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“Maybe they’ll be somewhat humane and just end it with one shot. Hopefully you won’t suffer,”

“I know, and I shouldn’t have betrayed you! I should’ve kept quiet; maybe just maybe I’d still have a chance,”

“Aw Anna, I know, but it’s too late. Besides, you know I’m here for you... right?” Her large green eyes gazed into his, the ones that she’s come to hate; they were filled with artificial worry and regret, he was always a good liar. Despite the current situation, she smiled slightly though her hands remained clenched; her mental state in question. Shivering, she forced her mouth to move, the possibility of regretting her last words were too high for comfort; thankfully her words came out steady.

“I don’t need your lies to be the last thing I hear.”

I was at the wrong place at the wrong time, no that’s not right, it wasn’t coincidence... it was my obligation. Sirens blared and rang loudly into the usually silent night, waking anything within a one mile radius, which wasn’t many considered where we were. I jumped startled, and backed into a nearby dark alley to stay out of sight; the enforcers were here. My eyes widened in mock surprise as I witnessed the heavy commotion going on around me; I had to play the innocent damsel in distress which was annoying but it was my burden, my job, and I would fulfill it. Legs moving, I hurried to the other side of the road, watching in the corner of my eye how their hover cars settle down onto the pavement.

“Where is he?!”

“Find him!”

“Check over there!”

Shouts and commands resonated and bounced off the rugged alleyways, while fifteen to ten officers roamed and searched spots they could've missed. I stood still, my body frozen in alarm, enforcers were cruel; it didn't matter what you did, who you were, mess with them and you could get life in prison. Their bright blue uniforms stood out in the dark night, which was now alive with movement, their gray “marks” were distinctly applied to their arms as well as over their brows. Almost hating to miss out on the action, the streets were being investigated and examined, and I could easily be included into something irrelevant to me, besides I had to get home and thankfully I was almost done here. My target was to show up somewhere down the block from here. I gathered my bag and held it closely to my chest and cautiously dashed around the corner and out of sight; I only slowed till the sirens could no longer be heard.

“Lots of chaos huh?” Warm breath tickled my ear, causing my heart to skip and my fists to rise in defense. I spun, automatically reaching out to attack my attacker, until a split second before my hand made contact I recognized the voice. Greg.

“Greg, what are you doing here?” I asked suspiciously, slyly taking a few steps back for safety measures.

“Nothing, really, though I did score big tonight,” Greg stepped in the moonlight, revealing his short messy black locks; his dark brown eyes crinkling as he smirked. Beneath his brow lay his black mark, identical to the one above mine. Still slightly cautious, I lowered my attack pose and decided it was just Greg. Though what happened next should've surprised me, I've known Greg long enough to know he doesn't think before he acts. He bent down and reached into the bag laying in the dark behind him, pulling out a shiny and metallic hover board S.O7, the newest brand that they've created. I slowly shook my head, my dark red hair moving with me. Greg was... well, Greg, who is a simple-minded fool. If he thought he could get away with this he's slightly mistaken. I bit my lip, deep in thought. If Greg was caught talking with me, I could go down for this as well, and I can't afford this. I nodded, fully convinced... Greg was... an acquaintance

and if he brought trouble to me, I could simply cut the ties. That's what they want me to think, the enforcers, it's a part of my burden that was afflicted upon me by the debt my mother left, but I'll accept even if I have to betray Greg; I'll play the bad guy.

"So, what do ya think?" He asked me, totally oblivious to the urgency of this situation. I didn't reply, the words "I'm going to have to turn you in" just weren't very... fitting. My feet were moving before I knew it and the sirens returned, getting louder and louder as I came closer; the familiar frustrated shouts of the enforcers were almost comforting.

"Anna...?" Greg's voice was but a distant whisper now, but he must've known what was coming, for I heard feet slapping against the pavement, almost in a constant rhythm. I stood close enough to the enforcers now, simply tapping on the shoulder of what seemed to be the leader.

"Excuse me; I think I know who you're looking for..."

I was angry, all the time; I think betraying a friend was the cause. Never before have I felt this way with the others; I must admit, I am the rat, the tattler, everything. But being the rat has its advantages; bigger houses, shorter hours, even larger tips, and in this day and age, getting ahead is key, no matter how low you are, I can thank my mother for that. I can thank her for a lot of things, the debt, the hatred from the rest of my class, I wish I could thank her in person; what a pity. I stretched my arms, relieving the guilt that I carry on my feeble shoulders. I haven't seen Greg around for almost a week, as I suspected he was probably caught, but it wasn't my problem now, time to move on. I yawned once more before taking a step out into the day it refreshes me; the wind beating down on my face is empowering, allowing me to push past the resentful glares and envious gazes, to move on. In my peripheral vision, I noticed a rather large crowd gathering, catching my interest, I followed.

His mark was white; that should've been the first clue that something was wrong. His distinct "mark" stood shining a bright white even in such a gray atmosphere as this one. The mark that everyone is marked with; it states your social class, and worth in society. White is the

highest place you can get, gray means your “well-off”, and mine, black, the mark no one wants. If you have a black mark, you’re nothing but wasted space; you’re a slave. At least I have it better than most people in my class, even if it means betraying every single one of them.

