

Mystic Academy

Author: Mrs. Fernandez

Queen of Mean

This was my second time running away from home, and maybe it would be my last because I might actually like it here.

Before entering through the high gate, I glimpsed the structure from a distance. The main building, somewhat gloomy, resembled a reused mansion crafted from ancient stones and red bricks. It stood in the center of the school, housing the administrative building and other facilities.

Rubbing my clammy palms on my pants out of habit, I let out a deep breath as I continued to gaze around.

Next to the main building was the classroom, which I didn't have time to explore. It was sizable and towering, leaving me curious about the total number of rooms it housed.

It looked like a regular boarding school.

Maybe it was because it didn't feel like how a regular juvenile detention center should feel. The headmaster, Mr. Kendrick, assured me I would fit in just right. I needed to hold onto his word.

Contrary to my initial expectations, the school felt inviting on the inside. It was far from the depressing and suffocating atmosphere I had imagined.

I spotted several other buildings with children yelling and running about. My heart thumped, and I placed my palm on it, letting out a breath as I gazed at the children. I felt a strong desire to partake in the activity going on, but I couldn't. It wasn't because I didn't want to, but I doubted they would let me.

My name was Kelani Redwood, sixteen years old, and I found myself in this school, Mystic Academy, because I killed my father. This act triggered what was known as the 'Curse of the Lycanthropes,' though I barely understood what that meant.

Mr. Kendrick explained that triggering the curse was a requirement for being in a school like this. Today, being my first day, I expected to see many troubled kids, but most of them seemed surprisingly happy.

I felt like I was the only one here who looked depressed and lost.

Before entering the school, I heard a few things about this mysterious place situated on the mountainous side of Mystic Heights, a city in the heart of London.

Mystic Academy, as it was known, was a mixed school primarily for kids with some uniqueness from wealthy homes. The requirements to get in seemed unattainable for mere humans, as I learned. It had a reputation as a school for "freaks," and the general belief was that only freaks would gain admission.

That label didn't bother me much, considering I'd been called a freak all my life by my stepmother and her children—even their friends.

My stepmother often locked me up in the cellar, praying for God to unpossess me, as she believed I was suffering from possession.

When my father died, things took a turn for the worse. I had hoped the mental, physical, and emotional abuse would end, but it only intensified. I was treated worse than her slaves.

At age nine, after my father's death, she made me run insane errands, staying up all night in the biting cold, cleaning, cooking, and guarding the house. In return, all I got were crumbs and leftovers, accompanied by curses demanding I return to hell with my father, the devil who supposedly birthed me.

Forcing me to confess to being possessed, she invited many priests to the house to cast out the demons she believed haunted me. Each time, they declared me a lost cause, suggesting I should be thrown into the ocean or locked in a casket with chains binding it. So I wouldn't torment pure children. Children like the ones from my stepmother.

Recalling all she had done, I sometimes wondered if I was paying for my sins.

I was in school now and away from her and her children; I guess now was all that mattered.

Sighing, I examined the folded schedule and room key in my left hand, obtained from the administrator's office after a discussion with the headmaster.

He instructed me to return for further registration, paperwork, and medical checks to ensure I wasn't suffering from an unknown illness. Though he mentioned a rabid infection, and I asked him what it meant, my questions were dismissed, with the assurance that I would understand why I was there with time.

"Fuck!"

I gasped as I collided with a body. Wincing, I inspected my hand and then the coffee cup in the stranger's hand.

Then my gaze travelled to his face. His eyes... That was the first thing I noticed about him. Mesmerizing shades of hazel flecked with silver.

He had golden blond hair held in a ponytail, making me wonder if it was legal to have that much hair because many juvenile centers I knew preferred for hair to be trimmed. Athletic and tall, he had strong arms, towering above my 5 feet 5 inches, exuding masculinity.

If I were to rate him, I would give him a ten out of ten because he totally deserved it.

Perhaps ogling the stranger I had bumped into instead of apologizing wasn't the best way to start my day, especially as his narrowed eyes now met mine.

"Did I hear an apology?" he gruffly asked. "Wow, I guess not," he added.

He was cranky; thanks to me. If I were in his shoes, I would be too.

