

## MIND-WIPED (A Hournite Fic)

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# MIND-WIPED (A Hournite Fic)

by [MeJacinta](#)

## Summary

Chuck: Hello, Beth. It's been a while.

Beth: (awkwardly) So I hear.

Chuck: May I reintroduce myself?

Beth: (taking a moment to think) Maybe you should, Chuck. (surprised at how naturally the name rolls out of her tongue) Wait, it's all right if I call you that, right?

Chuck: It was your preference on our last session. Is there anything you would like to know?

Beth: (bristling for a second) Actually...yes. Could you...run me back to the accident I had? What happened to me?

## Notes

I fell in love with Stargirl, but even harder with its characters Beth Chapel and Rick Tyler. This short novel is set after the events of the season 1 finale. Stick around to see how far it takes the team but mostly Beth and Rick :)

NOTE: Beth has an accident and goes through amnesia. The team must fight to get her to embrace Doctor Midnite again, so that they fight off the new ISA.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# Chapter 1

## PROLOGUE

Rick's heart was still thundering in his ears as strangers in scrubs, a blur of blue and green, rushed past him, their shoes against the white tiles squeaking irritably.

The emergency ward of Blue Valley Hospital was packed and Rick could barely breathe---even though Yolanda's side, pressed against his arm, offered a semblance of consolation. He didn't want to remember why they were there but the scarlet smears of blood on his shirt made the memories rush back.

It could've been anybody else. Just not her. Why her?

Rick clenched his jaw as he glimpsed the face clock across the hall, its arms ticking away, one second closer to reprieve or disaster.

Damn time! Damn the Pit Stop! Damn school and his Chemistry equations!

If only his dad had invented a way to turn back time, to alter the order of events just a bit, if only...

"Finally!" Yolanda let out a cry of relief, jumping up from her seat.

Rick looked up to see Pat and Courtney jostle their way in.

Took them long enough. But Rick knew they weren't to blame.

"There's a traffic gridlock out there!" Pat explained. He sounded tired and frustrated. "People want to leave town."

"Guys, how's Beth?" Courtney's question hit Rick like a blow of her Staff to the belly.

"What happened?" Pat sighed, a cloud of worry coming over his face.

Yolanda began answering but Rick couldn't hold it in any more.

"It was all my fault," he heard his voice tremble.

And instead of watching the confusion and shock on Pat and Courtney's faces, Rick rose up to dash for the exit.

## CHAPTER 1

(Earlier that day)

Rick barely heard her come in until her mustard yellow vans were staring him in the face. He glanced up from the jacked tire at Beth, the tension in his temples growing.

"What is it this time?"

Beth flashed her pearly white smile, but Rick knew from how it lingered that she wanted something badly. A glossy magazine popped out from behind her back in a flash. "Something to peak your interest, nothing much," she chirped, shrugging her woolen shoulders.

Rick stifled a grumble as he accepted the magazine, briefly eyeing Yolanda over at the small study table in the corner of the Pit Stop. Courtney and Pat were out (family business, they'd said) and wouldn't be back till around five in the evening to close down.

"You won't believe how hard finding one of these is in Blue Valley," Beth chattered on, nervous laughter in her voice. "Three libraries---three, can you believe it? Mr. Hodge the librarian said this magazine is the last one in Blue Valley with monumental groundbreaking

research—the formulas in it are timeless, basically better than modern science. Disputed but accurate...”

“Okay, okay! Fine, I’ll look at it later.” Rick conceded, dropping the spanner from his other hand to hold Beth’s magazine with both hands. He leaned on the truck behind him to lazily peruse through the pages.

It had been a long week and that was minus the last three months of Beth’s incessant obsessing over bringing Chuck back. Although Charles McNider’s goggles were technically gone, his spirit seemed to weirdly live on through the mouthpiece that was Beth. If Rick hadn’t known her so well he would’ve been seriously worried for her.

“I was thinking we could go through the formulas together?” Beth was biting her lip in uncertainty, watching Rick’s face for a reaction she knew he’d give.

“Beth--”

“I just think it’s kinda easier to understand complicated stuff when we’re teaming up than when we’re alone. Besides, it’s going to be a lot of fun.”

Fun was hardly it, and barely a concept Rick was to fully understand no matter everyone’s insistence. Besides, what time did he have for pleasantries and picnics when all he could think about...dream about...was Grundy returning to Blue Valley in his monstrous glory? Clawing at whatever little semblance of happiness and achievements Rick had gathered in his time spent with the JSA and the Whitmore family?

What if the only reason Rick had released Grundy wasn’t because he had forgiven him, but because he had glimpsed in the former scientist’s eyes that night in the ISA tunnels a reflection of the monster within himself, clawing and thrashing its way out to devour everyone else eventually?

“Beth, you need a real life,” the words slipped out.

There’d been no malice in them, but now Beth was looking like a person who’d been punched in the face.

“Chuck means a lot to you—I get that,” Rick sighed, “But by the end of the day life can’t always be about the JSA or artificial intelligence---”

“Chuck is my best friend,” Beth yelped, like a hurt animal.

It gave Rick pause. He’d not expected an extreme reaction at all. Beth and he argued on topics a lot but never like this; with tears and emotions.

Even Yolanda stopped what she was doing to watch what was happening.

“Beth, Chuck’s a program. He does his thing and can be fixed, but what about you?”

“Doctor Midnite can’t be Doctor Midnite without Chuck, Rick,” Beth snapped, her eyes gleaming with conviction.

“She has a point,” Yolanda called out from her desk.

“Yeah,” Rick huffed indignantly. “Except that you, Yolanda, have a boxing tournament to prepare for. Court has an internship at her mom’s office and I have auto-repair gigs outside of life as a superhero, ‘kay?’”

The backlash was a mouthful, but Rick couldn’t state it any more differently for Beth to understand his point.

She was still staring at him with those pitiful, wide eyes, but Rick was determined not to fall for them this time.

