The Bewitching Wish

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Chapter 1: SETTING THE MOOD

Caily's POV

Venus Hughes.

Who doesn't know her?

If there's someone who's literally being adored and worshipped here on earth, it will probably be her. For me, she's the definition of perfection that you could ever find in a woman. I will bet, her kind is like one in every ten million people living in this world, not exaggerating!

As I look at her, it's like everything is in slow motion. Her confidence is so intimidating she doesn't need to try so hard. Her simple ways, even on how she flips her hair is adored by a lot of my schoolmates, including guys. Her looks and sense of fashion is a total bomb, she's the queen bee. I can see that a lot of my schoolmates wanted to be near her.

I can't help but smile. I really admire her so much. If there's someone born too "perfect" for a woman, then definitely it is her.

That sight is making me feel that I am just another woman trying to breathe; maybe that's my only purpose why I'm still living in this world full of injustice.

Whenever she walks along the hallway, not less than five guys follow her. Everyone of them wanted her attention so much. Some of the guys that follow her offered to hold her bag for her while others invited her for lunch at the most expensive restaurants outside the school. She awkwardly smiles at them as she slowed down her steps and stopped.

Exaggerated as it may sound, but sad truth it is really happening. I sighed as I followed her with my eyes to where she's heading right now.

"Venus, you're so beautiful." Upon hearing it, she smiled and the guys are even dying to draw near her more. Well, to only ask nonsense questions. She looked so pleased as they gaze at their reactions the way she lures them. Most of the girls in the university, including me, always wanted to be in her shoes.

I am just three meters from where she's standing. It's a wide hall going to the entrance gate. She's chatting with a lot of people that are swarming around her like they are not getting enough of her presence.

I noticed Venus's charm is simply irresistible. When you look at her beauty, you will not get tired of staring at her over and over again. How much more, if she will waste her precious minutes in answering many questions about herself from her ever-curious fans.

I never noticed how time flies so fast because I am too focused on observing her every move. I am too focused on her when someone suddenly covered both of my eyes with both of his hands from behind me. I am wearing my eyeglasses that's why it hurt a bit when the frame pressed the corner of my eyes.

"Hey, who's this?" I asked, irritated. I can hear a soft chuckle. I held the hands that were covering my eyes and my mood suddenly changed.

"Nolan?"

"Why do you always know it's me?"

"You have the ugliest pair of hands. I am like holding a pair of baseball gloves to be exact." He removed his hands on my face and he touched my shoulders and gently twisted my body in front of him. I can see him frowning because of what I said.

"You're too harsh. I'm the only friend that's left of you and yet you're being so bad." His lips pouted as he looked into my eyes. I smiled as I pinched his cheek.

"You might want to consider yourself lucky because even if you're overly dramatic, I am still staying as your friend," I replied, trying to turn my back to where Venus is and what she is doing right now. I admit, I was a little distracted because Nolan saw me right away.

"Why does everybody like Venus?" He asked, sounding uninterested and yet looking at the direction to where my eyes are glued at right now.

"You're too insensitive and boring, you know. I guess you're the only one in this world who's never interested in her, are you really that blind?" I retaliated, not missing my gaze on what Venus is doing right now.

"Everyone has their own taste when it comes to women. It so happened that she's not my type."

"My goodness, why? Isn't she good enough?" I reacted as I widened my eyes in shock as I faced him. He smiled sweetly at me as if trying to irritate me more.

"I just don't like someone who is already popular. I don't want to compete just to gain someone's attention. Why do that when I have you?" He replied with a wink. I frowned as I faced him. He was smiling sweetly as she looked at me. I decided to touch his eyeglass because it doesn't look even as he wears it on his eyes.

"There you go. I can really attest that your eyes are not that good."

“Yours too.” He said as he chuckled a bit. I can see him blush because of what I did. I find him cute for that.

“Let’s go to the school cafeteria. I guess you’re just hungry. My treat.” He said, smiling as he pulled my hand. I don't know, but sudden actions like that coming from him makes me smile for no apparent reason sometimes.

“Really?” My face lit up as I grinned. He laughed out loud because of my reaction. He suddenly held my hand and I am not understanding why my heart suddenly beats so fast. He gently pulled me closer to his side as we walked away from where Venus is standing.

He ordered a lot for me while he just ordered a clubhouse sandwich and carrot juice for himself. We sit facing each other. The cafeteria’s wall is covered with glass all over. We were sitting on the table next to the wall. Because of it, we can easily observe whoever will pass by. I can see Venus walking on the sidewalk outside the cafeteria, wearing her sunglasses to protect her eyes from the heat of the sun.

Her wavy hair slowly bounced gracefully as she walked. She’s wearing our university uniform and she looked like Sailor Moon because she’s very tall and slim at the same time. Her skirt is above her knee and her blouse is very skimpy which made her chest of cup B noticeable. I can compare her beauty to the grown-up Aurora which played by Elle Fanning, while mine can be compared to that sea witch of the Little Mermaid. Fair-complexioned skin well-taken cared of, about 178 cm tall and she has an hourglass figure, not an exaggeration.

“Caily?”

“Huh?”

“You’re looking at Venus again.” Nolan looked annoyed as he held my hand. I looked at him and met his eyes and then I eventually looked at the food on my table. He noticed that I suddenly stopped eating my favorite foods that he ordered.

“She’s really beautiful, smart, elegant and rich. Did you know that she can even select any hottie in this whole damn University to be his boyfriend. I've never met someone so lucky like her. She's one in a million.”

"That doesn't make her pretty to me at all."

"Why?" I said as I gave him a curious look.

"I'd define someone really pretty if they are confident enough to tell themselves they're unique in their own way."

"Well, that's one thing I can't do for myself."

“That’s why you’re envious of her?”

“Uhm...I guess.”

He gently shook his head as a response. He gulped the remaining content of his juice and wiped his lower lip. He rested both of his elbows on the table and clasped both of his hands as he looked at me. He looked really serious.

“I don’t like that look on your face.”

“I don’t like you looking at her as if she’s everything for you.” He replied, looking really annoyed.

“Why, yes of course! I can trade everything to live the kind of life that she has, Nolan.”

"That's so sick. I think you're the only one who thinks like that."

"I don't care."

“You’re delusional.” He shook his head again, this time, he stood up and sat next to me as he placed his arms around my shoulders. I looked at him as he looked into my eyes. I'm surprised when he planted a kiss on my forehead. I felt the warmth it caused my cheeks. My, did I blush or something?

“Caily, you’re perfect, okay? just the way you are.” He smiled as he tried reassuring me with those words. It somehow made me feel better.

“You know what? You’re just telling me these things because you've been pursuing me and we're friends since kindergarten. I am not even like Venus.”

“You always know that you’re my type. I will never stop pursuing you no matter what happens.”

“Even if I am not beautiful or unique like Venus?”

“Oh c’mon, Caily. I don't like how you compare yourself to her."

"Sorry, I am not someone you can be proud of."

I heard him sigh aloud. He held me on both shoulders and looked at me directly to my eyes. "You’re not Venus, okay? You’re Caily. You’re beautiful and you’re the kind of beautiful that I wanted and no one else.” He smiled. I admit, he always boosted my self-esteem to the fullest. I hugged him tight as we sat next to each other. I noticed many students our age that’s coming our way whispering to each other.

They are laughing as they are looking at us.

“Eww, girl. They are really meant for each other. Look, the guy is okay but the girl is so fat.”

“They’re like nerds made for each other.” The other girl obviously made her voice louder for both of us to hear and it somehow made me shed a tear as I looked at them going past our table.

That is the exact reason why I wanted to be Venus. She’s damned beautiful. It’s like there’s nothing in her life that’s negative to comment about. All I know is, she’s living a perfect life.

“Please don’t mind them. They’re nuts.” Nolan said as he shook his head.

“Yes, I am not affected. Don’t worry.” I smiled at Nolan as I looked at him directly in his eyes. He smiled back and that’s the kind of smile that I would always want to see.

Nolan has been my best friend since primary school. Now that we’re in the same University, he took the chance to finally pursue me after confessing he had a crush on me way back then. Well, I am the type that’s not easily giving in, especially that I also have goals in life to reach. He would often tell me he’ll wait for me no matter how long it is.

I love him, yes. I knew it deep within me. However, it can't be close enough to that kind of love that I wanted to experience. I honestly consider him as a dear friend of mine, no more, no less.

Yes, everyone is also right. I am thinking that he liked me because our personality is almost closer to the way we look. We're like nerds made in heaven. Both of us wear glasses, both boring, both minding our 'thing'. We study all the time. We're always there for each other. We achieve many things, most especially in academics.

Many envied us. Never did they know that I envied more of the kind of life that they have. Since then, all I am ever achieving is always relating to academics. Nobody even appreciates that except for our parents. I always wish that one day, I can also be that popular Caily who is admired by all of the guys around this University. Sometimes, I am getting tired of being the invisible one.

"Caily?" I looked at Nolan who just waved his hand in front of my face as he smiled at me.

"Sorry, what was that again?" I said as I blinked. I carefully touched my eyeglasses as l turned my gaze at him.

He chucked and pinched my cheek again.

"Ouch. You!"

"I just find you beautiful when you blush." He held my hand and kissed it as he gazed at my reaction. I bit my lower lip and smiled as I avoided my gaze on him.

"You're the only one who calls me that."

"That's my opinion and that's the truth." He said, as I tried looking at his face again, I can see that he's really serious.

I feel like crying. I am always touched because of my best friend's gesture. Don't worry, one day you are not the only one who will call me that anymore.

Chapter 2: THEIR SAFE HAVEN

She's walking swiftly over colorful flowers and yet her feet are not touching the ground. The floral kingdom is in full bloom, hence the flowers where she's trailing automatically withers as she passes over them. As she saw what she had done, she was pleased.

Her entire body is adorned with withered vines, with large brown leaves covering her bosoms. Her long hair is braided messily, adorned with a rare black rose that glimmers through the sun's rays. Her pair of eyes is the only one in Fayvallea. It looked similar to that of a cat, yellowish and yet symbolizes authority to whatever she wishes to rule. Her long eyelashes were covered with silver pixie dust that glimmers whenever she'll blink them. She has a queer pointed nose and thin, black lips. Her long, pointed nails are painted black as well.

She's holding a wooden scepter with a transparent star on top of it. As you look closely, there's seemed to be flashes of lightning that's trapped, ready to let loose if given the chance.

"Dhara...no more hiding sweetie, I know you're here." She said as she grinned, her voice is like that of a lioness roaring like a threat to those who are around her. She is smiling so confidently not caring about the peril that will come for her.

"Bellezza...what brings you here?" A flash of light suddenly appeared in front of her, showing a beautiful witch all dressed in white. Her hair is adorned with white flowers glimmering as the rays of the sun touches it. Her white hair is wavy and it follows the breeze of the wind to any direction it wants. The innocence of her face can be compared to an angel's. Her eyes speak tranquility and compassion. Flowers are automatically filled with vibrancy as she gazes at them all.

Bellezza folded her arms as if showing impatience to someone in front of her. "I just want to see you today." She said as she's raising both of her eyebrows as well. She smiled as her way of responding to her actions. Dhara can't help but to shake her head.

"And what is that? How many times did I tell you to never touch that Luminastia. You are always breaking the rules of the Fayvallea." She is referring to what Bellezza is holding right now.

"Oh, this..." She grinned as she caressed the wand that she got. It's like, she's very proud of what she has done.

"I'm bored. I got nothing to do." She added as she smirks, looking at Dhara from head to toe.

"Are you aware that what you have done is prohibited? How could you break some of the important rules so lawlessly?"

"You're taking everything seriously. It is also good to break the rules sometimes. It is fun."

"You really think so? Please put that into its rightful place." Dhara said to Bellezza with humility. She held out her hand to her as if encouraging her to surrender the Luminastia to her. She was able to stare at her face and she switched to her palms that are open in front of her.

She sighed impatiently as she surrenders the scepter. Dhara smiled and nodded.

"I don't want you to touch this again." She said as she examines the Luminastia closer, with all its details.

"Can you stop me? I am just enchanted by its power."

"Bellezza, please don't put yourself to the things you might regret later, or shall I ask if you felt that before?"

"What is that?"

"This is a serious matter. If the queen will know someone breaking her rules of Fayvallea, we are doomed."

"Wow. Will it really happen if I break the rules? That sounds really scary...hmm." She said as she grinned in a meaningful manner, looking directly into her eyes. Dhara is aware that she is becoming sarcastic to her but all she knew is to humble herself for the sake of the wand of Fayvallea.

"Do not ever do this again. Remember to avoid any actions this kingdom forbids. You might get yourself in trouble if you do."

"Oh please, I don't need any concern coming from you," Bellezza said as she frowns. Dhara walked past her, trailing where she started walking, trying to revive the flowers that Bellezza killed along her way. When Dhara felt that Bellezza is following her, she stopped and turns her back at her. She smiled as she taps Bellezza's feet with the scepter. It gave her a tingling sensation, and as she steps forward, not a flower is harmed again.

"Ugh. Here we go again. Can't you let it pass?" She said, half-amazed, half-annoyed at what Dhara did. She raised her eyebrows because she doesn't like the idea of Dhara reviving what she already killed. Dhara taps her shoulders.

"No. You're in my place and I don't want to see any of my flowers harmed or withered."

"Dhara, you're really boring as usual."

"Many living creatures will be scared if I will let them die here."

"Well, if that's the case, you can go to my place. I will show you what's the meaning of fun." She said as she winked at her.

"Thank you Bellezza. I surely go there. Thanks for the invitation.We should return this scepter as quickly as possible before the queen finds out that this one is missing already." She said as she pulled Bellezza's hand by her left hand while tapping the flowers that wither a while ago with her right hand by the use of the powerful scepter.

They are the witches of the Fayvallea kingdom. They are tasked to take good care of the whole place. The three are responsible for protecting the equilibrium of the whole kingdom. The place is equally divided into two parts, including the part which is quite dominant because this is where the queen resides, and that is Floreal. It represents the highest place in Fayvallea that represents authority and power.

Withermoor represents the underworld and everything in it. It is protected by Bellezza Scyther, the black witch. Blossomcrest for life and the beauty of the world where people live and this is under the care of Dhara Rose, the white witch.

They quickly tiptoed from the kingdom of Blossomcrest to the boundary of Floreal. They are in front of the two enchanted mountains standing tall in front of them with a small hole at the center of it.

"Look what have you done!"

"Can you blame me? You're even holding that Luminastia too, this time. Now we're even!"

Dhara sighed as she looks around, with a worried look on her face.

"Now, give me your hand," Dhara said as she pulled Bellezza's hand and she held the Luminastia too. Dhara is holding the scepter on her right hand, while Bellezza is holding it on her left hand. They look at each other and nodded at the same time.

They close their eyes and held the Luminastia very tight. With equally joined forces, the thing suddenly disappeared from their hands. As they open their eyes, the hole at the center of the two enchanted mountains was sealed with a shiny rock. It is the shape of the star with a flash of lightning trapped inside of it. It's as if sealing the two mountains and keeping it together.

Dhara sighed with relief while Bellezza is looking at her as if she's the main reason for her ruined day.

"Look at that Luminastia. Has it come into your mind to at least own it as you rule Blossomcrest?" She whispers these words to Dhara as she walks around her. Bellezza is not letting Dhara's eyes avoided hers.

"The queen has the full authority of it, let me remind you of that."

"Well, I hope not, for me. Withermoor deserves that power too, Dhara."

"Let me correct you, the three parts of Fayvallea equally needs the Luminastia. Let not evil overpower you, Bellezza."

"I am evil, Dhara. You always know me."

"I always believe that there's good in every bad, Bellezza." She softly answers Dhara as she looked into her eyes, too, with a smile.

"Oh well...carry on, my dear. Carry on."

'Your kindness will betray you someday, Dhara. You'll see.' She kept the other words to herself as she smiles back at her.

Caily rushed to the bench under the large tree at the back of the library. This place is their official hangout if they want to meet for a snack, talk or study. As soon as she saw Nolan, she grinned from ear to ear.

"Nolan! Don't wait for me anymore." She gasps as if she's out of air while saying these words.

"Who is chasing you? Why are you running so fast? Are you okay?" Nolan held her hand and tapped her forehead. She pouted her lips as she looked at him.

"Yes, I am totally fine. Please don't wait for me after your class."

"Why?"

She looks at him as she moves her lips from side to side. She started moving her gaze sidewards, too, avoiding his eyes.

"You will not support me either if you'll know where I will be going so I decided to go there myself."

"Don't tell me you will go to that Ethereal Venus's modeling tutorial with press conference included?"

"Y-Yes." She said as she avoided his gaze.

"But the ticket for their fans are quite expensive. I think it will be my whole month's allowance." Nolan answered as he held both of her shoulders with both of her hands. Caily slowly removed his hands from her shoulders. She jerked her shoulders as if trying to get off the straps of her knapsack that's on her shoulders. As she unzips her bag and pulled the ticket in front of Nolan, she can see that his eyes widened with shock.

"Where'd you get that?"

"Of course if you're very passionate about something, you can do everything."

"Is Axile Wiles coming, too?"

"Well of course, being Venus's close friends, it's a guarantee that he will come."

"Is that so?" Nolan said, looking so disappointed.

"Yes, I am more than excited."

"What time will you go home?" He asked. When he shifted his gaze at Caily's face, her smile eventually fade away.

"I can't be sure about that. It is much better if you're not going to wait for me. I'd be coming home very late tonight."

"Where does she live?"

Can you not ask too many questions? I have to go now. It will start at 6:00 pm I have to be there early. Bye!" She kissed his left cheek and before he can even answer, she's gone from his sight.

Nolan sighed as he shook his head. He's looking at the path where Caily disappeared instantly.

'Why do girls have endless insecurities when it comes to themselves?'

Nolan slowly sits on the bench and look down.

'Am I not good enough? Am I not too convincing enough for her to believe that she's beautiful in her way? Or maybe, was I that ugly to not put her confidence in me?'

He slowly fixed the things inside his bag which he had on his side. A while ago, he's excited for his class to end because he will invite Caily to that fancy restaurant that she's been dreaming to go to. They both didn't have the money to eat there last month because this restaurant is quite expensive for them.

He bitterly smiled as tears poured down on his cheeks. He looked at the road to where Caily ran away. She can't see her anymore since she's very excited to go there. Looks like he can't even stop her at this time no matter what he do.

Without Caily knowing, he has a strong disgust and intimidation towards Axile Wiles. Who is he compared to him? He's more of this boy version of Venus Hughes. If Caily Mcfisher has this great admiration for Venus's life, how much more him to Axile Wiles?

Well, who is he when compared to him? He knows many girls will definitely flock to see him tonight. That complete boyfriend material that everyone at the campus is dreaming of having for

her own. He's thinking that maybe Caily is not yet accepting his love for her because of Axel. He hopes he's not right in what he's thinking right now…

Chapter 3: WISH UPON HER POWER

At Ethereal Venus's modelling tutorial with some press conference...everyone's wild with anticipation. The long table in front of the big LED-lighted screen is now waiting for the elegant Venus. The long table is beside the mini-stage with a wide runway is seen being set up there. It is for the purpose of modelling tutorial 101 with her, too.

The event is held inside Venus's grand mansion. The one-hectare property is defined as perfection. The house is spacious and wide, especially made for Venus's preference. The lawn is also big enough to accommodate big events, receptions and even events like this. There was a mini-bush maze at the back of the garden where the event is taking place. The buffet area is beside the round tables and chairs that's covered in white cloth embossed with classy floral designs. The chairs are adorned with fresh flowers and it suits tonight's theme: Ethereal Venus's night: A passion for spring fashion. Everyone is impressed about the preparations.

The weather is also perfect. The sunset is really stunning. It shows the beautiful wavelengths of colors red and orange across the sky. It can be compared to that of a sunset painters would love to draw on their blank canvas. The guests are going inside the gate that's also adorned with many flowers in vines, you'll think that it is just a 3D picture.

"How impressive! Everything is really perfect for my taste!" One girl giggled as she grinned at her friends. She's wearing a glamorous, backless, green, cocktail gown. She slowly turned around for her friends to see the details of her gown's design.

"Yeah, and we will get to know some of her secrets at last!" Her friends said as they cheered and clapped their hands as they look around them.

"I can't wait my dear! Let's go?" Caily is only half a meter away from them. That's Gracey. She knew her very well. She's one of the most popular girls in their campus who's also a big fan of Venus Hughes. She and her friends are obviously in a well-to-do family that's why it's easy for her to get tickets. She can see that those girls are really enjoying their time so much.

Unlike her, Gracey can definitely follow Venus's fashion sense. While she's only wishing for Venus to notice her, Gracey loves to gate-crash Venus's events to also steal some scenes. Venus doesn't care anyway. She's totally loving someone who will copy her, but can't be exactly like her because she's the only one.

Caily's stomach rumbled. She slowly looked down at herself and put her hand on her belly as she slowly massaged it in a circular motion. She remembered she hasn't eaten since breakfast time. She

knew that if she spends the remaining three dollars from her pocket, that 500$ once-in-a-lifetime ultimate pass for this event is not possible for her anymore.

She softly groaned as she sighed. Good thing she's naturally thrifty. She loves to save her money with hopes to add this to her tuition and yet she was able to spend it unexpectedly.

Before a lot of thoughts eat her, she's able to tell herself that she's able to save money again but to make this show pass? Maybe she'll regret this one if she can't attend it herself.

"I hope I will know her secrets, too." Caily slowly breathes some air and happily grinned at last. She kept those thoughts in her mind because nobody wanted to be with her that night. She's all alone, enjoying the feeling of finally getting into the parameters of Venus's circle at last. As she looked around the place, she's certain that there were approximately more than two hundred people, and they were guests alone. The media men that will cover the event are minutes late. She can also see photographers swooning around the popular girls because other women wore revealing clothes. Other guests wore a long gown with a slit on it.

She covered half of her face using her palm near her left eye to avoid flashy cameras around her. I guess she was also being filmed and photographed by some professional photographers roaming around to take some candid shots of the guests.

It was half past seven. The event will commence at exactly 8:00 PM. Caily inched forward, making sure she'll be in front to watch and hear everything as clearly as possible. She can't miss any single thing, especially when it comes to her idols and celebrities.

"Hello everyone! Welcome to Ethereal Venus's night! Are you guys excited?" The voice came from beside the stage going out and walked towards the center stage. She's very beautiful. She's of medium height and she's wearing a sexy cocktail dress, wearing full makeup on her face. Caily adjusted the frame of her glasses and she was able to determine the host right away.

"Well I am thrilled as much as you guys! I am very happy that my favorite friend invited me to be here as her host. It is such a wonderful privilege to see all your beautiful faces tonight."

"Oh my. Am I being fooled by my eyes? Did I hear it right? Was it really Emilia Collins? My freaking heart rejoices!" Caily tried to calm herself down from screaming because she is seeing her idol for the first time. Emilia Collins is a legend. A pop artist that everybody loves because of her talent and amazing face for more than seven years.

Emilia Collins completed Caily's childhood, literally. She's a fan that she haven't missed any of her songs. She even bought a lot of her CDs and memorize every song to her album she's been releasing ever since.

She can hear wild cheers and praises from the audience as she looks around. For Caily, I guess she deserved it pretty well.

"Serene! I love you!" She heard one girl shouted with full excitement as others cheered too. She saw Serene grinned widely. She looked very happy with what she heard from one of the audience.

"Gosh this 1000$ event is really worth it!" She just said to herself because this event is full of surprises. Bad thing though, Nolan is not here to cheer with her and witness every good thing. She felt sorry for her best friend but on the other hand, she doesn't want to miss everything. She knew that Nolan will do everything just to stop her from buying the ticket. He's been so vocal because by doing so, it's really impractical.

She could understand him and his being practical but on the other hand, it is her happiness and nobody can ever stop her from doing it just for Venus…

And not just Venus, she was very motivated to buy the ticket because she knew that Aivan Harper will be here, too. Her all-time ultimate crush and the guy that she really wanted to meet.

"To start this evening, we'll be witnessing the former models who were graduates from Venus's fashion modelling tutorial from the previous year."

The whole place was suddenly dimmed and the spotlight directed to the mini-runway that they had prepared for the models. Right there and then, the music "Fireworks" by Katy Perry started playing as their background as the show starts. Ten models are doing Venus's signature catwalk as they walk forward to the center stage. They gracefully turned around, some winking and waving to the audience that are looking at them with awe.

"Gosh they all looked so beautiful and elegant! Their outfits are spring fashion themed. Glitters from their amazing fairy-like dresses captivated the viewers but what impressed Caily the most are the way they are having fun on the stage with their graceful poises.

Caily can't help but to drop her jaw from being too amazed as she glued her attention to the details of their dresses, even at the model's body as she look at them closely.

She slowly pinched the fat from her belly beneath the fabric of the simple T-shirt she's wearing right now as she looked down.

"Wow, I think I can't be slim like them." She softly said to herself as she sighs.

She never expected that most of the guests wore their signature gowns. She felt awkward and shy, too. On the other hand, she has no choice but to attend because she already paid for this show. She never had an idea that there will be a dress code either. She only wore a pair of jeans and a simple T-shirt that she regretted the moment she went inside Venus Hughes's mansion.

Nobody even told her to wear something fancy because she doesn't have friends here.

"Can't get enough of them, yet? How about a bit of Venus? Everyone?" Caily's smile widened. That background voice coming from Emilia Collins is really setting up the mood for all of them, including her. She can't help but to smile. She thinks all of the best people is here for her to enjoy the most.

Good thing she was able to see Emilia Collins. The smile from her idol made her happy despite of this unfavorable circumstance.

The audience is getting crazy with cheers as they clap their hands to their heart's content as they see Venus doing her signature catwalk, passing among her models. The way she sways her hips as she touches her hair is way too perfect the crowd is getting louder and louder.

"That's our girl, Venus!" Serene cheerfully introduced her as she put both her hands on her waist. Caily noticed Venus winked at her friend, Emilia Collins after her lovely introduction of her while she's on the stage. Venus held Serene's left hand with her right and raised it in front of the audience.

"Thank you dear! Emilia Collins, everyone!" Venus said as soon as Serene handled her the wireless, pink-colored microphone. The loud claps never stopped. Caily is almost speechless because of what she's seeing.

"I want you all to have fun. We have a lot of activities here for you to enjoy. Go around, meet new friends and above all, stay fabulous!" She announced so cheerfully that everybody in the crowd grow wilder— even more.

She's thinking that everything in this place is really worth it. What she's witnessing around her is no joke and fun fact! She's not even dreaming! Who can even bump into Emilia Collins? She's even having her world tour once in every two months. Her schedule is always full. Caily know that too well from her interviews. She can be only seen on TV most of the time. Caily never thought she's this stunning in person even more.

The event started to roll with a lot of audiences catered. Caily is just standing two meters away from Venus's table, with all the special guests sitting next to her.

There were cameras flashing, glitz and glamour covering how she gracefully answered questions. Caily can't help but to stick her attention to Venus who is gracefully attending to her fans. She's never losing her smile whenever she's facing different personalities of people around her.

"Gosh, three minutes more and there will be autograph sessions." Caily said to herself. It is also getting late at night. Her stomach continued to rumble. She hasn't eaten a single cookie even from

breakfast. She can feel that her stomach is aching and yet she wants to endure it until this will be over.

She waited ten minutes in line for her autograph. Gripping the simple pen and her notebook, she's smiling as she slowly stepped forward to Venus's table.

"Hi. Thank you for coming." Venus warmly greeted her as she offered her hands for a handshake. Caily suddenly felt her knees tremble, she didn't know how to react to that simple, friendly gesture.

"Hey, Venus wants to shake hands." Aivan Harper said as he smiled at her, too.

"I really like you Venus. I hope we can be friends." She said, she even forced herself to speak because her lips trembled as well. She also glanced at Aivan Harper who is looking at her amusingly.

"Sure." She answered right away. "Here you go." She returned her the notebook she gave to Venus for her autograph.

She immediately hugged the notebook Venus wrote on. She was overjoyed and happy but when she started to walk away, most of what she's seeing suddenly became blurry. She can't help closing her eyes until everything becomes black.

Chapter 4: HER WIT'S END

"Where am I?" As soon as Venus opened her eyes, she was able to see herself inside a room.

"Is she okay?" She could hear some voices from where she is right now. She slowly opened her eyes and turned her head sidewards. She can see the worried look from the woman who seemed to be Venus's personal nurse. They are both talking to her from that room.

She preferred to observe them secretly first. She saw Venus being impatient. It was obvious when she saw her putting both of her hands on both sides of her waist as she frowned.

Despite of Venus wearing that kind of frown, Caily is still wondering how could she still look so beautiful and classy with that look? Caily thinks that there's no flaw left for this kind of woman. It made her envious with her even more.

"I'm okay..." She softly said that caught their attention to her. Both of them rushed beside the bed where she lies down. She can see Venus frowning in front of her.

"Oh. Good to know. I guess you can go home now, right miss?" She said with full sarcasm to the nurse attending to her right now.

"Ah, yes. I should go. I'm sorry." Caily interrupted them by assuring them that she's already good to go. She tried to get up but then she's a bit groggy and tired.

"You should be. You almost ruined my show by making a scene, I can't believe you." Venus folded her arms as she frowned at her. Caily saw how Venus rolled her eyes because of disgust and she wanted to cry but then she tried her best to stop the tears from falling.

"Miss...if she can stand up, then she can go home now." Venus said to her personal nurse. She then stepped between the two of them. Caily started to get up and even though feeling a bit dizzy, she managed to walk outside the door. Venus followed her until she was able to reach the wide staircase.

"Gosh, my fans nowadays. Are you that desperate to make a show for yourself?How could you?"

"I'm so sorry Venus. I do not mean to ruin your show. I am not feeling very well, I don't know what happened next."

"How can I ever believe in you?"

"That's the truth. I really apologize for what happened."

"How can I ever let this pass? Can you even compensate what I have lost tonight?"

"I'm really sorry."

"As if your apology can make any difference. You are just one of my trying-hard fans who will do everything just to give yourself a big break, what a shame."

"I'm not trying to prove anything. I don't intend to steal anything from you too. It's not my intention. I am not really feeling very well. Please forgive me."

"Did you know that most of my guests rush into you? Instead of me giving my closing remarks, I told them that the show is over for my nurse to attend to you."

"Believe me, I will always be grateful for it."

"I will always hate you for it. Everything that happened tonight is a total mess."

"I'm so sorry." Caily started to cry as tears uncontrollably ran down her cheeks.

"As if your apology will bring everything back."

"If only I could do anything to make it up to you--"

"Do me a favor. Do not show your horrible face to me." Venus cuts her off before she will say another word.

"I promise." Caily said as she wiped her tears that's running down her cheek with her bare hands. Venus just look at her as if she's not important. Venus walk past her and slammed the door.

"I will go with you. You might get lost around the house for sure." The nurse said as she nodded.

"Thank you so much." Caily answered. She even said sorry numerous times. The nurse just shook her head as she heard her saying those words.

'Poor girl. I'm with her on this. However, if Venus will get mad, nobody can stop that brat. She's very annoying and spoiled. She doesn't even care about what you feel. Instead, she only thinks about herself.' The nurse kept those words to herself.

One thing she knew is that, Venus Hughes is seriously hard to deal with.

"I told you. It is not a good idea to spend something that's not worth it."

"At least I got the chance to see Emilia Collins."

She said in a gloomy manner. Nolan tried to comfort Caily by patting one of her shoulders. Honestly, he doesn't know how to make her happy either. They were sitting on one of the benches of their school.

"It's still not worth the money. If only I know that you will just end up crying because of it, I never should have allowed you to attend Venus's show."

"I never expected her to treat me like that."

"Of course. They will always look down to us because..."

"Because what? We are poor? We were just trying hard no matter what we're doing? Because we are not attractive compared to them?" Caily can't stop her tears from falling. Nolan can't help but to pity his dearest friend.

"Hmmm...come here." Nolan held her hands as he pulled him closer to her. He wiped her tears using his handkerchief from his pocket.

"It is not what I intend to tell you. Please do not misinterpret what I am trying to say." He added. Caily looked up and met his gaze.

"I always try to catch her attention but it turned out to be my worst experience meeting her in person."

"I'm sorry you have to experience it, Caily. Too bad, sometimes we just have to accept that our world simply doesn't fit theirs."

He heard her sigh as she looked down.

"It hurts but we need to accept things because that's the way it is." As soon as she heard those words, she seemed to cry even more.

"I'm so sorry dear Caily. How about some food to cheer you up?"

"Don't make me sad even more."

"What?" Nolan can't help but chuckle.

How can Caily be lonely if that's already food that he's offering right now?

"Venus is dieting everyday that's why she can maintain her waistline at twenty-two." From her tone, Nolan can't seem to comfort her that easy.

"What's your full name?" Nolan cheerfully asked her.

"Caily Mcfisher." She said as she pouts her lips.

"See? You're not Venus Hughes to start with."

"Nolan...stop it." She reacted with a chuckle.

"You stop belittling yourself, will you? You're beautiful just the way you are. Do not try to be someone else when all you think of is being pressured rather than being happy."

"You think so?"

"Yes. You're Caily and she's Venus. Yes, she has a waistline of 22, but can she enjoy the food you're enjoying right now?

She was suddenly stunned because her friend Nolan is right.

"Just feel better. We never knew what kind of pressure she's facing everyday that you effortlessly enjoy without thinking a lot."

"You know what, Nolan? You're right. I suddenly become hungry. Where's that food?" She flashed a smile. She suddenly stood up and pulled his hand.

After Nolan and Caily ate their food, Caily decided to go home. Nolan went with her until they reached their gate.

"Thank you so much for making me feel better, Nolan."

"It's always my pleasure, Caily. You know that I love you."

"Nah. I've had enough for today. Please do not add up to my stress."

"If you will love me as your stress, It will be more than a pleasure to be your stress forever."

"Nolan, you're crazy."

"Yes, definitely crazy for you." He smiled sweetly as he looked upon her gaze.

"Go home."

He bid her goodbye as she gave him a friendly hug. "See you tomorrow."

She slowly went inside their house and it was exactly 11:00 in the evening. She's very sure that her parents are sleeping already. She tiptoed upstairs and as soon as she reached her room, closed the door, she was able to put off her clothes.

She can't help but to stare at her figure at her body mirror. She doesn't seem to have a figure anymore, does she?

After attending Venus's show, she realized that there are still people who seemed to care a lot for themselves. That's why they always looked so good, but her? Forget it.

She slowly puts on her pajamas and she takes her eyeglass off her face. She carefully placed them inside its pink hard-case cover.

She let her body drown on the soft matress of her comfy bed. With eyes opened, she fixed her attention to their ceiling painted all white.

"Why are there people so unfortunate like me in this world? While there are people so lucky they don't need to try so hard for it."

If only I could set any situation favoring me...if only I can change myself to be someone I really admire the most...I would do everything for it for sure.

She is now slowly walking as if without any direction. She's all alone as she walks from her home going to their school approximately two kilometers away.

"Oh, please pity this old lady...please." She heard someone groaning as if she's feeling really hurt somewhere. Somebody caught her attention as she is about to cross the road. When she looked at where the sound comes from. She saw a frail, old woman offering her palms wide open in front of her.

She looked at her eyes and she pity her right away.

"Oh...here you go, dear." She grasped the idea of the need to help her. She quickly yanked a biscuit from her bag and handed it to her in an awkward manner. She saw the old woman's face lit up after she saw the biscuit on her hands. She looked very happy.

"You are a good person."

"How I wish being a good person is also credited equally for being physically beautiful as well."

They sat side by side on a bench, quietly observing the passersby and on what the other people doing.

"Do you really think so?" She said in a meaningful manner that Caily can't help but to turn her gaze towards her grinning face.

"Just maybe...if I could be beautiful and attractive, then my life will be different from what I have right now." Caily said as she sighed.

"Are you sure it will make you happy?" The old woman asked, facing her. She can see that her facial expression is very serious right now.

"I will trade by giving anything just to achieve it. I think it will make me very happy forever."

"Very well. I want you to think about it over and over again. Be careful what you wish for..."

"Caily? Were you listening to me?" She suddenly heard a voice right after she blinked her eyes.

"Huh? Nolan, what are you doing here?" Caily said, feeling very shocked as she looks around, hoping to find that old woman she's talking with a while ago.

"What?! I've been here with you since twenty minutes ago. You're absent-minded ever since."

"But...but you know, there's an old woman that I talked to...believe me."

"I thought you badly wanted to become Venus. Now, you want me to believe that you have seen an old woman when you're with me all along?"

"No! It's not it. There's really an old woman--"

"Let's just eat. The class is over for the morning and it's already break time. Don't worry it's on me."

"But---"

He pulled her hands and that made her not add a word anymore. She hasn't got a choice but to follow Nolan. She just looked at her submissive hands being held by him.

She slowly turned her head back and as the passersby walked in front of her. She slowly blinked her eyes, she saw the old woman grinning at her. In another blink of an eye, she saw that the same old woman standing on the same ground instantly became a beautiful woman dressed in black from head to toe. She's wearing the same grin as the old woman wore as she heard the words coming from her like an endless echo...

She's directly looking into her eyes right now as she heard these faint words that seem to also come from her...

'Be careful what you wished for…'

Chapter 5: PICK AND PLAY

Nolan's POV

"Nolan, how are you related to Emilia Collins? You're having identical surnames." Caily said as she grinned sweetly in front of me.

"I am not related to her." I said as I sticked my tongue out. She instantly chuckled from what I did.

"I don't believe it. I know somewhere within your family tree, you're both close. You'll never know because you never try." She insisted as she flashed a sweet smile facing me. I want to laugh because she's really impossible to deal with.

There are times she will really insist what she wants and I somehow treat that as partly annoying.

We're in front of the canteen finishing the can of soda we bought a while ago. I am still gulping mine until the last drop when I shifted my gaze on her.

"Please? It's a small favor after all." She added as she gave me a puppy look. She's been tugging the sleeve of my shirt as she asked more about her idol. A popular singer in the country that's a dear friend of Venus.

"Psh. Dream on." I answered, shaking my head as I smiled timidly. I saw her pouting her lips from the side of her cheek. She looked so disappointed but she looked cute to me.

"Well, I am just hoping maybe one day you can help me gain her autograph by telling her you're relatives, right?"

