



For daily latest books please visit <https://novelsguru.com/>

And also visit my Facebook page, and like and share it

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345453369055623>

Thank you guys for downloading this book from my site please keep visiting <https://novelsguru.com/> for supporting me and also don't forget to share it with your friends.

Dear Friends please download these books direct from <https://novelsguru.com/> bookmark this site for latest African books, and also supporting me Thanks.

## **ATHENA - Sequel to THE PREACHER'S KID**

### **by Cathrine Phiri**

#### **Chapter 1**

CASSANDRA

'Dear diary! First day in varsity and I am very excited. I cannot wait for what life has in store for me and I cannot wait to meet new people. Speaking of meeting new people, yesterday I met the man of my dreams. Maybe the man of my dreams is a strong word, I met my ideal boyfriend. Okay.... I don't know what to call him but he is everything I want in a boyfriend, tall, light-skinned, handsome, and has a tattoo. With a killer smile as a bonus. I hope he and I become friends, I would love it if he and I become friends. I like him – scratch that, I love him. Oh my God, I am in love with a boy I only met once.'

My ringing phone disturbs me from my writing. I put my diary on my side table and get my phone from the charger.

Me: Hey, you!

Sanele: Hey kid, you good?

Me: Yeah, just woke up and I am about to prepare for my first day.

Sanele: Break a leg....any cute boys eying you there?

Me: Actually, I think I met my soulmate last night.

Sanele: What's his name so I can break his legs?

Me: I am not telling you, hey I have to get ready for class. I will call you after school.

Sanele: Okay kid, don't forget to have fun.

Me: I won't!

Sanele: May that fun not involve boys please, I am still young to be an uncle.

Me: (giggling) Bye, Sanele.

I hang up and put on some music on my phone. Today feels like it is going to be a great day. I feel good and I feel amazing. I just wish Frankie was here to experience all this with me. I hop into the shower while singing along to Beyonce. I am really feeling myself today. I put on my boyfriend jeans with a crop top and sneakers. Mom and Dad are not here so I can dress however I want. I kneel...

'Lord Jesus, may today be a great day filled with nothing but goodness. May Jayden also notice me. Amen!'

I grab my bag and head out but quickly shut the door when the first person I see when I open the door is Jayden. Okay, I said may he notice me not be at my door. I take a deep breath and open the door.

"Hey, Jayden..."

He smiles, "Cassandra."

"What are you doing here? I mean are you waiting for someone or you are waiting for me or you are just waiting? You are just waiting for no reason at all, not that you are not allowed to. You can do whatever you want. Am I talking too much?"

He chuckles, "You forgot your earpods in my room yesterday."

"Yes, my earpods. I have been looking for them, thank you."

"I heard you singing, you got some pipes," he says.

"You could hear me from your room? Was I too loud?"

"Relax, Cassandra I heard you now when I was waiting for you. See you around," he hands me my earpod and walks away.

"See you later."

Why the hell did I just say that? And why am I so nervous around him? I head to class, I don't know my way around but I

have the map and I am good at those. My classes go well and the teachers are so nice but unfortunately, I haven't made friends today.

"This school is cursed," says some boy when I pass in front of him.

"Excuse me?"

He says, 'This school has evil roaming around. There is evil everywhere in this school.'

"And that's Kairo, the school's crazy person," Jayden pulls me away. Is he really touching me? I am not bathing again.

"What does he mean this school is cursed?"

He answers, "Don't mind him, he is crazy. I was about to grab lunch with my friends, do you want to join us?"

"Yeah, I could use some friends."

I follow him and he introduces me to his friends, Nontle, Gail, Langa, and Jacob. His friends are nice and welcoming. At first, they thought maybe I am Jayden's girlfriend, how I wish. He made it clear that we are just two people who met the previous day and that I am the girl who stays opposite his room.

The rest of the day goes by very well. I cannot believe I am here and my parents are okay with it. It seems everyone wants a piece of me because I have been on the phone since I came

back from classes. I spent most of my time on the phone with Emily. The lady won't even let me breathe on my first day.

A knock on the door disturbs me, I am reading the bible. I put my bible away and put on my gown to get the door. To my surprise

Advertisement

it's Jayden.

"Hey, is everything okay?"

He nods, "Everything is fine. My friends and I are going to sneak out of campus, are you interested?"

"Is that allowed?"

"No but we are doing it anyways, are you interested?" he asks.

I have never broken laws at school before but I would love to hang out with Jayden. I mean this is what happens in varsity, right? I ask Jayden to give me a minute while I change. God will have to forgive me for this. I put on a simple jumpsuit and head out. The rest of the crew is happy that I joined them.

"I hope we don't get caught," I whisper to Jayden.

"You don't break rules much often, I see."

"I am a P.K so I am limited," I say and Nontle stops walking and says.

“You are a preacher’s kid, cute.”

Langa mumbles, “I bet she’s still a virgin.”

Jayden says, “Guys be nice. Cassandra is my friend, our friend.”

Gail wraps her arms around me, “You should be proud P.K and hold on to your virginity, trust me these boys are not worth it or you.”

“I said the same and then boom, it was gone in a second. Boys are bad people,” says Nontle and we all burst into laughter.

“Guys I have an idea, how about we check out the so-called haunted dorms,” Jacob suggests.

“Kairo is crazy, nothing is haunted,” Nontle answers.

Langa takes out his phone and switches on the torch, “There is only one way to find out.”

Everyone switches on their torches. I say, “I’ll just go back.”

Jacob takes my hand, “Come on P.K we need at least one praying person in case evil spirits pop up.”

“It will be fun Cassie,” says Jayden.

I sigh and switch on my phone and we walk to the dorms. I have a bad feeling about all this. We all follow each other in. The place is quiet and very dark. It is also very dusty. I scream when

I feel something touch me and it's just Jacob. I don't want to be here, I want to go back to my room.

"Jacob leave her alone." – Jayden.

"Fine, I won't mess with the P.K."

All the girls scream when the lights go on. This place will give me a heart attack. It's Langa who just switched on the lights. We start looking around. It seems we are in someone's old room and surprisingly their stuff is still here.

"How old is this dorm?" Jacob asks.

Gails says, "I didn't even know that there were once phones with buttons."

"Guys we should leave."

"Chill, P.K," answers Langa, "We will be out in no time."

"Guys check this out," says Nontle and we all go to her, she is carrying a book with her and browsing through, "I think it's a grimoire."

"Then put it away. Can we go?" I say. I don't like being here and I should have stayed.

Nontle starts going through the book and everyone seems fascinated by it except me. I regret coming here. Nontle asks, "Do you think all this is real?"



Gails answers, "There is only one way to find out, let's try it out."

Again why am I here? I should have slept. I stand and watch them follow the instructions in the book. They get candles and salt and start drawing things. They seem to be enjoying this but I want to leave.

"Last step, we all stand around each corner of the hexagon," says Nontle and they all stand on each corner, "Cassandra come!"

"You can do it without me."

"One corner is empty, come," says Jacob.

I hate this. I stand next to Jayden and we all hold hands. I have to say it feels good to hold hands with Jayden. Nontle adds, "We chant Prendre la releve."

Everyone laughs. What is that even supposed to mean? I don't think she is pronouncing it correctly. I say, "You mean prendre la releve."

I quickly let go of Jayden's hand when I feel an electric wave pass through my body. "Cassie, are you okay?" Jayden asks.

"I feel dizzy."

(We are back and back with a bang. Like, share, and comment. If you missed The Preacher's Kid run and go buy it before the

next chapter because you missed a huge chunk of the story.  
The book is available on premium books here on visionary  
writings)

## ATHENA

Light noises wake me up. I slowly open my eyes and they feel very heavy. My head also feels heavy. I rub my eyes trying to see what is making so much noise. In front of me are three boys and two girls. They seem to be arguing about something. Now that I am awake their voices no longer sound as hushed as they did when I first heard them. I look around me and I don't recognize the room I am in. What is this place and who are these people?

One of the boys notices that I am awake and says, "Guys she is up."

They all shift their attention to me. They are all asking me if I am okay, if I feel okay, and if I remember anything. I don't even know these people for them to be bombarding me with questions like this.

I say, "One question at a time, please. My head is spinning as it is."

They all shut up then the one girl asks, "Are you okay?"

"My head hurts and I don't know where I am."

The boy answers, "You passed out and we had to bring you back here."

Passed out where? The last thing I remember is...wait! What was the last thing I did? Yes, I was with my friends. "Where is Ruth?"

"Who the hell is Ruth?" they ask. "Are you okay? You have been out for more than twenty-four hours." Everybody wants to say something, but they are not giving each other a chance to speak. Why are they speaking at the same time?

"Can I please rest? I am hungry and my head is spinning," I say.

The girl who hasn't spoken since I woke up says, "We got you food in case you woke up hungry. I also have some painkillers in my bag."

"Do you have something stronger, like weed?" I ask and they all laugh.

"Let's try painkillers first."

They give me my food. It looks so good and not only does it smell good but it tastes like heaven. Not that I know what heaven tastes like but damn I haven't tasted such good food in forever. I don't know why they are looking at me like this. Did I maybe do something? Who are these people?

I say, "This food is amazing, who cooked it?"

"We ordered it, Cassandra are you okay?"

Who is Cassandra? Why is he saying Cassandra while looking at me? I am not Cassandra. "Jayden let's just let her rest."

So the one with the tattoo is Jayden. They all tell me that they will see me later but the one girl steps closer and whispers, "I really hope you are okay. You scared us."

"I'm fine, I promise."

"Nontle let's let her rest," the other girl calls her. So there is Jayden and Nontle. Why don't their names ring a bell in my head?

I get out of bed as soon as they all leave. Why does my body feel so weird and what am I wearing? I think my breasts and butt grew bigger. Why does my hair keep getting in my face and how did it get so long? Something is not right, I am not this fair-skinned. I am lighter than this.

I rush to the bathroom to look at myself in the mirror. No way! It's like I am looking at someone else that is not me but it is me. It is me but in someone else's body. No, that doesn't make sense, that is not even possible. This is just a dream. It's a dream and I am going to wake up anytime.

Maybe I am drunk, the last thing I remember was me heading back to my dorm after the school dance. This is just a dream and I will be fine. I get on the bed, lie down, and close my eyes.

When I open them I am still in the room. What is happening to me?

I need to get out of here, I put on the slippers next to the bed and head out. Why does this place feel familiar? I know this place but for some reason, it looks different and the people also look different.

“I know you!” I say when I bump into one boy.

“I don’t think we have met.”

“I know you, you are Kennedy, I attend class with you.” I never forget a face.

“I am not Kennedy, I am Kairo. Kennedy was my dad.”

“Where is your dad?” I ask

Advertisement

“Take me to him now.”

“I don’t even know you.”

I grab him by his jacket, “Take me to your dad before I break you.”

“Why are you even talking to me? People think I am crazy.”

“And I am in someone else’s body so we are beyond crazy here. Take me to your dad.” I yell.

“My dad died in 1998 after I was born. They say spirits were haunting him and that our family is cursed. I also see things that aren’t there, I guess it runs in the family.”

Kennedy has a son this old? Before I woke up we were at a school dance. Wait, did he say 1998? Why do I last remember 1996? “What year is it, Kairo?”

“2023...what year do you think it is?”

“This is impossible, just last night I was in 1996. Did I die and get reborn into this body? No, that doesn’t make sense. What is going on with me? Am I losing my mind?” it is the only explanation for this.

“Wait did you say you woke up in this body? If this is not your body then who are you?”

“I am Athena,” I answer, “I don’t even know who the owner of this body is.”

“Then how are you in her body?”

“I don’t know!” I yell. “I don’t know anything! I don’t know how it’s not 1996 and what the hell am I wearing? Is this what people wear now?”

“Wait a minute, did you say you are Athena? Athena the ghost of the school?”

I say, “Hello! One has to be dead to be a ghost.”

“Rumor has it that a young girl died in this school years ago. Some say that her friends were playing with a grimoire and accidentally killed her. Her spirit has been roaming around the school since the 90s but the girl’s name is Siphokazi so it’s not you.”

I sigh, “My first name is Siphokazi. Are you saying I died in 1996?”

“If you are who you say you are then yes. I have articles about you in my room. I can show you then you confirm if it’s you.”

“And why do you have the article?” I ask.

“Because my father was part of the screw that killed Athena now our family is cursed. Until we find Athena’s grave and put her soul to rest, I will continue seeing things that are not there. Since we now know your where your soul is we just need to find your grave and the grimoire that was used.”

“You mean kill me again? I don’t want to be dead, I just woke up and the last thing I remember is 1996. Maybe this is my second chance at life,” I say.

“But this is not your body and obviously this girl’s consciousness will kick in at some point. You are just a spirit that possessed her.”

“I didn’t possess anyone, this girl invited me in. This is my body too now,” I reply.



“What about her life, her dreams and everything?”

I answer, “I don’t care and your father is the reason I am here so in other words it’s your fault too. I have a second chance and I am not throwing it away. This stays between us, do you hear me?”

“Are you threatening me?”

“Yes, and you are going to help me know stuff about this girl. If I am going to live her life I need to know about her,” I say.

“I don’t even know her.”

I grab him by his jacket, “Then find out. This is my second chance at life and you will not ruin it for me.”

“But you have to find peace.”

I smile, “I am at peace, I am at peace in my new body. I just need full control and then bye-bye to this girl, whatever her name is. And find me that grimoire.”

“Why are you talking to the crazy boy again?” says a male voice. It’s Jayden.

“He’s crazy?”

He says, “Yeah, I told you last time. Kairo is the school’s crazy boy. Don’t talk to him.”

Kairo looks fine to me but if he says so. Jayden and I walk to our dorm and he is telling me about how worried he was when I was out. I don't know what to say but to accept his apology. He leaves me outside my room, I get in and lock the door. So my name is Cassandra Ndlovu now, I have to get used to it...

ATHENA

“Wake up, sleepy head!” I pour water on Kairo. He jumps out of bed and rubs sleep off his eyes.

“What are you doing here and how do you know my dorm?”

I answer, “I just asked where the crazy boy sleeps and you, my friend are famous in this school. Okay enough chit-chat, do you have what I asked for? Do you have information about this Cassandra girl?”

“I just woke up, Athena give me a break. It’s five in the morning and how do you expect me to get information on a person I don’t even know? I am not a detective.”

“Do you think I care? Your father is the reason I died in the first place so you will get me what I want or I will take out my frustrations on you,” I say.

He mumbles, “Now I see why your friends killed you.”

“Don’t play with me, Kairo. Do you think I want to be here? Do you think I want to be trapped in this body? I found out hours ago that my friends killed me, how do you think that makes me feel? You are lucky I am being polite right now,” I yell.

“I am sorry but I am just a twenty-five year old that was born in a cursed family. All I want is to be a normal person.”

I answer, "I don't care about your sob story. I want information about this girl. How you get it, I don't care."

"I will ask around the school."

"Now you are talking. What is this thing?" I show him this thing that won't stop making noise and what is this crappy music it plays.

"It's a phone."

This is not how phones looked back in 1996, "Why won't it stop playing this weird music?"

"Maybe someone was calling."

It's ringing again, "Alarm is calling."

"No, that's her morning alarm."

"Aww man does this mean I have to go to school? In 1996 it was my last year in university." This sucks, I thought I was done with school, and what is this girl studying? I tried looking around her room but the only thing I could find was her diary which only has one page written on it. Stupid girl! I should check her textbooks.

"You should probably go. I need to get ready for class."

I look at him, "Are you not the school crazy? Isn't that like a pass not to go to class?"

“People think I am crazy because I talk to things/ people they cannot see. I am not really crazy.”

“I am pretty sure that is the definition of crazy but whatever makes you sleep at night. I am going to go and get ready for class. I saw her schedule and I think I can do this. Find information about her or next time it won't be water I pour on you. Just kidding,” I say before leaving his room. I am not kidding at all.

I head back to my dorm and bathe. I didn't know I can sing, this girl has an amazing voice. Well, it's our voice now. After bathing, I find something to wear, I am not a fan of today's fashion, I look slutty but in a good way. I pack my books and prepare to head out but the phone rings again. It's written Sebastian and says swipe left to answer. Who is Sebastian? I don't know if I should be answering

Sebastian: You go to varsity for one day and already you don't answer my calls.

Me: Has anyone ever told you that you have a great telephone voice?

Sebastian: Don't try that with me... listen I only have five minutes before Emily makes me get on stage. How are you?

Me: Honestly, still trying to get used to everything but I am fine.

Sebastian: You will adjust soon.

Me: I hope so.

Sebastian: Relax, Cassie, everything will be fine. I have to go but take care of yourself for me.

Me: You too.

Sebastian: You are being very weird today but catch you later.

That went well even though I have no idea who I was talking to. Why is this phone locked? I don't even know the password. My classes start soon, I have to pull it together.

CASSANDRA

What in Christ's name is going on here? How did I get here? I don't remember coming to class or how my morning went. The last thing I remember was being at the haunted dorm and feeling dizzy. I look at the time on my phone and the date catches my attention. How is it two days later? This is not possible, my subconscious must be playing tricks on me.

I check the date again but it's still the same. I whisper to the girl sitting next to me, "What day is it today?"

She chuckles and shows me the screen of her phone. So I am not crazy. I look at the notebook in my hands, I have been writing notes yet I have no idea what the teacher just said. I need to talk to Jayden and the team about that night. After class

I am the first to leave, I need to look for Jayden. I don't know his classes but I need to talk to him.

I bump into that crazy boy, I forgot his name. "I'm sorry I didn't see you there."

He sighs, "I am still looking into it, no need to lash out at me."

"Why would I lash out at you and why aren't you supposed to be crazy, no offense."

"None taken. Wait...Cassandra?" he asks. Why is he looking at me like that?

"Yeah, how do you know my name?"

He answers, "You see you are..."

ATHENA

This boy is applying to be punched in the mouth. I cannot believe he is spilling everything. Wait, does that mean I was Cassandra moments ago? The last thing I remember was me being in class and then now I am here, outside class. That would only mean that Cassandra can take over anytime and I have no control over this body.

"Are you done blabbing out my secret?" I grab Kairo by his collar.

"Athena! It's you again."

“Try that next time and we will have serious problems. I told you that this stays between us.” I wish I could punch him right now but he is the only person I know right now.

“I’m sorry.”

I exhale heavily, “Do you have the information I need?”

“Not yet.”

“Then why are you just standing there? Go!” I say and watch him walk away in a rush. It’s lunch time and I don’t know who I eat lunch with but I will just look for Nontle and Jayden. They wave at me first and I join them.

“How do you feel, Cassie?” one of the boys Jayden called Langa asks.

“Still a little confused.”

“Do you think that grimoire affected you? I thought those things don’t exist,” says Nontle.

I laugh, “I don’t believe in those things.”

“I am just glad you are fine,” says Gail. I am starting to know their names. Gail is the one who talks too much, Nontle is the smart one who uses big words, Langa seems normal, Jacob is the jerk of the crew and Jayden seems like the guy who has a crush on Cassandra or is her boyfriend. I hope he is not her boyfriend, I don’t like light-skinned boys. Wait! Does Cassandra



even have a boyfriend? Is it maybe that person that called in the morning? Great, my peace is turning into chaos now.

“Hey,” Jayden holds my hand. Where did the others go? “Are you sure you are okay? I have been very worried since you passed out.”

“I am fine, don’t worry about me.”

“I have to get to class but do you want to grab a late lunch?” he asks.

“As in a date?”

He smiles, “If that’s what you want to call it.”

“It’s a date then,” I say and watch him walk away. I can’t believe I just said that. Please don’t tell me I have some of Cassandra’s character because that would be gross and I am older than that boy to date him. Now I have to prepare for a late lunch, how great!

CASSANDRA

Something is wrong with me, how am I in my room when I was last talking to that crazy boy? From the looks of it, I am heading out but I don’t know where I am going. I close the door and get back into the room. I need some answers. I go through my books and I wrote notes. What is this? Why don’t I remember

doing this? I check my diary and it still hasn't been written on since the first day.

This is insane and I feel like something is happening to me. I check my phone and the battery is low so I put it on the charger. I don't even know what I was doing or where I was headed. I lie on the bed trying to make sense of how I don't remember the past two days.

I needed to talk to Jayden by the way. I head out and bump into him by the door. "Hey, Jayden."

"Hey."

"Are you okay?" I ask. He looks angry.

"I have been waiting for two hours, Cassie."

"Waiting for what?" I ask, clueless, why does it seem as if he is angry at me?

"I cannot believe you right now. If that's how you want to be then fine," he gets into his room and shuts the door in my face.

## CASSANDRA

Am I missing something? Why is Jayden mad at me and what does he mean he has been waiting for hours? Waiting where? What am I forgetting? Is that where I was headed? Why don't I remember anything?

"Jayden!" I knock on his door.

"Go away, Cassie!"

He is going to have to forgive me for this. I walk into his room and find him lying on the bed with his arm covering his eyes. I don't know what I said to him but I feel bad. "Jayden I am sorry. I don't know why you are angry at me but I am sorry. I think something is happening to me. I don't know what but something is happening to me."

"Normal people apologize without trying to shift the blame to someone else."

"It would be easier if I knew what I did wrong," I say and he gets off the bed and goes to open the door.

"It's one thing that you stood me up now you are going to lie in my face? I get it, you don't like me like that. You should have just said so instead of lying."

I wish he could understand that I have no idea what he is talking about, “Jayden...”

“Just go, please. I have to study.”

There is no reasoning with him when he is like this so I leave and head to my room. Something is wrong with me. I check my phone and I have so many missed calls from my family and Sanele. I never miss their calls and how come I don't remember getting these calls?

I lie on the bed and read my bible. I will call everybody back later. Right now I don't have the energy for all this. My mind and body feel exhausted. I take my diary and write down...

‘Lately, I haven't been feeling like myself. I feel like something is wrong with me. I have been having these blackouts that I cannot explain. The last time my life was normal was when I went out with the crew. Could it be that something happened to me? Am I losing my mind maybe?’

I am even too tired to write. I place my diary down and then change into my pajamas. I get under the covers after saying a short prayer. I reach for my phone and start replying to everyone back on WhatsApp and apologizing for ignoring and missing their calls. I call my dad.

Me: Good evening!

Ndlovu: Finally she decided to call back. How are you?

Me: I am fine...

Ndlovu: What's wrong?

Me: I feel like something is happening to me. I cannot explain it but I feel like something is wrong.

Ndlovu: Maybe it's being far away from home. Trust me I am also having a hard time accepting that my little girl is in another town. Everything will be fine and I will keep you in my prayers.

Me: Thank you, Dad!

Ndlovu: Take care of yourself and don't forget to pray. You are in a new environment where there are new people who come from different backgrounds and are carrying different things. Be careful who you become friends with.

Me: I know and I will be careful.

Ndlovu: Take care and don't forget to visit when you can.

Me: I would visit all the time if I had a car.

