Breathing Heavily

By : sweet agony xo

im writing a novel, so bear with me cause i dont have much time to write, but i'll post a new chapter when i have a chance. its about a young girl, who is kidnapped, and sold on the black market to a filthy rich muslim prince. now she must live with him, make him happy, until or if she can escape. life isnt easy, and most of the time, you breathe heavily...

Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/sweet agony xo

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Breathing Heavily : Chapter 1

Breathing heavily.

Dedicated to Madeline McCann- I hope they find you one day.

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Breathing heavily, my eyes open with a flash, looking up at the ceiling that is a yucky yellowish colour, like it was painted before the ice age. Slowly turning my head I look over at my friend Chelsea, she is snoring quite peacefully, her dyed light red hair is draping around her big, blue, innocent eyes. I watch her for a moment as she pulls her sleeping bag, up higher around her pale neck.ï¿½ I don't want to wake her but the boredom and excitement is getting the better of me. I slowly rise up and start to un-zip my sleeping bag quietly. Looking around I look out the small narrow window above my bed, it's snowing outside, fairly heavily, and it's clogged upon the thin window sill.

Bored of waiting for Chelsea to wake up, plus it's almost 8am i awkwardly try to fake a rather loud yawn. She wakes and stares at me as if to say 'really? That was so fake' but Chelsea just says contently, "good morning"

ï¿½I reply, "Yeah we got back here pretty late from the 4wd bus journey last night."

Happily she adds, "yeah but it was so worth it. I mean, hello! We made it, after all the hiccups and parents saying no to almost everything in our life's, me, Chelsea cooper, and you, Tamzin young, from little old Tasmania, got to mount Hotham!!! Six days at a remote snow resort with some of our classmates from school, it's going to be so damn awesome." Chelsea adds with enthusiasm and excitement.

"Yeah it's going to be pretty cool. Do you want to go and get some breakfast?" I say expectantly, hoping she will accept the offer of warm porridge.

"Okay dokey" she replies.

We both slide out of our sleeping bags pushing our feet into our cosy, warm ugg boots, and head for the door, hastily, but, oh so quiet. We walk down the long corridor, which for a while looks never ending. ï¿½All the same room doors, same credit-card shaped keys for every door, the same long, bright lights along the antique white ceiling. We get to almost the kitchen and one of the lights is blinking uncontrollably. Like its refusing to be conformed to looking the same as all the others.

Chelsea and I make it to the guest kitchen; grab two small bowls that have little orange flowers pacing around the top edge of the bowls gracefully.ï¿½ We start looking around all the cupboards in the wide, second hand kitchen until I reach up and find the one with the cereals, coco pops, nutri-grain, just right, weet-bix, cornflakes, fruit loops, special k, and even my favourite, milo cereal. I stretch on my toes to grab the rather large box of milo cereal and ask Chelsea what she would like, Chelsea calmly says, "just some cornflakes please bub" "okay" I add. Pouring carefully listening to that soft twinkling sound as the cereal hits the bottom of the small bowls, tip some milk and in silence, walk back to our room, Chelsea is in front of me by a couple of metres, hungry to hog into her cornflakes in the privacy of our bedroom . I go to shut our doorï¿½ when I notice a fairly weird looking man, leaning against a piece of wall between two other hotel room doors, he has pitch black shortish hair that curls at the very rims of his ears, burnt olive skin and eyes as green as forest moss. Although im lured by his over whelming eyes, something about his stare and how he is looking at me gives me the creeps, I try to lighten the mood by giving him a vague smile and loudly close Chelsea and I's bedroom door.

ï¿½

Chapter 2

Hopping out of the warm shower quickly, I race towards where my towel is hanging, I hate that feeling when you are so warm in the shower and as soon as you turn the water of its like your standing in an esky. I've always resented that about showering. I snatch my undies and slide them up my legs, followed by my thermal leggings, thick socks and electric blue waterproof track pants. Followed by my rainbow coloured bra, thermal tank top, t-shirt, and pitch black doona jacket. I lean towards the mirror and start to apply my black eyeliner, ivory foundation and a touch of red lipstick. Grabbing an orange hair band, I gently pull my long blue-black, waist length hair up into a high pony tail, then brush my side fringe and im ready to go.

Chelsea greets me outside the bathroom door, and is dressed in fluoro green trackies, and a pink hoodie. It is now, 10:30 am and we meet our teacher and the rest of our class outside the lodge, as Chelsea and I are walking back past our room door, that same guy from earlier is still standing their watching me, and its more than an hour later! Acting calm I keep walking like nothings up, but the curiosity of why he is still there is getting the better of me.

Opening the front doors of the resort, we walk out and meet our sport teacher, Mr Pridgeon, he is an almost bald man in his early 50's with, and would you believe it? Khaki grey knee length shorts, in the snow!! A navy blue, polar fleece jumper and runners that look like he dug them up from ancient Rome. He looks at me sternly while im looking at him up and down, evaluating his choice of clothing in freezing cold snow.

