Nightmare and Fantasy

by And_There_They_Go_Again

Summary

Virgil Storm is your typical young emo. He lives a normal life... to some extent. But when a strange people come to the orphanage with plans to adopt him, and horrible nightmares plague his sleep, Virgil starts to realise that thing aren't as normal as they first seemed.

Notes

Hi hi!
So this is my first ever (published) fic and I'm super excited and really really nervous. This chapter kind of sucks so bare with me! It'll get better (I hope)! Honestly, I'm not sure if I'll even post another chapter. It all really depends. I probably will though! :D
(If I don't post for ages, I'm pretty slow so don't worry)
Trigger Warnings for this chapter: Major fire, slight mention of depression
I don’t remember falling asleep, but I remember the dream.

Darkness was on all sides of me. Not your typical, cliché darkness. Not the type that makes you run and hide in fear of monsters and the other things that are lurking in its depths. Not the suffocating type either. No. It’s the calming type. The type that you want to escape to after a tough day. The type that takes you away from reality, into the abyss, into the void. Cold, dark and calm. No-one can hurt you here. No-one can find you. Not your problems, not your life, not even the light. I shivered and sunk deeper into my hoodie. The only part of reality that reached down as far as here was the cold. Icy and grounding. It keeps me from drifting away completely. Floating in the darkness, I can’t see anything. It’s like I’ve gone blind in space. There’s no surface here. Nowhere you can stand or lean against, but you can lay down anywhere. Everything is nothing at the same time. It’s new but old. Cold but warm. I’ve been here before, but I haven’t. Everything here changes, but it stays exactly the same. There are no answers here. I don’t come here for answers anyway. I come here for nothing and everything. Are my eyes even open? Who’s to say. Has light ever gone this far? I can’t answer that. Where am I? I don’t need to know. To put it simply, I am nowhere. That’s it. No twists. No confusing riddles. I. Am. Nowhere. I don’t need to be frightened of this place. It’s done nothing to me. I’m safe. It’s not a nightmare, or a dream. A silent sigh escapes my lips. Another reason why I like it here. No sound. I could scream and scream and make no sound whatsoever. I don’t need to make sound anyway. No-one else is here. Or maybe there are others, and I just can’t hear them. Either way it doesn’t matter. Nothing matters here. Not me, not you, not anything. It’s peaceful. It’s safe. And it’s all here. Until you wake up.

~*~

“Up and at ‘em kids! Rise and shine!”

A familiar voice drifts through the door and I hear window shutters being pulled open. I groan with weak protest as the light hits me, and turn over in my bed, away from the window. The whole of my dorm does the same. The ridiculous waking times seems to be the one and only thing we agree on. Well, that and the fact that I’m never getting out of here. Ahh, depressing morning thoughts. Right on time! I think bitterly.

There’s a whole lot of shuffling going on. Some kids are fighting consciousness while others are giving in to the fact that it is time to get up. I feel a hand on my back and I open one of my stormy grey eyes. It’s Olivia, smiling down at me mischievously. My brain registers what’s about to happen a moment too late. She grabs me and pulls me out of my bed. I squeal and start to squirm in her iron grip, but it’s no use. The damage has been done. “Nooooo!” I say between giggles.

“Ohhh yes. It’s time to get up and seize the day!” Olivia’s grin widens as she tugs the last of the blankets from my feet. I shiver as the cold morning air hits them. It’s always cold in the dorms. I wriggle around in Olivia’s grip and wrap my arms around her in a warm hug. She laughs and a strand of her ginger hair falls in her face. Actually, ginger is an understatement. It’s more like orange with its strength doubled and then tripled and then dipped in red. It’s so bright it makes the rest of the room seem dull. It’s like the sun.

I love Olivia. Not in a romantic sense seeing as she’s twenty-two and I’m eleven. It’s completely platonic. She’s so great though. When she smiles, her green (another understatement but you get the idea) eyes light up and crinkle at the edges. She smiles a lot, and when I say a lot, I mean a lot. She’s so lovely to the other kids at the orphanage. Cheering us up when we feel sad and lonely, slipping us extra rolls at dinner time, taking care of us when we are sick. She’s like everything you
would hope a person would be like. She’s the best person I’ve ever met. “Come on you. Time to get dressed.” I groan into Olivia’s neck (By the way, she’s tiny). “She laughs again “I know, I know. I hate waking up tooooo. But guess what?” I look up at her and raise an eyebrow. “The hard part’s over! You’re awake and out of bed!”

Another great thing about Olivia. She’s the biggest optimist. “Yeah, I guess” A smile spreads across my face. “Now go away and let me get dressed” I snark playfully. Olivia giggles and walks backwards out of the dorm, giving me a half salute as she goes. “And that’s my move!” I say in offence. A final laugh echoes from the hallway, and I am left to get dressed. By now, all of the other boys have gotten dressed and gone to breakfast. All except one. He’s new by the looks of it. His nametag is still pinned to his shirt and his eyes are still red with tears. If I squint, I can make out the name printed on the red and white tag. It reads: Liam. Liam raises his head and looks around. He seems to realise that we are alone together because his eyes find me and widen with panic. He immediately picks up the pace. Buttoning up his shirt at rapid speed, throwing on his shoes and putting them on the wrong feet, running a brush once through his messy, sandy hair. He’s going so fast that he accidentally ties his shoelaces together. Wasting no time, he gets up and jumps towards the door, fly undone, shirt untucked and hair in a complete mess. He hits his head on the doorframe on the way out and curses loudly. I flinch as the door slams and I swallow a big lump forming in my throat. I pull myself together. They won’t break me. I reach into my pocket and pull out the only piece of my past that I have access to. A single, slightly torn piece of paper with words carefully scratched on to it in black ink: Don’t let them break you. Sucking in a deep breath, I swallow down the eternally unanswered questions bubbling up inside me. I fold the paper in half and put it safely in my pocket.

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“Virgil? Can you read number 42 out for the class” I freeze and look up at my English teacher. She is smiling sweetly at me, waiting for me to start reading. No. No no no no no. I look around at the other kids in the class hoping that there is another Virgil in the class. After a few moments, I accept my fate. Hands shaking, I reach for my book. Water drips off the cover from where I touched it. Great, just what I need. I clear my throat nervously and open the book to page forty-two. Almost immediately the words started jumping off the page. All of the letters jumbled around and mixed with other letters so I can’t make out actual words. I stutter as I try to read what’s on the page. Tears well up in my eyes and I blink them away, still struggling to read. I look helplessly up at the teacher who purses her lips tightly.

“I… I-“

“Nevermind, Mr Storm. Luna-?“

I hide my face in my hands and clench my fists as a single tear slips down my face. I can feel a thousand eyes on me. I wish I could just get up and leave. Walls feel like they are closing in. I can smell the hostility. Why can I never just say it? The words are always there, waiting at the back of my throat. All I have to do is say them. It’s all I have to do. It’s all I have to do. It’s all you have to do!

A kid behind me screams. I look up in panic and my eyes find the fire on my desk and lapping around my feet. I should be scared, and don’t get me wrong, I am; but just for a moment, something about the fire feels like it won’t hurt me. Like it can’t hurt me. And then that moments over, and fear crashes down on me like waves. The teacher is shepherding kids out of the class quickly and calmly. Her poker face is set but her eyes say it all. Fear. Unmistakable fear. It clouds her eyes. And if I wasn’t scared before, I am now. I have to get away from the flames, but they are too close for me to get away from. I scream out for the teacher and she turns to me. It’s just us in
the classroom now. Everyone has left. I start coughing uncontrollably as smoke floods into my lungs. Tears start pouring down my face which have nothing to do with the smoke. I stand on my chair as the room becomes engulfed in flames. Sweat pours down my face from the extreme heat. The teacher keeps trying to dodge the flames, but it’s no use. There’s no clear path that we could both get through alive. I collapse helplessly and start to sob. I close my eyes and will myself to sleep. I don’t want to be conscious for the pain. Cold air washes over me and cleans out my lungs. My eyes fly open as I desperately gasp for air. The flames have almost completely subsided, with only a few small, candle like flames. Black scorch marks cover the walls and the carpet has peeled away in some places. My teacher is still standing in the doorway with an involuntary awestruck/horrified expression. All of the smoke has just disappeared, making it easy to breathe once more. I want to lay down on the floor and sleep it off, but I’m not taking any risks. I step down from my chair and make my way over to the teacher as quickly as possible. And then, I’m out of the room. And then, I’m safe. And then, everything is going to be ok. It’s all gonna go back to normal, like it always does.

Oh how wrong I was.

~*~

My sixth time in the principal’s office and, yet again, it not on good terms. “Mr Storm, what were you thinking!? We always knew you were a bit of a trouble maker but setting fire to a classroom? It’s unheard of!”

“But I didn’t do it!” I protest “It just-”

“Magically appeared?” Our principal said, edging on hysterics.

“Yes!”

The principal sputtered for a moment before finally collecting himself, “Mr Storm, this is unacceptable. Six schools in six years and we offer you a place here when no-one else would, and you just throw it away.” Déjà vu hits me hard in the stomach. I widen my eyes in a silent plea but it’s not enough. “I’m sorry Mr Storm,” He says without an ounce of sorrow “But you are expelled”

It's never enough.

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Olivia and I walk through the hallway in tense silence. The grey walls feel like metal bars, trapping me in my own thoughts. I fidget nervously with the hems of my sleeves. Olivia looks over at me, sensing movement, and sighs. “Six schools, Virgil” I flinch. She didn’t shout it, but I wish she had. The disappointment in her voice crushes me. “How are we ever going to find another that accepts you?” I look down at the scuffed hardwood floors and will myself to not cry. “Virgil, seriously” Olivia crouches down so she’s almost looking directly in my eyes. “You have to promise me that you will try harder.”

“But I do try.” I feel a tear slip down my face and I pull my hood over my eyes so Olivia doesn’t see.

She sighs again, “I know Virgil, but you need to try harder. Please”

We walked on in silence.
I didn’t sleep at all that night. I couldn’t stop tossing and turning. It didn’t help that the kids in my dorm kept whispering. About me, no doubt, so it wasn’t just the noise that kept me up. Caretakers and kids alike seemed to lack sleep tonight. Maybe it was my imagination, but I felt all of their eyes on me, scrutinizing me, or just simply watching, waiting for the perfect chance to strike. I couldn’t stop thinking about what Olivia had said. Of course I had been trying! She knew that. Right? Obviously not. She probably thinks I’m some sort of psychopath now. I had no idea how the fire got there. My mind wouldn’t stop racing, ever pondering on what she said. The door opens and I clamp my eyes shut. “I just don’t know what we are going to do about him!” I hear a sweet and quiet whisper. Olivia. “There’s no way we can find another school that will take him!”

A deep sigh meets my ears and I realize who Olivia is talking to. It’s Robin. Robin, the head of the orphanage. Robin, the strictest woman alive. Robin, who’s wardrobe is restricted to the colours green and gold. Robin, who seems cold and is. Robin, how do I begin to explain Robin? “We may have to move him to a new orphanage; or state for that matter”

“No! We can’t!” Olivia protests. I wonder who they are talking about. Poor guy… whoever it is.

