

## Chapter 008|Safe haven

~ When he had first told me hello

I should have heard the hell in it.

Everyone has a haven, a shade. Most times, for the lucky ones it was a person or group of people. For the luckiest, it was family or a best friend.

Once upon a time, I wasn't aware of it but I'd been lucky. I'd Rob. He was my haven. We never had enough when he was around, neither did his presence disappear the ugly reality of sleeping hungry most nights, but he was there to hold my hands through the unbearable prodding of the worms in my tummy which most times, I like to entertain the thought of them restlessly wondering what I was

thinking not remembering to eat, hence they act as a reminder, acted up.

Biting here and prodding there.

But I didn't have such a haven anymore, but I did have a safe place. The under-construction Janitor's closet. I wasn't sure, if I'll be able to face anyone now, not sure I have the guts to walk back to the cafeteria like nothing had happened though I knew, I'd have to wear my hoodie soon and act invincible, act tough and unbothered like nothing got to me while anticipating the huge strike at me that was unavoidable now after Law Tyler's drama.

"Here." I almost fell off the table which on it was kept cleaning supplies not knowing when he had slipped through the door. It didn't even make any sound or was I so deep in thought, that I'd missed it?

Before I could yell at him, already aware of who was behind me. I couldn't mistake that chilling aura even if he was amid a multitude, the smell of something enticing and juicy called out to me and it didn't help that I was most vulnerable since I was in dire need of food.

"You didn't have any food to eat because of what had happened at the cafeteria, so take this."

I turned to look at him, keeping my eyes on his not wanting to be drawn to the palatable dish held in his hand, which I very much want to devour, recklessly abandoning my ego which was smothered at this point but I stubbornly still held onto fervently protecting it even though, ego had no home with a hungry man and what dignity is in poverty?

But Rob had taught me at a very young age to be able to glisten my lips with oil if need be so that my

peers would think I was well-fed while I played with a hungry stomach. He would always say, we didn't have much but of what value did we become when we give up our pride even though it is just the rattle of extreme folly?

"I had a huge breakfast so I was not even that hungry." I lied looking away from his eyes realizing how wrong of a tactic that was.

"Trust me, I do want something from you but taking this from me doesn't in any way means that you are obliged to do anything you don't want to do," he brings the tray in front of me but I held my breath not wanting to perceive the delicious wafting aroma of the sauce not sure I'll be able to hold on much longer if I did as I pushed the tray back into his arms which were still outstretched.

"I told you I'm not hungry."

"I do believe you but I'm allergic to gluten which is highly contained in spaghetti so all this would go to waste if I don't give it to anyone."

He would have fooled me, I thought knowing that rich people had no problem wasting food or any other thing since they had a surplus of all they could desire. I've seen how overflowed our waste baskets were after lunch and the wasted untouched food left behind at the canteen which I have more than once benefited from was evidence of just how easily he would not have been fined if he wasted his portion of food.

"You can dump it in the waste bucket." There was a pause but still, I didn't turn to spare him a glance even as I expectantly awaited the creaking of the door that would confirm he was gone already and I was doomed to hunger.

But although there was e creek, it wesn't from the door but from the mehogeny teble, I set on top of. The sturdy wood felt the pressure of his weight es he smoothly set down beside me like thet wes e very common thing to do.

"Whet ere you doing?" I met his emused eyes end knew he hed not in eny wey bought my story the seme wey I didn't buy his.

"I hed never loved the chetter thet went on et the cefeterie so I decided to come end keep you compeny here. I love solitude end peece, so here I em."

I fought the urge to chuckle, et thet obvious lie. Who wouldn't like the populer's teble he set on. A seet every student of Evens high school dreemt to be in, which he hed eesily been invited to the first week he hed come to school.

I could never forget how much dust he had raised in school, because of his admission though there had been rumours that he had turned down sitting down at the popular's table more than thrice, I'd refused to believe it, chalking it down to people trying to make him seem way cooler since he was the latest eye candy of Evans high school and soon would lose his flavour.

I'd been so wrong despite his indifference and how he didn't indulge in their endless chatter, didn't sign into basketball despite how many times the captain himself had hinted to him to try out because according to his transfer records he was in the basketball team, didn't keep a girlfriend and didn't keep friends, his value had only increased as more people had bent backwards to accommodate him over the years. The girls wanted him and the guys wanted to be him.

So how could he say he didn't want to be at the

popular's table? How could he act like he wasn't thankful for how smooth his high school journey had been and why keep on with the pretence that he wasn't like the other people who sat beside him. Smug and rich, acting like the world was underneath their designer footwear.

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But although there was a creak, it wasn't from the door but from the mahogany table, I sat on top of. The sturdy wood felt the pressure of his weight as he smoothly sat down beside me like that was a very common thing to do.

"What are you doing?" I met his amused eyes and knew he had not in any way bought my story the same way I didn't buy his.

"I had never loved the chatter that went on at the cafeteria so I decided to come and keep you company

here. I love solitude and peace, so here I am."

I fought the urge to chuckle, at that obvious lie. Who wouldn't like the popular's table he sat on. A seat every student of Evans high school dreamt to be in, which he had easily been invited to the first week he had come to school.

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"I don't know what you want from me, but you are pretty desperate and that just scares the hell out of me," I admitted.

He eyed me briefly, "What makes you think I'll want anything from you? You aren't an heiress hence my interest in acquiring daddy's money or having any material possession that is of interest to me."

"Which is why I'm more scared. Why else do you hang around me and would rather stay in this damn building with me rather than be in the cafeteria with the others?"

"You won't believe me if I tell you I enjoy your company, would you?"

I chuckled mockingly, "I gave you so much credit if that's the excuse you'd rather be going with."

He shrugged, "So I'd rather seal my lips than spew loads of crap then or insult the creativity of sorts you expect from me."

I rolled my eyes in absolute frustration, "You know this is outrightly desperate even in the history of absolute desperation and honestly, I wish I have the luxury of time to indulge you but I'm sorry I am not of your type and have real issues that have nothing to do with getting invited to the most popular parties or getting the latest model of a sport's car."

"My type?" He spat out like that was a joke, "Do not judge a book by its cover."

I eyed his expensive Rolex watch, Italian shiny black shoes, and his customized leather jacket and scoffed.

"No, I'll stick to judging a book by its cover figuratively

and literally, it saves me the stress of flipping through and finding the same cliché, boring words." I jumped down from the table finally accepting that he won't be giving up anytime soon and I needed to find another place to be in.

He jumped down too.

I wasn't the type to curse, it made me feel like I was no different from the other children in my ghetto surrounding but I found myself muttering curses underneath my breath gloriously being pushed to the wall.

"What the fuck do you want from me, you too good to be true Prince charming?"

"I want to be your friend." He had the guts to smile at me and then push the damn tray to my side.

I grabbed the tray intending to throw the damn thing on the floor agitated.

"If you eat the food, I'll calmly leave you to your solitude right now, but if not then I'll have no choice but to come back with more trays of food."

My mouth dropped open at the thought that he was threatening me to eat!

"You're sick."

"I've been called worst besides I'm a rich kid who like you rightly assessed has lots of time to spare so please indulge me." He patted the spot beside him even as he took a seat on top of the table intending to watch me while I eat.

My hands were curled into fists on both sides.

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