

I've seen better days

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Ever had a day where you die because of a book? Now you know what it's like huh?

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1 - Untitled

I've Seen Better Days

The day seemed long and boring. School was almost over, but it was as if the clock was ever so slowly making its way around the circular dish that was the clock. Marin the tall Gothic-like chick, wearing the unusual clothing sat in the very back. Her eyes wondered the room while her teacher ranted on about the major book report. She wasn't paying much attention. Actually she wasn't paying any attention. Marin's mind wandered off into its own little fantasy world. A form of heavy metal, and gothic music rang through her head. It was a sort of toxic, or black metal. Marin watched a blonde girl flip her hair at the jock beside her. She rolled her eyes in disgust at how low a girl such as her needed to get a guy.

"Marin Gates!"

"WHAT!?" the non-giddy teen asked, one eye half closed, and her face leaning against her hand.

"Repeat the assignment."

Just then bell rang and the teacher yelled at the students that book reports were due in a week. Marin was about ready to yell at the teacher for being so ignorant. Her eyes darted from the students to the lockers, and back again. She watched as the guys drooled all over the cheerleaders. It just plain disgusted her. She saw a few of the punk, and gothic guys giving her the eye, and she just politely smiled as she walked past them to the exit out of the school. School was finally over, well for now it was.

The tall, willowy teen began to weave her way about the streets, in search of a library. Her black hair swayed gently in the breeze. Her grey eyes darted from building to building. Marin's black tee-shirt read "Too bad I won't miss you". Her black jeans were tattered in numerous places, and her shoes would remind anyone of a mountain of melted snow, once beautiful at the peak of its coat, but now nothing short of ugly. A bright silver snake of chains clung to four belt loops, and her nails were black with miniature skulls painted on. Black make-up was printed on her face like a Halloween mask. Marin didn't care what people thought of her. In fact, she was proud to see what insults people could come up with. Poser, biter, vampire. Uncountable names.

Upon turning a corner she spotted a large oak framed library. Marin looked with her grey, black-lined eyes at the building, and then at her black watch. She had a "thing" for black, being a troubled teen, yeah, it kind of does that to you. Marin walked into the library, and as she did, a lone librarian sat in a brown leather chair in the center of the never ending wing of books.

Marin cupped her hands over her mouth and yelled, "HEY! OLD MAN! WHERE ARE THE CLASSICAL BOOKS?!"

An elderly man with white thinning hair sat, reading an old book. His brown suit made him look old, and his tie was a solid color which also made him look ancient. Marin guessed he was born in the late 40's or early 1950's. The old man looked up at her, a card with his name on it read "Mr. Lynden". His half moon

glasses slid slowly off his nose. Dozens of checked in books sat on the circular desk just waiting for a new reader to consume with words, and phrases. The old man pointed west to a sign that read "FICTION" in bold lettering. Marin scoffed, "Gee, how nice," she muttered. She began to stride towards the long, narrow hall of fictional books. Marin slammed her school books against the very end of the shelf. Walking past several book shelves, she came across an old dusty one, with a hard brown red leather cover and back. This intrigued her. Old books are bound to be good at some level, well, that's what she hoped. She grabbed the spine with her index finger and pulled it off the shelf, and read the title. In blood red, handwriting it read "Cinderella". "What in the world? Oh well! Man, this book looks easy already!" She grinned with sheer satisfaction. "Alright easy A here I come." she sang.

Marin walked again to the bullet point of the immense fish bowl. The librarian looked up at her in pure disgust.

"My dear, I highly suggest you NOT check that book out. It is dangerous."

"Look, it was in YOUR library so I'M checking it out whether you approve or not!" Marin retorted. The skull necklace that hung about her neck had flipped around. Mr. Lynden shook his head making his white locks of thinning hair sway. He sighed, and had her write her name and phone number on a card. "Thank you!" Marin grabbed her books, and walked out of the old dust machine that was the library. Nobody ever went in there. Not really at least. She looked back one last time, then rolled her eyes again.

People stared at Marin as she rummaged through her backpack for a place to put her book. She loathed actually carrying books, of course there was no place in her overstuffed garbage bag. Marin groaned, and walked on back to her house.

