

Bite Me

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Follow Aslynn on a adventure to a new vampyre school where she encounters love, loss and defeats a gruesome enemy.

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1 - Hello Stranger

Walking home from school in 15°F weather is never fun, but that's Delaware for you. Anyway, the walk which usually takes 20 minutes was now slowly approaching the hour mark thanks to all of the ice and snow. Now being a vampyre and all made the cold tolerable, but the icy wetness that started seeping into my clothes was not. Oh, I forgot to mention that I was a vampyre, sorry my bad. While we're on this topic let's get a few things straight: no we are not horrible blood sucking monsters, no we don't burn up in sunlight, and no we are not super pale nor do we have super powers. In fact we look just like humans, only need blood once a month to stay sane or if we are seriously injured, and we only get a mild rash when exposed to direct sunlight. If we weren't required by law to schools for vampyres only humans would be blissfully unaware of our presence. For centuries we had worked side by side with humans and we got along just fine, until one messy breakup with a vampyre and Dracula is released.

Finally walking up our driveway, I noticed my mom's car in the street. Before I could even put my key in the lock, the door to our 18th century barn-turned-house flew open. "Who died?" were the first words out of my mouth when I saw my mom blocking the way inside the house, she never came home early so this had to be an emergency. Giving me a stern once over my mother, who could pass as my older sister we looked so alike, looked as if she could have had a bomb thrown at her and she wouldn't even have blinked an eye. Her best poker face was on which meant something usually was messed up and she was going to blame me for it.

"Nothing is wrong. You are leaving and I've already taken care of packing your things and sending them to the station."

Astonished I thought she was joking, that this was all some cruel elaborate joke, but my more logical side said that she was cruel but not this cruel. "Where and when?" were the only things that I could choke out. "Upstate New York, your train leaves in two hours, the cab comes in one." As I digested this she snatched the key out of my hand, pocketed it, and slammed the door behind her without even a glance at me. That was when the dam broke, tears spilled down my cheeks because that house, no matter how many bad memories lie within it, was my only home ever since my grandmother died. Now I was just thrown out and cast aside like garbage, like I didn't belong with my mother and was just an old play toy that she outgrew.

Eventually I ran out of tears and just sat there in a crumpled emotional heap. When the cabby came and saw me he got out, took my hand and led me into the backseat of the cab. He helped me seatbelt myself in and drove off. I was too numb to even look back at our house and say my final goodbyes to the only home I had ever known.

Once we arrived at the station the cabby pulled me out of the cab and drove away, I watched him go and then wondered if he had been paid in advance because he didn't ask for money. I reached in my pocket to search for money for a ticket when I found the pre-purchased thing; looks like dear old mother really had taken care of everything. Disgusted I handed it to the guy taking tickets and boarded the train, not caring that there was still a half hour before the train departed. I found a window seat and just stared at the near empty station. Except for a few employees here and there I saw no one, and why should I it was only four o'clock. I was so lost in thought that I didn't notice him standing there until I heard, "Miss, is this seat..." he broke off midsentence and started searching for something on his person.

I took the opportunity to get a good look at him: around 17, with hair that was skater-boyish, tall maybe 6' 1", but when he looked up I noticed that his most striking feature were his ocean blue eyes that were framed by long black eyelashes that any girl would kill for. He handed me a tissue and I noticed for the

first time that tears had been freely running down my cheeks. "Thanks, and no it's not taken." I said and gestured to the seat across from me, assuming that's what his question would have been. He flashed a blinding smile and then stored something in the overhead compartment before taking the seat. "Josh," he said extending his hand.

"Aslynn," I said completing the handshake.

"May I ask why you were crying Aslynn," he said in a voice that sounded too wise for his age. Before I could reconsider I was spilling my guts to this stranger and tears were once again flowing down my cheeks. Instead of running away like most people do when they find out that you are a vampyre, he sat there listening and every so often handing me tissues. When I was done he said, "My guess is you're being shipped off the Clearbell, I'm headed there myself and could show you around if you want," he offered in a somewhat eager voice. Relieved that I had something to focus on other than my pity party for one, I nodded my head. Looking relieved he smiled and handed me a final tissue which I, again, took. I pulled out my cell phone just as the train departed and asked for his number in case I got lost. He pulled out his own and we traded numbers. Just as I excused myself to the restroom to clean myself up, I took a look around our train car which was completely and totally empty, "It happens," Josh said nonchalantly over a newspaper. Brushing it off, I hurried toward the back of the car and into the restroom.

Looking in the mirror I saw an olive skinned mess reflected back. My midnight black hair that usually hangs in a low ponytail or French braid was a tangled mess that would take weeks to brush out. My emerald eyes, and the only trace of my dad in my appearance, were bloodshot and my nose was redder than Rudolf's. I splashed cold water on my face and had just started working out the knots in my hair when I heard a knock at the door, "Your stuff was just dropped off," Josh called through the door to me. I unlocked it and he held out my toiletries bag, "I thought you might want this," he said slightly blushing. At that moment I didn't care how he knew which bag was the right one; I just gratefully took it and dug out a brush leaving the door open so that I could talk to him.

"I'm not usually like this," I tried to explain.

"I figured, I didn't take it well either," he said, the blood cells still rushing to his face.

Josh started heading back to our seat and I, being satisfied with my hair, followed him back. We rode in silence until the train pulled up to the station and we both hopped up to stretch and get out things. Josh lead me through the station and I got the feeling that this wasn't his first time at the rodeo. There were few cars in sight and Josh lead me straight to a black Hummer with windows tinted so dark that I wondered if you could see from the inside. Josh loaded up his stuff and then started loading up mine despite my protests and swears that I could take care of it myself. Then he opened the right side passenger door and held it open like one of those old time chauffeurs so that I could climb in the massive vehicle. He had barely gotten seated before the Hummer was flying down the highway at what could not have been a legal speed.

