

The lost kids

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The lost kids

by [AshIsWriting](#)

Summary

In this reinvention of the first movie of Descendants, we meet the VKs right after where the book "the isle of the lost" left.

When Mal is offered to retrieve the Fairy Godmother's wand in order to please her mother, she will do everything that is necessary for her to make her mother proud. However, things aren't as easy as her and the others thought it would be. New environments, new feelings, new people, things that they never experienced before are getting shoved on their faces, and it becomes a challenge for the VKs to get used to this new reality.

Rotten to the core

Chapter Summary

We are introduced to the VKs as they arrive at Auradon, and we get a little peek on their relationships and bonds.

Chapter Notes

Well, I had this in mind for a while now, and I decided to post it out here because ever since I read the book, I couldn't watch the movies without feeling like they did the kids dirty. I titled this story in my original draft as "I had to take a step because Mr. Mouse wouldn't" and that is an accurate representation of my train of thought! Hope you guys like it.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Mal stared at her feet, waiting for her mother to speak. She had been in front of her for almost five minutes in complete silence and was starting to get nervous.

"Do you know why you are here?" Maleficent broke the silence making Mal wince.

"No, Ma'am." She said firmly. Mal knew it was a trick question, a way to see if she had something on her conscience that she would get punished for.

"The land of Auradon sent a letter to me where it explained that you were chosen to go to its High School, in a Villain Kids' exchange program."

Mal looked up with wide eyes. "But, you wouldn't let me go, right?"

"I would be crazy if I didn't. This is the perfect chance for you to redeem yourself, and for me to rise from the ashes." She paused, staring directly at her daughter's eyes. "You will get the fairy godmother's wand, and open the shelter of the island."

"But, ma'am, I don't know how to use magic, I never-"

"You are a dark fairy, and more importantly, my daughter! You will know once you are there!" She exclaimed, anger rearing from her throat.

Mal shivered and looked down again. "Yes, mother."

There was a silence, and Maleficent's breathed in on a failed attempt to calm herself down. "You can ask one question now."

"Am I going alone?"

"No, Cruella De Vil's son was chosen too, and you can bring someone else with you." She noticed the change in her daughter's expression and frowned. "This is not a recess, Mal. If I were you, I'd bring someone with strength and a logical brain. Someone that will be helpful and not a burden, so think wisely."

Mal nodded.

"Dismissed." Maleficent gestured lightly for her to leave, and she followed her command without hesitation.

Mal walked off the tower and let out a deep sigh. She had another chance, she couldn't disappoint her mother again. Ever since she came back empty-handed from her old castle, Maleficent had looked down at her as if she was another of her goblins. But not everything was lost, and suddenly she felt relieved.

She kept walking the dirty streets, and as soon as she walked around the corner, she found Jay drinking one of those tasteless coffees that were sold on the only coffee shop on the island.

"Hey, shorty! I heard your mom's voice, what happened?" He walked up to her and tousled her already untidy hair.

"I was chosen-" she made commas with her hands. "to go to Auradon. My mother insists that going there will be a second chance for me to meet her expectations. Maybe then I'll be able to get called by my full name." She said that last part mostly to her than Jay.

"That sucks, but at the same time, it's good for you."

Mal snickered. "As if you cared."

Jay shrugged and patted her back. "I guess not. Are you going alone?"

"No, Carlos is going too."

The taller teen laughed. "That's a shocker! Why him?"

"It porbably has something to do with the hole on the dome that he did months ago. It must have alerted Auradon."

"Well, enjoy the vacations to princess land with the dalmatian boy." Jay said, and there was a certain irritation on his tone.

"Actually--" She stopped, and Jay turned to her. "I can bring someone of my choice with me, and I was thinking that maybe-- And only if you want to, you don't have to if you don't want to-" She spoke in a rush. "Maybe you could come with me. Not that I care." She smirked,

looked away, and buried her hands on her pockets. Jay looked at her with a warmth on his eyes that made Mal feel uncomfortable.

"Sure, it will be better than sleeping on the floor and listening to my dad ranting about-- shit." He shrugged and finished off his coffee, to throw the empty cup to the floor.

"Cool." She said as he placed his elbow on her shoulder.

The next day, the duo met Evie and Carlos after school, it was a new habit for them, hanging out together, but it was also recomforting.

"Did you hear that you were chosen to go to Auradon with Mal?" Jay said, patting the younger teen's back.

"Wait, what? When?" He blurted out, already sweating.

"Dunno, my mom told me yesterday. Maybe because of the thing you did to the dome."

"Do you think they want to put me in jail or something?" He fidgeted with his hands.

"No, we are going for an exchange program. I think they just want us there because they think we have some kind of potential, or something." Mal shrugged, and had the urge to reach out to the younger teen's shoulder, but decided against it.

"Congrats, Carlos!" Evie cheered, hugging him from the shoulders. He giggled softly as a response to the girl's sudden happiness.

"Are we going alone?"

"Nope, we can bring someone else, I mean, at least I could. I'm taking Jay." She said, nudging him.

"Well, then." He turned towards Evie with trembling hands. "Evie, do you want to come? I know that you always wanted to visit Auradon, so--"

"Yes! OMG, I waited my whole life for this, I'm so happy!"

Mal smiled and rolled her eyes. "It's just a prissy school with prissy royalty, Evie."

"But it's not this rusty and ugly island, so it's way better. I'm gonna miss my mother, though."

The other three got silent. They couldn't relate. This exchange could be a good vacation, far from their parents.

Carlos yearned for a week away from her crazy mom, and all the chores and shouting. Jay had been getting headaches for the past month because of sleeping on the floor, and his father wouldn't stop ranting about him not stealing enough. And Mal couldn't be in the same room as Maleficent without feeling like she was doing something wrong, feeling her mother's stare on her neck.

Evie couldn't complain, honestly. Her mom wasn't all on her best mental state, but she was caring and forgiving. And she knew that she would be proud of her daughter going to Auradon.

"Uh- talking about that, my mother had a plan," Mal commented and hid her hands on her pockets as all eyes placed on her. "You can help me if you want, but I was thinking about doing it alone."

"Well, we already helped with the scepter, another Maleficent plan won't be too bad." Evie smiled and bounced lightly.

"Yeah, and it's better than spending our days pretending to be goody-two-shoes, right?" Jay concluded, but he got no answer.

The next week, the four of them sat on the entrance of the island, waiting for the limousine to arrive. None of them wanted to say goodbye to their parents or wait with them for the car, so they just sat in silence and waited.

Jay looked over at the girls, who were each on their own head, and decided not to disturb them, and then glanced at Carlos, noticing him picking on his fingers, especially his cuticles.

"Dude, stop." He smacked him slightly to make him quit.

As a result, the younger teen winced and turned at him with big doe eyes. When he realized the situation, he just frowned and looked back at his hands.

"Why do you do that?" Jay rose an eyebrow.

"I'm nervous, so I just- do that." He shrugged.

Jay sighed. "Don't hurt yourself, man. If you need to calm down you can-- uh--" He stopped to think and had a sudden idea. It was risky, considering that they were still on the island, but he had to try anyway. "You can hold my hand."

Carlos looked at him with a confused expression, expecting him to laugh and call him names at his hesitation. But it didn't happen, Jay just stared at him with a plain face and extended his hand.

Evie noticed the nervousness on Carlos's face and rubbed the younger teen's back without taking his eyes off the bridge, immediately soothing him.

"I'm better now." Carlos hissed at the taller boy.

Jay shrugged and went back to staring at the entrance. He didn't really mind; if Carlos wanted comfort or not, that was on him, he wouldn't go around moping because the dalmatian kid didn't want to hold his hand.

Meanwhile, Mal was recalling the plan, going over it, and biting her lip (and getting smacked by Jay every time he noticed this).

The limousine finally picked them up, and the four of them, though cautiously, decided to try the treats that were left for them inside it.

Evie found out that she loved green apple flavored candy, and, just like Carlos, anything covered in chocolate. Jay would eat anything, to be honest, because he was just so hungry. When was the last time any of them had a proper meal? They couldn't recall, but for now, this was more than enough.

Mal tried to steal a treat from Jay, and he pushed her lightly, causing her to fall to her side and press a button with her elbow. The shiny bridge that connected both lands opened for the vehicle to drive through as soon as she pressed it, and they all gasped at it, causing the driver to chuckle.

"Did this button open the barrier?" She asked, with big wondering eyes.

"No, this one did." He revealed to them a keychain with a remote control that had the name: Bridge. "And this one-" he finished the sentence by pressing a button on the main cabin that closed the window between the back seat and the front seat.

"Well, that wasn't very nice." Evie said, chuckling.

"I like the guy." Mal joked.

When the limousine arrived at Auradon, the four of them were stapled to the windows, looking at the view. It was beautiful: the trees were green, the sky was blue, and it smelled like fresh air and grass.

Mal bit her lip once more, trying to go back to her mother's plan to steal the wand, but she was so invested in the view-- It was breathtaking.

At the entrance of the school, the band, the Fairy Godmother, Aubrey, and Ben were waiting for them, alongside other students that were swinging a flag and waving at the car.

Mal rolled her eyes, and Carlos wished for the seats to eat him; it was too much for welcoming the kids of villains.

The four of them walked out of the limousine, and Jay's full attention came to Aubrey, who was smiling with the most tender look in her eyes. She glanced at him, and he winked as an answer, causing her to hum with a sweet smile.

"Welcome to our dime prep! I am Fairy Godmother." The lady said, bowing. "Headmistress."

Mal's eyes widened. "The Fairy Godmother? As in-- bipidibapidi bu?"

"Exactly!" The woman nodded.

"I wonder how Cinderella felt when she met her for the very first time." Evie whispered, and Carlos snickered

"Must have felt terrified that an old woman made a pumpkin turn into a car."

They both giggled, and Mal glared at them, shutting them up.

"That was a long time ago," The woman said, always smiling, and making Jay chuckle because she had heard the other two. "And as I always say, don't focus on the past or you'll miss the future."

Ben stepped in, noticing how tall Evie and Jay were by his side. "It's a pleasure to finally meeting you, I am Ben-- Uh-- Prince! Ben." He said, giggling nervously at his mistake.

Evie smiled widely, it was so exciting! A real prince in front of her, just like the ones she watched on TV back at the island. She already felt like home.

"This is Aubrey, daughter of the Sleeping Beauty." He explained as she waved at them.

"It is a true pleasure!"

"Ben and Aubrey are going to show you all around!" The Fairy Godmother announced. "And I will be seeing you, kids, tomorrow!"

The four of them forced a smile as the lady walked up to Mal and Carlos and patted their shoulders, causing them both to flinch.

"The doors of wisdom are never closed! But the hours to the library are from eight AM to eleven PM, and we have a lil' thing about curfews." She explained and left.

Evie's eyes sparkled, and Carlos hid a mischievous smile. A library meant hours of reading, computers, and blessed silence! It was heaven.

Ben collected himself and walked up to Jay, who was the first in line from left to right.

"It is so pleasant to finally meet you all." He said, receiving a shove as an answer, and a warm smile. Ben stared in confusion for a few seconds because it had hurt him, but Jay obviously didn't mean anything evil by it, so he just grinned back.

Next was Mal, who took his hand firmly and shook it. He looked at her and noticed that he had seen her before, perhaps once upon a dream. He noticed her confusion and blushed. "This is a momentous occasion." He continued, trying to keep calm.

He walked to Carlos and took his hand. "And one that I hope will go down in history-" As soon as he let go, he noticed that the hand he received had chocolate on it, and Ben giggled at how childish that was. He also noticed Carlos's hard stare on him, as if he was being wary of every movement the prince did.

"As the day that our two people begin to heal." He finally took Evie's hand (with his left one, as the right was smeared with chocolate), and she smirked. "It's good to see a princess being rescued from the island, I hope you'll feel at home here." Ben whispered to her, and she felt a warmth in her chest.

"Yeah, I am starting to." She nodded, with a slight blush in her face.

"This is the day where we start anew." He finished.

"Or the day you told us where the bathroom is." Jay joked, raising both eyebrows.

"Was it too over the top?" Ben blushed.

"A little bit." Mal said with a smirk.

"Ah-" he sighed, scratching the back of his neck. "So much for that first impression! Heh-"

And they let themselves laugh, well, Jay and Evie did, Carlos and Mal just snickered under their breaths.

Aubrey was looking at Mal with a puzzled stare during the whole presentation and finally gasped, gaining the looks of the newcomers.

"You are Maleficent's daughter, right?" She asked, walking up to her. Surprisingly enough, Mal was taller than her. "I found it necessary to say that I don't hold a grudge, ok? What your mother did doesn't reflect on you, and the way my grandparents acted does not mirror me, either."

Mal looked at her, and it was surprising how filled with honesty that statement was. Her eyes were like windows to her soul, and every little emotion she had was revealed in her (quite expressive) face. Yet, Mal felt unsure about her.

"Thank you." She suddenly let out, surprising the other three VKs.

Aubrey nodded and walked back to her place by Ben's side, holding his arm caringly. The prince paused and finally broke the silence.

"Okay! How about-- a tour?" He clapped.

"Let's go." Jay nodded, placing his hands on Mal's shoulders.

And they did, Ben introduced them to the story of the school and explained a few details as they walked past a huge statue of King Adam. The prince stopped and pointed at it.

"This statue was made with the purpose to prove that our past flaws can be used on our future, to become the best versions of ourselves." He explained, and with the snap of his fingers, the statue shapeshifted into a beast-looking creature.

Carlos winced at it and had the urge to pick on his fingers as they walked by it. Evie sighed and took his hand to separate it from his cuticles.

"Stop. You are gonna get an infection in your fingers if you keep pulling them." She said, pouting.

"I know, I know. But that statue makes me think of mom. It's not really pleasant."

"I get it Los, but we are no longer on the island, ok? Things are way different than our parents made us believe." She sighed. "My mother used to tell me that the Auradon kids were vicious and would never accept me as a princess, but Ben did, so there is hope."

Carlos blushed slightly at the nickname and nodded. "Yeah, I guess."

Jay caught a glimpse of them and smirked. Maybe she was right, maybe things were better than what they thought.

When they arrived at the interior of the school, a boy with glasses welcomed them and explained how the rooming worked.

"The boy's room is in the western isle, while the girl's room is in the eastern isle." He said, feeling nervous at the two girls who were so close to him (that were actually trying to catch a glimpse of the list he was holding).

"Why are they separated?" Jay wondered as he crossed his arms.

"Uh-- because it could be risky. If there are couples and stuff." He noticed the kids rolling their eyes at the answer. "I know, it's dumb." He felt the need to add.

The four of them waved at each other and left to their respective rooms.

Evie smirked at Mal.

"We are sharing a room." She commented on the obvious, as they reached the door that led to it.

Mal snickered. "Yeah, I heard."

Evie had enough with that answer and opened the door to the dorm with a smile. Inside it was shiny, and the air smelled clean.

"This room is so pretty!" Evie commented, placing her bags on the bed.

"I think it's a bit too-- luminous." Mal huffed, placing her only bag on her bed.

"Well, I think it's really nice to see the sunlight, but we can close the windows if you want." She said, but before she could turn towards her dormmate, she was already closing the curtains.

The problem came with the fact that Mal was quite short, and there was the biggest window in the room that she couldn't reach. Her face went bright red out of embarrassment as she stood on her tiptoes trying to grab it, swaying her fingers on a desperate attempt to take it, and end her humiliation.

Evie, on the other hand, was tall. She walked up to her and took the handle of the curtain, lowering it enough so Mal could grab it.

However, her face fell when she noticed that she wasn't getting a 'thank you' from her roommate, so she just walked up to her bag and began to empty it.

"Why did you do that?" Mal growled, clenching her fists.

"You looked like you needed it." Evie turned around and noticed the mood of the girl.

"And you wanted to embarrass me because of it? Do you think I am weak?" She hissed once more, rising her voice unnecessarily.

"No, of course not!" Evie rose her hands in a gesture of giving up. "I was trying to lend a helping hand because it would have been worse to leave you jumping around, trying to reach the curtain."

Mal stared at her. "You don't have to pity me."

"I am not pitying you! Goodness! Not all the things that people do for you are out of a negative reason." Evie stomped her feet, losing her cool. "I wanted to help because I felt like it, no analysis behind it." She huffed.

Mal kept her eyes on her, studying each movement. It didn't make sense for her, Mal didn't deserve the help. Most of the time, her mother wouldn't sugarcoat the fact that she didn't care for Mal as long as she wasn't useful. Perhaps, Evie saw her as a good way to approach her own goals, it had to be it because nothing else made sense. Especially not after what happened on the island, at the party.

Mal looked down and tugged her hands into her pockets, which was starting to be an automatic reaction to feeling awkward. She gazed lightly at her and sighed.

"Thank you, then." She nodded, and Evie's eyes sparkled.

"You are welcome!" She smiled and took the last piece of clothing out from her bag. Under it were the books she brought from her old room.

The books were a mix of many subjects, biology, science, magic, literature; anything Evie felt like learning at the moment. She brought enough to keep her occupied for a week, though she was starting to think that, with all the activities she wanted to try, there would be little time to read.

Mal eyed the books and felt amazed by the amount of them. Evie wasn't the kind of girl that gave off the vibe to be a bookworm, though she was in an advanced class back in the isle. But so was Jay, and he wasn't the most brilliant guy either.

Her green eyes sparkled when she noticed a spellbook.

"You brought a magic related book to Auradon?" Mal broke the silence, still wary of Evie being angry after the discussion they had.

Evie yelped and turned around slowly. "I thought it was adequate-- after the whole thing at your mother's old castle, I thought that maybe learning more spells would be useful. You

won't tell anyone from the institution, right?"

Mal laughed at this. "No, why would I? I don't get anything by ratting you out." She shrugged. "I wish I could use a spellbook, though."

"You could try some of the spells." Evie offered, taking one of the books and handing it to her. "I don't know if fairy magic works the same as witch magic, but it may be worth a try."

Mal felt weirded out once more, there were the soft actions again.

"You are weird." Mal sighed, letting out a smile.

"Weird?"

"You are soft. Like, you try to help me, and shit."

Evie pouted. It occurred to her that Mal was never treated with love and tenderness, much less given the permission to act that way.

"Well, if that's weird, then I like being weird." She smiled widely, closing her eyes and causing the room to lit up, even when the curtains were down.

Meanwhile, Jay and Carlos were unpacking in complete silence.

Jay wanted to say something but found that there wasn't much to say. He hadn't spoken to the younger teen before the whole scepter thing happened, except for the few times he had bullied him, and even afterward, they didn't have that much in common.

Carlos, on the other side, was feeling like a deer caged with a lion. Honestly, he felt like pray with mostly everyone because compared to them, he wasn't strong or had high social skills. Jay was the complete opposite to him: tall, strong, and a heartbreaker. He remembered how strong he came off when he arrived for the party at his house, bringing drinks and all. Carlos couldn't bring himself up to talk to him because, deep down, he was scared to make a bad impression if he opened up.

So, without any of them willing to make up a conversation, they stuck with awkward silence and unpacking. The older teen eyed Carlos from over his shoulder and noticed how he took out a few scientific materials and placed it neatly on his new desk.

"You brought nerd stuff?" He commented, noticing how rude his question sounded.

Carlos winced and frowned, still giving Jay his back. "Yeah, so? I wasn't planning on staring at the ceiling on my spare time."

Jay smiled, it was interesting to see him in a defensive mode. He sounded cold and sarcastic all the time, which was a good defense mode. But it also made him feel guilty for causing him to sense danger.

"I didn't expect you to have so many-- of those."

"You are not stealing them, got it?" Carlos hissed, and Jay's eyes opened wide.

The statement made him remember his father's obsession with finding a big score and getting out of the island with it. He wanted to find something like a boat or magic object, like Maleficent's scepter, but Jay failed to give him that, and to some extent, it was haunting him. Both because he didn't like the idea of disappointing his father, and because he refused to be like him, obsessed with something he didn't even know if truly existed.

"I wasn't planning to." He shrugged, trying to sound less annoyed than he was. Carlos simply let out a sarcastic snigger, and it was enough to anger the older teen. "Listen, I am trying to get close to you, ok?"

The younger teen turned around, surprised. "Why?" That was too out of character from Mister Bad Boy.

"Because we are in this together. Auradon, and Maleficent's plan, all of that. We are on the same page now."

"No- we are not." Carlos grasped his bag. "You are the predator, and I am the prey, you made that very clear back on the island."

Jay wanted to be angry, but it was painful to hear that he hurt someone. It was true, though. He had bullied him plenty of times before the scepter situation, and he wouldn't admit out loud that he regretted it, because that would be showing his soft side. And it was too soon.

"I know I was a dick to you, but we are no longer on the island." He huffed, frustration growing in his throat. "Can't we start again? Fresh and new."

Carlos rose both eyebrows. "I don't think so. I prefer my walls up, where they are."

"What good is that gonna get you, anyway? We have to sleep in the same room." He stated, giving up and going back to his bag. "Unless you want to sleep on the shower." He joked, but Carlos hummed.

"I might."

And Jay didn't doubt that.

Chapter End Notes

Well, this was the first chapter! I pretty much wanted to settle their relationships and bonds so far, and the way their characters work. Also, I took some creative turns with Ben and Aubrey, changing their personalities to fit a bit better with my own interpretation of the book, so-- yeah.

Like them

Chapter Summary

At their first night on Auradon, the VKs are willing to find the wand whereabouts, but things go out of control.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

That night, Mal and Evie walked up to the boys' room and knocked. Jay opened the door and smirked.

"Missing us already?"

Mal rolled her eyes. "Yeah, right. Let us in, parrot head."

And he did. Both girls entered and Evie let out a gasp. "This is so cool! Your room looks way cozier."

Jay chuckled. "We can change pairs if you want."

As soon as he finished the statement, Carlos walked out of the bathroom fresh and well dressed.

"What are you doing here?" He stiffened.

"Yeah-- what are we doing here, though?" Evie asked as she sat on the bed that, by the looks of it, had Carlos things on.

Mal smiled mischievously and sat on the table. "Glad you asked. Tonight we are going to get the wand."

Jay rose both eyebrows. "Right, how are you planning on doing that? Do you want us to just enter the, wherever it is at, and take it just like that?"

"Yeah, and even if we did, what do we do then?" Carlos leaned on the bathroom door's frame. "Stand still until someone rescues us?"

"We open the barrier with the wand, and my mom will get us out right away." Mal nodded, though she wasn't so sure of that. "The details are not important anyway. Once we got the wand, it's all on our parent's hands."

None of them were sure, especially not Evie. She just arrived, and Auradon was such a nice place. She wasn't sure if she wanted to get rid of that already.

Mal frowned at the lack of response. "C'mon guys, we are doing this because the people here are assholes who trapped our parents for being who they are, treating them like animals. They aren't our friends, they are prissy royalty with their heads too up on their own asses to how the real world looks like. They are little glass people, and we are rocks. If someone should be afraid, it should be them, because we don't have anything to lose."

Once more, there was silence.

"We are rotten, remember?" She sighed, noticing the mood of the room.

"To the core." They cooed, and she let out a sad smile.

"Yeah." She hooped out of the table and sat on one of the chairs. "Now, let's get this wand."

Carlos walked up to the table and took out his computer, typing something on it at full speed while the other two took a seat.

"So, where do we look at? Fairy Godmother's house?" Evie offered.

"It's not a necklace, Evs. A wand as powerful as hers should be on another facility, extremely protected, like a fortress on the woods or a jail." Jay explained, leaning on the back of the chair.

"Or the museum of cultural history." Carlos finally spoke, turning his computer so the rest of the teens could see the screen. "It's 2.3 miles away from here, and it is close to the woods."

"I knew it!" Jay celebrated.

"Good job, Carlos." Mal smirked. "We should get moving, the faster we get this over with, the faster we can leave."

The four of them got up and, with Carlos's computer at hand, they walked out of the school building. The whole situation reminded them all of the scepter mission. The four of them leaving to find a magical stick following a technological device that happens to be Carlos's.

The night was filled with stars, and as they made their to the museum, Mal couldn't help but get caught on the constellations.

"That one is the Big Dipper constellation," Evie explained, walking close to her. "I read in my book that there is a smaller one somewhere, but I can't see it."

"A what?" Mal was suddenly confused.

"A constellation is a group of stars that form a figure. That one happens to be the Big Dipper."

The shorter teen looked up and stared in awe. "Woah, so that's how stars look like. The sky is way prettier without clouds."

"It sure is." Evie nodded.

Mal wished, deep down, to paint those beautiful light dots somewhere. On her new notebook's (given by the school) cover, her jacket, everywhere.

"If you want, I can lend you the book I saw them at." She offered. "So you can recognize them easier."

Mal looked at her with a plain expression and nodded. Yeah, she would like that.

Meanwhile, Carlos walked with Jay right behind him.

"You are quite the cool guy, you know?" The older teen commented. "It's the second time you guide us to where we need to go, and never look afraid."

Carlos was taken by surprise at this comment. "Huh? If you are trying to make fun of me-"

"Nah dude, I'm not sarcastic like you, it doesn't work with me." He shrugged, walking faster to catch up with him. "I am being honest."

"The son of Jafar being honest?"

"Oh, for fucks sake. We are not our parents, man." Jay rolled his eyes "You are not the dog crazy lady that Cruella is, and I am not the power crazy theft that Jafar is."

Carlos shrugged. "I guess not. So, you truly think I am cool?"

Jay smiled, finally getting through to him. "Yeah, I do. For a nerd, you are a pretty amazing one." He smiled and patted his back.

"Woah, thanks." Carlos rolled his eyes, though letting a smirk appear in his lips. "You're cool too, for someone as cheeky as you."

Jay let out a laugh, and the younger teen felt a warmth in his chest he couldn't quite explain. It was amusing, that's for sure. But that didn't mean they were friends.

It was too soon.

As they arrived at the museum, they noticed guards standing inside, chatting, and enjoying a cup of coffee by the object occupying the middle of the entrance: a sewing wheel.

"Shit-- of course there was security." Jay growled, pressing himself and an arm over Mal, to hide them from the guardians.

"Evie, do you have a spell for this?" Carlos whispered, and the girl sighed.

"I am sorry guys, if there is one that my mother has, I don't know it." She shivered slightly. "Mal--?"

The girl frowned. "I may-- but I don't know if it will work."

"It's worth a try." Jay whispered, nodding at her

She stared at the sewing wheel and closed her eyes, cursing at herself for not paying enough attention when Mother Gothel would talk about poetry. She thought long and hard and finally opened her mouth.

"Prick the finger, prick it deep. Send my enemies off to sleep." She commanded.

The four of them stared in silence, and for a few moments, nothing happened. Until all the guards stopped on their tracks and looked at the artifact with hypnotized stares. The five of them walked in line to the pointy wheel, and one by one got their fingers pricked to finally fall asleep over one another.

Their eyes (even Mal's) opened wide in amazement, and Jay hugged her tightly. "You did it, Mal! You used magic." He smiled.

"I did it!" She hugged him back, which was strange, but it was a celebration! No need to think too hard about it.

Evie and Carlos felt like they shouldn't stare at this intimate moment, but did anyways, holding silly smiles on their faces. It was strange to see them so touchy-feely, and Evie felt the need to stretch her arm and wrap it around Carlos's shoulders. And of course, she did.

"Alright, enough sappiness." Mal smiled. "Let's get this wand." A wave of adrenaline washed over her, and she proceeded to open the door with a proud spark in her eyes.

It soon disappeared when she was unable to open it, even after shaking it frantically. She crossed her arms and frowned. "Aight, you go now, Jay."

He smiled and took something from under his beanie, a pin. He walked up to the door and struggled a bit with the lock before a click was heard. He pushed it softly, and the heavy wood doors opened.

"After you, my fellow shorties." He smiled.

The other three entered, and he left the door slightly open, so they could get out easily after they were done.

It was creepy to walk through the museum at night when most of the lights were off. The statues seemed a bit too real, and the paintings felt a bit too obscure, even when there was no darkness on them. The iconic artifacts that once were part of a fairytale were now exposed under glass boxes, and the teens felt an uneasy feeling as they passed by them, it felt like they were unworthy of walking among them.

A fur coat, a lamp, an apple; everything was horribly painful to pass by, and Mal felt like she wanted to barf as the group walked to the section of wax statues.

The fact that that the building had a section dedicated to the villains felt like satire. Their stories were plastered on paintings, and their bodies were sculpted with highly disturbing attention to detail. The kids were unable to keep walking when they saw the figures, these twisted versions of their parents that seemed way scarier than how they actually looked like.

Jafar stood tall on his red clothes, and his always angry expression, holding a scepter that Jay only distinguished from stories once told by his own father. Cruella looked like a ghost, with a strong presence and the calculating face of a woman who saw it all, and lived through everything. The Evil Queen reminded Evie of a scary painting, with her crown decorating her head and the once poisoned apple on top of her hand, and eyes that could pierce the soul of anyone watching.

But the whole show was taken by Maleficent, standing on the middle with her horns and huge cape, black as night, holding a scepter, and with a crow standing on her shoulder. Her eyes were dead, and her skin was greenish. She looked like a zombie, and Mal felt sick because it was too realistic for her, causing her arms to have goosebumps.

"This is-- just like a horror movie." Jay stuttered, feeling sweat running down his forehead.

Carlos felt like his vision was getting blurry. He could hear his mother's voice in his head, so close that it could have been the statue calling out for him. "We need to leave." He whined, and Evie nodded, taking both boys' hands tightly yet caringly, and dragging them out of the room.

Mal stood silently, feeling like her head was pounding. She suddenly had the impression that things were out of her control, much less of her mother. She walked up to her statue and touched it gently.

She looked up and found those dead eyes that appeared to be staring and judging her, even when she knew well that her mother was far away on the island. Mal looked down at the plaque and frowned.

Mal couldn't do magic, she wasn't cold and precise (even when she tried to convince herself otherwise), and she certainly didn't look like a threat to society. Her mother, on the other hand, was powerful, scary, and heartless. And most importantly, she never expected anything from Mal, she was in a constant state of disappointment.

