

Sammanda Lewis

Haunted



BookRix

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the wallflower

Avery

The rain poured down on my face as I ran threw the woods. My fiery red hair clung to my, and the rain beaded of my leather jacket. I didn't remember anything. Not where I was or how I got here I only knew I needed to get away. And then I saw it, the mangy Mexican Gray wolf that haunted my every dream. The wolf's black eyes bore into me as I stood there frozen with the rain pouring down on me. The wolf lowered its ears at me and bared it's teeth. I gasped and started running in the opposite direction. That was completely foolish of me.

The wolf ran after me as I urged my legs to run faster. Of course with my luck I tripped over a tree root. I tried to get up but had become crippled by a broken bone. Why out of all times to break my leg, I broke it when I was in a life or death situation. The wolf had found me and was now right in front of me. I took an arrow out from my quiver, and loaded the bow. I pulled back, and prepared to shoot. The dark brown wolf crouched down and prepared to lunge at me. I covered my face and braced my self for the pain, but it never came. I looked up to see the Mexican wolf to be gone and a beautiful Yukon wolf in front of me. It's fur was a busted golden color that matched perfectly with his stunning golden eyes that bore threw me. What astonished me was his size.

Yukon were considered to be the largest wolf subspecies, and usually grew to be about five to seven feet long (head-to-tail). However this one looked to be nine feet long and almost four feet tall. I shuddered when he began to move towards me. I trembled as

he walked towards me thinking the worst. The wolf laid down next to my broken bone and began to lick it. I watched in amazement and the ugly discoloration faded and the bone moved back into place. I stared at my leg in amazement as I moved it back and forth. It was healed 100% as if it was never broke. I looked up to see the golden wolf leaving.

Beep Beep Beep Beep

I moaned as my eyes fluttered open to see my alarm clock. The clock read 5:45 a.m Mon. Sept.29.11. I dragged my hand over the top of the clock and hit sleep. I swung my feet over the side of the bed and walked to my closet. I stared at my closet that contained seven shirts, four pairs, and three jackets. The typical wardrobe of a foster kid and wallflower. I grabbed an cream colored tank top that had the declaration of Independence text covering it. I slipped on a pair of worn out jeans with holes at the knees and a simple gray jacket. I then laced my navy blue sneakers that had seen better days. I walked into the bathroom and did my morning routine. I stared in the mirror at my newest bruise under my eye and covered it with makeup. I then stared at my reflection and wondered what to do with my hair. I sighed and reached for the brush and simply brushed it and walked out of the bathroom. I was revealed when I heard silence in the house, which meant Cathy and Ben were at work. However that meant Terrence was still home. I grabbed an apple and my back pack and headed out the door. I wanted to avoid Terrance as much as possible. I ran down the block when I saw Mike's feed truck roll by. I ran and hopped on the back. My legs hung over the back of the truck as he drove me to school. I sat amongst the bails of hay and chicken feed.

My name is Avery Crawford. I am seventeen years old and live Port Angeles, Washington state. My skin is a pale white and blemish free, however my cheeks and nose are decorated with many freckles. I have natural vibrant red hair with light emerald

green eyes. I am almost 5'4 and extremely petite and am often mistaken to be fourteen or thirteen. I am also curvaceous with a slender waist and an average B cup breasts. Overall I am quite beautiful, and some girls do envy me. However I prefer to be unnoticed, a loner, invisible, a complete wallflower. I yearn for friends. I truly do. I want to laugh like the others, and be a normal teenage girl. However Cathy has made it clear she does not want me to have friends. She is not the only reason it is hard to make friends when whenever you touch them you see their past and their future. It is exhausting at some times and at others I get migraines. That is not my only "gift" I can read peoples minds when I choose to and can see the dead. That is my least favorite, they come to me asking for help to move. They will send me visions of their death and their last thoughts. and then they will have me perform a blessing to help them move on. Some times they will ask me to write a letter to a love one. Only twice they have told me the name of the murderer and I somehow became a witness in a murderer case. In the first part back, I do have one friend, but she is not living. Her name is Angela she is sixteen and died in a fire before they built my current home. I have offered to help her move on but she says there is nothing there and wishes to stay with me. She is always with me.. somewhere.

I was sent her when I was thirteen after my last foster mother passed away from a heart attack. I never met my real mother, apparently she had me when she was fifteen and did want an abortion, so she gave up for adoption. I currently live with my foster mother Cathy Paterson, my foster dad Ben Paterson, and my perverted foster brother Terrance Paterson. If you were to drive by our small one story house, it would appear normal and quaint with its Spanish tile roof, white stucco, a porch swing, and the lavender growing in front of the house. However that is not the case. Behind that red painted door is something eerie and unpleasant. The beating- the beatings are the worst. I do not know why they beat me. I sometimes think it is because I am an outsider. It often happens when the adults come home drunk, or had a bad day at

work. Even Terrance, he was sweet to me at first but when I refused him he started making vulgar comments about my body, and then he started acting like his parents. To my family I am just there to blame for everything that is bad in life, and a way of income. They only took me in for the money. I have never seen the money they get to use to take care of me. They use it on booze and gambling money. Never me. I work my ass off at the book store. I hopped of the back of the truck and yelled,

"Thanks Mike!" He then waved back at me.

I walked into the parking lot of Port Angels High School, and tried my best not to touch anyone. No one minded me or even looked my way, that is how I wanted it. I liked not having o worry about being liked or dislike. I couldn't be, because no one knew me. Barley anyone knew my name. I walked into the school building my locker was conveniently located next to my homeroom. I unlocked my locker and shoved several textbook into my lockers and grabbed my novel. I then walked to my first class. When I opened the door only few people looked at me. I slid into my seat that was in the fifth row against the wall. I pulled out my book and began to read. the book was *Evermore* I enjoyed it because the main character , *Ever Bloom*, was like me. A teenage girl struggling with an unwanted gift and is in contact with a ghost. The only difference was she missed her family, but I couldn't miss mine. She had a stare crossed lover who would who chased her threw many lives, love was not an option for me. She had friends. In short I would trade my life for hers in a heartbeat.

We herd the rev of a motorcycle and the entire class looked out the window. There he was Jericho,Levi riding his silver Honda CBF1000 Motorcycle. He was on the cross country team , and was the captain of the basketball and soccer team. I figured that he liked to play at least one sport all season. As well as a VIP member of the "It" crowd. He wasn't a bully, he was charismatic kind hearted but

even one like him. Although he could be a total ass. He had a very short temper. Most people loved him. I was on the fence about him. To me he was confusing, he hung out with people he didn't even like, he would say sweet thing on second and punch you the next, plus he seemed to be incapable of not ditching. I made sure to stay clear of him. There were very few who didn't like him, but guaranteed he was on someones hit list. He was 6'4 with broad muscles and long legs. He had an angled jaw and a straight nose. He had dark dirty blond hair that was in short locks, and beautiful mesmerizing teal eyes. I stared out the window as he got off his bike and was greeted by his friends Allen, and Tyler. Tyler wrapped his arm around him and said something that made them all laugh. When Maverick, your stereotypical football jock, came up to them they went silent. Even from where I was you could see the anger boiling in Jericho. Jericho came up to him and pushed at his chest to tell him to scram. I wanted to laugh at how short he was compared to Jericho. Maverick looked to be about 5'11. He walked away from the three boys and into the school building. Jericho looked frustrated and walked in as well. Five minutes before the bell rang I saw Maverick walk into the classes. Unfortunately for me he was in half of my classes. Jericho and Allen walked into the classroom as well. Jericho and Allen were in all of my classes, and Tyler was in two. I tried to keep my eyes fixed on my book while the three boys took their seats. I knew that Maverick sat in the corner by the window and the other two sat in the front with the "It" crowd. I just prayed to God that today would not be a repeat of world war II with those three. That was the reason I sat on the opposite side of the room from them. I thanked God when class started.

Mr. Jennings was a sweet middle aged man with a balding head. Him and his wife were my favorite teachers. Mr. Jennings was the perfect Chemistry teacher.

"Good morning class, let's start with attendance. When I call your name say here or raise your hand." He stared at the list.

"Gail, Alvarez."

"here."

"Carter ,Blanch."

"Present."

"Linda, Cáo."

"Here!"

"Avery, Crawford." I raised my hand.

"You know if you keep this up you can get a perfect attendance award." He asked me. I only smiled at him and went back to my book, as he continued to take attendance.

"Okay lets review for the quiz." He said as he started to lecher us on ions, electrons, and compound elements. I didn't need to pay attention. I already knew the answers to the quiz. A props on being a medium. Before I knew it a scantron was placed in front of me along with a packet. As soon as I touched the test letter "B" repeatedly flashed through my head. That was weird. The answers usually come to me in a vision or I see a replay of the lecture. I looked down at the test in confusion. The answers were all "B" I stared up at Mr. Jennings, who must have gotten bored and decided to make all the answers "B" to throw us off. I filled in the letter "B" in a strait row. I then got up and handed the test to Mr.Jennings. I was extremely careful not to touch him. I then walked back to my desk and started to draw. I gasped as I looked down to see what I had drawn. I had drawn the two wolves from my dreams. I glanced up to the clock to see that I had another twenty minutes in class.

"Pencils down. I will be back with the scantrons ,and you can see your grade." Mr. Jennings got up and left the room. As soon

as he left the class room erupted in to pandemonium. People were throwing things, shouting, and some were running around the room. It was a three minuet party. I focused on my drawing and ignored them completely. My pencil skid across the sheet of paper as it was suddenly lifted into the air.

"W-" was all I managed to say until my breath caught in my through when I say Maverick smirking down at me. Why was he even giving me the time of day? I have never even said a word to him.

"So you like wolves?" He said with venom in his voice. I stared at the floor and refused to meet his eyes.

"Why the hell are you drawing something like this? You weirdo." I herd snickers around the room. I have managed to go unnoticed until now. I could fell the twenty nine pairs of eyes staring at me. I wanted to disappear right then and there. The spot light felt uncomfortable ,and made my stomach twist and turn.

"Well? Are you just going to sit there?" He said. I just wanted it to end. I herd footsteps make their way towards us. Please God not another one. I was surprised when I saw my sketchbook in front of me. I looked up with wide eyes when I see Jericho death glaring Maverick.

"Leave her alone Maverick. No one likes a dick." He said. He pushed Maverick back and away from me. He then looked down at me,

"Be careful who you draw in front of." He said before he walked back to his seat. A boy yelled the Mr. Jennings was coming back. As if on queue he walked in with the scantrons in hand.

"Before I pass them back I must say I was disappointed in all of you except for one. Avery, you had a perfect score and got the bonus question spot on. as for the rest of you you should see me

after class to retake the quiz." He said. I really wish that I had flunked the quiz. That would mean I would be less in the spotlight, and would have to go home later.

"Nerd!" I heard Maverick yell. What was his problem today? It is like all of a sudden I was his target. I leaned back in my seat and spaced out the rest of the class. When the bell rang I hopped up and raced out of the class.

I went to my locker and put my science book in my locker. My locker was suddenly slammed and I was roughly turned around by my hood. I was now face-to-face with my devil spawn foster brother, Terrance.

"What do you want?" I asked him. He was too close for comfort. He smirked at me and said,

"You already know that." He leaned in and blew into my ear. I shuddered with disgust.

"Knock it off Terrance or I'll call CPS." I told him he laughed at me.

"I doubt they would believe you." I search the crowd of students for help. That's when I saw Angela standing in the hallway as people unknowingly walked threw her. I locked eyes with her and she understood fully what we were going to do. Angela placed her hands on his shoulders and I placed mine on his chest.

"I said stop!" I yelled at him. Angela sent him flying but to bystanders it looked like I pushed him. I grabbed my stuff and ran down the hall.

"Bitch get back here!" I heard him yell after me. I ran as fast as I could down the hall trying to make it to my next class. Someone pulled my backpack and threw me to the floor. I skid and slammed

against some lockers. When my eyes came into focus I saw Terrance towering over me.

"Never run from me." He hissed. I wanted to move but I was to scared. Was he really going to hit me in front of all these people?

"I- I'm sorry. Please don't." I begged him on the brink of tears. He laughed at me.

"No your not." He said. I watched in fear as He raised his hand. As he swung down some one caught it. I looked up to see non other then Jericho fuming with anger at Terrance.

"What the hell is your problem, jackass!" Jericho said. He let go of his hand and glared at him.

"Well?" He asked. Terrance grumbled and walked off.

"See you at home ,Avery." Was all he said before walking away. I came back to reality when I saw a hand in front of my face.

"Need help?" He asked. I stared at his hand. I really do not want to touch him. I do not feel like going to the nurses office because of a migraine.

"Just take it." He said. I didn't want to be rude so I took it. A static shock raced up my arm and my skin felt on fire. I stared at him wide eyed. Not because of the spark, but because I am making full contact but have not had a vision. I met his stunning teal eyes to see that he too was in shock.

wyrd

Jericho

I stared at her in shock as she did the same. I have heard of this feeling before. It meant I found my mate. My mate was Avery, Crawford. She was beautiful. I knew very well who she was. She had a reputation as a wallflower. She liked to stand in the back ground and go unnoticed, but with her florescent orange hair that was impossible. She was a foster kid and came here from Portland, Organ. She somehow ended up living with Terrance, Paterson. He was a sick twisted kid who did shit like torture animals. I pitted Avery, and so did most people.

Then realization dawned on me like I was being run over by a 18 wheeler. My mate was Avery, Crawford: The wallflower, The doormat, and and the universe's punching bag. My mate lived in a complete hell hole. Any home of the Paterson had to be torture. I tried to avoid Terrance as much as possible. He just liked to pick fights. Then there was Avery she worked at the book store non stop, and I often saw her at church...alone. She was pure perfection. She was beautiful, smart, independent, and innocent. She already has a screwed up life, why should I make it worse. I should just walk away and pretend I never saw her.