“It’s been three months since the ISA went under, Beth. Life is moving on and maybe you should try it too. Apart from the JSA work and fixing Chuck. That’s all I’m saying.”

He crossed the room for Pat’s red tool box, the magazine rolled in his hand now slippery with sweat. “I’ll see what I can do with the formulas. If what the librarian told you is true we can fix Chuck in three months tops.” He pretended to rummage through the screws and spanners

in the toolbox just so he'd keep his back to Beth. Rick was good at fights with his Uncle Matt, just not when it came to handling girls.

"It's all right!" Beth surprised him.

Rick turned round to face her but she was already by the exit of the garage door, her flowery bag dangling over her shoulder. It was impossible to clearly see her face against the bright afternoon sun.

"You have a point, Rick. Sorry for taking up your time."

Then she was off across the street before Rick could whisper a goodbye. The girl walked so fast for someone her height.

"So that's your idea of a pep talk, huh?" Yolanda exclaimed, rising from her chair. "Couldn't you have been less," she drew quotes in the air, "I don't know—confrontational? You saw Beth. She was crushed!"

"I'm doing her a favor," Rick argued. He really was.

Rick grew up alone, dependent on no one, and he'd survived. Individuality wouldn't kill Beth the way Yolanda was suggesting.

He reached for a towel beside the toolbox and wiped the grease and sweat off his hands and Beth's science magazine. "Look, I'm not antagonizing Beth."

"Fine, you're not," Yolanda agreed. She piled up her sports books and fetched them into her strong arms with one haul. "But I'm not sure Beth knows that, Rick. She's...different. Maybe you should understand that for a change."

(Present day)

The night was alight with red and blue lights from incoming ambulances when Rick stumbled out of the hospital building. Casualty were still being wheeled in over the low ramp connecting the entrance of Blue Valley hospital to the ample parking lot as relatives and families hovered every new arrival to spot loved ones.

Rick couldn't believe he was back here. He hated hospitals for the single reason that it was where he first saw his parents after Grundy murdered them. Uncle Matt hadn't been keen then on shielding him from seeing the gore of it all, and henceforth Rick had known hospitals for nothing else but death and hopelessness.

Now Beth was somewhere in there fighting for her life. The only child to a doctor could end up dying in the same place her mother worked...all because of Rick.

"Hey, watch it!" a jerk with a cigarette in his mouth mumbled as Rick bumped shoulders with him.

If only he knew how Rick was rife with desperation for a real fight. "Watch yourself!" the threat ripped from his mouth, a lump still jammed in his throat. "You'll burn down the place with that thing stuck in your dirty mouth."

"Kid," the smoker held up a forbidding finger as if that were enough to scare Rick off.

"Anyone ever taught you--"

"My parents are dead, you ass-hat!" Rick thundered, surging forward so that the smoker stumbled back. "Try someone else."

"Hey, kid—I'm sorry. My condolences."

Rick turned to keep walking. He hated it when people felt sorry for him. Even more so when he let small glimpses of his pain be seen by others just as he'd done.

Who could he attack next? What else could he do to keep the storm churning in his chest

from exploding and breaking his well kept walls? What could he do to stop feeling this way? What could bring Beth back?

BUMP!

“Aaargh!” Rick rubbed his shoulder as the stranger he’d run into pulled back to frown at him. He was a wiry guy, tawny and with sleek black hair pushed to one side of his face.

Rick immediately recognized him. “You’re the loser that was with her!” he growled.

The boy furrowed his thick brows. “Do I know you?”

“Beth was with you tonight and you did shit to protect her!” At that point, Rick didn’t care whether the stranger understood anything or not.

His fist flew out in front of him as if driven by an invisible force, crashing into tough bone as it smashed into the stranger’s face.

Rick’s victim landed on the wet ground with a gasp. “You crazy or what?”

“It’s your fault Beth’s here!” This time Rick pulled out his phone to show the stranger the picture.

He hadn’t liked it when Yolanda showed it to him, and he certainly liked the boy with Beth in the picture less in life size.

“You left her there! Lying there,” Rick blinked away tears as he relived the moment with Beth in the rubble, her limp body pressed against his chest. “You never went back for her—I did. Because you never cared.”

“RICK!” It was Pat.

The distraction gave the boy on the ground enough time to get up, but Rick was not letting him go anywhere just yet.

“Buddy, let it go. This isn’t the way.” Pat squeezed a firm hand on Rick’s shoulder as a warning, one that Rick was willing to respect for Beth’s sake.

“Young man, are you okay?”

“I didn’t leave Beth tonight. She left me.” The boy seemed just as tense and pumped up for a fight like Rick was, class aside.

But to Pat he nodded respectfully. “I’m okay, sir. Will Beth be fine?”

Rick didn’t like the way Beth’s name rolled fondly off the boy’s mouth.

“Is that why you’re here?” Pat sounded just as confused as Rick was. “How’d you know she was here?”

“I didn’t know. It’s just my dad, he’ll be taking questions from the press.”

“The press?” Rick scoffed.

The boy leveled him with a stare before swiping the sleeve of his leather jacket against his busted lip. “Yes. Tonight’s gala was at my dad’s place. He needs to offer condolences to the people of Blue Valley.”

“Wait, you’re the son of Keith Diaz?” Pat was gasping like God had just dropped from the sky.

Rick bristled. It’s not like the class of this dude could outweigh the graveness of what had happened to Beth, who’d gone on some sort of date with that rascal.

“Yes, I’m Robert Diaz.” The Robert boy glanced at Rick uncertainly, probably remembering the fist he took to the face. “Look, man. I’m sorry about Beth. You have my word she’ll get all the help she needs.”

“Thank you,” Pat interjected, filling in the silence on Rick’s end.

Seeing there was no more to be said, and that a sizeable crowd had gathered about to watch the drama, the Robert boy walked away.

“What the hell is a Diaz anyway?” Rick blurted out, his heart still thundering with anger.

