



AUTHOR PROFILE

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## The Unseen

Deceptions, beliefs. Lies at the beginning. All the calamities we've brought upon our lives. Sometimes coincidences, sometimes plans. At the end of the day, the only truth is lived experiences. I was never a girl stuck in the past. I was a girl who embodied the definition of indifference. Those around me might define it as uncaring. But I don't know enough to explain what's privileged.

My name is Adora, meaning "to worship," yet how could such a choice exist for me? I was either to be worshipped, or the worshipped one. How could I be made into someone to be worshipped when I didn't even fully understand myself? I couldn't confine myself to my own special molds. I may be indifferent, but I'm not merciless. I want to unite what I want; no one can tell me not to. Besides, I'm not important enough to be told not to be worshipped.

I stopped in front of the door. The laughter coming from inside told the story of a world I had never truly belonged to. People always liked disappearing into a crowd. I, on the other hand, became more visible within one.

Because I stayed silent.

Silence unsettled people.

I moved my hand to the door handle but did not open it. I didn't want to go inside. Yet I had to. Because sometimes you are forced to go where you do not wish to be. Not for others, but for the promises you make to yourself.

I took a deep breath.

And opened the door.

The moment I stepped in, everyone turned to look at me. I knew those looks very well. They were not judgmental, but inquisitive—attempting to decipher me.

“Why is this girl like this?”

I didn't know either.

But in that moment, there was one person in the room who was not looking at me.

He had his head bowed.

And for some reason, that caught my attention more than all the other stares combined.

He had his head lowered.

And somehow, that drew me in more than anything else.

Because people usually liked to look. To examine, to judge, to try to understand... He was doing none of it. As though my presence—or absence—made no difference to him.

That was unsettling.

Because I was not used to going unnoticed. People either became overly curious about me or failed to understand me entirely. But being ignored... that was new.

I walked further inside with slow steps. Even the sound of my shoes touching the floor felt excessive. In a noisy world, I was walking with my own silence.

As I searched for a place to sit, my eyes drifted back to him involuntarily.

His head was still lowered.

He was looking at the glass in his hand. But it was not merely looking. It was thinking.

And in that moment, I understood.

This boy was not here.

His body was in this room, but his mind was somewhere else entirely.

And for the first time, I found myself seeing someone who resembled me.

The seat beside him was empty.

Normally, I never sit next to anyone. I keep an invisible distance between myself and others. No one crosses that line. But at that moment, it felt as though that line did not exist.

I walked over and sat beside him.

He did not lift his head.

That was the second disturbance.

“Is this seat taken?” I asked.

As though hearing my voice for the first time, he slowly raised his head.

Our eyes met.

And in that instant...

Something happened that I could not comprehend.

There was no curiosity in his gaze. No judgment. Not even interest.

It was as if he had known me already. For a long time.

“Free,” he said simply.

His tone was neither flat nor cold. But it was peculiar. As though he was not accustomed to using words.

When I sat down, a silence formed between us.

But it was not an uncomfortable silence.

It was not the silence of two strangers... but of two solitudes sitting side by side.

And for the first time, I did not feel alone within the crowd.

I leaned back slightly in my seat. The sounds around us blurred. Laughter, music, the clinking of cutlery... all of it felt distant.

The boy beside me still did not speak.

Strangely enough, I did not want him to.

As though if he did, the delicate balance between us would shatter.

After a while, he placed his glass on the table. His fingers slowly slid away from the surface of the glass. Then his eyes turned to me again.

This time, he looked more intently.

"You don't belong here," he said.

It was not a question. It was an observation.

I smiled. Not mockingly. A smile of quiet acceptance.

“Neither do you,” I replied.

Another brief silence followed.

He inclined his head slightly.

As if acknowledging what I had said.

“You want to leave,” he added.

I frowned. “How do you know?”

He shrugged. “You lingered at the door.”

For a moment, something inside me stilled.

So he had seen me.

So his head had not always been lowered.

So I had been observed more than I had thought.

“Were you watching me?” I asked.

“No,” he said. “I watched you the way I watch myself.”

That sentence... settled somewhere deep inside me.

And for the first time, I truly became curious about him.

“What’s your name?” I asked.

He hesitated briefly, as though reluctant to answer.

Then, slowly, "Aren," he said.

I found myself thinking that I was sitting beside someone who did not match my name at all. Mine carried the meaning of devotion. His was the name of a god of war.

Yet neither of us looked ready to fight.

We looked... tired.

"Aren," I repeated, letting his name settle between us.

"Why aren't you like everyone else?"

He averted his gaze.

"Because while trying to be like everyone else, I forgot how to be myself."

For the first time, I saw myself with startling clarity in someone else's sentence.

Perhaps that was why I did not get up and leave.

Perhaps that was why, for the first time, sharing the same silence with someone felt comforting.

And perhaps that night, for the first time in my life...

I did not meet a stranger.

I met someone who resembled me.

We remained seated side by side for a while longer. Without speaking.

But the silence was not empty. Thoughts moved within it—his and mine.

As the crowd grew louder, the space between us grew calmer. It felt as though everyone around us was fading away, the table shrinking, the room narrowing, until only two chairs remained.

