

Between the Hartnell Memorial Building Library and the dormitories, there is a little park with flowers that attract butterflies. Cherry heard at the orientation that this spot is popular with people who have borrowed some books from the library and want a nice shady place to read in. She can see why: the breeze that comes is so gentle and cooling that it makes you want to sit on the bench and relax for hours.

Unfortunately, she isn't here to sip from a cup of tea and enjoy the seasonal flowers blooming.

"Remember, the button is in the middle at the bottom," Lexa says, handing Cherry her smartphone. "And the app asks for a portrait that's zoomed on the face. No space around my head, got it?"

Cherry nods while thinking to herself, *what have I gotten myself into? This feels like the time I had my photo taken for my passport...*

She holds the phone with her two hands, unsure of what the correct way to take a portrait picture is. Cherry wants it to be the most perfect picture for her since Lexa really, really wants to get someone from Wondr.

A few moments ago, Lexa told Cherry why she needed her help. Lexa had apparently learned of the service from a classmate of hers and became curious about it. At first, she pretended to not care about it and thought it was childish to play with such an app anyway. But then she heard about people getting matches on Wondr and becoming couples. Sometimes, she would even find those couples making out in the library she's supposed to supervise! This new app made her somewhat angry for all the trouble it was causing, but there's always a side to her that made her want to try it. That's why she's asking someone who can keep a secret -- like a roommate -- to take a picture for her. When Cherry said that this explanation didn't really tell her much about why Lexa wanted to try it, Lexa sneered and said, "Just take the picture already!" Cherry delights in poking fun at Lexa's embarrassment. Although Lexa may not look like a person who longs to be with somebody, she's clearly interested in the matters of love herself. She's just a bit shy and not upfront at all.

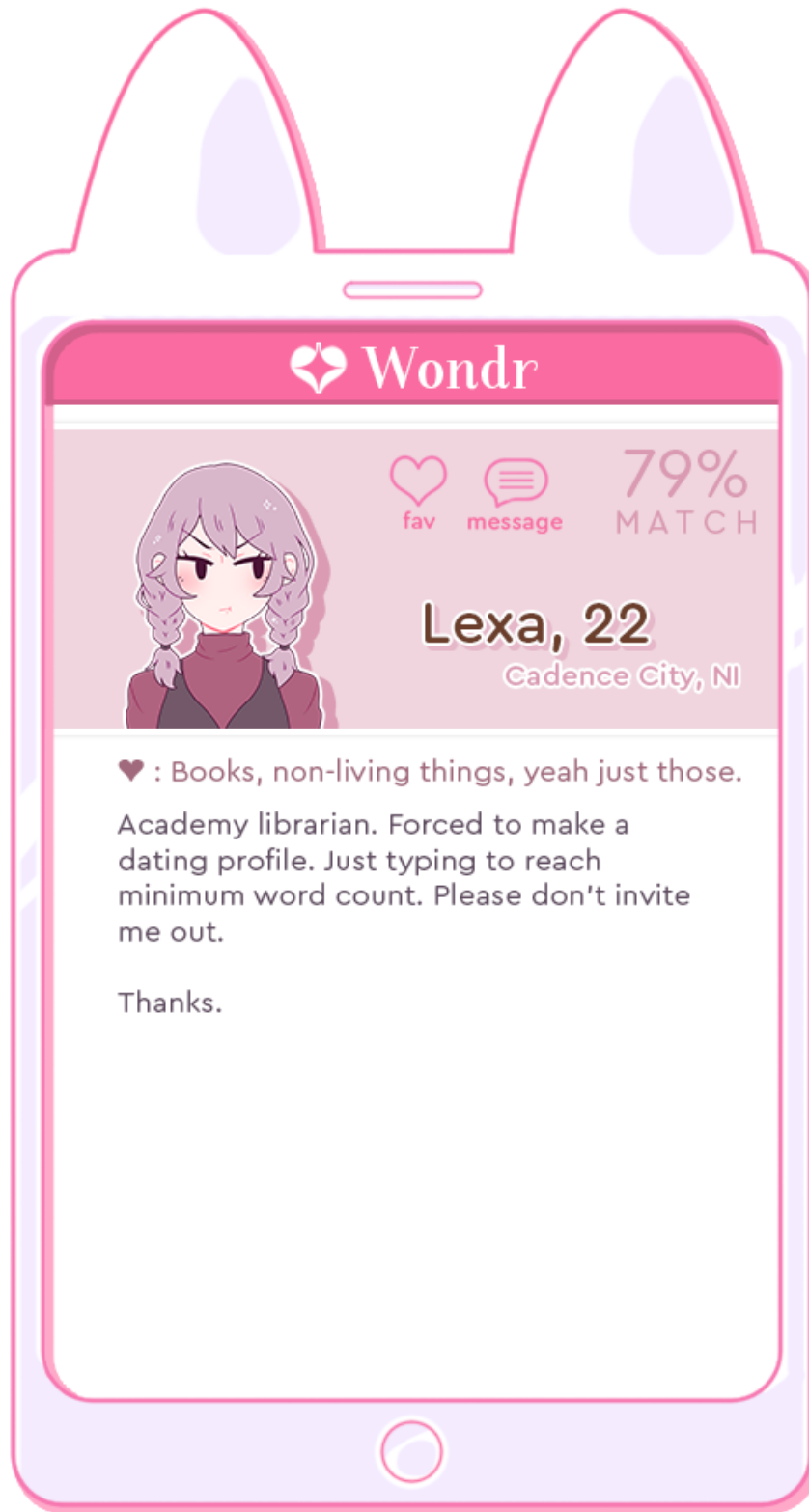
Lexa appears on the phone and the camera begins to focus on her. Cherry steps forward to leave out any space as Lexa ordered, but the bigger problem seems to be with Lexa herself.

