Minkus {Riarkle}

by LoveLaniLane

Summary

When Riley, Farkle, Maya, and Lucas are all blasted twenty years ahead of time, they befriend someone who is directly involved with their future.

While trying to find a way to get back to their time, they start to unveil the truth on what the future holds for them.
"How exciting is this?!" Riley beamed as she jumped to try and look over the heads of the many strangers in front of her.

They were at a science convention where many people were there to show off their inventions and hopefully get a rich investor to take an important interest in their product. How Riley found that interesting? It's rumored one of the machines could actually make horses into real unicorns with a DNA injection. How is that not amazing!?!?

Maya rolled her eyes at her giggly best friend. "Riles, please calm yourself. The last thing we need is attention on ourselves for your overly excited personality."

"I think it's great that Riley's taking a bigger interest in science, Maya," Farkle stepped in with a proud smile. "Riley could be inspired into being the next great scientist."

"Thanks again for inviting us, Farkle!" Riley smiled at the teen boy by her side.

"No problem, Riley. I wouldn't waste a chance to try and make you happy," Farkle said giving a smile of his own to his best friend.

"Of course you're happy she's taking an interest in science," Maya said slightly annoyed. "I don't know how you guys can even be slightly into this. Science is bor-ing!"

"Um, Maya? I don't think that's something you should say in a place full of scientists?" Lucas spoke as he caught some of the people's giving nasty looks at Maya for overhearing her words.

Maya gave him a bored expression. "You speak words, but all I hear is 'Bucky mick boing-boing ha-ha!'" She was up in his face and he rolled his eyes at her for insulting him once again.

"Maya, stop teasing Lucas," Riley stated seriously while giving her a look.

"I wonder if one of these machines could possibly make her nice to me," Lucas said out loud.

"Nothing in the world will make that happen," Maya shook her head.

"I'll look around," Lucas said as he started to check scientists' stands for hope of one making such a brilliant creation.

"I wanna see the unicorn!" Riley huffed, stomping her foot down in frustration.

Farkle chuckled. "We'll have to keep walking around. This place is for businessmen, investors, and scientists. I don't think they have posters pointing the way to a unicorn for a fourteen year old girl."

"Well, they should've!" Riley huffed, crossing her arms over her chest childishly.

The four of them continued to walk together; Farkle paying interest to the stands and what the scientists had to say about their creations, Maya bored out of her mind, Lucas looking for his Nice-Maya machine, and Riley keeping a look out for the magical unicorn.

While passing, a scientist in all white caught their attention with his shouting towards them. "YOU!"
"Me?" They all said in unison, pointing to their own chests, heads turning to the guy.

"Yes! All four of you! Come here!" He waved them over. They all looked at each other before cautiously walking over to the man who was fidgeting around with what could be called his creation.

"You look like a couple of young folks. Only ones I've seen all day!" The man said wide eyed.

"Yes, sir! We're here looking for the DNA-bred unicorn that was said to be at this convention today. Do you know by chance where that is?" Riley stepped forward, anxiously.

"Or a machine who turns mean people nice?" Lucas said peaking his head over Riley's shoulder.

"Only in your dreams, Ranger Rick!" Maya said, uninterested.

The scientist laughed at the four of the kids in front of him. "You are a bunch of young souls! So happy and naive!"

They all look almost offended at the term used.

"Why'd you call us over, Mister...?" Maya lingered on.

"Dr. Marbles!" He smiled a happy grin as he individually took their hands one at a time and shook them.

"Dr. Marbles, why they call you that? Because you've lost your marbles?" Maya strikes at him, giving him a disgusted look.

"Maya!" Riley snapped at her once again.

The man only laughed, his salt-and-pepper hair oddly staying in place as he threw his head back. "You guys are such a joy to be around. If you must know, it's what my wife calls me for having such crazy ideas. It kind of stuck."

"Ew, you have a wife?" Maya crinkled her nose. Riley glared at her. Maya held her hands up in defense.

"Yep!" He sighed happily, looking over to another stand. "There she is." He pointed over to see a women talking to a group of other scientists. Her back was turned to them but it can be seen that her and her husband were wearing the matching outfits and her long hair was pulled up in a ponytail, her dead brown hair having strips of grey in them.

"She's doing a presentation over a physical 3D representation on black holes and how they really work in our solar system."

"What's there to know about them? Whatever goes in never comes out. Simple as that," Farkle sad matter-of-factly.

"That's what you think," Dr. Marbles said coming in close to Farkle's face. It caused him to lean back.

"Why'd you call us over?" Maya said loudly, getting the man's attention again.

"Oh! Yes. I wanted to let you four younglings be the first to hear about my new greatest invention!" He gestured to the large glass marble that was displayed on the table.

The kids looked at it unimpressed.
"It's looks like a magic ball psychs use to tell your future," Maya said blandly.

"That's exactly what it is!" The man expressed. "But this crystal ball is different."

"How?" Lucas asked confused.

"This crystal ball can take you into the future!"

"Okay, your name suits you very well!" Maya scoffed.

"There's no way that can take you into the future. You're talking time travel here, sir. No one has invented the machine to time travel," Farkle shook his head, already calling it a hoax and a fraud.

"Until today! I can guarantee you that this crystal ball can indeed take you to the future!" Dr. Marbles moved around to get close to it and pointed a figure to the inside. "Inside this solid is hollow. I had taken the unfinished work of another scientist and finished it to make a remote to control time-jumping--"

"What you're saying means there needed to be trials, sir. Have you tested these to go into the future?" Farkle asked. The other three looked at the scientist curiously.

"Well... No. But I know for a fact this works... Dr. Marbles inventions always work!" Dr. Marbles grinned proudly.

"I don't think this is safe," Farkle stated, shaking his head.

"As great as it sounds to go to the future, sir, I'm with Farkle on this one," Riley said stepping closer to Farkle's side, crossing her arms over her chest while she stood her ground.

Dr. Marbles smiled at the two before nodding, "I see."

"I can assure you it's safe. The only unsafe thing I can think of is where you land. That part seems still uncertain to me," Dr. Marbles laughed.

"So what you're saying is that we could land in a swamp full of alligators or the middle of the ocean?" Lucas said bewildered.

"Yep!" Dr. Marbles continued to nod and grin.

"Oh, heck's no!" Lucas said as he stood by Farkle and Riley.

The doctor nodded at his choice. "Usually if you focus on a single location, it's where you go but whatever position you get in is not in my control."

"What is in your control?" Maya asked suddenly.

He turned his head to the blonde who stared at him intensely. Her eyes squinted at his face as he continued to smile at her.

"Time. It's the whole reason for this invention, is it not?"

Maya crossed her arms and stared down at the scientist, he returning the same intensity. "So what about you, Ms. Maya? Would you like to see how the future took care of you?"

Maya hesitated and her hesitation was caught by Riley. "I'm sorry Dr. Marbles but obviously we aren't interested in your magic glass ball. We're just going to--"
"I'd like to try it," Maya spoke out loud finally.

"Maya, no!" The other three nearly screamed.

"Excellent!" Dr. Marbles grinned before moving to get the machine ready.

Riley pulled Maya's arm to be away from the preparation. "Maya, are you crazy?!"

"I don't know, Riles. I just have a sense that I can trust him," Maya said, never taking her eyes off the man.

"Maya, there aren't verified results with this experiment. There are sure to be complications if you even try to go into the future!"

"Aren't you interested in knowing how the future is like for you, Riley? You could actually be everything you wanted to be. You could own a bunny farm and be married with a ton of little baby Riley's running around! Don't you just want to take a peek of what your future is certain to be?"

"As much as I would love to, I'd rather wait it out until it happens," Riley frowned.

"I'm not. This is an opportunity I'm not going to miss, for you or for anyone else," Maya stood her ground before yanking her arm away from Riley's grip and marching over to the man.

Riley huffed and followed Maya.

"Is it ready, Marbles?" Maya asked, slamming her hands down. She was determined to go through this no matter what.

"Maya, if you're actually going to go through this, then I'm going with you!" Riley said to her best friend.

"Riley, no!" Farkle objected.

"Farkle, I'm not letting my best friend go to the future all alone. The future is going to be a strange place for her alone, it's best to have something familiar while she is there. She needs me. I'm going," she firmly stated to her guy friend. He knew she was serious.

"Well, if you two are going, so am I!" Farkle nodded.

"I still don't want to go!" Lucas shook his head rapidly.

"You really want to be left here in the past with none of your friends or you want to come with us in a time-jump which is only a one-in-a-lifetime experience?" Riley tilted her head.

"But alligators!" Lucas whined.

"You're coming, Huckleberry!" Maya said pulling him closer to her side as she intensely watched Dr. Marbles ready the ball.

"As my wife says at house parties, the more the merrier!" Dr. Marbles said. "How far you want to go? 4 months? 3 days? 20 years?"

"20 years!" Maya selected.

"20 years it is!" Dr. Marbles repeated as he put an addition 20 years to that day's date. "When
thinking of a location, I'd prefer to pick a familiar place where teenagers won't be questioned."

The four looked at each other, knowing exactly where a couple of fourteen year olds like themselves would blend in perfectly.

"This is going to be fun!" Dr. Marbles grinned before pressing a button, causing a surge to interrupt the nerves in their body.

"Wait! How will we--" Farkle's question was never finished as with a flash of light they were taken away from their present time and jumping through time to their possible future.
Dr. Marbles was correct when saying the position which they'd put themselves in when landing wasn't his choice. All four of the time travelers from 20 years in the past were in awkward positions on the floor of Abigail Adams High School.

Groaning and stirring to sit up on the floor, they look around to see how their school looked near the same but with a much different design. Farkle got up off the floor then helped Riley up too. Maya passed off the help of Lucas, dusting herself off.

"This is Abigail Adams?" Lucas asked to himself as they looked around, checking the different colors and design of the school that almost didn't seem like their own.

"Man! When I was thinking of this place I was kinda hoping it had burned down from a fire or something," Maya huffed in disappointment.

Riley shook her head at her best friend. "Guys, this is our school..."

"Yeah, you wanna state the obvious again?" Maya rolled her eyes.

"Maya! We're twenty years into the future! This is absolutely amazing! We're time travelers!" Riley grinned as she squeezed her best friend into a hug.

"Woah, woah! It's still not confirmed yet that we are in the future!" Lucas said as he still was checking the place out.

"He's right. The redecoration of our school doesn't honestly mean that we are ahead of time by twenty years--"

Farkle was called off by the calling of a female voice. "Hey! What are you guys doing out here?" Their heads turned to see a young teen with dark brown hair and very pale skin. She was dressed in all black; loose black Tee, black skinny jeans, and combat boots. Her light blue eyes widened at the four bodies before her head turned to down the hall.

"Come on! In here!" She called out as she opened up a locker which didn't seem locked in the first place. She looked at four newbies, bewildered. "Come on before you get caught!"

Their bodies started to function as they quickly went to her, only to be pushed in the locker.

"We can't all fit!" Riley panicked as the mystery girl pushed Lucus in, then Maya.

"Trust me you can, keep going back!" She whispered as she pushed Riley and then Farkle and finally herself. The locker seemed to have no end as she closed the locker door. She shushed the gang while she peeked through the small lines to hear the Robotic Hall Monitor rolling down the halls, scanning the area. It stopped, causing the girl to hold her breath not letting go until the monitor started to roll again.

"I'm claustrophobic, guys!" Riley said taking deep breathes. The girl heard that and opened the locker pulling Farkle out with her to let Riley out. Once Riley was out, she took large breathes as she tried to calm yourself.

"That was a close one. You're all lucky I saved your butts or else you'd have to feel the wrath of whatever punishment they would have given you," the girl said looking at the other teens in front of her.
Maya comforted Riley to get her breath again, looking up at the strange girl.

"Why'd you do it?" Maya asked, curiously.

"Because obviously you guys seemed to forget hallway rules. No one out without a pass, and the four of you together obviously meant you guys didn't have passes. They're strict on the rule. Lucky the old locker passage way in the school is always there to save lives!" The girl grinned.

"Locker passage way?" Lucas questioned.

"Are you guys new or something?" The girl asked the four strangers.

"You can say that," Farkle rubbed the back of his neck.

"Every first locker is open to the locker passageway that takes you throughout the school," she informed them.

"Let me guess, you use it often?" Maya chuckled.

"No, I always have a pass," she said as she passed Maya her hall pass causing the other three to look over to see it as well.

Maya raised an eyebrow. "This looked forged."

"It could be..." She said as she snatched it back and straightened out the corners.

"Anyways, thanks...?" Maya stretched out, hoping to get a name.

"Nova," she grinned widely as she held out a hand to shake Maya's hand, which she oddly accepted.

"You four should really head out to class before another Monitor strolls by--"

"HALT. Stay where you are. Please provide hallway access pass and identification card to RHM-5473. HALT. Stay where you are. Please provide hallways access pass and identification card to RHM-5473."

Nova growled as she turned to the stupid Monitor that caught them. The four were wide eyed at the thing that was blinking red at the five teens standing around.

"Hey, RHM-5473! Long time no see! Listen, I have a pass but I forgot my identification card in the classroom. You think you can just pass this by for once, for me and my friends?" She smiled at the small camera the robot held as the eye.

"Identification card please."

"RHM-5473! You know who I am! My father made you!" Nova scoffed, as she tapped her foot and crossed her arms over her chest.

"Alerting security to Hallway 7A. Five unidentified figures in Hallway 7A. Please remain where you are until an authority figure arrives."

"God I missed it when it was human's who protected these halls!" Nova grumbled. She looked at the four nervous teens and gave them sad smiles. "Sorry, guys. Just follow my lead!"

The four nodded at her until the principle arrived and smirked at Nova who held her head high.
"Of course it's you, Nova," the principal stated, shaking his head.

"Principal Babineaux, what brings you the pleasure in appearing into my presence?" Nova hummed. Zay tilted his head pointing to the Monitor which was still in alert mode. Nova looked at it before taking a breath.

"I think it's broken."

Zay show his head. "With me, Nova."

Nova sighed and followed her principle gesturing for the other four to follow her too.

"Is that Zay?" Riley whispered to Lucas who was still wide eyed that Zay, his best friend, had become the principal of John Adams High School.

"I don't believe it either..." Lucas said. "He hated school, had the grades to prove it. How did he become this?"

"The future is weird, man..." Maya said shaking her head as she walked the familiar route to the principal's office.

"I've never been in trouble before!" Farkle shook nervously.

They were shushed by Nova who glared at them just as they entered the principal's office.

"Before you speak Mr. Babineaux, I would like the time to call my lawyer. I have done nothing wrong. I am to plead not guilty to any crimes which I have committed," Nova stated as she looked down at her manicured nails.

"Nova, there is no reason to call a lawyer in here," Zay chuckled.

"Yes, well, if I were to, they will represent me and the four who stand behind me," Nova stated waving to them.

Zay looked up, making weird expressions as he took in the faces of the four people who stood in front of him. He blinked several times. Riley pulled a nervous grin as she waved to Zay, only to have Maya pull her arm down.

"I am obviously hallucinating," he whispered to himself.

"What's my punishment, Mr. Babineaux? I can handle it," Nova said, taking a dramatic deep breath and closed her eyes.

Zay took a breath, "Well, seeing as this is your seventh time you have been caught this semester, the reasonable thing to do is to call your parents."

Nova's head snapped up, giving a horrid look to her principal. She started to shake her head, sitting up straighter in her seat.

"Call my lawyer!" Nova demanded.

"Nova, I'm not calling your lawyer. They've already told me that you can't keep calling every time you get in trouble in school. Unless you're suing the school district, no call."

"How much to sue?" Nova asked seriously.
"You're not suing anyone, Nova!"

"It's easier than dealing with my parents if you call them. My lawyer is easier to reach," Nova sighed.

"I'm calling your parents," Zay stated as he pressed the button for a glass screen to come out of the desk and search for the number for Nova's parents.

"They're both probably busy doing who knows what with their jobs! You know what? Call my mother. She'll be easier on me. My father wouldn't understand if you try to explain it to him," Nova rolled her eyes.

"I'm calling them both, see which one picks up first."

"Can I step out while you do it? I don't want to be here when you talk to them."

"There're chairs out there for you to sit," Zay said. She nodded and stood up.

The four other teens were silent as they had watched. Zay stopped them from following Nova.

"They're with me, Mr. Babineaux! They're family friends, they're staying with me for a while so, yeah," Nova stepped in as she pulled on Farkle's shirt and forced him to move behind her, yanking the rest out of the room as she smiled sweetly to her principal. She pressed the button which slid the door closed before pressing her back against it and letting out a loud breath.

"I'm dead."

"You have a nice smile," Lucas pointed out randomly and smiled down at the girl. The other four kids looked at him either confused or disgusted while Lucas smiled at them all. "What? It is a nice smile."

"Shut up, Woody," Maya rolled her eyes.

"I need to think," Nova stated as she looked up at the ceiling. "He knows you four aren't students? He's picked it up. Now, I don't know who you four are but I'm going to need something to make a story to tell my parents."

"Can you tell them that we're from twenty years in the past and we are only here to see how we turned out?" Riley said with a large, open-mouthed grin.

Nova matched her grin with laughed, throwing her head back and all. "The crazy part is that they'll probably believe you!"

Riley, Farkle, Maya, and Lucas all looked at each other nervously once again.

"But seriously, did you guys break in or something?" Nova chuckled.

"Yes," Maya said hesitantly. "We are runaways and we thought that with public school such as this one, we'd blend in for a while before our next move."

"Oh my goodness. Well, good thing you bumped into me! Do you guys have clothes? A place to sleep? Do you eat?"

Maya shook her head, bowing slightly as she wiped away a fake tear. Nova's face softened as she
pulled Maya close and hugged her. "Don't you guys worry! Once my parents know you guys don't have a place to stay, they're sure to take you in. We try our very best to give to the unfortunate."

"Thank you, Nova. You're such a bright soul!" Riley grinned.

Nova matched her grin. "That's what my mother calls me, too!"

Zay's doorway slid open, revealing his office to the teenagers again.

"Your parents are on their way now, Nova," Zay said taking a seat back in his chair.

"Both of them?" Nova said surprised.

"Both are coming. They were both in a meeting when I called. They had just finished it so they'll be able to arrive soon."

"Wow. What a surprise. Usually it's one or the other," Nova shrugged, taking a seat again.

"Now, for your parents--" Zay gestured to the other group of delinquents in the room.

"Mr. Babineaux, as I said, they're my guests. My parents are responsible for them until their parents come back from their trips in the frozen tundra. They'll take care of them, all of us really," Nova said.

"Okay, but can I get names to put down in the records at least?" Zay said taking out a glass hologram keyboard.

"Uh, Logan... Freeman?" Lucas said with hesitation, not thinking about what he should be called here.

"May Harper," Maya said, clearing her throat.

"Freddie Myers," Farkle said, his knee bouncing in nervousness and for lying.

"I'm Reed Manning!" Riley said loudly, biting her lip nervously.

They all look at her concerned except Maya who rolled her eyes. Zay typed it all down on his computer. He eyed Nova.

"You know me!" Nova huffed, shaking her head. He repeated her actions before putting the computer back down into the desk.

"So, when is it going to be Group Dinner again? Your mom hasn't sent notifications out yet," Zay said interested in the topic he brought up.

"Next Sunday. She's still having trouble getting responses from a few of her caterers so she hasn't let people know yet until it's certain she can get them to do the cake for the dessert table," Nova shrugged.

"Oh, yeah! We can't go without the cake. Will it be that delicious ice cream icing with chocolate layers again?"

"Pretty sure, yeah," Nova nodded, a small smile teasing her lips.

Zay shivered as he moaned out. "I love that cake! Your mother had good taste when it comes to cake, but in men? Lousy as always," Zay shook his head.
"I heard that!" A male voice said as the door slid to the side to reveal Nova's father, her mother right behind him with a large grin on her face. Nova rolled her eyes and slumped in her seat, releasing a sigh. The teaser smile on her father's face, caused Zay to stand and smile at his two best friends.

"Farkle! What's happening, man? Been a while since we've seen each other!" Zay said greeting his friend. "You know I was kidding about that lousy men joke."

"Even if you weren't, I'm sure I wasn't supposed to hear it!" The older Farkle laughed.

"Ain't that right!" Zay said before hugging the woman behind him tightly. "Riley, sweetums, how've you been, sugar plum?"

"Quite well, Zay. And don't you know better than to flirt with me in front of my husband?" The older and more mature Riley laughed as she leaned against her husband's side.

"I'm sorry, I do it with all the ladies. It's just how they respond back is the interesting part, am I right?" Zay chuckled, fist bumping with Nova who wore her mother's grin.

As they joked around, the four teenagers from another time were frozen as they had made the connection on what was happening.

Nova's parents were Riley and Farkle Minkus.
"Oh Nova, why do you always have to cause us some sort of trouble?" Riley stated, shaking her head at her daughter.

"I don't know. Maybe because I'm your daughter?" Nova said with a shrug. Her father looked at her seriously, causing her to shrink down in her seat. "Well, it's true..."

"Mr. Babineaux--" the older version of Farkle spoke out to the principal of Abigail Adams High.

"Come on Farkle, you can call me Zay. No harm being done," Zay insisted.

"I'd rather keep it professional when the issue at hand right now is my daughter," Farkle said. "Obviously, you can't keep letting her slid for missing classes and not obeying school rules. Whatever punishment that would be given to any other student for this should be given to her."

"For this, it would be suspension," Zay stated.

"We don't need that on her record," Riley sighed, whispering it softly to her husband.

"I take what I said back. Let her off easy, please, for my sake," Farkle nearly begged.

Zay sighed as he looked up something on his computer he pulled up and loudly clicked a button.

"Nova, you will be the apprentice of RCL-2986 with cafeteria duty ten school days as punishment."

"Hey, I had to do that when I was in middle school!" Riley grinned happily as she nudged her daughter's side. Nova gave a fake smile before wearing a neutral expression again. Riley had picked it up and frowned slightly. "What's wrong with you, Nova? This isn't you. Your father and I surely weren't like this when we were your age."

"That was you, mom. Maybe if dad hadn't taken away my lab privileges, I wouldn't have to sneak out to the chemistry lab all the time!"

"We wouldn't have had to take them away if one of your experiments hadn't put a hole through the floor," Farkle said sternly, causing his wife to look over at him to give him a look which meant to calm down.

"It was an error in my calculations, dad! It happens sometimes!" Nova replied.

"Although I had told you before you started to be careful around acids!"

"Okay, you two! Calm down! We're not doing this here," Riley stepped in, pointing a finger to Nova while a hand firmly landed on Farkle's shoulder.

"What about those four?" Zay said pointing to the other four troublemakers.

The grown-ups turned their heads to look at the other four teens and their eyebrows furrowed at the look of them. They shuffled in their seats, refusing to make eye contact with their future counterparts, shielding their faces.

"They're with me! They don't go here! They are staying with us and I snuck out of class to sneak them in so they could see where I go to school. Isn't that right, Freddie?!" She said asking the
young Farkle who only nodded, his face hidden.

Nova's mother turned to Nova to deny it until Nova whispered into her ear, "they're runaways from somewhere else."

Riley understood and nodded. "Yes, Zay. They're with us. We'll take care of them and with Nova once we get home. Thank you, Zay," Riley said shaking Zay's hand and nodded at his female friend.

"It's my pleasure. Hopefully we'll catch up sooner or later," Zay said.

"Soon actually. You're still coming to Group Dinner, right? It's this Sunday."

"Oh boy! I will be there!" Zay said all happy, causing Riley to grin and laugh.

"Sunday at 5:30 P.M."

"I'll be there!"

"Wait? They're coming with us--" adult-form Farkle asked his wife who pinched his arm.

"Yes, of course, Farkle. They are our guests," she said looking into his eyes, knowing he'll get the message. "Come on children, let's head home."

They all scurried out the door, Nova saluting at Zay before leaving the principal's office. The school bell rang, indicating the end of school. Children ran out of classrooms and out of the double doors.

The four teenagers out of their time watched as Nova walked ahead of them, behind her parents. Farkle's older self had an arm around older Riley's waist to almost shield her from the running students.

"This is too weird," Maya whispered other friends.

"This can't be happening. My eyes are just seeing things, right?" Riley said, fidgeting with her fingers.

"Well, I see that you and Farkle are married and have a teenage daughter," Lucas spoke, placing a hand on Farkle's shoulder who seemed frozen as he took it all in. "So no, it's not just you."

"How did this happen? You're with Smackle, Farkle," Riley said confused, cheeks blushing when the two made eye contact.

"Hey, you want your questions answered? Your main source on getting them is seriously about ten feet in front of you," Maya said pointing to see 34-year-old Farkle open the limousine door for his wife, who smiled gently at him and stepped in.

"Why'd you bring the limo? You know how attention seeking that is," Nova scoffed as she moved in to take a seat opposite her mother.

"Well, we apologize for not taking the car when we just got out of the meeting, a very important meeting. We went straight from there to here," Riley stated, watching as the other four kids moved to take a seat before finally Riley's husband was in and took the empty seat by his wife.

"Home please, Alfred," Farkle said before putting in his seatbelt along with everyone else.

"Nova had told me that you four are runaways. What are you running from?" 34-year-old Riley
asked sincere and curious.

They shrugged before Maya said, "our past."

The two adults looked at each other before taking a look at the four children. "Do you guys have a place to stay tonight?"

They shook their heads. Young Riley bit her lip as she watched the legs of her older self and Farkle's.

"Well, we would like for the four of you to stay with us. Our doors are always opened to those less fortunate," she smiled at them.

"Thank you," Maya said with a small smile to the older version of her best friend.

"Riley Minkus," she grinned, "and this is my husband Farkle Minkus, and of course, you know our daughter Nova."

"Wait, you're Nova? Nova Minkus?" Lucas spoke towards the teen girl.

She smiled brightly, a smile where she had inherited from her mother obviously. "Well, duh!"

The four strange teens looked at the Minkus family, blinking several times just to check that their eyes weren't deceiving them.

A ringing was audibly heard and Mr. Minkus sighed as he looked at his watch then over to his wife. "It's Sussie."

Mrs. Minkus leaned against her husband's side as he accepted the FaceTime call, smiling as she saw the face of their assistant on the small watch.

"Hello, Sussie!" The businessman smiled, watching as his wife wore her happy grin as she waved to the assistant over the screen.

"Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Minkus. Sorry to bother but I just wanted to know when you two will be returning? Mr. Hukamora called informing he had missed his plane to attend the meeting at 4:30 so he requested to do it over video chat," the content young brunette stated.

Mr. Minkus took in a breath while Riley answered back for him with "that'll be fine, Sussie. We'll be back in the office by then. Thank you for letting us know."

The call ended after that and Farkle grumbled. "I almost forgot about that meeting."

"I didn't! I never forget," Riley Minkus stated proudly looking over the five teenagers. "I would have reminded you about it anyways."

"I'm sure you would have. It's the only reason I keep you around..." Farkle said quietly but not quiet enough for his wife to dismiss it.

"I'm positive that's not the only reason," Riley rolled her eyes.

"Oh, yes, of course not!" Farkle said sarcastically. The woman look over at him smiling, breaking him to chuckle with her.

"Can I go to IEEE this Saturday?" Nova asked hopefully.

"No!" The parents snapped at her, watching her then roll her eyes and huff angrily.
The limo stopped and the door was opened by the chauffeur. Mr. Minkus stepped out first, helping his wife out afterward. The kids followed, eyes taking in the surroundings as they continued to walk into the tall building and to the elevator.

The kids knew this place. They’ve been in this elevator before. The young Farkle couldn’t help but frown as they were all brought up to the Minkus household, Farkle Minkus's home.

They were let off on the penthouse and they entered after Mr. Minkus had put in a code and thumbprint.

Once entering the apartment, the four teens were in awe at the inside. It was much different than what it looked like in their present time. It was obviously remodeled and redecorated to give it more of a home feeling.

It had a much better open concept and there were rich colors all over the place. It very much looked like Riley's home back in present time.

The best part of it all were the picture frames all over the main wall. Time had evolved photography as the picture frames didn't hold single second photos, but a replaying of a single moment. There were many single second framed photos, many of either Riley's family or Farkle's but also of the Minkus family themselves.

There were pictures of Riley and Farkle throughout their school years, going as early back as to the Halloween which they met. The photos were proof of their long term friendship. The videos were the unique and interesting part. They were of moments which the young Riley and Farkle hadn't lived out yet.

"You guys can look around if you'd like," Mrs. Minkus said. The couple walked off down a hallway where their bedroom was most likely located while Nova had stormed off to her room to get away from her parents.

Four pairs of eyes took in the wall of moments pointing out a few which they liked.

"Hey look! There's me!" Maya smile as it was a picture of baby Nova sitting on Maya's lap.

"They're quite a bit with you in them, Maya," Lucas said as he picked a video frame up which replayed a moment of Maya and Riley twirling around until they fell down laughing.

"You're in here too Lucas," Farkle said pointing to one on the wall which was all four of them together at what looked like a party, a New Year's party.

"Graduation..." Riley quietly said as she picked up a picture frame containing their high school graduation picture. They looked at it and smiled slightly.

"If that's high school graduation than this must be your college one," Maya said pointing to the one with Riley and Farkle smiling widely with their little Nova on Riley’s hip reaching up to Farkle's graduation cap.

There were a lot of them with Nova, and moments where it was all happy. Wedding photos were displayed, important moments such as the Minkus duo winning awards and even meeting Stephen Hawking.

They took it all in, stepping back before Riley said, "this is our lives..."

Farkle's released a breath, fingers twitching to take Riley's hand in his own because it was his life
with her and her life with him and what they were to be in the years to come.

"It's a nice collage, huh?" Mr. Farkle Minkus smiled as he looked up at it too. The four friends looked up at him and then back at the wall.

"You've had an eventful life, sir," Lucas said respectfully.

"Yep, and there's more moments to come to put up on there I'm sure," he smiled at it.

Riley Minkus's yelp caused them all to turn around as she almost tripped over a step. "Okay, I'm ready to go. Nova?!" She called out.

Nova's bedroom door opened, loud music escaping the four walls. "WHAT?"

"Come here please!"

Nova groaned loudly, turning off the music before making her way back to the living room. Riley looked herself in the mirror by the door to reapply her lipstick.

"Don't be that way, Nova, please," her father said.

"We have guests," Riley said putting her lipstick away. "They'll be rooming in the upstairs guest rooms so give them a tour of the place and give them guest packets, you know where they are. Your father and I have to go back to work but we'll be back for dinner. Paolo's coming over with it." She stepped closer and kissed Nova's cheek before turning to leave with her husband.

"Bye honey!" Riley said with a wave, letting her husband guide her out.

"Bye mom, bye dad!" Nova called out before closing the door and locking it behind them. Once it was locked, she groaned out.

The four teens stood awkwardly by each other, watching Nova. She sighed and stood up giving a smile. "So how about I give you a tour of the place and then we play some video games. Sound like a plan?"

They all nodded their head.

"Good," she smiled letting them follow her as she gave them the grand tour of her home.
"Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope. Heck's to the freaking NO!" Nova chanted as her fingers worked quick on the video game remote in her hand, eyes glued to the screen as she killed zombies that were breaking into the science lab of the game.

Farkle played split screen with her, equally skilled as he focused on the mission which was to kill zombies and protect his dear lab. Lucas watched as they played, mouth gaped at how violent and graphic the game was.

Maya wore a disgusted look on her face, watching the horror from afar. She and Riley sat in the reading corner of Nova's room. Nova's room would be Farkle's old room back in present time; along with that fact, it's the only place familiar to the four of them.

"That's disgusting but sweet at the same time," Maya said, speaking about the video game being played.

"I know, it is kind of cute seeing Farkle and his future daughter have something to do together," Riley said as her eyes never lifted off of Nova and Farkle enjoying their time together.

Maya looked at Riley, raising an eyebrow at the girl. "You alright, Honey?"

"I'm fine. I'm just...thinking..."

"About?" Maya asked, turning her body to focus solely on her best friend.

"This, the future. Maya, I'm not with Farkle in the past. He has Smackle and he's supposed to be my best friend. What happened that caused so much to change?" Riley asked, softly but seriously.

"You're asking the wrong person, Honey," Maya shrugged. "Between then and now, you and Farkle are going to get together and get married and have a daughter. That's all I know."

"I want to know what happened; we need to go back."

Maya frowned, "Go back? To the past?"

"To our present, Maya. We can't be here, we shouldn't be here. Oddly, in some way, this is an invasion of privacy."

"Because this is your certain future?" Maya scoffed. "You want to go back but what is your real reason?"

"Maya!" Riley shook her head.

"Do you see something you don't like?"

"Maya, it's not that!" Riley laughed bitterly.

"Riley, we just got here. This is your future, yours and Farkle's. There is still so much to see, like how I am! I was the one who wanted to be here."

"And do you believe staying here for a long period of time is good for us? Good for them?"

"I don't know," Maya shrugged again. "But let's stay and find out."
Riley was going to open her mouth again when there was a loud clash of metal across the room.

"Ugh! What's wrong with you?" Nova groaned as she was forced to pause the game in order to help lift up a small robotic form off the floor.

"Ms. Nova, your parents are home and dinner is ready in the dining area. Please take your guests and meet your parents there," the robotic voice stated as his wheels continued to roll and head turn from side to side, also arms moving up and down.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll be there. Thanks, Smicies," Nova rolled her eyes, putting the robot back down to roll out of her room and down the hall. Nova sighed and looked down at her watch, shaking her head. "They were late. Okay guys, dinner time!"

"I love food!" Maya said standing up and running over to her friends. Riley took a deep breath before following behind, smiling gently at Farkle who waited behind for her. A blush crept up her cheeks as they walked side-by-side.

When arriving to the dining room area, there was food set out but no adult figures on sight. The all took their seats, Maya next to Riley who was next to Nova. Farkle across from Riley and Lucas across Maya. The two seats at the head of the table were reserved for Nova's parents who walked in right when the clock hand had hit 6:00PM.

"Sorry, we're late," Mrs. Minkus sighed as her and her husband walked out of the hallway in casual clothing and not in their stiff business wear. Older Riley pulled her hair up in a ponytail before taking her seat across from her husband.

"Dinner's at 5:30," Nova stated as she had already started to fill her plate with food, make-your-own tacos.

"The video chat took a bit longer than we had anticipated," Mr. Minkus sighed, digging in as well.

"But we're here and we're eating together," Riley Minkus grinned, crinkles by her eyes. "Did you show our lovely guests around the place like I asked?"

Nova nodded her head to her mother, mouth full of taco meat and condiments.

"You have a lovely home, Mrs. Minkus," Lucas uncomfortably said with a small chuckle.

"Oh, please, call me Riley. It's weird being called Mrs. Minkus sometimes," she said preparing a soft taco for herself.

"Oh, it's weird for us too," Maya quietly said for no one else to hear.

"If you don't mind ma'am, I'd like refer you as Mrs. Minkus. It's a more respectful title often used where I'm from," Lucas said.

Mrs. Minkus nodded, understanding. "Well, it doesn't hurt being called by the formal title. I'm called many things by many people, Riley Minkus, Mrs. Minkus, Riley Matthews sometimes, Minkus, I get it all!"

"Paf uh shasha pea," Nova talked with her mouth full. Her father glared at her as he fulfilled her request with passing the salsa to her spot.

"If there's anything you guys need or want to know, you can just ask us. We'll be happy to assist you in any way you need," Mr. Farkle Minkus offered with a smile as he took a bite of his second taco.
"Actually--" Riley started to say but was cut off by a kick from Maya. "Ow!"

Maya played it off, shrugging as she took a large bite from her taco.

"Did you have a question, dear?" Riley asked her young counterpart. They turned to each other, finally for the first time looking at each other, eye-to-eye.

"I was going to ask, what do you guys do for a living?" Riley chose her words carefully, eyes looking everywhere but at the humans around her.

"I'm the CEO to my father's company, Minkus International. I inherited it after I had graduated from Princeton University. Riley works along my side, sharing 50% of everything I own," the businessman replied happily, looking over to his lovely real wife who grinned back.

"That's pretty amazing, Mr. Minkus," Lucas said.

"You went to Princeton?" Farkle asked seriously, never thinking he would actually do what his father had wanted him to do. His father had always pushed him into doing only what he through was best for his son, even if it didn't make the young heir happy.

"Yes, Riley and I both got accepted to Princeton, so we both went together."

"I was studying Astrophysical Sciences while Farkle studied Chemical and Biological Engineering," the 34-year-old Riley continued.

"What made you choice that?" Young Farkle asked his older self.

"It seemed like a good mix of all the sciences I found most interesting," he replied. "Riley loves the solar system and everything about the galaxy, it seemed right for the both of us."

"Astrophysics was all they could offer me at Princeton. I later took a different course in getting a Bachelor's in Astronomy, which I luckily finished." She took a bite from her taco.

"Why consider it lucky?" Riley asked the older woman.

Nova hummed and swallowed her food before saying, "Because it's hard having a toddler screaming in your ear while typing up a paper on what the nature of dark matter and dark energy is, only on five hours of sleep."

"We made it work," Mrs. Minkus took a breath, remembering the difficult days like so.

"Is that what inspired your name? Nova?" Riley asked her future daughter.

Nova smiled at her, giving her credit where credit is earned. "It's sort of obvious, isn't it? They came across my name in a science textbook."

"We were desperate," Mr. Minkus said under his breath.

"It fits our little girl very well though. I couldn't have found a better name to suit you, sweetheart!"

"Literally..." Nova grumbled before taking a bit of her third rolled up taco.

"What happened to your hand?" Farkle blurted out as his eyes had been staring at the future Riley's right hand for a while now.

The question had caused all eyes at the table to go to her hand, looking at how the skin was lighter
shade and looked stretched out, almost like a burn mark.

"Oh, this?" She said displaying it and running her left hand over it. "Accidental chemical spill in an experiment being worked on several years ago."

"It looks like it hurts," Maya cringed the longer she looked at it.

"The scientist who caused it, I can happily say, doesn't work for Minkus International anymore," Farkle stated, voice and face stone cold. His eyes focused down at his plate which was almost finished of his dinner.

The woman looked up to the male and clenched her jaw. "It was both of our faults. He was turning left and I was turning right, we crashed and it happened."

"What she very much means to say is it was all his fault," Mr. Minkus shrugged.

"Uh oh," Nova sighed sadly, giving the young Farkle an annoyed look.

"No, dear, I share responsibility for what happened. I don't know why it still bothers you so much. It doesn't hurt anymore, I can live with it."

"He was the one holding the beaker, sweetie. He was a scientist; he should have known better to have tried to leave the laboratory with 100 mL of pure acid. If that had gone directly on your hand and not on your lab apron, the acid would have burned right through your hand!"

"That's not what happened though, Farkle!" Riley Minkus snapped.

"Can someone pass the salt? I need to eat my salad," Nova interrupted, Maya passing it to her.

"You ruined his life when that accident happened. He can't get work anywhere in the state or at any of our business associates because you put in such a bad word on him. Do you know that he doesn't even accept our help when we do events like Group Dinner or charity events?" The wife said disappointingly.

"Good, he doesn't deserves it," he replied with no emotion.

"Who cares if he deserves it or not, Farkle, that's not who we are. We have Minkus Family Foundation and support a max amount of other charities; we help people, it's what we do. Look, we even took in four stray teens, yet for one man you refuse to do anything for him?" Mrs. Minkus shook her head in disbelief. They have fought over the subject every time it was brought up; it was still a touchy subject for them both.

"I really don't want to do this at the table, Riley. If you're going to continue this, I might as well leave," Mr. Minkus said pushing his chair out.

"No, I'll do you the favor," his wife bitterly said before standing up and throwing her napkin down on the table. "I was done anyways."

The table was quiet as she left the room to go to the master bedroom. The older Farkle sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose before looking over to his daughter who was giving him a knowing look.

"I know, I know, I have to go fix it." He stood up to excuse himself from the table. "I'm sorry you guys had to witness that. Please, continue your dinner while I go and make right with my wife." He left after that.
All had stopped eating except for Nova who was still stuffing down tacos.

"I think I've lost my appetite," Riley spoke pushing her plate back.

"Same," all the others said, doing as she did.

Nova rolled her eyes. "You guys act like you've never seen people fight before. This happens all the time, whether it's about something that happened before or me or even balancing chemical equations. It happens all the time. They're going to make up in like 3.2 seconds and come out all lovey dovey declaring about how they're to love each other for life, blah blah blah. They make me want to throat up my tacos," Nova said finally finishing her final taco.

"They're going to be okay?" Riley said slowly.

"Absolutely!" Nova reassured them.

Riley would be lying if she had said the scene that played out in front of her didn't scare her. She didn't like fighting, not when it was over a serious matter such as with what was bound to happen to her hand, but it looked like Farkle knew her well enough to know when to stop and when to try and fix the problem. Her eyes looked at to the boy in front of her, only to see he was already staring at her. She smiled softly before looking back down at her hands.

It was several more minutes until Nova stood up to take her plates to the conveyor belt where the plates were to be cleaned. The others stood up and did as she did, placing each one separately in it's own square on the belt and pressing start, watching it all go under as the process of it cleaning could be heard.

Mr. and Mrs. Minkus came back out with delighted looks on their faces.

"Oh you guys didn't have to clear off the table. We would have been fine doing it," Mrs. Minkus said as she saw all the teens put their dishes away to be washed.

"It's no problem, Mrs. Minkus," Lucas the Good said.

"Are you two okay?" Riley said cautiously, eyeing the couple.

"We're good," the missus smiled up at her husband, arms wrapping around his waist.

"I'm sorry if we scared you with that public argument. We get into conflicts sometimes but we always resolve them," the mister said staring down at his wife in pure adoration.

"We're soulmates. We know that we're destined to be together for life so problems like that shouldn't be a reason to hold long term grudges against each other," she finished for him, grinning up at him before the two leaned in and planted a tender kiss against each other's lips.

The kids caused all the kids to look away either exclaiming disgust or embarrassment.

The husband and wife laughed against each other's lips before breaking it up and keeping their distance.

"May I ask a question, for you, sir?" Farkle said stepping out from his line of friends.

"Ask away," the future Farkle asked, arm still around his wife's waist.

"You seem like a generous guy who has everything he has ever wanted, but I just don't understand why someone like you would lavish it all in a place like this. I'm not trying to be rude,
sir, it's a lovely home, but I just couldn't understand why someone would be cramped up in the same house for their whole life," Farkle asked in all seriousness. He hated living where he lived. It was fairly large for a family of three and had so much extra and unnecessary items. He didn't know why he would even consider living here in his adult years.

The older Farkle seemed to have the same feeling as he audibly sighed. "I have lived here my entire life so it was already custom to what would suit me and my family. When Riley and I got together, um, I had wanted to move out, live somewhere smaller and more accustom to our needs at the time, but Riley wanted to stay here because of one reason...and I was willing to put my wants aside to make my Riley happy."

"Why would you like to live here?" Farkle asked the woman.

She smiled softly at her husband before giving the smile to the young boy who asked the question. "It's the closest I'll ever get to touching the stars..."

Her answer was honest and sincere. Farkle sure did not like living here back in his present time but hearing those words come out of the mouth of his future wife really made all the reason he disliked it wash away in an instant.

Future Riley took a deep breath before letting her happy face take over. "Well, you bunch really do ask a lot of interesting questions," she laughed. "You guys can stay up if you'd like but Nova has school tomorrow so in the bedrooms by 9:00PM."

"Thank you again, Mr. and Mrs. Minkus," Lucas spoke, thanking them again for their generosity of taking them in.

"It's our pleasure, dear," she said happily.

"Your mother and I are going to bed since we have to head to work early in the morning," Mr. Minkus said to his daughter.

"Will you have time to eat breakfast with me?" Nova asked hopefully.

"If you wake up early enough," her mother replied before kissing her daughter's cheek.

Nova nodded at her mother's response before kissing both her cheek and her father's. "Good night."

The couple muttered their "Good night, Nova" to her before walking to their hallway and disappearing for the night.

"Come on guys," Nova said, making the four friends follow her to the closet under the stairs. She turned on the light to reveal plastic wraps filled with items inside such as a pair of pajamas and bathroom materials. Nova tsk'ed as she found pairs their sizes. She passed them each one, all accepting the offer.

"These are your guest kits. They each have a pair of clean pajamas, a towel, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a bar of soap, a small bottle of both shampoo and conditioner, along with a comb. These are for you for as long as you stay with us here, so get comfortable," Nova smiled before closing the door and turning the light off to the small room.

"Thank you," they all murmured.

"No probs. Each get your own bedroom so just select one when you get up there and you'll be set," Nova informed them. "Oh! And there's only two bedrooms up there with bathrooms, so
you'll have to share."

They nodded and made their way upstairs to the guest hallway where all the guest rooms were. There were only four rooms on the floor along with a glass door which led to the outside patio. Farkle and Maya took the bedrooms with the bathroom, so there would be a bathroom for the boys and one for the ladies. Riley's room was next to Maya's but across from Farkle's, Lucas' room diagonal from her's.

"These rooms are huge!" Maya exclaimed as she jumped on the bed, automatically loving how she bounced. "Ugh! I love this bed, I want to marry this bed."

Riley laughed as she walked past the room, leaning against the door way. Riley jumped to the other side, falling by Maya's side as they both stared up to the ceiling.

"What are we going to do, Maya?" Riley asked her best friend.

"I don't know, kid, but we'll figure out something tomorrow," Maya replied. Riley sighed, her hand running over her own stomach.

"What if we wake up tomorrow and this isn't here? What if this is all a dream and we wake up to our own beds and this was never real?" Riley proposed.

"Well, if this is a dream, would it be something you'd like to wake up from?" Maya asked.

"I don't know."

"Would you be happy that this is only a dream and not your certain future?"

The question made Riley think. Would she be okay with the idea of the future being uncertain? Her and Farkle never married and their teenage daughter never existed, never born? She wanted to give an answer, mostly a yes, she would be happy if this was only a dream, but all that slipped out was "I don't know."

A knock on the door caused both best friends to lift their heads to see Lucas and Farkle at the door.

"We're going to finish playing the game with Nova? Would you like to join us?" Lucas asked.

