

# Sin & Sinuous

By Riley Mendoza





*Branded  
for  
Error*



# Branded for Error

The bell rang, signaling the end of lunch. Reyna ripped her pictures of Chandler out of her locker, and slammed it shut. Tears fell down her face as she tore their memories to pieces. Aurora held back a smile and glanced at her list.

## *People Who Have It Too Easy*

~~—Reyna Duarte~~

Hot Tommy

Sabine Willow

Irene Coquelin

Miranda Lane

Chandler Tarantino

She put her little black notebook in her pocket and walked to fifth period.

While Mr. Smith droned on about the chemical properties of sulfur, the few students paying attention took notes.

In the back corner of the classroom, Aurora stared through the window to the parking lot. The same small, short-winged bird settled itself on the window sill. Aurora had seen it around the school often for the past few weeks.

She glanced down at her list again, and began making plans for the next undeserving piece of trash on it. She wrote

a few ideas out on the next page.

Eventually, the bell rang, and Aurora gathered her things to get to her next class. On her way out of the classroom, she came up with an even better punishment idea for Reyna. She pulled her notebook out of her pocket to write it down before she forgot. Eyes focused on the page, she rammed into two of her classmates.

Her notebook tumbled to the floor.

“Sorry about that. I was reading something.” Wren squatted next to her and picked up his books. He transferred to their high school a few weeks ago. Aurora had never spoken to him before.

“Maybe you should actually pay attention to where you’re walking.” Lyle Greene scoffed. He grabbed his papers and stomped away.

A little black notebook sat alone on the ground. Aurora picked it up and was on her way to her last period of the day. Study hall.

Aurora sat in the same back corner of the classroom. She grabbed her favorite red pen and opened up the black notebook.

*things HOT tommy has said to me*

*sup*

*you're in the way*

*why are you staring at me*

“What the what?” Aurora stared at the first page.

“What are you looking at?” Irene Coquelin poked her

head over Aurora's shoulder.

Aurora slammed the notebook shut. "Nothing."

"Let me see!" Irene ripped it out of her hands and opened it up.

"It's not mine." Aurora murmured. "We must've gotten them mixed up earlier."

Irene sifted through the pages.

"Oh my...This is some juicy stuff...Woah...Is that even physically possible?" Irene gasped.

"It's not mine. I swear." Aurora said while reaching for the notebook.

Irene glanced up. "What was your name again? Are you a writer?"

Aurora furrowed her eyebrows. "A writer? What are you talking about?"

"Your fanfiction. You know...about you and Hot Tommy." Irene pointed at the provocative pages.

"Like I said already, that notebook isn't mine." Aurora grabbed the notebook out of Irene's hands and started to flip through it. She skimmed over each page, taking in all the graphic details. Eventually, she got to the illustrations.

Irene covered her eyes.

Aurora shut the notebook.

"Goodness." Irene gasped. "I guess I'm not that surprised though. Everyone likes Hot Tommy."

"I don't. Seriously. This isn't mi—"

"His face is literally perfect, and don't even get me started on his body..."

Aurora snapped a few pictures, and examined the notebook for the owner's name. After a fruitless search, she plopped her head down on her desk in defeat. She wondered where her notebook was and if its unknown possessor had looked through it.

Sixth period ended. Aurora grabbed her backpack, notebook in hand, and quickly walked out of the classroom. Soon after, she ran into Wren again.

“Hey, I think we got our notebooks mixed up earlier. You’re Aurora Paine, right?” Wren held out her black notebook.

Aurora nodded. She thought about the disturbingly graphic content of the notebook she had accidentally taken.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Wren laughed. “Do I have something on my face?”

“It’s nothing. Here’s yours.”

They traded notebooks.

“I am a little curious about something, though.” Wren confessed. “What was that list about?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Aurora began to walk away.

Wren laughed. “It seemed like a hit list.”

She turned back towards Wren. “I think your notebook was the interesting one.”

“What do you mean? It’s just a list of my homework assignments...” Wren began to flip through the steamy notebook. His jaw dropped lower as he turned each page. “This isn’t mine.”

