

The bloom after the storm - Chapter 7 Chapter 6

Čöldhēärt5-6 minutes

Aurora nearly missed the umbrella. Well, almost. It was Monday morning, and as she was getting ready for school, she spotted the black umbrella from Thursday propped against her desk, where Noah had given it to her. She grabbed it and stared at it. Most people would have asked for it back the next day. He didn't. In fact, he never brought it up. "Oh well. I should probably give it back," she mumbled. School was already in full-swing. Students swarmed the hallways and teachers rushed around. Aurora saw Maya by her locker as she walked up. "Good morning." Maya squinted at her. "Why do you have an umbrella? There's no way it rains today." Aurora sighed. "I'm returning it." "The new guy's?" "God. You're making me sound like a criminal." "Oh, because you're being weird." Just then, the morning bell rang. Aurora couldn't find Noah the entire day. So she just took it with her everywhere she went. At lunch, she went looking for him. He wasn't in the cafeteria, and he wasn't on the field. So she decided to check the library, since it kind of seemed like his place. As she opened the door, the first thing she noticed was that it was dead quiet. A few students here and there scattered around the tables. Aurora scanned the rows. He was at a table by the window, alone with some books in front of him. He was reading, as if everything else didn't matter. It didn't make sense why it was so hard for Aurora to ask for his umbrella back. Eventually, though, she decided to go ask for it. "You know, you could have asked for your umbrella back." Noah's eyes glanced up for a split second as if surprised. Then they landed on the umbrella in her hands. "Oh." "Uh... 'Oh'?" She said in disbelief. A tiny smile appeared on his lips. "I forgot about it." "No way." "It seems like it." She passed him the umbrella. "Anyway, thanks." "Anytime." For a minute they just stood there. No awkward silence, just a moment where neither knew exactly what to say. She looked at his table. "So what do you do at lunch?" "It's quiet." "What? Most people would rather eat." "I already ate." "When?" "Early." His voice remained low, but he wasn't unfriendly. "What do you study here?" Aurora glanced over the books. One was about business, another was about successful entrepreneurs. "You read these in your spare time?" "Yes." "Really?" A tiny laugh left him. "People say I'm weird for that all the time." Aurora couldn't help but laugh too. She hadn't known he had that sense of humor. Aurora laughed at the comment too; she hadn't realized that Noah actually had a sense of humor. It was only hidden beneath his quiet. "What about you?" Noah asked. "What about me?" "You spend a lot of time writing." Aurora suddenly felt slightly embarrassed. "My journal's not that interesting." "To you, sure." Aurora averted her eyes. No one really ever noticed her stuff. Noah, though, did. "It's goals." "What goals?" Aurora didn't really talk about

them. Especially recently. But she felt okay with them with Noah. "To start my own business, I guess." Noah looked up at her. "You want to start your own business?" She smiled. "Yeah." He didn't laugh; he only nodded at her. "Sounds reasonable." "That's it?" Aurora asked. "I'm not that ambitious? I mean most people just think I have my head in the clouds." He closed his book, like he'd never said anything out of the ordinary. "I think the rest of you are dreaming too small." For a brief second, Aurora was unsure how to respond; even her classmates and family hadn't thought to comment on her dreams like that. Noah turned back to his reading as if he had never spoken aloud at all. As the lunch bell rang, Aurora stood up. "Oh, so I'll have to go." He only nodded at her. "Maybe we'll see each other." She turned to walk away. She suddenly turned back to the door and looked over her shoulder. "Hey..." "Huh?" "Thanks. Again." Noah raised a brow. "For what? The umbrella?" "Thank you for not laughing. At my dreams. Because it's happened so much lately." That night, Aurora stared at her journal. The same goals her parents hated, the ones that didn't seem possible, but somehow, they were less impossible now, because for the first time, someone had listened, believed, and told her.