

My ice princess

"Wow~! His movements are so fluid and pretty, right brother? I can't believe he's only one year older than me!"

"Haha, whatever you say, Ash. You really like watching him figure skate, don't you? What's his name again?"

"Brother~! I've told you over and over again at least 100 times! Yuri!"

"Right, Yuri."

- 10 years later

"Really?! I can participate?"

"Yes, indeed! Congratulations, Aspen!"

"Finally!"

"Your doctor said your health has been improving a lot, so I and your father decided you could participate after extensive back and forth with your doctor."

"Yes! Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"Alright, Ash, calm down. I know you're excited since it's been a life long dream of yours, but our parents aren't done."

"Right. Thank you, Aster. Now, princess. While you can participate in the competition, you need a partner who will skate with you. We're not letting you do this alone. However, you can choose who you want your partner to be."

"Then... I want Yuri."

"... What?"

"Aspen, you can't be serious."

"Ash, I know you've idolized him for years, despite you being just as good, if not better, but he's not a viable option anymore. You know that."

"No. I don't."

"Ash, please. Don't start."

"I know he got hurt. I know he hasn't skated ever since. But I also know he got physiotherapy and recovered."

"Ash, figure skating has nothing to do with physiotherapy and recovery. If he hasn't figure skated for 3 years, it's near impossible for him to pick it up again and in so little time as well."

"So you mean to say that he has a lower chance of picking it up than some random guy on the street who's never skated?"

"Ash, that's not what I nor our parents meant and you know perfectly well what we were trying to convey."

"I don't want anyone else but him."

"Sweetheart... Reconsider."

"He's the closest to me in height and age! Synchronization is important for pairs!"

"... Mother, father, I really hate to say it, but Ash made a very valid point. When it comes to pairs, knowing your partner better than yourself and being in sync is very important. If her partner has similar height and body type to her, it'll be easier on Ash. Currently, since Ash is very young, he is the best choice. It'll also be extremely difficult to find someone as skilled as she is. We don't know about his current state, but he was definitely worthy of being Ash's partner a few years back."

"... Are you sure, Aster?"

"Yes, I guarantee it. Ballet helps with flexibility, but skating on the ice is completely different from dancing onstage on solid ground. I was an award winning ice skater and a coach, so I know the most about Ash's sport. Not to mention, I've watched Ash for years. I know how she skates. If this were 3 years back... I can't think of a more perfect partner for her than Yuri. In fact, I'd even say they were made for each other."

"... Alright. Since Aspen clearly has her heart set on him and you also think he's a good choice, I'll allow it. But will he come just because we call him here?"

"Haha, leave that to me, mother. Like Yuri is Ash's idol, I'm Yuri's idol. Don't you worry. He'll definitely come if I ask."

"Really?! Thank you, brother!"

"Of course. Anything for you, Ash."

My brother laughs softly while running his fingers through my long golden locks.

Aspen Everly ↓



Long wavy blond hair

Big blue eyes that shine like stars

A fairy come to life(ethereal beauty that transcends a human's)

I have long, wavy, light blond hair and bright blue eyes, which make me look like some princess. I also love figure skating, and I'm more graceful on ice than on land. Therefore, a lot of friends and family call me ice princess as a fond nickname, despite its negative connotation. As for how I got into it... I was born very sickly and have been in and out of hospital all my life. My mother is a ballet instructor and taught me ballet to increase my physical strength. I loved ballet more than anything until I saw my brother. He's a professional figure skater and won numerous competitions. He also choreographs his own routines. I was hooked the moment I saw him gliding on the ice. It was like love at first sight. I've been figure skating ever since. It's actually quite a demanding sport, but I endure with pure mental fortitude because I love it so. I've been skating since I was 5 years old. Yuri is one year older than me and the only other person I know of who started at a similar age, 6. I've... Never met him in person, we live in different countries, but I've watched him perform and I was stunned. I'd never seen anyone perform as well as me other than him, especially at such a young age. I was so enamored I even started learning his native language. I'm fluent in it now, by the way. That's why I wanted him to be my partner if I had to perform as part of a pair, not a solo.

"Ash! Yuri agreed to come!"

"... Brother, what exactly did you tell him?"

"Hey, he didn't really give me a chance to say anything!"

"Okay, so what did you manage to say?"

"That I wanted to see him and a date, location, and time."

"... Oh my god, brother. Okay, fine. When and where?"

"Next Monday, at our private ice rink, 1 in the afternoon."

