

Her Destined Ride

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About this edition

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Chapter 1: HER SUNNY LIFE

"Ready, in one, two, three... smile!" She posed her best smile as she was standing between the large crowd of more than fifteen people. At the age of seventy-six, her grace and poise is still a bomb for the many people who admired her the most. Her health is still at its peak. Whenever people look at her physique, they couldn't easily guess her age if she will not reveal it herself.

She's wearing a classic, elegant cape sleeve floral blazer worn over a nude-colored turtle-neck top with matching white jeans paired with crystal stiletto heels.

"Wow, miss Sunny Grainger is really the best!" One of her die-hard fans exclaimed with glistening eyes.

"My gosh, I came all the way here just to see her! I mean, that twenty-two hour flight by plane is all worth it!" Another one boasted from the other.

"She's real indeed. I can't believe I am finally meeting her!"

She smiled as soon as she heard them and most of her fans that's more than willing to hear from her. It's the most awaited day of the year again. She will be the major guest speaker for today's event about empowering women since it is women's month. A lot of delegates were expected to be present for this event that's coming from different countries around the world.

She waved gracefully as she passed by the crowds from different countries. Some people, if they will notice her coming towards their direction, they will get their cameras or phones right away. They will take pictures of her, mostly candid ones.

"Madam Grainger, this way please." She held her chin high as she showed little to no reaction to the people assisting her.

"We apologize for the volume of people checking in this hotel, madam. They were just too excited to finally meet you in person." Her personal assistant walked beside her as she said those words.

"Well, that's understandable, honey. Let them. I am also excited to meet all of them."

"Madam, I regret to inform you that you cannot meet all of your fans. Your schedule is tight for today alone. Tomorrow's schedules are still tentative."

"Goodness gracious! What do they think of me? A pre-teen? They are not respecting an old woman." She sighed as she entered her VIP suit. Her personal assistant opened her door for her using a card.

"Madam, you don't look old, honestly speaking. Your essential oils are sold out in seconds."

"Thank you for the update, dear."

"I am more than happy to do it for you, madam." Her personal assistant smiled as she sighed. Knowing Ms. Grainger, she doesn't easily compliment anyone unless she's pleased with their services. She loves to admire those who could do the things she wanted in the most perfect manner.

"Please rest here for a while, madam. We just landed from our flight. Time check," She glanced on her wristwatch and smiled.

"It's four in the afternoon. Your schedule for pictorials will be at 8:00 PM. I will go back here to check on you later, madam."

"Alright, do that Valerie." She nodded as Valerie closed her door. She looked around as she sat down on one of the most comfortable sofa beds in her presidential VIP suit. She could feel the softness of the material behind her. She admit, it made her feel relaxed so much that she wanted to close her eyes.

However, she became very excited because this is an antique hotel she's in. Before she even accepted the invitation, she did her own research.

This hotel has the best antiques in the world included as their decoration. She will be seeing the 1957 Corvette that she's been dreaming of gazing. She went near the window to see the antique car and it is indeed true. It is displayed between the garden. I can't help but to playfully tap my fingers on the window.

She went outside her room and walked along the quiet hallway, and only her clicking stilettos were heard. When she gazed her eyes around the hallway, it got foggy and mysterious all of a sudden.

An old woman her age appeared in front of her. She wore a simple dress from the 1950s. She beamed an inviting smile as she moved her hand as if letting Sunny come near her.

"You have lived a full life." She greeted as she came closer to her.

"That's what they all say, thank you." The woman held her hand as she looked into her eyes. Sunny gave her a puzzled look.

"Do I know you, perhaps?"

"Not at this age. I am only a part of your past. Do you really want to know me?" She smiled and it left Sunny full of confusion clouded in her mind.

"Yes, I guess. The way I look at you, you seem to know me very well."

"Okay, let me introduce myself," The old woman smiled as she tightened her grip on her hand.

"Madam? Please wake up..." Valerie gently tapped her shoulders that caused her to wake up all of a sudden.

Was that a dream?

But, she knew that she opened the door to her room a while ago. How can she forget that it led her to a quiet hallway? There, she met a friendly old woman, probably as old as she was. How come that it is only a dream when she could still feel the tightness of the old woman's grip on her arm?

"Madam, are you alright?" Valerie brought her to her senses again.

"Y-Yes. What's my schedule for tonight?"

"Madam, I asked the management to just resume the remaining late night activities by tomorrow. You will only have the pictorial with some delegates and a small talk with them at the dinner gala."

"What a relief. Thank you for doing a great job, Valerie." She smiled at her personal assistant who nodded right away.

"Anything for you, madam."

"Let's get ready for the dinner gala. I will be ready in forty minutes."

"I got that, madam. I will return here after forty minutes for you."

"Better get dressed, too. You are the reflection of me, remember that."

"Yes, madam. I will keep that in mind."

Sunny Grainger faced in front of the big mirror as she did her own make-up for a glam look. She could still remember the old woman very well. The way she would smile at her as if she knew her somewhere ages ago. She would fail whenever she would try to retrieve whatever information in remembering her. Why is that?

Did that woman come from her past? Why is she troubling her too much just for today? Is the woman ghost of this antique, five-star hotel?

Sunny got the travel brochure from her handbag. She opened the section where she found this hotel: The Empire Cove. Where the past meets the future.

Her eyebrows met as she gently caressed her arm that's gripped by the old woman. The way she held her tight is still there. She can even see a faint, red circling mark near her wrist because of what she did to her.

Will she see her in the dinner gala?

She felt someone opening the door of her VIP room. As expected, Valerie is the one who did that. She wore a long sleeved, black lace dress paired with crystal black stilettos. She also curled the ends of her hair for a stylish look.

Sunny grinned with pride as Valerie did a slo-mo turn for her.

"What do you think, madam?"

"That taste is perfect. I love it so much."

"Madam, I love your backless dress. It is showing your curves more." She showed a slight grin as she also turned around. She wore a black and white with leopard print backless dress that reached her feet. She matched it with five-inch stilettos.

"Madam, you know what? How I wish I could be beautiful like you as I grow older. Can you believe it? Even if you're seventy-six years old, you can still slay stilettos."

Sunny Grainger chuckled as she held Valerie's arm.

"Age is just a number, honey. If you think you're old, you will just feel your body deteriorating. If you don't limit yourself to the things you wanted, you can do anything that you're passionate about."

"Thank you for that great advice, madam. I will always keep it in mind."

"I know you do, Valerie. You're learning a lot as what I have noticed from you. You just have to keep it up."

They went to the function hall of the hotel and everyone is waiting for them to appear. When everyone spotted Ms. Sunny Grainger, they went wild that the host of the evening had to go in front of the stage to announce that they have to respect Ms. Sunny Grainger's space.

"I hope she will say something." Someone whispered to her friend near her.

"Yeah. I want to hear her secrets, you know." She also replied. Sunny Grainger gracefully stood up and went on stage. Everyone cheered as soon as they saw her in front.

"Hello, everyone. I am happy to be finally here before all of you." She smiled as she waved her hand. All eyes were on her as they anticipated what she'll say next.

"The convention will be in three-days time. Let's enjoy the activities prepared by the organization for us. I am only but a part of the big group. Like all of you, I am also excited of what's in store for the week-long convention. For now, let's enjoy the party and meet new friends. Women run the world!" She smiled as everyone clapped to her short message.

Chapter 2: TRIP TO THE MEMORY LANE

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The woman looked at her as if she knew her very well. Being aware of this one gives her goosebumps.

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"Madam, you're indeed awesome! Look at your fans, they can't get over with you." Valerie leaned closer to her as she smiled. They are both holding a wine glass and took a sip on it.

"I am loving this convention. All the delegates came from the respective fields I am admiring the most."

"But you're the best among the rest, madam. In fact, you're the main guest speaker in this convention."

Sunny chuckled because of the amazement of her personal assistant to her. She had known Valerie for more than two years. She's only twenty-seven and yet she's also ambitious. She's a lawyer of Sunny, and a fan of her as well. She treated her job being with Sunny Grainger as the greatest job one could ever have.

Being the assistant of a world-class writer, a top calibre car racer and a wealthy businesswoman, she couldn't simply ask for more. Being Sunny's personal assistant gave her perks and opportunities nobody could easily enjoy.

"Do not admire me too much. Just do your job and gather information of what really my role is, to this convention."

"Yes, madam. I will." Her face became serious all of a sudden as she nodded. In a few minutes, Valerie is out of sight. This made Sunny grins from ear to ear. She's relieved that she got a trusted personal assistant that will make her stay perfect for the coming convention.

She stood up and went to the group of delegates from South America. Like her, each of them is successful of her own. She noticed that the dinner gala only consists of women outnumbering men who were just roaming around the hotel. Some were just curious of what the ongoing party meant at the function hall.

"Hello, Ms. Grainger. What a beautiful sight and an impeccable addition to the group." She smirked as she raised one of her eyebrows. She doesn't know if Helga Seriff really mean those words or she's just being sarcastic.

"I am just checking on everyone, not an addition to this 'impeccable' group." Sunny mimicked the way she said it that the rest of the women in the group laughed out loud.

She saw the grim look upon Helga's face as she gripped her wine glass very tight as she smirked at her. She sipped on her glass wine but she's not avoiding her gaze at Sunny.

"Sunny, we'll be glad if you stay with us for a while. I know you have a lot to share." One of her business colleagues, Rissa Wells. She gently held her arm as she smiled. She politely removed it as she looked into her eyes.

"Good for you, you have a lot of time. I got things to do. I have to go ahead of you, "impeccables". She chuckled as she walked past them, poised and chin held up high as she held her dress.

She heard their quiet scorn while looking at her walking past them. Other delegates were already complaining that their knees were hurting bad because of the heels. Others simply have signs of gout and brittle bones.

She walked between the crowd and she noticed that Valerie rushed towards her, as she did the brisk walking out of nowhere.

"Madam," She said, panting as she is almost catching her breath.

"What is it?"

Chapter 3: LONGING, DREAMING

"Great news. I got the possible questions that will be asked to you in the open forum after one of your talks."

"Hmm," Sunny nodded as she moved her wine glass in a circular motion. She looked at the movement of the wine inside the glass.

"I got the list ready here, madam." She added in a very enthusiastic manner.

"Are you sure those were the questions? I don't want any hassle related to the convention. You knew it too well."

"Of course, madam. It came from credible sources, especially the media that will cover the entire convention." Her secretary rushed at her as she gave a piece of paper to Sunny. She started to scan all the contents from top to bottom.

She examined the list of the exact questions that will be asked of her. She couldn't help but smile about the different questions coming from different people, especially the media that will cover the convention three days from now. She's surprised how fans get curious not only about her life but almost everything about her as well.

What is the secret to your youthful glow?

Do you have the fountain of youth?

What are your future plans?

What do you think is your best talent?

What are your regrets in life?

What can you advise to your fourteen-year-old self?

"That's great." She said as she nodded. However, she didn't see the two questions coming. She couldn't help but to also ask the same questions to herself...

"I have taken care of them that they can't say no. It is better that we have at least three days of preparation for your coming convention." Her secretary reported some details for the coming event. She can't wait for the convention soonest.

"That's what I liked about you. You know what's running in my mind."

"I am learning, madam. Thank you for also giving me the chance to always prove myself."

"Do your job well and we'll be okay."

"I will, madam." She said as she nodded. Sunny leaned closer to her ears and whispered something to her.

"I also want you to tell me about Helga Seriff and her role in the convention." She said while smirking at her. Sunny's secretary also flashed a grin as if she could read her mind.

"Madam, she'll be the one in-charge of the documentation and food selection." As soon as she heard it, Sunny frowned as she folded her arms.

"Oh, the nerve. Please send a request letter to the head of the committee the foods I am particular and allergic of. I also want you to recommend healthy foods since most of the delegates are in their senior years already."

"Consider it done, madam. Anything else?"

"That will be all. Good job, Ms. Valerie Peate."

"The pleasure will always be mine, madam. Please call me if you need me. I will double check your civilian security guards that's roaming around."

"Hmm," Sunny looked around and she noticed that at least five people are looking at her from where they are asked to stand and guard her."

"Wow, how many are they?"

"For your maximum protection madam, I deployed twenty, of which all of them were also dressed aligned to the dinner gala's theme. They were all well-trained and ready to assassinate someone who will try to attempt your life just in case."

"What? Twenty?"

"We're just making sure, madam. Some of them might think you're old. They might use that as an advantage to get you easily."

"They should at least try it so that they'll regret it all their life." Valerie chuckled because of Sunny's toughness.

"Please call me and I will be there right away. There are things that I just have to take care of right now."

"Yup. Do your job well, Valerie." She nodded and left. Sunny noticed that Valerie is already learning from the way she walked away.

Sunny greeted most of the guests but she never interacted with them too much. She knew deep within her what they only intended from her. Some would befriend her for many reasons. Most of it was the things that may benefit them in getting closer to her, which she avoids from happening. She only wanted independent living with few to none to rely on.

She got used to living all by herself for many years now. She slowly went outside the hotel, curious to the garden where the 1957 Corvette was displayed. She looked around and she saw some of her personal bodyguards follow her as quietly and not as obvious as possible that it suddenly annoyed her. She sighed as she stood beside the antique foundation of the hotel's shed when somebody pulled her inside the big bush.

"Hello," The old woman from her dream was the one who pulled her on the bush.

"It's you!" Sunny gasped in shock. But, this is not a dream anymore, right? It is not a dream where somebody will wake her up again to make her believe that none of these happened.

"Yes. I forgot to introduce myself. I am Felizia Khaley. Your colleague from the past." The old woman offered her hand for a handshake. Sunny just looked at her hand as if doubtful if she'll accept it or not.

She held Sunny's hand and placed it on her warm hands as well. She did the handshake for Sunny. She, on the other hand, found her crazy and weird.

"F-Felizia? I couldn't remember that name of yours from my friends from the past, I am sorry."

"I understand. You don't have to. I know you'll remember me someday soon. For you to be aware of, I know everything more than you do."

"Why are you following me? And why do you insist that I knew you even if I couldn't?" Felizia just smiled at her as she shook her head from side to side.

"What do you want, money? I can give it to you right away." Sunny added as she slid her hand on the side of her backless dress. She got a 100-dollar bill and handed it to her.

She smiled as she got the 100-dollar bill. She examined it right away. After looking at it closely, Felizia returned the money to her.

"Why are you returning it?"

"I can see that you need it the most more than I do." Felizia smiled at her as she held her hand again.

"Let's have a trip to the memory lane." Sunny couldn't help but be amazed about the garden where the 1957 Corvette was located. Are they in a different location already? The place doesn't look like

a part of the hotel anymore but they are now in a foggy garden and the car is seen at the center aisle being parked on purpose.

"You may want to try this car. It may answer most of the questions in your mind."

Sunny's POV

I went inside the car as I couldn't help myself grinning. I've always long to drive this car because of its timeless beauty.

I glanced at the mirror of the car. Felizia is not there anymore. When I turned my right, my heart almost jumped because she's already beside me.

Chapter 4: HER EXCITING PAST

She got in the car tapping the steering wheel with her fingers because of too much excitement. It's like giving herself a chance to go back to the kind of adventure that she had with her babies when she was at the peak of her success. She was one of the recognized female car racers in the world because of the distinction awards she got during her younger years.

Driving an incredible car makes her heartbeat rise to its peak. She can't almost hide her emotions as she looks and appreciates the overall look of the Corvette.

"Come with me." She told Felizia. She nodded and agreed with her right away. She opened the car and she sat on the front seat next to Sunny.

"Alright. Show me what you got." She winked as she started the engine. Despite being antique, its engine is still crisp and impressive because it was improved and well-developed over the past years.

"I love it so much! This is the easiest car to drive so far." She's grinning from ear to ear while turning at the unfamiliar road. It's a pavement that gives her the feeling of total de' ja vu. She felt like being here before but she couldn't remember.

"Well, looks like you're the queen of the road now. Could you still drive and show me that 100 km/ph speed? There's no traffic here because it's night time already.

She nodded as she followed what Felizia said. Sunny is the kind of person who loves to show off, most especially to someone who doesn't know her that much. She would often do something to take their breath away.

"Whoah! Is this for real? I feel like flying!" Felizia is almost gripping to whatever she would see around her that will prevent her from rolling over inside the car. She almost forgot that she's wearing a seatbelt because everything keeps bouncing as Sunny added up the speed of the car.

"Well, if you're not into adrenaline rush adventures, then don't trust me as your driver."

"Gosh, I want to end up regretting why I even invited you to drive this car. You can't even slow down even for a second." Felizia whined as she gripped whatever she could grab inside the car for her to not roll all around it.

"Yeah! This is way better than I ever imagined!" Sunny is caught up in a moment that Felizia just looked at her and gave her that mysterious smile. She's too focused on the road that she never saw Felizia fading away. She noticed the cute automatic calendar that is displayed in front of her. It showed the month, date and year, real time.

"Thank you so much for giving me the chance...I am so happy now..." She glanced at her side but Felizia is not there anymore.

"Felizia...w-where are you?"

She almost exclaimed but her eyes were still focused on the road.

"Felizia? This is not funny anymore, okay?" She adjusted her speed until she reached the normal speed that drivers used in driving.

Her heart started to race very fast. Where is that woman? Did she just vanish into thin air? Well, Sunny is sure that she never went out the window after she sped off. It's too impossible because all was closed. What a mystery! She attempted to step on the brakes but the car even went faster this time.

She tried going out from the car but to no avail. She then sighed as she continued to drive while her body became exhausted all of a sudden. She felt weak even if she's doing everything to feel active. There were times that her body is not permitting her to do so because of her old age.

She glanced at the automatic calendar that's displayed in front of her that's a part of the antique collection from the 1950s. She was terrified because the automatic calendar moved backwards. From year 2020, it showed her 2019, 2018, its date and week in every year in a swift motion.

Her eyes widened about the sudden changes that she witnessed before her very eyes. She couldn't believe what is happening right now. She tried her best to focus on the road despite the changes happening to her at the moment.

She also noticed her hands on the steering wheel, from her sagging old skin, it turned pinkish and fair. Also, even if she never touches the steering wheel, it is still moving faster as if it has a life of its own.

She stepped on the brakes again but it seemed pointless. She's like stepping on the brakes in vain. She also looked around her as she rubbed her eyes. When she blinked again, and looked beside her, there's no trace of Felizia and she started to really feel scared.

Is Felizia a ghost? Why is she not beside her all of a sudden? Is her sight fooling her all along? As the car ran swiftly, she was brought to a road where their old houses showed up to her.

"W-Wait..." She gasped as her eyes opened wide. She could even identify those houses and name the household one by one. She is too familiar to all of them for so many reasons.

The car started to run slow until it stopped in front of a small house. It is only made up of light materials, especially bamboo wood and some palm leaves carefully knitted to be their roof. It is then covered with a net so that the leaves wouldn't fall off that easy.

Before she could even get a grip of the handle, it opened automatically even if nobody did that for her. She started to have goosebumps all over his body as she went out of the car.

A woman went outside the house as she put both of her hands on her waist. She looked around and when she saw Sunny, she frowned as she took giant steps towards her.

"Where have you been? I've been calling you many times already! I told you not to play in the neighborhood so excessively that you're forgetting all the housework!" She pinched her ear using her pointed fingers. It hurted Sunny a little.

As she looked at her closer, Sunny realized that it is really the younger version of her...mother?

She stretched both of her hands to see what was really happening. It is indeed weird because instead of her familiar well-cared skin, she had a soft, pale skin.

"What is happening?"

"Get inside before I will really give what you're looking for." It was more of a warning that's why Sunny obliged and sprinted into the house. It was generally tidy but not for her as she roamed her gaze inside their small house. Sunny thought that she's more meticulous than her mother, but she's grateful because she got her exact, same personality, way even better.

Before she stepped into the kitchen, she passed by their big mirror but she walked backwards. She knew she glanced at her reflection in a quick pace. Well, it doesn't work.

When Sunny faced the mirror, her loud shriek was heard even to the neighborhood.

Chapter 5: BRING ME BACK TO THE GOOD, OLD TIMES

Her mother rushed inside the house to see what's happening. She frowned when Sunny was looking at the mirror with her jaw open as her eyes widened with shock.

"Mom, I am old already. And all I know is you're already dead—" She poked me on my head with gritted teeth. She looked really mad that she looked as if she wanted to crush me into fine bits any minute from now.

"You're a bad daughter! You seemed very excited that I will be dead and you're only fourteen years old. Who told you that?"

"Mom, that's not what I mean..." She said while putting her two arms in front of her mother as if putting a barrier shield between them.

Is she really talking to her mom? Did she go to the past or to the afterlife? Meeting her mom again for the second time is an odd feeling. She cannot even remember when they've become closer or not at all. Looking at her younger version getting mad to her right now looked like a nightmare more than a good dream. Of all the people! Her mother is dead already in the present time of 2020. That's what she's aware of, but now? They are facing each other on a normal day.

And there she is, right in front of her...scolding her right before her eyes.

"You better wash the dishes instead of doing outrageous things. You really want to get hit by my stick. I will really have a heart attack and die since you're not helping me."

"I am so sorry mom," She can't even believe she's trying to make a conversation with her.

"Don't make unnecessary noise if it's not even important. You're exaggerating things way too much, you know."

"Yes, mom. I will."

"Always follow what I am telling you because I'm your mother."

"Yes mom." She bit her lower lip to prevent herself from reasoning out even more. Even if she will explain to her mom that she came from the future, that she's already in her 70s, she will not believe her, either.

She will just tell her she's crazy. She will just assume that everything she will tell her is the result of her childish imagination of many things.

She walked to their kitchen and started washing the dishes. She tried her best to be very careful not to produce any sound from clunking glass or the sound of plates hitting each other. Her mom will surely think that she's acting up, that even washing the dishes would be against her will. Older people will tell that she's feeling bad, she will put her attention to the plates, put them all together noisily.

She sighed as she formed a lot of bubbles from the soap and transferred it to the sponge.

"You think life is always a fairytale, no it isn't. You have to work hard for your future self to be proud of you."

She could hear her mother telling her those words aloud from the living room five meters away from the kitchen.

"My goodness if only you know I will be a hit worldwide, you will be proud that you gave birth to me." She mumbled while washing the dishes. The glass slipped from her hands, it crashed on the floor. She swallowed when she heard her mother's giant steps towards her. This time, she's holding a stick. She hit her hard, she squirmed with pain.

"Mom, I am so sorry I didn't mean it." She said between sobs.

"You always say that but you're not changing at all. Sunny, grow up. Don't act childish anymore."

"Yes, mom."

Right after Sunny washed the dishes, she hurriedly went outside to look for the car that she drove from her future. She broke down in tears when she couldn't see it anymore

"Is this all a joke? Why would I be back to the past? I can't believe it! I don't want to believe it!" She looked around to also look for Felizia, instead, she was touched by the breeze of fresh air caressing her skin.

She doesn't want to look at her face, either. Seeing her younger face is almost a nightmare to her.

"Sunny! Where are you?" Her heart almost skipped a beat when her mother called her again.

"Mom! I am here!" She ran going inside their house to avoid getting scolded again. Good thing it was summertime.

She simply looked at their calendar and it showed April 27, 1957. She felt like her world had fallen apart all of a sudden. So, it is indeed real. It is not a dream after all! She went back to her fourteen-year-old self!

"What is it, now? Huh?"

"Mom, I am supposed to be old...it is hard to believe but please, I need you to listen to me."

"Sunny, stop hallucinating. It is not helping at all. If you're hungry, go grab some corn to eat."

Sunny scratched her head as she looked at her mother. She looked down as she followed what she just said. She doesn't want her mother to be mad at her for the third, damn time. She's hard-headed and childish based on her mother's description on her. It had to change so that she could return to the convention.

Night came and she noticed that her mother went to her own room, while she was still sitting on their dusty chair in the dining room. She is still looking through the window in front of her.

The car was nowhere to be found. She also couldn't see Felizia, the only person that could answer the questions that she's been keeping for herself ever since she got here in their house. She went to her room. She looked at her tiny bed and as she sat on it, she felt like sitting on a big, cold rock. She has a quilt of her own, being sewn by her mom but it is not soft enough to make her comfortable to sleep.

She tried turning to her left as she laid down on her own bed. However, it pained her back that she couldn't help but to get up from bed as she sat with her back straightened to the headboard. Both of her legs rested together as it stretched long half a meter from the end of the bed.

"My goodness! What did I do to deserve all of these? As far as I could remember, I was just being sarcastic to Hera but I am not mistreating her like others do." She muttered to herself. She didn't even notice that the corners of her mouth were lowered as she raised the inner portion of her brows. She never understood anything that has happened to her. All these time, she only wanted to go back from where she came from.

What will happen to the conference now that she's nowhere to be found? She wanted to blame Felizia because of what happened to her. It's like she lured her to a trap that she couldn't escape easily...well, could she?

Now that she's on her younger self, she is thinking of where to start...

Chapter 6: FINDING FELIZIA

The next morning, she woke up with a lot of body aches. Sunny began stretching and did light exercises for twenty minutes. She noticed that it is already seven in the morning but her mom is not awake yet. She decided to get ready and do something for her. Everything is new to her. However, she's fully aware that her role has changed overnight. She became her mom's daughter at a very young age. There are many things expected of her to do, since she's dependent to rely on her parents at this age. It sucks but she needs to do it.

She prepared scrambled eggs and bought some pieces of soft bread from a nearby bakery. She remembered that she used to like hot chocolate every morning. When she opened their food keeper, she saw a chocolate powder in a tin can. She smiled as she started to heat half a liter of water for breakfast.

She got two empty cups from their old cupboard and she went to the table to set up their food and even the bread that she bought.

"Mom! Breakfast is ready!" She called her with a raised voice. She felt so good that life from the past is so simple. She never noticed her mom standing behind her. She turned to her and she could see her folding her arms as she frowned. She's feeling like she's above cloud nine, now that she's having a chance to prepare something for her mom.

"You know what? If you're frowning, you will look ugly." She said as she giggled. Her mom sat in front of her looking annoyed.

"I got myself a hot chocolate, mom. Would you like coffee?"

"Well, if you start your day with this, I will be happier and you're setting my mood."

"Mom, just eat and be full, and everything else will follow."

She looked at me from head to toe as if I am acting really weird.

"You know what? I find you weird since yesterday. You're naturally quiet but now, I don't think you're my child anymore." She looked at her mom and she noticed she hovered her gaze to her from head to toe.

"Mom!"

She chuckled for the first time that Sunny couldn't help but smile, too. She's glad that her mother appreciated what she did early in the morning. This must be a daily routine from now on.

"Do the housework while I am away. I will just go to the neighborhood to check if they need some house cleaning service." Her mom said, still frowning at her.

"You don't clean your own house but you wanted to clean another house?"

"Just shut up and do as I say."

"Mom, you're a bit complicated, you know." She resisted, trying to explain her side. She had the point and she knew it very well.

"This is work-related, okay? Who will earn money for this family? Who do you expect to support us if I will not do anything?"

Sunny was stunned in a moment. Well, her mother is right. Ever since she set her foot on this house, she never noticed her father's presence. Where could he be at this point of time?

"Just do what I tell you to do without asking a lot of things. I don't need your opinion about this."

Sunny sighed as she looked at her. "Alright."

"And take a bath. You're stinky now. Act like a lady, you're not a kid anymore. Think about your hygiene."

"Mom, don't treat me as one. I know what to do, okay?"

The remaining minutes became silent as they ate their breakfast. As they were sitting facing each other, Sunny had a chance to look and observe her mom's physical appearance and the details of her face.

Sunny had her mom's lovely deep-set, brown eyes. While she had her dad's elegant, straight nose, symmetrical lips, with the lower lip slightly fuller. She would describe her mom to be the older version of her, beautiful even without any make-up on. She can't help but smile because she is seeing her mom again. For a while, she doesn't want to believe that this is really for real this time.

She also had a sprinkled stain of freckles around her upper cheek to her nose bridge which emphasized her fair skin even more. Sunny's skin is a bit tanned because there were times she will be sweeping dried leaves of trees outside of their house.

When her mom left for work, she sneaked outside again to look for the 1957 Corvette that brought her from the future. She sighed when she couldn't see any trace of it again for the second time around.

Is she on a mission right now? Why did she visit her past all of a sudden? Was she cursed by someone? Did someone put her into a magic spell that's why she's now stuck in this time of her past?

With shoulders drooped down, she got the rake and started pulling the pile of leaves to the shallow hole beside their fence. Good thing there were many trees around. The air is fresher from the past compared to the future. She looked around and she could even see houses that's not crowded.

Sunny also noticed that there were a lot of people passing by their house. She could seldom see bikes but most of the time, passersby. Those people were happily talking together while walking with giant steps. She noticed that those people were so used to walking rather than took any form of transportation for their convenience.

There were kids who also waved their hands on her while they were passing in front of their small house. Sunny couldn't help but envy those little girls. They have their beautiful ponytails on their braided, long hair. They also wear beautiful and classy clothes.

Sunny couldn't help but to look at herself. She only wore a simple blouse, wornout trousers and an old, ragged apron which had holes on it.

They knew her very well while she couldn't even name everyone who waved at her. That seemed weird. Sunny massaged her forehead a bit as she tried to remember them one by one but to no avail. She rushed in going outside, hoping to find Felizia.

"Felizia! Can someone tell me where Felizia is? Please?"

She shouted at the group of people who waved at her from a while ago. Nobody ever turned her back as she kept on calling them with new names. She noticed as those people went farther, they shook their heads. Are they making fun of her? Maybe they are thinking that she's getting crazy. It made her sad and lonely all of a sudden.

Is she going to spend all these teenage years looking for Felizia so that she will return her to the future again? That, she's not very sure of.

Sunny's curiosity just got even wilder. All she thinks about is Felizia. She knew that she's the only one that could ever answer her questions in mind.

Chapter 7: FRAGMENTS OF THE PAST

Sunny went inside their house to look around the furniture that they have. This place is entirely different from the things she had from the present. Sunny felt like going to a different dimension. She admits that it's her first time to see a lot of things from the past. She thinks that most of the people from the present already threw different kinds of things in front of her. That's why she never saw any of it herself from 2020.

It was just a cute console TV from 1952. Because she's a bit fond of antique things, she could identify it right away. Sunny smiled as she got excited all of a sudden. She looked at it closely and it looked like a small brown box with a rectangular lens in front of it. There were also controllers that's simple to understand.

She turned the knob for power and volume in one on the left part. While on the right part were the fine tuning and if you want to switch channels.

She turned the TV on and it showed her a black and white screen where an ongoing game show is currently airing.

Because of the monotonous tone of the game master and the suppressed enthusiasm that was shown by the contestants, Sunny doesn't feel like continuing the show anymore. Gosh, shows were boring from a long time ago. It's only the enthusiasm of the audience that's keeping the game interesting. She instantly missed the colored Smart TV she had in her mansion from the future of 2020.

When she turned the TV off, there was silence. It is too quiet that she could hear the chirping of the birds hopping along the branches of a nearby tree, the rustling sound of the wind.

She knelt in front of the idiot box and sobbed again. She tried to pinch and even slap herself to confirm if she's only dreaming. Sadly, she's not. She could also see a transistor radio and some things that's from the past. The things were way too outdated that she didn't know how to even turn it on.

She went outside again to look for the 1957 Corvette but it is nowhere in sight. She sat on one of the chairs as she covered her hands on her face. Can she still return to the present? No matter how she hurt herself, it is always in vain because she knew that she's not dreaming right now. When she remembered that her mom would be returning before lunch time, he got up and rushed towards the kitchen. She has to prepare their lunch before her mother will know that she's not doing anything again.

She prepared meat stew with vegetables for lunch. Good thing her mom has some meat left in the cooler.

"I'm home!" Her heart suddenly beat fast from the sound of her mom's voice. Good thing the meat stew with vegetables was cooked just in time before she arrived.

"Mom, good thing you're here now." She saw Sunny wiping her hands on her apron as she smiled sweetly at her. She couldn't help but to raise one of her eyebrows as she gazed at her from head to toe. She came towards her with a weary look.

"Are you sure you cook this one?" Her mom put her hand on her waist as she tasted what she cooked for her a while ago. It's smoking hot and it is obvious that it is newly boiled.

"Why, yes," She opened the casserole's lid and they could smell the freshly cooked meat with the aroma of the familiar combination of vegetables that made them both hungry in an instant.

Her mom prepared the plates on the table as she got two bowls and placed the meat stew to both of it. Her mom sat in front of her right away.

"This really tastes good. Where did you learn to cook this one? I know I haven't taught you to cook any meal?"

She just looked at her without even blinking. Could she convince her that she really came from the future? Sunny badly ever wanted to brag that she's the one who personally cooked for herself. It's a daily routine inside her mansion decades from now. However, could she ever prove it to her mom? She doesn't want her to say that she's getting crazy again.

"How's your job, mom?"

"Good. Mr. Athkinson wanted me to go to his house after this lunch."

She looked at her mom as she ate her part of the meat stew. Why is it that she had goosebumps when she mentioned Mr. Athkinson all of a sudden? Sunny tried her best to recall him but she couldn't remember some information about him.

"Mr. Athkinson?" She's also surprised of why she thought of him aloud that her mom put her spoon beside her bowl.

"Sunny...I hope you're not taking this very hard on your part. Mr. Athkinson is a good man."

Now, she's right. Most of his intuitions are correct, even in the future far from now.

Sunny just sighed as she met her mother's gaze.

"What time are you going home?" Sunny asked her dryly. She gave her an awkward smile as she got her a tiny mirror inside her pocket. She simply glanced at her reflection and smiled like an excited teenager to meet her date.

"I don't know when exactly. It would be really late if he would drive me home at 8:00 P.M."

"Just stick to the time that you promised me." She stood up as she gave her mother a backhug.

"I know you will eventually understand everything." Her mother touched both of her hands that hugged her as she lifted her head to see her reaction. Sunny just nodded and that made her mother smile more.

They finished lunch and Sunny just watched her mother select old but classy dresses. She never thought that she had those collections for herself.

She also retouched her makeup and did her weird hairdo. Her red dyed hair is reaching her neck and it has a stiff fly-away hairstyle.

"How do I look?" She slowly turned around as she wore the old rose sleeved dress with matching two inches heels. She also has a white hand mitten that's reaching her wrists.

"Mom, are you sure you will work for Mr. Athkinson? You are more likely to have a date somewhere rather than cleaning his house."

"My dear, even if you're only a housekeeper, you have to have a good taste when it comes to fashion." She said as she flaunted her body even more, showing how it is to pose lady-like to other people.

"Mom, I always believe that simplicity is beauty."

"If you will show that, do you think you could marry a rich, young gentleman? Think, Sunny! Think!"

Sunny looked at her mom and smirked. Here she goes again. If only her mother knew that she endured being single for almost all her life just to reach her ambition, she will never believe it herself.

She realized that it is better to show your true self rather than pretend to be someone you're not...

Chapter 8: GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

Sunny cleaned the whole house while waiting for her mother. It was a boring summer of May 1957. She swept their floor and wiped tables. She also dust off the dirt from their windows. She sat on one of the chairs again and sighed.

Yes. She was only fourteen for this period. She put her left hand on her left cheek. There's something wrong with the whole journey. If somebody made her go back to the past, that person should also delete her memories of the future. She's getting crazier every time she would think that she might be stuck in this time of her life for many years again. How come she could still remember her and the thoughts about her being stuck in the past when she came from the future?

She decided to go outside for a walk. She locked all their doors just to make sure. As she observed the other houses at least three meters of distance from theirs, she could say everything was generally quiet. This kind of environment is totally new to her.

She also glanced at the nearby house and on what the people are doing. Surprisingly, they just left their door open without worrying somebody to go inside.

"Hello! Can I help you?" A lady in her mid 30s greeted her with a smile. She stepped back a little as she gave her an awkward smile. She looked really polite that she's not used to it.

"Why are most of the doors open?"

"Well, they liked it that way, dear. Some of the neighborhood also came to visit that's why." She answered her in a cheerful tone. Sunny couldn't help but frown a little.

"Wow...so you mean the neighborhood knew each other so well? I am just wondering because houses were far from each other."

"Yes. Everyone is very friendly."

The lady is just chuckling at her expression. She seemed really amused at Sunny for acting like that. She sounded very curious and excited at the same time for asking cute questions about what she sees.