No don't do that!she's Mine! Mate!

My wolf yelled in the back of my mind. I snapped back to the present when Avery put her hands on my face and stared at me intently. What was she doing? This was not helping me at all! I stared at my reflection in her stunning green eyes. I herd snickering coming from behind us.

"What are you doing?" I asked as she pulled my check. She stared at me with a confused look on her face. It was beyond adorable. I suddenly had the urge to hold her.

"Avery?" Suddenly she snapped back to reality. She gasped and her cheeks turned about as red as her hair. Her hands dropped from my face and she ran down the hall. Allen came up to me laughing.

"Holly shit, what was that about? You looked like you were going to eat Terrance. It was fucking hilarious." He said. Soon Tyler came up to me as well.

"Dude, what was that for?"

"What was what?" I asked him.

"The redhead..." He said in a duh tone.

"I couldn't let him just hit her."

"Yup, St. Jericho." Tyler teased.

"She's a freaken door mat dude. Yeah she gets picked on." Allen pointed out. I looked over at her as she turned the corner, and she looked back at me.

"That's not funny." I said with a straight face. The bell rang and within seconds the hallways were like a ghost town. Tyler looked at me with a concerned look on his face. His eyebrows furrowed and then it dawned on him.

"Jericho what's going on?" he asked hoping he was wrong. I looked around the hallway.

"I'll tell you guys, just not here." They nodded and followed me out of the building. I wanted to be away from everyone supernatural or not. We walked for miles until we were in the woods west of the school. Tyler and Allen looked at me with stern expressions.

"Like to fill us in?" Tyler asked me. I put my hand on my brow and looked down.

"I-I found my mate." I said. They went wide eyed.

"Are you serious?" Allen asked.

"Yeah." I said.

"Who is it?" Allen asked me.

"It's Avery Crawford isn't it." Tyler stated more than asked. I nodded my head at him.

"She's human though. How could she be your mate?" Allen looked

pale as if he was about to faint.

"What are you going to do?" They both asked me. I crumbled down to the ground finally absorbing what this meant. I combed my fingers threw my hair, and looked up at them.

"I'm going to have to reject her." I said. When I said this if twinge in my chest and felt sick. Tyler stared at me in shock.

"You can't reject her. Your alpha, you need an alpha female."

"That's the thing. I need an *alpha*

female, not a gentile little girl. She's humane she needs to stay with the humans." I fumed at them.

"Jericho that isn't the issue. The issue is your an alpha considering rejecting your mate." He said to me. Allen smiled at me and sat down on the ground next to me.

"I almost rejected Ashlin." He said. I stared at him with disbelief. Ashlin was half bane half witch. The only reason she is able to touch Allen is because he isn't full wolf. He is a quarter human.

"You thought of leaving her? What changed your mind?" I asked him.

"Remember as we were learning about Norse myths? When we learned about 'wyrd' I though maybe I was supposed to be her mate. I figured that I was her mate for a reason, and that I found her for a reason. Then before you knew it her mom died and she had nowhere to go. She needed me." He expanded briefly.

"So what are you saying?" I asked him.

"I'm saying that you found her now for a reason, and to give this little match-up an opportunity before you reject her." He said with a sympathetic look. What sucked was I knew he was right. What sucked even more was the fact that eventually I would have to tell her.

"Then why did I just now find her?" I asked them.

"Apparently you find your mate right before you need them the most." Allen stated.

"What could she need me for?" I scoffed.

"Hmm I don't now. You now because she live's with the Patersons, gets picked on, and is almost eighteen. Gee I have no idea." Tyler

said sarcastically. He had a point. She was almost eighteen which meant that eventually she would be out of the system and on her own. There was a long silence between us.

"Fuck..." I said. Allen scoffed and hit me in the back.

"You'll get over it dude. Just don't stress." He said as they walked away. I followed them back to class. We waved at Tyler as we entered our honors English class. Luckily the teacher wasn't in the room. When I walked in I saw Avery with her eyes glued to her book. I watched as her eyes widened as she read and a smile crept onto her face. She was in her own little world. Her eyes slowly rose from the page and met mine. She seemed like she was so unreal and so close. That's when I realized that I was standing in front of her. My face flushed and I sat down in the seat next to her.

"You okay?" She asked.

"Yeah just fine." I lied. I put my head in my hands at tried to focus on the lecture. That was nearly impossible, my eyes just wandered back to the intriguing girl next to me. I inhaled her scent and instead became addicted. She smelt like fresh rain water and lilacs with a hint of hay. She continued to read her book threw the hole class. Why doesn't the teacher say anything? Most likely because she has perfect grades. The bell rang and we got up and headed to our next class... art. I honestly could not stand art class. Mr. Birch was a horrible old man.

* * *

The bell rang and we cleared out of the classroom and headed to lunch. Tyler met up with Allen and I. We headed for the cafeteria. I felt a firm hand grab my shoulder. I looked back to see Maverick looking at me sternly.

"We need to talk." He said.

"About what?" I asked him.

"Alone." He said again.

"Allen, Tyler, go find table. I 'll be back soon." They nodded at me and walked away. I then followed Maverick to behind the gym.

"Is that Avery girl your mate?" He asked me.

"Why would I tell you?" I asked him.

"I just wanted to congratulate you. This will make things a hell lot simpler." He said with a smirk on his face.

"What the hell do you want?"

"Give me your territory and tittle and I won't lay a finger on her." I was pissed now. He was threatening my mate! He had been trying to take my title as alpha for years. I grabbed his throat and pushed him up against the wall.

"Listen here you little shit, your damn right you won't touch her. If you do you have a war on your hands." I could feel my eyes turning black as my wolf tried to take over. I pushed my wolf back at punched Maverick square in the jaw.

"You know fucking well not to mess with me." I said storming off. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a yellow blur. Oh Shit! Before I knew it a cute little blond tackled me from behind and put me into a bear hug. This would have been fine if it wasn't Ashlin.

"Feel my love!" She yelled at me in a jokingly deep voice. I winced at the pain but it wasn't that bad.

"Ow! Ow! Holly shit Ash! Enough!" I yelled. She pulled back and smiled up at me.

"That's what you get! I had to find out from Allen that your mated! What the hell, I'm like your little sister! You are required to tell me everything!" She whined. I laughed and started walking to the cafeteria.

Avery

When the bell rang I rushed out of the classroom as fast as I could. I ran to my locker and threw my stuff in and grabbed my math book and my lunch. I walked to the girl's bathroom where I eat lunch every day. Why? there are three good reasons why. 1.) I can talk to Angela with out anyone thinking anything of it. They all think I'm just talking on the phone. 2.) I can't incidentally bump into anyone when

I'm in a stall. 3.) It's illegal for Terrance to enter the woman's bathroom. In other words it the only place I am at peace. I walked into the bathroom and went into the stall and locked the door. I took out my lunch and stared down at my plain turkey sandwich.... I'm vegetarian. I then started eating my apple.

My mind drifted to Jericho, and his teal eyes. Why didn't I get a vision when I touched him. Why was he staring at me all English class? The way he looked at me gave made my knees go week. Looked at me as if I was his whole world. It would be nice if I was actually allowed to have friends. He also looked pained, which made me want to hug and comfort him. Ridiculous right? I needed to avoid him. He was bad news, trouble was his best friends. I shook the thought of him from my mind and continued eating my apple, and then downed it with water.

I looked around the ugly gray stall and frowned. I could here the loud cater and laughter coming from the cafeteria. It would be nice to sit with everyone for once. However I know that I would be just as alone there as I am here. My breath caught as I heard someone come into the bathroom. I herd the clicking of heels on the tile floors. I saw two pairs of heels pass my stall. I tried to stay quite until they left. I looked up to see angel looking startled. I put my finger over my lip to tell to be quiet. We waited for a few minutes until they left.

"What is it?" I asked her.

"It about Jericho, Levi." She said. My face hardened at the mention of his name.

"I don't to talk about him." I said.

"I need you to stay away from him, Allen, Tyler, even Ashlin, and especially Maverick." She said.

"You don't have to worry about that."

"I'm dead serious... I heard him talking to Maverick. They mentioned territories, and m- something else. They were talking about you. I don't like it, Avery. They're worse then you think. I *need*

to avoid them." She said. What reason would they have to talk about me?

"I've been avoiding them from day one." I said.

"Well today you were doing a pretty shitty job." She said.

"It's easy for me to stay away, but only if they stay away from me." I said staring down at the floor. I heard her sigh.

"It was a close one to day. I could have sworn he saw me." She said.

"Who?"

"Jericho." She said.

"Well if it wasn't for him I would have been black and blue by now."

"I guess your right." She said.

"However that doesn't change the fact that he may be strange then you.... him and his friends."

"Once again you don't have to worry about. I have a rep as a wallflower. Not many people even know my name." I told her. I grabbed my things and opened up the stall door. My breath caught in my throat when I saw Ashlin, Darvis leaning against the sink and smirking at me. Of God I've fucked up know. I didn't even hear her come in!

"So who were you talking to?" She asked.

"Umm... my foster mom." I lied.

"Then was she in the stall, because I could hear her and I saw her when you opened the door." She said. My eyes widened and I turned around to see that Angela was gone. That little shit!

"She was on speaker." I lied again.

"Are you sure it wasn't a ghost... named Angela?" She asked again. I could feel my palms sweat.

"No I'm pretty sure." I answered.

"I knew her pretty well. She use to baby sit me. Could you tell her her misses her every day. Well her family that is still alive anyway." She said.

"I'm sorry to hear that, but I honestly don't know what your talking about." I told her. I walked past her and before I pushed the door open I heard her say,

"You don't have to hide it. It's actually kind of sad that you can't be your self." She said. I almost jumped out of my skin when I saw Angela Staring at Ashlin like she was her own child. Maybe she was telling her the truth.

"Are you okay?" I whispered to her.

"I- I don't know." She said. If I could hug her without falling threw her I would. I gave her a sympathetic smile and walked down the hall towards my trig class. As I turned the corner I felt like I hit a wall. I stumbled backwards but was stabilized by a pair of strong hands. I winced and prepared for the massive head ache and visions. I was stunned when there was nothing. I opened my eyes to see Jericho smiling down at me.

"Are you alright?" He asked me. I nodded my head yes. I brushed him off and started to walk away when he said.

"Why do you flinch when someone touches you?" He asked me. His face shifted into a look of concern.

"Are you being bullied?" He asked. I shook my head at him.

"No, I' just a bit chiraptophobic is all." I said as I pivoted on my heels to face him. I shouldn't have done that. I'm trying to avoid him but this man is so perfect that is is almost impossible.

"Hey, where are you going? Lunch isn't even half way over yet." He said.

"I'm going to go study for the Trig test today." I said to him. I could see his eyes lite up.

"I forgot about that. Do you think you could tutor me real fast?" He asked me.

"Sure..." I said timidly. I started heading for the trig room, when he trotted up next to me eagerly. Angela was right about him being weirder then me.

Warmth

I had somehow ended up sitting inches away from Jericho in the math room. He had asked me to tutor him for the test to day but honestly I had never planed on studying. Now his hand was next to mine, I could feel his breath tickling my skin, and our faces were only inches apart. I took all my senses not to grab his face and start furiously making out. But I wouldn't not after what Angela said. Territories? Me? What were they talking about? Then there was Ashlin, had she really seen Angela?

"Hey how would I do this problem?" He asked me. I stared down at the book. I brushed my finger over it and a vision rushed threw my head.

"Oh, well you would use \sin^{-1} , \cos^{-1} , \tan^{-1} , and then once you have the angles you would-" I was cut off him brushing his finger over my forehead and pushed my bangs to the side.

"Sorry it's just..." He trailed of as he rested his forehead against mine. His lips came closer to mine and I closed the gap in between us. His lips were as soft as they had looked. His hands rested on both sides of my face and brought me closer. I rapped my arms around his neck and brought us closer eliminated any space. I felt him nip my bottom lip. What was that for? I ignored it and continued to kiss him. His hand squeezed my waist and I gasped. His tongue darted into my mouth and explored every inch of my mouth. I didn't know what to do! I pushed away and blushed.

"I-I don't know how to kiss." I said sheepishly. He tilted my chin up so I met his eyes.

"Your so cute." He chuckled. I felt my face get warmer and I got up.

"I think you'll do fine on the test." I said as I walked out of the room. I whipped away a stray tear. I felt him grab my wrist.

"Avery what's wrong?" He asked me as he pulled me closer. His eyes searched mine hopefully.

"I shouldn't get involved with you." my heart ached as I could see his heart sink. God I'm such a bitch!

"Why not?" He said with a shaky voice and the most pained look I have ever seen.

"I don't know how to handle it. I don't know how to keep or make friends. I just don't belong with your crowd. I belong in the girls bathroom where I eat my lunch every day. I belong in the library after school reading about entomology ,not at a pep rally or a school dance." I shook his hand off and started running down the hallway. I wanted to get away before he saw my tears. I ignored him calling my name over and over again. I went into the bathroom and slammed the stall door shut. I sat down on the toilet and started crying. I hate them! I hate my family! If it wasn't for them and theses stupid powers I would acutely have friends. I could have stay next to Jericho, I could be normal. I thought back to our kiss. For those few second I could feel my powers dim and the chattering of thought cloud away. It was like he shields me from my own abilities. It felt nice. It felt warm when he touched me. I'm tired of being alone! As soon as I turn eighteen I'm leaving this God forsaken town and moving somewhere quiet and far away. I will leave everything behind, Terrance, Cathy, Ben, and even Jericho. My heart ached for some reason when I thought about leaving him. I hated how he made me feel powerless. However I loved how he made me feel wanted. I heard the bell ring and dried my eyes. I then walked to class.