Robin sighs again. My eyes start to hurt from keeping them closed so tightly for so long. “He is too much of a danger to the kids. We must move him. It’s for his own good”. It then dawns on me who they are talking about. They’re talking about me. I bite my tongue to stop myself from crying out in protest. Tears well up in my eyes and I desperately try to get rid of them by fake sleep-rolling around so I was facing the wall. There was a sharp intake of breath from Robin at this, and I thought that I was screwed, but she seemed to decide that I was sleeping, and that I knew nothing of the matter they were addressing. “I’m sorry Olivia. I know you are close to him, but it’s for his own good.” Olivia’s breath rattles and even though I can’t see her, I know there are tears in her eyes. I feel terrible for making her upset. I should have tried harder. Of course the fire was my fault. Who’s else could it have been? No kid in their right mind would have done something like that, except me of course. Me. Virgil Storm. The stupid, dyslexic kid who makes beautiful people
upset for no reason. I feel pain rising in my throat and I know I deserve it. Every bit of it. “If someone doesn’t take him in the next two weeks, we will have to find somewhere else for him to stay.” I hear Olivia’s defeated sigh and footsteps going out of the door, the creaking of its hinges, and then they are gone, and my fate is decided. My whole body shakes violently with silent sobs as I desperately try to banish horrible memories from resurfacing. Images of all the things I had done and caused come rushing back. The time all the bed sheets went missing and were never found again, the time when all of the doors locked at once and no one could find any keys, the time when a major flood hit the orphanage out of nowhere and left in five minutes, and the fire. I rub the side of my thigh where the flames had burnt it. It stings with pain and I bite my lip so I won’t cry out. A thin, red burn singed my skin right where-

I shoot up and jump out of bed, fake sleep forgotten. My tired body stumbles over the miscellaneous objects strewn over the floor on my way to the wardrobe. I hastily pull out my burnt trousers and shove my hand into the pocket and hope against hope that it was okay. My fingers meet ashes and my heart sinks into my feet. Grief turns my blood to ice as I pull out the remains of my mother’s note. The right side of the note had been completely burnt off while all the edges had been singed and torn. I press the note to my forehead and wish myself to wake up from this horrible dream. But I don’t. And there I stay for the whole night. Willing myself to wake up from something that doesn’t exist.

~*~

The next morning, everyone could tell something was wrong. Especially Olivia. She knew from the moment she woke us all up. The way I got up without her telling me too. The way I shrugged off her jokes and radiant smiles. I didn’t even protest when she used my salute. She knew something was wrong. And she was right. Something was wrong. Very wrong.

I sit at my usual spot at breakfast and keep my head low, shoulders stiff and fists clenched; a clear message of “Don’t talk to me”. Not like anyone would anyway. Not after what I did.

I don’t eat this morning; I have no appetite. My stomach twists with displeasure at the mere thought of food. I wrinkle my nose and push my bowl away from me. My head meets the table and I close my eyes tightly, still unconvinced that this is the turn that my reality is taking. The scraping sounds of a chair hits my ears and I start to scream internally at the promise of social interaction. I feel someone touch my hand and I instinctively jerk away. “Whoa, easy there”. A sugar sweet voice meets my ears and makes me sick. “It’s just me”. I raise my head to lock eyes with Olivia. Almost immediately, I look away. The look in her eyes is too much for me to bear. Her hand is back, but this time I don’t pull away. Tears start to well up in my eyes and if I don’t pull myself together quickly, we are gonna have a massive case of uncontrollable crying which is exactly what I don’t want right now. Olivia seems to notice this because she motions for me to get up and gently guides me to the empty dorms. A lot of the kids are staring, but it doesn’t bother me much. One way or another I will never see them again. This comforts me a little but not enough to destroy my ever growing feeling of loss.

When we arrive at the dorms, Olivia sits me down on my bed just in time for the tears. At first they start as a small trickle but in the record time of about two seconds I am sobbing uncontrollably in Olivia’s arms. I tell her everything. I tell her about how I overheard her and Robin talking last night. I tell her about how I know I’m moving away. I tell her about how I don’t want to leave. I tell her about the note. Everything. Olivia just holds me in a way that makes me never want to let go. At last when I am exhausted from crying and extremely dehydrated, I finish speaking. At some point we must have moved to the floor because I can feel the rough carpet underneath my hands. Olivia is running her hands through my hair in a last attempt to calm me. It was a good move because I can already feel my breathing slowing down. I try to speak but my words come out all
croaky because of my dry throat. As if on instinct, Olivia gets up and retrieves a glass of water. I croak out a quick thank you before draining the entire cup very quickly even for me. Olivia smiles sadly and the tears are back, but this time, they’re hers. She hastily wipes her eyes and speaks for the first time in what feels like ages. “I don’t want you to leave either Virge, but unless-”. She draws in a shaky breath to calm herself. “Unless someone comes to adopt you, then there’s nothing I can do”

Anger and helplessness attack my heart at the realisation of the options that are just out of my reach. “So, I’d be leaving either way?” I say with an edge to my voice.

“Yes. I’m so sorry Virge” She tries to pull me closer but I pull away. I get up and walk away from her maintaining perfect eye-contact. Horror registers on my face and Olivia’s eyes fill with plea. I continue to back away towards the door, my eyes wide and expression, horrified. Olivia knows what I’m going to do a split second before I do it. “Please Virgil, don’t!” But it’s too late, I am already out the door and running down the corridor.

I hear her footsteps echoing down the corridor after me but I don’t dare look back for I am too afraid of what I might see. “Don’t follow me!” I yell as I blindly turn corners, desperate to shake her off. After about five minutes, the footsteps subside and I am left outside, leaning against an apple tree and choking for air. As I gasp for breath I rummage inside my pockets until my fingers meet the burnt paper I was searching for. I pull it out and stare at it, searching for one last strand of comfort. My pale fingers brush over the remaining words on the paper: “Don’ te yo”. I don’t know why, but I laugh. Maybe it’s because I am so very tired, maybe it’s because I’m insane. My bets are on the latter.

I shiver at the icy cold wind that bites through my hoodie and take a moment to figure out my surroundings. I’m in the garden behind a row of apple trees. In front of me are the garden beds filled with seeds that grow in Autumn/Fall and look like they are getting ready to burst up from the soil. Behind me is the orphanage. I turn to look at its brick walls and fogged windows and think about turning back, but remembering the interaction with Olivia, I’d rather stay out here and freeze than go back in there and look her in the eyes again.

I wrap my hoodie closer to my body and position myself behind one of the apple trees so no one can see me hiding here. My throat is still burning and I am starting to feel really hungry. I look above me at an unripe apple and wonder if I could eat it. Seeking only to quench my thirst and hunger and not caring about the possible consequences of eating an unripe apple, I reach out to pick the apple from the branch. As soon as my fingers meet the smooth skin of the apple, it begins to transform. Red covers the area where my hand touched it and begins to spread up the rapidly growing apple. I jerk my hand away and gaze in shock and awe. In no longer than about ten seconds, a fully grown, perfectly ripe apple has taken the unripe one’s place. I begrudgingly take part in a well-known cliché and stare down at my hands in amazement. That’s the one good thing about these strange things that I possess: sometimes, when they don’t feel like burning down classrooms, they make good things happen. I pluck the apple from the tree without a second thought and sink my teeth into its flesh. A beautiful, crunchy sweetness explodes over my tongue and I smile. It was the single best apple I have ever tasted.

I look up at the sky and figure that it is about 11 o’clock in the morning, based on the position of the sun in the sky. I know this because every night before I go to sleep, I chart the stars and read books on how to tell something from the sky. I find it very interesting and when I get into high school I will not hesitate to put my name down for astronomy. That’s if they take me, of course. My throat tightens and I swallow back tears that are threatening to re-surface. I take deep, soothing breathes like Olivia told me to do when I feel this way and my thoughts stray to the stars. I try to recall what my star sign
looks like. I am a Pisces. Born February 26th. I love my zodiac signs constellation. It’s so beautiful and I have no trouble remembering it.

I stay like this for a while, just sitting here under the apple tree. An hour later and the apple is long gone, but I can’t seem to make another. I run my hands along the grass and relish the feeling of cold dew between my fingers. I go to lean back on the tree but stop myself just in time. The last time I did that a big drop of water fell down my shirt and I jumped so bad and hit my head so hard that I nearly knocked myself out. I laugh embarrassingly at the memory. It’s so peaceful out here and so very beautiful. I’ve never been out here before and I am aching to explore the place. I decide that it couldn’t hurt, so I get up, watching carefully for falling drops of icy death water. The crisp grass under my feet crunches as I step on it. I smile at sound of the grass and a feeling of peace envelopes me like a bubble. Another pair of crunching noises meet my ears. I am not alone. And as quickly as my bubble of peace arrives, it bursts.

I whirl around to meet Olivia. She is red in the face and her breathing is sharp and irregular. She runs over to me and collapses in my arms. I gasp at the sudden weight and wrap my arms around her to steady her. She looks exhausted. “What?” I say exasperatedly. Olivia just shakes her head. A huge smile is plastered across her face. It takes me ten minutes to calm her down before she can say anything at all. When she can speak all she says is: “Two. We… we got… you got… two”

Confusion clouds my brain and I try to shake it out, I need to think clearly to try and process what she is saying. “What do you mean? Two of what?”

“Two… two…” She coughs dryly and I realize how thirsty she must be. She must have run a very long distance very fast. I nod my head, urging her to go on. “Two… offers”

... 

What? 

“Two offers?”

Olivia nods her head excitedly.

“What?”

Olivia nods again, a little impatient this time.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes!” She says, finally fully regaining her use of speech “Two offers for you!” She smiles a wide smile that I do not return. “What’s wrong?”

“I-I’ll never see you again” I say, fighting back tears.

“Oh, Virge-“ Olivia wraps me up in a warm embrace and I shudder as the first tears fall “I know, but you’ll have a family! Isn’t that what you’ve always wanted?”

“Yeah but… I’d take you over a family any day” I admit

Olivia smiles “Don’t worry Virge. I promise, no matter who you end up with, I’ll see you again”

“How can you promise that?”
“Trust me”

Chapter End Notes

I hope y'all like that chapter. A new one should be out soon! Have a great day/night/evening and remember...

ROAST ME IF YOU SEE A TYPO
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Virgil meets the couples.

Chapter Notes

Guess who's back!
I am so sorry about how long this took to update
I thought I'd lost my motivation for this fic but then OUT OF NO WHERE, it comes back and forces me to write the next two chapters so :)
This actually started as two separate chapters but they were both too short so I combined them.
Enjoy!

Trigger Warnings: I'm not sure for this one so please tell me if there are any
(comments are appreciated!)

