley's.

"Da da!!" I stopped and turned to face her, "Da, da, da, da!" using my legs to stand up she continued to say, "Da, da, da, da!" I picked her up and chuckled.

"Well Da da says it's time for your nap." I said taking her to her room. After I left I found myself wearing a small smile. I had to admit I had grown attached to her. The fact that she thought I was her pops made me happy.

I went down the stairs still happy about it when I gave myself a mental shake, "I shouldn't be getting so attached," I said to myself, "it's dangerous for the both of us." then a little voice in my head argued, *True but neither you or Sally have been able to find anyone who could take better care for her. Not to mention that you have grown to love her as if she was your kid.*

I flopped onto the couch and turned on the the T.V. still arguing with myself, *It would be confusing to Riley if we found someone now.* I sighed, I did like the fact that she thought of me as a father...why not? I would tell her when she was older. I nodded and went to the video phone to call Tails.

"Sonic what's up? Anything wrong? Oh and how's Riley?"

"Nuthin's up other than the sky, nuthin's wrong and Riley said her first word." I smirked, "I was wondering if you could come her and watch her for a few I need to talk to Sally and she's asleep."

Tails looked worried, "Why somethin' up?" I saw him pick up a twin tailed fox kit identical to him.

"Hi T.J.." I said waving to the little kit, "To answer your question Tails yeah, I've decided to adopt Riley."

Tails looked at me with an odd face as T.J. shouted, "Hi Uncle 'Onic!"

"Sonic why such the sudden change of mind?"

I shrugged, "No clue these past few months have made me feel like she really is my daughter." I looked back to the stairs where Riley was sleeping, "That's why I want to talk to Sally, I need to ask her-- Hang on little bro I got another call." I looked at the I.D. "Princess Sally Acorn" I pushed the conference button, "Sal, just the princess I wanted to see."

"Hi Sonic I just called to see how Riley was doing and I need to tell you something."

"Riley's great she just said her first word. What do you need to tell me?" I said. Just then I heard Riley scream, "Hold that thought Princess be right back." I raced up the stairs and went into Riley's room. She was still screaming, but this wasn't her normal "I'm up come and get me" scream, she sounded terrified. That got me worried. I picked her up and noticed that the air seemed charged around her as if something was emanating from her. *I sense a disturbance in the Force* I thought as she clung to me as if someone was going to take her away "Shh what's wrong?" *As if she could tell me* I thought.

I brought her down stairs with me once she calmed down. Tails looked worried, "What happened?" he asked.

I shook my head, "Dunno she's acting like she had a nightmare." Riley was still clinging to me with a terrified look in her eyes.

Sally looked at me, "Well you are about to feel the same way. Remember when you were captured by the Iron Dominion?"

I squeezed my eyes shut and shuddered, "Don't remind me I still have nightmares about that." About two years ago The Iron King killed Eggman and I raced after them to get some pay back, only to end up getting captured by Conquering Storm, she threw a canister of sleeping gas at me. When I came to I was in the dungeon tied up against the wall. For the next two months I was tortured in order to get information. By the time I was rescued by Sally, Bunnie, Antonie, Tails Shadow Knuckles and Khan. I was half-dead and had both my legs broken along with all eight of my quills gone. When they got me down I ended up breaking Tails' jaw and Sally's nose. It wasn't that I was mad at them I didn't recognize any of them I was more than likely hallucinating from lack of food and water. It took six months for me to recover. To this day I still wake up in a cold sweat from the nightmares.

"Well Snivley told us that they had managed to get a large amount of...um well...your seamen. About a year and a half ago they managed to capture a female hedgehog and inseminate her with it. I've known this for a long time and I didn't want to hide it anymore. Riley is your biological child." Sally looked as if she told me I was going to die tomorrow, "I thought you wouldn't want her anywhere near you if you knew"

I looked at Sally, then to Riley, then back to her. I was shocked, outraged, and dumbstruck. Tails looked at both of us and said, "I think I should go." I gave him a stiff nod and his side of screen went black.

Sally looked down and said, "I'm so sorry Sonic I should have told you but I didn't like I said I thought you wouldn't want anything to do with her if you knew."

I put Riley down and she crawled off to play with Muttski who was lying on the floor. Hiding my face from Sally I said, "I'll call you back Princess once I cool off." before she could say anything I hit the call end button and said out loud, "NICOLE." the holographic lynx appeared in front of me, "Can you tell Khan that I need to be gone for a few hours and he needs to watch Riley." NICOLE could tell I was upset and vanished without a word to find the mystic monkey.

Ten minuets later Kahn knocked on the door and I called, "Come in." getting my shoes on.

Kahn looked at me as I passed him, "I'll tell you everything as soon as my head stops spinning" and before he could say anything I raced off.

Once I was far enough away from New Mobotropolis I pulled out the blue Chaos Emerald. Seeing that Feist the big bad Panda-God-thing had three, the gray one Mammoth Mogul had thanks to me (and I've never heard the end of it), so I had to borrow this one from Shadow just in case we needed something a little extra when it came to the Dominion. Using Chaos Control and focusing on a vision of Knuckles a small green energy field appeared and the emerald began to glow and float about three inches off my hand. What I saw was blue sky, clouds, and the mountains of the Rainbow Valley, "Yo Knux are ya there?" a second later Knuckles' face appeared he looked busy but I didn't care.

"What is it Sonic I'm very busy." he snapped

I did a quick run down of what Sally told me then asked, "Quick question how would I get into contact with a ghost seeing as I ain't psychic?"

Knuckles thought for a moment, "Astral projection sounds like your best bet but something tells me that you are not going to like having to wait for anything..." He looked his eyes were going back and forth, "Ya know what I'll be over there in a few minuets just wait there..." he left then his head popped back, "Don't do anything stupid or I'll kill you myself."

I nodded and cut the connection. 'Okay find something to do while waiting for Knuckles...no problem.' I looked up and found a tree I had been climbing since I was a kid. "Eh, at least it's something to do..." I jumped to the first branch and began to climb. I was about thirty feet up when I sat on a branch to watch the sunset over the Great Forest. I was swinging my legs thinking about everything that I had been told. Riley is my real daughter and to make matters worse Sally knew this whole time and didn't tell me! And if that wasn't enough Riley was born because I was caught and tortured for two freakin' months!! I put my face in my hands, "Man I don't know what to do anymore..." I then realized that I was falling forward I tried to grab the branch but I was to late I screamed as I fell and saw the ground rushing up to meet me. There was a loud snap and everything went black.

I opened my eyes and sat up moaning, "Ow, that is going to leave a..." I looked behind me to see myself laying face up my head at an odd angle, "Oh God this isn't happening I must be dreaming!!!!!" I was panting by this point and stood up to back away.

"WHAT DID YOU DO!!!! I SAID NOT TO DO ANYTHING STUPID THIS QUALIFIES!!!!" I looked to the left and saw Knuckles storming over to me. He sure looked angry, "I am going to kick you little blue @\$\$!"

"Wait it was an accident! I swear or may I become as slow as a turtle!" I then thought of something, "Wait I had a Chaos Emerald with me wouldn't it heal the break in my neck and anything else?" I winced as Knuckles raised his fist.

