Jester- protector/persecutor

Lillia- child alter

Rose- caregiver alter

Jerome- host alter

Echo- day alter

Chapter 1: 5 in 1

A pale thin stream of light fluttered through the crack in the curtains casting a dim glow on vibrant green walls. The floor was covered in an array of clothes, books, flowers(some fresh and some dried), and papers. The whole room seemed as if it had been torn apart except the bed. In the left corner of the room there was a large nest of pillows and blankets laying atop the bed. A soft knock shattered the silence eating up the room. The only response was a minor shifting of pillows and blankets as if someone was burrowing deeper into the nest. There was no warning when the door opened allowing the room to flood with light.

“Time to get up kid.” A deep grumbly voice snapped. The only reply the old man received was a grunt from the pile of blankets. There was a pause for a few moments before the elder spoke again.

“I mean it Jerome. You know I’m not opposed to pouring ice in your bed.”

Blankets flew from the bed as Jerome sat up in a huff. His fluffy blond hair was in utter disarray.

A single ice blue eye glared across the disastrous room at the tall gray haired man standing in the doorway. Short blond hair whipped around as the boy shook his head no.

“Jerome, We talked about this…” The old man sighed and ran a hand through his balding hair. Jerome continued to glare at the old, his arms crossed and a look of defiance shining brightly in his eye.

“Kid.. Come on, School isn’t that bad. It’ll be over before you know it. Then you can come mope around here or do whatever the hell you do when I’m not here.”

Jerome’s glare wavered for a moment before he dramatically threw his blanket on the ground. He made a show of getting out of bed and going over to his closet.

“Drama queen.” The old man scoffed and turned to leave. Jerome kept his back to the door waiting for the sound of his door clicking shut. The blond nodded silently to himself and shuffled around the dark room. He knelt near his closet and let his hand brush along the wall looking for an outlet. His boney fingers ghosted over the smooth plastic before he blindly shoved his christmas lights into the outlet. The room was cast in a warm dim glow. It took a moment for the blond’s eye to adjust to the comforting glow. Once he could see Jerome riffled through his closet looking over his section of clothes. Old man Weathers had taken them shopping when they first arrived. Jerome didn’t remember much after he picked out a few outfits for himself. He woke up the next day with a closet full of 4 different styles of clothes and a journal tucked neatly under his pillow. There had been a new entry on the first page. A feminine scrawl explaining the events of the day and assuring Jerome that he would be safe here. Much safer than where they had been anyway.

Jerome had tried asking where they had been before this but Rose and Jester would tell him *“Don’t worry about it darling..” “That’s not information little birds like you should have.”*

Eventually his questions changed to why he could only remember bits and pieces of their past, but those questions were also dodged. Lila had been taking them on walks around the house though they never strayed from the garden. The past month had been a blur for the ice blue eyed male. Rose and Lila seemed to be the two out the most thought Jester would appear and push the old man’s buttons every now and again. Jerome had no actual memories of this, only what was told to him by the system. Whenever one of the others would take over Jerome would have gaps in his memories. The more time they spent here the more time he was able to retain. By the third week of staying with Old Man Weathers he had established a sense of normal. Rose would make their meals and clean up Jerome would get to eat breakfast and spend some time drawing or reading. Lila would eat lunch and go for a walk in the garden. She and Jerome would take turns watching the sunset before turning in for the night. Jester had calmed down after the first few weeks, he stopped forcing his way out as often, content to watch the others enjoy themselves until he was needed.

“JEROME THE BUS IS HERE!”Weathers called breaking Jerome from his thoughts. The ice blue eyed male huffed and grabbed a sweater and pulled it over his shaggy blond mop. He didn’t bother changing from his pj bottoms, simply grabbed the green canvas bag that held his things and ran out the door. He paused on his way out to glance in the mirror and cover his sightless left eye with bangs. As the door slams behind him his bare feet dig into the soft ground pushing him forward towards the road. He came to a stop at the edge of the road, his eye locked on the approaching vehicle. Anxiety swirled in the pit of his stomach and he gripped the strap on his bag tightly. He had never been on a bus before, at least he never remembered being on a bus. He was pretty sure none of them had ever been on a bus, or to school before. Old man Weathers had said it was a place for him to make friends and learn. Jerome had been hesitant but had agreed to give it a try despite Jester’s protests. Rose and Lila thought it would be nice for them to get see more of the world. Jerome was more worried that he didn’t know what to expect.