"Wow. You really never have a plan to give up, right?" I said as I let out a soft chuckle. It make her frown all of a sudden. "I hate you. Talk to yourself." She folded her arms and started walking past me without turning her back.

"Hey, I was only joking." I ran towards her as I rested my arms on her shoulders. She immediately removed it by jerking it a bit, until I remove it myself. She's really pissed she can't even look at me.

"Your arm is heavy." She commented, stealing a glance to see if I am still looking at her. She can't help but smile after she realized that I caught her doing it.

"Dear Caily, I am so sorry. Okay fine. I will get an autograph from her if it will make you really happy."

"Really?" Her face lit up like a lightbulb being switched on all of a sudden. I can't help but laugh. Her reaction is always the one I am expecting. I guess any man will do everything just to see their

beloved smile like that. The kind of smile that will last for a while and could warm your heart, especially if the one that you really love does it for you.

"You think you can?" She added, wanting me to promise something to her this time.

"Well, I guess if we want it to happen, it can be possible."

"I really hate someone giving me false hopes." She said as she sighed aloud.

"You know what? You're silly. I will do my best, okay?"

"I knew you can't last seeing me sad." She is still smiling sweetly. "Thank you." She added, meeting my gaze. Oh no, every time she does this to me, I can't help but to feel very happy deep down. She always make my heart flutter.

"Anything that could make you smile, my dear Caily." I said, smiling back at her as I pinch her chubby cheeks.

"I know you can't resist me. Thank you so much dear Nolan." She gently massaged it while looking at me. There goes her pouty lips again as she awkwardly showed her smile to me.

My heart almost stopped when she hugged me tight. She's always like this. But sad to say, she failed to do this: For me to not fall in love with her. It's always my losing game and yet I always feel like a winner of everything I have.

If there's someone worth it and deserving of all my attention and love, it should be her and her alone.

She might be less valuable for other people but for me, she's everything I have. I am always proud of her. She always complete my day. Whenever she's around, I could feel I can do everything that's asked of me. Her smile is my fuel and my strength. My inspiration to continue more in life. She's the one who lifts my spirits up.

All I can say is, I can't live without her in my life.

She grins as she slowly leaves the dark tunnel-like pathway exit of Withermoor. The dark smoke follows her and covered her footprints leaving no trail behind.

It had been her practice to leave her place as she head towards the boundary of two mountains. The connecting route of Withermoor and Blossomcrest is a complicated road and yet it's all nothing to her.

Not a stone ever touched even her bare toes. She could be as light as a feather if she wants to. She trailed along the narrow road as she climbes higher. As she steps on the ground, some of the little plants wither and their shades becomes darker as she passes through them.

As she looks as how the plant reacts to her power, she grinned with pride.

"Oh dear, oh dear, I love how you are turning into my favorite color." She held the withered flower and it eventually turned into ashes and vanished into thin air. She grinned, looking very pleased.

She continued walking along the steep trail as she climbs on a higher altitude of the boundary of two mountains. The lush part of the Blossomcrest kingdom is embracing the dead side of the mountain of the Withermoor kingdom. Between them is the Luminastia that's shining brightly. The tiny lightning that's continuously lashing inside the star-shaped wand. The sight of that power alone that's holding the two boundaries excites her senses. It's like a beautiful art she wanted to gaze for every day.

She is now standing between the boundary of the two kingdoms. Above her is the heart of the boundary of the two mountains where the Luminastia lies. It is freely floating between the never-ending blossoming flowers that's part of Blossomcrest kingdom and the withered branch of Withermoor kingdom.

"There you are my sweet one." She reaches her hand up high to where the Luminastia is located. The rays of the sun is hitting the wand that made it sparkle even more. Gazing at the Luminastia is more important for her than any activity she will ever do for each day.

"Ah...your beauty is really captivating. You're lovelier if you're in my hands." She made it move a little. She felt excited when she sees that it can easily respond to her powers. She let out a victorious shrill of laughter at the sight of it.

"See, my love? I know you are made only for me. I know the power that you have right now deserves someone who can manage you very well."

She grinned as she slowly put her hands down as she clenched her fist even more.

"I will surely get you. I will make you mine and nobody can ever stop me this time, not Dhara and not even Shreya."

She stepped back, smiling as if she is now in a sure victory over the power she's been dreaming of.

"I don't like sharing ever since. You'll shine beautifully in Withermoor and I will make it soonest, my beloved. Just wait and see." She softly said to the wind that caressed the Luminastia as if considering it as her own already.

She's lying on her bed while staring at the white ceiling. She can't help but to think of many thoughts. After that incident that's relating to the old woman, she had many sleepless nights.

"Be careful what you wish for..."

Those words still echoed in her ears. That old woman gave her some chills. The way she grinned as she looks at her eyes.

"What does she mean by those words?" She softly said to herself as she gets up. She was able to lean her back against the soft headboard of her bed. She can't help but to massage her forehead as she closed her eyes trying to relax.

She slowly looked at the direction where her body mirror is located.

"Why are you born so ugly and unappealing?" Tears started to form from the corner of her eyes. "I hope your ugliness will end soon. I can't endure seeing you everyday. It's always making me sad and miserable as I wake up."

"Caily Mcfisher..."

She looked around because she can hear a faint, whispering voice.

"W-Who is it?"

"I know your wish. It's the wish that you wanted so bad..." From that faint whisper, a shrill laughter came next which sent chills down her spine.

"Don't be afraid dear...tell me what you want."

"I..."

"Caily...wake up. It is time for school." As soon as she opened her eyes, she realized that it was the voice of her mom that's waking her up. She frowned as she gets up, lightly scratching her head.

"Yes mom, I am awake." She yelled back because she's inside her room on the second floor of their house. Was it only a dream, perhaps?

But she's very sure that it is not a dream after all. She's really certain to have heard that faint voice of an old woman. It was faint yet very clear enough for her to hear very well. She felt like that someone who owned that voice is just sitting beside her, but she can't see her. It seemed like the one that is talking to her is invisible.

Was it the same old woman she met days ago? If the answer is yes, then what's her purpose of doing this to her? That's sounds absurd if she'll say she's her stalker. Even dogs from their neighborhood doesn't even care or appreciate her overall physical appearance.

"Do not forget to eat your breakfast. I'll be going." As soon as she alighted the last step going down the stairs, she heard the slamming of their front door. She sighed as she slowly walk towards their dining table.

Yup. It's her ever-busy mother. She's always in a hurry. She's just waking up Caily, cooks and prepares her food for her that's good for breakfast and lunch. After that, she's always in a hurry in going to the office to work. She will return at exactly five in the afternoon to prepare their dinner and that's how they simply spend their day.

Today, she checked the food that's available for her to eat. She has some thinly-sliced cheese and a loaf of bread prepared by her mom for her breakfast. She also noticed that her mom already prepared some fried chicken and rice as well for her packed lunch.

"My mom doesn't even know I love vegetables more than meat." She said as she shook her head. She rushed to the bathroom and got ready for school. She's heading to a day that's already dull and boring as what she used to expect each day.

As she meets Nolan down the road in going to school, that voice never left her thoughts.

"Are you still mad at me?" He asked her, looking so worried.

"No. Why should I do that?"

"About what happened yesterday. I'm so sorry. I'll try to find a way to ask Emilia Collins her autograph for you, I promise."

"As if you can do that." She said, sounding doubtful.

"I will try if it will make you happy."

"Don't be too nice. I'll miss you so much if ever I will be gone." She said, facing him as she looked directly at his eyes. He gave her a weird look.

"Hey. It's too early to think crazy like that. Do you think it's funny?"

"It's funnier to even think that someone really cares about you when in fact there's none."

"It's because you're playing ignorant when you're not even like that in the first place." She heard him as he said those sentiments. She noticed that Nolan walked past her looking very sad. Well, she always expects Nolan to be her last resort when she will tell her frustrations or daily, useless rants about how inferior she is towards others.

"Hey, Nolan! Wait for me." She ran towards his pace because he's walking briskly towards the school gate not even turning his back on her.

Chapter 6:DREAMSCAPE

Caily's POV

"Can you please wait for me?" I ran as fast as I could, trying to cope up with his pace. I suddenly felt strange after he left me while I'm still venting out my sentiments.

"I am, but you're being silly again."

"You're leaving me easily. Why are you being like that all of a sudden?" I exclaimed as I almost gasped for air. Finally I was able to reach him by holding his hand.

He looked at me straight into my eyes. I can see from his face that he looked weary and impatient at the same time. Looking at him being like this makes me feel sad I instantly feel guilty. I hate it when it happens.

"I'm sorry if I can't satisfy what you really wanted."

"What are you trying to say? I don't understand."

"Sometimes, I wanted to leave you alone because I think you don't feel like hanging with me anymore." He said as he looked down.

"What? How could you ever think of that?" I almost reacted violently as I held his hand and it made him look into my eyes with that weary facial reaction.

"How could I think about it? Maybe because I am just an overthinker most of the time."

"I do not want you to feel that, okay? I'm sorry."

"Well, I am still the Nolan that you know years ago, but I think you're not the Caily that I used to know." He responded, trying to avoid my gaze. He also let go of my hand that's holding his by removing it from my grip right away. I honestly feel like crying this instant.

I realized we're in the middle of the hallway. Other passersby were just ignorant as they past by us. Others, glancing, observing what will happen next. Are they expecting a show or something? Sometimes I hate how other people look down on us as if we don't have the right to be hurt as well.

I suddenly felt really ashamed of myself. I never noticed my best friend is feeling this way already because of my outburst and for being selfish at the same time.

I was too focused on myself thinking of the best possible ways for my idol to notice me that I am already hurting my best friend without me noticing it. Am I really being selfish this time?

I grabbed his hand as I started walking. I am pulling him as I smile. This time, I need to assure him that what he's been thinking is wrong. I am still the Caily that he used to know and nobody could ever change it.

He seemed shocked and yet he didn't mind what I did to him. Instead, he took a grip of my hand in a possessive manner. I felt my cheeks flushed.

While we're walking towards the school canteen, I tried twitching my hands from his grip and when I felt that he's about to let go of my hand, I moved it until our palms were facing each other. I tried looking at his gaze before I fully clasp his hand on mine. Finally, I can see him smiling.

I really know this guy very well. I consider myself lucky because he's understanding. Too understanding he can't hold grudges that long.

We sat down at one of the tables inside the school canteen. As usual, he bought my favorite snacks, soda and some chips.

"S-Sorry." I softly said as I bit my lower lip as I looked down. He let me meet his gaze by touching my chin, gently tilted my head, leveled my head enough for me to see where he's looking right now.

"You said sorry but I guess you never mean it."

"What?!" I chuckled as I gave him a puzzled look.

"Do you even know why I was a bit disappointed a while ago?" He said, smiling sweetly.

I was about to really lose my cool over this man but seeing his smile makes me think twice.

"Okay, okay. I am really sorry because I said those words. I will try my best to not say those again. You love the chubby, sweet, loves-to-eat-all-the-food Caily and I think I don't deserve a best friend like you."

"Hmmm, quite convincing. Keep talking." He said, grinning. I can't help but chuckle.

"You're too silly, do you know that?"

"Your one and only."

"But dear Nolan, seriously though. I apologize."

"Eh. The whole apology speech was okay except for the last sentence." He said as he jokingly frowned.

"I already apologize, right? Are you deaf or something?"

"You're wrong when you said you don't deserve me," He said, holding my hands as he gently kissed it as he looked at me.

"You're too much I think I will let you pay for every kiss you do to me." I said as I can't help but to burst out laughing. That laughter caught a lot of other student's attention inside the school canteen where we ate our snacks. They are all looking at our direction. We simply don't care at all.

"I'm totally sorry. I underestimated how you consider me as your best friend. Thank you so much, Nolan." I took his hand and held it with both of my hands. I got it as I placed it on my cheek as I smiled. His hand automatically pinched my cheek which surprised me a bit.

"Ouch!" I exclaimed as I massaged my left cheek right away. I frowned as I hit his arm with my hand because when he pinched my cheek, he made it red as a tomato it really hurts.

"I want you to stop overthinking. Stop trying to be someone else when you can just be yourself."

"Okay, okay. I will not argue with you about this. I'm sorry once again." I smiled as I said those words...not actually meaning it so much.

"I hope you mean it this time. I don't want you to feel inferior again. Thar does not suit my Caily." He replied with a grin.

I just want him to feel that I am not a burden for him. Me and my own thoughts. I am thinking of confessing to him what I feel and see these past few days. However, seeing this passive reaction coming from him makes me feel that I should only keep it to myself.

I really hope that it was just a dream. I wish that that faint voice is only a result of my own imagination. I wish it was never real in the first place.

Floreal. The kingdom of illuminance, power and authority. This kingdom is placed at the northern part of Fayvallea, the name of the whole kingdom governed by witches. Floreal is situated on the upper part in between the boundary of two mountains that's part of Blossomcrest and Withermoor.The kingdom is a floating plateau of crystals above the clouds. Floreal is also known for its illuminance because the sun's rays reflect the crystals that surrounded the whole place. Precious gems are being carefully etched on each of the walls.

The flowers, structures and statues of the previous queen witches were made of transparent crystals too. They are beautifully carved and smoothened. They are standing along the hallways on the way to the throne.

The ground is made of transparent crystals clearly showing the reflections for those who will dare step on it.

Shreya Wallace is the queen of Fayvallea. She's the only daughter of the last queen of Fayvallea that ruled the kingdom for the last 500 years. She's wearing a light blue gown that represents the beauty and peacefulness of the clouds surrounding the kingdom. The sleeves and hem of the gown is as light as the feather but the color illuminates like that of a crystal. The sequence of the gown is adorned with precious gems and tiny crystals. Her long, loose curls with her tiara were looking so attractive on her head. It represents her authority as the queen of the Fayvallea kingdom.

"My queen...it's a pleasure to be invited here in Floreal." Dhara greeted her, half-smiling, half-nervous. The queen of living and nature also dressed in a stunning way. Her long white gown are all covered by baby cherry blossoms blown by the wind as it goes with the breeze. The different floral designs as sequence of the gown are also emphasized that's why it became more beautifil when the sun's rays reflects on it, too.

"Hello my Blossomcrest queen. You exactly know why you're here." She answered her, never showing any reaction at all. She looked at Dhara and her gaze made her shiver to the bones.

"I wanted to know from you." Shreya Wallace added.

"I can feel the resisting power of the Luminastia. What is happening down there?" She asked her as she raised one of her eyebrows.Dhara Rose gently swallowed as she avoided Shreya's gaze.

"Well, there has been a lot of things happening lately. The Luminastia is doing its best to fulfill its duty. Don't worry about it too much."

"I hope that's the only thing that's happening. I will always know the activity it does because it recognizes me as its queen."

"Of course, your highness. I knew that."

"We both knew that." They suddenly turned their attention to the person talking behind them. Bellezza Scyther suddenly appeared into the thin air by means of the spiraling black smoke surrounding her body. She's grinning despite the queen of Fayvallea's sarcasm as she looks at her.

"It is always good that we are all reminded. Let us not forget our own kingdoms. I am trusting you to do your part."

Dhara Rose glanced at Bellezza Scyther who is also looking at Shreya from head to foot as if enjoying what she's gazing at.

"I can see that Floreal is always a fabulous kingdom. How was it so far?"

"Bellezza...stop it."

"Why? Is it bad to ask our dearest queen on how she manage Floreal?" She is looking at Shreya Wallace as if there's a staring battle that is happening between the two of them. Obviously, she's talking to Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace.

"I don't mind at all, Dhara. Well, Bellezza...Floreal is always good. White magic is always produced for the benefit of the Fayvallea Kingdom." Shreya replied, walking past them as she climbed up to her crystal throne and sat on it. She grinned to both of them.

"Oh...that's good. Good to hear it." Bellezza claps her hand as if mocking the queen. Dhara tried to stop her by looking at her firmly. She meets her gaze, too but Bellezza just smiled at Dhara, a meaningful one.

"Well, a bad witch is not always needed so I'd better go ahead. I'd be dealing with a lot of ugly creatures today and you know how stressful it is, right?" She said as she chuckled. She instantly vanished into the thin air as the spiraling smoke enveloped her whole body. Dhara Rose almost lost her patience because of Bellezza's actions.

"I'm really sorry about her, your highness." Dhara bowed down in front of Shreya Wallace.

"My dearest Dhara Rose, I don't mind. I am getting used to Bellezza's uncertain behavior."

"I don't know what to do with her sometimes."

"You don't have to do anything, my dear. You are not bound to change her but it is always good that you're always reminding her of what is right to what is wrong."

"I'm so sorry." Dhara Rose even bowed a little lower than the usual gesture she's doing. She can hear Shreya Wallace chuckle with amusement. Maybe she's looking at her for a long time.

"I will be happy if she's the one who will do it for me. Anyways, I am not expecting that one from her." She smirked as she looked at Dhara Rose. "I wonder if she can bow down to the queen, too."

"I will try my best to do my part, Shreya. I know Bellezza is also doing hers, too."

"I have high expectations from both of you. Please do not let me down."

"We always do that, our queen."

"Very well, Dhara. If that is the case, I will give you an assignment."

Dhara Rose looked up to Shreya Wallace as she held her crystal scepter with her beside her crystal throne from where she sits. Dhara also held her floral scepter with her firmly as she looked straight into Shreya Wallace's eyes.

"I'd love to do it for you, our queen, just tell me what it is." Dhara answered right away.

Chapter 7: OBLIGATIONS AND ALLIGATIONS

"I will do anything, your highness." Dhara looked at Shreya Wallace as she smiled. She is holding her crystal scepter beside her throne. She narrowed her gaze at Dhara who is properly following how to show proper reverence to the queen.

"I want you to observe Bellezza Scyther whenever you have the chance."

"I always do it, your highness. She's always busy doing things and her potions in Withermoor.

"Is that so?"

"Yes, dear. Don't worry. I always make sure Bellezza is following the rules of Fayvallea."

"We should always be vigilant and responsible to our every action. Remember, every actions that we make can be a good or bad thing for us."

"I will always bear that in mind, your highness." Dhara agreed as she bows down in front of the queen again.

"I am always observing. Please don't disappoint me my dear. I am always aware of what's happening to Fayvallea. I hope you're all taking responsibility for all of the places assigned to each one of you to rule."

"We are not forgetting it, you're highness."

"Lina...where's Adeline?" Venus's shouting voice is almost echoing the room. She can see one of her maids rushing towards her looking really nervous.

Her voice alone is like thunder for them to appear in front of her. Whenever she will shout, her echoing voice fills the whole house that all the maids stop from what they are doing at the moment. It is only to attend the useless concerns of their boss Venus. Nobody could ever be so slow, she fires anyone that she thinks of only wasting her precious time.

"Madam...uh, Adeline went home already but she left your homework on your bedside table."

"Oh my gosh, really?" She said, her irritated tone changed from being someone who is in a good mood. She instantly felt satisfied with what she heard from one of her personal maids.

"Y-Yes, madam." Her maid answered, avoiding her gaze so she will not appear disrespectful in front of her.

"Okay. It's done, then. I thought she didn't accomplish it on time." The maids nodded as they saw her flashed a victorious smile.

"By the way, I will go shopping tonight. Tell Mr. Alison to get the car ready."

"Yes, madam." Another maid that's in charge of what she's talking about answered in a humble tone.

"I should be returning here from the mall by 8 P.M." She said as she goes back and forth to get her fancy dresses ready.

The maids hurriedly told one of Venus's driver to prepare what she demands. She also took a quick bath and put on her desired outfit of the day. She's very picky when it comes to everything. There are times that she usually match her clothes to one of the cars that her driver will drive for her in going somewhere she would want to go.

She wore a black, sexy racer-back shirt with white wing as a design and loose, ripped jeans. To add her looks, she wore a limited edition Christian Louboutin stilettos customized with Swarovski crystals. As soon as she's done with everything, she's able to check herself on her full-body vanity mirror. She even turned around. Even if her limited-edition heels were too high, she was able to handle it with confidence. As you look at her wearing it, you will think that pair of heels are looking very comfortable to wear because Venus is gracefully nailing it.

"Hmm...I am happy that I am not getting fat. Pilates and yoga are doing the trick." She said to herself as she looks at her reflection from head to toe. When she thinks she's ready, she carefully headed her way downstairs. Their wide staircase at the center of their mansion is the center of attention, for it is like fit for a queen.

The house is designed exclusively for Venus's taste. The staircase's design is a solid maple double curve. It has open rise treads to let light through curved glass panel railing. The mirrored curved stairs create circular lines to frame the entry. When you look at the ceiling, you will be greeted with the elegance of the moon-shaped spiral wave raindrop crystal chandelier. It is hanging brightly as if emphasizing its uniqueness like no other.

She's descending the stairs as if she owns the night. She puts on her signature fashion eyeglasses and walked in to her wide parking lot.

"Madam, the car of your choice tonight is ready."

"Good. We'll be going to the mall. You have to wait for me."

Her driver just nodded as soon as he heard her instructions. She sits on the backseat while her driver is in the front, starting the engine at its maximum speed and off it goes.

She loved it fast. She loves it whenever the wind will touch her skin as she opens the window of her car. She wanted to feel that she's the queen of the road. Because she has a lot of connections, there's always some special lanes for her to drive without being caught. She removed her eyeglasses and let the rushing wind play with her hair as she peeks her head outside.

"Careful, madam."

She frowned as she went back to sitting comfortably on the backseat, cross-legged, folding her arms as he glanced at her driver with wearing that impatient look.

"I know what I am doing."

"That's just a reminder."

"Well, that's not a part of your job. Mind your own business."

"Sorry madam. I will." Venus's driver said, never speaking a word from then on. They have reached the mall in a span of less than ten minutes because of the kind of speed that she wanted.

She walked along the aisle of dresses and skirts. The glamorous pairs are catching her attention the most. She stopped to look at the model mannequin wearing the trendy floral dress that's popular for the weekly specials of the mall.

"I remembered wearing you last month. I never knew it will become this popular after that." She said softly to herself as she touches the hem of that floral dress. She grinned proudly as she noticed most girls are coming near her. When they realized that it is indeed "Venus Hughes", they started to flock towards her. She admit, she instantly felt uncomfortable because she expected that the mall is almost empty by now.

It's the first time a mob of fans flocked around her like crazy, she felt dizzy all of a sudden.

"Venus...can we please ask an autograph from you?" She just smile at them but she is already pissed from insomuch attention she's receiving from the people she didn't even personally know. Aside from that, the smell of the different fans that surrounds her were already stinky because of the sweat that they had for that day.

"Sure." She hurriedly grabbed their notebooks and signed at them one by one until her bodyguards are stopping the mob from getting closer to her.

She smiled and waved at her fans as her guards surrounded her. They guided her until she reached her car.

"Why are you not around me while I am shopping? You guys are so ridiculous!" She sad, fuming mad as she scolded them one by one. Her four bodyguards are looking down, feeling bad about themselves as well.

"We're so sorry ma'am. Our negligence caused you so much trouble. It will not happen again."

"It will really never happen again if I will decide to fire all of you! You're not even doing your job very well."

"We deeply apologize, madam."

"I should be your top priority, right? Do all this again and you're all done! Get out of my sight! All of you!" She hissed, however keeping her cool and poise as much as possible.

She noticed that her other bodyguards went to the other van that's following her car most of the time. Her guards are not the typical one. They are all black-belters and they are ready to kill for Venus Hughes. She doesn't want her guards to wear a suit uniform.

She wanted them to wear some casual wear for them to not became too obvious or center of attraction if they will follow Venus wherever she goes.

She knew that in one wrong action that she'll do, she'll be triple dead. She'll be the star of the headlines. How she hated thinking about it. For her, it is much better to star to a lot of magazine covers and photoshoots but a big no-no for news headlines. She's not buying that one for her to rise to stardom. She will be Venus Hughes who became popular for her looks, glam, poise and most importantly, her personality that's "loved" by many, not appear in the headlines as bad news that will ruin someone's day.

"You have to be vigilant at all times. My safety should be your priority. All of you!"

"Yes, ma'am."

Wearing a face full of disgust, she had lost her appetite in shopping. She hurriedly got in her car, shut the side door and went home straight right away.

Her whole day was almost ruined, thanks to her guards and everyone around her. Venus, being used to be independent, doesn't rely much to her parents. She usually earns her money by herself. Although both of her parents are wealthy already, she wanted to depend only to herself and no one else. She takes pride and pleasure in spending her own money, especially that she is earning it the hard way most of the time.

She swallowed and cleared her throat in a classy, poised manner as she opened the entrance door as she wents in her mansion. Raising her eyebrows, she hovered her eyes around. Three maids came rushing towards her, wearing their complete black traditional maid uniform.

"I want my bubble milk bath ready with scented candles being lit around. Don't forget to spread red petals around my bathtub, especially on my bed.

"Yes, madam." One of her maids said as she nodded. She moved fast and disappeared on her sight right away, heading towards her room on the second floor.

She slowly headed towards her room and immersed herself in her bathtub. With a white towel wrapped around her damp hair, she tried soaking her body for about five minutes or more until she got bored. She wrapped her body with a white cotton towel. She faced the window with a gloomy face. The sight of the trees and plants that surrounded their house.

She slowly looked at what she all have right now. She bitterly smiled. Many people think that she has this perfect life. She's a spotlight thief. She's always the queen of the night whenever she wanted. However, there's something in her that yearns for more. A discontentment in her heart she could never fathom. Questions that needed answers.

"Madam, he is now waiting for you in the guestroom."

She froze when her maid went inside after knocking twice. Upon hearing those words, it made her knees tremble. She became nervous. She started this one few months ago and yet whenever she realizes what she had done, she can't help but to feel scared.

"Okay. Please tell him I will go there after taking a quick shower." She said and the maid nodded and went away.

She moved as fast as she could. She knew that he didn't liked waiting for so long. As soon as she's done from what she's doing, she wrapped her body with her signature pink silk robe. With her hair still dripping, she went inside and smiled.

"Hello, gorgeous." He said. She felt goosebumps all over her body. A man of his 60s with a wrinkled face and fat belly grinned at her as if she's his most delicious prey for the night. She wrapped her arms around his neck as she kissed him on the lips, savoring his tongue. She deepened the kiss with her moans.

"That's what I like from you. You always do what I only imagine from other girls."

"Stop imagining, honey. Just enjoy everything. I got you." She said as soon as she parted her lips from his.

Chapter 8: SHE'S A SURVIVOR

Withermoor.

Where darkness is highlighted as the center of beauty that adorns the whole place. There are black, lifeless trees that stand tall among the untrodden pathway under the murky skies.

The smell of the place is as similar to the smell of death lurking somewhere unseen. No living creature can pass unless given the permission of Bellezza Scyther, the queen of the place.

She slowly walked, feeling the earth beneath her feet. The coldness of the ground is as cold as her heart, grinning as she appreciates the dullness that surrounds her. It pleases her eyes to see her comfort zone. A place she can call her very own.

She has transformed herself to her original beauty. From the adornment of withered vines around her body and large brown leaves covering her bosoms, she changed her looks to even a wicked-looking one. She's now wearing a black gothic-like gown and a long, black cape with a hood, enough to cover her forehead and eyes.

Noticing that she had her braids, she gently touched the black rose that encircled her braids.Her long, black hair freely goes along with the breeze. The black rose ascended upward and it instantly transformed into a black crow and alighted on her shoulders. Her bewitching eyes looked similar to that of a cat, yellowish and yet symbolizes authority to whatever she wishes to rule. She has a queer pointed nose and thin, black lips. Her long, pointed nails are painted black as well.

Strange noises of wailing creatures, fainted voices of the undead greeted her as she headed her way towards her own black castle. The design was made possible, thanks to her best friend witch who is the mother of Aurora, also known as "The sleeping beauty".

"Shall I let down the lift for you, our highness?" The crow asked, speaking proudly in a squealing voice. She was able to look at the castle and on how high it is. She might be enjoying how to get to the top. Little by little.

"Let me use my lovely stairs, darling." She answered sweetly while grinning. She entered a small door at the foot of the castle and started ascending to the spiral stairs that seemed endless as you looked upward.

"Oh...our highness, looks like you've been very busy these days. Are you making a new potion?" The curious crow asked, this time, in a low, whispery, squealing voice. It's beak touched the tip of her ear.

"You will find out soon."

"Oh our highness, I can't almost remember the last time you made a potion. I thought you forgot how to make one already." The crow cackled but was shocked when Bellezza Scyther suddenly squeezed his neck and threw him on the walls of the castle. She saw him bouncing on the wall and fell down.

"You have no right to even tell me that!" She hissed. The way she ascended the stairs are now heavier than usual because of what the crow said.

"Sorry, our highness. I was just joking. Forgive me!" He said, slowly getting up with both his wings. When the crow realized that he can't fly because of his condition, he started hopping as he also ascended to the staircase. Bellezza is almost reaching the last step in going to the upper part of the black castle as the crow catches up.

"It's not what I mean." The crow added, as he started talking again, this time scratching his tiny head with his feathers. "I am just curious. The last time you made your potion was five hundred years ago." The crow's last few words made Bellezza look at him with an icy stare. They both met each other's gaze.

"We both knew what happened way back then." The crow continued, which made Bellezza sigh aloud. The crow noticed her thoughts becoming deeper as if she's thinking something not known to him.

The crow now wonders how she's able to make the potion again. Knowing his queen, Bellezza doesn't make a potion when she's at risk of not being successful about it. He knew what happened five-hundred years ago that's why she's a little confused that his queen is now doing it again.

What could be the reason this time? And how could she ever be so confident about this potion this time?

"Shreya Wallace already forbade you to make potions because she knew you're the only one who can make potions for all purposes." She can't help but grin as she heard those words coming from the crow.

"You're even better than the queen when it comes to potion, our highness." The crow continued, boasted out loud, which made Bellezza cackle with insomuch confidence within her.

"Well, that's the truth." She said as she grinned from ear to ear.

"I guess, you're unstoppable this time, our highness." She gave him a pleasant look. They stopped talking as soon as they reached a lonely room being located at the attic of the castle. It's almost a secret room that they only both knew.

She opened the door with both of her hands. She can see the giant iron cauldron being well-lit with fire at the center of the room. The pots were hung one meter from the ground with big metal chains supporting it. The green-colored fluid is boiling pretty well, as white smoke rises in the air.

"Ugh...as usual. The smell is terrible." The crow commented, peeking what's happening as it alighted on Bellezza's shoulder after hopping to a lot of things scattered inside that room.

There were several human bones, spider webs and a lot of books about potions and spells Bellezza is making when she will have free time for everything.

"Would you like me to include you there so that my potion will be completed?" Bellezza said as she frowned at him.

"You're not serious, right? Our highness?"

"I will really do it if you will continue to piss the hell out of me." She rolled her eyes at him and fixed her gaze to what she's doing. She mixed her potion with the use of a special wooden spoon that's bigger than the usual spoon that people use. The long handle is ideal for her to mix what she's making very well.

"Are the ingredients complete?"

"Well..." She looked at the crow as she sighed. Looks like she's really troubled.

"What is bothering you, our highness?"

"I am working on this potion for two weeks now. There's only one ingredient left for me to include here, though." She said, looking at the crow. She grinned as the crow seemed to be having the idea of what she's talking about.

"I need your help my dearest crow."

As Venus is walking along the hallway of their school, she saw someone that caught her attention the most.

"Adeline! Wait for me!" She exclaimed. The girl who heard her name looked at Caily's direction.

"Hello Caily! Good morning!" She smiled as she greeted her back. Caily put her hand on Adeline's shoulder. She's one of Caily's friends because they are clubmates to one of the most exclusive academic organizations their University has.

"How was Venus as a tutee?"

"Well, what's new with her?" She stopped walking and faced Caily. "As usual, she's as lazy as ever. Nothing has ever changed since then." She added as she told Caily in a whispering tone. Caily nodded her head and twisted her lips a bit.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I am only allowed to finish answering her homeworks."

"She's not letting you teach her anything?"

"Well, if the major test exams are coming, she will require me to stay overnight." Adeline answered with a frown.

"That's sounds tough." Caily commented, looking at Adeline's facial expression.

"She's always always a pain on the ass. Sometimes, we'll stay awake until three in the morning. I am not allowed to nap because my every hour is paid. She's sleeping the whole time and she can't even last an hour of reviewing."

"Well, that sounds hopeless for her."

"If I really didn't need the money, I will really resign from my post because she's really giving me a lot of headaches I can't endure it sometimes."

"I feel sorry for you dear." She said, tapping her shoulders. Adeline sighed as she looks at her.

"Hmmm, if you want then I can be your substitute if you're busy in the coming days. You have a life, too."

"Really? You will do that for me?" Adeline's face lit as soon as she heard Caily. She's looking at her so intently because she might be joking when she said that. Good thing she's not.

"Of course. I am willing."

"Thank you Caily! You're a bestfriend indeed!"

"Sure, just tell me whenever you're busy or what."

"Thank you so much my dearest Caily! You didn't know how much you made me happy today. You know what, sometimes, I can't help but to feel sad because I thought nobody will like to accept substitutes for Venus."

"I will always be happy to help her." Caily replied in her most willing tone.

"I also said that during the first week of my job. Later on, I found myself regretting my decision of being hired by her."

"Huh? Why?" Caily asked, looking at Adeline's eyes. She noticed her friend avoiding her gaze.

"Everyone liked Venus Hughes but I think there's more to know from her. She's unpredictable at all times, you know."

"I don't care. I am her number one fan always and nothing can ever change that."

"Seriously? Well then, good luck to you girl."

"I actually had an unsettled mistake and I got to do her a favor to compensate what I did."

"I cannot believe how pathetic Venus's fans can make them do anything just for her. I find it plain stupid I don't even like her at all. Don't lower yourself to her my dear. Don't you have a pride, too?" Adeline asked, raising her eyebrows.

"It doesn't matter. The important thing is, I will become hef substitute tutor because I wanr to be near her. Maybe I can learn her secret to a beautiful skin as well if she will share it to me."

"Caily dear, please don't you ever let Venus think that she's always on top. She's already too vain. Do not praise her often."

"I don't know. I just love her." Caily dreamily said as she smiles. Adeline just shook her head.

"Well, I am not impressed by her. We are still good in academics, the thing that she can't have no matter how hard she will try."

"Do not underestimate people, my dear."

"Don't worry I am not underestimating her. I am describing her."

"Hmm...it doesn't matter. She has all the ninety percent I dream in life, Adeline."

"That's sounding so ridiculous. I think if we'll all be contented in life, you will not have to dream of somebody else's life like hers. Her life is boring, anyway."

"I don't find her life boring. In fact, I perceive it to be very exciting." Caily answered as she even clapped her hands.

"Not really. I guess I am not a fan of her that's why I do not agree to what you're telling me about her."

"But reality will also hit you hard. Let's admit it. She is living the life that we only wish for. I guess she's one in a million. Hmm, me being contented? I guess contentment can be seen in movies more than that in real life."

"We are entitled of our own opinions." Adeline finally said. They never noticed that they already reached their own respective rooms adjacent to each other.

"See you later, dear! It was nice talking to you." Adeline said, smiling as she waved to Caily. She also winked in return and waved back.

After Adeline went inside their classroom, Caily smiled sweetly. She's already imagining herself to be acquainted with Venus someday and she can't help but to feel excited. This maybe the chance she's waiting for, all her life. An encounter and a fated chance. I know she will have it someday. Who would have thought? Maybe it will happen the soonest, or maybe when she's not expecting it the most.

Chapter 9: WHAT HAVE I DONE?

"What help, our highness?" The crow excitedly asked, flapping his wings. He can't contain what he's feeling right now. He's also riding to the happiness of his master, the one he respected throughout the kingdom.

Bellezza smiled as she stretched her arms. The crow started to walk from her shoulders to her arms, and eventually to the tip of her pointing finger. The crow instantly transformed into a black rose clip for her hair. She's able to put on her beautiful clip as she fixed her hair to a different hairstyle again. She grinned.

"You have to go with me. We'll visit the world of the living where people have their own desires." She held the special wooden spoon again and mixed her pot of potion. As she mixed it slowly this time, the surface became clearer and she was able to see the world she wanted to visit.

The world of the living. The world where people are all busy doing whatever they want or required of their lives.

"Look at them, my darling. I guess they are ready for me to make their dreams come true, what do you think?" She said as she cackled aloud. Her boisterous laughter echoed the whole Withermoor which made the whole place creepier this time.

"Nolan, where are you?" Caily asked, looking very impatient as he called him.

"I'm still in the library. You can go here if you want." She sighed as she ended the call. She went there right away because she's really bored, she got nothing to do.

As soon as she went inside the library, camera flashes greeted her. She was able to cover her face with her hands. When she noticed that the flashes of cameras moved into another direction, she slowly opened her eyes.

She saw Venus Hughes standing to one of the center aisles opening some books as flashes of camera followed her. She smiled sweetly as other students cannot get enough of her beauty. She sat on one of the tables, crossing her legs. She's wearing the University uniform but a skimpier one.

"Venus...thank you for visiting the library. I know many students will be inspired to go here because you visited us." One of the working students said as she greeted her.

"Oh, it's a pleasure." She said, smiling even more as she flips her hair and smiled to everyone inside the library.

"What's your favorite book so far?" A curious student suddenly asked. Caily can see a sudden change of her facial reaction. It's as if she's caught off guard, not feeling comfortable this time. She can see that Venus awkwardly smiled this time not knowing what to react or do.

Caily remembered what Adeline said, that even if Venus could answer all her homework, she's not a fan of studying. Some of her classmates even secretly gossiped her to other students of having a very low score on her quizzes.

She's not even into books. She's not fond of learning. She will only browse pages if the pictures are larger and captions are few.

She's just smiling and yet other students became curious too, they all went silent to hear what she's going to answer. Caily glanced at Venus, and eventually shifted her gaze to

"She loves Romeo and Juliet. A girl like Venus Hughes is a fan of William Shakespeare. A fun fact about her!" Caily exclaimed at the back of the students crowding around her. They were able to turn around and others stepped on the side for Venus to see who said those words.

Caily instantly put her hands on her mouth. She could see Venus's relieved look as she stared at her. Caily felt happy deep inside when she saw Venus Hughes smiled at her for what she did just now.

Well, she made herself her "little hero" for some reason. It makes her happy and proud.

"Wow! We never knew that! She's indeed a real Venus Hughes fan!" Other girls said as some clapped their hands because of amazement.

