

# DEAR TOON

A NOVEL

ASHMITA GHOSH

# Dear Toon

Dear LoonyToon,

I never thought this day would come. I never thought we would be so far away when we were this close together.

A week ago, we were happy. We were a family. I can't understand how Cecil could do that to us! There is a reason for everything that happens but what could possibly be the reason for the things we are going through now?

I need to be strong for Zafira and Zander but how can I stay strong when I keep breaking. Sometimes, it feels as if the walls are caving in around me and I don't know what to do. I've never faced anything without you by my side. I promise you that I will find a way to be who Zaf and Zan need me to be. And I will get you back.

I love you. Forever.

Your Sister  
CrazyLey

Dear Toon

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ASHMITA GHOSH.

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# **Prologue**

My heart thuds as I banged on the door of the house I knew all too well. I clutched my sister's hand with my other hand as my brother clung on to her other hand.

The smell of berries filled our noses and the moon illuminated everything.

"Coming!" a woman's voice called.

The door swung open and she smiled unaware of just how terrified we were.

"Ashley! Zafira! Zander! My darlings! What are you doing here? Come on in." she said cheerfully.

As soon as we got in I scanned to streets for any threats.

"Aren't you excited?" Natalie Williams, our godmother, mother's younger sister, asked.

"Aunt Natalie. We're on the run." I said.

"What why? The whole kingdom is looking forward to tomorrow!" she said.

"You do not know what has happened. Cecil Green. He has betrayed us." I said.

## Dear Toon

"Darling. Tell me what happened," she asked.

"Mama and Papa are gone. Cecil killed them. In front of us." I say and Zafi clung to me and Zander looked around to make sure we're safe.

"What? Naomi and Micah are dead? How has no one heard of this?" she asked as tears flowed down her face.

"Cecil has been covering it up. He has been telling people that they have gone to visit Oceania. He was going to announce that they had met an unfortunate accident and did not survive." Zan, Zander said.

"What about tomorrow's festivities?" she asked.

"Sham. It's all a sham. He said he'd kill our people one by one if I didn't listen. Somehow. I believed him. But I couldn't. I couldn't let him win. But I couldn't fight him there. He has managed to take over all our guards. Our tutor Ivan helped us escape but was killed while we were running away. He told us to run and not look back until we had the power to fight Cecil." I say

"What about Ashton? Where is he?" she asked.

"After killing Mama and Papa, Cecil tried to kill us all. Ashton managed to save us by taking the whole blow. Since then he hasn't been able to kill us. Somehow, Ashton saved us." Zafi said bursting into tears.

"Toon is dead?" Aunt Natalie asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

"No. It's much worse." I say.

"What is worse than death?" she asked as a horrified expression crossed her face.

"This is Ashton," I said pulling a brown leather bound journal.

"What?" she asked as she burst of crying.

Looking at Aunt Natalie I fought back my own tears. She looked a lot like Mama. She was fair as snow and her beautiful black locks where Mama had brown but they had the same sparkly blue eyes. Aunt Nat was spontaneous and edgy, always trying new things. She had once cut her hair extremely short '*Pixie*' she called it.

Mama had laughed at her shaking her head.

*"Nat! Only you would do this. You look gorgeous darling."* she had said.

She had long since grown out her hair again but every time I saw her I remembered that day.

We all loved Aunt Nat and trusted her.

# Chapter 1

*Dear LoonyToon,*

*Hey. So we made it to Springfield's Academy safely. As far as we know they don't know where we are.*

*Ashton. Can you actually understand what I'm saying or am I actually writing in a journal? I can feel your energy source in the journal. I hope you're with us in some way.*

*We're all trying to hold it together and I don't want to break in front of Zander and Zafira. It's hard, though.*

*David and Cecil's betrayal is really shocking. I'm not sure what to do.*

*A part of me wants to march back to the palace and rip them a new one and then kill them.*

*I've never had been a murderous person but they make my blood boil!*

*And a part of me wants to run. I am ashamed of that part of me.*

*But I've decided to face them. First, we'll save you and face them side by side.*

*We're having an argument about the room arrangement. You'd understand my frustration if you were here.*

*I love you. Forever.*

*Your Sister*

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

### ***CrazyLey***

“Ashley. I’m sorry but we cannot do that. We have to make it seem like you are just another student. The rules apply to you too. I’m sorry but you cannot share a room with Zafi and Zan.” Uncle Marc said. Uncle Marc was Aunt Nat’s boyfriend.

Uncle Marc had dark hair and deep brown eyes. He and Aunt Nat looked so cute together.

The night we ran away, the three of us went to our Aunt Nat. Nat was our mother’s younger sister.

We had told her everything that happened and mourned our family together but we knew we had to leave.

It was the first place Cecil would’ve checked.

So Aunt Nat came up with this idea.

Her boyfriend Marc Archibald was the headmaster at this boarding school in California for Elites all over the world. Springfield’s Academy.

We were all for it. We’d get some time to regroup and I could finish my last year of schooling.

Zafi and Zander were both fifteen and would join in Year 9 and I was continuing my Year 11.

The only bad thing about this place was that we had to stay with students in our own class. That would mean I couldn’t stay with my siblings.

## Dear Toon

We couldn't draw much attention to ourselves which would be hard since we were joining two weeks after the academic year started.

"Alright." I sighed.

"Now listen. While you're here, try to act like you fit in. Join groups, make friends." He said.

"We have to get ready to fight Cecil," Zan replied.

"Take a break. Rest up. Practice. And I'll do my research on how to help Ashton. You three can use my office after dinner and before breakfast and I've put a free slot in all your schedules at the same time too." Uncle Marc said.

"Good. I don't know how to thank you enough Uncle Marc." I said hugging him.

"You're family." He said.

"So, where are our schedules?" Zafi asked.

Uncle Marc fumbles in his desk and pulls out three folders.

"Ashley." He hands me mine and does the same for the other two.

I look through the folder. I was happy to have some normalcy back in my life.

School.

I remember back when Toon and I attended Nichols Prep School. We used to have so much fun.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

All our classmates walked on eggshells, trying to please us, but neither of us liked it. We didn't really have any friends, only a handful. We had each other. Now, I didn't even have him.

But I had to be strong for my family.

I had to try to bring him back.

But if I couldn't, then I had to take up that responsibility.

For now at least. I'd lie low.

I looked back at the folder.

**ASHLEY GREY: GRADE XI: Locker No: 199: Code: 22091999**

**SLOT 1: Creative Writing Room 100- TEACHER: Quinn Archibald**

**SLOT 2: Science Room 117- TEACHER: Elizabeth Taylor**

**SLOT 3: Art Room 103- TEACHER: Hansel Riccio**

**SLOT 4: English Room 100- TEACHER: Quinn Archibald**

**LUNCH**

**SLOT 5: Maths Room 119- TEACHER: Peitro Fernandez**

**SLOT 6: Free**

**SLOT 7: Psychology Room 115- TEACHER: Adam Taylor**

Score! Two English classes.

Uncle Marc knew exactly what we wanted!

**Dear Toon**

“Zafi, Zan! Hand me yours.” I said.

**ZAFIRA GREY: GRADE IX:** Locker No: 217: Code: 17102000

**SLOT 1:** Maths Room 119- **TEACHER:** Peitro Fernandez

**SLOT 2:** English Room 100- **TEACHER:** Quinn Archibald

**SLOT 3:** Fashion Arts Room 104- **TEACHER:** Mizzy Riccio

**SLOT 4:** Science Room 117- **TEACHER:** Elizabeth Taylor

**LUNCH**

**SLOT 5:** Drama Room 106- **TEACHER:** Douglas Moore

**SLOT 6:** Free

**SLOT 7:** Home Ec. Room 110- **TEACHER:** Celeste Joan

**ZANDER GREY: GRADE IX:** Locker No: 217: Code: 17102000

**SLOT 1:** Maths Room 119- **TEACHER:** Peitro Fernandez

**SLOT 2:** English Room 100- **TEACHER:** Quinn Archibald

**SLOT 3:** Gym Field- **TEACHER:** Roger Sanders

**SLOT 4:** Science Room 117- **TEACHER:** Elizabeth Taylor

**LUNCH**

**SLOT 5:** History Room 112- **TEACHER:** Peter Johnson

**SLOT 6:** Free

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

### **SLOT 7: Music Room 102- TEACHER: Reema Mukherjee**

“Well, at least we have three classes together,” Zander says putting his arm around his twin.

I feel a pang in my heart. Toon. My LoonyToon. Ashton. I miss you. My twin.

“Ash!” Zafi pokes me.

“Yes, sweetheart?” I ask.

“Where is your room?” she asks.

“There was only one vacant room in Year 11. Room A416. The Wing B is for 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Graders, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> are in A. I managed to get you two in one room, A202. At least you’re in the same wing. The first and second floor for 9<sup>th</sup> and third and fourth for 11<sup>th</sup>.” Uncle Marc said.

There was a sheet in the folder with the room layout.

### **DORM 416**

#### **OCCUPANTS: A. Grey & A. Mercer.**

Well, can’t wait to meet A. Mercer. I hope she doesn’t mind me being a slob.

“Well. You should head to your dorms. It’s getting late.” Uncle Marc says and shows us the way to the dorm building.

“Hello Dearies. You must be the new students.” The lady who was waiting for us said.

“Hello. I’m Ashley Grey and these are my siblings Zafira and Zander Grey.” I introduce us.

## Dear Toon

"I'm Emily Vance, the dorm supervisor. If you need anything, come to me. Anytime. I live in Room 101. Here is my phone number in case you can't find me and it's an emergency." She smiled.

Emily seemed like a wonderful lady with her warm blue eyes and short blonde hair. She seemed to be in her late forties or early fifties.

"Use the elevator to reach your floor and the room numbers are written on the doors. Do you need me to come with you?" she asked.

"No, thank you," Zan said politely.

"Well then Dearies, off to bed you go." She smiled.

The three of us got in the elevator with the scarce luggage we had.

I looked at my siblings and sighed. A few weeks ago we were so happy. A complete family. I look up at my younger brother and sister. Ashton. If only you were here.

But he was. In my bag. As a journal.

I could see the weariness in my babies faces. Zander's five-feet-eight-inches build was slouched and black his hair was matted. His blue eyes had been drained of life. Usually, the brightness in his eyes reminded me of Mama.

And my baby girl. My always perky sister wasn't even smiling. Zafi and I were short, really short, she was still an inch taller than my five feet. She had Papa's eyes and hair like Mama, long brown

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

and wavy. She was the only one of us who looked exactly like Papa.

Both Ashton and I had dark brown hair almost black. Ashton had brown eyes like Papa but I somehow ended up with green eyes. I always wished I had my mother's vibrant blue eyes. She was beautiful.

I remembered my happy family and felt a dam break, I couldn't take it anymore. I flung myself at my baby brother and sister pulling them in for a hug. I wouldn't cry in front of them, though.

"Everything will be fine right?" Zan asked clinging to me.

"Yes. I will make sure of it. You bath have been so strong." I say.

"I've been crying like a baby," Zafi says.

"Well... We lost our parents and Toon. And our home. And you're still functioning. That's strength." I said kissing her tears away.

"Um. I think we forgot to press the buttons." Zan says suddenly realizing we hadn't moved and we started laughing.

The two of them waved at me as the got inside there room right in front of the elevator.

I sighed as I stood in front of my new room.

Taking a deep breath I knocked.

No answer.

After knocking a few times I decided that my roommate was not home so I used the key.

The moment I opened the door I froze.

**Dear Toon**

There was a guy in my room. Making out with my roommate.

Oh, Raphi! My eyes.

## **Chapter 2**

“Excuse me.” I squeaked out.

This makes them stop. The guy slowly got up and stood in front of me.

I turned to face the wall outside the room.

“Hello there.” The guy said. His English accent was quite distinct. I had to admit, he was hot.

I took a deep breath and tried to calm my flushed face as I turned around.

His dark hair was still messy from their activities and I had to admit, he was extremely hot. Cute too.

The girl, who I hadn’t seen properly had a sour look on her face.

“I’m so sorry. I knocked. I thought no one was in. I swear I hadn’t even heard anything from outside.” I said.

“Well, you shouldn’t enter someone’s room like that.” The girl says.

“It’s all right really. These rooms are basically soundproof. And it’s not like we were making noise. Though you could’ve joined us.” He winked.

“That’s...that’s...that’s sordid,” I say.

“What are you doing here?” The girl asked.

## Dear Toon

"I'm Ashley Grey. I'm your new roommate. You must be A. Mercer." I said.

"Tasha King, daughter of Anna King." She said.

"So you're not my roommate?" I asked.

"Did you not hear me? I'm Anna King's daughter." She said and I'm an actual Kings daughter.

"I'm sorry but I know not of Anna King," I said.

"What! How could you not? She has won five Oscars!" Tasha said.

"Oh. I don't really watch movies. Where is my roommate? Is she out?" I asked.

"Well, she is a he. I think you know that." The boy smirked at me.

"What? That's not right." I said.

"Aaron Mercer." He said shaking my hand as I stood there shocked.

"But! You're..." I stuttered.

"A fetching young man. I know Shorty, I know." He winked.

"I'm expected to share a room with a boy," I said.

"It's a co-ed dorm shortcake." He said.

"Stop calling me short!" I huffed looking up at him.

He was tall. Really tall. Ashton was probably an inch or two shorter than him. He had to be at least six feet. Wow. An entire foot taller than me.

## Ashmita Ghosh

I was obsessed with people's heights, especially since I was so damn short!

"All right cupcake. Tash, I think you should go. I'd like to spend some quality time with my roommate." He told the blonde. The tall beautiful blonde girl glared at me and walked out indignantly.

"So, where are you from?" he asked as I finally decided to keep my things on the empty side of the room.

The room was huge. It wasn't like normal dorms. There were two closets, a kitchen-cum-dining, a bathroom, a living area and two beds & study tables. There was also a room with washer and dryer and an ironing board.

The room was clean. Like extremely clean. Nothing out of place, well other than the bed covers on his bed.

"I'm from America," I said. I couldn't really say where from!

"No shit Sherlock. Your accent didn't give it away at all. I'm surprised really." He rolled his eyes.

"You're from England?" I asked.

"Aye, aye, Captain Obvious." He rolled his eyes again.

"I'm going to go freshen up," I said getting up grabbing a t-shirt and shorts.

The bathroom was also clean and everything was put together.

I took a warm shower, washing away the dirt and grime and scrubbed myself clean until I was red. I tried to wash away his touch. Shivering at memories that came fleetingly in.

## Dear Toon

I wrapped a towel around my body and dried my hair. After putting on my clothes I walked out to the room.

Aaron was on the couch watching TV.

"That's your closet Shorty." He said pointing to one on the two doors on either side of the bathroom door.

I walked to my closet and shoved the clothes I was wearing in there. I barely brought anything so I quickly unpacked. I checked the study table which had a bookshelf on top of it.

All the necessary supplies were there. School books, pencils, erasers, pens, scale, stapler, tape and other necessities. I grabbed a pen and walked to my bed.

I pulled the brown Journal and sighed.

Oh, Toon. I miss you.

"So, why did you join late?" Aaron asked.

"Well, we hadn't planned on coming. It was sudden." I said.

"Why?" he asked.

"Decided we needed a change of scenery," I said.

"We?" he prompted.

"My siblings and I. They're in Grade 9," I said.

"They're twins?" he asked.

"Yeah." I smiled.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“You know, you might be short, but you’re pretty hot. Especially in that top and those shorts, Shorty.” He winked all of a sudden.

“You absolute pig!” I huffed. Just when I thought he was a good guy!

“Come on sweetheart. You know you want me.” He winked.

“You have a girlfriend. You should be ashamed to even suggest that!” I said.

“Tash is not my girl. I don’t date.” He winks.

I shook my head and started talking to Toon like I usually did. Well, I just wrote in the journal. He couldn’t write back but I had a feeling he understood.

***Dear LoonyToon,***

***We are in California right now. We ran away from home. I tried to stand up to them but everyone turned on us. The guards. How could they?***

***Ivan helped us escape. I just couldn’t do it. I couldn’t let them hurt our people. To our people, it would’ve been me ruling but do you think they would let me have an opinion. And then one day, he’d kill them all. Every time I made a move they threatened our people. I agreed for the sake of the public.***

***I hate David. You were right. He was just using me.***

***Ivan. Poor Ivan. When we win, I will ensure his name is brought to glory.***

***And Mama and Papa are truly gone. And, Toon... I have to take the responsibility.***

Dear Toon

*I know it's wrong but I wish I didn't have to. But there is no way I will let Cecil or David take over. It is rightfully ours.*

*Ever since we were kids, I'd always said I didn't want it. Papa said I could do what my heart pleased to do, he would be there for a long time and we didn't have to forbid.*

*I once asked him, if god forbid something were to happen to him and Mama, what would happen?*

*You know what he told me?*

*"The four of you have each other. Together you stand as one. As one you make decisions. There are four of you and together, you can live a normal life and yet do your job. Trust your people. Trust your guards, treat them with respect. And they will love you."*

*We always did treat them with love and respect. Never once have we treated them like any less than family. And we got stabbed in the back.*

*And I miss you. I miss you so much. Remember? Four. Not three.*

*I have a theory about why we're still alive.*

*The four of us stood as one.*

*I think as long as we're together, we're safe.*

*So. Well. We're together now even though it's not how we thought we would be.*

*We went to Aunt Nat. She thought I was willingly doing what I was about to do. Even if I was, don't you think I would've told my family? Why would she find out from the papers?*

## Ashmita Ghosh

*Right now we're at Springfield's Academy. I'm rooming with an English boy. He's so crass. I walked in on him and some girl.*

*And Toon. I wish you were here. You would've loved it.*

*I love you. Forever.*

*Your Sister*

*CrazyLey*

I sighed and closed the Journal and put it on my nightstand.

“Goodnight,” I say to Aaron who was still watching TV and close my eyes.

# Chapter 3

*Dear LoonyToon,*

*Good morning.*

*It's so weird waking up here.*

*It's five in the morning. I'm meeting up with ZandaBear and ZafiPie in half an hour.*

*I woke up this morning and realized I wouldn't see you. It's so hard waking up and not seeing you every morning.*

*Wanna know something weird?*

*When I woke up, my roommate was gone. Who the hell wakes up before five? If I could, I'd be in bed until noon.*

*I was thinking, if we could somehow harness your power through the book, maybe we could win.*

*I just hope you can be saved soon, though.*

*I wish you could talk back to me. I miss hearing your voice. I miss your laugh.*

*Do you remember that time when we were fourteen and Papa sent us to Oceania?*

*You spent most of the vacation with Viola.*

*I was so jealous...*

## Ashmita Ghosh

*I went to her room one night and told her to stay away from my brother.*

*You were always around me. Until then, there hadn't been a moment that we'd been apart and you were ignoring me for a fish!*

*It took me a while to warm up to her. But you did well with that girl.*

*Viola is truly amazing. I never really told you I approved, but I do. And I love her too.*

*I am going to contact her soon and tell her. She still doesn't know about what happened to you.*

*Well... I'm going to go. I think my roommate is about to come in.*

*Yup. It looks like he went out on a run.*

*Bye.*

*Love Always.*

*Your Sister,*

**CrazyLey**

“Do you always write?” Aaron says as he came in.

“Good morning,” I said clearing my throat. I hadn’t realized I’d choked up while writing to Ashton.

“Hey. Are you alright?” he asked his face morphing into one of worry.

## Dear Toon

"Just been one of those weeks. A lot of change. Decided to write it all down." I said.

"So tell me something about yourself?" he asked.

"Well, I'm Ashley Mikaela Grey. I'm sixteen. I have a twin brother, Ashton Michael Grey, and two younger siblings Zafira Nichole Grey and Zander Nikolai Grey, they're fifteen and in 9<sup>th</sup> grade." I said.

"So you said your siblings were here but where is your twin?" he asked and my face dropped.

"Not here," I mumbled.

"What happened? Why are you here?" he asked. Damn. I so wish he was being a crass jerk right now.

"He just didn't want to come. We did." I lied. "Well, it's almost five thirty. Gotta go. See you later."

"See you later." He said with a peculiar look. He seemed to be deep in thought.

I got up from the bed and walked to the room.

Just as I was about to exit the room I turned back.

"What time is breakfast?" I asked.

"Seven. Classes start at nine." He smiled.

"Thank you." I smiled.

"Have fun, Shorty." He called back with his beautiful accent.

And there he was, the boy I met last night.

## Ashmita Ghosh

I rushed to Marc's office. I'd lost track of time talking to Aaron.

"There's the perfect princess." Zan laughed as I came in "Always on time."

"A princess is never late. Everyone else is simply early." I retort.

"Well we've been here fifteen minutes." Zafi said.

"Yeah well." I stuck my tongue out.

"Such ladylike behavior." Zan tutted.

"Can we get this show on the road now?" Zafi asked impatiently.

"So, I had an idea. You remember when Papa said together the four of us could do anything? What if he meant it literally? If we can harness Ashton's magic from this book, maybe we can free him. And maybe we stand a chance." I said.

Being an Angelic princess wasn't an easy job. Never had I ever expected that I'd be in this position. I always thought we'd be older when the throne got passed on to us and the four of us would share responsibility. And Mama and Papa would guide us.

The world was a complex place. Humans didn't know that we existed. We weren't the only ones. There were four magical kingdoms. Mermaidia, Faerietopia, Angelica and Mythica.

I was the princess of Angelica. My father, King Micah Grey reigned over the Angels since he turned twenty-five. He was a kind ruler. Everyone loved him.

If our people found out what happened they'd be in a rage.

## Dear Toon

Angels had beautiful wings. Angel wings were different from Faerie wings. Angels had feathery wings, beautiful and from white to light gray and black. Black wings didn't mean evil. It was just another form.

Mama was a faerie. In fact, she was the Faerie Queen. Queen Naomi Williams of Faerietopia.

But we didn't. In fact, our angel wings were multi-colored, the colors of our wings represented the Faerie heritage.

People would know who we were by our wings.

We used to live in both the palaces. We attended school in Angelica, though. It wasn't hard traveling from one place to another. As an Angel and a Faerie, I could fly but since these were like alternate dimensions, we usually used magic gates, which were vastly distributed around the world.

All you had to do was think of where you wanted to go. Some nights we spent at the Faerie castle and some nights at the Angel castle.

Aunt Nat lived on earth, in LA in fact. She didn't want to be involved in the royal affairs. She moved to the human world five years ago and met a wonderful man, Uncle Micah. Now, she had to reprise her role in the Faerie world, unless we had to take that throne too.

Two kingdoms had lost their monarchs and didn't even know about it.

"So. Do you have any idea what we have to do?" Zander asked bringing me out of my thoughts.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“No. But we need to learn to control our magic first. Neither of you is very good at it.” I said.

“I just can’t get a hang of it,” Zafi complained.

“Close your eyes,” I said as I did the same. I was good at simple magic but I couldn’t channel others. Not even Ashton.

“Think of a happy place. We’re going to clear our minds and try to channel each other.” I said.

We sat there for a while with our legs crossed and eyes closed as we tried to focus with no success. We didn’t connect.

We were like radio signals at different frequencies trying to tune into each other.

We tried, though. For about an hour.

Finally, at seven, we gave up and decided to head to breakfast.

The dining hall was full of students. We spotted a table at a corner and decided to sit there after grabbing some breakfast.

There weren’t many students in the hall but I notice the girl from yesterday, Tasha and a few other girls.

She caught sight of me and turned her head.

I was eating my bacon and cheese when a person sat down next to me.

“Hello.” My sister said looking at him. Aaron.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

## Dear Toon

“Eating breakfast with my new roomie. It is the most important meal of the day.” He said as his accent made me melt. But I kept my composure.

He was an arrogant, crass moron but he was cute and I wasn’t ashamed to admit it.

“You’re rooming with a boy?” Zan asked outraged.

“Zan. It’s no biggie. Ash is responsible.” Zafi told him immediately calming him down.

Zander was easy to infuriate but Zafi could always calm him down.

“I’m Zafi Grey by the way. This is my twin brother Zander.” Zafi introduced herself.

“Aaron Mercer. Pleasure is all mine.” He said kissing her hand and she blushed.

Uh! He was such a flirt.

“Well. I’m going to go freshen up. You coming?” Zan asked Zafi but she shook her head.

“I’m going to go to the library for a bit.” She said and we nodded understanding she wanted to research on being trapped in a book. “Can I have Toon?” she asked.

“Sure,” I said and handed her the journal. She needed her big brother.

“So. Why do you refer to your diary as a person? And share it?” Aaron asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“It’s not a diary,” I said.

“Whatever you say, Shorty.” He said getting up.

After he left I picked up my empty plate and kept it in the cleaning area.

Just as I was about to exit the hall, I tripped due to someone’s foot and almost fell on my face. I looked up to see Tasha King.

“I see you found your place.” She smirked.

I stood up and stood tall. A princess is always at her best.

“Please excuse me,” I said politely trying to walk away.

“Stay away from Aaron. He’s mine.” She snarled. Wow. She actually snarled. Even my wolf friends don’t snarl at me.

It took all the control I had to contain myself and not give her a piece of my mind.

“Leave her alone. And I don’t belong to you. I thought it was clear. I’m not interested in dating you.” Aaron’s voice came from behind me.

“But baby,” she whined. Wow! Her tone changed so fast.

I decided they weren’t worth my time so I shook my head and walked away.

“Wait up Shorty!” he called and I could hear him running.

I decided to wait, after all, he stood up for me.

“I’m sorry about that. You know how some girls get clingy.” He sighed.

## Dear Toon

“It’s alright. I’m just not used to people talking to me like that.” I said.

“Really?” he asked.

“Yeah. People were always too scared. It’s kind of refreshing.” I sighed.

“Why were they scared?” he asked.

“Oh! Nothing. It’s just that Ashton was overprotective.” I said realizing my mistake.

“You, Ashley Grey are a mystery. And I will uncover the truth behind your sad eyes.” He smiled and walked towards our room leaving me standing with my mouth hung open.

## **Chapter 4**

I took a shower after Aaron left the bathroom. I needed time to think. Today was my first day at this school.

Back home I loved going to school. At school, I only took English classes. Ivan taught me science and maths and other subjects. The school was just a place to be free from the duties.

The way Tasha talked to me this morning surprised me. It made me realize, this wasn't home. I couldn't let my guard down for one second.

My mother was a Faerie queen and my father the kind of angels. I was used to being treated in a certain way and it was refreshing to have people be mean to me.

Ashton would've loved it.

Normalcy.

I dried my hair and put on a loose beige colored three-quarter pants. I never really wore firm fitting clothes, I mostly owned sweatshirts. I was a little figure conscious. I hated my height.

I dress in a sweatshirt and jeans, not feeling like dressing up and pull my hair in a ponytail. I look in the mirror and put on my glasses.

I didn't like wearing makeup. Usually, I just applied on some lipstick and mascara for special occasions. Other than that I didn't waste much time on my appearance.

## Dear Toon

The only time I went all out was during the balls back home. I loved those balls. All four kingdoms together. We saw vampires and werewolves from Mythica and mermaids. There were some human representatives too, as a sign of peace treaty.

I shook my head and walked out of the bathroom.

Aaron was sitting on his bed using his computer.

“So, what’s your first class?” he asked.

“Creative writing,” I said.

“Cool. Me too.” He said.

“You write?” I asked.

“Not really. Just a little. I didn’t like the other classes. Show me your timetable.” He said.

I shook my head and gave him the sheet.

“Well, looks like we have all the same classes except Art. I have gym then.” He said.

“Oh. Do you mind....” I started wanting help around the school. I had no idea where anything was.

“I’ll show you around. I’ll pick you up after art class. Just wait for me.” He said.

“No. It’s fine. You don’t need to go out of your way. Isn’t the English and Creative writing class the same?” I say.

“Yeah. Sure then. I’ll meet you there. Now. Get your books. We need to go. We can’t come back between the classes so grab the

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

first halves books right now. You can put them in your locker.” He said.

“Sure,” I said.

“Locker number?” he asked.

“199,” I said.

“It’s like you’re stalking me! Come on.” He said.

“What?” I asked.

“Locker number 198.” He smiled.

So many coincidences.

I could feel eyes on us as we made our way to our lockers.

I punched in the code as soon as we reached the locker.

*22091999*

“Your birthday was two weeks ago week?” he asked.

“What? How’d you know?” I asked.

“Well, that’s always the default code.” He shrugged.

“Yeah. It was.” I said as a cold feeling crept over me.

“So, what did you do?” he asked.

“Spent it with my family,” I said.

Cecil and David murdered my parents on the very next day.

David said he gave us one last day together.

## Dear Toon

We were supposed to have a birthday ball that weekend but it got canceled for obvious reasons. I initially didn't want a ball. But now, I desperately wanted one. At least that would mean my parents were still there. But alas. They weren't.

"Ashley?" A voice called from behind me.

I turned around and froze in shock.

"Candy!" I said as a smile appeared on my face.

"What are you doing here?" She asked rushing over and hugging me. Her electric blue eyes shone with excitement.

"We're attending school here now. I didn't know you were too." I said.

"I've been here since I was a freshman. I was so excited about seeing you at that event. But it got canceled last minute. What happened?" she asked.

"It wasn't right. We thought it was best for everyone if that didn't take place." I said.

"What?" she asked.

"I'll tell you later. Meet us for lunch?" I asked.

"Sure. See you at the dining hall. You can sit with me. I don't usually eat breakfast down there. That's probably why I didn't see you. Well, bye. Mr. Fernandez gets pissed if we're late for Maths." She said as she rushed away.

As I watched my brunette friend, Candice Shepard walk away I felt someone clear their throat.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Oh. Hi!” I said.

“You know President Shepard’s daughter?” Aaron asked.

“Yeah. Family friends.” I said and also because Candy’s mother was a faerie.

“What do your parents do?” he asked.

“They’re lawyers,” I said hurriedly.

“Both of them?” he asked.

“Yeah.” I said uncomfortably “Um... Can we go to class? I want to see Quinn before class.” I said.

“Quinn?” he asked.

“Quinn Archibald. I was told she was the English teacher.” I said.

“You know Ms. Archibald?” he asked.

“Another family friend,” I said.

“So you must know the headmaster too, right?” he asked.

“Uncle Marc’s my Aunt’s boyfriend. He’s the reason we’re at this school.” I said.

“Ah.” He said.

“Don’t go around telling people that, okay?” I asked.

“You’re secret’s safe with me. Now let’s see Ms. Archibald.” He said smiling.

Oh, Rafi! His smile. This wasn’t like his usual smiles and smirks. This was a genuine smile and it made me melt.

## Dear Toon

Shut up Ashley! You don't melt because of a boy's smile, especially a boy like him!

We walked to the Writing class in silence. He wasn't quite bad. I liked being around him when he wasn't being a crass jerk.

"Ashley! Darling! You're really here!" Quinn said as soon as she saw me. Quinn was Uncle Marc's younger sister.

"Hi," I said. I noticed Aaron move quietly to go sit in the back.

"I heard. Darling, I'm so sorry. It must be devastating. Where is Ashton? Can I see him?" she asked.

"He's with Zafi right now. She has next period with you." I say.

"If you need anything. I mean absolutely anything. Come to me. I know I'm not your mother or even Natalie. But darling, I'll be there for you." She said and I hugged her.