"You should, um, smile," Cherry says.

"Why should I?" Lexa says while pouting, "The requirements didn't say I need to smile."

*And it could be a better picture if your eyes aren't always darting left and right and you didn't look so angry all the time...*

Cherry takes the picture and returns the phone to Lexa. Lexa glances at the picture, blushes at it, then goes on Wondr to type out her description. A sigh later, Lexa reveals her Wondr profile to Cherry.



Wondr



fav



message

79%  
MATCH

**Lexa, 22**

Cadence City, NI

♥ : Books, non-living things, yeah just those.

Academy librarian. Forced to make a dating profile. Just typing to reach minimum word count. Please don't invite me out.

Thanks.

“So, what do you think?”

“I think, I think you look mysterious,” Cherry says, “I have never used dating service before, so I cannot tell. But you are pretty and this makes you look mysterious.”

“M-Mysterious...” Lexa looks at her dating profile and grimaces at her own picture. “And pretty, huh. Who in the world would pick me?”

“My grandmother says, ‘If you never try, you never know’.” Cherry pumps her fists up and down. “You are good and pretty. I believe in you. You will get date!!!”

Lexa scratches her cheek in embarrassment and says, “Okay, if you say so.”

Cherry smiles and thinks that Lexa will be an interesting roommate to have.

“Oh yeah,” Lexa says, “I’m going to ask the library to order copies of a more general Celestian-Yayue dictionary for you. It’ll be free -- don’t worry about it. Besides, the library should’ve had this years ago. I’ll also allow you to borrow this book for long-term use since you will probably need it a lot.”

“Ah, really?” Cherry’s eyes sparkle. “I am happy!”

“Yeah, um... This is just my way of saying thanks for this.” Lexa looks away from Cherry. Cherry notices that Lexa is hiding her nervousness by laughing a bit, but she’s biting her lips and her body is shaking. “And anyway, I’m just looking out for you as your roommate! You’ll need help, right? I’m just extending my hand to you.”

“Thank you.” Cherry can’t help but cover her giggles. “You are very kind.”

