

Rie's Horrible Life

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Submitted: March 16, 2005

Updated: October 13, 2005

Rie's life isn't like she wants it to be. She doesn't feel loved or needed. Till somebody shows up who claims he needs her

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1 - Rie's Horrible Life

Chapter 1

While working on a sucking system of her new vacuum machine, Rie hears very familiar sounds, upstairs inside the walls: Soft but clear clinging of screws finding their way through the pipes of the toilet. It couldn't be true! How could it be?!

She didn't even see the little rat sneak in stealing the darn things!

With a loud bang she smashes her tools on the table and rushes her way out of the basement, her footsteps stamping dangerously on the stairs.

„AYE! You better hide!” She bellows furiously. He wasn't going to get away with it this time! He got away with it every time and this time he was dead for sure.

She had to climb all up to the second floor to arrive her goal and she kicked the bathroom door open.

A little 5 year old boy, with large brown eyes, turns his head to her at her appearance. In his left hand he holds 3 screws, with the right hand he just threw 2 other screws in the toilet, flushing it immediately.

„Aye! What do you think you are doing?!” Rie cries out, almost exploding with anger.

At this point Aye put both his hands on his back, put up his puppy-eyes, squeaking: „I'm not flushing screws! I didn't do it! No! I didn't!”

„You... snotty...” Towering above him, shaking with anger Rie steps closer to the little squirrel, also known as her little brother. „...little...piece...of...shoot...”

Panicking, Aye starts to wave his little arms around, launching screws around the bathroom. „I don't have `em! I didn't do it!” Screaming for dear life.

„Are you aware of how many screws you already flushed, you pickle!” Rie breathes, tightening her fists while moving closer.

Knowing he has to fear for his life now, Aye decides to use his last rescue. He opens his mouth to inhale lots of air.

Rie sees it too. „No, you're not gonna cry for mommy! NOW I GOT YOU!”

And she leaps forward, clinging her arms around Aye. Ofcourse Aye doesn't let himself get caught that easy and he starts to wiggle around, attempting to free himself. „Lemme go! Lemme go!”

„No! You're dead! I am gonna torture you in my basement, a day for every screw. AND BELIEVE ME, you little worm, that is gonna be quite some years!”

„I didn't do it!” Aye cries out, tears rolling over his cheeks now.

Rie smirks. „I'm talking about hundreds of screws here. Ow, you are in such trouble!”

„I don't wanna be tor...tor....I don't wanna be hurt!” Now almost choking in panick and tears, Aye starts to tremble, while Rei calm with anger walks out of the bathroom with him, going down the stairs.

„I will put an electric device around your neck, so I can turn you into my slave! And when you don't obey me, I will electrocute you!” Rie promises him, a little evil laughter following after it. „I'm a genius, I'm so smart it almost supprises me!”

„You're not smart!” Aye sobs. „You're mean! Mean people are bad!”

Rie looks at her little brother, eyes with fire. „Mean?! Me?! You're the one to talk! You committed a crime more than once! Stealing is enough to put you into prison!”

She wished she wouldn't have said that. Somehow the fact of going to prison when you steal the dear screws of your ingenious sister upsets him more than the torturing with electricity thingy, because Aye immediately starts crying so hard not even an hurricane could have made more noise.

Tears flooding out of his eyes, snot dripping out of his nose, his little head even seems to grow and explode because of the panicking.

„Keep it down!” Rie drops her little brother on the floor. „Keep it down you stupid boy! Shh!”

„WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH! DONWANNAGOTOPRISOOOOOOOON!!!!” Almost running out of air, he starts to roll around over the floor.

Considering to kick him to shut up, Rie wants to lift up her foot, staring anxiously at her little nervbreaking brother, when her mother opens the door of the hallway, looking in with a stunned look.

„Rie, what's goin.....Aye! AYE, WHAT HAPPENED?!” Bending over, caving Aye in her arms, who immediately relaxes, sobbing softly in her warm hug.

„Rie! What in the world happened!” Her mother asks, looking really shocked. Her large eyes, just as brown as Aye's are, are staring at her daughter. „What did you do to him? What did you tell him? How does he get so upset?!”

Staring to the floor, not speaking a word, Rie feels really uncomfortable.

„I...Momma...I don't wanna go....to prison...” Aye sobs, his cheeks still red and wet of the tears.

„You don't have to go to prison. You're a good boy!” Mother comforts her little boy.

„He's not!” Rie breaths, clenching her fists.

Her eyes still focussing on the floor, not daring to look up.

„Rie...” Her mother eyes look suspicious. „What did you do to Aye!?”

Now Rie looks up! „I didn't do ANYTHING! He did it to himself!”

„What in the world are you saying!”

„He flushed my screws down the toilet again!” Rie bellows.

„He is just a little kid! You can't be so strict to him!” Mother cries out, very upset, hugging Aye who starts to cry harder because of the raised voices.

„THAT'S BULLshoot!” Rie feels tears whelming up. „HE KNOWS frackING WELL HE HAS TO KEEP HIS HANDS OF MY SCREWS!”

„And watch your language, young lady!” Mother says, very furious now. „I don't like your attitude at all! You should know better then treating your little brother like that!”

„HE STOLE MY STUFF!”

„He is only 5!”

„HE DESERVES PUNISHMENT!”

„I think he already got enough punishment from you!” Though her voice is soft, it's the most dangerous thing Rie ever heard.

„Now, I don't want to see you anymore today.” Mother says. „You should know better then treating your family like this. Go to your room, Rie.”

Now the tears are running down Rie's face. „You're.... You're always picking his side... You never, NEVER agree with me...”

Mother doesn't listen, but walks through the door into the livingroom, hushing comforting words to little upset Aye.

Feeling worthless and neglected, Rie turns around and starts walking down the stairs to her basement. Tears running over her face once again.

Nobody cares about her. All they care about in this house is her stupid brother.
Always that stupid annoying Aye! Aye with his large chocolate colored eyes.
Aye with his innocent smile.

Rie opens the door to the basement, which is parted in 2 rooms. Her inventingspace and her bedroom.
She goes to her bedroom and let herself fall down on the soft bed.
She hugs a pillow, burries her face in it, tears going their own way.
Why doesn't anybody care a damn about her? Nobody likes her!
Not even in school! She doesn't have any friends!

And when she thinks about it, it doesn't surprise her. She is a dog. She is a stupid egocentric dog.
When she is at school, she hides in the sciencelab so she doesn't have to spend minutes in the
cafeteria, where she sits alone at a table. Nobody sits with her. Not even in classes. Always alone,
drowning in her books trying to ignore the absence, the absence that is killing her from inside out.

But is it too much to ask to receive some respect and love?

The only thing she does is trying to invent stuff by using old radio and vacuÃ¼mcleaner parts. If she isn't
invented stuff in her room, she is hiding at the iron dump, looking for usefull parts. Nobody knows she
goes there, really.

She doubts it if anybody knows her, not even the neighbours recognize her.

Tears are in control of her body now, making her shock with ever depressed thought that crosses her
mind.

Nobody likes me.

It's all Aye's fault.

I don't have friends.

Nobody likes me.

Nobody...

Nobody will ever like me.

Nobody will ever pay attention to me.

I will die alone.

I'm alone.

„I don't want to be alone.... I don't want....” Rie sobs softly.

„Honey... you're not alone...”

With shock Rie shoots up, staring at her father standing in the doorway.

Without thinking she leaps out of bed, runs to the wall and crawls out of the little window, which is
leveling with the driveway outside.

„Rie, don't run away!” Her father calls after her.

But Rie already left her room, running across the drive way to the street.

She can't face her father! She knows what he will say, what he will do.

He will hug her and comfort her. Tell her she is a great daughter.

And he will tell he she can't be so strict towards Aye anymore, that he believes in her. She is a bright
and pretty girl.

She can't believe him. He doesn't know she has no friends.

He doesn't know she isn't loved by anyone.

And she knows he doesn't love her either. He can't! He possibly can't!

Dark thoughts are drowning her vision. Tears are troubling her view.

She keeps walking trying to dry her eyes. And when she finally manages to do so, she finds out she
ended up at the mall.

Surprised she ended up here of all places, she starts to walk around. She hardly ever comes here, because she doesn't give a damn about clothes and shopping.

After walking around the mall awhile, calming herself down, avoiding peoples faces, she finds a hardwarestore. As she always has some change in her pockets, she walks inside to buy herself some new screws.

It takes her a while to find them, but finally she got her hands on them. Shaking the box up and down, listening to the clinging she walks to the counter.

She pays for the box of screws, manages to get of 5 cent of the price and walks outside, keeping the box of screws close to her ear. The clinging sound of screws outside the toiletpipes relax her somehow. Her mood becomes more sunnier and a little bit absendminded she walks around the mall for a few minutes.

A boy around her age gets her attention. He is sitting on a bench, all by himself, looking like he could cry any moment now. His skyblue eyes staring motionless to nothing in front of him, his dark blond hair tickling his forhead and cheeks.

He wears a very worn out tshirt, with a black basketball shirt over it, also looking really worn-out. His short jeans are all raffled of and his sneakers are ready for the trash! What happened to him?

Maybe it's because she can relate to his feeling, maybe it's because you can't help but feel sorry for him, maybe it's because she feels good again, but she finds herself walking towards him and sitting down next to him.

He doesn't even look up, doesn't give a slightest sign he knows she is there.

She studies his face from the corners of her eyes for a while. He looks so sad.

It's like he is a little kid, who lost his mommy. Or a puppy who is left alone in the room to wait for his master to return from shopping.

He barely blinks, continues to stare into the distance.

Why does she pay attention to him? She doesn't know. But she feels like she must.

So she holds up the box with screws up his ear and shakes it. Soft clinging sounds come from it.

He doesn't look up.

Frowning her eyebrows, she shakes the box again.

No reaction.

She taps her foot, not to give up now she started. She moves the box in front of his eyes and shakes with it again.

Finally he reacts. His eyes focus on the little box and then after a while, he turns his face to the owner of the box, looking really dazed, like he doesn't expect someone to be there.

„Hi there.” Rie decides, looking back at him. „Brighten up will ya? You're totally depressing me and I just got in a good mood.”

That wasn't a very tactfull move and she knows. She is terrible in being tactfull.

He looks at her, staring more likely, not believing his eyes.

Not being able to get a word out of his mouth, staring at her spell-bound, the boy sits motionless next to her.

Feeling very uncomfortable and really sorry about approaching somebody she doesn't know, she stands up. „See you around, I guess”

And without further talking, she turns around and runs away, leaving the boy behind on the bench, who can only stare at her in aw. She doesn't stop running until she reaches the window of her basement, let herself slip through it into her bedroom.

„Rule to myself, never talk to strangers. They are scary as hell.” She shivers and hides herself in her inventingroom, continueing the the work she was busy with until her little rodent of a brother interupted her.

2 - Losing It

Chapter 2

„Revenge...” Rie whispered. „Revenge on my nitwit brother.”

She was stirring in the cookingpan. She was making a carrotporridge.

If Aye hates something more than anything, it's carrots.

Rie offered to cook, like she does a lot, since she enjoys doing it. And she is making Aye a special meal tonight.

Grinning she adds some extra carrots and stirs the stuff roughly.

Checking on the potatoes and chicken, she quickly sets the table. She loves cooking. It's almost like inventing stuff, only cooking usually turns out good and not in explosions.

„Dinner is ready!” Rie cries out, putting the pans and pots on table.

Father is the first one to enter, his nose high up the air. „Mmmm, this smells so good. Are we in a 5 star restaurant?” He says smiling.

„Dad, don't be stupid.” Rie cuts his compliment short, blushing. She isn't good with compliments at all.

They make her feel so uncomfortable and stupid.

Mother and Aye quickly follow, sitting down at their seats.

„I have prepared something new. I wanted to try something out with vegetables.” Rie explains. „So I hope you will all eat your plates.”

„Ofcourse we will!” Father says immediately. „We don't wanna be rude.”

Aye is sitting on his knees, staring at the orange stuff in the pot in front of him. „Ehm... that...”

Rie sticks the spoon in the orange carrot substance.

„I'm sure you will love this Aye! Look, you don't have to chew it!” She drops a whole spoon of carrotessence on Aye's plate.

„But...” Aye complains, questioning himself if the stuff on his plate is what he thinks it is. „This...but...”

„You wan't some more? Here you go!” Rie drops another spoon on Aye's plate. „I have more then plenty Aye!”

„I think he has enough now, dear.” Mother says. „But I would love some.”

She holds up her plate and Rie smiles and scoops up the carrotmouche.

After helping everybody to their food, she sits down and says: „I hope you will all like my master cooking as much as I do! Let us all dig in and finish every last bit of it, since there are starving people in the world, amen!”

Father grins at his daughter. „Yesh, let's!”

The signal for everybody to start eating and they do, accept for Aye.

Father and mother are really enjoying the meal Rie cooked but Aye is poking the orange colored

porridge with his spoon, looking suspiciously at it.

„These...”

„Don't be rude and eat it.” Rie says.

Father looks up at Aye. „Yes, son. You can't say you don't like it, you haven't tasted it yet!”

„I don't really like carrots, daddy.” Aye mumbles, staring at the carrotstuff.

„Try it and find out if you like it!” Father says.

„Eat it all.” Rie adds.

Pressured, Aye sticks his spoon into the mass of carrot and pulls it back out. A pile of orange is balancing on top of his spoon. He swallows bravely, blinks at the vegetablemixture. Then he opens his mouth and lets the spoon enter it.

He chews and chews, swallows. Rie is staring at him, hoping he will hurl it all out again, since that's his usual reaction to carrots.

Aye looks at Rie, a surprised look on his face.

He sticks his spoon into the carrotmass for the second time, taking another bite.

Rie watches him, not able to move as he finishes his whole plate of carrot without complaining.

Suddenly he lifts up his plate to Rie.

„Can I have some more Carroty?”

Rie stares at him motionless for a second, but then wants to explode.

„YOU MEAN YOU LIKE IT?!” She bellows with astounishment.

Aye smiles. „Yes, please can I have some more?”

„You're such a big boy!” Mother cries out happily. „Eating carrots and all!”

„I love it! I wanna eat it at my birthday.” Aye says.

Angry Rie turns the pot with carrotporridge upside down over Aye's plate, causing the whole inside of it be thrown out of it, splattering in every direction as soon as it hits Aye's plate. Whipping bits of carrot of his face Aye looks at his overfull plate.

„Well, I don't know if I can finish that all...”

„You don't have to.” Mother says.

Rie grumbles and leans back in her chair.

„Rie would you clean the mess up later, please.” Mother says. „But I must say, I think it's great you cooked carrot in a way you're brother likes it!”

„Yay for you.” Rie mumbles, not eating her food, leaving it untouched.

Stupid Aye. How can it be she can't even take revenge on a stupid 5 year old?

She keeps looking grumpy, until her father informs her about school.

„Ehm...what...oh the usual.” She mumbles.

„Okay...” Father says, trying to keep the talking up. „So good grades for every class?”

„Yesh, the usual.” Rie cuts it off short.

„A's and B's.” Father says.

„Mmyup.” Rie starts to pile up the plates which are now emptied. „Don't worry about me. I know how to take care of myself, okay?”

„Don't need help studying or something?” He looks at her, hoping her to react on his offer.

„No, thank you. I'll be fine.” Rie clears off the rest of the table, cleaning the table as fast as she can, as her father stands up to do the dishes.

„Dad, I can do that myself.” Rie bites at him. „I promised to do the kitchen today.”

Father grabs ahold of a dryingtowel. „Let me help you, so we'll be done sooner.”

„I don't want help!” With a fast movement she has taken the towel out of his hands.

„Now go and play with Aye or something!”

Father tries to make one last movement, but mother jumps in. „Leave her. She has it under control, Diego.”

She takes Aye out of his seat. „I will put you into your bath, young man. You got carrot all over you!” And she tickles him. Aye cries out a laughter.

„I wanna bathe with daddy!” He claims as soon as his laughter gives him sense of speech back. He stretches his arms out to his father.

„Well, okay then.” Diego says, taking over his son from his wife, who follows them upstairs to the bathroom to put down towels and bathrobes.

Rie is left alone in the kitchen with a big pile of dishes, cleaning them alone with fury.

She wishes her dad had put up more of a fight. That he would force her to go away so he would do the dishes. She wishes he wouldn't give up so easy, while she is dying for his attention.

Why doesn't she take it when she gets the chance?

What makes her want to run away like this?

She can't never become the daughter he wants to have. She is a stupid dog, always swearing and being absend with almost everything. When was the last time she told him something what happened?

The only way she really contacts the family is through cooking and fights.

She closes her eyes to keep the tears from coming.

He can't love her like this. Why can't she change?

School, counting down the seconds, minutes, hours. Trying to avoid as much people as possible. Not looking anybody in the eye. Not paying attention to anybody.

Mathclass now, a big test with difficult formulas and large numbers.

Easy, piece of cake. Rie bends over the paper, filling in every answer carefully and precise. She can almost imagine a big red A+ at the top of her paper.

She grins. Rie, girl, you are a genius. Not even Einstein had so much brain!

After putting her pens away, she stands up to deliver the paper to her teacher, who smiles at her. His eyes almost say it too. „An A+ again, huh, Rie?”

„Yes.” Her eyes say back to him. „Did you expect any different.”

„No.”

„I thought so.”

Rie grabs her bag and quickly manages her way out of the classroom. She still has 20 minutes left until class is over. She better go to the library and bring back the book she lend. Maybe she can find a cool science book or something.

Besides the sciencelab, the library is Rie's other favorite hideout. When it's her birthday or christmas, she only asks for machanic parts and books.

Her mother, ofcourse, always gives her a piles of clothes too, but she doesn't care about those. A brain doesn't need those. A brain needs books.

Plus, she thinks she looks fine the way she looks now. Dark colored clothes, not standing out of the crowd because of flashy colors. Her mom loves colors, but stopped her attempts to let her daughter wear colorfull clothes, since Rie refused to wear those pink and yellow things she bought her.

Rie stays in the library, flipping through books she already read, putting them back and avoiding people who start searching at the same bookcase as hers.

Finally time is over and the bell of next class rings.

Rie quickly puts the book back she had in her hands and rushes out of the library. The hallway is already packed with students, but Rie easily and quickly finds her way through them. Barely being noticed by anyone.

She hurries inside her Biology class. Another test coming up and she is reading for it. She sits herself down at a table in front of the teacher, so she won't have to look at the backs of other students.

The place next to hers remains as empty as ever.

Though on the table that goes with it, now sits a boy.

A boy that doesn't belong to the class, but a boy she met a few weeks ago.

She stares at him, wondering what in the world he is doing in their classroom. She dares to take a quick turn around to check if others find his presents weird too.

Questioning if maybe he is a new student they only got informed to the last few minutes of her last class, so she missed the news, the teacher tells the class to settle down and take a pen or a pencil.

Rie immediately got her pen ready, purposely not looking at the boy, who's still sitting on the desk, his eyes focused intensely at her.

Sometimes you can feel it when somebody is watching you and this is one of those times. Rie just feels his eyes staring at her and she has an awful big deal concentrating on her test because of it.

When she read the same question 3 times at a row, she decides she isn't gonna let one bloody boy ruin her chance on an A+ and she raises her hand into the air.

„No questions during a test, miss Rie.” The biology teacher simply says, looking at her hand. But Rie keeps it up.

„Miss Rie?”

„Please sir.” Rie says, as polite as she is able to. „I was wondering why this boy is sitting on the table next to me. He is really annoying and I can't concentrate.”

The eyes of the teacher moves swiftly from Rie to the table next to her.

„I have no idea what you are talking about, miss Rie.” He says. „But may I assure you, you are disturbing valuable testing-time right now. Please return to your work.”

Staring at the teacher with large eyes, she wonders what he meant with the don't-know-what-your-talking-about-part.

It is clearly a boy is sitting on that table. Right in front of the teacher, for god sake.

How could he not see it?!

Again she raises her hand into the air. „Sir, he is really there. He is staring at me.”

Losing his temper, the teacher clutches a pen in his hand. „Miss Rie, there is no boy sitting on that table, now please be quiet or else I have to send you to the principle!”

A giggling sounds hurls up from the class behind her.

She is being laughed at. She is at the center of the attention right now.

Her cheeks turns red and she bends over at her table, covering her head up.

No, this can't be. There is sitting a boy next to her.

Why are they laughing? Are the class and teacher trying to pull a prank on her?

The boy next to her bends over to her. „You can see me.” He breaths.

Her eyes shoot towards him. Who is this boy?

Is he a crazy guy escaped from some institution or something?

„You're the only one who can though.” His whispering voice echoes in her ear.

What... What did he just say?

She is losing her mind.

Who is this boy? What in the world is happening to her?

„You...can see me, right?“ The boy asks, now sounding really insecure.

Rie lifts her hand up the air again. „Sir, I feel really really ill. I have to puke really really bad.“

With a serious look on his face, the teacher studies her. Then he nods. „Yes, clearly somethings wrong. You're excused. You can catch up the test later.“

Without further talking, Rie grabs her stuff and rushes out of the classroom, running her way down the stairs, speeding outside.

This can't be good. What's happening?

Maybe she is losing it. Maybe she has some sort of panickattacks, maybe she is just to smart for her brain to handle. Just like Matilda could use her brain to let things fly.

Out of breath, she crushes down on a bench in the park.

She can't remember ever running like this, panting she drops her bag on the floor.

„You can see me! You can really see me.“

It's like having a heartattack. Her eyes widen. „Wha...who...What are you talking about?!“ She manages to cry out, backing away from the boy who now has taken seat next to her on the bench.

„You...you can hear me. You can see me...You... I can't believe it!“ The boy almost seems to faint in excitement. „I searched everywhere for you. I looked in every corner of the city to find you!“

He moves closer towards her.

Rie, however backs away more. „Find me? I don't even know you!“

„Don't you understand?“ The boy says. „Im invisible. Nobody can see me....But...now you can! You can see me!“

„No I can't!“ Rie cries out. „Go away! Leave me alone!“

With these words she jumps up, grabs her bag and starts running, ignoring the stings in her side.

Running, keep running, she pushes herself.

Get away from that freak!

3 - Forcing Your Way In

Chapter 3

Rie dives into the window that leads to her room, closing and locking it up immediately. Panting she stares through the window, searching for the blond boy who might be following her. After waiting several minutes, she calms down and sits down on her bed.

„I can't believe it... What's happening to me?“ she softly whispers to herself, putting her hands in front of her eyes, moaning.

„Rie?“ Her mother voice comes from above the stairs. „Are you home already?“

Rie's heart stops. She totally forgot she actually have classes right now. It can hardly be noon!

„Ehm... I feel ill.“ Rie answers, rolling herself up in her blankets immediately.

Her mother comes down and enters her room. „Ill? Oh, dear.“ And she sits down next to Rie. „And you have tests to make all week.“

„The teacher said I could do them later.“ Rie mumbles, trying to look as sick as she can. „I wish I could have made them now. I studied so hard.“

„Well, you will manage, dear. You're such a smart girl.“ Mother says. „You better stay in bed now you're sick and get better soon, okay? I'll make you some tea.“

She touches her daughter's forehead. „Oh, dear, you do feel slightly warm.“

That's from the running, Rie thinks. She sighs and turns herself on her side.

„Thank you, mom, but I will get it myself when I want some.“

Mother smiles. „Typical you, Rie, every time you're sick you don't want people to take care of you.“

Rie stares back at her mom, not talking. It's true. She never asks her parents to get her something when she's sick. She always gets out her bed and get it herself.

Also when she's not sick.

„You just stay here. I will bring you your tea.“ Mother promises and she stands up. „But first I have to pick Aye up from school.“

„Now? But it's 12, he can't be out yet.“ Rie mumbles.

„They gave them the afternoon of. Some project in school.“ Mother explains before leaving, closing the door softly.

Rie frowns her eyebrows and turns on her other side, looking at her window, which is really small and very high, since she is on an underground level.

She stares at it for a few minutes, watches her mother walk past it, getting in her car and driving away.

She looks away from it and wonders what she will do now.

How long will she put up her Being Sick Act?

Sooner or later she won't be able to hide she isn't sick.

A knock on the window gets her out of her thoughts. She turns her head around, looking who in the world is knocking on her window. Maybe it's dad, who forgot his keys.

A hand is sticking right through the window! Right through the glass.

Rie let's out a shriek and jumps up, looking at the arm, which is now joined by a second one. A blond haired head follows, a neck, torso, legs and feet. The whole body thumbles down and collapses on the floor.

Her lungs are stressfully pumping air in and out of Rie's lungs and she stares at the blond boy who is now looking up. A big smile on his face.

„No...Go away!” She cries out. „Go away!”

The boy stands up and walks towards her. „No, I won't go away! I need you! I will never let you go! I won't let you run away from me!”

Rie backs away further from the boy. „Get away from me! GO AWAY!”

Her voice gets higher as he comes closer.

He reaches out his hands to her. „No, I want to stay with you!”

„I DON'T KNOW YOU! GET AWAY FROM ME!” Rie carefully tries to stay out of his reach, backing away from his hands.

„You don't understand it, I need you! I can't leave!” The boy says.

„GO AWAY!”

With a loud crash Rie falls off the bed, on the floor. She quickly recovers herself, turns around and crawls under the bed. She can hear the boy move around on her bed.

„You have to listen to me! You're the only one who can see me! You are the only one who can hear me! Please listen to me! I need you! Can't you see?”

Panick is ruling his voice right now. „Don't you know how it feels when everybody is ignoring you? Simply because they don't know you are there! My heart jumped when I found you talking to me! You can see me! I need you! I can't let you go!”

Rie covers up her ears, she doesn't want to know.

She is going crazy. She is losing her mind.

The boy's head dangles up side down from the bed, looking at her. „There is nothing you can do to make me go away.” He says. „I'm staying with you whether you like it or not.”

Rie suddenly feels some rage. „You can't invite yourself like that!” She hisses, leaping forwards and grabbing him by his throat. He gets pulled off the bed and Rie quickly lets go, not believing she touched him. She backs away, gets away from the bed and stands up. At the other side of the bed the boy stands up too and he looks at her with unbelievable eyes. „You... you can... you...”

„What?” Rie snaps.

„You can touch me...” He finishes.

Rie tightens her fists. „I don't know who you are and what the hell you are thinking, but I want you to get lost! Right now!”

„I'm Seth and I think of staying with you.” The boy says.

„GO AWAY!” Rie bellows. „NOW!”

Seth is just about to yell something back, as the door of her room opens and her mom looks at her, a cup of tea in her hand.

„Rie, why are you screaming like that?”

Rie points with her finger at Seth, who is now grinning widely to her. „That boy snuck into my room! He is scaring me! Mom, call the police!”

Her mother looks at the point Rie is pointing to, then turns back to Rie. „What boy? Rie are you sure you are feeling well?”

Shocked Rie looks at Seth. „But...mom! He is standing there! Mom, make him go away!” She rushes over to Seth and grabs his arm. „Here he is! Can't you see him?”

Looking a bit scared her mother puts down the cup of tea and moves to Rie, who is still holding Seth.

„Rie there is nobody standing there.”

„I'm holding his arm!”

Her mother sticks out her arm and moves it through the space next to her daughter. Horrorstruck Rie sees her mother's hand going through Seth's body. Seth shivers, but doesn't move. „Nobody here honey.” Rie lets him go and backs away, falling on the bed. „He... mom, your hand went through him! He's... mom...Make him go!” Mother urges Rie under the blankets and covers her up with care, Seth stands next to her and stares at Rie. He isn't grinning anymore but is looking at her deadly serious.

