

Monster

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Kira is a young vampire who can see the absolute future and into the past and past lives. She has very little memory of the past few years.

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1 - NIGHTMARES

The stunningly beautiful woman in the radiant pink dress tenderly licked the red liquid off of her fingers. She smiled as a rust-colored tear fell from her eye. Her long eyelashes were wet with salt water. Her strangely cut black hair stuck to the sweat on the back of her neck. A dusty wind blew the long strands of her hair out of her face.

“Such sad fools,” she spoke with a raspy voice, eyeing the freshly deceased bodies lying in front of her.

The woman in the emerald green dress tried desperately to lift her limp body from the ground, but the fight with the woman in the pink left her weak and useless. Her wounds would never be healed in time and time was the only thing that constantly abandoned her side. She looked over at the rock the woman in the pink was sitting on and tiredly blinked her eyes. She put her hand on the bottom of the other woman’s dress, squeezed, and noiselessly closed her eyes forever.

The woman in the pink simply stared and chuckled at the other woman’s feeble attempt to get up. For the woman in the pink was stronger and more knowledgeable. She was one of the deadliest things around. A terrible beast in human form, with her eyes glazed over in a blood-colored luster, seeking more sweet, red nourishment. There was only one word for this malevolent woman.

Monster.

2 - Awakening

"NEVER!" Kira screamed, jolting her slender body upright. Beads of hot sweat were running down her cheeks and her comforter was in a heap next to her. Kira looked down at her hands and began to shake violently.

"The same dream...on a different day. I can't believe this," she whispered, a light tear coming from her eye.

Kira began to stare at her hands, and the image of them covered in blood refused to leave her mind. Forever they would haunt her deepest thoughts, leaving Kira speechless at the disturbing images she would remember in the morning.

Kira looked over at her clock in mounted frustration. It read two forty-five in the morning. She knew it couldn't have been the late night eating that was making her wake up at ridiculous times in the morning. Kira groaned and laid down, more than ready to go back to sleep. A moment passed before Kira slowly but surely lifted herself back up.

"How did I end up on the floor?" Kira asked, making sure nothing else in her room was out of place. "I couldn't have fallen." Kira looked at the bed that was located across the room.

She ran over to the brown box with the black leather handle that was in the corner of her room. She grabbed the key that she kept concealed underneath the box and stuck it into the black lock. The lock was heavy and beautifully crafted with delicate roses engraved into it. Kira gave the key a quick turn to the left, and heard a small click as the lock fell to the floor. Kira picked up the lock and admired it for a moment. It used to go on a gate that used to go in front of her porch steps, but she quickly took it down after the accident.

Kira opened her special box and saw that everything was just as she had left it

the last time she had opened the box.

The earrings her mother used to wear were still hanging from the inside of the box, shiny and untouched in their flawless glory. The letters her father had written her from his business trip in Germany were still held together by a single golden rubber band, which remained unbroken.

A small black cube occupied the corner of the box, accompanied by a small layer of dust. It was away from the various letters, trinkets, and ticket stubs that Kira had put in the box. Kira opened the cube and saw that her two rings were still sitting in it peacefully. The rings were welded together, one with her brother's name on it and the other with her sister's name. Kira blinked away the tears that had threatened to leave her eyes. She prayed deeply that somewhere, Dmitri and Nataly were still alive.

She put her hand on the other two rings that hung from a sterling silver chain from her neck. They were her parent's wedding bands, their names, Lillith and Nikolai, somehow engraved in the silver diamond they were made from. Kira clutched the rings hanging from her neck and let out a loud sigh as tears began to slide down her cheeks. It had been ten years since the accident, yet the loneliness still shattered Kira's heart into small intricate pieces that could never easily be put back together.

Kira's cries came to a slow halt after she heard a soft growl. A white ball of soft fur nuzzled against her leg, quickly falling back into a deep sleep.

"Hey Grigori. I didn't mean to wake you," Kira cooed. She gently lifted her Albino German Shepherd puppy from the ground and put him in his dog bed that lay next to Kira's bed. She covered him with a small blanket, because she knew he would be cold without it.

Kira suddenly felt thirsty, so she crept down the stairs. She knew this was unnecessary, for Kira lived alone. She lived in her parent's house; it was once filled with five happy people. Kira was the only one who survived the accident with minor injuries. Her brother and sister had remained at the hospital for

some time, then one day they disappeared after the hospital was planted with a bomb. They were the only two patients that were unaccounted for.

Kira tiptoed to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. She almost screamed when she saw it was full of packets of blood. Kira smiled to herself, for she knew how the blood ended up in her fridge. She took a look at the counter and the answer was clear.

There was a small brown package on the counter and underneath it was a letter. Kira picked up the package and opened it carefully, untying the red ribbon and lifting the tape that left the package closed. Inside in the package was a sharp red cell phone with a small pink bow sticking to the front of it. Kira grinned and picked up the piece of paper that lay under her gift.

Kira read it three times:

Kira,

A gift so we can keep in touch. My number is the first and only number in the contacts. Feel free to add as many as you like, so long as you promise never to change my name.

Yours,

Chi

Kira smiled to herself again. Chi was a mysterious male benefactor who had been watching over Kira for as long as she could remember. Unfortunately, Kira didn't know he had been around her whole life. She couldn't remember much after the accident, and only the time before the accident and the past year stayed clear to her.

After Kira's last phone was attacked by Grigori, she could only contact Chi through written letters because she didn't own a computer. She had talked to him on the phone once, but it was in the weeks after the accident so she couldn't remember how his voice sounded. Kira was grateful to have someone who was the same type of monster she was: a pureblood vampire. Not a drop of human blood touched her family's lineage, and the same went for Chi. Even

though Kira had never seen Chi, she knew he could be trusted.

Kira checked to see if the phone had a camera and was overjoyed when she realized it did. She took a picture of herself smiling and sent it to Chi in a message. She was in high spirits to be able to communicate with him at any time she wanted. Kira waited a moment before she felt her phone vibrate.