“When do you need to meet your advisor?”

Cherry looks up and tries to make out the top of the Hartnell Memorial Building Library, which has clock faces on each side of the building. She counts with her fingers and says, “Three hours.”

“In three hours, huh. Well, if you want, we can go to a bookstore and read some books,” Lexa says, fiddling with her fingers. “I figure you’re interested in getting better at Celestian and reading fiction’s a great way to learn some new words. Also, I know some novels that will go well with the dictionary.”

“Really?” Cherry says, grabbing Lexa’s hands and holding them tightly. “I love fiction books!”

“Okay, okay!” Lexa’s face is now pure red and her eyes are just staring at their hands intertwining together like rope. “Yeah, uh. Let’s go to the bookstore. It’s huge in a good way and there’s lots of nice fiction. I think you’ll like it there.”

Lexa clears her throat and leads the way while Cherry is getting excited about being able to read novels again.

###

For the past year or so, Cherry has been studying Yayue-language sources on Attunements and those readings can be very dry. She missed reading romance books and travel literature. It was fun to imagine the wonderful adventures people can take and learn something new about themselves. She's always thought that her journey to Cadence Isle is one such odyssey. It's been too long since she read something for fun and now she can do it to improve her language skills!

"We reached the bookstore, Cherry."

The bookstore Lexa's pointing at is a thatched shack in the middle of the woods. Cherry looks up and sees a wooden plaque that reads "The Cottage Bookstore". A little chimney sticks out from the thatches and puffs out small gray clouds. She looks back and sees the dirt path she has taken to reach the store. It's a short walk down the hill of Celeste Academy and into a forest full of pine trees. The dirt path is visible from far away and there are white wooden signs that point in the direction of the bookstore. The Cottage Bookstore seems to be cooped up away from the bustle of Cadence City. But if anyone wants to access the store, it finds a way to welcome its guests.

Lexa's hand is on the doorknob and she calls out to Cherry, dazed by the fairytale-esque surroundings, to enter the store. Cherry remains standing, watching the pigeons chirp on the branches of trees before flapping their feathers and launching off. The pigeons soar up, blocking the rays of the sun from Cherry's eyes, and disappear into the blue sky.

Cherry walks toward the bookstore while trying to peer into the rounded windows between the doors. There seems to be wooden tiles everywhere and the room looks small. She wonders how this is supposed to be the large bookstore Lexa was talking about.

When she enters the library, she is greeted with the ring of a bell and the fragrance of old books. Cherry looks around and sees no books; there are only stuffed toys on the shelves. Lexa is talking to the owner, it seems, and she is very lively. Her gestures are flailing about while the owner, an old man whose beard reminds Cherry of clouds, picks something up behind the counter. It is a picture book of a woman dressed up in a cape learning to ride a bicycle.

"Ah, this must be the lady you're talking about," says the owner when Cherry goes over to Lexa. "She looks bright, I must say."

“Bright enough to pass the rigorous entrance examinations, at least!” Lexa says as she turns toward Cherry and smiles. “This is the owner of The Cottage Bookstore, Mr. Chandra. And this is Cherry.”

“Mr. Chandra, nice to meet you,” Cherry says before bowing.

“I don’t mind the courtesy and formalities here.” Mr. Chandra gives out a hearty laugh. “I was like you too, an international student from Karawita. I believe that is south of Yayue.”

“Karawita! Yes, I hear name from books.”

“It’s a gorgeous place. I didn’t go back there though. I found the man I love and now I live here happily,” says Mr. Chandra, “but before any of that, I was as clueless about Celestian as you are now. That is why I don’t mind helping you with the language.”

He reaches out his hand and gestures at Cherry to hold it. When Cherry does, he grasps her hand and shakes it before saying, “a deal is a deal.”

Cherry smiles awkwardly, but she is delighted that she has been meeting such friendly and helpful people on Cadence Isle so far. A little worry she had before coming here was that people might be unfriendly and even hostile to someone whose language skills were not up to par. But everyone is so happy and friendly here.