When I walked in I locked eyes with Jericho. Memories of our little encounter flooded into my mind and I instantly blushed. I walked to the empty seat that was far away from him. The teacher wasn't in the room yet thank God because I was a few minutes late. I heard the sound of a shifting chair and then foot steps coming near me.

"Move." The all too familiar voice said. The coward next to me ran away instantly.

"What did you mean you 'don't know how to handle it'?" Jericho asked me. His warm breath traveled down my neck and set my senses running wild.

"I don't want to talk about it." I said.

"Well I do." He said. Yep this was asshole Jericho speaking.

"I don't want any connections to this town." I said.

"What the hell does that mean?" He growled.

"I-" I stopped talking when the teacher walked in. I tore a piece of paper and wrote

"I want to leave this town behind when I turn 18. I don't want to feel obligated to stay because of someone. I want no reason to stay." I passed the paper to him. he read it and the scribbled down a reply and passed it back to me.

"Then don't leave." I sighed and wrote,

"It's not that simple, I hate my family. I want to be as far away from them as possible." I then passed it back.

"What did they do to make you hate them?"

"Have you met Terrance... where do you think he learned to act like that?" when he read my note he laughed.

"Then what if you came with me?" I was shocked at this.

"You barley know me."

"I know you enough to know that you don't belong here."

"Let's say I did go with you (which I won't) where would you take me?"

"Somewhere incredible."

"Thanks but no thanks. I already know where I want to go."

"Where?"

"Hoxie Kansas."

"Why there ,Dorthy?"

"It's small and far far far away."

"To far." I stared at that comment and thought about it. It was hanging over me. I then put the paper on my desk and shook my head. He then took the paper and wrote,

"My offer will always be up. If you don't say yes I might kidnap you."

"Creep!"

"I just don't want you to leave."

"I'm leaving as long as the Patersons live here." He was in the middle of writing something when the test was placed on our desks. I effortlessly filled out the the test and handed it back to Mr. Fultcher. I then sat back down in my seat. I took out my book and

started to read.

There was a sudden pain in the back of my mind, almost like a prick. I ignored it and continued to keep reading. My vision became blurry all of a sudden. I blinked several times to refocus my eyesight. The prick in the back of my mind worsened by the second and became a painful throbbing. I let out a groan as I clutched my head. The thoughts of everyone around me, living or dead, flooded into my mind. The voices became louder as they tried to yell over each other. My head was now throbbing and I felt like I was going to blow a vein. I got up abruptly and rushed out of the room. I ran down the hall and burst into the bathroom. I frantically crumpled in front of toilet and clutched the side of the ceramic bowl. I could feel my stomach stretching and constricting. I then hurled all my insides into the toilet.

"Are you alright?" I heard a voice say. I wiped my mouth and steadied myself.

"Just fine." I lied.

"Strange, because if you were alright, you would be in class right now, not hurling into the toilet." The voice said again. I turned around to see Ashlin smirking at me. This girl was so weird. I got up and walked over to the sink.

"It's just a migraine."

"Yeah I had those two when I got mine." She said. My eyes widened, and I looked over at her.

"What are you talking about?"

"I think you know."

"I honestly don't." She gave me a sympathetic look and walked over to me and brought me into a comforting hug. I was once again shocked that I was getting no visions from her.

"Avery I can help you, and if you wanted to I could take them away. You just need to admit that you're a medium." She whispered in my ear. I only stayed silent and tried to process what was happening.

"I get it. You don't want to tell me because you don't trust me. Don't worry though I've seen your future, although you can't I can, And you will you'll trust him as well." She said as she moved away.

"Who's him?"

"Jericho. You know he wasn't happy when you walked away. He was actually pretty hurt." She said.

"I I would love it if you and your friends stayed away from me. Your going to get me in trouble with my family. So could you just leave me alone?" I said as I walked out of the room.

Human

Jericho

Where was she? She had looked as if she was in the most excruciating pain. Then she just got up and left. I didn't like it. My wolf was on high alert and refused to rest until he and I both knew she was safe. I stared down at the math test in front of me. I wish I had acutely paid attention to what Avery was saying instead I tried to seduce her. I filled in random numbers hoping to be right. When I was done I handed the test in and waited for the bell to ring. When it did I rushed out of the classroom and search for her scent. It was covered up by the thousands of other scents.

"Jericho!" I turned around to see Ashlin rushing towards me. she looked panicked.

"Ash, what is it?" I asked her.

"It's Avery she's sick. I went to try to get some answers from her but-" She said.

"What do you mean?"

"She said she want's to be left alone because she'll get in trouble with her family. I don't like it. I tried to read her mind to get some more info but she pushed me out. It's like she's blocking out memories. I don't like it at all." She said. I ruffled her hair and walked past her.

"Thanks for trying. Where is she?" I asked her.

"The nurses office." she said. I walked over to the nurses office. I creaked open the door and saw her laying down with her arms over her eyes as she tried to block out the light.

"Go away, Jericho." She said.

"Just wanted to know if your okay." I said as I sat down next to her.

"Just peachy. Now leave." She groaned.

"Don't want to." She removed her arms from her face and glared at me.

"What do you really want. I can tell you want to say something." She said as her eyes narrowed into slits.

"Ash said that you would "get in to trouble with your family" if we didn't leave you alone. Like to explain?"

" The only people they let me be around is Terrance's friends. I hate them just as much as him so I keep to my self." She briefly explained. God, I hate him so much right now. The thought that he is around her twenty-four-seven infuriates me. He is the reason she is alone!

"They wouldn't have to now." I said to her. I heard he sigh.

"It's not that simple."

"Yes it is." She sat up and stared at me intently with furrowed brows.

"No it's not. There's thing that I don't want you to know, and if I got close to you ...you would find out. I don't want to be hated." She said in a weak voice. I wrapped my arms around her and brought her close.

"You really think I give a shit about that?" Was all I said. Her hands rose and fell. Then she finally wrapped her arms around me and buried her face in my chest. She felt so small and fragile in my arms. It felt right. Suddenly the bell rang and she pushed away from me.

"You should go. You can't be late." She said with empty eyes. My heart sunk a little more.

"What about you?" I asked her.

"I'm staying her for the rest of the day. I could use the rest." I kissed her forehead and said,

"I'll come get you after school. Wait here, okay." I then walked to the door and looked back at her. One hour. I would see her again in one hour. Then seventh period is our free period, so I could just leave with her.

The day went by and that was the longest hour of my life. As soon as the bell rang I ran like a mad man down the halls. I threw the Nurse's office door open. I scanned the room most likely smiling like

a moron. I Felt like some one shot me in the chest when I say the empty bed. I looked over to see Mrs. Burklee reading a book in her chair.

"Where's Avery?" I asked her. The school nurse was a short and stout middle aged woman, who had four kids, so needless to say she treated everyone like her own.

"The little redhead?" She asked me.

"Yeah..." I said with a heavy heart. She looked down at her log.

"She wasn't feeling good so I gave her some some thing to help with the head ache, she took a nap, and then about two minuets before the bell rang she sighed out. Why did you have plans with her?" She briefed me.

"Yeah I did." I said. God I feel like shit right now! I turned around and booked it to the front of the school. I pushed past people and tried to make to the parking lot. I opened up the door and stared out into the parking lot. My eye saw something orange move. I instantly looked to see her walking out of the gate.

"Avery!" I called. she looked at me with a scared expression on her face and ran. I followed suit. Dammit she fast! I pumped my legs harder as I ran through the parking lot. I turned the corner and ran out the gate. I saw her about a block away and ran even faster. I finally caught up to her. I grabbed her wrist and turned her around.

"I told you to wait for me!"

"I told you to leave me alone!" She yelled back at me. That's the one thing I cant do. Leave her. It is physically impossible for me to walk away from her.

"Why me! Why do you have to toy with me?" She fumed at me. Then I remembered, my little Avery was human. She was ignorant to the supernatural world around her. I stared at her as she wore a displeasing scowl on her face. I grabbed her and threw her over my shoulder as I walked back to the school.

"What the hell! Put me down Dammit!" She protested. I ignored her and picked up my pace. I walked into the school parking lot and walked to my bike.

"If I put you down, will you not run?" I asked her.

"Fine! Now put me down." She said. I set her down on her feet and

she crossed her arms and glared at me. She then turned and tried to run but I caught her before she could. I took my helmet and put on her head. The black helmet was huge on her and was extremely loose.

"What are you doing?" She asked. I still had a grip on her wrist.

"Taking you somewhere we can talk." I said as I lifted her onto the bike.

"What if I don't want to talk?" She whined.

"Too bad." I got onto the bike and started the ignition.

"What about your stuff?" She tried to give me a reason not to leave.

"I'll have one of the guys pick it up for me." I said. I revved the bike to life and pulled out of the parking lot. She wrapped her arms around me and pulled herself close to me. We pulled up to a random restraint at the harbor. I turned off the bike and she slid off the side of the bike. I chuckled when she staggered and the helmet wobbled on her head. She took the helmet off and poked me in the chest,

"Never, do that again. I thought I was going to fall off." She warned me. I fought the urge to wrap my arm around her, knowing that she wouldn't feel comfortable. When we entered the restraint the bell rang as we opened the door. I noticed that no one else was in the restraint except for a waitress sitting behind the bar. We sat down at a booth in the corner.

"So what did you want to talk about?" She asked me.

North and South

Avery

I sat across the table from someone who was almost an alien to me. The things I knew about him were things that were no secret and the same for him. He only knew my name and my reputation. Nothing else, nothing more. That is how I wanted to keep it. I crossed my arms and angled my head down slightly. I was going crazy! He was immune to me! I could not hear his thoughts at all. I couldn't even read his emotions. What drove me over the edge was when I got visions I never saw him. It was like a missing puzzle piece, and you are left to wonder what was on that piece, and what the picture would look like with that one piece in place. I had gotten a vision earlier, and it predicted exactly this moment. However I only saw me, alone, but talking to air. I wasn't talking to Angela in my vision. I would have seen her. I always do when I have a vision of her. I knew for a fact it was Jericho.

"Hey, are you listening?" He asked me waving his hand in front of my face.

"Hmm?" I answered.

"I was asking you if we could at least be friends." He told me. My heart sank. I'm sick and tired of being alone.

"That is not such a good idea. I enjoy solitude..." I said looked down.

"Is that you or your wardens talking?" He asked me with a stern voice.

"That's irrelevant." I said. He was right though it was them. I was scared of what they would do to both me... and him if they found out he was even within five feet of me. They did want our little "secret" to get out, and have their little "income" move away.

"You can make your own decisions. It's alright."

"It is my decisions." I said. I felt guilty, I felt sick, and I felt aggrieved. He could be my life boat, my way out. He could save me, but I had to let him walk away. I had to make him walk away. I was the *living*

proof of what they were capable of doing, and how they never felt remorse. If they did then they would have stopped long ago.

I saw something flicker in his eyes. He had many conflicting emotions. I saw pain, doubt, determination, and anger.

"Avery, don't lie. I know that look. Dylan, Erika, Chris, and Mia all give me that look. That's the look of guilt from lying." Damnit! He was spot on.

"Avery I'm going to ask you again and I want you to answer honestly. Is that you or your wardens talking?" He stared at me intently; his teal eyes were hard and cold. I looked over at the window to see Angela across the room. I stared her with a pleading look. As if asking her what to do. She nodded at me. She knew that I could tell him the truth, maybe eventually all of it. I closed my eyes and sighed,

"Your right. I absolutely hate being alone. To tell you the truth it terrifies me sometimes." I finally admitted. Never in my young life had I said that aloud. He stared at me in shock.

"Does it feel good to finally say it?" He asked me. I didn't know how to respond.

"So why are you alone?" He asked me.

"I already told you that." I said.

"Then why don't you leave?"

"Why don't you have wings?" I fired back. He glared at me.

"Don't avoid the question." He said.

"I have nowhere to go, and who would want me anyway..." I said. It wasn't the truth nor a lie. I felt the lump in my throat begin to well up. I refuse to cry in front of him.

"That isn't true." He said. I scoffed at him. What did he know? He doesn't know what I am and what I am capable of.

"My last foster mom died of a heart attack all the ones before that said I was a burden and shipped me off." I still remember being

accused of witch craft, being possessed, and even being a demon. I also remember being told that I was hated and unwanted. No small child should have to be told that. I looked over at him.

"I know we all have our own demons by mine are most likely a hell lot bigger than yours." I said as I stood up and walked out of the restraint.

"Avery!" He yelled as I walked away. I could hear his footsteps behind me. Then I felt his firm hand on my shoulder.

"I don't know exactly what you're dealing with, but at least give me a chance. I like you a lot. So please at least give me some time." I wanted to run to him and wrap my arms around him but the realistic side of me prevented me from doing so.

"You don't know me." Was all I said before walking away? He caught my arm.

"I want to know you. I want you to trust me, but I can't do that unless you let me try." He said. I shook my head at him,

"I- I can't do this." That was as all I said before I walked away. I looked back to see Jericho in utter pain. He looked as if I just ran over his cat. My chest tightened and became heavy. I didn't mean to hurt him. I never wanted to hurt anyone. I walked away from him and this time he didn't follow me.