Aren placed his hand on the edge of the table. His fingers trembled slightly. I noticed, but pretended not to.

“Do crowds exhaust you too?” he asked.

"People exhaust me," I replied.

He nodded. He understood.

"What exhausts me most," I added, "is being constantly tried to be understood."

His eyes returned to mine.

"You don't want to be understood."

This time his statement was firmer.

"I do," I said. "But no one truly tries."

Aren smiled faintly. For the first time.

"I'm not trying," he said.

I was startled. "Why?"

"Because I understand without trying."

For a moment, my heart seemed to lose its rhythm.

That was when I realized: this boy did not ask questions. He did not speculate. He did not force anything.

He simply... saw.

And being seen, I discovered, was far heavier than I had imagined.

I looked away.

"Would you come outside with me?" he asked suddenly.

His voice was neither inviting nor pleading. Just natural.

As though he were stating the most obvious thing in the world.

Without thinking, I nodded.

We stood up together. No one noticed us. Not that we intended to draw attention.

When we stepped outside, the night was cool. The air, unlike the noise inside, was calm. The streetlight cast its glow onto the pavement.

I took a deep breath.

Aren slipped his hands out of his pockets. His shoulders relaxed.

“Do you feel better now?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said. “Because I no longer have to belong there.”

We began to walk.

Side by side.

There was still distance between us. But it was not born of unfamiliarity—it was habit.

After a while, he stopped.

He looked at me.

“What’s your name?” he asked.

I smiled.

“Adora.”

When I said my name, a strange expression crossed his face.

“Devotion,” he said.

I nodded.

“I don’t worship anyone,” I replied.

Aren answered without narrowing his eyes, without hesitation:

“I think you simply don’t allow anyone to worship you.”

His words lingered in the air.

The night was silent, yet something inside me was speaking. His sentence had slipped through the defenses I had built for years, seeping quietly between them.

We kept walking. The rhythm of the paving stones aligned with our steps. The streetlights were spaced apart; light and darkness passed over us in turns. After every stretch of brightness, the returning shadow made me feel more at ease.

“People,” I said, “have always tried to assign something to me. Strong. Indifferent. Distant... Maybe all of it was true. But none of it was me.”

Aren tilted his head slightly. He was listening. Simply listening.

“What do you want to be?” he asked.

The question seemed simple. But it had no answer.

“I don’t know,” I said honestly. “Maybe, for the first time, I just want to say that I don’t know.”

A brief silence followed. Then he took his phone out of his pocket and checked the time. The light from the screen fell across his face, making his exhaustion more visible.

“If you don’t know,” he said, “at least you must know what you are not.”

I smiled. “Yes. I am not someone to be worshipped.”

“And you are not the one who worships.”

“Yes.”

We noticed a bench. Old, its paint chipped in places. We sat down. The distance between us lessened slightly—without intention, without awareness.

“Do people misunderstand you?” I asked.

“No,” he said. “They never try.”

The sentence felt familiar. Like my own words spoken through a different mouth.

I leaned my head back and looked at the sky. The city lights hid the stars. Still, the darkness was peaceful.

“I,” Aren said slowly, “have always performed around people. Agreeable, calm, normal... Then one day I grew tired. I dropped the role. No one noticed.”

I turned to him. “Is that bad?”

“No,” he said. “But it’s strange. To disappear among people who don’t notice you’ve disappeared... it’s strange.”

For a moment, our eyes met. A long, silent gaze—neither heavy nor exhausting.

That was when I understood: we had not met to save each other. We were simply two people who had noticed the other was lost.

And that was enough.

Aren stood up. “Should I walk you home?”

“There’s no need,” I said. “I want to walk.”

He nodded. He did not insist.

We continued side by side. When we reached a crossroads, we stopped. The road to the right was mine. The left was his.

"Tomorrow," he said, "I won't be here."

I wasn't surprised. I felt as though I had been expecting it.

I didn't ask where he would be.

He didn't explain.

He only added, "But I'll remember tonight."

I smiled. "So will I."

A brief silence.

"Will we see each other again?" he asked.

This time, answering was difficult.

"I don't know," I said. "But I won't regret meeting you."

Aren inclined his head slightly. Not like a farewell, but like acceptance.

Then he turned and walked away.

I remained where I was for a few seconds. I watched him. He grew distant. Blended into the darkness.

And for the first time, when someone left, they did not leave a void inside me... but a trace.

As I walked home, my steps felt lighter. Strangely, there was no sense of loss within me. It was as though I hadn't lost something—I had merely realized I had been carrying a weight for too long.

I opened the door. The house was quiet. I didn't turn on the lights. The darkness felt closer to the night.

I walked to my bed and sat down, staring at the wall, thinking.

Meeting this boy had been strange.

But it had made me feel good.

That night, I couldn't sleep.

I didn't toss and turn. I didn't look at my phone. I didn't play music.

I simply stared at the ceiling.

And thought.

Not about Aren... but about the feeling he had left in me.

Because remembering his face wasn't difficult. Nor was remembering his voice. But what I remembered most was that peculiar calm inside me when I was beside him.