"... Bro, you didn't have to say afternoon. I wasn't going to go there in the night."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever. Where's my thanks? I worked hard for this!"

"Yes, yes. Thank you so much, brother Aster! You're the best brother ever!"

"Right? That's my Ash. I'll be sure to coach you two and choreograph your routine, along with some help from mother, but only after you two prove yourself worthy."

"... What?! I'm your little sister~!"

"I would do it in a heartbeat if it were you and you alone, but there's Yuri too. I have to check many things. How in sync you two are, for example. The level of trust between you two. You may be my little sister, but I don't plan on going easy on you purely because you're related to me. If you want my help, prove yourself worthy."

"... Fine! But you better help after!"

"Of course, my dear little sister. I always keep my promises, and you know that."

- Next Monday (Yuri's arrival)

"Welcome, Yuri!"

"... Oh my god, it's really you!"

"Hey! How could you leave without me?!"

"And who are you to speak to him like that?!"

"... Pfft... Ahahaha! You've got to be kidding me. I'm not explaining, by the way. Ask your idol why I can talk like that."

"She's my little sister. She's probably angry at me because I didn't say anything about her to you, but you basically cut me off. And she's also annoyed I went by myself and didn't come with her, which is why she said what she said. Also the only one who can talk to me like that and get away with it, so don't you dare try to discipline her. Why are you getting angry when I'm fine? Oh, and you will be skating with her in the upcoming national competition as a pair. Don't you worry, she's not violent or anything. Sweet as sugar. A personality as lovely as her face, if you can believe it."

"... She's your sister?!"

"... That's the part that got you hooked? Yeah, we're siblings. We don't look a lot like each other, do we? My sister's like a fairy princess. I'm nowhere near as pretty. Ah, there she is. You just watch her perform for today, okay?"

I change into my costume, which isn't necessary, but I love my costume. It's so pretty and sparkly.

"Brother, can I get some music going?"

"Sure thing, princess. Which song?"

"Any, just play whatever comes to mind! You know I make up choreography on the spot most of the time- Actually, on second thought, pick the one that lets me show off the most. You know the one where I work in all the jumps and stuff."

"Gotcha. 3, 2, -"

"Brother, I don't need the countdown. I don't exactly remember competitions giving countdowns before music. Not to mention, I already know the song. Now, let's take this from the top. Play the song again, but without the 3 2 1 this time."

The song starts playing, and I start to skate. I love skating because it lets me forget who I am and melt completely into the character. That's why none of my freestyle choreo is the same. I just let my body take the lead. I then start to show off a little, loops and the like. And finally, for the finishing touch... A quadruple axel! The music comes to a stop as soon as I finish and I skate back to my brother.

"So... How did I do this time?"

"Perfect as always, dear. She's good, no?"

It took me a second to realize he was talking to Yuri. It's been such a while since someone else besides brother and I were here, especially since it's our private rink.

"... She... A quadruple axel..."

Okay, he's not in the right mind to answer my brother, but I've definitely got him hooked. His eyes are sparkling and his cheeks are flushed pink. I gently wave my hand in front of his face to try and snap him out of his trance I induced.

"She's... Good. But how does this relate to me? She doesn't need me. She's got it."

"Our parents disagree. Well, not exactly disagree. They agree she's got it down to a T. However, they think she needs someone beside her to help her out a bit."

"... Find someone else. I... Don't skate."

"Wait!"

I reach out and hold his hand on instinct.

"Let me go!"

He roughly snatches his hand away, and I fall to the floor due to the shock. Meanwhile, my brother looks like he wants to punch Yuri in the face for making his delicate little sister fall.

"Ouch... Yuri, couldn't you listen? I wasn't trying to talk you into skating. I heard you came here in quite the rush, so I was wondering if you had a place to stay or whether you booked a return flight or... Ah. You didn't do any of those, did you? Did you at least bring your wallet or any money? If so, you can book a hotel room."

He shook his head.

"I see. In that case... Stay at our place. We have more than enough rooms, so take your pick. I'm done for today. Brother, let's go back home. Ah, Yuri, would you mind waiting outside for a little? I want to talk to my brother about something privately."

Yuri shrugs and leaves while I proceed to scold brother harshly.