After a while, I pulled away, just in time. Other students started fleeting in and taking their seats.

Within a few minutes, only the seat next to Aaron was empty.

I sat down next to him and he looked over at me.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

"Yeah." I tried to act nonchalant but my voice cracked.

His hand came up to my cheeks and I stopped breathing.

He wiped a tear off my face.

I hadn't even realized I started crying.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

I quickly wiped my face with the sleeve of my shirt and tried to compose myself.

“Did everyone see?” I asked.

“The best thing about teenagers is that they’re self-obsessed. You’re safe.” He said smiling. His smile.

“Thank you,” I said.

“For what?” he asked.

“Not prying,” I replied and faced the class.

## Chapter 5

The rest of the day flew by. I barely paid any attention in class. I was too busy trying to come up with a plan to help Ashton.

Before I knew it lunch had arrived.

“You coming?” Aaron asked as we stood outside the dining hall.

“No. My siblings and I are having lunch in Uncle Marc’s office. I’m just waiting for Candy.” I said.

“If this is about this morning...” he started but I cut him off.

“It’s not,” I assured him.

“Well then...” he said walking away. I watch as he sits with a group of people, which included Tasha.

“Ash!” I hear Candy’s voice.

“Hi! Let’s go.” I say.

“Where?” she asks.

“To Uncle Marc’s office. I need you to do me a favor.” I said.

“What?” she asks.

“I’ll tell you when we get to his office,” I said and with that we rushed off to Marc’s office. My siblings hadn’t arrived yet.

“So?”

“I need to talk to your father,” I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“My parents were murdered. Any news from Angelia is a hoax.” I said.

“What?” she froze.

“Cecil Green killed my parents,” I said.

“Green as in David Green? Your David?” she asked.

“Not my David. That bastard betrayed me. He took my family away from me.” I said.

“When did it happen?” she asked.

“23<sup>rd</sup> September,” I mumbled.

“So that’s why the event was canceled.” She said.

“That’s why Ashton and I’s birthday ball was canceled but the other event was never supposed to happen. I only agreed to save my people but I heard about a massacre somewhere in the kingdom and I knew they were lying. They would hurt people no matter what. Our tutor, Ivan tried to help us escape, dying in the process.” I said.

“Ivan Powiski? The Vampire king?” she gasped.

“Yes,” I said.

“He was a great man. Hey, but why doesn’t everyone know what happened?” she asked.

“We haven’t been allowed to leave the castle, we’d been locked in. They’ve been controlling everything. People trust him because he was a friend of Papa’s.” I said.

“And he’s trying to take over?” she asked.

## Dear Toon

“That would make things easy. You can’t take over if your subjects don’t want you. He is an old one. One of the only remaining Dark Ones. He’s trying to end all that is good.” I said.

“Oh my god.” She gasped.

“Yeah. And he’s going to use our allies against us. The last I knew he was planning an attack on the humans. That puts the humans against us.” I said.

“When?” she asked.

“I don’t know. I was planning on calling everyone today. Queen Elis Hathaway and Queen Atlanta Hathaway of Mermaidia, Alpha Johan Poike and Luna Welma Sevra of the Wolves, Queen Erica Powiski of the vampires, and tell her of her husband’s death. They all need to be careful. They’re all in danger.” I said.

She looked terrified.

When Zafira and Zander came in, she jumped a foot in the air.

“Candice?” Zafi asked running to embrace her.

“Hi. Ash was just telling me about what happened.” She said as she dialed someone on her phone.

“Daddy.” She said, her voice quivering “Ashley wants to talk to you.” She said handing me the phone.

“President Shepard,” I said curtly.

“Ashley dear. It’s Uncle Kevin. How many times have I told you that? I basically saw you grow up.” he said laughing.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Uncle Kevin. Have you heard anything from Angelica?” I asked putting the phone on speaker.

“Yes. It is quite unfortunate, your parents’ accident. Your parents were honorable people. If you need any help, humans will lend a hand to both Angelica and Faerietopia. Lord Cecil Green called us himself. Said you were in grief and had the event postponed.” He said.

“They weren’t in an accident, Uncle Kevin. They were murdered in front of us.” I said and I saw Zafi cringe and Zan held her tight.

“What? That isn’t a matter taken lightly. Angelica shouldn’t try to cover it up. Why would Lord Green tell us that?” he asked frantically.

“Cecil!” I spat “As the rightful Queen of Angelica, I revoke his title.” I said.

“What?” he asked confused.

“Cecil Green is a criminal. He should be executed for treason. He murdered my parents.” I said.

“What?” he asked and I explained everything to him. Everything that happened since the day my parents died. The two of their plans to kill everyone, not take over. He didn’t care about anyone but Angels. Dark Ones have always tried to kill Angels, they would hurt others too, they are our common enemy.

When I told him about Ashton, Candice gasped and looked at the journal in Zafi’s hands.

“Is that?” she asked.

“Yes.” Zander nodded.

“Ashley. Listen to me carefully. You three are going to stay at Springfield’s. Be safe. We can’t have the queen of Angelica hurt right now. We will deal with this the best we can. You just focus on Ashton. And if you can, contact the other kingdoms.” Uncle Kevin said.

“Even if we stay out now, we’re the only ones that can kill them. And please don’t tell the public. It will cause panic and they’ll find out.” I said.

“Of course. It will be done covertly. I promise. Do you think you have the power?” he asked.

“Yes. I’m sure we can do it. But we can’t connect.” I said.

Kevin Shepard was one of those humans that understood magic as well as us.

“You need to relax. No training for a month. Relax. Zafi and Zander need to practice. They need it. And tell them to do it away from you. You stress too much.” He said.

Yeah. Uncle Kevin Shepard was closer to my family than most humans, he was my father’s best friend. And that’s why I was so close to Candy.

“Okay,” I said. Stress hinders magic.

“And one more thing. Aren’t you kids late for your class?” he asked.

“Shit!” Zafi said, “I have Drama.”

“Zaf! Wait. Can I have Ashton?” I asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Sure.” She said, pity shining in her eyes.

She loved Toon too. They both did but they knew how attached I was to Toon. They had the same relationship. Twins.

“Oh, and by the way, Mama and Papa were lawyers,” I said.

“What?” Zander asked.

“I told someone that,” I said.

“Okay.” They nodded.

“Bye,” I said to Uncle Kevin and gave the phone to Candy.

She bid her father goodbye.

“What are you doing after classes?” she asked me as we headed to our classes.

“We were going to practice. But...” I shrugged.

“If you need to talk about David, I’m here.” She said.

“I’m not ready yet. But thanks. But can I ask for another favor?” I asked.

“Sure.” She said.

“Can I borrow your phone? We ran in a hurry. None of us got our stuff. We just got Toon and ran. We had some clothes at Aunt Nat’s so we took those.” I said.

“Well. You know I love tinkering with electronics. I have tons of phones. When’s your free period?” she asked.

“Next,” I said.

## Dear Toon

"Here. It's the key to my room. B320. The desk with a lot of electronics is mine. Pick any three phones and give one to Zafi and Zan. All the phones have sims." She said.

"Thank you so much," I said waving as I head towards the math class before realizing where it was. Aaron probably left.

"Candy! Where is Mr. Fernandez's class?" I ask.

"Go straight, second left. Third class." She smiled and walking the other way.

When I got to class I noticed it had already begun.

"Excuse me," I said meekly.

"Ah! You must be Ms. Grey. Finally graced us with your presence I see. You're late." He said.

"By five minutes," I said checking the clock. I noticed Aaron sitting in the back.

"Well. No need to come in. You'll be going straight to the headmaster." He said.

"But sir." I started.

"No buts." He said.

"Sir. I was in the headmaster's office. That's why I'm late. Had to work out some admission stuff. You can ask him." I say.

"Oh, I will." He said picking up the intercom phone, probably to talk to Marc.

"Sir. Ms. Grey is late and claims to have been in a meeting with you." He said smirking.

## Ashmita Ghosh

Then it faltered.

"Of course sir. She will be excused." He said.

"May I come in?" I asked sweetly.

"Sit at the back. There's an empty seat next to Mr. Mercer." He said straightening up with a sour look on his face.

As I walked back, I saw a few familiar faces. Some of these people were children of human representatives.

"I waited but I couldn't be late. He's awful." Aaron said.

"It's fine. I got held up." I said.

"It must be cool, having the headmaster pull you out of trouble. You can skip all you want and he'll cover your ass." Aaron said and I frowned.

"We were actually busy. It was a serious matter. And Uncle Marc would only help out when he knows what we were doing was important." I said.

"I wasn't judging. I was just saying that..." I stopped him by telling him to concentrate in class.

# Chapter 6

"I'm sorry," Aaron said as we walked out of the class.

"For what?" I asked.

"For offending you. I really didn't mean it in a bad way." He said.

"It's alright. I understand." I said.

"What're you doing now?" he asked.

"I have to get something. Can you guide me to B Block? I need to get something from Candice's room." I said.

"Sure. I'll come with you." He said.

"You don't have to," I said.

"No. I'm free. And I really don't want to be pursued by all the girls in the school right now. I don't feel like it." He said.

I shook my head but accepted his help.

When we got to Candy's room, I immediately recognized her table. I grabbed three phones and scribbled a thank you note on a post it I found in her room.

"You're stealing phones?" Aaron asked.

"No. She told me to take them. We left in a hurry. Didn't get much." I said.

"Teenagers these days are addicted to their mobiles. Even I am. So what is your real story?" he asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Nothing,” I said and realized that the other half of the room was occupied by a boy. “Does everyone share a dorm with the opposite sex?” I asked.

“No. It’s actually depending on their schedules and times of admission. This is Duke Theo Marchand of Monte Carlo, Monaco.” He said.

“Theo is here? I haven’t seen him in ages!” I exclaimed.

“You know him too?” Aaron asked shocked.

“Yeah. My parents worked in those circles.” I made an excuse.

“Really?” he said raising an eyebrow.

God! I wish I could. I couldn’t raise an eyebrow and I was always jealous of people who could. And of people who could whistle.

“Yes. Now. Can we leave?” I asked.

“Sure. What do you want to do now?” he asked.

I knew I had to make phone calls but I didn’t want to tell him to go away. He was being too kind to me. I’d seen the way he behaved around others but he was kind of sweet to me.

“I don’t know,” I said.

“Come on.” He said and I followed him.

We were near the art class when I heard a loud shriek.

“Mr. Mercer!” our art teacher Mr. Riccio screamed walking out of the art room covered in paint.

“What did you do?” I asked.

## Dear Toon

“Just a little fun.” He said smirking. Not his smile.

Smile, damn it, don’t smirk!

“Mr. Mercer. Come with me to the headmaster.” He said.

“See you later, Shorty!” he smirked walking away happily with Mr. Riccio.

*What did he do?*

I went to check on the art room. The whole room was covered in paint.

“What happened?” I asked someone.

“Aaron Mercer. He set up balloons filled with paint on the ceiling and covered them up with some fake ceiling thing made of some weird powder that dissolved.” She said.

“How did they burst? I asked.

“Dunno. He’s a genius.” She said.

“Ashley?” a voice called from behind me.

“Theo!” I smiled and launched myself at him.

“Hey.” He said, “I didn’t know you were here.”

“First day. I was in your room earlier.” I said.

“Why?” he asked.

“Well, I had to get some phones from Candice. You’re her roommate?” I asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Yeah. She’s not bad for a roommate. So, are your siblings here?” he asked.

“Anyone in particular?” I wagged my eyebrows.

“Shut up!” he said blushing.

“You’ve had a crush on Zafi since she was thirteen, which is a little gross, but still. Ask her out.” I said.

“Does she like me?” he asked hopefully.

“Maybe. Maybe not. Take a chance.” I said.

“Ashton will kill me.” He said as we walked out of the class together.

“He can’t,” I mumbled.

“What?” Theo asked.

“Ashton is not in any state to hurt anyone,” I said.

“What?” he asked again.

I saw a janitor’s closet and pulled him in. I sat in a corner and told him about everything.

“Wait. That journal is Ashton?” he asked shocked and I nodded.

“And your parents?” he asked and I nodded again.

“And David?” he asked and I nodded again.

“I will kill that bastard!” Theo got riled up.

“Calm down. Chill. Tell your father about this. It’s hard for me to tell this to everyone over and over and I still have to tell many

## Dear Toon

people, I will contact the Alpha and Luna and they'd tell your mother but I just thought I should tell you myself. But she'll find out once in a while. I mean she is the werewolf princess." I said.

"It'll be alright." He said comforting me.

"I'm fine," I said. Those two words were keeping an internal wall shut. A tear or two might slip but I hadn't full on cried yet.

"Let's get going. What's your next class? I'll drop you off. I have Home Ec. I decided to change my subject this year because I didn't like creative writing. I bet you took that class. Now I have a class with ninth graders." He said and I smiled.

"Well. I did take creative writing. And I think you'll enjoy this year's Home Ec. I have psychology, lead the way." I said.

After he dropped me off in front of my class as he walked to his class and I caught sight of him and Zafi! Yay!

They looked super cute together. They both had dark brown hair and brown eyes. They looked adorable together even though she was so tiny and he was tall. He was like 5'11" and she was 5'1". It looked cute. And the way they blushed around each other.

As if on que, they saw each other and blushed. God bless for my amazing vision.

"Are you planning on going in the class?" I heard a voice right next to my ear.

I jumped and turned around.

"So, did you get in any trouble?" I ask Aaron.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Nope. Got a lecture though and detention. The usual. *You have potential, Mr. Mercer. Harness it. Don’t waste it on these silly things.*” He said imitating Marc’s voice.

“How did you do it?” I asked as we walked towards a table.

“It’s quite simple. I put the paintballs in between the real ceiling and the fake one. The fake one was thick enough to hold up until it dissolved. There were many balloons. I calculated the weight needed to break the thin layer of the ceiling and put the balloons in. And arranged the pipe so water kept seeping in. I calculated an average time for the wall to break and splatter everyone with paint. Perfect, right.” He asked.

“When did you do it?” I asked.

“This morning. Then went running off the excitement.” He said.  
Ah! So that’s why he woke up so early.

“You really are smart,” I said.

“Of course, I’m not just a pretty face, you know.” He smirked.

I was going to retort but Mr. Taylor called the class’s attention.

The next words out of his mouth shocked me.

“We are going to do a trust project!” he said.

“What?” I asked confused.

“Trust Project.” He said again. Many students had the same reaction as me.

# Chapter 7

"You all have partners. This is a psychology class. You and your partner will establish a close relationship and try to understand each other. The ability to trust others is a major attribute of psychological development, especially for a teenager. It shows how secure you are. I'm not saying spit out your life story at once, build your trust in each other. And you'll work with the same partner for the entire year on the multiple projects." Mr. Taylor said.

I looked around the room for someone I knew, I had to tell them about what happened for their own safety anyway. Just the important parts. Not the personal aspect of it.

I saw a few familiar faces but couldn't place a name to them.

"I have already assigned a partner. There is no changing." He said.

"Riley Avery, Quinton Webber

Norman Bowman, Natasha King

Duchess Naina Morris, Maggie Everton

Max Sheen, Prince Markie Desmou

Lana Sylas, Korin Xi

Joseph Argon, Jane Maddison

Irina Volsci, Henry Bryant

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

Geisel Monteverdi, Garry Reynolds

Emilia Kent, Carry May

Cath Avery, Bryan Mathis

Ashley Grey, Aaron Mercer.” He said.

What? Not only do I have to room with him, I have to *trust* him too.

I started to think of a story that I could feed him.

“Oi.” I felt Aaron poke me.

“Yes?” I asked him.

“Hey partner.” He winked at me.

“So. This project lasts for two whole months. I know trust doesn’t come easily to some people but trying doesn’t hurt. And this doesn’t mean our normal course work won’t continue. But you have today’s class off. You all can go and talk to your partners in a more comfortable setting.” Mr. Taylor said.

As we were walking out I saw Korin wave me over. Korin’s mother was a prominent Chinese figure. She always represented China when the courts met. I’d met him a couple of time.

“My condolences.” He said.

“Thank you. I have a warning for you.” I said and he raised his eyebrows.

“What, your majesty?” he asked.

## Dear Toon

“Do not trust anyone from Angelica. We have fallen. My parents weren’t in an accident. They were murdered.” I said.

I know I kept blurting it out nonchalantly but I had to tell these people so Earth could be warned.

“King Grey and Queen Williams were murdered? By who?” he asked.

“Cecil Green. I will explain everything. Just tell your parents to not trust Cecil Green.” I said.

“Okay...” he said.

“And tell Prince Desmou. I cannot stand him.” I said.

“Okay... What about Naina?” he asked.

“Yeah, tell the Duchess of Werrington,” I said.

When I re-joined Aaron he was looking at me with a weird expression.

“Aren’t you supposed to be the new student? You seem to know so many people.” He said.

“Well, many of them are children of my parents’ acquaintances,” I said.

“You know many of these people?” he asked.

“Most of the royals and diplomats,” I said truthfully.

“Wow. Are you sure your parents are lawyers?” he asked and I nodded.

“Let’s go to the room,” I suggested.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Sure.” He said and we made our way to our room.

As soon as we got in I crashed on the bed.

“Tired?” he asked.

“Yeah. Who knew the school could be so hard? The courses are easy but sitting for so long is annoying. Ivan always let us off for a while after every half hour.” I said.

“Ivan?” he asked.

Damn. Me and my big mouth.

“Our tutor. We only went to school for the sake of it. I only took Literature and Writing classes. Ivan taught us the rest.” I said.

“Your parents must be quite influential.” He said.

“Yeah. So, you keep hounding me with questions but I know nothing about you.” I say.

“Of course you don’t. It’s not like all those rubbish magazines print articles after article about me.” He said sourly.

“I truly have no idea what you’re talking about. I don’t read *trashy magazines*.” I said.

“You don’t know who I am?” he asked.

“No. I do. You’re my roommate, Aaron Mercer.” I said.

“You don’t know?” he asked with wide eyes.

“What?” I asked.

## Dear Toon

“This is amazing! You’re not my friend because of who I am!” he exclaimed.

“What are you talking about?” I asked.

“Oh, nothing.” He said.

“Come on. We’re doing a trust exercise remember?” I said.

“Fine. I’m Aaron Dominic Mercer, I’m almost seventeen. My birthday is on 31 December. I was born in 1998. My father is French and my mother is from England, I took my mother’s last name. My father is a businessman, mom’s an interior designer. And I’m a single child.” He said.

“Okay, but I still don’t know why I should know you,” I asked.

“Nothing. And please don’t try to find out. It’s not everyday people hang out with me for me.” He said.

“I know how that feels. But you already know that I don’t have any ulterior motives.” I said.

“I know. But let me relish in this for a while. Just a week.” He said.

“Okay,” I said. I knew how it felt to have everyone treat me differently.

The humans I knew here didn’t fully comprehend my status, so that was a plus. And many of them were stuck up.

“So... What’s your favorite color?” he asked.

“What? Why?” I asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Well, since neither of us is ready to share any substantial information, I thought we could ask silly questions.” He said.

“Sure. Favorite color. It’s silly. But I love blue. Mama had blue eyes. There was this electricity in her eyes that made me feel so comfortable. It warmed me up. Her eyes always expressed her emotions. They were the most beautiful shade of blue. My aunt has the same eyes and so does my brother. I always wanted to be exactly like her, in appearance and in behavior.” I said.

“Your eyes are really beautiful.” He said.

“What?” I asked as my head whipped to look at him. He was laying on his bed looking at me.

“Yeah, they’re this warm shade of green that reminds me of a forest. Nature is beautiful.” He said.

“Um. Thank you.” I said as I felt heat warm up my face.

“I like green. Always have. It reminds of nature.” He said.

I never really saw it that way. I thought I had weird eyes, mostly because they stood out from the rest of my family.

“What’s your place in the entire world?” I asked.

“I’ve been to many places. Like so many. I got kicked out of a different school every year. This is just another stop. I joined this year. Before this, I was in England. I like many places but I have to say, Paris is wonderful. Beautiful.” He said.

“Ah. I’ve never really traveled. I’ve never been anywhere actually. I’ve always wanted to but we just couldn’t. I read about the different places the characters go to and I want to go there. I

## Dear Toon

want to see Russia, China, Indonesia, India, Australia, England, Germany, France, Italy and so many other places. I've never been anywhere. I remember reading this book where a girl goes to Paris for her senior year and used to beg my parents to let me go somewhere. Anywhere." I sight. Now I just wanted to go home.

"You've never been outside The States?" he asked.

As if I've even been here. I'd been everywhere but nowhere. I'd seen inside of palaces, ballrooms, hotels but never the actual country or city.

"No," I replied.

"You have to someday. So, favorite book? You love reading, right?" he asked.

"Um... I really loved this book Anna and the French Kiss. It was so beautiful. I liked the whole series. Then there is the Shadowhunter Chronicles. I'm into Young Adult Novels. They're amazing." I said.

"I've read mortal instruments. It's good. But I would have to say my favorite is Harry Potter." He said.

"You're a YA reader too?" I asked.

"I read occasionally." He said.

"That's amazing. So, favorite music?" I asked.

"Green Day, Maroon 5, Pitbull, Chris Brown, Mariah Carrey." He said.

"I like Selena Gomez, Taylor Swift, Maroon 5, Kelly Clarkson, Demi Lovato, Lucy Hale. I like country and pop music." I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Movie?” he asked.

“I’ve never really watched movies. Whenever Zafi used to watch it I was kind of always reading.” I said.

“You’ve never watched a movie?” he asked.

“No,” I said.

“We are marathoning tonight. After I get back from detention.” He said.

“When is it?” I asked.

“It started half an hour ago.” He said.

“You’re late,” I said.

“Yeah, well.” He shrugged getting up.

He picked up his phone and earphones and headed out waving at me.

I felt so comfortable around him even though it had only been a day.

This was bad.

I decided to ignore it for now and decided to make much-needed phone calls.

# Chapter 8

"Hello." I heard a cold voice reply.

"This is Ashley Grey of the Angelic and Faerie Courts," I said.

"Your Majesty. What can we do for you?" he asked.

"I would like to be connected to Alpha Poike or Luna Sevra. It is an urgent matter. Whosoever is free, connect me to them. If possible both." I said.

"Of course your highness. And my condolences for the accident."  
He said.

"Thank you," I replied curtly.

Within minutes I heard Welma's voice.

"Ashley! Dearie! Are you okay? We heard you and your siblings ran away." She said.

"What?" I asked shocked. I didn't know Cecil was telling people that. Kevin had been pretty shocked to learn I was here.

"Poor Lord Cecil Green has been frantic. Especially with the accident and the whole runaway..." she said.

"Welma. Listen to me carefully. Do not trust Cecil. He is a Dark One." I said and she gasped. I heard glass shattering in the background.

"Are you sure?" Johan asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Yes. My parents weren’t in an accident. They were murdered on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and we’d been trapped in the palace. Our guards turned against us. You need to increase security at Mythica. It is very dangerous to be an ally to us right now. Keep your kingdom safe.” I said.

“Are all of you children safe?” Welma asked.

“Yes. Well mostly. We’re alive. We’re in the human world.” I said. I didn’t mention Ashton’s condition. I trusted the Alpha and Luna but this was too private.

“Good. Stay there. We need to call an emergency meeting for all kingdoms.” Johan said.

“Listen. I want to break the news to everyone so give me a day. And make sure Cecil doesn’t find out. I have to think of my people too. If he knew that I was spreading the news, he’d kill the angels sooner rather than later. Don’t let the public know. And any Angelic reps you have at the wolf territory of Mythica, send them back. They could be snitches. Tell them you think their help would be of more use at Angelica. Especially due to the tragedy.” I said.

“Alright. Oh and Ashley. You’re better off without that wretched boy. He never really smelled good.” Welma said.

“Thank you. Be careful.” I said.

“We will. You do too, dear. We quite like Angelica and Faerietopia under your parents rule. The last few centuries were good. They were great rulers. Like you.” Johan said hanging up.

*They were great rulers. Like me.* I smiled at that thought and dialed Erica Powiski, Ivan's wife, and the vampire queen.

Knowing how to contact other kingdoms in the case of emergency was important, so of course, I knew all their numbers.

"Hello." I heard the Queen's delicate voice through the phone.

"Erica. It's Ashley." I said and she sighed loudly.

"Oh! Darling, we've been so worried. Ivan came home and was frantic. He told us about what happened." She said.

Wait. What? Ivan?

"He's alive?" I asked.

"Us vampire are harder to kill, dear. You know that. Ivan needed to make it look like he was dead so he could come back without raising suspicion. Also, he wanted to make sure you were okay."

She said.

"So you know everything?" I asked.

"Yes. About Cecil, your parents, you brother. I'm sorry. It must be so hard." She said.

"Can I talk to Ivan?" I asked.

"Yes. Yes, of course. He's right here." She said.

"Ashley!" I heard my tutor's voice.

"Ivan! I'm so relieved. At least something good happened over the past week!" I sighed.

"Are you three okay?" he asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Yes, we’re fine. We are laying low in the human world. Zafi and Zander are trying to master their magic but apparently, I stress too much so I can’t join them. At least for a while.” I said.

“Good. Your power is tied to your emotion. Strength and love are intertwined. Don’t do anything out of hatred. Do it out of love.” He said.

“You always say that,” I said.

“Someday you will understand. And I will come see you in a while. After everything settles down.” He said.

“Thank you, Ivan. For everything. We do love you.” I said.

“I love you too. You are like my own children.” He said.

“Bye,” I said.

“Take care of little Zafi. And Zander too. He may act tough but he is hurt too. And take care of yourself. Don’t wear yourself too thin.” He said.

After a heartfelt goodbye, I hung up the phone.

And then I dialed in my brother’s girlfriend’s parents. Yeah, complicated relationship.

“Hello.” I heard Queen Atlanta’s voice.

We’d been spending every summer underwater since Ashton started going out with Viola. I was so accustomed to Atlanta’s voice. I knew this wasn’t a happy phone call.

“Hi,” I mumbled.

## Dear Toon

“Ashley! Are you okay? We’ve been out of our minds with worry. Ashton hasn’t been picking up his phone either. Viola has been losing her mind. We heard you all ran away. Dear, bad things happen. You shouldn’t run away. You should face the problem.” She said.

“Atlanta. We had to. We have to save our people.” I said.

“What do you mean?” she asked and I explained everything. From our parents’ murder to running away to this school.

“Oh lord. Are you guys alright? Ashton! Oh, my god! What am I going to tell Viola? Do you know how you’re going to help him? Do you have any idea what you are going to do? And they did that to you? David? If I see him, I’ll make sure my guard sharks eat him!” she fumed.

“I need you to act rationally like nothing is wrong. Tell Elis, and I’ll tell Viola. She can come see Ashton. I mean yes, he’s a book but I’ve been writing to him. It makes me feel better, maybe she can do the same.” I said.

“Thank you, dear.” She said.

“I’m going to hang up now so I can talk to Vi,” I said.

“Alright dear. Call me if you need anything.” She said and I hung up after assuring her I would.

The last call. To Viola.

“Ashton!” she exclaimed as soon as she picked up the phone.

“It’s me,” I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Where are you? Where is he? Is he with you?” she asked frantically.

“We’re at Springfield’s Academy, and he is kind of here,” I said.

“What do you mean kind of?” she asked and I explained. She couldn’t keep it in. She burst into tears. I could hear her sobs and it made my heart heavy.

“Vi. You can come here to see him. I’m sure he’ll know it’s you. I’ve been writing about him. You could too. Zafi also wrote to him today. It makes me feel closer to him. Maybe we could all share the journal.” I said. Yes, weird but he was my brother and her boyfriend and we both needed him.

“That would be good. I’ll be there soon. Maybe I could have him for a day?” she asked hopefully, I could still hear her sobbing.

“Yes. Of course, you can. But I would like to...” I said and she understood.

“Of course. He’s your brother. You can keep the journal. I’d just like to, you know, for just a while.” She said.

“Of course. Why don’t you come here tomorrow? It’s Saturday.” I said.

“I would love that. I’ll be there in the morning. I’ll use a portal.” She said.

We talked a little more comforting each other, she cried, I stopped myself and then we hung up.

## **Dear Toon**

It was weird how the portal worked. If Viola used it, she'd be right in front of me. But Cecil wouldn't. It protected the people it was supposed to all by itself.

Magic was a wonderful thing. Mysterious.

## Chapter 9

“How was practice?” I ask Zander and Zafira as soon as I see them in the dining hall. I smile as I notice Theo and Candy wave us towards their table. Zafi not so covertly goes to sit next to Theo.

“It was no better than this morning. I tried to levitate Zafi but she fell on her ass as soon as she was two feet up.” Zander said sheepishly.

“Start small,” I said.

“That’s easy for you to say. You’ve always been good at magic. We’re almost fifteen and we still can’t do a simple levitating spell. You can tap into both the magic, angel, and faerie. Zander can only do angel magic and I can only do Faerie magic.” Zafi said.

“You remember when we were kids and we used to do magic for fun? Do that. Forget all the politics, the blood, forget that lives are depending on your shoulder. Do magic for the sake of doing it! Love magic. Embrace it.” I said. I was pretty darn proud of myself.

“We’ll try,” Zander said.

“What are you two doing tomorrow?” I asked them.

“Practicing,” Zafi said. My little soldier.

“Well. Viola is coming.” I said.

“You told her?” Zafi asked.

## Dear Toon

“Yes, and everyone else. Ivan is alive. He faked his death so it would’ve been easier for him to get back to Mythica.” I said.

“Ivan’s okay?” she asked.

“Yes,” I said.

“Oh thank god!” Zander mumbled hugging me.

“Viola is coming tomorrow. She wanted to see Toon. I told her she could write if she wanted to.” I said.

“Did you read what I wrote?” Zafi asked.

“No, that’s between the two of you. Just don’t read mine.” I said, “Zander do you want to write to Toon?” I asked.

“No. It’s not him.” He said. Zander had been bottling his feelings up too much. He needed to let go of the anger and frustration.

“Zan. Look at me.” I said.

“What?” he asked. I could detect the sadness in his eyes.

“Tomorrow, neither of you are practicing. All of us are going out.” I said.

“Sure. Where to?” it wasn’t Zander who answered. It wasn’t anyone from our table. It was Aaron.

“Hey man!” Theo said smiling at him.

“Hey!” Aaron clasped him in the back and sat next to him, directly opposite to me.

“Where are we going?” Zafi asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“We are going to the mall. We will go shopping and then watch a movie.” Candy said.

Uh! Shopping! I hated shopping, it was such a waste of time.

“Yay!” Zafi said and I groaned.

“What Shorty? Don’t like shopping?” he said.

“Nope.” I shook my head “Not unless it’s book shopping.”

“So what were you all whispering about?” he asked.

“None of your business,” I answered. A smile crossed Zander’s face.

“What?” I asked him.

“Nothing.” He smiled and I narrowed my eyes.

“Did you know Ash has never watched a movie before?” Zafi said.

“What?” Theo said.

“How can you not have watched a movie? Zafi is obsessed with Romcoms.” Candy said.

“Well. Never had time. I spent all my free time reading. And horse riding.” I said. I had never ridden a horse, Pegasus was more like it.

“Well. I’ve got a bunch of movies you’re watching tonight.” Aaron said getting up to get his food.