My gaze drifted from his compelling face to his chest. Oh, no! The liquid that had poured on me was his coffee, now staining his once pristine white shirt.

"I'm sorry!" I stuttered, wincing. I proceeded to place my hand on his chest without thinking, attempting to wipe at the stain.

It seemed like a stupid move, as it only made the stain worse. Yet, I just wanted this to be over and go on my way.

"You're making it worse," he muttered, eyeing me.

"If you don't get your filthy hands off my boyfriend's chest, I'll help you by chopping them off," a sultry voice said, and I swirled around.

Straight, shoulder-length blonde hair, neatly styled without a strand out of place, paired with bright blue eyes that glared daggers at me and fair, flawless skin I could only dream of but would never attain.

She wrinkled her straight nose as she stepped toward me, her cupid-bowed lips twisted in disgust as she assessed me. Her eyes moved from my head, slowly to my feet and then back to my face.

"Who the hell are you to caress my boyfriend's chest like that?" She folded her arms across her chest.

This was trouble, I mused, but how do I get out of it?

"When I ask you a question, you respond to me, bitch," she declared.

"I'm sorry. I bumped into him and accidentally made his coffee spill. I was only trying to get..."

"Sorry, I don't speak the language of lowlives. Can you speak louder?" she interrupted.

I heard slight giggles, and I turned to see many students had gathered, their interest reflected in their eyes.

"If you weren't so dumb, you should understand everything she said perfectly," another voice chimed in, and I turned again to see a new girl.

Unlike the first girl, this one appeared shorter, with brunette hair, dark brown eyes, and caramel skin. She offered me a smile before turning to the initial accuser.

"Let her be, Lia. She isn't one of your problems," the new girl said.

"And who the hell are you to tell me what to do?" Lia hissed, advancing menacingly toward the new girl, but the boy I had poured coffee on gripped her hand, halting her.

"I'm Riley Bakers, the girl who whooped your ass last summer. Did you forget that so easily? I didn't because I have a medal to remind me of how funny you looked." Riley declared, wearing a wide, proud smile.

"Perhaps we can do this another time, but right now, I need to jet," she added.

With that, she gripped my hand, tugging me away from Lia, the mysterious boy, and the crowd.

When we reached a considerable distance, I turned back to see the crowd had dispersed. "Thank you back there. I mean, I don't know what I would have done if it weren't for you."

"I'm Riley, and I don't think I need to introduce myself any longer. Also, don't worry; things like that happen, and I doubt it will be the last time. Note to self: stay away from Lia. You wouldn't want to be one of her newbie experiments," Riley said.

"I'm Kelani, but call me Lani. What do you mean by newbie experiment?" I asked as we stepped into the hallway, walking towards the staircase.

"Let's just say she's unpleasant, and don't forget, when a newbie offends her, she tends to go overboard until someone rescues them," Riley explained.

Seeing the curiosity in my eyes, she added, "Don't worry, you'll learn more. You can't know everything on the first day here. By the way, what room number are you?"

Glancing at the paper where it was boldly written, I gazed back at Riley. "Room 50."

"No way," Riley grinned. "You're Kelani Redwood?"

"I am," I affirmed with a nod.

"You're my roommate!" she exclaimed, rushing toward me.

Clutching my hand, she pulled me towards the room that seemed to be at the far end of the hall we were in, and we halted in our tracks as we spotted Lia.

She hissed, loud enough for us to hear as she stood by room 49, which was opposite ours. I presumed that was her room.

"First, I get to live opposite my enemy, and now I get to see a girl flirting with my man each day. Why does the goddess hate me so much?" Lia huffed, unlocking her door and throwing me one last murderous glance before stepping in.

"She's dramatic; you'll get used to it soon," Riley shrugged, and I nodded.

Yet, I doubted it. Earlier, I had seen the horror on the students' faces that had gathered to watch everything unfolding before Riley dragged me away.

Riley being on my side didn't make me less frightened of Lia. Perhaps not frightened like she could physically harm me, but frightened like she could do a lot of horrible things to me.

Even Riley had said so by advising me to stay away from her.

A drama-less start to the school year seemed far-fetched; I guess the rest of the academic year was doomed for me.