I have two things on my mind: constellations and OH MY GOD IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING!?!?!?!
Ok, so, maybe not that aggressive, but you get the idea.
So here I am, in Robins office, and I’m not in trouble. This is literally the first time I’ve been in Robin’s office, and I’m not in trouble.
It’s very fulfilling.
The door opens and in walks Robin, because it’s her office; and she is smiling, because I am not in trouble.
“They’re ready for you, Mister Storm” She says with a strange sort of light in her eyes. I jump out of my seat and walk over to the door. I hesitate for a moment before refusing to take part in the cliché that my brain had been considering and walk straight through the door, my brain, racing with possibilities of the people behind it.

~Five hours ago~

 Darkness enfolds me. Every time I breath in, my lungs fill with freezing air, washing out the stresses of yesterday and the promises of tomorrow. Thoughts come and go and I remember none of them. I don’t need, nor do I want to, anyway. I sigh and inhale the cold, refreshing air. Suddenly as if on instinct, my eyes flicker to the left. I catch a brief flashes of colour. I try to move closer and find that I cannot move. I thrash my arms out to the sides to propel myself forwards, but I’m stuck. It wouldn’t bother me, normally, but that colour seems like its screaming out to me, like its calling me. I have to get there I have to reach it. Desperation grabs my heart like a vice and I kick around wildly, willing myself to move. I don’t and the light flickers out and I am left, floating in darkness, still trying to move, for the first time: trying to see, hoping the light will come back. That’s when I
start to sink, down, down; farther than I’ve ever gone before. It goes darker than I’ve ever seen. I can’t see anything. It’s so loud I can’t think. I scream but I can’t hear myself, and so I am left to sink even further into crushing oblivion.

“Virrggggeee~”

I feel the familiar cold rush of air spread over my body as my blanket is ripped off of me. I groan at the sudden appearance of the crisp morning air and roll over, trying and failing to pull my blanket back up over me. “Tsk, tsk, tsk” Olivia says in amusement. She reaches down and picks me up. I flail my limbs in protest but it’s no use.

“You are freakishly strong for one so small” I say teasingly

“Oi, watch it mister” She says, swinging me around. My smile melts off my face as I start to become uncomfortably aware of how much attention we are attracting. My eyes anxiously flit around the room, taking in all the staring faces. Olivia seems to notice this and puts me down. She always notices. She’s good like that. “You excited for today?”

I give a sort of half-hearted nod and Olivia smiles softly “Aw, cheer up! Today’s your big day!” I shrug and turn my gaze to the floor, wishing that everyone else in the room would just disappear and take their prying eyes and pointed questions with them. “Hey, Virge” I raise my head slightly so I’m looking at Olivia through my bangs “Remember, you’re gonna get to choose. You got two offers! You get to pick which is best for you.”

“What if I don’t like either of them?” I ask.

Olivia’s smile becomes a little less genuine but it’s still there nonetheless “Well, we’ll burn that bridge when we come to it”

I didn’t like that answer. I don’t like uncertain answers. But I nod my head anyway. Either way, I’ll have to choose; there’s really no other place for me to go otherwise.

Olivia waves a little before leaving the room so I can get changed. As I’m getting dressed, I remember that I had a dream; the only thing is, I can’t remember what it was about.

~Present time~

I push open the door leading to the side room off of Robin’s office and I have to mentally restrain myself from jumping up and down and squealing in excitement as I lay eyes on the couple who made an offer for me. For me.

The words bounce around in my head. They almost don’t seem real. Too good to be true, like this is all some cruel trick to get back at me for the countless things I didn’t do. It suddenly becomes easier to restrain myself.

There are two people sitting behind the desk in front of me. Nothing odd jumps out at me at first, but they are the kind of people that, the longer you look at them, the more strange they become. At first glance I noticed nothing out of the ordinary but now that I look closer I can see strange little things appearing. Strange runes written hastily on their hands, fake smiles, mismatched jewellery, and their eyes, it was like they were pulling me in, daring me to come closer.

“Hello, Mr Storm” I snap out of my daze. The man in front of me had spoken. He was not smiling and his voice was cold and clipped and unwelcoming “It’s a pleasure to finally meet you” He said it like a lie. I nod my head, trying to push down the feeling of complete intimidation that was boiling up inside me. “My name is Damien Veritas and this is my sister, Lunar Veritas” Damien smiled coldly. I was beginning to not like him very much.

Lunar smiles a bright, fake smile after her introduction and offers her hand for me to shake “It truly is lovely to meet you Mr Storm” She says as I shake her hand timidly. I give a half-hearted smile and she beams. Her smile is warmer than Damien’s but still just as fake.

They were the kind of people you’d speed walk past on the street.

Damien looked pointedly up at Robin who was still standing in the door way “Could we have a moment alone?” He said sharply
Robin looked like she was about to fire back, but apparently thought better of it. Shooting Damien a weak glare, she left and closed the door behind her.

_This is how murders happen_— A horrible voice in the back of my head spoke. I shoved down the thought, trying to wrestle my uneasiness under control.

Damien had begun to flick through the pages on the desk, reading them with vague interest “Mr Storm, your reputation precedes you” I flush a bright red and open my mouth to defend myself “Don’t worry kid” He says with a icy smile “I never said it was a bad thing” He motions for me to sit down and I do. The room falls silent, with only the sounds of shuffling papers to fill the air. I shift uncomfortably in my chair trying to rid myself of the feeling of scrutiny that was coursing through my body. Damien laughs softly, like he’s impressed “Setting fire to a classroom?” He says incredulously.

Lunar gasps a little “Really!? Let me see!” She takes the papers from Damien’s hands and her strange eyes flit over them eagerly.

“N-no! I didn’t do it! I swear!” I say, my panic rising.

Damien laughs, sincerely this time “It’s ok Virgil” My name rolls unpleasantly off his tongue and I wish he had called me Mr Storm instead “We know” He winks discreetly at Lunar who giggles and passes the papers back. “It’s actually very impressive. We’ve heard stories of children setting fire to things but never actually physically destroying something” “But I didn’t do it!” Damien opens his mouth to retort but catches Lunar’s eyes as she shakes her head. “Ok” he said defeatedly. He shrugs as if it were no big deal “You didn’t do it; ok” I knew Damien didn’t believe me, but some part of myself knew better than to argue with him.

Lunar smiles at me again with her fake smile. I try to smile back but find that I can’t. I just wish these people would leave. Lunar seems to notice this “Perhaps we have overstayed our welcome” She gets up and brushes the non-existent creases out of her skirt and blouse. Damien looks up at her before sighing and getting up as well.

I stand up too, more than ready for them to leave. “It was great meeting you today Virgil” He said “Maybe we could meet another time, when you are ready of course” His eyes flash a dangerous yellow colour, (Trick of the light, I reason with myself) as he hisses “You should think about choosing us” I blink uncertainly. “Ok” I say tentatively.

Damien steps out of the light and the colour in his eyes vanish “Wonderful” He says, his cold persona back in place “We hope to see you again sometime” He steps out of the room.

Lunar is about to follow before she looks back and smiles her first genuine smile “Goodbye Virgil!” And then she leaves.

~*~

“-and then they just… left!” I finish my recount with a flourish of my hands, barely missing the pile of UNO cards that was stacked haphazardly on the floor in front of me “Careful, Virge!” Olivia says as she tries to steady the teetering pile of cards “Sorry! It was just so weird ya know? They were so intimidating and scary” Olivia nods her head and puts a card down on the deck “Murderer material” I laugh loudly ”No! Not like that! Just… strange” I look down at the two cards in my hand and place one on the deck “UNO” “Damn it!” Olivia says quietly, frantically shuffling through her four cards. “Aha!” She exclaims as she pulls out a card and throws it on the deck. “It’s nothing to worry about Virge! The next couple will show up any day now!” I place my last card down on the deck as Olivia gasps in horror “Yeah I sure hope so” ~*~

It was three days later when the second couple showed up. I was sitting in the dining room, alone
at my table. Kids throw irritated glances at me as I anxiously drum my fingers along the wooden table. My appetite has been missing for the two previous days and my mind is racing. Why were the first couple so interested in the strange occurrences? What did they know? Why did they leave so quickly? Did I do something wrong? I sigh nervously and continue to poke at my cold, untouched spaghetti.

After dinner, I change out of my signature black hoodie and jeans into some more comfortable clothes. I don’t own any pyjamas and I’ve never had the courage to ask for any. I just do without. I lay down on my bed and turn my head to look at the clock which was perched precariously on the tall set of drawers that the boys in my dorm share. The time read 9:22. Eight minutes until closing time. Eight minutes until another day of waiting.

I have been waiting for three days for the second couple to arrive and the bubble of hope seemed to deflate each time one passed. I have been trying really hard over the past few days to limit the number of accidents and misfortunes I had caused. In those three days, I had only caused two. The first time, all of my dormmates English essays had been found torn, shredded and scrunched up in a ball on the teacher’s desk. As usual, I was the first and only suspect. The second time was last night when one of the people working at the orphanage tripped down the stairs and sprained their leg. Again, I pleaded not guilty, and that I had been asleep at the time but – like always – the blame seemed to stick. The only person who defended me was Olivia, but even she had doubts.

So here I am, staring at the clock, counting down the minutes until closing time while everyone else fell asleep, completely oblivious to the fact that my entire life was about to change forever. Seven minutes to go. The air is filled with whispers and giggles of the people in the boy’s dorm. Six minutes to go. The whispers got quieter, but the nagging feeling in my brain did not. Five minutes to go. Robin had come around, telling us to be quiet. Silence fills the room.

Four minutes to go. A few people are asleep. The voice in my head has gotten louder now, but I can’t tell what it’s saying.

Three minutes to go. I start to fidget with the sheet. My baggy sleep clothes feel hot and sweaty. The voice is louder but not quite clear. To… come… going… never

Two minutes to go. I can hear the voice loud and clear now. They’re never going to come. They’re never going to come. They’re never going to come.

One minute to go. Everyone is asleep and the voice is screaming at me. They’re never going to come. They’re never going to come. They’re never going to come.

Thirty Seconds. THEY’RE NEVER GOING TO COME! THEY’RE NEVER GOING TO COME!

Five, four, three, two-

Knock knock knock!

I hear the sounds of a door opening and Robins muffled, annoyed voice. Another person speaks, the deeper tones of a man, but I can’t hear what they are saying. The door closed and I hear a pair footsteps approach. I can hear the voices now. “Please! Sir, I insist that you come and sit down so we can discuss this!”

“We would like to see him. As he is awake and the orphanage has not yet closed, it would be completely fine. Infact, my knowledge suggests that he has been waiting for us” The man who I heard out in the hallway speaks. His voice is deep and articulated. It sounds almost robotic. Another set of footsteps appear in the corridor. “I’ve already checked over everything, so we are good to go!” A man’s big, excited voice issues a raucous shushing noise from both Robin and the other man. “Oh! Sorry!” The second man lowers his voice to a loud whisper. “So… can we meet him?”