"I am just wondering. You know, you couldn't tell when thieves will attack houses."

"Whoah, that's too much negativity coming from a young girl like you." She replied with a giggle. Sunny couldn't help but to feel so annoyed.

"What do you mean, ma'am?"

"For the record, there wasn't any case in our place for the past three months. Everyone in the neighborhood knew each other pretty well. We don't have those kinds of people that you're talking about."

"Oh, I see," Sunny nodded as she looked around. People with fine-looking vintage dresses and suits greeted each other as they passed them. Others were waving at her that the woman giggled at her reaction.

"Young girl, you're acting as if you're new to this place, well in fact, you're not. I could see you sometimes."

"Sorry, miss. I am just stating possibilities, you know."

"As far as I could remember, you're the quiet daughter of a housekeeper in the neighborhood, right?" Sunny looked at her expression. The way she said those words were not rude because she's smiling.

"R-Right," She smiled back in an awkward manner.

"I never thought I could talk to you like this. It's nice to meet a pretty girl like you."

"Thank you,"

"I am Kelly Sanders. Your mom knew me already. Please tell her that I am needing her service for the next two days."

"I will, thank you, Kelly." Sunny nodded and smiled at her. She bid goodbye and started off going to the opposite direction of where Sunny is heading to.

She couldn't help but to stare at the blank space. She couldn't even understand people at this period of time. Are they really this modest? Or were they taking sarcasm to the highest level? She couldn't even tell when one is already indicating it to her.

As far as she could remember, she couldn't remember this exact thing from her past. All she knew was being successful, she never realized the fact that her mother was working for other people for both of them to live.

However, she didn't like the part that her mom was all glammed up, she even put on a nice vintage dress as if she will be attending a date of a lifetime. It cringed the hell out of Sunny. So this was an 'old school flirting moments' looked like.

She sighed as she continued gazing at the places around the neighborhood. She saw a butcher's shop. She was amazed how big the price tags were from a long time ago. She couldn't believe that it was even seen even three meters from where she is standing right now.

She also passed by a public library in the middle of the town. It is next to the capitol. Sunny admired how big and spacious the public library is. She went inside with a smile. Good thing the librarian is really accommodating. Sunny knew that the librarian might assume her to be a hard-working student that she didn't bother asking a lot about her.

"Well, if she loves to read, who are we to stop her?"

"Jill, what if she will mess around? Look at what she's wearing. She's almost dressed in rags, our books might get dirty."

Sunny frowned when she overheard one employee talking to the librarian. She looked back and she could see that employee looking at her from head to toe.

Wow, even from a long time ago, she never thought she could be discriminated so easily. She closed her fist and continued to one of the aisles full of fiction books. When she passed by the comic books, she stopped and opened them right away. Sunny opened the book and read it as she walked between the aisle. While she's looking down, she bumped into somebody.

"S-Sorry..." She said as she met his gaze.

Those pair of brown eyes...it's like expressing something she never found in anyone else's gaze. It suddenly wanted to melt her on the spot she couldn't help but to swallow hard.

"It's fine." He smiled and walked past her. Everything was in slow motion at that time. Sunny never understood what was the purpose of why her heart suddenly beat so fast.

She turned her back and checked on him again. She realized that he's taller than her. His shoulders were a bit broader but Sunny could assume that his age were almost the same as her.

It's the first time that she encountered a moment like this and she never thought that it could be this intense.

Chapter 9: TRAPPED AT THE MOMENT

Sunny's POV

I continued glancing at him from my back. Was I being too obvious?

I quickly grabbed one of the books beside me and covered my face with it. When I realized that it was upside-down, I wanted to evaporate from where I am standing right now.

It is really embarrassing. What surprised me is the reaction I had when I bumped on him.

It's the first time that I felt awkward when acting in front of a guy. Was it because I am trapped in a teenager's body?

Gross.

However, I felt my heart racing wild. I couldn't even understand the rush of weird emotions all of a sudden.

My neck went longer when I tried looking for him. As far as I could remember, I just saw his face for less than ten seconds. But I am sure I will remember his face when I'll be meeting him once more.

My steps went faster as I went out from the shelf of comic books. I felt so unlucky because I was too focused on his face I haven't noticed what he's wearing. I looked from left to right and sighed. I couldn't see him anywhere.

I went to the other aisles and pulled some educational books for college. I never knew it caught the attention of most people inside the library.

"Huh? Can she read that already? She's still young..."

"She's one, weird kid."

Whoah, judgemental adults. I never thought I'll be looked down like this, at this age from a long time ago. Am I not capable of reading it for myself? If only they know that I am a seventy-six-year-old trapped in a fourteen-year-old teenager.

I secretly grinned at them. I just want to think that they will be dead by 2020 somehow. It made me happy. They could backbite all they want. They'll die anyway soon. I am sure they will be the first to die before I do.

I sat on one of the tables. I never thought reading alone could be this boring. As I opened the books that I usually read, I felt dizzy all of a sudden.

I looked at the contents of the book and the letters were like dancing in my sight. I rubbed both my eyes and looked at the first five pages of the book. I scanned it but I never understood any word.

"W-What's this?" I muttered as I tried reading a lot of words but they're like special characters that I have never seen before. I stood up and stomped my feet as I went towards the kind librarian.

"Ma'am..."

"Yes, dear?" She smiled as she looked at me.

"I just want to ask things about this book." She leaned closer to me as she glanced what book I got for myself.

"Hmm...that's one of my favorite educational books in Psychology. What do you want to ask? Maybe I could help?"

"No, not about the content, ma'am," I couldn't help but to bite my lower lip. Should I ask what's in my mind? She might think I am crazy or stupid.

"Can you read the contents?" I opened it for her to check for herself. She smiled as she looked at the book and a minute more, she shifted her gaze at me.

"Why? Which part do you find it hard to understand?"

"E-Everything," I stuttered. I avoided my gaze at her, she couldn't help but chuckle.

"Of course my dear! You're still young to understand the contents of that book. Should you be reading anything from it? I could summarize it for you if you want,"

"No, ma'am. That's not what I mean. You know, in my past life, I could understand the contents. But now, they're only special characters. You know what I mean?" She raised one of her eyebrows as she gave me a weird look.

"Past life?"

"Ma'am, I know I may sound weird but it is true." I whispered as I leaned closer to her. She hovered her gaze from my head and downwards and met my eyes again.

"Are you really okay? Have you eaten?" I groaned as I looked at her.

Right. There's no way she would believe in me. How could I ever explain to her that I came from 2020 when it is only 1957? I could see her pulling something from her pocket as she glanced at me.

"Here," I am a bit surprised when she handed me a dollar bill. She smiled as she placed it on my opened palms and closed it.

"I know you need it the most. If you're hungry, please buy something that you liked using that amount."

She left before I even reacted. Do I look like a beggar right now? I rubbed my cheeks with both of my hands. I couldn't help but frown because I am feeling annoyed. I followed her with my gaze and I could see that she only had good intentions.

I sighed as I slowly walked outside the public library. It still confused me so much that I can't read what's in the book.

Have I become dumb after going back to my past life? Whoever did this to me intended to really make my life suffer so much. How I wish my memory of 2020 was also gone as I go back to this period of my life.

I remembered my mom and what I left back home. I walked as fast as I could without looking back. I hope mom is not going back yet because if she did, I will surely be dead.

I brisk-walked and I could see myself running until I reached our doorstep. I twitched the doorknob as I opened our door. I sighed with relief when I saw that nobody was around. I started walking to the kitchen, cleaned the sink and washed the remaining dishes.

I couldn't help but stop and smile when I remember his face. Will I see him again? I wish our paths will cross again.

Chapter 10: DECISIONS AND DELUSIONS

Sunny's POV

I continued glancing at him from my back. Was I being too obvious? My heartbeat raced very fast. I don't know what to do at the moment. I am more than terrified and nervous at the same time.

I quickly grabbed one of the books beside me and covered my face with it. When I realized that it was upside-down, I wanted to evaporate from where I am standing right now.

It is really embarrassing. What surprised me is the reaction I had when I bumped on him.

It's the first time that I felt awkward when acting in front of a guy. Was it because I am trapped in a teenager's body? I felt like going back from that time when being silly is an excusable thing to do. When acting like this is just a very normal thing to do.

Gross. My goodness! Do I still even know myself now?

However, I felt my heart racing wild. I couldn't even understand the rush of weird emotions all of a sudden.

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"Here," I am a bit surprised when she handed me a dollar bill. She smiled as she placed it on my opened palms and closed it.

"I know you need it the most. If you're hungry, please buy something that you liked using that amount."

She left before I even reacted. Do I look like a beggar right now? I rubbed my cheeks with both of my hands. I couldn't help but frown because I am feeling annoyed. I followed her with my gaze and I could see that she only had good intentions.

I sighed as I slowly walked outside the public library. It still confused me so much that I can't read what's in the book.

Have I become dumb after going back to my past life? Whoever did this to me intended to really make my life suffer so much. How I wish my memory of 2020 was also gone as I go back to this period of my life.

I remembered my mom and what I left back home. I walked as fast as I could without looking back. I hope mom is not going back yet because if she did, I will surely be dead.

I brisk-walked and I could see myself running until I reached our doorstep. I twitched the doorknob as I opened our door. I sighed with relief when I saw that nobody was around. I started walking to the kitchen, cleaned the sink and washed the remaining dishes.

I couldn't help but stop and smile when I remember his face. Will I see him again? I wish our paths will cross again.

Chapter 11: FATED, HATED

Sunny and her mom sat in silence. They've shared meals during breakfast, her mom will go out to clean other's houses, she'll be back later this afternoon.

In the end, she will be left with a paper and a pen.

"What am I going to do with this?" Sunny asked with raised eyebrows. Her mom looked at her and suddenly avoided her gaze. She bit her lip that she didn't know what to do with her.

"Well, you can draw what you liked, you know, the things that you want to express."

"What? You promise to teach me how to read. What is it this time?"

"Sunny look, I am busy okay? Wait for me tonight. I will return home by 7:00 PM." Sunny glanced at their wall clock and it was 10:00 AM. She sighed and nodded. Even if she's not really trusting her mom and what she's telling her, she must keep her faith to her words.

As usual, she dressed up like a single lady. No children, no responsibilities. She put her best vintage green polka dotted dress and turned around in front of the mirror.

"How do I look, dear?" She smiled at her daughter. Sunny looked at her from head to toe.

"You look stunning, mom." She weakly replied. Her mother patted her on the head and she almost leaped with joy in going outside their house.

She stopped walking as if she forgot something. Sunny is following her up to their fence gate.

"Please take care and look after our house. You're all alone here so don't go outside."

"Y-Yes, mom." She replied as she looked down. Her mother tapped her head once more as she walked past the fence. Sunny followed her mom with her gaze and sighed once again.

It got clearer to her this time. She never understood anything from the book because she's a non-reader in the first place.

She went inside their house and she returned to their dining table. She saw a thick, old notebook and a pen. She slowly opened the pages and all she could see was the blank space that stared at her back. She gripped the pen and started drawing stick figures. She drew a circle, it became a happy face then. She had drawn a hair on top of the smiley and a long gown. Next to her is another smiley with long hair.

She stopped when she realized she had drawn her personal assistant. How she missed all the attention that she's getting in the year 2020. Sunny could assume that there's nobody who doesn't know her on that particular year in the future.

Being stuck on her past is the most ridiculous thing that could ever happen to her at the moment. She did not even wish for all of this to happen to her. All she ever wanted is to live long, write beautiful stories with lessons, empower women and live life to the fullest.

She also tried drawing the model of the car that she drove all the way from year 2020. The worst thing is, it also disappeared into the thin air.

She had drawn many books she has ever written. She couldn't even count all of them anymore. She glanced at the wall clock again. It is already 10:30 A.M. She suddenly got a brilliant idea. She stood up and looked at herself in the mirror. She tried fixing herself to look decent.

She has to go back to the library to ask for help. If her mom couldn't have time for her, the librarian could definitely help her. She remembered that librarian who was really kind to her.

She made sure she locked all the doors of their house. She ran as fast as she could, overtaking those people who were sauntering on the sidewalk. They even noticed her being in a hurry.

The librarian greeted her with a smile as she panted, almost catching her breath.

"Hello, young girl, we meet again,"

"Hello! I haven't got the chance to thank you, ma'am."

She chuckled as if feeling really amused.

"Oh, never mind my dear. Come inside, the books are waiting." She encircles her arms around her shoulders as they went inside the public library.

She instructed her employee to take over her table as they sat down to one of the tables.

"Dear, what you have told me last time really troubled me. I started reading about your condition."

"What condition?" I couldn't help but frown because she heavily misunderstood me.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Well, I have read your condition and from it, I could say you might have dyslexia."

Sunny couldn't believe what she heard from the librarian. She bit her lip to stop her tears from falling. She just couldn't accept the fact that it was the result of her mom's negligence in taking care of her education.

"No, ma'am. I knew the reason why." The librarian nodded as she started to explain why it happened to her. She even told the librarian that she's a 'non-reader' to start with.

"Oh, I see. That means your mom didn't really tell you even the alphabets or numbers. Well, we could consider you learned a few sounds from the things around you."

Sunny scratched her head and met her gaze. She couldn't help but to cry in front of this kind librarian.

"If you considered me a dyslexic, you're wrong because I am even worse than that."

"Dear, don't be too harsh on yourself. I promise I will help you." She looked at her as she held both her hands.

"I am Miss. Marlyn Ang, the officer in charge of our public library." She added with a smile. I always admire her sincerity as she offered her hands. I took it and shook it gently.

"Here, take this," She offered her handkerchief to her.

"Thank you so much, ma'am."

"I am willing to help you for as long as I am here in the library. All you need to do is to go here every morning. We'll be having so much work to do."

"Ma'am, it is an honor to be taught by you."

"It's a pleasure dear. Please don't hate your mom. I know what it feels to work the whole day, feeling worn out when you will reach home."

"I hope you're as understanding as most people in the world...because I am not like you, ma'am."

I am starting to hate my mom." Sunny kept the last sentence for herself as she closed her fist.

Chapter 12: FROM THE TOP

Sunny's POV

I followed her with my gaze.

I could say being a librarian requires a lot of determination and patience. You got to face a lot of people from all walks of life. Considering this place is a public library, I can tell she's really kind. She smiled at some of the students borrowing more than five books. Her aura is really light and charming at the same time. Her personality could match almost everyone she meets day by day.

She loves readers of all ages. She's the most patient librarian I came across all my life. However, I tried remembering everything from my past but I couldn't remember a single memory I have with Miss Marlyn Ang.

Am I really too dumb from my former past that I haven't even remember this kind of struggle? Am I in a different body, mind and heart while these things are happening?

My goodness! If I didn't come back from 2020 to 1957, I wouldn't know I am a non-reader even if I am already fourteen years old. This is more than heartbreaking that anything that has happened to me.

I loudly sighed that the people beside my table turned their attention to me.

"Sorry," I whispered and smiled in an awkward manner.

"How are you doing, dear?" Someone tapped my shoulders that I couldn't help but twitched to confirm if it was really Miss Marlyn.

"Yes, it is just me. Are you bored already?" She sat in front of me again, this time, she placed a lot of books that seemed familiar.

"These are children's books. I also let someone prepare copies of worksheets for beginner students." She looked at me and nodded.

"T-Thank you so much, Miss Marlyn."

"Please don't thank me. Do that if you will learn how to sing the ABC song for me today."

"The alphabet is very easy to sing." I confidently pulled a notebook and opened it. It is still happening. The dancing characters.

"I know you could sing it well when you could memorize our alphabets." She got my hand and opened it for a stretch." You also need this," She added, taking over my hands.

She started showing me the first five letters. She pronounced the sounds of the letters in front of me. She pointed at the first letter and made me take a look at it very well.

"A, B, C, D, E, Please read it this time." I looked around me and I could see the people around me simply observe what I am doing. It is really embarrassing and not a good idea.

"A, B..." I bit my lip as I looked down. I wanted to cry. I felt like some people were laughing behind my back.

"Dear, don't mind them."

"But, I can't help it, Miss Marlyn. I pity myself for being both stupid and a burden to someone."

She chuckled. I could feel her amusement as she shook her head. She held my hand and smiled again.

"Please remember, you will never be a burden as long as you're willing to learn. I can say you're a fast learner. Please try memorizing the 26 letters of the alphabet. I will test your memory by letting you sing it for me. Would that be okay?"

I nodded. She's about to leave when I tugged the hem of her blouse. She turned to me again.

"I will let you study quietly but you have to remember the characters and their sounds."

She stayed with me until I got familiar with the 26 letters of the alphabet. Now, everything is making sense.

She worked for more than three hours after she left me on the table. I tried remembering and repeating the twenty-six letters as well. When Miss Marlyn returned, I tried singing the alphabet song. She clapped her hands out of excitement.

"Wow! Thank you for working so hard, dear. You got it all perfectly. I guess that would be all for today."

"Really, miss? Why are we only learning alphabets today? You see, I am a fast learner. I could learn another set of lessons from you in the next two hours."

"Dear, I'd love to. However, I will be working half-day today. I will go to the vet clinic to have my dog checked. Libby is not feeling well."

"Oh, I am sad to hear that, miss. I hope your dog will recover fast."

"Thank you, dear. I guess I will have to see you tomorrow. Please come at the same time as what you did for today."

"I will do that, miss. I will always do my best for you to be proud of me."

"Let's put it into action. A little learning everyday will be everything someday."

"Whoah, so this was the reason why I became an inspiration in the year 2020. So this was Sunny's six decades in the making." I said dreamily while smiling like an idiot.

"Were you saying something?" Miss Marlyn asked me while nudging my shoulders. I smiled in a very awkward manner.

I became silent all of a sudden. Well, who am I to brag today? I am only fourteen years old, a non-reader and a dependent daughter living with her mom. How can I be proud of myself?

"N-No, miss. Please don't mind me. Shall we go now?"

"Yes, sure. I will be going outside the library and probably wait for a bus to ride. Will you go with me?"

"Yes, miss. I will accompany you outside the library. But I will not get on the bus because our home is just near the school." I smiled when I answered her.

"Wow! That's great news. Now, I can be sure you will not be late for our everyday lessons. I believe in you dear. You also have to believe in yourself as well."

"I will always remember your advice, miss."

"That's great! Let's go!" She gently held my hand as we walked outside the biggest library in town. Miss Marlyn is always enthusiastic in life. She's a natural optimist. She's also kind and patient in everything that she does. She's really one of a kind, a blessing in disguise for me.

I am always grateful.

Chapter 13: WHO'S THAT BOY?

Sunny rushed towards home. She needs to return home before her mom does. As much as she wanted to tell her mom the good news, she might get scolded. Her mom only wanted her to keep the house clean, stay in the house and do the chores.

Sunny couldn't help but to be weary. Does her mom really intend her to be a non-reader or illiterate for her to easily manipulate her? She knew that if people didn't know what to do with their life, they intended to follow rules. Sunny thinks that being a person without any formal education will just be contented with their life. Those kinds of people will just be slaves in whatever their masters will tell them.

She reached the doorstep, panting and catching her breath again. She was more energized compared to hours ago. She glanced at their wall clock and she still has seven more hours to go before her mom would arrive.

She looked around to see what she could do. Something that's worth doing while waiting for her mom. She went outside to rake leaves falling from their front yard. After a couple of minutes, she's done with the work alone. She went inside the house to check if her mom left some extra tasks for her to do.

She pasted reminders to buy some ingredients from the grocer for her to cook.

In the end, she got what her mother told her to accomplish. She got the folded paper on the table. She looked at herself in the mirror as she touched her cheek.

She couldn't help but to stare at her younger self in front of the mirror. She smiled as she even pinched herself. Something in her still hopes that everything is only but a dream. However, if she could feel a slight touch of pain, she would tell everything is real after all.

She got the folded paper again and headed to the grocer. Good thing she was somehow familiar to the market because it's just near their house. Her mom reminded her not to go outside. However, how can she follow it when they have no meals? She has to find ways. Afterall, her mom listed all the possible things she could buy. I guess the people at the grocery store were already familiar to her and to her mom.

Sunny suddenly had a feeling that her mom used to give her a list of ingredients listed on a piece of paper. She will then give it to the cashier or someone who will do it for her.

Gosh, what life did she have ahead of her...before she even got here from the future? Was she really abandoned by her mother in an indirect way? She walked directly to the grocery shop. She could see a man waving at her right away.

"Over here, Sunny!" He was beaming with a smile. Sunny came towards her right away. But the truth is, she doesn't know him that much.

"Here you are again. C'mon, don't be shy." He offered his hand to her. She awkwardly smiled as she gave her the list of ingredients.

"Hmm, what do we have here?" He examined the list of ingredients listed by her mother. He smiled and put it inside his pocket. "Same as usual, please follow me Sunny." He walked inside right away. She followed him as she looked around. The grocer was wide and spacious. She then thinks that it was the man who owns the grocery shop. She could see a lot of things and foods to buy. From the wide variety of snacks to ingredients of a perfect meal. It's all here.

She saw him grabbing a grocery basket and started moving along the aisles. As he glanced at the list, he started to pick some cans of essentials. He also picked a cooking oil, some snacks and some herbs and spices.

He glanced behind him and he could see Sunny tailing him. He told her to come closer.

"Here are some of the things your mom wanted to buy," He smiled as he looked at Sunny from head to toe with malice. Sunny felt goosebumps all of a sudden. Why is his smile creeped her out? She glanced at her chest and she could see his name plate.

"Mr. John Hanes"

"T-Thanks Mr. John." Sunny held the handle of the basket but John also held her hand that's holding the basket. She gasped as she suddenly looked around.

"I can handle it, Mr. John." She forced a grip to the basket but wriggled the grip of Mr. John from her hand.

He smiled in a meaningful way as he let go of her hand. She sighed with relief, however, it made her knees tremble. She suddenly feared his presence around her, now that the grocery is not really crowded.

"I guess I have to pay it at the cashier now?" Sunny said as she immediately walked past Mr. John. He is the one following her this time.

"Don't worry," He said, meeting her gaze as Sunny faced him. He looked at her, hovering her with her gaze as if undressing her. "...it's already paid."

"What do you mean, Mr. John? Did mom leave some money here before she went to work?"

"Hmm, yeah." He answered as he looked at her again. Sunny wanted to slap him right away, however, she doesn't want to start a scene.

"Very well then. I'll be going, Mr. John." She was able to get the basket from his hands. She went to the cashier right away. The female grocer helped her pack the groceries. Right after that, she headed home, never turning back.

Sunny could feel that even if she's getting far from the grocery store, there were two eyes watching her from behind.

When she reached their house, she locked the front door right away. She also shut the windows, and she has covered them with curtains. She also checked the backdoor and locked them all up.

She was suddenly attacked by anxiety because of what she encountered. She's not very familiar to Mr. John, however, there's one thing that she's very sure of. He couldn't be trusted.

Chapter 14: RESOURCEFUL REMORSE

Sunny's POV

I returned home right away, feeling bad and devastated. That look from Mr. John humiliated everything in me. I hate the way he would look at me from head to toe. It feels like he's going to do something that I won't like. His presence alone terrifies me from my head down to my feet. I don't want to see him again after what happened to the store. It felt really traumatic even if I experienced it for the first time.

Even if I am already inside the house with all the doors locked, the anxiety attacks kept on bothering me. I feel like I am not the only one inside. I hugged both of my arms as I hovered my gaze inside the room. Everything is quiet. I inhaled deeply and tried calming myself down.

I badly wanted to shift my attention into something worthwhile. It will somehow make me forget what happened to me when I was at the grocery store. I tried cooking a meal based on the ingredients that my mother asked me to buy from that store.

I examined and prepared all the ingredients on the table. Setting the skillet on medium heat. I will be having stewed meat and vegetables for dinner. My mom needs to explain everything to me. She has to tell me why Mr. John treated me that way.

I have a feeling that she knew what's going on. She has to explain everything to me, from the way that man looked at me and the mystery payment. What was even the meaning of what he said? Mother already paid it? I don't think so.

"Hello darling! How are you?" I glanced at our front door as soon as mother arrived. She went straight to where I am standing to check what I've cooked for dinner. She saw me preparing our meal again. I could see that her mood is really great the way she greeted me as she came closer.

"You know what? I am starting to wonder how you learned how to cook. As far as I could remember, I haven't taught you how to do it," She said while touching her lips with the spoon she dipped on the stewed meat and vegetables. I was about to set the table when she arrived. The last to be placed on the table is our viand.

I prefer to be silent for a while. I don't want to spoil her mood. We both sat on the table. I served her the food I cooked in her bowl. She looked happy and energetic that I couldn't help but to get annoyed.

She doesn't seem to care if I stay quiet. As a matter of fact, I have observed that she would be more surprised if I am being talkative. I guess that's my upbringing. She made me this way, but this time, I have to deal with her.

"How did you know Mr. John?" I could see that she stopped eating all of a sudden. Even her facial reaction changed when I mentioned his name to her. She looked at me in the eyes as if reading my mind right now.

"Why do you ask dear? He's only a family friend."

"It's just odd. I don't like him." I said in a straightforward manner. She slammed the table with both hands. I can see that she's fuming mad because of what I told her.

"Don't you ever say that again!"

"Why do you defend him to me, mom?"

"Oh you ungrateful daughter! Do you know that Mr. John is really kind? He even give us free food and snacks—"

"What do you mean, 'free', mom?" I cut her off from what she will say more. I cannot even tolerate it. I want to vomit what I had been eating for more than five minutes ago.

"He's kind and he's been worrying about us since we can't almost eat a decent meal."

"So you mean he's been doing all of these for free?"

"Honey, look," She stood up and stood behind me as she touched both of my shoulders.

"Mr. John is a good man, okay? He's just concerned about us. In fact, we're not only the ones he's helping with. He's also helping many other families who are not capable of buying enough food for themselves."

I sat in silence. Should I tell mom what happened inside the grocery store? Should I tell mom how Mr. John looked at me like I am his tiny prey?

Everytime I remember his face, I couldn't help but to feel scared about what will happen to me, especially that my mother is not always in the house.

"Mom, do you think Mr. John is just helping us without expecting something in return?" I asked as I tilted my head up to see his reaction.

"Mr. John's family owns a charity, dear. It is natural for them to help, in fact he's planning to finance you to send you to school."

"He said that?"

"Yes, dear. He wanted to support your schooling. I also recommend you to stay at their house to help their maids clean the house even during weekends. That way, it will not be too awkward to receive your education from him for free."

"What?" I stood up and faced her. Really? Is that the only wish my mom would ever have for me? Is she really being serious about her plans?

"Yes. He seemed to be okay with it so you better do what I will have to tell you."

"No! I will never do it! I'd rather be a non-reader and illiterate, name it! But I will never do what you wanted me to do. You don't even know him that much!" She slapped me as a reply. I touched the affected cheek as tears gushed from my eyes down my cheeks. I looked at her in the eyes but it seemed like her reaction was blank.

"I will never go to the house of that pervert, mom! And there is no way you could force me!" I said as I hurriedly went to my room and shut the door before her.

I jumped on the bed, lying flat on my stomach. I covered my eyes with my folded arms. I couldn't believe my mother could do this to me as if her decisions were always right. They were never even right for a second. How could she depend on other people more than me?

Does she really love me? What is really my role in her life? Her personal maid? Someone she could ask about how she would look if she will date another man?

Is she really my mother?

Chapter 15: LONGING TO LOVE YOU

Sunny's POV

The day went on as usual. I learned that my mom leaves at the exact time of 10:00 A.M. and returns before 7:00 P.M. She's really busy with her work. Well, I am starting to get used to it, anyway.

That is also the time where I lock the doors of our house and head straight to the library. She's not even aware to all of these. I am afraid she might not allow me to go there once she would know what I am doing after she's gone to her work.

"You're always on time. I could see a bright learner in you in the future." She smiled as soon as she saw me walking inside the library and coming towards her. She pulled one of the chairs beside her and she let me sit on it.

"Indeed, Ms. Marlyn. Thank you for being patient to me as well."

"Why of course! You're easy to teach my dear. I could even leave you here while you are learning on your own. You're an independent learner and I admire you for it."

I smiled at her as she tapped my head. She's really kind and considerate to me. I always liked the extra attention she will give me more than my mom could ever do. She's more than my mother when it comes to giving a lot of effort for me to learn all of the things I needed to learn. I love it because she really helped me learn the basics from our lessons first. Sometimes, I wish she's my mom and not my present.

I can see that her eyes were like sparkling diamonds. Her teeth were as glittery as the precious pearls of the sea. Everything about her is really admirable, even the way she would chuckle or laugh. She looked like a living angel personally sent for me by God for a valuable lesson.

"I guess you got all of my instructions clearly," She cheerfully said looking through my eyes.

"Yes, Ms. Marlyn." I nodded and smiled. She pinched my cheek right away because of my reaction first.

"That's a really good girl! I will return here after an hour. Please give your best to remember the three-letter words I gave you. You'll have to recite them all to me afterwards."

"Got it crystal clear." She smiled once again as she turned her back to me. I looked at all the worksheets and basic-learning books she has given me. When I turned the pages, I couldn't help but to pity myself. So this was me from a long time ago.

However, why is it that I couldn't remember everything that is happening now? How did I ever live my life before 2020? It's like every single bit of information from my teenage years was robbed to me. Everything, every single moment that is happening now seemed to be absent from the present times. I don't even know where it came from.

I couldn't even remember having a picture of my mom or an encounter with her. I am more accustomed to the information about my father, how loving he was and how patient he is to me. As I went back from this period, I didn't even know where he was, or where he lives. He's not even living with us at this moment.

I scratched my head with a pen as I bit my lower lip. I got bored reading the words with my eyes that I selected the writing practice materials instead. I started to trace the letters A-Z when I felt someone standing in front of me. When I lifted my head, my heart fluttered all of a sudden. It's him!

To my surprise, I was able to scamper, grabbing the worksheets that I was working on that others flew in the air. My other papers were creased, some fell on the floor. I could hear him chuckle as he helped me pick the papers up. This was pure embarrassment on my end.

I had a sudden surge of emotions that I made it too obvious for him that I am not at ease. I want to disappear right away. I hate it!

"I'm so sorry," He said as he carefully placed all of the papers he picked on the floor.

"Ah, i-it's o-okay...I am so sorry, too." I scratched my head again as I awkwardly smiled at him when all of the papers were placed on the table.

"I was just about to ask if it is okay for me to sit beside you? The place is too crowded already and this is the only table that could accommodate another person." I couldn't help but to look around and he was right.

I have never seen such numbers of people going in the library compared to yesterday.

"Please have a seat. I don't mind at all. Thank you for helping me, too." He followed what I said right away. He placed his backpack on the floor next to the chair. There's a table between us where he sat, facing me. I was able to insert my basic writing worksheets under my ABC book while looking at him with an awkward smile. I want to cry because this whole thing is really embarrassing.

Who would have thought the great Sunny Grainger of the year 2020, a famous novelist, writer, car racer and an influencer will struggle like this? This is too much to handle! I want to break down with tears. I looked down and slowly closed my fist. I bit my lips when I felt my tears rolling on my cheeks again.

"Are you alright?" When I met his gaze, I could see his worried look. He shifted his gaze to his pocket and to my face. "Here," He added, offering me his handkerchief.

"T-Thank you," I accepted his handkerchief and wiped my tears away.

"If there's anything that troubles you, please don't hesitate to tell me. I am willing to listen." He said, sounding really kind.

As I glanced at him, I realized that our age difference is not that far. I could say he's only between sixteen to eighteen years old. Looking at the features of his face this near made my knees tremble all of a sudden.

He's not handsome, you know, the striking ones I have seen from my previous life. He has a tanned skin and broad shoulders that's making him attractive to my sight. He has those powerful pairs of eyes that could immediately melt you in one gaze. He has a perfect pointed nose that added to his physical charm. His mouth is also a turn-on, and his smile would literally kill someone. I guess that's one of the things he got for himself that he's proud of.

"If I am making you uncomfortable, please tell me." He smiled again and I couldn't help but to avoid my gaze at him. I just looked down and started scanning the pages. Gosh, I have never been distracted all my life, not until today when he sat in front of me.

"As I said, I don't mind at all. It's not my personal table so we could definitely share." I answered him and he nodded with a smile as well.

Chapter 16: THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY

They sat there not uttering any single word. Sunny glanced at the guy from time to time while the guy seemed to be concentrating in reading very well. It is obvious for Sunny that he's really into that book right now.

When he's about to turn another page, he glanced at her, too. Well, too bad he caught her staring at him that he chuckled a bit. Sunny felt her cheeks fluster as she avoided her gaze on him. She couldn't help but cover her face with the book she's reading.

"Wow, I never knew you wanted basic books." She heard the guy referring to her. She couldn't help but to raise an eyebrow while putting the book down. So, that book didn't escape from her gaze.

"Is that a compliment or a sarcasm coming from you?" She could see the guy seemed to be shocked a bit that he scratched his head as well as they looked at each other.

"I don't know. I just find you cute," She held the sides of the opened book tightly as she bit her lower, inner lip as soon as she heard what he said.

"Are you trying to cover up the damage that has been done?"

He chuckled as he closed his book. He's not even feeling awkward when meeting her gaze like he's always used to it. He looked at her as if never getting enough of everything in her.

"You're cute," He said as he smiled. Sunny couldn't hide her smile anymore. That's the most straightforward thing a guy has ever confessed to her. And he's being frank Sunny felt like she couldn't handle it easily.

"Okay, I forgive you now." She giggled as she tried to continue reading her book but to no avail. She's totally distracted at the moment.

"This book was really intended for me," Sunny started the conversation. She noticed that the guy already closed his book and is now willing to listen to what she wants to say.

Sunny could see the guy giving her a puzzled look. "What do you mean, 'intended for you'? Do we have those kinds of books that's really intended for us alone?"

"It's what I think it is." He answered, looking at what she's holding.

"But that book you're holding is too basic, you know." He added. He heard Sunny sighed right away as she avoided his gaze.

"That's the point. I was never taught by my mother at home to learn even the alphabets. I am fourteen years old now but I haven't received any formal education, even primary school." Sunny could see the shock in his eyes. He even opened his jaw a little bit that it's kinda annoying for Sunny.

"Yeah, way too impossible to even let it sink in your mind, right? But it does happen in real life."

"I-I'm really sorry..." He looked down on his books.

"Nah, don't be sorry. It happens in real life."

He looked at Sunny again, this time with a different impression. He looked at her, this time with pity and understanding. Did he really intend to judge her at first because of the book she was reading?

"Funny how I was able to tell you everything and yet I never even knew your first name yet."

He chuckled when he realized she had a point. She relaxed herself while scratching her head as she also chuckled with him. They both looked silly at that particular moment while talking to each other.

"Maybe you got so comfortable to me that you were able to share a part of your life." He smiled as he offered his hand for a handshake as he smiled.

"I'm Tyler Sean. I am more than happy to meet you." She smiled back at him as she held his hand. She immediately felt its warmth as soon as she took a grip of her hand. It's like signifying that he would be really glad to accept her as a friend.

"I am Sunny Grainger. It's also a pleasure to finally know your name."

"Yeah. I could still remember how we bumped into each other the day before yesterday, right?"

"R-Right," Sunny almost stuttered as she answered him. Well, she hasn't had a goodnight's sleep after that encounter. If only he knew.

"Please don't be afraid to ask help from me, alright?"

"I don't want to disturb someone," Sunny said as she avoided his gaze. She heard him chuckle.

"Well, what are you doing to Ms. Marlyn Ang if you're not disturbing someone?"

"She offered to help me."

"But we can't deny the fact that she's busy most of the time, especially today. There's a sudden surge of students going in and out."

"Yeah. I did notice that. What's the event?"

"Students are preparing for their exams. Most of my colleagues here love to study in advance, you know."

"When will this last?"

"Usually it could take one to two weeks. So don't expect that Ms. Marlyn could really focus on teaching you."

Sunny sighed as she studied the look on his face.

"I am just here everyday. If you want, I can teach you until you can be confident enough to read."

"Really?"

"Do you think I am joking?" He said between chuckles. I can't help but to admire him more. He's becoming charming if he does that often.

"Well, if you really insist, then that would be really great. Thank you."

"Good. I am just here everyday. If Ms. Marlyn would be too busy to attend to you, I will take over."

"It is nice of you. I am so sorry I couldn't pay you for doing this for me. I guess someday I could repay you if I could apply for a job."

