

# Double Take

By Gemini

Submitted: March 22, 2005

Updated: March 22, 2005

*Double Take is a fanfiction about the guys who play Harry and Ron in HP and two girls based on my and my friend. (I'm Gem) lol. If I actually finish this story and it turns out ok, I'm gonna send it out to see if I can get it published. tell me what*

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/Gemini/12613/Double-Take>

<b>Chapter 1 - Chapter One- Moving Out</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chapter 2 - Chapter Two- Maui</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 3 - Chapter Three- Here and Gone</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Chapter 4 - Chapter Four- Cheating</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Chapter 5 - Chapter Five- (it doesn't have a name yet)</b>	<b>31</b>

# 1 - Chapter One- Moving Out

## Chapter One- Moving Out

She stalked off down the dark hallway dragging her feet as she went. She didn't want to leave; the business was none of hers but of her fathers. He had recently been hired to work in a factory in London some nine hours away. Gemini had lived in the small town of Cornwall for as long as she could remember and wasn't just about ready to leave all of her friends behind. Slowing her pace, she struggled to prolong her last day in the old house. A shout from downstairs echoed its way to her ears.

"Gemini! Get down here and help me load everything into the van!" Her father bellowed, storming into view at the foot of the stairs.

She nodded silently and hurried into the living room. The carpet was barely visible through the wall-to-wall sea of boxes containing their belongings. She couldn't stand the sight of it and suddenly an overwhelming urge to run back to her room and cry flooded over her; but she knew her father wouldn't allow it. He wouldn't let her cry. "*Boys don't cry and neither should you.*" He had always told her. Her father had wanted a son. Had wanted more than anything to have someone to pass on the family name and watch rugby with. Unfortunately, shortly after Gemini was born, her mother was taken by a terrible illness and left the family without a son or mother.

This hadn't been an easy concept for him to grasp and so saying, Gemini had grown up a tomboy. She was strong, stubborn, and willing to take on any challenge her father presented. Regrettably, she had now found something she couldn't handle, and it was the one thing that could possibly make her life better in more ways than she could have imagined.

Picking up the two closest boxes to her, she set off out the door to the front driveway where the moving van was parked. It was nine when they started, and by the time they had finished, the sun was high in the sky and her wristwatch read 1:15. She slumped, exhausted, onto the curb as her father did a final inspection of the house. She couldn't bear to look at it and let her head fall dejectedly into her arms.

Suddenly she felt a hand rest itself on her shoulder and turned to look up into the smiling face of her best friend, Kyleigh. Jumping up, she near tackled her and they both hugged for a few moments.

"You've gotta promise to call me as soon as you can alright? *We must* hear how the house is." She laughed, trying not to look too disheartened.

Gemini smiled in spite of herself. "I promise. But no having fun of any sorts while I'm gone right?"

There were footsteps behind them and Gemini turned again, this time to see James, her boyfriend of one and a half years, walking up to her. For a couple of seconds, neither of them said or did anything, then, without warning, Gemini wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him to her. **He pressed his forehead against hers and kissed her softly on the nose.** She smiled and kissed him back. There was

silence between them as they embraced for a final time. Without saying a word, she stepped back, her hand held fast in his as she began to walk away.

As her fingertips fell from his grasp, a single tear slid down her pale face.

Her father shouted from the cab for her to hurry up and with a last wave to her friends, she climbed into her seat and closed the door.

They drove on through the day, the poorly air-conditioned van making it hard to concentrate on anything. The hours passed slowly but soon the sky before them began to darken, streaks from the setting sun highlighting the clouds and sending shadows crawling across the road. By the time the van pulled up in the driveway of a small indigo house, the moon was high overhead and silvery stars glittered in the sky.

“Get the sleeping bags and pillows from the back. I'll be inside.” Her father growled over his shoulder as he inserted the key into a lock on the front door.

Opening the back of the van, Gemini saw that the items she had been sent to retrieve were sitting close to her where she could easily reach them. Dragging them across the pavement, she made her way to the open front door.

Inside the house was filled with shadows, the only light coming from the windows and what appeared to be her father's room. She laid his things inside the door and then turned back down the narrow hallway that led towards the back of the house. At the end of the hallway she was faced with a door, which swung open to reveal a small darkly coloured room with thick carpeting and two windows on the right and opposite wall.

Setting down her possessions in a corner, she strode over to the facing window and rested her elbows on the sill. **She found herself slowly gazing off across a small backyard and onto the back of a facing house.** Parallel to her, a window was set into the creamy brown surface texture of the house's rear wall. The room beyond it was shadowy and dark. As her eyes adjusted to the light she could see something moving within it. A person paced back and forth in front of the window, apparently unaware of her eyes following his or her every movement. She was much too tired to think though and when the figure stopped suddenly and backed out of view, she hardly noticed.

Slowly, she began to let her eyes wander again. Across the backyard, along the stone wall separating the two properties, and to the houses on either side of her. To her left, the yard was bare; the space taken up only by a small, shrivelled garden covered in weeds and looking in dire need of attention. To the right stood a massive willow tree, towering over the house and everything around it. It looked to her as though the tree had lived there longer than any of the houses in its vicinity. Up near the top she noticed what looked to be a cleared area, perfect for her hammock. She couldn't wait till the next morning when she could check it out for herself.

A noise from across the wall made her jump and her head snapped around to see the window across from her being opened. With one swift movement, she was back in her room and out of sight. She sat in the dark for a couple moments, regaining her breath, then peeked timidly through her window and was astonished to see a boy leaning his head outside from the other house.

He looked to be about her age with long red hair that came to nearly shoulder length and curled slightly at the bottom. Thick bangs fell across his forehead, partially shielding his eyes. A bridge of freckles lined his nose and lightly covered the rest of his face as well. He squinted into her room. He must have seen her for he didn't take his eyes away. After a few moments, he disappeared back inside his room and shut the window.

Gemini slumped against the wall and let her eyelids slide shut; she didn't even bother to crawl into her sleeping bag.

## 2 - Chapter Two- Maui

### Chapter Two- Maui

She awoke the next morning to the toe of a boot nudging her lightly in the side. Sitting up, she saw her father standing above her.

“It's nearly nine o'clock. We've got a lot of work to do today. No sleeping in. I want you up and helping me bring in the boxes.” He said, walking away.

As he shut the door behind him, Gemini sat up, looking around at her room as the sun streamed in through the window above her.

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The living room, she saw, was now littered with boxes and there was still much work to be done. As she stepped out the front door, she saw her father standing beside the van, attempting to balance several boxes on top of each other.

The morning seemed long, but before either of them knew it, it was nearly mid-day. The hot summer sun loomed high overhead, watching as they carried numerous boxes into the small house and pelting their sore backs with its burning rays. Once all the boxes were unloaded, they set about to unpack everything. The boxes labelled Gem went to Gem's room. The boxes labelled Max went to her father's room. And the rest stayed in the living room for the time being.

The total of Gem's boxes covered one wall and filled out into her room some. She reached for the closest package and lifted it into her arms. Upon opening it, she found that she had picked the box containing her books. The bookcase they were to go on was still out in the van along with the other pieces of furniture and she hurried out to retrieve it. Returning to her room, bookcase in tow, she made her way into the corner to the right of the door. She set it down and stepped back to admire it, making sure this was in fact where she wanted it before she began loading it with heavy books and knickknacks.

The first things to go on were the books; they took up two and a half shelves, leaving two and a half more for any other odds and ends she might find while looking through the other boxes that still needed unpacking.

The next box contained bedspread and pillow. With another trip out to the van, she managed to haul her bulky mattress through the house and into her bedroom. In the third box she found her photography supplies; her camera, its hard black plastic case, the detachable flash, the multiple lenses for it, the cleaning cloth and fluid, and a few rolls of black and white film. All these items but the film, which went into the refrigerator to make it last longer, were spread out on the second to top shelf on her bookcase. As she dug through the remaining boxes lining her room, she soon stumbled upon the one holding her most prized possession: her hammock. She lifted it gingerly out of the box and held it up before her for

inspection. There were a few tangles, but that was to be expected. She thought for a moment about where to place it; Where would be best to spend the rest of her summer days? She glanced out the window and, remembering the willow tree, dropped the hammock out onto the grass. Following it over the sill, she stooped to pick it up, then hurried over to the base of the tree. Gazing upward, she saw a perfect path up to the top, where she had seen the clearing in the branches the night she arrived.

Scurrying up the trunk at an almost inhuman speed, she soon arrived at the top and sat back to catch her breath. She unfolded the hammock and, locating the tie strings, commenced to hang it up. **It only took a matter of minutes before the whole thing was securely fastened to the tree, and when she was done, she happily laid back on the seat she had made herself.** Glancing down at the ground, she saw the boy from the night before standing at his window and gazing intently into her room. Once satisfied that she wasn't there, he disappeared.

Giggling, Gemini followed her path back down to the ground and jumped back inside. Looking around she saw that while she had been gone, her father had been kind enough to bring in her vanity and bedside dresser. She smiled and quickly rushed out into the hallway to help him drag in her wardrobe as well. He helped her set it up against the wall then spoke to her.

"I was thinking about having some of my new work mates come over for a little party later today and it would be helpful if you weren't in the house." He said, finishing the sentence over his shoulder as he turned and walked out of her room.

She nodded and set about making sure each piece of furniture was properly placed against the walls. When this task was complete, she began rummaging through the boxes on her floor for the one containing items to go on her vanity. Locating it, she carried it over to her bed and sat down. The boy was out in his backyard playing with his dog and she couldn't help but position herself directly in front of the window where he might have a chance of seeing her. A couple times she looked into his yard to see him looking back, each time he quickly turned his head away and continued to play with his dog.