“How the hell did you get him to act like a normal person?” Candy asked.

“What?” I asked confused.

“I always thought he was a self-righteous idiot.” She said.

“I thought he was crass. But he seems pretty cool.” I said.

I noticed that Zander was stifling a smile.

“What????” I asked him.

“Oh, it’s just that the two of you relentlessly flirt every time I see you.” He said.

“I don’t flirt with him. Besides, he’s a player. The first time I met him, his mouth was attached to a girl’s.” I said.

“You like him,” Zafi said.

“No.” I shook my head.

“Whatever you say. But seriously, be careful.” Zander said putting his arm around me and I hugged him sideways.

The rest of the dinner was quiet and I gave my siblings the phones before heading up to my room with Aaron.

It was only seven. We’d had an early dinner and had a lot of time to watch the movies.

“So, movies?” I asked as I settled on the couch.

“Well, I have a wide range of movies. Just to see which one you like most.” He said.

“Sure,” I said.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“We need popcorn. Put any one of these in,” he said pointing to a stack of movies on the table.

I looked at the movies. Notebook. What’s your Number? Fast and Furious. 21 Jump Street. Confessions of a Shopaholic. Insidious.

How were we going to watch so many movies?

I put in The Notebook and sat back down on the couch.

“Such an expected choice.” He said.

“I have no idea what kind of movie it is,” I said.

“You’ll love it.” He said sitting next to me.

I was hyper aware of the space between us. I reached out to take some popcorn and our hands touched. And zap. I felt electricity pass through us. Just like in books.

No. I did not like Aaron.

I pulled my hand back and looked at him from the corner of my eye. He was staring at me, with an expression that told me he was trying to figure me out.

I paid attention to the movie and in a while, I was drawn in.

When the movie was over I was left with mixed feelings.

“Were those two crazy? And I loved how they died together. That was romantic. They were together in life and death.” I said.

Mama and Papa were together in life and death.

“I take it you liked it.” He laughed.

## Dear Toon

“Yeah. Why have I never watched a movie before?” I asked myself.

“Because you’re an idiot.” He said.

He put in the next movie and we watched it. We had bowl after bowl of popcorn and watched movie after movie.

I decided I loved Romcoms.

The final movie was Insidious.

I was sleepy and it was a horror movie. Somehow I found it boring and senseless, it wasn’t scary. I hate horror movies.

## Chapter 10

I woke up to a warm and hard surface. I was so comfortable.

I moved closer to the warm surface and froze.

It was a person. It wasn't Ashton for sure.

I tried to get up but a strong hand stopped my movement.

"Mmm," Aaron mumbled. He was wearing an extremely thin shirt and his body heat was radiating all over me.

"Aaron," I whispered.

"Sleep." He said and pulled me closer. I froze in surprise.

"Oh my god!" a voice shrieked in a distinct Australian accent causing Aaron to jump and both of us fell on the ground.

"Viola, why are you here so early?" I asked.

"It's almost noon." She said raising an eyebrow. Why can't do that?

"What? Wow. I haven't slept this long in such a long time." Aaron asked.

"What's going on here?" she asked.

"We fell asleep watching some movies," I said explanatorily.

"How quick you are to dismiss our love..." Aaron said mockingly and I felt the heat rise up to my face.

## Dear Toon

"Uh... Well. Where is Toon?" she asked.

"In the first drawer of my desk," I said.

"How did you get in?" Aaron asked all of a sudden and we froze.

"Um... Well, I broke in. I wanted to surprise Ash." She said.

"So, we haven't been introduced yet." He said turning to me.

"Vi, this is my roommate, Aaron Mercer. Aaron, that's my brother's girlfriend Viola Hathaway." I said.

"Pleasure to meet you," Aaron said.

"The pleasure is all mine." She said bowing a little.

She walked to my desk and pulled Toon out.

"What is with that journal? Do you share it with your sister and your brother's girlfriend? Is that like some type of journal commune?" he asked.

"No. We all just miss Ashton. Let's just say it's his old journal." I said.

"Where is he?" Aaron asked.

"Not with us," I replied.

"Is he?" he hesitated.

"He's alive," I said vaguely but he let the subject drop. I gave Viola Zafi and Zan's room number and she went to go see them.

I quickly took a shower and got dressed for the day.

"When do we leave for the mall?" Aaron asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“I don’t know. Meet us in Zaf and Zan’s room when you’re ready?” I asked.

“Sure.” He said.

I waved goodbye and went to see my brother and sister.

When I got there, I saw Candy and Theo there and smiled.

“Hey!” I said.

“Did you like watching movies?” Zafi asked.

“Yeah. I loved them all, well except for the one horror movie. I’m not a fan of horror.” I said.

“I don’t like them either,” Zafi said.

“Your roommate seemed nice.” Vi said smirking.

“He’s fine,” I said.

“She likes him,” Zafi said.

“I do not!” I exclaimed.

“Do too. And he likes you too.” She said.

“No,” I said adamantly.

“He acts like a different person around her. He’s always been a jerk to everyone. Especially girls. But he treats her differently.” Candy said.

“Aaron’s not a bad guy. Just misunderstood.” Theo said.

“Can we not talk about him?” I ask.

“Sure. Whatever you want.” Zander said.

I went and sat beside him.

I looked at him and felt my throat constrict.

He was my little brother. I was meant to protect him. I could see how tired he was from his eyes. They were both tired.

“I still can’t believe this is Ashton,” Viola said.

“We don’t know if it is but it probably is. I mean one second he stood in front of us to protect us and the next he turned into a book.” I said.

“I just wish... I miss him so much.” She said.

“We all do,” Zander said his voice hardening.

“We will save him. I know we can do it.” Zafi said.

“How could David do that to us? To you?” she asked.

“Believe me I was shocked. I thought he loved me.” I said.

“I can’t fathom what you’re going through.” She said.

“You know, I never really loved him. I always thought, maybe, maybe if I just gave him a shot, I would love him.” I said.

“Maybe, in your heart, you knew he was bad.” Candy said.

“Maybe.” I agreed.

We all sat there in silence until a knock on the door startled us.

Theo opened the door and Aaron came in.

“When do we leave?” he asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

Zafi immediately got up to her feet and pulled me and Zander up too.

“Now.” Candy said.

Candy’s car wasn’t big enough for everyone so Aaron suggested that we took his bike too and somehow I ended up on the back of it.

“I don’t know about this,” I said.

“Trust me. I know how to ride a bike. I’m good at it. I’ve never been in an accident.” He said.

“But,” I said.

“Get on. And put your arms around my waist.” He said getting on the bike. I got in the same way and clung on to him. At first, he froze and then relaxed.

“Ready?” he asked.

“Yes...” I mumbled squeezing my eyes shut.

And then we were off. We were both wearing helmets so I couldn’t feel the wind on my face but it was like we were cutting through the wind. It was exhilarating like riding a Pegasus. Or even better, flying.

Before we knew it we stopped in a parking lot. I could see the others getting out of the car and got off the bike.

“That was awesome,” I said.

“Told you. You should really learn to *trust* me.” He said.

“Come on you two!” Zafi called.

## Dear Toon

South Point mall was huge. We went into the shop after shop, buying clothes and other necessities. We even got new laptops considering our old ones were in Angelica.

I spent a few hours in a bookstore and bought a few books. There was this series I found, *The Iron Fey*. I could see some promise there. It seemed to have a great plot and according to Goodreads, it was a good book.

“You didn’t get anything from home?” Aaron asked as we were sitting in the food court. The other girls were still shopping so I sat with the boys eating frozen yogurt. I liked shopping, just not excess shopping. An hour or two was enough to get what we needed but my sister and my friends loved to go through the stores, fabric by fabric. I did not enjoy that.

“We left in a hurry,” Zander explained.

“I keep hearing that. But how much of a hurry can you be in that you don’t bring anything.” He said.

“We were late for a flight and accidentally left our luggage at the front door.” Zander shrugged.

Aaron just nodded.

Aunt Nat had been bankrolling us, paying for necessities and gave us our credit cards.

Well, at least we got some shopping done.

# **Chapter 11**

It had been a while since we came to Springfield's. So far we had enough time to relax.

I woke up to someone knocking on the door.

I opened my eyes to see Aaron open the door.

"Hey Viola," he said and I sat up.

"Morning. Why are you here so early?" I asked.

"Someone's here to see you." She said and my eyes widened. It couldn't be.

A smile spread onto my face and she nodded.

I jumped off the bed and ran to the door. No one was there.

I looked to my left, then to my right. There he was.

I squealed and ran to him.

"Ivan!" I said jumping on him.

"Hey there Princess." He laughed.

"I'm so happy to see you," I said.

"I said I'd visit. Let's go see your siblings. I asked Marc to have you excused from all your classes. I thought we could spend the day together." He said.

## Dear Toon

"That would be amazing. Viola can show you to their room. I need to change." I said pointing to my Mickey Mouse sweatshirt.

"Are you sure you're fine dear?" he asked.

"Yes. I'll change and grab Toon." I said kissing his cheek. Ivan was the best tutor in the world. He was more like a grandparentish person to us than a teacher. He had been the Vampire Advocate at Angelica for over fifteen years and he decided to teach us.

"I'll see you soon then dear." He said and I walked back to my room.

"Vi. Show Ivan to Zan and Zafi's room. I'll join you guys." I said.

"Sure. Aren't you excited?" she said.

"I'm just glad he didn't die," I said.

"Me too. I'll see you in Zan's room, 'kay?" She said joining Ivan who waved at me.

"So, who's that?" Aaron asked.

"My old tutor. Ivan Powiski." I smiled.

"What's he doing here?" he asked.

"He came here to see us. You know to check up and see how we're coping with everything." I said.

"What do you mean by everything?" he asked.

"Nothing. Just the move." I said.

"What did you mean when you said you were glad he was alive?" he inquired.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“N...nothing. It’s just a joke.” I said.

“Really?” he asked raising an eyebrow.

“Yes,” I said more confidently.

“Somehow, I don’t believe you.” He said.

“Well. I need to go.” I said going to the bathroom to change.

I took a quick shower and dried my hair putting on an animal print romper and tied my hair up in a ponytail.

I rushed out to my siblings’ room where everyone sat.

“So?” I asked sitting on the ground next to Zander.

“Well. I wanted to see what you kids were up to.” He said.

“How has the council been holding up?” I asked.

“Good. We’ve all gathered a few times. We think the best approach is to try and let you kids heal. Try help Ashton. Because from what we’ve come to. Only an Angel can destroy the Dark Ones. Remember when King Micah used to say, if you’re together, no one can stand against the four of you. I think he was trying to tell you that together, even a Dark One. We all need to combine our powers.” He said.

“How?” Zander asked.

“There is a way. But for that, you need to be prepared. You need to know how to transfigure. For you to absorb all our magic. The four of you together will kill them.” He said.

“How do we save Ashton?” Viola asked.

## Dear Toon

"I don't know. But during a war a while ago, a lot of metamorphoses took place. I cannot tell you of that war." He said.

"Why?" I asked.

"Your parents requested it." He said.

"Why?" Zander asked.

"It was a dreadful time in the world." He said.

"So?" I asked.

"I might have a lead." He said.

"What lead?" I asked.

"I found this." He said showing us a CD.

Zander brought out his laptop and we put the CD in.

The interviewer was someone I'd seen before. Alana Ingrid Overa, a Mermaid known for her charm and connections.

The man on the screen wasn't someone I recognized.

***"Welcome, Winch Wolwond. A man who lived as a pen for ten years. Yes, as a pen!" she exclaimed.***

***"Um. Hello." A man said nervously. He was really handsome***

***"I understand that you were cursed into being a pen over ten years ago." She said.***

***"Yes." He said.***

***"It must have taken a toll on you." She said.***

## Ashmita Ghosh

*"It did." He said.*

*"So how did you become a merman again?" she asked.*

*"Love," he said quietly.*

*"Would you mind elaborating?" she asked.*

*"The love of my family was my salvation. It was the strength of their love that saved me. Love is stronger than everything else. There is nothing more strong than love." He said.*

*"How do you feel?" I asked.*

*"Those ten years gave me an experience I'd forever bear. It was hard at first but I knew the reason I was as such was because I saved the people I loved. They talked to me. And I knew that someday, I'd be home. They gave me hope. And it was their love that saved me. It took them a while to figure out how but love is always the key." He said.*

*"Hope. That is a wonderful thing, isn't it? The wonders a little hope and love can do." She said.*

*"Yes. Hope and love are stronger than all else." He said.*

*"Do you want to share how they brought you back?" she asked.*

*"No. That is something private." He said.*

*"Well, everyone! Here you have it! The first scoop. Don't forget! This is where you first heard the story!" she said loudly causing him to jump.*

Love. Love can save him.

"That woman is insensitive," Viola said.

## **Dear Toon**

“It’s a step closer to helping Ashton,” Zander said.

“I was hoping that you, being the Mermaid princess can find him,” I said.

“I will try my best. In fact. I’ll leave right now!” she said dissipating into the air and water splashed onto us.

We decided to do more research.

We surfed Magix.net for hours, finally when it was time, Ivan bid us goodbye and left.

## Chapter 12

*Dear LoonyToon,*

*I wish you could be here.*

*We've been in California for about a month. It's been quite an experience. Viola comes to visit us every once in a while.*

*Every time she comes, she hangs out with you.*

*I can see the pain in her eyes, she misses you. I wish I could understand that kind of love. The kind that surpasses everything, even death.*

*Mama and Papa had that. You had that with Viola. You have that.*

*Zafi and Zander have been getting better at magic. Zander is having trouble with Faerie magic. Faerie magic is delicate. Zander is anything but. He's rash and brave.*

*I've been trying to talk to him but he won't open up. He won't talk to me about you. Every time I bring you up, he shuts me down.*

*But I will keep trying.*

*We celebrated their birthday, just the eight of us, Zan, Zafi, Vi, Theo, Candy, Uncle Marc, Aunt Nat and I. Aunt Nat got the cake and lots of gifts. It was small but we enjoyed it.*

Dear Toon

*Oh! Theo finally had the guts to ask Zafi out. He kissed her at the party, I think that was her favorite present. Don't get pissed. We know Theo. He is a good guy. We trust him.*

*I've never seen her so happy. I think she feels a little guilty for feeling happy. But her happiness has led to one thing.*

*Her command over magic is better. Yesterday, she was able to set the room on fire without burning us. Amazing, right?*

*I'm proud of her. She's taking a leap of faith and letting herself be happy.*

*Also, I think Zander has a little crush.*

*Every time we hang out with Candy and Theo, he stares at Candy. He has this lost look in his eyes. It's so cute. But he's just so stubborn.*

*I wish you were here. You could talk to him.*

*He must feel awkward talking to his sisters about all of this. I mean you told me when you started liking Viola, but you're you, and we're us. I don't think Zan's that comfortable talking about feelings. You and I used to share everything.*

*In faith of sharing everything, I also wanted to tell you something. There is a chance I might like my roommate. A teeny-minnie chance.*

*He's so sweet and kind. I feel as if my heart will beat out of my chest when I see him smile. He is sweet but he is also a jerk.*

*Sometimes he is amazing and then it's like he realizes that and changes, just for the sake of it.*

## Ashmita Ghosh

*I am terrified about my feelings for him. It scares me to fathom how I could hurt him!*

*He is so good. I don't want to be his undoing. You understand me right?*

*It seems like his jerkish nature is an act to cover up something. What is that something?*

*Anyways. We've made some, limited, but some progress on how to help you.*

*Something similar to this has happened before. Back in 126 AD, Winch Wolwond, a mermaid was turned into an inanimate object.*

*I've tried to find what I could about him.*

*Viola is digging through old reports for more information since he was from Mermaidia. Her parents knew him but they don't know where to find him or how to help you, just like Ivan.*

*There was this line that really caught my eye. It was a quote directly from him. After he recovered.*

*"Those ten years gave me an experience I'd forever bear. It was hard at first but I knew the reason I was as such was because I saved the people I loved. They talked to me. And I knew that someday, I'd be home. They gave me hope. And it was their love that saved me. It took them a while to figure out how but love is always the key." He said.*

**Do you have hope?**

**How? How do we use love to save you?**

**Dear Toon**

***We love you. We really do. But how?***

***I love you so much.***

***I remember when we were little, well even when we weren't little, and one of us couldn't sleep, we used to crawl into bed with the other.***

***I miss that. I haven't had a decent night's sleep in over a month. Even when you were dating Viola you were there for me.***

***I somehow feel I'm letting you down.***

***I wish you were with me.***

***With Love***

***Your Sister***

***CrazyLey***

It was around nine and I was in bed writing to Toon while listening to the rainfall when the door creaked open and Aaron stormed in.

“Hey!” I said cheerfully but he ignored me.

“Are you okay?” I asked again.

Over the last few weeks, Aaron and I had become good friends.

He gave me a whiplash.

Sometimes he was the sweetest guy in all dimensions and at other times he was a jerk.

## Ashmita Ghosh

I'd grown accustomed to his crass jokes and quite enjoyed his cheesy lines.

But there were times he'd act cold and indifferent. That really hurt me.

"Aaron?" I called.

"What?" he screamed and I cringed.

"Are you okay?" I asked getting up and walked towards him.

"I'm fantastic. Absolutely fine." He fumed.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Nothing." He said.

"You can tell me. Trust remember?" I prompted.

"Yeah? And what have you told me? I know nothing about you! Trust? Why don't you start first? You don't even care!" he exclaimed.

"The fact that I haven't lied says quite the opposite," I said.

"What?" he asked.

"I can't tell you," I said.

"Why?" he asked.

"I can't tell you that either," I said.

"Are you in some sort of trouble?" he asked.

I kept my mouth shut.

"If you tell me I could help." He said.

"You couldn't," I said.

"Yes. I could. At least a little. You said you didn't know who I really was, I think it's about time I told you." He said.

"Sure," I said.

"My father, Pierre St. Clair is a huge business man. He is the owner if St. Clair Enterprises, one of the world's richest men." He said.

"Okay..." I said.

There were many rich people at this school. It was a school for the elite. It didn't really surprise me that he was rich.

"I know I told you mum was English but she isn't completely English. She was exiled from her country for falling in love with my father and breaking off her engagement with a Russian someone. I don't know who. But my mother was..." He says and then I understood.

"Emilia Morvitz Mercer de Gram, Princess of Slokes," I said.

"Yes. Wait, you said you didn't know..." he said and a look of hurt crossed his perfect features.

"I didn't know of your connection to her. I've heard of her from my parents. They once told me that no parent should act as harshly as King Yesef did with Emilia for following her heart. They always told us that the heart never lies. It was the only truth in a world of lies." I said.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“The reason I’m so important is the fact I’m next in line to become King.” He said.

“Ah...” I said.

I was a little shocked to learn of his heritage but I thought.

“You’re still the same guy you were five minutes ago. This doesn’t change anything.” I said.

He stared at me with wonder, as if he expected me to change because of what I just said.

“The reason I told you this now is so you know I can help you. I can provide you safety in Slokes if you’re in danger.” He said.

“That’s so sweet of you but there is nothing you can do,” I said.

“What happened?” he asked.

“Someone stabbed my family in the back. Now we can’t go home.” I said.

“Were your parents really lawyers?” he asked.

“Yes.” I lied.

He looked at me again with a great intensity in his eyes.

“Why were you so mad earlier?” I asked changing the subject.

“You changed me.” He said moving closer.

“What?” I asked.

“I was at a party earlier. I tried so hard to get you out of my mind. I tried to flirt with this girl but I kept seeing your face, seeing your

## Dear Toon

smile, hearing your laugh. Before you came into my life, emotions weren't important. Did you know, I haven't hooked up with a single person since I met you? You've changed me. And I don't mind it." He said leaning in towards me.

I froze up and stopped breathing. Anticipating his lips on mine.

And then it happened. It was like sparks went off. I could feel myself unfreeze as I kissed him back. My hand traveled to his hair and he pulled me closer against him.

"Ashley." He mumbled against my lips and I moaned.

I pulled him closer as if trying to become one with him.

And then it came over me like a bucket of cold water.

I couldn't do that to him.

I wasn't right for him.

I was dangerous. I wasn't even human. He deserved a *human* girl.

It took every ounce of my will to push him away and run out of the room.

## Chapter 13

I rushed down the stairs as fast as I could. I could hear Aaron's footsteps behind me.

I took a deep breath and concentrating on becoming invisible. I stood flat against the wall as he rushed down.

"Ashley! Shorty!" he called.

'*I was right here.*' I wanted to say.

I couldn't let him get caught in my battles. No. He was too good.

He came and slumped down on the stairs right under my feet.

"Why?" he mumbled.

'*To protect you.*' I thought.

For a while, he just sat there and I stood there invisible staring at him.

And then, something happened. I fell to the ground and lost consciousness.

"*Ashley.*" I heard a voice that made my heart clench.

"*Mama?*" I said turning around looking for her.

"*My little angel. I'm so proud of you.*" She said.

"*Why? Why? I haven't done anything! I can't help Ashton, I can't make Zander open up to me, I can't be the rock they need. I can't recognize a threat! It's my fault! I trusted David!*" I said.

## Dear Toon

*"We did too. Your father was friends with Cecil. Does that mean Micah was incompetent? That he lacked good judgment? You are a lot like your father. Driven by the need to protect. That's one of your best qualities." She said.*

*"Mama! I can't protect anyone. I can't keep Zafira and Zander safe! They're depending on me. Our people are depending on me! I haven't been able to do anything!" I said.*

*"Don't be blind. You've done so much. Everything you do is done out of love." She said.*

*"I just wish you were here," I said.*

*"I am. I will always be there in your heart." She said "In life and in death. We're happy where we are. But we are with you too. You should be happy too, follow your heart. Because the heart never lies. And now, my darling, it's time to wake up."*

When I opened my eyes I felt a soft surface underneath me. I fell on the floor.

"You're awake!" Aaron exclaimed walking over to my bed.

I looked around and noticed we were in our room.

"Aaron..." I croaked out.

He rushed to give me some water that I drank greedily. My throat was like sandpaper.

I tried to remember my dream. Mama appeared in my dreams. I knew that they were in heaven.

Heaven really did exist. Papa was probably doing his duty in heaven, someday, he'd become an Archangel.

## Ashmita Ghosh

All the magical dimensions were immortal. And if someone were to die, they went to heaven.

I'd read stories of remarkable angels like Raphael, Gabriel, Samuel, Michael. There were so many angels who were greater than all else and made Archangels. And hopefully, Papa would be too.

Mama being a Faerie didn't have that option. But fairies were better off in a pure world. Fairies got their powers from good emotions. Heaven was the best place for her.

I looked at Aaron shaking my head.

"You just fell to the ground. And appeared out of nowhere!" he exclaimed.

"I was right behind you," I mumbled.

"I was looking for you. Screaming out your name. You just walked away." He said, hurt marring his beautiful features.

"I'm sorry," I said.

"Why?" he asked.

"I can't tell you. But believe me. I deeply care about you. I hope that you understand." I said.

"How do we go back from this?" he asked me.

"We try and move on," I said.

"Why won't you give me a reason?" he asked. The pain in his eyes was so raw. I wanted to kiss him again. I wanted to kiss him forever.

## **Dear Toon**

**“Aaron. I can’t. I’m not ready for a relationship. I just got off one.” I said.**

**“I’m sorry if my actions made you uncomfortable.” He said. And this time, he walked away.**

**I sat on my bed and pulled Toon out. I needed to talk to him.**

***Dear LoonyToon,***

**I know I just wrote to you but a lot has happened since then.**

**When I put you down, Aaron came in the room. He was upset.**

**He opened up to me Toon. And I can’t share anything with him. He thinks we’re in trouble and that he can help me. But he can’t.**

**He said that I changed him. I... I don’t know what to do.**

**He kissed me. And I kissed him. I want to do it all over again.**

**But it’s wrong and I know it.**

**I can’t afford to get distracted. I know I said Zafi shouldn’t feel guilty for being happy but I can’t. Not when you’re like this. You’re my twin. I can’t get distracted. I wouldn’t survive without you.**

**But I think, it will be hard to keep my distance from him.**

**He’s such a great guy. I don’t want to hurt him. That’s another reason I can’t be with him. His safety.**

**But I’m hurting him either way. At least this way he’s safe.**

**I want to give us a shot. I wanted to kiss him so bad.**

## Ashmita Ghosh

I know this makes me a bad person. What kind of person chooses to hurt someone knowingly?

But...

~~I think I could love him someday.~~

No. I would not. I want him to be safe, and I am not safe.

I'm anything but safe.

Cecil is after me. David is after me.

I'm also afraid of what would happen. I judged David all wrong.  
Yes, I never truly loved him but I never expected he'd do anything wrong. But Ashton, I did think I loved him.

Aaron makes it all seem insignificant, though.

But I have this feeling, Aaron would never hurt me. He's such a pure soul.

I can say for sure that his heart is as pure as an Angel's.

He is a dream that I cannot have.

I just wish you were here to help me.

I love you.

Your Sister,

Ashley

# Chapter 14

It had been two weeks since I last talked to Aaron. He was avoiding me like a plague. Even though we sat next to each other during class and shared a room, he hadn't said a single word to me.

He didn't even sit next to us during breakfast or lunch or dinner anymore. Ever since we moved here, Aaron had joined us on our table and it was weird without him around.

Of course, my siblings noticed. Zafi tried to tell me to give him a shot but his welfare comes first.

I sat in the library with my computer as the three of us researched on Winch Wolwond.

So far we'd had no luck. We'd gone through every single detail about that man that we could find but every time we thought we had something, we were mistaken.

I was looking at an article by Sir William deJose when Zander cleared his throat.

"Yes?" I asked looking up.

"I found this article on transfiguration." He said handing me the article.

## METAMORPHOSIS

*(By Robert Brown, Editor of Magical Times)*

15 May 1873

## Ashmita Ghosh

*Metamorphosis is an old form of magic that was once used by the DARK ONES as a form of a curse on their enemies. It is a crime punishable by death.*

*The Dark Ones not only attacked Angels but the rest of magical universe too. They specifically hate Angels, though.*

*There was a rumor that the Queen managed to find a way to help revert these curses with the help of the merman Winch Wolwond, who was in the metamorphosed state for years.*

*Even the mention of it from now on is viewed as a sign of betrayal. The study of metamorphosis on people will be discontinued, the media is forbidden to talk of this after this.*

*Why you may ask.*

*It's simple.*

*A long time ago, metamorphosis was an acceptable form of arts but in the year 1399, a dark one used Metamorphosis to transform a mere unicorn into a dragon. A fire breathing dragon that is now known as the Curse of The Fire, Rejhula.*

*Angels all over Angelica were terrified. The dragon destroyed city after city until King Drevi, our daring hero, finally faced it himself.*

*There are stories of how this fight went. Some said the king singlehandedly fought the dragon with just a sword. Some say he had a battalion of warriors by his side surrounding the dragon from all sides and the king climbed on his back and cut his head off.*

*It was said the blood of the dragon sprayed all over the ground creating a crater where bloody rain graced its presence. The body of the dragon was replaced by the unicorn*

*That very spot is now known as Rejuzeala. The death of Rejkhula.*

*That wasn't the last time Metamorphosis was used as a weapon.*

*Last year, in 1872, when our country first met its new Queen, her highness Naomi Williams, the Queen of our Faerie allies, an attempt on her life was made.*

*A man turned himself into a ferocious beast. A beast with the head of a lion and body of a man. The monster charged himself at the newly crowned queen screamed 'Dirty Blood'.*

*The king and queen together fought the beast and he was slain by the queen's dagger. She was the one that suggested that the women in Angelica be given a chance to be warriors too, which couldn't be refused after seeing her strength. Upon killing him, he reverted back to his original form.*

*A long time ago, the people of Angelica and Faerietopia were at war, a war so gruesome it shakes people to their core. But with time, those wounds healed and we merged ourselves with the Fairies.*

*That horrendous attack on our Queen was taken as an offense by the Faerie Court.*

*Her highness was quite forgiving on the other hand and suggested the topic be put to rest.*

## Ashmita Ghosh

*But our King wouldn't let go of something that almost took his beloved away from him. He searched, he hunted for the dark ones and killed them one by one in name of treason. All the courts came together to fight them. But in the end, it was the power of the united magical that killed them.*

*For treason is a crime punishable by death.*

*But being the humble king that he was, he gave them a chance to redeem themselves first. He gave them a choice, to give up their magic and lead a mortal life. But they chose to spit in his face.*

*Since then, the Royal House has been working on a petition to ban the use of dark magic, especially metamorphosis.*

*And now after the long awaited wait, we can finally take a breath. We are free of metamorphosis.*

*I for one am glad that I will never have to talk of this.*

*But Transfiguration of inanimate objects into other objects is a form of highly difficult light magic. No one since Angel Michael himself has been able to master it in all four dimensions of magic.*

*Transfiguration is still legal, in fact, it is looked upon.*

*Today we can finally feel free and safe from the darkness that once hounded us. Today, we're free of the dark ones.*

*With this, I would like to thank our king and queen, especially our queen. For even though she is not an Angel, she treats Angelica like her own kingdom.*

***Lord hail our King! Lord hail our Queen!***

I had no idea any of this even happened. I rummaged through the files I'd gotten off my cloud account, yes, we were as advanced as humans, probably, even more, we had holographic photographs after all.

"So one way to change them back is to kill them," I said.

"What? You can't even be considering that. Mama found a way, Winch Wolwond must know. I know Viola hasn't been able to track him down yet but there is no record of his death." Zafi said.

"I wasn't saying I was going to kill my twin brother. I was just stating a fact. I will do everything to help him. Starting with calling up Robert Brown to find out what he knows. He was one of our subjects. He will help us. Most Angels don't like Dark Ones. Ivan can bring him here. We can have him swear to keep this a secret." I said.

"I'll call Ivan. And we should get going. We have class." Zander said pulling out his phone as we exited the library and I made my way to psychology where Aaron was.

# Chapter 15

“Hey” I said as I sat down beside Aaron but he ignored me as usual.

We sit in silence as we wait for the teacher to come in.

Mr. Taylor rushed into the class, his hair all messed up.

“Hello class. Sorry, I’m late.” He said.

“So, we’ll be starting a new topic today. Psychological disorders. This is a vast topic so we’ll be skimming through it focusing on the important stuff.” He said and we all turned to the right topic in our books.

“Back in 1887, a journalist named Elizabeth Jane Cochran assumed the alias Nellie Bly and feigned a mental illness to report on the cruelly awful conditions inside psychiatric hospitals in the US. Does anyone know what they were known as at that time?” he asked. Everyone knew that but no one raised their hand so I did.

“Ms. Grey?” he asked.

“Asylum,” I said.

“Good. The patients were treated awfully, the food was rotten, there were rats everywhere and the worst thing were the abusive nurses and patients were tied up and electroshocked. Her findings were shown in her famous exposé, *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. It was her work that led the charge in mental health reform.” He said.

## Dear Toon

As the class went on I got more and more into the lecture and forgot about my worries. I loved psychology class. It was a subject I thoroughly enjoyed.

Before I knew it, the class was over.

"Alright. We'll continue this topic later. Now for your Trust Project. I hope you're doing well. You have two weeks to submit your report. I'm not going to ask you to tell me anything personal. But I want to know the process. I want to know how you earned each other's trust and how long it took, what were the results and stuff like that. Class dismissed. Read the chapter. We'll be studying OCD tomorrow." He said.