He chuckled and gazed at Sunny into her eyes.

"Silly. Don't mind it. As I have said, I understand your situation. It might be too difficult for you to just accept it. However, please let me help you. I always believe that anyone who is so willing to learn will be successful someday."

"Yeah, too successful she'll become famous all over the world." Sunny murmured as she smirked. Tyler just shook his head and smiled at her, too.

"Hello lovely people!" Ms. Marlyn suddenly appeared from Sunny's back.

"Good morning Ms. Marlyn!" Tyler greeted her with a smile.

"Wow! It's nice to see the both of you know each other!"

"We just met, Ms. Marlyn. I find Sunny cool and fun to be with."

"Yeah, I agree dear Tyler. Where were we, Sunny? Tyler, you could help us, too."

"Sure thing, Ms. Marlyn! You got my back!"

She would always imagine this day will happen. The good thing is, it was more than what she imagined their encounter would be. It happened in a way she least expected. He met her again when she's studying her ABCs. She hated to think that he might mistaken her as a dumb girl because of the basic books she's reading.

However, after he listened to her side of the story, he understood her right away. He's also kind and patient like Ms. Marlyn.

Sunny could feel that she's not alone in this world she's in right now.

Chapter 17: SUPERHERO IN THE MAKING

Sunny's POV

Ms. Marlyn left after I showed her what I have learned throughout the two hours of being instructed by her. That was a self-studying technique, of course, before Tyler came in to help me. We almost spent a lot of hours together. We talked about a lot of things. Topics that's almost under the sun. All of the things we could remember sharing to one another. He also assisted and helped me with a lot of words seen in the basic books I grabbed from the library.

"I am glad that you're getting to know Tyler, Sunny. He's really great and a helpful student."

I nodded and smiled automatically. Yes, everything that Ms. Marlyn said is true indeed.

"Yes, Ms. Marlyn. In fact, he was able to help me with the words I find difficult to read."

"It's a pleasure. I am having fun teaching you too, so don't worry about it."

"What can I say?" I smiled back and she tapped my shoulders.

"We will always be here for you. I just couldn't personally teach you in your house since I am needed here in the library. I hope you understand."

"I totally do, miss. I am also thankful and lucky to know you both. Thank you so much!"

"As a treat, I'll give you both a chicken sandwich."

"Wow! It looked so delicious! Thank you so much, miss!" I can't help but laugh when I realized that we almost answered in chorus.

"You're both adorable, kids!" She answered with a hearty laugh. We noticed that she was getting something from her bag as we went outside the library. It's already half past eleven in the morning.

"Wow, how time flies fast. It's almost noontime. I will go ahead, dear!"

Tyler and I had a high-five as we received the sandwich Ms. Marlyn gave us. We thanked her as we parted ways. I noticed Tyler followed me while I walked forward. I stopped moving forward and turned my back.

"Keep walking," He whispered, almost nearing me. I followed what he said when I noticed someone is also following us. My heart skipped a beat when I realized it was Mr. John. He looked from left to right as he followed me. I guess he didn't realize that I'm with Tyler because there were other people who were busy walking on the sidewalk.

I saw Tyler overtook me as he walked ahead real fast. When I reached a place full of people, somebody pulled me sideways as he covered my mouth. I looked back and it was Tyler, putting his pointing finger in between his closed lips. I bit my lip and I followed what he wanted me to do.

"Fuck," I saw Mr. John moved forward, not noticing a narrow pathway in between the buildings that's part of the town's city shopping center. I sighed with relief as soon as I saw him losing me in sight.

"I hate that person. He's a damned pervert." Tyler murmured. I turned around and hugged him tight, putting my arms around his neck. I felt his hands slowly caressing my back to comfort me.

"Thank you so much. I don't know what to do without you," Teary-eyed, I let go and looked into his eyes. He smiled at me as he wiped my tears with his handkerchief.

"I was about to go home when I noticed that man started following you right after we went outside the library a while ago. Do you know him?"

"H-He's my mom's friend."

"I don't trust him. I'm a man and the way he would look at you makes me want to punch him right away. I don't like how he looks at you."

"T-Tyler, I am scared." I couldn't help but avoid his gaze as I said those words. He held my hand and pulled me out of that narrow pathway of the building.

"Are you going home?"

"No. I am afraid to go home, honestly."

"I could accompany you wherever you wanted to go."

"But..."

"You said he's your mom's best friend, right? Is your mom home yet?"

"She will be home between seven to eight in the evening."

"I am afraid that Mr. John might go to your house. If you want, you can go with me. We can have lunch there." He pointed a small restaurant across the street.

"But, I have no money with me,"

"Who said you'll be spending a dime? It's on me, alright?"

He held my hand and we looked from left to right as we crossed the street. Well, in the year 2020, I have never been dating for a long time that's why I got too excited. My heart is beating fast all of a sudden.

But the situation is quite difficult now. Somebody is treating me instead of me, spending money on myself. I suddenly felt really ashamed as I looked down.

He opened the door for me and the wind chime greeted us as well. The room is cozy, with the chairs and tables having their pastel colors. The materials were made of wood but the small restaurant was enclosed with glass windows.

"Wow! This restaurant is lit!"

"Lit?"

"Oh sorry, I mean this restaurant is beautiful and cozy." Why did I said "lit" all of a sudden? That's so year 2020. I smiled in an awkward manner as I faced him.

When we spotted a perfect spot inside the restaurant, we sat right away. It's located in one of the four corners of the restaurant. The table was near the window overlooking what's outside.

He ordered two burgers and two glasses of sodas for both of us. I couldn't help but smile because Tyler is really thoughtful.

"Let me guess, is it your favorite food?"

"Hmm," I shyly nodded and it made him chuckle.

"I am sorry for bringing you somewhere else when all you wanted to do is to go home." He said in a worried tone.

"I should be the one to thank you. You saved me for today. If you didn't follow and check on me, Mr. John could've done me harm."

"You're always welcome. Besides, that's what friends are for, right?"

"I won't get tired thanking you."

He chuckled again and this time, he carefully placed my part of the burger and my drink in front of me. We ate and talked more about my life and on how mom will treat me.

"I am so sorry to hear that. I hope your mom would also teach you at home so that you could keep track of your reading progress."

"There's something I didn't tell you about, though."

He looked into my eyes and leaned closer to me.

"Mom doesn't know this whole thing. That's why I have to go back on the designated time that she would tell me so that I won't get caught."

I looked down as I sighed. He tapped my arm and smiled. "I understand," He replied.

We're able to finish lunch and he even walked me on my way to our house.

"Thank you so much for today." I stood on the doorstep as I waved at him.

"See you tomorrow!" He replied as he waved back.

"See you!"

Now, I have all the reasons to be inspired and learn more. I hate the fact that I am starting to like him...

Chapter 18: SECOND CHANCE TO LOVE

Sunny's POV

I know I am vegan.

At age 76, I know I already loathe meat. I refuse to even eat it anymore. Well, today, I am fourteen years old. I am young and vigorous to digest meat. I am still healthy and my body is young. Eating burgers during cheat days is really a great thing. I realized I never ate this kind of thing for a long time, already. I can't help but to feel very excited and nervous at the same time.

I closed the door as I bit my lip. I am stopping myself to smile a lot. Tyler knew my house now that he accompanied me up to the fence outside our house.

"I guess I would have to stop right here. I am just making sure that you will arrive at your house safe and sound."

"Thank you so much, Tyler. It meant a lot to me."

"It's a pleasure. Please take care and lock the doors of your house when you know that you're all alone in there, alright?" He reminded me. I can't help but to flash a wide grin.

"Okay. Thank you for the reminders. Please take care in going home, too!"

"I will!" He started to move away and I waved my hands as I followed him with my gaze. He's really very sweet to me. I moved quickly when I realized that I didn't prepare something for our dinner. Any time, mom will arrive from work.

I never thought we'll be having a longer time talking about random topics we think of. Tyler Sean is such a nice guy. As I talked to him, I could feel his sincerity and willingness to teach me until I will get used to basic reading.

Good thing I am so familiar with cooking that I was able to finish it for less than twenty minutes. It was fried meat with stir-fried vegetables. I also cooked mashed potatoes as our side dish. I am also surprised that I am humming and singing while I am preparing our meals. I feel really happy and energetic. All thanks to Tyler for letting me feel this way.

I heard a knock on the door and when I checked on the peephole, it was mom. I opened it and she went inside right away, wearing a weird face. She seemed mad as she met my gaze.

"We need to talk," She said as she sat on one of the chairs facing me. In between us is the table full of food I've cooked. I swallowed gently, not making myself guilty. I just avoided her gaze.

"We could talk after dinner. That seemed serious." She never replied. After I said our grace, we ate our dinner quietly.

I washed our dishes and after that, I sat in front of her as I rolled my eyes.

"Mr. John talked to me and he said he found you walking somewhere in town. Is that true?"

"So what? I got bored in the house. What am I supposed to do?"

"Didn't I make myself clear that you should stay inside the house while I am working? You might get yourself harmed."

'I will truly get myself harmed if I will stay in this house. If only mom knew Mr. John's true intentions, what would she do?'

I kept the last sentence to myself as I looked at my blabbering mom.

"Yeah...blahblah." I replied that made her glare at me. I chuckled as if mocking my mom.

"You should really consider what Mr. John proposed. Afterall, he's really concerned about you and your future. Aren't you happy about that?"

"Don't tell me what to do. As what I have told you, I would prefer to be a non-reader or illiterate than letting somebody decide what I wanted to be."

"Why are you becoming so hard-headed? Since when did you learn how to disobey me?"

"From the time I have learned that you abandoned my chance for learning." I answered in a straightforward manner that made her speechless.

Her mother stood up and walked out from their dining table and headed towards her room. Sunny also did the same as she went to her room and shut the door behind her as well.

She sat on the chair placed in front of the bedside table near her bed. She got the paper and pen that her mom gave her. She started to write the capital and small letters of the alphabet, from A-Z.

'One at a time, Sunny. One at a time...'

She let go of her pen and folded the paper and kept it under her bed. She almost forgot that her mother has no idea that she's learning on her own.

She looked at the clock and she realized that it is already eight thirty in the evening. She tucked herself on the bed and tried sleeping. All she wants is a peaceful night without thinking of the proposed plan of Mr. John that will just lead to nowhere.

Morning came and I started to prepare breakfast. Weird, it is already nine-thirty in the morning but mom is still asleep. Is she not getting over what happened last night?

"Mom," I called in a louder voice as I knocked on her door.

"Coming!" She answered from the inside. When I was about to leave her door, she opened the door. I was a bit surprised when she was just wearing her pajamas. Is she not going to work today?

I secretly frowned as I set the table for us.

"Sweetie, I will not work for two days starting today." She said in a very good mood. I couldn't help but to raise one of my eyebrows.

"Why? I thought many people needed your service that you shouldn't be absent?" I answered as I drank my chocolate.

"I realized that your learning is more important. I will be teaching you for two days, especially in math."

"Wow, I hope this will always happen. I have been waiting for this moment," That was pure sarcasm, and I am sure she got it that it made her quiet the entire time we're having our breakfast.

"We'll both stay inside the house. I will be cooking meals as you answer the worksheets I prepared for you."

"Worksheets?"

"I didn't have a good night's sleep last night because I made it all for you."

"I appreciate it mom, thanks." I smiled a little and it somehow encouraged her.

Well I guess being a stubborn daughter has positive effects sometimes. My mom really thought that I was just walking on the sidewalk, roaming without a purpose. She never knew that I am learning little by little in the library with people who are willing to teach me.

I couldn't help but to feel sad because I will not be seeing Ms. Marlyn and Tyler for two, straight days. I hope they will understand my absence. I will just explain what happened when I will be back in the library.

"We'll start at exactly eleven in the morning." I nodded as I cleared the table and washed our dishes. This is a positive start for me. I am sure of it.

Chapter 19: HER STORY

Sunny's POV

"These are your worksheets," My mom smiled as she carefully placed the papers on the dining table. I shifted my gaze on her face and to the papers.

I noticed that she handwritten all of it. I have five worksheets and it has numbers from front cover to back. Did she really sleep last night? It's like she did all of the work herself all night long. I noticed that her eyes were a bit red.

"Mom, you don't have to do this,"

"Don't complain. After all, it is for you. I already asked Mr. Athkinson that I will be taking my two days off. I thought it would be good for me to teach you on my rest day. I don't want to miss this moment."

I looked at her and she's really serious. I swallowed when I realized that I am keeping her my secret of going to the library to learn all by myself. Now, it felt really awkward to hear it from her. Wow, she will be teaching me for the first time, if ever.

"Thank you so much mom. I appreciate it."

"I want you to start answering this for me." I looked at her and she looked very happy in teaching me step by step. I never thought that mom could be this patient in teaching me how to add simple numbers and subtracting them as well. She's better than Miss Marlyn in teaching me the step-by-step way on how to do everything. However, Miss Marlyn is more patient compared to mom. She is teaching me in the calmest way possible. While mom? She's easily irritated when I commit little mistakes. She would repeat all the process again. For me, she's taking too much time doing it.

"How was it?"

"It's all clear to me. Thank you mom." She smiled as she sighed with relief. She looked accomplished when she heard my answer.

"It is my obligation. Now, I want you to recite what you have learned from tenths to hundredths."

"T-tenths to hundredths?"

"Are you deaf? Do it." I nodded and followed her right away. If I won't do it, she will surely get angry at me for not trying my very best at it.

I admit, for more than three hours straight of her, teaching me, I appreciate her presence. I suddenly regret hating her too much several days ago. Knowing that I was not enrolled even in a primary school and not knowing a lot about reading, numbers and the basics of learning shook my past world.

I realized if I will be back to the year 2020 again, this year is one of the bittersweet memories I will bring with me. Of course, nobody wanted to become illiterate or a non-reader. Even in this year alone, people are trying to be educated as much as possible. I could see many children dressed in fancy vintage dresses and colorful hats. They bring their slingbags with them as they walk their way to school. Others take a bike, especially men.

I sighed as I continue answering my own worksheet. I glanced at mom who is busy cooking in the kitchen. I couldn't help but smile because she's cooking fried chicken. When I checked on her, she turned her back to see me, too.

"Are you done with your worksheets?"

"Almost, mom. I am just checking what you're cooking for lunch." I said as I glanced at our wallclock. It is already half past one in the afternoon. We'll be having our late lunch this time.

"Well, I am cooking one of your favorite foods. Mashed potatoes, the way you liked it." My eyes glistened as I heard mashed potatoes. Yeah, she's right. I really wanted this food more than anything. It is because of its rich, milky flavor and the fact that it is soft to eat.

"Thank you mom!" I almost clapped my hands. I could see that she's also happy with my reaction.

"You better finish everything and in ten minutes, we'll be eating lunch."

"Yes mom! I will finish all the remaining worksheets."

I returned to my worksheets and answered all the remaining items in a flash. Being excited to eat at lunch prepared by mom is the best feeling, so far. I never thought I'll get happier like what I am feeling now. How I wish mom will always have a day off for us both to bond like this.

Two days off ended like a flash. The day after tomorrow came and mom has to work again for the both of us.

"Will you be okay here?"

"Yes mom. I will. Please take care as you go to work."

"Of course I will. Don't you ever dare go outside. Please follow me and what I want you to do. Staying outdoors is very risky. You never knew what some people will do to you..."

'I hope you can tell that to Mr. John,' I just kept the last words to myself.

"Yes, mom. I will. Please take care."

"You cook stewed meat and vegetables again before seven in the evening. Wait for me and we'll both eat for dinner."

"Yes, mom." As soon as I was sure that she's far from my sight, I started getting ready to go to the library. I looked at my left and right side of the road as I rushed to the heart of town where the library is. It's a seven-minute walk from our house. When I arrived at the library, Ms. Marlyn almost hugged me tight. I also saw Tyler stood behind her.

"Hey! You're back! You're two days late!" Tyler said. I couldn't help but giggle as I poked his arm with my fist.

"Long story," I smiled. We all sat on one of the vacant tables. I told them everything that happened and they all looked at me with happy faces.

"Wow! I do believe in miracles now!"

"Silly! Do you think that's a bit too much? Of course, she's her mom. She will always think of what's best for Sunny."

"Not really," I frowned as I cut what Ms. Marlyn had to say. She kept quiet and listened to me instead.

"I have to say it because not all of her decisions would benefit me sometimes."

"I'm so sorry to hear that, dear."

"Don't mind it, Ms. Marlyn. I guess it's just normal. It happened that I got this kind of family."

"Hmm, won't you mind if I ask about your father? Where is he, by the way?"

"Well, my mom didn't mention him much to me. All I know is, they were already separated when I was five years old."

"I am so sorry to hear that from you, dear." Ms. Marlyn said.

"No, miss. It's fine. People would eventually ask questions like that from me, anyway. It's okay." I slightly smiled as she tapped my arm gently while looking into my eyes.

I could see their faces full of gloom. Funny how other people became sad for me but my own mom can't.

"I guess that's also one of the reasons why she didn't mind me much at all. She preferred working hard for her to forget him I guess? I really don't know."

"We're very sorry to ask about that. How about rereading the previous lessons you have missed? Let me guide you again." Tyler said as he smiled at me while handling the book that contains basic, simple words to remember. I nodded as I smiled at him. If he is very willing to help me read, who am I to refuse? I will always say yes to a handsome and thoughtful personal tutor.

"Yes, let's cope up all the lost times you have missed for two days."

Chapter 20: LOVE OF MY LIFE

Sunny's POV

I glanced at him and the way he's been teaching me the complicated word blends. He smiled as he caught me stealing a glimpse.

"Can't you believe you have a charming tutor?"

"Silly...don't be overconfident. I am looking at another thing, not your face."

"Why are you sounding really guilty?" He chuckled. Miss Marlyn cleared her throat as she approached the both of us.

"How was it, Tyler?"

"She's doing great, Miss. I like Sunny for being a fast learner."

"That's nice to hear. Keep it up!" She winked as she went back to work. Tyler and I followed her with our gazes. I caught him smiling.

"You know what? Miss Marlyn is one of a kind. She's really selfless."

"I agree. She would offer help without expecting something in return." I answered as I looked at the worksheets she has done.

"I want to congratulate you by the way," He said, gradually changing the topic.

"Hmm?"

"For doing a great job. I don't feel like teaching a primary school child because of the kind of learning pace you have."

"Is that compliment or sarcasm?"

He laughed as he pinched my nose. "Not funny," I retorted, giving him an eye roll.

"What I mean is you're not hard to teach at all," He insisted. My frowning face turned into a happy one because of it.

"Of course, I am almost fourteen years old, not a baby." I pouted my lips as I folded my arms. He laughed because of my reaction to what he said.

"I want to say you're doing great so just keep it up." He winked and I smiled deep down. I felt fulfilled because I feel like I deserve every praise from him.

I have to learn fast. Even if it is only 1957, I have to make things right because I'd be earning everything I sow from this year to the future 2020.

I sighed and I never noticed that he saw that.

"You know what Sunny, I find you weird sometimes."

"Why?"

"Well, you seem to think deep. Is there something bothering you or what?"

"Nothing..."

"If there's any problem, you can always share it with me."

"Even if I'll share it to you, I don't think you would understand, either."

"What do you mean?"

"Will you believe me if I will tell you that I came from the future?" I said to him. He gave me that look as if waiting for me to tell him more. He seemed stunned as if trying to digest every word I just said.

"See? You'll never understand." I said as I sigh. He gave me a tap on the shoulder.

"I understand. Imagination could take us to many places even in the future." He answered me with a smile. I kept quiet as I frowned. I folded my arms and looked at the other direction.

He chuckled as he gave me more writing worksheets about three-letter words. I accepted it as I answered it all. I stood up and transferred to a different table five meters away from him.

He scratched his head as he looked at me from where we were sitting a while ago. I continued answering my writing worksheets while he read his own sets of books. I almost forgot he needed to study well, too. I have learned that Tyler Sean is a scholar and an outstanding student.

Upon knowing it, I admired him more, in secret.

I was about to finish my worksheet when I noticed that he transferred beside me. I felt my cheeks reddened. I really hope he didn't see it. It might be too embarrassing to see, I think.

"Wow! Good girl!" He tapped my head as if I am a little girl. I grabbed his hand and placed it on the table.

"I hate it when somebody will do that to me. I am not a child anymore."

"I am just happy that you're done with all of these." He got all of my worksheets as he stood up. He walked towards Ms. Marlyn's table to pass all of my worksheets. I could see Ms. Marlyn smile as

she checked all of my worksheets. I could see her giving me a thumbs up when she's done with it. Tyler went back to our table and placed all of my worksheets on the table. When I take a look, it was all 10/10.

I am beginning to feel proud about myself. Because I am doing all of my best and with their support, everything went well and even possible.

"Until next time." We waved goodbye to miss Marlyn. Good thing Tyler walked with me five meters away from our small gate.

"Don't forget to lock doors and even windows just to be sure."

"I'll keep that in mind."

"See you tomorrow!" He pinched me on my nose again as he went on his way on the opposite side of the road.

"Thank you," I muttered as he walked away. I followed him with my gaze and when he's out of my sight, I walked towards the door and locked it behind me. I am always energized whenever I learn new lessons from both of them.

I feel important and loved as a person. Mom started teaching me maths these past few days and I've never been this happier.

When my mom arrived, I set the table as usual. I noticed that she's really happy and she even bought me some freshly cooked steak.

"Do we have an important occasion?"

"Is it bad to let my daughter eat this kind of food?"

"I know how expensive this is."

"Can we talk about something after dinner? I don't want to spoil my mood for eating." I nodded. We ate the food that's on the table quietly, including the steak.

After washing the plates, we sat on the dining table facing each other.

"I know you're old enough to understand things, dear."

"W-What do you mean?" I don't know but I have a bad feeling about something that she has to tell me.

"How do I start?" She held both of my shoulders as she looked into my eyes deeply.

"You can tell it to me first and we'll see."

She gently swallowed and bit her lower lip.

"Dear, I am in a relationship with Mr. Athkinson now."

Chapter 21: MISS HAPPINESS-DEPENDENT

She looked at her in the eyes without blinking. She tried to see if her mother will eventually say that it's only a joke. However, she's as serious as she is.

"How come?" She found herself saying to her those words. Her mom sighed as she sat straight.

"Long story, dear."

"How come I didn't have an idea about it? Since when did it start?"

Sunny's mother stepped back as if regretting what she had said in an instant. She was about to turn her back to Sunny when she also stood up and block her way.

"Were you really trying to hide it from me in the first place?" Sunny studied her reaction. As she faced her, she sighed once again.

"It just happened when I least expected it. You know what, Sunny? Mr. Athkinson is a good man. In fact, he could give both of us a bright future."

"You don't depend your future to a man. We could always work together to overcome poverty." Sunny couldn't help but to disagree to what her mother has been talking about.

Based on her experience, being a strong, independent woman is really great. Sunny learned how to be great without a man. She's also certain that her mom could do it too.

"Yeah, try to tell that to me. I've been working nonstop, any job possible to have for more than ten years. Look, we got rich, right?" She could feel the crisp sarcasm coming from her mother. Sunny couldn't help but sigh. She's definitely right.

Sunny think that they lived in different times, situations and experiences. She began to think that she's her mom's opposite when it comes to dealing with life.

"You couldn't even tell me what happened to dad clearly and here you are entering a new relationship as if you're single."

"You knew it already. You're not only accepting the fate that he left us with. Get over it Sunny. We all have a chance to move on, too. Not only him."

"Yes. I know what you mean, but this?"

"Sunny, I want to get over your dad. If it is my fault, then I already paid the price. He was happy and I am choosing happiness this time around, too."

"I don't know what to say." I shook my head as she looked at her mother's face.

"I...I just want to inform you. I guess you also deserve to know what's happening because you're my daughter."

Fast forward, in the year 2020, her knowledge about her father is limited. All she knew was her father left her mom when Sunny was only five years old. He went with another woman and he got another family. Her mom, because of too much disappointment and sadness, immersed herself to work. She worked day and night, literally. She even forgot how to send Sunny to school or to teach her the basics.

Is this for real? Is she really ready to get over with dad and start a new life with another man? How long has she been thinking about this?

"Who am I to stop you if you are happy with him?" Sunny dared say at last. She saw her mother's face suddenly lit up.

"Really? Do you mean it, dear?"

"If he will make you happy again, you have my support."

She pulled her closer to her chest and hugged Sunny tight. She could also feel that her mother is sobbing as if there's a big lump removed inside her throat. I guess she's trying to find a right timing of when to really tell her about Mr. Athkinson and the relationship they already have.

"Will it be okay for you if we'll move into their house if ever?"

"What do you mean, mom?"

"Mr. Athkinson told me that he could take good care both of us if we'll be living with him."

She never answered her. Instead, she went in her room. She felt she had enough of all the things confessed by her mom today.

She sat on her bed as she contemplated the year 2020 again. Were the people from that year function without her? Is the convention done already? How can she be able to go back when she felt like stuck in her childhood?

She got a pen and a paper and started to draw the things that happened today. Sunny tried to weigh the dominant emotions she's been having, now that her mom is having her new relationship with another guy. What will her life be after it? Sunny hopes that this revelation from her past will not affect the present year she'll be living.

She lay down on the bed as she closed her eyes. Everything that happened to this day alone seemed to be tiring for her to accept.

The next day, Sunny woke up with an unusual vibe. It was supposed to be her who will prepare breakfast. However, today seemed to be special. She was a bit surprised when her mom woke up earlier than the usual and prepared breakfast for the both of them.

She rubbed her eyes as she went near their dining table.

"Hello honey! Good morning! Breakfast is ready!" That's her mom with her most energized voice. She's never seen her this happy ever since she went back from her future life. Sunny glanced at their wall clock.

"Really, mom? I thought that was my 'iconic' line? Besides, it is only six in the morning. Your time for work is later at ten. You can still sleep,"

"This silly girl. Don't you want me to prepare breakfast to you this time? Look, I prepared pancakes and hot chocolate for the both of us."

Sunny remembered that they had dinner at seven in the evening last night. When she heard of pancakes, she instantly felt hungry.

"Wow! That looked delicious!"

"Of course! I topped it with chocolate and maple syrup, the way you like it!"

"Thanks mom! Let's eat."

Sunny wanted to be sentimental. She even wanted to tell her mom that she will still think about accepting Mr. Athkinson in their life. However, she can't deny the fact that she's only young...well at least for that year.

Maybe it is not bad to enjoy being young once more.

Chapter 22: TOUCH BY TOUCH

Sunny's POV

We finished breakfast full of happiness. After informing mom that I am in favor of Mr. Athkinson for her, her smile is always on her face.

A little creepy and yet I am loving it. I've never seen her smile like that for a very long time. I guess she deserves to be happy after all.

I went to the library with thoughts drifting away from that I can't almost focus on my lessons. I forgot to tell my mom that somebody is helping me with my reading lessons. I don't want to ruin her moment, either. Maybe I will just tell her at the right time.

"Hey, Sunny...are you alright?" Tyler waved his hand in front of my face. I blinked going back to my studying reality.

"Oh, I am so sorry. Yeah, I am alright. What were you saying?"

"I said, are you done with the three writing worksheets?"

"Huh? What worksheets?"

"Here," Tyler showed the three papers scattered in front of me.

"Oh my! Sorry! I am sorry! I think I didn't notice that when you placed it here."

"Yeah. I never bothered to remind you again because I guess you're quite preoccupied with things."

"I promise to do it now," I grabbed my pen and the worksheet that he meant. I started scanning the pages and I was about to answer it when Tyler stopped me.

"How are you supposed to answer an upside-down page?"

I gasped as I chuckle. I covered my face because of that instant embarrassment I received just now. If only I could go home by teleportation I will do it.

"What happened? You can tell me about it. Please don't be shy."

I sighed as I faced him. From the look upon his face, he's willing to listen to whatever I will share with him.

"I mentioned about my father and his relationship with mom with both of you and Miss Marlyn, right? Last night, my mother confessed that he's in a relationship with the owner of the house she's working with."

I paused as I observed his reaction. He seemed to wait for whatever I will have to say next.

"Honestly, I am bothered by it."

"What did you tell your mom?"

"Of course, I have to support her. She seemed to be happy with her decision."

"If that's the case, then why are you acting like that?"

"I don't know. Maybe I am not used to this one? Of course, I always wake up with my mom and doing the same, old routines with her until I have grown up with it."

"You seem to have a point. You will have to adjust a lot."

"What do you think? Did I make the right decision?"

"I can't say you did. However, there's one thing I am proud to know that you did."

He tapped my shoulder as she smiled. I admit, it instantly melted my heart.

"You did great as a daughter. You made your mom happy."

"That's the thing. I did it for her because I can see that she's really happy about it. But the thing is, will I ever accept it myself?" I said as I gazed into his eyes. He gave me a reassuring look.

"If you give your mom's new boyfriend a chance, you will get answers for yourself. It is not bad to try, isn't it?"

"Yeah..." I got no more words to add because of Tyler's words of wisdom. I admit, it somehow made me feel better.

"Alright. Thank you for sharing those things with me. If there's something you want to talk to, don't hesitate to open it up. I am willing to hear from you."

"Thank you, Tyler."

He smiled as he pinched my nose again. This time, I did the same to him that he couldn't help but laugh.

"I did not see it coming!"

"You're used to do that to me! You think it is not annoying?" I said as I poked him on his arm. I couldn't help but laugh at him too. It made Miss Marlyn come near us. We almost forgot we're inside the library that our voices are becoming loud.

"Sorry, Miss Marlyn." We apologized, almost in chorus in a whispering tone. Miss Marlyn chuckled lightly.

"No, it is fine. Just please slow down while talking as you might disturb other people from studying too."

"Yes, miss. I will also finish the worksheets that you're giving me." She nodded as she went back to her table to review some documents that seemed to pile up on her desk. I smiled as I looked at her and on how dedicated she is when it comes to her work.

Tyler tapped my shoulder to tell me to continue what I am doing. As usual, I have to finish what I needed to do. Talking to him feels like forgetting everything sometimes.

"Yup, I know I am handsome but it's not an excuse for you to get distracted."

"Seriously?" I tried to hide the outburst of my laugh because Tyler is being silly again. Instead, I pinched his arm.

"Ouch," He mouthed, biting his lower lip as he suddenly got my hand that pinched him.

"Bad girl," He didn't let go of my hand, instead, he held it with both of his hands. He even tried putting it on the table as he played with my fingers.

My goodness! My hand started to sweat and it is getting so embarrassing. I tried pulling my hand out from his touch but he even grips it tighter.

"Not so fast...I have to play with it to get even," He smiled a little as his face got serious. Now, I am starting to get conscious about how my hands feel like.

"M-My hands are not beautiful..." I reasoned out. He looked at me and he shifted his eyes on my fingers, touching my nails one by one this time.

"Hmm, but I wonder why they fit mine

perfectly." He said as he opened my palms and clasped it with his. It felt warm and I didn't like how my heart behaved, too.

Chapter 23: ONE-WOMAN PERSON

Sunny's POV

"Uhm, I will write now," I smiled in a very awkward manner as I looked into his eyes. I was able to pull out my hand right away as I grabbed my pen. He also realized what he had done that's why he grabbed his book. He opened it right away as he almost shoved his face on the pages.

"I-If you need help, I'm just here. I will read my book for tomorrow's quiz." He said, not looking at me this time. We could do this right away, being awkward to each other without any explanation.

"Okay, t-thanks." I also answered. I tried glancing at him as I lifted my head a little. Instead of seeing him reading his book, I caught him stealing a glance at me, too. His book is on his nose level while his eyes were just observing me. He chuckled a little when our eyes met.

"I have a quiz for tomorrow, actually..." He said defensively as he returned to reading. I just smiled and continued what I am doing too. The remaining hour is not as boring as the past few days.

"Yeah. I...I know," I smiled as I noticed him trying to concentrate but I guess he can't do it easily. Is my presence being too much for him? He suddenly can't concentrate because I guess he also wanted to know what I am doing now.

This time, all I could expect is fun as I learn. I think this is no better feeling than this. When miss Marlyn was already done with her workloads, she went back to where we're sitting. She made me recite all the words Tyler and Miss Marlyn prepared for me.

I was so happy that they appreciate my progress, including Tyler. He's a real friend to keep. He never got tired of teaching me everything that he can. His patience with me is really incredible, I admire his personality as I know him more and more.

We never mind the time as it passes as swiftly as the wind. It's this same time to part ways again. However, I noticed Tyler followed me as I walked to the same path beside the shops located inside the town's shopping center.

I tried telling him that he shouldn't have to do that because I could handle myself. Yet, he's always insisting that he has to. He told me that he doesn't want the same incident that happened days ago when Mr. John followed me.

Every time I think about it, I am starting to be scared. Mr. John is a big man. He is also wealthy and powerful. One could not underestimate what he can do.

Well, as long as Tyler is beside me, I feel safe. His care for me feels like home. The warmth of his thoughtfulness is overwhelming. I guess if I could get used to it, I'd die if I'll not see or be with him even in a day.

"Thank you so much," I stopped walking as I faced him. We were almost in the middle of the town, walking on the right side of the sidewalk. He's following me one meter apart as he is looking from left to right.

"From what?"

"F-For everything,"

"Why are you acting weird?"

"What?" I said between chuckles. He looked funny when his face became serious all of a sudden.

"Don't thank me too often. If you do, it's like you don't want me to do it again for you."

"Are you trying to think that way?"

"That's what other people try to show. I am thinking that if a person thanks to you as always, she means that she doesn't want you to do the same favor again."

"Really? But I never intend to say that. I guess every person is different. I am just trying to be grateful."

"I appreciate it. Whatever I said does not apply to you."

"Never. Hmm, I guess you're thinking that way because of the girls you've been helping the previous months before you know me?"

"Look who's jealous. Don't worry. I am a one-woman person."

I don't want to assume everything he just said. However, I will lie if those words coming from him didn't make me smile, even a little.

"See you tomorrow again! Please lock and secure the doors when you go inside. We can never be so sure."

"I will always remember everything that you've said, Tyl."

I waved goodbye as he walked in the opposite direction. He's a true gentleman. I am touched by the extra effort he's giving me. It somehow made me feel special at trying times like this.

Everything about my mother is giving me a lot of dilemmas lately. Tyler has been my comfort ever since I brought the issue to him.

I closed the door behind me and followed everything that he has reminded me about. I couldn't help but smile because it's like everything in the house makes me think of him now.

I couldn't feel my feet as I went to the kitchen. I started humming as I prepared all of the ingredients to cook the stewed meat and vegetables again.

I noticed that mom loves to eat this one for dinner, that's why I also like to prepare this food for her more than everything.

I am smiling as I prepare everything. I am just imagining my mom's reaction and I am feeling energized already. I heard a knock on the door and as I glanced at our wall clock, it's almost half-past six in the evening. I heard somebody is trying to open the door. I am sure it was my mother this time because she always has a spare key with her every time she went outside the house. One for her and one for me.

As she opened the door, she looked at me with a blank expression.

"Mom? Are you alright?" She walked past me like a zombie. She didn't even know that I was also observing her moves. What happened? Was it work related? Why is she acting strange all of a sudden?

"Talk to me when we're done with our dinner." I swallowed as I nodded. She concentrated on eating her food without even looking at me. She hasn't got any reaction to what the food tasted like, as well.

The next ten minutes feels like the longest time that happened to me today. What happened? Did they have their first fight or something? I washed the dishes in an almost slow-motion for her to somehow forget what she wanted to tell me but she shouted the phrase 'hurry up'. I got nervous all of a sudden.

I started to recall all the possible things that happened a while ago. Did I just get busted?

Is it my visit to the library that she's not aware of? Well, I was about to tell her this time around. Maybe she will be happy when she'll know that I am studying on my own in the library. I even improved a lot when it comes to reading, I could read even labels of grocery stuff and road signs around me now, compared to before.

She cleared her throat.

"Who is the boy you're with roaming around the town a while ago?"

Chapter 24: MOVING OUT

Sunny's POV

I looked at my mom to confirm if I am hearing what she said clearly. She raised her eyebrows as I swallowed.

"H-He's...he's a friend." I narrowed my gaze, trying to avoid her judgemental look on me.

"Since when did you start being friends with someone I didn't know?"

She looked so mad that I couldn't help but swallow hard, I could choke on my saliva anytime.

