

Unreal-Chapter One

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A in progress 'novel' I am currently working on. I am proud of my work. Please keep in mind NOT to steal or use anything. Don't feature on any website with out my given permission.

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CHAPTER ONE

((I am aware of errors. Keep in mind that this is being constantly looked at, edited, and added-to. Also, keep in mind that this is not all that I have written. More chapters will be following very soon. Please remember that, yet again, this is MY story. Everything is made up and belongs to me.))

I crossed my arms, staring at the other side of the triangular shaped room, forcing myself to keep my eyes open. My hair was a tangled mess wavering down my back, and I revoked anyone's attempt to keep it straight. For hours now I had been sitting here, watching, waiting, and anticipating.

For a while I had been getting this strange feeling, a feeling that something would happen in great proportions, proportions of loss that I couldn't hold back. I fingered the stiff fabric of my dress, letting my gaze slowly drop from the window, and to the carvings beneath my feet.

When my father had first built this house, it had been nestled near a sloped hill side, no neighbors of any kind except the grass and the trees. Over the last couple of years though, houses and cottages had swamped the area, and my family's place of refuge was ruined by a hundred or so merchants.

So this was what I was watching now, my eyes peeling back to window. The swarms of people frolicking past, enjoying the hot afternoon sun, passing by the small cottage that gave no hint that it housed one of the village's deadliest disasters.

My legs were so numb that I gave up on trying to prance over to the bigger window on my left, which gave the greatest view of a neighboring house. Instead I weakly reached up my hand to flick a piece of hair out of my eyes.

The door opened with a moan. I saw my mother as she entered, shaking her head slightly. "I told you," she said with a over powered accent clinging to her voice, "You should have washed up hours ago. Now you'll be all filthy in this dress."

I said nothing as she carefully placed a beryl dress on my bed. White lace shot up the back, twisting and weaving into a gorgeous border that spread from the waist up.

"It's..pretty." I managed to choke out. She raised an eye brow and surveyed me with a careful eye. "You better not be getting sick, Caster. No one will want you at the ball if your coming down with something."

I bit back a sigh. I wasn't sick, just stressed over by this feeling. I almost said that to her, ready to open my mouth once more. But I did not, I kept my mouth clamped shut and watched her body stiffen as a shear cry echoed throughout the hallway. Jonathan. My brother. "It's the baby," she reported, lifting her

droopy body from her hunched over position. "I'll have Mara come help you with the dress then.."

I studied the closed door, admiring my few seconds of freedom. My sanity. Down the hall way, I heard a few more muffled cry's and a door squeak shut. I rolled my head around, trying to get out the knots that seemed to have grown on me as I sat like the dead.

It wasn't long in till Mara shuffled in, her arms full with cloth and spun materials. She tipped over to the right, slumping against the threshold. I leapt from my chair, hurrying to help empty her arms. She said nothing, and I followed suit. I tried placing a few objects on the bed but she slapped my hand away, causing me to release the thread.

"No." She said firmly. "That's your Mother's thread. Wouldn't want you messing with that, would she?" As she turned around to assist with the dress, I silently mouthed her.

Mara. She was cold and hard on the outside as she was on the inside. It seemed like she loved everyone dearly in this house hold except me. I didn't bother with arguing with her anymore though, even though it seemed like a game to me when I was younger, it certainly grew old now. Mara was a maid to us-a servant. We have a small house, which I dislike greatly- but she scrubs every inch, corner, and wood shaving in till its sparkling clean.

You think I would be nice to her then. In till I met her attitude.

Mara jostled my shoulders, breaking my fantasies and dragging me back to reality, "I asked you a question, and you don't respond. I ask you again and you just look past me to the door." Her lips curl into a grimace, causing wrinkles to pop out around her mouth. "You don't deserve this dress." she hissed. She possibly was right, but I had to wear it. For my mother, I didn't want to let her down.

I stared at that black woman with hatred. "Just put it on me." I replied coldly. Not bothering to respond now, Mara quickly slid the gloves on my hands, her mouth in a scowl. As she put the hoop skirt on me, I quickly closed my eyes, not wanting to see the horrible piece of 'work' she was about to put on me.

Mara fluttered about me, and eventually to the back. She got a firm grip on my laces, and yanked liked there was no tomorrow. I got light headed, and reached around to grab her hair. At this point, I wouldn't care what the punishes would be from Mother.

Mara helped me into my shoes now, she gave me a mask, embroidered with light blue jewels. It had the appearance of the sky. I would wear it at the ball, - a masquerade that would be held by my mother and father-the richest people in the village.

I wasn't that excited to go. Why should I be? The whole village came, dressed up in clothes that they think are fashionable- which I think are way too ridiculous- and parade around like they think they are prized collections on a shelf, pleading to be recognized.

I do realize that it would please my family if I go. It was in our family records, anyways. Each Siyuk girl, when they turn 17 are eligible to attend a grand arrangement made by our parents. Even though I was the first lady in this family to have dark thoughts about the convection, I didn't want to upset my family.

So I stubbornly stuck out my chin as Mara finished me off- applying my hair into a neat bun, fixing a tiny

hole in the dress at the small of my back. As she finished, the door swung open and my mother reappeared, looking as tired as ever.

