

Episode 14

-Flashback-

Valtor: "For this, my dear, we will need the Agador Box."

Bloom scrunched up her nose, clearly puzzled. Her brows knit together as she searched her memory for any mention of such an object.

Bloom: "The what now?"

Valtor stared at her, disbelief flickering across his face. He tilted his head, his eyes narrowing slightly, as if questioning her entire education.

Valtor: "Honestly, what do they even teach you at that school?"

He sighed, "The Agador Box is a powerful magical container. Currently, it holds the Eye of the Ancient Ancestress in the Museum of Magix. We will use it to temporarily contain the Shadow Virus."

Bloom: "But if it's in the Museum of Magix, how are we supposed to use it? Do you think they'll lend it to us?"

Her innocence pulled a chuckle from him. His sharp expression softened into something almost indulgent, his lips curving into a faintly amused smile.

Valtor: "Don't worry your pretty little head about it. I'll take care of that."

-Magix-

Bloom sipped her drink absently, her eyes unfocused as her thoughts drifted back to her conversation with Valtor a few days ago. She could still hear his smooth, condescending tone, the teasing lilt in his voice. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't get it out of her mind.

She and the Winx—well, mainly Stella—had decided on a fun day of shopping in Magix to unwind, but Bloom's preoccupied thoughts had turned the outing into a blur.

Flora: "Hey little blossom? Everything okay? You seem a bit distracted today."

Bloom snapped her head up, startled to find Flora's warm green eyes studying her with concern. She felt her cheeks heat up, flustered at being caught daydreaming—of all things—about Valtor.

Bloom: "Oh um not at all, haha. I was just thinking that I should probably go after Layla. She seemed really upset about that guy just now."

Flora didn't look convinced. Her soft features creased with worry, and her voice grew gentler.

Flora: "Are you su—"

Valtor: "Attention, people of Magix!"

Flora's words were cut off by a booming voice from above. The bustling streets of Magix fell silent as a dark cloud swirled into the sky, gathering into the unmistakable shape of Valtor and the Trix.

Valtor: “In 20 minutes I will be at the museum of Magix to steal the Eye of the Ancient Ancestress. Bloom’s stomach dropped. She barely managed to stifle the shock from showing on her face, but inside, panic gripped her. She knew why he was here—and it wasn’t for the Eye.

Valtor: “You can hand it over or fight, either way it will be mine.”

Bloom: “*Oh, crap.*”

He couldn’t have chosen worse timing. Of all the days they had to be in Magix!

Musa: “Come on guys! Let’s fight!”

Musa cracked her knuckles, her voice brimming with excitement, clearly eager for action.

Layla: “No one’s going anywhere without me!”

Layla skidded to a stop beside them, her expression fierce. It was obvious she’d heard the announcement and immediately sprinted back to join them.

Bloom winced. Of course this was coming. Normally, she’d be the first to call for a fight, but today? Today, she felt an unusual pang of sympathy for the Trix and Valtor. Was this what it felt like when she and the Winx came barreling in, screeching and blasting magic to ruin their plans?

Still, she had to try to stop them. If she didn’t... Well, she didn’t even want to think about what would happen if her friends got in the way.

Bloom: “You know, maybe we should leave it up to the authorities this time? I mean the museum will have impeccable security, I’m sure and-”

They were already gone.

Stella: “Come on Bloom!”

Bloom sighed, her heart sinking. So much for staying uninvolved. She forced herself to follow, her legs feeling heavier with each step. As they raced toward the Museum of Magix, Bloom’s thoughts churned.

She needed to think of a way out of this—and fast.

-Museum of Magix-

Valtor was annoyed. Very annoyed, even. His furious gaze burned into Bloom, and though anyone else might have mistaken his expression for general irritation, she could practically feel the heat of his anger searing her.

Thinking fast, she summoned a small flame in her palm, weak enough to avoid any real damage but bright enough to make her intent clear. Shooting him a warning glance, she hurled the fireball in his direction.

To his credit, Valtor caught on immediately. He let the flame hit him, staggering backward dramatically as though the attack had genuinely caught him off guard. Theatrics, of course—but convincing.

Icy, ever the sharpest of her sisters, snarled in displeasure, quickly catching on.

Icy: “Let’s keep the others busy so Valtor can deal with Bloom!”

Valtor: “Didn’t expect to see you and your infuriating friends here *today*, Bloom.”

His voice dripped with annoyance. Bloom rolled her eyes, her own irritation bubbling to the surface. It wasn’t as if *she* had been in on this part of the plan.

Hearing her friends closing in, Bloom knew she needed to act quickly. She had to draw Valtor away before anyone overheard them.

Bloom: “Come and get me, Valtor!” she shouted, hoping her voice carried enough conviction to fool her friends—and lure him.

Valtor’s lips curled into a dark smile.

Valtor: “Glady.”

The moment they were out of earshot, Bloom whirled on him, her hands clenched into fists.

Bloom: “Your brilliant plan was to just waltz in and *steal* the Box?!”

Valtor: “And the plan would have worked beautifully if it wasn’t for you and your meddling little friends. Not that any one of you is strong enough to stop me.”

Her annoyance flared hotter.

Bloom: “Agh I can’t believe you! Maybe next time you could tell me when you’re planning to rob a museum?!”

Valtor raised an eyebrow, clearly amused.

Valtor: “Hm, because you would’ve been thrilled to hear I was planning on robbing the museum on your behalf?”

Bloom huffed and crossed her arms indignantly.

Bloom: “Considering the circumstances I would have made an exception.”

Valtor’s smirk widened, and he stepped closer, his voice dipping into a teasing drawl.