Kira headed upstairs without her drink, giggling like an elementary school girl. The message Chi sent her back left her sleeping with a smile on her face:

Beautiful, as always. Your hair has grown very long. It's beautiful, blacker than night. Now get some sleep! You know you have school later :]

After sleeping two more hours, Kira woke serenely at five-thirty. She smiled to herself and walked to the bathroom. She looked as the whites of her eyes changed back from black to white. Whenever it was dark outside, the whites of Kira's eyes would change from white to black. She always wondered if she was the only vampire this happened to. Her nearly white-blue eyes were always the first thing to be noticed with first looking upon Kira. She was a beautiful girl who favored both the looks of her mother and her father. Kira closed her eyes and fired up the shower.

After a long, refreshing shower, Kira walked over to her closet and came to a dead halt. Her eyes grew wide with the things she was seeing:

A blissful couple danced playfully in the brisk snow of the harsh winter.

"Aren't you thrilled for the party??" asked the female, a woman with an unseeable face.

"Truly, my dear," said the boy, grabbing a hold of the woman's hand. "I must go now, my love."

The two shared a passionate kiss under the moonlight before reluctantly

parting ways.

The woman who had been watching frowned bitterly. She wanted them both dead.

Kira's mind was thrown back into her own time with a sudden jerk. Within the time she had seen the past, Kira had gotten dressed in a high waist black skirt and a white long sleeved shirt. She had just begun taking care of her jet-black knee length hair. She dropped her hair straightener on the floor after feeling the heat burn her skin. She looked at the bright red, puffy flesh and cursed. She gently put her left hand over the burn on her right and sighed. She concentrated on the burn.

"Ten," she said sternly, as the burn on her hand retrogressed to before the burn was inflicted. Kira was getting better and better at aging things everyday, but seeing the future and the past always seemed to baffle her. She never knew who the people in her visions of the past were. And worst yet, Kira was not able to see into her own future.

Kira headed downstairs and pulled something large from the refrigerator. She dropped the bloody, uncooked steak into Grigori's food bowl.

"Grigori! H???? ???(come eat)! Shokumotsu(food)!" Kira yelled, letting Grigori know that food was in his bowl. Once Kira heard Grigori scampering down the stairs, she walked over to the door, picked up her black bag, and headed out. She laughed as she heard Grigori devouring his steak. After all, it was his favorite food.

Kira locked the door. She was in deep thought as she slowly walked to school.

"Who could these people be? They're so cheerful yet I sense such an immense...grief. It's almost like despair. This is way too much for a sixteen year old to handle," she said, running her hands through her long hair. "What

connection could they possibly have with me?"

Kira looked deep into her mind and saw the couple once more. Kira was looking for any type of clue as to who they were. She looked closely at the deep blue, almost black, diamond that hung from the woman's neck. There was a letter carved into the diamond-an A?

Kira opened her eyes and she was already too late. She had already collided with someone.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I wasn't watching where I was going."

"It's okay, you spazz," said the person. As soon as this was said, Kira didn't feel sorry anymore.

Vincent Sterling tussled Kira's hair and laughed his deep laugh.

"Vincent! I spend a lot of time on my hair this morning," Kira complained.

"Yeah, I though you looked different today. Why are you dressed up so nice?"

Kira could feel her face turning red. "I just had a good morning and uh, I just felt like it okay?" Kira blurted.

"Dude, calm down. You look cute," Vincent said, messing up Kira's hair once more.

Vincent was in the eleventh grade. He was seventeen, one year older than Kira. He had long black hair to his shoulder blades, with long strands of messy bangs hanging in the front. He kept his hair in a low ponytail. He had profound red eyes that held such a strange sadness, but glowed with high spirits whenever he looked at Kira. Kira though Vincent was extremely handsome, but she was too shy to say so. She never felt like Vincent was interested in her.

"Hey Vincent, can I have your cell phone number?" Kira asked shyly.

"Yeah, sure. I though Grigori, uh, you know, dismembered your phone two months ago," Vincent said, pulling his sleek black phone out of his pocket.

"He did. I got a new one this morning," Kira said confidently.

"Oh, so you ordered one?"

"No, Chi dropped it off this morning."

"Aw jeez, here we go. Why don't you just ask that guy out already? Here, put your number in," said Vincent, handing Kira his phone.

"Our relationship isn't like that in the least bit. Chi is like a brother to me. He's family," said Kira, handing Vincent her phone.

"Ha, ha, sure he is, Kira. Did you put your number in?"

Kira looked at Vincent in shock. She couldn't believe how rudely he was speaking of Chi. Quickly Kira saved her number into Vincent's sleek black phone. It looked nearly the same brand as Kira's. She flipped it closed and gripped it tightly in her hand. Kira thought about giving Vincent his phone back, but a better thought crossed her mind.

Kira stuck Vincent's cell phone into her mouth.

"What are you doing?!" Vincent yelled as Kira ran in the direction of the school.

Kira ran as fast as she possibly could, trying to ignore the pulsing burn in her chest.

Vincent didn't like to be made a fool of. Especially not by Kira. He ran after her, his black ponytail trailing not far behind him.

Vincent caught up to Kira in a millisecond. He could have beaten her easily, even with her ridiculous head start. But Vincent wouldn't let Kira know that. He stopped her with a tap on the shoulder.

"My phone, please," he said.

"I think I'll keep it," Kira mused.

"Then I'll keep yours, little girl," Vincent said, walking past Kira and walking toward the front doors of the school.

"Wait!" Kira exclaimed, pulling Vincent's shoulder. "That's my only connection to Chi. I'm not about to go home and write him a letter about how you took my phone and have him receive said letter four days later. Here's your phone."

"Thanks for the ticket ma'am, now you may perform your favors on my body," said Vincent, attempting to change his previously deep voice to an even deeper one. He handed Kira her phone.

Kira and Vincent both burst into an uproarious laughter.

"Vincent, you are such an idiot," Kira giggled.

"It's what I do best," said Vincent matter-of-factly, pretending to tighten the fake bowtie that was on the front of his black shirt. Vincent and Kira shared another hearty laugh.

"Hey, Kira," said another deep voice that Kira recognized.