I walked into the house, and quickly cooked dinner. I then walked to my room and locked my door. I plopped down onto my stiff, old, spring mattress. I stared up at my ceiling fan and thought of what the event that occurred to day. I replayed the look on Jericho's face. I wish that I had met him in a different situation. Not like this. If I had a normal life with a family maybe thing would be different. I closed my eyes and exhaled. That would be the day... I soon dozed off to sleep. I was woken up by Cathy's booming voice.

"What the hell were you thinking?" She yelled.

"Sorry, Ma I just lost my temper." I heard Terrance say. There was a long silence and the Cathy sighed before yelling,

"Avery!" Got up off my bed and walked into the living room.

"I got a call from the principle at work today saying that Terrance was harassing you. Since Terrance wouldn't tell me exactly what happened, I want you to tell me." She said. I gripped my forearms

and shifted uncomfortably. I looked over at him and saw that he was glaring at me.

"Umm... well... I was at my locker and Terrance came and said some things I didn't like. So I ran away from him. When he caught up to me, he threw me against the locker. He raised his hand at me and was going to hit me but..." I stopped speaking. Was it safe to tell her about Jericho? Knowing her she would pry until I told her every conversation we have ever had.

"But what?" She snapped at me.

"He... decided against it and walked away." I wasn't safe to tell her.

"Is that really it?" She asked me.

"Y-yes ma'am." I lied.

"Ma that isn't what happened. I wanted to hit her ,and I was going to but Jericho, Levi stopped me." Terrance said with a evil grin playing upon his lips.

"That isn't all of it. I saw her leaving school on the back of his bike." He continued. I stared wide eyed at him! That bugger!

"What! What did you tell him? where did he take you?" Cathy stormed towards me. I cowered backwards away from her.

"He- He wanted answers about Terrance but I just told him to leave me alone! I swear!" I stammered.

"You lying bitch! I you told him didn't you!" She pulled her hand back and swung at my face. I sunk down to the floor and whimpered as I felt my stinging cheek.

"No I didn't!" I told cried.

"I bet you poured your heart out to him thinking he'll save you! He won't! No one wants you! You're fucking lucky I tolerate you!" She then kicked me in my stomach. Even though Cathy is a tall slender woman, she was extremely strong.

"Don't go near him again. I don't need him snooping around." She gave me another good kick and then walked with her son. I sat there for several seconds before getting up and going to me room. I locked my door and laid down on my bed. I brought my knees to my chest and cried into them. I jolted up when I heard a creaking sound. I instantly relaxed when I saw that it was only Angela. She looked at me with apologetic eyes.

"I'm so sorry." she whispered. I shook my head at her,
"No, there was nothing you could do." I said as I gave her a half hearted smile. She wrapped her arms around me, however I couldn't feel them.

"I could have helped if I was still alive." she said.

"Ang, if you were alive we wouldn't be friends. You would probably be married with a kid." I said in a weak voice.

"I guess you're right, but still times like this I wish I was still alive so you could confined in me and cry on my shoulder." She said as she pulled back to look at me.

"You've done enough just being here." I told her.

"Thanks." she smiled at me. I got up and walked over to my cracked full length mirror. I lifted up my shirt and cursed under my breath when I saw the a nasty bruise beginning to form. I walked over to my closet and grabbed my old Polaroid instant camera I lifted up my shirt again and snapped a photo of my torso I then took a picture of my cheek. I picked up the photos from the floor. I then walked over to my bed and reached under it. I felt the cold chill of metal touch my fingers. I pulled out my fire box. I took the key I had tied on the camera strap and unlocked the chest.

"Avery what is that?" Angela asked. I slipped the photos into the file-folder that was labeled, "September -2011." I then looked over at her and said,

"Evidence."

Sticks and Stones

Dedicated to sami13

I was still tightly wrapped up tightly in his arms. He leaned down and planted a warm kiss on my forehead. I pulled away and frowned at him.

"Just friends..." I told him. He smiled down at me.

"Friends for now...Just let me have my moment right now." He told me. I couldn't help but to smile at that. He pulled me against his chest and inhaled deeply.

"What are you going to do? Eventually I'll get caught and then what?" I asked him.

"I'll make sure Terrance shuts his trap." He told me.

"And if I get in trouble?" I asked him again.

"We'll find away." He said simply. I heard him mumble "It's not fair." under his breath.

"What's not fair?" I asked him.

"Just the fact you have this life..." He said.

"I'll be eighteen in seven months. Once I'm eighteen I'll be out of here." I told him in a quiet voice. He sighed and his grip around my waist tightened.

"Don't talk about that. I don't want to think about you leaving." I glanced down at my watch and gasped. It was almost 3:00. My shift was at 3:30, and Terrance got home at 3:45. I pushed away from him and rushed into the house.

"You okay?" He asked me.

"I'm fine. Just running short on time." I said as I rushed to the bathroom. I flinched when I saw my reflection. Cathy had hit me harder than I thought. How the hell am I going to cover this up? I

sighed and twisted my hair into a bun and found my concealer, cover-up, and foundation. I quickly smeared the makeup over the bruise and smiled at my fine work. The bruise was barely visible. I grabbed my bag and ran to the door. I was half way down the walkway when I heard Jericho shout,

"Where are you going?" I pivoted around on my heels and said.

"My shift at the book store." I told him.

"What time does it end?" He asked me.

"7:30. Why?"

"Don't leave after your shift I'll pick you up." He told me. I crossed my arms and scoffed,

"On that bike? No way in hell." I sneered at I looked over at the bike.

"I'll take the Dodge." He told me. I glanced down at my clock.

"Fine. Now get out of here ,Terrance is on his way home!" I told him I heard him laughing and I turned and ran down the side walk. I ran full speed to the bus station that was about twelve blocks. I felt rain trickle on my nose and groaned. I reached into my bag and pulled out my umbrella. I started to walk into the rain down the slippery pavement. I finally made it to the bus stop to see the doors of the bus about to close. I sprinted even faster

"Wait!" I called. The middle aged bus driver opened the doors again.

I climbed into the bus and Thanked her. She smiled at me,

"Running short today, Avery?" She asked me. I laughed lightly,

"You have no idea. How are the twins?" I asked her.

"Their fine thanks for asking." I nodded at her and took my seat in the empty bus. I leaned against the window and listened to the rain. I was woken up by someone sitting down next to me.

"Hey there." The voice's breath tickled my ear. I jolted when I recognized the voice. I turned around to see Maverick smirking at me.

"What the hell do you want?" I hissed at him. He just continued to smirk like an idiot.

"Not much. I just heard that your talk to guys now so I wanted to get to know you." He said. I scoffed at him.

"I've never herd such bullshit in my life." I turned away from him. He gripped my chin and forced me to look at him.

"I don't like being brushed off. I know Jericho can handle it but I'm not like that twat!" He roared. I slapped him hard in the jaw and said, "I don't know what the hell your problem is but you have no right to call him that." I was pissed. He laughed at me, and leaned in closer, "Defensive are we?" His hands caged me in and prevented me from moving. His hand trailed down my arm. I felt sick. This felt wrong. The bus came to a rough stop and Maverick fell off the seat and onto the floor. I looked up at the bus driver, who's name was Mrs. Shelly. She was now turned around and fuming at Maverick.

"You listen hear ,Maverick.I hate your scrawny guts and I get sick at the thought of having to drive you around, but the law forces me to serve all citizen. But as soon as you pull shit like that on *my bus*

, That's where I say fuck my agreement, I am not going to let you harass this little girl on my bus." She paused for a second and pulled the lever,

"With that said get the hell off my bus. " Her eyes narrowed on Maverick as he got up and ran out of the bus. She slammed the doors shut and mumbled.

"I really hate that bastard." I tried to hold back a laugh. She turned around and looked at me with eyes of sympathy.

"You okay hon?" She asked me.

"I'm fine thanks for helping." I smiled at her.

"I'd jump at any chance to kick him off. So I thank you." She smiled back at me. She then turned around and started the ignition. I leaned against the cool window. I stared out at the blurred lights as we passed by. The lights of the old bus flickered as if they would blow any second. The bus would go dark for a second or two until the lights flickered back on again. My eyes widened as I saw an old woman staring at through the window. I turned around to see no one in the bus. I instantly relaxed. As I turned around, my shoulders were gripped tightly and I came face-to-face with the old woman in the window. Then I saw it. I saw her life, her hopes, her dreams, and her death. I saw a car crash with a car smashed into a store with scattered flowers ruined from the collision. The haunting red color of blood stained the pavement as pedestrians crowded around the

area that was marked off with police tape. I then saw an old woman with a terrified look in her eyes with pale skin and blue lips being rolled away on a gurney as her lifeless hand hung limply. I was snapped back to reality as I looked into the eyes of the woman who laid on the gurney, and she was staring right back at me. Fear shot through me, but then I took notice of the pained and distressed look in her eyes.

"Tell me, can you see me?" She asked me. I nodded at her slowly. Her face softened and she asked,

"Am I dead?" I slowly nodded my head at her. Her grip on my shoulders loosened and just one look at her and you could see the anguish. She then slowly stood up and passed through the side of the bus. I looked out the window to see her standing next to a memorial wreath.

"That was the memorial of Linda, Grey. She died a few months ago from being hit by a drunk driver. Sad isn't it?" Mrs. Shelly told me.

"Very." I said without removing my gaze from the window.

Little White Lies

I slowly sat up in bed and winched at the pain in my stomach. I remembered what had happened. I got up and walked over to my mirror I lifted up my shirt to see the bruise. I frowned when I saw that I had a massive swelling black and purple bruise about the size of a watermelon. I knew I was too sore to go to school today. I walked down the hall into the kitchen and stated breakfast and making Ben's lunch for work. When I was done making the eggs, toast, and Ben' sandwich, I grabbed a piece of paper. I wrote down a note and put it on the fridge. I stopped when I saw Cathy had beet me to it. Her note read "Called A. in sick today. -C" I crumpled up my note and threw it in the trash. I reached in the freezer and grabbed a pack of frozen peas. I placed it on my bruise and sighed. My head shot up when I heard the cabinet closed shut. I looked up to see Ben. I froze when I saw him reading the note.

"You too sick to go or something?" he asked me.

"No sir. I' just sore..." I said in a small voice.

"Then why you skippen'? You finally get laid?" He asked. I sneered at his crude comment.

"No." I said as I lifted up my shirt to show him the bruise. He nodded and went over to look at the sandwich.

"So whatcha do to get the shiner." He asked me.

"Nothing... as usual" I said the last part under my breath. He lifted up the sandwich and took a bite out of it. His face twisted and he ran to the sink and spit it out.

"What the hell is in that?" He fumed.

"Turkey, Swiss, tomato, lettuce, and mustard... you have it every day." I said with a shaky voice. He grabbed my wrist in a death grip and dragged me to the tabled.

"You think I would like this?" He said before he shoved the sandwich into my face. The plate fell from the table and shattered on the floor,

and the pieces of the sandwich fell to the floor.

"Clean this up." He said before left the room. I sighed and slowly picked up the glass pieces and put them in the trash. I then went into my room and sat down at my desk chair. I rolled up my sleeve to look at my wrist. I can't wait to leave this place.

Jericho

I shifted uncomfortably in my seat with my eyes glued on the door. It was now second period and she still wasn't here. ***What if she's hurt?***

my wolf whined. ***She's fine.***

I told him. However in the back off my mind I wondered the same thing. Was she okay? Yesterday she looked almost scared. My stomach twisted at the thought of my mate being hurt. I pulled out my phone and texted to the number Ash had given me. ***Where are you?***

I texted her. Seconds later my phone buzzed. ***How did you get my number?***

she asked me. I texted back ***I have my ways***

. She then texted back, ***I'm sick now stop texting me.***

I frowned at this last message. I exhaled and put the phone back in my pocket. I leaned back in my chair and tried to look like I was paying attention.

"Mr. Levi, could you please answer this question?" I remembered that I was in English class.

"Oh umm.... could you repeat the question?" I asked Mr. Black. He sighed at me.

"I asked you 'Why might Mary Shelly not go into depth about the charters that Frankenstein's monster killed?' Pay attention." He asked me.

"So you wouldn't feel pity towards them?" I asked unsure of what I

just said.

"Exactly." He said. After that I went back to my own personal though. I looked down at the last text I got from her. I didn't like it. Last night I had gotten a painful feeling in my gut that had caused me to need to sit down. The same thing happened this morning on my wrist. Then she doesn't show up to school. Maybe my wolf was right. The bell rang and I got up and walked to my locker. Tyler and Allen came up to me.

"Dude you okay? You look like someone killed your cat." Tyler joked.

"Avery isn't here is she?" Ash stated more then asked.

"Yeah. I'm worried she's hurt." I said.

"She's absent not missing." Allen joked.

"Do mates share the same pain? As in let's say one got hurt, would the other feel it? I know that if one mate dies so does the other one." I asked them.

"From what my mom told me more or less. She explained it as an instinctive feeling to help you understand your mate. For example if ash here broke her leg, I'd feel a prick in my leg and my wolf would warn me that she was hurt, but my leg wouldn't snap in half. As for the whole dying at the same time that is more of a favor. If one mate died the other one would be so depressed they wouldn't want to live so they just..." He trailed off.

"So you don't think it's so crazy that I think she might have been hurt?" I asked him.

"If you felt pain then most likely, but you don't know from what. For all you know she stubbed her toe." He had a good point.

"I have a paranormal question. Is it possible to talk to the dead?" Ash asked us.

"Ash... what's in those antidepressants?" I asked her. She glared at me and then put her hands on my cheeks. Instantly the burning stated.

"Fuck ash! Okay I get it you were serious." I yelled at her. She continued to glare at me and kept her hands on my cheeks. Allen pulled her hands down.

"From what I know ghost can only be seen by their protégé or if they allow you to see them. However there are those few people who can

see them no matter what." Allen answered seriously. Ash nodded and walked away.

