

EXCERPT

Kate in the Land of Myths and Wonders – by J.P.H. Tan

Chapter 1

The Wealthy Girl

It was 11:47 p.m. Thirteen minutes to her birthday. Well, she wasn't exactly looking forward to it—going through another year of nothing, really. Besides being a genius and brilliant at her studies, she felt she really hadn't achieved anything else in her life. Nothing had changed since her last birthday—except for menstruation. She finally understood what *that* was all about.

She was considered a grown-up, by the way. Apart from that, she was still the same. Her friends found her strange because she tended to do things differently, and that made her appear weird. She also enjoyed being by herself—even talking to herself a lot. At least she could definitely get along with herself and didn't always have to figure out when or how best to say something before she said it. She liked to speak her mind, and it truly suffocated her if she couldn't say what she really felt and be who she really was. She found that keeping friends was such an effort, and she just couldn't seem to get it right. The parties, the social media, the cliques and gangs—ooh...she simply couldn't catch up. She wondered if she was alone in this world and if there was anyone else who felt the same way.

Eight minutes to her birthday, and he hadn't called. She'd thought he would call; he'd said he would. But she was still waiting. She gazed out her bedroom window, and there they were: the tiny, twinkling lights from those same few humongous vessels that always lined up neatly along the horizon, far, far across from her window against the dark-blue sky. They appeared now and then, and she remembered also seeing them on her birthday last year.

“OK...happy fifteenth birthday, Kate,” she said to herself. “One year older—and another year wiser.” That was what her granny always said. To be honest, she thought she was far from wise. Her granny said that if you could have one thing in this world, it should be wisdom, because “when you find it, you'll find life.” It seemed that Kate hadn't found it yet, because up till then, she hadn't really found life...except for school—assignments, exams—and more school. She often wondered if there was a purpose for her here on earth. Or was she living only because she happened to be alive?

Kate sat in bed with her laptop over the duvet, writing the last line in her journal that night. Then her sleepy eyes closed as she dozed off, holding her phone in one hand and a little stinky pillow over her nose with the other. It was the comfort pillow from her childhood that she had refused to discard—it was sentimental to her. The next day she would be going to celebrate her birthday in Chicago with her best friend, Gus.

End of Excerpt

Thank You