Ndlovu: Nice try but I am not getting you a car.

Me: (laughing) You do know that your daughter can afford a car right?

Ndlovu: One – Zero, you win.

Me: I didn't mean it like that and you know it.

Ndlovu: I know. Take care of yourself and I love you!

I close my eyes and drift to sleep. My morning alarm wakes me up. I get out of bed and look around me. As weird as it sounds, it's nice to wake up and see my morning. The past two days I didn't see anything or should I say I don't remember anything.

I bathe, have my breakfast, say my prayer, and head to class, I feel good today. I bump into Jayden and he ignores me. I like him but I won't let him ruin my day. I head to class and my classes go well. When I don't have classes, I am reading my bible. I feel amazing. I see Dad's prayers are working. After classes, I head back to my dorm.

'Dear diary! Classes went well, nothing unusual and my day was great. Jayden is still mad at me and I don't know why. I hope eventually he will forgive me or at least talk to me.'

"We are mad at you!" Gail and Nontle barge into my room.

"What did I do?"

Nontle shows me her phone, "We didn't know you are singer Cassie. Girl you are famous."

"I am not famous

Advertisement

I just happen to have a great manager and a collab with a famous person."

“Shut up! You have a song with Sebastian Jones and you didn’t tell us that you are a famous singer. You are the new big thing and you know it,” says Gail. I wouldn’t call myself famous. Maybe upcoming singer is the right title.

“It’s a long story and please don’t start giving me special treatment people I am a singer.”

Gail answers, “Not just any singer but a singer with over a million views on her song.”

I chuckle, “Yes, that too.”

“Tell us about Sebastian!”

Why do all my friends seem to like Sebastian? Well, I don’t blame them Sebastian is quite a looker. Thank God they have boyfriends, the last thing I need is to lose another friend because of a man who doesn’t even like them.

My phone rings and I excuse myself from the girls.

Me: My lovely Manager!

Emily: I got a gig for you just ten minutes away from your school. A car will pick you up in five.

Me: I wasn’t doing anything, thanks for asking.

Emily: Sorry about that but it’s only a thirty-minute performance. You will be back at your dorm in no time.

Me: Fine.

I hang up and join the girls, “Guys I have to go, I have a gig to get to.”

Nontle asks, “Can we come with you?”

“Only if you promise not to drink alcohol and that we will leave as soon as I am done performing.”

Gail mumbles, “We can’t promise not to drink but we will leave as soon as you are done.”

“No, if you want to come with me then no alcohol.”

They promise that they will not touch alcohol and we head out. A car is already waiting and it drives us to the venue. They show us the dressing rooms where Emily has my outfit and someone to do my makeup.

“Your parents must be proud of you,” says Nontle.

“They seem like that.”

“What do you mean?” she asks.

“At first my family called my career the devil’s music. This is not the career they wanted for me. When my father first found out I sing in clubs, he kicked me out of the house.”

She gasps, “For real? What did you do?”



“Long story short, Sebastian took me in and I will forever be grateful. He is the reason I am known today.”

“That’s a lie,” Emily walks into the room. “You are famous because you are talented. You are up next.”

I take my mic and head out...

ATHENA

“Hello everyone!” I yell and everyone screams. Did I say that? Why am I here? Why am I on stage? What am I supposed to do? What does this girl do? Most importantly what the hell am I wearing? I close my eyes hoping Cassandra would take over but it’s still me.

‘Why are you not singing?’ a voice speaks in my ear startling me and I quickly remove the thing in my ear.

I don’t know what this is but this is the only thing that can help me right now. I pretend to faint. Cassandra will have to forgive me for this, not that she will know but others will tell her. Someone comes and carries me. I don’t know where they are taking me but I can hear them calling my name and yelling that someone calls the ambulance.

## CASSANDRA

I wake up in my dorm. I don't know how I got here but Jayden has fallen asleep on my study chair. I sit up and look at myself. I am still wearing the clothes I was wearing when I was about to perform and I can still feel the make-up on my face. Why don't I remember my performance and how I got here? Does Jayden being here mean he is no longer angry at me? I get out of bed and go to the bathroom because I need it badly.

In the process, I wash the makeup off my face and then change into my pajamas. I cannot believe Jayden is still asleep with all these movements I am doing.

"Hey," I lightly shake him, "Wake up you will hurt your neck."

"Hey, you are up."

"Yeah, what happened?" I ask.

"You fainted moments before your performance. Just when the ambulance was on its way, you woke up. They ran tests on you and you were fine then you passed out again on your way here. Nontle called me. I had to wait until you wake up to make sure you are fine. Are you fine?"

I nod, "I feel fine."

"Then my job is done."

“Hey,” I hold his hand before he can walk away, “I’m sorry. Whatever I did, I am sorry.”

“Why do you say it as if you don’t know what you did?”

“Because I don’t!” I sigh, “I don’t know what I did. Things have been happening to me and I don’t know what is happening to me. Sometimes I just black out and never remember anything. Like the past two days. I only remember bits and pieces.”

“What do you mean?”

I answer, “You will just think I am crazy.”

“I’d never think that.”

I say, “Sometimes I feel like I am not in control of my body. Like today, I don’t remember passing out or feeling sick. I swear I was fine when I got on that stage. You say I passed out and woke up, why don’t I remember the time I woke up.”

“That’s weird, why do you think you like that? Is it a medical condition maybe?”

“I don’t know,” I reply, “Ever since we visited that haunted dorm everything just doesn’t make sense.”

“Do you think that the spell Nontle did might have affected you?”

I laugh, “Spell? Those things exist in movies only.”

“But we had all the ingredients it needed. Five humans and one who is pure which is you.”

“Jayden do you know how crazy you sound right now?” I say.

“Cass I am serious. We drew a hexagon with salt as the book requested. Stood on each corner as it requested. We joined hands and then only you chanted the words.”

This is insane and sounds crazy, “What are you saying?”

“I am saying we should find that grimoire and read what the spell was for then take it from there.”

I nod, “Okay but right now I am tired.”

“Get some rest and I hope it’s nothing bad like you turning into a hundred-year woman.”

I laugh, “Lord I hope not.”

“See you tomorrow.”

“Wait!” I stop him, “What did I do?”

“We were supposed to meet on a date that day. I know I sound like a jerk but I was really looking forward to spending time with you.”

I answer, “I’m sorry I guess that is one of those moments I don’t remember. But, I want you to know that I would never stand you up.”

“Are you just saying that to make me feel better?”

“No, I mean it. You are the first guy I actually like and I mean the first. I haven’t even gotten my first kiss yet,” I say and cover my mouth. I shouldn’t have said that. “You should go.”

“Okay, see you tomorrow and I will look for that grimoire.”

“Good night.”

I lock the door soon after he leaves. I say a prayer and get in bed. I get out of bed and go through my stuff. I have a camera that Sanele gave me so I can capture every moment of my varsity life. I put it on record and place it on top of my bookshelf. Maybe it will give me the answers I seek.

My phone rings just as I am about to sleep and it’s Emily.

Me: Hey...

Emily: Are you pregnant? Because I would kill you.

Me: No

Advertisement

I am not pregnant, I don’t know what happened today and I am not sick.

Emily: You scared us today, I hope you are fine.

Me: I am fine and I promise it won't happen again. I hope I didn't get you in any trouble.

Emily: Your health comes first sweetie. I will tell you when there is another gig.

Me: Thank you and I am sorry. Please don't tell Sebastian and Sanele. I don't want them to be worried.

Emily: If it doesn't happen again then I won't.

Me: Thank you and goodnight.

The first thing I do when I wake up is check the recording and it seems fine. I delete the clip and charge the battery while I bathe then put the camera on record again but switch it off. It's a waste since I won't be around.

ATHENA

I hate this. I hate that I don't have control over all this. From the looks of it, Cassandra is heading to class. To hell with her class, I need to find a way to permanently take over this body. I cannot be playing dead and alive. It's messing things up for me. I don't know what happened with Jayden and I don't know what happened after I left that club.

Did I mention I hate how this girl dresses? Well, I have mentioned it now. I head to Kairo's dorm. He is not there meaning he is in class so I look for him. I see him talking to himself. Now I why they say he is crazy.

"Hey, crazy...come with me," I say.

“I am having a rough day Athena.”

“It’s Cassandra,” I slap the back of his head, “And that sounds like a you problem. I need your help.”

“I have voices and wandering spirits bothering me. Can you please give me a break for today?”

“Sorry I can’t do that,” I answer, “I need you to find out for me how I managed to get in this body and how I can permanently stay here.”

“Athena we have to break the curse and put you to sleep. Put you at peace.”

I reply, “I don’t want to be at peace, I want to be here. Now what did you find out about me?”

“Cassandra is twenty or going on twenty I forgot. She is the second child and her parents are Pastors. She is a singer and she seems to be doing well in her career. You are ruining her life.”

I say, “That’s rich coming from a child of a murderer. Now what else did you find out?”

“That’s all.”

“Does she have a boyfriend? Who is Sebastian to her?” I ask.

“I don’t know.”

“Gosh, you are so useless. Go wherever you were going.” I walk away.

I head back to the dorm and read Cassandra’s diary. Poor girl. Too bad neither of us asked for this. And her diary, not helpful at all. Isn’t a diary like a book where you pour your emotions out? This girl doesn’t write much. I need to talk to Kairo again. I head out. I am so hungry. I need to eat something before I die of hunger.

“Jayden hey,” I greet him.

“Hey, you good?”

“I am hungry, buy me food,” I command.

“You could say please.”

I smile, “Please! Better?”

“Maybe if you smile more I might say yes.”

“Or...” I shift closer to him, “I could kiss you and make you say yes.”

“Oh, that’s how you are going to play?”

“Come on don’t tell me you don’t want to kiss me?” I ask.

“Trust me it’s the only thing I think about.”

I answer, “Me too, since our date the other day I can’t stop thinking about you.”



“Right, our date...”

“What?” I ask.

“Nothing, our date was amazing. I am going to go and uhm...I am going to buy you food. Stay in your dorm and I will find you there,” he says before walking away.

6

JAYDEN

“Jayden!” Nontle yells when I barge into her room without knocking. At least she is not with her boyfriend, she tends not to lock the door. I once walked in on them and I still have nightmares until now.

“We need to talk!”

She closes her books and gives me her full attention, “Is it girlfriend problems?”

“More like a friend problem but can I use your UberEats App first? My phone just switched off and I need to order something for Cassie.”

She reaches for her phone, unlocks it, and hands it to me, “I see you are already buying stuff for her, are you two dating?”

“We are not dating and wouldn’t say there is a thing between us but I like her.”

She says, “If you like her then ask her out.?”

“I was going to but I am chickening out since I found out how famous she is. I didn’t know she is a singer and that she is very famous.”

“Don’t be scared, Cassie seems like a nice person. She is nice and humble. You would be surprised that she likes you too,” she replies.

“Speaking of Cassie, I think something is wrong with her. I can’t quite put my finger on it but I think something happened that day in that dorm.”

“What do you mean something happened?” she asks, “Affected how? Is she okay?”

“She mentioned something about blacking out. I know I sound crazy but I feel like something is wrong with her. I don’t know what exactly but something is wrong.”

He replies, “Jayden you are scaring me. What is wrong with Cassandra? I thought we were just joking around. Those things don’t really happen, right?”

“I don’t know, Nontle. At this point, I don’t know what is happening. Where is that grimoire so we can check what we did?”

She answers, “I left it in that dorm.”

“Did you read it first?”

“No, I didn’t think much about it I thought we were just playing around. Please tell me everything is fine with Cassandra?” she is now pacing up and down the room.

“I don’t know how to make sense of everything we just need to read that grimoire. Let’s go back to the dorm later and fill everyone in.”

“And say what Jayden?” she asks, “I am also confused and scared right now. If that dorm is really haunted do you think it’s a good idea we go back?”

“We have no choice, if Cassie is really affected then it’s all our fault. She didn’t want to go there in the first place. We will all meet up later right now I have to take Cassie's food to her.”

“Whoa! Rewind, you are going to the same girl that you think something is wrong with?” she asks.

“I have to, she is our friend, and what if this affects us all.”

She sighs heavily, “I will tell everyone what is going on.”

“If you happen to see Cassandra, just act normal. At least until we get that grimoire.”

“I can’t believe this is happening. What if...”

I interrupt her, “Let’s just stay positive.”

I head out to collect the food by the front entrance and then give it to Cassandra. I swear she looks fine but there is something. It frustrates me that I can’t figure it out. After giving Cassandra her food I head to my room. I need to catch up on

my assignments then I can meet up with the crew later. We might be a group of rebels but we put school first.

ATHENA

May I say the food in 2023 is amazing. Back in 1996, we bought everything in school and we had ladies that cooked some horrible food. It was either the horrible food or cooking your own food. I lie on the bed and just close my eyes. I cannot believe I am dead. All this is a lot to take in I have to say. To me

Advertisement

a few days ago was 1996 it's like I just closed my eyes, and then now it's 2023.

I wonder what really happened to me. How did my friends kill me and why? I thought we were friends and why would they kill me? What happened to my family when they found out I was dead? It would be easier to find information about my old life if I had this body to myself.

I need more answers from Kairo so I head to his dorm. He better be there. The door is locked when I get there. "Kairo!"

He opens the door, "What?"

I push him aside so I can get into the room, "Show me those articles about me. I might find the answers I seek."

He sighs and goes to some drawer then comes back with a few newspapers, "This is everything you will need."

"Why the long face?"

He answers, "I'm just tired Athena. You have no idea how it feels like to hear things and have restless spirits bother you day in and day out."

"And it's all your father's fault. Where is your mother?"

He sighs, "She couldn't handle living with a crazy son so she abandoned me."

"I almost feel sorry for you but I don't. Do you know what happened to my other friends that killed me?"

He shakes his head, "I don't know."

"According to your own understanding, how do you think I ended up in this body?"

"I think a spell was performed and your soul was summoned into this body. I think Cassandra unknowingly invited you in," he says.

"Her father is a Pastor, shouldn't she know how to defend herself from such things."

He answers, "She is a spiritual person, trust me those are the easiest targets."

“But how did she know the spell?”

He shakes his head, “I don’t know but I have a feeling they did the spell here in school meaning there must be a grimoire around here.”

“A grimoire as in a book of spells? Doesn’t one have to be a witch to use that?”

“I don’t think witches still exist but I think someone spiritually gifted did the spell then Cassandra invited you in. Look I am just using my common sense I don’t know if I am right or wrong,” he says.

“How does one get me out of this body?”

“Two ways, put your soul at rest or do a spell that takes you out. It has to be in that grimoire,” he states.

“Will I die too if Cassandra dies?”

He shakes his head, “I don’t think so. I mean you are already dead maybe your spirit will be roaming around until you find another host.”

“I can deal with that. Your next assignment is to get that grimoire and starting today I will introduce you to the crew so that you can tell me everything Cassandra does when I am not in control.”

“I can’t do that,” he answers, “I also have a life and school.”

“I am surprised that by now you still haven’t picked up that I don’t care. See you around,” I leave. On my way out that is when I notice that Kairo’s room is not with the other dorms.

I start looking around. I recognize this side of school and this is where my dorm was. I wonder why they no longer use them. I go in and to my surprise, the lights still work. The first room I go into is Ruth’s room. She was my best friend. We were very close but she never allowed anyone in her room, not even her best friend. I think now I see why.

Why is there a hexagon drawn with salt on the floor and surrounded by candles? The book in the center of the room catches my attention. I pick it up and read it. It’s the famous grimoire. Why can’t I read it? Well, don’t need it so I grab the matchbox on the table and burn it.

I head back to my dorm and bump into Gail. “Hey!”

“Hey....Cass.”

“Where are you going?” I ask.

“To see my boyfriend.”

I walk closer to her, “Why do you look nervous?”

“What do you mean? I am not nervous.”

“You look almost like you are scared of me,” I say.



“Stop playing around, my boyfriend is waiting.”

I smile and watch her walk away. I know this school like the back of my hand so I follow her but take another route. I feel like she knows something or she senses something. I show up from behind her but she doesn't notice. Just as she is about to go down the stairs, I bump into her and she goes down crashing. I look to see if anyone saw me then walk away.

## CASSANDRA

I hear commotion just as I am headed to my room. At this point, I just need to accept that there are some things I do subconsciously. I would also be lying if I said all this doesn't freak me out. I am just trying not to lose my mind. I just hope Jayden took me seriously when I talked to him earlier. I hope he doesn't think I am crazy. The last thing I want is for my crush to think I have a loose screw in my head.

I gasp when I see what the commotion is about. Gail is lying unconscious on the floor. "What happened to her?"

One boy answers, "I think she fell down the stairs."

I kneel and check her pulse. I don't know what I am doing but this is what everyone does in the movies. "Did you call the ambulance?"

"Yes, they said they will be here in thirty minutes."

"That's a long time. Does someone have a car we can use? What if she is badly hurt?" Oh my God, how did Gail fall down the stairs?

"I don't think moving her is a great idea. Maybe she is badly hurt. Let's wait for the ambulance, they will know what to do."

He is right. We might hurt her while taking her to the car. I hope she didn't break anything. I am trying to find an explanation for how she fell. Did she slip? The stairs don't look slippery. Maybe she missed a step. Accidents happen all the time.

In about half an hour the ambulance shows up and takes Gail. I try to go with them but they insist I stay since I am not family. I need to inform Jayden to call her family or anyone to let them know what happened to Gail.

I go to Jayden's room and get no response. I head to Nontle's and still no response. I don't know Langa and Jacob's rooms. I wonder where everyone is. A part of me wants to follow to the hospital where Gail is but I need to talk to Jayden first.

I look at my clothes. When did I change into this outfit? This is not what I was wearing this morning. I do not change outfits in a day. One outfit can last me the whole day.

Jayden is taking forever so I walk around the school hoping to bump into any one of my friends. I think I should get their phone numbers I mean we are friends now.

"I'm so sorry," I say when I bump into someone. It's the crazy boy.

"Cassandra?"

“You never told me how you know my name. I don’t remember telling you my name,” I say.

“You are a famous singer. I am sure everyone in this school knows you.”

Oh! Sometimes I forget my song is still trending. “What’s your name?”

“Most people call me the crazy boy.”

I chuckle, “I mean your real name and I don’t think a crazy person knows they are crazy.”

“It’s Kairo.”

“Nice to know you, Kairo. My dad is a preacher, you should visit our church sometime,” I invite him. He might get the healing he needs.

“I don’t think people like me are welcome.”

I hold his hand and squeeze it, “Everyone is welcome in the house of the Lord.”

“I will tag along next time you go.”

I say, “How is this Sunday?”

“Sure...I will meet you here on Sunday morning.”

I smile, “How is six am, the church is back home and it’s two hours from here to there. We need to leave early to catch the ten am service.”

“Sunday, six am, I got it.”

“Stay blessed Kairo,” I walk away. Gosh, I sound like Zoey. It’s been long since I invited anyone to church I have to say. Now I have to find transport. While I am still looking for my friends I call Sanele.

Sanele: Timing, Cassandra. Timing!

Me: I’m sorry, should I call another time?

Sanele: Just talk faster, what’s up?

Me: I want to buy a car, can you help me? I want to take some of the money in my savings and buy a car.

Sanele: Why do you want a car?

Me: To save you from being my driver and I am now far from home. I can’t call you all the time I need a ride.

Sanele: I hear you but will you be able to maintain it? A car is expensive.

Me: Emily pays me well so I think I am fine.

Sanele: I hope no one pressured you into this. I most definitely hope you are not doing this to impress a boy.

Me: No

Advertisement

it's for me.

Sanele: Save your money, I will give you my car.

Me: No, I want to buy it myself. I want to look at it and say that's all me, m y hard work.

Sanele: Okay how soon do you want to do it?

Me: Even tomorrow.

Sanele: I will call you.

JAYDEN

“Where is Gail?” Jacob asks. He, Nontle, Langa, and I are standing outside the haunted dorms. Today it seems a little scary to walk in there. I think everyone is freaked out about what we told them. It's that and waiting for Gail that is keeping us from going in.

“Maybe we should go in without her,” I suggest. It's already dark and we can't stand here forever. I don't know why Gail is delaying but maybe something came up.

After about five minutes, we all gather the courage to go into the room. After we have searched and searched for the book Nontle says, “Please don't tell me these ashes are from the

grimoire. Lord, it is the book, I recognize the unburnt page pieces.”

“This is not good. Without that book, we don’t know what is wrong with Cassandra.”

Langa says, “I am more worried about who burnt this book. There is no way it went up in flames on its own.”

“Guys I am scared because this means someone out there knows what we did and knows that we want that book. What if we all go crazy like school crazy boy?” – Nontle.

“Can we please not overthink this? Maybe we should sit down with Cassandra and ask her how she feels. Maybe it’s me who was overthinking things,” I say.

We all head out and go to Cassndra’s room but she is not there. So we wait for her in my room. While waiting, I receive a text message from one of the girls I attend class with telling me that Gail fell down the stairs and was rushed to the hospital. Unfortunately, she doesn’t know the hospital she is in. I tell everyone the news.

Jacob says, “We are haunted guys and bad things will happen to us until we go crazy like that crazy boy.”

“Or maybe she just fell down the stairs and it was an accident. Can we all please think positive?” I say. I don’t want to overthink all this because I feel like I will lose my mind

“I think we should call in a night, I need some air to process everything,” Langa leaves first. Jacob follows in a while and eventually Nontle also leaves. I wonder where Cassandra disappeared to but I will talk to her tomorrow.

CASSANDRA

I couldn't find Jayden so I decided to go to the hospital to check on Gail but the doctors are still checking her out and they wouldn't tell me what is wrong with her since I am not family. I hope she gets better.

I get into my room and lie on the bed. Why do I feel like I am lying on something? I check what it is and it's newspapers, very old newspapers. Did I bring these in? I start going through them and they are articles about a girl that was found dead in 1996. She was found dead in her dorm. The doctors couldn't find the cause of her death. I keep going through the newspapers and it's reports about school children claiming that the school is haunted. It's the same university I am in.

A year later the group that claimed the school is haunted, started doing crazy stuff and hurting themselves. It was a group of two girls and three boys, it turns out they were also friends with the girl that died in 1996. All this is confusing me. I don't know why or how I brought this to my room but it's confusing me.



Does it mean this school is haunted? I am just going to sleep and I will deal with this tomorrow and show the others these newspapers. Before I go to bed, I put up my camera and put it on record. I will do this until I find out what is wrong with me. I close my eyes and drift to sleep.

The first thing I do when I wake up is check the recording. It's fine, nothing unusual. Is it maybe because I am trying too hard to find out what is wrong?

## JAYDEN

This is not what I expected my year to be like. I thought this year was going to be different. It is different but not the different I wanted. My friends and I had made a deal to do better in school, we made a deal to pull up our stockings when it came to our school work but at the same time not forgetting to have fun. May I say this is not fun. Having to think about what will happen next. Having to worry if the stories we have been hearing are true. Not forgetting how we might never know what that thing we did the other day is.