“I’ve never seen you like that Pat. Literally like a dog with its tail between its legs!”

“Stop, Rick!”

“For what?”

Pat pursed his lips before letting out a sigh. “You just punched a millionaire’s son in the face. Keith Diaz is the top investor settled into Blue Valley, Rick. You better pray to God he doesn’t sue you before he gets this town out of the rubble! ”

\*End of chapter.\*

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

Each of the JSA members deal with their fears and insecurities at the hospital.

### Chapter Notes

A lot of angst coming your way.

(Earlier)

The setting sun was pulling its rays off of the neat roads and tidy lawns of Blue Valley when Beth finally set foot on the Welcome mat outside her home; sweaty, hot and palpitating. She couldn't feel her feet because she'd found padding down several blocks to try and clear up her head a better option over fuming in a public vehicle and drawing Blue Valley gossips and busy-bodies. And try she had, not to overthink or fume; but still Rick's words played on repeat in her head, as if Chuck were running an audio tape in her ear.

"Beth, you need a real life," Rick had said, like he were talking to one of his lifeless cars.

"Life is moving on," he had added without even looking at her. "And maybe you should try it too."

Moving on, Beth pondered as she pushed her way into her house.

She squinted at the white marble wall and the sparkling plant vases at the entrance. Wow!

Mom was moving all the way up with redecorating.

"Dad?" Beth called mechanically on her way up the staircase. "Mom? Am home!"

Her room was in the same mess she'd left it in the morning. She tossed her bag on the ground, to shove her face flat on her bed.

"Rick Tyler, you're a jerk!" The anger blasted out of her at last, rattling her throat.

She had a right to at least state the obvious, even though Courtney and Yolanda couldn't.

Rick had been way too far up the 'jerk meter' these last couple of weeks; more erratic, withdrawn and snappish. Courtney and Yolanda would've argued that was 'Rick being Rick', but Beth was far better at observing things than them; just like Chuck.

She could tell Rick was hiding something behind his auto-repair work and that self-righteous rant he'd dropped on her. She could tell how the human connection between people scared the Bejesus out of him. And if Beth wasn't being paranoid, she could tell that Rick wanted a best friend too just like Beth had Chuck and Yolanda had Courtney. But he could never bring himself to admit it!

He flipped out at the hint that Beth and him work together on Chuck. He claimed Beth needed to get a real life. He claimed Beth wasn't 'moving on'.



Why was Rick scared that Beth wanted him to be her new friend? What did he have against Chuck? Why was he so against fixing Chuck?

Beth didn't get it. Was Rick...jealous of Chuck?

"But I understand him," Beth groaned, sitting up on her bed. Much as she hated to admit it, it was true. "Losing his parents like that, being alone for so long...it couldn't have been easy on Rick."

This time she spoke out loud to Chuck, just as she'd been doing the past few weeks, so he could hear her wherever he was. "Rick can't understand what having a best friend is like. And I honestly don't think he wants to."

Deep down, Beth knew that Rick hadn't meant to be hurtful or harsh to her. It just came more naturally to him to sound that harsh and hurtful when anyone disagreed with him. That's what all this really was: a disagreement. Beth could fix it in no time...

"Chuck's a program and can be fixed, but what about you?" The words rushed back to Beth before she could hush them out, and her face suddenly pulsed with heat at the memory. Those specific words stung more than the others, not because of how Rick had said them but because she knew deep down they were true. Her chest tightened.

"No, I'll prove him wrong! I'm not that anti-social."

If Rick were to talk 'anti-social', how about him hiding behind his cars and his auto-repair work all day so as to prevent from actually talking to anyone, or having a nice time? He did it ALL the time! He said parties were 'lame' and that family dinners were 'awkward' and 'unbearable'. He turned down offers to sleep at the Dugans' house or at the Pit Stop. He preferred to fight with his abusive Uncle Matt as if there were no other people in the world to offer him refuge, to care for him, to talk to him.

"You know what? Never mind Rick!" Beth huffed, frustrated. Why did she care so much to know what was up with him, when he didn't want that?

Beth thought about everybody. Maybe too much that she didn't pay herself any attention. That was exactly what Rick had been referring to...exactly what had caused the rift in the first place. But was he right?

"Maybe it's time I have my own thing," Beth muttered. Defeat was a hard pill to swallow.

"Apart from you, Chuck," she said to the air, "apart from the JSA."

And one last thing.

"Oh, but this isn't for Rick!" Beth pouted in defiance. "It's for me."

"Honey, who're you talking to?" It was Mom.

Beth froze, her mother's cat-like eyes holding her in place. "No one! Just my friend over the phone."

Gosh, I suck at lying, Beth regretted inwardly. Then suddenly she was wondering if Rick had sensed her lying about being 'fine' with his comments.

"Or is it a boyfriend I don't know about, Beth Chapel?"

"Boyfriend?" Beth snorted, the weight in her chest lifting a little. "You'll make a good comedian, Mom."

It amazed her sometimes, the kind of blind faith parents had for their children's progress. If Beth hadn't known her parents any better, she'd think they didn't know her well at all. Beth was the school 'turtle': adorable, chatty, funny, studious—just not the kind to draw boys like Yolanda or Court. Even the fact that Beth had 'official friends' surprised her parents still. Mom effortlessly teased herself in through the crack of the door, her special turquoise satin dress rustling. She looked stunning, but all Beth could perceive was that irksome comment Mom had just made.

It hammered Rick's point in all over again. But Beth didn't need a boyfriend to feel like she

had a life. Nah-ah!

“Looking good, by the way!” Beth remembered. “You and dad going out on a date night?” Beth stooped down to pick her bag from the floor. Next to lateness, untidiness was one of the biggest sacrileges in the Chapel household.

“Oh, I wish!” Mom’s tone was dry. Tired even. Over the last couple of weeks work had piled up considerably at the not just the Blue Valley hospital but all other public amenities in town. Blue Valley was in the midst of a laborious resurrection, so to speak, after the trail of destruction the ISA had left in its wake three months ago. A re-election for Mayor was also in the horizon and campaigning was at peak level.