**As she was lifting a stack of seven some books onto the vanity top, she turned to look at him and dropped them on accident. Gasping, she bent down to retrieve the pile from the floor.** When she sat up, she looked again to see if he had seen her clumsy mistake. In that instant as she was turning her head, something round and fairly solid came pelting through her open window and struck her hard in the forehead. She toppled out of sight onto her bed and lay there for a few moments, dazed and unsure what had happened.

There was a pounding of footsteps outside her window and the boy appeared, face a ghostly shade of white, leaning into her room to see if she was ok.

"I'm really sorry about that. Did I hurt you?" He asked quickly, offering her his hand. She took it and smiled at the warmth she felt beneath her fingertips.

She shook her head. "Oh, no. I'm fine. It just kinda scared me a bit. You throw too hard."

"Heh, yeah. I was throwing it to Ruby but I must've slipped or something. I wasn't trying to hit you." He blushed, noticing they were still holding hands and quickly taking his away. She blushed too then scrambled over to the other side of the room where the tennis ball had stopped after bouncing off her

face.

“Here, catch!” She shouted as she pitched the ball hard in his direction. He winced as it made contact with his hand, quickly dropping it to rub his palm.

“I guess I deserved that huh.” They both laughed at each other for a couple moments before the boy took a step back, saying that he had to go put Ruby inside and finish some chores.

Gem nodded and watched his retreating back. Once he had disappeared back into his house, she returned to the task of setting up her vanity. As soon as she was certain that everything was where it was supposed to be, she called down the hallway to her father that she was finished and preparing to leave.

The sun was still high among the scattered clouds and watched lazily as Gem made her way down the hot, reflecting pavement. Houses on each side of the street seemed a bit less accommodating as most had their blinds closed; though several people could be seen in their backyards playing in sprinklers or out front washing their cars. At various spots along her walk, Gem would find herself pausing to rest under the forgiving shade of a large leafy **oak or birch**. It was a pleasant walk and she could feel that she would have a good summer ahead of her.

Several blocks away from her house she came upon what appeared to be the local high school. It was large and made of brick, set just atop a small hill and surrounded with grass. As she approached it through the parking lot, Gemini could see small paths worn away in the grass from years of students walking across them.

Sitting down in a soft looking patch of grass below a window, she pulled out her drawing supplies and opened the pad to a blank page.

*What to draw*, she thought, nibbling the end of her pencil. Casting her thoughts about for a suitable picture, all she could see was a single hovering face. The boy from the backyard. No matter how hard she tried, she found it nearly impossible to get him out of her mind. There was something about him that was just so magnetically attracting to her that she could hardly imagine anyone more perfect. Soon she found herself drawing his face over and over again until it covered an entire page.

She snapped her head up as someone sat next to her, leaning over her shoulder to get a look at her notebook.

“Oh, sorry. Didn't mean to freak you out. What's your name?” The girl asked. She was short and possibly the same age as Gem with long dirty-blond hair and pale skin. Deep blue eyes peered from beneath a layered fringe and a big white smile shone beneath them.

Gem quickly shut the book, not wanting the stranger to see the drawings she had done of the boy. “I'm Gemini McRainey. I'm new here.” She introduced as she slipped her things back into her bag.

“Maui Cavendish.” The girl smiled, waving energetically. “Where did you move here from? Are you gonna be a senior or what? Is your house near here? Have you made any friends yet? Have you been here long enough to meet anyone? Why did you move to London anyways? Do you draw a lot? Can I

see your drawings? Do I bug you? Do you want to come over to my house?" She gushed, taking a gasping breath when she had finished.

Gemini couldn't help herself and broke out laughing, nearly falling onto Maui in the process. "Er, uh... What was the first question? I'm not in school anymore. I graduated last year. I haven't made any friends yet... kinda. Uh, I like to draw a lot. No you can't see my drawings. And sure, I'd love to come over to your house."

Maui beamed and stood up, brushing the grass off her pants and laughing at Gem's response. "Good. We'll have fun. I've got plenty of friends for you. Do you need to ask your mum or something?"

"I'll ask my dad. Hold on, I'll call him." She replied sullenly at the mention of her mother, reaching into her bag for the small cell phone.

Dialling her father's number, she raised the phone to her ear and waited.

"Hi, Daddy." She said after a moment. "I'm up at the high school and I just met this girl Maui. She wants to know if I can come over for a while." She waited again, biting her lip nervously as Maui giggled from behind.

There was more silence then her father spoke, "Sure, but be back before dusk. You know how to get back to our house right?"

"Yes. Thank you!" She grinned, hanging up the phone and turning back to Maui.

The girl's house proved to be only three blocks away from the school and it was an easy walk there. The house itself was large and white with grey trim and a faded black roof. The front door was black and flagged by two large rosebushes that steadily climbed their way to the roof. A perfectly tended flower garden lined the base of the house and a neat row of dark green hedges concealed the white picket fence running along the outside of the yard. It was a beautiful house in all aspects and Gemini couldn't even begin to imagine what treasures the inside might hold.

"Mum! Daddy! I'm home! I brought a friend, hope you don't mind." Maui shouted when she entered. Gemini saw that the room they had just walked into was the living room, with a TV in the corner surrounded by couches and a small coffee table. Forward a little and to the left was a hallway lined with several doors. Far right on the facing wall was a door leading to the dining room. Maui led Gem through this door and turned left.

"Are you hungry?" She asked as they stepped into the kitchen.

"Not really; I'm good, thanks." Gem said, watching as Maui opened up the two large cupboard doors to the pantry.

"Alright, I'll only make you one burrito then. I'm having two." Maui giggled as she emerged from the shelves, tortillas, refried beans, and cheese in hands.

Gem raised her eyebrows and laughed as Maui set about to prepare the food. When the burritos were



done, Maui lead the way down stairs to her bedroom. It was decently sized with a computer in one corner, a three person couch set up in front of it, a bed pressed against the other wall, a dresser, a bedside table, and a wardrobe all lining the remaining walls. Maui promptly flung herself over the back of the couch and began to tear away at her food. Gem laughed as she followed, taking the empty cushion on the end.

“So,” Maui said, bouncing upright so she was face to face with Gem. “Tell me about where you came from. I wanna hear what kind of friends you had. For reference.”

Gem thought. “Well, I used to live in Cornwall. My best friends were Kyleigh and James. We've all been friends since we were babies. Kyleigh is a year older than me and James's is only a couple months younger than me. They're both pretty cool. I'm gonna miss them. But we might see each other when we go off to college.”

“Neat! My friends that you get to meet have been friends with me since we were babies too. Daniel is my boyfriend. Rupert isn't. I think you might like Rupert.”

Gem blushed. “I don't know. But I'd sure like to meet them. What's Daniel like?”

“Er, he's Daniel Radcliffe.” Maui said, bracing herself as though she were expecting Gem to attack. “And Rupert's Rupert Grint.”

There was silence as Gem stared blankly at her friend. “Ok... So what are they like?”

“Don't you know who they are?” asked Maui, a confused look plastered across her face.

“No, I told you, I just moved here. You're the only one I've met really. Should I know them?”

Maui shook her head. “No. Sorry. I just thought that... Never mind. But yeah, Dan and Rupert are cool. They're funny and nice and all. Dan and I have been going out for a year and a half now. You and Rupert would be adorable together. I'm so hooking you up with him!” She beamed, bouncing a little off the back of the couch.

“Thanks... I guess. So when do I get to meet these fabled men?”

Rolling her head onto her shoulder, Maui chewed absently at the burrito in her hand. “I dunno. Are you free tomorrow? Maybe we can double date. You know, go to a movie or something.”

“That sounds fun. What movie?”

“I don't know. We'll see what there is. What kind of movies do you li--“ Maui started, cut off suddenly by the ringing of the phone on her desk. She picked it up and lifted it to her ear.

“Yes?” There was a pause and her face lit up. “Hey Danny! We were SO just talking about you! Yeah, I made a new friend. What? Oh, her name's Gemini McRaney. She's cool. You and me'er gonna get her and Rupe together. You says what? No. Yes. What are you talking about? Hey, you should, like, tell Binka and Nugget hi for me. That's great. You're great. Yeah, I miss you too. We haven't seen each

other for what..." she checked her watch. "eight hours? Oh I know! You should come over and meet Gem! No. Don't do that. Yeah right now. You're so immature! Shut up. Daniel Alan Radcliffe! Goodbye. Yes, I love you too." And with that she hung up.

"Ok, so Dan's gonna be over soon. Maybe then you'll recognize him."

"I've only seen one guy since I got here. He lives behind me and hit me in the forehead with a tennis ball."

Maui laughed and continued to gnaw at her food.

The two sat and talked for a few more minutes before there was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" Maui shouted, attempting to keep a mouthful of beans from spilling out of her mouth. The door opened and a tall, dark haired boy walked in. Maui looked to Gem expectantly but her friend only waved calmly at Daniel.

"So Dan, we were gonna double date with Gem and Rupert. What movie should we see?" Maui started again as her boyfriend took a seat next to her, wrapping his arms around her shoulders and kissing her lightly.

"I dunno. I'm really not pro-anything right now. All the movies are good. Action, romance, comedy, and fantasy isn't it? But you know the fantasy one looks kinda neat. What was it called again?" Asked Dan, taking a bite out of Maui's burrito.

"Here and Gone. I think that's it anyways. The one with the witches and crap?"

Daniel scowled suddenly, "Yeah, the one that copied Harry Potter?"

"Danny... They didn't copy Harry Potter. What do you think Gem? Seen it yet?"

"No, sorry." Gem said quietly. "I haven't even seen Harry Potter. But I've read the books at least. They're brilliant!"