"I'll make you proud, ok? I'll do it right this time." She promised, and it felt better, somehow. "I'll show you that I deserve to be standing by your side."

"Mal?" Evie whispered, peaking from the door. "Let's go, we found the wand."

The shorter teen turned around and nodded, walking fast towards the blue-haired girl and making their way to the wand. The boy stood to wait for them outside the Wand Room, and Carlos looked paler than usual.

"You ok, buddy?" Jay whispered.

"I wanna throw up." He said, staring at his shoes.

"Understandable." The taller teen sighed, rubbing Carlos's back softly.

Surprisingly for both, the younger one leaned on the touch, and Jay felt startled but didn't say anything that could upset him, neither withdrew his hand from where it stood.

When the two girls arrived, he took his hand away slowly as to not startle him. And he hated himself for thinking that way, as if he was treating with a stray cat.

"Alright, let's get the wand."

"That's gonna be a problem." Carlos finally spoke as he clearly felt better. "The wand is surrounded by a force field."

The four teens walked into the room and saw the wand being held in the air, protected, as Carlos said. Mal frowned.

"Can't you hack it?" She offered, rising an eyebrow.

Carlos looked at her with an unamused stare. "It's a force field, not an electric field. It must be magic related, that's your area." He pointed at the girls.

Evie frowned. "Maybe it's an illusion? I mean, it would be silly if they truly had something as dangerous as this here." She pointed out.

The four of them stood in silence.

"Well, we don't have any other option." Jay shrugged, as he sneaked down the golden gates.

The three of them looked at him with worried looks, but Mal nodded, and Jay followed her order.

He stretched his hand and touched it, which immediately sent him flying to the other side of the room. The alarms on the whole building went off, and the four of them got on their flight instincts. Evie and Carlos helped Jay up, and the four of them ran the same way they came from.

As they made their way out, Carlos stopped and walked up to the phone that had started to ring, feeling adrenaline flooding his veins. He picked it up and thickened his voice as much as he could.

"Hello." He stuttered, looking around as the voice from the other side spoke. "Ok, just give me one second."

His hands flew around the papers on the reception desk, searching for something, and when he finally found what he was looking for, a keyboard, he smashed a combination onto it. After a few seconds, the alarm stopped blasting.

"Ah-- yeah, yeah-- No, false alarm." He sighed, being able to breathe again. "It was a malfunction in the-- uh--" He thought of something, a term that sounded professional enough. "LM614 chip in one of the circuits." That should do the trick. And it did.

"Yeah- ok, thank you. Good night to you too." He huffed and hung up.

The other three stared in awe.

"What?" He blushed at the attention.

"I stand with what I said earlier man, you are so cool." Jay commented.

"A true mastermind." Evie celebrated.

Mal felt warm, even when the night was cold, and the place was dark. She couldn't help but smirk. "Aight, let's get out, I'll try to wake these guys up then."

And they did, they stood outside and Mal closed her eyes again, trying to concentrate. "Time goes by and is no slack, bring the sleeping ones' conscious back." She hummed, and after a few seconds, the men woke up.

The four teens ran away, back to the school building, and each returned to their rooms.

"Well, that was disappointing." Mal growled, throwing herself on her bed, still on her leather-covered clothes. "Now, we are gonna have to go to school tomorrow." She protested covering her face.

Evie smiled. "Well, at least we can plan our next move better, right?"

"Yeah. Stealing the wand just like that is out of the list, I guess. Unless we find a way to make a hole through it that lasts more than two seconds."

"Yeah." Evie, already on her pajamas, sat on her bed. "Do you think we will manage to do this?"

"I want to believe we will, because if I don't I may lose my mind." She confessed and regretted it automatically. "Because I will be far from ruling the world." She saved, but Evie knew better.

"Yeah, we wouldn't want that." She commented and laid down.

Meanwhile, the boys entered their room (which was farther from the entrance than the girls), and Jay fell in his bed with a loud thud. The mattress accommodated his body immediately, and he felt his eyelids heavy and itchy from tiredness. He eyed Carlos walking slowly to the bed and letting himself sink onto it.

"I thought you would sleep on the shower." Jay joked, but the only answer he got was a soft snore that made him smile. "Night, buddy."

Chapter End Notes

Kind of short chapter, but I couldn't put it with any of the others heh.

First day

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next morning, when Evie woke up, she expected to be back at the island, but found rays of sunlight piercing through the curtains and a soft mattress instead. She stretched and looked to the side, seeing Mal snoring loudly on her own bed.

Evie's phone (which was given to her and the others to keep themselves connected) went off, and she sat up, turning the alarm off.

As an answer, Mal groaned. "What the fuck was that?" She murmured.

"Alarm. It means we are gonna get late to class if we don't get ready now." She hopped out of the bed and walked up to her closet. "You may want to take a shower, though." Evie offered.

The purple-haired teen frowned and sat up. A warm shower sounded good, but it was too early for her to want to do anything. The floor was warm under Mal's bare feet, and it took her by surprise.

"Why is the floor warm?" Mal commented.

"There must be a heater system. I saw on a documentary about the school that said that they used heaters to avoid students getting ill." Evie answered, walking into the bathroom. "It goes all the way to here, too! Pretty cool, right?" She smiled.

Yeah, it was pretty cool, but Mal decided to just smirk and roll her eyes at the new information.

As Evie closed the door to the bathroom, the shorter teen looked at her reflection on the windows and noticed how greasy her hair looked. Back on the island, getting a shower was a once-a-week activity. She picked a streak of hair and noticed how easily it stuck out from the rest. She wouldn't say it out loud, but it made her sort of embarrassed that she arrived with her hair on that state.

Evie was out of the bathroom soon, and Mal entered in a flash. Once inside, she felt like she entered one of those fake bathrooms on the home depo magazines that got thrown at the island, and were all over the place on the goblin cafe. Everything was shiny and steamy, which made her uncomfortable.

Peeling out the clothes was a rough activity, it felt like taking away her armor. She turned on the shower and spent a whole minute trying to calibrate the water. When she sat on the bathtub, she felt dumb.

Everything, the whole situation, felt like a big joke. She sat in silence and placed her knees up to her chest.

"Mal? I get that showering is great, but we need to get to class in ten minutes." Evie warned.

Mal sighed and took the shampoo. She supposed there wasn't much to do, and moping around wasn't gonna get her anywhere, so she finished taking a bath and walked out with her hair still wet.

Outside, Evie was already dressed and brushing her hair while humming softly. She wore a baby-blue buttoned-up shirt and a pair of skinny jeans, yet kept her combat boots and her signature necklace.

She already looked like a princess, and Mal knew that she fitted in just right. Her, on the other hand-- had mostly leather on her closet. She walked up to it and frowned, finding a huge collection of plain white t-shirts, ripped jeans (even the jorts were somewhat ripped), and leather jackets. There were some plaid shirts and a hoodie that she was pretty sure Jay stole for her.

"Uh-- what do you wear for a princess school's first day?" Mal asked, mostly to herself than Evie.

"Well, what would you wear to island school?"

Mal stopped and turned around with an awkward look on her face. "Leather?"

Evie chuckled. "So, the exact same thing you wore yesterday?"

"Is there something wrong with that?" Mal frowned, feeling insulted.

"Well, no." she shrugged. "But it's gonna be kind of warm, spring is starting. You are gonna get suffocated by the leather jackets. Wear a plaid! It's pretty badass. It's a fresher alternative to leather."

"You know a lot about-- here, huh?" Mal commented, taking out the clothes of the closet.

"I prepared myself! Turns out, there are a lot of books about Auradon that got thrown into the island. And documentals on TV." She commented, putting on a red lipstick that her mother gave her as a parting gift.

"The Auradon channel is the only thing the TV back home has." Mal chuckled.

"Yeah, I know. I wonder what channels are in here."

Mal got dressed fast, so much so that Evie didn't even notice when it happened.

"Must be as prissy as the people in here." She shrugged.

"I love that look!" Evie commented, smiling at Mal.

She was wearing a white t-shirt under a plaid shirt, and a pair of jeans, with the only pair of boots she brought. "Yeah? I find it pretty average." She shrugged.

"Average isn't bad, silly." Evie patted her shoulder. "Sometimes, it can be a cool look on you."

And just like that, they walked out of the room with their plain black bags, the ones given by the school.

The boys' morning was a bit different.

Jay woke up first and stared at the ceiling for a while. He considered taking a shower but he found it unnecessary. He didn't smell that bad.

However, when Carlos woke up and looked so fresh after taking a bath the night before, he felt self-conscious. He was a heartbreaker! He wouldn't be able to break hearts if he smelled like trash and had oil-looking hair. So he hopped off the bed.

"I call dibs on the bathroom!" He commented as he rushed to it.

Carlos was too sleepy to care, so he simply got up and examined his clothes. He wouldn't accept it if you told him, but just like his mom, he had a quite eccentric sense of fashion. Perhaps that was why he got along with Evie so well.

All the prototypes of a new fashion line from his mother would end up being Carlos's, even the ones that were too unfinished to be actual clothes.

He stared at the pieces of clothing and took a few, neatly placing them on his bed. A black t-shirt, red jeans, a white jacket with fake fur on the collar and hood, and a pair of black boots that gave the final touch to his outfit.

Back on the island, he would mostly wear leather, because it was always cold and that cloth could protect him from the weather. But here, there was no use for leather, because the climate was mostly warm. He looked at his reflection on the full body mirror by the door and smirked.

"Woah, man, we are going to school, not a party." Jay commented, walking out of the bathroom with a towel on and his long hair watering his back.

Carlos turned around to answer with a witty comment, but his face shifted at the sight. "Please tell me you have something on under the towel."

Jay looked down, then back to the younger teen, and chuckled. Carlos rolled his eyes and took his bag.

"I'll wait for you outside." He commented and left, closing the door behind him.

The taller boy smirked and walked up to his side of the room. Oppositely from Carlos, his clothes were all over the floor and some even on his desk. He took three random pieces of cloth and put them in. A black shirt that had some weird logo on, a pair of jeans and a leather jacket that he decided to wrap around his waist. Once he was out, he placed his elbow on Carlos's shoulder, noticing the extra inches he had compared to Mal.

"Let's get some learning," Jay exclaimed as they began to walk. "Wait, do you know where we are getting this class?"

Carlos seemed taken by surprise. "They sent us a class schedule, didn't you receive it?"

"Right, our new phones. I didn't even turn on mine." He shrugged.

"Of course he didn't." Carlos thought, taking out his own phone "Just, follow my lead." He finally spoke, and Jay nodded with his always chill expression.

The four of them met in the classroom and sat down in pairs. The girls sat together, and the boys on the desk parallel to them.

"Good morning, kids!" Fairy Godmother spoke, clapping her hands together and causing them all of them to wince. "How did you sleep?"

The answer was a not so happy groan. Enough for her, anyways.

"Let's begin with some easy questions, okay? To get on track!" She commented, moving out of the way for the teens to see the chalkboard.

Two questions stood in the middle of the green background, and as soon as the four of them finished reading it, they felt a stung of indignation. How dumb did these people think they were? Fairy Godmother noticed their expressions and decided that it meant that they were confused.

"Ok, we will be going to answer some basic questions, they may be just review for you, I'm sure!" The teens kept on their bored glares." Right, let's begin! The first question is: if someone hands you a crying baby, do you: A, curse it; B, lock it on a tower; C, give it a bottle; or D, carve out its heart."

"If you come near, I will do D to you." Mal whispered doodling something on her notebook and causing Evie to snicker.

"What was that?" The lady asked, truly curious.

"The answer is C, give it a bottle." She answered aloud, making the lady clap out of happiness.

"Good job, sweetie!"

"You are on fire, girl." Jay commented, making Carlos smirk. "I would have never guessed!"

The four of them chuckled and Fairy Godmother smiled at the image. It was surprising to her to see them so calm and collected, just like normal teenagers in a class they don't quite like. It was somewhat amusing and gave her the sense that not everything was lost.

As she turned around to ask the next question, the doors of the classroom opened and all eyes went to the person standing on the entrance. A girl was there, wearing a bob cut decorated

with a big bow, and a light blue dress. She jogged to the lady standing in front of the chalkboard and yelped while passing by the teens.

"Hello, dear!" Fairy Godmother spoke, leaning forward to see what her daughter brought.

"Hi." She murmured. "You need to sign up an early submission for the coronation." The girl spoke in a rush, staring at the villains sitting on the desks.

Her eyes were moving like crazy from teen to teen as if they would stand up and beat her if she didn't keep an eye on them, or something.

Mal's stare was suddenly stapled to her. "Why would the Fairy Godmother need to sign something for the coronation?" she thought, biting onto her pencil.

"Dear students, this is my daughter, Jane." The lady spoke without taking her eyes off from the form she was signing.

"Mom, no-" Jane whined.

"It's okay! Jane, this is everyone." The lady gave her the forms and turned her around, causing her face to turn bright red.

"Hi--" she muttered. "It's okay-- don't mind me." She began to walk out, visibly trembling. "As you were." She finished in the same volume as her greeting and left in a hurry.

Mal suddenly felt interested, the girl was extremely shaky and easy to scare. Perhaps she could lead them to the wand.

"Alright, next question! If you find a bottle of poison, you: A, put in on the king's wine--"

Mal stopped listening after that and looked down at her notebook. Maybe not everything was lost, perhaps Jane could be of help to get the wand. She passed the page and began to scribble some bullet points.

Meanwhile, Jay looked over at the girls and noticed how pretty Evie looked.

"Dude, you are a lucky one." He patted the younger teen's back.

"What are you talking about?" Carlos rose both eyebrows.

"Evie's really pretty, no wonder she is your girlfriend, you two are the nerds and fashion experts here." Jay commented, smiling.

"What?" Carlos whisper-shouted. "We are not dating."

Jay's eyes widened. "Ah-- I thought you were. The nicknames and the face you did when I said she was hot back in the island-- I thought you two were, you know, together."

Carlos's face got flustered. "We are just friends, she was the first real friend I ever had. And she is just very nice and sweet, so she gives nicknames and such."

And then, the older teen understood. "You like her." He nodded.

"No! I mean-- I guess? I don't know, maybe. How would I know, anyway? I never had many friends so maybe I just think I like her when it's just friendly love?"

"Well, kiss her." He shrugged. "It does the trick. If you enjoy the kiss, you like her, if you don't, it was a false alarm."

Carlos blushed even more. "Kiss her? Are you kidding?"

"No?"

Both stayed silent, staring at each other with the same confused expression.

"You never had your first kiss, did you?" Jay smiled widely, and even though there wasn't mockery in his tone, Carlos wanted to fall to the floor and be eaten by it.

"Shut up!" Carlos growled.

"Mister De Vil, do you wish to answer the question?" Fairy Godmother offered.

"Ah--" He couldn't really say no, so he just looked at the chalkboard and sighed. "C, turn it to the authorities."

"Correct!" She smiled.

"Good job, Los." Evie winked at him, and he blushed lightly, causing Jay to smirk at him and begin to mess his hair.

Carlos took many things seriously, some of them where his science items, his clothes, and his hair. And his first reaction was to try and get Jay off him, but it was on.

Jay began to laugh and keep messing his hair, with his knuckles destroying his nicely placed hairstyle.

"Jay, stop it!" He growled.

"Oh, your hair is so soft!" He laughed.

"Stop that! Do want me to bite you? I'm gonna bite you!" He warned.

The girls giggled, and Mal smiled softly. Jay was a puppy man, even if he usually came off as an ass, and she was glad that he could be so touchy with someone else apart from her.

Evie was also happy for Carlos because he wasn't evil, just scared. And she wanted more than anything for him to have someone to feel calm with, someone that would be there when she wasn't available.

Meanwhile, Fairy Godmother frowned and stomped the floor, gaining the attention of all the teens.

"Boys, I am gonna encourage you to use this energy on the Tourney field."

Jay rose both eyebrows, stopping suddenly. "What's that?" Carlos used his confusion to bite his hand, and Jay hissed, letting him go.

"It's the school's sport!"

"Yeah, figures." Jay rubbed his hand, glaring at Carlos. "What sport is that, anyway?"

"It's like rugby and lacrosse, but mixed into one big ball of testosterone," Evie commented. "I used to watch the matches on TV." she excused herself as all eyes were on her.

Mal rose an eyebrow. "Don't tell me you are a sports girl too."

"Nah, not my area." She laughed awkwardly. "The guys were hot, though." She smirked, causing Mal to snort.

"I could try that." Jay thought out loud. "Wanna come?" He offered Carlos, and he frowned.

"I don't like sports." He sighed. "I was always get picked last at PE for a reason, Jay."

"Yeah, but you are quite agile! I saw you back in the fortress." He whispered the last part, and Carlos squinted.

"That was because my life was in danger."

"Oh, come on! It'll be cool." He shook him.

Carlos pouted and looked over at Evie, who gave him a thumbs up with a smile.

"Trying won't kill you, right?" She offered.

"Yeah, besides, you'll be with Jay," Mal commented, pointing him with his thumb. "He's like a bodyguard."

"A bodyguard that used to bully me." Carlos thought but shook the idea away. He kind of appreciated his attempts to be friendly, so he swallowed his bitterness and sighed. "Fine." He nodded.

Jay smiled and squeezed his shoulders. "We'll be unstoppable, fella."

"You'll be unstoppable, I'll be easily stopped." Carlos said with the plainest face, causing Jay to chuckle loudly.

After their first class, the four teens found that their schedules were almost entirely different, and they only shared a few classes, so they arranged a meeting at eight to wrap up.

Mal walked through the halls, eyeing her schedule. She was excited when she read that she was going to have a subject related to drawing and painting, which was a hobby she had back

in the island, but swallowed the thought away when her mind got invaded with the voice of her mother. She gripped onto the strap of her bag and walked up to her locker.

Her locker was plainly blue and boring, and she groaned when she found more supplies inside it. She examined the new things: a pencil case with coloring pencils, a few pins with the school emblem, and more notebooks. She was about to grab one of the pins when a voice visibly startled her.

"Sorry! I didn't mean to scare you." Ben apologized, scratching the back of his neck.

"Prince Ben--" Mal murmured. "Hi, something wrong?"

"Not at all." He shook his head. "I was actually looking for you guys, but couldn't exactly find you."

"Well, we have pretty different classes so it will be complicated to find us all at the same time during-- school time, I guess." She shrugged. "What did you need?"

Ben felt incredibly intimidated by Mal as if she would punch him in the face if he did anything wrong. Even being so small, she had the energy of someone two times her height. Which was the exact opposite to him.

"I wanted to know how you guys were doing." He smiled, causing a pair of dimples to appear on each side of his mouth.

"It's cool, I guess. Good Deed's class is kind of dumb, though." She commented, closing her locker.

"I know, but my dad insisted on putting you on it." He smiled sheepishly. "He insists on a lot of things he thinks are good-- he is usually wrong."

"Eh? Problems in paradise?" She joked.

"You could say that," his face shifted into embarrassment. "My dad wanted me to be captain of the Tourney team, but I don't really like it." He shrugged. "Sometimes I think he wants me to be the better version of him, of course, he doesn't do it out of being a bad person! But he is just-- oblivious of other's feelings."

"Most people here are." She shrugged. "It's not like they had a reason to consider them when you live in a perfect world."

Ben understood her thoughts, he had noticed this too. His friends, his parents, even Aubrey seemed to be blinded, or pretended not to notice most of the problems on the kingdom, and even outside it-- especially outside it.

"Yeah, you are right. But they aren't evil, at least most of them, just blind. When I get to be king, I'll try to help as many people as I can, and inspire others to open their eyes, too."

Mal smiled. She wondered if he was too confident, or too naive, but whatever it was, he had his heart in the right place.

"You'll be an amazing king, then." She said, looking down briefly as if saying the compliment was challenging for her.

Ben blushed. "That if the council accepts me!" he snickered. "But, thank you."

It was strange, the whole situation felt like a déjà-vu. And then, Mal had an idea to get out of the silence they had gotten into.

"Hey, can I paint my locker?" She asked.

Ben was taken aback and opened his eyes widely. "Of course!"

"Really? Isn't it like, a huge deal because it's school property?"

"It's a piece of metal," He poked the door of the locker. "If the school dislikes it, they can change it." He shrugged. "You have my permission!"

"So, if they lecture me about it, I can blame you, right?" She smirked.

"As long as you don't draw something--" He did a weird gesture, and Mal burst out in laughter, immediately putting both hands on her mouth.

"Sorry." She snorted. "I won't do anything like that, don't worry."

"Good." He smiled and let himself chuckle. "Have a good day, then! I have to get going to Turney practice, or my dad will get suspicious that I'd want to drop out, or something." He rolled his eyes and smiled.

"And we wouldn't want that." She smiled playfully.

"We wouldn't." He nodded and left while waving.

It was strange, their whole conversation didn't feel forced, and Mal felt in control. Though she would need to revisit it and feel ashamed of oversharing, later, more specifically, that night.

Ben arrived at the Turney field and his face lit up when he noticed Jay and Carlos talking with the coach.

"Guys! You are joining the team?" He asked, jogging up to them with a sweet smile.

"That's the idea." Jay smiled and placed his arm over Carlos's shoulders which he answered by growling. Jay took out his arm immediately. "Wish us luck!"

"You'll be great! Just concentrate on the goal and trust your teammates." He stopped, noticing the angry stares on them. "Or-- me. Trust me." He smiled again, looking up at both Carlos and Jay who were taller than him.

"We will." Jay nodded, and their little chat was interrupted by the coach's whistle.

"Alright, everyone to the field! We are gonna have a practice match! Ben, give Jay and Carlos a place on the grouping!"

"Yes, coach!" Ben answered and looked at the teens. "Which one of you is willing to kick their way out?" Jay smiled widely, and Ben gave him a helmet. "center." He winked.

"I don't want to do this, though." Carlos complained.

"Do defense, then. When I first started, I was defense all the time." Ben explained, giving him a shield and a helmet.

"You didn't want to play, either?" Carlos rose both eyebrows as he put on the helmet.

The prince sighed and stared out at the field, where the players were getting ready. "There are a lot of things I don't wanna do, you know? But as the future king, I had to be the star player, and the class president, and stuff."

It took him by surprise how vulnerable he presented himself as. Carlos would have never opened up the way he did, and he felt somewhat flattered that Ben would tell him such a personal thing.

"Well, as the future king, shouldn't you do whatever you want?" Carlos asked.

"I have to be an example for the rest of the class." Ben shrugged. "When I become king, it will be even worse."

Carlos frowned and patted his back. "But, isn't it kind of contradictive that you are giving the example of not doing what you want in order to look good?"

Ben's eyes opened wide, and he bit his lower lip. "Yeah-- pretty much. Add that to the list of things I want to change when I get to be king." He smiled sadly.

"Boys! Enough talking, get to the field." The coach screamed, and the two teens jogged to the court.

The match was a mess, especially because it seemed like everyone was against Carlos and Jay during the whole game. Yet, the latter was amazing and managed to score five goals, causing the cheerleaders watching to cheer and compliment him. Even Aubrey, who was the captain of the girls, clapped and jumped out of happiness, annoying some player on the process.

At the end of the game, the team came close to the coach and he cleared his throat loudly.

"Jay, what do you call that?" The coach spoke.

The teen stared at him dumbfounded. "I--"

"Because I call that raw talent. Come find me later and we can discuss the rules of the game in detail!" The man smiled, and Jay's eyes widened. The man patted his shoulder. "Welcome to the team, son."

Jay turned to Carlos with the silliest smile and Ben congratulated him. It was cute to the younger teen to see Jay so excited about that, and he wondered that, perhaps, what he was truly happy with being seen and getting accepted.

"Sorry that you didn't get picked." Jay said, smiling at Carlos.

"Ha-- I'd call that luck. The last thing we need on our team is another villain kid, especially a weak one." Chad spat while walking by them.

Ben frowned. "Chad, go drink water, you get annoying when you are dehydrated." He growled, and simply glared at him until he disappeared between the rest of the team.

"What an ass." Jay hissed. "Who the fuck was that?"

"Chad, son of Cinderella." He introduced him.

Carlos sighed. "It's whatever, Jay. Don't get so heated." He huffed.

"He doesn't need to treat you like that! Someone has to kick him in the shin so he can--"

"Don't be a hypocrite, Jay." Carlos growled and walked away with annoyance.

Both older teens stared as he left, and Ben's face was filled with confusion. "Did something happen between you two?"

Jay wanted to say that they fought on the way there, something that was easy to fix. But he was starting to think that every time they reached a nice spot on their growing friendship, Carlos would retract back to his past mistakes. And the worst part was that Jay couldn't be angry at that, because, if there was someone to blame for this, it was him.

"I was pretty shitty with him back in the island-- I've been trying to make it up to him-- but every time I get close, he pushes me away." He sighed, taking off his helmet.

Ben looked at him and noticed a certain sadness in his eyes. "It's a huge injury, it's gonna take time to heal. But, in the meantime, just keep trying. Eventually, he won't push you away anymore."

Jay looked down at him and smiled. "I hope so, we have to sleep in the same room. One day I'll wake up with my leg stabbed by a pencil, or something."

Both guys snickered, and the bell rang.

Classes began.

It was amusing for Evie to have chemistry as a subject, instead of magic potions or something like that. She sat on one of the desks and stared as the teacher introduced a topic. It had to do with maths, which she wasn't such a fan of, but she sure had a huge memory.

When she was younger, her mother used to tell her that her mind was like a polaroid camera, always taking in images and information, and storing it flawlessly.

A boy sat by her, startling her slightly. It was the same guy who gave them the indications to their room, and he waved at her sheepishly.

"Ah! I know you, you are- Doug, right?" Evie smiled.

"Yeah! You remembered." He blushed.

"I have a good memory!" She poked her head lightly. "I'm Evie."

The guy nodded. "I know. How has your day been so far?"

Evie let out a loud sigh. "So good! It feels like I am in a dream, you know? And I really don't want to wake up."

Doug smiled as a blush covered his cheeks. Evie was such a vision. Her eyes sparkled and her voice had a sing-song tone every time she spoke; it was breathtaking. He stared casually as she began to talk about the room and something about a warm floor.

Chad entered the room while the girl spoke, visibly annoyed, and sat on the table behind the two.

"What's up with that guy?" Evie whispered to Doug, changing the subject of her rambling abruptly.

The latter eyed Chad from over his shoulder and shrugged. "Who knows, he is super unstable. Average pretty boy, and super dumb."

"Who's his heritage?" She asked, truly curious.

"Cinderella and Prince Charming." He whispered back. "Mommy's little boy, and a whole brat."

Evie frowned. If she was right, and she knew she was, Cinderella used to be a servant who managed to get out of that horrible life after falling in love with the prince, who saw above the social classes and wanted her for who she truly was. But it was shocking to see that such a sweet love story gave birth to someone like-- Chad.

He was leaning on his chair, and eyeing a pair of girls who giggled as soon as he winked towards them. Her face went slightly red out of anger, and Doug frowned.

"Don't tell me you like him." He complained.

"What? No." She huffed. "And even if I did, it's none of our business." She sighed and leaned over the desk. Suddenly, she wasn't in the mood to make friends anymore. "Sorry." She sighed

"I was trying to be nice, no need to act so rough." Doug grumbled.

"I know, sorry- I just got in a bad mood, that's all."

"Well, don't take it out on me, you know?" He sighed dramatically.

Evie turned around, angrily. "I already said sorry." She frowned and he was about to open his mouth again, but she pouted. "You know what? Leave it."

"But--"

"She said to leave it, got that, moron?" Chad spat, taking him by the shirt and throwing him off his chair.

"Hey! I was sitting there!" Doug growled.

"Yeah, not anymore. Go find another girl to pester, asshole." Chad growled, sitting on his old seat and turning to Evie. "You ok there, baby girl?" He smirked.

"I'm fine." She forced herself to avoid rolling her eyes and sighed. "Thanks."

At that moment, Chad noticed her looks. She was extremely pretty and dressed like a princess, but there was something strange about her.

"Wait-- you are one of the villain kids, right?" He hissed. "The Evil Queen's daughter! No wonder you were angry at Doug! He isn't a prince, and you are probably a gold digger." He spat.

Evie's eyes widened, and a sting of discomfort struck her. Was that how people saw her mother in Auradon? Her mother did tell her a lot that men were mostly evil, but money and prestige weighted more than feelings. She was suddenly pale, was she truly-- a gold digger?

"How dare you speak about my mom that way! You don't hear me calling your mom a doormat!" She complained.

Of course, the teacher only winced when she rose her voice, not when Chad was doing a mess, because it was her. The professor turned around and frowned so intensely that his forehead looked like a reverse set of mountains.

"Miss Grimhilde," the man growled. "will you do me the favor and step in to answer the question on the blackboard? Perhaps this is just a review for you." His voice was filled with prejudice, and it made Evie's blood boil.

Chad snorted, laying his head on his hand. "Good luck with that, golddigger."

Golddigger? Fuck him! Who did he think he was? She walked up to the teacher and yanked the marker off his hand.

"Sure." She hissed and stood in front of the board. "The average atomic weight of silver." She read out loud and closed her eyes.

One of the many books she had read almost two years back was minerals and gemstones. It had information about everything that could be carved out of a cave; from bronze to diamonds, and it was Evie's favorite book because it had a special part where it focused on

the spiritual charge that certain gems held. She went back to page fourteen, Silver, and after a few seconds, her hand was moving, causing the marker to squeak.

A whole equation was written on the blackboard before the teacher had time to open his mouth, and at the end of it was the number 107.9 MU, which answered the question.

"Wow--" The teacher let out. "That is correct." He nodded, feeling extremely embarrassed. "It was a mistake to underestimate--"

"A villain?" She said with a crooked grin on her face. "Don't do it again." she placed the marker on his desk and walked back to her seat, to a surprised Chad.

"You-- are pretty good, huh." He suddenly was flirty.

"Fuck off, will you?" She smiled at him, getting up and sitting on his old seat, alone. Doug walked up and sat by Chad, both in very awkward silence.

If the guys at this school were all as shitty as those two, then she may as well be single and happy. Maybe Mal was right, maybe they were indeed just prissy royalty, even if the thought made Evie's heart hurt.

