

My Visions His Reality Chapter 2

My Visions His Reality 2

Posted by October 4, 2024

Chapter 2

Chapter Two: "Can you just go back to being oblivious to my existence, like you have been for the past several years. Harper?"

I was more than twenty minutes late for my English class. And my English class was at the other end of the school Great. The universe hates me!

Don't get me wrong! It wasn't like I was dying to get to class, it's just that I had never been late to class before and the thought somehow disturbed me, even if being late wasn't entirely my fault. Scratch that! It wasn't my fault at all.

I ran all the way, as fast as my legs would carry me, and guess what, Ms. Wilson wasn't even there, and here I was, huffing, so I could catch my breath. Wow. Talk about being responsible. As I walked into the classroom, the chatter ceased and everyone looked up. When everyone realized that it was just me and not the teacher, they redirected their attention to whatever they were doing before.

I scanned the classroom for an empty seat and the only seat available was the one in front of Harper Cain, who was busy sucking some girl's face off.

This guy has some serious hormonal issues, I tell you. His behavior is definitely not normal. She wasn't even the same girl I saw him in the janitor's closet with. What was her name again, Maria, was What. The. Hell.

Could he be more of a d**g?!

I mean, literally.

He wasn't even kissing her subtly or trying to be discrete about it. He was full thrusting his tongue in the poor girl's throat. She was sitting on his lap and was moaning his name between kisses. Just by looking, I was pretty sure he was hurting her boob by groping her so hard. Guess what, she didn't even mind. What the world has come to?!

I mean, was it just me or did anyone else think that this kind of behavior was highly inappropriate in public?!

Can he even breathe without some sort of girl hanging from his arm or clinging to his tongue as her life depended on it?!

Disgusting.

If it was up to me, I would just sit in the other corner of the room, far away from this walking STD of a man-child. Preferably, I would stay in the other corner of the school from him.

I dropped my books on the desk and sat on the last seat available, in front of Harper. Very reluctantly, I may add.

Being this near, I could hear every sigh, gasp, and moan.

Kill me already. It was way past being uncomfortable.

What games is the universe playing with me?!

I took out my phone from my jeans, plugged in my earphones, and blared some music, loud enough to shut out the sounds coming from behind me.

After two songs, the door burst open and a flushed Ms. Wilson walked in with the material of her cashmere blouse ruffled, her buttons undone and her hair sticking in a million different directions. Is there really drool on the side of her face? Was she really sleeping all this time? So **ing professional.

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Still a little breathless, she asked us to open our books to page 320 and tried to smooth out the wrinkles in her blouse. Keyword being tried.

I rolled my eyes at the immature behavior.

I took out my earplugs and shoved my phone back into my jeans.

“Pest.”

“Psst.” Someone tapped me on the shoulder and I turned around to look at Harper, who leaned forward in his seat to talk to me

“What?” I hissed.

“Do you have a pen:

I sighed and decided that he wasn’t worth the effort of arguing. Of course! What more did I expect from him?! I just simply rummaged through my bag and handed him a pen.

After about two minutes, his breath fanned my neck. “Psst.”

“What?” I asked, without turning around.

“Hi, I am Harper.” I could imagine the infamous smirk on his face, which all bad boys like to sport.

OH MY GOD. Was he f**g serious? He was hitting on me? Right in the middle of class? And just after I saw him sucking someone else’s face not too long ago?

“Yeah, I know.” I gritted my teeth. I just wanted to keep this conversation as short as possible, if you could even call my short- clipped retorts a conversation.

I turned my attention back to the front of the classroom where Ms. Wilson was just droning on about some novel that was in our syllabus.

“Psst.

I ignored him.

“Psst.

Just ignore him.

“Psst.” He tapped on my shoulder. I ignored him and copied whatever I thought Ms. Wilson was talking about.

“Psst.” Tap. “Psst.” Tap. “Psst.”. Tap. “Psst.”

“What the hell, Harper?” I hissed, careful to keep my voice low enough so I wouldn’t attract attention but could easily pass out as venomous.

His lips twitched in a smirk and his eyes twinkled mischievously “Not my fault. You were the one who was ignoring me.” Yes, d**ag. Now get the message. I am ignoring you because I don’t want to talk to you. Don’t you have a brain? “Can you just go back to being oblivious to my existence, like you have been for the past several years, Harper?”

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“Aw, come on. You have my attention now. I am making up for lost time.”

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I could still feel his smirk even though I was facing forwards and wasn’t looking back at him. I rolled my eyes and resisted the urge to groan out loud.

“Okay. First, that was the worst pickup line ever. Second, I am not interested. And third, F**k off.”

His cool demeanor shifted and he looked angry. Furious even. Alw

Has Pretty Boy never been rejected? Did I deflate your ego, you man whore? Awww, I am so not sorry, though. You deserve it.

I smirked. Harper opened his mouth to say something, which I was sure wouldn't have been pretty if I took his facial features into account.

But before that, the bell rang. I gathered my stuff and practically ran out of the classroom. You know what's the best part of any school day? The bell rings marking the end of the day. If I wanted to look like a demented person on crack, I would have jumped like a crazy maniac and sang some stupid rock song about gaining my freedom all the way from my last class to my locker. That was what I was feeling, anyway. But as a normal person, I settled for a smile and a slight jump in my step.

When I reached my locker, I saw Samantha and Natalie waiting for me at the locker. Ah! My two best friends.

Natalie had strawberry blonde hair and blue eyes while Samantha had brown hair with grey eyes. Both of them were really pretty and really tall. While Natalie had a wild personality, Samantha was the mother hen of our group. Whereas, I was the quiet intelligent type, who had a 4.0 GPA and was ready to try out my life in the big city.

Where the hell were these two during lunch anyway?

And what were they talking about? Why were they both so damn excited?

I squared my shoulders as if I were preparing myself for a war. I approached my best friends with narrowed eyes and the best intimidating expression I could manage. And of course, they saw right through it. Da**n it.

"Where the hell were you two when Melanie went crazy on me during lunch?" I pointed my finger accusingly at the two.

"We were late." They shrugged nonchalantly.

Before I could accuse them of lying, Natalie took hold of both of my arms and started speaking excitedly about some kind of party, which was apparently going to happen tomorrow,

"A party? On a school night?" I asked them.

"Oh yeah. It's going to be great, you know. Everyone's going to be there. Like everyone."

Natalie squealed while Samantha just rolled her eyes.

I put my books in the locker and slammed it shut. The three of us started walking towards the parking lot, where our cars were parked.

"What's so special about this party anyway?"

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"Tomorrow is Harper's eighteenth birthday," Natalie told me in sing-song voice.

"And? What's so special about that?"

"Are you kidding me? Tomorrow is his eighteenth birthday! He could find his ma- oof"

Samantha cut off Natalie by jamming her elbow in a not-so-subtle way.

Leyed them both suspiciously.

"What were you going to say?"

Samantha coughed nervously and Natalie just sighed.

"Well, tomorrow could very well be the day when our school may lose its biggest heartbreaker."

"Why, is Harper going to die and make the world a better place? I scoffed.

"No, I am just saying, you know, maybe he will find someone tomorrow, and I don't know,

maybe, want to commit.” Natalie fidgeted nervously.

I looked at her for a couple of seconds and laughed. Hard. I had trouble breathing but still, I was unable to control my laughter.

I took a deep breath and laughed again. “Okay, why do you think that tomorrow he is going to wake up a different person and will have the motivation to commit to some girl.”

They both looked at each other nervously.

I looked around the parking lot in search of a dark blue BMW. Yup, that was my car, when my eyes landed on the topic of our Coration.

“Just look at him.”

They both turned their heads in the direction in which I pointed, to look at Harper Cain who was, yet again, making out

with a different girl while leaning on his car. He was groping her ** and she was holding onto him like her life depended on it.

Today, I saw him h//g up with Maria in the janitor’s closet. Then, I saw him making out with some other girl in the English classroom. And here he is making out with some other brunette. Three girls in a day people. And I am not even sure of how many more there were.”

“Well, yeah. He is a..... um, player. We are not denying that,” Samantha said.

Natalie nodded. “Yeah, I mean, I am just saying, maybe some girl sweeps him off his feet?”

“What girl are you talking about, Natalie? He has already made out with every single girl in the school?” I rolled my eyes at her suggestion.

“I don’t know. I am just saying, you know, that he could change. Samantha laughed nervously. They were just being so weird.

“You know”, I unlocked my car and dumped my bag in the passenger seat,” the day he changes, I will sleep with him myself, I give you my 1 I chuckled, shaking my head in mirth.

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They both laughed nervously, making some weird eye contact with each other, waved at me, and headed towards their own cars.

I shook my head and laughed under my breath.

Is Harper Cain changing his ways? I could laugh forever at the notion.

My Visions His Reality 3

Posted by October 4, 2024

COMMENT Chapter 3

Chapter Three: I think, sometimes, they forget that they themselves were parents to three hormonal teenagers.

I wouldn’t say that the town I lived in was some kind of booming metropolis. Quite the contrary, actually. The town I have lived in since I was born, is a quiet little town situated in the hills It was not one of those small and remote towns too, where everyone knew everybody.

Arada was a moderate-sized town and had two high schools three primary schools and a number of kindergartens. There was also a small prestigious college on the outskirts of Arada, which didn’t accept many applications, and thus had fewer students compared to any big University.

Arada was surrounded by thick woods on three sides. The forest was shaped like a crescent moon if you were to look from above, high in the sky. The abundance of trees in the area made

the town colder than other nearby cities and made it rain quite often.

The nearest city was almost six hours away and was more industrialized with big businessmen and buildings and a bigger population

The second nearest city was half a day away and was more of a quiet little town. If you stayed overnight and traveled another six hours east of the town, you would come across a budding coastal town that had the most beautiful beaches ever. The coastal town, Mylta was a favorite spot for us Aradans to vacation.

I drove my car out of the school premises towards my home. My house was a twenty-minute drive from my school.

I kept humming the tune of a hit pop song while I parked my BMW in my house's driveway. My car was my baby as I had paid for it all on my own (with a little help from my parents), with the paychecks I got weekly after working at Monique's Bakery. I have worked there since I was legally allowed to work, so yeah, almost three years.