“Another board dinner?” Beth guessed, squeezing out one of her infectious smiles.

“Homecoming gala, more like.” Mom perched on the edge of the bed with a sigh. “For a businessman new to town. Big names, boring speeches, a lot of wine.” Mom returned Beth’s smile robotically. “So no, honey. No date night. You’ll understand these things one day.”

“What’s not to understand?” Everybody was too busy for fun these days, Beth thought, then quickly regretted when the bite of Rick’s words revisited her.

“But maybe we all need to let our hair down every once in a while—have some fun,” she commented, more to herself than Mom.

“Did someone say fun?” Dad stepped in polishing his Rolex with the sleeve of his tux jacket.

“A small bird once told me they were committed to some science project.”

“And I just might show it to you, Daddio,” Beth laughed, knowing her ‘science project’ was a guise for trying to fix Chuck. “If you allow me more hours out?”

“Honey, you know that’s not gonna happen. You ready, babe?”

Mom glanced at Beth. “Why don’t you tag along, Honey?”

“What? Me?” Beth pushed her glasses up the bridge of her nose. “I don’t want to be a third wheel.” It was flattering, though, to know Mom cared. “You guys go on without me. I want to work on my science project.”

“Again with that science project?” Dad shook his head incredulously. “That project has got to be hella huge. Give me at least a sneak peek, Beth.”

Oh, snap!

Beth didn’t have the time or energy to create a decoy science project to show Dad. And knowing her parents with all their scientific obsessions, the fake project would have to be one Frankenstein to be believable! Even bigger than Charles McNider’s Artificial Intelligence.

“You know what, I actually could use some fresh air.” Beth wanted to pinch herself as Mom and Dad’s faces lit up. “Gala night it is!”

(Present time)

How could a place be so noisy and so quiet at the same time? How could anyone be so present and absent at the same time...like Yolanda?

Courtney reached up her hand to pat her friend’s shoulder. It felt like patting a block of wood. Yolanda was staring across at the reception like there were circus monkeys juggling balls, her eyes wide and glimmering. She had seen Beth at the site of the accident, but it was Rick who was worrying Courtney more. There’d been blood on his shirt, and then he’d walked out saying what had happened to Beth was his fault?

God, how long had he and Pat been out—half an hour? Where on Earth were they?

“We need to find them.”

“What?” Courtney started at Yolanda’s voice.

“The Injustice Society.” Yolanda bore out her teeth, her emotions no longer tamed. “Who else?”

Courtney inhaled quietly, measuring what she was going to say next. “Yolanda, we’re not sure it’s them. Not for now at least.”

“Or you just don’t want to be sure.”

The accusation bit like Icicle’s frost. Yolanda’s stare was intense and unrelenting, brimming with the indignation Courtney knew she still felt for losing Henry to the ISA three months ago.

“Why is that, huh, Court?” she scowled.

It made Courtney wince. She could tell where the conversation was headed.

“I feel like a soda!” Courtney didn’t even look once at Yolanda before streaking out of the waiting room to a hallway opposite. Fortunately there was an actual soda machine there.

Courtney pushed a button absently, the tightness in her chest stifling. Ever since the battle with the ISA three months ago, this happened to her often. Nervous fits, paranoia, nightmares. But it was the last thing the JSA needed, surely; for the team leader to be a mess.

“Are you going to get that?”

Courtney jumped, wheeling round to follow the voice.

The boy behind her beamed, his dark hair shining under the fluorescent lights.

Courtney’s heart literally back-flipped. “Cameron?”

“Your soda.” The boy smirked, amused.

And instantly Courtney noticed, embarrassed, that his eyes were too far apart to be Cameron. She was hallucinating. Again.

The boy pointed at the can at the bottom of the soda machine. “It’s a Fanta, right? Not a Cameron.”

“Oh!” Courtney bent over to claim her Fanta, the heat in her cheeks scalding.

Honestly, the boy had actually sounded like Cameron. Gosh, why in the world was she even doing this now? Attracting unnecessary attention like this because she couldn’t stop thinking about Icicle’s son? Yes, that was all Cameron Mahkent could ever be to the JSA: the departed Icicle’s son. It didn’t matter whether he was innocent or not.

“Look, I’m so sorry I confused you with somebody else...”

“Robert,” the boy injected readily. He looked less and less like Cameron the more Courtney cared to notice. He even had a busted lip.

“Robert, OK.” Courtney forced out a cordial laugh. “Again, so sorry,” she repeated awkwardly before rushing off.

At last, Pat was back with Rick at the waiting room.

“Where have you been?” Pat was giving her his mean dad look, with his eyebrow raised and his lips pursed. It was like he could see right through to Courtney’s crimes by just wishing it.

“Soda!” Courtney held the can up like it were a trophy, secretly thankful that her excuse was feasible. “And you?” she cocked her head at Rick, who blinked at her like she were a statue.

“What was that back there about everything being your fault?”

“Forget it,” he shrugged casually, but the smears of blood on his shirt screamed otherwise. He looked like he’d just stepped out of a bush, with his hair and jacket in a mess. Was he from fighting something or someone?

“Beth is in there seriously hurt!” Courtney reasoned. “We’re a team, guys! I need to know if you’re doing okay or not. This is important.”

“What we need is to find the ISA,” Yolanda insisted.

“The ISA?” Pat echoed, confused.

"It's Beth's dad!" Rick shot up his chair like there were coals on them, dipping his hands into his back pockets.

Courtney rarely ever saw him like that: jumpy and nervous.

"I've got this," Pat said, then walked up to the bespectacled man in a waistcoat and black blazer.

Mr. Chapel's face was shining with sweat. His hand was lightly bandaged from some kind of burn. Courtney edged closer to Pat to listen.

"Mr. Chapel? I'm the Dad of Beth's friend, you remember?"

"Uh, yes. Dugan."

