She's So Fire In That Dress

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She's So Fire In That Dress

by Serena_Walken

Summary

As Jinx gives into a painful fate of her mind being split in moments of time so that there can be a vaccine for shimmer, Ekko and Vi can't accept it, but before they hand her back to the mage, Heimerdinger comes shouting it isn't too late. Ready to take any chance, Ekko listens as his professor makes a terrible deal to be completed in six months.

Vi swears she will lock up Jinx and visit each split everyday, that Piltover will get the vaccine out quicker than anything else.

Sevika swears with Heimerdinger that there was a better way for Zaun, but it would make Ekko live out his worst nightmares:

Employ an enchanted Jinx under the impression Ekko was working with Silco while fooling a trusting Powder into believing she was stuck in an alternate universe.

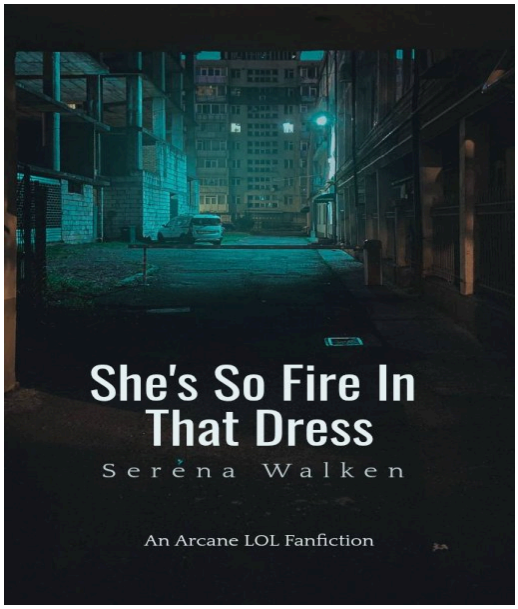
Book 1 of 2 in a series. This has Time bomb, but not a happy ending for it until book 2. (I divided up the books.)

Notes

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Cover is not done with AI, it is made from some free app called bookmaker.

Chapter 1: A Kid Named Cake



Kumangra

/// “This is what I have,” Silco said as he showed her a new room. “It doesn’t have. Toys. Or anything like that.”

Powder just looked around. She needed to stay positive. She was in a new situation she didn’t understand and Vi wasn’t there anymore. So, she had to do what Vi did teach her before she screwed everything up.

Survive. Try to survive, no matter what. “I don’t mind it.”

“Good. We’ll figure out more tomorrow.”

“I- I can be useful?” Survive. How was she supposed to survive? “I know stuff. I’m learning to fight. I can make smoke bombs. I made one of out nails. Sort of.”

“You think you can earn your keep?”

“Yes.” Right. Survive. “Yes, I can learn things. I’m a fast learner.”

“Not that fast. You are trying to make sure that I don’t dump you tomorrow.”

“I don’t want to be alone,” she said before catching herself. “Whatever you need. I’ll learn. I promise. Just. Where’d Vi go to? I need her.” No, that wasn’t survival! She had to be strong.

“She died in an explosion.”

Died? “No. I talked to her. Everyone else died. Not her. She was mad at me.”

“Why?”

“Because I-I . . .” She wiped her tears away. “I did the explosion.”

“You killed everyone?”

“I didn’t mean to.” Wiping her tears did nothing. “I’m just. I’m a jinx. I mess things up, all the time. This time, people paid with it for their lives.”

“Your sister is dead.”

“But? I talked to her-”

“You heard the dead. It’s just guilt. It can create things within us,” Silco said to her. “She blamed you for everyone’s death. It happened. Nothing can be done about it.”

She was dead? She heard her though. She was really dead? “M-my sister . . .”

“Is no longer your sister. That’s what you said.”

“Right.”

“You’ll have a new life now. A new name. What would fit you?”]

She broke down into full out crying. “Jinx. I’m a Jinx.”