"No thanks. We'll be fine here," Maya answers, shooing them away. Lucas nodded, leaving the doorway afterward, his footsteps able to be heard as he went down the stairs.

Farkle stayed behind as he made eye contact with Riley, both of them just staring and not saying anything to the other. Maya could only feel the tension between the two.

"Um, I just wanted to say good night," he stuttered, eyes shifting down to the floor as he shuffled his feet.

"Good night," Riley answered back, chest moving up and down as she tried to keep her breathing regulated. Farkle nodded and left without another glance. Riley released a breath she didn't know she was holding. She plopped back down to Maya's side, eyeing the ceiling once again.

"You're going to fall for him bad, aren't you?" Maya joked with a chuckle.

Riley didn't answer verbally. She didn't want to.

She didn't want to fall for her best guy friend.
Not now.

Not yet.
Waking up from what seemed like a long slumber, Riley Matthews stirred away, yawning and stretching before relaxing against the bedsheets of the foreign bed she was in. Blinking up at the ceiling, she used her touch to sense that she wasn't in her own bed, concluding that she still remained twenty years in the future.

She sat up, taking a deep breath and she looked around the bedroom she remembered slipping into the night before. She threw off the covers, wiggling her toes before placing them down on the soft carpet of the bedroom. Her legs took her out of the bedroom and down the hallway and the stairs until she had reached the kitchen.

The sight that awaited her caused her to pause. Her future self was all dressed up professionally in a white blouse and jet black pencil skirt, high heels and her hair up in a low ponytail. By her side was future Farkle wearing a black business suit, the jacket off and hugging the shoulders of the chair he was sitting in so he had the sleeves to the white dress shirt rolled up to his elbow. Nova sat across from them in her regular seat, still dressed in her pajamas black plaid pajama pants and a black shirt which read "Stand back. I'm going to try SCIENCE."

Confirmed; she was still twenty years ahead of her time, her future self was married to future Farkle and they had a teenage daughter.

Okay.

"You're up early!" Her counterpart said as she turned her head to the sound of the footsteps that had came down the stairs. The young Riley turned to the clock to see it was almost six in the morning.

"I-I didn't know," Riley stuttered, shuffling her feet against the hardwood of the floor.

"It's no problem. Would you like breakfast? We have cereal in that cabinet there and there's some leftover bacon and some french toast you could warm up. I believe there is still some batter out for waffles too," Mrs. Minkus said as she wiped the corner of her mouth with her napkin.

"Uh, I'll just have some cereal, but thank you," Riley said, taking a bowl and selecting her favorite cereal which happened to be one of the options. After pouring herself a bowl, she took a seat next to Nova and started to eat.

"I hope you don't mind staying here for the day while Nova goes to school and we go to work. It'll just be you and your friends, but I'm sure with so much to do in our home, you'll find something to do," Mr. Minkus said before taking a bite from his french toast stick.

Riley looked up to the man and spoke up after swallowing her spoonful of cereal. "It'll be fine."

"Also, there will be a man coming over later to finish fixing the hole in our laboratory," Riley Minkus informed the teen out of time.

"It's my Uncle Lucas!" Nova nodded with a grin.

Riley froze mid-chewing, blinking several times. "Uncle Lucas?"

"Lucas Friar if you need the full name for when he comes over," future Farkle stated as he finished off his breakfast.
"I don't know why he needs to come over when I'm at school. I haven't seen him in like forever!" Nova exclaimed, adding an angry have do at the end.

"You saw him earlier this week, don't over exaggerate," Nova's mother chuckled. "Besides, he needs to come over early for the floor to be patched up and dried by the time we come back from work."

"You guys aren't going to coop yourselves in the lab all Saturday, right?" Nova asked, sounding worried for some reason.

"Just depends on how much we get done today," her mother answered truthfully before getting up from the table, putting her plate on the conveyer belt, her husband doing the same.

"We'll be back for lunch. Maybe we can take you and your friends out to eat or something," Mr. Minkus said to the young Riley who blushed slightly for being acknowledged by the man she would be married to.

"T-Thank you, Mr. M-inkus," she cleared her throat, hating herself for stuttering.

The mother and father kissed their daughter's cheek who returned the gesture to them. They said their goodbyes before the mother reminded her daughter that her punishment of cafeteria duty at school would start today. The information made the 14-year-old student groan, letting the chuckles of her mother and father be heard before they left for the day.

"Why *are* you up so early?" Nova asked Riley who looked at her and shrugged.

"I don't know. I just couldn't sleep anymore. What about you? What's your excuse?" Riley reversed the question back to her.

"This was the only time to eat breakfast with my parents," Nova answered, before taking a spoonful of her cereal and eating it.

"Do you normally eat breakfast with them?" Riley asked, interested to know.

"On weekdays, there's at least one time during the day I can actually be with them, breakfast or dinner. They're always busy with work and I'm busy with school, we try to be together as much as possible but breakfast time or dinner is all we have to come together and really interact as a family. They're going out tonight for some stupid banquet so breakfast was the only choice for today..."

"Does it upset you? That you don't hang out with them as much as you want?" Riley asked with a frown.

"Only a little bit, but they always make it up for me with the weekend. Usually I join them in the lab and help them with experiments, but I'm grounded..." Nova huffed as she stirred the milk left in her bowl with her spoon. "Which is why you're going to be my hawk."

"Your hawk?" Riley asked bewildered.

"Yes! Make sure Uncle Lucas closes that stupid hole today so when I come back to school I can go in and finish that stupid experiment I never got to finish!"

"I don't know, Nova. You're grounded, you should respect the punishment you got and just stay away."

"Ugh! You sound like my mother!" She groaned. Riley tensed, blush creeping up her neck.
"Please Reed! You're the only one I can trust!" Nova said taking Riley's hands and giving her a pleading look.

"O-kay...?" Riley said questionably before Nova squealed and hugged her tightly.

"Thank you! If you need anything, just tell me!" Nova offered.

"Actually, do you have a computer I could borrow?" Riley asked.

"That's a stupid question to ask."

"You sure like the word 'Stupid'."

"Ironically, it's my favorite word!" Nova grinned and sat up straight, taking Riley's hand, leaving their cereal bowls at the table as she took Riley to her room where she presented a blank desk and the wall in front of it to the teen. Riley looked at Nova, not getting it. Nova rolled her head before she pressed a blue button and the center of the desk flipped around to a keyboard and mouse while a piece of the wall opened up to reveal the screen.

"Cool!" Riley smiled. "And I can use it?"

"Yeah, sure! I won't mind!"

Riley embraced the other teen, chanting "thank you". Nova chuckled at the happy teen.

"Okay, now if you don't mind, it's almost 6:30 so I can sleep for another half hour before I need to head off to school."

Riley nodded and left the other girl to be left alone, along with herself. She went back to the kitchen, taking her bowl and Nova's and putting them on the conveyer belt.

It was still early in the day so she decided to return back to her bedroom. With fainted footsteps, she jogged up the stairs and entered her temporary bedroom. The sound of another door's squeaky hinges caused Riley to turn her head to catch Farkle's form in between the door and the side wall. She smiled gently at him and hid her face before she could catch his returned smile.

He watched her as she closed the door behind her, him letting out a heavy sigh before shaking his head and closing the door again.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Farkle and Riley Minkus had gone to work and Nova had gone to high school, leaving the Minkus residence to be occupied to four unsupervised teens who were simply up to no good.

"Riley, what are you doing? You can't just search up his name and have him pop up on your screen," Maya huffed as her best friend was on a mission to find and locate Dr. Marbles.

"Don't underestimate the future, Maya! They surely have trackers imprinted on everyone by this time!" Riley stated seriously, her eyes not looking off of the computer screen.

Maya whimpered at her best friend's words. Why was knowing her so hard?

"You actually believe this guy is still alive?" Lucas stated as a possibility.

"It's only been twenty years, Lucas. He wasn't that old," Riley sighed. "I'm almost positive he's still alive. I just wish I knew more about him to search up the right things."
"I don't know why you're in such a rush to find him, Riley? We just got here! Lucas is right, this guy is probably long gone from some freak science accident or something. We might as well be stuck here!"

"He wouldn't do that to us!" Riley snapped at her friend. "What happened to trusting him, Maya? Those were your words; you trusted him, and if you do, then I believe that he's out there and knows exactly how to get us back to our time. What about our parents? They're probably worried about us right now!"

"If we're even gone..." Farkle said more to himself as he thought about Riley's words. "Search up Dr. Marbles science convention of 2015," Farkle stated standing up. Riley looked over at him. "Most conventions have a whole list of the participants online so on-goers know what to expect."

"Oh my gosh! The unicorn! I totally forgot about it!" Riley gasped up at her friends.

"Move over, Riles," Maya said as she pushed her friend the chair and started to do the work for her.

Farkle took her by the arm and helped her up, both timidly smiling before she took a step apart, keeping their distance. Farkle's smile faltered at her action, noting her behavior towards him.

"That's weird. There's no record of a Dr. Marbles participating at the 2015 convention," Maya said, confusion laced in her voice.

"That can't be right," Farkle frowned as he leaned over and took control of the keyboard. He placed a search for any Mr. Marbles in the city of New York City. Luckily, several popped up.

"Write these down," Farkle instructed Maya to do. She gave him a stern look, not liking how he demanded for her to do the action.

He softened slightly, giving her a encouraging smile, "please?"

She hummed before taking a pen and a sheet of printer paper and writing down the names, numbers, and addresses.

There was loud distinct pounding coming from the front door of the penthouse apartment. The teenagers froze, all looking at one another.

"Do you think that's the other Farkle and Riley?" Lucas asked, trying not to assume the worse.

"They would have used the padlock; they wouldn't need to knock," Maya reasoned.

"Maybe they're being nice?" Lucas pushed on, only to get a head shake from the blonde.

"Who could that possibly be? Is someone supposed to come over?" Maya said, rubbing her hand up her arm as she stepped closer to friends.

Farkle gasped. "What if it's another version of us from a different time coming to take us away and brainwash us?!"

Maya rolled her eyes at her guy friend, standing up from her seat. "I'm not going to let that happen! Man, you're just as bad as Riley about all of this. No wonder you two end up together..."

She muttered the last part, still audible for the others. Farkle and Riley caught each other's eyes and blushed, looking away after not even two seconds.

The knocking got louder.
"What are we going to do?" Maya questioned.

"This seems like a nightmare I once had where Uncle Sam had came out of his poster, yelling 'I WANT YOU' before taking us all to fight in the war." Farkle visually looked frightened as he stepped closer to hide behind Maya who was just done with him.

"What war?" Lucas asked.

"THE WAR!" Farkle answered back loudly.

Riley looked at her friends and over to Lucas whose eyebrows were furrowed and looking around to his friends. With a gasp of realization, she knew who was knocking at the front door of the home. She dashed out quickly, hearing the yells and calls from her friends behind her, their footsteps following.

"Riley no!" They yelled in unison but it was too late.

She opened the door, a smile creeping onto her face as she spotted the handsome, tall male figure standing in front of her.

"Lucas!"
Lucas Friar stood at the doorway, his charming, boyish smiling appearing on his face. His smile made the young Matthews girl relax in her stands.

"You don't look very surprised to see us," Riley spoke to the older man who stepped through the door, toolbox in hand and a metal box in the other.

"I got a call from Nova's parents about you four being here. Nova's new friends, right?" He said in a comforting tone as he looked from Riley to the three who stood behind her, waving slightly at them.

"Yes, sir!" Riley beamed, grinning largely. "Nova Minkus, daughter of Farkle and Riley Minkus who were your best friends. Tell me how has life been for you?"

Maya cleared her throat loudly, giving Riley a warning look. Riley passed it off, turning back to the future version of who she thought would be her future husband but wasn't. Riley's mind was racing at the moment at the moment, heart at equilibrium with it. He looked great, absolutely incredible, and he hasn't changed it seemed. Nothing with Lucas changed in the future and it's so great to still have that constant.

"I'm sorry about her, she's crazy," Maya laughed, taking Riley away from the door.

The older Friar boy stepped in, chuckling at the four teens. "It's fine. I'm just here to finish fixing the lab floor."

"Oh yes, you go do that!" Maya smiled, covering Riley's mouth with her hand when she knew she was about to speak up again.

The man nodded towards them and went down the hall where the master bedroom was known to be, but also the elevator down to the laboratory.

"We need to talk to him!" Maya whisper-yelled to Riley after she took her hand off.

"That was what I was trying to do!" Riley replied.

"You were asking questions. We can't get future Huckleberry to get suspicious about us. We need to be subtle, getting to know him without coming off as too curious on a complete stranger's life."

"But he's not a stranger, he's him," Lucas said pointing to Lucas.

"She's right, Riley," Farkle spoke to the brunette. "We need to act casual about this."

"Yeah, that guy is me. As much as I want to know everything about what my future is, we don't want to drive him away as quickly as he came," Lucas said.

Riley sighed. "It's three against one, obviously I'm out numbered. So, fine. We'll be casual about this."

"Let's go," Lucas led as they followed to the elevator, all pressing the down button. The panel slid over to reveal a thumbprint identification pad.
"Aw man!" Maya groaned.

"They really do use a lot of security in this place," Lucas frowned.

"So what are we going to do now?" Riley asked her group. "Are we going to wait until he comes back up to talk to him? I don't think he has the time to do so."

"There has to be another way to that place. I don't think Farkle is stupid enough to just have one elevator down to his geek lair--" Maya pointed out.

"Hey! I take offend to that! That's mine too!" Riley defended.

"Yeah, well unless you know a way to--"

"Welcome back Mr. Farkle Minkus," a robotic female voice stated. The three heads turn to see Farkle take off his fingerprint from the thumb scanner and the elevator door open for them.

Farkle looked back at his friends and shrugged, "what? He's me and I'm him, we obviously should have the same fingerprints even after 20 years."

"Farkle, you're a genius!" Riley grinned.

He returned the smile, "obviously."

They brushed against each other as they enter the elevator, the four of them taking the trip down to the laboratory which was the only place the elevator stopped besides the main floor.

Once the door closed, they all released a breath of air. They leaned against the wall, taking in the silence. Riley's eyes looked up to the view across from her which was Farkle. He looked at her and they smiled at each other. They tend do that a lot to remind the other of the friendship they still have despite the knowledge that they were to be married and partners possibly for life.

It was a short while afterward when the elevator stopped that it revealed the long hallway to a metal door at the end. They stepped out, walking down slowly, the sound of their footsteps echoing.

"Okay, this is creepy. You could have put a better design on this, Riles," Maya stated until the got to the door. Another thumb scanner awaited them and Farkle used his thumb again, getting them in.

Once the metal door slid open, white was revealed. White walls, white tables, but grey concrete floors; everything in the lab shined, and it appeared large too. They walked into the preparation room where the white lab coats and goggles awaited for scientists to wear. They passed through that and entered the lab, looking around in awe at the chemistry sets all around and the metal scraps over at the other side.

The sound of a laser being turned on, distracted them from the large space, seeing Lucas go to work on finishing the patched up hole on the ground.

"You guys do know you're not supposed to be in here, right?" future Lucas said not looking up from his handy work.

"And why is that?" Maya said in disgust as she watched him from her towering stand.

"They don't really give a lot of access to a lot of people to be down here."
"Well, here we are!" Maya said spreading her arms out to gesture to the space around her before dropping her arms.

"Why do you get access then?" Riley asked.

Lucas scraped the cement to be even along with the rest of the flooring. "I usually fix anything that Nova messes up. She might be extremely intelligent, being Riley's daughter and all, but she's a trouble maker, like me."

The three friends look at their Lucas who frowned slightly at the choice of words selected by his older self.

"Since you're so a part of Nova's life, who are you to her?" Maya crossed her arms over her chest.

"Uncle," Lucas answered straightforwardly. "Godfather actually, but I've been with her since even before she was made."

"Made?" Maya cringed.

"Eh, many people say that Nova isn't actually a real person, just a result from a science experiment which was being practiced by Farkle and Riley. Ask Nova, she even believes it herself."

"Is she real then?" Farkle asked, a bit confused.

"Yeah, she's Farkle and Riley Minkus's actual daughter but it's not a lie that she was a result of a science experiment," Lucas said.

"I'm confused," Riley stated.

"Don't be. It's not your place to know to be honest," Lucas said. He took a sheet of what looked like waxing paper and placed it over the still drying cement.

"Ouch," Riley said, hurt.

"So if you can't tell us about them, what about yourself? What do you do, old man?" Maya asked for the group.

"I'm a veterinarian, but I help with Farkle and Riley with their Minkus Family Foundation to do construction on the side," he answered.

"You're in their lives often then?" Riley asked, glad that she still has Lucas and Farkle in her life, a constant.

"Yeah, mostly because of Nova. I don't think I'd be here now if not for her," the older Lucas said truthfully.

"Why'd you say that?" The younger Friar kid asked, concerned along with everyone else.

"It's quite awkward, really. It's weird, I'm sure you kids don't want to hear it," he laughed. He placed a metal box on top of the cement turning on a switch which caused a red light to go off. The older man held it down as it did its work in cooling the top layer of cement in quick timing.

"Trust me, we've dealt with weird, whatever you might say will not be as weird as what we've been through," Maya said.

The older man looked at the four of them before shrugging.
"I dated Riley Minkus back in high school when she was still Riley Matthews," he revealed. Riley looked up at the man, face softening as her body relaxed. "It was different back then. I had her, Farkle was still with a girl named Smackle at the time, and we were all friends! We did what friends do; double dates, constantly hang out, that sort of stuff. BUT, Riley broke it off with me the same time Farkle broke it off with Smackle. Even after the break up, Farkle got back with his ex while it remained awkward between Riley and I throughout most of junior year. Luckily we remained friends but not as close."

"How does Nova fit in the story?" Farkle asked.

"When Riley was pregnant, Farkle often called me to talk out any issues that he couldn't figure out. He's a genius but he didn't know how to deal with the real world, let alone the fact that a new Minkus was entering the world. He kept me around to give him a sense of reality in his world. Because Farkle wanted to keep me around in case he even faced a problem, I was gifted to be Nova's godfather, remained friends with Riley and now, life is back to how it should be."

"That's it? Nothing else happened?" Farkle pressured on.

The cowboy rubbed the back of his neck, shrugging. "What else is there to say? Our breakup made her open her eyes on what was really important and she focused more on her education and strived to be what she is today. She's worked hard to be what she is, and I respect her so much for it. She changed a bit after the breakup but she's still the Riley I knew and loved."

"Love?" Farkle exclaimed. Riley turned to the boy, watching as his face scrunched up in a way she knew was anger. She stared at him, not knowing why he would even show the slightest expression of anger. He didn't look at her but kept a hard stare at the man.

The future Lucas's face was over taken with a sad smirk, "everyone loves Riley. There isn't a knowing human being who has crossed her and could say one bad thing about her. As I say, I respect Riley. When I speak of love towards her, just know it's not romantic. It's more of a unconditional sort-of friendship kind of thing."

"Do you have a girlfriend now?" Maya asked, causing Riley to hit her arm. "Ow!"

Mr. Friar chuckled before shaking his head. "No. No girlfriend. I'm the only one out of all my friends who isn't married. Well, all my guy friends, with the exception of Zay."

They all nodded, understanding the exception. The contractor turned off and lifted up the machine and then the waxing sheet. Left in the place was hard, dark grey concrete which he ran his hand over, soothing it before smiling at his achievement.

"Can you believe it took me four days to fix that? It was such a process. Nova really did a number on it." With that, the Friar man collected his things and took advance steps to leave.

"Wait, you're leaving?" Lucas asked his older counterpart.

"Yep. My work here is done!" He said tipping his head to the kids who stared at him. "You comin' or what?"

They started to function, moving their way to the awaiting elevator which Lucas had used his thumbprint to activate. The five made their way back up to the main floor.

As soon as they had entered the living room, the front door opened to reveal Mr. and Mrs. Minkus returning for lunch.

"Friar!" Farkle smiled as he opened his arms to give his friend a hug. "Didn't think we'd catch you
"Neither did I. I just finished fixing the hole, looks like it never happened."

"We could never thank you enough. You don't have to worry about coming back for a while," Farkle said.

"Why's that?" the Texan asked.

"Farkle provoked her lab privileges," Mrs. Minkus stated, looking through mail they had collected from the lobby, not lifting her eyes to her former boyfriend.

"Come on, man. Her lab privileges? You could have done something a bit easier on her like no sleeping on a bed?" Lucas joked, the joke getting a snort from the woman. Her snort had brought a slight smirk on his face.

Farkle shook his head, "Taking them away was a reasonable punishment as the lab was what she ruined. She needed to stay out anyways in order for it to get fixed."

"Riley, you approved of this?" Lucas asked in disbelief.

Riley flipped her hair over her shoulder as she finally turned to the old flame, eyes meeting the taller man's. "I did. I didn't at first but after some discussion with Farkle, he seemed to have some reasonable explanations. It seemed fair."

"She's probably dying knowing she can't use the lab," Lucas joked. It didn't get a laugh out of Nova's parents.

"She's been getting in trouble at school for skipping class. Her excuse is that she skips to go to the chemistry lab."

Lucas shook his head and deeply sighed. "Nova. Listen, if you ever need to me to talk to her and such, let me know. I'm only a phone call away."

"Thank you, Lucas. As her parents, we will very much consider it if it's what is best," Riley said, standing by her husband's side. She gave the blond man a smile. "Oh! Just to let you know, Group Dinner is this Sunday. You need to come, because Zay's coming."

Lucas smiled grandly before nodding at the her words. "I will be there. 5:30, right?"

"Like every other time," Riley chuckled. Lucas nodded again at her before he looked down, saying his byes to the teenagers and to his friends. Once he left, the young Riley had finally noticed how fast her heart was beating. The look on her face matched her older counterpart and she was sure they were feeling the same way right now.

Mrs. Minkus sighed softly as she turned away from her husband's side. "I don't know why you're still friends with him..."

"What? I think the two of you have gotten a lot better over the years. It's not awkward anymore," Mr. Minkus said directly to his wife.

"It's still awkward, Farkle. Yes, it was a lot less awkward years back but the more Nova grows up, the more the awkwardness grows back and I don't like that."

"He's a friend of ours, Riley. We can't just put aside a friend," Farkle frowned. "I know it's weird because you two had dated before but he's done some incredible things for us over the years. He's
fixed every hole Nova created in this place, he's taken care of Nova on nights we couldn't, he
adores Nova. He's even the one to who gave me the idea to marry you."

"Oh Farkle, you're smart enough to have married me some time down the road," Riled scoffed.
"We had a daughter together."

"I wasn't talk about our time in college."

That comment made Riley's whirl her head toward her husband, a look of surprise on her face
before a tiny smile took over it. "You divorced me."

"It was one of my biggest regrets," Farkle slowly stated, stepping forward to take her left hand and
kissing it.

"You have a lot of those?" Riley poked at.

Farkle laughed down at his grinning wife. "None with you..."

Shade of pink crept up Mrs. Minkus' neck and cheeks, turning away embarrassed on how her
husband still made her feel like her teenage self.

"Besides, I'm sure if you can forgive Maya and still be friends with her, Lucas can still be a part of
our lives too," Farkle said cautiously.

Riley Minkus turned her head up at her husband, eyes wide. "That was different, Farkle. The
situations were different between the two--"

"I know! I was just making an analogy, stating a fact."

"Yeah, well, you tend to do that a lot, don't you?" Riley huffed playfully, taking her hand away.
The man poked at her sides which, causing her to flinch and place a distance between the couple.
She gave him a warning point with her finger, and glared at his smirking face.

"Well, now that the moment is over," Riley switched the subject. She turned her figure towards
the four teenagers who either were eyeing the married couple or refusing to eye them. "Where
would you four lovelies love to go?"

"We can get whatever we want?" Maya asked, forwarding her statement towards the happy
couple.

"Just about," Mr. Minkus laughed.

"But before we go out, you four surely will have to change."

They had all totally forgotten they were all still in the pajamas given to them by Nova to wear for
the night.

"We don't have anything to wear," Riley spoke.

"Yeah, the only clothes we have is the ones we wore yesterday," Maya finished for her best
friend.

Mrs. Minkus placed a hand over her heart. Her facial expression forming to a mood of dismay at
the teens before nodding, "Tomorrow, we go shopping. All of us. We will get you new clothes to
wear and all the necessary essentials you all need."

"That's be great! Thank you," Maya said graciously.
"It's absolutely no problem, sweetie. Anyways, lunch? We'll order in. Do you guys like pizza? Oh, why do I ask? Everyone likes pizza!" She beamed as she took her phone out. "Now, what are we all getting?"

/~*~*~*~*~*~*

"Just pick a movie!"

"The movie has to be something we'll all enjoy! These are all new. Are there not any classics listed anymore?"

"Riley, we're twenty years into the future, our movies are the classics..."

"Wait, if we're in the future, then is Incredibles 2 already released?"

"Search, search, search, search, search, search!"

"I'm searching, okay!"

"Do you guys ever stop bickering?!" Nova butted in, dropping herself in between of Maya and Riley who argued over what to watch for the night. Nova placed her tablet on the table which displayed her homework on it. Although it was Friday night, she had gotten in the habit of doing her given homework the day she received it to just get it done and over with.

"Usually it's not this tense," Farkle chuckled as he leaned against the arm of the couch waiting for Lucas to finish with the popcorn he was making in the kitchen.

"Nova, we're about to go," Nova's father said while entering the room. Their heads turned to watch the older man fix his cuffs to the suit he wore.

"Looking nice, dad," Nova complimented him.

"Thank you, Nova. It's been a while since we've gone to a formal event, huh?"

Nova only hummed before going back to her homework.

"What're you working on?" The father asked his child.

"Chemistry homework," Nova smirked. Farkle's head snapped over to his daughter.

"You need any help? I could help you if you need any. You're smart but help isn't a bad thing to ask for, I learned that from your mother."

"I'm fine, dad. I got it."

"You know your father, Nova, always itching to work on anything that's even related to the field of science." Mrs. Riley Minkus's voice rung out, making all heads turn to her form.

She wore a long, red, beaded Keyhole, open back Chiffon evening gown. Her hair was pinned back off of her face in a princess style where her waves ran down her back. She looked like a princess, an absolute dream.

The looks directed to her by everyone in the room was of absolute awe and how stunning she appeared. Her brown eyes focused more on her husband who took his stand, looking handsome. Their hearts paced faster as they took their slow steps towards one another.
Smiles formed on their faces as they started to sway their hips from side to side and exaggerate their hands out to try and get each other's reach.

Nova watched in absolute horror.

"Why do you guys have to be so weird?" She groaned and covered her eyes.

The married couple laughed out when they held each other in their arms, kissing each other's lips before turning to their daughter and the four other teens.

"What? Do I look too much of Mary, Queen of Scots?" Mrs. Minkus asked feeling down her dress.

"If you were on your way to being beheaded, this'd be perfect," Nova smirked.

"If you must know something, my dear Nova, this is what people do when they're in love. You're sure to experience it someday," Mrs. Minkus said sweetly.

Nova gagged. "I surely never will! Love is an illusion. It's a constant distracter to the brain. Even the word is use by people to simply state their attraction towards someone and willingness to advance forward in life to do exactly what a human's purpose is."

"And what's that?" Mrs. Minkus raised an eyebrow at the child.

With a straight face, Nova answered, "Reproduction, mother. Which you have failed to do."

The statement made the woman roll her eyes. "Whatever you say, Nova."


The loud, swirling, robotic sound was heard just as Nova's little robotic friend Smicies had entered the room.

"Sorry, Smicies..." She apologized, watching the robot walk out back to its charging station.

"Don't you have homework to do?" The young Farkle tried to change the subject quick. He refused to even glance towards the direction of the woman in red.

"I'm on the last question. Which element in Period 2 of the periodic table is the only Metalloid?"

She asked out loud.

"Oh! Remember that cute little song we used to sing to Nova about the first ten elements of the periodic table!" Mrs. Minkus beamed to her husband.

"No!" Nova yelled.

"Do you know the first ten elements of the periodic table? There's Hydrogen, Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen, Fluorine, and Neon!" The married couple sung in harmony.

"Lithium and Beryllium are metals, Boron is a Metalloid, and Carbon is a nonmetal!" The teenager joined in blandly with her passionate parents.

"Okay! I know it! Boron! Thank you my boron parents," Nova joked, causing her to snort at her own pun.
"Just some ground rules. Actually, here is only three; no one sets foot in either the master bedroom or the laboratory, and no standing on tables. I’m speaking to you, Nova."

"Mother, I’m grounded. I wouldn’t dare go against the word of my punishment. I’m smarter than that."

Riley Minkus hummed. She clutched her purse and took her long, black coat with her. "If anything happens, call the police."

"Got it!" Nova called out.

"Do you know the first ten elements of the periodic table?"

"Shut up!" Nova yelled, throwing a couch pillow at the closed door which her parents exited out of.

She glared at the door before she took the chance to stand on the coffee table in front of her. She danced on it, almost trying to break it, before sticking her tongue out at the direction of the door and then sitting back down.

"I’m sorry, I had to get that out of me," she excused herself as she captured her breath again.

"So movie?" Maya pushed for as she stole the remote from Riley.

Nova saved her homework before closing her tablet and running off to the hallway which wasn’t permitted.

Riley watched her, following her steps.

"Nova, where do you think you’re going?" Riley frowned.

"I need to check something down in the lab. It’ll be fast," Nova reassured the teen girl.

"You’re not supposed to go down there."

"Reed, you’re supposed to be my Hawk. Keep a look out for me, okay?" Nova said, resting a hand on her shoulder. Riley looked at her hand, not paying attention as the elevator door opened and Nova disappeared.

Riley was frozen there in her spot, slowly returning to the spot on the couch, next to Maya who kicked her feet up on her lap. She tried to focus on the movie but she couldn’t. She slowly drifted off, letting her body give up for the day.

/•/•/•|•\•/•

"I thought I’d catch you here," Farkle had spoken as he looked down at the sixteen year old girl who was gazing up at the twinkling stars in the sky.

She let out an audible breath. "I knew you’d find me..."

She watched as he came towards her, his hands in the pockets of his jean jacket. He stood next to her on her fire escape, leaning against the iron railing.

"I heard what happened."

"Ditto."
"I guess we're both going through the same dilemma."

The teenage girl smiled sadly, "I guess so."

They remained silent, enjoying the silence, the comfortable silence that each other's company brought it. They faint hearing of New York life happened in the streets below but they continued to look up to the sky half of the world shared right at that moment.

"Farkle, why doesn't it hurt as much as I thought it to be?" Riley asked her best friend. Her eyes awaited for him to speak. He shrugged.

"To hurt is more of a physical injury, a physical pain. What's happening now isn't physical. It's all a mind game that we're all forced to play..."

"Is that science talk?"

"I guess."

"I'm asking, because I understand now."

She linked her arm with his and leaned her head against his shoulder.

"New moon tonight," Farkle pointed out.

"New moon means new beginnings..." She said softly, inhaling his light scent.

"I wonder who else is starting over tonight," Farkle wondered out loud, rubbing Riley's back softly, enjoying each other's comfortable presence under the sky, the moon, and the stars.
"Come on, Farkle. Going to Princeton isn't a bad idea. It'd be a great honor to get accepted from there," Riley Matthews said as she sat across from her best guy friend and took a piece of their shared cake that remained in the middle of them.

"But it's not what I want. It's my father's dream for me to go there."

"Have you even considered Princeton?" Riley asked.

"Of course. It's been on my mind since my youth, because it's all I've ever heard about."

"My parents went to Pennbrook. I'm going to send an application but I might not even go. You should do the same with Princeton."

"If I get an acceptance letter from Princeton, my dad's making me go," Farkle stated.

"Why can't you just accept that Princeton is the best choice for you?!"

"It might be, but I can't go because you're not there," Farkle snapped. "You, or Maya, or Lucas, or anyone."

"Or Smackle..." Riley added in with a pointed look.

"I'm not going to go anywhere you guys aren't."

"Okay then, I'll make a deal with you!" Riley took another bite of the cake, Farkle taking one for himself afterward.

"What's your proposal, woman?"

"If I get accepted to Princeton, you have to come with me."

Farkle stopped mid-chew. She looked at his best friend who had a smirk planted on her lips.

"You're kidding, right?" Farkle chuckled. Riley maintained a neutral expression on her face, taking another bite of cake. "Oh my...you're not."

Riley shook her head. "I wanted to major in astronomy but I've heard that Princeton has a great astrophysics unit."

"You're unbelievable," Farkle exclaimed.

"Why? You don't think I can get in?"

"No, I know you can," Farkle smirked. "I just can't believe you're forcing me to go to Princeton."

"Now I'll be there. Whatever happened to following your friends to wherever they go?" Riley chuckled at Farkle's expression on surprise on his face. "Didn't think I heard that back at the middle school graduation, huh?"

"No, I didn't," he laughed.
"Don't worry, Farkley. Just know you'll always have me. Partners! You and me against the world. I'm by your side 100%." 

"Thank you, Riley. I appreciate you."

"Life will find a way to figure itself out. It'll just take some time..." Riley smiled at him softly as she takes his hand in her's and squeezed it gently. "Now, are you going to finish that because I really want it."

Farkle chortled, "it's all yours."

Riley beamed as she took the cake for herself and took a big piece into her mouth, moaning in delight at how great it was against her taste buds.

Farkle bit his lip to stop himself from smiling. "As said, you're unbelievable."

"Ou ah me," Riley said with her mouth full.

Farkle knew what she had tried to say behind the cake and he shook his head at her, but not denying it one bit.

Brown eyes opened themselves up for the first time in the new day. When walking up, Riley had to remind herself of what her life is still in the middle of at that time.

It's the future, 20 years ahead. I am married to my best friend Farkle and we have a teen daughter together, Nova. I work alongside my husband with his company. Lucas is only a friend, although we used to date.

Riley processed all this into her brain before standing up, wiggling her toes before placing her footprints onto the carpet. She stretched and yawned, reaching over for her toothbrush which was at her bedside table. She walked over to Maya's door and was about to knock on it to use the bathroom when the squeak of another door opening was heard.

Farkle stepped out of his room, scratching at his bedhead. He stopped when he caught Riley standing there, making the two the only ones in the hallway. Riley bit her bottom lip as she look down at her hands fiddling the toothbrush.

"Hey," he spoke first. He spoke softly, quiet that it was almost inaudible, but with his voice being the only one that played in the empty hallway, Riley heard it.

She took a deep breath before looking up at him, a defaulted smile on her lips. "Hi...or should I say good morning?"

"Yeah, good morning," Farkle scratched the back of his neck. "Good morning to you, Riley."

"And to you, Farkle," she answered back.

They stood awkward before one another and Riley didn't like it. She was sure Farkle didn't like it either. This wasn't what it should be like for the two best friends.

"What brings you up early this morning?" He asked, pushing for conversation.

"Oh, I'm was going to brush my teeth. Maya locked the door again," Riley chuckled.

"You could use my bathroom if you'd like," Farkle offered.
You could use my bathroom if you'd like," Farkle offered.

"Really. I insist. Besides, you know Maya, she's probably not going to wake up just to open the door for you."

Riley shook her head, "I shouldn't, Farkle."

"Really. I insist. Besides, you know Maya, she's probably not going to wake up just to open the door for you." Riley sighed in defeat. She maintained the smile on her face as she took steps forward towards Farkle. "Okay then."

Farkle opened the door for her and let her in. She made her way to the bathroom and took the right sink out of the double vanity. She put her hair up in a ponytail before taking Farkle's toothpaste and putting a generous amount on her toothbrush.

Farkle came in seconds after she started to brush, to do the same action. She glanced over at him as he smiled at her and wet his toothbrush before putting toothpaste on his own toothbrush. They brushed their teeth together, their minds going off to the same idea.

_This is what I go through every morning with you for the rest of my life._

Glances were shared between the two teens as they finished up what they were doing.

She walked out but took a deep breath before turning back to the boy who took his time cleaning around the sinks.

"Farkle?" She called out his name. His head lifted up to the sound of his name being released from her lips. She stood tall with her head held high. Her mouth opened and closed before she took another deep breath and said, "This seems awkward between us, and I don't want it to be. We're best friends and I care about you deeply."

"I can very much say the same thing about you," Farkle said.

She wanted to say more, a lot more, but she didn't want to fulfill the moment with too much thought and too much emotion. She smiled at him and left it at that, walking out, him falling behind her.

They made it down the stairs to catch the sight of Nova, upside down on the couch, sucking on a plastic spoon and Riley Minkus dancing to music that played over the intercoms in the kitchen.

Mrs. Minkus caught sight of the two brunette teens and beamed brightly at the sight of them. "Hiya, children! Come here! Come on, gather around!" She took their wrists and pulled them to the dining table, squishing them to be by each other's side. She grinned widely.

"Oh, it's such a wonderful day! It's a beautiful morning. There's a star in the sky, the earth is turning, and I have my wonderful family!" Her hand gestured over to Nova who didn't pay any attention to her own mother and her usual Saturday morning routine.

"You're still your usual Riley," Farkle commented to his best friend next to him.

"Why wouldn't I be?" Riley asked curiously.

"Well, Lucas did say yesterday that you had changed throughout the years."

"But he also said that I was still the same Riley as I am now," she stated quietly. "So what's changed?"

"You guys sure do whisper a lot!" Older Riley whispered to the two teens who separated quickly.
She laughed. "Don't worry, I heard nothing. I just observe."

"Observe?" Young Riley questioned, eyebrow raising at her future self.

The woman hummed as she readied their plates with egg, ham, and cheese omelettes, and placed it in front of their bodies.

"Well, I am a scientist. I tend to observe people and surroundings a lot. Just natural instinct..." She answered. "Nova, come eat!"

Nova groaned and kicked herself off the sofa only to face plant onto the rug on the floor. Her mother stared at her and shook her head before placing Nova's plate across from the other two teens.

"Ow, that hurt!" Nova exclaimed, hopping over to her seat. She tied her long, dark brown hair up in a ponytail and then take the salt and pepper, applying it to her omelette.

"Smicies!" Mrs. Minkus called out. The small robotic creature rolled in, looking up to the mother of her creator. Riley smiled gently as she bent down to speak, "May you please get Mr. Minkus from the lab and tell him breakfast is ready."

The small creature beeped and rolled along to the elevator.

"Oh, and tell him, if he doesn't come I'm eating his food!" Nova yelled as she watched robot roll. Smicies beeped before crashing into a wall, and falling flat on her face. That caused Nova to express annoyance. "Stupid," she muttered about the robot.

Smicies got up on her own and continued her journey to Mr. Minkus down in the laboratory.

"Why do you call it Smicies?" Riley asked interested to know.

At cue, best friend Maya walked down scratching at her head as she yawned, "yeah, why do you call it Smicies?"

"Thank you for repeating my question," Riley chuckled as her friend smiled and winked at her.

"It's an acronym. Stupid Machine I Created In Eighty Seconds," Nova answered.

"It's not a very nice name for her but it's the only one that worked," future Riley said as she plopped down a plate in front of Maya. The blonde immediately started to scarf it down.

"Where's your other friend?" Mrs. Minkus asked.

Maya swallowed her food to answer, "I heard him in the bathroom so he should be down soon."

"You created a robot in eighty seconds? That's incredible!" Riley smiled proudly at her future daughter. Riley's brown eyes met with crystal blue as she stared to Nova's eyes which she inherited from her father.

"Well, my father made her, I just wired her up to program. I'm a Minkus, it really shouldn't be a surprise. Besides, she has a few bugs still I need to fix so she isn't perfect..."

"No matter what, she is a Minkus! We made her so she is ours. She's a wonder helper around the house! She's something you should be proud of, Nova!" Mrs. Minkus complimented.

"She's annoying too. It's like having a smaller sibling," Nova grumbled picking at her food.
"Which isn't so bad!" Her mother tried to positively add.

"Which is bad..." Nova whispered to her new friends.

Lucas came down the stairs with a decent smile on his face. "Morning, everyone!"

All muttered back their good mornings and Mrs. Minkus placed a plate in front of Lucas. He thanked her for the meal before taking his first bite and exclaiming a sound of delight. It caused everyone to turn to the boy.

"Wow, Mrs. Minkus! You sure do know how to prepare a delightful breakfast! This is pretty good!" Lucas exclaimed, trying his best to not act casual but obviously, by Maya's eye roll, it didn't pass.

But with Mrs. Minkus being the one and only Riley, of course it passed.

"Why, thank you! You are beyond sweet! You know, I don't always get praised for the food I make since I'm not the best but I love to plan and make things grand. It's why I host a Group Dinner every month, but gosh darn, I'm blushing!" Riley grinned and giggled as she pressed a hand against her hot cheek.

Lucas smiled at the blushing woman before he exclaimed his pain after he felt a hard jab at his shin from under the table. He looked over to the person across from him, Farkle, who continued on eating his food and acting casual.

Mr. Minkus finally entered the room with his eyes glued down to the paper he read as he fiddled the pencil in his hand. He took his place at the head of the table, not looking up to anyone.

Nova smirked as she watched her father. She took out her phone and placed it on the table, stating to record a voice memo. "Good morning, Father."

"Morning, Nova," he automatically responded.

"I would just like it to be known that my charging station will need to be repaired soon. I only turned on with seventy-three percent battery, and we all know for me to be in full Nova-mode I need a complete one hundred percent."

"Yeah, I'll work on it later on today," Mr. Minkus stated, causing Nova to wear a satisfied grin on her face.

"Nova, don't take advantage of your dad while he has science on the brain," Mrs. Minkus scolded at her daughter.

"Mom, you didn't play along! I'm gonna have to trim your part off," Nova pouted as she took her phone off the table and saved what she got, saving it to her "Proof I'm a Robot" folder. "Mom's blushing!"

Farkle's head snapped up to look at Nova, who hid her smile behind her phone, then at everyone at the table. "Blushing? Why's she blushing?" He turned to his wife who stood behind him. "Who made you blush?"

Riley Minkus rolled her eyes before staring over her husband's shoulder, his plate of breakfast in her hand. "What are you working on, Farkley?"

"Oh, let me switch with you!" Riley said before ripping the papers out of his hand and replacing it with his breakfast.

"Riley, please! Don't do this! I just have four left!" He whined as he tried to steal it back. Riley wore a pointed look as she took his pencil and used the end to lift his head up to look at her serious look.

"You eat. You've already done a lot; you woke up very early this morning, and you hadn't taken a break. Eat, and I'll finish this up for you by the time you're done with eating," Riley firmly said to her husband.

"But--"

"Farkle!"

"Fine! But I'm eating quick!" The man huffed. His wife smiled satisfied as she pulled up a chair to his side and kissed his cheek sweetly, nudging his side, getting a smile out of him, before getting to work.

Her eyes focused down to the lead on the paper as she figured out to answer to three-step conversions.

"Nova, what's the molar mass of glucose?" Riley Minkus asked.

Nova sat up straight as she recited. "Glucose has six atoms of Carbon which has the atomic mass of 12 grams, twelve atoms of Hydrogen which has the atomic mass of one, and six atoms of Oxygen which has an atomic mass of sixteen. Six times twelve equals seventy-two plus twelve which equals eighty-four and the addition of sixteen times twelve which equals ninety-six, making the total molar mass 180."

"Thank you, daughter!" Riley grinned as she wrote that down and continued working on.

"Holy cow, how did you know that?" Maya chuckled in disbelief at the girl sitting next to her.

Nova smiled as she took out her phone and played an audio of her mother saying, "Nova is--a robot."

"Nova, delete that please. Trimming off the word 'not' from the clip doesn't make it legit. You're not a robot," Mrs. Minkus stated as she went off to the second to last question.

"Oh! I have one of dad too!" Nova played the clip of her father saying it but in a form of a question. "Nova is a robot?"

Mr. Minkus gave her a pointed look. Nova returned it. "What? Do I need to convince you, the speaker of those words, how it helps my theory of me, Nova Minkus, of being a robot? It is how the question could have been stated at the time. It could have been of disbelief at a doctor's appointment after they couldn't draw blood from my fingertip. Or it could have been of discovery?"

"I was asking it to Uncle Lucas after he told me that was what you were going to be for Halloween."

"That's your story, but there's no evidence!"

"You're so much," Farkle Minkus sighed as downed his juice.
"How?" Lucas spoke his mind out loud. The one worded questioned got the attention of most of the people at the table with the exceptions of the Minkus females.

"How what?" The young Riley asked to her guy friend.

"How...a lot of things? How did she get into science? And how...I'm sorry, Mr. Minkus, I don't mean to disrespect but how did you end up with her?"

The question got Lucas a lot of glares around the table, mostly from his friends. He looked at them and shrugged. "What? It's a question I really want to know!"

"Oh, Woody, ya sad 'cause you don't get da girl?" Maya teased as she pinched his cheek and poured up at him.

"You know what? This is also a question I often think about too!" Nova spoke out. "Are you really my parents or my creators?"

"Both," the parents spoke in unison with smirks on their faces.

Nova closed her eyes and put down her fork on the side of her plate. "That's just...gross."

Mrs. Minkus giggled as she placed her pencil down on the sheet of paper with all the completed conversion equations. Mr. Minkus smiled as he pushed his finished plate away from him and took his wife's hand.

"Riley and I have always been friends. We've always been drawn to each other," Mr. Farkle Minkus started as his deep blue eyes captured the dazzling sparkles of brown.

"He was the only one that ever really got me. I always just blamed it on him being a genius but he understood me more than he understood anyone else," the missus spoke.

"How we got together? Well, that's a long story," he laughed, causing his wife to grin massively. "So much was going on at the time...so many boys liked her..."

"Oh shut up you! I had to win you over with like three or four other girls pinning after you!" Riley giggled as she pushed him lightly.

"But with black holes and supernovas causing rifts to the continuous motion of our lives, how I caught the brightest and most beautiful star with my bare hands to be by my side for all of eternity will always be a mystery to me..." He softly started, maintaining eye contact with his wife as he grazed her knuckles with his lips and planted kisses on her hands.

In that moment, one could obviously note how Riley Minkus relaxed so much that if she could melt at that very moment, she very much would. Her heart fluttered as she added this to the list of moments that made her fall in love with her best friend all over again.

"Oh Farkle..." She softly pronounced, leaning in against his touch.