Upon arriving home, Marin got nagged at by her overly-protective mother. Marin's mother, Sharen Gates, complained of never seeing Marin, or how Marin was always such a good child when she was little. Marin ignored most of the raving banshee's complaints, mainly trying to stay away from the fact she used to wear dresses. The very thought of herself wearing a non-gothic dress made her sick. Marin propped herself on couch, and sighed in distaste. Her mother was so much of a nag that it was like a hobby to ignore her. After raging on, Marin's mother gave up and retreated to her office to work. The gothic teen, struggled to get up off the couch, and climbed what seemed to be an endless staircase. Sure, she'd lived in that house since she was 6 but the staircase always seemed to be a long, tedious, and endless climb to the top.

With the brown, red leather book in hand she jiggled an old door knob, and opened it revealing a room drenched in nothingness. Her room was like deep space, but with no light. No stars to guide you to the safety and security that makes you feel like your home. No, this was the absence of color. The very thread of nothingness that bound the world of darkness to its sheet of fear, and regret. Her dresser was black but painted on it were the words "Never Knows Best" in a sort of Chiller font.

Marin sighed, and collapsed onto her bed. She thought back to when her stepmother died. Her father divorced Marin's mother when Marin was about 6, and married another woman. Marin remembered how her stepmother died, she knew quite well for Marin killed her step-mother out of hatred. She was found innocent from lack of sufficient evidence. She smirked with contentment, then faced the ceiling and opened the book. Marin shook her head, making her black strands of hair sway. "I'll get ready for bed first." she muttered, getting up, closing the book, and hopping out of bed. She loomed over her

dresser, and yanked open a draw. Marin rummaged through her drawer, and grabbed a long elegant black nightgown. She slipped on the gown on, and sat back down on her bed. From the base of her neck down to her the upper region of her chest it was all net. Her sleeves were long, and see through, and the skirt part was tattered with scissor-like cuts. She would remind anyone who loved Halloween or people who love horror movies of a vampire. The Goth opened the book, and was instantly consumed in a Wonderland of words, phrases, and sentences. She soon fell asleep to the soft patter of raindrops on her window, as the moon began to come over the mountains.

Marin's black-lined eyes fluttered open. She sat up straight, and felt a harsh arctic-like wind whoosh pass her. Her hair whipped upwards, and fell gently back down to it's rightful place. She jerked her head to the window. "WHAT IN THE WORLD?!" she exclaimed. As Marin peered out the window, a barren wasteland stood broken barely standing on its foundation. In the distance was a large half-burned castle. Houses had crumbled, fountains were nothing more than dust in the wind. The once proud trees, and flowers of a village's forest had withered, and became bleached. Marin backed away from the window, and into the southern wall. Men's and women's names had been painted on the wall with what seemed to be blood. She looked on in slight happiness. "Very dank. Very bleak. Very. . .me." Marin turned her head, and faced another wall, but on that wall in black paint it read, "The reader of this book must be confined to all its pages. No more riddles, no more jokes, no more brooms or sages. Riddle me this, riddle me, this tell me what is the prince? Is he a monster? Is he a freak? Tell me the answer and I'll show you the exit you seek." Marin rolled her eyes in great disregard for the riddle. She scoffed, and turned to open the door.

Little red flashing lights lite the staircase. Pink clay tails peeked through holes. "Rats." she whispered. Half-decayed corpses lined the staircases, with mouths gaping wide as if they screamed before they died. Marin stepped down the countless stairs which had a mono creak to them. She stepped onto one more stair before it collapsed. "OH, MAN!" she cried. Her hand grasped the wooden frame of the stairs before it too collapsed. Below a low hiss echoed. "Snakes. Whatever sick and twisted person made this house is good, BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO SCARE ME!" she said as if trying to let whomever had made this "Little House Of Horrors" know that they needed to do better. She pulled herself up, and brushed off her shoulders. "I bet their not even poisonous," she scoffed and walked down to the kitchen.

Her soft footsteps echoed softly in the vast kitchen. Bloody hand prints lined the walls. Strips of blood ran down the walls in a race. A rusty butcher's knife stood up stuck on a wooden block. "Hmm. . .homey." she stated. Flies buzzed an opera of wings as they flew about the kitchen. Rotten cut up pieces of flesh, and large cups of blood (wet and dried) sat in an untidy fashion on the counter tops. A large long-haired cat lay in the corner watching Marin. It's big, flashlight yellow eyes wouldn't move away from her. A rat scurried by and the cat swiped at the rat, and caught it. The rat squeaked in anguish. Banana yellow teeth became drenched in green, and red blood as the cat picked off the rats trying to scurry by one by one. Marin raised an eyebrow and tried to watch her step as she walked past the blood stained walls of the kitchen halls and into the immensely decorated foyer.