“It must have been Lyle’s.” Aurora walked past Wren. “I think I know where he might be.”

“Wow. How popular is this notebook?” Wren followed her.

They found Lyle folding up his paint splattered apron in the art classroom.

“Hey, Lyle. I think we mixed up our notebooks.” Wren said.

Lyle glanced at Wren. “Oh my gosh! I didn’t even notice.”

He took Wren’s notebook out of his bag and gave it to



him. Lyle's fingers gently caressed Wren's as he took his own notebook back.

Wren let out an anxious laugh and put his notebook in his pocket. "Well, now that that's settled, I think I'm gonna go home. See you guys around."

"You're leaving so soon?" Lyle asked. "You transferred here a few weeks ago, and we're just barely getting acquainted with one another. Do you want to see what I've been working on?"

Aurora thought Wren looked uncomfortable.

"Well, I'm gonna go home now," she said.

"Nobody asked." Lyle rolled his eyes.

Aurora gripped her notebook. Her nails pierced the once smooth cover.

He turned back to Wren. "So...what do you say?"

Wren was silent for a moment.

Aurora turned around and began her long walk home. She was glad she didn't have to work today. She wasn't in the mood to deal with customers or anyone else for that matter.

Once she was far away enough from any prying eyes, she took out her notebook and red pen.

"Lyle has the most supportive parents out of anyone at this school. When he came out last year, his parents were there for him completely. What has that lecherous pig done to deserve them?" Aurora mumbled to herself.

## *LYLE GREENE*

The sun was beginning to set when Aurora made it home. The porch steps creaked as she ascended. She ran her fingers across the chipped paint of the railing. She entered her dark, empty house. Her mother wouldn't be home until

late as usual.

She sat down on the ancient couch and looked over her cellphone camera roll. The screen lit up the room as she selected the pictures she had taken of Lyle's notebook. She sent them to Hot Tommy who undoubtedly didn't have her phone number saved and made Lyle's authorship crystal clear. Then she grinned.

The next morning, Hot Tommy's friends cornered Lyle at his locker before first period. Hot Tommy didn't feel like dealing with the situation himself.

### ~~LYLE GREENE~~

It was lunchtime. Aurora was writing in her notebook outside by herself. She saw the familiar small bird fly towards a nearby tree.

Wren walked up to her. "I know it was you."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Aurora continued to write in her notebook.

"Oh, come on. I read all of your creepy little judgment plans. What happened to Lyle this morning had your name written all over it."

Aurora crossed her arms. "Like I said before, I don't know what you're talking about."

"Look. I wasn't going to tell anyone. I just think you should be careful."

"What do you mean by that?" Aurora closed her notebook.

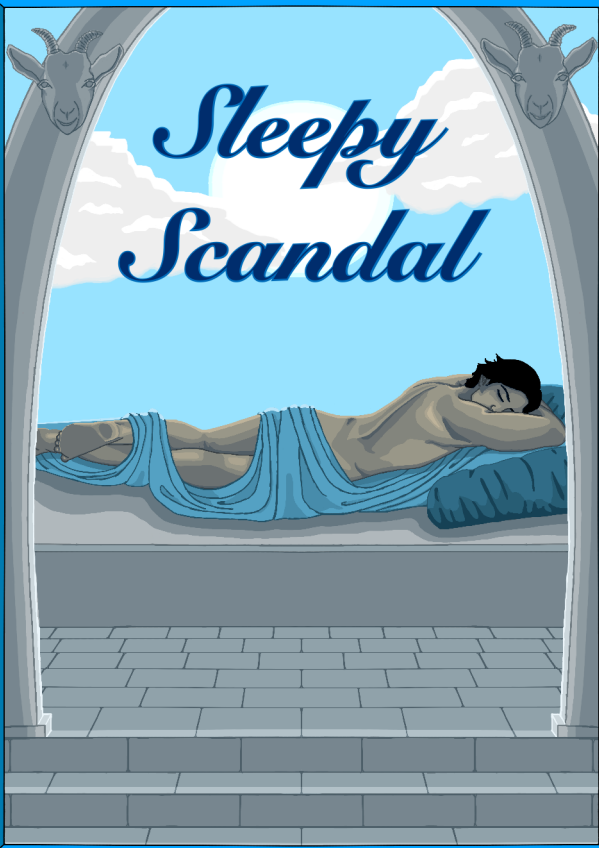
"It just seems like the little 'pranks' you have planned for your friends have the potential to go a bit too far." Wren looked at the ground.

