

Chapter 004|Secret prayers

~ Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn't commit.

I stared at the board even as Mr Brighton seems immersed in his make-believe world where students give a damn about where a dinosaur's bone was first found in history, pretending to be listening to his endless ramble just like everyone else.

He was talking about some kind of comet that hit the earth in 3000 BC and Tory, a history obsessed proud geek indulged him in his conversation and although I knew I should be taking notes, mentally thinking of how to access my neighbourhood's only library that was out of shape and dilapidated to browse through some of the available history books to have more

knowledge about this, I couldn't stop thinking about Law Tyler.

It was impossible to, especially since if I sniffed hard enough on my clothes, I could still perceive his unapologetic manly Cinnamon musky scent that reminded me weirdly of fresh rain.

It was stupid of me to even still remember the strange words he had told me and the fact he had called me Amelia should convince me that he wasn't in his right senses when he made those bold declarations, but I couldn't help it, nobody has ever looked at me that way like I was wanted, cherished, loved...

I scoffed at my pitiable self inwardly, this is what happens when you attend a school and no male has even spared you a second glance except to pick on you, bully you and pass snide remarks.

Back when I was a middle school student in the state public school, I wasn't the most popular girl in school or the Queen bee but I'd felt average, knowing I could be beautiful if I got rid of the braces I had on back then and always wear my big goofy grin. Rob would always tell me that I was the most beautiful girl he knew and back then though I do shrug and flush brilliantly, turning the shade of his favourite crimson-coloured boots, a part of me knew he was just being a good brother and was being too kind in his compliments and then a little part of me that struck poses in front of the mirror and flipped my hair like I was in some kind of commercial while alone had believed him.

That part of me had died the day he went to jail, it was cremated on my first day at Evans high school, when I had stepped in here with my worn out yet favourite leather jacket enthusiastic about making new friends but have been met with outright scorn and mocking

snickers and at the end of the day when I finally removed my braces and my boobs were finally in need of the Brassiere mom had bought for me when I had clocked 12, I could tell that I was unappealing, unattractive and my brother was a criminal hence the biggest liar on planet Earth.

Later that day as I lay in bed hearing mom complained about us running out of almost everything like we ever had them stocked, I stood up and walked straight to the long sized mirror next to my stack of books that was now dusty because of lack of use hence I hardly remembered to clean it and because I was a big fool and women were creatures influenced by words, I went to pick a foamy duster and spent minutes cleaning every inch of the mirror.

I stered et my reflection in the mirror when I was done. One second. Two seconds. Three seconds.

I cringed and looked away, dropping the mirror hurriedly and then lying back on my bed with a thud. Lier, Lier Lew Tyler, I thought tears pooling in my eyes even though I knew he was no liar.

He had called me Amelie, maybe the name of the women that had broken his heart and had made every woman undesirable in his sight. The reason why he never kept a girlfriend despite the large number of Evans high school female students who would give up a pair of both legs and hands to do him.

I choked back a tear, at the thought that Amelie might even be Deed and the loss was something that he couldn't accept and was responsible for his almost loss of sanity, even as I slowly was lulled into a dream state.

Later that night, I woke up and breathlessly laughed, my croaky whimper if it could pass as laughter echoed in

the room as I wonder if I also didn't need the mental institute. Nothing fancy, like Tyler's maybe something pub

like that smelt like death and with an uncomfortable looking bed where we were offered stale food once a day since we can't tell the difference. Because what else could possibly explain my deranged bizarre thought that he'd lingered for the briefest of seconds that the most popular and wanted boy in Senior year wanted anything to do with me.

I woke up the next morning to the yellow note stuck to the refrigerator. I knew what they meant. I didn't even bother to read the excuse mom had penned down with her poorly written cursive and heavily ridden with errors. It was yet another excuse why we didn't have anything to eat and the promise to make sure that never happened again.

The problem was that I didn't know why she bothered because it'd heppened so meny times to the extent the grumbling worms in my stomech didn't heve eny impect on me or felt neerly es uncomfortable es the wey it hed when I wes e child end hed hung on my mom's every word end bedly written promise on her stick it notes.