That day ended on a pretty disappointing note, Mal couldn't catch Jane to talk to her, Carlos had been convinced by Ben to try on the track team (which he was mostly tricked to accept), Jay managed to get into the team, alright, but as he walked out of the field he saw the other teammates whispering on his back, and Evie had discovered that people in Auradon could still be shitty.

The four of them were laying on the beds of the girls, staring at the ceiling.

"I hate this fucking place." Jay huffed. "The guys on the team are all shitty, minus Ben, poor guy."

Mal sighed, as Ben's image popped up on her head. His sad smile and tired gaze made her wonder how many obstacles he had to go through to get them in Auradon.

"Tomorrow I'll intercept Jane and ask her about the wand. She is super self-conscious so I'll just-- make up a spell and make her feel better or some shit." Mal sighed.

"Does that mean that we have to go to class tomorrow again?" Evie groaned.

"Sadly, yeah." Mal got up on her elbows. "How was class though? I had like four classes and all the teachers were supper happy-go-lucky." She fake gagged.

"My teachers were assholes and treated me like a little kid," Carlos commented. "one of them even asked if I knew the basic math. Basic math! One plus one kind of thing." He covered his face out of frustration.

"One of my teachers thought that I was too dumb to know a really difficult answer for a question, and he called me to the front to embarrass me."

All the attention was on Evie now.

"What? Which one?" Carlos asked.

"Chemistry teacher." She looked up at him, as she was laying on his lap. "He asked the atomic weight of Silver."

"The fuck? Were you even learning that?" Jay commented.

"How would I know? I had just arrived." Evie turned slightly to see him. "I knew the answer because I have a pretty good memory and tons of books, but otherwise, things would have gone to hell."

"What an asshole, at least you put him in his place by answering correctly." Mal pointed out.

Evie huffed. "Yeah, but--" she was angry and couldn't find the words. "he was looking at me like I was dumb just because I am a villain, and then Chad--"

"Chad was in your class?" Jay and Carlos cooed.

"Who?" Mal rose both eyebrows.

"An asshole who is super against villains, and is a bully, and every time he opens his mouth I want to kick him." Jay spoke, placing his head on Mal's back.

"Son of who?"

The three of them looked at her with the most unamused looks on their faces and exclaimed: "Cinderella and Prince Charming."

"Shit." She snorted. "Talk about hypocrisy."

The four of them snickered and stayed in comfortable silence. It was curious to be so calm like that, it was personal, and they weren't on a life-threatening situation where they were forced to bond. Well, sort of.

"We should get going, right, Carlos?" Jay commented, looking at the time on his phone.

"Yeah." The younger teen got up and Evie hugged him as a goodbye.

"See ya tomorrow at Good Deed class." Jay saluted and opened the door. Carlos waved at Mal and both boys left in silence.

The walk to their room was awkward, and Jay's thoughts were going back to Ben's words.

"Hey-- I'm sorry about today." He finally said, and Carlos looked at him.

"No, that was on me. I shouldn't have reacted like that, it's just that-- I don't believe people can change, and you seem to be trying to do so! But I just- I don't feel like it will work."

"You think that I will bully you again?" He scratched the back of his neck.

"Well, yeah, why wouldn't you? You could easily become friends with anyone and get peer pressured, or something." He shrugged.

Jay's face fell dark, he noticed then that Carlos had huge trusting issues, and who could blame him, anyway? Evie, his first true friend, 'sold' Carlos to him and Mal, after promising not to tell anyone about the device that pierced the dome.

"Sorry." He managed to say, as Carlos opened the door and entered. "About everything. If it makes you feel better, I don't like the way I acted back then either--"

Both stood in their room and the younger teen sat on his desk. Jay followed him with his eyes and sat on his bed.

"Do you want to start again?" Jay offered once more.

Carlos turned around with a tired expression on his eyes. "I have to finish my homework since we have to go to school tomorrow." He hissed.

"Carlos--"

"Give me space, please." He closed his eyes, getting impatient. "You won't get me anywhere by insisting, you'll just make me annoyed." Jay nodded.

"Okay--" He sat on his own desk and looked down at his schoolwork, nervously tapping his papers.

Chapter End Notes

I enjoyed doing the dynamics SO much. Hope you liked it, there are some things from the books, and others that I felt like Auradon would have (the heated floor, for example). If things go as planned, I'll be back next week!

Take two

Chapter Summary

The second day in Auradon rolls around and the kids have to keep going. Will they manage to pursue their objectives for the day, or fail on their take two?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next day, Mal woke up first and used the extra time to take a nice bath. She soaked for a while, going back and forth on her plan to manipulate Jane. A crooked smile formed on her face when she thought about it. It had been a while since she had done something villain-like, and she was starting to crave it.

The plan was to gain Jane's trust and push her to rebel against her mother, so she would give her the wand. It was easy and had a really small margin of error, but it was risky because she wouldn't be able to blame someone else in case it failed.

Mal crossed her arms over her legs and stared at the water.

When Evie woke up, she got nervous. She couldn't see Mal anywhere, and yes, she was forgiving, but the fear was still palpable. The fear that she might betray her.

"Mal?" She cried.

"Bathroom." Mal's voice flowed from the white closed door, and Evie breathed out.

"Oh, okay!" She got up and began to shuffle around her clothes to find something to wear. She took a pair of shorts and a nice sweater that reminded her of her mother, as it was colored in a dark blue and had red details. She dressed while humming a song without a name, and thinking back to classes.

She wasn't so fond of going back and seeing Chad or Doug, perhaps she would be lucky enough to not bump with either of them. When she finished putting on the sweater, Mal walked in, already changed.

"Morning! How was your shower?"

"It was ok, I guess." She shrugged, noticing the positivity on Evie's tone. "You are still happy? After what happened yesterday and all, I expected to see you--"

"Frowning? Not really my vibe, Mal." She smirked. "My mom used to say that being sad took years of beauty out. I know one can't help but feel sadness sometimes, but I try to see

the positive side of things." She shrugged. "If I only see the bad on life, what else is left?"

"I-- don't really know. I guess I am used to being negative." She stated. "It's not like I grew around much love. The last time my mother cared for the way I felt was when I was really young, during your birthday."

"When-- my mom decided not to invite you?"

Mal nodded. "Yeah. Though, looking back at it, she was probably just worried about looking like a fool for not being invited somewhere once again."

"I'm very sorry." Evie pouted, and Mal snorted.

"You were a kid, it's not your fault. If anything--" She stopped, considering if she should open up. She figured that it wouldn't hurt her, after all, they shared a room, and she woke up safe and sound. "I should say sorry. I tried to hurt you multiple times back home, it was-- shitty of me, I guess." She sighed.

Evie's face shifted into amusement. It was strange to see Mal ramble like that, being insecure. "Well, I forgive you. Do you?"

"Forgive you? Yeah."

"No, dummy! Forgive yourself." She smiled.

Mal stared at her with a confused expression on her face. Her eyebrows furrowed and her eyes opened wide. Evie saw Carlos reflected on that expression, she was presented with something that never truly crossed her mind.

"Mom used to say that, to love others, you had to love yourself first." She took her bag. "The same goes with forgiveness, at least in this case. Do you forgive yourself, Mal?"

And the girl was unable to answer.

After Good Deed class, they scattered in different directions, and Carlos winced when a hand was placed on his shoulder. He turned around violently, shaking.

His face relaxed when he noticed it was just Ben.

"Sorry, buddy! I didn't mean--"

"It's ok." He cut him off. "I'm guessing you are here for the track test?"

"Yep! The area is empty right now, and the Turney team is on-- well, the Turney field, so it will be just you and me." He smiled and it lit up his whole face.

Carlos couldn't help but smile too. "Ok, let's go."

Both walked towards the field, and Ben began to ramble about the school system. As they made their way towards the track area, Carlos eyed the Turney field and found Jay chatting

with a few guys. He was glad that he could hold a conversation and ignored the growing feeling of worry that crossed his chest when Chad walked dangerously close to him.

Ben noticed his eyes and patted his back, glad that he didn't wince this time. "Chad's out the game for a while." He explained.

"Why?"

"I told the captain that he was a safety hazard, and he'll be serving water for at least a week until I see that he calmed down."

Carlos smirked. "Thanks."

"I'm glad you two made up!" Ben smiled.

Carlos frowned in confusion. "What?"

"You two had a fight, right? I mean, yesterday your exit was kind of-- dramatic. He said that he would try to keep getting closer." Ben explained. "It worked, I see!"

"We didn't fight, I just-- reacted out of instinct." Carlos placed his hands on his armpits, it was a rather windy morning.

"That's fine, at least you two are good now."

"Yeah."

They finally arrived at the track and Ben took off his jacket. "You might get heated with running, so you can take your coat off."

Carlos shook his head. "I'm fine." He shrugged and Ben explained the way he had to prepare for running.

"Ok! We'll check the time. Just run as fast as you can." He took a notebook from his bag in his right hand and a timer in the other. "Ready?"

Carlos nodded, though, it's not like he could back down now anyway.

"Go!" He pressed the button on the timer.

Carlos got up and ran. He wasn't sure where he was going, or when he had to stop, so he just ran. As he made his way past Ben, his mind had already drifted off.

The forest past the school made him think of the island and his cat. He missed his cat. It was the only thing back home that he couldn't take with him, mostly because it was a living being and he refused to lock it in his bag. Suddenly, he heard shouting behind him and stopped in his tracks, almost falling.

"Carlos!" Ben came jogging through the trees. "Where were you going? You scared me."

The taller teen's eyes fell dark. "Sorry, I didn't mean to! I just-- zoned out and didn't hear you. I didn't know where to stop, either." He moved his hands and began to pick his fingers. "It won't happen again, I swear."

Ben's face softened. "It's okay, I'm not mad, just- I got scared." He noticed the boy's state and took out the timer. "You did really well on the track test!"

Carlos's eyes widened. "Really?"

"Yeah! You are quite fast." He nodded, and both began to walk back through the forest. "A lot actually, what were you thinking about to run so far?"

"I miss my cat." He confessed, staring at the floor.

"You had a cat back on the island?"

Carlos nodded and looked up, squinting his eyes a bit at the sunlight. "Yeah, Beelzebub. It was a cool cat, though it was quite old already."

Ben looked at him and back at the front. "Well, the Turney team has a dog mascot." By how Carlos's face changed, he guessed that dogs weren't his preferred animal. "Dude is not bad, but I understand if you don't want to see it. There is a cat, too. It's not the school's mascot, but it comes around at lunchtime and night, asks for food, and goes away. Maybe you can try and get close to it." Ben offered.

Carlos thought as they walked out of the forest, and nodded. "I hope I get to see it."

"You will, there's plenty of time for it to pop out somewhere." Ben patted his back, but Carlos wasn't so sure of that.

Meanwhile, Mal was roaming around the halls with her hands on her pockets. The students were waking up, and most of them were either in the dining room or enjoying the sunlight somewhere on the grass. She couldn't understand why they liked the sun so much, it made her face burn and sweat, which was extremely gross.

She thought about going to see what Evie was up to, or maybe annoy Jay during his practice (and take care that this Chad guy didn't touch him), but decided that she was going to the toilet. Again.

She had gone to every toilet she encountered in the halls, and this was the third one she entered. Mal pushed the door with her shoulder and her expression stiffened when she heard huffs and angry wails coming from the sinks. She peaked through the door and noticed Jane.

The girl was fighting with her hair, brushing from side to side, desperately trying to find a way to make it look stylish. She stomped her feet on the ground and Mal hid behind the door. This was her opportunity.

She thought back to the night at the museum and tried to think of a spell. What rhymed with hair? Air, affair, square--

"Who's that?" Jane's voice snapped her out of her thoughts.

Mal walked in with a bored expression, trying to look the most harmless she was able to. "Hey, sorry about that, I couldn't open the door until now." She lied. "Your name was Jane, right?"

The girl winced out a yes and Mal chewed onto the inside of her cheek to avoid smiling.

"Pretty name." She offered, looking at her own reflection and slightly frowning at the red on her nose and cheeks, a side effect of standing on the sun for ten minutes.

"Thanks." She said and began to leave.

"Don't go!" She roared, and the girl stood still. "Sorry, I just-- Was kind of hoping that we could be friends?" Mal breathed out a faked a smile.

Jane's face changed into confusion.

"But you probably have all the friends you need, huh?" Mal's eyes were dark as ever, but her face was soft, and the blush in her cheeks made her look innocent and sweet.

"Uh- hardly." Jane said without leaving her stiff position.

"Wait, really? Since your mother is so prestigious, and you seem to have an amazing personality--"

"I'd rather be pretty." Jane burst out, and Mal frowned. "I mean, look at my hair! I can't even shape it the way I want-- and well, you have such pretty hair." She pouted.

Mal seemed taken aback. Pretty hair? She woke up like that, and she hasn't brushed it since she was like- six. Hell, she cuts it herself every month, and she is no stylist. She shook her head lightly and smiled.

"Well, do you want me to fix it?" She offered.

"How?" Jane's eyes sparkled.

"Well, you aren't the only half fairy here." Mal bounced slightly on her feet, trying to look the most innocent she could. Jane pressed her lips together, hesitant. "I'll just do a spell and wallah! New hair."

"I don't know--"

"It will be fine, just let me--" Mal was still new to the magic thing, so she just placed her hand on Jane's hair and chanted. "Beware, forswear, replace the old with brand new hair." She felt kind of embarrassed with how dumb it sounded when said out loud.

In seconds Jane's hair began to move and Mal felt the shifts under her hand. The roots expanded and her hair took turns on the tips. When she removed her hand, the new hairstyle

was done and it looked impressive on her as if she was a new person. The bob-cut turned into nice waves that reached her shoulders.

Jane turned around and stared at her reflection, slowly moving her hands to touch her new hair. A smile popped up on her face and she began to giggle while moving her hairstyle to enjoy the dynamism.

"So?" Mal asked, truly curious.

"I love it! Thank you so much!" The girl smiled and Mal smugly placed her hands on her pockets once more with a smirk on her lips. "Can you do something to my nose?"

Mal's face fell. What was this sudden entitlement? She bit her lip trying to swallow down the rage of her throat and shook her head.

"Sorry, Jane, but I'm a half-fairy, I don't have all the power I wish I had! I mean, I'm not like your mom, you know? With her wand and all." Jane's eyes twinkled as Mal spoke. "One swish from that thing and you could have any features you wanted."

"She doesn't use the wand anymore." The girl sighed, crossing her arms in resignation. "She believes that the real magic is on the books, not the spellbooks. Regular books with history and stuff."

Mal scoffed. "Yeah right." She rolled her eyes. It was a dumb saying, magic was magic, reading books made you intelligent, but that didn't mean anything that you became a warlock after doing so. "She used magic on Cinderella, and she wasn't even her real daughter."

Jane's expression fell, and Mal felt a sting on her stomach. There, the first brick had fallen.

"Doesn't she love you?" She pressed on.

Again, there was the look on her eyes, so sad and vulnerable that it created in Mal a feeling of power. "Of course she does." Jane sighed. "It's just- she says that you should work on the inside, not on the outside." And then, there was what Mal could only describe as the face one does when they are about to cry. That was enough.

"That face!" Mal faked having an idea and being overly excited about it. "Like your heart is about to break. Use that to make your mom understand that she is hurting you by not letting you enjoy who you are on the outside too!"

Jane seemed suddenly interested. "Do you think it would work?"

"Yeah. I mean, that's what Cinderella did back in the day, right? She cried a bit on her lap to push your mom into bibidi-babidi-boo her out of the sad life she had." Mal shrugged, leaning slightly on the sink. "And if she does accept at the end, call me. I'd love to see her in action."

Jane smiled and did something weird, something that pulled all alarms on Mal on. She hugged her. Mal felt like she was an animal who got stuck in a bear-trap, and there was no way to move or escape. But it also felt warm, extremely warm, and Jane's perfume had a

touch of lavender that reminded her of clean clothes. She stayed still, taking in the situation, and Jane let her go.

"If I do convince her, you'll be there, for sure." Jane smiled and took her bag. "Thank you again, Mal!" She walked out of the bathroom as Mal followed her with her eyes.

It had been a strange talk and an extremely useless one too. Mal knew deep down that Jane was too shy and insecure to ever stand up to her mom, and even if she did, Fairy Godmother was too stubborn to accept taking out a wand just to turn her daughter's nose into something she liked better. The girl stomped her hands on the sink and looked up, finding her green eyes staring with hatred.

She spent too much time on that conversation, and it took her nowhere. Just in time for the first bell to ring.

Evie stepped onto her class with a sense that it would be long and painful. She sat down and before she could put her bag on the chair by her side, a guy sat by her. Chad.

"What now?" She hissed.

The boy seemed surprised that he had chosen a seat by her as if he wasn't really looking where he was going to.

"You again? Do we have every class together?" He hissed, but before he could get up, a teacher walked in and signaled him to stay put. The blond frowned but sat down once again. "Stuck again with the villain nerd."

"So sweet." Evie rolled her eyes and he scoffed.

"Do you really think I care about what a villain has to say?"

Evie growled and Chad eyed her. She was pretty as always, her hair carefully tucked over her ear, and her posture was incredible. Chad thought, though he would never say it out loud, that she could easily pass as a princess.

"What?" Evie asked, noticing the stare.

Chad was startled but stayed still. He looked at her for a while and finally let out a short: "You don't look like a villain."

"Well, you don't act like a prince, so that's that." She leaned onto her hand as the teacher began to explain the lesson of the day.

"What does that even mean-?" He couldn't finish because the teacher shushed him. He frowned but kept going over that phrase. What did that even mean? He was charming and athletic, and that was pretty much how a prince acted, right?

He took a piece of paper and scribbled something, to then pass it to Evie. She snorted and took it with an unamused look on her eyes.

The note had a single message in the prettiest handwriting she had ever seen: "What did you mean?"

Evie took out her pen and scribbled the answer, placing it by Chad's notebook without even folding it first. He took it and his eyebrows furrowed once more.

"I thought you didn't care what a villain had to say."

Chad stared at it with a lost look, and for the first time in a very long time, he was speechless.

Later that day, Jay found himself staring at his new homework. It was lunchtime and he had just walked out of chemistry, which was pretty much like poisonology back on the island, but boring. He didn't really pay attention to the class, as his thoughts were on the jacket he was given earlier that morning.

He had walked onto the practice and the coach gave him a jacket and a tour through the book of game rules. After that, a bunch of players decided to introduce themselves, such as Aziz, who was a really chill guy even though his parents were enemies to Jay's dad. He introduced him to others and explained that one of their players was missing for the day because they had to retake an exam or something.

"It's great that we are gonna have more players, and I'll be honest with you, I was kind of nervous about you guys coming to Auradon," Aziz explained as the two of them walked towards the field. "But my father always said to never judge a book by its cover, so I decided to give you guys a try before taking my conclusions."

Jay smirked. "Well, me too. My father might have been-- a power-crazy thief, but I'm not like him." He sighed. "I don't want to be like him." He confessed.

Aziz smirked and patted his shoulder caringly. "Welcome to the team, Jay."

And Jay felt happy, he smiled widely and placed his arm around Aziz's shoulders, causing the guy to giggle. He loved Mal, Carlos, and Evie, but it was nice to have someone that had the same energy as him and was accepting of his constant need to be touchy.

Jay snapped out of the memory as his eyes devised another tourney jacket passing him by on the hall. He couldn't exactly tell who it was so he just touched the person's shoulder.

A pair of dark eyes looked at him and he froze. They smirked and rose both eyebrows at Jay. Their look was kind of androgynous, and even though their face was rough and many characteristics hinted as male presenting, he didn't want to say something that could cause the stranger to get angry at him.

"You must be Jay, right? Aziz told me about you joining the team. I think we weren't introduced correctly, I am Lonnie."

Jay stared with a faint smile on his face as Lonnie extended a hand. "Ah-- hey." He took the hand and shook it lightly. "Jay."

Lonnie rose an eyebrow, still smiling. "I know, I said it."

Jay shook his head lightly. "Yeah, sorry."

Lonnie smiled softly and nodded. "Why are you were so stiff?"

Jay opened his mouth and closed it. "I didn't want to say something wrong, like misgendering you or something."

"You could have asked!" Lonnie snorted. "I'm a girl." She shrugged and Jay nodded, more comfortable now.

"Well, a pleasure, then! It's weird that you didn't say anything about me being a villain and all."

"I know how it feels to be judged without knowledge what-so-ever, so of course, I won't say anything, especially since I am a player on the Turney team." She smiled. "I'm guessing Chad already cussed at you?"

Jay mimicked a bell. "Exactly. He insulted my roommate too."

"Carlos De Vil, right?" She commented, taking her bag from the locker and closing it. "He looks like a cool guy."

"Yeah. He's pretty intelligent but gets scared easily. I think it will take him a while to get used to Auradon." Both began to walk the halls.

"I get it, when I started the year at Auradon it was super difficult, I don't know what I would have done without my brother guiding me." Lonnie explained.

Deep down, Jay wished he had a sibling, someone to play with when he was young, and before he met Mal. But it would have meant another life that would be on Jafar's hands, and no one deserved that.

"Well, I gotta get going," Lonnie commented, noticing the hour on her phone. "see ya at practice tomorrow!"

And Lonnie left, meeting Aziz at the end of the hall and turning over the corner. Jay smirked lightly and looked down at his phone. He was still trying to get used to it, but all the drawings and symbols didn't really make sense to him. He could barely understand the time, and it was almost six.

Evie stormed into her room and fell onto her bed, causing Mal, who was doodling on her notebook, to look up. "Tough day?" She said, moving to her side to see Evie better.

"It was tough but better! I had classes with Aubrey, and she was really nice." Evie explained, sitting up.

Mal nodded. Aubrey was nice, though Mal couldn't exactly trust her yet, she also seemed too naive and easy to manipulate, but not in the way Jane was. It was strange for the girl to remind her so much of Ben, and to some extent, it made her wonder if they were dating just because of how similar their ranks and personalities were.

"Did she say anything interesting?" Mal asked, focusing again on her notebook. She was trying to draw starry skies since she learned about stars.

Evie walked up to her desk, leaving some of her paperwork there. "Not really, she was mostly talking about us and all the parties the school had. There's gonna be a party that focuses on families." She commented.

Mal rolled her eyes. "Dumb."

"I guess." Evie looked around the room as if she was searching for something.

"Did you lose something?" Mal leaned on her hand.

"Aubrey told me that every room had a sewing machine, except hers." She snorted at that. "But I can't find ours."

"You know how to sew?" Mal was suddenly interested.

Evie nodded happily. "My mom taught me! Well, she did because she was hoping for me to make a prince believe that I was a worthy wife, and then kill him or something." She giggled, and Mal let out a laugh.

Both stayed in silence as the taller teen stared. Mal frowned. "What?"

"It's the first time that you laugh at my jokes." She smiled. "I'm glad!"

Mal's eyes widened, and she seemed confused again. Evie was extremely weird! Yeah, she laughed at her joke because it had to do with a murder, who doesn't think that's funny? But she seemed to take it as a signal of something nice, perhaps friendship. Mal's expression closed and she went back to doodling.

Evie spent the next thirty minutes looking until she found the machine under the sink, in the bathroom.

"What kind of person stores a sewing machine in a bathroom?" She complained, placing the device on a smaller desk.

Mal stared as Evie walked around her room, and took a few cloth pieces to finally placing them on the desk. She sat there and began to organize the machine to make it work. After a few huffs and loud growls coming from the device, she finally let out a triumphant laugh.

"It works!" She clapped.

"What are you planning to do?" Mal asked, slightly looking up.

"Dunno." Evie snorted. "But a sewing machine is always useful." The corners of her mouth twitched and she sat on her bed. "How did the Jane thing go?"

"Shitty. She's too-- scared. She's not gonna be the way we get the wand, that's for sure, though she won't be a problem. I think she trusts me now, or something, because I fixed her

hair."

"You fixed her hair? Did she pay you?"

Both stared at each other, and Evie rose an eyebrow.

"I was improvising! I wasn't thinking about money at the time, I had the wand on my mind!" She hissed.

Evie nodded and decided to leave it there.

Later, the boys stormed in too, and Jay made his way to sit by Mal. She complained but placed her legs on his lap, still doodling. Evie opened her arms and Carlos sat by her, leaning onto her and letting her hug him.

They stayed like that for a few seconds before Mal finally closed her notebook.

"Okay, let's recap. What did you do today?"

"I got a Turney jacket!" Jay said, gesturing to the jacket that was hanging on one of the chairs. Mal smirked.

"Cool, you are number eight?" She leaned on her elbows.

"Yeah! I don't know about you, but eight is a great number." He winked. "I also got to talk with two of my teammates."

"Ben and?" Evie joked

"It wasn't Ben, the guy was with Carlos during the whole practice."

Evie gasped and looked at the boy by her side. He shrugged and looked down, hiding a smile.

"They were Aziz, son of Aladdin and Jazmine; and Lonnie, daughter of Mulan." He commented.

Carlos's face twitched up. "The son of your dad's enemy?"

He chuckled. "I know! I was surprised too, but he is super chill and nice." Mal looked at him with a smirk. "So was Lonnie! It was great to know that there are better people than Chad in this school."

"Tell me about it!" Evie smiled. "I spent most of the day with Aubrey, she was so nice! We have most of the classes together, except for art, I think."

"You had art already?" Mal pouted. "I wish! I've been having super boring subjects all day, yesterday and today."

Carlos grimaced. "At least you didn't have to do sports two days in a row, and forced." He complained, dramatically sighing.

"Right! You had track today. I saw you running, you were super fast." Jay complained, leaning on Mal's leg and getting kicked because of it. She mouthed "ouch" and he mouthed "I'm sorry" back.

"Really?" Carlos asked, looking down at his hands. "Ben said that too, but I wasn't really paying attention."

"What were you thinking?" Evie asked, poking his cheek with her nose, and causing him to wince because of how cold it was.

"Ah- my cat." He said, blushing. "Ben said that there's a cat that roams around the school to steal food. Needless to say, that was the highlight of the day." He shrugged and gained a couple of laughs.

"So, you are a crazy cat lady?" Jay joked.

"He only had one cat." Evie rose an eyebrow.

"They all start like that." He wiggled his own eyebrows as an answer.

More laughs and Mal suddenly felt guilty.

"My plan with Jane failed." She blurted out, and the room fell into a sharp silence. She sat up and eyed Jay who's expression was too soft for him.

"Well, we still have time right?" He said, grabbing her by the shoulders. "Besides, we are all doing good, better than yesterday at least! And we are all still together. Nothing is lost yet, we'll come up with a plan."

"Yeah! I can ask Aubrey about any parties that require the wand being present, and Carlos can work on the device that opened the barrier once to have a more potent effect." Evie offered. "Right, Los?"

The latter thought for a few minutes but then nodded. "Though I might need to visit the library for that." He explained.

"I'll go with you! I've been looking forward to visiting the library ever since Fairy Godmother said there was one." She celebrated.

Mal let out a true smile, and she turned towards Jay.

"We could try to learn about the place, right? Find new places and all."

"Yeah, it settled then." She nodded. "Tomorrow is--"

"Wednesday." Evie pointed out.

"Okay," She took in the information. "we'll focus on this new plan, Evie and Carlos are in charge of gaining information; Jay and I will be examining the faculty. Okay?"

They looked at each other and nodded.

That night, when the boys left, Carlos looked at Jay's new jacket.

"It suits you." He said, nodding. "Though the colors are really ugly."

"Are you saying that I'm ugly?" Jay joked, raising an eyebrow.

Carlos's eyes widened. "No! Of course not, I just- the jacket is cool but-"

"I know, it was a joke." He smiled and placed his arm on his shoulders. It was relaxing when Carlos didn't growl or wince at the touch. "Are you gonna join the track team?"

Carlos snorted. "Not in a million years. I'm glad that people think I am fast and all, but it's not really my area." Jay hummed and the younger teen looked up. "Did Chad appear during practice?"

Jay tried to remember and then shook his head. "Nope, I don't know where he was, though." He looked down at him. "Why?"

Carlos thought about it, and even though he wasn't quite sure, he sighed and looked to the front. "I'll tell you, but you won't do anything weird about it, okay?"

Jay snorted. "Okay."

"I was worried that he might do something to you." He shrugged. "Ben told me that he would be out of the field for a while, but I wanted to make sure that he truly was-- out."

Jay stared at him and a dopey smile appeared on his face. "You care for me?"

Carlos looked around a bit and crossed his arms. "You seem to really be trying to be my friend, and no one has ever been so insistent before, not even Evie." He sighed. "So, I guess I do care."

Jay smiled and squeezed him lightly. "I care too." He looked at him and shuffled his hair lightly.

Chapter End Notes

Well, I am physically invested on them! I wrote a whole timeline for the next chapters and-- yeah. Next upload will be a bit more complicated to publish but it will be coming eventually. See ya!

Stealing kisses

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next morning, after Good Deed's class, Mal walked up to her locker and took out a few cans of paint that she brought with her from the island. There was some time before the first class to finally paint her locker, and she was ready to use it. It didn't matter that they wouldn't stay too long on Auradon, in the meantime, might as well leave a mark. Mal grabbed her notebook and decided to copy the drawing of a dragon onto the metal.

She took out her mask and began to paint.

It took her a while, longer than she intended to, but once it was done, Mal felt proud of the result. It made her locker stand out, and she liked that.

She stood back and lowered her facemask, smirking. Some people passed by and smiled at her, though others rolled their eyes, and Mal had to admit that she enjoyed that the most.

She was collecting her things when a voice caught her attention, Ben was talking with Aubrey. She froze and tried to concentrate enough to catch the words that were being said.

"I told you, I understand that you are worried about them, but your coronation is in a month, and you haven't planned anything yet! I am part of the welcoming committee too! I can take care of the VKs while you get ready." Aubrey spoke.

"I need to do this by myself! When I become a king, it will be on me and I have to get used to having many things on my hands." Ben said. The boy's words trembled, and deep down he knew that he was just repeating what his father had lectured him about ever since he was twelve.

"But it's hurting you." Aubrey said, softer.