I got out of my car and opened the door to my house. I stepped into the two-storeyed, light blue painted house and headed towards the kitchen.

And there behold, I saw my parents full-on making out on the kitchen slab. That's a site you don't want to see. Like ever.

Gross. They acted like h*t*y teenagers. I think, sometimes, they forget that they themselves were parents to three hormonal teenagers.

My parents were high school sweethearts and have been going on strong since their college years. They loved each other so much, that it sometimes made family dinners unbearable. You seriously don't want to watch your parents make googly eyes and seductive gestures when you are sitting with your brother at the same table.

my husband when I was pushing my But I guess I was lucky since I had two parents who loved each other to the ends of the world. They made me believe in love.

As I stood here, I couldn't help but wish to have the same chemistry and lowe forties.

"Hi", I said, in the loudest voice I could muster, with which I was sure I would get their attention. As soon as said it, both of them sprung apart from each other with wrinkled clothes, flushed faces, and nervous smiles.

My dad cleared his throat awkwardly and smiled at me nervously. "Uh, I was just, uh, helping, um y-your mom make dinner

I couldn't help it, my lips stretched on their own accord to a full teasing grin. "Oh, I am sure Dad, that's exactly what you were doing.

He scratched the back of his neck nervously and practically ran out of the kitchen while coughing.

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I looked at my mom and both of us burst into giggles.

"You need to go easy on your dad, honey."

"Oh my god, but that was so funny."

My mom giggled again. "Yeah, but don't tell your dad I said that

I mock saluted her. "Call me when it's time for dinner."

She nodded and I began climbing the stairs to my room. On my way, I checked on Cory, my fourteen-year-old brother, to see how he was doing, only to find him sleeping in his room. That boy sleeps all the**n time.

I shook my head as I smiled. My family was far from normal but we loved each other so much. Sure, we had petty fights now and again, but nonetheless, I wouldn't trade them for anything else.

The next morning. I woke up late by forty minutes. I am not going to take the blame for it, Netflix is

My parents leave for work before I leave for my school and my little brother, Cory was the least dependable person ever, so they couldn't have woken me up. And now, I was going to be late and miss my first class. Absolutely great.

I have had the best first two days of my senior year already!

I hurriedly got up from my bed and got fresh within minutes. After I showered and shimmied into my clothes, I raced down the stairs and out of the house.

I got in the car and zoomed out of my driveway. I drove like a madwoman, so I could at least be in the school fifteen minutes before the second class. In record time, I found myself parking my car in the school's parking lot. Hastily, I got out of my car and ran all the way from the parking lot to the front doors of the school. I barged through the doors and checked, the time, while desperately trying to control my breath.

Yes! I had fifteen minutes before the second period started. I did a little happy dance before I realized that I needed to breathe to compensate for all the running I had been doing. Yeah, not an athletic person.

After I made sure I was not going to die from lack of oxygen, I walked leisurely towards my locker. The hallways were deserted as everyone was in their respective classes.

I dialed my locker combination and began sorting everything in the tiny space because I had made quite a big mess in it last year. I rearranged my books and cleared all the junk I didn't need anymore.

Just as I was taking out the books I would need for the next class, I heard the sound of someone's rapid footfalls. Isn't running in the hallways prohibited? Someone was running like their life depended on it.

I craned my neck to get a better look at the person blindly running as if hounds were chasing them.

The person was getting close and would probably end up walking straight into a wall.

Harper Cain came into my view at the end of the corridor and he was not even breathless. I mean, I knew that he was in the school's football team and he had good stamina, but still, not even a little out of breath?! I would have been panting if I had been running like that.

When Harper came to a stop, after running like a madman, he just stood there for some time and looked straight at me. I don't know why, I just couldn't look away. He just kept looking at me with an unreadable expression on his face and stood there, looking all dark and brooding.

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But he looked handsome as always. I may say he is a pl** and an a**but even I can't deny how se** he really is. Ah! But that wrecked personality of his. Dressed in a grey V-neck and blue ripped jeans, he looked intimidating and s**st looking at someone behind me, but I quickly banished the thought when I remembered that all the students were still in their classes.

He started walking towards me in calculated and even steps. He walked like he was a predator and I was his prey. I gulped. I had absolutely no idea as to why, Harper Cain of all people, would take two minutes out of his **y life to come to talk to me.

He came to a stop when he stood close to me. Too close. Our boots were touching and our chests

were a few inches apart. Okay, definitely too close for my liking. Even though it was too close, I just couldn't seem to take a step back to increase the distance between us.

His minty breath fanned my face. I wanted to move away. Take a step back. I really did. But, somehow his eyes held me in a trance. They were magnetic and demanded all my attention. And they were really beautiful. They were a soft color of green and when light hit them, I could clearly see the flecks of gold in them.

They were more than beautiful, they were simply enchanting.

"What's your name?" Harper's gravelly voice brought me out of my thoughts.

That question broke me out of my trance. Is he f**ng serious?! Honestly, I was offended.

I have been living in the same town as Harper and have been going to the same middle school and now, high school. We have even sat together all these years and have done various assignments in our sophomore year. He even flirted with me yesterday. But what exactly did I expect? Him to remember each and every girl's name he sleeps and flirts with?! He could probably write his own book of GIRL'S NAMES.

I broke the eye contact, shoved my books in my bag, closed my locker, and muttered "***ole" under my breath.

I turned to leave when Harper grabbed my wrist and turned me around to face him.

What was the matter with him?

"What?" I hissed.

"Okay, I am really sorry for not remembering your name and not calling you. But I swear, give me your number again and I will definitely give you a call." Desperation laced his voice and his eyes pleaded with me. His pink lips were puckered into an adorable pout which I was sure, made girls fall at his feet, left, right, and center.

"What?" Okay, I was genuinely confused now. What the hell was happening?!

He scratched the back of his neck and laughed nervously. "I slept with you and didn't call you back the next day. I mean that's why you are so angry with me, right?"

Wait, what?

The nerve of this man-child!

Anger coursed through me at his ignorant and arrogant attitude

"I never slept with you, Harper, and I am never going to. Now it's best if you leave my hand and let me go" I hissed.

He looked taken aback and I wondered for a second, what he was thinking. That there were still some girls left in the school.

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who he hadn't slept with, yet Or that I would reject him when I had never even slept with him?

Or why I didn't want him like every other girl in this town?

His eyebrows furrowed in confusion as if what I was saying was completely unbelievable.

I scoffed.

Harper was lost in his own world and I felt his grip on my hand loosen.

I jerked my hand away from his, as the bell rang and headed towards my class.

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Chapter Four: "Party. At my house. Today. Come Harper flushed.

"Why is Harper Cain staring at you?"

whispered the girl sitting to the left of me, for what felt like, the hundredth time.

I groaned inwardly. "If it had not been for you, I wouldn't have known he was staring at me. And for the last time. I. Don't Know." I gritted my teeth.

The redhead gave me a death glare and went back to texting on her phone in the middle of the class.

I took a deep breath and prepared myself to check if she was right like I had already done the past twenty times. I knew that he was looking at me because I could somehow feel his intense stare at the back of my head.

Nonetheless, I gathered my courage and turned my head around. And there he was, in the last row, in the corner of the room still staring at me with a stony expression. I don't think he had looked at any other person in the class because every time I turned my head around to look at him, he had his eyes right on me.

I met his intimidating gaze for a few seconds, raised my left eyebrow, and telepathically questioned him as to why he was being a creepy stalker and had been staring at me since the class started.

He just kept looking at me with the same stony expression, when finally his lips twitched upwards to reveal his trademark smirk which I absolutely hated.

I rolled my eyes and looked forward toward the teacher, who was going on and on about some quantum theory and looked as eager as the students to get out of the school.

And I swear, if one more person asks me why the hell is Harper Cain staring at me, I am going to go berserk. How the hell would I know why this idiot keeps staring at me?

Samantha and Natalie had a field day during lunch when Harper kept staring and staring and staring at our table, well specifically at me. I even had to change my goddamn seat so I wouldn't have to directly look at him.

I mean, what even happened to him? Did he wake up this morning on a single mission to stare me to death?! If that was his plan, then it was certainly working.

He doesn't even blink. It's like he wants a staring contest all the damn time.

time I

We shared three classes with each other and I could feel his stare at the back of my head every damn second. Doesn't the teacher even notice that he was not paying attention or do they have a personal vendetta against me, because every turned to look at him, the teacher always pointed it out?

And as a result, I am pretty sure, half the school must think that I have been eyeballing him.

"Hey Zara?" a male voice spoke from behind.

"Yeah," I leaned back to hear a little more clearly.

"Why does Harper keep staring at you?"

I sighed and plopped my head on the desk.

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I packed my bags as soon as the class ended, eager to get home.

"Miss Hemming, stay after the class."

Mr. Roberts said.

Greal.

I sat back down on my seat with a huff and waited for the class to empty, wishing I could get out early too.

When everyone got out, I stood up from my desk in the middle of the room and headed towards the teacher's desk where Mr. Roberts's desk was. Mr. Robert had a small smile on his face. Okay, so that was good. At least, I was not in any trouble.

"Zara, I may not have taught you before but I have heard from all the teachers that you are a grade-A student." He smiled in a really creepy way.

"Um, yeah." What the hell am I even supposed to say to that?

"Great, because this year I will be monitoring a group of twenty students who will join our school's tutoring program. And I want you to be one of them."

I was not one of those super nerdy students who got an A all around the year. I got decent grades, I often touched the B grade and I was pretty sure there were many students just like me. This man before me, who I had never even spoken two sentences to before, thought I would be a good tutor. I had never been in the tutoring program before, how did he even come up with my name?

"Yeah, ok. I will think about it."

He smiled again and handed me an application form from the top drawer of his desk. "Just fill out this application and get back to me, ok?"

I took the flyer from him and nodded.

As soon as I got out of the classroom, I crumpled the flyer and threw it away in the nearest dustbin.

I had absolutely no interest in investing my limited free time in tutoring someone who wasn't even going to care about his/ her grades. My job at Monique's Bakery already demanded so much of my time, I don't think I would be able to entertain anyone.

The hallways were deserted because the school had finished twenty minutes ago. How time passes! Everyone pretty much runs away from school as soon as the bell rings. Yeah, that's how much everyone despised this hell hole.