The moment those words left his mouth, Aaron shot out of his seat and rushed out, like every day.

Before I could leave Mr. Taylor asked me to wait.

"Yes, sir?" I asked.

"Your highness. Please don't call me sir when not needed." He said and my mouth dropped.

"You're?" I asked.

"I'm Adam Taylor, a werewolf. At first, I did not know of your presence here. But recently my Alpha has contacted me and my wife, Elizabeth, about your protection. I confirmed your identity with Headmaster Archibald. Most of the teachers are actually not human." He said.

"Marc didn't tell me," I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

"I think he thought you'd be more comfortable without the knowledge. But since my Alpha has asked me to be your protector, I think it is my duty to tell you about it." He said.

"Your bravery is appreciated." I smiled at him.

"I would kneel but if anyone were to come in it would look weird." He said.

"Please treat me as you would if I were just a student," I said.

"All right your highness. But if you need any help. Please don't hesitate to ask." He said as I nodded and left.

I rushed off to my siblings' room and knocked hoping they were already in. Five minutes later the door still hadn't opened so I used magic to unlock it.

"Ah! My eyes!" I squeaked turning around.

"Ashley!" Zafi squealed.

"What are you two doing?" I squeaked.

"Um... Um... we got carried away." Theo said blushing.

"It could've been Zander," I said and Theo's eyes widened. He hurriedly got off Zafi and to the other corner of the room.

"Come on. Don't tell me you're afraid." Zafi pouted.

"I love you but your brother can kill me." He said.

"He won't," Zafi said.

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"Um. Well, I just had a conversation with my psychology teacher." I said just as Zander came in.

"Hey." He said sitting on his bed completely unaware of his twins' actions.

"Hi. So my psychology teacher is a werewolf." I said.

"What?" they all asked shocked.

"Yeah. Alpha Poike has asked him to protect us." I said.

"Wow. That's so sweet. He cares about us." Zafi said.

"We're the last living heir to the Angelic throne. Us dying would cause a chaos that no one wants to deal with." I said.

"But still. It's sweet." She said.

"Yes. It is." I agreed.

"Grandad just wants to protect you. It's not because you're the heirs, it's because he cares." Theo said.

"We are so many people looking out for us and yet we're hiding like cowards," Zander said.

"We're not being cowards. We're working on things from a different angle. We're doing what we can. If we went out of hiding, then we won't be able to do anything. Cecil and David would kill us at an instant and then we won't be able to prevent the downfall." I said.

"But..." he said.

"Theo, Zafi. Can you both please leave us alone for a bit?" I asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“But!” Zafi protested.

“Zafi. Please.” I said.

“He’s my brother too.” She said.

“I just want to talk to him alone. He’ll talk to you. But right now. I need to.” I said.

“Fine.” She said and scowled.

I knew she was used to being the one he always talked to but she was shutting everyone out. Even her.

“Darling,” I said as soon as she left with Theo.

“What?” he asked.

“ZandaBear, talk to me,” I said.

“Don’t call me that.” He grumbled.

“You like it. Admit it.” I nudged him.

“I don’t. It’s annoying.” He said.

“Talk to me,” I said again.

“I have nothing to say.” He said.

“Yes, you do,” I said.

“How do you know for sure?” he raised his eyebrow.

“I’m your older sister,” I said.

And in that moment I could see his pain in his beautiful blue eyes and I knew that I’d gotten through to him.

**Dear Toon**

## Chapter 16

"I'm pissed," Zander said and I just nodded.

"I'm pissed that mom and dad died. I'm pissed they left us! I'm pissed at Cecil. That bastard killed them without any regret. No remorse. And we all thought the Dark Ones were gone. Dad told us he personally made sure of it! How could he have left one out? Especially let one get so close to us!"

They kept us in the dark. We were never told anything. And yet we were always expected to take over if something were to happen to them. Both the kingdoms, you know Aunt Nat won't be able to handle it! It's too much. We're only fifteen. Dad was two hundred and sixty-two when he started ruling in 1747. Mom was one hundred and twenty-eight back in 1613. We're not ready.

I'm mad at dad for letting Cecil into our family, for letting David in.

I'm angry because David betrayed you. He claimed to love you. He said he'd do anything for you. And he hurt you.

I'm mad at Ashton for leaving us. I'm mad that I can't talk to my big brother. Sometimes, I just need him in my life. I love you but I need him too. Somethings I need you for and some things I need him.

I'm mad at you. I'm mad at you for trusting David. For giving him a chance. And for letting him push you around after mom and dad died.

I'm mad at me, I'm mad at me for not being strong. For not being able to protect you. I'm mad because I didn't break David's face for hurting you. I hate that I was weak, that we were weak.

I hate that even through all of this, I'm pining after Candice!" he said with tears streaming down his face.

I hugged him tightly and we rocked back and forth trying to soothe him.

"It's okay. I love you. I'm here for you. We aren't weak. We're strong. Strong enough to face the world and Dark Ones. And as for Candice, we all are going through that Dilemma. Zafi is with Theo, I think I'm falling for Aaron and its okay. You're okay. Look, there is no reason for you not to go after her. You have every right to be happy. Happiness makes your magic stronger too. Follow your heart." I said realizing how hypocritical I sounded.

"Why don't you follow your own advice and be happy." He said.

"David isn't after you. He's after me. He'd hurt Aaron if he knew. But you. You can be happy. Do me a favor. Be happy. For my sake." I said.

"I love you." He said hugging me and I hugged him tightly.

Knock.

"Come in," I called out and Zafi came in.

"Hey." She said.

"Come here," Zander said and she rushed towards us and three of us hugged.

"Can I come in?" I heard Candy's voice.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Hey” I said.

“So, there is a party in Erica’s dorm, B413, tonight. I thought you all could use cheering up.” She said.

“Sure,” I said.

“You need help getting dressed?” she asked.

“No,” I said. I bid goodbye to my siblings and went to my room.

As usual, Aaron wasn’t in the room. I rummaged through my closet and took out a green off shoulder leopard print dress with a cut out in the middle of my back.

I loved printed clothes.

I wasn’t always worried about how I looked but my sense of fashion wasn’t bad. When I was in a mood I’d dress up but I wasn’t always worried about how I looked.

I put on some leather three-inch heeled boots. I liked heels because it gave me some height.

I pulled my hair in a ponytail and walked out almost knocking into Aaron.

“Sorry!” I said.

“It’s fine.” He grumbled.

“So...” I said but he walked into the bathroom before I could say anything else.

I sighed and made my way to the party.

## Dear Toon

The party was in full swing. Almost everyone was drinking and having fun. I looked around for my friends and siblings and spotted them in one corner.

Zafi and Theo were dancing. They were so close that they could be the same person. I looked away feeling as if I was intruding on a private moment.

I made my way over to Zander and Candice who were drinking something from a red cup.

"You look hot! Why don't you dress like that all the time?" Candy asked.

"I'm too lazy. You know that." I said.

"This party is amazing. Here!" she said handing me a red cup.

I took a sniff and was taken over by a fruity smell.

I hesitantly took a sip and the drink burnt my throat. I took another gulp feeling a little braver.

"What is this?" I asked.

"Lavender Strawberry Juice. Good isn't it?" she asked.

"Yeah," I said.

"Let's dance!" Candy said pulling me to the crowd. The room was packed with people.

Bodies were grinding against each other.

I faced Candy and we started dancing. It was fun. The music was so loud I could feel my heart thudding loudly.

I liked this song. It was amazing.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

After a while, Candy went back to get some more drinks.

I felt someone's arm around my waist and froze up. I turned around to see a stranger.

"Excuse me," I said trying to push him away.

"Come on darling." He said, his Australian accent was thick. He pushed me back and somehow we'd ended up away from the crowd.

"Get away!" I said.

"Come on sweetheart." He slurred.

I readied myself to kick him in the groin but somehow, just as I raised my knee up to kick him in his family jewels.

# Chapter 17

“Are you okay?” Aaron asked.

Aaron was the one who pulled the guy off me.

“Yes. I’m fine. I was dealing with it.” I said.

“Well, how were you going to do it?” he asked.

“Kick him in the...” I mumble and he smiled.

“You sure you’re okay?” he asked.

“Yes. I’m fine. I can deal with unrequited affection. Not the first time.” I said.

“Of course.” He said and his smile disappeared.

Oh shit!

“NO! I’m not talking about that. It’s just something from my past.” I said but he was walking away. I rushed out after him. I saw him exit the dorm and followed.

“Hey! Aaron. Wait up!” I said as I ran after him in heels.

It was hard to run in heels.

“Hey! Wait!” I said running a little faster trying to reach him before he got on the lift but I was too late.

I decided to teleport downstairs and wait for him in front of the lift. I landed in the stairwell.

## Ashmita Ghosh

I rushed out just in time. The lift had just reached the ground floor.

“Aaron! Please.” I said.

“What? What do you want?” he said finally stopping.

“I’m sorry,” I said.

“For what? All you did was rebuff unrequited affections.” He said as he picked up speed once more.

“It’s really hard to run in heels, you idiot,” I said.

“Don’t follow me!” he screamed and headed to our building.

I sighed and bent down removing my shoes. I clutched my shoes in my hands and ran after him.

This time I was fast but he was faster.

He made his way to the elevator and just as I reached the lift the door closed.

I knew I could not afford to teleport again, I’d lose consciousness due to over exhaustion.

I headed to the stairs and rushed up.

I was huffing by the time I reached the door of our dorm. The door was locked and tried to find my keys but I couldn’t find it. Damn! I forgot to take it.

I took a deep breath and used magic to unlock the door.

“Aaron. Listen to me.” I said.

“Why?” he asked, he looked so vulnerable.

“Because I...” I said.

“What?” he asked.

“I didn’t want to walk away. I had to.” I said.

“Why? Why did you run?” he asked sitting on his bed. He was keeping his distance.

“I don’t know,” I said as I sat on my bed facing him.

“You kissed me back. I thought... Maybe I was imagining things. But I thought you liked me too damn it!” he exclaimed.

“Aaron. You need to understand. It was never my intention to hurt you. You mean too much to me.” I said.

“Don’t you want this?” he asked.

“What I want has never been something I could really consider! It’s best for you if we don’t. You shouldn’t get attached to someone like me.” I said.

“Why?” he asked.

“I’m not normal. I’m unsafe. I’m broken. I have trust issues. I... I can’t hurt you!” I said.

“You’re hurting me right now!” he said.

“I don’t want to but if this keeps you safe,” I said as I felt a tear slip.

“Why won’t you give us a shot?” he asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“I just got out of a relationship. A relationship that went to hell.” I said.

“But that doesn’t mean we can’t work.” He said.

“I’m not good for you! You don’t want to get mixed up in my problems. My life isn’t rainbows and unicorns.” I said.

“Let me decide that! I want this. And my life isn’t rainbows and unicorns either. Let me decide what I want! Just tell me. Do you like me?” he asked.

I kept quiet.

“Ashley. Do. You. Like. Me?” he said getting up.

“I’m afraid I like you too much,” I shouted getting up from the bed and walking away.

Suddenly I couldn’t move. Aaron had grabbed my hand and pulled me against him.

“I like you too. And I want you! Why can’t you let me like you? Why can’t you listen to your heart?” he said.

“The heart never lies,” I mumbled quoting my father. Maybe. Maybe if I let myself be happy. Maybe.

Happiness is something I could use.

“In a world full of lies. It’s the only truth.” He said and crushed his lips onto mine, my shoes clattered to the ground.

His hands moved to cup my face and mine entangled themselves in his hair.

## Dear Toon

We pulled each other closer trying to diminish the non-existent space between us.

When we kissed the world around us disappeared. It was only us. Just the two of us mattered.

The rest of the world was in black and white. We were in screaming colors.

When we pulled apart we were both breathing hard trying to catch our breath.

I looked at Aaron whose face suddenly split into a wide smile that could put Rafi to shame!

His smile made my heart thud faster and made me smile.

“You like me?” he asked. His voice was so vulnerable. It was hard to believe the innocent boy right in front of me was the same cocky boy I shared a room with.

“Yes.” I smiled back at him. To hell with right and wrong. The heart wants what it wants.

“I like you a lot too.” He smiled.

“You’re really short. I like it.” He said.

“You’ve got lipstick on your lips.” I retorted cleaning his lips with my fingers.

“Well, I like how you put it on me.” He smiled.

His smile was so beautiful. There was nothing more perfect than a smiling Aaron.

I’d give him anything for a smile. Just one.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“You look so pretty when you smile like that,” I said.

“I’m not pretty. Men aren’t pretty. I’m devilishly handsome.” He said reverting back to his confident self.

I didn’t mind. I liked all of him. The sweet, cocky, kind, caring, maybe even the jerk him.

He was Aaron Mercer and I was falling for him.

## Chapter 18

"Shorty." A voice cooed in my ear.

"Mmm," I said snuggling closer to the warm pillow.

"Wake up." It said and I slammed the alarm.

"Wakey wakey." It said again.

"Shut up alarm," I said banging my hand against it.

"Ow!" it said I opened my eyes.

Oh. It wasn't a pillow or an alarm.

"Sorry," I mumbled hiding my face in his chest. I could feel his body shake as he laughed.

"You thought I was an alarm?" He asked.

"Shut up!" I mumbled

"Good morning Shorty." He said and I looked up at him.

"Morning." I smiled remembering last night.

He leaned down and kissed me. And just like yesterday, I lost myself in him. His scent was so intoxicating. I wanted to drown in him.

"This is a great way to wake up," I mumbled.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Well, it’s about time you woke up. I’ve been trying to wake you up for hours. Seemed like you preferred sleep over me.” He pouted.

“Sorry. I haven’t been sleeping well. I guess I finally got some sleep.” I said.

“You look cute when you’re asleep.” He said making me blush.

“You’re an idiot.” I smiled.

“Yeah?” he asked and I nodded.

He got this glint in his eyes that scared me. Before I knew it he was tickling me. I thrashed around the bed laughing, trying to get away. I was very ticklish. Extremely ticklish.

“Take it back!” he said.

“Never!” I giggled.

“Say I’m the smartest person you know. And I’m the best boyfriend ever.” He said.

“I’m the smartest person you know! And I’m the best boyfriend ever.” I giggled then realized the second half of the sentence.

I think he realized it too because he stopped tickling me.

“So...” I said, “I’m your girlfriend?” I asked.

“I thought you said *you’re* the best boyfriend ever...” he joked and I elbowed him. “And I just thought it was a given, especially since what happened yesterday.”

“We just kissed.” I pointed out.

## Dear Toon

“Best damn kiss of my life. But anyways, will you be my girlfriend?” he asked me.

“I thought you didn’t do girlfriends,” I said.

“That was because they weren’t you.” He said.

Aw! He was so sweet! I was going to get diabetes!

“Yes,” I said and he flashed me his beautiful smile.

“Well then girlfriend. Let’s seal the deal with a kiss.” He said and I pulled him down to me for a kiss.

It was as if our bodies knew each other perfectly. We moved in sync.

It was as if we were made for each other. We fit together like two puzzle pieces.

His skin was so soft and I loved his hair. God. He was perfect!

“We should get up. Breakfast.” I said pulling away.

“Hmm. Thank god it’s Saturday. I really don’t want to go to classes. I just want to spend the day with you.” He says.

“We have all the same classes.” I pointed out.

“Except for Gym. Why didn’t you take gym?” he pouted.

“Cause I don’t like sports,” I said.

“What kind of a person doesn’t like sports?” he asked with a fake scandalized expression. He already knew I didn’t like sports. I was too lazy.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Breakfast?” I asked.

“How about we stay in and make something ourselves?” he asked.

“I can’t just drop my siblings like that. They’ll worry.” I said.

“Fine. I’m taking you out after breakfast, though. On a date.” He said.

My heartbeat picked up a little and I nodded. I’d let them practice without me for today.

With one last kiss, I got off the bed and headed to my closet taking my things to the bathroom with me.

I decided to take a quick shower before blow-drying my hair and putting on a dress.

The dress was pretty, it could be considered casual but was still really pretty. It was a floor length maxi dress, a leopard print one with a black and white striped belt. My mother bought this a while back when she went shopping with Aunt Nat I’d left it at Aunt Nat’s home. I really loved this dress.

As usual, I put my favorite pair of black platform heels. I hated my height. Everyone I knew was taller than me. My little sister was taller than me.

I pulled my hair up in a ponytail with a few stray strands running free and put on some red lipstick and mascara.

I wasn’t into makeup all that much, but Mama always said red lips made me look fresh.

I looked at myself in the mirror and smiled. I looked better than I normally did. I didn't look as good as I did when Portia Gracia, my stylist, dressed me up for parties.

Portia was amazing. She was the sweetest amongst all my other stylists. They were always fussing about how I never put any effort on how I looked, very unbecoming for a princess. My mother told them off on multiple occasions. Mama always said a princess should be beautiful from inside.

I shook my head. I missed all my people. I put that out of my mind and looked at the watch. Only been fifteen minutes.

When I walked out of the bathroom Aaron had his back to me. He was holding two shirts as if trying to decide which to wear.

And Holy Gabriel! He was shirtless. He had this huge tattoo covering his back. A tattoo of an angel with her wings spread wide flying away.

I stood there admiring not just his tattoo but his back too for a while before I cleared my throat.

"You're ready?" he said as he turned and froze as he looked at me.

I was entranced by him. He was handsome, sexy and every other term my incoherent mind couldn't think of. He had muscles, amazing muscles, and abs. Oh lord. He made feel things I didn't know I could feel.

"You look beautiful." He said, his voice laced with wonder making me blush and take my eyes off his perfect body.

"Um... Thanks." I said.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“So, which shirt?” he asked holding up two shirts.

I had to force my eyes from looking at his perfectly sculptured body.

“Blue. When in doubt always go with blue. It brings out your eyes.” I said.

He flashed me his beautiful smile before giving me the black shirt and putting on the blue button up one leaving the top two buttons open looking so damn sexy.

I handed him the other shirt and took my purse, putting in all the necessities like my phone, headphones, and the journal. Yeah, I was taking my headphones. I always carried them.

And I was going to give Toon to Zafi. I wasn’t about to take my brother on a date with me.

“Ready?” he asked.

“Hey! I was ready before you and you took a shower before I woke up.” I said.

“That’s only because I was planning our date.” He said.

“Whatever,” I grumbled.

“Let’s go.” He said kissing me before we left the room.

My siblings were sitting in the hall already eating so we grabbed some food.

“Morning.” I chirped as I sat next to Zander who was covertly gazing at Candy.

"Morning! You won't believe what I did today! I did it! I made it rain!" Zafira exclaimed and I think Zander kicked her under the table.

"Made it rain?" Aaron asked and her eyes widened.

"It's a metaphor," I said trying to cover her mistake up.

Controlling weather and nature is the most complicated aspect of Angel magic. If she was the cause of the rain yesterday, I was proud of her.

"Why are you all dressed up?" Zafi asked me finally noticing "Both of you." She said and realization dawned on her and she smiled widely.

"When did this happen?" Candy asked.

"Last night." Aaron smiled.

"What happened?" Zander asked.

"Well, we're together," Aaron said.

"You're dating?" he asked me.

"Yes," I said, his eyes searched for something in mine then in Aaron's and he seemed satisfied with whatever he saw.

"Okay." He said shrugging.

For rest of the breakfast, Zafira kept asking us exactly what happened. Aaron seemed complacent enough to share.

# Chapter 19

“Where are we going?” I asked as we got on the bike.

“It’s a surprise.” He said.

“Come on!” I said.

“Shh.” He said as we zoomed on.

When we stopped I stared at the beautiful place before me.

“I love carnivals!” I exclaimed jumping up and hugging him.

“Let’s go!” he pulled me and we stood at the line for tickets.

He put his arms around me and his chin top of my head.

The line slowly moved on. I realized I’d never really done anything. Most of my life I spent in the castle. It wasn’t that I wasn’t allowed but I didn’t like attention and going out meant attention.

The girl at the counter told us the cost and I immediately went to take out the money.

Aaron’s hand covered mine and he gave her his card.

“It’s a date.” He whispered in my ear.

“But,” I said as she gave us two tickets.

“But nothing.” He said kissing me.

I lost myself in his lips until someone cleared their throat.

"There's a line here. Go suck face somewhere else." A guy in his mid-twenties said. I blushed as we walked away.

"That was humiliating!" I said.

"What? No, it wasn't. I was just kissing my girl." He smirked and I smacked his stomach. Damn. He was ripped.

"Shut up!" I complained.

Suddenly he pulled the rubber band out of my hair.

"What?" I asked.

"You look prettier with your hair down." He said and I punched him lightly for being corny.

"Come on. Let's go in," he said pulling me with him as we walked through the gates.

"Wow!" I gasped. It was amazing. There were rides everywhere and stalls.

"You like?" he asked.

"I love!" I squealed pulling him towards a ride.

There were horses going around in circles. It looked like fun.

"Oh no! Carousels are for children." He said.

"Please! I've never been on one." I pouted. It was true, I had never been on a human merry go round. I could see his resolve wavering.

"Oh fine!" he said as we stood in the line.

## Ashmita Ghosh

We roamed around the carnival, going on ride after ride. My favorite so far was the bumper cars.

It was so much fun bumping into everyone.

We'd just got some cotton candy, they had one in every color of the rainbow! I'd got a mixture of pink and blue.

"Hey!" I exclaimed slapping Aaron's arm, Aaron took a bite out of mine when I wasn't looking even though he had his own.

"What?" he asked innocently.

"That's mine," I said.

"There's no I in us." He smirked.

"Well, there is one in mine," I smirked right back.

"Well, it's ours. Ours doesn't have an I either." He smiled.

I shook my head.

"Now how am I going to eat this? It's got your saliva all over it." I said wrinkling my nose.

"Well, you don't seem to mind my saliva when we kiss." He said proving his point by kissing me.

"I get your point," I said when we pulled back.

"Come on." He said pulling me towards a booth. Archery. Well, not real archery.

"Five bucks." The guy at the stall said. "If you hit the bull's eye, you get the big panda bear. The red circle, you get the third-row

gifts. Blue circle, second row, and black circle first row. And white area, nada.”

Aaron set the bow and put in the arrow. And then he shot. The arrow hit the blue area and Aaron smiled.

“Which one do you want?” Aaron asked me.

I looked at the row of toys.

“That one,” I said pointing at the fluffy white dog with big eyes.

“Here ya go!” he said handing it to me.

“Can I try?” I asked.

“You sure?” Aaron asked me “It’s kind of heavy.”

“Really?” I asked raising my eyebrows.

“Sure. Go ahead.” He smiled.

The guy handed me the bow and I set it right and arranged the arrow at the right level.

I closed my left eye and took a deep breath in and let it out.

I arranged my elbow properly and kept breathing normally.

I aimed at the exact center, not just the bull’s eye and let go.

“Yeah!” I squealed.

“You know how to do this?” Aaron asked as the guy got us the huge panda with his eyes wide.

“Mama taught us. I’m not delicate.” I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Wow.” He said pulling me to him kissing me passionately.

The panda bear was huge, four feet. I picked it up with some trouble and handed it to Aaron.

“Here. Your gift.” I smirked.

“You know how to emasculate a man.” he said.

“Aw! You poor baby.” I said leaning up to kiss him. I wondered how awkward it was for him to bend down so much to kiss me.

We went to a balloon shooting thing next.

Again I whooped his ass. I was good at aim, best amongst my siblings.

People said I was the best archer since Eros.

“Can we go on the Ferris Wheel?” I asked.

“Sure.” He said.

We sat in the capsule and a girl our age secured us in.

“Wow!” I said when we were at the very top “It’s so beautiful. It reminds me of flying. I miss it so much.” I mumbled then realized Aaron was next to me.

I turned to face him and saw he wasn’t paying attention. He looked terrified.

“Aaron?” I called out.

“Hmm.” He said, his jaw clenched.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

"I'm fine." He croaked out.

"Look at me," I said.

"What?" he asked, his voice was shaky.

"Are you afraid of heights?" I asked.

"No!" he exclaimed in a pitch higher than normal.

"Heights are beautiful. The world seems so much smaller. The wonders you see. Heights are wonderful. You feel the wind pass through your body. It's exhilarating. Maybe someday, you'll understand the amazement of flying. Heights make the world seem insignificant. And all that matters is us." I said.

"Wow! That's beautiful. Even though I didn't understand what you meant by flying." He said.

"Nothing. Just look down. The world is so beautiful. And it's like only we exist." I said.

He was looking at me with a strange expression before he kissed me with a passion like never before.

I somehow moved onto his lap. We were kissing for god knows how long. It was amazing. I could feel the earth shatter. I could see the stars.

And suddenly there was a knock at the capsule window.

"You weren't supposed to take off your seatbelt." The girl told me but smirked and I blushed beet red.

"Wow! That was amazing." Aaron said.

"It was," I said removing the lipstick from his lips.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“You’re beautiful.” He said making me blush. I wasn’t used to that. Only my family ever said that, well unless my stylists dressed me up. David had never called me beautiful in all the years we were together. But being with Aaron was nothing like being with David.

“I’m not, I’m alright,” I said.

“No, you’re amazing. Beautiful. Inside and out.” He said with such intensity that made my heart warm.

# Chapter 20

“How are we going to travel with the stuff toys?” I asked Aaron as we reached his bike.

“Wait.” He said taking out his phone.

“Hey. Yes, Albert. Be here in five minutes.” He said over the phone and I looked at him funnyly.

Exactly in five minutes, a car parked in front of us.

“Mr. Mercer.” A man dressed in a white uniform greeted him.

“Albert. Please take these to the campus. I’ll collect them later.” Aaron told him.

“Yes, Sir. Good day ma’am.” He nodded at me and took the stuff toys from us and got in the car.

“You have a driver?” I asked when the car drove away.

“Yeah. But I prefer my bike over the car. He’s just on standby in case of an emergency.” He said.

“Are we going back now?” I asked.

“Nope. The day just started. We’re going to lunch. There’s this really cool Italian place. I thought we could try that out.” He said.

“Sure,” I said.

I got on the bike clutching on to Aaron and we sped off.

## Ashmita Ghosh

The restaurant was beautiful. It was small and pretty. We stood at the gate waiting for a waiter to show us to our seat.

“Table for two?” a girl asked as she stood in front of us. Her skirt was shorter than necessary and she looked at Aaron with such a lustful look that my blood boiled.

*Back off!* I wanted to snarl.

“Right this way.” She said leading us to a table of four.

“Somewhere more private?” Aaron asked.

“Sure Sir.” She said leading us to a table in the back.

Just as I was about to sit, Aaron came up behind me and pulled my chair out for me.

“Such a gentleman. Who knew?” I laughed as he kissed my cheek.

“Well, when there’s a beautiful lady in front of me I’m bound to be a gentleman.” He smiled sitting down.

“Would you like something to drink?” the waitress asked.

“Um...” Aaron said looking at the menu.

“I have no idea. It’s all Italian.” He mumbled.

I smiled.

“Do you have strawberry-mango-kiwi Bellini?” I asked.

“I don’t know.” She flustered.

“Can you ask?” I asked politely.

“Sure.” She said walking away.

“You like Italian?” Aaron asked.

“My favorite! I always looked forward to Saturdays. Every Saturday, Sebastian Russo, our Italian Chef, used to make Italian food. I used to spend a lot of time eating while he cooked. The staff always had to pull me out so I didn’t spoil my appetite.” I said.

I looked at the menu and felt Aaron’s eyes on me.

“What?” I asked.

“You’re beautiful.” He replied making me blush.

“Shut up,” I said.

Aaron and I decided we’d just share everything, that way we’d have some variety.

The waitress arrived with our drinks just in time and I gave her the rest of the order.

“Tomato, mozzarella and basil Bruschetta, chicken ravioli and chicken lasagna and avocado panzanella. And for dessert zabaglione trifle and white chocolate panna cotta.” I listed off.

“Okay, ma’am.” She said walking away. I think I intimidated her.

“So” Aaron said looking at me.

“It was amazing. The carnival. My siblings and I used to go to a carnival, but I always left early and spent the night in the tallest tower to watch the stars in peace. Once a year, complete harmony.” I smiled.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“You know, I haven’t really been truthful with you,” I said out of the blue.

“What?” he asked.

“My parents are not lawyers,” I said.

“I figured.” He smiled.

“But I can’t tell you right now,” I said.

“I understand. There are things you can’t share but right now, I’m happy right as we are.” He said.

I smiled and leaned forward to kiss him.

We talked about lighter topics. It was fun. The conversation between us flowed so easily.

The food was exquisite.

After lunch, he picked up the bill before I could.

“Let me contribute,” I said.

“It’s our first date. Let me.” He said and I sighed.

After lunch, we decided to walk around for a while enjoying the sun.

It was around six when we got back on his bike and this time drove off towards somewhere he won’t tell me about.

I looked out at the beautiful water body in front of me. It was gorgeous.

And the yacht.

## Dear Toon

"Wow! It's beautiful! Are we going in there?" I asked.

"Yes." He smiled pulling me with him.

He helped me into the yacht.

I went up to the deck and looked out to see the beautiful city skyline.

"It's beautiful," I mumbled.

"It's amazing." He agreed "but not as beautiful as you."

His comments always made me blush.

"Do you know magic?" he asked and I froze.

"What?" I stuttered.

"Because, whenever I look at you, the world disappears." He said.

Relief flooded over me but that comment still made me blush.

"That's cheesy!" I laughed.

"There isn't a word in the dictionary that describes how beautiful you are." He said.

"Where do you hide your wings? Cause you seem like an angel."

He said.

*The wings came out on command* I thought.

"Wow! Such great lines they are." I said sarcastically.

They were lame but funny.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Do you want to dance?” he asked all of a sudden pulling me in his arms.

“I don’t dance,” I said.

“Come on.” He said pulling me to the center of the deck.

“There’s no music,” I said.

“We don’t need any.” he said.

He put his arm around my waist and held my hand and I put the other hand on his shoulder.

We swayed around together for who know how longs. Enjoying each other’s company, dancing under the night sky adorned with stars.

“You said you couldn’t dance.” He said.

“I said I don’t. But I can.” I smirked.

“Is there anything you can’t do?” he asked.

“Well, I did almost burn down the entire kitchen once. So I can’t cook. Sebastian made sure I was away from the fire.” I said.

“You’re amazing.” He said kissing me.

“Isn’t it hard for you to kiss me? I’m like a foot shorter. Even with heels, I’m at least seven inches shorter.” I said.

“I like a challenge. And the prize is worth it.” He said suddenly picking me up “Though this is good too.” He said and I wrapped my legs around his waist. My dress made it a little hard but it helped keep my balance.

**Dear Toon**

“Dude! You’ll break your back!” I squealed.

“You break my back? What a joke! You’re like a feather.” He said kissing me again.

# **Chapter 21**

“Wake up.” I felt someone shake me. It had been an amazing two days with Aaron.

“Sleep,” I said.

“Come on, Ashley. We need to get going. Zan’s waiting for us.” She said.

“Five more minutes,” I said.

“I have no idea how you get up for school. It’s impossible to wake you.” She said.

“Let me try.” A beautiful voice said before I felt someone’s breath on my face.