„Rie, I swear you there is nobody here. Just try to get some sleep. I will check on you later okay?” Her voice sounds really worried. Rie can only nodd and keeps staring back at Seth. Mother leaves and Seth moves again, sitting down next to Rie on her bed. „Do you believe me now?” he asks. „I'm losing my sanity...” Rie breathes, closing her eyes, praying Seth is gone if she opens them again. But when she opens her eyes he is still there. „You're not crazy.” Seth says. „You can see me.” Rie doesn't know what to do or say anymore, so she flaps out: „How can... how can mom's hand move through you?” „I don't know. That just happens.” Seth replies calmly. „But you're not sinking through the bed.” Rie squeeks. „No, I don't.” Seth says. „I don't know, but I can sit down on bed and chairs, I can move through solid object, but I can't lift things up.” Telling herself this must be all a weird dream, Rie closes her eyes again. This can't be true. There can't be a boy named Seth who is invisible. „You're name is Rie.” Seth speaks. „I like it. Well, I have no choice, now do I?” He laughs and Rie feels him touching her cheek carefully. Rie's eyes shoot open. „Don't...” She bites. „Don't what?” Seth asks, not removing his fingers from her face. „Touch me.” Rie growls. „Go away.” „No, I won't go away.” Seth moves his hand of her cheek. „I'm going to follow you everywhere you go.” Rie looks at him in shock. Everywhere she goes? „Except for some privetplaces.” Seth promises her. „You know, like the bathroom and all.” He smiles at her. Still not quite believing she is going through all of this, she continues her staring at him and he stares back. „I'm sorry for scaring you.” Seth says suddenly. „I didn't mean to.” Somehow now she relaxes a bit and she closes her eyes, turns her back on him. „Yeah, yeah, whatever.” She mumbles. „I want to sleep.” „I guess you deserve that. Do you mind me sitting here?” Rie doesn't reply, acting like she's already asleep.

An hour later her mother comes back into her room, waking her up. Surprised she actually slept she sits up, turning around. Seth is still sitting on her bed. Apparently this whole time he barely moved. „You're still here?” She snarls to him.

„Rie, what do you mean?“ Mother says, giving her a new cup of tea.

Rie looks at her mom, but her eyes are stuck at the door. A man is standing in the doorway, wearing a white coat and a bag in his hand.

„Mom! I didn't ask for a doctor.“ Rie shrieks. „I'm fine! I'm not that sick.“

„I thought it was wise for him to come, honey.“ Mother says and she moves away so the doctor can come closer.

His friendly face smiles at her, but Rie knows that in his mind he is already checking on her sanity. She knows her mother already told him she was talking about boys being in her room.

„How are you feeling, Rie?“ the doctor says calmly, as he sits down on a chair next to her bed, opening his bag.

„I'm fine.“ Rie says. „I'm not sick anymore.“

„Let me check on you, please.“ The doctor says.

„No.“ Rie backs away, bumping into Seth. „I'm feeling fine. Now go away.“

Surprised the doctor looks at her mother, who lifts up her shoulders.

The doctor decides to take different measures. „Your mother said you were being really panicky when you got home today.“ He says. „Talking about a boy being in your room.“

„I never said that.“ Rie lies. „I have been asleep ever since mom left to pick up Aye.“

„So, maybe you were talking in your sleep.“ The doctor says.

„How should I know?“ Rie snaps. „I was asleep until you two rudely woke me up, thank you!“

Being turned down on her snapping, the doctor stands up. „It is possible she talks and moves around while she is actually asleep, mississ.“ He tells her mother. „Especially when she is ill. So I'd say you keep her in bed for a day or 2 and check out the progress.“

„Yes, doctor, thank you.“ Mother says, helping the doctor out of the house.

Rie turns around to look at Seth. „I already am doubting my sanity. I don't need them to do the same.“ She says.

„You're not crazy.“ Seth says.

Rie narrows her eyes. „What do you know about being crazy?“ She moves out of her bed. „I'm going to get me something to eat. Do you want some too?“

„I don't need food.“ Seth says, as he stands up. „But I want to come with you.“

Rie shakes her head. It's going to be an awful big of a deal to accept somebody following her everywhere she goes.

4 - Crazy Girl

Chapter 4

Seth really doesn't leave her side. He walks closely next to her, not talking really, just following her and watching her every move. When she goes to the bathroom or have to change clothes, he waits in the hallway patiently.

It's like a toddler following his teacher around, a chick chaising his mother, he acts like her shadow. From time to time he reaches to her and touches her arm or back, like he wants to check if she is really there.

Rie ignores him most of the time, though it's hard getting used to this new appendix.

No matter what she does, he follows her. If she gets out of her bed because she has to use the bathroom really bad, he follows her there and back to her bed.

If she drinks some tea, while reading in her bed, he watches her moves closely. Observing how she turns every page, sips her tea and puts her hair behind her ear.

The first time he was doing that, that means: on day 1, she had almost smacked his face with frustration. „What...is... it?!” she had hissed.

But he hadn't replied, just looked at her.

He doesn't know any better, Rie thinks. He couldn't communicate with a living soul before he met me, so he doesn't really know how to now.

But he does talk to himself a lot, he mutters words to himself when he sees things or just say them out loud. When her mother came into her room, he had said out loud that dress looked really sexy on her mom.

Rie had troubles keeping her tea inside and wacked him over the head, which was only more reason for her mother to keep her in bed another day.

„Don't you talk like that about my mom!” Rie had hissed to Seth when her mother left the room. Seth had just shrugged his shoulders and smiled at her.

Now it is weekend and Rie claims to be better.

„Are you sure honey?” Her mother asks, looking worried. „You were talking to `somebody' again last night in bed.”

Rie sighs. She wasn't talking to Seth, she was telling him to shut up his big mouth. Seth has this annoying habbit to talk to himself when it's night. Probably he gets bored and just start talking to himself, exposing his thoughts. It's also hard for him to getting used to somebody actually listening to him, hearing every word he says.

„Mom, I know for sure!” Rie hisses. „I'm not a crazy lunatic with invisible friends.”

„Maybe we should get an appointment with a psychiatrist.” Mother mutters.

„Gowd, mom!” Rie cries out and angry she rushes out of the room, hurrying out of the house, Seth closely behind her.

„Psychiatrist... They dig in your head... Childhoodtraumas.... Rapeing....Losing your job... Bad marriage.” He mumbles, more to himself then to Rie.

„To who are you talking?“ Rie breathes, kinda pissed of, she stops walking and heaves down on the sidewalk, not wanting to walk further, since she doesn't know where she must go.

„I don't know.“ Seth mumbles, sitting down next to her. „...I don't really know.“

„Well, I think you were talking to yourself.“ Rie says, not on her most politest tone. „And I also think you should stop that! It's annoying!“

„You're yelling, you're upset...“ Seth says. „I think you should calm down.“

„Don't tell me what to do! I didn't ask for you to come to me!“ Rie backfires.

„You're really upset, you're cheeks are red.“ Seth says. „I like red.“

„Talk to me, you @\$\$! You don't say things like that! Who cares if you like red!“ Rie jumps up again and walks away, heading to the park.

She hardly comes outside, why did she go outside? She hates being outside.

„Look at that @\$\$...“ She hears Seth mumbles.

„Why... you!“ Rie turns around and smashes her fist into his face.

Seth, really surprised by being hit so hard, look at her with a stunned look.

„Not you... you're @\$\$ is just fine...“ He mumbles quitely. His finger rises up to a woman a few feet away, eating icecream, her enormous behind swinging from left to right as she walks. Rie had never seen anyone with an @\$\$ that big.

„That's still no reason just to flap out whatever you are thinking!“ Rie grabs his hand and drags him along. „You are a stupid idiot, you know that? You should stop talking out loud! You're really being a burden!“

Seth looks at her, not knowing what to say really.

„Well, you can talk now!“ Rie says. One thing is for sure, she loses her temper easy.

„Ehm...“ Seth starts. „I like you.“

„Drop dead!“

„You yell and get angry really fast, but I like you.“

„You like me because I am the only one who can like you back!“

„Yes, do you like me back?“

„No!“

Looking slightly dissapointed Seth turns his face away. „Ow...“

„You're way to annoying to like!“ Rie says.

„People are looking.“ Seth mutters, looking around. Several people are looking at Rie making a scene. She turns around and looks at the people surrounding them.

„What? Yes, I am crazy! Why do you care?“ She cries, frustrated.

A familiar giggles rises up from the few people watching her. The blood pulls away from her face.

Just behind the woman with the enormous butt is the most populair girl with her clan.

The most populair girl in her class, in her school: Fanny Dawn.

Rie doesn't know what to say anymore, she doesn't know how to hold her arms, where to look or how to breathe. This can't be happening! Why did she talk out loud to Seth? Why did she even went outside?

„You really are crazy.“ Fanny giggles. „I guess your brain finally exploded huh?“

Her perfectly manicured nagels cover her mouth as she laughs at her own joke.

Rie can't think of any excuse of her weird behaviour. The only thing she can think about is how they are going to bully her when she goes back to school monday.

„She looks kinda cute, yelling to her invisible friends, you know.” Fanny's boyfriend, Marten, says. Rie holds her breath. Why did he have to mingle in?

He had never said anything to her or about her and now he did. Why?

„Stop it!” Seth now says, really angry.

Ofcourse the clan of Popular People can't hear him.

But he is really angry and he stands in front of Fanny, yelling in her face. „Stop it! She hasn't done anything to you! Leave her alone!”

Fanny just giggles and laughs. „Where is your friend now huh?” She says. „Why did you stop talking to him when we arrived? Aren't you going to introduce us?”

„STOP! STOP TALKING TO HER!” Seth cries out, really angry and trembling all over now. „GET LOST! GO AWAY!”

Rie can't hear Fanny talking, because Seth is going wild.

She is afraid to move or talk too, the tears are forcing their way out of her eyes.

She tries to hold them down.

„Rie?”

Her father's voice!

She looks up, behind Fanny and her clan is her father. He is carrying a grocerie bag in one hand. Aye is holding his other hand.

Fanny stops dead and turns around too. „Ow Hello, mister Stalker. How are you today?” She says in her sweetest voice.

„Hi, Fanny.” Rie's father says. „Is everything alright here?”

„Yes, certainly.” Fanny says.

„We were just telling her how hard the tests were.” Fanny's Popular Friend bugs in.

Fanny nods. „But I'm sure Rie will do them with ease.”

„She is the smartest in class, you know.” Another Popular Friend says.

Fanny smiles her most cute smile.

Father narrows his eyes. „I guess so, yes. Well, Rie are you coming home with me? You can help me unpack the groceries.”

„Yes, dad.” Rie mumbles, taking over the groceries, turning around and walking home immediately.

He showed up to save her, but why does she feel bad about it?

Why does she wish he hadn't? She is thankfull he helped her out here, but she just wish he hadn't.

„Are those mean people?” Aye says, catching up with Rie.

„I don't know. Why would you care?” Rie growls angrily.

„You're my sister. I don't want people being mean to you!” Aye says, looking extremely cute with those big puppy eyes. So cute Rie feels an urge, for maybe the first time in her life, to hug her little brother.

„You're right. You're the only one who can.” Rie says.

„Yes!” Aye says, looking proud and worried at the same time.

„I thought it was suprising to see you in the park.” Father says, also catching up with them. „You never go outside without a reason. Are you sure things are alright, Rie?”

„Yes, why wouldn't it be?” Rie mutters, not looking at Seth who is walking next to Aye, scanning Rie with his big blue eyes.

Later that night Rie is laying in bed, curling up like a ball.

What are they going to say to her when she goes to school? She thought she was safe in school by not being known by many people. By living like a shadow between all the students. The only outstanding thing about her are her grades.

Why did Seth help her out? Why did he start yelling, while he knew they couldn't possibly hear him?

She hears Seth mumble in himself. „Stupid.... They....NotI hate...”

She turns around to face Seth, who stops talking and focus his eyes on her.

Seth doesn't sleep, he doesn't need it. He doesn't need to eat either.

„Seth...”

„Rie...”

„Why... why did you yell at Fanny?” Rie asks in a whisper.

Seth blinks with his eyes. „Shouldn't I have?” He asks.

„Why did you?”

„...I don't want... I don't want people to be mean to you.” Seth answers. „You are the only I have now. I can't afford losing you.” His blue eyes are shimmering.

He reaches out his hand to her arm and touches it for a few seconds.

„They can't hear you, you can't help me by yelling at them.” Rie says, turning her back to him, covering her self up with her blanket.

„I know they can't.” Seth says. „But... I can't stand them acting mean to you either.”

When Rie doesn't reply, Seth stands up, walks around the bed and sits down in front of her face. „What if they hurt you? Or if they make your life so terrible you want to kill yourself? I have seen it happen before, Rie. I don't want to lose you! Not now I finally found you!”

„You don't even know me.” Rie says with a razorsharp voice.

„You don't know me.” Seth replies. „But I would like you to know me.”

„If I would say I like to know you...” Rie says. „Will you promise me you will stop talking to yourself so you won't distract me when people are around?”

„Do I talk to myself?” Seth asks.

„Yes, all the time.” Rie snaps.

„I'll try then.” Seth smiles at her, patting her head with great care. „Do you want me to know you?”

Actually enjoying the soft patting Rie closes her eyes, not replying his question.

She doesn't know what she wants from Seth, if he just keeps patting her head like that, or laying his hand down on her cheek, it's okay.

Seth doesn't remove his hand from her face, keeps looking at her while she dozes of in a quite dream.

5 - Morning Before School

Chapter 5

A soft tap on her shoulder makes Rie wake up. Her eyes shoot open and she closes them immediately when she sees Seth's face right in front of her.

She moans and rolls around, covering her head up with a pillow. „Muuuuuh.”

„Rie, wake up!” Seth's voice is remarkably tender.

„I don't wanna.” Rie moans and she clings her arms around the pillows on top of her face. A hand is caught in her arms.

She shoots up, letting go of her pillow and the hand, which without a doubt belongs to Seth, falls on her lap.

Seth looks at his hand, a little dumbstruck. „I still can't really believe we can touch eachother.” He breaths.

Rie raises her eyebrows, looks down at the hand laying on a place where she definitely don't want it.

„Seth...”

„Yeah?”

Seth looks up; she looks back, a deadly look in her eyes.

„One, don't make it sound so perverted! Two, get your fracking hand away from there!” If she had spit fire, it wouldn't had surprised a soul.

Seth quickly pulls his hand back. „Not that I can feel pain or something.” He mumbles, followed by a loud: „OUCH!”

Rie's hand is still hanging in the air, ready for a new attack on Seth's head.

„Hey, that's not a good feeling.” Seth cries out. „That really wasn't good.”

„Don't be so wise.” Rie snatches. „And don't touch me, you pervert!”

„It was just your lap!” Seth defends himself, quickly taking a step back, safe from Rie's smashing fists.

„That's the whole thing, you @\$\$!” Rie growls! „It's my lap! You can't touch a girl there! Just like you have to keep your hands away from my chest!”

„You can touch girls there.” Seth mumbles, eyeing Rie with an upset face. „I saw it many times before. And those girls didn't hit the boy!”

Rie clenches her fists, she can't believe it! She is stuck with a pervert!

„What do you mean, you saw it many times before?” Rie asks, losing her temper sooner or later.

Seth's eyes grow bigger. „What?...Is that... a bad thing?”

The look on Rie's face already gives him the answer and his cheeks become very red. „But... I know you can't really... go into somebody's bathroom and all... but I mean, those people were outside... danceparties and all. In public!”

Rie rolls out of her bed, moves closer to Seth. „Let me make something clear, Seth. I can imagine your little hormones make you wanna watch some stuff I don't even wanna know about, but you better keep your hands to yourself or else I am gonna inflict so much pain in you, you won't even be able to

breathe!"

Seth slowly gets on his knees, simply of fear, the feeling of pain fresh in the back of his head. „I don't really like pain, Rie."

„Well, I guess you know what to do then, don't you?" Rie growls and she walks to her closet. What should she wear today?

Not that there is much to choose from, since everything she owns is black. And she doesn't own much, cuz she really hates shopping for clothes.

She picks out a black skirt and a black sweater and turns around to face Seth. „Hey pervert, get the hell out of my room! I need to get dressed."

„What's the deal of seeing you in your panties anyway?" Seth mumbles. „That's not a big of a deal, is it?"

„Get the hell out!" Rie rushes towards him, her fist in the air.

„I'm going! I'm going!" Seth quickly gets out of the room.

Shaking her head, Rie pulls out her pj's to get dressed. The few days he has been here, he just left the room as soon as he saw she needed to change her clothes.

Why is he making a fuss about it right now?

She combs her hair and washes her face at the little sink that is installed in her room.

Seth is quite something and this is the first day he will come to school with her. Well, except for that day when he scared the hell out of her.

When she's ready she opens the door of her bedroom and Seth is standing right in front of it. „Rie, ehm... sorry for everything, you know." He immediately says. „I mean, I didn't mean to act to stubborn to you and I am really not preverted, but ehm.. everything happens right in front of me and well... I'm used to just looking at everything I can look at. That's pretty much all I can do all the time, you know. Sometimes you kinda wander off to certain things and... I'm sorry, I was such a burden when you needed to get dressed and when I touched you... `there' and..."

„Shut up, you're giving me a headache." Rie moans.

„Please forgive me, Rie! I didn't mean to be like that! I really didn't!" Seth begs. „I don't want you to hate me or give me pain! I just want to be with you and I don't want you to be angry at me!"

„Did you think of all that in the little time I was getting dressed?" Rie asks as she climbs the stairs.

„Huh?" Seth quickly follows her. „Kinda... I don't know. I just thought I was wrong. I'm used to just doing and saying what I want to say and think, you know. And I want you to like me, so I'm trying very hard. But I often don't even see it myself when I go wrong! So..."

„Shut up, please! You are really The Thing That Wouldn't Shut Up, aren't ya?" Rie turns around to look at him. „If you are gonna talk that much to me when we are around people, you aren't gonna live to tell the tale, understood?"

„Roger!" Seth nods and closes his mouth like a zipper, following Rie into the kitchen. Seth takes seat on the floor in the corner of the kitchen where nobody walks and silently watches everything moving. Rie starts preparing lunches and breakfast.

Mom walks into the kitchen a few minutes later „Make Aye's lunchbox too, please." Mom asks, quickly drinking a cup of milk, while combing her long black hair.

Rie doesn't reply but prepares breakfast and lunchboxes for the whole family, like she does all the time. Nobody really asks her to do this, but she hates it when the kitchentable is crammed with people, trying to butter their toasts. And she is the first one to get out of bed she made it a habit to make everyone's breakfast and lunch.

She sets the table and just when she poured the last cup of tea, her father walks in, a yawning Aye on his arms.

„Goodmorning, angels.” Dad yawns, sitting down at the kitchentable.

Rie doesn't greet him back, but stuffs her lunch in her schoolbag, takes a bite of her breakfast, drink her milk in one gulp and quickly walks out of the room.

„You're gone already?” Her dad calls after her. „It's just 7.30!”

„Homework.” Rie yells back, hiding in her room, rocketing her schoolbag on her bed, crashing down on the floor, pulling out some Math-books.

She hates sitting in the kitchen in the morning, since her parents keep asking her what she is gonna do today, while they won't listen to her answer, cuz they will be busy getting ready for work and making Aye eat his breakfast, which he really don't want to eat.

She could use her time better, by just doing some homework. She doesn't have anything better to do with her time anyway. It's not like she has a boyfriend, or she has a hobby she can practise. Except for kinda inventing stuff. Well, if you can call, breaking down old tv's, VSH-players and vacuÃ¼mcleaner and trying to make something new out of it, inventing.

She never makes anything usefull, but she enjoys screwing stuff together and trying to make it work again. She was able to fix the dvdplayer once, so the works pays off eventually.

Seth enters the room, by walking through the door. He shivers. „I don't like going through stuff, you know that.”

„Like I give a damn.” Rie replies, scribbling down some formulas in her Math-book.

Seth sits down next to her. „Sorry for mentioning.” He says, sarcasm leading his voice.

„Better be.” Rie says. „I never asked for you to be around me, so don't go telling me stuff I don't wanna know! I think I did more then enough by accepting your presence!”

Seth stares at her for a few seconds.

„What do you... want to know then?” he finally asks.

„How to shut you up!” Rie's hands shoots up, jolting up his jaw. „Didn't you notice I am a horrible person, who is really egocentric? Just leave me alone! I don't want people talking in my ear all the time! Especially when I don't ask for it!”

„That hurt!” Seth whines, his hand on his jaw. „And I don't think you're horrible.”

„Shut up, you don't have a choice.” Rie says. „I'm the only hope you have, so you try to see every positive thing about me. Newsflash! I don't have anything positive! I'm a terrible person, I'm a horrible sister and daughter! The only thing I am good at is schoolwork, but nobody wants to be around a nerd!”

Seth lowers his head, his hand still on his jaw. He takes a deep breath. „But... you're wrong. You're not horrible... you're just... misunderstood.”

„Don't try to make it look better. I just described the truth for you! You can't change the truth!” Rie totally forgot about her Math-work now, leaving it motionless on her lap.

„You can't change the way I look at you either!” Seth suddenly yells. „To me, you aren't a bad person! To me, you are somebody!”

Rie clenches her teeth.

„I don't say this because you are my only hope, but I say this, because I witnessed you for a few days now and I already saw who you are!” Seth continues, his voice softer now. „When you're working with you machine-thingies or doing your homework, when you prepare dinner for everybody, when you run for your father's nice comments, when you look at your little brother, when you're laying in bed, staring at the ceiling... you're not... somebody I can hate. No matter what kind of things you say or do.”

Rie doesn't know what to say, so she just stares at Seth, who isn't looking at her, but sitting on his knees, reaching to her hand. He holds it and pets it like you would pet a cat. „You may think I just... say this because I want to stay with you and maybe I partly say it because of that. But the biggest part of me says it, because I mean it. You think so low of yourself, only getting security out of schoolwork...”

„Shut up, will you?” Rie mumbles, feeling uncomfortable.

„No... I won't...” Seth says, still petting her hand. „You think you are such a bad person, but you really aren't. You are really just misunderstood. It's like you speak a language nobody else speaks and nobody has a dictionary.”

„That's the stupidest thing I ever heard.” Rie growls, but not trying to remove her hand from Seth's hands.

„Rie, if you want to yell at me, or call me names, or even hit me,... that's okay.” Seth whispers.

„Because... if that makes you feel a bit better, it's all that matters. Because I know how terrible it is when you're misunderstood.”

„Stop being so stupid, will ya?” Rie growls. „You sound like a drama-movie.”

She stands up, pulling her hand back. „I don't like the way you said all that, because it's not true....”

Seth looks up at her from the floor where he's sitting. His large blue eyes staring at her. She never saw eyes like that before and in some weird way it does something to her. Just like the first time she saw him.

„But... I appreciate it too.” Rie mumbles, feeling her cheeks becoming red. „And... well, I may be a dog and all, but you can keep being around me and lecture me in stuff, but if you get too much...”

„I know...” Seth says. „So... ehm...”

„What?” Rie eyes at him, suddenly feeling really uncomfortable again.

Seth stands up, facing her. „Rie... we had a sort of a fight right?”

„Eh.... I guess you can call it that.” Rie says.

„And we made up again, correct?”

„I guess.”

His eyes look at her, making her feel so stupid. It's like he is looking right through her. It's like his eyes are made out of the blue sky.

Seth holds up his hands.

„Can we hug then?”

„What?! No way!”

Rie jumps back. „I don't like hugs!”

„I never hugged somebody! They all fall right through me!” Seth begs.

„No! Not a change! Go hug the floor! You can touch that too!”

„Please!”

„Drop dead!” Rie ducks to grab her schoolbag and mathbook. Before Seth can even blink, Rie disappeared out of the room through the little window.

Seth lowers his arms and smiles. „I could have expected that.”

6 - Fight With A Teacher

Chapter 6

The rumor about Rie's weird behaviour a few days earlier in the park apparently spread itself through the school like a walking fire, because Rie has this weird feeling everybody is looking at her. And she hates it, not only because of the rumor. That's the part she cares about less, but she hates those eyes staring at her.

Those eyes, who used to ignore her, who didn't even know who she was or even knew she was there, are now staring at her. And they don't just look, they look for a reason. The brain behind those eyes says: „Look, there's the freak everybody is talking about."

She is no longer the unnoticed shadow everybody ignored with all their mights (geeks included), but now she is on the frontpage of the Daily Gossip.

Rie tries to act like she doesn't see the eyes staring at her, pretends not to hear the whispers behind her back. She clenches her fists around her books.

If it was Aye who was staring at her, she would have whacked him over the head with those books. But she don't want to put more pressure on the fact she is exciting right now. She wants to dissapear, be one with the walls around her.

Her mind gets drawn to Seth when she thinks about this.

Does she really want to dissapear? It must be a murder not to be noticed by a single soul. Nobody who responds at your call. Not even a scream or a "dog" when you hit somebody in the face with all your streigth.

No answer on your question.

Rie straightens her back and turns to look at the 3 girls, who are momentarily looking at her, talking about her behind their pink-colored and perfectly manicured nails.

She wants to say something, something to hurt their feelings.

The Terrible Three look at her and the little streight she had, is chaised away from her body. She can't, she feels so weak. She doesn't want to make a scene in school.

She bows her head to the ground.

Two feet with worn out sneaker are blocking her view. She looks up in Seth's face.

„Hey, sorry about the hug-thing. I mean, I was going a little overboard and all, but you know, I never really hugged somebody before and..."

Rie turns around on her heels and walks to Economics-class, leaving Seth talking to himself. Why can she hit Aye and Seth over the head when they upset her, but not tell those doges in school what she thinks about them?

See, one more prove she is worth nothing. Rie quickly enters the classroom, gets her books out of her bag and starts working. This way she doesn't have to look at anybody and look like a sad and alone person with no friends, desperartly looking at the others in class.

Usually when she sticks her nose in her books, nobody bothers her, but apparently today everything's different. Because she can hear Madison, Fanny's (Evil Beeatch Numero Uno) best friend say: „Ow, there she is, she talked to her invisible friends right?"

Fanny's voice replies: „Yes, haha, it was terribly cute in one way though. But still... it only makes clear Rie is crazy. Maybe her brain got overexcited, I've read about such cases."

Rie clenches her teeth. She wish she could lock her ears of this.

Seth apparently walked in the classroom too and heard Fanny talking too, because he starts yelling at her. „Shut up, you dog!" He stands right in front of Fanny, he fists clenched into fists. „DON'T TALK ABOUT RIE LIKE THAT!"

Rie wished he'd shut up, because of his shouting, she can't hear the other voices in class. But on the other hand, she doesn't want to know what they are saying.

The teacher enters the class and everybody sits down. Seth stops his shouting too.

He narrows his eyes as Fanny is sitting down, wishing he could kick her and hurt her like Rie had hurt him earlier today.

„I'm going to make her pay." He hisses, sitting down on the table next to Rie.

„I swear I am going to make her pay!"

Rie tries to ignore Seth and tries to pay attention to what the teacher is saying, but Seth is so full with frustration, he is not shutting up at all.

And if Seth is still raging on, making up Plans Of Doom, she knows she can't keep sitting here and doing nothing, risking an A- instead of a A+ on a test.

So, as a rocket, she launches her fist to her right, right into Seth's stomach, who gets whiped off the desk and crashes on the floor.

Rie's quick movement was obviously caught by everybody, who were all closely watching her, apparently begging for more Weirdness from her.

Even the teacher frowns his eyebrows at her, but continues his lesson.

Rie can hear the soft whispering behind her back, but she can also hear Seth yowling in pain. „That wasn't fun! That hurt a lot more then the other punch you laid on me!"

