

THE best thing about being a transfer student was those few days before you developed your allegiances. Getting to hang around with everyone, picking and choosing, and finding out what was going down behind the scenes: the things people didn't tell you once they'd worked you out.

Jecht knew his eventual clique would be the blitzball team, but in the days before training started, he was a free agent. He hung out with the gym bros, the weird religious kids, the ... heck, Spira High turned out not to have much beyond those two groups, but it was something anyway. Weirdly enough, most people seemed really nice, even if they claimed not to know about Jecht's blitz talents. The one exception was some kid who got up in his face and started yelling at him as soon as Jecht had the audacity to talk to the guy's friend. Jecht could have sworn he called him a "knave", as if it was 1582 or something.

"Oh, that's Auron," people said when he asked. "He's like that."

Jecht didn't care about Auron – the guy was clearly just a jerk – but he couldn't help noticing him around after that. He was always with his friend, the upperclassman Jecht had made the apparent mistake of trying to talk to; weirdly, Auron always carried his bag for him, opened doors for him, stuff like that. Nobody else seemed to make a big deal of it; they just shrugged and, when Jecht pointed it out, said the same kind of stuff. *That's Auron. He's like that.*

The more Jecht saw of it, the more fascinated he was. It really did seem like Auron did everything for this guy, and he never even seemed to thank him for it. Jecht wondered what was going on: maybe they were like a mafia boss and his henchman. A mafia boss's kid and his henchman's kid.

He saw them both sneaking out of the cafeteria after lunch one day, and obviously the most sensible thing to do was follow. He headed down the corridor, around a few corners – hoping he wouldn't get lost, he was still the new kid – and:

*Oh.* Auron had the other guy pressed up against a locker, grabbing him by both shoulders, and he was kissing him. Kissing the shit out of him, in Jecht's professional opinion.

He ought to have turned around and left them to it, given them some privacy, but the surprise seemed to have made him lose control of his limbs for a moment. Instead, he stood there gaping, even while Auron took his mouth off the guy's face for a second, turned to him, and said, "Got a problem, knave?"

"No," said Jecht, managing to fold his arms nonchalantly. "You guys carry on."