"Call me Pat. How's Beth doing? Court and the rest are worried about her."

Mr. Chapel sighed heavily. "Not good...not good."

"How bad is it?"

"The doctors tell me the blow to her head...it was too hard. She could be in here for weeks! God, even months."

"She's fell into a coma?" Pat gasped, half-shouting.

It caught Rick and Yolanda's attention instantly.

Courtney gestured a warning at Rick to not come any closer. She needed to hear more without them interrupting.

"No, Pat," Mr. Chapel spat bitterly. "Someone put Beth in a coma, or some...thing."

"You were at the party tonight," Pat's tone was soft and emphatic. He was good at getting answers, no matter how long it could take him.

Courtney moved closer to the men, sheltering behind a pillar where Pat couldn't see her even if he tried. This was what she had followed Pat for: answers about the attack at the gala.

"What did you see, Mr. Chapel?"

"Oh, everybody saw what I saw! A blue light, flying in and out of the building like some alien saucer."

"You had a closer look at it?" Pat pushed on cleverly.

There was some hesitation on Mr. Chapel's end, like a mood-switch was about to happen.

Courtney peeped out at the two men facing each other, Pat's back to her.

Mr. Chapel rubbed his brow before looking up at Pat. "It was more like a staff, okay? Like Stargirl's staff."

Courtney's knees buckled at Mr. Chapel's words. What did he mean a staff? Her staff had been in the basement all night. Also, her staff didn't emit blue light.

"A staff?" Pat sounded just as shocked as Courtney. "You sure about that, Mr. Chapel?"

He shouldn't have said that. Now, Mr. Chapel looked more upset than before. He clasped his waist, the frowns in his dark forehead deep and zigzag.

"My daughter may not wake up from this, Mr. Dugan! Of course, I'm sure of what I saw.

These super-heroes are all murderers and pretenders. They can't fool me or the rest of Blue Valley now. No!"

He stormed off, leaving Pat there confused.

What was going on? Courtney didn't know what to think.

"Court, will Beth be all right?" Rick startled Courtney.

Again, Courtney couldn't tell what was going on with him. He was literally in her face now, his eyes bloodshot.

It killed Courtney that she had to be the one to tell him...

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# THE RUNAWAY

## Chapter Summary

Rick processes Beth's coma as he prepares to investigate who caused the accident at the Diaz's mansion.

\*character assessment\*

Also, Happy belated New Year. I'll try to be more consistent with my writing. Work has been very demanding lately.

## Chapter Notes

Welcome back to my Stargirl fic, dear readers. Because season 2 has just wrapped filming I guess I have more motivation to write now :) But i'm also doing this for my own enjoyment and leisure amidst doing my job so please be mindful that I will not be able to post as consistently as you'd like.

I hope you enjoy this fic as much as I do, though. Drop a comment on what you liked, what you'd love to see or any other question Stargirl-related you have. Disclaimer, though: I know little to nothing about the comics. I'm just going by the TV show and the little I know about the comics :)

Rick hesitated at the entrance.

Did Beth know it was him? It sure looked like she did.

After his parents and Grundy he'd learned that people never really left. He'd seen his parents' faces the night of the accident, at this same hospital. He'd seen the spark gone from his father's eyes. Yet he had still felt them there. Like they were watching over him.

Looking at Beth now, Rick couldn't understand what he was picking from her. He couldn't register it or label it, and that's what scared him.

Because what if Beth didn't want him there? What if she hated him? What if she thought, just as much as he did, that her accident was all his fault?

Seeing her this way (laying still on the hospital bed, her fluffy afro strangled with tight bandages, her face ashen brown, and her eyes puffy with weeks of the coma) made something

twist in Rick's chest. Like someone had snatched at his heart and wrenched it out.

He shouldn't be here. He can't. He's not ready.

All of a sudden, he was stepping back and her room with her in it drifting away. He was running away from Beth's room again. Just as he'd done for the last three weeks, with his tail between his legs.

Rick Tyler, the heir of a superhero, running away; not because he was unable to save somebody but because he couldn't save himself.

And from what? The anger? Disappointment? Shame?

For how long was he going to lie to Courtney and Yolanda that he had managed to visit Beth when he just couldn't get himself to?

The fact was he couldn't breathe in Blue Valley Hospital. He hadn't breathed for a while now, after letting Grundy walk away, scot-free, at the ISA tunnels three months ago.

He had let his parents down, and now he'd let Beth down too. He'd dragged her into his issues because he'd been a selfish prick that day at the Pit Shop. Maybe, just maybe, if he'd thought of someone other than himself for one second Beth would've been with the team today. Not in this God-forsaken hospital!

He almost bumped into some people at the exit.

"Sorry," he choked, but he kept with the flight, heart thumping, frantically searching the car park for his mustard yellow salvation. And when he finally spotted his mustang, he made a clean dive inside, safe at last.

At least here, things were familiar. The soft squeak of the leather seat, the shallow scratches along the steering wheel, the foggiest of breath on his windscreen...

Rick exhaled the heaviness in his chest at last. "What's wrong with me?"

He couldn't run from Beth forever. Not for as long as Blue Valley was facing this mysterious threat. Not for as long as Blue Valley needed the JSA.

Her face flashed before his eyes. A conscious and lively Beth the day before the accident.

Her eyes could light up all the time in amusement. Her moon-shaped smile could take out an entire room with its weird intensity.

Beth was annoyingly insistent, yes. At being happy.

And Rick feared happiness. He feared joy. He couldn't handle it, just like he couldn't handle her.

All life had done was steal happiness from him. It started with his parents, then to living with Uncle Matt, barely wading through the murk of school and bullies and now this.

Only difference was this time he'd been the one to steal someone's happiness. He guessed it was balance. Once you stole something from someone, you'd lose exactly what you'd taken.

Was that what Grundy was going through? Was Rick being like Grundy? Was he Grundy?

"The shit am I thinking about?" Rick scoffed.