Vladimir Sterling, Vincent's younger brother, walked up wearing a fake grin on his pale face. Of the two, Vladimir was definitely the less handsome one, but he wasn't unattractive. Vladimir had short black hair with muddled bangs. His dull brown eyes constantly told people he was either thinking nothing or he wasn't paying attention. Though they were usually mistaken for twins, Vincent and Vladimir were a year apart and held an intense, profound hatred for each

other. Not even Kira knew why. Every other minute they would have a disagreement.

"Oh well, party's over. Road kill has arrived," said Vincent, rolling his eyes up at the sky.

Vladimir winced. "Shut up, Vincent. Don't be jealous because Kira likes me way better than you," he sneered, sticking his tongue out at Vincent.

"Say that again and I'll beat the stupid out of you," Vincent yelled.

"Yeah, I'll bet that Kira will slap the taste out of your mouth before that happens."

"You freaking-"

"THAT'S ENOUGH! I swear, when you two get even ten feet from each other, the fur starts flying. And it always happens when I'm in the middle of it!" Kira scolded.

"What does that tell you, Kira?" Vlad asked smoothly, reaching for Kira's hand. Kira pulled her hand away before Vladimir had the chance to touch it. "Jeez Vlad, grow up. Both of you need to settle this once and for all, and save me from a morning that's ruined!" Kira yelled, pushing past the brothers and into the school.

Vincent and Vladimir stared after her for a moment.

"Oh yeah Vladimir, she definitely likes you better," Vincent sneered sarcastically.

"Shut up, stupid."

Kira was peacefully putting her things into her locker when she quietly sighed. Why was it so impossible for Vlad and Vincent to get along, she wanted to ask but she dared not.

She hardly ever got along with her sister.

Kira closed her glasslike eyes and bowed her head in sorrow.

"Hi, Kira!" exclaimed a singy, loud voice.

Kira placed her hand over her heart and tried to ignore how fast it was beating. "Hi, Eddie."

Eddie was a tall, think girl with honey colored hair and eyes to match. She was the tallest and nicest girl in the whole school. She was also the best friend Kira could ever ask for. Kira was thankful to have someone to share her deepest, darkest, bloodiest secrets with.

Eddie's real name wasn't Eddie, but she would never let anyone else but Kira know. The only reason that Eddie went by Eddie was because she absolutely despised her true name. She was supposed to be a boy, but the doctor made a mistake. Eddie's parents still wanted to give their little girl the name they had picked out for their son. Warren Edward Hayes was Kira's best friend.

"I called you like six times this morning," Eddie exclaimed.

"How did you even know I got a new phone?" Kira asked, confused. She pulled out her bright red phone, and sure enough, there were six missed calls from Eddie.

"Come on, Kira. Did you forget again?" Eddie asked, pointing to her head.

"Oh right. That."

Even though she was human, Eddie possessed an amazing ability. She could

know the thoughts of any person at any given moment. The only times Eddie couldn't read a person's mind was when they were dreaming. The times that she couldn't read Kira's mind was when she was seeing the past or future, or dreaming.

Kira saw the strangest things in her sleep.

"So...did you hear about Vlad?" Eddie asked excitedly.

Kira slowly turned her head and gave Eddie a deadly stare. "What about him?"

Eddie almost burst with anticipation. "He's going to ask you out on a date on Friday!" Eddie squealed in one breath.

"Friday?! That's two days!" Kira whined.

"What are you whining about? Any girl would die to go anywhere with Vladimir Sterling!"

"I'm not just any girl, I'm a Monster! And I'd rather anyone than old Vladimir. I mean if-" Kira quickly shut her mouth and blocked her thoughts.

"Oh, come one Kira, that's SO not fair," Eddie said. She pushed her mind into Kira's thoughts and was quickly thrown out with the same amount of power, by Kira.

"How can you kindly turn down someone you don't like in the least bit?" Kira wondered aloud.

"Okay Kira, I have a proposition for you: how about you go on a date with Vladimir-"

"Eddie!"

"Just as friends, just as friends! Then when you come to school on Monday,

you TELL ME EVERYTHING!" Eddie yelled diabolically.

"It's days like these that I truly question your sanity, Eddie," Kira said honestly.

"How could you question this innocent face?" Eddie asked cutely, putting her mouth into a perfect pout.

Kira started to crush Eddie in a hug. "You're so funny, Eddie."

"Okay, okay! Life insurance doesn't cover bear hugs!"

Kira laughed and let Eddie go so she could breathe. Eddie smiled and messed up Kira's hair, much like Vincent did.

"Eddie! That's twice in one day!" Kira giggled. "And I'll help you with your evil plan about learning about Vladimir."

"Kyaa! Thank you, thank you, thank you, Kira!" Eddie squealed, giving Kira a hug. "Well I have to go to English. Later!"

Kira watched Eddie walk gracefully down the hallway. Eddie was the only person who made Kira feel human.

Kira grabbed her phone and sent a quick text message to Chi before heading off to Pre-Calculus:

Chi,
Today is already a good day. Thanks a million for the phone. It's great to talk to you again. Vladimir is going to ask me out on a date :/ You remember who that is, right? Eddie and Vincent both messed up my hair! Peace for now. :D
-Monster K

Kira had always hated math, yet she could never understand why she was put in an advanced math class every year. She understood math and all, but she always got the worst teachers. This year Kira got Mr. Verner, the most idiotic

teacher in the entire school. Even the other teachers called him "Mr. Stupid McClueless" right in front of him. He was too dumb to even comprehend who the other teachers were talking about.

He would laugh at jokes he clearly didn't understand and walk to his class the long way, because he didn't know any shortcuts. He was always late to his own class.

"Hello students! Please get your homework out and switch with a partner," said Mr. Verner, arriving ten minutes after the bell had rang.

Kira grabbed her homework out of the bag that sat happily on her lap. She had done all of her homework through the quarter so she would have time to ponder about her strange visions of the past. She was thinking heavily until a paper with nearly perfect handwriting was placed gently on her desk.

"Give me your paper," Vincent asked, extending his hand.

"Oh sorry. I spaced out," said Kira, quickly handing her paper to Vincent.