Robin speaks up “I’m afraid not. It is past closing time and- Sir!” The dorm room door opens and I immediately close my eyes and feign unconsciousness. “Really! This is unnecessary!” I open one of my eyes ever so slightly. The shorter of the two men present wore a pastel blue cloak which would have looked spectacular in the sunlight. His unnaturally blue eyes shine through the
darkness under a pair of round glasses. Hazel brown hair fell in waves over his eyes so he constantly had to brush it away. He had a fair smattering of freckles all over his light skin and his full lips were curved into a smile. The slightly taller man wore the same cloak but in black with a blue tie visible underneath. His eyes were the exact same shade of grey as mine. He has slightly rectangular glasses and dark brown, edging on black hair. His skin colour is reminiscent to hickory and he has a large pale birth mark on his left arm. The expression on his face was unreadable except for when the other man accidentally brushed up against him. When this happened, the skin on his face turned darker, his eyes flickered with colourful light and a small smile appeared on his face. Against my will, I immediately began to like these people.

Robin, however, did not. “Excuse me, but it is past closing time and the child you are looking for is asleep!” She whispered, irritably.

The man in the black cloak speaks up “You close at 9:30, correct?” Robin nods slowly, clearly intimidated “Well then, if you look at the clock, you will see that it is not past closing time. Infact, we have one minute to spare.” I tear my eyes away from the men to look at the clock and bite the inside of my cheek to stop myself from gasping. The second hand was moving around the clock, but the minutes were not changing, nor were the hours, I checked the current time. It was 9:29. A hop skip and an estimate away and I realised that the clock should read about 9:32. Robin looked very confused. Looking down at her watch and then back up at the clock, she struggled to find an argument. “As for the apparent necessity for his consciousness, that won’t be a problem as he is already awake” His grey eyes found me in the dark and I met them with my identical pair. He smiled ever so slightly and I could swear that I saw a flash of gold travel over his iris before he turned his gaze to Robin with a questioning look.

“I- alright then! You can meet him” She says, clearly defeated “But it’s up to the kid.” Both men turn to me and I sit up far too quickly, raising a shaking hand to flatten down my hair. “Sure!” I say hastily, before anyone could make the decision for me. My face flushes with embarrassment at my eagerness “I- I mean, ok. I’ll- I’ll meet with them” Both of the men smile “Lovely” Says the one in the blue cloak “We should introduce ourselves then!” He said looking at the other man.

Robin has apparently regained some of her authority “Not here!” She hisses quietly. The men turn to her and she suddenly looks very small “I mean, well, you might wake the other children!” “She’s right” The first man says quietly “Let’s move somewhere more comfortable, shall we?” He walks out of the room and motions for us to follow. As I walk back out through the door I glance at the clock again; it reads 9:35.

And I smile.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter should be up real soon!
Thanks for being patient!

(roast me if you see eatypocowards)
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Virgil meets the second family and has a big decision to make but don't worry he'll get through it

(or will he)

((Nah don't worry he will))

Chapter Notes

Welcome back to another chapter of 'Alex Has No Idea How To Maintain Consistency'.

Sorry for the delay. School is getting in the way of me writing. My spring break is in a few weeks (Yes. It's Spring over where I live. Doesn't stop it from raining, though) so hopefully I'll be able to write more. Thank you all for being patient and I hope you enjoy this chapter!

Trigger Warnings: Again, I'm not sure. Please comment if there are any so I can fix it ASAP

(As always: roast me if you see a typo)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I don’t mean to be suspicious, but there was definitely something strange about these people. Strange in a kind of good way, if that makes sense. They’re the kind of people that are so subtly quirky that they almost seem normal. The kind of people that at first you wouldn’t look twice at when passing them, but when you finally turn around to get another look, they’ve already turned a corner and are out of sight.

I like that about them. As the time passes I realize that I like a lot of things about them, but I can never put my finger on exactly what. I guess I just like them in general.

Robin leads us into her office, far enough away from the dorms that we won’t disturb any sleeping children. We enter the room in silence. Robin reluctantly offers the two men a seat behind the desk.
I sit facing them. The two men glance at Robin and one of them smiles awkwardly. Robin seems to get the hint because within seconds she is out of the room and I am left alone with the strangers. The taller man clears his throat awkwardly and I can see his jaw start to tense up. Great. Not even five minutes in and I’ve already made one of them feel uncomfortable. I just hope that they don’t know about the fire.

“So uh… Hi Virgil! It is Virgil right?” The man in the light blue cloak speaks and I nod tentatively, still unsure as to how I feel about them “Okay! Well, my names Patton Sanders but you can call me Patten” He smiles brightly and I give a soft smile back “And this is my husband, Logan!” He looks at the other man. He gives a small, tense wave and I smile a little at him. Patton looks over at Logan with concern and whispers something into his ear. The man relaxes a little but his jaw is still rock solid with tension. Patton sighs, “It’s okay Lo. I’m sure he’ll understand”

Logan shakes his head “Later” He says. I can’t help but wonder why he is so tense. Patton nods. “Well, anyway…” He looks at Logan who gives him an encouraging look “Let’s just get straight to the point. The thing is, Virgil; we’d love to have you. We would love for you to come with us. We understand that there is already another family who wants you too but… well it would be awesome if you could consider us”

I take a moment to process that.

“Y-you… want me?”

They both nod.

“What?”

“We see a lot of potential in you, and even though you may have a few incidents from time to time-” Great. So much for not knowing about the fire. “We really think that you would be best with us” He finishes his sentence with a little nod, as if reassuring himself.

“But- what about the fire, all those things that I-“

“How could we be mad at you for things you didn’t do?” Logan interrupts.

I go silent for a moment.

“How do you know I didn’t do those things?”

Patton smiles “Because we know what it’s like to grow up, Virgil. We especially know what it’s like growing up as someone like you”

“An orphan?”

Patton flushes pink and looks as if he regrets what he just said, “No. Not that” He says, his voice shaking with nervous laughter.

“I don’t understand”

“You will” Logan says with a small, stiff smile.

I shake my head a little, confusion battling curiosity. I decide against asking any further questions. Instead, I sit there in silence, waiting for one of the men to say something, for anyone to say something.
In the silence, I think over my options. I could go with the Veritas’. They seemed alright. Maybe they were a little creepy and condescending, but they didn’t seem like horrible people. When Robin was going over the details with me, they seemed like they were okay. Unmarried siblings who just wanted a child. Not murderers. Not bad people.

On the other hand, there was the Sanders family. A married couple. A little strange, but in a good way. They seemed nice. Definitely nicer than the Veritas’. Definitely nicer than any of the kids at the orphanage.

Then there’s Olivia. I can’t leave her. I don’t want to leave her. She’s my best friend. She stuck by me in my worst days and laughed with me on my best. I know she said that we would still keep in touch but she never told me how. I guess I have to trust her but it’s so hard. She’s like a sister to me and you can’t separate family.

Patton breaks the awkward silence “So um… is there anything you’d like to know about us?”

I think for a moment “Um… how far away do you guys live? It’s just… one of my friends here, well, she’s older than I am. She works here. Uh, she said that she’d keep in touch? Her name’s Olivia and uh… well… yeah. Did she talk to you or..?” I blush, feeling slightly embarrassed as I realize that I had been rambling.

“No. No-one spoke to us about that; however if you wish to keep in touch with her, that is entirely possible, even if you do not choose us” Logan answered. “And we live on the country side just outside of Scotland”

I nod, a happy feeling rising in my chest. It doesn’t matter who I pick, I’ll still be in touch with Olivia. Fantastic.

“Um… is there anything you want to know about me?” I ask them.

They look at each other before turning back to me and shaking their heads in perfect unison. “Unless there’s anything you want us to know?”

I shake my head as well and the awkward silence returns.

After a few moments of panicked reasoning pass, I suck in a deep breath. *Well, here goes nothing*-

“Ohay”

Patton looks up at me with a confused expression “Hm?”

“I… uh… I think I wanna go with… you guys”

Patton smiles brightly and even Logan smiles a little “Really!??”

I nod, a smile forming on my face as I gain confidence.

“Oh this is fantastic!” Patton says jumping up “Alright, well, I’ll get the paperwork ready. And you probably need a day or two to pack, right?”

I nod again. A fantastic feeling spreads through my body at the thought of packing, but not just packing for a trip or excursion; packing to leave.

I feel a sudden surge of guilt at my eagerness to leave but I push it down.

“Wonderful! Well, that went quickly!” They both get up and I stand as well, a little more clumsily
than when I sat down.

At this moment, Robin re-enters the room. I figure that she must’ve been listening through the door and by the looks of it, the Sanders have realized as well.

“Well?” Robin says as if she had heard none of our conversation. To be honest, she is fooling no-one.

Even so, the Sanders play along “Virgil will be staying with us”

I nod in agreement.

“Lovely” She says with a horrible look of relief in her eyes.

*There are many things I will miss*, I think as I smile to myself, *and she will not be one of them.*

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for being so patient with this next chapter. I've been trying to get this done for ages but, as I said before, school keeps getting in the way. Hopefully I'll be able to write more once spring break comes around.

Thanks again for reading and roast me if you see a typo cowards.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hello again! I'm so sorry about the wait for this chapter. It's finals week for me so I need to devote a lot of time to study. I really hope you guys enjoy this chapter!

I'm really glad that this fic has been successful. We recently hit 230 hits! Thank you guys so much! Every comment, kudos and hit that is left on this work makes me so happy it's unbelievable. Y'all are amazing. Have a great day/night/evening and enjoy!

(I'll give you a shout out if you can guess why Damien and Lunar's last names are Veritas)

The days that followed moved slowly. So slowly, it felt as if they were taunting me. I’ve been so used to everything happening so fast around me that I had no idea how slow time really was. I guess I was used to everyone moving on without me. It felt nice to leave everyone behind for a change.

Two days. That’s how long I was given to prepare. It may not seem like enough time, but I was already packed and ready to leave the morning after I met the Sanders. I spent the next few hours that I normally would’ve spent at school packing and unpacking, making sure I had everything that I needed. I even packed the burnt crisp of a paper that was once my mother’s note. It was beyond repair, but it still had a special place in my heart.

I asked Robin if I was going to see the Veritas’ again. She said that I wouldn’t. I felt a little guilty about not choosing them but I think I made a good decision. Besides, there were plenty of other children in the orphanage.

The next day, Olivia brought in the Sanders’ file so we could read it together while the other kids were at school. They both seemed like really nice people. They were both teachers (no matter how hard I looked, it never said where or what they taught). They lived just outside of Scotland in the countryside which was perfect. No neighbors.

It felt like the more I read about them the more mysterious they became. Their file was informative but vague. There was a lot to be said about them but not enough information on the topic to give me a general idea of what they were like. There were no specifics whatsoever.

That night, I didn’t sleep. I knew that the Sanders were coming the next day. Anticipation was high. Some small part of me thought that they wouldn’t come. It spoke to me in a way that I had never felt before. It told me to change my mind, to go to Robin’s office, to change it, to fix it.

I ignored that part of me but I still couldn’t sleep. The dorm air room was warm and suffocating and I needed to breathe. I was forgetting how to breathe. If I didn’t get air soon, I would start panicking and then a world of bad things could happen.

So I got up, got dressed and went outside, back to the garden.
As soon as the cold air hit my face I felt so much better. I could breathe, I could see, I could think.