"They're not really my friends." Aurora replied.

Wren sighed. “Yeah, I know.”



# *Sleepy Scandal*





# Sleepy Scandal

Hot Tommy rolled out of bed. He threw on a shirt just tight enough to reveal the outline of his muscles. He finished his ten minute morning routine and drove to school. He was thirty minutes late to first period.

Mrs. Dean, his English teacher, didn't mind since he was so much more beautiful with his perfect skin and chiseled face than her wrinkly, cheating bastard husband.

Hot Tommy sat down and laid his head on the desk.

Mrs. Dean told him to work on the semester's final writing project, but he was already fast asleep.

After first period was over, he stumbled into his algebra class where he fell asleep again. When math ended, his teacher asked him to stay behind so they could discuss his ten missing assignments. However, Hot Tommy didn't feel like spending his energy on a conversation with his math teacher, and he sure as hell didn't feel like spending any energy on all of those assignments. So he slipped away after the bell rang.

By lunch, Hot Tommy barely had the motivation to attend the Senior Officers' meeting in the leadership room. He was the class' Vice President. Everyone knew he had only won the election because of his attractiveness since he didn't even bother to campaign.

Sabine Willow, the President, led the meeting about their senior trip. She wanted to get the preparations

started early, so they weren't stressing last minute blah blah blah. Hot Tommy didn't feel like paying attention. At the end of the meeting, Sabine gave the other officers a few tasks to complete by their next meeting. She paired Hot Tommy up with the class secretary to find potential options for transportation for the trip.

Hot Tommy thought the secretary had a crush on him. He couldn't remember her name, but he always saw her looking at him in chemistry class.

When the secretary walked up to him to get started, Hot Tommy told her that it might be best if she did the work on her own since he already had a lot on his plate with all the algebra homework he had to do. He wasn't actually going to do the assignments, but he didn't need to tell the secretary that. After the whole Lyle fiasco, Hot Tommy didn't want to get involved with anyone else that was possibly obsessed with him. Plus he didn't feel like doing any work. The secretary said she would do the research on her own and left.

Hot Tommy decided he would skip fifth and sixth period to take a nap in the leadership room. He plugged in his earphones and fell into a deep sleep.

When he woke up, the room was much brighter than before. Instead of lying down on his desk in the leadership classroom, he was on a bench in what he thought was the boys' locker room.

He felt cold. Everywhere. He was completely naked. He jumped to his feet. Was he dreaming?

A group of girls in P.E. uniforms walked in and screamed. He was in the girls' locker room. He tried his best to cover himself. A few campus security officers came in to escort him to the principal's office after tossing a P.E.



uniform for him to wear.

Hot Tommy was suspended and lost his position as Vice President. Miranda Lane had to fill in for him, but no one really cared since the entire senior class loved her. Well, almost the entire senior class.

Sabine was not very happy.

~~Hot Tommy~~



# *Her Shadow*





# Her Shadow

Sabine couldn't believe her eyes. For as long as she could remember, Sabine had been ranked number one in the class. She was almost guaranteed Valedictorian. Her breath was caught in her throat. She crumpled up her transcript and went to her next class. She saw 2's everywhere, taunting her.

When she got to her AP Calculus class, her hands were trembling. She thought about how her parents would react. She imagined the frightening silence, disappointed expressions, and piercing criticism.

Miranda Lane sat down in the seat next to Sabine and asked her if she was okay. Sabine was hunched over with her face buried in her shaking hands.