Chelsea, me and the rest of the group from my high school, trudge out into the windy, blithering snow, our feet sinking abit deeper in the ground with every step we take. we all walk for roughly ten or so minutes, which feels like an eternity in this snowy weather, before stopping in front of a long, wondrous chairlift. Mr Pridgeon turns and looks at the group before starting to talk. He tells us to stand in front of the seats, two at a time, until they come around and sweep us of our feet. The whole idea of a machine sweeping me of my feet brings a sense of nervousness to me and I get fluttering butterflies in my stomach. Chelsea and I line up, and stand in this area of worn snow, I could vaguely see mud under it.

Before it's too late, Chelsea squeals to me "it's coming!!!"

I reply "what?" but before I can turn to see what she is excited about, I feel a sharp pain, like a hammer against cloth, as the chairlift punches me in the back of the knee and urges me to sit down on the hard, cold, metal seat. We slowly rise up in the air, high and higher until we reach a chosen height. The view was amazing, it's like we were almost about to touch the clouds. Although it was freezing and breath was coming out our mouths, it was worth it, to see all the little fluoro dots skiing around on the ground, it was perfect for a few moments. Until the chair lift started to lower again, Chelsea and I quickly jump of and run to the side so we don't get hit again while it keeps moving.

Chelsea, me and the rest of the group stand on a clear patch of snow where Mr Pridgeon gives us a basic guide on how to ski, and what not to do if you don't want to get maimed. I give him a dumb look but what he remains to talk about is fascist in its own right.

Chapter 3

Gliding unhealthily down the big white slopes, sharply cutting through the cold air while leaving soon to be, untraceable marks in the snow. Chelsea on the left of me speeding down the hill with a worried terrified look on her face as if to say, 'Omg this is fun, but when will it be over? I'm going to wet myself!' Not paying attention I realise I have started to slow before abruptly coming to a halt in a vast galley on nothing but white. In the distance over another small hill I can see that same chairlift, Chelsea and I once rode on. She slows down and stops pretty close to me a sharp useless look on her face, she says nothing but just looks around, absorbing every camera angle like she is taking pictures in her head so she will never forget.

Walking back towards the hotel after a day of learning to ski, more like a day of moving and falling, moving and falling, over and over again, countless times the group walked back through the dark polished doors of the resort. We all wearily walked back to our rooms dragging our feet. Anxious I look over to where that strange man was standing, he was gone. Feeling relieved because he was not there but scared because I didn't know where he was, I had a fear in me I had never felt before. I don't know why exactly but it eat away at the back of my spine all afternoon, especially when I promised Chelsea I would makes us dinner by myself. It's not that I didn't want to make dinner for Chelsea; it's just that I didn't want to be alone doing it. Still I put my fear behind and walk down the long narrow corridor, where that light is still hopelessly flickering. I walk into the kitchen, grab the same to round bowls we used for breakfast, did a quick round of washing up and poured a large can of baked beans evenly between the two bowls, put them in the microwave and got started with the toast. I just casually start humming and then can't help myself but dance. It all stops though when I hear a sharp noise, enough to make me drop the butter knife I'm holding. I turn around and see the guy staring at me. I can't move, I can't scream. I don't know what to do. The toast pops with a ping sound and I slide my hand behind my back to get it out of the old grey toaster. I can't find where the toast is so I turn around quickly to grab it, turn back around to check the man is still where he was, and he is gone, I can't see him anywhere. Although all I want to do is run back to my brother and hide under his bed, I can't. I have to finish tea. I think to myself 'tomorrow night, Chelsea is making tea.' I place the warm baked beans and toast on a tray and hasten back to my room. Walking so fast I'm almost running. Opening our door so fast I make Chelsea jump up while she if reading her favourite book 'forgotten by cat Patrick' she jumps up and yells, "Jesus Christ!" not caring about anything I reply "yeah, whatever." I grab my bowl of baked beans and toast, thump down on my bed and face the window. Chelsea says with a hint of concern in her voice "okayâ ¦ thank you for making dinner anyway Hun." Softly I simply add "you're welcome."

A few hours after dinner it is now 8:45, I'm flipping through pages of my latest girlfriend magazine when all of a sudden I feel a familiar but un-welcome feeling in my stomach, I'm going to be sick. I jump off my bed, and run towards our bathroom, Chelsea now looking rather worried about me, she slowly follows behind me into the bathroom and looks at me as I am chucking up in the toilet. In panic she says "im going to go get Mr Pridgeon, I'll be right back sweetie." And with that she is gone. Im left alone chucking my uts up in the cold white toilet bowl while the hard wooden floor is killing my knees. A few seconds later she comes racing back in with Mr Pridgeon by her side, he looks at my face which is now as white as the snow outside. He feels my forehead which is hotter than the sun at the moment, yet has sweet running down my head, and circling on my the base of my small earlobes. He looks down in the toilet bowl, which makes me wonder why anyone would want to spend time looking at someone else's half decomposed second hand food. Still, he observes on for a few seconds before announcing that I go to bed and not go out tomorrow, he demands consistently that I stay in bed the whole day tomorrow so I am better for the rest of the trip. Reluctantly, with a loud sigh, I agree. With sadness In his voice he says "I will be in to check on you in the morning before the group leaves to go skiing for the day." I reply simply "okay." He turns and looks at Chelsea once more and walks out of our door, shutting it rather loudly behind us. I turn to look at Chelsea but before I can I feel that same ghastly feeling again and have to bury my head in the toilet. Chelsea adds sarcastically "well this is going to be a joyful night, lol" "oh yeah it's going to be frigging amazing" I say with a hint of frustration about the whole situation. I