It was as though there had always been a voice speaking inside me—and for the first time, in his presence, it

had fallen silent.

The hours passed. My room was dark. The headlights of passing cars cast fleeting shadows across the ceiling.

I closed my eyes.

And asked myself a question:

Why?

Why was I thinking about him?

I didn't know him. I didn't know his life. Where he lived, who he spoke to, what made him laugh...

But there was one thing I knew.

He had seen me.

People had always tried to define me. Strong. Cold. Distant. Indifferent.

Aren had said none of those things.

He had simply looked.

And that was more powerful than all the words I had heard for years.

I sat up in bed. Drew my knees to my chest. Rested my head against the wall.

Perhaps I wasn't thinking about him.

Perhaps I was thinking about what it meant to be truly noticed for the first time.

And that feeling... was frightening.

Because to be seen is to be unable to hide.

After a while, I walked to the window. I parted the curtain. The street was empty. The yellow glow of the lamp fell onto the pavement.

We had walked there last night.

Side by side.

As if nothing had happened.

As if everything had.

I felt the cold glass beneath my palm.

And whispered to myself:

“Is this a beginning, or just a one-night coincidence?”

No answer came.

But there was a strange certainty inside me.

This story wasn't over.

It simply hadn't begun yet.

The sentence I had spoken by the window still echoed in my mind:

"Is this a beginning, or just a one-night coincidence?"

The next day, I didn't go to school.

I didn't know why. There was a strange unease inside me. As if something were about to happen. I couldn't stay home. I grabbed my coat and went outside.

I walked without thinking.

When I realized where I was going, I stopped.

I was at the beginning of the street we had walked the night before.

My heartbeat slowed.

In daylight, the street was ordinary. Even a little ugly. Nothing remained of its meaning from the night before.

Still, I walked.

The bench was still there.

I went and sat down.

For a while, I did nothing. People passed by. None of them caught my attention.

Then... I noticed something.

There was a small scratch on the edge of the bench.

Last night, while speaking, Aren had absentmindedly scraped the paint with his key.

I remembered.

I ran my fingers over the scratch.

It was real.

We had been here.

Just then, an elderly man passed by. He looked at the bench, then at me.

“You came again?” he said.

I looked up. “Excuse me?”

“You were here yesterday too. Sitting the same way.”

My heart began to race.

“Was I alone?”

The man frowned. “Yes.”

My throat went dry.

“Wasn’t there anyone with me?”

He shook his head. “You were talking to yourself, even. At one point, you laughed.”

The moments from last night flashed before my eyes.

Aren’s sentences. His gaze. The way he walked.

"There was a boy with me," I said.

The man smiled faintly. Almost with pity.

"My child, you were alone here last night."

He walked away.

I remained frozen on the bench.

My hands began to tremble.

I shoved them into my pockets.

The paper was still there.

I took it out.

Unfolded it.

“Don’t wait at the door this time.”

The writing was there.

It was real.

But... if I had been alone...

Who had written this note?

Slowly, I lifted my head.

In the window across the street, I saw my reflection.

And for the first time, I realized something.

Last night, while Aren was speaking...

I had never spoken.

I stepped closer to my reflection in the glass.

I moved my lips.

Without saying anything.

I thought about the night before. Aren had been talking. Forming sentences. Asking questions.

And me?

I had only been listening.

I remembered answering. But I didn't remember my voice.

How could someone not remember the sound of their own voice?

I stepped back.

My head began to spin. I sat down on the bench again. Crumpled the paper in my hand. My thoughts tangled into one another.

Just then, my phone vibrated.

I looked at the screen.

Unknown number.

Normally, I wouldn't answer.

I answered.

For a few seconds, there was silence on the other end.

Then a familiar voice:

“You didn’t wait at the door this time.”

My hand went cold.

It was that voice.

Aren’s voice.

My breath caught. “Where are you?”

“In front of you.”

I lifted my head quickly. The street was empty.

"Don't joke," I said.

"I'm not joking. You're just not looking in the right place."

I looked around. Right, left, across...

No one.

"I saw you last night," he said. "And you saw me."

"Yes!"

"Then why did everyone see you alone?"

I couldn't answer.

My heart pounded in my chest.

“Because,” he said, his voice becoming much calmer, “only you can see me, Adora.”

My throat tightened. “What does that mean?”

There was a brief silence.

Then he said that sentence:

“I didn’t meet you last night.”

My breath caught.

“You met me.”

The phone almost slipped from my hand.

“What are you saying?”

"You didn't see me for the first time last night," he said. "You only noticed me for the first time."

My breathing became irregular.

"When?" I whispered. "How long have you... existed?"

The silence on the phone was heavy this time.

"Every moment you stood in front of doors," he said. "Every second you wanted to take a step but didn't."

My throat went dry.

"You're talking nonsense."

"No," he said calmly. "I was always there. When you couldn't speak, I spoke. When you couldn't look, I looked. When you ran away, I stayed."

Memories from last night began to swirl in my mind.

Who opened the door?

The voice that said, "Take a deep breath"...was it him?