After only ten minutes we pulled up to a massive castle-like structure (which I found odd because it was New York not England) I could only stare at the incredible sight. With snow covering everything from the building to the forest behind the school, it looked like a winter wonderland. Josh, having unloaded the car while I gawked like an idiot, snapped his fingers in front of my face to get my attention. Chuckling to himself he said, "The dorms are on the bottom floor, classrooms on the second and third, and professor's dorms are on the top. Follow me and I'll show you around." I grabbed my things and followed him through the front doors. The lobby was better than any other school lobby, wood floors and ivory colored walls with floor to ceiling windows every ten feet and thick burgundy velvet drapes tied back with ivory cords. Off to the sides there were two spiral staircases that looked right out of a Harry Potter movie and portraits of the school's founders hung along the back wall. Right in the middle of the lobby was a wood table carved with images of the various contributions vampyres have made from the

dawn of time (discovering fire, designing the pyramids Eiffel Tower and Leaning Tower of Pisa etc.) on it were folders with I assume every student's name on them. Josh and I quickly found ours, "Room assignments, schedules, etc," explained Josh. We spent the next five minutes comparing things; turns out we have every class together and our rooms are right across the hall from each other.

"Do you think they planned it that way?" I asked Josh since he seemed to know how things worked around here.

"Who knows, the plans and dreams of the Headmaster are an enigma to those of us with a lesser brain capacity," he attached a British accent to the last half of the sentence and sounded perfectly snobby, causing fits of laughter between the two of us.

"Alright I'm assuming you will show me the way to my room?" I asked when we had calmed down.

"Of course neighbor," he said leading me down one of two hallways that I hadn't noticed when we first walked in.

The hallway was a lot less elaborate than the lobby, the only thing they seemed to have in common was the ivory colored walls. Other than that you could tell that this was left for the students, corkboards every few feet and the doors had fresh whiteboards complete with a brand new pack of markers for each student. "It will be a lot less empty tomorrow," said Josh and I knew he was referring to the fact that tomorrow was move-in day for the vast majority of the student body. We stopped in front of a plain ivory door with my very own whiteboard and pack of markers; I couldn't resist immediately customizing it. Ripping open the markers I started to get to work and less than five minutes later I had written Aslynn in my best handwriting and drew broken hearts on the four corners of the board.

"Nice," commented Josh he thought for a second and then added, "I wouldn't leave the markers out they tend to go missing in the middle of the night."

"I'll meet you in your room in twenty minutes?" I asked, but to my disappointment he shook his head.

"I've got somewhere better in mind. I'll come and get you," then he turned around and disappeared into his own room.

2 - Worst First Day of School

Here goes nothing, I thought to myself and opened the door lugging my stuff in behind me. I flipped on the light switch immediately to my right and a ceiling light attached to a fan tuned on allowing me to get a good look at my new room. The room itself was ivory (like everything else in this place!) with a window that overlooked a snow covered courtyard, the desk was small and pushed up against the wall with a closet, the bed was a twin shoved under the window, and the dresser was shoved against the wall with a door that led to the bathroom. I sighed because this room needed a lot of help, so I started moving furniture.

When I was done customizing/unpacking the bed was against the left wall with the bathroom, the dresser was in the right wall corner with the closet, and the desk was underneath the window. I had just finished making my bed and putting away my clothes when there was a knock at my door.

"Come in!" I shouted knowing who it was before he opened the door.

"Wow," was all he said before he came up behind me and blindfolded me.

"Is this really necessary?" I asked trying to sound exasperated and conceal my excitement.

"Yes, the place we are going to is top secret and I can't have you going around telling everyone its location," he said double checking that I couldn't see a thing. Then he took my shoulders and started leading me around.

When we arrived at this so called "top secret" location he took off the blindfold and I stood in shock, trying to take in the beauty of this place in one view.

"Well?" he asked and I could hear the nervousness in his voice.

"It's amazing," I said still in complete shock.

We were in the middle of the forest behind the school surrounded by snow covered trees and to our left was a small frozen lake. Smiling he said, "I thought you'd like it. In the summer you can swim in there," he gestured to the lake. I was so overwhelmed with everything that had happened in the past twelve hours that I broke down crying. Josh came over and took me into his arms and I just stood there crying. I cried for my old typical 16 year-old girl life that I would never be able to go back to, I cried for this new life that I was just starting and was just so amazing, and I cried because I couldn't tell if my feelings for Josh were out of a need for love in general or a need for Josh's love. We stood there, me in his arms, not talking until I pulled away.

"I'm sorry it's just a lot to take in," I explained and left it at that very vague explanation. He smiled and I felt a pang of guilt.

"We should be getting back soon anyway," he said and checked his watch, "crap it's 10 already." And so we walked hand in hand back towards the dorms.

Once I was back in my room I changed and was asleep before my head hit the pillow. The sound of footsteps woke me up and I flung the closest object, my cell phone, in the direction of the "intruder".

"shoot! What was that for?!" called a familiar voice.

"Josh?! What the crap?! It's like one in the morning!" I screamed at him. Returning my phone and taking a seat on the edge of my bed he let out a deep yawn.

"Actually it's two. And I could ask you the same question. I woke up to you screaming your head off and I came in here to make sure you were alright," he explained in a still half asleep voice.

My face warmed and I hoped he couldn't see me blushing, "I'm so sorry it only happened when I sleep in new places. It hasn't happened since I was little. You can go back to sleep I'm fine," Now that my eyes were adjusted to the darkness I could see the concern on his eyes, "really I'm good."

“How did you deal with it before?” his voice filled with concern again.