I wore e bleck peir of ripped shorts. I'd mede it out of Rob's peir of jeans thet hed torn once when he hed fellen down. Beck then he hed told me thet it wes en eccident gotten from pleying too herd with his friend Jimmy, I've believed him just like I'd believed Mom. Neive stupid Prudence who couldn't tell thet her brother couldn't look her in the eyes end wes elways so fixeted on his legs when he told her mede-up story of how he wes working in e bekery end wes eble to bring beck home the lerge emount of money she hed seen him counting more then once.

I stared at my reflection in the mirror when I was done. One second. Two seconds. Three seconds.

I cringed and looked away, dropping the mirror hurriedly and then lying back on my bed with a thud. Liar liar Law Tyler, I thought tears pooling in my eyes even though I knew he was no liar.

He had called me Amelia, maybe the name of the woman that had broken his heart and had made every woman undesirable in his sight. The reason why he never kept a girlfriend despite the large number of Evans high school female students who would give up a pair of both legs and hands to do him.

I choked back a tear, at the thought that Amelia might even be Dead and the loss was something that he couldn't accept and was responsible for his almost loss of sanity, even as I slowly was lulled into a dream state.

Later that night, I woke up and brazenly laughed, my croaky whimper if it could pass as laughter echoed in the room as I wonder if I also didn't need a mental institute. Nothing fancy, like Tyler's maybe something pub

lic that smelt like death and with an uncomfortable looking bed where we are offered stale food once a day since we can't tell the difference. Because what else could possibly explain my deranged bizarre thought that had lingered for the briefest of second that the most popular and wanted boy in Senior year wanted anything to do with me.

I woke up the next morning to a yellow note stuck to the refrigerator. I knew what they meant. I didn't even bother to read the excuse mom had penned down with her poorly written calligraphy and heavily ridden with errors. It was yet another excuse why we didn't

have anything to eat and a promise to make sure that never happened again.

The problem was that I didn't know why she bothered because it'd happened so many times to the extent the grumbling worms in my stomach didn't have any impact on me or felt nearly as uncomfortable as the way it had when I was a child and had hung on my mom's every word and badly written promise on her stick it notes.

I wore a black pair of ripped shorts. I'd made it out of Rob's pair of jeans that had torn once when he had fallen down. Back then he had told me that it was an accident gotten from playing too hard with his friend Jimmy, I've believed him just like I'd believed Mom. Naive stupid Prudence who couldn't tell that her brother couldn't look her in the eyes and was always so fixated on his legs when he told her made-up story of how he was working in a bakery and was able to

bring back home the large amount of money she had seen him counting more than once.

If only she had known the cut he had gotten from his knee was when he had scraped his knees while trying to escape from a barbed fence, if only she knew that no bakery paid such a huge amount of money just because you stood at a counter and made records and such an amount of money could only be made from going on risky assignments of procuring and distributing drugs for the big Lords of the neighbourhood like Louis and Roman.

Maybe if she'd known she would have saved her brother, stopped him from being used as a pawn that had discovered way too late he was all alone the moment he had been caught with a large amount of cocaine and handcuffs had been clasped on his wrist.

The naive Prudence who was forced to grow up immediately to notice that the other two boys who were caught with Rob had gone home the next day

because their parents were able to afford huge lumps of money to bribe the higher-ups. Nobody had cared for the child of the single parent, not Louis who last I heard about him was in London or Roman who still ruled the street and recruited more boys that always meet the same fate as Rob eventually finding out too late that all his promises to make them as rich as he, was a blatant lie and when he told them he cared about them since they reminded him of his younger self ridden by absolute poverty he only cared about how much they made him rich as each day passes.

Naive Prudence was dead anyway and in her place was me, the girl who couldn't look at herself in the mirror longer than three seconds without flinching.

Grateful that I was able to create something decent from his torn jeans, I wore mom's hoodie jacket she had have since forever. It was worn out like most of my clothes but at least it was neat.

Tying my hair with an elastic band, I grabbed my backpack, shrugged it on and completely ignoring my grumbling tummy while looking forward to the cafeteria food disliked by the privileged Evan's high school gods, I made my way to school.

I resisted the urge to yell at a few of the children who gawked at the crest on my chest with a hunger to be just like me, to escape our squalor neighbourhood and scream at the parents who looked at me jealously, wishing that their children were in my place knowing that I would have also gawked and be hot in envy if I was in their shoes but if only they knew, then they would be careful of what they wished for with their obvious stares and be mindful of their secret prayers because although poverty was punishment enough for a crime we didn't commit, the students of Evans high school would make you pay.

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