And there was a silence. Mal looked up, trying to see where the couple was and saw them hugging a row of lockers away from her. The two split up and she kissed his cheek, leaving him to walk alone. She took her stuff and placed it on the locker, with a troubled expression.

As Mal was leaving, she didn't notice Ben's presence, and how he stopped by her locker to admire the art. His eyes lit up, and his mouth formed the shape of an O. She was truly talented, and he had the sudden urge to touch the paint, but he guessed it was still wet, so he simply looked at it in awe as an idea slowly formed on his head.

Later, once the first bell rang, Evie sat for Ancient Literature. She frowned when the teacher explained that it had to do with re-reading the princess's old fairytales and analyzing them. She stared at the chalkboard where the name "Snow White" was written, and let out a heavy sigh.

Aubrey sat by her and waved. "Morning, Evie."

"Hey! I was waiting for you. Is everything okay?" She commented, noticing her slightly disheveled look.

"I had a little argument with Ben, but that's all." She swung her hand in a dismissive gesture. "Did you want to ask me something?" Her eyes were gentle, and there was a subtle sparkle on them.

"I was thinking about the official parties of the institution, and all of that. I was wondering, is there any that has to do with magic? As the daughter of a witch, I am quite interested in it, but I never got to see true magic before." She excused, knowing that it was a lie.

Aubrey thought for a few seconds and then nodded slowly. "Yeah, actually. Ben's coronation." She pointed out. "Fairy Godmother uses her wand, I don't know if that's the magic you are looking for, but that's all I know we have."

Evie nodded. "It does the work, thanks, Aubrey!" She whispered hugging her briefly. The girl nodded and looked up at the chalkboard, to then look back at Evie and grimace dramatically. Both giggled.

The teacher began the lesson, but Evie's mind wasn't interested. Her eyes drifted towards the window and saw how another class was outside, having an art class. She smirked when she noticed a familiar face scrunching his eyebrows at the large canvas: Carlos.

He was extremely frustrated. Not only did he find the whole class pointless, but he also disliked trees, much less drawing them. His brown eyes examined the plant and then the white canvas, and just concluded that trees move too much to be painted.

He rolled his eyes and decided to spend the class looking at his classmates. He saw some girls and guys that were very invested in their art, and others who were talking and doodling things that had nothing to do with the task. His eyes finally arrived at Jane, who happened to be sitting not so far from him.

She noticed his stare and nervously began to play with her hair as a blush covered her cheeks and nose. Carlos wondered where the length of her hair came from, as she had a very short bob cut on Monday. She looked at him briefly and blushed harder when she noticed that his gaze was still on her.

Jane wasn't the type of girl who caught the attention of many guys at school, at least not that she was aware of. Bad boys were off league for her, but here she was, getting stared at by Carlos De Vil, who was not only attractive and dressed well, but also looked extremely interesting.

She had a lot of questions for him, like if his hair was naturally white and black. But Jane was shy, and with the knowledge of someone who hasn't had a date before, she simply decided to act cutesy and pray for Carlos to catch the message that she was flirting.

And to her demise, he didn't.

He wasn't the most experimented with love either, and he couldn't recall loving or receiving love before Evie (and he didn't even know if what he felt for her was romantic love), though he did have plenty of crushes. And he would find himself thinking of Evie.

He hated for his head to fly back into Evie's image every time he thought of love, but it was such a special thing that he got easily attached to the idea after Jay placed it on the table. It felt like a personal characteristic of his, one that got him giddy and filled with feelings. But it also made him wonder if this feeling may harm him, or place Evie on a pedestal from which he wouldn't be able to reach her real self.

Maybe because of this Evie blindfold, Carlos didn't understand Jane's attempt of flirting, and took it as her being nervous and not liking to be stared at, which he understood, and had a mental fight over whether he should stop staring, or keep going.

He ended up looking back at his empty canvas and drawing a very simplistic tree, so he would at least have the task finished.

After the class, Jane noticed how unwilling Carlos seemed to speak to her and decided to take a step.

"I like your drawing." She said, leaning over his shoulder. "It's simplistic."

Carlos got uncomfortable as soon as he felt her close and flinched. "I didn't want to do it." he dismissed and jumped out of his seat.

"Well, it looks good." Jane smiled, tucking a hair behind her ear.

"Thanks." He nodded, smiling awkwardly as the teacher took the canvasses.

"I was thinking-- do you have plans for later?" She asked.

Carlos felt annoyed at her curiosity, which his oblivious brain couldn't understand. "Why?"

"Well, maybe we could hang out?"

Ah, so that was it. "I was going to the library."

The girl's eyes darkened, and she nodded. "I see. Well, have a good reading session, then. See you tomorrow!" She said nervously.

Carlos's rose an eyebrow. "We have history together."

"RIGHT!" She blushed. "I knew that! See you at history, then!" She began to giggle and left in a hurry, leaving Carlos with a confused look in his face.

As the recess bell rang, Jay was deeply asleep on his desk. He had the most useless class on the three days he was at Auradon: English. He knew how to speak and write (to some extent, that is), so it felt pointless for him.

However, he woke up once he felt a poke on his shoulder. He opened his eyes abruptly and kicked the stranger's hand away from his shoulder.

"Sorry that I scared you!" Lonnie said, smiling sheepishly as Jay's face softened.

"I'm sorry that I kicked you." He smirked. "Did the class end?"

"Yeah, a few minutes ago." She explained, gesturing to the door with her head.

He nodded and grabbed his things from under his desk, shoving them back onto his backpack. He glared at it and hung it over his shoulder.

"Did the school gave you guys those?" Lonnie asked as both of them left the classroom.

"Yeah, they are black and boring, and I hate them." He snorted. "Back on the island, Mal would use our bags as anything but bags, so mine was mostly covered in paint and dust" He recalled.

Lonnie smirked. "You two are close?"

"Yeah, we know each other since we were kids. She is like a sister to me, even when she can be a pain in the ass sometimes." He giggled.

Lonnie's face lit up. "Well, if you want to personalize your bag a bit, I can give you some Turney pins and some patches."

"I don't know how to add the patches to my bag." Jay pouted.

"Use heat! There's an iron at the nurse's office if you want one." She patted his back. "So-- how are you guys doing here, though?" Jay rose an eyebrow and she blushed slightly. "I know that your comfort is on Ben's hands, but we are friends and I wasn't even able to ask you that."

"We are friends?" Jay seemed taken by surprise.

"Yeah! I thought it was obvious?"

"I'm not used to easy friendship." He shrugged. "Usually, it takes longer back on the island."

"Well, lucky you, here in Auradon it doesn't take much." Lonnie assured him. "Any questions? I don't know every detail of the school as well Ben does, but I can answer some doubts."

Jay's brain suddenly shifted onto his objective: exploring the school. He nodded and grinned. "Actually, I do." He nodded. "Is there something interesting around here?"

Lonnie thought for a moment and then nodded. "Aziz, Aubrey, Ben and I make a party in November to celebrate thanksgiving day. It usually works as a way to distract ourselves after meeting with family, it can be stressful for some people."

Jay stared at her. "Thanksgiving?"

"Yeah-- It's a celebration that comes before Christmas, the 26th of November." She explained. "You reunite with your family, have dinner, and well, some talk about what they are thankful for." She shrugged.

Jay never celebrated that, and he was sure that half of the island didn't either. Being thankful and eating with your family seemed like a dream or a nightmare even, but not a reality. He simply nodded and stayed silent.

"You should come! With your friends." Lonnie offered, patting his back. "I'm sure all the hosts will be more than happy to have you there."

"The hosts?" He snorted. "Sure, we'll be there."

"Great! Though it's in two months." She stopped and gasped once more. "We are planning on doing another party, too! Celebrating spring, and all." She commented. "You should all go there too."

Jay nodded and smirked. He hadn't gone to a party since the fiasco at Carlos's, which he tried to forget as to avoid feeling guilty for forcing him onto doing it. Both made their way to the outside, where the sun was warming the grass and getting rid of the last few dew drops.

The day passed by quickly, and right after class, Mal and Jay met up by her locker.

"I love what you did with the place." Jay commented, patting the locker.

Mal grinned. "I know, pretty impressive, right?" She patted the already dry metal. "Did you get any useful information?"

"Appart from the fact that there's gonna be a spring party AND a thanksgiving party? Not much." He shrugged. "It's better if we start moving, we can say that we were looking for my last class because I forgot my backpack."

Mal snorted. "That backpack?" She pointed at the black bag hanging on his shoulder.

He opened Mal's locker, still maintaining eye-contact, and threw the bag inside it. "They don't know that." He grinned maliciously.

As they made their way between the classes, Mal noticed how silent Jay was and bumped his arm softly with her shoulder. "How was practice?"

The taller teen's face lit up. "Oh man, it was so great! This Friday we are having a Turney match, and Aziz said that I'll be participating!" He smiled. "You'll be there, right?"

Mal's eyes were gentle, and she smiled. "Sure."

"And today, Lonnie and I talked about getting pins to decorate my bag because it's the most boring thing I ever wore in my life." He continued and kept on rambling about mundane things, as excitedly as ever.

Mal was glad that he was comfortable with the place and the people, and she wouldn't admit it, but watching him go on about the things he enjoyed made her feel calm. However, her smile turned into a frown after a while, when the warmth of his words turned into a harsh whisper that she knew too well.

"Jay, you know I like that you get along with these guys, but remember to keep focused on the big price, ok? We are still villains." She spoke to him firmly.

Jay glanced at her with a darker expression in his eyes and nodded. "How to forget." He snorted, noticing how the last students that were left around the halls looked at them with a nasty look on their eyes as if the pair had a disease. "People here make it very clear that we are still rats carrying the plague." He shrugged.

Mal looked up. "I like that metaphor." She commented raising an eyebrow.

"Thanks, we were learning about it during history." Jay commented, feeling proud of himself.

After entering a few empty classes, Mal found a laboratory room.

"Finally!" She smiled widely and entered in a rush, followed by Jay.

"Oh, wow, a boring class with a lot of white furniture. Shocker." Jay rose both eyebrows, unamused.

"No, dumbass." Mal rolled her eyes and opened a cabinet, revealing a bunch of chemicals and other laboratory items.

Jay's eyes widened and his face took a strange shift. He walked up to it and took a few chemicals. "Bertha, sweetheart, pass me some of those containers, will you?"

Mal growled but did it anyway. "Don't call me that."

"What, Bertha or sweetheart?" He teased, taking the chemicals and placing them on one of the tables.

"Both." She hissed, putting the containers down. "What are you gonna do with this?"

"I'll take these to Evie and Carlos, maybe they can work with this." He smirked. "If I take the whole containers from the cabinet, they'll notice."

"And you taking these--" She patted the empty vessels. "Won't be suspicious?"

"They were empty, they could think we used it for something like gardening, not to steal chemicals." He explained, pouring part of the chemicals onto the containers.

Mal smirked. "Clever."

"I know." He bowed slightly and finished to pour the chemicals. "Take one of those boxes, I'll look for something to cover them." He pointed at a bunch of wooden boxes piled on the corner of the room.

They split up momentarily and met back on the white table with a wooden box and a white rag respectively. "If they ask, those are plants." Mal pointed out while placing the containers inside the wooden box as fast as she was able to.

Both finished and cleaned up as best as they could. As they left, Mal snickered. "Finally, we actually stole something! It's like the old times."

"Old times? We stole that guy's bag a week ago!" He bumped her playfully. "But, hell yeah, it felt good." He nodded and gripped onto the box of chemicals.

They kept wandering around the building until they came across a big white double door. They looked at each other and entered, pushing one each.

Inside was the kitchen.

"What? Why is there a kitchen here? Shouldn't it be in the dining room?" Jay asked, placing the box aside.

"It must be connected to it somehow." Mal explained. "Maybe we can take something from around here? Snacks or something." She shrugged.

Jay nodded, and they began to look for something that they could take. Small things that could be stored in their pockets, like chocolate bars. After a few seconds, they heard voices and stiffened.

They shared looks and then left, taking the box with them. However, as they were turning on the corner, they almost got caught by Aubrey and Ben, who were arguing on the hall. In a flash, they went back from where they came and hid on the wall, hoping that the couple didn't see them.

"What are they doing here?" Jay whispered, clenching his hands on the wooden box and getting a few splinters on his fingers.

Mal shushed him and looked down, trying to concentrate on their voices, but she was too startled to do so. She tried to catch a glimpse of them and noticed how frustrated they both looked, gesturing and stomping. After a silence where both stood staring at each other, Aubrey stormed off.

Mal frowned. "They fought." She commented, and Jay rose both eyebrows.

She saw how Ben sighed and looked around, seemingly lost and sick. He ran his hand through his hair, sighed once more (louder this time), and leaned onto the wall behind him, visibly shaking. Mal's eyes widened, and she began to pat Jay's arm rapidly.

"Ow, what?" Jay hissed, picking her hand off his arm so she would stop kicking him.

"Go get water."

"Eh? Why?"

"Go!" She growled, getting out of her hiding place and running up to Ben.

It was strange, but she felt a strong need to protect him. Mal slid and scrunched down to be at Ben's level, holding his shoulders.

"Ben?" She whispered and noticed how his breath was bumpy and he was frantically looking around as tears formed on his eyes. He desperately grabbed onto her sleeves.

"I'm dying." He whispered, and Mal shook her head. "I can't breath-- I-- My head--"

"Ben, look at me." The boy's eyes darted around and stayed little to no time on Mal. "Breath with me." She spoke, placing his hand on her chest. "One." She took a deep breath.

It took a few seconds before Ben finally began to catch up on her breathing, still clenching onto her chest. Both breathed together and Mal smiled once Ben calmed down. Her hand ended up covering his, and she felt a sudden wave of happiness.

Suddenly, it didn't matter that they were in Auradon, or that they were kneeling on that awfully dirty floor, or that her lap was getting wet because of Ben's tears. It didn't matter that the clock was ticking, and the weight on her shoulders was slowly suffocating her.

Her free hand moved upwards, and she wiped off some of the tears that were falling down the boy's cheek, and it didn't matter how grossed out she would have felt in a regular context. Ben's tear-stained eyes looked up at her, and she gave him a small reassuring smile.

Their surroundings seemed to fade away, and Mal had the strange feeling of being in a dream. It wasn't figurative, it was literal. She felt like her hand would go through Ben if she touched him again, and she would fall onto the obscurity of her own mind if she moved even the slightest bit.

But both snapped back into reality when Jay came running too and sat on the floor by them.

"Hey, buddy." He said, taking his shoulder and squeezing it firmly. "I got your water." He offered him the glass, and Ben nodded.

Ben drank a bit and slowly sled down, to finally sit on the floor. He rested his head on the wall behind him and closed his eyes as a pink tone covered his cheeks.

Jay and Mal shared a glance but said nothing. The prince breathed in a few times before hugging his legs and looking up at the other two. His eyes were sparkly and reddish from crying.

"I'm sorry that you had to see that, friends." He exclaimed, with a sad laugh. "Thank you for helping me."

"It's okay, dude. We all had our bad days." Jay shrugged.

"I need to ask you to keep this between us, though." He said, slowly getting up followed by the two villains. "My father would freak out if he knew about-- this."

Mal nodded. "Sure. You can sleep tight, we'll keep it a secret."

Ben smiled widely and patted their backs. "Thank you, guys. Do you want me to walk you to your rooms?" He offered, nervously.

"Ah! No, dude, thanks. We are actually going to get some gardening done." Jay lifted the box he had on his hands.

"It's for home ed." Mal explained.

Ben nodded slowly and smiled. "Alright, then I'll be seeing you guys tomorrow! Have a good day." He began to walk away and turned around in the middle of his route. "Thank you again!"

Both VKs nodded as the prince left, and Jay pouted.

"Poor guy, his dad sounds like a pain in the balls to deal with." He commented, turning to keep exploring. "Ya coming?"

"I think it was enough exploration for the day." She cut off. "Let's get these to your room and then get a good night's rest." Her hand moved instinctively to where Ben's hand was before. "And let's hope for Evie and Carlos to have found something in the library."

But they hadn't.

They arrived at the library right after PE class and spent a whole hour catching up on those three days.

"You should've seen their faces when I told the teacher that I was actually a year younger." He snorted, and she burst out laughing. "Is it so crazy to believe?"

"I mean, you don't look so young anyway, and you are pretty clever, so I wouldn't believe it either." She explained.

Carlos's face turned pinkish as the duo fell onto a silence, and Jay's voice echoes in his mind.

"Ah! By the way, remember Doug?" She commented, looking up from the book she was holding.

"The guy who showed us our rooms, yeah." He answered, moving his hand through the page of his own book.

"He apologized for coming off too strong, and he asked me if I needed tutoring or something." She shrugged. "He was flirting once more which, again, annoying." Carlos snorted and looked up. "But at least he apologized, not like Chad."

"He sounds like the type who doesn't feel ashamed of treating others bad, though. I wouldn't bother." Carlos shrugged.

"But he did treat you bad too, right? He insulted you." She pouted. "Has anyone else from here treated you like that?"

"Not really, just Chad." He shrugged, as the pinkish color attempted to cover his face again. "And there is Jane too-- but I don't think she meant to make me uncomfortable."

"Jane? As in-- fairy godmother's daughter?" She placed her book away and crisscrossed her legs.

Both stared at each other from each side of the shelves, sitting on the blue carpeted floor. He snorted at her sudden interest.

"Yeah-- she was acting weird and came too close to me. She asked what I was doing later and I told her that I was planning to be in the library." He shrugged. "I don't know what's got into her."

"You clueless moron!" Evie exclaimed with a huge grin. "She likes you!"

Carlos's face must have shifted strangely, turning on one that reflected a mix between fear and disbelief, because Evie's smile turned onto a mocking expression.

"How come you didn't know?"

Carlos's face was red. "I-- I guess I did know, but just decided to not think about it?"

"Why not? She's cute and intelligent." Evie thought out loud. "You two would make a great pair."

The younger teen closed his eyes in annoyance and then the book on his hands. "What's up with you people telling me whether someone would make a good couple with me?"

Evie's eyes widened. "You people? It's just me here." She snorted, looking around.

"I meant Jay and you." He sighed.

"Jay said-- Jay knew before I did?" She sounded offended, and Carlos couldn't help but crack a smile.

"Yeah, no. He just-- It's just that I like someone already." He sighed. "I think I might be in love."

Evie's eyes sparkled, and her smile widened (if that was even possible). "Who is it?"

The boy blushed furiously and looked away. "Someone." He hissed out, crossing his arms.

"Oh- lemme guess! Is it-- Mal?" She commented and burst out in laughter when Carlos turned to her with a nauseated look on his face. "Sorry, sorry!" She snorted once more. "Could it be-- Aubrey?"

Carlos rose an eyebrow. "No? Why would it be her?"

Evie shrugged. "She's cute." both snorted and Carlos shook his head.

The girl stopped and tried to think hard, however, his eyes are stapled on her, and deep down he wants her to guess because Carlos doesn't have the strength to tell her.

Evie's eyes got up and she smiled. "Let's see-- are they from the island?"

"Yes." Carlos whispered out, feeling how suddenly, the space between them wasn't as huge and safe as it used to be.

"Are they a girl?"

Carlos's eyes looked at the blue floor. "Yes."

"Are they-" He could hear her moving through the rug, and felt his face burning when her voice came from somewhere too close. "here in Auradon right now?"

He looked up and found her eyes, looking at him with a fondness that made his heart race. He nodded softly, keeping his eyes on hers.

It was strange, how the only feeling Carlos had was a pressure in his chest, and the constant voice of Jay muffled on the back of his head. She moved slightly closer, and he couldn't breathe.

"Is it me?" She whispered too close to his face, and he looked down at her lips for a split second before nodding slowly.

They looked at each other for what felt like ages, as their brains tried to work out what came next. Carlos felt like his heart was pounding on his throat, and Evie had a certain feeling of adrenaline crawling up her spine.

It was sudden, and Evie certainly wasn't thinking straight when she did it, but she leaned forwards and kissed him. She had seen how he acted, and had felt the same way for a while-- or so she thought.

She wanted to protect him, and make him feel safe, but it wasn't love (not romantic love, at least), though she wasn't too sure about it until they kissed, and the only feeling she had was emptiness.

Both pulled away and Carlos felt a strange feeling in his chest: disappointment.

The kiss had been dull, and Evie knew that, by Carlos's blank expression, it had been as flat from both sides.

"Well-- guess I was wrong." Carlos whispered, and Evie faked feeling insulted.

"Rude!" She nudged him, and he snorted.

"Not that I don't like you, I do. But not romantically, that's for sure." He explained, and she nodded in agreement. "It's just that-- I guess I never had a friend? Before all of this--" He

gestured nervously. "and I guess you were the closest to love that I ever had." He shrugged.

"I get it." She nodded and smirked. "I really do."

Both stayed in comfortable silence and then burst out in laughter once more.

"I'm sorry!" Carlos laughed. "It was Jay's idea."

"What are you sorry for? I was the one who kissed you-- wait, Jay's idea? And you went with it?" She looked at him with a playful look.

Carlos rolled his eyes, still smiling, and he leaned onto her shoulder. He rested his forehead on her, and she smirked. Evie petted his hair softly, closing her eyes and taking at the moment.

They weren't aware of what time it was, but it didn't matter. The hug was warm and relaxing, like a pressure they both held on their chest had disappeared, leaving a sense of peace behind. It felt odd, and they weren't used to it, to the feeling of closeness that would have been so attacked on the island.

But they weren't on the island, they were safe in Auradon, and there was no one to tell them that they were wrong.

Except for a woman who walked in and shouted for both of them to get out because of the curfew.

They had violently winced at the sudden voice, but the woman seemed to be uninterested about whether the kids had been scared by her presence or not. They shared annoyed glances and got up anyway, huffing, pouting, and doing all the noises they could to annoy the woman who was staring at them with a frown that deepened every time they let out a sound.

As they left, Evie nudged Carlos and exclaimed. "Next time you see Jane, ask her for a library card, so we can stay longer."

He thought for a second and rose an eyebrow. "Why would she give it to me?"

"She likes you." She snorted, clinging onto him, and for the first time, he didn't feel weird or annoyed, but calm.

That night, Carlos slept easy, free of the constant thought that he liked someone and had to deal with that. Evie fell asleep with a smile on her face.

Mal, on the other hand, stayed up till late, holding onto her chest and feeling the ghost touch of Ben's grip. She frowned and wanted to puke out of frustration. This wasn't what she was meant to do in Auradon! She was supposed to get the wand, free her mom, and rule alongside her, enslaving the other prissy royalty.

And now, she was thinking about the prince. A prince who had a lovely girlfriend, and was extremely off league for a villain. She growled soundly, not caring if Evie would get woken up by this, and curled up on a ball over her mattresses.

She wondered, as her eyes darted towards the window, if her mother would be disappointed in her, and tried not to think about how fast the answer came to her head.

Chapter End Notes

I had some problems with this chapter because it was easier to plan it than to actually write it! haha. I still enjoyed the process and I have to admit that it was interesting to write romance considering that I'm not used to that.

Mixed duets

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When Mal woke up, she noticed tears in her eyes and a pressure in her chest. It had been a while since she woke up with that strange feeling of dread and angrily rolled on her stomach, pressing her face into the pillow.

She didn't have a nightmare, hell, most of the nights she didn't even have dreams. Dreaming was something that only happened once in a long while, and she could count the occasions with the fingers of her hands. What she did have was a sinking feeling that she had woken up, and she had to face real life. Sleeping was an odd escape, but it was also painful because she knew she was wasting time.

She also knew that those thoughts were of no use, and only enraged her, so Mal couldn't help but press her eyes shut and try to think of something else.

However, her surrounding did the job for her, as Mal's phone began to buzz. She darted up on her bed, staring daggers at the device, cussing it mentally, and finding no strength in her to move and turn off the alarm. As if it were magic, the phone stopped sounding and Mal's eyes shifted into surprise.

She moved rapidly and took the phone in her hands carefully like it was a piece of glass that would break in pieces if she held it too tight. Mal would have chosen to think: 'I did that! I turned off the alarm with my magic', and go back to sleep with a happy smile, but neither did she believe it, nor could go back to sleep because Evie woke up.

"Ah! Morning Mal." Evie said in a sleepy tone while stretching. "You are up early! That's new."

"Ah-- yeah." She nodded and left the phone back in the nightstand, not willing to talk about her little failure with anyone right now.

On the other side of the school, Jay woke up earlier that day, ate some of the snacks that they stole from the kitchen, and tried on the Turney jacket that was given to him and he never got the chance to put on.

He held it in front of his eyes and his face filled with pride. Jay earned it, he didn't steal it or forced someone to give it to him, he just showed that he was deserving of it. Putting it on was an experience: the cloth was soft on the inside, but the sleeves had a cold material inside. He shivered and looked down with a huge smile.

He had to walk up to Carlos's side of the room, as he had taken the mirror during the first day and Jay had never retrieved it and began to turn around admiring the way it looked on him.

Carlos woke up and got up with his elbows, noticing Jay standing in front of the mirror. His sleepy face turned into confusion and he rose an eyebrow. "If you keep spinning, you will make a hole on the floor."

Jay flinched and turned around slowly, meeting Carlos's gaze. "Hey, good morning, boo!"

"Don't call me that." He looked unamused. "I think the jacket is a bit short on the arms." Carlos pointed and the taller teen looked down at the sleeves that were, indeed, too short.

"What would you do?" He frowned, slightly annoyed.

Carlos sat up and lazily gestured for Jay to come closer, and he did. He walked in front of him, stood still, and watched as the younger teen began to examine the clothing with a plain expression in his eyes.

"The cloth looks pretty common, but the type of sleeve is a bit complicated to enlarge. The process is too complex, and I am not a professional tailor, so I'd ask for a bigger size, and, in case it happens to be too oversized, we could always shorten it." As Carlos spoke, his face stayed focused and blank. He looked up at Jay when he finally finished his explanation.

"I didn't know you knew about sewing." He blurted out. "I should have guessed, considering that Cruella has a clothing line."

Carlos shrugged. "I don't know much sewing, but I know the procedures and I have fixed up my clothes back on the island. My mom would mostly give me unfinished outfits, so I had to work it out."

"Amazing." Jay's face lit up by a huge smile, and the younger teen motioned his hand dismissively.

"It's not that big of a deal." He sighed and got up from his bed. Truth to be told, he was flattered that Jay thought he was amazing.

The four of them met back in Good Deed class and, for this time only, Evie and Carlos sat together, leaving Jay and Mal to share a desk. Jay had noticed right away and proudly stared as they giggled and joked with each other, more touchy and freely than ever.

Class ended with Fairy Godmother saying something dumb about fair play and teaming up, staring oddly at Jay who growled soundly in protest at the woman's gaze, and she flinched when hearing it.

When the woman dismissed the class, Jay sprinted out and waited for Carlos at the door, bouncing on his feet.

Mal rolled her eyes at him with a smile, and Evie looked over with a confused glance. Carlos wasn't even looking at him, focused on his phone, and moving his fingers rapidly as he passed by.

However, he was restrained from making his way down the hall by Jay's arm around his shoulders. Carlos's first reaction was to freeze at the sudden movement, and the taller teen

felt guilty. He looked like a scared deer.

"Hey, buddy." His voice was soothing and it made Carlos's face harden and soften his stand.

"You scared me." He hissed, kicking his arm.

"Sorry, boo!" He pouted, leaning onto him as he tried to pull away. "I saw you very touchy-feely with Evie, did you--" He wiggled his eyebrows. "kiss?"

Carlos grinned to the side. "Yeah, you were right. Kissing her did make things clearer."

"Oh, man, congrats!" Jay shook him softly.

"Calm down! We are friends, it was all platonic from both sides." He shrugged and placed a hand on Jay's chest, pushing him away from him. "Thank you for the idea." He nodded, hiding a smile as he looked to the side, pretending as if he was searching for his phone.

Jay nodded. "My pleasure."

Carlos eyed him before leaving rapidly through the halls. Jay turned over his feet and began to walk towards the Tournay field.

The school before class was interesting. It was mostly empty, and the students who were there were simply enjoying the green spots on the faculty or finishing homework. Jay wasn't used to this new environment yet, it always felt surreal. Back on the island, if you arrived too early you would be an easy target, and walking around the school would be like wearing a neon sign that said: Yes, beat me up, I'm in for that.

Looking back at it, Jay would feel a shiver going down his spine at how cynical life in the Island of the Lost was. Compared to Auradon, it was a dungeon of deathtraps, and it didn't matter where you stepped on, you would get struck down. He guessed that the situation wasn't so present for him because in the pyramid of survival he would be on the top most of the time.

It made sense. For a predator, the danger wasn't as latent as it was for the pray. He couldn't help but feel a sting in his chest, guilty of the fact that he had caused pain to others to the point where they felt danger constantly.

Jay might not be books smart, but he was hella intelligent in other fields, and since he got to Auradon he had developed a feeling of self-awareness that was slowly choking him. He looked up when a guy who seemed younger than him passed by, nudging him violently in the proppes.

He stopped, trying to regain composure after that attack of thoughts, and breathed in the new air. Unpolluted air that was there to remind him that Auradon was a new start for him and the rest of VKs.

As he made his way through the field, he noticed the cheerleaders practicing, and waved at Aubrey. The girl smiled and waved back, swaying her pompom on the air, which caused him to smile.

"Hey, Jay!" Aziz waved at him when he arrived at the Tourney field, and both hugged.

"Hey! Did I arrive early? Ben's not here." He pointed out. "Or Lonnie."

"Ben's not coming." Aziz sighed and took off his jacket.

Jay frowned and stared at his counterpart as he took off his common shoes and tied on the sports pair. "Why? Is he okay?"

A pair of brown eyes looked up at him accompanied by a shake of his head. "Not really. He had a serious fight with Aubrey yesterday, and they are--" He tried to look for a name that defined the situation. "I guess, taking a break? But I'd call it break up."

"But Aubrey was all happy and dandy back there." Jay sat by Aziz, pointing at the cheerleaders with his thumb.

The prince nodded. "Yeah, I know. She is that way, usually tried to swallow her troubles because she knows the influence she has on others."