The couple looked suddenly shocked. "You've never seen Harry Potter? Have you at least seen any pictures from it? Posters or anything?"

"Not that I can think of. I stay around my house mostly and we don't get mags or TV or anything." She said miserably, hanging her head. "But I've heard it's great. And that the actors are really good. Have you two seen it then?"

"I've seen it a couple times. It's the best. And the actors are fab!" Maui giggled. "The one who plays Harry is a major hottie."

Dan breathed in sharply, frowning at his girlfriend. "And what about me? Is he better than me?"

"No, Danny. You're pretty cute too. Ooh, and Gem? You'd totally love Ron. He's great. Absolutely

adorable.”

“Ron was my favourite character in the books.” Gem chuckled, biting her lip. “I can't wait to see who was cast to play him. He's probably ugly though, knowing my luck,”

“Oh well, maybe we can all watch it sometime! That would be the best. I think you'd enjoy watching it with us. Dan and Rupert can practically act out the parts. It's great.”

“When?”

Maui bounced up in her seat. “Right now? We could invite Rupert over! It would be so much fun... Oh, but it looks like it's getting dark out, you have to go don't you.”

“Yeah, but thanks for having me over. Wait, what time's the movie?” Gem asked, jumping over the couch and heading for the door.

“6:00”

“Right, I'll see you then. Bye.”

By the time Gem arrived back home it was nearly dark out. Her father's silhouette flicked past the window as he pulled the curtains back to see if she was coming. She waved as she walked past into the back yard and up the willow to her hammock. Flopping tiredly onto her back, she looked up through the branches at the fading light. Pulling out her drawing pad and pencil she used the last rays from the sun to draw the boy one more time before she headed back inside to go to sleep.

### 3 - Chapter Three- Here and Gone

#### Chapter Three- Here And Gone

Gemini awoke the next morning, not to her father prodding her in the side, but to a warm breeze sifting in through her window and the hot summer sun falling across her face. She squinted as she sat upright, rubbing the sleep from her eyes and scooting over the edge of her bed. The wall clock she had rested atop her dresser read half past seven.

Her father was already up and unpacking in the living room. A small pile of newspaper and boxes sat in the corner and she watched as he gently set pictures of their family on the mantle above the fireplace.

“Good morning, Gem. Do you want to help me nail up some pictures? The hammer and nails are over there on that box. No, on second thought, go out to the van and get the end tables for the couch.” He said as she stepped up beside him to look at the photographs. Each one was facing slightly towards the middle where a glass sphere containing a single preserved lily sat reflecting the light from the morning sun.

After she had returned from fetching the end tables, Gemini set about to help her father hang up the rest of the pictures. When that was done, a few new friends from work were called over to help carry all the heavy furniture into the house and Gem was released to her willow until the job was complete.

She hurried back into her room, snatching up her bag and bolting up to her hammock. She had to draw something else today. Something to take her mind off the boy. She was to meet someone else at six that day and she needed to get him out of her thoughts. She set the pencil to a blank sheet of paper and began to draw. Soon, the image of a woman in a rocking chair formed before her. This woman was cradling something in her arms. A baby. Long sheets of silken hair fell down one side of the woman's head, the other half tucked behind her ear to reveal her face. She was beautiful, with high cheekbones, a perfect jaw line, and a calm smile lighting up her face. ‘Mummy’ Gem labeled below the picture before turning the page.

There was a noise from below and she shifted her notebook so as to get a good view of the garden below her. The boy was out in his yard watering a small clump of flowers. He looked up at her, then, seeing her gaze on his, turned away quickly to tend to his job.

She giggled silently and dropped the pencil she had been holding. It bounced off several large branches before falling square into the garden below her. Staring down at it, she debated crawling down and retrieving it herself, or calling over to him to throw it up instead. This would, after all, be a good way to get a conversation started.

“Oy!” She called through the branches, scooting onto the edge of her hammock and brushing a lock of stray hair out of her face. “I dropped my pencil, do you think you could grab it for me?”

The boy looked startled having been addressed by her and quickly hurried over to where she was pointing. After a few moments of searching, he located the pencil and climbed up on the stone wall to hand it to her. This, of course, was pointless seeing as she was up near the very top of the tree and he couldn't have reached her if he had tried.

"You can come up if you want." She laughed, seeing him pull back his arm to throw the pencil at her. "If you're not busy that is."

"Sure, just a sec." He grinned as he began scaling the side of the tree. She laughed at the sight of him struggling to pull himself up and around the branches protruding from the rough trunk.

Once he was nearly to the hammock, she reached her hand over the edge to help him up. Feeling his hand grab hers, she pulled hard, his head popping into view, shortly followed by the rest of his body.

"Nice place you've got up here." He said nervously as he seated himself on a thick branch facing her.

She nodded, looking around at her hammock. "Thanks. I like it too. Erm..."

"Oh, uh, here's your pencil." The boy said quickly, handing her the pencil she had dropped. He let his eyes shift to the notebook in her lap. "Are you drawing something?"

She looked down quickly; hoping the page wasn't open to a picture of him then shook her head. "No, I was earlier. But now I'm not. No... Just finished. Yeah, er, yeah."

He laughed at her for a few moments before starting again. "Can I see any of your drawings?"

"Sure, uh, let me find a good one." Said Gem, flipping the pages carefully so that the boy wouldn't catch sight of the sketches of him. Coming to the picture she had done of her mother, she handed it to him.

"That's amazing!" He said, smiling as he looked down at the notebook. "How long did it take to draw?"

She thought for a second. "About five or ten minutes."

"Wow. It would take me forever to get one of my drawings to look like that. Do you draw a lot?"

"Yeah. It helps pass the time." She laughed as he handed the notebook back to her.

"Do you think you could draw me?" He asked, posing jokingly.

She smiled, biting her lip as she set the tip of her pencil to a blank page. "Sure."

As she drew they talked.

"So... How do you like London?" The boy asked, stretching into a comfortable position across his branch. He watched as she continued to work on the drawing, not even looking up at the question.

She shrugged. "It's good I guess. I haven't had much of a chance to get to know a great deal about it

yet. I've been up to the school though. It seems nice enough.”

“Really? That's cool. How old are you then?”

“Eighteen. I'm gonna be nineteen on August 23 though.” She said as she worked to sketch the piece of hair he had falling between his eyes before he brushed it away.

He beamed. “That's the day before my birthday! What a coincidence. Yeah, I'm just a day younger than you then. Do you have any siblings?”

She felt her stomach clench. “No, my mother died after I was born, my dad wanted a son but he got me instead.”

“I'm sorry,” he said sincerely, a look of apology spreading across his face. “That must be hard. I have three little sisters and one little brother who's only a little younger than me. Still got both parents too.”

It was silent for a moment save for the scratching of Gemini's pencil across the paper.

“Hm...” she let her eyes flash from the drawing to the real thing. “Do you have any hobbies?”

He thought for a moment. “Unicycling I guess.” They both laughed. “It's fun, yeah, kinda hurts though. And I play the guitar, pool, football...” he began ticking things off on his fingers. “I like to swim and ride bikes and draw... Yes, I think that's it. Oh, and acting too...”

“That's quite a bit. You sound busy, do you have a job or anything on top of that?” Gem laughed, sketching the finishing details into the drawing.

The boy looked down suddenly. “Yeah, uh, no. No. I don't have a job. No.” He looked up sheepishly hoping she hadn't noticed his hesitation. She though was still staring intently at the notebook in her lap and smiled as she handed him the final result.

A near exact replica of him smiled back from the page as he took it from her. “Bloody! It's me! Oh, this is brilliant! Thank you.”

She beamed. “Hey, I thought you said you were a drawer too. Think you could do me?”

“Yeah. But I warn you; it won't be near this good. I can't do hair that well... Or girls. But I'll try.” He said, taking the hat from his head and placing it haphazardly on hers.

The next three hours flew by at an almost ungodly speed, the pair thoroughly enjoying themselves with talk and drawing and climbing around in the willow, neither keeping track of the time. As Gemini sat perched on a thick branch someways up, she flung a piece of stick at the boy then scurried to safety behind a curtain of leaves. Bracing her arms against the barricade to strengthen it for an incoming ambush, she caught sight of her watch.

5:37

“Crap!” She shouted under her breath, remembering the date she had planned. “I’m sorry, it’s 5:37 and I have to be somewhere. I had fun though; it was good getting to know you. Maybe we can hang out some other time.”

“That’s ok, I have to go too. But yeah, thanks for the picture and everything.” He smiled, the corners of his eyes crinkling as he did so.

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Back in her bedroom, Gemini strolled over to her vanity in an almost dream-like state. She couldn’t stop thinking of the boy. He was perfect! And funny, and nice. She shook herself mentally. She was on her way to a date in half an hour; she had to get a hold of herself. Stepping in front of the mirror she noticed that the hat the boy had put on her earlier was still in place.

She smiled at her reflection and adjusted the hat tenderly, letting her fingertips linger transiently on a break at the tip of the bill. The hat itself was dark blue in colour with a lighter blue emblem of sorts on the front. After a moment’s pause to admire the effect of the colours with her deep blue eyes and black hair, she left the vanity and pulled open the wardrobe in the corner in search of her jacket. Once she retrieved this from beneath a pile of clothes near the floor, she put it on and slung her art bag over her shoulder.

Out in the living room, she found her father still busy with unpacking and murmured a quick goodbye so as not to disturb him.

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Unlike the school and Maui’s house, the movie theatre was quite a bit farther away than Gem had expected. After a few wrong turns and a stop to ask a man at the grocers for directions, she finally arrived before the front doors of the theatre. Maui, Dan, and Rupert were nowhere in sight, and, checking her watch, Gem found that she still had several minutes till their projected arrival.