"Not really." She smiled at those students who happened to be her colleagues. She know they will not stop interrogating Venus if they will not hear any answers coming from her. It's better to speak on her behalf so that her idol will be safe from further questions.

"Yes. I love that book. A classic love story of all time, it never grows old." Venus said and other students focused their attention to her now, rather than Caily who just saved her from possible humiliation.

"We hope to see you here more often."

"I'd be more than happy. If my schedule permits, you will definitely get tired of my presence most of the time."

"We never mind. It will always be our pleasure to welcome beautiful guests like you here." One of her boy fans quickly exclaimed out of nowhere.

They just disregard her not being so quick-witted, rather, they admire her smile above everything.

Caily just smiled bitterly. Well, she's somehow happy, too. At least, she's eventually making it up for Venus and what she did that almost ruined her show. She didn't exactly know what happened but she's very sure that Venus will somehow appreciate her help from what she did just now.

She slowly stepped out of the crowd, unnoticed. A lot of people still were into Venus that they did not care about Caily at all. She took another step and everything around her seemed to stop right away.

There were students opening their books and the two seemed to be happy, but now they stopped moving even a muscle. She snapped by looking around her and she's shocked when even the ticking of the clock stopped. She rubbed both of her eyes and everything are not changing.

She gently slapped both of her cheeks using both her palms but the people around her seemed to be not moving at all. They all paused from what they're doing. It's like everyone was participating in a statue dance.

"What? Am I the only one that's moving?" Caily exclaimed aloud as she started to move around their wide library, walking around, looking through the aisles one by one, peeking from the other side between the books arranged neatly on the shelves.

"Are you not getting tired of everything that's happening in your life right now?" She heard a faint, whispering voice of an old woman. She tried looking around but she cannot see who is talking to her right now.

"Who are you?" Caily asked as her heart started to beat faster than the usual.

"I could be someone you badly wanted to meet."

"Why would I?" She said, as she keeps on looking for that voice she's hearing. All that Caily is seeing right now are all shelves of books and the people who stopped moving from what they are previously doing.

"Well, I know the very desire of your heart. I can make it come true..." She heard her say that with a chuckle.

"Who are you? Please tell me!" Caily exclaimed, still looking around like crazy. She didn't like the idea that somebody could see her and what she's doing right now, but she can't see that voice that seemed to echo in her mind. She started to feel afraid because she doesn't know whom she's talking to.

The voice became faint as she slowly took her every step. The sound of the heels of her shoes is like knocking the ground for the silence seemed to be deafening.

"Caily...please wake up." When she realized her name was being called by an unfamiliar voice, she quickly opened her eyes in a snap of a finger. She can see Nolan gently tapping her shoulders.

"Am I sleeping the whole time?" She rubbed her eyes and looked around, this time, everyone around her is moving like crazy. She is still inside the library and she's sitting in one of the numerous chairs scattered inside. In front of her were the books that they usually study with Nolan.

"Yes, you've been sleeping for fifteen minutes now. I just woke you up because the librarian might notice you." Nolan inched closer to her ear as he said those words. Being noisy inside the library is prohibited, except for special occasions.

Something odd is really going on she doesn't even understand it herself. If it was only a dream, then why does it felt so real?

"Venus was here a while ago, right?" She asked, remembering what happened a while ago as she looked around.

"Yes. And I always hate it when she will draw much attention. The library went wild a while ago."

"Isn't she cool?" Caily dreamily smiled as her elbow is on top of the table and her hand on her left cheek. Nolan frowned in response to what she said.

"I will never be impressed. I didn't even like what you did a while ago."

"I just said that so that she can notice me."

"You don't need to do it, Caily. Look, she's not into books. She doesn't even know a thing about it and it is very obvious."

"I am happy to do it."

"Don't be too generous. Not everyone can appreciate your efforts, remember that."

"Do you really think so?" She softly said as she started to cry after what she heard from her best friend. Nolan was startled after he saw Caily crying this time.

"N-No dear, it is not what I mean. Please don't get me wrong." He said, looking so worried as he held Caily's arms. She shrugged off his hands in a forceful way.

"What do you mean, then? Because I don't even know what I should do for others to approve it."

"C-Caily...I'm so sorry." Nolan said as he tried to hold her hand once again. She suddenly stood up and straightened her books, started packing them up inside her bag and started to walk outside the library. Nolan tried to catch up with her but she was able to run as fast as she could until she

reached the bus stop. A bus stopped right in front of her. After a minute, it went away before Nolan could even step inside.

He hurriedly searched for his phone inside his bag and started dialing Caily's number but it is out of reach.

"She really turned off her phone so that I can't talk to her. Oh goodness, what have I done?" Nolan said in a low voice as his eyes followed the bus as it quickly went away from his sight.

Chapter 10: WILLFULLY YOURS

Caily's POV

I can't remember the last time I felt so upset, not until today. I hurriedly got on the bus right after Nolan said those words. I admit, I am getting used to his harsh opinion as always. However, this time I guess he's already crossing the line too much.

I understand that he's only trying to think of what's best for me and I always appreciate that. However, it is not always good to say something against someone you don't even know personally. I know Venus is beautiful and popular but then, who gave us the right to judge her? Who knows, despite her being so popular and all those stuffs, she is also undergoing a lot of struggles other people are not aware of.

I'd often see her as my inspiration. I prefer admiring her, to the point of accepting the fact that she's not perfect as other people will perceive her to be. I don't want to be like other people who love to see her faults, even bash her to the core until it hurts. That's not simply me in the first place. I guess Venus doesn't deserve to be hated because she's not doing anything wrong for people to judge her that easy.

I would often feel that it is not always fair to treat other people depending on how she would look. If she's ugly and unappealing, people will just put hate over the things that person is capable of doing, rather than appreciating what's unique in her. Maybe that's life sometimes. It isn't fair, and will never, ever be. Well, except for Venus, though. She's always the queen of exemptions, I wonder if sometimes she's getting tired of all the attention she's having.

My thoughts were interrupted when the bus finally stopped near the place where I live. I stood up from where I am seated and got off the bus. I walked slowly along the wide pavement surrounded by plants and trees all over. I still need to walk for about one kilometer until I reach the doorstep of our house. On my way, I will have to pass a wide children's park and an abandoned, old cemetery. The rusty metal gate was all locked up. No one is living near it because of the eerie feeling that it is giving to almost everyone that passes beside it. I heard from my mom that the land owner filed bankruptcy because most of his businesses went down. He has to pawn one of his properties to the bank. That includes the cemetery and we never heard of him ever since.

The children's park is already closed at four in the afternoon. That's why I can only see a few cars running on the road, as if in a hurry. I think they don't want to pass by the cemetery at dusk because it looks really creepy to me, too.

I tried walking as fast as I could so that I can reach home and finish my homework quickly. I suddenly wanted to eat dinner with my mom who always goes home late.

"Oh dear...I am hungry. Please give me some food." I heard someone from behind me.

"Oh my gosh! You startled me." I softly uttered as I looked at someone who called my attention.

"I am so sorry dear. Sorry to make you feel that way. Did I scare you?" The old woman, who looked more of a beggar roaming around the streets. When he looked at me, I was able to notice the details of her face. I was also able to look at her from head to toe. She's a bit tall, with saggy skin all around her face. She's having a pointed nose and thin lips. Her teeth were a mixture of yellowish and black, obviously not taken care of for a long time. She's wearing all black, with a cape on her back and a hood that's covering her hair.

"No, not at all." I tried to sound calm but I can't help but to feel nervous at this point of time.It is because for me, she looked like a witch more than a beggar. She looked scared that I am having goosebumps all over my body when she showed me her smile that creeps the hell out of me.

"Are you alone? Do you have your daughter or son with you? You should not go here often. Car accidents are happening here most of the time." I added, looking around me. I realized there were only the two of us talking to each other now.

"I am alone but thank you so much for being so thoughtful. This humble, old woman is very happy."

"I don't mind at all, ma'am." I answered. I was surprised as hell my heart almost skipped a beat when she called my attention a while ago. I wasn't even feeling a presence going past me because that's one of the loneliest roads this city has, most especially in this time of day.

"I am so sorry but I am so hungry, my dear. Please give me some food to eat." She said, teary-eyed as she looked at me directly to my eyes.

"Oh, okay ma'am." I smiled at her in an awkward manner as I removed my backpack from my shoulders. I opened her bag and I saw a beef sandwich and a small box of chocolate drink inside. Nolan would often leave many kinds of food inside my bag, it became my wonderland.

"Here, ma'am. Please take it." I held the food in both my hands and insisted she take then. I can see the old woman's excited reaction. I can't help but smile as soon as I realize this precious moment.

I'm already used to Nolan's simple sweet gestures. I knew that I'll never run out of food because I'm always hungry. It is just today that I missed eating what he bought for me because I immediately walked out after that library incident.

"Thank you so much dear. You really have a good heart." She smiled after she ate all of what I had given her. I noticed she's very quick in eating all of those.

"You're welcome, ma'am. I better get going. My mom is waiting for me now." I said as I nod. She also smiled back at me. I walked past her but I stopped when I heard those faint, creepy voices of an old woman that's bugging her for days.

"Well, every person with a good heart deserves a reward."

I was able to turn my back quickly to look at her for the last time but I can't see her anymore.

"Huh? Where is she?" I look around but all I can feel is the cold breeze touching my skin, instead of her presence. I hugged myself this time. Am I being tricked by my own thoughts? I knew I saw her just now but why is she gone all of a sudden?

I turned on my phone and dialled my mom's number. I can feel my knees trembling from what I just witnessed.

"Where are you, dear?"

"M-Mom...I-I am on my way home." I tried to sound calm as much as possible. I can hear my mom is doing something, most probably preparing our dinner for tonight. Maybe she's just putting her phone in between her shoulders and cheek, because both her hands were full and busy.

"Okay, honey. Please take care. Come home quickly, alright?" Before I say another word, she already hung up on me. I started walking as fast as I could.

I admit, I feel really scared right now. I want to think that everything that happened tonight isn't real. I think I really need to take a break and rest.

Bellezza Scyther is slowly ascending the stairs as she goes to the room where she's making her potion. The crow alighted on her shoulders but then she noticed he seemed to be quiet this time.

"My crow, what happened to you? Can't you not talk?" She asked him, frowning. The crow squealed right away.

"I don't want to bounce against the wall again, our highness." He said as he flapped his wings. He seemed to be stretching his body well.

"Oh silly creature." She said as she laughed out loud. The crow laughed nervously with her too.

"So, our highness...what is your plan?"

"Have you seen the girl, my crow?"

"Yes, our highness. What about her?"

"She can help me complete my potion. In return, I can grant her wish, her very desire she's been keeping deep within her heart." She said as she smiled. She stopped in front of the old, wooden door of the room where the potion is. She walked towards the iron cauldron of potion. It is still boiling. The green-colored liquid is almost brimming as it rose above.

"I can feel her burning desire."

"What? Desire? When?" The crow suddenly shut his beak off as soon as he saw Bellezza Scyther's killer stare at him.

"Poor you my dear. You're not observant enough."

"Is that so?"

"I can feel her earnest desire for change and I can definitely do her a favor if she'll let me." Bellezza Scyther smiled, a meaningful one.

She got the tissue wrapper and the box of chocolate she enjoyed a while ago inside her cloak. She threw them on the boiling potion and it slowly sinked into the boiling green-colored liquid. After a minute, it created a tiny exploding effect. It emitted white smoke as it arose in the air.

"The iron cauldron is not a trash bin, and you know that, right? Our highness?"

"And do you know that if I will be pissed, you'll be included in there, too?"

"I did not say a thing, our highness. You never heard a word I said..." The crow defensively replied to Bellezza Scyther. Before she loose her patience to the crow, she shifted her gaze to the things she had thrown inside.

"These are the things that she offered as a sign of good deed to others."

"I still don't understand." The crow said as he looked upward. Bellezza sighed aloud as she rolled her powerful eyes.

"You don't need to. Just watch and learn, my dear. Watch and be amazed."

"Well, I am with you always, you're Highness. I will know everything, eventually for sure."

"We'll continue to go to the world of the living. I like that girl, I shall keep my eyes on her."

Chapter 11: I'LL TAKE OVER

Nolan's POV

Lately, I noticed Caily for being too sensitive. I admit, I am quite surprised when she suddenly walked out from the library. I just aired my opinion about Venus and then she suddenly got mad at me.

I tried following her but to no avail. She already went inside the bus and headed home. I knew her, when she's angry, she doesn't want to talk to anyone. Unless she already cooled down from what she's feeling.

"Are you okay now?"

"I'm sorry I left a while ago." I can hear her soft voice on the other line. This kind of voice always makes my heart flutter.

"It's okay. I also apologize for what I did that offended you a while ago."

"No. Please do not mind it. Sorry that I have to react like that."

"I shouldn't do it when I know it will hurt you."

"Of course, it is not good to judge someone without us knowing Venus's real personality."

"I was just telling my opinions. I never thought that it will offend you in any way."

"I am not directly offended and you know that. I am just empathizing with Venus. I know she is already undergoing some difficulties. We might never know what she's been through, so instead of judging, we'll just understand her in any way we can." She explained. I can't help but sigh.

Venus found herself a faithful fan in Caily. She's very lucky.

"Yeah, I regret what I did. I'm really sorry."

"Don't be. It's totally fine."

"I guess I have to really study the psychology of girls and their attitude. Girls are unpredictable most of the time."

"I can't agree more." She giggled and I can't help but smile as I hear her.

"I miss you Caily. Can I go to your house?" I said. I heard her chuckle on the other line.

"You're really silly. It's already seven in the evening. We'll just see each other tomorrow." She replied. I can instantly see her smiling face as she said those words. I guess I knew her for the longest time because I can even see her reaction even if I am just calling her.

"Awww. Is that so? Well then, I can't wait for tomorrow to come." I sounded so sweet that I could hear her laugh a little.

"I miss you too. I can't last a day without talking to you. Please forgive my being unpredictable."

"You always know what I feel for you. I definitely understand you because I knew you well." He said in a reassuring tone. She said goodbye after three minutes of call.

Now I wonder, how long is she going to be a fan of Venus Hughes? Is she really happy about it? Is she being a fan because she really likes Venus that much? Or is she thinking something else?

Ever since she started being a fan of Venus, she started to change. She's doing many things that she isn't supposed to be doing. She even breaks her own rules for her to try to please Venus.

I wanted to stop her from idolizing her too much because it is not becoming of her anymore. However, how can I stop the happiness of the woman I love so much.

The next day, Venus started to stay in the library longer than she used to be.

She remembered Venus bragging about her promise to visit the library whenever she has a vacant time. Caily can't seem to forget that and visit the place as often as possible.

"I am so happy to meet you here." Adeline cheerfully said as she sat next to her. She looked tired from her facial expression.

"Why do you have to work here when you already work for Venus?" Caily asked her not to blink an eye. She wanted to see how she would answer her questions. Adeline sighed and eventually smiled.

"I have my reasons."

"It doesn't hurt if you tell me a little." Caily said as she softly giggled. She inched closer to her as she roamed her eyes sideward to see if she's being observed by the librarian.

"Well, I miss being alone with books. They are my safest haven. If I have to stay there at Venus's mansion, I can't see a lot of books and it is making me sad."

"Is that so?"

"All I can see are scattered magazines and different beauty stuff. She doesn't even have a study or a mini-library of her own. How can she live a life like that?" Adeline said, as if not hiding what she needed to say. Caily saw her frown as she said those words.

"Maybe that's her lifestyle afterall."

"I can't imagine myself having that kind of lifestyle. It's simply dull and lifeless."

"Well, for us nerds..." Caily raised her fingers to show her the "quote and quote" gesture to Adeline. "Books are life. Without them, we can't be happy." She added, smiling. She just want her friend to understand that some people born beautiful and privileged in life mustn't put a lot of books nor keep one because they've got money to make their worlds go round.

"And I will be happy with books, until forever. Forget salary for a while, you will just earn it soon. Go for a good read, the things that you will learn from books will last inside your brain forever. No one ever told me they regret reading one.

"Yeah, you're right about that." She said as she nodded to me politely.

"Oh by the way, I almost forgot what am I supposed to tell you." Caily added.

"Huh?"

"Have you told Venus about me being a substitute if in case you'll not be available, perhaps?"

"Oh my goodness! I already forgot that I have a student council interview at this time." Adeline said as he stood at the library.

"But you haven't answered my question yet."

"No. I still have to figure out the way of how will I do it. Given that, of course Venus is a busy woman. You can't simply talk to her without setting an appointment on normal days."

"Whoah! Can you tell me more?"

"Oh dear, oh dear. There will be no more. I better get going. See you when I see you!" Caily waved and shouted as Adeline went ahead of her from the outside of the library.

"I hope you'll remember me to introduce to her when you have a time." Caily said softly as she lets out a sigh. She followed Adeline by her eyes until she's nowhere in sight.

"I am seeing a glimpse of hope, knowing that any time soon I can work with Venus, and I will be her private tutor instead." Caily murmured happily. Thinking of the possibility of her job, she can't hide her excitement of meeting Venus face to face.

She can't wait for more.

Adeline's meeting with the student council has finally come to an end. As she looks at the clock, she knew somebody must be diligently waiting for her to come.

She rushed inside Venus's room immediately inside their house. She's already known by all of the people there as Venus's personal tutor. That's why she gained access most of the time, in going inside and outside of the mansion.

"Are you ready? Sorry to keep you waiting for me."

"As if I have a choice."Venus muttered as she rolled her eyes. Adeline smiled as she sits next to Venus's bed. On the other hand, Venus is lying down the bed, sidewards looking at her. She supported her head with her left hand, her elbow on the bed. She's wearing a pink, silk robe that glitters. Her face is also covered with white cream, except her eyes and lips.

"You have to understand math phobias by means of understanding and memorizing them one by one." Adeline said, looking at Venus. She wanted to resign so bad, however, if not for Venus's father, she's not also here.

There are many things her family has done for her and Adeline is very thankful about it and yet, It is making her feel the worst, either. It's like a lifetime curse that she has to be there for Venus.

'I really hope she could able to stand for herself at least once in a while. She's not getting any younger. She needs to think about the perspective of contrasting worlds she might encounter as she faces her life independently. If she thinks she's dependent well enough, then I am never impressed.'

Adeline saw Venus as she reached out her personalized "Venus" pen on her bedside table from the other side of bed. She is using it most of the time. "Please study effectively. Try to understand the contents of your book well, dear!"

"I am trying, don't you all worry."

"Try not to sleep because in a week's time, there will be major exams that's coming. You have to understand what you're trying to answer one by one."

"Okay, okay. Please do not remind me over and over again. I feel bad about myself if you continue that."

"I'm sorry." Adeline said. As she looked at Venus, she saw her folding her arms tight and looking at her with an icy stare.

"Oh by the way, before I forgot, I want to let you know that if I can't report to you or whenever I wanted to request a leave for work, you will have another substitute tutor that will take care of you."

"What? Why? Can't I not review whenever you're not here, instead?" Venus said as she smiled at her tutor. Adeline just smirked off the idea she's suggesting.

"You shouldn't stop reviewing. Don't worry. I personally know the substitute tutor myself just in case it will happen.

"Who?" Venus asked with raised eyebrows.

"Caily Mcfisher."

Chapter 12: SECOND IN LINE

"What?"

"You heard me right. I put my confidence on her since she's my friend and I personally know her for many years now."

"How dare you hire someone I don't even know?" Venus said as she frowned. She even put her hands on her hips as she raised her eyebrows.

"It doesn't matter if you didn't know her. What matters the most is her effectivity to help you pass the coming exams.

"My gosh, you know what? Let me tell you a secret, I can pay so that I can pass the test without any question at all." Venus said, folding her arms as she rested it below her chest. Adeline smirked her idea off.

"How will you feel about it afterwards? Will you be proud of yourself when you will really pass because you "paid" for it? How ridiculous could it sound? Do you even hear yourself?"

"Ah, you piece of shit." Venus answered. She's obviously pissed as hell because of what Adeline is saying to her.

"I'm the piece of shit you're benefiting from. Stop talking nonsense. Start reading and learn from them one by one, understood?" Venus rolled her eyes at her while grabbing the snack her personal maid prepared for her. Adeline handled her the books that she needed to study.

Venus finally found herself a seat and a table for her to sit down. As she is reading few pages of the book, she looked at Adeline and smiled.

"Well, what can I do? Anyways, you can select anyone as my personal tutor because I trust you a lot." Venus finally said with a sigh.

"That's good to know." Although a bit hesitant, Venus accepted the deal because she had known Adeline for almost a year already. Her tutor smiled at her because Venus agreed right away.

"Please tell her to see me in my house. It would be much better for you to go here with her tomorrow instead."

"Wow. I never see that coming." Adeline answered, a bit amazed.

"Well, I guess we have to talk for us to know each other a little. Also, I want to tell her about my rules and the payment scheme for her service."

"You're not planning to fire me, right?"

"Well, if you give me a reason to do so, I will not hesistate and you know me well."

"Of course."

"Just remember what I said. I have to meet her tomorrow."

"Clear enough. I will make a phone call with her right away." Adeline said. She just nodded and smiled. Well, the whole plan is not bad at all. Besides, she has her own plans, too. She knew Caily Mcfisher a bit. That senseless, ugly girl who almost ruined her Ethereal Venus's fashion show. How can she able to forget her?

She must not feel bad about Adeline hiring Caily for her. It might turn out to be a blessing in disguise for her and she might have her revenge for what she did.

She smiled as she continued reading some pages she didn't even understand.

"Good news, girl. Venus agreed." Adeline excitedly called Venus minutes after Venus allowed what she wanted.

"Oh my, that fast?" She heard the other line giggled with happiness. She can't help but smile.

"Of course. As if she has a choice."

"Whoah! You don't know how happy I am, dear! How can I ever thank you?"

"My gosh, you're one, lucky fan." Adeline answered. She can't help but chuckle because she can hear Caily's enthusiasm after hearing the good news.

"Yeah, and you made it possible."

"Well, do not feel very happy,though. It's more of a nightmare rather than a job opportunity so must be prepared at all times."

"I will keep that in mind, dear."

"You have to go with me tomorrow. She'll talk to you about the job.'

"Wow! Oh my! Really?"

"Don't be too excited. Go get some sleep first and be presentable. She wanted girls who really takes care of their physical appearance."

After all, Adeline will be the one who will benefit the most because she can now take her leave without feeling any guilt. She's very happy that she haven't got a hard time convincing that brat.

"Okay. Thank you once again dear! I will always be grateful for this favor."

"Gosh, the coming nightmare should not be thankful of. This is more of a warning: Goodluck!"

"If you like what you want to do, no matter how hard it is, at the end of the day, you will only feel happiness."

"Well, we may have different perspectives. I just wish you the best."

"Thank you, Adeline! You're the best friend I've ever had."

"Second to Nolan."

Caily chuckled. "Ah, yes. How could I ever forget that punk?" She said and they laugh together.

"Our highness, I still don't get it. Why did you put all those trash inside the cauldron?"

"You are really one, thoughtless crow I don't know what to do with you anymore."

"Curiosity doesn't kill, our highness."

"But if you're one, senseless crow, you'd better say goodbye to your body now."

"Oh our dearest queen, you know a joke, right?"

"I know and do not make a fool out of me." She said, really pissed. They are facing the boiling cauldron again, this time Bellezza grinned as she smelled what she's making.

"Those are the things that she owns, my dearest crow. I used them as my main ingredient for my special potion to add its power, you'll see."

"So, she's the girl that you plan to have?" The crow answered, sounding annoying and curious at the same time. Bellezza just look at him with a meaningful look as she grinned.

"I will just wait for an opportunity to make someone's dream a reality."

"Well, Fayvallea might be happy to know that your potion could help someone in the living world. Imagine the queen of the undead finally supports the queen of Blossomcrest."

"Yuck. I want to sulk about the idea."

"But you're doing it anyway, right?"

The crow saw Bellezza Scyther's smile. From her reaction, he suddenly shuddered. The crow is scared of Bellezza and what she does with her power, how much more with the things running in her mind that's not known to him?

That is the real scary thing.

"I can already smell my success. It is almost done." She said as she cackled aloud. The crow just alighted on her shoulders.

"I am just on your side, our highness. I want to be the first to witness your sweet success."

Adeline held her hand as she entered Venus's guest room. She can't help but to be amazed because of the overall interior design. It followed a minimalist interior design of floral and spiral themed combined. Sophistication and elegance is the first thing you'll notice inside the room.

She can't help but to smile. She was impressed on how beautiful the mansion is, including the rooms she haven't got the chance to see. She remembered the last time she passed out. She was placed in a room but not in this type. That room is just simple and the interiors were almost white all over.

"You're both here." They both turned their backs and saw Venus. She obviously went home from school because she's still wearing the skimpy uniform.

'I haven't got the chance to see her up close and I never realized she's even this beautiful.' Caily said to herself, almost gasping with awe.

The three of them sat together on that meeting table Venus prepared. Venus smiled sweetly as usual, while Adeline smirked with full of disgust. As of Caily, she secretly poke Adeline's left part of her waist with her right elbow under the sheets of the table.

"Nice to meet you, Caily Mcfisher. My name is Venus Hughes."

"I already knew you. I am a big fan." Caily answered as she shook hands with Venus in a tight manner. It's now Adeline's turn to poke her elbow secretly on Caily's waist without Venus noticing it. She let go of Venus's hand right away and bowed her head down in an apologetic way.

"Oh. Thank you so much." Venus said as she smiled more.

"Shall we start?" Adeline interrupted, obviously impatient from what she's seeing right now.

"Oh, yeah. Caily, here's a folder of the things you should know more as a substitute tutor, just in case Adeline will be unavailable or she have some urgent matters to attend to."

"Why don't you tell her about it more?" Adeline commented one more time.

"Well, I guess that would be a waste of time already. I only spared twenty minutes for this meeting."

"Whoah. You're really that busy." Caily said, really amazed.

"Yes. I am really sorry I will not take long. Do you have any questions before I go?" Venus asked her in a straightforward manner.

"I-I don't know. There are too many questions for you but then I guess I will keep it and ask you next time."

"Okay, then. It is all settled. Thank you for attending now. Venus said as she stood up.

Adeline just rolled her eyes from what she's seeing. She came near Caily who is still smiling as she followed her gaze to Venus who is leaving the room right now.

She folded her arms as she come near her best friend who looks like she's in cloud nine.

"How I wish she could really be like that all the time."

"What do you mean?" Caily said as she hear Adeline's voice. Caily's smile suddenly faded away after what she heard from her best friend.

"She's just keeping her temper at school but here, it's the total opposite of her behavior. Please take care of yourself." Adeline warned her as she receieves the folder.

"I still don't understand what you're talking about."

"Caily, there are things that Venus does that we don't know yet. Please do not stay too close to her or you will regret it for the rest of your life!"

"You really sounded like Nolan but this time, it's the girl's version. I love it! You're my best friend second to Nolan, Adeline!"

"You really make my heart ache. You're making it clear that I will forever be your second best."

"At least there's still "best" in it."

"You're really silly."

Adeline accompanied Caily until one of the personal drivers of Venus to fetch Caily home. As soon as the two got off the car, Caily is surprised when Adeline hugged her.

"I just want to make you feel well. Please remember what I am telling you about Venus. You don't know her yet, but if you do, I hope you will not regret it."

"What are those things I should regret about Venus Hughes? Gosh, call me fool but do you even know her?"

'I do not personally know her, that's for sure. However, I knew her enough to warn you to stop idolizing her too much."

"Fine, Adeline." Caily said as she sighed aloud. How can she argue to someone who just helped her?

"Never, ever put your trust to Venus Hughes. That would be the last thing you'll ever do."

'Do not worry, I will remember every reminders you said now."

Adeline hugged Venus and went inside their house. She had a long day because of what happened. However, she is happy because her dreams are finally becoming a reality.

She will work for Venus Hughes. It means she will be close to her. She can't wait.

Chapter 13: HAPPINESS IN A BOX

"I am free to file a leave any time I want." Adeline cheerfully said as she hugged Venus. She seem to be stunned after she hear that from her friend.

"Sure. I will be more than happy to do that for you, my dear."

"Well, Venus is quite good but most of the time, it depends upon her mood to do it for others."

"From the way you sound, you really knew her quite a lot."

"Of course." Adeline confidently answered. "She is so hard to deal with. I had a hard time discovering how I could handle her."

"How did it go?"

"Well, after a lot of observation from her, I managed to get to know her attitude in the long run."

"Really?" Caily's expression is really amazed from what she heard from Adeline. She badly wanted to know her idol more so that she will minimize the possibility of disappointing her if ever she will have to start working for her.

"First, you have to show her that you're not predictable. I don't want to see you being manipulated by her. That's the worst thing to happen."

"Whoah. Is she doing that?"

"Well...I cannot exactly tell but please, notice how action speaks louder than words. She might not tell it directly to you but she's great when it comes to manipulating people without you even noticing it."

"Well, it may differ from who she's dealing with. I strongly believe on this."

"And I do not want you to be manipulated by her. I am telling you this because we're two different personalities."

"You are really assuming that I am always the underdog."

"Why, is it not obvious? Do you know that Nolan already assumed this one to happen? That's why he told me to remind you about this just in case."

"Well, congratulations to him it is happening."

"I know your best friend is only thinking about you because he care so much."

"I hope he's not judging Venus from what he's doing right now."

"You will understand why he's doing it soon."

Caily was tasked to do Venus's homework after three days of her being hired as her assistant tutor. She was able to do Venus's homework and so far, Venus is enjoying everything because the accuracy is really great. Adeline is right. Caily is able to do her duties and even exceed her expectations.

However, the Ethereal Venus's fashion show is only happening once in a year. She was able to invest a lot from that show. Being a perfectionist, she was totally disappointed of the outcome. All because of Caily Mcfisher. How can she ever forget her when she made a show for herself? Nobody could ever steal her own show from her. No one.

"Here's your homework, Venus." Caily timidly smiled as she handed three pieces of paper to Venus in an awkward manner. Venus smiled as she received it. She examined it closely to herself and she noticed how Caily exerted some efforts in doing a complicated math problems.

"Oh, there's a small ink that's making this page ugly." Before Caily retrieve the papers from Venus's hand, she started to tear the paper into many pieces. Caily can't help but drop her jaw in shock.

Venus looked at Caily's reaction as she did that thing for her. As she looked at Caily's face, she can see that she's about to cry but she's just stopping herself from doing so.

"I have no extra copy of that, Venus." Caily answered her as she looked down and bit her lower lip.

'Dear, never allow yourself to cry in front of her, or else you'll give her the reason for her to manipulate you more...' Caily just kept these words to herself.

"Is that even a problem? I know it's just easy for you to do it again, right? Just answer everything from the very beginning and then bring it to school first thing in the morning tomorrow."

"B-But..."

"Are you going to resign now?" Venus asked her in the most sarcastic way while not losing her smile.

"No, that's not what I mean. It's just that--"

"Well, just do what I say." After she heard those words from Venus, she can't help but run away from Venus's room.

Caily's POV

I want to believe what they are saying is true. I've been very patient in dealing with her attitude but today, it's just too much to handle.

I am now sitting on one of the benches to the park near the cemetery. I noticed I am already sitting alone within that area because it is already quarter to five in the afternoon.

The whole place is getting quieter. The only noise that I am hearing is the silent breeze that touches my skin. I will be telling lies if I will say I can't feel any eerie feeling right now.

I hugged my arms as I slowly looked around. I didn't notice tears already falling down my cheeks. Is it wrong to give someone the benefit of the doubt?

The only strength I have is having a good heart but why is it that somebody is trying to steal it away from me? I thought doing good will always be an admirable deed to start with...why is it that it might seem so wrong for other people?

Am I really doing bad for doing good? What benefit should I get if I will change a bit? Is my life really worth living?

I slowly get up and walk to our house. I feel really drained right now all I want to do is to sleep. I entered the house and I noticed my mom is holding the remote control of our TV while sitting in the living room. When she saw me, she paused from what she's doing.

"Hey, darling. Eat your dinner now. You looked tired."

"Mom, I'm not hungry." I muttered as I walk past her. I feel so tired and drained that I can't even feel my legs anymore as I ascend the stairs in going to my room.

When I opened the door, I threw my schoolbag on a nearby chair and I walk towards my bed. I plunged my body at the center of it, feeling the soft, white mattress that covered my wide bed. The comfort I instantly felt made me close my eyes automatically.

"Hello! I am a fan!" A lot of people flocked towards me as they forced to shake their hands to me. I am too stunned that I just smiled awkwardly.

I have no idea what's going on right now...

"Hey babe. Let's go?" Somebody put his hand on my shoulders as he pulled me closer to him. When I look upward to see who's talking to me, I froze in an instant.

"A-Aivan Harper?" My eyes widened in shock as I said those words. He just grinned. He even stole a kiss on my cheek I did not see it coming.

I saw the people around me cheered as if they really love what they are seeing at this moment.

"They are really made for each other." I saw a girl giggle as she poke her friend who is also smiling like crazy. I am really confused this time, I don't know what is happening anymore.

"Yes, I agree. I really love their loveteam." I heard others commented in unison. They even had high-fives. I can see Aivan Harper smiled at them. He held my hand in front of them. "Let's go?" Without hearing my answer, he pulled me away from the crowd as we head towards her fancy car parked to the VIP parking area of the school premises. I am more of being hypnotized because, well, that's Aivan Harper pulling me, shall I say no? If I already consider this my dream come true?

"What is happening to you? Are you okay?"

"Venus...what's wrong? Are you alright?" He added that made me stopped walking instantly. I slowly turned my head on one of the car's window to see her reflection.

I suddenly opened my eyes and now, I can only see the white-colored ceiling of my room.

A dream.

Now I am wondering. If it is only a dream, then why does it feel so real? It is so real she could still feel Aivan Harper' breath on her cheek. The hand that held hers and his kind of grip that does not want to let go as much as possible.

It's like more of a reality coming out from a dream. It made my heart race like crazy. I slowly touched my chest to feel my own heartbeat. Right now, I can feel is that my heart wants to go out from my ribcage. I have mixed emotions this time. I don't exactly know if I feel excited, scared, happy or neither from the choices. It is totally weird.

Being the "Venus Hughes"? In my dream, I could see all the faces from the crowd as they flock towards me for an autograph. I could feel my heart slowly filling with happiness. I saw myself the desperation from their faces just to ask an autograph coming from me. I could see how their eyes sparkled as I smiled at them all.

So, I think that's the bliss that Venus Hughes is feeling every time she faces her fans. No wonder, she has the right to feel so proud about herself.

Now this is the feeling of living the life of Venus. I can't help but smile. If that is a dream, I shouldn't wake up from this life of being "Caily Mcfisher". I wanted the life of "Venus Hughes" better.

"Darling..." I heard a faint voice that speak right through my head. I looked around but nobody is there. I suddenly grabbed my blanket and covered it over me as I am now in my sitting position on my bed.

"Who are you?" I exclaimed, trying to sound brave as much as possible.

"Do you really want to live the life of Venus Hughes?" That faint sound followed a cackle, as if I am hearing a voice of an old witch. That is a faint, whispering sound, I can almost feel somebody is telling all these right beside me, inch closer to my left ear.

I shut my eyes. I closed it because I felt really scared. I can feel goosebumps all over my body, from the strand of my hair down to my toenails.

"What do you know about? Go away! Please!"

"Is that what you really wanted? Darling, you can still change your mind. I can grant your wish. You can be Venus Hughes..."

I automatically opened my eyes and right in front of my face under the white blanket, I can see a beautiful woman that's wearing all black staring at my face as she grinned. Our face is really close to each other I can hear her breathing. I wanted to move but this time, I think I am just frozen. Maybe because of this scared and shocked emotion that controlled me already this time.

But what did she say? I can be Venus Hughes? Can she really do it for me?

Chapter 14: BAD AT BEING GOOD

Caily's POV

"Oh, this silly girl." She smiled back at me and I realized it is not a dream after all. I froze, dead scared. I can't seem to process what I am seeing today.

Who is she? How was she able to enter my room without even opening the door? How could she speak right through my mind when I can't see her lips moving? Does she know what's running in my mind right now?

"I am Bellezza Scyther, your special friend." She grinned as she offered her hand for a handshake. I looked at her face and eventually turned my gaze on her hands, too. She's wearing a precious ring embossed with accent crystal stones on its side shank,the rest covered with pure gold. The center stone of the ring is what caught my attention the most. I believe it is a black onyx that symbolizes physical power to whoever will wear it.

"Who are you?"

"Is my identity more important than your wish that I am about to grant?" Bellezza said as she grinned.

"I don't know how you easily get here in my room but you're invading my privacy." I replied, trying to meet her powerful eyes.

I saw her frown all of a sudden. She folded her arms and removed the blanket that's covering both of us in just one snap of her finger. I haven't even seen how she did it herself.

"Why are you being so complicated? I didn't know this side of you." She said, looking at me as if examining my facial expressions. I can see that she's gently tapping both of her arms with her fingers, emphasizing her black, pointed nails. She raised one of her eyebrows as she sighed aloud.

"Anyway, I want to introduce myself. I am the queen of Withermoor, Bellezza Scyther. It's a pleasure to meet you, darling." She offered her hand for a handshake again, for the second time around. I slowly accepted her hands as I do an awkward handshake that made her chuckle all of a sudden.

"Withermoor what?"

"Oh my goodness. I don't have to tell you in detail about my place, you'll not familiar with it, anyway."

"Wherever that is, I think that place is cool." I said, trying to keep the conversation up. I saw her rolled her eyes as if not liking what I commented about where she came from.

"Seriously, you're the only one who appreciated my place. It is really nice of you."

"Well, from how you looked like right now, I guess that place is interesting."

You have no idea of how good-hearted you are, I want to melt."Bellezza smiled but with full of sarcasm as she raised her eyebrows in front of my wondering face.

I just nodded and smiled, too. She's really weird and creepy at the same time. I am just thankful that she's really friendly.

"How will you grant my wish?" I said as I started to get curious.

"Oh..." Her facial reaction suddenly changed. She gently clapped her hands with full of glee as she faced me. She's grinning from ear to ear. "Well, imagine me being your genie in a bottle."

"You're not a boy." I reacted right away. I can see the disgust in her reaction. It's like she's trying to be patient with me.

"Just think that I only came from another place, but somehow, I can do it, too."