Tears are running out of the corner of his eyes. Rie ignores him.

Doesn't he understand she wants him to shut up?!

Seth sits right up on the floor, a hand on the back of his head. „What if you gave me a brainfracture or something and nobody can fix me, because they CAN'T SEE ME!"

Rie can believe he isn't shutting up! How can she follow her class like this?!

During breaktime Rie escapes to the staircases, as soon as everybody left the hallway to have lunch. Nobody is allowed in the hallways and staircases when the lunch has started, but Rie always hides in here or in a scienceclassroom.

Seth follows her as a loyal dog.

„Seth!" She starts.

„You're going to apologize for that brainfracture you gave me?" Seth says, apparently still very upset about what happened during class.

The urge to whack him over the head again is so big.

„No! I never want you around me in class! Ever!" she says.

Seth let his arms hang next to his body, while he stares at her with amazement. „Ehm... what? Why?"

„Are you THAT stupid! What did I told you before about Not Talking To Me Around Other People, you @\$\$!" Rie yells at him.

„Huh... but...I didn't noticed.... I mean, I kinda forgot, I'm not used to keeping my mouth, you know!" Seth explains, feeling really guilty right now.

„Better learn to keep it and until that time I don't want you around when Im surrounded with people!" Rie decides.

„That's not fair!" Seth yells back.

„Why isn't it fair?" Rie asks, her eyes are now very little and angry.

Nervously Seth looks at her. „Ehm... I mean, you're being selfish... I want to be with you, I need to be with you!"

„I don't need you and I don't like burdens around me!" Rie shouts back. „Remember, I never asked for you to be around me! So better follow my rules! It's my life you are totally wrecking now!"

„I am not wrecking it!" Seth yells back.

„You so totally are!" Rie has an itchy feeling in her hands.

„I just want to be with you!" Seth cries out and he launches forward to wrap his arms around her, pulling her against his body and Rie is surprised how cold he feels.

„Don't ban me out! I wanna be with you! Do you have any idea how long a schoolday lasts? I can't go that long without you!"

He places his cheek on hers and really holds on to her like a seastar would with his next meal. If you never saw this before, I suggest you watch Animal Planet or Discovery Channel more often.

„You have done pretty well without me before you knew me, you big stupid..." Rie mumbles aggravated, though she has to admit to herself she likes this hug.

„No, I haven't done well at all! Understand that! My life was terrible!" Seth pushes his nose in her neck.

„I want to be with you, please! I'll promise I try harder to shut up! Please don't leave me out!"

„I'll consider it if you let me go, NOW!" Rie bites.

Seth looks up at her, tears in his eyes.

Rie looks back, not with a happy face.

„I hugged you..." Seth mumbles. „Sorry... I couldn't...resist."

„You scemed this all out, asshole." Rie can't help grinning now.

„I didn't! I didn't!" Seth waves his arms up and down. „I didn't sceme it out! Really! Believe me! I never meant to be a burden, I never...."

He suddenly stops dead, staring at something behind Rie.

Rie sees him looking and she quickly turns around, to face a teacher, who has a really weird look in his eyes.

„Rie is your name huh?" he says.

„Why?" Rie asks instead of answers.

„To who were you talking? Are you feeling well?" The teacher asks, looking really worried right now.

„Ehm... to nobody. What are you crazy or something! You can't talk to somebody when nobody is around, you know." The expression on her face shouts out: DUH!

„Well, no, ofcourse not, Rie. But you were sort of talking to thin air right there." The teacher explains, pointing somewhere behind Rie.

„I'm not thin air!" Seth protests. „I'm a boy, you big prick! Go jerk off in the dressingroom like you always do!"

„He does?" Rie asks, without noticing she was talking back to Seth again.

„Yeah he does." Seth cries out dramaticly. „That image can never be whiped out of my memory again! I will have nightmares over it the rest of my life!"

Rie slaps her hands in front of her mouth to cover up the giggles that escape from her mouth.

The teacher stares at her with a puzzled look. „I better go inform the principal..."

shoot! Not the principal! If she has to go there her reputation as Never Sent To Principal Student is over! She can't risk that!

Plus everybody will find out her acting weird again and people will stare ever harder at her then before. Maybe even start to bully her! She doesn't want that.

„Before you go, don't you have to make a stop at the dressingroom." Rie's mouth says before she can even stop it from talking.

The eyes of the teacher become really big. „...what?"

„We all know you go there to jerk off." Rie continues.

Stop! She thinks! This is a teacher

„His wife cheats on him, she doesn't want to touch him anymore." Seth explains.

„We all know your wife cheats on you and doesn't want to touch you anymore." Rie copies. „And we all know you get horny of all these High School Girls, so you give yourself a hand, since you can't touch them, huh?"

She finds it stunning of herself she just spits this out in the face of a teacher, but the more stunner is the cool expression on her face that goes along with it.

The teacher can't remain cool anymore. His face goes from snow white to bright red.

„What nerves do you have, little missy!" His voice is trembling in anger.

„I can spread it around the school, you know. Kinda wrecking your reputation!" Rie hisses, going into her real defence mode now.

Now the teacher is trembling all over his body. „You can't do that!"

„So you say it's true?" Rie says, a little astonished.

Now the teacher's eyes grow twice as big as they were before. „You..."

„I think they would believe me, especially since I am a 16 year old girl after all. You know how easily teachers can get close to them." Rie says.

The teacher turns around and to Rie it's an answer: „Move on! Move on and don't tell anyone you told me!"

She smiles of pride, though on the inside she feels sick too.

„You know what?" The teacher says, as he almost leaves the hallway. „No teacher would ever try to make a move on you! You're too weird and you're not even pretty, everyone thinks so. Everybody knows about what happened in the park." Rie stares at the closed door, her mouth hanging open.

„Wha...wha..."

There you have it, proof of that what she always thought: She's ugly and weird, even the teachers think that of her. She bows her head. And even the teachers know what happened in the park when she was talking to Seth.

She should have never been so mean to him, talking about his private stuff.

Tears just overwhelm her, she can't keep them to herself.

„Rie, hush." Seth puts his hand on her shoulder. „Come on, Rie, you're not ugly, you're not ugly at all."

Rie shakes her head. „No... I am! I am ugly and I am weird!" Her body is trembling, she can't control it.

„Why do you even listen to what he says? He has no idea of what you really are!" Seth says. „He was upset too, of what we told him he was."

„Did you hear him?!" Rie cries out. „The whole school thinks I'm weird and ugly! They all know of what happened in the park! When I was talking to you!"

She smashes her fists into his chest. „Why did you come into my life huh?!"

„Rie, please! They don't know a thing! You're not ugly! Really! You're really pretty!" Seth grabs her fists and pulls them close to his body.

Rie stares at her hands. Seth's touch is so cold. It's like she's holding wind or something. She pulls up her nose and now looks up higher into Seth's eyes.

„You're not dressed in the latest fashion, and you're not into make up or doing special stuff with your hair, but it only tells me you're not like everybody else. It makes you even more pretty, Rie, just the fact that you're different."

„Why... why do you only talk about the pretty-part?" Rie mumbles softly, continuing to stare into his eyes.

„You want me to cheer you up about the weird part?" Seth asks. „Because you're not weird. It's all my fault."

A little smile curls upon her face. „Yeah..." She bows her head. She doesn't know what to do. What must she do now? She ruined it all.

Slowly she bows forward, until she feels Cody's cold body pressed against her head and she lets his arms slip around his back. „Seth,..."

„Yeah?"

„If you... if you want, I want you to stay with me, okay?"

She doesn't dare to put her arms around him, since it would look really stupid if somebody would accidently walk in, like that other teacher did. Now it looks like she is just kinda being tired or something.

„You want me to be with you?" Seth repeats.

Does she want that? She closes her eyes.

He is so annoying and gives her troubles, but now she doesn't know if she rather haves him out or here. But she thinks it's harder to miss him once he's gone, since she knows about him now. Plus, it's hard to get rid of him in the first place.

Maybe it's better if she wants him around, so things can get better.

Plus, since he hugged her just a few minutes ago, she feels she wants them more.

„Yeah... I want you to stay with me." Rie says.

Seth gently presses her more close to his body. „I will try to shut my yap around people then." He promises.

„This time, try to actually shut it." Rie smiles.

„What is it, Clan Of Evil Witches?!" She hisses. „Nice gossips and rumors about me and my invisible friends?! Don't you have any nails to polics or eyelids to paint?!"

The Horrible Three look at Rie with looks full of disgust. Like they can't believe the Lunatic is actually talking to them.

„I hope you die of the poison in all that make-up you rub over your skin! You're a disgrace to the human race! Because of you the ozon-layor has holes!"

In the back of her head Rie knows she is goind overboard, but she can't stop talking.

It's like somebody is pulling the words right out of her mouth.

Truth is, she is finally telling them what she thinks of them. Next point: Is she going to survive the consequences?

7 - Ignoring The Family

Chapter 7

Seth is legally staying with Rie now. They agreed on signs that Rie can use when Seth has to shut his mouth or when he has to get out of the way.

But he keeps walking right behind her, not leaving her side and when they double checked if nobody is around, they talk to each other.

And Rie finds it very comfortable to have somebody to talk to now, since Seth is really open to every subject and looks at things from a different view than Rie does.

The lonely feeling Rie always used to have has floated away a little.

But she ignores other people a lot more than she already did. Even at home, she doesn't speak a word to her parents and brother, because she doesn't feel she has anything useful to say. She can't remember having a good conversation with them, so what's the point of trying when she has Seth now? He listens and talks with her whenever she wants and about everything she wants.

Rie sits in her room, making her homework.

Her window is open, a warm breeze enters the room.

Seth is laying on her bed, his arms stretched to the ceiling. „How would it be like to fly?" he asks.

„Dunno, try it out." Rie mumbles, focusing on her math.

„If I tried I would drop dead for sure." Seth says.

„You have to begin by jumping off a... table or something. And then get a little bit higher everything, until you can fly off a building."

„I don't think humans are built to fly."

Seth lets his arms fall down next to him.

„Pity though." Rie admits. „It would be a blast to fly in this warm weather."

Seth lifts up his head. „Warm?"

„Yeah it's hot outside, I think flying would be great to cool off."

„Is it warm outside?" Seth asks, now sitting right up, gazing out of the window.

Rie now turns around to face him. „Like duh! Can't you feel it?"

„No... not really." Seth says. „I don't know what I feel, but it's always the same."

Deciding not to show any pity to him, since being invisible must be a murder already, she says: „Well, can't you see I'm sweating like a pig?"

„So that's warm?" Seth says.

„Yeah!" Rie turns to her homework again.

Just a few seconds later her mother is calling her for dinner.

„Dinner already?" Rie mutters, leaving her books open on her desk and moving her chair back. She stretches out and walks to the door. „I hope we don't have any food I hate."

Seth quickly follows Rie out of the room, upstairs to the kitchen.

Rie sits down at the table and Seth sits down in his safe corner.

„Hello Rie." Her dad is apparently cooking. But it's thursday, he always cooks on thursdays. „Did you have a good day?"

Rie doesn't answer, but plays with her knife and fork, while eyeing Seth, who is making faces, trying to make her laugh. But Rie keeps her face straight. Though it uses up all her energy to do that.

„Do you need help with your homework? Oh, how did that catch up test go?" her dad still tries to hold up

a conversation.

„Diego, let her be." Her mother whispers to him.

„Why? I wanna know. " Her dad says. „She's my girl."

He looks at Rie, who is shoving little disks of cucumber from a cup on her plate now.

„What has gotten into her? She isn't the same anymore." He whispers to his wife.

„She's a girl in puberty, don't ask so many questions." She whispers back and she lifts a pan of the stove and puts it on the table.

Rie didn't catch a word from her mom and dad's conversation, but Seth did.

And she notice him looking up at her parents. She frowns.

„They were talking about you." Seth says.

Rie eyes her father. About her? What's there to talk about her?

But she decides almost immediately that she doesn't care at all.

She stuffs the cucumbers in her mouth and swallows them down in a few chews.

When every member of the family sat down at last and filled up their plates with food, her father asks her again how school was.

Rie doesn't react, but just pokes the meatball on her plate.

Why does she have to eat at the table? She doesn't want to sit here. It's a total waste of time. She can eat it in her room too, right?

She likes it more in her room and she can talk to Seth in the mean time.

She feels a little guilty to admit to herself, but she doesn't like being around her family. Sitting alone is a better option. Well, alone, aside from Seth.

„Can I finish my dinner in my room?" Rie says.

„So you can speak, huh?" Her father says, sounding a little irritated.

Rie doesn't react on this, but looks at her parents, waiting for an answer on her question.

„Why?" does her mother ask, without even looking up.

„I want to eat in my room." Rie says.

„Why do you want to eat in your room?" Her mother says.

„I just want to!" Rie stands up now, her plate in her hands and she leaves the kitchen.

„No! Come back, young lady!" Her father got up his feet now. „I don't know what has gotten into you, Rie, but dinner is a familyoccasion! You sit down and eat with us!"

Rie doesn't turn around to face her dad.

„This is why I don't want to eat here." She says with a very clear voice. „I want to be alone." And she continues her walk back to her room.

Her father doesn't say anything, lets her go.

A small part in Rie wishes he had called her back and forced her to eat with them, without taking no for an answer. That he had pushed her back in her chair if he had to, no matter how hard she would call him names.

But he doesn't and Rie closes the door of her room.

„You know, your father loves you." Seth says later that night, while laying on Rie's bed again, staring at her demontaging a radio.

„I doubt that." Rie mumbles, trying to unscrew a screw. „I bet they are more then happy when I leave the house or... when I drop dead or something."

„Don't say that!" Seth cries out. „They worry a lot about you!"

„No they don't. All they care about it sweet, innocent, flushing-my-screws-down-the-drain-brother Aye!"

Rie throws her screwdriver on the floor in frustration. „I'm the dog, happen to be their daughter."

She grabs another screwdriver and continues her work, carefully not looking at Seth, who is looking

really close at her face now.

„Why did you leave the table?“ he asks.

„Why do you even bother asking me that.“ Rie's reply is from under her long hair hanging in front of her face.

Seth sits up and moves closer to Rie. „Your dad told you not to go. And still you did.“

„Yeah, and he didn't bother trying harder to keep my in the room, now did he?“ Rie bites, looking furious at Seth now. „Only more proof they don't give a damn about what I do and who I am.“

„He didn't bother trying harder, because he is afraid!“

„Why would he be afraid of me?!“

„Afraid of losing you, if he is too strict on you!“

„He oughta be more strict, he is losing me!“

„He can't! He can't be strict! Can't you see, Rie?!“

Seth now got of the bed and put his hands around Rie's arms, shaking her in frustration. „He sees you as you are! A fragile girl, a misunderstood girl and he wants to be involved with you and your life, Rie! Can't you see that?!“

„How do you know?!“ Tears are streaming down her face, as she looks away from Seth, just because she can't bare to stare into those skyblue eyes.

The grip around her arms relaxes. „You can see it... in his face and when he looks at you.... His attempts to make you talk... He is afraid you might shatter, might really lock him out of your life, if he acts too strict on you...“

„You're wrong, he doesn't give a damn about me.“ Rie whispers. „Nobody in this family does, okay? So shut up about it.“

She turns around on her seat, facing her father peeking through the door.

When he catches her watching him, he quickly closes it, dissapearing out of sight.

Then she hears a knock on the door.

„What?“ Rie can't help to snatch.

„Rie...“ There is a pause. „It's me.“

„Ofcourse it's you! You were peeking through the door!“

A pause again, before her father starts talking again, a little insecure now.

„Rie... is everything okay?... You were talking to... to...“

Rie jumps up. „What?! You think I'm crazy now too, huh? Cuz everybody in school thinks so! So if we add you, along with mom, the whole list is complete, right?!“

„I don't think you're crazy, Rie. You're not crazy! You hear me?!“ Her father now says, his voice a lot louder. „I want to know what's happening! Why are you so distant?!“

„Go away! Let me be!“ Rie shouts at the door. Her chest is hurting from the yelling and she wished everything would go quiet. From the other hand she wants her dad to keep yelling at her like this.

„I won't go away!“

„Go be happy with your wife and son! Leave me alone!“

„What happened with you! You are ignoring us all, Rie! You didn't use to ignore us like this! What's wrong?!“

„I'M WRONG! OKAY?! I'M CRAZY! NOW SCRAM!“ Without thinking, she launches the light on her nightstand into the door. „DIE FOR ALL I CARE! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!“

The voice behind the door doesn't reply anymore.

He has given up, Rie thinks. He didn't continue his fight for her. He doesn't care.

But then the door flies open now with great force.

„No! You're NOT crazy! And I won't leave you alone!“ Her father now marches up to her and Rie is too shocked to move.

Just as he is right in front of her, ready to swing his arms around her to hold her down, she slips away and faster than she thought she was able to go, she climbs through the little window of her room.

But she is a little bit too slow and her father catches ahold of her legs.

„No! Stay here! Stay here!" He pulls her back in.

„Let me go! LET ME GO!" Rie screams, kicking and wriggling around as hard as she can, in an attempt to get loose.

Seth is watching the two in silence, not able to do anything, not wanting to do anything.

„I won't let you ignore me! I won't, Rie!" He gets knocked down, but takes Rie with him on the floor.

„Something's wrong and I want to know what!"

„YOU ARE WHAT'S WRONG! LET ME GO!" Rie shrieks, almost running out of breath.

Her father now manages to cling his around around her body and holds her tight against his body, not thinking about letting go.

Rie is twisting and turning and screaming. She wants him to let go, she wants him to continue, not to give in to her. Tears of confusion and sadness are streaming down her face like waterfalls.

Then her mother's voice cries out: „Diego! Diego what are you doing?!"

Father looks up and nods his head to the door. „Get out, Essence! I'm dealing with her! I won't stop until she gives in! Until she calms down!"

He is having trouble holding Rie down, who can't hear anything because of her own screaming, yelling and crying.

„Diego! Let her go now!" Her mother's voice is overflowing in panick. „You can't hold her down like that! You have to let her go!"

„I DON'T WANT TO LET HER GO, DAMMIT!" He screams, he is crying now too. His red cheeks are wet with tears. „I DON'T WANT TO LOOSE HER!"

Now Rie finally stops her screaming and looks up at her dad, sobbing and shivering.

She doesn't know what to say and she feels like a little kid. She feels stupid.

Rie lets out another sob. Then she hides her face in his arms and starts to cry again. Crying so hard, she can't control it anymore. She just can't control herself.

The only thing she wants now is to stop the everlasting battle and arguments she causes and to stay in her father's arms like this.

When she opens her eyes, she is laying in her bed and she can't remember being asleep. But she slept, because her alarm tells her it's already 2 in the night.

Around her are 2 arms and when she turns around in them she sees her father, sleeping. His warm breathe in her face.

She looks at him, brushes the air out of his eyes.

Then she carefully sits up, looking around for Seth, who is sitting on her desk now, staring up out of the window. He is quietly muttering to himself. He doesn't even notice her being awake and looking at him.

„Seth." She whispers, not wanting to wake up her dad.

Seth turns his head and looks at Rie. He smiles. „Hey."

Suddenly embarrassment hits her. She blushes furiously. „I'm sorry."

„For what?" Seth asks.

Rie shrugs. She doesn't know. Not a clue, but she is sorry.

„Rie...?" Her father mumbles, waking up now. Looking a little puzzled his eyes finally manage to focus on her. „Who... who are you talking to?"

Rie looks at him and raises her shoulders.

„You said... you said: Seth... I'm sorry." He says, it's like he has troubles believing himself. It's like he doesn't think what he heard was right.

„Ehm... I did say that." Rie says.

„Why?" Her father now looks awak and sits up too.

„Because... I was talking to him." Rie looks down at her hands.

Seth is watching them with great care.

„But....to who?" His eyes look puzzled.

„Seth."

„Who's Seth?" He now looks around in the room.

„You won't believe me and think I'm crazy... or... shizophrenic or something." Rie mumbles, now turning a quatre and staring at the wall without really seeing anything.

„Can... can you see somebody?" His arms slips around her shoulders. „Is that what you mean? Is somebody around here?"

„And I am the only one who can see him." Rie turns her face away another quatre, her face not showing to her father at all.

„Are you serious? I mean... for how long can you see him?" She can sense from his voice that he want to treat this moment with extra care. He don't want to mess it up.

„You think I'm crazy huh? You think I'm losing my mind, aren't you?" Rie can't help the trembling in her voice.

„No, no I will never think that! I will never think that." And with these words, he wraps his arms around her. „I promise you that I believe you Rie. I really do! Just give me a chance to realise."

Rubbing her eyes with the back of her hand she now points at Seth. „He's sitting right there. He's sitting there since we fell asleep, talking to himself, because he... because he doesn't need sleep and is bored."

Her father looks at the point Rie is pointing and Seth has frozen in his body, waiting for what is coming. Her father stares a feet away from where Seth is sitting.

„Seth's there?" He asks, sounding really insecure.

„You don't believe me! You think... you think I'm crazy huh?" Panicky Rie tries to unwrap her father's arms from her. „You think I'm making this up! That I'm shizophrenic with an own world!"

„No! No I want to believe you! I will!" His arms tighter around her, rocking her back and forth, hussing comforting. „Don't go into conclusions. I think you are the sanest girl in the world, I don't think you are losing it. I believe you, I believe Seth's here."

Rie lets out a sob. She hopes he does.

„Is he nice?" He asks.

„Well, he was annoying at first." She quietly admits. „But it's nice to have... a friend."

„Yeah it is." He hushes. „Now, please, give me a chance to get used to Seth too. This is new to me, just like it must have been new to you when you met him."

„If you... promise not to tell anyone. And especially mom or the school!" Rie says.

Her father hugs her tight and pulls her back into her bed. „I promise that, Rie. Please never ignore me again." His voice sounds scared.

Rie blinks and turns around to hug her father. „I promise. I won't ignore you."

8 - Three Blond Boobs

Chapter 8

The next morning, when Rie is entering the kitchen with Seth on her tail, her dad puts a large plate with pancakes in front of her nose. „Goodmoring, chicky."

Rie stares down at her plate, then shoves it aside and let her head bang downon the table. She isn't hungry. Eating in the morning is a murder, especially with everything that happened yesterday and last night.

„You must eat, squirrel." Her father says and Seth is nodding.

„I don't want to eat." Rie looks up at her father, who smiles at her. „Well, mom is helping Aye in his clothes, so... how's Seth doing this morning?"

Rie covers her head up with her arms. „Ask him."

„I can't ask him." Her father says, sitting down next to her, helping himself to some of her pancakes. „I can't see him, like you can."

„Try me!" Seth cries out with enthusiasm.

„Seth says: Try me!" Rie mumbles and she peeks through her arms to her dad. „...I don't think you believe me... I think you think I'm making Seth up."

„I don't think you're making him up." Her father promises.

„When is the little van showing up?"

„Van?"

„That one of the House For Crazy Girls? Did you call it already?"

Now Seth jumps right next to her ear and shouts: „You're not crazy, dammit!"

Rie sits right up and pushes her pink in her ear. „Ouch! You stupid @\$\$! Don't shout like that! I don't want to end up with eardamage!"

She gives Seth some Dark Looks and he sticks out his tongue.

Rie notices her dad looking a little surprised. „So... that was Seth."

„Hell yeah." Rie growls. „But from your point of view I might as well look like a lunatic."

„Well, I believe you on your word, because you are being so cranky about him." Her father promises her. „If he wouldn't be a nuisance, he would be made up... I guess."

„Dad, you don't know shoot about psychology!" Rie sneers. „But I... what if I am crazy, huh? What if it turns out that asshole here isn't real at all and I'm just losing it?"

Now Seth looks really insulted. „Not real? I am real! I'm the real thing!" He is making energetic gestures with his hands to his chest.

„Shut it, you aren't part of the visible conversation now!" Rie locks Seth out of the conversation and eyes her dad. „Well, dad? What you think?"

Her father leans back in his chair and thinks. „Well... then if you think this way, I think you should try to think of evidence that he isn't a mindthingy."

„I am not a mindthingy, dammit!" Seth cries out! „I can touch you! I CAN TOUCH YOU! That's proof! I'm not totally made of air!"

„Stop shouting!" Rie cries out. „You sound like somebody is killing you!"

„You can touch me! TOUCH ME! THAT'S PROOF!" Seth now hops up and down, totally excited all of a sudden. „Touch me! Lean against my shoulder in a way no normal human could do without somebody to lean on!"

Rie stares at Seth, but then she thinks this isn't a really stupid thing to do.

„Okay... dad... you want evidence?"

„Yeah, bring it on." Her father sits up, looking amused.

„Seth stand here." Rie demands. Seth hurries to the spot Rie is pointing, right in front of Rie's father. He is looking like a 5 year old kid who had just been handed out candy.

„Dad, stick out your hand and move it here." Rie says.

Her father does as he is told and his hand moves right through Seth. Seth is shivering, apparently not liking the feeling of the hand moving through his body.

„You're moving through Seth's body now." Rie explains. „You can't touch him. But I can." She stands up and stretches out her hands, wraps them around Seth's neck and let herself hang on his body, pulling her feet of the floor.

To her it is like she is just hanging on somebody's neck, but her father pushes his chair back so hard he thumbles over and with large eyes he stares at his daughter floating in mid air. „You.... You're.... How... ow dear god!"

„I think we got our proof." Rie says.

„You're heavy." Seth mumbles, trying to keep his neck straight.

„Heavy?!" Rie lets herself go and slaps him in the face. „I'm not heavy!"

„You don't have to slap me!" Seth cries out.

„Shut up, you ... pile of cheese!" Rie now turns to her dad.

„I think you really believe me now huh?"

And he dad nods, seeing a little white in the face. „Yeah... I absolutly believe you now, honey."

Seth just comes to school with Rie and she ignores everybody she sees, even the teachers. She doesn't dare to look anybody in the eye, but the whispers around her back are even worse. The news of her losing her mind is known by the whole school now. Everybody who didn't know about her, now do. And it's starting to pull on Rie's nerves. She doesn't want to stand out in school.

But the school is starting to look like a boy giantic version of her little annoying brother. Lucky Seth is helping her as good as he can.

He is really shutting up when he has to, but sometimes he does talk and Rie shuts him up very easy, by using the signs the agreed on. Like coughing and poking.

But when a lot of girls are talking about her behind her back, with the intension being loud enough for Rie to hear, Seth begins to sing as loud as he can, to cover up the gossip. And Rie thinks it's very sweet, but Seth is a terrible singer.

But today, when Rie is walking through the hallways to her next class, she passes this group, also known (by Rie) as the Three Blond Boobs.

She hates them, because they are always flipping their dyed blond hair back, their full chest showing in their tight shirts, chewing pink bubblegum with their mouths half open for everybody to see, leaving guys drooling behind them.

They aren't as popular as Fanny and her Gang Of Popularity, but they do get a lot of attention from everybody in the school.

And usually the Three Blond Boobs don't pay attention to Rie; don't even know she exists. But apparently they have taked notice of her.

„Hey, you're that crazy girl!" The first one says loudly.

What an entrance, Rie thinks, forcing herself to continue her walk.

„Hey, I talked to you!" Blond Boob No. 1 repeats.

„Hay is for horses." Seth mutters under his breathe and Rie grins.

„Hey! Crazy chick!" The second one now shrieks. The Blond Boobs aren't used to being ignored by

people.

The bubblegum in their mouths are making sobbing noises.

Rie just passed the Three Blond Boobs, staring straight in front of her, completely ignoring the Blondies, who can't totally not stand this. Especially when they are trying to pick on somebody in front of a public, for as they are quite a lot of students in the hall, making their way to class too.