I almost lost myself to those depressing thoughts until the crowd surrounding me suddenly came to life, the man I was looking at earlier stood taller now, revealing the holographic name tag that clung to his coat. His name was Darui, and nonetheless, he was attractive, and as it stated on his name tag or mini profile, he was twenty one, two years older than me; making him my *superior*. My mood automatically darkened again, it felt as if everyone was superior to me, never once being able to actually be in control over myself; always waiting for orders; it left an unwanted distaste in my mouth. Still my curiosity levels increased, as I stood among other curious bystanders; secretly hungry for more than the daily routine that lay in store for us as soon as this little meeting dispersed. Several officers, A.K.A the enforcers, stood beside Darui already planning to *deal* with anyway who dared to make a wrong move; it wasn’t possible. These people can riot and petition all they want, their just fooling themselves; trying to hold on to the last of their pride and humanity, but ever since the “Eden project”, I’m surprised we still even have that. Next to the officers stood another man; impatiently checking his watch, he looked exactly like the stereotype spoiled rich person, people we call “uppers”.

“Anna, duck down! Lemme see!” A small agitated voice rose from the thick fog of whispers and murmurs. Dee, my imitation of a friend, emerged alongside me, her tiny figure barely reaching my shoulder. She was a loner, that’s the main reason for our bond; our entire relationship was based on phony agreements and forced smiles. It was understandable, she was all I had and vice versa; you get what you can get, simple as that, but if I ever had to “rat” her out, I would do it in a heartbeat. Refocusing my attention back to the front, I listened intently noticing that the “upper” was about to speak.

“I can see everyone has arrived accordingly, well, I suppose I should introduce myself. “His voice was deep and loud; the microphone wasn’t necessary. His body reeked of confidence; those dark and disproving eyes scanned the crowd, looking down his long pointy nose in disgust. As absurd as it was, the crowd was mesmerized, the people we were supposed to hate stood in

front of us and all we can do is stare in awe. I sighed, realizing how much of a hypocrite I was, I am a rat, the only one who I should be disgusted by is me.

“My name is Mickel Crux, and by now you know there was a robbery that happened a couple blocks down from here.”

My eyes widened. No, that can't be, Greg was caught, the case is closed... right?

“We have reason to believe we have the wrong person, Greg here will tell you,” The man exited the stage, and there he was...Greg. He walked onto the stage like a whole new person, his lazy gimp was now gone, replaced with shining new confidence almost too bright for my eyes. I gasped as my eyes gazed upward, the usual black mark that we had both shared was now gone, replaced with a fresh white mark.

“Hello, everyone,” That sentence alone, made the crowd erupt into cheers and hollers; I understand, never before has a slave risen up to the “upper” class.

“I've been wronged by someone in this crowd, one of our own.” Low boos and shots of betrayal emerged from the crowd and I shrank away in response, afraid of what was to come. He wouldn't rat me out, he's not like that, I told myself, the heavy guilt returning harder than before.

“She betrayed me, and blamed me for *her* actions!” Greg stood so high and mighty above me on the stage, it made me feel so small, and it was like *he* was superior. Thick, heavy tears blurred my vision and I swiped at them angrily, refusing to let him see me cry. It wasn't my fault!

“It's all her fault,” As he said this, his eyes met mine, and fury burned so deep within them, I felt the heat where I was standing. With his finger slowly raised out toward me, my breathing hitched, and time stopped.

Run

Run.

RUN!

I flew. My legs pumped as fast and hard as I could go, never looking back, I could hear the shouts and angry rants behind me, but I never stopped. I kept running faster and faster, until... nothing, the ground beneath my feet vanished, I was falling I could feel it. The noise disappeared and only my racing heart could be heard, and as I saw darkness try to take me, I welcomed it with open arms. The guilt I had to live with left me and finally this rat was relieved from duty.

I wasn't dead, but I felt like it. An ache ran deep within my bones and my eyesight was hazy and red around the edges.

"Hey, you're up, and how ya feeling?" I sighed, Greg, of everyone I could've met, it had to be him. As I scanned my surroundings, I noticed I was in a hospital, one of the "upper" ones since everything was so clean and pristine.

"They had said I was guilty. They said the mistakes I made were a danger to society; that I was too dangerous," Greg said, his voice releasing no emotion.

"You're not to blame; I'm the one who's dangerous,"

"Maybe they'll be somewhat humane and just end it with one shot. Hopefully you won't suffer,"

"I know, and I shouldn't have betrayed you! I should've kept quiet; maybe just maybe I'd still have a chance," I knew I wouldn't, it was my job as a rat.

"Aw Anna, I know, but it's too late. Besides, you know I'm here for you... right?" My eyes gazed into his, the ones that I've come to hate; they were filled with artificial worry and regret, he was always a good liar. Despite the current situation, I smiled slightly though my hands remained clenched; my mental state in question. Shivering, I forced my mouth to move, the possibility of regretting my last words were too high for comfort; thankfully my words came out steady.

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“Your right,” His hands raised as he pulled out the hidden pocket-knife he was holding. Instead of screaming, I stayed quiet, instead of fighting back, I lay still, instead of crying, I smiled; after all, it was inevitable. I have you to thank mom.