Sabine looked up at Miranda's stupid face. She hated how pretty she was, how kind she was, how talented she was, how athletic she was, how popular she was. And now, how intelligent she was. Sabine knew that Miranda had booted her out of first place. She had always thought of Miranda as a potential rival, but she had no idea that she would slither her way into Sabine's rank, all because she took one more AP class that year. Sabine didn't want to look at her anymore, so she said everything was fine and got ready for the day's math lesson.

She spent all day sulking. Alone.

Almost every second, Sabine was reminded of her

failure. She saw Miranda everywhere, laughing and smiling.

Little "Ms. Perfect" sat next to her again in sixth period. When Sabine could no longer bear her presence, she raised her hand and asked to go to the restroom.

Once she was out of the classroom, she walked past the bathrooms and went straight to her car. She bumped into another girl along the way and yelled at her to watch where she was going. Sabine threw herself into the driver's seat and took the crumpled transcript out of her pocket. Tears began to roll down her cheeks. She hated how naturally everything came to Miranda, but she hated even more how afraid she was of what her parents would do when they found out. Sabine stayed in her car until the end of sixth period.

When Sabine was about to start her car, she heard a horrific shriek echo from the school. She drove off right after. That night, she didn't receive any news from the school, so she figured nothing big had actually happened. But she was wrong.

The next day, Sabine heard the rumors and whispers. Everyone was talking about the dead fish Miranda found in her locker after school yesterday.

Irene had heard that there was fish blood splattered all over the inside of the locker.

Reyna had heard that the blood spelled out a death threat.

Chandler had heard that Sabine had done it.

Irene said that she never did come back to sixth, and that she never saw her go to the bathroom either. They all thought it made sense. Miranda had always been better than Sabine in almost every way, and now she had finally

beaten Sabine in what she was best at. Having the highest GPA.

The students were positive that Sabine was the culprit and didn't try to hide it.

~~Sabine Willow~~









# Pork

Pulled pork sandwiches. Irene asked where the heck the vegetarian options were.

After giving Irene her classic blank stare, Janet the lunch lady told her to hurry up and grab a sandwich.

Irene sighed and took two from the top of the stack. She walked over to Miranda's table.

Miranda smiled and asked if her preparations for auditions were going well.

The school's theater department was putting on a new play this year written by one of the students, and Irene was a shoe-in for the star role, a strong-spirited vegetarian driven by her passion for protecting animals and their rights. Everyone thought it was going to be the school theater's biggest show of the year, and it meant the world to Irene.

Auditions were only one day away.

Irene told her that she was feeling pretty good about her chances of getting the part, but also that she had no idea how vegetarians survive. Then, she took a big bite of her pork sandwich.

After school, Irene went home to rehearse all night. She didn't just want the role, she needed it. She couldn't bear to see someone else in the spotlight because it belonged to her and only her. Irene paid close attention to each detail, practicing each facial expression, each gesture,

each small mannerism to perfect her portrayal of the character.

About three hours into preparations, Irene received a text message from one of the play's student directors. She told her that auditions were postponed until next week. Irene was relieved that she had more time to practice, but she was curious about the sudden change.

At school the next morning, Irene ran into the other student director. She asked him why they decided to push auditions back a week, but he didn't know what she was talking about. Irene showed him the text, but he said that he was directing the play on his own. Irene brushed the misunderstanding off and went to auditions after school.

A few days later, Irene was called back. She was excited for her friend, Miranda, who had gotten called back as well, but not as much as she was for herself. She felt her dreams coming true. All of the fame and awards were just beyond the horizon.

That day, at lunch, Irene went to her locker to grab her fifth period notebook and found a sandwich wrapped neatly in white paper with her name written on it. The scent of pork floated into her nostrils as she picked up the warm sandwich. Irene took it to her friends' lunch table in the cafeteria and devoured it. She loved pork almost as much as she loved attention.

