

# Chapter 1

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## **A Hopeful Start**

Wednesday, September 21st:

The sharp ring of my alarm jolted me out of a restless night, I could feel my heart beat every second and I didn't even get a second of sleep in. I spent the entire night lost in thought and picturing different scenarios for today, hoping that it'd be the fresh start I needed at a new school. I got up and tip-toed sneakily into the bathroom careful not to wake my mum up, her morning crankiness was the last thing I needed today. I stood in front of the mirror; staring at my reflection revising all the dreams I hoped to achieve for that year from the many friends I would make and the amazing love story I hoped to have. Abandoning all logic and rationality, all I hoped for was a perfect fairytale. As I was brushing my teeth, my mother's alarm rang. It had that aggravating ringtone that I hated, I complained about it before but I always got shot down as according to my mum 'as long as it gets the job done who cares'. I quickly finished up and made my back before she got up, I tried to avoid her as much as possible that morning. My uniform glowed with its bright white colour in my wardrobe. As I put it on I sensed a real change and couldn't help but gaze at myself in the mirror, it felt odd; over my whole life, I remember wearing dark colours for school and I always hated how miserable it felt with a huge frown in these ever-dark clothes, but right now all I could see was hope like I

was more alive. A couple of minutes later, I heard my mum call my name. "Edward, are you ready dear?" she said in an enthusiastic voice. "Good morning mum," I said quietly. "Are you excited about your first day? I packed your favourite lunch!" she said. I smiled and thanked her. "She is awfully happy this morning." I wondered it was honestly quite energizing seeing her happy smile and excited tone, it helped develop the sense of hope I had. Anyway, about 10 minutes later I was in the car staring out of the window and trying to soothe my nerves to some quiet tunes. The closer we got to school the more I could feel my heart get louder, even my mum could feel it. She kept trying to initiate small talk and make jokes but I just nodded or barely answered. The car ride felt like an hour, a torture punishment, thankfully it was done and we were now at my new school; Wonder Sprout Academy. "Have a nice day honey!" my mum yelled with her wide smile as I got out of the car. I just chuckled and waved her goodbye. The moment I went through the gate, my palms got sweatier and I felt my heart burst out of my chest. I looked around me and saw everyone greet each other, talk, and make jokes, the sense of loneliness momentarily crossed my mind until I heard someone yell my name. "Edward!" Her ecstatic chatter and fun jokes helped ease my mind a bit, even though we only knew each other for about a year, it felt like forever. Honestly, talking to her did help cool my anxiety down a little and I felt refreshed a bit. A few minutes later, one of the school supervisors came and started hanging the class list. Everyone rushed over there like a horde while Maria and I just stood back waiting for them to leave so we could check where we were placed. The only thought that drowned my mind was hoping that we'd be placed together. Seeing our names separated, my heart sank and I felt it shatter. Maria's reassurance was genuine even if not helpful. After that awful moment, we had to separate as our classes were on two opposite sides of the building. I got up to the 3rd floor and stood outside my new class, "This is it," I took out a huge sigh, brushed my awful past experience, and went in. A couple of people were already sat down so I had quite a few spots to choose, but I ultimately decided on the second row right next to the windows. sat by the window, each new face raising my hopes for a potential friend. But one by one, they chose other seats, leaving the spot next to me conspicuously empty. I even saw that one of my old classmates was in the same class, too. I guess I had been so preoccupied thinking about Maria that I just didn't read anything else. I thought that was the worst of it, but as usual life had other plans. Suddenly, I saw Sandra, my ex from freshman year, enter through the door. My jaw