The grass was wet with dew which sprayed up on my legs when I walked, making me shiver. I pulled my hoodie closer around me.

Tiny rays of weak light manage to slink through the trees and I knew it must be dawn.

When I reached a clearing in the trees, I glanced at the pinkish sun rising up from the horizon. The cold air and the freedom of this place calmed me, even though I knew I wasn’t free. I still had to wait. Just a few more hours to go.

I don’t know how long I stayed there for, but when I left, the sun had fully risen and the dew had started to dry up.

No one said anything when I returned to the building. Everyone knew that I left sometimes. Everyone knew that I would always come back.

I went back to my dorm. All the kids had left for school so it was nice and quiet. The cold morning air had finally penetrated the room and for once, it was a welcome feeling. My eyes felt heavy and it was then that I realised that I didn’t sleep. My body ached for sleep but I knew that if I slept now, I could miss the Sanders arriving. Sleep could wait, I needed to be prepared. That probably wasn’t the best decision, seeing as that I was already anxious on top of that. Anxiety heightens when you’re sleep deprived. Olivia taught me that.

I wanted to be productive, so I checked and double checked over my belongings again. I pulled everything out and repacked it as neatly as I could. I checked drawers and cupboards. I checked under my bed and under my mattress. I had to make sure that I didn’t leave anything behind. I didn’t want any part of myself to stay here.

When I was finally satisfied, I put my suitcase under my bed, just in case. I glanced at the clock. It read 11:46. The orphanage opened hours ago. My anxious thoughts returned and I had to continuously remind myself that the Sanders lived on the country side outside of Scotland. That’s at least a two hour drive from here. I just needed to be patient.

The minutes ticked past, then the hours. I paced the room. I went back outside. I visited Olivia. I even packed my bag again, but nothing made the time go any faster.

After I had repacked my bag for what felt like the billionth time, I realized that three hours had passed. The kids would be back from school soon, and then the orphanage would close. I swallowed down a lump in my throat and tried to reassure myself.

*Maybe they’ve forgotten? It’s pretty easy to forget about me. If they’ve forgotten, then someone needs to remind them.*

I take a few deeps breaths and begin to make my way to reception.

~*~

The person at the front desk was not impressed. “You want me to call them?” They said, raising an eyebrow.

“Yes. Can you do that?” I replied timidly, feeling slightly intimidated.

“Why?”
“Well… uh… t-they were supposed to come today and… uh… well, they haven’t shown up and I just w-wanted to make sure they haven’t f-forgotten about me or…” My voice trailed off.

The person at the front desk sighed “Your name?”

“Virgil Storm”

They nodded and turned away from me to pull up a file on a computer. A few moments passed before they turned back to me “They don’t have a number listed on their file”

“What?”

They gave me an exasperated look “It means that I can’t call them”

“Why don’t they have a number listed?”

“I dunno. They probably don’t have a phone or something. It’s not my business to know”

The room suddenly felt warm again.

I was forgetting how to breathe.

“C-could you please check again?”

“Look, kid, they’ll show up. Alright? Just be patient” They turn away from me and continue typing on their computer.

I lower my head, feeling foolish, and begin to walk away.

I look at the clock.

3:07

And the world feels like it’s crashing down.

I know it’s irrational. I know it’s stupid, but in the moment, I really thought that they wouldn’t come. I know there are hours and hours left to go but I was so tired and so used to people leaving me behind that I just couldn’t take it. I could feel my body begin to shake and tears were threatening to spill from my eyes. I place my hand on the doorknob and shakily open the door but I stop. I heard something. A car pulling up to a driveway. A vaguely familiar voice. I turn around just in time and there he was. My body stops shaking. The tears disappear.

Patton opens the door and politely waves to the person at the front desk who appears to be baffled by the man’s appearance.

To be honest, I was too.

He was wearing a long, thin, light blue cloak, and all sorts of silver rings and bracelets decorate his hands. When he moves, the cloak flows behind him like wisps of smoke. I can just see a thin, deep pocket on the inside of the cloak. A small part of what appears to be a stick pokes out from the top but it swishes out of view before I can get a good look at it.

A watch sits upon his wrist, but it’s not a normal watch with numbers. No, instead of numbers, planets dotted the inner rim. There was also only one hand, which was currently pointing to what seemed to be the planet Jupiter. However strange it might’ve seemed; it was a very beautiful watch. Elegant silver and white gold are intertwined on the outside and reach around the face of
the watch. It was sort of enchanting, in a way.

His hair was a mess and his eyes were as brightly blue as ever. Somehow, if possible, he seemed to have gained even more freckles. He looked different in the light of day. It made me smile.

The person at the front desk clears their throat “How can I help you sir?” They say with a forced smile.

Patton smiles brightly “Oh, hello. I’m here to pick up Virgil. Virgil Storm? Is he here?” Patton looks around as if they were hiding me somewhere. My smile widens.

A moment later, his bright blue eyes find my grey ones “There you are! Are you packed?” I nod “Brilliant! Go get your bags and say your goodbyes. But be quick! We’re on a bit of a tight schedule” Patton taps his strange watch and gives me a sort of guilty smile.

I nod again without saying anything and race off to my room.

When I get there, I reach under my bed and pull out my bag. I glance inside the bag and around the room one last time, just to make sure that I didn’t miss anything. When I’m satisfied, I run out of the dorm and towards Olivia’s office.

I knocked on the door once. No answer.

Twice. Still no answer.

I pounded on the door three times and was met with an annoyed voice “Alright, alright!” Olivia opens the door and I throw myself into her arms. “Whoa! Hey Virge. You okay?”

There are a million things I want to say to her. I want to thank her, I want to apologize, I want to make it up to her. Somehow, I want to say everything I’ve been to scared to say.

“I’m going now” Is all I manage to choke out.

She hugs me tighter “Aw, hey Virge, it’s okay”

“No, it’s not okay. I wont get to see you again!”

“Of course you will, silly. Remember?”

“Yeah but… the Sanders don’t have a number listed which means t-they probably don’t have a phone s-so I can’t call you. They a-also live really far a-away which means we c-can’t see each other in person and…”

“Virgil… it’s okay. The no phone thing and the distance isn’t a problem” Olivia gives me a reassuring smile “I’m sure the owls wouldn’t have a problem travelling that far…” She adds as a quiet afterthought.

“Owls?” I say, confused.

“N-nothing! Don’t worry about it Virge” She brushes it off like it was nothing, but I can see the subtle panic hidden in her eyes. I want to ask questions but I don’t. I’ll figure it out soon enough, I guess.

We say our goodbyes and I fight back tears. I wish she could come with me, but I know she can’t.

Just as she was about to close the door, she salutes. I do the same. Then the door shuts. Then she’s
I take a deep breath. I almost couldn’t turn away.

I remember what Patton said about how we were on a tight schedule and I begin to run at breakneck speed towards the reception.

By the time I arrive, I’m out of breath.

“Whoa kiddo. Slow down. I know I said that we’re on a tight schedule but you ran like it was the end of the world!” Patton said with a little laugh. He had no idea that it kind of was “I still need to do a little bit of paperwork so you can catch your breath while I finish up” I nod and sit down on one of the chairs in the corner of the room. It takes all my self-control not to go through my bag again. I look around the room for the last time and feel a sense of vague intimidation. It’s quiet. And when it’s quiet, your thoughts get loud.

Four days. That’s how long I think I’ll last before the Sanders send me back. Of course, when that happens, I won’t be left without any options. I’ll still have the Veritas’. Will they still want me by then? Will I have to move orphanages? I’ll be left with a horrible track record and no reputation. I can’t start over. I just can’t. I couldn’t-

“Virgil?” I snap out of my thoughts and look up at Patton “Are you ready to go?”

I nod again. I wish I could say something to him as a reply but my voice had disappeared.

How long would it take for him to send me back?

How long would it take until he hates me?

Chapter End Notes

Roast me if you see a typo!

(Comments are appreciated)
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Let Patton say heck 2k19

Chapter Notes

What's this? Alex posted a chapter on time? Yep, that's right! A mere few days after I posted chapter five, motivation slapped me in the face and forced me to write so voila! This chapter probably needs editing and I cannot tell you how long it took to do the HTML formatting.

Also, I recently asked y'all if you could answer why Damien and Lunar's last names were Veritas. Congratulations to Flamecaster for getting it right! Veritas means truth in Latin and it is the name of the Roman goddess of truth. It was meant to be ironic.

Anyways, I hope y'all enjoy!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The drive to the Sanders’ house was... awkward, to put it lightly

I sat in the front seat with Patton while my bag was resting in the back. Every once in a while I would glance back at my bag, just to make sure it was safe.

The car Patton drove was old. Not extremely old, just not as modern as some cars you see on the road these days. It was maybe ten or twenty years older than most of the cars we drove past. That didn't bother me, though. In fact, it was kind of cool in some weird way. I could tell there were some places in the car that had been modified. Extra knobs and dials had been added here and there, and I'm almost certain that the engine had been modified because you could barely hear the thrum that it makes when your driving. The lack of noise meant that the silence stretched, and when the silence stretches, so does the awkwardness.

About ten minutes in I tried to make conversation by asking why Logan wasn’t there. Patton said he was busy with work. Then we fell back into an awkward silence, both of us, wondering what to say next.

*What exactly do you say to your brand new father, anyway?*

After an hour of us trying and failing to make decent small talk, we gave up on our attempts and I took to staring out the window.

It was then I realized that we were driving fast. Too fast. Definitely above the speed limit. The green hills went past so quickly that it made me dizzy to look at them. As we shot past a speed
limit sign, I barely got a glimpse of the speed we should be going: 40 mph.

We were going at 80.

My jaw tensed up tightly and I held onto the edges of my seat for dear life. I felt like we could crash at any moment, but cars seemed to swerve around to clear a path for us. I’m pretty sure my mind was making it up, or maybe I truly was insane, but I could’ve sworn I saw a mailbox jump aside for an oncoming car. My heartbeat was pounding in my ears and I try not to think of what would happen if we crashed. Don’t think about that. You’re gonna freak yourself out. Patton knows what he’s doing. But as we hit 85 mph, I started to wonder how if he actually did know what he was doing.

For the first hour of the journey, the car’s silence prevented me from realizing how fast we were actually travelling, but now that I can see it, now that I know; I am beyond terrified. We hit 90 mph and my whole body tensed up with fear.

Patton must’ve noticed how tense I was because he spoke up “Am I driving too fast?”

I nod stiffly and he slows down to about 50 mph. Still above the speed limit, but much, much better than before. I relax a little and release some of the tension from my body.

“Sorry, I’m not really used to these... things”

“It’s okay” I say, though it really wasn’t. I didn’t exactly want to die on my way to their house. That would be rude.

I thought we would sink back into silence, and we did for a while, but for some reason, about half an hour later I tried to spark up conversation again except this time, it worked.

“So... I read your file. It said you were a teacher?”

Patton nodded happily, apparently glad to be engaging in conversation “Yep!”

“What and where do you teach?” I ask, a little shyly.