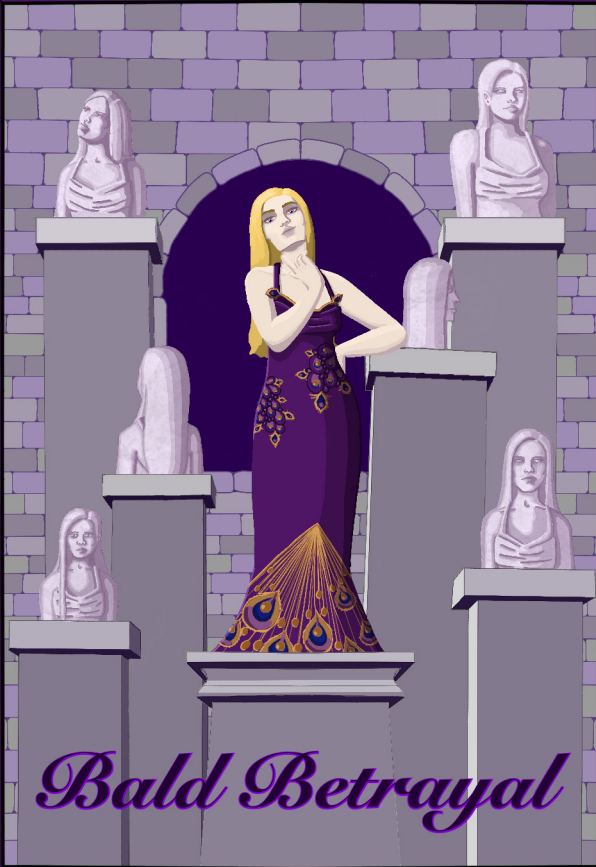
During fifth period, Irene's stomach began to feel strange. So strange that she asked to go to the bathroom. She was stuck in the stall until the beginning of sixth period when a classmate found her and took her to the nurse's office to go home early. She stayed home for a few days while her stomach recuperated.

Irene missed call backs, but Miranda blew the directors

away with her perfect acting and beauty. Miranda got the role and wasn't all that surprised.

*Irene Coquetin*





*Bald Betrayal*







# Bald Betrayal

Miranda woke up to the sound of tweeting birds. She sat up and stretched. She rolled out of bed and got dressed.

After she was ready for school, Miranda hopped downstairs to eat the blueberry pancakes that her mother made for her.

Mrs. Lane planted a kiss on Miranda's forehead and told her to have a good day at school. She left for work while Miranda finished up her breakfast.

When her new boyfriend, Chandler Tarantino, pulled up at her house in his Tesla to pick her up, Miranda grabbed her rose gold backpack and met him at his car. He said that she looked gorgeous today. She told him that he was too sweet and kissed him on the cheek. Miranda didn't need the reminder. She knew that everyone thought she was enchantingly beautiful, but she also knew that she was humble too. She thought she was the perfect girl, and so did everyone else. She was the definition of effortless, in all areas of her life. Or so she thought.

They arrived just in time for first period. Miranda lit up the classroom with her perfect girl personality.

After class, she went to her locker to get her Spanish Literature textbook. Her hand stumbled with the combination while she thought about the dead fish that she found in her locker a couple of weeks ago. She was

given a new locker after the incident, but no one ever found out who had put it there.

Most of the school assumed it was Sabine, but Miranda didn't think it was her.

Her locker was free of dead animals, but she found a small piece of paper wedged between her binders. It read 'Watch your back.'

She crumpled up the note and threw it away before walking to her next class. It lingered in the back of her head all day.

After school, Miranda went to rehearsal for the school theater's biggest production of the year. Throughout rehearsal, she made no mistakes and barely had to put in any effort at all. The student director reminded her how pretty she looked today. Miranda thanked him with a smile and went to her locker to take some beautiful post-rehearsal selfies. She noticed another small slip of paper hanging out of her locker. She looked around the hallway, but she was alone. She ripped the piece of paper out of the locker crevice. It read 'You think you're so perfect.'

Miranda didn't think she was perfect. She knew she was.

She crumpled up the note and walked to the gym for basketball practice.

Afterwards, Miranda met her mom in the parking lot to go home. Mrs. Lane asked if she enjoyed her day at school. Miranda said that she always had a good day at school.

When they got home, Miranda went straight to her room where she found a small slip of paper on her desk. She dropped her backpack by the bedroom door and ran to the desk. She picked up the note. It read 'Ms. Perfect

won't be so perfect anymore.'

