# Sleeping Sound Chapter 2

The house was quiet but only for moment. The Lights turned on, people hiding behind the furniture crawled out into view, a shrill cry penetrated my ears. My heart nearly jumped out of my chest, taken aback from the suddenness of the situation.

“Happy Birthday!” everyone yelled an exalted breath.

Leon’s hand gently patted my back. “You didn’t think we forgot, did you?” he whispers into my ear.

I never did think my birthday was all too important, to me it was just another year on the calendar. It’s unnecessary. Yet, a smile stretched across my face. It was heartwarming to see them all there, all the most important people in my life, my misfit family made of orphans and Kieran. Kieran stood behind a splintered table, spread across it was an ugly looking table cloth dotted with woven images of flowers and vines.

To Kieran’s left stood Cara, arms open and smiling gleefully at me. Her smiling was already enough of a birthday present if I’ve ever needed one. Mercyhell, she is beautiful under this dim light. I’ve had a crush on this girl ever since Kieran took her in.

In the center of the table rested a single cupcake with a single large candle standing behind it. We only had night candles, no birthday candles so they made do with that, putting it next to the cupcake. I’m just amazed they even got a cupcake, I’ve never had a cupcake. The cost of one cupcake is the same for a bag of grain, there is no justifying buying one.

“Take your slacking time why don’t cha, hurry up and blow out the candle, he says playfully.

So I walk up to the table lean close and blew out the candle, eyes getting somewhat watery.

“Aw, happy 16th birthday Rin” Cara says sweetly. “I know you’ve never really liked celebrated birthdays, so we’re celebrating for you. Actually we’re forcing you. You are going to stay here and you are going to like it. Register?”

Mercyhell, for how sweet she is, she could command and army with that voice.

“Haha, I got it. I can’t say no to all of this.” I say still smiling. “Thanks. This is nice. Really nice.”

“Are you tearing up? Ha, you’re slacking crying. Do you love us that much?” Leon says whilst gripping my shoulder. “You we love you man, your family. Also you’re behind 16 years of birthday presents. So we got you something real nice.”

“What?” I question him.

“Open the box,” Kieran says to me smiling.

Mercyhell, these cunning slacks. They made me deliver my own present, I admire that. Must have been Cara, she is the only one sneaky enough to pull this off.

Remembering the leathered box in pocket, I reach in and grab it. Nervous as I am, I look to Kieran and she just nods. Almost as if she was giving me approval it’s okay. I flip the lid and empty the box into my hand. Sitting in my palm was a leather strapped bracelet. The strap was a brown, tanned leather and in the middle was pinned a sigil. Made of metal, painted gold and shining in the dim light. I stood there admiring it. The sigil was made of three simple designs, shapes better describes it, layered atop each other. It started with a large V, a circle with its top bit cut off encases its middle, and a vertical line runs through the center of the design.

“We didn’t get it from the Reserve, it was hard to get it but you deserve it. I know you do.” Kieran says to me.

“Nifty little trick that comes with it too. Flick the metal with your nail.” Cara says anxiously. “I want to hear it sing.”

I then strap it to my wrist, taking my time to bind the leather thread. Once bound I flick the sigil, fingernail meets cold metal. It sings. The room is filled with a pleasant hum, long and constant spanning for about ten seconds. In those ten seconds no one talked, all of us were listening getting lost in its song. Even Leon was quiet for a bit.

“It’s beautiful,” I say. “Where did you get it?”

“Don’t worry about that, I am just glad you like it.” Kieran says to me. “I still remember when I found you on the street 16 years ago in a basket. You looked dreadful, you did. But right now I see a fine young man and I can’t be prouder.”

“Alright let’s cut the water works. Anymore of this mush and I might actually start tearing up myself,” Leon chiming in. “Let us get into we were all really gathered here today. The cupcake.”

I can’t help but let out a chuckle. “Well thanks for that, you really know how to make a guy feel special don’t you?” I say grinning myself.

“Slack off, you know you want it too. Like, it’s been how long since we got our hands on something this sweet?” He says tapping his chin with his index finger. “Ah it was a week after we took in Cara. You were really reserved back then, hated to show emotion. Yet when Kieran put that slice of cake in front of you, you started blubbering like a baby. Ah good times.”

“Oh nut up Leon. I remember when you pissed off a Warden and you got you your ass beat. I think it was what, a good three days before you stopped pouting about it.” Cara says in a response with an eyebrow raised and a straight smile.