Jay's face shifted into a sad frown. "What about Ben? Is he that heartbroken that he just--skipped practice?"

"It's just that Ben told his dad and he offered for him to skip practice. He never liked Turney so he took the chance." Aziz explained, stretching on the bench.

That statement quickly clicked on his head, and he nodded rapidly.

It made sense, of course, poor Ben had always been forced to do things that he didn't want to do. A strange thought occupied his mind for a few seconds, a thought that he despised as soon as it popped up in his head, and he had to shake physically to make it go away: "he won't have to worry for too long, anyways."

Jay sometimes forgot that he was in Auradon to open the shield surrounding the island and give free access to Maleficent to rule the place at will. This would also mean his dad would be back, and Carlos's mom. He didn't want that at all, but it wasn't something he could say out loud, not to the other VKs, and certainly not to Mal.

"That sucks." He let out, mostly to himself than Aziz.

Aziz snorted. "Not to him. He is all mopey about breaking up with Aubrey and all, but he would be sadder if he had to come to practice after that." He got up in a hop as Lonnie came into the picture.

"Sup, fellas!" She said, hugging Aziz and moving to hug Jay. "Do you know anything about beast boy?"

"He's not coming, his dad gave him the chance to not come--"

"And he took it happily." Lonnie shook her head with a smile. "Of course."

"But, I don't get it, they just fought and broke up like that?" Jay crossed his arms over his chest, and Lonnie sighed.

"I wish it was that simple! But no." She took off her sweater. "They've been fighting for almost two months since Ben began the VKs project. He was obsessed with doing it by himself and Aubrey felt like he didn't take her seriously because he refused to accept her help."

Aziz nodded along with the explanation. "Ben, on the other hand, wanted to do it alone because he was scared that he would become too dependant on Aubrey, and make her as stressed as him."

"Lemme guess." Jay extended a hand in front of them to stop their conversation. "They never voiced this, and ended up fighting more and more."

"Exactly." Both teens said in unison.

"What a mess." Jay shook his head. "Is this going to-- Split you guys up?"

"No way." Aziz snorted. "They may be exes, but we were friends first. They are strong, just grieving, I'm sure things will be fine in less than a week."

"Aziz, Jay, Lonnie! Stop laying around and get to the field or we'll start without you!" The coach roared at them, and Lonnie snorted.

"The last to arrive is a dumbass!"

The three ran to their destination, bumping and laughing on the way, without noticing a pair of angry eyes staring at them from the benches. Chad crossed his leg and leaned onto the seat, grumbling to himself as the coach announced the last practice before the first game of the season.

Evie stopped by one of the toilets before the first bell rang and examined her outfit. She had been roaming around the school and ended up falling asleep on the grass. It was crazy for her to feel grass after living on an island that was pure concrete and mud, and the little patches of grass that could be found were either gross or dry.

She sat on the lawn and giggled at how soft it felt. As she laid on it, the shadow of a tree let her enjoy the sky, so blue and shiny that it made her eyes teary from staring too long. The clouds were puffy and moved so slightly that, for a few seconds, Evie thought they weren't moving at all, and it was just a trick of her mind.

Eventually, she fell asleep in the calm and fresh air of the morning.

But, when she woke up she felt sticky, gross, and noticed a green stain in her white jacket. She huffed angrily at her reflection and furiously patted her cloth, trying to wash away the spot.

She gave up after a while and tied it around her waist with a sigh of resignation. As she walked out of the bathroom she crashed with Aubrey and Lonnie, both coming from the field

and with their sports bags on their shoulders, which fell to the floor because of the clash.

"Oh, my! I'm so sorry!" Evie excused, rapidly leaning towards the bags and taking them.

Aubrey shook her head gently and helped Evie up. "It's nothing." She smiled.

"So, you are the famous Evie! I have been meaning to meet you!"

Evie seemed confused and slowly gave them their respective bags. "You've heard of me?"

Lonnie nodded. "Yeah, I've heard you are the villain who looks like a princess. They were right!" She winked, and Evie was even more confused.

"People talk about me?" She blushed at the idea, at the fact that people said good things about her-- or bad?

"People talk about everyone, don't worry." Aubrey said. "But they do talk nicely about you, so that's different, special."

A smile formed in Evie's lips, and she giggled happily. She was in love with the idea of people liking her, and she remembers feeling like that wouldn't happen during high school because of the whole Maleficent situation. But now, it was different, and she had a chance.

However, her face went plain when she noticed the lack of spark in Aubrey's eyes.

"Is everything okay?" Evie asked, reaching for her shoulder.

The girl smiled sadly, and though she wants to say yes, she frowned. "How did you notice? That something was wrong?"

"Your eyes look sad."

Lonnie sighed and patted her friend's back. "She and Ben are taking a break." She commented. "Fights and stuff."

"Ah- Sorry." Evie let out. "That sucks."

"Yeah, well, it was bound to happen." Aubrey gripped onto the strap of her bag. "We've been fighting a lot."

Lonnie rose her eyes, and her gaze united with Evie, both wearing a certain look of worry in her face. The taller girl moved her eyes towards Aubrey and back to Lonnie rapidly, trying to signal for the athlete to say something.

The girl looked at Aubrey, who's eyes were stapled to the floor, and smiled widely.

"I just had a brilliant idea!" Lonnie looked smug when both girls dedicated her a puzzled look. "Let's move the spring party to next weekend!"

Aubrey's face shifted and she let out a laugh. "After the tourney match?"

Lonnie's face falls. "Oh-- I forgot." She bit her finger and smirked. "Even better, we can have that party as an opening for the Tourney matches of the year, if we win we celebrate it, if we lose, we party to forget!"

Evie rose an eyebrow. "So, there's gonna be a party this weekend?"

"I mean, do you want that?" Lonnie turned towards Aubrey, and her eyes took a new spark.

"You know what? Yeah, let's do that." She nodded happily. "Let's do a spring-themed party this weekend! I'm sure I'll feel better. You and the other VKs should come." Aubrey said, and Evie noticed a hint of a spark on her eye.

"Of course, we'll be there." She nodded, though not sure if they all would agree, or if she was ready to go to another party after the last time.

After the first bell rang, Mal entered her first class. It was art, and she shared it with Aziz who walked up to her as soon as he saw her.

"Hey!" He exclaimed, sitting by her side. "You must be Mal."

The girl glared at him. "Yeah." A hiss escaped her mouth.

Aziz stood there uncomfortable, taken aback by the harshness of the girl's voice. It was crazy to meet someone so cold after becoming friends with Jay, who was the complete opposite.

"Uh-- I'm Jay's friend! From Turney." He explained, extending his hand over the desk. "I'm Aziz."

Mal's eyes shifted from rigid to calm in a matter of seconds, and she took his hand with a slight hesitation on her grip. They shook their hands and Aziz let go with a charming smile.

"Jay talks a lot about you, and Lonnie, and Turney in general." She explained, looking back at her canvas. The task of the day was to draw something that reminded you of spring, and she couldn't help but draw a single rose.

When she was on the island, especially in her younger years, she wanted to see roses. It was the only flower that she had books about on her castle's library, and she would read it and copy the photographs of it everywhere.

When she arrived at Auradon, the first patch of flowers she saw was a beautiful group of red roses covered in morning dew. She fell for them that day and spent her free hour after Good Deed's class sketching it.

Aziz looked over her shoulder and smirked at the sight of the rose.

"You are really good at this." He exclaimed, leaning over with a soft gaze.

Mal's eyes flashed at him and back to her drawing, as she nervously shook her head. "It's nothing." She sighed. "A lot of practice."

She hated being stared at while drawing, especially by someone she just met. When she was working on a piece, she was unable to see the other person's face, and couldn't manage to see what they were thinking, she couldn't find enough attention for both the drawing and Aziz's thoughts.

She slapped her hand on the desk. "Could you stop staring at me?" Mal hissed, causing the prince to gasp at the sudden movement.

"I-- sorry." He looked away. "It's amazing, by the way. You are really talented." He finally concluded and began to work on his own piece.

Mal looked over at Aziz, who's face returned to that charming smile and always a cheerful expression that reminded her, to some extent, to Jay. But her friend had a heaviness on him that Aziz didn't, one that caused his eyes to look dark, and his posture to look threatening most of the time.

The school day went by fast, so much so that Carlos was unable to grasp on whatever the classes were trying to teach him. Not that he cared for them either, it was all just dull information that he already knew. He walked out of his last class ready to do something he had never done in his life: take a nap.

He had heard many times that it was great, but he never experienced first hand, mostly because living with his mother was like working all the time. When he came from school he had to clean the entire Hell Hall plus Cruella's coats (careful not to step on one of the bear traps surrounding them).

The sole thought of them made Carlos's leg hurt, and though the injury was long gone, it was something he considered psychological rather than physical, like when you think about insects and suddenly have the sensation that something is crawling on you.

As he made his way to his room, ready to try on a nap, he bumped with someone. His first answer was to close his eyes at any possible punch that could come with the impact, but instead heard a voice he had heard before.

"Oh, Carlos! I'm so sorry." Jane whined, patting the boy's arms in a nervous attempt to make sure he was okay.

Carlos swallowed down a growl at the sudden touch, and his eyes fell on the girl. "Ah-- It's okay." He wanted to sleep now more than ever.

The girl smiled sheepishly and tucked a hair on her ear. "So, how was your reading session?"

Carlos wanted to say: we didn't read much and I'm sure Mal will want to kill us because of it but instead shrugged. "Curfew cut off my reading time."

At that moment, his brain reproduced Evie's voice, and his face shifted into determination.

He wasn't good at flirting, at least not that he was aware of, given the fact that he never attempted to flirt before, but he had to try.

"Oh, that's too bad." Jane pouted. "Was it important?"

"Yeah." He nodded dramatically. "I wish there was a way for me to stay longer, after all, the library is one of the things that make me feel happier here." He forced himself to sound whiny.

"I'm so sorry, Carlos! The school is kind of strict with curfews." She leaned her head to the side with a sad expression on her eyes and then stopped. "Unless--"

"Unless?" He leaned closer to her and felt bad for using her feelings against her.

"Well-- Uh-- There is a special card that I use when I need to work with projects." She began to fidget with her fingers, and Carlos felt guiltier. "Maybe I can lend it to you?"

The boy forced himself to let out a soft smile. "You would do that for me?"

"I-- Yes!" She smiled and began to examine her bag. "Of course." She blushed slightly as her hand moved around. "If the library makes you feel better, then--" She took out a yellow card with blue streaks and handed it to Carlos. "It's yours."

Carlos's eyes sparkled without his permission as he took the card and looked up at her. "Thank you." He nodded.

"Ah-- It's a pleasure!" She swung her hands around dramatically. "You can give it back when you finish with your library stuff." Her eyes drifted up to his, with a special shine that Carlos could recall was fascination.

"Thank you a lot." He looked down at the card and forced himself to give her a kiss in the cheek.

She left happily, glowing and walking alongside her pounding heart; while Carlos felt a sinking feeling of guilt that made his hand, the one holding the card, heavier.

"That was some act." A voice startled him. He looked over his shoulder and found Mal walking towards him with a smug smile. "Worth the laugh."

Carlos took out the card. "I had to get this to stay longer in the library."

Mal's eyes opened wide with a spark. "Clever!" She patted his arms and took the card. "Let's go." She gestured with her head, and he looked over at her with curiosity.

"I thought you'd want to go alone or-- with Jay." He explained as she began to walk towards the library.

"Eh? Why?"

"Aren't you friends?" He asked while jogging up to her.

She looked up at him and sunk her hands onto her pockets. "Yeah, I guess we are. It's odd to admit it out loud like that." She sighed as a streak of sunlight leaked onto her eyes. She

grimaced and placed a hand on her forehead.

Carlos nodded. "It's been a while since we worked together."

Mal stiffened slightly at the memories from back at the island, and the danger at every turn, especially during their mission. "I hope you didn't tell anyone that you held my hand." She attempted to joke, but the tone was harsh.

"Of course not!" He shook his head slightly and Mal noticed how tense he got. It occurred to her that she never said sorry for forcing him into doing a party or pushing him to go with them to get the scepter.

She placed a hand on the back of her neck and sighed. "Listen, I'm sorry-- about the shit I did to you back on the island." She finally let out.

Carlos's eyes widened and looked over at her. Her eyes were as severe as ever, and her brows were furrowed. Even being so small, she was extremely scary and intimidating. He shook his head and crossed his arms.

"It's okay."

Mal found herself thinking: good, at least he doesn't give me life advice like Evie would. "Yeah." She sighed, and they made their way to the library in silence.

As they walked through the halls, Evie knocked on the boys' room. Jay opened the door for her, and she noticed how sleepy he seemed.

"Did I wake you up? It's like-- two PM." She snorted.

"I was doing homework, and it's a fucking bore." He complained dramatically and gestured for her to come in. "It's all just pointless to me."

"I guess." She nodded. "I try to do everything before I leave so I don't have to worry about homework."

Jay sat on his desk and looked over at her with a smile. "Nerd."

Evie pouted but didn't protest. "Where's Los?"

The boy seemed to pause entirely by this, and his face shifted into confusion. "Good question. He's probably in the library." He nodded, feeling confident with the answer.

"Oh, well, wanna go eat something? I haven't visited the city since we arrived!" She clapped.

"Do you have money for that?" He snorted.

"Fair enough, let's get to the dining room, then." She exclaimed once more, heading for the door.

"Ah, sure! Let me finish this and I'll be at the door." Clicking the pen on his hand, he went back to furiously scribbling on a paper.

Evie nodded and sat on Jay's bed, looking around the room. She found it remarkably tidy: every surface was well polished, and the place was organized from one corner to the other.

"This place is super clean." She pointed out, passing a finger through Jay's nightstand and noticing the lack of dust.

The boy didn't even look up to answer. "Yeah, Los is a compulsive cleaner, I think. He gets super annoyed when he notices something out of place or untidy. He almost killed me when I left my clothes all scattered around the first day."

Evie wondered how much of this behavior had to do with all those years of having to do the chores and arrange Hell Hall and felt somehow saddened by the idea.

Mal and Carlos arrived at the library and began to take all the books that seemed mildly useful, from the history of Auradon to ancient magic 101.

He sighed and turned on one of the lamps on the long table they had settled in. She looked over at him and noticed how he had started reading something about the science behind the barrier.

"I'm not that into reading." She commented, breaking the silence that was overwhelming her. It was true, she couldn't find enough concentration to read a book, and finishing one sounded like a reality she was not part of.

Carlos rose his eyes from the book and placed it down. "You never read anything?"

She scoffed. "So what? It's boring."

"Maybe you haven't found a book that you like." He shrugged. "What kind of thing do you like?"

"Like a genre?"

Carlos nodded and rose his book. "For example, I like science, so I am reading about it."

Mal thought for a while. She liked potions and magic and was into anything related to those subjects. At that moment a memory flew back to her: she had finished a book once, one about bubbling liquids and particles that had made her feel excited about going to school.

"I like science too." She finally said, staring at the table.

Carlos tried, he really did, but he couldn't help smile a little at Mal's doe-eyed expression, as if an unexpected thought had come to her. "Well," He stretched over the table and gave his book to Mal. "You can try this one."

She stared at it and then at him. "I don't need your pity." She said with a plain tone in her voice.

"Eh?" He let out, suddenly confused. "I'm not pitying you! I was just- I-"

Mal noticed how fast he could go from confident to scared when it came to her, and though she wished she could be happy about the control she had on him, they were in this together and she had to start considering that.

"You were trying to help?" She sighed. "I know, I'm just not used to that."

The boy nodded and unstiffened. "Yeah, I'm new to all of this too."

She looked up at him with the same plain expression she always carried and leaned on her hand. "My mother would always say that no one wants to help a ruler, and if they do, they are either pitying them or looking for something in return."

"My mother would say the same, but more scattered." He snorted, and Mal let out a soundly exhale. "Like: they just want to use the fact that you need help to kick you in the ass later." He explained, reaching for another book. "Or something like that."

"Shitty moms, am I right?" She let out and felt like a pressure in her chest softened. She said something that had been roaming around her brain for longer than Mal would accept, and it felt freeing.

Carlos looked surprised but smiled to the side anyway. "Shitty moms, yeah." He could never say that to Cruella or even look at her in the eyes when addressing her. Perhaps it was for that reason that it felt so nice to say that out loud.

Maybe it was the silence and loneliness of the library, or perhaps the lifted weight from their chests after having something in common, but once more, the reading session became a talking gathering.

"So, Jane likes you." She snorted. "People here seem to be super needy or something, every corner I go, I see a couple! It's gross."

Carlos snorted and passed the page on the book he was reading, well, looking over would be the correct description. "I don't know how they can live being in love. I only felt like that once and it was so annoying! Even though it wasn't true love." He commented.

"Eh? You fell for someone on the island?"

He blushed, remembering that not everyone knew he had liked Evie a day ago. "Uh, well, I did like Evie until I kissed her, and realized it was the wrong love I believe I had."

Mal's eyes widened and she burst out laughing. Carlos blushed more, if that was possible, and pleaded to disappear from this embarrassing moment he himself had stepped into. "Dude! That explains why Jay was so annoying this morning!" She snickered.

He nodded. "It's so dumb now that I think about it."

Mal shrugged. "I kissed Jay back on the island." She placed her book down. "I thought I liked him when I was twelve, so we kissed and it was the most disappointing and anti-climactic

moment of my life." She rolled her eyes with a smile. "We were stitched from the hip after that."

Carlos smiled. "Since you were twelve! That's some time."

Mal shrugged, yielding a prideful smile. "I guess you chose who your family is, and I chose him. I have to take responsibility for that."

Both let themselves laugh, and it felt natural. For the first time in Auradon, they felt safe with someone else than their respective friends. Until Mal stopped her laugh as she shrieked quietly.

"Are you ok?" Carlos placed his book down.

She shook her head slightly. "It's just a headache." She dismissed. "I woke up with it."

Carlos nodded. "Nightmare?"

The girl didn't hide her surprise. She didn't have a nightmare perse, but she did have a bad premonition. "Something like that." She explained. "You have nightmares too, I suppose?"

"Who doesn't?" He sighed, leaning on the seat. "But yeah, mostly about Cruella."

"Same here." She nodded and suddenly snorted. "About my mom, I mean. Not Cruella."

Carlos chuckled and Mal didn't even try to hide a smile. It was strange, but they were more alike than what meets the eye. They both enjoyed science had shitty mothers, and now they knew they also had nightmares (or bad thoughts) with their respective parents. Mal felt like she wasted too much time picking on him when she could have found another ally.

However, in a moment of silence where there was no sound to stop their inner voices to make their way into their conscience, the happy-go-lucky feeling that had surrounded them disappeared as soon as it came, and as in sync as they were capable to, they shut down and went back to reading their respective books.

Carlos felt exposed, like he was back to being pray, easier to trap after talking about himself with Mal. And Mal felt like her severe stance had crumbled apart, making her less respectable, weak.

If only they knew that the other was as scared as they were from one another.

Meanwhile, Jay and Evie had made their way to the dining room and were enjoying some of the desserts that the large menu offered the students. It was crazy how many things there were to choose from, either sweet or sour; and some even salty.

"Man, this is great! No wonder there's never sugar on the island, it's too good to throw away." Jay commented as he ate another of the pancakes he had asked for.

"I know! I always wondered what cheesecake tasted like, and lemme tell you, I'm not disappointed." She explained, taking another spoonful of the dessert.

The place was filled with students at that time of the day, and even though both had to swallow down the ugly stares they received as they made their way into the room, it had all been worth it to try those dishes.

"So-- This Friday's the big game! Are you excited?" She exclaimed, taking a cookie from him. He had to mentally slap himself not to growl at her for this.

"Yeah! I don't know how I'm gonna manage to sleep." He smiled sweetly. "I never felt like this before, you know? Usually, back at the island, I couldn't sleep when something made me anxious, or just because the floor was a literal pain in the back."

"You slept on the floor?" A concerned look crossed her eyes.

Jay smiled and shook his head dismissively. "That's in the past, anyway." Evie pouted nonetheless, feeling a sinking sadness in her chest. He reached over for her hand and squeezed it reassuringly. "It's fine, I promise."

Evie wasn't sure and sometimes blamed herself for not being able to understand what they went through. She had a loving mother, and a warm bed to sleep in every day. Perhaps some people deserved it more than her, like Carlos and Jay.

"Okay." She nodded. "I'm glad you feel excited."

He smirked. "And the best part is that Chad won't be participating."

The speed in which Evie's face shifted from sadness to extreme happiness was comical, and Jay had to bit his lip to avoid laughing hysterically.

"No way!" She chuckled and progressively began to laugh louder.

"Yes way, Ben found managed to get him off the field until he calmed the fuck down." Jay snorted. "He deserves it."

"Ben keeps showing over and over again how superior he is from the rest of the people here." She smiled. "Oh, did you hear that he and Aubrey broke up?"

Jay knew but pretended he didn't as he rose both eyebrows with a smug smile. "Interesting."

Evie nudged him from over the table. "Leave Aubrey alone." She playfully complained. "Anyway, Lonnie decided to throw a party to cheer them up, I'm guessing you are going." She leaned on her hand.

"Man, a party sounds great." He nodded, leaning on the seat. "When?"

"This weekend, it's spring themed." She wiggled her eyebrows. "So you better wear a flower crown, or I'll be very disappointed."

Both laughed, and Jay finished his dish. They stayed on a comfortable silence for a few seconds, both calmly taking in their new reality, one where they could eat sweets and drink tea, and gossip about dumb drama and parties. It seemed surreal.

"Hey, Ivs." He finally broke the silence. "I got you something." She smirked at him with a risen eyebrow.

"You did?"

"You know how you said that you liked potions and spells?"

She frowned, as she put her teacup down. "Yes--?"

"Well, I got you some chemicals from the lab."

Her lips parted in surprise and she began to laugh. "OMG Jay, what did you do!" She whisper-shouted in between giggles.

Jay looked proud and gestured for her to follow him.

They made their way back to the dorm, and Jay gave her the tray with chemicals.

"I got some for Carlos too, but now that I think about it, I don't really know if he'd find any use on it." He sighed, giving her the wooden box.

She smiled and kissed his cheek, taking the chemicals. "This is a gold mine! I wonder--" She looked it over and looked up at Jay with an idea in mind.

They made their way to the kitchen, a huge dopey grin on both teens as they slid into the room. The place was already empty, and Evie dropped the wooden box on the counter alongside her spellbook. It had been her mother's, the one she had used to poison Snow White once upon a time.

"I never saw you do witchcraft." He said, jumping onto another counter and moving slightly to sit in a comfortable position on the rather small space.

She smiled widely and winked. "There are a handful of secrets you don't know about me."

"Duh." Jay leaned on a pole by the counter. "That's why they are secret."

Evie stuck her tongue out for him and went back to her stuff. She had brought a perfume bottle with her too and began to work with the chemicals, humming what he could only guess was a popular song that blasted on every radio and tv around the school.

She moved her hands gracefully around the containers, pouring and swirling the liquid inside almost rhythmically. Jay felt hypnotized by her movements but got taken aback when he could see her mouth moving.

She began to whisper words too quiet for him to understand, but loud enough for Jay to know they were beings said. She finally stopped moving and stared at the container in her hands, as a green liquid occupied it.

"Done!" She exclaimed, putting the container down and opening the cap of the perfume bottle.

"What is it?" He asked, jumping off the counter and walking in.

She poured the liquid carefully and closed the perfume bottle. "This, my dear Jay, is a potion that has the same effect as Snow White's venom, but weaker. It will last for a few minutes only, and we could use it as a last resource in case things get out of hands."

"That is so cool, Ivs." He whispered with a huge grin.

She smiled and slid the perfume into her pocket. "You know how you said that you wanted to give this to Carlos, but that he won't find much use to it?" Evie offered, taking the wooden box. "Maybe you could return this and take something else?"

Jay seemed confused but nodded. "What do you have in mind?"

Carlos entered the room with a heavy sigh and noticed Jay watching the TV from the table.

"Hey! Welcome back, how was the library?"

He shrugged. "It was fine." He felt drained, not wanting to talk or wasting any more time where he could be sleeping.

Jay looked over as Carlos took off his jacket and belt, and neatly placed them in his desk. He sat dully on the bed and took off his shoes

"You know, I gave Evie some chemicals today!" He offered.

Carlos let out a low "mhm" as an answer and pushed the shoes under the bed. The taller teen leaned his head to the side and pouted. He guessed that Carlos had a complicated day. Jay thought that, when he had a day like those, he wanted to sleep and not be bothered, so may as well not disturb him.

But he wanted to let him know! So he gave a short spin and walked up to his side of the room. "I got you something too."

"Did you?" Carlos's curiosity seemed to be sparkled over the topic.

Jay sprinted up and showed off a cardboard box that had what seemed to be wires and other technological parts scattered around. As soon as the younger teen saw it, his eyes widened and he jumped up and towards Jay.

"Did you steal this?" Carlos touched the parts carefully.

"Yeah, they were in the engineering room. I guess it was an old computer! But its all scattered around now so-" He pushed the box towards Carlos. "I hope it works for you."

"What do you want for it?" He asked, focused on the box.

The taller teen shook his head. "It's on me, you can sleep tight, I won't ask for anything in exchange."

Carlos's eyes were sparkling, and Jay couldn't help but feel proud.

"This is perfect." He smiled, taking the box. "Thank you." He looked up at Jay who chuckled as an answer to his happiness.

"It was my pleasure!"

It happened fast, and none of them really expected it to happen, but it did. Carlos left the box by his bed and hugged Jay.

Carlos wasn't used to hugging, so he just wrapped his arms around the taller teen's neck and squeezed. Jay wasn't used to it either, and he couldn't think fast enough to hug him back, because when the situation clicked in his head, the boy was already back in his bed.

It didn't last more than a few seconds, and in a short time, Carlos was looking around the box, checking what things were inside. Jay felt happier than before, and with a feeling of warmth in his chest.

On the other side of the faculty, Mal entered her room and saw Evie painting her nails.

"Hey! What were you up to?"

"Library." She sighed, throwing herself onto the bed. "You?"

"Painting my nails." She gestured with her head.

"I know, but what did you do today? I mean, unless you've been struggling with painting your nails for six hours." She looked over at her.

She smiled and jumped off the bed, careful not to touch anything with her nails. She walked up to her desk and opened one of the cabinets, taking out the perfume and tossing it to Mal once she gestured for her to throw it.

Mal caught it and stared with a blank expression. "What is it?"

"A potion, something to knock out someone for a period of time." She explained while taking another bag out of the cabinet. "With the chemicals Jay got me."

Mal's eyes sparkled in a green that Evie never saw before, and the shorter girl bounced on her bed until being on the edge. "This is brilliant." She complimented. "You are really talented with this witchcraft thing."

Evie smiled proudly. "Yeah, I guess I am."

"It's not weird, you already showed us how good you were back on the island." She nodded, placing the perfume on her nightstand. "Anything else?"

The taller teen smiled. "I met with Jay! We ate some desserts and-" She turned around and took the small box on her desk. "I got you some." She tilted her head as Mal moved slightly to take the bag.

She opened it and noticed a few red triangle things.

"What is this?" She said, raising an eyebrow.

"Strawberries. Some have chocolate and others don't." A giggle escaped her lips. "I didn't know what you'd prefer so I asked Jay and he said that you would like them."

Mal took one of them without chocolate and smelled it. She couldn't understand why, but it smelled fresh. She hesitated but tried the fruit, and her face lit up.

It was hard to explain, but she loved the taste. It was sour in an enjoyable way, but sweet too.

In seconds, she was eating the strawberries as her life depended on it, and Evie smiled happily at it. "I'll get you more next time." She promised.

Mal looked up at her and, for the first time, gave her a huge toothy smile. It made Evie think of that of a child, and she was content with that.

That night, none of them had nightmares.

Chapter End Notes

Man, did I love writing this chapter! It's one of those that I like to call the calm before the storm, so yeah. Hope you liked it!

A fist for a hug is better than none

Chapter Notes

A very Carlos-centric chapter because I love him and-- yea. Also,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Good Deed was turning into something that Mal liked to call: the most annoying class of Auradon. Not only were the questions dumb, and they were treated like kindergarten children, but Fairy Godmother had stopped pretending to like them after the second class.

"I'll see you tomorrow at the game." She waved as they left, and Mal crossed her arms with a heavy sigh.

"That lady is extremely annoying." She said, not caring for the woman to listen.

Evie smirked. "She's just doing her job. If anything, I'd call the king annoying." She commented as the four walked out of the class.

"What are you guys up to today?" Jay asked.

"I'll go sketch something." Mal shrugged. "Maybe go to the dining room and eat some strawberries."

Jay smiled and eyed Evie, who stood proudly.

"I'll work with the parts you got me to see if I can fix the computer they gave me." Carlos pointed at his bag.

"What's wrong with it?" Mal asked, tilting her head slightly.

"I want it to be easier to work with, and find a way to avoid the school to control the things I do and write on it."

"They can do that?" Evie gasped.

Carlos nodded. "Yeah. I better get going if I want to finish this before the first class. I'll see you at lunch?"

It occurred to them that they hadn't eaten together since they arrived. Mal would skip lunchtime and eat during the class before or after, depending on the day. Evie would go sit under a tree, and enjoy the peace. After all, she was used to being alone and had developed a certain liking for it. And Jay usually eats on the Turney field, with the team. Carlos would eat in the dining room, concentrated on his own projects.

They realized then that they had been in their heads more than together as a team, and so, Jay nodded happily. "Yeah! Let's do that."

Mal nodded. "Sure."

Evie placed her hand on his arm and squeezed lightly. "Yeap."

The boy nodded and left, sort of jogging.

"I'll meet with the Turney team to take a last look at the schedule for tomorrow. See you guys at lunch!" And he sprinted off.

Evie smiled. "Want me to go with you? I don't have anything to do for the next few hours." She explained to the shorter girl by her.

But before Mal could say anything, a bunch of girls walked in, giggling and chatting loudly. Both VKs turned towards them and noticed that the group was approaching them.