“My mom or a relative would sleep with me but that was when I was like five I’m fine now probably just a onetime deal,” even I didn’t believe my “onetime deal” bit. I knew I needed to ask him otherwise neither of us would get any sleep but luckily he put two and two together first.

“Move over I’m coming in,” he said and then thought better, “unless you don’t want me too.”

“Whatever do what you want,” I said trying to be nonchalant, “but you really don’t have to.”

“Are you kidding? I’ve known you for one day and I’m in bed with you already,” he yawned and I resisted punching him because he was already asleep.

When I woke up I thought that I had dreamed the whole thing last night and had myself half convinced until I saw the note on the dresser.

A

I’ll be locked in my room all day. Knock twice.

-J

Sighing I started getting ready to face the day. Not even bothering to shower yet I threw on a pair of jeans and a graphic tee, brushed my hair and teeth, and headed over. I scarcely even had knocked twice when Josh opened the door wearing only jeans (that were hanging really low on his waist) and toweling off his shaggy wet hair. Okay I’ll admit it, I did like what I saw, he had a very defined six pack and ... and probably noticed that I was staring at him. He cleared his throat and said, “You gonna stand there all day?” and added a smile that brought out dimples that I hadn’t noticed before and I couldn’t help but return the smile and walk in. I did a quick survey of his room and saw that unlike mine, his fixtures were all in their original positions. Posters of motorcycles dotted the walls and a small TV had found its way onto the desk. Unsure of what to do I stood in the middle of the room awkwardly while he sat on the bed. He gestured for me to take a seat next to him and as I was sitting down he made an announcement that put a knot in my stomach and gave me butterflies all at the same time.

“A blizzard blew in and their not sending any more students until it’s cleared out. The kitchen staff, Headmaster, and some professors are here already but we’ve pretty much got free range of the school.” I tried to look impassive but I have a feeling that Josh sensed my nerves because I realized that Josh, me and an almost empty school for an undetermined amount of time could be a bad combination and he quickly added, “it gives you a chance to adjust to everything though so only I’d know about the whole screaming incident,” he tacked on a smile for my benefit.

“So when’s breakfast?” I asked trying to focus on my gnawing hunger rather than Josh’s announcement.

“Usually it’s served in the cafeteria between 8 and 10, why you hungry?” he asked.

“Starving,” I said enthusiastically.

As he led me back to the lobby and in the direction of the cafeteria Josh was babbling on about something or other and I was in my own world. Until I saw the thing. It was on Josh’s right and was going in the direction of the doors to the outside, it was almost completely opaque until it got to the door and passed through it, and then it shimmered just slightly. To the day that I die I will never forget the ugly creature it was almost as tall as Josh, maybe 5’ 10” and had on a royal ball gown that looked as if it was ivory and burgundy at one point with a cinched waist and lace coming from the end of the sleeves and the top of where the neckline ended. Everything about it was breathtaking until you got to looking at its neck; a large purple bruise lay straight across the middle of its neck and extending completely around. The bruise itself was as thick as a small novel but looked as if it could have killed a man within seconds. Moving up to the creature’s head was by far the most gruesome sight anyone would ever see, a skeletal head sat in place of a real one atop the creature’s neck. It appeared the flesh from the neck melded with the bone at about where the ears would have been. Where its eyes should have been sat great big empty holes, just vacant spots, there was not on bit of flesh from the base of the skull to the top

of its head and it was painstakingly obvious. Right before the creature left the building it saw me staring at it and looked straight into my eyes, vacant holes boring into me and I swear it would have broken out into what would have been a disfigured smile.

“Josh?! Did you see it Josh?!” I could hear the panic in my voice.

“See what?” I heard panic make its way into his voice too.

“That thing!! It walked right past you...” I trailed off because I knew I sounded crazy.

“When was the last time you ate?” he asked all signs of panic were gone from his voice.

“Um, good question,” I joked forcing myself to look away from where the thing just disappeared.

“Well then let’s head down to the...” now it was Josh’s turn to trail off because just then a red flashing light and loud alarm started going off.

“Students please halt all activities and report to your dorms immediately. This is not a drill,” a computerized voice called over the din of the alarms.

Josh started dragging me back toward the dorm hallway and I was trying not to have a panic attack because it didn’t seem like the time nor place for my nerves to kick in. Half dragging, half pushing me, Josh seemed to be keeping a pretty cool head until you looked into his eyes. They were darting back and forth, like they were searching for something or someone. I had to force myself to stop looking at his eyes because Josh freaking out was not going to help me stop freaking out internally. Josh stopped at his door and shoved me inside then closed and locked it behind him. The warning lights, blaring siren, and voice were still going off in the hallway but luckily for the most part, we couldn’t hear it in his room. I took the chance to question him, “Josh what is going on? And why are we locked in here?” I succeeded for the most part in keeping my voice even and panic free.

“There are only two reasons why the alarm would go off,” he said in between pulling metal sheets over the windows, “one a natural disaster is headed right for the school or two,” he paused as if considering whether or not to tell me.

“Two!” I commanded because this was not the time to be withholding information.

“Or someone has died,” he said finally finishing the sentence.

I guess everything that has happened in the last 24 hours caught up with me and combined with the lack of food was just too much for my body to handle because everything went dark after that.

3 - Necro.....what?

When I woke up my head was in Josh's lap and his bleeding wrist was being held up to my mouth. Warm fresh blood was flowing into my mouth and I was lapping it up like a thirsty puppy. I heard Josh sighing contentedly and forced myself to pull away and let him heal the wound (vampyres can heal their wound by focusing on only the wound and it changes some kind of hormone or something like that). Looking up at Josh I could tell he'd been letting me drink for a while, when vampyres drink from live victims they both experience a feeling like when humans get high. "Josh!" I yelled holding back a giggle fit. He looked down and his eyes were glazed over. He clamped a hand over my mouth and shushed me, and then we both erupted into laughter.