"Ash, you got something to tell us?" Tyler called after her. She laughed and said,

"I'll tell you guys at lunch." As soon as she turned the corner Tyler hit my shoulder. I glared at him and say that he was frustrated with me. "You shouldn't have joked about her 'happy pills' as she calls them. She's still misses her mom. It's been a year and a half but the wound is still fresh." He told me. To be honest

"Shit now I fell like a dick." I said. Suddenly the warning bell rung and we went to our next class.

About fifty minutes later we all walked out of our classes and headed towards the lunch table. We usually sat with the other athletes of the school, but today Ash wanted the four of us to sit separately from them. We all sat down and I asked her,

"What did you want to tell us?" I asked her.

"Do you guys remember Angela, Rosen? She died in a fire when we were all about nine and she was about to turn 16." She informed us.

"She baby sat you right?" Allen asked. She nodded.

"She was my next door neighbor until her house burnt down. After that her family moved but she...." She trailed off.

"Why are you bringing this up?" I asked her. She looked at me.

"Because Avery lives where Angie's House was." She stated. To be honest I was pleased with this news because I now knew where my mate lived.

"I understand why you brought up the house, but why the dead girl?" I asked her. Her eyes narrowed into slits.

"Her name is Angela. Not Dead girl." She snarled.

"Ash..." I tried to get her to focus.

"I brought up Angie, because I think she's haunting Avery. It makes sense because 1.) she lives in her house. 2.) she's close to her age. And 3.) she's a loner. I hear ghost tend to target people who are alone and lost."

"Ash, what are you saying?" Tyler asked.

"I'm saying that I'm worried, because Jericho's mate either is being haunted or can see ghosts. I did some research last period in the

library, and from what I read, Ghost's tend to look for two things in a person that they want to attach themselves to. 1.) They are lonely, so the ghost serves as a second conscious, and 2.) They experienced a near death experience. Jericho I think that might be why she's so distant. What if she feels like she can't trust anyone?" As soon as she said this it all clicked together. My angel had been so damaged in the past that she can't trust anyone. Not even me.

* * *

I walked I walked into the guys locker room to see that I was the only one in there. I walked to my locker and pulled my shirt over my head. I stared into the ancient mirror that was bolted to my locker. I looked like shit. Those green eyes continued to flash in my mind. They were always scared, and in pain. And now she isn't here today? I have had a rocky life, I would never deny that. Sometimes I just wanted to quit. Just walk away from my alpha title, my pack, my future. all of it. Then I would think of my mate. I thought that when I found her, I would become stronger, happier, and a better man. However I can't even get close to her. I can't have her. ***What if she hates you....***

my wolf said in the back of my mind. My eyes widened and I sat down on the bench. Fuck... What if she did? I don't think I could accept that. The thought of my mate was the only thing that has kept me alive since I was thirteen. I knew that I would have to live to protect her one day. I couldn't do that if I was dead. Now that mate I dreamed of is Avery. She's my world. She's the one that God had given me. Yet she pushes me away. I want to save her, to make her feel safe, but from what? What had hurt her so bad in the past? I was ripped from my thoughts when the door creaked open. My eyes snapped up to see Terrance who looked at me pissed.

"Is anyone else in here?" He asked me. I shook my head at him.

"No, just me." I told him he nodded and propped a chair up against

the door to prevent anyone from coming in.

"What is it?" I asked him.

"Stay away from Avery." He said simply. I scoffed and said,

"I believe that's up to me." I told him.

"To hell it is!" He yelled at me. I scoffed once again and looked at him seriously.

"Why so rallied up, Terrance?" I asked him. His nostrils flared and he walked towards me.

"You know very damn well!" He hissed at me. My eyes narrowed at him as I looked up at him.

"Now, now no need to curse." I told him calmly. I knew him all too well I knew that he hated it when you stayed calm and unaffected. He liked to feel powerful, and feared. I was never going to give him that. I stood up in front of him to remind him how much bigger I was compared to him. His eyes widened when he looked up at me. Terrance was about almost 6'1 ,weighed 160 pounds and had a small frame. Then there was me who was 6'4, weighed 200 pounds, and had a muscular build. I didn't underestimate him though, I knew from personal experience that he could through a few good punches. He could also tackle you and pin you to the ground so he bash you. He always failed to tackle me though. It was actually kind of funny. I was snapped out of my thoughts when I saw something flying towards my face. I shifted to the side and caught the thing with my hand. I noticed that it was Terrance's fist. I smirked. I gripped him by the collar of his shirt and shoved him up against the lockers. The metal doors rattled at the impact. He clawed at my hands as I leaned in towards him.

"Before I strangle you to death. Tell me why you want me to stay away from her." I growled at him. I blinked several times and tried to contain my wolf.

"She's mine!" He yelled at me. I composed myself and coldly said,

"No, she's not. The whole school knows you hate her, and how you love to make her suffer. I'm sick of watching from the sidelines." I watched as he smirked.

"It's ironic because the closer you get to her, the more your hurting her." He said to me. He pushed my hands away from him. He

walked towards the door and knocked over the chair and walked out. I stared after him in shock as his last words spun around in my head. *The closer you get to her, the more your hurting her.*

I stood there for several minutes before I realized I must look like a dumbfounded idiot. I rushed out of the locker room just as the rest of the guys came down the hall all 30 of them. I spotted Tyler and waved at him.

"Hey, where are you going?" He asked me.

"I need Avery's address." Was all I told him. He smiled proudly at me and reached into his pocket.

"I got this for you this morning when the old lady wasn't looking. Good luck." He gleamed at me. I nodded and walked towards the parking lot. I took a quick glance at the address, hopped on my bike, and then sped away from the school. I pulled up to her house and killed the ignition. A smile played on my lips when I could smell her scent. I took off my helmet and straightened my leather jacket and walked up the steps. As I got closer to the door I could hear her steady heart beat on the other side of the small house. I rung the door bell and my heart skipped a beat when I heard her footsteps. She opened the door and stared at me in shock. I stared right back at her. There on her right cheek was a large nasty bruise.

"A-Avery?" I stammered as I looked into her eyes. She let out a gasp that sounded more like a squeak before slamming the door shut in my face.

Avery

I stared up at the ceiling as I laid here bored out of my mind. The worst part was I couldn't go to work today. Believe it or not, work was my favorite part of the day. Angela had run off to somewhere saying she had "Dead girl things to tend to". I glanced over at my

small book shelf, and quickly scanned it. up... I've read every single book more than once and I was getting sick of them. I guess I'll sell them this weakened to get some new ones. I closed my eyes and sighed. I heard the somewhat comforting sound of a Motorcycle pulling to a stop. *Jericho*

. Every time I heard one now I think of him. I can't deny to my self that I am attracted to him. It's an attraction and nothing more though. Suddenly the doorbell rang. I groaned and got up from my bed and made my way down the hall. I opened the door and Immediately regretted not checking who it was. There he was Jericho, Levi... on my front porch. His face twisted when he saw me. "A-Avery?" He stammered as he looked into my eyes. What's he looking at- oh shit the bruise! I let out a gasp that sounded more like a squeak before slamming the door shut in in face.

"Hey hold on!" He banged on the door. I slid down against the door and sat on the ground.

"Avery, where did you get that bruise?" He asked me.

"A book fell and hit me yesterday at work." I lied to him. There was a long silence after I said that. I could see in my mind on me front porch. His forehead rested against the door as he sighed.

" I get it. You don't want to see me." I saw him turning and about to walkaway. The sound of his shoes confirmed it.

"Wait..." I said. I heard him stop and he turned around and stared at the door as if he was trying to see me on the other side.

"It's not that I don't want want to see you. It's just that I don't want to see- That's not what I meant." I caught my self in mid sentence and took a deep breath.

"The bruise. I'm embarrassed and don't want you to see me like this. so could you just... stay where you are." I finally said. I felt sick having to somewhat lie to him. However what I just said was completely true. I saw him walk towards the and heard the floor boards creak. He sat down an the ground with his back against the door.

"Why are you here?" I asked him.

"Terrance said something weird to me today. He said that the closer

I get to you, the more I hurt you. What was that suppose to mean?" he asked in a gruff voice. I shook my head and laughed under my breath. I thought back to Cathy's threat.

"He sure loves to mess with me." I said under my breath.

"Are you there?" he asked me.

"My family got pretty pissed when they found out that I was with you yesterday." I told him.

"So what are you saying?" He asked me. I could see that glint of hope in his eyes.

"By 'me' he means 'us'." Suddenly the vision of what happened between them came to mind. I saw Terrance facing off to Jericho. I could sense his fear towards Jericho as soon as he stood up. Then he tried to hide his fear by trying to punch him. I couldn't help but smile.

"My family doesn't like you so he knew that if he told you that, you wouldn't back off." I briefly explained to him. There was another heavy silence.

"Do you want me to leave you alone?" He asked me.

"I-I don't know anymore...." I said honestly. At first I knew that was for the best but then I got visions of Jericho with me. Once again he didn't appear in the visions but I could feel his presence in the visions. It made me feel safe.

"You do know." He told me.

"No! I don't. I have things I don't want anyone to know. If you found out I don't know what would happen." I told him a knot in my throat formed.

"Jericho, lets saw I did let you in to my life. Eventually I would turn 18 and I will be on a plain going far far away. What then? It will make it harder for me to leave." I told him. Suddenly the door swung open and I fell backwards onto my back. I looked up to see a frustrated Jericho, Levi. He yanked me to my feet and brought me into a tight hug.

"First of all, you have a right to your own secrets. If you went to tell me one day I'll listen. Second, why do you want to leave so bad?" He told me. I was mostly in shock as he tightened his grip on me.

"I won't have anywhere to go! I hate them. I no people say that's a

strong word but I do hate them! I want to be far away from them as possible. I want to go to a university and just forget about my life here." I told him.

"I get it. And it's true that after high school we all go our separate ways. For now you don't have to make your decision until then." He said in a hushed voice. He was right. He was utterly right. However I couldn't help but to think that one day he'll get tired of this game and leave me... alone and hurt. Furthermore how can I not think about the future! I was a freaking psychic for God's sake! I can't go more than four minutes without having a vision or seeing a ghost!

"What do you say?" With those three words I was brought. I pushed away from him and glared at him,

"How do I know you're not just playing me? That you weren't paid to befriend the 'wall flower' as a joke?" I sneered at him. He looked hurt.

"I would never do that." He came towards me and caressed my cheek. I subcutaneously leaned into his touch. *It's okay. Trust him. Let your walls fall.*

I heard a voice say. I looked around to see a shadow nested up in a tree. There sat Angela with a wide smile. I smiled back at her. I knew that Angela could see things I couldn't and knew things I didn't. I wrapped my arms around his neck and brought myself to him. I finally gave into him. He was right it was my choice to leave this god-forsaken city as well as it is to stay.

"Fine." Was all I said to him. His arms fell limp for a moment as if he had been switched off and then suddenly he was switched back on. He held me tightly and lifted me up off the ground briefly.

"Thank you. Thank you" Was all he said to me.

Life Raft

I got off the bus and walked into the book store. When I walked in the bell rang and Charlotte smiled at me.

"Hey, Avery. I thought you called in sick today." She said.

"I changed my mind." I told her. Her smile widened as she said,

"Did something good happen today?" She asked me. I smiled at her and said,

"You could say that." I said as I walked into the locker room. I opened my locker and took out my dark green shirt. I took my shirt off and slipped my dark green polo over my head. I then tied the khaki apron around my waist. I put my bag in my locker and shut it. I slammed my locker door shut, and was startled when I saw Angela leaning against the locker next to me.

"You know for a psychic you suck at seeing the future." She scoffed at me. I rolled my eyes and walked past her. I stopped at the door and turned to look at her.

"Angela..." I said.

"Yes?"

"Why are you letting me get close to Jericho? I thought you wanted me to stay away from him." I asked her.

"Avery, I know I said that, but I can see the things you can't, and very soon you are going to need him." she said seriously. I mouthed thanks and walked out of the locker room. When I walked out Charlotte's head snapped up and looked up at me. I walked over to the other cash register.

Charlotte was 29 years old, and was half native american. She was very beautiful, despite her constant disagreeing. She had tanned skin, honey brown eyes, and dark hair. She was about 5'9 and very thin.

She smiled at me and leaned on the counter in front of me.

"So how have you been?" She asked me. Charlotte has been

nothing but a saint to me.

"Good. You?" I asked as I pulled the hem of my shirt down. I didn't want her to see the bruise.

"I've been fine." she said.

"So you want to tell me why why you were having a good day." She said. I smirked at her and said,

"And why would I tell you?" I told her.

"Fine then, You can just get your paycheck a week late." She grinned evilly. My eyes widened.

"Okay I'll tell you!" I told her.

"you remember that guy Jericho I told you about along time ago."

"The super hot, short tempered, part-time asshole, and mega jock?" She asked me.

"Yeah that's the one." I laughed.

"Anyway. I guess he decided that he wants to be in my life now..." I stopped when I heard her snort in disbelief.

"Oh just wait... and then-" I began but I was cut off.

"There's more?" she laughed at me.

"And then he showed up at my door step. In the middle of the day, and we some how are now friends *and*

he's picking me up today." I finished explaining to her. She put her hand over her mouth trying to hide her smile, and then snorted again. I couldn't help but to laugh. Once we calmed down she inhaled deeply, trying to compose her self.

"Well as much as it is so fun to laugh about your new *BFF*

, you my friend have work to do." She said as she pointed to a stake of books. I sighed and walked over to them.