It happens in a flash.

Rie's way is being blocked by a high heeled foot, belonging to Boob Numero Three.

Rie looks up at her and she wish she didn't have done so, because the Boobs now have what they want: her attention.

„Hey! It's true huh?" Number Three says.

Rie frowns.

The second Boob pats her foot impatiently. „She means: that you're crazy, hey!"

„Gowd, what's with the hey?" Seth growls, feeling slightly annoyed.

„Hayfever." Rie mumbles to him as a reply.

She shouldn't have said this, because not only the Three Blondies are looking at her, but so is the whole hallway.

Too late now, she thinks, and she continues her stare at Cilicone #3, who is now staring back at her with her mouth open in surprised shock. The big piece of horrible pink colored bubblegum is a sore in the eye. Then she jams her jaws shut, opens them again to talk and the chewinggum makes an awful sucking sound.

„Ow... my... gowd." Blond Chick 3 says.

„You're right... I'm grossed out." Rie agrees on her, judging her on the sucking bubblegum. She can't keep her eyes of it. Come on, the gum is brighter colored then the clothes the Boobs are wearing!

„I am grossed out!" Booby 1 mingles in. „I mean,... hey! You are like talking to like... nothing! I mean, hey, what's that all about?"

„Yeah! Like the hayfever thingy, you know! That was totally weird." Number 2 now says. All three of them keeps chewing on their bubblegum.

Seth is eyeing them and then he makes gagging gestures, like he's throwing up.

Forcing herself not to laugh, she continues to stare at the Three Blond Boobs and then mutters: „Yeah, totally weird... ehm... you know you can chew too much bubblegum? Causing your jaw to unlock?"

About every pair of eyes is staring at Rie now. They didn't expect this answer.

„Wha-?" Number 2 says while breathing out in 'shock'.

Thinking it's not true what she says, Rie just continues her lies. „Well, if you chew on those giant pieces of gum every day you are bound to chew your jaw off. I don't think you three look so stunning when your jaw is hanging on your collarbone, right?"

Apparently this conversation is containing a too high IQ for the Blond Boobs to follow.

They smack with their bubblegums a couple of more times, look at eachother. The students around them are holding their breath, looking at them.

Then Number 1 says: „You're like so crazy! What do you think you are saying?"

Rie narrows her eyes. „What I'm saying? If you don't have anything usefull to say, then keep your blowjob-mouth shut! That pink bubblegum is making my eyes hurt!"

Judging by the stunned look on their eyes, they didn't had a clue what Rie tried to say, but they did catch the words: Blow-Job and Bubblegum.

But they don't know how to respond.

With this silence Rie has stalked away, Seth on her tail, laughing so hard he is running out of air, his cheeks red like apples.

„Hey! You are a total freek!" Boobie Two now shrieks. „You are so crazy! You talk to people in your

head! Everybody thinks you're crazy!"

The third joins her by crying out: „Crazy! Crazy!"

The first quickly follows: „Crazy! Crazy! Crazy!"

It echoes through the hallway and Rie turns around in her footsteps. This is really starting to look like a home situation. It's like Aye has transformed and duplicated into a few pubering schoolmates.

The rest of the students in the hallway either laugh or join the cry.

It echoes through the hallway and Rie is clenching her teeth, her hands into fists: her fingernails are pressing so hard in her hands, it starts to bleed.

She is staring at all those students who are all being against her and she wants to cry. She wants to buckle her knees, fall on the floor, surrender to being an everlasting loser and cry.

But Seth is standing next to her, his upperarm pressed against her. And he starts shouting back: „SHUT UP! SHUT UP!"

And Rie doesn't feel alone. It doesn't matter that they can't see him! He is really here!

Her dad knows! She isn't crazy! She isn't alone!

And she has nothing to lose!

With a few quick pases Rie walks towards the Three Blond Boobs and with one single gesture slaps the first one in her face.

The shouting stops abruptly, everybody holds their breath as one person.

„You dog!" Rie bellows. „You stupid dog! You have inhaled too much nailpolish if you ask me! Why don't you all leave me alone huh?"

She focuses on everybody her now. „Just leave me alone! I never bothered you! You never bothered me! You are just too stupid to go with the flow! To judge me on the base of a rumor! You really are shallow! All of you are so immature! All you care about is popularity, on the heads of people who aren't as social as you are! Well, you can all drop dead where you standing for all I care!"

And she turns around on her heels and walks away, she doesn't run, she walks; leaving everybody to look at her, because nobody knows how to respond.

9 - Swings Are For Babies

Chapter 9

For some strange reason Rie doging of those who are directly bugging her has it's effect. The one the most surprised about it, is Rie herself, but she is happy the bigger part of the school chooses to ignore her like before. Plus, it's easier dealing with Seth now she knows she isn't losing it and her dad knows about him. He hasn't asked a lot about Seth yet, only if he ever ate or slept and that was about it. Ofcourse Seth must be a totally weird thing for him too, but at least he is treating her as a normal human.

The few that stil try to make a fool of Rie are those little annoying boys who think they are cool and though by picking on those who aren't socially high in the standards.

But every now and then Rie threatens then to kick them impotent and flashes her foot up, hitting one of them fully in the croch, making the rest run away in fright.

„What if they all turned on you?" Seth asks, watching the boys run away, one of them crying in pain.

„Matter of getting the leader." Rie breaths.

„If they decided to revenge their leader?" Seth asks.

„They won't, they are too selfish for that." Rie heaves her schoolbag on her shoulder and turns around, suddenly facing Marten a.k.a. Fanny's boyfriend. Before she is able to recover she bumps into him, but he pushes her on her feet gently, making a cute 'wow' sound.

Rie backs away and looks at him. „Pardon me."

„I'm not blaming you." Marten says and he smiles, passing her. „See you around."

Rie looks over her shoulder at Marten. What was that about? Since when did anybody of the Fanny Fan Club act nice to her like that? Following the rules of the We Love Fanny Club he oughta yelled at her, called her a big beatch and whiped his foot on her back!

„Mathclass." Seth sings, dancing around in front of her, immediately stopping this because a student walks straight through him. He shivers. „Crap, I don't like that."

Rie ignores him and hurries of to Mathclass.

When Rie is walking out of the schoolbuilding after school she catches her dad waiting for her, Aye on his shoulders. „Goodafternoon Rie!" He says, a happy note in his voice.

„Ellow." Rie mutters, hurrying towards him and pressing her body against her father's as a hug. She doesn't feel wrapping her arms around him in full enthusiasm.

„I thought you would like icecream." Her father says, gesturing to walk along with him towards town.

Rie hestitates. „Ehm... I have homework."

„Lie to somebody else, you are 3 weeks ahead in homework." Her father says, putting a hand on her shoulder, urging her along. „We're getting some icecream. You like chocolate flavour right?"

„No lemon." Rie mumbles, liking the urging hand on her shoulder. She smiles faintly.

„And how's Seth?" Her father asks.

„I'm fine." Seth cries out happily. „Somebody walked through me today! Didn't like that very much!"

„He's fine, somebody walked through him, he didn't like that." Rie repeats and her father nods. „Okay, that's great!"

„No it's not, I don't like people walking through me!" Seth says.

„Stop your whining." Rie snaps. „Come on!"

Her father frowns. „Makes me wonder... how old are you Seth?"

Seth stops dead in his tracks, thinking, then he hurries to catch up with Rie and her father who didn't wait for him. „Ehm... I don't know. Seventeen or something, I guess."

„Do you age then?" Rie ask now.

„What did he say?" her father asks, very interested in Seth.

„He's 17." Rie quickly says, looking at Seth, who has his answer on her question ready.

„Yes, I age." He nods very fast along with it. „I can recall being smaller and suddenly I just... grew... I guess I must have been 10 years old or something."

„Are you walking around for 7 years already?"

„I don't know. I guess. Maybe longer." Seth says, shrugging. „I have been everywhere, looking for somebody... I have been around spiritual people and they... sort of sensed me I think. But from the other hand, they were all complete frauds."

„You have been everywhere?" Rie says, now very excited.

„Yeah, I guess. Just went on a plane or a boat." Seth says. „Just went to look everywhere, didn't have anything else to do. I also went to school!" Now he looks at her with a very proud look on his face. „I felt I still had to do a lot of normal stuff for when I would turn visible again one day! I wouldn't be too far behind in school if I did!"

Rie stops walking and looks at Seth. „You ... you went to school?"

Somehow this touches her so badly. Eventhough nobody can see him, everybody ignores him, he still keeps his hopes up and goes to school.

„I just went everywhere. Not filled with enthousiasm, though... Being ignored is the worst thing. The only thing that comforted me is that I still could be around people." Seth smiles faintly and then shrugs. „It doesn't matter. I'm with you now. I'm happy again."

Supressing the urge to hug Seth very tight Rie quickly starts walking again.

„So what did he say?" Her father asks, who waited patiently.

Rie looks at her dad. It's still weird that nobody can see and hear Seth while she can.

„He's ageing, so I think he's not dead or something. And he traveled a lot and went to school... to ehm..." She can't say it.

„Interesting." Her father frowns, apparently thinking of something.

Aye, who was sitting on his shoulders in silence all this time, now says: „Who's Seth? Why is Rie talking to herself?"

„To scare you." Rie snatches. „And Seth is a friend of dad and me!"

„Friend?" Aye wraps his hands around his father's face, blinding him. „I wanna be his friend too!"

„You do?!" Seth now cries out happy, his face cracking up in a grin. He is flapping his arms up and down in enthusiasm. „That's so cool! I'm having friends."

„Seth,... do you have a last name?" Rie's father now asks, trying to adress Seth and not ask it too obviously through his daughter, still he casts glances to his daughter, because he himself hasn't got a clue where Seth might be standing.

„A last name?" Seth repeats.

Rie nods. „Yeah, mine is Stalker, so what's yours?"

„Rie Stalker... mmh." Seth thinks. „I thought... it's so hard to recall, because... I don't remember anything from the time I was visible. If that would be the case I would be hanging around my family... I think..."

„What do you remember?" Rie asks. „There must be something you remember, or maybe there a things that remind you of your visible life, so you can remember."

Seth shrugs. „I don't know. I really don't know."

Rie looks at her dad. „He can't remember, dad. He only knows about being invisible."

„But I must have been visible, because I remember the youngest age I have been in this state was 10 years old! So I must have been visible when I was younger!" Seth cries out, not wanting to let all hopes get lost.

„If we want to help Seth, we have to find out who he is." Rie's father says to Rie. „And we can't do anything with the knowledge of his first name and the uncertainty of his age. He doesn't even know where he used to live, we're eve further away from home!"

Seth now looks really excited, though Rie would think he would be dissapointed. Her father just said there is so little chance they can find out who he really is, but still Seth is looking like a kid who just got a box of candy.

„You want to find out who I am?" he cries out. „Oh jolly! I'm so happy!"

„Seth, did you hear him?" Rie snaps. „You are one of the thousand people on the Missing People List. We can never find you if we don't even have a clue where you came from in the first place or what you're last name is!"

Seth calms down and swings his arms around Rie, urging her to a stop, almost cutting of her air.

„Yeah, but you're trying to help me and that's already more then I could ever hope for."

He rubs his cheek past hers and whispers a thank you.

Rie feels her cheeks go red and eyes her father, who is looking a little taken aback by Rie's sudden stop and now red face. „Don't worry dad, Seth just hugged me in a Thank You."

„Thank you?" Her father replies. „Thank you for what?"

„That we're helping him... though it's very little help." Rie mumbles, freeing herself from Seth's arms and catching ahold of her father's arm. Her cheeks are still burning red.

„I think you're a nutter." Aye giggles and he rocks back and forth on his father's shoulders.

With angry eyes Rie looks at her little possum of a brother. „What?"

„Aye learned a new word at school." Her father explains. „The first thing he said to me when he saw me was: Nutter. I don't think he has a clue what it means."

Aye smiles with bared teeth and hugs his father's head. He can't make his arms meet while doing this, but he does block his father from view. „Hey watch it Aye!"

He grabs Aye in his collar and lifts him off his neck. „You better walk for yourself for a while now, huh? Exercise is good for you."

As soon as Aye's feet touch the floor he's racing away, to the playground a few feet further. He's going like the wind, apparently not tired of the schoolday. Rie watches him climb upon the slide and she wishes she dared to take a seat on the swings. She likes swings a lot, but she stopped playing on them when Aye was born.

„You sit, I push you." Her father says, like he's reading her mind, and he nods his head to the swings. A smile on his face.

„Dad, grow up please." Rie mutters, turning her face away. „Swings are for babies."

„I don't think they are for babies." He says, walking towards the swings. „If we had a big tree in the yard I would hang a swing in it and swing on it every day."

„But you are crazy and a grown-up." Rie says, following him awkwardly, Seth on her tail.

„Meaning?" Her father asks, sitting down on a swing, his eyes on Aye, who is going up and down the slide without taking a pause.

Rie stuffs her hands in her pockets and kicks against the swing next to her father's. „I'm a teenager, I have to keep an eye on my social status."

„Yeah right. You don't give a damn about that." Her father laughs. „You're not a follower, Rie. You like doing things your own way, so sit down on that swing and enjoy yourself."

„I pass." Rie turns her back on him and faces Seth, who is looking at her with a frown.

It's kinda enjoying how Seth dares just to look at people without a trace of embaresment. He just looks

and stares at everything he wants to stare at, without blinking.

„What do you want?" She snaps, not meaning to be so mean to him, but she can't stop herself.

Seth comes closer to her, he's so tall. He's a whole head taller than she is.

„Why don't you sit down on that swing?" He asks.

Rie's mouth drops. „Mind your own business, Seth!"

„You're my business!" Seth says, folding his arms over his chest, a grin on his face.

Rie pokes his finger in his chest. „And who are you to decide that?"

„I'm Seth!" And he turns around to watch Aye, who is apparently really enjoying himself on that stupid kiddy-slide.

„Rie, telephone!" Rie's mother calls from the top of the stairs. „Some guy from school!"

Rie frowns and looks at Seth. „Guy from school?"

Seth shrugs. „I don't know. How should I know if you don't even know?"

Rie pushes her chair back from her desk, where she was making his homework and hurries to the stairs, taking the phone from her mom, who has a Is-It-Your-Boyfriend?-expression on her face. Rie sends her a Are-You-Kidding-Me-expression back and disappears in her room.

„Rie Stalker." She mumbles with no enthusiasm at all, hoping to keep the conversation as short as possible.

„Hey, it's Marten."

Rie holds her breath. Marten? Why in the world is Marten calling her? She eyes Seth, who approaches her, his ear close to hers so he can listen along with her.

„Ehm...I was wondering..." Marten asks with a little hesitation in his voice. „If you... ehm... help me with maths."

Rie frowns and Seth shrugs. Why is he wanting the help of the schoolfreak? This isn't making any sense! There are people in Fanny's Popular Group who can help him with maths.

Why doesn't he ask them to help him? Marten isn't even in her class!

„Are... are you there?" Marten asks, sounding a little insecure and Rie can't help thinking it sounds so cute. She gasps at this thought and hangs up the phone.

She is not going to help him! There is something fishy about him wanting her help.

Seth now looks at her with the greatest frown ever. „You hang up on him."

But then the phone in her hand rings again. Like it's on fire, she throws it on her bed and muffles the sound with her pillow. She is not going to answer it again, he can choke in his stupid maths-homework. She ain't gonna help him!

10 - Stay Away For Today

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 already, I'm going like a burning stuntman over here. I'm happy you guys like this story of mine too! Luv luv luv!

„Lunchbreak, I hate lunchbreaks." Rie mutters under her breath, slowly packing her bag. Seth observing her every move with the greatest security.

„You know what." He finally says, cuz he hasn't talked to her all morning, since there were so many people around. Rie looks up in an answer.

„You would look great in a tight shirt or a short skirt." Seth breaths, like the idea is elevating his brain to it's maximum.

The next moment Rie has thrown her Biology-book right at his head. Ofcourse it doesn't hit Seth, but goes right through him. With a stunned look Seth stares at her.

Not daring to shout at him, since there are still people in class, she gives him deadly looks.

„Ehm, Mrs. Stalker, your book, please don't throw it around." The teacher picks it up from the floor and hands it over to Rie. „You oughta be more careful with your schoolsupplies, Mrs. Stalker."

Rie puts up her innocent face. „I'm really sorry, thank you." With the book clenched in her hands she hurries out of the classroom, cursing Seth in her head. She wonders if he looks at her like that all day. Picturing her in more daring outfits or maybe naked, that stupid, perverted idiot. She hides under the staircase, like usual and crashes down on the floor.

Just as she is dumping her lunch into the bin, Seth arrives, looking really upset. „What's wrong with you?"

„Me?! Wrong with me?" Rie cries out furiously. „You are the perverted one!"

„What do you mean perverted?!" Seth cries back.

„Picturing me in tight and short clothes! Thanks a lot, you crazy perverted asshole!" Rie breaths. „You are not allowed in my bedroom anymore! And you do not tell a girl how to dress!"

„I was only saying you are pretty!" Seth says, grabbing her wrists and urging her back.

And for an invisible guy he sure is strong.

Rie isn't going to let him push her away like that and with red cheeks she unscrews her wrists from his hands. „Shut up! You are saying I should dress up and show of my body! Like all those other nitwits! While... while you said I was good the way I was, because I wasn't like all the others!"

„I...you..." Seth falls back and looks at her, not knowing how to react on this.

Rie, at the other hand, stand up and looks down at Seth, feeling really pissed of. And she hates to admit it, but she didn't like Seth telling her she should dress up to be pretty. Somehow that hit her very hard.

„You know what, Seth, I may not be the prettiest of all. I don't put on the latest fashion, only wear dark clothes and my hair is straight and dull, but I'm the only access for you to the real world. I don't think you want to waste that, right?" She says, she wishes her voice wouldn't tremble so much. „So shut up about my looks. You won't get anything done with it! I'm not like the others, okay?"

Seth, still too stunned to say anything, looks up at her.

„And if you don't mind, I don't want you around me anymore today. I will see you tomorrow." And with these words, before Seth has a chance to say anything at all, she runs away. Her cheeks wet and nothing she can do about it.

How can you feel so bad about such a stupid matter? Rie rocks herself back and forth on her chair in the library. She has been here all day, not went to class, because she felt so miserable. And she questioned herself over and over again for the last 3 classes, why she feels so miserable about Seth telling her she could look much prettier if she changed her looks. She never used to mind people telling her she looks dull, her outfit wasn't acceptable anymore these days, or that she had to get a haircut linea recta. She didn't care, she burried her nose in her book and shut herself of from the world. But why does this bother her so much now? It's stupid, it doesn't make any sense. At least Seth has respected her wish to be alone for today. She couldn't face him at the moment, even if she wanted to.

„Why did you hang up on me?“

Rie freezes.

Marten?! What is Marten doing here? Talking to her?!

She slowly turns around, Marten is standing there completely solo.

„You hang up on me yesterday.“ Marten says, he doesn't look annoyed.

Rie turns her back on him, focusing on her books, which lay open on the same page for the last few hours, without Rie reading them.

„Now you do it again. You ignore me!“ Marten takes a seat next to her, one hand supporting his head. Rie doesn't want to look up, so she keeps her eyes focused on her english book. She hopes for Marten to leave, because she doesn't feel comfortable at all. But Marten lifts up his hand and touches her hair, puts it behind her ear. „Such a shame you hide your face behind your hair like that.“

„Keep those words to yourself, please.“ Rie mumbles, finally facing him, her cheeks getting red for the second time that day. One more time and it's a record.

„Ah! You can talk.“ Marten smiles in a way like only a pretty boy can.

„I'm not going to help you in maths or anything.“ Rie quickly spits out. „I prefer not to talk to you at all, so leave me alone, thank you.“ And she shakes the hair back in her face.

He's right, she hides her face. This way she doesn't have to go through much trouble not to look at people.

„Why not?“ Marten asks.

Rie keeps her mouth shut. Ignore him girl, ignore him.

„Did you put on the mute? Come on, why won't you help me?“ Marten puts her hair back her ear again and lifts up her chin, forcing her to look at him.

She doesn't try anything to stop him and she hates herself for it.

„I don't like you.“ She says. „You are popular, I'm the freak. Let me go, please.“

„Why don't you like me?“ Marten asks, not letting go of her face.

Rie clenches her teeth. Damn Marten. She narrows her eyes. „Why are you so desperate in making contact with me, huh? Did you get knocked over the head by a windmill or something? Got a couple of screws lose up there? Whatever it is, stop bothering me. I have more important stuff to deal with without you around! Please remove yourself!“

With her hair back in front of her eyes, she grabs her books and replaces herself a few seats away from Marten. But he follows her stubborn.

„I'm not crazy? I think I like you?“ Marten whispers.

A chill runs over Rie's spine, she forces her cheeks not to go red. Why is she feeling so uncomfortable? Why is he making her feel so unfocused? She has the feeling she wants to run away far away from him. Deciding to follow the urge, she scoops up her books again, turns on her heels and hurrieherself out of

the library, bumping into Fanny in the hallway.

„Was Marten talking to you?" Fanny says, watching Rie picking up the books she dropped.

Fanny sounds amused, like she expected Marten to talk to her. And it hits Rie. Marten talks to her, wants her attention, because he and Fanny set something up to embarrass her.

Ofcourse they did. Now she is known as the freak, it's become legal to make fun of her like that.

Gaining her trust and then lure her into a trap, so she would be a public joke. Nothing is more fun then to play a prank on the schoolloser.

Rie looks up at Fanny from below and she wishes she could inflict some serious pain on her.

Fanny and her gang of loyal friends decide to ignore Rie and pass her, walking over her books while trespassing.

Clenching her fists, Rie ignores them in return, whipes her books clean with her hands, picks them all up, stuff them under her arms and hurries away through the corridor. Her goal: right outside, going straight home.

Rie is laying in her bed, gazing at the ceiling. It's so quiet. She can hear everything.

Passing cars out on the streets. A dog barking a few blocks away. The baby from next door crying. The movements upstairs. The sounds of footsteps on the staircase to her basement.

The door of her bedroom opening. And finally the soft voice of her father: „Are you asleep yet?"

Rie takes a silent breath. „No."

„It's 9... I figured you would be awake. It's too early." Her father says, sitting next to her on her bed. Rie turns around to him, wrapping her arms around his waist.

„I was surprised you said you went to bed at 7.30, Rie." Stroking her head softly with his hands, pulling his legs up on the bed too, laying down next to her, enclosing her into a hug.

Rie hugs him back, so happy she has him as her father. So happy he is willing to be with her.

It takes her a while to find the explanation of her early bedtime.

„I... I didn't know what else to do..." she finally mumbles. „I already picked on Aye during dinner... so that job was done..."

„Isn't Seth here then?" Her father asks. „Normally he is around, you talk to him until you fall asleep."

„He talks too much." And Rie burries her face into her father's chest. „Doesn't know when to shut up or when to talk."

„Nobody is perfect." Her father says wisely. „I mean, when I am excited about a subject, I tend to talk about it non stop, driving a lot of people crazy."

„Yeah, but you can't help it. You aren't mentally normal." Rie says, hugging her father tightly. „But that's okay. I still like you, okay?"

„Well, as long as you do, I'm not complaining." He kisses her hair, pushes her back in her pillow and covers her up. „Now you go to sleep and not worry about Seth talking too much, okay? Just go to sleep."

„Yeah, I'll try." Rie mumbles, feeling extremely exhausted for some reason now. She yawns, pulls up her legs and claws her hands into her blanket, pulling them close to her.

Wishing her dad a goodnight, she closes her eyes and falls asleep almost immediately. It's weird, it's like she has been waiting for something like her father to bid her goodnight, before she could actually fall asleep.

A soft stirring feeling wakes Rie up from her sleep. Disturbed in her rest, she lifts up her head and tries to focus her eyes on the world around her. A big shadow is sitting in front of her, outlined by the moonlight outside. A hand moves towards her, touching her cheek.

„Rie. It's tomorrow... so I can come back right?" An insecure voice says, trembling slightly.

Blinking, trying to gain back her conscience, she turns her head around, inspecting her room, being disorientated.

Her eyes end on her alarmclock, showing a big 0:06 AM in flashing red light. Scratching her eyes, she turns now to look at Seth. Being used to the light now, she can see Seth's eyes glimmering with tears. Still being really sleeping, not being able to process the information, she drops herself back into her bed, covering herself up with her blankets.

Why is Seth waking her up in the middle of the night? She thinks, almost drifting off in a sleep again. Stupid idiot waking her up! Maybe he doesn't need to sleep, but she does! Why didn't he say what he had to say before she went to bed, or saved it for tomorrow?

Tomorrow?

Rie stops breathing. She throws the blankets back and targets her eyes back on her alarmclock.

It's tomorrow. She told him to come back tomorrow.

She looks up at Seth. „You're..."

Seth bows his head. „I have been outside all day, wondering around in the mall... checking out boxes with screws...watching people eat icecream..." he reports with a monotone voice.

Rubbing her eyes, Rie casts another look on her alarm again. „You're..."

„You told me to stay away from you... come back tomorrow. So I did. I did what you asked, because I thought I had hurt you really bad..." Seth mumbles, not looking at her, but staring at his hands. „And whole day long I was afraid... that you would still be mad... and that you didn't want to see me again..."

Her alarmclock now saying: 0:11 AM, she once again says: „You're..."

Seth looks up at her finally, his eyes still shimmering. „I'm what?" His voice is so breakable, it makes her feel so weak. To avoid his eyes, Rie falls back in her bed.

„You're late, asshole."

She can hear him breathe in and out. „I'm ...late?"

„Six minutes late." Rie mumbles. „Now shut up and let me sleep. You're so cruel waking me up in the middle of my sleep." She turns her back on him and hugs her pillow. A happy feeling crawls up in her chest. He's back! He has come back!

He bends over her, his breath tickles her face, and his voice whispers in her ear: „You're not mad at me?"

Uncomfortably Rie moves away from him, to the other side of her bed. „Leave me alone, I wanna sleep."

But Seth follows her, crawling upon her bed, his mouth once again close to her ear, almost touching it.

„Rie, can I still stay with you?"

His voice sends shivers up her spine, making her legs feel like jelly. She is so happy she isn't standing up, but is laying safely in her bed. She snorts, pulls up her blankets.

Ofcourse he can stay with her. He has to! She likes him around.

But she doesn't speak out the words.

Pretending to be asleep, Rie relaxes her face. She lays there for several minutes, Seth sitting close behind her, when a warm sleep creeps in her eyes, pushing her back in the soft and relaxing feeling you always have before sleep comes.

She is only slightly aware of Seth's lips kissing the shell of her ear, whispering one more thing before she drifts off.

„I think I'm in love with you..."

11 - Can You Blame Him?

Chapter 11

Rie wakes up the next morning with absolutely no memory of Seth's last words before she fell asleep last night. She throws her blankets back at the sound of her alarm, absolutely awake because she went to bed so early. For a few moments she keeps laying there, staring at the ceiling, enjoying the temperature in the room. A fresh smell creeps into her nose. It's gonna be a great and sunny day today.

Too bad she isn't an outside-person. She rolls around on her bed to face Seth, but Seth isn't in the room. She checks the other side, but he is nowhere to be seen. Wondering if she imagined him coming back last night, she pulls her pj's out over her head, sitting chestnaked on her bed. She stares down, feeling so weird. It has been a long time she has been able to do that. Since Seth was around she always had to watch she was fully dressed and not walking around in her underwear.

And now she is sitting here, like she used to do more often. People can't look in her room from out the streets, so she isn't making a big deal out of it. Walking to her closet on her easiest, she pulls open the drawers to get clothes.

