



1.

Slipping in a puddle under the broken water fountain should teach me to stop gawking at Jenna Macintyre, but I know it won't. I fell for her when we were ten, and in the six years since, I've continued to fall. And stutter. And make an ass out of myself in general.

"Good one, Zachy," she says, leaning down so that her golden hair swings in my face. She flicks my shoulder, sending shivers down all my nerve endings, straightens up, and heads off toward whatever her next class is. If I had any guts at all I'd call her on all the humiliating things she's ever said to me, but I don't. Instead, I wonder if she moves that way on purpose.

Her gaggle of wannabes follow in her wake, blocking the view. Their laughter bounces back down the hall even after I hear the door close behind them.

It's only after the final bell rings that I realize I should probably breathe if I want to avoid passing out and drowning in an inch of water. So, I shake myself and stand up, leaning on Emmet. I almost forgot he was there. I groan when I feel the heavy material of my soaked jeans clinging to my legs. Nice.

"Loitering now I see, Mr. Slater." My sixth period Physics teacher's voice nearly makes me slip again.

"But-" I start.

"Save it for someone who cares. Get to your next class or I'll be happy to send you to detention." Mr. Crown slides his Coke bottle glasses up the bridge of his nose and curls his thin upper lip in distaste.

"I had an accident," I say in a rush.

He raises his eyebrows, taking in my pants, and heat floods my face.

“Not that kind of accident. I slipped in the hall because of the broken fountain.” I ought to threaten to sue.

“That’s what happens when you run in the hallways.”

Is he serious? I draw my hands down over my face, trying to collect myself. “Fine. I’m going,” I say, slinging my backpack over my shoulder.

“Watch that attitude.” He slams the door to his room, and I flip him off before turning back to Emmet, the only other person left in the now deserted hall.

“Take good notes,” I say. “I’m out of here.”

“Thank God,” Emmet says. “I thought you were going to actually go to class like that for a minute.”

2.

“Now, open the night-table drawer,” she says. She waits while I move around to the other side of the bed and do as she says. Inside is the same kind of thin stick Eyleen had, only it’s pink and instead of a star, there’s a heart at the top. Great. “Take it out,” she says.

I swallow, and gingerly pull the thing out of the drawer. I remember how it felt when Eyleen brought us here, and I don’t want to cause an accident.

“Good,” Mom says. “That is a wand.”

“Why does it have to be so... dainty?” I ask, twirling it in front of my eyes. “I mean they look cool in Harry Potter.”

“Harry Potter isn’t real. And he’s a wizard. Not a fairy.”

“So, what am I supposed to do with it?” I ask.

“Tap your back,” she answers.

I hesitate, but when she coughs, and grimaces in pain, I do as I’m told. Instantly, a searing pain spreads over my shoulder blades, and I shrug in response. Then it’s over, but something feels weird. My back itches, and it feels like something is pressing

against my skin. I reach back with my free hand to scratch it or swipe at it like a bug, but my fingers meet something soft and flexible. I grab hold and yank.

Then I'm screaming, partially from the intense pain, and partially from the shock. Shit. Shit. Shit. I wave the wand on instinct alone, and a full-length mirror appears in front of me, just like I wanted. I twist around to get a glimpse, and there they are. Two symmetrical, slightly pointy, iridescent protrusions about three feet long and half as wide.

I have wings. Freaking fairy wings. "Shit!"

"Zach!"

"I'm sorry, Mom, but SHIT. I have wings."

"Shh! If they hear you, you could get grounded, and then we're really in trouble."

"Who are 'they'?" I ask, still trying to scratch at the base of my wings. Naturally, they're in the hardest place to reach. "And why do they itch so much?"

3.

"I have to get you your happily ever after by sunset on the next full moon or bad things happen. To me *and* my mom."

"My happily ever after?" she asks in a dreamy sort of way.

"Yeah. I'm supposed to fix you up with your soulmate. Your prince charming."

She smiles, her eyes lighting up. "Then get back over here."

I throw my head back and groan. "I'm not him, Kelly."

Silence.

I risk a look. She's sitting on the edge of her bed, twisting her blanket in one hand. "You're the one I like," she says. "I can't imagine falling for someone else by the full moon."

"I like you too," I say. "I do, but it doesn't work that way. You're supposed to be with Bo."

“You mean Bo Tyler?” she asks, laughing. “Quarterback of the football team, most popular guy at school, Bo Tyler?”

“Yeah.”

“No way. I mean, he’s good looking, but he was just a silly crush. I don’t even know him. And he isn’t as cute as you, Zach. In fact, I doubt he could ever compete with someone like you.”

“You only like me because I’m a fairy,” I say.

“That’s not true, but it is pretty cool.”

“No. I mean that’s part of my nature. Fairy Charm. That’s why we’re not supposed to get involved with humans. They can’t tell if it’s really us they love, or our nature. Plus, you have a thing for me because of your book fantasies.” I point to the shelves.

“I’m pretty sure it’s you I like,” she says. “I did before you told me any of this.”

“If you don’t get together with Bo in less than a week, I will lose my wings and my wand.”

“That’s not fair,” she says, standing.

“Nope. But there it is.”

“So, you want me to be stuck with some dumb football player for the rest of my life just so you can keep your wings?” she asks, stepping up so we’re nose-to nose-and poking my chest.

“No! I mean, sort of. But only because he’s your soul mate. Really! I’m not making this shit up, Kelly. It’s real. Just... just give me a chance. I mean him. Give *him* a chance. If I fix you two up, will you do that?”

“Only if you agree to seeing me too.” She narrows her eyes at me and purses her lips so the dimples in her cheeks deepen.

I sigh. She isn’t getting this. “Kelly—”

“Those are my terms. I promise to give him an honest chance if you give me one too.”