"Whoah." I can't help but be amazed. Can she really do it?

"How?" I held both of her hands in excitement.

"Simple. Think of a wish that you really want to come true with all your heart." She said as she looked directly into my eyes. As I meet her gaze, I feel like she's casting a spell on me.

"To become rich?" I answered right away. She frowned at me and she looked at me in a deeper perspective as if looking at my soul already.

"I hate you. Be realistic. I know it's not the wish of your heart." She avoided my gaze and brushed off my hands that held hers. She started to hum a weird sound that give me goosebumps.

"Will it be realistic if I will tell you that I want to experience living the life of Venus Hughes?" I said as I looked at her. I saw her eyes glistened this time. It's like it is the answer that she wants me to tell her.

There was a long pause. I look at her intently while she is looking directly into my eyes as if studying the sincerity of what I just said. Is shw trying to read my mind? She sighed aloud and flashed a victorious grin. She started doing this when she realized I am dead serious about my wish...but it is more of being impossible even in my dreams.

"Granting queer wishes is my cup of tea. I can able to do it if I think you are that deserving. Following crucial instructions are part of it, of course."

"Huh? How did I become deserving? I did not do anything." I said, very confused as I shook my head.

"You really never realize you're doing great these days. I counted your deed and treat that as worthy."

"I never do a good deed for other people just to expect something in return. I just do it because I always think it is the right thing to do."

"Well darling, I never wanted you to think about that way."

"So, what exactly do you mean, then?"

"What I mean is, I think every deed deserves a reward, especially if you do good to others with your heart in it."

"I still don't understand."

"I want to reward you for a great deed you've done for an old woman."

I froze as my eyes widened. How did she know about that? I remembered there's no one except the both of us on that lonely road, even on that park, unless...

"Yep, darling. That's me. I am that old woman." She said and started laughing. I can hear the laugh similar to a witch.

"So you are a witch? Now I am more confused."

"I do not want to complicate things. The reason why I am here is to grant your wish. All you have to do is to think about what wish should you want me to do for you. I will be back so please be ready when it happens. Byebye!" She said and as she mentioned the last word, she disappeared as I blink both of my eyes.

I slapped myself to test if I am still dreaming but sadly, I am not. I am beginning to fear the coming days. Meeting Bellezza Scyther is not a joke after all. Should I consider this a blessing or more of a curse? What does she mean when she said that she's like a genie in a bottle? Above all, can she really grant my wish? That sounded too impossible for me to even believe it myself.

The next day, I tried coming to school early because I still have to give Venus the homework that she wanted me to accomplish.

I almost never got a goodnight's sleep because I stayed up late until two in the morning. This time, I made sure that there will be no erasures or ink messed somewhere. I wrote as legibly and as neatly

as I can before I handed it to her. I never thought she's this perfectionist when it comes to every detail she wanted.

She wanted me to meet her at the back of our school library. It is full of trees standing tall and many plants surrounding the whole place. There's a secret mini-garden that's been set up that suitable for students who wanted to be alone. Some people also go here merely because they don't want to be disturbed when they will read a book. It is not the place where many students go that's why she preferred to meet me here.

"Oh, you're already here." She walked towards me as she wore her signature smile. It's like she's been hiding something and she's only wearing that generic smile people is expecting from her.

"Yes. Just like what you reminded me yesterday."

"Well, you're ten minutes early. I am impressed. I thought I'm the first to arrive here." She said as she checks the papers that I already handed to her. She looks at every page meticulously and smiled.

"Here's your tip. Thank you." She said as she shoved a three-hundred dollar bill in front of me. Before I can even react to what she did, the bills fell on the ground. I quickly picked it up but I also dropped my eyeglasses on the ground all of a sudden. She walked past me. Unexpectedly, she stepped on my eyeglasses as I heard a crack that almost broke my heart into pieces.

I didn't exactly see if she really intended to step on my eyeglasses or it is just an accident. Seriously though, I can't help myself but to be hurt too much.

"Oopsie. Don't worry. I already gave you the money. You just buy a new pair for yourself." She smiled with full of sarcasm. I can't help but to cry.

I have no problem with buying a new one. What hurts me the most is the fact that I can't fix that special pair of eyeglass my father bought for me five years ago. He bought it as a birthday gift for me. A week later, he died in a car accident.

I promised myself to take good care of this eyeglass because it is a good memory of my dad before he died. I never expected Venus to be that bad. I am so frustrated that I can't help but to cry out loud.

"Caily!" I heard a familiar voice. Somebody made me stand up as he helped me get on my knees because I am not moving. I am almost crawling on the ground.

"Are you all right?" He said as he looked at me from head to toe. I heard him cuss when he saw my broken eyeglasses. When I realized he saw what I am trying to hide, I can't help but to cry as I hugged him tight.

I felt his hand caressing my back as if consoling me from what happened. He let me cry for a long time. Good thing it was both our break and we haven't got a class in our next subject after the teacher sent us a chat in our virtual meeting chat group.

He let me sit to one of the benches around the place as he put his hands around my shoulders as she guide me.

He held my broken eyeglasses as he shifted his gaze at me.

"I am so sorry to see this eyeglasses in this situation."

"I feel really bad, you know."

"Why? It's just a pair of eyeglasses." He responded right away.

"Y-Yeah. It might only looked like a normal eyeglass but that's my father's gift to me." I said as I sniffed. He got something from his pocket. I can see his hankerchief and tried to wipe my tears.

"Please do not worry about it too much dear. It will be fixed soon." Nolan said with full of reassurance in his tone.

"How?" I said between sobs.

"I will find a way." He said as he hugged me on the waist. That particular gesture from him made her feel really good. He's someone great that could make her feel alright, despite of all the things that's happening to her.

Maybe Nolan is right. Venus shouldn't be someone to idolize. She's a spoiled brat that nobody could ever stop. She's now starting to consider what the witch told her the last time...granting a wish to experience the life of Venus Hughes. Why not? Maybe she can change her life by doing it, too.

Chapter 15: SURE, LURE

"Well...what can you say?" Bellezza asked the crow as it rested on her left shoulder.

"I am not believing it myself! I can see that she's convinced from what you told her last time." The crow can't hide his excitement as he said those words.

"That's what I am telling you my dearest crow. I am good at convincing anyone."

"You're indeed the queen of Withermoor."

"My potion is done." She grinned as she stopped looking at the cauldron of potion. It was boiling violently a while ago but this time, it is gradual...until it halted to a stop.

The crow looked so amazed he can't help but to flap his wings out of happiness and excitement.

"I can't wait what will happen next."

"My darling crow, you'll see, everything is going my way. Nothing can stop me now." She said as she cackled.

"We'll just have to wait. Let us do it one step at a time."

"We will not go to Caily's house, our highness?"

"No."

"Why? I thought the potion is done? It's time to go to her and do our next move."

"Easy darling, easy."

"Oh, our queen. It's not so you!"

"We just need to wait for Caily to call me. I know it will be sooner than I am expecting her to do it."

"Oh my. How sure are you? She even doubted where you came from. Can you remember how she made fun of Withermoor?"

"She will definitely need me when I do not expect it at all. Just be patient and enjoy the show afterwards." Bellezza grinned as she looked at the crow. From her reaction, she's already victorious.

"We will see then. I can't help but be excited, too." The crow flapped its wings again, as if celebrating their sure victory somewhere down following the road of certainty.

They are now on the fifth floor of their school. They've spend their time on their lessons but then Nolan tried his very best to comfort Caily from what happened.

Nolan and Caily are both standing up, gazing at the beautiful sunset. Nolan can't help but glance at his dear friend. From what happened, he is now cautious about his opinions.

He knew for sure that any wrong opinion could break their friendship any time and he doesn't want it to happen.

Although he have all the right to comment from what happened to Caily, on how she was bullied by Venus, he preferred to keep quiet.

"How ironic, isn't it?" Caily muttered. Because Nolan can't hear her well, he inched closer to her.

"It turned out you were right all along." She added. He was able to hold her shoulders gently. He let her face him and look into his eyes.

"I can't stop you from admiring other people. That's your right and your happiness." He said as he wiped her tears again.

"But if you're losing yourself because of it, then it's another story that I should be mindful about."

"I'm so sorry, Nolan. You have to also suffer because of me. This is too much disturbing you already." She said between sobs. Nolan hugged her right away.

"You never disturbed me nor wasted my time. You're dear and special to me I will never allow any bad thing to happen to you."

"You should leave me alone, Nolan. I know this is too much already."

"It is never too much if the reason is you. I will never get tired of you no matter how unpredictable you are."

"Thank you Nolan. I always appreciate that you never let me feel alone."

"I will always be here for you." Nolan said. It made her cry even more. She was touched because she can see the sincerity as she looked at Nolan's eyes. Those pair of lovely eyes that knew her entire soul...

She knew that Nolan is someone whom she can trust so much. He's the truest for her. He can bring her the comfort that nobody else can. He's her hero in disguise. He's the best friend everyone is dreaming of having forever.

She wanted to feel him into her arms. She wanted to feel this kind of embrace that seem to last for a lifetime. She wanted to feel his heart beating next to her.

She wanted to memorize all of his bestfriend's features, his eyes, nose, mouth, the way he breath, the way he would laugh or simply the kind of comfort he's doing especially for her.

She's enjoying everything...right here at this moment because it might be the last time she can do it.

After what happened this early morning, she is now considering the offer of Bellezza the witch. She is more than excited. This time, nobody can stop her from making her only dream a reality...

Twelve midnight.

She is sitting on the bed, with eyes wide awake. After that incident from last week, she already had some sleepless nights.

'Oh dear...just call me and I will be there.'

She can still recall the voice of Bellezza the witch.

She had been thinking about that wish she's about to grant for her. Bellezza said that she could call her any time if she's very sure of her wish, her only wish that she want with all her heart.

"Bellezza...where are you?" She gently called her, as her voice gently goes with the wind and as she blinked her eyes, she could she the same image she had seen last week.

"I heard someone calling my name." Bellezza said as she appeared right away. Caily almost had a heart attack.

"I'm sorry to appear right in front of you. I was just too excited of you calling my name."

"Oh..."

"So my darling dear Caily...what's your wish?" She asked, grinning victoriously. She looked at her as if very confused.

"I don't know if I should wish this or not..." Caily answered and Bellezza could sense that she's holding back what she wanted to ask.

"Don't be my dear. If it is the wish of your heart, then who am I to stop myself from granting it to you? Just imagine that it is your reward for being good."

"Well, I want to live the life of Venus." Caily finally dared speak what she always wanted. Bellezza can't help but to laugh out loud.

"I knew it darling! I knew it! Is that what you really wanted?"

"Y-Yes."

"Tell me again."

"I want to live the life of Venus!" Caily said as if gathering all her strength to tell it right in front of her face.

Bellezza cackled as if she had won somebody's favor. She's very happy from what she heard from Caily. What made her blissful even more is her wish and on how sure she is this time.

"I can grant it to you my dear, of course." She nodded as she grinned, facing her. "However,"

Caily looked at her as if waiting for her to spill it out. She realized that she's this sure of what she always wanted for herself.

"There's one condition..."

"What is it?"

"You will indeed live the life of Venus by having her body yourself."

"Huh?" Caily answered, giving her a confused look.

"I need her soul my dear. Can you give it to me?"

"Soul? What soul?"

"You will enjoy your wish not only for a day but for the whole week."

"I have this potion that could change your life forever." She said as she opened her palm as she grinned. She could see a little bottle that's floating on her palm. It contained a green liquid that glows in the dark.

"You have to try your best to drink half of it and the other half goes to Venus at the same time. If you can do it, then your wish will come true."

"Huh?"

"Are you going to be like that all the time or you will follow my instructions?"

"Yes." She answered right away.

"Very well then. It is our secret. No one should ever know all these things. It is only between you and me or else you can't go back to your body anymore after a week."

"Well...I don't mind living the life of Venus forever." Caily muttered softly but she didn't know that that statement of hers reached Bellezza's ears. It pleased her even more. Those words were

only intended to herself but Bellezza happens to also know the thoughts of other people by looking at her cauldron.

"I will do it right away." Caily answered. In a blink of an eye, she's already holding the small, transparent bottle and Bellezza is gone at the same time. She tried looking around but she's nowhere in sight.

Can this be true? She tried pinching herself and when she felt hurt after what she did to herself and as she looks at the bottle, she realized that everything is real. She have no choice but to start what she ought to do right at this moment.

The next day, while she's on her way to the library, she felt her phone vibrating. When she checked it, she saw Adeline calling her.

"Hello?"

"Hi Caily! How are you?"

"I'm okay. I'm on my way to the library."

"T-Thats great."

"It is sweet of you to call me just to ask if I am okay. What do you want?"

"I'd like to ask one more favor from you if it is okay?"

"Is it about Venus again?"

"Yeah. Please do this for me. I promise this would be the last favor I will ask from you. My mother is just sick today. I should take care of her right after I go to school."

Caily can feel the gloom from Adeline's tone of voice. She definitely understand where she's coming from.

"Okay. I will be going there this afternoon."

"Whoah! That's really great dear! Thank you so much! I will really make it up to you dear."

"Don't worry. You should take care of your mom right now."

"By the way, I'm sorry about Venus did--"

"That's ridiculous. Isn't she the one who should do that for me? Why are you doing it for her?"

"Well...it might help."

"Don't try to change my mind I might not go to Venus's house if you keep on insisting that."

"Sorry. I will not do it again."

"Mind your business and I'll do mine." As soon as Caily said those words, she's the one who ended the call.

Caily's POV

I slowly walk until I reach the entrance of Venus's mansion. I am able to go here again and again because I am her substitute tutor and yet I am never getting tired of appreciating this house.

I sighed aloud. I slowly got the small bottle out from my pocket and I played it by rubbing it between my hands.

Is Bellezza really serious? Should I really believe all that she's telling me? What if everything is only a joke?

I started to ring the doorbell and the maids opened the door right away. I was instructed to go to Venus's room right away.

As I opened the door to her room, I saw the note and the homework that I need to accomplish for her. Well, what's new then? If there's only one thing I can do that she can't, well that is being really brilliant in most of the subjects. Obviously, Venus was on a shopping spree right at this hour.

I finished all the homework diligently. I have to finish everything before Venus returns at exactly 8:00 P.M. I must wait for her because I have to settle everything, including how she will get her homework from me.

Also, I am more than excited of what will happen after I will follow all the instructions Bellezza told me. I want to see if it is effective myself. How awesome will it be if it will really work? I honestly can't wait. I badly wanted to make my dream a reality.

This time, I will only think of myself and no one else. Afterall, I think I deserve to be happy. I also have this right of pursuing my own happiness if given the chance...and this is now the chance I've been dreaming of all my life. A once in a lifetime chance that is worth given a shot.

I am now scribbing notes like crazy as I check on the wallclock. It is like a work under pressure that I need to accomplish to work my way later. I am thinking of how will I convince Venus to drink half of what this bottle have in my hands.

I'm two words to finish everything when I heard a car approaching the mansion.

I can't help but be excited. My heart raced so fast I can't help but smile.

Chapter 16: I AM IN YOUR DREAMS

Caily's POV

'Why are you still here?"

Venus frowned as soon as she saw me staying in her room. I am sitting comfortably in one of her mini-sofas when she enters her room holding a lot of shopping bags.

"Of course, I am waiting for you." I answered, not afraid of her icy stare...well, not this time.

"What? Why would you do it? I already left the money for tonight's service."

"I know." I said as I smirked.

"I don't see any reason at all for you to stay here any longer." She said. I want to laugh out loud because I can see that she's really pissed from my reaction.

"I guess it is not bad to stay a while, right?"

"Can you hear what you're talking about? Who exactly allowed you to simply decide like that?" She said, now I can sense that she's fuming mad at me right now. I caught her attention as I waved the papers right in front of her face. I noticed that she started walking towards me. She's about to grab the papers when I avoided it from her hands.

"What are you doing?" She exclaimed.

"I knew from your classmate that this homework is one of the most important graded ones, right?" I asked as I smirked. I saw her swallow her saliva gently as if nervous.

"That's none of your business." She sarcastically said while she rolled her eyes to me.

"It is, actually. What if I tear this into tiny pieces? Too bad I can't have my own copy because I will be too tired of writing it again." I gently said. It made her mad that she shouted at me with full of frustration.

All of a sudden, she's looking at the papers that I am holding. She may be too nervous. I might tear her homework if she'll do something I wouldn't want her to do.

"What do you want? Are you crazy?" She said in a loud voice. I can't help but chuckle. She's already fuming mad. I find it really funny. Can you believe I just let her feel this way right now?

"Well, I don't need your money."

"Then what is it? Tell me quickly and get the hell out of it. I am a busy person so do not waste my time."

"Spare me an hour." I said as I looked directly into her eyes. I saw it widened as if she's not believing what she's seeing or hearing from me.

"Are you crazy? Why should I agree with you?" She answered in a loud, shouting voice. I waved the papers to her that made her shut her mouth.

Serves you right, dear. I find pleasure when I will see her being like this. I remembered Adeline told me that even if she's beautiful and powerful, she's also trying her best to study well. Venus knows it is her weakness that's why she's doing everything to make her parents proud of her in this area of her life. That's why I can see that she's very serious about accomplishing her homework so perfectly by all means.

After she heard my request of her, spending an entire hour exclusively for me, she started walking back and forth as she folded her arms.

"What shall we do with that hour? Do you know how important my time is for me?"

"Yeah. I am aware of that."

"Then why are you wasting my time so easily? Are you really nuts?"

"Let's just say I want to call it even. I can't forget how you bullied me last week. You even stepped on my eyeglasses that my deceased father gave me." I said. I can see that she looked shocked and frustrated in an instant.

"That's why I am trying to make it even for both of us."

"What do you want?" She said, now in a calm manner.

"Let's just say, this is a humble request of someone who admires you so much. I want to have dinner with you, if it is okay?"

"Very well then. After dinner, you will get out from this house right away."

"Deal." I said.

I saw her calling someone on the other line. Maybe she's requesting the maids to prepare dinner for the both of us.

"And oh, I want our dinner here in your room, if it is okay? Sorry if I am becoming too much."

"You really are." She said, sounding pissed however, she doesn't have any choice but to agree to my small request.

After less than ten minutes, we heard a gentle knock on the door. She hurriedly opened it and three maids came in to bring in some trays of delicious food. I can see two plates of steak, rice, some fruits and a mushroom soup for the both of us. I can also see two glass wines and a bottle of wine that's already opened. I can see a mini ice bucket full of ice cubes and a mini-tong.

"Whoah. From a simple request coming from a fan, I should say I am impressed." As soon as she heard me saying it, I heard her groan out of disgust.

"Let's make it quick so that you can get the hell out of it."

"Whoah, not so fast, my dear Venus." I started preparing all the food that the maids put on the table. She held the bottle of wine and poured it into each of the glass wines.

"Thank you."

"And my homework?" She asked, putting her hands on her waist. I smiled as I faced her.

"We're not yet done with our dinner yet. Don't be too excited. Let's just enjoy what's on the table."

'Well, I might be enjoying something for myself this time...'

I can see that she's starting to eat the steak. I can't help but to enjoy seeing her eat. She's indeed classy even to some little details of herself. I can't help but to feel pressured I held the silver spoon and fork.

"What are you looking at?"

"I'm just amazed by the ways of how you'll do everything just to accomplish your homework. I admire your dedication."

"Let's just say I'll do everything I can for as long as I can think of a way on how to do it as perfectly as possible."

"Even to the point of bullying someone for a shallow reason? How could you?"

"Sometimes, life works in that way, my dear. Somebody has to be on top while other people are on the bottom. We have to just accept it that way."

"Oh, is that so? Don't worry I will remember that." I said as I smiled.

"I have another request though."

"You're too demanding for a fan now, you know." She answered right away and I can feel I am getting into her nerves right now, I find it really pleasurable.

"Do you want me to give your homework to you or not?" I folded my arms as I faced her.

"What is your request, then?"

"Please put on the best sleeping attire that you have in your walk-in closet."

"Oh, that's simple. Wait here." She said as she stood up. She went inside her walk-in closet right away. I can't help but to chuckle as I shook my head. Yes, she's beautiful but I never expect her to be this foolish.

I feel really nervous but I started to pull the potion from my pocket. I looked at it one last time and I poured half of it to Venus's wine glass and the other half to mine. As soon as I was done doing it, she was able to get out from her walk-in closet.

I almost dropped my jaw when I saw her wearing her see-through satin nightgown. Her lacy t-back and brassiere is really obvious to my sight.

She's really hot and stunning. Any guy would fall for her or beg to make love with them tonight. She looked really seductive. I don't know what to say.

When she saw my reaction, she couldn't help but laugh.

"I can read your mind." She said as she bit her lower lip and narrowed her gaze.

"I only said that you should wear your best night attire. I did not say you'll seduce me."

"Well, what can you say?" She asked me. From her reaction, I can see that she's really pleased that I am admiring her beauty. Adeline is right. She's crazy, vain and conceited. She might not directly say it but she's always hungry for attention, no doubt.

"I love it. No wonder, people love you so much." I said as I smiled at her. Well, this compliment, I admit, it is sincere and it came from my heart.

"Thank you." She replied. I looked at the wine glass half-full of wine as I swallowed. I slowly gazed at the wall clock. I never noticed we already spent thirty minutes through all these.

'I still have some minutes left to spare.' I only kept these words to myself. We spent another ten minutes enjoying the meal. Everything is savory and delicious. I am really glad to spend the last supper with my idol. I knew only a few people were given a chance to do so.

Wait...last supper. I slowly inhaled when I realized I can't go back. I should really do this and not back out.

I feel goosebumps all over my body. I can feel my heart racing again. As I look at Venus, it's like everything is in slow motion.

'I'm really sorry, Venus. I promise, I will only do it for a week. I will return your body to you safe and sound.' I said to myself. I j I am hearing the faint voice again in my head.

"What are you waiting for?"

"Bellezza?" What is this? I can even hear myself talking to her through my mind? Is this still normal?

"The time is running so fast. We all know that Venus is one, impatient brat. She might sue you for setting grounds just to do her homework. Remember, you signed a contract. She might use it against you if you're not being careful." She said in a very faint voice.

I've heard this voice many times but why is it that it gives me the feeling of being really scared every time? Another reason why I don't like her is because I know she's not a normal person or a magician. It's like I am dealing with an evil witch I can feel my knees tremble.

I swallowed hard as I cleared my throat. I must start now before it will be too late for me. Chances only come once in a lifetime. I must get it for me.

"Venus...I think this calls for a celebration."

"Ew. What are you trying to say?"

"Let's have a toast. We should both drink something."

"I do not agree unless you will tell me what we should be celebrating about."

"Well," I said, holding the glass with half-full of wine. I smelled it as I looked at her. She also did the same. However, she's giving me a weird, confused look.

"This homework is perfect. It's an addition to your mark and I made it sure, already. And then, I am so happy to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to dine with my idol."

"Hmm, sounds convincing."

"Of course."

I saw her grin on the other side of the table where she's sitting.

"Also, you will never get to see my face again, ever. After this, I will not let this ugly face bother you again."

She laughed. I know she's feeling really nostalgic. How can she ever forget what she told me that night when she accused me of ruining her fashion show?

It's the iconic "Venus's line" that's not familiar for most of her fans.

Well, it sounds good to me. Cheers!" She said as she smiled sweetly. Of course, how can you detect sarcasm from it when that's her specialty? She's very good at faking everything for the sake of building only a good reputation of her image among her die-hard, solid fans.

We raised our glass wine and we both drink our wines with half-and-half potions in it. The last thing I saw is Venus gently put the glass wine on the table and held her forehead, slowly closing her eyes and falling on the floor...while I can't help but to close my eyes as well and everything went blank.

Chapter 17: SWITCH OF A LIFETIME

Venus's POV

I slowly opened my eyes and I felt weird. I think something odd is happening. I look around and I noticed that I am still in my room but my head is aching so bad.

I felt someone is walking near my bed. I slowly moved my head to see who that is.

I saw me looking at myself. My heart started to race. I tried blinking my eyes, even rub it to confirm. I slap both of my cheeks for me to process the whole thing.

It wasn't a dream after all!

"Y-You! Impostor! How did you ever get inside my room?" I exclaimed as I tried getting up but I realized both my hands and feet are tied securely so that I can't escape.

I look at her and she just grinned. Yes. That is how I grin. That is how I smile. I can almost see my own reflection, however reacting differently, instead of following my movement.

"I am you. Definitely not an impostor." She said, even owning my voice.

This can't be happening! Am I being lied by my own self?

"Who are you?"

"I am Venus Hughes." She calmly said, the way I introduced myself. I am amazed of how she can even do it so effortlessly.

"What? Are you out of your mind? I know you are not Venus, I am Venus. Get me out of here, you bitch!"

"S-Sorry. I can't do that. You will stay here first." She said looking terrified this time. When I started shouting, she suddenly doesn't know what to do.

"Where is Caily? I know I am eating dinner with her. Had she gone home?"

"No. She hasn't left the house yet."

"What do you mean?" I asked, more confused this time. I saw myself walking towards my whole-body vanity mirror. She pushed it gently, as if letting me see myself through it.

"What are you doing? What is this shit all abo--" I stopped talking when I saw my own reflection.

It is hard to believe but the one I am seeing my reflection as Caily Mcfisher. This can't be happening!

I became her.

"Aaaaahhhhhhhhh!"

Caily's POV

I did it!

It is the last thing to even believe but it is simply happening now. I can't get tired looking at my own reflection being Venus Hughes now. It was only a dream but now, I will live her life indeed.

Bellezza...where are you?

Now that my dream did come true, can't I not talk to you anymore? I can't even heard her faint voice that persuaded me to be firm in finally voicing out what my dream really is.

I look around me and I noticed that Venus being inside my own body is still not getting up.

For the first time, I got to see what I really looked like to the perspective of Venus.

I really look unappealing and ugly and I really hated myself even more. I shifted my gaze on the mirror and it made me smile again. I am now Venus Hughes and I should live her life now that I have her body this time.

When she woke up, she started talking a lot of things, on how she hated Caily. She even asked why she's all tied up she can't even move because I secured everything. I am already anticipating that she will be chaotic when she will regain consciousness. I decided to tie her up for me to lessen my problems.

She kept on blabbing useless things that I have decided to make her look at her reflection in the mirror. I pulled her whole body vanity mirror. When she realized she bacame Caily Mcfisher, she started shouting and wailing at the same time, at the top of her lungs.

I suddenly become terrified I held a vase and I was able to smash it on her head and she fell down in an instant.

A few minutes later, three maids came rushing inside the room of Venus and they were very shocked of what is happening. I can't stop the outburst of my tears falling. I can't believe I could hurt myself this much. But then...

"What are you all waiting for? Call my doctor and help me with her!" I can see the horror from their faces but then they moved as soon as I commanded them on what to do.

A lot of our helpers came to the rescue. They all helped me in putting her on the bed to lay her down. I can't help but to cry. I really feel sorry about what happened to myself, but what can I do?

If I haven't done anything, she might go out and blab everything that happened. I can't let Venus ruin my dream that instant.

I can't let her break the condition that Bellezza Scyther set up for this dream to finally become a reality.

Nobody should ever discover what happened.

"Madam...can you please tell me what happened?"

"S-She threatened me so w-what I did was self-defense." I can feel that my lips were trembling like crazy. I pity myself and the blood that's coming out from my head.

"Where's the doctor? Nobody is following me!" I screamed and everyone is moving faster. I saw a nurse coming in as well to check on my body. She went in with a large medicine kit to give a first aid kit. When she entered my room, our eyes met and it's like happening in slow motion.

I am sure she can see the horror in my eyes, on how terrified I am right now.

"She's here again." She simply commented beside me without any reaction at all.

"Just do your job quietly." I said with sarcasm. I tried to act as calm and disgusted about what happened, but my knees are trembling. I can't control the fear that embraced me just now.

"Yes, madam. I will. By the way, I already called the ambulance before I entered your room." She said as she looked directly into my eyes.

"J-Just do your best, nurse. Make sure she's okay." I said, feeling relieved somehow.

Now that I am inside Venus's body, I should act exactly like her...even if it hurts to see my own body suffering like this. However, I can't let my body die because I am only given a week.

My body was hurriedly rushed into the hospital. I told the maids that they have to report Caily met a car accident within the vicinity of Venus's mansion. I admit I feel really sad because of what I did to myself. What happened was unforgivable. Deep in my heart I am sorry for what I did. However, I know there's no turning back for what I already started.

The next day, I am awaken by the sun's rays that kissed my cheeks through my glass window. I slowly get up to look at my reflection on the vanity mirror. I put my hand on my cheek.

Even if I don't smile or frown, I still look beautiful. Venus's beauty is indeed incredible. When I look at her reflection in the mirror that I own right now, I can't simply get enough. Not a pore is seen. Her skin is really amazing. She's like a living Snow White.

However, how will I ever know all her skin care routine? I look at myself in the mirror and I gently pulled my hair. I realized that I am more than back to zero for what happened.

I need to know everything that concerned Venus, to her schedules, the people that surrounded her, even her routines and what she does for herself.

I called one of the maids and they gave me all the schedules that I needed to know. I felt relieved. Somehow I admire Venus for being meticulous and systematic when it comes to her schedules. I can see that she's a perfectionist even in simplest things.

I think I am not only living her life. I will be her for one week. I suddenly fear the coming days. I thought it is just easy but it turned out, I was wrong.

After Caily's body rushed into the hospital, the doctor confirmed that she's now in a coma. This made her mother resign from work. Realizations hit her hard when she discovered that her only daughter is fighting between life and death.

"Doc, how is she? Please save my daughter...please." She said in her trembling voice. She can't remember the last time she cried so hard like this.

"Ma'am, we're doing the best that we can. She's now safe."

"When will she wake up?"

"We can't really tell, ma'am. Let's just pray that she'll recover fast. I'll get going now."

She followed the doctor with her gaze until the doctor left the room and closed the door. She can't help crying aloud. How can she be this irresponsible when it comes to her daughter?

She thought she's being a good mother by working so hard to give her what she needs. It turned out she's wrong. She felt guilty all the time every time she sees her daughter suffering like this.

She's looking at her sleeping daughter with full of white bandages wrapped around her head. She thinks her daughter doesn't deserve this kind of unfortunate incident. If only it happened to her instead of her daughter. She thinks she's more deserving to be in that death bed rather than her precious Caily.

Chapter 18: SEEING MYSELF IN THE MIRROR

Venus's POV

What exactly happened? Why am I here in this body all of a sudden? What did Caily do to me?

From what I remembered, I was only eating dinner with Caily because of her foolish wish. I was also being blackmailed because if I will not allow it, she might not give me my homework. Of course, I will do everything just to get it from her. I always believe her accuracy to save my grades that's why.

She also requested me to wear my best night gown. Of course! Who am I to refuse? It's my chance to let her know that she's nothing compared to my beauty and what I can show her more. I remembered wearing my pink, see-through nightgown. I can see the adoration from her eyes as she looked at me from head to toe.

After that, we had a toast...it was my favorite wine that I shared with her. I was happy because she promised me that I will not see her again. I gladly accepted it because who would want to see her face over and over again? If not for Adeline, I will not hire this girl because she's a show stealer. I know she's just acting innocent but deep inside, she also wanted other people to notice her...she only wish. I know even in her dreams, it is too impossible to happen.

When I opened my eyes, I was shocked that I am greeted by my own, living reflection. I thought I am still dreaming but when I realized Caily and I switched bodies, I screamed. That was the time that she broke a vase on my head.

Right now, Caily's body is still unconscious. That is also the reason why I can't see anything despite of knowing I am alive and well. There's no fucking way I will be trapped in a body that cannot do anything right now, even respond to whatever I want.

Caily's body is not in a good condition. She's been sleeping for a day already, not even opening her eyes that's why I am not seeing anything except darkness.

From what I know, it is common that souls usually roam places that they want to when the body is left unconscious. They can get out from someone's body whenever they want to. They could visit people and see places but in my case, it is totally different. I am trapped inside this body I never even desire to be in the first place!

"Hello darling...how are you?" I suddenly heard a faint voice somewhere. It felt like someone is directly speaking through my ears.

"Who the hell are you?"

"Well, is it that important for you to know?" The faint voice answered with a creepy cackle.

"Yes. I need to know you!"

"Why? I think you don't need me darling."

"You need to help me here! I can't be stuck here forever! I need to be back for my shows, schedules and even my usual life!"

"Whoah. Easy peasy darling. As if you can be out from that body. I tell you, it will be difficult." She sounded cunning and deceptive.

I started to worry about what will happen to me. I feel sick all of a sudden. I know I am alive but nothing feels worst that knowing you know you can do something but your body can't simply cooperate with you.

"W-What will happen to me, then? Why is this happening to me? Who did this to me?" I exclaimed on top of my lungs. I realized the kind of horror I am facing when only me can hear myself out.

"Wow. That's too much question to ask. I am not the one to answer your questions though."

"I need answers. I don't understand what is happening. Please tell me now." I pleaded as I look around the total darkness that hugged my vision and whole being.

"Ask someone who used your body. She has all the answers." She said. I can hear her voice in almost a whisper on my ears. She sounded more like a witch for me that's why I feel scared of hearing her voice as she speaks.

"And how will I supposed to do it? That bitch stole my body! And what happened to this body in return? It can't even respond to whatever I want."

"Well, it is for you to know. Life is full of riddles you need to solve sometimes, my dear."

"You need to help me get out of here!"

Yes, I am opening my eyes and yet all I can see is darkness that surrounded me. I sobbed and cried but I feel like nobody is on my side. Nobody can't even hear me right now. I feel like being confined in a sure grave that I can't do anything. I guess waiting will be the only option but then how long will I ever wait? I can feel that will only do it in vain.

I can hear her laughing voice echoing all around. From that faint one to a terrifying sound I can't even differentiate it to a total nightmare. I wish everything is only a dream. Will this end soon? What will I do now?

Caily's POV

I am just staring to nothingness as I look through my window. I thought I can enjoy the verdant surroundings but I am much worried about my body and what happened to it.

Did my mother know about what happened to me? Did she ever care that I was rushed in the hospital this time? I badly wanted to know her reaction now that I am not feeling well. I wonder what she feels right now...

I looked at Venus's schedule and I am amazed on how she managed all her schedules in one day.

As I look at her schedule from a 95-inch monitor TV set, I suddenly felt dizzy and nauseated. It's a crazy schedule to start with. How can she ever sleep at 11:00P.M and wake up as early as 5:00 A.M for a skin care routine?

From what I knew, she's also a regular guest to that early-morning show that's popular for teenagers and blossoming women.

And the hours onwards, she has numerous dates with those bachelors I saw on TV and news headlines. Whoah.

Is this the new trend amongst beautiful girls? Is it even a requirement to have some extra if the other guy lacks something?

I looked at some descriptions of the guys she'll be dating today and someone caught my attention:

Lance Todd.

I almost fainted from what I saw. Is this for real? Is this really one of my long-time celebrity crush, Clifford?

I tried looking at his name and picture again in case I am fooled by my own eyes. He is indeed that man! From the striking feature of his face, that damned attractive eyes, pointed nose and that naturally pinkish lips that's so irresistable...

I remembered buying some of his limited edition posters and caps because he's an inspiration. Both boys and girls love him because of his humility and courage to always follow his dreams.

I continued browsing more about him as I look at the TV monitor placed in some part of Venus's room.

Name: Lance Todd

Age: 28 years old

Nationality: Dutch

Reason to date him: He's fucking rich. He's spending time practicing for the national baseball tryouts. A future star baseball player. He owns a lot of villas and private jets, acres of lands. He is also a major stockholder of Aspire Towers Inc., an elite corporation of condominiums that has all the branches from all over the world.

Who would've imagined Venus could simply date him whenever she liked? While me? If none of these happened, even if I will live again in my next life as Caily for three times a row, I won't have any opportunity to date someone like Clifford.

She's really crazy. She always see to it that she put every detail she'll get from her boy prospects. I browse some additional information about Clifford and I can't help but to smile. He's too perfect for a date tonight I can't wait to see him in person.

Whoah, I can't believe Venus so much! She's really incredible. I never thought she'll date other guys except Aivan Harper.

I browse the others. I noticed she only got two hours maximum for each dates, with thirty minutes break in between. What is her purpose of these seemingly endless dates? Is she getting ready to settle down soonest? Or she's overly bored she got nothing worthwhile to do that's why she decided to find a lot of guys to date?

I sighed and eventually, it turned to a wide smile. Ever since I entered Venus's body, it is my routine to hold a mini-mirror with me because I can't really get enough of this face, beauty and body. Now, I understand why she's too vain and conceited in flaunting her best assets because she has all the reasons to do so. Let me correct that, she has every right to do whatever she will like.

I admit everything is still new for me but if I try, why not? All I need to do is to embrace this kind of life that I have for myself. Afterall, I worked hard for this to become a reality. I won't let the whole week to pass for nothing. I want to give this life a try by thinking for myself. I guess it is not bad to choose happiness now that my dream really came true.

Chapter 19: EVERY PENNY COUNTS

Caily's POV

I still have more than one hour to prepare for my date with Clifford.

"Madam, your outfit for today is ready. You can choose from the ten sets." Venus's fashion designer said as she bowed down.

"Thank you ma'am." I also bowed down in front of her. She suddenly looked at me as if very confused. I also noticed she pinched her arm.

"Oh, no, no madam Venus. Please do not thank me, don't call me ma'am, too."

"Huh? Why not?"

"It's not ethically accurate to greet some ordinary employee." She politely answered. She's not even looking at me directly on my eyes.

"It's nonsense."

"No. What I am saying is true. You are paying for our services. I also agreed to sign a contract from you about it."

"Okay, fine. But please allow me to simply thank you sometimes for a job well done." I said. I noticed she gave me the sweetest smile after hearing what I said.

"Well then, madam. If you are still undecided on what to wear, I will definitely recommend this one." From the ten sets of dresses and stylish limited edition that Venus hoarded directly from the closets of fashion designers, her personal fashion designer choose a black and gold illusion halter-top dress. She paired it with her limited Christian Louboutin stilleto heels designed with swarovski crystals.

"Isn't it too formal?"

"I can't believe you will react like this madam. For the record, this one is your most conservative outfit."

"This one," She added, getting me the pair of stilleto heels and gently put it in front of me while I am sitting on my bed. "...is your favorite shoes. You're always telling me to bring you this one. In fact, you can wear this with any outfit that you usually wear."