"Yes but I'm still going to kick your little blue @\$\$"

"Boys that's enough." Knuckles and I both looked over to see a lavender hedgehog walking towards us, "I've been waiting for you to come and find me Sonic for a long time. My name's Marisia."

"Are you Riley's mother?" she nodded, I looked down trying to figure out what to say, "I...I don't know what to do...I mean I'm afraid that every time I look at her I'll see what I went through..." I closed my eyes forcing memories of what happened back and feeling tears come to my eyes.

I felt a hand on my right shoulder and opened my eyes to see Marisia smiling at me, "I can guarantee that you will not feel like that not because I said so but because you know who she is, a child born out of tragic circumstance. You will love no matter what." She then walked over to my body, "Knuckles was right your neck is healed and it looks like you would be able to go without a neck brace."

"Hmph pity." Knuckles said crossing his arms, "Your lucky I have to guard the Master Emerald or I'd kick you @\$\$ personally, I have to go later." He vanished and Marisia looked at me.

"Not to friendly is he?" She had cocked her head to the side and had a confused look on her face.

I laughed, "Naw he's cool, you should see another friend of mine calls himself the 'Ultimate Lifeform'." I walked over to my body my chest was rising and falling again, "When will I see you again?"

"Not for a while I'm afraid." She said looking down, "I only had enough energy to talk to you." as she said that she began to fade. She waved good-bye, "I hope to see our daughter soon though." and she was gone as a strong wind began to blow.

"WHOA!" I screamed as I lost my footing and fell into my body. My eyes flew open and I groaned as a dull throb in the back of my neck. After making sure that everything was okay I did a quick stretch and raced back to the house. When I got there I opened the door to find Kahn watching T.V. and his feet on my coffee table, "Kahn Feet of the table!" I said angry.

Khan jumped and took them off, "Oh sorry." He then looked at me, "Feel better or what?" I nodded rubbing the back of my neck, "What's wrong?"

"My neck is killing me." I said forcing back a laugh from the obvious pun.

"I can crack it for you maybe it'll feel better." Kahn said pulling my chair over, "Here sit down and let me see the problem is." I sat down,

"Is this going to hurt?" Stupid question I know but hey I had never had it done before.

"I don't think so it never has with anyone else I've done it for." he said and grabbed the right side of my



head and his left hand and my chin with his right, "Okay relax your neck and one, two, three!" My head turned sharply to the left and I both heard and felt my neck cracking and popping. I screamed in surprise.

"Ahh what the hell M.K. warn me next time!"

"Your neck feels better though don't it?" he said smugly.

I moved my neck around and nodded, "Yeah you got me there M.K." I looked around, "Where Riley?"

"I put her to bed about twenty minuets ago...someone forgot to give her a nap." I looked down and gave a sheepish smile, "Well are you going to tell me what happened or not?" I shook my head.

"When I feel like it but as of right now I wanna see Riley." I got up out of the chair and headed for the stairs, *I sure hope that Marisia was right...* I thought as I opened the door to her room and walked over to the crib. Riley was sound asleep hugging her teddy bear and I found my eyes soften. Marisia was right I didn't see the torture I saw a little girl born out of tragic circumstance. *My little girl*

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Two Years later Sonic's POV

I had just started the dishwasher when Muttski came covered in mud and I sighed, "Muttski why are you covered in mud?"

My pet pooch scratched behind his right ear and said in a cheery voice, "Muttski found a puddle to play and roll in with Riley."

My face fell, "Muttski please tell me that she didn't join you."

"Yep she did," he then seemed to notice that, that was a bad thing, "Muttski's sorry Sonic! Muttski didn't know!" He whined.

I sighed, "No use crying over spilled milk boy. I'll just give her a bath that's all. I'll have to break it to her." I walked out side and sure enough Riley was making a mud castle cover in the stuff laughing like she just found buried treasure. "Hey Kiddo come here." I called Riley looked and before I could blink she was next to me. giving me a hug and caking my fur in mud.

"Daddy look what Muttki find!" She sure did look happy about being covered in mud.

"That's great Kiddo but we are going to Uncle Chuck's right?" She nodded, "Well I can't have you going there filthy so you need a bath and--" No sooner had I said the word bath left my mouth she was gone screaming.

"NO BATH!!!"

"And here we go again..." I sighed and raced after her, I was proud at the fact that she had inherited my

speed but that also meant that she would try to get away in a hurry I managed to catch up with her and in single motion I scooped her up and turned to head home.

"No bath, no bath, no bath!!!" She screamed pounding my chest with her tiny fist of fury. I opened and closed the door and put her down as she began to run around to find a way out of the house, but seeing that she was two she couldn't open the door anyway.

I chuckled, "Fine then I'll go to Uncle Chuck's by myself and eat all the chili dogs with him and leave you out." Riley gave me a look of horror and then raced up the stairs.

"Tub time Daddy hurry up!"

I chuckled to myself, *When in doubt bribe, always works.* I walked up the stairs pleased Riley had grown quite a bit she was now about a foot and a half tall seeing that I was four foot even the doctor that we would see for her checkups said that she might be as tall as me which of course sent my ego soaring. That was before we had heard the bad news; before she came here the Iron Queen had replaced her spine, spinal cord and central nervous system with cybernetics...Bionic Cybernetics to be exact meaning that they would grow with her, but that also meant that dear old Queenie would be able to take control of her when she was older if she ever found out she was here. So as a precaution Sally had her ears pierced with mini power rings that we hoped would stop her from gaining control of Riley. I opened the door and looked at Riley who had pulled out her bubble bath soap.

"Bubbles Daddy?" I nodded taking the bottle and tickling her neck making her giggle.

"Sure thing Kiddo."

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Three years later Sonic's POV

*"Tell us where your city's central mainframe is!" The Iron Queen demanded.*

*"Go to Hell Queenie!" I spat. Pain surged through my body as an electric current coursed thru me. I screamed and my head fell to my chest, unable to lift it.*

*The Iron Queen lifted my chin and said, "Just tell me what I need to know, and I'll only break you, maybe even put a few cybernetics in so I can control you." she chuckled, "I need a new errand boy."*

*I gave a dark laugh, "Ha, I'd rather have my quills torn out than be your errand boy..." she snarled and threw my head to the left.*

*"That can be arranged!!!" I felt someone grab one of my quills, and pull.*

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"Daddy?" My eyes flew open and I found myself panting, covered in cold sweat, "Daddy, are you okay?" I felt a small hand grab my left hand, I looked down and saw Riley looking back at me frightened, she

was wearing her sky blue night shirt Mina Mongoose had given her when I visited her and Ash with Riley.

"Riley? What are you doing out of bed?" I asked.

She looked down as if she was guilty or scared, "I heard you yelling, and I got worried about you daddy..." I looked at her and realized I was screaming in my sleep, "Did you have a bad dream daddy?"

"Something like that..." I said. She looked at me, nodded, and went off to her room in a flash. A second later she was back with her blanket and pillow.

"Then I'll sleep with you for the rest of the night daddy," She said climbing into my bed, she then put her right fist up and gave me a cocky grin, "that way if anymore monsters come to give you bad dreams, I'll go and beat 'em up!" She then crawled over and kissed me on the cheek, "G'night Daddy, I love you!"

I smiled, *Her attitude is just like mine...* I thought as I ruffled her quills, "I love you too Kiddo."