It makes her think of the first person she has ever met: the woman in the cafe.

“Can you lead the way, Lexa?” Mr. Chandra says, “I have to take care of my buddy here, the cashier. And you know my recommendations for people learning Celestian anyway.”

“Indeed,” says Lexa before turning toward Cherry. “Shall we?”

Lexa guides Cherry and opens the door, revealing stairs that lead to an underground chamber. Cherry enters and realizes she’s surrounded by rows and rows of books. To her, this is like discovering a secret base for Lexa and herself.

“This used to be a cellar.” Lexa says, her steps resounding behind Cherry. When Cherry tilts her head to signify her confusion, Lexa says, “Ah yeah, words. A cellar is where you keep the wine underground for shelter. There’s a winery around here that used to own this place and the old owner liked the view here. He still comes here once in a while, actually.”

“Wine...” Cherry says as she walks over to a random bookshelf and touches the spines of the books. She is imagining her auntie’s house back in Yayue; there’s a storage room full of jugs of plum wine. Cherry wonders if that is the same as this cellar thing as she pulls a book out from the shelf.

“That section is where all the pulps go, especially speculative fiction which imagines the massive potential of Attunements without any limits,” Lexa says, looking over Cherry’s shoulder

to see what she's reading. "I really like that kind of stuff, even though it's very unreal. You can dream about a better world. I remember reading this one. It's about a robot who learns how to use Attunements to make itself speak and talk to humans. Since Attunements only work on non-living objects, it works on the robot! I like the line, *We communicate not to tell each other our feelings but to share our difficulties in expressing ourselves*. It really resonates with me because I think I'm that kind of person too. Too bad sentient robots aren't a thing, haha!"

Cherry's mouth gapes a bit. She is surprised that Lexa has begun talking so confidently and honestly. Lexa takes out another book and starts discussing the themes that really helped her grow as a person:

"This story taught me that idealism is actually nice."

"The second short story is so good! It tells us struggles are everywhere and they're important."

"This is such a romantic story. I love how the hero learns everything by themselves."

Cherry likes how Lexa reads books to find herself in those little fragments of words and sentences in books. The way Lexa pours emotions into her readings is so lovely it is like listening to music. Sometimes, she even hugs these books before returning them to the bookshelves. Although Cherry has difficulty in reading these books because their vocabulary level is too high, she appreciates the enthusiasm that Lexa has.

*It is a trait worth admiring for*, Cherry thinks as she watches Lexa flip through the pages of books to quote some more. *I want to be like her and teach the kids back home about the wonders of reading.*

"Do you like picture books by the way?" Lexa says, her cheeks now blushing a trademark red again. "I, um, am quite a fan of them."

"Oh? What is picture book?"

"Y-You don't know?" Lexa's eyes bulge out as if this is the biggest surprise of all time. "Does Yayue have those books that, uh, have large pictures and are easy to read?"

"Ah!" Cherry nods and remembers her preschool teachers using such books to teach her the language. "Yayue call them 'storybooks'."

"Storybooks, huh. That makes a lot of sense. This bookstore has some, in the back. They might be good for you to improve your skills, I think."

“I think so too!” Cherry likes the idea of reading those storybooks again to improve her language skills. It might be fun to bring some of these books back for the kids in Yayue too.

Cherry and Lexa walk to the kids’ section of the bookstore. There are play mat tiles on the floor, each of them showing a letter of the Celestian language. The furniture is colored green and there aren’t any edges and corners in any of the tables.

“Do you remember when I was like going crazy about a book upstairs?” Lexa says, stepping on the mats and twirling around to meet Cherry’s eyes. “It’s because they released a new installment -- I mean, new book in a series I’m in love with.”

“What series?”

Lexa takes out a big leaflet-like book from the low shelves easily accessible to children. It reads *Vampire Luna’s Little Adventures*.

