Chapter 1:

Is it weird to have a favorite wall? Because I have one. I have a favorite wall, in my favorite building, in my favorite place. It's a wall of dark and weathered wood, stained with the oils of a century of hands passing over it. And on that wood is a board of cork skewered with a thousand pins that hold up what might as well be a wall of paper. And on that paper lies a not-so-secret secret: The Poem Post. No one is really sure where The Poem Post comes from. There is no identifying information, just a single poem that shifts to a different form every Monday morning. The person posting might as well be their very own Dead Poets Society. But they gave me a reason for my favorite wall, so I won't really complain. Besides, the mystery is half the fun.

And so, my eyes scan the first poem of the semester over and over again, looking for a clue that can solve this low-stakes mystery. But just like in the Fall, it's all too abstract. I get lost in the words, time and space melting away all around me. All that exists is a piece of paper and a girl.

"So you have the time to just stand there, but not the time to answer my text saying to wait for me?" a soft, masculine voice calls out to me, putting time and space back where it belongs. I turn my head towards the voice and see raven hair falling just barely to frame his steely eyes.

"Nice to see you too, Grey. You grew your hair out to fit your emo persona, I see."

He clutches his chest at my words and lowers his head towards the ground. "That stings, CeCe. And it's not emo because I got an undercut with it," he turns his head to showcase it. "See, not emo!"

"Careful, when that undercut grows out, everyone will find out your hair isn't actually

black!" I chuckle out. I've known Grey since high school, when he wore his brown hair no problem, though we weren't really friends then. We just ran in the same circles most of the time. But when we only knew each other during freshman orientation at our university one and a half years ago, the friendship was inevitable.

"So the mystery poet already struck?" He steps up next to me and leans in a bit to read the poem on the wall. "I have fallen/Into a pit/Of unwavering darkness/Never giving way/Light is hope/There is no light." He frowns at the poem. "Well that's depressing, isn't it?"

"I would say more brooding than anything else. It has a different vibe from the poems from last semester. Maybe the poet got hit with seasonal depression."

"Now you're trying to psychoanalyze them? Through their poems?"

"Why not? We do the same with Shakespeare. *Lots* of speculation that he was actually gay."

He laughs at my unfair, yet in my opinion valid, comparison. "What about this poet? Do you think they're gay?"

I place my forefinger and thumb on my chin in thought, scouring my memories for the past poems. After a few moments, I ponder out loud, "Well, it is possible, but none of the poems gave us a gender to work with, so it would be difficult to really pinpoint it. But, the brooding nature of the poems makes me want to say the poet is a dude."

"Aren't you gender stereotyping right now?"

"Yeah, but it's the best I have to go on. Definitely could be not a dude."

"Wow, really narrowed that down, didn't you?"

"Shut your face, asshole." I take one last look at the poem before turning away to my right. "Come on, we got, like, two minutes before class starts."

"Oh, yay, I am *so* excited for British Literature…" He starts walking towards the classroom and I quickly fall into step next to him.

I take my knit beanie from my head and smooth down the red hair it frazzled. "Why are you even a lit major if you hate lit classes?"

"My only other option was math, and you know how much math makes me want to die."

I roll my eyes so hard I can almost see the honey brown of my irises reflect off my skull. "Now *you're* the brooding one."

"Am I emo or am I brooding? Gotta pick one, CeCe."

"I personally think they complement each other pretty well."

He sighs dramatically. "I'll just never win with you."

We reach the classroom door and Grey opens it to head in first, holding it open for me on the other side. It seems some of the class must be running late, as only half the seats are filled. I can't really blame them for being late on the first day, though. Some of them may be freshmen, while the rest may just know that all we'll do is go over the syllabus. In any case, their lateness works in my favor for seat choice. But ultimately, it's not up to me as Grey makes a beeline for some seats in the middle of the room. I follow him and take the seat on his left, shrugging my jacket off my shoulders and onto the seat back. These aren't traditional desks, but elongated tables with separate seats. Thank god, because the space on the traditional desks is way too small. Grey doesn't even bother taking anything out of his backpack as he leans back in his chair, hands in his hoodie pockets.

I roll my eyes. "Prepared as always, I see?"

"Now it's my turn to say 'shut your face.'"