I don't believe in these kinds of things but I am starting to. What if the school is really haunted? What if we unleashed something that day in that dorm? I don't believe in these kinds of things but what if it's not only in the movies? What if we accidentally cursed ourselves? I swear I tossed and turned the whole night, bombarding myself with questions.

After my shower, I get dressed and go to Cassandra's room. We created a group chat last night and agreed to go and see Gail at the hospital. Cassandra is not in the group chat because we don't have her phone number but I will add her today.

"Hey," Cassandra greets with a smile after opening the door.

"Hey, are you going to class?"

She nods, "Yeah on my way there. Did you hear about Gail? I tried looking for you and couldn't find you."

"Yeah, actually me and the team are going to see her. We would have told you but I couldn't find you last night."

She answers, "That's why we should have each other's phone numbers. It's easier to look for each other like that and of course, we can chat. If you want to chat I mean if you don't want it's also okay."

"Relax, I understand what you mean."

"You can give me your number or I can give you mine. I don't mind both are fine with me. Gosh, I am being weird again," she covers her face with her palms.

I love it when she gets nervous. I take out my phone, "Give me your number and I will text you, I will also add you to our WhatsApp group since we are all (clears throat) friends."

She calls out her phone numbers. I save it and send her a hi so she can save mine then also add her to the group chat. She insists on joining us as we go to see Gail. The ride to the hospital is very awkward. I think the rest of the team is still freaked out about what happened and what we told them.

I am sitting at the front with Cassandra and the other three are at the back. We are using Jacob's car. He got it as a university gift from his uncle. The rest of us don't own cars.

Cassandra clears her throat, "You guys are quiet today."

"We are just worried about Gail," Nontle answers, almost whispering.

"She will be fine, let's not worry too much."

Jacob mumbles, "Easy for you to say."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Cassandra asks.

I answer, "Can we just stay positive until we see Gail?"

Right now we need to stick together and stay positive. We cannot afford to turn on each other. We all did this even though we have a feeling Cassandra is the most affected since she fainted afterward and is the only one who chanted those words. We do not even remember the words, maybe if we did, we were going to google what they mean.

We get to the hospital just in time for visiting hours. We didn't know what to bring for Gail so we brought a fruit basket. I whisper to Cassie who is walking behind everyone, "Are you okay?"

"I don't like hospitals."

I answer, "We won't stay long, I promise."

She bites her lower lip and picks up her pace walking ahead. Don't tell me that made her blush. Does that also mean that

she feels something for me and it's safe for me to make a move? I catch up with her and we both walk into the room where Gail is. We find her talking to the others.

The smile on her face disappears when she sees us. From the looks of it, she broke her neck and arm. "What is she doing here? Why is Cassandra here?"

Cassandra looks at me then back at Gail, "Uhm...I am here to see you."

"You mean see if I am not dead."

Jacob says, "Gail come on, she is here to see you."

"See me when she is the reason I am here. Cassandra is the one who pushed me down the stairs." – Gail.

Cassandra answers, "Gail I found you already unconscious."

"I can't believe you are going to stand there and deny it. I was on my way to meet up with everyone then I bumped into you. We went separate ways but you followed me and I saw you before I went down those stairs," says Gail.

"Gail I didn't even see any of you yesterday, I only saw Jayden after classes

Advertisement

" answers Cassandra.

“Jayden please take her out,” Gail requests.

I politely ask Cassandra to go out. I offer to go with her. I am not taking sides but if that is what Gail wants, we cannot afford to cause a scene here.

“Jayden I didn’t do it, please tell me you believe me. I would never do that to Gail. I would never do that to anyone,” she says as we sit by the benches.

I don’t know who to believe. I want to believe her but I also know Gail and there is no way she just made that up. I say, “What do you remember about yesterday?”

“I remember leaving for class and then...I saw Kairo wait was that the same day? I don’t know, these days I forget stuff.”

I ask, “Do you remember asking me to buy food for you?”

“Why would I ask you to buy food for me? My UberEats works fine.”

This confirms it, I am not overthinking things. I don’t know what to say to Cassandra but I need to talk to Nontle first before I conclude. In fact, I have to talk to the whole team. I look at Cassandra who has been covering her face for a while now. Is she crying or she is just thinking?

“I have to check on Gail,” I say and she removes her hands from her eyes and looks around.

“Are we at the hospital? I hate hospitals.”

“Yeah, you already mentioned,” I answer, “Let me check on Gail.”

“I am leaving... tell Gail I send my wishes.”

“Cassandra wait,” I hold her hand so she doesn’t walk away, “Don’t you want to apologize or try to talk to Gail.”

“I just want to be out of this horrible place. Call me if there is any news about Gail or if she remembers anything about her accident,” she walks away.

Did she just say and do that? I head back to Gail’s room. I hope I am not late and visiting hours are not over. Soon after I walk into the room Gail asks, “Is she gone?”

“Yeah, she says she doesn’t like hospitals.”

“You do believe me, right?” Gail asks.

I nod, “I do believe you and I also believe Cassandra when she says she didn’t see you yesterday. Before you say anything let me explain. When Cassandra is around me, she gets nervous and shy. She says things that don't make sense but in a cute way. Recently she has episodes where she is bold and flirty which is unlike her. This might sound crazy but I think Cassandra was possessed by something that day. I swear it is as if she has two personalities.”

Gails rolls her eyes, "You are just defending her."

"Gail you are my friend and you know I care about you."

She says, "But you like Cassandra."

"I am not denying that but I am also saying that sometimes she is not herself."

Nontle says, "Prove it."

Why are they making this hard for me? How do I prove it to them when I am also still putting two and two? I take out my phone and call Cassandra with it on speaker.

Cassie: I was just with you, why are you calling me?

Me: I just talked to Gail and she cannot remember what happened or how she fell down the stairs.

Cassie: I see...

Me: She is also asking why you didn't come see her.

Cassie: Please tell her that I did come to the hospital but got sick and left. Make up a lie.

Me: You want me to lie to your best friend? You and Gail are best friends, right?

Cassie: Look I have to get somewhere. Just tell her you couldn't reach me.



Me: Okay then, see you later?

Cassie: Yeah, sure.

I hang up and say, "Do you see what I mean? She is just replying randomly."

"It's like she didn't even see Gail today or she is clueless about what you are saying," says Nontle.

Jacob says, "I am very confused right now. What are you saying?"

"I think the person we were with here is Cassandra and the person I was talking to now is whatever possessed her that night when she chanted those words."

"Time out, I need some air really this sounds insane," Langa leaves the room.

## ATHENA

I won't even hide it, Cassandra's friends annoy me sometimes. I just want to fully take over this body and move to another place. I don't care about Cassandra or her life. Next time she will learn never to do things that she doesn't know anything about. That is if there will be a next time. I don't know what will happen to Cassandra's soul when I fully take over but I am sure Kairo has all the answers I seek.

As for Gail, I don't care whether she remembers or not either way, Cassandra will be to blame for everything. If she remembers who pushed her down the stairs then Cassandra and her reputation will be ruined. I really don't care about anything right now. Well, maybe I will start caring when this body is fully mine. For now, I will just sit back and enjoy the show.

Things have changed around here since 1996. I don't even know my way back to the school from the hospital. Luckily, I asked around and got help. Taxis are very expensive now. Lord, why is it so expensive? Things were much cheaper in 1996. Thank God, my friend Cassandra has some cash in her bag.

Now that I am going through her bag, I am realizing that she has her ID and I should have just checked it instead of

bothering Kairo. Still, I have to bother him since his father is no longer around. In other words, I am channeling all the anger I have for his father to him. Kennedy was my boyfriend back in 1996 and that night before the school dance, we fought. I am angry that I didn't get to give him a piece of my mind.

I roll my eyes when Cassandra's phone vibrates. Why is her phone so busy? Unfortunately, I don't know her password and I don't know how to work the 2023 phones. I only know how to answer calls. Sanele won't stop calling. Who is this person anyway? Is he her family? Cassandra will deal with her family and school when she is herself. I don't have time for this.

About thirty minutes later, I am at the school. Gosh, I am so hungry. Is this girl on a hunger strike? Why am I always hungry? The phone rings again and I decline the call. Why won't this Sanele person stop calling? I decline the call and continue walking.

"Ignoring my calls?" a male voice startles me.

"I am not..." Whoa, he's handsome. Is this the Sanele that has been calling? I should have answered quickly. So Jayden is not Cassandra's boyfriend meaning this one is, right? Can he please be her boyfriend? I would love to kiss those lips. "Hey."

"So you make me drive all the way here only to ignore my calls?"

I answer, "Rough day, my friend is at the hospital."

"What happened."

"She fell down the stairs, poor Gail," I reply.

"I hope she gets better. So have you thought about what car you want to buy?"

I want to buy a car. Can Cassandra afford a car or he is the one paying? Did they discuss this? I don't want to say the wrong thing, "Uhm...how about we choose together."

"Sure, do you have your ID and the money."

The money? So Cassandra is paying...I don't know anything about any money, "Today has been a long day. Can we do it tomorrow? I am sorry for wasting your time."

"You can never waste my time. I will call you tomorrow and I have a girlfriend around here so more reasons to stick around."

So he is not Cassandra's boyfriend. Bummer, he's cute, "And I thought you came for me."

"You know I came for you."

"Do you want something to drink maybe?" I ask and he shakes his head turning me down.

"We will catch up tomorrow."

"No problem. See you around then," I answer wearing a smile.

“Are you okay? You don’t sound yourself today.”

I sigh, “I am just worried about my friend and you know school is hectic.”

“Everything will be fine, one thing at a time.”

I answer

Advertisement

“Yeah, everything will be fine.”

“Any word from Sebastian? He ignores my calls these days.”

I don’t know who Sebatsina is but I answer, “I haven’t heard from him but maybe he is busy.”

He hugs me goodbye and then leaves. I smell like him. I think I have a new crush. What is Cassandra doing with Jayden when she has someone this handsome?

SEBASTIAN

The tour has been nothing but amazing, When Emily first mentioned it, I wasn’t really on board. I mean I am famous in South Africa but I didn’t know I am famous internationally and that so many people know me and they know my music. It has been nothing but a blessing to travel from country to country. Perform to new people and find out something interesting about every country I visit.

I won't lie I miss home. I miss my friends, I miss my house and I miss my bed. I definitely do not miss Sanele. He is annoying and won't stop calling me. I asked him to come on tour with me and he said he didn't want to be the third wheel. Rita is also here and makes all this fun. She and I are now official.

"Your brother is calling," Rita walks into the bathroom. It's midnight and I am in the bathtub. The concert ended at ten pm so Rita and I are back at the hotel.

"Tell him I died."

"Come on just talk to him, maybe he misses you," she says.

"Sanele missing me? I wish."

Rita answers the phone and says, 'Hey Sanele. He is bathing but you can talk to him.'

ON THE PHONE

Sanele: Just to be clear, I also don't want to talk to you.

Me: Then why are you calling?

Sanele: It's Cassandra, she doesn't seem herself and I am worried.

Me: Maybe you are bored and thinking too much about it. And, what makes you say that?

Sanele: I don't know but something is off about her.

Me: Maybe it's her parents. Try talking to her and see if she will open up

Sanele: I will do that. Are you enjoying your tour?

Me: Sanele it's midnight and I am in the bathtub. We will talk tomorrow. Sanele: Fine, pretend you don't miss me. Bye!

Me: I do miss you brother and take care of our child. I better hear good news when you call back.

I wonder what is happening with Cassandra. Being far away from her makes it very hard to reach out to her. I also noticed that she hasn't been answering my calls and doesn't call back. That is unlike her. Cassandra usually talks to me all the time.

ATHENA

"I hope you are dressed," I barge into Kairo's room. My eyes are closed though. I wouldn't want to see things I shouldn't see.

"Normal people knock before walking into other people's rooms."

"You are talking to a person who is in another person's body. Again, past normal," I sit on his bed, "Tell me you have good news." "I don't have anything."

"Then ask your dead father or the spirits that you see," I yell.

“Athena, what do you want me to do? I didn’t even know this was possible until it happened to you.”

“Now you know and you have to help me find a way to take over this body,” I say.

“What about Cassandra? She is such a nice soul for her life to be destroyed just like that.”

I look at him, “Since when are you friends with her?”

“I am not, I swear.” “As I was saying, help me find a way to take over this body permanently.” I want to have full control of this body then I can decide if I want to live Cassandra’s life or not.

“What if we find your body and put you in your body?”

I roll my eyes, “I died in 1996, do the math.”

“Or put you in someone else’s body.”

I stand up and walk to him, “Do you have a thing for Cassandra?”

“No, why would you ask that and I am the crazy boy of the school. I am sure girls want normal boys.”

I say, “Just checking and how do you think I can take over this body or take over someone else’s body?”

“I think the grimoire will have the answers we seek.”

“Yeah about that, I burnt it.”



ATHENA

“You burnt it?”

There is no need for him to look at me like that. I had my reasons. I am sure Kairo would have done the same if he was in my position. I was just doing what I thought was best for me. In my defense, he wasn't going to be able to read the book anyway. I couldn't read it meaning no one else could read it. I wonder how Cassandra was able to read it. Maybe more people are involved in this than I imagine.

“Athena tell me you are joking?” Kairo asks.

“I burnt it. I didn't want it to be used against me.”

He says, “You do know that the same book was also going to work to your advantage. If you want to permanently take over then you need it.”

“I didn't think that far okay, give me a break.”

He mumbles, “Trust me I am trying but you are starting to be a pain in my life.”

“Don't speak to me like that. I am here because of your father. I had a bright future ahead of me.”

“My father!” he yells. What is wrong with him today? “My father not me. If you want my help then you should be a little nicer to me. From the looks of it, you need me more than I need you. I was fine with my crazy life until you showed up.”

“Fine. I will be nicer, sorry.”

Why is he being like this? I hope he didn’t talk to Cassandra or he planning something behind my back. He says, “We need to find another grimoire, that is if there is another one.”

“Sure, where do we start looking?”

He answers, “The only place I can think of right now is the haunted dorms. Maybe there is a copy or something that can help us with answers.”

“Fine, when do we do it?”

“Tomorrow night,” he says, “I will help you only if you promise not to ruin Cassandra’s life. Promise you will not ruin her life.”

I want to roll my eyes badly. I can do whatever I want.

“Whatever!”

“Promise me Athena or the deal is over. I won’t help you if you are going to cause trouble.”

I want to take over this child’s life. Doesn’t that count as causing trouble? Anything to get him off my case so I answer, “I give you my word.”

“See you tomorrow then.”

After talking to Kairo I head to my room. I don't promise to be good but I won't ruin Cassandra's life either. I will try to behave as much as I can but if anyone comes at me, I won't hesitate to act. I find Jayden waiting for me by my door. He is also annoying.

I smile, “Hey, you.”

“Hey, you are ignoring my messages.”

I don't know how to unlock or work this phone, “I have been busy, is it about Gail?”

“Why don't you check your messages first?”

I clear my throat, “I will check later. I am here, tell me.”

“I think you should check your phone.”

“I don't have it,” I answer and it rings. Stupid phone. I take it out and decline Zoey's call whoever that is. I try Cassandra's birthday and it doesn't unlock.

“You don't know your password?”

He is being pushy and I don't like it. If he continues, he might end up at the bottom of the stairs but won't live to tell the tale. I say, “Jayden I am tired, see you tomorrow.”

“Sure

Advertisement

goodnight.”

I get into the room and lock the door. I go through the newspapers I got from Kairo. Does this mean my soul has been roaming around since 1996? I still cannot believe my friends killed me. The last time I checked we were fine. Since Kennedy is dead, I wonder if they all died. I will ask Kairo to look into it.

Why do Cassandra’s people call more than once? Zoey now won’t stop calling and I won’t answer it. Maybe I should ignore all calls. From Zoey, her mother starts calling. Maybe they are worried about her. I clear my throat and answer.

Me: Hello.

Cassie’s mother: Are you okay? Why are you not replying to our messages? Cassie, you are worrying us.

Me: I am fine, don’t worry about me.

Cassie’s mother: Maybe if you talked to us and answered your phone, we wouldn’t be so worried.

Me: You don’t have to worry. I am fine, I promise.

Cassie’s mother: Can you come home this weekend?

Me: I will see.

Cassie's mother: Baby are you okay? You don't sound happy or fine.

Me: I am fine, I promise. You know I would tell you if something was wrong.

Cassie's mother: I will keep you in my prayers.

Me: Thank you. I was studying...

Cassie's mother: Sure you can get back to it. I love you!

Me: I love you too, Mom.

The line goes dead and I feel a warm liquid on my face. No, no, these people don't mean anything to me. I will not let emotions that are not even mine take over. This is my second chance at life after I was killed by people I trust. In my defense, I didn't ask for this. Cassandra invited me in. I didn't forcefully possess her.

CASSANDRA

My morning alarm wakes me up. I check the date and it is the following day. Why is this happening to me? I last remember being at the hospital. I want to pray but I am exhausted. Why has God forsaken me like this? Why is my life like this? I have been good and doing everything right.

As tired as I feel, I drag myself to the bathroom. I need to be ready for classes. I have a feeling I am going to fail. I don't

remember anything I have learnt since I got here. I check my messages when having breakfast. Sanele says we will meet at noon to go buy the car. I need this car to go home and tell my father what is going on.

'You good?' a text message from Jayden.

'I am good and you?'

'Do you have a second?' – Jayden.

'My class starts in an hour.'

I hear a knock on the door and when I check who it is, it is Jayden, "How are you?"

"I feel exhausted. I am tired of this, Jayden."

"I'm sorry. I just came to check if you are you again," he says.

"What do you mean?"

He answers, "You don't black out...well you do but when you black out another spirit if I can call it that takes over and walks around as you."

"What?"

He says, "As crazy as it sounds it's true."

"So you are telling me that Gail could be right that I pushed her down the stairs? What if I hurt someone else?"

He answers, "It's not you and we would have answers to your questions if we had the grimoire."

"Where is it?"

"We think someone burnt it," he replies.

"Oh my God! So you are telling me that this is how my life will be from now on? Blacking out and someone else taking over? What if they fully take over? What is going to happen to me?"

He shakes his head, "I don't know. Without the grimoire, we are in the dark."

"I can't believe this is happening to me."

He holds my hand and squeezes it, "We are going to fix it."

"How? How are you going to fix it without the grimoire?"

I should have followed my instincts. I shouldn't have followed them into that dorm. Jayden tells me that he is leaving for class and I stay in my room. I am no longer in the mood to go to class. What is the use? Whatever possessed me is going to take over. Might as well sit here and wait for it to do so. Did it have to be me of all people? Sanele comes to get me around noon and I put on the best act. I don't want him to worry about me. If I have a car then I can go home. I know my father will fix everything.

"Cassandra you know you can talk to me," says Sanele.

“I am fine.”

“You are not fine, something is bothering you. You can talk to me,” he holds my hand.

“I don’t want to talk about it, not yet.”



## CASSANDRA

Thank God, Sanele doesn't push too hard. He respects my decision when I tell him that I am not ready to talk about it. I can tell he has a lot of questions but I will answer all his questions when I have talked to my father. I know my father will help me with this. I just need to go home and talk to him. Tomorrow is Saturday so that is when I will go home.

I have to tell Kairo that our Sunday plans might change. I now have a car and I want to go home first thing tomorrow morning, that is if that spirit doesn't take over. I wonder whose spirit it is and why me of all people. Maybe it is because I chanted the words but Nontle did the same, why wasn't she affected?

Well, overthinking about it won't do anything. I just have to go home and talk to my father. I cannot believe I am not even excited that I bought a car. This is my first car, that I bought with my hard-earned money. I should be proud of myself. This is the day I should be celebrating with my friends but here I am, worried about some spirit.

I hope Sanele doesn't tell my sister about this. I wouldn't want her to be worried. I am not planning on keeping this from my family but I want to talk to my father first then I can decide on everything else.

“Oh my God! We have to stop meeting like this,” I say when I bump into Kairo. I just parted ways with Sanele and now I am heading to my room.

“Cassandra, right?”

“Why do you always ask that? Of course, it’s me, who else would it be?” I say.

“I wouldn’t want to get your name wrong. I am crazy after all.”

I answer, “Don’t say that about yourself. You get what you confess with your mouth.”

“Right...I am just a normal boy like any other.”

I smile, “There you go. You are just going through a season but that doesn’t mean you are crazy.”

“I am glad you see more to me than my crazy side.”

“Hey, who am I to judge? I am glad I ran into you. I am leaving for home tomorrow so if you don’t mind, can we leave tomorrow?” I say.

“What will your parents say about you bringing a boy home, a crazy one for that matter?”

I reply, “Stop saying you are crazy, I don’t believe that and my parents know that I wouldn’t dare bring a boyfriend to the house. If I bring a boy, they know he is a friend.”

“Friend? Is that what we are now?”

I nod, “If we have talked more than twice then we are friends.”

“Okay then see you tomorrow, is it still morning?”

“Yes, let’s make it ten am since we are not in a rush,” I say.

“Are you okay, if you don’t mind me asking? You seem not okay if that makes sense.”

“I am fine, it’s one of those days where everything is just a little too much,” I reply.

“If you want to talk to a crazy friend, I am here. I can listen and not judge.”

I chuckle, “I will keep that in mind, see you tomorrow.”

I head to my room. I don’t know why everyone thinks Kairo is crazy. He seems fine. Well, he is fine when one talks to him – maybe no one has ever tried talking to him. Jayden is waiting for me outside my room. Poor him, I am sure he is very worried about me. I am just glad that my friends didn’t turn their backs on me.

“Hey,” he hugs me. Gosh, I needed this hug. It’s funny how a simple thing such as a hug from the right person can make your day

Advertisement

“How are you feeling?”

“Honestly, I don’t know how to feel anymore.”

“I ordered you some Chinese food, I hope you love Chinese food,” he says with a smile.

“I can eat anything and they say one never knows whether they like something until they try it.”

He leads me to his room, “Do you want to watch a movie while you eat.”

“Jayden what is all this?”

He answers, “It’s me cheering you up.”

“What if the other spirit takes over while we are here?”

“What if it doesn’t? I also think I now can tell if you are no longer you,” he helps me sit on the carpet, switches on his laptop, and then gives me my food. The food smells amazing. We are watching Beautiful Disaster – the movie.

For the first time since we went to those haunted dorms, I relax and be a normal girl who is in varsity and with the boy she likes. I look away every time then kiss or do anything erotic.

“You good?” Jayden asks and I nod, “If you are not comfortable, I can turn it off. I am sorry if you do not like these kinds of movies. It’s still new and I figured you might want to watch it.”

