

3.The Bullies

Five Years Ago

Mia

I was bored. I hated chemistry class the most and was happy when it finally ended though I couldn't say that this was what I learnt from the class.

I had only heard non-metals and asides that, I didn't think that I had understood any of Miss Brenda's explanation. It was lunch break and I walked to the cafeteria, already thinking of what to eat.

I needed a hefty dose of lunch after enduring chemistry. It always felt like the metals or non-metals dug through my intestines in class and made me hungry than I was meant to be.

I scanned the cafeteria for Rose but I couldn't see her. I frowned as I patiently searched through the faces at the tables, eating and laughing and yet Anna was nowhere to be found. This was unusual. She was always there, waiting for me after securing the best spot.

I walked out of the cafeteria and went outside, searching for her.

"Have you seen Anna?" I asked around as I passed students going on their way to the cafeteria.

Some of them shook their heads while the others ignored me. Finally, a girl told me that she saw Anna moving towards the fields. I sighed, thanked my informant and rushed to the fields.

Anna would never listen. I had told her not to wander off alone but she insisted that that was the only place she could get her muse.

Anna was an artist and needed to be alone when she wanted to draw. I understood that but as her best friend, I didn't like it.

I got to the garden and sighed when I didn't find her. I turned back, wondering where she could be. I was about to leave when I heard a shriek. The voice sounded a lot like Anna's and I wondered what she was doing there.

The voice sounded from a corner far beyond the garden and I was already terrified before I got there. It was too risky there and I knew Anna wouldn't have gone there on her own, no matter her quest for privacy and chase for her muse.

"Leave me alone." I heard Anna shriek.

She seemed to go silent all of a sudden and I picked up the pace, my heart slamming in my chest in fear as my mouth went dry. Her silence didn't sound like good news to me.

I got to the corner and couldn't believe what I saw. Anna was there with three males and it didn't seem like she was enjoying herself. One of them had his hand clamped on her mouth and the other two were teasing her, trailing their hands all over her body.

I felt pity for my best friend and was filled with anger at the same time. Who were these unmannered boys who derived delight in taking a girl who didn't want them?

I brought out my phone, took a video recording for some minutes and then put the phone back in the pocket of my trousers.

I hissed and charged at them, flying at the two who were toying with Anna. Seeing me, she kicked back at the one who was holding her and he groaned in pain. He moved towards the other two and they all glared at us, heated anger on their faces.

"Let's go, girl." I said and held Anna by the hand, glaring at the boys.

I knew them. Everyone knew them. It was hard for someone not to know them with the way they were heavily built as compared with the other boys in school.

Quinn, Jack and John. The triplets who commanded authority in school among the students. Everyone wanted to be close to them - boys wanted to for their strength and girls wanted to for their looks - but not me. I didn't know how Anna had walked into them.

They could have been fooled into thinking that they could have everything they wanted because of the attention people gave them but that didn't extend to me. They thought wrong if they thought that they could taunt my best friend and I would let it go.

"And where do you think you are going?" John asked, moving forward to block our path.

"We are leaving."

"Who told you to leave?"

I scoffed, bringing out my phone. "Don't come closer or you will force me to show this to the police." I was glad that I had evidence of their assault.

They sneered. John growled at us, baring his teeth and we fell back, gasping in horror. I could have sworn that I saw fangs in his mouth and his eyes turned yellow. I looked at Anna and knew that I hadn't imagined that with the terror on her face.

They laughed when they saw our reactions and realized that we were too terrified to move.

"Didn't you say you were going to the police?" Quinn said as he bent low and picked my phone.

I watched in horror as he smashed it on the ground and stepped on it, crushing it to pieces. I winced as I saw my damaged phone, knowing I was going to have to work my fingers off to get a replacement.

"Let's see what you are going to report us with." Quinn laughed as he stepped back. "Go." He growled.

I jumped in fright, pulled Anna up and we both ran out.

"It's not over, hero." I heard their laughter as we ran out.

It was truly not over. I groaned the next day as I saw the three of them moving towards me, realizing that I was doomed. I was bullied till I hated myself and everyone else in my life.

They followed me everywhere, enjoying how the other students looked at me with disdain. They seemed to love my helplessness and the way I cringed the most.

I had had enough. "Can you stop following me?" I said to them, a month after they turned myself into the bodyguards that I didn't ask for.

"No. You wanted our attention, don't complain after getting it."

I couldn't believe them. They were too arrogant and I couldn't understand what others liked in them.

"I don't remember asking for it."

"You interfered in our affairs. If that is not asking for our attention, I don't know what else it is."

I snorted. Who were these people? I stopped at that thought, remembering how John had changed looking like a wolf. I didn't think they were people. I had a wild guess that they were animals which could explain why they behaved as such.

"I helped my friend."

"Did you think we were going to hurt her? We were only playing with her?"

"She didn't seem to like it."

"We weren't done with her yet. You made us lose our toy and so, you became ours."

"I'm not your toy."

They laughed as they walked away from me. "It seemed like we have to make you believe that you are."

I was bullied by them till I was done with high school. I couldn't bear the judgmental gazes of my classmates and wanted to hide out somewhere. They seemed to think I had done something to make them focus on me instead of the others.

If only they knew I was being bullied. When we had audience, the boys acted all sweet to me and made it seem like I was their friend, making the other girls hate me more.

I didn't want to come to school anymore but I knew mum would ask me for the reason. I couldn't tell her that. I was only going to cause her heartache.

I was forced to do a lot of unpleasant tasks, like dealing with the teachers they didn't like. They would send me to submit their assignments, reports or whatever the teacher wanted to give them and they didn't want to show up for it. I got into trouble more times than ever with the teachers but I didn't dare tell them that I was being bullied.

The boys reminded me cruelly of how John's face had changed and threatened to tear me to pieces like they had done to my phone if I speak a word about them to another soul.

I hopped with exams and homework, cracking my little skull on how not to get caught. The most annoying part of their bullying was buying condoms for them to use at chaotic parties.

I suffered through high school because of them and my nightmare started that day I rescued Anna and John bared his fangs at me. It wasn't easy suffering and smiling but I did it because they gave me no choice.

It was either I moved along with their bullying or I dared them and find out if they would tear me to pieces. I didn't think I wanted to make a bet with my life, knowing how unruly the boys were.

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