

Chapter 1

Louis was scared. Or was he excited? He couldn't tell; the well of emotions in his stomach was tossing and turning like waves crashing against a ship. Tentatively, he reached across the armrest and gently placed his arm on top of hers, their fingers slowly interlocking into a warm embrace that just felt *right*.

It all started at the beginning of the year when he had walked into his first English class to come face to face with the most gorgeous girl he'd ever seen. Sitting at the back of the class, the legs of her chair slightly raised off the floor, was Rose Hadley. Although her outfit was nothing glamorous, just a black crop top and some well fitting gray jeans complemented by a statement pair of hot pink sneakers, Louis was taken aback by the mere sight of her. She radiated a youthful vigour that lit up the room. He remembered his friend Moana mentioning her last year, something about a trampoline, but he had never seen her in person.

She dramatically brushed her hair out of her face revealing her electrifying teal eyes that lingered on his for just long enough for them to both look away out of embarrassment. Hurrying to his seat to stop blocking the door, he took a chair close to the

window. Although he enjoyed English sometimes he couldn't help himself from staring out into the clouds to pass the time. Unfortunately when Mr. Mossbowpitt walked in he quickly realised he would not be privy to that luxury this year.

"Alright! Settle down, settle down." rumbled a teacher clearly displeased with the class he'd been assigned. "I see some new faces among us and some old ones" He glared barely concealed daggers at the back of the class. "So let me introduce myself: I am Jonah Mossbowpitt and I will be your English language and literature teacher for the year. For those unfamiliar with my teaching style I make it a point that I do not slow down for those that cannot keep up." He leaned back on his desk in way that was anything but casual. "It is your job as students to be attentive and invested in the material."

As Mr. Mossbowpitt drawled on about the year ahead Louis thought to himself that a too intense teacher was better than one not intense enough. He shuddered thinking back to last year when he spent most of his English classes doodling on his notebook or scrolling on his phone.

Almost subconsciously, he kept sneaking glances back at Rose. He wasn't sure what it was about her but he was enamoured. The way the light caught on her hair like sun rays glistening in between the leaves of a tree was stunning. She giggled at at something the guy next to her said and her face trying to stifle

her laughter was the cutest thing Louis had ever seen. She was just so effortlessly attractive that it almost intimidated him. Realising he'd completely zoned out, he was called back to reality by the ringing of the familiar bell. His bag in hand, he made sure to tell Mr. Mossbowpitt on the way out that he was excited to in his class this year. "Can't hurt to be on his good side." He thought to himself. He hurried to join his friends outside.

It all started when at the beginning of the year where Rose was sitting at the back of the class when the most adorable guy she'd ever seen walked through the door of her English class. He wore a fashionable deep blue sweater over white t-shirt that was neatly tucked into his light beige slacks completed with a pair of dark brown loafers. He was the spitting image of light academia: understated elegance. He donned a warm smile that melted Rose's heart like few ever had. His cheery demeanour, rosy cheeks and kind eyes lit up the room.

As she cleared her hair from her face their eyes met from across the room, freezing him in his tracks. Whether a second or a minute passed she could not tell. The ambient chatter around her faded away since to her there were only two people in the room right now. Realising she was being creepy staring into a random persons eyes, she quickly turned away at the same time he did. He hurried to take a seat by the window halfway across the room.

Finally Rose's English teacher from last year entered the classroom. He clearly remembered her from last year judging by the judgemental gaze he gave her as he started his usual start of year spiel. She hadn't exactly been a model student last year to say the least but she was hoping to turn over a new leaf this time around. Having heard his speech before, she spent a lot of the hour looking at back of this guy's head, at his luscious hazel hair and his robust posture. She couldn't help but notice that he kept discreetly casting glances in her direction making her blush. Evidently Max, who was sitting next to her, caught these too because he leaned towards her and whispered: "I think that guy is trying to figure out why your eyelashes are painted with crushed smurfs."

She tried her very hardest to stifle her laughter to avoid upsetting Mr. Moss in the very first class of the year. By the time the bell rang it felt like six hours had passed. She was finally liberated and hurried to join her friends outside with Max in tow.