“It’s a nice movie, I swear...” it’s a nice movie that is getting me aroused. I am with a boy that I like and all I can think about is wanting him to kiss me. Then I am scared that he might try to kiss me and the other soul/spirit takes over and I don’t get to remember my first kiss.

“Then what is wrong?”

I answer, “Nothing is wrong.”

He places his hand on my chin and makes me face him, “You can talk to me.”

“I love this and I am enjoying this. I am just scared that I might end up not remembering it if the...”

“Shhhh,” he places his finger on my lips, “But you are you now, let’s cherish the moments when you are still you.”

“Okay.”

He cups my face and shifts closer, “Since you are still you, I hope you don’t mind if I do this.”

He kisses me.

SEBASTIAN

Today has been a long day. I wasn’t performing but I was on my feet all day. Rita dragged me around the city so she can shop. I can never understand how women cannot do a simple thing as

choose the right dress they want. We are in Cameroon and still have more countries to tour. I don't want to lie my body cannot take it anymore. I have never done a world tour before and I don't know why Emily didn't mention it earlier.

"Love, do you want to join me for a shower?" says Rita.

"I will be with you in a second."

She kisses me and heads to the bathroom. I take off my jacket and shoes. Just when I am about to exit the room, my phone rings and it's Sanele. This has to be about Cassandra so I can't miss it.

Me: Hello, brother!

Sanele: She is not okay, something is bothering her. She won't talk to me and I tried not to push too hard.

Me: Do you think it's school or a boy?

Sanele: I think it's something bigger than that. If there is anyone who can make her open up, it's you. I think you should call her.

Me: If it's big then I need to talk to her in person. I doubt she will say anything on the phone.

Sanele: You are not even in South Africa, how will you do that?

Me: I can always come back home.

Sanele: What about your tour?

Me: I am tired Sanele. I need to catch my breath and I will use this as an excuse.

Sanele: Emily will not be happy to hear this.

Me: I will handle Emily don't worry. See you soon, brother.

I hang up and take off my shirt, ready to join Rita but see her coming out of the bathroom, "I was coming."

"I am sure you were, who was that?"

I answer, "That was Sanele. Something is wrong with Cassandra so we have to go back home."

"You want to cancel your tour for her?"

"I need this break and Cassandra needs me," I say.

"Sebastian you do remember that you and this girl are not even related, right? You can't put your career on hold because of her."

"We are not having this conversation and Cassandra is family to me whether related or not. We are going home and if you want to stay here then it's your choice. I am going to shower," I kiss her on the cheek and head to the bathroom.

CASSANDRA

“Still you?” Jayden asks causing me to chuckle. I don’t think if it wasn’t me the other person would say so. I think they would just play along. I have to admit, today has been fun. It has been great getting to know Jayden and getting to know more about him than his pretty face. I love how calm is he when he talks and I love that he doesn’t brag and.... I swear I love everything about this boy.

Did I say, love? I think I love him. He is such a nice boy and he is everything I have ever wanted in a boy. I have never had a boyfriend in my life but I know what I want in a man/boy. Jayden is what I want. I know not everyone ends up with their first boyfriend but for now, he is the one I want.

Moments like these remind me of Frankie. I would have loved to tell him about my first kiss. I would have loved to tell him about Jayden and how he makes me feel. But hey, I still have Mary and I cannot wait to tell her all the details – that is if I get the chance.

“Do you need anything to drink maybe?”

“I am fine, Jayden,” I answer. I don’t want anything. I just want a few more moments in his arms. That is all that I want right now.



“I have to check if my woman is still fine.”

I sit up so I can look at him, “Your woman? Is that what I am now?”

“I mean I wouldn’t have kissed you if I wanted us to stay friends. Or maybe you want us to stay friends?”

I answer, “No! You just caught me by surprise. I want this...I want to be with you.”

“So you are officially my girlfriend?”

I bite my lower lip, look down, and nod, “I guess I am.”

He leans and kisses me. Does it always feel so magical when kissing a boy? I have read about it but I never thought it felt so good. I thought it was gross whenever I thought about it or maybe it was because I had not yet found a boy I wanted to kiss.

I am also surprised at how I haven’t bitten his lip. I have never kissed someone before and I wasn’t sure how I would do.

Jayden whispers, “Are you sure this is your first time kissing a boy?”

“Why? Am I doing it wrong?”

He laughs, “You are perfect, this is perfect.”

“You are just making fun of me, I see.”

He pecks me on the lips, “You are a great kisser, trust me.”

“I want to ask something, are you sure you want to date me, with my situation? I would understand if you want to wait until I fix everything.”

He takes my hands and says, “We will go through it together.”

“I don’t want...”

He shuts me up with a kiss, “We will go through it together. I know it’s not going to be easy but I promise to be by your side always.”

“Don’t you think it’s too early to start making promises?”

He answers, “It’s never too early. I will be with you and help you get through this.”

“Thank you and it’s getting late. I should go to bed.”

He checks the time on his phone and it’s now past eleven. Time flies when one is having fun. He walks me to my room and kisses me goodnight. I also tell him that I am going home and mention my travel buddy.

“You are going with the crazy boy?” Jayden asks.

“His name is Kairo and I invited him to church.”

“Okay, but what if he does something crazy like attack you?” he asks.

“He is not crazy, trust me. I have talked to him more than once. He is just going through something and I think he might get the healing he needs at church.”

He sighs, “You are too kind but I trust you will be fine.”

“I would invite you to tag along but I think my father would pick up that you are my boyfriend at first glance. Let me go home and try to fix my situation then I will come back fine and enjoy my year peacefully.”

“Okay,” he kisses me and waits for me to get into my room. I lock the door and change into my pajamas. I am surprised I haven’t blacked out yet. I say my night prayer before getting in bed. I send my mother a text message telling her that I will be coming home. To my surprise, she is still awake. She tells me that she cannot wait to see me. I will tell her about the car when I get home, right now I need to rest.

My morning alarm wakes me up. I am glad I am still me. I have never been so excited to see myself in the mirror. I just pray that this spirit doesn’t take over at least until I reach home. I check my messages and I have a ‘Good morning, babe.’ text message.

I giggle by myself before replying to it. I almost forgot that I am someone’s girlfriend now. I reply to Jayden and tell him that I am going to get ready and then I will see him before I go. I told

my mother that I am bringing a guest and told her about Kairo's condition. I wouldn't want them to make him feel uncomfortable.

Around nine pm I am ready to see Jayden before I leave. I don't have Kairo's phone number and I don't know if he owns a phone but I have to make sure that I am where I said we should meet by ten on the dot.

"I am going to miss you," Jayden hugs me.

"It's only for today and tomorrow then I will be back. I will also miss you."

He kisses me on the forehead, "Travel safe. What's your means of transport by the way?"

I show him the car keys

Advertisement

"I bought a car yesterday."

"Sometimes I forget you are famous and loaded."

"I am just Cassandra. See you tomorrow," I kiss him on the cheek.

"Now that we are dating should we tell the others?"

“Send a text message to the group chat and switch off your phone,” I say and we both laugh, “I will tell the girls and you tell the boys.”

“Sounds like a great idea, Travel safe.”

I find Kairo already waiting for me. Honestly, I don't know why people say he is crazy. This boy also cleans up well. He offers to help me with my bag as we walk to the car, he is also a gentleman.

“Nice car,” says Kairo, “Who does it belong to?”

“It's mine. I bought it yesterday.”

“Congratulations. But then why were you sad yesterday after buying a car?” he asks. I cannot blab my business to him so I answer.

“I am currently going through something. You clean up good by the way.”

He answers, “I am going to church, have to look the part.”

“Why do people say you are crazy if you don't mind me asking?”

I know it sounds crazy asking a crazy person if they are crazy but I want to hear it from him. I want to hear his side. He answers, “I see things that other people cannot. When people see me they think that I would be talking to myself but I would

be talking to other people. Of course, I am the only one that can see them. It's a curse that I was born with."

"Maybe it's a gift."

He shakes his head, "If it was a gift then my mother wouldn't have abandoned me because of it."

"I am sorry about that."

"I'm sorry for ruining the mood. I didn't mean to bring up my sad past," he says.

"It's okay...sometimes it's good to talk about it. For the record, you are not crazy in my eyes. You are just someone with a gift that not everyone understands. There is nothing wrong with being different."

He replies, "You have a good heart, Cassandra."

"Maybe it's because I am a P.K."

He chuckles, "I think it's who you are, who you truly are."

"Are you trying to make me blush Kairo?"

"I could never, I mean look at you and look at me," he says.

"Hey don't say that, we are both people and equal."

He shakes his head, "At the end of the day we are not and you know it. You are pretty, have a family that supports you, and

have a successful career. We are not equals, you are famous and I am crazy.”

“I don’t care what you say, we are equals.”

“And you just have a good heart,” he replies.

“Let’s get you some food, you must be hungry that’s why you're talking like this. My treat!”

He laughs, “See, you have a good heart.”

ATHENA

“Oh my God!” I scream and the car just loses control. I look next to me and there is Kairo. I have so many questions but now is not the time. “Kairo I don’t know how to drive!”

“Step on the brakes!”

“Which one is the brake?!”

## ATHENA

My heart is pounding so fast I feel like it's going to burst. For a second my life flashed before my eyes. Everything happened so fast but thank God I managed to stop the car with Kairo's help. I don't know why Kairo is here but I am glad it is him and that he helped me stop this car. I can imagine if it was someone else that is not him. How was I going to explain that one moment I was driving and then the next I can't?

Kairo and I have been parked on the side of the road for some time now and we are just processing everything that just happened. I think we are still in shock. Well, I don't know about him but I am. The way the car lost control just freaked me out. I am surprised I am still in the driver's seat because my legs are shaking.

"Are you okay?" Kairo asks.

Hell, I am not okay. I almost died. It's a miracle I didn't crash into other cars on the road. "Where are you and Cassandra going and since when are you two friends?"

"She invited me to church."

I look at him. Church? Oh, she is a Preacher's Kid by the way, "You could have said no."



“And you could be alone right now and maybe could have died on the road.”

He has a point but why is he friends with Cassandra? He is supposed to be on my side, “So you two are friends now? Aren’t you supposed to be on my side?”

“I am on no one's side and you are definitely not my friend. Not after all those threats you have thrown at me.”

I am going to pretend I didn’t hear that, “So what now?”

“You tell me, you are the one that knew where we were going or should I say, Cassandra.”

“How great for all of us,” I say and look around. I have no idea where we are and I have no idea where Cassandra lives, “Can you drive? We should head back to the school.”

“The last time I checked, they don’t give licenses to crazy people so we are stuck here.”

“Great!” I get out of the car and kick the tires. We cannot just be stuck here, we have to do something. I get back in the car, “Why are you so relaxed?”

“What do you want me to do, Athena? Freaking out will not help with anything.”

“Let’s go back to the school?” I say, “Let’s lock the car and head back to school.”

“Cassandra and I have been on the road for a while now, trust me where we were going is nearer than going back to the school.”

I sigh, “So what now? Can we not call someone else to pick us up?”

“I don’t have any friends and if you leave this car here it could get stolen.”

I answer, “I don’t care about the car. We can’t sit here forever.”

“We can sit here until Cassandra take over or you can just sleep and let her come out.”

“You know I have no control over all this,” I say. Why is he being so rude?

“Then let’s wait.”

I say, “Do you have something to eat?”

“Cassie packed some snacks, they are in the back seat.”

I reach for the plastic bag in the back seat. There’s some lays and juice. Does this Cassandra girl ever eat because I am always hungry when I am her? I say to Kairo, “Any luck finding the grimoire?”

“Zero!”

“Are you even looking?” I ask. From the looks of it, he is enjoying spending time with Cassandra.

“Yes, Athena. I am looking.”

I am sure he is looking for a way to get rid of me. He has made it clear that he doesn't like me. I don't like him either. His face reminds me of his father and his father is the reason I am dead. I wish I remembered how I died. How did I end up dead? Everything seemed fine that night. Putting aside that Kennedy and I fought, we seemed to be having a great time. Where did it all go wrong? Cassandra's phone rings and it's Jayden.

“Should I answer it?” I ask Kairo.

“I don't know.”

“Don't give me attitude

Advertisement

Kairo,” I say and he takes the phone from my hand, answers it, and hands it back. I am so going to pinch him for this.

ON THE PHONE

Me: Hey!

Jayden: Are you home yet?

Me: Not yet, I stopped for something.

Jayden: I see, call me when you get home and travel safe.

Me: I will.

Jayden: I miss you already...

Me: (clears throat) I...I miss you too. Listen I have to go and I will call you when I get home.

Jayden: Okay cool.

As soon as the line goes dead I ask Kairo, "Jayden and Casandra are now officially a couple?"

"How am I supposed to know?"

"Kairo is there anything you know?"

We stay in the car for a while – longer than I imagined. How long until Cassandra takes over? It has been five hours. I hate this.

"We should get some food," says Kairo getting out of the car.

I also get out of the car and Kairo helps me lock it. So he knows how to lock it and not drive it? Weird! He takes us where we get some food. I say, "This place is amazing, have you been here before?"

"No, I haven't been out of that school in forever."

I mumble, "I hope you don't start seems things while we are here. You did have your episodes while we were waiting in the car."

“Thank you for reminding me.”

“Can’t you ask one of your spirit friends to help us get back to the school?” I ask.

“It doesn’t work like that.”

I add, “Do you at least have money to buy us food?”

“I do, Athena. I wouldn’t have brought us here if I didn’t.”

I know I am asking a lot of questions but I ask, “Where do you get money if I may ask?”

“The same way I can afford to be at school. What do you want to eat?” I answer, “Anything that can fill me up.”

We get some food and then go around the shopping center. We have nothing else to do to kill time. Hours and hours go by and still, Cassandra hasn’t taken over. People won’t stop calling and it is driving me crazy. Jayden and Cassandra’s mother won’t stop calling the most. These people are so annoying.

“Why won’t they stop calling,” I decline the call from Cassandra’s mother.

“She is her mother and I am sure she is worried. It has been hours since Cassandra told her that she was almost there.”

I roll my eyes, “Well she is annoying me, and the password on this phone is driving me nuts.”

“We have been away from the car for too long we should go back.”

“Sure,” I say as we leave the shopping center. It is dark outside and close to eight pm. I am sick of this. We get to the car and just sit there. I am sick of being here and I am sick of Kairo. The phone rings again and Kairo tells me to answer it. I hate this...

Me: Mom!

Cassie’s mother: Why are you declining my calls?

Me: I was in the middle of something, sorry...

Cassie’s mother: Are you still coming, we have been waiting all day. Me: Yes, we just delayed on the road but we are on our way.

Cassie’s mother: Where are you so we can pick you up?

Me: No, don’t worry we are coming.

Cassie’s mother: It’s getting late and it’s not safe out there.

Me: We will be fine I promise. Something came up last minute and I had to perform somewhere. I promise we will be there in no time. Cassie’s mother: Fine but please be safe.

Me: Yes...see you soon.

“This is bad,” I say to Kairo.

“You are only realizing it now?”

CASSANDRA

“Are you okay?” Kairo asks.

The car is parked on the side of the road. I check the time on my phone and it is now ten pm. I have so many missed calls from my family and friends. I am sure everyone is very worried. I am sure Kairo is freaked out the most. I have been out for more than eleven hours and he had to deal with whatever spirit possessed me.

“Hey...I am fine, are you?”

He answers, “Yes... you don’t have to worry about me.”

“I am so sorry Kairo. I don’t even know how to start explaining everything,” I say.

“You can start the car and we continue with our journey. Your parents must be worried.”

I start the car, “Maybe we should turn the car around and go back to school. I have tortured you enough.”

“It’s okay, we can go.”

“I didn’t...I didn’t do anything crazy, right? I know it’s weird but I wasn’t myself the past hours. Gosh, I am so sorry. You must be

tired of being in the car and hungry. Should I get you some food? Are you sure you are okay?" I ask.

"I am fine, let's get you home. Are you okay to drive?"

I sigh, "No. If you can drive please do."

He tells me he can drive. We stop the car and swap. I open the map on my phone that is going to guide him. I really hope I didn't hurt him. I hope I didn't do anything crazy. What happened while I was blacked out? Why didn't he go back to school? What did he talk about with possessed me?

"Are you sure you are not hungry?" I ask him.

"Me and the other you ate before you became you again."

"The other me?" I ask, "You know there is another me?"

"Yes, and I know you have a lot of questions. What do you want to know?"

Does he know what has been happening to me? Did he know all along? Is he even crazy or was it all pretense? Is this even happening? Did he talk with the other me and he now knows something? I am sure they talked in the past hours I was out. They have to have talked. I have a lot of questions right now but I don't know where to start. The fact that I still haven't accepted that I am possessed makes everything seem crazy.

"Are you really crazy?"



He chuckles, “Of all the things you could have asked, you decided to go with that question?”

“I feel like I am also losing my mind. Maybe I am the crazy one.”

He says, “This is all just a lot for you, and one thing for sure, it will take time for you to adjust to everything.”

“I think I am possessed?” I say and before he can say anything my phone rings. It’s my mother.

Me: Mom we are almost there.

Mom: You said that hours ago, what is going on?

Me: I will explain everything when I get home, I promise.

Mom: You are worrying me, what is going on?

Me: A lot is going on Mom but I promise to tell you everything. I am still with Kairo.

Mom: Just get home, please. You are worrying me.

“We are here,” says Kairo. My parents are both waiting outside the house. I get out of the car and go to hug them. I cannot wait to tell them what is going on.

“Mom, Dad this is my friend Kairo. Kairo this is my Mom and Dad,” I say.

“Nice to meet you Mr and Mrs Ndlovu,” Kairo shakes hands with them.

Mother replies, "Nice to meet you too please come in."

Mother leads Kairo into the house leaving me with my Dad who asks, "Cassandra what is going on? What is happening to you?"

"I don't know! I don't even know how to make sense of everything. I feel like I am going to go crazy."

He hugs me, "You can tell me everything and we will fix it."

Mother calls us in and says it's best that we eat first and that maybe Kairo is tired and needs to rest. We eat and I am happy that they are nice to Kairo. After eating Mother insists on clearing the dishes. I show Kairo to Zoey's room.

"Don't mind the girly stuff, it is my sister's old room."

Kairo answers, "I don't mind at all."

"Let me talk to my parents while I still can. We will talk, maybe tomorrow."

"Goodnight, Cassandra. Your family is nice and welcoming

Advertisement

" he says.

"Goodnight, the bathroom is the room opposite this one."

I join my parents in the sitting room. I can tell they are anxious to know what is going on with me. I sit down and say,

"Something happened at the school."

“Are you pregnant?” Mother asks.

“No, I am not pregnant. My friends and I were playing around and I got possessed.”

They look at each other. Even I know that I sound crazy. Father asks, “Possessed by what? Cassandra, what are you saying?”

“I am possessed by a dead spirit, I think. I don’t know what is going on but there is someone else’s spirit inside my body.”

Mother says, “Baby you are not making any sense.”

“My friends and I were playing around, we found a grimoire, did a spell and I got possessed.”

“Possessed how and what is a grimoire?” Father asks.

“A grimoire is a book of spells. We unknowingly did a spell and I invited someone’s dead spirit into my body.”

I am confusing the old people. I wish they could understand everything I am saying but right now it’s hard. I know it sounds crazy. Where I come from a person is only possessed by an evil spirit that is probably sent by someone they know. I don’t think they even know what to do a spell is. I mean they don’t even know what a grimoire is.

Father takes my hand and says, “I have no idea what you are saying my child but if you feel something possessed you then we will pray for you and try our best to help you. The only

problem is that I haven't been shown anything in the spirit realm and even when I look at you nothing seems wrong. All I can do right now is pray for you."

I nod, "I understand."

"Whatever you are going through we will help you get through it and we will be here for you. We might not understand what it is but we will be here for you, I promise," says Father, and I nod. He and Mother pray for me and then we go to bed.

I can't sleep so I go to the room Kairo is in to check if he needs anything. I knock then let myself in, "Kairo?"

"Hey..."

"You are still up," I walk into the room and close the door.

"I haven't left the school in years so this is new to me and I am failing to fall asleep."

I sit on the far end of the bed, "My parents don't understand a thing and my father says he doesn't feel anything wrong with me."

"I don't blame them, it is a lot to take in. And it's understandable for your father not to see anything, you are his daughter, and usually a gift like his works for other people, more than family. Another thing, Athena is not an evil spirit, she is a roaming spirit that never found rest."

“Athena?” I ask, “Is that her name? You know her?”

“Sort of, it turns out my father was part of the screw that killed her back in 1996. I don’t know what happened but you invited her into your body.”

I say, “Nontle and... we were playing around and did some spell. So how do I get her out.”

“I don’t know but I think the grimoire has the answers we seek and also how to put Athena’s soul to rest.”

“The grimoire was burnt and how do you know all this?” I ask.

“I told you my father was friends with Athena and Athena’s restless spirit is the reason I have this curse.”

I sigh. I think I am going crazy, “So what will happen if Athena continues sharing this body with me?”

“I have a feeling she will fully take over. You are the one who willingly let her in and gave her access to your body. She is stuck in you.”

“So what will happen to me if she fully takes over?” I ask.

“I think you will just cease to exist. Not dead but...I think you will be like sleeping. I don’t know Cassandra the grimoire might help you more than me.”

“Just when I thought my life was going great then this happens,” I say.

“Think positive hey, maybe there is a way out. We might find another grimoire we just need to look into all this thoroughly.”

“We?” I ask, “You will help me?”

“Well, you are the only person who sees me as a friend so why not.”

15

(NOT EDITED)

CASSANDRA

Gospel music playing wakes me up. For a second I forgot I was home. I get out of bed and stretch myself. I don't know when Athena will take over but Kairo promised to help with everything. Speaking of Kairo, I am sure he is not used to so much noise in the morning. When Mother wakes up, she wants to wake up the whole house.

I need to check on my guest and see if he needs anything. I wouldn't want him to starve to death. I wash my face and brush my teeth before heading to the room that Kairo is in. I knock and wait to be invited in.

"You can come in!"

I slowly open the door, "Good morning! Are you up?"

"You can come in, Cassie. I am dressed."

I get in and close the door, "Was just making sure. How are you and are you hungry?"

"Are you always like this with your friends?"

I chuckle, "Not really...you just remind me of someone maybe that's why?"

“Boyfriend?”

“No, he was a friend. Jayden is my first boyfriend,” I answer.

“I see...”

“Come to the kitchen, I will make you something to eat. What do you eat in the morning, cereal or coffee? English breakfast maybe?” I ask and he laughs.

“I will have whatever you are having.”

“Okay then, I will let you do what you want to do then you will join me in the kitchen when ready,” I say before leaving the room.

I head to the kitchen and find Mother singing along to gospel music. She cooked a feast, that’s new, especially on a Sunday morning.

“You are in a good mood,” I say.

“I missed cooking. Your father hardly eats since he is always fasting and it’s not fun eating alone. Zoey won’t visit so it’s nice to have people to cook for.”