I scoff at his "too cool for school" attitude, knowing he actually does care a lot, he just

pretends like he doesn't. I reach down to my backpack that's slumped on the floor and slip out a pen, just in case the professor asks us to make notes on the syllabus. My gaze lingers a bit on my notebook. *Should I take it out… Naw, I'll take it out later today.* I close the zipper and sit back up, tapping my pen against the desk as I rest my chin in my other hand. I glance around the room as more students trickle in to fill the seats. I vaguely recognize some, since the English department isn't exactly the biggest. There are a couple new faces, though. One new face happens to sit on my left, and like me, he takes out just a pen.

I can't help but take glances at my neighbor, analyzing him. His light brown hair is a little shaggy, like Grey's, but it's shorter and layered, accentuated by the slouch beanie on his head. Some of the strands fall in front of the lenses of his glasses, but at this angle I can't really tell what color his eyes are. I look back at my pen for a bit so no one thinks I'm staring… But I look back not too long after. He's looking down at the desk, watching his fingers as they fiddle with his pen. Is he nervous? Maybe he's a freshman? Maybe I should tell him about the writing room…

My thoughts are interrupted by the professor as she begins to speak. "Alright everyone, it's 5 past, so we'll just get started and if any more of you are coming we'll catch them up on what they missed! I know some of you already but for those who don't know me, my name is Dr. Queen…" I'm one of those who know her, she's my advisor after all, and a good one at that. She pauses her spiel and writes her name on the outdated chalkboard, "I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the head of the English lit department, so if any of you have any questions about English lit as a major or minor, I'm more than happy to talk to you!"

A couple students enter the room near the end of her introduction and find some seats towards the front.

Dr. Queen continues after a short pause. “The syllabus is uploaded on the class site, so please read through it before the next class and bring any questions you have. I know most classes go over the syllabus on the first day, but I’d rather take this time to let you all get to know each other because a lot of this class will rely on group discussion. First, we’ll just introduce everyone where they’re sitting so we have at least an idea of everyone’s name, then we’ll be moving around after that. Any objections?”

I’m sure there are some students who object, but are too anxious to speak up about it. They’ll just have to get used to it.

“Alright, we’ll start at the front and just flow towards the back!” She gestures to the student in the very corner of the front row. “So we’ll start here, please introduce yourself with your name, pronouns, and your major, if you have one. Go ahead and start us off!”

The first girl to speak is another sophomore I know, Emily, who funny enough is the only other redhead I’ve seen in my English courses. You can’t tell when she’s sitting, but she’s pretty tall, around 5’9”, with an intimidating aura. She introduces herself, announcing that she’s an English lit major, before looking to the person next to her as they begin to speak. I listen intently to the names, knowing that I will definitely need them later with the way Dr. Queen teaches.

I tone out Grey’s introduction a bit, already knowing everything I would need to know about him, but something he says at the end of his introduction catches my ear. “I’m thinking about adding a minor in something, but I’m still undecided on what.”

I’ll have to ask him about that later.

Once Grey’s done, he shifts his eyes over to me expectedly. I glance around the room as I start an introduction of my own. “Hey, I’m Camille, she/her, and I’m an English lit major.” I look off to my left at the guy with glasses, waiting for his introduction.

He glances up from his pen and begins speaking. “I’m Ashton, he/him. I’m a creative writing major, English lit minor.” The moment he’s done speaking, he looks back down at his pen to continue his fiddling.

He has a major and a minor already planned? Probably not a freshman…

I glance down at my own pen, toning out whoever begins speaking next. I click it a couple times before I start pressing the tip to the skin of my inner forearm and start drawing a flower. The black ink bleeds from the thin lines, as if the flower is fading into my skin. I almost finish the flower before I feel a flick on my right shoulder. I shift away a bit in surprise as I look to my right and see Grey, still laid back in his chair, but scolding me with his eyes. He whispers to me, “That shit’s bad for you, idiot.”

I roll my eyes as I lower my voice to respond. “Thanks, Dad, I’ll keep that in mind.” I immediately go back to finishing the flower. *Maybe I’ll color it in later with some other pens…*

Before I even realize it, the rest of class finishes their introductions and Dr. Queen is speaking again. “Okay, so now, I’m going to pass out these papers and we’re going to play some ice breaker bingo. Get out a pen or pencil so you can write down the names of one person for each category. Don’t worry about winning, just try to get to know your classmates!”