"Josh," I said again only less urgently this time.

"I warned you woman," was all he said before he bent over and sealed his lips to mine.

His kiss was slow but eager and I melted into him, laying with my head in his lap his lips against mine felt so right. He pulled away first and I could tell his normal self had taken control again (the high doesn't last long). I noticed that he hadn't pulled back all the way yet and I took a chance. Putting both of my hands on his face I pulled him back in for another long kiss. This time he didn't pull back until we both had to breathe. Clearing his throat he got up slowly and I sat up too. "Careful," he warned and I knew what he meant, as soon as I sat up I started seeing stars and felt dizzy. He came back and handed me something.

"Eat," he commanded and started eating a sandwich himself.

I looked at the sandwich he handed me, "Nutella on whole wheat? How did you know?" I asked wondering how in the world he had known my favorite sandwich.

"I never forget anything. You had that for lunch on the train yesterday," he explained, color slowly rising into his cheeks. By the time he had finished explaining himself my sandwich was gone and while he was still eating I got up to get a better look at his room. I noted that a laptop, full library of books, and a mini-fridge had made their way into his room since this morning.

"Students I'm sorry to announce that our head chef Ms Anne Roberts was found dead this morning. A memorial service will be held in her honor as soon as the blizzard blows over."

"Who was that?" I asked Josh.

"Headmaster Thomas, he lives here year round," he explained sounding rather melancholy. In my gut I had a feeling that no matter what anyone else said, the thing that I say was responsible for Ms Roberts' untimely demise.

"So can I return to my room tonight or am I being held captive here?" I asked half jokingly.

"You're stuck here until they figure out what happened," said Josh a smirk finding its way onto his face.

"Let's watch a movie," I suggested and I could practically see the cloud above Josh's head dissipating.

"Hmmm, have you seen..." he trailed off deep in thought about what movie to watch.

"Ok no laughing but when I had a bad day my mom would put in Mulan to distract me from whatever had happened," I said and now it was my turn to blush. It seemed so childish now that I was sorry I had suggested it and I could see him holding back laughter.

"Mulan it is," was all he said before he started moving the dresser so that we could set the TV on it and watch the movie while sitting on his bed. After he rented the movie from Netflix we settled on his bed his arm around my shoulders. Somewhere in between Mulan stealing her father's armor and her almost getting kicked out of the military he passed out. I tried to do the same but I just couldn't shake the

feeling that the thing that I saw was responsible for Ms Roberts's death so I carefully climbed off his bed so as not to wake him and made my way over to his laptop. Praying it wasn't password protected I turned it on. For the first time since I had arrived at this school something went right! Not only was it not password protected but it also had internet access. I got on the internet and went straight to Google. Then I realized I didn't even know what it was I was looking for, so there was no way I could Google it without drowning in tens of thousands of unrelated results.

Feeling discouraged I shut down his laptop and walked over to the bookshelf to see if there was something to read until Josh woke up. Skimming through the carefully organized sections containing encyclopedias and various other research books I noticed that most of the books had a paranormal theme:

Most Haunted Destinations in the World by R.J. Hammer

Visits from the Other Side: Ghost Stories from all 50 States by Meghan Wolfe

Paranormal Studies: a Complete Encyclopedia on all things Paranormal by Chris Baker

I stopped at that one and pulled the massive book from the shelf, clinging to the hope that maybe the thing I saw would be in it and that I may finally have answers. Going through the pages one by one, studying each picture and making sure it's not the creature I saw was tedious work. In fact I was so absorbed in my work that I didn't notice Josh was awake until he spoke right over my shoulder.

"Whatcha looking for?" he asked.

"Josh! I thought you were asleep!" I practically shouted, while trying to restart my heart.

"Was, but people tend to wake up. I repeat whatcha looking for?" he said adding a smile that made his dimples resurface. I didn't want to tell him because I didn't know if I could take the rejection that was certain to follow my conclusion but his large sapphire eyes were practically begging me to tell. Before I knew it I was spilling my guts about everything and when I was done he didn't burst out laughing or look at me like I had lost my mind like most people would have done. Instead he looked like he was deep in thought.

"Sounds like a Necrolancer to me," and he took the encyclopedia from my lap. A few minutes later he seemed to have found the page he was looking for because he handed the book back to me. At the top of the page in big letters it said: Necrolancer. I began reading the article that followed:

Necrolancers are ghost like creatures bent on avenging their death and returning to the land of the living. To do so they must kill any creature that has supernatural blood (vampyres, unicorns etc) and drink their blood. Many necrolancers choose to kill vampyres because their blood is more potent. With each killing their body will literally grow again; bone first and then flesh covering the bone. A necrolancer can only kill during the full moon; most will kill dozens if not more within that time period. Necrolancers that desire their bodies faster must kill anyone (or their descendants) involved in their death. There is no known way to kill a necrolancer once its body has grown back completely. Being that necrolancers don't appear to everyone, they can only be killed by someone they have revealed themselves to, but that person cannot be easily corruptible. They have been known to reveal themselves to weak minded creatures only to manipulate them into sacrificing themselves. Only one person has ever killed a necrolancer, Nikoli Stafford in 1824, he passed away shortly after the necrolancer's death. It is said that the one that deciphers the following riddle and acquires the weapon mentioned will be able to vanquish a necrolancer.

With haunting eyes and showing bones

Most hide and shriek in high pitched tones

Face the creature if you must

But bring with you one you trust

Old and useless it may appear

Its purpose is quite unclear

Its power and might you can't imagine in the least
It will help you kill the beast

"Well that isn't helpful," I said, discouraged once again.