I headed in the direction of my locker when, out of nowhere, a hand latched around my wrist and I was roughly pulled into an empty classroom.

I stumbled a little at being manhandled and closed my eyes because I was pretty sure I was going to fall, because what can I say, I was clumsy that way. When I was about to topple on the floor in a mess, two arms wrapped around my waist and helped me regain my balance.

I opened my eyes and all I could see was a vast expanse of someone's chest. Definitely a male.

This person was standing very close to me. Inside my personal bubble. I could even smell his cologne which was so very delicious. I had to resist the urge to grab his t-shirt and sniff him. That wouldn't have been awkward at all.

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I looked up to see Harper looking down at me. Of course, it had to be Harper. The boy was everywhere today! He looked at

with an intense expression of...need? Lust? I can't even fathom it. My breath got caught in my throat at our proximity and the sudden rise in the temperature.

His large, warm hands on my waist were sending delicious shivers through my whole body and I resisted the urge my eyes and lean into him.

I was caught in a trance. A trance created by Harper Cain out of all people.
to close

I wanted to move, I really did. At least a part of me did. That particular part was aware of the fact that Harper had his hands on my waist, the same hands with which I was pretty sure he had groped countless females. That part of me wanted to remind my brain to step out of his embrace because I have hated Harper since he broke my sister's heart. That part to remind me that I would just be another number in the never-ending list of Harper's conquests.

But unfortunately, that part of me was really small and was quickly fading away.

wanted

We just kept staring at each other for a long time. And we would have stared for a long time if the silence had not grown

uncomfortable.

I shook my head to clear my head of these traitorous thoughts and tried to step back. But he didn't let me which, for some reason, didn't surprise me at all.

He leaned forward abruptly and slammed his lips on mine. All rational thoughts completely flew out of my mind because the next thing I knew, my hands, which were limp by my side before, came around his neck in order to pull him closer to me. His lips molded perfectly with mine as if his lips were made for me. My knees buckled due to the unexpected desire coursing through me and the lust my body was experiencing and had it not been for Harper's arms around my waist, holding onto me for dear life, surely I would have fallen down on the ground into a mess of raging hormones.

I could feel his shoulder muscles flexing. I felt as if any time now, I would just float away.

His tongue slid out of his mouth and he sucked on my bottom lip asking for entrance. I couldn't help but moan and grant him the entrance he needed.

His tongue massaged my own and conquered every inch of my mouth. Fighting for dominance in the kiss with him was at futile war, which I would have no problem in losing.

I detached my lips from his quite reluctantly and breathed in large amounts of air.

Harper didn't stop. Didn't he need to breathe too?

He planted little butterfly kisses from the corner of my lips to my jaw. To behind my ear lobe to my neck. And to my shoulder. I felt a shiver of desire go down my body at his last kiss.

He rested his head in the crook of my neck and breathed in my scent.

Leaving my neck, he met my eyes and I saw his lust for me. Pure unadulterated lust.

His pupils were dilated and appeared almost black.

He wiped his tongue on his bottom lip and my gaze drifted towards his lips, which were, a few moments ago, very skillfully massaging my own.

I resisted the urge to pull him back down and kiss the living daylights out of him. I knew he wanted it too. I could see it in his eyes and in the tense muscles of his shoulders where I was still holding on to him.

With one hand on my waist, he used his other hand to cup my cheek and I subconsciously leaned into his touch. I enjoyed

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reveled how rugged and calloused-his hands felt on my soft cheek. I closed my eyes for a second in the moment.

"Party. At my house. Today, Come." Harper flushed.

My eyes flew open at Harper's husky voice.

yout

Woah! Was Harper so out of it that he couldn't even form a proper sentence? I mean, sure, I was pretty out of it too but I would like to think I would still be able to form a coherent sentence. Seriously, my subconscious snarked at me.

Harper cleared his throat and a blush crept on his cheeks. Wow had never ever seen Harper blushing before. Ever! And it felt great to know that I was the reason that he was so flustered and bothered.

"Um, I am throwing a party at my house today. Come. Please."

PLEASE? That was just another word Harper Cain never used. He was used to people over his every word and following him around. I felt honored and special. And happy.

I was stunned and totally out of my wits, so I could just nod. I felt my lips relax and gave him a soft smile.

He smiled. Not the smirk which I hated on him, but a full-grown smile.

"You know, I think I deserve another kiss."

why? The word sure came out of my mouth but it didn't sound like my voice at all. It was way i

"Because it is my birthday."

husky and.....breathy?!

He smiled softly at me and gazed at me with pure adoration. He twirled a strand of my brown hair which had somehow gotten out of my ponytail during our little make-out session.

Without waiting for a reply, he leaned forward and stole another kiss from me. Not that I mind.

The second kiss was way more passionate and hungry. The first kiss was nothing compared to this one. I think I moaned. twice and was not one to boast about it, he did too!

His lips broke away from mine quite reluctantly. He took a deep breath looked down at his watch and sighed. "I have to go He gave a small smile, his fingers tracing the bone of my shoulder creating tingles and leaving a hot trail of fire.

He leaned back, gave me a quick peck, smiled at me, and ran out of the room. I am not joking.

He literally ran out of the classroom. Leaving me all hot and bothered.

Holy hell!

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Chapter 5

Chapter Five: I didn't have the heart to tell her that I wanted to roam the place and check out where Harper was.

I was numb. Just completely and utterly dumbfounded.

My brain was taking a lot of time to process what the f**k just happened. Throughout the ride home, I replayed the kisses over and over in my mind. How they felt and how they drove me to peaks of desire and ecstasy.

After I reached my home, I walked like a robot to my room, all the while ignoring my parents and brother. I plopped down on my bed and that was when it hit me..

HARPER CAIN KISSED ME! AND I KISSED HIM BACK! AND I LIKED IT!

TWICE, if you leave that last peck.

After I freaked out for half an hour, I decided I needed an expert opinion on this matter and that's why I called my two best friends on a conference call and told them everything.

Silence reigned for a few seconds on their ends and then they screamed. I could feel cracks beginning to form in my room walls and nry eardrums being shattered. They were that loud.

my wedding with

They giggled for some time, fangirled a lot, and fought over who was going to be my maid of honor in Harper. They even foretold the names of our children because according to them 'we are so meant to be together Over dramatic much?! I rolled my eyes at their childish behavior. It was a nice distraction. Their giggling and 'oohing and 'aahing certainly put me in a much lighter mood.

I mean, he had just asked me out for a party. It was not even a proper date. And before that, we hadn't even spoken two

in the ja words to each other (if you exclude the short conversation we had in the janitor's closet). So what was the big deal?

But even then, I let them have their moment, because why not. It amused me to no end and diverted my mind.

The only reasonable decision my two best friends could come up with was to help me get ready for Harper's birthday party tonight

So, at exactly seven, they came over to my house and dolled me up. They curled my straight hair into soft waves. They made me wear a chick strapless black figure-hugging dress that rested just above my knees and accentuated my curves. Then, they gave me black pumps to wear with four-inch heels and because of them, I now stood tall at 59. My makeup was light but my eyes were given a smoky look which looked very attractive.

They changed me!

After taking an hour on me, they both worked super fast and were ready in just half an hour. That was the fastest I had ever seen them getting ready. I swear, they were more excited about this party than I was.

And that was why here I was, sitting in the backseat of Samantha's car with Natalie sitting in the front, filled with nervous anticipation.

I didn't even know why I was nervous, to be honest. I mean, like I said before, it was just a party. Nothing serious at all.

And it's not like I had never attended parties. I had gone to my fair share of parties, gotten drunk, danced like crazy. committed drunken mistakes which I regretted later, and woke up with a killer hangover in the morning. As I said, parties were not new to me at all. So, I didn't have the slightest clue as to why I was getting nervous.

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Chapter 5

Mon, Se

Clenching my hands into fists, I took deep breaths and tried to control my anxiety.

"We are here," Samantha said.

Harper lived in the richer part of the town. The insanely rich part of the town was directly opposite to mine. I am not saying that I was poor or anything. No one was really poor in our little town but Harper, he was insanely rich. The society in which he lived, was a sucker for guards and all kinds of security systems. On a normal day, normal people like me won't even be able to enter the society premises. We were only allowed entry because Harper was having a party. Talk about being royalty! I had no idea how his father turned out to be a man of such importance.

Natalie lived in this part of the town and her parents were super rich too. Samantha just lived outside the society and as a result, their houses were pretty close to each other. That helped when we had to sneak in the middle of the night to go to each other's houses.

Harper's house was simply gorgeous. I mean, who even needs that much space? It was like six

stories. The building before me was styled like a mansion from the Victorian era and looked like a five-star hotel. How many rooms were in this house?!

The lights on the ground floor and the first floor were all on. The music was blaring and I wondered why his neighbors weren't calling the police. There were so many people milling around, drunk teenagers smoking in the front well-kept lawn. and inside, I could see silhouettes of teenagers dancing to the crazy music.

I could recognize many of the people from my school, Ridgeback High, and many others from Cormack High. Despite teenage novels cliché, there was no enmity between our school and theirs. There were two schools in the town just because there were too many teenagers to accommodate in one building

The three of us got out of Sam's car and headed towards the front door. When Natalie opened the door, the base of the music hit us in full force.

The ground was shaking with the thumping of the bass and I could see a few pieces of furniture vibrating on their spots on the ground, but I don't think anyone minded getting deaf at such a young age because everyone was already dancing like crazy.

Bodies were grinding against each other. Red cups were littered everywhere. Zombie-like people were lying on the couches and floor, passed out from intoxication, and it was not even 10 o'clock.

Samantha grabbed my hand and started leading me towards the kitchen. How she knew, where the kitchen was, I had no clue! As we walked, I could sense several pairs of eyes following us and checking us out. Some even wolf-whistled at us. I blushed at the attention.

When

we made it to the kitchen, Natalie handed me a beer bottle and we downed our first drinks of the night.

My eyes roamed the entire place for a certain person who invited me to this party but he was nowhere to be found. Slightly disappointed, I grabbed another drink and finished it in a few seconds.

Natalie grabbed our hands and led us to the makeshift dance floor. She was the wildest and the spontaneous person in our group.

I didn't have the heart to tell her that I wanted to roam the place and check out where Harper was.