“A vampire’s a scary mythological creature from our folklore. I assume you know about them, right?” Lexa waits for Cherry to nod before continuing. “Well, this picture book writer I like -- their thing is they really enjoy taking scary things and transforming them into something cute. I deeply respect their work because the *Luna* series is not only engaging to audiences of all ages but it explores some deep issues.”

Cherry smiles and says, “You like book series, don’t you?”

“Yeah, it’s what made me want to write children’s books.” Lexa sits down and looks at the book cover with a grinning face. Then, she looks up and whispers, “Um, don’t tell people I write books for kids. It’s, uh, embarrassing...”

“I think it is cute.”

“IT’S NOT CUTE.” Lexa pouts, her cheeks turning into red balloons. “I am a professional librarian who tries her best to mediate between archivists, historians, and other scholars. I find it hard to reconcile my professional interests and hobbies.”

“You are good.” Cherry doesn’t understand the word ‘reconcile’ but gets the impression that it is a word that doesn’t make sense in this situation. Cherry then says, “I support you.”

Lexa sighs.

Cherry wants to look at the book cover, but it is angled downwards. She tries to tilt her head to see more of it.

“Do you want to read it?”

Cherry nods and Lexa gives off a wholesome smile.

###



"Our story begins with a vampire named Luna," Lexa reads aloud, "for she is our intrepid yet stubborn hero." She has opened the book towards Cherry, so Cherry can see the illustrations of Luna looking smug on top of a rooftop well. Lexa is reading it from above and seems fairly confident about reading in such a strange way. Back in Yayue, kids are expected to read books by themselves. It is very strange and surreal to hear someone read a book aloud for everyone and it makes Cherry feel immersed into the story.

"Luna likes to go to school because it is so dark and comfortable." Lexa continues, flipping the page to reveal Luna closing her eyes while resting on the ceiling. The teachers downstairs are mad and the other schoolmates are laughing. "The sun annoys her a bit, so it makes sense for her to enjoy the refuge of a school ceiling."

Another page flip. "The door opens. A girl with a bright aura appears before everyone. She has wings with the whitest feathers Luna has ever seen." Lexa stops, letting Cherry appreciate the artwork. Now, there are shadows and highlights on the people and objects near the entrance of the school. "She must be the new student transferring in."

"Her name, it is later known, is Sola. She is an angel from another city and her father has gotten a new job here." Lexa points to Sola who is standing in front of a blackboard with her name there. To Cherry, Sola's white garb is very distinctive compared to Luna's black cape and the dark blue uniforms the other students are wearing. "She is new to our part of town," says Miss Woods. "Please make her comfortable."

"Sola, however, is already uncomfortable. The shadows in the halls frightens her." Sola falls down to her knees between the two ends of the hall. She tries to wipe her tears away while everyone else walks around her. The spotlight is on Sola and Luna is peeking from the lockers while looking concerned. "Her constant weeping makes her classmates not want to talk to her."

Luna approaches Sola who's now covering her face with her hands. The tears are dripping between her fingers. "Are you alright," asks Luna. "Why are you crying?"

The next page has nothing but blackness. The text is white. "Sola looks at Luna. 'The lights,' she says, pointing upwards to the ceiling, "the lights are not on. I can't find the switch. Why are the lights not turned on?"

"Luna realizes that there are lights on the ceiling, even though she sleeps beside them all the time. The switches are on the ceiling in case someone accidentally turns them on." The illustration shows both characters pointing towards the ceiling. "Luna says, 'the school has always been dark because that's the way everyone likes it.'

"It's scary,' Sola says, her teeth chattering. 'I can't see in the dark.'" Lexa clears her throat and then continues, "Luna is going to say that's impossible, but she remembers that angels need light unlike everyone else.

"Sola can't see because the lights are not on. She can't see in the dark either. If she can't see when she is so used to seeing, then the world will always look scary to her.