"Farkle," the younger Riley and Maya sighed in pure awe as they felt the words spoken by the older man hit their romantic spot in their hearts.

The two male friends look surprised at their female companions and then glance at each other before back to the future Farkle who still had older Riley entranced.

"Smooth," Nova smirked as she sipped her juice. Lucas nodded his head in agreement at hire comment as he had a look of surprise on his face.
"Teach me your ways, man!" The young Farkle demanded from his future self. The moment was lost with that as Mr. Minkus chuckled and the missus' face flushed red with a mixture of different emotions.

"Maybe later, but today we have a day full of activities. We have to prepare the Group Dinner which is tomorrow and also we have to get your guys some decent attire, right babe?" The older male said, turning to his wife who giggled loudly into her hand after saying the cute pet-name.

"Yeah! We should start getting ready! We should get ready right now!" She said excitedly and rushed. She took her husband's hands and started to tug him away. "Children, we've washed the clothes you came in, so wear that to go out today. Nova, you show them where it is! We need to get ready!" She giggled madly as she pulled at her man's hand before she took off into a dash to her master bedroom with her husband chasing until he caught her, getting a loud "Farkle!" before the door slid and locked closed.

"What a lucky lady..." Riley sighed happily, still replaying the moment in her head of Mr. Minkus declaring his love to the love of his life.

"I know. I want a guy like that. Where do I get a guy like that? How do I get a guy like that?" Maya asked, laying her head on her hands as she had an adoring smile laid on her lips.

"I don't know but gosh, this day is starting off as such a beautiful and romantic morning!" Riley gleamed.

"Um, ladies?" Young Farkle cleared his throat.

"Farkle," they repeated their moment as they look over to the younger male, whose eyebrow rose at the déjà vu.

"I am right here," he stated as he gave himself a gesture.

They look at him up and down before settling with "eh."

Farkle smiled as he rolled his eyes at his ladies.

"Already this day is starting off productive!" Nova stated as she got up with her plates, silvers, and glasses to put to wash. She stood there and shook off a shutter which shimmied down her body.
"I believe we've made an amendable amount of progress today, don't you all think?"

Loud groans were the responses to Mrs. Minkus's question. She smirked slightly at the teen quartet as she took a sip of her fizzy drink. The group took up the sidewalk as they waited for Mr. Farkle Minkus and Nova to come around with the car. Mrs. Minkus remained by their side, preoccupied with her phone.

"My feet hurt," Maya groaned as she leaned her head against Lucas's shoulder.

"I don't know how since I've been carrying you around since the third shop we visited," Lucas groaned. He was holding onto her with all his strength. He knew that if he even slipped on holding her, she'd tease him for in the afterlife for being weak.

"We visited three stores?" She questioned.

"We visited seven," Farkle panted as he leaned against the side of the building, taking a deep breath after dropping the numerous amount of bags to the concrete.

Maya's eyebrows furrowed. "I don't remember going to seven stores?"

"You ditched us and went to the food court!" Lucas exclaimed loudly.

Maya's lips stretched into a smile as she remembered then. "Oh~, yeah! That burger was so good...both of them!"

Lucas was holding in the groan he desperately wanted to release. He tried to subtly hitch Maya more onto his back since she was slowly slipping from his grip. Maya smirked as she caught to what he was trying to do when he bend down.

"You losing me, Huck?" Maya teased.

"Nope! No, not at all! I just...thought you'd be more comfortable in this position."

"I liked where I was." She said before pushing more weight to his lower back. He released a deep groan of pain, giving Maya a satisfied smile on her face.

"Come on M," Riley spoke up from the ground she was sitting on. Maya rolled her eyes before getting off of his back and standing there with her arms crossed over her chest, a disappointed look on her face.

"Thank you," Lucas sighed in relief to Riley, who smiled at the blond boy.

Two honks broke the moment up. Mr. Minkus parked in front of them, getting out of the car to start immediately taking shopping bags and stuffing them into the truck and storage compartments under the seating and car floor.

"Where's Nova?" Mrs. Riley Minkus asked just as she opened up the car door to see her daughter resting her head against the car window with her eyes closed.

"Resting," her husband answered her question, still loading up the car. The young Farkle started to help his older self with it as there were a countless amount of bags to fit in. "Once she got in the car, she laid her head down and was out."
"Poor Nove. I don't blame her," the mother said taking her place in the passenger seat. "Everyone, remember to secure your seat belts. Safety always comes second!"

The quartet took their seats, looking confused at the saying said by the female Minkus.

"Um, always second, ma'am?" Lucas asked, concerned with his life at that moment.

"Don't question her. Please, I beg," Nova groaned, messaging her temple.

"Ah, look who speaks," Mrs. Minkus grumbled. "We thought you were asleep."

"Who could sleep with your voice ringing in their head..." Nova muttered under her breath, reviving a glare from her mother.

"Ouch," the woman raising a pinky to the girl, a sign of credit given. Nova smirked only slightly.

"How is she yours?" Maya asked to Riley over the shoulder of the seat in front of her. "She's so sarcastic."

"I'm insulted...but I was just thinking the same thing," the younger Riley replied back before exhaling a breath and turning back to her older self who muttered to herself in the passenger seat.

"Chef Perí messaged about the courses he made. He claims we're going to need a meat locker with all of the cold foods we've demanded for Group Dinner tomorrow," Riley Minkus chortled. Her husband snorted.

"Did they ever situate that order about the smoothie machines?"

"Yeah, I ordered on express since that company had a smoothie machine taken last month."

"It was two smoothie machines," Nova added in the important detail. "But the guy was caught, sadly."

"Sadly?" Mr. Minkus chortled.

"He obviously just wanted some smoothies too, daddy. Can't blame the guy..."

"Touché," the father shrugged.

"I only question why, to so much extent, would someone steal q smoothie machines?" Riley Minkus asked.

"Two smoothie machines," Nova's father corrected his wife, getting a hit to the arm.

"Oh...my...Smackle..."

Riley Minkus's head whipped around just as Farkle had stomped on the brakes. Gravity pressed the car back but bodies forward, secured behind the restriction of the seatbelt they all wore.

"Nova!" Riley Minkus gasped as her breath hitches and picked up its pace. Cars honked at the stopped vehicle in the middle of the highway.

Nova along with all the other teens wore wide-eyes while circulation rushed faster all throughout their bodies.

"Are you psychotic?" Nova screeched at her mother who looked bothered by her daughter's previous words.
"Not by psych tests!" Mrs. Minkus responded.

"Nova, you know better than to throw that name around," Mr. Minkus said sternly as he slowly started the car again to run the velocity back up to the speed limit.

"I say it all the time as an alternative to the average teenager's 'Oh My God' expression; that's what it is, an expression. Besides, how could I not say it when Ms. Isadora Smackle's face is plastered up there on that billboard!"

Multiple pairs of eyes looked over to see Smackle at a b-boy stance as the words next to her lit up, reading "Isadora Smackle. Attending the 26th annual Wegner Science Convention. Saturday."

"When did this happen?" Nova's mother hissed as she turned from the billboard to her husband. "She never attends anything. You know how she sets her meetings? Via VideoChat."

"Maybe she's stepping outside her comfort zone for once," Her husband spoke softly as he drove by the billboard.

"You mean again, don't you?" She scoffed. Mr. Minkus shifted uncomfortably. "You know what this means, right?"

"We will be crossing paths with Isadora once again," he answered.

"We will be seeing Smackle again," Riley said, her voice trembling a bit as her mind spaced off to every possible way the interaction could go.

"Is something wrong?" The young Riley spoke up for her silent friends in the car. They were all friends with the one and only Isadora Smackle and by how the way her and Farkle's older counterparts act, the relationship seemed to have changed after twenty years.

"Mom and Dad hate Smackle!" Nova yelled.

Mrs. Minkus turned her head, "No! We don't...hate Smackle. Hate is such a strong word to use for it. We're competitors in the same fields of science. When our business rises, her's falls and vice versa."

"Sure, mom." Nova looked over at her new friends and mouthed repeatedly, "she hates her! She hates her so much!"

"Shouldn't you guys be friends?" The young Riley asked, not understanding what had changed. Smackle was a good girl, an intelligent one who had really grew into the group lately since Farkle started dating her.

"Ri, can you drop it?" Maya whispered to her over the seat shoulder. The look Farkle was giving Riley meant he very much wanted Riley to drop it as well.

"Ha! The Minkus' and and Ms. Smackle friends?" Nova laughed.

Mrs. Minkus itched at her hands as she turned to look out of her window. Mr. Minkus glanced at his wife before up to the rear view mirror to answer Riley Matthews.

"We respect her very much. She's one of the most intelligent species of our time. It's just, of a line drawn, we like to keep her on the other side of the line, if you catch my drift?" Mr. Farkle Minkus said to the kids.
Riley Matthews nodded her head and she didn't know why but watching her older self tense up under the conversation being said and not facing anyone made her take the advice by Farkle and Maya and remaining quiet.

Nova leaned in close. "I actually like Ms. Smackle. She's very intelligent and comes out with new projects every year. Some would say I idolize her," she whispered lowly.

"Are you allowed to?" Lucas asked as the three teens and Riley leaned it.

"What's stopping me from not?" With that, Nova shrugged and went back to her position at her seat.

Nova's parents had a moment. Mr. Minkus glanced over to his wife to see her spacing off and her mind turning gears. He grabbed her left hand, trying to get her to break away from the deep crevices where unpleasant memories and overthought thinking hid in. What broke her attention was when the firm grip moved to a position of hand holding, fingers locked together and thumb grazed the top of the side of her palm relaxingly.

"Don't go there," he whispered almost inaudibly, the message only for her.

Mrs. Minkus shook her head. "I wasn't," she lied. She rested her right hand over their interlocked ones. She stared at the contrast between her right and her left, the left wore smooth tanned skin while her right was stretched and had different colors of light red, light brown spotting and her normal skin tone. She hid it underneath their palms, letting the moment be.

They drove a little while longer before red lights that belong to the back tail lights of the cars ahead were all they could see in front of them.

The adult male had asked his companion to check up how long the line stream of cars go for which she checked. "Ten miles," she answered. "It's because they're making that fourth lane. I say we take the next exit and go through the next little county and skip all this."

The man shook his head. "That's what everyone else is going to do. I'd rather wait here and when people start doing that, we'll take their spots and it'll speed up."

"At this speed, we'll get nowhere. It's rather make the drive productive than be in this mess for an hour."

"Riles, can you just trust me?"

"Can you trust me?" She strikes back with a smirk.

The oldest male rolled his eyes. Mrs. Minkus knew her husband wouldn't budge. "At least move to the right lane, it's the left lane that's closed."

She turned in her seat to the tired teenagers who stared off out their windows to the surroundings around them.

"Seems we're stuck in traffic for a while 'cause of Farkle's stubbornness. I know you guys are tired so it'd be best to rest up in here while we have the time."

"I'm out," Nova said, pulling out a blanket from under her father's seat and a sleeping eye mask before kicking off her shoes and resting her head against the window. She let out little wheezes as she went straight to the land of nods.

Nova's mother gave the kids an apologetic look before turning around, returning to her previous
position.

With boredom as motivation, they all selected positions which were the most comfortable while in the seating position and closed their eyes for until they arrived back.

/*/*/*/•/•/•

"Look at our girls!" Lucas sighed in awe as he eyed his current girlfriend Riley Matthews who was loudly singing the lyrics to the song being played on the speakers. The party was alive and she was standing on a table with a bunch of other girls doing the same thing.

"Yep, I see them!" Fifteen-year-old Farkle chuckled as he wanted to just loudly voice how hysterical it was seeing his own girlfriend Smackle stand among the large clan of females and just stand there watching how loose and relaxed they all were while she was rather the opposite.

"Smackle doesn't like parties?" Lucas asked his friend.

"She likes parties, just not people." Lucas made a sound, sympathizing. "But she's trying. She's getting around to liking and trusting you guys which is great for me, her, and everyone else."

"Riley really thought bringing Smackle on a double date will help her open up and interact with people and society norms," Farkle yelled over the music.

"Can't say she's wrong. I mean, look!" He pointed over to Smackle as she started to smile gently and sway from left to right. "She'd adapt well."

"Riley also wants to gain Smackle's trust. For some reason, she's threatened by her," Farkle announced to her best guy friend.

Lucas laughed. "Why's that?"

Farkle could only shrug, but he knew why.

Eyes returned back to the mass of ladies only to catch Riley start dancing from side to side with Smackle, making Smackle more comfortable. Riley looked over to her boyfriend and best guy friend and wink at them just as the song changed to one of Drake and Rihanna causing them all the scream and sung along with the words for those who knew it.

"And last night I think I lost my patience,
Last night, I got high as the expectations,
Last night, I came to a realization,
And I hope you can take it,
I hope you can take it.

I'm too good to you,
I'm way too good to you,
You take my love for granted,
I just don't understand it.
No, I'm too good to you,
I'm way too good to you,
You take my love for granted,
I just don't understand it."

[--"Too Good" by Drake ft. Rihanna]

Riley grinned brightly at the males standing across the room. Both of them involuntarily smiling back at her, watching her dark hair away along her back, her body swaying entrancingly, eyes
never leaving her alone.

Smackle leaned into Riley and said something in which she nodded and they both hopped off the sturdy coffee table. They walked back over to their boyfriends. Both stood up from their seats and smiled at the approaching girlfriends.

"We came drinks," Riley stated. Lucas offered to go get it for them leaving Farkle with both ladies.

"This party's a lot of fun!" He spoke to them.

"I know! The playlist so far is amazing!" Riley commented. "I'm just glad I can spend my fun with my good friend here!" She locked arms with Smackle who looked baffled.

"Friend," Smackle stated, returning Riley's contagious smiling, tightening their locked arms.

The song changed to Beyoncé and that stirred up more hype from the females, especially one who stood up and took everyone off the table for herself. She took the microphone from the karaoke machine which was used earlier on in the night and sang the song, dedicating it to her "cheating ex-BF, Justin."

"When you hurt me, you hurt yourself,
Don't hurt yourself.
When you diss me, you diss yourself,
Don't hurt yourself.
When you hurt me, you hurt yourself,
Don't hurt you yourself.
When you love me, you love yourself,
Love God Herself."
[Don't Hurt Yourself by Beyoncé ft. Jack White]

"Lots of profanity," Smackle commented, causing Riley to chuckle slightly.

"Sadly, that's today's music," said by Farkle."

"Yeah, this song is about a cheating situation. Many believe it's Beyoncé addressing her husband and his cheating rumors. It holds a good message if you go into it to be honest," Riley said, continuing to watch the singing girl yell the lyrics rather than sing them. It was entertaining really.

Lucas came back with drinks which the females thanked him for. He wrapped his arm around Riley's shoulder and she leaned in and snuggled underneath his arm. Farkle looked over at them and then to Smackle who just stood there, keeping to herself. He shifted before looking down at his shoes, smiling slightly as he caught Smackle look back at him. He glanced over to Riley who was smirking at him, tilting her head to make a move on her already. Farkle smirked and shook his head.

The night continued on...

\•\•\•|•/•/•/

All the teenagers rested in the back of the car, dreaming and slumbering without a stir. Riley Minkus watched them carefully. All their breathings were even and they seem undisturbed, up until the young Farkle twisted in his seat, a discomfiting look on his face.

Possibly a bad dream? Mrs. Minkus thought.
A squeeze to her hand caused her to shift her attention from the children back to her husband. She sighed softly as she focused attention to the lights ahead of her.

"How stupid do they think we are?" Riley huffed, shaking her head.

"Very. But they'll come around," Farkle said.

"When?" Riley asked seriously.

"Soon," Farkle reassured her.

"I can't do soon. They're using us."

"They're not using us."

"I don't know if you're noticed, Farkle, but they are using us."

"Just give them some time. This is all new to them. Besides, we're doing a good deed," Farkle smirked and chuckled slightly.

Riley shook her head at her husband. Her eyes focused forward to the red lights ahead that lit her face. She squeezed his hand, happy to have this man by her side at this time.
"Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny..."

"She's kinda good," Lucas complemented as he heard Nova recite poetry into a microphone as a way to do a mic check.

"Romeo and Juliet. A classic which we'll read this year in English," the youthful Farkle Minkus said as he watched with interest, watching his future daughter quote the prologue of Shakespearian literature.

"What?" Maya scoffed in disgust. "This is original art, Farkle. I don't know what you're talking about?"

"Oh, Maya..." Riley sighed softly.

They were the only four figures in the large warehouse which weren't busy-boding around. Everyone was active trying to finish the setting by 5:00 P.M. to begin Group Dinner, the charity event of giving dinner to the public, supported by the Minkus Family Foundation.

Mrs. Minkus wore casual clothing and light makeup as she was prepping and preparing everything for the night. It was a contrast compared to her usual working attire she was usually seen in. She was moving and couldn't stop. She directed to others what to do and had moments where she muttered to herself at time. The only one who's noticed is Maya since she was watching it all in disgust.

"Why are you like this, Riley? Too good to the world and to good for it," the blonde said. The brunette best friend smiled slightly and nudged her to the side just as her older self did a 180 to give attention to Nova who continued to recite Shakespeare dramatically.

"Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband? Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name, When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it? But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin? That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband: Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring--!"

"Nova! What in Dante's inferno are you doing?" Riley huffed angrily, getting annoyed with her daughter's voice being a constant in the background of the chaos around her.

"Nice pun there, mom. I'm doing mic check!" Nova answered her mother's question.

"And monologuing Romeo and Juliet is how you do it?"

"What? Is Hamlet better for you? I can do some of Hamlet ya know?" Nova grinned. "Too many journeys around the sun and moon, Make us count again over our love be done!"

"Ah! Nova, you pain me!" Mr. Minkus exaggerated as he held at his heart while walking up behind Riley Minkus who giggled behind her clipboard. Mr. Minkus smirked and winked. "That one is your mother's favorites and you say it all wrong."

"I'm not perfect you know!" Nova huffed.

"Yet you can speak Romeo and Juliet like it's a second language," he teased at his daughter.
"Like my fourth, father," Nova smirked, bring up the fact she could fluently speak English, Spanish, and French.

"So many journeys may the sun and moon, Make us again count o'er ere love be done! But woe is me! you are so sick of late, So far from cheer and from your former state," Mr. Minkus quoted as he gripped his wife's hand and kissed it, the kisses lingering up her arm as he left a trail of them behind.

Mrs. Minkus continued on with the monologuing, saying, "That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust, Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must; For women's fear and love holds quantity, In neither aught, or in extremity. Now what my love is, proof hath made you know; And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so..."

"Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear; Where little fears grow great, great love grows there." They finish it off together. Mrs. Minkus released a giggle from her lips as she turned around to face her husband, chest-to-chest finally.

"My favorite lines of Hamlet," she smiled.

"I know," he chuckled at her.

"You guys speak Shakespearian together? That is so gross," Maya gagged. Riley harshly elbowed her rib, causing Maya to counteract the action to Riley.

"What do you want, Farkle? If you haven't seen, I'm really busy. I don't have time to fit in small chat right now," she told him.

"Don't worry, I'm not here to bother your spirits. Just here to warn you that Lucas should be here in about thirty-seven seconds once he finds us," the older Farkle said.

The older Riley's face pinned up to a hurt smile. "How great! The first unwanted guest!"

"Ouch," the young Friar kid muttered.

"Don't be rude," the man said, running a hand down his wife's arm. "You invited him, and he's here to help out."

"He's here for Zay," the lady laughed. "Once they see each other they're going to start putting on a show like the last times."

"Peach football was all good and fun until it hit that old man! And Banana Boomerang!"

"And Marshmallow Catcher was a great idea until they ruined one of our tables!" Riley rolled her eyes.

"I don't care, that one was funny!" Farkle laughed.

Thirty-five year old Lucas Friar walked up to the married couple with an adorable smile on his lips. He wore the outfit of a plain white shirt, blue jeans and construction shoes which were splattered with white paint.

"Farkle, Riley," Lucas greeted the two.

"Lucas," was all Riley could let out while wearing one of her grand Riley Smileys.

"Kiddos," Lucas said to the four teens standing behind the couple.
"Lucas..." They all said in unison with small waves.

"UNCLE LUCAS!" Nova screeched into the microphone causing all to either cover their ears and jump or look at the direction of the front area. Nova jumped down and sprinted over to push between her parents to wrap herself around her Uncle Lucas's waist. Lucas chuckled and hugged back. "I've missed you Uncle Lucas!" She inhaled his scent and sighed happily. "You still smell nice."

Uncle Lucas chuckled. Mama Minkus's jaw clenched and pulled her daughter away from the man wth a slight struggle since she was holding on so tightly.

"How've you been, kiddo?" He asked the teen.

"Quite swell actually. I've been thinking about us lately and I've once heard a saying by Loretta Young saying, 'Love isn't something you find. Love is something that finds you.' I'm willing to take it literal for our connection," Nova swooned. Her mother rolled her eyes as her Uncle Lucas looked just plain out confused.

"I tried that, sister. Doesn't work out that way, now move along!" Riley Minkus said pushing her daughter to the side. "Don't pay attention to her. She just needs some friends."

"Well, I'm here and in your service. Is there anything I can do to help?" Lucas offered help.

"Well, catering should be here any minute. You can hang around the pickup area and help them bring in desserts," Riley sighed.

"I can do that!" The older man smiled.

"Good!" Nova's mother smiled. She pulled a bright yellow, circular sticker off from underneath her papers on the top and stuck it onto the front of Lucas's shirt.

He looked down at it and read the words aloud. "I'm a Minkus Family helper?"

"Just so they know who you are and not some weirdo trying to steal desserts. Okay, bye!"

Lucas was pushed away and led by Farkle who excused Riley's behavior for the millionth time in his entire lifetime. Mrs. Minkus turned around to the four from the past and called them out, "you four!"

"Us?" They spoke in unison as they pointed to themselves.

"Yes, of course you! Who else?" She rolled her eyes. She peeled off the large stickers for the and stuck them on their persons. "You guys will be helping out around here! I need as many hands as I can get."

"What are we supposed to do?" Lucas asked for the group.

"Organize tables, set up chairs, anything but mic check. My brain hurts from so much Shakespeare today," she said before walking away to continue her checklist.

"I'm taste testing the food!" Maya said as she dash off to the appetizers immediately.

"I'll set up chairs," Farkle said turning to Riley.

"And I'll organize the tables!" She said.
The bumped into each other trying to go opposite direction. Lucas snorted and went with Riley as Nova stuck with Farkle.

"I'm sorry for how I seem to be treating you in this future, Lucas," the young Riley said to the Friar kid helping her place tablecloths at the tables.

Lucas shook his head, "it seems to be the most appropriate thing since apparently we're exes."

"Even though, this is twenty years down the line and I would have at least thought we'd be friends..."

"We are," Lucas reassured her. "Believe me, I'd rather have this than not have you at all."

Riley's cheeks blushed a light pink. "I guess you're right. You're still an important part of our lives, and a big part in Nova's I see. This isn't so bad."

Lucas agreed. They smiled at each other and continued on to the next table.

Riley stopped and pondered on a thought, "do you think this is our genuine future? That no matter what happens, this will be the end result?"

Lucas could only shrug. "Doesn't seem like my type of topic..." Riley nodded and pushed the question aside to ask to a person willing to answer it. Inaudibly, Lucas mumbled, "...but I sure hope not..."

Farkle watched from afar, keeping an eye on his two best friends as they made conversation about whatever. Nova focused on the set mission of getting chairs done done in time, but she could obviously tell her partner's mind was focused elsewhere.

"Do you like her?" Nova asked out of the blew, catching Farkle by surprise on how bluntly it was asked.

"Who?"

"Reed."

"Reed?" Farkle asked confused. Nova pointed to the young Matthews girl and Farkle remembered the fake names they had selected the first day. "Oh, Reed, um, yeah, I love her. She's one of my best friends."

"You know that's not what I meant," Nova teased.

"Yeah, I know, but I don't love her that way..." He looked back behind him to take the being that is Riley Matthews in for even the slightest moment he had without getting caught by her. "...not yet anyways."

"My parents always tell me how they fell in love," Nova smiled. Farkle paid his attention to her, needing to hear what she would say.

"Really? What happened?"

"They each tell it by their own point of view. They didn't fall in love at the same time but set very long apart. My father claimed to have loved my mother since the first grade, my mother and I still believe it to be bogus but he's set on that he has loved her since then and had never stopped. My mother didn't know until she was in her teen years but it was small and grew for him with even
every thought of him. They were better friends than a couple but my mother had always told my
father to follow his feelings at times when he's clueless."

"Is that a lot of times?" Farkle asked curiously.

"No, but when it comes to my mother, he always does what would make her happy. That's all he
cares about."

Farkle was the same way in the future as he was as his teen self. Riley's happiness was first
priority to him and he's caught himself forgetting about that sometimes, but the last thing he ever
wants to see is Riley in any way upset. He loved Riley, his feelings were sure on that.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Sussie, the Minkus' business assistant, spoke into the microphone as she greeted and started the
event while people were still walking in through the doors and preparing themselves their plates.
The doors opened at 5:00PM but now as the place was a little more than half filled by twenty
minutes.

"Hello everyone! I'm Sussie Morales, associated with Minkus Corporation run by CEOs Riley
and Farkle Minkus. We still have people coming in and settling and shortly once more people fill
in we will move over to hear some words by Mr. and Mrs. Minkus. Thank you." Sussie stepped
down from the microphone and went to continue on helping out setting people in.

Mr. and Mrs. Minkus were greeting people at the door and catching up in conversation with some
regulars they occasionally saw attend Group Dinner every month. Nova was by her parents side,
stuck there so that their family was presented as hosts. It was obvious Nova would rather be
anywhere but by her parents' side.

The teens out of time stayed a distance as they watched people of all types walk through the
doors. Most were people of the homeless but they walked in with warm smiles and was greeted
warmly by the family. There were some middle class families and some of the upper class here for
mere support of the cause.

"Wow..." Maya said as the whole scene played out in front of their eyes what Group Dinner was
all about.

Principal Babineaux walked through the door, getting greeted with a hug by Mrs. Minkus and
receiving a kiss on the cheek. He greeted his pal and student as well, saying a joke afterward
because Riley's smile tightened and she turned her head to laugh.

"ZAY!" A loud greeting came from across the area. Heads turned to see the older Lucas walking
towards his best friend with arms opened and a large grin on his face.

"Lucas, my man!" Zay laughed as he made his way over and the two embraced, patting each
other's backs. The female Minkus walked over and pointed to the two troublesome men.

"I'm watching you too. You do anything out of line, I'm not afraid to repeat Group Dinner
February 2026."

The guys gasped and gulped. "We'll try and be on our best behavior, ma'am!" Zay said in his
Texan accent and bowing his head.

"Good! I also need to speak to you later so don't leave until I speak with you."

Zay nodded in understanding.
Lucas hit Zay's arm to get his attention. "Guess what? They have a smoothie machine here! Not one but two! You know what that means?" Lucas smirked, having a sinister idea.

"Oh yeah," Mr. Babineaux smirked.

"Fill up with no cup!" They spoke in unison before running off together and cause some mayhem.

Mrs. Minkus rubbed her temple not wanting to know what the game "Fill up with no cup" meant but she would be sure to find out soon enough.

The older Farkle wrapped an arm around his wife, a small smile on his lips. "It's time to introduce ourselves, sweetie."

"Yeah, let's go," Riley sighed. "Nova, come on!"

Nova groaned and followed behind her parents as they made their way to the stage. Nova stood to the side while Riley stood in front of the microphone, her usual Riley Smiley on her face as she caught everyone's attention.

"Hi everyone, if I could get everyone's attention! I'm Riley Minkus, organizer of this incredible event. I know a lot of you have already started getting food and taking seats and just continue to do so please. To start off this event we'd like to show our introduction video. I know we do this every time but you know we have to do this." A wave of chuckles went through the room as a large screen came down and a video played, several of the lights going down but not enough to stop others from doing what they want.

Nearly all eyes watched as the video started, playing as an intro to starting Group Dinner.

It started off with Farkle's father Stuart Minkus sitting at a desk. He looked young, exactly how he looked back in their current time.

"Hi, I'm Stuart Minkus, CEO of Minkus Internationals. As of the year of 2014, the amount of people living in poverty was a shocking 15% in the United States, highest it's ever been since the early 1990's. Certainly, no one should be one to not afford what they desperately need; water, shelter, and food. Things need to change and the best time to start it is today. With help and resources, I'm proud to say that the start of what is to be the Minkus Family Foundation is going to be the start of a better and brighter future for us now and for the times ahead of us. We are to give generous grants and donations to as many as we are allowed to help. We are people of this fine world, it's best to take care of one another while we're on it. Thank you."

The video faded out of Stuart and changed scenery to reveal Farkle Minkus, wearing casual wear and looking dashing and young. He smiled at the camera as he approached it.

"I'm Farkle Minkus, current CEO of Minkus International and son of the one Stuart Minkus. My father started the Minkus Family Foundation to help those less fortunate, and I'm here to continue his work and improve on it. Minkus Family Foundation are happy to expand more to those of less fortune and to all. We're proud to announce that we're to expand out to building homes for those who don't have one, joining the fight of giving clean water to everyone everywhere, and provide shelters where meals are served three meals a day. Let's give what my father knew all need; water, shelter, and food. After all..."

He stopped walking to squat down and open his arms in the video. A bouncing dark haired little girl ran into the shot and jumped in her father's arms giggling. Farkle hitched her up on his hip and smiled at her as she grinned down at him; Nova. Another female appeared by his side, obviously being Riley. She rested her hand on his shoulder and ran a thumb over Nova's cheek as
a sweet gesture. Farkle looked back at the camera, "the Minkus Family Foundation is the start of a better and brighter future for us now and for the times ahead of us. Thank you."

The video faded out after that, a loud wave of clapping echoing off the walls of the place.

Mrs. Minkus stepped up to the microphone, smiling lightly over the crowd. "Again, thank you all for coming to this event. To let it be known, dinner to us, the Minkus Family, is one of the times where we all get together and we converse with one another and talk about our days and our lives, so I'm so glad to have organized this where I'm able spend my most treasured time of the day with all of you."

Another wave of clapping rolled in, Mrs. Riley Minkus giving her usual large smile.

"She's so inspirational," a woman sniffled by the four teens who blended in with the large crowd.

"Wow Riley, you've really seemed to have done something with your life..." Maya muttered as her eyes ran over the crowd clapping at Riley, for Riley, loving and/or falling in love with Riley Minkus.

"What can I say? She's a crowd favorite," Lucas chuckled in a joking manner but the blonde female didn't take it in any other why but serious.

"Don't say that guys... This isn't me. N-Not yet, anyways," Riley stuttered uncomfortably. People really seemed to like her and appreciate her.

"Oh, Riley, you don't see it do you?" Maya cooed at her little brunette friend who frowned at her.

"What don't I see?"

"Riles, this is about you. This is all about you. We've been so invested with your life, we haven't had a chance to see what else is out there," Maya said straight up.

"This isn't about me. We're got intel on everyone. We're getting bits and pieces the longer we stay. Farkle has a life with me, Lucas is a busy man who's still in our lives and is friends with us, there's Zay, there's even Smackle--"

"What 'us' are you talking about? You and me or you and Farkle?" Maya questioned, not seeing how Riley does.

Riley paused for a second, taken aback. "Why would I speak for me and Farkle? Of course I mean you and me..."

"I don't know if you've noticed Riley, but I don't seem to be here other than in a few pictures on your living room wall." Maya's face softened as she witnessed Riley's eyes shift to the side and back to her.

"Is this what it's all about? Trying to find out about you?"

"Well, I was the one who wanted to come here. I've learned more about you than about my own self...and that scares me."

Riley softened as she pulled her best friend into an embrace. "You have nothing to be scared about. I'm sure we'll get to learn more about your future soon, learn more about us."

Maya returned the hug tightly, not wanting to let go of her best friend, now or ever.
"Hey," Lucas spoke to get his friends' attention. The turn to him, only to see him focused on something else. "Does that man look *exactly* like Dr. Marbles?"

Heads turned to see the man in white, looking up at the Minkus family on stage. He was also clapping along with everyone else. He stood out with a white lab coat and his salt and pepper hair.

"Oh my, that is him!" Riley squealed before she took Maya's hand and started to make her way to him.

"Dr. Marbles!" She called out getting an instant reaction from the man. He looked over to see the young brunette pulling her blonde front towards him. He squinted, trying to figure out why the younglings approaching look so familiar. His eyes widened once his mind clicked and glanced up again to the Riley of this time period before moving away.

The younger Riley slowed down, wondering what he was doing. "Dr. Marbles!"

"Hey, wait up!" Maya called out as they excused themselves through people, Farkle and Lucas catching up with them as they excused themselves too to try and catch up with the scientist who could get them back.

The light of the room beamed to the mass ahead of herself. She turned to her companion, who smiled warmly at her.

"Oh! And, before I forget, we will be attending the 26th Annual Wegner Science Convention this upcoming Saturday. If any of you guys would like to come and attend, we are providing tickets to those interested. It's gonna be a bunch of us science geeks but I'm sure everyone will have something they're interested in it!"

Riley turned again to her husband, trying to see if there was anything else to say. "Um, I think that's all I have to say for now? Unless Farkle wants to say something quickly."

Farkle nodded and stepped up. "It'd be great for anyone to support us while we're there. We thank those who come in advance. Thank you all again for coming, if any of you'd like to talk to us, we're definitely approachable and we don't bite. Any left overs of this event are going straight to the Minkus Family Foundation Center for those who want to pick somethings up. We're not trashing food so take what you'd like when heading over there. Thanks. Enjoy yourselves."

It was the final say before stepping down from the stage. Farkle kissed the top of his wife's head and pulled Nova in under his arm.

Maya was close to Dr. Marbles who was near the exit of the place. "Hey, stop!" She called out but no action was immediately taken. Maya harshly bumped into another person who called her out but she said sorry. Maya had a clearing and started to dash when she hit hard against Mr. Minkus' torso. He grabbed her arms and looked down at her with amusement and curiosity.

"Woah, what are you doing running around like maniacs?" He chuckled.

"There shouldn't be any running around here. They're people carrying food and elders around her," Mrs. Minkus finished.

"I'm sorry, we were just trying to--" Maya started to say but was cut off by a hectic looking Lucas Friar, the future version.

"Riley, Riles! She's coming! She's here, she's coming your way!" He said rapidly, with the mess of a large smoothie stair messing up his white shirt. Smoothie dripped from his mouth, and he wiped it off with the back of his hands.
"Lucas, are you mad? What were you and Zay doing?" She asked furiously.

"Riley, she's here!" Zay called out, finally catching up to Lucas, looking just like the same mess.

"Who's here?" She asked loudly.

Her husband gently tapped her side as his eyes were focused ahead of him, looking good shocked and in disbelief. "Riley..."

"What?" She asked. She turned to see what he was looking at, only to gasp and wear a bewildered face. Nova gulped as she made herself small, falling through the space in between her parents and staying behind them. She didn't want to be a part of this.

The other three teens from the passed, approached slowly to the scene that seemed to be like time had frozen. No one moved as all pairs of eyes were staring at one thing and one thing only, the woman who hugged herself tightly with her leather jacket, leather boots making hard contact with the floor. Yellow hair was cut short and in wild ringlets. She seemed hesitant with every step but knew it was too late as she had already made herself seen. She stopped at a far distance away from her friend, sighing softly as her blue eyes looked up to the faces of her past.

"Riley," she spoke, voice smooth and gently but somehow still on the edge.

Riley released a loud breath, almost speechless. One name releasing from her lips,

"Maya..."
Fractions

For Maya Hunter to return to her friends seemed to be a shock for everyone. The older blonde lady shifted from side to side, uncomfortable under the eyes of her friends. To them it felt like a great reunion, but to her, it felt like Judgment Day.

Mrs. Riley Minkus was the first to do something, taking steps forward and opening her arms to embrace her friend into a hug. Maya hugged back loosely, eyes still not making contact with anyone.

"It's so great to see you again, Maya!" The older brunette sighed softly before pulling back and looking her friend up and down to check for any changes.

"Yep. It's sure been a while."

"Three years," Riley reminded the blonde.

"Was it three? I swore last time we saw each other was when we we dug up the time capsule," Maya said.

"That was six years ago. We saw each other at the funeral, remember?" Riley said softly, voice so soft it was like walking on egg shells bring up the topic.

Maya's face went neutral, nodding as she brought back the memory of the day they last saw each other from the deepest depths of her mind. "Oh, right... Must of forgotten about that..."

Riley watched her friend, wearing the sympathetic look that she knew Maya hated but couldn't help but feel towards her. Riley's husband stepped up, resting a hand on the lower back of Riley, a gesture for her to move back.

"Maya, always great to see you!" The older Farkle said as he brought her in into a side hug.

"Farkle, isn't there a restraining order placed on me from you? I shouldn't be this close," Maya joked, the corners of her lips lifting up to somewhat of a smile.

Riley Minkus took a deep breath at her friend's words before releasing a huff. Rubbing her arm, she stood closer to Farkle who let go of Maya to pull in his wife.

"Protect me," Nova whispered as she pushed the young Farkle and Maya in front of her to shield her from her godmother.

"Why do we need to protect you? This is your aunt Maya, you should be embracing her presence!" Riley Matthews beamed as she pulled at Nova's arm harshly, trying to pull her from behind her best friends.

"No! I'm telling you now, bad idea!" Nova shook her head as she gripped onto Lucas who stood his ground, watching Riley try and pull Nova away.

"Pumpkin spice?" Zay called out unsure if it would bring the old companion into a good mood. When a smile released out on the lady's lips he knew he was safe. They embraced each other tightly, rocking side to side. Riley Minkus felt her eyes fall down to her fiddling hands, questioning why Maya and Zay could have a more better and comfortable hug and not them, thunder and lighting... And then she remembered...
The two former troublemakers pulled from their tight embrace, Maya feeling lighter than she had before. It wasn't until she faced Lucas Friar, did her guilt come back. She shifted, taking a deep breath before looking up at the man, Lucas smiled gently.

"Maya..."

"Clint Eastwood..."

Lucas chuckled at her name calling, not taking it as an insult but knowing it was.

"You have a little something..." Maya pointed out about the smoothie stains all over his white tee. He looked down on himself and chuckled, not really making a good impression on his first greeting to the one and only Maya Hart.


"It's so great to see you again, Maya!" Riley beamed as she pulled Maya back into a more suitable hug for best friends.

Maya chuckled, "it's good to see you too, Riles."

"Can you believe it guys? The gang's back together! We're all here!" Riley exclaimed to her male friends, still not letting go of the blonde female.

"With the exception of...you know who... Am I right?" Zay cleared his throat lowly, nudging Lucas. Lucas's eyes widen and he bit down on his index finger to not gasp or say anything. He shook his head as a warning to Zay, but it wasn't enough to stop the comedic friend. Riley overheard the words said, and let out a low growl as she gave Zay a deadly glare.

"You know Zay, you weren't originally in the group. You could be excluded..." Riley threatened.

Zay gulped. "You know what? I realized that I made a mess at the smoothie machines. I'm just gonna--" He sprinted off in the opposite direction, Lucas falling behind him. Riley smirked slightly before the look of sinister disappeared and back to her heavenly face that wore her regular Riley Smiley.

"Oh my Gosh! Where's Nova?" Riley asked, looking behind her to see the younger Riley trying to pull off Nova from Lucas as the young Farkle Minkus tried to loosen Nova's grip. Maya just sat back and watched it all happen.

"Nova Minkus!" Her mother snapped. Nova let go of Lucas's leg, falling to the ground. She rolled to look up to the pretty blonde who looked down at Nova with a blank expression on her face.

"Ms. Maya. What an unexpected surprise to see you again," Nova smiled.

"Same, kiddo," Maya said with an awkward wave. Nova had time to stand up on her feet just as her aunt gestured to the groups of kids who looked up to the blonde beauty in awe.

"Oh, these are just my new friends. Freddie, Reed, May, and Logan!" Nova introduced them to her aunt.

Maya Hunter looked wide eyed at her brunette friend who sighed softly. "Just go along with it," Riley Minkus mumbled.

The older woman gasped and creepily grinned widely. "Hi! I'm Maya, Nova's...whatever."
"Aunt! You are her aunt! Aunt Maya, that's what you are! Godmother, but also aunt," Mrs. Minkus grinned as she tightly brought her friend back in a hug.

"Nova, you still smart as ever?" Maya asked the Minkus spawn.

"Is my last Minkus?" Nova scoffed.

"Who am I to you?"

"Ms. Maya."

Nova's aunt stood up on her tippy-toes, pointing to Nova as she announced, "She is the smartest person alive!" Maya liked over to her best guy friend, shrugging before adding, "No offensive, Minkus."

Farkle shrugged, "she's my daughter. I take pride."

"Wanna test me?" Nova smirked before standing up to face her aunt.

"Nova, don't push it," Riley warned her daughter.

"Don't worry, Mom. I've got this," Nova continued to smirk at her aunt who returned the look.

Nova's father took his wife's side as he wanted to watch his daughter breeze through the challenge.

"Okay, since you think you know it all--"

"I do!" Nova cut off her aunt.

"Let's start off simple. Sixty is 20% of what number?" Maya started off.

"Sixty is 20% of 300," Nova answered immediately.

"The price of a shirt is increased by 15%. If the shirt originally cost $20, how much does the shirt cost after the increase?"

"With a 15% increase of the original price of $20, the shirt will now cost $23 with no tax included," Nova grinned.

"The ratio of girls to boys in my art class is 5 to 2. The class in total has twenty-eight students. How many girls in the classroom?"

"With a 5 to 2 ratio of girls and boys, there should be a division of twenty females in the class, leaving the other eight has males."

"Your mother and I brought an equal amount of money for shopping. I spent $95 and she spent $350, because that's very realistic," Maya said.

Riley Minkus grinned and nodded her head, "it very much is!"

Maya shook her head at her friend before turning back to the teenager. "After that she had 4/7 of what I had left. How much money did I have left after shopping?"

"This is fractions, isn't it?" Nova cleared her throat.

The corner of Maya's lip twitched upward. "Stumped ya?"
"No!" Nova said too quickly as she snapped her neck.

Nova's eyes flickered around as she was still processing the question.

"I-If Mom only had 4/7 of what you had left but started off equally... Um... She spent $350 and you only spent $95..." Nova was thinking hard, that it was almost visual that the gears were turning in her head, which was something since most mathematical questions just come to her on the spot.

"Nova, you don't have to answer the question," Riley said to her daughter.

"No, Riley, she has to! It's the only way for her to bring honor in this family!" Mr. Minkus said, getting a gasp from his wife.

"Farkle!" She exclaimed.

"Shhh! Nova's getting it!" Farkle said, keeping an eye on his daughter.

"If Mom spent $350 and you spent $95, the difference would be $255 which would be $85 if divided by three which is the difference of four and seven. Eighty-five times the full unit of seven equals $595, which is what you would have left after shopping!" Nova answered the question, breaking a sweat as she could feel herself getting lightheaded.

"Final one. Recite pi."

Nova blinked once, swaying slightly. "Three point one four one five nine two six five three five eight nine seven nine three two three--uh oh... Mom, I'm going down..." Nova warned just before she fell into her mother's arms, completely done with it.

"You did great sweetie," Riley said, running her hand through her daughter's hair.

"She needs to finish answering the question! Eight nine seven nine three two three what?!!" Mr. Minkus encouraged her on.

"Farkle, pi is infinite!" Riley stated the fact.

"So she will recite it onto forever! She's a Minkus, she can do it!"

The wife hit her husband's shoulder with a "POW", making him fall to the floor in pain. Maya laughed at that and sat down in a seat across from Riley.

"She's exactly like Farkle!" Maya laughed at her goddaughter.

"Should I take that as a complement? I should take that as a complement. I'm taking that as a complement! Thank you!" Riley laughed with her friend, still running her hand through her daughter's soft, dark hair.

"Hi," Riley warmly said to the friend in front of her. Her daughter sprawled out on her lap, still out of it completely.

Maya took a deep breath before speaking, "hi."

~*~*~*~*~*~

"Riley, where are you going?" The young Maya called on her best friend who slipped away from the group. Riley made it through the double doors and a bit down a hallways before Maya caught up to her.
"I'm going after Dr. Marbles! He couldn't have gone that far," Riley answered before turning away to continue the chase. Maya caught her before she had gone far.

"Riles, he's long gone! Come on, I'm here! We're here together, don't you want to see how we are now?" Maya asked. Lucas was behind Maya, and so was Farkle. Farkle had his foot in the doorway, peeking his head into the large recreational area occasionally to keep check on their older selves.

"I know what I am, Maya," Riley responded back. "I've seen my future, I know what my destiny is to be no matter what happens. Now it's time to go back."

"We can't go now! There's still so much to see, so much to figure out!"

"Maya, I want to go home. We have a life to go back to, a life that we need to continue!" Riley laughed.

"But right now, we have a life to figure out and ours is right through those doors!"

"Maya," Riley said softly, stepping forward, "we are not going to get to this point of our lives if we don't go back to the time we came from. Now, come and help me search for Dr. Marbles."

Maya faced her best friend. She stood her ground as she sucked in some air before saying, "No."

"Excuse me?" Riley said, taken aback. They were best friends, they do everything together! Wherever one went, the other goes along too...but Maya said no?

Releasing a shaky breath, Maya continued, "It was my choice to come here, to come to this time, not yours. Coming here had only raised more questions about what I am to become. What do I do for a living? Do I have my own family? You have Farkle and Nova and yet once I'm finally in the picture you want to leave?"

"I wanted to leave the moment we got here," Riley said honestly. "We know too much of our own fate!"

"No, Riley, we don't know enough. We don't know anything..."

"Lucas!" Riley turned to their guy friend who was in the background watching the two friends argue. "What do you think?"

"No. No, no, no, no. Do not drag me into this!" Lucas whined.

"Your opinion matters to us," Riley admitted. "Whose side are you on?"

Lucas shook his head. "I'm being set up!"

"Give us an answer, cowboy," Maya demanded an answer from him.

Shifting awkwardly, all eyes on him, he replied, "I'd have to go with Maya."