Hiding my disappointment at not meeting Harper yet, I tried to at least enjoy the party. I moved my hips to the rhythm of the music. Swedish House Mafia was on and the crowd went wild and started jumping and dancing with more vigor.

I was having so much fun that I almost forgot about Harper. Almost.

After about an hour of dancing, I yelled in Natalie's ear that I was going to the kitchen to get another drink. She just nodded and went back to her seductive dancing.

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I made my way toward the kitchen with much more difficulty than I had experienced earlier. It looked like more people joined the party and even more of them were passed out, as if this was their own house. There was barely any space to move.

The kitchen was relatively quieter and the music was mu**.

I grabbed a beer and drank a few sips. I found myself alone in the kitchen with empty beer bottles and a lot of trash and I was thankful for some silence because I could finally hear my thoughts.

Just then, Aiden Knight entered the kitchen. Aiden Knight was Harper's best friend. He was insanely good-looking and was a player too. Why are good-looking guys all players? So **n unfair. With sandy blonde hair and brown eyes, girls fell to his feet and worshipped him but he wasn't exactly like Harper. He at least treated girls with respect and had the decency to offer them a cup of coffee after he kicked them out after a one-night stand. Nonetheless, he too, used girls to get whatever he wanted which were mostly sexual favors. As far as I know, he too never had a girlfriend, just some casual flings.

Now, as I think about it, I have always been in the same school with the same people for so many years and have never once talked to them.

Aiden smirked and winked at me.

"So, Zara, right?"

He knew my name was Zara, which was new. I was like a wallflower. I had no intention of coming into the spotlight and being the topic of everyone's interest. He was just trying to make conversation, I reminded myself. Let's see, do I help him or act like a b**h?

I just nodded.

He leaned against the counter, at a respectable distance, his whole body facing me. "So, are you enjoying the party?"

I smiled, "Yeah" and held my red cup upwards in the universal sign of "cheers".

He abruptly stood up and covered the distance between us in two short strides. Somehow, I just knew that he didn't want anything to do with me. Anything romantic or sexual, I mean. I didn't get turned on by our proximity at all. Unlike with Harper.

He just leaned forward and whispered, "If you're looking for Harper, he is on the first floor. On the balcony. The last door on the left side."

He leaned back, winked at me, and then left me speechless.

That was random. I have a doubt it was random at all!

Great, now I am going crazy too!

How could he have known I was looking for Harper? It was not like I had looked for him at other parties before! Or maybe, he just thought I was another one of his h**ups who clinged to him for a relationship and would be satisfied with a quickie instead. I scoffed at the thought.

I finished my beer placed the empty bottle on the counter and headed toward the staircase-T followed Aiden's directions and reached the first floor.

I turned left and kept walking straight till I felt the soft breeze of the wind which could only come from the open doors of a balcony.

The sliding glass doors of the balcony were open. The curtains that covered the doors were uttering in the breeze.

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I reached the glass doors, grabbed the curtains, and moved them to look out onto the balcony and there he was. Harper.

The only problem was, he wasn't alone,

In his arms, there was a girl. I couldn't figure out who she was, though. But that detail was irrelevant. What matters was, that they were both making out, quite passionately so.

I was just rooted to my spot. I didn't know what to do, because out of all the scenarios I prepared myself for, I didn't think about this one. My heart plummeted to the ground and I felt sick.

Gathering my wits. I just turned around and fled from the scene I ran down the stairs and waited

a moment to catch my breath.

I felt incredibly stupid.

What did I even expect from him? Did I think that a few stolen kisses would change him and make him less of a *ag?! I think, for a moment I forgot who I was talking about Guys like Harper Cain never changed. He was a **oy and he didn't care about anyone. He broke everyone's heart and I will not be next in line for him to t**ple over, I vowed to myself. Plastering a smile on my face, I rejoined my friends. They didn't question my prolonged disappearance for which I was glad. I resumed swaying my hips to the peppy Katy Perry number and lost myself to the music.

After some time, I felt a pair of hands wrap around my waist. I turned around to find Harper gazing down at me with adoration and lust. I wasn't going to be fooled again. I don't know what came over me, but I didn't remove his hands from me. Instead, I giggled put my arms around his neck, and danced with him for a while. I swayed my body with the music, while Harper's hands burned my body.

After the song. Harper stopped moving. I stopped too and looked up at him, silently asking him why he stopped.

He grabbed my wrist pulled me off the dance floor and dragged me up the stairs. If anyone did see Harper dragging me, nobody stopped him. Where are your friends when you need them? I was too drunk to resist him. I wasn't sure the drunk me wanted to resist him and that was a big problem. His strides were long and determined and I stumbled after him, trying desperately not to fall. He pulled me to the same balcony where I found him making out earlier with some girl. My mood plummeted instantly when those images flashed through my mind. I writhed in his grip in a desperate attempt to get away from him but he didn't let me go. Instead, he slammed his lips to mine.

Earlier in the day, when he kissed me there were fireworks, and there was passion and I loved it. But now, I wanted nothing of it. Those images kept flashing in my mind and the rough way in which he dragged me here gave me enough motive to resist him.

I started pushing him away from me but my actions were already uncoordinated because of the alcohol I had consumed. His grip on my body was firm. It was clear he didn't want to let me go yet.

His lips moved forcefully over mine and were continuously asking for entrance. My lips are so going to be bruised after this. I was trying to push him away. I tried to hit his shoulders and push him away, but our bodies were pressed so tightly against each other that there was no space and my drunk body was refusing to cooperate with me

And then I got an idea.

I granted him entrance for a second and before I could forget the reasons why I needed to get away from him, I bit his lip hard. I immediately tasted blood. I think I bit a little too hard. Oops. Well, he deserved it!

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He pulled away from me in a state of shock and disbelief. Taking advantage of his shocked state, I pushed his chest, his hold on me loosened and he stumbled back with wide eyes and blood on his lower lip. He looked at me with hurt in his eyes, but I didn't give a damn. You don't kiss a girl forcefully and then expect her to sympathize with you when she kicks your balls.

As soon as I got away from his hold, I swung my hand and slapped him as hard as I could. If he

was shocked before, he was more than stunned now. He was completely speechless. His cheek was red with a red imprint of my hand on his cheek and I smirked internally in satisfaction at my masterpiece.

“Who the hell do you take me for?” I shrieked. “I am not one of your whores!”

I was getting angrier by the second now. How dare he do this! What does he take me for?

“W-what?” He stuttered.

“I saw you making out with some girl in this very place two hours ago. And now, you bring me here to make out with me as some sort of f**g replacement.”

His eyes widened and he had the gall to look guilty. He looked around nervously and didn’t make eye contact with me, for a few minutes. When he looked up again, I could see his face depicting several emotions, the prominent ones being pain and guilt.

“I am not one of your w**Harper. News flash and **k you

I was seething now. I was furious.

Before he could say anything else, I pushed him again one more time and ran away from the balcony. He didn’t follow me. Good. I didn’t think he had the nerve. And I would have kicked him in the balls if he did.

I rushed down the stairs and ran out of the house.

I stopped only when I realized I was standing on the pavement with no mode of transportation in the middle of the night.

It was only then that I realized that my face was streaked with tears. And they weren’t angry ones!

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Chapter 6

Chapter Six: ...Don’t let these boys get to your head. They aren’t worth it.”

When I stood on the pavement, at night, I realized I had no ride didn’t want to go back inside and face Natalie and Samantha with tears streaming down my face and smudged mascara. So, I took the only option I had, I started walking while furiously wiping my tears.

At this point, I didn’t even know why I was crying. Was it because Harper stole a kiss from me when I didn’t want it? But that couldn’t be the reason, because it had already happened in school today. It wasn’t with the same forcefulness, but still

Was it because he thought it would be okay to kiss another girl before me and he thought I would never know and that I was just another one of his hookups? Was it because the kisses we slured did something to me whereas Harper just thought of me as another girl he could have sex with? I was so confused I don’t even know the answer to my questions, right now. And I was not sure I wanted to know.

I heard the sound of a car honking beside me. I ignored it at first and hoped that the person sitting inside it would just the hint and go their own way. But luck wasn’t on my side tonight.

The side window went down and I turned around to see Aiden sitting in the driver’s seat with a concerned expression. I honestly didn’t know how to feel!

take

In a way, it was Aiden’s fault that I was on the pavement in a dress while trying to walk in these heels. After all, he was the one who had told me where Harper was, and that was when the whole drama started. I knew I was being irrational but my exhausted mind couldn’t come up with a

better explanation.

Was I expecting Harper to come to me and give me a ride back home?! Be the gentleman I knew he wasn't?!

I sighed and crossed my arms over my chest. "What do you want, Aiden?"

If he saw my raccoon eyes, tear-stained cheeks, and shaking shoulders in the darkness, he didn't say anything and for that I was thankful. I would like to hold onto whatever was left of my pride. going to

"Zara, are you walk back to your house?" He asked me gently.

"I don't see how it's any of your business." I snapped and regretted it immediately. It was not Aiden's fault I was on a road, walking in my heels trying to get away from the party and Harper. I was not a bitch to random people and I was not going to start now.

If he found my reply offensive, he didn't say anything. "Let me drop you. Your house is on the other side of the town.

Please.

He was right. My house was literally on the other side of the town. I didn't even know how I thought I would be able to walk to my home. I didn't even take into account the heels I was wearing and that I didn't carry any money.

Even though I had my phone, I had no intention of calling either of my parents to come and pick me up. It was almost twelve and I wasn't ready for the onslaught of questions I would have to face if they ever saw me like this.

"Why are you even doing this?" I asked in a small voice.

"I wouldn't be able to sleep at night if I let you go like this. Alone and miserable. You don't deserve that. I am just happy to help." He smiled at me.

Releasing a breath, I resigned to my fate and got in the car.

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"Thank you, Aiden."

He just smiled at me and nodded.

I wondered why a certain green-eyed boy couldn't be more considerate.

The ride back to my house was filled with silence. A silence that didn't need to be filled. Aiden understood I needed to be alone with my thoughts and take control of my emotions again. He didn't question me or ask me how I was doing, instead just drove silently.

When he parked the car in front of my home, he gave th a small smile. "Take care, Zara."

