

Chapter One

* CHAPTER 07 *

Fantastical colours danced around Bloom's periphery, until her entire field of vision was consumed by what looked like wisps of starlight, swiftly swirling and sparkling all around her. Suddenly a sensation of falling encompassed her entire body, gentle, to begin with, but slowly it became so forceful she dipped in and out of consciousness. She looked around in terror for any glimpse of Stella - she was nowhere to be seen - so she closed her eyes as tight as she could until the feeling finally stopped...

"Bloom, are you okay?" A voice echoed out. Bloom was curled up on the ground completely passed out, she slowly fluttered her eyes as Stella's face came into focus - her amber brown doe eyes shifting from worry to relief. "Thank the stars!" Stella exhaled. "Listen, if you're going to vomit please do it on the hard floors, the rugs are all couture."

Bloom went to respond but could only just sit up and nod towards Stella. She sat for a

moment and looked up. A beautiful mural of the sun, moon and stars was painted onto the ceiling. Against a backdrop of midnight blue, stars twinkled like celestial lanterns, their radiant gleam mirrored by the luminous moon casting its silvery glow. And at the centre, the sun's beams shine a fiery brilliance, its rays extending like celestial tendrils, infusing the chamber with a warm and comforting glow.

Bloom slowly brought her head downwards and glanced around, the room was made of what looked like golden sandstone, each piece perfectly carved to frame the large expanses of decorated wall. Four pillars made of the same material stood in the middle of the space, connecting to the four corners of the painted mural that Bloom now noticed glowed in shifting holographic light. It was as if the cosmos itself has descended to share its celestial secrets with those who dare to seek it.

"Where... where are we" Bloom finally said in awe, her voice was hoarse and clearly still in slight state of shock from the jump.

"We're currently underneath the temple of light, Nobody is allowed down here aside from the royal family and a couple of other delegates from the other realms. I thought this would be one of the only places in the city we could go without being detected." Bloom took a moment to take it all in, the sheer beauty of the chamber still almost too much to process. Stella smiled before lifting her wrist to look at what seemed to Bloom like a small bejewelled bracelet. A hologram then appeared above her wrist, crystal clear, almost like a phone screen.

"What is that?" Bloom said in the same enchanted tone, slowly rising from the floor so she could get a closer look.

"It's called an Omni, kind of like the slabs of glass you carry around on Earth only so much more functional. It allows us to communicate but also control a myriad of other

things, like... fashion!” Stella’s eyes lit up as she spoke, then, from the wristband, came a white glowing wave of light that materialised into a plain burnt umber outfit. Stella just smiled at Bloom as she stood weak in the knees and bewildered at the sight of it all.

“It’s incredible...”

“This? It’s drab Bloom, it’s meant to be understated...speaking of understated I need to get you out of that abomination you have on...”

“I wasn’t talking about the clothes Stella, I was talking about that thing! How does it work?”

“Bloom...” Stella wandered off through one of the many doorways in the temple “Do I look like the girl who knows the answer to that? Something to do with little nano robots or something...” Her voice faded away as she spoke, a minute or two passed and she came back with a dark navy cloak. It was a soft velvet and had golden trimmings around the hood and hems. “Listen just wear this until we can get you into something a little more... modern.”

Bloom donned the cloak as she wandered around the chamber, still gazing at the fantastical mural on the ceiling.

“Listen Bloom.” She turned to face Stella, her face and voice now appearing more serious. “Whatever that creature was on Earth it was not from here, monsters like that have only been spoken about in legend. What I’m saying is, it did not get there by accident, it was after something... whether it was looking for you or for me doesn’t matter, all we know is that we cannot trust anyone. Not my father, not the Magix council. Just us and a couple of friends. One of them I have just contacted, that’s where we are going first. You’re powerful Bloom, the magic you displayed is no ordinary feat... Not only that, you’re the only other person who saw that creature. Something is going on Bloom and we are going to find out

what it is. I don't know how you ended up on Earth, but we are going to get all of the answers together... okay?"