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I woke up the next morning and felt Riley's quills tickling my back. I yawned and sat up to look behind me. "Heh, She sleeps in a tighter ball than me when I was a kid."

I stretched and headed down the stairs yawning, "Man I'm still tired...aw well let's see what time it is." I looked up at the clock, it was ten-thirty. I walked into the kitchen, and I opened the fridge door, "Let's see, milk, and oh leftover pizza guess that's breakfast" I pulled out the gallon of milk and two pieces of pizza. Shutting the door with my foot I walked over to the counter and grabbed a cup. *knock, knock, knock* I looked and called, "Door's open!" the door opened and dad came walking in.

**"Morning Maurice! Did you check you calendar today?"** I began to laugh realizing what today was.

"Dad, what kind of a father would I be if I forgot her birthday?" dad didn't buy it.

**"You forgot didn't you?"** I swallowed and began to rub the back of my quills.

"I didn't mean to...I've been busy with ousting the Dominion." Myself along with the rest of the Freedom Fighters had recently defeated the Iron Dominion, after Snivley (who ended up betraying us and telling Queenie where Riley was) managed to kill the Iron King. Don't ask me how I don't wanna know how! But now she was gone for good and that's all that mattered. Dad gave me a serious look (well as serious as you can with robotic eyes and mouth) and then smiled pointing at me.

**"Bernie and I will cover you, but only for this year! Forget again, and you're on your own. That, and we got her a really good present this year. So we'll say you pitched in, but only once!"** I then heard someone running down the stairs.

"GRANDPA!!!" Riley tackled dad to the ground and began to attempt to crush the life out of him, "I missed you Grandpa." She looked up, and around, "Where's Grandma?"

**"She's at the house, but she wanted my to say from both of us, Happy Birthday Gummy."** I chuckled as Riley beamed, and looked at me. Gummy was the nickname that mom and dad had given her when she was little because of her love of gummy snacks.

Riley giggled, "Daddy had a bad dream last night, but I helped him beat up the monsters that gave them to him." Riley got up and hugged me as I left from behind the counter, "Right daddy?"

Dad looked over at me, **"It happened again?"** I nodded, he got up, and walked over to me. He put his hand on my left shoulder, **"Are sure that you'll be okay ever since...you know that night."**

I took his other shoulder and smiled, "Naw I'm fine dad really." I could tell that he didn't believe me but I gave him a thumbs up, "Today's Riley's day let's not darken it whaddya say dad?" dad nodded and smiled. I then looked at Riley, "And as for you..." I picked her up, threw her up, caught her, and put her back down, "We're going to go out and you can get whatever you want, within reason." Riley squealed and raced up stairs, "I was thinking of playing the field again, now that this whole mess with the Dominion is over. Mom's right she needs a mother." I leaned back putting my hands behind me to grab the counter, "I mean seeing that Amy and I didn't work out. But at least she's not obsessing over me anymore."

Dad laughed, **"Yeah she's to busy with Shadow. Who would've thought."** I nodded; I wasn't upset about our break up, I mean I still say she's way to young for me aged body or not. But hey is Shadow finds her...attractive who am I to complain? **"Well I'm going to help your mother out and are you going to have the party here or at our house?"**

"Yours this year," I looked over my house, which was a mess at the moment, "mine's not the right place this time."

"Daddy I'm ready!" I looked up and saw Riley walking down the stairs she was wearing her sky blue friction resistant shoes and a blue vest Sally had given her about two months ago. It was to big for her but she would grow into it. She also had her autumn long sleeve shirt on under it, it was red so it matched perfectly with the vest, "How do I look Grandpa?"

Dad gave her a thumbs up **"Like your ready for anything."** She beamed and hugged him again, **"Have fun, and I'll see you two tonight."** he waved good-bye and left and I looked at Riley.

"So, where to first?" I asked.

Riley thought for a moment, "How about...breakfast at Uncle Chuck's Chili-Dog Shack?"

I laughed, "A girl after my own heart, let's go Kiddo." Riley grabbed my hand, "Wait! I have to put the milk away! And get a jacket, it's cold." I put the milk away and grabbed my red jacket, it looked a lot like my father's before he became a Robian the only difference was that it didn't have the chest pockets, and it had sleeves. "Okay I'm set let's jet."

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"Here you two go, one Breakfast dog with extra chili and mini dog for the birthday girl extra cheese."

Uncle Chuck said handing us our food Riley smiled and took a bite.

"Fanks Uncle Chuck!" She said and began to eat smiling.

"So the party's at Bernie and Jules huh?" Uncle Chuck said, "Did you see what they got her?" I shook my head, "Well after Muttski passed away," he lowered his voice not like Riley was paying attention, "they decided to get her a pet of her own, it's a little Chao I think they'll become fast friends."

I smiled, "That's great remind me to thank them, Riley took muttski's passing pretty hard." Muttski had passed away about two months ago and Riley had taken it pretty hard they had been real good friends and I missed him just as much seeing that he was my dog. But Riley sure was in for a shock, I finished my chili-dog and looked at her, "Ya ready?" She nodded, "Then where to next?"

"Can we get some presents?" I nodded, "Yay! Thanks Uncle Chuck for breakfast!" she hopped off the chair and I looked at Uncle Chuck,

"Thanks Uncle Chuck that was great." I said following Riley. We then headed to a few other shops and I bought Riley a few things (a new teddy bear, a pair of light blue sunglasses, a new game for her system). We were on our way to the Arcade when we saw a few familiar faces, "Tails, Millie, Brianna, Mr. Knuckles, Caps, Ms. Julie-Su Mr. and Mrs. D' Coquette. Guess what today is?!" Bunnie looked over and gave me a 'your mother told us to find you' look as she picked up Riley.

"Riley, darlin' look how much you've grown! Ah believe that tahday's your birthday, am I right?" Riley nodded, "Well then how old are you surgah?"

Riley thrust out her hand showing all five of her fingers, "This many!" she then hugged Bunnie and looked over, to Knuckles, "Why are you three here?" Bunnie let her go and she raced over to hug Julie-Su. Who I noticed had a baby carriage in front of her.

"Su what's with the carriage?" Riley apparently noticed it too because she walked over to it and looked inside.

"This is our daughter Lara-Su." Julie-Su said as Riley looked over and smiled, I walked over to look too. In the carriage was a red echidna with a tuft of pink hair she looked at me and Riley and gave a smile.

"How old is she Mr. Knuckles?" Riley asked looking up and letting go of the carriage and going to give Caps a high five.

"Six months last week." Knuckles said with a smile on his face, "Oh I brought something for you Riley." He pulled out a little box about three inches long Riley opened it and pulled out a green emerald. "I figured you would want one for your collection." he smiled, Riley loved to collect rocks and crystals, so far she had three rock each of them looked like a different member of New Mobotropolis, NICOLE, King Elias Acorn, and the third one looked like me, she had two quartz crystals, a piece of amethyst and an arrowhead made from obsidian. Riley beamed and hugged Knuckles. I could sense that something was coming from the emerald.

"Thanks so much Mr. Knuckles!" I smiled and looked to Brianna, who was Tails' wife, she was an arctic

fox with bright white fur, brown hair, and ice blue eyes. She was wearing a black shirt, silver elbow length gloves and a pair of silver knee-high boots.