"Brother! Stop being so cold to poor Yuri! I understand your anger, but don't you see?! He came all this way just because of you! You saw how unprepared he was your self! He left his wallet, clothes, necessities, etc! He didn't even book a return flight or find a place before he came! He dropped everything and came immediately at one phone call from you! You're his idol! His dream self! He didn't come for me ! You didn't even get to talk about me before he said he'd come and hung up on you ! He came solely for you and you alone! Imagine how hurt he must feel! His idol called, so he dropped everything and came as soon as possible, filled with excitement, only for his idol to treat him coldly and harshly! You need to be nice!"

My brother sighed but agreed.

"Yay! Thank you brother! Ah, I can't forget. Thank you and sorry, ice!"

I bow to the ice and leave.

"Yuri~! Let's go! Let me give you a tour!"

"Ash, wait. How about... You let me and Yuri go alone so we can make up?"

"Oh... That sounds logical. Sure! I'll go on ahead then, sound good?"

"Sure, Ash. See you at home!"

- With Aster & Yuri

"Okay, so. Here's what you have to do on the ice. You are going to watch my sister and stop her from overexerting herself."

"She can't tell? What is she, 3?"

"I don't know why or how, but my sister was always that way. She has trouble with limits. We took her to the doctor's and they ran all tests known to mankind and she was perfectly fine. Oh, and she treats ice like a friend. She will apologize and thank the ice, plus greet the ice everyday."

"... Ice?"

"Yeah, my sister's weird, I know. But ice seems to like her better? I remember when I tripped because of a ridge, and then my sister skated over that same ridge and she was fine. I don't know. I skated professionally for years and yet she's never fell hard on the ice while I have. If Ice has a favorite, it's gotta be Ash, no doubt."

"And this seemingly schizophrenic chick is your little sister?"

"She's not schizophrenic. She did this all the time to a plant and a goldfish. The goldfish actually lived for a longer time. And that plant flowered beautifully and bore delicious fruit. She would just kneel down and talk to them daily like old friends. About what she learned today, her ballet routine, etc. She'd also say good morning and good night. If she forgot, she'd apologize first thing in the morning, offering to make it up to them with more food or fertilizer or whatever."

"That sounds schizophrenic."

"She's not. She does this to beings that are actually real. Schizophrenic means you have hallucinations. She's never acted like they answered back. She just talks to them like... Imaginary friends. Actually... Spend the day with her tomorrow. You'll get to know just how sane she is."

-The next day

"Good morning, Yuri! Brother let me know you'd be spending the day with me today to convince you I'm not schizophrenic!"

"... Oh good lord..."

"So, did you really call me schizophrenic? I'm honestly impressed. I've been called manic, loco, crazy, mad, psycho, etc, but schizophrenic is a first. Although I think it was insensitive because schizophrenia is a real life issue, it was kind of you to assume it was a medical issue instead of just slapping a crazy label on me and be done with it. But my brain scan says I'm not schizophrenic, so sorry to burst your bubble like that. Anyway... We've arrived! Take a look around and see if anything catches your eye."

"We're..."

"Yep! You said you didn't bring anything, so I thought you might need things like clothes or whatever. After we're done here, let's go sightseeing!"

"You're not going to persuade me to skate?"

"I mean... You don't want to, right?"

"No, but--"

"If you don't want to, I can't force you, simple as that. It'd be great if you changed your mind, but I don't want to force you. I don't know why you quit anyway, s

o I don't have the right to say anything about you ice skating. But it was nice while it lasted. If my brother was how I learned of ice skating, you were my motivation and inspiration. I used to watch you whenever I was in the hospital."

"The... Hospital?"

"Yeah, I was born with a weak constitution, so I get sick really easily. A cold could develop into pneumonia really quickly. I was in and out of the hospital so often it was practically my second home. That's why I was so excited when I learned I could compete for the competition this year! My doctor didn't let me until now. Although... It is probably my fault. I can never tell when I'll be back in the hospital, so I go overboard when I get the chance to skate, which just makes things worse."

"..."

"So... Which store do you like? Would you like some recommendations or would you like to walk around a little more? I have a few stores that I think you'll like assuming your social media posts accurately represent your taste in clothing. This one, that one, and I guess this one could have some items you like?"

"Look at this! Yuri, what do you think? I thought it suits your usual style."

"These accessories look nice with your current outfit. Do you like them?"

"... What about the money?"

"Oh, it's my treat, naturally! Think of it as a welcome and thank you gift for coming on such short notice. Hmm... Should I just buy the whole store?"

"What?! Are you insane?"

"No? It was just a thought. It seemed you had trouble deciding, so I thought it'd be more efficient to just buy everything."

"And you can pay."