There was no blood, there were no rotten corpses, or rats, but a beautiful enchanting song echoed lightly tapping the walls. Marin was confused and lost in much needed translation frenzy. She closed her eyes and followed the voice. Her steps banged against the walls, and halls of the never-ending maze of corridors, corners, and doors. Marin realized the song was about death, chaos, blood, and Satan. A small movie-like screen came to her. It was herself painting the walls of her room with her stepmothers'

blood. She opened her eyes as she came to the room that the singing loudly emitted from. She held her breath, and peeked around the corner into the room. It was a bathroom, and in the bathtub a woman, more like Marin's very own stepmother who was skinning a woman. Well, a dead one anyway. Lines of peeled flesh and skin hung from rusty, crooked fish hooks from the ceiling. Marin's stepmother was sitting in a bathtub of blood. Marin grimaced. Sure, she was a Goth and desired to be bathed in it at one time or another, but her stepmother!? Her stepmother could be seen skinning half of a woman. It made Marin sick to think that such a hateful woman would skin a young girl. Marin walked in and pointed at her stepmother. "HOW DARE YOU!" she exclaimed in disgust.

"But my dear, hasn't it always been your dream to bathe in blood? I'm just living out your dream." she said looking up. Black lined her eyes as if she was or had been dead.

"That gives you no right whatsoever!" Marin growled clenching her pearly teeth together. Her black lips twitched.

"But, I'm only doing what you've wanted to achieve."

"Don't toy with me," Marin growled.

Marin grabbed a knife from the counter nearest to the sink and lunged at her stepmother. As they rolled in the tub of blood, Marin's stepmother plunged Marin's head into the crimson abyss. Marin waved her arms about trying to stab her. She was able to pry herself free, and in a split second, Marin whirled around and lunged again, sinking the knife deep into her stepmother's jugular. Marin's stepmother gasped for air, and instantly grabbed her neck. Marin pulled back her hand pulling the knife out. The bleeding, however, wouldn't stop. Her stepmother twitched uncontrollably, and grasped the plug to the bathtub by accident. The blood drained onto the marble floor. Marin watched on as her stepmother tried to save herself. She reached to grab her stepdaughter's hand but instead she pulled back her hand and turned her head. Her eyes closed shut. Marin was used to this. She killed her stepmother once and she did it again. Her stepmother gave in. Marin stood up and spit into the bathtub. "Didn't put up much of a fight. Not like before." She stated in a hearty tone. "You put much more of a struggle up last time. Guess I sort of. . .got to you. So much for a loving mother, daughter relationship." The sadistic Goth licked the edge of the knife with her stepmother's blood dripping like raindrops from the handle. Malice was carved into her very eyes and soul. Something inside of her had clicked. Something that made her want to kill, but her mind tempted her to stop. She walked out of the red painted room and back into the foyer.

Marin opened the large cardboard walls that were the elm doors. They looked as if termites had eaten away the frame even though it could still move. As Marin entered the courtyard a small fountain sprang to life with water. The clear liquid poured off of the fountain like a waterfall. A desperate-to-hit-the-bottom waterfall. Marin cocked her head, as her eyes blinked half way as if wincing at a wound. She took one last step before the water exploded into a muddy, black oblivion. A young man stood in the center of it all. His hand on a scythe, with a beating heart in his opposite one. His eyes glowed a radical green color, and large, black, shadowy wings were thumb-tacked to the edge of his spine. Marin didn't flinch. "Wow. . .scary," she said flatly. The man gripped the heart tighter in his hand. Marin gasped and fell to the concrete foundation. She grasped her chest in pain.

"I suggest you NOT toy with my little girl," the figure said.

“Ditto.”

“Resistance is futile. You cannot win against me. I’m your only ticket out of this place.” The shadow looked up, and the moonlight poured onto his face. His right eyebrow was pierced with a ruby stud, and on his arm was the tattoo of a heart hanging by a noose from Heaven. His hair was shaggy and black. “I’m the Prince of this story. My name is Raioke, and I’m afraid you’re the Cinderella.” the shadow stated. Marin knelt before him, trying to peel herself off the ground, but no matter what she did she just knelt there. It was as if a Lord was making his knight or serf kneel before him. “Now listen carefully, love,” he started, “since I’m your only token out of here I suggest you start kissing up to me, ‘cause death threats,” he dropped his shoulders, and waved his hand, “they doesn’t work on me.” he ended. Marin grimaced and spat in his face, hitting him dead center in between his eyes. “You’re lucky that wasn’t a bullet! I want to get out of this stupid Cinderella story now! So get me out or I’ll kill you WITH MY OWN BARE HANDS!” The figure grinned, “I’m the Prince of this story. I can do what I please. Here’s your invitation to the Death Ball tonight. Be there or your stuck here for eternity.” The Prince disappeared into a wisp of mist. This mist was worse than fog, and smelt of bloody velveteen. “How is he my token out if I’m dreaming?”

