

## SILENETTA BLUE EYES - CHAPTER ONE



*Just relax... Just stay calm... No one is going to bother you...*

Rene sunk down between a businessman and a middle aged lady, making herself as unassuming as possible.

She tugged the hoodie back over her face - she knew it wouldn't fully compensate for her bizarre lack of facial features, but it did a good enough job to make her feel hidden. Her fringes kept her eyes covered as she tilted her head down. She crossed her arms. There was no sighing or audible frustration – every thought and feeling was quietly processed.

She pulled and rubbed at her cursed hoodie like taffy. Rene was stubborn enough to go through two entire blazers, three t-shirts, two pairs of shorts, a pair of underwear and even a hat before she finally stopped. It was going to curse every conceivable piece of clothing she put on, and she couldn't stomach the idea of her entire wardrobe becoming like this, so she had no choice but to accept it. The skirt, itself, was one of the shorts in question - actually, both of them became skirts. She wasn't confident enough to waste a third pair, so she simply wore it.

Her legs, which gave the look of wet leggings, swished and swung in front of her, while the bottoms of her high platform heels made light scraping noises on the floor. The little spikes

would occasionally rub against her ankles, leaving minor impressions of swipes before immediately disappearing. Despite the implications of what this curse does, Rene could definitely sense it as a second layer applied onto her body, but it was also seamlessly sealed onto her at the same time. Same deal with the bodysuit, which was represented by the black and grayish stuff. The white areas of her body - like her face and exposed fingers and the bust - were the most sensitive. Rubbing her face once again, it felt like the most "natural" parts of her body, even if nothing felt natural at all.

Rene knew this was a trick or a punishment of some kind, but she wasn't sure how intentional this was. The aesthetic of a long-legged punk adorned in spikes and dark clothing was the complete antithesis of what she actually was, like an intentional mockery. As a flowing long-haired blonde, she was always in something pink or vibrant. She didn't have to hide herself, at all. Rene had no reason to be a rebel or be angry at the world. Actually, her life was just fine leading up until this moment. Right? Things weren't so bad. Why be so mad and angsty?

It was genuinely shocking: 22 years of being a regular normal person and all it took was a few days of deprivation to make it feel like a distant memory. It was like living in a constant invisible box that nobody could enter except her. She never truly appreciated all the little things in her "previous" life, a term she never wanted to encounter nor relate to, but just the simple act of getting on a bus or being around people was suddenly a psychological barrier. The feeling of being judged - but never knowing if, when or where it's happening - was maddening.

Well... that's what she assumed the feeling is supposed to be.

Instead, Rene was reserved and relatively calm. An intense awareness surrounded every thought in her head, like watching pedestrians cross a street. Depressive feelings had just enough time to pop up and stab her in the stomach, then wash away into the lyminate abyss, losing all hope of having the same effect twice.

She wasn't sure what to make of that realization. This clearly went on a deeper level than just making her "feel better" - it was like a stripping of her own self, or rather, a rewiring. A version of Rene with a clearer mind, perhaps, but didn't this seem like a betrayal of what made Rene who she was? Those feelings of frustration were important to her. They weren't just negative - they were alarms going off in her head, like stubbing her currently nonexistent toes. It reminded Rene that this wasn't normal and that... she shouldn't... she...

Rene crossed her arms. She felt a light-headedness take over. Her body shivered from a wave of weakness, and that was far from the worst it could get.

*Ugh... I need to stop. Even showing just a little bit of anger makes me exhausted. This is horrible.*

The word “horrible” rang through her head with a distinct hollowness. Even putting on the facade of thinking something was horrible or frustrating or scary took necessary energy to keep up. She didn’t want to keep feeding this thing negative energy, but she couldn’t help it. At some point, she knew she would completely lose to this alien thing. It would tire her out completely until she gave up.

Rene yanked down her skirt so her thighs would be a little less exposed. The businessman didn’t seem to mind her very much, and the middle aged lady was asleep. *Thank God.* Rene wanted to avoid any awkward confrontations or questions. She did not want to hold a conversation with someone while having no mouth.

Despite her abject distrust with the morph, Rene did not feel as if it was hard to control, especially when compared to all the stories she read about. It didn’t seem to attack or antagonize her thought processes as much as it made them harder to exert energy into. Rene had to start conserving what thoughts to spend time on: useless petty shit was definitely the first to go. Someone insulting her two years ago? Something infuriating she saw on social media? That was an immediate drain. It would be a drain even if she was still human. All of these were unimportant. She wasn’t as upset by losing this.

