

# Wind River

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*Elvira Simmons has just been reacquainted with her cousin, and tries to get along with him and his friends.*

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# 1 - The Arrival

## Chapter One: The Arrival

Elvira Simmons lugged her suitcase down the narrow sidewalk, looking around curiously at her surroundings. It was a pleasant day as she walked, taking in the sights of the lush green grass and the tall blooming trees. The warm breeze brushed through her long blonde hair. Her eyes were a bright green, but the shining sun made them an even lighter shade. She pushed her thick-rimmed glasses farther up her nose as they slide down. She didn't really need glasses; she used them to cover up her freckles. She was a small girl, and it was surprising that she could carry the luggage that she held in her arms and hands. She had a large black suitcase that had seen better days and in the opposite hand she held a violin case. Although it was a warm day, she wore a white long-sleeved shirt under a dark green short-sleeved form-fitting shirt. Her long brown skirt ended once it reached the tops of her knees, showing her black boots.

Reaching an intersection, she set her suitcase down on the ground near a wooden bench and revealed a small crumpled piece of lined paper from a small pocket on her skirt. She unfolded it the best she could and read it.

"Anderson drive..." Elvira muttered, looking up from the piece of paper. She glanced at the street sign across the street. "There it is! Finally!" Picking up her suitcase, she rushed across the street. It was surprising that there were no cars on the road or that there was not a single person walking about aimlessly.

The town, Kaman, was so beautiful; she didn't understand why there weren't many civilians. As she had walked from the airport to Kaman she had only seen one school, and she assumed it was a high school. She was used to there being an abundant supply of schools, whether they were junior high, or elementary. Kaman had a large park filled with equipment that small children could play on, including a sandbox, swing sets, monkey bars, etc., and it had a snack bar and a café for the teenagers and adults to occupy after school or work.

Elvira felt like she wanted to rush to her new home, but her luggage held her back, so she paced herself. She had memorized the number on the house she needed...21 Anderson drive. She studied the houses as she passed them. At first they were high numbers, forties and up. But as she walked the numbers decreased. They were all pleasant looking houses, but most of them looked alike. Every couple houses there would be one that was brightly painted, as if the homeowners *wanted* people to know that they were different from the surrounding neighbors. The houses also had fantastic yards, each house having a wide variety of flowers and shrubs to look at. As she walked, she decided that she would have to get to know each and every neighbor, seeing as she was a city girl and had so many more neighbors than this small street. She would have to ask her aunt and uncle about her new neighbors.

Stopping in front of number 21, she set down her suitcase and gazed at the tall house. It was two stories high and was an off-white color. Two overgrown grape vines cradled the large windows in the front of the house. The grass was neatly trimmed and the flowers were in neat rows. Elvira gulped. *Hopefully they haven't changed into clean freaks...* she thought, dreading the truth. She dragged her suitcase to the door of the house and carefully rapped her knuckles against the door. She waited patiently for the door to open. When it didn't, she knocked again. Hearing footsteps, she backed away a small step. The door opened and a boy with brown hair and glasses about Elvira's age poked his head through.

"Yes...?" he said, raising an eyebrow. He looked her up and down and his eyes fell onto her suitcase. "Hi, I'm Elvira...Alex?" she said, adjusting the suitcase so that it leaned against her leg. The boy's

eyes widened.

“Yeah...? You’re Elvira?” he said, unsure whether to believe her or not.

“Allex! You know it’s me! Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten me!” she cried, hurt that he didn’t remember her.

Allex narrowed his eyes at her. “It’s been nine years since we last saw each other.”

Elvira’s face flushed. “B-but I remember you...”

Allex studied her and opened the door wide enough for her to get by. “I was kidding...”

Her face brightened. “You mean you remember me?!” she cried happily.

“No.”

Elvira stared at him and sighed. He was in a pair of sweatpants and a large black t-shirt. He wore no shoes, but socks. He had squarish glasses and behind them he had dark blue eyes. He was tall, but this Elvira didn’t notice, probably because of how distressed she was about him not knowing who she was. She walked into the large house, looking around, amazed by her surroundings. He led her upstairs to her room silently. She gazed around the house. It was very large, larger than what Elvira was used to. *Will I ever get used to this???* she asked herself. They walked into a hallway with two doors across from each other, one on the left of the hall and one on the right. Allex walked to the door on the right side of the hallway and opened the door. It was empty, all except for a bed, a small brown dresser, and a gray desk.

“This is yours,” he said, standing at the doorway. She dragged her suitcase past him and dropped it and set her violin on the bed. The violin caught his eye.

“Do you need any help?” he asked quietly. Elvira turned to him.

“‘saight,” she said quickly, accidentally slurring her words into one word.

Allex was confused. “What?”

“It’s alright,” she said, laughing. “Sorry, I’m excited.”

Allex studied and walked out of the room. “I’ll be here,” he said, pointing to the door across her room.

“Is that your room?” she asked.

“Yeah,” he said, entering his room. “Tell me if you need any help.” He disappeared into his room, closing the door behind him. Elvira closed the door to her room.

She looked around at the bare walls.

“Aah...it’s so plain! Maybe I could ask Aunt Theresa and Uncle James if I could repaint the room...” she said, talking to herself. “Agh....” She collapsed onto the bed, next to her violin. She stared at the white ceiling. “I wonder what I can do around here.”

Elvira shot up in the bed, realizing that she needed to call her friend. She hopped off of the bed, quickly opening her suitcase. She carefully searched through the pile of clothing and video games that filled her suitcase. Soon she found what she was looking for, her cell phone. She turned it on and searched for her friend’s number. When she found it she called it and held the phone up to her ear.

“...Hey! Kari! Wassup~!” she cried happily to her friend.

“Elvira?” her friend said, surprised.

“Yup! I miss you...and it’s only been one day!” she said sadly. Kari giggled.

“I miss you too! It’s not really the same here....I’ll have to come visit you someday.” She said thoughtfully.

“You’d better!” Elvira teased.

“So, how’s Kaman?”

“It’s so much different from Imae. It’s so quiet here and there’s so many beautiful sceneries here,” Elvira explained.

“I meant about your home, but okay. Thanks for the details,” Kari laughed.

“Oh, I just got here.”

"Haven't you seen you uncle and aunt yet?"

"No...now that I think about it...I don't know where they are," she said, scratching her head. Kari was silent.

"Kari? You there?"

Kari laughed. "Yeah, I'm here. Have you met your cousin yet?" she questioned.

"Boy, you're the nosy one."

"I'm just being interested in your affairs."

"Suuure....well, he's awfully....um...I don't know how to explain it..."

"Is he hot?" Kari said, grinning.

Elvira was stunned. She hadn't thought of anything like that towards her cousin. "WHAT?!"

"Ow...that was loud..." She said, rubbing her ear as she held the phone away from her ear.

"Why would I think that way about my cousin!" Elvira said, obviously disgusted.

"I was just asking. You know that I love looking for hot guys," Kari said with a smile. "So...could you tell me if he's cute? I mean, from a girl's point of view, not as if you're his cousin." Elvira grimaced, but gave into her friend's plead.

"I guess. He's okay. Your type," Elvira said.

"Ahh...is he nice?"

"I've barely talked to him, but from what I've met of him so far he's kind of...in-between."

"Oh, okay...oh, I gotta go. I'll talk you later. Y'got the same number, right?" Kari asked.

"Yeah," she said.

"Oh okay! Seeya later!" Kari said.

Elvira said her goodbye and hung up, sighing as she tossed her phone onto the bed. She looked at the opened suitcase with open disgust. *I'll do that later*, she decided lazily as she opened the door to her room. She walked across the hall to Alex's room and knocked on the door.

"Come in," she heard him call. She opened the door to see him and a girl sitting on his bed with an open book between them. The girl had short brown hair and bright brown eyes. She wore a blue-gray tank top with short jean shorts. Her thong sandals were placed at the bottom of Alex's bed. She smiled at Elvira.

"So this is your cousin?" she asked.

"Yeah," Alex said quietly, eyeing her.

The girl stood up and walked towards Elvira and smiled at her. "I'm Jean."

"I'm Elvira, but you probably know that already," Elvira said, happily.

Jean laughed. "You're right about that."

Alex watched the two become friends from afar, every once in awhile looking to the book.

"So how do you like it here? Where were you from...?" Jean asked.

"Oh, it's fantastic here so far! So much more nature than in Imae-"

"Omgod! You're from Imae? Isn't that a big city to the way North?" Jean asked excitedly.

Elvira was taken aback. She wasn't sure that being from the city was such a big deal.

"Uhm...yeah."

"Ooooh! I've always wanted to go there! It sounds like such an adventure to live there," Jean squealed, twirling around in a circle. Elvira guessed she let out her emotions often. She seemed very high-strung.

"It's actually not that much fun. I couldn't stay out late, y'know...since there've been shootings ever since Mr. Antyago repealed the anti-gun act last year. I don't even know why he did that..." Elvira sighed.

"Mr. Antyago? Is that your mayor?" Jean asked.

"No, it's the governor. I absolutely despise him. He makes up some stupid reason to repeal the acts, just for the sake of himself," Elvira fumed.

“Why do you say that?”

“Well, first off...Mr. Sora, our former governor, decided that since we were having too many killings with these new guns Proun Industries had just introduced, he banned the use of any kind of gun made by Proun Industries. After Mr. Sora left office Muriel elected Mr. Antyago governor. He was a former hunter and saw that there should be nothing in the way of a man being able to collect guns, so he repealed the act. He’s a lunatic...I heard he killed his own family,” Elvira said, gritting her teeth.