I walked over to Knuckles and and pointed over to a spot away from the crowd, he nodded and followed as soon as we were far enough away I asked, "Did you feel anything strange around Riley when we visited a few months back?" Knuckles gave me a questioning look, "I sensed the Chaos energy from the emerald, what are you up to?"

Knuckles shrugged, "Yeah I did," He looked over to Riley who was playing wit Caps, and T.J., "The emerald I got from the base of the Master Emerald, it's pretty much a mini version of it in a sense. The energy will dissipate over time but I want to see if there is a reaction. If so then we'll have to talk."

"Talk about what?!" I whispered harshly. This was insane! What was he up to?

"The thing is only one of her parents, you, is a Chaos being. Meaning that her Chaos Control is powerful and unpredictable. Without proper training she runs the risk of killing herself and taking half of a major city with her."

I looked down and grabbed my left arm, "I don't know Knux...how would we break it to her? It's her birthday, can we at least wait about making a desion tomorrow? Next year at the latest?" I looked over to where Riley was, T.J. was in the middle of showing Riley how well she was at flying, I sighed, "You have a bad habit of springing bad news on people you know that right?"

"Just try my best, but you really need to be serious here what if something were to happen and Riley got hurt, upset or worse? Her abilities would surface and have devastating effect." He then gave me a serious look, "And if someone like Mogul found out about her how much do you wanna make a bet that he'd send out the Destructix to bring her in so he could turn her against us?"

I nodded, "Fine, but we need to see if you're right and if whether or not you are will be whether or not she goes with you for...how long?"

"Ten years roughly if the amount of power I sensed in her was right, then it'll take a long time for her to master it. Besides," he said putting his hand on my shoulder, "it would be for her own good." He pointed over to her, "We'll test her as soon as the party's over." I nodded and began to rub my right temple, I could feel a tension headache coming on.

*One of these days these last minuet plan changes will kill me, I swear!* I sighed, "Okay the party's in a few minuets my mother had NICOLE tell me it was at sunset, and seeing that it pretty much is sunset....Hey Kiddo!" Riley looked over at me, "C'mon we have a party to go to." Riley nodded and waved to the other.

I walked over to meet her, "You guys comin' too?" Bunnie nodded.

"Yup we're all invited ta come Surgah-hog."

I grinned, "Great the more the merrier" I turned around and lead the group to my parents house and saw Sally and Khan, "Hey there are the Newly-weds! How's it goin' so far?"

Sally looked at me and smiled, "Great! Your mother called and asked if we wanted to come to Riley's birthday party, we had some time and so here we are."

"Yes and besides we got Riley a few gifts as well."

I walked up to the front door and knocked. I heard mom's voice call out, "Jules dear, the door."

**"Got it Bernie."** dad called back and the door opened, **"Oh hello everyone, come in everything's all set."** Riley hugged dad and raced in squealing when she saw all the presents.

I laughed, "Now remember the rules Kiddo, no opening till after dinner, cake and ice cream."

"Aww, okay daddy." Riley pouted and hopped onto the couch with a look that pretty much said, *Must resist childish urges*. swinging her legs wanting to get everything done and over with so she could tear the boxes and wrapping paper to shreds.

I walked into the kitchen and gave mom a kiss, "Hey mom what's cooking?"

Mom hugged me and said, "Oh honey, how are you and Riley?"

"We're fine, mom I need some advice..." I began to rub the back of my head, "Knuckles says he's been sensing a lot of Chas energy from Riley. He wants to take her back to Angle Island for the next ten years to teach her to master her powers. But I don't want her to go."

Mom looked at me and smiled, "What did he tell you?" I gave her a run down of what Knuckles said. Mom put her chin in her right hand, "I think she sould go with Knuckles." I blinked and looked down, "I know you don't like the idea but if it'll prevent something catastrophic from happening, then I say go for it."

I nodded, "Yeah I know but I don't like doing it."

Mom gave me another hug, "I know it's hard to let a child go but she isn't going to be gone forever, And you'll still be able to see her."

I smiled, "Yeah I guess your right, alright I'll let her go...I'll miss her though." I looked into the pot to see what she was cooking, "What are you cooking?"

"One of Riley's favorite; Sloppy Joes."

"Cool, she's gunna love 'em."

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"Okay Riley; make a wish!" I said

Riley thought for a moment, took a breath and blew out the candles. After we all cheered, we cut the

cake and dished out the ice cream, "Riley what you wish for?" T.J. asked.

Riley shook her head, "Nuh-uh can't tell, else it won't come true!" T.J. pouted, "Can't help what's true." She replied grinning and giving a wink. The little fox huffed and began to eat her cake and ice cream, Riley shrugged and began to do the same.

As soon as we were all done and the dishes were in the sink Riley looked at me, "Can I open them now?"

"Sure thing Kiddo." Riley squealed and rushed over and grabbed the nearest box, "Whose it from?" I asked she took the label and squinted.

"Bu-Bunn-Bunnie! And Ant-Tony? Whose Ant-Tony?" Riley had been learning how to read and so far she was doing a good job at it. Though some words she had a hard time but sounding things out always worked.

"Zhat would be Moi Riley."

I had started laughing at this point, "I think she just made a new nickname for you *Ant-Tony!*"

"Anyway, why not open eet and see what eet eez." Riley nodded and looked at me.

"Daddy that was mean! Say your sorry." Her ears had flattened and she was glaring at me.

I blinked, "Sorry 'Twan." Riley nodded and opened the box.

"Wow a new doll! Thanks Mrs. D' Coquette, Mr. D' Coquette!" She hugged it and put it down to grab another box, "T-Tails, and B-Bri-Brianna," She opened the next box, "New earrings! Thanks!" For the next hour she opened her presents from everyone, Knuckles had already given her a gift, but Caps and Julie-Su got her a new set of crayons and coloring books. Sally got her a new Tricycle, and a silver tiara for her princess costume I bought for her for Halloween. Khan got her about five children's books to help with her reading. Uncle Chuck gave her a toy robot the banged cymbals in its hands and did a lot of clicking. After that NICOLE gave her her first ten rings, "What are these for NICOLE?"

"I think your father would be better to explain it Riley." She said looking at me.

I shrugged, "Well I use to use them to get a speed boost, or to power up my spin-dash, not to mention they really do come in handy in a tight spot."

Riley nodded, "Cool! Thanks NICOLE I'll make sure not to use them till I need to." Mom and dad then walked over and mom knelt down.

"Dear we know how hard it was for you when Muttski passed away, so we went to the lake of rings and found you a new friend." Dad walked over and pulled out from behind him a blue and yellow Chao.

Riley gasped and opened her arms and the Chao hopped into her, "Choo!" it squeaked and Riley hugged it.



"Thanks Grandma, and Grandpa," she looked at the Chao, "I think I'll call you Choo."

"Choo, choo!" Choo squeaked and hugged Riley.

Riley got up and Choo grabbed her shoulder, "This is the best birthday ever, but I'm tired and I want to go home." Riley yawned and I looked over to Knuckles who had a pained look on his face.

*What's he got to be so upset about?! I'm not the one who told someone there kid's gonna be taken away for ten freakin' years!* I sighed, "Alright Kiddo let's get you stuff, and get ready to go."