Then a loud and shiny „Goooooodmmmmoo...." sounds unfinished through the room.

Rie turns around. Seth is hanging through the window halfway, staring at Rie with large eyes. Then he thumbles over and falls on the floor with a loud thunk.

Screaming on the top of her lungs, Rie covers herself up with a tshirt she pulled out of the closet, hurrying to Seth to knock him over the head with her fullest power. „Get out! Get out! You stupid perverted asshole! How you dare to dash into the room when I'm not wearing anything! Creep!"

Seth tries to dodge her, but he is really bad at it. That or Rie is just a good aimer.

Finally he manages to crawl up and get out of Rie's reaching area. „Hey! I didn't know!" he cries out.

„How could I know you would be naked! You usually dress in the bathroom!"

Raining her fists down on him once again, she clings the tshirt close to her body. „You can't just enter a room! You can't! Learn some rules, pervert!"

„Stop the hitting! Stop! It's hurts!" Seth tries to stay out of reach, backing towards the bed, preparing to crawl under it. But Rie is very angry. „First you wake me up in the middle of the night. At least I think you did. Then you disappear in the morning! And then you see me naked! You - stupid - perverted - pingpongball!"

With her last hit and her anger, she loses her balance and bumps into Seth. They both crash down on the bed, making the bed shriek loudly. The bottom of the bed shivers from the big crash and then it falls out. Rie and Seth both fall along with it, Rie's legs clinging on the side of the bed, which hurts her really bad. Seth's legs just fall right through it.

„Ouch... ouch..." Rie squeaks, rubbing her head. „Stupid bed... I told mom ages ago this one wouldn't last much longer. The bottom is too fragile."

She is laying on top of Seth, who is eyeing her quietly, his cheeks colored bright red. His nervous eyes are flashing down her chest continuously.

Rie cracks her knuckles. „You better not look down there anymore, buddy."

„I can't help it." Squeaks Seth. „You're naked! You practically ask for it to be looked at!"

Snapping her fingers around her chin with the speed of light, she forces Seth to look up. Her eyes are flaming. „Let me tell you something you better not forget, Seth! No matter how I look, buttnaked or dressed to up my chin, nothing, absolutely NOTHING, gives you the right to look at any privet parts of my

body. Did I make myself clear?"

„Ehm..." Trying to talk with Rie's fingers pressed in his skin, he looks at her with very nervous and upset eyes. „I... I will try... sorry..."

„Now close your eyes so I can put my clothes on." Rie commands, not letting his chin go.

Seth does as he is told and closes his eyes.

And while Rie is getting up and pulling on her clothes, Seth remains on the same place, his eyes closed tightly. „Rie?" He asks.

„What?"

„Ehm... If I would... would be something... like your boyfriend. Ehm, then... uh... then I could look at you naked, right?"

Rie freezes in her movements. „Boyfriend?"

„Yeah, something like that." Seth mumbles, his whole face shining in a bright red color.

Rie turns around to look at him. He is sitting there, his eyes shut tight, wriggling his fingers. His blond hair is hanging almost in front of his eyes. He says it never grows bigger, while the rest of his body does. And the clothes he wears are the right size too. It's weird. It's unexplainable.

„In your dreams, Seth." Rie mumbles, stepping in her shoes. „Like that will happen."

She walks to the door, ready to go upstairs.

„Rie? Can I open my eyes yet? ...Rie?" Seth asks, but Rie doesn't hear him, since she already left the room.

If he were her boyfriend? What gave him that idea? What a stupid thing to think of! He is invisible! How could she fall for him! That's ridiculous! He doesn't even have a real identity! He only knows his first name and he guesses his age! For crying out loud, why did he ask her that? Why did he?

She eyes him from her chair in the classroom, he is sitting on the floor next to the teacher's desk, staring back at her. And he is mumbling softly. Rie can't hear him, since the class is too noisy. Rie breathes in and out, ticking with her pen on her book.

Being lonely must really inflict your well being. Never having somebody to love you back, because nobody notices you. Then one person does notice him and he wants to check out the options. But he is crazy! She can't love him!

Staring down on her paper she realizes she hasn't wrote down anything yet.

Why is she so bad on schoolwork lately? It's so hard to concentrate properly. Angerly she shakes her head and bows over her desk. Her hair is swooping over her paper.

Solve some mathproblems, that's not hard!

Her eyes fly over the page These are easy. She lifts up her hand to write.

But no ink passes onto the paper. The pen is hanging in the air, hold by her fingers.

Nothing comes out, absolutely nothing.

Why did Seth ask her that stupid question!? She closes her eyes in frustration.

„Hey, you know what I found out?" Seth calls out to her. „Marten is going to ask you out to the schoolparty this weekend."

What?! She stares at Seth in shock. „How... how do you know?" she whispers, so noone will hear.

„I heard him talking to himself." Seth mumbles in a voice like he doesn't care at all. But his eyes swoop swiftly in Rie's direction, like he waits for her response.

Rie holds the pen tight in her hand. He wants to ask her?

What has gotten into these people? Why is she so interesting lately? She just wants to be left alone!

Why aren't things like they used to be! She doesn't like changes at all!

„What?!" Seth interpreates her silence in his own way. „You mean you are going?"

He has jumped up and is now standing in front of her desk. His blue eyes are staring at her in

asthonia.

Rie stares up at him and chews on her lip. No matter what's all going wrong, it can't get worse than Seth. She narrows her eyes.

„Maybe I will." She hisses. „Nothing you can do about it, your invisible."

Turning her eyes to her book to ignore Seth, she can hear him breathe in deeply in and out. His feet move over the floor and she can hear his restless moves. And then without expecting it, he suddenly backs away and disappears through the wall.

Ow, let him be, she thinks, shaking her head.

The math problem lay unsolved in front of her.

Seth was right, when Rie walks out of the school to go home, Marten appears from behind a tree and approaches her. „Rie! I want to ask you something!"

Rie stops in her tracks and looks up at him, waiting.

Uncomfortably Marten puts his hand on the back of his head and eyes the sky. „Well, I was wondering...if... if it would be okay if I would take you... to the school party this weekend.?"

His eyes finally meet hers, make her feel really uncomfortable.

„Ehm... okay." She chokes. „But only under one condition."

His eyebrows frown in surprise. „And that is?"

„I don't trust you at all, so you better not have anything up your sleeve! I have read that book Carry and I am not intending to end up like her! So if you try anything at all, I will launch my foot so hard up your best buddy over that, you won't be able to spread your genes anymore! Got it?!"

The look on her face is exactly the same as she gives her little brother: extremely violent.

To her surprise his face cracks up in a smile. „You can't kill people with your eyes like Carry did. But, hey, don't worry. I won't do anything to you, okay?!"

Judging him, Rie stares at him for a while.

„Pick me up at 8."

„Party starts at 9."

„Sheesh, 9 then!" And she turns around and walks away.

It's like there is a whirlpool inside her stomach, not only causing her feel weird, but also make her lose the control over her legs. Why is she feeling so hyped up about this?

She feels so different. In some way she feels like she let herself down. It's nothing like her to accept somebody's offer like that, it's not like her to make human contact at all.

But deep inside, very deep, she did it to hurt Seth.

And Seth is obviously hurt, though he shows it on his own way: by not showing up.

He hasn't been around her all day since she told him off at Maths.

Rie quietly moves through the house, passing every room but not going inside. But Seth is really nowhere. Then she heads towards the kitchen and starts to prepare dinner, though it's not her day to take care of that.

Absentmindedly she washes the beans and removes the jackets from the potatoes. Where could Seth be? Is he hanging around outside? All alone?

Is he really so upset about her going to the school party with Marten? Why would he be so upset? Like he ever could go to the school party with her! He is only real to her. To everybody else he is just air! She can't show up with just air!

Yeah, another voice in her head whispers, but normally you wouldn't even show up at a school party.

"Ouch!"

Blood is dripping in the sink, her knife drops on the floor.

Cursing, she puts her finger in her mouth and pulls a cabinet open to look for the first aid kit. Right on that moment her father walks inside and when he notices her, he quickly helps her. He pushes her down on a chair and takes care of her cut finger.

„Honey, how did you manage to cut yourself? You never cut yourself before! Not even as a kid, when you were making your first sideshishes!"

She sends her father a growl and inspects her finger, now nicely wrapped with a bandage.

„I kinda got invited for the schoolparty."

„Schoolparty?" Her father repeats, staring at his daughter. „By who?"

Rie stands up to pick up the knife she dropped and she answers his question, trying to sound as coolly as she can: „Mr. Popularity."

„Mr...who?"

„Marten."

„Marten?!"

Rie washes the knife and nods. „Yeah, Marten. And I told him I would go. So I am going."

„Yeah, but... what about Seth?" Her father asks, putting away the first aid kit. „I figure he isn't too happy about it, is he?"

„Can you smell his temper or something?" Rie snatches. „Yeah, he doesn't like it! I did it on purpose, okay? I only said yes, cuz Seth is being an pain in the @\$\$!"

„Why is he?"

„I don't know! He is!" Her cheeks go red. She won't tell him what happened this morning. That's too embarrassing. „He thinks that with me his world expands a whole big deal, but that's not true. He still is invisible!"

She listens to her own words echoing in the kitchen.

Judging to his soft sighs and rocking his shoulders, her father is thinking. Rie patiently waits for his words to come.

„Seth is a human. I am convinced of that." He finally says. „And he has feelings and emotions just like you and me. Yes he is invisible, and yes he can't do everything we can do. But that doesn't mean you can hurt him, Rie."

Surprised her father is not agreeing on her, she turns her head to him to hear him out.

„Seth's only communication source is you, ofcourse he does get attached to you, Rie. You have to understand he might get possessive over you, because he is afraid that only source of communication will leave him."

„So, he's selfish." Rie says. Why is it so hard to be positive?

„In some way, yes. But can you blame him?" He asks.

Turning back on the cooking, Rie thinks.

Can she blame him?

The truth is, she can't handle being liked or being special to somebody like that.

It makes her feel like she is losing control over her body. She doesn't want to lose control.

But she can't blame Seth, not totally.

12 - Icecream Fight

Chapter 12

Seth is suffering from a really bad mood, judging from the fact he hasn't come back yet. With tonight being the night of the schoolparty, Rie is actually happy he isn't around. She is nervous as it is and with Seth yabbering about how stupid she is to fall for Marten like that, she would definatly whack him or yell at him and then the real proof of her crazyness will be there. She will be the laughingstock at the party, at the school for the rest of her life.

Not eating dinner, Rie is tapping on the table with her nails. Her head resting on the other hand, staring out of the window. But the truth is also there, that without Seth the day is a lot more boring. She thought she would be able to do her homework now, but she can't. She threw it aside, it's still piled up in a corner of her room.

And demontaging the old toaster her mom gave her yesterday isn't something she can enjoy now without Seth staring along with her over her shoulder. Stupid idiot, she thinks. It would be more usefull if he was a dog or something, at least they are loyal and don't ask so much.

„Aren't you hungry?" Her father wakes her up from her thoughts.

Sighing in a response, Rie continues to stare out of the window.

„I think she is nervous for tonight." Her mother says. „She has got a real date! That's so exciting!" And she feeds Aye some slices of cucumber, who is chewing them so rappidly, half of it falls back on his plate.

„You did have to go tell her, didn't you?" Rie adresses her father. She would have rather kept her date from her mom. Now her mom thinks she is finally becoming a real teenage girl who giggles a lot, wears pink and dates every hotshot that catches her eye.

Her father grins back. „Sorry, sweetcheeks."

Rie pushes her chair back and leaves the kitchen without saying another word and she goes to the livingroom. A place she barely ever enters and she sits down on the couch. Surprised of herself for turning on the tv and actually watching it, she puts the tv on a musicchannel.

She can't remember watching tv here for the last time. At some point she started avoiding the livingroom, was only to be found in her room, the kitchen or the bathroom.

Trying to call back how long it must have been, she realizes she stopped watching tv and avoiding this room around the time Aye was born.

She sighs. Since Aye was born everything changed rappidly. Her mother had tried to give Rie a little brother or sister so many times and when she reached the age of 10, she finally got pregnant and Aye was born 9 months after. Everything went as it was supposed to go, accept for the fact Aye was born a few weeks to early. So they had to watch him closely and if something was wrong, they would drop everything and speed to the doctor, no matter where they were.

One of those times was during Rie's 11th birthday. They just gave her the presents, she still had to unwrap him when suddenly Aye was having trouble breathing. Both of her parens took immediate action, took Aye along with them to the hospital, leaving Rie alone in her room.

After sitting there for an hour, she slowly unwrapped her gifts.

Aye was always the middle of the attention. Rie always backed away, not wanting to be in the way. And deep in her heart she wished he was never born. She was jealous from the moment he was her in her mother's belly. Because already on that point Aye was favorite.

She never touched Aye, never went to look at him. She hide in her room and her parents let her be. Wanting to show she was worth the attention too, she started to act more like an adult. She started cooking, doing the laundry, try to demontage electric machines and studying non stop. Studying was never a problem, she always got good grades.

Her parents never suffered problems from her, so everything was going as it should go. Easy and quiet, Rie taking care of her self, abonding herself from everything Aye was now doing. That included going on the swing, eating a lot of candy and watching tv.

Proving she was too old to do that stuff.

And she abonded her parents from her life. She always had been a loner in school, with almost no friends. And she didn't care. She was too cought up in being an adult.

But the jealousy always grew. She wanted attention from her parents. She did her best to make them look at her and on what she achieved. But Aye always got on first place.

Always. Hate against her brother grew with every day.

It didn't matter what she could manage. What Aye did was more important.

And she grew cold, found out she was more at ease when she was alone.

Rie sighs once again. Aye messed everything up. If he never was born her life would be a lot better. She would have friends and a great bond with both of her parents.

„Rie, I got icecream for you!" Aye's voice shrieks as she hears his little feet drippl to the hallway, yelling downstairs to the basement. „Rie! I got icecream! Icecream! I put it in the cup for you! Look!"

„I'm here, you nitwit!" Rie spits out.

She hears Aye stand still for a while. „Where?"

„Here!"

And his little feet drag him to the livingroom, a smile on his face, covered up in his own icecream. „I got you icecream! Look!" He hurries towards his big sister and pushes the sticky cup of melting icecream in her hands. „Ow! Ow! You need a spoon!"

He hurries of again. Rie listens closely how he demands a spoon from his father, who laughs and gives him one and then Aye comes back.

„Spoon! Here, now eat it! It's yummy!"

Rie takes the spoon and stares into those big chocolatebrown eyes of her little brother.

What shall she do? Eat it? Or just throw it back to his head?

Before she can decide, Aye has crawl on the couch with her, snuggling against her like she is a big teddybear. „You never sit here!" And he hugs her.

„Eew! Aye! Your hands are too sticky! Gross!" She shrieks and she punches her fist on his head. Aye giggles and scoops some icecream out of the cup with his hands. „Here, before it melts!"

Surprised over the fact she actually opens her mouth and let Aye stuff the cold icecream in her mouth, she watches Aye dig his little hands in the cup again. With the most serious look on his face, he stuffs it in her mouth and she feels his little nails tick against her teeth.

A little part of her is grossed out over the fact she is being feed and half of the icecream is on her face and clothes instead of her mouth. But she let's Aye feed her.

„Here, have some too, shrimp." And she too scoops icecream out of the cup and pushes it in Aye's mouth, who grabs her hands with his own sticky ones and pushes the icecream in his face. His whole face is covered in the white stuff.

„Eeeew, gross!" Rie can't help to let out a laughter. „You got icecream all over you!"

„Haha! I'm an icecream!" Aye cheers and he grabs more icecream and before Rie can stop him, she too has a mask of icecream.

Going into an icecreamfight, while rolling of the cough and making everything sticky, Rie doesn't notice her mom and dad watching them from the livingroomdoor. When mother finally lifts Aye up from the

floor, she freezes in her actions.

With large eyes she stares up at her mother, expecting a speech about cleaning and being irresponsible. But her mother is smiling. „I think that was enough icecream fun for today huh?" she says and she hugs Aye, smearing all the icecream on herself too.

Rie sits still on the floor like an deer staring into the carlights.

„You guys had fun didn't you?" Her father says, his face in such a big smile.

No response from Rie, she just stares back at him. She doesn't know what to do. She wants a moment to run. For some reason she feels ashamed and she feels like she has done something terribly wrong. Her mother lifts Aye up the sky. „You made such a mess! Well, let's get you cleaned up first, Aye! Don't worry about the rest! As long you don't make is a daily routine."

Aye lets out little cries of joy, while his mother brings him upstairs to the bathroom to give him a nice warm bath.

Pulling her eyes away from her dad, Rie starts picking up the cup and whiping the floor with her sleeve, which is already so filthy of the icecream, this little bit won't matter much.

„You heard your mom, it's no big deal." Her father says, bending down through his knees. „A little mess isn't bad when you are having fun, Rie."

Rie doesn't reply. She feels like such a baby. She feels like her mom just didn't get upset because it was Aye who started the icecreamfight. If it was Rie who had started, she would have been angry.

„Rie, let me clean this up. It's okay, Rie, why are you being so down?" Her father whispers.

Turning her face away from him, she lifts her shoulders up. „Leave me alone."

„No, I won't. Come on, Rie, let me handle the cleaning! I thought it was great you had so much fun with Aye." He says and he grabs her wrist.

Trying to pull herself free, she shakes her head. „No! Let me go! I didn't have fun! I was acting like a little kid and let me clean up!"

„Why are you being so strict on yourself! You didn't act like a little kid! You acted like a big sister!" And he forces her into his arms, but she lets herself hang down, facing the floor.

„I only didn't get punished because Aye started this!" Rie cries out, holding her tears down with all her might.

He pulls her close to his body, making his clothes dirty with icecream. „No, that's not true!" he promises her. „You're wrong, Rie. Now calm down." He kisses her cheek.

Rie whipes her face with her hand, not looking at her father.

After sitting with her father on the floor for a while, she suddenly hears him asks: „It's bothering you that Seth has been gone, huh?"

She straightnes her back and directly looks her father in the eye. „Why would I be bothered by that?"

„Ah, you have your fire back." And he smiles. „I think you have a little weak spot for that guy."

„I don't!" Rie bites. „I'm glad he is gone! I finally have some peace on my mind!"

And she struggles herself free from her father's arms. „Now let's clean this up! You get a bucket with water, I will get us some towels."

Laughing about his daughter's red cheeks, he quickly lifts himself up his feet and does what his daughter has ordered him to do.

13 - Going On A Date

Chapter 13

Rie doesn't even bother to dress up nice. Now it's almost 9, her stomach is turning upside down and she wishes she had Seth next to her side. Dating is awfull, why did she even give in to all of this? She already hates the beginning!

She sits in her bedroom, rocking back and forth on the bed, hugging herself. Her eyes are fixated on the clock and her mind wanders off to tonight. What will happen? Will people look at her with those eyes that obviously ask what in the world a loser like she is doing on a schoolparty? Or will they try to prank her?

„Whaaa, I don't want to go anymore!" Rie cries out and she throws her pillow of her bed. „Stupid schoolparties! I don't want to go! Mom! I'm staying home!"

And she turns around and lays flat on her stomach. She should have never said yes to that stupid Marten. He's not even cute! She closes her eyes.

Well, maybe he is... a little...a lot. She gets pissed of at the thought and shakes it off. No, he is not cute! Not at all! And even if he is, she musn't think about it!

Now an image of Seth floats into her mind. His big skyblue eyes stare at her, his mouth curves into a nervous smiles. His blond bangs tickle his face and Rie lets out a sigh.

Where the hell is that boy? Why did he leave?

Angry about the fact that she disposed the pillow, because she needs something to slam her fists in, she rolls of the bed and reaches for her pillow. She clamps it in her arms and cuddles it. It's so soft and warm. Why isn't Seth feeling warm at all?

He does feel soft. It's like holding a cloud or something. Very comforting.

If he would get his real body back, would he still feel like that? Getting more and more pissed of over the fact that Seth isn't anywhere to be seen, she once again rockets her pillow away.

Right on that moment her mother enters the room, the pillow misses her on a few inches.

With a shocked expression on her face, she stares at her daughter.

„Ow, hi mom, I'm sorry." Rie grunts, but she doesn't sound like she means it.

Her mother picks up the pillow. „Did you call earlier?"

„Huh?" Rie takes the pillow and throws it on her bed. „Ow, yeah, I'm not going to the party."

„Aw, pity." A second voice says.

The voice makes her shiver. She turns around and sees Marten stand in the doorway. Apparently he was right behind her mom, but she didn't even take notice of him.

He smiles at her and he look really stunning in that outfit. It's just too perfect.

„Yeah, I guess. Well, go home or something. Bye." She spits out and she let herself drop on the bed again, grabbing the pillow and hugging it, her back turned to her mom and Marten.

She feels her cheeks burning and she hopes that Marten and her mom will leave, but ofcourse, they don't.

„Rie, don't act so childish! Marten will wait in the livingroom while you put on something nice." Her mother says. It's not even a request, it's a demand.

„I'm not putting on something else!" Rie says.

„I think you look great." Marten says.

Rie stares at him, her eyes are narrowed. „Stuff it, weasel." And she climbs of her bed again, to her closet. She doesn't even own nice stuff, so why even bother looking in the first place. But she still looks

and Marten joins her. „Here, maybe this one." He says, lifting a skirt out of the closet.

„Do you wanna die?" Rie says. „You don't pick out my clothes and you absolutly don't search through a girl's closet!" Slamming the doors shut, with a new shirt in her hand, she gives Marten a few more deadly looks and hurries of to her inventingroom to change.

Jeans and a nice tshirt will do the job. She has no idea what to put on else!

Just when she enters the room again, she hears Marten say: „Hehe, I think she is kinda cute."

Rie stares at them like a deer who's staring at the incoming traffic. „Who?"

Marten turns to face her. „Huh? Ow you." And he smiles.

„You don't have to suck up with my mom, you know." Rie doges and she walks to her window, opening it.

„Rie, don't be so rude! He is just being nice!" Her mother says, who is obviously charmed by Marten.

Rie knows her mother already sees him as a future Son In Law. She loves guys like Marten. Rie bets her dad was just like him.

„Let's go." Rie climbs through the window, causing her mother to cry out: „Why do you always have to climb through that thing! We have a frontdoor!"

And she hears Marten chuckle and follow her quickly.

Rie doesn't even wait for Marten but walks of the drive way with big pases. He catches up with her rather quickly and he seems pleased with himself. Well, at least, judging from that stupid grin on his face.

„What is it?" She snatches, not liking the fact he is really enjoying this. But even liking it less that she thinks the look on his face is so adorable.

„Nothing, you're just..." Marten says, not able to whipe that smile of his face.

„I'm what?" Rie asks, getting curious and annoyed at the same time.

Marten looks at her, turns his eyes away, forcing himself not to laugh and shakes his head.

This little gesture just makes Rie feel so weird. It's like there is soda prickling inside of her. It's a feeling she can't control and she doesn't know if she likes it.

„When I said you were cute..." Marten finally manages to say. „You said I shouldn't be sucking up. That was even more cute!"

„Ow if you are gonna talk about me being cute or not, you better stop talking." Rie immediately backfires. „I don't want to hear that from you!"

„I'm just saying what I'm thinking!" Marten defends himself with a smile.

Heavens, he is really enjoying himself, Rie thinks. „Well, stop speaking and stop thinking then!"

„You are just making yourself cuter and cuter!" Marten assures her. If he smiles more, his skull is gonna crack through half!

Rie tightnes her fist. She doesn't like it she feels like she is losing control of herself. He is making her go dizzy and feel like jelly. „See if you still find me cute, when I slammed by fist in your stomach!"

„Yeah, I think I would!" Marten says.

„Don't make me do it." Her nails are jamming in the palms of her hands. How can you be annoyed and feel so 'dizzy' at the same time? This is so weird.

For some reason she is feeling guilty she is feeling 'dizzy'. But why in the world would she feel guilty for it? For who should she feel guilty?

But then she sees the reason, right in front of her, standing at the frontdoors of the school. His arms crossed over his chest; skyblue eyes staring at her from underneath his bangs, no trace of a smile on his lips. Seth is just standing there with a dead serious look on his face.

Her heart skips a beat. He's back!

He's standing there! Obviously waiting for her!

Trying to controle her breathing, she catches ahold of Marten's hand very tight.

Seth is back! She can't believe it!

Why isn't he moving? Why isn't he coming towards her? Why does he keep standing there and staring at her? She wants him to move! Now! Pronto!

And why in the world is she holding Marten's hand? She feels so nervous.

Her heart is racing and her legs are harder to control, and just because Seth is standing there!

This isn't right! This isn't right at all!

Her hands are sweaty, her eyes don't catch any sound. Her and Seth's eyes make a connection and she just wants to go to him and wrap her arms around him. So tight.

And hold on to him for a few hours. Just hugging, that would be so nice.

But she doesn't. Marten guides her past Seth, through the front door, where their eyes have contact and Rie feels really heavy for some reason.

She wants to see Seth again. She glares over her shoulder to see if he follows them, but there are so many people walking in the hallway, she can't see it. Why is the light of the hallway off anyway?!

„What is it? Did you see somebody?" Marten asks, pulling Rie's attention.

„Who?" Rie asks, now noticing her fingers are wrapped with Marten's. Why is she holding hands with him? Marten looks at her, amused.

And that guilty 'dizzy' feeling enters her body again. Why is Marten so cute? Why is he being so nice to her? This isn't right! Why is she feeling so strange?

She lets out a little squeak of confusion, staring back at Marten, whose expression changes. „Are you feeling well?" He asks.

Rie nods quickly. „Yeah, ehm... nervous... first schoolparty." She mutters. How is she able to come up with answers so quickly?

„And first date." Marten says smiling, and he pulls her closer. „Don't worry! It will be great! We will have a great time. Just fun, okay?"

„Promise!" Rie says.

„Yes, I promise!" Marten says. „As your first party, we will make it fun and only fun! I won't try to kiss you or something. Cuz that look on your face obviously tells me you don't want that!" And he smiles.

And Rie finds him ever nicer now. She smiles too. „I didn't expect that to happen, to be honest." She mumbles. „But thank you for assuring me."

„I don't kiss on first dates." Marten grins.

„This is our first and last date." Rie mumbles.

14 - No Matter What Happens

Chapter 14

A schoolparty isn't a that big of a deal, Rie finds out. It's really dark, except for a few flashy discolights, loud music is making the building shiver, and there are kissing couples all over the places. But there is also a bunch of hyperactive people making spastic moves on the dancfloor, trying to go on the beat. Only a few manage to succeed.

„Boys so don't know how to move." Rie yells to Marten. She has to scream on the tops of her lungs to make herself clear. The music is really destroying your ears.

Marten laughs. „Yeah, I know. We're terrible! That's why we like a music with a loud beat, so we only have to swing our arms around and hop on our legs!"

And Rie smiles and let Marten lead her to the bar, where he buys her a coke. Rie checks the area for Seth, but she can't spot him. Did he even enter the school, or did he stay outside?

„Oh, heavens, look it's Fanny." Marten says, he lets out a sigh.

Rie follows his eyes and sees her too. Fanny is hanging on the arm of her new boyfriend: Alte Dengen. In Rie's eyes he is known as the asshole that once let her trip in the hallway and who let his cigaretash fall on her arm, which hurt like hell. She didn't make herself popular with him when she gave him a kick in the shins as a payback.

„Yeah, looks like somebody is getting laid tonight." She says. Marten frowns as he looks at Rie, but then his eyes go back at Fanny. „You think?"