It didn't go

unnoticed by me that he knew the address to my house without me telling him where to go. I was, honestly too drained to question him about his stalker tendencies.

"I will, thank you." I smiled at him, unbuckled my seat belt, and got out of the car.

Giving him a small wave, I unlocked the door to my house and walked in.

I could distinctly hear the sound of the TV in the living room and I knew both of my parents were awake and were watching some night show or something.

I didn't want to face them right now. Not when my makeup was a mess and clear signs were showing that I had been crying not too long ago.

The whole point of riding with Aiden was to evade the questions my parents would ask me if they saw me in such a state.

I planned to silently climb the stairs and make my way to my room. But surprise, surprise that didn't happen because before I even climbed the first step, Dad called out my name.

“Zara, is that you?”

“Um, yeah it’s me.” After crying, my voice became hoarse and scratchy and my parents knew it too. In a minute, both of my parents were standing under the archway of the living room side by side with worried and concerned expressions.

“Are you okay, Zara?”

“Yeah, mom.” I cleared my throat to make it less scratchy. “I will be in my room.” I gave them a small smile which felt more like a grimace to me.

Before they could say anything, I ran upstairs, slammed my bedroom door, and heaved a sigh of relief. I was not in the mood to give any explanations.

I walked into my en suite to wipe my makeup and change my clothes. I wanted to take a shower to wash out any remains of the party tonight, but I couldn’t find the strength to do that just now. I quickly walked to my queen-sized bed and buried myself under my wine-colored duvet.

After about ten minutes, my door opened and a sliver of light crept into the room. Dad came inside, and with him followed. my favorite fragrance: hot chocolate.

He usually knocks before entering my room but when he knows I am upset, he just walks in. He knows whenever I feel down, I am fully dressed and moping in my bed and won’t open the door. He swiftly crossed the room in calculated steps and reached my bed. My dad was a tall man, so much so that he had to pay extra money if he wanted a comfortable seat while traveling on a plane. Mom never fails to tease him whenever that happens,

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I sat up on the bed, ready to drink the hot chocolate he made for me. He makes the best hot chocolates in the world. Whenever any of us had a bad day or got upset, he always made as hot chocolate. He is thoughtful that way.

My mom had other ways of coping with hormonal and distressed family members. She hugs them and listens to them patiently, before taking us out for our favorite treat.

My family is great that way.

I took the mug from his hands. He chuckled at my eagerness.

“Are you ok. Zara?”

I wondered how they decided which one of my parents would come and talk to me. The last time something like this

my face. happened, they played a game of rock, paper, and scissors. The thought brought a small smile to

The best thing about my dad is that he knows exactly when to give space and what questions to ask. His soft blue looked at me with concern. The blue eyes I get from him.

I gave him another small smile and nodded my head.

“You know we are here for you, right? Whatever happens, you can always come and talk to your mother and me. We won’t ever judge you

“I know.” I smiled brightly at the man who has been my hero ever since I could remember.

“Was it a boy?”

I hesitated before answering and looked down at the mug in my hands. I could never lie to him. He always had the uncanny ability to know whenever any of us lied.

He sighed. “I won’t dictate your life, Zara. But I do trust that you will make the right decisions for yourself.”

I nodded my head and gave him another smile. “You can trust me.”

“I know, Zara. I know.” He smiled back and kissed my forehead. “Good night, kiddo. Don’t let

these boys get to your head. They aren't worth it."

With that, he ruffled my hair and laughed at my annoyed expression. Giving me another kiss on the forehead, he walked out of my room.

What can I say, I am a daddy's girl!

The next day at school was pretty boring if I say so myself. I had bravely battled through three periods, keeping my head high and warding off any signs of sleep.

The downside with the last period before lunch was that I didn't have either of my friends in it. So, it had just changed from boring to super boring.

And the teacher, who I was pretty sure, was going through a mid-life crisis, was droning on and on about algebraic equations, which no one gives two s**ts about. Remind me why thought taking AP English for my final year would be nice. Right, extra credit, of course!

I groaned.

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Loudly.

Quite loudly.

So much so that the teacher stopped talking, the class was silent and everyone was looking directly at me.

Kill. Me. Now.

My cheeks burned from embarrassment at the sudden attention and I even heard a few snickers coming from the slackers seated in the back. I so wanted to glare at them but I refrained from doing so because I knew Mr. Andrews had something to say about the disruption. Great.

"Miss Hemming, is everything ok?" Mr. Andrews arched an eyebrow. If he was trying to look intimidating then I must say, he failed. A middle-aged man wearing khaki trousers with a pot belly could hardly look intimidating with a raised eyebrow.

Instead of telling him exactly that, I smiled inwardly as a plan began to form in 1
my
head

I groaned again and clutched my stomach as if I was going to puke my guts out any second. "No, sir. Add a little stutter to make it a little more believable stomach cramps."

He flushed in embarrassment. What is with guys evading the topic of us females bleeding?

But the sad part in me was enjoying his discomfort. He cleared his throat before speaking again.

"Would you like to go to the nurse's office or perhaps the washroom, Ms. Hemming?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

With that, I quickly gathered all my stuff, swung my bag on my shoulder, and walked briskly out of the classroom.

I lifted my hands in the air as a form of victory against boring classes, when the door of the classroom closed behind me.

I am an evil genius. Cue an evil laugh!

I roamed around the school hallways, carefully avoiding the hall monitor of the school.

The halls were pretty much deserted because all the students were in their respective classes and didn't have the right motivation to bunk them.

I headed to my locker, dumping my books and taking whatever I would need for lunch and the period after that.

In a way, it was soothing to find the hallways empty, when usually all one could see was people bustling and elbowing their way in a desperate attempt to get to their classes.

Taking note that I still had some time left, I walked slowly towards the girl's washroom. I could touch up my very basic makeup and check my messages while I was there.

I occupied one of the stalls and did my business.

Suddenly, the doors to the washroom opened and someone walked in. I couldn't hear the click-clack sound of heels, so I was pretty sure it was not some diva girl who would eat my brains about some new fashion trend she read somewhere in a magazine. Girls in my school were weird that way.

I opened the door of the stall and walked out, ready for some quiet time knowing the girl outside, most probably clad in sneakers or flat bellies, wouldn't trouble me with mindless chatter.

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Chapter 6

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But when I came out, I saw someone who I would have never talked to anyway and didn't belong. At all. At least not in the girl's bathroom.

I stood there with my hand stretched towards the tap to wash my hands when I looked sideways to find Harper Cain standing in the girl's washroom and looking at me with an unreadable expression,

I have had it with his intense expressions. Snapping out of my daze, I glared at him,

Yesterday night, after crying because of him, I resolved to revert to my previous self who wouldn't give Harper the time of his day.

"Can I help you?" I could hear the ice in my tone and I was sure he didn't miss it too.

He took a deep breath as if to collect himself before opening and closing his mouth several times.

"Look, I don't care for your apologies because—"

"1. Harper Daniel Cain reject you, Zara Sophia Hemming, as my mate." His expression changed to one of immense pain as soon as the words left his mouth and his features distorted into one of utmost despair.

And with that, he barged out of the washroom leaving me behind, with my jaw hanging open.

Naturally, several questions sprang up in my

How did he even know my middle name?

mind.

How did he have the nerve to enter a girl's washroom?

What the hell is a mate?

And last but the most important question in my head was, what the f**k just happened?

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Chapter 7

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Chapter Seven: My gaze traveled from one end of the classroom and stopped on Harper because he **was** staring right at me with a stony face.

“Ok, you have stalled long enough. Now you will tell us what happened!” Samantha’s voice was determined like her whole personality. Samantha and Natalie sat down across from me on the cafeteria table.

I cringed. I had been trying to escape my inquisitive friends since yesterday night. They had no idea why I left them at the party when we were supposed to have fun. They had no idea who dropped me and why I ran away in the first **place**.

I didn’t pick up their calls yesterday night, hoping they would think that I had fallen asleep. And in school, I evaded them in the two classes I shared with them.

But now I had no choice. I had to tell them. I have never hidden anything from them in all the years we have been friends and the guilt had been weighing me down.”

Taking a deep breath, I looked up from my plate of spaghetti and meatballs to meet the eyes of my two best friends.

They looked at me expectantly and I started telling them everything. About Aiden telling me where to find Harper, to watch him on the balcony kissing some girl, to dancing with him, to being kissed forcefully by him, to slapping him, and then to **go** home crying.

After my rambling ended, I could see that they were angry **and** disappointed. Well, I would be too if some pathetic guy would mess with either of my best friends in the way Harper had been messing with me.

I stole a French fry from Samantha’s plate and she scowled at me. She may be a mother hen, but you don’t dare mess with her food. I chuckled and popped the fry in my mouth.

“And you know what’s the weirdest thing that happened? I was in the girl’s washroom during the class before and Harper came in there.” They exchanged curious glances with each other and then looked back at me, silently asking me to continue “And then he said that he was rejecting me. And then simply ran out of the washroom.”

I giggled thinking about the strange encounter I had with him. But when I didn’t hear any other giggles, I stopped and stared into their eyes which held pity for me. Pity? Why the hell are they pitying me?

I arched an eyebrow and they again looked at each other.

Both of them held my hands and gave me sympathetic glances.

“The nerve of him! How dare he reject her!” Natalie fumed. Samantha discreetly puts her hand on Natalie’s and gives her a pointed look. Well, the action wasn’t quite discrete if I could see t

Then they both looked at me with concerned expressions. Their synchronization was so spooky. They had done it many times before, but it didn't make it any less weird.

"Oh, honey we are **with** you, you know that **right**" Samantha gave me **a** soft smile.

"Yeah. We **are** with you. How are you feeling anyway?"

What?

I furrowed my eyebrows in confusion, "what the hell are you talking about?" I looked from Samantha to Natalie, and back to Samantha again.

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"Oh, Zara, you will get through this. You are a strong girl."

"Yeah, you

don't need to act like this. You can share your pain with us. It won't do you any good to bottle it up.

Hun? "What pain?"

They both looked at each other again with confused glances.

"When Harper said that he rejects you, didn't you feel any pain? Like a lot of pain? As if your heart is shattering in a million. little pieces?" Samantha spoke softly. I didn't know how her voice could get any

softer.

"Um, no? All I managed to think was how whatever he said was bizarre. What pain are you talking about?"