“My...that’s awful. It’s so peaceful here. I just wish that for once something amazing would happen,” Jean chirped, a gleam in her eye sparkled. Elvira watched her, amazed.

“You’re so high-strung...” Elvira laughed.

“I have to be, or else I’d be forever bored around Alex,” Jean said, pointing to Alex.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Alex growled, looking up from the book.

Jean turned to face him. “You’re boring most of the time. Either that or you talk very little. You need to be energetic!” she cried happily, punching the air with her fists.

“Shut up...” Alex mumbled, turning back to his book.

“But...but...” Jean stammered, her shoulders shaking. Elvira patted her back.

“WAAHHH!!” Jean cried, tears streaming down her face as she flung herself at Elvira.

“Whoa!” Elvira grunted, nearly falling over.

Alex stared at her with wide eyes.

“Y...you...you told me to shut up....You’re mean Alex!!! ”she cried, hugging Elvira tightly.

Alex chuckled as he watched Elvira struggle to get out of Jean’s death grip.

## 2 - The Foreigner

### Chapter Two: The Foreigner

"Ow....she has a tight grip," Elvira said, rubbing her back. Alex had pried Jean off of Elvira and apologized to her. He then sent her home. Alex smiled.

"She overreacts sometimes," he said, sitting down on his bed. Elvira laughed nervously.

"So I see..." She began to look around his room.

"You looking for anything?" he asked her, curiously.

"Porno? You have any?"

Alex stared at her. "What...?"

"Porno...you don't seem to have any," Elvira said, confused. She was used to guys being loaded with naughty magazines. Alex's face flushed.

"W-what are you talking about? Why would I have porn?" He asked defensively, glaring at Elvira. She cocked her head in confusion.

"You mean you don't have any...?" she said with a tinge of disappointment appearing in her voice. He looked her up and down.

"Would you rather have me own some?"

Elvira tapped her chin. "It would show that you are a healthy young man," she said thoughtfully. Alex shook his head.

"Not always...did all of your friends have porn?" he said awkwardly.

Elvira nodded. "They always showed it to me and had me do some weird poses..." she said. Alex's face showed disgust.

"They did WHAT?!" he cried, jumping up from his seat on the bed.

Elvira fell over onto her bottom and looked up at Alex, confused at his sudden action. "H-huh?"

"What did they do to you?!" he said intensely, squeezing Elvira's shoulders.

"Owww! Nothing! They just had me pose!" she cried out in pain. She clawed his hands off of her shoulders. He released her.

"Are you sure? Nothing...nothing..." he said, looking away from Elvira, blushing.

"Nothing what?" Elvira said, raising an eyebrow.

"N-never mind!" he said, turning away from her. He sat back down on his bed. Elvira felt awfully confused.

"What do you mean? What's there to hide...I'm just your cousin!" she said standing up, stretching her arms above her head. Alex turned to face Elvira, but avoided eye contact.

"You're still a girl though..." he said softly.

"Hm?" Elvira said, leaning closer to Alex. He shook his head.

"Nothing."

Elvira sighed. "You confuse me! What time's dinner?" she asked, changing the subject.

"...? Well...I have to get started on cooking it," Alex said gruffly, standing up from his bed. Elvira eyed him up and down.

"W-what?"

Elvira giggled. "You cook...ah....don't get me wrong! I think that's cool. I can barely even cook myself."

"I...could teach you," he said, looking down at Elvira. She just stared back up at him and pointed at him.

"You're tall," she said. He stared at her silently and shook his head, walking out of his room with Elvira following.

“Not that anything is wrong with being tall, but I just noticed it,” Elvira chirped, obviously happy. She followed Alex down the stairs and through the front entrance room.

To the right of the front door was a room that seemed to be the kitchen. It was quickly illuminated as Alex flicked the switch that turned on the large lights overhead. Almost everything in the kitchen had white somewhere on it. It was very clean though, despite everything being white. The only things that were not white were the cupboards and the countertops, which were grayish in color. Although it was a beautiful kitchen, it seemed awfully plain.

“Hm...a little...empty...” Elvira said.

“My mom’s not really...artistic,” Alex explained, opening a door to a cabinet next to the large white refrigerator for a pot to boil water with.

“Oh, I wasn’t saying she isn’t artistic. Everyone’s artistic in his or her own way. My mom wasn’t very artistic but she made my home feel cozy,” she said, scratching her cheek. Alex stood up straight and filled the pot up with water and set it on the stove to boil. He leaned against the counter.

“Mhm...” The two shared an awkward silence.

There was a loud crashing sound that came from the front door. It startled both Elvira and Alex. Alex cleared his throat, recomposing himself. He walked to the front door and opened the door cautiously. His eyes widened.

“Bret?!” he cried. “What are you doing here?” A dark blonde haired boy poked his head through the opening of the door and forced his way in.

His bangs hung into his face, hiding his eyes somewhat. What Elvira could see of his eyes, it seemed that he was tired, for his eyes were half closed. They were a dull blue and seemed to not be looking at anything in particular. He was a little shorter than Alex, the top of his head coming to Alex’s nose. He turned towards the kitchen and waved at her.

“Who’s thiiz, Alex?” he said, his voice calm and low, with a tinge of accent that Elvira didn’t recognize. He seemed like an overall calm and quiet person.

“Elvira,” he grumbled. Bret’s mouth curved slightly into what seemed to be a smile. “You sure? You guys dun’t look *anything* alike...”

“We’re not closely related, dipshoot,” Alex grouched, rolling his eyes.

Bret looked at Alex’s face. Then he turned back to Elvira.

“You’re right. Ze’s cute.” This caused Alex to hit Bret. Bret didn’t mind that he hit him, but smiled at him. “You know it’z tue, hm?”

Elvira tapped her chin, trying to figure out his accent. It didn’t sound like anything around her area, and it sure didn’t fit in around Kaman or even the whole country of Alenuy.

“Where are you from?” Elvira asked without reservation.

Bret laughed, surprising Alex. Alex looked at his, freaked out by his friend.

“Wandering where I’m from?” he chuckled. “Daigru.”

“Daigru...where’s that?” Elvira said stupidly.

“Overseas.”

“OMIGOD!! You’re...a foreigner! Aren’t foreigners not allowed on Salreui?!” Elvira cried.

Bret stared at Elvira silently. “I whaz born he’e. My mother tauht me how tu zpeak.”

“And she taught you her accent?” Elvira asked. Bret nodded.

“Zo...what’s for dinner?” he asked Alex. Alex glared at Bret.

“Why do we always have to feed you?!” he growled.

“Beacaze I’m your friend,” he said, staring blankly into Alex’s face. Alex sighed and pulled a box of Rice-A-Roni.

“We’re only supposed to start dinner. When my mom comes home she’ll cook the rest,” Alex said.

“Oh, okay. That’s fine.”

~\*~

Alex's mother arrived at home a few minutes later, welcoming Elvira and Bret. Theresa Houtz was a beautiful woman, flowing brown hair that dropped down to her elbows and fair skin. It seemed that if you were to press her skin too hard that you would tear right through it. She had light blue eyes and a slender body with tight-fitting clothing. She looked very professional in her long black skirt and her purple button up shirt. She had a pretty smile and seemed to never be sad.

"Hello Elvira, Bret," she said as she entered the house, shutting the door behind her.

"Aunt Theresa!" Elvira cried. She ran at her, giving her a big hug. Theresa smiled.

"I'm glad to see you've gotten here safely. Has Alex helped you get comfortable?" Theresa asked.

Elvira nodded.

"Mom...would you be able to finish dinner?" Alex asked, walking out of the kitchen.

"Oh, sure honey..." Theresa said, walking into the kitchen.

Alex walked up the stairs followed by Bret.

"Well, see'a," Bret said to Elvira at the top of the stairs.

"W-wait! I wanna come!" Elvira cried as she rushed up the stairs to catch up with the two boys. Bret waited for her at the top of the stairs, but Alex had already ventured into his room and was sitting on his bed.

"Why didn't you wait?" Bret asked. Alex shrugged.

"I'm tired. Why don't you two hang out in Elvira's room? I need to rest..." Alex said, giving into a yawn.

"Okay," Bret said happily.

"H-huh? But I'm still not ready! Nothing's unpacked yet..."

"I dun't care. I'm a guy."

"Well...I-I do!" Elvira said, her face turning a light pink. *Godammit! I should've unpacked when I got here!* Bret blinked.

"Oh...'kay...I wun't go. I'll stay he'e an' bug 'im." Bret said, pointing to Alex.

"What?! No!!" Alex cried.

"You go along," he said, leading Elvira out. He shut the door behind her.



### 3 - Pleasant Feelings

The dinner was delicious. It was the best thing Elvira had ever tasted! Even though her own mother's cooking was the best in Imae, she believed her mother and Theresa Houtz could go into a cooking match with thousands of other people and be tied. It would be amazing for someone to surpass her mother's cooking, but it might've been possible for her aunt to do so. After eating the delicious dinner of rice, fried chicken, dumplings, fresh green beans from their garden, and some scalloped potatoes, Elvira helped Theresa with the dishes. Bret thanked them for the meal and left, not without getting a hug from Elvira. For some reason, Alex glared at him while he got the hug.

It was a tiring job to do the dishes. There had been so much food, and now she could see why. There was a mountain of dishes and pots and pans in the sink of the kitchen. Although there were two people working on them at the same time, it was still a hard chore to accomplish. Elvira's hands and arms felt sore as she cleaned off the table and emptied out the trash outside.