"Mom, I will tell you about him but then the timing isn't right as always..." I reasoned out and yet her facial reaction is not changing at all.

"How dare you even make friends with a random guy? C'mon, Sunny."

"What is wrong with it, mom? I never judge yours anyway." I can see her clenching her teeth as she glared at me. Maybe because I kept on reasoning out despite that I am decades younger than her.

Gosh, if only she knew that she's facing a 76-year old woman trapped inside a teenager's body. She would be really shocked. I know she can't believe it no matter how I tell her about it. I don't want my mother would be the one to tell me that I am crazy.

"And how many times will I ever tell you that going to town is dangerous? You might never know somebody who will be after your life," She simply changed the topic with the same thought. She also looked worried though. But, seriously? How can she think about that when Mr. John is the one who's terrifying of them all? If only mom knows Mr. John's true colors...she will despise him so much.

"Who told you these things?" I asked her at last.

"It was Mr. John, dear. He told me everything. He saw you when he happened to buy something around town."

I frowned. Hmm, sounds convincing but not for me. Even Tyler knows what his real intention is.

"That's why I have decided to think about his proposal. You have to be in school as soon as possible."

"How could you easily trust someone you barely knew, mom? Just because he's good at other people, it doesn't mean we could be complacent any time."

"Sunny, think about the practical side of things. I don't think Mr. John would offer a great deal if he couldn't see your potential as a student. He even told me that you're a promising one."

"But mom! What if I don't want to? Would you insist on this to me?"

"Why don't you like it? Mr. John is a good man. He's like a father concerned to his daughter like you."

Seriously? She doesn't even know Mr. John and his real intentions to me.

"What do you know, mom? You're not even here to look after me as often as possible." I said with full sarcasm to her. I hope she can sense it. She looked at me as if she can't believe the words she heard from me.

"Stop this nonsense, Sunny. Always bear in mind that my intentions were only for your good and nothing else!" Any daughter could be frightened by her raging voice, but not me. I am not even impressed by it. Did she ever feel what I feel? Does she know my pain? She's not even asking if I am okay.

"But if I will entrust my future to others is not right, too. I don't want others to think that I became successful because I am a gold digger or a sugar daddy is financing me."

"How could you even say that?" My mom said as she gasped with disbelief. I just smiled with sarcasm as a result.

"Can you even hear yourself and what you're saying right now?" She exclaimed while clenching her fists.

"In short, you can't force me what to do."

"See? Look what you're showing now! You're being stubborn. I don't know what to do with you anymore!" She said, whining. It's as if all the smoke were going outside her nose and mouth as well. She looked like a mother dragon.

"Let me do anything you want me to do, except living in the house of Mr. John. I don't see myself working for him as he uses his money for me to go to school." I said straightforwardly. My mom suddenly became speechless as she shook her head slowly.

"You can't always stay the same forever, Sunny. Please think about the bright future ahead of you."

"I will always reach my goals even without depending all of me to other people. We're two, different worlds, mom."

"If you insist on your own, you will not like what I am going to do."

"My word is final. I will not work for Mr. John, nor live in his house and work for the money he'll spend on my education." I answered her casually. She left without saying a word. I smiled because I guess I have won an argument with her. I think she's taking what I have said into consideration. I guess my approval of her boyfriend made her rethink things, including my small request.

I am dead serious about it. I don't imagine myself living with Mr. John and being paranoid about what he's going to do with me.

I told everything to Tyler and he tapped me on my shoulders.

"Yes. Any parent should be considerate of their children's wishes or small requests. How could you concentrate on studying if you're always preoccupied with worries?"

"I don't trust that man. You also observed what he's like, right?"

"I agree. Don't you ever accept what your mom has fated for you? If you can think of a better way to succeed and you're happy with it, start pursuing it."

He said as she nodded. I couldn't stop hugging him tightly as we sit facing each other inside the library. We're standing in one of the aisles as he helped me find some useful books to read.

"If you also ask Ms. Marlyn, she will tell the same. She will not be in favor of your mom's decision." I let go of him and looked down. I couldn't afford blushing like a red tomato about to burst at any time.

"What? Did I heard it right?" Miss Marlyn sounded shocked as we also told her what my mom decided upon me.

"It is not possible. No mom could ever do that to their child! It's like abandoning their child completely at all!"

"Well, my mom is an exception to the rule."

"I guess your mom could easily decide on things because you're not even close to starting with..." Tyler added as he leaned closer to Sunny's lap.

"I guess that's one of the reasons, dear." Miss Marlyn added in a low voice

"I promise, if there's an opportunity for me to improve my skills or to even go to school, I will be the one to grab it."

"That's the spirit, Sunny!" We had a high-five with Tyler.

"We're always on your back ready to support you with anything. Just don't hesitate to ask for help." Miss Marlyn added as she hugged her tight as well.

"I know guys. What will I ever do without you guys? You're all too great for me! Thank you!"

Chapter 25: LETTING HER GO

Sunny's POV

I could describe it more as a cold war between me and my mom. We ate our dinner but nobody said another word for the other. I looked down and concentrated on my food. Gosh, the age difference is killing me. If only I am not aware that I am 76 years old from the present year, I won't behave like this for sure. I will be an ordinary stubborn kid for my mother.

I tried glancing at what my mother is doing but I guess he's also doing the same, never wanting to speak another word to avoid any argument between us. Does she also regret what happened a while ago?

"Have you ever considered what we talked about this morning, Sunny?"

I looked at her reaction to see if she's being serious about what she just said. I took a deep breath and as I looked at her, I was out of words right away.

"Mom, how many times will I ever tell you that I am not going to do it? I am not going to agree about whatever you're going to tell me about." I said in a raised voice as I stood up. I heard her sigh as I started piling up the dishes for me to wash.

I can't wait to put them all in a sink and do my work and avoid arguing with her with nonsense words.

I went directly to the kitchen to start washing without looking at her. It's a bit annoying because she's been thinking about it most of the day without considering my feelings.

"Like what I am saying, it is all for your own good."

"Even if I don't like it? How could it be for my own good when I am against it? What good will it benefit me?"

"Sunny, since when did you become very complicated?"

"I am not complicated, mom. I just want to let you know that you can't always get what you've always wanted in life, that includes deciding for other people."

"You are not other people, Sunny. You are my daughter. You have to follow what I want."

"Then give me choices, if you insist."

“Okay, alright...” I heard her sigh from behind me while I'm washing the dishes. I am keeping myself busy and I always avoid facing her. I might forget my current age and I will act mature more than my mother does.

“Mr. Athkinson has decided to let us stay at his house starting next week. That way, he could help you prepare for the enrollment for high school after two months.”

From what my mother told me, I guess I could trust Mr. Athkinson more than Mr. John, even if I haven't met him even once. From how mom described him to me, he seemed to be a responsible man. I guess mom deserved happiness in the world more than anyone, even if sometimes, she's being insensitive and annoying to me.

“Okay, seems reasonable enough.”

“I can't believe I am like bargaining from someone older than me.” My mom said with a sigh. I couldn't help but chuckle as I let go of the plates first and dried my hands on my apron. I hugged her tight that surprised her at that moment.

“Thank you, mom. You're the best. You will not regret this one.”

“I wonder why you didn't like Mr. John, though.”

I just don't, mom. I don't like to think that you are going to entrust me to somebody we barely knew. I don't feel safe when I think about it.”

“Hmm, is that an alibi because he was able to spy you for me while I am at work?”

“What? Of course no! That's too childish for a reason.” I chuckled to hide my anxiousness. If only mom knew what is really happening then she will truly understand where I am coming from.

“Okay, whatever my daughter wanted. You know I always want the best for you, right?” She smiled as she cupped both of my cheeks. I hugged her again. This time, I could feel her warmth as she hugged me tightly.

From the time I went back to this year, it's the first time that she hugged me this tight and warm. I can't help but be emotional. I realized, at the age of 76 in the year 2020, I never had a vivid memory of my mom. I can't even remember what she looked like. There isn't any picture of her in my room, nor anything to retrieve to continue remembering her...and this?

This moment is too priceless for me to just let pass. I let go of her and think about my phone. I looked around and when I realized it's 1957, my shoulders dropped.

“What is it?” She asked, giving me a weird look. Maybe, she was shocked to see me scampering without any reason at all.

"How can I ever capture this moment, mom? We don't even have a camera of our own."

She gave me a hearty chuckle as if feeling amused with what I have mentioned to her.

"We don't need a camera, dear. Priceless memories of you and me is enough to remember." She assured me. I nodded as I could relate to what she said.

"Okay, I will mom. Do you think we'll remember all of this?"

"I don't worry about it dear, for as long as you keep this memory in your heart forever, you will always remember it." She bent down on both knees at my height level.

"Even if the mind can't remember anymore, it's the responsibility of the heart to remind us about it."

"Thank you so much, mom. I will always keep this in mind. Best memories deserve to be treasured forever."

I went to my room and we all took a rest with a smile. I am so thankful that mom finally understood what I meant when I said that I don't want to go to Mr. John's house and work for him. I will always accept any options available except living under his care.

I don't want to see myself regretting everything when I reach my age in the year 2020. I don't want to hate myself for not defending what I think is right for me. If my mom thinks that what she has been deciding is right, then for me it's not. It won't be always right considering that she will let me work with other people.

The next morning, I met Miss Marlyn and Tyler with a smile.

"I think things happen the way I expect in my life. I guess I never saw it coming, that's why I am so happy right now."

"Well, we are more than happier for you too, you know."

"Of course dear. Thank you too."

"I hope you will be happy with your new guardian."

"I am also expecting it, Miss Marlyn." I answered back. I guess everyone is also expecting that way. They were just all smiles to me for what happened.

"All I wish is for you to be happy, dear. If you're happy, you're also motivated to learn to the fullest."

Chapter 26: MY SUBSTITUTE TUTOR

Sunny's POV

As we develop a beautiful relationship with mom, so does my friendship with Miss Marlyn and Tyler. They both helped me with phonics, letter sounds, simple words, and even sentence construction. Even everything I need to know from the basics. They do it to help me transition from the simplest thing before getting into complex lessons suited for my learning style.

Every night, I can't help being very excited for the next morning. Every day is another new experience to enjoy and I am liking every bit of it. Things got lighter compared to the previous days. These days, I am only getting up and being grateful for everything I have and experience.

As soon as mom went off to work, I was able to prepare myself to head to the library as well. My smile faded away when I saw the library closed for today.

"Huh?" I muttered as I scratched my head. I'm even annoyed when somebody covered my eyes from behind me. Gosh, someone is screwing me up that it's still very early in the morning.

"Who is this please?" I held the back of the hands of the one covering my eyes. I could feel that he's only stopping himself from laughing for me to not recognize him easily. Well, he's only assuming, that's for sure.

"Tyler?" I added as if confirming if it is really him. I could hear a chuckle from behind me.

"C'mon, can you sometimes pretend that you don't know me?" He said, scratching his head.

"That's a terrible idea. I want to know why the library was closed today instead." I tried changing the topic. My goodness, that one gesture from him made my heart beat real fast.

"Sorry. I forgot to mention it to you yesterday. You know, most of the employees filed a leave today. Miss Marlyn also grabbed the chance to rest today."

"Oh, that's a pity. I guess she needs it the most, too. I know she's stressed out lately."

I couldn't agree more."

"The number of people going in and out of the library went nuts. I can also say I knew I added up to her burden as well."

"Please don't say that. Miss Marlyn was the one who offered you help. You're not a burden at all. Do not worry about it too much, okay?" He said and I could sense the assurance from his tone.

"So, what are we going to do now?" I scratched her head as she glanced at the closed library entrance once again."

"We can do more interesting things while not missing your supposed lesson of the day."

"How could it be possible?"

"Don't worry. I got your back. Let's go! I will show you something," Tyler pulled my hand as we ran across the street.

"Where?" He just chuckled and let go of my hand. I followed him to the narrow pathway in between the tall buildings as we roamed around the town. He smiled as he tapped a bike parked beside the wall of a building.

"Wow! Is that yours? I thought you're riding a bus when you go home?"

"I usually do that. However, recently, my father bought this one from his colleague. He thought I might like it so he gave it to me."

"I am glad to hear that. Your father is sweet."

"Thanks. I am happy that you liked it too."

"Does my reaction mean that much to you?"

"Well, for a reason, yes."

I looked at the bike and swallowed. I remembered I never rode a bike my entire life because I am afraid I might fall and have a lot of bruises. That's why I preferred learning to drive a car more than to practice riding a bike.

"You look scared just by looking at it," He said between chuckles. I never realized that he's already observing me while I am looking at his bike closely.

"No, I'm not!" I answered in my most defensive way that he chuckled more.

"You ready?"

"W-What?" My heart began to race when Tyler asked me this one. He suddenly laughed upon seeing my reaction. Is he thinking of letting me try it? I hope not!

"Don't worry. You will just ride on the back of my bike." I heaved a sigh of relief. I don't know why I felt happy when he started pedaling the bike going somewhere I am not familiar with.

"Better hold on to something because you might fall as we pass on the bumpy part of the road."

"Oh my! Is that so?" I reacted all of a sudden as I hugged him from behind. I could hear his soft chuckles as if liking the whole thing I am doing to him.

I feel like I am light as a feather because of the way he rode the bike. He's skillful without being obvious. I don't like the idea of hugging him. However, I can't help but imagine I might fall on the ground at any time.

"Wow, you just got a free hug from me, it's not funny," I said as I bit my lower lip. He just laughed as a response. The weather is not that hot nor too cold. It's a cloudy day, overall.

"I hope we're not going to cut classes."

"We are still enjoying our summer break, so it's not what you think of."

I hugged him as I preferred being silent while enjoying the view. We passed on to many houses and tall buildings.

"Where are we going, by the way? We're already far from the city center." I asked as I looked around. We're already paving a rough road full of grass beside it. We also passed beside the lake and there were fewer houses already. I closed my eyes as I smiled.

"You'll see. Wait for a little more."

My face almost pressed on his back as he stopped his bike all of a sudden.

"What happened?" I asked, still closing my eyes as I hugged him tightly. He laughed as he held both of my hands that hugged him.

"We're here, sweetheart." He whispered. I let go of him all of a sudden that we almost fell on the ground.

"Don't call me that, my goodness!"

"I was just joking, no big deal, okay?"

We alighted from the bike and I am awestruck with the view. It was a large tree standing on a large hill.

"I love it! What is this place?"

"It's a part of our property. I call this "my place".

"It's beautiful!"

"I am glad you like it." He smiled as he parked his bike beside the trunk of the tree. He gently placed his backpack on the ground. I love the breeze of the wind kissing my skin. The shade of the tree is making the atmosphere cool.

I saw Tyler as he opened his backpack and pulled the picnic blanket and spread it on the roots under the large tree where we're at right now.

"Whoah, I never thought you can be this prepared."

"Of course. I am planning to show this place to you for a long time but we're always busy."

"We had great timing today."

"What do you mean?"

"I will be your tutor today."

Chapter 27: MEME-MENTS WITH YOU

Sunny's POV

"Wow! Are you serious about that?"

"Do I sound like I am joking?" He said with a smile as he is still pulling things from his backpack, not even paying much attention to me.

"Well, we're almost the same age. Do you think it won't be too awkward?" I said, following whatever he is doing with my gaze.

"What are you pulling out from your bag?" I tried to come closer to him this time. Now, I am curious about what he wants to do.

"I brought some snacks. We might get hungry while studying."

"Wait, did you know that the library will be closed today?"

He just grinned as I gave him an annoyed look. I turned my back as I opened my notes.

"Sorry, okay? The truth is, I never want to inform you about it even if Ms. Marlyn already told me to remind you." I gaped right away. He chuckled at the sight of it.

"My goodness! Why didn't you tell me? I should've not come here to disturb you..."

"What? No! The truth is, I am afraid you might not come here today. I don't want to spoil the fun that we might be getting here."

Gosh, I can't believe he could do this to me.

"So you planned all of this all along? What kind of fun do you mean?"

"C'mon, Sunny. Have fun, alright? You're one, serious learner. Let me teach you how." He said as he pulled my hand closer to him.

"Here, eat this." He gave me a chocolate bar as he smiled.

Kelly's chocolate bars.

I opened it and put the chocolate bar inside my mouth. I couldn't help but smile as I covered my lips.

"Delicious, right?"

"Yeah...I love it." I said as I chewed it. I realized that there's a small caramel inside the candy and you need to chew it for a minute or two.

I sat next to him, closer this time. It is because he's holding the book Ms. Marlyn left for me to practice reading. It's more awkward today because instead of Ms. Marlyn, I will be reading the contents of the book to him.

"Are you ready?" He said, sitting comfortably while eating his share of the chocolate bar as well. He handed me his water bottle for me to drink some.

"Hmm, yes I guess. As if I have a choice." He chuckled as soon as he heard me.

We started silent reading. I noticed that he's also reading his own sets of books.

"Were you looking at me?"

"What? N-No..." I said defensively. It made him smile as he shook his head. He continued gazing on the pages.

"Focus, Sunny. You need to read that in front of me later. Do you need a timer?"

"I hate you. Miss Marlyn never treated me this way."

"Sorry for that but I am your mentor now. We're two, different teachers."

"We're almost the same age."

"Well, I am more advanced than you when it comes to reading."

I whined as I gripped the pages of my book tightly. I have to overcome this one. I have to prove to him that I am awarded as the woman of 2020. I sighed as I looked at him again. Maybe I have to undergo this one again because this is the making of 'Sunny Grainger'.

He offered me some cookies. I got it from his hand without looking at his face. I put it on my mouth while reading the words from the book I am reading.

"Alright. Times up."

"What? Am I being timed? Since when?"

"No need to argue. I want you to start now."

Seriously, he's annoying. He's triggering my anxiety right now. I stood up and faced him. He looked calm with anticipation as he met my gaze and smiled. I slowly breathed and started opening my mouth as I read the pages before him.

This was the last page Ms. Marlyn left for me to practice because I was supposed to read it before her. However, things happened unexpectedly.

"Your confidence impressed me so much. You can even read with minimal supervision." He said while clapping his hands.

"Duh, I know, right?" I smiled as I raised my eyebrows.

"Intonation and pronunciation check, excellent!"

"Thank you!" I bowed and I sat next to him again, removing my slippers. He followed it with his gaze as he looked at my face.

"I never noticed you're only wearing slippers." He said in a worried tone. I sat in an Indian sitting position, hiding my feet from him. I suddenly feel ashamed that he saw what I am wearing.

"M-Mom is so busy she has no time to even buy me a new one."

"Sorry to hear that. You don't have to hide your feet. They're beautiful. I only noticed your slippers because it was a bit old already."

"Don't mind it. If I will show my mom that I can read well before her, maybe she'll not hesitate to buy me things I wanted, including a new pair of slippers."

He nodded. He laid flat on his back as he rested both of his hands on his nape as he looked up.

"It must be hard being a scholar, right?"

"Yes. You have to maintain your grades just to be called a scholar."

"Why do you have to do this? I know you came from a well-to-do family, right? I am sure they can support you financially."

"I always have a choice. I don't want to see myself seeking help from my family all my life."

"What do you mean?"

"If I will depend on them all the time, I am sure it comes with a price later on."

"I am still confused."

"What I mean is, I don't want to see myself getting forced into something I don't want but I have to do it anyway because I am obliged by my parents."

"Hmm, you got a point. We both agree with that."

"I want to live my life as freely as possible. Being a scholar is just a stepping stone for them to prevent them from controlling me."

"We have different situations but the same idealism. I love it."

"I am telling you all these things for you to realize more, Sunny. Let's live our lives with freedom."

"Thank you, I will always keep it in mind."

"Go to the next page. Let's double time. You may not see results now but don't you ever give up something that you wanted to become someday."

Coming from a guy like him, I am more impressed. He's not the kind of guy I dated from the future. Even in 2020, I also dated random guys but I guess Tyler stood up from the rest.

I think I am not only liking learning but the one who's making me learn as well.

Chapter 28: BRING ME BACK TO THE PRESENT

Sunny's POV

I glanced at him to see what he has been doing. I practice reading the assignment that Miss Marlyn left with me. I also noticed he was reading his sets of books. He caught me gazing at him and his smile. It made me avoid my gaze right away.

I heard him chuckle a little as he closed his books. I am starting to feel nervous if he will pay much attention to me rather than to the things he's supposed to be doing. I hate it when he is treating me as his priority.

"You know what? You are stricter than Miss Marlyn. I am thinking of hating you this time." He smiled as a response, not even minding my warning.

"Well, I am not doing this for myself but I am doing it for you. I want you to finish everything so that we can proceed with another lesson."

I frowned, however, he got some point there.

"Yeah, that's what I am supposed to be doing, right?"

"Trust yourself more. You know what? I already put my confidence that you can actually do it."

He gave me a thumbs up sign as he smiled from ear to ear. I sighed and started to read another text aloud in front of him. He nodded in agreement. I am happy that he looked satisfied with how I read it.

"Wow, you're doing great, Sunny! I honestly mean it. Keep it up!"

"Yep. I want my future self to be thankful for what I am doing now, you know."

"Of course. That's what we're supposed to do. Think of our future that would be bright ahead of us."

I nodded in a fun way while grinning. He couldn't help but to stare at me in a fun, weird way. He chuckled with glee. I know he would agree with me from this area of learning. Who would've wanted to be left behind, right? I have my two personal tutors. There's no way for me to back out from what I have started.

I agree with what he said. I know he's only concerned about how I will improve even more. After I read everything he wanted me to finish, we sat next to each other as we looked at the horizon. The vast meadow in front of the high hill where the tree is standing tall is looking majestic. I love the simplicity of life this time has to offer. It's the year 1957. People could still appreciate our nature's goodness and advantages more than the profit they could make.

Also, air pollution is not even evident because there were lots of trees standing tall among the houses in the suburbs. They looked lovely and refreshing to the eyes.

"Wow, I am not used to you being so quiet, Sunny." Tyler smiled as he commented. I never noticed I was silent for a long time.

"Well, sometimes you should expect that. I am naturally quiet and timid, you know."

"Not these past few days, though. I can see that you're more confident when it comes to speaking, reading, and writing a lot of things. I am proud of you."

"Thank you so much! If not for you and Miss Marlyn's help, these will not be possible."

He looked up to the cloudy skies. He reached both of his hands to the rays of the gentle sun peeping through the shade of the large tree above us.

"It's very fine weather. It's not too cool nor too hot."

"Yeah, you must be going here a lot, right?"

"Not really. I am just going here whenever I am free. It's a part of my family's property. That's why I am very much familiar here."

"Wow, more like a secret hideout or something?"

He laughed because of what I said. "Well, kinda. Whatever you call it, then."

"Do you bring a lot of your friends here?"

"You're the first to go here, Sunny."

"That's nice," I said. I couldn't help but be glad about what he showed to me. I am happy that he's giving me this kind of trust that nobody has ever given to me my whole childhood. Wait...I can't even remember all of these from the past.

"I am not used to see you being quite like this." I smiled at him as I meet his gaze. He looked worried as he studied my expression.

"I am just thinking about something."

"I don't mind if you share it with me." He replied, sounded very willing to listen to me. I sighed as I looked at him.

"As if you're going to believe me easily."

"Well, you will not know if you will not try. What is it? Is it about your mom again?"

"No. It's more about me, Tyler."

"You? What about you?" He looked puzzled now, looking at me from head to toe. It's as if he's expecting unusual for me to confess to him. Well, it's more than what he expects.

"I am not from this time, Tyler," I said and as I waited for his reaction, he seemed unbothered. Instead, he's looking at me too. It's like he's expecting me to say more.

"Is that it? Wait, what do you mean?"

"Well, what I mean is I came from the future." Upon hearing the words I said, he burst out laughing.

"I never knew you will have that kind of imagination."

"But I'm not joking!"

He looked chill and cool. He's not even impressed about what I just said.

"You know what? You can become a great writer someday." I smiled awkwardly. Well, that's exactly true. I am a writer in 2020. I am even a world-renowned writer and scriptwriter under the pen name, Sunny G.

"See? I told you. There are things that it is hard to explain and believe no matter how you will prove it."

"Sorry to offend you, Sunny. It's never my intention. Let's just change the topic for you to not get angry at me."

"Alright, will the library be opened tomorrow, then?"

"Yes, I am sure of it."

I won't blame Tyler now. He insisted that I must tell him what I felt. Moreover, it doesn't mean that I will expect that he will agree or believe in anything about it.

"Let's get you home. I know you will still get ready for some chores before your mom arrives from work."

I nodded. I hopped on the backseat of his bicycle again and hugged him from behind. I admit he is good at driving a bike for the reason that I couldn't almost feel the bumpy or rough parts of the road.

When we arrived at our front gate, he parked his bike beside the white fence. He handed me some of my notes and a book suited for my reading age.

"Thank you so much for today. I appreciate it so much."

"It is my pleasure. I will be seeing you tomorrow!" I waved at him and turned my back right away. He never left because he's still observing me from a far distance as I enter our house. He is a real gentleman because he was making sure I am safe. When I glanced at the window of our living room, he was not there anymore.

Chapter 29: MOVING OUT PLAN

Sunny's POV

Everything was all set when mom arrived home. I already cooked mom's most requested meal from me. She loves eating stewed meat and vegetables almost every day, without even getting tired of it. She told me to eat my dinner quickly because she's about to tell me something important. That's what she said.

Well, I guess something's weird is about to happen. She seldom does this 'very important' announcement. From her personality, I could say that she's timid and she would always prefer being silent.

I guess this is the moment that I am also anticipating. The timing is also great since I also want to tell her something very important for me, too.

This time, I also badly wanted her to know that I am taking advantage of the public library for my growth when it comes to my growth in learning. I could sense that this is another heart-to-heart talk and I don't want to miss it out for myself.

"Dear, we have to move to Mr. Athkinson's house tomorrow."

"What?" I couldn't help but exclaim in a raised voice. I admit I am surprised because it is sooner than what I have expected to happen. Really? That quick? They must be joking or something.

"Yes. He wanted to know you in person. He also wanted our relationship to be official at last."

"Why is it that it is too soon? I am not even prepared yet."

"I am so sorry for the very short notice, dear. However, we have to. I also long to be one of the hosts of a big mansion and not as a housekeeper forever."

"Is Mr. Atkinson serious about it?"

"Why would he insist if he's only joking?"

"I don't mean it that way. I am just thinking about maybe he's telling you that we will move into his house because he could see that you wanted it so bad."

"He wanted us to move in tomorrow. He hired a private teacher for you in advance. It is to prepare you for the incoming enrollment that will be in two months."

"But mom, are you sure I'll be admitted to senior high? I didn't even go to primary school. What about my documents? What about my eligibility?" She scoffed, trying to be patient in dealing with those follow-up questions.

"That's why I insist you to agree about moving in by tomorrow. Mr. Athkinson assured me that he's in charge of anything. He said that making me worry is never on his list."

I smiled at her, the kind that she also did the same and even winked at me.

"Wow...I never knew that my mom has that kind of charm." I even emphasized that last word from what I said. I couldn't help but comment on what she confessed just now. If that's the case, then who am I to argue? After all, upon hearing what my mom is telling me right now, I can say Mr. Athkinson is earnest about his love for my mom. He even cared about my education. I am touched that he'll have to take care of it himself.

I heard that Mr. Athkinson is a wealthy man. He's got a lot of businesses, especially car dealership. There's no way he couldn't grant my simple wish of being educated at last.

"Very well, then. I will start to pack my things, mom. Shall we bring some more things aside from our clothes?"

"No, dear. Please pack up your clothes but don't bring all of them. We'll go shopping tomorrow. Mr. Athkinson told me that he'd love to accompany us to buy what we need."

"Oh, is he trying to impress you that much, mom?"

"I guess so. In fact, he's more excited on the move out, more than I am."

"That's great news."

"I know, my dear. That's why he's just easy to love because she's very kind and considerate. Many people would love to have his love. But of course, there could be only one."

"Gosh, you're the real winner, mom." I couldn't help but chuckle upon seeing my mom's reaction. She's like a teenager being in love for the first time.

"Well, now that you agreed to our relationship, I can talk to you freely about him, right?"

"Mom, if Mr. Athkinson is making you happy, I will also feel very happy for you. Please don't worry about a thing. I will understand."

My mom rushed to hug me tight. It was the second time around, hence it makes my heart warm with happiness and pride. Seeing my mom like this is everything for me. I wonder why I can't remember this memory from the year 2020 that I come from.

I now wonder why. Am I too young that I couldn't remember such a thing even from my childhood? Why is this memory not even existing in the year 2020? Did I come back only to recall this particular memory that is already non-existent in the present time?

"C'mon, I will help you pack your things. I know your clothes were a bit heavy. We'll have to prepare because we'll be leaving as early as five in the morning."

"Is Mr. Athkinson's house far from ours, mom?"

"It is approximately seven kilometers from here, dear." I nodded as I bit my lower lip. Oh no, how can I ever go back to the library when we're going to move out? Oh my, I haven't even got the chance to say goodbye to Tyler and Miss Marlyn. I will go without informing them that I will be living in a new house farther than ours, much farther than the library, this time.

I opened my room, and mom started to open the cabinets. I got my big bag with two handles with a zipper in between and opened it. I saw her starting to fold my clothes one by one as she started to put it inside. She's even humming with happiness. As I look at her, I am having my second thoughts. Is this the right time to tell her about what I am doing in the library?

"M-Mom?"

"What is it, dear?"

"What do you think of the public library?" I swallowed as she suddenly stopped from what she was doing and looked at me.

"Why do you ask that?"

"N-Nothing. You know, I only want to know your reaction if you have been there or not".

"I hate that place." She said, not even looking at me. Instead, she continued what she's been doing.

Now, I am more confused. Why will mom hate a place where learning and fun take place at the same time?

"May I know why? I noticed many people loved going there. There were thousands of books to choose from."

This time, I am more curious about why, of all places, will mom hate the library the most. She looked at me and sighed. Her reaction suddenly went from happiness to gloom real quick.

"Do you want to know the reason why?"

I gazed into her eyes as her reaction went blank. I can tell she is not liking the whole idea of recalling everything about it.

“That’s where I met your father, Sunny.”

Chapter 30: MOM'S UNSUNG HERO

"What about it?" Sunny asked further. Her mom sat in front of her and touched her cheeks. She smiled but she could sense the gloom in her eyes. She even caressed her hair as she started recalling the past with her father. Sunny looked at her mother intently as she started talking.

"He was the most handsome man for me that day," She started as she swallowed. It's as if she had the memories come back even if she didn't want to.

"It was more of a "love at first sight"...it was love when I first gaze into his eyes."

"Wow. Mom, I have never seen that part of you in ages."

"I kept myself busy throughout the years. I never thought I could love again after a failed relationship with your father."

Sunny badly wanted to hear from her mother herself the reason why the two didn't work out pretty well. She could remember a bit of those memories from 2020, the future year where she came from. However, she wanted to hear from her mother for her to clear things up. She has heard her father's side. She wanted to hear from her mother this time. She felt very excited because she will be hearing her mom's point of view through her in person. It felt great more than anything right now.

"Did dad ever give up on you just because someone has more than you can offer? Is that it? Did he just fall out of love that's why you two didn't work out?" I asked a lot that she couldn't help but sigh. She looked at me straight into my eyes. She stared at them for a long time. After that, she bitterly laughed a little. However, I could see that tears were starting to form from her eyes.

"Are you serious?" Where did you even get that one?" She mumbled as she sighed. She held out a weird chuckle, not as a result of happiness but more of anxiety attack.

"I guess you're hearing the version of the story wrong." My mom smiled but it didn't hide the sadness she's been concealing for a long time. She wiped her tears with her hands as she chuckled again. This time, I felt guilty for asking a lot of questions from her.

"He loves me so much. I am very confident about it. I am the only woman he has ever learned to love with all of his heart."

"Mom, I am very confused this time. I have learned that dad was a womanizer and he's up to no good for you that's why you both separated."

"Believe me, whoever told you that, I wanted to give him or her a lesson."

"Mom, it's father..." That was a slip of a tongue. I covered my lips with my hands to prevent myself from showing her my surprise reaction too.

"It's now my turn to tell you about that silly guy," She chuckled. I'm wondering...mom should hate dad this time, right? I mean every wife would be angry when they learned that their husband is cheating on them. But upon seeing mom, I don't know what to say anymore.

"After three months of us being together, I realized that he hasn't got much to offer. I was too young back then, too ambitious that I told her I wanted a life that he can't give me. I was the one who truly initiated the break-up. How our relationship became so complicated was all because of me."

I was left speechless. I was expecting that mom would just rant or vent out the things she felt during those cheating moments dad had caused her. I thought she would be bitter with all the experiences and heartaches he caused her. I was totally wrong.

The thing she just confessed to me was really out of my expectation. I truly never see it coming.

"How have I proven that he loved me so much? He spread rumors about him being a douchebag instead. He told everyone that he's a kind of jerk that could dump anyone after any woman that will fall in love with him. The truth is, he doesn't want me to appear as the 'bad guy' in our love story."

I realized that father loved mom very much. Instead of mom receiving so much humiliation, father did whatever it means to save her out of it. He became mom's unsung hero for her lifetime.

I couldn't understand but tears ran down my cheeks as I listened to mom. It did crush my heart because dad has to suffer that much all because of her.

"And Sunny, your dad never left us. I was the one whom you should hate because if it wasn't for me, he's still alive until now."

That shook my world that I fell on my knees sobbing as I covered my face.

"Mom?"

"We had a huge fight. I am about to leave our house and about to cross the road when a fast-running truck is coming. He saw all of it and pushed me on the edge of the road. He was the one who got killed instead of me. That's why I am always blaming myself for what happened."

The truth was too much to handle. I felt dizzy all of a sudden. The last thing I saw was my mom's worried face rushing to me and everything went blank.

I looked around the place. It was a big mansion with a lot of open spaces. Approximately, it could accommodate fifteen to twenty people all at once. I remembered my own house in the year 2020 and all the modern technology I have invested in it. I wonder if Valerie missed me already. I know she has all the access to my keys, houses, and cars. Oh my gosh, my lovely cars! I hope she is taking care of all of them.

“Sunny, Are you alright?” She smiled as she held my hand.

“Yep. Everything is fine. I...I just remembered something.”

“I guess you’re also impressed with how big this house is, right?” She said between soft giggles.

“Dear, it also has a swimming pool in the back! Isn’t it lovely?” She added in a whisper.

“Y-Yeah...wow. I love it, mom.” I said as I smiled awkwardly.

Oh my goodness, if only mom knew that my house is bigger than this mansion from 2020. The only difference is that my house is partly remote-controlled. I could open the doors with the help of voice command. It’s way too advanced. I am very shocked about how the people from this period survive in their day-to-day life.

I need to adjust. Even if it is hard, but I have to. I have to be patient and wait for the things that are yet to come. I wish I could bring Tyler to the year 2020 for me to prove that what I was telling him was real.

The things that were new to him were already familiar to me in the year 2020. At least if I have to bring him to the year 2020, I could show him what things I meant. At least I could prove to him that all of what I am saying is true, with pieces of evidence.

Chapter 31: NEW WIFE, NEW LIFE

Sunny's POV

I slowly hovered my gaze around the house. I admit the mansion is a bit bigger for this year. I can say that Mr. Athkinson is a wealthy man. The features of the house itself is so great, you could easily tell that the one living here is very particular when it comes to furniture and appliances. From its wide array of stylish, marble-designed statues of goddesses and greek gods beside the entrance door, you can also see many indoor plants scattered within the area. Since the mansion is mostly white in color, the plants complimented to its lively and relaxing look at the same time.

"You know what, my dear? Mr. Athkinson would love to meet you at last." I was able to shift my attention to mom after hearing her voice. I smiled as I went closer to her as we roamed around the house.

"I also want to meet him too, mom. I want to know why you fell in love with him."

"He's very kind. If you meet him, I am sure you will like him too." Seeing my mom's sweetest smile is an encouragement for me. I love how she was able to find her happiness after what happened to dad.

I nodded and returned my mom's happiness. After all, she deserves it well. Mom stayed inside Mr. Athkinson's room, while a maid accompanied me to the room next to them. It looked like a big guest room. I could see that it could accommodate at least four people when we're inside that room with one of my mom's colleagues.

"Ma'am, this is your room starting now."

"Wow! You can't be serious! I gasped with awe as I opened the door. The color pink accentuated the whole room. The design was just right for me.