"Heh, yeah, you do that a lot," said Vincent. Kira had half a mind to hit him, but her phone buzzed and her rage promptly turned to happiness when she felt her pocket buzz.

Kira quickly signed her name on Vincent's paper and checked every problem. He missed three and Kira handed him back his paper. Her grading was always finished before everyone else's because time was never on her side. She needed things to go swift when they were sluggish. When Kira needed to take things leisurely, time flew by.

Kira looked at the clock. She'd always hated calculus because Mr. Verner taught as if all of the students were idiots. He was the only one who didn't remember that this was an honors class.

Kira glared at the clock, hoping that her fall out of bed that morning had

equipped her with some sort of venom that triggered awesome powers when she was really angry and heat rays would come out of her eyes and she would be HellKira and help rent-a-cops out at the mall where the flasher stood scaring innocent little bratty girls who have just discovered nail polish and the internet.

No heat rays. Kira silently hissed a word you couldn't say on TV.

Kira sat bored in calculus while Mr. Verner re-taught a lesson they had done last week. As class dragged on, Kira got lost in her thoughts. She wasn't paying attention, and she felt that she didn't need to. She pulled out her phone and smiled at the message she had received.

Kira,

Wow. Your friends really care about you. And yes, I do remember the Vladimir guy. I say you should go on that date with him. You work too hard and you definitely deserve a break from all this madness. I'm glad you're having a good day.

-Chi

The bell rang stridently and Kira ran out of the classroom like a bat out of hell. Kira's second period was student aid, a class she truly didn't mind. She would have to call kids to the office or give teachers notice that kids would be removed from their classes. She got to walk around the school with no pass and no penalty, and Miss Pout never had anything big for Kira to do.

Kira made it into the office a few minutes before the bell rang. Kira looked into her bag for her student aid pass. Miss Pout was filing and she saw Kira standing there, waiting for her task.

"Oh, good morning Kira. There isn't much today. These students' parents are here to pick them up," said Miss Pout, handing Kira four slips of paper. "After you do that, you can go listen to the band practice or walk around. Just don't get caught," she smiled.

Kira walked upstairs in Valentin High and went to Mrs. Mari's room. Mrs. Mari was Kira's English teacher and it made Mrs. Mari very happy whenever Kira graced her one class of freshman with her presence. It made all the boys in the class be quiet for once.

"Hello Mrs. Mari. I need Chace to come to the office. He's leaving," Kira said, resisting the laughter bubbling up in her chest.

"Thank you God!" Chace yelled, quickly packing up his things and running over to Kira. He winked at his best friend Bruce and Bruce flashed him a quick thumbs up.

Kira and Chace walked out of the classroom and started toward the office. Kira thought Chace was the most adorable boy she'd ever seen. He had big, blue sparkling eyes and soft features. His soft blond hair never fully cooperated for his liking. He was also teased a lot because he was so small.

Chace gently tapped Kira on the shoulder and Kira turned to him almost instantly. His face was washed with a light pink blush painting his cheeks. He handed Kira a beautifully folded note and averted his eyes to the floor.

"Don't read it until I leave, please," Chace asked calmly, refusing to look into Kira's eyes.

"Okay, I won't," said Kira, giving Chace an unexpected side hug. Chace smiled an award-winning smile and ran over to his parents. Kira went straight down the stairs and over to the Performing Arts Hall. Kira sat down next to the third practice room and pulled out the note. The same talented cello player always occupied the third room, but Kira could never stay long enough to find out who it was.

Kira opened the note. Chace's handwriting was god-awful. But what he had written made Kira smile:

Dear Kira,

The minute I saw you I knew you were the one I liked. You're so funny and nice and you're really pretty. I know you'll probably never go out with me, but I just wanted to let you know.

Love,
Chace

Kira smiled and held the note to her chest. She was going to put it in her special box when she got home. Now the only thing Kira had to do was think of a good way to respond. She thought about giving Chace her cell phone number, but she believed that would be a bit on the creepy side.

Chi,
I just got the nicest letter I've ever read. It was so touching, I don't even know what to say or how to respond. Absolutely nothing could ruin this day.
Absolutely nothing...
-Monster Kira

As Kira sent her message, Kira heard the cello player playing a song she was sure she'd never heard before. Yet, the song sounded familiar and made her a bit tired. She swore she'd heard it, but couldn't remember anything beyond the past year except for the accident.

The cello started out very slow and bass-y and Kira slowly closed her glassy grey eyes.

"Please," she said. "Try to remember."

Kira was running down an old hallway, carpeted in yellow and white roses and carnations. Her dark blue shoes clicked happily on the stone floor and she held the bottom of her dress as she ran. The long sleeves on her light periwinkle dress fluttered as she ran.

"Alexei!" a woman yelled, but his only made Kira run faster as she began to

giggle.

Kira quickly turned to the right and saw a huge iron door at the end of a long hallway.

Kira ran to the door and opened it carefully. She gave the heavy door a light push and it opened with a strange east. When Kira opened toe door, she saw a woman sitting there with very long black hair. Vincent Sterling, or at least a man who looked like him, was laying on the woman's lap. He was wearing clothes from the renaissance era, as was the woman. Vincent was sleeping peacefully on the woman's lap and dark rep blood started gushing from the deep wound on his neck. He didn't cry out. Like a fool, Kira opened the door all the way and stepped forward. It was Kira, the woman, and the man all in the room together. The woman turned around and looked at Kira with a drowsy smile and blood dripping down from her mouth.

The woman and Kira shared the same face.

Kira's eyes jerked open as hot tears sprang from them. "NO!" she screeched, using all of her energy on that one word. The door to the practice room flung open, but Kira had already fainted in the hallway before she could see who it was.

Kira awoke some time later in the infirmary. Vincent was sitting in a chair at the end of her bed, smoking. His eyes lit up once he saw Kira was awake.

"That's a terrible thing to do to yourself, Vincent," Kira said, wiping the cold sweat off of her forehead. She flicked tears from her eyes and hugged her knees to her chest.

"So what. It's not gonna kill me. And that Chi guy was here earlier."