Miranda tore up the slip of paper and threw the pieces in her wastebasket. She walked downstairs and asked her mom if anyone had gone up to her room.

Her mom said that one of her friends from school came by to drop off something for a group project earlier, but Mrs. Lane didn't remember her name.

Miranda went back to her room. She couldn't sleep that night.

The next morning, Miranda woke up late. With dark bags hanging beneath her eyes, she got ready for school and ran out to Chandler's parked car, skipping breakfast. She got through the first four periods of the day without receiving any other ominous notes.

At lunch, she went to the Senior Officers' meeting in the leadership room. The class secretary brought snacks for everyone and little juice bottles for each officer. Miranda was starving. She hadn't eaten all day. She dug into the food and drinks. Ten minutes into the meeting, her plate and juice bottle were empty. She leaned back in her chair and relaxed for a moment. Her eyelids grew heavy. So heavy that she could barely keep them open. Sabine's voice eventually faded, and Miranda dozed off.

When she woke up, the classroom was empty. Miranda sat up and wiped the drool off of her face. She scratched her head and yawned. Her head. Her hair. **HER HAIR WAS GONE.**

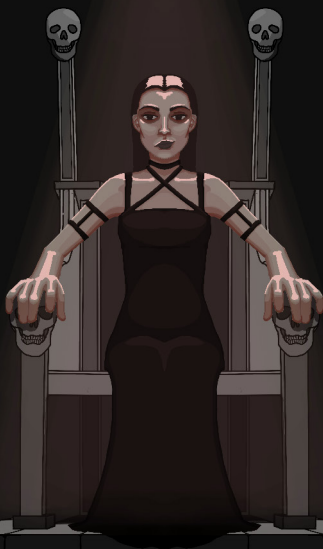
Miranda ran her hands across her shaved head. She jumped out of her chair and saw the rest of her shiny hair scattered all over the floor around her. She screamed. She sank to the ground and sat amidst the beautiful stands. She looked at the clock. School had already ended. She

had missed rehearsal, and was already late for basketball practice. Tears blurred her vision.

~~Miranda Lane~~







*The Final  
Heave*





# The Final Heave

She threw up for the fourth time that day. The first time was after she woke up feeling too tired to go to school despite already staying home the day before. The second time was after she screamed at the maid for forgetting to wash her favorite crop top. And the third time was after she saw Hot Tommy's abs while they were swimming laps in the pool for P.E. It was only 10 in the morning. Reyna Duarte couldn't tell what had made her so nauseous. She had just finished ranting on Twitter about how bothersome it was that her parents still hadn't gotten her a personal limo, when she felt the need to rush to the bathroom. Maybe it was something she ate or drank, but all that was on her mind was her basketball team's playoff game that night. Reyna flushed the toilet, gulped down some water, and shoved a mint into her mouth before returning to class.

After a long day, Reyna finally returned home and began to prepare for the game she knew she'd have to single-handedly win as the star player of the team. She barely made it to her porch steps before her half-digested lunch flew out of her mouth onto her new Gucci slippers. That was the fifth time. Tears streamed down her face as she took off her shoes and threw them at the maid, ordering her to fix them through loud sobs. Reyna tossed another mint into her mouth and hobbled to her room to

get dressed for the game. She slipped into her jersey and a clean pair of slippers before leaving the house with her Louis Vuitton basketball bag.

Relaxing in the back seat of the family limo, Reyna instagram-stalked the ugly whore, Miranda Lane, who stole her boyfriend last month. Everyone loved her new shaved hairstyle, but Reyna thought it was hideous. Two minutes into scrolling through her feed, she broke out in a cold sweat as her mouth began to fill up with saliva. She gripped her stomach with concentration, almost losing control every time the driver braked.

Once they reached their destination, the driver wished Ms. Duarte good luck at her game, but she ignored him since she didn't speak to peasants. Reyna's stomach lurched with each step she took, but she pushed on knowing that the team would undoubtedly lose without her.