“Go. I sleep.” I groaned putting a pillow on my face.

“Morning Gorgeous.” He said.

“Sleep.” I groaned.

“You’re not a morning person, are you?” he asked and I turned around and grunted.

“I really didn’t want to do this but you leave me no choice.” He said and before I knew it, he was tickling me.

“No!” I squealed.

“I’m up!” I squealed.

“Good. Now. You should get ready Angel.” He said.

## Dear Toon

Just as I got up, he pulled me close to him and kissed me.

“Now you can go.” He smiled.

I shook my head at him and went to get dressed. We were meeting the *wonderful* Ms. Overa, note the sarcasm. We had initially tried to reach Robert, who unfortunately had passed away about five years back. When we couldn’t reach him, we asked Viola to look into Ms. Overa, and Viola had managed to get her to meet us. But we couldn’t give up our location so we were meeting her in New York.

I knew how much of an opportunist she was. I knew she’d want to take an interview of us, and although we wouldn’t allow her to print anything we said, we’d use this an opportunity to find out what was happening.

We had reliable sources but everyone knows, the media knew more than the kings and queens themselves.

It took me half an hour to find something to wear. It was easier to dress for my date than this.

I finally settled on a black and white graffiti print dress and six-inch-high wedges.

“Wow,” Aaron said when I walked out.

“Hey!” I said walking over to him and leaning up to kiss him.

“Should I be worried?” he asked.

“About what?” I asked.

“Well, when your hot girlfriend dresses up like that, you’re bound to worry.” He said like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

## Ashmita Ghosh

"Well. I have no interest in the illustrious Ms. Overa." I said.

"Who's she?" he asked.

"A reporter. She's here to get the scoop on my parents' accident." I said.

"What accident?" he asked his eyes widening.

"I'll tell you later," I promised. Maybe it was the time I gave him the humanized version of the story.

"Okay." He said kissing me again.

"I really need to go," I said pulling back.

"Fine. Come back to me." He said.

"I always will," I replied.

When I opened the door Zafi fell in. That little eavesdropper.

"Really?" I asked.

"What? I was curious." She said, not even a little remorseful.

"Let's just go." I shook my head.

"So how are things going with Aaron?" she asked.

"Great. He's amazing. He's great, understanding and doesn't push me to be someone else. With him, I can truly be myself." I said.

"You really like him. You never talked about that idiot like that." She said.

"Yeah. He's nothing like David. He isn't after my status or my money. Well in David's case, my life." I laughed a humorless laugh.

"Ash. Do you really think it's a good idea to not tell him? I mean he is related to King Yesef of Slokes." She said.

"You knew?" I asked.

"You didn't?" she asked.

"No!" I exclaimed.

"How did you not? He was on the cover of every newspaper when his identity was revealed." She said.

We walked out of the lift and I knocked into someone.

"Look what the cat dragged in." Tasha sneered at me.

"Hello Tasha," I said politely.

"I thought I told you to stay away from me!" she said.

"Do you think I have time to waste on you? I have no interest in spending my day on you." I said.

"How dare you? Do you know who my mother is?" she said incredulously.

"How dare you? Do you know who you are talking to? Unlike you, she doesn't need her parents' status. She has her own." Zafi spits back and I pinched her making her yelp.

"Yeah? Who the hell are you? Your parents were mere lawyers." She said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“You!” Zafi charged and I pulled her back.

“Let go!” she said.

“Zafira Nichole Grey! Don’t you dare, we are to meet Ms. Overa. You know as well as I that she doesn’t like to be kept waiting.” I said.

“Ashley!” she asked.

“Zafira. That is an order. It is wrong to pick fights.” I said

“I’m not picking a fight! She did! She insulted you!” she said.

I glared at my sister and pulled her out of the room leaving a slack-jawed Tasha behind.

“Why?” she seethed.

“Because it is absolutely unacceptable for you to do what you did. You are not to fight the mortals. That makes us look bad.” I said.

“But she spoke disrespectfully.” She said.

“Zafira! You cannot threaten her for being disrespectful.” I said.

“If we were back home, she could’ve been executed for speaking to you that way!” she said.

“That’s a little overboard, isn’t it?” I asked.

“But aren’t you mad?” she asked.

“No... It’s refreshing. People treat me like a normal person.” I said.

## Dear Toon

“And you like it? I miss home.” She said.

“Being normal is amazing,” I said.

“How?” she asked.

“Back home, you and Theo wouldn’t be able to have a proper relationship. The media would suck the life out of you. You’re sensitive. It is hard to start a relationship under the strain of the public. The questions. Those are the worst. Try to live a normal life as long as you can. It’ll only last for a little while.” I said.

“Never really thought of that.” She said.

“You two coming?” Zan said waving at us bringing us out of our conversation.

“Let’s go face the reporter.” She sighed and we walked to the empty cabin at the corner of campus so we could safely teleport.

## **Chapter 22**

“Ah! Princess Ashley, Princess Zafira, Prince Zander.” Alana Overa stood up as soon as she saw us.

“It’s a pleasure,” I said.

“Pleasure is all mine.” She said.

“Let’s sit somewhere private,” I said.

“Of course. I have a private room booked.” She said.

We followed her through the restaurant that we met up on.

“So do you mind if I recorded our conversation?” she asked.

“Yes. Not now. First I have a few questions.” I said.

“Well. Sure. We can both help each other out.” She smiled a fake smile.

“Winch Wolwond. Where is he?” I asked.

“Excuse me?” she stuttered.

“I know you once interviewed him. I want to know how to find him.” I said.

“Well, may I know why?” she asked.

“You do not have the authority to question me. If you know what is right, you will answer.” I said.

"I understand but I have to say. I swore not to tell anyone of his whereabouts." She smirked.

"Miss Overa. You happen to forget, I'm not a princess anymore. I'm the queen of Angelica and Faerie. I might not be in my kingdom but there is one thing I want to make clear. The Merking and Merqueen would back me up." I said.

"So?" she asked.

"I command you to tell me of his location," I said.

"That is preposterous. You have no right to command me," she said.

"But I do." A voice came.

"Your majesty." Alana stuttered standing up and kneeling down.

"Alana. When a queen asks you for help, you are in no position to deny it. Even if she is the queen of another kingdom." Atlanta Hathaway, the Merqueen, said.

"But..." she started.

"Where is he?" she asked again.

"Faerietopia," Alana said.

"He is in our kingdom and yet you wouldn't tell us?" Zander said. He had been quiet since we arrived. Both he and Zafi decided it was best if I spoke.

"Where in Faerietopia?" I asked.

"Berri Venchika." She said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“What?” I asked. That was a city not too far from the Royal Court.

“Berri Venchika. He moved there with his family under your mother’s protection. My sources tell me that only the Queen knew of this. When he decided to drop off the maps, he requested that no other kingdom found out about it.” She said and summoned map with the location marked giving it to me.

“You are dismissed,” I said.

“My interview.” She said.

“After I return to court. But if you breathe a word of it to anyone, you will pay for it.” I said.

“If you tell a soul of any of this, you will be exiled,” Atlanta said.

“This is outrageous, you majesty. Princess Ashley has been missing for months. Her kingdoms are in a panic. As a reporter, it is my responsibility to tell them the truth.” She said.

“As the Queen. It is my duty to protect my people. No one finds out.” I glared at her.

“Yes, your highness.” She said and vanished splashing us with water.

“She’s a witch,” I said.

“Tsk. Tsk. Language.” Atlanta said.

“I had no idea you were coming!” Zafi said.

“I knew Alana would’ve given you a hard time.” She said.

“I hate that woman,” I said.

“So, when do you think we should leave?” Zander asked.

“Not yet. You’re not ready yet. Transfiguration and feature changing. Until you master those, you’re staying at Springfield’s. David and Cecil would need to end your life to kill the entire Angel race. And then the rest of us.” She said.

“That seems reasonable.” Zafi agreed.

“Do you have Ashton with you?” she asked and I nodded. I carried Ashton everywhere.

Her eyes welled up as soon as she saw him.

We decided to catch up and spent some time in New York.

By the time we got back to the Academy, it was dark.

I bid goodbye to my siblings and went to my room.

Aaron was sitting on his desk with his head down. He fell asleep studying.

I laughed and walked over to him.

“Aaron,” I whispered in his ears.

“Mmm.” He mumbled.

“Get up. You’ll hurt yourself.” I said.

“Ashley?” he asked, his voice thick with sleep.

“Hey.” I smiled.

“Hi. I was just doing the psychology project.” He said.

“Haven’t you finished it yet?” I asked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“No. Thought I’d have time. We have to submit it tomorrow right?” he asked.

“Yeah,” I said yawning.

“How was your meeting?” he asked.

“Awful. I never liked reporters.” I sighed leaning on his desk.

I squealed as he pulled me on his lap.

“I have to ask you something.” He said

“Shoot,” I said.

“Um. Well, my grandfather is in town. I was talking to him today and he asked to meet me tomorrow evening.” He said nervously.

“Good,” I said.

“Well. I was wondering if you wanted to come with me.” He said nervously.

“Um. Sure.” I said.

I knew I had to tell him someday about who I was.

I trusted Aaron but he wouldn’t be safe. I didn’t want to tell him until absolutely necessary. He might lose faith in me but he’d be safe longer.

“You’re the best!” he said kissing me.

Kissing him was the best thing in the world. Without him, I realized, I’d lose a part of myself.

What if I lose him?

## Dear Toon

I couldn't think like that. I'd enjoy my time with him for as long as I could.

What we had was beautiful.

"I think I'm in love with you." The words tumbled out of my mouth before I could stop myself.

It was then I realized how true it was. I realized I'd been falling for him for months. I was truly in love, for the first time.

"I love you too. You're my first and last love." He said as a smile took over his face and his kisses intensified. He picked me up and walked over to the bed.

We toppled over as we let our passion take over us.

## Chapter 23

"You're meeting King Yesef and haven't told Aaron yet?" Zafi asked shocked.

"I don't think I should until it's absolutely necessary," I said.

"It is! He might recognize you!" Zander said.

"Well. I've never met him." I said.

"But you're not an insignificant figure. You've been on TV." She said.

"It's not like a human watches the Magik TV," I said.

"No, but he may have been to Angelica. They're pictures of you there." Zan said.

"He may not have been to Angelica, and besides it's not easy to recognize a person from their pictures!" I said.

"Really? Now you're just looking for excuses!" Zafi exclaimed.

"Why are you so against telling him? I thought you liked him."

Zander said.

"I love him but I don't want to burden him. You don't understand. If he knew, two things could happen. He could either try to help me, which will endanger him or he could leave me. The first is more probable and truthfully, that scares me more!" I said.

"Wait! You just said you loved him." Zafi said and I blushed.

“I might have accidentally told him I loved him,” I said.

“Really? That’s amazing!” she squealed.

“I really don’t want to be a part of this conversation,” Zander said cringing.

“This is so sweet!” Zafi squealed.

“That’s amazing!” Zander said in a falsetto tone mocking her.

“So... did he say it back?” she asked bouncing up and down.

“Yes.” I blushed even more and she squealed.

Zander grunted and hid his face under the pillow laying back muttering to himself.

“Can we get back to what we were doing?” I asked trying to concentrate again.

It was currently our free period and we’d come to Uncle Marc’s office to attempt transfiguration.

It was going awfully. I wasn’t able to concentrate. My mind tended to flutter around. Sometimes I’d think about the past, sometimes the future or even the present. I found extremely hard to focus on one thing.

“I still think you should tell him,” Zander said.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because if you don’t, you’re basically lying to him.” He said.

“I’m protecting him,” I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“You really are dense.” Zafi shook her head.

“Shut up and concentrate,” I said changing the subject.

“Fine.” She huffed.

We sat there in a circle all trying to concentrate. I could feel Zafi constantly moving. That made it harder to concentrate.

I sighed and opened my eyes.

“We’re screwed,” I said.

“Why?” Zander asked.

“Because we suck at this,” I said.

“Dude, we just started,” Zander said.

“I’ve never been bad at magic. Always did it perfectly. I can’t concentrate.” I said.

“You’re just going to have to hope and do it.” He said.

“Why don’t we just close our eyes and sit quietly for a while?” Zafira suggested.

“Sure.” I smiled.

We sat with our eyes closed and held hands. I cleared my mind. Things came fleeting in and fleeting out of my mind but I was at peace. Peace.

When we finally opened our eyes, it turned out we’d missed the last class.

And there it was, a small change. The carpet’s color changed.

"We did it!" I squealed.

"Yeah! Small victory. Next thing you know, we'd turn it into another object. I mean, we can't do that, cause it's illegal and all, but I'm just saying we could." Zander said.

"As fun as this is, as exciting this is. You need to go to your room. You have a king to meet." Zafi said and I realized that Aaron must've been worried.

"I'll see you guys later. See you later." I said.

"Good luck. I hope you know what you're up to." Zander said and I nodded.

When I got to my room Aaron was pacing around the room.

"Hey!" I said walking in.

"Where've you been?" he asked.

"Fell asleep in Marc's office. I was with Zafira and Zander." I said.

"Ready to go?" he asked.

"What? No! I need to change." I said.

"You look great. Let's go." He said.

"Aaron, chill we have an hour," I said.

"Fine." He mumbled.

I put on some black jeans and a pink and black lace peplum top. I walked out of my closet and smirked at Aaron.

"Five minutes!" I smirked.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Aren’t girls supposed to take long to get dressed?” he asked.

“Nope. I used to hate it when those morons used to come over before the parties and take hours to get me ready.” I said.

“What?” he asked.

“Nothing.” I laughed.

I held his hand and we walked towards his car. It was a beautiful midnight blue sedan.

“After you milady.” He smiled opening the door for me.

“You’re so sweet.” I smiled getting in.

He rushed over to the other side and got in, leaning over to kiss me.

“I wish I could drive,” I mumbled as we drove off.

“You can’t?” he asked.

“Nope.” I shook my head.

“Well, I’ll teach you.” He said.

“No! No! I’d crash it.” I said.

“It’s really easy!” he promised.

“We’ll see about it,” I said.

“Good.” He said.

I fiddled with the radio, trying to find a song. Yay!

“See me in hindsight, tangled up with you all night, burnin’ it down, someday when you leave me, I bet these memories follow you around!” I sang along.

“I don’t think you can sing,” Aaron said and I smacked him laughing as I increased my volume bordering on screaming.

The whole way there we sang, screamed, together. When he finally parked, I noticed that his mood changed. He was nervous again.

“It’s going to be alright. And shouldn’t I be the one worried?” I asked.

“Why?” he asked.

“I’m not just meeting my boyfriend’s grandfather; I’m also meeting the *king* of a country,” I said.

“You have nothing to worry about.” He said.

“And neither do you,” I said pulling him towards the hotel.

“This way.” He said leading me towards the lift. We traveled up to the 20<sup>th</sup> floor.

When we reached the right room he knocked on the door.

“You ready?” I asked.

“As I’ll ever be.” He said just as an old man opened the door.

“Hello Aaron. And you must be Ashley.” He said.

“Grandfather.” He nodded.

“Nice to meet you, your highness,” I said bowing a little.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

He took us to the living room and told us to have a seat.

“Have we met before?” he asked me curiously.

“We haven’t,” I said politely.

“So Aaron. Have you given my offer anymore thought?” he asked Aaron, but I could see him looking at me.

“I haven’t decided yet. You said I had time.” Aaron said.

“You have until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December.” He said.

“That’s not enough time. It’s the fifteenth today!” Aaron said.

“You’ve had enough time. Make a decision.” He said.

“You don’t have a right to tell me what to do. You disowned my mother!” Aaron said.

“She betrayed us!” he said.

“She didn’t. All she did was fall in love!” Aaron fumed.

“I think this is enough, don’t you? We have company.” He said turning back to me.

I could feel his stare and my heart stuttered. I could almost feel the gears in his mind turning, trying to figure me out.

He couldn’t know. I’d never met him!

And then it happened. Why was I so stubborn?

“I do know you.” King Yesef said.

“I’m sorry but we’ve never met,” I said.

“Yes but I’ve seen you. At an Annual Magik Ball.” He said.

“At what?” Aaron asked.

“You do not know, do you?” he asked turning to Aaron.

“What don’t I know?” Aaron asked.

“Aaron, remember when I told you my parents weren’t lawyers?”  
I asked and he nodded.

“Well, you’re in the presence of the Anglican-Faerietopian  
Queen, Ashley Grey.” King Yesef said.

“A what?” Aaron stuttered.

“I had to keep you safe,” I said.

“What’s Angelica-Faerietopia?” he asked.

“I’ll explain everything. Just not here.” I said and he understood.

## Chapter 24

“I don’t think you’re a good influence on my grandson.” King Yesef said.

“You don’t get to decide anything about my life Grandfather,” Aaron said.

“I do not want a Queen that runs away from responsibility near my grandson.” He said.

“And what makes you think I ran away from that responsibility?” I asked.

“Poor Lord Green has been out of his mind trying to clean up your mess. He has been trying to mend relationships with the countries your parents neglected.” He said.

“It’s Cecil. His title was revoked for treason.” I said fuming, he was not a Lord. He had no right to pretend to be a savior when he killed the king and queen.

“Treason? That man is the only thing keeping your kingdom together. You should be grateful.” He said.

“The only reason the kingdom is still together is because we’re alive. I don’t think anyone knows that if the royal family dies, the entire race of angels ends. Until recently we weren’t privy of this. We wouldn’t be alive if we were in Angelica. Cecil Green murdered the King and Queen of Angelica and Faerietopia. And was apparently planning to kill us, the last living heirs and plans on ending all of Magik and maybe even this world.” I said.

"The king and queen died in an accident." He said.

"That's what Cecil wants everyone to think. I thought by now everyone would know the truth." I mumbled, "The President himself said so." I said.

"What are you two talking about?" Aaron asked this time. I could feel him tensing up. I should've explained everything to him beforehand. I was an idiot.

"I was there when Cecil killed King Micah and Queen Naomi. And tried to kill us. And took my brother from me. Your highness. Before you start accusing me of not caring about my subjects, you should know the whole story. My people are safe as long as I am." I said.

"But Lord Green." He started.

"She said he wasn't a Lord." Aaron thundered.

"Respect your elders, boy! I should've known letting you grow up with your mother was the wrong decision." King Yesef said.

"I was happy until you came along!" Aaron said, "Let's go Ash." He said and I got up.

"I hope you don't believe anything Cecil tells you," I said as I left.

Aaron hadn't said a word since he stormed out of the room. We rushed into the car and he punched the steering wheel in frustration.

"Are you okay?" I asked softly.

"Why?" his voice broke.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“I didn’t want you to get hurt,” I said.

“How did you expect to keep it from me if you knew my grandfather?” he asked.

“Well. I’d never met him. I wasn’t sure he knew me but I made excuses. So many excuses. I’m dangerous.” I said.

“You keep saying that.” He said.

“Let’s go home and I’ll tell you all I can. I don’t think I can tell you everything.” I said.

“Tell me what you feel comfortable with.” He said as he started the car.

“I’m sorry that I caused a fight between you and your grandfather.” I apologized.

“You didn’t. I can’t bear being in the same room as him. Especially since he keeps pressuring me.” He said.

“What do you mean?” I ask.

“He wants me to accept my place as his rightful heir. It should be my mother but he disowned her.” Aaron said bitterly.

“Follow your heart. I remember when I was little, I asked my father if I had to take over after him. He said it was what people expected of me. But he told me to forget about it. If I didn’t want to, he had made sure I had a way out. We also have a democratic government. We work hand in hand. That’s why I’m so shocked. Cecil shouldn’t have this much effect on people.” I said.

“So you can choose to walk away?” he asked.

"I can. But I won't. My people matter to me. We're basically hiding out. No one would let us go back until we are sure we can face that bastard. He was a close friend of my father. He..." I choked up.

"I'm sorry." He said.

"Anyways. If you feel committed to your people, you should take the throne. A ruler should feel passionate about his subjects. Putting your people before you. That should be instinctual." I said.

"You know, you give really good advice." He smiled for the first time since we left that room.

We were silent after that. When we reached the campus, we quietly made our way to our room.

When we got in, I locked the door and sealed magical travel so we didn't get interrupted.

"Well, let's start with the basic. I'm not human." I said.

"Kind of guessed it. Angelican, Faerietopian..." He said.

"Yeah. My father was the King of Angelica, the Kingdom of Angels. My mother was the Queen of Faerietopia, Faerie Kingdom. I'm half angel-half Faerie. As kids, we grew up in both the world. We can magically teleport, fly and there are magical gates for travel. Cecil, a friend of my father killed them. It was the day after Ashton and my birthday. We didn't know what to do. One minute we were having breakfast, and then Cecil comes in. We never expected it. He just shot a spurt of magic towards my parents. And they dropped dead." I said in a monotonous voice.

## Ashmita Ghosh

The memories haunted me. I couldn't take it. I knew I'd break. But I couldn't. Not right now.

"Then he attacked us. Ashton shielded us. He... he left us too." I said choking up.

"What do you mean?" Aaron asked.

"You know the journal I carry everywhere?" I asked and he nodded.

"That's my Toon. That's Ashton. Metamorphosis. It's an illegal form of magic. Cecil meant to kill us but somehow, he turned Ashton into a journal. Even he didn't know why his magic redirected." I said.

"That makes so much more sense. I mean, your whole family is attached to the journal." He said.

"And then, I gave up. They told me they would kill everyone if we didn't do what they said, and at that point, we weren't aware that if he killed us, angels would become extinct. Our guards had turned on us. Only Ivan hadn't, he told us of Cecil's plan and told us running was the only way to save our people. Cecil was a Dark One. Dark Ones were this awful race of magical creatures. They caused terror. My father was the one who ended their race. They tried to kill Mama when she first made a public appearance as the Queen of Angelica. It infuriated my father. He hunted them down. And the last of them killed him and Mama. I didn't know about my father's past with them." I said.

"I'm sorry." He said.

## Dear Toon

"I did as they asked. For my people. I forgot what my mother taught me. Mama said I should be strong no matter how awful the situation was. I buckled. I did as they asked. If Ivan hadn't helped us. I'd have gone through with it. They would eventually have found a way to kill us. Then kill Angelica, Faerietopia, Mythica, Mermaidia and finally Earth. I didn't know that our death meant the death of our people. I thought I could somehow protect them." I said.

"You could've trusted me." He said.

"I trust you. I do. But they're after me. I didn't want you to fall victim in my war. I don't want you involved in this." I said.

"I love you. I'm not going anywhere. I'm right here. I'm in the middle of it." He said.

## **Chapter 25**

“So you know,” Zander said as we sat down for breakfast.

“Yeah. She told me yesterday.” Aaron said.

“Thank god. Now we don’t have to make excuses every time need to practice. We can just tell you.” Zafi said.

“Wait, these two know?” Aaron asked pointing at Candice and Theo.

“Yeah. I think all countries have a representative on the Magik Council. Since Daddy is the President, he is a part of the council. And most of the royals know.” Candy said.

Candice Shepard was President Kevin Shepard’s only daughter. She had been attending this school since her freshman year. Most students here were kids of famous people, government officials, royals and other important people. So it was easier for her here since people weren’t weird around her.

“So like twenty percent of the school’s population knew my girlfriend wasn’t human before I did!” Aaron laughed.

“Hey!” I said slapping his chest.

“You know I love you.” He said kissing me.

When we pulled back I could feel someone stare at me.

I looked around and saw a few girls glare at me. I was actually a little scared of the look I saw in Tasha’s eyes.

## Dear Toon

I chose to ignore them all and immersed myself in our group.

I wondered if Aaron still hung out with his old friends. I mean he should even though I wanted him around.

After breakfast, we headed to class. I had a little chat with Quinn for a while before the other teachers arrived and then settled in the back with Aaron.

“Today I want you all to write about something that ugly- war, hate, fear or cruelty- but find the beauty in it.” She said after everyone settled.

I decided to write about fear. In some ways, fear made our identity more solid. Fear encourages us to face the fact we aren’t invincible, that we are vulnerable. Fear teaches us about our weakness. Overcoming weakness makes us stronger.

Truthfully, there was no one in this world that was fearless, and it was how one faced their fear, that showed their bravery.

By the time I was done with the essay, it was about a thousand words long.

I handed it to Quinn and waited for the class to get over. I still had about half an hour so I pulled Toon out of my bag.

I saw Aaron’s eyes go to Toon and he smiled.

“Tell him I said hi.” He whispered.

***Dear LoonyToon,***

***Hey! You have no idea how amazing the last few days have been.***

## Ashmita Ghosh

*So, as I told you, Aaron and I started dating a while back and it's amazing.*

*Yesterday, I met his grandfather and he found out what I was. I should've known it'd come out. I just wasn't sure if King Yosef had ever seen me. I didn't want him to find out quite yet.*

*We're just in such a phase in our journey.*

*I accidentally told him I loved him. And he loves me too. I know you don't want to listen to this but I feel like I'm supposed to tell you... you're my Toon. Just because I have him in my life now, doesn't mean you mean any less to me.*

*I didn't feel anything like this for David. It's so new. Do you feel this way about Viola?*

*Anyways.*

*We saw that stupid Mermaid interviewer Alana, she kind of pissed me off. She told us where to find the mermaid who was turned into a pen.*

*We know where he is but we cannot go yet. I'm so sorry.*

*We've been asked to master transfiguration so we can change our appearance so we didn't get recognized and learn to change inanimate objects.*

*It's a little time consuming but Hey we're making progress.*

*We changed the color of a carpet yesterday, which is amazing!*

*I mean we can teleport but changing the properties of an object, I'd never imagined I could do that!*

Dear Toon

*I never realized what it felt like to not be able to do magic. You and I always learned magic naturally but let me tell you, Transfiguration sucks.*

*Anyways. As soon as we can change the way we look, we will be on our way.*

*So I was thinking of a proposal for our people. Instead of me being the sole ruler of both the kingdoms because I'm like ten minutes older than you, we all rule together. Both Faerietopia and Angelica. Especially since Aunt Nat doesn't want to.*

*We'll talk about this when you get back.*

*I love our people. And I want to be their leader but I want all of you next to me. United we stand, divided we fall.*

*Anyways. The bell just rang!*

*I love you*

*Your Sister*

*CrazyLey*

*PS. Aaron said hi!*

“You ready to go to the next class?” Aaron asked as I put Toon in my bag.

“Yeah. Let’s go.” I said.

The rest of the day went on smoothly. During Art, there was an announcement about a Christmas Masquerade.

I remember all the parties back home, I wasn’t a fan of parties but these balls always had so many people. I usually loved to

## Ashmita Ghosh

spend time with my human friends. I felt like humans treated me more normally than the others.

Especially Angels and Fairies. That is why we didn't have any friends at school.

We were sitting in Aaron and I's room and trying out Transfiguration again.

It wasn't easy even though we'd done this before.

Aaron looked at us with wonder in his eyes.

I thought about Aaron. He was taking all of this so well. He just found out that I wasn't human yesterday and right now, he was watching me do magic. I thought it would hit him harder.

When I first met him, he seemed like a crass player but it was all a façade. He was nothing if not kind and understanding.

I fell for him. I fell for him hard.

Suddenly I heard three gasps.

"What?" I said opening my eyes.

"You... you're glowing." Zafi stuttered.

"And wings... you have beautiful wings." Aaron said with wide eyes.

"She's always had wings," Zander said.

"Aeris in speculum translucent, cogita anima mea." I said and a mirror appeared in front of me.

I was glowing. My eyes seemed to shimmer. It literally glittered. And my hair shined with such brightness! And it was blue. My jaw seemed more prominent and my nose seemed to be in better shape, my lips were fuller.

"I transfigured," I said.

"Into your glory." Zander gasped.

"I attained glory!" I said.

"What is glory?" Aaron asked.

"It is a form only some angels can attain. It is the when an angel is at its strongest. If you can do this, if you find what triggered it, we may just have a chance. We might not need to transfigure. We should learn to attain glory." Zafira said.

"Zafi, Zan, I think we should do both. We need to go in incognito. People can't recognize us when we go there." I said.

"How did you do it? What were you focusing on?" Zafi asked and I blushed.

Aaron. Love.

My love for Aaron had made me attain glory...

## Chapter 26

“You’re wearing the pendant.” He smiled picking up the snowflake pendant with the letter A at the center.

“I told you I’d wear it,” I said.

“You look hot with my necklace on you.” He smirked.

“You change from sweet to cocky in a matter of seconds,” I say.

“Which do you like better?” he asked.

“I love all of you,” I said kissing him.

After a few seconds, he pulled away.

“Don’t we have a party to go to?” he asked.

“Do I have to?” I groaned.

“You’re the one who suggested that I hang out with my old friends. So you have to bear them too. I don’t really like them.

Theo was the only real friend I had there. I’d like to distance myself from them. They’re annoying and immature.” He said.

“Well. I said I didn’t want you to stop talking to your friends for me. No one’s forcing you to do anything.” I said.

“I’m going to keep my distance but thought maybe we all could spend Christmas Eve at the party.” He said.

“Sure. The last high school party I went to didn’t go well.” I said remembering that night.

“We did makeup.” He said nibbling on my lower lip. Damn. Didn’t his neck hurt?

I stood on my tip toes stretching to make it easier for him.

After some time we pulled back.

“We should get ready.” I gasped.

“Yeah. That seems like a good idea.” He said and set me down as I unwrapped my legs from around his weight.

I got into a blue insect print high-low dress with lacy cutoffs near my midriff.

I quickly slipped on my striped pumps.

After pulling my hair up in a ponytail I walked out of my closet. Aaron wasn’t out of his yet so I knocked on his door.

“Come on in.” his voice called out.

“Can you help me?” I asked.

“Sure. You’re ready? Aren’t most girls supposed to take long to get dressed?” he asked.

“I’m not most girls. And you always take longer to get dressed.” I said.

“Yeah, yeah. It takes time to attain this perfection. You probably use magic. Doing the hair takes long.” He smirked.

“Oh please! And just so you know, I don’t use magic for everything.” I defended.

“I know.” He said walking over to me and kissing me.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Wait,” I said.

“What?” he asked.

“You’ve got some lipstick on.” I laughed wiping it clean.

“It’s like every time you wear lipstick, I’m wearing it too.” He shook his head.

“At least it’s not always. I don’t dress up all that much.” I said.

“You look beautiful in everything.” He said.

“You’re too cheesy!” I said.

“Yeah, whatever. Let’s leave Cookie.” He said.

## Chapter 27

“Ivan called.” Zander rushed over to me, pulling me out of the loud party.

“And?” Zafira said joining us. I looked back to see Aaron and Theo approach us.

“Slaughter!” he said barely able to contain his tears.

“What?” Candy asked joining us.

“Dude. Let’s go to the room.” Aaron said and they led Zan out as we followed.

“What do you mean by slaughter?” I asked as soon as we were in our room which was on the same floor as the party.

“Cecil slaughtered thousands of people. There was a meetup, there were angels, fairies, humans, vampires, wolves and mermaids present. He blew the place up. He’s not waiting to kill us anymore. He’s started his destruction.” Zan slurred.

Things were so screwed up!

“He told me Vikia Square was destroyed.” He said.

Vikia Square was beautiful!

We sat there looking at each other in silence. After sometime Candice and Theo left.

“Can we crash here tonight?” Zander’s voice broke.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Of course man,” Aaron said.