Paying for her ticket, she sat down on a bench against a wall in the lobby and thought momentarily about pulling out her drawing pad and finishing up a small sketch of the boy she had been working on at the high school. Deciding against it, she folded her hands in her lap and stared at her feet. The sound of a door being opened and money being pulled from a pocket could be heard from across the room and Gem looked up to see the boy taking a ticket the cashier had offered and turning to towards the bench where she was seated.

There was a moment of hesitation as they looked at each other before he came to sit beside her.

“Strange.” He laughed, slipping the ticket into his pocket. “What movie are you seeing?”

Gem thought. “Here and Gone, I think...”

“Strange-er. I’m going to see the same movie. As soon as Maui and Dan show up that is. They’re supposed to be hooking me up with someone. You waiting for anyone?”

“Maui and Dan?” Gem choked, recognizing the names and the set up. “Wow, um, I know this a bit of

an off the wall question, but you wouldn't happen to be Rupert would you?"

The boy looked shocked. "Yeah... Crap... Then you're Gem. Well this is odd. Why didn't we figure this out-" He was cut off though as the door opened again and a voiced called from across the room.

"Gem! Rupe! Hey guys!" Maui beamed, bouncing over to where they sat and standing in front of them. "You've met now. That's good!"

Gem stood up, Rupert quickly following. "Yeah, hey, Maui. Remember when we were talking yesterday and I said I had only met one person aside from you here?" Maui nodded. "The one who beamed me in the head with the tennis ball?" Maui nodded again, not appearing to be following Gem's train of thought. Gem pointed to Rupert.

Dan walked over with their tickets to help his girlfriend. "They've met before now."

"Oh! Oh, that's neat!" Maui grinned, leading the other three into the movie theatre and into a row of seats near the front. Though Maui and Dan talked until the movie started, Gem and Rupert sat in awkward silence, neither of them looking at each other, each choosing to stare absently at the floor or any spare bit of space not containing the other.

As the movie started, Gem became uncomfortably aware of a sound coming from beside her and turned to see Maui and Dan draped across each other and not particularly bothering to keep quiet about it. She squirmed in her seat, grabbing edgily at the armrest below her fist. Rupert turned to her and opened his mouth to speak but, catching sight of his friends a few seats beyond, **chose to turn away and back to the movie.**

Being that this was a double date, Gem found herself feeling slightly pressured by the two and hoped desperately that Rupert wasn't thinking along the same lines as them. It was after all just the first date and whether or not they even held hands was a concept completely up in the air. Plus, she still had James! **She looked to him only to find him staring absently back at her and blushed, turning back to the shadowy floor below her feet.**

Though the couple beside her failed to discontinue their antics throughout the rest of the movie, Gem felt relieved to find that Rupert hadn't made a single move, and with only half an hour left in the theatre, she began to doubt that anything at all was going to happen. This thought seemed a bit depressing and she had to admit that she had been secretly hoping for him to at least hold her hand, in any case she had discovered that he wasn't the pushy sort and smiled inwardly to herself.

Suddenly, she felt something brush against her arm and looked down to see Rupert's hand reaching nervously for hers. Her heart leapt and so did Dan.

"This is the best part here!" He beamed, leaning across her. "This is where the guy dies!" Rupert quickly pulled back his arm and crossed it with its counterpart defensively.

A few people behind us let out unappreciative mutters and shook their heads angrily.



As they left the theatre ten minutes later, Gem couldn't have been madder at Dan for what he'd done. To think, Rupert had almost held her hand! She could only hope that she would get another chance.

"Well that was a good movie." Maui said happily, squeezing Dan's arm and smiling.

Dan nodded. "Yeah, what'd you guys think of it?"

"It was alright." Gem said, trying to sound pleased. "You were right when you said it was like 'Harry Potter'"

Maui laughed maliciously. "Speaking of which, you *still* haven't seen that have you?"

"Wait, you haven't seen 'Harry Potter' before?" Rupert asked, astonished. "That must be why... No, don't watch it then. It sucks."

Dan and Maui let out incredulous laughs and Gem just looked between the three of them.

"Don't listen to Rupe, Gem. He's just a bit pissy because the lead character is better looking than that one red headed co-star." Dan chuckled, opening the front door for his friends and stepping outside as well.

Oblivious to what exactly they were going on about, Gem started off away from them down the street that she had come on. "I have to go now, guys. Thanks for inviting me to watch the movie with you. Maybe we can do 'Harry Potter' some other time."

Rupert caught up with her halfway down the block, looking a bit hot in the face and shaking his head as he walked.

"So why do you hate 'Harry Potter' so much? Is there something wrong with it?" Gem asked nervously, questioning an explanation for the argument outside the theatre.

Rupert shrugged. "I dunno. I don't hate it or anything... I just don't think you should watch it." Gem raised an eyebrow. "Uh, it's... The actors! Yes, that's it... I don't much care for the one who plays Ron Weasley."

"He's my favourite character though." Gem pouted, unconvinced.

Rupert thought. "Well he won't be once you watch the movie. He's a bad actor and fairly unattractive. No, just don't watch the movies."

Gem opened her mouth to retort but figured it better to leave the dispute there. After a few minutes of silence between the two, Rupert turned to Gem and then looked down at the notebook sticking out of her art bag.

"Do you have any other drawings in that?" He asked, pointing to it.

Gem looked down then folded the flap of her bag down defensively over the visible pages. "Yes, why?"

“Well I was wondering if I could look at them maybe... Are they all of your mum?”

“No, just the one is.” Gem said, crossing her arms in front of her. “And no, you may not look at them.”

Rupert grinned mischievously. “Why? Is there something bad in there?”

“No! There's nothing `bad' in it. The pictures just suck, that's all.”

“Right. And what would you do if I did this?” Rupert laughed, grabbing quickly for the bag. Before he had even reached it, Gem was off and running down the street. He caught up with her and grabbed her upper arm as it flew back behind her, spinning her around to face him and grabbing the other. She let out a cackle and fell limp in his arms. Dropping her in surprise, Rupert soon found that he had been tricked and watched as she continued running towards her house.

She made it two branches up on the willow tree by the time he caught up with her. Lashing out, he grabbed the closest part of her to him: her left foot. She kicked and her shoe came off in his hand as she scrambled back up to the top of the tree and into her hammock. Resting her back against a limb-free branch protruding up from behind her, she waiting for Rupert to finish his climb. A branch snapped below her and she looked down to see him struggling upwards, still clinging on to her shoe. As he reached where she sat, he handed the shoe back to her and smiled, putting on a mock-proper voice.

“I believe you've dropped this, Miss.”

## 4 - Chapter Four- Cheating

### Chapter Four- Cheating

“Yeah, so I was sitting right here when he threw the tennis ball in through my window and hit me.” Gem said, bouncing a little on her bed.

Maui, who had just sat down with a plate of burritos, let out a shrill laugh and fell over backwards onto a pillow that Gem had thrown at her. “I think someone has the hots for Gem!” Maui beamed, taking a bite out of the nearest burrito to her. “He was throwing that in here as an excuse to talk to you. That’s so cute. I think he likes you.”

Gem rolled her eyes and grabbed her own burrito from the plate. “I dunno. He doesn’t seem like to type to like someone like me. I’m not saying I don’t like him or anything... ..because I do... a lot. I have a boyfriend where I used to live too and I don’t know if we’re still together or not... I just don’t think this whole ‘me and him together’ thing is gonna work out.”

“Whatever, Gem. I can tell he likes you. I don’t care what you think.” She smiled. “And speak of the devil. Look at that.”

Gem turned to look out her window at something that had just ducked down out of sight below the stone wall and smiled when she saw Rupert reappear wearing gardening gloves and holding what looked to be a weed tight in his fist.

“No, he doesn’t like you at all does he?” Maui giggled, shaking her head as she chewed on the burrito in her hand. “That’s why he keeps looking over here. He just *really* likes ‘gardening’. Personally? I think you two would be adorable together. And Lord knows he needs someone who’s not just a fangirl to like him.”

Gem was taken aback. “Fangirl?” she questioned, raising an eyebrow and setting down her food.

“Did I say fangirl? Yes, no, not fangirl like if he was an actor or something... Fangirl is just a name Dan and Rupe use to talk about, er, the girls who like them because they’re hot.” Maui covered, cramming the rest of the burrito into her mouth.

“Right. I’m just gonna stop there then. Let’s talk about something that doesn’t confuse me.”

Maui got up and began to walk around the room, looking at everything in it. She stopped as she reached the bookcase, it’s top shelves laden down with knickknacks and trinkets. Picking up the old camera gently, she returned to the bed.

“Are you a photographer?” She asked, turning it over in her hands then passing it to Gem who cradled it gently in her palms.

“My mother was. When she died I got her camera. I don't take pictures much; mostly I just draw. I've thought about taking up the hobby though. I just don't know what I'd take pictures of.” Gem said sadly, running her finger along the lens cap before returning it to Maui.

Maui thought for a moment before smiling maliciously and turning to the window, camera raised to her face as though she were about to photograph something. Gem looked around as well and could clearly see why Maui was getting at.

“Can we say `stalker'?” Gem laughed.

Maui didn't respond as she stealthily slid off the bed and onto the floor, scuttling towards the window and straightening up against the wall just out of Rupert's sight. Once he had looked away, she jumped in back in front of the window and pretended to take a second picture. He heard the noise and peered curiously over at the two girls just as Maui let out a single high-pitched scream and crumpled to the floor. Gem shook her head and laughed, taking the camera away from her friend and apologizing to Rupert who was still leaning on the wall and looking puzzled.