"Mal! OMG, we were just looking for you!" One of the girls said.

"Ah-- You were?" She whispered, staring at the stranger with a rigid stare.

"Yes! Jane told us what you did with her hair and we were wondering if you could do that to us?" Another girl butted in, causing Mal to take a step back.

"I don't--"

"Please! We'll pay you! Well, we don't really have like-- money. But we can give you something else?" Another girl said.

Mal felt her head was pounding and looked around with an expression that to an outsider would seem like confusion. She took another step back, and Evie noticed the sudden change of behavior.

She wasn't used to this amount of attention, and the fact that they were looking to get something from her was starting to piss her off. A feeling of anger began to build on the pit of her stomach, and stress ran in circles through her brain like a stray cat. She had the sudden urge to explode in pure rage until Evie stepped in front of her.

"Girls, please!" She said, waving her hands around to catch their attention. "I'm very sorry to tell you that she wasn't the one to make the spell, I was." She lied, crossing her arms over her chest.

All the girls' attention turned directly towards Evie.

"Really?" They cooed

"Yes. In fact, I can make a stronger spell if I wanted to." She smiled smugly.

All the girls shrieked in happiness. Evie looked over at Mal and winked. The latter smiled heavily and mouthed a short "thank you" before sprinting out.

She made all the way towards the lockers and let out a shaky sigh. No matter how many days she'd stay on Auradon, she hated the attention and the intensity of everyone there.

Her ears caught Jay's voice not so far from her, causing her to get out of her head. She turned slightly and caught a glimpse of him, talking and laughing with a group of cheerleaders and other people. She could listen to his smug tone, one that she hadn't heard in a while, that he used to flirt.

Mal's face filled with a dopey grin. Jay flirting was a funny experience to see: he'd puff his chest and talk in a dumb tone that she couldn't take seriously.

She chuckled to herself and opened her locker, looking for her sketchbook.

Mal felt kind of guilty that Evie had stayed behind with that group of annoying girls, but in the end, she took the fall for her, so she could take care of it. She had shown Mal many times that she was stronger than what meets the eye.

Her hand moved into the locker and took the sketchbook and a pencil, shutting the door in a single movement. Her eyes rolled towards the hall, and her heart dropped with surprise at a face waiting by her side.

"Fuck! Jay, you scared me." She hissed, kicking his chest.

"Sorry!" He laughed. "Where's Ivs?"

"She took a bullet for me." Mal snorted. "Shouldn't you be at practice, or were you having fun with that group of people and forgot about it?" She teased.

"They stopped me midway through!" Jay blushed slightly and laughed soundly. "But yeah! They are really into me for some reason."

"You are hot." Mal shrugged, leaning on the lockers. "They are hot. It's a simple equation."

"Fair enough." He nodded, and Mal felt warm by seeing him so happy and glowy. "By the way! There's gonna be a party this weekend, spring-themed. We are invited! You are on, right?"

Mal looked at the taller teen and hugged herself slightly. She didn't like parties or people for that matter; the last party she attended was for the sole reason of causing Evie pain. But going somewhere without evil means behind? She'd prefer to talk with Fairy Godmother about all etiquette there was in the world, and then make a whole essay on the matter, then going to a party.

But it was for Jay, for his little happiness, one that wouldn't last long once her mother was in charge. The last meal.

"I'll think about it." She nodded.

"Promise?" His eyes looked like the ones of a puppy.

"Yeah, I promise."

For Carlos, building a machine was like solving a puzzle: each piece had to go in the right place, or the picture won't work in the end. He had been working on the computer for a few minutes now, and all his attention was settled on his project.

He was so centered on the building that he didn't notice when another being jumped on the table and stared at the boy with wondrous eyes.

When he was making something, he would get extremely annoyed if distracted. He would also get alarmed by any sudden movement. So much so that when he heard the gentle meow that came from the little brown and white cat sitting some centimeters away from him, he let out a shriek and covered his head.

After a few seconds of softly shaking, he felt a delicate brush on his arm and gasped. He parted his arms to see what had touched him, and his pupils dilated at the sight of the kitty.

"Oh- hey, buddy." He whispered, softly moving his hand closer to the animal, who extended his whole body to touch it with its head. "You scared me." He smiled, petting it.

The cat meowed at him, and Carlos could feel his heart melting at the sound. It walked around the boy's hand at tried to catch it with its paw, careful not to hurt him with its claws in the process. The cat moved around the computer and settled when it arrived at Carlos's lap.

Carlos was shaking out of pure happiness, and he could feel the animal purring as its paws opened and closed over his leg.

"You found the cat!" Aubrey said, popping out of nowhere and causing Carlos to flinch softly. He hated getting so scared, but he couldn't help it. "I'm very sorry if I scared you, but I just noticed that I didn't speak to you this week!"

The girl sat in front of him, noticing the scattered pieces, but deciding not to stick her nose on personal matters.

To Carlos, Aubrey seemed like the representation of the color pink. Her clothes were that color most of the time, after all. Her hair was brown, and her skin had a copper tone to it that made the pastel pink on her dresses pop up. She looked happy every time he looked at her, and her bubbly personality gave her a magnetism that no one, not even Carlos himself, could avoid.

"It's fine, really." He nodded.

"You dress really well." She commented, tilting her head and smiling widely. "This weekend, we are having a spring party, you are totally invited by the way," she nudged him softly. "but us, the hosts, would love some tips to dress up for it! Would you mind helping us?"

Carlos had a mental war as soon as the suggestion was proposed because he loved fashion and the idea of inspiring others, but he was also very untrusty. So he began to pick on his fingers in an attempt to calm down.

"Is there a way I can give you tips from-- here? Or write you a list or something?"

"If that makes you feel comfortable, sure!" She smiled, and Carlos couldn't help but blush at that aura of hers, so lovely and sparkly.

"Okay," He took out a page from his bag and began to scribble some tips. "It's pretty simple: oversized shirts that don't seem to fit can be stylish if tucked on the bottom, or tied. If you are wearing a flowery top, I'd offer for you to wear a plain bottom, and vice-versa, because two patterns don't work together unless they are the same." He began to mumble, and Aubrey paid close attention. "Try to keep your outfit to follow a color scheme of no more than four colors, otherwise it will look messy."

"Could it be five?" Aubrey whispered as she looked over the page.

Carlos looked up and thought before humming. "I guess so, as long as the colors are complementary, and not just one of every single shade there is." The princess nodded and smiled softly. "If you want to wear something under a buttoned-up shirt I'd offer a turtleneck, but that's just personal preference." He felt the need to excuse. "And accessories-- this is mostly an individual choice, but I'd offer for a cold color scheme to wear silver jewelry, and for warm color scheme wear gold." He passed the page to her, and she gripped onto it, placing it carefully on her handbag.

"Thank you so much!" An alarm on her phone went off, and she pouted. "I have to leave now, but I'll be seeing you soon!" Aubrey jumped up and waved excitedly as she left between the trees and garden decoration.

He watched as she left, and when she was no longer visible, he eyed his cellphone and began to place his things on his bag, causing the cat to meow in annoyance because of the movement. Carlos let out a smirk and patted the sleeping cat on his lap.

"I think I should be leaving too, buddy." The cat meowed in protest as the boy took him and placed him carefully on the wooden table. "You can go get me any time." He offered, approaching the animal, and giggled as it rubbed his face on Carlos's.

The day went by slowly, and the highlight could easily have been lunch and listening to Evie and Jay rambling about what they've been doing so far while a spark occupied their eyes. Carlos had shared plenty of looks with Mal that held the same fondness for the two other VKs, and for a whole hour, he was pleased.

Then, the last class of the day came by Home Economics. He frowned at the name. What was that supposed to be about? The logical thought would be home decoration, or something to do with architecture, perhaps even something to do with taking care of your money.

That's why when he entered the class, his face shifted into complete confusion. The whole room was covered in posters with Snow White holding an apple pie, Cinderella holding

cleaning supplies, and Sleeping Beauty wearing an apron. The desks were replaced by tables that had ovens under them, and he was starting to regret not skipping the last period.

"The hell is this?" He thought as he took place by a blond girl with blue streaks in her hair who gasped softly at the sight of the villain.

"You are new here!" The girl smiled.

Carlos looked at her from the corner of his eye and nodded. "Yeah, what even is this class anyway?"

"Home Economics, or misogyny, the class." Lonnie commented from the door and walked over, placing her things on Carlos's table. "My mother didn't fight a war for this school to do me like this." She pouted.

The other girl scoffed. "It's not that bad! Besides, cooking is a useful talent."

"Yeah, but I could be practicing for tomorrow's Turney match." She sighed and turned towards Carlos. "We couldn't get introduced properly before! I'm Lonnie, daughter of Mulan, and Jay's teammate."

The boy let out a smile. "Carlos, but I'm guessing you knew?"

"Yeah! Jay talks about you." She nodded. "You are taller than I thought you'd be."

Carlos was taken by surprise. "Uh-- thanks?"

"Oh, man! A guy! That's weird." Another girl said, leaning on the table. Her hair reminded him of a genie.

"Am I the only guy in the class?" Carlos asked, confused.

"Well, no, Chad's here too."

"Marvelous." The boy growled soundly and crossed his arms over his chest.

Lonnie pouted. "He's a dick, but we won't let him do anything to-"

"Well, isn't this my FUCKING lucky day." Chad's voice took over all the sounds in the class, hushing it right after. "What the fuck are you doing here, Devil?"

Perhaps it was the low patience he had from the disappointment of the class, or that he was surrounded by nice-looking people or the misuse of his name, but he placed both hands on the table and scrunched his eyebrows.

"It's a DeVil, dipshit." He hissed, automatically regretting it as he felt the stomps of the other teen throughout the marble floor.

He was lifted from the ground in a matter of seconds, and he looked desperately for Lonnie, who was on the floor, getting help from the genie and blond girl.

"How did you call me?" Chad spat, causing Carlos to get memories flooding his brain. His face turned blank, and his whole body was stiffened still. "Answer me! You think you are so cool because Ben's your friend-- He's my friend too! But he likes you and your little villain offspring friends because you are new!"

Carlos had grabbed his collar so it wouldn't get stretched off. That would be a pain to fix.

"Leave him alone, Chad!" Lonnie growled, taking his arm and ripping it away from the younger teen. "Or I'll tell the coach, and you can kiss your Turney jacket goodbye!"

The blond let off Carlos's shirt, causing him to stumble onto the floor and hardly get caught by the blond girl.

Chad glared at him before walking towards the other side of the room, into the table standing opposite to the villain.

"I'm sorry about that." The blond girl pouted. "I'm Ally." She offered, helping the boy get on his feet."

"I don't know where that anger came from, he tends to be really charming and chill." The genie girl explained. "I'm Jordan, by the way." She winked.

Carlos nodded. "Hey."

Seconds later, the teacher entered rapidly and apologized for arriving late. The class went smoothly- as smoothly as a class that was about cooking and using flammable objects could go, and Carlos wasn't as disappointed about it as he thought he would be.

Back on the island, he'd spend most of the classes alone, working on his own stuff and hoping it wouldn't be boring or too complicated (he was against asking the teachers for help with his whole being). But here, he enjoyed the class, mostly because of the girls. Ally was fun and kind, Jordan was witty and chill, and Lonnie was overall amazing. He felt welcomed for the first time in a class without the other VKs.

When the bell rang, indicating the end of the day, he waved goodbye and walked out of the class with a smile hanging off his lip. He eyed his phone and found that Jay had made a group chat with the other VKs called 'the boyz r bacc'. Carlos couldn't help but snort at the silly name.

"Hey, hotshot, I was just looking for you." A voice came from behind him, and Carlos began to walk faster. "Wait!" Chad hissed and ran up to him, cornering and forcing the boy to get into one of the darkest corners of the halls.

Carlos was trying to think of ways to escape, but the place was dark, and everyone had probably left or was outside. He sighed and looked up at him.

"Say that you are sorry," Chad growled.

The boy looked down and felt very annoyed at his stretched shirt. Chad could kick and shout all he wanted, but there was no apology coming from Carlos, that's for sure.

"So?" He hissed and moved his face to be nose-in-nose with the younger teen. "Dog's got your tongue?"

Carlos decided to simply stare at him until he got tired.

"Answer me!" A growl emerged from deep within Chad's throat. "Say that you are sorry! That you are sorry for taking all the spotlight! For making my friend be against me! For always getting everyone's pity!" The boy shook Carlos violently.

Carlos hugged himself in an attempt to calm down the speed at which his heart was racing. He expected Chad to already punch him and walk away, but then, why was he screaming at him? Why was he being blamed for someone else's reaction? He had to mentally laugh. Ironically, he had constantly been the one to blame for someone else's doings, like his mother's.

"Say something!" Chad pushed him onto the lockers.

But the younger teen had his heart struck on his throat and he couldn't let even the slightest sound, which made the blond angrier. It lasted a few seconds, and Carlos didn't feel anything right away, just the sudden impact and Chad kicking him to the floor to keep punching.

Two punches came to his face before Chad let out a soft inhale, almost like a gasp, and walked out. It had been the most bizarre beat up Carlos ever had experienced. He sat on the floor, touching his bleeding nose and a busted lip, glad that his eyes were fine and predicted a few bruises and no stitches.

With the little strength he had left, he stood on his feet and put his hood up to cover his face from strangers' wandering eyes. His steps were heavy, and he wished that his room would be empty when he arrived, but it's not necessary to say that the world was against him daily because as he opened the door, he heard Jay's voice.

He stiffened and peaked, noticing how the latter was talking on his phone while doing what he thought was homework. Carlos tried to be silent, but as soon as he stepped in, holding his hood over his face, Jay's attention fell on him.

"Welcome back!" He smirked, but his face fell when he noticed the hood. "Uh-- Aziz, I'll call you back." He mumbled before hanging up the call and getting up.

Carlos cursed himself for standing still and gripped his hood tighter.

"What's wrong?" Jay offered, taking gentle hold of the boy's arm.

"It's nothing, I just-- fell." He whispered and gasped when Jay's hand violently placed under his chin and pulled his head up, off of its cover.

The taller teen examined the injuries with the most severe stare Carlos had ever seen on him and felt extremely scared.

"Who did this to you?" Jay growled in a low tone, causing Carlos to shiver.

"No one, I fell."

"Don't bullshit me, I can recognize a beat up when I see one."

Carlos sighed and made his way past Jay, sitting on his own bed. "Chad."

"Of course." The words came out louder than he intended. "That fucker is the most annoying RAT of the whole place." Jay angrily grabbed onto his hair. "I should have been there."

"It's not your fault, I called him a name, I looked for it." Carlos excused, shaking his head dismissively.

"What are you talking about? Nothing you do is worth a--" he swung his hands around the boy's face. "Fucking beat-up." An exasperated huff came out of his nose, and Carlos looked down.

"It's not like anything we do will stop him." He sighed. "Besides, it's done already, no use crying over spilled milk."

Jay looked at him, and Carlos could see a strange feeling flowing through them, one that he could only explain as loss, like regret. "Why didn't you-- kick him or something? You are strong, you could defend yourself." Jay sounded more pouty and whiny than Carlos expected.

The pair of brown eyes from the younger teen heavily placed on Jay, and he felt a pressure on his chest. "Because I didn't have a reason to."

The silence in the room was dense, and Jay's eyes had widened in surprise. The taller teen hadn't expected that answer or any, for that matter, a shrug would have been better to let him sleep peacefully, but this made him worried.

He walked up to Carlos, and his heart shrunk at the way he stiffened with the decreasing distance. He sat in front of him on the bed and hugged him. More than a simple hug that he would give Mal as a celebration or an empty greeting, he took the boy's head and softly placed it on his shoulder, squeezing the rest of his body with the remaining arm.

Carlos stared past Jay with a confused expression on his face and the odd feeling of wanting to escape but slowly began to calm down when he found no other option than to let it be. He noticed Jay's heart-pounding on his chest and his soft breathing that would have small rhythmic pauses, which the younger teen decided not to comment on. He let his head rest on his shoulder, and his hands moved up to Jay's back, holding onto his shirt and hanging peacefully from there.

The silence was no longer dense but peaceful, the kind that makes you hope to stay that way for a long time. Carlos felt safe, which was odd considering how threatened he had been by Jay's presence back on the island, and Jay felt a strong and increasing need to not only protect him but also give him a reason to defend himself.

"I'm guessing you didn't get the injuries treated." Jay broke the silence with a soft broken whisper, so low and quiet that it didn't matter if they were alone. Only Carlos could listen to

it.

The shorter teen let out a negative hum. "I came straight to here."

"Do you want me to clean them up?"

Carlos wanted that, of course, but he was so comfortable on the embrace that he hesitated to answer. Two sides of his head were suddenly fighting: the side that wanted to stay there and enjoy the hug and the other who didn't want to look needy.

"Yeah." Carlos nodded and let go of Jay as soon as he began to shift slightly. He smiled softly at him and left to the bathroom, looking for a first aid kit.

As he rustled and searched for the kit, an idea flew to his head: "he let me hug him." The thought made Jay smile, even though he was worried that the injuries might get infected.

Meanwhile, Carlos sat crisscrossed on the bed and had a single thought that made his chest flutter: he felt the way a child would feel when getting hurt and waiting to get treated.

He never had the chance to experiment that, to have someone caring if he got beaten up or badly hurt. Whenever he did, Cruella would bark at him to stay away from her coats and clean the floor where he was bleeding in. Luckily, here he had Jay, which was unusual, but that didn't mean bad.

"Okay, I have no idea what the difference is, but there are two kits so I brought both." He explained, sitting on the bed once more. He had brought a damp towel and some soap and began to clean the injuries as much as possible.

"I think your lip may need stitches." He explained. "It's like he exclusively aimed for the mouth, it's the most busted place."

Carlos pouted. "I hoped I wouldn't need stitches."

Jay thought as he cleaned the injuries. "Maybe we could ask Evie to fix it up with a spell or potion."

And just as if they had summoned them, Evie's voice came from the door as she burst it open, showing that she had arrived with Mal. "Good afternoon, my fellow companions in crime."

However, her smile disappeared when she saw Carlos's face, and in a matter of seconds, she was desperately asking how he felt, who it was, and thousands of other questions he couldn't quite answer because she was overlapping his voice with concern.

The boy stared dumbfounded and felt the need to bit his lip, thought it was bloody, so he simply pouted and looked over at Jay, who nodded and placed a hand on Evie's shoulder.

"Ivs, I get that you are concerned, but you are overwhelming him." He smiled softly.

The girl nodded. "Sorry, Los." She said, sitting on the floor by the bed. "Who did this?" She looked over at them as Jay went back to fixing Carlos's injuries.

"Chad." Jay sighed. "I'm guessing he got him after the last class."

"What an ass!" She hissed. "How dare he-- I will literally kick him in the nuts if I see him tomorrow."

"Please don't," Carlos whined. "I don't want to make a bigger fuss about this. I just want to avoid him as much as possible."

Mal stared at them with a dark expression on her face, annoyed and angry. Why was it that this Chad guy had attacked them? Why didn't he attack her? She was the one willing to destroy their homes, the one whose mother had caused more pain and was continuing to torment and threaten them even if they didn't know about it.

She was the evilest of them! Then why-- why was it that she could get away with living normally on that stupid school, but they got beat up and harassed.

"It's not fair." She sputtered, catching the attention of the three. "You don't deserve this, none of you do."

Evie was sweet, she was constantly willing to give her advice and a helping hand, even after all the pain she had caused her, always showing that she was stronger and more mature than any of them. Carlos was a hurt, marked soul who lived through hell and still managed to be the sweetest, willing to forgive and forget. And Jay-- poor guy, she always believed he had been born on the wrong side of the dome because he had a heart of gold more worthy than any treasure his father forced him to steal.

And she was evil and had a hard time showing emotions or opening up. She was angry all the time, and sometimes she wondered if she was faking the smiles and laughs that she would give to them in order to please them. She was heavily flawed, a black sheep on a farm of beautiful white sheep overshadowed by someone else's past actions.

Her head was pounding, and she felt her hands turn cold. Her thoughts were far away, somewhere with Chad, kicking him with anger and frustration.

"Mal!" Evie shrieked, pointing slightly at the girl.

Her eyes had sparkled in a gold shine that none of them had ever seen, and her hands seem to be catching fire, a purple-green fire that slowly but surely expanded to her elbows. Until she snapped back to reality and noticed the smell of something burnt.

She screeched and shook her arms around, scared by the sudden fire. Jay moved his hands through the kit and took a bottle of water, opening it in a single sping and pouring it on her.

Evie got up and walked to her, examining her hands. "Mal, I think-- I think that wasn't normal fire." She pointed out, picking her hand up and pointing at the untouched skin.

"But-- my jacket." She pointed out at her sleeve that had been burnt, and the taller girl picked it up and examined it.

"Maybe the fire doesn't hurt your skin, but it does clothes because they are not part of you." She commented. "Because it's your fire, your power. As in-- raw power managed by emotions." Evie's eyes were sparkling.

"Emotions? So I don't have to create weird-ass poems to do magic?" Mal was interested.

"If you want to do something specific, I think yes," Carlos said from the bed, as Jay finished taking care of his injuries. "But maybe the fire represents emotions? Like, I guess you were angry, and that set off the fire."

Evie gasped happily. "That's so cool!"

"Is it? What if I lose control again? What if--" Mal began to stutter.

Jay sighed. "What if we do a recap? We haven't done one for a while and I'm sure we need it right now, enough shit has happened today." He sighed and looked over at Carlos, who was licking his injured lip. "Stop." He poked his cheek.

Evie nodded and took Mal's hand firmly, taking her to the empty bed and sitting with her on it.

"I'll start." The blue-haired girl offered and continued when no-one stopped her. "I asked Aubrey about official parties that had to do with magic, to see if there was a chance that the wand would be used and we could take a hold of it." She explained. "And she told me about Ben's coronation. The Fairy Godmother uses it for who knows what."

"I read part of it on a book." Carlos nodded. "It's used on a sword-like fashion, in the way kings used to knight their-- well, knights. It stands in display for the whole evening, though, so we could easily take it before or after she uses it."

Mal's eyes were staring at the floor, listening with full attention, still a bit tense from the past event. "Good, then we have an opportunity at hand, this could be the occasion we needed."

"When is that party coming, anyway?" Jay seemed a bit uninterested in the upcoming plan.

Evie, Carlos, and Mal looked at each other in complete silence and felt dumb for not knowing. Evie was sure that Aubrey had told her, but she forgot completely and was mentally kicking herself for her lack of memory.

"Alright, let's put 'asking for the coronation date' on our to-do list and keep going with the recap. Any other news?" Mal sighed and picked Evie writing on a little notebook, which caused a small smirk to pop on her face.

"Well, you must all know already, but there's a party this weekend, and we are all invited." Jay winked, a huge grin covering his face. "Have y'all decided to go?"

Carlos sighed. "I said I'd go today because Aubrey asked me, and I panicked." He let his head hang loosely to the side of his shoulder. "But now I don't know if I want to turn up with this-- thing on my face." He moved his hands around his injury, and Jay pouted.

"I don't know man, you look pretty badass. It's a nice complement to your vibe." He nodded, and Carlos let out a dry laugh. "It's true."

Maybe it was the softness of his voice on the last two words, or how much he seemed to be excited about the party, but Carlos felt like a puppy was asking him to take him on a walk. The younger teen sighed dramatically. "Fine, I'll go."

"Hell yeah! Mal?" He asked, surrounding Carlos with his arm and squeezing lightly, causing the boy to glare at him.

"I guess it would work. I'd get to collect info on the royals and use it against them if needed." She noticed Jay's expression stay in a frozen smile before he let out a soft nod, which she took as being startled, even taken aback at the answer.

"Ivs, you are going, right?" He smiled widely, to the point where he was closing his eyes even.

"Of course, I am! Though I haven't gone to many parties in the past- I'm willing to go and have the best time of my life."

Mal's chest sunk at her words, noticing how this party wouldn't just be Jay's last meal, but Evie's too. She let out a pouty smile that held a certain sadness within, and the only one who noticed was Carlos, who could see himself reflected on it. Just like her, he wasn't into the whole party situation. He was, and would constantly remind himself to be, a man of science and not society, so clearly, he was not into talking and socializing with loud music in the background, if not even doing it at all. Both couldn't find the appeal on partying or the emotion and excitement that Evie and Jay felt towards it, but then again, they couldn't find the charm on most of the things the two enjoyed. But they were willing to go at least once, for them, because in the end, they had pulled them from the island to Auradon, and it would be wrong of them not to let them enjoy this one thing.

"The Turney match's tomorrow, right?" Carlos blurted out, stepping out of his thoughts and looking over at Jay.

"Yeah! I can't wait! I am so excited to play in front of a crowd."

"We are excited to see you there, Jay." Evie nodded, gentle eyes fixed on the athlete.

"Though is Chad playing?" Mal commented, calmer. "Because I can try to get him jinxed or something so he won't be able to turn up."

"No need, he's banned until Ben decides otherwise." Jay stopped and smiled. "And talking about Ben, you know that he broke up with Aubrey?"

Mal and Carlos seemed shocked by this. "Why? They looked like your average happy couple the first time we saw them?" The boy asked, leaning over his legs.

"Trouble in paradise, I guess." Evie shrugged.

Mal wondered in silence if it had something to do with Ben's panic attack that night and if it was influenced at some point by the prince's obligations.

"Moving on-" Mal sighed, not having the strength to keep going on the breakup theme, considering that sometimes she couldn't keep her tongue from slipping, and there was a chance that she'd tell the VKs about the panic attack.

However, before she could make up any sort of theme to move towards, the door caught their attention as three rhythmic knocks came from it. All eyes moved towards Jay, and the boy frowned. "Why me?"

"It's your room." Carlos shrugged.

"It's our room, man."

"Just go." Mal growled, and Jay had no room to hesitate, jumping up from his comfortable space in the bed and slipping towards the door.

When he opened it, he saw Ben standing there with a tired expression on his face and an always present smile decorating it. He peeked casually over Jay's shoulder and let out a breathy laugh.

"I figured they'd be here." He nodded. "You know, it's kinda illegal for you four to be here." Ben's face was filled with tired kindness as he spoke.

"You won't tattle on us, right?" Mal asked, hiding her sudden nervousness under a dangerously threatening smile.

"Not at all." He chuckled. "I originally knocked on the girl's room but they weren't there, so I came here."

Evie and Mal exchanged glances before looking over at Ben again. Jay moved to the side, offering him to walk in, but the prince shook his head.

"Mal, can we talk?" He smiled, tired eyes fixed on the girl.

The half-fairy looked at him, back at the other VKs, and to the prince once again, eyes filled with a sense of doubt. She couldn't read his eyes, too dark and exhausted to show any thoughts other than the need for a long break. She stood to the front, walked to the door almost in a protective stance, blocking the way to the others.

"Sure."

Chapter End Notes

As one song once said: It's about to go down.

Match made in Heaven

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Decoration committee?" Mal spoke, eyes focused on the prince. He shifted in place and casually scratched the back of his neck.

"Yeah-" A sigh. "I know it sounds odd and out of the blue, but I saw the painting you did on your locker and really liked it, so I thought that maybe the decoration committee-"

"You liked it?" Mal cut him off with a curious, almost surprised voice. Just a few minutes ago, she had almost burnt her whole jacket out of sheer anger, and now she was standing doe-eyed in front of Ben. It was a really sudden change of pace, and she certainly wasn't expecting to get a compliment.

"Yeah!" He beamed, a bright smile adorning his face. "So- do you wanna join?"

"I don't know what the committee is about." She sighed, leaning on the wall behind her and allowing herself to relax. "If it's like art class, I won't like it."

"Oh- it isn't! We are in charge of creating a theme for the royal and school parties and taking care of them." He began to explain, gesturing dramatically as he spoke. "For example, the spring party!" He stopped and mumbled, "Though that's not an official party- But it works as a good example! We could create a specific theme like pink flowers or lilacs and take care of the way we use said theme. We decorate the gym according to it."

Mal stared with a blank expression. She didn't find it appealing. She loathed doing work and decorating sounded tedious, so she simply stared unable to answer. "That's it?"

Ben noticed the lack of interest and tried hard not to look nervous at her severe eyes. "Yeah- but I'd take care of it! You would be in charge of designing and choosing the materials rather than decorating directly."

"Oh?" The girl shifted her stance once more, lifting her head and letting a smirk crawl up on her face. "Well, that sounds more like it." She tapped her arm as her brain thought about the pros and cons. "Anything else? I mean, do I get to go to special events or something?"

As much as Mal didn't like the idea of being part of a committee, she had to consider that in the end, they weren't there to enjoy a vacation and do some recreational activities but to build the way for their parents to rule the world. And perhaps this committee was exactly what she needed to get closer to that objective. Ben stood thinking for a while, hands fidgeting with each other.

"Well, you get to be closer to the ceremonies." He pointed out. "For example, in my royal events my family, closest friends, the council, and the decoration committee are in the first row."

Mal's eyes widened at the new information and she had to bite the inside of her cheek to avoid a mischievous grin from crawling up her face, but there was a strange spark in her eyes that Ben decided to ignore as soon as he noticed. She nodded slowly, and after a few minutes of deep thinking and very awkward silence, Mal finally let out a sigh.

"Alright, if you insist!" She finally said, dramatically throwing both hands up in a defeated gesture. "I'll join the decorating committee."

"Really?" He beamed once more and Mal could bet that he seemed relieved. His tired eyes seemed less heavy for a brief moment. "I'm glad." Just at that moment, his phone buzzed and his face fell into a serious, almost grim expression. "Well, that's my cue, gotta go."

"Alright, thanks for- for considering me."

"Oh, for sure!" He smiled brightly. "I'll see you in the match tomorrow!" He waved and left as silently as he arrived. Mal looked at him as he walked away, always standing with his chin up and straight back, but there was a slump on his shoulders that made her wonder how many responsibilities he held on them, and for how much longer he'd be able to carry them.

