

# THESE SHARDS, MY HEART



Her haven is a canopied glade. Sweet runs the water of her gentle stream, and each blade of grass illuminates the sunlight which peaks through the mighty trees. Ever the day lasts, and never has nightfall fallen. The breeze caresses the fair land with its dance, commanding the music to sound. Slowly the violin plays. Its silver bow majestically moves as its strings sing. The birds answer the song with tuneful whistles. All was blissful.

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Adrina coughed out her own bitter blood. Clutching her slim stomach, she ruefully cast a look at the crimson liquid that dripped from her coat. She moaned, walking onwards to the orange light she saw afar. Not once did she dare turn back to look at the wreck.

For behind she would see the ebony road dressed in silver shattered glass; and his limp body lying helplessly from the vehicle that was now twisted into a terrible form.

*I have to get help. Simon needs ... help ....* Adrina choked back painful sobs as her bare feet met with more glass – their icy sharpness injecting what felt like poison into her flesh. She shivered violently, stumbling.

*The light ... it's so close now.* She gulped, and cringed at the vile taste that went down her throat.  
*I'm so thirsty ....*

The blood that drenched her hands and clothing – was it her's or his? Not that she could tell as she clumsily stumbled onwards.

Knocking on the door, its pale green paint peeling, the girl's legs gave in and she collapsed. Clawing at the ground and gasping for air, the door opened, and she was greeted by a shriek of terror.

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Isabel Santos. That was her name. Everyone took in delight as they pronounced it, smiling at the feeling it gave them. And it was more than her mere name that made people smile.

She enjoyed creating beautiful things – whether they were made for herself or for others. Beautiful things that people could wear that were enriched with deep colors and fine silks. Many mannequins were placed here and there, posing elegantly while draped in her latest creations.

The girl – although rightfully considered a woman – sat by her windowsill, enjoying the sunlight that made her blonde-white hair shine and her blue eyes gleam like ice. Her expensive violin leaned against the wall beside her.

*Isabel Santos. Future wife to Simon López ...* Everything was perfect for her. She stared longingly at the golden band wrapped around her long white fingers, which more than proved the commitment.

*Everything is perfect.* Or so she thought. Until one of the maids unexpectedly – and without knocking- burst into her room in fits of tears.

The only words Isabel got out of her babble was "Simon ... last night .... almost here ... then it crashed ... killed ...."

Now the ring means nothing.

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Everything was madness. The breeze grew into a ferocious storm, crushing down the evergreen trees and tearing them from the roots. The birds frantically flew with desperate wings for safety, only they did not find any. The sky was a black void, touching the land with darkness as lightning danced in terrible forms of beasts and monsters. The violin, now joined with an orchestra, grew to a thunderous crescendo. The strings of the instrument ached with the ferocity of the song and produced a horrible high pitched screeched. All was dying amongst the storm.

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Adrina's vision was blurry when she had first awoken. Tall thin wraiths dressed in long white coats dashed in and out of the room, crying out orders.

Adrina's ears were filled with a piercing buzzing sound, causing her head to throb painfully. She tried to raise her hand to feel her forehead, only to find it clasped tightly in someone's grip.

“Adrina?”

She blinked rapidly, casting frightened glances around her with wide brown eyes. The room was blindingly white. She began to panic.

A warm hand stroked her hair comfortingly, hushing her with a soothing voice.

“You're okay now. You're safe here.”

She turned her trembling face, fearing for the worst. Her boyfriend, Michael, smiled lovingly at her. His goofy grin paralysed her, and she was too shocked to speak.

“Where – where am I?” she finally croaked, sitting upright.

Michael looked her in the eye, his face set in a grim, stern look. “The hospital. An elderly couple found you dying on their front porch last night.” he deeply sighed, stroking her small hand.

Adrina paled. The memories from last night sliced into her mind.

She didn't intend to swerve Simon's car so fast. The wild stag bolted in front of them so fast her first instinct was to drive around it without hurting anyone. Her hands jerked the wheel around in an urgent spasm – but it was far too late. The deer lay in a crumpled, bloodied heap, and the vehicle flipped and turned until it lay scattered along the road, Simon and Adrina under it.

Adrina, small and lithe as she was, was able to crawl out of the wreck. She was sobbing as the shattered glass ripped at her smooth, olive skin. And after that all she did was walk forward.

*We were almost home ...* she shivered under Michael's worried gaze.

"Michael," she choked back a sob. "where's Simon?"

Michael gulped, taking a deep breath and looking down. Finally, he looked up with teary eyes.

"Simon's dead."

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Adrina never liked being left alone in dark mansions. She always felt like eyes were watching her every move from the darkness of a corner. The Santos house was no different.

The curtains were drawn shut, shunning out the sunlight Adrina yearned to see. The wooden floorboards groaned when one even lightly stepped upon it, and portraits of ancient elderly people – who Adrina assumed were ancestors – hung uselessly on the walls in their golden frame.

Adrina clutched her ribs, and grimaced at the pain she still got since being discharged. It was all she could think of to distract her from the portraits. Their leathery faces seemed to be glaring, accusing her with disgusted eyes.

The pain in her chest grew so sharp, she jumped at the sudden door creaking open. Breathing heavily, Señor Santos gave her a quick nod.

"She's ready to see you."

Isabel stood by her open window, a soft beam of sunlight surrounding her like a giant halo. Her slim, tall figure stood poised, her back to her father.

Finally, Señor Santos cleared his throat.

"I'll leave you two to it," he said, giving his daughter a solemn look before closing the door behind him.

Adrina gazed at Isabel's room in wonder, her breath taken away by her latest gowns. They were the most beautiful clothing she had ever seen. Staring at them for longer, she made out fine rips on the hem and waistline of each dress, made by sharp nails. Did Isabel do that? To her own beautiful creations?

She didn't notice the violin lying neglected on the floor.

"So, you're the one who was behind the wheel." the woman spoke, stating it, not asking.

Adrina shuffled her feet. "Yes." gulping, she took a step forward. "I was driving him home after the party. It was me who -" she stopped, regaining her breath before she could break down. " - who caused it to crash."

Silence. The room was drowning in the silence that both women had created. Adrina hated it.

Slowly, Isabel turned around, revealing her face. Her white skin was flawless – like the surface of a

smooth pearl. Yet pearls do not shatter easily. That's what it looked like to Adrina – her face was like a pearl wall, ready to burst in millions of glittering shards.

"Get out." she trembled.

Adrina felt like she was going to retch. "But I -"

"I said, GET OUT!" Isabel held a small glass swan. One that had decorated her shelf since she was a little girl. She glared at it, before shrieking and throwing it at Adrina.

Adrina dashed out, stumbling and sobbing. Despite her injuries, she had never run so fast.

*I'm sorry, Isabel. I'm so sorry ...*

The broken glass rippled in shimmering silvers – mocking Isabel as she stared at it. In many ways, it was just like her. Beautiful yet broken.

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Suddenly, as the wind drops, the music ceases. It's hauntingly enticing notes no longer flow through the trees. The trees have died, it's bark crumbling. The birds no longer sing, for they perished. The water trickles slowly. Over rocks and over sand it stops moving. All is dead.

Last we hear a single note. The violin plays its mournful tune and leaves it hanging, Long and full of sorrow, before it too dies. Her haven is gone. It can no longer flourish and grow.

Just like the heart of Isabel Santos.