Dr. Queen places the papers at the ends of each row, so Ashton receives a small stack of paper. He peels one from the stack for himself then passes the rest over to me. As he does, I catch a better glimpse of his face and see honey brown eyes behind his glasses. *Dang, those are some pretty eyes*. I don’t allow myself even a second to stare as I grab the papers, take one for myself, and pass them to Grey, who is rummaging through his bag. I can’t help but laugh at him. “Ha! Told you! Should’ve been more prepared.”

“Yeah, yeah, always right and all that.” He pulls a pen out from the void of his backpack.

“You can gloat about it later.” He passes the last paper after his to the person next to him.

Dr. Queen speaks up once again. “Start moving around! Mingle!”

I look down at the bingo sheet to see if there’s anything I can mark down for Grey, something more obscure… Just so I can get a harder one out of the way. I scan the page for just a second before I land on the perfect one: has a tattoo.

Just as Grey stands up, I look to him to say, “Hey, I’m putting you down for ‘has a tattoo!’” I look back down to write his name down in the space.

As I write down his name, he bends over to put his paper back down on the desk and starts writing something down himself. “And I’m putting you down for ‘afraid of heights.’”

I groan as he finishes the sentence. “Dude, I was scared *one time*, that doesn’t mean I’m afraid of heights!”

He stares down at me, more intimidating than usual. “CeCe, you straight up passed out. You’re afraid of heights.” He stands back up straight and walks behind my chair to go find others to fill in his card.

I stand up to follow him, figuring we can get more filled out if we work together, but I’m stopped as someone calls out to me. It’s Ashton…

“Hey, Camille, do you have two or more sisters?” He looks up at me expectedly from his seat, taking a moment to push his glasses up the bridge of his nose. Looking down at him, finally seeing his face straight on, I feel my ears heat up a little. *Dang, he’s cute*... It takes me a second to respond.

“Oh, uh, no, sorry, I don’t have any sisters…” I’m praying to any god in existence that my face isn’t as red as it feels.

“Oh,” he responds as he glances back down to the bingo card, “Well, what about a

younger brother?"

My heart stutters a moment and my throat tightens at his words. I feel a sting in my nose as my tear ducts start to activate, but I force it all down. *Just… not right now…*

"Y-yeah, I have a brother. You can put me down for that one."

Ashton smiles up for a moment before he turns to his paper to write my name in the space labeled "has a younger brother." As he's writing my name down, he starts talking again. "You can put me down for 'only child' if you don't have anyone down for it yet."

I put my paper back down on the desk as I bend down to write on it as Grey did earlier as I write "Ashton" in the box. When I finish, I stand back up, let out a quick "thanks," and make my way towards Grey as he stands in the back of the room with a couple other people. *I need to calm down… I won't tell him that, though… God I need a distraction.*

I function as if on auto-pilot for the rest of bingo until Dr. Queen calls an end to it. When I look down at my card, I see that I've filled out most of it, with three different bingos. Too bad there's no prize for a winner… But I can live without one. We all navigate back to our seats as Dr. Queen speaks up one last time. "Alright, everyone, that's it for today! Hold on to your bingo sheets for now, maybe go over the names so you can remember your classmates, make sure you read the syllabus, and come prepared next class to talk about your prior knowledge of British literature. And one last thing, make sure you get your books sooner rather than later because the bookstore will return any books that haven't been picked up by March! Now go out into the world with your extra half hour of spare time to do whatever makes you happy!"

I slip my bingo card into my binder that lays empty in my backpack and drop my pen into the smaller pouch at the front that still lays open from earlier. I close up all the zippers and stand up to slip the straps onto my shoulders, seeing Grey is also ready to go. As I look back to my left

to leave the row, I see that Ashton is already walking out of the room.

Grey surprises me a little when he starts talking. “Early lunch?”

My stomach grumbles at the mention of food and I look back at him over my shoulder as I begin to walk towards the door. “You have the best ideas to ever exist.”

As I make my way out of the classroom with Grey behind me, I look to my right and see a janitor at the cork board on my favorite wall. She’s taking old and unauthorized flyers down either to file away or to trash. As I get closer, she tears the poem from its pin. A surprising courage rises inside me, pushing out the anxiety from earlier, as I walk up to the employee.

“Excuse me, why are you taking down the poem?”

She doesn’t even look at me as she continues to gather the old flyers leftover from last semester. “Doesn’t got a stamp.”