„Yeah, is it not because Alte wants it, then it's because she wants to make you jealous." Rie says and she empties her glass in her mouth. She whipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

„Why did you break up with her?"

Now Marten stares at his hands and shrugs with his shoulders. „I don't know. We had an argument, you know. About you."

„Ow, that's fun, now I am the subject of the Populars. That's cool. I should write that down on my resemé!" Rie says, grinning. But her grin dissapears, when she sees Marten's face.

„I told her I thought you were a nice girl. I thought it wasn't fair that everybody was picking on you and that I found it so cool that you bit back." He says, not looking at Rie or Fanny, but finding his hands a more interesting subject to look at.

„Thank you." Rie says, appreciating Marten didn't follow the crowd when she was honored with the 'freak-title'.

Marten straightnes his back and stares at Fanny again. „Yeah, I guess. But Fanny didn't like me saying that at all. And she dared me out. She said I would never talk to you, because it would ruin my social status. I said I didn't care shoot about that."

„I am beginning to like you." Rie tells him with a monotone voice. She tips the glass out of his fingers and starts to drink his drink. This place is so warm, it's making her thirsty.

„So I started to talk to you, and I liked you. Because you were trying so hard to keep me away from you and stuff. But Fanny got pissed ofcourse. So I made up my mind and I asked you on a date. Fanny was furious when she found out and she broke up with me. I guess I asked for it, but I just hated it that she was doging over the fact I wanted to know you and be friends with you."

Rie nods, finding his explanation quite understandable. Well, at least the part of the Pissed Off Fanny. But why would he want to be friends with her, when he has all those people hanging around him all day

long? That's just stupid!

„Why me?“ She asks, her eyes staring directly at him.

„Why you?“ Marten repeats and he shrugs his shoulders once again. „You caught my attention. Suddenly you were standing out because of that rumour and I thought it was a stupid rumour. So I guess I kinda wanted to know who you were.“

„Yeah, but you have loads of friends! I am the loner of the school! I'm a teenage dirtbag!“ Rie cries out.

„Why would you pick me as a friend when you already have them drooling after you?! That doesn't make sense!“

Now Marten smiles again. „It doesn't?“ And he now let his eyes wander back at Fanny, who is almost choking in her new boyfriend's tongue.

„Nah, because it doesn't huh? It doesn't matter if they like me for me, or for my social status right?“ His voice chuckles and he shakes his head. „Don't you think having a friend who likes you for you is much more worth than a bunch of assholes who worship you like you are a famous tv guy? Because I am not a famous tv guy! I'm a normal guy, who's parents just divorced and who's is now hoping his dad will pay money, so he and his mother can pay for the rent?“

A normal girl would have awed in pity and would have patted him on the back or hugged him, but Rie doesn't. She takes the last drink of soda out of Marten's glass look at him.

„Do you think I will emphasise you with that?“ She asks. „I don't give a damn if your parents are divorced or not! Man, it sounds like you are now trying to get my friendship with that story! And that's not what you want either, do you?“

Dumbstruck Marten stares at her and he blinks. „Ehm... I guess.“ And he smiles.

Rie smiles back at him. „But do you think friends are that important?“

Marten nods. „Yeah, yeah they are. Why do you ask?“

Slamming the glass on a table Rie shrugs her shoulders. „I think you're better off alone. Nobody can hurt you when you're alone.“

„You can't have love without pain.“ Marten says and he walks towards her, grabs her hands and pulls her along. „Enough talking before you depress me! Let's have some fun, please!“

„You want me to dance?“ Rie cries out, but she can't suppress a laughter when Marten swings her on the dancefloor, making her move along on the beat.

It's past midnight when Marten brings Rie back to her house. They are walking next to each other talking about the night and about school. Rie feels so comfortable with him that she almost has the urge to tell him about Seth, but she stops herself from doing it.

„I will see you monday then!“ Marten says, rubbing her head.

„If that's what you want, dude, then do as you please!“ Rie says. „Don't come crying when the Populars start to pick on you!“ She looks at him and smiles.

Marten smiles back as they stand still in front of Rie's window. „I had a great time.“ Marten says. „And maybe we do become friends.“

„Maybe.“ Rie says and she feels a little uneasy again. A friend, huh? She never had one before. Well, aside from Seth. But she hasn't seen him the rest of the evening.

Marten gives her another rub over the head and then leaves. Rie watches him walk of the drive way and then cracks her window open and slips into her room. She doesn't bother finding the light, but throws her clothes of in the dark and slips under the covers wearing only her underwear. It's too warm to sleep in pj's.

Happy about the fact that the evening went so smoothly and without any feeling of stress, she listens to the silence around her. And slowly a sad feeling enters her body.

She saw Seth at her school, but now he is gone again! Why did he leave her? She wants him with her

so much, it hurts. How come she wants him so badly now?

First she would have loved him to leave, but now she feels so empty without him.

Especially after seeing him today, staring at her with those eyes. Those skyblue eyes who were staring at her so angry.

She makes a fist and hits her pillow. Why didn't he come to her? She would have leaved and come with him if he would have asked her! Well, she would have doged about it at first, because she doesn't wear the name Rie for nothing. But she would have come along with him!

A touch of a hand on her cheek; a jolt makes her spine make a twitch and she kicks with her legs, turning on her side. In the shadows, but still perfectly clear, is a boy. And she knows him damn well.

„Hey." Rie whispers softly.

She sees Seth blink a couple of times. „I never really left, you know. I was here every night."

He was here every night? Rie's heart skips a beat.

„You're so rude." She mumbles. „You never woke me up."

Seth strokes her cheek. „I was angry, but still I couldn't leave your side for too long."

With a snatch Rie catches ahold of his hand. „You're so stupid, you know that? I hate you! I don't want you to leave like that again!" And she pulls his hand close to her, resting it in her neck. She stares at him and sees the expression of his face change.

He smiles and bends through his knees, sitting next to her bed, staring back at her.

The fingers of the hand Rie's holding, are stroking her neck gently. And Rie feels the heath in her body rise up. He is making her feel so stupid. Just like Marten did in the beginning.

But now Seth is doing it, and he is doing it much worse.

„Don't leave me anymore, no matter what happens." Rie whispers, finding it hard to let her voice sound normal.

Seth moves closer to her, whipping the hair out of her face with his other hand. „No matter what happens." He repeats, not a smile on his face, but his eyes give warmth.

His nose touches her and Rie gasps. She can't help it.

She close her eyes. The touch of Seth's nose against hers is making her glow. It's like her body is much better in feeling right now and she's feels like she is going to burst because of it. How can a single touch make her feel like that?

Seth's fingers keep stroking her neck and Rie wishes she was more in controle of her body. She hates not being in control.

But, she thinks as she lets her free hand slip around Seth's neck, pulling his forehead against her's and feeling his cold breath in her face, she hates it more when Seth's gone.

„Seth?"

„Yeah?"

„I promise, I will find out who you really are. I will find your family." Rie whispers. „Maybe then we can also find a way to change you back to normal."

She opens her eyes again, lets go of Seth's hand and catches ahold of Seth neck with both of her hands now, pulling his head close to her. Seth settles in her neck, stares up at her while laying there. „You will do that for me?"

Rie hugs his head, while she feels Seth's arms wrap themselves around her body. She takes a deep breath and relaxes. Seth is feeling so cold. It's really like holding a cloud.

„Yeah, I promise. But you better never leave my side again, you annoying perv." She mutters, feeling more like herself when she can dog about things.

She hears Seth giggle and tighten his grip. And Rie closes her eyes, allowing sleep to come.

15 - Sharing A First Kiss

Chapter 15

The next day Rie walks to school with Seth next to her side and she feels great. Somehow, for the first time in her life maybe, she feels like things are going the right way! Seth is back, Marten is her friend (well, sort of) and her father loves her. And on top of that, her schoolwork is good, the sun is shining and she has a free class this afternoon, so she can surf on the internet at school. She wants to find out everything there is to know about Seth. It's gonna be hard, but maybe she will find something.

„I saw you and Marten... were like...normal...” Seth suddenly says. Surprised he is only mentioning it now, Rie nods. „Yeah, guess we're friends. That's cool right?”

„Yeah, I guess it is.” Seth says and he starts humming and making little hops in his pases.

Rie grins and shakes her head. They've almost reached the school and Marten is standing near a tree, apparently waiting for her. When he sees her, he smiles and waves.

A little shocked he is waving at her in public, she awkwardly waves back.

„Hey, did you have a good weekend?” Marten asks. He is wearing sunglasses and Rie can see herself reflected in them. Her daily boring self is staring back at her.

„I guess. Did you?” Rie asks.

„I didn't do much.” Marten says. „Fanny has a new boyfriend, remember? How would I like to kick his @\$\$.” He looks really determined.

„Why? You did it to yourself, you know.” Rie says, starting to walk again, Seth on her left, Marten on her right. What in the world is so great about Fanny? He should spend his time better.

Seth is still humming, he is suffering from a great mood and Marten stretches his arms out. „Yeah I know and I don't regret approaching you. But I wish Fanny was still my girlfriend. She isn't so bad.”

„I bet she is once you had another girl for once. One who won't run off with another guy when you have your own opinion not based on The Rules Of The Populars.” Rie mutters, having the urge to ditch him. If she doesn't watch it, he is going to complain about Fanny non stop. She doesn't want reports about how she ditched him and how a great girl she really is. She hates Fanny from the bottom of her soul. Just being in the same school as Fanny is a punishment.

„What has gotten into you?” Marten says, frowning. „I thought we were going to be friends.”

On her left, Seth is laughing now. It's not a real laugh, it's an annoying and fake laughter.

„I'm not planning on being your whining-dog.” Rie says. „If you are going to complain and whine about your lost love, who in my opinion is a great dog who crowned me the Freak Of The School, no we are not going to be friends.” With the last words she pokes him in his stomach and looks at him with narrowed eyes.

Marten narrows his eyes as well. „Why do you have to be so negative?”

„Because I am!” Rie spits out. „I don't have to be friends with you! I don't care if I have friends or not! I am the outcast of the school, but I do have a life. And I don't want you in it if you are going to sob over Fanny!”

Seth's done laughing, but is now hanging around Rie's shoulders, also staring at Marten. „Populars will always be the same, Rie. Dump him now you can.” He says.

Rie launches her elbow in Seth's stomach. „I will see you around, Marten.” She mumbles. „I don't want to waist my time on this.” And she walks away as quick as she can.

Gained a friend, lost a friend, Rie thinks, while sitting in the library of the school, behind a computer. She should have never ever even considered having Marten as a friend. That stupid prick.

„You know, others would say you were overreacting.” Seth is telling her, while he is sitting on the floor next to her. „But I think you did a good thing. Marten is annoying. The typical pretty boy. You are better off without him. And you have me as a friend. I am your friend for life!”

„Shut your mouth, or I will ditch you too, little dog.” Rie sneers.

„But we're friends, Rie!” Seth whines, grabbing her arm.

Rie feels a twitch in the corner of her eye, but tries her best to ignore it „Yeah we are, now let go of my arm, before people think I also have a handicap next to my insanity.”

Seth lets go and turns to sit on his knees, to look at the computerscreen. A website is opened and Rie is scrolling through it.

„How are you planning on finding me?” Seth asks, staring at the screen with no idea what it's all meaning. He reaches out for the computerscreen. His fingers don't even touch the screen, but move through it. „Weirdness. It feels tingly.” Seth says with a giggle.

„Stop being annoying.” Rie mumbles as her eyes move over the screen quickly. She found a databank with missing people. She selected the children out of them. Too bad not every file has pictures with them.

„I got lost like 7 years ago.” Seth says, trying to be a help. He pulls Rie's arm. „7 years ago! I'm 17.”

„Maybe you are like 13 and I will laugh my @\$\$ of.” Rie says. She is so happy the library is a little noisy. This way she won't be overheard so easily.

„I am not 13!” Seth cries out, flapping with his arms. „I am not 13!”

„You act like a 13 year old.” Rie whispers, her eyes still on the screen. She isn't stupid, she did select the missing kids from like 5 till 8 years ago. But there are a lot of missing children in the world. It's a lot to go through. Maybe Seth isn't there at all! Maybe he was never put in there as missed, maybe they figured him dead and now his name is in the file of Dead People. And how is she gonna find him in there?! Or maybe Seth has been visible? Maybe he has been like this for his whole life already? But then she wants to know why he is like that. One thing is for sure. She isn't done with Seth for a long time.

Just as she could have guessed, Marten is waiting for her after school to walk her home. Seth sees him first and he glomps Rie. „Scary guy is back! Kill it!” He screams.

„Holey shoot, Seth, quit it. You're hyperactiveness is getting on my frikking nerves.” She mutters from the corner of her mouth. Marten doesn't wait for her to say anything but grabs her at her shoulders.

„Stop being so annoying, Rie. We are friends. I won't talk about Fanny if you dislike her so much.”

„It's not disliking. It's pure hate.” Rie says.

„Whatever you like the best. Just don't get so pissed of. I only want to be your friend.” His eyes look so determined. And Rie just melts for those eyes: „Yeah whatever. You want icecream? Your treat.”

Marten stares at her for a moment, but then he cracks up in a smile. „Okay!”

He clings his arm on hers and pulls her along. „Icecream it is!”

Seth is staring at them with big eyes. „Hey! I thought the plan was to dump him!” He cried after them.

„Rie! You're so low! I never expected this from you! You should have hit him in the face like you always do to me!”

But Rie ignores Seth wisely. She doesn't want Marten to think she lost it.

Luckily Seth gets the hint and follows them, but a lot quieter then he was earlier this day.

„You are really mean, you know that?” Seth mumbles, as he stares at Rie who is sitting on the bed, demontaging an old alarmclock with great care.

„Yeah okay.” She mumbles, not even paying attention to what Seth said. Seth frowns and stretches out his hand, his fingers land on her cheek. „Rie?”

„Huh?” And she turns her face without taking her eyes off the alarmclock, but Seth's full hand now touches her cheek.

„I can feel that you're soft... but nothing else.” Seth mumbles. „I wish I could feel more.” Now Rie does focus her eyes on him. „Huh?”

„I always hear people say they feel cold or warmth... or itchy...” Seth mutters, petting her cheek. Now Rie frowns. „Itchy? Why would you wanna feel itchy?”

„I dunno what it feels like.” Seth says. „Is it a good feeling?”

„It's like that tickling feeling you have when something moves through you, I guess, but then more annoying.” Rie says.

„Like pain?” Seth asks, looking at her with the eyes of a 5 year old.

„Itchy feels much worse.” Rie mumbles, turning back on her work.

Watching her in silence for several minutes, Seth places his hand from her cheek to her neck, to her shoulder, arm and wrist, until finally his hand is resting on hers.

Annoyed Rie turns his eyes on him. „You are so annoying today?! What is it?!”

„I'm bothered... that...” Seth starts, but he doesn't know how to finish his sentence. He chews his lip and tries to find the words. Impatiently Rie looks at him.

„Does this has something to do with Marten? You are such a jealous @\$\$, if you ask me.” she spits out. She throws the alarmclock down on her bed and turns around to Seth, who has a very pretty color of red on his cheeks.

„You know what, goofball? I am gonna find out who you are and how to change you back!” She says, catching ahold of his shoulders and urging him into a hug. „And then you can make Marten jealous, understood?”

Seth gives a little cough. „Ehm... huh?”

„I said: you can make him jealous. Are you deaf?” Her cheeks glow red now too, because now she realizes what she meant with what she said: that Seth can make Marten jealous with her.

Well, no reason for him to be jealous, since he loves Fanny still. But her crush for Seth is developing with the speed of light. With every look he cast on her.

And sometimes she pushes him away, while other times she reels him in. It's really weird.

If only he was visible, then this would be a lot easier.

Like thunder strikes her, so suddenly is she aware of Seth's hands cupping her face and before she can even defend herself, the soft pressure of cold lips touch hers. It's like somebody breaths cold air in her face. But not uneasy cold.

Pulling herself back into the real world, she cuts off the kiss by yamming her fist right up, collapsing with Seth's jaw. He gets lifted up a few inches and thumbles over on the floor.

„Aaaaah! Whawadahfow?” He cries out, covering his jaw up with his hands, giving Rie hurtful looks. His sky blue eyes burn in her eyes and she backs away on the bed.

„You pervert!” She breaths, because she doesn't know what else to say.

Seth is really offended now. „Pervert? Me?!” He says, leaping back on his feet and moving closer to Rie again. „You practically asked for it, Rie!”

„I never asked for anything!” Rie cries out. „You can't just kiss people!”

Seth swings himself around her neck, making them both crash down on the floor at the other side of the bed. „You are the only one I can kiss! So I finally did it, okay?! Blame me! Kill me! I had my first kiss and I did it because your face just asked for it!”

Dumbstruck Rie remains on the floor with Seth on top of her. Was the expression on her face so obvious? Is she so see-through? Hating herself for this, she now eyes Seth, who is staring back at her

looking really comfortable with his current position.

„Did you like the feeling, Rie?” He asks, with a happy note in his voice, but however no smile on his lips. His eyebrows point at the sky and his eyes seem even more blue than before.

„What feeling?” Rie mutters, feeling her cheeks go red again. „You stole my first kiss, asshole.”

„See it more as sharing our first kiss together.” Seth says, sounding like an actor from a Shakespearian Play, and he rests his head on his hands and stares at Rie, who feels mentally so weird she can't afford to lift her head off from the floor on the moment. So she stares back at her.

After a few seconds of staring contesting Seth gently aims forward and let his lips land on hers again for just a second. „Now we shared our second kiss. Isn't this fun?”

Rie rolls her eyes. „I don't know if these counted you know. Nobody can see you. There must be an unwritten rule you can only receive your first kiss from somebody visible.”

Seth's eyebrows lower. „There is no law like that, Rie! They don't make laws about kisses.”

„Ow shut up.” Rie snaps.

„What about sharing a third kiss then?” Seth says, smiling, already attending to bend over.

„Die!” And Rie holds her hands in front of her face. „You are such a horny little bastard, Seth! You are so rude to steal a girl's first kiss without even asking.”

„If I asked you would have said: No and Go to hell!” Seth mutters. „So I took the gamble and just did it. Plus, like I said, your face asked for it. Well how did you like my kiss?”

Rie narrows her eyes. „My mouth is poisoned.”

„I thought it felt soft.” Seth says with a thoughtful look on his face. „But I don't know what else. It was just one feeling of touch. I know visible people feel a lot more. Like 'taste' and stuff. But I did feel a lot of stuff going on in my body. I was feeling happy.”

A true love confession, Rie thinks, going red in the face. But she can't have him as her boyfriend when he is in that state! He is frikkin invisible! It would really ruin her image if the neighbours would see her walk hand in hand with air.

„Rie?”

„What?”

„How did your first kiss feel?” Seth asks.

Finding the straight to sit up, Rie bites her lip. „I don't know. It tasted like you, I guess.”

Sitting up, Seth still on her knees, she ruffles through her dark hair.

„Did you feel happy?” Seth wants to know, placing his hands on her hips, bending over a little to face her, making her look at him.

Rie does her best not to look at him. „Whatever you want.” She mumbles, not knowing how to handle this thing at all. She wants to jump up and run away but at the other hand this is a relief too. Seth confessing and she kinda avoiding. She can never tell him she is having a growing crush on him, how could she when they don't even have a future when he is invisible?

Seth's hands steers her face up to Seth's again. „I want to share more kisses, Rie. It feels so nice.”

Feeling a twitch in the corner of her mouth, Rie pushes him aside. „I think we had enough for today, you frikking pervert.”

But apparently Seth is having a hang of it and he tackles Rie down on the floor in a hug. „Never ever leave me again, Rie! Okay?”

„Ow brother.” Rie rolls with her eyes.

„You wanna know why?” Seth asks, still clung into a hug with her.

Rie finds her hand petting the back of his head, gently stroking his blond hair. It feels so nice, like silk or water or something. „Why?”

„Because I'm sure I love you.” Seth says, rubbing his cheek in her neck.

Rie stays silent, pets his hair, feeling really confused now he literally confirmed his feelings for her.

16 - Seth Cooper

Chapter 16

So he loves her. Brilliant.

Abusing her potatoes, but refusing to eat them, Rie sits at the kitchentable with her family.

Aye is also refusing to swallow anything, because, according to him: If Rie doesn't eat, he won't take another bite either. Mother is trying her best to gently force some food in his mouth, but Aye is determined.

At the moment Seth is sitting on the floor watching the family eat like he does every day. Since he kissed her, he have been acting rather normal, aside from the sudden glomps come more often then before. She also has developed the urge to slap her hands in front of her mouth when something makes her jump, because Seth does have a hang of it now.

Next time I jolt my leg up in his nuts, Rie thinks annoyed. But that thought fades almost immediatly. Or I can kiss back. I never started the kissing, so why wouldn't I kiss back?

„I don't wanna eat! I don't wannaaaaaaa!” Aye's voice shrieks, while he tries to get out of his chair.

Rie growls. Her thoughts are already confusing, why does her little noodle of a brother have to whine like this now?!

„Hey little glowworm on the first row!” She bites, making Aye look up in fright. His large chocolate shiver and shimmer of tears.

Also her father and mother stare at her, not knowing what to expect.

„Just eat, you little prick!” Rie snaps. „You are making me violent if you keep whining like that and you don't mom to find your arm or head somewhere under the bed!”

„Huh?!” Aye hiccups.

„Meaning: I will rip them off your body if you continue drowning us in your tears!” Rie makes herself clear.

Her mother stands up. „Rie! Don't say stuff like that!”

Rie rolls her eyes. Why can't they just see she doesn't like that whining?! She has a lot on her mind!

Aye is crying right now. „I just want to eat with Rie! I only wanna eat when Rie does!” Big tears are rolling down his face and Rie wonders why he can ask for that while she always acts like such a dog. How can he have a wish to eat with her?!

Rolling around in his chair, making it heave dangerously to the back, Aye is screaming the lungs out of his body. Father hurries to lift Aye out of his chair and hug him. A weird and sick feeling of jealousy crosses Rie's body and she turns her face away.

If she would make a scene, they would yell at her. Aye always gets comforted.

Aye doesn't calm down, he keeps on screaming and yelling and kicking. He is making it hard for his dad to hold him.

„I think you should take serious action now.” Seth mumbles, crawling up and looking at Rie with those big skyblue eyes, looking so adorable.

Annoyed Rie holds up her fork and coughs. Then she sticks her fork in a potatoe and lifts it up till it's at the same level as her mouth. She opens her mouth and stuff the vegetable in her mouth, chews and swallows.

Aye's sobbing and yelling goes silent and he stares at his big sister.

„Happy?” Rie mutters, whipping her mouth with the back of her hand, turning her eyes away.

Aye let's out a little "Muuh." And he wiggles in his father's arms until he puts Aye back in his chair, where Aye eats his dinner without further complaining.

Rie is sitting on her father's lab in the livingroom, both watching the weatherforecast. It's a wonder she ended up on his lab. She never used to do that, well, not since Aye was born. But for some reason she is sitting here again, her father's warm arms around her, pulling her close to his body. His breathing makes her feel really comfortable and she tries to breathe on the same rate. Seth is sitting next to the tv, looking straight at Rie, obviously a little jealous. Rie grins at him and makes herself even more comfortable, by laying her head back on her father's chest.

„How is Seth doing, honey?“ Her father asks casually.

„He's still alive.“ Rie mumbles back, staring at Seth.

Seth pumps up his cheeks and places his head on his knees. „Yeah I am.“

Rie turns her head to face her father, but then sees her mother standing in the doorway, a tired Aye in her arms. „Who's Seth?“ She asks, as she enters the living room, sitting down on the couch. Of course she isn't supsuspecting anything, she looks really relaxed, but Rie and her father both tense up a little bit.

„Seth is Rie's friend.“ Aye mumbles and her yawns, pulling himself close to his mother's body.

Father nods and Rie starts nodding too. „Yeah, ehm... he has this bright blue eyes, you know.“

Why in the world did she say that for and she goes red. She quickly eyes Seth, who is grinning from cheek to cheek.

Her mother sits up straight and frowns. „Seth? Yeah, I remember him...“

Rie's eyes open up wide, she can feel her dad's arms tense up and Seth jumps up crying out:

„WHAT DID YOU SAY?!“

„How d-do you mean?“ Rie mumbles. „You never saw him, right?“

„You mean Seth Cooper right?“ Her mother asks. „This little boy you used to play with when Aye was born“ Her eyes are focused on the televison, like the whole thing isn't a big deal at all.

And her father sits right up, making Rie sit right up too. „He has bright blue eyes, Rie?“

Feeling akward, Rie nods. „Yeah... didn't I ever tell you?“

„No, never.“ Her father says, eyeing his daughter with a nervous look in his eyes.

Seth on the other hand is dancing around on his legs, waving his arms around with the speed of light.

„Omigawd! Omigawd!“

„He's the only Seth... well, the only kid I know with such blue eyes.“ Her mothers sighs. „But then within a few months they moved or something. Never saw him again. Did you meet him Rie? You should invite him over.“

Seth hops around. „I'm here! I'M HERE!“

„Ehm... I will when I see him again.“ Rie mutters, feeling really uncomfortabel right now.

She slips of her father's legs and quickly makes her way to the basement. Seth follows her like he is her shadow. He has become really hyperactive. „You know me?! I have a last name?! Rie were we childhoodfriends?!“

„Man, shut up! I don't know! I can't remember you!“ Rie hisses, throwing herself on her bed.

Seth sits down next to the bed. „What do you mean, NOT remember me?! Why wouldn't you remember a guy like me huh?!“

Rie frowns. „Maybe I forgot about you, because you are really annoying and whining all the time.“

Seth leans forward and narrows his eyes. „That is not funny!“

Shrugging, Rie hugs her pillow. „But, if it's true that you are Seth Cooper, maybe there is a link why I can see you while nobody else can, huh?“

„What do you mean: IF you are Seth Cooper?“ Seth hisses. „I bet I am him! I'm Seth Cooper with the

blue eyes!... I never knew I had blue eyes though. I can't see them. I can't see myself when I look in the mirror you know."

„What a downpoint it will be when you finally can." Rie grins. She knows to turn away before Seth throws himself around her. With her back faced to Seth, who wrapped his arms around her neck, she burst out in giggles, while Seth is poking her in the cheek. „You are such a dog. You like teasing me, dontcha?"

Rie turns around, throwing Seth off her. „Don't be such a whiner then." She says hiccuping. „And we will find out if you are Seth Cooper. If you are I have more chance of finding out who you are and maybe turning you visible."

„What do you mean, MAYBE?!" Seth cries out, flapping with his arms. „I will become visible! And I will walk hand in hand with you! Making everybody look and be jealous."

„Yeah right. Stay invisible." Rie mumbles with a monotone voice.

She bursts out in laughter when she sees Seth's face blow up in anger, when he charges to attack her, she quickly fleeds under the bed and crawls out at the other end of it. She doesn't see Seth, but the moment she has crawled from under the bed, Seth launches himself on top of her, locking his arms around her. „You are saying mean things, but I know you like me, Rie."

Her face burns of her red cheeks as she freezes in her body.

Seth grins. „See? You like me, Rie Stalker. Your face is all red! "

„Shut up." Rie grunts, throwing him off her, turning her back on him. „I like you, I don't like you like you."

„Yes you do." Seth says, crawling towards her and pressing his cheek on her back like a cat. „But that's okay, cuz I like you too."

„Shut up, you dog." Rie bites. „I don't want to know."

„You already knew."

„Put a sock in it!" Rie hugs her knees, not wanting to look at Seth right now. She is feeling really uncomfortable right now and she doesn't like it one bit. She hates it that he is reading her like an open book. She doesn't want to be an open book. Being an open book sucks!