Riley scoffed in disbelief. "You're choosing her over me?"

"You set me up! I'm not choosing anyone," Lucas reassured her. "I just think that Maya's right. We don't know much about ourselves. I still have questions about myself I'd like to know. Staying a little bit longer wouldn't hurt anyone."

"It could hurt everyone! What if we find out something that could tarnish our friendship?" Riley
proposed.

"Like you and Farkle are married?" Maya put out there.

"Something that could alter our lives?"

"Like, I don't know, you and Farkle are married."

"Okay!" Riley snapped. "I'm married to Farkle, we get it! I'm sorry that we just so happened to bump into our daughter and we ended up mixing into what is to be! I'm sorry, Maya! Is that what you want to hear?"

There was silence from her friends. There was the buzz from all the commission from inside the area going on. Riley looked past her friends to Farkle who had his eyes to the ground, shifting his feet.

"Farkle..." Riley called out, getting the boy's attention. "You're with me, right..?"

Farkle's lips lifted up to form a smile. "Always."

Maya rolled her eyes. In her narrator's voice, she said, "Well, of course! The married couple are the ones to do everything together!"

Riley frowned, "Maya, that's not funny..."

"I wasn't trying to be. I'm just point out a fact," Maya said before walking away from her brunette friend.

"Where are you going?" Riley sighed.

"Back to the party!"

"We're still in each other's lives at this time. What else is there to know?" Riley laughed.

Maya paused and looked back at her best friend. With a soft voice she placed the question "Why haven't I seen you in three years?" into the air. When Riley wore a confused expression on her face, Maya clarified. "She said--you said--you're future self said that we haven't seen each other in three years and before that it was three more years... What happened to us? I'm supposed to follow you through everything... So what happened?"

Maya turned around and left to enter back into the room where everything was happening. Farkle held the door open for anyone else to leave. Lucas was after Maya. Riley took hesitant steps towards the door and stopped by Farkle's side.

"You meant it when you said you'd be by my side through this, right?" Riley asked him.

Farkle smiled slightly, "I meant it one hundred percent. From what I've seen, it's you and me in certainty and all of eternity."

Riley grinned and pulled Farkle into a hug, glad to have him there by her side through it all.

"Thank you, Farkle."

"Anytime." Farkle gestured for Riley to walk in and she did, tucking a lock of her hair behind her ear. She walked into see the gang together at the table the two ladies had occupied.

Mr. Minkus was by his wife's side, who had an awake but lightheaded Nova on her lap. Maya Hunter was across from Riley Minkus, and Zay and the older Lucas were side-by-side looking
tough and glancing at the passing ladies, hoping for a chance.

"Just the kids I wanted to see!" Riley Minkus beamed. The four wandering teens approached the table, a bit odd being under the watch of their future counterparts. "Well don't we have amazing news for you!"

"Principal Babineaux have allowed you guys to attend Abigail Adams High under our consent," Mr. Minkus announced.

"You'll be attending school with Nova and have classes with her! Isn't that great!?" Mrs. Minkus simpered.

"Yay..." The teens exclaimed dully, with the exception of Farkle who actually meant his.

"Wait!" Nova paused as she sat up quickly, looking around to all of the adults at the table. "They're going to school with me? So can my permission slip for my field trip on Wednesday also be a pass for them if my parents say it's okay?"

"You have a field trip on Wednesday?" Riley questioned.

"Yes!" Nova pulled out a slip of paper from her back pocket along with a pen. "Just sign on the dotted line and put a little note saying my minions--I mean my guests are also allowed onto this trip and we can continue on with our happy lives."

"Where is this field trip to exactly?" Nova's father asked. It was only the bottom slip of a full permission slip, so there were no details given on where the class would be going.

"Some invention company in the city, nothing interesting, but it gets me out of school! So sign?" Nova smiled forcefully.

"Nova, we need more information than that!" Riley shook her head.

"It's for science class," Nova said.

"On the dotted line you said?" Farkle took the pen and slip from Riley's hands and signed the slip adding a little note that the new students under his guidance are allowed as long as with his daughter.

"Farkle!" Riley exclaimed.

"Riley, it's for science! We can't stop Nova from reaching her fullest potential! Have fun sweetheart!" Farkle said. Nova snatched the pen and paper away, grinning widely at the sight of her father's signature. She thanked her father and gave him a kiss on the cheek and a pat on the head.

"I should head out. I'm distracting you from your event," Maya said as she stood up and looked around to her friends. "I'll see you Thursday for the gallery walk?"

"Wouldn't miss it for the world!" Riley Minkus exclaimed before taking her friend in for a hug again. Maya gave a pained smiled before saying goodbye to her guy friends and leaving with that. (Not without stealing some food first.)

"Do I have to go to Ms. Maya's art show too?" Nova groaned.

"Yes, it's for moral support! You're going no matter what! Understood? And start calling her Aunt Maya!" Mrs. Minkus strictly said.
"Yes, Mom," she sighed, saying what her mother wants to hear but not going to be obeying that last request. "Thanks for the signature, daddy! I'll take my projects--I mean my friends this direction." Nova pushed the gang away from the adults. She had put quite the distance between them before she released a breath.

"Oh my glucose...he actually signed it!" Nova yelled and did a happy dance as she kissed the slip of paper repeatedly and held it close to her face. "I can't believe it! I'm so happy. If my parents knew where it'd be, they'd never let me go! No, my mother wouldn't let me go, but my father signed it and I'm happy! I think I got life handled pretty well right now." She snapped her fingers and bobbed her head.

"Um, Nova? Where exactly is this field trip going to go?" Riley Matthews chuckled nervously, asking in behalf of all her friends.

"Well, I.S. Industries of course! I plan to break away from the group and finally meet my one and only idol! Surely there is more to the plan than that but we're gonna think about the official set out tomorrow during class!" Nova squealed.

"And who's that we're going to meet?" Maya asked, cautiously.

"Isadora Smackle! Duh!"
Planning and Feelings

Walking through Abigail Adams High School and seeing how it was to evolve was overwhelming to the four "new" students which were being guided by Nova Minkus.

"Your schedules are corresponded to be matched with mine thanks to Principal Babineaux! There are a few classes that we don't share due to overcrowding but I'm sure you can handle being on your own for the time being. Just don't go running away," Nova snorted as they returned to the main hallway after speaking to the principal about schedules, school identification cards, and school rules.

Approaching Nova's locker, Nova swiped her identification card to unlock and open it. She took out a purple binder which was designated to her first class of the day.

"Luckily, we have the first class of everyday together so we can start off the day great!" Nova grinned. She took a deep breath of the air and watched the people who walked the halls. "If you guys have any questions whatsoever, just ask me. I'm sure to have the answer to all your questions."

She started to guide them to their first shared class. Each one had a notebook and a pen, with the exception being Riley who was keeping hold of Maya's notebook and pen.

"I really don't think you have the answer to the questions we're looking for," Maya muttered with an added chuckle.

Nova stopped and turned to give a wicked look at the short blonde. They all stopped when she did, looking at her curiously.

"Don't test me. It's too early for that," Nova said before walking into the classroom and taking her usual seat in the front center of the class. Lucas was about to claim the seat behind Nova but she quickly put a stop to it as she placed an arm of protection of the desk. "This seat is taken."

Lucas' eyebrow rose and he went to take the seat to the left of Nova. She moved fast and kicked her foot up to stop him from sitting in it. "This seat is taken too."

Lucas threw his hands up. "You set me up!"

"Where can we sit?" Riley asked their guide.

"You can sit on the right of me in any seat. Ricky and them can move back for all I care," Nova said. The four teenagers took their seats in what was their usual seating position. Farkle was beside Riley who was in front of Maya, who sat next to Lucas; the squad square.

"Who are the seats taken for?" Lucas asked. Nova turned her head to answer, but the sound of a binder snapping down on Nova's desk stopped her from answering. Calm and collectively, Nova turned to face the front to see her dear best guy friend giving her a suspicious look.

"You got in trouble on Friday," the brunet boy stated, knowing the small info on the Minkus child.

"I'm won't deny it," Nova huffed holding her head up high.

"Tried to sneak out to the chemistry lab again?" The boy smirked.
"You know what's going on at my fortress. Mother and Father dearest still have my laboratory privileges provoked thanks to the experiment you told me to try!" She hissed.

"Not my faults you're a klutz sometimes!" He laughed before taking his binder off his desk and moving to take the seat behind Nova. Nova flipped her hair over her shoulder before turning in her seat to continue making conversation with her best friend.

The boy smiled adoringly up at Nova. "I love when you do that..."

"I know. Exactly why I do it," Nova smiled as she flipped her hair over her shoulder again to get the boy to swoon for her.

"Woah!" Riley stopped the whole scene as she had observed what had been going on with her own two eyes. She smiled stiffly, pointing between the two bodies. "W-What's going on here?"

"Oh! Guys, this is James. James, these are my newly acquainted friends and current household guests," Nova introduced the boy.

The boy's eyebrow rose at the four new students and smiled sweetly at them.

"Quite the pleasure to meet you all. You guys can just call me Jimmy. Only two people call me by my birth name, Nova and my mother," he stated the fact.

"I know how much it annoys you, my boy!" Nova grinned.

Jimmy growled lowly at his female companion. She ignored him by changing the subject, "my four little minions here will be helping me meet the one Isadora Smackle!"

"Why do you always insist on getting into trouble? You know that if your parents find out about your little plan, you're in bigger trouble than the lab incident." Jimmy tapped his stylist pen annoyingly again his desk, actually wearing a concerning look on his face.

"It's because I'm a spoiled rich kid who never receives the amount of attention a normal child needs from their mommy and daddy!" Nova pouted, her sniffle obviously being fake. Nova cut the act off quickly and grabbed at Jimmy's stylist pen which stopped the annoying tapping. "My parents are too distracted and focused on their presentation this Saturday for the Wegner Science Convention to care what diabolical scheme their robot daughter is cookin' up in her genius brain of her's. You understand? You're a key part of my plan so you're going along with this no matter what."

Jimmy gulped and nodded rapidly. "Understand, ma'am. I would just like to point out that your parents--"

"--my inventors--"

"--are not as dumb as you make them out to be. You're Nova Minkus, yes, but you're the daughter--"

"--robot creation--"

"--of two of the most smartest scientists living on this planet today..." Jimmy finally had the time to finish. "Um, I think you're hurting my writing utensil."

Nova let go of the cold metal device. "You don't need to worry your head about my parents. I got Alaina working on the plans with Eduardo right now for Wednesday."
"Oh, is that why she's not here ranting about her siblings? I almost missed her," Jimmy said pointing to the empty seat next the Nova which was reserved for the said Alaina.

"Yep! Oh and by the way, I blame you for me getting caught on Friday! Your stupid hologram machine did that glitch again," Nova said pulling a small, black box like container out of her backpack and settled it on her desk.

"Again? That's the third time since the last fix," Jimmy sighed in disappointment.

"Don't worry about it. I took it home Friday and snuck into the lab that night and fixed it. Hopefully it should run smoothly for the class time," Nova said setting it onto the empty seat and switching it on, the body a light skinned female with long black hair wearing casual clothing of blue jeans, a white shirt, and a green jacket coming on to display.

Nova and Jimmy smiled at the hologram which had matched perfectly to the hologram looking over and smiling over at the two.

Farkle was in pure awe at the realistic look of the hologram. He stepped out of his seat and approached it, completely mesmerized. "This is absolutely amazing! The holographic projection seem smooth and fluent. What did you do to improve on this?"

"Junior, here," Nova rolled her eyes at James, who stuck his tongue out at her, "had made it by my request. Two things would cause it to glitch. Whether it was to run your finger through it--"

"--Or come near the source with something that displays off radiation waves--" Jimmy added along.

"--such like a cell phone, it would cause the video transmit to turn blurry and fuzzy or simply shut off," Nova sighed. "It took me some time to improve on but I've only tested this in the lab since then."

Farkle brings his hand close to the holographic girl's face only for Nova to intervene. "I wouldn't touch it just to be safe. We really are trying to avoid a Ms. Kraner's class incident again."

Jimmy snorted out and chuckled slightly, ducking his head low as he shook his head at the memory.

Farkle didn't know what that meant but he decided to follow Nova's advice and just not touch.

"Now," Jimmy turned to the his four new classmates, "are you guys really going to help my sweet angelic bunny a.k.a the love of my life meet her idol who she shouldn't be meeting?"

Nova rolled her eyes at him, but with what the other four could see she had pink tinted cheeks and a smile on her lips turned away from Jimmy.

"Are you two dating or something?" Lucas asked up front.

Nova scoffed, "he wishes!"

"It's true, I do wish to be Nova Minkus's boyfriend," Jimmy sighed sadly. "But I'm something better!"

"We're engaged," Nova said dully, lifting up her left hand to reveal yellow-gold and pavé diamond small starburst ring that was in the shape of the North Star.

"What?!?" Farkle snapped at Nova as she let Maya and Riley gawk at her ring, observing the real
"Oh my gosh! How much was this?" Riley asked turning to Jimmy who held a proud smirk on his face.

"It's 14 karats, what do you think it cost!" Nova bragged as she looked at her finger and sighed happily. "I also got the matching crescent moon necklace in silver."

"I don't like it," Farkle fumed as he started to shake in his seat.

"Calm yourself. You're going to blow it for all of us," Lucas whispered to Farkle.

"You're way too young to be engaged!" Farkle snapped to Nova who looked taken aback.

"Pukin' Pluto, you should just like my dad!" Nova scoffed. Farkle's eyes widened. "My parents had been married for like three days at a younger age than I am now. They can't blame me for already knowing my destiny that I'll be with James."

"Love isn't a game, Nova. You're so young. How do you even know that he's the one your destined to be with?" Riley questioned curiously.

"As this class teaches, History repeats itself. My grandparents, Cory and Topanga Matthews, had met at a very young age and grew up together, later dating and marrying and starting a family," Nova said. "My own parents, Farkle and Riley Minkus, had met young and grew up together, dating, then later having me and finally marrying and now here we are!"

"It's only destiny saying that Nova and I are going to be together, my baked cherry pie," Jimmy cooed.

"Do you two even like each other in that way?" Riley chuckled in disbelief.

"He likes me," Nova shrugged as if it was nothing.

"But she doesn't like me in that way. But don't worry, I know deep down she's completely and overly in love with me," Jimmy smirked.

He looked over to Riley who was watching the two explain themselves. "You're incredibly beautiful..." Riley's eyes widened but she could stop the blush that warmed her cheeks. Lucas and Farkle looked bewildered at Riley who placed a hand on her cheeks to feel them get hotter.

"Teach me your ways, man!" Lucas said loudly.

Nova's head turned to face her fiancé, despite her warming cheeks which made Jimmy's smirk widen.

"I have read enough books and heard enough stories to know that the best guy friend of the female protagonist and the female always end up together no matter who she likes or who he falls for; they always wind up coming back to each other. I'm sorry that I decided to skip to the ending. I reserved you, you can try and like someone else but let me tell you now, James, you will never get over me."

Jimmy's smirk softened into a smile. "There's no one but you. I promise."

Maya nodded as she had a mischievous look on, "I approve of this," she directed to the boy and girl who stared at each other.
"I don't!" Farkle exclaimed, smacking his hands down on the desk. Holograms of historical stories popped up on Farkle's desk causing him to move back a bit. The four teens stare in awe, exclaiming, "cool!"

The hologram of the girl named Alaina, looked back over to Nova and smiled, Nova returning it.

"Doesn't she look familiar?" Farkle placed the question in the air as he continued to look at the girl. "Like very familiar..."

"No, she looks like a normal girl," Maya said as she played around with the holograms displayed on her desk.

"No, Maya, he's right... She does look familiar. I don't know why," Riley said as she stared at the light skinned girl.

"Maybe's she a kid of someone we know?" Lucas suggested.

"Who could that be through?" Riley asked.

Maya froze as she looked over Riley's shoulder and bit her lip. "I don't know but I really don't want you to turn around right now."

"Why?" Riley said while turning around. The smile on her face was wiped off as she saw her father setting up the class lesson up front. He had aged obviously, this being twenty years ahead of time. He had grey hair on the sides and wrinkles on his face, along with glasses prompted up to the bridge of his nose. "Oh no..."

The school bell rung indicating the start of school and class.

"Welcome class. Calling off the attendance, let's see... Kellie, De'ondrae, Nicolette, Gwen, Kunta, Washington, Johana, Stephany, Logan, Bianca--Logan? Logan Freeman?" Mr. Matthews said more like a question than a statement. He lifted his head, looking up and around to see any unfamiliar faces. "Ah! Class, we have new students with us today!"

All heads turned to the new students who shifted uncomfortably under all of the eyes.

Nova raised her hand and with her blighting smile, stood up from her seat. "They are my current household guests, Mr. Matthews!"

"Are they now?" Mr. Matthews raised an eyebrow as he approached the quartet, squinting his eyes at the four. "You guys look so similar to a couple of kids I used to teach back in the day..."

"Were they good kids?" Maya played off with a smirk, crossing her legs.

"Well, one of them was my daughter," Mr. Matthews chuckled as he spaced off. "She was the most innocent and sweetest thing. She's what made my world go round..."

"Awe!" Riley beamed. "That's so sweet!"

"But she was ruined!" Mr. Matthews slammed his fists down on Riley's desk, causing everyone's eyes to widen and be taken aback. "She had to grow up and like boys and fall for every boy that gave her the time of day! Oh, but it wasn't until him. Ohhhh, it was him who destroyed my little girl's life..."

Nova smiled as she leaned over to Riley, "he's talking about my daddy!"
"He was right under my nose! He had planned it all! I was too focused on the boys who my daughter liked to pay attention to the real threats, the boys that always stuck around!"

"Come on, Gumpa. Without my parents falling in love with each other, I wouldn't be here!" Nova grinned, striking a pose for her grandfather. The teacher silently judged his granddaughter before shuttering.

Nova frowned and turned to her partner, "what did I do?"

Mr. Matthews drew closer to the student known as Logan Freeman, placing his hands on his face, stretching it and observing it. "You have the face of..."

"Of whom, sir?" Lucas asked as the teacher continued to mess with his face.

Mr. Matthews gasped away. "You act like him too! This smells like a conspiracy. This smells like the job of a Minkus!" Mr. Matthews turned quickly, pointing to Nova who wore a bored expression on her face.

"What did I do now?" Nova groaned. "Can't you see I'm tired."

"Oh, I don't know what you did but you did something! It's like the hologram thing you did in Ms. Kraner's class. Yeah, I heard about that," Mr. Matthews huffed.

"Of course, blame the genius!" Nova scoffed. "I could sue you with only one call to my lawyer!"

"Your lawyer is my wife!" Mr. Matthews interfered.

"But who's got the money?" Nova hummed gently, brushing off her shoulder coolly.

Alaina's hologram replayed, the time being perfect as she turned to face Nova and smile at her, Nova returning it as she would usually do. Mr. Matthews eyed his granddaughter suspiciously. "I'm watchin' ya, Nova."

Throwing her hair over her shoulder, she shrugged while Jimmy behind her let out an audible sigh of admiration. Nova bit her lip from breaking into a smile. She looked over her shoulder to smile at her friends, who smiled back nervously.

~*~*~*~*~*~

"Have you guys been experiencing anything weird lately?" Riley asked to her friends as she sat down next to Maya who was devouring her deluxe hamburger. Cafeteria foods have improved by a million times and everyone was actually enjoying the food they had selected.

"What do you mean?" Lucas followed up the question with his own, picking at his fries.

"I don't know. I was just asking because I dosed off during English for like five minutes but...you know what? Never mind. It's nothing!" Riley brushed it off.

"If somethings wrong Riley, you need to tell us," Lucas said.

"Yeah, Riley, we're your best friends. You can tell us anything," Farkle stated what she already knew.

"Did you sleep well last night?" Maya asked. "You went to the bathroom in the middle of the night. I thought maybe you weren't feeling good."

"I haven't been sleeping well lately..." She admitted. Every time she'd even close her eyes
momentarily, her mind drifted off to thoughts and dreams that she felt stronger than what she had believed them to be. Most of the dreams were involving of both her and Farkle, and she didn't know how to project them.

"Are you having bad dreams?" Lucas asked.

"No," said Riley honestly. "They just...feel real to me. I don't know, I just wanted to see if anyone else was experiencing the same thing."

"Well, if anymore come up, you're welcome to take the feet of my bed to sleep on!" Maya offered with a smile.

Riley smiled at her best friend and nudged her. "Thanks, Peaches."

"Hey guys!" Jimmy greeted while walking over to the core four group. "Mind if I sit with you?"

"Not at all! Take a seat," Riley answered. Jimmy sat next to Riley.

"Sorry to intrude. Usually I sit with Nova and Alaina but Nova's got cafeteria duty for the next two weeks and Alaina's still off making plans for Nova," Jimmy excused.

"It's fine," Riley passed off. "You seem to know a lot about Nova?"

"Correct! I am her best friend, right behind Alaina. Alaina and her go back to when they were born; they're a package," Jimmy announced.

"Can you tell us some things about Nova? We're staying with her but we're so shy to ask her any questions," Riley fake laughed, acting timid. Maya slowed her chewing as she watched her best friend play an act in front of Nova's boo.

Jimmy grinned, "yeah, absolutely! Anything you wanted to know in particular. I know Nova just as well like I know myself."

"Just about anything would really be nice."

"Well, Nova's a literal genius. She's absolutely incredible and is the warming sun to my days. She's really into school, mostly the STEM subjects and she's my partner is everything. We get each other a lot but sometimes she goes a little overboard which is why she has me and Alaina there to hold her back. She's a complete math wiz; you could give her any mathematical equation and she'll recite the steps to find the exact answer. Because of it, she completely believes she's a robot and honestly there's so much evidence to prove that theory, it's most likely true..."

"Do you know anything about her parents?" Riley asked, her nerves causing her to jitter slightly as she could feel Farkle's eyes on her.

"I don't know them too well. Nova's very independent and her parents work like crazy. Around this time of the year is the only time both are her parents are home normally because of the Wegner Science Convention and the holidays. It's usually one or the other for the rest of the year, but I know that she loves her parents a lot..."

Riley frowned at Jimmy's words not liking how he portrays Farkle and her in the future. "Do you not like them, Nova's parents?"

"I respect Mr. and Mrs. Minkus with all of my being. I respect them as scientists and my soon-to-be parents-in-law, but I know how it feels when a parent isn't home all the time... I don't know them well enough to give you anything but they're incredibly famous, you're sure to find"
something on the internet if you search their names...but I can't not love them when they are the
time reason my beautiful blossoming flower is in my life."

"I love this guy!" Maya grinned widely. "He's not even talking about me and I'm just swooning at
his words!"

"Why is everyone so suave and smooth in this time?" Lucas threw his hands up in defeat.

"Beautiful blossoming flower, huh?" Nova spoke up as she revealed herself to her friends wearing
an apron over her normal clothes and hair in a high ponytail. "Who you talkin' about? Your secret
lover?"

Jimmy chuckled gently, turning to the blue-eyed brunette. "Don't you look cute."

"I hate you."

"Deep down, you don't."

Nova chortled, "that must be very deep, because I don't feel anything."

Nova continued talking, "Alaina's not back yet with those plans?"

"Haven't seen her all day," Jimmy stated.

"I knew I shouldn't have trusted her to be with Eduardo for more than three minutes. They're
probably kissing in the sawing room or something," Nova gagged.

"Doubt it. Eduardo could barely kiss her for ten minutes without getting a nosebleed!" Jimmy
smirked.

"I don't know what she sees in him...but oddly, they're perfect for one another!"

"Just like us!" Jimmy said reaching for Nova's hand.

She pulled back rapidly and shook her head. "Ten more years."

"This reminds me of someone, or more importantly someones!" Riley said as she looked at her
friends.

"Yeah, I think I'm getting who you're thinking of..." Lucas said slowly as he looked over to Maya
who shrugged.

"What are you two on about?" Maya she said annoyed.

"Alaina has been best friends with Nova since birth..." stated Riley.

"And she's in a relationship that is described as weird but perfect...." continued Lucas.

"Also, she looked familiar, almost as if she's the daughter of someone we know..." Finished Riley.

Maya stopped her chewing as she sat up straighter and looked at Farkle who's eyes widened
rapidly.

"Epiphany!" Farkle exclaimed.

"Oh my gosh!" Maya dropped her burger on her plate.
"Oh, there she is!" Jimmy announced as all heads turned to see the light-skinned brunette female in a pink and white dress run into the cafeteria with a rolled up blueprint and a stack of lined paper in her hand. She ran quickly as she approached her best friends.

"I'm sorry guys! I'm here," Alaina said out of breath, dropping the plans onto the table. "Oh my, my legs hurt."

"She looks just like Yogi..." Maya said in awe as she stared hard at Nova's best friend.

"She has Darby's hair," Farkle stated his observation.

"And Darby's tallness," Lucas said as he noticed how taller she was to Nova.

"Do you have the plans? Dang, I've been waiting all day for this!" Nova huffed as she took the blueprint and rolled it out, looking down at what was the interior outline of the I.S. Building they were to be visiting on Wednesday.

"I'm sorry, Nova. Eduardo and I just got so caught up with one another, he ended up going to the nurse for a sudden nosebleed. I don't know what happened!" Alaina played innocently. Jimmy and Nova looked at each other before rolling their eyes. "But we got a lot done! Here are the blueprints to I.S. This is the room Isadora is rumored to always stay in. By what the website said, we'll be taking a tour to the rooms here, here, here, and also in this general area."

"How did you get blueprints to the building Isadora Smackle works at?" Farkle asked curiously.

Alaina looked over at the boy, offendedly. "I'm sorry. Who are you?"

"Lainey, these are my current household guests and new friendly acquaintances. This is Reed, May, Freddie, and Logan," Nova introduced them.

Once acknowledging they were friends with Nova, Alaina beamed. "Hi! I'm Alaina! It's so amazingly great to meet you!" She shook all of their hands, wearing a warm smile which seemed infectious. She turned back to Nova and got serious.

"Now, back to business. The four friends looks at each other confused at the sudden change in Alaina's mood. "I talked to Educardo--"

"Oh, you actually talked?" Jimmy joked. Alaina twisty pinched Jimmy, causing him to exclaim his pain and rub harshly at the pinch.

"As I was sayin'..." Alaina growled, before smiling lightly at her best friend, "he said if we're going to try and meet Ms. Smackle we'll have to disburse from the group when we visit the laser show."

"There's a laser show?" Nova gasped. "Is it before or after the chemical enhancement presentation?"

"Before."

"Aw man, I really wanted to see that," Nova whined. "But it's no problem. I'll meet Isadora Smackle and it'll be worth getting banned for...Man, I'm going to meet Isadora Smackle, the greatest scientists since the start of the century! I don't know what I'd do once I meet her. I have so many questions!"

"Are you still certain you want to do this, Nova? My mom always told me to follow my gut feelings when it comes to stuff and I really don't have a good feeling about going along with these
plans..." Alaina gulped as her eyes intensively stared at her friend's face.

"We're going along with it, Lainey! This is Isadora Smackle we're talking about! I've read her research papers over a thousand times, seen her interviews a hundred times over--"

"And watched those fight videos between her and your mother a million times? I know I have!" Jimmy laughed out loud.

Nova passed a deadly glare to her guy friend who laughed for a while until he stopped suddenly when he caught the stare.

"We don't talk about that, James..." She growled.

"Fight videos? What fight videos? I watch wrestling every Monday and Friday to try and impress you but nope, I'm going nowhere in my life. I'm nothing," Jimmy talked quickly before ducking his head in shame.

"I look up to her," Nova said softly. "I wanna be just like her... Give a name for myself and do what I love. I'm going to meet her Wednesday no matter how anyone feels...and no one's going to stop me."

Alaina and Jimmy nodded simultaneously. "We'll do it for you, Nove..." Alaina spoke softly.

"We'll do anything for you," Jimmy added.

It was nice for a moment until Mr. Matthews passed by while doing cafeteria duty, smiling at the kids. "Hey there kiddos! Nice dress Alaina! When did you get the chance to change from earlier?"

Alaina looked confused for a few seconds before looking to Nova who gave her a warning look. "O-Oh, Mr. Matthews, this thing? Just now actually... You know me! I'm always wanting to look nice in case Momma gives birth to the new baby any time soon."

Mr. Matthews laughed while Alaina laughed along nervously. Mr. Matthews took a few steps away before stopping suddenly, turning around at the same time Nova did.

"You!" He called out, pointing at Nova accusingly.

"Uh oh! Busted! RUN!" Everyone at the table got up, picking up the plans but leaving their trays at the table (for Nova to get later) and ran out of the cafeteria quickly with Mr. Matthews attempting to run after them, yelling, "DETENTION! ALL OF YA!"

While running away, Riley pulled Maya close saying, "we got some major dirt to dig up."

Maya agreed.

"Look Nova! It's Alaina!" Riley gasped as she guided her two year old daughter to the other two year old girl who was hiding her face on the side of her mother's thigh.

Darby tried to release the grip of her daughter but the small girl held on with a mean grip. "Alaina, honey, you need to play with Nova. Look, you have blocks here and little dollies."

"Uh uh!" Alaina shook her head as she climbed up the chair her mother was sitting in and hid herself so she wasn't seen.

"I'm sorry, Riley. We're really trying to get her to socialize but she's a bit stubborn," Darby
excused as she took her daughter and placed her on her lap. Alaina snuggled close to her mother, holding her blanket to her body. Alaina’s eyes watched Nova as the other little girl held her mother’s hand.

"It’s fine. Nova hasn’t been on a play date in a while so just seeing another toddler is enough for her," Riley said as she distracted her daughter by placing three blocks on top of each other.

Nova watched her mother before crouching down and taking her own three blocks and putting them on top of one another.

"Muma!" Nova called Riley to show her what she has accomplished.

"Good job, Nove! Can you do it again?" Nova jabbered on saying half words and half baby talk as she was on the task of making another tower of blocks, but this time bigger and better.

"How’ve you been lately? I know you’re probably tired with all the wedding planning for you and Farkle," Darby started conversation, bouncing Alaina gently on her lap.

"I’m tired because of Nova, not because of the wedding planning. Farkle and I aren’t in any rush with the wedding honestly."

"Yeah, because he obviously hasn't been waiting to marry you since middle school," Darby scoffed with a chuckle.

Riley laughed along, shaking her head. "I'm lying. I really want to rush this wedding. I really want it to happen next month but that'd be too much stress to plan an entire wedding all while I take care of Nova and Farkle works..."

"You guys just got out of college, maybe by the end of the year?" Darby suggested.

Riley sighed looking out of the windows in the living room of Yogi and Darby’s apartment. "I always pictured having a winter wedding..." Riley admitted. "I wanted it to be all white with snow slowly falling down as I walk down the aisle..."

"Why don’t you have that?" Darby asked in awe.

"Because knowing New York, it'll probably turn into a blizzard," Riley joked. Darby admittedly laughed. "I'm going to settle for a spring wedding maybe. Farkle and I always had a thing for new beginnings."

"Well then, just make sure the wedding is just after the new year because I don't think I'll be able to to fit my bridesmaid dress if we do it before..."

"Why not? You’re in great shape now for a fitting. I mean--" Riley gasped suddenly, understanding what Darby was talking about after watching the grin spread largely on her face. "Oh my gosh, you're pregnant?!?"

"About to be four months!" Darby announced. Riley hugged Darby, Alaina slipping from in between Darby’s legs. Alaina got up from the floor and walked over to her reading chair next to the television and watch Nova who was constructing what very much looked like the Brooklyn bridge.

"I'm so happy for you, Darb! Have you told Yogi yet?"

"Not yet. I will though! I found out when doing my checkup. Yogi and I have talked about having more kids so I know he’s going to be excited!"
"How many kids are you guys planning to have?"

"Well, we talked to have between five to eight."

Riley blinked, "Wow! Eight kids, that'll be something if you decide on that."

"I really want eight," Darby admitted.

"Then...you go girl! Congratulations!" Riley smiled widely.

"Have you and Farkle talked about wanting more kids?" Darby asked the twenty-two year old.

"No! No, no, no. I mean, no we haven't but I'm pretty sure Nova's it for us... Yeah, just Nova..." Riley smiled softly at her daughter who placed the last block on her sculpture, clapping her hands at her accomplishment.

"If I were to have another kid? What would you possibly name them?"

"It'd be a girl named Theta," Riley answered too quickly. Riley blushed red as Darby smirked at her. "So I've thought about it. So what?"

"You so want another child," Darby simply stated.

"Farkle completely freaked out over a pregnancy scare. Trust me when I say Nova will be our only."

"I won't believe it."

"Muma! Look!" Nova said as she showed her mother her creation.

"Amazing, honey. Momma's very proud!" Riley said, kissing her daughter's cheek and pulling her in for a tight hug.

"I'm scared..." twenty-year-old Riley Matthews nervously said as she looked to her friend and dorm room neighbor who stood in front of her. Marché, a dark-skinned woman of color, studying into neuroscience.

Marché's lips broke into a grin as she took small steps closer to Riley who tried to maintain her balance on the diving board they were on. Yes, they were on a high twenty foot tall diving board, right over the deep end of the community swimming pool. Why? Because Riley was scared...

"What are you scared of? The jump...or your feelings for Farkle?" Marché asked curiously as she studied Riley's face.

"Of dying!" Riley yelled, looking back at how far it was until she would make contact to water.

"You're not going to die. You're nervous on what's going to happen once you hit the water. You're scared because you don't know when I'm going to push you...You're scared because you don't know what these feelings towards Farkle could lead to if they are what you are truly feeling."

"I hate that you're in neuroscience. I can't feel for myself!" Riley pouted as she looked down at her bare legs and feet, just in the two piece bikini terrified for her life.
"Why are you even doing this, Riley?" Marché asked. "You've been through a lot. You walked on hot rocks, ate a cockroach, threw up the cockroach, binged watched a whole season of some stupid reality show, had a Brazilian wax done, and now you're about to let me push you into a pool, and all for what?"

"I know all of that stuff seemed stupid, and that cockroach was so gross, I couldn't handle..." Riley gagged, "but you know what I'm doing. I'm putting myself through emotional states and situations to test my statuses."

"Is this similar to thesis of that experiment you and Farkle did last year?" Marché asked.

"No! Well, yes, a little bit, but this won't result in you know what..." Riley's hand made hand gestures around her stomach, and Marché nodded understandingly.

"No, baby, but maybe possible feelings?"

"I don't know!" Riley groaned loudly. "I feel something towards Farkle. Whether it's just me liking him because he's the father of my child or because he's always been there for me my entire life! I just feel something so stro--AHHH!"

Marché took the distraction and pushed Riley off the diving board, letting her drop into 22,000 gallons of water in the attempt of Riley discovering her feelings.

Riley crashed hard, diving herself deep enough where her toes nearly grazed the floor of the deep end. Her arms flinging around in the water, trying to push herself back up. She was only down for not even ten seconds but her time under made her realize reality better than anything before.

She came back up gasping for air, turning her form to see Marché climbing down the ladder of the diving pool, retrieving a towel for Riley who swum towards the edge and hitched herself up to sit on it.

Riley splashed at Marché who could barely protect herself from the little drops. "So?" Marché asked hopefully.

Riley was silent for a while, staring out at the water she had been submerged in just a minute ago. She took a deep breath, "he saved my life... He saved my life twice. It's how we met. And here we are nearly fifteen years later, best friends and we have a daughter, we have our sweet little Nova..." Riley turned to Marché to continue. "He gave me complete happiness, he gave me a life. He saved my life three times... I'm in love with Farkle Minkus."

Marché clapped her hands, large grin on her face. "Finally! Realization! I love it! Now, put your clothes back on and find Farkle and tell him that so you can be a completed family unit and live the life you both deserve!"

"You know what?" Riley smiled as she stood up, water still rolling down her legs as she wrapped the towel around her. "I'm going to go and do exactly that."

Riley walked by her friend and collected her backpack which had her causal clothes in it. She went to go change, feeling the adrenaline of finding Farkle and finally telling him how she feels, and she is completely head over heels for him.

She changed as quickly as she could and sprinted off the campus grounds just down the street. She ran back to the family unit of Princeton where she and Farkle lived with Nova. She walked in only to find the babysitter and five-month-old Nova playing on her blanket, surrounded by Nova's favorite toys.
"Aggie, has Farkle came back yet?" Riley asked out of breath, panting heavily.

"No, but I'm sure he's at the campus' green area. I saw him there when I was on my way over earlier," Agnus said.

"Thank you! I'll be back shortly," Riley said before she ran out again, going down the corridor. She sprinted to towards the large green area which had students out either studying or playing around. Riley's eyes scanned for the brunet boy who was her soulmate and the love of her life.

She wanted to find him, find him and run into his arms after calling out his name. She wanted to kiss him and tell him on the spot that she was completely and utterly in love with him and she wanted to give them a chance. She wanted to give Farkle and Riley a chance, and be a completed and whole family with their daughter, Nova. She wanted to feel the rush of emotion, she wanted to smile so big that it would feel that it was to fall off her face. She wanted to be happy, happy with Farkle...

But it was only want she wanted... The sight that awaiting her at the green area changed everything.

There on a blanket with opened textbooks and little finger sandwiches out was Farkle with a girl Riley had never seen before in her life. Farkle was talking to her and she wore what Riley described to be the face of pure admiration and liking. Farkle turned his head to talk directly to the female, but she laughed. Her laughter caused him to smile and chuckle and before Riley could turn away, they both leaned in and...

Riley was out of there, taking the walk of shame back to her family unit that she shared with the man that'd broken her heart and their sweet innocent daughter, Nova.

"Don't cry, Matthews. He's just a boy. He's a stupid boy, just a stupid boy..." She muttered to herself. Aggie smiled at Riley as she walked through the door. Riley paid Aggie for her hours of care and picked up her daughter as her friend left. Riley took Nova to her bedroom and settled her on the bed beside her.

Riley looked at her daughter's face, stroking her cheek while Nova reached up to the sky to the glow-in-the-dark stars that were all over the ceiling. The longer Riley watched her daughter, the more her heart hurt.

"You look just like your daddy, Nove... You're my little girl, and I love you so much... And I love your daddy... I love your daddy so much but I was too late... He moved on, Nova. I love your daddy and he's move on..." As much as Riley tried to hold on, she couldn't be strong.

She cried and sobbed her heart out into her pillow and her hands. Nova didn't know what was going on but she watched her mother cry, her crying being the only source of sound in the room. Nova's tiny hand reached over and she baby talked to her mother who sniffled and kept wiping away the tears that continuously rolled down her face. Riley kissed her daughter's hand, smiling softly.

"But you're just like me... You can make anyone smile when they're feeling down. You're all I need, Nova... You're my constant in life..."

Nova made a bubble with her mouth and Riley laughed gently. Riley looked up to her ceiling, Nova following her mother's eyes. Nova's hands were back up reaching for the sky, making grabby hands to the stars.

"I know Nova... At least the stars will always be there for us..."
"Your turn, Riley!" Marché called out her new dorm neighbor. The eighteen year old took the seat in front of the psychic, giving the woman her palm to read.

"You guys are ridiculous," Riley said to the large group of girls who were there for a slumber party at the girl's sorority house.

"Come on! Don't you want to know your future?" Agnus, Riley's other new friend, nudged the girl.

"I'd rather live it out by my own, thank you very much!" Riley said.

"If that was true, you'd have taken your hand away by now," Gexie has said causing all the other girls to "ohhhhh!"

Riley shook her head at her new friends and everyone leaned in listening in on what the middle aged Latina woman had to say about Riley's future.

"I see the distant future coming soon to you," the psychic spoke slowly.

"How soon, Mama Henta?" Angus asked for Riley.

"I see a man... And two children..."

The girls squealed loudly while Riley blushed. "I also see fame and fortune."

"You're going to marry someone rich!" Gexie gasped.

"I'm so glad I know you, girl! Hook a girl up in the future!" Marché said rubbing her hands together.

"But with this future, there will be many heartbreaks."

The girls "ouch" and Riley frowned.

"Heartbreak? What heartbreak? I'm to be with a husband and two kids but there'll be heartbreak? How does that make sense?"

"Maybe not of you but of those who it may affect," Mama Henta explained.

"But who? I don't want to hurt anyone!" Riley spoke loudly.

"I don't know, sweetie. You'll have to live your life to find that out," Mama Henta said softly.

"I call baloney on this whole thing! I'm gonna have a life but I'm not going to lose anyone while doing so!" Riley assured herself. She stood up and went to walk away from the so called psychic, only for her to call her out.

"I see stars in your future, mija. But don't forget that in some cultures, stars are just the souls of those we lost..."

Riley wanted to stop and take what she said in for a moment but she left the room, ignoring everything that was said and just playing Truth or Dare with the other half of the sorority in the other room, completely forgetting it all.
"I love the Internet. It gives you everything you want to know with just the simple touch of your fingertips," Maya said as she and Riley were scrolling under Farkle and Riley Minkus in the search engine. Millions of pictures along with articles and videos were just waiting to be clicked on. Many of the articles were about the positive effects the couple has successfully attempted to pursue onto the world, but sprinkled in would be a few dramatic articles only caring about their feud with I.S. Industries. The most recent news articles were exactly about the feud; they were about the confirmation of the couple attending the 26th annual Wegner Science Convention which was also being attended by Isadora Smackle.

"It also gives you some weird stuff," Lucas cringed as he was staring weirdly at a picture of the blobfish that came up when he researched his own name.

The teens were able to use Nova's supercomputer and game system to do their research on their future selves since Nova wasn't present, currently still at school attending her monthly science club meeting. (She was the president of the club, she had to attend.)

"Are we finding anything?" Farkle asked with a sigh, completely stressed and jittery over all of this.

"We're finding a lot of things," Maya stated. "But this is all useless. We're searching for something with dirt, something scandalous, something that would clear up a lot of questions."

"Why are we searching up what could possibly be horrible things about ourselves? I surely didn't do anything bad..." Riley frowned at her rebellious best friend.

"Because, Riles, while there are good things that make us who we are, there's also the bad, and the bad things are what shape us to be the best we can be," Maya said.

"And you believe bad things happened to make the future we live in now?"

"I hope not, but I honestly just want some drama!" The mad blonde grinned suspiciously as she took over the computer.

"I really don't like this...the sneaking around, the Internet research on ourselves..." Riley nervously bit her lip as she turned to her two best guy friends.

"I don't like it either," Farkle sided with Riley, making Maya roll her eyes at the boy (always siding with the future wifey). "I don't think it's really safe trying to do this here anyways."

"Why? You think there're secret cameras that're recording our every move?" Maya snickered. "Believe me. No one's here. Nova's out, you guys are at work, we got the whole place to ourselves."

"Hey, look here. I found some videos of you guys. Future Riley and Farkle sure do a lot of presentations and interviews," Lucas said giving them the suggestion to watch it.

"Oh! I'll go make some popcorn!" Maya grinned satisfyingly as she ran off to the kitchen to prepare a bowl of goodness.

"Huh. We're featured in a video? Of what?" Farkle asked.

"There's a lot here. Farkle Minkus Speaks At Public Meteor Shower, Riley Minkus Interrupts"
Lucas read out a few of the suggested videos.

"Oh! I want to see that one!" Riley beamed as she grinned widely.

Both boys smiled lightly at the overly excited female friend. The cowboy beamed at the happy aura that Riley always puts out; the genius shied away, hiding his smiles away.

Maya came back munching on salty and buttery popcorn in a large bowl. "Making popcorn these days are so fast! It literally took less than thirty seconds to make this bowl. And look who I found strolling around the hallway outside the elevator."

Maya passed the bowl to her friends and they all turned to see Nova's robot sibling Smicies roll in making noises and rotating its head to check around the room.

"Smicies? What was she doing out there?" Riley asked as she watched the little robot take its spot underneath the desk of Nova's supercomputer and fix itself straight, a small red light blinking on.

"I don't know. Just walking around. I think it's charging now," Maya said taking one of the gaming chairs and spinning in it.

"She, Maya. Nova and myself said that Smicies was a girl," Riley sighed.

"She, it, who? Come on, let's get the binge watchin' goin'!" Maya threw a popcorn up in the air and caught it into her mouth. Riley took a piece as well, throwing it up high and opening her mouth wide to catch it, only for it to hit her cheek. Maya snorted, "you tried, doll."

Maya had pressured/forced Lucas to click the video of Riley Minkus interrupting the Environmental Presentation. It was obviously recorded by a phone as the person was a little shaky holding it to focus on Riley who stood there, hair clipped back and very professional attire along with a lab coat on.

"Mrs. Minkus, if you could please take a seat!" The man who sat in the center of the table in the front of the room stated into his microphone loudly.

Riley Minkus continued to speak into the microphone which had been politely snatched from the person who stood beside her. The woman hadn't asked her question yet when Riley had walked in ranting about how the companies speaking before her weren't saving the planet but ruining it more than it already was.

"What you're doing Mr. Almata isn't 'changing' the world as you proposed! If your plan of deforestation, oil drilling, and burning fossil fuels with radioactive traces in them goes on, you're not protecting our planet, you're killing it!" Riley argued calmly but with a firm tone in her voice.

"We are thinking of the future that is to await for not us, Mrs. Minkus, but the future generations to come. Taking trees now will give time to grow new ones that takes hundreds of years to grow strong and we get our paper that we need. Oil drilling with our company will be taken safely and with minimal action of causing spills, and it's cleansing what is in the crust below of the ocean. Burning fossil fuel isn't getting rid of it now to not have problems with it in advanced time!" The man reasoned. All Riley did was scoff and shake her head in disbelief.

"I hear what you're saying Mr. Almata but you're obviously trying to put a twist in your knowledge to make it sound good when in the long run, it's all going to go drifting through the ocean currents! I have a daughter who needs the trees that are growing now to give her oxygen for when we take her out to run around and play. Putting holes into the ground is the cause for oil spills and we don't even need it as we're constantly making advancements and creating
technology that uses minimal oil and fossil fuel. Believe it or not, people care about going green and taking care of themselves and their children and their children's children and so forth. Burning fossil fuels now isn't thinking about the generations to come, it's only killing us now and ripping the healing ozone layer. We don't only need to think about the time ahead of us. We need to think about the three most important time periods that affects us the most; we need to think about the past, present, and future."