They both looked at each other again and got up abruptly. Mumbling a few excuses about being sick or something, they both dashed out of the cafeteria leaving me alone.

I sighed.

What the hell just happened? What were these **two** up to?

I will just corner them later.

I picked up my plate and headed towards the trashcan to dump it. When I reached the trash can, I saw Aiden holding his plate and coming toward me, well, towards the trash can.

I waited for him to come closer. I had been nothing but a bitch to him last night and he had been the perfect gentleman. He had given me a ride to my home when I wasn't in the right state of mind. He had to leave the party early to drive me to the other side of the town. And considering his playboy ways, he had to give up a night of hooking up with a random girl. That **was** a pretty big sacrifice for a guy like him.

Instead of having an ulterior motive, I hoped he just did it out of the goodness of his heart.

When he stood beside me, I smiled at him. "Um, thanks, Aiden, for giving me a ride yesterday. I wasn't in the right state of mind and you were there for me, I am sorry for being a bitch to you."

Aiden just looked at me and gave me a grin. "Don't worry about it. It was my pleasure. After all, you are my lu-" he coughed mid-sentence and gave me a sheepish smile.

I gave him another smile and leaned forward on my toes to plant a kiss on his cheek. "I can't thank you enough."

That was unplanned.

I saw a blush rising in his cheeks and I smiled at him. He just nodded at me, still blushing.

He looked over my shoulder and visibly flinched back. Before I could turn around and see who he was looking at, he said, "Well, um, like I said, it's no problem. I have to go now. See you later."

His last words were rushed and then, he walked away as fast as he could, with his shoulders visibly tensed.

What did I do now? Why is everyone running away from me today?

I put my stuff down on a random desk in the middle of the classroom. The class had yet to start and I just hoped that Ms. Wilson **was** on time.

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Chapter 7

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Students slowly started trickling and claiming seats when Ms. Wilson walked in. Ah, no wrinkled clothes and flushed faces.

Ms. Wilson started the lecture and I suddenly felt conscious. It was as if I felt somebody's gaze on me. I tried to **shake** off the feeling but it only got stronger.

In an attempt to calm my subconscious, I turned around to check if anyone was looking at me. I didn't share this class with anyone I was close to, so I didn't expect to be the subject of someone's scrutiny.

My gaze traveled from one end of the classroom and stopped on Harper because he was staring right at me with a stony

face.

A shiver ran down my spine and I gulped because the way he was looking at me was just **so** intense. I wanted to look away, I really did but I just couldn't move my body and turn around.

Somewhere in the back of my mind, I was aware that I was sitting in class and that I needed to turn around, look at the teacher, and jot down notes but it was like my body was out of my control.

We kept looking at each other and after some time I could see various emotions swirling in his green orbs. Pain, longing, and regret are most evident. Pain for what? Longing for who? And regret for what?

The whole class just seemed to melt away and the only two people in the classroom were the two of us. At least, it felt that

way.

The bell broke the trance we were in. Harper broke eye contact first, grabbed his stuff, and ran out of the class, not sparing me another glance or any indication of anything that passed between us.

When the contact broke, I felt something snap within me. A sense of emptiness took over, but I quickly banished the traitorous feeling before it fully settled in my brain.

I turned around and realized that I hadn't even taken out my supplies to take notes. Was I that lost?

I took a shaky breath in. What the hell is happening?

For the **rest** of the day, I didn't see Harper and I don't know why but it bothered me. Did he get out of school because of what happened in Ms. Wilson's class or did something serious happen to him, that he had to take the rest of his day off?

I didn't even see Natalie and Samantha in any of the classes I shared with them and when I called to check on them, they assured me everything was alright and they just had to go home because of **an** emergency.

I drove back home when school ended, totally confused about what had happened. I was more irritated than confused. I huffed in annoyance when I reached my driveway, got out of my car, and slammed the door shut.

As I lay on my bed, after dinner with my family, I couldn't help but wonder how my life had started to feel like some teen drama. And it all started because of Harper Cain. That boy was trouble.

I quickly banished thoughts of Harper Cain, vowing to myself to stay as far away from him as possible.

I felt like I was floating and falling at the same time. How can you experience these two things at the same time? But that was exactly how I was feeling now,

I could practically feel myself floating as if I were swimming in some invisible river. And I was falling too, like I was being

sucked into a vortex.

Apart from these two things, I didn't feel anything. Somewhere my mind, I was aware that I should be able to feel more,

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but I didn't. I couldn't. didn't feel the rise and fall of my chest and neither did I feel anything else in my body.

My body wasn't listening to me. My brain **was** active and was going through a thousand possible scenarios **as** to how I could find myself in **such** a state.

Darkness surrounded me and I couldn't **as** if had gone blind.

anything

Then suddenly, out of nowhere, I felt a s

pressure on my body, thrusting me towards a particular direction. My whole

body was tossed and turned in the current. It felt as if I had just been flushed down a toilet.

My body was being tossed and moved at an impossible speed towards a direction. I couldn't see where I was going but the current seemed to have a mind of Its **own**.

And then all of a sudden, I stopped. The thrusting stopped and I lay still.

Then I fell. And it was like I had been pushed off a skyscraper. The gravity which felt so strong forced me down into oblivion. I kept falling and then the fear finally hit me.

If I was falling. I was bound to land somewhere, **was** I not?! And with the speed with which I was falling, I was bound to break every single bone in my body. I opened my mouth to scream when the realization hit me. I forced my vocal cords to make some sound, any sound. I didn't make any sound and I could hear nothing. It was like being in a vacuum.

I just closed my eyes and waited for the inevitable to happen.

Then, quite abruptly, I fell to the ground. Grass tickled the bare surface of my skin in the white nightie I wore to bed. I lay on the **grass**

for a few seconds, reveling in the fact that I could feel again and how unbelievably soft the grass was. It almost felt like a soft cushion.

I moved my hands to sit up and to check where I was. My limbs felt like Jell—
O and for a second, I wondered if I had broken, all my bones. That would explain my lack of mobility.

But before I could check my bones, I felt an intense headache. An all-consuming headache, which made me close my eyes and grab my head for dear life.

I curled my body and if anyone could see me now, they would think I was just a small ball.

The headache **was** so intense that tears streamed down my cheeks and I opened my mouth to scream.

I screamed as loud as I could in a desperate attempt to get rid of the pain that had taken over me so suddenly.

I felt my body shaking and someone calling out my name.

“Zara”

Zara

“Zara”

I woke up panting and my body was drenched in sweat.

My heart beat frantically in my chest and fear and apprehension took over me.

I **was** dreaming. I am ok. It was just a dream.

My mom was standing by my bed in her nightgown with a concerned expression.

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“Are you ok?” She asked in a worried tone. I felt guilty because my **screaming** had woken her up. I just nodded in response, because I had nothing else to say,

I wasn’t sure if I could

sau anything at this po

I didn’t feel any signs of the headache that had me **screaming** moments ago, but I did feel the wetness on my cheeks. And the feel of the extra soft grass on my exposed skin.

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Chapter 8

Chapter Eight: “If I had known, you worked here, I would have come **here** before.”

It has been two weeks since Harper’s birthday and everything had returned to the way it used to be.

Harper had gone back to his ways of groping and sleeping around, with anything that walks and has a vagina. He has an insatiable appetite, I swear.

He has been ignoring me. I had no idea why, though. Before he was just oblivious to my existence, but now, he was avoiding me. He practically ran the other way whenever we happened to be in the same hallway.

I didn’t miss the way he looked at me when he thought I wasn’t aware he was around. Well, whenever his mouth wasn’t attached to someone else’s.

I had realized that Harper was not the man for me. Man—where is not my type. I think I got upset at his birthday party. because he took me for granted and while I was sure he felt nothing during the kisses we shared, I did feel something. The kiss was passionate and the best kiss I had ever had.

But I was happy that things were back to the way they were. Uncomplicated and simple.

I had started working at Monique's Bakery again. Monique had generously **given** me the first week of the senior year off, much to my opposition, to "get used to everything" as she put it. I had been in the same school for three years. I was already "used to everything". God bless that considerate woman.

Even Samantha and Natalie had been back to their normal selves and their weird behavior the other day about Harper's "rejection" was never mentioned again.

Because here we were again, debating over Harper's character at the end of the day while walking towards our cars. Good times!

"I mean, seriously I don't know why you even defend him. Just look at him. Can he even breathe without being attached to some girl?"

"So, he's a hormonal teenage boy, big deal. It's his life, isn't it? He can do whatever he wants with it." Samantha countered.

"You know, I clearly remember the two of you saying Harper will be a changed person after his birthday and will most likely settle down. I don't see anything like that happening anytime soon." I chuckled. "Why do you even defend him?"

Natalie shrugged.

"You keep criticizing him and we will keep defending him."

I just shook my head at them and laughed. Some things never change. And honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way.

"You all remember that it's sleepover **night** at my house tonight, right? Because if you don't, I will drag you from your houses, Natalie said while looking both at me and Samantha,

"I will be there." Samantha piped up.

"I didn't forget about it. You don't need to drag me. I chuckled. I forgot about it.

Natalie raised her eyebrow." We all know you forgot, Zara."

Damn, they know me so well.

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“So, I want you both at my bouse by 7.

“Yeah, **sure**, Samantha **said**.

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“Uh, I can’t. I have a shift at the bakery till 7” I checked my watch to see if I was already late. “And I am late for my shift. So, if you want me to be there by 8, I suggest you let me go.”

Natalie pouted and Samantha gave a thumbs up before getting in her car.

I gave them a wave and got inside my car.

The best part about Monique’s Bakery was that it was way closer to Cormack High and so, wasn’t frequented by students from my school. I always felt more comfortable because of the fact.

Monique was of the same **age** as my grandmother. Monique’s son was my dad’s friend when they used to be in high school. So, she was more of a family friend. I **had** been exceptionally close to Monique and she was the one to offer me a job at her bakery. Even though I didn’t need the money, I helped her. And he has been one of the closest people to me ever since.

Monique’s Bakery was styled in a retro—modern theme. The bakery was big enough to have tables inside so people could sit in and a few of the tables were placed outside.

