

Coordinates to Nowhere

Dear Angelface,

I still don't know if it was the day I learned what happened to you, or the following days I spent spiraling over why my body is intact and why I am safe doing goodness knows what—that is what killed me most. And I don't think I have ever grieved over someone this much. I still haven't figured that out.

When you said that one day you will be a protector, I've never had this much faith in someone before. And for me, I want to tell you: one day, we'll see each other standing shoulder to shoulder, fighting against the wickedness.

So I would find you, maybe, one day.

As I said in my letters—I would do anything for just one glimpse of your smile. I don't know if I'll take these letters from when I was thirteen until now to you, or to my grave.

But I'm taking that train, Angelface.

I'm a Scholar-at-Law now—are you proud of me? I'm going to make real changes soon. And I'm taking the train; I'm taking the trip to find you.

See you,

Cheri

No, I don't know who Angelface is, that's not her name. I know her ordeal and her declaration of who she will be one day. That's the only two things I know. I named her Angelface because she is my Angel. I wanted to protect her, even now, even then.

A sapphire-dyed rose rested on my windowsill as I shut the door. Outside, my university town was a beautiful but small maze of sun-baked rooftops. I walked to the mountain station where concrete shifted into grassy mounds. I wore my academy uniform everywhere; I didn't know how to tell people I am fighting without displaying the badge.

I was heading to Sagar-Jyoti, Rajvanya, the Indigo Realms—the only home the news ever listed for her. I boarded the train, watching the lush fields rapidly transform into an expanse of burnt grass and cracked soil. I pressed my forehead against the glass, my heart aching all over again. *They burnt it. And nobody cares to know.*

The journey itself was long and magical in a way I could not explain. On the train, I met a girl and desperately asked if she was from Rajvanya—searching out for a potential connection. She wasn't; she was from the Southern Shore.

Sinking back in disappointment, I tried to drown the sadness by burying myself in legal statutes and human rights declarations.

Curious, she had asked what I was doing. Eventually, I opened up about my dreams, and she completely resonated. She had studied the law too, but was transitioning to pediatrics to support children of abuse. It was a simple conversation of our goals—but somehow even when we parted ways, that had stuck with me. I felt motivated and supported in a way that had felt like a cushion behind me.

My next stop to the North, near the airship station, was a beautiful landscape of flourishing flowers and windmills. It heavily contrasted the burnt patches I had seen earlier. There, dozens of

workers bathed in the burning sun, clearly exhausted but working relentlessly to nourish the vegetation and plant seeds

I stopped beside a weathered elder.

“How can you keep planting?” I whispered. “They burnt so much of it.”

The worker snapped his head toward me. “Do not you dare waver your faith, child,” he scolded sharply. “Look around—people are still working to the brunt every day. We may not live to see it all bloom. You are the next generation to plant the seeds.”

I froze. He wasn't just talking about the fields. He was talking about Angelface. He was talking about me.

When I finally arrived at Sagar-Jyoti, reality crashed over me. Looking at the crowds, I knew the odds were zero. She could have changed her name; she could be anywhere. I was never going to find her.

Tears spilled over my cheeks, but a quiet smile broke across my face anyway.

I didn't need to see her soul to know she was out there. There are still people who fight, and maybe I'm one of them too without the badge. I boarded the train back home.

Returning to my apartment, I laid on the massive pile of my unread childhood letters. I took another white rose and dipped it into sapphire ink.

The first few days, I promised we would stand shoulder to shoulder, I thought. But truly, my ultimate wish is just for you to be happy—in success, love, justice, or safety. This is the only letter I want you to have.

I closed my eyes against the paper. The scale didn't need to be balanced with my suffering. I was already a fighter. I was already planting the seeds.