Riley's point had the whole room clapping and in agreement. Mr. Almata was obviously getting annoyed with the confident woman that stood before him.

"We have a plan to continue with what we have drawn out--"

"Well you need to cancel your plans, because I'm not letting you poison Mother Earth and stab her in the back just because you're clearly blind on the outcomes of this plan of yours. I like being here. I like looking out my window and seeing blue skies and green grass. I like seeing my daughter chase butterflies and pick flowers to give to me and her daddy. It's important to prepare ourselves now and teach our children to be respectful, responsible, and caring towards nature. That is what matters and what we should take along to the future with us because we are the future too. That can never be forgotten."

"Thank you for your curiosity and for caring on the matter, Mrs. Minkus. We will definitely take your opinion into consideration. Now if you could please pass the microphone to one of our audience members who actually has a question for us, that would be great. Thanks."

"I'm not finished with this Mr. Almata--" Riley tried to continue speaking.

"I said thank you, Mrs. Minkus. The door is that way, I'll have security escort you out."

Three security guards politely asked Riley to leave and she started to argue with them as she absentmindedly was walking backwards towards the door. The camera holder's hand got a little shaky but the video ended with Riley storming off with the guards behind her making sure she left.

"You go, Riles!" Maya exclaimed proudly. Riley's face flushed red in embarrassment. Although it seemed like something she'd do, it was hard to watch herself be kicked out and visibly hated by someone publicly.

"Hey, it says here in the comments that Mrs. Minkus had met up with him several more times and after a few months after the confrontation, he had flushed the original plans and teamed up with Minkus Internationals to plant trees in South America and Africa which had been hit with deforestation already," Lucas read the top comment.

"You made a difference, Riley," Farkle smiled adoringly. Her brown eyes widened and all she did was shrug.

"Aw man! They still have auto-play in the future. That sucks!" Lucas said catching everyone's attention, heads turning back to the television screen.

"We're here with Farkle Minkus, CEO of Minkus Internationals--"

"Co-CEO of Minkus Internationals," Farkle had cutoff the interviewer quickly, correcting her for the title she had used for him.

"Oh right! You had recently signed half of your company over to share with you beloved and lovely wife, Riley Minkus. Tell us, Mr. Minkus, what made you decide to share Minkus Internationals with your wife? We know that Minkus Internationals is a major company in the science department and your wife is an Astrologist."
Farkle wore a smug grin on his face as he shrugged lightly and answered, "I adore my wife very much and honestly, I had always known that with my wife I wanted us to always have equal everything, equal share, equal responsibility, equal rights...So it didn't make any other sense than to share my company with her as she was always someone I would always resort to whenever I needed anything."

"Do you believe that she could be a useful asset to your company with having her work along your side?" the interviewer asked, putting the microphone back to her then to Mr. Minkus.

"Without a doubt. She's probably to put some more sense into me at work. It's one thing I love about her, she really does see the other sides of things that I never consider. She truly is my other half," Farkle winked at the camera, causing the interviewer to giggle.

The interviewer rolled her eyes slightly and still with a smile on her face, her slightly pitched voice questioned, "What will be your first order of business as a co-CEO, Mr. Minkus?"

"Minkus Internationals has a lot of contracts that had to be put on hold due to bring my wife on board to the company but now that all the steps have been completed, we're going to be starting back up in making the world a better place."

"Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us, Mr. Minkus. It's always to nice seeing you. I'm sure you have a lot more interviews to partake in," the interviewer smiled sweetly at his direction.

Riley hit Farkle in the back of the head, scowling at him as he used his hands to cover his head from the raging female. "Ow, Riley!"

"What was that, huh?" Riley fumed as she repeatedly hit Farkle in any open area she could reach for.

"Riley, what did I do?" Farkle asked as he just took the hits, slowly dropping to the floor and loudly scream.

"Riley!" Maya called out trying to get her friend's attention.

"You saw how she was all over you! You winked at her, you twisted bas--"

Lucas stopped the madness by pulling Riley back off of the screaming Farkle, giving him time and space to breath. "Woah there, girlie. You're acting like a possessive wife," Maya said holding her face to make her look at her.

"No, I'm not!"

"Yes, you are," Maya calmly said.

"Yeah, you are!" Farkle butted in too.

"Hush it, you pig!" Riley snapped, causing her future to huddle back into his own embrace.

"It's alright, Riley. You're just getting a little too close to the life you have here. It's understandable," Lucas said letting her relax in his arms as she leaned against his chest. She looked up to Lucas’s sweet face and he smiled down at her. She grinned widely, finding his smile infectious to her soul.

Riley calmed down and Farkle finally felt save enough to stand up, but kept a distance from Riley.
The brunette sensed the distance and rolled her eyes. "I'm not going to hurt you, Farkle."

"I'm just protecting myself..." Farkle stated taking small steps towards his friend.

"I still don't see it!" Lucas laughed as he gestured to the two which were to be married in the years to come. They looked at Lucas and while Riley shook her head in annoyance of the comment, Farkle bowed his head.

"Will you all shut it? We don't have that much time until Nova comes back and we still haven't found anything! You guys are holding me back!" Maya scoffed as she took over the game system and went on the hunt for the ultimate find. "Oh my Gosh..."

They all looked at Maya before up to the screen. "No..." Riley whispered.

"Oh YEAH!" Maya cheered as she played the video that was sure to be interesting.

RILEY MINKUS AND ISADORA SMACKLE FOOD FIGHT

The video was very shaky as it panned in on seeing Riley Minkus in a lavishing dress, hair all done up but her face was stone cold as she faced Isadora Smackle who replicated the look. One second it was just the two women staring each other down while their mouth visibly moved, showing that they were talking to one another... the next second, a piece of triple chocolate cake made contact to Isadora's face. Riley smiled sweetly as Smackle wiped the dessert off of her glasses and took the dessert next to her and flung it at Riley ruining her beautiful dress.

Riley gasped in shock as she took a handful of cheesecake and aimed for Isadora's face but got the other's neck and shoulder. Smackle threw cups of fruits before Riley grabbed Isadora and they started to rumble, pushing each other's faces into desserts and knocking each other as they pulled hair and tore off stitches to their designer dresses. A circle was created around the brawl as it continued. Their mouths' moved meaning they were obviously communicating but everyone's loud chatter couldn't make it be heard.

Smackle must have said something that made Riley pissed off as Riley pulled Smackle's hair and then harshly pushed her into the crowd, causing Smackle to fall at someone's feet and make them push against the person behind them. A domino effect took place as about one sixth of the room tumbled to the ground, tripping on the dresses and the heavy bodies of men dropping quickly against one another. The video caught only part of the room before going back to Riley and Smackle who looked absolutely guilty and messed up. Their faces were in absolute horror as they watched the formal event be ruined due to their fault.

Farkle appeared out of nowhere and both of the women looked at him. He took in the sight of his girlfriend and ex-girlfriend. Riley bowed her head in guilt while Smackle only looked at Farkle trying to make herself presentable even thought she looked wrecked. Farkle's face only read anger as he shook his head at the two and then moved pass, leaving them both behind. It was shown Smackle taking a step forward before freezing, as if she was going to follow him.

The video cut off with Smackle walking away from the fight.

The room was quiet as they all wore wide over the video they had just witnessed. Riley opened her mouth to say something but it only ended up closing again, not knowing what to say. Auto-play did the justice in filling in the silence but only in the worse way.

RILEY MINKUS AND ISADORA SMACKLE CAT FIGHT: "YOU'RE A HOMEWRECKER"

The video was set what was possibly months or a year later. It was a different scenario as it
appeared to be a female's gala. It was set outside rather than inside a palace. The video was from afar but was zoomed in immediately on the sight of Riley dominating the fight with tightly gripping the hair of Isadora Smackle who kicked and tried to get her hair untangled from Riley's sticky fingers.

Both ladies had one hand in each other's hair messing up their updos. Their dominate arms swung as hard as they could, aiming at their faces. There was a loud chanting of "STOP" from all the women that surrounded them. A few of them even tried to reach in to pull them apart only to get pushed back from it. Isadora was kicking and trying to get Riley off.

"Get it to her, Isadora!"

"Beat her ass, Riley! Beat. Her. Ass."

"STOP! PLEASE STOP!"

"Oh my God! This is some World Wrestling Entertainment."

"Us ladies need to stick together! Stop!"

Riley harshly dragged Isadora by her hair a couple feet before Isadora went around and kicked her shins, causing Riley kick back. Whistles went off and men in black came running in just as Riley was about to get back on top of her enemy who was still kicking at her. Riley tried to reach other but they were being pulled apart. Adrenaline still pumped through their blood as the physical fighting turned verbal.

"You don't talk about my family like that! You say anything about my daughter, I'm going to come back and mess you up!" Riley yelled loudly. Her face was beat up and had slight bruising already appearing.

Isadora laughed out as she looked worse than how Riley looked but seemed to be owning it. "I have the right to say whatever I want! You don't deserve them! They weren't supposed to be yours!"

"Shut up! You're just mad it's my life and not you--"

"YOU'RE A HOMEWRECKER, RILEY! Damn you! There's a special place in hell for fakers like you. Stop taking everything from other people, that's what you do!" Isadora screamed, using all her strength to try and get out of the arms of the men holding her.

"God choose this for me, this was always meant to happen, Smackle. I'm sorry I have the man and you don't--"

"You only got what you got because you were being a little whore!" Smackle spoke harshly.

That unleashed more rage in Riley as she slipped away underneath the arms of the security that were trying to hold her back and she sprinted over to Smackle who twisted in time for Riley to hit and kick at Smackle's back as she shielded herself and only let out one cry of pain. Riley was pulled back at last.

Smackle spat in Riley's direction, singing, "It's true. It's true. It's true(!) and you know it!"

The last few seconds of the video was security carrying Riley Minkus out of the event. The video taker kept saying, "oh my God" over and over again until the video ended.

A shaky sigh is released from Riley's mouth as she felt herself get lightheaded and leaned against
the sofa for support. She obviously did something to hurt Smackle, something really bad. The words Smackle had directed to her in the video were harsh and full of pure hatred. Knowing that someone who was currently one of her best friends hated her in the distant future for an unknown reason killed Riley's soul a little and let tears brim her eyes.

"I regret my searching. Now I have more questions," Maya sighed.

"I don't think we're going to find anything that is going to answer all of our questions. The best bet on getting everything we need is if we ask them ourselves," Lucas stated.

"I thought you were opposed asking them questions?" Riley stated blandly, turning to look at the cowboy. He only shrugged.

"We're not going to find a straight and honest answer if we are only relying on finding videos and internet searches. Maya and I aren't famous like you and Farkle are. We'll have to do go out of our comfort zone for this one apparently." Lucas's so smart.

"I opposed of this from the start," Farkle stated. Riley turned her head around, giving him a hurt of look before shaking her head in disbelief.

"What do we do now?" Lucas asked the group.

"We stop watching videos," Maya said turning off the computer system. "I have a feeling that if we continue using that we'll just sink ourselves more down of the rabbit hole of questions and confusion."

"Are we going to do as Lucas said? We going to walk up to them and say, 'Hey! We're you from the past and we really want to know what made you decide to grow your hair long during your college years?'" Farkle exclaimed as he glanced up at the photo of himself, Riley, and baby Nova that was displayed on Nova's wall.

"We're not going to do that. We don't need to ask them, but we could ask the people closest to them..." Maya said.

"Someone who knows probably everything we want to know..." Lucas continued.

"Someone who was always there in every moment..." Riley softly said, lifting her head up.

The front door audibly opened and shut with it's loud sliding sound effect. Footsteps came close and Nova showed herself, groaning before she plopped down on the bed tiredly.

"I'm in a club full of complete idiots! The only person equal to my level of intelligence in that club is me!" Nova exaggerated. She laid her arms across her eyes as she took a deep breath and then sat up. "Identity property and all."

She smiled at the quartet of her fellow peers and raised her eyebrows. "How was time without me? I'm sure you must have felt a void in your meager, little lives without me."

They all looked confused at one another except for Farkle who looked downright offended.

"We're still on for tomorrow, right? A.K.A The Day I Meet My One and Only Idol, Isadora Smackle!" Nova squealed in excitement and did a little shoulder dance to show it. "Everything's just about prepared for the day. We just need to rely on time to get us through it."

"TIME?!?" Riley gasped, looking bothered and her eyes wandered everywhere.
Maya shushed her pretty, little head and gave a pat on her back. Her words were directed towards the Minkus child, "We were born ready."

"Great! Everything has to go absolutely perfect tomorrow or else I shall erase our entire existence from the universe!" Nova threatened.

"WHAT?!" Farkle exclaimed, breath hitched.

Nova snorted, "I'm kidding! I don't know how to do that yet. Still working on it honestly..."

The four that stood in front of the genius female chuckled nervously, not knowing if Nova was being serious or not.

Beeping started as Smicies came out from her hiding spot, appointing her eyes to Nova who gasped at the very sight of her.

"Smicies! You traitor! If I knew you were there I wouldn't have said anything, easedropper!"

Smicies beeped and made her way out of the room as Nova stuck out her tongue behind Smicies's back. Smicies stopped and turned only her head around 180 degrees to stair back at Nova, knowing what she had done.

Nova yelped and fell back from her bed, embarrassed and in bed as she landed on her back.

"Uhhh, it huuurrrttttttssss..." She groaned. The four friend stiffened their laughter as they shook their heads. *She truly was a Minkus...*
"This is exactly what it's like when you enter the gates of Heaven's door. I'm sure of it," Nova sighed in admiration as she passed through the revolving door which set her in the I.S. Industries building. Her eyes wandered to every surface of the building, taking in everything in awe. Jimmy walked behind her smirking slightly as he knew that she was using her photographic memory to remember every little detail.

They walked in the back of their school group, completely unlike them. They were usually in the front, being the center of attention of every moment and having the spotlight following them. No one took notice of the change in the normality.

Nova stood in the middle with Alaina and Jimmy by her side, the four others wrapping around their small group. Alaina was on her phone going over the plan in her head, trying to remind it from perfection to her watch she wore on her wrist.

“We’re still going along with this plan?” Maya shakily sighed as the school group stopped as their tour guide stepped forward and smiled at them introducing herself as Tifys (pronounced tie-fees).

“We’re still on track with time. She only has fifty-seven, fifty-six seconds left in her introduction speech and then we move,” Alaina stated.

“And how do you know this?” Lucas asked the light-skinned teen.

“Tifys; Tour Instructor for Youthful Students,” Jimmy said to the group, looking back at them.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Maya questioned, still confused.

“She’s not human. She’s a robot programmed to get tour directions and facts,” Farkle answered for the blonde as he looked up to Tifys eyes and noticed its dim red light right in the center of the pupil. It was recording and watching.

“Well, you could have just said that. I’m not smart like you guys are,” Maya pouted, sticking out her bottom lip and crossed her arms over her chest.

The corner of Nova’s lip twitched, but suppressed the smile she wanted to do.

“We did consider the robot employees into this plan, right? If she is recording this, she’s going to notice that seven of us from this group is going to be missing,” Jimmy whispered over to Nova who raised her nose up in a confident stance.

Her eyebrows furrowed over as she looked bewildered at her best guy friend. “It’s like you don’t know me… Of course, I took note on the employees. I took note of everything that is affects this plan in the slightest.”

“Everything?” He tested her.

“Everything,” she hummed confidently. “Don’t underestimate me, James. It doesn’t suit well for my self-esteem.”

“I never underestimate you. I very much have as much faith in this plan as you do.”

“Very well then, that is a lot because I made this plan, so it’s bound to work.”
“Of course,” Jimmy smiled, standing by her side every step of the way as the group started to progress forward.

Maya looked over to her best friend who remained quiet the entire day so far. The blonde nudged her brunette friend slightly, getting the girl’s attention from the blank stare down on the ground. “Hey buttercup…you okay? You’re awfully not yourself today. What’s wrong?”

“Nothing, peaches. I’m just not feeling very well today. I think it could be a stomach ache that’s passing,” Riley excused. Maya knew better than to trust Riley’s first words.

“Don’t lie to be, Riles,” Maya said in hush tone. “What’s wrong? Really…”

Riley only shook her head. She bit her lip from saying what was truly bothering her. “I really don’t have a good feeling about any of this.”

“About what?”

“I-I don’t know really…I just don’t,” Riley stuttered over her words.

“Okay then. If anything happens to us that doesn’t make you feel comfortable or just gets worse, you let me know and we’re out of here, understand?” Maya said sternly.

“We can’t just leave, Maya. We’re on a trip, a-and Nova’s parents know we’re here—”

“Let me know and we’re out of here, understand?” Maya repeated.

Riley gulped and nodded her head slowly, taking a deep breath before answering, “I got it.”

Riley hated lying to Maya. Nothing ever good happened when lying is involved, and even though she knew very well to stay true with her friends, things have been happening to her that only she has been experiencing. She knew it was only her because none of the other seem to be affected by anything and no one had said anything about strange things happening to them. It was best if she just remained quiet for now…

The tour continued on. Nova was completely astonished by every exhibit in which they passed and learned about. She was taking notes in her phone, and secretly taking audio recording of Tifys as she spoke about the exhibits they approached. It wasn’t only her but also Jimmy. Lucas’s eyes never focused on one thing as it was often checking their surroundings, almost as if he was the security for his small group. Farkle didn’t show much emotion but occasionally he would catch himself smiling over the accomplishments that were completed by the company, I.S. Industries. His eyes drifted over to Riley who paid her attention to the plaque informing about a machine that was working behind the glass wall. He smiled softly at her before glancing away as Tifys moved the group along to arrive to the Hall of Halls. It would seem like a normal field trip if it wasn’t for Alaina occasionally checking her watch.

“Be very cautious in this area as it is quite easy to get lost. Some halls and doorways may be occupied for uses, said but not limited to: chemical experimentation, biological enhancement, preparation stations, important meetings, engineering and mechanics, robotic building…” Tifys continued to list as she guided the group to the laser show room.

“Okay, take a deep breath Alaina. This is the moment. Don’t panic,” Alaina said as she stood behind Nova who was quietly counting passing doorways. Alaina checked her watch one more time, seeing as by her count the door they were supposed to take was apparently seven seconds ahead.

“Twenty, twenty-one!” Nova was quick as to take the closest people near her and pull them into
the doorway which was to direct them to their approximate destination. They pressed their backs against the wall, breathing evenly. Nova watched Alaina who was trying hard not to panic, but the look she received by Nova nearly caused her to stop breathing.

Nova looked over the edge to see their group getting farther and farther away until they took a right and disappeared. Nova released a sigh before opening the heavy wooden door which squeaked lightly. “Let’s go.”

Seven bodies disappeared behind the door on a mission for one girl to meet her idol.

Down the blank hallway and up the white stairwell, they came to another wooden door at the very top of the long journey upward. The teens were all out of breath when they reached the top.

”Tell me again why we couldn't take the elevator up here?”

“We don’t have an access card to take the elevator,” Nova stated, peaking through the glass of the door.

“And besides, it wasn’t part of the plan!” Alaina also reasoned, getting a hit from Nova. “Ow!”

“They didn’t know it wasn’t part of the plan, Lainey. Now they think I worked them up for nothing.”

“We would never think of that from you,” Jimmy said to give Nova the feeling that she was right. Nova was about to go through the door when Alaina stopped her. “We’re thirteen seconds ahead. Give a few more seconds.”

Thirteen seconds of heavy breathing occurred before Alaina nodded. “Okay, now we can go.”

Seven secret teenage spies peeked through the wooden door, escaping and pressing their weight against the wall. The hallway wasn’t busy but there would be the occasional person that walked by.

“Okay, so where do we go from this?”

"It'a done this hall, to the right, and then the large double doors in the large spacial area," Alaina stated, looking at her watch. "We need to go. We're running behind on the schedule."

"Alright, let's go," Nova sighed as she casually walked down the hall as if she belonged on the top story of the building with all the others. She wasn't going to waste any more time sitting around and catching her breath, she was to lead action and get the job done.

Alaina and Jimmy walked behind her without hesitation while the other four friends had to take a glance at each other before they took the steps following behind the trio. As they continued down the hall, they got questionable stares but no one dared stop them from making their journey to their final destination.

As they approached the main lobby area where Isadora's office was supposed to be, Nova stopped the group just as they were about to turn the corner to talk and collect.

"Okay. Alaina, the laptop please," Nova instructed her best friend to hand over the laptop which
she had kept in the backpack that she worn. Alaina handed it over and Nova sat on the ground, taking out a flash drive from her back pocket, sticking it in and getting on the a document which opened up with a document of code.

"What are you doing?" Farkle asked cautiously as recognized some of the letters and numbers and their form of organization.

"I'm breaking into the firewall of the security system. Miss Smackle has a certain list in which her assistant knows who is and who isn't allowed to see her. I'm going to go in and put our names in the Acceptance list," Nova stated as her fingers got to work on breaking through.

"This wasn't part of the plan," Jimmy snapped, glaring down at the genius child.

"We added it last minute," Alaina guiltily said.

"I did say I had considered everything, James," Nova smirked, not taking her eyes off of the laptop screen.

"Isadora Smackle has top high-end security. She uses Trojan defense times twelve as her security. You can't just go in hack into her security system, Nova. She'll take notice before you even pass the first barrier!" Jimmy snapped.

"Um, that sounds like that can get us in trouble," Riley whimpered. "Will we get in trouble for this?"

"Not with me doing all the work. Don't doubt my abilities, Junior," Nova growled before smiling and looking up at her concerned guy pal. "Don't forget, I'm a Minkus."

That statement got Farkle to crack a smile at who was his daughter.

"Besides, Alaina helped me figure out some modern tick that can go through the firewall with ease. I just need to get a hold of her list, put our names, and we're good."

Jimmy shook his head, rubbing his hands over his face completely stressed over Nova's last minute addition to the plan.

"Okay, and we are...now in!" Nova grinned. Alaina squealed slightly before taking the space next to Nova, looking at everything that opened up. There was much more in the server than what was expected. The two were in completely awe over the design plans and also the discussion talk between email and saved audio recordings between calls of what was planned for the company.

"Oh my Smackle... Look at all these mechanical engineering plans that are written here. Improvements to robotic technology to become of public use, high power of solar energy to generate manufacturers, enhanced way for genetic growth in living things. My mother would go crazy for these project ideas!" Nova was completely breath taken over what she was looking at.

She wished she had a pen and paper to write all of the information down before her brain goes into overdrive.

"Nova, put our names on the list and let's go!" Jimmy hissed, looking over the corner to see large groups of people coming down the meeting hall.

"Wait, Manual Genetic Mutation? Pace Duration Enhancement Generator? What is she doing with things like this?" Nova questioned out loud as she accidentally came across the files and opened them.

"Nova!" Jimmy yelled, getting her to jump. Men in black passed by her and she worked fast to
find the list which was inserted into the Pupil's File. Nova added all seven names for her friends before saving it. She did one little extra thing without anyone's looking before closing the laptop and passed it back to Alaina to put it in the backpack.

"Let's go," Nova simply stated before going up to the desk that guarded the door that was to Isadora Smackle's office. The woman looked up to the children and crinkled her nose slightly before plastering a smile on her face, her glossy lips widening to reveal pearly, white teeth.

"How may I help you, children?" she said in a pitchy voice.

"We're here to see Miss Isadora Smackle!" Nova grinned widely, standing up right with all of her friends behind her.

The female assistant cooed, "I'm sorry children. Miss Smackle is currently at a meeting right now."

"That's fine. She had asked us to come at this time and wait for her in her office," Nova said innocently.

The assistant laughed, "I very much doubt that. Besides kids, you most likely aren't on the list."

"I should be," Nova said thoughtfully, pouting out her lip. "I'm her goddaughter. She was really excited to see me. I even brought my friends since she promised me to take us on a tour around the building today."

"Miss Smackle has a very busy day today, I very much doubt that she had asked children to come today of all days."

"My school is taking a tour here today, Abigail Adams High School. She promised me she would tour my friends and I around the building if I came at this time. Please! Just check to see if my name is on a list or something," Nova begged, forcing herself to play her part.

Maya smiled slightly as the blonde beauty was very proud of her future goddaughter lying easily to get what she wants. Obviously, she didn't get that from her parents...

The assistant huffed in annoyance but nodded as her fingers went over to her keyboard, "name?"

"Nova Minkus."

The single phase of the child's name caused the assistant to whip her head around so quickly she was sure it was going to snap. She stuttered over the name she repeated, "M-Minkus?"

"Yes," Nova nodded and grinned.

"You're Miss Smackle's goddaughter?"

"It's very much so. Check the list for me, will you?" Nova asked politely.

The woman released a shaky breath before using her fingers to peak at the keyboard spelling out N O V A M I N K U S into the pupil's list, her name popping up in a green light.

"You're accepted?!" The assistant gasped, looking in disbelief at the teenage girl who stood in front of her.

"Of course I am! Auntie Isa loves me!" Nova giggled as she wore a proud wide grin on her face.

The assistant nodded as she stood up with a key in her hand and gestured over for the kids to
The assistant nodded as she stood up with a key in her hand and gestured over for the kids to follow her. Nova’s eyebrows furrowed as she looked at her friends who wore the same face. “Um, ma’am. Aren’t you going to check my friends’ names as well?”

“I don’t need to. If you are on the green list, I’m sure they are too.” The assistant opened up Miss Smackle’s office door and the teens were hit with a strong aroma of coconut. Nova entered the office, not believing the accuracy of her ideas of what her idol’s office would look.

"What do you mean by that?" Nova frowned, but her question was dismissed.

The door closed behind them and the teens walked around the teen slowly as if absorbing everything that the room presented. There weren’t any pictures but there was artwork. Lots of paintings and charcoal art. The office was very organized, as papers on the desk were stacked evenly and in file. The books on one side of the wall was ordered by alphabetical order by title, and Nova felt in a wonderland.

"I'm standing on the same floor that Isadora Smackle walks on every day," Nova squealed as she fell down to her needs and hugged the ground as if it was a prized possession.

"Nova, get up, the floor might be dirty," Riley said wanting to pull up the troubled teen.

"It's not. Miss Isadora would never allow it," Nova sighed a breath as she just rested there on the ground like the weirdo she was.

"What do we do now?" Lucas asked, speaking up finally as everything had been done but the purpose of the plan hadn't been accomplished.

"We wait," Jimmy sighed taking a seat on the sofa in the sitting area on the office. He laid back and kicked his feet up onto the coffee table to relax. All the other teenagers did the same as they took a seat with the exception of Nova who remained on the ground.

"How do you do, Miss Isadora? I'm Nova Minkus, I admire you so much--no, that's too forward. Hello, Miss Smackle. My name is Nova Minkus and I am here because I truly am inspired by your work--ew gross, that's too formal. Hi, Miss Smackle. I'm Nova and I too care about the polar bears in the Arctic--meh, maybe..."

"What are you doing?" Jimmy sighed, looking down at his sweetheart. Nova looked up at him blandly.

"I may have planned all of this out but I just realized I never practiced what I would do if I actually met Isadora Smackle. I've simply only ever dreamed of meeting her, never in my life did I think I'd actually have the opportunity to actually be face-to-face with her..." Nova said while looking up the decorative ceiling.


A moment later, a shoe was thrown at his head, hitting what was aimed for of Jimmy's head. Nova's purple kitten sock was on display as she only wore one shoe of the pair.

"I think I'll just start off by talking about electromagnetic fields or gravitational waves and it's travels through spacetime--" Nova beamed.

Maya rolled her eyes as she let her head drop to Riley's shoulder, whispering, "She's making my brain hurt with all the science-y talk." Riley smiled and stroked her hair as if she was a baby.
Nova had drifted off speaking about her favorite science talk she'd like to get her idol's point on when she heard rapid talking outside of the door. She stood up immediately along with everyone else as they watched the door, waiting for their guest of honor to make an appearance.

"--shipment papers have arrived and would need your sign of approval and also Rena had brought up the incident reports that had been turned in this morning. You'd need to check over that to see if Mr. Claymore is to keep his position as ITT. Oh, and in your office, your guests are waiting for you, all checked in and afternoon cleared off until late afternoon," the assistant rambled on.

"What guests? I'm not expecting anyone," another female voice asked in concern of what was told to her.

"Your goddaughter. She said that you asked her to come up with her friends so you'll give them a tour of the building. Apparently their school here is on a tour as well."

"Goddaughter? I don't have a goddaughter," the voice said just as the door knob jiggled and entering came in a short women dressed in dark blue women attire so dark it appeared black at first glance. She had long, black hair that draped down her back. She was fit and unaware of the children in her office as her thick black glasses frames which surrounded her eyes were looking at her assistant who glanced over at them in confusion.

The woman followed her assistant's line of vision to catch the sight of the seven teenagers that that were frozen in shock. Time seemed to have stopped as confusion was worn by the two women at the doorway while shock wore by the teenagers.

Jimmy broke away to slowly turn to Nova who stood like a statue as her brain took a picture of the moment, wanting to remember it for the rest of her natural born life. The moment was remembered and after the process was finished, Nova tilted forward getting caught in Jimmy's strong arms. He held her in a dipping position as he lightly smacked her face to wake her up.

"Come on Nove, you've worked too hard to not take this opportunity now," Jimmy hissed as she slowly blinked up at the boy holding her and she sighed.

"Has it been ten years already?" Nova's first words were.

Jimmy chuckled and grinned down at his one true love. "No, not yet. Just a few seconds."

"Bummer," Nova said before standing up and taking in the presence of her idol before she got down on her knees and bowed her head in respect. "Miss Isadora Smackle, it is honestly a great pleasure to be in your graceful presence. Although I had sinned my way to get to this moment, I have no regrets."

The six other teenagers facepalmed at Nova's initial greeting to her idol as this moment isn't going to sound so great when having to orally share it to others in later times. Nova's going to regret this.

"I don't know who you are or what you're doing here but I didn't give any of you children permission to be here. You will need to leave," Isadora firmly stated. The assistant started apologizing to her boss, explaining that their story fit so well, and that they were on the acceptance list and got the go.

Nova stood up and started to calmly bring the attention back to her as she knew this would happen. "I apologize, but I am a huge fan of you, Miss Smackle, and I have read all of your papers that you've ever written and seen your presentations via video streaming. You're my inspiration of becoming a top-lead scientist, and I would honestly just love a moment to talk to you and answer my questions that I have pertaining to your work."
"I have no time to talk to children. I am supposed to be having a very busy day running a
cOMPANY and doing this and doing that. Interviews are only by my request only, not the only way
around. My time now will have to be used to call back everyone that was cancelled and apologize
for a misunderstanding on my assistant's part." Isadora said it, directing it to her assistant who
bowed her head but got to work on trying to get a hold of everyone that was cancelled.

"I just need a few moments, Miss Smackle. You're a very hard women to reach and as a future
woman of science, I'm sure using your time to put some inspiration into young ones," Nova tried
to persuade.

"There is a reason that I am a hard woman to get a hold of," Smackle said as she turned back to
her assistant and added another request, "call security to escort these kids back down to their
school group."

"Miss Smackle, she really is a huge fan of yours. There is never a day that she doesn’t talk about
you and quote you. You’re a really important aspect of her life. Can you please, for all of our
sake’s, spare even a minute of your time? She really worked up a good plan in order to get here
and speak to you," Jimmy said to defend his fiancee’s point.

"You constructed a plan in order to see me?" Isadora asked the genius child.

"Yes, ma’am," Nova stated proudly with her head held high.

"You broke apart from your school group on a trip here at my company building, snuck around
the building without any passes, hacked into my firewall and add your names to my acceptance
list, just to see me?"

Nova rubbed the back of her neck. “Well when you put it that way…”

“I’m going to call your school about this.” Nova’s head snapped up, guilt running through her
blood and her blood was now pumping fast with adrenaline on her words. “It is completely
disrespectful that I allow your school to come to my company building only for a sample of those
invited really thought that I would just let them run around as if this place is a zoo. My company is
everything I have…”

“We didn’t mean to disrespect you in any way, Miss Smackle ma’am!” Alaina rose her voice.
Nova gave her friend a look, which just told her to just shut up and let her take this. This is the
most she’s going to get into talking to her idol, she was willing to take it. “She admires you! Much
more than her parents!”

“Oh! I should call them too. I should let them know of how their children didn't participate in the
field trip their school allowed them to go on, but instead broke into a major company.”

"We didn't do that though!" Maya spoke up, taking a step forward.

"Your words against mine...

"Please Miss Smackle," Nova begged. "Don't call my parents. They don't know anything about
this. I'm their little genius..."

Isadora wasn't having it. She stride over to her desk, retrieving a pen and notepad. "What's your
name?"

"Nova..." Nova said loudly as she took a step forward.
Isadora's head snapped to Nova's direction, staring at the teenager. "Nova...?"

"Nova Minkus."

Isadora sucked in a breath as her face dropped and she leaped back against her desk. She looked to the contents on her desk, distracted all of a sudden.

"Nova M-Minkus? As if--"

"My parents are Farkle and Riley Minkus!" Nova stated proudly.

"Is there proof?" Smackle joked.

"None whatsoever. There's more of a chance that I am more of their robot creation than an actual biological spawn of them two," Nova shrugged.

"I wish that was the way..." Isadora quietly said before taking a deep breath and directing her attention to the brunette teenager with bright blue eyes.

"Do your parents know that you are here? I don't believe your mother would give you permission to come to my company willingly."

"My father signed the permission slip."

Isadora smiled slightly and tilted her head. She shook it slightly as she bit her lip and crossed her arms over her chest. "Your father was always something..."

Nova's eyebrow furrowed. "You knew my father?"

Isadora didn't answer the question before she straightened her outfit. "You're a Minkus," Isadora stated. "You're a Minkus. You need to leave."

"What?" Nova was shocked. She was thinking the moment could have progressed into more, maybe get a few of her itching questions in before getting a picture and autograph.

"We can't associate with one another. I won't tell your parents, but you need to leave. I'm sure if they knew you were here, let alone talked to me, you won't be the only one to get in trouble," Isadora chortled.

"Please, Miss Isadora, dismiss the feud you have between my parent's company. I'm my own being. I am nothing to do with any of this. I'm just a fan of your work and would like to make a professional relationship made between you and me, no one else...Please..."

The door opened wide to reveal security had arrived to take the unwanted guests away.

"Miss Smackle," one of them said in a deep voice.

The moment grew still as the tension between Nova and Isadora's stare could be felt from everyone.

"You're wrong. You're very wrong... you are your parents, and you're the problem..."

Nova's shoulders hunched as her face dropped, her eyes welding up. Isadora's face was stonecold as she glared at Nova directly. "Get them out of here, and make sure to get them transferred to my Deny list."
Jimmy took Nova under his arm as she couldn't take away the broken look on her face. Her pleading eyes stayed focused on Isadora. All seven kids were escorted out of the office without being touched by the security guards as they left willingly. It was silent between everyone as they took the walk of shame to the elevator to take the ride down to the main lobby.

Tears ran down Nova's cheeks as she hid herself in Jimmy's chest who was trying to comfort her as best as possible.

"I'm sorry, Nova," Alaina said as she hugged Nova from behind. A loud sob released from Nova's lips, muffled by Jimmy's shirt which was tear stained.

Lucas, Riley, Maya, and Farkle all remained silent as they usually were. They all had their own opinions on what had happened, which they knew they would have to talk about later in private. For that moment, it was supposed to be Nova's moment and it was ruined, for what?

Riley closed her eyes as she leaned back against the elevator wall, taking a deep breath as a flash of a moment played behind her eyes.

"I know that this really isn't a good place or time to try and make things right--" Riley Matthews had chuckled lightly, without a trace of humor in it. She sat down on an elegant styled tan chair which was in the middle of her preparation room. She was careful not to cripple the pure, white dress she was wearing for the very day.

Isadora Smackle stood before her, dressed in black and dark blue, colors that she had been liking lately. She looked angry as rage was bottled up the small body of hers. She was witnessing the sight of her former friend whom she had trusted greatly, wearing a beautiful white dress that wasn't meant to be worn by the chirpy brunette. The dress was wrong, the hair was wrong, the day was wrong, the whole situation was completely wrong as it was never supposed to happen to Riley Matthews...It was never supposed to happen to her...

"You're right about that," Isadora cut off.

Riley released a breath before looking up at the woman standing in front of her and gave her a small, genuine smile. "I just want to try again. I had done you wrong, Smackle, and I know that. I don't want to play games and I'm tired of fighting, physically and emotionally. I invited you because I need you to forgive me. I know that I didn't do anything to deserve wearing this down the aisle to meet a man that I know you still love..."

Isadora shook her head rapidly, "I don't love him anymore."

"I know you're lying, and that's okay. He's really hard not to love; it's what makes us love him more," Riley smiled. Isadora closed her eyes as she released a shaky breath. Tears prickled the corner of her eyes, but she refused to let them fall. She wasn't going to break down in front of this woman, no, never.

"I don't love him..." She convinced herself to be true.

"Everything is my fault, Smackle. I know that my choices had greatly impacted your life and I'm so terribly sorry. I wish I could say that if I was able to go back in time and change things to how they were supposed to be, I'd do it, but I'd only be telling half of the truth..." Riley said truthfully. Smackle scoffed at that but Riley kept going on.

"I'm sorry I fell in love with Farkle, but I can tell you that I do love him. I really do, and I love the
daughter we have together. I just know that today would be so much better if I could walk down that aisle and say my 'I Do' knowing that I have your blessing to do so...that I have your forgiveness."

Smackle was silent for a moment. She looked at the hopeful bride and only associated the bad with her.

"I wanted to get married too, you know. I loved him so much and I had opened up to him about everything just to be with him. He helped me function and put myself out there in the real world and gave me friends, friends like you. We talked about everything science and never had a dull moment together. I gave him everything because I loved him and wanted us to be the anomaly of having like forces always repel. I wanted to get engaged and get married, start up the Minkus-Smackle company and everything. I never pictured having kids but I would have been open to it with time... I had a future, and all of that was taken away from me...because of you. You ruined my entire life, Riley."

Riley clenched her jaw to try an remain strong although her heart was shattering with every word that Smackle indicates towards her. Riley looked down at her fidgeting fingers before speaking, "So, you're not going to forgive me, are you?"

Smackle let out a scoff of disbelief. "I am never going to forgive you for what you've done to me, Riley... You just walk down that aisle and enjoy being Mrs. Minkus. Always remember though that you don't deserve the name whatsoever."

Smackle left the bride's dressing room after that. Riley sniffled and looked up to her ceiling, a technique to try and not let the tears ruin her makeup. She looked around her to the empty room which she sat in by her lonesome and thought to herself, 'Will it all be worth it at the end?'

Isadora Smackle watched as the seven teenagers were guided out of her sight. Her body was numb and her blood ran cold as her hand raised up to settle itself on her assistant's shoulder.

"Leave my afternoon open. Just call to reschedule with all those I missed today..."

The assistant nodded rapidly, "Right away Ms. Smackle."

The title stung Isadora's heart more than it should. It was who she was after all, Ms. Isadora Smackle. She hated being called so because she knew that if things had went differently in her life, there would have been a different name for her, a far better name.

She disappeared back into her office, closing herself out as she returned to her organized desk, sitting in her chair. She sat there enveloped in the empty room around her which she sat alone in. She was processing the moment that just happened before her. She had met Nova Minkus, the daughter of her former friends, Riley Matthews and Farkle Minkus.

She remembered what she looked like as the long, dark brunette hair was inherited by the girl's mother, but those bright blue eyes were obviously the recessive gene she got from her father. Her incredible intelligence in creating a wonderfully successful plan is a clear mixture of Farkle's smartness and Riley's ability to always work something out. Her facial features were of Farkle, but her smile was an exactly replica of her mother's. Her physical being and the acknowledgement that she was real hurt Isadora.

*She's a perfect representation of both of them,* Isadora thought sorrowfully, *But she was never*
supposed to be...if things had gone right.
"CAN YOU TURN THE MUSIC DOWN?" Lucas yelled above the music which played on Nova's surround sound system. Everyone had their hands over their ears which the exceptions being Nova and Jimmy. Nova laid on her bed, hands on her tummy, looking emotionless. Her eyes were focused on the ceiling as depressing music shook the walls almost violently enough to cause Nova's picture frames to fall down.

Jimmy just leaned against the sofa with his arms crossed as he observed Nova's dull mood. "SHE'S IN A MOOD. JUST LET HER BE."

"MY EARS ARE ABOUT TO EXPLODE!" Riley Matthews screamed as she plugged her ears with her fingers as a way to muffle the music.

"NOVA!" Alaina called out. The gloomy teenager remained in her Sleeping Beauty position on the bed. She paid no attention to those around her, although she would note that their presences were comforting. They were there for her at any time she needed them. Alaina stepped forward and turned off the melancholy music, filling the room with silence.

Sighs of relief were released, but Nova still didn't move. Alaina frowned before crawling on the bed to take the space next to her best friend.

"You can't just drown yourself in a mood, Nova," Alaina worded.

"I'm not drowning myself in a mood," Nova said blandly. "I'm just listening to music that relates to me. I'm neither going to eat nor drink. I'm also going to lie here for the rest of my life. It's a science experiment I like to call, Dying."

"Nova," Jimmy said disapprovingly.

"I just got passed off by my idol, James. She told me to leave from her sight. She said I-I was a problem," Nova choked on her words. "And I don't know why!"

"You shouldn't take her words to heart, Nova. She probably has her feud with your parents in her mind and thought you were sneaking around to get intel for them," Alaina reasoned.

"But I would never do that, Lainey!" Nova sat up and yelled. "I told her I wasn't like them! I told her and you know what she said to me?"

"That you were them, we know Nova, we were there," Alaina sighed.

"I'm not my parents! I'm my own being. Yes I have traits from both of them but I am me. I am Nova Minkus, a fourteen year old girl who believes herself to be a robot creation because she knows that life would be much better if life had gone on without the baggage of having emotions and feelings. She has a childhood friend whose always got her back because Life knows she couldn't do everything by myself, and a guy who cherishes her for everything she does no matter how crazy and bizarre his life has become having to put up with her." Nova released all of her feelings as she had gotten up and had paced the room, going from wall to wall.

"Nova, you're speaking to yourself in third person again," Alaina commented.

"And she hates me becomes of my last name! Ugh, how could she judge me simply because of my last name?" Nova groaned in frustration. She pulled at her roots before looking towards the quiet bundle of friends in the room. "Does it make sense to hate someone due to their last names?"
"I don't think so," The statement was input by Lucas as he looked to his group of friends. "But I can personally relate to it as I have a family feud back in where I'm from because of our last names."

"It's like the story of Romeo and Juliet in which the Capulets and the Montagues were rivals. Their rival was the key reason Romeo and Juliet could never be, and it eventually let to their downfall. It seems odd, but it's not uncommon," Farkle shared.

"Oh great," Nova huffed. "So being a Minkus ruined everything with Miss Isadora even before I thought up with that plan to meet her. I'm so stupid!"

Nova plopped back on her bed, hair sprawled out on the bed covers as she looked back up to the ceiling. "Sometimes, I really wish I wasn't born a Minkus..."

Riley gasped quietly as she heard those words come from her one and only (future) daughter. Glancing over to Farkle's deep frown, the words had affected him as well. They might seem as her friend now at that moment, but in years time Nova is destined to be theirs. Their daughter to say they wish to not be who she was hurt more than it should for not being parents to her just yet.

"Don't say that, Nova. We all adore you for who you are," Alaina tried to lift up her spirits.

"You already know how much I love you with all of my pumping veins and arteries," Jimmy smiled. "My life would be a complete bore without you."

"Thanks for the nice words for my self-esteem, but according to my idol, I'm not Nova Minkus. I'm Riley and Farkle Minkus and honestly how am I supposed to live up to them? They're called the Marie and Pierre Curie of this century for crying out loud!"

"This is some serious deja vu," Riley said as she looked at Nova's struggle. "She's going through exactly what I went through with my parents."

"History does repeat itself, huh?" Maya shrugged as Nova stopped to stare up at her wall of pictures which had pictures of her friends and family. "The crazy part is that she's saying this about you."

"Don't listen to her, Nova. She doesn't know you. You are your own being," Alaina pleaded for Nova to understand.

"This woman was my idol. I looked up to her, and thought more highly of her than I had about my own mother. I can quote that woman's paper on botanical kinetics! And she passed me by?" Nova ranted.

"She was? Past tense?" Maya caught Nova's wording. Nova was conflicted over her feelings of what was right and what was wrong.

"She hates me... It's honestly really hard to be polite to somebody who can't stand your existence. I don't know how my mother does't it all the time!" Nova was aggrieved, screaming at the sky and the world. "I am feeling extreme emotions of infuriation circulating inside of my bloodstream. Why did my parents program me with feelings? Which wire do I need to cut to remove them from my system?"

"Nova, you need to relax and think on positive things," Jimmy said holding her shoulders to steady her.

"My idol hates me."
"That's not positive. Nice, pretty things. There are flowers in the springs--"

"That die out in the winter," Nova sighed dully.

"The sun comes out every day--"

"But it will blow up into a few billion years taking all of us with it."

"Our wedding is in ten years--" Jimmy smirked and wrapped his arms around his beloved fiancee.

"And there's no guarantee that I'll even show up."

Jimmy pouted and looked at his blue eyed favorite gal. "You might not show up?"

"I might push it back to fifteen years," Nova stated, glancing over to Jimmy who released a hurtful whine from the back of his throat.

"A-And I'll wait," Jimmy said, getting Nova's nod of approval before she let herself crack under pressure and released her radiating grin at the guy who loved her. "There's that smile I love."

Nova nudged him before pushing him away and flipping her hair over her shoulder, causing him to swoon.

"Okay, my mood is a little lifted, but I'll still need time to mourn for my loss." Nova shook her body and relaxed as best as she could. "I can't act sad now. Mom and Dad will know something is up if I'm not their usual Nova."

Hearing those words put a smile on everyone a face. "As my plan to meet Miss Smackle had succeeded, the only thing left is to make sure my parents never find out about it."

"She had said she wouldn't be saying anything to your parents, so we're clear on that," Alaina said.