“Thanks,” Zafira said.

“I’ll take the couch.” He said.

“Oh no. You can... you can take our room.” She said.

“Thanks,” Aaron said.

She handed him the keys and he walked to the door.

I jumped up and ran towards him.

“Wait,” I called out.

“Are you all right? Tonight was stressful,” he asked.

“Yeah. I’m sorry you have to go through all of this. The last week has been perfect. But I have a feeling things are about to crash and burn.” I said.

“I’m here no matter what. And when you’re ready to talk, you can tell me anything.” He said.

“Thank you for being so understanding,” I said.

“I love you.” He said.

“I love you too,” I said wrapping my arms around his neck kissing him putting all my feelings into the kiss.

I was terrified of what was to come. But I knew we were almost ready.

I snuggled closer to the brother and sister.

I remembered what happened last night. My people needed me.

I sat up on the bed and looked at my siblings. Those two were still asleep, absolutely peaceful.

I decided to let them sleep a little longer and changed into some sweats. I made my way to Zafi and Zander's room.

"Aaron," I called out as I entered the room.

He was asleep on the bed. He looked so cute! Usually, he woke up before I did. It was surprising to see him asleep this late.

I walked over to the bed and sat at the corner.

"Aaron," I whispered.

"Ashley?" he mumbled.

"Wake up," I said.

"Merry Christmas." He said in a muffled voice.

"Merry Christmas," I said leaning down to kiss him.

He pulled me on top of him and kissed me ferociously leaving me breathless.

"Best Christmas ever. I have a present for you." He said.

"But I said no gifts." I protested.

"I know. But I had to get it." He said.

"Well, then I think we're even. I've got something for you too." I said.

"No gifts thing was your idea." He said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

"I had Aunt Nat get something from home that I wanted to give you," I said.

"Are your siblings still asleep?" he asked.

"Yeah. They've been through a lot. I thought I'd let them rest." I said.

"How about I make you breakfast?" he asked.

"That would be amazing," I said.

Aaron was a great chef. I couldn't cook anything without bringing everything down.

"Pancakes?" he asked looking at the pantry drawers in Zander and Zafira's room.

"Do none of you stack up on food?" he asked.

"Nope. We have no idea how to cook. That's why the cafeteria exists." I said.

"Well, I'll go get the batter and your gift." He said.

"I have yours right here." I smiled.

Aaron returned within ten minutes and made stacks of pancakes. It was delicious.

"I might keep you around forever. You're a better chef than the entire Royal Kitchen!" I moaned.

"You only love me for my culinary skills?" He pouted.

"Is that a bad thing?" I joked kissing him.

“I guess not.” He said.

After finishing our wonderful breakfast we sat on the sofa and exchanged the gifts.

I excitedly ripped the wrapper open and pulled out the box.

There was a beautiful scrapbook. It wasn’t a simple scrapbook. There were holographic images, pop out quotes, audio recording, small clips of us, Polaroid of us. It was so sweet.

“I love it!” I flung my arms around him.

“Zafi kinda helped me with the holographic images, we humans don’t really have that. And she helped me decorate it. There are small pressure detectors on each page which sense when you open the page and the clips play in a particular order.

I flipped through the pages noticed only a few pages were filled.

“Um... most of it is empty,” I said.

“Open that envelope.” He prompted.

I opened the envelope and pulled out the papers.

Two tickets to London.

“What?” I asked.

“You said you’ve never really been anywhere outside those stuffy meetings and parties so I got us tickets to London and then we can go around Europe.” He said and I smiled.

“This is too much but it’s amazing!” I said.

“I’m glad you like it.” He said opening his own present.

## Ashmita Ghosh

He looked at the glowing stone as the colors kept changing.

“What?” he asked.

“Defensiva Lapis,” I said.

“What’s that?” he asked.

“It’s a stone that protects people. It’s directly mined from the cavern to heaven. Yes, a cave that leads to heaven. Mamma gave this to me when I was six. She said that it would always protect its holder. She gave me another a few years later but this was always special to me. I’d actually lost it in the Faerie Palace. Aunt Nat found it recently and I asked her to bring it here the last time she was here.” I said.

“What does it exactly do?” he asked.

“Well, it can guide you to wherever you want to go and it kind of has the ability to put a force field around you. It turns black when it senses darkness.” I said.

“Wow. This is amazing. My first magical item.” He said excitedly.

We spent some more time just hanging around watching some TV before deciding to go to our room.

Just as we reached our floor, I got a text from Uncle Marc asking us to meet him in his office.

I walked in our room to find my siblings still asleep.

I walked over to them and shook Zander awake, it was harder to wake Zafi.

I handed Zan some aspirin to help with his hangover.

It took about half an hour to wake Zafi up and they left to get ready.

“You want to join us?” I asked him as I grabbed everyone’s presents.

“Need help with that?” he asked grabbing a few of mine presents and his own.

We made our way to Uncle Marc’s office and knocked.

When the door opened, Aunt Nat greeted me.

“Darling! Merry Christmas!” She said pulling me in.

We all settled down in the office waiting for the others to arrive, Candy and Theo too.

“So you’re Ash’s boyfriend.” Aunt Nat said looking at Aaron. It was the first time she was meeting him.

“Pleasure to meet you. Ash has told me so much about you.” He said smiling politely.

She seemed a little hesitant to like him, even though she clearly did. It was probably due to David.

When everyone was there, we exchanged gifts, magical, human and what not. It was fun spending time with my family.

“So we are going to the masquerade tonight,” Zafira said.

“Really? With all, that’s going on?” I asked.

“It’s a great distraction.” She said.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“What about practicing. We don’t have that much time left.”  
Zander said.

“We’ll practice until we head to the ball.” She said.

“I think she has a point.” Aunt Natalie said.

“You have some time to have a final moment of peace.” Uncle Marc said.

Final moment of peace.

# Chapter 28

*Dear LoonyToon,*

**Ashton.** I have so much to tell you!

There was an attack in Angelica. It was awful. I couldn't believe it. It was so scary. I know we don't have much time left.

I have decided to head to Faerietopia this week. Zafira and Zander are still working on transfiguration but I think I can do it. I am finally able to concentrate.

I will go alone.

This morning after we exchanged gifts, I was able to change my eye color, my hair. It's working.

I can hold it without any problem but it's the *getting into the costume* part. But with some concentration, I can.

Truthfully, it is thinking of Aaron that helps me concentrate. He is like my stationary boulder.

I'm going to visit Winch Wolwond, get some answers.

It's just infuriating. We have to go through so much. I cannot believe that our fates could be so screwed up!

But I have decided that the best way to face this is to be strong. Letting my fears make me stronger. My fears still haunt me at night sometimes. That day still makes me cringe but it made me stronger. I am a better person.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

**I tried again. I didn't tell the others. I've been trying every day.  
Can you feel it?**

**It's like I can reach you but I can't. It's like when you're stuck in  
a glass box, you can see the person, but can't touch them.**

**I just hope you hold on. Don't give up hope.**

**I love you.**

***Your Sister***

***CrazyLey***

**PS. Merry Christmas**

After some deep thought, I sat in front of the mirror and started changing my appearance.

Before I knew it, I had donned my mother's face and gasped.

I looked exactly like her. I didn't copy her face, that was metamorphosis, I just changed a few features and I looked like mom. I never understood why people said I looked like mama, I always thought resembled dad but I could see it now. Just by changing my hair and eyes...

I whirled around when I heard a gasp.

Zafira and Candice were standing at the door with their mouth hanging open.

"You look like her," Zafira said shocked and I reverted back to myself.

"You learned how to transfigure?" Candice asked in awe.

## Dear Toon

“Yeah, I think I’m ready to go to Faerietopia,” I said.

“But Zan and I aren’t.” she said.

“You’re not going. You two will stay here. I will go. It will be less noticeable too. I can look like a different person and talk to Winch Wolwond.” I said.

“You can’t go alone.” She argued as the door opened again.

“Go where?” Zander asked as he entered the room.

“I’m leaving for Faerietopia soon,” I said.

“What?” Aaron said shocked.

“I have to. No offense but Zander, you and Zafi aren’t ready yet. I need to know how to help Toon.” I said.

“You can’t go alone!” he argued.

“You’d be recognized,” I said.

“But you need backup,” Zafi said.

“Maybe Theo or I could come with you.” Candy suggested.

“No. Even you could get recognized if we were to run into someone from the Faerie Court.” I said.

“I’m coming. You can’t change my mind. No one would recognize me.” Aaron said.

“But, it’s dangerous,” I argued.

“I don’t think I’d be able to sit around wondering if you were alive. I love you.” He said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“You can’t go alone. Maybe you should take Aaron with you.” Zafi said.

“Zaf. He’s human. He’d be in danger.” Zander said.

“I’m sure I’d be able to cope. If things go according to whatever you’ve planned nothing bad will happen and if they don’t, then I’d be with Ash.” He said.

“We’ll talk about this later. We do have a party to attend.” I said changing the subject.

“There’s nothing to talk about. I’m coming. And we should get dressed.” He said.

“You guys sure you want to go to the party?” Theo asked.

“Yes. Now. Boys out of the room.” Zafi said.

“Um, all our clothes are own rooms. Can’t all of us just meet up?” Candice said.

“No!” she protested.

“I’ll pick you up from your room.” Theo smiled at her.

“But we should...” she started to say but Zander dragged her out the room before she could even finish the sentence.

I dropped down to the bed as soon as they all left.

Aaron came and sat next to me putting his arm around me.

“You okay?” he asked.

“You know you don’t have to come with me,” I said.

"Like I said, you don't have a choice." He said pointedly.

"I love you," I replied.

"I love you so much. If we don't start getting dressed we'll be late." He said.

"You seem more excited about the masquerade than my sister," I said.

"Well, I get to show my girl off to the world." He smirked.

I shook my head at him and got up.

As I started to walk away Aaron pulled me back into his arms.

"I'll always be there for you." He said and finally let me go.

"Hurry up." He called out.

"As I remember it's you who takes longer to get dressed," I said.

"Is that a challenge?" he asked.

"Maybe..." I smiled forgetting about all my troubles. He had that effect on me. He made me happy.

"Challenge accepted." He boomed and I burst out laughing. He introduced me to this television show called *How I Met Your Mother* and the way he said that reminded me of the Barney character.

The ending, the very last episode was disappointing. I hated the plot twist and I thought it was unnecessary.

I walked into my closet and took all my things to the bathroom, Aaron was changing in the room.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

I put on the beautiful white dress, the front covered in actual Swarovski crystals and the back was just a single like a strand of threads in the middle and the rest of it was transparent, the dress had cap sleeves covered in crystals.

The tulle skirt was basically covered with silver leaves.

I curled my hair which took some time which made the fact I lost the bet obviously.

I kept my makeup minimal, black eyeliner, mascara, and red lipstick. Pulling my hair in a half-up-half-down hairstyle and the curls cascaded around my face.

I put on the four-inch long white pumps and looked at myself in the mirror picking up my black mask and tying the ribbons.

With one final look at myself, I opened the bathroom door and came face to face with my boyfriend whose jaw dropped and he gaped at me.

## Chapter 29

"Hey" I said walking to him.

"You look... You look stunning." He said.

"You look debonair," I said.

He pulled me close and kissed me. Every time our lips touched my whole body burnt up with desire. I wanted to go further than this... I was ready to be with him in every sense of the world.

"So... Are you ready to go?" I whispered into his ears trying to play off the effect he had on me.

"Can we stay?" he groaned out.

I had to admit that I almost decided to say fuck it to the masquerade but I knew this was important to my sister and with all this shit going on she needed it.

"We have to go," I said.

"But I am enjoying this." He mumbled.

"So am I, baby, so am I," I said.

He pulled back and smiled at me.

"I like it when you call me baby." He said kissing me.

"Doesn't it hurt your neck bending down so much to kiss me?" I asked.

"Really?" he asked pulling back laughing.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“What!” I exclaimed.

“You have the really bad timing to make your silly comments. It’s endearing!” he said kissing me again.

“I do not make silly comments!” I pouted.

“It’s adorable!” he said nuzzling me.

Our little moment was destroyed when there was a loud knock on the door and I jumped away from him blushing.

I rushed over to the door and took a deep breath before opening it.

“Ready to go?” my brother asked looking away from me.

“What are you doing here?” I ask as Aaron joins me outside and we shut our door.

“Zafi sent me. She wanted me to make sure you two didn’t get... carried away... That you actually attended the party. Aaron, you have lipstick on your face.” He said blushing profusely.

“Hey man!” Aaron said smirking and I narrowed my eyes at him.

“Let’s go,” Zander said glaring at him and stalked away.

“Do you think he’s going to kill me?” he asked.

“I don’t know. If you don’t keep your smirk in control, I just might. You better clean up real quick.” I said pecking him and magically reorganized myself.

Just as we were about to enter the huge ballroom, which I’d never been in, I put on the mask.

"It's my first human masquerade!" I whisper to Aaron.

"Well, let's ensure it's the best damn masquerade ever." He said kissing me right behind the ear, nipping on my earlobe.

The whole room was lit up with Faerie lights and the smell of the beautiful Christmas tree decorated with white lights and a star on top.

This was the first time we'd seen Christmas on a full scale. My family did celebrate Christmas but it wasn't anything grand. We usually had a nice family dinner and exchanged gifts.

I gaped at the room, which looked like a winter wonderland with the fake snow and white décor. There were some red flowers here and there and mistletoes hanging everywhere.

"This is gorgeous!" I said in awe.

"Aren't you used to these things?" Aaron asked.

"Never been to a Christmas party. We usually just have the union balls. They're fun, everyone's usually there. But I never stick around. Show up, meet and greet and sneak out." I said.

"You don't like parties?" he asked.

"I'm not the best party person. Not really social." I said.

"An antisocial princess." He laughed.

I looked around to see my brother had long since left and searched for everyone. I could see Zafi and Theo on the dance floor and Zander talking to Candy in a corner talking.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

Zafi was wearing a beautiful white lace dress with some ruffles on one side. She looked gorgeous, so beautiful that she reminded me of our mother.

“Wanna dance?” Aaron whispers into my ears leading me to the dance floor.

“I love this song.” I groaned as ‘*All About Us*’ by He Is We came on.

His hand wrapped around my waist pulling me close and I put my arms around his shoulder putting my cheek on his shoulder as we sway to the music.

As the song changes he spins me out surprising me and I giggle.

I place my hand on his chest to steady myself as he pulled me back in.

In his arms I was content, I was safe and I knew soon, things were about to be shaken.

We spent hours wrapped up in each other, spending time with our friends, some of his friends joined us too. After dinner, the two of us sat at a corner in the hall watching as people flitted around the room dancing.

“There are things I haven’t told you yet,” I mumbled into his chest.

“Whatever it is, I’m going to stick by your side.” He said pulling my chin up “There is nothing in this world that can make me love you any less.”

“I love you. I didn’t know love could be this strong.” I said.

## Dear Toon

"I have no idea how I fell in so deep so fast. But I'm so damn glad that I did. I can't imagine a life without you." He said.

"Show me. Show me how much you love me. Make me yours." I whispered and his breath hitched.

His lips found mine and he pulled me on his lap where I was met with a hard welcome.

"Let's go back to the room." I breathed out nibbling on his lower lip and stood up offering him my hand and pulling him out the doors not looking back to see if my siblings or uncle saw.

We rushed to our building and ran up the stairs not wanting to wait for the elevator.

We were panting when we were at our door but too keyed up to care.

## Chapter 30

I sat at the kitchen table as Aaron plated a stack of pancakes covering them with syrup.

“This is heavenly!” I moaned out taking a bite.

“Not as heavenly as you.” He said kissing me. He was so cheesy sometimes.

“Are you sure you want to come with me when I go back to Faerietopia?” I asked.

“Yes. It’ll be fun. I’ll get to see where you grew up, find out more about you. Get some time off school.” He smirked.

“You don’t have to...” I protested.

“I want to.” He said firmly kissing me.

“Fine. But I need to tell you something first. It’s obvious you’ll find out when we get there but I want to be the one to tell you.” I said.

“Okay. What is it? You kinda have me worried.” He said.

“It’s about my ex,” I said nervously.

“What about him?” Aaron asked just as there was a knock on the door “Hold on a sec. I’ll see who it is.”

I slumped in my seat as Aaron went to open the door.

“Hello.” I heard Aaron say and the reply made my heart stop.

A voice I recognized all too well. A voice I never wanted to hear again.

"I'm looking for Ashley Grey. I'm her fiancé, David Green. You are?" he said as I rushed to the front door.

Aaron turned to me with an expression that broke my heart.

"Fiancé?" He asked.

"He's not my fiancé. I can explain." I said begging him to look at me.

"I'm afraid we don't have time for that princess. Your presence is required. Now where are those two brats?" David said pushing past Aaron to the room.

"I see you've been busy in my absence." He said turning to me and grazing his nail across my cheek.

"Don't touch me." I hissed.

"Ah. But we were to be wed, my dear. I have every right to touch you. If anything this man deserves to die for touching what's mine." He said looking over at Aaron with disgust.

I'd never seen David in this light. He'd never been mean or vindictive. Even when he stood by his father as he committed crime after crime he wasn't vindictive. But I could see beyond his charm for the first time.

"I'm not coming with you," I said.

"But you have to. Or else I will kill the pretty boy over here." He said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Don’t you dare touch him,” I growled.

“Touchy aren’t we?” he said.

“How did you find me?” I asked.

“Well, nothing my charm can’t do.” He laughed.

“So Cecil knows where I am?” I asked.

“Father doesn’t really care for you as long as you’re dead. But I’d like to make you my bride. He disagrees. But he’ll let me keep you as mine as long as I kill those brats. And don’t worry about your pesky human friends. Father doesn’t know where you are. Just that I’ve come to claim what’s mine. I’ll let these humans die with the rest. We have angels to turn into dark ones. When I ascend as your king, your people become mine and my dark blood will turn theirs to poison. And eventually, if my father decides to kill you, there would be no trace of angels left. We’ll conquer earth later, but I wouldn’t mind ending this boy right now. No one touches what’s mine.” David said.

“Rot in hell.” I spat just as he launched an attack at Aaron.

A gust of black wind scurried him and I ran to stand in the way.

I was a little too late but surprisingly the coat of darkness passed right by him.

“What?” David asked confused, letting his guard down for just a second.

And I did something I’d never done before. Something unfathomable.

I choked him to death with my magic.

## Dear Toon

The color drained out of his face as he dropped to the ground falling face first.

I staggered back trying to breathe but I couldn't intake any breathe. I looked across the room where Aaron stood looking at me with wide eyes.

"You... You killed a man." He said.

I killed a man. A man I thought I once loved. A man who destroyed my family.

I took a deep breath and straightened myself.

"Yes. That was Cecil's son." I said.

"Your ex is the son of the man who killed your parents?" he asked finally walking towards me.

"I was just about to tell you," I said.

"I figured. You did bring him up. What did he mean when he said you were his fiancé?" he asked.

"Well, until the day Cecil killed my parents, we were on pretty good terms. I thought I actually liked him. That day he changed. He stood by his father as my parents died and he stood there. His father attacked us and he just stood there.

He threatened to kill all of our people if I didn't marry him. That's why I agreed. I've told you that people of our kingdom are connected to us. And that killing us would kill them and making him king would connect him to our people. And his poisoned blood would poison them. I didn't know that when I agreed to their little deal. Ivan convinced us to run, he told us about the

## Ashmita Ghosh

blood ties and told us we had to protect our people from them. We ran that night. Right before the wedding we ran. I was done listening to them.

I decided to fight back. I came up with a theory. If we could converge the four of our powers we could kill Cecil and free our people. We went to Aunt Nat who sent us here hoping we wouldn't be found. But he did find us." I said.

"Hey. He said Cecil didn't know." Aaron said.

"I don't know if we can trust him. I'm going to have to find another place for my siblings to stay while I'm away." I said.

"I know where they can stay. My family would love to accommodate them." He said.

"You don't have to. They can stay with Candy's dad." I said but I knew that would be the first place Cecil looked.

"You and I both know it's not safe enough. No one will suspect them. Especially since your ex is dead." He said.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you. You must hate me. I wasn't ready to tell people how stupid and naïve I was when I trusted him. I haven't discussed David's role in all of this with anyone. They know but I find it hard to talk about. I just feel so stupid!" I said.

"I love you. When are you going to get that through your skull? I'm never going to hate you. Now let's tell the others the good news." He said.

"I guess we use our tickets to London earlier than expected," I said.

## Dear Toon

“I have an untraceable private jet, it’d be safer. We’re using the tickets when we go on our Europe trip.” He kissing me and I felt like I could finally breathe.

“How did I not get hurt, though? Was that you?” he asked.

“No. I thought I was going to lose you.” I said just as a thought came to me “Do you have that stone I gave you yesterday?” I asked.

“Of course.” He said pulling it out of his pocket.

“It protected you from him,” I said.

“Now that is the coolest gift ever.” He said kissing me.

# Chapter 31

*Dear LoonyToon,*

*Hey! So we're currently flying to London so Zaf and Zan can stay with Aaron's family. When Uncle Kevin found out about David being at the school he freaked out and demanded Candy went home.*

*After some convincing he finally allowed her to come with us. Theo, of course, wasn't ready to leave Zafira's side. Uncle Marc was going to manage everything there.*

*I was still reeling with the fact that I killed a person. Granted he was evil and I probably saved more lives than I took but it still bothered me. I don't want to play god.*

*But honestly, I think I part of me is relieved. A part of me was afraid that in the end, I'd end up giving in and marry him. I don't want to marry someone like him. And truthfully for the good of our people, I would've. What if I blindly agree to something which blows up in my face?*

*I wish you were here to guide me. There are so many things you're missing. I wish you were okay.*

*But don't worry. Aaron and I are going to go to Faerietopia and find Winch Wolwond. I'm positive he'll help us. He must. We'll head to a secluded area in the Royal City where we'd get a carriage and hover to Berri Venchika.*

*When I told the others David found us you should've seen their faces. Zafi was horrified. Zander looked like he was ready to kill someone.*

*I'm afraid that when we face Cecil, we'd have to kill him and I'm not sure I can do that.*

*At least by then you'd be here.*

*I'm hoping it's a simple spell, but deep down I know it's going to be more complicated than that.*

*Oh and we took David's phone to keep tabs on his texts and emails. I'm quite interested in knowing how he found us, was it someone at the school? Who did they report to? Was he lying about Cecil not knowing?*

*I should chill out a bit shouldn't I?*

*I'm also freaking out a little about meeting Aaron's family. I know he's close to his parents, especially his mom. What if they don't like me?*

*I know it's a silly thing to worry about in the midst of all of this but I am so damn nervous.*

*I'm putting their son's life in danger. They have every right to hate me. But I hope they like me. I love Aaron and I don't want him to be in an uncomfortable position.*

*Why am I bothering you with all this shit?*

*Anyways, while we're gone, you're going to be with Viola. We thought you might like that.*

## Ashmita Ghosh

*Also, Aaron's birthday is coming up in a few days, five to be exact and I don't know what to get him. Buying you gifts is easy, just get you something off of Witch Weekly. You love that shit.*

*I don't know what to get Aaron. I was thinking that if we were still in Faerietopia I could take him the Garden of Eve. That's an amazing place to visit all year long. The flowers are gorgeous and the multi-coloured apples are adorable.*

*But I was hoping the Carnival is going on. You know, this time of the year the Winter Carnival goes on in Faerietopia. I don't know if it's happening this year. I love how crazy the Faerietopia is during the apexes of seasons, Summer Circus, Spring Parade, Fall Dance and Winter Carnival. Though I've never been to a carnival, you know I spent it watching the stars.*

*I was thinking later I could take him up to the top of the tower to star gaze.*

*Anyways, I probably should buckle up, they just announced we're about to land.*

*I love you. Forever.*

**Your Sister**

**CrazyLey**

I looked out the window and sighed. I could see the city from here. We were going to land in Heathrow Airport and drive to Aaron's place from there.

I looked over at Aaron who was fast asleep. He looked so adorable with his beautiful hair all messed up.

I leaned over and slowly shook him awake informing him about our descent. My siblings and I were too keyed up to sleep and Theo had been on the phone with his mother throughout the ride. He'd been explaining what happened to her.

All the world leaders were on high alert, everyone expected something to go wrong and to some extent, they were prepared. I knew I had to stop things from getting messed up.

Most of them didn't fully apprehend the danger. Many rulers like King Yesef refused to cooperate with the representatives of other countries, which was how he didn't know of Cecil's betrayal.

Candy, on the other hand, was immersed in a sketch pad, sketching. She hadn't uttered a word since we got on the plane. She was a picture of serenity but I knew her well enough to know it was anything but true. She was scared. I knew that much.

My siblings and I were going through our attack plan for when we got Ashton back and attacked Cecil.

We were getting carried away but a fantasy made life easier.

I was pulled out of my thoughts by Aaron tugging my arm. I looked up and found him with both our suitcases.

"I can carry mine," I said.

"It's no big deal." He said.

"Aaron. My bag." I said with some authority.

"Someone's shirty today. I'm just trying to be chivalrous." He said with his hands up in the air.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“I’m capable of carrying my own things. I just hate it when people do my work. It makes me feel guilty. Like I’m using them.” I frowned.

“You’re not using me. And here, carry your bags if you want.” He said and suddenly we both started laughing at how silly we were being, well I was being silly.

“Why the bloody hell are we wasting time? Let’s go love. I can’t wait for you to meet my mum and dad.” He said.

Ah... well, time to face the music.

## Chapter 32

We stood in front of Aaron's parents' house. It was a gorgeous two story house on Kings Road in Chelsea.

I was absolutely freaking out about meeting his parents, it was like taking a huge step in our relationship.

"They're going to love you," Aaron whispered into my ears as if he sensed my thoughts.

I squeezed his hand tightly in mine taking a deep breath as he knocked on the door.

A beautiful dark haired woman opened the door and enveloped me in a hug.

I stood there limp as she hugged me before my hands wrapped around her. Something about her touch felt so maternal it almost brought tears to my eyes.

"Oh dear, it's so nice to meet you!" she said pulling back "Aaron here hasn't stopped talking about you."

"Mum!" he exclaimed and I laughed.

"I missed you too sweetheart." She said.

"Missed you too mum." He said kissing her cheek before pulling me into his arms.

"You mind proper introductions?" I sister piped in from behind us.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Mrs. Mercer,” I start to say but she interrupted me.

“It’s Emilia. No Mrs. Mercer nonsense. Do I look like an old lady?” she asked raising an eyebrow.

“Emilia, this is my sister, Zafira and that’s my brother Zander,” I said pointing to them. Zaf says hello as Zander kisses the back of Emilia’s hand and says ‘*your highness*. My brother, such a proper person.

“That’s Candice Shepard and you know Theo,” Aaron said.

Emilia ushers us in and shows us around the house. It was huge. I mean not a palace huge but huge for a home. There were two floors, plus a ground floor and a lower ground floor and a basement a sub-basement. There were five bedrooms and six bathrooms.

There were two dining rooms, a beautifully designed Roundhouse kitchen with bespoke full height bronze doors concealing a spacious walk-in pantry, a cinema room, a library, a catering kitchen, indoor swimming pool, Jacuzzi and spa, a gym, a sauna, an entire area designated for the staff.

It was gorgeous.

Finally, we settled in the beautiful garden and Emilia called over a staff member to bring us tea.

The others excused themselves settle down in the rooms given to them. My siblings were sharing a room and Theo and Candy got their own room. I offered to shack up with either Candy or my siblings but Emilia waved it off.

## Dear Toon

"You and Aaron can sleep in the same room sweetheart. No need to be shy, I was young once. I know how it goes." She laughed.

I was pretty sure I was beet red at that point, it's not every day your boyfriend's mom tells you that she's okay with you sleeping in the same bed with her son, and probably do more than that.

"You have a beautiful home," I said to her as our drinks were served.

"Thank you. I'm an interior designer. I love redecorating this place every once in a while. Just had it done this summer." She said.

"It's gorgeous," I said.

"Thank you. Please take a seat both of you. I need to discuss something important with Aaron." She said before turning to Aaron. "Aaron I'm sorry we never told you. Your father and I decided we'd wait till you were eighteen. But you're going home and you deserve to know. Pierre and I have had this discussion. I know he wanted to be here when we told you but he's in Mythica. We've been switching. When he needs to work in the human world, I go to Faerietopia, and he goes when I have work.

Your grandfather wasn't just against the fact I wasn't marrying the man he picked for me. He was mad I was marrying a Vampire. The woman you think is your grandmother is actually my step-mother. My mother died during an attack on the Faerie. Dad isn't human either. He moved to the human world after mom died. Aaron, your grandparents are Fairies." She said shocking both Aaron and me.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“What? Mum. You never said anything! I didn’t know about fairies until I met Ash I didn’t know anything about myself. I’m a faerie?” he asked shocked.

“A Vampire-Faerie, your father is the Prince of the Vampires. Son of Welma and Ivan. When Ivan saw you at Springfields, I knew we had to tell you sooner than expected. We asked him not to say anything. I’m sorry dear we didn’t tell you.” She said.

“What about the fact Grandpa is the king of Slokes? He always goes on about the fact it’s in our blood.” He said.

“Dad was the king of Slokes five hundred years ago too. His mother was the princess of Slokes. He faked his death when he fell in love with mom and moved to Faerietopia. When she died he gave away his immortality. But we still are immortal. You are too.” She said.

“I’m immortal? Wait fairies are immortal?” he said turning to me.

“Yes. All mystical creatures are. Vampires, werewolves. Theo is immortal too. I mean we get the chance to choose whether to be immortal or not. His mother decided to be a mortal wolf so she could grow old with his dad. But she will still get the Wolf of Mythica if her parents, the Alpha and Luna were to pass. May it never happen.” I said.

“You didn’t tell me.” He said hurt.

“I didn’t think it was necessary. There’s a war waging in my world. That is my foremost worry. I’m sorry but I haven’t had time to even get to that piece of information yet. I hadn’t even considered it. I mean, it’s not really necessary considering there’s a huge chance I’ll die soon.” I said

"You're not leaving me," Aaron said pulling me into his lap.

"I heard about your mother dear. It had been a while since I last saw her. You know, we were best friends. We still kept in touch, until well, she passed away. You have no idea how much power you hold. I remember when you were a baby, you short circuited the entire Angelican realm with your magic. All of you are powerful." She said.

"You knew Mama?" I asked.

I wanted to ask her how my mother was back then, if she was always the perfect queen or if she had her doubts but I knew now wasn't the time.

"Aaron dear. I'm so sorry." Emilia said.

"Wait. Did Aunt Natalie know?" I asked.

"We asked her and Ivan not to say anything just yet." She said sadly.

"Mum. I need to have some time to think all of this through. It's a lot of information to process at once. We'll see you at dinner." He said and we went to his room. I smiled politely at Emilia as I walked with Aaron.

I mouthed *It'll be alright* and she smiled sadly.

## Chapter 33

“It’s all too much to process. How could they keep that from me? How can I not know I’m a faerie? It sounds so girly!” he exclaimed.

“You have never met our palace guards, none of them are girly, not the tiniest bit. Even the female guards are the epitome of a warrior. Faerietopia is said to be the most brutal kingdom. Believe me, as a kid I did everything mama asked because I was terrified of her head of the guard, she was one scary woman. She retired when she lost her eye. How is that girly? And besides, you’re part vampire.” I asked him.