“I teach charms at Hogwarts” Patton said confidently, like he didn’t just utter absolute nonsense. Even so, I nod like I understand. Patton laughs “You probably have no idea what I’m talking about” I nod again, a little embarrassed “I thought so. Should I explain it to you now or do you want to wait until Logan can explain it to you as well?”

“C-could you explain it now?”

Patton sighs and nods. He pulls over on the side of the road and the car jolts to a stop. We’re in the country now. I can tell by the rolling fields of bright green that were dotted with trees on either side of us, and the fact that the roads have gotten narrower and much less crowded. It looked like we were the only ones around for miles.

I looked at him expectantly and he sighs again “There’s no easy way to explain this to you. Heck, there’s no easy way to explain this to anyone” Patton said with a little laugh “I just want to make sure you’re okay, alright? If you want to ask a question, just do it; you don’t have to wait for me to finish. I know how confusing this will be for you so just ask me whatever you want to know”

I don’t say anything but I do nod. I’m already feeling confused and I can think of a million questions to ask and Patton hasn’t even begun explaining yet.
“Hogwarts... is a school of wizardry. Young witches and wizards go there to learn about magic. That’s where I teach” I tried to be understanding, but I ended up looking at Patton like he was insane.

Wizardry?

“I know how crazy it sounds” Patton says. I can see panic beginning to edge into his expression “But really, it’s true. I’m a wizard, Logan’s a wizard, you’re a wizard—”

“What?”

This time it’s Patton’s turn to be confused “Hm?”

“I’m a... wizard?” I say with a look of complete, utter confusion.

“Yeah!” Patton said, apparently mistaking my confused expression for one of surprise.

I didn’t know what to say. A horrible voice in the back of my head told me that it was a trick. That this was all some sort of game to get me to act stupid so the people at the orphanage could get back at me for all the things I had done.

For a moment, I believed that voice, and I wanted to cry, I wanted to scream, I wanted to leave.

“Prove it” The words fall out of my mouth before I know what I’m saying. In that moment, I sound very unlike myself.

Patton nods in understanding and his smile vanishes. He reaches into his cloak and pulls out the long, thin stick I caught a glimpse of earlier. I fight the urge to laugh.

“Can I see the message?”

“W-what message?” I say, but I know exactly what he’s talking about. My mother’s note, the one that was burnt in the fire. I moved it from my bag and into my pocket while Patton was doing the last of the paperwork. He must’ve seen it, but how he knew it was a message, I did not know.

I was hesitant to just hand over something as precious as my mother’s note, but I trusted Patton... to some extent.

I reach into my pocket and pull out the remains of my mother’s note. After a few moments of hesitation I cautiously hand it over to Patton. Patton smiles at me and I try to smile back, but it feels impossible. I was almost holding my breath, waiting for him to laugh and tell me it was all a joke. I waited for disappointment, but disappointment never came.

Instead of telling me that he was joking and that this was all a trick, Patton lifted the stick in his hand and tapped the ashes “Reparo” He muttered as he did so.

For a moment, nothing happened, and I was convinced he was insane, or maybe I was insane. I opened my mouth to say something but I stopped. The ashes had started to move.

The note shot back together in a matter of seconds. I stared on in shock.

I blinked a few times, and pinched my arm in case this was a dream. But it was not a dream, and there it was, my mother’s note, completely intact.

To say I was speechless was an understatement.
Patton handed the note back to me “Like I said, wizardry”

“How did you-?” I examined the note in awe. The paper didn’t have a single tear and no matter how hard I looked I couldn’t see a trace of ash on it anywhere “You’re really a… a wizard?”

Patton nodded, apparently glad to finally get through to me “Yeah. I started at Hogwarts when I was your age” Patton’s eyes widened, like he’d remembered something “Oh! I almost forgot! I have something for you!” He reached into his cloak once more and pulled out a parchment envelope. The letter was sealed with green wax and on the front of it, in the same hue, was my name Virgil Sanders, written in beautiful cursive writing. I stared at it like it was gold. “Well go on!” Patton said giddily “Open it!” The excitement was clear in his eyes. Whatever this was, it was a big deal.

I carefully tore open the seal, hands shaking slightly, heart beating a million miles a minute. The same green ink was used to carefully write the contents of this letter in smaller, neater print. Patton has turned away from me, but I can just see the wide excited smile still plastered on his face.

I press the creases out of the paper and try to read, but the letters start to move and all of a sudden I can’t read. The small, green letters jumble around and mix up so much that I can’t make out any words. I want to ask Patton for help, but I don’t want to bother him. Patton turns to look at me and I stare back at him with wide, scared eyes.

Is he angry? Is he going to yell at me?

Patton didn’t yell. Instead, he pointed the stick at the paper and muttered another strange word. I look down at the letter and the words are suddenly clear. Gratitude and relief floods my body "Thank you" I say in a quiet, awestruck tone. I begin to read silently to myself.

Virgil Sanders,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please see attached note for the required materials. Term begins on September 1st.

We await your owl.

Regards,

Headmaster Arden

I needed a moment to process what I had just read before I turned to the attached note.

First-year students will require:

Uniform

Three Sets of Plain Work Robes (Black)

One Plain Pointed Hat (Black) for day wear

One Pair of Protective Gloves (dragon hide or similar)

One Winter Cloak (Black, silver fastenings)
(Please note that all student’s clothes should carry name-tags at all times)

Books

The Standard Book of Spells, Grade 1 by Miranda Goshawk

A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot

Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling

A Beginner's Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch

One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore

Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander

The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

Other Equipment

1 Wand

1 Cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)

1 set of glass or crystal phials

1 telescope

1 set of brass scales

Students may also bring an Owl, a Cat or a Toad.

PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST YEARS ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS.

If this was a trick, they went through a lot of effort to convince me.

In a way, I kind of did believe. I wanted to believe. I really wanted it to be true.

So I did believe. I would let myself go along with it for a little while, just until I was sent back.

“This… cannot be real”

“Haven’t you ever wondered why strange things seem to happen around you? Like the fire. Were you angry? Were you scared? Those emotions usually trigger a surge of power that can affect your surroundings. Your powers however seem to be slightly… heightened” Patton catches the worried look on my face “It’s okay though! A lot of kids like you have heightened powers. It’s nothing to be scared of. It’s completely normal” Patton says reassuringly, though I’m not sure if he’s reassuring me or himself.

I hope it’s the former.

“So what now?”
“What do you mean?"

“Well, I’m a wizard, what do I do about it?"

Patton smiles and taps the letter in my hand “You go to school”

“B-but I don’t know anything about magic! I didn’t even know it was real up until now!”

“Most witches and wizards didn’t know about magic when they were your age. It’s nothing to worry about”

“Did you know about magic when you were my age?”

“Yes, but that’s different. I was born into a wizarding family” Patton said with a soft smile.

“Did Logan know?"

Patton shakes his head “Nope! He’s muggle-born” A confused look crosses over my face at the strange word. Patton notices “Oh, muggle-born means his parents weren’t magic. Muggle is our word for non-magic folk”

I nod again and turn my head to look at the stick in Patton’s hand “Is that your wand?"

Patton holds it up “Yes it is! Ten inches, oak wood with unicorn hair core”

I stare at it in awe “Whoa. Will I get to use one of those?”

“Yes, but not outside of school. It’s illegal to use magic outside of a wizard-or-witch-only area”

“But you just used magic. Twice!”

“Yeah, but I’m of age. You have to be seventeen or over to use magic anywhere”

I nod in understanding “Who made that law? It there some kind of magic government?”

Patton laughs “Yep! The Ministry of Magic”

“There’s a Ministry of Magic!?" Patton nods “Whoa”

Patton smiles and laughs a little “I’ll answer the rest of your questions when we get home. We’re running a little late, I told Logan we’d be home by five” He puts the car in gear, pulls back out onto the road and continues driving.

~*~

By the time we arrive at their house, I can think of a million questions to ask. We drove the rest of the way in silence, which could’ve been the hardest thing I’ve ever done. I could barely bite back the thousands of questions I wanted so desperately to ask.

Logan was waiting outside when we arrived. His eyes shone gold in the dying light and a small smile was present on his face. I stepped out of the car and stretched my cramped limbs. I then got my bag out of the back seat after insisting to Patton that I could carry it myself. I was still holding onto my mother’s note and my acceptance letter and I wasn’t planning on letting go any time soon.

“Welcome home, Virgil” Logan said as Patton and I approached.
“Thanks” I said shyly

The faint gold in his eyes disappeared and his jaw tensed up again when we got close. Patton sighed “It’s alright Lo, I explained everything”

Logan exhaled with relief and released the tension from his jaw. The golden color flooded back into his eyes, stronger and brighter than ever “Good. Thank you for doing that”

“It’s no problem” Patton said with a tired smile

I looked into Logan’s eyes, confusion clouding my own “Your eyes were grey before…” I said quietly.

“My eyes change color depending on the emotion that I am currently feeling. I can suppress the color, and when I do that, they turn grey”

I nod for what feels like the billionth time today, but I don't ask why they change. Probably some magic thing. I might even learn about it at school.

“We should probably go inside and get you settled in so you can get some rest. We have a big day ahead of us tomorrow!” Patton says cheerfully.

“What are we doing tomorrow?”

“We’re going to get your school supplies! Like your wand, your books and robes!”

I nod again, feeling excitement bubble up inside me. The two men smile at me and I smile back. I think I’m going to like it here.

I think I'm going to like being a Sanders

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this, I hope you enjoyed!

Roast me if you see a typo.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Virgil goes to the wizard shops and nearly suffocates.

Chapter Notes

Warnings: Implications and scenes depicting suffocation (no-one dies), if there is anymore, please let me know ASAP

Hello again! I hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

From the moment I stepped inside the Sanders’ house, the whole pretence of what I though a wizards dwelling would look like was out of the question.

In truth, I had no idea what a wizard’s house would look like. I did, however, have assumptions.

I thought that the house would be cluttered and small, with evidences of impossible magic everywhere. I thought there would be broomsticks, bright colours, loud noises. I thought it would be strange and crazy and weird, like a storybook fantasy.

It was none of those things.

The house was warm and spacious. Neutral colours surrounded me the moment I stepped inside. Unlit candles could be found on almost every plausible surface, and their sweet scent made this place a calming environment. There were little to no traces of magic, but a powerful aura seemed to take hold of me; an aura that I could only link it to something supernatural.

Everything seemed slower here.

The Sanders didn’t say anything as I ventured further into the wide corridor.

Photographs lined the walls and I admired them with interest. Most of the photos were shots of a younger version of the Sanders and their family. Most of them were of people I’d never seen before. Everyone was smiling, most seemed to be laughing, just a small moment of bliss in their lives captured and displayed. A flash of black and blue caught my eye and I turned my head to see yet another photo, this time, just of Logan and Patton. Logan was wearing a cloak, similar to the one he was wearing when we met, except it was black, with a white dress shirt and a black tie. Patton was dressed in pale blue and silver, with elegant bracelets decorating his wrists and a thin veil, pushed away from his face, that reached just below his waist.