"Luna wants to help, but she is afraid. She knows that many people hate the light because they are used to the darkness, herself included. They may retaliate and even bully Sola and her.

"What should I do, Luna thinks to herself. She doesn't want to leave Sola alone crying because she wants to help her smile in her new school.

"Luna suddenly remembers her late mother, who always told her to help people in need" -- Cherry finds herself getting immersed into the story of the book, even though she didn't expect it to be this engaging -- "Those who seek help are folks who are cruelly abandoned by the world. They need vampires who can fight for them.

"I'll help you,' Luna says, her voice trembling. She is now scared of the darkness too, but she wants to help Sola no matter what.

"Luna flings onto the ceiling and turns the switches on. The burst of light is so bright it illuminates the halls in a second." Lexa claps to signify an exploding sound effect, startling Cherry. "Everyone scowls:

"Who turned on the lights?! 'How dare somebody take away our lovely darkness!' 'I am angry at whoever did this!'

"Everyone rushes to the hall and scolds Luna." Luna starts sobbing and is crouching on the ceiling with her ears covered. "They want to know why."

"I just want to help Sola,' Luna screams, 'I want her to not be scared on her first day of school!'

"Everyone looks at Sola, whose body is quivering. Sola says, 'The darkness is scary. I need light. I can't see.'

"Knew angels were troublesome!' 'Angels are a nuisance.' 'Go back home!'

"Luna flies to Sola and raises her arms to protect her. 'Miss Woods says it is our job to make her comfortable! We are being awful to Sola!'

"The crowd looks at each other and they are ashamed.

"Everyone walks away without apologizing. Luna's going to ask them to come back before Sola grabs her hand.

"'You helped me', Sola says. 'It's fine.' She then hugs Luna tightly.

"The next day, it's as if nothing happened: the lights remained turned on, but no one wants to speak to Sola.

"Except Luna.

"Sola, wanna go play in the playground together?'

"Sola smiles and says, 'Sure!'

"Luna thinks about the pain the school has caused to Sola. That's why she has made a promise to herself: to help Sola as much as possible.

"As they play on the seesaw, the two of them realize they're now friends. This is what's important in the end. Luna is happy she has found a wonderful new friend and so is Sola.

"Friends are those who will help no matter what other people say. That's the valuable lesson Luna and Sola have learned. They're at their happiest when they can protect each other.

The two girls laugh, knowing they have each other. The end." Lexa closes the book.

###

Cherry lets out a huge sigh of relief.

"Isn't it intense?" Lexa says, "I was surprised when my parents read it to me. A picture book this dramatic... It made me want to read more stuff like that."

"Yes," Cherry says, "I see why."

"The writer once said to me that the books are close to their real life experiences," Lexa says, "and they want the children to know that their struggles at school are real and valid. The

way that Luna learns to be aware about the world around her because of how she feels Sola's pain is some powerful stuff. And the courage to do something about it -- well, I can't help but admire that too."

Lexa stands up to return the book, spins around, and leans on the wall.

"I want to be like Luna," she says, "and gain the courage to start something. I reread this book in middle school and I realized I wanted to be a picture book author. I wonder if I can do it."

"You can," Cherry says, "I know you can!"

"I suppose. It's worth a try, isn't it?" Lexa lets out a laugh. "Now that I think about it, I wonder if this book made me sign up for a dating service."

"Wondr?"

"Yeah, I guess you think I'm shy," Lexa says, "and you'd be 100% right. I have difficulty expressing my emotions, I think. I might be doing the reverse of the thing I'm supposed to be doing unintentionally."

Cherry tries not to break into a smile because she definitely does think Lexa is like this.

"And you know," Lexa continues while looking up at the ceiling, "if I want to be like Luna, I should get a Sola. Don't you think?"

"Yes, the two of them very good friends."

"The rest of the books are about them adventuring together. You should read them sometime; I have some of them in my room and you can use them to improve your Celestian."

"I want!" Cherry says, "It is a beautiful story. Really inspiring!"