The giant faded yellow bus stopped in front of the blue eyed boy. He fidgeted with the strap of his bag as the doors creaked open. Jerome hesitantly climbed onto the bus and was greeted warmly by the bus driver, though all he could focus on was the chaos in the background. The bus was filled with chatter and the occasional shout. The back of the bus appeared to be packed with children. The blond shuffled through the aisle, deciding on an empty seat near the front of the bus away from the chaos. Once he was seated the bus lurched forward and began to move. The blond glanced around nervously at all the kids on the bus, silently wondering why he had agreed to try school.

*“It’ll be okay jerome. We’re right here with you.”* Lila said softly from the back of his mind. Her voice was soft and friendly. The small reassurance from did wonders on Jerome’s general anxiety. She was right he wasn’t alone. He would always have the others watching out for him.

“Thanks Lila.” Jerome whispered softly. The bus lurched to a stop pulling jerome out of his thoughts when his forehead connected with the seat in front of him. The blue eyed boy groaned and rubbed his forehead as he climbed off the bus. He followed the mass of students heading towards the front of the school and tried to focus on finding his way to the office instead of all the people surrounding him. Thankfully there was a large sign on a door to his left that read *Main Office*. He sighed in relief as the sounds of chaos faded behind the door.

“Can I help you?” A chipper voice asks drawing the blond's attention. Behind the desk before him there stood a tall brunette woman looking at him with a grin that didn’t quite reach her sharp green eyes.

“Uh.. I-I’m new. T-today is m-my first day, I w-was told t-to come here t-to get my schedule.” Jerome stuttered out in reply. His hands went to fidget with the hem of his purple sweater.

“Oh yes of course, What’s your full name?” The woman asked turning her attention to the laptop in front of her.

“J-Jerome Valentine”

Jerome watched as the woman’s fingers flew across the keyboard before going across the room to the printer. She returned a moment later offering the blond a pink sheet of paper. Jerome accepted the paper with a small nod of his head before he practically ran from the room. He froze on the other side of the door when he saw the mass of students filling the hallway. His chest tightened and it got hard to breath as he stumbled back. He could faintly hear someone asking if he was okay though he wasn’t sure he managed to respond. He felt himself start sinking down, his back pressed to the door. Slowly his vision began to fade and he squeezed his eyes shut, Shakey hands tugging lightly at his hair.

A moment later the blond uncurled from position against the door. A warm hazel eye scanned her surroundings. Jerome had been freaking out, so Lila took point allowing the boy sleep while she dealt with what he couldn’t. There was a short pink haired girl standing in front of them blocking the blond from view.

“Are you okay?” The girl asked softly her eyes full of worry and concern.

“Yes. We just…” Lila paused trying to explain what just happened. “ We’re new.”

The pink haired girl’s eyes softened and she offered them a warm smile. “It’s scary being in a new place. If you want I can help you to your classes.”

“If it’s not too much trouble.” Lila replied returning the girls smile and stood slowly.

“My names Melina, by the way.” The pinkett hummed.

“I’m Lila.” The hazel eyed alter replied.

“What’s your first class?” Melina asked as she knelt and grabbed the pink paper Jerome had dropped in his panic.

“Oh you have English with Mr.Moore. His classroom is near my first class.” Melina chirped and reached out taking Lila’s hand. The blond had little time to reply as she was dragged along by Melina. The pair walked in a comfortable silence, sticking to the outer edges of the halls. As they got deeper into the school the mass of students started to thin out, allowing some breathing room.

“Gosh there sure are a lot of students here.” Lila muttered glancing back at the swarm of students in the main hall.

“I guess. I never really thought about it. Were there few students at your last school?” Melina asked

“We’ve never been to school.” Lila replied looking around. There were posters dotting the hall in between the open doors leading to classrooms. The blond was so absorbed in their inspection of the hall they didn’t realize when Melina stopped. Lila blushed lightly and smiled at the pinkett.