"Maybe you just need to think about it for a little bit," offered Josh, who had been reading over my shoulder the whole time.

"I have to get in the shower, while you ponder this useless riddle," I growled thoroughly frustrated. Just then I remembered where I was.

"shoot! I have nothing to wear!" I screamed because nothing was going right.

Pulling himself to his feet Josh said, "Wait here." As he walked to his dresser I sat there pondering what he could have that I could wear and why he would have something that a girl would wear.

"Sorry about the lack of options," he said throwing one of his t-shirts at me, "it's all I have that would fit you." Grumbling to myself I walked into the bathroom and slammed the door shut. After I got the temperature just right I got in, enjoying the warm water and time to myself.

No matter what I tried thinking about the riddle kept making its way into my head. Ignoring all of the other lines I focused on: Old and useless it may appear, its purpose is quite unclear. It has to be some form of weapon that doesn't look like a weapon because then its purpose would have been clear and it wouldn't look useless. I can see the creature and I'm not going to be sacrificing myself to it so I have to be the one that is going to kill it. All of a sudden I heard a knock at the door.

"Aslynn? You planning on coming out? It's been nearly an hour and a half," Josh called through the door.

"Yea! Give me five minutes!" I said and then hesitantly turned the water off. Sighing at my lack of wardrobe options I pulled on my underclothes and reluctantly put on Josh's t-shirt. I unlocked and opened the door so that I could talk to Josh while braiding my long hair when I noticed my grandmother's locket still tangled in my discarded pile of clothes. "What's that?" I heard Josh ask but I was too deep in thought to even respond to the question. I was remembering the day that my grandmother gave me the locket; she was on her deathbed when she shoved this into my hands, "Swear to me that you'll protect this no matter what. It's more valuable than it looks." I swore to her but I never knew what she meant the darn thing wouldn't even open for me; I just chalked it up to a dying woman's scrambled brains. Flipping over the necklace I noticed for the first time an engraving on the back,

A game of hide and seek we played
Now you've found me to work we get
Put me near an awful beast
And their soul shall be ours to keep

4 - Beware an Enemy is Near

"It's the necklace!" I yelled to Josh.

"What is?" he replied. So once again I found myself spilling my guts to him; following my train of thought back to beginning.

"How does it work?" he asked when I was done explaining. I shrugged, clueless of what to do next.

"Maybe we open it?" he suggested, sounding hopeful.

"Tried, the thing seems glued shut," I said feeling hopeless and dejected. Pondering this we walked back to his room and I perched on his bed. Suddenly it felt like I had hit a wall of exhaustion. Yawning, I laid back and Josh came around to lie next to me.

Next thing I know I'm in a lush green meadow with wild red amaryllis and gorgeous purple monkshood all around me. The sun is shining and the meadow's lush grass is tickling my toes. I flopped on the ground to look at the clouds rolling by in the perfect blue sky. A rabbit here and a rose there, the clouds seeming to make whatever I thought of and this dream was just so perfect.

Slowly though the scene was getting darker and darker as if a giant cloud had passed over the sun.

Looking up I could tell that no such thing had happened and that the sun was still shining just as brightly if not brighter. I had a gut feeling that I was being watched so I started running, trying to escape from the dream-turned-nightmare. The monkshood flowers started shifting and changing slowly from the beautiful purple flower to a sickening fleshy tone. That started morphing and growing until fully grown necrolancers surrounded me on all sides. As they started to close in I tried to run again but the meadow's lush grass had turned to quicksand slowly swallowing me whole. I opened my mouth to scream but got mouthfuls of sand. Not only could I not scream but now I couldn't breathe, the sand just kept pouring into my mouth. As I was slowly suffocating images were flashing before me: my grandmother's locket, Josh in the hospital. As the last breathe escaped my lips I saw the necrolancer coming for me.

And then I was awake. Tears were flowing down my face and I was covered in sweat. "Aslynn are you okay?" Josh asked in a groggy voice, indicating he had fallen asleep too.

"Yeah, fine, it was just a nightmare," I explained as he rolled over to face me. His gaze captivated me, his sapphire eyes, I noticed for the first time, had specks of black scattered throughout. He must have moved closer because our bodies were suddenly touching. Uncomfortable I hopped off of the bed and started pacing. I immediately regretted it because, even though Josh had his best poker face on, his eyes held a little hurt deep within them. Coming up to me, he put his hands on both of my shoulders to stop my pacing. I tilted my face towards his and looked him in the eyes. The little emotion that had shown only seconds before had been snuffed out and his eyes gave away nothing.

"You're a terrible liar," his voice held a note of concern but a smile tugged at his lips and he leaned down. Our lips met and I melted into him. Suddenly it was just the two of us and the whole world had disappeared. He put his hand on my lower back and drew me closer. All too soon the kiss ended and he buried his face in the arch of my neck, lining it with kisses. I arched my neck wanting more but once again he pulled away too soon. We stood there for a moment, me in his arms and just enjoyed the peace.

All of a sudden Josh's body went rigid and I saw the necrolancer float out of the room, dripping blood behind it. Everything happened in slow motion, I looked up and Josh's eyes had rolled back into his head. As his body went limp I caught him and slowly laid him on the floor. Blood had started to pool around the back of his shirt so I rolled him over and took off his shirt to get a closer look. A deep wound

near the base of his spine was oozing fresh blood.

Going into autopilot and running on pure adrenaline I balled up his shirt and put it on the wound.

Determined not to leave him, not even to get help, I lugged his still bleeding body to the desk chair. I laid the back down as far back as it would go and I laid him on his stomach. Rolling him to the door I unlocked it and pushed him into the hallway; temporarily forgetting I was in nothing but his t-shirt.