“I missed your food, do you need help?” I ask tasting the eggs. For some reason, I also hardly eat at school. It’s really not fun to eat alone.

“Where is your friend, he should join us.”



I answer, "He is coming and thank you for welcoming him into our house."

"Your friends are always welcome and he reminds me of Frankie."

I smile, "Me too and I hope he finds the healing he needs."

"I hope so too, we will keep him in our prayers."

"Have you heard from Zoey? I need to tell her that I am around. She will be angry at me if I leave without telling her," I say.

"I haven't heard from her in a while, you girls are all grown and don't want to talk to your mother now."

My phone rings and it's Jayden. I forgot to call him back. He must be very worried about me. I excuse myself and go to my room to answer the phone.

Me: Hey, I am sorry for not calling you back. A lot happened yesterday and we got home late.

Jayden: What happened, are you okay?

Me: I am fine but the other person took over while I was driving home. It's a long story but I will tell you everything when I come back.

Jayden: Are you fine though?

Me: I am fine. I told my parents about what is going on and they are confused. I am just glad they don't think I am crazy. But they are in my corner.

Jayden: It's good to hear that. How is Kairo?

Me: He is fine. We are about to prepare for church. Do you go to church?

Jayden: No.

Me: Why not?

Jayden: I don't know

Advertisement

I just don't. You don't date guys that don't go to church?

Me: I didn't say that. I will call you later...

Jayden: I will call you because you never do.

Me: In my defense, I am sharing this body with someone else.

Jayden: I will let you have this one. Take care of yourself and I would like to take you on a proper date when you come back.

Me: I would love that.

I join my mother and Kairo in the kitchen. They are getting along and I love how he is free around her. For someone who hasn't left school in a while, he is doing great. Around ten am,

we leave for church. We are late and I am sure the church has started. Mother drops us off and then goes to park the car properly.

“Are you going to be fine around this many people?” I ask Kairo.

“I don’t know. The school is crowded too, right?”

I answer, “But it is not loud like here. If you want to leave just tell me.”

“Hello sister Cassandra, it’s been a long time.” Argh Joseph. I swear it’s like he smells that I am around.

“Hello, Joseph. How have you been?”

He answers, “I have been fine. It’s nice to see you again. I hope you will bless us with a song today.”

“We will see.”

He greets Kairo before walking away. Kairo says, “You don’t like him, right?”

“Is it obvious?”

He laughs, “A little.”

“He annoys me. He is that one boy that has wanted me since I was twelve.”

He says, “Do you blame me, you are gorgeous.”

“Let’s go in before mother finds us here.”

ATHENA

May I say this is no longer fun. I hate this and I prefer to be dead again. First, it was the car now I am in a church. This place is so loud. Is this how people pray nowadays? My church was quiet and peaceful back in 1996. These people are praying as if they are possessed and all this falling and rolling on the floor seems extra to me. Is this a church or some drama club?

I pinch Kairo, “Get me out of this place!”

“Athena?”

“I want to leave,” I answer.

“We can’t just leave.”

I will cause a scene if he doesn’t take me out of this place. I am around a lot of new faces and I am not comfortable. Just when I am still arguing with Kairo the noise dies down and some man stands in front of the church.

“Praise the Lord!” the man says, “I would like to greet you all in the name of Jesus and welcome all the new members. Feel at home and be at home. Before I get on with the word there is a song I would love my daughter to sing for me. She knows I love this song...”

Why is everyone looking at me? Did he say my daughter? Is that Cassandra's father? I am not singing anything. I don't know how to sing or any songs that they sing in this church or 2023 in general.

"Cassandra!" says the man at the front.

Kairo nudges me, "Go!"

Go where? I am not going to make a fool of myself. I stand up and leave the church. I ignore the stares and gasps. I am not going to go up there. I don't sing and I am not Cassandra.

"What are you doing?" Kairo runs after me.

"Was this your idea? Whose side are you on, Kairo?"

He answers, "Calm down, you have already caused a scene."

"I want to leave...take me out of this place."

He says, "And how do you want me to do that."

I grab him by his collar. I am going to kill this boy in a church if he plays with me, "Take me out of this place, now!"

"Since when do you fight boys?" says a male voice.

I let go of Kairo to check who it is and it's Sanele. "Sanele!" I whisper.

"It's Sebastian," Kairo whispers back.

## SEBASTIAN

I am back in South Africa and not many people are happy about me coming back starting with Emily. She is not happy that I canceled everything and came back home. I won't lie I was sick of the tour. I did prepare for it but didn't know it was going to be so much hard work. I am exhausted and I need this break.

Another person who is not happy that we had to come back home is Rita. She is not happy at how I easily canceled everything. I don't expect her to understand why I did what I had to do but I wish she could trust me. Cassandra is not the only reason I canceled the tour. I need the break.

It's Sunday today so I decided to go to church. I invited Rita to church but she straight up refused. One would swear she and God fought. She hates going to church and turns me down whenever I invite her. One thing I didn't expect today was to bump into Cassandra. I wanted to surprise her at school – where I thought she was. I also didn't expect to find her threatening to hit a boy.

“Since when do you fight boys?” I ask and Cassandra lets go of the boy and says something to him but not too loud for me to hear. “Why are two not in the church.”

Cassandra says, "This one is getting on my nerves. What are you doing here?"

"Is that how you greet me after I have been gone for months?"

She answers, "A lot is going on and...I'm sorry. How are you?"

"I should ask you that," I say then shift my attention to the boy she is with, "Why are you still here?"

"I can't leave her, they need her ins..."

I interrupt him, "Don't make me repeat myself."

He looks at Cassandra and she shrugs. I thought she was into light-skinned boys. This one is not light-skinned and they are almost the same height. I remember her specifically mentioning how she wants a boyfriend taller than her.

"Is he your boyfriend?" I ask Cassandra because she seems worried that he is walking away as if she wants him to be near her.

"Him? God no, he's not my type."

"Is that why you want to beat him up, was he asking you out?" I ask.

"Something like that."

I open the car door, "We have a lot of catching up to do, get in."

“I was supposed to sing...”

“Your father is already preaching, I am sure there is no need. Get in I want to talk to you about something,” I say she looks around. Why is she acting like I am a stranger that wants to kidnap her? After a lot of hesitation, she gets into the car. I also get in and drive us to my house.

Sanele is right, something is wrong with her. It is as if she has never been to my house the way she is looking around and seems amazed by everything she sees.

As soon as we walk into the house, I say, “Just a heads up, Rita is not happy that we came back earlier.”

“Should I be worried?”

I answer, “No but don’t ask about the tour.”

“I won’t.”

“I need to make a phone call, give me a second,” I say and she nods. I leave the room and call Sanele. Maybe he will explain better because it’s like I am talking to Cassandra but not talking to Cassandra.

Sanele: I see you are back in South Africa.

Me: What is going on with Cassandra? Why is she acting like this?



Sanele: I told you something is wrong with her.

Me: Is this a prank, Sanele? I hope it's not some game you and Cassandra are playing.

Sanele: I wish it was. I would do anything to mess with you but unfortunately, I am also as clueless as you are. It started with her ignoring phone calls and then when I met her she was just a little off. Not a little, a lot off.

Me: Do you think her parents know what is going on?

Sanele: There is only one way to find out.

Me: Do you think something happened at school?

Sanele: You do know what clueless means, right?

Me: I am just worried about her. What if she got hurt and lost her memory or something?

Sanele: Now you are just being crazy. Talk to her parents and see what they say. I will drive that side first thing in the morning. Is your grumpy girlfriend still around?

Me: You know that Rita and I now live together.

Sanele: Tell her to gather herself because I am coming. She has made it clear that she doesn't like me.

Me: You could start by not picking on her. You are always on her case when around.

Sanele: I will try, see you soon.

I send Rita a text message that I will be back soon and then tell Cassandra that I need to go somewhere before leaving the house. I am sure church is over by now and I can talk to Mr. and Mrs. Ndlovu. I am sure they have the answers I seek because right now I don't know what to think.

I drive to Mr. Ndlovu's house. Their car is not outside and I doubt they are in but for some reason, I go in to double-check. I knock and that boy that was fighting with Cassandra opens for me.

"Hello," he greets.

"Hello

Advertisement

is Mr. and Mrs. Ndlovu in?"

He shakes his head, "No, church wasn't over but I asked Mrs. Ndlovu to bring me back here."

"I don't think we have met, I'm Sebastian."

He answers, "I know you, who doesn't but I know you by your scandal with that younger girl."

"Who doesn't...tell Mrs. Ndlovu that I stopped by."

He nods, "I will. Where is Cassandra if you don't mind me asking?"

"She is at my house. Are you her friend?"

"Yes, my name is Kairo. Cassandra and I met at the school and she invited me to church," he says. Now that sounds like Cassandra not how she was behaving when I saw her. The Cassandra I know was going to jump with excitement after seeing me. Maybe varsity has changed her.

"Nice to meet you, Kairo," I say before walking away.

"Wait! I know what is wrong with Cassie. That is what you wanted to know, right?"

I walk back to him, "I'm listening..."

ATHENA

So that is the famous Sebastian. I didn't know that he and Sanele are identical twins. I hope I will be able to tell them apart because for now I can't and it might get me in trouble. This house is beautiful and who is Rita? Is she Sebastian's girlfriend? She has to be, why else is he worried about offending her feelings?

This is nice. A photo of Sebastian, Sanele, and Cassandra. I see they are very close. I wonder who this old man is. Maybe it is the father. Where is Rita? Isn't she supposed to be in the

photos too? Maybe things are not that serious between her and Sebastian.

I continue touring the house since I am alone and I haven't seen the Rita woman. I wonder where she is hiding. This is pretty, I pick a vase and admire it.

"Put that down!" a voice startles me and I accidentally drop the vase, "What have you done?"

"You are the one that scared me. You shouldn't sneak up on people like that."

"Do you know how expensive that was?" she says furiously.

"It doesn't matter now, it's broken."

She scoffs, "I cannot believe you right now. You are not even going to apologize?"

"You should apologize for startling me. I wouldn't have dropped it had you walked up to me like a normal person would instead of sneaking up on me."

"Listen here, young lady. I don't care that you mean a lot to Sebastian. You will not talk to me like that," she retorts.

"So you know that I mean a lot to Sebastian than you do, good to know we are on the same page."

"Don't test me, Cassandra," she warns.

“What are you going to do? Go running to Sebastian? Just to weigh our options, what do you think he will say when you tell him this?”

She swallows hard, “You are nothing like what Sebastian said you are.”

“Well tough. Now get out of my way before I intentionally break another vase,” I push her out of my way and leave the room.

## CASSANDRA

I wake up in the room I use when I am in Sebastian's house. How did I get here? The last thing I remember was when I was in church. I look for my phone and find it in my bag. I check my messages. Zoey is angry at me for not telling her that I am home. Jayden and Nontle tried calling me last night and I also have missed calls from my parents.

Today is Monday. Oh my God, I didn't take Kairo back to school. I hate this. This is ruining my life. I will never be able to live like this. What kind of a life is this? How will I continue with my career like this? How will I continue with my relationship with Jayden like this? How will I continue with school like this?

My life is a mess. I can't live like this? Will there be an end? I get out of bed and head to the bathroom. It is seven in the morning. Usually, my alarm wakes me up meaning I wasn't me when the alarm went off. I brush my teeth and wash my face. I have toiletries here since I live here and always have new toothbrushes and towels.

When I am back in the room, I call Jayden. I am sure he is sick of my episodes. I am sure he is sick of me. I am sure he is sick of my excuses. I really like him but I feel like this Athena thing will get between us. I feel like eventually he will get tired of all this.

Jayden: Hey, babe!

Me: Hey, I am sorry about yesterday...Athena happened.

Jayden: You don't have to apologize. I understand and I know you cannot control it. Is Athena the other spirit?

Me: Yes, might as well tell you now before I forget or before I black out. That night in the haunted dorms, we performed a spell that made me invite Athena into my body. Athena is a roaming spirit from 1996. I don't know how she died but Kairo says his father was part of the screw that killed Athena. Her spirit was just roaming around the school until I invited her to take over my body. Without the grimoire or fixing this, she might fully take over my body.

Jayden: Oh my God that is terrible. What will happen to you when she fully takes over?

Me: (sighs) I don't know.

Jayden: This is bad, Nontle and I have been searching for the grimoire around the haunted dorms and no luck.

Me: I don't know what to do or think anymore.

Jayden: Please don't lose hope. There will be a way out.

Me: I am trying to be positive but it's hard.

Jayden: We will fix it let's just think positive.

Me: Let me go see the others before Athena takes over. Kairo told me that she is very rude and I have a feeling she said bad things.

Jayden: Since Kairo knows more about this, maybe his parents can help us fix this.

Me: His father passed away and his mother abandoned him.

Jayden: But she is still alive, maybe we can look for her.

Me: I will talk to Kairo and hear how he feels about this and also ask if he can help.

Jayden: At least we have a lead, let's focus on that.

Me: Okay, I am coming back today I hope I will get there still me.

Jayden: I hope so too. I miss you.

Me: I miss you too. Please say hi to Gail for me. Tell her she is always in my prayers. I hardly use my phone but I hope things are still good between me and her.

Jayden: She understands that it is not your fault.

Me: Okay take care, babe (chuckle)

Jayden: I love you! You don't have to say it back but I want you to know that I do.



I take my phone and head out. I am surprised that my phone is charged. Athena usually lets it go flat. I wonder how I got into Sebastian's house. I own a key to this place but I don't remember carrying it and I know very well that Athena doesn't know anything about Sebastian. Maybe Sanele brought me here. I am scared to see him, how will I explain Athena's character and that whatever I said last night, it wasn't me?

I swear I am trying to be positive but all this is a lot for me. On my way to the kitchen, I bump into Rita. I see she is back from the tour. I remember Sebastian saying the tour will last for months. Maybe she missed home that is why she is back.

"Hey, Rita! I didn't know you are back. How was the tour?"

"Cut the pretense, we both know you don't care," she says, coldly.

"What do you mean?"

"Just stay out of my way and I will stay out of yours. Sebastian cares about you and that is the only reason I tolerate you," she says before walking away. I don't know what that was about but I have a feeling Athena is involved. I head to the kitchen and make myself some cereal.

"Good morning, Miss P.K."

"Sebastian!" I throw myself in his arms hugging him, "Why didn't you tell me you were coming?"

“I wanted to surprise you.”

I say, “I hope you brought me something because if you didn’t I am going to give you the silent treatment starting now.”

“I am sure your friend Athena will talk to me.”

“You know?” I ask.

“Yeah, I sort of ran into her yesterday

Advertisement

and let's just say I suspected something was wrong. I went to your parents’ house and ran into your friend Kairo who told me everything. Cassandra, why didn’t you tell me?”

I pull a chair and sit, “A lot has been going on. I am also having a hard time dealing with this and I didn’t want to be labeled as crazy.”

“I won’t lie when Kairo first told me I thought he was crazy until we came back here and you were not yourself.”

“Kairo is here?” I ask.

“Yes, I brought him with me. He was worried and insisted he is the only one who knows how to handle Athena. Don’t worry about your parents. I told them not to worry and that I will help you through this. They wanted to talk to you but I told them not to since you were not yourself.”

“Had I known this was going to happen, I would have stayed in my dorm that day,” I say.

“Let’s not play the what if game. It will not work. Let’s just figure out a way to fix this. I called Emily and told her that you cannot take any gigs till further notice. I called the school and told them you have a family crisis and that you will study online. We need to fix this then you can get back to your life.”

“No, I have to go back to school. My friends are there and they might help fix this because they were involved in doing the spell,” I say. I also need to see my boyfriend.

“I am afraid you need to stay this side, Cassie. You need to stay here where I can keep an eye on you and help you. We will call your friends when we need them. You are famous Cassie and any wrong move will ruin your reputation forever.”

I exhale heavily, “Fine.”

“I know this is hard but it’s for you.”

I nod, “I know and thank you for being here for me.”

“I will always be here for you,” he hugs me, “Sanele is on his way here. I told him everything over the phone so prepare for the thousand questions. You know he is a little slow.”

“I have to brace myself that is if he doesn’t find Athena.”

He says, "I wonder how Athena was in 1996. But one thing I noticed, is she is nothing like you. She tries to act like you but it's difficult especially if she is talking to someone that knows you. That is how I was able to pick up that she is not you."

"I am glad there is a difference between me and her. Imagine if no one could tell us apart."

"Yeah that would have been something," he answers, "I don't mean this in a bad way but what is up with your university?"

"What do you mean?"

He looks around to see if no one is around or nearby. He whispers, "Is Kairo crazy? I mean he does talk to himself and only crazy people do that."

"I wouldn't say he is crazy but he just sees things that other people cannot see."

He says, "According to what I know, that is the definition of crazy."

"He is just going through something because his father was part of the people that killed Athena. I think it will all go away when Athena is put to rest."

"But just to be sure, he is crazy?" he asks.

"He has his moments but please take it easy on him. I am sure it is also tough on him."

He answers, "I will try but I do not speak for Sanele. You know how he is."

"I will talk to him."

"The fun twin is here!" Sanele walks into the kitchen, "Brother! (shifts his attention to me) Are you Athena or you?"

I answer, "I am me."

He says, "I am pretty sure Athena would also say that. Tell me something only Cassandra would know."

"While Sebastian was on tour you..."

He interrupts me, "Okay, okay you have made your point ...so, how do we send Athena back to hell?"

## JAYDEN

Gail has been released from the hospital. If it was any normal day we would have thrown a party for her but no one is in the mood for partying. Everyone is worried about Cassandra and worried that another one of us is going to start experiencing weird things. Cassandra got possessed and Nontle has been having nightmares. They started two days ago.

We have been looking for the grimoire and no luck. I have a feeling that was the only copy. I don't know how we are going to help Nontle and Cassandra. For now, we kept it from Cassandra that Nontle is also experiencing the effects of whatever we did that night. We don't want to stress her more than she already is.

It has been tough I don't want to lie. We are trying to solve this on our own but soon I think we will have to involve our parents. This is beyond us now. What if another one of us also starts experiencing the effects? My worst fear is us turning into the 1996 crew or worse being crazy like Kairo.

"Jayden you will kill us!" Nontle screams.

Shit, I forgot I was driving. We are heading to the school from the hospital to get Gail. It's me, Nontle and Gail. The boys

stayed behind, Jacob has an assignment due and I can't remember Langa's excuse.

"I'm sorry...I have a lot on my mind. You and Cassandra, God knows who is next."

Nontle says, "We will fix it. Let's continue looking for the grimoire."

"What if there is no other grimoire?" Gail asks, "What if we become like Kairo?"

Nontle replies, "No one is becoming like Kairo can we think positively."

Thinking positively is all I have been trying to do but it is very difficult, not when things are like this. We get to the school. I park Jacob's car while Nontle helps Gail to her room then take Jacob's keys to him. I have been communicating with him on WhatsApp and he said I can bring the keys.

"Is Gail fine?" Jacob asks.

"She seems like that but I am sure she is in a lot of pain. I have never gotten my leg broken but I am sure it is painful."

He says, "Yeah I heard it is. So where are we looking tonight? We need to continue searching for that book."

"I don't know man. We searched all the haunted dorms and no luck."

“Maybe we should search Kairo’s room. He is not yet back, right?” he suggests.

“No, we cannot go through his privacy and I am sure he would have told Cassie if he had it.”

Jacob says, “Maybe we might find something there that might help us. That boy’s father was part of the 1996 crew after all. We need to search his room.”

“We are not doing that. That is his privacy, Jacob. We will find a way out but not like this.”

“Fine, let’s do it your way. Let me head to class, I will catch you guys later,” he takes his keys and walks away.

I don’t have classes today so I head to my room. I could use a breather. I wonder if Cassandra is still coming back today, I miss her. We just started dating and already we are facing so many challenges. I know I promised to be with her but all this is messing with my mind and I don’t know anymore. I do love her but this is a lot to handle. It’s a lot on my side I am sure she is going through hell. Speaking of Cassandra, she is calling.

Me: Hey, baby!

Cassandra: Hey, how are you?

Me: I can’t complain hey. Please tell me you are on your way back, I miss you.



Cassandra: About that, they want me to stay this side so that Athena doesn't cause troubles like what happened to Gail.

Me: I see...

Cassandra: Look I am sorry. I know this might affect our relationship but I have to stay this side.

Me: It's okay...just do what you need to do then come back fine.

Cassandra: Please don't be mad at me. I promise we will talk all the time.

Me: Half of the time you are Athena so...

Cassandra: Jayden my hands are tied here. I want to be with you but I have to be this side. I promise I will call you every time I am me. Please just hold on a while longer for me.

Me: Sure.

Cassandra: I love you too and I want this to work please just be patient with me.

Me: I want this to work too.

ATHENA

Argh this place again. When are we going back to school? I hate this place. I am surrounded by strangers and I hate it. Kairo is here too but from the looks of it, he is no longer on my side. I

cannot believe that he has turned on me so fast. He is lucky I don't know how to get out of this place otherwise I was going to stab him and run away. How dare he betray me like this? Like father like son.

I get out of bed and put on the slippers on the side of the bed. I head to the kitchen to look for something to eat. Cassandra doesn't eat. I don't know if that is how she is but I am always hungry when her.

"Good evening," I walk into the kitchen. I didn't know both twins are here. I don't know how to tell them apart so I will just play along. Where the hell is Kairo? I know he is still here. He was here last night when Sebastian came from church.

"What are you cooking?" one of the twins asks, "You said you will handle supper."

I roll my eyes but make sure they don't notice. I smile and say, "I am not feeling well. Can one of you cook."

"Athena! You must be Athena because Cassandra has never been too tired to cook."

I fold my arms

Advertisement

"I see you Cassandra went running to you. You see I can't tell you apart, who is who?"

“Sebastian,” the one with the beard raises his glass. So Sebastian is the one with the beard. Sanele also has a beard but from the looks of it, he just started grooming his.

“Nice to meet you, Sebastian. So, how did you find out? Your brother didn’t even notice a thing.”

Sebastian says, “Listen we have nothing on you, Athena. We just want you to find another body to possess.”

I pull a chair and sit, “No thanks, I love this one.”

“There has to be a way to get our Cassandra back and you get to live your life,” says Sebastian. He is so sweet.

“I am afraid I was invited into this body so I am stuck. Sorry, but you will have to get used to me.”

Sebastian adds, “Athena you are ruining a child’s life. What if we find you another body.”

Sanele jumps in, “Why are you negotiating with her, Sebastian? We are getting her out of that body whether she likes it or not. As soon as we find that grimoire we are sending her back to hell.”

I laugh, “Kairo didn’t tell you? I am not evil, my spirit was restless because I was murdered. In other words, you can’t cast me out because I was summoned here.”

Sanele says, "I guess you and I have different definitions of evil because I heard you pushed your friend your friend down the stairs."