“Why does it need a stamp? It’s not advertising anything. It’s just a poem and there’s plenty of roo--”

“Sorry, kiddo. Admin made the rule.” Her expression is unchanging as she simply continues her task at the cork board. I feel her apathy permeate in the air as I slink away back to Grey.

As I reach him by the entrance to the building, I sigh deeply. “So much for respect for art.”

“You’re making this a bigger deal than it is, you know that right?” he asks as he opens the door for me. I walk through while maintaining my dejected posture, pulling my beanie back onto my head to protect my ears from the chilly air.

“I know it’s not a big deal to you, but it is to me! You don’t write, so it’s harder for you to understand.”

He crosses his arms over his chest as we walk, the chilled concrete sapping the warmth from my feet. “What made you think that I don’t write?”

Suddenly, all negativity evaporates. I can feel the twinkle in my eyes as I stop dead and turn to face him. “You write? Since when? I’ve never read anything you’ve written!”

“Well that’s on purpose. I don’t exactly crave the attention that you do.”

I let my eyes droop in disappointment. “Wow, just when I thought you could be exciting, you’re still boring as hell.”

He continues walking as I keep standing still. He looks back over his shoulder at me as he walks. “If I wasn’t boring, then I wouldn’t let you talk my ear off all the time. This is to your benefit, *Camille Collins*.”

I tilt my head up to the gray winter sky as I walk after him. “Ugh! You didn’t have to use my name like that, you know I hate it.”

“And that’s why I used it!” He smirks at himself. That deserves a punch to the arm. “Ow! Asshole…” He rubs the tender spot on his arm.

“Either bulk up those skinny chicken limbs, or shut your face, choose wisely.”

“I’ll take neither, please.”

“Then your chicken limbs will suffer.”

~

I scribble word after word in my notebook, none of them really making sense together. But that’s my process for you. None of my poems really start out like poems. It’s more like a game of scrabble if all the words were listed out. I cross out some words here, circle some there, finding the ones that speak to me the most. I get stuck on one word, “never.” It repeats over and over again, but I don’t know why. I write it over and over, hoping that writing it will somehow

shake it loose. As my hand frantically moves and my writing gets sloppier, a plate is set in front of me. I jump at the clang of the plate on the metal table.

"Lunch delivery for carrot top!" Grey takes his seat across from me as he unwraps his turkey sandwich from the paper. I close my notebook and slide it into my backpack. I can always finish my work later.

I open the cap on my water bottle to rehydrate. "Thanks, didn't even hear them call it." He's already chewing a mouthful when he responds, "Yeah, you looked a little absorbed in your thing. Didn't wanna disrupt genius in the process."

I gulp down some water as he talks, then cap and drop it into the void of my backpack. "Oh my, what a gentleman." Grey rolls his eyes at me as I start to unwrap my own sandwich, a so-called gourmet grilled cheese.

He swallows as I'm about to take my own first bite. "By the way, why did you barely exist during winter break? You responded to only one, maybe two, of my texts. Something happen?"

My sandwich suddenly doesn't look very appetizing. I place it back down on the plate to let the cold air eat it instead. I know I owe Grey an explanation as to why I didn't really talk to him over break, but I wish I didn't have to talk about it. Maybe he'll take something vague. "It was just… a lot of family stuff. Didn't have the best time."

He doesn't respond for a while, probably mulling over the meaning of the phrase "didn't have the best time." He chews on another bite of his sandwich as he processes.

"Sorry… That you had a bad time and for bringing it up. You don't have to tell me anything."

"It's alright. Just, y'know… a little rough."

I imagine he can feel the tension radiating from me because he just nods in response. But, the silence feels suffocating.

“Talia and I’s request to be roommates again worked out. Do you want to grab breakfast with us in the morning?”

A small smile graces his face. “Yeah, that sounds alright. You want to catch dinner tonight too?” He takes a bite out of his sandwich once again.

I sigh as the memory of my semester’s schedule flashes in my mind. “I wish, but I have late classes. Going from my 4 P.M. class straight to a long 6 P. M. class.” I lay my head down on my arms, already feeling my exhaustion. “Please pray for me.”

“To what god?”

“Yes.”