stand up from the toilet and flush the toilet, have a glass of water, and Chelsea caringly walks me over to my bed with the most adorable puppy-dog faced look to cheer me up. She has always been the most caring person in my life, I thought to myself as I fling the blankets over my legs. I re-open the magazine I was reading from earlier and find the page on 'winter fashions' I thought it was quite appropriate after where I am at the moment, I chuckle to myself when I see a picture of a girl wearing socks and thongs. That's always fascinated me, that question that lingers in my head coming back from time to time, 'why were socks if you're going to wear thongs? Or why were thongs if you're going to wear socks? Arghhh its all too confusingâ ¦ or stupid" I mutter to myself. Looking over at Chelsea she has already hit the hay, she is half laying on her bed but half laying on the floor, her head is turning blood red from loss of circulation to other parts of her body. For a second I find it quite amusing and start to cackle evilly, I realise what im doing and shut up immediately. Struggling down deep under my covers I lay my head down and close my eyes, and start to lose myself as I drift off to sleep.

Groggily hearing a faint voice I widen my eyes unwillingly open and look up. Where I expect to see the ceiling I see Mr Pridgeon and Chelsea are hovering above me, looking down at my hot, burning head, they look at each other and both start to say at the same time "Tammi, we think its better if you stay and ret today so you are able to come out tomorrow, healthy and well. You've obviously caught a bug on our travels here." I look at up him disappointed and say "fine, 'ill stay in bed today." They both walk slowly out of the room and when Chelsea gets to the door, just before she closes it with a squeak, she says softly "I will be back later today to make us dinner, have a fun day sweetie." She pulls the door to a squeaky shut, put my head back down on the pillow and my eyes draw to a close.

Chapter 4

Arghhhhhh, what's that smell? What's that? Who's touching me? I open my eyes in a hurry to realise, my hotel door is shut but there is more than 4 guys in Chelsea and I's room. That guy from yesterday is in the corner near the door watching me with his un-easy gaze. I look up, there is a man, abit older than the other guy with his hand over my mouth. I start trying to scream, but all I can let out is a faint murmur of 'help' desperately trying to kick and punch and wiggle my way out of this situation, the other guys rush over and put their hands around my hands and legs. The guy from the corner walks over with a sad look on his face, pours some foul smelling stuff on a cloth, and comes up close next to me. The older man with his hand over his mouth removes his fingers from my lips fast, and the younger guy puts the cloth to my mouth. I feel a slight dizziness, and within a few seconds I can't help but un-willingly, un-wanting, my eyes draw to a close, my legs and arms go still, im out, all I can see is black.

I hear people talking, I realise im becoming conscious, im waking up. i can feel my hands an legs are still tied up though, I start trying to scream, I look around, im in a car, a ute, in the back seat. I glimpse out the back window before a hand slowly covers my eyes. I can see the resort back in the distance. I can vaguely see Chelsea and the group walking back towards the resort. I wonder to myself what will happen when they get back, see my bed a mess, and realise im not there. Well Chelsea panic? What will Mr Pridgeon do? I small single tear sheds from my eye as I realise the world, environment I have been pulled away, kidnapped, taken from by these strange, other-worldly men. Like a group of monsters out of a children's book. Fast around the wet roads, there is no point in struggling; the car is going way to fast, plus the fact that it is filled with 4 men. I turn back around and sit down in my seat, they realise at this point im fully awake from whatever they put on my mouth that smelled like old petrol from a dirty service station. I look to the guy at my left, the one who watched me for the first day or so. He's pulling a rather excruciating facial expression. He senses im staring at him, he turns his head, and looking at my eyes he sees my second hand eyeliner from the day before mixed with my tears and old foundation all over my pale yet red face from the point that I still feel quite sick. Raising his eyebrows into a puppy dog kind of face, he starts at me, his eyes moving up and down my body, he realises the rope around my wrists has gradually worn to the fact, my arms are now cut and bleeding from the tight rope. The same with my feet. I wonder what he's thinking but it's obvious soon. This man I don't know the name of lifts his hand down into his backpack and pulls out a bottle of water and a cloth. He loosens the lid and unscrews the drink bottle pulling the brown hacked-up cloth to the opening of the bottle, presses it tight against the hole, and tips the bottle upside down on the cloth becomes drowned in water. Lifting it back up to the bottles original position he screw the lid back on and sits the bottle between his legs and holds it tightly. Lifting the cloth towards me he lowers it and places it on my wrists, gently and so caringly it shocks me, he wipes the access blood from my arms and wrists, then repeats the process with my legs. Finally he turns the cloth over, grabs my chin and softly wipes my face, and removes the old eyeliner, foundation and tears from my now red face. I look in his eyes, he looks in mine, he has kind, sweet eyes, and from being a part of this whole situation, he looks saddened. He doesn't look much older than me, maybe just 18. The guy in the front passenger seat says something sternly to him in a different language, and the sweet-eyed guy quickly drops the cloth and turns around to face the front. He replies to the guy saying something else back in a language I don't recognise and for the next what seems like hours we sit in silence as the oldest looking guy drives along the snowy, wet roads towards suburban population.