Once all of the chores were completed, Elvira was free to do as she pleased. She decided to unpack some of her stuff. She was unzipping her bag when she heard a soft knock at the door.

"Yes?" Alex opened the door a little bit.

"Are you unpacking?"

"Yeah...you know you can come in..." Elvira said, smiling at Alex. Alex avoided eye contact, but walked into her room and sat on the bed.

"Alex?" Alex looked at Elvira.

"H-huh?" he stammered.

"Why are you so shy around me?"

Alex raised an eyebrow. "I'm not that shy...am I?" he said, biting his bottom lip.

"Well, I guess I'm not used to guys like you..."

"What...?"

"All my other guy friends were pervs, remember? They all weren't quiet around me," Elvira sighed. She smiled at Alex. "I'm glad you're not like them."

"We're cousins. Why would I think about in a way like that..." he said, obviously disgusted. Elvira shrugged.

"There's a slim chance that there...*could* be a little incest in each family," she said, laughing.

"But..."

"Do you like anyone at school?" Alex's face turned bright red.

"W-what?! What was with that?!" he cried.

"Wow...didn't know that would be such a sore subject..." Elvira giggled. "So you *do* like someone!"

Alex sighed. "Why?"

"I just want to get to know you," she said.

"I'm already with someone..."

Elvira gasped excitedly. "Who?!"

Alex was silent. "...Jean..."

"Omgosh!! Aie!! So cuute!!" she squealed, causing Alex to flush an even deeper red. He stood up and looked away from Elvira. Elvira raised an eyebrow.

"C'mon! Don't get so upset! Y'need to lighten up," she teased, hitting him lightly on the arm.

Alex studied her. Elvira became confused.

"What? Do I have something on my face?" she asked, putting her hand on her cheek. Alex shook his

head. Elvira smiled.

“Oh...by the way...what’s up with you and Bret?” Elvira asked suddenly.

Allex’s face burst into a deep blush. “WHAT?!” he screamed, causing Elvira to topple off of her bed.

“Ah...er....I..I gotta get some homework done,” he stammered, rushing out of the room.

Elvira hoisted herself back onto her bed, eyes wide. “What was that?” she said shakily. She shook her head. *Hrn...does he really have homework...?* A large grin crept onto Elvira’s face as she jumped from her bed to her floor loudly, not to mention ungracefully. Her foot slipped and she fell onto her back. She immediately sat up. She crawled to her opened bag and took a few objects out.

The first object was a pile of a “camouflaged” outfit. It was a short-sleeved shirt with pants and large brown and black hiking boots. The next object was a...hat? The third object was binoculars and the final object was a rope. She stood up with the outfit and stared into the mirror with a grin.

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Allex sat down into the chair that rolled into the desk near his door. He stared blankly at the screen of his laptop and sighed. He tapped a few keys on it and yawned. He looked around at the walls of his room lazily. As he gazed around, he spotted a shadow at his window and his eyes widened.

“Wh-what?! What in the hell was that...?” he said, as the shadow quickly disappeared from his field of vision. He rubbed his eyes and stared at the window. He stood up, opened his window and peeked out. He glanced back and forth, trying to find something that was not there. He shook his head, told himself that he was seeing things, and turned, closing his window behind him.

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Meanwhile, hiding in the large tree outside Allex’s window, Elvira hugged a large tree branch while hanging upside down. She sighed, dropping her head slightly. *That was close...she thought.* Her eyes the ground that seemed to float above her. She was pretty high up, ten feet or so. As she studied that grassy ground, her hat began to slip from her head, causing her to reflexively reach up and grab it. As she did this, her legs felt the full brunt of her weight.

“Oh god...nooooo....,” she cried, looking at her legs in fear. She tried to swing her body to have her arms grab onto the tree branch above her. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn’t reach the branch.

“Geeezzee...why do I gotta be so short?!” she growled, frustrated. Each time she swung, the grip on the tree that her legs had become less and less. It wasn’t until minutes later that she realized that she was losing her grip. She struggled to regain the grip she had earlier, but in doing so, she slipped off of the branch and fell, ripping her right pant leg from the knee down.

“AIEE!!” she screamed, falling to the ground below.

People always say that when others have done bad things in their life, or their past life, that they will never have any luck with anything in their life. It would seem that Elvira was not very lucky, as onlookers would think. But in reality, she had plenty of luck to go around. It was pure luck when a longhaired blonde boy was walking underneath that very tree at the very moment Elvira fell. She landed on his back, slamming his face into the grass. Unfortunately, this boy was *not* very lucky.

“Uagh...what the?” he squeaked out, obviously surprised that a girl “fell from the sky”.

Elvira sat up, her legs cradling the boy’s head. Her heart was beating rapidly and she was clutching her hat very tightly.

“I...I’m sorry!” she cried out, jumping to the left to get off of him so that he could stand. She knelt down next to him as he pushed himself up with both of his hands. His hair was a lighter blonde than Elvira, but it also had brown on the tips. He was pale, with bright blue eyes.

“Are you okay?” she asked, almost on instinct, noticing that he looked more fragile because of his thin, slender body.

He turned towards her and scowled. “Yeah, I’m just fine,” he growled, standing up. Elvira blinked, almost as if she was a confused child. She stood up next to him. She smiled a huge smile and hugged

him tightly. His expression turned from anger to shock.

“Thank you!! I could’ve died!” she said, pushing her body away from his.

“What? What d’you mean?” he said, grimacing in pain as he rubbed his lower back. Elvira stared.

“What?” The two stared at each other for a few moments, sharing an awkward silence. Elvira tapped her chin.

“What’s your name?” she asked.

“Why should I tell you? I don’t even know you!” the boy said, pushing her further away from him.

“You saved me! I want to know my savior’s name...,” Elvira pleaded. “I’m Elvira.”

The boy grunted as he walked a few feet away from the tree. He chuckled. “what did I even save you from?”

“The tree,” she said, pointing to the tree.

“Oh...so you *fell*...,” he mumbled. He was quiet for a few seconds. “I’m...Toby.” He scanned the street and looked down at his watch. His eyes widened. “shoot! I’m late!”

Elvira grabbed his wrist before he could rush off. “What’re you late for?”

Toby pulled his wrist out from Elvira’s hand. “Butt out! God! Do you need to know everything? Some people don’t like it when others are nosey!”

“I’m sorry...,” she said, shifting her gaze to the ground. She kicked a rock into the lawn.

Toby felt guilty and looked Elvira up and down. “I...gotta get going,” he said softly, feeling bad at how he yelled at her. “Wh...what school do you go to?”

“I guess Brine High. It’s the closest one, right?” Elvira said, glancing at Toby’s face.

“Guess. I’ll see you sometime then,” he said. With that, he rushed off, leaving Elvira in front of her new home.

Elvira put her hands on her hips and glared after Toby. “Why’d he ask me what school I was in...he can’t possibly be in high school. He looks younger than me,” she said to herself. She couldn’t help but watch after him as he ran down the road. Something in the back of her mind recognized him, but she thought it was just a coincidence. She shrugged and walked back into the house.

## 4 - Morning!

### Chapter Four: Morning!

Alex woke up early the next morning for school. He stood up from his bed, grabbing his glasses from his dresser. He walked sleepily out of his room and headed down the hall towards the bathroom. The door to the bathroom was closed and the light was on. He assumed that Elvira was the one inside the bathroom. He rapped his knuckles on the door.

"One sec!" he heard Elvira cry out, followed by a few thumping noises and the sound of clothing moving. The door swung open. Her hair was wet and she was dressed in a loose purple robe. There was a familiar scent lingering out of the bathroom...

"Hold on...", Alex twitched as he sniffed the air. "Did you use my shampoo?"

"Uh....yeah? I accidentally used the rest of the stuff in the green bottle."

"Godammit!" he said angrily, glaring at Elvira.

"What? I said it was an accident!" she cried out, defending herself.

"You could've used my mom's shampoo. That was the last bottle of mine," he growled.

"How would I know who's was who's?"

"The smell, you dolt!"

Elvira crossed her arms across her chest. "You can use your moms," she said.

"What?" he said, looking at her in disbelief.

"Oh, come on! You know you want to!" she teased. He glared at her even harder.

"I just won't take a shower."

"EW! No way! Take one! Please!" she hollered in disgust. She grabbed his arm and dragged him into the bathroom, slamming the door shut. She threw him onto the ground.

"Goddam-...you're frickin' rough!" he growled, sitting up. He stood and walked towards the door. Elvira flung herself at the door, blocking Alex's way.

"What are you doing? It's not that big of a deal if I don't take a shower one day," Alex said.

"Take...a...shower...It's disgusting if you don't! Think of Jean!" she said, turning to face Alex.

"What's that supposed to mean?" he said, slightly offended.

"Take a shower!" she hollered, throwing a towel at him.

Alex caught the towel in his hand and grinned nervously at Elvira. "Are you just gonna stand there?"

"Just get in!" she screeched, running at Alex. She hooked her fingers into the sides of his sweatpants.

"Gah! What're you doing?!" he cried out, pulling at Elvira's hair.

The floor was still quite wet from when Elvira had gotten out of the shower in order to open the door for her cousin. Alex's foot slid out from under him when it touched the slippery puddle. He fell to the floor, hitting his head on the shower door.

"Ow...", he grimaced, rubbing the back of his head. He looked up at Elvira. She was glaring down at him, clutching the front of her robe. She put her right foot onto his stomach and pushed softly.

"Do you mind?" he growled at her, trying to push her foot off of his stomach. Instead of listening to Alex, she dug her heel into his stomach.

