Fog.

Thick, heavy clouds clung to Emma’s head as she cracked her eyes open the next morning. She tried to lift her head, but it dropped right back onto the pillow like it weighed fifty pounds.

*What… happened?*

Emma tried to piece together the fragments of last night, but everything blurred like a dream—one big, *strange*, shimmery dream.

If not for the crackling smell of bacon wafting under her door, Emma might’ve stayed there all day, motionless beneath her covers. But that smell—*that glorious smell*—could wake Sleeping Beauty without the prince.

With more effort than should’ve been humanly required, Emma rolled onto her side and pushed herself upright. Her bedroom tilted and swayed.

*Seriously… what the heck happened after*—

A flash hit her—Miss Everdeen’s depthless eyes staring straight into her, dark and endless, like she was standing right there in the room.

Emma shook her head hard until her vision steadied. The image vanished. Just her bedroom door again.

She lifted her fingertips to her cheek—cold, as if they’d been brushed with ice.

*Food,* she thought. *I need food.*

Like a penguin, Emma shuffled her way to the kitchen, possibly bumping into the wall once or twice.

“Well, well, well… look who the cat dragged in. I thought you might never wake.”

Emma didn’t have it in her to retort. She just pulled out a chair at the kitchen table and plopped into it.

“Woah,” her dad said, quirking his head as he unloaded sizzling bacon from the pan onto a plate piled with fluffy eggs. “No snarky response?”

Emma pinned him with a look as he handed her the plate, then shoveled food into her mouth like she hadn’t eaten in three days.

“Late night?” her dad joked, leaning against the counter with his arms crossed.

Emma’s eyes widened—but only for a second before she masked it with a dramatic sigh. “Stayed up reading later than I should have. Still shaking off the cobwebs.”

Dad narrowed his eyes. “Reading, huh?”

“Uh-huh.”

She could feel his gaze still on her. Tired of people staring through her lately, she shot him a look. He didn’t back down.

“You’re a terrible liar, you know that?”

Emma huffed. “Am not.”

Dad tilted his head. “ ‘Am not’ as in you’re not lying, or ‘am not’ as in you’re not a terrible liar?”

Emma pressed her lips together while he smiled.

“Both.”

“Right… your eyebrow twitches when you’re fibbing, you know.” He chuckled, turning back to clean the kitchen. “Just like your mother,” he murmured.

The sound seemed to vanish from the room. Emma stilled, fork halfway to her mouth. Her dad stood still for a heartbeat too long, then busied himself with the pan on the stove as time resumed.

“So, uh… any plans for the day?” Dad asked, clearing his throat like he could cough the moment away.