“The word is still girly.” He said and I hummed in agreement.

“But it’s cool. I know you’ll think it’s *girly*, but you can sprout wings too.” I said.

“Did you forget I’m afraid of heights?” he asked.

“Well, I’ll teach you to fly. Trust me. Best feeling ever.” I said.

“Really? Better than me kissing you?” he smirked and I blushed.

“Do you have to go there?” I said.

“But seriously. Better than me? If so, I’m going to have to change that.” He said getting off the bed and walking towards me.

“Didn’t you have questions?” I asked and he sighed.

“A lot of them.” He said wrapping his arms around me.

“Ask ahead. I’ll answer whatever I can.” I said.

We spent hours talking about Faerietopia, it was weird explaining how it felt to tap into the magic when it was like second nature to me.

“So I met my grandfather, my other grandfather.” He said.

“I’d heard about a Vampire Prince but I’d also heard he left long ago. I had no idea he was your dad.” I said.

“It’s surprising. My grandfather and father look the same age.”  
He laughed.

We sat there in silence for a while when an idea popped into my head.

“Give me your hand,” I said standing up.

“What?” he asked.

“Hand,” I said grasping his hand.

I tried to channel his power and was shocked at the force of energy radiating from him. For the first time since I’d known him, I felt the magic in him. It was like some floodgates opened.

My eyes flew open as I looked at him in awe.

“Aaron,” I said in wonder.

“What?” he asked.

“You have wings,” I said.

“What?” he asked jumping off the bed.

## Ashmita Ghosh

He stood in front of the huge mirror in his room and gasped.

“They’re beautiful,” I said hesitantly touching his gorgeous blue wings splattered with streams of red.

“I feel it. The power.” He said reaching out to grasp my other hand.

“It feels freeing doesn’t it?” I asked.

“Can I see yours?” he asked nervously.

It was like a weight lifted off my chest as I summoned my wings.

“Just when I think you couldn’t be more perfect, you surprise me.” He mutters.

His hands trace the edge of my wingspan.

“Angels usually have monochromatic wings. But since mom was the faerie queen...” I tell him.

“I have a question. Are they like, tearing through our skin?” he asked.

“No,” I said. “Remove your shirt.”

“If you wanted me shirtless. All you had to do was ask.” He smirked.

“Shut up and do it,” I said and he smiled at me showing his dimples.

“There. You see. It hovers over your skin. It didn’t even get in the way of your removing your shirt.” I said.

“So it’s detachable?” he asked.

“No. It’s a part of you.” I said.

“Teach me to fly. Like a couple of feet.” He said all of a sudden.

I grasped his arm and raised myself off the ground until my wings were almost touching the ceiling.

“I’m going to let go. Trust your instincts.” I said.

“What! No!” he said but I’d already let go. He immediately plummeted towards the ground but soon his wings started to flutter and he flew back up to me.

“You scared me!” he gasped.

“It’s amazing isn’t it,” I said closing the distance between us.

“It is.” He said kissing me.

We lost ourselves in each other losing sense of our surrounding when there was a shriek at the door.

Aaron almost fell but I clung on to him as we both flew down at a slower rate.

Zafi stood at the door with her eyes wide.

“You... You’re a... you’re not human!” she looked at Aaron accusingly.

Her screaming had managed to grab the attention of the others who came out and stood motionless staring at us.

“You’re a faerie?” Theo asked.

“Ash! How could you not tell us?” Zander looked at me accusingly.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“He didn’t know. Neither did I! Emilia just told him she is a faerie and his father is a vampire, Ivan’s grandson! And Ivan didn’t tell us! If I knew, I swear I would’ve told you.” I said.

“How can you not know you’re a Vampire-faerie?” Candice asked.

“I don’t know. My parents never told me.” He said.

“You never felt the magic?” she asked.

“Not before today.” He said.

“Oh, this is screwed up. Things keep getting more and more complicated.” Theo muttered.

“You’re a werewolf? You happened to forget that little fact?” Aaron asked looking at him pointedly.

“Yeah. Most humans tend to freak out man.” Theo shrugged.

“I love you anyways, my big bad wolf,” Zafi said kissing him.

“Zaf. Theo!” Zander groaned looking away.

“Guys, there are more important things that *love* right now,” Candice said.

“Yeah. I came over to ask about when you guys were leaving.” Zafira asked.

“Tomorrow morning. We’ll take a carriage to the Berri Venchika Villa he is living in.” I said.

“Are you doing okay man? It must all be too much too fast.” Zander said looking at Aaron with sympathy.

## Dear Toon

“Coping. It’s nice having Ash.” He said kissing my forehead.

“I like you. I hope you know that won’t stop me from kicking your ass if you hurt her.” Zander patted Aaron’s back.

Zafira and I looked at each other and burst out laughing. My nerdy little brother hurting my boyfriend seemed a little far-fetched.

“What?” Zander asked.

“As if you could take him!” Zafi laughed out.

“Don’t worry man. I know you’d kick my ass. But honestly. I’d never hurt her.” Aaron said consolingly.

“Good,” Zander said walking out glaring at me and Zafi which only egged our laughter further.

That night dinner was kind of tense and Aaron refused to talk to his mom. He went straight to his room as soon as he was done eating and I followed him up to talk to him. When I got there I saw him on the balcony.

Instead of going out I decided to give him some space to think things over and make his peace.

I pulled Ashton out of the handbag I was carrying and decided to catch him up on everything.

***Dear LoonyToon,***

***Things keep getting crazier!***

## Ashmita Ghosh

*When we got here we found out Aaron's mom a friend of mama. They grew up together, and you know what that means. She was a faerie.*

*Aaron is a Vampire-Faerie. His mom's dad was half human. But he is... his mom's three-quarter faerie, his dad's full Vampire, so that would be 3/8 faerie and ½ vampire and ¼ human.*

*So he's three-eighth faerie. And I'm 100 percent crazy.*

*Why did I even do that? Rafi I'm losing my head!*

*So, Aaron is kinda in shock and I know it's hard for him.*

*I'm going to be there every step of the way but I don't understand what he must be feeling. I know he feels like his parents betrayed him but they didn't. They were only trying to protect him.*

*I hope he gets that.*

*I know Emilia was only trying to protect him and I think he should talk to her before we leave tomorrow. Maybe he'll even come to his senses and stay if he understood the severity of the situation.*

*You know what?*

*I'm going to see how he's doing.*

*Anyways.*

*Love Always.*

*Your Sister,*

*CrazyLey*

**Dear Toon**

## Chapter 34

I walked out to the balcony and sat down on the floor next to Aaron pulling my sweater sleeves down to cover my palm. London was so cold compared to California.

"Hey Shorty," Aaron said putting his arms around me pulling me close.

"You've been overthinking, haven't you?" I asked him snuggling into his arms.

"I've just been contemplating what happened today. I know we talked about it, and a part of me is happy that I'm a vampire-faerie. Still sounds girly. But I'm still unsure about it all. I'm furious at mum and dad. They kept this from me for seventeen years. It's a part of who I am Ash. How could they not tell me?" he asked.

"Aaron. They were protecting you. Our world was never truly safe." I said.

"They could've told me I wasn't human." He said.

"I think you should talk to your mother," I said.

"What? No. Shorty, you don't get it. Having a part of you hidden... I don't know how to react yet." He said.

"They'll be able to explain it to you. They can tell you how your powers were hidden. They can tell you why they did it. Aaron. Give your parents a chance. What they did, they did out of love. Don't let this cause a rift between you." I said.

"But they lied for years. They're my parents." He said.

"You're the kind of man who gives people second chances. Take me for example. Aaron, how many things had I kept from you? How many chances have you given me? I pushed you away and yet you gave me a shot. I didn't tell you who I was.

Though that was stupid 'cause your grandfather apparently knew me, not that it surprises me now knowing what he is. Anyways, you still gave me a chance.

And my ex-fiancé, who I didn't tell you about showed up at our dorm and I killed him in front of you and you still didn't hate me. All your parents did was protect you from the harsh reality of the Magik Worlds. They at least deserve a chance to explain everything." I said.

"You didn't know if you could trust me at first and then you were trying to protect me. And honestly what obligations did you have about telling me.

But you still did. I mean it would've been nice knowing you had a psychopath for an ex but come on, he wasn't really your fiancé. You didn't really agree to marry him." Aaron said.

"Aaron, I should've come clean about everything. And fiancé or not, I should have told you before. Also, everything you found out was by accident. I was eventually going to tell you after the war.

I was going to protect you from it. And that's exactly what they were doing. Protecting you. Maybe they were waiting for you to be able to make a decision about which world you'd be a part of. You won't know if you don't talk to them." I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

"How am I supposed to make an informed decision when I have no idea about the other world." He said.

"Your decision doesn't have to be permanent. And you have time. You know you're lucky they let you have a normal life. And you're lucky because you can talk to them about it instead of assuming things." I said.

"But what good would a talk do?" he asked.

"You might get an insight as to why they did what they did. I'm not saying they were right in stopping you from being who you are but I get it. I would protect my family no matter what the consequences too. They might have known you might resent them but they did it to protect you." I said.

"Maybe they did. Maybe they were being selfish and running away from who they were." He mumbled.

"I'd give anything to see my parents one more time. Talk to them one last time. You can talk to them. Understand them. Give them a shot Aaron." I said.

"I'm scared." He said after a moment of silence.

"Of what?" I asked.

"My whole life I've spent at school after school away from my family. I've always thought they wanted to keep me away. But now I'm not sure. I am afraid they thought I didn't have it in me to be a faerie or a vampire. Still sounds girly. I'm afraid that I don't have it in me. Maybe that's why they didn't tell me. Maybe they knew I wasn't good at anything. I'm useless. I'm the heir to a throne and I have no desire to take it." He said with a wry laugh.

## Dear Toon

Shock coursed through me. My confident, self-sufficient and cocky boyfriend was insecure about this. Somehow it made him even more perfect in my eyes.

"Did you forget the amazing pranks you pulled back at school? You're a genius. Ask any teacher there. You might think they saw as a troublemaker but I know everyone saw the potential in you. You know, Uncle Marc once told me he had high hopes for you. And it doesn't matter if you don't want to rule Slokes. You don't feel like you're a part of that world. I get that. And that doesn't make you any less of a man. You know, I see you being a great inventor someday." I said.

"You always know what to say to me shortcake." He pecked my lips.

"Now. Go talk to your mother." I said.

"Bossy. I love you anyways." He said kissing my forehead.

He got up and offered me a hand helping me up and we walk into his room.

He takes a deep breath before walking out of the room to see his mother.

I grab Ashton once more as I waited for him.

*Dear LoonyToon,*

*Hey again.*

*Well, I managed to convince Aaron to talk to his mother.*

*You know I've been thinking of that one summer we spent in Mermaidia before you and Viola got together.*

## Ashmita Ghosh

*We were at the Siren Cavern, do you remember? I remember the beautiful coral covered walls. I remember thinking I'd like to stay there forever.*

*Maybe when you come back to us, you and I could go there. I mean how long has it been since we went on a crazy adventure, just the two of us? It was always us and Viola or the kiddie party.*

*I love them but let's go do something crazy. Fall from grace maybe? It would be fun. I know you love it, maybe I could try.*

*I just wanted to have a normal conversation with you without all this war and other drama going on.*

*When we were five, I remember Papa took us to the Eden Garden. I remember distinctly how you demanded on eating every apple there and he told you the story was a myth. There was no forbidden fruit. A person could have anything they wanted. I told him to let you. And you did. Not all the apples but you had plenty and then couldn't stop puking. I laughed my five-year-old ass off.*

*Ah, the good old days.*

*Well. I'll check in before I leave tomorrow.*

*Love Always.*

*Your Sister,*

*CrazyLey*

# Chapter 35

"Shorty. Wake up." Aaron cooed into my ears.

"Sleep," I mumbled turning around. I felt him rumble with laughter before I felt feather light kisses on my neck. His lips peppered sweet kisses along my neck and shoulders and I turned towards him searching for his lips with my own.

He pecked me once before pulling away.

"Wake up *Short Cake*. We have an eventful day ahead of us." He said.

"Sorry, I fell asleep before you got in last night," I mumbled snuggling into his arms.

His hold on me tightened and he buried his face in my hair.

"It's alright. I came in really late anyways. You were talking to Ashton, weren't you? I put him in your bag just so you know." He said.

"Thanks. So, how was your talk with your mom?" I asked.

"Well, dad was there too. You were right. I should've listened to her." He said.

"So, it went well?" I asked hopefully.

"Yeah. They wanted to let me live a human life so I had something to compare it to. They wanted normalcy for me. Apparently, they didn't have that option and had to choose when they were young but after my grandmother died they wanted me

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

to be older before I was faced with it. It's stupid really but I get that they were only thinking of me and they planned on telling me when I turned eighteen. It's going to take some time to get used to but I'm sure I'll get over it." He said.

"I'm glad you listened to them," I said.

"Dad said they cast a spell to bind my magic, to help me go unnoticed. Apparently, many people are aware of magic. And that, in turn, hid my vampire characteristics." He said and for the first time, I saw his fangs. They weren't huge but they were noticeable when he wanted them to be.

"Well, didn't you get an idea about that back at Springfield's?" I laughed.

"You knew half the student body." He said.

"I knew of them, they knew of me. I hadn't met many of them. Some of them, yes." I said.

"Are you ready to go back to Faerietopia?" he asked getting serious all of a sudden.

"As ready as I'll ever be," I said.

"You know, I'm quite excited about seeing where you grew up." He said.

"It's beautiful, Faerietopia is a lively place," I said.

"Come on. Let's go down and have breakfast before we leave." He said.

"Sure. Give me a few minutes and let me take a quick shower and I'll join you downstairs." I said.

## Dear Toon

“Sure!” he asked giving me smile.

As I ran the comb through my hair as my mind wandered off to what all could go wrong.

Instead of getting ready I just stood there in a towel staring out of the window thinking.

I walked to my suitcase and pulled out some slacks and a sweatshirt.

I created a little wind with magic to dry my hair and pulled it up in a ponytail.

“Really? Have you ever heard of a hairdryer?” Aaron asked walking into the room laughing and I stuck my tongue out.

“Why don’t you go down and I’ll join you. I’ll say goodbye to Ashton before going down. Zafi or Zander can teleport him to Viola.” I said. As he went back down I decided to write to Toon for a bit.

*Dear LoonyToon,*

***Hey. So I wanted to say goodbye real quick before I left. I’m a little nervous about going home. What if my transfiguration fails and people recognize me?***

***I know you’d say that I should trust myself and honestly, that’s what I’ll do.***

***Anyways. You’ll be with Viola while I’m there. I’ll teleport you to me so I can fill you in on what’s happening.***

***Anyways.***

**Ashmita Ghosh**

*Love Always.*

*Your Sister,*

*CrazyLey*

## Chapter 36

“Morning Ashley,” Emilia said as I entered the living room where everyone was sitting.

Next to her sat a dark-haired man, if Aaron aged as well as him, I was one lucky bitch. I mean if he ever aged.

“Morning.” I smiled at them.

“Your majesty, it’s an honor to have you here.” Mr. St. Clair bowed and I blushed.

“That’s unnecessary Mr. St. Clair, I mean Prince Pierre Powiski,” I said.

“Pierre.” He corrected me.

“Ashley.” I corrected him.

I sat down next to Aaron who wrapped his arms around my shoulder.

“Breakfast?” Emilia asked.

“too nervous to eat,” I said.

“You should eat. It’s going to be a really long day.” Pierre said.

Aaron picked up a piece of sausage from his plate and brought it to my lips.

“Eat up love.” He said.

“Seriously don’t want to eat,” I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“No skipping meals,” Zander said mimicking my voice. I was always the one saying that when he lost track of time playing some stupid video game. I stuck my tongue out at him and took a tiny bite of the sausage.

“Here,” I said handing Toon to Zafira.

“Is that Prince Ashton?” Pierre asked.

“Yeah.” Zander nodded.

“There hasn’t been a case of Metamorphosis since the initiative your father took to end the Dark Ones,” Emilia said.

“Not that we know of. Who knows how many people he hurt.” I said.

“So, when are you two leaving?” Candice asked.

“Soon. We’ll head out right after breakfast.” Aaron said.

“Be careful son. And Ashley, you too.” Pierre said.

“How have things been in Faerietopia?” Zander asked them.

“The commoners don’t know. They’re keeping things hush. Most guards don’t know why we’re on high alert either. But we’ve been in chaos.” Emilia said.

“Is Aunt Natalie dealing with it?” Theo asked.

“She’s doing her best.” She said.

“When do you think you’ll be back?” Zafira asked.

“Well, it would take at least a day to reach Berri Venchika. It’s close to the court so the security is high and the direct roads are

blocked. I can't teleport there. I'll be using too much magic on Transfiguration and it drains people out to teleport. I would have to use a portal but it'll lead me to the palace. We'll have to take the longer route just to be on the safer side." I said.

"The next day you two will be with Mr. Wolwond. If things go well, you'll be back in the palace by 30<sup>th</sup> and here by 31<sup>st</sup>." Emilia said.

My loose-lipped sibling's had filled them in on everything. In some ways having adult help was kind of nice.

"We can be back before midnight, the travel is a little long," I said.

"That's so Cinderella." Candy laughed.

"Just in time for the New Year," Pierre said.

"Well, we should get going," I said getting up taking the last bite of the hash brown I'd snagged from Aaron's plate.

"Where's the portal?" Aaron asked.

"The sub-basement," Emilia said.

"Of course. The only part of the house I wouldn't allow me to visit." He shook his head.

We followed them down and stood in front of a heavily decorated door.

"Find a way to save Ashton," Zafira said hugging me.

"I will. I swear." I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Be careful. You too Aaron. And keep your distance from the guards.” Zander said hugging me.

“You’re the only one that’s still terrified of them.” Zafira shook her head.

“It’s cute!” Candy laughed and he blushed.

“Well. We’ll be on our way.” I said, “Thank you for your hospitality.” I said to Emilia and Pierre.

“It’s not a favor. You’re basically family. You’re my best friend’s daughter and the first girl my little boy brought home. I’ve always wanted a daughter!” Emilia said and I blushed. I looked over to Aaron who was red himself.

“Well bye,” Aaron said pulling me through the door.

We go through the portal and the world seems to spin under our feet before we stand in front of another door which I pull open revealing the room made up of pure gold walls and a huge diamond chandelier in the middle.

“Wow.” Aaron gasped out as we walked into the room.

“It’s the first impression people get of our world so it’s a little lavish. The entire palace is. It’s made up crystals. Just a warning, people here are extravagant. We’re going to have to change.” I said.

I grabbed his hand and ran dragging him with me before he had a chance to respond.

I finally reached my room after running up flights of staircases.

It was just as it always was. Simple in this chaotic world.

## Dear Toon

"You were right, the palace is extravagant. I mean those staircases. I can't believe we could stand on them. They looked more like water than glass." He said.

"It was water." I laughed.

"Wait. We walked on water?" he asked shocked.

"It's not unusual here," I said rummaging through my closet looking for some outrageous costume.

Even when I was here I was pretty much always in jeans.

I finally found something at the very back of the closet.

I remembered my mom arguing with the stylist about putting her children in those *monstrous audacities* for a party. Mom wasn't all that keen of those weird costumes either.

All our costumes had been shoved in the back of my closet because I lost a bet. Guess it would be useful now.

"See which one fits," I said handing Aaron both Toon and Zan's costumes and kissed him as he headed to the bathroom.

I quickly slipped into the strange neon green shirt completely ruffled with a hideous yellow skirt whose hem was rolled up in weird curls.

Then I used my newly attained ability to transfigure.

I changed my hair color to a neon blue shade before curling it and placing on a headpiece that looked like a spaceship to me. I changed my complexion into a shade or two darker and increased my height a bit, okay, a lot. Then I worked on my face. I changed the bone structure a bit, making my face longer and my

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

eyes narrower. I increased the size of my nose so it kinda looked weird and then applied some makeup. More makeup than I'd used in my entire life.

The neon pink lipstick and orange eyeliner looked awful!

Eek.

At least no one would recognize me.

I knocked on the bathroom door and Aaron let out a strangled 'come in' so I entered.

The sight in front of me set me off in loud giggles.

Oh, Aaron.

## Chapter 37

Aaron stood in front of the mirror with his eyes wide as he gazed at his reflection.

“Don’t laugh!” he said.

I tried to control my giggles. This was definitely hilarious.

Ashton had never actually put this outfit on so I had no idea what to expect.

Aaron looked horrified was he stood in some metallic silver slacks, not pants, literally slacks and a shirt that had feathers covering it completely.

“Is this a belt?” he asked holding up a snake like long rope made which looked more like a wire.

I took it from him and wrapped it around his neck, shaping it weirdly like I’d seen all the noble people do.

Finally, he tore his gaze away from the mirror and looked at me and started laughing.

“Shut up!” I said shoving him.

“I’m sorry. But you look...” he laughed.

“You don’t look all that great either,” I said turning around.

“Hey. I didn’t mean it like that. You could wear a garbage bag and I’d still think you’re beautiful. But the transfiguration. You look nothing like you. I like you just the way you are.” He said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“You have a way with words.” I smiled leaning up to kiss him but he pulled back.

“One, I only kiss my girlfriend. Two, I don’t want that lipstick on me.” He said.

“One, your girlfriend is okay with you kissing this person. Two, you’re going to have to have makeup on.” I said.

“If I kiss you, will you let me get away from the makeup?” he pouted.

“Nope,” I smirked.

I quickly grabbed the glittery blue eyeliner and applied it on him, and then some green lipstick. It took a lot of effort to not burst out laughing.

“All done.” I smiled innocently pulling away.

“What the hell Ash? I thought you loved me?” he pouted.

“It’s all in the name of fitting in.” I shrugged.

“Everyone here dresses like that?” he asked.

“Not many but the few that loiter around here like this make this place look weird. But if we are to take a carriage, we’d be better acting as nobles. Not all of them dress like this but dressing like this will result in the least questioning.” I said.

“This is crazy.” He said.

“Now come on. We need to hurry.” I said.

The two of try to get out of the palace as covertly as possible.

Just as we were about to enter, a guard yelled for us to stop.

I froze in my tracks and hoped that my transfiguration worked.

“Hello soldier!” I said in an annoying nasal high pitched voice.

“Ma’am.” He tipped his head.

“We were just going to use the pods. It’s a bee-u-ti-ful day!” I said breaking the word in pieces basically shrieking.

“My apologies. But it’s a little unusual for nobles to roam around without guards.” He said.

“We’re a little *adventurous*. We were planning on having some fun that I’m sure the guards wish not to see.” I faked a giggle.

I lived here long enough to know how to act like a noble.

Both the guard and Aaron were blushing now.

“I’ll leave you be then. Have a nice day,” the guard said awkwardly looking away as Aaron and I rushed through the doors to a pod.

“You told him we were going to...” Aaron asked.

“What? It just came to me!” I defended myself getting into the pilot’s seat as Aaron climbed in beside me.

“Do you know how to fly this thing?” Aaron asked.

“In theory.” I smiled at him cheekily.

“You’ve never driven this before?” he asked gaping at me as I shakily managed a lift off and sped into the sky.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Chill. Look out the window.” I said.

For a second he was calm and then he freaked out. Damn. He was afraid of heights.

“We’re going to die!” he said.

“Aaron. Calm down. Hold my hand, well my arm.” I said and he hesitantly held onto my arm.

I looked at him from the corner of my eyes and he hollered making me jump.

The pod swerved a little.

“What?” I asked.

“You’re not looking at the road!” he said.

“I was flying it just fine before you screamed,” I said.

I knew he hated heights so I took a deep breath.

“Sorry.” He said sheepishly.

“It’s okay,” I said.

There were so many guards patrolling the sky. I was happy to see Aunt Nat was doing an epic job of protecting our world.

It was getting dark as we reached the edge of the Royal City and entering the Winow Forest.

We’d been intercepted a few times but they didn’t suspect anything.

“We’re going to stop for the night,” I told Aaron.

“Why?” he asked.

“Flying at night during high alert is going to get us unnecessary questions we can’t answer. We can camp here. Also, I need rest. The glamor is draining me.” I said.

“I’ve never camped before.” He said.

“Finally something I’ve done and you haven’t.” I laughed.

“Do we have a tent?” he asked.

“We don’t need one. There is a tree we can crash in. The inside is hollow and big enough to hide us and the pod. But we’ll have to sleep in the pod.” I said.

The two of us pushed the pod a few hundred yards into the thick of the forest until we reached the Tree of Dreams.

“This is the oldest part of Faerie. The power of Faerietopia rests on this tree, if a Royal Faerie seeks refuge here, they’re nearly impossible to find. Only we can seek this tree. That was another reason David wanted to marry me. He was going to end all of Faerie in one blow. Each world has a core. This is the Core of Faerie.” I said.

“Earth too?” he asked as we made our way inside the tree.

As soon as we got inside I dropped my glamor reverting back to myself.

“It’s at the center of Bermuda Triangle. When all the other kingdoms unite, and one of each goes will it receive people.” I said.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“On a lighter note, can I get out of these hideous clothes?” he asked.

“What will you wear? We didn’t bring any spares.” I reminded him.

“regardless of that, I’m the makeup. I see a really good hot water spring inside a tree, I’m really looking forward to cleaning this shit off my face.” He winked as he started stripping.

I scrubbed all the makeup off my face and splashed some water on my face.

“You have no idea how happy I’m to see your face again. You’re so much more beautiful than that transfiguration,” he said kissing me.

## Chapter 38

"I can't believe there is a lake and a waterfall inside a tree. Can't really be surprised. It's a magical universe after all." He said laughing as he observed the place.

"Did you know this water is supposed to be holly?" I said as we wandered around.

"Come on. Let's go get some sleep. I'm definitely beat." he sighed.

"You'll have to teach me all of this magic shit." He said.

I tried to walk but felt myself wobble a little.

Aaron reached out and grabbed me and lifted me up in his arms.

After eating some food we'd taken with us we snuggled up close in the pod turning the heat up to keep us warm.

All of a sudden, Aaron froze up. His hands stopped tracing the soft circles he was tracing on my back.

I pulled back and saw a horrified look on his face.

I sat up properly and looked at him.

"What?" I asked.

"I bit you!" he said looking terrified.

"Aaron, you've bitten me before, so have I," I said.

"I mean I broke through your skin." He said horrified.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“It’s bound to happen at first. Aaron, you’re just getting used to your fangs.” I said smiling at him.

“But I hurt you.” He protested.

“It doesn’t hurt. Biting doesn’t hurt. Trust me it felt good. It’s like you were releasing endorphins.” I said.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

“I’m not bleeding. I didn’t feel any pain.” I tried to smirk. I could never smirk as perfectly as him.

“Shorty, does it mean I will have to drink blood? I mean I’m a vampire,” he asked.

“Blood will make you stronger but since you’re only half vampire, you can survive without it. Besides, you’re not hurting anyone. It’s not that strange. I know plenty of vampires who drink blood. And the fact even though you tasted blood and it didn’t overpower you shows how strong your control is.” I said.

“You told me about my faerie powers but what about the vampire powers?” he asked.

“Well, super speed, super strength, compulsion, things like that. Being a vampire isn’t a bad thing. It’s not like the movies where you bite someone and BAM! Vampire! Vampires are born like any other Magical Creature.” I told him.

“So the vampire part of me isn’t bad?” he asked.

“Vampires are noble people. Your grandfather Ivan is one of my favorite people in the universe.” I said.

“You like me better right?” he asked with a silly grin.

“I like you better. You’re much hotter.” I winked.

I lay back down resting my head on his chest and let myself drift off.

When I woke up in the morning I was still in the embrace of the man I loved.

“Morning,” I mumbled.

“Morning.” He said and I immediately sensed something was up. His voice was tense.

“What is it?” I asked “Are you still pondering over what we talked about last night? You’re a good man. Vampires are good. You didn’t hurt me.” I said adamantly.

“It’s not that. I just realized something.” He said.

“What?” I asked.

“We are about to go to war!” he said freaking out.

“Do you trust me?” I asked.

“Yes!” he said surely.

“I’ll make sure you’re safe,” I said

## Chapter 39

We laid back for a while relishing the silence before I finally sat up.

“We need to leave.” I sighed.

“This place is so beautiful. I don’t want to leave.” He said kissing my forehead.

“We need to head out otherwise we’ll waste another day, the sun’s up so we should leave,” I said.

I transfigured myself before turning to Aaron and nodded my head towards the pod.

Finally, the two of us pushed our pod out of the opening of the tree before I managed a bumpy takeoff.

“What if the person you’re impersonating finds out about us? What will we do then?” Aaron asked.

“I’m not impersonating anyone. When we transfigure, we only change some features. It’s impossible to look like someone else. That is illegal. The base of how I look now is the real me.

Metamorphosis is completely changing into someone or something. My voice isn’t different due to transfiguration, it’s because of another spell.” I said.

“This all is so confusing.” He mutters.

“You have a lot of time to learn. You’ll understand. I had sixteen years and I still get confused sometimes.” I told him.

## Dear Toon

The rest of the flight was uneventful as we flew through the dense forest. Aaron held my hand.

“We’re here,” I said pointing to the beautiful simplistic city in front of us.

“You know; I find it prettier than the royal city.” He said.

“So do I. I think sometimes little is a lot,” I said.

I tried to sense if there were any mermaids nearby and was hit with a strong force blocking them.

“There.” I pointed towards a road leading out of the quaint city.

I slowly drove the pod making sure that we were hidden behind the trees until we were out of the town center.

I parked the pod in a dense of the forest before getting out.

“You see that house right there?” I said pointing to the quaint brownstone house “It’s barricaded with magical barriers. My bet is, that’s what we’re looking for.” I said.

“You sure?” he asked.

“Only one way to find out.” I sighed trudging forward.

I knocked on the door for what seemed like the hundredth time but still no one answered.

“Can’t you use magic to open the locks?” Aaron asked.

“First, that’d be trespassing and second, they have magical barriers,” I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“What if you channel me? I remember you said channeling others makes you stronger. Besides, desperate times call for desperate measures.” He said.

“Fine,” I said.

“Stepping outside the lines isn’t necessarily a bad thing.” He said.

“I know you feel that way. I mean you’re always getting into trouble.” I said.

“Well, it’s significantly decreased since you came in my life.” He smiled.

“Ya think I didn’t hear about the stink bomb in the other wing during the time we weren’t talking? Don’t even get me started on what else I heard.” I said.

“I thought you were opening the door.” He said pointedly.

I grabbed his hand and concentrated on channeling his magic, especially his vampire magic while trying to keep my glamor up.

After some time I heard a low creak and let out a sigh.

Aaron pushed the door open and I walked in behind in.

The room was pitch black even though daylight was still out.

“Hello? Is anyone here?” Aaron called out.

Before we could move another inch something hard knocked us to the ground.

The last thing I remembered before blacking out was a figure looming above me.

I woke up with my hands tied behind my back and my legs tied together with enchanted rope that tightened every time I moved.

“Aaron?” I called out in a raspy voice. I throat hurt. It felt so dry. I needed water.