As soon as he disappeared around the corner, she left her spot leaning on the wall and walked into the room once more. The three remaining teens were talking in the same position she left them, and there was a strange feeling of nostalgia on her chest as she watched them, one that she pushed away and replaced with an increasing sensation of pride, the type that you feel after scoring a goal. Not that she'd know about it considering that she never played any sport before.

"Well, I'm proud to say that we are one step closer to our objective."

The words came out in a husky, strange even, tone. The three of them looked over at her. Mal wondered for half a second why was there a hint of sadness in their eyes.

That night passed by slow, mostly to Jay who had his mind packed with thoughts regarding the match that was happening the next morning. It didn't really help that his ears were buzzing with Carlos' comically loud snores. In the middle of the night, he turned to see the boy still asleep and wondered what he was dreaming about. Jay generally wasn't able to remember his dreams, especially back on the island. He was sure he had them because there was a brief moment in the morning where he could recall a strange plot before reality took over his brain and left no place for him to imagine or put together his dreams. However, now that he was in Auradon, he had a lot more time to stay inside his head, and he could recall a little bit of his dreams, even if it never made sense. He wondered if someday he would be able to remember a whole dream and keep it in his memories for more than a few minutes.

After rolling around on his bed and messing it up to the point where the mattresses were getting tangled on his feet, he fell asleep for what felt like a few minutes. When he woke up the second time, he found a few rays of sunlight peeking over the windows and decided that it was late enough for him to get up, even if Carlos' alarm hadn't gone off yet.

He sat up in the bed slowly, feeling his muscles tensing. He stood up, quivering after sensing the warmth on the floor, and made his way to the bathroom. Jay figured taking a shower

would be useless, after all, he would be going into a match in a few hours and be forced to take a shower right after. The visit to the bathroom was slower than usual, and he seemed to be recalling everything over and over as if the situation didn't fully dawn on him. He sometimes had a sensation that he wasn't living his own life, but the one of a character. In those moments where he was silent and left alone with his own thoughts, he couldn't help but feel like he wasn't fully there. Part of his brain expected to come back to reality at any second and realize that he had been on the island all this time, but every time he came back to his senses, he was still in Auradon breathing fresh air and watching the shiny blue sky above him without storm clouds anywhere to be seen.

Jay had to blink a few times to come back to the present, stepping out of his head and starting the day officially just to realize that he had been standing in front of the sink for at least ten minutes. He looked at his reflection in the mirror and twisted part of his hair on his fingers. If there was one thing he was confident about, it was his looks, even if sometimes his long hair had caused some turbulence back on the island, it was one of his most precious possessions, one that went above any material object that he had stolen in the past. He smiled at his own reflection and turned around, ready to leave and get changed. However, before he left the bathroom, he stopped by the sink and took a few things from the first-aid kit. He wasn't very good at taking care of injuries, mostly because back on the island he believed in the survival of the fittest and simply let the wounds heal by themselves, but this wasn't him, this was Carlos and he was willing to make him feel comfortable even if that meant a trial and failing period when taking care of his wounds.

He walked into the room with some bandages and rubbing alcohol at hand, and found Carlos sitting on his bed, scrolling through his phone. He was sniffing and brushing a hand through his nose repeatedly as his eyes stood fixed on the phone.

"Hey, buddy. You are awake."

"Yeah, my alarm went off." He pointed out, and Jay winced when he noticed the small change in his voice, probably caused by the injury. "Did I snore?"

"Uh- yeah, a bit." Jay nodded, walking up to his bed and sitting by him, startling Carlos a bit in the process. "How did you know?"

"My throat's sore." He patted his neck and snorted, though it sounded more like a sharp exhale through his mouth. "That along with my runny nose make me feel like I have a really bad cold."

"Runny nose?" Jay asked, gently moving his hands towards Carlos' face and hiding a small smirk when the boy didn't flinch violently at the gesture.

"Yeah, it's water only, though." He pointed out. "Probably because of the injury."

Jay nodded and took away the old bandage. The broken nose looked less bloody and slightly less disturbing than the night before, but there was still a sour taste on Jay's mouth every time he saw it. Cleaning and patching it up again was faster than the last time, considering that the older teen had an idea of what to do and Carlos was less scared of his touch.

"It's done!" He clapped out of happiness. "How do you feel, dude?"

"Uh- still like I have a really bad cold." He shrugged. "Thanks for taking care of it."

"Any time." He smiled brightly, leaving the items from the kit on their shared nightstand, and walking up to his closet.

Carlos stood in his place at the bed, hesitatingly fidgeting with his hands. The taller teen pretended not to notice the tension that had formed in the air. After a few seconds, he turned to Jay. "What about you?"

"Huh?"

"How are you feeling? I mean, with the match and all."

The taller teen stopped, wide eyes fixed on the shorter teen, and sighed. "I'm excited out of my mind, man." His face had a mixture between excitement and calm that caught Carlos' attention. "This is the first time I'm part of something, you know? Something as big as a sport's team, that is."

"Sure." He nodded.

Jay peeked over his shoulder and saw as Carlos got up from the bed and stumbled towards his own closet, taking a few pieces of clothes and gently placing them aside. "You- You are coming, right?"

Carlos looked at him, almost surprised by the question. "Yeah, of course. I'll be there." And he smiled. It was a real smile that held no sarcasm, or bitterness. It was soft and warm and Jay wondered what he had to do to keep him smiling like that forever. "But we still have a class of good deed today." He pointed out, grabbing his clothes and making his way to the bathroom.

"Oh- that's right." He whispered, mostly to himself than Carlos.

On the other end of the school, Evie was taking a bath. Mal was laying on her bed with her phone and had told her that she wasn't taking a shower that day, so she could have the bathroom for herself as long as she wanted. The witch wasn't willing to miss classes, though, but she really needed some time alone.

She loved people, most of the time she felt pumped up every time she finished interacting with strangers or classmates. But like most people, she eventually got burned out and had to have a few minutes alone in order not to develop a very grumpy mood. Baths were the best for that, even back in the Isle of the Lost when she needed some time for herself away from the possibility of her mother bursting into her room without warning, or the unstoppable situation where someone started a conversation with her as she sat on a bench far away from the crowd. She stared at the water and patted the surface making it splash around.

Evie had the talent to clear her mind up and make it focus on a single thing at once. When she didn't want to think she would just sing a song mentally or create stories on her mind about

fictional characters. It kept her at ease and calmed her deeply, even if sometimes her brain was louder than what she'd like to, it was better than letting it flood her thought without a fight. After all, spending most of your life inside a castle without social interactions can give you some time to create your own floats to survive the raging sea that could be intrusive thoughts. And in Evie's case, it was exactly what happened.

She wondered what would have happened if she had spent her childhood outside, on the island with the other kids. Would she be a thief? A witch that gives other villains potions for money? Maybe a girl that used her charms to get whatever she wanted, just like that one scarf that she had liked so much back in the clothing shop on the island? Maybe she would have met the other VKs and feel less alienated whenever she stood by them because it didn't matter how nice they were to her, there was a wall that she couldn't take down, and she wasn't sure if it was hers or theirs. Maybe both.

She sighed, annoyed by her own thoughts, and stepped out of the bathtub. Getting dressed didn't take her long, and the finishing touches were done after a few seconds. She stood by the door and felt a dread crawling up her back, and exhaustion of the mere idea of having to talk with Mal, or Carlos, or Jay, or anyone. She sure liked them, of course she did! Even with all the differences, they were like family, but there was a feeling on her chest that she couldn't shake off.

"How was the bath?" Mal asked, eyes fixed on her phone. She was laying on her back already dressed to go to class, which was just a pair of pants under her pajama shirt, and some shoes. "You took some time."

"Yeah, sorry about that." She smiled, taking her bag that hanged on her desk's chair. "Let's get moving."

Mal nodded and slowly got up from her bed, brushing a hand through her hair and shaping it lazily in a way that looked less messy. With a single movement, she took her bag and walked up to Evie who opened the door for the both of them to walk out.

The taller girl peeked over Mal and grinned as the pressure on her chest slowly dissolved. "You've been on your phone a lot."

"Yeah, Carlos told me that there were games you could have on them, so I got one." She shrugged. "For when I get bored."

Evie nodded and smiled. "Maybe you can put it on mine too." She offered.

Mal looked up for a brief second and softly nodded, a small blush of contentment appearing on her face. "Yeah, I could do that." It was strange to her how comfortable she was starting to feel around Evie, even if the guilt never left the back of her mind.

The girls arrived at the class and noticed Carlos and Jay already on their seats, as Jay spoke about something with great enthusiasm.

"Morning, boys!" Evie beamed, waving at the pair who waved right back.

"Hey, girls!" Jay smirked, leaning back on his chair and almost slipping by the sudden shift. Carlos caught the back of the seat and glared at the taller teen as soon as he started to laugh. "Thanks for the save!" He smirked.

"Be careful, you don't want to get hurt and be unable to play on the match." Carlos spoke, crossing his arms.

"Right, the match!" Evie beamed from her seat. "How are you with that happening in a few hours?"

"I'm pumped!" He clapped, eyes filled with a spark of pure happiness.

"What about you, Carlos? How's your nose?" Mal asked, leaning over her desk to see the boy better.

He sighed and moved a hand towards the injury instinctively. "Uh- it has seen better days." He sighed and placed both hands on the desk, trying hard not to touch the wound. "Even if- yesterday was the only day it has seen."

"I'm sorry about that, Los." Evie pouted. "Did you change the bandage?"

"Yeah, this morning." He nodded.

However, their conversation was cut short when Fairy Godmother appeared at the door, rushing towards the front of the class. She apologized for being late and messily organized a few papers over her desk. She looked disheveled, almost unprofessional, and she apologized repeatedly for it, too. The class carried on afterward the same way it had always done, a dumb question is asked, and the gang has to answer it no matter how stupid it was. The minutes slowly turned into an hour and before the four of them could complain, the class was over.

The four teens got up from their seats and made their way to the entrance as usual, but for the first time in the week, someone was waiting outside the door. Standing with his full Tourney uniform, was Ben with his always awkward expression and tired eyes.

"Hey! Good morning, Ben." Evie approached the prince who made a small bow as a greeting.

"Hey." He smiled. "I wanted to talk with Mal, but since I'm leaving towards the field in a few seconds I figured it would be better to come here and leave with Jay afterwards, what do you say?"

Jay's face got lit up by his smile, one that was big and bright. "Sure thing!"

"Good." Ben nodded. "Mal, I came to tell you that we could have the first committee meeting after the match! We have to start some preparations and I think it would be a good idea to meet today that we don't have any other classes."

The girl stood there for a while, wondering if she really wanted to spend her evening hanging around the prince, and sighed in annoyance when her brain spat a positive answer without much thought put into it. "Sure." She accepted, though there was a lack of enthusiasm that

Ben decided to turn a blind eye to. "Is there anyone else I might have to get ready to see today?"

"Uh- not really. Up till this point I was the only member of the committee, so it's just us." He smiled and it dawned on Mal that it was for that reason that he seemed so hopeful for her to accept. She wished that there wasn't a remorseful feeling on her guts as she realized this, and had to swallow it as if it were a pill, something hard to digest.

"Gotcha." She let out, giving him a small, sort of awkward, thumbs up that was enough for him to feel calm.

He stood stiffly for a while before Jay took a step in and grabbed him by the shoulders. "Alright, we'll be heading to the field, see ya after the match!" He waved and dragged Ben with him to avoid the prince sink further into whatever that situation was, which he appreciated a lot as he grabbed Jay's hand and patted it twice to silently thank him for the action.

Evie smiled to the side and grasped onto Carlos and Mal, squeezing them to her sides. "Let's go! Maybe we get to buy some flags on our way there."

"Flags?" Carlos asked as the trio began to walk.

"Yeah, with the school logo, right?" Mal asked. "I saw some the day we came here. The colors are kinda ugly, though. Are you sure we want them?"

"Oh, come on! It's for the spirit, we can burn them later."

Mal's face shifted and a soft laugh rise from her throat. "Yay, arson." She beamed, making Carlos giggle under his breath. Evie couldn't help but smirk at the interaction, the whole scene just felt fictional, too normal, and nice to have been part of the life of the kids of villains. But even if it was too good to feel real, it was, and that mere thought made Evie's chest get filled with warmth.

The seats around the field were filled to the brim with students and teachers alike. The sound was deafening, and the air was full of cheers and chants directed to the players that slowly walked into the green synthetic grass and towards the battle. The VKs never went to a match, the sports on the isle were mostly running and soccer, but because of the conditions of the place, there were never matches of any kind, at least not friendly ones like the one they were attending.

Jay walked out into the field and looked over at the seats surrounding it, searching for the remaining members of his party. Up in the tenth row holding a bunch of flags were Carlos, Evie, and Mal, each with a smile on their face (though visible in different extents respectively). Looking at them made him feel calmed and confident, and as he tied his hair on a ponytail, he peeked one last time at them. Aziz patted his back caringly and winked at the taller teen as the whistle marked the beginning of the match.

As the players began to work their way towards the goal, a pair of ice-blue eyes stared from the bench. Chad wasn't allowed to play, and Ben had been very strict to keep it that way

thought the first match of the season, which was enough to make the blond furious. Why was Ben doing that to them? Weren't they friends? What a friend he turned out to be, huh.

Of course Chad knew that part of it was because of his attitude towards Jay, but the guy grew up on an island filled with criminals, a few insults would never be enough to get under his skin, which was why he couldn't understand the insistence of the prince to keep Chad out of the field. Perhaps the worse part was that he didn't even bother to explain it, he simply scoffed and left without talking to him again. That happened at the beginning of the week, and it was making him angrier by the minute.

Not only that, but the other VKs had been a pain in the ass too. Evie was smart and she knew it, which was annoying for him to no end. She was a villain yet she was nice and clever, and always seemed to have the right words on the tip of her tongue. And he was a prince, yet he was treated like a villain, make it make sense! Of course it didn't, it was nonsense. And don't get him started on Carlos, a guy who's treated like a golden coin by the girls in his class, another smart kid that only showed Chad that he was too stuck up to care about getting beaten up or talking back to him. Both were the worse of the worse, and Jay wasn't any better, that little bitch who stepped into the field, smiled a few times, and took everything from Chad in a single week.

"How unfair." He muttered to himself, holding a plastic cup of water. His grip tightened with every thought.

He followed the movements of the players on the field as the minutes ran by, and before he noticed, the match was almost finished. He saw as Jay stepped on one of the player's shields and scored one of the greatest goals he'd ever seen anyone make. Maybe if it wasn't because of who had done it, he'd be impressed, but it was a damned villain. He noticed as the other three cheered their throats off, and waved the tiny little flags around as if their lives depended on it. Even the tiny girl who wasn't very enthusiastic was now shouting and cheering for him. It was infuriating.

With that last movement, a loud horn was heard signaling the end of the match and the victory for Auradon Prep. The cheers were loud, and he could see Aubrey jumping around out of sheer pride. He saw Lonnie and Aziz high-fiving, but his eyes were snatched away by Jay's presence.

He stood proudly, waving at the spectators. Just at that moment, Ben walked up to him and congratulated him. Jay was shaking out of excitement, and was so proud and filled with a strange feeling on his chest, one that made his eyes slightly watery and his mind overwhelmed.

"You did amazing!" Ben beamed, wearing a beautiful smile on his face that almost erased the tiredness of his expression.

"We did amazing." Jay smiled and just at that moment, Ben stepped in and hugged him.

In any other context, Ben would have been grossed out about hugging someone while being a sweaty mess, but he was so happy. Jay was the son of Jafar, a villain, yet here he was being a

star player and showing the school that he was worthy of forgiveness. The idea that others might see what Ben saw on him ever since the beginning made him ecstatic.

Jay hugged him back without hesitation and soon enough Aziz and Lonnie joined in. The group smiled proudly at each other and joined their heads together in the middle. Chad started with a stone glare and felt as his hand got soaked by the water inside the cup he once was holding, now destroyed by the pressure of his fingers.

The team waved as they left towards the changing room, and Jay walked last to give his farewell to the cheerleaders that were giggling and waving at him. He enjoyed the attention more than he'd admit, and maybe because he was focused on them, he didn't notice as Chad walked close to him with a mischievous smile as Jay disappeared from the public eye.

"Congratulations!" He cheered.

It happened in a few seconds, and it was so brief and sudden that it took Jay a whole minute to process it. From a moment to the next Jay stood stiffly in the hall between the field and the changing rooms, soaked from head to toe in a sticky liquid. He brushed a hand through his eyes but the liquid managed to get on them, making them itchy. He groaned in anger and turned around looking for the source of the liquid, it didn't take him long to find Chad leaning onto a tank of energy drink that was now empty.

Jay's face stood blank for a few seconds as he took in the situation. There he was, Chad, the guy who always saw himself as better than the rest. The same dude who treated Evie like an object, just a useful tool that he could put to use in case he needed it, and then treat her like garbage. The same one who took Carlos and kicked him to the point where he broke his nose and parted his lip, like a ragdoll. And he was smiling because he got to do all of that and go unpunished. The blood on Jay's body began to boil and his eyes darkened in the span of a few seconds.

He walked towards him, towering over the shorter teen, and grabbed him by the collar of his shirt to smash him on a wall. Chad's smile softly shivered into an unsure smirk and that was enough to make Jay feel angrier.

"What the fuck is your damage, Chad?" He hissed, low enough to be intimidating. The blond grasped onto Jay's hands in a useless attempt to loosen his grip.

"My damage?" He spoke in a shaken voice, almost out of breath. "You are the one who stood on my country, my school and decided to act like you are better than me."

"Oh, I am the one acting like that?"

Chad's eyes seemed to flash at Jay's words. "It's always been you, dipshit. You villains think you are so cool and special because Benny Boy picked you from the bunch when you are nothing but roaches." He smirked. "But, you see, you aren't better than me."

"You better watch your mouth before I break your jaw. Believe me, I have done that before."

"Oh, I'm sure you have. But if I were you I wouldn't risk it. I am a prince, and you are a filthy villain." He stopped to let out a low giggle. "Oh, Fairy Godmother! Jay stole my jacket and when I asked him why he did, he punched me in the face! He is such an evil man!" Chad whined, fake tears making their way through his eyes.

"You wouldn't- She wouldn't believe you."

"Why not? You are the villain, you just admitted that you have broken jaws before. Who do you think has the priority here? Me or you?"

Jay stood with a tight grip on his shirt.

"You might hug Ben, and hang around Aziz and Lonnie, and go to good deed class and be a star player. But you are still the son of Jafar, and once a villain, always a villain." He patted his face. "The people here are better than me to hide that thought, but believe me, if Aziz walked in on us right now, he'd be fast to get angry at you."

Jay's hand trembled for a second before he smashed Chad's collar and let go, causing the blond to fall to the floor. Both kept staring into each other's eyes before the taller teen made his way into the changing room. Inside stood Ben alone, who was startled by Jay's sudden presence on the place.

"Oh- hey buddy, you-" He stopped, noticing the state of his clothes as he took them off without any hint of delicacy. "What happened?"

"Why don't you ask your little prince friend about that?" Jay growled before he disappeared into the showers.

Ben frowned and stepped in too, even if he had showered already.

"Did Chad do this?" He asked with his gentle voice, almost so tired and fragile that it made Jay feel guilty to be angry at him.

Jay sighed. "Yeah."

"He said some nasty things too, right?" Ben leaned onto the frame of the door. Chad might be a dick, but once upon a time, he and Ben had been close, so much so that they were able to guess what the other was thinking with a single look. It was painful for the future king to see his friend's gentle demeanor turn into the monster he was nowadays.

Jay peeked over his shoulder and nodded. "I'm sorry I shouted at you. He just- he managed to get into my head- that asshole."

"He does that." Ben nodded, eyes fixed on the floor. "I get why you would be angry, Chad has that effect on people."

The two stood in silence and Jay felt his chest tighten. Even if the idea had been brought up by Chad a few minutes ago, he knew that since the beginning. Mal was there to remind him that the people in Auradon were two-faced, and he had to be careful with his every step. It wasn't hard, in the end, Auradon wasn't as good at keeping a smile as they thought they were,

and Jay could tell that some people still saw them as the spawns of their parents and nothing more. But he also knew that Ben was different, he cared and was willing to show the world the nicest part of everyone.

"Still, I shouldn't have reacted like that. You've been nothing but nice to me, to us, since the beginning." He sighed.

"Hey- don't stress about it. I get it." Ben smiled gently, and Jay couldn't help but smile back. "Whatever he said, I want you to know that it's bullcrap. He believes that everyone thinks just like him, but be sure that Aubrey, Aziz, Lonnie and I, love you guys a lot. I know it's hard to believe considering the hardships you faced in the past but- take my word in this one, okay?"

Jay's eyes sparkle before he let out a soft laugh, mostly out of his brain calming down. "I will." He nodded. "I'll take your word."

Ben's face lit up briefly with a smile. "I'm glad." His words came out in an almost sigh-like way, and Jay wondered if he had been holding his breath just like him. "I'll let you shower in peace now, then. See you later." He smiled before leaving the shower room.

Just as he left, Jay snorted under his breath as he realized the situation they had a conversation in. After an uneventful shower, he stepped into the field and found Carlos leaning on the wall petting a cat.

"Hey! You were waiting for me?"

Carlos rose his face and nodded as he heavily got up while the cat rubbed its head on the boy's legs. "Yeah, I was waiting with Mal but she left with Ben a few minutes ago."

"Oh! You guys are getting close?" He asked, walking towards him and leaning into the cat who stroked its head on him too.

"Sorta. We aren't strangers anymore, so that's good." He shrugged.

"You guys are really similar," Jay commented, absentmindedly. "Similar mannerisms, same logical thoughts, and dark humor." He finished, looking up at Carlos.

He stared at him for a while. "I'm not sure if I should take that as a compliment."

"Oh, you sure can. Mal is one of the most important people in my life. But don't tell her I said that, she has the ego of a dictator."

Carlos snickered at the comment. "Thanks, then."

Jay shrugged and got up. "Wanna get something to eat?"

"Sure-" The shorter teen stopped and furrowed his eyebrows, grasping Jay's arm and placing it under his nose. Jay stared with a confused look on his face as the blond smelled the clothes. "Did something happen?" He asked.

"Huh? Something like what?"

"Did you spilled some energy drink on you? You smell like blueberry and chemicals." He pointed out. "It's really strong, I thought it was a perfume but it clearly smells like energy drink."

"Uh- It's nothing, maybe one of the guys was drinking it and left it too close to my clothes!" He smiled, patting Carlos' back and making him start to walk. "Don't worry about it."

Carlos frowned but decided to not press further, and shrugged. "Alright."

He wasn't dumb, and Jay knew it too, but it was worth a try. Carlos knew well that something happened, and the fact that he didn't want to talk about it was enough to turn in the red lights on his head. It was clear that something went wrong and he was willing to make his own investigations.

"What do you want to eat? I really like sweets but maybe we can try something salty?"

"Eh, sweets are fine." Carlos shrugged. "Do you have money?"

"No, but the cafeteria has a free buffet for students!"

As the two made their way to the cafeteria, Mal and Ben arrived at a room, the committee's meeting room. It was just the inner gym, but while being empty it seemed like a theatre.

"We make most of our acts and important presentations in here." He explained, pointing at the stage at the far end of the room. "But it's not a common thing to have stuff happening here, so in the meantime, we can meet in here."

"Isn't it kinda sad that there is no one else with us?"

Ben shrugged as he hopped onto the stage, letting his legs hang from it. "I think it's less sad now that you are here." He smiled.

The girl snorted and smirked, "Thanks."

The prince shook his head, dismissing the comment. "Please, I should be thanking you." He shook his head gently. "So, I was thinking that, since the next party is the family gathering, maybe we could come up with a theme."

"What's the family gathering?" Mal asked making her way towards the stage.

"It's complicated, the families of the students are invited for a day to the school to make some recreative activities in the name of unity and- other stuff." He explained, gesturing around as he spoke. "There is food and sports, and usually there is a small show in the beginning as an opening ceremony."

Mal nodded along with the explanation, even if her mind was slightly disconnected with it. She stared as Ben continued giving some options for the party, something to do with flowers and fireworks, but her brain stood focused on the way he expressed himself. He would make gestures with his hands and change the pitch and speed of his voice now and then to fit his

narrative. It was amusing because as long as his blabber went, he looked happier, like a normal teenager talking about something they are passionate about.

"You really like this, don't you?" Mal asked, with her always blank expression as she leaned on the stage.

Ben stopped mid-sentence and looked over at her, as an embarrassed blush occupied his face. "Sorry, I must be really annoying right now."

"Not really." Mal shrugged, jumping onto the stage and sitting by his side. "It's-- it's interesting to see you so passionate about it."

"Really?" His eyes seemed to spark, and the girl couldn't understand why exactly. "I- Dad tends to say that I talk too much, sometimes more than I should. But then some say that I talk too little." He sighed, leaning onto his hand. "I'm not sure which one is it."

"You speak a normal amount, I think. People are just picky and annoying." She shrugged.

The prince looked at her and sighed, a little smile appearing on his face. "Thanks." He nodded, and Mal simply shrugged as an answer. "So, what should we do for the family gathering?"

"Well, maybe we can do something around your parents' fairytale?" She offered. "It can be a ball with fancy dresses and food, and the main decoration can just be old ballroom decorations."

Ben's eyes widened and a smile appeared on his face. "Amazing idea! I always wanted to go to one of those old balls! You are a genius Mal." He extended his hand and patted her shoulder, making her glare at it. It wasn't much of a reflection of the way she felt about it, but rather the fact that she was just used to scowling at anyone willing to touch her. He tried to remain calm at the sudden stare and simply took his hand off keeping a smile on his face.

"Thanks." She nodded, laying on the stage and regretting it as soon as she noticed the dust on it. "What do we do now?"

"Well, I was thinking we'd spend some time discussing the topic of the party." He explained, writing something down on a piece of paper. "But yours was pretty good, so I'll just send this to the council for them to approve it, and then we can start the real job." He smirked at Mal whose eyes were starting to fall closed. She was getting bored.

"Cool, so we can leave, right?"

Ben stopped. "Yeah, but we should finish some preparations for the spring party tomorrow." He pointed out as he jumped off from the stage. Mal sat up furrowing her brows at the statement.

"Huh? We have to take care of that too?"

"Not really." He smiled. "But I like to take care of the details, you can step out if you want."

"No, I'll go." She sighed. If she was really getting into the committee she had to go big or go home, otherwise, it would be useless. "But if we are still working I need to get out of this place. I've been in the same building for the whole week, I need a change of paces."

"Sure! We can go to the city for a bit." He nodded. "Let's go, there's a curfew at eight so it's better if we leave now."

And Mal accepted, even if she wasn't so thrilled about hanging out around the people outside of Auradon Prep. If the students were dicks about her being a villain, she could already feel the stares on her neck by the rest of the citizens who hadn't seen a villain in a long while, and especially not hanging out around the future king. Outside of the school, she found cars, paved streets, and houses whose sizes varied from two floors to four even.

It did surprise her how there were no castles, only a few shops that still held that fairytale bliss that the Isle of the Lost was forced to hold, unable to build anything else with the lack of resources. She was disappointed, to say the least, but in the end, Mal couldn't recall what exactly she was expecting to see in the city other than prissy people. Maybe it was the lack of them that made her feel dissatisfied. As they walked through the streets and around shops filled to the brim with clothes and random objects, Mal couldn't help but feel like she was in a different country, a different world even.

"What do you think? Do you like it?" Ben asked, hand gripping onto his bag.

"It's better than the island, alright." She snorted. "I couldn't say it's the most amazing place ever because I haven't visited many places in the past."

"Oh-" Ben blushed, it was mostly out of embarrassment, probably caused by a strange grasp of guilt on his throat. "Sorry."

"It's whatever." She didn't feel like throwing a pity party for herself. "I don't need you feeling sorry about me, it's not the end. I'm young and out of that hellhole, so I can assure you I'll see the rest of the world one day."

"I don't doubt it." Ben smiled, eyes fixed on the things happening in front of him. "You seem like someone who's gonna go far."

And Mal wished he didn't answer that. She wished he had stayed silent and continued walking without saying anything because that mere comment made her whole body tense up as a dreading feeling took over her chest. It was sudden, and she had to force herself to keep walking by his side to avoid the prince from noticing her stiffness. **Damn right I will**, she thought to silence the strange sensation on the back of her throat, **I will rule the world one day**.

I really enjoyed writing this one, especially giving Chad a personality! We needed a token evil teen in this so why not him, am I right? Yeah- hope you guys like it.

Windy Weekend

"Decoration committee?" Mal spoke, eyes focused on the prince. He shifted in place and casually scratched the back of his neck.

"Yeah-" A sigh. "I know it sounds odd and out of the blue, but I saw the painting you did on your locker and really liked it, so I thought that maybe the decoration committee-"

"You liked it?" Mal cut him off with a curious, almost surprised voice. Just a few minutes ago, she had almost burnt her whole jacket out of sheer anger, and now she was standing doe-eyed in front of Ben. It was a really sudden change of pace, and she certainly wasn't expecting to get a compliment.

"Yeah!" He beamed, a bright smile adorning his face. "So- do you wanna join?"

"I don't know what the committee is about." She leaned on the wall behind her and allowed herself to relax. "If it's like art class, I won't like it."

"Oh- it isn't! We are in charge of creating a theme for the royal and school parties and taking care of them." He began to explain, gesturing dramatically as he spoke. "For example, the spring party!" He stopped and mumbled, "Though that's not an official party- But it works as a good example! We could create a specific theme like pink flowers or lilacs and take care of the way we use said theme. We decorate the gym according to it."

Mal stared with a blank expression. She didn't find it appealing. She loathed doing work and decorating sounded tedious, so she simply stared unable to give an answer. "That's it?"

Ben noticed the lack of interest and tried hard not to look nervous at her severe eyes. "Yeah- but I'd take care of it! You would be in charge of designing and choosing the materials rather than decorating directly."

"Oh?" The girl shifted her stance once more, lifting her head up and letting a smirk crawl up on her face. "Well, that sounds more like it." She tapped her arm as her brain thought about the pros and cons. "Anything else? I mean, do I get to go to special events or something?"