"Yes, ma'am. Mr. Athkinson wants only the best for Ms. Grainger's daughter."

"Thank you so much, ma'am. I am happy that you all set this up for me."

"It's our pleasure, ma'am. Please call us if there's anything else that you will need in this room."

I nodded and smiled. The maid bowed down and left as she slowly closed the door.

Now, everything is becoming clear to me. I thought my dad only left my mom with another woman. I never expected that he was dead.

I never knew all of it. If not because of me going back to this year, I had no idea of the real thing that's happening about my parents. It's very sad. I never even had a chance to mourn for him because of the wrong information.

I slowly roamed around the place to check the things that they've placed. I noticed that there was some girly stuff being bought in advance. I also went to my bed and sat on it. The comfort gave so much relaxation to my body so much that it almost lulled me to sleep.

I slowly laid on my back and breath, enjoying the exclusivity of my room. Compared to my room from our old house, this one is better and cozy. The room has a lot of shelves that suited its real purpose. I can almost see that the space is too much for my things to contain. I guess mom is right. We need to buy new things and even additional ones for the space to be maxed out.

I opened my drawers and cabinets but they were all empty. I heard a knock on the door.

"Please come in! That's open!" I raised my voice a bit without minding the one who was knocking my room. I am too busy to be amazed that I never noticed it was mom. She also sounded very enthusiastic more than I do.

"Don't worry, my dear! We'll be filling those out tomorrow!" It was my mom, touching both of my shoulders from behind me. She sounded very excited with anticipation for tomorrow's shopping.

I rolled my eyes. I'm sure she never saw that one. I admit, before I came here, I was too fond of shopping. I feel like retiring from the year 2020 where I came from. Who would've thought I'll be doing it again?

"Yey..." I tried sounding excited as well, mixed with sarcasm. I noticed that my mom never minded all of it. She was too busy seeking her happiness and new life that negativity was not in her vocabulary right now.

"Mr. Athkinson wanted us to get up early. We'll be having breakfast and after that, we'll go on a shopping spree as he requested."

"C'mon, mom. It's you who wanted shopping the most."

"Uhm, well, not really. I am just excited to go shopping because I want to buy you something as well."

I can see her cheeks reddened as she looked at me. She tried avoiding her gaze, looking cute. I can't help but smile. Sometimes I can't believe this is my mother.

"Thank you, dear. I am happy."

"Mom, you don't have to tell me about it. It's too obvious." I said between chuckles. She hugged me tight from behind me. I held her hands that's warm and accepting.

"It's final, alright? Please wake up early. We'll surely have fun tomorrow."

"Of course, mom." We had some small talks and after half an hour, she bid goodbye to do many things. I guess she's too overwhelmed with the idea of managing a 'new home'.

I am also glad that Mr. Athkinson is giving all of the privileges to her as his new girlfriend. Wow, I couldn't help but admire mom's charm. Who would've thought she would love again after many decades?

I badly wanted to meet Mr. Athkinson in person. I want to know how my mom fell in love with him, how his personality would look like, and many others. I am curious about what my mom saw in him that stood among others.

I guess she deserves to be happy after all. She's been working long hours from the past years. I am not even sure if she's happy or not, but I have proven it myself now.

Agreeing with her new-found love is the thing that I guess she's grateful the most. I think that's the only thing that I could do for her as her daughter. For me, she deserves all of these things that are happening to her right now.

The next morning, I woke up early because of my mother's request. I stretched my arms and legs as soon as I opened my eyes. After a few minutes, I stood up and walked towards my window. I opened the sliding window from my room. The breeze of the morning air greeted me. I love the sight of the sun that is yet to rise from the horizon.

"Good morning, 1957! Gosh, a real throwback from the past. Who would've thought I would be going back to the past? This is crazy!." I muttered as I put my hand on my left cheek, leaning on the bottom rails of my window as I sigh.

I heard a knock on the door of my room. I remembered the reminder my mom told me yesternight.

"Coming, mom!"

Chapter 32: JUST FANCY, NOT USEFUL

She didn't know what to feel because it's the first official meeting of Sunny and Mr. Athkinson. Because of too much excitement, she took a bath right after she woke up and everything was all set. She's thankful that she could move too fast because of the routines that she has been following when she was still living in the year 2020.

Sunny went to the dining table after her mom knocked on the door. Mr. Athkinson's maids were assisting them as they prepared breakfast for Sunny and her mom. She looked so happy as she was seated next to him.

Sunny looked at him very well as he observed him closely. He is very simple when it comes to the way he dressed. Not ragged-looking, yet not overly sophisticated. He's handsome with the way he would smile, yet you can never see his teeth showing up. Sunny assumed that his personality is really like this. Gentle yet he has this strict aura that he has with him wherever he will go.

The way he would look at her in the eyes is subtle and gentle. Overall, he's looking harmless. Sunny liked him right away for her mom. She could say she had a good taste after all.

"It was nice to meet you at last," He said with a friendly tone of voice as he extended her hands for a handshake. Sunny couldn't help but swallow. She's a bit nervous when it comes to encounters like this.

"Me too, Mr. Athkinson. It's a pleasure to know you. Thank you for allowing us to live here." I nodded in a polite manner. He chuckled at what I did.

"You are my new family and I would love to see both of you here often. I hope you will enjoy your stay here in this house." He chuckled. I noticed my mom who was getting emotional because of what she's been hearing from both of us. I guess she just can't believe we're both getting along very well without her helping the both of us as well.

"You know what, Lilian? Your daughter is modest. She's too formal for a fourteen-year-old child." He added as he turned beside him.

"I don't know. All I know is, I am teaching her life's lessons first and I believe the rest would follow."

He chuckled that I couldn't almost see his eyes anymore because he's smiling a lot. I noticed that he has a gentle nature that anybody could easily get along with.

"Oh, Mr. Atkinson, that's her attitude."

"I admire her upbringing. She's well-raised. That's my first impression of her, dear." He looked at him as he nodded. I saw my mom blushing too much that she can't look at him directly because of my presence.

"Loves, breakfast is ready! We can't be talking the whole day, right?" My mom changed the topic before the conversation gets longer.

Sunny smiled as she sat beside them. They had a great breakfast. The cook prepared sausages, hash browns, and grilled chicken for them to share.

Sunny considered it a hearty meal. Hearty in a sense that except for great food placed on the table, they were all acting as if the three of them are one, big, happy family. After they enjoyed their breakfast, Mr. Atkinson talked to Sunny more about random things. She was able to ride a car that is one of the latest models for this year, the 1957 Corvette.

She never thought her mom would be this impressed. Mr. Atkinson was the one who personally drove for them. Although she knew he let his bodyguards follow them for safety as well.

"Do you really have to do this?" My mom looked worried, however he held her hands.

"This is where I started. Being a driver and driving different cars, trying out some. It will be so smooth."

"Wow! I love it dear. However, please take care even more, just to make sure."

"I will, sweetheart."

After the car parked to where they were going, her mom was the one who opened the door of the car because she can't wait any longer.

She could feel her mom's excitement as she went inside the stalls and shops of those vintage dresses. Now, Sunny is getting it. All those vintage dresses that her mom has been wearing sometimes came from Mr. Atkinson.

She thinks that it is also Mr. Atkinson that convinces her to wear make-up on her face. She could see that she is good with it. She assumed that Mr. Atkinson hired a beautician to teach her how to do it as well. Sunny is just smiling as she watches her mom fancying over the dresses worn by the mannequin.

"Which do you think is better, the floral or the striped one?"

"I guess the striped one is better, mom." She nodded in agreement. She smiled sweetly as she told the seller that she'll be taking it.

"How about you, dear? What do you want?"

Sunny looked around and sighed. She's not into shopping, real talk. She's having too much of it from where she came from and she found herself coming back to do this one again. She's sick and tired of it. However, her mom is asking her about what she wanted to buy for herself. She grabbed the T-shirt with a print of a paint company.

"Here! It's nice, isn't it?" Sunny even grinned as she placed the T-shirt to her chest as if showing her mom that she loved it so much.

My mom looked at Sunny as if she couldn't believe what she heard.

"What?"

"Mom, I'm serious. This is the fashion that I wanted, you know, T-shirt being tucked-in with loose jeans." She frowned as she folded her arms.

"Don't insist on something that's nonsense. I want you to wear dresses from time to time. I want my daughter to be beautiful just like me."

She sighed once again and accepted the three dresses she dumped in front of her. Lilian asked her daughter to try all of those dresses. Sunny hated everything but then it's her mother's request. She just couldn't say no.

Sunny noticed that Mr. Athkinson is just looking at her mom from a far distance. He looked so happy and supportive about her buying some stuff, mostly not even useful. Sunny thought that she could only see those scenes in a movie. She almost believed that it is not happening in real life until this moment happens. She realized that it's the best feeling ever! She loves how Mr. Athkinson gazed at her contently.

As they go home, Sunny is just listening to her mother's chatty nature. Most of the time, Sunny noticed that her mother is serious and silent most of the time. However, this time, things happened differently. She's happy and talkative. It's not being herself, it's being what she is that Sunny is not familiar with.

"Thank you, Mr. Athkinson." Sunny smiled for the first time. It's not bad to share this kind of smile, especially that she witnessed how Mr. Athkinson treated her mom at last.

"No worries dear." Mr. Athkinson replied, tapping her shoulders. How Sunny wished she would find the love of a father from him. She's praying that this relationship will last, unlike the failed love her mother from her father received.

Chapter 33: MEETING FATE

Sunny's POV

The next morning, I was shocked when my mom woke me up earlier than usual. Wow, it's not her usual thing to do but now? She looked more inspired than ever.

"Hmmm..." I sounded impatient as I stretched my limbs. She kept on shaking my body in a gentle way. She even tickled both of my waist that I couldn't help but laugh.

"My baby, get up. We have a lot of things to do." She sounded giddy and excited again. I don't know if I will still be happy about it. She's too active and happy it is sometimes scary for me. Right, for the first time feels like.

"Mom, you're not a housekeeper anymore. You don't have to wake me up early." I said between laughs. I have to remind her of this just in case she forgot already. She grinned from ear to ear as she pinched both of my cheeks.

"Oh dear, I agree with that. But then I scheduled a spa at exactly five in the morning. We'll be pampering ourselves the whole day. When I say, 'whole day', I mean it so much!"

Oh my gosh, here we go again. I want to freak the hell out of here and go somewhere far from mom. I don't like the way she's bringing me wherever she goes.

"Okay," I got up from bed, slowly and zombie-like. I brushed my teeth as I faced the mirror. Can I decide on my own? I guess I can't choose my own since mom is enjoying the whole thing.

I realized she followed me to the bathroom. I was too surprised I almost jumped because mom is already standing behind me.

"Mom! Can you stay outside? You acted like a ghost appearing right from behind me!"

She giggled as she put both of her hands on both of my shoulders. "Dear, I am so sorry. I am just excited about what 'being pampered' truly means. Can you imagine that? We'll be sitting and lying and making ourselves beautiful the whole day!"

"Mom, I heard what you said as soon as you entered my room."

"Well, I don't want how you react to everything that I said."

"Oh well, I guess...yeheeeey?"

"Even if you're my daughter, I want to hate you so much!"

"Mom, before you hate me, please go out. I am not yet done brushing my teeth. Do your drama later, alright?"

I pushed her outside and closed the door in front of me. I held the handle of my toothbrush again and brushed my teeth up and down as I looked at my face. Mom is very lucky to have a love life of her own. As far as I can remember, in the year 2020 I can't remember every man I dated because they're so numerous but none of them interest me the most. At seventy-six, I am still living my singlehood to the fullest.

What she's showing now is quite understandable but not to the point of creeping me out so much!

When I was all set, wearing the 'fashion' style I suggested to mom after our argument last night, I grinned looking at my outfit of the day in the mirror. I hovered my gaze from my head down to my feet. A pair of rubber shoes gave me an amazing fashion sense, I am beginning to feel proud of myself.

"Look at you! That is unacceptable for me!" My mom frowned as she walked near me as she scoffed. It's like she's breathing fire because she's getting mad for what I have decided to wear for today.

"Mom, do you know the reason why I wear this instead of the dress you suggested to me?"

"And what is in your mind right now?"

"Of course! You're already wearing a dress. Would you like your daughter to be more beautiful than you?" I saw her as she twisted her lips as she glanced at me.

"Well, I am not sure of what you're really talking about." I said, shaking my head as I looked at her.

She was speechless for a minute. I am sure she's thinking about what I just said, of me having a point somehow.

"I am just imagining what you would look like in a dress."

"Don't expect me to like it, though. It is not my style. Have you seen a tomboy wearing a dress?" I sounded as if challenging her.

"I can't believe you're my daughter." She jokingly retorted.

"I am." I answered right away, grinning.

"Gosh, you got me there. Alright, alright..." She muttered as she sighed. She turned her back to me right away because she knew I'm just following her.

I have to be enthusiastic about my mom. When we reached the place, I could see a lot of people doing a lot of spa services for their clients. I lay flat on my back and my mom is just beside me, lying flat on the back on the other bed.

I closed my eyes until I am drowsing myself off to sleep. I am still sleepy and tired but I am just keeping it up for her.

We ate our late breakfast at exactly 10:00 A.M. and my dreaded fashion style was ruined because mom wanted me to wear a dress. Bad news, she still bought that dress even if I already told her that I hated it.

"Isn't it cool? What do you think? It is more lady-like than what you're suggesting to me."

"Mom, this isn't fashioned when someone is not liking what he/she is wearing."

"I am your mother. I know what's best for you." I rolled my eyes as my reply. I just made sure she didn't see it.

I had my manicure and pedicure plus foot spa. I also had my foot scrub and body scrub as well. The massage is relaxing and it soothes my tired muscles.

We had the whole day for ourselves. We had fun and I never thought we could bond like we are very close to each other. It's all because of Mr. Athkinson and his good heart. He's very supportive and kind to my mother. I can't help but be touched because he is a great guy.

I am somehow happy that my mom is enjoying the thing she's been praying for so long. She achieved what she wanted at last, although what happened to my father is a bit tragic.

I am sorry for him because of the life he only had for her. If only mom was content and happy then I can tell I have a complete family of my own.

"Dear...are you happy today?" My mom asked me as she nudged my arm.

"Yes, mom. The spa treatment is so relaxing."

"See? I told you. You will enjoy it so much more than I do."

"I noticed we had a great chance of bonding together ever since we moved in here."

"Yeah. I am glad that you're liking the idea of staying here for good."

"How was Mr. Athkinson by the way?"

"I am happy to know him more, mom. Now, I know why you learned to love him so much, I hope I can also see a man like him in the future."

Chapter 34: THE UNSPOKEN GOODBYE

Sunny's POV

Yup. I was able to tell mom about what I am doing around town. I confessed that I am going to the library to learn how to read. I can see that she's teary-eyed by just looking at me.

"I'm so sorry dear. I never knew how you badly wanted to read and learn. I am so sorry that I never had time to teach you what you need to learn more."

"Mom, I understand. You're busy and you need to earn a living for both of us."

"You know what? I am lucky to have you as a daughter. You're all grown up with the way you even talk to me."

Gosh, mom. If only you know I am seventy-six years old now. I am old enough to compare to what you think of..

"I never got the chance to say goodbye to Miss Marlyn and Tyler."

"No worries, dear. I will let our driver get you to the library. I will also prepare some packed foods and sandwiches for you to share with them."

My heart swelled with happiness. I am so happy that my mom took what I said positively. I never thought that she'll support me this much. Her reaction to my thirst for learning is really priceless.

Mr. Athkinson's driver stopped in front of the library. I instructed him to fetch me at exactly six in the evening. I am glad that my mom truly understood my true intentions of learning more that I preferred going to the public library to have all the access to the books I wanted to read. I could see a lot of things or topics of books I could read to my heart's content.

As soon as I entered the library, I hovered my gaze around the aisles. The feeling is gloomy. For me, a day without going to the library is not great. It feels like my day is not complete. Now that I am here again, my heart started to race. It's as if expecting something great from what will happen from this day on.

I noticed that Miss Marlyn is not sitting on her table near the receiving area.

I looked for Tyler as I strolled to some of the aisles. I went to the academic book sections and my intuition never failed me.

"Sunny!" As soon as he noticed me approaching him, I could see his huge smile. He rushed towards me and hugged me tightly.

"Where have you been? You're absent for three days again. You're not a good student." He said between chuckles.

"I am so sorry. Things happened unexpectedly, you know."

"What was it? Any problem again?"

"No, not a problem. More of a good thing that happened."

"Wow! That's nice. What was it?"

I sighed as I smiled at him. He looked more enthusiastic than I am. As I looked into his eyes, I could see it glistened as they looked at me.

"My mother informed me the day before yesterday that we'll be moving out of the house because Mr. Athkinson wanted us to live in his house."

"Wow...that's nice. Did you meet him in person?"

"Yes. He's a good man. He went with us when we went shopping the other day."

"Oh, that's why you never arrived for three days." He said while nodding.

"Yeah, there were so many things that happened after that day. Yesterday, mom even scheduled a one-day spa treatment for us."

"Oh, that explains why," He answered. He looked at me from head to toe. I noticed that he couldn't take his eyes off me when he first noticed me approaching from this aisle.

"Yeah, I noticed you're more beautiful today, and you looked good in that dress."

This time, I felt like I wanted to kiss my mom from head to toe. She's the one who decided for me to wear this one. I never expected that this is one of the things Tyler would notice from me.

I felt my cheeks warmed a little. I hope he didn't see this silly blushing of mine. He tapped my shoulder and gave me a wink. With both hands, he pushed me from behind. I felt my feet followed what he wanted me to do. I walked out of that part of the aisle. I could hear him chuckle because of what he's doing.

"It's nice if we sit on the table we're always sitting on. It's more comfortable to talk like when we're sitting, you know."

"Oh, of course." I nodded and smiled. I understood what he meant. I know some of the people walking in the library were very judgemental. They might think differently if we talk in that secluded area of the aisle. Others may think bad about what we're doing there.

I tried looking around because there is someone that I haven't seen except from Tyler. He also noticed me for doing this one.

"Tyler, I have never seen Miss Marlyn around. Where is she?" As soon as he heard me, his facial reaction became different.

"We have a new librarian, Sunny." He said weakly.

"What? What do you mean?"

"She resigned from her job. She never told me the reason why. I tried to convince her to tell me the exact reason and he only told me that it is for her personal growth."

"She never even waited for me,"

"She told me to bid you goodbye for her."

I honestly felt like crying in front of Tyler. I never even got the chance to say goodbye to her.

"Let's just respect her decisions. I know everything happens for a reason. I will surely miss her the most." I said at last after his revelation.

"Yeah, me too. The new librarian looked so strict."

"Really? We must be careful then."

Even if I heard the sad news, Tyler made sure I still enjoy my library moments with him. He told me that Miss Marlyn left a lot of notes and recommended some books that suit me to catch up quickly.

Because of too much excitement, I read all of the notes. We spent the next hours searching for the books Miss Marlyn recommended to me. Tyler is very supportive as well. He made sure that I answered most of the worksheets correctly. He also helped me cope up with comprehension and grammar along the way. We sat on our table and decided to read the rest of the books silently.

"Tyler, I will never forget Miss Marlyn. She's kind and sweet." I said as I closed the book I'm reading. I sighed as I looked at the empty table where she used to sit and wave at us.

"Yeah, I admire her personality as well. She truly cared for your learning."

"Thanks, Tyler. Not only Miss Marlyn. I also wanted to thank you because of your support."

"It's a pleasure. You know what? Before Miss Marlyn left, she revealed a secret to me."

"Wow! Really? What is it?"

"I wanted to tell you about this one because she also wants to share this with both of us."

"Sounds interesting!"

"She told me that aside from being a librarian, she also wanted to be a good teacher."

Chapter 35: YOU'RE ONLY FOURTEEN

Sunny's POV

We sat next to each other again. Ever since I went with Tyler on this large tree on top of this hill, we always go here. It's like our secret hideout that nobody has ever discovered.

I always love the place because it is quiet and peaceful. It's like nobody could ever go here but only the two of us. It gave me this feeling of security and freedom that I felt like not experiencing even from the year 2020 where I came.

I still think about what Tyler confessed to me about Miss Marlyn. It is without any doubt that she's more suitable for being a teacher than a librarian, but it's only my opinion.

From what Tyler told me, Miss Marlyn became a librarian because her parents want it for her. On the other hand, her heart is to become an educator for the kids. She was ready to fight for what's in her heart. But then when her parents died from World War 2, she promised in front of their grave that she will fulfill their dreams for her.

I guess some dreams are not worth fighting for, especially if you get to choose the one that you love versus the one that you know you can also benefit and make your parents happy at the same time.

"Wow, you seem to be thinking something serious." I heard Tyler beside me telling me those.

When I looked at him, I noticed that he's a bit serious. I realized he's more charming when he does that. I can't help but smile.

"No, not really. I was only thinking about Miss Marlyn and her experiences."

"I guess there are many factors that triggered her to resign just like that."

"I agree. She loved being in the library and helped many bookworms and readers of all ages."

"Yeah, I guess it must be hard on her part." He said, looking down.

"I agree. That's why I don't want to follow my parents as much as possible." I heard him chuckle from what I have replied.

"Wow, are you ready to become the 'black sheep' then?"

"Well, no. Not really 'the' black sheep. I just don't want somebody to force me what I want to become. I don't like that."

"Don't you love your parents?" He asked out of curiosity. I guess he's also studying my facial expression. That's why he resorted to asking that question to me.

"Do you mean if I don't follow what they want from me, it will make me a bad daughter?" He shook his head from left to right as he smiled weakly in front of me.

"You will always know the answer for yourself. I know that,"

"I will always do what makes me happy, Tyler. Our parents only inspire us of what we want to become but in the end, it's always our decision that matters the most."

"You sounded like my grandmother." He said as he laughed. I poked his arm and he squirmed with pain, but only a little.

"Well, what if I am? What if I really time traveled from the future down to this kind of period just to scold you?" He laughed as soon as he heard those words from me.

Yeah, he's right. I could be called a grandma at the age of 76, right? I am a grandma by 2020. However, he never realized it because he couldn't even believe I am not from this year. I came from the future only to live this weird life of mine.

"Well, you never know." I smiled as I said it to him. He looked at me, feeling weird as I heard him sigh.

"You can be young but you could sound as if you experienced a lot in life and you're only fourteen."

Whoah, I hope that's true. I hope that I am also fourteen, too. Being in this kind of situation? Being trapped in the past when I know I could be living in the present is the hardest feeling ever.

"I am always telling you, I am not from this time." He only chuckled as his way of response. Before I began to get mad at him again, I turned to face him as I studied his expression.

"Okay, I will never insist on this one because it sounds too impossible for you," I said as I rolled my eyes.

"But, I am curious about what you wanted to know about the future. C'mon, tell me."

"Tell you what?" He said between laughs as if he couldn't believe I am acting weird again. I am honestly getting annoyed.

He acted as if he wanted to prevent himself from laughing at me and what I am telling him. He tried composing himself until I saw that familiar facial expression again.

"I want to know how modern technology is in the future. I wish I could bring the whole telephone with me so that I will not wait for long queue lines when I want to call someone."

"Gosh, if only you know phones in the future could be big or small. It will be designed to fit in our hands. The exciting part is, you can bring it everywhere you go."

"Whoah?" I looked at him because he's sounding amused more than impressed. It's like he's only reacting that way for me to be happy.

"I hate you," I said, too annoyed I felt like crying any minute by now.

"What is it, this time?" He sounds worried and concerned at the same time.

"You sounded like a joke," I said while pouting my lips. He smiled a little and hugged me to my surprise. It was not too tight yet not too loose, enough to calm my childish behavior. Yeah, I must admit.

I felt he caressed my back as his way of comforting me. Of course, I am like a fool wanting it that way, too.

"I love what you're telling me. Although honestly, it is hard to believe in all of those." He admitted, letting go as he looked into my eyes.

"Don't get me wrong. I felt excited about what you're telling me. It's like I wanted to be in the future right away because of those phones that you describe to me." He said, sounding sincere it touched my heart again.

I sighed as I bit my lower lip. He's too handsome and charming. I can't last the way he looks at me. It's as if he wants to meet all of me the way he would give me his signature 'stare'.

"Alright. I guess I will not bring this topic up again for me to avoid being disappointed with how you react to the things I say."

"I'm so sorry again. I never meant to offend you in any way, you know that."

I glanced at my wristwatch. It's already five in the afternoon. I told Tyler that he must return me to the library because Mr. Athkinson's driver will pick me up at six in the evening.

"I am excited about what is happening in your life, Sunny. I hope you will never forget me if you'll be successful someday."

Chapter 36: HER SUNNY SMILE

Sunny's POV

Tyler stopped his bike right next to the public library. I smiled as I waved goodbye. When I saw the 1957 Corvette that our family driver drove for us, I noticed Tyler started pedaling his bike as he drove the opposite direction.

Again, this gesture makes me happy. Ever since Mr. John followed me, he always made sure I would arrive home safely. Even if I am already living in our new house. He never stopped giving me this gesture every time we would meet. It always melts my heart so much.

From this simple way of showing his good side, I can attest that he's a gentleman. From the year 2020, I have never seen a great man that I could compare him with. He's smart yet the most humble person I have ever known. Most guys in the future that I have known of, were really selfish. They only think of themselves most of the time. They get girlfriends only to show off to their friends. They only treat them as trophies more than their supposed partner and love of their life. That's why I never had a boyfriend in the future.

I am actually capable to have one but I prefer not to.

As soon as I got in the car, I turned my back to see if I could still find Tyler riding his bike away. However, he's too fast to ride his bike, that's why I couldn't see him anymore. I turned in front of me and I could see our driver smiled at me.

"Miss Sunny, is everything good?"

"Yes, Mr. Henry. All good." I nodded and he gave me a thumbs up sign.

"Very well, Miss. Let's get you home."

"Thank you, Mr. Henry."

I can't help but smile for the things that happened today. I looked around when I realized that this is a 1957 Corvette. The one I am riding with our family driver! However, this is not the exact car I drove when I went here from the year 2020, but the exact model!

"Gosh, how could this be possible?" I couldn't help but mutter aloud that Mr. Henry looked at the rear mirror to check on me.

"Miss, is everything alright?" I could see that he was also surprised at my weird reaction all of a sudden.

"Huh? Oh, yes, Mr. Henry. I'm sorry about that,"

"I thought you wanted something. We're almost there, Miss." He answered as he turned the steering wheel. I nodded and smiled at our driver.

As soon as we reached home, I expected that we would be having a family dinner and it never failed me. When I glanced at my watch, I could see that I was just in time. My mom and I dined with Mr. Athkinson and as usual, he prepared something appetizing and delicious for all of us.

We talked about a lot of random things. I could see that Mr. Athkinson was amused and happy with the way the mother recalled a lot of funny things, mostly silly ones that usually included me. Those topics and most especially the things I did when I was little.

"Wow! I never thought that Sunny is a great daughter."

"Of course. I am always proud of her, dear. She's silly but I love her so much."

I can't help but blush because I heard mom's exact words as if complimenting me so much face to face. Honestly, I am not getting used to it, that's why. That lasted for more than an hour. After that, we decided to say goodnight to one another as I went inside my room. I finished doing my night routine as I sat on my bed.

I was thinking about all of these. Almost five decades after all of these things happened in my life. However, I wonder why I never even remembered all of these from the future. I can't even remember Tyler as my childhood friend. Everything of this was erased in the year 2020.

I wonder what happened in my mid-20s or even 30s that I couldn't even remember a thing about this year. Isn't it supposed to be remarkable when a great thing happens in your life? Why is it that I am more than brainwashed from the year I came from?

I started to relax my body as I stretched my limbs and lay down flat on my back, feeling the softest mattress I have ever experienced from this time.

Wow, is Mr. Athkinson the key to my success? I can't remember him too and I am starting to wonder why.

The next morning, mom woke me up by shaking my body. I thought I was still dreaming.

"Mom...you're so annoying," I said as I rubbed my eyes. She grinned and touched both of my cheeks.

"I have a surprise for you,"

"Yeah, it is your hobby from the time we moved in this house," I replied in a tired tone, still rubbing my eyes. Her excitement was high, I sometimes doubt if she's my mom.

"Well, this surprise will make you happy." She exclaimed as if she's very sure of it. She even giggled with glee. I want to do a facepalm yet I always think she's my mother and she is older than me, well, this time.

"You look silly and ugly. Now, I want you to take a bath and brush your teeth. You'll be meeting someone for breakfast."

"What? Mom, is this a kind of joke or something?"

"Nope. I am not joking. You better do all the things I am telling you. I will get back to you after ten minutes because I am helping the maids bake in the kitchen."

"Alright," I answered, scratching my head as I frowned. My mom is giggling with glee, she even hummed as she went outside of my room. The kind of happiness she's showing is all new to me, I wonder what she's up to this time.

I took a quick bath and brushed my teeth. I also wore a floral vintage dress with a cute collar. As I brushed my wavy hair, I couldn't help but stare at my reflection. I smiled because of what I am seeing. I naturally looked beautiful. I admire my skin because of the creams and soaps ideally made for sensitive skin like me. I am happy that my mom selected those for me to use.

I felt like I am better compared to before. Now, I have a lot of dresses to wear, compared to the previous days. I finished the remaining things I needed to do before I went outside of my room. I am happy that mom helped in the kitchen. The smell of baked bread is diffusing everywhere, making my stomach rumble. The smell alone could make me hungry.

I sat on the dining table with mom on my left and Mr. Athkinson sat on the left.

"Mom, I thought I'll be meeting someone?"

"Yes, she will be here any minute by now," Mom answered as she glanced on her wristwatch.

I nodded and I started eating the soup as I looked at it closely.

"Oh, here she is." I could hear my mom's excitement. As I looked up, I felt like I want to scream anytime because of that familiar smile again."

"Hello, Sunny."

"Miss Marlyn!"

Chapter 37: WE WILL FIND A WAY

Sunny's POV

I almost jumped from my seat as I rushed towards her. I hugged her tight, she couldn't help but chuckle.

"Gosh, you're the same Sunny dearie I have ever known." She said in her usual, cheerful voice as she giggled.

I turned my back and I could see my mom giggled as she tapped Mr. Athkinson's arm, too. He looked happy seeing my reaction as well.

"Do you like my surprise for you, honey?" I heard my mother from behind me.

"I can't believe it, mom. I love it! Thank you! I never thought you can do this for me!" I said, hugging her tight. She looked at Miss Marlyn while she also smiled at us.

"C'mon miss Marlyn. Have a seat. It is our pleasure to eat breakfast with you."

"C'mon, dear." I nodded as I held her hand as we walked to the dining table. I couldn't help but smile seeing her after three days. I missed Miss Marlyn so much. I hugged my mom from behind her as I stood behind the chair where she was sitting. She held both of my hands and tapped it.

"Mom, thank you so much."

"Anything for my precious daughter." As I sat between them, I saw how my mom smiled seeing my reaction.

"Mom, why is Miss Marlyn here?"

"I just want to make you happy in my own, little way. I decided to invite her here."

"This is really unexpected. I am really shocked, mom."

"Remember what I told you about your homeschool teacher? She's the one I am telling you about."

"W-What do you mean?" I answered grinning from ear to ear. I have this initial thought but I want to make sure of it. I want to hear it from my mother herself. Miss Marlyn only chuckled beside me as if letting my parents explain everything.

"Mr. Athkinson hired her for you. After what you told me last time, I coordinated with Miss Marlyn and she gladly accepted the offer."

I could see that Mr. Athkinson, and my mom met their gaze as if their eyes were having a conversation. They both smiled at each other, a meaningful one.

"Dear, your mom and I decided that it would be much better if she will be your homeschool teacher because she started it very well." Mr. Athkinson couldn't help but tell me these things, too as he held my mom's hand.

"Mr. Athkinson is right, my dear." Mom nodded as soon as she heard him.

"We can't find any suitable match rather than her for you."

"Wow! That's amazing, mom! Thank you so much Mr. Athkinson!" Miss Marlyn also looked at me. Her excited reaction always energizes me to the fullest. I always love how she would give that kind of energy whenever we would meet.

"I will try my best, sir, ma'am." Miss Marlyn nodded to them as she smiled. I admit, this is the best day ever!

I never knew mom would ever do this for me. I can't help but shed my tears in front of them that they all chuckled. There's no way I will ever get tired of learning more because Miss Marlyn will be the one teaching me what I needed to learn.

I got excited more because I have learned that Miss Marlyn will be living with us to focus on teaching me more. Now, I finally got the reason why she resigned from the public library as the librarian. I am sure she was offered double or even triple that she accepted this job right away.

I can't wait to tell Tyler about everything that happened today. I can imagine what he would look like as soon as he would know that Miss Marlyn is my teacher in preparation for my class two months from now.

The next morning, Miss Marlyn started explaining to me her specialized lessons designed exclusively for me. I felt like I am in cloud nine because I am sure I am three times more focused compared to the library.

"Does Tyler know about this, Miss?"

"I am sure he doesn't. When I passed my resignation, I just told him it's for personal reasons."

"I want to tell him about this, Miss. I am sure he'll be excited to know all of this, too."

"We can tell him this at a later time. I know he'll be happier to know that you're improving pretty well compared to the previous months."

She smiled as she tapped my head. I thought I'll be having a different teacher. I never expected that my mom would hire her for me.

"Sunny...thanks a lot, dear. I am very happy that your parents called me to be your teacher."

"I am telling mom about you, miss. If not because of you, I will never gain this much confidence."

She hugged me tight and pinched my cheeks.

She gave me the notes and books that I needed. Miss Marlyn focused more on my speaking and listening skills. The next two months seemed the easiest for me.

I never realized that mom hired Miss Marlyn as my teacher to prevent me from going outside more. It meant fewer meetings with Tyler. I tried my best to be as better as before for my benefit.

Days and weeks came like lightning and I rarely noticed the time as I learned with Miss Marlyn. Mom made sure I will be prepared more than anything that she let Miss Marlyn stay with us every weekday. She also has two days off every weekend.

"My dear, are you ready?" My mom asked me in a very excited manner. They were the same energy level with Miss Marlyn. I can't help but to be grateful for having them both in my life. It's as if I couldn't ask for anything more.

"Yes, although I am quite nervous."

"Oh please, don't be. That's just normal for your first day in school, my dear."

"Mom, do you think I can do it?"

"Why not? Even if you're not going to school, I can see your potential already. How much more today, after months of reviewing and self-studying? Please believe in yourself more, alright?"

"I'll do that, mom. Thank you for trusting me."

Westville Green Valley High. My eyes almost sparkled when looking at the school and the rooms inside it. I love the vintage design of the school. Although it is not air-conditioned, the trees that surround the school gave a lot of fresh air into every room.

The school has a three-story design, painted brown all over. The school is beautiful and welcoming. I can see a lot of high school students wearing their complete uniform from head to toe.

Our uniform's design is a white blouse that has a brown collar paired with a long skirt that's two inches above the knee. We also have our black shoes with long socks, covering most of my legs.

My mom bought me a beautiful backpack and I also have a lot of books to read. I preferred carrying it on my arms. I sighed as I hovered my gaze around the place. With a smile, I held my chin up high.

Gosh, I felt like going back to this weird, familiar feeling. That first day high in school. Who would have thought this granny would be back to school again? My goodness. In my wildest dreams, I haven't imagined it for me to do again. However, here I am without much effort at all. Back to school again. I am going back to that dilemma of students my age in this period of time.

"Hello, Westville Green Valley High. I am coming for you! Wait for me, classmates!" As I took my first step in going inside the place, I know this is also the start of changing my life forever.

Chapter 38: SUNNY'S FIRST DAY IN SCHOOL

Sunny's POV

I walked towards the office to get my schedule. I always tell myself to be as independent as possible by going to the cashier all by myself.

"Hi, dear. I could gladly assist you. C'mon, follow me."

"Thanks miss. Sorry, I am very new to this place. Thank you for being so patient with me."

"That is a part of my job. I am also happy to assist someone cute like you."

"Thank you, ma'am." She smiled as I followed her. Turns out the cashier is very friendly. She even guided me in going to the room where my section is. I thank her because of her help and she tapped my shoulder as a friendly response.

"Please enjoy your first day. You know where to go whenever you need help, alright?" She said before she left. This is one of the things I want to do for myself.