A long time later, we are driving towards Sydney international airport. Before I have time to speak the sharper, more unkind man on the other side of me pushes my head down onto my cold knees. But instead of driving around in the front entrance, I can see out the corner of my eye, we are going around a bag, more private entrance, it gets dark and then light again, we have driven into a massive garage at the airport. I realise without looking to excited this is my chance to get away, cry for help by civilised, normal people. There are security guards normally in airports. They will help me. I just have to get out and be silent, then bit the guy holding me and run like the wind. My plan was set. The kind guy opens the door and slowly gets out. The

mean guy puts his hand around my mouth and the other arm on my stomach, he forces me out of the car, I do as he wants, careful not to create any thinking as to what im about to do. Si look around, there are two pilots standing near a small, seater fly plane. To the left of them, there is a small door. I can see bright sunlight rays shining through, showing me the way. Again they start to speak in a different language, and while they are not paying attention I see my chance. The pilots are getting bored and start to head for the door of the aircraft. I bite the guy holding me's hand, and back kick my foot into his groin, after doing karate for 5 years I remember a great deal of it. He is now plummeting towards the cold concrete grey floor. Im running like the wind, getting closer and closer the door, which im now within 10 metres off. The kind guy is chasing after me until the driver of the car, before I have time to notice, pulls out a gun. I hear a loud bang and before I have a second to turn and look there is a sharp, hysterical pain in the back of my left leg. My other leg gives way and I fall to the ground. Not worrying about how much pain im in, I start trying to call to the door, im almost touching the outside sunlight when everything goes black; my head hits the ground with a silent thud.

I wake up again, still with a nauseating, excruciating pain in my leg, and a throbbing headache. My legs has been bandaged and cleaned and once again, instead of using rope, there's duct tape wrapped around my wrists. Listening quietly I hear a slight whistling sound. I begin to realise I am in a plane, headed for god knows where. The kind, caring guy is sitting next to me, im lying on the floor, he looks at me with that sweet smile, I look him in the eyes and a single tear runs down is cheek. He obviously knows something I don't, and that puts a scared tone in my voice, he reaches down and grabs my arm to help me to sit up, wrapping his strong arms around me he rests his name on my shoulder and gives me the quickest yet faintest hug. I whisper in his ear, wondering if I will get a reply at all, "what is your name?" "he stares at me with genuine fear in his eyes, "my, my name is Jamal. Please don't tell anyone you know that, just call me mister or something." "I won't" I promise him, and for a second a certain little glimpse of happiness rises in me.

He rises to his feet, turns and looks at me and replies to me, "stay here, I will be back soon with some food, I suspect you'll be hungry by now." "Thankyou" I say with a small faint giggle. . I want to ask him so much more, he has those kind of eyes you could stare into for days and never get bored. I want to know so desperately, where are they taking me? What have I done? How did they know I was going to the Hotham resort? But the question that's dangling back and forward in my mind, like one of those old fashioned hall cocks with the long metal ball that swings back and forth constantly is, why? Why is this happening to me?

Chapter 5: driving away.

Im leaning against a wall in the plane, sitting up I look at the curtain across the room, it starts to move than gets faster and aggressive, like it's fighting the wind to stay straight. The curtain starts to open in the centre and Jamal's back is coming towards me. As soon as he gets through the curtain he turns and an un-stoppable smile comes to his face. He is holding a rather large wooden tray with, toast, two bowls of what looks like chicken soup, two glasses of milk, chocolate, and a blue bowl filled with bananas, apples, strawberries and other various fruits. Lowering himself carefully to sit down on the floor he sits down opposite on the floor and places the tray between us. Before I have time to say anything he says cutely, "that's chicken soup, I hope you like it, I've heard chicken soup for the soul can be amazing, well that's what they title of a book I once red is called." He chuckles quietly to himself. "Thankyou" I say knowing that he didn't have to do this for me. Before I have time to consider what I blurt out next, "where are you taking me?" the chuckle from the corner of his lips soon fades to sadness. "I can't tell you, I'm sorry; you will figure it out soon enough. All I can say is that as much as I wish this wasn't happening to you, in a way I'm glad it did, because I would never have got the chance to even talk to you if it hadn't." Tears start to flow down my white cheeks, I manage to create a smile and say "are they going to kill me?" "No. " Jamal says. "But please eat, we will be landing soon and you won't get a chance for another few hours. And do me a favour; please don't try to run again. I'd hate seeing your leg get injured again." "Okay, I won't." there is silence for the next 15 minutes as I try to eat with duct tape around my wrists. Note to self, soup isn't the best thing to eat when wrists are occupied with duct tape, rope or anything else."

Jamal gets called again by another guy in a different language. He jumps to his feet and races out through the curtain. Once again I'm left alone. But this time it's okay, because I'm occupied, I have food, I have to eat.