"But of course. I don't offer to buy if I can't pay. My mother's a world famous ballerina and ballet instructor, as well as a model. My brother's a figure skating global champion. My dad's the CEO of a very successful tech company. My mom came in to model for their new product which is how they met, by the way. If I'm the youngest and their only daughter who's had weak health from birth and was denied many things, wouldn't you want to give her everything she could possibly want? All I hav

e to do is ask and it'll be mine, no matter what it may be. I get anything I want with a wave of my hand. Anyway, should I buy the store or no?"

"No. Gosh, how are you so spoilt? Are you even serious about skating? Incompetent people like you who just use connections to secure a spot should just give up. It's embarrassing to everyone else who worked hard for the competition."

"... Okay. You can go back now. When would you like to return? I can book you a flight tonight, 3 hours from now. Wow, thank god I didn't waste my money. I'll let you know how much the plane ticket cost, along with the price for staying at my house, the food, and other things, so the total comes to around... 600\$. And then my time, plus the emotional damage, not to mention you making me hit my head, so if we calculate that in you have to pay me an extra 1000\$. And then you used our private skate rink as well, plus our skates, so that's an extra 400\$, so that would make your total amount around 2000\$. So, uh, yeah. Be sure to send me 2000\$ once you get back home, okay? Bye!"

"Wait!"

"What now?"

"Who does that?"

"What did I do? You insulted me saying I was an embarrassment to skaters worldwide for being born wealthy, despite not being able to even compete properly due to health complications and I should quit. If I quit, I don't need you anymore because I'm not competing. I took your advice and did exactly as you said. It was all expenses paid since you would be helping me, but I don't see why I can't charge you for all my service fees since you didn't even do anything remotely nice. Now, please let it go of my hand. I will also be charging you for that by the way."

"No."

"No?"

"I refuse to leave. And I refuse to let you give up. To give up on your dream, simply due to something I said, is even worse than using your connections."

"I didn't! The only connection I have is brother, who trained me! I asked him not to get involved and I'd do it my- Ah, everyone is staring at us so let's take this elsewhere."

I drag him into a secluded alleyway.

"Okay, back to what I was saying, I asked my brother to not get involved because I wanted to make sure he didn't pull any strings! And in case you were wondering why I chose you out of all people, I really admired and liked you! Watching you glide across the ice, as graceful as a swan, was my only joy lying in the hospital bed! That's why I invited you here. But it seems that was a miscalculation on my part."

"That was... 3 years ago."

"Huh?"

"The last time anyone posted a video of me skating was 3 years ago."

"I know that."

"And you invited a skater, that hasn't skated for 3 years, when there are other figure skaters out there who would be happy to skate with you."

"Yes."

"You're really really dumb."

"... Excuse me?"

"You could do so much better than me."

"... No, I can't. I have seen multiple skaters, but none enraptured me as much as you. I don't want to skate with anyone else. If you refuse, I guess I can't compete. Again. Well, either that or I compete as a solo, but knowing my parents, they're never going to let that happen. They were adamant I skate with a partner. If I don't have one, too bad. I can't participate, it seems. So..."

I spin around to face him and hold out my hand as if asking for a handshake.

"How about it? Will you skate with me?"

He looked at my outstretched hand, then back at me a couple times. He sighed, ran a hand through his raven hair, and gently touched my hand.

"Fine. As a trial."

"Yay! Thank you! Ah, by the way, I was raised very spoiled indeed, so don't think this is going to be easy. I expect everything to go my way. Brother will be choreographing and teaching us by the way, so yeah. Oh, but we have to pass."

"Pass?"

"Yeah, we have to show how well we work together or something?"

"Oh. I thought he'd just do it."

"He would if it's just me, but since it's both of us, he wants to check our synchronization with each other's moves."

"But first... Tell me why you quit skating."

"No."

"You have to!"

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Then let's hold off on skating until you want to talk about it."

"That's just going to waste time when we already don't have a lot."

"So talk. Oh, and... Did you really come just because of my brother?"

"He also said he'd pay me per day."

"By?"

"10,000."

"10,000?! That's it?"

"... Isn't that a lot?"

"... My allowance is more than that, not to mention the extra that I get. Hey, let's make it 15,000. I'll add on 5000. My dad's a third gen billionaire after all. Medical treatment is expensive, you know. How do you think we afforded all the hospital visits? Not to mention the treatment, hospitalization fees, etc without financial issues? It's kind of obvious my family is wealthy. I'm also the youngest in the entire extended family too, so I can practically get everything I want by asking one of my aunts, uncles, and cousins."