"Really?! What did he say? How old is he? What does he look like?" Kira

asked frantically, holding her throbbing head.

"Chill. He told me to make sure you were alright. And"-Vincent held up a twenty dollar bill-"He told me to keep quiet."

Kira frowned. "Please?"

Vincent flicked the nearly dead cigarette into the garbage can. He pulled out a lighter and a fresh cigarette and lit it, ignoring the smoke alarm in the nurse's office. Kira could tell he was angry about something. Vincent had an intense hate burning in his eyes and was fidgety.

"Yeah well, I can't. Have fun on Friday," Vincent said after ruining Kira's hair.

Kira fixed her hair as best she could and looked at the door that Vincent had just walked through. She twirled a piece of her knee length black hair and held on to her necklace.

"What's happening on Friday?" Kira asked, though she could easily find the answer. Yet, she chose to let things fall into place.

Vladimir walked over to the infirmary and stopped as he bumped heads with Kira.

"Ow," she said, rubbing her now red forehead.

"Uh, sorry. Can I talk to you for a minute?" asked Vladimir.

Kira's chest locked up and her eyes widened. "Sure," she choked.

Vladimir pulled Kira in front of the teacher's lounge and took a deep breath. He looked down at his feet before looking up at Kira.

"Will you go to the movies with me on Saturday?" he asked bluntly, refusing to

look into Kira's eyes.

"Sure," Kira said, briefly remembering Eddie's plan.

Vladimir stared into Kira's eyes with a blush on his cheeks.

"Okay, cool. I uh, already told my parents and stuff and they like...want to meet you so uh, can you come over for dinner on Friday for that?"

Kira looked at Vladimir in awe, amazed at how brave he'd suddenly become.

For a moment Kira couldn't find her voice. It felt as if her voice had lodged itself between her ribcage where it knew Kira couldn't reach it.

"I-I mean if you don't want to that's cool and all-

"No I'd love to, sounds like fun," Kira said robotically.

"Cool. Uh, six, okay? Later," said Vincent, walking out the school doors.

Kira quickly took out her cell phone and checked the time. It was one thirty-six. No wonder Vlad left. School had ended half an hour ago. He must have been waiting for Kira to wake up. Kira sighed loudly and walked outside.

"So this is what Vincent meant by Friday. This must've been what he was so mad about," Kira realized, hugging herself. It was cold outside and Kira wasn't in the mood to walk home. Kira sat down on the front steps of the school and buried her head in her knees. "I hate this place."

"You need a ride, angry?" asked Vincent, forcing Kira to look up at him. "Dude, you look like you saw Grigori died or something. You alright?"

"I just didn't have a very good day today. And I thought you walked to school today," Kira said, confused.

"I did. Tank Bishop is giving me a ride home."

Kira's eyes widened in terror. "T-T-T-Tank B-B-B-Bishop?" she stuttered.

Tank Bishop was the biggest, buffest guy in the entire school. Though his real name was Timothy, he stood by the name Tank. He would walk around the halls with a scowl on his face and most students had never heard him speak before. He liked a very tiny girl named Alyssa, and she would always laugh when she was with him. She was probably the only person capable of making him smiling.

Kira was afraid of him, as most people were. She was afraid he would snap one day and she would be his first victim.

"Come on, Tank's waiting," said Vincent, grabbing Kira's hand and pulling her toward the big red pickup truck waiting a few feet in front of them.

Kira reluctantly dragged her feet across the black pavement over to Tank's car. Vincent went straight to the window and took Kira with him.

"Hey Tank, can you give Kira a ride home? She doesn't feel well," asked Vincent.

Tank looked at Kira as if she were something inside out. He grunted, and Kira jumped at the low rumbling noise he made.

"Alright, get in," said Vincent, opening the door.

"What?" asked Kira, shaking.

"You heard him, didn't you?" he said 'no problem'," said Vincent.

Kira was dumbfounded. If tank had really said something, Kira was the stupid one and she didn't hear it.

Kira slid into the back seat, her black bag resting peacefully on her lap. Sleep threatened to overtake her but she refused to give way to her eyes. She kept dosing off and catching herself before she could lean over onto the empty seat next to her.

Tank pulled up to Kira's beautiful house and unlocked the car door.

"Make sure she gets in, Tank," said Vincent, leaning his seat all the way back. He grabbed a cigarette out of his pocket and put it on his lips.

Tank got out of the car along with Kira.

This is it, thought Kira. I'm going to die.

The two quietly walked up the front steps to Kira's porch. Kira stopped to unlock her door. As soon as the lock clicked and the door was open, a little white ball of fur was at the door panting.

"Hey Grigori!" Kira exclaimed, picking up her little puppy.

Kira turned to thank Tank for driving her home. The look on his face had changed. Instead of his normal monstrous scowl he was used to wearing, he looked content and gentle. Kira looked at the ever excited Grigori, wagging his long and curled tail.

"Do you want to pet him?" asked Kira, holding Grigori out to Tank's large hand.

Tank gently pet Grigori, tussling his clean white fur. Tank adjusted the beanie he always wore before reaching for Kira. Kira ignored the urge to duck and run. Tank simply put his hand on top of Kira's head and gave it a light pat.

"You're alright," he said, his voice much higher than Kira had expected. It was a manly voice, yet it was higher than Vincent's deep, husky voice.

Tank walked over to the driver's seat of his car and loudly slammed the door once he was inside. He slowly drove away as Vincent laughed at something Tank had said.

Kira looked off in the direction the two boys had driven in. She smiled and walked through her front door.

Kira sped to her bathroom and turned the bathroom water on as hot as it could go. When the tub overflowed, there was a clever little drain in the bathroom floor that kept the bathroom from getting slippery.

As the bathwater was running, Kira went up to the showerhead of the wall and turned it on. The water was cold at first and Kira shivered when it touched her skin. She peeled off her now wet clothes and threw them down the laundry chute.

The warm water ran through Kira's shiny, long, midnight colored hair. After washing herself in the shower room, Kira walked over to the bathtub and got right in. The searing hot water soothed Kira's nearly freezing skin and Kira dipped her head underneath the water and looked up at the hazy ceiling. She didn't have to breathe, so she stayed under the water for a good ten minutes.

