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What Might the Future Hold?

Dull, dark and monotonous. That is what the Shack is. People hide. Hiding their scars, hiding their pain. Dead sky, dead earth, dead minds. Dark hearts, dark building, dark souls. Rust climbed the walls like the now non-existent ivy. This is life. And it is death.

Rebecca. Midnight hair ripples down to her waist like the most important thing in the Shack: water. Olive green eyes are cold and calculating, and will scare a wolf. They are framed with lush lashes. She has a petite nose, and lips the dusty pink of the strange plant that was once called a rose. Skin like paper is stretched over a bony body. She is a diamond, stunning. But like a diamond, she is hard- she has to be. And like a diamond, she leaves scars.

James. Slanted doe-like eyes, filled with laughter and mischief and innocence. The darkest grey, darker than slate. Crooked nose, wide slanting lips that are forever peeled back into a smile to reveal sea-shell white teeth. His fair hair is tousled and unkempt, and like him, will never be suitable for the Shack. Too pale skin is stretched over a too bony body.

People always skip over him, too focused on the other twin. His other half: her only love.

There is no such thing as family, no use for friends. Those words were foreign to the people of the Shack. And who made everything wrong? *They* did. *They* did this to us, *They* rid us of plants, *They* killed our people. No one wanted to take it upon themselves to own up. It was just so much easier to blame *Them*.

Each year, two are sacrificed. People are happy to see the Lambs go. Two less mouths to feed, two more bodies to bury. James and Rebecca are chosen. Twins. Everyone snarls and dances and taunts and teases and pokes and prods. But when the knife touches their hearts, and the twins disappear, no one is dancing anymore.

Rebecca awoke first. There was ash in the sky. Nothing new there, but there was something else. Beams of light. Real light! Filtering through the clouds. Sunlight! Rebecca's eyes glimmered in hope, and for the first time in many years, she laughed. *Happiness. What an odd feeling*, she thought. Her heart was light, and she felt as though the slightest breeze would blow her away.

And then she saw it. Something green and dangly was dancing over the sky-scrappers. They were plants. And they were alive! She let out a whoop of joy at seeing something else full of vitality, at the fact that she could breathe fresh, clean air.

Her exclamation woke James. James, who took a double take at the sight he saw: Rebecca with her teeth showing, but not in a snarl. She was smiling! And then he saw why. Plants.

Plants!

He rushed over, and brushed his smooth fingers over them. Feathery, and tickling his hands. The most beautiful green, more beautiful than Rebecca's eyes.

In their hearts, the twins found paradise, and *They* smiled at the two of them from above.