“Shorty?” he called back, his beautiful British accent sounding even sexier in a hoarse tone.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“I’m fine. Are you? You’re not hurt, are you? I’ll kill that bastard if he raised a hand on you.” He growled.

“Aaron. Calm down. I’m fine. Besides, we’re the ones that broke into his house.” I said.

“Is it Winch Wolwond? Are you sure it’s not that bastard?” he asked.

“I’m sure he’s not Cecil. It has to be Mr. Wolwond. I couldn’t see the person’s face but I think it matched the pictures I’d seen of him. Dark skin, tall, built.” I said.

“Do you think he’ll let us explain?” he asked.

“We should’ve waited for him to open the door,” I said.

“Then we’d still be standing outside.” He argued.

“We’re tied up!” I said exasperatedly.

“At least we have a better chance of talking to him!” he insists.

A door opening makes us stop our argument.

“We’ll see,” I said just as the room lit up.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

It took me some time to focus my eyes but when they did there was no doubt that the man in front of me was Winch Wolwond.

“Who are you? Why are you here? Who told you where to find me?” he shot question after question at us.

“Mr. Wolwond. I’m Princess Ashley Grey of Faerietopia and Angelica. This is my companion, Prince Aaron Mercer of the Vampires.” I introduced us.

“Companion?” Aaron asked incuriously.

“Aaron...” I warned him.

I looked back at Winch who looked perplexed.

“You... you can’t be. I’ve seen the princess’s picture. She doesn’t look like you.” He said.

“Transfiguration,” I said and he hissed jumping back.

“Mr. Wolwond. Not metamorphosis. I’m not pretending to be someone else. I’ve just changed a few features so I can hide. I came here to seek your help.” I said.

“If you are the princess. Show me.” He said and I let my glamor drop.

“I need your help. My brother was turned into a book by a Dark One.” I said and he gasped.

# Chapter 40

“Dark Ones no longer exist,” Winch said.

“They do. Well, I know of two. Well, one.” I said.

“Who?” he asked looked at me skeptically.

“Untie us first,” I said.

“How do I know I can trust you?” he asked.

“Because, if I wanted to I could remove these ties myself. I broke through your magical barriers.” I said.

“You’re really Princess Ashley?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said exasperatedly.

“Why’d you run from your kingdom?” he asked.

“I see news reaches a hermit like you too.” I said, “Now, untie us.”

He hesitantly walked towards us and removed the ropes around my wrist and then did the same for Aaron.

“You okay?” Aaron wrapped his arms around me.

“Fine,” I said.

“Now, the Dark Ones? The Prince getting turned into a book? You’re running away?” he asked.

## Ashmita Ghosh

"A few months ago, a dark one killed the king and the queen and tried to kill us. Ashton was turned into a journal in an attempt to save us. After that, they couldn't kill us. So they decided that having me marry David would give him some power and somehow they could destroy angels and then rest of the world. At first, we went along with it to protect people but ran away before the wedding. We think to kill Cecil we need all our power. I've already tried to kill him once before, but the spells seem to bounce off him. David, on the other hand, can be hurt.

A few days ago, he found where we were hiding and attacked us. I killed him. It didn't even take any effort but every time we used a spell on Cecil, it backfires. We think the four of us together could do something and we need Ashton back for that. You are the only one that can help us." I said.

"Love. I've said this before. My wife, Persia's and my son's blood on me changed me back. It was an accident. She is a weapons crafter. She was at home working on a project and she had kept me, in pen form, on her work desk when my son being the little hellion he was decided he wanted to play with her new toy. He went for the knife and tried to grasp it by the blade but she stopped him from severely hurting himself. It was hard for me. Knowing I was there and not being able to do anything, even though nothing bad happened. They both cut their hand a little and some blood trickled onto the pen. Both of them saved me. Blood to blood. Heart to heart." He said.

"Blood? That's the key? We've tried so many different spells." I said exasperatedly.

"That's the point. People assume the counter to dark magic is light magic, but the blood of loved ones is stronger." He said.

"And if I were to cut my hand over him, he'd be fine?" I asked.

"I don't know. I think it's more like people who care about you most, not just a person. Persia once cut her finger and I remember when she picked me up to write later a drop got on me but nothing happened. At that point, it held no meaning but later I'd tried to find out how that happened. It only works if people you love most and who love you back, all of them bleed over you. Their blood together saved me." He said.

"But that's a lot of people," I said.

"I said most. People who're incomplete without you." He said.

"Vi," I mumbled.

"Anyways, you best be going now. Cadler and Perisa must be returning any moment now. Don't want Cadler alarmed. He matures a little slow. He is a few hundred years old but still not an adult." He said.

"Thank you, Mr. Wolwond," I said.

"I owe your mother. When I felt unsafe in Mermaidia, she offered me refuge." He said "My condolences. She was a remarkable ruler. I wasn't her subject for long but never had I seen a more just ruler." He said.

"Thank you," I said as I motioned for Aaron to follow me.

"You said he was the Prince of the Vampires," Winch asked.

"Not really. My dad is." Aaron said sheepishly.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“That makes you one too.” He said.

“Still new,” Aaron mumbled.

“So, you’re Prince Pierre and the Faerie’s kid,” Winch said.

“You know my father?” Aaron asked.

“When you are one of the most recent cases of Metamorphosis the rulers tend to want to see you, I don’t know him personally but I’d seen him around Mythica during my time there.” He said.

“Well, we should get going,” I said when we reached the gate.

“I hope the Prince is okay,” Wolwond said before shutting the door on our faces.

“Weirdo.” Aaron whistles.

“Why can’t I whistle?” I whine making my way to our pod.

“You’re adorable,” Aaron said blowing a raspberry kiss on my neck making me squeal.

“Tickles!” I said between giggles.

“So, you happy about finding a way to bring Ashton back?” he asked.

“Yes but it feels anticlimactic. We tried and tried for months and it takes what, five minutes to find a solution?” I said.

“Not everything has to be complicated.” He said.

“But...” I said.

## Dear Toon

“Even if you had figured out the connection with blood, you’d never had figured out anything about mixing everyone’s blood. Be happy the solution is simple because we have a war to fight.” He said.

“You’re right. Nothing about this is easy. Now let’s go. We need to get back by tomorrow.” I said.

“You should go to the palace and I’ll join you, I’ll sneak you in first,” I said.

“I’ll come with you.” He said.

“Aaron. I say this with all the love in my heart. You’ll just be in the way.” I deadpanned.

“Fine. But don’t take too long.” He huffed.

# Chapter 41

"I'm telling you I can do this no biggie. I will be in and out. Just go to the palace and wait in my room." I said.

"Hurry back." He said wrapping his arms around me and I kissed him before pulling away.

I quickly summoned my wings before I flew away from the palace.

I quickly walked around the Garden of Eve.

I marveled at the multi-coloured apples and went to pluck as many as I could and put them in my bag.

I said one last goodbye to my favorite place in the kingdom before I went back to the palace. I fluttered in through the guest entry.

"Milady." A guard bowed down as I entered.

Dressing up like a hooligan had its advantages. It wasn't like it was a security violation. There were sensors everywhere to sense any non-faerie.

We were trusting of fairies and I know at times like these, safety should be taken more seriously.

But if we were to doubt each other, our own people and not stand as one unit we'd never be able to face anyone who attacked us.

I slowly made my way through the palace until I was in my room. I quickly found a duffle bag and started stuffing what I needed in it. I took out some money from the safe and stuffed it in my pocket.

I picked up some clothes from Ashton's room and headed to my room.

"Excuse me." A voice called from behind me and I froze.

"Yes?" I asked turning around.

"The Queen Regent has asked for your presence in the throne room." The guard said firmly.

How the hell did he know who she was talking about? How the hell did she know how I looked?

"Yes of course. Anything for her highness." I said following him.

The gates to the throne room were flanked by at least a dozen guards who stood in perfect two quies parallel to each other.

"My queen." I bowed as I walked in.

"Guards. Leave us alone." Aunt Nat said.

"But your majesty." A guard protests but she cuts him a look.

They all scurry out leaving the two of us alone.

"I've been waiting for you to return! I kept a sensor in Ashton's room. I knew you'd go there after you were done with what you needed to do with Wolwond and I knew you only own one of those costumes. So any success?" she asked.

"Yeah. Found out how he came back. I need your blood." I said.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“Why?” she asked and I launched into a recap of our meeting with Wolwond.

“I can’t believe we’re so close to winning.” She sighed.

“I’m glad I’ll have Ashton back soon,” I said.

“I miss him. That boy was a firecracker.” She laughed.

“So, your blood? Will you meet us there or should I take your blood?” I asked.

“I’ll meet you. I want to be there when he returns.” She said.

“See you then. I should hurry back. Aaron would be out of his mind.” I explained giving her a quick hug and she nodded calling for the guards.

I bowed to her one last time before making my way out of the palace.

“Took you long enough.” Aaron sighed as I found him in my room.

“I had to fill Aunt Nat in on our meeting with Mr. Wolwond,” I said.

“Where did you go?” he asked.

“To get you these.” I smiled.

“What the hell are these?” he gasped.

“Multi-coloured wishing apples. I mean the whole wish factor is a myth but I didn’t know what to get you so I decided to get you my favorite thing in Faerietopia.” I said.

## **Dear Toon**

“It’s wonderful.” He smiled kissing me.

I stuck a candle into the apple and lit it up.

“Happy birthday,” I said kissing him after he blew the candle.

“Thank you. It’s wonderful.” He said pointing to the apples.

“Now, let’s have a little apple picnic before we go back to earth,”

I said pulling out the rest of the feast that I conjured with magic.

## **Chapter 42**

“All need is our blood to save Ashton?” Zafira asked as we told her about our chat with Winch Wolwond.

All of us sat in Aaron’s parents living room by the fireplace. Aunt Nat and Viola were here with us.

It was only ten when we returned and Aunt Nat turned up not long after us with Uncle Marc. We all celebrated Aaron’s seventeenth birthday, his dad made a cake. After we settled down I told everyone about our meeting with Wolwond.

“Let’s do this then!” Viola said excitedly.

“We need Ivan.” Zan said and we all looked at him “Ivan is like family to all of us. You said, everyone, that loves him.”

“I’ll try to contact dad,” Pierre said.

“What if it doesn’t work?” Zafira asked. She seemed a little hesitant to believe it was that easy.

“Winch knows about all this and he wouldn’t lie.” Aunt Nat said.

“He must think he knows but what if he’s wrong? We’d be on square 1 with no plans.” She said.

“Aren’t you supposed to be the optimistic one? I’m the pessimist.” Zander said jokingly.

“Well since you seem to be so upbeat lately, someone had to take up your role.” She said.

“Honey, breathe,” Theo said rubbing a hand on her back.

“I’m just freaking out a little.” She said.

“Everyone’s a little scared sweetie.” Aunt Nat said.

“You all seem so calm.” She complained.

“If that’s what you think, you’re highly mistaken. We’ve learned how to hide how we really feel over the years.” Emilia said.

“Ashton’s going to be fine. You’ll probably see him before new year’s.” Aaron said.

“I’m hoping we can get the show on the road.” I heard Ivan’s voice and jumped up to hug him. Next to him stood a gorgeous blonde I knew all too well.

“I am happy to see that you’re all fine.” He smiled at me.

“How have you all been dear?” Erica asked.

“Great,” Zander said.

“Why are you so chipper?” Zafi asked and I glared at her. If he was happy we should let him be. She was running on nervous energy.

“None of your business.” He said.

“Dear grandson. How you’ve grown!” Erica said kissing Aaron’s cheeks and he just stood there awkwardly.

“How are you, son?” Ivan asked patting his back.

“Uh... Fine?” he said, more like a question than an answer.

## Ashmita Ghosh

“So, I was thinking we could use a bowl. Ya know, to mix all your blood in!” Candy said, a little excitedly.

“We’re not making a blood punch,” I said.

“You said that he said that the blood was dropped together. So won’t it be best if all your blood is mixed?” she asked. I could see her point. It made a lot of sense.

Aunt Nat summoned a crystal bowl and cut her palm open. I watched as the blood trickled down drop by drop into the bowl.

Uncle Marc was next followed by Ivan and Erica.

My siblings followed them by summoning their own knives and cut their palms.

Finally, Vi and I stood above the bowl looking at the bowl. We looked at each other and at the same time slit our palms.

As soon as our blood touched the book, a bright light flooded the room. I could make out the blood magically flowing in the air in circles and the book floating up from its position.

The explosion that followed knocked me off my feet and I fell on my ass. I reached out for Aaron’s hand gripping it.

As I stood up the room seemed to clear up.

In front of us stood my brother dressed in the same thing he was wearing the night he was turned into a journal, just a bit tattered.

Viola burst into tears and ran into his arms kissing him.

I think I caught tears slip down Ashton’s eyes. I turned around to give them some privacy.

## Dear Toon

When they finally separated I made my way to my big teddy bear of a brother.

“Toon!” I sighed in relief wrapping my arms tightly around him refusing to let go.

“Missed you too Crazy.” He said crushing me in a tight hug.

“Toony?” Zaf said softly as if still in a daze because what happened.

I pulled back and let Toon engulf her in a hug.

“I’m fine kiddo. I’m so glad to see you all.” He said pulling Zander and me in too.

“It’s been hard living without you,” I said.

“You’ve had me with you every step of the way.” He said

“I missed you brother,” Zander said.

“I’m proud of you kid. You dealt with everything like a grown up.” Ashton said patting Zan.

“Aunt Nat!” Ashton said moving to hug her.

“Little prince. It’s so nice to see you. I’ve been out of my mind worrying about the four of you. Knowing all of you are alright is such a relief.” She sighed.

Ashton greeted everyone enthusiastically before sitting on the sofa with Viola on his lap.

“Ten seconds to New Year’s!” Zafi said excitedly, back to her chirpy behavior.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Ten, nine...Three, two, ONE! Happy New Year’s.” we all said happily.

The past few months had been so hectic!

I turned around and kissed Aaron passionately, our first kiss this year.

“Happy New Year.” We whisper at the same time.

The staff got some champagne for all of us.

We sat there in peace for a while before deciding to retire into our rooms.

I hugged Ashton finding it hard to let go as we separated to go into our own rooms. I knew he wanted to be with Vi tonight so finally let him go.

“I’ll see you tomorrow morning. Don’t you dare vanish.” I said.

“Yes, Your Highness.” He winked and I punched his arm.

I kissed him on the cheek before he entered the room he would be sharing with Viola. Zaf was rooming with Candy and Zan was with Theo as far as I knew and those two were taking the room Zaf and Zan were previously in.

“How are you feeling?” Aaron asked as we entered his room.

“Relived.” I smiled.

“You seem so much happier. It’s like a weight has been lifted off you. I’m glad to see you this happy.” He said.

## **Dear Toon**

"I have everything I need. I have you, my family. If my parents were here, it would be the perfect new years. But honestly. I'm happy. Toon's back." I sighed.

## **Chapter 43**

I looked at the floating palace of Angelica before taking a deep breath.

“Ready?” Ashton asked me.

“Aren’t I always?” I asked faking a confident smile.

After we had got Ashton back we’d formulated a plan on how to defeat Cecil.

We’d finally figured out what my parents meant when they said we had to stand as one.

Ivan said he wasn’t aware of how to help us but Emilia did. She was mom’s best friend after all.

Ashton and I were hitting up the underground entrances to the palace.

“This way,” I said pointing to one of the two dark tunnels at the end of the tunnel we were in.

“You sure?” he asked.

“Toon. Trust me. You know every part of the city and I know every inch of the palaces.” I said.

We walked through the dark tunnels as the walls started to cave in on us.

Ashton had to crouch down barely after five minutes and it came to a point where both of us had to crawl through the small space.

"There are cobwebs everywhere!" he complained.

"Really? I'm the one afraid, no terrified of spiders and you're complaining?" I said.

We managed to come out the other end knocking into each other so many times.

"This is going to work," I whispered reassuring myself.

"Of course it is! I helped plan!" Ashton said jokingly pulling me into a side hug.

We waited as Viola and Theo emerged from the waters in front of us.

"The armies are going to come in as soon as we give them a go," Viola said as her golden tail disappeared and legs replaced them.

"Are you kids ready?" Erica said.

"Yeah," Theo said.

We barged into the palace in full force from all directions.

Humans would've considered it weird that the Kings and Queens entered the battle first but that's how it had always been for us. We did our own work, fought our own battles.

I caught Pierre's eyes as I passed by him to enter the throne room from the north gate and Ashton split from me to take the east entrance.

"Hey Shorty," Aaron said standing by my side.

## Ashmita Ghosh

Over the last few days, we'd vigorously trained, I spent every free second helping Aaron with his magic. My siblings had become amazing at magic.

We actually had a shot of winning.

I looked at Cecil who stood in front of the throne smirking at me.

"Good to see you're finally here." He said.

"Cecil Green," I said entering the room.

"What are you going to do? Kill me by yourself? What is that human boyfriend of yours's going to do?" he asked.

"Who said I was alone? Or that my boyfriend was human." I said as the others entered the room.

"Guess you found out how to save that annoying brother of yours." He said like it was something trivial.

"We outnumber you," Ashton said.

"Really? Guards." He said and the guards, the faerie guards arrived.

I looked at them in horror. Their eyes were hollow, pitch black with no emotions. They weren't themselves. They had no control over themselves. They hadn't betrayed us.

"Do you know what happened to your son?" I tempted him.

"He went to seek you out." He shrugged as if it were trivial.

"I killed him." I snarled and his demeanor became sour.

"You'll pay for it little bitch. When I kill you and your precious little family, the entire faerie and angel race will end. Then I will end those mutts and bloodsuckers and fishes. Maybe I'll rule over the weak humans." He seemed to muse to himself.

"Go to hell," I said.

I smiled noticing we were in the position we needed to be in.

I conjured up a ball of fire and blasted it off at Cecil's head but he managed to put up a dark wall and deflected it towards Viola who ducked just in time.

"You think you can attack me? Guards!" he barked out and they monotonously charged at us. I saw the apprehension in their eyes and realized they were being controlled.

"Don't hurt them if possible," I screamed out to everyone in the room and ran towards Cecil just as he vanished in black puffs of smoke.

I somehow managed to grab a hold of him.

I landed on a rough surface as the gravel dug into my skin. I tried to stand but realized I'd twisted my ankle.

"So little girl. Without your entourage. Poor helpless princess. Your end has come." He cackled.

"Try me old man." I snarled.

He sent waves of dark magic to choke me but I put up a shield just in time.

I concentrated and attacked him with as much magic as I could muster.

## Ashmita Ghosh

"I see you've been working hard. But you little fool. I'm hundreds of years older than you. You think you can face me alone?" he smirked.

"That's where you're wrong." I heard my brother's voice just as I felt his magic in the room.

Slowly one by one my siblings attacked him too.

Even as we worked together it was hard facing Cecil. Cecil was stronger than all of us. But maybe as one...

Cecil's magic got stronger by the second.

A bead of sweat trickled down my forehead from the effort we put in. It was taking a toll on us. I could feel myself become woozy. I felt something wet on my lips and noticed my nose had begun to bleed. A classic symptom of magic overuse. I tried to plow through the throbbing in my head.

"I can do this all day but looking at you, I'm not sure you can keep up dearie." He laughed.

"We will...we will not stop until you're dead or we're dead," Zafi growled.

"Naïve little children." He shook his head.

I could feel the darkness trying to envelop me, try to take over my body. Exhaustion coursed through me. I saw black spots but refused to give up.

The darkness seemed to surround me, engulfing me completely.

## Chapter 44

All of a sudden the room seemed to light up, controlling my magic seemed easier. My vision cleared up. I looked around the room and was greeted by the face of the man I loved. Aaron.

"What are you guys doing here?" I asked Aaron and Viola who seemed to have joined us in an effort to overpower Cecil.

"We defeat him together," Viola said.

"That was supposed to be the four of us," Zander said.

"No. It's all the realms of Magik together as one." Theo said joining us.

"Everyone accounted for," Aaron smirked at me.

"You're crazy." I shook my head finding it easier to concentrate on the magic. Cecil's efforts to rebuff our attack seemed to get more and more exhaustive by the second.

A few moments ago it was us who were suffering and now it was him on the ground trying to fight our magic.

"For a newbie, you're not too bad at magic," Ashton told Aaron.

"Thanks, man. I had a great teacher." He winked at me.

Candy seemed to run into the room and seeing what everyone was up to joined in.

That was enough to overpower Cecil, the last dark one.

## Ashmita Ghosh

In front of our eyes, he disintegrated into ashes.

I stood up straighter and all of a sudden my legs vanished from under me and I lost consciousness.

“Ash...” I heard a voice.

“Please wake up. I love you.” His voice floated in.

The light blinded me as I tried to open my eyes.

“Water.” I tried to say but it came out distorted, my throat hurt so bad. It was like my mouth was a desert and my tongue seemed to be stuck to the roof of my mouth.

“Here.” Aaron handed me a cup of the water guiding it to my mouth helping me drink it.

The cold liquid trickled down my throat and I sighed in relief taking bigger gulps.

“How are you feeling?” he asked.

“Like a herd of elephants just trampled me.” I laughed and then bent over coughing.

“I’ve been terrified. You passed out as soon as we defeated Cecil. He vanished and you collapsed. Ashton, Zafi, and Zan too. I thought I’d lost you. I’ve been sitting here for days waiting for you to wake up. I wasn’t sure if you were going to. And then Zafi woke up yesterday. It gave me hope. I’ve been sitting and talking to you for days.” He said.

“How long was I out for?” I asked.

## Dear Toon

“One week. Your aunt is taking care of everything. The guards snapped out of Cecil’s control as soon as he died and Angelica is stabilizing itself. The government is taking care of things and informing the citizens of everything.” He said.

“A week.” I wondered.

“You’re my light in the darkness.” He whispered kissing me.

“I love you!” I said kissing him.

“You have no idea how much you mean to me.” He said.

## Chapter 45

"My Queen, are you saying you will forsake the throne?" the Governor stared at me with wide eyes.

The coronation happened the day after I woke up, it was such a rush I barely had time to breathe. Over the last forty-eight hours I'd decided on what I wanted to do with the kingdom.

"No. I'm saying along with the Royal family ruling over the kingdom, we also have a democratic government chosen by our people. It'll make managing the kingdoms easier. I'm saying we do this for both Faerietopia and Angelica. King Hathaway has decided to do the same, the royal families of Mythica are also contemplating it. I'm not saying we won't part-take in our kingdoms' matters; I'm saying we will look over parts of the kingdom." I said.

"We all want a normal life but still wish to be part of our kingdom. The four of us have talked this through. It's been finalized. We are to announce our decision at the open court tomorrow. Queen Zafira and I will go to Faerietopia and Queen Ashley and King Zander shall be here in Angelica." Ashton announced.

"So you all are going to leave again?" he asked.

"No. We'll be here when needed. We'll return to earth after everything here has settled. But we do want to finish school. I've decided to move out of the palace and live in the human world. But that shouldn't matter. I can use a portal." I said.

## Dear Toon

I knew in some ways my decision was selfish but I believed that if we had a proper government structure we'd be safer. If something were to happen to us, heaven forbid, we'd never face what we did over the past few months.

"How do you expect this to go?" he asked.

"We decided that we'd have a council meeting every month, the government and the four of us and we'd divide the work amongst us. Ashley will take the Winter Court, Ashton will take the Summer Court, Zafi will take the Fall Court and I'll take the Spring Court. If we're needed, you can reach us depending on whose Court's in session." Zander said.

"And we will form a council to bring the different kingdoms together," Zafira said.

"Together with all the kingdoms of Magik stands stronger than all its enemies." Ashton agreed.

"I'm not sure how successful this will be." The governor said.

"If we don't give it a shot, we'll never know," I said.

"As you say, your majesty." He bowed to us and asked permission to leave. All of this seemed so surreal. It's like people were intimidated by us and it was so weird.

I sighed dropping into my seat sighing as there was another knock on the door of the throne room.

"Bad timing?" Aaron asked peeping in.

"Nope!" I said making my way to him.

## **Ashmita Ghosh**

“Morning. You weren’t in bed when I woke up.” He said kissing me.

“Had a meeting,” I said deepening the kiss.

“Dude! Stop kissing my sister in front of me.” Ashton threw something at our heads but Aaron managed to catch it.

I was so glad that the two of them got along. They’d spent some time together over the last few days. Theo, Aaron, Ashton and Zander even had a guys’ night.

“So, we have a long day ahead of us,” Aaron said leading me out of the room.

“Why?” I asked.

“Don’t tell me you forgot it’s our one-month anniversary.” he said.

“It feels like we’ve been together so much longer.” I sigh.

“It’s been the best month of my life. Dress comfy. I’ll meet you in the garden.” He said kissing me and walked away.

“I love you,” I said.

“Love you more.” He winked.

I joined Aaron in the garden where a portal stood.

“Where are we going?” I asked as I clutched onto his hand as we walked into the portal.

I gasped at what stood before me when I opened my eyes.

We were at the same place we had our first date!

## Dear Toon

“This is amazing!” I squealed hugging Aaron.

“I thought you’d say something like that.” He smiled.

“Come on! We’re wasting precious time!” I said running towards the ticket counter.

I drag him around the carnival taking him to every little ride.

After the last few weeks, this was the perfect day. A much-needed break.

# **Epilogue**

Ten years had gone by in the blink of an eye.

At first, it had been hard to adjust to living in both the human world and Magiks but with time I had learned how to balance it.

I stood at the entrance of the ballroom at the palace in Mythica. This year's Annual Peace Ball was held by the Werewolves.

I looped my arm through Aaron's and he kissed my temple as our entrance was announced.

Our lives had changed in so many ways but in some ways, it was just the same. Every day I thank whoever is responsible for how my life turned out.

I miss my parents but it's easier to remember them, it doesn't crush me to think of them.

Sometimes I just like to sit in their room and remember them.

I smiled as we passed a knight, nodding my greetings.

Aaron and I made our way to where our family was waiting for us.

"Took you long enough. Where were you?" Candy asked.

"Got stuck at work," I said.

## Dear Toon

Candy and Zander had finally started dating a year after the incident with Cecil. All of us had gone back to Springfield's to finish school, except Ashton, he went to Atlantis.

I was content with everything in my life right now and hoped things would continue the way they had been.

A clinking sound echoed through the room catching all of our attention as Alpha and Luna stood on the top of the spiral staircase.

"It doesn't take a hero to win a war, an army is needed. A united army. And we're proud to say that even after all these years, our kingdoms stand as one. It's been ten years since our Kingdoms created a new Treaty and it's marvelous to see how strong it stands. And may this peace last for a long time." Luna Welma said raising her glass and the room joined her raising their own glasses.

Peace.

Ashmita Ghosh

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# Ashmita Ghosh

I am a young writer who wants to use this platform to share her work. In the crazy hectic mess that is my life, writing happens to be my only escape from reality. The pen is mightier than the sword so fight the battle of life with the best weapon there is! Writing is like magic and it's beauty is incomparable to anything else in this world.



ashghosh.writergash@gmail.com



@AshGhosh2299



writergash.weebly.com

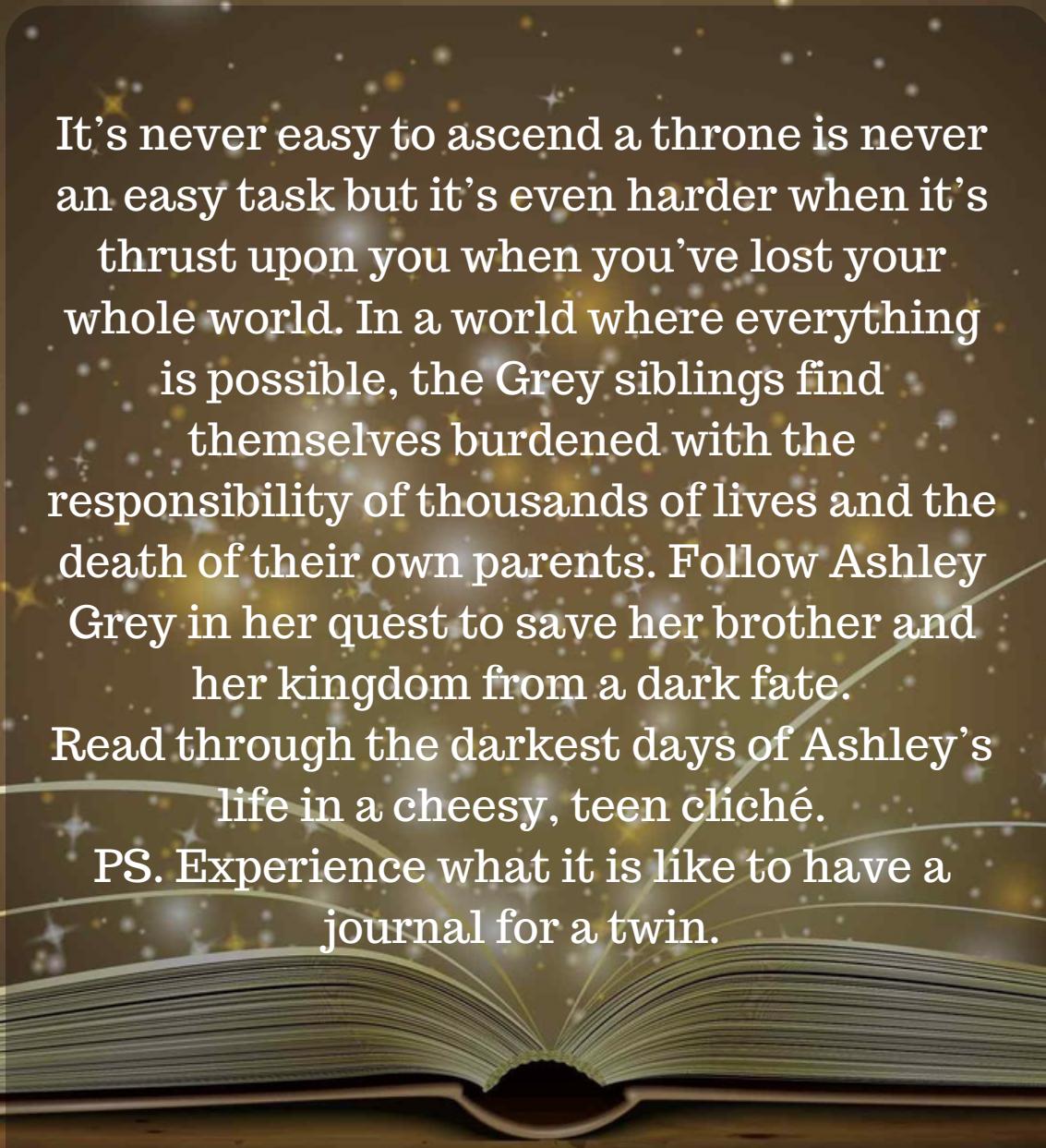


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It's never easy to ascend a throne is never an easy task but it's even harder when it's thrust upon you when you've lost your whole world. In a world where everything is possible, the Grey siblings find themselves burdened with the responsibility of thousands of lives and the death of their own parents. Follow Ashley Grey in her quest to save her brother and her kingdom from a dark fate.

Read through the darkest days of Ashley's life in a cheesy, teen cliché.

PS. Experience what it is like to have a journal for a twin.



Ashmita Ghosh