"Gail? Gail was nosy and I had to take care of her."

"Okay enough!" Sebastian stands, "Arguing won't help with anything. We need to find a way to get you out of Cassandra's body and we are taking no for an answer. We get that what was done to you is unfair but this is not your body and this is not your life."

"You are sweet. I almost feel sorry for you but I got a second chance at life and I am not planning on giving it up. I am here to stay. Might as well say goodbye to your sweet Cassandra."

"You are annoying Athena, no wonder your friends killed you. I am sure it was hard to be around you," says Sanele.

"I don't like you."

Sanele replies, "The feeling is mutual sweetheart."

Sebastian says, "Sanele you are not helping, please don't fight with her. Can we find a way where both of them can survive?"

"Listen to your brother Sanele because you don't want to deal with angry me. When you think of it, I am older than both of you so might as well start respecting me. Be nice to me or there will be penalties."

Sanele groans in annoyance, "You are annoying Athena."

"I am annoying? I see you think I am making empty promises," I say and bang my head on the kitchen counter.

"What the hell Athena," Sebastian comes to check on me. My head is now bleeding.

"Mess with me and Cassandra's body will pay for it."

## ATHENA

“Thank you,” I say to Sebastian after he finishes nursing my wound.

My head is sore from banging my head on the kitchen counter. I might be in Cassnadra’s body but that doesn’t mean I am emotionless when in this body. I feel emotions and I hurt my head or should I say Casandra’s but I had to teach them that there will be penalties if they mess with me.

They need to understand that they can’t mess with me. I get that they are worried about Cassandra but she willingly invited me into her body. I was doing great whenever I was with no knowledge that I was dead. If there is anyone to blame for all this it is Cassandra and her stupid friends. They should have stayed away from things they don’t know about.

“Take this, it’s painkillers. It will help if you have a headache,” Sebastian hands me painkillers and water. I like him more than his brother.

“Thanks, I do have a headache.”

He sits on the bed next to me. We are in Cassandra’s room. He says, “Look, I understand all this is frustrating for you but if you want us to get along then you have to promise not to hurt this body.”

“I won’t hurt this body if you and your brother are not mean to me. All I want is to live however I want to.”

He says, “We get that but can you please let us fix this first? I promise you I will find a way to help you and Cassandra no one has to get hurt.”

“Your brother is bent on getting rid of me. How do I know that you will keep your word?”

He answers, “You will have to trust me on this one.”

“The people I trusted most on this earth killed me and the one person I thought was on my side turned on me.”

“I am not like your friends and I keep my word. I will keep my word only if you promise to not hurt yourself or Cassandra,” he says.

“Fine but tell your brother to stop throwing insults at me.”

“Sanele is not well in the head so don’t mind him. All I need is for you to trust me, trust me to fix this, and make sure everyone is fine. I get that you were betrayed in the past but that was then and I promise to help you,” he assures me that he will find a way to save both me and Cassandra.

“I will trust you but don’t make me regret trusting you. So, how are you going to help me without the grimoire?”

He answers, “We are going to find your friends from back in 1996. You know them better than us. We need you to give us their names then we will search for them.”

“I also have a thing or two to say to them.”

“I am glad we are on the same boat, let me grab a pen and paper so you can start giving me names. I hope you still remember their addresses,” he says.

“I remember 1996 like it was yesterday.”

He leaves the room to go and get a pen and paper. I use the opportunity I go to the kitchen, I am thirsty. I find Kairo in the kitchen. Isn't he supposed to be back at school? What is his purpose of being here?

“If it is not the traitor,” I say opening the fridge, “I see you are walking in your father's footsteps.”

“You can't blame me for doing the right thing.”

I pour myself juice and say, “I blame you for betraying me. You promised to help me then turned on me.”

“I didn't turn on you, Athena. I am trying to help Cassandra and I am not apologetic about it.”

I fold my arms, “Tell me, when are you planning on telling Cassandra that you like her?”



“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

I chuckle, “I see right through you, Kairo. You like Cassandra and you are hoping if you help her she might like you or give you a chance. You are just wasting your time. You are not her type.”

He furiously pushes the chair back and strides out of the kitchen. I am not even trying to be mean. Cassandra likes Jayden and I am pretty sure her type is not crazy boys.

“You just love ruining everybody’s mood don’t you?” Sanele walks into the kitchen.

“Me? I would never!”

He gets himself a beer, “I heard what you said to Kairo.”

“It’s rude to eavesdrop but I was just stating the obvious. Cassandra has a thing for some guy that she goes to school with.”

He says, “Let her decide whether she likes Kairo or not

Advertisement

and stop turning people against each other.”

“Turning people against each other...don’t give me ideas Sanele. I am bored and would do anything to keep myself entertained.”

He wants to say something but stops himself. I see he finally got it. He should stay on my good side. Happy Athena is better than angry Athena. I get off the chair pour out the juice, open the fridge, and get myself a beer. I am old enough to drink so why not? I wonder if the beer is as good as the one back in 1996.

Sanele says, "Cassandra doesn't drink."

"Thank God I am not her."

Sebastian walks into the kitchen. He looks at me and then looks at Sanele who says, "Do you need a beer?"

"I think I might need one," Sebastian also grabs a beer and then says, "How about you give me those names Athena..."

JAYDEN

"It starts with us going to the haunted dorms, all six of us. We perform the spell but this time not only Cassandra chants the word, we all do then weird things start happening. I can't make sense of it but I see blood and I hear screams. Someone screaming for help. It's the same dream over and over again," Nontle explains. She finally gathered the strength to tell us what her nightmares are about.

Jacob asks, "Maybe your nightmares are a message."

"A message that we are going to die?" says Gail.

“Or maybe it’s just her subconscious playing with her. We all have been worried about getting the grimoire. Maybe she is thinking about it too much that it is messing with her head,” says Langa.

Jacob says, “Or we are slowly turning into the 1996 crew. Soon we will all become a bunch of Kairos. We will start talking to ourselves and hurting ourselves.”

I chuckle. I didn’t mean to but what does he mean we will be a bunch of Kairos? Is Kairo the only crazy person he knows? I clear my throat and say, “I think we need to talk to Kairo and Cassandra. It is about time we tell them what is going on. Maybe Kairo might know a solution to this. I say we drive there tomorrow and try to fix this.”

“You want us to ask a crazy person how to help us?” Gail asks, “Or you are just looking for a way to see your girlfriend.”

“Yes and yes. Kairo is the only person who knows more about this than us.”

Nontle says, “I am with Jayden. We should go there. I can’t continue having these nightmares.”

“All in favor that we go and talk to Kairo raise your hand,” Jacob says and everyone raises their hand except for Gail.

“I have a broken leg. I think I should stay behind.” – Gail.

Nontle shakes her head, “No you can’t stay, we need to stick together, What if something happens and we are not around? You need to come with us and we will help you move around.”

“Fine, I will go,” says Gail.

I say, “Okay so now we need to search for accommodations near Cassandra and I also need to talk to Cassandra and tell her we are coming.”

“I will handle accommodation, you don’t have to worry about that,” Jacob volunteers.

I say, “I will handle everything we will eat when we are that side.”

“I will put fuel in the car.” Langa.

“I think that is all we need. We should start packing,” says Nontle and we all leave for our rooms except for Nontle who needs to help Gail pack.

I pack a small bag enough to last me a week. I don’t know how long we are going to be away but I have to be ready for anything. I call Cassandra as soon as I am done packing.

Cassie: Hey, Jayden! Calling to check on your girlfriend?

Me: Hey, Athena.

Athena: I am very happy that everyone is now able to tell us apart. The pretending was killing me.

Me: I am going to hang up...

Athena: Trust me you don't want to do that. Listen I want to get out of this place and you are going to help me.

Me: I am not helping you with anything.

Athena: How do you feel about your girlfriend throwing herself at Kairo? I don't think he would be able to turn her down. I also heard she is a virgin.

Me: Athena please don't do that.

Athena: Then help me get out of this place.

JAYDEN

I wish we can get this grimoire already and get rid of this Athena girl. I swear she is on a mission to ruin Cassandra's life. Why does she want to leave? Cassandra told me that Sebastian suggested that she stay at his house that way he will keep an eye on her. Also to protect her reputation and those she loves because from the looks of it, Athena knows nothing about Cassie or her life.

"Hey, I came as soon as I got your text message what is going on?" Nontle asks as soon as she walks into my room.

"Athena is threatening me. She is threatening to sleep with Kairo if I don't take her away from where she is."

"Is that girl crazy? What did you say?" she asks.

"I told her that I don't know where she is and that I can't help her when I don't know where she is. I thought that was going to work in my favor but she said I must call back in thirty minutes, she will have the details of where she is."

She says, "You do have the phone number of the person Cassandra is staying with? We can call them and tell them that she is blackmailing you."

“I don’t have anyone’s contact and I don’t even know which city Cassandra is in. We just recently started dating and we haven’t talked much.”

“This is not good. We need to think of something,” she starts pacing up and down the room, “Do you think she would sleep with Kairo or she knows you won’t say no if she pulls that card on you?”

“I don’t know, Nontle. But I don’t think we should get on her bad side.”

“Let’s go to Cassandra’s room, maybe we might find something there,” she suggests.

“I am sure she locked the door before leaving. I have tried thinking of a way out but nothing is coming to mind.”

She sits on the bed and buries her face in her palms, “This is all my fault. I shouldn’t have picked up that grimoire. I shouldn’t have suggested that we do that spell.”

“You didn’t know, Nontle.”

She says, “But look where my doings have gotten us. Cassandra is possessed by a spirit from 1996 and I am having these unending nightmares.”

“We will fix this, I promise.”

“What if we fail?” she asks, “What if I go crazy like Kairo? I was looking forward to this year you know. I wanted this year to be the best but it seems it is the opposite.”

“Now is not the time to lose hope Nontle. Let’s wait for Cassandra to take over then we tell her what is going on.”

“Still, you have to call Athena because if you don’t she might do something crazy just to prove a point,” she says.

“I don’t know okay. I am trying to think of something but nothing is coming to mind.”

She sighs heavily, “This is bad.”

“Maybe we should search for Sebastian on the media and contact him.”

Nontle and I search for Sebastian which is hard because we don’t know his second name and there are so many accounts we don’t know which one is legit. It’s a dead-end.

“I should just give her what she wants,” I say to Nontle.

“We need her close in case we find the grimoire.”

“What if she sleeps with Kairo? Maybe Kiaro might turn her down but what if she blackmails him too? I don’t know Nontle, I am out of options here,” I sit on the floor.

“I am sorry, I know how much you love Cassandra.”



I say, "I wish I had let her stay in her room that day. We all know that she came because I asked her to. My thirty minutes is up, I should call Athena."

I dial Cassandra's number.

Athena: About time, I thought I was clear that you call after thirty minutes.

Me: I had class so...

Athena: (interrupting me) I don't care, grab a pen and paper.

Me: Can't you text me the details or your location?

Athena: I don't know how to work this thing, grab a pen a paper.

Me: Okay I have the pen and paper.

Athena: The address is...

Me: Hello? Are you there?

"The call went off," I say to Nontle.

"That buys us some time to look for Sebastian. Let us search Instagram. It would be easy if we knew his second name."

ATHENA

Argh this thing. I think it's dead. Why didn't Cassandra charge her phone? I put my beer on the side table, I have been having

beer since I am bored and no one wants to talk to me. I put shoes on and head to Kairo's room.

"I hope you are not naked," I barge into the room Kairo uses, "I want you to call someone for me."

"A little hi and please here and there won't kill you. Who do you want to call?"

I fold my arms

Advertisement

"I want you to call Jayden for me. He and I have some business to discuss."

"I don't have his phone number."

I roll my eyes, "You are so useless. Can you at least charge this phone for me? Make sure it's on."

"I don't have that kind of charger. Check in Cassandra's room. I am sure you know how to plug in a charge."

"You are skating on thin ice, Kairo," I leave the room and don't bother to close the door. I put the phone on the charger and switch it on. Great, it needs a password. What is it with passwords? Can someone call when the phone is like this? I hate this, things are so different from 1996.

I leave the phone on the charger and head out. This place is driving me crazy I feel like I am in a prison.

“Watch where you are going,” I yell when I bump into Kairo.

“You bumped into me.”

“Take me out of this place before I hurt Cassandra’s body,” I say.

“And take you where? I also don’t know this place. Listen, Athena, I don’t know what type of person you were back in 1996 but you seriously need to stop being mean. I get that this is frustrating but no one blames you for anything. At least try to get along with the people that are trying to help you. We are all looking for the grimoire and we will look for a way to save both you and Cassandra.”

I exhale, “Fine, I will try to be nice.”

“I don’t even know why people give you so much power,” Sanele shows up from behind me, “Try being mean to me and I will tie you up and starve you. I will only let this body free when Cassandra takes over.”

I say, “She will feel the effects too when she takes over.”

“At least we won't have to worry about her banging her head on counters or pushing people down the stairs,” he says and walks to his room.

Kairo says, “He is right, you need to start being nice to people.”

People don’t understand nice, one has to be a little mean to get things done. People need to be threatened or yelled at sometimes. That is the only way. I am going to wait for that phone to charge and for Jayden to call again and take me out of this place. I don’t know where I will go but I don’t want to be here. I head back to Cassandra’s room.

CASSANDRA

I slowly open my eyes, I am in my room. I sit up and look around. I don’t feel good. I reach for my phone that is on the charger. I put in the password and let messages flood in. I am sure my friends think I hate them because I never reply to their messages. I stand on my feet but stumble. What is happening to me? Why do I feel funny? I feel funny but in a good way.

For some reason, Jayden comes to mind. I miss him so much. I lie on the bed facing the ceiling and dial Jayden’s number. I close my eyes and wait for him to answer.

Jayden: Hey...

Me: Just hey? No babe? Does that mean I no longer have a boyfriend?

Jayden: No, I am sorry about that. I thought it was Athena.

Me: What did she say this time? You know what, I don't want to talk about her. I want to talk about us, I miss you.

Jayden: You don't sound good, are you okay?

Me: I don't know, I also feel weird but I'm fine. I actually feel good.

Jayden: If you say so. While you are still you, the team and I were planning to come that side and solve this together.

Me: That's sweet. Supportive boyfriend.

Jayden: (Chuckles) Are you sure you didn't take anything?

Me: I swear...no wait, there is a beer bottle on my side table. But I don't drink alcohol. You know what, let's not talk about Athena. Let me send you my address right now.

Jayden: Received it. We will fix all this and then get back to our normal lives. Me: I hope so, I really do.

Jayden: We will do it together. Everything will be fine.

Me: Thank you for being there for me. All of you but especially you.

Jayden: You are loved, let me speak for myself. I love you, that's why I am doing this. See you soon and don't do anything crazy while drunk.

Me: I will try.

## SEBASTIAN

We have the names of Athena's friends, what is left is finding them. I just hope they are still alive and that they know a way out of this. So far we know that Kairo's father is dead so we are looking for five people and we have our fingers crossed that they still remember what happened back in 1996.

"How sure are you that Athena gave you the right names?" Sanele asks. Honestly, I wish I had kept him in the dark. Sanele doesn't have timing. He is always provoking Athena and making everything worse. Right now we need to work together and try to figure out the way forward.

"A little hope won't kill you. Why would Athena give me fake names?"

He answers, "So she can stay longer in Cassandra's body."

"I promised to help her. We will look for a way to save them both."

He walks up to me, "You seriously need to stop trying to save everyone and stop being nice to everyone. That same niceness also scored you a crazy girlfriend."

“Don’t talk about my woman like that, I have said that countless times. I love Rita and it doesn’t have to make sense to you or anyone as long as it makes sense to me.”

“What I am saying is that you shouldn’t be negotiating with Athena. There is no helping her Sebastian. That girl died in 1996. The least we can do for her is put her soul to rest. The only way that she gets to live is when taking someone else’s body. The dead are meant to remain dead.”

“You think I don’t know that? Unlike you, I think with my head. The only way Athena can help us is when we are on her side.”

“In simple terms, you are gaslighting her? Is that even the correct word?” He goes to the fridge and opens it, “Where is the beer?”

“I threw it all out, isn’t you were letting Athena drink knowing very well that Cassandra has never tasted alcohol?”

He says, “So now I get blamed for everything Athena does? You saw how stubborn that girl is.”

“She is stubborn because she is defensive, she knows no one wants her here and uses the little power she has on us and that is abusing Cassandra’s body.”

“I am sorry, Sebastian, I am not as smart as you,” he says and then snatches the list in my hands, “I will find Athena’s crazy friends, you deal with her since you understand her better.”

“Take Kairo with you maybe he can help.”

“You handle the crazies, I will find these people don’t worry,” he answers.

“Stop calling them crazy. Kairo didn’t ask for this. Just find those people then we take it from there.”

“I am on it, brother. Have a little faith in me,” Sanele leaves the room.

I might act cool in all this but it is a lot to handle. I can imagine how hard this is for Cassandra. I never believed in spirits and spells until this Cassandra issue. I have heard that people get possessed by this is not what I imagined. I swear we are living in a movie.

I feel sorry for Cassandra’s father more, he wants to help his daughter but doesn’t know how. I am sure all this is a lot for him. He calls every day to check on his daughter but every time he calls it will be Athena. I am still trying to time how long it takes before the other takes over. One thing I have noticed is that Athena has more time than Cassandra and I don’t know why. I feel like we get to see Athena more than Cassandra.

When Kairo explained everything to me, he said if Athena stays longer in Cassandra’s body she will fully take over. I think it is happening. The spell that was performed is for Cassandra’s



body to be Athena's new dwelling place. My mind feels like it is going to explode. All this is a lot to process.

"Hey, baby," Rita walks into the room.

"Hey!"

She stands in front of me and kisses me, "I was thinking..."

"Yes."

She says, "How about we go out and get some air? The house is crowded and I miss spending some alone time with you."

"I can't, I have to keep an eye on Cassandra, she is not fine. She is going through something and I have to help her."

"But Sanele is here I am sure he can watch her. Even that crazy boy I am sure he can watch her. Sebastian is this what our relationship will be like from today?" she asks.

"It's only until we find a solution to Cassandra's situation. I promise."

"I will be at my mother's place if you need me. I don't think I can stick around all this madness. The fact that you don't want to tell me what is going on shows you don't trust me," she tries to leave the room but I stop her.

"I am not telling you because it is a lot to deal with."

“Let me decide if it’s a lot to deal with or not. What is going on?” she questions.

“Fine, I will tell you. Cassandra got possessed by some spirit from 1996 and we will lose her if we don’t get her the help she needs.”

She chuckles. “Do I look stupid to you that you would make up a story?”

“I am not making it up.”

“I am going home and you know where to find me if you need me,” she walks out of the room, and just when I am about to go after her, the doorbell rings. I attend to it, when I open the door I am met by a group of two girls and three boys.

The one girl says

Advertisement

“Hello, my name is Nontle and these are my friends. We are all Cassandra’s friends, I don’t know if she mentioned but we were there when the spell was performed.”

“More unwanted people in my house, come in,” I step aside so they can come in.”

CASSANDRA

I am in a room that looks like one of the school dorms but not my room. I am sitting in front of the dressing table and applying makeup to my face. Surprisingly, I am not puzzled by being in this foreign room as if I am used to being here and I seem familiar with everything that I am doing as if I have done it before.

A boy/ man walks into the room, "I brought your dress."

"Thank you! Thank you! You are a lifesaver," I get up from the chair and try to take the dress from his hand but he shifts away just in time.

"Where is my kiss?"

I smile and kiss him on the cheek, "There you have it, now can I get dressed before I am late for the dance."

He says, "About that, I don't think I will be able to make it."

"You are kidding, right? Kennedy, you promised to be my plus one."

He cups my face and says, "I know baby but something came up?"

"Something like what?"

"I can't tell you," he answers, "But, I promise to make it up to you."

“We have been planning this for months. Why are you changing your mind now?”

“Can we please not fight about this?” he requests.

“We are not fighting. Do you want me to be happy that you are canceling on me last minute?”

“I said I can’t make it, Athena! What is wrong with you? You are so controlling. I can’t even have a life outside this relationship!” he yells.

“Excuse me? I am controlling when you are the one always making excuses and making promises you can’t keep.”

“Maybe I am just trying to get away from you!” he says but quickly regrets it, “Baby...”

“Leave my room. If you don’t want to come with me to the dance you could have just said so. Go wherever you want to go. I am capable of having fun without you,” I push him out of the room and slam the door shut.

I take the dress and put it on trying to fight back the tears that are threatening to come out. When I am done, I get my purse and head to the room next to mine. I knock and let myself in, “Are you ready?”

“I am almost done,” Ruth answers.

“Don’t tell me you got late reading your weird book, what do you call it again?”

She answers, “It’s a grimoire and it’s not weird. It’s fascinating. Where is your date?”

“Kennedy bailed out on me. We had a fight and he thinks I am controlling, can you imagine that?”

She mumbles something I can’t hear and then says, “I am ready, let’s go.”

“What? Do you also think I am controlling?”

“No, of course not, let’s go.”

\*\*\*

I open my eyes and I am in my room. Kairo walks in, “You are awake? Sebastian asked me to come check on you.”

“I just woke up,” I check my phone, “How is it two days from when I was last conscious?”

“We have been chilling with Athena 24/7. I don’t know why.”

I say, “I had a dream and it felt like I was Athena. She was getting ready for a school dance.”

“She died on the night of the school dance. You having her memories might mean that you are slowly becoming her and she is fully taking over your body.”

NOT EDITED)

CASSANDRA

It's nice to have all this support around me. It's nice to know that I have so many people who care about me. When Kairo told me that my friends were around, I put on a smile and went to meet them. If these are going to be my last days then might as well enjoy them. No one has talked about the grimoire or Athena and I appreciate that. I appreciate that everyone is making my last moments fun.

I am calling them last moments because I don't know when Athena will fully take over. One thing I know is that she is having more time than me meaning she is fully taking over. I don't want to lie, I am scared. I don't want to die. There is a lot I wanted to do with my life and now I will never get to do that.

Sebastian seems fine with my friends being around. I will forever be grateful for everything he does for me. I know he doesn't like people in his house, he is just doing it for me. I hope one day I will have a chance to properly thank him.

Sebastian and Sanele gave me some time alone with my friends. I finally introduced Kairo to the crew. I am happy that they are nice to him even though they think he is crazy. My

friends and I had pizza and we played cards. I cannot remember the last I had so much fun. Around ten pm, we all go to bed.

Nontle and Gail are sharing a room and so does Jacob and Langa. Jayden is with Kairo because he is the only one who agreed to share a room with him. The others are scared. I check the time on my phone and it's almost eleven pm. I am scared to fall asleep because I have a feeling Athena will take over when I sleep.

I hear a knock on my door and the door opens before I permit the person to come in. I smile when I notice it's Jayden. I have been wanting to spend some alone time with him. I get out of bed to hug him. I missed him so much.