“Here we are, Mr.Moore’s class.” Melina stated with a grin. She dropped Lila’s hand took a few steps back.

“I’ve got to head to my first class but I could show you around later if you want.” The pinkette hummed.

“Yeah, that would be great Melina. Thank you.” Lila chirped excitedly. They were only ten minutes into their first day of school and they already had friend! Jerome would be so happy.

*“Slow your roll Lila. We don’t even know this girl. It’s the nice ones you’ve got to watch out for.”* Jester snapped in the back of their mind. The hazel eyed Alter ignored him and waved as Melina left. Once Melina was around the corner Lila took a deep breath and walked into Mr.Moore’s english class. The room was dotted with students, a soft chatter filling the room. There was a tall man standing in front of the white board in the front of the room. He had dark hair that was peppered with bits of gray. A pair of thin wire glasses sat low on the bridge of his nose. Lila paused in the doorway for a moment taking in the calm atmosphere of the classroom.

“Can I help you?” Mr.Moore asked looking them over.

“I’m your new student.” Lila replied shyly. She didn’t like talking to adults, they were hard for here to read and in the past often betrayed her trusting nature making her more hesitant around them.

“Oh right Jerome Valentine. Well just take a seat anywhere and I will get you the assignments we’ve been working on.” Mr.Moore replied gesturing to the sea of desks filling up the rest of the classroom. Lila set her bag under a desk that was dead center of the front row. Mr.Moore returned a moment later and set a packet of papers on her desk.

“Mr.Valentine where are your shoes?” He asked eyeing the blonde's bare feet.

“I uh…. Forgot them?” She replied avoiding eye contact with the sharp blue eyes of the teacher. She hadn’t forgotten them Jerome had, and he most likely forgot voluntarily.Jerome had always had a problem with wearing shoes; he complained that you couldn’t feel the energy of the world with shoes on.

“Well it’s a school policy that Students to wear shoes. Don’t forget again or else you’ll get a citation.” Mr.Moore replied with a flat look before returning to what he had been writing on the board.

Lila sighed and closed her eyes rubbing her forehead. She wasn’t interested in sitting through Jerome’s classes for him, or getting lectured for his carelessness, but the blue eyed boy was still tucked away in their mind unwilling to come forward. She could faintly hear Rose trying to coax him out for her but the hazel eyed alter doubted Jerome would be out anytime soon. The sound of the bell jolted Lila from her thoughts. The room flooded with students and Mr.Moore started speaking as soon as the door shut a few minutes later. Lila sighed and rested her chin in her hand. She gave some attention to what was happening in class though she didn’t particularly care. The class passed painstakingly slow however, halfway through Jerome made his reappearance.

The blue eyed male blinked into awareness when Lila drifted off through Mr.Moore’s speech on the importance of reading into the text and looking for a deeper meaning. Panic set in for a moment until he looked down and saw the neat loopy handwriting of Lila.

*English class have fun-L*

Jerome ran his hands through his hair and sighed in relief. By the time he had calmed down to give his attention to what was happening the bell had rang. He watched as the mass of students emptied the room in a matter of seconds. He stood slowly and made his way over to the door. Melina was waiting just outside the classroom for her new friend. She was chatting with a friend from her last class and almost missed the distinctive blond slip out of the room. She waved to her friend and ran after Jerome.

“Hey Lila!” She called coming to a stop beside the boy. Jerome glanced at the pinkett confused for a moment before a look of realization crossed his face. Lila must have introduced herself to this girl.

“I uh…. Sorry but….” Jerome forze and bit his lip unsure what to say. How would he even explain that there were other people living in his head with him.

Melina watched the blond stutter and freeze. She noted the apparent fear in his now ice blue eye. The pinkett paused a moment at this and began inspecting the boy closely. She noted the subtle difference in the way he held himself. Before he had seemed more confident, now he seemed almost a shell of the person she had met that morning. Melina reached out hesitantly to place her hand on Jerome’s arm, only for the boy to flinch away from her.

Jerome could feel the panic grip his chest making it almost impossible to breath. He wasn’t ready for school. This was too much, he wanted to leave, he *needed* to leave. The hallway around the pair had cleared though Jerome took no notice. His chest tightened, his blood rushing in his ears. He didn’t even realize when he fell to the floor. His eyes squeezed shut as a sharp pain formed between his eyes. A moment later sharp emerald eyes snapped open glaring daggers at the pinkett standing before them.