I don't have my watch on anymore, they've obviously taken it off to wrap the duct tape with more ease around my small wrists. But I here Jamal's voice getting closer to the curtain and he comes back through it. Im desperately wanting to know the time. Its pitch black outside so I know it's some part of night or very early morning. I look down at Jamal's arms; he has a long sleeve black polar fleece jumper on. A bright silver watch hand band is peeking out the bottom, as he walks closer to me, I can make out the watch in its roman numerals, it Is 9:45pm, almost 10:00. Jamal walks over to me and crouches down. He tells me calmly that at 10:05 we are going to land and that I should probably go to the toilet, and splash some water on my face because its apparently going to be another long car drive. He helps me to stand up and guides me through the curtains where some of the other men are sitting around playing a card game, casually talking like everything's hunky dory. Past their room is another curtain that leads through into the kitchen, than a door of the side of it with a picture of a male and female stick figures. He tells me quietly he will wait for me outside the door. I walk in and look at myself in the mirror, in shock for a few minutes before I realise I'd better hurry up before they break the door down or something. I lower myself down and go to the toilet. Thinking to myself, no-one really has an idea how hard going to the toilet with duct tape around your wrists, is until you've tried it. It's definitely no picnic. Jamal knocks on the door, and im back standing in front of the mirror. I reply "yeah im coming." I open the door and try to force a smile. He looks at my face and can see tears forming in the corners of my eyes. He grabs my hand and says, "come on, il fix you up." he walks in the small bathroom with me behind him and pushes the door almost closed. Ripping a tissue out of the box he holds it under the tap and begins to make it damp. Lifting it up he places it under my eyes and takes away some of that, swollen, red, puffy skin from under my eyes. Like the cloth have magical abilities to wipe away sadness. He is looking me in the eyes and smiling at me. For a moment I almost get lost in it. My thoughts are turning scramble, I can't think. I blink and that feeling is gone. We both hear a bang and he turns back to face the sink to wet the tissue again. He starts to clean my red cheeks. After that he leans down and finds a brush from the cupboard underneath the sink. He pulls my hair out of its messy loose ponytail and begins to brush it. Instead of tying it back up he leaves it out and pulls it around the front. Handing me a new pink t-shirt he giggles to himself and turns around as if to say, 'I know, privacy. But put the clean t-shirt on.' I oblige and lift my over

dirty sweaty shirt of and place the other one on and pull it around until it's comfy. I make a coughing sound and he turns back around to face me. It's a small bathroom and so we are standing closely. We stare each other in the eyes for what seems like a long time. Before he leans in and without a word kisses me on the cheek. I couldn't believe it. I was over-whelmed by this moment. It will be forever printed in my mind, until the end of time. He stands back, to his old position and looks in my eyes for a little longer. He leans towards the cupboard and pulls out a small red tube of clear, shining lip gloss and applies it to my lips. I start to wonder why he is cleaning me up, brushing my hair, putting lip gloss on me. He's making me look good for something. The problem is I don't know what. That's the bit that scares me. I still manage to draw a smile to my face without looking as panicked by this situation as I feel. After all, my leg was shot, I was hit on the head, I'm tired, still feel sick, and in need of some more water and a shower.

Jamal finishes fixing me up and grabs my hand, and leads me out of the bathroom back towards the lounge room thing. His older acquaintances stare at me with a look of demise as we walk back through their kitchen area. Jamal and I get back to the lounge and he sits me back on the floor, than lowers himself next to me. For the next 15 minutes there is complete silence. Even though there is so much I want to say, want to ask, I hold it in. the compromise, the sadness, the guiltiness of this situation hangs in the warm air, blowing from the old daikon air conditioner.

The plane starts to dive nose, Jamal helps me to the seats and straps me in for landing. I hear the tyres remove themselves from the plane and lower down towards the straight, long stretch of airport. Feeling the tyres hit the tarmac the only thing that crosses my head is "I'm here- wherever here is though" the plane slows as Jamal un- buckles my safety belt. He looks in my eyes as if to say, please don't try to run again. I nod back in agreement. Jamal's older co- workers walk into the room, and one viciously grabs me by the arm and yanks me up, and starts pulling me towards the exit door. Walking down I get dragged to a black Holden station wagon. It has tinted black windows and a silver statue on the bonnet, Jamal is told something in the language I don't understand, and gets thrown the car keys by the elderly guy holding me, obviously he wants Jamal to drive. He gives me one last look and lowers himself diagonally into the front driver's seat. The rough man holding me pushes my head down and forces me into the back seat of the car, following me as I get in. the other stranger who has gotten in the other side is quickly tidying me up. Fixing my hair, clothes so I'm all pretty even though I still feel like a tired piece of shot, headachy shit. Jamal starts to slow down as we pull into a dim, lifeless driveway. I can faintly hear a small yappy dog barking through closed doors. A light shines through the thin blinds and the vicious guy next to me steps out of the car, and mutters Jamal something. Through the windscreen I can see the rather large outline of a muscly guy. Both of their heads turn to face the car in my direction. Mr vicious as I've started to refer to him as, walks quickly back to the car and grabs my arm, as if to try to pull me out. I struggle about but frighteningly climb out and fix my t- shirt up. Jamal looks at me as I walk past the driver's window and smiles with a tear rolling down his soft cheeks. Mr vicious leads me towards the muscly guy, he attempts to grab my hand, I avoid contact with this stranger. He has horrible looking eyes, they are yellow, with sparks of orangey- brown. His almost shaven hair, spikes up on his forehead. His lips are small and frustrated looking. I stare down at him, even though he has muscle arms, he has a beer gut. Wearing a black suit with dark brown hair sticking out the top of the shirt. Mr vicious and him shake hands than Mr vicious walks back in the direction of the car, tells Jamal to get out of the driver's seat. Jamal obliges, looks at me one last time, gets in the back, and the car hums away. I'm left alone with this man, why?.....