"Take a shower," she said bluntly. She took her foot off of his stomach, but grabbed his arms and yanked him upright. She dragged him to the sink and turned it on. Alex watched her as she walked to the shower and took Theresa's shampoo out of it. She then walked over to Alex and dunked his head into the sink. He pushed his head back up gasping for air.

"What are you doing?!" he choked out, holding his throat. She smiled at him as she dumped a handful

of purple shampoo into her hand and rubbed it into Alex's hair.

"There...now you HAVE to wash it!" Elvira said angrily as she opened the door and walked out. Alex stood in front of the sink, thoroughly surprised. *Is that really Elvira?* He asked himself, becoming a little frightened. He shook his head and washed the shampoo out of his hair.

"Great...I smell like flowers..."

~\*~

"Mm...you smell nice..." Bret said, sniffing the air around Alex.

"Shut up!" Alex hollered, holding himself back from hitting him.

"Oh, you know you like it! You smell clean...oh, and sorry about the way I was acting this morning. I hate it when people won't take a shower," Elvira said.

"Why are you coming to school with us?" Alex growled, glaring at Elvira. She was starting to become a large problem for him. She always wanted to go everywhere with him. She wouldn't let him leave the house without her. Now he found himself walking to school with Bret and Elvira.

"ey...it's because I need a good education! Brine high's the best around-."

"It's also the only one in ten miles. Like you'd have a choice on where you would go," Alex sighed, rubbing the back of his neck with his hand.

"Well, in any case, ze's 'ight then," Bret said, his mouth curving into a small smile.

Alex was quiet as stared angrily at Elvira.

"You know, if you frown too much your face may freeze that way," she said, poking his cheek. He hit her hand away.

"Get away," he growled. He walked faster, in hope for losing Elvira and Bret. Elvira and Bret both slowed their pace.

"Is he always like this?" Elvira sighed.

"He's al'ays been like thiis. Kinda distant, ya'no?" he answered. "Acts diffent when he's got gi'ls a'ound."

Elvira scrunched up her nose. "Is he gay?" she asked. Bret smirked and gave out a hearty laugh.

"If only," he said, smirking. *He's probably the gay one.* Elvira thought, raising an eyebrow.

Bret's smile faded as fast as it had appeared. "He's not usually like thiis. Hn...you must be gettin' close with 'im."

"What do you mean?"

"Heh...e usually acts mo'e...how should I put it... *rude* when he know you bette'," he said, tapping his chin. "Then again...he acts 'ike that ta Jean. Makes no sense sometimes." Bret shrugged. "Oh well..."

"Hmm...oh....is there a kid named Toby that lives around here?" she asked, remembering the blonde-haired boy from the night before.

"Toby?...Handlin ya mean? Yeah, I know 'im. Not a ve'y nice kid though. Rude, eh?" Elvira nodded.

"Where'd you meet 'im?"

"Last night..."

Bret shook his head and smiled. "I won't ask."

"Wh-what?! What d'you mean?!"

"Somethin' happened, eh? You're turnin' red, ya'no," Bret teased.

"Jerk! Nothing happened!" she cried out, not knowing why her face was turning so red.

"hm. Whateve'. He lives down the street tha' you and Alex live on. Ain't too frienly, but you should already know that iif you've meet 'im," he said, shifting the weight of his backpack.

Elvira sighed. *So I guess I may see him at school...*

## 5 - Festivities: begining

### Chapter Five: Festivities: beginning

The day went by slowly but with much fun for Elvira. She spent most of her classes introducing herself to new friends and actually trying to find her classes. Luckily, Alex was in most of her classes, allowing her to feel more comfortable.

“So...we have to walk home too?” Elvira moaned, shifting the weight of her backpack. The two were walking down the sidewalk towards their house, seeing as the school day had ended. Alex rubbed his temples.

“Yes, Elvira...,” he growled. She looked up at him and blinked.

“Did something bad happen today?” she asked, tilting her head.

“No. Why?”

“Oh, no reason...”

It was sunny outside, making it enjoyable to walk home. The weather was like it was yesterday, when Elvira first arrived at Kaman. The only difference was that the breeze was colder. Elvira scanned the horizon and noticed a blonde haired boy ahead of them. She raised her eyebrow and strained to see if it was anyone she knew.

“Alex? Do you know him?” she asked, pointing forward.

Alex squinted. “Uh...Toby? Not really. He’s in orchestra with us,” he said.

“He is? I didn’t see him today,” Elvira said.

“He was probably in trouble again.”

“What do you mean?”

“He gets into fights a lot. Constantly in and out of the office...I heard he’s supposed to be in anger management. I wouldn’t be surprised,” he said.

“What?”

“He doesn’t seem to have any friends. He’s always alone,” Alex replied, beginning to get irritated with Elvira.

“Oh...,” she said softly, looking after Toby. “Wait...so he does go to high school?”

Alex nodded. “Why?”

“He doesn’t look like a high school student,” she said.

“Hn...”

“I’m gonna go and talk to him,” Elvira said, balling her hand into a fist.

“Knock yourself out,” Alex said sarcastically.

“It’s better than being with you. You’re so grumpy!” Elvira said, puffing her cheeks out. Alex’s eye twitched.

“Just go!” he cried out, pushing her in front of him. Elvira laughed at him as she ran towards Toby. *I wonder what Toby’s like...I mean, nobody’s really that mean, right?* She thought, thinking of Alex. *Way better than being with him.*

Elvira tapped Toby on the shoulder as she came up behind him. Toby swung around, surprised.

“W-what?” he choked out, looking away from her.

“Where were you?” she asked, comparing her height to his.

“Huh?”

“During orchestra. You weren’t there. My cousin said you were in that class”

“I was in the office. Why do you want to know?” he scoffed, glaring at her.

"You're not much taller than me," Elvira said, out of nowhere.

"Shut up!" he growled, obviously hurt by her comment.

"Ah! Sorry! Was that a sore area?" she said.

"Would you just shut up? I don't want to talk to you!" he yelled, glaring at Elvira.

"God! You need to chill! I'm trying to be friends with you!" Elvira cried out.

"I don't need friends," he said quietly.

"Sure. Everyone needs at least one friend. And I **will** be that friend if you don't have any other," Elvira said, sticking her tongue out. Toby's expression softened as he turned away from Elvira. "Do you live near me?"

"I don't know where you live," Toby said roughly.

"Where we met yesterday. That's where I live."

"Wait...you live with that Houtz kid?" he asked, his eye twitching.

"Yeah...he's my cousin." Elvira smiled. "Why?"

Toby looked at her with a shocked expression. It was as if he was half angry and half scared.

"W-what's the matter?" she asked sheepishly.

He bit his lip and turned away from Elvira. "Nothing."

"You sure?"

"Yeah! It's nothing! I swear..."

"Do you not like Alex or something? I don't blame you if you do, I mean...he's kind of a jerk," Elvira laughed, looking back at Alex.

When she looked back, Alex was with a shorter black haired girl. *W-who's that?* Elvira asked herself as her heart skipped a beat. She felt jealousy tugging at her heart, and turned back to Toby. *What the...* she thought nervously. He noticed that she seem disturbed at what she saw, so he turned to see what had upset her. He turned back to her, disgusted. The two were silent.

"Who's that girl?" Elvira asked, shattering the silence between the two.

"Madelyne. She's so irritating. She's such a slut," Toby said through gritted teeth.

"Heh...plenty of those where I come from!" she laughed.

"You're not from around here?" Toby asked.

"No, I'm from Imae," Elvira answered, rubbing her eyes.

The two soon went their separate ways, but not before exchanging phone numbers. Elvira was far ahead of Alex, so she decided to go home without him, seeing as he would be having much more fun with Madelyne. She felt bitter as she walked the rest of the way home, hoping that something bad would happen to the two. As she thought of all the things that Madelyne and Alex could be doing she became even angrier, as if she was a jealous girlfriend. She entered her new home with a whirlwind of ideas in her head. There was no one home so she went directly up to her room. Throwing her backpack onto the ground, she threw herself onto her bed and stared at the wall to her left.

"Why is he so rude..." she said softly, spreading her fingers across the material of her blanket and then closing them, only to spread them again. She stayed still, closing her eyes. She listened to the hum of the light above her head, and the quiet rumble of cars and trucks coming and going outside.

She dozed off, waking up an hour later. She sat up lazily, glancing around her room, wondering what time it was. Standing up, Elvira took off her shoes and opened her door. She glanced outside of her room. Alex's door was open and there was no sign of him. *Is anyone home yet?* she thought nervously. Since she hated being alone, she felt lonely and scared. She crept along the wall slowly, clinging to the sleeves of her long-sleeved shirt. Walking down the stairs, she looked around. The house was completely silent. She crouched down, holding her elbows in her hands. She felt empty and horrible about her earlier emotions. She hoped desperately that nothing bad had happened to Alex.

It was getting late, and not even her aunt or uncle were going to be home for a few hours. They told her

that they'd be coming home late, seeing as they worked late on occasion. She was nervous being in the large quiet house alone. *Allex...someone...please come back...I don't want to be left alone again*, she thought sadly. She sat down at the table in the kitchen and laid her head onto the table. She stared at the front hall blankly. After a few minutes of silence, clicking noises coming from the door woke Elvira from her trance. She jerked herself up from the chair and ran to the door, pulling the door open. "H-hey," Allex said. Madelyne stood next to him, causing Elvira to feel irritated. She turned from them and walked away a few feet.

"You could've called," she said.

"What?"