"Is this too high? I don't think I can handle this one."

"Oh, not a problem, madam. This shoe has a secret made just for you." She smiled as she got the pair. In a matter of minutes, she was able to hold the heel and twisted it until it detached from the shoe.

She did the same with the other shoe until the shoes became flats. She neatly put the heels inside the box. She placed the version of this lovely shoes as flats in front of me this fine.

I can't help but to be amazed with awe my jaw almost dropped. My fashion designer chuckled when she saw my reaction.

"Madam, you know what? I find you really weird today."

"Huh? Why?"

"It seemed like you had a great night. I can see that you're in your perfect mood today."

"You think so?"

"This is the greatest mood you had since I started, honestly speaking."

This time, I can't help but to laugh. I can't believe Venus Hughes. Does it her fashion designer meant that she's this mean?

"I guess I am just busy most of the time that's why I even forget greeting you at times. Please understand." I said as I smile.

"I think you're more beautiful if you wear that kind of smile, madam." She said as she bowed down again as a sign of respect.

"You know what? It's really awkward if you do that sometimes. We're almost the same age. Please don't be too formal whenever you're meeting me. I guess it is unnecessary to do so."

I can see that she's shocked she can't even process what I just said. Venus's fashion designer happily nodded her head as she agreed with me.

As I prepared for my date, I made sure to move as perfectly as what Venus does. I even asked the help of my fashion designer the whole day. I admit, I learned a lot from her, especially the instant flats from that same Christian Louboutin heels. It was really awesome!

"Madam, I guess you're all set."

"You really think so?"

"I can't believe I will be more confident than you today. Where did it all go? Did you, by any chance sold it or what?"

"I guess it is normal for me to be prepared because it is Clifford?" I asked her back. Now, she looked more confused.

"This is not the first time you had a date with him, madam."

"Oh, really?"

"That's why I based the ten sets on the previous dates that you have with him."

"How many times have I went with him on a date?"

"More than ten times already." She said as she chuckled. I can't help but to swallow my saliva. I timidly smiled in front of her and started to keep quiet.

Yeah, I guess I should definitely shut my mouth because it may ruin my week's worth of being Venus.

The night seemed to be endless. I arrived at Venus's favorite five-star hotel and this date was booked one day in advance.

The main course were served. Being the classy Venus that I should, I tried my very best to talk less in front of Clifford. I can feel that my body is shaking because of excitement. Damn he's even gorgeous in person. I can't believe I could meet him face to face like this.

"Is there any problem?" He smiled as he sliced the steak and ate it in a graceful manner. I can't see anything bad about him. I awkwardly smiled and shook my head.

"Are you okay? You're not eating." He added, now he stopped from what he's doing and locked his gaze on me. I felt conscious all of a sudden.

"Oh...no. I think I am not feeling well today."

"Really?" He said. I can see his worried look as he held my hand.

"I think I can manage." I said as I smiled. My goodness! I can't believe someone like him is holding my hand. It is like holding a person that I thought it is impossible for me to meet.

But this is my reality now. I can do whatever I want. Literally.

"Are you sure? You're not even touching your favorite steak."

"Huh?"

"You always love rare blue Filet Mignon, right?" He said as he sweetly smiled.

When I slowly look at my steak, I gently swallowed my saliva.

I really hate Venus for having a lot of weird taste when it comes to food. Looking at this kind of steak makes me vomit in an instant. How can she eat abnormal foods like this?

I bobbed up and down because of what he said. With the charm he's having right now, I just can't say no.

"I can feel your hands are cold. Are you okay?"

"Yes. I guess I am just nervous."

"I can say I am impressed. I don't know that someone like me can make Venus nervous."

"Did I say it?" I said as I look at him. He chuckled.

"You're weird today."

"Well, I think being weird is not bad sometimes."

He laughed even more. When he stopped, he stared at me and smiled. He held my hand right away.

"You know, I liked this version of you better."

"What do you mean?"

"You're always tackless and mean. You're always uninterested in everything I share with you but now, you loved smiling more than everything."

"Am I that mean?"

"No, it's not like that. What I mean is, I like this version of you better."

"Thank you. Meeting an amazing person like you is always a delightful experience."

"It's always a pleasure."

We had fun spending the rest of the night. I got endless chat messages coming from my fashion designer. She said that I should only last for a maximum of two hours tonight because I still have a late-night pictorial. It is scheduled at exactly 9:00 PM tonight.

Clifford went with me until we reached the parking lot where my car is. I also instructed Venus's bodyguard to not go near us. Although their protocols are to follow wherever I go, I told them to not disturb us. I can feel that Clifford is a nice guy.

"I guess, I'll be going then. It's nice meeting you today."

"It's a pleasure to meet a fresh, smiley-faced Venus. I want to believe that you're not the Venus that I used to know." He said, not wearing down his smile a bit. God, looking at this fine gentleman is a great experience I can do this the whole day.

"Don't ever dare talk to me for so long I may cancel everything just to hang out with you more."

"Isn't it the normal thing that you do? C'mon." He said, leaning his face closer to my nape and breathe slowly it sent a tingling sensation that reaches my spine. I smiled as I feel my knees tremble.

So, this is the feeling of flirting with someone and being adored in return. It's the best feeling that happened to me yet.

I can see that he slowly motioned his face near mine. I gazed straight into his eyes. I can see that he's narrowing his gaze on my lips pulling his body closer to mine. Our gaze locked and before I knew it, his lips touched mine. He gently brushed his lips and I can taste its sweetness. I guess it is the wine that we had a while ago. I felt like my heart raced wild. Before I let go of him, he hugged me tight I want to last this moment forever.

The best feeling? My first day is yet to end. I am already getting the hang of it.

Chapter 20: WAIT IN PAIN

Nolan's POV

"Miss, how is she?" I asked the nurse who is currently monitoring Caily's condition. The nurse, who is also wearing her usual white uniform, is looking at her records.

She gently shook her head. I sighed as soon as I realized her gesture that signifies hopelessness. I tried holding back my tears as I looked at my sweet Caily.

"Sir, do you think staying here all the time can help? I hope you will also go home so that you can rest, too." She gently said as she tapped my shoulders.

"I'm okay, miss the nurse. I could get some sleep here. Besides, I don't want to miss the moment when she will finally awaken."

"You're one sweet friend."

I just smiled weakly in front of her, trying to look brave.

"I'd love to have someone as genuine as you in my life, too." She added as she smiled back.

"Thanks Ms. Nurse. I know this is the least that I can do for her during this time." I said, giving my full attention to Caily. I closed my fist even more until I can feel that it hurts already.

"I'd better get going. Please take care." She left before I even noticed that she's out in the room already. Empathy, above all is what I am feeling right now for my dearest Caily.

I know the nurse got tired about my endless questions about her real condition. She's in a coma after that car accident. As what I've heard from the witnesses, she was on her way home that day. She finished tutoring Venus when a rushing car came towards her. They said it hasn't got any brakes that's why my poor Caily was hit by that car. When she fell down, she hit her head on the gutter. The impact was so severe she got a big head wound that developed a lot of head injuries.

I can feel that my knees are getting weak as I sit on the chair beside the bed where Caily is sleeping right now. I gently held her hand as I look at her.

Why did this happen to you? Why, of all people?Why should it be you?

There was silence. I wish that the next sound that I will hear will be your beautiful voice again. I wish that I will see you smile as soon as you see me. I don't care if I will look crazy. I don't care if she'll be angry at me for toying around or for simply being crazy. For as long as I can see her smile

once again, I'll trade anything. If there's something I can do for her to wake up soon, I'd gladly do it with all my heart.

I didn't notice I have been focusing my attention at her for the longest time when I heard my phone rang all of a sudden.

"Hello?"

"Dear, are you in the hospital right now?" I can hear Caily's mom on the other line.

"Yes, ma'am."

"What a relief, dear." After hearing the voice of Caily's mom, I can sense she's still worried about what happened to her daughter.

"Don't worry, ma'am. I am going here after school hours."

I heard her soft cries on the other line. I admit, it crushed my heart too. I know that no matter how she tries to hide it from me, she's becoming soft especially if it involves her daughter.

"I didn't know what to do without you. I can't thank you enough, dear." She said in a shaky voice.

"There's nothing I wouldn't do for Caily ma'am. You know how soft I am when it comes to her, too."

"For a friend, I can say, you're too good for my daughter. I always appreciate it, dear."

"That's why you don't have to worry that much, ma'am. I will try to help in many ways that I can."

"I always appreciate it from the heart. By the way dear, I'll be there after an hour. I am just taking care of the hospital expenses of Caily."

"Oh, is that so, ma'am? Please take care."

"I will, Nolan dear. As soon as I will arrive there, you can also go home and rest. I know you're also tired."

We talked for another minute and then she finally hung up first. I look at Caily's peaceful way of sleeping. I just realized tears started streaming on my face, too.

I really pity her so much. Sometimes, I wished if only it will be me who got into that car accident instead of her. Whenever I look at her, sometimes I just can't stand it. Why is she not regaining consciousness until now?

flashback

"I'm so sorry, Nolan. You have to also suffer because of me. I guess I am being too much for you already." She said between sobs. I hugged her tight before she could even say a word.

"I don't think of it as a burden. As long as it will be you, I will always be here. You know that, right?"

We are now on the fifth floor of our school. We've spent our time on our lessons. Even so, I tried my very best to comfort Caily from what happened.

Venus ripped the homework Caily did for her. The bad thing is that, she hasn't secured a copy of it. She had to do it again and she was able to stay up late until the following morning for her to finish it.

Venus was able to show how bad she is by stepping on Caily's eyeglasses after it fell on the ground. I i I thought that that was too much that Caily ran to me airing her seemingly hopeless sentiments from what Venus did to her.

Caily and I are both standing up, gazing at the beautiful sunset. I can't help but glance at my dear friend. From what happened, I am now cautious about my opinions as well. I'm afraid he might add up to Caily's frustrations that time.

I knew for sure that any wrong opinion could break our friendship any time. I don't want it to happen.

Although I have all the right to comment from what happened to Caily, on how she was bullied by Venus, I preferred to keep quiet.

"How ironic, isn't it?" Caily muttered. Because I can't hear her well, I inched closer to her.

"It turned out you were right all along." She added. I was able to hold her shoulders gently. I let her face me and look into my eyes.

"I can't stop you from admiring other people. That's your right and your happiness." I said as I wiped her tears again.

"But if you're losing yourself because of it, then it's another story that I should be mindful about."

"I'm so sorry, Nolan. You have to also suffer because of me. This is too much disturbing you already." She said between sobs. I can't stand her looking weak like that I hugged her right away.

"You never disturbed me nor wasted my time. You're dear and special to me I will never allow any bad thing to happen to you."

"You should leave me alone, Nolan. I know this is too much already."

"It is never too much if the reason is you. I will never get tired of you no matter how unpredictable you are."

"You know what? You're too good to me I always think I do not deserve someone like you." Caily said. I can see her weary eyes as I slowly held her arms. I gently pulled her towards me. I can't help to caressed her hair with my hands, feeling its soft, vibrant strands. Her hair's fragrance is also too familiar for me to resist. I narrowed my gaze on her lips as my hand slowly trailed on it.

Believe me, I am just stopping myself from kissing her because her lips is irresistable. She locked her gaze into mine. I can't help but to smile at her. Where did she get all the courage to look at me directly on my eyes?

She's really something.

"You always deserve me. You always have my back. I do not ask for anything but the assurance coming from you that this friendship will never end no matter what happen."

"Of course. I want you to be in my life always. Even if you don't want me to." She said, grinning as she pinched his cheek.

"Ow! That hurts!"

"Well, that's a part of being your best friend." She said and I can see that he's becoming successful of finally letting her feel better after what happened.

"Don't worry. I will try my best to find someone who can fix this for you." He slowly got her broken eyeglasses from the side pocket of her large handbag.

"Really? Thank you so much my dear Nolan!" She said as she hugged him all of a sudden because of too much excitement.

"Yes. Consider it done probably by next week. You can wear your spare eyeglasses for the meantime." He replied, hugging her more...

end of flashback

I can still remember that day. This week is supposedly my surprise for her. I slowly opened my bag and got the hard case where Caily's eyeglasses are kept. I presented it to her as I bitterly smiled.

"Look, dear. Here it is. Just like what I have promised to you. Please wake up so that you can try this on." I said as I sigh. I can't help holding her hand and kiss it in a gentle way...

I miss you so much, my love.

Chapter 21: THE BEAUTY COMPETITION

"My queen...my queen! At last! Everything is a success!" The crow happily exclaimed as soon as he was brought back to his original figure. He is flapping his wings as he sees the grinning face of Bellezza.

"The potion is great. I can see that it is taking effect right now." She said. The crow can see the happiness in her eyes.

"I am excited about what will happen next."

"Well, my darling crow, you should be. I assure you, it will be the grandest show that you'll ever see."

The crow started to be really noisy because of too much excitement. Bellezza, even though she felt annoyed a bit but she can't help but to show her sweetest smile. She thinks the crow deserved it because she considered him her only companion and friend for the longest time.

"Ahhh...after five hundred years our highness. Shreya Wallace will be finally dethroned. Of all the queens, who would have thought it would be you?"

"I need to hear a lot of it from you, my darling...keep talking." Bellezza answered as if really pleased from what she's hearing from her friend.

"Everyone is expecting that the next queen will be Dhara Rose of Blossomcrest. So, our highness, does it mean the Luminastia will be yours to keep and it will be placed in Withermoor for good?"

"You are asking things you're already sure of. Don't be so stupid."

"If that will be it, you truly deserve Luminastia the most. Oh, I can't believe our highness. I can't!"

"I do not want to excite myself too much."

"Why not? You have all the reason to celebrate now that everything is falling into place at last."

"Celebrations should be slow and sweet. I want to enjoy my victory that way." She said, never losing her smile as she looked at the cauldron in front of her. It is showing the commotion that's happening to the entire Fayvallea.

"I guess Fayvallea did not see this coming. The entire kingdom is not prepared for you to finally become the queen."

"You're right my darling."

"Make me your right hand, our highness! Please! Please!"

"Calm down, you ambitious crow! You will have your own position when that will happen. Now, I want to show you something," She said as she stood up , facing the cauldron. She raised her black, wooden scepter. Smoke with sparkling dusts slowly swirled from the inside of the cauldron going out. It is getting bigger and when the smoke is slowly fading away, a beautiful tiara is floating in the air.

The crow can't help but be amazed because of it.

"This is the tiara of our queen Shreya Wallace." He said with sparkling eyes. He cannot believe he will be seeing the actual crown of Floreal in front of him.

"Yes. You're right."

"I can say it's more beautiful if it is seen this near."

"Is that so? Well, I'd love you to see something." Bellezza said and the crown slowly turned clockwise into the thin air. The crown is changing its figure, color and quality. The crystal crown that's glittering slowly transforms in a different crown. From a glittering crystal tiara, it became a five pointed crown. The five pointed tips were topped with medium black onyx crystals.White swarovski crystals accentuated the black onyx, giving it a gothic-like finish.

"What can you say about it?"

"That crown is very much suited for you, our highness."

"I know my dear. If you look at this one, it is much suited for me instead, right?"

"Most definitely, our highness. Nobody but you alone."

This will be the crown of the next queen and you're the one who saw it first."

"It's more of a pleasure to witness what the next crown will look like, our highness."

"Yes, I also think of that way, too. I can't wait to be crowned as the next queen after things are coming my way."

"I hope it will soon, our highness. I know you've been waiting for this for so long."

"All we need to do is to wait, my dear. Our patience will be paid off, that's for sure."

They both look at the cauldron with hopeful eyes. As they see the different witches coming from Blossomcrest, Withermoor and Floreal gather together, they can't help but be excited. They can see it through the cauldron that the news has been spreading throughout the kingdom.

Well, for the first time, Bellezza Scyther has done a great deed. This is totally new and indeed shocking. The witches of Fayvallea started the trial because of what happened.

"I am looking forward to seeing Shreya Wallace doing something about it."

"As if she can do anything at this point in time."

They know that victory is sweet when earned the hard way.

Caily's POV

As soon as I wake up, I can't seem to control my hands as I am getting the mirror on my bedside table to look at myself.

I automatically smiled when I realized that it is already my second day as being Venus Hughes. I tried pinching my cheek again as I look at my reflection. This is to confirm if I am still dreaming. When I felt that it hurts, I smiled again.

I still can't believe it until now.

It felt good when something is happening the way you exactly imagine it to be. I glanced at the wallclock to see the time and it is almost four in the morning.

Even if I feel sleepy at this very hour, my excitement kept me from feeling it. Anticipating the day's activity helped me a lot to wake up easily.

"Madam, are you ready?" My fashion designer greeted me with a smile. Her timing is really superb. As soon as I wake up, she's already calling me out as she knocked on the door of my room.

I am letting her sleep in this house. I am confident that she can assist me to whatever Venus does with her daily routine. I can't be wrong while I am still being her. The literal Venus Hughes that I only once dream to have for myself. Now, I think I am unstoppable.

"Y-Yes." I said, rubbing my eyes.

She smiled and I can see that it is genuine as she looked into my eyes.

"Is there any problem?" I asked, giving her a curious look. I can't help but to yawn in front of her. I guess my body clock doesn't cooperate with my mood.

"Whatever happened to you madam Venus, I just want to let you know that I am loving it."

"What do you mean 'happened' to me?"

"You know, you as the smiling and gentle version of my madam Venus. I like it this way. I hope I will be seeing it often if it is not too much to ask?" She said, happily smiling.

I totally understood at the same time, pity this fashion designer of Venus. I guess she's really being evil and she's very mean since then.

"Silly girl." I said, shaking my head as I finally getting out from bed. She followed me right away as I went straight to the bathroom that's big as my room when I am still Caily.

My fashion designer became my personal assistant because I am not really getting the hang of everything. Venus's schedule is too much than what I am expecting. From the 5:00 A.M photoshoot and endless dates to handsome bachelors. How can she handle all of it? I am not treating it as a mere joke after all!

"Madam, let me refresh you once again when it comes to cosmetics and everything...so that you will know what to do if ever you will have to retouch."

"What? Are you really telling me all this?" I said, as I started to be nervous for some reason. Why am I not into cosmetics and make up while I am still being myself?

"If ever you want to learn it your own..." She said. I can sense that there's something that my fashion designer wanted to disclose to me. However, for some reason she's stopping herself from doing so. What could it be?

"Why should I learn it when I know you'll be with me all the time?"

"I just want to suggest that, madam."

"Well, I don't want that kind of suggestion. I just want you to do your job very well."

"As you wish madam. By the way, I prepared everything for you inside your van. Every wardrobe and outfit are ready for you to select from."

"Good."

"We'll have more than thirty minutes to go to Glam Studios. You can sleep in your van as we go there."

"Please wait for me outside. I'll be ready in less than twenty minutes."

"Yes, madam." Her fashion designer said as she politely nodded and left the room. She closed the door gently. When the door closed behind me, I couldn't help but be nervous.

I really hope my first time for this one will not be a worst one or else, I will really be dead.

Chapter 22: SECOND DAY, MAD DAY!

Caily's POV

After taking a bath, we headed towards the pink van where my wardrobe and outfits are located. When I opened the door, I was amazed by how many sets of outfits were there. I can see complete colors of the outfits, to the pairs of shoes and different jewelries. I guess all the things inside my bedroom are all here.

"Tsk...crazy girl. How could she understand all of these?" I said to myself as my forehead wrinkled.

"Madam, for this morning's shoot, Glam studios wanted you to share something about your beauty secret that you've never shared to anyone before."

"What?"

"Due to insistent public demand, the show alloted ten minutes for you to show to your audience more about yourself."

"I thought I already showed it to them? I am their regular guest. Why bother doing that now?"

"The volume of requests overflowed after the Ethereal Venus's fashion show. You already agreed to this one, right?"

I can't help but to frown in front of her. I am scratching my head as I sighed. She handed me two pieces of paper. It is obviously a script for this morning's show.

"What's this?" I asked her. She's giving me a queer look. She even sighed. "In case you're going to forget your lines again." She answered, not avoiding my gaze.

"What?" I said, giving her a very confused look. Now, I am not really understanding what she meant.

"Madam, what have you been doing lately? I noticed you're not in your own self."

"That's total nonsense! What do you mean I am not being me?"

"I'm sorry. I think I am only used to seeing you reviewing this script before you go to any shows that you have."

I frowned as I looked at her. I even crossed my arms. It made her look down as she avoided her gaze at me. I preferred not saying any word again. That might even complicate things. I might say anything that could be taken against me. Venus's fashion designer is looking at me as if doubting

what she's seeing right now. I can see that she's starting to notice Venus's changes now that I am being silly.

Venus Hughes is well-known for her being classy and composed all the time. I admit it is a challenge for me to do it for her this time.

"Yeah. I am going to read this now, thanks."

"And this one too, madam."

"What are these?" My eyes widened with shock as she handed me a box of different kinds of cosmetics. From several foundations, creams, serums and even matte lipsticks and lip tints.

She looked at me as if I am the weirdest creature she ever knew. I can't help but to have a second look at what she handed me just now.

"Oh...I mean, what are my products doing here?"

"Madam, you will have your own time to introduce each one of them. They will just ask you something about your products. You have to tell the audience about the steps to use them. You may share your personal experience about your own products, that might be much better."

"I can't take a break on this one, right?"

"You shouldn't. Your appearance on that show means the world to them. The ratings are doing very well simply because you're on that show."

"Is that so? Ok I'll do it."

"That's quite a relief." She said, putting them aside. I remembered Venus being so vain, she even featured a simple lip tint for almost three minutes. Yeah, I almost forgot she's really crazy at all times. She loves attention coming from other people.

I can't believe I will be acting crazy as well just because I am now her. I rolled my eyes. Well, if Venus could pull this off, well then I guess I can, too.

For more than twenty minutes, we've finally arrived at Glam studios. I've seen this place on TV every morning but I never thought it was very beautiful in person.

The driveway is extremely spacious. The name of the place "Glam studios" is being highlighted in metallic, pastel colors. Each letter was designed in a different way. There were more than three alternate font styles that you can see as you go inside the place.

It's like the letters alone are welcoming your arrival like a royalty.

Venus Hughes deserves that one and I am her, right now so I also deserve all these treatment coming from them. I admit, I am used to seeing Venus Hughes and all the paparazzi that's surrounding her with camera flashes. But, I never expected a lot of them this early to bug me already.

Are all the reporters trying to be early birds just to catch a juicy worm? I am so flattered.

My fashion designer retouched my make-up for my 'no-filter' look. I especially instructed her to do it because I want this show to be as simple as possible. Maybe it will not hurt Venus Hughes's image a bit if she'll appear simple today, for a change, right?

I am now sitting side by side with Priya Kenner, my favorite host for Glam studios. She's a tall, sophisticated woman. She's always formal and wearing female suites makes her oozing with sex appeal despite being in her mid thirties already. She has a seven-bob haircut that suits her blonde hair. It even made her look fierce and beautiful at the same time. It is because her haircut emphasizes her facial features.

Her brown, hazel eyes were stunning. I love how proportioned her pointed nose to her plumby, red lips. It is too perfect. Somebody even told others that she had a permanent lip tattoo. They never knew they were wrong all along.

I can't help but to be starstruck with her beauty. She's really incredible.

"Welcome, Ms. Venus Hughes."

"T-Thank you Ms. Jennings."

I can see that she's a bit shocked as she chuckled a bit.

"Am I seeing it well? Am I making our princess nervous today?"

"N-Not at all." I said, trying to sound confident as much as possible. I turned my gaze to where my fashion designer is sitting right now. I smiled when she gave me a thumbs up sign.

"Very well. That's nice to know. Let's start." We paused right there because of some commercials rolling.

"Are you okay,Ms. Venus?"

"Yes, totally." I said, meeting her gaze. I tried to sound confident rather than tensed. Of course, everybody knows how confident this body I am having right now. I should never be wrong, even the way Venus breathes.

"We'll be on air after three minutes. Will that be fine?"

"I guess so."

"What?"

"Fighting?"

I can see Priya Kenner chuckled as she shook her head. "Wow. Looks like you're also using trendy lines now, Ms." I don't know why but she's more of being sarcastic when she said those words. It is making me shiver deep down.

I suddenly remembered Venus's fashion designer and on how she's telling me to not ever forget my lines...I mean Venus's lines.

What the...I forgot the pieces of paper for my lines!

I haven't even scanned it a bit because of her blabbering a while ago. Argh! That punk!

"I guess you're ready now." Ms. Jennings signalled the cameramen and all the people in studio one to go on air this time.

"And now, we're back, beautiful people! Right now, Ms. Venus prepared something special for us."

"Huh?" Oh crap. I hope the show will edit what nonsense I am saying right now. Seriously, I just want to melt.

I can see that Venus's fashion designer is massaging her forehead because of what I am doing right now. It means this is something really bad. I can't believe I am trying to mess everything. This is only my second day as Venus and yet I am slowly breaking her image into pieces.

Venus's fashion designer made a gesture by means of her thumb drawing an invisible line in front of her neck. It means to cut whatever that is. I am really fortunate that this episode is not live. It will be shown after forty minutes of shooting the interview.

"T-Thanks." I softly said as my frowning Fashion designer walked towards me.

"I am just seeing this coming."

"Is it the reason why you decided to not film this show live?"

"The moment you refused to read your script was my cue to do it. I can still remember what you have told me. If the situation gets worse, you should do everything to get it done beautifully, no matter what happens. That line of yours became a classic. Can you still remember it?"

"I am glad that you're applying it right now."

"It's a part of my job." She said as she smiled at me.

"I can say, you are really trusted. I can't thank you enough."

"Trust? When did trust become a part of your vocabulary, madam?" She said, giving me a sarcastic remark.

"Don't even thank or trust me. You even said it yourself that you never trust anyone but yourself." She added as she stood up, walking past me. I noticed pieces of paper being left on the table. I looked around and I saw Ms. Priya Kenner drinking her cup of coffee along with my fashion designer. She just came there at the mini-pantry visible to the TV newsroom where the shooting of my special on-screen participation takes place.

This word "trust" is indeed scary after all. If Venus Hughes can handle trusting no one, I am the very opposite of her.

Chapter 23: THE STAR'S VISIT

Caily's POV

My day started really weird and crazy. If not for Venus's perfectionist attitude, I am a dead meat by now.

I didn't know being pretty can sometimes be too exhausting to the point of you, cramming the hell out of it.

"Are you still fine?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"You look tired and it's only noon time. Do you think you can handle it?"

"If I could handle it the previous days, there's no way I will excuse myself for today's activities. Let's do this!" I said to my fashion designer. The staff are all behind her, grinning from ear to ear after hearing those words from me.

"That's the spirit that I wanted to hear from you, dear."

"Let's get back to work, everyone!" I said, clapping my hands in front of them. I also raised my eyebrows as I smirked.

The next hours seem to be endless. Flashes of cameras surrounded me like what Venus used to have. I have been posing for a lot of hours but I realized you can never be tired being beautiful.

"Don't forget, you have your dates with Mr. Chen, Mr. Hassan and Mr. Hudson." She said as she walk towards me right after the last camera clicked on my last pose for that summer outfit gala.

"Yeah. Got it." My fashion manager nodded and handed me my Ipad to let me do my mini-background checking to the three of them.

"What time is my first date?"

"Three in the afternoon, madam."

"How about my second and third dates?"

"Madam, there's only a one-hour difference for each."

I nodded and I preferred being silent as I look at my fashion manager. I want to tell them something that I want to do. However, I am afraid whatever I will decide for myself will greatly affect Venus's life and her daily routine.

I agreed. The dates were crazy. I never realized they were three different races that I would date for today. Mr. Chen is a Chinese tycoon and a close friend of Jack Ma. Mr. Hassan is an Indian Businessman. He is a major stockholder of different brands of yachts being sold around the world. Mr. Hudson is one of Bill Gates' associates when it comes to international technology innovation. They are all big names but they were old men.

I can't believe Venus is also into DOMs for her beauty's sake! She's really the Marilyn Monroe of the 21st century I must say.

"Honey, I will go to your house at exactly 8:00 PM."

"Huh?"

"Well, why do you ask? I missed you." He said as he kissed my hand all of a sudden. I am just stopping myself from cringing too much. Imagine an old man of her 70s, with that sagging skin and wrinkled face. As he grinned at me, I can see one golden tooth that made his smile expensive to look at.

"Baby, I can't wait for you to make me happy tonight." He added, grinning. His voice alone makes my heart beat very fast.

I can't believe what I just heard that I gently swallowed my saliva and smiled back. I hope he can't see me being too awkward.

"Okay. Please go to my place. Same time." I said as I smiled at him. Honestly speaking, I am just gathering all my courage deep within. Whatever this is, I don't have the idea but I guess I am already dead.

Mr. Hudson arrived at the expected time Caily has set up for the both of them. She already took a bath and put on a lot of perfume as one of the preparations exclusively for him. They are now inside the guest room and she's only wearing the pink night gown that Venus wore before they switched their bodies.

After seeing her only wearing these clothes, Mr. Hudson suddenly grabbed her by hand and squeezed her breasts. She was shocked she pulled herself away from him.

Seeing the fire of desire from his eyes, she tried her best to stay calm as she thinks of a way out.

"Uhm...Mr. Hudson, I think I want to drink a glass of my favorite wine, first." She reasoned out, without him knowing it, her knees are shaking already.

"Why? I want you now, I can't wait." He said in an impatient tone. As she said this to him, he can't help but to feel more aggressive towards her.

"I-I want to set up the mood. P-Please." She said, the feeling of fear is already sweeping off her feet.

"Very well then, as you wish my queen."

She tried her best to distant herself from him because she thinks that he's a potential harm for her. Caily, who is now in the body of Venus told the maids to bring in two glasses of her favorite grape wine. She also instructed them to put a sleeping pill inside Mr. Hudson's wine.

After five minutes, they were able to follow what Caily told them. Mr. Hudson is smiling as the glasses of wine came in the room. The drinks are exclusively delivered by the maids.

"You're very sweet, my lady. This night deserve a toast." He said, getting the glass of wine and held raising it upward. "More of the best nights with you, my love."

Caily held the glass wine, too. She encircled her arms to him and they both took a sip from their wines.

"Sleep well, my dear." I softly said to him as noticed him slowly closing his eyes. She's happy that they are already sitting on the bed that's why she haven't got a hard time letting him sleep.

She watch him closely as he slept. She was able to put off his clothes as she changed it to his bathrobe.

"Hello, Sean?"

"Madam?" Her driver answered him right away as she called him.

"Prepare my favorite car. We'll go to the hospital. I will visit a friend at exactly 12 midnight."

"Yes, madam. I will have it prepared for you right away."

"And, one more thing, please clear everything. I don't want to create a buzz for my visit. I want it to be as private as possible."

"Consider it done, madam. Nobody will ever know you stepped on that hospital."

"Thank you so much."

As she ended the call, she heaved a heavy sigh. She needs to check on her body and her present condition. She also wanted to know what happened to her mom after knowing she's there. Will she ever care about her this time? Knowing that she got a 'car accident'?

Now, she realized that if you have a lot of money, everything could be possible. Many will believe what happened even if it didn't in the first place. You can even twist lies for it to become a solid truth.

Caily's POV

I waited for more than two hours until midnight. My thoughts are too preoccupied I didn't notice we have arrived at the secret VIP lobby of the hospital.

"Her mother quit her job because her poor daughter is in a state of coma." She overheard nurses talking while she passed beside them. She also disguised herself by wearing the nurse's uniform and a facemask. I know the people who know Venus will cause a lot of trouble. I am sure that this presence alone can catch too much attention.

I can't help but to feel emotional. Somehow, I felt love and attention for the first time coming from my mom.

But, why? Why did you take care of me like this all of a sudden? If only I knew that accidents are the only way for me to be treated so well, then I'd gladly do it to myself. I'd be more than happy to become bedridden just to enjoy my mom's attention more than anything.

I slowly walk along the hallway going to the room where my body lies. It is located in room 24B. I walk towards my body. I noticed that my body changed a lot from the moment Venus and I switched bodies. I am drastically losing weight because of the liquid diet that I am going through right now.

"Get me out of here!" My heart almost stopped when I heard that familiar voice. That loud shriek of resentment and hate belongs to Venus Hughes that's now trapped inside my own body in a state of coma.

"I can't see anything! What the fuck! Get me out of here!"

Her voice is too loud but I guess I am the one that can only hear that one.

I sat on the chair beside her bed quietly as I look at my face. I can't help but to cry because I felt pity to myself all of a sudden.

"Who's there?"

My heart almost skipped a beat when Venus felt my sobs and silent cries. I guess I failed at being silent this time.

"Who the fuck is there? Can anybody answer me, please?" She said in a very irritated voice and yet I can sense the desperation in her tone.

"Venus..." I said in a cracked voice. I gently wiped my tears using my arms.

"Caily...is that you?"

"Yes."

"Did you come here to bring my body back? What the hell are you doing? I need to go back. I want my body back!"

"As much as I would want to, I think that will be impossible, this time."

"Why? You wench! I will not let it pass. If I will return to my own body, I will crush you into pieces!"

"What if you can't do that anymore?"

"W-What? What do you mean?" She shouted at me as if not believing what I am saying right now.

"I already killed you, Venus."

Chapter 24: EMBRACING DARKNESS

Caily's POV

Upon hearing those words, she shouted on top of her lungs until her voice became hoarse.

"W-What do you mean you killed me, huh?" I can hear her crying this time, while saying the words. From her tone of voice, I can sense fear and desperation in one.

"I have killed your hopes."

"You're one, crazy bitch!" She shouted back.

"Nobody will ever notice that it is not you who are possessing this body but me."

"How dare you! Who allowed you to do it, huh?"

"Let's say, I just want to try what your life's like. Well, I am enjoying it!" I said, grinning. I want to be as calm as possible. I don't want to appear as if I am actually talking to her.

Who will believe that I am talking to someone right now? Looking at my own body in front of me, I am sleeping like a log.

"Fuck off, will you? It's my body and bring it back to me!"

"I will return this body to you, soon. For now, just stay there and behave yourself very well." I said, grinning. I am sounding very calm while speaking to her. I admit, even if she's shouting, I guess I am the only person to hear it. Maybe, Bellezza will hear her, too.

I still can't believe all that Bellezza said was true. I haven't even thanked her for doing this for me.

Venus shouted because she's really pissed off by my voice and I guess, even my presence.

"This is all useless and unfair! All I can see is darkness around me! Your body is not even responding no matter what I do. You foolish girl."

"This body where you are right now will be awake, soon. Just learn how to be patient, okay?"

"You will regret what you did, Caily Mcfisher." It sounded more of a warning that made me shiver all of a sudden.

"Why will I regret living your life? I am afraid I will be getting used to it soon."

"What you did is wrong. You never even dared ask for my consent! You'll regret this!"

"One thing's for sure, I will not. I might not return your body to you if you're being mean to me." As I said those words, I noticed that my pointing finger started to move. How can she suddenly make my finger move? I am even in a state of coma!

I stood up as I gasped. I can't help putting my hand on my mouth.

"I am the only Venus Hughes, you fool. You can't easily take what's mine."

"I will go now."

I stood up and took a last glance at my body who is peacefully lying down right now. I am like taking a deep slumber but then how she made me move my finger all of a sudden is a mystery to me.

I called my fashion designer/personal assistant and I told them to attend to my body here in this room. I was about to go outside when somebody opened the door.

My heart almost stopped when I saw the worried face of my mom. I noticed that her eyes were a bit swollen. Is it because of too much grief? Now that I am in a state of coma?

"How is she, Ms. Nurse?" She said in a worried tone. I can't help looking directly into her eyes.

I almost forgot, I am in my full disguise as being the nurse on duty because of what I am wearing right now. I guess she can't recognize me because I am wearing a face mask too.

"S-She's okay. Please do not worry too much."

"Thank you, Ms. Thank you for looking after my baby for a little while. I'm gone in a bit. I bought some medicine for her, that's why."

I never thought holding back my tears can be this hard as I look at my mom's eyes directly.

"She'll be fine, don't worry. I know she will wake up soon." I said, trying my best not to cry in front of my mother. She placed the foods that she bought on the side table and held both of my hands.

"Thank you, Ms. Nurse. Again, I want to say thank you. You know, I badly wanted to hear those words from you because I can feel that my baby will leave me soon." She said while sobbing.

She's looking right into my eyes as if reading what's in it that I suddenly let go of her hand as I avoid my gaze on my mom.

"Y-You're welcome. I have to go now, ma'am." I said as I rushed on the door going outside because I just feel that I can't hold back my tears anymore.

I ran along the hallway and when I saw the exit door of that VIP lobby, I let out all the emotions that I feel right now.

Why did she ever act like that? She's too warm and I could feel I am about to melt. Why, of all situations, why now? If only she knew I badly wanted to hug her this time. It's been almost two days and yet I could feel that I haven't seen her for years now.

"Yes?" I answered that phone call right away. I wiped my tears with my hands as I tried to compose myself. She shouldn't know that I have been crying for a while.

"Madam, Caily Mcfisher's condition is getting stable this time." My fashion designer said on the other line. I feel relieved all of a sudden.

"Update me about her from time to time."

"I will madam. If you worry about what happened, everything is well taken care of. They didn't even doubt what happened to her."

"Alright, then. Pay off her hospital bills, will you?"

"Why should we do that, madam? I think we covered up the incident. You don't have to keep on thinking it over and over again."

"It's too hard, you know."

"As far as I can remember, you badly wanted to get even with her. Why are you so concerned about her all of a sudden?"

"Are you even thinking? I can't be at ease knowing that it's my fault that she's in a coma right now."

"Yes, madam. Will do it right away."

"If you're not busy right now madam, please go back to your car. We'll go home now. You will still have your morning guests at Glam Studios at 5:00 A.M.

"I am going back now. Bye." I walked inside the secret door which led me to a long, wide tunnel. I reached the parking space where my driver parked my car.

After a few minutes, I am already at home but my thoughts are still into my mother's face and her gloomy state.

For the first time in my life, I have seen that worried face of her as she fears the possibility of losing me any time. Instead of me being very happy about it, it makes me even more sad. I don't get the point of why is she being like this all of a sudden? Because if I am fine, she can't even spend a lot of time that's alloted especially for me, even on weekends.