“Then you are Jinx. Own it. Don’t let the mess ups creep up on you again. Let the jinxing of Powder die, and let Jinx live.”

She tried to stop crying. She wasn’t doing well in surviving at all. He was probably going to kill her soon because she wasn’t useful and she was crying. “I can be better! I can be Jinx!”

“I know you can, Jinx. You can do what it takes to survive.”

///

Survival. It was one thing Jinx was getting good at. First time, with her mom and dad. She learned how to follow Vi and be a good person. Then when she lost it all, she went to Silco. She learned how to become the villain that survived no matter what. And now?

She needed another change. She had to break the cycle, learn something new again. She needed to become something better. Something that Vi didn’t have to take care of. Didn’t have to worry about. Vi could be happy with her, if she didn’t have to worry.

A good person. A great person. She was going to become a great person. A person, building something new. Helping others. That would make her a good person.

Something besides survival *This should be the place.* Jinx went into the first building. She had been digging around to find the guy named Anatoly. She had to do some not-so-nice things in order to find him, but change wasn't instant. "Hey."

The man there just gestured toward a seat. That village was weird. It took a guide to actually help her find it, and at least three gates to get inside of it. It didn't have any name, but from what she heard, it was a utopia where everyone had a job. It was the only place the big guy in charge could be found.

She sat down. "So, where is he?"

"First, we are going to see-"

Jinx rolled her eyes. Just great. "Look. Guy deals in criminals. I am a very high criminal, so let's get to talking. I don't have time to play a thousand applications with him."

It? Didn't help her. It didn't hurt either. All Jinx could do was tell this beginner guy her deal. Then she had to wait.

She tried to wait without anyone recognizing her. When someone did, she claimed she was a 'jinxer'. Few people knew that she had cut her hair, so it seemed to be a good enough excuse to get them off her back.

Needing to move around, she went outside and saw a bunch of nice looking food. She never had much, but maybe she could afford it? "How much?"

"Hm?"

"Cost. Food." She gestured to it.

"Oh. It's free," he said. "Tell me if you want any sauces."

Free? She looked at the spread of food a little differently. "It's free?"

"Yes."

"What costs?"

"Nothing. Enjoy."

What the heck? "All this food, you've got a buffet of food here, and it's free? What's it made of? Where's it from?"

"From the cooks?" He seemed confused. "It's made in the village."

Jinx didn't get it, but hey, she wasn't gonna turn down free food. She grabbed some of this, some of that, it all looked so good.

"Plate?" he offered. "Beverage?"

“Beffrage?” Her mouth was full, the food was really good. There were dark green glitter containers on the side, but those didn't look like they would be good to drink. “Water?” He gave her some water to wash the food down. She just stayed there and piece-mealed, eating some of this and that. Fruit. Veggie. Small bits of meat. She really expected it to bother the person behind the stand, but it didn’t.

This place was a huge win so far. She went back to the waiting room where she had been. If it turned out to be terrible, then at least that was worth it.

As she sat down again, two other people moved away from her. She shook her hands at them. “Ooh, teenager, scary,” she teased them.

“Pink eyes!”

Jinx saw a little girl move to the seat next to her. Maybe nine or ten? She was waving a little tufted tail in excitement.

“I love your eyes,” she complimented Jinx.

Um? “Preservation instincts are not on maximum with you.” Who just grabbed a seat next to someone who looked like her? Even the pink eyes staring out of the outfit should look rough and dangerous. Not a kid attraction.

“I don’t know what that means.” The little girl grabbed her hand and shook it. “I’m Cake.”

“Cake.” Uh? “Great name, Kid." At least it wasn't Cupcake. "I’m not one for talking to kids right now.”

“Oh, okay.” Cake sat back down. She didn’t move though. Just swishing her legs back and forth. “Welcome to the village.”

“Thanks.”

“I like your outfit, it’s colorful and neat.” She touched it.

“Yeah, I do too. A . . . friend helped me with it,” she admitted.