“Buzz off little bee." Jester snapped before jumping up from the floor. " I'm outta here."

"Wait! What the hell?! What was that? You were practically having a heart attack a minute ago!”

“You wouldn’t understand! You’ll only end up hurt us in the end. Lila should have never spoken with you!” Jester spat as he spun on his heel. The green eyed alter ran his hand through his blond hair pushing it back out of his face, revealing a long pink scar stretching from his eyebrow to his cheekbone. Melina stood frozen for a moment before she took off running after the blond.

“Wait stop!” She called and reached out to grab his shoulder. Jester whipped around grabbing her wrist and twisting her arm at an awkward angle. Her big doe eyes widened in fear for a second before morphing into a sort of understanding look. He glared at her for several moments before a low chuckle escaped his lips. It grew into a twisted laughter that filled the hall. When the laughing died down he pretended to wipe a tear from his sightless eye.

“Whew! Your hilarious pinky.” Jester said as he released her wrist and took on a patronizing smile. “Listen kid, you’ve got spunk. I like that. You don’t want to get mixed up with us. We are a walking bag of crazy.”

A pout crossed Melina’s face as she watched the blond turn and leave again. This time she didn’t try to stop him, she simply watched with a look of deep contemplation.

A scowl quickly crosses the blonds face as he heads towards the exit. His bare feet slap against the linoleum, echoing through the halls.

“*You can’t just leave Jester”* Rose scolded as the green eyed alter continued towards the closest exit.

“Watch me.” Jester snapped in reply. He shoved the door open and walked out into the warm summer air.

*“We told Mr.Weathers we would at least try school.”*

“Yeah well we can ‘try’ again tomorrow.” The green eyed alter snapped his voice full of anger and disgust. He heard an exasperated sigh from the back of their mind and scowled.

“Screw you Rose.” He snapped and headed towards home. It was a long walk to the old man’s house from school. Jester had no idea why they lived so far from the town. It was annoying really. They had gone from one captive situation to another.

*“You know that’s not true.”*  Rose muttered breaking Jester’s train of thought.

“Would you just shut up!” He shouted fisting his hands in their blond hair. “We went from being locked up in a mansion to being confined to a little house.”

*“Yes but we are allowed to leave Mr.Weather’s house.”*

“Then why don’t we ever leave? We left for school and look how that turned out! we haven’t left for anything else!” Jester snapped before continuing his angry march home.

*“It’s dangerous to leave. We have no idea what it’s like outside those walls. It’s dangerous for us to even be wandering home like this. You’re so reckless.”*

“LALALALALALALALALA I CAN’T HEAR YOU!” Jester shouted trying to block out the other alter. The rest of the walk home consisted of Jester belting out nonsense trying to ignore the anger and fear from Rose. Jerome and Lila weren’t conscious, after their eventful morning they both needed a break.

Instead of entering the house, Jester walked around to the backyard and threw their bag over the fence into the garden. The green eyed alter had no intention of sitting around getting lectured for leaving school. This was his first time hosting in almost a week, he was going to do something fun. Jester walked to the tree line and glanced back at the house, seeing Mr.Weathers looking out the window at him.

Jester smirked and stuck his tongue out at the old man before he took off running through the forest. He ran as far and fast as he could. The wind whipped through their blond locks, his lungs burned and his muscles ached but Jester refused to let that stop him. When he got to a lone willow sitting in the center of a field of daisies and daffodils the green eyed alter slowed to a stop. He hung in the tree line watching the warm summer breeze ghost through the hanging vines. There was something about the tree that made it different than the others surrounding it. It was almost like it was calling to them. Jester hesitated before walking out into the field. He stopped when he reached the curtain of vines before parting it with both hands. On the other side there was a tall dark skinned male with chocolate colored dreadlocks. Upon closer inspection Jester noted the leaves and willow vines neatly weaved into his hair. Electric green eyes met a singular deep emerald eye. Jester took a defensive stance and glared at the man. The man had a curious gleam in his eyes as he looked them over.

"Hi there!" The man hummed his voice