I asked for my schedule instead of giving all the responsibilities to my mom. I badly wanted to discover things myself. I realize I am much older than my classmates but I don't care. I don't want to blame my mom for what happened to my education in the earlier years, either. Nobody has to be blamed for this. All I need to do is to step forward to where I am supposed to be going.

The important thing is, I am right here. Starting all over again even if it is hard. I am in section 4 and as I walk through the hallway finding my room, I accidentally bumped one of the students there.

"Hey! What's the problem with you?" Someone exclaimed in a raised voice. A blonde girl, taller than me stood in front. She looked unhappy about what I just did.

"I'm so sorry. I didn't see you. That was just an accident. I didn't mean to do it."

"Just admit it, you're stupid. Get out of my way!" She even pushed my shoulder that made me step aside. She passed through me like she owned the hallway herself. I turned my back and she even flipped her hair. She doesn't seem to care about what I feel at all.

I know I'm tough but the baby heart inside of me wanted to cry out loud for being treated like this. I never expected that I will be bullied on my first day of school. My shoulders dropped. I felt discouraged all of a sudden.

I continued walking until I reached our designated room. Grade 7, section 4 was written on the door frame of the door connected to our room. I can see a lot of my classmates entered one by one. When they saw me slowly entering, I felt like all eyes were on me. It made my knees tremble a bit. I looked down but I also hovered my gaze around the room a little to see what they were doing. Some didn't care and continued chatting with their friends. However, most of the students inside the room locked their eyes on me and on what I am doing. It's like my every step did not escape those eyes.

I decided to sit at the back of the room because I can see those seats at the back were almost vacant, not until someone tapped me on my shoulders.

It's her again, my bully.

"Hey, mind your seat," She said in a very nasty manner. I turned around to gaze at her and I could see that she looked mad while folding her arms.

"That seat is vacant."

"Oh yeah? How can you be so sure of that?"

"Because nobody is sitting there?" I said as I put my hands on my hips. Most of the students who listened to us chuckled, it made her frown. She looked annoyed already that she glared at me like I am the most hateful person in the room.

"Are you insulting me?"

"What is your problem? I didn't do anything and yet you're being rude."

"You don't even know me yet, my dear."

"I don't need to know you, just leave me alone!" I admit I can't stand bullies. I don't want to tolerate them because they mean all the harm when it comes to most students. I don't see any problem being in this section. Maybe she is the problem herself.

"You'll see! You'll regret this." She warned me. Instead of being afraid, I rolled my eyes and sighed as I took my seat from the back. The teacher went inside the class that's why almost everyone scampered to take their respective seats as well.

"Good morning, everyone! Welcome to your first day of school! I hope everyone is doing well." Our classroom adviser is a woman. I could say she's approximately 26-34 years of age. She looked a bit strict with her glasses on, but I can see a smile on her face. Probably not a threat after all.

Everyone was silent and they were all listening to our adviser. I admire the kind of discipline old school learning has. I wish the present year will behave like this as well. It's far different from where I came from.

"I hope everyone will take their chance to know everyone in the room. After all, you'll be seeing the same faces throughout the year." Most of my students cheered and clapped. Here goes the "introduction blah blah" part. My bully stepped in front of us. She's very confident and sophisticated. I admit, she's beautiful and charming. However, her personality sucks. She's plastic and she only wanted to be with people like her.

"Hello everyone! I am Laila Connor! Nice to meet you all! I hope we'll all get along well."

She smiled but I don't understand why I am annoyed with how she said those words. I can't even feel any sincerity at all. For me, she's plastic and she never meant what she said just now.

"Thank you, Miss Connor," Our teacher said as she smiled. My name was called after ten minutes. Everybody became silent again as they all looked at me from the back. I suddenly felt as if I am the most anticipated student in the room.

I can see the disgust on Laila's face as it's her turn to roll her eyes and avoid my gaze at me as she sighed.

"Hi everyone! My name is Sunny Grainger. I don't expect to be friends with everybody but I do hope we'll all be working together to help one another's weaknesses and build each other's strengths."

Right after that, I got a round of applause from my classmates. I also saw my teacher reacting the same way. I saw Laila closed her fist as I grinned at her. I realized I am no ordinary student. Well, I am not Sunny Grainger for nothing. I am sure this is the start of something exciting.

Chapter 39: YOUNG LOVE'S LIKE THAT

Sunny's POV

The next day in school was a rough one. Some of my classmates gladly went and made friends with me. I can also see that Laila is doing the same thing. I felt like she's competing with me when it comes to the attention of most of my classmates when the real thing is, I just don't care at all.

I am not a war-freak nor an attention seeker. I only wanted to go to school for my own development and growth. I guess I don't even have time for being enemies with someone while I am in school.

After our tough lessons, I decided to go to our school library to study what our teacher taught us the whole day. I already informed Mr. Henry to fetch me after five in the afternoon. Although our class ends at exactly four in the afternoon, I still need to study in the library.

I noticed Laila also went to the library. I don't understand why but I felt that she only intended to observe what I'm going to do here. I rolled my eyes and avoided her instead. All I need to do is to avoid her at all cost. I don't want her to come near me. I don't want to ruin my mood as well.

As I strolled around the aisles of the library, somebody covered both of my eyes again. I couldn't help but smile as my heart started to race.

That smell of his cologne. How can I ever forget that one?

"T-Tyler?"

I heard him chuckle from behind me as he hugged me tight. I looked around as my heart started to race really wild. What if somebody might see us doing this? We're surely both dead for displaying so much affection inside a public place, especially that we're in the same school!

"I missed you," He said, resting his chin on my shoulder. I looked around as I removed his hand from my waist. I couldn't help but chuckle a little as he tickled me.

"Can you please stop? It's annoying!" I said between chuckles. I even hit him on the arm slightly.

Gosh, I miss him too...so much. If only he knew it. Of course, I don't want to appear obvious that I feel this way. I don't want him to be overconfident himself.

"I haven't seen you for more than a month. Where have you been?" He said as he held my hand. He pulled me to the table where he's sitting right before I arrived at the library.

I looked around and I saw Laila covering her mouth. It is obvious that she's a bit shocked about what she had witnessed. Gosh, so, I could assume that she saw what Tyler did.

I grinned as I returned my gaze at Tyler. Well, It is not my fault if this man is too sweet.

"I was homeschooled for two months. Guess who's my teacher?" I smiled as I raised my eyebrows up and down.

"Who?"

"It was Miss Marlyn! Can you believe that?"

He laughed as he widened his eyes. We even had a high-five.

"Wow! That's awesome!" He said, noticing the books I am getting in the aisles now.

"These are advanced books already! I am happy for you, Sunny!" He said as he held my hand again. I gently swallowed as I smiled. Why is he being like this? I am dying to know. Is he clearly flirting with me? Or he's only friendly that he's sweet to almost everyone?

I avoided his gaze because his smile is really contagious, it wants to melt me.

"Thanks," I smiled in a very awkward manner and pulled my hand from his touch.

"Sorry,"

We talked for more than twenty minutes. I told him about how Miss Marlyn taught me advanced lessons for high school students. Tyler just listened and nodded in agreement the whole time. I can see that he's very proud of me.

"Yes, I am enrolled here. Maybe you just forgot the time I told you about it. I'm a student of Westville Green Valley High but I am in grade eleven, junior high to be exact."

"I am glad to know that, Tyler."

"Yeah, me too. You never knew how happy I am knowing that I can see you here always."

"I guess we can bond here in the library more often, right?"

"You know what's on my mind." He said as he grinned. I stood up and I told him that I am going home because it is getting late. He walked with me until I reached the entrance gate of our school. He waved goodbye as soon as I'm inside the car. I smiled as I did the same.

Wow, this is too much for one day. Upon reaching home, I rushed towards Miss Marlyn's room to tell her what we talked about.

"I am happy that you get to meet him again dear. But, I also want you to know that your mom only wanted you to focus school without any distractions at all. I hope you understand."

"What do you mean, Miss Marlyn?"

"Your mom doesn't want you to get closer to Tyler. He might be a distraction for you, dear."

I gasped in shock. I never expected that it would come from Miss Marlyn herself.

"What? I can't believe my mom would think about that. And you, miss? I can't believe you will think about it, too." I said, disappointed. She pulled me closer to her and hugged me.

"No, no, dear. It is not what I meant. Of course, everything starts with friendship. It will then blossom to something much deeper than that before you even know it."

"I know, miss."

"Please don't think that we conclude that way. We are just being careful, dear. You're still young and you have a bright future ahead of you. What we are telling is just a reminder."

"I also want you both to know that I know my limitations. I may be young in your eyes but I know what I am doing." I answered in a polite but firm way. She even observed my reaction for a very long time before she smiled.

"I am happy to hear that from you, dear."

"Yes. I want to make myself clear. I don't want others to judge me just because I am young. I may be fourteen but I know my responsibilities." I said, frowning. It made Miss Marlyn chuckle seeing my reaction alone.

"You're very cute, dear. You know what? If I don't know you're only fourteen, I would conclude you're much older than me." I hugged Miss Marlyn as my non-verbal response. I don't want to see myself arguing to somebody if I already made myself clear.

But then, I know right? If only you know I am a seventy-six year old trapped inside a fourteen-year-old body. If only she knew...

Chapter 40: NEW TRENDS, FEW FRIENDS

Sunny's POV

I never had a good night's sleep last night. What Miss Marlyn and mom told me bothered me. From what mom experienced, I guess she never wanted me to face the same love she had.

I could still remember how she told me about dad. Her experiences, and on how immature she was way back then. I can't blame my mom for feeling this way. Maybe she didn't want me to experience the same feeling that she had from the past.

Although she's the ideal type, I guess all she meant is for me not to get involved in any form of immature love. I guess she doesn't want me to regret anything as I live my life.

"I don't want you to rush towards me and cry because things didn't work out exactly what you wanted them to happen. Love comes unexpectedly. It is always up to us on how we would be able to handle it."

It bothered me until I reached school. I'm about to enter the room when Laila blocked my way again. She's grinning while folding her arms. The sight of her face can ruin my day instantly.

"Gosh, who's the real flirt now?"

"You're only eleven years old and you're a bully already." I also retorted. She scoffed as a reply, then grinned while looking at me in a malicious way.

"Look who's talking! You're already fourteen and yet you're still in grade seven. What happened?"

"You're being judgemental."

"Well, I am stating the truth."

"Don't you ever dare tell somebody about something if you didn't know what they've been through." I can't help but to argue with her. How dare her tell me these things when she has no single idea of what I've been through? I honestly wanted to slap her hard. I want to forget that I am decades older than her. Ripe and experienced in life already, while her? She's too young to become a notorious bully to someone she wanted to pick a fight with.

"Don't talk nonsense, Sunny. I know you. You're nothing but a flirt. You've always wanted attention since day one."

"Can you get out of my way?"

I might forget you're only eleven I might slap you from left to right.

She followed what I told her but then I didn't like her smile. I hate the way she did it like she's fabricating something that I didn't like. I admit she is making me nervous.

I went inside the room and I could see a lot of my classmates whispering to each other as they looked at me from head to toe.

What is wrong with them? What did Laila tell them this time? She's getting to my nerves.

When our teacher arrived, she gave us a sudden oral recitation. My heart started to pound when she announced that she will give it to random students as they call them.

"Sunny Grainger..." I swallowed when I heard my name. My teacher said the question but I was too nervous I couldn't even say a word.

"Sunny?" I heard her mention my name again. I shook my head as I glanced at my other classmates. They giggled as they looked at me. It's as if they're mocking me as they also wait for my answer.

"Ma'am, sorry I didn't know the answer." I heard my teacher click her tongue as she sighed. I looked down because of too much embarrassment.

"Gosh she didn't know the lesson but she knew how to flirt with a junior high student. Shame on her." I heard one of my classmates whispering those things to our other classmate in front of me. I am sure they were friends with Laila.

"What? Is it for real?" My other classmate seemed not to believe it but the other one insisted.

"Of course! Laila saw what they're doing herself. Let's go to the library to see it for ourselves." They even had a high five. Seriously? How can they be like that?

I never thought they've become this worse. Worst than I ever thought they could ever be.

I closed my fist as soon as I realized that Laila is being too much. Now I know the reason why she meaningfully grinned at me when I am about to go inside our classroom a while ago. This is what she meant when she said I'll regret things.

She's becoming too much for my first week in school. She's younger than me. However, she's fearless and reckless at the same time. Well, sad thing is, she was able to convince most of my classmates that I am good at flirting and nothing else.

Instead of going to the library, I avoided that place and waited for Mr. Henry in the receiving area until five in the afternoon. I am sure Tyler was waiting for me but I do not want him to get involved in this.

I almost forgot I am in a period that people are still conservative. I did not get it. For them, a sweet gesture between the opposite gender is considered "flirting". The worst thing is, they will make a big buzz about it like you're the most wanted criminal that ever lived in 1957.

As soon as I reached home, I informed Miss Marlyn and mom about what happened right away. They were very shocked but they just looked at me.

"I hope that you are both on my side because I am telling you all of these things."

My mom sighed and Miss Marlyn tapped my shoulders.

"You're one, fierce soul, Sunny. I admire you for being honest. I hope from what happened, you'll get a lesson out of it."

I never stopped myself from crying in front of them. I never thought that a single action that Tyler and I did will result in this one.

"I promise not to do it again, mom, Miss Marlyn."

"We always trust you, Sunny."

The rest of the week is like hell. I know Tyler wanted to talk to me but I am the one who avoided him. I don't want him to suffer as much as I do. He's a scholar and I know it will affect his grades if he will be involved in this one, too.

Although I admit, I am starting to miss him so much. I badly wanted to see him but how? I closed my notebook as I stood up from my bedside table and went straight to bed.

I have an idea and I know it is much safer this time. The next morning, I got ready for something. I thought of a valid alibi just for them to allow me to go to town. Mr. Henry dropped me in front of Viny's flower shop. I told him to go back three hours after I went shopping. He agreed and when our car was out of sight, I went inside the public library.

As soon as Tyler saw me, he hugged me right away.

"I miss you so much!"

"I miss you too! Can we go to the hilltop?" I suggested. He smiled as he rode his bike again, with me sitting behind him.

Chapter 41: THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Sunny's POV

I glanced at him again as we sat next to each other. The roots of this tall tree standing tall on top of the hill gave me a calming effect. It's cold and thick, I could consider it a mini-chair already because of its size. I could sit here as comfortably as possible without any effort at all.

I just waited for him to talk to me as I sat beside him. Looking at the beautiful town from afar, I realized the hill is a bit high. I could see the top view of some houses from where I am sitting. The view is really nice and it helps me relax my nerves. Looking at the breath-taking scenery made my stress go away somehow.

"I just want you to know that as long as you're not showing you're affected, it doesn't matter at all." I looked at him and his facial reaction. He looked serious yet calm. I guess he's just waiting for me to tell things to him or vent out something that he's very much willing to hear.

"Is that how you deal with things?" I said as I faced him. I can't believe I am hearing these words from him.

"Yes."

"Why?"

He smiled but it's the opposite of what he's showing me right now.

"We should select things that matter the most. You don't need to get involved with things that destroy more of you, right?"

"You knew all of it, did you?"

"Of course. It's all over the school library. I don't go there often when that issue spread. I prefer going to the public library. It's quiet there."

"I'm sorry. You're being dragged into this. It's all my fault." He chuckled as a reply. He tapped my shoulders for me to assure that I have nothing to worry about.

"Don't blame yourself. It's normal. We get to face these things no matter how we avoid it."

"I just don't get it. Why do they make such a big deal out of it? We're friends, only friends but their minds are so filthy."

Tyler laughed out loud as he pinched my nose. I frowned as I looked at him. I glanced at him and I noticed that he's pulling something out of his bag again. I noticed that it's another sandwich and water from his water tumbler.

"Here, just eat this one, and don't worry."

"Why won't I worry about it when the issue is roaming around the school?"

"We're still young. Let them gossip as they please. You know what? The more you get affected by the issue, the more it will ruin your mood. Let it go. We'll practice more about your missed lessons instead."

I sighed as I looked into his eyes.

I admit, his words gave me a sudden comfort. I practiced with him again and while doing it, I caught him stealing a glance with me as if studying my every action, even facial reactions.

"I will always be here. I will always be a good friend to help you whenever you need me." I smiled as I heard those words from him. However, I can sense that he meant something different than what he said a while ago.

"We're always friends, right?" He suddenly asked that made my heart leap. What does he mean by that all of a sudden?

"You know what, you're being silly..." I said in a chuckle. It made him smile a bit but it faded away as he looked from afar.

"You never know what tomorrow might happen. I just want your assurance." I can sense that he's serious this time.

"Of course. We're friends always."

"Great. Because tomorrow, it might turn out to be different, you know."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing." He smiled as he shoved a book on my lap. He also encouraged me to forget what we talked about and proceed to review the lesson instead.

I went home, a bit puzzled. I am used to Tyler being a free soul. He's always free to say whatever he wants to say to me. He's very comfortable to share what's on his mind. But then, after what happened hours ago, I can sense that he's being distant. I mean, he's becoming distant for a purpose. And what does he mean when he say, we're still friends no matter what? He's becoming a mystery to me all of a sudden.

Someone knocked on the door and when I realized that it's my mom, I told her to come in.

"Hello, my dearest! Why didn't you eat dinner with us?"

"Mom, I'm very sorry. I have a lot of lessons to review. Plus, I don't have any appetite to eat right now." I honestly confessed. She smiled as she touched my cheek.

"Wow, something is bothering my beautiful daughter. C'mon, what is it? You can tell me." She smiled. I sighed as I looked into my mother's eyes.

"I don't like the sudden changes in my life, mom."

"What do you mean?"

"I guess I am just used to being a simple girl having some simple dreams. I never thought that I would be this 'pressured' all of a sudden."

She chuckled as she listened to me. Did she find me silly? Did she find me cute or something like that?

"Mom, I am not joking."

"Yeah, I got what you mean, my dear. I'm so sorry for laughing at it." She sighed again, this time, a relieved one. "It's normal. I guess everything is still new to you that's why you feel this way."

"Mom, do you think I can do it? Do you think I can survive high school without having a lot of experience?"

"This is already your experience, dear. All you need to do is to get used to it."

"Mom, how do I ever deal with my classmates? In our classroom alone, I can already see discrimination coming from my classmates."

"If you let them treat you like that, it will always be their hobby. If you know how to fight for what is right, then I guess they will stop doing it."

"One of my classmates asked me why I am still in grade seven despite my age."

"As long as you're standing on the right track, nobody could ever knock you down, dear. We all know what happened. It's my fault but I am already making up to you."

"Thank you so much, mom. I will do that."

"Never be afraid to stand for what is right, dear. Don't let others define who you are without even knowing your own story."

Knowing my mom, she's not always into giving her words of wisdom, but when she does, it always makes sense.

Chapter 42: CAN THIS BE LOVE?

Sunny's POV

The other day, I continued going to school. It was Thursday. The weather is very fine. As I entered the school gate, I am much hopeful compared to yesterday. I'd like to thank mom who gave her a piece of nice advice about dealing with people. Different people had varieties of personalities. I have to understand and deal with them even if I have no choice left.

Laila kept on pestering her again but this time, she doesn't care anymore. She went to their school with confidence even if she's surrounded by negativity.

She's on her way to their room when a lot of students laughed as she passed through them. Puzzled, she looked around and she's surprised when somebody made her face front by touching both of his shoulders.

"Tyler..."

"Keep walking." I felt that he got something on my back as he crumpled the paper.

"What's that?"

"Don't ask. Just keep walking." He looked serious when I was about to cry. He stopped in front of our room and I can see a lot of my classmates whispering to each other.

"I'll wait for you in the library." He whispered as he went away after noticing that my classmates started to whisper to each other about what they saw. They were all maliciously looking at me.

"Gosh, so the rumors are true."

"Gosh, all she know is to flirt and display affection with her boyfriend."

"Guys, I guess she'll get married early. She is flirting some junior high boys like she wants to have a family of her own."

I can't believe that young generations of this time is thinking like this. They are the worst when it comes to overthinking. How could they ever think about that for me? Are they nuts? They were only a generation older and yet they think of these things already.

The class ended like a flash. I am happy that my teacher noticed my hard work when it comes to coping up with the lessons. But then, about Tyler, I am thinking twice. I don't want others to spread rumors about the two of us. I can handle rumors for me alone. If it concerns him, that would be a totally different story. I am ready to fight for him whatever it takes.

I made sure that I couldn't see any student following me before I headed my way to the library. I saw Tyler standing in front of the library's entrance. Looking around, as if looking for someone. Oh goodness, he's really expecting me to be here any time.

"Hello Tyler." I timidly smiled as I went near him. He pulled my hand right away as a response. "Not here..." He said, looking around as he made me follow him.

My heart raced fast as he held my hand tight as if never letting go. I am just looking how he gripped my hand and it made my heart race fast already.

We stopped in front of a room.

"W-What is this?"

"Get inside."

"Huh? What's the meaning of this?"

"Please trust me on this." He gently pushed me inside and I stepped in right away. I saw him looking outside before he gently closed the door in front of us.

Instead of becoming nervous, I didn't understand why I suddenly got very excited. He locked the room and switched on the light. The room was painted all white. I can see that everything is very tidy. I can also see a long table with two chairs.

"Taadaa..." He smiled as he proudly presented the room to me.

"What is this?" I said between chuckles.

"I know you're struggling about being in the library with all the rumors and such, so I prepared this room."

"Are you a principal or what?"

"No. It's the art room for Junior students. I am in charge of this room so the council president gave the key to me."

I looked around and I really admire the cleanliness of the room. He moved the seat for me to sit down. He's really a gentleman by nature. He even put all of my books in front of me.

"How was it?"

"I love it. This place is peaceful and nobody could ever lay their judgemental eyes on us." I said, hugging my arms as I hovered my gaze around the room. This is a nice place, honestly speaking. Nobody could ever see what's inside if they attempt to peek from the outside of the room. The tiny windows were placed higher. The four walls were made of pure, concrete material.

"However, I just worry if somebody will know we're both inside of this room. It will create a scandal."

"We're not doing anything..." He said, defensively as he looked down. I tapped his shoulders.

"Yeah, I know. And I trust you so much. I just don't trust the people around us. You never know how far their imagination could go."

"You have a point," He said, quite thinking. "I'm really sorry I dragged you here. I will never do this again."

"It's okay, Tyler. Well, since we're here, let's study. I kinda like this place compared to the library."

He smiled as we continued studying and reading our own books. Although I could see Tyler glancing at me from time to time.

I saw him writing something on a piece of paper. When I attempted to look at it, he covered it right away.

"You're unfair." I said, pouting my lips. He just smiled and continued what he's doing. I sighed as I read my book silently.

"Don't worry," He said, gazing at me. I did the same as our eyes met.

"I will give this to you after twenty minutes."

"Twenty minutes?"

"It will be five in the afternoon by then. You will go home, right?"

"Oh, alright." I admit, it made me feel excited. I couldn't help but smile deep inside. Is he giving me a written letter or something? I hate to assume but then how could I not? He's doing it right now, and it seemed really long. Gosh, if he will give it to me, it will be my first time receiving one.

I can see that he's folding it in thirds as he pushed it to where my books were placed. I smiled as I inserted the letter between my English book.

"I...I want you to read this whenever you're free later, or you're in your room already." I nodded as I smiled. He pinched my nose again.

"Let's go. Let's get out of here before somebody sees us." He said. I placed my books inside my bag and I could see he's doing the same. He held my hand as we slowly opened the door. He made sure nobody had seen us before we went outside the room. He waved goodbye as soon as I got in the car.

I couldn't wait to see what's in the letter.

Chapter 43: WRITTEN MEMORIES

As soon as Sunny reached home, she took a quick dinner. She told her mom and Miss Marlyn that she'll do a self-review inside her room. They agreed right away as they've seen her very happy and inspired when it comes to learning.

What they didn't know is that she's more excited about the letter Tyler has given her. She couldn't wait to read everything he had written for her. Back in 2020, she could read countless emails and messages from unknown people. But it's the first time she felt very excited about a written letter from someone dear to her. So this is how it actually feels to actually receive one. It's more of a greatest gift that she could ever wished for.

She felt jumping up and down. She felt very ecstatic that she couldn't easily put everything into words.

She placed her books on her study table as she turned her back on the door. If ever her mom will check on her, the books will serve as her props.

Well, she's into studying. They all know that. It's just that, the letter is really what she's excited all about.

She slowly opened it as she smiled.

To my dearest Sunny,

Sometimes, I wonder why your name is like that, not until I got to know you more. I realized you're like the sun who is giving light to everybody around you. Thank you for showing your true self. Thank you for sharing the happiness with me. I hope you will always remember your strength no matter how others might be bringing you down. Please take care and stay happy.

Sincerely yours,

Tyler Sean

Sunny folded the letter as what Tyler did and placed it near her chest. This letter might be a simple friendship letter but for her, it is already everything.

She decided to write a letter back to him as a form of gratitude. Sunny never realized the importance of written letters until she experienced it herself. It is indeed real that written letters are the best form of relaying messages to someone. She began to appreciate why she got in this period for the first time in months.

She got her pen and a beautiful piece of paper kept by her mother. She sat straight and smiled as she scribbled her reply message to him.

Dear Tyler,

I never thought you would mention the meaning of my name. Honestly, I never really think about my simple name until you make me realize this one. Thank you for your letter. I felt better after I read this. I am happy that aside from my mom, Mr. Athkinson and Miss Marlyn, you will be included as my support system. I think whatever I will achieve in the near future, it is all because of the people who never gave up on me. That includes you, most especially.

Please take care, wherever you will go. Take care in riding your bike.

Sincerely yours,

Sunny

The next morning, Sunny handed it to Tyler as she passed the hallway. For the both of them, it is possible that they could talk and have fun for as much as they like. They became distant only because of the gossip around involving the two of them. They tried to look around to see if there were other students gossiping about the two of them.

One thing that Sunny avoids the most is for Tyler to get involved because he's a scholar. Anything that will make Tyler's image bad will subject him to the possibility of not acquiring the scholarship again if gossip will continue to spread.

It means less meetings and conversations between the two of them. It means letters as the main channel of communication as of the moment. However, they make sure they are bonded on the weekends.

Sunny's mother only thought that she was going shopping alone. That's the reason why she is allowed to go to town.

She knew that Tyler was at the public library waiting for her. Somehow, she got this idea that they should be meeting on the weekends because they are barely seeing each other on the weekdays. They were both busy at their school work.

When Tyler saw her, she hopped on his bike right away and they headed to the hilltop.

"You know what? It's the first time I got a lot of letters in a matter of one week." She noticed that Tyler chuckled as if feeling very amused.

"You're weird..."

"Yeah, it's hard to believe but it is true. Thank you so much for letting me experience it." Sunny hugged him right away and he almost fell from where he's sitting.

"Receiving letters are a normal thing. It is only you who are acting weird."

"Never mind me, alright? I am just happy. I love to enjoy simple moments like this."

He only chuckled as a response.

"I hope we can live longer. By then, I can show you how technology works, probably by 2020."

"Speaking of the advancement of technology, have you heard the news? Sputnik 1 will be launched by the Soviet Union."

"What is that?"

"It is the first man-made satellite that's almost the shape of a beach ball."

"Well, that's the start."

"Of what?"

"I am sure the US will do something about it because Russia did it first. The U.S.A will build the National Astronomic Space Administration or NASA in the coming years."

"You know what Sunny? I am sure you'll become a scientist one day. I can see that you have the knowledge of everything that's yet to come."

"No. I prefer being a writer or a race car driver instead." Tyler laughed at what she said. Sunny frowned right away.

"Sorry," He said as he poked her arm. She massaged it while looking at him.

"Yeah, I am serious. I wanted to be either of the two. But if I can do both in the future, it will be great I guess."

"Yeah, those things that you said were very cool. I like it."

"What about you, Tyler? What do you want to be someday?"

"I don't know."

"What? You should know what you want as earlier as now. How could you inspire yourself to pursue it?"

"Well, I wanted to be a scientist."

Sunny gasped and chuckled at what she heard. It is Tyler who wanted to be what he's suggesting to her.

"See? So it is really you who wanted to be a scientist, huh..."

"I don't really want it. It's only a dream for me. As much as I would want to, I prefer being realistic."

"What do you mean?"

"I told you. I don't want to follow what my parents dream for me because I don't like it."

Sunny looked at his expression. She could see the gloom in his eyes.

"They wanted me to become a doctor, Sunny. Also, they want me to marry someone whom I don't even know."

Chapter 44: ARRANGED DECISIONS

She was silent as she listened to him. She's not usually silent but she didn't understand why she felt weird all of a sudden.

Was she hurt from what he told her just now?

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"You mean arranged marriage?" She finally dared ask him. Gosh, is that one existing from a long time ago? It looked unbelievable.

"Sort of." She heard him sigh as he glanced at her.

"Have you met the girl you will marry?"

"Y-Yes." He answered right away. She swallowed as she realized that it hurts after all. Does he even love her, then? She knew that arranged marriages were just surprise weddings that parents love to do with their sons and daughters. She never realized that Tyler's parents were also fond of that one for their son.

"Wow...I never knew arranged marriages were a trend during this period."

"As soon as I knew that I would marry her, I felt like I'm the luckiest man alive. But then I realized that I shouldn't get married to someone whom I am not sure if she's feeling the same way as I am."

"T-That's nice."

"If I will ask you, Sunny...would you want to be married to someone whom you don't love?"

"Of course I won't." She answered right away, sounding very defensive.

Tyler sighed as he looked at her but a smile formed his lips.

"That's exactly my point. That's the reason why I don't want to depend on my parents. Just like what you're believing in. Children should be deciding on their own and not wait for their parents to decide for them."

"You know what, Tyler...I admire you for what you're telling me just now."

"You're a dear friend, Sunny. I want you to know these things too. You might encounter this yourself one day."

"What do you mean?"

"Our parents love us. They care for us, even give us what we want but remember, everything comes with a price."

Sunny's POV

I can't sleep and it is exactly nine in the evening. I can't forget what Tyler said this afternoon. It still bothered me up until this time. I never thought he'll be forced to marry someone whom he barely knew.

I got up and I drank a glass of water.

"Everything comes with a price..."

This is the sentence that kept on echoing my mind. Will there be a possibility that I will be married to someone I didn't know, too?

This thought could make my head burst into tiny pieces. It is aching terribly no matter how I turn from left to right. I even covered myself with a blanket and closed my eyes.

****Sunny's dream****

"Miss Sunny Grainger! I am a fan!" One of the young ladies inside the mall rushed to ask for an autograph from her. She smiled as she got her pen.

"What's your name, dear?"

"Jinky Spencer." The girl enthusiastically replied. She nodded as she smiled at her. She got her book that she bought. She scribbled her name together with her short message for her.

"Thank you so much, Miss Sunny Grainger! You're the best!" Jinky hugged her tight before she went to her friends. She shrieked with happiness because of what happened.

She then turned her back and a guy held her hand.

"Honey, that's thirty only for this hour alone. Would you like me to make a quick announcement for your fans to gather as they line up for your autograph?" The guy chuckled as she poked his arm.

"No, dear. That's enough already. I informed my guards that I am not going to entertain autograph signing and fans anymore."

"Let's go shopping, then."

I opened my eyes right away as I looked around. Gosh, I am still in 1957! I hate it so much! Why am I not coming back? And who is that guy in my dream?

Honey? Oh my goodness! Even in my dream, the face of that guy is blurry and his voice is not even clear for me to familiarize. Who is he? Am I having a relationship as young as fourteen years old? Wait, in my dreams I am in my twenties. I am pretty sure of that.

I glanced at my wall clock and it is already six in the morning. It's Sunday and it is supposed to be our family day, that's what I know.

I slowly got up and put on my bedroom slippers as I went outside. When I am on my way to the kitchen, I can see that my parent's door was slightly opened.

"Why, Adrian? You know that Sunny won't agree to it."

"I just think that it's for her own good."

"My daughter is just fourteen years old, for pete's sake! Are you insane?" My mom's voice raised a bit. I couldn't help but swallow. What are they talking about?

It's still very early in the morning and yet they are arguing already.

I sighed as I passed by their room. I don't care about what they argue all about. I am still young. I guess I've had enough of what Tyler confessed to me yesterday. I went to the kitchen trying to find an appetite to eat.

I can see bagels that's served with hot chocolate syrup on the side. I also noticed mashed potatoes, coffee and hot chocolate on the table already.

"Miss Sunny, we already called your parents and they are coming over any minute from now."

"Thank you so much, Sylvia." I smiled as I nodded at her. She bowed down and stood beside me.

I glanced at Sylvia and she's wearing a long sleeved gray blouse with white collar. She paired it with the same colored skirt below the knee with a white apron. My mom used to wear that when she was still a housekeeper inside Mr. Athkinson's house. How time flies so fast. Mom is the host of the house and the wife of Mr. Athkinson.

They slowly went to the dining room, looking at each other without speaking a single word. Mr. Athkinson moved the chair backwards for mother to sit down. She quietly uttered her thanks as she turned her back. Mr. Athkinson also sat beside her. I am beside mom as I started eating some bagels.

Mom looked at me as if giving a warning for me to stop what I am doing. I almost forgot we should say our graces first before any meal.

"Sorry," I muttered. I saw Mr. Athkinson smiles as if letting me know that it is completely fine. My mom started to utter a simple grace and we started having our delicious breakfast.

Chapter 45: HEART-STOPPING MOMENT

Sunny's POV

We shared a simple breakfast. I preferred to be silent so that I'll not be included in their argument.

"We can go shopping since today is a family day." Mr. Athkinson suggested as soon as we're done with it.

"I have a lot of dresses already. I am not also in the mood for it so I'll pass."

"What about you, Sunny? Any suggestions?"

"I just want to stay at home, Mr. Athkinson."

He sighed and smiled like he always used to.

They looked at each other again and we've finally concluded to just stay at home and play some indoor games. As for me, I have to go to my room to study my lessons. How I wish it will be Monday already. Even if I won't be talking to Tyler that much, I can somehow see him and everything will be alright.

As I went in my room, I got my bag again and emptied it. Without my mother knowing, I have kept seven written letters from Tyler already. I inhaled as I decided to reread those again.

October 16, 1957

My dearest Sunny,

Thank you for spending time with me today.

You never knew how much I am thankful that you're just being my side hearing me out. You never knew how happy I am knowing I have someone who will listen to me with anything I will tell her.

You're like a ray of sunshine bringing hope to everyone around you. I will always cherish this day and the days to come. Please reach for your dreams but don't ever forget me.

P.S: Please be a scientist. I guess if I will see you being one someday, you will make my dream come true.

Sincerely yours,

Tyler

I folded the letter following how Tyler did it when he gave it to me. I can't help but be giddy about seeing this hand-written letter. I realized that I never needed a lot of material things in this world. Sometimes, the thing that makes me happy are the things given by someone with their effort in it.

Reading Tyler's letter alone could make me feel happy and complete throughout the day, no matter I'm feeling bad about it. It's like taking a happy pill whenever I will look at his neat cursive handwriting.

"My daughter can never get married." Lilian firmly said as Mr. Athkinson hugged her from behind. They were inside their room, still arguing about the matter.

"Honey, I am very sorry about what I said earlier. I guess you have mistaken my point."

"Adrian, I am not dumb. I know what you meant when you said that Sunny could have a brighter future by doing this." Lilian, Sunny's mother is almost teary-eyed.

"I am so sorry, I will not bring this up again. Hush now, alright?" Mr. Athkinson tried to hug her but Lilian removed his arm from her waist. She even turned her back at him as she sobbed.

"Don't you ever dare decide what's best for my daughter because I am the only one who could do it for her and not you."

Lilian gazed at their door and she never realized it was open for a long time. A familiar figure was standing frozen in front of them.

It was Sunny! And she's giving them both a blank expression. They were very sure she heard everything that they've talked about.

"Sunny! Please, let me explain!" Lilian cried as she rushed towards the door. However, it's a little late because Lilian ran towards her room and locked it.

"Sunny, please open the door! Let us explain! Please!"

"Leave me alone," She said in a calmed tone. Not angry but loud enough for the people outside her room to hear what she wanted the most.

Mr. Athkinson pulled Lilian who was crying that time. He comforted her and promised that he will take care of the matter as soon as Sunny will go outside her room.