No way was he like Grundy. He wasn't a murderer or a mad scientist.

Right now Rick needed solutions. Obsessing over Grundy wasn't going to help get Beth back or find the scumbags who did that to her.

Rick turned the key in the ignition, applying more force than usual on the breaks as the hospital entrance greeted him on his way out the parking.

Next time, maybe sooner...he'd be ready to see Beth again.



# Train Wrecked.

## Chapter Summary

Courtney has to come clean about a long time secret she's been keeping from the team.

## Chapter Notes

I guess this story will be a one scene/one chapter progress from now on. I don't have the patience to write three different scenes in one chapter any more, lol. But I truly am enjoying the work so far, in as much as the progress is slow.

Like or comment if you like what you're reading and want to see more, please.

Happy May!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Can I come in?”

Courtney groaned at her mom’s voice, rolling over to her left side to pull her duvet from the unoccupied side of her bed. It was mid-morning and she’d be lying if she said she were still sleepy. Anyway, it wasn’t like mom was simply asking.

“Sure, knock yourself out,” Courtney decided, as her mom crossed the room to sit down.

She pulled herself up to lean against the headboard. Her hair felt like a nest full of creepers, her dried laundry was still staring at her by the window and yet here mom was. Ms. Perfect, in a sky blue sweater top and jeans; her eyes sparkling with life and curiosity.

“It’s meeting day,” she said, like Courtney didn’t know that already. Like the dread of it wasn’t still lodged in the pit of Courtney’s stomach and was basically what had kept her up all night.

She couldn’t bring herself to face Yolanda or Rick, not after what had happened.

“Three weeks isn’t exactly my idea of time to heal.” She slipped, and now mom was looking at her with that worried puppy look.

Courtney bit her lip regretfully. “I shouldn’t have said that!”

Mom's hand brushed gently down her arm, warm and soothing. It was like the thawing warmth to ice, gentle and intense at the same time. Lately, all Courtney felt like was a block of ice; cold, unfeeling, numb. Maybe even more numb than Rick, although she doubted that.

"Am I a bad leader?" She asked, point blank.

Twenty one days was a lot of time to think, and Courtney had plenty of questions. But that one question had been gnawing at her thoughts the most, taunting and challenging for an answer that Courtney wasn't willing to give herself.

"What?" The grin on mom's face faltered. Her brows knit together so that she resembled Pat in interrogation mode.

"Honey, what makes you think that? What's going on with you?"

"I don't know!" Courtney cried, frustrated. "I mean, I should but I don't. Mom, how can I help the others if I don't even know what's wrong with me?"

"What are you trying to forget, Court?"

"Huh?" Courtney started, and when she looked at her mom it was like she was seeing her for the first time. Who was this woman and what was she driving at? Why did this suddenly feel like an attack?

Tenderly, mom's hand closed around hers on her lap. And when her blue eyes pierced through hers, Court knew mom was being the most serious with her she had ever been.

"Honey, you're blocking yourself from feeling," she sighed. "You're protecting yourself from being vulnerable and that's not how you lead. So, tell me. What are you protecting yourself from? What's making you vulnerable? Talk to me, baby."

A moment passed. Courtney never cried, but at that point she thought she would. Nobody, absolutely nobody, could see through her mask of strength and toughness like mom did. Sometimes, not even Pat.

"It's not what, mom, it's who." Courtney let loose at last, exhaling the weight of the entire world out of her chest. She tried to ignore the prickle of tears in her eyes as her secret finally found its way out. "I can't stop thinking about Cameron. What we did to him...what happened to Beth...It's all my fault."

The ISA went after her because of her staff. And the thing that had blown Beth up looked like her staff. Someone had a target placed on her and the JSA but it was often the people close to her who paid the price first, not her.

"You care about him. And you care about Beth." Mom reasoned. "There's nothing wrong with caring."

"But he's Icicle's son, mom," Courtney argued. "I shouldn't!"

“Well, I shouldn’t have loved your dad either. But the heart...well...it’s a whole different thing altogether.”

“What’re you trying to say?” Courtney didn’t know what to feel: curious or offended. She and mom hadn’t talked about boys in a long time, much less her biological father.

Mom scooted closer so that they were seated side by side against the headboard. She sighed, probably because Courtney was being either stubborn or dumb. And Courtney couldn’t really blame her.

“What I’m saying is sometimes not everything we feel is good. And not everything we block is bad,” mom explained. “It’s not bad admitting your weakness, Court. Sometimes, you need to in order to get help from those that are with you. Those that stand by you.”

“Yolanda knows about Cameron and she hates me for it. I can’t have Rick hate me too.”

Courtney couldn’t forget the fury in Yolanda’s eyes the night of Beth’s accident. If she was like that, how much more enraged would Rick be with her, especially if what she feared was true?

“Do you think Cameron did this?” She needed to know. Maybe if the answer came off someone else’s mouth, it would sound more real to her. It would help her like Cameron less, or hate him as much as Yolanda did.

“Oh, honey, I don’t know,” Mom said, wrapping her in her arms and ruffling the top of her frizzy hair. “It could be anybody. But you can’t get to the bottom of this if you’re worried all the time, understand?”

Courtney was a team leader. Worrying was basically her lifestyle. It’s how she got steps ahead of a mission, and how she should have been on the day of the accident: all over everybody else’s business, in the know of where they were, who they were with and how they were feeling.

But worrying had never stopped an incoming threat. Now, more than ever, she needed to face herself and the others.

“I hate you for being right!” she ripped into her mom, half joking, half honest.

Mom’s body danced and vibrated with laughter at the comment.

“The gang’s arrived, Court!” It was Mike.

Courtney disentangled from mom to glare at the short, smug looking boy in the doorway, his dog drooling copiously at his feet.

“The hell happened to you, Court? You look like a train wreck!”

“Mike, please,” Mom warned.

“Just being honest here!”

“I should get ready,” Courtney grunted, with a roll of her eyes.