In the team room, there was an abundance of snacks, but a single plate of rice crispy treats caught Reyna's eye. Her face lit up immediately as she made her way over to the sweet snack, feeling better already. She devoured the whole platter within minutes.

Shortly before warm-ups were about to begin, Reyna ran to the bathroom and flung herself into one of the stalls to barf up her delightful dessert. That was the sixth time. She hurried back to the gym after rinsing out her mouth. There wasn't enough time to get a mint. She had already missed half of the warm-up time, so her coach pulled her aside to ask where she had been. Reyna mentioned the bathroom and told him that she had felt nauseous all day, but that she was also starting to feel better. She smiled innocently, and jogged onto the court

to join her team for the rest of the warm-up.

When the game started, Reyna was noticeably slower than usual, but that wretched tart, Miranda, was playing like a rockstar. Since her coach knew Reyna wasn't feeling well, he decided to play Miranda instead of her. Reyna stewed on the bench thinking about how horrible Miranda was for stealing both her boyfriend and her playing time. She began to feel light and airy, as if she'd float away if it weren't for her churning stomach tethering her to the ground.

The other team's coach called a time out, so Reyna and the rest of the bench stood up to huddle around her coach and the five players in the game. As her mouth began to fill up with saliva once again, she knew there wasn't any way that she'd be able to hold it in any longer. The burning acid made its way up her throat, and Reyna yacked onto Miranda's back. That was the seventh time.

Reyna wobbled to the side, feeling as if a weight had been lifted off of her. She collapsed on the court in a heap, with her insides still stained on her lips. Her coach rushed over to her. She didn't have a pulse.

~~Reyna Duarte~~





*Payback's Price*



# Payback's Price

*Chandler has always gotten everything he wants. And he wanted everything.*

*He awoke to*





*Primed for Ruin*





# Primed for Ruin

Aurora stared into her notebook, leaning against the wall of lockers. She wasn't used to writer's block.

She glanced at Reyna's old locker.

Only a couple of days had passed since the playoff game. Some of her old friends had taped some pictures of her on the locker door.

Aurora was surprised. She didn't think anyone actually liked Reyna.

"Hey, Aurora." Wren walked up to her. "We need to talk."

"About what?" Aurora asked, closing her locker. She turned toward the direction of her next class.

"Reyna. And what you did to her." Wren blocked her path.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Aurora sighed.

"Come on, Aurora. We talked about your journal. Am I supposed to think that everything that has been happening to everyone on your little list is supposed to be a coincidence?" Wren asked with concern.

"Look. I had nothing to do with Reyna's... accident." She looked back at Reyna's locker. "Maybe karma finally caught up to her. At least there's one less wrathful bitch on this planet."

The warning bell rang. Aurora walked away before Wren could speak again.

Aurora sat down in her English class. They were just supposed to watch a movie today. She opened up her notebook.

### *People Who Have It Too Easy*

~~Reyna Duarte~~

~~Hot Tommy~~

~~Sabine Willow~~

~~Irene Coquetin~~

~~Miranda Lane~~

Chandler Tarantino

~~LYLE GREENE~~

“Only one left,” Aurora mumbled.

“What are you looking at?” Hot Tommy whispered.

Aurora shut the notebook. “None of your business.”

Hot Tommy laughed. “Now I’m really curious. But I don’t have the energy to pry it out of you.”

“Leave her alone.” Sabine turned around. She was sitting in front of Hot Tommy.

“I’m not even doing anything.” He said.

“Your presence is bothersome.” Sabine turned her chair around. “By the way, what was it like when you were suspended?”

“It was great. I didn’t have to go to school.” Hot Tommy smiled. “What was it like finding out Miranda bumped you down to number two in the class rank?”

Sabine glared at him.

“I may have been stuck at home, but I still heard some ... fishy rumors about you.” He added.

“Oh, shut up. I didn’t do it.” Sabine crossed her arms over her chest.

“Right. It’s not like you were jealous of Miranda or anything.”

Sabine turned her chair to face the front of the classroom again. Hot Tommy laid his head on his desk and drifted off.