“Friends are good. I have Flute, she’s six, she’s young, and Figaro, he’s 15, and Tomato, she’s nine, and Watchclock, he’s 19, and they are my friends.”

That was a big discrepancy between ages. Usually meant one thing. “Orphans scraping by?”

“No,” she said. “We all have moms and dads. Well, not Watchclock, his dad is missing, and not Tomato, her mom is missing. Other than that, we have our family.”

“Are you waiting to see someone?” She was getting wrapped up in her.

“The Anatoly. Mister Anatoly. Not Mister Anatoly, but the big Mister Anatoly,” Cake said. “What’s your name?”

“Going by Jinx right now,” she admitted. “Kind of in between. Figuring out who I am.”

“Oh, you are bound to meet my mother then. She helps people.”

Cute. “Is your mom a doctor?”

“No, no one calls her that.”

Oh. “What’s she do?”

“I’ve heard her called a practical sorceress and a mind healer.”

What the heck did that mean?

“Am I bugging you too much?” the kid asked her. “I’m sorry. I’m nervous. The Anatoly’s kind of scare me, but don’t tell anyone that. It’s not allowed to say that.”

Scare her? “Nah, you’re fine. Are they ferocious beasts?”

“No.”

“Built tough?”

“No, but they are powerful. And. Like? I don’t know if you know, but really powerful people don’t always know . . . you know. Like. Limits of regular people.”

Ooh, that didn’t sound good. “You think you’re gonna be okay?”

Cake shrugged. “Everyone plays a part in the village. The young have to be used between whatever until we can get jobs.”

“So it could be an easy gig, or a hard gig.” Huh.

“Yeah, but mom will have something nice for me at home afterward. I always get a special trinket when I go through these. I never know what to expect.”

Huh. “Well. Good luck to you then.”

“Why do you have pink eyes?” She turned around in her seat again. “I mean, I have seen pink eyes, but yours are glowy and you look full human, so why does a full human have glowy pink eyes? Or are you not fully human but you just look it?”

“That’s a . . . whole story there, Cake,” she said.

“Charlotte Kay!”

Hey there we go, looked like she did have parents. It looked like her mom wasn't happy either. *This must be the practical sorceress.*

"Hello." Cake stood up and got a hug from her mom. "Anatoly came and got me, and told me to sit down."

"Oh." Her mother looked like she cared about that. She kissed her cheek and tightened the hug.

"I've been making a new friend," Cake said, gesturing to her.

"Oh." Well good, looks like the mom recognized danger when she saw it. "Sorry, Ma'am. She's excitable." She picked her daughter up. "I'm Shields."

Ma'am? First time anyone called her that. *Well, I guess technically now.* Yeesh, what a way to realize that. Her kid years with Vander. Teen years with Silco. What was gonna be next. "Uh. Hey. Jinx."

Just like that, the polite woman went rigged. "Oh. Sorry for disturbing you. Come on, Cake. Let's sit over on the other side."

Yep, she'd heard of the name. That was typical.

"Jinx." Someone called her name for the door.

She got up and went in. "Oh, finally." She recognized the seating and fine clothes, it wasn't going to be another yes man. "I see the big guy in charge finally came out." There were several places to sit, but she picked the one with big chair arms and a lower center. It always made her feel in more control.

"Uh?" Anatoly looked at her oddly. "And your wish? What do you need?"

"I need to learn to be . . ." Jinx thought about it. Pictured it in her mind.

/// Jinx waved. "Hello, Vi. I'm all better. Yep, totally normal. I am breaking the cycle and helping others. I'm not gonna bring any-"

She wrapped her arms around her. "Powder, Powder, Powder! I am never going to let you go again. I promise, you'll be safe, forever."

"Uh, no, Vi. I am safe. I'm good now."

"We'll get you moved in with me and Caitlyn right away." She held her sister's face so lovingly. "I am going to take care of you."

