

XAVIER WEVERS



NIGHTMOOR
THE DARKENING

Chapter 1



"Sit, dear. There's much to discuss," she invites, gesturing towards an ornate chair. I reluctantly take a seat, my gaze shifting between her and the strange markings on the walls. Sophia and Victoria exchange knowing glances. Their demeanor, once comforting, now adds to my growing unease.

Suddenly, my so-called mother's voice changes, taking on a sinister undertone that sends a chill down my spine. "You see, dear, I am not who you think I am."

The room darkens, and her appearance distorts. The once comforting familiarity twists into a grotesque form, revealing the true nature of the entity before me. Azruleth, the demon that had haunted us, now stands in my mother's guise, its eyes gleaming with malevolence.

Fear grips my heart, and I instinctively move away from the creature. Azruleth chuckles, the sound echoing with an otherworldly resonance.

"Your despair, your confusion—it fuels me. I am reborn through your suffering," Azruleth declares, its voice resonating with a ghastly triumph.

As Azruleth's demonic laughter echoes through the twisted room, I summon every ounce of strength and

determination. With fear clawing at my heart, I extend my trembling hand towards Sophia, desperate to break the hold of Azruleth's malevolent influence.

"Sophia, snap out of it! This isn't real!" I plead, my voice wavering with a mix of urgency and fear. Sophia's vacant gaze meets mine, a glimmer of recognition flickering beneath the oppressive darkness.

Azruleth, momentarily taken aback by my resistance, hisses in frustration. "You cannot break free, mortal. Surrender to the darkness within."

Ignoring the demonic entity's taunts, I continue to reach out to Sophia. A brief, intense connection passes between us, a shared moment of defiance against the encroaching shadows.

Sophia blinks, her eyes clearing as she gasps for breath. The room trembles as Azruleth, now realizing the threat to its control, emits a piercing shriek that cuts through the air like a blade.

"Hannah, what... where are we?" Sophia stammers, disoriented but freed from Azruleth's manipulation.

But before I can respond, Azruleth's influence tightens its grip once more. Sophia's eyes cloud over, her face contorting in pain. "No!" I cry, reaching for her again, but it's too late. The darkness consumes her, and she steps back under Azruleth's thrall.

Desperation fuels my flight as I dash towards the doorway. "Hannah, you cannot escape," Azruleth's voice taunts, reverberating through the walls. Victoria steps in my path, her eyes cold and unyielding.

With a surge of adrenaline, I dodge past her, bursting into the hallway. The house twists and contorts, the walls elongating into a labyrinthine maze. My heart pounds in my chest as I hear the pursuing footsteps of Azruleth, Victoria, and Sophia.

"Almost there, just a bit more," I whisper to myself, pushing forward despite the disorienting surroundings. The front door looms ahead, a beacon of hope. I throw it open and stumble into the cool night air.

Azruleth's malevolent presence follows me into the streets of Nightmoor. The town, once familiar, now feels like a hostile landscape under the demon's influence.

As I sprint down the dimly lit streets, my breath ragged and my legs burning, a glimmer of hope appears—a car approaching in the distance. I wave frantically, shouting with every ounce of strength I have left.

"Help! Please, help!" My voice cracks with desperation.

The car screeches to a halt, and the driver, a woman with determined eyes, leans out. "Get in!" she commands. Without hesitation, I dive into the passenger seat.

As we speed away, I glance back to see Azruleth, Victoria, and Sophia receding into the darkness. Relief floods me, but it's quickly replaced by exhaustion.

"Are you okay?" the driver asks, her voice filled with concern.

I struggle to catch my breath. "Not really. I just woke up, and apparently, it's now a year later. My friends and everyone I know are gone. I'm all alone."

The driver interrupts me gently. "Don't worry, honey. We'll get them back. For now, let's get you to safety. This town's not safe anymore." She offers a reassuring smile. "My name's Emma, by the way. What's yours?"

"H-Hannah," I stammer quietly.

"Wait! Hannah?" Emma's eyes widen in recognition. "Do you know someone by the name of Janessa?"

"My guardian?" I ask, bewildered.

Emma nods. "She thought you died!"

"Wait... who are you?" I ask, my curiosity piqued.

Emma's smile turns awkward. "I'm her girlfriend."

"What the actual—"

To Be Continued...

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