

Everything We've Ever Known – Sarannah, Year 6, QLD

Angel tried to calm her breath as she gripped the bottle with its metallic looking contents, perched on the roof of the tall building, gazing out across the sea of neon city lights. She looked around for the weird, winged creature called a "Bird" that she had rescued from the lab she had worked as a slave for. She admired its slick wings, and its soothing song. Angel wondered how the scientist thought this beautiful creature was a failure. She realised that it needed a name. The word "name" was new to Angel, as she had never had one before.

She was formerly known as "Slave". Sometimes "Girl". On her identification necklace it said #1669302. Angel liked how her real name sounded on her tongue. Whenever she thought about how the Supreme Council had told every slave that names were for *REAL* people, not slaves, anger welled up inside. She was forever being told, "Slaves are not *real* people."

Real people got gourmet food, luxurious apartments, and slaves to do everything. Slaves were forced to make and clean up the gourmet food, clean the luxurious apartments and get beaten up by the *real* people. *Real* people are better than Slaves.

That's why she was assigned to clean the lab after particularly sticky experiments. But this time, the Head Scientist had tried to recreate a "bird". When he realised that the bird did NOT like to be shoved in a cage, he tried to kill it. Luckily, Angel *accidentally* knocked over a barrel of acid, so the Head Scientist re-examined his priorities, and Angel escaped with the mysterious bottle and... Sky.

The bird seemed to like freedom, and the sky was what reminded Angel of freedom, so Sky it was.

"Here, Sky!" she called.

The bird cocked its head at her. Angel set the bottle down on one of her makeshift benches and called Sky again.

Angel failed to notice that the bottle let out an eerie glow. She didn't notice the metallic insides slowly spilling out in a spiral shape, defying gravity. She was oblivious to the contents, in all its sparkly glory, reaching out towards her. What she didn't fail to notice was being engulfed in metallic liquid.

When Angel came to, she didn't realize where she was. Probably because she seemed to still be inside the metallic bubble, just... spaced out. A blue blur was speeding around, before being swallowed by more liquid.

"SKY!" Angel cried, trying to swim towards the small bird shaped blob.

She tried to dust, scrape, blow and shake the annoying metallic liquid off her first potential friend.

"Come on, come on!" she grunted through gritted teeth, somehow standing on the wall bit of the abducting bubble, still trying to pry Sky out.

Angel saw her finger slip in, and felt Sky's soft, feathery wing. As soon as she felt Sky's wing, she immediately felt herself be thrown backwards to the floor, visions coursing through her mind.

A massive war, people in chains, marching to a huge city, people in nice robes conducting laws, slaves being tortured, the bottle being placed in a safe, locked up, an alien invasion, and what felt like a million other things. Angel felt things she never felt before, like love, pure pain, disobedience, belonging, fear, and suspicion. So. Much. Suspicion.

Angel felt like every shadow had a secret, every slope had an unknown side to it. She got up, the feelings and memories fading, but not gone. She whipped around. She realised she was no longer in the bubble. The ever-present glowing neon lights of the city, the familiar smells, and a blue bird chirping on her shoulder.

"Sky! You're okay!" Angel cried with delight, reaching up to stroke her now free-of- goop friend. Sky gave her a warning nip, to remind her that they weren't friends... yet. Angel gave a sigh. For two reasons.

"Sky, I can't live in a world where names are only for *real* people, and everyone judges you on your class. I know what I need to do."

She looked at the bottle, walked towards it, took off the lid, and drank all of the metallic looking liquid. And then it happened.