"I don't need taken care of, really," Jinx protested. "Plus, she's going to arrest me."

“No, she won’t. You two are going to get along great.”

“No, really. I’m good, I don’t need that. I’m good. I just came to see you. I won’t drag you down, I’m really good.”

“Oh, Powder. How do I know that?”

She just froze. “I just am.”

“No, no. You’re coming here with me.” She hugged her again and then looked at her. This time, jutted lines appearaed on her face. “You’ll stay here with me, I’ll watch over you. You’ll be safe and warm and loved.” More scratching lines with demonic smiling. “Ruin my life.”

“Vi. I’m gonna be fine. I promise.”

“Oh, Powder.” She stroked her hair. More scratching lines and sizzles. “No you won’t, and you know it. Deep inside, you’re broken, and you’ll never be okay.” Scratching lines with jutted mouths. “Wreck my life forever. I love you. Kill me.“///

“ . . . a better person?” she said. She needed to be someone that wasn’t going to drag Vi down. She needed to break the cycle, by helping others and not needing her to worry anymore. By proving she could be a good person without her.

If there was a her out there who was good. She could be too.

He looked at his papers. “Yes, it says that. What do you mean? And please stand up and remove your hood.”

“Do I really have to do that?”

Anatoly went over toward her and touched her shoulder. Then, he just looked confused.

“Okay, fine. If you move, I’ll stand.” He moved backwards a little and she stood up, lowering her hood.

Ooooh? What was that? Her eyes were so pink. She was from Piltover, the lower scummy parts. The shimmer infested parts. But hers? “You’re . . . Jinx.”

“Yep,” she said. “In person,” she joked.

“Your eyes are pink. That’s shimmer. You haven’t been in Piltover for months now, that should be temporary. Right?” Sources said it would be temporary.

“I’m a whole medkit,” she said. “These puppies don’t change.”

“Are you an experiment?”

She looked at him in disgust. “I had something done. It was a last minute thing to save my life. I’m *not* an experiment.”

Oh no, she was clearly an experiment. Anatoly moved closer again. “You’re pale. Is that from it too?”

“That’s from living out of the sunshine and fresh air all my life,” she corrected him. “You’re buzzing around me like a little bee.”

“How old are you? Are you an adult?”

This guy. “I’m an adult, are you?”

Soon. “It’s interesting. Your pale skin. Pink eyes. Blue hair.”

“Uh. Yeah, sure, I’m interesting. Can you help?” she asked. “Everyone that I can find keeps saying if anyone can help, it’d have to be you.”

“That Anatoly is my father, but I can help.” He sat back down. “Tell me specifically what you want.”

She sat back down. He watched her pink eyes as she spoke with that atrocious accent. “My sister came back into my life. It was kind of hard to figure out what to do with that. I kind of went through weird phrases like kidnapping, taking in a kid, suicide bombs, stuff like that. But, I know where I want to be now,” she said. “I can’t be the person I am, and be with her. I want-”

“Anatoly,” his mother came in the room. “What are you doing starting without us?”

He sighed curtly. His father was behind her. They took their seats next to him. “Continue.”

“I want to build something new.” She looked toward the ground. “I just don’t know how.”

Everything. She was hitting every note. She was a gorgeous diamond in the rough, but first she had to get out of the dirt.

“Anny, close your mouth,” his mother scolded him.

Damn.

“I’m sorry,” his mother apologized. “Our son started without us. Could you please go over that again?”

As she did, he kept watching her. Never had something that filthy seemed that beautiful. *I bet her all cleaned up and in a dress would be stunning.* His parents would probably give her more of a chance too, neither one seemed moved to help her. “Perhaps we should offer our guest the chance to tidy up more first before finishing this?” He snapped for a guard and whispered to him. “Get her cleaned. Get her in a nice dress, something to go with her eyes or hair. You know what, contact Marlina, she can dress and fix her hair.”

The guard went over to talk to her.