Marin growled lowly and stood up. She read the letter. “‘Death Ball. Sophisticated clothing required. Must be escorted in a carriage.’ Well I have the dress, but not the carriage.” As Marin said that, two rats turned into large black stallions with red eyes, and sharp flesh-tearing teeth. The cat was turned into a the coach but instead of an old man it was a vampiress. From the rotten old pumpkin patch a random, moldy, pumpkin was turned into a round, black stagecoach. It looked exactly like a Cinderella ride, but just more darker, more violent. Marin blinked in a mass of confusion. “Wow. . .talk about fast service.” Marin said in utter shock. With that said and done she stepped into the stage. Black high-heeled shoes embraced tightly against Marin’s feet. They were extremely uncomfortable. She sighed, and kicked off the shoes. “I hate this dream so much. Everything I love is here, and yet. . .,” she paused, “everything I HATE is here.” The carriage pulled off. Upside-down cross held ravens, rats, and dead cats. The words “Hell”, “Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter”, and “The Black Wings scar the world, and fire chars the heart.” flew by. Marin sighed as she watched the signs skitter by.

The stagecoach halted and jerked Marin forward. She looked out the window. The inside of the front gates held nothing but barren land, a castle, and the very stagecoach she was seated in. Marin looked away in disgust. “What a dump.” she muttered moving her eyes to the corners. Her eyes wandered about the area as she hopped out but a quick flash of lightning, and a clash of thunder erupted from the clouds. A shower of clear edible glass (water) fell from the sky like stars and began to drench Marin. She sighed as her make-up melted off her face. Her eyes looked like they stretched. She ran up the stairs to the castle but tripped on the way up. “Oh yeah. I’m good.” she whispered sarcastically. Marin pushed herself up off the steps, and ran until she got to the door to the castle.

The stone marble of the castle looked like the darkness in her room. But something hanging from the ceiling she couldn’t make out. She stepped in closer, and an eruption of noise sprouted like a flower. The stone doors shut with a deafening SLAM! Marin jumped, and stepped onto another staircase that lowered to the first floor of the castle, but she stepped in something. . .wet. The rank stench of decapitated body parts filled her nostrils. It practically made her faint. It was like raw meat with that funny package smell. She could not longer breath threw her nose.

As the lights turned on the room was clear. It had nothing except chattering people in it. A bright, crystal, immense chandelier hung from the onyx ceiling. Marin stepped downward again but in high heeled shoes that were comfortable. Her hair and dress were dry. Her make-up was back to normal. "What in the world is going on now?" As she stepped onto the foundation of the castle, a young man about her age bowed before her, and held out his hand asking, "Would you like to dance, M'lady?" His eyes were a deep, ice blue, his hair jet black, and his clothing soft, velvety, and silky. Marin raised an eyebrow. "I'll just play along." Marin said. In truth she thought the young man was cute. She let her hand smoothly slide into the young man's, and he pulled her into a half embrace. Music filled her ears. A soft, lone violin began to play a melody. One she'd heard before. It was sad, and depressing. It rang through her ears as she closed her eyes. Images, strange flashbacks raked against her mind. A pained expression crossed her face. The two went in a circle dancing. Their steps matching the pace of the music. Marin couldn't even hear their footsteps. She leaned back her head and an image came into her head. A series of grotesque images flashed. Each flashback was of a hanging or a slaying. Her grey eyes shot open as the last piece was played.

The room went back to being dank, black, and dreary. She found herself in the embrace of a rotten corpse who's mouth was agape. Marin screamed and pushed the thing away from her. She shook her head and looked up closing her eyes, but before she COULD close them she spotted what hung from the ceiling. Bodies, torn limbs, heads with no eyes or teeth. Some of the corpses hanging from the ceiling were still alive! People were still alive and hanging from large hooks in their backs.

"GET OUT OF HERE!"

"THE PRINCE IS A VAMPIRE!"

"HE'S A WRAITH!"

"HE'S THE REAPER!"