As much as Mal didn't like the idea of being part of a committee, she had to consider that in the end, they weren't there to enjoy a vacation and do some recreational activities but to build the way for their parents to rule the world. And perhaps this committee was exactly what she needed to get closer to that objective. Ben stood thinking for a while, hands fidgeting with each other.

"Well, you get to be closer to the ceremonies." He pointed out. "For example, in my royal events my family, closest friends, the council, and the decoration committee are in the first row."

Mal's eyes widened at the new information and she had to bite the inside of her cheek to avoid a mischievous grin from crawling up her face, but there was a strange spark in her eyes

that Ben decided to ignore as soon as he noticed. She nodded slowly, and after a few minutes of deep thinking and very awkward silence, Mal finally let out a sigh.

"Alright, if you insist!" She finally said, dramatically throwing both hands up in a defeated gesture. "I'll join the decorating committee."

"Really?" He beamed once more and Mal could bet that he seemed relieved. His tired eyes seemed less heavy for a brief moment. "I'm glad." Just at that moment, his phone buzzed and his face fell into a serious, almost grim expression. "Well, that's my cue, gotta go."

"Alright, thanks for- for considering me."

"Oh, for sure!" He smiled brightly. "I'll see you in the match tomorrow!" He waved and left as silently as he arrived. Mal looked at him as he walked away, always standing with his chin up and straight back, but there was a slump on his shoulders that made her wonder how many responsibilities he held on them, and for how much longer he'd be able to carry them.

As soon as he disappeared around the corner, she left her spot leaning on the wall and walked into the room once more. The three remaining teens were talking in the same position she left them, and there was a strange feeling of nostalgia on her chest as she watched them, one that she pushed away and replaced with an increasing sensation of pride, the type that you feel after scoring a goal. Not that she'd know about it considering that she never played any sport before.

"Well, I'm proud to say that we are one step closer to our objective."

The words came out in a husky, strange even, tone. The three of them looked over at her. Mal wondered for half a second why there was a hint of sadness in their eyes.

That night passed by slow, mostly to Jay who had his mind packed with thoughts regarding the match that was happening the next morning. It didn't really help that his ears were buzzing with Carlos' comically loud snores. In the middle of the night, he turned to see the boy still asleep and wondered what he was dreaming about. Jay generally wasn't able to remember his dreams, especially back on the island. He was sure he had them because there was a brief moment in the morning where he could recall a strange plot before reality took over his brain and left no place for him to imagine or put together his dreams. However, now that he was in Auradon, he had a lot more time to stay inside his head, and he could recall a little bit of his dreams, even if it never made sense. He wondered if someday he would be able to remember a whole dream and keep it in his memories for more than a few minutes.

After rolling around on his bed and messing it up to the point where the mattresses were getting tangled on his feet, he fell asleep for what felt like a few minutes. When he woke up the second time, he found a few rays of sunlight peeking over the windows and decided that it was late enough for him to get up, even if Carlos' alarm hadn't gone off yet.

He slowly sat up in the bed, feeling his muscles tensing. He stood up, quivering after sensing the warmth on the floor, and made his way to the bathroom. Jay figured taking a shower would be useless, after all, he would be going into a match in a few hours and be forced to take a shower right after. The visit to the bathroom was slower than usual, and he seemed to

be recalling everything over and over as if the situation didn't fully dawn on him. He sometimes had a sensation that he wasn't living his own life, but the one of a character. In those moments where he was silent and left alone with his own thoughts, he couldn't help but feel like he wasn't fully there. Part of his brain expected to come back to reality at any second and realize that he had been on the island all this time, but every time he came back to his senses, he was still in Auradon breathing fresh air and watching the shiny blue sky above him without storm clouds anywhere to be seen.

Jay had to blink a few times to come back to the present, stepping out of his head and starting the day officially just to realize that he had been standing in front of the sink for at least ten minutes. He looked at his reflection in the mirror and twisted part of his hair on his fingers. If there was one thing he was confident about, it was his looks, even if sometimes his long hair had caused some turbulence back on the island, it was one of his most precious possessions, one that went above any material object that he had stolen in the past. He smiled at his own reflection and turned around, ready to leave and get changed. However, before he left the bathroom, he stopped by the sink and took a few things from the first-aid kit. He wasn't very good at taking care of injuries, mostly because back on the island he believed in the survival of the fittest and simply let the wounds heal by themselves, but this wasn't him, this was Carlos and he was willing to make him feel comfortable even if that meant entering a trial and failing period when taking care of his wounds.

He walked into the room with some bandages and rubbing alcohol at hand, and found Carlos sitting on his bed, scrolling through his phone. He was sniffing and brushing a hand through his nose repeatedly as his eyes stood fixed on the phone.

"Hey, buddy. You are awake."

"Yeah, my alarm went off." He pointed out, and Jay winced when he noticed the small change in his voice, probably caused by the injury. "Did I snore?"

"Uh- yeah, a bit." Jay nodded, walking up to his bed and sitting by him, startling Carlos a bit in the process. "How did you know?"

"My throat's sore." He patted his neck and snorted, though it sounded more like a sharp exhale through his mouth. "That along with my runny nose make me feel like I have a really bad cold."

"Runny nose?" Jay asked, gently moving his hands towards Carlos' face and hiding a small smirk when the boy didn't flinch violently at the gesture.

"Yeah, it's water only, though." He pointed out. "Probably because of the injury."

Jay nodded and took away the old bandage. The broken nose looked less bloody and slightly less disturbing than the night before, but there was still a sour taste on Jay's mouth every time he saw it. Cleaning and patching it up again was faster than the last time, considering that the older teen had an idea of what to do and Carlos was less scared of his touch.

"It's done!" He clapped out of happiness. "How do you feel, dude?"

"Uh- still like I have a really bad cold." He shrugged. "Thanks for taking care of it."

"Any time." He smiled brightly, leaving the items from the kit on their shared nightstand, and walking up to his closet.

Carlos stood in his place at the bed, hesitatingly fidgeting with his hands. The taller teen pretended not to notice the tension that had formed in the air. After a few seconds, he turned to Jay. "What about you?"

"Huh?"

"How are you feeling? I mean, with the match and all."

The taller teen stopped, wide eyes fixed on the shorter teen. It was interesting to notice that the tension had to do with Carlos' urge to communicate and failing to decide how. However, he didn't make a comment about it and simply answered, "I'm excited out of my mind, man." His face had a mixture between excitement and calm that caught Carlos' attention. "This is the first time I'm part of something, you know? Something as big as a sport's team, that is."

"Sure." He nodded.

Jay peeked over his shoulder and saw as Carlos got up from the bed and stumbled towards his own closet, taking a few pieces of clothes and gently placing them aside. "You- You are coming, right?"

Carlos looked at him, almost surprised by the question. "Yeah, of course. I'll be there." And he smiled. It was a real smile that held no sarcasm, or bitterness. It was soft and warm and Jay wondered what he had to do to keep him smiling like that forever. "But we still have a class of good deed today." He pointed out, grabbing his clothes and making his way to the bathroom.

"Oh- that's right." He whispered, mostly to himself than Carlos.

On the other end of the school, Evie was taking a bath. Mal was laying on her bed with her phone and had told her that she wasn't taking a shower that day, so she could have the bathroom for herself as long as she wanted. The witch wasn't willing to miss classes, though, but she really needed some time alone.

She loved people, most of the time she felt pumped up every time she finished interacting with strangers or classmates. But like most people, she eventually got burned out and had to have a few minutes alone in order not to develop a very grumpy mood. Baths were the best for that, even back in the Isle of the Lost when she needed some time for herself away from the possibility of her mother bursting into her room without warning, or the unstoppable situation where someone started a conversation with her as she sat on a bench far away from the crowd. She stared at the water and patted the surface making it splash around.

Evie had the talent to clear her mind up and make it focus on a single thing at once. When she didn't want to think she would just sing a song mentally or create stories on her mind about fictional characters. It kept her at ease and calmed her deeply, even if sometimes her brain

was louder than what she'd like to, it was better than letting it flood her thoughts without a fight. After all, spending most of your life inside a castle without social interactions can give you some time to create your own floats to survive the raging sea that could be intrusive thoughts. And in Evie's case, it was exactly what happened.

She wondered what would have happened if she had spent her childhood outside, on the island with the other kids. Would she be a thief? A witch that gives other villains potions for money? Maybe a girl that used her charms to get whatever she wanted, just like that one scarf that she had liked so much back in the clothing shop on the island? Maybe she would have met the other VKs and feel less alienated whenever she stood by them because it didn't matter how nice they were to her, there was a wall that she couldn't take down, and she wasn't sure if it was hers or theirs. Maybe both.

She sighed, annoyed by her own thoughts, and stepped out of the bathtub. Getting dressed didn't take her long, and the finishing touches were done after a few seconds. She stood by the door and felt a dread crawling up her back, and exhaustion of the mere idea of having to talk with Mal, or Carlos, or Jay, or anyone. She sure liked them, of course she did! Even with all the differences, they were like family, but there was a feeling on her chest that she couldn't shake off.

"How was the bath?" Mal asked, eyes fixed on her phone. She was laying on her back already dressed to go to class, which was just a pair of pants under her pajama shirt, and some shoes. "You took some time."

"Yeah, sorry about that." She smiled, taking her bag that hanged on her desk's chair. "Let's get moving."

Mal nodded and slowly got up from her bed, brushing a hand through her hair and shaping it lazily in a way that looked less messy. With a single movement, she took her bag and walked up to Evie who opened the door for the both of them to walk out.

The taller girl peeked over Mal and grinned as the pressure on her chest slowly dissolved. "You've been on your phone a lot."

"Yeah, Carlos told me that there were games you could have on them, so I got one." She shrugged. "For when I get bored."

Evie nodded and smiled. "Maybe you can put it on mine too." She offered.

Mal looked up for a brief second and softly nodded, a small blush of contentment appearing on her face. "Yeah, I could do that." It was strange to her how comfortable she was starting to feel around Evie, even if the guilt never left the back of her mind.

The girls arrived at the class and noticed Carlos and Jay already on their seats, as Jay spoke about something with great enthusiasm.

"Morning, boys!" Evie beamed, waving at the pair who waved right back.

"Hey, girls!" Jay smirked, leaning back on his chair and almost slipping by the sudden shift. Carlos caught the back of the seat and glared at the taller teen as soon as he started to laugh. "Thanks for the save!" He smirked.

"Be careful, you don't want to get hurt and be unable to play on the match." Carlos spoke, crossing his arms.

"Right, the match!" Evie beamed from her seat. "How are you with that happening in a few hours?"

"I'm pumped!" He clapped, eyes filled with a spark of pure happiness.

"What about you, Carlos? How's your nose?" Mal asked, leaning over her desk to see the boy better.

He sighed and moved a hand towards the injury instinctively. "Uh- it has seen better days." He placed both hands on the desk, trying hard not to touch the wound. "Even if- yesterday was the only day it has seen."

"I'm sorry about that, Los." Evie pouted. "Did you change the bandage?"

"Yeah, this morning." He nodded.

However, their conversation was cut short when Fairy Godmother appeared at the door, rushing towards the front of the class. She apologized for being late and messily organized a few papers over her desk. She looked disheveled, almost unprofessional, and she apologized repeatedly for it, too. The class carried on afterward the same way it had always done, a dumb question is asked, and the gang has to answer it no matter how stupid it was. The minutes slowly turned into an hour and before the four of them could complain, the class was over.

The four teens got up from their seats and made their way to the entrance as usual, but for the first time in the week, someone was waiting outside the door. Standing with his full Tourney uniform, was Ben with his always awkward expression and tired eyes.

"Hey! Good morning, Ben." Evie approached the prince who made a small bow as a greeting.

"Hey." He smiled. "I wanted to talk with Mal, but since I'm leaving towards the field in a few seconds I figured it would be better to come here and leave with Jay afterwards, what do you say?"

Jay's face got lit up by his smile, one that was big and bright. "Sure thing!"

"Good." Ben nodded. "Mal, I came to tell you that we could have the first committee meeting after the match! We have to start some preparations and I think it would be a good idea to meet today that we don't have any other classes."

The girl stood there for a while, wondering if she really wanted to spend her evening hanging around the prince, and sighed in annoyance when her brain spat a positive answer without much thought put into it. "Sure." She accepted, though there was a lack of enthusiasm that

Ben decided to turn a blind eye to. "Is there anyone else I might have to get ready to see today?"

"Uh- not really. Up till this point I was the only member of the committee, so it's just us." He smiled and it dawned on Mal that it was for that reason that he seemed so hopeful for her to accept. She wished that there wasn't a remorseful feeling on her guts as she realized this, and had to swallow it as if it were a pill, something hard to digest.

"Gotcha." She let out, giving him a small, sort of awkward, thumbs up that was enough for him to feel calm.

He stood stiffly for a while before Jay took a step in and grabbed him by the shoulders. "Alright, we'll be heading to the field, see ya after the match!" He waved and dragged Ben with him to avoid the prince sink further into whatever that situation was, which he appreciated a lot as he grabbed Jay's hand and squeezed it twice to silently thank him for the action.

Evie smiled to the side and grasped onto Carlos and Mal, pressing them to her sides. "Let's go! Maybe we get to buy some flags on our way there."

"Flags?" Carlos asked as the trio began to walk.

"Yeah, with the school logo, right?" Mal asked. "I saw some the day we came here. The colors are kinda ugly, though. Are you sure we want them?"

"Oh, come on! It's for the spirit, we can burn them later."

Mal's face shifted and a soft laugh rise from her throat. "Yay, arson." She beamed, making Carlos giggle under his breath. Evie couldn't help but smirk at the interaction, the whole scene just felt fictional, too normal, and especially too nice to have been part of the life of the kids of villains. But even if it was too good to feel real, it was, and that mere thought made Evie's chest get filled with warmth.

The seats around the field were filled to the brim with students and teachers alike. The sound was deafening, and the air was full of cheers and chants directed to the players that slowly walked into the green synthetic grass and towards the battle. The VKs never went to a match, the sports on the isle were mostly running and soccer, but because of the conditions of the place, there were never matches of any kind, at least not friendly ones like the one they were attending.

Jay walked out into the field and looked over at the seats surrounding it, searching for the remaining members of his party. Up in the tenth row, holding a bunch of flags, were Carlos, Evie, and Mal, each with a smile on their face (though visible in different extents respectively). Looking at them made him feel calmed and confident, and as he tied his hair on a ponytail, he peeked one last time at them. Aziz patted his back caringly and winked at the taller teen as the whistle signaled the beginning of the match.

As the players began to work their way towards the goal, a pair of ice-blue eyes stared from the bench. Chad wasn't allowed to play, and Ben had been very strict to keep it that way

thought the first match of the season, which was enough to make the blond furious. Why was Ben doing that to them? Weren't they friends? What a friend he turned out to be, huh.

Of course Chad knew that part of it was because of his attitude towards Jay, but the guy grew up on an island filled with criminals, a few insults would never be enough to get under his skin, which was why he couldn't understand the insistence of the prince to keep Chad out of the field. Perhaps the worse part was that he didn't even bother to explain it, he simply scoffed and left without talking to him again. That happened at the beginning of the week, and it was making him angrier by the minute.

Not only that, but the other VKs had been a pain in the ass too. Evie was smart and she knew it, which was annoying for him to no end. She was a villain yet she was nice and clever, and always seemed to have the right words on the tip of her tongue. And he was a prince, yet he was treated like a villain, make it make sense! Of course it didn't, it was nonsense. And don't get him started on Carlos, a guy who's treated like a golden coin by the girls in his class, another smart kid that only showed Chad that he was too stuck up to care about getting beaten up or talking back to him. Both were the worse of the worse, and Jay wasn't any better, that little bitch who stepped into the field, smiled a few times, and took everything from Chad in a single week.

"How unfair." He muttered to himself, holding a plastic cup of water. His grip tightened with every thought.

He followed the movements of the players on the field as the minutes ran by, and before he noticed, the match was almost finished. He saw as Jay stepped on one of the player's shields and scored one of the greatest goals he'd ever seen anyone make. Maybe if it wasn't because of who had done it, he'd be impressed, but it was a damned villain. He noticed as the other three cheered their throats off, and waved the tiny little flags around as if their lives depended on it. Even the tiny girl who wasn't very enthusiastic was now shouting and cheering for him. It was infuriating.

With that last movement, a loud horn was heard signaling the end of the match and the victory for Auradon Prep. The cheers were loud, and he could see Aubrey jumping around out of sheer pride. He saw Lonnie and Aziz high-fiving, but his eyes were snatched away by Jay's presence.

He stood proudly, waving at the spectators. Just at that moment, Ben walked up to him and congratulated him. Jay was shaking out of excitement, and was so proud and filled with a strange feeling on his chest, one that made his eyes slightly watery and his mind overwhelmed.

"You did amazing!" Ben beamed, wearing a beautiful smile on his face that almost erased the tiredness of his expression.

"We did amazing." Jay smiled and just at that moment, Ben stepped in and hugged him.

In any other context, Ben would have been grossed out about hugging someone while being a sweaty mess, but he was so happy. Jay was the son of Jafar, a villain, yet here he was being a star player and showing the school that he was worthy of forgiveness. The idea that others

might see what Ben saw on him ever since the beginning made him ecstatic. Jay hugged him back without hesitation and soon enough Aziz and Lonnie joined in. The group smiled proudly at each other and joined their heads together in the middle. Chad started with a stone glare and felt as his hand got soaked by the water inside the cup he once was holding, now destroyed by the pressure of his fingers.

The team waved as they left towards the changing room, and Jay walked last to give his farewell to the cheerleaders that were giggling and waving at him. He enjoyed the attention more than he'd admit, and maybe because he was focused on them, he didn't notice as Chad walked close to him with a mischievous smile as Jay disappeared from the public eye.

"Congratulations!" He cheered.

It happened in a few seconds, and it was so brief and sudden that it took Jay a whole minute to process it. From a moment to the next Jay stood stiffly in the hall between the field and the changing rooms, soaked from head to toe in a sticky liquid. He brushed a hand through his eyes but the liquid managed to get on them, making them itchy. He groaned in anger and turned around looking for the source of the liquid, it didn't take him long to find Chad leaning onto a tank of energy drink that was now empty.

Jay's face stood blank for a few seconds as he took in the situation. There he was, Chad, the guy who always saw himself as better than the rest. The same dude who treated Evie like an object, just a useful tool that he could put to use in case he needed it, and then treat her like garbage. The same one who took Carlos and kicked him to the point where he broke his nose and parted his lip, like a ragdoll. And he was smiling because he got to do all of that and go unpunished. The blood on Jay's body began to boil and his eyes darkened in the span of a few seconds.

He walked towards him, towering over the shorter teen, and grabbed him by the collar of his shirt to smash him on a wall. Chad's smile softly shivered into an unsure smirk and that was enough to make Jay feel angrier.

"What the fuck is your damage, Chad?" He hissed, low enough to be intimidating. The blond grasped onto Jay's hands in a useless attempt to loosen his grip.

"My damage?" He spoke in a shaken voice, almost out of breath. "You are the one who stood on my country, my school and decided to act like you are better than me."

"Oh, I am the one acting like that?"

Chad's eyes seemed to flash at Jay's words. "It's always been you, dipshit. You villains think you are so cool and special because Benny Boy picked you from the bunch when you are nothing but roaches." He smirked. "But, you see, you aren't better than me."

"You better watch your mouth before I break your jaw. Believe me, I have done that before."

"Oh, I'm sure you have. But if I were you I wouldn't risk it. I am a prince, and you are a filthy villain." He stopped to let out a low giggle. "Oh, Fairy Godmother! Jay stole my jacket and

when I asked him why he did, he punched me in the face! He is such an evil man!" Chad whined, fake tears making their way through his eyes.

"You wouldn't- She wouldn't believe you."

"Why not? You are the villain, you just admitted that you have broken jaws before. Who do you think has the priority here? Me or you?"

Jay stood with a tight grip on his shirt.

"You might hug Ben, and hang around Aziz and Lonnie, and go to good deed class and be a star player. But you are still the son of Jafar, and once a villain, always a villain." He patted his face. "The people here are better than me with hidhing that thought, but believe me, if Aziz walked in on us right now, he'd be fast to get angry at you."

Jay's hand trembled for a second before he smashed Chad's collar and let him go, causing the blond to fall to the floor. Both kept staring into each other's eyes before the taller teen made his way into the changing room. Inside stood Ben alone, who was startled by Jay's sudden presence on the place.

"Oh- hey buddy, you-" He stopped, noticing the state of his clothes as he took them off without any hint of delicacy. "What happened?"

"Why don't you ask your little prince friend about that?" Jay growled before he disappeared into the showers.

Ben frowned and stepped in too, even if he had showered already.

"Did Chad do this?" He asked with his gentle voice, almost so tired and fragile that it made Jay feel guilty to be angry at him.

Jay sighed. "Yeah."

"He said some nasty things too, right?" Ben leaned onto the frame of the door. Chad might be a dick, but once upon a time, he and Ben had been close, so much so that they were able to guess what the other was thinking with a single look. It was painful for the future king to see his friend's gentle demeanor turn into the monster he was nowadays.

Jay peeked over his shoulder and nodded. "I'm sorry I shouted at you. He just- he managed to get into my head- that asshole."

"He does that." Ben nodded, eyes fixed on the floor. "I get why you would be angry, Chad has that effect on people."

The two stood in silence and Jay felt his chest tighten. Even if the idea had been brought up by Chad a few minutes ago, he knew that since the beginning. Mal was there to remind him that the people in Auradon were two-faced, and he had to be careful with his every step. It wasn't hard, in the end, Auradon wasn't as good at keeping a smile as they thought they were, and Jay could tell that some people still saw them as the spawns of their parents and nothing

more. But he also knew that Ben was different, he cared and was willing to show the world the nicest part of everyone.

"Still, I shouldn't have reacted like that. You've been nothing but nice to me, to us, since the beginning." He sighed.

"Hey- don't stress about it. I get it." Ben smiled gently, and Jay couldn't help but smile back. "Whatever he said, I want you to know that it's bullcrap. He believes that everyone thinks just like him, but be sure that Aubrey, Aziz, Lonnie and I, love you guys a lot. I know it's hard to believe considering the hardships you faced in the past but- take my word in this one, okay?"

Jay's eyes sparkle before he let out a soft laugh, mostly out of his brain calming down. "I will." He nodded. "I'll take your word."

Ben's face lit up briefly with a smile. "I'm glad." His words came out in an almost sigh-like way, and Jay wondered if he had been holding his breath just like him. "I'll let you shower in peace now, then. See you later." He smiled before leaving the shower room.

Just as he left, Jay snorted under his breath as he realized the situation they had a conversation in. After an uneventful shower, he stepped into the field and found Carlos leaning on the wall petting a cat.

"Hey! You were waiting for me?"

Carlos rose his face and nodded as he heavily got up while the cat rubbed its head on the boy's legs. "Yeah, I was waiting with Mal but she left with Ben a few minutes ago."

"Oh! You guys are getting close?" He asked, walking towards him and leaning into the cat who stroked its head on him too.

"Sorta. We aren't strangers anymore, so that's good." He shrugged.

"You guys are really similar," Jay commented, absentmindedly. "Similar mannerisms, same logical thoughts, and dark humor." He finished, looking up at Carlos.

He stared at him for a while. "I'm not sure if I should take that as a compliment."

"Oh, you sure can. Mal is one of the most important people in my life. But don't tell her I said that, she has the ego of a dictator."

Carlos snickered at the comment. "Thanks, then."

Jay shrugged and got up. "Wanna get something to eat?"

"Sure-" The shorter teen stopped and furrowed his eyebrows, grasping Jay's arm and placing it under his nose. Jay stared with a confused look on his face as the blond smelled the clothes. "Did something happen?" He asked.

"Huh? Something like what?"

"Did you spilled some energy drink on you? You smell like blueberry and chemicals." He pointed out. "It's really strong, I thought it was a perfume but it clearly smells like energy drink."

"Uh- It's nothing, maybe one of the guys was drinking it and left it too close to my clothes!" He smiled, patting Carlos' back and making him start to walk. "Don't worry about it."

Carlos frowned but decided to not press further, and shrugged. "Alright."

He wasn't dumb, and Jay knew it too, but it was worth a try. Carlos knew well that something happened, and the fact that he didn't want to talk about it was enough to turn in the red lights on his head. It was clear that something went wrong and he was willing to make his own investigations.

"What do you want to eat? I really like sweets but maybe we can try something salty?"

"Eh, sweets are fine." Carlos shrugged. "Do you have money?"

"No, but the cafeteria has a free buffet for students!"

As the two made their way to the cafeteria, Mal and Ben arrived at a room, the committee's meeting room. It was just the inner gym, but while being empty it seemed like a theatre.

"We make most of our acts and important presentations in here." He explained, pointing at the stage at the far end of the room. "But it's not a common thing to have stuff happening here, so in the meantime, we can meet in here."

The two made their way through the empty room, and Mal listened silently as their steps echoed in between the four walls.

"Isn't it kinda sad that there is no one else with us?"

Ben shrugged as he hopped onto the stage, letting his legs hang from it. "I think it's less sad now that you are here." He smiled.

The girl snorted and smirked, "Thanks."

The prince shook his head, dismissing the comment. "Please, I should be thanking you." He let his head and loosely by his shoulder. "So, I was thinking that, since the next party is the family gathering, maybe we could come up with a theme."

"What's the family gathering?" Mal asked making her way towards the stage.

"It's complicated, the families of the students are invited for a day to the school to make some recreative activities in the name of unity and- other stuff." He explained, gesturing around as he spoke. "There is food and sports, and usually there is a small show in the beginning as an opening ceremony."

Mal nodded along with the explanation, even if her mind was slightly disconnected from it. She stared as Ben continued giving some options for the party, something to do with flowers

and fireworks, but her brain stood focused on the way he expressed himself. He would make grand gestures with his hands and change the pitch and speed of his voice now and then to fit his narrative. It was amusing because for as long as his blabber went, he looked happier, like a normal teenager that's talking about something they are passionate about.

"You really like this, don't you?" Mal asked, with her always blank expression as she leaned on the stage.

Ben stopped mid-sentence and looked over at her, as an embarrassed blush occupied his face. "Sorry, I must be really annoying right now."

"Not really." Mal shrugged, jumping onto the stage and sitting by his side. "It's-- it's interesting to see you so passionate about it."

"Really?" His eyes seemed to spark, and the girl couldn't understand why exactly. "I- Dad tends to say that I talk too much, sometimes more than I should. But then some say that I talk too little." He sighed, leaning onto his hand. "I'm not sure which one is it."

"You speak a normal amount, I think. People are just picky and annoying." She shrugged.

The prince looked at her and sighed, a little smile appearing on his face. "Thanks." He nodded, and Mal simply shrugged as an answer. "So, what should we do for the family gathering?"

"Well, maybe we can do something around your parents' fairytale?" She offered. "It can be a ball with fancy dresses and food, and the main decoration can just be old ballroom decorations."

Ben's eyes widened and a smile appeared on his face. "Amazing idea! I always wanted to go to one of those old balls! You are a genius, Mal." He extended his hand and patted her shoulder, making her glare at it. It wasn't much of a reflection of the way she felt about it, but rather the fact that she was just used to scowling at anyone willing to touch her. He tried to remain calm at the sudden stare and simply took his hand off keeping a smile on his face.

"Thanks." She nodded, jumping on by his side and laying on the stage, regretting it as soon as she noticed the dust on it. "What do we do now?"

"Well, I was thinking we'd spend some time discussing the topic of the party." He explained, writing something down on a piece of paper. "But yours was pretty good, so I'll just send this to the council for them to approve it, and then we can start the real job." He smirked at Mal whose eyes were starting to fall closed. She was getting bored.

"Cool, so we can leave, right?"

Ben stopped. "Yeah, but we should finish some preparations for the spring party tomorrow." He pointed out as he jumped off from the stage. Mal sat up furrowing her brows at the statement.

"Huh? We have to take care of that too?"

"Not really." He smiled. "But I like to take care of the details, you can step out if you want."

"No, I'll go." She sighed. If she was really getting into the committee she had to go big or go home, otherwise, it would be useless. "But if we are still working I need to get out of this place. I've been in the same building for the whole week, I need a change of paces."

"Sure! We can go to the city for a bit." He nodded. "Let's go, there's a curfew at eight so it's better if we leave now."

And Mal accepted, even if she wasn't so thrilled about hanging out around the people outside of Auradon Prep. If the students were dicks about her being a villain, she could already feel the stares on her neck by the rest of the citizens who hadn't seen a villain in a long while, and especially not hanging out around the future king. Outside of the school, she found cars, paved streets, and houses whose sizes varied from two floors to four even.

It did surprise her how there were no castles, only a few shops that still held that fairytale bliss that the Isle of the Lost was forced to hold, unable to build anything else with the lack of resources. She was disappointed, to say the least, but in the end, Mal couldn't recall what exactly she was expecting to see in the city other than prissy people. Maybe it was the lack of them that made her feel dissatisfied. As they walked through the streets and around shops filled to the brim with clothes and random objects, Mal couldn't help but feel like she was in a different place, a different world even.

"What do you think? Do you like it?" Ben asked, hand gripping onto his bag.

"It's better than the island, alright." She snorted. "I couldn't say it's the most amazing place ever because I haven't visited many places in the past."

"Oh-" Ben blushed, it was mostly out of embarrassment, probably caused by a strange grasp of guilt on his throat. "Sorry."

"It's whatever." She didn't feel like throwing a pity party for herself. "I don't need you feeling sorry about me, it's not the end. I'm young and out of that hellhole, so I can assure you I'll see the rest of the world one day."

"I don't doubt it." Ben smiled, eyes fixed on the things happening in front of him. "You seem like someone who's gonna go far."

And Mal wished he didn't answer that. She wished he had stayed silent and continued walking without saying anything because that mere comment made her whole body tense up as a dreading feeling took over her chest. It was sudden, and she had to force herself to keep walking by his side to avoid the prince from noticing her stiffness. *Damn right I will, she thought to silence the strange sensation on the back of her throat, I will rule the world one day.*

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