“God you're a dork.” Gem reprimanded, replacing the camera on its shelf.

Maui just laughed and pulled herself back onto the bed. “Well it entertained *me*. I dunno... I still think you guys should hook up. We need to do another double date thing again. That way you guys could get to know each other.”

Gem thought. “Another movie?”

“No.” Maui said, thinking as well. Suddenly her face lit up. “Ooh! You know what would be fun?” Gem shook her head. “We could all go swimming at my house! We haven't done that since last summer. It's really fun. Do you like to swim?”

Gem was shocked. “You have a swimming pool?” She asked skeptically, turning on her friend who simply smiled and nodded energetically. “Right then. Sounds fun enough. When would we do it?”

“Half an hour?” Maui suggested, glancing down at her watch. “I have to get back home and finish up a few chores before Mum and Dad will let me have anyone over. I should leave soon too. I'll call Dan when I get home and you can walk over and ask your little lover boy yourself.”

Gem scoffed indignantly and pushed a now laughing Maui out into the hall. “I'll see you in half an hour. Is there anything I need to bring?”

Maui turned as she reached the front door. “Uh, swimsuit, towel, sunscreen. I think that's it. I'll have a plate of burritos ready when you all get there. Remember, half an hour. Tell Rupert.”

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Gem pulled open the bottom drawer of her dresser and began sifting through the pile of unfolded undergarments for her old, rarely used, black bikini. After a few moments of looking, she recovered it

from the back of the drawer and held it up in front of the mirror. It had been a while since last she had worn it and she prayed that it still fit. After trying it on to make sure she would be able to wear it, she crammed it, along with her sunscreen and towel, into the bottom of her art bag.

Climbing out her window, she hurried over to where Rupert was still working and hopped up onto the wall.

“Hey.” He said, smiling as he looked up at her. “What’s up?”

She crossed her legs under her. “Maui was just over and said that you and I and Dan could go over to her house to swim. She had to go finish chores and we’d head over in half an hour. What do you think?”

“Yeah! I love swimming at her house. We haven’t done that yet this summer. You said half an hour?” Rupert smiled, looking down at his watch as he did so.

“Yep. Can you go?” Gem asked hopefully as she moved to stand up.

Rupert nodded. “As soon as I get this done. My mum’s been sick and I get stuck with her chores. All James has to do is dust the living room. Stupid brother.”

Gem choked, the name setting off a chain reaction in her mind, and hopped quickly off the wall before hurrying back to her window. “Alright, I’ll see you then. Bye.” She shouted over her shoulder as she tore back inside and thrust her hand into the art bag laying open on her bed, looking for her cell phone among the pockets.

She had completely forgotten to call Kyleigh and James when she got to her new house like she had promised. She felt like an idiot and quickly dialed her boyfriend’s number, hoping he wasn’t too mad at her.

“Hey, James.” She said meekly when he picked up the phone.

“Gem!” James said happily on the other line. “How are you? I thought you’d forgotten me or something.”

Gem blushed and quickly responded. “I’m so sorry, James. It’s just been so busy around here with all the unpacking and setting things up. I would’ve called you earlier but…”

James laughed. “It’s ok! I’m just glad you called. I was getting worried. We’ve missed you a lot. Ky’s getting frantic. She thinks you’ve replaced us. I told her you wouldn’t’ve gotten a new girlfriend and boyfriend already and she wouldn’t believe me. Have you made any friends at all yet?”

“Oh, uh. No. I haven’t seen anyone at all. I’ve been inside getting everything out of boxes.” Gem blushed, looking over at Rupert, ashamed.

“God, I wish we could talk longer, but Kyleigh and I are going out for lunch in a bit and you called just as I was leaving. I’ll tell her you say hi. I’m sorry I have to go.” James apologized.

“That’s alright. I still have some stuff to do too. Maybe I’ll try back later. I love you.” Gem finished as she paced around her room, trying desperately to look anywhere but Rupert.

“I love you too.” James said quickly before hanging up.

Gem set the phone back into her bag and collapsed lifelessly onto her bed. Tears welled up in her eyes and she wiped guiltily at them. It hadn’t even been four days yet and she had already managed to get herself into a situation in which she would be replacing the one person who meant the world to her. She snapped the rubber band on her arm several times; wincing each time it made contact with her slowly reddening wrist.

She couldn’t go on with this, with anything. She’d have to tell Maui and Rupert that she had someone back home whom she had made a promise to and so simply couldn’t fall in love with Rupert. Sitting back up in bed, Gem cursed mentally at herself and reached for her glass of water.

Rupert called to her from across the fence. “You ok?” He was leaning on a rake and looking worried.

Gem hastily wiped the remaining tears away and choked out a response. “I’m fine, thanks. I just…” she fought to find the words that stayed firmly lodged in her throat. “I just got off the phone with my boyfriend, James, back at home. I was just thinking about what’s going to happen to us now that I live so far away.”

Rupert’s face dropped. “Y-you have a boyfriend?” He repeated confused, his shoulders slumping though he looked to be trying hard not to show his disappointment. Gem nodded. “How long have you guys been going out?”

“One and a half years. We’ve been together through high school and were childhood friends.”

“Right then. Well I have to get back to work now. I’ll see you at Maui’s.”

Gem could feel her stomach knot up as she watched him return sulkily to his chores. Everything had been going so well and now this. Then and there she swore to herself that she would not continue to like or lead on Rupert. She had to remain true to her boyfriend no matter how far away he lived. Unbeknownst to her, on the opposite side of the wall, Rupert was making a promise of his own; he would not love her for he did not want to lose what he might have of a friendship between them.

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Arriving at Maui’s house half an hour later, Gem found that she was the last to show up and watched as her three friends splashed energetically around the pool before her.

“You can change in my room if you want, Gem. You remember where it is?” Maui said as she pulled herself out of the water and scrambled over to where Gem was standing.

“Yeah, thanks. I’ll be right out.” Gem nodded, hurrying back into the house and into her friend’s room. Once in her swimsuit, Gem looked over herself in the mirror and couldn’t help but feel self-conscious. After a thought about it, she wrapped the towel she had brought around her chest and returned to the

poolside.

Dan and Rupert were still in the water but Maui appeared to have climbed back on shore to down another burrito. Gem found her curled up on the grass, towel wrapped around her shoulders, a small lump of tortilla and beans in her hand. She squeezed it lightly so that a bit of refried beans poked out the top and licked at it happily. Sitting down beside her, Gem looked over at the boys who were now caught up in a violent water fight, sending waves of crystal droplets pelting the shoreline and the two girls resting on it.

“Maui?” She said cautiously, not wanting to interrupt what appeared to be a heartfelt moment between the burrito and her friend. “I’ve sort of got a problem.”

Maui looked up as she chewed aimlessly at her food. “Mgh. Sorry,” She swallowed the chunk she had in her mouth. “What’s that?”

Gem hesitated. “I don’t think Rupert and I are going to work out.”

“Why not?” Maui looked confused.

“Well, I know I told you, but I have a boyfriend back at home. We’ve been going out for one and a half years and we didn’t exactly break up when I left.”

Maui pondered this for a moment then bit her lip. “Well he lives all the way out in... wherever it is you came from. It’s not like you’ll be seeing him at all. And he doesn’t *have* to know about Rupert! It’ll be fun! You can be all sneaky. We can break the laws of dating and whatnot. Ooh! I feel like a criminal now!” She squealed happily, rolling onto her back to stare up at the cloudless sky.

“But I can’t do that to him!” Gem protested, quite near tears. “I know he wouldn’t do that to me; even if I’d never find out. It’s just bad karma and he means too much to me to throw away like that.”

Maui shrugged. “Suit yourself. But what’ll poor Rupert think when he finds out you have someone back home?”

“He already knows. I called James earlier today and Rupert asked who I was talking to.” Gem sighed, falling back as well. “Mind you he didn’t seem too pleased when I told him who it was. But I think everything’ll work out even if he and I don’t hook up.”

“Hm. Whatever. I’m gonna go swim now. You coming?” Maui asked as she sat up and headed towards the pool, pitching the remaining corner of her burrito at Dan’s head before jumping in next to him. Water cascaded over Gem’s face and towel, causing her to recoil and scoot further away from the pool.

So she sat bundled up on the shore, uncomfortably aware of Rupert’s shifting gaze, and pulled the towel tighter yet around her torso.

“Are you gonna swim with us or what?” Dan called before Maui dunked him and his head disappeared below the water.

“No, I'm fine for now. Thanks.” Gem replied as he resurfaced.

Rupert swam over to her and raised himself out of the water till she could see nearly to the top of his swim trunks. “Com on, Gem! The water's fine, see?” He flicked some on her and laughed kindly. “And nothing in here'll bite... Except for maybe Maui.”

Maui bared her teeth and lunged at Rupert, aiming for his neck like a vampire. Avoiding the attack, he hopped up on shore and scrambled over to where Gem was sitting.

“Ok, her you have to worry about. But it looks like Dan's taking care of things, it'll be fine to get in now.”

He laughed as the two watched Dan leading Maui slowly towards the opposite side of the pool.

Gem rolled her eyes and turned back to Rupert. He was looking at her expectantly.

“I'm sorry. I just don't feel like swimming anymore.” Gem apologized.

“Ok. No need to then.” Rupert smiled mischievously, shaking the water from his hair onto her.

She screamed and lifted her arms to shield her face. Seeing his opportunity, Rupert quickly reached down, whipping to towel away and leaving Gem sitting beside him in now only her black bathing suit.

He looked over her once before she jumped forward in an attempt to retrieve the towel. As soon as she made contact with him though, he wrapped his arms around her thin frame and stood up.