"What are these? Returns or new restocks?" I asked her. Charlotte rolled her eyes at me and said,

"They're returns. Some people don't know a decent literature even if it hit them in the head." She complained. I laughed and told her,

"They won't because they leave it to you to beat it into them." She sarcastically laughed and narrowed her eyes. I scoffed at her reaction and picked up the box of books. I walked around the store, and placed the book under it's a propriety title. I then swept the

walkway, vacuumed the carpet, dusted the shelves, washed the counters, reorganized the books, and finally changed the flickering light in the woman's bathroom. When I finally finished, I swigged back a gulp of water and walked over to see Charlotte "test reading" one of the new arrivals. Don't assume that she is lazy ,and has me do all the work though. I just do most of the cleaning. She does what ever I don't do, and all the financial business, such as restocking, managing the bank account, paying rent, and keeping this place open and running. She looked up from the book and smiled as she handed me the slip of white paper I had been working so hard for. I smiled at her and gladly took it. I then went into the locker room to change. I slug my bag over my shoulder and walked out of the store as I said goodbye to Charlotte. When I looked forward I saw a black, sleek, and brand new Dodge Charger. Along with Jericho gleaming at me as he leaned against the car.

"hey!" He said cheerfully. Honestly I didn't know what to say. So I awkwardly smiled at him as he opened the side door for me. I got into the car and shut the door closed. I buckled my seat belt and leaned into into the beige colored seat. He got into the car and smiled at me.

"How was work?" He asked me with a wide smile. I chuckled under my breath.

"Why are you so happy?" I asked him.

"You." Was the only thing he said.

"What?" I asked slightly in disbelief.

"Avery, yesterday you walked away from me crying, and today I'm giving a ride home. I don't know... I guess it makes me happy." He briefly explained. I scoffed at him and said jokingly,

"You do realize that's something Edward Cullen would say, right?" He laughed at my remark.

"Ill have you know that I'm the polar opposite. I don't watch you sleep." He teased back. I brushed my hair behind my ear and laughed.

"Well if you did I would stake you." I said. I heard him scoff and then I faintly heard him say something ,but I was to absorbed in the current vision I was having. I saw Cathy fuming at Ben as I sat in the

corner just waiting... for something. I wasn't sure what. Then I saw Terrance's face flash in my mind. I then saw Cathy bragging by the hair and throwing me on the kitchen floor, she then threw a pot, and some food down at me and started yelling at me. Ah, I get it now. I had forgotten to make dinner before I left.

"Shit." I said underneath my breath. Jericho looked over at me from the driver's side.

"Something wrong?" He asked me.

"Yeah, I forgot to make dinner."

"Okay then, I'll pull over. There's a Pizza place not far from your house." About ten minutes later he had parked in front of a pizza parlor and bar called, *Joe's Pizza Pub*

. As we walked in I instantly noticed the crowd of people. The place was filled with already wasted men gathered around a plasma TV with a Spanish soccer game playing, while Rascal Flatts blasting in the background. I walked up to the counter, and leaned over to see the cashier was glued to the TV. I sighed and banged my hand against the counter. The man jumped and glared at me.

"What!" He snapped at me.

"I would like some service..." I told him. He ground and walked up to the counter.

"What would it be for you?" He said not too friendly I might add.

"One medium sausage with extra sauce, one large pepperoni with extra pepperoni and extra cheese, one large supreme, and one small vegetarian." I said with a smile. He pressed the button and the receipt spit out. He tore it off and then hollered my order into the kitchen. I took a seat at one of the bar stools. Jericho sat down next to me. I tried my best to avoid being bumped, but within fifteen minutes I already knew that the men in the bar were cheating on their wife, in the country illegally, was on drugs, and so much more... I was snapped out of my thoughts when I was lifted up out of my seat. When I wasn't getting any visions from their touch I knew exactly who it was.

"What the f-"

"You said your chiroptophobic right? I figured you were getting

unconformable with all these people bumping you so..." He trailed off.

"So you think putting me on your lap will help?" I snapped at him as I crossed my arms.

"It's better than strange men brushing up on you." he said. I stayed silent and looked down at his hand that was wrapped around my waist. I shifted and tried to slide off his lap but he held me in place as he tightened his grip.

"Oh no you don't." He laughed under his breath. I ground and then leaned in against his chest.

"Urg! Fine!" I said. I heard him laugh at me. Finally after an awkward three minutes of sitting in his lap, the pizzas came. The guy called out my order and I raised my hand. The man set the pizzas in front of me. He eyeballed me and Jericho.

"This your girl?" He asked Jericho.

"Nope." I said quickly. Jericho laughed and wrapped his arms around me.

"I wish." He said. The pizza boy laughed as he set the pizzas in front of me.

"Well you better snag her before someone else does." he teased. I felt Jericho tense and then relax. I sighed and hopped off his lap.

"Okay so how much do I owe you?" I said as I dug for my wallet.

"\$56.50" My breath caught when I heard the number. That's my salary for three and a half days. I found a fifty and a ten and placed it on the counter. Jericho slide the money back towards me and replaced it with his own.

"Oh hell no!" I argued.

"Too late." he said I looked to see the pizza man giving Jericho his change back and Jericho grabbing the food. and started walking towards the door.

"Hey!" I said as I grabbed the change and ran after him. He had placed the Pizzas in the back seat and got in on his side. I slid into the seat and buckled my seat belt.

"That was not okay." I said.

"What wasn't?" He asked me.

"You paying for the food." I snapped at him. He then started the car.

When he looked at me he narrowed his eyes slightly and said, "I was just being nice." He said with slight venom in his voice. "You shouldn't have to pay for a meal for people you hate." I mumbled.

"Well I figured you barley have any money so why should you send most of it on something like this. That reminds me why did you get four pizzas?" I appreciated his gesture, it saved me enough money for three bus rides and five meals.

"They say that they don't like their food to touch other toppings, they refuse to get the same toppings, they're glutton, they won't eat vegetables, and I'm a vegetarian so I have to get a separate pizza anyway, and when I do they always say 'Well why don't I have my own?' So to be blunt their spoiled rotten." I griped about my family. Out of the corner of my eye I could see him shake his head,

"They're ridiculous." He said. I scoffed in agreement and grinned,

"That they are." I said. The car came to a stop.

"You should smile more." He said, I looked over at him with a scornful look.

"What?" I said almost in disbelief.

"You don't smile much, you should smile more." He said once again.

"I don't have much to smile about." I said.

"You never now." He said. We were now half a block away from my home.

"Pull over." I said.

"What?" He asked me unsure of what I just said.

"I said pull over." I repeated myself. I exhaled as he pulled up to the side walk. I quickly unbuckled my seat-belt and opened the side door.

"Did I say something wrong?" He asked me. I shook my head at him.

"No, I just don't want them to see me pull up in your car." I told him. I could see relief was over him.

"Okay then, I'll see you then." he said. I smiled at him and then got out of the car. I opened up the back seat and grabbed the food. I then waved at him as he sped away. I walked down the sidewalk up to my house. I tensed when I saw Ben standing on the front porch

with his arm crossed, and a displeasing visage.

"Where the hell were you?" He barked at me. I rolled my eyes as I walked past him.

"Get you all food." I replied.

"The why did I see Levi's car go by?" I tensed at the mention of his name. How am I going to get around this one?

Think Avery.

Think.

I then remembered Grant, Bronson bragging to all his friends about his new *black*

charger. I turned around to face him and said.

"That must have been Grant's. Didn't Terrance tell you he got a new car?" I tried not to act smug, but my lips curled at the end. Ben looked at me with a skeptical look.

"Terrance!" He hollered down the hall. Terrance flung him self out of his room and looked over at his dad.

"Yeah?" He asked. I walked away from their conversation and went into the kitchen. I set the pizzas on the counter and grabbed mine.

"Did Grant get a new car?" He asked him.

"Yeah he did." He said.

"What type?" He asked him.

"Umm... a black dodge charger." He told Ben. Ben nodded at him. He exhaled and said with grief,

"Avery, your in the clear." I smiled to my self. Then Cathy walked in...

"What is this?" She sneered down at the the food.

"Pizza. I got you your own sausage pizza." I told her. She nodded and took a slice of pizza. I walked out of the kitchen and went into my room and locked my door like I always do.

Silence

Jericho

I unlocked the front door and walked in. I heard the pitter-patter of small feet running down the stairs. I then saw Erika's dark ash brown pigtails bounce as she ran down the steps. When she reached to bottom of the stairs her face lite up when she saw me. She ran full speed towards me, but tripped over the curled edge of the floor mat. She looked up at me with teary eyes.

"Oh Shit!" I said as I ran towards her. I scooped her up in my arms , and she wrapped her arms around my neck as she sobbed. Although Erika was six years old she was born with a growth defect and looks to be about four. I sat her on the third step and tried to walk away to get the first aid kit but she held an iron grip around my neck.

"Hey, Erika I need to get you a band-aid. Okay?" I told her calmly as I stood in an awkward bent over position. She shook her head at me and squinted her eyes shut.

"No." She said.

"Eri-"

"No don't go. I'm fine." She tried to say but the tears continued to flow.

"Yet your knees are bleeding." I said. I tried to stand up again, but she prevented me from leaving.

"No. I need to learn how to be tough." She said. I smiled down at her and ruffled her hair. Her hands instantly flung to the top of her head and she glared at me.

"Now what do you mean?" I asked her.

"I'm daddy's daughter and the youngest. So I need to be tough like

you." she explained. I laughed and lifted her up again. I rested my forehead against her's and said.

"Erika your right, you are the youngest, but you don't have to be made out of stone. You understand? That's why you have us, to be tough and mean for you. Got it?" I told her. She had stopped crying by now and nodded at me.

"I get it Jeri." She was the only person on the planet that I let call me that. Not even Mom could call me that.

"Now do you want a hello kitty or spider man bad-aid?" I asked her as I walked to the bathroom. She scoffed and said,

"I'm to old for that stuff. I'll have a red sparkly one." She said seriously. I laughed at her and took her to the bathroom.

I sat her down on the toilet seat as I searched for Erika's band-aid box.

"So... why do you smell funny?"she asked me. I smiled to my self sat the thought of Avery.

"I say a friend to day." I told her.

"It was a girl wasn't it! Is she pretty?" she asked me. I looked over at her and smiled. I thought about Avery when she smiled, her laugh, her freckles, her stunning green eyes, and her florescent orange hair. I loved how she had now use for cosmetics. She had nothing to him, well except for that nasty bruise. That then brought me to the thought of her leaving. If she knew what I was to her would she leave? Perhaps she would stay here with me, where she belongs, or perhaps she would be horrified and leave right then and there. I was brought back to reality when Erika snapped her fingers in front of my face.

"You in there , Jeri?" I looked over at her and said,

"Is she beautiful?" A smile once again played upon ,my lips at the mere thought of her. Erika's eyes shined with curiosity.

"Whats her name?"

"Avery"

"Is she like you?"

"She's human."

"Do you like her?" I felt completely godsmacked. MY mouth opened and closed like I was going to say something but I was at a lack of

words.

"What? No- I mean-" I didn't know how to explain this situation to a seven year-old. She squealed and leaped off the toilet seat. Before she ran out of the bathroom, she snatched the band-aid from my hand and ran down the hall. I got up to follow her and saw that she had stopped to put the band-aid on her knee and continued running. I laughed and started to follow her down the hall again.

"Mommy! Mommy!" She said as she burst in to the living room. My mother looked up from the book she was reading and smiled at us. Erika hopped up into her lap and started bouncing like the young giddy child she was.

"Guess what I heard." She said. My mother brushed her light brown hair over her shoulder and smiled down at her youngest child.

"And what might that be?" She asked her playfully.

"Jericho likes a girl!" Erika said with excitement. My mother's face went flat. She then looked over at me.

"Jericho, library now." She said with authority. She stood up and placed Erika on her feet. Erika looked confused thinking she had done something wrong. My mother walked past me, but I walked over to Erika.

"Did I get you in trouble?" She asked me. I shook my head at her and knelt down to her eye level.

"No. Never. Mom just needs to talk to me. You just go play with Chris and Mia, and I'll see you later okay." She smiled at me and ran to find her siblings. I then turned and looked down the dark hallway that lead towards the Library. Have you ever gotten that heavy feeling in your chest when you're nervous and somewhat scared? That feeling you get when your parents call you to talk to them, and you know you're in trouble? That's what I'm feeling now. Except my mom is at times a ruthless, viscous, and murderous alpha female. I dragged my feet down the hall as I walked towards the library. I gently opened the door and peeked in side. I looked over to see my mother sitting in a chair with a displeasing scowl on her face. There was hardly anything that terrified me but one of them is my mother.

"Close the door." she said using her alpha tone. Needless to say I did as I was told. Stepped onto the room and sat down across from

her.

"Jericho, what did she mean *you have a girl that you like*?

" She asked me sternly.

"exactly what she meant." I told her. I dared not even to look into her eyes. To be honest my sub-conscious told that I would turn to stone if I did.

"I forbid you." She told me. My head shot up and I looked at her in shock.

"Mom, you can't do that." I was almost in a panicked state. Not allowed to like? Is she denying me my mate? My eyes were wide as I searched hers for the slightest hint of compassion.

"I just did." Her eyes narrowed at me.

"What the hell do you think your doing?" I raged at her. She flinched slightly and then she became angry. Oh shit. The irises of her eyes turned a deep, shocking yellow. Mama wolf was here. She shot up out of her seat, causing it to fall over. She towered over me and looked murderous. I stayed in my seat and tried to stay calm. Future alpha or not, to her I was deifying her and her beast didn't like it at all.

