

The bloom after the storm - Chapter 11 Chapter 10

Čöldhēärt5-6 minutes

The day the presentation was due dawned sooner than Aurora anticipated. For a couple of weeks, she and Noah had spent almost every single afternoon working on it. As they studied, prepared, and rehearsed for the presentation, they were somehow starting to get used to each other. They were starting to get used to each other to the point where the silence wasn't so awkward anymore. They were starting to get used to each other to the point where, more than once, Aurora found herself looking around for Noah as soon as she walked into school. Though she would never admit it. "Just relax." She looked up from her notes. Noah was sitting across from her in the library. "I am relaxed." Noah's eyebrows flew upwards. "You just read that same sentence six times." Aurora scowled. "I just did not." "I think you did." Aurora looked down. Unluckily, he was correct. The actual presentation went surprisingly well. When it was their turn, Aurora spoke confidently. Noah explained the financial aspect. Then, they were done. As soon as they had finished, she and Noah had managed to answer every single question the teacher asked. By the time they were both done, most of her classmates were staring at them. "Great job." The teacher smiled. Aurora grinned back. "Thanks." She and Noah looked at each other quickly, knowing that for once, the hard work they put into it was going to pay off. At lunch, Maya was almost like a dog jumping on Aurora. "You guys were great!" Aurora laughed. "It was just a project." "It was not just a project." Maya threw herself forward a bit. "Everyone in the class noticed!" Aurora was suddenly extremely suspicious. "Noticed what?" The grin on Maya's face was much bigger than before. "The two of you!" Aurora almost coughed on her juice. "There is no me and Noah!" "Sure there is." "There isn't." "Sure there is." Aurora grabbed a paper napkin and threw it at her. But Maya was not the only one. Over the next few days, Aurora began to notice whenever she was around Noah. The students started whispering. Nothing too mean. Nothing too serious. Just gossip. But it still made Aurora uneasy, not because of Noah, but because she just did not like being around other people's eyes all the time. She decided to just bring it up with him. One afternoon in the library, Aurora said, "People were talking." Looking over the top of her notebook, Noah said, "Well yeah, everyone is always talking." Aurora blinked. "Well that's... that's it?" "What else do I say?" Aurora let out a small laugh. Sometimes she just could not believe how calm Noah was. That evening was a little different from the library. When Aurora walked through the front door, she could feel it immediately: tension. Her mom was sitting in her dining room chair, and her dad was standing over by the kitchen. They both looked rather upset, which made Aurora's heart stop and start racing in her chest. "Did something happen?" Her dad and mom

looked at each other, that look that she was starting to get more and more used to lately. "Oh honey no," her dad said. But there was something so off in his voice that Aurora knew he was lying. Later that night, Ethan was knocking on her door. "Hey, you okay?" Aurora nodded. "I think so." Ethan sat down next to her on her bed, looking at her intently. "Mom asked about a boy." "What?" She asked. "I don't know. But she asked if there was a boy you've been hanging around with." Aurora's mouth dropped open. The rumors had not only managed to get around the school, but they had found a way to her house too, which was the part she was most worried about. After Ethan got back out of the room, Aurora sat down in the window in the corner of her room, where it was the least crowded in the neighborhood. She looked up at the sky; the stars were really pretty that night. It was the type of night she usually liked; quiet and calm and peaceful. But now it was making her feel even worse. She couldn't stop thinking about her parents or her brother and Noah or just the way that her life had just taken a quick change of course, for better or for worse, as she wasn't sure, but deep inside she felt like she was about to get into a lot more trouble than she had ever before.