“Put me down!” She demanded, her face pressed into his shoulder.

“As you wish.” Rupert laughed happily, striding contentedly to the poolside, dropping her promptly into the water and earning an objective shriek from a now sodden Gemini. Her head emerged just in time to see Rupert take a running jump and cannonball next to her. Waves of chlorinated water slapped her face as she turned and quickly began swimming towards the shore. Just as her fingers made contact with the edge of the pool, she was pulled back suddenly as something closed around her ankles.

Spinning around, Gem found herself face to face with Rupert. How it happened, she didn't know, but there was scarcely an inch between them, and their chests and legs were pressed together. Their noses brushed innocently between them and Gem could feel herself being drawn to him. The same force seemed to be acting on Rupert as well and soon their faces were so close that neither dared breath.

Soon both pairs of eyes were closed and Gem could feel Rupert's lips brushing hers lightly, shortly followed by the soft touch of his hands coiling around her waist. She too brought her hands up and placed them slowly on his chest. Just as they were about to kiss, both opened their eyes and pushed away, remembering their promises. Gem flushed red and Rupert opened and closed his mouth several times, trying to apologize.

“I'm so sorry.” He said after a few failed attempts to speak. “I didn't mean to... I mean... Crap. I'm really sorry, I swear it won't happen again.”



Gem shook her head. "It was my fault, I shouldn't've... I... Well I guess it's my fault anyways for not telling you I had a boyfriend the first time we met. But..." She said at a loss for words.

There was a shout from behind them and Rupert turned to see Maui holding herself away from Dan and looking shocked. "Uh, Gem? Could I borrow you for a sec?" She said, a hint of a smile playing at her lips.

Gem nodded and followed her out of the pool and behind a clump of bushes, taking a last fleeting glance at a still red Rupert swimming embarrassedly over to Dan.

Once safely out of earshot, Maui let out a muffled scream. "My God, Gem! Did you just kiss him?!" She shrieked as she bounced up and down on the balls of her feet.

"No! No I did not kiss him! I told you I can't and won't." Gem huffed indignantly.

"Right." Maui rolled her eyes. "Then what was that back there? Giving him a demonstration of the 'mouth to mouth' technique? Was he drowning?"

Gem bit her lip. "Look, it was an accident. We both caught ourselves before anything happened. We didn't kiss and I can't like him!"

"I know, I know. But still, I can tell you guys like each other. Why not do something about it?" Maui asked hopefully, sticking out her bottom lip.

"We don't like each other!" Gem scoffed resentfully. "As I've already explained: it was an accident! Nothing happened and nothing is going to happen between us."

Maui looked back in the direction of the pool. The splashing had stopped. "And what if you and James don't make it? Then what? Are you gonna give Rupe a chance or are you just going to be stubborn about it?" She whispered, afraid of eavesdroppers.

"I can't believe you, Maui! I think it's my decision what to do with my relationships, not yours. You and Dan can do whatever you want. That's fine. I don't tell you guys that you have to be together or apart. I've only known you three for how long now? Like, three days. Things will work out between James and I. This argument is over. Let's just get back to the pool and pretend like none of this ever happened."

"Ok, but before we go back out there I just have one thing to say." Maui said seriously, putting her hands on Gem's shoulders. "You two are the cutest couple ever!"

"Maui!" Gem screamed angrily chasing her friend back out to the pool.

While they had been arguing, Dan and Rupert had climbed out of the pool and were now drying off in the grass a ways away. Both boys were sprawled on their backs and talking about something but stopped as the girls walked up beside them.

Maui stood above Dan, straddling his legs, and fell to her knees on top of him. He smiled and placed his hands on her waist, pulling her down against his chest and kissed her contentedly.

Gem sat awkwardly beside Rupert and tried hard not to look in the couple's direction. Propping himself up on his elbows, he turned to her. "Do you want to go play video games or something?" He asked nervously, seeing her less than enthusiastic glare at Dan and Maui.

Sitting up abruptly, Maui beamed. "I want to play video games! Can we play video games Dan?"

Dan nodded from his position below her and moved to sit up.

Once everyone was clothed and dried off, they all headed into the living room and sat down on the floor in front of the TV.

"I'll play you!" Maui challenged once everyone was seated.

Gem looked up at her. "Me? Oh I can't play. I don't know how. Sorry."

"That's alright." Rupert said, picking up a controller and handing it to her. "It's easy. Maui, start the game up."

Maui complied and set the level to beginner. Reaching over, Rupert placed his hands over Gem's, holding them tightly to the controller. "Ok, now just... Hold on... This isn't working." He said and moved to sit behind her, sliding his arms around hers and looking at the screen from over her shoulder. Gem could feel Maui's penetrating stare but smiled inwardly to herself at the comforting warmth of Rupert's chest on her back.

He helped her patiently through the first part of the game, moving each of her fingers gently across the joystick and buttons and coaching hints into her ear.

Nearly two hours passed and by the time the four finished, scarcely an inch of table was visible below piles of randomly strewn game and CD cases. Maui and Dan were cuddled together on a reclining chair and Rupert and Gem lay at opposite ends of the three-person couch.

Dan looked down at his watch. "Well we've still got a long time till we have to leave... Does anybody want to go swim again? We didn't really spend a lot of time out there."

Everyone agreed and soon they were all back into the water and splashing each other happily. Rupert and Gem shot awkward glances across the pool but for the most part avoided any direct contact. Maui and Dan however did achieve a successful underwater kiss along with a mouthful of chlorine and amused laughs from the other two.

Again, the hours flew by and soon Dan was motioning to his watch and jumping out of the water to dry off.

"Is it time to go already?" Rupert asked sadly, following Dan's lead and grabbing a towel.

"No kidding!" Gem agreed. "We really need to do this sort of thing more often."

Maui nodded her consent as she wrapped her own towel around her waist. "I guess we'd better go change then. Rupert and Gem have to get home now don't you guys?"

Rupert looked confused. "What about Dan?" Maui smiled mischievously then bolted into the house.

The boys changed in the bathrooms and Gem and Maui headed down to Maui's bedroom.

"I'm sorry about tweaking earlier." Maui apologized as she pulled a shirt on then peeled the top of her swimsuit off from under it. "I just think that you and Rupert could be really good for each other. You're the only girl he's met who actually acted like this..."

Gem looked up from buttoning her pants. "Acted like what?"

"Never mind." Maui said as she too stepped into her pants. "I just think that you should at least give him a chance. Even if you do already have a boyfriend... I mean, you don't even know when you're gonna see him next. What if he meets someone else while you're gone?"

Gem scoffed. "James would never do that to me! We trust each other and for God's sake we've been going out for over a year with no problems! He wouldn't just up and leave me like that. It's not one of those kinds of relationships. He loves me."

Maui shrugged into her coat and headed for the door. "Well that's good that you two mean so much to each other. I'm sorry I thought otherwise."

Out in the living room, they found Dan and Rupert both sitting inattentively on the back of a couch next to the door, saying something about 'girls'.

Maui scurried over to Dan and jumped up next to him, startling both boys and causing Rupert to trip onto the floor.

"How long have you two been standing there?" He asked nervously, twitching at the corner of his shirt.

"Not long enough to figure out what you guys were talking about." Maui teased.

Rupert flushed and started for the door. "You ready to go, Gem?" He held the door open as she walked out.

"Yeah." She smiled, hopping down the steps and into the front drive. "Thanks again for having us over, Maui. It was good talking."

Maui nodded and shut the door behind them. As the two stepped away from the house, they could hear giggling coming from inside. Gem looked nervously back at the curtained window and Rupert laughed.

"Don't worry." He smiled. "They're not doing anything bad in there. I'm sure we'd know if they'd been planning anything we'd need to be worried about."

Gem laughed too and smiled up at him, opening her mouth to say something but deciding better of it.

They walked most of the way home in silence both seemingly lost deep in thought as they continued on through the slowly darkening streets. Rupert was the first to speak.

“So this boyfriend of yours... How long have you two been going out again?”

“It'll be one year and six months in two weeks. We've been friends forever though. We just finally started going out our junior year.”

Rupert nodded. “Wow. That's a long time. I guess you guys are pretty solid then.”

“Yeah. It sucks being this far away from him though. He's supposed to be coming up to visit me as soon as he gets the money. Until then we'll keep in touch over the phone.”

“Oh.” Rupert sounded a little disheartened. “Well that's good then. I've never had a relationship like that before. They always just seem to come and go. I mean, it's great and all, but things always just end so quickly. You get people like Dan and Maui and you and James who stay together forever without conflict of any sort and then you get people like me.” Gem looked up at him understandingly. “It just... Never mind. Look we're home.”

They both stopped on the sidewalk beside the stone wall separating their yards. The sun was low on the horizon and behind them the sky was fading to an inky black. As the daylight died, the shadows came to life and began to prowl about the hedges and corners of houses. Gem smiled contentedly then turned to look up at Rupert.

He was staring at the sunset and smiling vaguely. She hesitated before speaking.

“Back home, James and Kyleigh and I used to always lay outside and watch the stars.” She started, her voice trembling slightly.

Rupert looked down at her for a moment. “You know I can't say I've ever done that.”

“Oh. I suppose you think it's stupid. Sorry.” Gem said embarrassedly as she turned around and headed for her willow.

“What? No, I didn't say that.” Rupert said honestly, reaching out and grabbing her arm to stop her.

She turned back slowly to face him. There was silence again as they both looked at each other. Neither could think of anything to say and simply stood together on the deserted sidewalk in the fading light. A light breeze picked up and wove itself through Gem's long black hair, sending it dancing around her face. Rupert could feel his heart catch in his throat as he took her fragile hand in his.