Or was it me?

"If you were always there," I said, trembling, "why are you showing up now?"

This time the answer didn't come immediately.

Because you can't suppress me anymore."

I clutched my forehead. I felt like the world was spinning.

"I'm not going crazy," I said to myself.

"You're not going crazy," he said, as if he'd heard my thoughts. "You're just splitting in two."

My heart pounded in my chest.

"What does that mean?"

"One part of you still wants to wait. It wants to stay safe. The other part..."

There was a brief pause.

"...wants to open the door now."

I realized I was standing in the middle of the street. People were passing by, but no one was looking at me.

"Where are you right now?" I asked.

"Right behind you."

I froze.

I slowly turned around.

There was no one there.

“You’re lying.”

“No,” he said. “You’re just not looking in the right place.”

I looked at the shop window across the street.

My reflection was there.

But it wasn't alone.

A silhouette stood behind me.

Aren.

This time it was clear.

The one in the reflection wasn't looking at me... he was looking into my eyes.

In real life, there was nothing behind me.

But in the glass... there wasn't.

The phone was to my ear.

"If you turn to me," he said slowly, "you'll lose me."

"What do you mean?"

"Because I'm not outside, Adora."

I gasped.

"I'm inside you."

Just then, Aren in the reflection raised his hand.

In the real world, the space behind me was empty.

But that person in the glass... reached out their fingers toward my shoulder.

And I felt a light touch on my shoulder.

The touch on my shoulder wasn't cold.

It was warm.

It was real.

I flinched reflexively but didn't run away. I was locked onto the reflection in the glass. Aren in the reflection held my hand on my shoulder.

In real life, the space behind me was still empty.

"Don't do this," I said breathlessly.

"What am I doing?" whispered a voice from inside my ear.

This time there was no phone.

The voice... was inside me.

"You're confusing reality with the game."

"Which reality?" they said.

The image in the glass flickered for a moment. My reflection split in two. One me... and one who looked very much like me, but with a harsher gaze.

Him.

"I'm nothing without you," they said. "But you're always incomplete without me."

The sounds of the street gradually faded. People blurred. Colors faded.

It was as if the world was being pushed into the background.

"If you accept me," he said, "you won't freeze in front of doors anymore."

"What if I don't?"

He smiled slightly in the glass.

"You will still live. But you will always be a little late."

That sentence pierced me.

Being late.

That was the summary of my life.

One step late.

One sentence late.

One feeling late.

The pressure on my shoulder increased.

"Choose," he said.

Suddenly, the image in the glass changed.

I saw myself.

I'm standing in front of a door.

I don't open it.

Then another scene.

I'm silent in the crowd.

Then another moment.

I swallow the sentence I wanted to say to someone.

It was all me.

And behind it all, like a shadow, he stood.

"I am the face of your courage," he said.

My eyes filled with tears.

“So who are you really?”

This time the answer was clear.

“I am what Adora could be.”

The street suddenly went completely dark.

Only the glass remained.

There were no longer two people in the reflection.

There was only one person.

But their gaze had changed.

Me.

And for the first time...

I wasn't afraid when I looked at myself.

The touch on my shoulder disappeared.

The phone wasn't in my hand.

The street returned to normal.

But something inside me had shifted.

I understood then.

Aren hadn't disappeared.

He had entered me.

The moment I thought this, my heart pounded hard once more.

But this time it wasn't from fear.

It was as if another pulse was beating right in the middle of my chest.

A rhythm that didn't match mine...

But one that beat with mine.

I closed my eyes.

And I felt it.

"Adora."

The voice wasn't in my ears.

It echoed in my mind.

Suddenly, my knees trembled. The streetlights flickered again for a moment. The air grew heavy. People's

conversations became muffled.

"This isn't normal," I whispered.

"It was never normal."

This time the answer was clearer.

When I opened my eyes, the world seemed two-layered.

First: the ordinary street everyone saw.

Second: another reality, woven with lines of light, filled with symbols suspended in the air.

And those symbols... flowed towards me.

I looked at my hands.

A thin, silvery light traced across my fingertips.

"You're not doing this," I said to myself.

"No," said Aren.

"We are."

I took a step back. I looked at the reflection in the glass again.

This time I wasn't alone.

My face was the same.

But my eyes...

My eyes gleamed faintly in the darkness.

And behind me, in the reflection, was a faint shadow.

It was level with me.

But its head was tilted towards my ear.

“You won’t just be able to see me anymore,” Aren said.

“You will use me.”

A scream rose in the street.

Lines of light suddenly sharpened.

Something like a crack opened in the air.

And from within that crack... something looked out.

Cold.

A being that touched the deepest part of my consciousness.

Aren's voice was strained for the first time.

“Adora...”

“They noticed you.”

And then I understood.

Aren hadn't entered me.

He had awakened me.

The scream stopped.

The rift narrowed, trembling in the air, but didn't close completely. That dark gaze seeping from within was still there.

My breathing was irregular.

"What am I going to do?" I whispered.

"Don't panic," Aren said.

This time his voice was calmer but deeper. It was as if he was speaking not from within me, but from within my veins. "Your power works with focus, not fear."