"Mhmm," Lexa says. "Say, have I mentioned who the writer is?"

Cherry shakes her head vigorously.

"It's Mr. Chandra. He's incredible!"

"Wow," Cherry says, "owner of this place and writer!"

"Yes, he was showing me the newest installment. Luna learns to bike while Sola coaches her. It sounds so adorable!" Lexa then sighs. "Unfortunately, the series is not too popular because it is somewhat serious, I think. But it is based on his real life and his late husband and that's why I want to help him as much as possible."

"Is Luna and Sola, him and husband?"

"Yeah," Lexa says, "that's why it's wholesome. I really like it. You should check out the bookstore more since we have time and --"

*Buzz. Buzz. Buzzzzzzz.*

“Sorry,” Lexa says, reaching into her pockets. “It’s my phone. I wonder who’s calling me.”

Cherry looks around the bookstore, reminiscing about the picture book. She’s enjoying Lexa’s company and is learning a lot about the world around her. Her thoughts later wander into the cafe, with its distinctive doorbell jingle and the young woman who has welcomed her onto the island. She wants to meet that person again and tell her all about what little adventures she’s been on.

Lexa lets out a monotone “ah.”

“What is wrong, Lexa?” Cherry says, turning back to Lexa who is now sweating profusely all of a sudden.

“I-I got a date,” Lexa says, “this girl ... Carida. She-she’s my type.”

“Type?”

“I mean, I like her. She looks cute. I’m going to go on a date with her. I don’t deserve this.” Lexa’s wrists are shaking and she starts breathing in and out rapidly. “I can’t believe this. I can’t. She’s so cute. Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.”

“Let me see,” Cherry says as she stands up.

“No!” Lexa swerves away from Cherry. “It’s too embarrassing!”

Cherry grins mischievously and takes out her phone. “I will look at Wondr to see Carida,” she declares. Lexa gasps and tries to take it away. She is nimble with her hands and downloads Wondr, creates a quick profile using her passport photo as her profile picture, and searches for Carida. An exasperated Lexa tries to cover Cherry’s eyes with her hands, but Cherry, who used to babysit children back in Yayue, is able to roll away to evade Lexa’s maneuvers. Cherry’s getting a kick out of this. Seeing Lexa react so wildly like a child having a tantrum makes her think that it could be fun to tease her in the future.

“I didn’t know you were a rascal,” Lexa says, “I thought you were a nice kid! God!”

Cherry sticks out her tongue. “I am,” she says, “except with friends.”

“Friends...” Lexa tries to shake away the embarrassment. “Aaaaaaaahhhhhh...”

Cherry finally finds Carida and says, “Wow, she is pretty.”

“She is!” Lexa sighs, defeated, and falls back onto the chair. “That’s why I don’t deserve her.”

“You do! You are cute and she picks you.”

“But why? I don’t know why anyone would pick me.”

Cherry says, "Then, ask her?"

"She'll be free when I get my letter from the publishers. I don't know..."

"Do it! I believe you. You have power of cute."

"I could be a disaster," Lexa continues, "what if I get rejected from the publishers and I'm a wreck? What if --"

"Carida is beautiful. You are cute. Both good." Cherry pumps her fists up and down again.

"If you say so..." Lexa looks back at her phone. "God, she's so pretty."

Cherry giggles and goes back to her phone. She scrolls through the Wondr profiles and marvels at how pretty everyone is.

Then, she stops.

*Mima.*

"What's the matter?" Lexa says, "Oh, do you have someone you're interested in now?" It's Lexa's turn to be snarky and Cherry's to die from embarrassment.

"N-No!" Cherry says, guarding her phone from Lexa. "Just looking."

"Hmm," Lexa says while trying to peek, "Mi-Mima. She's pretty."

"Y-yes..." Cherry has to acknowledge it. That's what took her breath away the first time she met her in the cafe.

"Well, if you join me in dating somebody," Lexa says, "I'd be less embarrassed. You seem particularly interested in Mima anyway."