Seth's face appears in front of her face. He smiles and places his hand on her cheek. „Don't be so down. Is it such a bad thing to like me?"

„Yes, it is." Rie mutters, burrying her face in her knees, trapping Seth's hand between it. She does her best to fight against her tears. Why in the world is she crying?

His other hands starts petting her hair. „Why?"

„You're invisible, you stupid." Rie hiccups. „Nobody can see you. What am I supposed to do with an invisible boyfriend?"

She waits for some sort of respond from Seth, but there doesn't come any. Seth just sits there, petting her hair, looking at the top of her head. And Rie hiccups again, dissappointed for some reason.

How can she really be with Seth if he is invisible like that?! How is she ever gonna make him visible again? She can't do that! She doesn't have the power to do that!

Tears whelm up in her eyes and she feels miserable.

She is just a 16 year old girl with no powers, she doesn't even have social skills!

How can she give Seth back his old life?!

17 - Play Chess Fairyboy

Chapter 17

„Here is a picture album.” Rie's mothers stuffs a big book in Rie's hands. It's a heavy piece of work and Rie rests it on her knees and opens it, while her mother sits next to her, flipping through the pages. Seth is standing next to Rie, looking curious over her shoulder.

Rie sees herself grow bigger and bigger on the pictures until she reaches the age of 10. Her mother stops going through the pages and taps her finger on a picture.

Rie's sitting in the garden, a book on her lap. And next to her is a boy around her age with blond hair and eyes as blue as the high sky. Those eyes are staring at the camera so intensely, like a wild animal. He is making a gesture of moving closer to Rie, who is totally drowned in her book.

„That...Am I...” Seth breaths, not believing his eyes.

„You would just sit there and read, or do your homework. And he would accompany you. I believe you met in the park.” Her mother says with a little smile on her face. „You ran away because you found it so hard to get used to your little brother and you ran into Seth, who was being all by himself too. And I don't know what you said or did, but Seth came here every day. It was so cute, you never really mind. I thought it was good that you had a friend, because your father was out for work a lot and I was so busy with Aye.”

Rie touches the picture with the tips of her fingers. It is Seth, there is not a single doubt about it.

„But after only a few months his parents suddenly moved. I never saw anybody look so torned up, that poor boy. Though you seemed pretty okay. You kept your nose in that book.” Her mother says and she gets up again. „I better prepare dinner now. Will you put that album back when you are done watching it?”

Rie doesn't look up from the picture, Seth's eyes trapped her. „Why didn't I mind him leaving?” She asks. „Didn't I liked him around?” She hates the fact she is sounding so weak.

„I think you liked him around, Rie.” Her mother says and she smiles again. „Your eyes would light up when he came. But you also did your best to act like you didn't care.” She opens the door of Rie's basement, ready to leave upstairs. „I guess that's typically you, Rie: acting like you don't care.”

The door closes behind her and Rie now finally tears her eyes away from the picture, looking at Seth standing next to her. What must she say now?

But Seth bows towards the album to have a closer look. „Am I that little boy?”

Rie casts a look on the picture again. „Yeah, I know for sure that you are him.”

Seth frowns. „Do I really have such blue eyes?”

„Who gives a damn! We found you!” Rie cries out, a big smile on her face, putting the book down and throwing her arms in the air. „You should be happy! Jump for joy! Be annoying! Do your Daily Annoying Routine!”

An insecure look goes over Seth's face. His eyes walk through the room, stick at Rie.

„We knew eachother ever since we were little.” Seth mumbles. „Do you think I became invisible after moving away?”

„I don't know. I didn't make you invisible!” Rie says, her smile fades away.

The silence isn't comforting at all. She can sense that Seth is really worried about something.

His eyes nervously swift from left to right, he bites on his lip.

„What... what if you indirectly did?” Seth whispers, not sounding really sure about himself.

Rie stares at him, her jaw hanging open. „Say what?”

But Seth turns her back on her and sits down on the floor. „It doesn't matter. I mean, I can't remember one single thing, except for my name.” Grabbing in his hair he starts to rock back and forth. „Why can't I remember anything? How can I not remember you?”

Now Rie believes he is even crying. She never thought he would be upset about this all.

So she bows through her legs and sits behind Seth, placing her hands on his shoulders. „Shut up with your stupid whining, Seth.” She says. „I can't help it that you can't remember anything! Don't make me feel guilty over something I don't know anything about!”

He's is quivering under her hands for a few seconds, but then turns around really fast and glomps himself on Rie, throwing her on her back. And he starts crying like a little kid. With big hales and wet salt tears. His chest heaves up and down and he burries his face in Rie's neck.

It takes a while for him to calm down and all this time Rie has laid under in in silence.

Sobbing in her neck, he finally starts talking again. „I'm sorry... I just... Why do things have to be... so bad for me? What did I do to deserve this?”

Rie lifts up his face and whipes his tears away with her fingers. „I don't know.” She speaks the truth. She can't remember Seth being in her life at all. It's upsetting actually, because it's so hard to believe that you can forget eyes so blue as Seth's!

„What if I forget again?” Seth asks. „What if I finally become visible and forget everything again? Everything, including you?” His voice shivers and his eyes shimmer in tears. „I don't want to forget you! I don't want that! I want to be with you!”

She smiles and pets his hair. „Yeah, I want to be with you too, so shut up. If you forget me, I will make sure we get to know eachother again.”

Seth lifts up his head higher and places his mouth on top of Rie's, leaves it there for a few seconds and then lays his head back to rest in his neck. Rie can still feel the cold touch on her lips and a faint smile curls upon them.

That evening Rie is sitting in her bedroom with Seth, playing chess. She is moving the black pieces Seth points out, while she plays for herself with the white ones.

„Rie, do you think I will remember everything or forget everything when I become visible again?” Seth asks, while scanning the chessboard with great care. Rie is much better in chess then he is, so he has to watch his steps.

„I don't know.” Rie mumbles, also concentrating, not planning to let Seth beat her when she makes a mistake. She frowns and bows lower to the chessboard. „Make a move or I will slap you.”

„Stop being so mean or I will kiss you.” Seth mumbles, pointing at a piece and then pointing to the place he wants it to be put.

Rie moves the chesspiece and sticks out her tongue. „That was a losermove, fairyboy.”

„Fairyboy?” Seth growls. „I'm not some gay fairyboy!” But when he looks up at Rie's grinning face, he smiles too.

Rie concentrates on the game again, calculating the best way to win. „Maybe you will regain your memory instead of losing it.” She answers Seth's question.

„That would be so cool.” Seth lets out a sigh, watches Rie move one of her white pieces.

„Yeah, that would be cool.” Rie says. „Pity that I don't have any memory of you whatsoever, Seth. I mean, who would forget eyes that kind of blue?”

They both stir up as they hear a formiliar voice say: „Blue eyes?”

Marten's head is peaking through the little window that's open because of the hot weather outside.

His eyes stare at her, gazes through the room as he expects somebody to be there, but at the same time the look in his eyes reveal that he heard the conversation for a few minutes already and he knows

nobody is in the room.

Seth stares at Marten with a shocked expression, as Rie feels her cheek become really red. She is opening and closing her mouth like a fish on the dry. Marten caught her talking to Seth.

Brilliant, now he must think she indeed is crazy!

Marten lets himself enter the room by slipping through the slim window and he walks over to Rie, sitting down in front of her, where Seth is sitting. Seth yelps and crawls away. „I don't like people going through me, asshole!” He shrieks.

Rie's eyes swift to Seth, not knowing what to say or do. Marten follow her eyes, staring at Seth too, but ofcourse not knowing her is there.

„To who where you talking?” Marten asks. „Who... who is Seth?”

Seth is now waving his arms around, attending to hit Marten in the face, but he goes right through him.

„I am Seth, no get out! Rie is my territory!”

„I'm not.” She has spit it out before she could stop herself. She slaps her hands in front of her mouth and stares at Marten with a shocked expression on her face. How can she be so good in schoolwork and still be so uncarefull with this?

Marten stares back at her. „I... I know you're not Seth...” He stutters. „But... who is then? And... what's happening here?”

„What do you mean?” Rie says, deciding to play dumb on him.

„You were talking to somebody. And I mean... really talking to somebody.” Marten looks really uncomfortable right now and he doesn't look Rie in the eye. In fact, he looks at everything except for Rie.

„You even had the pauses and the look in your eyes, like you were having a real conversation with somebody... with Seth.”

„I am real, dammit!” Seth cries out.

„What's a Seth.” Rie mumbles, overreacting in her Play Dumb Act right now, but she is nervous as hell and she really doesn't know what she is doing right now. The only thing what is crossing her mind right now, is how doomed she is, now Marten heard her talk with Seth.

„Rie... don't lie to me.” Marten says.

„Don't act like you are my best friend, who I have to tell every secret to.” Rie gives him in return, her eyes are dark and she whipes the pieces of the chessboard, just to give her hands something to hold. Because sitting there, not knowing where to look or what to do with your hands is terrible.

„Don't act so cold! I want to know what's happening here!” Marten says, raising his voice.

Rie jumps up. „I'm crazy! That's what's happening! Now get the hell out and tell all your Popular Friends that you saw me talk to my invisible friend! Fanny would love to be your girlfriend again if you would do that!”

„I won't do that!” Marten yells back, also standing up now. „Just tell me what's going on! I'm confused!”

„No! I can't tell you!” Rie cries. „You wouldn't believe me! You would think I am the freak everybody says I am!”

„I never thought of you as a freak and I never will!” Marten looks really determined and ready to face anything that's going to happen.

But Rie is certain she doesn't want to tell Marten about Seth. He says he will believe her, but she doesn't think he really will. He would be intimidated and say she might have a mental desease or disorder. And she doesn't want him to think that, because it's not true! She isn't crazy! She doesn't suffer from some weird disorder! She is completly normal! Seth is the abnormal one! But he can't help it!

Seth has also stand up and now putting his arms around her, hugging her. And Rie is so thankfull her is doing that. „Do what you think is best to do.” Seth whispers in her ear. „If you don't want to tell him, you don't have to tell him.”

„I don't want to tell him.” Rie mumbles.

„Don't want to tell who?“ Marten immediatly says, hopefull Rie will tell him what's happening. Suddenly Rie goes in defensive mode. „I don't want to tell you! Now get out! Get out!“ And she charges right at him. „Get away from me! Never come near me again! Go and be popular! Leave me alone! I never asked for you!“

She forced Marten all the way to the door of her basement, chaising him away with everything she has. She pushes her hands against his chest and shoulders, making him go through the door. Marten can't do much to hesitate, because Rie doesn't stop yelling or pushing. She throws the door shut in his face and blocks it with a chair.

Finally Marten is putting up some resistance. „Rie! Don't lock me out, dammit! I am worried about you! Why won't you let me be your friend!? Why do you mistrust me like that?!“

„Get out! I never wanted you as my friend, you selfish asshole!! Just get the hell out, before I give you a real reason to worry about!“ Rie shrieks, running to her bed, covering herself up in her hot and clammy blankets. Being under the blankets in this weather is terrible, but she wants to be alone. Being a lonely, isolated teenager with an invisble boy to your side isn't the easy life.

18 - Alte Goes Mad

Chapter 18

Rie is back to her 'shadow'-self, avoiding people as much as she can or else moving forward almost invisible. She is carefull not to walk into Marten at school and she ignores everybody, including the teachers. Things aren't working out fine. When she entered the schoolbuilding, the next schoolday after Marten had come to her house, she immediatly heard big news: Marten and Fanny were back together again. Apparently Marten had forced his way back to his old love and Fanny had ditched her other boyfriend, the horrible Alte Dengen. For some reason, this newsflash stung her a bit, Marten must have given up on any kind of friendship with her. Being popular and getting everything you want is easier then fighting for social rights, like Rie has to do.

And since she knows that Seth is a real person, Seth has been a lot closer to her then before. When she's sleeping, he holds her hand and pets her cheek. And here at school, he is always trying to remain contact with her in any little way: a soft touch, or holding her tight around the shoulders, almost hugging. Rie has been thinking about the time she was small and hanging out with Seth. She wonders how it can be true if she can't recall it. And she was 10 back then, so she oughta have memory of it, especially in such a sad period!

No matter how hard she thought about it, no blue eyes boy entered her memory. The only thing she could recall was the feeling of being alone. Nobody around to play with her, nobody who looked at what she could do, everything was about Aye, Aye and Aye again.

No matter how much of a pro Rie is in avoiding people, somewhere half way the next week, Marten finally managed to fight his way to her. In the middle of the cafeteria, where Rie is just about to buy some food, because she threw her homemade lunch away, since she claimed she wasn't hungry. And now, on second thought, she do was hungry.

„Now I got you and now you better listen!” Marten hisses upset. He looks like he have been walking the marathon. Maybe he saw her at the other side of the cafeteria and literally sprinted her, jumping over the tables. That would have been a funny sight, too bad she didn't see him approaching.

Seth is holding on to Rie's shirt and eyeing Marten deadly, when he catches a hold of Rie's shirt too.

„What is it?” Rie spits back, completly in her dog-element. „Am I yesterday's news and don't your friends want to know more about me and my invisible friends? Is that it? Cuz I do got other interesting and freaky news, like my brother being from outerspace!”

„No! No, that's not it! I never told them anything from that day!” Marten says. „If you say there is a Seth, then I believe you.”

„I never told you that there was a Seth.” Rie says, quickly eyeing Seth. Seth frowns his eyebrows. „I don't know about you, but I would kick him in the nuts.” He says.

„I know you never told me, but I know there must be.” Marten says. „And I believe you, okay?”

Is he so desperate to be friends with her again? What is so bloody interesting about her?

She narrows her eyes and looks at him closely. „Did you talk to my dad or something?”

„Does your dad know too?” Marten says, sounding very excited, like he is convinced of Seth now.

„Knows what?!” Rie cries out. „I haven't got a clue what you are saying! Stop being a pain! There is no Seth!”

She eyes Seth again, who makes an It's-okay-I-know-you're-lying-gesture.

Marten follows her eyes and stares to the space next to him. „Is he here?“

„No!“ Rie yells, feeling the urge of hitting him coming up.

But Marten doesn't respond to her, he's frozen in his movements, staring straight through Seth's head. His mouth opens and closes like a fish on the dry.

Both Seth and Rie stare back at Marten and for a moment the thought: „He can see him!“ slips through Rie's head. That thought dries up when she realizes that more people are staring to where Marten is staring it. And now she notices it, it gives an eerie feeling, like there is something seriously wrong going on.

She turns her head around to look at what people are looking at and then she knows what caused the eerie feeling.

In the doorway of the cafeteria is Alte Dengen standing: Fanny's fresh ex.

He's weird looking, his chest is heaving up and down, his face has light hair on it and his eyes are bloodshot. It looks like he hasn't slept for days now, like something has been keeping him rudely awake for nights in a row.

And he's just standing there, until people notice his white face. And it's like a domino, because more and more people start staring at him. And once they stare, they can't pull their eyes away from him anymore. His whole appearance gives a creepy feeling and you just have the feeling that you have to keep still and watch him, or else something will happen.

Suddenly he starts lifting up his righthand, until it's leveled with the belt of his jeans. The next moment he is holding up a gun, a silver one, shimmering in the lights on the ceiling.

One heartbeat, that's what it feels like.

Rie's mouth slowly sags open, why did she had to dump her lunch in the trash today? If she hadn't done that, she would have been savely underneath the stairs, eating it and being save.

Alte starts to walk and she doesn't realizes it, until Marten breathes the word: „Fanny.“ Alte is heading towards Fanny, who is staring at Alte with big eyes of fear.

„Fanny!“ Marten says now louder, horrorstruck. And suddenly also Marten begins to move.

Alte is lifting up his hand, aiming it at Fanny. Nobody is doing anything, everybody is staring at it like it's some stupid play. But Marten is moving, it's like he is in slowmotion, but slowly gaining speed on his way. Also his voice becomes louder and louder.

„Fanny!“ He says. „FANNY!“

Alte stops walking and aims his gun at Marten, who doesn't stop but keeps walking.

„DON'T HURT FANNY!“ He bellows, shivering in anger, his feet making him come closer and closer to death.

Rie knows he will shoot, he will shoot Marten. Like it's programmed, she starts following him, but she has speed. To be honest, she isn't thinking about what will happen to her, the only thing that crosses her mind is that Alte is going to shoot Marten!

Every sound is died out, every image, except Marten and Alte is whiped out. Her body moves to the two guys without a trace of fear, but filled with a rush of tension. Somewhere in the background she can hear Seth crying out her name.

But she is there, between Alte and Marten.

Holding the gun with a unnatural steady hand, Alte's finger makes the deadly movement. An extremely loud bang seems to throw everything back it's perspective and speed. Everything is going fast and before falling into Marten's chest and throwing him down on the floor with her, the only thing she sees and feels is blood.

She drops on the floor and is just blown away by all the sounds, smell and air that she senses.

She expected to feel pain, but she doesn't feel it at all. While the world around her is moving around like there is no time to loose, she lazily lifts up her hand and touches her body. But no matter how she touches, no wounds crosses her fingers. When she holds her hand up to her face she does see blood, but not much.

But if this isn't her blood, does that mean that Marten is shot?

Slowly her contact to the world comes back and a shrieking voice she doesn't really knows is piercing through her ears: „He... Where did he?! How did.... He just appeared!... How can that... how!... He came out of thin air! Holey shoot... Oh...How!”

Rie forces herself to sit up and supporting on her elbows she sees Marten sitting up straight, blooddrops on his face, but he doesn't seem to be hurt himself. He is staring at the point where Alte was shooting from. Rie moves her eyes to Alte, who was the person that the shrieking voice belongs to. He is sitting on the floor, dropped his gun next to him and he is even whiter then earlier. His eyes are almost popping out of his head and his voice is shrieking like mad. But she doesn't even hear the words anymore. Her eyes are drawn to the place where Alte is staring at. On the floor, laying on his tomach in a puddle of blood that is slowly expanding itself, is a blond haired person. Her lungs suddenly suck in a gulp of air. The person on the floor is facing her and his bright blue eyes are staring right at her. A faint smile on his lips.

How easy it was to move towards Marten, how hard it is to make her body go towards Seth.

Slowly, like gravity has become heavier, she gets on all fours and crawls towards Seth.

She can't even blink with her eyes, her lungs are having troubles handeling the air going in and out, her hands are shaking.

Down on the floor Seth is still staring at her, that silly smile stuck on his face.

„I... I'm okay.” He whispers hoarsly. „Don't... worry.”

It's her sign to start crying. Tears are streaming down her cheeks and her lips starts shivering.

„S-seth....Seth, what.....w-w-wha....” Her voice can't make anything good out of it.

Seth is bleeding to death here, what did he do? He jumped in front of her? Why did he do that? Nobody can see him, how are they supposed to help him?

„Don't cry...” Seth whispers, moving his hand towards Rie's and touching it. „I'm... okay.”

Rie shakes her head. „No...d-d-don't die...please. Seth... Seth, please.”

He smiles wider, but the smile fills up with pain. „I'm trying.”

This can't be happening! He can't die! He just can't die!

She needs him! Can't he see that she needs him?!

The next moment somebody catches a hold of her shoulders and yanks her back, away from Seth. With her crying eyes locked on Seth, she tries to fight the hands that are taking her away. „He's dying! Let me be with him!” She cries out hysterically. „I want to be with him!”

A couple of people in matching outfits are kneeling down at Seth's body, lifting him up and placing him on a moveable bed, made of lightweighted iron tubes: an ambulance bed.

They are taking him away! How can they do that?! How can they see where he is?

Rie stops the fighting against the person holding her, she can't move anymore. This doesn't make any sense any more.

19 - Hospital Visit In PJ's

Chapter 19

If people can see him, he has turned visible. But if he is going to die, it's not going to matter anymore. And how did he get short when everything else moves through him? Those thoughts are whirling around in Rie's head, laying in her bed, where she was put after she was brought home by a teacher, who is now upstairs talking to her parents about what happened. Rie can hear them talking, but the words doesn't mean anything to her. In her arms, curled up and crying, is Aye. The moment he saw her, covered in Seth's blood, he had been crying, not wanting to leave Rie's side. Rie, who didn't feel lik rejecting anything, allowed him to lay in bed with her. And to be honest, it feels nice to have somebody next to you, crying too. Aye isn't a much of a talker, doesn't want to know what happened and only wants to be with her, and that's good. She wouldn't be able to talk to anybody about what happened. How is she going to explain everything? Nothing looks real anymore. She wraps her arms tighter around Aye's little body and puts her nose in his hair. It smells like spring and sand. She kisses it. How could this have happened? She was right about Alte, that guy isn't ticking right. Fanny breaks up with him, to return to her old boyfriend, but that's no reason to start shooting. And Marten only wanted to protect her and Rie, she didn't want Marten to get hurt. She never thought about the possibilty of dying in the process. And maybe nor did Marten or Seth think about that, they only thought about saving the other person.

Feeling guilty that she slept, Rie wakes up because of the sun shining through her window. Aye is attached to her body, drooling over her clothes while sleeping. Rie sits up and ruffles through her hair. How could she sleep? While Seth is dying? Or maybe, he has died already. And she never got a chance to tell him goodbye. Or tell him that she does love him! Mean tears are focring their way up again and she clamps her arms around Aye to cry. Aye awake abruptly. „Wha...huh?...Rie?” Rie loosens her grip and stares at Aye, crying. „I don't....I don't want Seth to die.” She says with a shivering voice. She really doesn't want that to happen. If she knew Seth was going to shield her, she would have prevented him from doing so! How could she have let this happen to him? He's going to die! Aye stares at his big sister crying and his own eyes start to shimmer in tears too. Before Rie can glomp him though, her father hurries inside her room. „Rie, the hospital called. He... he's alive. He's save!” He cries out, almost tripping over the chair that's standing close to the door. He jumps on the bed, next to Aye and Rie and hugs them. Rie is blown away by what he just said. He's alive? He's gonna make it? Seth is going to live?! „Seth's really there!” Her father cries out with an emotion that's a mix between happyness and nonbelieving. „He's visible and he's going to be fine!” Rie lays still for a moment, staring into space. Seth is alive and people can see him. Something weird has happened, but he's alive. Seth won't go away! Not wanting to waste another single second, Rie crawls out of her father's arms, launches herself through her window and starts running. She doesn't care she is wearing her pj's, she only cares about how fast she can reach the hospital.

Panting, she leans on her knees in front of the information desk of the hospital. She ran all the way down here, took the subway for a little part, and ran out of it. Everybody was staring at her, because her hair was obviously a mess and she was still wearing her pj's.

The lady behind the information desk stares at Rie and frowns. „Are you okay? Did something happen?” She asks with a worried tone in her voice.

Rie shakes her head. „No...no, I need to.... where is....” Her chest is aching from running so hard. She bends through her legs and gasps for air. It's stinging in her chest.

The lady hurries from behind the desk and helps Rie up. She forces her to sit down in a chair and gets a glass of water for her. „There, there, girl. First calm down so I can help you, okay?”

Rie nods and gulps some water down, the waoman is holding in front of her mouth. She never realized water could taste so good.

When she feels like she got everything eased down again, she throws it out: „I need to see Seth.”

The lady smiles. „Ah, you're visiting somebody. When was he brought in?”

„He was brought in because of that shooting accident at my school!” Rie says, feeling panicking all of a sudden. What if something has happened? Maybe he isn't visible! He has to be, right?

Tears stream down her face and she claws her hands in the lady's sweater. „I need to see him, please! I don't want him to die! Please!”

„Calm down, girl. I will look in the computer and see where Seth is, okay? Then I will bring you there, is that a good idea?” The lady says with a kind voice, handing her the glass of water back in her hands.

Rie stares at the woman, as she walks back to her desk to look up Seth's information. She never thought people would be so kind to her when she act so freaked out like this. With the back of her hand she whipes her tears of her face.

„He's laying here. I think he's sleeping, so please don't try to wake him up. He needs his rest.” The lady leaves Rie in front of a light green door. It's closed and on the tag of the door is written: “Seth Cooper.” Apparently her father has given the information to the hospital, at least, that sounds most logic, because she can't really recall what happened between the shooting and her father telling her Seth survived. She takes a deep breath and places her hand on the doorknop, softly pushing it open. A gently beeping sound enters her ears and a shadowdark room appears in front of her eyes.

The white sheets on the bed aren't to miss and the person in it is laying motionless. A lot of medical apparatus is detached with strings and tubes to his body. His chest is going up and down slowly. A monitor is showing the gently flow of his heartbeat.

Rie comes closer to the bed and feels her breath freezing in her body. It's Seth, it's really him. Though he looks terrible. His skin is so white, his eyes have dark circles around them and his lips don't look soft anymore.

She wonders if the color of his eyes are still the same shade of blue, or of they will be faded too. But Seth it sleeping now and she can't wake him up. So she takes a seat next to his bed and looks at him, breathing slowly in and out, like it's a hard thing for him to do.

His blond hair is around his head, not as shiny as they used to look. They look so faded. Maybe it's because there is not much light in this room, but he looks so terrible. Like he doesn't have much chance on living anymore.

Rie heaves her shoulders up and burries her face in her hands. She don't want him to die! Her dad told her he would live, but Seth looks like he lost his last battle! Tears start to stream down her face again and she just can't stop it. She hates what happened in school and she wishes Seth would have never gave up his life for her! She isn't worth it!

„Don't... don't cry.” Seth's unsteady voice breaks the sounds of her tears. Rie looks up and stares into

Seth's white face, who is doing his best smile, but he doesn't really succeed. His eyes are as blue as the sky, like they always were. „I don't... I don't like it when... when you cry.”

„I don't like it either.” Rie mumbles, hiccuping in her tears. She reaches out for his hands and holds it, strangling his fingers into hers. Surprised she stares at it. His touch, his skin, it's warm. It's not feeling like cold or like a cloud anymore. It's feeling like real skin, warm and a little sweaty.

Seth also stares down at their hands. „It feels... different.” He says.

Ofcourse he must feel things different now too, Rie thinks and she smiles. „Is different wrong?”

Seth closes his eyes. „No... it's good.”

Rie moves her chair closer to his bed. She is so happy that he's alive. She wouldn't have cared if he was still invisible, the important thing is that he's alive and with her. „How are you feeling?”

It takes a while before Seth opens his eyes again and a little part of Rie is worried. But he looks at her and smiles. „Weird... I'm... I'm sensing things... I never sensed before.”

„Yeah?” Rie asks, lifting his hand up and holding it close to her body, cuddling it.

„Warth... cold... itching... immense pain.” Seth sums up. „Sleep... hunger... tickling...smell”

„You never sensed those before?” Rie asks.

Seth shakes his head and places his other hand slowly on his throat. „And I feel... weird here.”

„What do you mean?” Rie wonders what he means and she bows closer to his face.

„I don't know... like... my body wants... to throw something... out.” Seth mumbles. Talking his hard for him and he closes his eyes again, breathing a little bit harder now.

„Throwing out? You mean, you feel sick?” Rie asks. „That wouldn't be surprising, considering the situation you put yourself into.”

Still in front of his face, Rie wonders if she should do what her body is screaming for. Seth's eyelashes are trembling softly, his nostrils are looking so soft. Slowly she bends even closer towards him then she already was and plants a kiss on his mouth.

Seth opens his eyes lazily and smiles faintly. „I knew it...” He says. „I knew you... you had a crush... on me.”

„Shut up before I change my mind.” Rie says, also smiling and she sits back on her chair. „I'm sorry for waking you. Go back to sleep, Seth. You need it.”