I slowly got up from bed because I felt thirsty all of a sudden. I gently wrapped my night robe around my waist as I let my feet feel the softness of my carpet from my room. Well, Venus's room to be exact but I am now her, anyway, so it is mine.

I let my feet locate my bedroom slippers and when it finally did, I put it on and started tiptoeing as I went outside my room.

I smiled when I received a text from my fashion designer that Mr. Hudson is still sleeping soundly in the other room, I mean the guest room just beside my own room to be exact.

I let out a sigh of relief. I must be there beside him as soon as he opens his eyes so that I will not be caught. If he'll discover that I am not there beside him, I will be really dead.

I went to the big kitchen and opened the refrigerator. I got a glass and poured the contents in the glass of water. As I drank from it, I choked on water all of a sudden because I can still hear Venus's words: "You'll regret this!"

It's echoing in my ears like the countless beating of the gong.

Well, if only I discovered that these things are the actual activities of Venus, then maybe it changed my mind for the first and last time I ever made a decision with Bellezza Scyther.

"What are my schedules for tomorrow?"

"You'll be in your class, madam. The first period will start at exactly 7:00 AM. Please be there before that time."

"And then?"

"At 10: 00 AM, you'll be visiting the library for exposure and you'll be studying with your tutor at the same time."

"Got it, " I said, remembering almost everything. As a student of the same school where she's being at right now. She smiled because of the excitement to see her friends. Now that she's Venus Hughes, she will experience what she feels for each flash of camera that surrounds her.

Can you believe it? I will even get the chance to be swarmed by boys. Even in my dreams, I've never imagined all that she'll be treated by those hot guys, too. This time, this woman is so beautiful, too.

Chapter 25: HER EXCLUSIVE TIME

Caily's POV

I opened my eyes when I felt the sun's rays kissing my cheeks. Ever since I started being Venus, I felt like my life changed forever. From the time I got her body, there was never a day that I failed to smile. I am a lot more excited today because I will not wake up earlier than the times that I have from the previous days.

It is the time for Venus to go to her physical school. She had a lot of homeschooling schedules but I don't understand why she has to also go to an actual school, too. Well, I guess if you're rich and crazier than your usual self, you can do anything in your life.

I took a quick bath and got ready for the beauty routine that my fashion designer taught me. I admit it is a struggle for me to convince them to believe that I am just freshing everything up.

Venus is known to be a very good make-up artist and she's enthusiastic about cosmetics that she got her own brand of beauty products as well.

I have to blend in very well. I need to let them feel that I am just practicing everything from the very start because of my future plans. They seem to like the idea. The truth is, I am simply being Caily and I need to learn everything from scratch.

As I am facing the mirror, I can't help but to smile. I still can't believe I am this beautiful. I mean, Venus is this beautiful. Her skin is incredibly fair and flawless. I tried frowning in front of the mirror and I am still feeling happy deep down.

'Hey Venus, how to be ugly? I guess even if I will apply these foundations and CC creams on my face in a messy way, I'd still be beautiful.'

I tried to be looking so serious. I noticed that my tears automatically ran down my cheeks.

"My goodness, even if you will cry, you are still so beautiful. I think I am being Narcissus right now. That greek god who fell in love with himself."

I am saying all these things aloud in front of the vanity mirror as I touched my cheek and cupped it with my hands.

A text message from my phone caught my attention. I stopped applying some powder to my face and read it.

"Madam, are you ready? We'll be heading to your school at exactly 7:00 AM."

"Yup, I am almost done."

"Just go downstairs and proceed to the parking lot."

Gosh, I suddenly felt that my stomach was rumbling because I am hungry. I forgot, when I was Caily, I used to have breakfast everyday.

I called my fashion designer and she answered right away.

"You'll be having breakfast with your friends at school." She cheerfully said on the other line.

"Oh is that so?" I answered, suddenly becoming disappointed.

"Yes, madam. I'll go with you as you go to school. Don't worry and enjoy your day." After she said those words, she hung up on me right away.

I sighed as I stood up. I put on my skimpy uniform that highlighted my body's curves. The last time I remembered, I was only looking at Venus and how she wears this one. I can't believe I will have to experience it myself this time.

I stepped outside my bedroom's door but a lot of thoughts are still clouding my mind. Indeed, Venus is strategically witty. Well, I can't blame her. It's only seldom that she appears in school that's why maybe her 'so-called' friends are just grabbing the opportunity to be with her.

The question is, is she really treating them as friends? Or she's just bringing up her image as a 'good friend' for other people to admire her 'good side'? For me, she doesn't even have one for the record.

For me, she's not even a good friend but more of an enemy. If she doesn't like you, she will make a way just to eliminate you in whatever ways possible for her.

I arrived at school and I noticed that I still have two hours for me to eat my breakfast. As usual, there were mobs of fans that surrounded me. I smiled as I shook hands with them.

"Venus!"

"Hello, Brielle and Reese!" As soon as they heard that I called their names, I could see them both blushed and smiled at me.

How can I ever forget them? They are Venus's super fans. They will both literally do everything just to get her attention. Well, my attention this time.

"Are you ready for breakfast?" They almost chorused as they asked me. I look at them and I want to laugh. I can see their eyes sparkle with glee.

"Uh, yeah. I'm hungry." I said in an awkward manner. They look at each other in an instant.

"Are we hearing everything right?" They both said which made me chuckle this instant.

"Why?"

"Venus, it's our first time to hear that you're hungry at this very hour." They said, their tones were so amazed and wondering at the same time.

What? Now Venus is really impossible. Is she even human for not feeling hungry? My goodness!

"Let's go, dear! The cafeteria prepared a lot for you. We rented everyone's services for you to enjoy your breakfast to the fullest." Reese said as she grabbed my hand. I smiled as I walked with them. While we're on our way to the cafeteria, I saw a man sitting on one of the benches beside the campus facade.

As he lifted his head up, our gaze met. Right now, I can see the sadness in his eyes.

Nolan.

I stopped walking in front of him and many people that surrounded me stopped walking, too.

"Nolan?" I said, he just looked at me, giving me that confused look as well.

"Huh? Do you know him?" Brielle asked as she locked her arms on mine.

"Well...I just saw his name on the announcements." I answered. I saw him shaking his head as he stood up. He left without even saying a word that made the others mutter and whisper something among themselves.

"Let's go. He's not important, anyway." Reese said as she gently grabbed my hand again as we headed to the cafeteria. I secretly looked at Nolan and the direction of where he's heading. He is also heading at the cafeteria. When the guards told him that it would be exclusive to me and my friends, he politely nodded and went away.

I felt guilty this instant. Of all the people that I will see today, it's my best friend who simply appears out of the blue.

"Hey, let's get some at the counter. They are serving all the possible breakfast meals today." Brielle proudly said which made me smile. I guess I have to forget clouding my thoughts about Nolan for a while, this time.

I grabbed three tuna sandwiches and one pineapple juice. I also got a plate and filled it with sausages, bacon, scrambled eggs with garlic rice.

Other girls also followed what I got and went to their respective tables. Imagine the whole cafeteria getting those foods, too. I slowly turned my head around and I saw many girls anticipating what I will do next.

"Well, we should also get these too, right, Reese?"

Brielle said as she poked Reese's waist.

"Wow, that's really touching but I don't encourage you to also get what I am getting."

"Are you serious?" Reese exclaimed that even some of the people inside the cafeteria can't help but to take a glimpse of her.

"You make everything a trend in whatever you'll do so you can't blame us for doing this one." She added as she looked at me, giving that puzzled and annoyed look.

"Really? It's all up to the both of you if you're going to follow me. I should go back to the table because I really wanted to eat." I went back to our table as I left them, still confused about what to eat.

"Can you believe the words she's saying this time?" I can still hear them murmur.

"No, totally. It's like she's not Venus. The Venus we knew is too quiet the last time."

"Is it possible that Ms. Venus will be talkative like this?"

"No, that's why I am concerned because it's like she's an impostor." I can hear more of Reese's voice for that one.

I gently shook my head. They are more excellent when it comes to talking behind my back rather than them being nice to me. Poor Venus Hughes. Is she trying to fit in?

What if she doesn't really have good friends at all?

After several hours, the whole day at school is almost ending. On my way home, I received a phone call.

"Hey, are we going to meet at the library or I'll just have to go to your house tonight?"

"Adeline? Oh my goodness you're back." I said being so excited that I almost forgot I am Venus Hughes this time.

"What's this, Venus?" Her voice on the other line is rough and partly annoyed that instant.

"What I mean is, you're finally back from your leave." I said, sounding sarcastic for her to not doubt me.

"Well, just go to my house. I don't want to be exposed to so many people who kept on interrogating me."

"Okay. If that's your wish, madam." I hung up first to be safe. I know the more I talk, the more I get myself in trouble.

I should be very, very careful this time.

Chapter 26: VENUS' BREATH

Nolan's POV

"Nolan?" As I look at the one who called me, I almost can't believe it myself.

It's Venus Hughes.

I am now wondering why, of all people, she will simply call me like that. She's sounding too casual many would think we're friends or whatsoever.

"Do you know him?" I saw Brielle ask her as she raised her eyebrows as she turned her gaze at me. She looked at me as if she's observing my reaction to her question.

She eventually said that she saw my name on the announcement board. It made them shut their mouth that instant.

This encounter makes me sad even more. I remembered my dearest Caily. I think if she sees this sight and the fact that Venus is almost one breath away from me, she will be very happy. But then, she's not here. She's not even awake until now and it's almost three days.

I left without saying anything. As much as possible, I should avoid Venus Hughes. I don't know. I just feel that deep down, she's also responsible for what happened to Caily. She's giving me a vibe that it is not a simple car accident of why Caily is in the state of coma right now.

I can still remember what she did to Caily before Caily fell into this accident. She was being mean to her. Deep down, I could feel that she's taking revenge to Caily. I really don't know what happened. I really hope that she's not responsible for anything. I hope my gut feel is just wrong.

I walked and headed towards the cafeteria for me to have my breakfast, also to reminisce my moments with Caily.

"Sir? Please wait. You can't enter there right now."

"Why?" I replied, giving the guard a puzzled look.

"This cafeteria will be closed from 7:00 A.M until 9:00 AM because of the reservations made beforehand."

"Oh, is that so? I understand." I said as my shoulders dropped. I walked away and decided to stay in the library to review my notes. I can't wait to see Caily after class.

As I walked to the different aisle of the library, I saw Adeline right away. When she realized that it was me, she waved her hand. She's like telling me to come near her right now. I smiled and walked towards where she's sitting right now.

"It is so nice to see you now, Nolan! How have you been?"

"I'm not feeling well these days. I guess you've heard the news, right?" I said as I met her gaze. From that cheerful mood, it turned sullen all of a sudden.

"I am really sorry for what happened to Caily. I guess I am also a part to be blamed for what happened to her." She answered with tearful eyes. I patted her on the shoulders.

"I guess nobody wanted it to happen. Please do not blame yourself."

"If only I didn't suggest her working for Venus Hughes, this would never happen to her."

"Don't say that. Caily loved working with her. She's a fan of Venus and she knows what she's doing."

"Nolan, I can see that you really know our friend more than I do. Again, I am really sorry." She replied as she wiped her tears with her handkerchief.

"I hope she'll wake up soon. By the way, how's your work with Venus?"

I can see that she's frowning too much while she heaved a deep sigh.

"What happened?" I added. She looked into my eyes and sighed once again.

"You know what, something weird is going on with Venus."

"Why? Is she making you mad again?"

"Actually, no. Something really incredible happened as soon as I saw her."

"What is it? Tell me."

"As soon as I arrived, I saw all her homework, all done. She just let me check those papers and told me to go home right away."

"What?"

"We have the same reaction. What's weird is that, she's nicer this time that it creeps me out."

"How did she answer all her homework? Did the maids help her or something?"

"No. That's really something. For the record, it's the first time that I have seen her being like that. All I know is that she's independent when it comes to everything except doing her homework."

"That's really weird." I nodded as I wrinkled my forehead.

"You said it right. And you know what's even weirder this time?"

"What is it?"

"The Venus Hughes that I know of is not the same as she seems. She has changed a lot. I can say she's a totally different person now."

Caily's POV

As I entered our room, everyone was freaking out. I think they don't want to believe that I am in front of them right now.

"Hey, say something Ms. Venus." Somebody just talk to me as they poke my arm. I awkwardly smiled as my way of response.

"Don't touch her. You can't reach her level." Brielle said to my classmate who just talked to me.

"No, it's okay." I insisted. I smiled in front of them. That made Brielle frown even more.

"Venus, what are you doing?" She said in a loud voice as she stood up and it caught the attention of our classmates.

"Huh?"

"Why did you become stupid all of a sudden? What are you doing?" She said and I can sense the rising anger on her tone.

"Brielle, what are you doing?" Reese grabbed her by hand.

"I am really pissed off, Reese. She's doing it all wrong."

Looking at the two of them, my other classmates also joined as they came closer to the corner of the room where I sat.

I also stood up as I slammed my hand on the desk. I can see that everyone was shocked from what I did.

"You know that I am never wrong. You're not only doing it right." I calmly replied as I smirked. Meeting their frightened gaze suddenly delighted me.

"Brielle and Reese are really mean." I can hear my other classmates murmur as they look at the both of them. They both look around slowly and all they can see is the look my other classmates are giving them.

Of course, when would Venus be the underdog? She can even convince a lot of people to sympathize with her without doing anything at all.

I saw the both of them looking at the direction to where I am looking. When they notice that the mob is condemning Brielle and Reese, Brielle starts to cry.

"I can never forgive you!" She said in front of me. I just smiled and looked at the people around me. They started to also discuss among themselves.

"Brielle should be the one to ask for her forgiveness. She even got a face to say that in front of Venus."

"Gosh girl, she's so dead!"

"No, they will both be dead."

"Why should they select Venus to be their enemy? Do they want to die earlier?"

I chuckled as I heard the murmurs and whispers of my other classmates that made the both of them cry harder like a crybaby. I sighed as I folded my arms.

"Go back to your seats guys. It's just a small misunderstanding between the 'best of friends', right, Brielle? Reese?" I said aloud and they both nodded at the same time.

When everyone went back to their seats, I slowly walked towards the both of them and told them in almost a whisper...

'If you want to make friends with others, please be true to yourselves and accept that other people won't follow you just because you wanted them to do it.'

I attempted to go back to my seat when I remembered something.

'Oh, one more thing. Please do not select your friends. Everyone deserves both your attention. Don't chase someone popular. Be friends with people that you think deserves your friendship. Be real.' I said as I smiled.

I will let them think what they want to think. They've known Venus for being mean. I want Venus to be known for showing the real her, somehow. I am Caily. That's inside Venus Hughes's body. I want to somehow make a difference in how people usually treat her. I also want them to discover about her personality that's not known to many. I want other people to think that she can be good in her little ways.

"Can we ever believe that these words came from you? Are you really Venus Hughes? Who are you?" They said in a chorus. I can't help but to chuckle in front of them.

"Well, I just said what's on my mind." I said as I raised my eyebrow. I smiled sweetly at them that made them frown even more.

"Yeah, it's one-zero for me."

"Our one and only Venus Hughes won again."

I shook my head as I heard murmurs again. I look around and I can see a lot of my classmates looking at me as if I am their only precious one. I can see their glistening eyes.

"Venus is really beautiful. How could someone become too adorable and cute at the same time?"

"Yup. Her innocent look is really driving me crazy. How could others hate her so much?" I also overheard some of my boy classmates saying these words behind me.

Now, I realized that this beauty can be dangerous too. I hope I will not get myself in trouble. I will not only risk Venus Hughes but Caily Mcfisher as well.

Chapter 27: DEEP CALLS TO DEEP

Caily's POV

Look at that! Just, look at that!" My fashion designer angrily exclaimed as soon as I entered my car.

"What?"

"You really never realized what you did? Are you out of your mind?You're now in the headlines!"

"So what?" I said, not having second thoughts either. I told the driver to go home right away. I had a lot of stress at school already, I don't want her to add it all up by listening to all her rants.

"Let me remind you. It's a big no no for you to be in the headlines except if it is good news or a new endorsement."

"Why are you so hyped up? You don't have to care about what people will say. Let the news spread out the hell I even care."

"Well, you should be. That's your number one rule. Never put Venus Hughes on the headlines unless you badly wanted publicity."

"I guess it's just normal."

"You're crazy."

Now, I am totally pissed. Yes she's the fashion designer/assistant of Venus but I think she doesn't have the right to dictate her in whatever she will do with her decisions.

"I know what I did was wrong but can you just let it pass? For once, let them talk about me until they will get tired of it."

"I don't know what to do with you anymore, Madam." She said in a very sarcastic way. However, I guess she noticed that I am very pissed that's why she tried to look composed. The truth is, I wanted to believe that she will explode any time.

"By the way, you have a schedule tonight." She changed the topic right away with a smirk.

"What now?"

"Mr. Hudson will have to see you again. He discovered that you put a sleeping pill on his drink."

"What the...?"

"You have to go inside the guest room again. You have to give him what he wanted this time."

I swallowed hard. She's not serious, is she? I look at her as I observe her facial reaction. She looked at me as if cheering me instead of saving me from this possible trap.

Well, for Caily Mcfisher, this is plain stupidity. This is not even possible! I should never let this happen!

We arrived home shortly after she told me what's going to happen tonight. She even followed me in my room and I can't help but to get pissed off.

"Can you just leave me alone, just this once?"

"But you have to be in the guestroom shortly."

"Can't you be patient? If you want, you can go there first." I said as I frowned at her. I even folded my arms as I met her gaze.

"I am just reminding you, madam. You can't easily outwit that old man. He may look frail, but he can be very dangerous if you make him mad."

"Get out. I will still have to prepare." I answered, trying to ignore the budding fear inside my heart.

Now, this is what I am scared the most. I will really have to prove that I am Venus Hughes by doing what she does every night...

As soon as I entered the room, I was greeted by his grin. I am more greeted by the devil. It gave me goosebumps.

"Baby, quit playing games. Make me happy tonight."

As soon as I hear those words, I can't help but to cry in front of him.

"Please, don't do this. I don't want to."

"What the fuck? Venus, what's behind this shitty drama? You agreed to be my mistress for a long time. Who gave you second thoughts this time?" He roared as his heavy steps walked towards me.

"M-Mistress?"

"In case you forgot, you even do all your best to make me happy. C'mon, ride me, baby." He grabbed me by hand and kissed it. He pulled me close and sucked my neck, as his kisses are going down.

He gently lay me back on the bed behind me.

"I missed you so much, baby. I will fuck you all night." I can't stop my tears as I look at the ceiling.

I can feel that my nightgown and everything that covers me was ripped because of his desire to own me tonight. I closed my eyes as he spread my legs.

"Look, baby. You're already wet and ready for me." He huskily said. I let out a moan as I felt his tongue. He started licking and sucking my core. I moaned as I felt pleasure that I shouldn't feel. He gently entered me and I felt his hard manhood stretching my vaginal walls. He started thrusting in and out, fucked me rough that I reached my climax. I felt like having an endless orgasm after that.

I am almost breathless but then he started stroking my core again. We had sex again and again that until I dropped on my bed, too tired and exhausted.

Maybe, this body longed for the touch of this dirty, old man but I felt my world just shattered. That real nightmare lasted for two hours. He is now falling asleep while me? I only feel that I am already dirty and worn out. He used my body for two, straight hours and I am even wondering where he got the stamina to last that long.

I closed my eyes and forced myself to sleep. Maybe when I wake up, this is just a bad dream after all.

I woke up because of the sound of the telephone ringing aloud.

"Hello?"

"I cancelled all your schedules this morning, madam. You just have to proceed to your date at exactly 2:30 P.M this afternoon.

I sighed as I heard those words coming from my fashion designer. "Okay." I answered, ending the call right away. As expected, I am left alone in this room again.

I started to be emotional after feeling pained all over my body, especially deep down. It's like I already lost all my strength. Mr. Hudson really used my body to the fullest. I remembered three days ago, I feel like I'm on top of the world but now? I felt like I am the dirtiest slut that has ever lived. I sobbed my heart out. I only intend to experience what enjoyment and feeling her life has to offer. I never expected that I would also have to experience the worst. I admit, I am never prepared for this one.

I can't accept what happened. I think I can never forgive myself.

Floreal, the northern part of Fayvallea. The witches gathered. A lot of them are more than terrified because of the turn around of events.

"This can't be real!"

"We can't accept this."

"This is not possible. It will not happen! We are all against it!" The mob almost chorused as they presented their opinions to Shreya Wallace who was seated on her crystal throne. She's also feeling agitated and troubled as she gently massaged her forehead.

"Rules are rules. She was able to abide by it perfectly that she's fit to become the next queen." Shreya said that made the mob roar in disagreement even more.

"Our highness, you can do something about it. Do not make haste decisions that we could regret later." One of the witches that belonged to the council commented. They were standing side by side behind the queen's throne.

"We need to review everything beforehand. Let us set grounds for her to become the next queen of Fayvallea." Shreya Wallace said as she stood up and faced a lot of the witches present in front of her throne. She gently touched her crystal scepter. In an instant, it showed Bellezza helping Caily grant her wish to come true.

A lot of witches stood in awe while others murmured words of opposition. A lot of them can't believe she cared about the world of the living. To the point that she even made a potion just for this girl for her to grant her wish.

"She's not worthy to be the next queen. Remember, she's dangerous because she's capable of creating potions of different purposes." One of the council now joined the deliberation of Bellezza Scyther becoming the next queen.

"We never know what she's capable of doing. She will always possess a threat because we know for a fact that she can make potions."

"If she'll be the queen, we will expect that the glorious days of Fayvallea will soon come to an end!"

The mob roared even more. They are all agreeing to one of the twelve councils surrounding Shreya Wallace who just aired her opinion just now.

"I agree. She's incapable. How can she handle three kingdoms when she only cared about the undead more than the world of the living? That qualifies her for being incompetent from the very beginning. I am against it!"

"Silence, everyone! Whatever decisions I will be making, it will be for the benefit of many."

"Our highness, please decide on this very well. We are putting our trust in you."

The mob can't hide their anxiety and worry about what Bellezza Scyther did. It was something that they can't believe she did herself for the first time.

The place suddenly became silent. The mob of witches made way from the back of the crowd. At the end of the crowd, there stood Bellezza Scyther wearing her victorious smile.

"Well...I am touched that everyone here is talking about me. Aahh, I am now feeling what it means to be popular." She said, not missing Shreya Wallace's gaze that's becoming cold as ice. Bellezza felt the rage that's budding inside her heart.

"The deliberations are not yet done. You may leave for now." Shreya Wallace said as she kept her cool. Bellezza looked at her hands. She can see her secretly closing both her fists. She knew Shreya very well. She knew that she's just trying to conceal rather than letting out what she truly felt.

"Yes, our highness." She said as she does the curtsy in greeting her. She can see Shreya grimacing as she looks at her.

"It's good that you bowed down for me after all these years."

"Why of course? You are our queen and it is only right to do this for you."

Shreya Wallace smiled as she raised her eyebrows.

"I am also showing you the right way on how to do it properly once I become the queen. Don't forget to surrender your crown after the deliberation." She laughed aloud after she said those words and disappeared into thin air right away.

Chapter 28: LEADER OF TRUTH

Nolan's POV

I am entering the hospital with a heavy heart. I am feeling this one again after those long hours of studying and taking our exams at school.

I should be happy with my exam results but then, I am always hit hard by the reality that Caily is unconscious until now.

I am excited to tell Caily what happened at school and my short encounter with Venus. If she's awake, I could probably see her wearing the biggest smile that could brighten everyone's day. I can't stop my tears from falling with these thoughts.

Why is she still sleeping this time? Is she not getting tired of sleeping? It's been more than three days and I really miss her so much.

I never noticed how I even reached the door of the room where she's at.

"Oh, there you are again." The nurse said. When she opened the door, she saw me right away. She smiled at me as she took a quick glance on her wristwatch.

"You're always on time. What a sweet, young man." She added. I just nodded as I looked at her.

"She's always been stable since yesterday. I guess any time from now, she'll be awake. Please be more patient." As the nurse said those words, she looked at me directly on my eyes. It felt like forever as we locked both our gaze.

"Really? Thanks, Miss nurse." I felt my heart skip a beat as soon as she mentioned that my dear Caily will be awakened soon.

"Yes. I hope it made you happy. I'll be going now." She nodded and avoided my gaze as she started to walk away. I can see her eyes that seemed to smile at me behind that face mask. I followed her with my eyes until she turned left going to the nurse's station.

I hurriedly went inside and gently closed the door behind me. I slowly walked near where she's lying down. She's still sleeping like a log.

"You know what? I got the top spot again. Are you impressed now, huh? Well, you must be." I smiled as I started talking about how awesome my day has been. As usual, no answer from her and it is making me cry once more.

"Sorry, Caily. I'm sorry I am not strong. Sorry for crying in front of you." I buried my head beside the bed where she's at right now.

"Please wake up. I promise to buy you more food than usual. I'm sorry for not taking care of you that much. I'm so sorry you have to experience all of this. You don't deserve this kind of hurt. If only I am in your position right now, I will be happier to see you alive and well."

I felt a hand that's gently tapping my shoulders. It's Caily's mom. I guess she had just arrived. I can see her holding a bag full of fruits and a bowl of Caily's favorite soup.

"The nurse told me that she might be awake any time soon. I can't miss not being able to give her favorite soup."

"Ma'am, I'm sorry. I am so embarrassed." I replied as I wiped my tears with both my hands.

"Don't be, dear Nolan. It's okay. I must be thankful above all because I can see that someone really cared for my daughter. I can't thank you enough, dear." She said as tears also flowed down her cheeks as she smiled weakly at me.

I stood up and hugged her. I think if Caily will see this sight, she will definitely be smiling sweetly. The last time I went to their house, her mom got really angry. She thought that Caily and I are already in a relationship. But then, after Caily explained that it was just a friendly gesture, she was relieved all of a sudden. It has been a golden rule of her mom to her that she mustn't be in a relationship until she graduates from college.

She thought that her only daughter already disobeyed that rule. They were not that close that's why she assumed that Caily could easily rebel against her will. I know for a fact that she isn't able to do it no matter what happens.

Her mother let me go and we sat down next to each other as we looked after Caily. Her excitement is the same as mine as we anticipate Caily to wake up and we're very much confident that it is sooner than we're expecting right now.

Caily's POV

As soon as I entered the nurse's station, I locked the door and removed my face mask. I sat down on one of the swivel chairs.

I looked around and when I am sure that there's no nurse to go inside, I gently placed the bowl of mushroom soup my mother cooked for me. I was able to sneak it out while there was no one in the room where my body lies.

I gently opened the lid and I could see the smoke of aroma coming out. It is always my favorite smell wherever I go. I even bring this one even if I am going to school. As I taste the soup, I can't help but to be emotional.

I realized that I have come a long, complicated way out of my bizarre dream. In order to achieve it, I even hurt a lot of feelings of people that's very close to me. Looking at Nolan a while ago, it makes me cry. I want to hug him so badly but how am I supposed to do that? First of all, he's not even impressed at Venus Hughes's looks, power and fortune. How can I even come near him when he's not even interested in me even if I am now Venus Hughes?

After eating, I wore my face mask again and sneaked outside my room. I saw Nolan through the glass window outside the room. He's crying in front of my body.

"If only you know how I miss you so much too. I want to hear your endless stories...of how your day has been."

Withermoor.

The crow flew a long way until it leaped on the window of Bellezza's castle. The crow transforms to a male human being, wearing all black.

"Our highness, I am back." He said as he bowed down at her. She's looking at her cauldron again as she grinned.

"What took you so long?" She asked, raising his eyebrows right away.

"Queen Dhara Rose asked me a lot of questions, our highness."

"Oh, is that so?" She answered. Bellezza seems to enjoy what she's hearing from him. She's still enjoying everything that she can see through the cauldron.

"I apologize for not being able to return here. By the way, they will announce the next queen after the last full moon. Are you ready for it?"

"I am more than ready. It took me four hundred years to wait for this moment to finally commence."

"Patience is a virtue indeed." The crow said, looking at the cauldron, too. They both enjoy looking at the commotion happening in Floreal.

The deliberation is still ongoing. They both saw how Shreya Wallace is dealing with the twelve councils of Fayvallea.

"Our highness, if Withermoor will be the next throne place, everything will be entirely different and you're aware of that, right?"

"I know it. I am not a fool to not prepare Withermoor for the incoming resident witches of Blossomcrest and Floreal."

"I can't wait to see the outcome." The crow said, grinning from ear to ear.

"You help me in welcoming them to Fayvallea's future kingdom."

From Withermoor's dragons to cute little wagons,

From those deadly weapons, let's turn them into chambers of our beloved deacons..

Withermoor's mystery creatures will gradually become the week's beautiful features.

Let's complete the decorations by removing every skull along the way to not make the place dull. Let's fade away the darkness a little,

so that it will not scare them away.

We'll turn the scary shrieks and screams

into beautiful sonatas and classical treats.

Blossomcrest is known to be the place of blossom.

Well, my Withermoor is a place of awesome.

I can turn the eerie chills to a sight of beautiful mills placed along the pavement.

Green, scary neon lights

will be highlighted on the sky as northern lights.

I always express myself to impress.

If they will set foot to my place,

they will realize that Withermoor is a nice place after all.

"Wow! This is breathtaking! You are bringing Withermoor to greater heights!"

"Should you assure me that you'll always be on my side as always?"

"I came from here. Everything in Withermoor was created by you so I am also yours, our highness."

"I am always pleased to hear that." She said as she smiled at him.

"By the way, how's Caily and Venus?" The crow said, very curious about the situation of the two.

"I will deal with them, perhaps make a visit to know how they are."

"If not because of them, you will not be in your dream position right now."

"Right. I want to see Caily enjoying herself as Venus Hughes for a week."

She can see that the crow is not having any facial reaction at all. He's just meeting her gaze as she grinned from ear to ear.

"But I know that nobody can ever survive in making a deal with you, am I right?"

Upon hearing it, she cackled and laughed out loud. It was terrifying that it echoed the whole Withermoor.

Chapter 29: I'LL READ YOUR MIND

"Where have you been?"

"None of your business." Caily said as she was greeted by Venus's fashion designer.

"Let me remind you about your date--"

"If you want to date them, please attend to them instead of me."

"I don't like you being sarcastic."

"I don't like you meddling with the business of others." Caily stared at her for a long time that she avoided.

"I heard that you went to the hospital again. Venus, stop visiting that girl. Why are you so concerned about her? You're not even relatives to start with."

"I will definitely go to all of my dates but please, mind your own fucking business!" Caily got really mad for her invading her life so much.

Caily stomped her feet as she went inside her room. She dove on her bed, feeling the soft mattress on her skin. She tried closing her eyes. However, the memories from yesterday kept on haunting her.

"Bellezza! Where are you?"

"Yes, darling?" She appeared right in front of me as a spiral of dark smoke formed around her.

"I want to go back. I want to be Caily Mcfisher again. Please." She pleaded and it made Bellezza close her hands secretly. She tried smiling in front of her.

"Well darling, you see...that wish that was granted to you is valid to the number of days that we agreed."

"I want to go back! I don't want this life anymore."

"If you're going to insist upon going back to your body, you might never go back, ever."

"Can there be a way? There is, right? Please," Caily pleaded as she held Bellezza's arms. She shook her arms and Bellezza rolled her eyes in return.

"Remember, you're creating your destiny now. Take time in appreciating it one by one."

"No! Venus's life is not what I wanted. I realized that my life as Caily Mcfisher is much more valuable compared to her. Please bring me back!" Caily shouted on top of her lungs that made Bellezza look directly on her eyes. In a split second, everything stopped, even the ticking of the clock.

Bellezza just looked at the mad expression of Caily. Widened eyes and opened mouth because of shouting, everything stopped. She sighed as she held her hairclip and tossed it in the air. It transformed into a crow and alighted on the bed beside where they are both sitting right now.

"Our highness, this is not what I expected. I thought she's enjoying his life as Venus Hughes? What happened?"

"Shut up or I'll break your wings if you keep on blabbering!"

"I apologize, our highness." He said, sticking a cork on his beak.

"I should do something." Bellezza said as she opened her hands. There appeared her black scepter right away. The crow observed what she'll do as she placed the scepter on top of Caily's head.

"Sleep my darling, now. Forget the previous day's memories that troubled you somehow..."

After that enchantment, everything moved right away. Caily fell on the bed with closed eyes. She fell into a deep slumber that both of them looked at each other.

"Our highness, Venus has a date for today." The crow reminded her. She grinned and glanced at the wall clock.

"Oh well, she still has two hours for a great nap and one hour for her glam up. She will be awakened by her maids."

"So, our highness...she will forget everything from yesterday?"

"For the meantime, yes. However, she must not be reminded of whatever memory that may trigger her mind to remember what happened from yesterday."

"I guess it will lessen what she's feeling right now."

"I never wish that to happen." Bellezza said as she smiled in front of Caily who is sleeping soundly this time.

"Let's go. We'll still meet someone to thank."

"Hello, anybody there?" A faint voice woke her up.

"Who are you?" Venus suddenly answered. She's still trapped inside Caily's body. Her voice, sounding desperate to get out from it.

"Can you still remember me, darling?"

"It's always dark here! Are you stupid? Why do you have to ask questions with obvious answers?"

"That's why you're my favorite person. I always like your fighting spirit."

"Why are you here? What are you trying to prove? After that Caily bitch visited me here a while ago, you're also here to tell me I am already powerless." Bellezza can sense the fear in every word she uttered.

"Easy, my dearest Venus. I am here to help you."

"Help? What kind of help?" She answered right away.

"All you need to do is to behave. Always remember that your life doesn't end here in this world of living."

"What do you want to tell me?"

"You have to stay here. Behave and just be inside this body. Everything will just go back to normal if you learn how to wait."

"I don't want to wait anymore. I want my body back! Please give it back to me! Please help me!" Venus shrieked as she exclaimed that Bellezza and the crow looked at each other. She opened her left hand again and in an instant, her black scepter appeared right away. She touched Caily's head with the scepter she's holding right now.

"There, there my dear. Forget the stress of today. Sleep my darling, sleep well."

"Yup, they both need sleep, I think." The crow chuckled in delight as he looked at Caily who was in a coma. Venus is not answering anymore that's why they can easily tell that she's also resting in Caily's body.

"It's the first time that she rested after she transferred inside the body of Caily. After she wakes up from this sleep, we will tell them the plans I have in mind."

"Yes, our highness. Nobody should prevent you from being the next queen of Fayvallea."

"Of course. Everything is all set. Nobody should mess it up because it is already destined for me."

Bellezza said, grinning. The crow is also laughing with her and the sure victory they are going to receive.

Caily's POV

I slowly opened my eyes and I felt light-headed. I looked around me and when I saw the small mirror beside the bed. I smiled as I looked at my reflection.

I remembered my date all of a sudden. Few hours ago, Venus's fashion designer reminded me of my date. It made my heart flutter so bad.

"Madam, Aivan Harper is one the bachelors that's on the list that you're going to date today."

"Really?" My face lit up all of a sudden. Why, he is my all-time crush. I really should prepare for it.

"Madam, leave everything to me. Just relax and enjoy your soothing bathtub time. I will get back to you after two hours."

"Okay. Please do. I'm just here in my room in case you wanted to tell me something last minute."

I can see that Venus's fashion designer left the room as soon as I told her to do so. I looked around and it is the first time I begin to notice how big and spacious Venus's room has to offer.

I entered the bathroom and I could see that my bathtub was prepared ahead of time. I literally would have to wake up for everything I need. It is indeed a great advantage if someone is too familiar with your daily routine. Is Venus's fashion designer a part-time mind reader, too?

I just glanced at everything that's prepared for me ahead of time. I think I should familiarize myself more from this room. I should grab every opportunity that would lead me to experience the life of Venus first-hand. As much as possible, I should not miss anything while I am still living here.

I opened a large closet and what greeted me struck me the most. I almost freak out! Venus's a monster when it comes to collecting limited edition things! I hovered my gaze on one of the handbags she has right now. I looked at the LV bag that's being displayed on the crystal shelves.

I remembered this brown LV bag with a real crocodile skin. It was even featured on the news three years ago because of the controversy that's with it.

So, she's the owner of this bag, huh? I know it is worth thousands of dollars. It's even a crazy, massive amount for one bag! I won't spend on this even if I am the richest woman alive right now. I mean, who will literally spend all her fortune for a bag that she can't use for everyday? Looking at the features, it doesn't even look that durable in the first place!

I stepped backward and I almost fainted when something opened for me. When I look on where I am standing right now, a secret staircase slowly formed from a normal, concrete floor. I can see that there's a way leading to a place down there. I don't know what exactly is that place but my heart suddenly beat very fast. I can't help but to panic and look around me to locate what exactly I did for me to be able to make that small staircase appeared in front of me.

When I looked at what I stepped on, I saw nothing. I tried touching the glass screen and the staircase went back to its normal position.

Is this glass screen related to the mystery I am seeing right now? I tried touching the glass screen and I realized that my fingerprint was the one responsible for this. I admit, I am really awestruck. What's inside that secret passage of Venus's room?

As my curiosity is eating me slowly, I am finding myself touching this glass screen again…

Chapter 30: FANTASY VS. REALITY

Caily's POV

I touched the glass screen and it led me to the small staircase going down again. I am about to descend on the first step going down when I felt someone open the door of my room.

"Madam, are you ready?"

I hurriedly touched the glass screen again and everything went back to its proper place before she even opened the door of my room.

"Oh, yes. Yes. Please give me thirty minutes more for my bath time. Just wait for me outside." I said, as I tried my best to not sound nervous. She closed the door of my room again. That's when I finally sighed out of relief.

I put on my best dress and everything Venus's fashion designer prepared for me on the bed. I just looked at it and sighed again. I need to finish the date so that I will go back to what I discovered just now.

We still have thirty minutes for the preparation and final touches. Venus's fashion designer looked at me from head to toe. I am thankful that I somehow managed to do my own make-up and hairstyle.

She nodded as she seemed to like everything I did to myself. I sighed with relief.

"You know how important these dates are, right?"

I just looked at her and she gave me a serious look in return. She typed something on the ipad. I am surprised a bit when I received a notification from her. I opened the file and my jaw almost dropped. I can see the complete files and information about my dates. Well, the usual thing happens every time.