If she was going to face Rick and Yolanda, she could as well do it not looking like the ‘train wreck’ she’d been for an entire three weeks.

Chapter End Notes

Stick around :)

# Old Scores (Part 1)

## Chapter Summary

“That’s unfair,” Yolanda dared, suddenly feeling small.

“Unfair is what happened to Beth!”

Rick leaned back into his chair. He wasn’t letting up. It was all dead ends and steel walls with him and he seemed more determined to die on that hill than Yolanda had ever been.

## Chapter Notes

Never really got to explore Yolanda's point of view in all this mess of events, so here's Yolanda and Rick...my abrasive twins...finally having that taboo discussion about their feelings because these two are good at hiding emotions.

Will it go well? Will it go bad? What is Rick hiding from Yolanda and will she find out?

This is just part one. I wanted to be consistent with monthly updates, so don't stress if this chapter is like clownishly short. I also got too excited to update.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Can you believe this?” Yolanda gasped, proceeding to read out the headline of the Daily Valley newspaper she’d bought on her way to Pat’s house. “Keith Diaz says not to jump to conclusions. Rules out alien invasion.”

At the rate at which Blue Valley media was going, people would start moving house to house like it was the Salem days, hunting for the Blue Staff’s owner. And the government trying to shroud things in secrecy, like last time with the ISA satellite fiasco, wasn’t exactly easing the town paranoia.

“So they think we’re aliens,” Rick flatly said, shrugging his massive shoulders. “Kind of an advantage for us for all I know.”

Was he being serious? How exactly did the public mistaking the JSA for aliens actually help? Didn’t that only make things even worse for them?

“You’re not listening,” Yolanda concluded, putting her newspaper aside.

Ever since Henry and Cindy happened to her, she'd learned to detect a jerk from a mile away and, clearly, Rick was trying too hard to be one at the moment. He was putting up a distraction so he wouldn't have to talk or listen to her or the others, just like he'd done for the last three weeks.

She sighed, taking in all the dark webby corners of Pat's basement. It really had been a while since they'd been here. After they defeated the ISA they'd laid low for a while and tried to stay away from trouble. Now the trouble had washed right up to their doorstep and hurt one of their own. There couldn't be any laying low or keeping secrets. Not any more.

"Is this about Beth?"

Yolanda could tell it was, even though Rick was giving her that dead eye stare.

"You saw her, didn't you? That's why you're upset."

Between boxing classes and avoiding Courtney, Yolanda had forgotten that Rick hadn't visited the hospital yet to see Beth.

"You don't know me, Yolanda," He huffed, reaching for his bag to tug at that jammed zipper he'd been trying to fix since coming in. Apparently, the bag was more open than its owner.

"Then talk to me," Yolanda insisted, dragging her chair up to him to sit. "I can understand."

Grief hurt, but what hurt more was grieving alone. In so many ways, Yolanda could see herself in Rick: the dark circles under his eyes, the wrinkles across his brow and the pained stiffness on his face from wearing a façade.

Then there was sleep. You rarely got that when grieving but somehow Rick, never one to care about being punctual, had made it there earlier than her. That was how Yolanda figured he'd been from the hospital.

It wasn't hard to tell that Beth's accident had affected Rick profoundly, just like Henry's death had affected her.

"There's so much about this team we don't even understand yet," Rick snapped, obviously deflecting. "Nice try."

"That's unfair," Yolanda spat.

"Unfair is what happened to Beth!"

Rick crossed his arms, adamant. He wasn't letting up. It was all dead ends and steel walls with him and he seemed more determined to die on that hill than Yolanda had ever been. But instead of pissing her off, he only made her pity him. Because if she looked carefully past Rick's defiant, steely gaze she could see herself in them, trapped and begging for a way out.

"No!" she refused, leaning forward in her chair to fix her combative stare on him. "Unfair is that you keep thinking it's your fault, Rick! Don't you think I've been there before, with Henry?"

“What?” Rick snorted spitefully, giving Yolanda pause. “This isn’t about you, Yolanda! Besides, Courtney needs to hear that more than me, don’t you think?”

That was the last straw!

Rick knew. He knew Courtney was defending Henry’s killers and he had the nerve to mock Yolanda about it?

“Like I said, Yolanda,” he continued, his blazing stare pinning her on the spot for a bigger, more painful blow, “We don’t even understand ourselves any more in this team.”

“You know what,” Yolanda could hear the tears in her voice as she shot up from her chair. “Maybe you’re right, Rick! You didn’t want to do anything when Beth was out there with strangers, why would you want to do anything now?”

Deafening silence.

Rick didn’t move. Didn’t speak. His eyes, white and round with shock were looking at her, but not seeing her. It was how someone dead inside looked. It was what the ultimate guilt trip did to someone.

Yolanda snapped back into her senses to feel her insides turn out.

“God, Rick,” she closed her fingers over her mouth, horrified. “I didn’t mean—”

“I HOPE Y’ALL DON’T MIND THE MESS AND EVERYTHING.” Pat’s breezy voice blasted through their bubble and they turned to see his towering figure approach with a carton box bearing files in his hands. “Barbara really insisted on going full store mode.”

“Hey, Pat.” Yolanda shriveled back from Rick with embarrassment as Pat smiled at them. Exactly how much had Pat heard or not heard?

“Rick. It’s good to see you, buddy.”

Rick passively waved his and, eyes still lost in thought and shock. “Yeah,” he mumbled.

As Pat moved over, Courtney was standing behind him.

Yolanda held her breath, and so it seemed like Courtney was holding hers too.

Stargirl’s rosy-cheeked smile stretched out wide, but her eyes were large with obvious panic and nerves. “Hey, guys.”

It was going to be a long day.

Let's see where this goes :)



# The DIAZ Obsession.

## Chapter Summary

By being involved with Beth, Rob had walked straight into a trap of scandal, and his dad hated those. You could do whatever you want as a Diaz except get embroiled in scandal.