"I don't know how to focus!"

"You do," he said. "Because this is your power."

The rift widened a little more. The people on the street didn't notice anything. For them, the world was normal. But in my eyes, there was a black crack in the middle of the sky.

I closed my eyes.

I focused on the place where my heart was beating.

On that second pulse.

On Aren's rhythm.

For a while, I just listened.

Two separate beats.

Then, slowly...

The rhythms began to align.

The pressure in my chest eased.

I opened my palms.

This time the silver light was not trembling uncontrollably. It gathered at my fingertips. It expanded and contracted with my breath.

“There,” Aren said.

I looked at the□ —

No.

I looked at the rift.

The fear was still there. But beneath it, something else had settled.

Determination.

I raised my right hand toward the air.

The light extended from my palm like a thread. Thin. Bright. Alive.

The moment it touched the rift, a shock ran through me.

A cold whisper flooded my mind.

“Don’t pull back,” Aren said sharply.

I clenched my teeth.

I widened the light.

The thread thickened. Spread across the edges of the crack. Wherever the black surface met the light, it dissolved like vapor.

My chest burned.

But I did not retreat.

"This is my body," I whispered.

"This is my mind."

The light burst.

A silent explosion.

No one heard it.

But I felt it.

The rift collapsed inward.

And sealed completely.

The street returned to a single layer.

The light faded.

I dropped to my knees, breathless.

“Did I do it?” I asked.

Aren did not answer for a few seconds.

Then:

“Yes.”

A pause.

“And there’s no going back now, Adora.”

I looked at my hand.

The light was gone.

But beneath my veins, warmth still moved.

This was only the beginning.

—

“There’s no going back,” Aren said.

And in that instant, the warmth inside me changed.

The power that had just held me upright reversed direction. The second pulse in my chest accelerated. Too fast.

“Something’s wrong,” I said.

Aren did not respond.

The world split into two layers again.

But this time, I wasn't in control.

Light flooded my hands once more—but it was no longer silver. It was pale. Flickering. The streetlights burst one by one. Windows cracked with a thin ringing sound.

I fell to my knees.

My skull echoed from within.

“Adora...” Aren’s voice was weak for the first time.

“Power demands balance. You closed it... but you didn’t seal it.”

The sky.

The same spot.

The same point.

A thin line reappeared.

This time, the rift did not open.

It tore.

And from it, not darkness—

Shapes fell.

Not entirely black, yet not anything else. They resembled human silhouettes, but their edges dissolved and reformed constantly. When they touched the ground, they spread like shadows.

People still saw nothing.

But I did.

And they saw me.

All of them turned their heads toward me at once.

The second pulse inside me stopped for a moment.

Then the pain began.

Sharp. Real. Burning.

As if light were being torn from my veins.

“That’s the price,” Aren said with strain.

“When you call the power... they feel you.”

The nearest silhouette took a step.

It wasn't walking.

It was gliding.

I tried to stand, but my legs trembled.

"I controlled this!" I shouted.

"No," Aren said.

"You knocked on the door."

The light inside me extinguished completely for a heartbeat.

The silhouette extended something—an arm, perhaps—toward me.

Just as it was about to touch—

The pulse in my chest struck again.

But this time, there was only one rhythm.

Mine.

I pushed back the pain.

I pushed back the fear.

I did not summon the light.

I did not force it.

I accepted it.

"I'm not running from you," I said to the silhouette.

The light did not explode this time.

It spread.

Calmly. Like waves.

The moment the silhouette's extension touched it, it fragmented. The others recoiled.

Aren whispered:

"You can't destroy them."

"I won't," I said, breathless.

"I'll draw a boundary."

I placed my palms on the ground.

The light flowed into the pavement.

A thin circle formed along the street.

An invisible border.

Whenever a silhouette touched it, it was thrown back.

But the power inside me began to tremble again.

Aren grew quiet.

“Adora...” His voice drifted away.

For a moment, I felt nothing.

Then everything went dark.

—

White.

That was the first thing I saw when I opened my eyes.

A white ceiling.

The faint hum of fluorescent lights.

The sharp scent of disinfectant.

For a moment, I thought it had all been a dream.

Then I felt it.

The emptiness in my chest.

Emptiness.

I slowly brought my hand to my chest.

There was a pulse.

But only one.

"...Aren?" I whispered.

Silence.

There had always been a faint echo at the edge of my mind. A subtle vibration. A presence like a shadow.

Now there was nothing.

No second rhythm.

No whisper.

No depth.

It felt as though a room had been torn out of me.

The door opened. A nurse entered, saying words that floated meaninglessly—"found unconscious," "stress," "shock."

None of it mattered.

I was listening to the silence inside me.

This time, it was real.

Aren was gone.

I closed my eyes.

I did not call him.

I couldn't.

Because he wasn't there anymore.

My throat tightened, but I did not cry.

Because what I had lost was not a person.

It was a part of me.

And that part had been severed.

—

Days passed.

I was discharged.

The streets were normal.

The sky was whole.

There were no rifts.

No silhouettes.

And I no longer saw in layers.

