

The Library

Hi, my name is Amelia. I'm 12 years old and I'm a student at Lincoln Middle School. This is my story.

When I moved to Lincoln this year, I had a hard time making friends. By seventh grade, most of the friend groups are well-defined and not looking for new members. My shyness didn't help anything either. Mr. Quinn was nice, though. He's the librarian, and, while books are not my favorite, he had a way of finding a book that spoke to you. In this way, he reminded me of Ollivander from the Harry Potter movies. It frightened me when he matched me to a book for the first time. When he handed it to me, I thought he must know my secret.

"Does it resonate with you?" he asked, his voice a low murmur. "Don't worry, I don't know anything I shouldn't. I am simply gifted."

After that, his suggestions were spot on, albeit more mundane. I quickly read the Harry Potter books (having only seen the movies, prior). He then suggested a few other fantasy books, two sci-fi novels, an encyclopedia entry on whales, and the biography of Queen Victoria. I accused him of turning me into a reader. He merely chuckled and gave me a wink.

I was halfway home that evening (I always leave school after the sun has set), when I remembered the book in my bag was due back today. Mr. Quinn was kind and soft-spoken, but return a book late and he will scold almost as bad as my nastiest teachers. I entered the library to find it well-lit. Good, he was still here. Maybe we could discuss the book as we often did. I called to him and heard the sound of rapidly retreating footsteps in response. I rounded the stacks and there he lay. Still, in his own blood he lay. Shakespeare's crimson bust sat up beside him as bloodied as Mr. Quinn. I knew in my heart he was dead.

A guttural, primordial scream erupted from deep within me. The one person at this damn school who acknowledged my existence, reached out to me, and extended every kindness to me lay soaking in his blood like bread in gravy.

I gave chase after the retreating footsteps, stopping only to duck inside the utility closet. There was a button that locked the doors from the inside (in addition to already being locked from the outside). As I pressed it, I felt a thrill of satisfaction as I heard a slam and a grunt. The murderer had just missed his opportunity to escape. As I ran towards the sound, I heard fabric and saw a cloak whip around the corner. I gave chase, my righteous anger fueling my flight. We looped the seventh-grade hall and returned to the scene of the crime.

The poor fool must have thought the stacks to be the perfect hiding place. I knew I would find him. I, who know every inch of that library. I, who spent every day in that library learning that reading was almost tolerable. I, who grew to love and cherish my dear Mr. Quinn and his wonderful books.

My prey, cornered at last, tried once more to escape. As I leapt at him, he swung his arm, striking me across the face with the back of his hand. So enraged was I that I was completely unphased. I clawed at every inch of exposed skin until I could smell his blood in the air. I may be twelve, and I may be a girl, but I find that works to my advantage when they underestimate me. He stumbled under my assault, hitting his head on an ornate volume, knocking it to the floor and stunning himself. I sat upon him, pinning him.

“Why?” I asked, moistened eyes begged for an answer, a reason, anything!

“Your librarian,” panted the monster, “he isn’t what he seems.” He winced, an unsure look on his face. “You probably won’t believe me, but I thought he was a vampire, he must have been!”

Shock coursed through me, followed quickly by anger and contempt. Nearby lay the ornate volume, knocked to the ground in the scuffle. It also happened to be the first book Mr. Quinn had lent me. I picked it up, showing him the cover. “Don’t you read? Vampires must be staked through the heart with wood! You bashed his fucking head in!” I screeched.

“I know, that’s when I realized it wasn’t him,” groaned the man. “You need to get out of here! I know the vampire is in the school tonight! I have the Sight, and I can sense it!”

“Oh really?” I cast my gaze upon the window. The darkness of the night made it impossible to see the outside world. Instead, the library is reflected in all its fluorescent brilliance. The hunter’s reflection laid upon the floor, pinned, it seemed, by nothing.

Horried comprehension dawned on the hunter and spread across his face. Fangs descend from my mouth. I sink them into his neck and begin to drain his lifeblood. As the color drains from his face, my hunger and my vengeance are satisfied.

I return to Mr. Quinn. I roll him to his back and fold his arms across his chest. I take the book he first lent me that terrified me so.

I lay the book, tenderly, as though cradled in his arms: Bram Stoker’s Dracula.

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