He kisses me, "I missed you so much."

"I missed you too and I hope no one saw you come here. The Jones twins would murder you."

He chuckles, "Sanele did threaten me to stay in my room but I had to come see you and I promise I was careful."

"Thank you for coming here. I mean leaving school and coming to see me."

"You don't have to thank me. We missed you and we wanted to come help fix this together," he answers and we get in bed. This will get me in trouble if Sebastian was to walk in but these are

my last moments. They should give me a break. “How are you, with everything going on?”

“I would be lying if I said I am okay but I am trying to stay positive.”

He pulls me into his arms and lets me rest my head on his chest, “Everything will be fine. We will fix it all.”

“You are forever positive. I am grateful to have a boyfriend like you.”

He kisses my forehead, “I am the one grateful to have you as my woman.”

“My family would have loved you for me.”

He says, “Don’t speak like a dying person. You will be fine and we will fix this.”

I nod and close my eyes. I feel very sleepy. He holds me in his arms and tells me he will leave when I fall asleep. I wouldn’t want him to cuddle Athena or worse fight with her and then get in trouble with Sanele.

\*\*\*

Ruth and I are at the dance and having the time of our life. The music is loud and nice. We agreed that today is a no-boys night. It’s just two best friends having a nice time. We have other friends but they refused to attend the dance, they think it’s



lame. We are a circle of six. Kennedy and I are the only couple in the group.

“Ruth, do you think I am controlling?” I ask while we are dancing. The music is too loud so I have to speak in her ear for her to hear me.

“Come on, don’t tell me you are still on that.”

I say, “I want to know, am I controlling or not?”

“Sometimes...let’s just say you love things to be done your way and if not you get angry and use violence.”

I chuckle, “I will be joking, I am not a violent person Ruth come on.”

“Sometimes you are, Athena. You threaten people when they don’t do things you don’t like and you fight with almost everyone.”

I swallow hard, “For some reason that hurts. Is that what everyone thinks of me, as violent and controlling.”

“Hey, don’t be sad, you are pretty and every guy in this room would kill to be your boyfriend, that is something to drink about. Let’s get shots.”

\*\*\*

I wake up and check the time. It is three am. I take my phone and text my father. I know he wakes up at three am for prayers. I want to pray too but I am exhausted mentally

‘Dad I am scared.’

‘What’s wrong?’ – Dad

‘I don’t want to die. I am scared and Athena is still stuck in my body. I don’t know how to fix this and what is going to happen to everyone when I am gone?’

‘I am praying for you, my child. That is all I can do for now and I know the Lord will not forsake us. I know things may look like they are getting worse but we have to trust God’s plans.’ – Dad.

‘Did it have to be me though? Why wasn’t it someone else? I pray every day and it’s not fair.’

‘Where there are no tests, there are no testimonies. It’s all just a test and you have to be strong and pray harder.’ – Dad.

‘Dad I am tired. I have been praying since this started and I am tired.’

‘You are tired because you are fighting a battle that is not yours. The battle is not yours but the Lord’s – Let God be God.’ – Dad.

It’s easier said than done. Only if he knew how hard this is for me. I am trying to be strong but it is tough. I am trying to leave

it all to God but it seems he doesn't hear me anymore. Why did he let Athena possess me in the first place?

ATHENA

I wake up with a heavy heart. I get out of bed and head to the bathroom. I stand in front of the mirror and my face is puffy. Cassandra must have been crying. These days I feel her emotions and I am starting to have her memories bit by bit. I am starting to feel sorry for her. She doesn't deserve this, she is too young for this. But I also want to live

Advertisement

my life was cut short and I never got to live it.

I brush my teeth and wash my face then head out of the room. I see Cassandra's friends are still around. They remind me of my friends, we used to be very close. I still don't know how and why they killed me.

"Good morning, everyone," I greet them and make cereal.

Nontle says, "We were thinking of going out for ice cream later today. Sebastian says you haven't left the house in days."

I answer, "I am not Cassandra."

I take my cereal and head back to the room on my way there I bump into Sebastian. "Hey, how do you feel today?"

“Not Cassandra, bye.”

I continue walking, get into the room, and lock myself inside. Might as well save my strength. I know all these people hate me. I stay in the room all day. Cassandra has novels in her room so I am not entirely bored. Someone knocks on the door.

“I haven’t killed myself, no need to be worried!”

“Athena please open the door,” Sebastian knocks. I now know the difference between his voice and Sanele’s. Well, Sanele hates me so it’s easy to tell him apart from his brother.

I get out of bed and open the door, “What?”

“You need to eat.”

I take the tray from his hands, “Why are you being so nice, did you poison me?”

“I am not like that. Cassandra or not, you need to eat.”

“Thanks.” I mean it. Sebastian is the only person that has been nice to me.

“And get out of that room, do you want to die in there?”

I chuckle, “In case you haven’t noticed, no one likes me. That’s why I am here and trying not to ruin everyone’s mood.”

“Maybe if you tried to be a little nicer, people will also be nicer to you.”

“It’s a little difficult when you grew up like I did but I think Cassandra’s niceness is rubbing on me a little. Don’t be surprised if I start smiling more,” I say.

“What do you mean a person who grew up like you did?” he asks.

“Go already, you are starting to annoy me.”

He says, “Now I see why you put up such a brave act, you don’t want to seem weak. You are the type that attacks first before they get attacked. Not because you are mean by nature but because circumstances made you like that. It’s a defense mechanism.”

“Bye,” I slam the door in his face, sit down leaning on to it, and eat my food. I think I want to be dead again. These people are annoying.

## SEBASTIAN

I am getting worried. We looked for Athena's friends from 1996 and it's all a dead end. Two died and two lost their minds, they are in mental institutions. Leaving us with one person, Ruth. We can't find her or any information on her. Those who know her say they last saw her in the early 2000s when she relocated. No one had heard from her since. I don't want to lose hope but I don't think we will be able to help Cassandra and I am freaking out.

I promised to help Cassandra and I am failing. Athena can now spend more than five days and Cassandra less than 24 hours in her body. As much as I want to stay positive, we are slowly losing Cassandra, and Nontle's nightmares keep getting worse. Kairo thinks that they will stop when Cassandra fully remembers what happened to Athena that night at the school dance. It will be the end of Nontle's nightmares and the end of Cassandra.

Cassandra's friends are still at my house and they have been doing everything to help find the grimoire but there is no sign of it. I don't think there is another copy. I think the burnt copy was the only copy. I am very worried about Cassandra. All this is too much for her and it's depressing her. She spends most of

her time in her room even when she is herself. She is no longer the bubbly girl I know.

I also feel like everyone is slowly losing hope, even Cassandra's father. I think he is accepting that he will lose his daughter. At first, he would call many times a day and even come to pray for her but now he no longer does that. He hardly comes anymore because he usually finds Athena. He now only calls.

I am in the kitchen having some whiskey. I need it, a lot has been going on, and not just with Cassandra. Rita wants to break up. She doesn't understand what is going on and thinks I am lying to her. I love her but at the moment I don't know what to do to prove to her that I am not lying or not making things up. I could have made her meet Athena but Athena is also changing these days. She is becoming nicer and sometimes we cannot tell her apart from Cassandra.

"Another dead end," Sanele sits next to me. He had gone out to look for Ruth and trying to follow information he got from people who used to know her.

"We will try to look again tomorrow."

"I only found this picture. They say it is from the early 2000s," he tosses the photo on the table.

“At least now we know the person we are looking for. She is the only person who was faceless from everyone we were looking for.”

He takes my whiskey and gulps it down, “God knows I am trying to keep it together brother but it’s getting tougher.”

“I know but we have to keep it together, for Cassandra.”

He says, “Or prepare to lose her. She is slowly fading away.”

“We will find a way.”

“You sound like that Jayden kid. He also believes that there will be a way out and that we will save Cassandra. We all know that there is no way out. Cassandra is slowly fading away. We have tried everything to try and help her, even God has turned his back on us,” he says.

“Come on, you don’t mean that.”

He shakes his head, “Cassandra is a good kid and she has been through hell then now this. Sometimes we blame the devil but I know God is letting all this happen and on purpose. It’s not fair.”

Sanele leaves the kitchen taking my whiskey with him. I know he doesn’t mean what he said. He is just angry. God hasn’t forsaken us. He is God and he is God in good times and in bad times. I don’t know what this is but I believe the sun will rise



again. Everything will be fine and we will get our Cassandra back.

“Is this Ruth? Did you find her?” Athena asks. I didn’t see her walk into the kitchen.

“Not yet, we are still looking.”

She says, “Maybe she also went crazy and hung herself.”

“I am not in the mood, Athena. Go annoy someone else that is not me.”

“Fine, I will go,” she leaves the room.

Great, now I have to get something to drink because Sanele took my whiskey. We hid all the whiskey away because Athena doesn’t want to see alcohol. I sigh heavily, the house is too quiet today, and I wonder where the kids are. I am sure they are out there looking for clues to help Cassandra. That is what they have been doing for the past three weeks. I tried to get them to go back to school but they said they want to help. We also need all the help we can get. At this point, we even have the church people coming for prayers, and anything to help but from the looks of it, nothing is working.

I hear noises from the other room. It seems they are back. I prefer their noise to being alone with my thoughts. Things have changed in the past weeks, I have neglected my career and I

haven't written anything or sung anything in a month. Since I came home to be precise.

"We have an idea," says Nontle as soon as they all walk into the kitchen. Nontle is the one with the ideas. "How about we try to perform the spell we did that night but we say the opposite of what we said last time or get Athena to say it."

"You mean kill me again?" says Athena who is now standing by the kitchen door. I swear she is everywhere these days.

"We are not saying it will work but it's worth a try," says Langa. Athena answers, "The only problem is that I end up dead in all this if it works."

Jacob mumbles, "You are already dead."

Nontle shifts closer to Athena and says

Advertisement

"If it works then we can do another spell and find a body for you."

"I don't trust you, I don't trust any of you and I know you would do anything to get rid of me. Remember I have to find rest for crazy here to be set free. If my spirit is here or roaming Kairo remains crazy. I don't want to be part of the plan."

I say, "We don't even know if it will work, we are just giving it a try."

"Then try it without me," she leaves the room.

"Quick question, does it work when she is unconscious?" I ask Nontle, "We can always knock her out."

Nontle answers, "Unfortunately, we need her conscious."

"Then we have to wait until Cassie takes over. It could be in the next three days but it's worth a try."

"Where did you find this?" Kairo picks up the photo on the table, "I know this woman."

"You know Ruth?"

Kairo nods, "Yes, she is my mother. The woman who abandoned me because I was too weird for her."

"Let me see that," Nontle takes the picture from Kairo, "This is your mom?"

"Yes, I remember this photo from the photos I have of her," Kairo replies.

"No, it can't be. Are you sure?" – Nontle.

"I am sure, how can I forget the face of the woman who abandoned me," Kairo says. I think he hasn't healed from his mother leaving him. I noticed he never wants to talk about it.

“Nontle are we missing something?” Jayden asks her. I also want to know because it seems she knows something we don’t.

Nontle says, “If this woman is Kairo’s mother then it means Kairo is my brother or half-brother because this woman is my mother too.”

CASSANDRA

I can’t sleep. The dance was fun and I didn’t want it to end. I wanted Ruth and I to have more fun but she said she wanted to go to bed early. Usually, I am the first to complain but today Ruth seemed like she didn’t want to party with me. Maybe I am thinking too much about it because Kennedy stood me up. Speaking of Kennedy, he hasn’t tried to apologize or call me.

I get out of bed and get myself some water. I can’t sleep so I am going to go and bother Ruth. I can’t be the only one who cannot sleep. I wear my gown and head to Ruth’s room and get the shock of my life. All my friends are in there and everyone seems to be having a time of their life. Kennedy and Ruth are on the bed, kissing. It’s like they are having a mini-party. It's past two am and I thought Ruth said she was tired.

“What is this?” I walk into the room and close the door behind me, “What is going on?”

Ruth quickly gets on her feet, “Athena, it’s not what you think.”

“You are kissing my boyfriend, is it really not what I think it is?”

“I can explain,” Ruth walks toward me and when she is close I push her way.

“Explain what, you are kissing my boyfriend.”

“Baby calm down and let us explain,” says Kennedy.

“I cannot believe you and I cannot believe all of you. As for you, Ruth...” I jump on her but the others hold me back. A part of me wants to strangle her. She is supposed to be my best friend. When my friends notice that I am overpowering them, they shove me into Rita’s closet, locking it. I hear the door opening and closing.

I bang on the door and call for help but no one comes to my rescue. I do it for hours, screaming my lungs out for help but no one comes. It’s a school-fitted wardrobe and there is no air coming in.

## SEBASTIAN

“Is everyone ready?” I call, “We need to get moving.”

We are all going to see Ruth today. Thank God, we have Nontle who knows where her mother lives and today she is taking us to her. When I say all of us are going, I mean all of us are going. Sanele, all of Cassandra’s friends, and me. I hope Ruth will give us something positive to work with. She is our last hope and I have my fingers crossed that she knows how to help us undo all this mess.

We didn’t tell Athena about our new discovery. It is best if we keep her in the dark. I know she will try something crazy if she finds out that we are trying to get rid of her. She has overstayed her welcome and she needs to leave. She needs to accept that she died in 1996. We still don’t know how she died but we cannot change the past. As Sanele said, the dead are supposed to remain dead.

What we are going to do today is leave her locked in the house. She will not be happy about it but she will get over it. We cannot afford to lose her so locking her in the house is the best option. She knows better not to do something stupid because she now has more time than Cassandra meaning if she hurts herself she will feel more pain.

“Guys we need to move!”

“Quit being a dad. It’s five in the morning, some of us are not morning people,” says Sanele. We decided to leave early in the morning that way we don’t have to drive in the scorching sun. It is very hot these days.

“You could lead by example you know. Show the kids the right way.”

He answers, “I am no one’s role model and I am not leading anything. You are the celebrity. I am sure they will listen to you, people listen to famous people.”

“We are done,” the kids say.

“Did everyone get what they need?” I ask, “We won’t make stops maybe one bathroom stop because it’s a two-hour drive. Where is Jayden?”

“I am here,” says Jayden coming down the stairs, “I went to check on Cassandra, she is still asleep. It has been more than twelve hours. Shouldn’t we be worried?”

“She has been getting Athena’s visions and her not being able to wake could only mean that she is getting close to the time when Athena died,” Kairo responds. I still wonder how he knows all this. Well, he has been trying to get rid of his curse so that explains the knowledge.

“What will happen if she remembers everything?” Gail asks. I thought we talked about this last time we were looking for everything.

Kairo answers, “We lose her and Athena fully takes over. We will never see Cassandra again.”

“I think I should stay and keep an eye on Cassandra or Athena,” says Jayden.

I answer, “We all need to go in case Ruth knows how to reverse this mess.”

“I will stay,” Kairo offers, “I am not needed anyways.”

“You need to meet Mom,” says Nontle, “I am sure she has an explanation as to why she abandoned you. Don’t you want to hear what she says?”

Kairo answers, “All she will give me is excuses and I am not ready for that.”

Sanele says, “Maybe she might also fix your situation. Let’s all go and come back sooner. Let’s go to the car.”

Everyone goes to the car leaving me with Sanele in the house. We had to hire a van for this trip because my car is too small for everyone to fit. “Are you ready?” I ask Sanele.

“I hope it’s not another dead end. It is the last thing we need right now.”



I say, "Let's stay positive, and here are the keys, you are driving."

He leaves the house and I call Cassandra's father. I told him about Ruth, now I have to update him that we know where she is.

Me: Good morning, Mr. Ndlovu. I hope I didn't wake you up.

Mr. Ndlovu: I have been up since three. Prayers...is everything okay? You never call so early.

Me: We know where Ruth is and we are on our way to see her.

Mr. Ndlovu: Finally some good news. Can I come with you?

Me: We don't want to crowd her in her house. Everyone this side is going. We will update you on how our trip goes.

Mr. Ndlovu: What about Cassandra or Athena? Are you going with her?

Me: We think it's best if she stays. Athena will not be happy if she finds out we want to get rid of her.

Mr. Ndlovu: I wish there was a way to help with all this. This is my daughter yet you are doing all the work. I will forever be grateful.

Me: We are all putting in the work. Your prayers are working too.

Mr. Ndlovu: I hope Ruth will be able to help. I cannot lose my daughter again.

Me: I hope we don't get to that. I have to go, I will update you on everything.

Mr. Ndlovu: Thank you very much, Sebastian. May the Lord bless your good heart.

Me: Thank you too. Your prayers have helped me a lot too.

I lock the house and head out. I hope Athena is not crazy enough to break down the door but still, she will need a remote to open the gate so she will still be stuck.

“Okay

Advertisement

let's go,” I say as soon as I have buckled my seatbelt.

“What were you still doing in there? I hope you were not calling that ungrateful girlfriend of yours.”

“Drive please,” I turn up the radio. The last thing we need is to be annoyed by Sanele all the way.

We hit the road. The drive is a little awkward because everyone is quiet except for Sanele and his boring unending stories. I swear if we were not identical I would think he was swapped at

the hospital. Sanele is the opposite of me. But, his ridiculous stories are making the drive bearable.

Sanele clears his throat, "So your mom is fine and didn't go crazy like the others?"

Nontle answers, "I wouldn't say she is crazy but she has her moments where she talks to herself."

"Like Kairo, he also talks to himself," says Sanele. Does he have to be so blunt? Kairo is also in the car for Christ's sake.

Nontle replies, "She is different. She talks to herself like everyone does when they are alone but when around people she is fine. Well, she seems fine to me I don't know how other people see her."

"And you, Kairo are you ready to meet your mother?"

"Sanele let him be. It's up to him if he wants to see his mother or not," I say. Knowing Sanele, Kairo will get to his mother pissed if this continues like this. Kairo doesn't have to talk to Ruth if he doesn't want to. Us wanting her help does not change that he abandoned him when he needed her.

"We are here," Sanele parks the car outside some house,

"What is the way forward, Nontle?"

"We can all go in, it's fine."

“Are you sure?” I ask, “Don’t you want to talk to your mother first?”

She replies, “My friends come here all the time. She will be fine with it. Let’s go.”

Everyone gets out of the car and I ask Kairo to stay behind. I don’t want it to seem like we are shoving his mother down his throat. If he doesn’t want to see her yet then I respect his decision. It also took me a while to fully forgive my father so I understand what he is feeling.

“How do you feel?” I ask Kairo. I know we should have had this conversation at the house but we didn’t get the chance.

“Honestly, I don’t know. The fact that my mother had another child after abandoning me, puzzles me.”

“I am sorry and if you don’t want to see her, I can tell Sanele to handle everything and I will stay here with you,” I say. “You don’t have to see or talk to her if you don’t want to.”

“I want to talk to her but at the same time, I feel like she will just make excuses about the 1996 saga. I want to know why she abandoned me and never looked for me.”

I answer, “You can only get the answers you seek if you talk to her.”

“I know but let’s handle the Cassandra issue first.”

“I am going to join the others, are you coming or do you want to stay in the car?” I ask getting out of the car. The others are still outside the gate and waiting for us.

“I’m coming.”

I say, “Again, if you are not ready you can just stay in the car.”

“I am ready,” he also gets out of the car.

We make our way into the yard with Nontle leading the way. We get inside the house and she shows us to their sitting room then goes to call her mother. As expected, her mother is shocked to see us but loosens up when Nontle tells her that we are her friends. Ruth keeps looking at Kairo, I think she recognizes him. They offer us something to drink and once we are settled we state our case.

Sanele says, “I hope you don’t mind but we would like to talk about 1996 and your friend Athena.”

Ruth’s face goes from happy to super angry in a split second she gets on her feet, “Get out of my house!”

Nontle says, “Mom they want...”

“Get them out of my house, Nontle!” she yells and exits the room.

SEBASTIAN

“Maybe I should have talked to her first,” says Nontle.

“You think?”

“Sanele not now please.” I say, “Should we leave? We don’t want to upset your mother.”

Sanele answers before Nontle, “We are not leaving without answers. If tying Ruth up and forcing the truth out of her is what it takes to save Cassandra then so be it.”

“Let me talk to her, please just give me a minute. I promise I will make sure we get the answers we need,” says Nontle before leaving the room.

We sit in awkward silence while Nontle talks to her mother. I hope we did not blow our only chance of helping Cassandra. Ruth is our last option and we need to make sure we leave this place with answers, anything tangible.

“Do you think she will agree to talk to us?” Jayden asks. He is the most positive one among us all but I think he is finally seeing things for what they are. As hard as it is to accept, we might lose Cassandra. I just hope Ruth helps us. I excuse myself and go outside.

I call Cassandra. I need to know if Athena is awake or not. I made sure that her phone was charged and next to her. I am keeping it cool but I am very worried. She has been sleeping for so long. I am scared Athena might be the first to wake up meaning goodbye to our Cassandra.

“Are you okay?” I ask Kairo who just joined me outside.

“Sort of. I still cannot believe I am in my mother’s house. I have so many questions.”

I answer, “You will get your chance to ask everything you want to ask. Let’s get back inside.”

We join the others who are still waiting. What is taking Nontle so long? We don’t have time to wait, we want to know how we can help Cassandra and leave this place.

“Somebody call Nontle before I do it myself,” says Sanele. I know he is capable of doing it.

Jayden is the one close to Nontle so he goes to call her and also disappears for half an hour before coming back. He says, “We might stay here longer than we imagined.”

“What took so long? What did Ruth say?” Sanele asks and Jayden tells us that Ruth doesn’t want to talk about Athena or what happened in 1996. Nontle is still trying to talk to her.

“Let me try, maybe it might help,” says Kairo.

I ask, "Are you sure? If you you are not ready..."

Sanele interrupts me, "Sebastian now is not the time. You, crazy town, go talk to your mother and bring her out here."

Kairo goes to talk to his mother. He takes a while and after about forty minutes, Nontle joins us and it seems Kairo is getting through to Ruth. Nontle makes us something to eat while we wait. How long does it take for two people to forgive each other? We are aging here. I try calling Cassandra again and still no one picks up. I wish there was someone I would send to the house to check on her. I am very worried. The only person who still has a key to my house is Rita so I call her.

Me: Hey, you good?

Rita: I am good, how are you?

Me: I am good and I am sorry to call just to say this but can you do me a favor?

Rita: What do you want?

Me: Can you go to my house and check if Cassandra is awake? She has been asleep since last night and I am very worried.

Rita: You called me not to talk about our relationship but to ask me to check on Cassandra? Wow!

Me: Rita, please! I wouldn't have asked you if it wasn't important.



Rita: Fine, I will go check on her and use the opportunity to leave your house keys.

Me: Can you at least give me a chance to explain everything?

Rita: No, and I think we should break up. I will text you when I get to your house.