"I didn't know you'd be coming home this late."

"Uh...does it matter?" Allex asked, letting Madelyne into the house. He shut the door behind her.

"N-no. I've got to...unpack," she said slowly, walking upstairs. Once Elvira had entered her room and shut the door, Madelyne sighed.

"She seemed upset," she said, leaning against the door. Allex put his backpack down next to the door.

"Really?"

"Are you clueless?" Madelyne laughed. "Maybe it's because you're a guy and you're not sensitive. But, she did seem...at least to me, she seemed upset."

"Oh," he said, walking into the kitchen. Madelyne followed.

"So, are we gonna cook what we need for cooking class?"

"Why not," he said, his mind obviously elsewhere.

"Y'got any potatoes?" Madelyne asked, looking at a low cabinet to the right of the sink.

"Yeah. They're in there. The brown bag," he said, taking out a tomato and a package of bacon from the refrigerator.

"Potato skins, right? That's the easiest one on the list. Don't think she minds, eh?" Madelyne said cheerfully and she pulled three potatoes out of the large bag. She wound the top of the bag and wrapped the rubber band around it.

"Yeah," he said, slicing the tomato into fine slices.

Madelyne washed off the potatoes in the sink and put holes into the potatoes with her fork. While she did this, Allex preheated the oven to 425°. She placed the potatoes onto a pan with foil on it and placed it into the oven. As they cooked, Allex cooked four pieces of bacon. He took the quick way, placing them onto a plate with a damp paper towel over it and placed it into the microwave. After a few minutes, she took the potatoes out and sliced them into four wedges lengthwise and scooped out the inner portion of the potato so that there was only a little white and skin. Allex grated some cheddar cheese and placed a small handful onto each of the potato skins. Madelyne took the bacon out of the microwave and broke them into small pieces, spreading them onto the skins. She also put the tomatoes onto the skins, and then placed the pan into the oven to cook for a few minutes more. When Allex took them out of the oven, the smell flooded the kitchen.

"Ah! They smell so good!" Madelyne said, drooling.

"I feel so helpless...I barely did anything," Allex said, yawning.

"Aw, It's alright. You're lucky I love to cook," she said, nudging him with her elbow. Allex smiled as he put the potato skins into a small container so that they could bring them to school the next day to get their grade. He placed them into the refrigerator.

"So...who're you bringing to the light festival tonight?" Madelyne asked.

Allex looked up at her, confused. "The light festival's tonight?" She nodded. "Damn...Jean's out of town starting today-"

"Oh! So that's why she wasn't here today...do you not have a date?" Madelyne asked, smiling.

"What, you want to go with me?" Allex said, leaning against the counter.



"Heh...never thought you'd ask!" she said happily. "Sure I'll go with you!"

"What?! I never said I'd agree!" Alex cried.

"Do you not want to come with me?" Madelyne said, trying to make Alex feel guilty.

"It's not that...what about Elvira?" he said.

"What about her? She might bring some other guy. Just go with me! Please?"

"Ah...o-okay..."

~\*~

Elvira stood listening to their conversation at the top of the stairs. She walked back into her room and closed the door as quietly as she could. She took her cell phone out of her pocket and pulled out the piece of paper with Toby's number. She dialed the number and waited for him to pick up.

"Hello?" she heard Toby answer.

"Hey Toby? It's Elvira..."

"Oh...hey," he said nervously.

"Do you have anyone to go with to the Light Festival?" she asked, twirling her hair around her finger.

"No...wait, it's tonight?"

"I guess so...I heard Madelyne and Alex talking about it downstairs-"

"Hah! Alex is still with that slut? What ever happened to Jean?" he scoffed with a bit of laughter.

"He says she's out of town tonight," Elvira said, biting her fingernail.

"Kh...B.S....," he said softly.

"You want to go with me?" she said. Toby was silent.

"I guess...I don't have anyone to go with, either."

"Okay! Do you want to meet here in an hour?" Elvira said, relieved.

"Mhm. Sure. See you then," Toby said.

"Bye!" she said. They both hung up, just as Alex knocked on the door to her room. "Yes?"

Alex opened the door and peeked at Elvira. "Do you want to go to the festival with me and Madelyne?" he asked.

"I'm going with somebody already," she said, looking back at Alex casually. He looked taken aback.

"O-oh...who?"

"Toby." Alex looked a little hurt that she chose Toby over him.

"Really...you sure you're going to be having any fun?" he said angrily.

"It'll be a lot funner than with you," she said, crossing her arms across her chest.

"What's that supposed to mean?!" he yelled, throwing her door open.

"Just what I said!" she yelled back, turning her body towards Alex. "I'd probably never have any fun around you because of the way you treat others! And plus...you're already going with someone," Elvira said in a huff.

"Oh, so it's about Madelyne?" he growled, clenching his hands into fists. "I was going to bring both of you, but now you're acting stuck up. I don't even want to see you at the festival!" he grouched, slamming her door closed.

Alex stood outside of her door, feeling horrible, but he was too stubborn to apologize. He walked downstairs to tell Madelyne it was just him and her.

## 6 - Festivities: During

### Toby only Toby can hear them Chapter Six: Festivities: during

There was knocking at the door and Elvira rushed to get it. Alex was still refusing to talk to Elvira, and him and Madelyne were sitting in the dining room talking while watching T.V.. She opened the door and greeted Toby, walking outside of her house and closing the door.

“Hey,” she said, closing the door.

“Oh....you’re ready?” Toby said, expecting that she would still be getting ready for the festival. Elvira smiled and nodded, trying not to have Toby suspect that anything happened earlier. She had been feeling so angry with herself for lashing out at Alex. It wasn’t his fault; he had a life. It was her fault, she wanted him to keep her company and not leave her alone. She realized this, but she was too scared to talk to him.

“You okay? You look-”

“I’m fine! Let’s go!” she said, trying to act cheerful. She looped her arm through his arm and tugged him down the street. “It’s at the park right?”

“Y-yeah,” Toby said, trying to slow Elvira down, seeing as she kept tripping him. He tugged his arm away from her grip. He walked slowly next to her.

“Are you sure you wanna go like that?” he asked, looking her up and down.

Elvira was wearing a short denim skirt with a loose brown shirt. She raised her eyebrow. “Why? Isn’t this normal dress?”

“Yeah...never mind,” he said, obviously avoiding something. Elvira wasn’t in the mood to pursue the reason why the way she dressed was so odd.

“So...let’s get going,” Elvira said, grabbing Toby’s hand. His face turned a light pink as she walked with him towards the park.

They arrived after a few minutes of walking. There were tents of different colors and sizes pitched everywhere on the lawn of the park. The smell of sweets and meat lingered in the air as Toby and Elvira walked happily through the crowded “aisles” that the tents created. Many of the people there were teenagers and young children, but every so often there would be a middle-aged or elderly man or woman. Elvira felt the weight of grief lift off of her shoulders as she saw the children running beneath their feet.

Toby stopped Elvira at a tent that sold food. “Do you want something?”

“Can I have a bowl of potstickers?” she asked.

“Yeah,” Toby said, turning to the young man behind a small table in front of the tent. “One bowl of potstickers.”

“Sure, comin’ right up!” he said cheerfully, standing up. He walked into the tent behind him and began to cook the food. Toby turned to Elvira. She smiled at him.

“W-what? Is something wrong?” she asked nervously.

“Was Alex coming?” he asked.

“Yeah...”

“Why didn’t you go with him?” he asked as the man came out with a plastic bowl with three potstickers residing inside, floating in a small amount of soy sauce.

“Here you go, boy,” he said, chewing on a straw. “That’ll be two dollars.” Toby paid the man and handed the bowl to Elvira. They walked away from the stand and walked towards the pond near the eastern side of the park. There were a couple of couples there, making Toby feel uncomfortable. Elvira

leaned against the railing circling the pond to make sure that no small children would tumble into the mucky waters. She nibbled on a single potsticker held up on her fork. She stared down at the pond silently while Toby fidgeted.

“Elvira?” he said, leaning against the railing next to her. “Why are we here?”

Elvira looked at Toby. “I don’t know...I wanted to come here. I haven’t been here before...,” she said softly. She looked up at the starry sky. “The sky’s so clear...”

“It’s usually like that during July,” Toby said, turning around, leaning against the railing with his back with his arms crossed over his chest.

“Toby?”

“Y-yes?”

“What exactly does the Light Festival celebrate?”

“You don’t know?” he asked, as if it was something everyone should know.

“In Imae we never celebrated any festival with this name,” she replied, taking another bite of the potsticker. “In fact...we *never* celebrated anything but the New Year.”

“Fh...the Light Festival...you know about those warriors that defeated the Merias?” Toby asked.

“Merias...you mean the demons that captured Munex? Yeah.”

“Well...back then this planet was named Bornik, not Munex. Anyways, this festival is to celebrate when the warriors destroyed the Merias,” he explained bluntly.

“Oh, is that it?”

“Heh...I guess so. Everyone makes such a big deal about this festival. They dress up-see?” he said, pointing to a small girl who was dressed in a medieval outfit. “I really doubt that they dressed like that...”

“Wasn’t that practically two hundred years ago? I wouldn’t be surprised if they dressed like that,”

Elvira said, tossing the empty bowl into a trash can that was next to her.

“I don’t. It’s just my belief. I think that our civilization is exactly the same as theirs was,” Toby sighed.

“We don’t have any records of their civilization, right? How can you be so sure? If they did have the same level as us, then we would know-”

“How do you know? It’s possible...”

The two shared a moment of silence.