I figured it must’ve been taken on their wedding day and the thought made me smile.

The troubling thing was the people in the photo smiled back.
I jumped and stepped back in astonishment. After blinking a few times and regaining my senses, I looked closer at the photo, thinking that my eyes were playing tricks on me.

But my eyes had not deceived me.

Patton waved cheerfully up at me and Logan smiled, his eyes, a bright gold. I stared at the photo, at a loss for words and unable to look away, as about a million questions presented themselves to me at once.

*It’s magic. This is a place where two wizards live, of course there will be magic. If I’m extremely surprised by this then we must have quite a night ahead of us*

I reluctantly swallow down the questions and turn back to the Sanders and away from the photo, though I make a mental note to ask about it later.

By now a certain awkwardness had settled over the three of us. I notice Logan’s eyes are a light green.

It was Patton who spoke up, breaking the momentary awkwardness “Your room’s upstairs. It’s the third door on the left. Why don’t you go put your things down, then, when you come back downstairs, we can answer all your questions”

I nod without saying anything and make my way upstairs. There are more photos, but none of them are moving; and trust me, I checked.

I count the doors on the left, making sure I enter the right room, mostly out of respect for the Sanders’ privacy, and fear of what I might find if I enter the wrong one.

I push open the door to my new room and look around. It was a decent size for a bedroom, and a window on the far side of the room would let in plenty of light during the day. Now, an orange glow is cast throughout the room from the dying light of the sun. It looks eerie, and I flick on the light. There is a built-in cupboard on one side of the room. I open it up to see it is empty except for two large trunks at the bottom. There is also a set of drawers, and a nightstand next to a comfortable looking bed that was positioned under the window.

I take out my stuff from my bag and start to put it all away. It doesn’t take long to fully unpack. The whole contents of my bag fits in only one drawer.

I just stand there, in the middle of the room for a few minutes, so I don’t seem too eager.

Just when I can’t stand the weight of all the questions resting on my shoulders, I begin to walk back downstairs.

Patton and Logan are waiting for me in the loungeroom, talking quietly amongst themselves. Their whispered conversation ended abruptly as soon as I entered the room.

Patton motioned for me to sit down and I did, just about as far away from them as I could manage without seeming rude and distant.

“So… I imagine you have quite a few questions” Logan says, his voice, eerily monotone.

I nod and stare at my shoes, feeling awkward and uncomfortable, even though I was desperate for answers.

After a few more moments of awkward silence I push aside my discomfort and take in a deep
breath before asking one of my burning questions “What’s this school like? Like, the subjects and the teachers, you know, just in general”

“Well, the subject that are available are Potions, Charms, Care of Magical Creatures, Herbology, History of Magic, Defence Against the Dark Arts, flying lessons, Divination, Astronomy, Ancient Runes and Arithmancy. There might be more, those are just the ones I can name off the top of my head. Each subject has one or more qualified witch or wizard teaching it

There are four houses, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, Gryffindor and Slytherin. Ravenclaw is for those who value knowledge. Hufflepuff, for those who value kindness and trust. Gryffindor, for those who value bravery and daring. And Slytherin, for those who value ambition and cunning”

“You were in Ravenclaw, right?” I guess, speaking slowly and cautiously.

“Correct” Logan says with a ghost of a smile “And Patton was in Hufflepuff. Now, the people you meet will tell you many things about these houses, and you should not believe them. It’s up to you to make your own judgements about the houses and the people within them”

I nod “Okay. Um… you’re a teacher, right? What do you teach?”

“Yes, I am a teacher at Hogwarts. I teach the flying lessons”

“Flying?”

“On broomsticks, yes”

“On broomsticks?”

“Yes”

“Why?”

“Transportation, mainly, though the class does also focus on Quidditch for a while”

“Quidditch?”

“Oh goodness!” Patton spoke up in shock “That’s right, he doesn’t know about Quidditch! Oh gosh, I forgot about that, that does come as quite a shock”

“What’s Quidditch?”

“Well, Quidditch is… oh I better let Logan explain it, he knows it better than anyone” Patton said with a little laugh.

“Quidditch is a sort of magic sport. It’s played in the air on broomsticks, which are enchanted to fly. There are four balls, the quaffle, two bludgers, and the quickest and tiniest of them all, the Golden Snitch. There is a team for each house. There are four Chasers on each team, whose goal is to put the quaffle through one of the three hoops on the other end of the field. Each time a goal is scored, ten points are awarded to the team that scored. The Beaters job is to hit the bludgers to the opposing team, so that they are rendered unable to score for at least a short while. The bludgers are enchanted to fly at players at random, sometimes knocking them off their brooms. The Beaters also must direct the bludgers away from their own team. There are two Beaters on each team”

Logan paused before continuing, as if checking that I was still interested. I was beyond interested. I was rapt with attention “There is also a Seeker. The Seekers job is to catch the Golden Snitch,
which is an extremely difficult task as the ball is small and impossibly fast. When the Snitch is caught, one hundred and fifty points is awarded to the team that caught it and the game ends. Catching the Snitch doesn’t always mean victory. You must plan exactly when you should catch it, making it all the more difficult”

“Whoa” I said as I took in all of this new and wonderful information “Did you play when you were in school?”

“Yes. I was the Seeker on the Ravenclaw team from my second year, up until my seventh and final year. Patton also played. He was a chaser”

Patton nodded happily “Yep! That’s actually how Logan and I met, but that’s a story for another time” He said with a light blush.

I nod again, slowly. My brain was still processing all of this information. I hadn’t asked a quarter of my questions yet, but my thoughts were slow and long. I stifled a yawn behind my hand, but I wasn’t fooling anyone.

“You must be tired” I shake my head in weak protest and stifle another yawn. Patton smiles softly “Come on, time for bed. We have a big day ahead of us, you’ll need to get some rest. We’ll answer the rest of your questions tomorrow”

“Alright” I say getting up slowly. I walk over to the staircase and paused before turning back “Goodnight” I say, a tiny bit shy.

“Goodnight Virgil” They both say in perfect unison.

I give a small wave and walk back upstairs, towards my new room.

I don’t bother to get changed and I’m asleep the moment my head hits the pillow.

~*~

I am awoken the next morning by a sliver of sunlight that managed to slink through the drawn curtains. Judging by the light orange glow, it’s early. Around late dawn.

I yawn and try to stretch the sleep out of my tired limbs.

I’m used to waking up early, so it doesn’t take long before I’m wide awake and alert.

It feels strange waking up in my own room, without the whispers and chatter of others. The silence is sort of peaceful, but unfamiliar. It’s not that I don’t like it, it’s just different.

Whether it’s good different or bad different is up for debate.

I hear soft footsteps coming from downstairs. Someone is awake.

I get up as quietly as I can and try to brush some of the creases out of my shirt. I slowly walk out of the room and down the stairs as silently as possible.

Luckily for me, I’m very good at not being seen, so sneaking downstairs unnoticed was extremely easy.

Logan and Patton were sitting in the living room, talking in hushed, excitable tones. I couldn’t hear what they were saying, but they looked happy, so nothing bad had happened. Yet.
After about five minutes, Patton looked up and found my eyes.

I felt my face flush a bright pink at being discovered to be eavesdropping. I was sure that Logan and Patton would be mad at me.

But they weren’t. Instead, Patton smiled “Good morning. You’re up early”

I shrug a little shyly, as if to say that it wasn’t that early.

“Well, now that we’re all up, we might as well get going”

“Where are we going?”

“Diagon Alley, of course! We’re going to get all of your school stuff”

My breath hitches and my heart leaps “Okay” I say with a tone that was a little more than halfway between forced casual and unbelievably excited.

Patton giggles and I realize that I’m pretty bad at concealing excitement.

“So… we’re leaving now?”

“Yes!”

“H-how are we getting there?” My nervousness and excitement were making me all jittery. My heart was fluttering, and my breathing was picking up speed. I tried to take a few deep breaths to calm myself.

Logan glances at Patton and Patton’s smile falters a little.

“Well… the quickest way to get there would be apparition. But…”

“But?”

“It’s not exactly an enjoyable experience, especially if you’ve never done it before. It’s completely fine if you don’t want to- “

“It’s okay!” I say hastily “Really, I’ll be fine”

Patton nodded and smiled reassuringly “Well, okay” He took Logan’s hand and stretched out his other towards me “I’m gonna count down from three. Make sure you take a deep breath before we go and whatever you do, don’t let go”

I nod and take his hand. Part of me was screaming at me to let go, that this was dangerous; but another part, a braver part, told me that I needed to do this, I needed to get used to this, I needed to experience everything because this could be over in an instant.

“Three”

I shut my eyes tight and try to reassure myself.

“Two”

My breaths become shallow and quick. I can feel myself start to panic.

“One”
There’s no going back now. I grip Patton’s hand as hard as I could and suck in a deep breath, preparing for the worst.

I feel my body lurch forward and I am thrown of balance. I can’t breathe, I can’t see. Everything is rushing around me, so fast, so loud. It feels like walls are on all sides of me, crushing me. I open my eyes slightly and see nothing but crushing blackness. My lungs are burning, and I realize that I am running out of breath. My heart jolts, and I feel Patton’s hand slipping out of my grip. I try to hold on but it’s no use. I start to fall, down and down…

I hit the ground and my knees buckled underneath me. I can hear voices calling to me, but I don’t care. I need to breathe. My lungs are still burning from pressure. I lie on the ground, struggling to inhale, struggling to exhale. Everything is spinning and my head is aching. Suddenly, I feel arms around me, and I’m being pulled upwards.

The stranger’s arms are still around me as I regain my balance. I know they’re not Patton or Logan. They are shorter than them, but taller than me. They smell strongly of cinnamon and some sort of exotic flower. It relaxes me. My breathing begins to return to normal, but I don’t open my eyes.

“Are you alright?” I notice they have an accent. It’s vague but noticeable. I can’t tell where it’s from.

Wait. They spoke to me. Right. Am I okay? I don’t know. Everything still hasn’t stopped spinning. At least I can breathe again.

“Yes” I manage to croak out. My voice cracks a little.

The stranger let’s go of me and I stumble a little, but I’m able to stand. I realize that I still have my eyes shut tight. I open them and face the stranger.

My heart jolts.

He’s tall and thin, with long, wavy, auburn hair which is tied back from his face in a messy bun. A strand of his hair falls in his face and he brushes it away like second nature. His skin is a light almond colour and his eyes are the type of piercing green you only read about in stories.

He isn’t pretty.

He’s Disney prince level gorgeous.

I stare for a moment, until I realize that staring is rude. Then I look at the ground, and I realize that not maintaining eye contact is also rude.

To whoever invented proper eye contact: who hurt you?

“Did you apparate all by yourself?” The boy said with an awed expression.

“N-no. I came with my… parents”

“Oh…” He said, looking a tiny bit disappointed “Well, where are they?”

“I don’t- I don’t know”

“Did you let go when you were apparating?”

