

## *Antigone Sits in the Last Row*

by

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### Chapter I

For me summer has always begun at the very last minute of the recital that traditionally closed the school year, and not before.

It wasn't important that classes were by then over and the halls at school were suddenly deserted, and that the classrooms had vaguely spectral expanses of empty desks and chairs with maybe a notebook left in a corner or with one last equation still on the chalkboard that the classroom monitors had forgotten to erase.

No. I had to wait for that magical moment in which the last line of the play had been spoken, the final applause had faded, the curtain had come down, the stage lights had dimmed and parents, friends and relatives had begun to leave the auditorium and flow outside. Then we could swarm like fireflies down the long, dark hallway behind the stage, amid the ropes and the dust of the old Teatro Comunale, all the way down to the big room where we changed.

Here, our faces still red and our hearts still hovering in our throats with emotion, we could finally laugh, cry, hug each other, and remove our costumes in a flurried confusion of shoes, stockings, and t-shirts while the boys, having left their dressing room, would try to enter ours to catch glimpses of us in our underwear as we threw our flip-flops at them.

At a certain point I would go and sit under one of the large picture windows that looked outside, my face still sticky with stage makeup melted in the heat, and bask in the glow of the performance and of that night in particular. It was a sweet feeling that caused an emptiness inside of me and gave me a strange sensation of languor.