“What do you want to do now?” he asked, standing straight up. Elvira turned around, scanning the mass of tents. People scurried happily from tent to tent, leaving with a souvenir or food. *I wonder if Allex is here.* she thought sadly. Toby noticed that Elvira looked down, and patted her back.

“D-do you want to go play some of the games?” he asked, looking at her face.

“Sure,” she said, walking towards the tents. Toby followed. *Something’s up...* he thought, sighing.

Elvira led Toby, winding through people left and right. She was blocking everything out of her mind as she walked. She tried hard not to think of Allex, but he kept popping up into her mind. She walked faster, forgetting that Toby was trying to find her. It was too late for that; Toby had lost her a while ago. When Elvira noticed, she felt scared. Now she was alone, yet she was surrounded by tons of people. She tapped a auburn-haired girl on the shoulder. When she turned around she found out that “she” was a “he”.

“Yes?” he asked, smiling as he looked down at Elvira.

He was slender, which was probably the reason Elvira thought he was a girl. He had shoulder length auburn hair with chocolate brown eyes. He had a girly face with glasses. His hair was parted to the left. He was taller than Elvira, about Bret’s height. He had a short-sleeved maroon shirt over a white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. He looked a little bit older than her, but she couldn’t be too sure.

“Ah! Uhm...h-have you seen a boy with long blonde hair...?” she asked, suddenly shy.

His smile faded away as he watched Elvira, and he narrowed his eyes. He shook his head a little, and smiled again. “There are lots of blonde people here,” he laughed. “Are you lost?” Elvira nodded

silently.

"I'll help you find your boy," he said, setting his hand on her shoulder. "What's your name?"

"Elvira," she said, her face turning pink for no reason.

"I'm Malbeice. Where did you last see him?" he asked, looking around the crowd.

"I...we were at the pond," she replied, pointing in the direction.

"Should check there first then," Malbeice said, leading Elvira through the crowd.

They reached the pond, but Toby was nowhere in sight. Malbeice sighed. "Is he here?"

Elvira shook her head. "No. I don't see him..."

"Are you a couple?" Elvira's face burst into flames (figuratively O.o;:). She waved her hands.

"N-no! We aren't like that!" she said, blushing furiously. Malbeice walked towards the railing around the pond and leaned against it. He was quiet. Elvira became uncomfortable.

"The sky's clear," he muttered, looking up at the sky. Elvira looked up too. She wasn't too used to being able to see the sky, seeing as she was from the city where the lights always drowned out the stars. She nodded quietly. Malbeice turned towards her. "Maybe you should go home."

"W-why? I'm looking for my friend," she said shyly.

"Why not? He might've gone home. Guys are like that."

"No. He wouldn't do that."

"How do you know? Have you known him for long?" Elvira was silent.

"Maybe he ditched you..."

"NO! Toby wouldn't of done that! I want to look for him! You don't have to come," she said angrily. She was offended at how mean Malbeice was being.

"I was only saying that might be what he did. I never said it was the only thing he would do. Maybe *he's* looking for *you*...heh...you two must be close," he said softly.

"I...I'm going to go," she said, turning around and heading back to the festival. She didn't look back.

Malbeice watched her leave with a smile. *Maybe she is her...looks like her, and acts like her*, he thought, chuckling to himself.

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"Godammit!! Where the hell could she of gone?!" Toby growled breathlessly. He was sitting on a bench near the area where he had bought the potstickers. He had been searching for Elvira by winding through the crowds, but it was extremely crowded. The man that kept the food stand smiled at Toby and fanned himself with a fan.

"Y'okay? Where'd that girl go?" he asked, putting up a small sign that told everyone that he was on a break. He sat next to Toby.

"How'd you-"

"Cursed with a good memory," he said. "Y'guys came to buy potstickers earlier...where's she?"

"I lost her," Toby sighed, scratching his head. The man laughed and set his fan down on the counter of the stand to the left of them. Toby studied him. He was tall, with long legs, and had shorter brown hair with dim blue eyes. He was well built and he looked about four years older than Toby.

"That's not too good," he said, laughing. "Kids these days are so careless!"

"You sound like an old man," Toby growled, glaring at the man.

"I'm so hurt," he said heartily, hitting Toby on the back. He flinched.

The man leaned back against the light pole that was conveniently behind him and put a cigarette into his mouth. Toby watched as he lit it.

"That's bad for you," he said.

"Hm? Ugh...I know that," the man sighed. "I get that too much."

"Then you should stop."

"It's addicting." The man turned towards Toby. "What's your girl's name?"

"She's not *my* girl," Toby said angrily.

"Whatever....what's her name?"

"Elvira."

"Hm...," he said, thinking. He shook his head. "Sorry, can't help you there...do you know anyone else she's related to?"

"Why...?" Toby said uneasily.

"I know everyone around here. She's new around here right?...I mean, I've seen you around," the man laughed, not making Toby feel any better.

"Um...Alex Houtz?"

"Oh! I saw him around here too! He was with some girl....hm...," the man said.

"W-who are you?" Toby asked nervously.

"Ah...sorry, forgot to introduce myself. Raymond. I usually work at the restaurant down the street," he said, rubbing the back of his neck.

The two were quiet as they watched people walk back and forth in front of them. Raymond stood up and walked behind the stand.

Toby looked out into the crowd and rested his chin on his hands. People left and more appeared, making it seem like there was an endless supply to the people flooding throughout the area. He would every once in a while see someone he knew from school, but he wouldn't say hi. They never liked him anyways...

"TOBY!!" Elvira cried as she ran up to him, nearly tackling him.

He was too surprised for words. He was busy thinking, he didn't even see Elvira appear in the crowd.

"Where were you?" she cried, wrapping her arms around his neck tightly. Toby's face turned pink.

"Where were you?! You just ran off!" he said, pushing Elvira away so that he could see her face.

"You're not supposed to run off like that! You'll get lo-" Toby quieted down when he saw Elvira's face. Tears were streaming down her face. Her hands shot up to cover them up. She fell to her knees.

"Elvira...I, uh...didn't mean it. Don't cry!" he said, putting his hand on her shoulder as he knelt down in front of her.

"I don't...don't leave me alone....please....," she sobbed uncontrollably, her shoulders shaking. Toby didn't know what to do. Elvira grabbed the back of his shoulder and buried her face into his chest, crying. Toby sat there, arms twitching. *What do I do?* He asked himself nervously.

Two little figures that looked similar to Toby (they both had the long blonde hair) popped up on his shoulders, one on the left and one on the right. The one on the right had a small red pitchfork and a black suit with black sunglasses. It also had a long tail with a point and two small horns protruding from the top of his head. The one on the left was wearing a long white dress with a halo hovering above it's head. It held a long golden staff (although the sleeves on the dress were too long; the hands were not visible). It was "the Little Devil and the Little Angel".

\*[C'mon Toby, she's defenseless! It's just what you've been dreaming of!] the Little Devil shouted, taking off his sunglasses, revealing red eyes. A small black forked tongue poked out of his mouth every time he talked.

[No! Toby! You musn't! Think of how Elvira would feel...she's in an emotional wreck! You must think of her feelings.] the Little Angel said, glaring at the Little Devil. The Little Devil stuck out his forked tongue and looked at his red fingernails while crossing his legs.

Toby's eye twitched. *Am I going crazy...what are these little things...* he thought. He shook his head and opened his eyes. The two little figures still stood on his shoulders, the Little Devil looking at him as if he was an idiot.

[You're so dumb...I mean, what guy wouldn't want a cute girl in their arms. You're acting totally gay...you sure you're not gay, To-] The Little Devil was silenced when the Little Angel hit him across the

face with it's staff. The Little Angel turned towards Toby and smiled, little particles sparkling all around it's face.

[You shouldn't treat a girl in a way you'll regret. You must always treat them with care; do you hear me?] The Little Angel said, lecturing Toby.

Toby's head felt as if it was going to burst. This was the first time he had ever seen these two, and somehow it was giving him a headache. *I'm sooooo loosing it...* he thought, looking down at Elvira. She was still crying. The Little Angel looked down at her and sighed.

[Maybe you should find Alex? He knows her better than you do.] he suggested, as the Little Devil climbed back up Toby's shoulder.

[Bloody hell! Lookit what you did!] The Little Devil screeched, showing his nemesis his sunglasses. They were broken in half.

[What comes around goes around.] The Little Angel said, puffing his cheeks up.

Toby helped Elvira stand up, ignoring the two little guys as they argued.

"You okay?" he asked.

She was still clinging to his chest. She sniffled and shook her head "no". "Don't leave me..."

"Do...you want to find Alex?" he asked, blushing a little. Elvira's grip on his shirt grew tighter.

"No," she answered quickly. Toby was silent.

"Can...I go home with you?" she asked. Toby stood in front of Elvira, shocked.

"Wh-what?" he stammered.

"...please...I don't want to go home," she said, letting go of Toby. She stepped back and rubbed her eyes. I could borrow some clothes and say I'm a friend of yours. I'll just sleep over..."

[Oooh! Maybe this is a *con-fes-sion!*] The Little creatures said at the same time.

[TAKE HER!] The Little Devil cried, waving his arms.

[NO! DON'T GIVE INTO HER CHARMS! IT'S A TRAP!!] The Little Angel cried, hitting the Little Devil.

Toby hit his right shoulder, smashing both of them. They disappeared.

"Sure...but do you have any boy clothes?" he asked.

She nodded and smiled. "Thank you..."

"Wait...where are the clothes?"

"... ..()"

"...shoot..."