Chapter 6: arrival

Breathing heavily in the cold night air, mist fly's out of my mouth and rises up towards the white beaming moon, and I think about the previous night, I had been lying in my old bed, at the ski resort, believing I was safe. Still I guess I was sadly mistaken. He looks down at my shivering arms, Removes his suit jacket and wraps it around my shoulders, then rudely pushes me towards the front door. Gripping this stranger's pitch black suede suit jacket, we enter. There is a long narrow hall rug. It has red, gold and yellow patterns embroidered in it. The walls are a soft cream, with hanging black lights. Walking along a bit further the narrow hall widens into a massive sized spilt level, living room. Grabbing my waist this man leads me down the two steps and walks me towards a precise spot where you can see pretty much everything. My mouth widens, turning my head, to one side there is a big bright blue pool, and a small bubbling spa bath. Around the, are a plate of white big tiles like you'd see on television at an expensive spa and sauna place. To my other side it looks to be a games space. Its filled with a pool table, air hockey, dance machine, pin ball machine, car racing driving simulators, and even a couple of toy grabs. I'm over-whelmed by this place. It looked so small from the front, even in the dark.

This man walks over to me, and stands in front of me. He isn't that much taller than me, yet tall enough I have to lift my head upwards slightly to look at him. Grabbing my hand, he smiles and leads me down another long hallway, with many doors until we finally stop in front of one. It's a fairly old pine door with a gold doorknob that's rusted near the screws. Pushing the door open, I see a white single bed, a bookcase, and a rug rolled up in the corner. Guarding me to the bed he makes me sit down. Sitting down next to me, he squeezes my hand and looks me in the eyes. Confused and slowly he says to me, "I don't know much English, I know you speak it, but you will have to learn our language, Arabic. I want you to get some sleep now. I know it's been a big couple of days." He rises and walks towards the door, "oh also, don't try to get out. I'm locking this door, and you'll notice there are no windows in this room. Goodnight." Pulling the door closed tightly, until I hear a shamble of keys rattled until one finally goes on the key hole and swiftly turns than slides out. I listen to the his footsteps slowly get more distant and quiet as he walks of back down the long hall way. A shiver runs down my spine, I lower myself on to my side and pull a thin sheet over my body and head until I'm completely covered.my eyes draw to a close. I fall asleep drowning in my thoughts.

Chapter 7

Waking up to the sound of a stern voice, a young lady is looking at me. She is covered from head to toe in a long black cotton dress, with a covering burka. I can only see her bright blue eyes sticking out. Olive skin covers her soft hands and fingers. Pulling the sheet of me she grabs my arm and is obviously expecting me to rise. I oblige and rise upwards so I'm in a sitting position. Making me stand, this woman straightens up the bed covers and turns to face me. Even though I cannot see all of her face, I can tell she is the gentle caring type. Stuttering a little, she speaks to me. Her soft voice helps me to calm down. Yet her ocean blue eyes remind me of my home. And how much I miss everything. Even the little things like how the leaves blow in the cold winter's breeze along the paths to school. Getting lost in my mind I realise I wasn't paying attention to her. Because now she is staring at me uncomfortably. Awkwardly I say, "sorry what?" she replies with a frustrated look, "My name is Seeda. I'm here to help you get ready for the events of the afternoon. I'm sorry I can't explain more but I am not allowed to. I am going to lead you to the bathroom, where you will have a shower and then I will do your hair and makeup. Please, I'm begging you don't try to run, for I will get the incompetent blame." I see the worry in Seeda's eyes, I know she isn't lying. I simply say, "okay" she helps me up as my leg is giving me trouble from the bullet hole in it. I wrap my arm around her shoulder and limp towards another door in the hallway. She opens it and I see the newest of new bathrooms. Pure white glistening floor tiles, a window formed from crystal shards, the shower in the corner with a glass door is a pale sky blue sparkling tile that invites you in. I'm grasped by the cleanness' of this bathroom. It's overwhelming. Seeda looking at me with an amused expression, asks me nicely to get un-dressed. Unpleased with the idea of getting naked in front of a perfect stranger, I unwillingly agree. Removing layer, by layer I am down to only the bandage that is wrapped firmly around my leg, from where I was shot. Seeda leans down and un-wraps it for me. Then she lifts my upper body back to a standing position, and helps me in the shower bay. She looks into my eyes as if to say, 'yes I will turn around' she turns to face the wall and I slowly slide the shining, beaming silver handle to the left, to face the little red spot of water-proof paint that means the water will be warm. I mess up my hair under the soaking water and begin to run my fingers through it, seeing a bottle of shampoo and conditioner I carefully pour some on my head and lather, then rinse. I work my way down my body with a bar or pink soap, then clean my lower orifices. I finally get to the bullet wound, and do not attempt to put the soap anywhere near it, but push the soap on my skin around the hole. Staring at the blue wall tile I wonder why I am being made to get clean in the first place. The fear starts to take a hold of me; it's trying to swallow me whole. I take a deep breath and push the handle to an off position. Stepping out of the shower Seeda passes me a towel from in front of her and I dry myself off. She next hands me a pair of soft purple undies, and a pure silk white bra. Although I find the bra pretty, it makes me wonder how they knew exactly my size.

