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THE SONG

"Change" rang through the classroom. Old radio wailed hearing tried and harsh voices of fifteen-year-olds. The class wanted to stop and rest their vocal cords, but that was forbidden. Every little pause could become the one that would send them to the lifetime under two meters underground. Because, everything was known, heard, seen. Somebody stops anyway. Roxy rests her voice and catches her breath, after that come the questions:"Why did you stop, Ms Maresh? Do you think that you are smarter than everyone else because you aren't singing? Is everyone else a fool?" asked Clasion, that old witch. "I am, I am better! Maybe everyone else was brainwashed by songs and Hamlet, but I won't! All of this is stupid!!!" Roxy thought. She wanted to say all of it, free herself from that chain... She couldn't. She'd end up like Rebecca. In a hospital, forgotten by everyone. "Well, Ms Maresh, I'm waiting. Are you, by anything, above everybody?" "No, I'm not Mrs Clasion. I apologise to everyone, especially to Lashes who did so much good for us." "That is enough. Apology accepted. But, if this happens again, you will be punished." Roxy swallowed the lump in her throat. One more little pause separated her from the punishment. The punishment which could be fatal.

THE AMULET

The stone shone under the bright sun making weird shapes. That makes Roxy laugh. That ring is all she has. When she got it, she was told that one day it will have great power and meaning. She doesn't have P of "power". Maybe. Just like Tim was supposed to show up an hour ago. He probably ate too much Snickers and fell asleep. "Why do I even hang out with him? He is like 5 years old..." She thought. But still she couldn't be mad at someone who always makes her laugh. Suddenly there was buzzing. You could hear words coming from the black stone: "One scream, one wish. But beware, wishes are alluring!" Buzzing and lights stopped. Words were lost in songs. "What happened? A dream? A vision? That mayonnaise? I'm probably just seeing things." "BOO!" "AAAAA! Tim, you fool! What is wrong with you?" "Hi to you too. Where will we go? To the park? Your house? My house?" "Actually, I have an idea. Let's go to The Amulet Museum!"

HAMLET

"Damn curator... Why would he say anything to me?! I ask him something, he pretends to be deaf!" she mumbled into her chin. Roxy was spinning the ring in her hand. On the stage, a play took place just like in her head. Visit to the museum wasn't worth much, Tim went home and she was stuck in the theatre watching Hamlet once again, while Clasion was sitting next to her. She felt her glare on the ring, so she quickly put it back on her finger and tried to focus on Hamlet who was just starting his most famous sentence. She couldn't. She felt her eyelids slowly closing. Soon, plains started to appear around her. Somewhere there was Stonehenge. Suddenly she sees a house. She goes inside and she smells blood. She sees a familiar face, messy hair and torn up clothes. Around the body, scattered needles are filled with white powder. She comes closer, and then shock. Tim laid motionless, scares and bruises indicated torture. Needle wounds were fresh. Roxy screamed from shock and then felt stabbing pain. Before she fell, she sees the face of Hamlet. Everything goes black.

FEAR

"Have you ever wondered what would happen if somebody important to you disappeared?" Roxy asked Tim with fear and pain in her voice. "Of course I have. Actually, I think about it everyday because something strange has been going on. Mason told me that you slept and screamed during Hamlet. Are you okay?" "Yes, it's just... I saw something that frightened me. So horrible, I'm afraid to tell you. But, somebody very important has been hurt. And I simply started thinking I was going crazy. And I can't do it anymore!" "It’s okay, calm down. You aren't crazy, stars just aligned that way. In a few days you'll see that you worried for nothing. But, how did you fall asleep during Hamlet? That's weird! You know that witch is just waiting for you to make a mistake!" he said, overeating. He felt something more than friendship for Roxy. Much more. Of course, he never told her that. He was afraid. But, he knew that he'll tell her everything one day. He was just waiting for the right moment. Or was it just an excuse. Excuse for fear.

THE MISTAKE

"Repeat after me: Their power is bigger than the mountains, their generosity is deeper that the oceans. Their reign is the centre of our lives, the bright point of our existence." stand Clasion. Roxy was silent. She refused to be a slave of some fools who imagined they were bosses. And while the others were tiring their voices on a new song, she was staring at a blank space. Her thoughts were in some other world. A world of fear and pain. That vision was still before her eyes. Minutes past and then the touch. The Witch noticed that she wasn't singing. Nothing can help her now. Clasion's touch meant: STAY AFTER CLASS. That could mean only one thing: she made her last mistake. The punishment is coming. The bell rings. Everybody leaves, but only Roxy stays. Clasion begins:"It is clear, Ms Maresh that this was your last mistake. You will be punished. Tomorrow, at 8 o'clock in the morning, go to the nearest station and go on the train, You will receive a spatial ticket with the letter J. The conductor will understand immediately. He will take you to a special home. You will be there until you wise up. See you soon, Roxy!" she says. Roxy stays alone in the classroom. Tomorrow, this time, she will be on the train, on her way to her doom.

THE JOURNEY

She has been travelling for three hours. Everything was all the same. Houses were the same as the songs which were repeated again and again. She remembers Tim. Their goodbye was like tonic. Bitter and colourless. "Where are you even going?! When will you be back?" said Tim with sadness in his voice. "I don't know, Tim! I don't know!" she screamed as she was putting a shirt in the suitcase. "Listen, I don't know where I'm going, but I know one thing; I'll be back soon. Okay? Don't worry. Is it okay?" "Okay. But at least tell me where you are." The train stops. Roxy steps out. She sees the house from the vision. In front of the house are guards. They seem harmless at the first glance. But they are not. They are clenching needles full of white powder in their hands. She goes in. She was greeted by a man in a white suit. "Welcome, Number 975. You will be here until you accept new rules. Tomorrow, at 5 in the morning, be in front of the house." "But how, when I do-" " Your problem, Number 975..." "This is not going to be good!" Roxy thought. Tomorrow, at 5 in the morning, she will experience something that will make her wish that she sang.

THE SACRIFICE

The Sun was slowly raising while they were putting on red robes. The man in white was putting his robe on, while a knife, curved like a snake, bounced on his hip. They set off. They walked for around 20 minutes to Stonehenge. In the middle of the circle, a girl stood in a white robe. The song begun. The circle started moving and with every second they moved faster. They stopped. That man takes the knife out and stabbed the girl. A scream. No one turned. The man pulls out the knife from the girl: "This is how everybody who stands up to us ends up. Keep that in mind!" The crowd slowly walked away. The ones that were sent to Jail, were the only ones left.

THE SILENCE

Months past. Roxy was broken. There was no help. Those wishes weren't coming, like they were scared too. She refused to accept the reign of Lashes. That had a price. Every hour, she got hit with chains and she got stabbed. Nobody cared about her screams. Why should they? She was nothing, nobody. Friday. "I am asking for the last time, Number 975! Will you accept our reign?!" shouted the man in white suit. "NO!!!" Roxy yelled using last atoms of energy she had. "Let it be!" he says pushing the needle with white powder in her arm. In those few seconds, she remembers everything from her life. She remembers Tim. No scream. Just silence. Blessed silence.