„Are you staying here?” Seth asks, really sounding exhausted, as he once again closes his eyes and breaths in and out heavily. Rie whipes the hair out of his face and smiles. „Yes, I'm here.”

„Have you been here all this time?” Rie's father walks in the room, close behind him her mother and little brother Aye, who is carrying her clothes. Aye walks up to his sister and dumps the clothes in her lap, sighing hard. „This is heavy! You can't run out in your pj's!”

Rie doesn't look up or turn around but keeps her eyes focused on Seth. „Don't talk so loud, he's sleeping.” Is all that she says.

Her parents and brother all take a seat and for a moment they are all quiet. They are all staring at the boy who sleeping in the bed. „So, this is him, huh?” Her father asks quietly, uneasy to interrupt the silence again. Rie nods.

„You knew him?” Her mother asks her husband. „Why didn't I knew him? You don't tell me anything, do you?” „We sort of did.” Rie's dad says, smiling faintly. „This is the Seth we talked about. You know, the boy with those bright blue eyes.”

Mother looks uneasy and looks at the sleeping Seth. „He is? You were in contact with him all this time?” she asks. „And you never invited him over in our house?”

Rie clenches her fists. Why does this conversation have to go like this? Why can't everybody just accept that Seth is here and get over with it? Why make such a fuzz?! She snaps her head in her mother's direction. „He was in our house!” Rie hisses. „He was there all the time, okay?! Happy now?”

Once again she can't prevent the tears streaming down her face. Two small, soft hands touch her face. „Don't be sad, Rie. I knew he was in the house.” Aye's squeaky voice claims.

Before she can stop him, he has climbed on top of her lap and slapped his arms around her chest. Rie pets his head softly and nods. Then she looks at her mother again, who is, in her turn, looking very puzzled. „What do you mean he was in our house? When?”

„All the time for the past few months.” Rie says. „But I guess you just thought I was losing my mind, talking to 'myself' and making sudden movements, huh?”

Her words clearly affect her mom, cuz she shakes her head and starts to stutter. „I never.... I n-never thought t-t-that, Rie. I though... i-i-it might be... stress, or typic-c-cal girlthings.”

Lucky for her mother, father bugs in. He puts an arm around his wife and hugs her. „I'm sorry, honey. It might have been partly typical girlthings, but most of the time, it was Seth.”

Now it's time for her mother to cry. She burries her face in her husband's chest and cries so hard. She must feel very confused and attacked right now and Rie feels sorry she snapped like that.

On Rie's lap, Aye is having a mindbattle of his own. His mother is crying and Rie needs his hugs too, what to do? He quickly slides off Rie's lap, runs to his mom, kisses her on the elbow, because he can't reach her face. And runs back to Rie, climbing back on her lap.

Rie's mom is still sobbing her eyes out, words become clear through her tears. „I am... so...con-confused!” Father pats her head gently, while she whines on: „I don't know... I still don't know... how... how Seth....”

„How Seth could be in our house without you knowing?” Rie asks, she can't help her voice sounding so harsh. How come she just can't sound like what she feels like? I mean, she didn't mean to make her mom cry like this, but still her voice is not making anything better.

But her mother nods at her question, her snottering gets quieter and she looks up at Rie. „How could he?” She asks with an unsteady voice.

How can your mom turn out to look so fragile and so little? This doesn't look like the mother she knows. She knows her mother as a strong woman, who wouldn't go down easily for others. And now she is sobbing like a baby, looking so vunurable and confused.

„Because nobody could see him, but me.” Rie says, not looking at her mother. She feels so weird. A little ashamed of telling this. It's like sharing something very embarrassing. Rie, who has been holding Seth's hand all this time, huggles Aye with her other arm, her cheeks burning like a fire.

Her mother whipes over her face with the back of her hand. „Nobody can see him? I... I don't understand, Rie.” She whispers.

But it's not Rie's turn to respond, instead Seth is speaking. „Like you said...” He says hoarsly.

„Nobody except Rie... could see me.” His blue eyes look kindly at Rie's mother. „It's hard... to believe, I know... but it's true...” Rie's mother blinks at the sight of Seth, staring back in his eyes, lost for words. And Seth just smiles. „Nice to meet you... once again.” He whispers.

„Once... again?” Her mother asks, obviously really confused.

„Yes, dear.” Rie's father explains. „He is the little boy Seth from when Rie was little. You remember? That friend of Rie when Aye was born? He moved soon after that though.”

„He is, I remember him. I showed... I showed you that picture album, Rie.” Her mother says, now focused on Rie. And Rie, still looking at Seth, nods. „Yes, Seth and I looked in it, together.”

Seth's facial expression changes, he frowns and opens his mouth a little. „I... I remember it too, now... About when I was little, I mean.”

Rie stares at him. What does he mean, he remembers?

20 - No Eating, No Sleeping

Chapter 20

Why can he remember and why can't she? She can't recall a thing about Seth when she was little. She met him, he knows about it, her mom and dad know about it! Why can't she? The only thing she knows about the time when Aye was born, that she locked herself up in her room a lot, hide outside in the garden a lot, and just tried to show off with good schoolgrades. She is sure no blue eyed boy was in her life, because... how can you forget Seth's eyes? They are such an unnatural kind of blue, you just have to remember those!

But she doesn't ask Seth about it, not yet. She is embarrassed that she can't remember him, while he clearly can now. But everyday she visits Seth, helps him eat and reads him stories. Seth is having a hard time getting used to all the needs he is having now. He can't get used to the fact he has to eat. His stomach roars like a lion and when Rie forces him to eat something, he doesn't want to. Chewing and swallowing isn't his thing. He doesn't like it.

Having to keep his body clean, is another thing he has troubles getting used to. Also being annoyed by these constant feeling of itching and pain. Being tired after a day is another hard thing. He doesn't like being knock out for several hours, he feels like he is missing out on things. And the nurses often caught him watching tv or reading in the middle of the night, because he did his very best to fight the sleep.

It's not weird that Seth's healing progress is going really slow and Rie's patience is getting really small.

„Do you have any idea how much trouble I went through to make this soup for you?” She spits out, when Seth pulls a face over her own made chicken soup. „This stuff had LOVE absorbed in it, so EAT IT, you rotten squirrel!”

„If you say it like that, it's hard to believe you put love it.” Seth mumbles. „It's more like you are trying to poison me, or something.” He covers his mouth up with his blanket, eyeing the soup with fear. He really doesn't like to eat.

Rie puts the bowl down, half of it's contents splash on the floor. „Food is good for you! Dammit! You are not gonna survive if you don't eat!” She folds her arms and stares daggers at Seth. He is so annoying! He just has to eat! He needs to get better and get the hell out of that hospital!

She is skipping school, so she can watch over him, in case he suddenly starts to rebel the fact he has to breath and stops doing that too! You never know with Seth! If it weren't for the nurses, Seth wouldn't even wash his own stupid body! And he would smell and stink and that would be a waste, because she would dump him so hard if he smelled like sweat all day.

„I hate the feeling!” Seth excuses himself. „I don't like the feeling of that stuff going down my throat! It doesn't feel good, it's... icky. Plus, there is animal in that soup, I can't eat animals! I like animals, they are cute! I am not gonna eat it! No way!”

Rie stands up, places her hands in her hips and turns around. „I don't care! Just die for all I care! Just forget we ever met, you slimy annoying so-not-boyfriend!” And she walks out the door, sits down in the first chair she sees and waits.

She doesn't have to wait long, because within a few moments, Seth is shuffling into the hall, looking really panicky. When he is standing on both of his legs you can really see how skinny he has become. He already didn't have much flesh on his bones, but this is crazy! He might be even lighter then she is!

„Don't.... don't leave!” He gasps, totally exhausted. He keeps himself standing on the doorframe. „I'll eat! Just don't leave, okay?”

His big blue eyes beg her. Rie rolls with her own eyes. „You mean it? You promise to eat EVERYTHING I give you?”she asks. Seth hesitates, but when Rie makes a gesture to the exit, he quickly nods. „Yes! Everything! Everything! But please, no animals!”

„I'll get a bowl of vegetable soup in the hospitalkitchen.” Rie says and she walks towards Seth, grabbing him around the waist and helping him back to bed. „Damn, I can feel every bone in your body!” She cries out. „What's wrong with you? You have to get better!”

Breathing in and out deeply of exhaustion, Seth heaves up his shoulders. „I don't like food, I don't like sleep. I never had to eat or sleep before.” He says. „When I eat... it feels like my body wants....to throw it out again.”

„Duh! You are sick! But still, you have to eat! Light things!” Rie says. „You have to, or else you'll die anyway! If you die, you're gone forever okay? Then I'll have to find somebody else to feed chickensoup and crackers! So just eat! And sleep ain't that bad! If you sleep, you feel better the next day. It's good to rest, Seth.”

Seth stares at Rie, his face completely blank.

She sits next to his bed and pets his forehead, which is feeling kind of sweaty. „Hey, I'm visible and alive for like 16 years now, so take my word for it, okay? Eating and sleeping is important.”

„I don't....” Seth begins, but Rie covers his mouth up. „No I-don'ts! It's the prize you pay for being visible okay? Just do it and you'll be out of this hospital in no time and you can live in my house.”

„In your house?” Seth asks, his face lightens up a little bit.

Rie nods. „Yeah, we haven't find your parents yet, so it leaves us no other choice, huh?”She pulls up the blanket over his slim body and gets up again. „I'll get your soup, I'll be right back.”

„Okay.” Seth mumbles, sounding a lot happier than earlier. And when Rie returns with the soup a small 10 minutes later, Seth is sound asleep.

It takes long for Seth to recover, but finally his wounds are closed safely and his weight is on a good level. It's time for Seth to leave the hospital and stay at Rie's place. Rie's mother prepared a bed for him in a spare bedroom and Seth is wearing clothes of Rie's father, since he doesn't have any of his own. Having Seth around the house, while everybody notices him is weird for both Rie and Seth. Seth goes everywhere, even bumps into walls and doors, because he is used to walking through them, he speaks his mind often and looks at everything he can, without being embarrassed at all.

Rie finds it weird that Seth isn't just hers anymore. Now he is walking around for everybody to see, he has become a real part of the rest of the world. Not just her world, but everybody's world.

„It's still so hard to believe the story behind you.” Rie's mother admits one time during dinner. Seth, who isn't noticing somebody is actually talking to him, pokes his beans with his fork and pulls a face. He got used to eating, but still, it isn't his favorite activity of the day.

Aye is staring at Seth a lot, observing what weird things he is doing. Then he starts to copy Seth and pokes his beans too. „Icky icky beans.” He adds. Seth looks up to Aye now and nods. „Yeah, icky.”

Rie rolls her eyes and looks at her mom and dad, who are raising their eyebrows too.

Then Rie hits Seth on the head with her spoon. „Mom asked you something, stupid!”

Howling in pain, Seth places his hands on top of his head. „What? What?! I didn't know! You don't have to make me feel pain! I hate the feeling of pain!” He eyes Rie's mother with sad puppy eyes and mother becomes very red, turns to Rie and says: „Don't hurt him, Rie! He can't help it!”

Seth looks thankful at Rie's mom, but Rie lowers her eyebrows even more.

„Well, Seth.” Rie's mother continues. „I was saying that it was hard to believe your story. You know, about you being invisible.”

„Yeah, I know!” Seth cries out, suddenly being really active. „I mean, I can't remember how I became invisible! But since I became visible again, I do know that after I told Rie goodbye when we were like 10,

suddenly everybody stopped talking to me. Everybody ignored me.”

Father places the tips of his fingers on his chin. „What do you mean?”

„I don't know! From one moment to the next, nobody was talking to me anymore and then I tried to open a door... and my hand kinda went through it.” Seth says, his voice suddenly becoming really cold and soft. He bows his head towards the table. „I couldn't touch anything anymore, nobody was talking to me anymore, nobody seemed to notice me. I started to panick and I ran away. And then I noticed it, when I went past this shopwindow. I could see everything reflected on the window. The bus passing by, the grandma who wanted to cross the street, the boy and girl walking hand in hand. And I knew I had to be in the reflection too, but... I couldn't find myself. I knew I had to be staring straight at me, but...”

He takes a deep breath, clearly reliving the cold feeling he had back then. Everybody stares at Seth, Rie feels a shiver run down her spine. She tries to imagine what it would feel like. Suddenly coming to the realisation that you have become invisible. That you are not existing to the world anymore, not having the faintest hint that you are real and still there.

„...I looked in carmirrors, in windows, in puddles of water, but... I couldn't find my own reflection.” Seth continues. „And I started to scream, to cry for my mother and father. But... I realised that... I had no idea who they were, what they looked like. And then I realised I didn't have a clue what I was doing before I realised that everybody was ignoring me. I completly lost every memory I had. I started with a new memory, but... it wasn't good, ofcourse.”

Seth looks up and he smiles, but he doesn't really mean that smile. Rie can see it immediatly, that he doesn't mean that smile. The food is becoming cold, but everybody has forgotten about it, they are listening to Seth's story, who continues telling it.

„I went as far as I could go, trying to look for somebody, something, anything that would confirm my existence. That would tell me I was still there, somebody to talk to. Anything. But nothing responded to me, not even if I shouted in their ears with all my might. Not even the flowers I stepped on, broke or bend. Not even they responded to me. And then I decided to go back to the place I could remember first, I hoped I could find something here that would tell me what had happened to me. I looked everywhere, but couldn't find anything.”

Rie's hearts starts to beat faster. It must have been so horrible for him. He has been walking around without anything to hold on to for years! Nobody who told him he was a good boy, nobody who gave him a hug, or yelled at him for being an idiot. Nobody.

Everything he tried to touch went through his hands. The water wouldn't even wrinkle for him.

„One day, when I was sitting on a couch in the mall, in my usual state, I saw this box with screws in fron of my eyes. It was shaking and I didn't really took notice of it. After a while you just stop reacting on things.” Seth says, his voice is getting louder and more excited now. „I mean, why respond on things when you learned that no information is meant for you right? But the box kept shaking and it just asked to be looked at. So I looked at it, realised a hand was holding it and turned my head aside. I thought somebody was bored out of his mind and just playing around with something he had just bought, but when I turned my head to see that person. And well, there was definatly somebody there. I thought she was looking at something behind me, so I didn't give much attention to it all, you know.”

Seth is now hopping on his chair and Rie feels her cheeks burn. That was her, she was that person. Ow heavens, now they are gonna hear all about that story. He'd better not tell their whole story together, because she will kill him personaly if he does. That he kissed her, nobody has to know!

“Hi There!” she said, 'Brighten up will ya? You're totally depressing me and I just got in a good mood!’

And I realised she was talking to me. I just couldn't believe it! She was talking to me, looking at me and telling me to cheer up! I was shocked! How I loved that feeling! I just frooze in my body, couldn't do anything but to stare at her and then she ran away!” Seth cries out, a big smile on his face. Rie's mother and dad are grinning in a respond. But Rie jumps up, defending herself.

„What did you expect?!” she says. „You seemed like a frikkin creep to me! Staring at me like I was the next world wonder!”

Seth ignores her and continues his story on a happy tone. „And then I started to stalk her. It was hard, since I lost track of her. But I had to find her and after a whole while, I finally saw her on her way to school. Like a pirahna on a dead cow, that was how stuck I decided to be on her!”

„You compare me with a dead cow?!” Rie cries out, now throwing her spoon and fork at Seth's head.

„You rude asshole! I AM NOTHING LIKE A COW!”

He has guts! How can he say anything like that! The stupid idiot!

„I'm just saying what I am thinking!” Seth says, picking up the spoon and fork. „I just decided not to let you go, you know. You were my only hope. I made more comparings, if you would like to know.

Like...ehm, a bulldog to a sausage, or gum on the bottom of a shoe, a shopaholic to her creditcard!”

„Stop comparing me to a sausage, the bottom of shoes or creditcards, moron!” Rie cries out. „Couldn't you come up with something more like me? Dammit! If I had known that back that, I would have so dumped you! I wouldn't have allowed you around me for another second!”

Seth pulls a face. „You are acting like nothing nice right now, so I think the resemblents suit you perfectly!” He says and he ducks right in time for Rie's plate to miss his head.

Rie's father jumps in. „Enough throwing with the dishes, Rie! And Seth, we loved your story. Thank you, it clears up a lot. But now...please, let us eat in pease! I don't want anybody ending up dead during this meal, okay?”

Rie sits down with a mood to kill. Seth, on the other hand, is rather happy. And he smiled at Rie, who is determined she will get back to him one way or another. The little brat! He turned out to be even more annoying then her little brother.

„And I thought you thought I was cute!” Seth then says, wiggling with his eyebrows at Rie.

Rie bares her teeth. „Not so cute now, are you? Wanna know what YOU resemble right now, you...”

„Rie stop it!” Rie's mother cuts in. „You two, please stop it! Continue your little lovequarrel outside...after dinner! But not here! Not now!”

„LOVEQUARREL!” Rie's breath has almost turned into fire. „I so do not love that prick! He is annoying like hell! He is constantly daring me out!”

„Oh, shut up, Rie.” Her mother says, cutting her patatoes in pieces, trying to force a smile away from her lips. „It's very clear that you like eachother. And you don't have to be so embarassed about it either! Now let us continue dinner. Please.”

That forced away smile of her mother, makes Rie go completly silent. Apparently being a parents is lots of fun, totally reading your kid's minds when Love is the subject. Stupid parents.

But she doesn't say anything anymore, chews up her food and hides herself in her room in the basement.

21 - Imagine And Forget

Chapter 21

„Rie, do you mind if I tell you that...” Seth begins. He is sitting on the end of her bed, his hands folded in his lap and his head looking the other way. „...that I...eventhough I remember everything... I still can't remember having parents.”

Rie is sitting at her desk, catching up homework. She wasn't behind in the first place, but she wants to keep being ahead of things. She straightnes her back a little. That is kind of strange. It's also strange she can't remember anything about Seth at all. Nothing, not the slightest thing. And it's embarrassing.

„You can live here.” Rie says. „We told you, you can live here, mom and dad will ask for custody.” Seth lets out a little sigh. „Yeah, but only if my parents can't be found. And... well, don't you think it's weird there isn't anything about me known? Absolutly nothing? No name or number, nothing about me from before I became invisible.”

Rie doesn't say anything, but stares blankly at her book. That was really weird indeed. The police tried to trace down information about Seth, but couldn't find the slightest thing. Nothing about him missing, nobody looking for him. For the law he really didn't excist.

„Well, you are registered now.” Rie mumbles. „They took care of it, so stop whining.”

„But I'm not done whining yet!” Seth cries out. „I really don't have any memory of parents! The only memory I have... if of you! But not about the time when Aye was born! I can see vague pictures of you in my head from when you were much younger!”

Now Rie does look over her shoulder to face Seth. „Maybe we lived in the same neighbourhood or something, I don't know!”

„No, we didn't!” Seth says. „Your mom said you met me first when you ran away after Aye was born! That is the first time I can recall playing with you, being close to you! But I do know I was with you when you were younger too! I don't know how, but I just know it!”

Rie gets off her chair and walks to the little window in her room. She gazes out on the street. A little boy is playing all by himself, but he is having a lot of fun. He is talking to his imaginary friend.

Did she ever had one of those? Imaginary friends? It would have been fun, to have somebody with you who would play with you always.

„I know...” Seth mumbles. „When you were 4 years old... and this boy told you you couldn't play with them, because you were stupid.”

Rie is only listening half, she is observing the kid down the street closely.

„...and you looked at everybody's faces, and they didn't dare to disagree with that one boy. Even that 'friend' of yours didn't dare to stand up for you.” Seth continues. „...you started to cry. And they... they teased you with it. They pushes you in a puddle of mudd and ran away. Nobody helped you, except for...”

„...for you.” Rie ends his sentence. She holds her breath. She had forgotten about that memory. She had pushed it away, didn't want to think about the bad things. If you wanted to act like a grown-up, show your parents how big you were, you couldn't suffer from those teasings.

But now the memory slowly sneaks back. Her intire schoolperiod had been like that. Nobody really liked her. She had a few friends, but nobody who would help her, when she was once again the bully's victim. The mudd had drenched her new dress, the dress her mother had made. She had spend so much time on it to make it perfectly right. She had made it exactly like Rie had wanted it. Back then, her mother was

hers only, she got all the attention she wanted. Her mom loved her more than anybody else. When the dress was done, she wanted to wear it to school, but her mom thought it would be a waste. She didn't want the dress to get dirty, but in the end, Rie got her way.

She wore the dress to school and she was so proud. She felt like a princess and let it twirl around her constantly, looking at the dress widen and wave on the wind.

But then she was pushed in that puddle. Not only laughters of the kids were hurting, but also the fact that the dress which was made with so much love and care was ruined. Her special dress was covered in dark brown mudd.

And then this little boy appeared out of nowhere. Blond hair on his head and though there wasn't any wind, his hair tickled his forehead. His bright blue eyes looked at her with a kind expression and he held out his hand, told her that she just had to forget about those stupid kids. That he would play with her and always be there. That they would go to her mom together and explain what happened. That everything was going to be okay.

Rie breaths in a lot of air. And now that she thinks about it, Seth was not in her class, not at her school. Nobody could see him or play with him, nobody could....

„Imaginary friends are only meant to be seen by one kid.” Seth says, a sad tone in his voice. „They are meant for comfort, for support. They aren't selfish,... like I was.”

This can't be true! Is she losing her mind again? This is too much! Rie shakes her head and pushes the window open with the palm of her hand. Seth has to be a real person! He can't be an Imaginary Friend! He just can't be, because...he's here! Everybody can see him right?

„W-where are you going?” Seth asks, aware of Rie's leaving. She has climbed through the window and running down the driveway. „Don't run away!” Seth cries out and he quickly follows her.

Rie passes the boy, who is still playing with his Imaginary Friend. No, Seth has to be a real person. She didn't make him up! She isn't the one who created him! That can't be! It's not logical! Those things only happen in stories and fairytales! She is too old to believe in those!

Before she is aware of it, she has arrived in the park. Being out of breath, she bends down through her knees and inhales the fresh air in her lungs. It's bright daylight and very hot. Summer is a murder, every year again she wished for the clouds to cover up that big fireball. But her wish was no match against the wishes of all those other people who loved the sun and her warmth.

„Rie! Please!” She hears Seths cries from afar. He can't run fast due his condition and it takes a long time, before he finally collapses down on the grass besides her. „Don't...run...”

„You... you knew you were...” Rie says, feeling the tears whelm up slowly in the corner of her eyes.

„You knew...you were... Imaginary...”

„Only when I...when I ...became visible again.” Seth breaths, resting with his hands on the grass, his head bowed down. „I...I can't help it.”

Rie clenches her fists. „I don't get it! I don't get it how you can be my Imaginary Friend!” She hisses, tears now dripping down her face. She has a big urge to punch Seth in his face. She can not only believe it, it's also hurting. The person she has finally fallen in love with, turns out to be a person she made up herself. He isn't real! Isn't she capable of loving somebody who is real?

Suddenly she gets thrown over and her hands pinned down above her head. Seth is sitting right on top of her, his chest heaving up and down. „Don't get mad at me! DAMMIT!” He cries out. „I didn't do anything! I only wanted to be with you forever!”

„You did do something!” Rie yells back, ignoring the stares of people, who were, in first place, enjoying the sun in the park. „You weren't meant to become real! YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE!”

„You asked me! You asked me to!” Seth's hands around her wrists tightnen their grip. „You begged, you prayed, you cried! You wanted me to be with you! You wished for me to be real, okay? And I wanted to do everything for you! I wanted to be with you too!”

Rie looks at him through his tears. She is so confused. This is too weird. How could he have turned into a normal human being, who everybody could see? Her mom even photographed him! She saw pictures of him! How can he be Imagined? And how can he be real?

Seth's voice has calmed down down, it has become soft whispering nobody else but Rie can hear.

„Imaginary Friends aren't meant to become visible. They are only supposed to be seen by one child alone. And you had me, you imagined me. We were happy together, when nobody liked you at school, I was there. Nobody knew I was there, except for you. I was yours only. And then things got bad for you, because your brother was born. You felt so miserable about Aye, about your parents only seeing him and not you, that you begged and prayed for me to become real. So I would always be with you when you would grow up.”

As Seth tells her this, Rie slowly starts to remember it. It's like he's telling her a story and she is looking at the pictures that go along with it. She is spellbound to Seth's words, like a toddler his to his bedtime story.

„I was selfish, I didn't want to fade away once you grew up. I wanted to be with you, I wanted to do anything for you!” Seth says, staring straight into Rie's eyes. „And for some reason, right here in this park, I became real. I became like you. I played with you at your house, I followed you everywhere. But when you had to sleep or go to school, I hid in the park. Nobody would allow me in your class, since nobody else knew me and I didn't have any parents who could register me. And I didn't have any excuse to spend the nights in your house, like before. It was different, I missed being with you constantly, but I was real now and I could grow up with you.”

„Then... then why did you.... go away?” Rie whispers, tears still streaming. If things were so good, why did he leave? If he would have stayed back then, everything would have been different. Everything would have been okay, right?

Seth lets go of her hands and helps Rie sit up. The people around them have decided to ignore them and are all back to their silly little lives, not aware of the weird things Rie and Seth are discussing.

„Because of you.” Seth mumbles. „You told me that you wanted to be a big girl. That you had to show your parents you were all grown up, so they could be proud. Having an Imaginary Friend, even though he had turned real, wasn't something that fit a big girl. You told me that I had to leave. That I had to go back being invisible, but not come back to you again.”

„I couldn't do anything. From one moment to the next... I had become invisible again. Not because you really wished for it, but because that's the way things go. The laws of Nature, I think. I was punished for being selfish and I was made to forget about you. I knew nothing anymore, except for being alone in a world where nobody would notice me. Ofcourse they never did before, but before I was with you. Now I was completely alone, with not even one memory left of that one person who once could see me. And you were made to forget about me and everything that ever happened, until I would tell you about it again, I guess.”

„It isn't....right.” Rie mumbles. „There is no way I could have done such a thing.”

„You didn't do it. You requested it.” Seth says. „At least, that's what it feels like. It's weird. I can't tell you that there is a God who made this happen, but there was something. Something that makes everything happen. That gave us our way, that punished me and made you forget me.”

Rie wished she would understand it all clearly. Not that his story isn't complete now, but... it's so hard to believe that he really was her Imaginary Friend. That she in fact made up her own boyfriend. It really makes her feel so miserable, because... doesn't this say that there isn't a person born somewhere who was waiting to meet her and share the rest of his life for her? Because, aren't you born with the reason to meet that one person one day and share your lives together for ever?

You aren't supposed to make your own special person up, right?

„And I'm afraid Rie.” Seth confesses. „I'm afraid that...that I will become invisible again, that I will have

to forget about you again, but I want to be with you. I don't want to go away anymore.”

Rie looks at Seth, who now has finally bowed his head down and broken their eyecontact. „I don't want to feel that intense loneliness anymore, Rie. Please don't make me go away.”

She made him up, but still, he is sitting in front of her, being so real. She can feel her heart beating in her throat. It's so unreal, but still. She touches his face. He is there for her. And though she feels like she wants to run away from this confusion, she also feels that she wants to be with Seth.

She really wants him to be around her for ever, she doesn't want to be alone anymore, just like him.

People around her may like her eventually, like Marten, but maybe they aren't for real. Seth... he is the closest person to being real to her. The idea of Seth going away, not being with her, is hurting too much. She was so upset when he was wounded, so afraid he would leave her behind. She doesn't want to feel that again.

She bends towards him and softly kisses him on his mouth. He looks up with his bright blue eyes, looking slightly surprised. „Are you... staying with me?”

„Yeah...” Rie replies. „...Yeah, I am.”