Riley nodded, "Okay daddy." she picked everything up put them in bags that mom had gotten for her. After everything was picked up and the wrapping paper in the trash I waved good-bye as Riley hugged mom and dad. Though Riley didn't notice Knuckles said something to Julie-Su and began to follow us after we left. "Hey daddy,"

"Yeah Kiddo what's up?" I looked down to see Riley holding her new teddy bear, she looked as if she was un-sure of something.

"Is it normal for kids my age to feel things?"

"What do you mean Riley?" I watched as she pulled out the emerald, and held it in her left hand.

"This," She held the emerald tightly and looked around and found a large rock. Holding out her right hand, a green energy field began covered it. Soon the rock wobbled and began to lift off the ground. Once it was about eye level with her small cracks began to show. I looked down to Riley who looked panicked and seem to be trying to cut the flow, of energy, but was a little to late, the bolder exploded and I grabbed Riley and turned my back to protect her as a few large pieces flew at her.

"Nngh!" I winced as the rocks hit my back Riley looked up at me worried, "Don't worry Kiddo. I'm all right."

"No you're not!" I looked up and saw Knuckles storming towards me, "Your back's bleeding badly!"

I huffed and pointed to the house, "I doubt it's to bad our house is there Knux let's just get home and we'll check it out." I turned on my heel and walked quickly back a sour look on my face and a sour taste in my mouth, *Damn, he's right!* the fact was my back was killing me, and it could have been a lot worse. I reached back gingerly touched my back wincing as I felt a long cut. I pulled my hand back and saw the first two fingers on my glove were dark red, "Crud..." I whispered and pulled out my key from under the mat and opened the door, "Okay Kiddo go and sit on the couch. We have to talk." I went over and grabbed a chair and turned it around so that my arms were resting on the back. Knuckles went over and sat next to Riley, "I think you'd better say it Knux."

Knuckles sigh, "Do you know what you did?" Riley shook her head, "That was called Chaos Control."

"What's that Mr. Knuckles?"

"Well it's a fairly uncommon ability, that makes a person able to make things float, blow up, and a lot of other things as well." Riley nodded.

"I can do that can't I?" She asked looking at me.

I nodded, "Yeah, and by the looks of it not very well," Knuckles said, "Seeing as only your dad is a Chaos Being. Your abilities are powerful and unpredictable." Riley looked confused, Knuckles gave an annoyed sigh, "Sonic turn around and let's see your back."

I cocked an eyebrow, "Why?"

"Just do it." I shrugged and turned around, I then realized what he was going to do. I was about to turn back around when, "Look what happened Riley, accident or not it could've been a lot worse. Without proper training you run the risk of hurting a lot of people." Riley looked back at me with tears in her eyes.

"What do I have to do?" Riley asked beginning to cry out of fear.

I stood up and walked over to her and hugged her as she began to sob, "You're going to have to go with Knuckles for a while." She pulled away from me sniffing and hiccuping, "Don't worry Kiddo, cause I'm comin' with you."

"But daddy won't they need you?"

I shook my head, "Nah, besides if I stay here and have no action I'll go stir crazy." I then looked over at Knuckles, "That and I need to make sure that Mr. I'm-Not-Going-To-Sugar-Coat-It is going to train you right."

"Oh and I'm not going to?"

"I'm not saying that Knux, don't you have to train Lara-Su too?"

"Yeah when she's older!"

"Stop it daddy, Mr. Knuckles, I go if daddy's going to come to but I don't wanna hear any more fights!" Riley yelled.

Knuckles blinked and said in a forced calm, "Fine Sonic I'll give you till tomorrow at noon to make sure everything is all set." he turned and headed for the door, "I'm going back to the hotel for the night." and he left.

Riley jumped off the couch and said, "Does it hurt anymore daddy?"

I shook my head, "Nope, and look it's gettin' better!" I turned around to show her.

Riley yawned but she was still worried, "I'm really sorry daddy--"

"Don't worry about it Kiddo I've gone through worse a few cuts ain't nuthin'!" I yawned and stretched,

"But it's time for bed Kiddo, let's go."

### 3 - Chapter Two: Love is Accidental

One year later, Sonic's POV

"Come on Knuckles please?" Riley asked, I looked up from the book I was reading. Riley had grabbed Knuckles' jacket and was practically begging for something.

"What's wrong Kiddo?" I said putting the book down.

"The Echidnas are throwing a festival and I want to go! But Knuckles said no!" About two years ago, a few dozen Echidna's had managed to leave Albion and set up a small village near the Rainbow Valley. Though Knuckles insisted they leave, they said they were staying whether he liked it or not. It also helped that his family came with them.

"A festival? Well then how about I take you?" Riley's face lit up and she ran off to her room to get out of her training clothes. Whenever she went to train with Knuckles or Julie-Su she would wear a green tank top and a red vest with pockets. Knuckles gave me an accusing glare, "What?"

"And what about her training?"

"I may have agreed to only let you and 'Su do it all but I am not staying cooped up here. Yeah I understand how important it is for her to learn how to control her abilities but she needs a day off every so often." I began to walk to one of the other guest room that I was using, I opened the top of the dresser and pulled out a red t-shirt I pulled it on.

"What's with you and wearing clothes more?" Knuckles asked

I shrugged, "Why not? I didn't ask when you started wearing that hat and jacket of yours."

"I'll have you know that--"

"I'm ready Dad!" I looked over to Riley who was wearing her blue vest, her sunglasses and her new running shoes Uncle Chuck made for her, "How about you?"

I nodded, "All set, let's jet!" We walked to the door, "See ya Knux have fun." as soon as we closed the door we raced off heading towards the Rainbow Valley.

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Knuckles POV

*That Hedgehog is such an @\$#!* I thought walking into the livingroom. Julie-Su was playing with Lara-Su, I sat on the couch and sighed.

"Sonic talk you into letting Riley have some fun?" 'Su asked teasingly

"I don't have a problem with giving Riley a day or two off, it's just," I sighed, "I don't know anymore dear."

"Hun, I think you're letting your guilt of what happened all those years ago turn into a phobia." I looked at her surprised, 'Su almost never brought up the Enerjak incident, well never did unless she was trying to make a point, "The Echidna's that have returned wouldn't have unless they themselves have forgiven you. So come on and loosen up. Maybe going to the festival ourselves will make you feel better."

"Or give me a panic attack." I countered.

Julie gave me a harsh look that made me flinch and caused Lara to giggle, "Knuckles we are going to go with or without you!" I swallowed.

"Fine, I'll come along, but I'm not going to enjoy it!"

Julie gave me a shove, "Oh please!" I laughed and got up.

"Alright let's have some 'fun'!"

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Sonic's POV

"So how's the fried dough?" I asked Riley who grinned, the festival was spread around the village with different booths and shops selling tickets to shows and rides.

"It's great!" she then looked off, "Dad look, a fortune teller's shop! Let's go and get our fortunes told!" she grabbed my hand and pulled me towards the shop.

