“Good morning, Princess!” a cheerful voice echoes through the bedchambers.

Through the newly opened curtains shines the bright sun, ensuring no sleep could ever be had again in the spacious room that borders the bountiful gardens of the royal quarters.

That’s how it seems, at least – and yet, as it is in mankind’s very nature to struggle against nature and its courses, I choose also to struggle against my fate. Closing tightly my eyes, I speak out to the world in protest, ‘five more minutes…’

‘Geez,’ the voice exclaims, ‘it feels like very morning is your first time waking up. I’m almost jealous of whatever’s in those dreams of yours.’

‘Isn’t it obvious? I dream of a world free of war and pain - where hunger is but a distant concept, and the children run happily through the fields without a care in the world. In that dream, that exists only through my ability to experience it, happiness is but a given for its inhabitants. Would I then not be the cruelest mistress, were I to end that paradise?’

‘If you’re awake enough to reason, then you’re awake enough to get up!’

As the warmth of my blankets suddenly disappears, I’m forced to face the hard reality of the world – that mankind’s struggle is ultimately futile.

“I can’t believe you’d do this to them, Suzy,” I say, as I sleepily throw me legs over the side of the bed, before standing up and stretching my arms out.

“It’s not my fault you have to get up in the morning!” she responds, as she jumps over and starts working on my nightgown. “What dress would you like today?”

“Whatever you choose, Suzy. No one could make me look more dazzling than you.”

“Oh, Princess!” She says, “You flatter me.”

“It’s not flattery, Suzy. And won’t you just call me Anne?”

I can see flusteredness(?) turn to hesitancy as she parses my words.

“But, I couldn’t possibly, Princess – I’m just a chambermaid.”

I softly put both of my hands on Suzy’s face.

“Suzy,” I say, trying to lower my voice, in hope’s my sincerity will come through, “you are so much more than just a chambermaid. You’re the one who’s been there for me the most, with everything that’s happening. If nothing else, it’s your smile that gets me through every day.

“So, please – to satisfy my selfishness, at least – call me Anne.”

I guess my little speech got through to her as she – with a slightly strained(?) smile – responds, ‘Okay, Anne.’

“Thank you,” I say, as I start to lightly stroke her hair. A few moments of serenity pass, before the I start to feel the effects of the morning breeze coming through the newly opened windows.

A shiver passes through my body.

“Are you cold, Anne?” Suzy asks.

“What gave it away?”

“Well,” Suzy exclaims as she breaks from my hold and returns to her usual demeanor, “Has this dazzler here got something just for you then!”

She pulls out some fucking shit idk.

I give her a questioning look.

“You picked that out before you even walked inside, didn’t you?”

With a mischievous look – and without an answer – she dresses me, before pulling me along to the beautifully ordained mirror that stood almost as a focal point in my bedchambers’ design. (🡨 needs more attention)

It was important to me, after all.

“See, isn’t it beautiful?” Suzy asks, referring to the dress. “You look gorgeous again today, Anne.”

“It really is beautiful,” I respond, referring to the mirror, as a feeling of sentimentality washes over me. “Thank you, Suzy.”

“Oh shush,” Suzy says, looking oddly embarrassed.

Then, she lets out a wide yawn.

“Pardon me,” she says, looking even more embarrassed.

“Are you getting enough sleep, Suzy?”

She responds with a small nod.

“You’re always working so hard around here.”