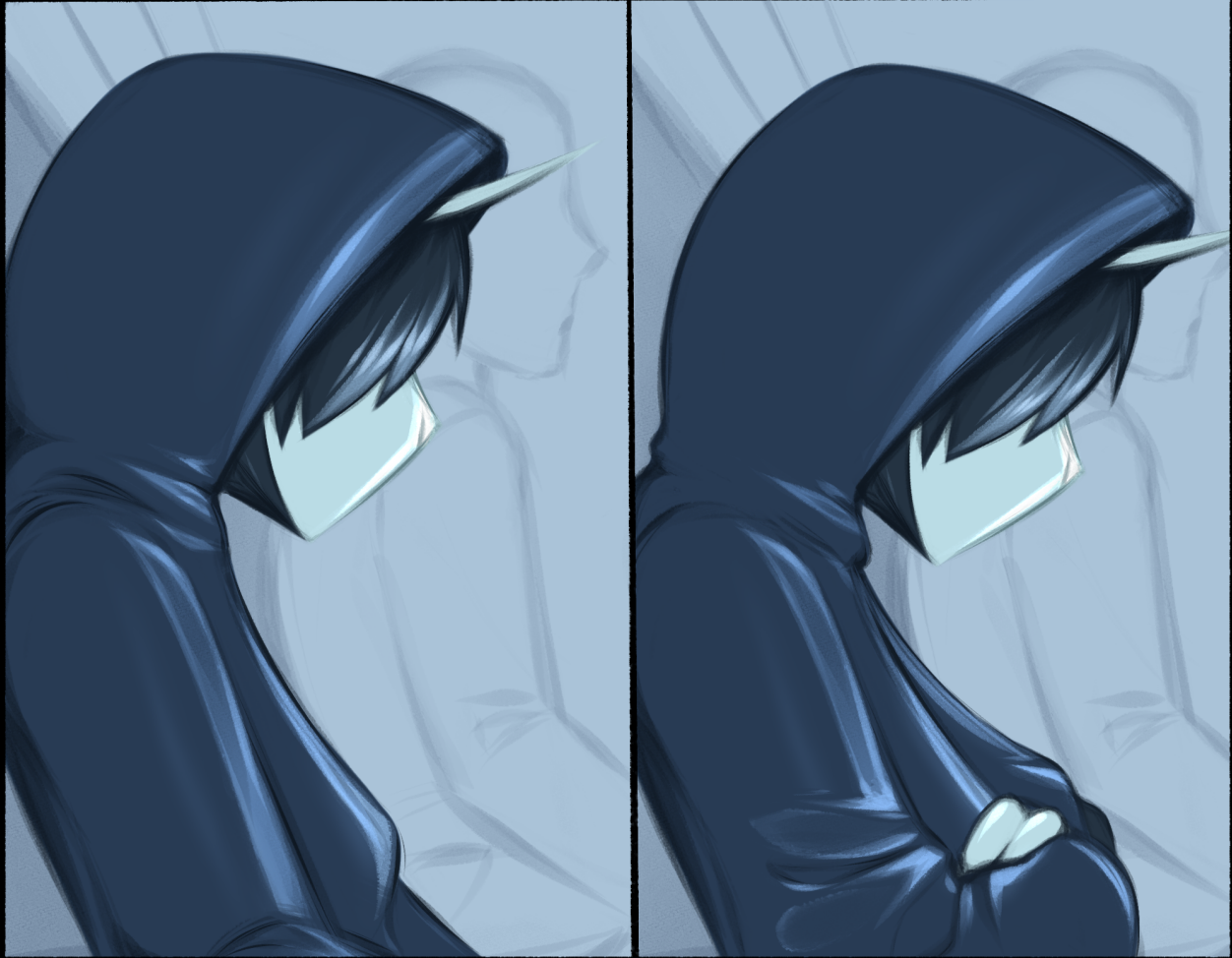
Rene looked up. A small crowd of people huddled around, either chatting or looking down at their phones quietly. Despite how mundane it was, that feeling of paranoia always hung in her mind. In a way, she was thankful for it. Anything that resembled an alarm going off in her head felt like genuine humanity. Unfortunately, that paranoia welled up just long enough to remind Rene of herself before immediately whimpering out to be used for something more efficient.

*Nobody is looking at me or judging me.*

Her observation ended as concisely as she composed it in her head, like a neatly punctuated sentence. She almost expected herself to come up with more reassurances, but instead, it simply stopped dead right there. Nothing else was needed. Nobody was looking nor judging. It didn’t matter. It wouldn’t matter even if they *did*.

Rene hated admitting it, but it definitely made her feel better.

She crossed her arms.



Rene looked outside the window on the opposing side of the bus. The city was becoming darker and denser. This was a part of Union City she'd never been to before. Clearly, it was a place of sin: lots of nightclubs, lots of bars, lots of reckless kids running around in suits and dresses. An underground type of environment. It wasn't her thing, but then again, going here made sense. Becoming this inhuman nightcrawler somehow made it feel like her natural environment, a realization that she detested. Occasionally, she would eye one or two people that had a similar appearance to herself. Suddenly, she didn't feel so out of place.

The bus slowed down next to a corner building. Standing up, Rene's rubbery body stretched and warmed. Her platform heels clacked on the metal flooring as she quietly guided her way around the other bus goes, and she lowered her head to keep as much attention off of her pale mouthless face as possible. She felt like an alien hooker.

It was an incredibly subtle difference from being human, but everything felt so doll-like, like she was perfectly molded to have an exact definite appearance. Images of Barbie dolls and toys she played with as a girl kept running through her calculated mind, deconstructing and drawing conclusions she had never considered before. Even amid her 8-year old crayon makeup scribbles and haircuts, they still always looked perfect and reflected the way she wanted them

to be. But even Barbie could not escape the fact she was just made that way. Was Barbie defined by the synthetic material that shaped her into the portrayal of a girl's doll or was she a genuine woman who only adopted the feeling of plastic for the sake of her self-image? *Why the hell am I thinking about this?*

There was no true way to escape it - every single part of her being was reconstructed and defined by this curse. The fantasy of ripping off her skin and discovering it'd just been a suit the whole time ran through her mind more than a few times. Fantasies of waking up from a sudden nap and seeing her normal self return. Fantasies of just thinking about her college life and her friends and pretending that was happening and not this. But of course, the misery and frustration would not last long enough for her liking, so even those painful machinations of freedom were doused out. There was no human beneath the flesh - it was lyminate all the way down.

Rene heard the bus door whirring shut behind her before driving off, leaving the poor lyminal alone in the deeper parts of the city. Checking her phone, she noticed that her destination was very close.

*Dear God, please just let this be really easy to remove...*