5 - Facing the Enemy

Following the signs to the infirmary, I started screaming, hoping that someone would be there and could help us. Finally a team of nurses ran out and saw us. They did a quick visual assessment then wheeled him away, leaving me heartbroken and alone in the hallway.

The adrenaline had worn off and panic set in. My racing thoughts were of no comfort to me as reality set in. Leaning against the wall I slid to the floor and burst into tears. For the first time in a very long time I prayed, begging who or whatever was up there to take me instead and to let Josh live. I looked up and saw a young nurse, around my age, fretting around me. She would get close and then back off, get close and then back off, as if grief were a contagious disease that she didn't want to catch. Wiping away the tears I tried to fix my appearance and then I realized it was hopeless until I got in front of a mirror.

"Aslynn," I said extending a hand and trying to be civil in the middle of all of this chaos.

"Abigail," she said, completing the shake and looking relieved to be of some help to the poor puddle of a person on the floor.

"Can I get you some scrubs to change into?" she hesitantly asked and I noticed for the first time that I was covered in Josh's blood. So I nodded and grumbled something resembling a thank you, wanting nothing more than to rewind back to the perfect moment in Josh's room right before he got stabbed. She led me to a bathroom and handed me a pair of fresh scrubs.

"Take all the time you need. He'll be in there for a while." I felt as if I should have said something to her but I was too upset to even think so I just shook my head and she disappeared behind the closed door. I broke down and ripped off Josh's blood covered shirt and cranked on the sink. Bawling my eyes out over how much of a train wreck this day had become I scrubbed at my skin. I was still scrubbing even after the blood was gone because I was trying to wash the nightmare away. When I felt like I had done a sufficient job I turned off the water and put on the scrubs. I noticed I had cried myself out of tears yet my body was still trembling with grief. Running to the toilet, I lost whatever tiny amount of food I had consumed over the last 24 hours. I lay on the cold tile floor in a crumpled heap, crying, shaking and weak. A nurse found me there and plucked me off of the ground as if I weighed nothing more than a feather. She placed me on a bed where various needles were placed in me. I must have fallen asleep because when I woke up the nurses were gone and I was connected to only one IV bag filled with blood. Even though the world was a little fuzzy I could tell that Abigail was seated at the foot of my bed.

"Josh is in our ICU down the hall. The knife missed his spinal cord but it was covered in some kind of poison that prevented his blood from clotting and made his brain swell. All of this caused him to slip into a coma and they're not sure if he'll come out of it. If he does manage to come out of it no one knows how severe the damage to his brain was and there's no way to tell," she filled me in.

"I have to go see him," I insisted, trying to sit myself up. I didn't get far before Abigail was pushing me back into the bed.

"You passed out from dehydration and have been on a steady dose of blood since then," she explained checking my vital signs. I knew that I had to see Josh and she was not going to stop me so I formed a plan.

"Is there anything to eat around here? I'm absolutely famished." I knew I had said the right thing because a giant smile made its way onto her face.

"I'll go ask what you can have," she said playing right into my hand. I hauled myself out of bed, ignoring the wave of nausea and pain, and dragged the IV machine out of the room with me.

Working my way down the hall, I was careful to avoid people. Finally at the end of the hall I found his

room. It was blindingly white and there were more tubes attached to him than I would have thought possible. Letting myself in I crept slowly to his side. His eyelids were fluttering, but not in a way that indicated he was waking up, more like he was stuck in a nightmare with no way of escaping. Remembering how much I had relied on him I climbed up next to him, wary of all of the tubes. Laying my head on his shoulder I closed my eyes, pretending we were back in my room the first night I was here. I opened my eyes and noticed his eyelids had stopped fluttering and allowed that small comfort to carry me to sleep.

Once again when I awoke there was Abigail. I took my first good look at the young nurse and noticed her perfect oval face was lined with concern. Her platinum blonde hair was tied back into a ponytail and her emerald green eyes sparkled with understanding and set off her rosy lips and cheeks perfectly. All of this was wrapped up into a perfectly sun kissed 5' 5" package.

"You weren't supposed to escape," she said half jokingly half serious. I groggily apologized but made no attempt to move.

"Luckily, the Elders are understanding and are willing to move your things into this room so you guys won't have to be separated." There was an edge to her voice when she said the word Elders but I couldn't identify any veiled meanings or malicious intent. Once again it was of little comfort under the circumstances. Then I remembered the necrolancer was going to be "human" again within a matter of days.

"Hell no! I have to get out of here," I shouted, ignoring the look of shock on Abigail's face. I started removing the IV and looking for a band-aid. "Jesus Christ this is a hospital where the fudge are the band-aids?" I screeched, tearing the room apart.

"The only way you're leaving," Abigail started and handed me a band-aid, "is with a medical escort." "Then escort me back to Josh's room so that I can pack up a few things," I said heavily mocking the word escort.

"Fine," was all I got out of her before she turned on her heel and walked away. I pondered whether or not I could trust Abigail the whole way back to the dorm, while she babbled on about something or other. When we reached his room I hesitated at the door and Abigail looked as if she was getting ready to catch me. There was a pool of dried blood, that I carefully maneuvered around, where Josh had laid only hours before. Retrieving the encyclopedia and my locket I fought the urge to vomit from the memories suddenly flooding my brain. Just wanting to leave the dorm area, I quickly surveyed the room before locking the door behind us.

"Where to now?" Abigail asked in an annoyingly perky voice. Shrugging my shoulders I started walking in a random direction, hoping I would find some clue as to where to find the necrolancer. By attacking Josh it had made this fight personal and now I was out for blood. Trying to think about where it could be hiding I realized that I didn't know enough about the school to even begin searching. That left me with two options: one bring Abigail in on the secret or two give up completely and let Josh's attacker go without a second thought. After weighing my options heavily I stopped walking and turned to Abigail.