Everything was ordinary.

Too ordinary.

Sometimes, unconsciously, I touched my chest.

There was no warmth.

No light.

Just me.

And for the first time, I was truly alone.

—

Weeks passed.

One evening, I returned to the street where the first rift had opened.

I didn't know why.

Maybe to say goodbye.

Maybe to prove something to myself.

I stood before the window.

Looked at my reflection.

One person.

Ordinary eyes.

An ordinary girl.

I lowered my head.

Just as I was about to turn—

The reflection did not move.

I froze.

My heart accelerated.

Slowly, I looked back at the glass.

I was still.

But the reflection...

Was smiling.

And behind me, there was a silhouette.

This time, it was not a shadow.

It was clear.

Human-shaped.

Its eyes were dark—but familiar.

The figure in the reflection tilted its head slightly.

Its lips moved.

From behind the glass—but directly into my mind:

“I never left, Adora. My breath caught. In the real world, I turned around.

No one.

I looked back at the glass.

The reflection was normal again.

But on the surface of the window, as though written from the inside, a faint mist had formed.

One word:

Are you ready?

And in that moment, I understood.

Aren had not vanished.

He had not been torn from me.

He had crossed over.

And he no longer belonged to me.

“Are you ready?”

The word slowly faded from the glass.

I lifted my hand. Touched the cold surface.

“Ready... for what?” I whispered.

At that instant, the glass rippled.

As if I had touched water.

The reflection distorted again.

This time, he was not behind me—

He was standing in front of me.

On the other side of the glass.

Aren.

No longer blurred. Clear. But not the same.

His eyes were deeper now. A darkness like a starless night within them.

"You thought you lost me," he said.

His voice did not echo in my mind this time. It came from beyond the glass.

"I did," I said, my voice trembling.

"You're not inside me anymore."

“Because I couldn’t stay there.”

Thin lines of light, like cracks, spread across the glass.

“They marked you, Adora. The moment you first called the power, they learned your location. As long as I remained inside you, finding you was easier.”

My chest tightened.

“So you left.”

“No,” he said calmly, firmly.

“I relocated.”

The darkness behind him shifted. As though there were another world beyond—fractured structures. Inverted shadows. Shapes drifting through emptiness.

“I crossed over,” he said.

“To the other side of the door.”

My breath faltered.

“To protect me?”

This time he was silent.

Then he inclined his head slightly.

“Yes.”

The glass trembled harder.

“Here, I can distract them. Mislead them. I suppressed your energy. That’s why nothing has happened for weeks.”

That was why everything had been normal.

That was why the layers had disappeared.

“Then come back,” I said suddenly.

“We’ll fight together.”

Aren’s gaze changed.

It did not soften.

It deepened.

“I can’t come back.”

My heart dropped.

“Why?”

“Because,” he said slowly,

“someone who crosses over never remains entirely the same.”

The shadows behind him seemed to be listening.

“If I stay here, I remain human. But if I return... I will bring a part of them back with me.”

My throat tightened.

“So to protect me, you—”

“I didn’t sacrifice myself,” he cut in sharply.

“I made a choice.”

Behind the glass, he raised his hand.

I lifted mine instinctively.

On opposite sides of the glass, our palms aligned.

A thin line of light formed between us.

“This is not an ending,” he said.

“It’s a preparation.”

“For what?”

This time, something shifted in the darkness behind him.

Something larger.

Older.

Heavier.

Aren's eyes flickered toward it for a brief moment.

Then he looked back at me.

"One day the door will open completely."

Fine cracks spread across the surface of the glass.

"And on that day... either you will cross over..."

His voice changed slightly.

"...or I will return."

There was a sound like an explosion.

The glass returned to its former state.

The street became ordinary again.

Aren was gone.

But this time, there was no emptiness inside me.

Because I hadn't lost him.

I was waiting for him.

And for the first time—not out of fear—

But knowingly.

The night I stepped away from the window, everything appeared to have returned to normal.

But nothing was normal.

Aren was no longer inside me.

I couldn't hear his voice.

That second breath at the back of my mind was gone.

And I couldn't tell anyone about it.

□

Days passed.

Then weeks.

Every night I stood in the same place.

In front of the same glass.

In case the writing appeared again.

In case the shadow trembled.

In case "Are you ready?" surfaced once more.

But nothing happened.

At some point, I stopped standing in front of the glass.

Because the thing that hurt the most was hope.

I tried to accept that I had lost him.

But why does a person still feel someone they believe they've lost?

Sometimes my heart would suddenly race.

Sometimes I would shiver for no reason.

Sometimes it felt as if someone were watching me from behind.

And each time, I whispered his name.

“Aren...”

My voice dissolved into the emptiness.

But a small place inside me kept saying:

He didn't leave.

He's just late.

I went to bed and sat cross-legged, trying to calm myself.

I began to think through everything from the beginning—what I had lived through with Aren, the emotions he had made me feel, and the ending. Losing him.

It was as if I were feeling every emotion at once.

Pain, regret... Yet even if you gathered them all together, perhaps they still wouldn't amount to love.

Sitting there, my thoughts grew more and more tangled.

