

Episode 23

Alfea Classroom

Bloom had really tried her best—*truly*. She'd managed to stay awake through all her morning classes, which, at this point, was nothing short of a miracle. She hadn't had a full night of sleep in days. Between the late-night training sessions with Valtor and Daphne's dream visit, exhaustion clung to her like a second skin.

It was only a matter of time before sleep overtook her. The warm midday sun pouring through the windows didn't help—its rays settled on her like a heavy, golden blanket, lulling her deeper.

“Bloom.”

A voice called to her, soft but insistent. She barely registered it. How rude to interrupt such a nice nap.

“Bloom, you need to wake up.”

Wait... she knew that voice.

Her eyes snapped open.

Professor Avalon's familiar, kindly face swam into view—only it wasn't *quite* his. For one breathless moment, it twisted into something else, something wrong. His eyes too sharp, too knowing. A phantom version of his kindness, the one that haunted her.

Her body tensed, instinct flaring. He reached toward her, gentle and slow.

Avalon: “Bloom, are you alri—”

He shouldn't have done that.

She flinched violently, shrinking back in her seat as if his hand were made of fire.

In her mind, she wasn't at Alfea anymore. She was back there. Back on that table. Its coldness biting into her skin. Pinned. Helpless. And then, pain.

Bloom: “Please—no! Don't touch me!”

Tears streaked her cheeks, but she didn't notice. She wasn't Bloom the powerful fairy of the Dragon Flame anymore, the fairy that saved the Magical Dimension, she was just a girl, helpless and terrified.

Stella: “Bloom...”

That voice, so soft and familiar, pulled her back. Slowly, the classroom returned. Chalkboard. High windows. Her desk beneath trembling fingertips.

Reality set in.

So did the horror.

Avalon's face—the *real Avalon*—was frozen in a look of concerned shock. He, who had always been patient with her. Who never pressured her. Who quietly let her pass his class just for showing up.

Then she saw her friends. Stella's hand was still holding hers. Tecna, Flora, Musa—all staring, eyes wide with worry. The classroom was dead silent.

Bloom: "I'm sorry, Professor!"

And then she ran.

She bolted from the room and toward the only person she could think of. Someone who didn't look at her like she was fragile. Someone who wasn't afraid of her. Someone who sometimes understood her better than even her own friends.

Professor Avalon remained in the class, head bowed slightly—upset written clearly across his face.

Faragonda's office

Faragonda sat at her desk, a cup of tea cooling beside her. Griselda stood nearby, arms crossed, mid-conversation.

A knock interrupted them.

Faragonda: "Enter."

The door opened to reveal Professor Avalon. He entered, face grim, his steps clipped with urgency.

Faragonda: "Professor Avalon! What can I do for you?"

Avalon didn't return her pleasant tone. He sat across from her with deliberate weight, gaze serious.

Avalon: "Mrs. Faragonda, I'm here to ask you—no, beg you—to reconsider having Bloom take my classes."

Faragonda: "We've already discussed this. I can't make special exceptions for one student."

Avalon's jaw tightened. He leaned forward, voice rising with restrained frustration.

Avalon: “This isn’t about favouritism! The poor girl had a panic attack in my classroom today. Because of *my* face!”

Faragonda: “It wasn’t you, it was an imposter. Surely you understand—”

Avalon stood abruptly, startling Griselda. His voice hardened.

Avalon: “Don’t reduce this to semantics! Trauma doesn’t care about technicalities. You’re asking her to look her abuser in the eye every single day.”

He took a breath, steadied himself, then continued more quietly

Avalon: “Bloom is strong—stronger than anyone should have to be. She’s saved Alfea *twice*. Once at seventeen, while barely even understanding her own powers. But she’s still a *girl*, Faragonda. Not a weapon.”

A beat. Faragonda remained silent. Griselda, unusually still, said nothing. That silence alone said more than any words could.

Faragonda: “I know Avalon. I know.”

Avalon blinked, caught off guard by the sincerity in her voice.

Faragonda (stands, facing the window): “It’s time you both knew the truth.”

Faragonda: “The Council of Magix has deemed Bloom a threat.”

The words hung in the air, slowly sinking in.

Faragonda: “Ever since it came out Bloom was the lost heir of Domino, she’s been under the council’s scrutiny. The Dragon Flame is too powerful—they’ve always feared what it could become, especially when it unexpectedly resurfaced after it was supposedly lost with Domino all those years ago.”

She paused, folding her hands behind her back.

Faragonda: “At first, the Council wanted to marry her off. It was the simplest solution — supervision disguised as diplomacy. A political union would let them keep the Dragon Flame under control while benefiting from its power.”

She sighed, voice growing colder.

Faragonda: “A powerful kingdom, allied closely with the Council, tied to the keeper of the Flame... it was perfect. They’d gain access to the magic without Bloom ever realising she was being managed.”

Griselda: “So... Sky?”

Faragonda: “Yes. By chance, or perhaps fate, she fell in love with a prince. It spared us the need to push. Eraklyon wasn’t the Council’s first choice, but King Erendor has been planning to step down for a while now. And Sky... is young. Malleable. If Bloom stayed with him, and I kept her powers under control, the Council was satisfied.”

A shadow passed over her face.

Faragonda: “Until last year.”

Avalon: “The Codex...”

Faragonda: “She handed it to Darkar, whether by manipulation or not, it didn’t matter. The Council panicked. They called for action. Severe action.”

Griselda: “What kind of action?”

Faragonda: “They want to seal her powers. Permanently. Lock the Dragon Flame away so it dies with her and can never be a threat to them again.”

Griselda’s hand flew to her mouth. Avalon stared, stunned. Everyone knew what taking a fairy’s power meant, it was cruel and barbaric practise.

Faragonda: “What they don’t know, however, is what happened after she stole the Codex.”

Avalon: “You were able to keep it quiet that she was kidnapped by Darkar...”

She turned to them, eyes sharp.

Faragonda: “Exactly. I was able to get them to reconsider sealing her magic away, but if they find out she was taken again... that she was used—*again*—or worse, that she has any kind of connection to Valtor...”

She trailed off.

Faragonda: “All it would take is one whisper. One parent with the right political sway. One student saying the wrong thing. And it’s over. They’ll take her. We won’t be able to stop it. As long as there are no more incidents... and she stays with Sky... we can put this behind us. And she’ll be safe.”

END