"What's wrong?" she asked, alarm evident on her face.

"Nothing. How familiar are you with the supernatural?" I asked feeling like that was an appropriate place to start. Pondering this for a moment, she shrugged and looked at me, urging me with her eyes to continue. So I took a deep breath and started from the beginning, editing out a few details that I would prefer to keep private.

After I had finished she didn't go running for help, or even call the psych ward like I thought she would. Instead she stayed silent, as if processing what I had just told her. When she did speak it was my jaw that fell open.

"If I was the creature I would hide out in either the abandoned gym or the basement. Either place is creepy enough," she joked, fear clearly present in her voice.

“Let’s start with the basement,” I suggested. I didn’t have a clue what we would do if we found the necrolancer but it was worth a shot.

After heading down several flights of steps and multiple winding hallways, we finally came to a stop deep within the bowels of the school. In front of us was a wooden door that looked like it hadn’t been opened since the Middle Ages and we were surrounded by stone walls. It was freezing cold and if there weren’t lanterns every few feet it would have been pitch black. The door wasn’t locked and was a lot lighter than it looked but the creaking hinges gave away its age. As soon as we walked into the basement a few lights tuned on allowing us to see a little better than the lanterns did. The basement was fully furnished with hardwood floors and heavy velvet curtains covered the walls. In the middle of the floor there was a piece of black onyx the size of a twin bed and melted wax all around it. Other than that the room was bare and relatively well kept. There were no spiders or their webs and not one dust bunny in sight.

“Well if they were going for the devil worshiper look they achieved it,” Abigail joked to try to cover up her fear.

“Yeah. I don’t see it let’s try the gym,” I said just wanting to get out of there. So we silently walked back up to the warm inviting lobby. Reluctantly we headed outside and into the blizzard. The snow was up to my thighs and coated everything in sight. Within a matter of minutes we were soaked and only halfway to the gym. By the time we got to the front doors we had to have looked like drowned rats. My scrubs looked like I decided to swim in them and Abigail was shivering so much she looked like she was convulsing.

We sat down to rest and I did a survey of the gym. It had the typical springy gym floor and high ceilings but the windows were completely covered with velvet so it would block out the sunlight. The basketball hoops were in place, the lights were on and the bleachers were pulled out; as if someone had just left. I heard a door open and all of my senses went on high alert. Abigail must have heard it too because she was suddenly right next to me. We could hear high heels clicking as if someone was walking up steps. Then the door leading to the locker room swung open and there was the necrolancer. The flesh had grown and was now up to her forehead.

“Oh I see I have visitors,” she announced with a smile, “if I had known you were coming I would have done a little remodeling. Her voice was smooth as honey but oozed a forced sweetness as if she was growing impatient but didn’t want to set us on edge. Her eyes were the color of dark chocolate and her lips were a deep red that reminded me of blood. I looked over to Abigail only to see that she wasn’t there anymore. Her disposition had completely changed and her features had contorted to a look of malevolence. She had taken her hair down so now it was hanging at her waist and her eyes held a dark presence in them.

“Abigail?” I asked, slightly afraid that my friend had changed so suddenly.

“Abigail had to go away for a little bit. My name is Jessica,” she said shooting me an evil glare. Now I was really on edge because it appeared that Abigail had multiple personalities and I wasn’t so sure if Jessica was a friend or foe. I stood up and got in front of Abigail ... Jessica ... which ever she was, so that I was in between her and the necrolancer.

“Now dearie why would you do that?” the necrolancer asked. She moved her hand to the side and an invisible force pushed me knocked me out-of-the-way. “Jessica and I have been talking for a while now. Haven’t we dear?” she crooked her finger at Jessica and the same force urged her forward. Jessica practically ran over to her, like a puppy to its master. “It seems that she doesn’t like Abby too much and wants the host all to herself,” the necrolancer continued.

“Don’t talk about Abigail that way!” I shouted ashamed that this creature knows more about my friend than I could ever hope to. Even though I had just met Abigail I knew that we were going to be friends and I could trust her with anything. The necrolancer just clucked her tongue at me.

“I convinced Jessica that if she sacrifices Abigail to me she will have the body,” she continued as if I

hadn't spoken.

"If she sacrifices Abigail then she sacrifices herself. Kill the body and you kill them all," I said drawing on the little information we had covered in health class about Multiple Personality Disorder.

"I will miss my loyal servant but she understands she's sacrificing herself to a greater cause," she said without a note of sadness in her voice. Drawing out a silver dagger she stabbed Abigail right in the heart. I screamed but the necrolancer tipped her head back as if enjoying the pure ecstasy of Abigail's death. Remembering that she has to drink the blood for the sacrifice to count towards her body I hurled myself at the both of them. The necrolancer let out an awful scream and dropped Abigail's body. Her blood spilled everywhere and there was just so much that I couldn't believe that she was only stabbed once. "I was going to spare you but seeing as you made me drop my final victim I'll have to settle for you instead," she said anger spilling into her words. She drew the dagger up to stab me but I rolled to the side and she stabbed the floor instead. I jumped up and ran to the closest door: the woman's locker room. Flinging myself at it I tumbled down the stairs and when I came to a stop at the bottom I had a deep gash along my cheek and I was pretty sure my cheekbone was broken in at least one place but I kept going. I heard the necrolancer's heels clicking down the stairs and ran into the locker room. There was a door off to the left and I ran to it only to find that it was locked. Running down the rows of lockers I kept searching until I found one. It was a locker that was big enough that I could fit inside and close the door behind me.

Just as I closed the door I heard the necrolancer enter the locker room. She seemed to have stopped to check the locked door off to the left but when she found it was locked she just let out an evil laugh.

