

13. Mehreen A.

“No, Nicole, I already told you I won’t lead the army!”

I yelled across the lab. My voice echoed despairingly, and I wondered if I would ever escape the prison that had become my home. At the age of 16, I had chestnut colored curls, a slim body, and a spark of magic. The lab I was currently destroying with my high-pitched screams was a portion of the Liliansa Scott Academy. However, the Academy was just a cover name. Those who had been here long enough knew that Crystal Sparks Spy School was run, not deep underground, but high in the clouds. At first sight, it seemed like a fairy tale come true. Alas, things that seem too good to be true usually are. The behind the scenes of being a spy were tortuous and unforgiving. Pupils were recruited from the young age of thirteen.

“Gabby, you are the only one who can do this. The kingdom is counting on you!” my instructor Nicole stated calmly.

“Why do you think I can do this? Pick Samantha, or Jen. They would be much better at this than me, I’m telling you.”

Samantha and Jen are stuck up snobs who are best friends. They are kind to teachers, and cruel to the student body. The only reason they’re friends is so that they aren’t enemies all the time.

“The Andrids are invading. King Fredrick has tried countless times to defeat them, and has failed. The Reneska Army has also been severely injured. You know very well that I cannot reveal information of other students to you. Countless lives could be saved if you accept this position. By leading the attack, you’ll distract the force long enough for us to intervene. It’s our only hope.”

The kingdom of Reneska, where I lived, had been peaceful for a very long time. Then, the Sorceries War had occurred. Thousands injured, hurt by the dark time. Fortunately for them, a small group of scientists had been going through an inventive phase. They had created the first set of cyborgs, replacing flesh and blood with metal and wires. The cyborgs were supposed to be able to integrate into normal society once more, though for a very short time, as three months ago, a shadow of an army had first been sighted by King Fredrick’s watchmen. The sightings grew, and rumors spread. Now, Nicole believed that I, of all people, could end this issue.

“I...Please, give me some time to consider...”

“Gabiella, time is something we do not have much of...”

I turned and walked peacefully towards my dorm room. I passed many colorful tapestries of ancient dragons and warriors, rebels and heroes, fantasy and reality. This was the only explosion of color in the halls, as simple, beige rugs lined the floor, and brown curtains fluttered in the wind.

When I reached the dorm, my roommate and best friend, Sophie, ran out and threw a pillow at me. I laughed at this act of randomness, and ran inside, ducked, and rolled under my bed, grabbed a gravity rope, and lassoed Sophie. I carefully checked to make sure my path was clear, then I launched the pillow back at her, letting go of the rope. We fell to the ground, dying of laughter, when she said,

“So, how’s Nicky?”

I started laughing once more, then composed myself and said in as serious a tone as I could muster.

“Didn’t she hear you once? She told you not to call her that.”

“Like I care. She deserves it, after making my BFF risk her life out in the dangerous world.”

“Soph, we’re SPIES. It’s literally in the job description.”

“Not like we signed up for this.”

Sometimes, I imagine not being a spy. Daring to live a normal life. No worries, no pressure, no magic. After all, in the movies, spies are confident, daring, and use their wits. I’ve never heard of a spy with magic. All those movie marathons, for absolutely nothing.

“Gabby? Earth to Gabby. Are you okay?”

“Sorry, just lost in thought.”

“Care to enlighten me?”

“Just thinking right now about how if we weren’t here, I would never have met you. We’re BFFs forever, right?”

“Always. Come on, let’s go grab a bite to eat before training begins.”

“Right behind you.”

As Sophie left, I wondered what was out there. What would happen if an army were to attack now? Would I be prepared? The greater question, did I want to lead? My hand started glowing pink, slowly transitioning to orange. Eventually the full rainbow would occur. This is how I knew my powers were about to make a rare appearance.

Suddenly, the hallway exploded. Windows shattered, and glass shards rained on shrieking students. Dust rose, and I heard someone calling my name.

“GABBY! GABRIELLA!”

“Sophie?” I said in confusion. I didn’t know where she was. I looked down and saw armor. Rainbow armor, to be exact. “How cheesy is this?” I said, to no one in particular. Then I looked up and saw it.

There was a giant robot-like thing standing there, the school flag trapped in its shiny, death trap of a hand. Behind it, rows of cyborgs stood, ready to fulfill its commands.

I couldn’t believe it. Had I done this? It seemed the only way, for I had been thinking that just before it occurred.

The sound around me faded away, and it seemed like I had been trapped in water, only to be freed now. Iridescent light bounced off my armor. I thought in silence. It had to have been a mere coincidence. There was no way my magic was that strong. Coincidence or not, I had made up my mind. I strode into battle, leaving flecks of rainbow dust in the distance.