nearly dropped and I just wanted to escape. We weren't exactly on talking terms due to some of our issues and her presence didn't help the day at all. "This surely can't get any worse right?" I muttered as I had my hand on my head. Yet again, life hits hard when we least expect it and I found out we were having Biology; my most hated subject, as our first lesson and that was the last nail in the coffin that shattered the fantasy I had of today. I wanted to scream, but I just kept repeating to myself how this was only a couple of lessons then I would meet Maria at lunchtime. After a few soul-crushing lessons, it was finally lunch and I finally got to see Maria. I rushed out of the classroom and into the dining hall as fast as humanly possible. I scanned the crowd for Maria and the second I spotted her I rushed over "How did it go?" she asked. I sighed and then went on a ramble about how horrible it was. She was hysterical, but I didn't care I was finally with a human being that I could talk to. While talking, a couple of people walked up to us and greeted her. I asked her about them and she just said 'Oh! These are just a few friends from class,' Maria said. 'That was fast,' I thought, but then again, Maria always made friends easily. I didn't give it much attention before we continued talking. After lunch, I was back to the misery I was in. I just pushed through the next couple of lessons till the bell rang. I didn't have to push through a lot since the school was offering us half a school day for the first 2 weeks as a part of their "Welcome Back to School event." I didn't care about any of the things that they were giving away, I just wanted to be done and out as soon as possible. As soon as the bell rang, I packed my stuff and rushed out of the door hoping I could catch Maria on her way down. To my luck as usual today, she was already gone. I texted her to see where she was, and she had already left a few minutes earlier. I just sent her an 'ok' and then made my way on the stairs thinking about that god-awful day when someone nudged my shoulder, "Is this yours?" It was someone from my class. I turned around and saw a short brunette girl from my class giving me my Chemistry notes. I guess I was in such a hurry to catch Maria that I completely forgot them and left. "Yes, yes they are.." I replied and thanked her. "No worries, I'm Emma; Emma Fiske." She said with a smile on her face. "Hello, I'm Edward, thanks again for returning that I can't believe how careless I was," I replied awkwardly. "No worries I'm happy to help, also aren't you that new kid? We could walk and I'll show you around!" "Hmmmm..." I was hesitant. "Come on it'll be fun I promise." After much convincing I agreed and we started walking. Her face glowed while speaking and it was truly impressive it also made me a little jealous as I only

dreamt about speaking like that. It's usually extremely difficult for me to get used to people let alone talk to them, but talking to her felt so natural, something I rarely get to feel. "And this is our humble football pitch, you'll mostly find mostly idiots or our football team playing here after school." She said laughingly. "And that concludes our tour, do you have any questions?" she added. "No thank you for this little tour and the fun chat," I replied back. "No problem, Then I'll see you tomorrow." she said "Yes yes sure" I replied awkwardly. She walked away saying goodbyes and I waved back awkwardly. "Guess this wasn't a total failure of a first day, huh." I wondered with a faint smile. As I was leaving, the football team was done with their football match and leaving, too. I peeked at them just to see who the people I'll try to avoid at all times and saw them all huddled around one guy. I tried to see who it was from a different angle so I could avoid him at all costs. It was a tall guy with brown hair and faint brown eyes, the typical high school football player. He did notice me looking at him and just smiled, I just gave my annoyed face and left. I don't like people like him because I got harassed by people like him for years, so I just left. Later, at dinner with my parents and brother, my parents asked "So how was your first day?" My mum asked. "Yes, I'm really excited to know, too." My father added. "Fine," I answered vaguely. "Come on spill the beans, was it just as magical as you hoped." my mother teased me. I chuckled and gave them a few details about my day, I didn't want to add any more details about today and we continued dinner. Later that night while studying, I lost my thoughts wondering about my upcoming days and revisiting my odd day. I mean in a way it was a failure but at least I talked to someone. I couldn't brush off Emma's warm welcome and I hoped wed talk again soon; I enjoyed her company more than I thought. Lying in bed, I hoped that the upcoming days would be better. "If not at least I have Maria, right?" I wondered. I turned off my night light and then went to sleep. "What a day for my new beginning huh, I wonder what else could happen this year," I said jokingly before dozing off.