“What would you say if just for tonight, we watch the stars and forget you have James back home. Just for the heck of it. We could just watch the stars and have a good time without any strings attached.” Rupert said softly, looking into her eyes as she began to smile.

She squeezed his hand back gently. “That sounds pretty good. But do you think we could keep it just

between us? I don't want Maui and Dan to know. I don't want to go through everything with her.”

“I promise.” Rupert laughed, leading her into his backyard. “Let's get up on the roof now. It looks like the stars are coming out.”

“Why don't we use the hammock? It'll be a lot more comfortable. I don't know how much of the sky you can see through the leaves but it's close up to the top and I'm sure it'll be clear enough.” Gem suggested as she turned back towards her house. Rupert followed obligingly and soon they had both made their way to the bottom of the tree.

“Right, so we get to climb up this again?” Rupert asked skeptically, tilting his head backwards to look up through the thick limbs and leafy branches.

Gem hopped onto a root that protruded from the ground and took hold of a bough just above her head, swinging on it slightly as she brought her face teasingly close to Rupert's. “Of course we are. Did you think we'd get to fly up or something? You've managed before, I'm sure you'll live.” She laughed, scrambling up the trunk to perch on the branch she had been holding.

Rupert mock-glared up at Gem before following her lead and lifting himself onto a branch a bit lower down. As they continued on up through the tangle of thick and thin branches, the sun maintained its steady pace of disappearance, taking with it any warmth that might have been shared with the two when they reached the top of the tree. The breeze was now notably cooler and Gem felt herself shiver as she climbed into the hammock, curling up on one side and waiting for Rupert.

Within a few moments he was over the last branch and settling down beside her. “This *is* nice.” He laughed as though he hadn't believed her.

“I told you it would be.” She smiled, looking up at him through the dark. He was smiling too, though a bit awkwardly and looked away after a second.

“So... Is that Scorpio?” He asked, staring up through the thin layer of twigs above them.

Gem turned her head to the side. “Um... I think it's Cassiopeia. The W looking one up there?”

“Yeah. Ok. We got to look at stars during the astronomy scenes but we never learned about the constellations really.”

There was a moment of silence. “What?”

Rupert flushed white. “Oh, Astronomy was a class I took in high school...”

“Why'd you say scene?”

“Because,” he thought for a moment. “...Medical reasons!”

Gem laughed, rolling up into a ball and sliding towards the middle of the hammock so she was cushioned against his side. Looking down, Rupert could see her squirming to regain her

**posture/bearing/position/stance.** He laughed too and but his arm around her back. She flipped over and looked at him before snuggling closer and putting her hand on his chest.

“I feel so bad though.” She said uneasily, playing with a fold in his shirt. “I don't even know if I should be up here.”

Rupert looked concerned. “Do you want to leave?” He asked timidly as he began to remove his arm from around her back. She put her hand on his as it slid off her shoulder and held it in place.

“I'm not going to go. I should... But... I don't know. Never mind, let's just figure out what that constellation is.”

**Rupert nodded, not fully reassured and turned back to look at the sky. He knew it was wrong too but felt that it was worth it just to be this close to her for a while. She fit perfectly against him and as he ran his fingers through her hair he didn't think he could be happier anywhere else. They were both getting a taste of something amazing and neither wanted to let it go.**

So they sat for a while, cuddled against the light breeze, talking and laughing and looking at the stars. It had been nearly 10 minutes before Rupert sat up suddenly. Gem sat up too, partially pulled by his arm.

“What?” She asked, looking startled as he looked around below the hammock.

“Can you hear that?” He whispered, straining his ears for the sound. “It's like... buzzing? Or humming or something.”

Gem listened too for a moment then laughed, “Oh, it's my cell phone. Sorry, hold on.”

Reaching to a branch just below where the hammock was anchored, she pulled her bag up towards her and unzipped the top pocket. As she did this, the buzzing became louder.

“Hello?” She said as she raised the small phone to her ear. No one answered. “Hello?” She repeated again, pulling it away from her face to check the caller ID.

*O'Mally James* it read in bold letters surrounded by small pixely hearts.

“James? Are you there?” She spoke louder into the mouthpiece. There was a sound coming from the other line now but it wasn't a voice. It was someone breathing heavily, two someone's breathing heavily. “James!” She shouted, scared.

Now the breathing had turned into panting and a dull thumping sound joined in. This went on for several more seconds before someone spoke. It was a girl and she was whispering some one's name. James. And a boy speaking a girl's name. Kyleigh. As Gem sat and listened to the two voices grow louder, she realized what she was overhearing from the other line.

## 5 - Chapter Five- (it doesn't have a name yet)

### Chapter Five-

“James!” She screamed, choking on her tears. “James! Kyleigh!” Her body was wracked with sobs as she dropped the phone, letting it bounce a few branches down before shattering on the ground at the base of the tree.

Rupert watched, unsure of what to do, as she collapsed against the trunk of the tree, crying and gasping for breath. He extended his arm to her, still unaware of what had happened, and placed his hand on her shoulder.

She spun around and slapped him hard in the face before scrambling to the edge of the hammock.

“Don't touch me!” She screamed, wiping furiously at her eyes. “Don't ever t-touch me!”

Rupert stared in disbelief, clutching his cheek as he watched her disappear from view. He could hear limbs cracking below, shortly followed by a solid thump and the sound of a window opening and slamming shut. There was a crash inside of glass breaking and a shout then muffled arguing.

It had all happened so fast that it took Rupert several seconds to come to and climb down the tree as well. His mind spun with what had just happened and he tossed around ideas of what might have happened to make her so upset. He came to the same conclusion as Gem had and felt that somehow it was his fault. He was still a bit shaken though and figured it would all make sense once the burning handprint on his cheek had died down a bit.

As he reached the ground, he glanced into Gem's window. Through it he could see she and her father standing in the doorway. Gem was still crying and her father was arguing heatedly with her. It looked as though she had woken him up.

Rupert watched for a bit despite the fact that that it was a blatant invasion of privacy and he knew he was out of place. Just as he was about to leave, however, he saw something that almost drew him out of his hiding place in the shadows.

Gem's father had grabbed her by the arms and was squeezing so hard that his knuckles were turning white. She screamed but he hit her hard across the face, throwing her against the wall where she raised her arms to block a second blow and slid down to the floor.

Terrified, Rupert clambered over the stone wall as soon as he was certain Gem had locked the door to her room. He wanted to go make sure she was all right but figured a loud confrontation would anger her father more and it wasn't worth the risk.

Back in her room, Gem lay crumpled on the floor, crying silently into her arm while a small trickle of blood ran down the back of her head.

## Chapter Five and a Half

(A/N: This is a little ditty I wrote while working on the end of chapter four because I had nothing better to do with my brain at the time. I think I might have been eating lemonade powder again... it was cold too so maybe it was a rare case of brain frost bite...)

(Another A/N!: Not all of this was written at the same time. A lot of it is random bordness during school and such.)

## Preface

Hi, I'm tired. Don't talk to me for a sec. Hold on... Ok, I'm back. It's about exactly 3:16 right now... Three as in the afternoon. Don't ask why I'm still tired... Just don't. It's snowing a bit outside. It's 15 January 2005. And for God's sake there's a bloody song stuck in my head about a little boy who dies! \*Cries a bit\* Bloody computer... Every time I put the little \* \* things around things it makes them boldish. I'm sorry, really I am. I'm supposed to be working on the stargazing scene from the end of chapter four right now but I have an Åber bad brain block at the moment and can't. I like that little dealie over the u... heh heh. Å® Å- Å- Å- Å- Å- Å- Å- Å-. Zoom in! 150%. Yey.

I do hope I'm not keeping you from anything important... (like reading my book because you love it so much X\_x) You don't have to read this if you don't want to. Bailey and I just thought it would be fun to write our own little chapter about us. Maybe we'll even get to meet the character's we've made.

Whoa!!!!!!! I just realized that I'm in a book! \*\*laughs manically\*\* (using two stars makes it not bold) You must understand how my brain works to get why this amazes me so much. I've characterified myself and now I can do ANYTHING! \*\*insert echoes here\*\* Watch as the amazing Heatherdini stretches her arm clear around the globe and kidnaps... Oh my gosh I can't believe it! Her arm is returning with none other than the infamous (hold on the announcer has to think of someone hot) Rupert Grint! Am I aloud to put that in here? Am I aloud to talk about famous people or are they copy-writed? Krishna... \*\*thinks real



hard\*\*

Alright, well I just decided that I really don't care. Plus, I now have my favourite Rupert Grint ever with me!

### Introduction

Part one- in which Heather walks up to Rupert all seductive like and tries her best not to scare him. Part two- in which Rupert scoots away and tries his best to escape. Part three- in which Heather fan-girl-screams and jumps on Rupert. Part three point seven nine- in which Rupert pulls a sledge hammer which doubles as a chainsaw and mashes Heather into a pulp.

I'm sorry Rupert and everyone who took offence at what just happened. I'm sure that he wouldn't do that to me or anyone else. But just wait till you meet me! Haha! Please don't hate me? Rupert's gone now. But I have something better! ...Kinda...

### The Real Part One

Gem shifted lazily in the black recliner, sipping at a coke in her hand and gazing around the crowded trailer. A small plasma TV sat atop the counter before her and was currently turned off. Make-up lay scattered beside it along with several bags of candy and chips and empty soda cans. Her wardrobe hung at the opposite side of the trailer, each piece of clothing labelled for which scene they were to be worn. A script lay on the table next to Gem and she glanced at it occasionally, repeating the words to herself.

Suddenly, the trailer door opened and Rupert and Heather stepped in. Rupert looked slightly scared of Heather as he trailed behind her, watching as she jumped in front of Gem and bent close to the actress's face. There was silence as she lifted a hand and swiftly poked Gem in the eye.

