

Chapter 4

Mrs. Standish was finished giving me her instructions when a girl whipped around the corner. Blond curly hair freed itself from her cap, which sat a little askew on her head. Flushed cheeks and a smile, she dipped down in a rushed curtsy.

“Leeza!” Mrs. Standish chided. “How many times must I often do I have to tell you to slow down?” Mrs. Standish huffed and took a deep breath, clenching her jaw.

“Leeza, this is Izzy. You are to show her around and explain her duties. Procure her a uniform and shoes, and show her to your room. She will be in your room with you for now, and I trust there will not be any issues with that, Leeza?” Leeza diverted her eyes away from the sternhard, knowing gaze of Mrs. Standish.

Looking sheepish, Leeza replied, “Yes, Ma’am.”

Mrs. Standish continued, “I expect you to behave with the utmost decorum, worthy of this castle. You will be held accountable if Izzy falters or fails in her duties. Do I make myself clear?”

Leeza curtsied once again, “Yes, Mrs. Standish.” Leeza glanced over at Izzy and smiled with delight in her eyes.

Leeza curtsied again to me, “Pleased to make your acquaintance, Izzy.”

Mrs. Standish said, “Leeza! You do not curtsy to others among those of your station!”

Leeza returned to Mrs. Standish and curtsied again, “Yes, Mrs. Standish. I'm sorry, Mrs. Standish. It won't happen again.” With my head down, I peeked through my eyelashes to see Mrs. Standish let out a slow, tight breath.

“Well, girls, what are you waiting for? Off you go.” We curtsied inThe girls curtsied in unison and said, “Yes, Ma'am.”

Leeza grabbed my hand. “I’m so excited to have someone in my room with me! It's been ages! Mrs. Standish has not let anybody in my room with me since the last girl, who was always late for her duties. The girl said it was because I had kept her chattering into the wee hours. So, they moved her to a different room, and she hasn’t been late for her duties since.”

Leeza shrugged her shoulders and dismissed the thought as though it didn’t have merit. I glanced at Leeza and smiled, glad I might have a friend in the castle, knowing I would miss my two best friends from home. Leeza continued to chatter as we made our way down the hall.

We stopped at the laundry to pick up my two uniforms. Leeza paused mid-sentence, and her eyes dropped to my feet. Wondering what she was looking at, I glanced down. I hadn’t given much thought to my boots until that moment of mortification when I realized my toes had worn through the only pair I had. She smiled at the laundress and asked for a size six. Then Leeza continued her sentence as though there had never been a pause.

We continued down the hallway and then took a narrow set of stairs to a small room. Leeza opened the door with a flourish and smiled at me, “This is it! Isn’t it wonderful? I am the only one of all the girls to have a window in my room.”

RadiantSure enough, light streams made their way onto the worn wooden floorboards between the two narrow beds. There was a table that separated the two beds. A wick lamp sat on the table, along with a clock to keep it company, its chattering filling the air. I smiled to myself at the thought, I was the lamp, and Leeza was the ticking clock. I was okay with the chattering from both Leeza and the clock, as it drowned out any sounds of loneliness and sadness that came with leaving home.

Overall Thoughts-

Leeza is a sweetheart! She reminds me a lot of Lydia and Kitty from Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*. Very endearing!

We've mentioned before that some of these chapters need to be consolidated, and I want to explain, it's not entirely because they're short. Not at all! Even the chapters in the original *Pride & Prejudice* are 2-3, sometimes even 1-2 pages short! I prefer longer chapters, but the main reason they need to be consolidated is because of something called "Story Arcs". It means that anything within a certain encounter or scene should be included in one chapter. If you look back at my previous notes, you'll see that the first two chapters of the story cover Izzy's beginning in the palace, and I said to combine them. Here, I would say chapters 4 and 5 cover her introduction to the next secondary character (who seems very important to the plot) and should also be combined. You can end the chapter on a cliffhanger IF the scene or the plot is about to shift into the next Arc, which could be brought by a new character, a new setting, a new action or catastrophe, etc. Ultimately, if you follow this pattern, your story's flow will not only feel much better, but it will also help you discern where a good spot for a cliffhanger is vs when the chapter should continue.

The other crucial tool in writing is tracking! Pretend you're on a mission, spying on your characters, and it's your job to mark their every move. If they start walking, write it. If they start speaking, write what they say. If they laugh, sigh, sneeze, or cry, write it down. If you don't track their movements, your readers are going to lose track of your characters while reading. And that kinda ruins to cohesive reader's experience. There's nothing worse than "being there" so-to-speak, and then you're jarred out of the world because you got lost in what's happening. Make sense?

That's all I have for this chapter. Looking forward to learning more about Leeza and Izzy's character! Even though this is the 4th chapter, I still feel like I hardly know Izzy at all. Her characteristics and quirks are still ambiguous. Something to think about while you revise.