Turning to face Seeda, she unzips a long black dress bag and slides outa long, white, sequined gown. I suddenly realise what is going to happen, what I've been sent here for. The realisation pulses through my brain as my legs became unstable; I tremble to the bathroom floor. Seeda lets go of the dress and rushes to my aid, kneeling down on the cold tiles. Swipes the tears that are forming from the corner of my eyes and hands me a soft pink cotton handkerchief that was carefully placed in a pocket under her hijab. -I know what some Muslim things are called as I recently did a project on Muslims women's clothes in society and history. Lifting my head I manage to give her a smile; she smiles back in my direction and whispers close in my ear, "it's hard, but it will be okay. Cause, well because, I've gone through it." I look at her in a shocked manor, by the tone she said it I know it really did.

I take a hollow breath, as Seeda grabs my hand and pulls me back to my shaking feet. I think to myself, I can do this. If Seeda can, I can. Holding my head and pushing my back up straight, I say "okay" I lift my arms up and the dress falls over my pale shoulders. Lapping around my feet, I see the sequins covering the edging of the top half. Its corseted from the waist up and strapless. Small triangles are cut out of the back revealing small pieces of my soft skin. Seeda gasps at how good it looks on me. I regrettably agree. But I hate this dress.

Not its style, small cut out holes or even sequins! I hate what this dress represents. That I'm being tied to another until the end of my days. And there is nothing I can do about. I'm screaming inside. Crying out. And no one can hear me- or if they can they aren't listening to my painful cries. Looking in the thin full length mirror I n the bathroom, I feel dizzy. Like some evil source is toying with me. Making it so I have to look in the mirror and think about my unfortunate future. Seeda pushes me down to sit on the edge of the spa and starts to apply various and many coats of different makeups. Eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara, foundation, top coat foundation, lipstick, than lips gloss. By the time she has finished I'm looking like a porcelain doll. She than places a pair of silver drop earrings and a bracelet that looks like all real diamonds. I turn around and look in the mirror one last time before we walk out the door and I'm taken to god knows where. The shoes make me taller by an inch. Cream with white stitching around the sole.

I look at Seeda and face the door, she looks at me and breathes in asking "are you ready?" I reply sounding strong, "yes" "okay" she adds. Its time to be brave. I think in my head.

Chapter 8: the day.

Seeda opens the bathroom door, and leads me back along the corridor towards the lounge room with the pool and games. I notice something I didn't see last night -a stair case. She holds her hand out to help me up the stairs. I accept and with my other hand, hold my dress up above my feet. When we reach the top of the stairs there is a big room. That looks like it is used for parties or something. It is packed today though. There are rows of chairs, flowers hanging from seat to seat. A higher platform at the front and a priest in black and white, a long white rug streaming along the aisle.

Seeda takes me to the back of all the seats and tells me to stand there and wait. I force myself to look up. The man from last night is standing there looking at me with a smirk. In the front aisle, Jamal and his older workers are sitting next to him. He sheds a sincere saddening smile. I hear an organ start to play. The panic hits me. I turn my head, start to shiver I want to run, but I realise I can't. I have to stay. They would kill me if I tried to leave. Seeda gives me a small push forward, I realise it's a nudge to walk. Tears start to pour out of my eyes. I can't help it. My legs are beginning to feel weak again. I'm feeling wobbly in these to- high stilettos. This isn't how my life is supposed to go. I was supposed to come back to Tassie after an awesome school ski trip with Chelsea than go back to Tassie and pluck up the courage to ask my crush to the school leavers dinner! In my wildest dreams I couldn't have dreamt a nightmare like this! I look up and realise I've stopped in the middle of the aisle. It's like there is a wall in front of me. Like I cannot possibly go any further. Seeda walks up behind me and pushes me forward. Like she has broken the wall. Finding some source of comfort I stare into Jamal's eyes. And for some reason, he makes everything feel better.

