

“Are you ready?” the little blonde asked, extending her hand to the older girl. Her voice was soft, but not fearful. The older one bit her lip and backed away subtly from her. “Take as long as you need,” she spoke in a warm, reassuring tone.

“I-I don’t know...” the other one stuttered, backing away in a more conspicuous manner than before. The younger nodded understandingly and paid no mind to her backing away. She had known many others who were much more apprehensive than the older girl was. It was rare to find someone who was ready as soon as they met the little girl.

“It’s okay,” she reassured in almost a whisper, smoothing out her long white dress and feeling the wet grass under her bare feet. The brunette was comforted by the other girl’s tone, but her breath was still shaky. The younger girl gave a warm smile.

The full moon shone, illuminating the girls and the wide field with its milky glow as the clouds above shifted their position. The tall brunette sat in the dewy grass and held her head down, long thick hair covering her face. The little girl sat right next to her and gazed up at the moon.

“It’s stunning out here,” she said, staring in awe. “So many stars! You’ve gotta see this!”

“I’m j-just scared...” the other one said shakily, not lifting her head. She felt a small, comforting hand on her shoulder.

“There’s nothing to be afraid of,” the girl in the white dress whispered in a patient tone. The older girl knew the little one was being honest, but she was still frightened. “I’m sure you didn’t like being born too much, either.”

“But I’m not ready yet. I’m too young.”

“Everyone goes there eventually.”

“I’m not ready,” the older girl replied in a more assertive tone.

“Then we can wait until you are. In the mean time, you’ve gotta see this! It has to be the most beautiful night you’ve ever seen!” She gave her shoulder an encouraging squeeze.

Slowly lifting her head, she pushed back her long brown bangs, revealing a pale tearstained face. The teenager had to admit the sky was beautiful. There were more stars out than she’d ever seen. There were what seemed to be explosions of stars in some areas. Closer to the moon, the stars were fading. The moon was brighter than the stars. She wondered how she could see the stars *and* the moon on the same night? Wouldn’t the moonlight make the stars invisible? The blonde saw her confusion and giggled.

“Don’t question it. Just enjoy it!” The moonlight lit up the little girl’s emerald eyes. They had to be the most beautiful that the other had ever seen! She almost forgot about where she was going because of the nighttime’s beauty. The small hand eventually let go of her back and instead began to

braid a strand of wavy blonde hair. The brunette let out a sigh of content. Her breaths were calmer now and she inhaled the smell of dewy grass through her nose. They sat in silence for what seemed like forever. Finally, the older took a deep breath and spoke up.

“Is it a good place I’m going?” Her voice was a bit hoarse from not talking for so long. The young girl smiled and nodded.

“Of course it is! I told you that everyone goes there eventually. Where else did you think you were going?” The older girl was afraid to respond, so she kept silent. The child knew what she meant by the look of dread on her face and shook her head. “Don’t you worry about a thing...”

“Okay,” she said in a voice just above a whisper and lay back with a sigh.

“Just let me know when you’re ready.” The little girl hoped she wasn’t pressuring this girl too much. She had come off that way toward others in the past.

“I don’t even know why I’m scared,” she stated truthfully.

“People are naturally afraid of the unknown.” The older girl sat up again.

“How do you know all this? You’re so young.” The little one chuckled at this question.

“I’ve met *many* people. You learn a lot from them, really. They all have different stories, lives, and most importantly, how they got here.”

“Is there any way I can go back?” There was a hint of desperation in her shaky and nervous voice. The younger girl sighed and shook her head, almost solemnly. Nothing was worse than telling people they couldn’t go back. It reassured her greatly, however, knowing that the place everyone went would be even better.

“I’m sorry...” she whispered in response. They kept silent after that. All that was heard was the cool wind rustling softly through the leaves of the nearby oak tree and a few crickets singing their songs. After a while, the older girl began to speak once again.

“I-It really is gorgeous out here,” she stuttered hoarsely, adjusting to her voice again. It sounded louder than she expected. “I’ve never seen such a starry sky, having lived in the city and all.”

“There really is nothing like nights such as these.” She inhaled the fresh air, and turned her head to the other girl. “So, what was the city like?”

“Hm...” she began to ponder. “It can be annoying as hell.”

“Really? How so?”

“Well, it’s really hard to sleep at night with all of the traffic outside of our apartment. I mean, it could be three in the morning and people are speeding and beeping their horns like they’re the only ones that matter.” The girl speaking received a nod, indicating for her to continue if she wished. “As if they’re the only ones who have places to go, and god forbid anyone has a place to go, or a life to

live.” She began to pull out blades of grass absentmindedly.

“I get what you mean,” the blonde responded, noticing the other girl becoming antsy. She wanted to be understanding, because she was, but not egg her on too much and get her angrier. She finished braiding the strand of her hair and moved on to braid another next to it.

“The city may have more people, but none of them actually care about you,” she continued.

“Take it easy with the grass,” the little girl commented, now using her left hand to hold the braids in place, and the right to point to the girl’s fists, clenched tightly with blades of grass. “It didn’t do anything to you,” she joked.

“Oh... sorry.” Her voice became meek again. She set the grass gently over the patches of bare dirt, as if doing this would somehow make fresh grass emerge from the earth. The teen wiped her dampened palms on her jeans to dry them off, letting out another shaky breath. She pulled her knees tightly to her chest.

“Are you cold?” she asked, continuing to braid the second strand of hair.

“Nah, it feels pretty nice out here.” She thought for a moment, looked to the girl in the white dress, then quirked an eyebrow. “Oh, uh, what did you mean when you were talking about how I didn’t like being born?”

“Well, you’re in a nice and cozy place for nine months, unable to even comprehend anything different. Then, against your will, you are pulled right out of your home to a foreign place with blinding lights and big things staring at you.”

“I never thought of it that way,” she mused. “It does make sense, though.”

“Remember when I said people are afraid of the unknown? That’s an example right there.” The older girl took in the magnificent scenery and inhaled slowly and deeply. “I-I think I’m ready,” she blurted out.

“You *think*?” The blonde raised a skeptical eyebrow.

“No...” she replied in a more confident tone. “I *am* ready.”

The girl in the white dress smiled and held out her small hand once again. It was taken and the little girl gave a firm squeeze. The little girl had no doubt the older one was ready. She could see it in her eyes.

“Now, just stare into the moon,” she whispered, pointing upwards. The moon was brighter than it was before. Oddly, the light wasn't blinding. It was actually very beautiful to the older girl. It relaxed her immensely.

Slowly, the moonlight shone brighter and brighter until everything to be seen was white, other than the two girls.

The brunette smiled. She, too, began to be engulfed by the warm, comforting light.