Chapter 2:

A bed is a girl’s best friend. Rather, my bed is my best friend, even surpassing Grey. I glance at the alarm clock on my right, arms too exhausted to wriggle my phone out of my pocket. 8:57 PM. The first day of school was easy, so why do I feel so tired? My mental exhaustion must be manifesting physically. I look past my alarm clock to my roommate’s bed. Talia told me this morning she’d be getting back late, so I’m not worried. I turn my eyes to the ceiling above me and try to think. That damn word is stuck in my head again. Never. Never what? It’s like there’s a raven in my head, but he’s leaving off the -more. The raven squawks over and over, never, never, never. I sit up in a flash, my hands flying to my ears as if to shut out all the noise. I don’t even realize I’m crying until the tears stream down my neck. I know that I know what “never” means. I just can’t say it. I can’t let it be real.

I turn onto my left side and hug my knees to my chest, ignoring the way the denim of my jeans pinches my skin. I squeeze my eyes shut and focus on the feeling of tears as they won't stop falling. The crying feels empty without ugly sounding sniffs and croaks. I feel empty. That emptiness follows me into my dream.

Is this what a coma feels like? Everything seems… hollow. I hear the beeps of a heart monitor, but it's as if the sound doesn't reach my ears. I feel the itch of hospital sheets, but the signals aren't going up my spinal column. It's like the hollow space can't be filled, no matter how hard I listen, no matter how much I focus on the feeling. I feel my body move, I'm clawing my way out of the hollow darkness, but I'm not really moving. How can I? I'm more dead than alive at this point. My breathing speeds up, but my chest doesn't rise. I'm collapsing in on myself, becoming even more hollow. I scream. Wake up! But I don't wake up. I'm being pulled even deeper. Wake up! My body chills. Is this how he feels?

"Wake up!"

My eyes shoot open as I bolt up in my bed, the itchy hospital sheets long gone. I clutch at my chest and feel my breathing and my heart rate. Both are much faster than they should be. I look up a little after catching my breath to see Talia standing next to my lofted bed, her face level with my own. Concern is written all over it. Great… Grey worrying about me is enough.

"You good, Cam? Actually, you know what, scratch that." She sits down on the side of my bed facing me. "I know you're not good, so just lay it on me."

My breathing slows down a little as she grabs my hand from my chest and holds in both of her own. If Grey's my best friend (sorry, bed), Talia is a close second. Grey is the one that understands the quieter side of me, but Talia is the one that pushes me out of my comfort zone, acting as my security blanket. She's gotten really good at the security blanket part. I keep my

eyes closed and focus on the warmth of her hands, desperately bringing myself back to reality.

I slowly pull my hand away and smooth my hair back out of my face, taking a deep breath in. It comes out again shaky. “Just a nightmare. I’ve been having them lately. This one was just… I guess heavy is a good word for it.” I open my eyes again to gauge her reaction. She still looks just as concerned.

“You gonna be good today?”

I nod in response as I swing my legs over the side of the bed to stand. I’m still in my jeans, and my skin is itching like crazy to get them off. “Yeah, I’ll be all good.”

It’s a lie more to myself than to her.

I walk over to my dresser and grab an outfit for today. “Mind if we skip the jog? Yesterday still has me exhausted. Gotta get back in the swing of things, yknow?” I look back at her.

Talia’s face looks less tense now, probably relaxed from seeing me act so casual. The dream is weighing on my mind like an anchor, but she doesn’t need to know that. She lets out a loud breath. “Yeah, that works out actually. I barely got any sleep. Didn’t get back till late.” She moves towards her own dresser.

“What were you doing? You never filled me in.” I lean back against the wall, letting my head fall on the solid surface. The motion makes me realize just how stiff my neck is, and I can feel the stiffness traveling through my whole body.

Talia grabs some clothes of her own. “Some of my friends from Women’s Studies threw a party disguised as a fundraiser. Technically they did still raise funds.”

“Sounds exhilarating.” I push off the wall and make my way toward the door to our suite bathroom. I listen for any running water and open the door when I hear none. “I’m gonna take a

quick shower, then we can head to breakfast. Can't leave the Grey-man waiting on us."

~

I'm two muffins in. Two banana nut muffins to be precise, and now I'm stabbing my fork into fruit as if my life depends on it. As I shove a slice of pineapple in my mouth, I feel eyes on me. I look up as the pineapple acid starts to sting my tongue and see that Grey and Talia are gawking at me. I chew my pineapple a little as I meet their stares. "What?"