~

"How could he smash us both?!" The Little Devil screamed, slashing a tree that wasn't much larger than him. The Little Angel glared at the Little Devil.

"Would you hush? I'm trying to read this novel..." he said, adjusting his glasses as he sat on a large rock reading a thick book. The Little Devil sighed, leaning against the tree.

"Wonder what they're doing right now...?" he asked, grinning. The Little Angel rolled his eyes.

"What do you think?"

"Oh hoho!" he giggled, putting his hand in front of his mouth.

"Geez..." The Little Angel said, rubbing his temples.

## 7 - Festivites: Ending

Chapter Seven: Festivities: ending

Toby opened the door to his house. Elvira followed him in, dressed in baggy pants and a large t-shirt that she had borrowed from Raymond, being the nice guy that he was. Elvira used a hat that Toby bought at the festival to keep her long hair in so that his parents wouldn't notice that she looked oddly like a girl. His house was smaller than Alex's; more homey than his too. It was decorated with many things, such as pictures hung on the walls and wallpaper. Toby took Elvira upstairs, shutting his bedroom door.

"Where are you going to sleep?" he asked.

Elvira shrugged. "On the floor...I really don't mind."

"I could sleep on the floor. It's kinda hard," Toby said, scratching his head. Elvira looked down at the floor of his bedroom. He was right. Unlike Alex's house, where everything was carpeted with elegant and expensive carpet, this carpet seemed to scratch at Elvira's feet. Maybe it was best for her to take Toby's bed. She felt bad for kicking Toby out of his own bed, but since he did offer it to her, she decided to take it.

"Sure. Why not. Thanks Toby," she said, sitting down on his bed. She took off her hat, her long blonde hair falling over her shoulders. She glanced around Toby's room. It was small and cluttered, but had a more comfortable feel to it. She felt more at home in his room. It smelled nice too. The room smelled of newly purchased books (best smell in the world >w<) and of ink. She wasn't sure where the smell of ink had come from, but as she looked around the small room, she noticed a small laptop and a printer neatly piled to the left of his bed. There was a stack of papers next to it.

"What's all that?" she asked, pointing to the pile.

Toby shifted his gaze to the pile. "N-nothing," he grunted, standing up straight and fanning his face.

"You okay?" she asked, looking him up and down. He nodded.

"Yeah, but..."

"But what?"

"I need to take a shower," he said, avoiding eye contact with Elvira. He felt disgusting for some reason, probably because it was hot outside. It wasn't that it was hot, it was muggy outside, a more humid heat.

"Oh! Go ahead! I don't have a problem with that. In fact...would I be able to use it after you?" Elvira asked.

"Sure..." Toby said quietly, turning away. He walked out of the room, sighing.

Once Toby left and went into the bathroom, Elvira looked around Toby's room. *Should I search it?* Elvira said to herself, wondering if she should do the same thing to Toby as she did do all of her guy friends. She glanced down at the pile of papers next to the laptop and printer. She sat down next to the pile and picked up the first couple of pages. They were titled *Light vs. Merias. Hm...so is he interested in that whole Medieval Era bogus?* Elvira said, not believing that Merias actually ever existed. She set aside those couple of pages and dug deeper into the pile, glancing at the pages every once in a while. All of the papers had to do with the incident 200 years prior. Her eye twitched as she neared the bottom of the pile. *Why does he have to be so obsessed?!* She sighed. There was one paper left on the floor. She picked it up and looked it over, reading it. Her eyes widened.

"What the...?" she breathed. She stared hard at the paper. It read:

---These names are those of the warriors of Light from 200 years ago along with their occupations that

they had before they were “warriors”:

Angevin Fature: acrobat/performer

Sebastian Ray: unknown

Herv Admerry: mercenary

Rei McKellihan: bodyguard

Evelyn Fulin: unknown

Rose Campell: waitress

Arnett Rowena: none

Kei Morris: pharmacist

Kiki Myonme: protector/bodyguard

Leala Tsomi: mercenary

Naum Edith: none

Brent Cobalt: Innkeeper

Naomi Szuborough: none

Kraen Udze: none

Odette Fature: village healer/diviner

Raissa Laraway: entertainer/actress

Malbeice Turner: magic student----

She looked over it again and again. “What...w-why...why is his name here?” she said, staring hard at Malbeice’s name. “It...it can’t be. He can’t be over 200!” she laughed, hitting her head. “How dumb...” She stacked up the papers in a neat pile and set them back where they were. She sat on Toby’s bed. The door to the bathroom unlatched not a second later.

Toby walked into the room, hair dripping and a towel around his shoulders. He was in a pair of blue sweat pants and a black t-shirt.

“Ah! My turn?” she said, standing up. He looked her up and down.

“Yeah. Towels are in the bathroom. Take your pick,” he said, showing her to the bathroom. When she shut the door, his mother walked up the stairs and spied Toby.

“Toby, your dad and I are going out for dinner. You and...and...,” she said, biting her lip, not knowing Elvira’s name.

“Evan,” he said, supplying her with a fake name.

“Yeah...you and Evan will be on your own for dinner. I’m sorry...I wish you would tell us in advance when you bring people over. Next thing you’ll be bringing girls dressed like guys when we go out!” she said, laughing heartily, slapping Toby on the back.

Toby cringed, hoping his mother wouldn’t realize “Evan” was actually a girl.

“Yeah...right,” he said, coughing. His mother, waving, walked down the stairs and exited the house with his father by her side. Toby slowly walked back to his room, stretching his arms over his head. When he reached his room he collapsed face first onto his bed.

“Urrh...,” he groaned. He ached everywhere. Whenever he went outside in the heat he was sore for a while. He always had envied all of the athletes at school, wishing he could stand the heat. “Ngh...it smells...like...,” *Elvira?* Toby’s face flushed and shot up. He realized she was the first girl that had been into his room. He had never had a girl friend. He rarely had any guy friends. How was he going to handle himself tonight...ignore her?

The phone began to ring, snapping him out of his thoughts. He ran downstairs in order to catch it before it went to the answering machine. He answered it on the fourth ring.

“H-hello?” he said, holding the phone up to his ear.

“Yeah, hi,” It was a boy. “Toby?”



“Yeah...? I’m him.”

“Is Elvira there?”

Toby twitched. “Who is this?” he asked gruffly.

“Alex. Just tell me if she’s there,” he growled. He sounded pissed off.

“Ah...no, why?” he lied.

“Godammit!” he growled. “Do you have any idea where she is?”

“Um...no, she left me...she seemed upset. Did something happen between you guys?” Toby said, smirking.

“Jesus...I don’t know...she got pissed at me for some reason,” Alex scoffed. He could hear Madelyne in the background telling him to get off of the phone. Alex’s voice became muffled. All he made out was “Go with your friends.” and “Meet me back here.”.

“You’re still at the festival?” Toby asked.

“No....so, if you see Elvira...tell her I’m sorry for ditching her after school. Tell her to come home,” Alex’s voice softened. Toby felt awkward talking to him. He could hear a hint of worry in his voice.

“O-okay.” They both hung up. He looked up the stairs at the bathroom door and sighed. “Guess I should tell her when she gets out...” Toby sighed. “What’s with Alex? Did he piss her off or something?”

He walked into the kitchen and opened a cabinet, looking for something easy to make for dinner. His eyes spied a few packages of Mac N’ Cheese. He took those down, hoping Elvira didn’t mind it. He took out a large pot and filled it  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of water and set it down on the stove to boil. He collapsed on the couch and grabbed the remote. He turned the T.V. on and watched the celebrities silently. Normally he didn’t watch things that talked about the stars’ lives, but he didn’t know what to watch. He was a little preoccupied by...the fact that there was a girl in the shower. He stared intently at the T.V., trying to forget this fact.

Upstairs, the door unlatched and Elvira walked out in a towel. She ran to Toby’s room. She had forgotten about grabbing clothing when she went into the bathroom and she held the clothing that she had been wearing earlier. She closed Toby’s room’s door and sighed. She looked through the drawers of his dresser to find some sweat pants to wear. She found a pair of red ones and found a large white t-shirt. She took a small black zip-up sweater and put it on over the t-shirt.

She walked down the stairs, brushing her long blonde hair. Toby was in the kitchen, stirring a pot of elbow noodles. Elvira smiled and waved when she walked into the room.

“Ey! Whatcha’ making?” she asked, looking over Toby’s shoulder.

“Mac and Cheese,” he said, looking her up and down. “Wait...you’re wearing my clothes!”

“I don’t have anything to sleep in...is it okay?” she said, setting the brush down on the counter next to the sink.

“Whatever...,” he sighed, turning back to the noodles. He stared at them, contemplating whether or not to tell Elvira that Alex had called.

“Did someone call?”

“W-what?”

“I heard the phone ring while I was in the shower. Or...was I just hearing things?” Elvira laughed, scratching her chin.

“Yeah. It...was Alex,” he said casually. Elvira was silent as she stared at him with wide eyes.

“What?”

“Alex called, looking for you,” he answered.

“You didn’t tell him I was here? Right?!” Elvira cried desperately, clinging to Toby’s arm.

“Ah! Stop it! You’re going to make me spill!” he yelled, pushing Elvira off of his arm. “No! I didn’t tell him.”

"Th-thank god..." she said, sighing. "You scared me for a moment!"

"Are you mad at him?" he asked.

"No...why?"

"I think he thinks you're mad at him. He told me," Toby said, trying not to remember about telling her "sorry". Toby honestly detested Alex. No one knew why, not even Toby. He guessed he didn't have a good feeling around him; a bad vibe. Yet he didn't want Elvira to hate him.