"Your parents wanted you to settle down as soon as possible."

"What? I am only twenty-three years old. Why are they rushing me?"

"That's the point. They want you to settle down so that you will learn how to be responsible in dealing with your life."

"What are they trying to prove? I am old enough to decide for my life." I said, stomping my feet. I don't think this is fair. My mother can't even dictate me to marry young. Yes, she's a bit strict and

she even told me to have a boyfriend after college. However, she will always allow me to choose whom to love because it is my own feelings.

"That's exactly why you started dating all the great bachelors in the world. And I remembered Aivan Harper is the first in the list."

"Yeah..." I answered but in a rising intonation. It's more of a questioning tone.

"Madam, is Aivan Harper really the one for you? Are you sure about him yet?"

"I am still dating him so I guess that matter will still be decided upon."

"Very well, madam. Oh, let me just remind you about your meeting with your parents tonight."

"Please tell me what to prepare."

"That's exactly what I am trying to tell you. You have to let them know someone that you liked best among all your dates." She said. I looked at her and frowned.

"You've been dating for a year now. It's impossible for you to not select anyone."

"What if I don't have someone in mind? What if I am still undecided?"

"That's a worst case scenario. They might decide whom you're going to marry."

"Hey, babe. Are you listening to me?" Aivan Harper held my hand as I sat next to him inside his car.

"Huh?"

"What happened? Are you okay?"

"Y-Yes."

"Your thoughts seem to travel somewhere. You're not paying attention to me that much."

"Do you think I am ready for marriage?" I asked as I faced him. He seemed to be shocked after hearing me.

"W-What's the rush about? We've agreed that this whole thing will be pure fun. No serious commitment attached, right?" He said, grinning in front of me as he rested his arms around my shoulders.

"R-Right." I answered as I looked down and avoided his gaze. He kissed my cheek and I pushed him away.

"Sorry, I am tired. Please send me back home." I can see his disappointed reaction. He nodded as he started driving and I folded my arms.

I remembered a while ago, I was too excited to meet him but then things didn't go my way. I really thought he's very sweet in person but then I was wrong. He's been very busy doing a lot of things on his phone. He even made a lot of phone calls. When he returned to our table, he apologized. He said that those were 'emergency calls' that he can't miss.

When I will start a conversation, he will start to also blabber a lot of his schedules, shootings and important things that matters to him. He's not even paying attention when I will start to tell him about my day or anything about me. I got tired and started to get bored. This is literally expectation vs. reality.

Now, I learned that not everything that celebrities show you will be their personalities in real-life. Most of it are purely show-offs for them to gain fans and supporters.

I opened the gate and I am greeted by Venus's mother. She looked really sophisticated and classy. She's wearing a formal sleeved old-rose colored dress that's above the knee.

She's looking youthful I can tell that she's more of Venus's elder sister rather than her mom.

"How's my beloved daughter?" She said with a smile. She's walking towards me with open arms but I can feel the sarcasm in her words.

I can't even reply to her greeting. If I will be Venus right now, I will feel intimidated by my own mother. I don't exactly know how Venus is dealing with her parents.

"I'm okay, mom."

"I guess we're all here so let's go to the dining room to have our dinner." Someone appeared from mother's back. He's an old, handsome man with a serious expression. His gaze was dark and mysterious; it made my heart beat very fast.

"Dad?"

I can see that they are both looking at each other as if I am acting weird or what. Did I do something wrong again?

"I guess you're forgetting how to address us properly, our dearest daughter."

"Your dad prefers you to call him 'sir'. As for me, well, I don't mind if you call me 'mom' for as long as not in front of your trying-hard fans."

We walked towards the dining room and we had a very silent dinner. I can only hear the sound of silverwares clicking because of the movement of the people who were eating gracefully. I slowly took a glance at Venus's mom. She's literally taking forever in chewing the meat. As for her dad, he's looking at his phone as he eats as if he's the busiest person alive right now.

Is this what they call an ideal family? I remembered three months ago, this family was even featured on the front cover of Mega Metro magazine because many people admire them for being bonded very well.

Is this what a closely bonded relationship looked like? We're not even talking. I also preferred to be silent because they don't seem to care...

"Venus...what the fuck is this?" I can't help but to widen my eyes in shock. I am sure I heard the sound of Venus's father. I can feel that he's really mad from the tone of his voice.

"Perry, please. Calm down." Her mom interfered right away.

"What is this silent treatment all about? As far as I can remember, you always love to brag about the millions of dollars that you're gaining just sitting here. Why give us this one?"

"Just keep quiet and eat, sir." I said, emphasizing the last word.

"We came here for us to talk about your marriage." Venus's mom suddenly commented and it made me drop the silver spoon and dining knife that I am holding right now because I am beginning to be pissed off.

"I said, I am not yet ready. You can't force me to do the things I don't like."

"You have to do it for us. Your marriage is important for us to look forward to."

"Is the money that I am giving to both of you not enough? I am still twenty-three. I am young and I still have my future plans." I said, not stopping myself and those words that will go out from my mouth. They both look at each other as if they can't believe they will hear those words from me.

I can see Venus's mother raised her eyebrow as she tried to meet my gaze.

"Very well..." She said as she sliced the tender meat gracefully and took a bite. I can hear the loud sigh coming from Venus's dad. This time, he dropped his phone and he's more focused on eating his meal.

"I guess nobody can ever stop me if I will decide to get married someday. Just, please. Do not force me to decide for my life. I am already independent and I can handle myself."

"We'll always be watching you, Venus. You have to decide on this matter soonest. I will give you the list of names that I want you to select for marriage." Venus's mother said, not even asking if I want to marry someone at least. I am frowning as one of my maids got the envelope from her hands. My maid gently put the envelope on the table and bowed politely. She went back to where she's standing one meter away from our chairs behind us.

I slowly opened the letter and I saw three names:

Lance Todd

Aivan Harper

Mr. Hudson

"M-Mr. Hudson?"

Chapter 31: MESSING EVERYTHING

She widened her eyes as soon as she read that name. Some scenes flashed her mind as she closed her eyes.

"Are you okay?" Venus's mom said as he gently massaged her back.

"Yes. I'm done eating. Please excuse me." She slowly opened her eyes as she stared at me with a blank expression. Caily gently dropped her spoon and dining knife as she stood up.

She held her phone and sent her fashion designer a message. She told her that she shouldn't disturb her inside her room. She felt like she badly needed a good rest all of a sudden.

She saw herself making giant steps as she hurriedly went back to her room. She felt sad and confused all of a sudden after her mom showed her the list. She tried to remember everything as the flashbacks seem to be clearer this time. When she realized that it was more of a nightmare, she covered her mouth with her hand as she stopped her tears from falling down her cheeks.

"What have I done?" She gently murmured to herself. She slowly lay down on her bed as she recalled what happened and those thoughts from last time.

She closed her eyes again. She hoped that it is only a dream that she should wake up on. She fell asleep for almost two hours. She woke up because of the alarms she set upon her phone. She had a lot of schedules that she messed most of it. She usually set the alarm every two hours.

She roamed her eyes around the room. When she realized that she had some unfinished business to attend to, she stood up from her bed. She remembered the secret room that she discovered hours ago. She has to know what it is all about and what's inside it.

She went back to where that rare bag is located. With her hands shaking, she touched the glass screen again. She realized that it can only be opened using her own fingerprint. Again, it led her to the small staircase descending to a lower ground that led her to a secret room.

As she went down the stairs, she could see some led lights being placed on both sides. It made her see things clearer. She could see what she's stepping on this time. She noticed that she's walking inside a tunnel-like way. It led her to a small door. She took a deep breath as she touched the glass and She slowly twisted it and it opened automatically.

No words could ever describe what she saw next. She expected that the room was small and narrow but she was totally wrong. She saw a room that looked exactly like her room from upstairs. However, the difference? She can see bundles of money in every corner!

This is a massive amount of money she thought Venus could buy the whole world! Caily slowly took a step inside and touched a bundle of money that seemed to mess around it. She looked at it closely and she could assume it was an amount of two hundred thousand dollar bundle, alone! I can see that the bundles of money were all around the room, being piled up!

"Tsk. Crazy, rich girl. She's literally too much!" Caily can't help but to shake her head because of what she is seeing right now.

She continued to roam around the room and when she saw Venus's bed, Caily frowned.

"Wow. And she's even sleeping on her bed with money bills on it. Seriously?"

Caily walked towards the bed and touched the soft mattress with money bills on it. She's now getting the point why Venus is one, proud brat. She's now learning the whole point as she understood why she's doing it for herself.

She sat down on the bed and scooped all the new bills and threw it upward. Caily can't help but to smile as the money bills slowly fell down like rain on her. "Yep, I think she's doing this everyday. She's unbelievable!"

As she is looking beside her, she can see a lot of suitcases. She got the suitcase and examined it closely. On the suitcase's handle, there's a tag that says, "From Mr. Hudson, with love."

Caily, who is inside the body of Venus, opened the suitcase. She almost threw it away when she saw another set of dollar bills that's approximately two million dollars each. It's arranged neatly into equal parts until the whole suitcase is filled with money. If you're a lover of this, you'd probably freak out because of shock and unbelief.

The piles of money bills are unbelievable! It's too much to even imagine! Is this the reason why Venus accepted Mr. Hudson's proposal to be his mistress? Knowing Mr. Hudson and what I am seeing in the news, he's a womanizer. As she looked at the several suitcases, it gave her goosebumps all over her body.

Venus will really do everything just to acquire a lot of riches. Is this not enough? Caily thought that if Venus would retire from what she's doing right now, she would still be rich, filthy wealthy until the day she dies.

Looking at all the massive money in that small room, Caily is now brewing a plan in mind and it is making her smile.

Bellezza and the crow were both standing beside the bed where Caily's body is located in the hospital. She stood up as she observed how Caily's body and condition is doing right now.

Her body was left alone because her mother bought something outside. Nolan, on the other hand, will only be there during the afternoon because he's still having a class.

Bellezza is wearing a black, hooded cape that's only designed exclusively for her. She completed her wicked, sophisticated look with her gothic make-up that highlighted her big, powerful eyes. The darkness of the night is also painted on her lips.

"Our highness, why are we standing here in front of Caily's body? We're like guarding her forever and she's not even moving!" The crow started to complain as he looked at Bellezza. She is alighted on Bellezza's shoulders and carefully hidden by her wide hood.

She grinned in response. The crow just looked at her and frowned.

"What's your plan, our highness? Please say something! I am dying to know what you're going to do next!"

She just looked at the crow and her smile wasn't fading away. The crow observed Caily's body and it is not moving until now. The crow then, shifted his gaze on the direction to where Bellezza is looking right now. He flapped his wings and flew. He landed quietly on Caily's belly that's covered by white blanket.

The crow tiptoed from her belly going upward to her chest. The crow leaned his head close to it. He's like listening to the beat of her heart. He flapped his wings and shook his body up to his tail.

"Well, she seemed stable now."

"Did you hear what the doctors say? She might wake up soon." Bellezza answered the crow as she crossed her arms.

"What's wrong with it?"

"Are you still not getting the point, you fool? What if she'll wake up and mess everything that I plan from the very beginning?"

"Oohhh..." The crow replied as he widened his eyes and nodded. He's now getting the point of Bellezza this time.

"Remember, it is only Caily whom I wanted to live, that's why she's enjoying Venus's body right now. Can't you see?"

"Our highness, is it the reason why you put Venus's soul into a deep sleep? I can't hear her shouting and cursing anymore. I miss her voice somehow..." The crow said as he leaned to Caily's mouth. No sound or anything.

"It is better for her to fall into slumber while I am still thinking of plans I have in mind. She must not mess anything I have started."

"So, she's not going to wake up, is she?"

"I don't want to."

"What? She seemed to be harmless." The crow said, defending the helpless Venus that's resting inside Caily's body.

"I don't think so." Bellezza said as she raised one of her eyebrows.

"I am not confident enough that she'll behave well if I let her wake up."She added, walking towards where Caily's head is lying on right now.

"Isn't it too wicked, our highness?"

"What do you think of me? Being bad is always my specialty." Bellezza said while grinning. She looked at the heart monitoring machine. The crow started to panic when he started to see the flat line that's slowly starting to move vertically.

"Our highness..."

"What? I did not do anything." She grinned as she said those words in a defensive manner.

It is when Caily's mom opened the door. She looked at the heart-monitoring machine and shifted her gaze on Caily who is having a seizure right now.

"I am not believing you." The crow said, flapping her wings again. He flew and alighted on Bellezza's shoulder. She frowned and turned the crow into a beautiful hair clip and put it on her head. She observed what will happen next as she folded her arms, not going anywhere to where she's standing right now. She rolled her eyes as she quietly looked at Caily.

"Nobody could ever stand against my plans. I won't let somebody mess with me or else..." She said as she smiled while looking at Caily's body.

"D-Doc? Nurse! Please help my baby!" She almost screamed and cried in tears as she went outside the door of that room.

Chapter 32: DRAGON'S QUARTERS

Caily's mother rushed into the nurse's station. She's almost screaming and doesn't know what to do anymore because of what she witnessed. Her daughter is battling between life and death. She must see any doctor available. When she saw a doctor coming her way, she suddenly grabbed his hands.

"Doc, save my daughter. Please." She said, while she's looking helpless and miserable at the same time.

"Maám, calm down. We're doing everything that we can. Please wait here for a while." The doctor said. He rushed inside the room and prepared the CPR for Caily along with the two nurses to assist him inside. Ten minutes had passed and the doctor finally came outside the room.

"Maám,her condition is stable now."

"Doctor, thank you so much." Caily's mother said as tears welled from her eyes.

"She will be fine soon, maám. Please rest now. I'll leave for a while. Please tell me if you need anything."

The doctor started to walk away and Caily's mother slowly sat down on one of the chairs as she couldn't control her tears from coming up. Looking at her, she's more relieved this time. She started to dial her phone and she seemed to be calling someone right now.

Caily, who is in Venus's body is also sobbing at a far distance looking at the situation of her mom. A lot of people just passed by her because she disguised herself just wearing a plain pink dress. She also applied a small mole on her face and a pair of sunglasses.She's also wearing a face mask and a red cap.

"Mom, I miss you so much. I am so sorry I can't be there to wipe those tears away…"

After she stood in front of Caily's body, she decided to visit her place for a while. She raised her black scepter and it's power spiraled her and she's gone in an instant. Bellezza appeared in front of the gate of Withermoor. It's a black, rusty wrought iron gate that's standing tall in front of her. Thick, black smoke arises around the gate. The black clouds are also covering the dimly-lighted blood moon that seem to have eyes that follow everyone wherever they would go. Crows are also flying around as they cackle aloud, welcoming her presence.

The Withermoor gate is about twenty feet in height and the width is of massive measurement from left to right. It has an intricate, baroque style gate that's fitting her gothic taste for

sophisticated black, dark arts. The gate is standing right at the boundary of Blossomcrest and Withermoor. No creature that belonged to this place is allowed to enter unless Bellezza authorizes it. She raised her black scepter and the giant gate in front of her slowly creaked open as if it had its own life, heading her command.

“Welcome, our highness.” She could hear the roaring voice resembling that of a thunder. When she turned her back, she could see the Withermoor gate grinning in front of her, showing it’s pointed teeth that’s fully opened, as if always waiting and longing for her presence to pass through this gate.

It's a place of unimaginable mystery and never-ending horror. Somebody will perceive this place as the smallest part of the Fayvallea Kingdom but this place is a never-ending maze of black magic where all hideous creatures live. It is the heart of death and horror. It’s the underworld that all appeared because of Bellezza Scyther.

She was walking gracefully as she slowly blinked her eyes. She’s looking at the whole place with glistening eyes. She walked and walked until she reached the feet of the mysterious forest. The whole place was surrounded by the giant, branches full of thorns hugging the trees inside. She raised her blank scepter again and the branches slowly unclasped the trees. It showed an eerie forest path. She smiled as she walked on it. Her long cloak spread gracefully from her back. She followed that path that led her into a dark valley. It’s the largest valley of Withermoor where black dragons dwell. The valley is a place of darkness, where light cannot easily step in.

At the heart of that mysterious valley lies a deep swamp where the creature that she wanted to meet, lives. As she came near to the swamp, the still water suddenly created a ripple, as if expecting her arrival.

“Hello, everyone. I miss hanging out with all of you.” Bellezza Scyther called them. The water suddenly rose and the sound of the huge, flapping of wings can be heard that ascended from the water and it flew in the air. It flew around and carefully landed in front of her. They bowed down one by one as both their wings dropped on the ground. It showed Bellezza their grim, skeletal appearance. One dragon faced her as his eyes lie in deep sockets. His two great horns curve forward and down as if bending for her. It showed her the flesh of his face that had partially deteriorated, as if acid burnt. Acidic slime drools from his menacing grin.

“What brought you here, our highness?” One black dragon slowly crawled towards her and Bellezza can instantly tell the massive weight this dragon is having because its feet are burying on the ground where it is stepping on.

"I just want you all to be ready for the coming changes." She said as she held her head high and smiled to every dragon that she's seeing.

"We are always ready for everything, your highness." One of the dragons said as it purred in front of Bellezza.

"I want you all to be on guard around Withermoor. I know a part of that change is for me to strengthen my defense around my place. I don't want to be outwitted by anyone, especially Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace."

"A special request is always granted." Said one of the dragons as they produced a high tone as if a screech. It's a sound that indicates unity among the Withermoor creatures.

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flashback

"Shreya, we are all excited for the coming announcement of you, being the next queen of Fayvallea." A very young Dhara Rose said as they walked along the pavement of Blossomcrest.

"I am not thinking about it for a while, Dhara."

"Why?"

"Being the queen of Fayvallea means having this world under your hands. I don't think I can handle such responsibility."

"I think you are able to manage it. I can see that your mother is doing a great job in reigning Fayvallea."

"For now, I am not that confident enough to be the next queen. Seeing my mother doing her responsibilities? It is always making me nervous."

"I know you will still have to practice everything. Is your mother teaching you the basics as early as now?"

"Yes. She's as enthusiastic as you are. She also wanted me to be the next queen after her."

"See? Even queen Veratia Reaper believes in you."

They continued walking along the road when they passed by the cave of doom.

"This cave is too old and abandoned." Dhara Rose poked Shreya's waist and in an instant, she hid herself behind her.

"Let's just pass across it. This place is not for us." Shreya said as she grabbed Dhara's hands.

"Help..." Dhara heard a faint voice that echoed the whole cave. It's like somebody is inside asking for help.

"No, it is not for us to listen. It's a cursed cave. Don't let yourself be deceived by those voices."

"But, that voice is really desperate for help."

"Dhara...listen to me. Do not ever dare to rescue someone who is asking for help. You might regret everything forever!"

"Shreya...it's a voice of an innocent girl like us. Who knows she's only a victim of other witches?"

"I said no! Please let's go out from here." Shreya Wallace forcefully grabbed her hands and in an instant, they disappeared into the thin air.

They appeared inside Floreal or the palace of Crystals.

"I do not get it. Why can't we help someone who needed it?" Dhara insisted as they walked on the center aisle with Shreya who was still grabbing her hands. Many of the other witches who belong to the lower rank bowed down to the both of them.They were all young at that time. They were only witches under training for a greater responsibility in the near future.

"Not everyone could ever be granted for any help, Dhara. Remember, our enemies are always hiding in any form. They can shapeshift into someone whom we always thought as friends."

"How can you even tell the difference? For me, if somebody needs help, then we can give it to them because they deserve it." Dhara said, contradicting Shreya Wallace's beliefs.

"Be careful who you help...for not everyone hold your hands when you try to offer it to them. Others will bite your hand and betray you."

"I will always remember that, Shreya." Dhara answered as she looked down.

Dhara left Floreal with a lot of thoughts clouding her mind. She appeared within the vicinity of Blossomcrest. She sat down on one of the giant roots of a century-oak tree located on the vibrant forest of Blossomcrest.

Whom will she ever believe? Shreya, who only wanted to protect her wherever she goes...or that someone who desperately called for help and yet they both ignored it? She stood up and sighed, disappearing right into the thin air of Blossomcrest. She appeared at the mouth of that cursed cave that's located on the boundary of Blossomcrest and the shortened way to the floating crystal palace, Floreal.

"Help...please help me." That voice is really faint and it made Dhara worry too much.

"What shall I do?" She said as she went to and fro. She shifted her gaze on the mouth of the cave. She inhaled and opened her left hand. In a few seconds, there appeared her white scepter. As soon as she saw it, she held it tight. She aimed her scepter and she recited some incantation. In an

instant, the cave spew a lot of bats and black smoke. She suddenly heard someone laughing aloud as she stepped a foot outside the cave.

Chapter 33: HOW IT TURNS WELL

flashback

(Continuation)

"W-Who are you?" Dhara Rose asked with horror in her eyes. She saw a figure of a girl stepping out of the cave, along with the dark smoke that is continually surrounding half of Blossomcrest.

"I am Bellezza Scyther. Thank you for freeing me inside." She said as she grinned from ear to ear.

Dhara widened her eyes.

No! It can't be! Of all creatures, why did she ever freed Bellezza Scyther? The famous cursed witch of Fayvallea?

This can't be true! No! She can't believe it herself! Why did she ever let Bellezza trick her just like that? Her heart beat so fast. She suddenly cried that for the first time in one hundred years, Blossomcrest experienced a thunderstorm with a heavy rainfall. Bellezza looked at her and smiled.

"I will always be grateful for this chance, Dhara. I promised to stay good because a good witch saved me." She said as she laughed out loud. She started to jump for joy around Dhara Rose who is now on her knees as she cried really hard.

She is so scared because as soon as she wiped her tears with her eyes, she witnessed how the black smoke that's coming from the inside of the cave found a place to stay within Blossomcrest. The black smoke continued to suspend in the air as it spiraled, wanting to stay there forever.

"What's a witch without her kingdom, right?" She said, looking at Dhara Rose as she winked. She shifted her gaze at the thick, black smoke that surrounded the western part of Blossomcrest.

A few minutes later, she found the place had been changed a lot. It is a place full of darkness and mystery that all the birds were afraid to pass over this place.

"Welcome to Withermoor, my dearest Dhara!"

end of flashback

Caily's POV

I am standing at a far distance in the major aisle of the hospital. I am looking at where my mom is sitting as she is crying so helplessly this time. She stayed outside where my body lies.

It made me emotional as I looked at her. It hurts me the most because I can't do anything other than looking at her. I can see that she's been through a lot.

"Madam..."

"What happened?" I asked my fashion designer who is standing by my side, not avoiding my gaze on my mother. My fashion designer just arrived because she's doing a lot of things related to what's happening inside the hospital.

That includes spying and knowing everything that is happening on Caily Mcfisher. Even if she's not inspired to do it, I offered an extra allowance of three hundred dollars per hour for her to think that I am serious in this job.

As she stood beside me, the worried look on her face is really evident.

"Madam, Caily Mcfisher almost got a flatline a while ago. She survived because of the CPR that's done to her by the doctor moments before you arrived."

"What? Why? How did it happen?"

"Nobody knew the reason why, madam. Caily Mcfisher's mother just went inside the room a while ago and they just saw Caily having a flatline."

I suddenly felt my knee tremble when my fashion designer assisted me to sit down on a nearby bench located beside the hallway's aisle.

"T-Thank you." I said. She held both my hands as she tried calming me down. I think she felt that I was shaking at this moment.

I froze as soon as she heard those words. It made my heart beat faster than usual. What does it mean by this? If my body didn't survive, will this mean I am trapped in this body forever?

I almost forgot Venus. I need to talk to her to ask what happened. Perhaps, I should also talk about Bellezza Scyther. It's my fourth day as Venus and I don't think I can still last for a week being like her and living her life.

"But she's fine now, madam. Please do not worry too much."

"I appreciate all the information that you're telling me now. You may go back to your post."

"Yes, madam."

"A-And one more thing, I need you to pay everything that's being spent on Caily."

She nodded and left me right away. I headed towards the nurse's station and I paid someone to ask for her uniform and name tag to complete my disguise. A nurse agreed right after I gave her an envelope of a few hundred dollar bills.

I used her uniform. I also put on a face mask and gloves. Luckily, we have the same uniform size because our body is almost the same.

"Thank you so much."

"You're welcome, ma'am. I hope she will get well soon." The nurse said as she smiled. I nodded and opened the door from the nurses station. I need to know what really happened. I do hope that Venus will be strong to endure everything, it includes being inside my body and cannot do anything about it.

As soon as I slowly entered the room where my body is, my mom looked at my face right away. I stopped myself from crying in front of her.

"Hello, ma'am. How are you now?"

"I am feeling terrible but somehow, I am relieved knowing that my baby is okay." She said, still feeling very emotional.

"Good to know that, ma'am. We always do our best for our patients to get well soon."

"Thank you so much, miss nurse." My mother said. I never thought that I could manage to stay tough in front of her. I guess I have to do this even if this is one of the most difficult things in the world to do.

I put down all the things needed to get the vitals of my body.

"Ma'am, you can go out for a while this time. You can eat your lunch first. I noticed you're still not eating since this morning."

"Miss nurse, please look after my baby. I will return after ten minutes."

"I will take care of Ms. Caily, ma'am." She awkwardly nodded and slowly stepped out of the room, shoulders dropped. I sobbed as soon as she closed the door.

Poor mom. It is obvious from her face that she's been through a lot. The darkening of her skin around her eyes indicated that she lacked sleep for many days. I know she's also stressed from the turnaround of events. I hope she'll rest and get some adequate sleep so that she will feel fine.

'Mom, please wait for me. I will definitely come back. I will come back for you and Nolan. I promise...'

I was left all alone in front of my body. I am still sleeping like a log. I look helpless and weak that I can't help but to cry in front of my body. I felt weird and sad at the same time. I can see myself literally and all the changes that's happening on my body since that magical switch. I noticed my body became thinner because of the liquid diet that my body only accepts this time.

I carefully looked around as I took a glimpse on my wristwatch. I still have more than thirty minutes to spare so I have to be quick. I came near to my own body and leaned my face on my ear.

"Venus..." I said, almost a whisper. I waited for a minute and when I realized that there was no response, my heart almost skipped a beat.

Why is she not answering me?

"Venus? Venus... please wake up and talk to me. I need you to say something." I said as I shook my body gently. No response. I noticed that tears welled up from my eyes. This can't be!

"Venus...if you're angry at me, please tell me. I don't want you to be quiet there. Please."

A black smoke suddenly appeared in front of me as it spiralled on someone until I realized it was Bellezza Scyther.

"Hello, darling. How are you?" She greeted me as soon as I realized it was indeed her.

"I-I'm okay..."

"Why are you here?" She said as she raised her eyebrows. She started to fold her arms and smirked at me. I can't understand but the way she would look at me is like an indication that she can devour me alive any time.

Her eyes alone can speak the most dangerous language. My gut feel is telling me that I must be careful with my words as I face her.

"I just wonder why I almost got a flatline a while ago. What does it mean?" I said, trying to be strong. As scared as I am, I tried meeting her dangerous gaze this time.

"Oh, that," She said while grinning. "It is actually normal, my dear. Besides, I thought you don't want to talk to Venus."

"What made you think about that? Of course I want to talk to her. I am wondering why she's not responding at all."

"Well darling, she's sleepy. Really sleepy that I want her to rest. Can you still remember how she shouted at you?"

I looked at her grinning face. I grimaced at what she's trying to tell me.

"But I wanted to talk to her about something..."

"Oh, forget it. You may come back on the last day of the week, as promised."

"B-But...why is she not saying something? What did you do? Why is she not waking up even if I am trying to do it so many times?

"Hmm...I didn't do anything. What are you saying?" She said as she defensively answered my question. She's even shaking her head and looking in the other direction. She walked towards me until she reached my back. She even touched both of my shoulders as if trying to reassure me about something.

"Darling, she's just asleep. Do not worry too much. I just let her rest for a while." I can feel that her long nails dug deeper to my shoulder blades that it hurts. I can also feel that she's trying to hold me by force.

"Bellezza Scyther let me remind you, my body is also at stake. I am taking care of it for as much as I can."

"I granted your wish. For one, whole week you'll enjoy Venus Hughes's life. Do you still want more of that?"

"My body is always important for me. How can I go back if I will see this body on the grave and it is already too late?"

Upon hearing those words, she laughed at her heart's content. It gave me goosebumps.

"Your being an advanced thinker truly impressed me. I never even thought about that. Not even once."

She said while grinning from ear to ear. I noticed she's not sincere with her words looking at her actions.

"Well, as for your body, it is always like this until the end of this week."

"What do you mean?"

"Your body will stay like this until you will have to complete what you have to do."

"Should I trust you?"

"Shouldn't you? Remember, you're not yet back to your body. Better be good or you'll have to face the consequences."

I look at her and I am being greeted by her sly grin.

"Nobody should know our agreement. It should always be a secret between the two of us. I am very bad when I am angry, darling." She said as she flashed a sly grin at me.

As soon as I heard those words from Bellezza Scyther, I felt really bad and scared at the same time. This is a totally different feeling of fear that I am feeling right now. I have the need to overcome this one as soon as possible or else, it might be too late for me…

Chapter 34: FAYVALLEA'S LAST QUEEN

Blossomcrest...where the world of living and nature fuse. Dhara Rose is looking at the daffodils that's dancing with the breeze. The vibrant trees also boast their colors, their sturdiness highlighting the stronger image of Blossomcrest, aside from the beauty and magic it possesses.

"You seem to look so bothered." Shreya Wallace said as she suddenly appeared behind her. Dhara was a bit surprised with the unexpected guest. When she saw the presence of the reigning queen of Fayvallea, she automatically bowed down.

"Welcome our highness." She did a graceful curtsy in front of her. She nodded at Dhara Rose as she smiled. She stood up and she started to walk. Shreya Wallace walked side by side with her.

"I am just wondering why you're not worrying about Bellezza dethroning you all of a sudden."

"I believe that if it is destined to happen, nothing can ever stop it."

"But, our queen, please do not ever allow it! The council forbids!"

"I am still the reigning queen of Fayvallea. They can't do something about it once I will decide that Bellezza will take over soon."

"Let us see what really happened. Investigating what she did and knowing everything from the very beginning can save us from making any wrong decisions in the near future."

"If you strongly disagree with my decisions now, why did you save her from last time even if I already warned you not to do it?"

Dhara Rose became silent all of a sudden. She recalled what happened when they were still very young back then. As she met Shreya Wallace's eyes, it's like everything was back from where it all started...

flashback

She shifted her gaze at the thick, black smoke that surrounded the western part of Blossomcrest. That black, magical smoke continued until she was not able to control it anymore.

A whole new different fear slowly budded inside her heart. A few minutes later, she found the place had been changed a lot. It is a place full of darkness and mystery that all the birds were afraid to pass over this place.

She was able to put her arms on her shoulders as she presented the newly formed place of darkness. Looking at the place itself makes her shiver down her spine.

"Welcome to Withermoor, my dearest Dhara!"

"W-Withermoor? What is that?"

"Fayvallea has Blossomcrest and Floreal. Might as well have my own world so that I am not being left out, right?"

"W-What do you mean?" Dhara Rose stepped back, too nervous to even meet Bellezza Scyther's gaze.

"Well, Withermoor will be the third part of Fayvallea Kingdom. If Shreya Wallace has Floreal and you have Blossomcrest, well I have my own Withermoor."

"It can't be! You can't just decide on that matter easily!"

"But you freed me, right? It only means you authorized me to do anything I want because I am free now." Bellezza said. As young as this wicked witch is concerned, Dhara was amazed at how she handled herself. Her self-confidence intimidated her without Bellezza Scyther knowing it.

While Bellezza Scyther is saying something, Shreya Wallace suddenly appears in between them. She widened her eyes when she saw Bellezza's sly grin as she looked at her. Also, the sudden appearance of Shreya Wallace made her knees tremble and it hardly made her stand up.

"Forgive me, our highness." Dhara Rose started to be terrified as she held Shreya's left arm. Shreya Wallace opened her left hand and there appeared her crystal scepter. She tried putting back Bellezza from the cursed cave where she was imprisoned by having some incantations but the power just bounced back.

Bellezza Scyther laughed out loud from what she witnessed.

"What happened?" She said as she looked at Bellezza Scyther who was giving her a sly grin.

"Well, a good witch just freed me. There's nothing you can do about it and no power can ever imprison me back there."

Shreya looked at Dhara Rose who looked terrified of what she had done.

"I'm really very sorry, Shreya. I did not mean to do it. Please forgive me."

Shreya sighed aloud as she held her scepter tight. She looked at Dhara Rose straight into her eyes.

"We're supposed to banish you from this Fayvallea kingdom. However, you will have to stay here to help guard what place Bellezza Scyther has made."

She looked at Shreya with pleading eyes. She fell on her knees as she suddenly cried aloud, looking up to Shreya as she held one of her hands.

"And oh, by the way, you were wrong when you told me that I will be the next queen."

"W-What?" Dhara Rose said between sobs.

"You're supposed to be the next queen. My mother Veratia wanted to succeed on her throne. But I guess, you will only stay as the queen that we will never have."

end of flashback

Nolan's POV

I can't stop myself from glancing at the wall clock. I still have an hour before the class hours will be over. I can't concentrate now. After that emergency call coming from Caily's mother, I can't help but to cry inside the comfort room as I excused myself for a while.

"Nolan..."

Somebody caught my attention as my thoughts wandered somewhere. I saw my teacher called me as she sat in front of us.

"Please come here for a moment, please." As soon as I heard her, I slowly rose from my seat. I look around me and I can see my other classmates taking a glimpse of me as we're doing our worksheets as I walk towards our professor's table.

"What is it, professor?"

"I noticed that you're not feeling fine."

"No, I'm okay ma'am." I said, avoiding her gaze.

"Hmm, I beg to disagree. You don't look fine to me. Would you like to go home now?"

"Really, ma'am?"

"Of course. I will allow you to go now since you're already done with your worksheet. I guess you needed some rest for today."

"Thank you so much, ma'am." With glistening eyes, I packed everything on my table and put it inside my backpack. I left as quietly as possible. I need to go to the hospital now to take good care of my dearest Caily.

"I'm so sorry if I am not there when you need me the most." I said to myself as I can't stop my tears from coming up. I wipe my tears right away so that the people from the bus where I am right now will not notice me crying.

Sometimes, I feel like I don't care anymore. They don't know my situation either. I am just thankful that my professor is so considerate. I can feel that she's trying to empathize with me for

what happened to Caily. She also knew Caily because she's also her teacher before she got in an accident.

The bus stopped right in front of the hospital. I hurriedly got off and I almost ran going inside. As I am half-walking, half-running along the hallway, I met Caily's mom. As soon as she saw me, she embraced me very tight and I can feel that she's sobbing on my chest.

I can't help but to cry, too.

"How are you now, ma'am?"

"I'm quite relieved now, Nolan."

"T-That's good, ma'am."

"I'm so sorry, dear. You're the first person I had in mind as I did the call. I'm sorry I didn't realize you're in school that time. I forgot that you're still doing your classroom activity."

"I do not mind at all, ma'am. In fact, my professor just told me to go home early for me to rest. That gave me the chance to go here earlier than usual."

"What will I do without you? Thank you so much dear! Don't worry, I will tell Caily that you are always here for her. She's very lucky to have a friend like you from the very beginning."

"That's what friends are for, right ma'am? She's always supporting me in whatever I do."

"I will always be grateful, dear."

"That's why I am also doing this for her, I never mind."

I smiled as Caily's mom tapped my shoulders as she nodded.

"Have you eaten? I am hungry now. I have to go to eat my late lunch but it will be very quick." I added as I pointed the way to the cafeteria with my thumb. She shook her head as she awkwardly smiled.

"Let's go ma'am. I will eat with you so that you will not feel lonely."

"Let's go to the hospital's cafeteria. Don't worry, there's an attending nurse for Caily. She said that I must have my lunch first."

"Oh, ma'am, please do not miss your meal. I am sure that Caily doesn't want you to get sick as much as possible. She will be sad if she knows that you are skipping meals."

"I was not hungry a while ago. When she mentioned that I have to eat my lunch, My stomach rumbled all of a sudden." She said as we walked together.

We had our late lunch at exactly three in the afternoon. I tried talking about other things so that Caily's mom will somehow feel better. I know the feeling of being really down and nobody is there to comfort you. It feels like you're dying and no one is there to sympathize with you and what you've been going through.

I still hope that everything is a bad dream. That I should wake up from it very soon.

Chapter 35: SECOND TO NOLAN

Caily's POV

I am now facing Adeline as we're having my weekly lesson tutorial as Venus. I am still clouded of the thoughts that happened in the hospital. Every time I think about Bellezza Scyther and what she told me, I can't help but to worry for my safety, I mean for my body's safety. I can feel that it is at stake, too.

"Are you listening?"

"Are you saying something?"

Adeline frowned in front of me as she slammed some of the papers on our table. It gave me a surprise.

"What is your problem?" I said, trying to act mad as convincing as possible. I remembered Adeline told me that Venus is really a brat. I have to at least show it to her so that she will not think of me as weird.

I can also see her holding my activity lesson sheets.

"I am explaining the lessons to you, from the very beginning and yet you're not even listening."

"I'm just thinking about something. Please forgive me."

"It's the third time that I am explaining it to you. I even talked blah blah for more than fifteen minutes nonstop."

"I will pay you double for today's lesson. I'm really sorry."

I can see that she's raising one of her eyebrows. Her facial expression somehow changed. I guess she never expected that she'll hear me say 'sorry' to her.

"It's the fourth time, Venus. Let's start from the very beginning again."

"Right." I smiled as I met her gaze. She chuckled a bit when she saw me cupping both my cheeks as I focused my full attention on her.

"That's the enthusiasm that I want. Let's start again." She said as she started to explain the lessons that I told her to study with me. She's even doubtful because this is now the hard version of lessons compared to what she's only teaching Venus.

This is a great opportunity for me to know more about the lessons I missed four days ago. Adeline is a senior student and I know she can help me review my lessons in advance.

"Nice. You seem to listen very well. Now, let me test your memory if you can still remember what I am explaining to you right now. Please recite the math formulas and briefly explain how they work."

"What? Are you serious?"

"That's only my way of knowing if you're really following me or your thoughts are wandering somewhere again."

I sighed as I started to recite the four formulas in some of the math problems and it's process. She's gaping her jaw open because of unbelief. She looked so happy that she clapped both of her hands.

