

Song 5

Song 5 ♪ Time Of Your Life (Not)

My ma wasn't entirely pleased with how everything had developed, my best friend was mad at me and this probably made me a terrible person, but I was completely over the moon. I made something happen for me. Something good. Everyone who had asked me why even try, that I most likely wouldn't get in, could suck it.

I actually felt like singing Unwritten by Natasha Bedingfield. That was how cheesy happy I felt.

Ma came back with my suitcase and new uniforms and found me in the middle of a deep get-to-know-each-other session with my new roommate — and oh my God, I now had a roommate, how adult did that sound?

"I can see that you're busy." Undeterred by my desire to ignore her, she went on, "But we need to talk before I leave."

Addy shot up to her feet. "Oh, that's okay. I can leave."

"No, I'll walk ma out." We left the room and she grabbed my arms in a vice once we were outside, getting all up in my grill. "Whoa, you're scaring me."

"Listen to me chiquita." Her eyes narrowed. Was she mad? "This whole thing is crazy and I probably shouldn't even be allowing it. The only reason I am is because you're going to be under the care of good, religious people. So you better behave and not do something crazy like, like."

I supplied helpfully. "Get pregnant?"

Her fingers tightened on my flesh and I was sure I was going to bruise.

"That or something else that would make this people think that we're low class."

"Right."

And by that I meant, thanks for the encouragement, ma. I know you're proud of me for getting here. I'll work hard.

"And if this doesn't go well," she said as a final warning. "I'm pulling you out of this place. Entendiste?"

I nodded. "Crystal clear."

Except that wasn't going to happen, because I was going to ace every freaking test even if it meant not sleeping or eating until I caught up to the level of this school. I was not going to waste this miracle.

That thought helped me wave her away with a smile. Once she made her way down the stairs I felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. It wasn't her I had to impress anymore. When it came down to it, now it was only myself I had to surpass.

I twirled around and went back into room 43. I found Addy holding up my brand new skirt. It was made in that fancy navy and burgundy plaid that was probably worth every piece of clothes I had back home. There was a spare, a few short sleeved white shirts and a couple long sleeved ones, a tie, two blazers and a big box. Once I opened it I found one pair of sleek brown shoes and many pairs of socks. And my first thought was that I hoped the shoes were wide.

"I think they gave you a size too big," she said, inspecting my skirt.

"Why? What makes you think that?"

She lifted her eyebrows. "I have an eye. Try it on."

She didn't have to ask twice. I wanted to see how I looked like in a private school uniform anyway. I grabbed it and one of the shirts and took a look around. Two beds with drawers under them. A large desk that I supposed we had to share, backed against a window. A lot of shelving. One single door.

"Where's the bathroom?" I asked, hoping that there was an attic door that led to it or something.

"It's a shared bathroom for the entire floor."

I died.

Okay, I didn't. But it sure felt like the life was leaving my corporeal shell.

"No." I exhaled the word like it was my last breath.

Addy gave me a solemn nod. "I'm not gonna sugar coat it. It sucks and girls are mean. If you ignore them they usually get tired of teasing you pretty quick, though."

My good mood started to sour.

I changed in the room as she turned her back on me and went back to browsing on her laptop. Over the top of her shoulder I saw that she was looking at clothes. Pretty high end stuff, actually. When I was done I announced that and she turned to face me. There was a mirror hanging behind the door and we both stood in front of it.

Yeah, it was kinda large and boxy. I decided to take that as a flattering thing, because it wasn't one of those clothes fit too big on me. Although most likely the school people had probably just thought I was fatter than I already was.

She grabbed the waist of the skirt and cinched. "Hmm, I could pull it in just a couple of fingers, roll the hem up a little as well. You look more nunnish than the nuns themselves."

"You can do that?"

"I have two talents. One is smacking my big head into low door frames and the other one is making clothes." She laughed at the amazement that undoubtedly oozed from me. "Just leave me to it and go explore. You need to be able to find your way around."

I gaped for a second longer. "You'd really do that for me?"

"Free of charge even."

"Careful," I said with a grin. "You're going to make me think that not everybody here is that bad."