Aurora finally began making some headway with her plans for Chandler when the classroom door opened. The school principal stepped in alongside a policeman.

“Sorry to disrupt, Mrs. Dean.” Principal Hoffman spoke. “I just came to borrow a student.”

Mrs. Dean paused the movie.

Principal Hoffman turned to Aurora. “Ms. Aurora Payne, will you please grab your things and follow Officer Cruz and me to my office.”

“Oh, um yes,” Aurora replied quietly. She scrambled to put away her notes. Once she was packed, she grabbed her backpack and followed the principal and officer out of the classroom.

The walk to Principal Hoffman’s office was silent. When Officer Cruz opened the principal’s door, Aurora noticed a second officer was already in the office.

“Please take a seat, Aurora.” Principal Hoffman said with a smile lowering himself into the chair at his desk.

Aurora sat down across from the principal.

“It was brought to my attention that you have been writing some strange notes about some of your classmates who, in your own words, ‘have it too easy.’ Officer Cruz, and her partner, Officer Haywood, are just here to ask you a few questions about your little black notebook, where this information was found.” Principal Hoffman explained.

Officer Cruz took a step towards Aurora, and leaned against the principal’s desk.

“Hello, Aurora. We were informed that the late Reyna

Duarte was a part of these notes of yours, along with a few other students who have been affected by some recent, suspicious events. Do you have the notebook with you? We just need to take a look at it.” Cruz explained.

Aurora swallowed. Her mouth was a desert. She nodded and pulled the notebook out of her jacket pocket. Cruz grabbed the notebook from Aurora’s barely outstretched hand and began to flip through it. She glanced up at Aurora a few times as she read it.

Aurora stared through the office window at the tree outside. She noticed a familiar wren that was perched on a branch begin to flap its wings. It flew away, and abandoned her.

The notebook clapped shut.

“We’re going to need to check your locker.” Cruz said.

The police officers escorted Aurora to her locker, and allowed her to enter her combination. Officer Haywood opened the locker, and carefully searched through her personal items. He pulled a small brown paper bag out, as its glass contents clinked together. He looked inside and showed Officer Cruz.

The school bell rang.

Students poured out of the classrooms into the hallway. Aurora felt her heart in her throat. Students slowed down as they neared Aurora and the police officers. She could feel their stares. She could hear their whispers.

“Can you explain why you have two empty bottles of Ipecac syrup in your locker?” Cruz questioned.

“Um...I...th-they’re...I,” Aurora stumbled. Her eyes darted around the hallway, at the growing crowd of students.

“Did you know that an abundant amount of this drug was found—”

“I didn’t use it on Reyna. I could never have done

something like that.” *Right?*

Cruz sighed.

“All I did was tamper with her life a bit. But that was weeks ago.”

Aurora couldn’t stop the upchuck of words.

“Yea, I did mess with a few other classmates. I might have gotten a bit carried away, but I didn’t do anything that bad. No one got hurt. Not really... ” Aurora scanned the crowded hallway. The whole list was present; Sabine, Hot Tommy, Irene, Miranda, Lyle, and even the unscathed Chandler, witnessed the spectacle. Aurora continued to spew, “I didn’t actually hurt anyone. I just sprinkled a little misfortune into their lives. Everyone else did the rest. I didn’t make everyone hate Reyna’s awful personality. I didn’t tell everyone to spread rumors about Sabine. I didn’t force Hot Tommy and his friends to bully Lyle. I—”

“I think that’s enough, Aurora.” Officer Cruz interrupted. “Everyone please continue on your way to your classes. There is nothing to see here.”

There was a small chorus of groans throughout the hallway as students slowly dispersed. Miranda and Chandler passed by Aurora, trying to recall her name, or how they knew her.

“We’re going to have to take you with us to the station to finish your questioning.” Officer Cruz said to Aurora as she began to guide her towards the front entrance of the school. She left willingly, pierced by the stares of her peers.

Underneath all of their disdain, Aurora noticed something a bit different. Fear. She could smell it. She tasted its bitterness. They were afraid of her, of her wrath.





