



WINDOW  
of  
Time

The Stained-Glass Legacy  Book Four

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*To Heather, Amy, and Regina. Three of the best writing sisters that  
a girl could ever want.*



# Chapter One



## *Present Day*

The sharp jab of a bobby pin poked the back of Mia Miller's ear as she looked away from her sister's wedding photographer. If she had to listen to the woman's chirpy voice telling them to "smile for June!" one more time, she would fling off the ridiculously high heels that June insisted she wear. She shifted her weight to her left leg. Oh, how she longed to slide into her favorite pair of Converse. A grin spread across her face at the thought. Who would know? Her lavender dress was long enough to cover up the sneakers.

The photographer moved the bridal party into a new pose, and Mia wished she could hide in the back of the wedding chapel in their quaint Tennessee town and watch from afar. She wasn't jealous of her sister and Mark—just reluctant to let Mark into their family bubble.

But one quick glance in her sister's direction brought a wave of guilt. June radiated with joy. She couldn't deny anything that made her sister that happy—so she'd plaster on a smile and keep trudging forward.

Sore feet and all.

Turning away from the happy couple, she brushed away unbidden tears. Now wasn't the time to get so sappy. A rainbow of colors danced across the wooden floor and drew her attention from her thoughts to the beautiful stained-glass window. It was the first thing she noticed when they arrived at the chapel. The way the light filtered through the window drew her closer to get a better look at the unique pattern. Reaching out, she gently traced the etched lines of the glass. Each gentle pass over a new color coaxed the desire to create something new from nothing.

"June, let's sign up for a stained-glass class. It can't be that hard—" She turned, and a flash of light nearly blinded her. "Not another picture."

The photographer lowered the camera with a sheepish expression, but June waved her hand in dismissal. "Oh, please. You always look beautiful, and the lighting was gorgeous behind you."

"Mr. and Mrs. Pierce, it's time to move to the reception." The photographer picked up her camera bag and ushered the bridal party down the aisle toward the door.

A giggle came from her sister's direction. "Mia, don't forget your flowers."

Mia followed June's gesture to the front pew. Her bouquet of daisies was exactly where she laid them. "I see them. You guys go on, and I will be right there."

"You sure?" June hesitated but couldn't fully pull her eyes away from Mark.

She was the last Miller. A family of one. How could her heart be full of joy for her sister but sadness too? "Of course. I'll be out to the car in a minute."

"Okay, hurry!"

Her fingers slipped on the silky ribbon before connecting with the bouquet stem as a flicker of light caught her eye at the window. No, not a flicker—more like a shimmer—like the entire window was glowing.

She walked over to it and peered out, searching for the light's

source. Mia stood on her tiptoes and craned her neck to get a better view of the sky. The setting sun had already muted the beautiful reflections of light on the floor, so there must be another reason for the bright flickering light.

If anyone walked into the chapel now, they would certainly question her sanity. She sighed, lowered her feet to the ground, and instantly regretted it. Her ankle wobbled in the high heel, throwing off her balance. Without thinking, Mia stuck her empty hand out to brace herself, but her hand didn't touch the window.

It went through it.

Mia's body pitched forward and fell completely through the window. Gasping, she forced her eyes closed and braced for the impact.

Except nothing happened. There was no shattering of glass or pain.

Slowly, Mia opened one eye and then the other, afraid she would see the window in front of her and that somehow her mind had made up the whole thing. But the window *wasn't* in front of her. She whirled around, taking in the room and comparing it to what it had looked like moments before.

The chapel walls were the same. Wooden pews still sat in the same place, but cracked in sections, sagging, and covered with a coat of thick dust. The front of the chapel was an exact replica—just rundown—and the pulpit was missing.

It was like she simply stepped through the window into an older, dirtier version of the chapel, which was completely crazy.

Or was it?

Mia couldn't discredit what was right in front of her, which meant there had to be some sort of logical explanation. She just had to figure out what was happening so she could return to *her* chapel. Her stomach churned at the thought of her sister wondering where she was. June would be beside herself with worry.

Gathering a corner of her silk dress, she lifted it up so the hem

wouldn't drag on the dusty floor and turned to go back through the glass.

Except the beautiful stained-glass window was gone.

There was nothing there—just an empty frame and a middle-aged woman staring at her with her mouth halfway open. How long had the woman stood on the other side of the window and watched her? Did she see Mia fall through it? Surely not.

The lady continued to gape at her, so Mia self-consciously raised a hand to pat her hair, making sure the bobby pins still neatly secured her up do. Her blonde curls tended to have a mind of their own, and she didn't trust the bobby pins to hold them. The woman's gaze followed Mia's hand all the way up to her hair, then back down at her feet. Mia took a few seconds to realize she still gripped part of the fabric, showing off her three-inch heels. She released the dress and gave the woman a small wave.

A slow smile spread across the lady's face. "There you are!"

It was Mia's turn to look shocked. "Excuse me?"

The woman raised her hand to her ear and said, "Sir, I've found her."

Panic knotted Mia's stomach at the words. Surely, this stranger didn't mean her. Every instinct she possessed urged her to bolt. She turned around to run but remembered the flowers. She couldn't leave them behind.