Valtor: “My, my, what a depraved little fairy you are. Are you sure you don’t want to join my side? You’d fit right in.”

If looks could kill, Valtor would’ve been incinerated on the spot.

Bloom: “I’m quite sure.”

Voices echoed from nearby, and Bloom quickly shoved her anger aside.

Bloom: “What are we going to do? I can’t keep pretending to fight you.”

Valtor: “I have a plan…”

His tone lowered,

“But, you’ll have to trust me.”

...

Valtor: “They’re coming. Are you ready?”

Bloom’s heart pounded, but she nodded, her eyes flickering with determination despite the anxiety gnawing at her.

Bloom: “As ready as I’ll ever be.”

Valtor’s voice boomed across the open space, loud enough for the Winx to hear.

Valtor: “What’s wrong? Afraid to attack me?”

In moments, the Winx surrounded him, their collective magic crackling in the air.

Bloom forced her expression into a mask of defiance, bracing herself for what came next.

Bloom: “No, I just figured it would be easier if we all did it together!”

Valtor’s grin turned razor-sharp.

Valtor: “Darling, someday I’ll rip that little fairydust necklace from your neck and add it to my collection.”

Bloom’s cheeks burned at the audacity of his tone. He didn’t have to say it like *that*...

Valtor: “But, right now, I’m not going to fight all of you.”

”No. Just you!”

This was her cue. As Valtor reached for Layla, who was closest to the Agador Box, Bloom darted forward, jumping in front of her friend.

Valtor’s magic enveloped her, a giant hand pulling her closer with a dark flourish. She let her body go limp, pretending to faint just as they had planned. But what she didn’t expect was the way Valtor caught her. His arms wrapped around her gently, his grip steady and... careful.

Valtor: “Now, look what I caught here. I’m sure you wouldn’t want something terrible to happen to your precious friend?”

He tilted his head, his sharp eyes gleaming with dark amusement.

“It would be such a shame to mar this beautiful face.”

Bloom peeked at her friends through half-lidded eyes, watching as their expressions turned to horror. Her heart raced, the ruse beginning to feel too real.

Valtor: “Maybe I should blind her like I did to you, Princess of Andros.” He looked at Layla, a malicious grin spreading over his face. “Only a bit more permanent this time.”

Layla’s seething anger could be felt across the room.

“Or perhaps I could carve my mark into her neck, one that won’t be removed as easily as the one I left last time. A pretty little scar to remember me by. Hm, no...”

He trailed off, his smile turning cruel.

“This time, I’ll carve it into her back, after I *rip* out these beautiful gossamer fairy wings.”

His words sent an immediate ripple of dread through the Winx. The horror etched on their faces was unmistakable, their collective fear thickening the air like a suffocating fog.

Musa: “You vile scumbag!”

Bloom blinked, confused by the intensity of their reactions. *Rip out her wings?* Sure, it didn’t sound pleasant, but surely it couldn’t be worse than blinding someone? She’d choose sight over the ability to fly any day! But, the way her friends looked as though Valtor had uttered something truly unspeakable made her stomach twist.

Not that it mattered. He was selling the performance perfectly, and she couldn’t risk letting her confusion show.

Valtor: “If you hand over the box and the Trix, I’ll *consider* letting her go.”

His lips curled into a devilish smirk, his tone mocking.

“Although, I might prefer to keep a pretty fairy like her. Don’t worry, I tend to take *extra* good care of my most prized possessions.”

Bloom suppressed a shiver, gritting her teeth to avoid reacting. She could tell he was enjoying this far too much. Subtly, she tugged at his coat, her half-closed eye glaring up at him—a silent warning not to take it further.

Valtor’s grin only widened, his amusement deepening as he turned his gaze back to the others.

Stella: “If you DARE lay a hand on her I will personally make sure you’ll never have hands again, you creep!”

Valtor chuckled, the sound low and indulgent. His eyes flicked to the blonde, taking in her enraged expression. Ah, yes—Stella. Bloom’s best friend, no doubt. Her bravado amused him, but her threats were meaningless.

Valtor: “Well?” His tone turned sharp, commanding. “What will it be?”

Flora: “We can’t put Bloom’s life in danger like this!”

Tecna: “Give him the box Layla!”

Bloom’s chest tightened. She’d never seen Tecna look so shaken. Her typically composed, logical friend now seemed overwhelmed with worry, her wide eyes darting between Bloom and the Agador Box. The desperation in her voice twisted the knife of guilt even deeper.

Layla: “Alright. You win.”

With a heavy sigh, Layla floated the box toward Valtor, her hands trembling slightly. The fear for her friend’s life taking over her.

Valtor lowered Bloom to the ground with an almost unsettling gentleness. He made a point of setting her head down carefully, as though mocking their concern.

Valtor: “Pleasure doing business with you. Until next time, dear fairies.”

The Winx didn’t waste a second. They rushed to Bloom’s side, Stella being the first to reach her.

Stella: “Bloom! Are you okay? Your wings, he didn’t touch them did he? Let me see!”

Bloom forced herself to sit up, feigning grogginess. Her mind raced to piece together a convincing response.

Bloom: “N-no, I don’t think so.”

Her words felt heavy on her tongue, weighed down by guilt. Her friends’ relief was palpable, their panic giving way to overwhelming concern.

Bloom: “Don’t worry...I’m okay.”

She tried to smile, but it didn’t quite reach her eyes. She couldn’t bear to meet their gazes, afraid her guilt might give her away.

As Stella helped her to her feet, Bloom’s thoughts swirled. She’d lied to them—again. How much longer could she keep this up? How much longer before the weight of her secrets crushed her completely?

END