

The bloom after the storm

Bab 3: Chapter 2

Aurora woke with a thrill running through her. It was the weekend. No lectures. No tasks. Just two whole days free to do whatever she wanted, like working through the dreams she'd penned in her little notebook. Looking up at the desk, where her book sat open, she smiled softly. One day. One day, she'd accomplish every goal written on those pages. And it was a fact she believed without question. By the time she came down, breakfast had already been served. "Morning!" she sang, walking into the kitchen. Her father looked up from his mug. "Morning." That was odd. Usually, he'd return her smile. He seemed almost distracted. Aurora frowned at him as she sat down. Something felt wrong, but she let it go. She assumed he'd just had a rough night. Her mother seemed just as subdued. Even Ethan picked up on it. "Why is everyone acting so strange?" he asked. "Nobody's acting strange," their mother said quickly, before the conversation died off. But the strange atmosphere persisted, and Aurora couldn't quite place her finger on what was wrong. That afternoon, she decided to sit out in the yard beneath the great oak tree. With her notebook in her lap, she was scribbling down notes on a future business venture when her father walked up to her. "What are you doing?" "Planning," she responded, flashing a grin. "Planning what?" She immediately thrust her notebook forward. She knew that, normally, her dad enjoyed seeing what she wrote in there. However, his expression was far less pleased than usual as he flipped through page after page. "What's all this?" he snapped. "My objectives," Aurora answered. More pages were turned by her dad. "Travel the globe. Start your own company. Move to a major city." She nodded enthusiastically. "Yep." Her dad's face twisted with frustration. "You don't even think about telling your family you're leaving?" "Excuse me?" "Going somewhere," her father clarified. "I just." "But you did write all this. You don't think it's something we need to know about?" "No, not yet," Aurora tried to explain. The notebook was pushed back into her arms, and the tone her father took was far colder than ever before. "You're getting too caught up in fantasies." Aurora stared at him, momentarily taken aback by his words. "They aren't fantasies. They aren't fantasies," she tried to repeat, "they are." She was hurt. She was looking for support, and this wasn't it. "Why can't I dream big?" Her father exhaled loudly. "Why? Because there are some dreams that don't really take you where you need to go." With that, her dad took off. Still sitting under the tree, Aurora wondered what had just happened. She was confused and upset. Later that night, Aurora stumbled upon an altercation in progress. She hadn't intended to hear what was being said; in fact, she was in the midst of coming down the stairs when the arguments drifted from the dining room. "She's changed," her mother was saying. Aurora's ears pricked up. "She's maturing," her father said. "No. This is a little different. It's a little more. I'm talking about all those things you write in her notebooks, her plans. All the things she mentions about getting out of here and moving." Aurora's stomach fell. Were they talking about her? "Maybe it's a big deal, and maybe it's not," her father reasoned. "Maybe you're worrying too much," his wife disagreed. Aurora went to her room, her throat suddenly tight. She had never thought her goals would make her parents uneasy. In the weeks that followed, a few small changes seemed to appear. Changes only visible to Aurora. Her mom quit asking her about her career. Her dad ceased praising her grades. Aurora's conversations on her plans just made the dinner table awkward. She kept making As in her classes. Her teachers admired her. Her classmates saw her as driven. All that work, though, only left her wondering why her parents thought she was in the wrong. One day, she brought up the topic of a scholarship she was interested in. Her parents gave her one of those looks they'd been giving her for the past while. She looked at them, waiting for a comment. "It's

nothing," her mom murmured. Aurora could see through her. "It doesn't feel like nothing, does it?" her dad cut in, dropping his fork. "Aurora." "Yes?" "Have you ever thought about being satisfied with what you already have?" Aurora paused, taken aback. "I am satisfied." Aurora's face dropped, confused. "Then why are you always searching for more?" Aurora looked at him in disbelief. She wanted the best life possible. She wanted new experiences. She wanted to be a great woman. Didn't she deserve that? For once in her life, Aurora was unsure. Later that evening, she picked up her journal. She sat there in silence for a few minutes, staring at the page. The dreams written there hadn't changed. It seemed as though only everything else did. She thought about her father's disappointment, her mother's anxiety, and the gap in her relationship with her parents. What if, she pondered to herself in her heart, what if the people in her life weren't looking for what she was looking for? What if they never understood her? She closed her journal, and hugged it to her heart. Outside, in the distance, she could see dark, foreboding skies. A storm was approaching. And for this storm, it was no longer just about the weather.