"Princess Amelia, what are you doing in here? I was supposed to meet you at the castle courtyard." The lady leaned into the window frame and sighed. "And where are your guards? Your entourage?"

Princess? Castle? Courtyard? Where was she? Better yet—this lady was the one that was crazy. "I think you have the wrong person." Mia somehow formed a coherent sentence and reached for the flowers.

The woman raised her eyebrow and pointed. "Stay right there."

She looked out the window and wished she hadn't. Mia definitely wasn't in Park Haven. There were no grass or trees. No



late summer picturesque view of the woods. In their places were neglected buildings, built close together. If she wasn't in her small rural Tennessee town, then where was she?

A long squeal at the front of the chapel drew Mia's gaze. The woman pushed the front door open, and it scraped across the floor. Mia lifted her dress once more and stuck her leg through the window.

She must have gone completely mad because none of this was happening. She was not about to escape out of a window in a formal gown.

"Princess Amelia!"

Ignoring the woman's cries, Mia climbed through the window and sat on the ledge. At least it wasn't much of a leap down. At the last second, she remembered her heels and scooped them off before jumping to the wooden boardwalk below.

A cloud of dust engulfed her, and she waved it away, choking on the heavy air.

"Princess, what are you doing?" Anger and frustration lined the lady's words. This woman really thought Mia was a princess. This was absurd.

"I'm sorry." Mia coughed again and took off down the sidewalk toward a crowd. Hopefully, escaping would buy her some time to hide and gather her thoughts. She had to make this woman understand she wasn't who she was looking for, but she did not know what to say. Telling her she fell through a window didn't exactly sound like the best way to go about it.

Mia slowed her sprint as she neared the crowd. Understanding the woman's confusion suddenly made sense. She was a refreshing splash of color in a sea of muddy water. Shades of muted blues, grays, and browns filled the streets. Gone were the pretty fields and woods of the chapel, the neat little neighborhoods, and quaint downtown shops.

Tears filled her eyes as she looked around the square. People greeted each other, but not in the way she was accustomed to.

Instead of handshakes or hugs, they placed their hand over the heart and bowed their heads.

This was not her town and clearly not her time.

Mia reached up to swipe away the tears when she noticed her shoes dangling from her fingertips. She must be a sight to behold.

A push came from behind, and Mia turned just in time to lock eyes with a girl who appeared to be about her age. The young woman quickly lowered her gaze, bowing over and over as she backed away from her. Mia needed to get out of this crowd before the girl brought more attention toward her.

Mia darted across the street, ducking into the first booth she found with long, rough fabric hanging in the opening. She let it close behind her, but she clung to it as if it would help her make sense of what was happening. A gasp filled the small area, and she looked up to find a girl watching her with wide eyes.

“Your Highness, forgive me.” The girl bowed, lowering her gaze just like the other young woman had done.

Did everyone think she was a princess?

“No, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have barged in here.” Mia let go of the curtain.

The girl looked at her again but didn’t say anything else. Mia stepped into the booth and glanced over at the tables. Jewelry graced the surfaces, and Mia had to get a closer look. “These are beautiful.” She ran her fingers over the smooth stones.

The young lady’s face flushed at the praise. “Thank you, your Highness.”

“Did you make this?” Mia lifted the bracelet and, sure enough, each stone wrapped around the wire.

“Of course, your Highness.”

“Please, call me Mia.”

The girl’s eyes widened with a look of doubt or confusion as she fumbled over her words. “I couldn’t do that ... Your Highness. It wouldn’t be right.”

“Check all the booths. She has to be here.” The woman from the chapel called out from the street. What was Mia going to do

now? They would no doubt find her, and there was nothing she could do to hide herself. She wasn't exactly dressed like the rest of the townspeople.

She set the bracelet down and searched around the booth for some way out. But would it really be so bad to go along with it for now? Just until she could figure out where she was? Mia didn't know anyone and had no money or identification with her. If she managed to escape, where would she sleep? And how would she eat until she could make it back to June?

The curtain swept open, and the woman's worried expression relaxed when her gaze landed on Mia.

"Princess Amelia, what are you doing?"

A knot of guilt formed in her stomach. She hesitated too long, and now she was out of options. This woman wasn't going to believe her anyway. She had to play along for now. "I was admiring this beautiful jewelry."

The woman sighed. "I was going to bring you to the festival tomorrow, your Highness." She gave a smile to the young woman. "I'm sure Luna would love to show you more of her designs after you're settled."

The girl beamed. "I would be honored."

"Great! Now, let's get you cleaned up and ready for your party." The woman held Mia's arm so she could slip on her shoes, then led her out of the booth and toward a waiting car.

A man in a uniform opened the back door, and Mia slid into the seat despite her high heels and long silk dress. The woman walked around the car and got in beside her.

"You said something about a party?"

The lady placed her clipboard on her lap and sighed. "Your engagement party to Prince Liam, of course. You must be so excited."

Mia's pulse skyrocketed. Wait. No one said anything about marriage. She reached for the door, scrambling to find the handle, but the car took off, leaving the booth and the sad, dreary court square behind.