

Song 20

Song 20 J Chop Mary Sue

The top queen bee looked from Ashton to me, back and forth a couple of times.

"Never mind," I said, chickening out even as I felt like grabbing her hair and smashing her perfect face on the table. "We were just leaving."

Ashton shook his arm off my hold and bent down to lean on their table. He looked at each girl in turn and finally rested his eyes on Madison.

"Is it true?" he asked.

She tilted her head. It sent her long golden hair into a cascade over her shoulder.

I fidgeted with my hands and looked around and cringed. Even if I ran away now the whole school would have already seen me in the middle of the mess.

"Is what true?" she asked.

Ashton's voice lowered and it gave me a shudder. "That you stole away Vera's clothes this morning?"

The girl's eyes widened to an almost impossible extent. Mine did, too. Not only because Ashton's voice sounded like he was capable of committing murder, but because he also had just outed me as the idiot who streaked this morning.

I slammed my elbow onto his side. "Gee, thanks for telling everybody that it was me!"

He grabbed his side in pain and looked at me with his entire face scrunched up. "I'm trying to help you."

"As usual, I really can't tell if you're helping me or making me sink deeper."

Madison stood up and I jumped. I'd almost forgotten that she was there. She looked me up and down, not with hostility but with pity. And I didn't know which was worse.

"Look, aside from reading the message that half of the school has read, I have no idea what you're talking about." Then she looked at her ex. "And frankly I'm offended that you'd think I was the person behind the prank. What do you think I am?"

Oh, I didn't know, a cheater? Cheaters had no regard for other people's feelings. Plus, the fact that she'd seemed so upset that Ashton kissed me made her a prime suspect for revenge.

A new voice joined us. Addy. "I don't know, the jealous ex? Not to mention, you had your minions, Thing 1 and Thing 2 over there do the same thing to me years ago." Said minions gasped in outrage.

Madison threw her hands up in the air. "I never asked them to do that!" When it was crystal clear that we didn't believe her she turned to her friends who looked down.

Thing 1 said, "Sorry." And she and her other friends looked genuinely like they were hoping Earth would swallow them whole.

I exchanged a glance with Addy. Her jaw was as unhinged as mine. I figured it was probably more shocking for her, after having gone for years resenting them over the episode.

Madison tossed her hair over her shoulder and folded her arms. She honestly looked hurt. "Why do you all keep assuming the worst of me?"

I could feel a headache forming on my temples, and we hadn't even started class yet.

"Wait," I said, lifting a hand up and drawing the attention to me. I didn't recoil from it this time. "If it wasn't you, then, who was responsible?"

We all started looking around, as if we'd be able to see a giant neon arrow pointing at the culprit. But life was never that easy, so-

And then I saw them, two girls a few tables away. They jumped out of their seats, grabbed their bags and ran away as though we'd snatched the truth out of them. They passed Quinn who was entering the cafeteria. He stood there stunned and as confused as everybody else, until Ashton screamed at him.

"Q, run after them!"

Without questioning why, Quinn turned around and ran out of the cafeteria like the devil was after him. I found myself following suit. After a few moments, between my hugs and puffs, I looked around me and found that I wasn't alone. Addy and Ashton flanked me, Lincoln had joined us and to my shock, so had the five queen bees.

But there was no time to wonder what the fuck was going on as we followed the trail of Quinn chasing the two girls all the way to the lake outside. I thought for a second that he was going to tackle them, but he just grabbed them by their shirts and forced them to stop if they didn't want the clothes to be ripped off of their back.

I caught up to them last, panting so much that the act of standing was the only thing I could do. It'd have been worse if Ashton didn't have me running on the treadmill every day.

He was actually the first one to recover. Ashton got all up in their grill as Quinn held them captive by their shirts. Now that my brain wasn't rattling inside my skull and I could see them up close, I recognized them. They were part of the orchestra. I didn't know their names but I knew they weren't seniors.

"You must have ran because you're guilty."

They just glared at him.

Addy took a step closer to them. I didn't know if it was her reputation or her size what made them shrink.

"Why did you do that to my friend?"

I couldn't believe it when they just scooped and admitted everything.

"She's so annoying," the one of the right side.

The other one added, "Everybody's fawning over her and treating her like some sort of genius, and she can't even learn the music without two boys helping her everyday."

I just looked around me to see if everybody was hearing the same thing I was. These two girls were jealous about me? About me having the attention of two boys?

I absolutely lost my shit then and started laughing. Everybody looked at me, no doubt getting to the same conclusion I just had.

"Ah, this is the most absurd thing I've seen in my life." I shook my head as I kept laughing. "What is it, are you jealous of people treating me nice or about me hanging out with boys?"

They didn't reply to my question, just glared.

Link snorted. "Imagine if they'd seen you kiss Ashton."

A second later he was howling in pain, since I stepped on his foot with all my strength.

I walked to the girls and asked them, "Did you take pictures?"

The first one rolled her eyes. "Of course not, we're not stupid."

"Then give me back my clothes, apologize and get over yourselves."

They looked away, refusing to acknowledge my request. I looked back at the others, raising my hands as if in question. If you asked me, it wasn't a ridiculous request. What I really wanted to do was knock their heads against each other and drag them to the headmistress's. This was much better and I hoped that if they saw I wasn't a total bitch they'd just leave me alone.

Quinn had apparently put two and two together at that point and shook them a bit. "I guess since they won't apologize the only thing we can do is take them to the Mother Superior."

"No, please," the first one of them broke. "We won't do it again."

"And?" Ashton asked, folding his arms. I could tell they had trouble looking at him, and at me, when they muttered shitty apologies.

"You're not seriously going to let them go after they humiliated Vera, are you?" Addy asked us, incredulous. "What they did was a serious offense. They should be expelled."

"I agree," I said, viciously enjoying the panic on their faces. "But I'll be straight up. Everybody here knows what they did. If they try something else any of us will be able to run and tell."

Madison smiled at me. Which was a first.

"And by letting them go, they'll be in your debt," she said. "Clever."

"Thank you?" I asked, because I wasn't sure anything coming from her to me was ever a compliment.

"Christina Brownstone and Jackeline DiMarco." The two girls paled as Lincoln said what I assumed were their names. Then he recited two addresses and smiled. "We know where to find you."

Quinn let them go and they scrambled away. I saw a bunch of people peering at our group from the windows and doors leading outside. But then I looked back at Link.

"How did you know their addresses?"

He smirked. "I Googled them while you all were playing good cop bad cop."

Addy put her hands on her hips, radiating displeasure with every breath. "I don't think you did the right thing."

To everybody's shock, Madison sauntered over to me and gave me a friendly pat on my shoulder.

"Welcome to Trinity." She then snapped her fingers at her girls and said, "Let's go, we'll be late to class."

I made contact with Addy and the boys, willing them to explain to me all that had just happened.

Ashton bumped his arm against mine as we headed back into the building. "Told you we'd help."

Lincoln and Quinn high fived me.

By the time we made it into the classroom we were all grinning like we shared a secret.

It felt almost like... we were friends.

SONG OF THE DAY: System of A Down - Chop Suey!