"Okay." Bloom stated clearly, her voice sounding assured for this first time in a while.

"Then let's go"

Bloom and Stella left the temple through the back onto a small street. For the first time, Bloom saw the sky of an entire new world. Stella put on some oversized sunglasses in order to try and mask her identity. She led not saying a word and Bloom followed swiftly behind her, every second that passed a new question coming to mind that she wanted to ask about this new world she found herself in and what Stella had told her in the temple moments ago... So far where-ever they were looked almost like Rome in its architecture: tall, stately buildings of weathered stone flank either side, their facades adorned with ornate carvings. Arched doorways beckon her with an air of regal invitation. Vines, clinging tenaciously to the walls, weave a verdant tapestry that softens the harshness of stone, creating a symphony of nature and history. The street seemed to twist and turn, revealing tantalising glimpses of hidden courtyards adorned with fountains. This one small street, a magical blend of fantastical elements already inviting you to explore its secrets with wide-eyed wonder. But that was dwarfed by the astonishing beauty of the rest of the city. The pair stepped out onto the main balcony in front of the temple, only now could Bloom see that she was on top of a mountain with a panoramic view of the entire city.

"Bloom, welcome to my home, Cittaluce" Stella gestured to the view, Bloom had never seen or imagined anything like it before. It was a city of magic and technology

together. A kaleidoscope of luminescent colours mesmerising the eye everywhere you looked. The skyline rising like a forest of gleaming spires, reaching towards the cosmos in a testament to architectural brilliance. Buildings of glass and metal soar, their facades adorned with intricate patterns of glowing runes, each one a harmonious marriage of mysticism and technology. The city was spacious and seemed to stretch beyond the horizon. The sky was a different colour to what it is on Earth, more a periwinkle than a blue. Bloom just stood looking at the panorama of the city shaking her head in disbelief.

“This is Solaria?” Bloom asked softly crossing her arms over the balcony.

“Yes, well this is the capital of the Realm... Look, you can see my house from here!” Stella took Bloom’s head and rotated it left to face a large Palace in the distance, seemingly shaped like a Crescent moon and built with similar materials to the temple of light that now stood behind them. “I can’t wait to show you the city! We have somewhere to be though, but you’ll get to see more on the way! Come on!” Stella exclaimed as she ran off to a building in the distance. Only now did Bloom notice that there were other people at the top of the mountain along with them. They were sparse, one couple was looking at the view of the city just as Bloom was. Another was taking pictures of the temple using the Omni that Stella had used earlier. Everywhere she looked there was another example of magic fused with technology, and another spectacular view to take in. She also understood why she couldn’t be seen in her clothing from earth. Bloom ran to catch up with Stella, taking in as much of it as she possibly could.

“Stella, wait, you never told me where we’re going or who we’re going to meet!”

Stella looked at Bloom for a moment almost as if she was deciding whether to reveal the information to her now.

“We’re going to the Lupus district on the far side of the city. Before I left for

Earth an old friend of mine contacted me to ask for some help, so I'm hoping she will return the favour... And right now we need all of the help we can get. She's so way smarter than me so she'll be an amazing help to figure this whole thing out"

"Amazing, what's her name?" Again, Stella paused to think about her response.

She looked at Bloom.

"Layla. Her name is Layla"

Stella led her to a building that was on the very edge of the mountain, it bore aspects of a Grecian temple, but it looked as though it was freshly built just yesterday. In the distance Bloom could see what looked to be floating trains that were pearlescent in colour pulling in and out of the building. Stepping inside, a vast atrium unfolded before her eyes, Sunlight poured through stained glass windows, casting kaleidoscopic hues upon the polished marble floors below with a gentle murmur of the trains in the distance.

"This is the city's transport system, we call it the Lev. They can get you anywhere and everywhere all over the city! C'mon this is ours!" Stella immediately ran towards the carriage giving no time for Bloom to process anything or reply.

"Stella wait!" Bloom ran after he

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