"Thinking back to it, could there have been a flaw in the plan for it to come back to us later?" Jimmy asked. Everyone thought hard about it but nothing was brought up or could be remembered.

"I think we're okay." Nova sighed out to release of the jitters she had been feeling.

"Thanks for letting us stay for dinner, Miss Riley," Alaina thanked Nova's mother as she ate her meatloaf dinner quietly.

She smiled to her daughter's best friend and spoke after swallowing her food. "You're very welcome, Lainey. You're always welcome to spend time with us, you know that."

The entire dinner had been awkward since the first sitting. Barely anyone had spoken a word to anyone or each other and that totally wasn't the norm. The married couple which sat on opposite ends of the table glanced at one another occasionally, trying to urge the other to start a conversation with looks. All seven kids tried hard not to speak, shoving food down their throats as an excuse to dismiss the conversations.

"How's your mother doing? I haven't seen her since the baby shower a while back," Riley Minkus asked Alaina.
"She's fine. She's still very pregnant," Lainey laughed awkwardly, bowing her head to keep her eye level at her food.

Mrs. Minkus rolled her eyes and stared at her husband who shrugged at her.

'Say something,' Riley Minkus mouthed to her husband.

'Like what?' He mouthed back.

The wife shook her head as she took another bite of her food, the sound of her chewing being the only sound that filled her ears.

"Um, Nova, w-wasn't there a, uh, field trip today or something, for you and your friends?!" Nova's father asked. His wife beamed at her husband's mention of a topic they could all converse about. She nodded, praising her husband for being a conversation starter up.

The kids all tensed and gulped whatever was in their mouths, whether it had food or only saliva.

"Yeah," was the only word Nova let out.

"How did it go?" Riley Minkus asked a follow up question.

"Okay."

Mrs. Minkus put on a fake smile as she looked from her daughter to her husband, then back at her daughter.

"Where did you guys go again? I believe you said it was something to do with science. We all love science around here!" Nova's mother laughed.

"Not all of us," Maya slyly slipped in a comment. The younger Riley smiled and nudged Maya for the quiet words.

"Just some science place. They had some cool stuff, but it was all recycled information and experiments," Nova said.

Mrs. Minkus hummed. "Well, it seems like nothing productive happened with you kids."

"We live boring lives, Miss Riley," Alaina stated, "Every passing day is the same."

"Oh," Riley Minkus exclaimed before uncomfortably shifting in her seat. "Well, Farkle and I visited the expo today to set up for our Wegner Convention presentation. Everything is set up perfectly. Hopefully you kids could join us and support me and Mr. Minkus."

"Of course, Mrs. Minkus. My father also has a stand rented out for his company," Jimmy cleared his throat.

"Oh, is he back from South America already?" Me. Minkus asked.

"No, but his employees will be standing in giving his latest information he's gathered from his trip."

"When is your father planning to come back up? Surely, he'll be back by Thanksgiving. You know how big and grand our Thanksgiving events are by the Foundation!" Mrs. Minkus smiled.

"Even I don't know the answer to that, Mrs. Minkus..." Jimmy tone lowered as he gave a sad
smile to her before picking at his food.

"He's doing a lot of hard work and research down there in the Amazon. Just last year he found that new parasite in Northeast Asia! Wow! Really shook the medical world by storm!” the older Farkle exclaimed in amazement.

"It was founded in Mongolia, right?” The scientist's wife asked for clarification. Jimmy and her husband nodded.

It was quiet again for another moment. Mrs. Minkus couldn't take it and used her watch to send a ding out and in strolled in Smicies, your friendly lovable robot.

"Smicies, my sweet angel..." Riley Minkus cooed as she opened a hidden drawer that was on her side of the table which contained nails and bolts, along with pennies as a form of copper for the robot.

"If she's a sweet angel, what am I?” Nova pestered to her mother as she watched the lady slip a penny into the robots slit around where the tummy area was.

"You're a robot," Alaina nodded, Maya glancing over and pointing to her as if saying 'Exactly!'.

Nova's eyes widen, "Is this confirmed?!!"

Mr. Minkus looked at his daughter and rolled his eyes before smiling softly at his wife.

"What's my day for tomorrow, Smicies?” The woman asked. A holographic schedule popped up of the lady Minkus's day and Smicies used a projected voice to announce the day for her.

"By 6:00 p.m. you have Ms. Maya Hart's Art Show to attend to at the Buchanan Hall."

Mrs. Minkus choked on her drink which she was downing at that moment. Everyone watched her with wide eyes, the exception being Nova who continued to finish her plate without even a glance up towards her mother.

"Oh my Goodness! That had totally passed my mind! I need to do something big!” Riley Minkus exclaimed as her mind was know running a million miles per seconds trying to thing of something to do.

"You don't have to do anything, Riles. Us just turning up to support Mays's art show is enough for her,” Mr. Minkus said.

"It's like you don't even know her!” Riley groaned. "I need to get her something. I batch of red roses, some suede boots? Wait, how much is it to get a Russian husband?"

"We're not getting Maya a boyfriend. She's already said she still isn't ready to look for another relationship," the older Farkle pointed out.

"She doesn't need a boyfriend. She can skip that and go straight towards commitment and longterm lovin!" Riley squealed.

"No," the husband wrinkled his nose.

"That's disturbing, Mom,” Nova shuttered, standing up to put her plate away on the conveyer belt.

"Smicies, be a doll and tell Alexa to order all I've said. Suede boots, by two in light blue. You know the sizes needed," Riley grinned as Smicies strolled out going to do as what was asked.
"Do we still have to go to that? What if I have homework?" Nova grumbled.

"Nova, we both know that you'll get your homework done before you even set foot in this house if you do have any. You need to go in support of Maya, she's probably worked really hard on this collection," Nova's father said, giving her a pointed look.

"Why is it that when Miss Maya does something you both have a need to make it a necessity but when I have something, it seems like only a suggestion?" Nova frowned, thinking out loud accidentally. Jimmy gulped his food and downed his drink, seeing already where this was going to go but Nova's facial expression.

Mrs. Minkus straightened her posture as she stared at her daughter, her husband and her sharing a small glance before looking to their daughter.

"What do you mean? We always try and support you with anything you do, sweetie," Nova's mother carefully said.

"You mean at least one of you tries," Nova corrected her mother.

"Nova, you know very well that your mother and I are very busy with a lot of things at the company. This thing for Maya is the first time in a long time she's had an event. You're always succeeding and accelerating to be better than best. There will be many moments for us to be there for you," Nova's father gave a comforting smile in which Nova didn't take as comforting but as one that should be of guilt. He knew full well that she was making the comment directly to him.

Nova's neutral face towards her father wasn't a good sign. "I'm going to the lab."

"No, you're not, young lady. You're still grounded. The lab is still not accessible to you," the older Farkle sternly said as his words stopped his teen daughter.

"And when will I be getting my lab privileges back?" She asked sharply, in disbelief that her punishment has gone on this long.

"When your father and I believe it is best for you to have them back, and that you've earned it," Mother Minkus answered her question.

"It's been almost two and a half weeks!" Nova yelled. "I've apologized, Uncle Lucas even came by and fixed the mess. I still can't go in and just tinker with something to calm me down?"

"Tinkering turns into fixing and fixing turns into working, which could turn into breaking," Father Farkle said.

"This is totally unfair! This is judgement towards my actions of only one entry in the lab out of many and completely suppressing me from reaching my absolute best ability!" Nova yelled towards her father.

"Nova Minkus, that is no way to talk to your father," Riley Minkus said to the genius daughter in a warning tone.

"For the love of all sciences!" Nova yelled in frustration, her face flushed with red as anger came building up again. "I've always been allowed to defend myself. You taught me that I have just as much right as everyone else, and I just don't see how this punishment is fair for what I have done. Being in this stupid family is punishment enough! I hate this!"

"Nova, go to your room," Mr. Minkus' voice was flinty as his jaw clenched.
"I'll go if I want to--"

"Now, Nova!" Farkle snapped at her. The teenager stood frozen in her spot, looking in shock towards her father and how he raised his voice at her.

She groaned loudly before exclaiming, "This is the worst day of my freaking life!"

The angry teen stormed off to the direction of her room, making sure to hit the sliding door loudly when she was on the other side, locked. Mr. Minkus let out a breath through his nose, pushing his plate away, no longer in desire of finishing his food. The table was quiet as apparently no one else was hungry.

"Surely she's just exaggerating," Riley chuckled without any humor in it. All the teenagers glanced at one another, knowing to beg a differ. Loud depressing music had started to play on max volume which indicated that Nova was putting herself in a mood again.

Riley Minkus looked around to the other teenagers which had witnessed the argument occur. She sulked in her chair. "Why must we always argue at the table?"

Her husband scoffed before standing up, shaking his head at his wife. "Let's not, Riley."

"I'm just saying--"

"Well, don't!" He snapped at her as well. Her widened eyes at him, made him realized that he raised his voice at her and it was his mistake. He dismissed himself without a word, probably going to work in the laboratory and cool down.

Mrs. Minkus didn't look at him as she just listened to the elevator door greet Farkle and close. A smile returned back on her face as she looked to all the children, a fake one obviously but she tried.

"Miss Riley, if you don't mind, could I take the meatloaf to go?" Alaina asked to break the awkwardness. "I'm sure my mother would love some along with my brothers."

"Oh! Of course, Alaina! I know how much they love my infamous meal. Let me get a container for you to take." Riley Minkus got up from her seat, taking her plate with her to put on the conveyer belt. "Everyone else is dismissed. I'm sorry yet again for the scenario that played out during dinner."

"This has happened before?" Jimmy asked the younger Riley who nodded shyly.

The table was cleared off. The younger Farkle had reached to take the plate of his older self but was stopped by the warm hands of the older Riley. His eyes stared at the slightly charred hand that covered his left hand and the smooth one with the wedding band that covered his left. His eyes lifted up to make contact with the pleasant brown eyes of belonged to the older Riley, Riley Minkus.

"I'll take that from you. Thank you." Her words affected him in a mild way. It wasn't only the words but simply the thought of taking her husband's plate meant. Even though the family was a little on rocks at that moment, she still accepted to take care of what her husband had carelessly left behind. Riley Minkus was too good for him. Her smile made his heart thump a thousand times a second; it took all he had to look away when she took the plate and noticed a small lock of hair fall from behind her ear to glide down her tinted cheeks.

He was feeling emotions towards a married woman. Correctively, his married woman but what should have felt wrong actually felt very right.
Alaina and Jimmy left the apartment complex while the four kids from out of time had went upstairs, leaving Mrs. Minkus alone downstairs.

The four teenagers collected themselves in Maya's guest room. Maya and Riley took the bed as Lucas took the only chair in the room and Farkle stood.

"Okay, so things haven't been all smooth sailing lately," Maya stared as she kicked off her shoes.

"Yeah, we're learning new things but lately things have been really rocky with in this household with Nova and this future Farkle and Riley," Lucas spoke up.

"And this isn't going to get any better," Riley shakily said.

"Ah, look who finally speaks," Maya clapped her hands at her best friend who stared at the blonde. "You've been too quiet for my liking, honey."

"I've haven't been feeling all that good lately," Riley sighed.

"Do you feel sick?" Farkle asked, concerned on her well being.

"No, but I just have a feeling that we should really just try and find Dr. Marbles and go home, back to our original timeline."

"And this is a feeling?" Lucas's eyebrows raised.

"I know we shouldn't be here. A lot of bad things are happening and we're just standing around watching it all like we're invisible. They acknowledge us, we should tell them the truth and let them help us go home," Farkle sighed.

"No, no, no," Maya laughed. "We're not getting out of this so easily."

"Either way, even if we weren't here, this timeline would still go the same. Nova would have stilled snuck into Smackle's company, the dinner fight would still play out, because if you just take us out of the scene it still fits," Farkle sighed.

"We've been here for almost a week," Riley stated the obvious.

"And we can stay a little longer," Maya exclaimed as she got off the bed. "We're going to my art show."

"We need to find Dr. Marbles!" Riley was sticking to what she wanted.

"We're in New York, Riley! He could be anywhere right now, and by how he was on Sunday, I'm a thousand percent sure that he's avoiding us so good luck trying to find him," Maya laughed, "Hey, for all we know, he could show up to the art show, I don't know!"

Maya entered her bathroom, locking it behind her and it was went the shower started to run when the others knew that the conversation was officially over.

"We'll try and find him, Riley," Lucas said to comfort the brunette. Riley looked up to him and smiled softly, thanking him for his support. He gripped her hand and they squeezed tightly on one another's hands before letting go and Lucas left the room. Riley's smile slowly slipped away and she stood up from the bed.

She passed by Farkle, her eyes focused on her footsteps as they went one-by-one ahead of her. His eyes followed her and his mouth opened to speak but a sigh was only released when his eyes
followed her and watched as she closed her bedroom door behind her.

He went to his room, cursing himself silently.

---

Farkle hadn't slept yet. The lights were out and he just laid in bed, looking up at his ceiling too much in thought. He was taken out of it when the floor boards in front of his door cracked. He sat up and watched as a shadow passed by his door and down the hall, not towards the staircase but towards the other end of the hall.

He pulled off the covers and quietly slid open his door to check a shadowy figure make its way out the glass door that was on the opposite end of the hall. Farkle checked his surroundings before he left the bedroom and moved towards the glass door. He didn't know what to expect but what he caught was a sight he wished to freeze.

He witnessed as the older Riley was clothed in her blue jeans and a pink fuzzy sweater. Her arms were crossed over her chest and her hair pulled up in a high ponytail. The patio was furnished with a few lawn chairs laid back and a telescope aiming perfectly at the stars above.

It was fairly dark but the moon illuminated perfectly on the sight of Riley Minkus looking up at the dark sky and the universe. Her skin was slightly glowing under the moonlight. Her focus was too much on what was above her to pay attention to what was going on around her and in the real world.

She was the most wonderful and most beautiful sight he had ever witnessed in his life...

The glass door opened and Farkle stepped through quietly, not saying anything as he tried to take in the moment for as long as it stayed.

"Farkle, do you think we're slipping again?"

The words caught the boy off guard as he opened his mouth to say something but nothing came out for a second time that night from the same human being.

Riley broke her trance away from the stars to see the teenage boy who stood there mesmerized by the adult.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were my husband." Mrs. Minkus giggled and shot her beaming smile at the teen who simply stared at her. "He usually knows I'm here if I'm not anywhere else in the house."

Farkle nodded, dumbfounded as to why but it seemed like an appropriate response to follow with.

The older Riley bit her lip as another laugh released from her throat. "You know, you look a lot like my husband when we were younger?"

Farkle gulped, "Do I now?"

She nodded, "Very much."

"What...do I have that reminds you of him?" Farkle seemed stupid to keep asking questions but he wanted to take a moment to just be with his future wife.

Her eyes softened and her head tilted to the side. "About everything... Most just one little thing..."
She whispered.

"What? Is it the hair? The voice? The eyes? I bet you'll be cliche and say the eyes," Farkle guessed. He knew Riley to be a person to love any cliche moment, and would take any opportunity to make a moment be one.

Mrs. Minkus laughed and shook her head. "No, not any of those."

"Then what is it?" Farkle asked confused. He physically looked like a younger version of her husband because he was a younger version of her husband. If she didn't look at him and see it, then she's partially blind.

She smiled softly at him and shook her head, "I can't make it too obvious. With time..."

"What do you mean by that?" Farkle asked.

Mrs. Minkus looked away to catch the eyes of another teenager waiting at the door. She hummed gently before straightening her posture. "Looks like we have company..."

"I'm sorry! I didn't mean to interrupt a moment," Riley Matthews smiled oddly as she went back and forward from her future self and Farkle.

"No moment interrupted. I was just actually about to go. The stars are a little dim tonight," the Minkus lady observed as she glanced up one more time to the stars above her. "Enjoy some time out here. I'll leave you two be. Good night."

The older Riley walked out of the patio, leaving the younger version of husband and wife out by themselves.

"What brings you out here?" Farkle said the first words of the new conversation.

Riley shrugged, "I couldn't sleep... you?"

"Heard some noises out my door," Farkle simply explained. She nodded, accepting the excuse. She walked forward to take the empty side of Farkle and look up at the stars above, the edge of her lips curving upward.

"Was the noise me?" Riley asked pointing over shoulder, indicating that she was talking about her future self.

"Yeah. I heard her pass my door and I followed her out here. We only talked for like a minute," Farkle informed her on.

"That's cool. What'd you guys talk about?" Riley asked a follow up question.

Farkle only shrugged, "The stars."

Riley looked up, observing the little twinkling lights that hover above her head. "It's very pretty out tonight..."

"Yes, it is," Farkle agreed, looking away from the stars to look at the brunette beside him. It was at that moment he noticed the small dark circles underneath her eyes. She glanced away to make eye contact with him and they both shared a glance before looking away.

"Farkle, are you satisfied with all of this?" Riley just came out and asked what she wanted to know.
"What do you mean?" Why were Rileys so confusing?

"Are you satisfied with this? Us?"

"If you're talking about this point in the future, then I can't answer you honestly just yet," Farkle answered.

"I probably shouldn't have expected you to. I just ask because of everything that's happened today..."

"Nova's words got to you too, didn't they?" Farkle said. Riley sighed and nodded. "Yeah, I was a little hurt about it too. And just to add what happened at dinner on top of that..."

"It's been an awful day," Riley stated the obvious.

"I wouldn't take it too harshly. I'm sure with a new day, things will start off on a better note."

"I hope so... I'm just glad that I'm not going through all of this alone. At the end of the day, I have Maya, Lucas, and I have you..."

Farkle smiled slightly at her words and took her hand in his own palm. Riley looked down at their hands and up at Farkle who gave her a friendly smile, letting her know it wasn't to be taken as a romantic gesture but as a sign of support. "I'll always be there for you, Riley. No matter what happens to us, I'm glad that we can see from this future that we'll always have each other's backs when needed."

"Farkle, we're walking through life together..." Riley laughed as she squeezed his hand, laying the other hand on top of the one she was holding.

"We are, and I couldn't think of anyone better to do it with than with you..." Farkle said. His words caused Riley's cheeks to blush into a light pink as they saw each other's eyes at that moment. The trance of staring into one another's eyes was broken by Riley who ducked her head as she bit her lip from releasing a wide grin. She took her hands back and stood up, rubbing her hands on her arms.

"A bit chilly out here, don't you think?" Riley asked with a short chortle.

"Just a tad bit," Farkle agreed with her comfortably.

"I'm going to head back to bed. I'll see you tomorrow morning?" Riley said.

"Definitely."

"Good night, Farkle," Riley remarked as she slowly stepped away.

"Night, Riles," Farkle replied.

Riley walked away slowly, stopping and releasing a huff before turning back around and giving the unsuspected boy a surprising kiss on the cheek. Farkle's eyebrows rose and he turned around to see the brunette beauty quickly rush off to her room, leaving him alone in the open space.

Farkle tried hard to suppress his smile but failed. He stared up at the sky and he swore that the sky had gotten much clearer and much brighter.
"That's actually kinda cute," Maya cooed. She was standing side-by-side with her friends, watching the couple that was holding each other in their arms on the couch, fast asleep.

Mr. and Mrs. Minkus obviously made up over the night as Riley Minkus had her head laying on her husband's shoulder and her leg propped up on her man's stomach. Her hand gently laid on Mr. Minkus's chest and the husband had his left arm wrapped around the shoulders of his wife, holding her securely to his side. The older Farkle was still dressed up in last nights attire while the woman had taken off her sweater and cuddled up in her dark jeans and a black tank top.

"Should we wake them?" Lucas asked.

"Well, we are about to go to school. Surely, they got somewhere to be as well," Maya shrugged.

"Like their jobs?" Farkle suggested jokingly.

"I don't want to wake them, guys. They seem so peaceful," Riley Matthews said as she tilted her head, completely admiring the way that her future husband held her so close to him as if he was afraid to lose her.

The couple stirred in their sleep, causing the teenagers to freeze in their place. Mr. Minkus stretched while Mrs. Minkus went to turn around only for her to fall off of the couch with a loud "oh!"

Mr. Minkus sat up and reached for his wife, helping her up from her position on the floor. "Riley, sorry."

"It's fine. You know it happens more often than not," she laughed gracefully as he dusted herself off, pulling off some pieces of dust bunnies off of her black tank. She turned her head to finally acknowledge the kids that smiled at the couple. "Oh, good morning, children." They all say their good mornings back. "Is Nova not up yet?" the mother asked.

"She's probably up, just still hasn't come out of her room," Lucas said to the mother who nodded understandingly.

"Well, would any of you like any breakfast? Farkle and I can make a mean bowl of cereal?" Riley Minkus laughed. "I-I don't mean a mean bowl of cereal. Cereals can't be mean, nor can bowls. Well, unless you throw them, then that would be mean but that's your anger not the bowls'. I can make cereal in a bowl if you'd like? I can make it a nice bowl of cereal--"

"Riley," the older Farkle said his wife's name to stop her from blubbering and muttering. He smiled at the cute, innocent expression she gave him.

"We're good, Mrs. Minkus. Thanks though," Lucas politely declined her offer as the four teenagers had already ravished through the cabinets and pantry for good treats to savor on.

"Okay. Well, Farkle and I are going to get ready for work. Make sure Nova eats before she leaves if we don't catch her before we go," Riley said as she passed by her husband and he followed her to their bedroom.

"We will, Mrs. Minkus," Lucas said.

Riley Minkus smirked as she turned around to the oldest of the group. "I wasn't talking to you."
The confused looks on their faces were gold as they walked away from the living area. Just as the bedroom door closed, another door swished open. Nova Minkus peeked her head out to check to see if her parents were around and when she saw that the coast was clear, she dashed out quickly, taking Farkle by the collar, choking him as she pulled them towards the door.

"Come on! We got to go before they come back out!" Nova said.

There was a loud alert sound that chimed through the air. All five teenagers covered their ears and followed the red blinking light to see Smicies guarding the door, her sound system playing the deafening tone on repeat. "Nova Minkus, you make sure you eat before you leave this house."

"You're not my mother, Smicies! Although you do sound just like her with that stupid, loud sound," Nova yelled at the robot sibling. The alarm chimed higher, causing Nova to cringe.

Nova ran over to the fruit bowl and took a green apple, polishing it before she took a large bite in front of the robot's red eyes. "There you go, Mom! I'm eating. Now let me be, you control freak! God, I swear Smicies, I'm going to find out how to hack you to be my own personal slave one day."

The horrible, blaring sound stop when Nova had taken the bite of the apple. Smicies moved from her spot in front of the door and out rushed the teenagers, making their ways down the elevator to catch their ride to school.

"Why the rush, Nova?" Riley asked as she was at a daze over all the fast motion.

"I can't face my parents just yet. I'm still mad at them," Nova simply stated as they entered the elevator and pressed the button to go to the bottom floor.

"You do know that you have to face them tonight, right?" Farkle said.

Nova scoffed slightly, but sighed contentedly when the elevator door closed and they headed down. "Yes, I do. I just don't want to deal with them now."

They nodded understandingly and just rode the ride, hoping today would be a far better one than the one before.

Although the point of a new day was to have a new start, Nova's mood hadn't changed from the last twelve hours. She walked into school and as soon as she walked in, all those around her got the effect of what having a grumpy Minkus meant.

Kids lost their focus and fell over one another. One girl got hit in the face in the locker while a boy got stuck in a locker. Some bypassing student crashed his presentation poster into a hipster girl, her Vanilla Bean Frappachino spill all over his hard work he had probably done last night. A couple who had been together for several months had finally broken up, the girlfriend slapping the boy in the face before running off to the girl's restroom with tears running down her cheeks.

Nova continued walking, unaffected by any of those who were experiencing bad due to her bad mood.

She walked into History catching the attention of Alaina who was applying lipstick on herself. The end of the lipstick stayed in place as she turned her head, a light pink streak running from the corner of her mouth to the middle of her cheek. She gasped and took out her compact mirror,
looking at herself in horror.

Nova chortled, "Haha, you look ugly."

"That's not funny, Nova! This is stainless," Alaina exaggerated as she took out a makeup wipe and started to take off the embarrassing mark.

Nova took her seat in front of Jimmy who was literally holding his breath, hoping to not get noticed by his unruly mistress which seemed to be sparking bad luck to those that were in her path. She noticed how the boy hadn't greeted her with any of his charming pick-up lines and slowly turned around to eye the boy. Jimmy whimpered.

"James..." she said in a low voice. He shuttered as the sound caused chills to run up and down his spine.

"Nova, my...sweet..." Jimmy choked out. Nova hummed gently, a slight smirk on her lips. "...delightful...lovable...gentle flower."

"Are you just listing synonyms to me?" Nova asked, testing the uneasy male.

"I love you so much!" He squeaked out. He was so scared for his life and the life of others. He was screwed if Nova's mood didn't lift up soon. "I don't want to die. I have a wedding in ten years I need to attend to."

"Nice try," Nova said before turning back around to her grandfather walk in completely drenched from head to toe. He walked in, set his suitcase on his desk before turning around and writing two words on the board.

**PANDORA'S BOX**

"Oh no..." Jimmy groaned and hid his face in the crook of his arm.

Nova's lips formed a smirk as she leaned back and brought up her holographic notebook, getting ready to write down notes about this lesson her gumpa was going to teach her. "Oh yes."

"While in Christianity, there is the book of Genesis in which God created the world and Adam and Eve were the first people on Earth, it is completely different in Greek mythology. In Greek mythology, Zeus had asked Hephaestus, the God of Blacksmith, to create the first women on Earth. That woman was named Pandora. She was gifted by the gods with beauty, speech, clothes...and with that, she had one thing to do; Do not open the box. Of course, curiosity got the best of her and what does she do?" Mr. Matthews asked to the class.

"She opened the box," Nova answered.


The students smiled slightly and a few even chuckled.

"With opening the box, she unleashed all that's bad and evil onto the world; Hunger, Jealousy, Vengeance, Death. She unleashed this!" The teacher gestured towards his soaked suit which still dripped on the solid floor. "...but by the time she closed the box, she had left the one most important thing in the box."

"And what was that?" Riley Matthews spoke up. The older gentlemen turned to make eye contact with her.
"Hope. Hope was the last thing left behind, and without hope, what's the point of anything else?"

The question got the quiet classroom thinking.

Nova chuckled slightly, "Okay, Gumpa. Thank you for the wonderful lesson...really." The old man glanced over at his granddaughter perplexed. "We all know that you're talking about me. I'm Pandora and I opened the box and let all bad things happen, I get it. My bad moods are always contagious and has the domino effect. Gosh, I hate it when you match your lessons to my life..."

"The lesson wasn't about you, Nova. It wasn't even for you. I'm just mad that I got my favorite suit wet," the teacher huffed as he shook like a dog, getting the first row of students wet with little droplets to the face. "Not everything is about you."

Nova rolled her eyes and she sighed before sulking in her seat, wishing she would just disappear at that moment.

The younger Farkle frowned at the upset teen who had laid her head down to see another brunette with her head down. He glanced over to see Riley breathing evenly as she had somehow fallen asleep in the short amount of time they had been in class.

"Ladies," Farkle Minkus had said greeting the table of studying college females. Three pairs of eyes lifted up from their books and smile knowingly at the sly guy.

"Farkle," a large grin erupted from Riley Matthews's face as she placed her sparkly purple pen in between the two pages she was on and sat up straight, leaning forward to give her attention to the guy who decided to sit in the empty seat next to her.

"How've you ladies been?" Farkle asked the other two beside Riley, Marché and Agnus.

"As if you care," Marché scoffed jokingly.

"I care very much! I care for anyone who's cared by Ms. Matthews over here," Farkle said, charming the ladies who rolled their eyes at him. "Speaking of Ms. Matthews..."

Riley laughed at her best guy friend and smiled sweetly at the brunet boy. "Yes, Farkle? What do you want?"

Farkle raised an eyebrow before he scooted closer to his blushing gal friend. The college boy leaned in, hiding his face in the crook of Riley's neck. Marché and Agnus looked at each other, hiding their smirks as they know too well what the murmurs were about.

"I'm sorry about last night," he apologized only quiet enough for her to hear.

She sighed softly, replying, "It's fine, Farkle. It's not like this project affects our semester grade or anything." He knew she was being sarcastic about the fact. "I needed a day break anyways. Spending time with you is tiring."

"A good type of tiring, right?"

The corner of Riley's lip twitches upward but she didn't full on smile as she knew it would only give Farkle the satisfaction.

"I'm not hearing an answer, so can I just assume--"
"Why are you here? Usually the library is a placed for peace and quiet for people who need to study, like me," Riley changed the subject.

"I want to be with you tonight... Make up for yesterday," Farkle whispered, looking into Riley's eyes.

"I don't know, Farkle--"

"Come on, Riles. It's a Tuesday night. I know you don't have anything to do on Tuesdays."

"I need to study."

"You can study now, and if you need more time, just come over and you can study some more. I can order take out, buy some smoothies... extra thick, so you can eat it with a spoon." Farkle was very hopeful as he knew he had upset Riley by not contacting her and basically ditching her for the boys last night. He was trying very hard to make it up to her in any possible way.

Riley thought about it for a minute, her eyes scanning over her Biology textbook, reading an excerpt about Natural Selection before saying, "Will you bring the spoon?"

Farkle grinned and whispered, "I'll even bring the spoon."

"5:30, your dorm," Riley decided. She rolled her eyes as she could feel Farkle's wide smile against the skin of her neck and she even tilted her head so he could have more room to nuzzle his nose against. She shuttered slightly at the feeling of his lips graze against her skin, but like a good boy, Farkle pulled back before he drove the girl insane.

"5:30," they agreed on. Farkle looked over to Riley's friends who were wearing knowing smirks on their lips. He gave them a head nod before excusing himself from the table. "I'll let you ladies continue on with your studying."

"Thanks, man. It's appreciated," Agnus chuckled as she continued to right down her notes.

"I'll see ya," were Farkle's last words before he strides away from the group, chirpy as all be.

Riley moaned softly as she watched Farkle leave the library. The other two waited until Riley looked at them to speak.

"What?" Riley laughed.

"Come on, Riley! When are you two going to make it official?" Marché asked, completely annoyed how Riley just assumed that what had happened was a moment she could just pass.

"What are you talking about?" Riley asked innocently, going on to reading about Survival of the Fittest in her textbook.

"You and Farkle have been something since the beginning of freshman year! It's been going on for a good fifty years," Agnus expressed.

"Stop exaggerating. We've been friends for many years. There is nothing going on between me and Farkle," Riley stated to her friends who were making things far more than what they were.

"And I'm obviously blinded to your extremely close relationship and overnight stays with the extremely attractive hunk named Farkle Minkus. Of course, it's only a friendship though," Marché sarcastically said, making Agnus giggle into her hand.
"It is! Listen, I've been with Farkle--"

"In how many ways?" Marché cut off.

Riley laughed out loudly, receiving a hush from the librarian who glared at the entire table of females.

"Uh, no. Farkle and I...we get each other. I've always been there for him and he's been there for me. We aren't going to let anything ruin what is most important, which is our friendship," Riley smiled. She focused back at her book and added, "besides, it's only been going on for two and a half weeks..."

Marché and Agnus gasped loudly and the librarian shushed them for the second time.

"Riley Matthews, you're actually with Farkle Minkus?" Agnus asked.

Riley shook her head, "No. We're not together and we probably never will. There's too many factors that stop us from being so, if we wish to ever be in a relationship like that. We're simply just working on a science project that requires both of us to participate. I'd call it... I don't know. It's more like...a college rendezvous?"

"Rendezvous, huh? I like it!" Agnus squealed. "I mean you have to agree Farkle has really become one of the hottest studs on campus."

"He's really grown into a fine, young gentleman I will say. I was by his side as we were both growing up and he really has become a looker," Riley agreed with her friend.

"Girl, as long as you getting that white frost on that pound cake, you do you!" Marché pointed out. Riley and Agnus stiffened their laughter by cover their mouths. The librarian side eyed them as they continued their studying.

"It'll never be more, but I'm just going to have fun with it while it lasts."

"You have your fun. Everyone needs to be a little daring once in a while," Agnus smirked.

Riley bit her lip. The smile on Riley's face never wiped off as all she could feel were jitters for her little hangout later that day with the boy she couldn't get off her mind.

\•\•\•/•/•/

"That was absolutely horrendous and completely embarrassing must I add!" Nova exclaimed as they walked out of the school building.

"That was pretty funny actually," Jimmy laughed along with everyone else in their little group. Nova hit him hard, completely annoyed by the boy.

"I can't believe that had actually happened," Nova groaned. "I'm just glad that I already have cafeteria duty for my two weeks because I'd surely get cafeteria duty for the whole month if Principal Babineaux had to lay anything else on top of my punishment."

The event that had everyone doubled over had happened while Nova was performing cafeteria duty again. Nova's mood had followed her to when she was busy wiping down tables when another student had called Nova over and taunted her about how the food who was given was served poorly. The student went on and tipped over her Strawberry Kiwi drink getting Nova's front all wet. She had demanded Nova to clean up the mess while she put away her tray. Nova did as told without saying a word, having given her friends pointed looks as she could see them from
the corner of her eye that they wanted to step in. Nova had taken her rag and also the plate of Devil's food cake from another student and had wiped off the floor when at the most perfect timing, she had slipped the plate on the seat just as the student sat. It got the laughs out of a lot of people when they saw the student leave the cafeteria with large brown stains on her behind. Nova took the glory with pride.

"What you did was golden," Jimmy laughed out loudly.

"Yeah, well, I can explain myself that I had water on me but she's gonna have a hard time explaining what she got."

"I have never been so proud," Maya stated, getting a light smack from Riley who gave her an amused look.

Nova's walking slowed down to a stop as her face transformed into one of disgust when she saw the black SUV waiting outside on the Fire Lane with her parents' driver holding a sign that read "Nova Minkus" with a little "+4" on the side.

"Uh oh," she muttered. Alaina and Jimmy gave her apologetic looks. "I'll see you guys later."

The two best friends muttered their goodbyes as they walked towards the busses.

Nova grumbled a "come on" to her four guests and all five walked towards the black SUV which awaited them. They entered the car and the first thing that was asked was "What's this about?"

A holographic projector came up and a message from a small Riley Minkus in a flower patterned dress appeared.

"Hi, sweetie. I'm so sorry about this but your father and I are jam packed today with all the moderations to the presentation on Saturday and realized we wouldn't have time to go home and get ready for your Aunt Maya's art show tonight..." the holographic Mrs. Minkus said.

"She's not my aunt," Nova rolled her eyes.

"We've sent Sussie to pick up some appropriate and formal wears for your friends and you and you'll be meeting us at the International building..."

"NO!" Nova yelled and slumped into her seat releasing a long groan.

"I know you're not happy about that but you'll only be here just a few hours before we have to head out immediately to the art show. Aussie should meet you in the front and guide you through to us. We'll see you when you get here."

"Can my life get any worse?" Nova asked the rhetorical question up to the sky as she felt the SUV move to start its journey towards her parents' business building.

"What's wrong with going to your parents' workplace?" Lucas asked for his friends.

"Only that it's not my home," Nova said as if it was an obvious question. "Besides, I wanted to sneak off to the lab while they weren't there. I have so many projects to work on. I still need to find Smicies's blueprints to try and reprogram her to my command too."

Nova sat up back in her seat and buckled up, because as her mother had always said throughout her life, "Safety always comes second!"

"My dad works in a laboratory that will only be a reminder of how I'm not supposed to work on
experiments... What he doesn't know won't hurt him..." Nova said, a small chuckle releasing from her lips.

The car ride seemed to be shorter than expected as they had arrived to the Minkus International building. It was a tall glass building that seemed to be tinted in the degree of the sunlight.

"Wow, this is pretty impressive," Farkle said as he was proud of himself and what he had accomplished at this point in his life.

"Yeah, well, it was my mother's design. Believe it or not, she's the brains behind the name," Nova snorted as they walked up to the security door what looked like elevator doors.

Riley Matthews nudged at Farkle's side and smirked at him. "I'm the brains in the relationship."

"I can honestly say I'm surprised," Farkle joked, his serious tone getting a hard smack from the brunette. "Ow! I was kidding."

Riley only hummed and walked away in a fast pace, releasing a large grin when she was out of Farkle's line of vision.

The teenagers entered the building with the large "MINKUS" sign on the top of it. They were greeted by the Hispanic business assistant of the Minkus couple, Ms. Sussie Morales.

"Hi Nova, so nice to see you again," she greeted Nova.

"The feelings returned, Miss Sussie," Nova said, not meaning it as she believed herself not to have feelings.

"And you must be the friends the Minkus's were talking about. Sussie Morales, nice to meet you."

Sussie shook all of their hands with a warm smile and they all nodded back as greetings. Maya added a "ditto" and an uncomfortable smile.

"You're the woman from the dinner!" Maya called out.

"Yes, I am! Come on, lets go up. I'm to take you to the office and keep you there until one of your parents come and get you," Sussie said as she took them to the personal elevator and used her thumb print for it.

"How's school going for you, Nova?" Sussie asked as she and the Minkus daughter knew it was quite a trip up to the office floor.

"Quite well. I'm taking an AP class along with four honors classes this year. I'm also taking physical education for two semesters and an online course during my free fifth period block. My current calculating GPA is a 4.428. I sometimes just say it's a 4.43 just so people don't know I'm 0.002 off from an actual 4.43. It's an embarrassment to my overall intelligence to be off by so little, even if it more accurate to the thousandth place," Nova informed the business assistant, ending with a gleaming smile.

"You know when I finished high school I finished with a solid 4.0 and ranked 30 in my class," Sussie stated proudly.

"And a business assistant is all you could get as a career? I'm very sorry," Nova said sincerely.

"Nova!" Riley gasped at her future daughter. Nova turned around confused. Seeing the look on her friend's face made her realize what she should add. "But if it makes you happy..."
Sussie was shocked. What sort of jab was this teen doing at her life? She cleared her throat and straightened up so it seemed as if she was unaffected by the girl's words.

"I am happy with this job. Your parents are very kind and generous people who knows everyone and treats them with respect. They are our equals and don't seem like superior figures..."

"It's all a act," Nova said dully.

"What?" Sussie asked, wanting to see if she heard right of the girl.

The elevator dinged. "Oh, we're here!" Nova exclaimed watching as the doors open and she walked through it to enter the office floor.

Nova lead the group to her parents' office. Sussie opened it up and let the children in, Nova immediately dropping her things and falling on the sofa next to the door to rest her legs.

"You are to stay in this room until either Mr. or Mrs. Minkus comes to retrieve you. If you need any food or drinks, it's just over on that wall. It should have all your favorites, Nova," Sussie said.

"Good," Nova groaned as she closed her eyes and kicked off her shoes, revealing her black socks with little ugly green aliens on them. "Where are my parents now?"

"Your father is in his laboratory while you mother is..." The pause in Susie's sentence caused Nova to open an eye and see that she was pointing above their heads to the ceiling. Nova let out an "oh", understanding what the assistant meant.

"I'm going to let them know you're here." Sussie closed the door behind her and locked it.

The sound of the door locking got Nova to narrow her eyes. "Someone doesn't trust us..."

"And they shouldn't," the young Farkle said, adding a small chuckle afterward.

"These look delicious," Maya hummed as she inspected all of the snacks they had stocked up: Candy, bags of chips, a large variety of beverages...

"Take some, actually we should take it all. My mother doesn't eat any of this stuff unless she's sad and my dad only eats it if he's bored," Nova said as she sat up and went over, taking a couple bags of her favorite chips (Salt & Vinegar) and three Snickers bars and two Sprite sodas. Maya went all out grabbing all the Lays potato chip bags and savoring into the flavor of each chip. Lucas took a Sprite, Farkle didn't take anything while Riley only gifted herself with a juice box.

Minutes had passed and the boredom had really gotten to them.

"Are we just going to sit here until they come?" Maya groaned, sitting upside down on the other sofa they had.

"We could investigate the building by going through the vents," Nova suggested, taking a bite from her candy bar.

"Would that get us in t-trouble?" Riley stuttered.

"Yeah, but it'll kill the boredom," Nova said as she got up to get a stool but was stopped by a familiar set of beeping.

"Oh no you don't."

"Smicies," she growled as the little robot revealed itself from behind the desk, showing angry eyes
as the teen. "Mom brought you here?"

"Mom brought me here to watch over you," Smicies said, looking up at the Minkus spawn.

Nova gasped dramatically, "S-She programmed you to call her m-mom?"


"NOOOO!" Nova cried out as she dropped to her knees, cursing the gods above and below for letting nightmares come true.

Laughter came from the doorway of the office as Mrs. Riley Minkus walked through, picking up Smicies and setting her on the desk.

"I'm just playing with you," she spoke as she took out a chip from Smicies's backside.

"Don't ever do that to me again, you evildoer. I about jumped off the ledge with that sick joke," Nova huffed at her mother as she set Smicies's settings back to normal.

"Wow! You are really against Smicies. When you were younger you were all over her," the older Riley laughed.

"That was when I was younger... I've grown, she hasn't. She's my stupid machine I created in eighty seconds, yet you care and love her more than me..."

"I don't love her more than you. I just claimed her and made her function better."

"She's my robot!"

"She helps me get through my day. Let her go!" Mrs. Minkus grumbled.

A few strides of colors and a few beeps happened, before Smicies turned back on, greeting with a "Good afternoon, Ms. Nova."

"Yeah, yeah, hello to you to Smicies," Nova said as Mrs. Minkus set her down on the floor to walk around and inspect the room.

"I'm sorry for the last minute change in plans," Mrs. Minkus apologized as she went to the corner of the room and picked up some bags with labels such as "Nova" and "Boy #1" and Girl #2" on it since Sussie hadn't known their names.

"It's fine, Mrs. Minkus," Lucas said before a random bag was shoved into his arms and an "oomph" escaped his throat. "No harm done."

"Put on these. I'll let the receptionist that you're okay to be in my office. The bathrooms are just down the hall to the left. I trust Sussie to have selected the best clothes she could find for you guys. We'll be leaving in an hour as I'm sure that will be when Farkle comes up from the lab," Mrs. Minkus instructed. She pushed them away towards the door. As they went to change, they could hear the co-CEO let the woman in the desk up front about them.

They separated into the bathroom doors, the boys going on one and the ladies in the other.

So two adults and five teenagers walk into an art gallery...the universe should've know that was the start of trouble.
Nova got stuck with holding the box of suede shoes in a size 8 (which Mrs. Minkus had ordered on priority express) and the bouquet of a dozen red roses.

Speaking of Riley Minkus, the two teenage boys, Farkle and Lucas, hadn't taken their eyes off of the married Mrs. Minkus since she had put on the slimming, white casual chic dress for the art show.

Maya got annoyed with all the goo-goo eyes and had slapped the back of their heads hard, snapping some sense into the boys literally. "Dogs," the blonde muttered under her breath.

Mrs. Minkus wrapped her arm with Mr. Minkus and they walked in, smiled plastered on their faces as they had first looked around thinking they'd be surrounded by high end people who were into pieces of art and investing into it. Oh no... they were completely surrounded by middle class families in casual wear (blue jeans, tennis shoes, etc.) and elementary school children.

"Oh my god..." Mrs. Minkus said horrified.

"Riley!" The blonde that was Maya Hunter waved over to the group that had entered, rushing to make her way over. Maya took one look at the bunch and started to laugh out loud. "You guys are way overdressed."

"Maya, you didn't tell us this was a casual event. When you meant art show I thought you meant an Art Gallery with one of a kind art and little waiters walking around with trays of white wine," Riley Minkus said to the 34-year-old artist.

"No, I said it was a gallery walk... as in a gallery walk with one of a kind art...made by little kids that I wanted to display," the older Maya finally told her with a sickening grin. "Wow. Fame had really gotten to your head."

"No it hadn't!" Riley snapped before returning back to her sweet persona. "Nova, please hand Aunt Maya her gifts."

Nova stepped up and passed the gifts to the other set of open arms and said a bland "Here you go, Miss Maya."

"Wow, kiddo, thanks. I very much appreciate it," Maya replied in the same dull tone that Nova had said her sentence like.

"And!" Riley exclaimed loudly, large grin on her face, "I also got another present coming on their way right now. They should be here hopefully by ten o'clock tonight!"

"It's not another hot European swimsuit model, is it?" Maya groaned.

Riley's grin widened as she shook her head, "Nope!"

"Or a Russian husband? I personally think they are the worst!" Maya scoffed.

"Excuse me while I make a call!" Riley laughed in a fake way as she walked away to a private corner.

Maya laughed at her friend. "Nova, your friends are already here. Last time I saw them they were around the back wall."
Nova thanked her for letting her know and to her friends to follow her in the search to find Jimmy and Alaina.

Maya finally turned to her friend's husband who had been silent since he had stepped in. They took in each other's presence, each releasing a sigh before Mr. Minkus decided to make the first move.

"Come here," Farkle chuckled as he could see that the other love of his life was waiting to see what he was going to do. He opened his arms and Maya hesitated before she filled in the gap in his arms and embraced the man who's always supported her as tight as she could. They swayed from side-to-side, and Maya's shortness was an advantage as Farkle rested his head on top of her's and Maya got a good whiff of the (strong) cologne the man was wearing.

They lingered slightly when they pulled away, keeping a distance apart from each other.

"I'm sorry about Riley's talking at Group Dinner on Sunday. You know how she is?" Farkle chuckled lightly.

"I know exactly how she is. I was her best friend," Maya pointed out.

"Yeah... So how have you been?" Farkle asked, actually curious on what's been going on with her lately.

"I've been good. I've been distracting myself mostly with this gallery walk I've barely had time to actually do stuff since I've been back here in New York," Maya answered. "Traveling really sucks the life from you."

"I hear you. If you ever need a night out, you should let me take you out one night... My treat!" Maya raised an eyebrow at the married man and he shook his head, "Never mind... but yeah, Riley and I have been focused on the Wegner Science Convention that's this Saturday..."

"Yeah, I heard Smackle's going to be there. I'm sure Riley didn't take that lightly," Maya said crossing her arms and pulling her cardigan tighter around her body. She wore a smug look on her face.

Mr. Minkus admitted, "She didn't. I'm only hoping it won't lead into a part three on the Riley versus Smackle series."