Thoughts of her late mother and father were running over in her mind. She remembered running around in the backyard with Grigori when she was very small. Her Brother Dmitri's warm touch on her shoulder could never be forgotten. It was Kira's third birthday, exactly two years before the accident. Kira lifted her head out of the water and embraced her knees. She put her head down and looked at her feet.

For once, Kira didn't care what time it was.

She would stay in the bathtub as long as she wanted.

Kira slowly sauntered over to her dresser and put on some underwear and

comfortable pajamas. She almost flew into her bed, her freshly washed hair sinking into the pillow. Sleep was ready to take over Kira, and Kira was ready to oblige.

"Goodnight, Grigori," Kira managed to say before letting sleep consume her being.

Kira awoke and she was in a white dress. A deep black darkness surrounded her.

"Hello?" she called, wondering why she was all by herself in this profound darkness. She felt so lonely.

Suddenly, Eddie appeared in front of her, a longing look swimming in her eyes.

"Eddie! What are we doing here?"

Eddie was silent and she turned away from Kira and began to walk away.

"Eddie! Where are you going?" Kira asked, running after Eddie. Kira pushed hard against the ground with her legs but she was unable to catch up to Eddie.

"I have to go now, Kira. Be safe," Eddie said meekly, as a dark red stain began to appear on her back through her favorite yellow dress. She turned and smiled at Kira with sleepy eyes, as blood started pooling underneath her feet.

"Be safe Kira," Eddie said, the crimson liquid gushing from her mouth. "Or you'll end up just like me."

Eddie turned and walked away from Kira, and she collapsed onto the ground.

"EDDIE!" Kira yelled, sending the sleeping dog on her belly rolling to the foot of her bed. He growled softly and went back to sleep.

Kira took a minute to regain herself and she lied her head back on her pillow.

"Just a bad dream," she said as a tear fell from her eye. "Just a bad dream."

3 - Infection

A shiver slithered its way up Kira's spine. This was her only sign that some life was left in her. Kira looked up at the black sky and the eerie gray clouds blocking her view of the million stars. Staring at the clouds always caused her mind to wander, but the line between dream and reality was slowly beginning to fade. Kira pinched her leg gently to make sure she wasn't dreaming. After feeling a twinge of pain fly up her leg and to her fingers, she was satisfied. Kira's lovely satisfaction quickly turned to embarrassment, then anger, as she remembered where she had woken up just minutes before. This had been the third time this week that Kira woke up next to a trashcan.

The first time, she had simply fallen out of her bed. She was having a rather gruesome dream about having to abandon an airplane because there was a murderer on board. She awoke with a loud groan, and walked over to the bathroom to splash some cool water on her face.

The second time, Kira had gotten a further distance. That night, she was dreaming about a mass murderer being in her room, and she had to up to the attic, which was the only place he couldn't go because he didn't have the key. Kira woke up with her head leaning against the island counter in the kitchen. She held a notebook in her right hand and a thin black fountain pen in her left. She cursed herself for using the ink she used for her art to write in large letters, "6780 Arseny Lane". She blinked hard and shoved the paper into her empty burgundy art bag. Kira threw the bag on the stairs before returning upstairs to get some sleep before school.

But this time was the worst. Kira woke up next to a large dumpster, nearly three miles from her house. Kira cursed out loud and punched a dent in the side of the can. She examined herself, to make sure she left the house in clothes, and a wave of relief washed over her. Not only was she wearing a black shirt with a cape and a skirt, she was also wearing some striped socks and sharp black boots. Kira got up and dusted herself off before heading off to

the address scribbled in her notebook.

On the street of Arseny Lane, there were a number of unusual stores—acupuncture, psychics, scary clothing stores—not to mention Valentin Tower. The tower was over two hundred stories high, and hadn't been entered by anyone other than Kira in over twenty years. Kira was always in the Arseny Tower library. It was the only place she could escape from the idiots at her school.

Everybody stayed away from Valentin Tower because it had a thirteenth floor. Kira simply ignored the foolish superstitions and climbed the creaky stairs to the library, which was located on the thirteenth floor. She would stay at the library for hours on end and be engulfed in her studies of the many things she didn't know about the history of the small town of Valentin (Vahl-ehn-teen).

But today the thing that brought Kira away from her home wasn't Valentin Tower. It was the building diagonal from it. Kira sighed and put her right hand over her heart. Tears threatened to fall, but Kira refused to let them pass. She stood there in remorse for a moment before lowering her right hand. She raised her left hand into the air.

“One hundred,” she whispered before waving her left hand down to her side.

The building's foundation began to rot slowly, causing the building to come crashing down. The foundation was nothing now but fine dust and debris.

Kira stepped back carefully, letting the blood pour onto the street. It teased touching her boots, but it shrank away. The blood began to boil, and the street under it dissolved. Kira looked down in disbelief.

“An infection?” she asked herself. A cold, dead body fell to the ground right on front of Kira. Her eyes widened in horror and her hand flew to her neck. The corpse's eyes were bright yellow and its mouth was wide open. As the lip curled back, it revealed the teeth Kira wished she had not seen. Fangs. “A half-breed...infection?” Kira gasped.

A loud siren wailed and Kira ran away hastily, leaving bloody footprints. But it didn't matter what she had left behind. The shape of the bloody prints and the DNA on the hair had already changed before Kira was gone.

4 - Transformation

Kira awoke Thursday morning with a whack to her face. She grimaced and saw her little puppy smiling happily.

“Get off, Grigori. I’ve got a lot of things to do today, some of them I’m going to forget. But I don’t want to get started right away, ” Kira whined, rolling over.

Kira forgot that weekend would be four days. She was happy that somewhere through her shenanigans last night, she remembered to turn off her stupid alarm clock. Grigori stared at Kira with a sad look on his face. Kira just looked away from him.

“Watch out, Grigori,” Kira said, getting up. “I already told you that I had a lot to do today.”