“Point taken, I’ll shut up. So, about that cupcake. Anyone, no? Just me? Ah okay I don’t really want too, but if no one else wants it, I guess I’ll have no choice but to give everyone a hand.” He says exaggerating every other word.

Kieran looks at him inquisitively, “Kay, so no we’ll eat this after dinner. You guys got the meat from Emmet so I’m making Rin’s favorite meal, pork stew.” She says giving me a wink as disappears into the kitchen.

“Alright, so there is another part to your gift,” Cara says blushing, head somewhat turned away. “I’m going to sing you a happy birthday. Don’t say anything till I finish though, it’s not the best but I’m sure you’ll like it. Here goes it.”

*Happy Birthday to You  
Happy Birthday to You  
Happy Birthday Dear Rin  
Happy Birthday to You.*

*Even if we are here, and you are there, remember,*

*From good friends and true,  
From old friends and new,  
May good luck go with you,*

*And happiness too.*

“That was amazing,” I say to her.

To which in response she walks over to me, looks me dead in the eyes and punches me straight in the gut. I lurch backward from the punch and rub my stomach to sooth the soreness.

“Oh nut up it wasn’t that amazing,” Cara retorts turning herself around to hide her face. I’m sure she’s blushing. Slack that’s adorable.

“Ha, she practiced so hard too. Would always sing it to me, ‘for practice’.” Leon mumbles. I wince slightly to that but don’t let it show. Mercyhell

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After Kieran finished making the stew, Leon, Cara, Kieran and myself had seated ourselves at the table table, talking and just enjoying each other’s company. Sure the party wasn’t fancy, or big, and it didn’t have a lot of people, but what it did have was a cupcake. And beer. A lot of Beer. Usually Kieran swears us all off of the stuff but she was incredibly lenient about it when Leon came into the dining room with a create full of alcohol. Which I’m sure was his present for me. Well it’s the thought that counts. Then again we all got mad drunk. Even Kieran had some, Leon was the first one drunk enough to break out in dance. It was weird and rigid dance that would have made me embarrassed for him if there was literally anybody else in the room other than the family. For all of his perfect-ness it is somewhat nice to know he slacks at something.

Mercyhell, I couldn’t watch anymore of that… interesting dance. I pushed the table to the side and shooed Leon off of the make-shift dance floor. I pulled Cara in close to me and started reciting the steps in my head, seconds later mimicking those steps with my feet. Though I loved dancing with Cara my mind was following the music Kieran had just put on her old radio. Forming the rhythm in my head, I step in and away from her swinging methodically with the music, our hands still clenched. I swing and she would swerve, our steps perfectly in sync. If you’re a well enough at dancing you can make even inexperienced dancers look great. I am so grateful Kieran thought me how to dance. She would always practice by herself late into the night trying not to wake me. It always did. Yet, I would often come down from my room and see her dance. She was always graceful in her step arms flowing like water, body contorting along with the music. It was just a whim when I first asked her teach me, but soon it became our thing, time we would bond. Like mother and son?

The music stops and me and Cara finish in perfect time, like it was scripted. We gripped each other poised, gasping for breath under a single bulb, brighter now as the day reached dusk. It was fun, I’ve only danced with Kieran before so dancing with Cara was a nice change.

“Where did you learn that, mercyhell Rin?” Cara says to while trying to catch her breath.

“Secret,” I wink back in response.

“Slack, and here I thought I was the best dancer in the house.” He quips while sitting backwards in the chair facing us.

“Really, like really really? Like I’m sure there are children with lost limbs that can dance better than you.” I laugh back.

“Ha, what can they do the worm?” Leon disputed staring into my eyes wearing a stoic expression. Few seconds pass and Leon and I burst out into laughter unable to contain ourselves.

Cara’s head clasps into her hand in disappointment. “Mercyhell, can you slacks be anymore inappropriate?”

“All in good fun.” I tell her while trying to compose myself.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

For a second we all freeze. Over to the door I see the door knob wriggling back and forth, I look back to Cara. “Who is it?”

“Probably just Emmet, he said he’ll pop by when he finishes errands. Let him in.”

A little happy Emmet decided to join us I make my way over to the door.

“KIERAN, open up. NOW.”

My hand freezes just over the doorknob.

I stood there shocked, staring at the doorknob where my hand is hovering over. No, him? Why him? Why now? I look over my shoulder and I see Kieran standing behind Cara and Leon. Her eyes meet mine and only a whisper escapes her mouth.

“Run.”