Men and women cried from their hooks. A shadowed figure jerked its head towards the bodies. A pair of gloved, disembodied hands broke their necks, and a series of sickening cracks rang through the castle room. Marin winced as she heard the twists. This whole nightmare had to end. Now. She walked to the middle of the room and glared onto the prince's throne. She sighed, and took one more step forward. The prince, Raioke, smiled sadistically. Crimson drops ran down chin and plopped onto ground.

"You made it. I'm surprised I didn't give you a heart attack. So have you figured the riddle out?" He moved his face and the pale moonlight that poured through a skylight lit his face. Marin nodded. "Good. You get three chances. If not you're put on one of those hooks. You see, people who read this book and don't get the answers right, they get put up on the ceiling as a trophy."

"Well, I'll admit. You tried your best and you didn't get the best of me. I'm surprised there weren't more clues. Only rotten corpses. I'm going to try my first try. Vampire."

Raioke took the form of an Englishman, with sophisticated clothing. Long, sharp I-teeth grew, and his face became pale. He shook his finger, as a rusty lock of chains grasped her arm, and wrapped around it pulling her to one side. "Guess again."

Marin bit her bottom lip. "Death Wraith."

He took another form of a shadow-like character. It waved gently. Raioke shook his head, and finger again. Another roll of chains shot up and grasped her opposing arm. Each chain pulled her making Marin wince, and tear. "This is your last chance Marin. If you don't get it right you'll be pulled into eternal darkness."

Marin broke a sweat which rolled into her eyes, and stung them sharply like needles. "U-ummm....Satan?" She asked.

Taking once last form Raioke became a tall, darkened man. Large, bloodied, demonic wings sprouted from behind his black ones, and large spaded tale grew. He grinned and shook his finger. "Game over." The last line of chains grasped her neck, and entwined her body. Marin's eyes widened. Her arms had crossed and held her hands to her ears. 'I don't believe it. I don't believe I was wrong. I'm. . .going to die.' She thought. Raioke turned back to his normal, creepy self. But instead of his skin he was bound with cloth. His chest, and arms were bound together. The Prince's face was the only thing that Marin could see, well, actually, one lone green eye was seen. Marin closed her eyes, and admitted defeat. There was no getting out of this. She opened her eyes, and a single tear ran down her face. The chains raised her, and banged Marin against the once beautiful marble. Continuously, Marin cried out in pain and agony. A large target of crimson was now tattooed on the wall. Nothingness covered Marin's vision, as she fell into a long, deep sleep. Her name was now printed on the west wall of the tower in the mansion where she had first woken up in.

Marin's mother began to bang on the door to daughter's dungeon of a room. Her alarm clock was going off, and the beeping was obnoxious. The green numbers flashed multiple times. Marin lay in her bed, lost in a everlasting world of darkness. He warned her. Mr. Lynden warned her, but now. . .it was too late. Too late to give back the book. Too late to change her mind at all, it was too late to stop anything. The Prince would forever kill until someone was clever enough to figure out the riddle. Ms. Gates walked over to her dead daughter's side, and felt Marin's cold, sweat-drenched forehead. The color had drained away in as little as 2 hours. Marin resembled a movie ghost, but without the cheesy make-up. Her lips were pale black, and her body was stiff. Marin's mother, shrieked in horror as she felt Marin's neck. There was no heartbeat. Her mother began to sob, and cry. She grasped the telephone and phoned an ambulance. Her words were muffled by the shrill, sharp, cries that emitted from her mouth. Sure enough, several minutes later car after car barreled down the streets, and screeched to a halt at the Gates House.

Later that month Ms. Gates moved out of the house. She ever so subtle drove done the street. Her eyes jerked from building to building looking for the library. Her tires squealed as she ran the red light to return the book, and get out of the wretched town that destroyed her life. Sharen parked her car, and raced over to the library does. She strutted over to the center of the library, and slammed the faded book onto the desk. Ms. Gates gave the old man a harsh look than paced away.

A young boy had watched the whole situation from afar. Way afar. He blinked numerous times. The boy slunk over to the desk and grabbed the book. With his small legs he ran out the door with the book. Mr. Lynden turned his head, than shook it. "Poor, poor soul." he said, "It's going to start all over again. And such a young, little boy too. What a shame. What a shame."

Another nightmare would happen. Another person would soon fall to this book's mystery's and deceit. When would it all stop? When would this whole chaotic situation come to a sudden halt? Why wouldn't it stop when it was ahead?

Whoever said a fairy tale had to end happily?