Cherry can't bluff her way out of this. And so, she nods, defeated from Lexa turning the tables on her.

But Cherry goes back to Mima's profile. She has finally learned her name and --

*I want to talk to her and listen to her voice again.*

She looks forward to messaging Mima on Wondr. The thought of meeting her again is making her heart throb.

###

After groggily climbing up the stairs back to her room, Mima lets out a huge yawn. She can see from the windows that the sun is falling and there are a few stars twinkling in the orangish sky. Her hair's still wet, so she has kept it wrapped in a towel. Mima switches on her phone and types down the events that have happened today on a diary app. It keeps her on track and lets her think about what to do next tomorrow:

*Met my grandparents. Advice: find a partner to share the burden and be lovey-dovey. Use Wondr. I did so just to appease them. Went back to figuring out Mom's recipes. Still no success.*

She notices that her diary entries are so matter-of-fact. Lifeless but brief. That's unfortunately the professional life. Mima's thinking of getting an early night's sleep since she feels the fatigue overwhelming her. *Those all-nighters were bound to get me*, she thinks as she walks over to her bed. Mima plugs in the charging cable to her smartphone when a notification slides onto her home screen.

***Wondr: You got a new date!***

Mima stares at her phone for a bit. That's quick. Too quick. She only signed up for a dating profile a few hours ago. With her looks and long profile description, her profile might just be too intimidating for people to click on. Well, Mima isn't sure what's intimidating about her besides the length of the text.

But still...

She slides it open and a familiar face appears on her screen.

"The Yayue student," Mima says without realizing it, "she picked me."

Why.

Why?

Why?!

The Yayue student -- her name is Cherry -- has picked Mima as a date.

Mima gets up, leaving her phone on the bed, and goes to the bathroom sink to drink a glass of tap water. She dries her hair again and then she briskly walks back to the bed. Cherry's still on the screen and the phone keeps blinking the message, "Cherry wants to chat with you."

Cherry...

Mima clicks on the checkmark button and the screen goes to the chat window. The text below reads, "Cherry is typing..."

Cherry: Hello! Do you remember me? :-)

Mima slams the letters on her mobile keyboard and sends a "Mima: YES". Then, she realizes the message she has just sent is in all-caps so she apologizes with a "Mima: Sorry for all-caps."

Cherry: ^\_^

Cherry: I want to meet you again.

Cherry: You look nice.

Mima's mind is exploding. She reads the text over and over again. Cherry wants to meet Mima. She also thinks Mima looks nice. That emoticon is also precious, just like her.

W-What does this mean?

Mima: Ah, I'd like to do that too.

Mima shakes her head. She's a professional and needs to keep her emotions in check. Calm and measured. Yes, calm and measured.

Cherry: Yay!

Cherry: ^\_^

Mima realizes she's on her bed rolling around left and right.

Cherry: Sorry! My Celestian not good yet!

Cherry: But I want meet you!

Mima stuffs her head in the pillow. *This is too cute*, Mima thinks, *I'm having difficulty breathing*. She goes back on her phone and types, "Mima: ME TOO"



###

*Dear Diary,*

*Today is a busy and wonderful day. I met Lexa, my roommate. She is a nice person who is very shy. She is the librarian of the library with the long name, but she also writes picture books! She reads me a wonderful picture book today and I want to know more about her. She also gets a date named Carida. Carida looks pretty. I hope her well.*

*I also meet Mima on the phone. Mima is the beautiful woman in the cafe. She looks so mature and powerful. I want to talk to her. She types funny though. I do not get much time to talk to her, but we promise we will talk tomorrow. Then, we can date soon too.*

*I know I am supposed to study, but friends and even date... Those make me happier than I expect! My class start soon so I am also excited but a bit scared. But my grandmother says to trust my friends. Maybe I can trust Lexa and Mima. They are incredible, strong people.*

*Today is a long day. But I am very happy!*