I nod and look at the ground, feeling embarrassed.
“Hey don’t worry! I’ve done that loads of time, it’s no big deal. We’ll find your parents. My name’s Roman by the way! Roman Prince. What’s yours?”

I can’t decide what accent he has. French, Spanish, German? No, none of those. It’s like he invented it himself. It really is lovely.

He asked me a question, didn’t he? What was it? Something about names… god I need to stop staring at him but wow his eyes are really green.

After a moment of panicked silence, I speak up “Virgil! My name’s Virgil. Virgil Sanders”

“Well Virgil” Roman extends his hand “It’s a pleasure to meet you”

I shake his hand. His skin is so soft, it’s like he’s wearing gloves.

“Virgil!?” I hear Patton’s voice calling to me.

“Patton!” I yell back

Then he’s there, beside me. I feel relief like waves crashing over me. Patton pulls me into a tight hug “OhmygoshIwassoworriedaboutyouwearingbutoyouweren’tthereandwetriedlookingforyoubutwecouldn’t”

I wriggle out of Patton’s iron grip “I’m okay” I say quietly “Sorry, I just couldn’t hold on any longer”

“It’s okay. I’m just glad that we found you” He smiled softly and reassuringly

“Hello! I don’t believe we’ve met. You must be Virgil’s father!” Roman said cheerfully “I’m Roman! It’s lovely to meet you”

“Oh, hello! I’m Patton! Your name doesn’t ring a bell. Do you go to Hogwarts?

“This year will be my first year”

“Oh! It’s Virgil’s first year this year as well!” Patton said with a wide smile

Roman looks at me with those bright green eyes and smiles and my stomach does a somersault.

“Well, that’s fantastic. I guess at least I’ll know someone when I get to Hogwarts”

“Two people, actually. I teach charms!”

“Really! That’s so cool”

As they continue talking, I begin to zone out, only partially paying attention to what’s being said. My thoughts wander a little.

French, I decide, He has a French accent

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed!
Next chapter should be out in the next month. Sorry for the wait, I've been pretty busy lately with school and stuff.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Warnings: Mentions of food, mentions of cobwebs/spiderwebs,

Chapter Notes

Hi y'all! I hope you enjoy this chapter!

We didn’t immediately part ways with Roman, like I thought we would after he and Patton had finished their conversation. He ended up introducing me, Patton and -when he eventually found us- Logan to his parents. They were both dressed in long, bright red robes, unlike Roman, who was wearing a simple white t-shirt and jeans. They couldn’t look less alike to their son. Both parents had dark blonde hair and soft blue eyes, with round faces, pale skin, and just a touch of freckles. If Roman didn’t introduce them as his parents, I would’ve assumed that they had never met.

The one similarity I could find between them was that both his parents had French accents, but they were much more noticeable than Roman’s.

They were both very polite people, and they were sweet to me. Patton and Roman’s mother, Clara, hit it off immediately, and got along very well. Logan and Roman’s father, Lucas, were much quieter around each other, but they did engage in polite small talk, though whether they enjoyed each other’s company was a mystery to me.

While the adults were talking, I kept my head down and only spoke when spoken to, something I was taught to do from a young age.

After about ten minutes of me awkwardly half-engaging in conversation and Patton spoke up “We should probably get going, we have lots to do and I’m sure you guys do too!”

Roman looked disappointed “Aww. But we only just met you!”

Patton smiled “Don’t worry kiddo, we’ll definitely see each other again. School starts in three days!”

My stomach jolts when I hear that. Three days. I hadn’t realised. I needed to get my books and start studying as soon as possible, so I wouldn’t be behind. Because I will be behind.

“Okay then! I’ll see you all soon! Bye sir! Bye Virgil!”

I wave a little shyly as we start to walk away and Roman smiles brightly.

My back is turned, but I can feel his sharp green eyes follow me out of sight.

“Alright” Patton says as he consults the list of supplies “First we should get your books, then we can get your supplies and robes. And then we can get your wand! You always have to save the best
“Okay” I say, starting to focus. I turn my gaze from in front of me to look at the wide expanses of shops on either side of me. Windows were filled with colour and the shops were bustling with people trying to get their shopping done. I could hear people talking quickly and excitably from all directions. Sounds of people, the opening and closing of doors and the occasional loud bang filled the air, along with a vague smell of smoke.

All the people and the noise should’ve made me feel uncomfortable, but I had never felt so alive. It was much quieter when we got into the bookshop. Shelves lined the walls, filled with books, some the size of paving stones and some, smaller than the palm of your hand. Some were full of words that were barely squeezed onto the page and some were completely blank. It was fascinating. We picked out my school books with ease, as they were all in the same general area and payed for them with a few strange golden and silver coins. I decided to ask about them later. There would be plenty of time to ask later.

When we got out of the store, I almost had to physically restrain myself from opening the first book I reached and reading for the rest of the day. The covers were already so interesting, I was particularly excited about reading the one on spells, but we had the whole rest of the day ahead of us. Reading could wait.

After a few minutes picking out quills and parchment and getting a few basic potions materials, we made our way over to where I would get my robes.

Before we got inside, Patton must’ve remembered something as he whispered something into Logan’s ear and quickly rushed off. I didn’t think much of it, I knew he would be back sooner or later. Hopefully sooner.

The shop was immaculately clean. Perfectly rolled fabrics were piled neatly into boxes. Containers upon containers absolutely filled to the brim with pins were stacked on a counter where a bored shop clerk was sitting. He pointed half-heartedly to the side where a woman was fitting another boy with robes. Logan sat down in a chair in the corner as I cautiously approached the two. When the woman heard me coming, she turned her head to face me and smiled sweetly “Hogwarts, dear?” I nod “Of course. Stand right here and I’ll have you fitted in no time” I stand where she pointed, right next to the other boy and she starts pinning up my robe to size.

He looked my age, with wavy, brown hair, bright blue eyes, and a kind face that had a fair number of freckles. He was shorter than I was, but only a by little. He turned to me and smiled.

“Hi” He said. His voice was smooth and sweet.

“Hello” I say back “I’m Virgil Sanders. What’s your name?” I almost wince at how awkward I was.

The boy didn’t seem to mind “I’m Emile Picani” Emile smiles brightly “Hang on; Sanders? Are you the professors’ son?”

“Yeah, do you know them?” I say, a little surprised.

“Yeah! My sister goes to Hogwarts. She’s in her fifth year. Professor Sanders is her charms teacher!”

“Oh!” I say, for lack of a better response.
“Anyway, do you know what house you’re gonna be in? I bet I’m gonna be in Hufflepuff, my whole family is!”

“Uh… no I don’t. Do your parent’s houses really affect which house you’re gonna be in? Because my parents are in different houses…”

“Well, no one really know what house they’re going to be in, but close relatives houses’ usually give you a good idea. I reckon it’s because of the upbringing”

I nod “That makes sense”

The women stopped pinning the robe and looked me up and down “Well, that’s you done, dear” she says before pulling the robe off of me.

“Thank you miss”

She smiles and walks over to the counter, where Logan was waiting. He handed over a couple of gold coins and she gave him three sets of robes before he motioned for me to follow.

“Well, I’ll see you at Hogwarts” Emile says cheerfully.

“Yeah, see ya” I say with a smile as I follow Logan out of the shop where Patton was waiting for us.

He was carrying a large object with a blanket over it. Logan smiled.

“Okay, so, I know there isn’t any special occasion, so think of this as a sort of welcome gift!” He says giddily as he hands the object to me.

I pull off the blanket with shaky hands to reveal a bird cage, and inside the cage, a beautiful jet-black barn owl. My eyes widen with awe.

“They’re super useful, they carry your mail and everything. Plus, they’re really, really cute and loyal!”

“Thank you” I say quietly “Thank you so much” No one, except Olivia, had ever given me a gift before. To me, this was so much more that just a kind gesture.

“It’s no problem” Patton said with a soft smile “What are you going to name her?”

I think for a moment “Astrid” I say confidently “Her name is Astrid”

“That’s a lovely name” I smile up at Patton and he smiles back “Now, come on, let’s go get your wand!”

I keep stammering my thanks all the way to the wand shop, which Patton always responds with a smile and a ‘It’s no problem’ or ‘Really, you’re welcome’.

When we reach the shop, the door opens with a creak. I step inside and look around. The room was dusty, and the beginnings of cobwebs were starting to form in the corners. Though it wasn’t exactly what you’d call ‘clean’, everything did appear to be rather neat and orderly. Slim boxes were stacked neatly on top of one another on dusty shelves, and piles of completed paperwork were carefully laid out on the counter.

No-one seemed to be in there; at least that’s what I though, until a young man appeared abruptly from behind a shelf, making me jump. “Why, hello there” He said with a sharp, cheerful voice
“Just starting at Hogwarts, eh?” I nod shyly “Well, you’ve come to the right place. I’m Noah Ollivander, and you are?”

“Virgil Sanders”

“Ah yes, Sanders” He smiled at Patton and Logan “Yes, your uncle was a frequently returning customer here. It seemed like he needed a new wand every week!”

Patton giggled “He was quite a troublemaker”

“Quite, is an understatement my good sir” He said with a shake of his head “My father had wands for him on standby so each time he came here, he would be out before he could break anything” He chuckled “Quite”

I smile a little. It’s nice hearing about my new family, even though I’ve never met them.

“I assume you’re here for your son?”

“Yep!”

“Alright then, let’s try out some wands, shall we?”

I take in a shaky breath and nod nervously. I was excited about this moment before, but now I was having second thoughts. After all, thinking about doing something and actually doing it are two very different things.

Noah carefully selects a box and pulls it down from the shelf “Try this one. Phoenix feather, ten inches. Nice and flexible, good for your basic charms” He hands the wand to me “Go on, give it a wave”

I wave the wand, feeling extremely foolish. A split second later, Noah takes the wand from me. “Alright, how about this one…?”

Ten minutes later, the pile of used wands was getting larger and I still hadn’t found the right one. I was beginning to worry that I’ll wave all the wands in the store and nothing will ever happen. Then I’ll be told that I’m not a wizard after all, that this was a mistake, and I’ll be sent back to the orphanage. I try to banish the thought from my mind.

“Alright” Noah pushed a lock of mousy brown hair out of his dull grey eyes “Try this. Dragon heart string, eleven inches. Sturdy, good for defensive spells” He handed me a wand and hesitantly took it.

I felt a strange, sudden warmth spread through my body. I waved the wand, and bright sparks flew out of the end like a firework. Patton and Noah cheered. “Well done! Well done! It seems that this is the wand for you!” He said as he took the wand out of my hand and put it in a nicer box, lined with soft velvet. Logan handed over six gold coins and after saying out thanks and goodbyes to Noah, we left the shop.

After stopping for lunch it was late afternoon, and Logan stated that we should be getting back, as it will be dark soon.

We ruled out apparition for means of transportation and took the train instead.

As we road the train in silence, I couldn’t help but think how strange we must all look, with our boxes of strange books, robes, and Astrid. We must’ve looked strange, as people kept giving us
strange sideways looks. I smile to myself.

Let them stare, I think, Let them wonder, because I don’t have to

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