"I know very well 'what the hell' I'm doing. I'm protecting you. Your almost eighteen, Jericho. You are at the age where you find your mate. What the hell are you going to do if you get serious with this girl and your mate pops up? Hmm? Are you just going to leave the girl? Will you reject your mate? Or will you stoop so low that you decide to have both? I'm not going to let that happen. I let you date other girls in the past because you need to feel as human as possible, but not any more. Do you understand?" Protect me? *Protect me?*

Was she serious does she even know?

"Mom-" I was cut off by her.

"No, Jericho. You think you get it but you don't. I-" I then returned the favor. I shot up from my chair, causing it to fall over as well.

"Dammit Mom. Will you listen to me for once?" I practically screamed at her. She was taken back, and her eyes faded and her teal colored eyes returned. I took a deep breath.

"Mom, I don't need your help."

"But I-" I cut her off again.

"Mom, Avery isn't just some girl. She's-"

"She's what?" She snarled at me.

"My mate!" I yelled at her. She stared at me in shock and brought her hand to her mouth.

"Sh-She's what?" She said in disbelief.

"My mate." I repeated. Tears were now streaming down her face.

"Mom..." I lost my train of thought when she wrapped her arms around me.

"I'm so proud." She whispered. She then pulled back and said.

"Well..." She said. I stared at her confused.

"Well what?" I asked her.

"What pack is she from. Who's her alpha?" She asked me. I exhaled and shook my head at her.

"Mom... Avery doesn't have an Alpha." I told her. Her smile widened,

"So she's the Alpha?" She asked hopefully. I shook my head at her.

"Oh my God, she's a rouge!" She gasped. I shook my head again.

"Well then what is it then?" She snapped.

"She's human." I told her. Her eyes widened.

"Have you told her?" She asked me.

"No." I told her.

"Well when will you?"

"And exactly what would I tell her? That I'm a wolf and she's my mate? She just agreed to be my friend you really think she's going to be okay with that?" I asked her. She sighed and said,

"I guess your right, but your going to have to tell her soon." I nodded my head at her and said,

"I know."

"You are dismissed." She told me. I bowed slightly and then turned to leave.

I walked up stairs and to the third door on the right. Allen and Ash's room. I knocked on the door and waited. Allen opened the door and looked pissed.

"What do you want?" He asked me.

"I need to speak with Ash." I said. He glared at me and opened the

door and I saw Ash sitting on the bed with a flustered look on her face. Her blonde hair was tousled , her cheeks were a bright crimson red, and her top wasn't buttoned correctly and the first four buttons were undone. I raised my eye brows at Allen and said,

"That's gross." I told him.

"My room. I can use the bed how I want." I scoffed at him and called over to Ash.

"Hey Ash." She looked up at me and blushed as she remembered her current appearance.

"Um- Yeah?" she said nervously.

"I need to talk to you. I'll give you a minuet to *rearrange*

yourself." I said with a smirk as I closed the door. I leaned against the wall and waited for her. About five minuets later she opened the door with a new top, glossed lips and perfect hair.

"I take it I interrupted something then?" I said with a wide grin. She walked past me as she mumbled.

"The hell you did." She snapped at me. We walked to the end of the hall to doubled door archway. This was my room. We walked into the room and she held her hand open. I went to one of the shelves and picked up a bundle of dried sage and then tossed it to her. She immediately walked over to one of the candles, and began to burn the sage. She was preforming a secrecy spell that prevented other from hearing us.

"So what do you need?" She began.

"A favor." I said. She rolled her eyes.

"When do you not?"

"I talked to Avery." I told her.

"And..." She urged me on.

"She's giving me a chance."

"Well good for you. Now cut to the chase." She ordered.

"Here's the thing. I need Aver in my life, and she said she would give me a chance, but she's worried that Terrance will blab. That's where you come in."

"So do you want a silence spell, recurring memory loss, or preferably death."

"Can you do both?" I asked her. She looked at me with a smug look on her face.

"I could do all three if you want." I take it she's still pissed at him for the hazing incident a few years back.

"I don't want him dead. Now what could you do?" I asked her. She smirked and I could see something flash in her eyes.

"I have one in mind. I'll be right back." She then turned and left the room. I sat down on the edge of my bed and waited for her. I watched as my ceiling fan circled around and around. My head shot towards the door as I heard yelling and heavy foot steps.

Suddenly a highly annoyed Ashlin burst in with her grimoire in hand, and a fuming Allen on her heels.

"Ash, are you even listening? I said no!" He yelled at her. She rolled her eyes at him and turned to look at him,

"No, Allen I didn't hear you. I was trying to tune you out." Allen's face grew redder at her comment.

"Did you find one?" I asked her.

"Yeah I did, but Mr. pussy over here has his panties in a wad ,and won't let me try it."

"Because I said hell no!" Allen shouted. She closed her eyes and inhaled deeply in an attempt to calm her self.

"So what's the spell?" I asked her. She set it down on the coffee table and opened the grimoire and pointed to the page.

"Ash- are you even listening? I said no!" Allen yelled at us. Ashlin snapped. She turned to him , as mad as hell and said,

"Enough Allen! *Hakkpeashka*

!" She shouted a muting spell at him and even though he continued to yell no sound came out of his mouth.

"Thank God." She said under her breath.

"Why didn't you do that earlier?" I asked her. She looked at me and gave me the "duh!" look and said,

"What do you think happens when I remove it?"

"I think this spell will be the most effective. It's a removal spell. This one uses a elixir, and requires an assigned trigger word. I think I should use both your's and Avery's name. Basically I would give him

the elixir, say the triggers and then he would become incapable of saying her name as well as yours. Also every time the word is mentioned he'll instantly forget all the events involving you two a few hours prior." She explained to me. I just nodded.

"So why is he so pissed over this? Seems easy." I said. Her cheeks heated up as she said,

"To give him the elixir I have to k-kiss him." Her face flushed after she said it.

"Then it's not an option." I told her.

"Yes it is. It's the best one." She argued.

"You and I both know that Allen will kill him."

"Does that matter?" She mumbled.

"Ash!"

"Look I know that it's humiliating, but it's the best one! There isn't a damn spell in there that's comes even close. The others only stay in affect for a few hours! This is the best one. I can deal with a bit of humility for about 20 seconds, after that you two are home free." She justified.

"You really are bent on this aren't you." I stated. She nodded her head at me.

"I want to help you two. I need to get close to Avery to see Angie." She said. I instantly understood every thing. She is convinced that Avery is in connection with her old friend Angela, and she sees earning Avery's favor would help her see Angela again. She scoffed at me and said,

"I'm doing it with or without both your approval. Jericho, you wanted my help and now your gonna get it." And with that she left the room.

Rats Tongue

I tried my best to stay focused on the road ,but that was hard hard to do when Ash kept complaining about Allen's "possessiveness" as she puts it. Ash typically road to school with Allen, but after she said she was going to do the spell, Allen went nuts. And when she removed the mute spell, he had a lot to say... more then she could handle. Henceforth why I have a pissed off and slightly bitchy Ash in my car, and a beyond angry and overprotective Allen using my motorcycle. Poor Tyler. His iPod broke this morning so he is forced to listen to Ash, and every now and then Ash makes him agree with her. Over the years I have learned how to tune her out when she gets into these rants. I love Ash. I really do, but right now I could do with out her.

"Jer? Jericho! Are you even listening?"She asked me.

"What?" I said blankly. She looked at me in disbelief.

"Are you serious? I just asked you if you think Allen should apologies." She said.

"Yes. Ashlin, he should. Are you done with your rant?" I said. She looked at me with a insulted look on her face. She then rolled her eyes at me and said,

"You just want to see you little mate." she stated.

"Now that your right about." I told her. She looked out the window with a wide smile and scoffed.

"Males." She said under her breath.

"Hey did you read her fill? I left a copy of it on your desk last night." He asked me. I nodded my head at him in the mirror.

"Not all of it but the major things. Her birthday is on April 29th, She is allergic to celery, mustard, and parsnips, and she has a tendency to get sick in the middle of the day." I told him.

"Don't forget the fact that in fourth grade, she was suspended for fighting." He said. I laughed slightly. Avery fighting? I couldn't see it.

"Or that she plans on becoming a florist or art major." Ashlin Chimed in. I smirked and said,

"I didn't read the whole thing because I would feel like a stalker, but I see you two didn't restrain from reading it." I teased them. Ashlin punched me in the shoulder.

"Hey, I just wanted to know more about the girl that's stealing my man from me." She teased me.

"Say that in front of Allen." Tyler mocked her from the back of the car. Ashlin turned around in her seat and tried to look offended ,but instead she ended up smiling at him.

"I'll burn you." She threatened him. He laughed.

"With what your freaky bane powers or your demon powers?" He said sarcastically.

"No with holy water. And my powers aren't demon powers. I'm Christian thank you very much." She narrowed her eyes at him.

"Oh my God! A Christian witch! I need to find the camera this is a rare sighting!" He teasingly grabbed his bag and started digging through it. I laughed as he pulled out a camera and snapped a picture of a scowling Ashlin. He looked down at the screen and said, "Aww! So cute!" which earned him a,

"Fuck you." From Ash. I laughed at their childish behavior as we pulled up to the school. Ashlin stiffened at the sight of the school.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" I asked her. She didn't respond. I looked back at Tyler and jerked my head to the side telling him to get out of the car. His eyes widened and he scampered out of the car.

"Ash, why do you want to do this so bad?" I asked her.

"My mom." Was all she said.

"What? Your mom is-" I stopped my self in mid sentence. I knew it was still a fresh wound for her.

"I know, but if I can- What do you know about the ghost world?" She asked me.

"Not much why?" I asked her.

"I read that ghost are in contact with one another, and they can see things that we can't."

"Like?"

"Our future, our deaths, all the lies were told, our regrets, fears, dreams... all of it."

"What does this have to do with your mom?" I asked her. She stayed silent for a long time.

"Have you ever had a dream that you die and it feels so real? I keep having this dream that I die over and over and over. I figured that the only one that can tell me their meaning and how to prevent it is my mom. However theirs a bit of a road block..." She said.

"So by helping Avery you'll be able to...." I trailed off.

"I'll be able to see my mom." With that said she got out of the car and made her way towards the school. After about a minuet of watching her make he way to the school I got out as well. I walked into the school building to see ash pulling out a small vial and swishing it back. I then looked down the hall to see Terrance closing his locker shut. Ashlin stormed over to him with a pissed off look o n her face. Terrance turned around to see Ashlin storming towards him. Terrance sneered at her and said,

"What the hell do you want?" With out even answering Ashlin grabbed his face , and crashed her lips to his. She forced his mouth open with her tongue and my keen eyes could see a blue tinted liquid drip down his chin. She push her mouth harder against him and forced him to swallow. As soon as he did she tore away from him and whisper in his ear.

"You will not breath the names Avery and Jericho, and you shall not think of them. " With that she pushed away from him and walked down the hall way towards me Tyler, and Allen. I thought she looked pissed before but now she looked deadly. She whipped her mouth with her sleeve and walked up to Allen. She threw her arms around his neck and crashed her lips against his. I looked away felling as if I was intruding and waited for them to finish.

"Well you knew what you were doing." Tyler said to Ash. Ashlin turned around to face him.

"I grew up with that spell." She said. Allen instantly stiffened. Ashlin laughed and playfully punched him in the shoulder.

"I didn't do the spell my mom did. How do you think I got through element school?" I then recalled a little girl with pig tails always

getting into trouble but never being punished.

"Anyway don't worry that was the worst kiss I ever had." She says as she leans into Allen. We all snickered. We then heard a loud shriek of excitement and saw a human girl named Lily walking towards us. Lily was on the dance team and was part of the "in" crowd like the four of us. However we prefer to stick to ourselves.

"Oh my god Ashley what was that?" She said as she tried her hardest not to look over at Tyler. Poor guy.

"It's Ashlin." Ashlin corrected her under her breath.

"It was part of a dare." Allen said.

"Then why did you do it?" She pressed.

"For fifty bucks." Tyler said as he reached in to his wallet.

"Tyler, you are so mean!" She squealed. I flinched at her high pitched voice. I then saw four others walking over to us. Annie, Mikaela, Trent, and Taylor. Taylor's eyes wandered over to me and that same hurt yet still loving look gleamed in them. Taylor and I dated almost a year ago. I dumped her for cheating, yet she swears it meant nothing. I drowned out the sound of the chatter of the others as I scanned the hallways for a little redhead girl. But I didn't see her. But I knew that if Terrance was here then she must be as well... unless she's out again. My wolf whined at that thought. I was ripped out of my thoughts when I felt a soft hand on my arm.

"Hey..." I looked down to see Taylor looking at me with longing eyes.

"Can we talk?" She asked me. I shook my head at her as I brushed her hand off,

"We have talked, and the answer is still no." I told her.

"But I've-" She was cut off by Ashlin.

"Taylor give it a rest. You screwed up, he found out, and now he's moved on. You're making yourself look pathetic and needy." Ashlin has always and I mean *always*

hated Taylor. Even when Taylor and I were dating. Taylor looked at her with a stunned look.

"You're such a bitch." she said in almost a whisper. She knew Ashlin was right, we all did. Taylor walked away once again acting hurt and claiming to be the victim. I shook my head and said,

"I'm gonna go." I said as I walked away.

"Jericho!" Allen yelled after me. I turned and looked at him,

"Yeah?" I asked.

"I saw her in the classroom." He said. I knew who he was referring to.

Truth

I walked into the science room and saw her sitting in her usual spot reading her book.

"Avery." I said. She looked up at me. I noticed a glassy and unaffected look in her eyes and then she looked back down at her novel. What the hell? Was she ignoring me?

"Avery?" I said as I walked towards her. She didn't look up.