"I know you're in here! Come out come out wherever you are!" she screamed like a madwoman. I heard her heels click down each row of lockers and she must have punched a few of them because every now and then I'd hear the loud thud of flesh against metal. Finally she got to my row of lockers. I held my breath and once again found myself silently praying. She stopped right in front of my locker and I had to come up with a plan and quickly. As if she could hear my thoughts she said, "Good luck dearie."

6 - Walking Dead

With that I flung open the locker and it knocked her right in the face. She fell backwards and dropped the knife. My adrenaline was pumping as I ran out of the locker room and headed to the weight room. Silently cursing myself for not grabbing the knife, I picked up a few free weights as I rushed through the door. Sadly my grip on one of them wasn't as good as I had hoped and it slipped through my finger and landed right on my big toe. I had limped behind the bench press in the corner just as she ran in.

"I heard you drop something. You can't just give away your hiding spot and then not give yourself up. It's not ladylike," I heard her tsk at me. The sleek silver dagger was in her right hand but there was blood dripping from her nose where I had hit her with the locker. She must have seen me in the mirror because all of a sudden she wheeled around.

"There you are dear," she said sounding like a mother looking for her toddler. I took a weight and chucked it at her. Today must have been my lucky day because it hit her right in the crown of her skull. "How dare you?! This is a newly grown body! It took decades to regrow this!" she screamed cursing at me and calling me vile names. I chucked another weight at her and it hit her in the stomach, causing her to double over in pain. I slipped out from behind the bench press and ran by her but she was too quick. She grabbed my ankle and yanked me down next to her. Slitting my arm with the dagger she said, "And you thought you would get away." My necklace started to grow warm against my neck. The necrolancer's eyes got wider than dinner plates as my necklace flew open. A bright light erupted from within my locket and then the necrolancer was gone and my necklace sealed itself shut again.

I knew I wouldn't have much time before I lost enough blood to pass out so I forced my body to get up. Grabbing a towel that was left on one of the machines, I wrapped my arm up in it and headed back to the locker room. As I climbed the stairs I felt my legs going numb and knew that the same poison that had put Josh in a coma was working its way slowly through my veins. I was unsure about how much time I would have left so I lifted my legs and climbed the stairs one by one. At the top of the stairs my legs felt leaden and I couldn't feel my lower abdomen. I didn't trust my legs enough to walk anymore so I started to army crawl towards the gym. Because I had to use both of my arms the blood had started to flow faster and the towel was soaked by the time I got to Abigail's body. I knew she was dead so I just crawled by as the tears started prickling in my eyes. By the time I reached the door there was no feeling in my upper body and I knew my arms would be next to go.

Luckily we had left the gym door open enough that I could just push with my hands to get outside. However once it was open I lost all hope. The snow was piled to just below the gym door and even if I was 100% I probably wouldn't have been able to make it out. I laid down, defeated, knowing I had come this far only to hit a wall, literally. Then I saw Josh in the hospital and knew he couldn't wake up alone and he would keep trying if the roles were reversed. Slowly I dug at the snow, creating a small tunnel of sorts and relying on my internal GPS to get me back to the lobby. When I thought I was halfway there I stopped to rest and then I noticed that I couldn't feel my shoulders. I knew soon enough I wouldn't have any use of my arms and that I had to keep going. Finally through trial and error I found the lobby doors, just as I lost feeling in my hands. Without the use of my limbs I had to just lie there, outside the lobby and pray that someone would walk by and find me. I banged my head against the door until there was a crack in the door and my head was bleeding. The numbness had spread to my neck by that point and it looked like no one was coming for me. I was going to die here all alone. I closed my eyes and drifted away from this world.

7 - Happy Ending At Last

The next time I opened my eyes I was in a field of black roses and marigolds. A wooden bridge was in front of me and I saw my big sister on the other side. Unconcerned by this oddity I waved at her but she just looked at me with sad eyes. I walked towards the bridge but she held up her hand as if to tell me to stop. Confused I started walking again but again she held up her hand to tell me to stop; this time she also pointed down. I looked down and saw that the field had disappeared and there was nothing but sky below me. Then I started free falling down, all the way down. The last thing I saw was my older sister beaming down at me and waving good bye.

"She's alive," I heard someone call in a relieved voice.

"Thank god," said a second. I tried to sit up but at least three sets of hands pushed me back down.

"Honey you're going to need to stay down. Stop moving," said the first voice again.

"Josh?" I called, hoping that he would be near me.

"I'm right here," he said taking my hand and giving it a firm squeeze, "You're in the hospital, the headmaster found you collapsed in the lobby, there was a fresh gash on your arm and your cheekbone is broken," he filled me in.

"That's impossible," I heard myself mutter, the last thing I remember is being trapped outside of the lobby and not being able to get in.

"We just gave her a sedative," said one of the doctors to Josh.

"Okay I'll stay right here though," he said firmly. With that I went into a drug induced sleep. When I peeled open my eyes there was Josh. He was collapsed in a chair next to my bed. One of the nurses came in and I put my finger to my lips to tell her to be quiet. She nodded and refilled my blood bag. As she walked out of the room I untangled my hand from Josh's and attempted to leave the room without waking him. I got about halfway to the door before I heard, "Aslynn?"

"I'm right here Josh," I called back to him, heading back into my bed.

"You should be resting," he said.

"You should be in a coma," I countered. We both just laughed at our near death experiences.

"I want to go back to my room," I told him.

"I'll go see if you can if you lay back down and act like a good patient," he said half jokingly. So I plopped back into my bed and waited his return. When he came back he unplugged my IV and helped me stand up.

"Um just one thing," Josh said rather bashfully, "they never cleaned up my room so for now we're roomies." I just rolled my eyes at the news as he escorted me back to my... our room.