Grigori jumped up and rolled himself into a small white puffy ball. He flung toward Kira and hit her in the stomach. She flew back into her bed with a force like no other. Grigori growled and put his tiny paws on Kira’s flawless face. A glare sat on his adorable face.

“Right! I’m sorry I forgot Grigori. On your feet, please.”

Grigori got up on his hand legs and Kira held his little paws. Kira thought back into her past life, where the first knight in her large council was named Grigori. He love Kira like a sister and gave his life protecting her. He was chosen to be in her council because he had an extraordinary. He could turn into a Hound, a beastlike dog that would destroy anything in it’s path. He was turned into a small puppy when he was reborn so Kira could be protected by him always.

Kira remembered everything about the life that she and Grigori shared. He had brown hair, which turned white whenever he turned into a Hound. His light

greenish-blue eyes were incapable of telling lies. Though he was extremely brash, he always came through in the end. Unfortunately, coming through is what took his life from him.

Kira could feel Grigori's once small paws turning into strong hands, ready to fight for anything. He grew taller and taller, becoming less furry with every inch. His perky dog ears became small human ears, slightly hidden by his hair.

When Kira opened her eyes, Grigori was standing there, admiring his muscle-y body. Kira would need some blood later to return her strength. Kira quickly handed him a towel to wrap around himself. He showed off his sparkling grin and immediately started to panic.

"Kira...Kira, I can speak again! Where did all the fur go? My whiskers? My ears? WHERE IS MY TAIL?!" he yelled. Grigori opened the towel a bit and looked down. "THAT'S CLEARLY NOT IT!" he whined, going into the fetal position.

Kira began to giggle. Every time Grigori was turned into a human, he would always have the same reaction, even though he was originally a human. "Grigori, come on. Even in my past life you wouldn't freak out this much when you changed back into a dog. Now turning into a human is the thing that freaks you out?" Kira gave Grigori a fully look. "You know? You actually look twenty-three years old this time. We might have to buy you some new clothes. Last time you were only what, fifteen?"

"Yeah, but what will I leave the house in?" asked Grigori.

"We'll just put you in something that was too big for you last time," said Kira. "Now go to your room and find something suitable to wear. You do remember how to dress yourself, right?"

Grigori scoffed. "Of course I do, Kira. I was human before I knew I could turn into a Hound, you know," he sneered before walking across the hall to his room.

Kira glared at her door after Grigori left the room.

“Some things never change,” she said, walking over to her walk-in closet. She didn’t feel much like dressing up in something cute today. She pulled on her favorite pair of black jeans and a white shirt with a black “X” on the chest. It was her perfect weekend outfit. Kira found some lime green socks in her underwear drawer and slipped them on her feet. She tied her red converse shoes and got up off of the floor.

Kira also didn’t feel like doing her hair, so she let it swing happily down her back, brushing against her hips. She figured today would be a lazy day.

Kira walked down the stairs where her phone was sitting on the counter, charging. She went to the fridge and pulled out a blood packet. She tore through it with her pearly white fangs and was careful not to spill any of the sweet red liquid on the floor—or worse, herself.

Kira walked over to her phone and saw that she had three unread messages. They were all from the people she favored the most:

Kira,
Good morning. Tell me how Grigori’s transformation goes.
—Chi

Kira,
I SO cannot wait until Friday! Don’t forget out plan!
—Eddie

K-
Text me if you’re feeling better. Stay pretty :B

—Vincent

As Kira began to respond, she got another incoming text message from a number she had never seen before. It used her real name in it:

Alexei,

You're bank account has been replenished. Feel free to spend as you please.

Kira locked the message into her inbox and would definitely deal with later. It was put straight into the back of her mind along with other things she refused to think about.

She was hoping that knowing the message's sender wouldn't make her have another fainting episode. Kira shook her head and took another swig of her drink.

"Do I look okay?" asked Grigori, walking down the stairs. Kira turned around and beamed.

Grigori was wearing a white collard shirt with a sweater vest over it. Kira remembered getting him this shirt because he refused to wear t-shirts with vulgar sayings on them. He was wearing some black jeans with black converse that matched Kira's red ones.

"Aww, Grigori, you look so handsome!" Kira said, patting him on the head. Grigori flopped down onto the floor and grinned.

"Am I a good boy?"

Kira burst into laughter and had to hold her stomach. Short, rapid wisps of breath barely escaped her mouth.

Grigori blinked his gorgeous eyes. "I've been a dog for way too long."

"Ha, ha, come, let's go," Kira said, walking out the front door. She turned

around just as hastily as she had left and walked back in the door.

She waved her half-empty blood packet into Grigori's face. "You want this?"

Grigori sucked the packet dry before Kira could put it in his hand. "You animal."

Grigori licked his lips. "It's what I do best."

Kira and Grigori were laughing up a storm while walking to Valentin mall. Valentin was a small town that held only one thousand, nine hundred eighty-one people. Everybody knew who everybody was and where everybody lived.

Kira longed to leave this place Even though it was her birthplace and only home, Kira couldn't stand being in a place so...minute. She wanted adventure in the great wide somewhere. She wanted it more than she could possibly say.

Nobody really understood how Kira hated the ever small city of Valentin where everybody knew who everybody was.

"Hi, you guys!" Eddie sang, charmingly dancing up to Kira and Grigori. Her honey colored curls bounced bashfully against her slender shoulders. She wore yellow, her favorite color, every day. She wore a black mid-length black shirt and a yellow sundress over it.

"Hey, Eddie," said Grigori, his tone all of a sudden becoming gentle. He looked straight into her eyes and a small grin was on his face. "I missed you." Grigori opened his arms to Eddie and she gladly accepted his hug. She wrapped her arm under his and held him close to her. Eddie couldn't believe it had been an entire year since he'd last hugged the one girl he was in love with.

In Kira's past life, she had a friend named Viktor Edmund. Kira couldn't

believe how they had stayed connected through different lives all these eternities.

Viktor Edmund was a strongly confident woman who never housed any regrets. She never liked her first name, so she decided it would be better to go by Edmund. She was the one human who was honored in Kira's council and stayed strictly by her side. She died next to her lover, fighting something appalling that Kira longed to remember each day. No matter what she did, Kira couldn't remember what wiped out everyone she loved in her past life.