Suddenly tears began to stream down my face.

I cried for my loneliness.

For living alone after my family left without caring about me. For the truth that Aren had left me of his own will.

Until not a single drop of tears remained.

I cried for my loneliness.

Although hours had passed, I couldn't fall asleep. Absentmindedly staring at the ceiling, I had no idea how many hours had gone by since my last tear had fallen.

Perhaps dawn would break soon; I would wipe the salt of dried tears from my face and continue my life with my usual smile.

Why was it that the sun never rose at the moments I needed it most? Why did some days have to be longer nights than others?

I felt the pain down to my very core.

The last thing I remember feeling was falling asleep.

□

One month later.

The night was quiet again.

This time I wasn't in front of the glass.

I was on the hospital terrace.

As the wind swept through my hair, I looked up at the sky.

For the first time, I was trying not to think about him.

"It's over," I said to myself.

"It's over now."

At that exact moment, I heard footsteps behind me.

Slow.

Distinct.

Real.

My heart stopped for a second.

I didn't want to turn around.

Because if no one was there...

Then it would truly be over.

But the sound came again.

"Adora."

It wasn't a whisper.

It wasn't a voice inside my mind.

It was a real voice.

I turned slowly.

And my breath caught.

Aren was there.

Not behind the glass.

Not within the shadows.

In front of me.

Real.

Human.

His hair moved with the wind. His eyes were the same as before. Not darkness within them, but a calm depth.

He took a step forward.

“I’m not on the other side anymore.”

The echo in his voice was gone.

He was entirely human.

“This... isn’t possible,” I whispered.

“I found a way,” he said.

He approached slowly.

“Before the door closed, I severed the source of the curse. I broke the bond that bound me to them.”

My heart was pounding wildly.

“So...”

“So I’m free, Adora.”

He paused for a moment.

And looked directly into my eyes.

“I’m just human now.”

My knees weakened.

“What about the power? What about that darkness?”

“Gone.”

He stepped closer.

“It fell silent inside you as well. Because I was the connection.”

In that moment, I understood.

This wasn't a sacrifice.

It was a transformation.

“Aren...”

This time, I said his name not with the fear of losing him—

But as if I had found him.

A faint smile appeared on his face.

"I'm late," he said.

"But I'm not leaving this time."

The wind softened.

The sky grew still.

And for the first time, the emptiness inside me was completely filled.

I no longer felt him within me.

Because I no longer needed to.

He was in front of me.

Real.

And free.

The sunset shifted from orange to pink.

A gentle light lay over the city.

Adora was lying on the grass in the park, watching the sky. She had taken off her shoes. The coolness of the grass touched her feet.

Aren sat down beside her.

He held two paper cups in his hands.

“You said to reduce the sugar, but I still added a little,” he said.

Adora smiled faintly.

“You never get the measure right.”

"I'm human, after all," Aren replied with mock pride.

Adora sat up and took the cup. Her fingers brushed against his.

Once, that touch would have carried electricity. A vibration. A force.

Now it was only warmth.

And that was better.

They didn't speak for a while.

Children were running nearby. A dog was chasing a ball. In the distance, someone was playing the guitar.

Life was going on.

Normal.

Aren lay back on the grass.

“You know,” he said, “I’m hearing the sound of the wind for the first time.”

Adora turned onto her side to look at him.

“Didn’t you hear it before?”

“I did. But I was always inside something else. An echo. A darkness.”

He turned his eyes to her.

“Now I’m just here.”

Adora was silent for a moment.

Then she reached out and removed a small leaf from his hair.

“Stay here,” she said simply.

Aren inclined his head slightly.

“I’m staying.”

When the sun had completely set, the air grew cooler.

Aren took off his jacket and placed it over Adora’s shoulders.

She didn’t object.

They walked together. Slowly. Without haste. Their shoulders brushing from time to time.

They stopped in front of a pastry shop.

Aren looked at the display window.

“Chocolate or fruit?”

Adora thought for a moment.

“Let’s get half and half.”

“Is that your philosophy of life?” he laughed.

“Balance,” Adora said. “Extremes don’t suit us.”

Aren understood the meaning beneath that sentence.

But he didn’t disrupt the lightness of it.

They left the pastry shop and sat on the curb. They shared the same fork. They argued like children.

“You took a bigger bite.”

“No, I didn’t.”

"That's unfair."

Their laughter echoed along the street.

And in that moment, they were truly happy.

There was no curse.

No door.

No darkness.

Just two young people.

And an ordinary evening.

Anyone reading that scene would want to remain there.

Because for the first time, peace was real.

□

But peace is always tested.

That night, when Adora returned home, a faint headache began.

She dismissed it as insignificant.

But the next day, when she looked into the mirror, a brief shadow flickered in her eyes.

Very brief.

Less than a second.

But it was there.

Aren noticed it.

"You're tired," he said at first.

But Adora shook her head.

"No."

She stood before the mirror.

And a slight stirring of that old sensation returned.

Not power.

Not darkness.

But... an echo.

Aren's expression grew serious.

"I severed the bonds," he said.

"I know."