"Now, that's the result of listening very well to me. Are you happy that you're able to recite it effortlessly?"

"Well, that's just easy, darling." I said as I wink at her. She put her arms on my shoulders and smiled at me.

"If you keep it up, you'll achieve the grades that you have been wanting for so long."

I am so happy that I suddenly hug Adeline. "Thank you so much Adeline! You're the best friend I've ever had...second to Nolan!"

"W-What?" She reacted as if very shocked from what she heard from me. I widened my eyes as I realized what I said to her. I let go from that tight embrace.

"I will go to the kitchen for a while to check for snacks. Please stay here." I almost ran outside my room. I shut the door behind me as I am almost catching my breath.

"Oh my...what did I do?" I murmured to myself as I bit my lower lip because of frustration.

Floreal. Also known as the Crystal Palace. The place for the reigning queen of Fayvallea.

The mob of witches gathered in front of the throne where Shreya Wallace is sitting right now. Some of the creatures of Blossomcrest are also witnessing the entire scene. There were living tiny fays flying around the place. Their lovely mist on their wings gracefully showered the mob of the witches.

The mist gradually helped them for its calming effect that some stayed quiet and served as listeners.

Some were discussing among themselves as they argued about the ongoing investigation. Shreya Wallace, together with the twelve council of witches standing side by side behind her throne has been silent for a while.

The queen is closing her eyes as she holds her crystal scepter's head. She's using it to support her weight as she sits on her throne.

"Our highness, do not make haste decisions, please." She overheard one of the witches at the back that's shouting on top of her voice. When other witches heard it, they started seconding the motion.

One of the council of witches rebuked the witches to be silent. Shreya Wallace slowly opened her eyes. She roamed her gaze around the place.

"Thank you all for coming. I appreciate everyone's presence as you join me in making an important decision that will change our life forever."

"We are always pleased to be here for you, our queen." One of the witches of Blossomcrest said as she did the curtsy. Many of the creatures who gathered there also agreed.

"With all my heart, I am pleased."

"Our highness, we are all appealing for equality. Everyone deserves to be treated fairly, thus, we should proceed to the investigation now." The eldest among the council suggested. As Shreya Wallace roamed her gaze around the place, she could see that almost everyone nodded sadly.

Shreya Wallace heaved a big sigh. "The Luminastia please." The twelve councils joined forces as they all gathered at the center aisle in front of Shreya's throne. They all gathered in a big circle and they put their palms open all together. A small light is forming at the center of everyone's palm until they are able to remove the Luminastia of Fayvallea from where it is kept. The twelve hands were raised and the Luminastia is continually forming at the center. When it completed it's scepter appearance, the eldest of the council of witches got it as she held it firmly.

"Here it is, our highness." Shreya Wallace nodded as she put her crystal scepter on the side. She carefully got the Luminastia on the eldest council's hands. She raised the Luminastia and it showed the scenes where Bellezza started to offer her help to a girl. Everyone saw a blurred face of her looking around inside her room. The girl seemed to hear a faint, whispering voice.

"W-Who is it?"

"I know your wish. It's the wish that you wanted so bad..." From that faint whisper, a shrill laughter came next which sent chills down her spine.

"Don't be afraid dear...tell me what you want."

"I..."

The witches started to argue aloud. They can't see the girl's face clearly.

"Our highness, what does it mean?"

"The Luminastia isn't done yet. It recalled back everything that Bellezza Scyther had done. Please be patient."

They all continue to look at the scenes flashing before their eyes as what the Luminastia is showing them.

They had different reactions when the scenes showed them how Bellezza transformed herself into an old woman, how she was able to talk to Caily until the magical switch that happened. The witches saw both girls switched bodies and how the potion became a success.

"The potion worked!" They all chorused in awe. However, there were still some number of witches who seem to be unconvinced from what they have witnessed.

"We couldn't see the faces of those girls to whom Bellezza Scyther helped." One of the witches protested as she insisted about what she saw.

"The Luminastia doesn't show the faces of the living being. It only shows how the witches of Fayvallea attempt to help someone in the living world, especially witches that came from Withermoor."

The mob started to talk and argue among themselves more.

"Luminastia is the power that's founded by Fayvallea thousands of years ago. This is the only power that signifies fairness and equality. It never goes wrong." As Shreya Wallace said these words, most of the witches who stood in front of the throne and witnessed the whole thing started to keep quiet.

"Everyone, now that we have proven Bellezza Scyther's faithfulness to Fayvallea as she also heed the rules with all her heart, we are ready for the next queen."

Caily's POV

I am happy that it is my fifth day already as Venus Hughes. I am honestly dying to go back to my body now that I know what Venus's life is like. It's full of glitz and glamor and yet the underlying factors, namely negativity, prostitution, selfishness and self-love is slowly eating me. I realized that I can only enjoy her life for a day but it is too impossible for me to live it forever.

We are two different individuals. I grew up with the upbringing of my beloved mother who sacrificed a lot for me without me even knowing it. When that magical switch started to ruin my morals, I realized that it's not her job that she glorifies the most but the kind of life she wanted me to experience by earning more money. That she kept herself busy for me to have a good life and maintain what my father did for us.

I am now standing on the part of the rooftop where Nolan and I only knew. It's our hideout when the world is getting very cruel for both of us. Tears started to stream on my cheeks. I slowly wiped my tears using my hands. I need to go back before he could see me staying here. I was able to step on a tin can that it created a sound that broke the deafening silence.

"Who is it?" My heart almost stopped beating when I heard a familiar voice.

It was Nolan!

Chapter 36: NEXT TO THE THRONE

Caily's POV

As soon as I heard his voice, I'm stunned for a moment, but then I noticed a large box that was standing beside me. It's like an abandoned storage box being dumped there. Without any hesitation, I suddenly got inside of it and closed it a little. My heart is beating so fast because I can see Nolan heading from where I am hiding right now.

I just took a peek at the thin line at the center of the box that showed who and what's happening outside.

I can see Nolan moving his head from left to right as if looking for something or someone who created the noise. I almost forgot how to breathe that time when he spotted the storage box and he's about to go where I am hiding right now.

I regret cleaning the tin cans of sodas that we're drinking from last time that I am stumbling at them now. They just scattered around the place like helpless garbage.

"Oh, a mouse. Shoo!" I heard him going away from the box where I am hiding right now. My goodness! Good thing there was really a mouse that's running around there at times. It really saved me from getting caught by Nolan here inside the storage box. Whew, that was so close!

I quietly sighed with relief as I observed him more. When I saw that he's going downstairs, I slowly opened the box where I am standing.

As much as I would want to meet him, I am in doubt. How can I ever talk to him as Caily when I am inside Venus's body? How will I ever convince her that I am his dear Caily when all he would see is the Venus Hughes that's famous.

I am also certain that she is starting to hate Venus Hughes too, because the accident happened within the vicinity of their house. I guess he is really thinking about it until now.

I look downstairs. He already left the rooftop. When I took a peek from where I am right now, he is already waiting for a bus arriving and on its way to the hospital. I hurriedly went downstairs and headed towards where my car is parked.

"Let's go to the hospital now."

"Yes, madam." My driver started the engine as soon as I went inside the car.

Bellezza Scyther still bothers me until now. What does she mean when she told me that my body will stay like that until the last day of our agreement? What does she want to imply? Thinking about what she's saying over and over again is driving me really crazy.

What if my body will deteriorate as time goes by? Thinking about my body losing its life is giving me endless mini heart attacks.

I didn't know how I followed Nolan and disguised myself as a nurse again. Wearing my face mask as I face him makes me want to cry. Seeing him being miserable as she held my hand while I'm lying on that bed, brain dead. This sight makes me want to faint. When I couldn't take it anymore, I nodded as I started to walk outside the room because the sadness that I am seeing right now is too much to bear.

"Miss nurse, please wait."

"Y-Yes?" I secretly wiped my tears with my hands and faced him. I have to be cheerful as much as possible.

"Can you stay here for a while? Whenever you're here with me, at least you're making me feel that I am not alone."

"Of course, sir. I will do that."

"Thank you." He showed a weak smile as he met my gaze. She is still holding Caily's hand...my hand rather, as my body is lying down on that bed. I looked more like a dead person in front of him. I know that's one of the reasons why he's hurt right now. Shifting my gaze to my helpless body and Nolan right now makes me cry so bad but as much as possible, I want to stop my tears from falling down.

I should be the stronger one at this point in time...for him and for my fighting body that seemed to be deteriorating as what I have observed now.

"I miss her so much."

"I-I'm sure she misses you too, sir."

"I want to tell her a lot of things about what's happening in my life right now. I feel that she had a lot of catching up to do." He said as he chuckled but I can feel the sadness in his tone.

Looking at Nolan's weary smile makes me feel weaker inside. I want to comfort him right now but what can I do? I can only look at him and not give any reaction. All I can do is to observe him from afar because for him, I am just a nurse and a nobody.

"You don't know how I miss you so much, too...Nolan. Don't worry I will be back soon. I really have a lot of catching up to do. I will listen to you more if I will come back, I promise."

I said most of these to myself. I felt weak but if I will only wait, I'm sure I cannot accomplish any single thing. I need to start moving.

As soon as Caily, who is now inside the body of Venus, arrives at her house, she's able to get some money from those suitcases. Most of the bundles of money were donated to several different charities, including the orphanage and the elderly. Also, Caily started to launch some feeding programs for the homeless. She was so happy that even if her schedules and photoshoots were so hectic, there's her hired team that's doing all of these for her.

She did this without being publicised because she doesn't think she still has the courage to face a lot of people. She felt really bad whenever the bad memories started to hunt her, especially where those massive bundles of money came from.

This is one of her wishes that finally came true. To become a philanthropist in her own way. She badly wanted to help people who can't help themselves and also to those who can't find any jobs as of the moment. She even gave them money to start all over again with their lives.

Caily wanted to think of the magical switch as one of the things she did in her life that's worth remembering minus the bad memories she experienced in the hands of Mr. Hudson.

Floreal. The crystal palace. Everybody gathered for the most important event that will happen in Bellezza Scyther's life.

It's her crowning moment as the next queen of Fayvallea. For the first time in the history of the kingdom, all the creatures inside Withermoor were all there to witness their queen's succession to the throne.

"With the power vested upon me as the reigning queen of Fayvallea, I now announce Bellezza Scyther as my successor." Shreya Wallace proclaimed to everyone present in that throne hall made of different illuminating crystals.

She sweetly smiled to everybody in front of her as she waved her hand. Wearing her usual cloak and black, glittering cape, she walked towards Shreya Wallace who waited for her in front of all the mob of witches who whispered among themselves. Others just kept quiet as they witnessed the whole thing.

She flipped her hair and raised her eyebrows as she accepted the power of the crystal scepter being transferred to her black scepter. She did a graceful curtsy as the reigning queen tapped her left and

right shoulder with her crystal scepter. She slowly nodded as she accepted Shreya Wallace's blessing to the throne.

"It's more of a great pleasure for me to finally serve you my beloved creatures of Fayvallea." She started which made the whole Withermoor creatures cheered aloud.

"It's a bigger responsibility I know but I appeal to all of you here that is present to give me a chance. A chance to also prove myself worthy to be your queen as a part of Fayvallea." She added that made the other witches applaud to her. Dhara and Shreya looked at each other with gloomy eyes. It is now done and proclaimed...Bellezza Scyther, now the next queen after five hundred years of Shreya Wallace's reign.

Caily's POV

Right after my endless schedule for today, I decided to go to my driver and instructed him something. I have to go to Nolan this time. Nobody can't stop me as I get inside the car.

After that incident in the hospital, I realized I miss him so much that I have to see him tonight.

"Let's get to his place as quickly as possible."

"Yes, madam."

In less than twenty minutes, I reached their front gate. "Please wait for me here." I said as I got off my car. I wear the favorite T-shirt and shorts of Caily and also her hairstyle. I looked at my wristwatch and I glanced at the gate. Knowing Nolan, I almost know all of his schedule, including what he's going to do at this point of time.

I smiled when I saw him open the door. I knew it!

When he saw me, I can see that he's quite shocked that he can't almost move any of his muscles. I saw him dropping the garbage bag that he's holding.

"C-Caily?"

Chapter 37: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nolan's POV

"C-Caily?" I blinked for many times and I even rubbed my eyes.

"Well, I wish I was her." She grinned as she came near me. When the lamppost reflected her face, I realized that it was Venus, not Caily. However, it is really hurtful to see that she's trying to copy how she dresses.

I closed my fist because of too much anger building on me. How dare she tell me things like this? Is she really insane?

"Leave."

"What if I don't?"

"I will hit you even if you're a woman."

I can see her chuckle and smirked. She folded her arms and she smiled at me like she's never threatened at all.

"As if you can do that." She said, in a challenging tone that's pissing me off more and more.

"Venus, please. Are you really out of your mind?"

"Maybe." She pouted her lips as she took a glimpse of our front door. "Why don't you invite me inside your house?" She said as she winked.

"Why would I do that?"

"Well, for a second I thought you'd be pleased to have Venus Hughes as your guest. Not everyone gets this once-in-a-lifetime chance." She said. I sighed as I grabbed her hand and opened our door. I saw her being surprised by what I did.

We are now sitting in front of each other on the dining table. I observed her and I feel really weird because she can't stop looking at me as she smiled. She's taking a sip from her glass of milk that I gave her a while ago.

"What time are you going home?" As soon as she heard me asking her that, she laughed all of a sudden.

"Is that how you treat your guests? You want them to go home right away?"

"I do not consider an unwelcome person my guest."

"You know what? You're too harsh. Do you even know how to act like a real gentleman?" She said, giving me a slight frown.

"Do you know how to be considerate? Is that really what you liked doing? Appearing at random people's houses in the middle of the night?" She chuckled as she heard what I was saying.

"I am bored at home." She answered as she grinned. I can't help but groan in disgust.

"What am I supposed to do? Act your clown?" I am surprised when she suddenly pinched my left cheek. A sudden flashback recalled before my eyes. It's as if Caily is doing it for me at the same time. The way Venus smiles so wide is like following how Caily does it, too. I got her hands off my cheek. I am suddenly pissed off that I punched our concrete wall.

I heard her gasp so hard that she came near me.

"S-Sorry." She softly said. I slowly turned my head and looked at her reaction. I can see the tears flowing on my cheek.

"What do you want, huh? Isn't it enough that Caily had a car accident within your vicinity? Why do you have to follow how she dresses up? Are you that heartless?"

"I..." She started to cry in front of me after I angrily told her all these words. For the first time, Venus Hughes showed her fragile side that I can't help but be shocked.

"I am so sorry for going here." She continued. "I came here to say sorry, Nolan. I really do. It's hard for me to also accept what happened to Caily..."

"And you even wish her dead now, huh?" I answered in a loud voice. This time, I am not giving in to her. I know she often cries crocodile tears as part of her mini-show that he only benefits for herself. I am used to seeing her doing these in movies or even commercials that she's doing that I don't want to care anymore,

But...

This time, when I look directly into her eyes, I can see the hurt that she's feeling. There's something in me that I wanted to comfort her, rather than make her leave our house.

"P-Please leave. I appreciate your concern but I know you're a busy person. You better go home and rest now."

I widened my eyes as she hugged me all of a sudden. It was so tight that I could feel her heartbeat racing fast against my body. It suddenly felt so weird I can feel that I am hugging a very familiar person that I truly love right now.

"Thank you so much. I guess I am just feeling guilty. I don't know how to compensate for the loss that I feel like I am being responsible for."

"As much as I wanted to hate you, I am still faced by the fact that it was only an accident. Do not put all the blame to yourself. Also, I am not going to hate you because Caily loves you so much."

After I said those words, she even cried harder. I got goosebumps when she did the "ugly crying" that Caily described to me last time. I remembered that I even laughed at it because Caily wanted to follow the exact way of doing it: Crying aloud, mouth opened, a sudden runny nose and the eyes that she can't almost open because of too much crying for a longer period of time.

"Thank you Nolan. If I am Caily, I will really be proud of you as a friend." I can't help but to smile when I hear that.

"Too bad it's not what she's thinking."

"Why? You seem to be good. Don't be too hard on yourself."

"She's always into greater goals and dreams. Sometimes, I feel like I am very small for her."

"I think she's not thinking about that at all...maybe you're only assuming things."

"She may be imperfect but I love her every flaw." She is still not letting go of me, instead, she looked up as she met my gaze.

"Nolan, you won't believe what I will have to tell you." Adeline is shaking Nolan's shoulders as they meet in one of the benches located on the facade of the campus.

"What?" He replied as he wrinkled his forehead.

"What is Venus up to? She's a total psycho I should say!"

"Huh?"

"Imagine? She's even telling me the exact lines Caily is always telling me."

"H-How come? What did she tell you?"

"That, 'you're the best friend I ever had, second to Nolan!' with the exact reaction, expression and gesture!"

Adeline can see Nolan's reaction. He seemed to be shocked. His face is becoming very pale and worried.

"Do you think she's also affected by what happened to Caily, too?" Adeline suddenly asked him that he felt as if he was caught off guard.

"Hmm, I think that's possible. She even went to my house last night to apologize personally."

"Venus Hughes? Venus did what?" Adeline even held her mouth because of unbelief.

"Yeah. It may sound impossible but she did apologize. I don't know what she's thinking but I guess she's up with something."

"Yeah, knowing her, she's not apologizing for no reason at all."

"But I am just curious how she was able to do it so effortlessly."

"Is it possible that Caily's spirit transferred to Venus Hughes's? She's in a coma right now and I guess it is really possible."

"You and your imagination. Will you please stop watching a lot of fantasy shows? It is not helping."

"I am just telling you the possibilities. Who knows?"

"That's way too impossible to happen. Stop saying nonsense things." Nolan said as he started to walk away.

"Nolan, wait!"

As Adeline and Nolan walked along the highway, they met Venus Hughes along the way. As usual, she's swarmed by her endless fans but she stopped in front of Nolan and smiled.

"Hello Nolan! I cooked your favorite meal." She said in a cheerful manner as she was holding a set of stacked stainless tupperwares and presented it to him.

Nolan and Adeline slowly looked at each other as if not believing anything that Venus said.

"Your highness, the crown suited you well." The crow cackled as he flew around Bellezza Scyther's throne in Withermoor.

"I still can't believe I am the reigning queen now." She grinned as she narrowed her gaze. The crow alighted on her left arm as she rested it on her throne. With the black scepter on her right arm, she transformed the crow into a man. It bowed down in front of her right away and kissed her hands.

"You deserve it, our highness. With the potion that you made, everything became possible." She grinned as she looked very pleased. She can see her reflection as her crown illuminates the Withermoor throne room.

"You will have to collect the magical scrolls from Floreal so that I will make some new rules for myself for Fayvallea."

"For Fayvallea!" The crow cheered.

"I will have to give you a name since you're almost my right hand to the throne. I will call you Warlen."

"It's my pleasure, our highness. Thank you for this wonderful name."

"Warlen, I want you to tell Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace that I want the Luminastia."

"Right away, your highness."

He bowed down and right away,she transformed himself to a crow and she flew away outside the window of the Withermoor castle.

Chapter 38: LONG LIVE!

"Our highness, look at the Luminastia!" Dhara Rose exclaimed as they were standing in front of where the Luminastia is located.

"W-Why is it being like this?" Shreya answered her, not believing what she could see before her eyes. The illuminating lightning inside the Luminastia's power is slowly eaten by a dark smoke.

"Our highness, what is happening?"

"This isn't right! I have never been fooled by my decisions ever since!"

"The Luminastia cannot lie. We have to investigate what is happening to ourselves. No council should know about this."

"How about the Luminastia, our highness?"

"Shouldn't you call Bellezza that instead of me? I am not the queen anymore."

"The Luminastia is still heeding to your commands, our highness. It means you're still a part of the throne. However, you have to hurry up because Bellezza Scyther is desperate in taking over what you have granted her."

As they both look at the Luminastia, the black smoke continues to cloud inside the wand as if slowly taking over its original power. Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace held their respective wands as they both raised it on the air at the same time. Shreya led the enchantment and the power of the crystal and floral wand fused together and went straight to the Luminastia.

The black smoke stopped moving rapidly inside the wand. Instead, it is moving really slow as a result of Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace's combined power to slow down Bellezza Scyther's taking over the throne.

"No one should ever know we'll have our own investigation ourselves. Not any of the council should know this."

"We were fooled. I knew it from the start." Dhara replied, with a worried look on her face.

"I gave her a chance. I always do. How could she ever fool us like this?" Shreya said as she held on to her scepter tight.

"We'll find out, our highness. Are you ready?" Shreya nodded.

"Luminastia, show me what Bellezza Scyther did from the very beginning." Shreya's voice resounded the mountains and the Luminastia emitted a light of power as it slowly encircled in front of them.

"This can't be! How could she do this all along?" Shreya Wallace shouted on top of her lungs because of rage that made her crystal scepter emit lightning that went up to the heavens.

"O-Our highness...calm down, please."

"Dhara, I failed Veratia. I never protected the throne. It's my fault." Shreya's voice is almost fading as she tries her best to stop her tears.

"I know we can still do something about it."

"What do you mean?"

"There's a counterpart potion to what Bellezza Scyther has made. She can't be successful in making her own potion if she'll not make it, too."

"We can still save the two girls." Shreya Wallace said as soon as she heard these words from Dhara.

"But you know it will be too risky, right?"

Caily's POV

"Hello Nolan! I cooked your favorite meal." I said in a cheerful manner. As much as possible, I don't want him to see me being nervous as I hold the tupperwares.

I can see that Nolan and Adeline slowly looked at each other as if not believing anything that I said. I can even see Adeline look at me as if doubting what I am doing right now.

"Oh my! I can't believe Venus Hughes will cook something for someone!" One of the fans murmured.

"Yeah! I guess this is the first time ever!"

"Look! He's not even touching it. Is he nuts?"

"My gosh is that Venus Hughes's past lover? Why is she being like this to him all of a sudden?"

I can see that Adeline poked Nolan's shoulder using hers as if he will do something. Nolan simply scratched her head and accepted what I am trying to give him.

"T-Thanks." He awkwardly smiled and grabbed Adeline's hand and they suddenly walked away. Adeline managed to look back at me.

"Venus, do you know Nolan Sanders?" As I walked to the opposite direction, many of Venus's die-hard supporters kept bugging me. I looked at my bodyguards to surround me. Many pictures were taken as I gave Nolan the tupperwares but I don't care. The most important thing for me right now is that I showed him that Caily cares for him a lot. That I never forget him, not once.

Bellezza Scyther told me not to tell anyone about our agreement. I guess what I am doing right now is not defying the rules that she set upon. I want Nolan to know that Caily cares for him. That I always do, in whatever form I will become. Even becoming Venus Hughes, nothing can ever stop me from doing what I think will cheer my best friend, somehow.

Nolan's POV

We are sitting facing each other and nobody even dared to say a word. I already opened the stacked stainless tupperwares and what we have witnessed really shocked the both of us.

"Yes, I am really watching a lot of fantasy movies."

"Adeline, I can't stop my heartbeat this time. It's getting really fast."

"Nolan, can you see my hands shaking? Huh?" She said as she showed me her hands on the table. I slowly rubbed my eyes but everything that we see in front of us is never changing, even a bit.

"Fried eggs, check. Kimchi, check. Stewed spinach with beef strips, check. Rice with black sesame seeds, check. I want to faint, Nolan." Adeline added and as I looked at her face, tears already streamed down her cheeks.

I closed my fist as I bang it on the table that the other students turned their heads on our direction.

"How could she do this to me? Can't she realize the damage that she did by just doing this alone?"

"Nolan, listen to me. Something is terribly wrong. I've been noticing it for days."

"What is it?"

"Like what I said to you last time, Venus Hughes can answer most of her homework. I can't even believe that she's doing her homework at 98% accurate."

"What's wrong with that? Maybe the woman is trying her best to learn her homework--"

"Which she's not even trying to do! I knew Venus Hughes very well! She's born dependent doing her homework. In fact, it would be the last thing she'll do for her life."

"Adeline, I guess you're just overthinking."

"You think so? And what about this one?" I can see her palms moving over all the foods that we set on the table. She got the spoon and tried tasting everything. After some few chews, she slowly dropped the spoon.

"Nolan...taste the food and you can tell it to yourself."

I nodded. As soon as it reached my tastebuds, I knew Adeline is not exaggerating. It is indeed the flavors of Caily...

We shared the food that Venus cooked for me. Adeline is so emotional that I am also trying to comfort her as we recall the times Caily cooked for us. I can see a lot of cameras still flashing on us. As much as possible, I did not entertain interviews coming from the Mass Communication students and their news scoop. As much as I want to hate Venus, I want her to not get involved in anything controversial. I don't want Caily's idol to be ruined because of me again.

I already disappointed Caily by talking against Venus Hughes. She even ignored me for one whole day last time. I don't want that situation to happen again. Who knows? If she will wake up from her sleep, she'll ask me about that girl first, rather than me.

I should also protect Venus Hughes at all cost, even if I don't want to.

"Are you really sure we can do this?" Dhara Rose said as they both appeared in front of the Withermoor gate. They looked around as darkness started to seep through their bones. Dhara Rose noticed that her knees started to tremble.

She went to this place once but it's the first time that she felt this way. The force that enveloped the whole place is much stronger this time. She sensed that any creature that will be inside this place will be filled with fear and remorse.

However, I can see that Shreya Wallace faced the gate with confidence and valor. She raised her crystal scepter in the air. She tried opening the gate with the power that she has but to no avail.

"Looking for something, Shreya?" The gate roared like thunder. Shreya stood, unafraid of the Withermoor gate.

"Let us enter."

"Our queen doesn't want you both to enter Withermoor."

They looked at each other as they held hands. They disappeared right away in front of the gate. A black smoke encircled the gate as it went straight into the castle, reaching the throne room of Bellezza. The black smoke encircled where she's sitting right now. She widened her eyes as she suddenly stood up. She firmly held on to his black scepter.

"No! This can't be! How could they!"

She looked at the window as something was coming towards her. She saw Warlen flying inside the Withermoor castle through the window.

She transformed himself as a human being before he even alighted on the ground of the throne room in front of her.

"Our highness, this is not good! Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace joined forces as they stopped the Luminastia from heeding your commands." He said as he almost gasped for air. She held onto her black scepter and she slammed it on the ground. It created a ripple of power that caused tremors inside the Withermoor castle. Bellezza's shout of rage echoed the whole place.

Chapter 39: LIPS SEALED

Nolan's POV

As soon as my 4:00 PM class was done, I rushed to the rooftop of the Science building where the two of us only knew.

As I climbed up the stairs, I felt like my steps were getting heavier. I noticed that my vision became blurred with tears. I slowly sighed as I twitched the doorknob of the secret door above me. I pushed the door until it bounced on the other side as it opened. I stepped on the metal railings being tucked on the concrete walls, I felt like my heart suddenly beat fast.

When half of my body is almost exposed to the rooftop, I can instantly feel the fresh breeze caress my skin. When I look around, I can see a figure of a petite woman facing the railings of the roof deck overlooking the tiny cars and houses. I hurriedly climbed up until my feet touched the concrete ground of the roof deck. I rushed towards her and grabbed her hand.

"W-Who are you?" She slowly turned her back and faced me.

It was Venus Hughes.

"Venus? How did you know this place?"

"This is where we always meet, right?" She answered me in a shaky voice. She's not even looking at me straight on the eye.

"Where did we meet? Are you out of your mind? We're not even close!"

"Nolan...try to listen to me."

"This is ridiculous! I only knew one person who knew this place."

"W-What if I also knew that person that you meant very well?" I stepped back when I heard her saying it. I admit, I did not see it coming.

"Venus, you're crazy. You really are! I will not fall for this anymore."

"Nolan, please listen to me."

"This is too much. You are too selfish. You're not even thinking of what others would feel. Does this make you happy? Huh?" I said as I grabbed both of her shoulders. I can feel that I am almost crushing her because of my nails digging her skin.

Her voice is almost weird. She started to cry but instead of tears, blood started running down her cheeks. I felt something was crawling on my hands and as I looked at it, her body was slowly rotting and worms started to eat her skin. When I look at her face, I can almost see her eye socket because of the skin that's sagging off her face.

"Nolan, please help me..."

"Nolan! Nolan!" I suddenly opened my eyes when I heard someone calling my name aloud. I can still feel that someone is shaking my body.

"Oh, my baby!" My mother hugged me tight when she saw my eyes opened.

"M-Mom, what happened?"

"You had a bad dream dear, I guess." She is very emotional. I can feel her sobbing as I rest my head on her shoulders.

"D-Dream?"

But it happened indeed. How was it a dream when I was able to climb up the roof deck of our Science school building right after our class? Am I being tricked or something? It really felt so weird.

"Yes. Can't you remember? You went home last night very tired from the hospital. It was almost 10:00 PM when you reached here. You dropped straight to your bed and slept. You even forgot to eat your dinner.

'How could it be? How could I ever forget what happened last night before I slept? I clearly remembered what happened. I knew I left the school canteen with Adeline and attended all my classes. The last place I remembered reaching was the roof deck of our Science school building.

"R-Really, mom?"

"Yes. How can you ever forget it? Were you drunk last night?"

"Drunk?"

I can't be drunk. I've never been drunk even once. Caily knew it very well. She even told me that I am not a real guy because I am not fond of drinking alcoholic beverages.

"I want you to eat now, my dear. I think you're just hungry. I prepared your breakfast for you. Let's go." She smiled as she stood up. She went downstairs to prepare everything. I am sitting on my bed scratching my head. How can it be? How did it happen?

I finished breakfast and I bid goodbye to my mom as I walked on my way to the bus stop. I will still have to walk half a kilometer for me to reach there. As I glanced on my wristwatch, I noticed that I

still have forty-five minutes to spare before our first period. It's already 6:05 A.M. I am slowly walking beside the road when a car swiftly stopped beside me.

I stopped walking to see who is driving. I was shocked when three muscular guys in uniform went outside the car.

"Sir, please go with us if you still want to live."

"What? I don't know all of you." I said as I stepped back. The three of them rushed towards me and forced me to get inside the car. I tried twitching my arms but they are much stronger than me. I can compare myself to a fragile thing ready to break anytime.

As I sat on the backseat of the car, they started to tie both of my hands on my back and sealed my mouth with a silver packing tape. I tried shouting but I guess even my strength has left me. Someone slapped me with a newspaper and it fell on my lap. I looked at the headlines and I widened my eyes when I saw Venus offering me the stacked tupperware as she smiled sweetly.

"Our boss didn't like the headlines. That's why he asked us to find you at any cost."

Boss? Oh right. I know Venus has been dating a lot of bachelors ever since. I guess one of them got really jealous because I got us in the headlines. How can I be so careless?

I can also see some smaller pictures beside the bigger one. Some pictures show that I am eating what Venus prepared for me.

I twitched violently. I can't be here. I must not be here. How dare someone kidnap me like this? As I moved and the guard beside me tried to stop me, I felt like everything stopped in an instant. When everybody stopped, I felt my body start to disappear from the car.

"Our highness, it will be too risky. We already went to Withermoor and we can't even enter. How can we be able to get the counter potion?"

Shreya Wallace raised her crystal scepter and in an instant, Nolan appeared in front of them, lying sidewards on the ground, still his hands tied and his mouth shut by a silver packing tape.

"Our highness, what's the meaning of this?" Dhara said, as she gasped in shock. Nolan also widened his eyes as she saw the two witches standing in front of her as he looked up to them. In an instant, everything that tied him up was gone.

"He's our only chance."

"Chance? What chance? We can't even get the potion ourselves, why rely on a mere human-being? Our highness, he is powerless." Dhara Rose exclaimed, shifting her gaze to both of them with a worried look.

"W-Why am I here?" Nolan cut them off. They look at each other and Shreya inhales gently as she looks at him.

"You have to save Caily."

"Too late, she's not even waking up." Nolan answered Shreya Wallace in a gloomy manner.

"Caily Mcfisher and Venus Hughes were switched, without Venus knowing it."

"I don't understand what you mean."

"Your best friend wished to be inside Venus's body and Bellezza Scyther made it come true for a week."

"Who is Bellezza Scyther?" Nolan asked, still putting everything together. He's touching the affected part of his hand that was tightly tied a while ago.

"She's the witch of Withermoor. She's the reigning queen right now but I guess it is not yet too late."

"Y-You mean I am literally talking to Caily as I face Venus Hughes? Y-You mean it is really my best friend whom I talk to these days?" Nolan asked with misty eyes. Both witches can see a ray of hope that's shining upon him.

"Yes. She's indeed Caily. Yesterday was the 6th day of their agreement. We don't have much time. You have to save Caily whatever it takes."

Dhara Rose and Shreya Wallace held his hands on both sides and they disappeared from Floreal. Both of the witches suddenly appeared at the foot of the gate of Withermoor.

"Please tell me what to do. I am willing to risk even my life for Caily." He said as he faced the gate, unafraid. Shreya grinned as the gate broke open after Nolan said those words.

Dhara Rose sighed with relief. "Love can do miracles, indeed." She smiled and nodded. The three of them rushed inside Withermoor.

"I know the way, please follow me." Dhara Rose ran towards the eerie pathway towards the cursed forest. The path becomes too impossible to see because of the fog and dark smoke that tries to stop them but Shreya's crystal scepter also lighted the way as they ran very fast.

"W-What's that sound?" A sudden whirlwind surrounded them, as some group of creatures flew towards them.

"Black dragons." Shreya confirmed to them.

"D-Dragons?" Nolan asked, shocked. Shreya grinned as she held his arm.

"Don't be afraid. As long as the Luminastia is still heeding my commands as the queen of Fayvallea, nothing in Withermoor can ever harm us."

"We've arrived." Dhara stopped in front of the cursed forest hugged by gigantic branches filled with pointed thorns.

"However, we can't follow you inside. You have to do it yourself this time."

Chapter 40: ROCK BOTTOM

Nolan's POV

As soon as my 4:00 PM class was done, I rushed to the rooftop of the Science building where the two of us only knew.

As I climbed up the stairs, I felt like my steps are getting heavier. I noticed that my vision became blurred with tears. I slowly sighed as I twitched the doorknob of the secret door above me. I pushed the door until it bounced on the other side as it opened. I stepped on the metal railings being tucked on the concrete walls, I felt like my heart suddenly beat fast.

When half of my body is almost exposed to the rooftop, I can instantly feel the fresh breeze caress my skin. When I look around, I can see a figure of a petite woman facing the railings of the roof deck overlooking the tiny cars and houses. I hurriedly climbed up until my feet touched the concrete ground of the roof deck. I rushed towards her and grabbed her hand.

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"This is where we always meet, right?" She answered me in a shaky voice. She's not even looking at me straight on the eye.

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"This is ridiculous! I only knew one person who knew this place."

"W-What if I also knew that person that you meant very well?" I stepped back when I heard her saying it. I admit, I did not see it coming.

"Venus, you're crazy. You really are! I will not fall for this anymore."

"Nolan, please listen to me."

"This is too much. You are too selfish. You're not even thinking of what others would feel. Does this make you happy? Huh?" I said as I grabbed both of her shoulders. I can feel that I am almost crushing her because of my nails digging her skin.

Her voice is almost weird. She started to cry but instead of tears, blood started running down her cheeks. I felt something was crawling on my hands and as I looked at it, her body was slowly rotting and worms started to eat her skin. When I look at her face, I can almost see her eye socket because of the skin that's sagging off her face.

"Nolan, please help me..."

"Nolan! Nolan!" I suddenly opened my eyes when I heard someone calling my name aloud. I can still feel that someone is shaking my body.

"Oh, my baby!" My mother hugged me tight when she saw my eyes opened.

"M-Mom, what happened?"

"You had a bad dream dear, I guess." She is very emotional. I can feel her sobbing as I rest my head on her shoulders.

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'How could it be? How could I ever forget what happened last night before I slept? I clearly remembered what happened. I knew I left the school canteen with Adeline and attended all my classes. The last place I remembered reaching was the roof deck of our Science school building.

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"We've arrived." Dhara stopped in front of the cursed forest hugged by gigantic branches filled with pointed thorns.

"However, we can't follow you inside. You have to do it yourself this time."

THE WITCHER'S HOUR-EPILOGUE

"Caily...wake up!"

"Huh?" She slowly opened her eyes as she looked around. She can see Nolan right away, smiling in front of her.

"Why are you waking me up?"

"You always make the library your sleeping area," Nolan said as he jokingly frowned in front of her. He can see that Caily is looking very curious as she looks around. Nolan helped her pack up her things and put them inside her backpack. They both left the library as quietly as possible. They started to walk going to the center of the football field of their school. The sun is hiding among the clouds that's why it's not that hot.

"How's Venus Hughes, by the way? Did you see her?"

"Well, there's a lot of changes Venus Hughes underwent last week. She even announced it in public that she'll retire from modeling any time soon."

"Really?" She looked a bit dismayed. Nolan saw it from his reaction. However, it changed right away.

"Why? You look funny." Nolan said as she pinched her. She giggled as she pinched him on the cheek, too.

"You know what? I will never dream of living Venus's life even if she's the most beautiful woman in the world."

"Why would you say that?"

"Nolan, I had a terrible dream. It's not good to even imagine."

"Is it about Venus Hughes?" She nodded. He put her arm on her shoulder and grinned at her.

"For me, you're the most beautiful woman in the world. Even if Venus Hughes will cook for me, I will never, ever pick her. It will always be you."

"Of course. You don't want to offend your bride, right? We'll still be getting married someday." She cheerfully answered him.

"Did I say 'yes' already?" He replied as he ran ahead of her.

"Hey! You're bad! Come here! I will catch you!" She giggled as she chased him.

Shreya and Dhara looked at them as they sat on one of the branches of the old, giant trees standing tall within the vicinity of the school. They are smiling together.

"I am glad everything went back to normal."

"Yes. You shouldn't also worry about Scyther because she's imprisoned inside Withermoor."

"Let's go back to Fayvallea. You know we can't last here in the world of the living." Shreya said. Dhara Rose nodded in response. As Dhara Rose raised her floral scepter, a crow flew away from one of the branches of the trees where they were staying.

"I am not feeling good about this one," Shreya said as her eyes followed the direction to where the crow flew.

"Our highness, did you get the Luminastia back from Nolan?"

They looked at each other. It is when they realized everything has just started...

-END-