She hangs up. I don't blame her for not believing me. Anyone who doesn't know what is going on would never understand. I head back into the house. Still no Ruth, how long do we have to wait? People are no longer sitting on the couch some are now lying on the carpet.

Sanele says, "All in favor that I drag Ruth out here raise your hand."

"There is no need for that

Advertisement

" Ruth walks into the room with Kairo following behind her. She sits down, "What do you want to know?"

Sanele answers, "I am sure your children have told you what happened. We want you to tell us how we can help Cassandra."

"First, you have to get the grimoire," she answers.

"There is no grimoire, Athena burnt it. Is there any other way to help Cassandra without the grimoire?" I ask.

Ruth shakes her head, "I am afraid there isn't."

"Who did the grimoire belong to? Maybe they can help us," says Jayden.

"The grimoire was just a book I found in the school library. I didn't even know if it works until today. We were just doing anything to try and save Athena's life." – Ruth.

"What do you mean save Athena's life? Weren't you the ones that killed her?" Sanele asks.

"We didn't do it intentionally. It was a mistake!" Ruth yells. The Athena topis seems sensitive to her.

"Easy now, we are not here to arrest you. We just want to know how to help Cassandra." – Sanele.

Ruth says, "There is no helping her without the grimoire and we don't fully know if there is a way to help her in the grimoire even if it was available."

"What happened in 1996. How did Athena die?" I ask

1996 - THE NIGHT ATHENA DIED

RUTH

"She is going to hate me, she is not going to forgive me for this," I say to Kennedy. I wish I had been honest with Athena – her catching me red-handed was worse than me telling the

truth. I wish I had told her that I had a crush on her boyfriend and that we were seeing each other behind her back. I didn't tell her because I knew telling her the truth was going to ruin our friendship. Athena and I have been friends for almost five years.

"Let's just tell her the truth. I am sick of hiding us. I don't like Athena anymore," Kennedy answers.

"You don't understand, she is my friend and I have been betraying her for months. She might forgive you but she will never forgive me."

Kennedy says, "She knows the truth now and she will want an explanation."

"I think we should call the others because you know what Athena is like. We can't go in there alone."

I stand outside my room while Kennedy goes to call the others. After the drama with Athena, they went to get some air and left me with Kennedy. After about ten minutes everyone joins me and we go inside my room. I unlock the closet and open the door. Athena falls to the floor as if she was leaning on the door.

"Athena!" I shake her and gasp, "Guys she is cold."

Kennedy comes to check on her and check her pulse, "No pulse."

Everyone comes to check on her and she is not breathing and is already cold. I say, "I think she is dead. I think she suffocated in the closet."

"That's impossible it has only been...," Kennedy checks his wristwatch, "Four hours. Damn it!"

"We have killed our friend, what are we going to do?" Bruce, one of our friends asks.

We pour water on her and try everything to wake her up but she is gone. We even try the grimoire because we are out of ideas. We do a bunch of spells but none of them work.

"I don't want to go to jail, what are we going to do? We have killed our friend," says Abigail (our friend)

"We won't go to jail if no one finds the body. There is no blood meaning there won't be evidence. All we have to do is hide the body and take the secret to our graves," says Kennedy, and we all agree to get rid of Athena's body.

## SEBASTIAN

“That explains why Athena has trust issues,” says Sanele after Ruth finishes explaining. They locked Athena in a closet and she suffocated then they got rid of her body. Couldn’t they give her a proper burial as their friend? Which also explains why her soul was still roaming around the school dorms.

“So there is no way we can help Cassandra?” Jayden asks, “There has to be something we can do. It can’t just end like this.”

“What happened after you got rid of Cassandra’s body?” I ask, “According to the newspapers from 1996 you and your friends thought you were haunted.”

Ruth exhales heavily, “After Athena’s death bad things started happening to us. It is as if we were cursed and she was haunting us.”

“Of course, she was haunting you,” Nontle utters sullenly, “You betrayed your friend, got rid of her body, and continued to be with her man. How do you expect her not to haunt you.”

“But you are fine meaning maybe you can help us fix this,” I say.

Ruth chuckles, “Fine? I am not fine. I still have nightmares of her and she is still driving me crazy. Kennedy couldn't take it anymore so he took his life.”

Kairo says, “I thought he died in a car accident?”

“A car accident that he caused. He couldn't handle the torture so he killed himself and left me with you. I also wanted to take my life but I had you.’ – Ruth.

“But you abandoned me,” says Kairo.

“It was not easy for me too. I had my own demons and then you also took the curse. I couldn't handle it. I did what I had to do to save myself,” Ruth answers and she does not seem apologetic about it.

Nontle mumbles, “And the award for mother of the year goes to Ruth. I cannot believe that I had a brother out there and you kept it from me.”

“Can you guys finish your family reunion later?” Sanele asks, “Right now can we get back to the reason why we are here? We need a solution to help Cassandra.”

Ruth shakes her head, “There is no way out. I suggest you say your goodbyes while you still can. I don't know how to fix this, especially without the grimoire.”

“There has to be a way!” Sanele yells.

“I am sorry,” Ruth replies, “I am sorry but there is nothing I can do. Even I would like to get rid of Athena and be freed from these nightmares but I don’t know how to.”

“What about putting Athena’s soul to rest?” Kairo asks.

Ruth sighs, “How many times do I have to mention that everything you are saying requires the grimoire? That book is the only thing with the answers we seek.”

“There has to be another copy. Let’s go back to school and try to find another copy at the library,” Jayden suggests.

Sanele stands, “Here is the plan, you guys go to your school library to find the grimoire. Crazy town, his mother and I will go and find Athena’s grave. We cannot fix this and put her to rest when we don’t know where she is buried. Sanele go back home and get Athena, unconscious or conscious we need her around to fix this.”

Ruth whispers

Advertisement

“I can’t remember where we buried Athena.”

“Mom seriously?” – Nontle.

“It has been seventeen years okay,” Ruth answers.

I sigh, “It’s twenty-seven not seventeen. Just go there and try to remember. You guys can take the van and I will try to get an Uber.”

We all part ways and I get an Uber heading back to my house which costs a billion. I didn’t even know that Ubers are this expensive when going a distance. I don’t know when last I was in one. On my way there, I receive a phone call from Rita.

Me: Hey, is everything okay?

Rita: Sort of, I am at your house and Cassandra is still asleep. I have tried shaking her awake and sprinkling water on her but nothing is working. Should I call an ambulance?

Me: No, she has a condition. That is what I have been trying to explain. It’s a long story.

Rita: What should I do? We can’t leave her like this. Why won’t she wake up? Her pulse is fine and she doesn’t have a fever.

Me: It’s a long story but I will explain everything later

ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER

“Finally, what took so long?” says Rita as soon as I walk into the house.

“I was out of town but I am here to get Cassandra.”



She follows me upstairs where I get Cassandra and get her to the car. I don't know if we need anything else. I try calling Sanele and he is not picking up. I am sure he is busy shouting at Ruth and not attending to his phone.

"Where are you taking her?" Rita asks.

"It's a long story, love."

She nods, "Keep me updated. I hope she will be fine."

I close the car door and stand in front of her. I cup her face and say, "I still love you and I hope when all this mess is cleared you will give me a chance to explain. It's not that I care about Cassandra more but she needs me right now and I need you to trust me. Give me a chance to fix us and fix everything as soon as I handle this."

"We will talk when you come back."

"I love you," I kiss her before getting into the car and driving to the university. I have so many missed calls from Cassandra's father but I will talk to him later. Right now the only thing he can do is keep his daughter in his prayers. That is the only thing at the moment. Without the grimoire and Athena's grave, there is nothing we can do.

JAYDEN

We have been searching for hours and there is no sign of the grimoire at the school library. People think we are crazy when we ask for it because they have never heard of such a book. There has to be another copy. There has to be another copy out there somewhere. The burnt copy cannot be the only copy of it. This cannot be the end of it. This cannot be how it all ends.

“I am tired,” Gail sits down.

“Sit down and get some rest,” I answer. She has a broken leg and she cannot strain it.

“We have been searching for hours why can’t we find it!” Jacob yells knocking some books to the floor.

Langa says, “Hey don’t get us kicked out of this place.”

“We have been searching for hours for Christ’s sake. Why did we go to those stupid dorms in the first place?” – Jacob.

“Jacob calm down, we will find the book and we will fix this,” says Nontle.

Jacob answers, “There is no finding anything because we are looking for a book that doesn’t exist. The only copy that was going to get us out of this was the burnt copy. We are doomed.”

“Can we think positive and continue searching,” I say.

“Let’s face it Jayden, there is no book. We are all going to go crazy when Cassandra dies. Just like the 1996 crew her death will haunt us,” says Gail.

Nontle replies, “But we didn’t kill her.”

“True but if she dies we are responsible.”

SEBASTIAN

The drive to the university feels like days. I have been on the road for less than an hour but it feels like I have been driving for days. I just hope I don’t get stopped by the police because how the hell will I explain having an unconscious person in my car in this heat? My phone rings and it’s Sanele.

Me: I am on my way, I will be there in an hour max.

Sanele: Quick question, will you bail me out if I get arrested for punching an old lady?

Me: Please don’t cause trouble, what is going on there?

Sanele: This old lady doesn’t remember where she buried her friend.

Me: It’s been years, give her a break.

Sanele: Our grandmother died when we were ten and we know where she is buried. How does she not remember?

Me: I don’t know okay just continue looking.

Sanele: Maybe a punch might knock some sense into her.

Me: No one is punching anyone. I will be there soon, please don't cause trouble.

Sanele: I can't promise that.

He hangs up.

## SEBASTIAN

We have found Athena's grave, sort of. Ruth says that's where she 'thinks' they buried her. According to Ruth so much has changed around the school since 1996. There are new buildings meaning the grave is anywhere around the area she showed us. Athena / Cassandra is still unconscious. I am just glad no one has questioned us moving around with an unconscious girl.

Sanele and I are at the school. We couldn't check into a hotel because how were we going to go into the hotel with an unconscious girl child? It was going to raise suspicion and it's not good for my reputation. Speaking of my reputation, I managed to disguise myself. I did not want anyone to recognize me. The last thing I need is people screaming at me and asking for my autograph.

Again we reach another dead end. At this moment I don't know what is going to happen. I don't know what the way forward is. I don't know what to do and I don't know what to tell Cassandra's father. Everyone is blowing up my phone, Cassandra's father, Zoey, my father even Rita everyone wants to know what is going on and I don't know. I don't know what to say to them.

Right now we are all gathered in Jayden's room. Ruth went home. We don't know what to do. We are out of options. We have all done what we could do and there is no way out. In the morning Sanele and I are going to head back home and give Cassandra's family the chance to say goodbye and then we wait for Athena to wake up.

We order something to eat and then go to bed although it's a little difficult. All this is a hard pill to swallow. Sanele and I are sleeping in Jayden's room. There are two single beds and is this a prison or a school? These beds are not comfortable at all. How do people sleep in these beds?

"Are you sleeping?" Sanele asks.

"I am not in the mood please."

He sighs, "This cannot be the end. She cannot be gone just like that."

"I am afraid it is what it is."

"What is going to happen to Athena when she wakes up? Are you going to take care of her or help her look for her family?" he asks.

"I don't know, Sanele. I am tired and I think my brain has shut down. I will cross the bridge when I get to it."

He says, "I know this is hard for you. I know how close you and Cassandra are."

"This is beyond our control."

"We tried our best, you tried your best. You don't have to feel guilty for not doing enough," he says.

"We have a busy day tomorrow. You should get some rest."

I wish I had noticed sooner that something was wrong with her. Maybe if I had found out sooner we would have also found a solution sooner. I close my eyes and drift to sleep.

The alarm wakes me up. I get up and also wake Sanele up. We need to leave before people start moving around. We are moving around with an unconscious person and we don't want to land in jail. At five am we are done and ready to leave. We are leaving the kids at school. They said their goodbyes the previous night. The person who is having a hard time than everyone is Jayden. He must have loved Cassandra. He is lucky I didn't even get the chance to break his ribs.

My phone rings for the hundredth time when Sanele and I drive home. Sanele talks me into answering it. I don't know why he is putting me in such a tight spot, I don't know what to say to Cassandra's father that's why I am not answering. I answer and my battery saves me by dying. Thank God, I really don't know what to say to that man.

When we get to the house, we get Cassandra inside and then call her parents that we are back. I don't know what is taking so long for her to wake up. She is going on 48 hours and it's very concerning.

CASSANDRA

I open my eyes and I am in a white room. I get out of bed and look around me. Am I dead? Is this what dead people see? I didn't even get to say goodbye to my family.

"You are not dead, not yet," says a female voice.

"Who are you?"

She chuckles, "Take a wild guess. My pretty face doesn't ring a bell?"

"Athena."

She smiles, "The one and only. We finally meet, Cassandra Ndlovu."

"You are pretty."

"You are nice. You are nice but it's time to let go. Your time is up. You invited me into your body and it's time to let me take over," she says.

"Where are we?"



She answers, "In your head, I am about to fully take over but you are still holding on. You are already gone, give up already."

"But this is my body, why don't you give up?"

"You willingly invited me in and this is my second chance at life. I am not throwing it away," she says.

"And this is my body and my life. I am not throwing it away either."

"You don't have a choice, sweetie. All I have to do is open my eyes, never let you take over and you are gone forever. I am just giving you a chance to freely do it. Plus, I wanted to grace you with the honor of meeting me," she says wearing a smile.

"So this is it? The end of me, you just wanted to say it before you take over?"

She nods, "Yes, and also to say goodbye. I am sorry that it had to be you. You don't deserve this but I also want to live."

"Can I at least say goodbye to my family?"

She answers, "Even if I let you

Advertisement

you don't have much time. You might get maybe thirty minutes. Your time is up."

"Thirty minutes is enough."

She sighs, “Fine, you can say goodbye but don’t hate me if it’s less than thirty minutes. I have no control over how long you get.”

I open my eyes and I am in my room. I check the time and date on my phone. It’s five days since I was last conscious. I think I also need a bath. I look around me, I am going to miss this place. I pick up my phone, I don’t know who to call first. I don’t know who to say goodbye to first. I have so many people in my life to say goodbye to. I don’t want to say goodbye. I don’t want this to be the end.

My parents will be shattered if I no longer exist. What is going to happen to my career? What is going to happen to Sebastian and Sanele? They have tried so much to help me only for this to end like this. I think I have been holding my phone for ten minutes not knowing what to do. Should I call my father? Should I call Sebastian? Should I call Jayden? God, I don’t know what to do.

If there is anything I am good at, it is singing. I say words better when I am singing so I close my eyes and sing:

‘Like every morning, the sun always rises

Reminds me of forgiveness you always provide

When life seems hard and there's no way out

Moving toward your love is the route

I give it all to you, the pain I go through

I give it all to you, my hope comes from you

I give it all to you, victory in you

I give it all, I give it all to you'

"You just wasted your time singing?" Athena asks.

"I didn't know what to do, there are so many people I care about and I couldn't close."

She says, "I can try to give you another chance."

"No, just take over but this is not fair. You are not fair. This is my life and this is my body."

"I'm sorry," she answers.

"You are not sorry. If you are really sorry then go back to where you were. I didn't kill you and I had nothing to do with your death. Why do I get to pay for it? You are not fair."

She says, "I am sorry. I just want to live."

"I also want to live."

"I'm sorry, Cassandra."

SEBASTIAN

I didn't know how much I was attached to Cassandra until we lost her. Two days ago, Athena woke up meaning Cassandra is

gone. It still feels surreal that she is gone. It feels like a dream that we will never see her again yet seeing her every day. Athena is still here and still at my house. It's hard having to look at her but at the same time when she smiles, I see Cassandra. The past two days have been hard, not just for me but for everyone. We are mourning a person we see every day.

"I am back!" Athena walks into the kitchen. Today she woke up very happy and said she wanted to see the city. She asked me to accompany her but I was not in the mood so I got someone to go with her.

"Hey."

"Today was fun, I had so much fun," she says excitedly.

"Good for you."

She shifts closer and hugs me, "Thank you, you are the only person who has shown me kindness around here."

"Why does it sound like you are saying goodbye?"

"No one likes me here so I should leave," she says.

"You can stay if you want. Where are you going to go?"

"I will be fine, don't worry about me. I am just happy I got to be around you people and everything," she leaves the room.

I head to my studio. Singing is the only thing that will lift my spirit. I get in the booth and try to sing something that I have been working on. The music stops when I am in the middle of singing.

“Athena, what are you doing?”

She says, “Your vocals sound a little dry.”

“Don’t play...what did you say?”

“You sound a little dry why not throw in some high harmonies?” she says wearing a smile.

I get out of the booth and go to hug her because those are the exact words Cassandra said to me when I first met her, “Tell me it’s you.”

“It’s me, Athena gave up my body. She said I deserve to live my life. I wasn’t completely gone, a part of me was still holding on and she willingly gave up. She said she was ready to rest.”

## ATHENA. CHAPTER 28. CASSANDRA.

Dear diary!

The past few weeks have been hectic for me. Okay, let me not only focus on the bad part, the past few weeks have been hectic and also fun. I don't know where to start, a lot has happened. To this day, I cannot believe that I was possessed by a soul from 1999. I am sure my kids would laugh the day I tell them this story. I doubt they would even believe me. So, Athena is gone. I don't know where she is but probably where dead souls go if there is such a thing.

I wish there was a way to save us both but there wasn't. The least I could do for her as a thank you was look for her grave, put a tombstone for her, and give her a proper burial. I know it was a little too late but it is the least I could do for what she did for me. She could have taken over my body but she chose to give me a chance to live. I will forever be grateful for that.

It's been four weeks since I have been myself. I am back at school and trying to catch up on everything I missed. My family was very happy when they found out I was me again. They even threw a party for me, it was amazing. Everyone I know came, my friends, my sister, Mary, my parents, Sebastiana and Sanele. Even Mr Jones senior was there to celebrate me. It was a great day and I got lots of gifts. Maybe I should get possessed more often - just kidding.

A lot has happened and I don't know who to start with. Let me start with Kairo. After Athena left my body, he also became fine and stopped hearing and seeing things that are not there. I guess he was right, Athena had to find peace for the curse to be broken. He finally left the school to start a new life. I don't know where he is but he promised to call once he is settled and told me that he has a plan. I won't lie I am a little worried about him but I hope he is as fine as he said he will be. He didn't fix things with his mother – I guess he still needs time. Kairo and Nontle were close before he left so I think they are fine and talking.

My friends Jacob, Langa, Gail, and Nontle are doing fine and just like me also catching up on their schoolwork. From the looks of things, everyone's life sort of took a standstill after Athena showed up. But we are fine and we get together when we can. My friends also threw me a party when I came back. My parents would die if they heard this but we had alcohol, we danced and had a nice time. For my first time drinking, I did well. Maybe it's because Athena was training my body while she was in charge.

Sebastian fixed things with Rita, thank God. I know Athena is the reason they started fighting. I would have been hurt had they broken up. I know how much they love each other. Sebastian and Rita have officially moved in together but it's still

a secret to the rest of the family because they know that his dad and my dad would force them to get married. They love each other but they are not ready to tie the knot yet.

Sanele went back home. He has been secretive lately, I wonder what he is up to. We wouldn't be surprised if he one day woke up a Preacher. Sanele is capable of anything but he said he is fine so I am going to trust his word. Also, he promised to break Jayden's ribs – for no reason at all. Having big brothers is not fun sometimes. I don't know why my boyfriend gets to suffer in their hands and his only crime is loving me.

Then there is Zoey she is pregnant and she is very excited to be a mother. But, she has been scared something might happen to her baby after what happened to the first baby but mom has been helping her through it. I am not involved in that, I know nothing about babies and pregnancy. More good news, Zoey's boyfriend finally put a ring on it. I am already searching for a bridesmaid dress because I know I will be the maid of honor. I better be or I am bombing her on her wedding day.

Who am I forgetting? Yes, my boyfriend. He has been the best I have to give him credit. I am glad that he was by my side when I needed him and never gave up on us. I appreciate him and I cannot wait to have more days with him.

I close my diary when the door opens. Jayden walks in carrying a plastic bag from Steers. I smile, "Is that for me?"



“You said you are craving burgers.”

“You are sweet,” I kiss him and take the bag from him, “You didn’t have to go out in the rain for me.”

“I didn’t go out in the rain. The driver brought the food and I still would go out in the rain for you.”

I kiss him again, “And that is why I love you.”

“I thought you loved me for my good looks.”

I giggle, “You are crazy, let me heat this so we can eat.”

I have a microwave in my room. I didn’t think he would get it for me. I just said I crave a burger and ribs from Steers. I am glad he bought it for me. Now I don’t have to worry about supper. I heat the food while Jayden finds a movie for us to watch.

We eat our food while watching a comedy. I don’t know if it’s me but Jayden does not seem himself today. It is as if something is bothering him.

I pause the movie, switch on the lights, and sit facing him.

“What’s wrong? Don’t say it’s nothing.”

“Let’s watch the movie first.”

I answer, “We will watch it after you tell me what is bothering you.” “I got something for you.”

I chuckle, "Is it a present? Why do you look nervous?"

"I am nervous and I am not sure you want this kind of gift from me." "Let me decide if I want it or not," I say

He asks me to close my eyes and I do so. I don't know what the gift is but I am also nervous. I am trying to think what he could get me that could make him nervous and nothing is coming to mind. "You can open your eyes."

I take a deep breath, slowly open my eyes, and gasp, "Jayden!"

"It's not an engagement ring."

I sigh in relief. I am almost twenty-one and I don't think I am ready for marriage, "What kind of a ring is it then?"

"I don't know the right name but this is me saying I want this to be a forever. I want you to one day be my wife. I know we are young and maybe things will change in the future but I want to be your first and last boyfriend. I want to one day be your husband. I know you are a P.K and there are dos and don'ts but I am willing to do that with you. What I am saying is that this is me promising you a forever and wishing this could be a forever. I love you, Cassandra and I want you to be my last girlfriend and one day my wife and the mother of my children."

I smile, "I wish that too. I accept your ring and I love you too."

He kisses me and stares into my eyes, “The road is not going to be easy but I want you to promise we will always have each other and that calling it quits won’t be an option.”

“I promise.”

And that is when my love story with Jayden began. We were kids when we fell in love but we held each other’s hands through thick and thin. He always says he is lucky to have me but I am the lucky one. I got the man I had always manifested, tall, handsome, muscular with a tattoo and he gave me two light-skinned girls as a bonus. Aint the Lord good?

.....**THE END**.....

**For daily latest books please visit <https://novelsguru.com/>**

**And also visit my Facebook page, and like and share it <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345453369055623>**

Thank you guys for downloading this book from my site please keep visiting <https://novelsguru.com/> for supporting me and also don’t forget to share it with your friends.

Dear Friends please download these books direct from <https://novelsguru.com/> bookmark this site for latest African books, and also supporting me Thanks.