*Mine's probably full of doom and gloom.* I thought as we went through the beaded door. My nose twitched as the smell of incense hit me. *Maybe it's an old hag or something--*

"Hello how may I help you?" I turned my head to the left to see a young female Echidna looking at Riley with a kind smile on her face. The first two dreads on each side of her head were dyed yellow and her hair was dyed the same color, the dreads on the rest of her head were crimped. She held them back slightly with a hemp braid that had green and yellow crystals tied in it. All four of her yellow dreads had the bottoms wrapped in hemp with pendants of a cloud, sun, moon, and star, she wore a purple short-sleeve shirt and a teal long skirt with a design of a white spot with a teal crescent moon. She also had a crescent moon choker around her neck.

My left ear twitched, *Wow, um okay...she's...wow!*

"Can we get our fortunes told?" Riley asked, the Echidna nodded giving her another smile.

"Oh of course! But I'm afraid you will have to wait I have another Client with me at the moment, and they need to get back to Mercia as soon as possible."

"Wait what--"

"Hail Sonic!" I turned and waved hello, Rob O' the Hedge, Mari-An and Jon were sitting around a brass bowl that was on a rug with crystals balls of different sizes and colors around it. "How art thou?"

"Eh, can't complain." I said shrugging, "You?"

"I have been most well." He then stood up and walked over to Riley and me, "Prithee, who would this young maid be?"

Riley grinned (I doubt she understood anything he was saying), "My name's Riley!" she held her hand to shake his, Rob took her hand and kissed the top the top of it. He then looked up at me.

"Since when hast thou become a father?" I looked back over to the Echidna who was talking with Mari-An.

"Long story, *really* don't wanna get into it."

"Okay that's all I see at the moment." The Echidna said looking at Mari-An, "You, Rob and your son will have many a happy year! Your Kingdom as well."

Mari-An sighed, "That's good to know, Rob dear? Did you hear that?"

"Aye, 'tis good news to my ears." he said I gave him a questioning look and he sighed, "Hard times have befallen my kingdom. 'Tis a sad sight to behold at the moment, but what this fortune teller hath said has made me feel better in my heart."

Riley noticed Jon and walked over to him as he stood up, "Hi what's your name?"

"Jon, yours?"

"Riley." Jon held out his hand and she shook it, "Nice to meet ya!"

"Aye, nice to meet you as well." I was still staring at the Echidna when she looked up at me and smiled. My ears twitched and flattened as I blushed and gave a sheepish wave.

Mari-An noticed what just happened and whispered something to Rob who snorted and began to chuckle, "What?"

Rob shook his head, "I said nothing." still chuckling

"No, but your laughing what's so funny?" I said

"My love just noticed you were as thou would put it, 'giving her the look'" He then took me by the shoulder and lead me out of the shop Mari-An following.

"What? No I wasn't!" I lied

"Sonic thou art about as good at falsehoods as thou art good at slowing down." he said giving me a wink, "If ye finds her pleasing to behold, then tell her, she might enjoy an invitation to sup with you."

"Your telling me to ask her out?!" he nodded and I sighed, "You really think I should? I haven't dated in over six years!"

"Dost thou find her attractive?" He demanded

"Yeah I-I guess."

"Then ask her, serenade her, do anything that will steal her heart."

I swallowed, "Okay I'll ask her out, can't believe I'm getting dating advice from a guy whose wife shoved him in the mud!"

Mari-An laughed as Rob kissed her on the cheek, "And it was love at first sight." She then went back inside, "Jon we're leaving."

"But mother, I wanted to play with Riley some more."

"Later, sweetie. Your Father and I have to go back to Mercia and we can't leave you here." Jon huffed and nodded. "It was nice meeting you Sonic." With a wave they left.

I sighed and walked back into the shop, "Okay so all you have to do is be careful and, you should have a good year."

Riley nodded and looked over to me, "Hi dad! Ms. Carol-An just told me that I'm going to have a good year."

*So Carol-An is her name, hm*

"I can do yours next if you want?" Carol-An said, I blushed and nodded.

"Sure, I'm game. Riley why don't you go outside and play on some of the rides, nearby." I handed her some money and she nodded and raced off.

Carol-An giggled, "Your sure she'll be fine on her own?" I nodded.

"Yeah she's got the fastest feet for a six year old." I smiled.

"Okay well come here, sit down, and take your shoes off." I blinked.

"Y-You sure you want me to do that?" I asked, "I mean **really** sure?"

"Yes it'll make your energy flow more readable,"

*Oh something will flow alright* I thought, "Why don't I j-just keep them on?"

"No take them off a little foot order isn't all that bad, I've smelt worse trust me." I shrugged, knelt down and began to take off my shoes.

*So much for a chance at a date...* I thought putting my shoes next to me as I sat down crossed legged.

"Okay now let's just..." Her nosed twitched and covered her mouth and nose, "By Aurora put your shoes back on!"

"I warned you!" I cried blushing all the harder, I then heard a snicker behind me, I whirled around to see Riley covering her mouth doubled over and with tears streaming down her face, "You could have warned me about the shoe bit!"

"No, you should have seen that mine were off dad! That would have been warning enough, but this was fun!" She winked and raced off again before I could blink.

"Your daughter has a very mature way of talking." Carol-An commented I shrugged, pulling my shoes on.

"She reads a lot." I rubbed the back of my head, "Listen I'm sorry about the shoes, and yelling at you."

Carol-An shook her head, "It's okay, we'll just do our best with your shoes on." She sat across from me and pulled out a bag of tea leaves.

"Uh listen I still feel really bad about yelling at you...why don't I make it up to you?"

"Are you asking me out?"

"Maybe, depends on your answer."

She didn't answer me instead she threw a small handful of leaves down onto the water. I looked over at her and blushed slightly, she looked back at me and said, "Okay now relax your body." I swallowed and let my body go as limp as I could. "Okay let me see..."

"Is everything okay?" she didn't answer right away. When I asked again she gave me an annoyed look.

"Listen don't be so impatient I need to concentrate."

I huffed and kept my mouth shut. After a few minuets she nodded and said, "You are the hardest person to read I ever had in my shop. It looks like danger but at the same time peace...I can't get a good read out at all!"

"What does that mean?" I asked starting to stand up.

Carol-An shook her head, "It means I have no idea what's in store for you."



"I thought you said you were a fortune teller?" I muttered.

"I AM it's not my fault that your destiny is so messed up!"

"I thought people like you were supposed to be able to un-mess it up." I snapped slyly.

"What is it and Hedgehog males being so dense!?!?!"

"Don't know. What's with Echidna's and having anger issues?!"

"Maybe you should slow down, that might make your destiny more readable!"

"Slow down ME?! Never!" I yelled back, "In case you haven't noticed I'm the fastest thing alive!"

"Yeah and in case you haven't noticed, YOUR passing YOUR life by!" she then pointed to the bowl, "And if you don't slow down and enjoy life, not to mention be a little less proud of yourself and your abilities, you'll regret it in the future!"

"Oh so now you get something from those Hokus Pokus leafs!" I turned and stormed out, "To think she told me to slow down, HA! I'm in my prime, I'll slow down when I'm old and gray!" I found Riley who was playing a game eyeing a large Teddy Bear as she aimed and threw the ball knocking down all pins, I put on a happy face and called over to her, "Nice shot Kiddo!"

"Dad look what I won!" She yelled over to me as the Echidna pulled down the teddy bear and handed it to her. She raced over to me and asked, "So what did the fortune teller say?"

I shrugged, "That I'm going to have a good year." I lied, just then there was a loud clap of thunder. The sudden sound made Riley jump, as it started to pour, "Let's head home Kiddo." Riley nodded and we raced off for home.