One corner of Grey's mouth turns up in a half smile. "We literally sat down two minutes ago and you're eating like a gremlin."

I turn my head to face Talia as she speaks up. "Did you not get dinner last night?"

I finally swallow my pineapple and blindly stab another piece of fruit. "Does sleep for dinner count?"

A collective "No" comes from them both as Grey pinches the bridge of his nose.

I wave my fork around, forgetting about the piece of fruit on it, as I reason, "Well when I got back home, I was too tired to eat, so I just passed out." I stuff the fruit in my mouth—oh, it's watermelon—and keep talking around it. "Didn't even change out of my clothes." Part of this is true, but they don't need to know about the slight panic attack I had right before falling asleep.

Though to my distaste, Talia keeps nagging. "I doubt your sleep for dinner was enough since you're having nightmares…"

"You're having nightmares?" Grey questions in a deep and monotonous tone. It's the "disappointed dad" tone that he denies he even has in the first place. I've heard it way too many times over the past year. It always makes his questions sound like statements, like he is demanding an explanation, but he doesn't even realize it.

I sigh dramatically loud, and grumble out, "It's not a big deal, I don't even remember

what happens in them." Yeah, it's another lie. I'm probably digging myself a hole. But, I'd rather not have to spill my guts right now. Not when the semester just started. I stab another watermelon. "Y'all got nothing to worry about!"

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My 11am class today doesn't even make it 10 minutes before we're already excused. I mean, there isn't really much to do for a poetry workshop when it's the first day and no one has written anything yet. Hell, this class doesn't even have much of a syllabus. All Professor Whitley really says is, "Sign up for the day you want to submit writing, everyone will read it and have feedback ready, and then we'll go over it in the next class." He seems to be a man of very few words. I signed up to bring a piece two Tuesdays from now, so here I am, back at the same table I was yesterday as I scribble words in the very same notebook. I'm avoiding the word "never."

Anxiety.

Pit.

Crumble.

Suffocating.

Caught.

Stiff.

Caved in.

I cross them all out. No one needs to hear about how I'm barely hanging on. How dare my pen try to betray me like this?

I start over, this time trying to force positive thoughts.

Mystery.

Romance.

Hidden.

Cloaked.

Who are you?

Why do I care?

Stupid love.

Head in the clouds.

Irrational.

Searching.

Yeah. Now I'm getting somewhere. Something light and fluffy, just what my inner therapist ordered.

I hear a violent *buzz* against metal as my phone vibrates on the table. I lay my pen down in the crease of the notebook and pick up my phone, seeing a text from Talia.

Talia

When you get out of class, make sure you come to the quad so you can help out with the writing room booth! Your stunning looks are sure to draw in more students to participate 😉

My palm hits my forehead at that last comment. Talia goes overboard with the flattery a lot, and I still haven't gotten used to it. It's one of the reasons I love her, though. I check the time at the top of my phone. **11:35**. I haven't gotten lunch yet… But I still have half a muffin in my backpack, so I should be fine. I shove my pen in the pocket of my backpack and slip my notebook in with the rest of my books before standing up to make my way towards the quad. My fingers grip around the straps of my bag as I step along the patterned concrete slabs. The air isn't as cold today as it was yesterday, but it's still cool and crisp. I take in a deep breath to fill my

lungs with the numbing chill. *I wish it could be winter forever… Everything just feels so much more… fresh? Is that the word for it? Whatever, I'll find a better word later.*

Eventually, my feet carry me to the grass of the quad, cold and wet still from the midnight sprinklers. The booths lining the middle path are various colors, bringing the attention of students roaming the campus from class to class. I scan the line, looking for Talia's familiar face. Eventually, I find the back of her head. That's familiar enough, I guess. I start walking over to her, shoving my hands into the pocket of my hoodie to heat them up a bit. Maybe the air is chillier than I thought…

Talia must feel my presence approaching behind her, because she turns around to greet me. "Hell yeah, we got coverage!" She pulls me in for a hug as if we haven't seen each other in weeks, even though we saw each other just a few hours ago. She's always been very physical in her affection for friends. "You're a life-saver, Cam. I still need to eat lunch and I have a class starting at 12." She peels herself away from me as she grabs her bag from under the booth's table. "I'll come back over after my class. You don't have any other classes today, right?"

I shake my head. "Nope, I'm all done for today. You're lucky I love you and the writer's room so much."