## Chapter Notes

I can't tell how long it's been since I've posted, but I'm trying my best :) to be at least more committed, lol. This chapter is just a lil' intro to our new guys in town: Robert and Keith Diaz, the millionaire family whose house got blasted with the Blue Staff.

Do we trust them? Can we trust them?

Hmmm... and is Rick in danger of being put in his place with Robert after their fight 3 weeks ago outside the Blue Valley Hospital???

This should keep you thinking until my next chapter comes back. Beth is gonna come back, and I'm in for the drama!!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

(Earlier before the Diaz Mansion accident)

“There’s a study upstairs, you know.”

The girl spun round so fast at Rob’s voice that her glasses fell askew down her brown button nose. She snapped her note book shut, eyes large and owlsh.

Suddenly, Rob felt like he’d inadvertently walked into a girls’ bathroom. “I’ve scared you?” He backed down, remembering his manners. “Sorry about that.”

“No, you haven’t,” the girl said with a nervous laugh, her smile flashing white. “I was just...” she hinted with her eyes at the empty hallway they were in, “I’m not sure if it’s OK to be here? I didn’t mean to trespass.”

So she knew who he was? Of course she did. Dad had introduced Rob first thing to the crowd tonight. Nothing was more fetching than flashing one’s new star quarterback son from Blue Valley High. It could win votes.

But Beth didn’t look as taken by Rob as the party people. No, in fact she looked distracted.

Of course. Why else would she be down here, away from everyone, if it weren't to clear her mind of something? Or, like in Rob's case, to escape people?

"Every room is as open to the public as my dad's wallet," Rob quipped, stretching out a hand. "Hi. You can call me Rob."

The girl hesitated before shifting her mysterious note book to her left hand so their right hands touched softly but fast.

"I'm Beth," she said, then pushed her glasses up the bridge of her nose. "Beth Chapel."

Her dimple deepened as she blushed, and now all Rob could think about was how and why he'd not spotted Beth on his first week at school.

"Chemistry and Math, huh?" He could tell he'd caught her by surprise, but he wasn't going to hide the fact that he was impressed with what he'd seen her scribbling.

"I could use a bit of help myself." He really could, for his dad's sake. "Or we could just dance like everybody else tonight before it's too late."

He could feel Beth's eyes on him, peeling back his skin and scrutinizing him for what or who he really was. There was something there. Something in her eyes that told him she'd lost her trust in someone too. If she'd refuse he'd understand. Honestly, he'd not expected to say the things he'd just said. And Beth would be perfectly justified to think he was being a weirdo at that point.

"Maybe it's not too late," she suddenly said, seemingly surprising even herself.

The look of gloom fell off her face so this overwhelming enthusiasm could radiate.

Rob found himself smiling too. "I promise," he beamed from ear to ear, "I'll try not to get you home late."

.....

(Present Time)

"You should get more ice on that," Dad suggested from across the room.

"It's not going to come off in a day, dad," Rob grunted, pressing a finger gently against the soft, scarred spot on his right eye. His good eye and his lucky charm at the games.

Three weeks on, the punch Beth's boyfriend gave still stung. Three weeks on, he'd still not seen Beth at the hospital. Three weeks on, and all dad could rant about was how bad the black eye was for the cameras.

"I wonder what else you don't tell me," Dad continued, his tone short with impatience.

"I'm not lying!" Rob bolted up from the chaise lounge, to approach the huge dressing mirror dad was standing before, all grand in his finest pressed suit.

“A boy I don’t know came at me, then he was gone! I don’t know what his deal was.”

Except Rob knew. Beth had a possessive boyfriend. One with a jealousy so fierce he’d hit whoever was a threat, just like that night outside the hospital. By being involved with Beth, Rob had walked straight into a trap of scandal, and his dad hated those. You could do whatever you want as a Diaz except get embroiled in scandal.

“He must’ve confused me for someone else, dad. It was a crazy night.”

And even that was an understatement, given that almost half their mansion had been +leveled down by an alien force; an eerie blue light that had blinded Rob from seeing where Beth had gone. In the chaos of it all, he had abandoned the hopes of ever seeing her again.

“You’re right about that.” Dad smoothed down his tie, the expression on his face more solemn and steely than before. “Homelessness isn’t something I’ve pondered even in my wildest dreams, Robert. This new threat needs capable hands.”

“You mean your hands?” As if that was surprising. Dad’s obsession with Blue Valley was something that had come up out of the blue, and before Rob knew it they had moved from the urban high life to Blue Valley, Nebraska.

It was a sleepy town. Rob hadn’t liked it at first, but there was fresh air and friendly people. And now there was Beth and this.

“Blue Valley is our home,” Dad emphasized, now crossing over to the chaise lounge to pick up his coat. “I know I’ve not been here as often as I’d like but that’s no excuse not to give back.”

“Because you’re the best at giving back, huh?” Rob bit out.

But dad just blinked back, unfazed. Nothing moved him. Not anything that had to do with Mom anyway.

He moved soundlessly to the door, the beige hotel carpet catching no dirt from his soles, the crispness of his suit rustling with every perfect, measured step.

“I try to do my best, Robert,” he sighed. “And you should too. It’s too bad you can’t join me for the presser today.”

Of course that’s all he wanted. Typical.

Robert tried to smile without betraying the boiling feeling in his chest. “Yeah. We don’t get to spend much time together any more, Dad.”

“Please, be responsible. It’s all I’ll ever ask from you.” That was an order. Very far from a warm, fatherly comment.

“Like you said Dad,” Robert swallowed, seeing only Beth’s face through the mist clouding his sight. “I’ll try to do my best.”

## Chapter End Notes

NEXT CHAPTER, God willing, Beth finally wakes up, and the lives of the JSA are never the same again.

## End Notes

That must've been a lot to take in! Expect more flashbacks, more changes in POV and an introduction to the main villain next chapter.

Thanks for reading! Like, comment, critique in the comment if you can. I'd really appreciate your feedback.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!