"I... What?"

"Yeah. Told you I was spoilt to the extreme. I had like... 10 people hanging on to my every single word. But anyway... Since you don't want to talk, let's see you on the ice. Come on, I have to say hello anyway. You can borrow any skates you like, we have them in all sorts of sizes, colors, and styles. I will be chatting with my good friend until then, okay?"

"... Sure."

"Good afternoon! Sorry I couldn't come greet you this morning, a new friend came. His name is Yuri, and—"

"Who are you talking to? An imaginary friend?"

"No. I'm obviously talking to the ice."

"Oh good lord. Your brother said you'd do this, but I didn't think he was serious."  
"

"Ohhh, that's why you called me schizophrenic. I was wondering what made you think that as I was trying to act somewhat normal around you. I even told you to leave before I said goodbye to the ice the day we first met. That explains it."

"You also talk to plants, I've heard."

"That's right! I talk to it at least an hour per day, not counting the greetings good morning and sweet dreams."

"Can plants even dream?"

"Umm... I guess? If they do, I want them to be sweet, which is why I say that. I also say sleep well and goodnight too though."

"You're a complete psycho."

"I get that a lot. Now lace up your skates."

Some people might find his comments hurtful, but... I really am used to hearing things like psycho or insane or manic or something like that, so I don't mind. He puts them on fine, but it took a lot of time for him to even get on the ice. Once he finally did, he was so shaky he reminded me of Bambi taking his first steps.

"Yuri? Are you okay?"

"Yeah, yeah, I'm fine."

Okay, you're clearly not fine. Noted. I better keep a close eye on him to make sure he doesn't fall or hurt himself.

"Then skate!"

He takes a deep breath and starts to skate, but nearly falls and would have hurt himself had I not swooped in to save him. I gently turn him around to face me as I caught him from behind and take his hands in mine to help him balance.

"Easy there. There's no rush, you know. Here, let me help you."

I slowly start to skate around the rink while still holding his hands. It was really slow by the way. I used to skate like this on my first day. I was so confused how brother could stand, but I got the hang of it soon enough. I think brother filmed the whole lesson, actually. I skate around once and stop.

"Was it that bad? Anyway... That's enough for today. How about you watch me now? Let me know when I should stop, okay?"

"What?"

"I told you, I get carried away. If I start breathing in short gasps or look like I might have a fever or anything, please tell me I should stop because I won't if you don't tell me to. I can never tell if I overdid it or not until I actually stop."

"Uhhh... Okay?"

"Oh, and watch carefully. We need to cooperate, so it'd be good for you to observe how I skate. Anyway, here I go!"

I start skating. No routine in mind, I just skate whatever comes to mind. Lutz, loop, axel, whatever.

"That's enough, Aspen."

"So soon?"

"Yes. Now get off the ice. Your brother is probably waiting for you."

"Okay..."

- Later, with Yuri & Aster

"Excuse me?"

"Oh, Yuri. Yeah?"

"So... I don't think letting your sister compete is the best decision."

"Why not? She's not good enough for you? Is it something like that?"

"What? Oh, no. It's just... It's dangerous."

"Dangerous? In what way?"

"I know you already told me, but... I truly didn't realize her sense of when to stop would be that bad. I feel like she'd skate until she faints."

"Oh, she actually has done that before. After that, we always made sure to watch over her so she doesn't faint again."

"Are you... Sure she'll be okay competing?"

"That's what you're here for! I would normally do it, but I'm busy because I'll also be competing, along with choreographing you two's programs, and on top of that, satisfying mother's extremely high standards for her only daughter's first ever competition routine. My mother is an extremely successful prima ballerina, so she has some say when it comes to the choreography. So, you will be filling in for me to make sure she doesn't overdo it. Oh, and her doctor said she'd be fine, so it's safe. I think."

"You think?!"

"Yuri, you gotta understand how much my sister has wanted this. It's been her dream for 10 years. I can't crush that dream of hers just like that. It'll break her heart."

"Yeah, well, competing might break her spirit! Do you know how many talented skaters start at 15?! None! All of them compete since they were young! A complete new face is unheard of!"

"She has my last name."

"I... Well, I suppose that's true, but even so. I just don't want her to lose her passion... Like... like I did."

"What did you say?"

"N- Nothing!"

"Well, anyway. My sister will be competing as planned. So you better do your job."

"I... Yes, I understand."