"This isn't from me."

That sentence tightened both of their hearts.

Because if it wasn't from him...

Then what remained belonged to Adora.

As the night progressed, the headache intensified.

The sky did not crack this time.

There were no dramatic signs.

But a subtle warmth began to gather in Adora's palms.

Aren took her hands.

Firmly.

"This is not something that will separate us," he said in a steady voice.

Adora closed her eyes.

"I know."

And she truly did.

This was not a new war.

It was the final remnant left behind.

Perhaps power took time to fade completely.

Perhaps it wasn't a curse, but balance.

But this time, she was not alone.

And Aren wasn't running.

He was holding her.

It frightened them.

But it did not tear them apart.

On the contrary—

It drew them closer.

Because for the first time, what stood before them was not an enemy,

But something they had to resolve together.

The warmth in Adora's palms did not intensify as the days passed.

But it did not disappear either.

As if something were waiting for her to decide.

Every night, Aren sat beside her. He held her hand, listened to her pulse, watched her face.

"This isn't because of me," he said one night.

Adora lifted her head.

"If you say that again, I will start a fight."

Aren smiled faintly, but his eyes remained serious.

"The bond was broken. But the power... it may have transformed inside you."

Adora took a deep breath.

"So it's not a curse anymore."

"No."

"Then what is it?"

Aren was silent for a moment.

"A choice."

□

That night, everything became clear.

Adora stood before the mirror.

She opened her palms.

The warmth rose.

But this time, it was not uncontrolled.

The sky did not fracture.

Objects did not tremble.

The power was not trying to escape.

It was waiting within.

And in that moment, Adora understood.

This final spark would not fade completely.

She could not destroy it.

But she could direct it.

Aren stood behind her.

“What are you thinking of doing?”

Adora spoke slowly.

“The door is completely closed. But the imprint of the key remained with me.”

“Yes.”

“If I don’t release this... one day I’ll be called again.”

Aren’s jaw tightened.

“I won’t allow that.”

Adora turned and looked at him.

“This isn’t about permission.”

She slowly placed her hand over his heart.

“This time, I won’t run. I won’t hide. And I won’t sacrifice myself either.”

“Adora—”

"I won't hold onto the power."

In that instant, Aren understood what she meant.

"You're going to disperse it."

Adora nodded.

"Completely. Piece by piece. I'll pull it out of myself and release it into the universe."

"That will weaken you."

"No," she said in a calm voice.

"It will make me ordinary."

Ordinary.

Once, it had been a frightening word.

Now, it was peaceful.

Aren stepped closer.

“If you do this... you won’t be special anymore.”

Adora smiled faintly.

“I don’t want to be special.”

She intertwined her fingers with his.

“I want to be happy.”

□

At midnight, they went up to the terrace.

The sky was clear.

Adora closed her eyes.

The warmth in her palms rose.

But this time, there was no fear.

Only resolve.

Light slowly lifted from her fingertips.

Not toward the sky—

But in every direction.

Dispersing.

No door opened.

No rift appeared.

Only a subtle, invisible vibration spread outward.

It was as if the universe took a deep breath.

Aren wrapped his arms around her waist.

"I'm here," he said.

A single tear slipped from Adora's eyes as she smiled.

"I know."

The warmth diminished.

The final spark faded.

And this time, it was truly over.

No echo remained.

No trace.

No call.

Adora swayed as if she might collapse to her knees, but Aren held her.

“Are you okay?”

Adora opened her eyes.

Everything looked normal.

But inside...

She felt light.

"Yes," she whispered.

"More than I ever have."

□

The following days were quiet.

Adora no longer saw shadows in the mirror.

Her palms did not warm.

She did not wake in unrest at night.

Aren complained while making coffee beside her.

Life was filled with small things.

And those small things felt like miracles.

One evening, they lay on the grass in the same park again.

Aren turned onto his side and looked at her.

“Do you regret it?”

Adora gazed at the sky.

The stars were in their places.

Steady.

Safe.

“No,” she said.

“Because this time, I didn’t lose you.”

Aren took her hand.

“Neither did I.”

And now there was no power between them.

No curse.

No door.

Only two people.

Who had chosen each other.

Who had stayed.

And who had earned an ordinary happiness through a conscious act of release.

For a brief moment, my gaze drifted to Aren. I couldn't pull my eyes away from his beautiful face; I found myself smiling at the thoughts stirring inside me.

"Aren was my world."

"When I was beside Aren, those were the only moments I truly felt at peace."

"And from now on, I would enter any battle not to lose him."

"I would stand against every dark thought."

Truthfully, I could no longer imagine existing without him.

I had grown so accustomed to him.

And I was certain that he could not exist without me either—that he shared the same feelings.

That he thought the same thoughts.

Their story did not end with a war,

But with a release.

And that release...

Set them free.

And so—

Adora and Aren's story did not end with a battle, But with a choice.

Yet there was one detail Adora had forgotten.

She had already found the one who would worship her.

But there was a contradiction.

For no matter what happened, Adora herself was the one who would worship him.

And what we call a happy ending is not truly an ending.

It is merely a peaceful beginning.