Every item in the bakery was personally approved by Monique. She loved to bake and when both of her children moved out, she used her retirement money to open up a bakery. Even now, she used to cook half of the items displayed in our

showcase.

Me and the chef, Antonio always insisted she just rest and let us handle the bakery, but she never budged. She enjoyed baking and loved to see it all get sold. It wasn’t a surprise that the bakery was a giant hit.

The bell above the door dinged when I walked in. A few of the tables were occupied by the customers. I walked towards the display case and smiled at Amy, the cashier.

Amy was a sweet girl studying at Cormack High and had just started to work here. She was still learning the ropes but now, she could efficiently handle the light hours alone. It was in the rush hour that we needed two people working together, one as the waitress and another one as the cashier.

Amy **was** already in her uniform and apron and was busy billing the order middle-aged man. I waited for the man to

take his order and then greeted Amy.

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“Hi, Zara.” Amy chirped. That was another thing about Amy. She was way too lively for my taste.

“Hi, Amy. I am going to change in the back, okay? You think you can hold the fort for some time.”

She just gave me a nod. I pushed the door which was only for us employees.

I quickly changed into my uniform and made my way to the very back of the bakery where the kitchen was. I just couldn't

shift without greeting Monique **and** Antony.

start my

Monique and Antony were both immersed in their work. Monique was baking pics while Antony was coating frostings on the pastries. They looked damn good. The pastries, I mean.

Monique looked up and gave me a warm smile. “Hello Zara. How was your first week at school?”

“Tiring. And full of drama.”

She laughed. “That's the senior year for you.”

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Chapter 8

I moved closer to her and planted a kiss on her cheek. Then, I moved closer to Antony and kissed him. He had his earphones plugged in and so didn't even see me coming.

Antony was a nice guy and a great friend of mine. If only he wasn't gay. He gave me a peck in return and went back to frosting without taking out his headphones. He wasn't a man of many words and I learned it a lot early in our relationship

I went back to the front of the shop and took up the job of the waitress.

Hours passed by waiting tables and taking orders, when I noticed it was 6 in the evening. One more hour to go and I would be off work and on my way to Natalie's house. I sighed relieved.

The bakery was still half full and it didn't close till ten at night. That was when Stephanie started her **shift**. She was responsible for maintaining the extreme hours of the bakery, in the morning and night. Stephanie was a bitch and I think that was why Monique arranged our work hours so that we didn't have to talk to each other.

The doorbell dinged, signaling the arrival of customers. I looked up to see a couple of guys walk in. Each boy looked a little familiar and I figured that they were all from my school. I took a fleeting look at them and let them settle down on a table.

I walked to the table the guys chose took out my notepad and pen and then looked up to them.

On the table were Harper, Aiden, and a few other boys from the football team whose names I didn't know. I gulped nervously.

The whole point of taking the job at Monique's was the advantage that nobody from Ridgeback came here because they didn't know about it. The plan worked fine for three years.

I smiled at them remembering my role as a waitress. "HI, I am Zara. I will be your waitress today. What can I get you?"

They looked up from their menus and then looked at each other for a few seconds, making the situation completely awkward.

Aiden smirked. "I will take whatever's your favorite."

Ever since the night of Harper's party, me and Aden had gotten close. He never missed a chance to flirt with me, though it,

was harmless.

I could see Harper roll his eyes from the corner of my eye. What the hell is his problem?!

I smiled at Aiden **and** then looked at every guy on the table. Except Harper. "Okay, I will make you guys a deal. If you can name my favorite item on the menu, I will bring it to the house for you."

"Ooooooh challenge accepted. One of the guys said in an excited voice. I couldn't help but chuckle.

"So, I will come back after five minutes and I will give you the time to think about it. Can I get some drinks for you. meanwhile?"

Everybody ordered their respective drinks and got back to their menus with so much concentration. I didn't know they were that competitive. I laughed inwardly.

After placing all their drinks on a tray, I walked to them and placed all of them in front of the guys who ordered them. I took out my notepad again. "So did you guys decide which one is my favorite item on the menu?"

"Key Lime pie." One guy piped up.

"Apple crumble Cake." The other said with so much concentration I had to hold a back smile

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Chapter 8

"Pineapple upside down cake. The overly enthusiastic guy said, who had accepted the bet in the first place.

"Rhubarb. The last guy said.

I looked at the four boys whose names I didn't know and just shook my head, telling them that all of them were wrong.

"Aiden? What about you?"

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"Blueberry muffin?" He looked like a cute, little puppy when he skimmed over the menu in the hope of finding my favorite item.

I let a small smile slip but shook my head. "That's my second favorite." I chuckled at his crestfallen expression and bit the end of my

pen to refrain from laughing.

"Dark chocolate cupcake."

I whipped my head to look at Harper. I opened my mouth to say something because I had never thought of all the people, he would be able to name my favorite item.

"Correct." I looked at him and he had the same expression of longing and regret in his eyes back from when he talked to me in the girl's washroom.

“So, I guess you are getting the cupcake for free. Damn. What a lucky guess!” The guy who had been excited earlier said.

It **was** just a lucky guess, wasn’t it? It was. It was.

“Um, I will get back with all of your orders with a dark chocolate cupcake on the house.” I smiled at them and then scurried away from the table. Particularly from Harper and his strong **and** overwhelming stares. They made my skin crawl excitingly and I was not sure if I liked that.

I walked behind the counter to take my place as the cashier as Amy changed into her casual clothes because her shift ended before me. Stephanie usually came around seven to take over the job.

After some time, the boys got up from their table and headed towards me to pay their bill.

Aiden came forward and paid everyone’s bill. “If I had known, you worked here, I would have come here before.” He gave a suggestive **wink** at me and followed the boys out of the bakery.

My eyes then landed on the boy standing alone in front of me, on the other side of the counter. I raised my eyebrow, silently asking him why he was still here.

He folded a hundred-dollar bill and dropped it in the tip jar.

Shit! A hundred-dollar tip? That wasn’t even worth all their orders.

“**What** are you doing? A hundred bucks is way too much.” I looked at Harper.

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“**Dark** Chocolate muffin.” He said the words as *if* he were checking how they were rolling off of his tongue. “Contrary you believe, it wasn’t just a lucky guess.”

With a suggestive wink, **he** walked out of the bakery.

And he left me there with my jaw open.

Posted by October 4, 2024

Chapter 9

Chapter Nine: “Why do you hate Harper so much, Zara?”

I took my bag and changed out of my uniform as Stephanie took charge behind the counter. I sent a quick goodbye to Monique and Antony. I thought I would be at Natalie’s house for the sleepover by 8 but I was running a little late.

I wasn't worried about the fact that I didn't have clothes with me I would just borrow Natalie's.

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I got in my car and started driving towards Natalie's house. I had to give my details to the security man posted at the gate of the colony Natalie lived in. The same colony where Harper lives.

Why does this colony even need security guards?! It was not as if Arada was full of cutthroats and criminals.

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parked in Natalie's driveway,

Her house held a modern yet conservative touch to it. With light cream walls and two huge pillars supporting the patio, the house was simply magnificent. The wide garden wrapped around the house and gave it a soothing aura. The house consisted of two floors and many rooms, all brilliantly furnished.

I knocked at the door, waiting for the maid to open the door. Yeah, Nat was that rich! The maid knew me, so she opened the door and let me in. She had seen me spending countless nights in the mansion.

I greeted her and stepped into the foyer. Soft lights dominated the entrance giving a soft and welcoming glow.

climbed the staircase and headed towards Natalie's room, where I knew Samantha would be too. The three of us took full liberties when we were at each other's houses. It had always been this way. So, instead of knocking and waiting for permission to enter the room, I simply walked in, hoping that both of them were decent.

Both of them never found it odd to strip in front of each other. They said they found nudity liberating and easy, but it had always been awkward for me. I never failed to wonder how, though, after some time I accepted it. But I still refrained from publicly showing my tits.

Luckily for me, they were decent, well decent for them, but I could still live with whatever little clothing they had on. Both of them were sprawled on the bed, wearing nothing but their pushup bras and shorts that were barely covering their butt cheeks while music blasted in the room.

They were bobbing their heads to the rhythm of the music and were so lost that they didn't even realize that I was standing there.

I smiled wickedly as I ran and threw my body on the bed and landed on top of them. They immediately jerked up from the sudden weight and shot me a murderous look.

"Ah! This is bliss." I stretched my arms and covered as much space on them as I could while hitting Nat in the face and Sam in her stomach. I opened my eyes and enjoyed their irritation.

All of a sudden, they pushed me off the bed. I landed on my butt and looked at them with narrowed eyes. They both looked at each other and laughed hysterically.

I pouted and crossed my arms.

"These puppy dog eyes won't work on us, Zara," Natalie said between her bouts of laughter.

"Oh, hush!" I got up from the bed, while rubbing my sore bottom and plopped down on the bed between the two of them.

Chapter 9

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"Before you join the party, you got to change, Zara," Samantha said.

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They had this weird rule about being as naked as possible on sleepovers. Because to them, naked equaled comfort. I never

got that logic.

“Yeah, I know,” I grabbed the set of shorts and crop top Natalie laid out for me. Even she knew I wasn’t going to move around her house in just underwear.

After I changed and came out of the bathroom, I found Samantha going through the many DVDs Natalie owned, picking out a movie. Natalie must be downstairs getting the popcorn and all the junk food we needed for a sleepover. Neither one of us could live without food.

Samantha was a romantic at heart, so I knew we would all be watching a sappy romantic movie which we had already watched a countless number of times before on these sleepovers, I would have picked some mystery or action movie while Natalie would have picked out something with blood and gore in it. That girl and her choices, seriously.

Samantha popped the movie in the player and my suspicions proved to be correct when The Notebook started playing. Natalie entered the room just as the movie started, with her hands full of food.

Natalie put down all the food on the floor and groaned out loud when she saw what we would be watching.

“Shit! Not this again. How many times have you watched that movie, Sam?”

“Oh, shut up. It’s my turn to choose the movie and I choose this, so you will watch it.”

“I am going to throw out this DVD,” Natalie muttered under her breath but Samantha heard it and gasped in mock horror.

“Don’t you dare even think about it?” Samantha looked truly horrified.

I laughed at the scene.

We settled down on the lush carpet in the room, all of us facing the TV. We each took a tub of ice cream and started eating it.

