

Fated out Chapter 32

32 Payback time...

Lyla

A wave of apprehension washed over me. There was something in his gaze that sent a chill down my spine.

His eyes, dark and penetrating, seemed to look right through me as if he knew secrets about me that even I,

didn't know.

He looked like he could be a businessman or

something else...I couldn't say but what unsettled me more was how he stared at me, as if he had been "waiting for me to notice him. I felt my pulse quicken

a quick tremor passed through m

my head, I wanted to look away but I just cou.'t why was he

here? Was he a new teacher?

—

Suddenly, something said sharply in my ear, startling me as I bolted up from my seat.

"LOOK AWAY!"

I finally managed to tear my eyes away from the man, only to notice I was standing and everyone in my class was staring at me strangely including Mrs Caldwell

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and Ms. Hayley.

"Is everything alright, Lyla?" Mrs Caldwell asked eyeing me strangely. "You look like you've just seen a ghost."

My eyes went back to the entrance of the door, the man was still there and his eyes were still on me. I

wanted to tell the teachers what I saw but they were humans and I could be the only one seeing it, I didn't want them to think I was stupid.

"I..." I trailed off stuttering. "There's an empty seat next to me and I was wondering if the new student would like to sit here," I said quickly with a strained smile.

"That's so sweet of you, Lyla! Ms Hayley beamed with pride and turned to the man at the door "I told you Mr Dupree, our school is 'the best pla or your son, you don't have to worry about him fitting in."

The man nodded but didn't say anything.

"Xander, go ahead and take the empty seat next to Lyla and let's go back to our teaching."

Xander nodded and waved at the man by the door

before making his way towards me. I forced myself not to look at the mysterious man by the door. The man

19:24

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32 Payback me.

couldn't be his father — he looked far too young and Xander seemed like my age.

Xander finally slid into the empty desk beside me. The man by the door lingered for a moment longer, his eyes still on me, before he turned and left.

I exhaled slowly, realizing I had been holding my breath. Something about that man wasn't right. And Xander — I turned to look at my new classmate and caught him looking at me.

"Hi!" I murmured, blushing at being caught before I quickly turned away.

"There was something off about him, too, though I

couldn't quite figure out what. W

lesson, discussing, with me bare

ntinued the

ontributing

anything. Xander on the other hand remained aloof,

drumming his hand on his desk without looking at Mrs.

Caldwell.

"Xander!" Mrs Caldwell suddenly called his attention, though her smile seemed a little strained. Could she feel it too? I wondered. "We're discussing Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale'. I don't suppose you've

read it?"

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His lips curled into a faint smirk. "I've read it," he said, his voice low and smooth. "It's a good book, but it's a little too... idealistic, don't you think? Offred was a fool. She should have known better than to chase a dream that was never real in the first place."

My brows furrowed. There was something strange about the way he said it, as though he wasn't just talking about the book as if he was speaking from **wW.N©vEtw0R@c©m**

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experience. His words made me uneasy, though I couldn't explain why.

Mrs Caldwell was caught unawares, she just stared at Xander for a few seconds before turning back to the lesson. The class continued, but my focus wavered. My thoughts kept drifting back to ler, to the strange man — Mr Dupree who had stared at me so intensely and to the feeling that something was about to change.

My mind flitted to the dream I had when I was sick, and I wondered if it had to do with any of this. I reminded myself to tell Nanny and ask her for interpretation today. As the bell rang, signalling the end of class, I gathered my things, my mind still racing

something was coming, I could feel it...

10:24:

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I made my way to the student cafeteria for lunch. It was the first time I had ever dared to step foot inside. In the past, I had always eaten my lunch either in the bathroom or outside by the field, too afraid of being bullied.

I entered the bustling cafeteria, picked up a tray of food, and made my way to an empty table. I could feel eyes following me but I didn't care. Finally, I settled on an empty table near the centre of the room. As I sat down, their whispers reached my ears.

"Is that really Lyla?"

."What happened to her?"

"She looks...different."

I ignored them, focusing on my food. I had just taken. bite of my sandwich when a familiar voice cut through the whispers.

"Well, well, well," Marissa said, her voice dripping with mockery "Look who's finally decided to grace us with her presence. To join the rest of us in the cafeteria."

I didn't look up from my food. I calmly took another bite, the room was now quiet as everyone turned to

atored at 110

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"Hey!" Marissa snapped, slamming her hand down on the table, "I'm talking to you. What's the matter?"

I looked up at her now. She was standing before me, flanked by her usual group of friends. Her eyes raked over me, a sneer twisting her perfectly glossed lips.

"What do you want, Marissa?" I sighed "Don't you know it's bad table etiquette to interrupt someone eating?"

"What!" she scoffed "You must have a lot of nerve, Lyla, showing up like this and speaking to me in that manner. Did you think wearing some cheap new clothes or putting oil in your hair is going to change

anything? No darling, you're still the same freak you've always been."

The girls with her giggled, the filling the Cafeteria.

gh-pitched laughter

One of them, chimed in. "Yeah, you can change your clothes all you want, but you'll never stop being the

school weirdo."

I ignored them and continued eating my sandwich. I could feel anger bubbling up inside me, but it was different now controlled, focused. I was no longer

—

the helpless victim they expected me to be.

When Marissa saw I was barely reacting to them and apparently frustrated decided to escalate things. With a dramatic flourish, she picked up her used food tray and dumped its contents onto my food. Her friends. followed suit. giggling as they emptied their trays into my food.

"Oops, Marissa said with feigned remorse. "Looks like you won't be eating in here after all. Why don't you run along to your usual spot in the toilets?" **wWw.Nov©WOrM.c©m**

In the past, this would have been the moment where I fled, tears in my eyes with their cruel laughter following me. But not today. Today, I was different...

With deliberate slowness, I s up. I picked up my tray, now a mess of mingled food and looked at Marissa directly in the eye. Her smug expression faltered as I held her gaze.

"You know, Marissa," I said coolly, "I've been thinking about you lately. About how small and insignificant you are and I was going to forgive you, truly... but I guess you do not deserve it."

Before Marissa could respond, I tipped my tray

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dumped some food from my tray over her head. Gasps. and shocked exclamations filled the air as food dripped down Marissa's perfectly styled hair and designer

clothes.

"What the hell?!" she shrieked, stumbling backwards.

I didn't stop there. I turned to her friends, who stood frozen in shock and emptied the rest of the food over them as well. The cafeteria had fallen into silence, as

everyone stared at me.

"Listen carefully, Marissa," I turned back to her. She was trying to wipe food from her face. "This is the last day you'll ever try to offend or bully me. Your father is a mere Gamma. How dare you think you have the right

to torment me?"

Her face turned bright red as she tried to talk but I pressed on, not giving her a chance to interrupt.

"I've faced things you couldn't even imagine and survived, Marissa. Your petty attempts at bullying insults me."

Then I turned to the address of the rest of the cafeteria, my eyes sweeping over the shocked faces of my classmates. **wWw.Nov©1WOrM.c©M**

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"Let me make something clear to all of you. If you don't want to end up like Marissa and her friends here, I suggest you mind your business from now on. I'll be in senior class next year, and then I'll be gone for good. But until then, if any of you so much as looks at me the wrong way, you'll regret it. Do I make myself clear? This is your final warning."

I straightened my shoulders, grabbed my backpack and strode towards the exit. As I reached the door, I paused and looked back over my shoulder.

"Oh, and Marissa? You might want to clean yourself up. That really doesn't suit you."

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