One foot, in front of the other, until before I know it I'm at the front of the crowded rows of seats, lifting my heavy feet up the step to stand next to the priest and look into this strange man's eyes. He snatches my hand and holds it in his, slowly at first the priest begins to talk. He starts of in English, than swaps to Arabic. I don't understand what he is saying but at one point the man stares directly at me. I begin to think he is saying his vows. The priest looks at me now and tells me to repeat one line in English. The words elude me, even though I understand them. "Will you promise to love him, cherish him, in sickness and health?" not being able to say anything, feeling my stomach rise in my throat, I nod. The priest gives me a sickening smile that surely makes my stomach rise into my mouth. He looks back at this man that is soon to be my husband and says what I'm assuming as, "you may now kiss the bride." His face leans towards mine. I try to back away, yet his hand slides behind my head so I can't move it. Thankfully, before I know it, it's over. I'm hoping this man that I don't even know the name of, doesn't like a physical relationship. Turning to face the audience, he slides a solid silver ring on my finger. It has a single big diamond in the centre, than a circle of smaller diamonds around it. I'm shocked by its stunning beauty, yet deterred by the motion of why I'm wearing this in the first place. The priest hands me a ring. I'm guessing I have to slide it on his finger. I do so, and he holds my hand up to the crowd. They stand and shout with joy. Yet all the while I stand and look at Jamal's eyes. I see the hurt. This man picks me up, puts his arm under my leg, and carries me down the centre of the aisle, and down the stairs. He carries me down and sits me on the couch. Gently touching my faces as he removes his arm from under my leg. Everyone from the reception rushes down the stairs and into the game area. I see more people rushing through the front door with black suits and white aprons on. They are carrying silver platters up stairs. Jamal's co-worker people, rush up stairs behind them. Within half an hour, they call everyone back up; including me. When I reach the top of the stairs, I can see all the rows of chairs have been moved, and now there are 7 or 8 round tables. On one wall, there is a long, straight buffet with too much food. There are salads, prawns, lasagne, fish and chips, a roast beef, jam and cream scones, ice-cream, fresh strawberries, raspberries, apple and bananas, Pavlova, and so much more. I feel like I could go on forever. The one thing that struck my first notice though, was the wedding cake. Or more significantly, MY wedding cake. Pure white, three layers, with a single light blue edible flower, attached to the top right- hand side. Walking over I grab a plate and serve myself up, just a massive serve of Pavlova, when my apparently new husband comes up behind me and shows me to my seat. Looking at me, he leans over for another kiss. Grossed out I know I must

oblige. I sit there for what seems like minutes in my head, but I know hours have gone by. Everybody leaving, I see them walk out the front door, its twilight outside.

Someone yells out, cya Ahmeer! My new husband turns and waves. I finally know his name! Seeing me look at him, he walks over and grabs my hand, leading me down the hall way, past the door I was in last night, and to the door at the very end. He opens it. There is a large king sized bed. With satin blue sheets. I'm starting to realise he likes blue. The walls are a soft faun colour, with a stain glassed window of blue and green stars. For a guy, I have to admit, his room is pretty. This comforts me for a few seconds. He is standing near his dresser, lighting a couple of candles here and there. Creeping up behind me while I'm astonished by his room, I hear a click. He has locked the bedroom door. Locked us in here. Together. Alone. I start to freak out, but don't show it. Placing his head on my shoulder, he whispers "you looked beautiful today." And kisses me on my neck. I move away from him. I'm scared. He walks towards me. And pushes me down on the bed, moving his sweaty hand up my long white dress. He stops when he reaches me undies, and starts trying to lower them. By now I'm screaming. But he is pretty much lying on top of me. I can't compete with his body weight. He is managing to lower them down past my knees. Urging me to shut up, he slaps me. My face begins to throb and sting. Tears are rolling down my face. I know, I realise, I can't stop what is going to happen.

Chapter 9: the night, the cursed.

Breathing heavily, I am kicking and screaming, waving my hands all around his face. He is slowly climbing higher up on me. He has managed to un-zip his pants. I look down, yet realise I don't want to look at what I saw. His sweaty hand is covering my mouth. I feel a sharp, excruciating pain in my lower half. Feeling dizzy, I can't stop this, I pass out.

I wake up, it's dark. There's no light shining through the faded curtains. Feeling all exposed I'm completely naked now. Only a thin sheet covers my ivory skin. I manage to slide out of the bed and wrap the sheet around my body. Its edge is daintily moving across the floor with my every step. I walk the door. It's locked. On the back of the door I notice there is a long, floor length gown. It has a layer of white silk under it, and a big, heavy collar. I don't know whether I'm supposed to put it on or not. So I return to walk back over to the bed. As I walk, I notice I'm really sore between my legsâ¦

I'm starving; I haven't eaten in what seems like hours. There is nothing to do. So I just sit on the centre of the bed and look around the room. Waiting, wanting something to happen. Yet enjoying the tranquillity of being alone. I think back to my parent's and friend Chelsea, a feeling off sickness swallows me, and spits me out. I miss them, so much. They are probably so stressed, worried about me. I haven't seen a Tv or listened to a radio in days. Although I'm in a different country I wouldn't hear anything anyway. This might sound weird, but what I miss most is my music. I would never go longer than an hour or so without listening to music. Music is my life. Well it was my life. I'm alive now, but for how long? And to what kind of monster? I miss everything. I even miss my bullies. Because as much as I hate them, if they were near me, I'd know I was home.

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