She shrugged one shoulder. "Nah, I'm just special. They still suck."

After assurances that she really wanted to do this I decided her advice was solid. I picked up my introductory packet and set out to explore every nook and cranny. This building was by far the biggest in campus. Just the wing with the girls dorms was massive. On the map it showed two entrances leading to it. One from the middle of the building, the most convenient one to go to and from class, and one at the very far end that led to service stairs. In case of a fire, I guessed. In any case, both entrances were blocked by a door for which I needed to use a key fob. I supposed it was a pretty high tech way to keep the boys out.

I found my classroom on the third floor as well, and discovered that there were actually three different groups in my school year. We shared floor with the juniors classrooms as well. Freshmen and sophomore were in the second floor.

I made it all the way down to the first floor. Most of it was the cafeteria. My jaw dropped not at how spacious it was, but at the fact that it was fully stocked and it didn't seem like I had to pay for anything. Once I made sure there were no barcodes or dollar values anywhere, I swiped a deli sandwich and a Dr. Pepper. The cafeteria oversaw the grounds of the school and it was just...

"Damn," I said aloud. "Rich people really do live another life."

The school had its own little lake. Old trees with rich foliage. Freaking swans frolicking about.

I shook my head to myself and looked back down at the map. The other two buildings surrounded the lake as well. To the right, what seemed to be a fairly big one, was the library and the accommodations for the rest of the teachers. The building on the left was bigger, it had the indoors pool and basketball court. A baseball and a football field were beyond the lake.

Birds were chirping once I came outside. It was ridiculous. The only acceptable reaction to that was to twirl with my arms spread open like I was Aurora in the forest, just before prince Philip shows up and joins her in a duet. Except no prince appeared and my sandwich went flying under a tree. I ran after it but it was wrapped so tightly that no harm was done, so I sat under the shade and unwrapped it. I took a bite and basked in my accomplishment.

I got into Holy Trinity High School.

This deserved a toast. I reached for the Dr. Pepper and twisted the cap. I'd shaken the thing so much that a spray of gassy liquid showered over my hand.

"Shit!"

I was answered by the sound of a guitar.

I froze and waited. Was I going crazy?

As nothing else happened for a bit, I set out to wipe my arm with my jeans. They were dark enough that it wouldn't show. I took another bite of the sandwich and the music started again. This time I was sure I wasn't crazy enough. It wasn't like my imagination could conjure that stupid song that played in every graduation out of thin air.

Food and drink in hand, I stood up and walked into the little forest, following the music. A guy's voice joined it into the first lines and I stopped. I thought about it for a hot second. I was better off just backing away and never knowing who it was, because frankly, learning who was behind the excellent playing and nice voice was not going to change my life. I might even spare myself some embarrassment.

But let the record show that I was an excellent student at school and a complete idiot at everything else.

And so I kept walking, even though I was half soaked in soda and munching on a sandwich. Which, in retrospective, was definitely not my best look.

Instead I came face to face with the hottest guy I'd ever seen in the flesh.

Again.

He looked up from his guitar and I was stricken by the blue eyes. Some Caribbean ocean type of hue. Same auburn hair, combed messily at the top of his head. Same chiseled jaw. Straight nose. Perfect lips.

Ay, Dios mío.

He took in my sorry state and his eyebrows furrowed a bit. "Who are you?"

And just like that, it was as if a bucket full of cold water was dumped on me.

I turned my chin up, exactly the same way my ma did when people ask her things like, and do you clean for a living? That's all you do?

Because, yeah, most rich people didn't care about us. We were supposed to do our thing, unseen. Just like the dirt and mess we cleaned was also supposed to be unseen. Same level. I really hated those people. And at the same time I was embarrassed that yeah, that was what my ma and I did. We made a living out of something most people didn't want to do.

It didn't make it right to be treated like this.

A weird mix of hurt and pride surged through me. I looked him dead in the eyes and said, "Of course not. I'm invisible."

I walked away with a huff. The music didn't start again until I reached the building.

SONG OF THE DAY: Green Day - Time of Your Life (Good Riddance)