Lilian and Mr. Athkinson explained that they suppose to plan for the arranged marriage. It was at that period when families preferred their children to be in that way for them to get out of poverty. However, Sunny could never allow it to happen to her.

Sunny understood everything. She understood their explanation but then she has something in her mind now. She couldn't help but think about what Tyler said to her days ago.

Never rely on someone, especially if they are doing everything for you. As for Tyler, he believes that everything comes with a price. She decided to try being a scholar despite her classmates being hard on her most of the time.

One weekend, while they were sitting next to each other again on the hilltop, Tyler couldn't help but look at Sunny for a long time. He smiled when she caught him gazing at her again.

"Please stop that," She said as she covers her face. Tyler removed it and she noticed Sunny blushing because of what she's doing.

"Why? You're beautiful, I could gaze at you the whole day." He said as he smiled. Sunny bit her lip and poked his arm.

"Ow, that hurts!"

"I don't want you to do it, okay?"

"Why? I am not joking, alright? If that's what you think of, then sorry. But I mean it."

"Mean what?"

"You're beautiful, it's true."

"I don't want you to be straightforward. I am not used to it." She said as she frowned. She even folded her arms as she turned her back at him.

Tyler tickled her and she laughed out loud. She poked his arm instead but as she attempted to stand up, she slipped. Tyler was able to catch her quickly before she knew it. He wrapped his arms around her waist as he pulled her closer to him.

Their face is just an inch away and Sunny could smell his breath as he narrowed his gaze on his lips. Sunny slowly closed her eyes as her heart started to race.

Chapter 46: WARNING: FALLING FOR YOU

Sunny's POV

I could feel that he's pulling me closer to him. My heart raced wild with anticipation that I couldn't help but to close my eyes.

Everything was silent. I slowly opened my eyes and Tyler is still looking at me as if feeling very amused. He started to chuckle as he pinched my nose. I removed my hand on his nose and frowned as I let go of his hands. I stomped my feet as I sat back on the roots of the tree where I always sat on. He chuckled as he followed me.

"You're even beautiful when you're annoyed." He said between chuckles. He even let me face a mirror with a wooden handle. I pushed it away and he laughed more. I feel like blushing. I hope he didn't see it. It would be too embarrassing.

"You're crazy."

"I like what you're thinking."

"What?"

"You want me to kiss you, right?" He said confidently while grinning. I poked his arm again, this time, I made sure it would hurt him.

"Ow! You know what? You're getting physical. It hurts, you know!"

"How could you ever think about that?" I answered defensively. However, it was too late because he could see me blushing as hell.

"I want to kiss you but I am afraid I will be slapped on my cheeks."

I chuckled because he's really funny. Well, at the same time I am afraid he might see that I am being too awkward. I hate it so much! Why do we feel the same way? I really thought he would kiss me a while ago but then I did not see this one coming.

If only he knew a lot of trying-hard guys in the year 2020 badly wanted to taste my lips. I don't know what to feel right now. I am confused between insulted or embarrassed, or maybe both. But then...why am I happy deep down? Am I enjoying the moment of anticipation that would possibly happen?

"See? I'm just stopping myself from kissing someone, especially you." I looked at him as he said those words.

"We're friends and I respect you so much. If I will kiss a girl, I always make sure she would feel the same for me. I don't want to get slapped, you know." Upon hearing it, I burst out laughing. Tyler is really weird and funny in his own way I can't handle it sometimes.

"I don't know what to say anymore." I said between chuckles. When everything is in good shape, we enjoyed looking at the breath-taking view from the hilltop again.

"Why do you badly want to get a scholarship this time?" Tyler asked me from out of the blue. Should I tell him? I gazed into his eyes and he's really waiting for an answer coming from me.

"I just realized what you've said to me months ago. It's 1958 already but then those words coming from you is a realization."

"Which one?"

"That particular thought that says, 'Everything comes with a price.'"

I could hear him sigh. I know it is not also making him happy. This is the main reason why he's trying his best to be on his own. He even worked as a part-time staff almost everywhere around town. I just don't want to mention it to him because he might feel inferior towards me.

However, everything about Tyler's personality is admirable.

"Yeah. That sentence. It always keeps me going no matter how hard."

"Does your parents insist that girl you would marry every time?"

"Thankfully, not anymore. I don't know why. I guess they're up to something but I don't care."

"Have you seen the girl?"

"Hmm..." Tyler glanced at me as he smiled.

"Is she beautiful?" He just shrugged as he looked down. "Well, I must admit, yes." I bit my lower lip as I sighed. I looked at the beautiful scenery again but this time, it looked blurry. I realized I am already crying. I could feel that he's glancing at me and he went closer to my side. Without warning, he kissed me on the cheeks.

"That's a friendly kiss so I may snatch it from you sometimes."

"Gosh, you're unfair." I couldn't help but chuckle as I also kissed him on the cheeks.

"That's what makes it even." He touched his cheek dreamily. From the way he looked at me, I can feel that he loved what I did. My heart almost jumped out of my ribcage. That's totally scary yet exciting. I kissed a boy and I liked it.

"I hope we'll always stay this way."

He glanced at me as soon as he heard from me those words.

"I don't want to."

"Why?"

"Everything requires growth, even feelings."

I swallowed. Here he goes again. He's always straightforward when it comes to expressing himself. I guess he really intends to give me a heart attack because of this one.

"Do you know why I didn't like the idea of arranged marriages?" I looked at him as if anticipating an answer without waiting for my response. He knew it, most probably.

"I don't want to get married to someone I don't love. I don't imagine myself regretting every decision I will be making." He added as he gazed into my eyes, not blinking even once.

"M-Me too." I muttered but then I guess he never heard it because my voice is almost a whisper.

"What about you, Sunny? What do you think of arranged marriages?"

"I don't agree with it, either. I don't believe that you get to love the person because you don't have a choice."

"We always have."

"That's my point. Others may choose for us but it is our heart who could really choose whom to love."

He's only nineteen. I always remind myself. I am also fifteen this year and yet our topic is this one. I am almost forgetting we're still young and we're still allowed to be carefree when it comes to everything.

"I don't want you to compliment me in a straightforward manner."

"Do you hate it when someone calls you beautiful?"

"Nope. Not at all. What I hate is I might fall for it, which I hated the most."

"Don't worry. I am always responsible for my words. What do you exactly want to hear?"

"I don't want to hear compliments coming from you."

"Because you don't want to fall, am I right?"

I nodded, as I can't put it into words anymore.

"Please do. I don't mind catching someone who's falling for me, especially if it is you."

Chapter 47: REALLY INTO YOU

Sunny's POV

When friendship blooms into something you least expect the most. I never thought that his words would bother me for the rest of that day. I can't believe he could make me smile like an idiot that even the people around me could notice it.

"Miss Sunny, would you like another serving of stewed vegetables?" Sylvia asked me. I nodded and I even complimented her way of cooking while smiling.

"Gosh, you know what Sylvia, this is the most delicious stewed vegetables I have tasted the most. In fact, it is better than mom's."

"Shut up, it's not delicious! It even tastes bland!" My heart almost fell on the floor because I gasped all of a sudden. I never even noticed I am with mom and Mr. Athkinson for lunch because my thoughts were too preoccupied by Tyler's sweet words.

"Sorry mom! I never even know what I am saying. Please forgive me." I looked down but I wanted to chuckle because I just realized how silly I am. I glanced at Miss Sylvia and she even winked at me. My mom scoffed as she wiped her mouth with the table napkin.

I stopped babbling because I am afraid my mother would kill me. The rest of the day seemed really well for me because it's the weekend. I got ready for my secret meeting with Tyler again but things never turned the way I liked it. Mom noticed my happiness since last month. Because of it, she paid some of Mr. Athkinson's bodyguards to check on me and where I was going these past few months.

"So, you're meeting that guy without even telling me?"

"Mom, we're just friends, okay? Please calm down!" I cried. She slapped me right away even in the middle of my explanation.

"Where does everything begin? Being friends, right?"

"Mom, you don't know what you're talking about!"

"How dare you to say that, Sunny? Do you even realize what you're doing to me?"

"The worse thing is, you're judging me already without even knowing the whole thing!"

"You're still young and you're going against all of my plans! Maybe Adrian is right! You should get married this year! I guess that's the only way you're going to do things right!"

"Don't you dare, mom!" I couldn't stop my tears from falling. I can't believe mom will decide on things easily just because I am being friends with Tyler. She's impossible and I am starting to hate her again.

"I will decide for you because I am your mother. Look what happened to me! Look at my life? Am I happy because I have chosen love?"

"You should not compare your life to me, mom! We're different!"

"Say that when you're starting to starve because you don't have money to buy the food that you even like or the clothes you want to wear!" She retorted, more of a warning.

I don't want to argue with her anymore. I turned my back and went to my room to pack my things. I know I might decide without even thinking but the thing that I feared the most is happening right now. My mother shut the door of her room, not even realizing that I am about to leave this house.

Mr. Athkinson is at work at the moment. I couldn't even trust him to hear me out. I am sure he'll listen and side to mom more than I do. I noticed the tears streaming down on my cheeks. It's the first time I felt this worst. I even hired a cab because I can't trust Mr. Henry at this moment. With a bag of my clothes, I headed fast to our old home.

Going there, I am sure I am much safer there than Mr. Athkinson's house together with my mom who is trying to wed me off to somebody that I didn't even know at all.

The cab stopped in front of our house. As soon as I paid the driver, it went away without warning.

I noticed that our house was lit up. Is there anybody at home? As far as I could remember, we left this house untouched a year ago.

I tried knocking and a beautiful woman opened it up for me.

"Who is it?"

"Well, I guess I am the one who will ask that." The beautiful woman looked puzzled. She even scratched her head as if thinking in what sense am I talking about.

"Excuse me?"

"What are you doing in my house?" I couldn't help but ask her in a straightforward manner. I couldn't believe that somebody is living in our house without my consent.

"What? Young lady, we've been living here for quite some time. And, before you complain, I can show you the papers that legally proved that we're the new owner of this house."

"N-New owner?" I admit, I was stunned for a moment. Why would our house have its other owner without me knowing it?

"Lilian sold this house to us a year ago. Who are you to question me, anyway?"

"I'm..." I couldn't stop my tears from falling. "I'm her daughter."

"Well young lady, if you have issues with your mother, kindly talk to her and leave this vicinity right away before I will call the police officers."

She shut the door before me not waiting for my response. I suddenly felt very weak that I could feel my knees trembling. How could my own mother do this to me? This is the only memory my father left for both of us. Why did she do this without even telling me at all?

I started walking as I looked into nothingness. Everything starts to get blurry because of my tears. I admit, I feel really hurt because mom did this without even thinking of informing me first. I felt betrayed and crushed into pieces. I looked around and it is starting to get dark. I sighed as I continued walking. Carrying a bag of clothes with me, I suddenly remembered a place where I could stay for a night without someone getting angry at me. I wish I could see the person who can ease all these pain as well.

Chapter 48: LOVE GOES

Sunny's POV

There were few street lights as I continued walking beside the pavement of the road. Good thing there weren't many people compared to the year 2020 as this moment. I am also thankful that I am not popular this year or else my fans will call me crazy.

Yeah, I looked crazy already because of how I looked. I didn't even remember to take a bath that day. I just left home without any direction and without thinking. Too bad and too late, I am already here in front of the hilltop.

I hugged both of my arms as I carried my heavy bag. This is too epic. I am fifteen. I am very young and yet I already think about it, this is a wrong move.

With great force, I was able to place my bag on one of the big roots of the tree. The shade of this giant tree somehow covered the light of the moon that's shining brightly under me. The shade of the tree makes the surrounding dark and I am starting to feel afraid. I looked around. The crickets and owls were only my companion for the night. I started to touch my bag and unzip it. I started feeling the contents with my hand. I am thankful that I brought my blanket with me. This soft, cottony blanket is my favorite ever since I went back from 2020. The material is very nice, it helps me to sleep right away. However, I don't think I can sleep in this kind of situation I am in.

I touched my pocket and I can feel the match that I got from our house. I couldn't see any lamp or light or whatever that made me see the things around me. I never thought I would experience being a nomad for once in my life. I started to feel the match. When I am already familiar from the matchbox as I touch it, I slowly push the tiny compartment of the box until I can feel the matchsticks lying on it.

Approximately, it contained fifty pieces of matchsticks for me to practice. I started grasping the match firmly at its midpoint. As far as I could remember, I started putting my pointer (index) finger and my thumb to hold the match about halfway down the wooden stick.

I honestly felt nervous all of a sudden because I never get to experience making a fire through a matchstick and a match. However, desperate need calls for desperate measures. I gently wrap my other finger around the base of the stick for support while I am closing my eyes.

I felt really embarrassed for the first time in my life. Good thing I am alone and nobody is seeing this epic thing I am doing right now.

I started to light a match as I tried the wooden "strike on box" while closing my eyes. However, my matchstick is hitting pointlessly on the matchbox. It turned out to be a failed strike because I couldn't even see anything. I tried again, this time, making sure that the friction will cause fire.

When my matchstick sparkled, I got surprised that I threw the stick on the ground. There, failed for the second time around.

I started to breathe as I inhaled deeply, getting my third matchstick. I even closed my eyes and uttered a quick prayer before I tried it again for the third time. At this point, I sat on my favorite root of this tall tree as I lit the third matchstick. I successfully lit the third matchstick without blinking. It made my heart race fast but then I am too quick to put the matchstick on the ground as I covered it with dried leaves. The fire started to spread easily and I could feel warmth right away.

I am too relieved I even wiped my sweating forehead with my arm. I covered myself with a blanket as I sat down on the root again. However, I have a big problem. My stomach started to rumble. I realized I haven't eaten my dinner and the night is getting deeper. The wind is blowing, kissing my skin that gave me a lot of goosebumps.

I started to overthink. What if there are wild animals surrounding the hilltop during nighttime? What if they will eat me alive? Do cannibals still exist at this period? What if I will be roasted over the fire that I personally made?

I suddenly froze when somebody covered my eyes with both of his hands. It was so cold I could die with shock and terror. I started shouting but then the person was too quick to put his hands on my mouth. I bit his hand that covered my mouth as deep as I could and it made him let go of me.

"Tyler!" I said, shocked as I put both of my hands on my mouth. My eyes widened with horror as I realized what I did to him just now. He sat down, closing both of his hands as he placed it on his stomach.

"Wow, that hurts for real." He said while writhing in pain.

"I am so sorry. I thought you're a cannibal trying to eat me alive."

"Wow, if I am a cannibal, I'd be the most handsome cannibal in the world."

"You wish..." I suddenly got annoyed because he's being nonsense all of a sudden. How can he joke around while in pain? Sometimes I don't get men, for real.

"I don't understand why you're here in the middle of the night."

"Because I missed you?" I said with sarcasm. I heard him bursting with laughter again.

"Don't say that, I might fall for your words."

"You're a copycat. I did say that sentence first." I said while frowning. We became silent for a minute. When he heard my stomach rumble, he held my hand and placed something on it.

"Oh, a chicken sandwich!" I exclaimed as I excitedly opened it.

"Eat first before you eat me alive. I am afraid you might eat my hands for real if you're not gonna eat something."

Chapter 49: SHE WILL BE LOVED

Sunny's POV

I cried while chewing the sandwich he just gave me. I looked silly and stupid but now, I don't care anymore.

A while ago, I just wished he would be here but I never expected that it would become real because I went to this place alone. We never even got a phone to communicate together and yet here he is, sitting beside me.

****flashback****

It was too dark as I set my foot in front of the hilltop. The trunk of the giant tree looked really scary at this time. Some branches of the trees moved as if they were alive. I felt like they were ghosts dancing before me. I decided to close my eyes as I held both of my hands.

"Tyler...please be here." I heard my own voice pleading too much. But then only crickets and owls and their sounds answered me back. I felt goosebumps all over my body from head to toe.

"I promise if you're here right now, I will love you, even marry you instead of that jerk my mom is telling me to marry!" I could hear my own voice echoing that some birds that alighted from the branch of the tree flew away because of the noise I created.

I started to feel my tears trailing on my cheeks. When suddenly, I remembered something.

"Aha!" I cried as I felt the matchbox from my pocket.

****end of flashback****

Gosh, I can't even look at him directly. I just cried because of mixed emotions. I admit, everything is just really epic. Why did I even say those words I am surely regretting right now? Well, not all of them, though. I should expect more of his presence rather than his absence, that is really so stupid of me.

"W-When did you arrive here?" I said, crossing my fingers from behind me. I hope he arrived just now or I am really dead for sure. Gosh, I realized I became stupid for one, straight hour before he appeared from nowhere.

He didn't answer me. Instead, he grinned from ear to ear. He showed me the most meaningful, epic smile the universe has ever had.

"Do you really mean it?" He said as he raised her eyebrows up and down.

"What?" I frowned as I turned my back from him. I bit my lower lip as I swallowed. Gosh, Sunny! You're really stupid! Gosh! I badly wanted the ground to swallow me alive right here, right now.

"What you said a while ago..."

"Duh, just treat that as a bad dream that never existed, alright?" I pretended to be tough. The truth is, I want to melt right away. Now, I am sure he heard everything I said a while ago.

He sighed as he shook his head from left to right. He opened his bag and handed me his water tumbler again. I grabbed it like a hungry child and drank from it. It's really cool, I felt really good all of a sudden.

"Wow, it's like it just came straight from the fridge."

"Huh?"

I scratched my head as I looked at him. I don't want to tell him things that's not too common from this time. He might admit me to a nearby mental hospital any minute by now.

"Well, it's like a cooling box in a simple explanation."

"Oh, I see. Yeah, I put it in our cooling machine before going here."

"What? You mean you often go here during nighttime?"

"I love going to places where there are so many stars for you to count."

"Isn't it difficult?"

"I got my own blanket, too." He showed me a blanket almost similar to mine.

"Wow! Our blankets almost looked identical!"

"Yeah, I agree."

"The weather is fine tonight. As long as it is not raining, the sky is my roof. I don't care much."

"How about mosquitoes?"

"Taadaa..." He smiled as he showed me some corn cubs.

"What are we going to do with that one?"

"This will keep the mosquitoes away."

"How?" As soon as he mentioned it, I started to get really excited.

flashback

(Sunny's life way back 2020)

"Valerie!" She roared. In a few minutes, Valerie appeared in front of her.

"Oh my gosh!" Her assistant reacted when Sunny showed her a dead mosquito on her mattress.

"Madam, please don't move! I will be right back!" Valerie rushed outside the room, shutting the door behind her. Sunny grinned as she straightened her robe. Two minutes later, Valerie returned with some electric mosquito repellents. She put the switch on. Also, she checked the windows. She grabbed the remote control and pressed it. A fine, screen protector appeared through the glass windows. It looked very classy and breathable at the same time.

"Madam, would you like to have your bubble bath again? I asked your personal maids to prepare ingredients that they will include inside your bathtub. It is used to relax the stress that was brought by that mosquito." She flashed a stiff tissue paper in front of Sunny and grabbed the poor, lifeless mosquito and crumpled it on her hands.

"Sorry for this again. Oh, before I forgot..." Sunny grinned as Valerie lit a rose-scented candle for her. It diffused all of a sudden inside the room and it instantly relaxed her.

"Is there anything I can help you with, madam?"

"Val, I love what you're doing! Keep it up!" She gave a thumbs up sign as her assistant winks back at her.

****end of flashback****

Sunny sighed as she recalled those moments. Here she is right now, coughing because of the smoke coming from the corn cubs Tyler lit in front of them.

"Are you sure only the mosquitoes will be repelled from this?"

Tyler just looked at her as if trying to understand what she meant by it. She whined when she realized he's not getting her.

"Do you think I am a mosquito, too?" She said while frowning. It made Tyler chuckle after getting what she's trying to say.

"Sorry, Sunny. This is the only thing I can do at this moment. Don't worry, you'll get used to it."

"I will really get used to it if I am dead because of second-hand smoking."

"Wow, you're the one complaining here but you're not even thinking twice before leaving your house."

After hearing it, Sunny never dared speak a single word to Tyler. He just looked at her in return and let her head rest on his shoulder.

"You should be returning home first thing in the morning."

That's the only sentence she heard before she finally closed her eyes to sleep.

Chapter 50: BABY LOVE

Sunny's POV

"Sunny...Sunny..." I felt someone was shaking me as I slowly opened my eyes. It was Tyler and I widened my eyes when I realized everything was not a dream after all!

"Why, it's too early you know."

"Yeah, it's only four thirty in the morning but you have to get up."

"Why?" I softly whined as I rubbed my eyes.

"Would you like someone to see us and think we just eloped? Wake up, princess. I have to return you home."

"No!" I exclaimed right away. He saw that I am about to cry again. He hugged me tight. "Please, I am begging you. I am not going to return home, Tyler. Adopt me in your house. Promise, I will not complain a lot. I will try my best." I sniffed as he wiped my tears away. He nodded and let me go. He started packing my bags and straightened my blanket.

"Did you bring your uniform and books?"

"Yeah..."

"We have no choice but to go to school today because it's Monday. We'll talk later, alright?" He said as he cupped my face, his lips were closer to mine as I narrowed my gaze.

"Tyler..."

"You will take a bath inside the house. Everyone is still asleep right now, so you can do that. You should also wear your uniform and go to school like nothing happened."

I nodded and followed his instructions. I tried getting myself ready for what will happen later. I am sure my mom will go to school and will try to convince me to return home. I won't allow her this time.

He held my hand as we tiptoed to his room. He almost flew on his bed as he felt the soft mattress against his back.

"Wow..." I whispered as I lay beside him, on his bed.

"It's big, right?"

"Yeah, just like my room at Mr. Athkinson's."

"Why did you leave your house in the first place?"

"Mom got mad for a shallow reason. For that, she decided to arrange my own marriage even if I don't want to."

"Wow, you can relate to me now."

"Yeah. I realized the feeling is worse. I am only imagining getting married to someone I didn't know, I wanted to vomit right away."

"Wow, your imagination is the worst."

"Of course. As a matter of fact, I am thinking what if I will be married to someone twice or thrice my age? I'd rather die, Tyler."

"Whoah...I am feeling the same way too. I don't want to marry someone that I don't even love. I mean, who could ever learn to love someone when they don't know each other in the first place?"

Tyler looked at me lying beside him. He got up and I was going to do the same when he stopped me. He went on top of me and I swallowed.

"W-What are you going to do, Tyler?"

"I realized we're on the same situation, Sunny." He said, leaning his face closer to mine.

"You know what? If something happens between the two of us right now, nobody would hear us, no matter how loud you scream." He added, his voice started to sound husky. My heart started to race wild. He locked both of his fingers on mine as he raised my hands that's resting on his bed. His lips were almost an inch from mine. I started to close my eyes.

I admit, I am getting wild with anticipation. I felt his lips kiss my forehead down to my cheeks. I gasped as I felt his hands on my uniform. My knees were also shaking. I wanted to stumble down because of what I am feeling right now.

"Fuck," He muttered as he stopped even before a moan escaped my lips. He let me go and went down the bed, turning his back from me right away.

"Why?" I softly ask. He glanced at me and I am still motionless, laying in front of him as I moved my eyes in a seductive manner.

"Get up before I totally lose control." I followed what he said right away but I hugged him from behind. He was surprised with my sudden action, he held both of my hands as he faced me. I looked up to him, meeting his eyes.

"Please don't give me to them."

"I promise I will do my best." I hugged him again as he kissed my forehead.

"I mean what I said last night..." I said, shyly as I faced him. I can see that his face lit up all of a sudden.

"Which one?"

"The one that I said that showed how silly you are." I pinched his cheek and he giggled right away.

"If you want, we can have fun in my room the whole day."

"You wish. Let's go to school right now." He scratched his head as he grinned.

"I will just keep your bag in this room, under my bed. Don't worry about your things. My parents are not touching anything here."

He held my hand again. As I glanced at his wall clock, it was exactly 5:45 A.M in the morning. He assured that his parents are waking up at exactly 8:00 in the morning.

"Are you ready?" He giggled as he whispered at me.

"Yes. I always love to ride on your bike with you. This is the best ride ever!" I almost shouted that he quickly covered his hands on my mouth. I chuckled on what he did.

"We should be doing well in school. I promise to buy a car someday and drive you there. You will be the first passenger that I will ever drive with me."

"Wow, I love your plans! That sounds great, Tyler."

"Yeah. So read many books very well and get good grades, okay?" I nodded as he pinched my cheek.

He started pedaling his bike with me sitting behind him. He stopped at the parking lot where bikes should be parked and reminded me not to find him anywhere in school just to make sure nobody could see us being together.

I nodded as I followed him. I rushed towards school and headed to our school cafeteria to eat my breakfast. I can see Tyler in the other table but we just exchanged glances together. Now, I hate this moment that mobile phones are not yet existing at this period. While other friends were too loud in talking with each other, we're the opposite. We're more than strangers this time to prevent gossip.

I sighed as I took a big bite from my apple as I looked at him again. He encouraged me to smile as he pointed on his face and smiled very wild that he looked silly all of a sudden.

I giggled softly, not making myself obvious that I was laughing at him. I just looked down as I chuckled. It's amazing how he could make me happy despite anticipating the worst thing that may happen anytime of the day.

Tyler's POV

I am sitting to the table two meters away from where Sunny is sitting right now. She looked shy and timid while eating her apple. Yet, she kept on looking at me as if observing what I am doing as well.

I ordered juice and a soup for myself. However, I almost ignored it because I want to make her happy by being silly. While she's looking at me, I pointed at my mouth. Her eyebrows met as if looking very puzzled.

I forced a smile in front of her as if encouraging her to do the same. She giggled softly and yet I could hear her happiness right now. She followed what I told her to do. She easily flashed a charming smile that I will always love to see for myself.

That smile...that smile that always captures my heart. That aura and positive vibes she's giving me no matter how things could get worse. I guess I can do everything with her by my side. Her smile gives me courage. In times that I want to give up, looking at her smiling at me makes my world a better place in an instant. If only she knew how she impacted my life.

She's giving me this kind of feeling that I could face the world no matter how it could be worse because of so many circumstances. She's very charming and optimistic, I can't help but to admire her. Not only her natural beauty but her personality that stands among the rest.

Chapter 51: BABY LOVE

Sunny's POV

"I am not coming with you!" I exclaimed in front of my mom. We're in front of the office and she's convincing me to go with her after what happened. I don't want to even see her face because of what she did.

"Sunny, let's talk about this, please listen to me."

"I don't need your explanation, mom. I can handle myself." I answered her back. I even folded my arms as I frowned.

"Where do you stay right now? Are you eating your food properly?"

"It's none of your business. Don't pretend that you care about me when you sold our house without even informing me." She looked surprised to what I told her just now. I saw her gently swallowed as she tried to maintain eye contact with me.

I turned my back before she would tell me things that would change my mind. I know there were many of Mr. Athkinson's bodyguards roaming around the school premises wearing civilian clothes. That's why I tried my best to hide as much as I can.

As I was near the art room, somebody pulled me in. It was Tyler. He put his finger between his lips signaling that I should be quiet while we're hiding inside. I nodded and sat beside him as he pulled some armed chairs near the both of us.

When I noticed that mom left the school with the guards, I told Tyler that we have to leave school too, because it is getting dark. As usual, we went to the hilltop. It served as our hideout as I am hiding from my mom.

"I am so sorry for all of this," I said, gazing at him. He smiled to make me feel comfortable somehow.

"What for?" Tyler answered, looking really cool and unaffected.

I look at him to see if he knew what I meant. It is impossible for him not to. I know what the students sees in school will be the hottest topic ever. Gossips could spread like wildfire sometimes we can't stop it no matter how we try.

"You know it already. All of these things. I am really sorry because I've been dragging you to this since day one."

"No, I don't mind at all."

"I still want to apologize. I know I have caused you a lot of trouble. I feel guilty about it, really."

"No need. It happens when we least expect it." Looking at him, I suddenly felt guilty. What if I will stay like this? I am sure I will be a burden for him in the long run.

I know if this will persist, I will disturb all aspects of his life. I know he would care a lot for me. One thing I am afraid the most is, what if he'll forget to take care of himself because he's busy taking good care of other people? I can't allow that as well. The shame is on me.

I noticed he's getting something from his bag again. I couldn't help but smile because it's a special kind of sandwich this time. It is a smoked turkey sandwich. I enjoyed eating my meals with Tyler. I can feel I am the happiest whenever I do this with him. Seriously. When did I ever liked this kind of sandwich? I don't exactly know when. I only realized that I am loving it because he's the one giving it to me. I can see the enthusiasm in his eyes. He looked so happy by just offering it to me. I guess he already pictured out my reaction if I will be receiving this sandwich from him.

"Thank you, Tyler. I never know what I am going to do without you." He tapped my head as if I'm a little child under his care. I removed his hand because it annoys me so much.

"I can't stay like this forever." I muttered as I glanced at him. I noticed that he fixed his eyes on me as soon as he heard those words.

"Of course. Nobody wanted to settle for less, even me." He said, agreeing to my words.

"But then, I feel like a joke fighting for what's right even without anything right now."

"The choices that we take in life is the thing that we wanted the most. Never regret it, Sunny."

"Yeah. I agree with you, Tyler."

"What's your plan, then?"

"I want to sleep because I am tired already."

"Y-Yeah. You must. Your eyes wanted to close any time. Please have a good rest now."

He helped me prepare my blanket and we did the usual again. He lit up the corn cubs to serve as our inexpensive, bad-to-the-health way of insect repelling. It is very effective but then I don't think I can reach the age of 76 by the year 2020 if we continue doing this everyday.

"Gosh, imagine this one? I never even experienced it even once."

"Well, here you are, experiencing it now."

"I realized it is not too bad at all. Thank you so much, Tyler."

He covered himself with a blanket and let me snuggle beside him for warmth. I also did the same, wrapping myself with a blanket as if I am a giant spring roll in front of him. He chuckled when he noticed me looking at him with pouty lips.

"You can sleep now." He said, as he touched my face, letting my head rest on his shoulders again. He's taller than me that's why he could sometimes treat me like a little child.

"Thank you, Tyler. I will never forget your goodness. I will always remember how you help me with everything I need."

He touched my hair and he caressed it gently as if lulling me to a deep sleep.

I started closing my eyes, feeling his warmth even for the last time...

Tyler's POV

Morning came and as I opened my eyes, I stretched my limbs right away. I hate it whenever I will place myself in the same position whenever I sleep at night. It's as if all parts of my body ached so bad.

I started hovering my gaze around the dawning scenery of the hilltop. I usually get up at four in the morning. However, I couldn't see Sunny anymore.

My heart started to race fast.

"S-Sunny? I am not playing games with you." I called her name but nobody replied. I can feel that I am all alone here.

"This is not a hide-and-seek game. C'mon. Why are you doing this?" For the second time around, I got no response. Did she go somewhere without even telling me?

I looked around and I could not also see some of her things. I can't even see her blanket and bag full of books and some clothes that she's bringing with her.

"Sunny! Where are you?" I tried shouting but to no avail. I did not attempt for the second time because I might wake somebody up, too.

Where did she go? Did she realize that she would eventually get tired of this set-up and she will return home because she needed to?

I looked away and I could see the sunrise slowly peeks in the horizon. I am hoping for a brighter tomorrow, if not for me, I wish Sunny will have it. I can't ask for anything more than that.

Chapter 52: WAY BACK INTO LOVE

Sunny's POV

I can't remember how long I am walking right now. I tried waking up at three in the morning to make sure I won't wake him up. I haven't even had the chance to say goodbye to him for the last time.

I have decided to go far from him. Somewhere that he couldn't reach me. I should do all means just to avoid him, to not burden him after all.

I glanced at a nearby shop's wall clock and it is six in the morning now. I stopped at a nearby bakery to buy some bread. Good thing I still have my money with me, from my savings.

After munching the bread and drinking water from Tyler's water tumbler, I started walking again. I looked from left to right before I crossed the street until I reached a small restaurant.

"Good morning, ma'am." I entered it and an old lady with a crooked brow faced me.

"What do you want?" She said, putting both of her hands on her hips as she raised her eyebrows. I swallowed because she looked scary and strict at the same time.

"Do you need a helper, ma'am? I can work for you." As soon as she heard me, she looked at me from head to toe and she cleared her throat.

"Come inside," she said. I smiled because I can feel that I could have a part-time job while going to school.

"I need someone to wait tables,"

"Ma'am, I am willing to learn everything." I replied enthusiastically.

"You may start today." She said while looking at me again. I bit my lip and sighed. Well, this means I will miss school today. It is only Tuesday but here I am, working my ass on to survive.

I did what I was told to do. I am only fifteen and yet I am already experiencing this in life. I started to wonder why I can't even remember this part of my life if it is the most unforgettable one.

I wiped the tables as I glanced at the people going to and fro outside the restaurant. I am praying that Tyler will not see me here or else I will have to go with him again.

I talked to the old woman and I have learned that her name is Lydia Kheir. Thankfully, she allowed me to stay in the restaurant as a bed spacer because I got no place to stay this time. We agreed that I

would be getting the minimum pay but there were free meals and bedspace in return for my part-time job.

Lydia Keir is the owner of their family business for almost thirty years. The restaurant is a mix American-Mexican cuisine by day and a bar at night. She accepts men who want to drink some hard liquor and alcoholic drinks to soothe their stress.

I could imagine what my life will be after accepting this job. I felt nervous but I have no choice at this time. I am still mad about what mom did to our old house without even informing me. I am also a bit sad that I left Tyler. I am not planning to disturb him for a longer time. That isn't my style. If I became independent in the year 2020, I could start my training as young as I am right now.

Hours came by like a flash and it is almost seven in the evening. I'm a bit nervous because I have watched these scenes on TV but I never got to experience any.

"Sunny, start serving our customers. Usually, the most impatient ones were going here during nighttime." I nodded as I swallowed. I will not find out if I can if I will not try, right?

I lifted the tray full of beverages carefully. I started walking through the aisles of tables. I could see a lot of men staring at me like a delicious piece of meat that they're about to devour any time.

I placed some drinks to table numbers 6,7 and 8. They smiled as they nodded.

"Dude, that lass looked like Lilian Grainger."

"Yeah. I agree. But that bitch just left me for Adrian. I will never forget what she did to me."

"What do you plan to do?"

"I will take my revenge, John. I won't settle being a loser all my life."

Upon hearing those words, my heart started to pound real fast. How come my mom got involved at this? Who are these guys?

I walked past them, not being too obvious. I admit, I suddenly fear mom's life. I know I hate her so much but this is different. What if they will kill mom in one of these days?

"Sunny..." My thoughts were disturbed when I heard Ms. Lydia's voice.

"Y-Yes?" I slowly lifted my head as I looked at her. Please go to table number seven and serve them this.

Her voice is a bit firm that I couldn't say no. I swallowed as I nodded. What is she up to, this time? My knees were almost shaking because of what I heard from them and I am serving the boys their drinks.

I held the side of the tray firmly as I took a deep breath. Sometimes, I hate the fact that I almost look exactly alike as my mom. Now, I also fear my life as well.

When one of the men saw me coming, he smiled right away. I bit my lower lip and tried to calm down. I shouldn't let them see that I am nervous. I hope they didn't see me as I overheard what they were talking to themselves a while ago.

"Hello, miss."

"Hi, sir. Good evening. This is your order for table seven."

I put the glasses on the table and some bottles of alcoholic drinks that they've ordered without looking at their faces. But I am sure that they were fixing their eyes on me.

"You know what, miss? You are resembling someone I knew very well," He grinned as he held my arm.

Chapter 53: LOVE MOVES

Sunny's POV

"I guess you have mistaken, sir."

"No. I am sure I'm not. You look exactly like Lilian Grainger." I swallowed as he could sense the horror in my eyes. I awkwardly smiled and bowed down to excuse myself. I tried letting go of his hand that held my arm. However, I felt it was gripping my arm tightly.

"Can you stay here for a while?"

"What are you doing to my ladies?" Miss Lydia suddenly appeared in front of me out of nowhere. I suddenly felt relieved. I wanted to kiss and hug her tight from saving me from them.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I was just asking a question from her." One of the men answered in a defensive manner.

"Sunny, go back to your post. I will talk to them." I bowed down to excuse myself and left them. But then I can see that man staring at me from my peripheral vision.

I got puzzled all of a sudden. Does mom know him in the first place? Why did he say that to those men?

