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Matched

Background: In a dystopian society where the government controls everything from the clothes you wear to the day you die, 17-year-old Cassia is living in New York City. On the day of her seventeenth birthday, Cassia attends her Matching Ceremony, when the Society matches her with the person that they believe is her perfect husband. As it turns out, Cassia is matched with her childhood friend, Xander, which is a rare occurrence in the Society. Both families are elated and Cassia is certain that Xander is perfect for her. Certain, that is, until a second, different face appears as Cassia’s match: Ky, the adopted son of another family that lives on her street. Then, Cassia’s grandfather dies on his 80th birthday, like clockwork, but not before he gives Cassia two poems which are not on the list of 100 Poems and are therefore forbidden. After this, Cassia truly begins to question the Officials and Society. In the meantime, Ky tells Cassia his story through illustrations and poems written on napkins. He tells her how he grew up in the Outer Provinces (the rural farmland of the Society) and how Officials had murdered his parents before he was brought into the City. In the few alone times that they have during the hiking activity, Ky teaches Cassia how to write, an activity that is strictly taboo. The two fall in love amongst the seclusion that the Hill offers. Cassia realizes that she can’t be with Ky unless she wants to cause trouble for her whole family, so she tries to stop seeing him. However, the Officials find out anyways and take Ky from his home to fight in the wars in the Outer Provinces. They also transfer Cassia’s family to a farm in the Outer Provinces. Cassia, determined not to let the Society rule her future any more, decides that she will scour the Outer Provinces until she finds Ky.

We are no longer unknown.

We are the outcomes,

predicted endings,

Of logarithms and equations.

We are probabilities and percentages.

Likelihoods and calculations.

We are who they say we are.

We exist because they say we can.

Live because they tell us how.

Work because they say we must.

Stability is what drives us

Because it is what drives them.

We are expected to follow because they don’t show us the flaws.

But I looked behind the curtain.

I saw what they didn’t expect me to see.

I saw the uncertainty,

The arrogance.

The unexpected outcome of two unpredictable variables.

Me.

And Ky.

The Aberration,

Mistake,

Adoptee from the Outer Provinces.

The boy marked by tragedy and death.

He is the boy who is too smart to allow himself to be controlled,

So he controls his own fate.

Cheating the system out of his intelligence

True worth

And appearing perfectly average,

He silently fights the ridiculous falsity­­ of freedom

Illusion of choice.

He is the boy who was never blind to their sociopathic conduct.

He is the boy who taught me how to write,

Slowly and patiently,

In the dirt until I could re-create the poems that Grandfather gave me.

The banned ones.

Ones I burned.

Ones that now only exist in two hearts and the quiet whispers of the wind.

He is that boy

And I am that girl.

The girl who chose love over a Match.

Set fire to illicit and beautiful words.

Hid an Artifact from the Officers.

Shared secret kisses in the solitude and silence of the Hill.

Listened to the story of a complicated boy.

Refused to let that blue capsule pass her lips and ease her pain.

Disregarded the warnings of the government.

Learned to write.

Crushed that little red pill under her heel.

I am the girl who remembers.

I remember what they did to Ky,

His birth parents,

His adopted mother and father,

Xander,

Bram,

Mom,

Dad,

And me.

And no matter how far away they send him,

Or where they ship my family,

He is that boy,

I am that girl,

And I will find him.