"Oh...uhm...no...I'm not mad," she said, faking a smile. Toby studied her and sighed.

"He said he was sorry for ditching you," Toby continued.

"Ah...I...I'm still going to spend the night. I need a night to relax," Elvira said. Toby was silent as he poured in the cheese sauce, the butter, and the milk.

"Okay," Toby finally said.

Elvira sat down on the couch and watched the T.V.. Toby glanced up at her. Her hair was still pretty wet and it was clinging to her...*his* white shirt. Luckily she had grabbed that jacket, for if it wasn't for it, the shirt would be see-through by now. He turned his gaze back to the pot and turned off the burner.

"You want some?" he offered, taking down a bowl from the cabinet on the opposite side of the stove.

"Huh?" Elvira said, snapping out of some trance the T.V. had cast on her. "Oh...sure. Thanks." He took down another bowl and distributed the noodles and cheese evenly in each of the bowls. He tossed the pot into the sink and stuck a spoon into each of the bowls. He took each of the bowls, one in each hand, and walked over to Elvira. She took one and Toby sat down on the opposite side of the couch. They were silent as they took the first few bites.

"So...how do you think the festival was?" Elvira asked, breaking the silence. Toby shrugged and swallowed the noodles he had been chewing.

"It was alright. If only you hadn't of gotten lost," he replied, shoving another spoonful into his mouth.

"Heh...sorry. I don't know how I lost you though," she laughed. Toby eyed her, wondering why she was laughing about it when she was crying earlier.

"Mmhmm...you're sure everything's alright?" Toby said. Elvira turned to him.

"Why do you keep on asking me that?"

"You seemed out of it earlier."

"How?"

"God...you were...kinda weird when I picked you up," he explained.

"Oh..."

"Something *did* happen between you and Alex, right?"

"No! Why do you keep asking *that* too?!" she cried, tightening her grip on both her spoon and bowl.

"Alex's an asshole. Always was and always will be. He's always been pissing off everyone, ever since elementary school. 'Specially girls. I think he's kinda gay," Toby scoffed.

Elvira blinked. "You seem to know him," she said, taking a bite of noodles.

"Unfortunately. Somehow, every year, I've had one class with him: goddamned orchestra. He's usually either extremely quiet or he gets po'd and lashes out at everyone closest to him. No wonder Jean's gonna break up with hi-." Toby's eyes widened and he glanced at Elvira.

"W-what? What about Jean?" Elvira asked, staring at Toby.

He waved his hand at her and laughed nervously. "Nothing."

"You said something about breaking up. Is she going to break up with him?" she asked angrily. Toby was silent as he stirred the cheesy noodles.

"You know what?" Elvira said, looking at Toby. He looked up from his bowl. "You're a lot nicer at home than outside."

"Huh?"

"You're more relaxed here. You're not making a ton of rude remarks as you usually do," she said,

setting the bowl on the short table in front of the couch. She scooted herself nearer to Toby.

"So? I don't like going outside," he said nervously, hoping she wouldn't come any closer.

"You know...I'm happy I met you, even if it meant falling out of a really tall and scary tree," she laughed cheerfully. "I wonder how long we'll know each other." She inched closer to him as he took a few more bites of noodles. "Y'know what?"

"H-huh?" he said, with a mouthful of noodles. He looked at her, realizing she had gotten closer.

"I feel like I've known you forever, even though it hasn't even been a day yet," she said. "Where are you from?"

"F-furmai," he said, setting the bowl down on the table.

"Oh...wait...you're elven?" she said, surprised.

"No...I'm half," he said, standing up. Elvira looked interested, but Toby walked away from her and walked up the stairs.

"W-where are you going?" she asked, standing up.

"I got to check on my sister," he said gruffly.

"You have a sister?" she asked, following him up the stairs.

Toby groaned in his mind. He had used that as an excuse to get away from Elvira. It was true that she just wanted to get to know him, but something stopped him from telling her about his past: the fact that he didn't even know for sure if he was Usarian or if he was from Furmai. His parents never told him for sure where he was from.

"Yeah, I do."

"What's her name?"

"Sarah," he said, becoming irritable. He opened the first door. The light was on and a young girl dark brown hair and even darker eyes stared up at the two. She looked in her early teens, about the age of a fifth or sixth grader. She was in a long pink and white t-shirt that ended at the middle of her thighs. She was short, short for her age, making her look even younger than she was. She had a cute face, not too plump and not too skinny. As Elvira watched her, she noticed her dark eyes were actually a deep blue. There wasn't a thing that connected Toby and his sister. Neither looked at all like the other!

"Toby!" she cried, jumping up. "When'd you get home?" Noticing Elvira, she smiled.

"About thirty minutes ago," he said.

Sarah puffed her cheeks out and folded her arms across her flat chest. "You could've told me! I have something to give you," she said cheerfully, skipping towards her purple and pink backpack.

Toby smiled and scratched the back of his neck. "What's it this time?" he said, leaving Elvira's side to kneel next to Sarah. *They seem pretty close...* Elvira said, watching Toby as Sarah gave him a picture she drew for him in art class during school. *I wish I had a brother or sister.*

"Toby?" Sarah motioned for him to come closer. "Is that your girlfriend?" she whispered into his ear.

"What? No!" he said, pushing away from Sarah, his face bright red.

"Aww...that's no fun!" she giggled, standing up. She walked up to Elvira. She felt so tall compared to Sarah.

"I'm Sarah, his sister!" she said, motioning for Elvira to bend over. "You'd better take care of brother nicely, because if you don't-"

"Wait, wait...what do you mean 'take care of'?" Elvira asked.

"You two are going out, right? Toby's too shy to tell me!" Sarah said. *AIE!! She's so cuuttee!!* Elvira squealed in her mind.

"No, we're not," she said, smiling. She glanced at Toby. "We're just friends."

"Gyah, you two are sooo boring~!" Sarah pouted. She turned and yawned. "I'm gonna go to sleep." She rubbed her eyes. "Get out!!" she chirped. "Have fun!?" She pushed the two out of her room and shut the door behind them.

Elvira laughed. "Your sister's cute," she said, walking to Toby's room. "I...I'm going to go to bed." "I'll stay up longer. There's something I wanted to watch on T.V.," he said uneasily, walking down the stairs. Elvira looked after him and sighed. She walked back to Toby's room. She glanced around the room for a final time before laying down underneath the covers of the bed. She pulled them up over her head, closing her eyes.

~

Meanwhile, downstairs, Toby was laying down on the couch drinking water as he watched an old anime series. Being horribly dubbed, the voices annoyed Toby to death, yet he didn't change the channel. Maybe it was the fact that it was so old, that he felt obliged to watch it. Even though it was old, it had a decent plot. He wasn't too irritated by the animation either. Even though...he wasn't even watching it. He was too busy staring at the ceiling, wondering what he was going to do about Elvira being in the same room as him. Sighing, he sat up and looked at the stairs.

"What's wrong?" Sarah asked. Toby nearly fell off of the couch. He hadn't seen Sarah come down the stairs, much less felt her sit on the couch. "Gawd...why do you watch this stuff? Watch the more recent anime...or...watch *real* things once in a while!" she said, shaking her head. "This is all you do! That's why you've never had a girlfriend or *any* friends at that..."

"Sh-shut up," he said, still startled. "When'd you come down?"

"Few minutes ago. So...who's that girl?" Sarah asked. "She never told me her name."

"She's Elvira," Toby replied, laying back down.

"Ahh...mm-hmm...so nothing's going on between you two, right?"

"No...jesus..."

"How I doubt that," Sarah chuckled, touching her chin lightly with her index finger. Toby glared at her.

"What's that supposed to mean?!" he cried, throwing a small throw pillow at her.

"Why'd you do that?! I was just asking!" she said, clutching the pillow.

"You already asked the frickin' question earlier! You don't need to ask it twice."

"Ever think I didn't hear her?"

"What? But...you answered her!" Toby growled, feeling a sudden flood of sleepiness. He rubbed his forehead. "God...It's late...please don't ask me questions."

Sarah stuck out her small tongue. "But this is the best time for asking questions." She chirped.

"huh..." he said, peeking through his fingers.

"You overreact. It's funny!" she said, making a peace sign.

Toby smiled and shook his head. He sat up and ruffled Sarah's long brown hair. "You're weird."

"Heeey! Stoppit~!" she said, swatting Toby's hand away playfully. Toby yawned loudly and rubbed his eye. "Are you tired?"

"Yeah," he replied, standing up and stretching.

"Then go to bed."

"Ah...", he said nervously. "I-I'm not tired enough yet."

"Such a lie. You're just nervous because Elvira's in your room!" Sarah teased.

"No I'm not!" Toby cried out, defending himself.

"Then go to bed!"

Toby cringed. "Fine! I will!" he said with clenched teeth. He marched up the stairs in a fit.

Sarah smiled. "I hope you two get along t'night~!" she hollered after him.

"SHUT UP!" she heard Toby scream back to her. Sarah giggled, but soon after her smile disappeared and she sighed.

"I hope he meets someone soon that would like him...", she said. She grabbed the remote and changed the channel.

~

Toby peeked into his room. It was pitch black and he assumed that Elvira was asleep in his bed, judging by the large lump underneath the blankets. Being careful not to wake her, he took a large brown blanket out from underneath his bed and took one of the pillows that Elvira was not using. He made himself “comfortable” on the floor and wrapped himself up in the warm blanket. Surprising enough, Toby began to doze off and fell asleep in less than a minute. It was Elvira that was awake.