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Later that night I was watching T.V. with Riley when I heard her sneeze. I looked over and saw Riley shivering, her fur had paled along with her arms, stomach and muzzle, and her quills were down turned, "Riley are you feeling okay?"

She shook her head, "I feel stuffy and dizzy." I took off my glove and put my bare hand on her forehead yanking it away almost instantly.

"You're burning up! C'mon let's get you to bed." Riley blinked but it looked like she didn't hear me, I picked her up and carried her to her room. After I tucked her in and went to the sink, pulling out a bowl I filled it with cold water, "Mom used to do this whenever I had a fever," I said to myself shrugging. I had lived with my folks till I was twenty, so I had picked up a few tricks for when someone was sick. I pulled out a washcloth from the bathroom and went back into Riley's room. Riley had fallen asleep but she was panting and covered in cold sweat. That got me worried. I swallowed and took off my gloves again and soaked the washcloth in the water, after I put the damp cloth on her forehead she seemed to relax a bit.

I sighed and got up, Riley almost never got sick.

"Sonic what's wrong?" I looked up and saw Julie-Su leaving Lara's nursery.

"Riley's got a fever."

Julie-Su looked worried then stern, "You guys ran in the rain didn't you?" I nodded, "And you didn't tell Riley to take off her socks, shoes and pretty much anything wet or she'd catch cold?" I shook her head.

*And here it comes..* I winced as she slammed her fist into the top of my head.

"IDIOT!!! What kind of father are you?!"

"A good one?"

"Wrong answer hedgehog. You're a stubborn and impatient person. You're always running around and forgetting to do things a parent SHOULD, like make sure their child takes off their wet clothes so they don't go and catch a cold, or worse!"

*"And if you don't slow down and enjoy life, not to mention be a little less proud of yourself and your abilities, you'll end up regretting it in the future!"* I looked down guilty, *Maybe people are right and I have to slow down...* I sighed and looked back at her, "Don't you have a healer or a hospital in the village?"

Julie nodded, "Yes she's the fortune teller."

I moaned inwardly, *Oh for the love of...anyone but her!* I heard Riley moan and I raced in to see her tossing and turning, I ran into the bathroom and grabbed the ear thermometer and a plastic casing for it. I rushed back in and gently put the thermometer in her ear. *BEEP* I pulled it out, "Oh no..." the readout said over one hundred and five, "Su can you wrap her up I'm going to get my shoes,"

"Why?"

"She's cooking from the inside, I don't have a choice now. I'm going to see Carol-An." I raced into my room and grabbed a dry pair of shoes and socks, along with a red tank-top and red hooded jacket. I was dressed and ready to go in a matter of seconds.

"Are you sure You'll make it alright?" I nodded putting my hood up and taking Riley in my arms.

"No prob Julie!" I said, Julie opened the door and I zoomed out, *It should take me only about five minuets to get there she'll be safe!* I thought racing through the trees.

"Damien! Hey Damien where on Mobius are you!?" My ears pricked as I heard a familiar voice in front of me, I tried to put the breaks on but the ground was still soaked from the storm.

"Shadow look out!" I yelled, Shadow looked behind him and moved to the left allowing me to skid to a stop without hitting him, "You really need to start wearing reflectors or something at night."

"What is your hurry Blue Hedgehog?" he asked noticing Riley moaning, "What's wrong with her?" he looked concerned, at least I think it was you never know with that guy.

"She's got a fever, a bad one I need to get going Shadow, I'll fight with you later..." I raced off, a few seconds later Shadow had caught up with me, "What is it now?! I'm in the middle of something!"

"Have you seen my son?" He said bluntly

"No." I replied flatly the village in sight, I picked up speed and skidded to a stop in front of Carol-An's door. I began to kick the door screaming, "Carol-An open up I need you to help Riley!"

The door opened and Carol-An's head poked out, man what I sight I must have looked some mad hog, standing there with a black hedgehog, and my daughter in my hands, not to mention covered in mud up to my knees. "Come in Sonic." she said softly, "And who is that?"

"I am Shadow." Shadow stated.

"What's wrong with her, oh and it's nice to meet you Shadow."

"She's running a high fever," I looked down and muttered miserably, "it's my fault, I wasn't paying attention--"

"Are you admitting you made a mistake Blue Hedgehog?"

"Shut up Faker!" I snapped as Carol-An took Riley blankets and all and put her on a fold up couch. Just then I heard the door open and slam shut I turned around to see what looked like a clone of Shadow, even down to his annoyed look.

"Daddy! I thought I said to meet me by the by the oak tree near the eastern side of the village!" he then walked up to me, "Who are you?"

"I'm Sonic the Hedgehog."

"I'm Damien nice to meet you Mr. Sonic." Damien smiled and held out his hand after I shook it he looked over to Riley who was squirming and moaning, "What's her name? And what's wrong with her?"

I looked down and said, "Her name's Riley, and she's very sick at the moment." Damien blinked and walked over to Riley.

"Be careful Damien you may get sick as well." Carol-An said looking worried.

Shadow chuckled, "He is like me Carol-An, he never gets sick."

"And how do you know that?"

"Because I helped him when Mommy was very sick after my little sister was born. Daddy said that it was highly contagious but I didn't get sick like Mommy and neither did Maria." he said looking at Riley and

touching her forehead, "Wow, it's like she's on fire!"

Carol-An nodded, "Yes, and we need to break it before there's serious damage. Damien what don't you bring me that jar of green paste the one on the left." Damien nodded and I stepped forward.

"Um, is there anything I can do?" she shot a look back at me, "Or I can sit down shut up and let you work..." I swallowed, and sat down on the floor crossing my legs, Shadow did the same and I noticed that he was wearing a pair of green cargo pants, and a brown belt and empty gun holster.

I opened my mouth to ask but Shadow said, "Amy said I should wear something other than the fur on my back, and these," he lifted his hand to show he was wearing a different pair of gloves too, he was still wearing his Inhibitor Rings, but the gloves were green with nothing covering the fingers just holes that had steel around the two openings for the thumb and fingers, "I was bored and decided to change them too." I looked at his hand and noticed that the markings that started at his shoulder went down and covered both his middle and ring finger.

"I had no idea your markings went down that far."

"Yeah, neither did I." I nodded and uncrossed my legs and drew them up to my chest, wrapping my arms around them. "You are worried?"

I nodded putting my chin on my knees, "What father wouldn't worry?" I said that more to myself than to Faker, "It's high time I got off that high horse of mine ya know?" I watched as Carol-An applied some of her paste to Riley's mouth which she held open.

"What high horse?" Shadow asked.

"C'mon you've been saying for years that I can be a Self-Obsessed @\$\$-Hog right?" he nodded, "Oh and let's not forget impatient, stubborn, hard-headed," I looked back over to Shadow who had a smug look on his face, "you know you can stop me at anytime."

"I know."

I sighed, "The point is, Riley got sick because I've been too careless, I pretty much let her run herself ragged, and I forget to tell her to do certain things. Like making sure to take a break every now and then."

"Then again it could be because you're just not one to slow down. And because of that, you think Riley's the same way," Carol-An said getting up, "Her fever's broke so I think she'll be fine. Oh and thank you Damien for being such a big help, maybe with a little training you could become a fine doctor."