"I'm surprised there hasn't been a part one on her versus me!"

"She wouldn't hurt you. You were her friend--are you friend. She's trying to befriend you again, really hard."

"I don't deserve her..."

"Hey," Farkle stopped her. "You do. You both need each other."

"I'm pretty sure she hated me for a few solid years. Hate is a feeling that doesn't go away," Maya said truthfully. "And she hates Smackle with as much heart as she gives out."

"I can understand the Smackle thing. She's said some pretty nasty things apparently, and she's my ex--"

"So am I..." Maya said softly, eyes timidly lifting up to the man in front of her.

"But, you know, we were never really something official--" Farkle tried to go around it.
"We were married for a few weeks back in middle school."

"What we had was something different. It was never meant to be taken in a serious way. I love both of you; It's the same amount but it's different kinds of love. I love you in one way and I love Riley in another--"

"God, she would kill you if she heard you speaking right now!" Maya laughed bitterly.

"It's hard to explain--"

"I know what you mean, Farkle," Maya cut him some slack by giving him a comforting smile. "Riley... she's always been the light of your life. I'm like moonlight; I'm only there when the sun can't be. You need her and she needs you. I can't ask for anything else. That's all I have ever asked from you!"

"I need you too, Maya... I've missed talking to you..." Farkle admitted.

Maya shrugged lightly and shook her head as she never got to reply as Farkle's wife came back. Riley glued herself to Farkle's side instantly, plastering a wide smile on her face as she glanced between her friend and husband.

"IIIIII am back!" Riley giggled a little longer than usual. "Surely it was a little boring without me."

"Completely. Farkle was just going on and on about your thing this Saturday," Maya covered up quickly. Farkle mouthed a 'thank you' to her in which Maya returned a pained smile before focusing on her brunette friend.

Riley gasped, "yes! Maya, we're going all out this year. You should come and support!"

"I'll see if I can make it. I leave that day..." Riley looked upset by that news. "But maybe I could stop by for a little while."

Riley beamed, "YAY! It'll be amazing. I'm sure you'll enjoy it. Okay, now, enough about Farkle and me. This night is about you! Show us around, tell us about the art!"

"Sure. Follow me." Maya smiled at her friend before taking a final glance at Farkle who was already looking at her, before she turned and guided them around the hallways that lead to each other.

"I didn't sign up for this..." Nova stated as her face was frozen on the look of disgust as she couldn't look away from Alaina who was completely infatuated over the nerdy dressed Hispanic boy who talked to her about the art they were looking at. The boy was the infamous Eduardo that she couldn't get off her mind (nor get her hands off of).

"This artwork reminds me of your face. Absolutely beautiful..." Eduardo said to Alaina who began to giggle uncontrollably at her love's compliment.

"Eduardo, you charming devil..." Alaina swooned.

"It's a picture of a bird," Nova said matter of factly, "drawn by a five year old, labeled 'I want to be a bird.'"

"It's the thought that counts," Alaina giggled as she grasped Eduardo's hand tightly, and he raised
it up to his lips and kissed it, making the Yogi descendent gasp.

Lucas chuckled lightly in the background as he watched from the wall he was leaning against.

"This is disgusting. How did I become a part of this?" Nova asked, meaning it to be rhetorical.

"Hey Riles," the younger Farkle greeted Riley Matthews who had been starring at the same artwork for a while now. Farkle looked at it and instantly knew why it had attracted the girl.

The drawing was of four friends; two boys and two girls. They were all holding hands as the two girls were in the middle and the boys on either end. Each gender had a blonde and a brunette, the blond boy and girl on the left side and the brunettes on the right. There were labels on who was who over their heads; Samuel, Libbey, Dove, and Quinton reading from left to right. It was badly drawn, yes, but it was the caption that might have captured Riley's attention as it read,

'When I grow up, I want to be with my friends.'
-Dove, 5

"Caught your attention?" Farkle spoke. Riley's eyes never drifted from the photo as she answered his question.

"Yeah... I almost passed by it..." The way she said it almost sounded as if she lost something dear to her. "Why did I almost pass by this?"

"People usually only spend about three seconds looking at something before they move on. There's a lot to see here, Riley. You didn't know what this was until you actually took it in," Farkle informed her.

"Um guys?" The call came from Lucas. Riley's eyes stayed focused on the art while Farkle looked way to check on what his friend wanted.

"Yeah, Lucas?"

"I think I might have found the thing you guys were looking for," Lucas said. Those words finally got Riley to glance away from the art. Riley and Farkle walked towards the cowboy.

"What are you talking about, Lucas?" Riley asked. He tilted her chin over to follow his line of sight and there walking around, smiling at the childish artwork on the walls was the one person on the earth that could take them back to their original time...

Dr. Marbles.

"Where's Maya?" Riley asked as she couldn't look away from the man. She was too scared that if she looked away, she'd lose him and their plan to get back home would never happen.

"I-I don't know," Lucas said.

"Find her. Farkle and I will get him. We are not leaving here without talking to him," Riley stated. Lucas left to go on the search for the missing blonde. Farkle and Riley moved in close to the man, only for him to start moving away from the two.

"Farkle," Riley's voice raised.

"I got it," he said as the two split up. Riley following him as Farkle went around.

The hallways made it confusing as there was so many lefts and rights. One seconds Riley would
see the crazy scientist and the next he was gone. She was just about to go crazy when she bumped into someone, causing them to fall with Riley.

Riley groaned out and grabbed her head. She sat up, catching the eye of the old man she's been wanting to get a hold of since the very start. In front of her was Dr. Marbles.

"You!"
Growing Up

Lucas passed the maze of hallways, looking specifically for a short blonde that he knew was his tempered friend, Maya Hart. He had gone through, pretty sure seeing the same ten drawings at every turn. He had looked and searched for about ten minutes before he found her paused in front of one of the arts.

"Maya, there you are!" Lucas sighed in relief as he went to her. She looked over to him, her face looking serious and as if she had been broken away from a trance. "Hey, Dr. Marbles is here, we need to catch up with Riley and Farkle."

"I kind of don't feel like it," Maya spoke softly, turning back to the masterpiece in front of her.

"Is something wrong?" Lucas asked.

Maya shrugged and gestured to the piece ahead, "this is my art piece."

Lucas turned to face what she was talking about and he was stunned at what he saw. The piece was light, not having any shade darker than the solid yellow of the main figure's hair. The figure had their back turned but arms were spread out angelically to see fair skin and the dress of pure white. The surroundings were detailed small flowers, creamy peach roses. The only other apparent figure in the drawing was the solid black stiletto of another body.

"Wow..." Lucas said, breathless over such beauty.

"You like it?" Maya Hunter spoke from behind her younger self and the boy next to her. She turned her head and then back to the painting.

"What's this supposed to be?" Maya asked to her older self.

"It's what I want to be when I grow up. That's what this whole exhibit is about. Even though I'm almost thirty-five, I've been through a lot and I'm still growing. I'm not finished with my life just yet..." she reasoned.

"You want to get married?" Maya asked to the artist.

"Of course not," she laughed and shook her head looking at the painting again. It wasn't hard to understand why people would think that as it was a painting of a female's backside standing in an aisle with blonde pinned up in an updo and wearing a flowing white dress. She was staring at the back of a black figure that had no face, but the outline could be a man's (she wouldn't confirm nor deny). By just looks, it looked like a wedding scenario but only the artist knew of what more the art held.

"What...do you want to be when you grow up?" Lucas asked his friend's older counterpart.

Hurt flashed over Maya Hunter's face as her eyes glanced at her art once more before she stated, "I want to move on with my life...have a happy ending, or even a decent one... I just want someone to be there for me at the end."

The younger Maya softened her features as she looked back at the painting which she still only partly understood. Obviously this was inspired by something she hadn't yet experienced in her lifetime, but it was nerve-racking knowing that something big happens to her life to affect her in such a massive way. Maya wasn't ready for it, and she was sure it wasn't ready for her...
"Why didn't you stay with her?" Maya's voice was stone cold as she looked at her future self taking in not the look of herself but the sight of a woman incomplete.

Miss Hunter looked at the teenager confused. "What are you taking about?"

"Riley," Maya said firmly. "You were supposed to be there for her, follow her through life and everything that stands in your way! She was the one who was supposed to be there at the end."

"Maya, stop. You're saying too much," Lucas whisper-yelled at her and gripped her forearm. She snatched her arm back and shook her head, "I don't care!" She turned back to herself who looked at her as if she knew 100% what she was talking about. "You and Riley were best friends. Doesn't it feel wrong not having her around? Doesn't it hurt?"

"Of course it does. I still consider her my best friend..."

"Then what went wrong that everything had to change?" Maya was determined to know.

Maya Hunter's breath hitched as she took a moment to look around her to the numerous amounts of children's artwork and the families that came to visit and appreciate them. Her jaw clenched, knowing that among the crowd was her best friends and their daughter with her best friends.

"Trust is the key to any successful relationship. Betrayal and mistrust can break a person," Maya sighed heavily. "And I hurt Riley, multiple times. I broke Riley Matthews..."

The looks on the youthful faces of Maya Hart and Lucas Friar were ones that couldn't be described. Maya Hunter's face though was of deep regret and remorse.

"I lost Riley Matthews to Riley Minkus, and even though she's trying to be friends with me again, I don't deserve her..." Maya scoffed a moment after. "No one really sees it but Riley Matthews and Riley Minkus are two completely different people, and honestly I liked her better for who she was than for who she is now."

"Riley isn't a bad person," Maya defended her best friend.

"She's not, and she never had been and never will be, but you kinda miss the old times when you're never there for the new." Maya Hunter shrugged before turning back to the two teenagers and glanced back at her painting before pointing to it then to them. "Don't stop growing up."

With those words, the future version of Maya Hart left the scene, disappearing to do whatever she does now.

Lucas looked over to the blonde next to him and her face was stone cold. "Maya, are you okay?"

"I hate her."

Lucas chortled, "what?"

Maya threw her hands up in the air and turned to face her body towards the guy by her side. "I hate her. I mean, yeah, she's me but I don't like this. I don't like that Riley and I aren't there for each other at a time of need."

"I don't know what to say. This is just what happens."

"Well I refuse!" Maya said. "I refuse to accept a future without Riley."

"You two are still friends. We all are."
"Exactly! We're just friends here, but Riely and I are best friends. This entire thing is completely out of order; Riley hates you, none of us talk to Smackle, Zay leads a school, Riley and I aren't friends—"

"Riley and Farkle are married," Lucas interrupted.

"I don't know what happened that caused all of this to happen, but I'm going to find out and make sure to avoid it at all cost," Maya said determined.

"Maya, this is twenty years ahead of our time. We traveled here to the future to see what is of ourselves and now you want to change it?"

"Yes," she simply stated. "I believe that the future is in our own hands, and I am not taking this future as a certainty."

"You just don't, Lucas... You're okay with everything and whatever happens, but I'm not. Riley is the only good in my life, if I lose her, I lose just about everything."

"Even yourself?" Lucas questioned.

Maya was taken aback from the receiving question but she knew the answer, the truth, not even without hesitation. "Most importantly myself..."

~*~*~*~*~*~

The fourteen-year-olds Riley and Farkle were frantically looking for the other half of their group when they were finally found taking a careless walk away from they were caught standing.

"Oh my gosh! There you guys are! We need to talk now!" Riley distressed pulling on her bed friend's arm to go to a corner away from the strange figures around them.

"Woah, what's going on?" Lucas asked as the brunette pair looked bewildered.

"We caught Dr. Marbles—" Riley started off panting heavily.

"Yay, we finally have the bastard," Maya cursed sarcastically.

It earned her a scold and a hit on the arm from Riley. "Maya!"

"Sorry. Continue."

"We caught Dr. Marbles and he told us everything!" Riley exaggerated.

"He told you everything," Maya said unconvinced.

"Everything! Get this? He isn't a guy from our time!" Riley revealed.

"He's from the future," Farkle stated simply to get it over with. Maya's and Lucas's eyebrows jumped in interest.

"He said he's from about fifteen years in the future from this time, and he told us about a possible way to get us back to our time."

"Wait, a possible way?" Maya stopped.

"That's the thing..." Riley whined.
Farkle continued it for her, "We're in a time where his time machine didn't exist yet which means he's going to have to build another one of the same or find some sort of alternative route to go back...which is another problem."

"Dr. Marbles needs his wife in order to redo the experiment. That's how they've been jumping back in time; She knew the entire project forward and backwards; she is the main key into the time machine," Riley rushed out.

"So Mr. Marbles shipped four kids to the future without a device to take us back? Not only that, but he doesn't even know how to build it," Lucas groaned.

Riley gave a pained face as it did sound bad. "Why do you have to say it like that, all negative?"

"If his wife is such an importance to this, where is she?!" Maya groaned in frustration.

"I don't know. He did go on and on about how she was going to kill him for this but we don't really know anything else. Dr. Marbles said that the only way he could even remotely move forward is to find the him of this time. He claims that if he remembered right the project for the time machine started around this age in time," Farkle informed the rest of the group.

"Did he give any hint into where he could be? If you haven't noticed, he wasn't very specific and we're probably only four people out of an entire planet," the blonde female expressed in annoyance.

"He said something about being a time before he moved to Europe and that he knows he'll be at the Wegner Science Convention on Saturday. He was a helper for one of the stands apparently."

"At least that's something. I'm sure a few more days won't be too bad," Maya said truthfully. A few more days was possibly all she needed to get a rat to squeak out all the information she wanted; the only question was which rat would be the easiest and best to get it out of.

"Oh! There you guys are!" Four heads turn to see Mrs. Minkus approaching them with wide smiles and open arms. She took the younger Farkle's arm and Lucas's as well and started to drag them to the exit where other families WE being dismissed. "We need to go. They're closing the place down. I hope you enjoyed the art."

Riley Matthews and Maya Hart chuckled slightly as they watched their guy friends be dragged away by the woman. Maya glanced over to her best friend whose eyes shined brightly but smiled dimly.

"Hanging in there, honey?" Maya asked her best friend who nodded slightly as a respond.

"Yeah," stage brunette sighed, "I'm hanging in there."

Maya hooked their arms together and got closer so that their sides were pressed tightly. The blonde laid her head on the shoulder of the other as they started to follow the exit sign that were displayed overhead in the museum. "We're going to be okay."

"I know, Peaches. I know." And that was all the reassurance needed, all the motivation needed to make sure to have Riley Matthews as a constant in her life.

Everyone had gathered together, not a person missing from line of sight. They walked up to the scene of Riley Minkus and Maya Hunter giving each other one last hug (or more like Mrs. Minkus tightly sucking the seconds of life out of Miss Maya). The thirty-four year old Riley pulled away but kept her friend at arm's length.
"You'll try and make the convention Saturday?" Riley said hopefully, eyes wide and smile even wider. Looking at it by a far distance, it could be taken as fake but they know it's just Riley trying too persuade her friend into having it her way.

"I'll try but I can't make promises."

"Promise me!" She expressed, her left hand squeezing the blonde's so tightly, the wedding ring on the Missus's finger leaving an indent on the single's hand.

"I can promise you I'll try," Maya Hunter suggested.

"I'll take it!" Riley Minkus beamed before giving her another hug. She stepped away from the friend to take her rightful place beside her husband's side. The married couple locked their hands together. Riley Minkus flipped her hair over her shoulder and grinned at her friend who sucked in a breath but returned it with a bitter smile. Her blue eyes took only a second to connect with the other pair of blue of the man across from her.

"Hope to see you Saturday!" Riley gleamed before having all the others left follow behind her to leave Maya Hunter with just her art display.

"Already my little rats—I mean best buddies, follow me," Nova said to the bundle of teens behind her and gestured them to follow her. Jimmy rolled his eyes at his sweetheart.

The last words said to the artist was said by Nova, a simply, "See ya, Miss Maya."

"I just loved it so much! Too bad Maya didn't let me pitch in on just buying the whole place," Riley Minkus gave an exaggerated sigh. The husband smiled lightly as he helped his beloved wife walk down carefully in her heels.

"They weren't for sale, Riles," he told his wife.

"I had already written the check and all, oh well!" Riley stopped to turn back to do a head count on all of the teenager that followed. "Jimmy and Alaina, are you two sure you don't need a ride back to your places? We won't mind whatsoever."

Alaina was wide eyed at the Missus as she and the boy genius branched off from their best friend who looked miserable and betrayed that her only two friends we leaving her again on such a horrendous day.

"Oh no, we're fine, Mrs. Minkus. Thank you though. We'll see you at the Convention though," Jimmy laughed nervously as he took steps away from the large group and the love of his life.

"You guys have tickets, right?" The wife called out as they only got farther and farther away.

"Yes, Mrs. Minkus! Oh, it's my mother! Bye Mrs. Minkus!" Jimmy exclaimed as he and his girl's best friend ran away.

"THANKS FOR COMING!" was the final words that could be shared from the lady scientist before the kids were out of range and vanished by jumping in Jimmy's mom's car.

"They're dead to me," Nova spoke dully before her mother called over for her and the other four teens to get in the their car.

The car ride would be quiet if it wasn't for the blabbering of Riley Minkus expressing how much
she loved her "best friend's" gallery walk.

"I would have never have ever thought of doing such a master piece as Maya did with that art gallery. I really liked that 7-year-olds dream of fighting aliens on the sun. Oh gosh, that cracked me up!" Riley giggled. Her husband smiled at her and even have a small chuckle.

He gave a simple input of "I liked that one, too."

"Nova, were there any you and your friends liked? I'm sure you must have liked at least one!" Mrs. Minkus asked her daughter.

Nova rolled her eyes. She disliked this version of her mother; the too happy to be humanly possible that only appeared when she hung around people that weren't her father. The overbearing happiness being expressed was only putting Nova in a worse mood... Nothing good comes from a moody Nova.

The phone rang and Riley Minkus checked her watch to see who was calling and she squealed. "It's Sussie!" She answered the phone. "Hi Sussie, how are you?"

"No time for chitchat Mrs. Minkus," Sussie stated as her face appeared on the watch on the lady's wrist. "Can you transfer the call to your phone or earpiece? This is very, very urgent."

Nova watched in interest as the three of the four watched the peppy brunette as well, the exception being Farkle who kept a careful eye on his future daughter.

"Oh, okay." Riley Minkus uneasily transferred the call to her phone on audio mode only. "Um, what's up?" The female Minkus's content attitude faltered drastically. Nova's lips formed into a smirk before she secured her seatbelt and grabbed the safety railing above her head. "What do you mean...?" The husband looked over to his wife before he could see the fury take over her face.

"WHAT?!

Mr. Minkus pressed break, sending the teens forward so their faces were pressed against the headrests in front of them. Cars honked at the sudden stop from the car now in the middle of busy street.

"What is it, Riley?" Mr. Farkle Minkus asked cautiously.

"How could they do that to us? And within 36 hours of the Convention starting! We've always been the main act! We've been the last presentation for them for the last three years straight! We got fireworks this year for God's sake!" Riley screamed into the phone, breathing heavily. Her eyes were wide as she couldn't believe the words her assistant was telling her at that moment.

Farkle pulled over and parked, trying to get in on what was happening and also to calm his wife down from having a panic attack of some sort.

"Can't we negotiate?!" Riley said before she threw her head back and closed her eyes, her breathing becoming uneven the more she stayed on the phone. At one maniacal point she started to laugh hysterically before suddenly cutting off, a bitter grin on her lips. "Oh, really? Okay then. Thank you, Sussie. We'll work this out. Have a great night. I'll see you tomorrow."

As soon as the call ended, Riley yelled on the top of her lungs, "OH, IT'S ON, YOU TWISTED WITCH!"

"Riley, what happened?" Farkle asked firmly.

Riley's brown eyes shadowed over to her husband, her voice in a dark tone very rarely used but
used for one thing only. "Smackle's the last act of the Convention now."

Mr. Minkus froze in his seat, his eyes wide in disbelief. "What?"

"They gave the last act to Smackle because they're so grateful to have her first public appearance since the freaking Stone Age be at the Convention!" Riley cried out as she gripped her hair threw her head back against her seat repeatedly.

"What about us?" Farkle asked, curiously.

"We're moved up to 5 o'clock," Riley sobbed as her palms were pressed tightly against her eye sockets to not let the waters of sadness release from the dam that hold them back. Farkle cursed silently. "This can't be happening, Farkle. I can't do that! 5 o'clock?! That's dinner time; it's the time I'm going to be convicted with first degree double homicide. We might be able to pay my bail but this won't look good to the company name."

"Stop talking like that Riley! We're going to be fine. We'll make this work. We'll go in early tomorrow, change some set ups, maybe take out the fireworks—"

"Ugh, the fireworks!" Riley cried.

"A-And we'll do great, because we're Minkuses and we always do great, no exceptions!" Farkle told his wife, but it was mostly for himself as he was breaking apart on the inside. Farkle cursed again and ran his hands over his face before saying, "I'm lying to myself!"

As the two adults express frustration and grief from the front seats of the car at nearly 8:30 in the night, their spawn in the back seat smiled at their misfortune as she knew it would go well for them in one way or another.

She turned to look at her acquaintances and grinned what was the usual Riley Smiley. "I can already predict Saturday to be quite the showing. Good thing I got my ticket, huh?" The teens could only gulp at the manic scene playing.

Less than 36 hours.

/*//\*/

"She has nothing compared to you, Riley. You are so much more and you have so much more," Marché gave her share to the twenty-year-old Riley Minkus who was sulking by the bedroom window, watching the harsh winds blow leaves of the trees.

"Your personality is contagious and loved by everyone, girl. That's not something that girl has!" Agnus did her turn.

"She absolutely gorgeous," Riley sighed, never looking at her friends behind her.

"But you're so much more prettier!"

"Beauty is compared to your standard."

"And besides, Farkle obviously had a type. Light or fair skinned short brunettes with wit and brains just like all his exes. Girl, you the true OG!" Marché said. Agnus smacked Marché's thigh as Riley whipped around and gasped in disbelief to what her friend said. "What?! I say facts."

Riley rolled her eyes and scoffed, turning back to the window.
"Girl, you got Farkle's baby," Marché hummed sweetly as they all looked over to the sweet little angel sleeping in the crib. Riley smiled softly as she adored and loved the heck out of her baby girl.

"And that girl surely doesn't live with Farkle!" Agnus pointed out, getting props from Marché and a high five.

"Nor does she have a Tuesday night movie night with him!"

"Or play the Magical Gathering of Dungeon Masters with him," Agnus smiled awkwardly. Marché tapped her and shook her head and that one point.

"No, she's never been there—" Riley cut off Agnus with "But she's with him now!"

"But will it be a thing of forever?"

"Or just a thing of now?"

"You've been there for him all his life, Riley. He surely isn't going to let you go now, and you shouldn't him!" Angus argued.

Riley faced the window and crossed her arms over her chest, sweater hugging her tightly. The leaves were just newborn to the upcoming spring. It was uncertain if they would be lost again if any surprising snowstorms hit in the next month. She had enjoyed watching them grow, but she only enjoyed it for the moment as she knew it would be gone and die sooner or later...

"He's liked me all his life...since first grade. It was only recently that I had finally come to terms with my emotions and feelings for him and he doesn't deserve to have a long love just now return his feelings after over a decade. She knows she likes him, I've been numb for years on the truth. Now that I know I am completely in love with Farkle, the pain I feel having seen him move on from me just as I wanted to move on with him kills me..."

Marché and Agnus made pained faces before the rolled their eyes and tried to get Riley to see the positivity again.

"Ugh! Don't you dare feel any intimidation from that girl! What's her name? Natalie?" Riley whined at the sound of the other girl's name. Marché continued, "They only are together because they have like one or two classes together and she just happens to be his type. It's nothing serious!"

"Complete baloney!"

"Just a rebound!"

"He's going to realize that she isn't the one for him but that it's you! It's always been you, Riley! Deep down he knows it, and he's always known it. As much as it sucks, it'll take time but you just have to be there for him as he's been there for you," Agnus preached.

"Maybe a week."

"Maybe a month."

"Maybe tomorrow. I don't know!"

"But don't lose hope now, Riley. If he doesn't see what's special in you now, he'll know it while having the wrong girl in his arms!" Marché finished it and it was enough for Riley. She groaned
out loudly, quieting down when Nova whined before going back to her slumber a few seconds later.

Riley dropped on her bed and looked up to the glow in the dark stars that were on the ceiling of her room. The light from the window made them defective as they just looked funny and childish above her without the dark.

"I've always been someone to show how I feel. Ever since my youth, I've been that way. To actually feel so much emotion for one person and hold it in for the happiness of others, I've already done it, I've done it twice before. I just wish I didn't feel anything, that I didn't have these raging emotions for him because they only cause trouble...and I hate it. I hate this so much, and I love him... I love him and I'm the one left heartbroken by a guy who had always saved me before. Maybe I ask too much of him to do it again... Just one more time..."

Marché and Agnus frowned at their friend who was grieving over a lost love. They shook their heads, giving up on trying to convince her of seeing the sparking lights in the darkness.

Tears slipped down Riley's cheeks silently, hating how she was crying again over her current situation. She had hoped to run out of tears by now but it only seemed like she still had some left to shed.

\•\•\•/•/•/
•TELEVISION•

EMELIE: "Welcome back to NYSC. It is 12:22 in the afternoon and I am Emelie Keller alongside Jonahen Soto and Darian Wayne doing live coverage on the 26th Annual Wegner Science Convention today and oh my gosh, I am overly excited."

JONAHEN: "Same here, Emelie. I have had jitters over today for the past week, and I'm still feeling it today."

DARIAN: "There has been so much anticipation over today. It's been said by many that if you are attending this annual convention you are in for a treat."

EMELIE: "Yes, and that is being today is the day that Isadora Smackle and Riley and Farkle Minkus will be at the same public function in what is about a decade. That is absolutely crazy to believe!"

DARIAN: "It very much is. Actually this will be the first event participated by both parties since before Farkle Minkus had given 50 perfect of the rights of his company to his wife."

JONAHEN: "Everyone knows that Riley Minkus and Isadora Smackle have never been on the best terms with each other. You would think that two respectable women in the same field would be acquaintances at the least but that isn't the case."

DARIAN: "That's what makes all of this interesting. Every time we see Minkus and Smackle within a five-hundred foot radius of one another, it doesn't lead to good. Examples of course being their physical fights at both the Swendler's Gala and at the Women's Luncheon years back, which by the way Riley Minkus had crashed as she wasn't even invited to that event!"

EMELIE: "On the subject of Mrs. Minkus, although I respect her very much, people had always said that their encounters with her have always been great. No one ever has a bad thing to say about her; she treats everyone she meets as an equal, and she has a sweet, lovable personality that always hooks everyone in. I fortunately got to interview her and her husband when they had won the 2032 Best of award and they were such a remarkable duo who are so stable. They really compliment each other in the best ways and they know it."

JONAHEN: "Obviously, both women do have a lot of pros. Before picking sides, let's see the statistics. The Minkus duo have a net worth of $3.4 million, and contribute to a limitless amount of charities, including having their own generous support, the Minkus Family Foundation which was started up by Stuart Minkus back in the mid-2010s. They are activists, public figures in support of equal pay between the sexes, education for all children and people, clean water in third world countries, global warming, deforestation, and a number of others. Isadora Smackle, even though she hasn't even shown her face in years, she's a giver in the dark. In public and private records, she's known to give support to unknown scientists with big dreams, even funding an armful of projects. Her net worth is placed at $750,000, and her entire company was started on her own so she's always been solo and she has taken care of it greatly."

DARIAN: "Even by comparison, everyone can agree that they both are extraordinary and have contributed greatly to the world of science."

EMELIE: "Best said, Darian. A lot can happen today and a lot will happen today. If we had to choose sides... I've always been with the Minkuses even before I met them. I just think with
everything I've seen from both Riley and Farkle Minkus, I believe they are working hard to give all they have into this world. I was there when Riley gave that extensive speech on why Pluto should become a planet again, which because of that, it is. Of course, I don't have anything against Ms. Smackle, I just—if.”

JONAHEN: "I'm with you, Emelie. I personally love the Minkuses and they honestly are going to be such a joy to see at today's event."

DARIAN: "I respect the Minkuses just as much as the next scientist. I actually like Miss Isadora Smackle. Although she has remained hidden in the last several years, her informative papers in the subjects of Biology and physics always keep the science world by storm. The last time we saw her at a public event was when she received the Nobel Peace Prize four years back."

JONAHEN: "Ms. Smackle also has the main event tonight as the program that was released today stated that her presentation will be tonight at 7:00 p.m. while the Minkuses had been bumped up to the 5:00 p.m. showing."

EMELIE: "I was and wasn't surprised about that news. I mean, yes, this is Isadora's first event in years but the Minkuses have been the main presenters for three consecutive years!"

JONAHEN: "The decision was from the heads of the Convention, but this is definitely a drastic change for the Minkus duo who know how to entertain and give to the crowd. Farkle Minkus is usually presented professionally, constantly having to keep track of his wife's shenanigans on the stage since she is so outgoing. Everyone loves it, definitely the kids that attend these shows. We'll have to see at their performance if this opening act sort of thing really changes things for them."

DARIAN: "If so, enjoy your dinners and come in through the doors at six because Isadora Smackle is the one to truly see tonight."

EMELIE: "Oh, be quiet, you! No matter, we will be covering every aspect of the 26th Annual Wegner Convention so stick with us here at NYSC for your full coverage. We'll be right back after this..."

•COMMERCIAL BREAK•

"I didn't know we were choosing sides! Dang, this is going to be a tough decision," Nova said as she bit down on her green apple, shaking her head at the television screen.

"It's still a hard decision? Your mother or Smackle? Even after just a few days ago with meeting her?" Maya asked confused on the teenager's mindset.

"Listen," Nova said lowly to the blonde who's eyebrow raised at her sudden serious tone. "I had spent my entire lifetime chasing after this woman. I'm not going to think her any different than being one of the greatest scientists of this century just because she doesn't think of me highly...although I deserve to be treated as a queen."

"Let me guess, you've learned that from your mother?" Maya smirked.

"It's also common sense," Nova winked as her head turned as she heard footsteps emerging from the hallway. Mr. Farkle Minkus appeared, fixing his tie and mumbling to himself when he entered the room. His eyes caught of the television just as the commercials passed and the newscasters came back on screen. He immediately recognized what it was.

"Nova, either change the channel or turn it off. You know that your mom doesn't want to see any of that today. God knows for the whole week depending on how today goes," he grumbled as he
checked his suit pockets to check what he was missing.

"But you're all over NYSC! The entire science community is going berserk over today. Tickets for the convention are going on sell for triple the prices right now!" Nova said, looking up at her father from her place on the couch.

"And how do you know that?" The father asked curiously, eyebrow raised.

"I checked!" She said smoothly, not wanting to confess that she and Alaina might have sold a couple tickets and split profits 50/50 between the two. They were rich young women.

"Sure, Nova," he sighed. He put on his cufflinks that was gifted to him by the head of the Wegner Science Convention a few years before. His eyes moved over to watch a little bit of what was on before looking over to the hallway where the bedroom was. "Your mom is already on edge..."

"They're talking about you again," Nova sang as she waved the remote in the air.

Mr. Minkus looked over to the hallway before saying, "Bring up the volume."

Nova giggled a menacing giggle before raising the volume up a little more and they all crowded around.

They barely got to watch about ten minutes of it before Riley Minkus's blabbering was audible, freaking out all the teens and the husband.

"Change it!"

"Turn it off!"

"Nova!"

"I'm tryna!" Nova said as smashed some buttons. A Lifetime movie appeared on the screen, everyone acted normal.

"Please check again, Sussie! Double check, quadruple check! Everything needs to be perfect for today! Call me back when you get it sorted out!" Mrs. Minkus sighed softly before hanging up her call and letting out a loud squeal to release her nerves. She fixed her posture before placing a large overly fake smile on her face and looked at all the others in the room. "What's everyone doing?"

Everyone muttered inaudible responses as they refuse to even look at the female.

"Today's going to be extra spectacular! It's the Wegner Science Convention and I'm spending it with my wonderful family," Riley Minkus grinned as she leaned over the couch and kissed her daughter on the forehead before striding passed her husband to retrieve an apple to satisfy her appetite. "I love this apple; it tastes so good. Love this apple, love my family, lovin' life..."

The older Farkle eyed her suspiciously as she innocently took a bite of her small snack.

"Do you think she forgot?" Nova whispered her father while keeping an eye on her mother.

"No. I think she's purposely pulling an act," he replied. The female Minkus's chewing slowed down as she creepily looked up to her family who stared at her with wide eyes.

"You two are acting weird," Riley giggled.

"I don't think it's us, honey," Farkle stated causing his wife's face to tighten her smile grew wider.
"Don't be silly, Farkley." She took another bite of her apple before walking over and snatching the television remote from Nova. "You know they're streaming live coverage of the convention on NYSC."

"NO!" Nova and Farkle yelled, just as the channel changed to the live coverage.

**TELEVISION**

EMELIE: "Isadora Smackle is truly gracing us with her being as she walks onto the Convention floor. It's truly chaotic right now as everyone is surrounding her to catch the first glimpse of her presence."

JONAHEN: "I've never seen anything like this! I've never seen this even with A-list celebrities who sometimes show up to these events."

DARIAN: "I like the fact that Isadora Smackle was gifted with a custom lab coat with her last name on it. Isadora Smackle is the main presenter for this annual convention and it's not known but the head of the convention only gifts those of custom lab coats to the main guests."

EMELIE: "Security is stepping in to protect Ms. Smackle's personal bodyguards as the sense right now seems to be getting tight. This is crazy!"

JONAHEN: "It's interesting and a bit funny to see she hired her own security... knowing about her debacles with the one and only, Riley Minkus."

EMELIE: "It actually is! Mrs. Minkus hadn't been seen yet but now that Ms. Smackle has arrived, it makes the arrival of the Minkuses more anticipated."

DARIAN: "It's makes everyone more anxious for a possible part three in the Riley vs. Smackle battles?"

EMELIE: "Very mu—"

**TELEVISION SHUTS OFF**

Riley Minkus snapped her head at her husband who had secretly snatched the the television remote and shut it off for the sake of everyone in the room...mostly himself. Riley clenched her jaw before gulping down the build up in the throat. The slight moment of anger washed away and the typical smile of Riley's appeared. The husband had yet to look at his wife.

"We're leaving," Riley Minkus announced as she walked to the door.

"Now?" Nova asked alerted.

"Yes, now! Let's go!" Riley yelled as she left the door open and walked down the hallway, nearly punching the down button for the elevator. The phone was by her ear again to take a phone call, probably Sussie again.

All the kids rushed to get their shoes on, Mr. Minkus sighed audibly. "This is going to be quite something."

~*~*~*~*~*~

**TELEVISION**

EMELIE: "This just in, the Minkuses have arrived to the convention!"
DARIAN: "This is going to be good!"

JONAHEN: "All eyes are on the Minkuses right now, including our cameras. Isadora Smackle isn't visible at the moment but we're sure they'll bump into each other at sometime."

EMELIE: "We are doing live coverage so our cameras will be there when it all goes down."

•TELEVISION SIGNALS OFF•

"You kids go. Farkle and I are going to stay behind. We have a few things to do," Riley Minkus said as she shooed the teenagers away to the convention floor.

The place was crowded with science fanatics and scientists in crisp, white lab coats. Experiments were on display covering all topics of science—physics, biochemistry, biology, mechanics, Electromagnetism, etc. Nova passed by all of the cool displays.

The teenagers were following behind, keeping a distance so they could converse among themselves.

"Remember what the goal is for today, guys. We need to find the Dr. Marbles of this time," Farkle reminded the group.

"It would be much easier if he was here to identify himself. Seriously, there's like a couple thousand people here!" Maya complained as she searched her surroundings.

"Just keep your eyes open. I'm sure someone here has a defining trait that will help us identify them as the Dr. Marbles of this time," Farkle stated.

"Nova!" Alaina squealed as she stood up from where she was seated at a display table. She had on a white lab coat just like all the other scientists in the place.

"My intelligent gal!" Jimmy grinned as he stood up beside his girl's best friend. He was wearing a lab coat just like the rest of them. Alaina and Jimmy stood close with smiles on their faces as Nova approached them with a smirk on her face.

"Alaina, James," she looked at the display and nodded to in acceptance. "I'm absolutely loving our hard work on this."

"You mean mine and Jimmy's?" Alaina corrected her bestie. "It was us who had put it up and organized it after school yesterday."

"I was there!" Nova stated her input.

"You sat back and watched us," Jimmy's eyebrows furrowed.

"I call that teamwork, don't think otherwise," Nova said as she patted Jimmy on the back and went to retrieve her lab coat which was on the third empty seat by the display. She fixed it on herself, buttoned it up and flipped her long, brunette hair over shoulder. Jimmy stumbled back, Alaina catching his weight as he was dazed by his girl's astonishing beauty.

Nova turned to her partners and took a deep breath. "We are now in business." Nova took off the blank board from in front of the actual title display which read in large, loud letters "REAL GIRL OR ROBOTIC CREATION? TEST ME!"

Riley Matthews' eyes widen in disbelief of the display title and watched as her future daughter put up two jars on either side of the table, one being voted for Real Girl and the other being Robot
Creation (in print was also a reading of "cash, checks, and credit cards accepted"). Each already had three dollars in each jar to manipulate that others had already voted.

"Your parents are going to kill you," Maya laughed as her smile was wide from what this kid was actually pulling.

"They'll have to do it after I get my money back. I paid $85 to reserve a display for today, and that was just the down payment," Nova scoffed.

"Jimmy! Snap out of it, man!" Alaina groaned as she clapped and snapped her fingers in front of Jimmy's entranced face that focused solely on the sight of Nova in a science lab coat.

"Pretty..." he sighed softly as he had heart-eyes all over the Minkus child.

Nova turned the her best guy friend, putting her hands on her hips. "Are you sure you want to help me today, James? I'm not sure if you wanted to go over and help with your dad's display."

"And be away from you? Never! I support you through everything, my dear daffodil. Besides, my father has employees of his company taking shifts. I'd much rather be with you," Jimmy grinned. "We're destined. Eight years!"

"Ten!" Nova corrected the boy. "Maybe eleven."

"Our relationship is hurting me." Nova rolled her eyes at his fiancé's exaggeration.

A nice couple strolling by took interest in the display. Nova grinned creepily at the couple.

"Hi. I'm Nova. I am what you believe me to be. Ask me any life or mathematic question and you will receive an honest and correct answer. Test me for a dollar," Nova said in monotone.

"You have a dollar?" The man asked his girlfriend, who nodded."Okay? Um, what is 567 cubed?"

Without losing her smile, Nova answered, "567 cubed could also be alternatively written as 567 times 567 times 567. If so, 567 times 567 times 567 equals 182,284,263."

The couple's grins slipped off their faces as a scoff of disbelief. The wife searched in her purse and pulled up a crumpled dollar and dropped it into the Robot Creation jar.

"Thank you for your cooperation. Continue a great day at the 26th annual Wegner Science Convention."

The couple passed, questioning how the girl knew that so fast, Nova smirked and grinned at Alaina who also gave her a thumbs up. "If it continues like this, 50-40-10 split will be dominating."

"Um, 50-40-10?" Alaina gasped.

"Yes. I had put most of the deposit down."

"How about 50-45-5? The 5 for Jimmy." Nova nodded at the idea.

"How about a three-way split?" Jimmy suggested.

Both girls made faces. "I don't know. It can be debated later on though," Nova said.

"Debated? We all had a fair share in parts for this!" Jimmy's voiced raised slightly.
Nova's eyes widened as her jaw clenched and she placed a hand on her hip. "Are you arguing with me now, James?"

Jimmy gulped as he realized his wrongdoing. "No, ma'am!"

"We'll discuss this later."

"Yes, ma'am."

"They're funny. I like them," Maya laughed to her friends.

Nova turned to the four friends that were by the sidelines. "I'm not sure if you guys would like to check around the place. We're going to be here most of the day so if you want to walk around and check some of the displays."

"We actually might do that... There's a lot of things we'd like to do," Farkle said, the other agreeing with him.

"Yeah, just make sure to have your passes with you. It's the key to all," Nova giggled as she let the groups of four wonder pass to do what they will to do.

The teens from the past walked away and into the crowd of scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers.

"Check every white coated person in this entire place. He has to be one of the guys with a display," Riley Matthews said as she excused herself between people.

"How do you know that?" Maya asked.

"He said he was going to be here—"

"Yes, Riley, he said he'd be here but he didn't say he was one of the presenters," Farkle interrupted. "He could be anyone here..."

"We'll just start with the displays. It'll be easier. We couldn't have passed him; we'll know," Farkle stated as the group split up in pairs.

"Nova," Jimmy called out.

"What?" Nova snapped at him.

"Isadora," was all he said to get her attention.

All eyes went over to see a large crowd following behind Isadora and her security as she inspected the displays two rows over. She was in their line of vision and Nova paled as she watched the woman intensely. She was calm and collected, only offering small smiled and interested questions.

"Nova..." It was Alaina's turn to call out her friend's name.

"What?" Nova said, her breathing becoming ragged.

"Your dad's walking towards Isadora Smackle."

•TELEVISION•
JONAHEN: "It's hard to infuse that much of an energy source into a small compactor like that so it's astonishing to hav—"

EMELIE: "I'm sorry to interrupt, Jonahen. I just got news that there is visual of Mr. Farkle Minkus approaching Isadora Smackle at display D25. We're going to pan over to our cameras right now."

-CAMERA 4 SHOT-

EMELIE: "There is it. It's not the most anticipated meeting but surely with a mister, a missus must follow..."

•TELEVISION CUTS OFF•

"Isadora," Mr. Farkle Minkus softly called out from the crowd as it parted for him to approach the woman he hadn't seen in a handful of years.

Isadora tensed slightly before her black hair wasn't what he was seeing but the light-skinned framed face of his former flame. Her posture corrected itself as she stood up straighter and her hands locked with one another in front of her form. She seemed calm on the outside and that was only because in her mind, she was reminding herself to breathe evenly.

"Farkle..." She mentally congratulated herself for not stuttering over the name she hadn't spoken of in several years. She watched as his facial expression softened and a slight smile took his face. She wouldn't admit that her heart raced faster, but she wouldn't deny it.

"I wanted to congratulate you," Farkle stated. Their surroundings were nearly quiet except for the shuttering of cameras and lights going off behind his back. The lights blinded off of Isadora's glasses. She adjusted them before looking back up to the man in front of her.

"Thank you. What for?"

"Everything," Farkle admitted. "You've accomplished a lot in your life that I hadn't been able to congratulate you in person for. Noble Peace Prize, major figure in the Science community, being able to step out to this function today, even being the main event... I know it took a lot from you, and I'm happy that your life is going just how you wanted it to."

Not exactly, Isadora thought as her right hand involuntarily rubbed against her left. The action wasn't caught luckily.

"Thanks... It means a lot coming from you..." she whispered wishing his ears were the only ones to hear her weak words.

"I'M OUT!" A random person from the audience yelled out as it suddenly got loud again. Isadora looked over Farkle's shoulder as Farkle turned around. His eyes widened as he watched the crowd part like the Red Sea to make way for a fuming Riley Minkus with a small line of others who followed behind.

Riley Minkus marched up to push her husband behind herself and her bothered face turned upside down as a smile reached across her face.

"Isadora Smackle," Riley giggled as she took the same stance as Isadora was.

"Riley Matthews," Smackle said with a slight smirk.

Riley's face faltered slightly for a few seconds before returning to her usual look. "It's Minkus. It
reads it right here." She pointed to her lab coat which read her legal name of Riley Minkus. It matched the one her husband was wearing which read his name.

"Keep telling yourself that," Smackle whispered before taking a breath for those who had followed behind the raving woman. "And look who else is here... Maya, Zay... hey, Lucas."

Lucas nodded slightly as he gave a salute to the woman. "Hey Smackle."

Riley was flabbergasted at how casual the two were with one another. "Wh-what's this?"

"Lucas and I, after all this time, still reach out to one another. Didn't you know?" Smackle informed the bubbly brunette.

"I didn't!" Riley looked at Lucas. He rubbed the back of his neck and refused to make eye contact with anyone who was looking at him (which was everyone).

"Yep! Isn't it so great to have the gang back together?" Isadora said sarcastically.

"Yeah, on live television. Absolutely great," Maya Hunter stated with the same amount of sarcasm. Riley Minkus shifted her eyes at Maya, her hands clenching as she just wanted to scream at that moment but instead let it off with a cringeworthy comment she couldn't bite.

"I know. Riley, Maya, and Isadora. If only we had Natalie here, then this would really be a party..." Riley snarled bitterly.

"Okay! That is my cue to go," Farkle laughed awkwardly as the three exes glared at him as he passed them. He passed by Isadora who watched him go.

As soon as Isadora turned her attention back to the Missus Minkus, Riley plastered a smile again. "I must say Isadora, when I heard you were going to attend, I was surprised."

"I'm sure you screamed your head off when the news broke. I would have paid a lot of money to see that. Also for the moment Eddie had passed me the seven o'clock slot for presenting."

"Eddie?" Riley pronounced shocked. "You're on first name bases with the head of the convention?"

"Of course I am. My time in the shadows allowed me to be acquainted with many important people."

"Wow. First Lucas, now the head of WSC. I'm surprised you don't have a...louder and...bolder name to your reputation," Riley said innocently.

Isadora hummed. "I might have been robbed from an opportunity, but I've made a name for myself. That is something you can't claim, Minkus."

Isadora's eyes widened at her slip up of calling Riley by her marriage name. Pride filled Riley's body and soul at Isadora's frozen statue. Riley stepped closer to her nemesis, wanting her sour words for only Isadora to hear. The older Lucas Friar took a few steps forward as well, to stop anything from getting physical; it was for precaution.

"You'll come around, Smackle. I've been married for about ten years; you'll wrap your head around that sooner or later. I'm his, and he's mine. We're destined..."

"There's a lot you don't know, dear," Isadora whispered back. "About your friends, your family, your husband...even yourself."
"I know more than you give me credit for. I'm just waiting...waiting for the right moment."

"And waiting you will do, right up until you snap."

"I won't snap."