I served more tables until I could excuse myself to some of the people who also worked there.

I got upstairs and sneaked to the main office of the restaurant. I remembered Ms. Lydia has a telephone on her table. I need to call mom to at least warn her what's happening beyond her reach.

I touched the phone and picked up the speaker as I leaned my mouth near the receiver. I looked around to observe if there were movements going on.

I am torn between the feeling of being scared and anxious right now. I'm afraid to be caught but I have to call mom to tell her to take extra care of herself just in case.

I dialled the phone using the number of Mr. Athkinson's residence by means of turning the dialler, rotating it clockwise.

"C'mon, c'mon..." I muttered as I waited on the other line. It was ringing endlessly. My heart started to race because I felt like it's taking forever for someone to answer it.

"Hello?"

"Can I speak to Lilian Grainger, please?"

"Speaking. What is it?"

It was mom! I bit my lower lip and I twitched when I could hear some footsteps going in the office.

"I just want you to take care of yourself. Please. Some people were thinking bad about you."

"Su—" I ended the call right away because I can hear the doorknob twitching. I hurriedly ran under the table, still disoriented and nervous.

I heard heavy footsteps as it went near the table I'm under with, and it became silent for a few minutes. I felt like the world had stopped as well at that very moment.

"Miss Lydia, I have to show you something." One of my colleagues went straight to her.

"My, you almost killed me with a heart attack. Can't you knock first?"

"Miss, the door is open I went straight in. I am so sorry,"

"Alright. Point taken. By the way, where is Sunny?"

"I remembered seeing her going to the comfort room a while ago."

I felt the footsteps going outside as Miss Lydia closed the door behind her. I sighed in relief. I looked around and I glanced at the telephone I used a while ago. Good thing I was able to place it to its original position before Miss Lydia opened the door of her office.

I slowly opened the door again and closed it behind me. I tiptoed from the hallway, going down to the comfort room. I must be grateful for that colleague of mine who just saved the day! I remembered entering the comfort room before I went to Miss Lydia's office. I guess the odds are really in my favor this time around.

"Hello? Sunny? Is this you? What is it all about? Hello?" Lilian insisted as she held on to the speaker of the telephone like she's holding to her dear life.

She knew that voice! She couldn't make a mistake because she knew her daughter very well. Why did she call her only to say those words to her?

If Sunny was really her caller a while ago, it was weird that instead of telling her she misses her so much, she got a message that served as a warning for her.

She closed her eyes as she massaged her forehead. She couldn't even think straight because of what happened a while ago. She needed to find her daughter by all means or she would really end up crazy.

She went downstairs and she was greeted by Mr. Athkinson. She hugged him tight as she told him that she needed two more personal bodyguards. After telling what happened, Mr. Athkinson supported her idea.

They even tried searching Sunny in Tyler's house with the help of Ms. Marlyn. It happened hours before Sunny went away from her. They went home empty-handed. Even Tyler couldn't tell them where she was because she didn't know where she'd been this time around.

Tyler already searched everywhere around town. However, there's this saying that if someone doesn't want to be seen, he/she will not be found forever.

"Tyler, I will never ever do it again to my precious daughter. I will let her choose her dreams as soon as I will find her."

"Let's be hopeful, Mrs. Athkinson. Everything will be fine. Let's be positive to see her soonest." Tyler said as she hugged Lilian. Miss Marlyn also tapped both of her shoulders to comfort her as she sobs.

I will also show her what she really meant to me this time around...Tyler just kept these words to himself. He realized that Sunny is just no ordinary friend to him the moment she went missing.

He knew deep within him that this feeling that he has towards her is far different from what he felt from other people who showed interest in him.

He knew she was special but when she's gone all of a sudden, everything just felt so right. It's the feeling she kept denying for a long time that he has defined it in a different perspective. Now, it got clearer to him. It is love and he is sure of it.

Chapter 54: HATE ME

Tyler's POV

I got up with a sullen mood again. Sunny has been missing for a week and I am in between finding her or giving up completely.

As I walked downstairs, I headed to our kitchen right away. I prepared my sandwich, I placed the four loaves of bread in front of me. I started putting on the ingredient to the first two loaves. After that, I closed the sandwiches using the two remaining loaves. I sighed when I realized that Sunny isn't here anymore. I couldn't share my other sandwich with her anymore because she even stopped attending school.

I guess she's really serious to be fully independent without needing the help of somebody. I stood, picking up the sandwiches and placed it neatly inside my lunchbox as I headed to school. Even my bike is looking dull right now as I gazed to it. I started pedaling it as I looked down.

"Hey! Move slower! You'll kill us both if you do!" I turned my back and I almost forgot she's not behind me anymore.

I couldn't help but stop my bike on that side of the road under a big tree. I can still hear her and on how she will scold me if I will try making the ride faster than my usual way of pedaling. I chuckled in a bitter way.

I really missed her, damned so much. If only she knew how much I badly wanted to see her. I hope she's doing okay wherever she is staying. I wish she eats well in her new home if there's any.

Sunny's POV

As soon as I opened my eyes, I went down to the restaurant's kitchen. Although the food was free and looked delicious, I never got the chance to enjoy it that much. The food at home compared to this one is much better because I got to eat with my family. Now, things are going so differently.

Right after breakfast, I decided to start work right away. I wiped the tables and cleaned the chairs. It was exactly nine in the morning and I have to show Miss Lydia that she's not regretting accepting someone like me.

I am only fifteen but then I hope she will always find me responsible and suited as one of the helpers. It's sad that I have to drop out from school even in the middle of the school year. I plan to save some money enough for me to enroll myself in the next school year.

I sighed as I looked through the glass window. I can see a lot of people rushing to their work. Others were riding a bike while there were many vintage cars running in the middle of the street. Everything is a bit busy now, I started to feel bad. Thinking that I will be left behind this school year makes me feel sick and unmotivated. However, I should get going to follow my dreams. I won't let other people dictate what I am going to do with my life now.

It's not their possession to have the authority to decide for me. I will always chase happiness and the things that will make me happy and successful someday. I know I should do things that my future self will be thankful for.

"Sunny?" I turned my back as soon as I heard Ms. Lydia calling my name.

"Yes, miss?"

"I want you to run a few errands to Mr. John's shop."

"Mr. John's?"

"Yes. I bet you know him already, right?"

Of course. How can I ever forget someone who treated me so bad I almost developed a trauma. He's a class A pervert.

"Oh, Miss Lydia? Can I do everything except that?"

"Would you mind cleaning the whole bathroom then?"

"Bathroom?"

I can see that Miss Lydia is frowning already as she put her hands on her hips. She looked very impatient that I can't help but to avoid my gaze at her. She looked irritated because I can't believe that she will tell me all these things.

"My time is precious, Sunny. Don't waste it."

"I will clean the bathroom then, Miss Lydia." I insisted right away. She nodded as I followed her. It was supposed to be Sylvia who was tasked to clean the bathroom. Miss Lydia switched our roles because I won't accept running any errands. Good thing she didn't ask me the reason why. I don't want to be the waitress. I will do everything just to avoid those men. I don't want them to notice that I somehow looked like my mother.

As much as possible, I want to avoid the possible conflict or issues relating to me. I want to work here and be invisible as much as possible. I am avoiding my parents and even Tyler to find me right away. As of the moment, I only wanted to be independent when it comes to my life and on how I make decisions my own.

All of a sudden, I came here and changed my life forever. I am supposed to be in school and yet here I am, cleaning the bathroom. I never imagined that once in my life, I will be doing this one. That I will have this kind of job, too lowly that I will result to cleaning toilets.

Tyler is not here to protect me anymore. I should always keep myself away from him as much as I can. Sylvia instructed me what to do. Even if the place was stinking to death, I would prefer staying here, spending my time. I don't want to face him again.

I started filling the pails with water and searched for detergents and other strong chemicals. I covered my mouth but I ended up coughing because of suffocation. I couldn't help but be emotional at this moment. I suddenly wondered how I got into this instantly. Is this the life that I ever wanted? Do I really have to undergo everything like this?

flashback

"Wow, you're old enough to be in the Senior High, but you're still in grade 7. How shameful is that?"

"Why do you care about how old I am? It is not the reason for you to treat me like this."

"Well, that's the point. I know where you will be shortly. You will drop out of school because you will realize that studying is not really for you. Then, you will marry young." Laila grinned as she gave me a mocking smile as she said those words.

I know to myself that I am 76 years old. I am very sure of what my future lies ahead of me. No, correction, I already know what my future is because that's where I came from. However, I am stuck with this life. I can't do anything about it no matter what I do and it is the worst feeling ever.

I let out a soft cry as I slumped on the ground. I want to cry out loud because everything she's saying is real. I am being stubborn. I keep on comparing the things from 2020 to this time and yet I can't even pull myself together and manage my life well. I made sudden decisions that I thought would make me. Then I realized, it is breaking me little by little everyday.

My eyes were blurry with tears. However, I have to get up to continue working here before I will make another decision.

Chapter 55: THE LAST WISH

Sunny's POV

I started getting my things packed up. It's been over a month since I started working here. I realized the pay isn't much. It is not even worth my extra hours of hard work. I felt like devoting aimlessly in this restaurant. If I have to calculate everything, I guess I can save enough money to go to school again after ten years of working here.

That's how little my compensation is. I calculated the money and I realized it is not enough for everything I've sacrificed. Although, I am very thankful for the training and experiences here.

I have learned to cook some meals, especially Mexican cuisine. I have learned how to interact with a lot of people. I've mastered the art of dealing with people with different personalities and temperaments.

I sighed as everything was packed in place. I have also written a letter of thanks and in a separate one, a letter of resignation.

I started walking downtown, carrying my little luggage with me. I started looking from left to right and I only see busy people walking to and fro. I bit my lip as I went along when somebody grabbed my arm all of a sudden.

"M-Mr. John?" I gasped. He grinned as he started gripping my shoulders tightly. "Let me go!" I screamed as I started twitching and moving away from him. Good thing there were some few people who saw what's happening. They looked at Mr. John and he let me go right away.

I started running as soon as he let me go, moving my way towards the hilltop. I got no choice all of a sudden because I noticed that there were some suspicious people who were also following me.

My heart started to race fast as I confirmed that they were indeed following me. I can't see where I am stepping anymore because I tried running as fast as I can. When I am near the hilltop, I can see two familiar figures.

"Mom? Tyler?" I muttered. Minutes passed when they realized it was me who was running towards them.

"Sunny!" Mom rushed towards me and I couldn't see the people following me as well. My heart went crazy even more. I bet they never noticed those people who were after me, or perhaps after the life of my mother?

"Why are you here, mom?" I asked her as she hugged me tight. She sobbed as she cupped my cheeks with both hands.

"I asked help from Tyler, darling. How are you? You looked skinny. I've been looking for you everywhere." She said as she turned me around and examined me closely.

"I've been fine, mom. I worry about you. Who were those weird people who were after you?" As I asked her, I could see the horror in her eyes.

"W-What?"

"I called you last time. I hope you followed what I said."

"So, it was indeed you..." She welled up with tears.

She told me everything. Those people who were after her life were one of her previous suitors. She didn't like his attitude for being aggressive and possessive at the same time so she rejected him. Later did she know that he belonged to those groups who were a threat to the society.

She feared her life, that's why Mr. Athkinson doubled his bodyguards for her well-being. Now, I know the reason why she is acting weird. I even thought something's wrong with her for being overly protective of me. She even told me to stick to the curfew she set whenever I return home from school a month ago.

"Mom, you could've said all these things to me, right? Why do you like to hide everything from me?"

"Sunny, I don't want you to worry that much. Please understand that I am also doing this for you."

Minutes passed, I told them everything that has happened to me. Both of them were very ecstatic that I have finally returned.

"Mom, we better hurry up because it's not safe here."

I looked around and noticed that the bushes around the hilltop were moving like crazy. It's like somebody is hiding behind them.

I looked at Tyler and mom. I never knew how I would tell them that somebody might be after our lives.

We returned home but I could still sense that somebody is still following us.

"Mom, please take care of yourself. You will never know when you'll be attacked. They are always after you and your life."

"I will remember that, dear. Please beware too. Limit your time in going outside the house. I also went to Tyler's parents to inform them to take good care of him, too."

I swallowed. I feared for Tyler's life, too. I never knew how to accept all of this. It's like I suddenly put him at risk. He's not supposed to get involved in this. Moreover, I am sure he was seen by those people who wanted to put mom down.

What I didn't like about this period is the absence of mobile phones. I couldn't text or call him which makes things even worse.

I sat down as I looked through our glass window. Everything is not safe anymore. I am almost losing hope when I think about writing a letter to him. I asked mom about their home address. It is for me to assure that the letter will reach him right away.

December 12, 1958

My dearest Tyler,

Good day. I am writing this letter to tell you to please take care. I am always concerned about your life. I am so sorry that you're suddenly involved in this. I hope I could do something to make things better. I always wish you of your safety and well-being.

Let us see each other again at the hilltop after a week, next Monday, if it is okay for you? See you if I can. See you when I see you.

Sincerely yours,

Sunny

I sighed as I hugged my letter near my chest. When I inserted it inside the envelope, something crossed my mind. I grabbed my pen again.

"Smile before you open..."

I put on my lipstick and sealed it with a kiss.

Chapter 56: GOODBYE

flashback

Tyler's POV

I walked inside the library. It's been two weeks since I last saw Sunny roaming around school. I've heard that she dropped out yesterday because of an unknown reason.

It hurts me more because she never even told me about her sudden decisions. I sat on our favorite table as I looked through the window.

I wonder how is she right now? Does she eat well? Where did she stay right now? I looked at the empty corner in front of me. I can still see how she scratched her head as she reads those difficult words that she doesn't know.

I couldn't help but chuckle as I recall those times. This is the most vivid memory so far.

OYULVEOI

I recovered the small strip of paper I handed to her in between the pages of the book she's always reading. It's a hidden message scrambled for her to unscramble for her to know.

"You know what? You're too silly. I am having a hard time reading these words and yet you're adding up to my assignments."

I smiled as I can even remember this one, too. If only she knew what I intended to tell her at that time.

It was the feeling I know I am sure of having towards her. It was not an ordinary feeling of friendship, or a temporary feeling of liking someone and then forgetting it later on. I knew it was deeper than that. I learned that she was gone, and she decided to stop meeting me, I realized that I can't last a day without her. I realized that I can't be complete without seeing her beautiful face and captivating smile.

I just woke up one day realizing I love her so much.

Our maid approached me looking worried as she glanced from left to right.

"What is it, Miss Sandy?"

"Sir Tyler, I found a letter addressed to you inside the mailbox. I was able to retrieve it before your dad checked it earlier this morning."

"Miss Sandy, you're a trusted woman. Thank you so much."

"Don't worry about it, sir Tyler. I always see to it that I can help you in any way I can."

"Here, take this," I said, as I opened her palm and placed a dollar. I closed it as I looked into her face. She seemed surprised that she even attempted to return to me the money I just gave her."

"Sir, you don't have to do this. Anything I do is my help from my heart."

"Mine as well, Miss Sandy. I know you also needed this one. Please accept this as my gratitude for always being there for me." She looked as if she would cry any minute. I hugged her tight. I am thankful that even if mom is not showing me the love I asked, Miss Sandy is there to always fill the love I needed for a mother.

"Thank you so much sir Tyler. It is more than enough. Thank you so much for this. This is a great help. I will treat this as your treat to me."

"You deserve it dear."

The letter came from Sunny, as usual. However, I noticed that there's a kiss mark in front of the paper envelope. It even had a message in a cute handwriting that says, "Smile before you open..."

She's cute and silly at the same time. But that message indeed made me smile right away. She didn't need to tell me to do it. This letter addressed to me alone coming from her is everything. I rushed into my room in the attic upstairs. As soon as I locked the door of my room, I opened the envelope as if there's no tomorrow. I am too excited to read what's in it. Whenever I will think of Sunny's reply to my letter, I can't help but to feel very excited. She's giving me this feeling of mixed emotions rushed as one. I received a lot of letters but hers is the only one that I wanted to read first.

The letter's content was more on warning and thoughtful nothings. I hope I can tell her that I don't think about those things too much. All I am concerned with right now is her safety instead. I know she's in danger. Both of her and her mother. I wanted to oppose what she wanted in the letter. It clearly expresses urgency that's why we'll be meeting at the hilltop again.

What was it all about? Was it about the conflict of their parents?

Did she miss me more than I miss her?

I couldn't help but smile as soon as I realized that next week is more than a chance. I have to tell her what I feel before it will be too late for me. Afterall, we can never know what our life will be. Now that we're surrounded by people who badly wanted all of us to go down, little by little.

Days passed really quickly. It was Monday morning. I will be meeting Sunny again at the same time this afternoon. I couldn't wait to meet her to finally confess the feeling that I have for her.

I wanted to pull the time so that it would be afternoon already. I did some little housework. I even talked to Miss Sandy to ask a piece of advice. She expressed support that I am planning to do. After all, we'll be going to that aspect of our life as well.

I came to the hilltop which I considered to be our secret hideout. I intended to come thirty minutes ahead of time so that I could prepare for my confession. I walked to and fro to practice how am I going to say it to her. I was surprised when two hands covered my eyes from behind me.

"Sunny?" I heard her giggle.

"Gosh, you never even pretend you didn't know me at first."

"Hey, that's my line. Why are you saying that?"

"It's nice. I never forgot that time you also did that to me." She said while smiling. She smelled so good. I guess she just took a bath before she went here to see me.

"I thought I would be waiting for you for so long. I never expected that you would arrive earlier, too."

"I have to tell you something very important." Her expression became different this time.

"What is it? I also wanted to tell you something..." I replied while looking into her eyes.

Chapter 57: FELIZIA'S RETURN

Sunny's POV

His reaction while looking at me is too serious, I think I couldn't handle it.

"What is it?" I smiled because I've never seen him so serious like this before. He blinked as he avoided my gaze. He looked awkward for real.

"What?" I chuckled. I could see him clearing his throat as he looked at me again.

"W-What is it that you have to tell me?"

"You're unfair. I asked you first." I can't help but laugh when he hugged me from behind.

"I just want to thank you for the letter..." He said as he looked down. He's being two awkward now I don't know what to say.

"Really? Is that it? Looks like you will tell me anything other than that." I convinced him a little more. However, a wicked smile formed his lips.

"I guess you'll have to tell me. I always believe that it is more courteous to allow ladies first." I scratched my head as I looked at him.

Sometimes, I hate this part of him. He's a pushover sometimes but he tends to be lax as well.

I sat on one of my favorite roots of this tree where we're standing. He followed me as well, he even leaned closer.

"I want you to know that you must be extra careful nowadays." He sounded more of warning me.

"Can we not think about it often? Overthinking is bad sometimes, you are always scared all the time."

"Well, prevention is better than cure," I stopped him. If only he knew how scared I am when I heard those men talking about my mom.

"Okay. I will always keep it in mind." He said, finally with a sigh. I stood up and he lifted his head right away.

"Where are you going?"

"I am going home. I am sticking to my curfew time today," His facial expression became sullen all of a sudden. "Why? Is there anything else you want to tell me?"

My heart almost sank when we both heard gunshots. We suddenly crawl to the ground. I felt Tyler grabbed me by my waist as he pulled me closer to him. I could feel we're both sweating, cold and I am almost shivering with fear.

"Sunny...I love you." He whispered, enough for me to hear. My tears welled up as I looked into his face.

"I..." I replied but I guess he never heard of it because of the gunshots that's intended for both of us. It's like the gunman is just firing to where we are. A few minutes later, the place became quiet. He told me to go behind the tree so that I will be safer.

"What about you?" I cried, almost hugging him. He smiled but I noticed the blood going out from his mouth.

"Tyler!" I cried but he tried his best to cover my mouth. I cried even more but it was suppressed because it's what he wanted to do.

"Please...save yourself." His voice is almost fading. I looked around and I could feel that the gunman already left, assuming he already killed us. The rain of bullets fired at us was unimaginable a while ago.

"Please wait here. I will be right back. I will ask for help. Please hang on!" I rushed downhill and ran as fast as I could, wrestling dusk. Few lamp posts were lit and it made me feel worse. Every minute counts, literally. I shouldn't go wrong with this. As I ran in between the pavement of the road, I felt like somebody was following me. The headlight of the car started to shine right on my back.

I turned around as the car slowly went past me from behind.

It was the corvette 1957! Why did it appear right in front of me after nearly two years? How is it even possible? The window of the car slowly opened. I saw a familiar figure until I realized it was Felizia, but her younger version. I can say she's much older than me, probably seven to eight years or more than that.

"C'mon, you never want to be late for your speech, right?"

"S-Speech?" I am torned between puzzled and sad. She just grinned and looked at me.

"No! I will not go with you!" I cried, stepping back. She followed me as I ran towards Tyler. I shouldn't leave him because I know he needed me the most. I can feel that the car is still following me.

"This car only passed once a year. This year will be the last." I stopped running as soon as I heard her. Last year? What does it mean? If I would not go with Felizia today, there will be a possibility that I will be stuck here forever?

I looked at her again as she smiled back at me. It means I have my own choice. I could go back to the future and treat this as a bad dream after all. In the future, I am a woman with confidence. I am happy and more satisfied with my life. In where I am going, I am a powerful and well-known person of the society. I don't have to work too hard to prove myself to anyone anymore.

I will not hear from Laila's judgement of me in failing in life. In the future, I am Miss Sunny G. Everyone admires me for being great at almost everything.

I know, if I will go with Felizia, everything that happened within this two-year duration will be nothing but a bad dream. I am sure of that.

"Here..."

"What's this?" I opened the strip of paper he gave me. I was quite annoyed because I am in the middle of cramming and here he is, giving me another phrase to unscramble.

"Please solve that."

"You're making me think that I am not good at this. You know I can't even read, right?" With raised eyebrows, I shoved that stripped of paper to him. He inserted it in between the favorite book I am reading.

OYULVEOI

"Sunny...I love you." He whispered, enough for me to hear.

I opened my eyes and sighed. I cried once more as I began to open my mouth.

"Felizia, please help me bring Tyler to the nearest hospital."

"Are you sure? I will still ask you again for the last time, though." She said as if she's asking for a confirmation.

"Yes. This is the only thing I want right now."

Chapter 58: HE'S THE ONE

Sunny's POV

Felizia nodded. I got in the car as fast as I can. When we arrived where Tyler is, he's barely breathing. Felizia helped me as we gently put Tyler in the car. She drove fast as if there's no tomorrow.

"Tyler, please...don't give up. Promise I will never make fun of you anymore."

I shook his body as I observed what he's been doing. He looked weak and dying but he can't never die. I won't allow it. I will not forgive myself if there's anything that will happen to the man I loved the most.

We reached the hospital in a span of less than five minutes. As soon as the car stopped, she went out right away. I looked at her through the window but I couldn't see clearly because it's a bit dark. It's almost seven in the evening and nobody has updated his parents yet. It makes me feel guilty and worse. If not because of me, he will not be involved in this situation.

I cried as I hugged him tight. I could see the blood never stopped flowing from near his chest. I could also feel the blood coming out from his hips.

"Tyler, I am here. Please hang on. Please." I cried even more. Someone knocked on the glass window of the car. Is that Felizia? She's wearing a surgical mask now. I can see two people following her as well. They opened the car and gently pulled Tyler as they put him on the stretcher. They moved fast in going to the emergency room right away.

"Please stay here. I will update you with his condition."

Felizia looked at me and the eye and I nodded, weakly. I am not a doctor or a hospital personnel. I know I have to trust everyone that's there for Tyler's operation. All I needed to do is to stay strong here, outside as I wait for him

I haven't remembered the last time I prayed so hard, just now. I am going to and fro to the hallway going to the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital. I don't know what I will do if something happens to him. I guess I will never forgive myself for as long as I live.

I looked at the door in front of me five meters to where I am standing. In front of me were a lot of lobby chairs people sit on when they wait for something. I realized it's a different feeling if you will be the one to wait and pray for a patient that's so dear and precious to you.

I sat down, slowly. I felt weak and low at the same time. I didn't know what to do anymore. Every ticking of the clock is a struggle to me. I stood up and decided to call my mom instead. They have to know what happened. I opened both of my palms and I can see my sweating hands. I am still shaky. I felt like having a late reaction about what happened to us a while ago.

"M-Mom," I started, gripping on the phone's receiver as if my whole life depended on it. I told myself not to cry but it's too late. I sniffed and I could hear the worried voice of my mother right away.

"What happened to you? Where are you, Sunny?"

Her voice is like an echo but it added pain to my heart. Her shaking, worried voice made my tears fall off my cheeks. This moment is so real that I want to break down any time.

I took a deep breath before I would say any word.

"Mom, we're at the hospital." I explained slowly. I could feel that she panicked right away. I told her the additional information of where we are right now. In less than twenty minutes, I could see my mom rushing towards me.

"Oh dear, oh dear." She cried as she hugged me tight.

"Those bastards," I could hear Mr. Athkinson muttered those words for the first time behind my mom as he closed his fist. "I will make sure they will be found and dumped behind bars. I promise, dear." Mr. Athkinson added, tapping my shoulders as well.

Hearing those words coming from my parents suddenly meant a lot to me. I could feel that they truly care and love me more than anything else in the world.

The doctor went outside and told us that Tyler's operation was done. However, he is still in a critical condition because there was a lot of blood that was lost. We can only assure the stability of his condition if Tyler could wake up in twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

"Mom," I cried while hugging her. I also have his mom with me. I explained everything. Good thing, they totally understood.

"You know my dear Sunny? Tyler is a brave son. I am always proud of him. He will hang on, I am very sure of it." Her mom also welled up with tears as I hugged her as well.

"He's a fighter. I know he will never give up no matter what. Let's pray for him. Let's never stop hoping that he will wake up and recover soon." She added as she caressed her back.

"I will, ma'am. I am so sorry again."

"Nobody wanted that moment to happen. I knew everything happens for a reason. Let's hope for the best."

Both of Tyler's mom and my parents talked outside the room, while I stayed inside to just be on his side.

"Hey...you're so unfair. You haven't even heard my answer from what you confessed to me, right?" I felt like talking to the air because he was only laying in front of me, motionless. I felt pity on him because of the medical apparatus being placed all over his body.

I slowly touched his hand and grip it tightly. I looked at his face. He is still closing his eyes, laying there like a dead man. I can also see his breathing is becoming weaker and weaker.

"I love you too, Tyler. Thank you so much for saving me. You don't have to do that but you're too stubborn."

I suddenly wiped my tears as soon as I felt somebody went inside the room.

"How are you?"

"Felizia, is that you?" I looked at her and she showed a pair of arcing eyes. She removed her mask and I confirmed that she's smiling indeed.

"The one and only."

"Tell me, do you know that all of this will eventually happen?" I stood up, almost grabbing her sleeve. She stepped backwards as she held my hands. If so, she's making me crazy. This is totally insane.

"Sunny, everything that is happening to you right now is the result of how you live your life and on how you make decisions."

"Can I go with you?"

"Huh?"

"Felizia, don't tell me you forgot what you're saying already? Remember? The corvette 1957?"

She just smiled as she shook her head. She examined Tyler and listed some of what she observed on the piece of paper placed neatly on a clipboard she's holding.

She looked as if she's not hearing everything I was saying. Does it still make any sense at all? Am I earning the consequence for my own decisions right now? If I do, gosh I am doomed.

Chapter 59: COME BACK INTO LOVE

Sunny's POV

I was still sleeping beside Tyler when somebody woke me up.

"Mom?"

"Dear, you have to go home this time. You also have to take a bath and rest. We'll take care of him." She said in a calm way. I can't help but become emotional again. It's been more than 24 hours since he has undergone his operation.

"Please don't be stubborn, dear. Follow what I said to you."

I am feeling bad because his vitals are not even changing.

"No! I have to stay beside him. I have to witness the time when he will wake up." I cried. Mom hugged me right away. I can even feel that she is massaging my back.

"Dear, please follow me this time. You haven't eaten for a day now. Please?"

"But, mom..."

"Let me ask you, what do you think Tyler would feel if he will see you being like this?"

I hugged her even tighter this time. She had a point. I have to also take care of myself because I am very sure that Tyler will scold me. I turned my back as I looked at him.

"Okay, mom. I will just get my things and go back here right away."

"Take a good rest."

"What if Tyler will wake up any minute by now?"

"We will call you as soon as possible, dear."

I nodded. I rushed home as fast as I could, not thinking twice. However, as soon as I reached home, Mr. Athkinson blocked my way.

"Dear...I just received a call that Tyler is awake now." He told me as she tapped my shoulder. However, I could see that the reaction of Mr. Athkinson is a bit hesitant. Is he not planning to tell me everything?

"Mr. Athkinson, I will go back. He needs me."

"Not so fast, Sunny."

"Why?"

He held both of my arms as he welled up with tears.

"Your mom and I came into a decision to let you marry the son of the hospital, to clear Tyler's bills. His mom told me that they couldn't find the money to pay for his medication."

I was too shocked I didn't even move a bit. I tried processing everything that Mr. Athkinson said. However, whenever I remembered the time that Tyler saved my life from those gunshots, I closed my fist and sighed. I inhaled deeply as I tried my best to stop the tears that's about to fall from my eyes.

"Is Tyler really okay, Mr. Athkinson?"

He nodded. I can also see the sadness in his eyes. I know Mr. Athkinson didn't want this because they already promised me to stop the arranged marriage ideas. They clearly knew I was against it from the very start.

"I will do it, Mr. Athkinson." He hugged me right away as I didn't suppress anything to him anymore. I cried harder and for the first time in my life, I felt the love of a father in him.

The wedding preparations took nearly four months because they also have to deal with their son's attitude. I have heard from my parents that their son is always busy. He doesn't care about almost anyone.

I am in my white wedding gown now. Two women did my make-up and hairstyle. I wore my hair straight, with curls on its tips. I also got a small tiara of sparkling gold.

I faced myself in the mirror. This is supposed to be the happiest day of my life. I should be happy at my own wedding. However, I felt different. The realest feeling today is I felt like many people will bury me alive today. This fact is even making me feel worse. I missed Tyler already. I haven't seen him since the day he woke up. I've heard that he went away to another city to improve his condition.

Mom and Mr. Athkinson also advised me to stop seeing him. It's the worst thing ever. I felt like dying today with no one to even share how I really feel.

"Sunny, dear? How are you?"

"Mom, you're joking, right?" I chuckled bitterly as I gazed at her face.

"I even wanted to wish you the best, dear. I hope you will find the happiness that you desire from the man you're going to marry."

I cried in front of her and she scolded me for causing my make up to smudge. They redo it again. This time, I tried to calm myself. This wedding is more than a surprise birthday party. Because I am against everything, I didn't even attend to the preparations and motifs.

I am too tired to stress out those things I didn't even like and plan in the first place. We arrived at the church and everybody was standing in awe with the sight of me.

"She's so beautiful." I could hear someone whispering to a lady behind her. I guess they're the guy's relatives.

Everything is a joke. Imagine? I realized I didn't even know whom to marry because I am showing little to no interest at all. I slowly walked on the aisle as the wedding song started to play.

I am three meters closer when I can see my groom wiping his tears as he removed his glasses. I blinked three times before I realized who was my soon-to-be husband.

"T-Tyler?" I gasped as I put my hand on my mouth. He just grinned and held my other hand tight.

"How, what, why?"

"That isn't the correct way of using -wh questions. It should be one at a time." I hugged him tight as I cried again.

"Is it too late to propose?"

"The heck you already made me wear a wedding gown, prepared this wedding and invited so many people. You're even putting a ring on me, leaving me with no choice and you're still asking that?" He just laughed a little. The minister started the solemn ceremony between the two of us.

"Do you take this man, be your lawfully wedded husband? Through ups and downs of life, In sickness and health, and till death do you part?"

"Yes, I do."

Chapter 60: THE SPEECH OF A LIFETIME

"Miss Sunny? Miss Sunny?" Someone is shaking me gently. I can't help but to open my eyes. I started stretching a little and I noticed my skin changed.

It was a bit saggy with golden age. I widened my eyes in surprise.

"V-Valerie?" Tears started to well up as I pulled her closer to me.

"Madam, I just want to remind you that you will have a speech two hours from now."

"Isn't it done yet?" My eyes widened as I realized that everything happened in a snap of a finger. Why is it that in the year 1957, everything takes a long time?

As far as I could remember, I almost spent two years in that period!

I rushed at the nearest big mirror to check on my reflection. I laughed out loud and cried at the same time when I can see my old self back, staring straight at me.

I even touched my face and smiled.

"M-Madam? Are you alright?" I turned my back and it was Valerie who looked worried. She even touched my arm as she hovered her gaze from my head going down my feet.

"Yeah! I just realized that life is so beautiful and meaningful in a deeper perspective.

"Oh, I see," I noticed she sighed with relief.

"Madam, I hope you'll prepare yourself for the questions of your fans. They will be attending our conventions, too. Male and female alike.

"Okay. I will keep that in mind." I grinned at my assistant. I am really thankful to see her again. I haven't even prevented myself from hugging her tight. I guess she felt weird all of a sudden. I've never been so clingy. Not even one. Not even in my every wildest dream. However, as I went to the past, I realized that there's more to life than fame, fortune and money.

As I go back from the past where my mom still lives, I realized restoring the kind of love that they always deserve is the best. I admit, from that approximately 2-10 minutes nap that's equivalent to two years from where I came from, it's the best feeling ever.

After almost two hours of preparation, I found myself sitting on the VIP guest's table. I grinned as I looked around me. There were thousands of delegates for me to address my speech.

But then, someone caught my attention. A handsome man obviously was as age as mine carrying a bouquet full of purple and yellow flowers combined. When he noticed me looking at his direction, he pointed at the bouquet she had for me with a triumphant smile. I nodded.

I touched the microphone in front to where I am standing right now. There's a little feedback til it went to normal.

"Hello to my love, my husband, Tyler Sean. I love you sweetheart." I winked. He glanced around as if wanting to melt. He couldn't help but smile too.

I started my speech with my simple life. How I began as a non-reader and on how I overcame it with the help of those people who truly cared so much along the way.

"Doubting yourself it is the worst enemy you could ever have.

I ended the speech receiving countless standing ovations as usual. When the Q&A finally came, I sat together with Tyler.

"See? I told you...there's high-end phones today. All you will ever bring wherever you are."

He chuckled as he pulled his Ipad tablet. He's proud to present it to me because there were lots of games installed.

My fans started to line up, hugging their books on their chest, looking at me with gleaming eyes.

"Miss Sunny G, what will you advise for young love?"

Tyler looked at me right away, pausing his recurring game. I smiled as I faced her.

"Be true to yourself. If you need to confess, do it. Always remember that every ticking of the clock is an opportunity to seize the moment and be true to yourself. But then always remember, know your limits."

Another teenager lined up. I asked her name and as I wrote on her autograph, he struck me with this question: What will you say to your fourteen year old self?

"I will tell her that she's amazing the way she is. I am thankful that she lived on her own,worked hard to where she is right now. I am proud of the decisions she made."

Tyler winked at me as he held my hand. The teenager even told us that we looked really good together.

"Thank you so much." We almost chorused. We went to my room from that hotel. Even if we're already passed our golden age,still he is the most handsome husband in the world.

"Are you alright?" He asked me, looking really worried as he cupped both of my cheeks with both of his hands.

"I am just happy today. I love you so much." I initiated the kiss to his lips that surprised him. He kissed me back like a hungry child as well.

"I love you more, my sweet sunshine."

I am proud to say that Tyler indeed became a researcher at NASA. He was too fascinated by space and constellations, he pursued this program without thinking he'll be having much of a hard time. I can say he truly reached his dreams to its highest peak. Whenever and wherever he goes, I am there to support him.

Indeed, that journey to the past hit me differently. I feel like I became a new person. I could vacuum-clean the whole house as soon as I will be back from the hotel together with Charles.

This destined ride not only taught me life's lessons. It is more of knowing how to live, overcome trials like a pro. Also, believing in yourself the most. Most importantly, the Corvette 1957 car made me find answers to my questions that's been bothering inside my head for decades. From about my father to the selling of the house. I've been asking questions that nobody even cared at all.

That ride changed my life forever. I know if there's another similar experience again, I will never hesitate to try again because life is always beautiful. It is meant to be enjoyed and discovered. Most importantly, you can love as much as you can.

----THE END----