She wiped her hands on her dress as her eyes swept over me. Her face lightened up, I could tell, because tiny wrinkles in her face appeared as she smiled. "The dress looks wonderful on you, Caster." Mother praised, crossing over to embrace me. I smiled, trying to ignore Mara's frowns of discouragement.

"The baby is okay?" I asked, pulling away from Mother. She nodded, flattening out ruffles in the dress. "Just has the sniffles, nothing to worry about." I eyed her closely, detecting a tinge of an easement in her worn voice.

Then I remembered.

When I was at the ripe age of 4, I remember my mother telling me about a different child, one she hadn't made it to see the days of me being born. Her name was Tamari, and she had only lived to be about 3 years. She had come down with phenomena, a common case in our town. My mother had loved her dearly, and tried all she could to try to ease her out of the sickness. But only within a week of having the illness, Tamari had slipped away, never taking another breath again.

I sighed sadly and patted mother's arm, not wanting to see her in any form of pain.

She smiled once more. ". .I'm fixing dinner before we go." She announced. Me and Mara's eyes followed her as she left the room again. In the awkward silence that followed, I straightened my hair a bit, leaning over to get a good look in the mirror.

This was a stretch, but I decided to ask. "Mara," I said, "are you coming along with us?" As I watched in the mirror, I saw her face harden. "Of course not," she said briskly. "Why would I? Everyone is to come except the extremely poor and the servants, correct?" I sighed. I guess the information had slipped from my mind.

I said nothing else, the faint smell of food wafting towards me. I hurried towards the door, holding it open to let Mara pass. "I'm famished, are you?" I asked, trying my hardest to lighten up the mood.

The reply I got from Mara was a facial expression as strong as stone. And as bitter as pungent whisky. I let her go down the stairs first, not risking a broken spine or damaged face.

As I settled down into the hardened chair, I turned my face towards the window, catching the last rays of pink and gold that stain the ashen color on my face. A bowl full of steaming stew is set in front of me. I pick at it, not in the mood to eat, my stomach inside me a storm of churning mess.

Moments later, I find myself back in my room. I stare at the window, not really seeing what's outside, but what's reflected. I sigh when I catch sight of myself. This won't do, I think to myself, my fingers tracing slight dark circles under my eyes. Oh no Caster, I hear a inner voice in my head say, one more dominant, powerful. So what if people are to see you look hideous? Isn't that what everyone tries to cover with fashion and jewelry? I smiled at this wan thought, almost believing it myself.

There's a quiet rap at the door and my head shoots up like a bullet. The doorknob turns and in steps my

father, decked out in hunting gear. Instantly, I am confused by this. "Father," I say after we have embraced, "Why do you have that on?"

"Oh, this?" He regarded it coolly, like he had just realized it was on him. "Just my hunting outfit.." I cocked my head to the side, an eye brow raised. "But father, you never hunt." This seemed to pass through his foggy mind. "Ah..Yes. About that." He reached into a pocket at the front, pulling out a rather old parchment. He crossed over to my dresser, and spread it out.

The piece of parchment was a map, showing our village. I vaguely recognized the forest, surrounding the slums that hovered at the outskirts. My hand gripped tightly at my father's shoulder. Memories came flooding back to me. Memories about the slums, the poor, beaten down part of our village. The place were former slaves and wide-eyed children were raised and horded for food. The place where I would not be caught dead in ever again.

My father gently shrugged my hand off, interrupting my sudden train of thought. He started to talk, pointing at the woods. I narrowed my eyes as he droned on. " I'm hunting there, Caster. I'm taking hunting up as a new hobby," he smiled, drumming his hands on the spot. " I'll only be in there for a few hours..But I believe I'll have to-" He stopped, as I finished the sentence for him. " Miss my ball. Yes, father. I realized that." I tried to keep the anger and bitterness out of my voice.

" I am deeply sorry, Caster," he said, rising from the chair and rolling the map up. " But business is business." I scowled. Business? I thought. " What do you mean?" I demanded. He didn't meet my eyes. "I'm..I'm selling certain things, Caster. Food, clothes, whatever happens to appeal to the town." I kept looking at him, unblinking, not fully understanding. "So..Your saying that your selling everything we've made? Everything in the house?" My voice raised so loudly, I could hear it bouncing across the room, setting off echoes that disturbed my ears. Father set a distressed look on me. " Not everything, don't be silly. Just enough to raise enough money. " He tried to move over towards the door, and turn the handle, but my small hand gripped his like a vice.

"But we already have money, father." He looked down at my hand, swallowing. "What on earth are you getting at, father?" I pressed, trying to glean an answer. The only answer I got was a smack to the face with his free hand. The blow had sent me backwards, so I was on my bottom, dazed, and disoriented. His face seemed to come in and out of focus, and I could barely make out what he was saying. "Don't anger me Caster. You have no reason to treat your father like that."

I winced, using the chair next to me to lean against. "Sorry," I whispered. He narrowed his eyes. Then he turned the handle, opening the door, and shot out. I set heavily on the chair, covering my ears as the slam ricocheted across the room.

The pain subsided in my face, but my heart felt like lead. I had no clue what father was talking about. But I knew he was up to no good. I laced my fingers together and turned my head towards the window again, watching the outside world, hoping for a clear thought.