“More free stuff?” She didn’t seem offended. “Sure, take me wherever you need me, Chief.”

As she walked out, Anatoly made it known. They were already looking at him. “I feel we should help her.”

“I feel your priorities are different,” his father stated. “There are only two spots left in the village and you are marrying the leader of the Mercenaries. You are marrying Raven, what are you doing?”

Yep, his father noticed. “But for the thousandth time, I don’t like Raven in that way,” he protested. “She’s a great fighter. She could be the new leader. Let me handle the rest of this on my own.”

“Anny?” His mother looked concerned. “You know nothing about her. You can’t just say no to Raven.”

“But it’s years away.” He groaned.

His parents argued with him for a little while, until she stepped into the room again.

“Here I am!” Her voice was still a dead giveaway she didn’t belong, but everything else?

Anatoly looked at her. The dress was stunning on her. Accents of blue from the dress to go with her hair. Her hair was clean and cut, the double colors no longer clashing in it. She had a light pink decorative hair ornament trying to battle for attention from the eyes, but failing.

He stood up and went toward her. Her skin made her look like a porcelain doll. That? Was only deceiving, she had killed several times. She wasn’t fragile. She was a mastermind criminal that could kill him, then and there if she wanted to.

“So, I think I’m doing well so far?” she asked. “Maybe? You are kind of close.”

“Alright, alright,” his father gave in. “We will let you handle the deal, Son.”

“What?” His mother didn’t seem happy about that.

“He’s old enough. Just, be careful. Don’t do anything you’ll regret.” His father and his mother got up and left him alone.

Good! “Yes. I can give you what you need. You can be my mercenary.”

She didn’t look pleased by that. “Hi. My wish is to become a better person? Someone who, I don’t know, helps or something? How is me doing *that* going to help?”

“Oh, trust me. You aren’t just any mercenary. You choose which jobs your group will perform,” he explained. “Here. Look.”

She took the paper and looked at it. She was looking through down to the bottom. “Some people can’t pay, it just says ‘anything’.”

“You’ll decide in those cases, if you want one. For your knowledge, those would be the jobs that are usually helping to save lives, or helping communities. You choose who to help. Lots of details are given. A mercenary doesn’t have to be a bad thing.”

“Well?” She seemed to be coming around to the idea. “I am pretty good at that kind of thing. If it just changed ‘I am a villain and I kill good people’ into ‘I am a hero and I kill bad people’, maybe I can work with that again? Maybe . . .” She still seemed unsure.

“I have the others already here.” He made sure to inform all of them, they were already waiting for the test. Even before he saw her, he wanted to see her potential. “I would like you to meet them, and then we’ll run a little test, to determine your position.”

Shouldn’t. Should not. Really should not. But right there, in that dress, easily attainable. All her guards down because she didn’t know yet. And? He touched her clavicle gently.

His parents were going to kill him.

She just stared at him for a little while, with those pink beautiful eyes, her breath had caught in her throat.

Oh. Oh, there was definitely a connection between them!

About thirty seconds later, she took his hand and moved it from her neck. “I don’t know your neck customs. Hope that’s good luck.” She stood up, put her hoodie back on blocking the world from seeing those enchanting eyes, and followed the guard out.

Anatoly watched as the next person came in. “Ah. Shields. There is Cake.”

“Um? Can I stay with her?” Shields asked.

“No, no. No fuss. You’ll be called and informed promptly where I place her.”

Shield sat her child down and stroked her hair. She bent down to her level. “Cake? I’m not gonna be far. It’ll be okay. Mister Laurent always takes great care of you.” She touched her cheek softly as Cake started to whine. “It’ll be okay. I’m right outside a set of doors.” She hugged her daughter. “Be a big girl. Everyone contributes.”

“Can I just be a practical sorceress’ assistant until I become one?” Cake asked. “Mom?”

“You’re too young still. It’s okay. It won’t be so bad.”

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