

In Mt. Aries

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Iona April Lovely and her small family are new residents of Mt. Aries, the biggest city known to man. Things are tough for Iona, considering she has a horribly sick mother. She's gotten all the colds, malarias, and viruses alive, and more are coming.



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## Unknown

"Iona, Giona!" Mom's voice was loud and thick. I looked at Giona. She had a tired look on her face, disguising her martyrdom.

We ran up the stairs, three at a time each, and found mom in the bathroom over the toilet. I could tell, she'd been drinking non-stop.

"Go get the landlord," Giona instructed. I ran out of the bathroom and down the fire escape. Suddenly, a force knocked me back down to the last step.

"Oh, my Zachada! Iona are you alright!?" The voice shook in unneeded worry. I shook my head.

"Ms. Raavi, it's ok!" I hoisted myself onto my feet and shook her hand.

"I'm so sorry!"

"It's alright, Ms. Raavi. Um... my mom..." I didn't need to explain. Ms. Raavi rolled her eyes instantly. She started toward the foyer and I followed.

"You know that at this rate, Bostila can land you two in the hands of the government." Ms. Raavi picked the phone from the receiver. I contemplated me and Giona in that place. She wouldn't take it, so neither would I.

I leaned on the reception desk while Ms. Raavi argued with a maid. I heard the phone drop back to the receiver.

"A maid is going up to help Bostila," she assured. "But why is Ms. Lovely never in control?" I hung my head.

"She's depressed. Margarita, and Whisky are her way of... allaying it."

"Well, that's too bad, Iona. You could lose Bostila soon." I'd heard. Giona said it, my best friend, Willa Sihafe said it, before she got carried to juvie... actually, those were the last words I heard her say. But, she said it more harsh. 'Your mom is gonna die, Iona. You better do what she says, and what Giona says.' But I didn't want to listen. Mom was wasting parts of my life as hers flew away, because of herself. It really wasn't fair. And I supposed that the government already knew.

"Iona! Get up here!" My head snapped up toward the staircase.

"Bye, Ms. Raavi!" I called.

"See you, Iona." The maid was behind Giona on the stairs, supporting mom's weight. She was cursing heavily in a whisper that was strained.

"Help mom. I'm going to get Dr. Lanius." I reached for mom as she almost fell.

"Why can't I go?"

"Because, I had to watch mom puke her guts out... literally." My knees fell weak.

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"Come on, Lovely," the maid said and we struggled to get mom down the stairs.

The maid had dark, ominous eyes, a Lolita look to her hair, and an inappropriate maiden's dress. It was cut to her high-thigh and purple exotic shoes came up to her mid-thigh. I had never seen her before, roving around the building *maybe* as a resident, but never as the maid. She looked to be twenty-seven; her make-up was that of. I wondered. . . .

We hit the bottom step - finally! - and Ms. Raavi ran to us. Her hands hesitated, trying to find a spot to hold mom up in.

"Aubrey, don't hold her like that!" Ms. Raavi screamed. "Go catch up with Giona, Iona. I'll help Aubrey." I nodded and carefully slipped from mom's arm. As I ran through the lobby, I felt many eyes on me. I heard magazines stop flipping, I heard conversations stop. Maybe I was the problem here, for mom. It was possible. I had been sick a thousand times and I know it wore her out at some point. No one could be supermom. Especially, not my mother.

I thrust the door ajar and ran into the crowded street. Looking through the crowd, I saw Giona's brown hair.

"Giona!" She didn't stop. I reached my hand out in the air. "Giona!" My voice only got quiet, more quiet, miniscule quiet, then impossible to hear over the severe roar of people.

I was being dragged into a dream... where I was.... unknown.

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