

The bloom after the storm - Chapter 10 Chapter 9

Čöldhēärt6-8 minutes

Almost done. Aurora looked down at the spread of papers on the library table and smiled. "Looks like we're gonna be done a bit early." Noah looked up at her from his notebook. "Yeah. That happens when you actually do the work instead of griping about it." Aurora gasped. "Was that a joke?" "No." "Sounds like one to me." Noah grinned. Aurora considered this a win. Noah was smiling. The rest of the week flew by. School kept on being school; assignments, homework, projects, and tests. But something inside her just felt different. Lighter. Maybe it was because for the past few months she felt as though she was the only person who felt the way she felt. She didn't feel so alone now. She didn't think he understood her yet, she didn't understand him fully either, but it was enough for now. Some days, Aurora was late. On one particular Tuesday, Aurora was busy helping a teacher organize books when she came back home. The house was empty when she walked in, her mother was nowhere in sight. She had time to unpack her books before she heard a door open in the kitchen. She heard the door shut again a couple of seconds later. It didn't take Aurora more than ten seconds to realize that she was home and so was her mother. Her mother was waiting. Arms crossed. Expression cold. She looked at the clock. "You're late." Aurora felt a little bit sick to her stomach. It was always like that. "I stayed after school." "Doing what?" "Helping my teacher." She didn't move or make a sound. "Aurora," She said finally, "I want to know why you were late again. I'm very curious now." Her mother didn't look impressed. She still wouldn't be, for the most part. Aurora knew it now, even though she'd spent years convincing herself and her parents otherwise. At dinner, every response she gave seemed to be wrong. Everything she said was criticized. Every little thing her mother tried to say to her she responded with a look or a silent sigh. Even Ethan was noticing; he kept shoving a bowl of food towards her when she stopped eating. Aurora tried to smile at her brother; at least she still had him there, her mother clearly did not. After dinner that night, Aurora sat at her desk, her notebook in front of her. The page remained blank. Sometimes she liked to read a good book in order to help herself calm down, but that wasn't something she could get into the mood for now. Something didn't seem to feel right. Maybe that was all because the day she was having had not been a good one. She didn't really feel like writing a story that felt so much like herself. But she just couldn't bring herself to leave it alone, not for now. She tried her hardest to ignore the silence in the house; she kept thinking that she was just over-exaggerating. That she wouldn't feel quite this uncomfortable if she was just sitting alone at her desk. Then a soft tapping sounded against her door. She didn't answer, knowing that it

was probably just her brother. She looked over and sure enough, when the door opened it was just Ethan in there, holding a book in his hand. "Are you alright?" He asked her. Aurora gave her brother a small smile. "I'm fine, Ethan, I'm just fine." "Liar." "Since when are you so smart?" "Since, always. You know that." "Whatever, Ethan." Ethan grinned and walked over to the chair next to her. "Did you know Mom and Dad were fighting?" Ethan's serious expression caught Aurora slightly off guard. Aurora's smile vanished. "What about?" Ethan hesitated. "You." Aurora didn't say anything more after that. She felt as if everything in her body dropped and she just couldn't move anymore. When Ethan left, Aurora felt alone again. Just sitting there at her desk, looking at the walls around her and wondering why nothing made sense. She wasn't the worst daughter, she wasn't the most rebellious person. She wasn't getting bad grades or staying in her room all the time. She did everything her parents asked her to do; why was she still failing them? Why were things like that? Aurora didn't know the answer to that anymore. The next day at school Aurora was even more tired than she was yesterday. She knew it and Noah could tell too. "You look tired." He said to her. She raised an eyebrow. "Do I look that bad?" She asked Noah. "No, you just don't look happy." That comment from him was a bit deeper than he had intended; he probably didn't really mean it. But, Aurora didn't want to argue about the subject and she wasn't in the mood to pretend like she really was all happy and wonderful. She wasn't happy. In fact, she'd been unhappy for the past couple of weeks and it was getting kind of ridiculous; it didn't feel right. Aurora considered changing the subject but something about the way the conversation had been going so far made her want to say something. She looked at Noah again, surprised herself when she spoke up. "Sometimes you wish everything you do was enough; do you ever feel like that?" Noah took the question a little seriously. "I guess I did at one point." Aurora was surprised by his answer. "I know, it's terrible." "Yeah, it is." It was enough to get Aurora to laugh to herself. A simple statement that didn't really need much more than an answer; no fake advice or encouragement. Sometimes that was enough. Sometimes you didn't need more than that. When the final bell rang Aurora started packing her backpack again. Before she left, Noah spoke to her again. "Hey, do you know what?" Aurora raised an eyebrow. "What?" Noah pointed at the notebook in her hands. "When you work this hard, I don't think you should let anyone tell you that your dreams aren't worth pursuing." Aurora didn't say anything. For a minute, she could barely hear the sound of the people around her and the noise of the bell. Noah didn't know that, but he really didn't know why those words were so important to Aurora or what he'd just said. She smiled at Noah, a real one. This was the first one that had come out in a while. She had never felt this way before about something, and for the first time in a while, Aurora wasn't scared.