"Crap!" Gem cursed under her breath, throwing a hand across her face.

Heather on the other hand (you have five fingers) was jumping up and down and giggling maniacally. "You're real too!" She screamed, dancing about the trailer.

"Have they got a leash for her or should I file a restraining order?" Gem grumbled in annoyance as Rupert grabbed a squirming Heather carefully by the shoulders and placed her in a chair.

"She's the script write. We can't do that." He said irritably.

"Ooh!" Heather squealed, jumping out of her seat and hopping over to the table beside Gem. The actress cringed and scooted her chair back against the wall. "A script! Fun times!"

Snatching the stack of papers off the table, she began to read. Halfway through the second page, she stopped. "Oh my Krishna!" she gasped, dropping the script to the floor and throwing the back of her hand dramatically across her forehead.

Rupert and Gem looked at her uncertainly. (A/N: Psst! I'm in careers class right now! Shane says "Hi. Why'd you make me say hi? Me: Because!) Rupert stepped away from her nervously. (A/N: Ashley says "pizza's good". Me: Do I scare you? Ashley: \*walks away\*)

"What's that?!" She demanded, jabbing a finger at the papers splayed across the floor.

Gem bent to pick up the mess. "You wrote it, Heather. I have no clue."

Heather pondered this, pulling obviously at her chin and looking at the ceiling. "Ok." She smiled, clasping her hands together and bouncing over to Rupert who had almost made it to the safety of the door.

"You know? I think the story needs a new character." She grinned, looking maliciously between the two actors. "We need someone new to spice things up. You know. A gorgeous red head with dazzling blue eyes and striking features. She'd be cute and shy and a certain other red head named **Rupert Grint** would fall deeply in and madly love with her and he'd dump Gemini." She paused, thinking happily with her eyes closed. "And they'd live happily ever after. The end!"

There was silence as the two rounded on Heather.

"No, Heather, that's stupid." Rupert said, talking to her like she was a small child and placing his hands on her shoulders. She smiled happily as though he was encouraging the idea. "I won't do it. It's not like my character to act like that and it won't sell. I'm sticking to the original script."

"No."

"Why?"

"I don't like the original script!"

"You wrote the original script!"

"Stupid."

"Heather?"

"What?"

"Shut up now."

## Part Two

Location: in school

Time: 2:41, the last period of the day

The class is noisy, rustling papers and talking to friends and looking up inappropriate words in the Health text.

3 minutes... Bell rang! It's 2:56 now. I'm outside and cold. I have a headache. Emily just ran up, told me not to look at her boobs then ran off. The cement is making my butt cold. Anyone standing above me can see down my shirt.

St. Valentine's Day is coming soon. On Monday. My boyfriend dumped me. On last Friday. I want him back. He's awesome. The best. My butt's still cold.

## Part Three- Give Me Thine Sandwich

*Heather: Give me that sandwich right now!*

Bailey: Take a flying leap. This is mine!

*Heather: Aw come on. I'm hungry! Just give me a bite?*

Bailey: Well I'm hungry too and if you want to die then ask me again.

*Heather: (thinks) ...Look! John Lennon!*

Bailey: (spins around wildly) Where?! Bloody. He's dead!

*Heather: Ha ha, got your... hamster? Why do I have your hamster?*

Bailey: Because you're drunk Heather.

*Heather: No I'm not. I'm hungry. Please sir?*

Bailey: (stands to leave) Why are you calling me sir? I'm gonna go it over there. Ta ra.

*Heather: (appears suddenly at new table) Hello!*

Bailey: Gah! You're back! Krishna... No sandwich for you!

*Heather: But you love me and wouldn't want me to die.*

Bailey: Wanna bet? Here's a hundred bucks. Buy a pizza or candy cane or something...

Heather: *But I want a sandwich.*

Bailey: Then buy a bloody sandwich!

Heather: *No.*

Bailey: Why?

Heather: *...Because... Your head's on fire!*

Bailey: Liar.

Heather: *Fudge.*

Bailey: (worried) You should go to a therapist.

Heather: *(happily) They have a restraining order.*

Bailey: (more worried) Should you be on medication then?

Heather: *Sandwich is medi-*

Bailey: No.

Heather: *Aw... Can I have it anyways?*

Bailey: Why do you want my sandwich so bad?!

Heather: *...Because it controls my mind. See? I'm drooling.*

Bailey: The sandwich made you drool?

Heather: *...No...*

Bailey: Don't you have a cat to molest?

Heather: *Not till 3:10. Can I have the sandwich now?*

Bailey: Will you promise to go away?

Heather: *...Yes...*

Bailey: Here you go.

Heather: *(chews sandwich) Yay!*

Bailey: Why are you still here?

Heather: *(really close to Bailey's face)* Because the hamster has my wallet.

Hamster: (steadily consumes contents of wallet)

*\*Announcer Voice\* You are now re-entering Chapter Five! Hope you had a good time! Please fly Deltuh Atmosphere again! You may retrieve any baggage we might have broken at the fun spiny around thing with a little door at the end that has straps of stuff hanging down like curtains like bead curtains but not all hippy like they're leatherish instead but they do a neat bead curtain kinda thing when your bag comes out the little door onto the shiny metal conveyer belt that belt thing that has all the bags on it... you can pick up your bag there!*

\*\*\*

Sunlight streamed into the room, cascading over the windowsill and onto the floor at the foot of the bed. Slowly, it crept its way to the small figure lying against the wall. **She stirred slightly as the golden beams fell across her face and rolled over onto her back.** As the coolness from the night before began to ebb away, the memories of what had happened all spilled back in.

Gem sat up stiffly, pain shooting from the back of her head and face and resounding off the bruises on her arms. She bit her lip and lifted herself into a sitting position. Her head spun and screamed with pain as she coaxed herself over to the comfort of her bed. She had hoped that it was just a bad dream; the phone call, the voices on the other line, the frame holding the picture of her mother shattering as her father pitched it at her, and the fight. Touching lightly at the back of her scalp she found her hair matted with blood and sunk down onto her mattress realizing that the nightmare had been real.

And she remembered hitting Rupert. Her stomach clenched as she realized what she'd done. She couldn't remember exactly what she'd said to him but could remember feeling the sting in her hand as it lashed across his face. Cringing, she looked over at his window only to find it dark inside with the blinds shut. She prayed he'd forgive her.

Beyond her door, she could hear a timer go off in the kitchen.

There were footsteps in the hall. "Gemini," her father's voice called. "Breakfast's ready!"

She walked nervously over to the door, opening it and stepping slowly into the hall. Her father was standing in the doorway to the kitchen and holding a plate full of freshly made bacon in his hands.

Hesitantly, Gem walked into the dining room and sat down. Her father set the plate, along with two bowls of cereal on the table and took the seat opposite her.

"I'm sorry for hitting you last night. I-I don't know what I was thinking. It won't happen again." He promised, taking a bite out of a piece of bacon.

Gem nibbled the crispy parts of her bacon and ate a spoonful of cereal. "Ok." She nodded, not removing her eyes from the table. "I guess I'm sorry for waking you up then..."

Inside, she knew that his apologizing had fixed nothing, the bruises on her arms would not go away now, but she decided that voicing this and angering him probably wasn't the best idea.

Breakfast was finished quickly and Gem hurried back to her room. The curtains were still closed to Rupert's room but a light was now on behind them. She thought briefly about going over to talk to him but picked up the phone to call Maui instead.

Dialing the number, she lifted the receiver to her ear and listened to it ring. "Hi," she said as someone picked up. "Is Maui there?"

"Yes." The voice said simply.

Gem waited before she spoke again. "Can I talk to her?"

"Yes... This *is* her."

"Nice, Maui." She laughed, dropping onto her bed.

"What's up?"

"Not much." Gem debated telling her about what had happened then decided against it. "I'm just bored. Are you doing anything later?"

Maui thought. "Not that I know of, just hanging out in my room"

"Same here. Do you want to come over to my house?"

"Yeah. That sounds fun."

Curling up on her bed, Gem looked at the clock. "Can you come over now?"

"Sure thing. I'll be right there!" Maui said, hanging up.

Laughing, Gem set the phone back on its charger. "Shortest conversation I've ever had."

She knew it would be a while before Maui arrived and decided to scan the room for something to occupy herself with to pass the time. Her eyes roved across the clutter that lined her room from the vanity beside her to her photography supplies and finally to the pile of shattered glass beside the door. Large

and small shards littered the blue shag carpet, the larger pieces reflecting glimmers of the morning sun onto the dark walls and the smaller ones disappearing into the forest of bristly carpet.

Gem stood and strode over to the pile, walking lightly so as not to embed any stray pieces into feet. Upon reaching the spot, Gem knelt carefully and began excavating shards from the long, camouflaging carpet. Working slowly, she managed to obtain a decently sized heap in her hand by the time she stood to retrieve a garbage can. The pieces made an eerie echoing sound as they hit the bottom of the metal can, some breaking into even smaller pieces.

The white back of a picture lay half hidden below the silver frame, sheltering the remaining bits of glass. Gem picked the picture up carefully and shook it off. It seemed to be unharmed save for a small fold in the corner, which she quickly flattened out. From behind the glossy covering the peaceful face of her mother smiled up at her daughter. A fire was lit beside her in the background, setting a warm glow to an otherwise dark picture. Her hair was pulled back with a ribbon and her eyes caught and mirrored the flames the licked the hearth. The dress she wore was a deep navy blue, her favourite colour, and her fair skin looked even more pale compared to it.

Double Take

3

Don't hate me because I'm beautiful \*strikes pose \*