Grigori lifted Eddie's face so she couldn't refuse looking at him. He placed a gentle kiss on her lips. Kira couldn't help but smile. Eddie was one of the only people who knew that Grigori could transform into a Hound, besides Chi.

Kira looked at Eddie and Grigori and closed her eyes. She brought her face down to the ground. In a year, Eddie was going to graduate from high school and she would be going off to college. Kira promised herself that she would let Grigori be free to live a separate life from her, and she knew it would probably involve Eddie.

Kira couldn't possibly imagine life without her guardians from the past.

"Do you want to come with us to buy Grigori some new clothes?" Kira asked, trying to put on a bogus peaceful smile.

"I really wish I could...but I have something very important to do today...but I definitely will be free on Friday!" Eddie said, giving Kira a sly wink. Kira's face instantly turned red, for she had been thinking of what to wear to Vladimir's house tomorrow. She was all about first impressions and she didn't want to make a bad one. Eddie had read Kira's thoughts and she didn't even notice. Kira could usually sniff Eddie out when she was creeping around in her mind. She was so busy thinking about the past that she forgot to close off her deepest thoughts.

Her personal thoughts.

Her deadly, chilliest thoughts.

Kira shook her head and forced a grin onto her face. She didn't want a blatant repeat of yesterday.

"Well, I'll see you guys later. Bye Kira! Bye, Grigori," Eddie said, leisurely letting go of Grigori's hand.

"Ha, Eddie's always so busy. She probably keeps herself occupied so she won't get bored. We both know she is all about succeeding," Kira assumed, watching Eddie sashay across the side walk. Grigori remained silent, which gave Kira a cue to glance at him.

She could see the pale love pouring out of his eyes.

Gross, Kira thought. She giggled and latched onto Grigori's right arm as he continued to gaze.

"Come on lover boy, we have things to do."

As Eddie walked, she took short, frantic glances behind her to see if Kira and Grigori were still in sight. After a few moments, Kira and Grigori could no longer be seen.

"Alright, now to get to the bottom of this business," she said.

Eddie walked up to the steps and to the house with the maroon door and golden handle. She knocked on the door as hard as she could. A few instants passed and the door was opened little by little.

"Hello, Chi," Eddie said confidently.

“Eddie, come in,” he said, responding to a text message Kira had sent him.

Chi lead Eddie through his enormous house until they settled into the room he was only allowed in. He had to bring her through the garage and turn the handle next to the fire extinguisher. A huge compartment in the floor unlocked and Eddie followed Chi down the stairs. There was a long hallway that Eddie was used to going through, yet she could never remember exactly which turns to make. It was only Kira who had amazing memory.

Chi spoke some fast Russian and the door unbolted. There was a large computer and a single chair. Chi pulled another chair out of the closet and motioned for Eddie to sit. There were multiple monitors that showed where Kira had been and they were following her. Chi’s most important “job” was knowing exactly where Kira was at all times. Kira didn’t know that the software that was locked into her cell phone was specially designed by Chi. Kira was the only one that was kept in the dark about everything associated with Chi.

“Please, sit,” said Chi, taking a seat. Eddie confusedly looked around and gave Chi a funny look. A chair popped up from the floor and Eddie shook her head slowly as she sat down. She shouldn’t have been surprised.

Eddie was sitting confidently in her chair and gave Chi a deadly stare. She wasn’t about to let his mysterious ways get the better of her.

“What did you need to talk to me about?” Chi asked calmly, ready for the lecture he was sure Eddie was about to give. Eddie never came over unless she had something to chew him out about. There was always something he was doing wrong in her book.

“It’s high time you told Kira who you are, Vincent,” Eddie demanded. She looked at him.

Are you serious? Vincent’s face asked.

Oh yes I am. Eddie’s expression said.

“I could never, Eddie. It’s hard enough stopping Vladimir from telling her. I have to threaten him with epic violence everyday, just to keep Kira safe. And Chace is getting on my last nerve because I haven’t told him yet. And we both know that you’ve sworn not to tell her, Eddie,” said Vincent. He put away his “Chi” phone because Kira had told him goodbye. He pulled out his “Vincent” phone and checked to see if it had any messages. Kira had responded to him kindly and he responded in return. When his advisory session with Eddie was over, he would “happen to meet” Kira at the mall.

“No Vincent, you need to tell her that you are Chi. Something is about to happen, Vince. Something...nasty. I followed Kira last night, and she saw some pretty gory stuff. Someone is trying to infect the biggest buildings in Valentin with half-breed tainted food. I read some of the last thoughts of the people who had died. Most were their regrets or their whole lives flashing before their eyes, you know the usual stuff.

“There was one person who saw something useful; there was a woman with purple hair and eyes. She was attacking this person personally. The woman was Arseny Ward, Kira’s aunt. Kira never knew who she was. The purple haired lady was obviously a half-breed herself, but something isn’t adding up, Vince. She couldn’t have done all of that with just a sample of her blood. There has to be a whole army of them somewhere. There has to be someone else, closer to Kira, trying to bring her down,” Eddie explained.

“First of all, you and I both know I hate it when you call me Vince. That ends here. And secondly, what does that have to do with me telling Kira who I am? I don’t see any connection,” said Vincent.

“What I’m saying is, Kira’s going to have to fight and she’ll need your help.”

“She’ll have my help! Why do you think she’s invited over here for dinner? We’re gonna tell her about the situation,” Vincent panicked. Eddie locked Vincent in a cold gaze.

“Fine, Vince, Don’t tell her. When things get extremely ugly and she needs both you and Chi’s help, I hope you have fun explaining to her then,” Eddie said sternly. “I’ll let myself out.” Eddie almost got lost within the maze of hallways, but she slammed the door on the way out.

Vincent looked at the phones in his hands and cursed vociferously. He dropped them to the floor and punched a hole into his wall. He sat back down in his chair and slumped his head into his hands.

“It’s got to wait,” he said, shoving his phones into his pockets and walking out the door. He locked it behind him.