I started to get bored in the middle of the movie. Can you blame me?! We have watched this movie so many times because of Samantha that I could write all the dialogue all by myself.

I looked to my left to see Samantha engrossed in the movie as if she had never seen it before. Anyone would find it hard to believe that it was her thousandth time watching it.

I looked to my right to see Natalie barely holding her eyelids open. How can she even sleep while sitting? I wish I had that talent.

I nudged her using my elbow. She jerked awake and looked at me as if she was going to kill me. I stuck my tongue out at her and shifted close to her.

“Got anything interesting to talk about, Nat?”

Samantha shushed both of us, clearly riled up at our interruption.

We looked at each other, silently communicating, and moved closer to each other.

“No. Do you know about any gossip? Anything to take my mind off The Notebook? She looked at me expectantly.

I chuckled. Typical Nat.

Chapter 9

Samantha shushed us, yet again.

We both rolled our eyes at her behavior.

I just nodded my head at Natalie’s question. I did have something to talk to her about. The visit by Harper, Aiden, and the boys was still fresh on my mind.

The way he looked at me, how he guessed my favorite item on the menu, and how later, he claimed that it wasn’t just a guess”.

So, in a hushed voice, I told her everything that happened at Monique's. She listened attentively and then released a breath.

Nat looked like she was deep in thought.

"Why do you hate Harper so much, Zara?"

I flinched at her loud volume. I looked at Sam to find her snoring softly and the credits of the movie rolling in. Great, now she can't shush us. That bossy woman!

"I hate him because he plays with every other girl, he sets his eyes on. He doesn't treat them with respect at all. He hurts them and acts as if they don't matter." I ranted as I had ranted hundreds of times before, the reason already imprinted on my mind.

"You know that you are talking about every popular guy in every school there is, right? Besides, most of the girls know what they are going to get. They know that Harper is only going to **k up with them. Everyone knows Harper is in no mood to commit right now or anytime soon. So, you can't exactly blame Harper when it's the girls that throw themselves at him."

I contemplated whatever she said in my head for a few moments and I realized whatever she said made complete sense.

It wasn't like she had given me that argument for the first time. Whatever we were doing now, it wasn't playful banter. It was talking and discussing my feelings. This was serious. And I refused to lie to myself anymore if there was even a little chance that I had been blind to my feelings towards Harper.

How was Harper supposed to act when every girl was trying to get him to sleep with them?! Should he be celibate?!

"He slept with my sister and broke her heart. I remember she used to cry so much. Her eyes were red-rimmed for a whole week and she couldn't trust a boy after that, till her sophomore year at college."

Yup, that's a good point.

"I remember you telling us that she is in a serious relationship with some guy who kept going after her for two years and she finally caved in. So, does she still hold a grudge against him?"

That was a good question. Did Emily still hold a grudge against Harper for taking her virginity and then breaking her heart?

I didn't think so, because after she went to college, she stopped talking about Harper at all.

Whenever I used to bad mouth him, she used to listen to me but stopped agreeing with me after a while. She told me that there were worse boys in her college and that whatever happened with Harper was in a way her fault. I could never understand her reasoning. But now that I think about it, I don't think she hated him. She may regret the decisions she made when she was with him, but she wasn't going to plot his death anytime soon.

—

my ears.

"Um, no....." My voice sounded weak to my

The whole time the three of us just kept arguing about Harper, we never dissected the real reason why I hated him so much. Or was it just playful banter?! I always thought the reasons I had in my mind to hate him were plausible and practical.

Chapter 9

"Zara, why do you hate Hanger?"

Why did I hate him? The answer had always been clear to me. My sister's heartbreak was one of the biggest reasons but when she, being the victim, didn't have any grudge against him, who was I to hate him as the third party?

I had no reasonable answer to Nat's question as I thought about it

Π

"I think you "supposedly" hate Harper because you are subconsciously attracted to him and you don't even know it. And the fact that he sleeps around just disturbs you."

I liked him. I liked Harper. Hell No. No F**ng Way.

"I think that is a bit too farfetched, don't you think?" I was pretty confident that I did not like him.

"I don't know. Could be. You know what I think?!"

I nodded, already giving myself reasons why I didn't like Harper Cain.

"I think you should just think hard. I mean, hard. Do you even hate Harper or is it just a defense mechanism?"

Nat was just spewing b**hit now. She was not making any sense. There was no way I liked Harper Cain, Hell, I barely found him tolerable.

And I never felt jealous whenever I saw him with any other girl. Nor did I feel any longing towards him. So, it was simply impossible.

Since when did you become a d***n Dr. Phil?" I snapped at her. I bit my lip when I realized my outburst was uncalled for

"I just read an article at Cosmo this week. Thought I would try the bu**hit that no one would agree to." She laughed.

Samantha groaned beside me.

Nat got up and stretched her toned body. "I am going to the bathroom and then we will sleep.

The Notebook drained my energy and I barely watched it."

I chuckled. Yup, the movie sucked my energy too,

As I lay beside Sam, I thought about what Nat said. Surely, I didnt like Harper, right? I mean, my subconscious has to be smarter than that.

Right?

Views, 2642

Chapter 10

Chapter Tem: Or was she talking about Harper leaving hickeys on every girl?

I was floating and falling.

Ugh! Not again. I had been having the same dream every other right now and it was becoming a nuisance because in the end, I always woke up in the middle of the night after experiencing a terrible headache and then, I would have trouble going back to sleep **again**.

It was the same every time.

Falling and floating.

Not being able to feel anything at all.

Being surrounded by darkness. No, not darkness. Blackness. Utter and complete blackness.

Then, being trusted in a direction.

The thrusting ceased and my body lay still

Then came the falling and the fear of crashing down and never waking up again.

And then came the soft touch of grass on my bare skin.

As I lay on the **grass**, I waited for the headache to come and split up my skull.

But it never came. That's how far the dreams had progressed every time.

I gently peeled my eyes open expecting nothing but blackness to greet me.

It was dark alright, but not black. I could see for a few meters ahead of me and I could easily make out my surroundings.

It

gathered I was in the forest because tall trees surrounded me. They were so tall and their canopy so thick, that almost no light reached the ground. It must have been a full moon night that some little light was able to permeate the thick cover of vegetation and create an eerie glow for me.

I shakily got up on my feet, surprised I was able to move them at all. I took **a** moment to gather my bearings and get used to the shaking of my knees. It was **as** if I had never stood on my legs. My legs felt like lead and I leaned on the nearest tree for support.

It was ironic really. I dreaded those headaches so much that sometimes I didn't even want to go to sleep because I knew there was a huge possibility, I would have the same dream. And here I was, wishing for the same headache so that I could wake up from this dreamworld.

Following my gut, I started walking in a random direction. The branches and the bushes were so thick that I expected to be cut and scratched in several places. But when I looked down to check my body, there was not a single scratch, instead, the branches **and** leaves felt like a gentle caress on my body. It felt soothing-

Weird.

Pushing the twigs and branches away from my face, I kept walking. I was still in the crop top and shorts that Natalie had given me. After about walking for five minutes, I came upon a clearing and when I took the whole scene in front of me, I gasped. Before me stood the most breathtaking site I have ever seen.

Mon, Sep

Chapter 10

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With no trees to cloud my vision, the moon lighted the whole area in a halo. There were hills as far as the eye could see Dense forests covered the hills and I could see a narrow stream on a hill, it's water glinting in the moonlight.

The moon looked bigger than it usually does and cast a soft glow all around.

The scene looked ethereal and I forgot to breathe. I had lived my whole life in the mountains and was accustomed to seeing such scenery, but the sight in front of me was completely out of this world.

A few feet in front of me was a cliff and I was pretty sure it **was** quite high. On the edge of the cliff, someone was standing.

A female. She was wearing a white dress and the ends of her dress fluttered in the wind, giving the illusion of her having white wings and making her seem otherworldly. Her **hair was** stark white and reached her hips. Her hair wasn't bushy despite being in the wind.

I was jealous. I was sure after traversing through the jungle, my hair looked like a mess.

Her back was towards me but taking her creamy skin into account and her authoritative posture, she was bound to be a beautiful woman. She was so close to the edge of the cliff. If she so much as took an inch forward, she would plummet to her death.

"Um, I think you would want to step back from the edge of the cliff."

She slowly turned around and my speculations were proven correct. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Her features were soft with high cheekbones, plump rosy lips, and a straight nose. She had a tattoo of a moon at the base of

Zara." her throat and it was.....glowing? Glowing blue? She smiled softly at me. I have waited a long time for you,

Okay, so an apparition who I had conjured in my sleep has waited a long time to see me. Is it me or did it sound mental?

I stood there awkwardly shifting from one foot to the other. "Um, hi?"

She spel..

She softly chuckled.

Her voice was like a soft melody that could put anyone to **sleep**. So lucky of me that I was already asleep.

“We are running out of time, Zara. I need you to do something for me.”

“Who are you?”

“You will know soon enough about me. When the right time comes. Right now, you have to help me.”

“Help **you**?”

Help a woman from my dream?

“Yes. Stop Harper from committing a mistake.”

Great, now my dreams were muddled with Harper too. I swear that boy was everywhere.

“What has Harper got to do with anything?”

You will understand in time, Zara.”

“I am so confused right now.”

MIDI, Dep ou

Chapter 10

II

“Find Harper and tell him that he will be making the biggest mistake of his life if he is going to mark the girl he has in mind. Tell him the goddess forbids it.”

Mark? Did he mark people? He doesn't go around with a hot brandishing iron rod marking people as his, does he? Considering him, anything **was** possible.

Or was she talking about Harper leaving hickeys on every girl!

“What kind of mark are you **talking** about? **You** better have a confirmation.

“You will know soon enough!” Kudos to this woman's patience because I couldn't understand whatever she was saying.

What was with this woman and her secrets? And what was with **this** cryptic language?

I groaned. I must be going crazy.

“You must go now, Zara. Remember what I told you. Stop Harper before it’s **too** late.”

As if on cue, a blinding headache started in my head and I knew I was going to wake up from this silly dream.

I woke up panting, covered in sweat with the words ‘Stop Harper echoing in my head.

I looked around to see Nat and Sam sleeping soundly without a care in the world.

Ugh! So lucky.