Damien stuck out his tongue, "Bleh! No way," he then looked up at Shadow, "when I grow up I'm gonna be like Daddy!"

"What's that mean your going to be an arrogant, emo?" Shadow shot me a look of pure venom and I gave a cheap grin.

Damien laughed, "No, I'm going to be a top Commander for G.U.N. just wait and see!"

Shadow gave me a smirk, "Oh I forgot to mention I got promoted to Commander."

I huffed, "What do you want a medal?"

Shadow rolled his eyes and pulled out the green Chaos Emerald, "Come on Damien we are going home."

"Okay Daddy, bye Mr. Sonic it was nice meeting you."

I waved as Shadow shouted, "Chaos Control!" there was a bright flash and he was gone along with his son.

I sighed again, got up, and went over to Riley's side, "I'm sorry Kiddo." I muttered

"Stop beating yourself up Sonic, kids get sick all the time." I nodded, "Though it's nice to see you trying."

I looked up at her, "Trying what?"

"To slow down. It's kind of endearing."

I blushed, "Look I'm sorry about today, I have kind of a short temper."

She sat down next to me, "Truth be told it's my fault, I did see something but I was scared to tell you."

"What?"

"I'm not going to say, but it was good," She looked at me and smiled, "very good."

"Then why don't you tell me?"

Carol-An shook her head, "Nope," she giggled, "Some things aren't meant to be known, they must be found out." she then touched my shoulder which sent shivers through me, and not the bad kind, "Riley's going to be fine, why don't you get some sleep."

I shook my head, fighting back my own exhaustion, "I'm not tired." I lied

"Okay then I'll make some tea, do you want some?" I nodded.

"Yes please." I muttered.

She left for the kitchen and I turned around and looked at Riley, who was sleeping peacefully. She rolled over and smiled, *She must be having a good dream* I thought touching her forehead, it was still hot but not as much. I stood up and called to Carol-An, "Is there a chair anywhere?"

"In here by the table." She called back, I walked in and made for the kitchen table.

I looked over to Carol-An, "Uh, listen, I'm sorry about coming so late..." she walked over to me as I sat down blushing, "I can make it up to you, how's dinner sound?"

"You already have." I looked up confused and saw that her eyes were red, it looked like she had been crying for hours. Before I could ask why she kissed me.

My eyes widened from surprise, *What the...* I didn't know what to think, but then again, *This feels...okay...* before I could make a move to do anything, she pulled back, her red-orange fur becoming dark red.

"I-I'm sorry, I-I don't know what came over me..." She ran out of the kitchen.

*Great I blew it and I didn't do anything...* I thought huffing and getting up, I walked out into her front room.

"Sonic can you take Riley and put her in the guest room down the hall and to the right?" Carol-An asked.

I nodded, "Yeah, sure thing." I picked up Riley and walked down to the end of the hall, and found a simple room with a small bed, after I tucked her in I walked back into the living room. Carol-An was sitting on the couch, with two cups of tea on the coffee table that she had moved in front of the couch. I sat down next to her and grabbed a cup and took a sip, "Green Tea?"

Carol-An nodded, "Yeah it helps strengthen ones immune system." then all of a sudden tears came to her eyes and she began to cry putting her face in her hand.

"Whoa, hey what wrong?" No answer just more tears, "Aw c'mon don't cry..." I took her chin and had her look me in the face, tears streaming down her face, "If it's about the kiss, well I liked it..." She looked at me and smiled, which made me feel real good, though she was still crying, I hugged her, no idea why I just did. I then pulled her away and held her shoulder, she had stopped crying and that made me smile.

"Thank you Sonic."

"Don't mention it." I said *Kiss her you moron!* I screamed at myself, I moved as she moved and soon our lips were locked, it felt like I was floating.

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Knuckles POV

My eye twitched, I turned around and flew home, *Does he even know who she's related to?!* I thought landing near the door.

"What's wrong Knuckles?" I looked up and saw Julie-Su walking out of the door.

"Sonic's making out with that healer."

"Well it's about time she found someone!"

"WHAT!?" I flung my arms out, "Su do you even know who she's related to?"

"Yes, and why should that make a difference? Did it make a difference with me?"

"...No." I said looking down.

"Then why should it for her? If she love Sonic and he loves her back then I say woo-hoo!" she said putting her hands on her hips.

"Alright, but I'm going back to talk to her, and to give her a proper warning." I flew off before Julie-Su could say anything. As soon as I landed I went over and knocked on the door, "Carol-An it's me open up!"

"Guardian what do you want Sonic and Riley are both sleeping, and so was I." she said opening the door.

I pushed it the rest of the way open surprising her, I looked over to see Sonic sleeping, one of his arms hanging limp near his side, "Did you even tell him who you are related to?"

Carol-An huffed, "No, and I don't plan to, he's as much as a family member to me as Remington's pet Llama." she then pointed to me, "And why should it matter? My Soul touch showed me that we are meant together and so didn't the leaves." She pointed to an empty brass bowl, "I know you have a hard time believing me but would you just give me the benefit of the doubt for once!"

"Huh, wha..." Sonic moaned and looked at me with half-opened eyes, "Knuckles what are you doing here?" he yawned and stretched

"Her cousin's Dr. Finitevus!" Carol-An gave me a mortified look as she backed away tears coming to her eyes.

"How could you?!"

"An he's your what?"

"*Distant cousin* and I mean *distant*." she said giving me a look of pure venom.

"How distant are we talking?"

"Let's just say we aren't getting any Christmas cards from him anytime soon." she said her hands curling into fist tears streaming down her face, "Seeing as the Guardian told you before I broke it to you gently I guess that means you want nothing to do with me right?"

"Wrong."

I blinked as Sonic put his arm around her to comfort her, "W-What?" she asked, "But I thought--"

"If it's as distant as you say it is I'm fine with it, besides I have my own relatives that aren't so good....Well if you want to call him a relative." she gave him a confused look, he sighed and went back to the couch, "Ya see I have this evil twin of sorts, Scourge, but thankfully he's rotting away in a cell in the No Zone at least I think he is."

"You mean you don't know?" she asked he shook his head blushing.

"No, ya see," he chuckled, "Zonic's been a little busy lately with this Dr. Nega, so I haven't been able to ask him yet."

"Well it's not like Scourge was given a chance for parole anyway the crap he's done, he'd be put away for life." I said shrugging.

"But your really okay with it?" Carol-An asked looking up at Blue with concern, he nodded.

"Yeah and even he did show up--"

"Ha I'd die from surprise if he ever did!" she said laughing.

Sonic laughed, "Well even so, I'd spin-dash him a new one." he said giving her a thumbs up, "And leave whatever's left to Knucklehead."

I glared at him, "Fine have fun, how's Riley holding up?"

"I checked her before I fell asleep her fever's gone, and she's sleeping soundly." Carol-An said Sonic yawned again.

"Yeah and I bushed, so hurry back to your place and next time don't try to spoil something...Or anything for that matter." Sonic said he said shoot me a serious look.

I sniffed, "Fine, I won't." and I turned to leave, *Heh, that worked like a charm* I thought, *Guess Sonic's serious about the two of them oh well, I flew off back home, I just hope it'll last.*