"But I'm hoping for it..."

Riley placed a bitter smile on her face as she took Smackle (and the entire room) by complete surprise by wrapping her arms around the woman's still figure. The embrace was tight and only one-side; Smackle didn't have the time or the heart to return it in any sense. After the hug, Riley took a giant step back and fixed her composure.

"You despise me, don't you?"

It was the last words exchanged between the two women before Riley passed by her arch nemesis in the direction her husband had disappeared to. Isadora's eyes lingered on the passing figure before they made brief contact with her other former friends. Maya Hunter shoved her hands in her pockets before following Riley's trail. Zay and Lucas each gave Smackle smiles as they passed, Lucas even giving her a slight touch to her bicep and squeezing slightly as a form of a hello. Isadora had time to rest her hand on top of his just as it brushed off.

•TELEVISION•

EMELIE: "Did Riley Minkus just hug Isadora Smackle?"

JONAHEN: "Your eyes around deceiving you. I saw it too."

EMELIE: "I wonder, did they call a truth and make up?"

DARIAN: "We don't know. I sort of hope so? This is something between the two ladies of science."

JONAHEN: "Also, let's not forget that Mr. Minkus had left there in a rush. That was a little funny."

EMELIE: "I'm not going to lie, when I saw him leave, I seriously thought a part three was going to unleash."

DARIAN: "Both women know better than to unleash any emotions on this sort of floor. They might have had something happen behind closed doors and they both had smiles on their faces and we even got a hug. They aren't the same women who fought years ago, they had time to recollect thoughts and actions. This could be the start of a new beginning has already been settled we don't even know of."

•TELEVISION SIGNALS OFF•

Isadora sighed and pushed her glasses closer to the bridge of her nose. She turned around and skipped two rows to the first table which just so happened to be the display by Nova and her friends. They all stood up, paying respect to the famous science lady. She recognized them all immediately, no expression being read on her face.

"You kids..." she spoke to them.

"Ms. Isadora Smackle," Jimmy spoke for the group, bowing slightly at the woman's presence.
Smackle read the title and scoffed slightly, the corner of her mouth twitching upward to try and form a smile. "Did you ever find the birth certificate?"

"No, ma'am," Nova answered, standing up straighter.

"Did you try?" Smackle asked, knowing the answer too well.

Nova sighed while she shook her head. "No, ma'am..."

A hum came from the genius. "Any proof that can be provided that you are possibly a robot creation?"

"I scrapped my knee once when I fell rollerblading. I didn't cry," Nova replied.

"Not one tear, nor did she scream," Alaina supported her story with a large smile.

"So you can't feel pain?" The scientist asked.

"Or anything really," Nova said.

"No pain, no happiness, no love..." Alaina exaggerated.

"I'm quite heartless," Nova said in monotone.

"Precisely!" Alaina grinned.

"Can any proof be demonstrated?"

"You with all these questions," Nova shook her head in annoyance. "Just put money in a jar."

"I could punch her in the face, and it'll break my hand!" Alaina said loudly and determined to actually do it, retrieving a bewildered look from Nova whose eyes widened.

"Oh hell no!"

"I could kiss her passionately and she would have zero reaction!" Jimmy made an input.

"That's true since I've never known what lov—"

Nova was cut off with her fiancé with Jimmy grabbing her by the shoulders so she faced it. He gave her a nod as a heads up before passionately pressing his lips against her's.

Alaina gasped in horror as she watched her guy friend's lips attack her best friend's face. Nova had remained still, her only reaction was her bright blue eyes widening in the slow realization of what was happening... she was having her first kiss with Jimmy.

Jimmy finally pulled back with a content smile on his face before turning to Isadora Smackle who looked genuinely surprised herself.

"What's wrong with her?" Jimmy asked as he glanced to his beloved to see her still unable to move. The blue eyes were still focused solely on the boy who had the nerve (and the bravery) to kiss her without much of a warning or consent... Nova, although the majority of her mind was telling her to hit Jimmy for doing a stupid act, a small part of her liked it...

Uh oh, Nova thought as she realized what was going on within herself. There was a warmth growing from the inside and butterflies fluttering around her stomach which was also performing somersaults. A pink tint rushed up her neck and to her cheeks. This can't be what I think this is.
"One of two explanations: either she is completely broken or she’s buffering," Alaina stated as she carefully stepped around her friend.

Smackle smiled slightly as she knew the truth to what was processing within the teenage girl. She reached into her pocket where she had transferred some valuables she wanted to hold on to. She had a couple bills and took out a ten and a one dollar bill.

While Jimmy was confused about Nova's stance and Alaina tried to snap her best friend out of her trance of Jimmy, Isadora placed the ten dollar bill in the jar reading Real Girl.

"I am 99.75 percent certain of my hypothesis that you are a human being," Isadora said. She squeezed the one dollar bill in her hand before taking a breath and putting the dollar in the Robot Creation jar, softly saying to herself, "But a quarter percent of me wishes and hopes you aren't..."

Isadora left the stand with two friends trying to bring a teen girl back to reality. As the large group followed behind the lead scientist, some also chipped into the jar leaving bills of all amounts.

"Nova!" Alaina yelled in frustration. The Minkus spawn finally crashed (literally) as she fell back and fainted, dawning on the final result that she was feeling feelings.

/•/•/•|•

"I'm so glad you could've made it here today. It's not very often I get to see you a glimpse of you exit your office building," Farkle Minkus stated as he closed the office door behind him to give some privacy to him and the woman in the room.

Isadora Smackle looked around the modern office, smiling lightly at all the science-y tech around the room. It faltered slightly as he saw the second desk in the other half of the room but she shook her head slightly and released a breath.

"I'm just surprised Riley really wanted to do a formal meeting. I won't lie, I originally was going to pass on the idea of meeting her but there's still a lot unspoken between us..." Isadora stated.

"Exactly why this was a great idea," Farkle said. "May I take you coat?"

Isadora allowed it. Her coat slipped off of her bare shoulders to reveal the slim, black, off-the-shoulder dress she wore underneath that stopped just above her knees.

Farkle noticed how beautiful she looked, but refrained from saying anything that could be taken the wrong way.

He hung her coat and allowed her to sit in one of the empty chairs in front of his desk. He took a seat behind the desk, Isadora's head hovering over the picture of Riley, himself, and Nova he had on his desk.

The former flames smiled at one another and for a moment it was slightly awkward. There isn't anything that they could say; Farkle couldn't ask how she was because he knew that she hasn't been doing much and Smackle didn't want to ask how he's been doing because she knew the answer would involve the discussion of his family. They resulted with using their circle of friends.

"How have the others been?" Smackle asked.

"They've been quite well. Zay's become an administrator at Abigail Adams. He's sort of like an assistant principal to Mr. Matthews since he's taken the job."
"I will never get over him leading to education for his career goal," Smackle laughed, Farkle chuckling along.

"Same here. Lucas's been keeping track of himself. Luckily, we've been able to arrange his community service to help with the Minkus Family Foundation. He spends his time building houses and giving food at functions. He's collecting himself and he said he likes being able to give to others..."

"That's good to hear," Smackle smiled. "I've only heard what happened to him... He was at the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people."

"Only his friends know that. We couldn't convince the judges otherwise..."

"And Maya? She still doing art?"

"She's...distant," Farkle hesitated on his words.

Smackle looked at him confused.

"Her mother got diagnosed with cancer."

Smackle sucked in a harsh breath. "I'm so sorry."

"She's just done with all the pity parties. It's been hard on her, George, and Shawn. She's just hanging in there for little Georgey. We're trying everything for her..."

"Maya asked you to, did she?"

"She asked me to help with trying to get her better, even find a cure. She doesn't know that Riley and I are funding for Katy's treatment."

"Maya would skin you alive," Smackle snorted.

"Exactly why she doesn't and can't know. Shawn knows thought, he's thankful for it."

"I wish I could help," was all Smackle said.

The only one unsaid was Riley, but she didn't need to be spoken for...

"When will Riley be here?" Smackle asked as she hadn't heard anything about the Missus.

"Hopefully soon. Her schedule is packed tight today so she'll stop by when she's free," Farkle stated. He got up and went towards the drinks to fill himself one. "We'll just wait. Drink?"

"Sure," she answered as she got up took the drink he prepared for her.

They sipped on their bourbons slowly, taking time to relax in each other's presence and talk. They talked about most things science, a few stories about the group from Farkle. They shared a lot of laughs. It was like old times when they were together, alone and wasting the hours away with endless conversations that merged into more. As ninety minutes ticked by, Isadora realized how much she missed having a friend to talk to. Someone to make life interesting and counteract her opinions. She missed having someone, she missed Farkle. She knew it by how fast her heart was beating and the rush of her bloodstream being audible to her ears. It's only been Farkle who's made her feel this way...

It was just Farkle and Isadora for the longest time. Farkle was sharing a story that got Smackle laughing when the office door slammed opened to reveal a hectic Riley Minkus and a shocked
"Riley!" Farkle said standing up erectly, placing his glass down on the desk. Riley didn't say a word as she looked between her husband and his ex-girlfriend who was leaning in too close for her liking.

"What's going on here?" Riley asked calmly, too calmly.

"Catching up...?" Farkle said with uncertainty in his tone.

Riley hummed. "I like how you can't even come up with a believable excuse for arranging this."

"It's because you're going to take this nine-thousand times worse than what it actually is," Farkle huffed.

"I have every right to! You told Sussie to take me out on these useless, irrelevant meetings just for you to talk to your ex?"

Isadora Smackle dawned on realization as she saw Riley's fuming face. "Riley didn't invite me, did she?"

Her voice was timid and knowing. Her dark eyes lifted up to see her ex-boyfriend's face with pity and guilty. "No... I did."

She shook her head as she placed her drink next to other one. She stood up and brushed her dress, feeling horrible and filled with regret and she even came. She should've known better than to believe that Riley would have actually wanted to see her.

Riley crossed her arms over her chest and clenched her jaw. "I'm sorry you had to waste your time, Smackle. But while you're here, maybe we could talk?"

"I didn't waste my time," Smackle boldly stated. Farkle smiled slightly at her words. "And I've talked a bit already. I don't have anything to say to you."

"Smackle," Farkle gently voiced as he gripped her wrist. Her hair flipped as she turned to him, and he got a quick whiff of her perfume which he hadn't noticed until then. It made the man realize it was the one that he had favored on her while they dated; she agreed to meet Riley to see him, he knew it.

Farkle loosened his grip and she slipped away. She walked towards the Mrs. Minkus, wanting to just leave. She was manipulated and wronged by the man she loved, she still loved. She didn't have time to spend embarrassed in front of the wife of who she loved.

"Smackle—"

"I'm sorry, Riley. I was under the impression that I was to be meeting you and not spend my time with a former flame. Hopefully, you can pardon the misinterpretation of the intentions. Please forgive me for being so stupid."

"The forgiveness today is given to you, but what about me?" Riley asked, Smackle knowing what she was talking about. It was something she will never stop going on about.

Dark eyes met with brown, and the contact broke. Smackle took her coat from the hanger before passing by, leaving the assistant and the Minkus couple behind.

Riley gulped down and excused her assistant. She entered the office and closed the door behind
her, leaving it to her husband and herself.

"Riley, you know I had no intentions on doing anything with her," the husband reassured his wife.

"I hope you didn't," Riley snapped at him as she turned to give him the attention he didn't deserve. "For a genius, you're so incredibly stupid. Do you know how bad this looks to me? My husband called his ex-girlfriend over behind my back, and I fell for the distraction plan."

"I know. Don't blame Sussie, she didn't know anything about it, I asked her to just keep you away from the office...but I'm telling you, Riley, Smackle and I just talked."

"You two were alone for hours!" Riley screamed. "I can't believe it!"

"Well, you need to because that all that happened," Farkle said sternly. They were stepping closer and closer as they argued.

"I swear to God, Farkle, if you pull another stunt like this, just talking or not, it will not go well for you, know that. You have it good, Farkle. You have a wife and a daughter, a family that loves you more than anything and if you are by any chance ready to throw that all away for someone else, let me know and I'll arrange it personally," Riley snarled angrily, pointing an accusing finger at him.

"It's a good thing I am overly in love with you, my beautiful and beloved wife," Farkle smiled innocently to the short brunette.

Riley was having it as glared at her husband before exiting the office, leaving the husband to sit back on his desk and sigh heavily. He looked at the glasses of bourbon on the desk and picked up the one with the lipstick stain on the side. He shook his head before turning it to a clean side and downing the rest of the lady's drink, chuckling at something she had said earlier that day.
"I need a drink," Riley Minkus muttered as she rubbed her temple in circular motions trying to soothe the light pounding in her head. She had gladly escaped from the crowd and loud murmurs of the strangers around her and found herself a secluded part of the Convention with no random wandering bodies.

Zay passed her the small water bottle he had purchased earlier on in the day. She took it without a word and gulped a quarter of it down before closing off the lid and passing it back. She leaned back against the wall and sighed heavily. The three pupils that protected her sight line remained quiet as they gave the married woman a minute to prosper in silence.

"Feeling better?" Lucas Friar spoke first to the brunette who scoffed as a respond.

"Just for the minute. God, this is going to be a disaster," Riley groaned as she covered her face to envelope her sight with darkness.

"You don't know that. I thought that went pretty well," Zay assured her. "I mean, no hands were thrown...which upsets me since that is the only reason I came..."

The missus glared at the principal who turned away from the evil eye she was giving him. Lucas luckily stepped in, "You did great, Riley. I know it took a lot from both you and Smackle to maintain even an appropriate conversation."

"Thanks Lucas. Although I appreciate them, I'm just a little hurt and a little lost right now," Riley confessed. "Why have you never told us you're still friends with Smackle?"

"That. That was the question I was waiting for," Maya said as she pointed to Lucas to answer.

Lucas shrugged, "You've never asked, and it's not like we hang out all the time. It always depends on our schedules. Mostly we go out to eat about once every other month. My friendship with Smackle is fair."

"I know," Riley said, "And you have every right to be friends with her as she was a friend to you, to all of us. I just would have liked to know because of this feud we have on. Maybe we could have ended it sooner with a help of a mutual friend...? Or maybe she's using you to get insight on the enemy a.k.a me?" Riley's gears were turning for a minute there.

"We've never discussed about you, Riley. I can tell you that," Lucas smiled slightly.

"What about Farkle?" Zay asked. Lucas shushed at his friend and gestured for him to quit talking. Zay hissed at himself, "oh, never mind."

"I don't know what to do right now," Riley sighed in defeat. "I go out there, cameras are on me watching my every move."
"You can't just disappear now. You can't let this stop you from going out there and doing what you would normally do," Lucas said.

"Yeah, you don't go back out there, it's as if you're letting Smackle take over the place," Zay added.

"Exactly," Maya agreed with the principal.

Zay smiled, prideful that someone agreed with him. "Thank you."

"Yeah, don't let it go to your head," Maya commented without taking her eyes off of her distressed friend.

"Maybe I should just let Smackle have this. I've already taken everything else...the spotlight has every right to be on her today," Riley gave off a somber sigh. Maya rolled her eyes at her brunette friend.

"No, Riley. What you need to do right now is step up your game!" Maya said shocking the guys around her along with the woman she was talking to.

"Step up my game?"

"Hell yeah!"

Riley gasped, "Don't say that, peaches! You say it, you go there."

"Oh for Heaven's sake!" Maya groaned in frustration.

"That's much better!" Riley giggled, wearing her signature Riley Smiley that got the guys cracking smiles themselves.

Maya gripped the married woman's shoulders and started off, "You have done so much, Riley, and it was all for the good of humanity. You've helped with global problems and you help anyone that you can. You brighten people's days and your exciting energy is infectiously contagious. No one dislikes you—"

"Except for Smackle. She hates you," Zay interrupted. Riley pouted, and that look on her face made the blonde angrily glare at the man. Lucas stepped in on shushing him up by placing his hand over his best friend's mouth.

"You're so much better than her, Riles," Maya finished.

"I know I'm better than her, but she's better than me at somethings too. A-And I took Farkle away from her..."

"So what?!" Maya laughed out loudly. "As a former loved one of Farkle Minkus, I want to say congratulations. You won! You won Farkle Minkus against me, Smackle, that nasty Natalie bitch —"

"Don't say her name!"

"—that nasty bitch—"

"I meant that one!"

Zay laughed and nudged Lucas, "that was cold." Lucas laughed and nodded along in agreement.
"You won him over every one of those snooty Princeton girl, and you wear that name with pride because you are Riley Minkus and that name is never going to change!" Maya finished her speech as she jabbed at the woman's chest, receiving an expression of hurt from the brunette.

"I didn't win Farkle. I stole him. I cheated in the game of life and didn't play fairly. I had his kid."

"Even if Nova wasn't conceived, there isn't any alternative universe in any galaxy where Farkle wouldn't have realized his feelings towards you were there," Maya assured Riley.

"That's not true. Farkle and Smackle were very much in love with each other," Riley frowned.

"Yeah, in the tenth grade!"

"Even through college."

"Must I remind you the amount of breaks those two had between when they first got together to the last?" Maya asked. "It was a couple of times!"

"I was there when Farkle told the news to her and broke it off," Riley's voice cracked as as she crossed her arms over her chest. "She was so devastated..." Riley covered her hand over her mouth and took in a deep breath through her nose to not let the tears fall down her face from the memory. "I broke her that day, and it killed me to—"

Maya sighed deeply and pulled in her friend to a hug, rubbing her back in comfort as the Minkus wife released her emotions on her shoulder. The blonde gave a disappointed look over to the guys who bowed their heads in guilt. "There, there... don't cry. You cried fifteen years ago, no need to do it now."

"I'm sorry," Riley hiccuped as she pulled back and wiped her tears away, taking deep breathes to calm herself down. "I just—I know that if things happened the way they were supposed to, Smackle would be a Minkus, not me."

"Don't say that—" Maya rolled her eyes.

"But it's true!" Riley sniffled. "Smackle and Farkle had mutual feelings for one another; they had established that during their relationship. They loved each other for years. You and I both know that love doesn't just dissipate the moment a relationship ends, especially Farkle's love..."

Maya closed her eyes and took heavy breath. "You think Farkle's still in love with Smackle?"

"She's obviously still in love with him!" Riley let out a cry in her laughter. She wiped away more tears that fell free from her eyes. She looked at her wet hands, both shaking slightly. She shook her head, the action also being done by the blonde friend. "She's always been in love with him, and I—I can't hate her for it. She has every reason to love him...love him just as much as I love him."

"Riley," Lucas spoke up, stepping forward with a smile on his face and his arms crossed over his chest. "I remember during the college years when Farkle would call me up at odd hours of the day and you know what he'd talk about?"

Riley shook her head, sniffling lightly.

"He would talk about you. He'd call me up, tell me how you were doing and talk my ear off about days you two went out and went shopping or took a bite to eat. Then when Nova was born, he talk about you and her. He called me whenever Nova even blinked. Man, I hated him so much at first for being one of those annoying dads that let everyone know about anything that happened
with his kid, but I admired him so much because it just showed how much he loved that little girl and how much he loved you.”

Riley smiled gently as she looked at her left hand, smiling lightly at her wedding ring that she wore. She took the ring and twirled it around her finger. "I didn't know that."

"Farkle loves you. Anyone can tell that fact just by how he looks at you or talks about you. I don't want you to worry if Farkle loves anyone else—"

"Because he doesn't..." Maya finished for the Texan while looking into Riley's eyes. Riley bit her lip and nodded slowly. If Maya said it, then it must be true.

"I'll try and make it through the day. I've worn a heart of guilt and regret for fifteen years, I should just live this day lightly..." Riley said mostly to herself.

"Heart of guilt and regret? Riley, you shouldn't feel that way. What would you need to feel regret for?" Maya asked.

Riley bowed her head and her shoulders shrugged. Her feet shuffled under her weight as a sigh released from between her lips. "I don't know."

"If you don't know, then don't say that," Maya sternly ordered to her best friend who nodded once again. "Do you want anything? I can get you something. You want me to get you Farkle? I can get Farkle for you," Maya offered.

Riley nodded timidly, "Yeah, um. I'm just going to clean myself up real quick and then I'm going to go find him."

"Okay. No more crying, okay?" Maya said as she patted her friend on the back.

Riley chuckled, "yeah, okay." Riley sniffs before she smiled up at the blonde and pulled her in for a grateful hug. "Thank you, peaches. I know you have a flight to catch, but I'm so glad you had time to stop by. I really appreciate you."

Maya smiled guiltily as she hugged back after a few seconds of hesitation. "Thanks, Riles. I'm glad to have you..." To still have you, Maya really wanted to say but dismissed it.

"I'll see you?" Riley said with so much hope in her voice that it broke Maya Hunter's heart that this is what their relationship has become; Full of possibilities and uncertainties on when the next time will be.

"I'll be around," Maya said softly. It was almost inaudible but the brunette friend picked it up and took it better than nothing.

Riley smiled before she took the strength to move her feet to try and find the nearest restroom to fix her blotchy face. Maya frowned as she watched her married friend walk away from her, feeling an ache deep in her heart.

"I need some air," Maya announced with a heavy breath as she looked around to try and catch sight of the nearest exit.

"I'll come with," Lucas announced.

She turned to point as Zay, "you coming too?"

"Nah. You two go ahead. I'm gonna try and get a head start to try and find Farkle for Riley," he
The blonde woman and man nodded and they went their separate ways. Maya pushed open the exit door that was at the end of the hall they had wandered down. As soon as she stepped out, she felt several pounds lighter. She was away from the large crowds, away from the drama, from the past, Riley... There was almost nothing at all.

She reached into her jean jacket and pulled out a half empty packet of cigarettes. She placed one between her lips before looking over to the cowboy that followed her out. Her eyebrow raised at him. "Want one?"

He said yes and the next second a cigarette was in his fingers and it was lit by the blonde. They both took a drag of their own cigs, blowing outward from the other’s presences.

"I thought you quit smoking?" Lucas asked.

"I tried for two years. I used one of those water vapor electric ones—it wasn't quite the same," Maya replied. "Besides, I don't do it as often as I did with Tuck. I just do it to blow off some stress."

Lucas accepted that answer. It was another quiet moment between the two before Lucas spoke up again.

"What time's your flight? I can drive you if you need one."

Maya's eyes shifted slightly before taking another drag. She tapped the side of her stick and cleared her throat, "Monday."

Lucas's eyebrows scrunched up in confusion. "Monday? I thought you told Riley it was this afternoon. That's why you didn't know if you were able to come."

"I know what I told Riley," Maya said.

"You lied to her," Lucas stated, it wasn't a question since he knew the truth.

"I really wasn't going to come. I knew something was going to happen."

"Which is exactly why you had to come."

"Listen, I love Riley," Maya started off with pointing her cigarette at him. "You know I do. It just makes me so angry seeing her so weak and pathetic for stupid reasons. I knew that seeing Smackle would bring back emotions that should have died fifteen years ago."

"You know Smackle never did forgive Riley for what happened."

"I know. I was there at the wedding. That's what pisses me off so much. Riley has tried repeatedly to get Smackle to forgive her but her stubbornness is what makes Riley hate herself, and it shouldn't be like that! If Riley can forgive me for what I did, Smackle can forgive her."

Lucas simply shrugged before taking another drag of the cancer stick in his hand. Maya shook her head lightly as she had caught herself revealing a little more than she wanted to the former friend. "I'm just—trying not the get caught up in anything. That's how I got in trouble in the first place."

"I don't think there'd be anything wrong with you being a part in our lives again," Lucas admitted timidly.
"I'm the reason our group disbanded."

"I don't believe that."

"Okay. If you don't think that, what do you think, Mr. Probation?" Maya snapped, passing over a deadly glare to the man.

Lucas didn't fall into the heat of the moment; he remained calm and collected as he just gave another shrug to her. "I have my own ideas and thoughts on all of this. It'll be hard to explain but everyone can be saved...especially broken souls like you."

Maya's face softened slightly and her eyes shifted to look down at her fumbling hand that twitched the cigarette slightly. "Everyone's breaking, Lucas... I may seem weak but there are others that need more help than I do. I know you like helping people out, but I'm not the one that needs it right now."

"I know you're lying to make yourself feel better and that's fine. I don't need to help the weakest link all the time, I just want to be there for someone... and I'm here for you. Please know that," Lucas said in a comforting tone that made the blondie's heart ache in her chest. She slowly nodded before looking up at him.

"Smooth. I'm surprised some girl hadn't fallen for into your trap yet, cowboy," Maya smirked.

Lucas laughed which made the lady's smirk turn into a large smile. "Some girls don't usually fall for the good guys. I'd think you would know that better than anyone."

Maya gaped at him before letting out an expression of impressiveness.

"Besides, I'm still waiting for you to come around, short stack."

"I'll come around when both of our parole officers give the okay."

Lucas laughed aloud, glad the mood had lightened and it was how it should normally be with a somebody like Maya Penelope Hunter.

Time ticked by about 1/100 of a second slower than what Mrs. Riley Minkus originally liked. She was eyeing the digital clock that displayed the time for every staff and worker in the backstage area. Life was a busy body and it travelled around her constantly at the fastening pace. She took simple deep breathes and glanced between the time of her watch to the clock above head. The clock had turned to read 4:47 p.m. but it was one-one hundredth of a second off, meaning her watch had already had the time.

"I don't like that clock. It's too slow," Mrs. Minkus spoke as she shivered from head to toe, making the assistant by her side chuckle.

"You're nervous, Riley," Sussie stated. The co-CEO didn't deny the fact that it was at least one of the many course of emotions running through her veins at that very minute in time.

"Is everything prepped? Nothing can go wrong today."

"Yes. Everything's in its final stage for the presentation. We are just trying to scout out Mr. Minkus," Sussie announced.

The fact that no one had seen Farkle after he had left the confrontation with Smackle didn't set easy inside of the wife. She didn't have the slightest clue where he would have run off to, but he
knew that he wasn't with his ex as cameras had been on her every move and action the entire day. It made her feel a little more easy, but not by much. Her hands ran down her torso, over her abdomen until it settled into each other locked in front of her lap. Her head was raised, chin pointed outward as her eyes looked up to the many sets of televisions that showed visuals of everything going on in the public areas. Her eyes were more focused on the seeking out bodies, a small game of Where's Waldo with selective people who needed an eye kept on them.

"Ah, there he is!" Sussie's exclamation made the brunette turn her head to catch the eyes of her husband who was excusing himself between people to make his way to his assistant and wife. Riley frowned slightly at him, but she felt as if his presence made the air around her less sufferable.

"Sorry, got a bit held up with somethings," he excused. It was half-assed obviously, but Riley wasn't going to start interrogating him. Not when they only had a handful of minutes left until they were to go out there and put on their presentation.

She took a step forward towards him and did the top button of his crisp, white lab coat. Her eyes never lifted past his neck as she pressed her hands to his chest and just laid them there. She knew his eyes were upon her; she could tell by the way his heart was pacing a little more quickly under his lab coat. She wanted to smile over the fact that she could still make him feel certain ways after so long together.

"We'll be fine, right?" It was a loaded question she asks her husband. She took some lint off of his white coat and flicked it to the side.

"Always," he smiled softly taking her hands in his own and kissing the back of them. He ran a thumb over the charred, right one and placed one last kiss on her knuckles before letting their held hands rest by their side.

Time was relative. While it had only felt like a minute or two for the couple, ten had passed by for everyone else. Sussie was calling out for them to get ready to step out from the curtains. Riley took a nervous sigh.

"Always..."

"Where were you?"

The words spoken were not what Farkle had expected when he came back to his family dorm in the middle of the night. He turned to find his best friend, Riley Matthews sitting in her fluffy, pink bathrobe at the breakfast bar with the baby monitor by her side on the counter.

Farkle was a bit shocked by her appearance but didn't ignore the question. "Out."

"With?"

"Natalie. Who else?"

"Again?" Riley's eyebrows furrowed.

"She's having trouble in one of her classes. I had to help her."

Riley nodded slowly, looking away from his with a hum.
"Is that it?" Farkle asked. The keys he had in his hand rattled as he shook them nervously.

"I guess," she hummed again.

Farkle frowned and put the key away on the key holder. "Is there a problem? Did something happen?"

"Nothing happened, but there might be a small problem."

"Oh?" Farkle exclaimed a little concerned.

"What's up?"

"It's just—" Riley shrugged. She messed with the volume nozzle on the baby monitor, still not looking at him. "I understand that Natalie's your girlfriend and all, Farkle, but you haven't been here a lot lately and..."

"And what?" Farkle questioned.

Riley shrugged again.

She wasn't speaking but he knew she wanted to say something with how she was pursuing her lips outward as if she was biting her tongue from saying something hurtful.

"You can talk to me, Riles. I'm always open to listening to you. Do you not like Natalie or something?"

"It's not that I don't like her. I just don't like that you spend a lot of time with her when you have a daughter here who needs you."

"I'm here for Nova. I'm here as much as I can—"

"No you aren't, Farkle," Riley groaned. "You're barely here anymore. I've been having Aggie watch over Nova on overtime just to get some quiet time at the library to study. You're not here. In fact, you're never here!"

"I'm sorry. I'm working really hard here to try and balance everything on my plate. You know Dad's promise; If we want him to continue supporting us financially, I need to continue on with my studies," Farkle explained, "You knew and agreed on that."

"I did, Farkle, because I know the importance of education. School is a necessary priority, yes, but so is your family! You have a daughter now, Farkle! You can't been putting her second, third, or fourth on your list of important things. She needs to come first," Riley's voice raised loudly.

"I'm doing all of this for her! Don't you see how difficult this all is? I need to attend my classes and maintain my high marks, Dad is having me take that part-time job at the company, and I got Natalie who's now struggling in her class. There's a lot going on, Riley. Give me a break!"

"I'm not," Riley said bluntly. "I'm not going to give you a break because you don't deserve it. Where's your daughter on that list of busy-work, huh? You're gone so much that waking up to attend her needs isn't on the list; it's on mine! I wake up every time she cries, I attend her doctor appointments, and I'm the one who has to take her with me to class if I can't get anyone to watch her. Do you know how humiliating it is to bring your nine month old to class and be kicked out because she's whining constantly over the fact she doesn't like sitting in an infant car seat? You wouldn't, Farkle! You'd rather waste time with your girlfriend and that hurts. God Farkle, can't you see! She's taking you from us, because she hates me and she hates the idea of Nova!"
"When did this turn against Natalie? She's been nothing but pleasantly nice to you and Nova. She doesn't hate you or the idea of Nova."

"Farkle, she's playing you like a chess board. She can't have trouble with English 112 when she's in one of the most prestigious Ivy League schools in America!" Riley laughed bitterly.

"I know my relationship with Natalie, Riley and that is none of your business. You're just jealous because I found someone willing to be with me for me, unlike you."

Riley's facial expression turned into one of hurt and shock over Farkle's words. Her jaw clenched and her features hardened as she crossed her arms over her chest. She glared up at him, hating that she had to look up at him to show that she hated him.

"Who are you?" She spat. "This isn't you. This isn't Farkle Minkus. The Farkle Minkus I know would get his life straight and realize that his daughter is much more important than a Valley girl who is only with him for the public status and famous name. Farkle Minkus would care for his best friend's well being and help out as much as he could. He would be a part of his daughter's life and try to make it as great as possible. You aren't who you say you are. You're just a stupid, ignorant cool boy who walks around Princeton with a pretty girl in your arm just like all of your friends. You're forgetting about the people who care and love you. I love you, Farkle. Nova loves you. Your family loves you... and you don't care."

Riley scoffed and blinked back the tears that wanted to desperately fall. She wasn't going to allow it, no goddamn way was she going to cry and let her soft emotions reveal themselves now. She was so grateful that Farkle decided to remain silent at that time because if he had spoken even one word, she knew the waterworks wouldn't hold back to save her life.

Farkle couldn't say anything because he didn't know what to say. He was thinking about the past few months he had been with Natalie and yes, he had changed a little along with his schedule but he didn't think it would have a bad effect on Riley. Riley Matthews, his best friend and mother of his child, was telling him and forewarning him about who he was becoming. He looked at her even though she wasn't looking at him.

Her hair was shiny, either in the lack of time to properly wash it or the collective amount of hair product she needs to maintain it from crazy hair days. There were a slight dark tint underneath her eyes, most likely from lack of sleep. Make-up was still on her face and it looked like it had been there for several days. The fluffy, pink bathrobe hugged her comfortably he knew. It hugged her perfectly he noticed when he first gifted it to her. Her curves were more defined in the pink fabric and he liked it. Back then, he would have let his eyes linger down the form of her body, imagining to go back to a time where he'd gently lay it down on either his or her dorm room bed. That was then; now he noticed that she had a little pudgy stomach left from the baby weight. She was trying to bounce back to her former body, he knew, he noticed. She was working hard to be a mother, and a student, a best friend... he knew that and it just added to her beautiful personality. She was beautiful and gorgeous...but he always knew that. After so much time not noticing, he noticed now that the mother of his beautiful, healthy baby girl was beautiful and fantastic in more ways than before. She was beyond definition and beyond words.

The cry of said daughter played through the baby monitor, the lights turning bright red to visualize the intensity of the baby girl's screams. Farkle's maternal instincts were on autopilot as he stepped forward to go attend her, but he was stopped.

"No, Farkle," Riley blandly stated. Her hand rested against his hard chest, feeling his strong heartbeat which hid underneath. "If you never did it then, don't start now."

Riley moved away, going towards the room the little girl was staying at. She stopped at the
hallway light and turned back to the father of her child. "Remember, Farkle. I'm the one who allowed you to be in her life. I saw the potential of you being a great father for her. I decided that, I allowed that."

She turned back. The door opened and there stood the ten-month-old Nova Minkus, red face blotched from crying as she stood up in her crib waiting for her mother to attend her.

Farkle frowned as he could hear Riley's hushing from the baby monitor. Nova was picked out of her crib and the sound of hiccups came from the girl. He stood there in his place, hearing as Riley muttered what were comforting words to Nova. He couldn't help but be bothered by her choice of words to soothe the girl.

"Mommy's here, baby girl. Mommy's here."

"Riley!"

Fourteen-year-old Riley Matthews jerked awake to her friends surrounding her, giving her concerned expressions on their faces.

"Riley, are you okay?" Farkle said as he was on his knees by her side. She looked at him intensely before releasing a shaky "yeah".

"Girl, you don't look so good," Maya said truthfully as she saw how pale her best friend was.

"Sorry, I'm just—really tired for some reason." Riley yawned. It was very much true that she was tired. As much as she wanted to close her eyes and slip into the land of Nods every time she even as much blinks, clips of dreams come to her in a flash. They were sweet at first but they had recently been harsh, ones that make her wake up with a jerk.

"Do you think you can stand without falling into an intense coma?" Maya commented jokingly, making Riley smile lightly.

"I really don't want to pressure her into moving too much," Lucas stated with discomfort in his tone.

"No, no, I-I'm fine. Standing up will perk me up than just sitting here," the brunette female said before standing up and giving a yawn so grand it made her close her eyes tightly.

Riley Matthews sobbed aloud. The back of her hand came up to try and smother the sound but she couldn't hold her emotions in. She was still in her dress that she wore out on her date that she had just ran back from. The date ended quicker than anticipated.

Farkle knocked timidly on her bedroom door that was wide open, the light from the hallway, shining perfectly on top of Riley's form. She turned her head to reveal her face which wore bloodshot eyes, tear tracks, and smothered lipstick.

"Riley..." His tone was so gentle Riley couldn't help but release another cry. He was by her side in an instant, wrapping an arm around her shoulders.

"W-Why are guys so freaking stupid?" Riley cried out and she sniffled loudly. The question nearly made Farkle chuckle and give off the sarcastic "woah thanks" but he knew with the crying lady in his arms, it wouldn't be a smart move to do so.
"Do you want to talk about what happened or do you just want to cry? I'm here for whatever choice you decide." Riley's heart ached so much. He was so nice. She loved Farkle so much, but not in the way he loved her. He loved her as the mother of his child and as a best friend who's always been there. She loved him with a passion so strong that having him in his arms but not being able to do anything made the pain in her heart worse than the initial cause.

"The-The-The-The d-date didn't go so good..." Riley shut her eyes tightly to let more tears fall down her face. Farkle didn't say anything. He rubbed his back just like how Riley rubbed Nova's back whenever the little girl cried over anything that wasn't about hunger or a changing. "W-w-w didn't ev-even m-a-ke it to the movie—when he tried—to get b-between my—legs."

Farkle felt hatred and a small pang of jealousy run through him. The hatred was to the guy that dare try something with someone as wonderful as Riley Matthews and not take it seriously and push for something. The jealousy was split between the reasons that he actually got to go on a date with the great Riley Matthews and also getting a chance to try something intimate with her. He knew better than to say or do anything that wasn't going to help the situation. "What'd you do?"

Riley hiccuped, "I left! Screw him."

Farkle smiled and hid it in her hair. "Good. You're so much better, Riles. You got a whole line of guys waiting to be with you."

Riley cried again. She wiped her face with her hands and pulled from his warm embrace. "No, I don't. That guy didn't like me. None of those guys liked me! He even said it. They all just tried to be with me because they thought I'd be an easy lay since—I have a kid!" She expressed her rage before covering her face and letting her hands fall to her bare thighs. "I'm so freaking stupid."

"No, Riley. You aren't stupid," Farkle said sternly. "They're the stupid ones for not trying to get to know you more. You're so much more than people see, and I hate that guy for not seeing it. I hate all of them. Don't cry over them please. They're not worth it, Riles. You're going to find the right guy and he's going to love you for all the right reasons and for more reasons than you will believe..."

Farkle's words were too sweet for Riley's ears to hear. She had found the right guy; she had him but he slipped through her fingers. He loved her for reasons unknown and she reciprocated those feelings. She cried a little harder having to tell only her mind that 'It's you dammit! You're the right guy but I'm not your right girl.'

"Farkle..." she sniffled, refusing to move from his grip.

"Riley..."

"Stay with me... just for tonight."

"Of course," Farkle spoke without any hesitation. His girl needed him. If he was to play the shoulder to cry on or as the knight in shining armor, he wasn't going to back down from his role.

They switched positions so they were holding each other comfortably in each other's arms. Spooning would only bring back memories of the lovely times that had spent nights together, so they had changed it so that Farkle was on his back and Riley was by his side, legs tangled with Farkle's. Farkle looked up to the ceiling, while Riley's eyes closed, wanting only to focus on the heartbeat of the man who truly had her heart.

"I love you, Farkle..."
"...and I love you."

Riley opened her eyes wide, a harsh breath releasing from her lips as she felt her lungs compress in their chamber beneath her ribs. The sound of cheering and clapping filled her ears as her eyes snapped over to what had caught the people's attention. It was 5:02 and Riley had missed the introduction for the Minkus couple to come on stage. There was her older self alongside her husband.

Riley and Farkle Minkus walked out, receiving a grand welcome from the crowd around them. Mr. Minkus was all smirks while his companion was wide grins that made her eyes squint. They were displayed on every television screen above and around. After about a minute or so, they spoke up into their headpieces, their voices loudly filling the air of the auditorium the couple was in.

Riley Minkus spoke first. "Isn't it so good to be back?" She laughed. The crowd cheered and clapped again for the missus who couldn't get the overly excited grin off of her face.

"How has everyone been? Good? Enjoying the ton amount of Science around us?" Riley continued. The audience reacted. "I'm loving this. My sweet?"

The attention was passed over the gentleman on stage, who smirked across the way to his stunning wife. "Now, you know I always have the best time here at WSC. Thank you all for coming and showing support by the way. For those who don't know, I am Farkle Minkus, co-CEO of Minkus International, and this is my beautiful and amazing wife and partner, Mrs. Riley Minkus."

Riley blushed and shook her head at her husband. "Boosting your ego, Minkus? You may have married me, but everyone knows I'm great!" She posed dramatically, getting some whistles and laughter from the crowd. Farkle rolled his eyes as she had totally gone off script to take that bite.

"Possibly, but not as great as me, of course."

"Ohhhh" came from the crowd, Riley scoffing lightly as she glared at her man. "Have you lost your marbles? That's it! Farkle Minkus has finally gone crazy!"

"Aren't all mad scientists?"

"Yes, but especially you!" Riley Minkus laughed harmonically.

Riley Matthews's trance was broken from the sound of the younger voice of her destined husband. "What are some things that could help us out on finding this guy? We're searched all over with no clear notion on anything."

"Well, we know he's a scientist," Lucas stated first.

"Not a good one if he needs his wife to get us back home," Maya snarled bitterly.

"That's another thing."

The younger Riley leaned back as she witnessed her best friend's posture correct itself, seeming as if her attention was more alert than before.

"Maya, what's wrong?" The Matthews child had asked.
Maya Hart said, "And I know where he is."

"Who is?" Lucas asked.

"Batman," Maya stated sarcastically with an eye roll. "Dr. Marbles! Who else? If I was coming to the future or the past, The first and basically only thing I'd do is seek out myself. Heck, I'm doing it right now. He needs to keep his distance away from himself, but not be too far away. He knows us; he'd keep close to the people he knows."

"So, if we know he knows us then—"

"Then he's closer than he wants us to lead us on."

Three of the four kids looked around themselves to try and spot the man they've been seeking, except for Maya. "I don't see him anywhere, Maya," Lucas said.

"Not us..." Her eyes were glued back onto the television monitor that displayed the Minkus couple who were continuing on with their acts. The cameras sometimes panned to the audience and her smile grew when the camera did panorama to the people in the first few rows and spotted the man she needed to get a hold of shining in white.

"They're such losers. I can't believe they're my parents," Nova Minkus groaned in embarrassment to her best friend Alaina who was in the seat beside her. Jimmy was beside Alaina; Nova needed a barrier to separate herself from the boy who loved her in case his weird boy hormones were going to lose control, which she believed were bound to happen. His actions of his first act of physical intimacy with his one true love had no certain explanation, and with no explanation, Nova needed to keep distance to observe the teen boy. He was currently sitting quietly in his seat, eyes looking down at his twiddling thumbs that lay above the button of his pants. His eyes only shifted in three directions; upwards toward the couple presenting on the stage ahead, below to his thumbs, and sideways to glance at his best friends—mostly Nova who was giving him a look that seemed as if she was solving a mathematical equation.

"Remember when we were little and they'd always try and do something to make us laugh," Alaina giggled into her palm.

Nova have her friend a look of disgust, "When we were little? Lainey, that's their goal every year. They make the kids laugh and try to have them pick up an interest in the STEM subjects. My mother's the goofball while my father is the teacher, and it's not funny anymore."

"I think it's funny."

"You haven't grown up, and I hope you never do."

Jimmy smiled gently at his friends and shook his head. Nova glared at him from her seat, causing him to shift and bow his head, eyes paying attention back up to Mr. Minkus addressing the audience about the project presented on the screen. "You're not allowed to look at me," Nova directed to the boy.

"I'm not." The smile on his lips said otherwise but the hotheaded teen didn't want to give him too much attention. She knew it was attention he craved.

Nova looked around to try and spot her other friends who he hadn't seen in the last hour or few. She didn't get them but she did the attention of a man in white, salt and pepper hair and all. He was eyeing her a little too intensely for her liking and the smile that was playing on his lips was too sweet.
"May I help you?" She asked the man.

He shook his head, smiling growing wider. "No."

"You're lookin' at me a little too much for my comfort," Nova bluntly said.

The man chuckled, "I'm very sorry. It's just—you just remind me of someone I knew."

"Knew?" The girl's eyebrow raised.

The man cleared his throat and gulped slightly, "Know. Someone I know."

A figure passed by Nova and she looked away to see it was her new blonde friend. "May, you made the show! What are you doing?" Nova asked as she excused herself to fit between the seats and make her way towards them.

The man in white had wide eyes at the girl who took his hand and started to pull him up from his seat. "I need to borrow you."

The man sighed heavily. "Even in this time I'm used."

"May, you know this man?" Nova asked as her eyes followed them to the exit.

The question was ignored as the two made it outside the presentation room. The teenager faced the older man, a grin growing on her face. "I know who you are."

Dr. Marbles looked shocked at her words. "Really? I must say, I'm surprised. I was expecting one of the smarter ones to get it first—Ow!"

Maya twisted a grip of his coat before laughing out. He gave her a bewildered look. "You're laughing at my pain? What in the world?.. You get off on this?"

"I don't. But you are just extremely goofy!"

"That's partly true, but I'll have you know my wife finds me to be quite extraordinary."

"I bet so, but to an extent. Your wife is just the same. I would know."

"You would know. Of course, you would know—" He cursed his words before narrowing his eyes at her. "That was a set up, wasn't it?"

"Of course. Don't you know me, Dr. Marbles? What kind of stupid name?"

The man laughed, "I didn't pick the name. As said, the wife picked it and it stuck."

"She's something else," Maya smirked.

"She is," the man grinned. "But everyone loves her."

"True," Maya didn't disagree. "I hope you know what happens now."

The man's features softened as he nodded. "I do."

"Good, because I have a friend who would really like to go back home soon."

"I'm sorry I haven't put my soul effort into getting you guys home sooner. I'm trying to find an
alternative way to get us back to your time period but I won't lie to you, I like this time period. It was a little nice to everyone; a nice long moment of contentment before the storm happened,” Dr. Marbles confessed.

Maya didn't like hearing those words come out of the man's mouth. "Does something happen?"

"A lot happens. Life happens, and... I don't know. It's hard to talk about it when you're the only one that knows what's to come."

"You can tell me."

He shook his head. "I'm not putting you through that. Definitely when I know you well enough not to trust you with too much information."

"What are you talking about? I'm trustworthy!" Maya whined.

The surprising sound of deep laughter came out of the man's mouth. "That's gold coming from you."

"Whatever. Since you know where you are and I know who you are, we're confronting you after this ordeal is over."

The man nodded in agreement. "I understand. I had my fun, now it's time to get to the serious stuff. It was my intentions from the start and my promise to keep... Just give me a little more time."

The man walked back over to the door and looked through the glass window of the door they had exited from to watch the show which belonged to Farkle and Riley Minkus. His eyes then averted over to a teenage girl shifting her eyes to catch the attention of her best guy friend and the corner of both of their lips twitched upward at one another.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!