"Yes?" She answered me not removing her eyes from the book.

"Is everything alright?" I asked her. There was a long silence.

"Everything is fine Jericho." I stiffened when she said my name with no emotion at all.

"It doesn't seam that way." I told her. She slammed her book shut and looked up at me. Only now her brow was tightly knit and the green eyes were cold and hard.

"I said everything is fine. Are we done here?" She snapped at me. I was taken back.

"Yeah we are." I said. I sat down in the seat next to her in frustration.

"What the hell are you doing?" She asked me.

"Sitting with my friend." I told her. She groaned and gathered her stuff and moved to the front of the room. If I remembered correctly just last night we were getting along fine. I did thee same and moved to the seat next to her. we did this about five times before I had enough of this game. I grabbed her wrist a little to tight as she got up to move again. She winced at the pain. The way she winced was not from me squeezing her wrist. I saw tears well up in her eyes I instantly let go of her hand. I then absorbed her appearance. Long sleeved shirt, a hoodie, and finger less gloves. I grabbed her arm and lifted it up. The gears in my head started turning.

"No!" She yelled. This only edged me on. She tried to yank her arm away from me but it was hopeless. I quickly slid the layers away

from her wrist. I was in shock at what I saw. It took all my will power to contain my wolf from shifting right then. Her small wrist was surrounded by a thick black and blue ring. I tilted her wrist to see that three other half rings circled her wrist as well.

"Who did this?" I growled. She didn't answer. I studied her as she looked out the door at what seemed like thousands of people.

Avery

Jericho roughly dragged me by my arm out of the classroom. I gripped the frame of the doorway and yelled at him as I wanked my arm away from him,

"Wait! What about class?" Jericho looked around at the people surrounding us.

"Fuck it." he said as he grabbed my arm again and pulled me down the hallways and out of the school. Why was he doing this? Because he saw my wrist and wanted answers. He pulled me to the dumpsters behind the gym. The gray concrete walls were decorated with graffiti, and an old bench sat up against the wall. Most likely the smokers had dragged it here.

Jericho turned around and faced me. His face was agonizing he looked so hurt and in pain.

"Avery , please... who did this to you?" He asked me. I stayed silent and silently debated within my self weather or not to tell him. Could I trust him? He swears to me that he cares about me, but is that true? I bet he says that to all his fake friends. Let's say I did tell him... how would he react? Would he be repulsed at how weak I am and leave me. As much as I hated to admit it my heart constricted and felt heavy at that thought. I didn't want to be left alone. If he did I would be more alone then be for. That scared me senselessly. What if he told someone? Oh God that would not do at all. What

would I do if he told? That would mess up everything! Let's say if, and I mean *if*

I did tell him. Then what? Would he pity me? Would he hate me? Would he see me any different then he does now. All these questions buzzed around my head relentlessly. The gears in my head turned and looked at every angle and possibility of the outcome.

I don't want to be alone.

I Don't.

But could I trust him? That was my main question. I had a plan and if I told him that might alter things.

"Avery... pleas say something." He pleaded. I began to tremble. I stumbled towards the bench as my knees quaked underneath me. I sat down on the bench and squeezed my eyes shut. Could I do it? Could I tell him? Should I tell him. I felt Jericho sit down next to me and take my hand in his.

Trust him.

I heard a warm a smooth voice say. The voice gave me a sense of Déjà vu. My head instantly shot up and I looked all around me in search for the voice. I anticipated to find Angela somewhere, but she was no where to be seen. Angela was the one who gave me confidence and guidance at moments like this. However at this moment she was absent and I was left to make the final decision. I looked into Jericho's eyes. Could I trust him? Was he going to leave me more alone then before? There was only one way to find out. I took a deep breath and said,

"All of them." I felt his grip tighten on my hand.

"All of them who?" He growled.

"My family." He grasped my hand and brought it to his forehead as if he was praying.

"How long has this been going on?" He asked me.

"Since I was fifteen so roughly almost four years." I told him slowly and calmly. I Heard him curs under his breath. There was a long and tense silence after that.

"Pleas... don't- don't tell anyone." I begged him. As soon as I said

this he dropped my hand.

"Why would you say that? Avery it's dangerous. We need to get you out of there." He said frantically.

"You think I don't know that? Where would I go? Even if I did leave they would just hall me back to that hell hole and that would make things even worse. My best bet is to wait till I'm eighteen." I told him.

"Why can't you leave?" He asked me.

"Trust me I tried. I almost made it to the boarder, but Ben's on the police force so the police didn't help me. I told them but they just told me Ben would never do something like that. So they sent me back and things became worse." I told him.

"Then what are you going to do?" He asked me. I shook my head at him.

"At the moment there's nothing I can do. Before I leave I'm going to press charges against them, but I want to wait until Terrance is eighteen as well. That way he can be charged as an adult. But until then... I have to wait it out." Jericho wrapped his arms around me and brought me close to him.

"Listen to me. As soon as you get home lock your door and don't come out unless you absolutely have to. If any thing and I mean any thing happens then call me and I'll pick you up. It will be alright." He said in a shaky voice. I wrapped my arms around him and rested my face in the crook of his neck.

"I will." I promised him. He pulled away from me and exhaled.

"Now, why did you act like that this morning?" He asked me.

"Oh... sorry. I guess I do that when I'm on edge or trying to hide something. I just didn't want you to see the bruises." I said as I rubbed my wrist.

"I guess that makes sense. Why didn't you want me to know? He asked me.

"I didn't want you to pity me. The last thing I need is for people treating me different because I have a not so perfect life. So really can you blame me?" I told him.

"No I really can't." He said. He then reluctantly stood up and stretched his hand out at me.

"Now, we have a science class we are missing." And just like that I

took his hand and we walked back towards the school.

Aftershock

Word cannot describe what I am felling right now. Perhaps relieved? I felt like I had been rid of a small fraction of my troubles. Only a little. So much still remained. I also felt thankful to both Jericho and myself. To myself: for letting my walls fall. To Jericho: for caring about me and not walking away like so many others have done. I glanced down at my wrist and remembered the whole event. I couldn't help but smile

I currently sat across from Angela on my bed. We sat facing each other with our legs crossed. Her large dark doe eyes stared at me intently. Her dark hair fell in multiple ringlets. She wore a raspberry red scope cut neckline dress with floral lace skirt. When I look at this beautiful girl... my heart sinks. No matter how many times I ignore it or talk to her I can't help but to remember that sh's dead. It pains me to think that my best friend is one day going to move on and I will be alone.

"So?" she edged me on. My mind was ripped from my train of thoughts when she spoke.

"So what?" I asked her. She rolled her eyes and said,

"What happened with Jericho?" she said.

"Oh." I said. Looking down at my lap.

"I told him about well...." I trailed off. She raised her eyebrow at me and smiled.

"about what?" she asked me.

"About- He saw my bruises so I told him how I got them. The truth I mean." I said.

“That’s good.” I heard her say. I looked at her in shock.

“What?” I asked her. She sighed and said,

“Avery, if you haven’t noticed ... I’m dead. There isn’t much I can do to help you. I know that it kills you to do all this alone. You need to come to terms with the fact that I’m not human.” My heart clenched at her words. I hung my head not wanting to accept the fact she was dead. I wasn’t ready to face it.

“You were human.” I said under my breath.

“This isn’t about me this is about you trusting him.” She said. My eyes drifted up to look at her.

“Am I ready?” I asked myself out loud. She smiled at me and said,

“You need to. In more ways than one. I said this earlier, I can see things you can’t. Trust me Avery, you need to trust him.” She told me. That’s the thing... I don’t know if I can.” I told her.

“What do you mean?” She said in almost a whisper.

“I’m blind to him.” I told her.

“Well isn’t that a good thing? At least for a while?” She asked me. I must admit this did comfort me.

“Is it?” I asked her doubtfully. She sighed and said,

“It depends on how you look at it. It may seem hard to trust him because of it, but it might be the only time you will have to trust him. Meaning no more of the freaky Long Island Medium crap.” I laughed at that. I gently fell backwards on my bed and relaxed as I stared up at the ceiling.

“Maybe your right.” I whispered. After a long silence she spoke again.

“Another thing... There are things about him that I want to tell you but it’s not my place to. He’s going to tell you soon and when he does you need to believe him.” She said.

“Again with the trust?” I sarcastically asked her.

"Trust me your going to need a lot of it with him." She said. After that it was silent once more. My mind danced around with thoughts. I could see Jericho, I could see what he was doing right now. I saw him sitting on a large couch with a small girl on his lap that looked about four. I then saw Ashlin who was sitting by herself surrounded by books simply reading. I then remembered the look on Angelas face when she saw Ashlin the other day.

"Angela," I said.

"Yes?" She answered back.

"How do you know Ashlin?" I asked her.

"I use to babysit her until she moved away." She told me.

"I think you should talk to her." I finally said.

Dreamer

Jericho

I was jerked awake by the sound of a pitter-patter going past my room followed by the sound of an elephant running down the hall. Ah... Ashlin and Allen are up. I rolled out of bed and dragged myself to the stair well to see what the fuss was about.

I peered from my place on the stairs to see Ashlin with tears running down her face as Allen tried to calm her down. He was falling however.

"Come on Kitten it was just a dream. Nothing more. I'm still here and so are you." He cooed in her ear. Ashline pushed away from him.

"Your not the one having them! Do you know what its like to see yourself die a painful death evrynight? Do you even remember what happenes if I die? You die to! Only twice as worse and I'm sick of watching it! I'm not upset about me dieing, it's you! I just can't handel the thought of seeing you die like that. It gets worse every night. I can't-" She then crumbled to the floor sobbing harder then before. Allen instantly picked her up bridal style and held her tightly against his chest.

"I know. I know. I would have your nightmares for you if I could." He said gently. I couldn't help but smile at this. He knew Ash better then anyone. He knew that her only fear was death, and he knew how to comfert her, her knew how to care for her. He walked slowly up the stairs with a withered Ashlin in his arms. I walked ahead of them and

pushed their door open for them. Allen nodded at me. After he had tucked Ash in he walked out of the room to talk to me.

"Is she okay?" I asked. He brushed his fingers threw his hair,

"Yeah, she'll be fine. But even if she was normal dreams like that every night can take a tole on you. I've had enough of it as well, we need to figure out how to end them." He said.

"Erika says she plays with Ashlin evry day in the library, presonaly I think she's already looking into it." I told him.

"Does this have anything to do with her helping you and Avery?" He asked me. I exhailed and nodded.

"Yeah, It's the reason she even helped. She thinks her old babysitter is haunting Avery, and she figured that if she gets close to Avery she gets close to the ghost. She said something about all spirits are conected?" I told him. He sunk down to the floor and cupped his face in his hands.

"Shit." He said under his breath.

"What's wrong?" I asked him.

"she's going to contact her mom, or worse her dad." He said. My eyes widened.

"I thought her old man was back in seatle." I told him.

"Yeah he is, but six feet under. He died of alcohol piosening about two weeks ago. Now he really is a deadbeat dad." he said.

"Why would Ash try to contact her dad? I thought her mom was the witch and he's the bane." I stated.

"He's both... apparently Ash's mom brought him back from the dead and when she did she lost some of her power to him. After that he was a half witch half bane like Ash... only a hell lot more powerful." He explained.

"So what your saying is...." I urged him.

"Technically Ashlin is a full witch but a half bane at the same time. Her father was about twice as powerful then her mom... so I wondering if she-" I cut him off before he could finish.

"Turn to the parent with the most power? She probably will but we won't let her." I confirmed.

"Alpha's order?" He said as he smirked up at me. I reached my hand down for him to grab,

"Alpha's order." I told him as I smirked back at him. I walked ahead of him towards the kitchen but turned back to see him leaning against the door.

"You coming?" I asked him. He shook his head at me.

"No. Ashlin is sleeping. I've got to stand guard." he said. He did this everytime she was sleeping without him. He would stand guard so he knew exactly when she woke up, and to make sure no one hurt her while she was sleeping. I smiled and walked down the hall.

I walked into the kitchen to see Erika dinging in a box of cereal most likely looking for the free toy. When she heard me walk into the kitchen she stopped what she was doing and ran over to me.

"Jeri!" She yelled happily. She leaped at me and I caught her in my arms and lifted her up onto my shoulders. I looked over to see that the rest of my family was gathered at the table as well. Dylan constantly shook his blond hair to the side of his face so he could

see the screen of his PSP. Chris sat on a bar stool eating waffles and zoning out on the TV. As for Mia... well she was the same as any frustrating, abnoxious, fourteen year-old girl . She was like every other stuck up, spoiled girl her age, her face was caked with foundation to cover every "imperfection", her dirty blond hair was slightly frizzed from over styling it, and she was absorbed in a coversation over text.

"Mia.." I said in a stern voice. She rolles her eyes and closed her phone,

"What?" She snapped at me in a shill and annoying voice.

"What?" I mocked her. "Your at breakfast put your phone away." I told her. she rolled her eyes again and scoffed at me.

"Your not alpha yet Jeri. So dont tell me what to do." She said with a smug look.

"Don't call me that, and keep it up and I'll use my alpha tone on you, smartass." I told her. She flinched at my words and shoved her phone in her purse. Needless to say, Mia was my least favorite of my siblings.

I looked over at Dylen who had already gotten the message and paused his game and put it up on the counter. Dylen as the smart one, a little geeky yes, but he was brilient. He could take his PSP apart and put it back together perfectly. Dylen was sixteen.

My eyes then drifted to Cris who was twelve was quiet. I barely ever heard him talk. That was why he was my next favorite... he never annoyed me.

Erika pulled on my cheeks as she said,

"Jeri, Jeri, Jeri! I'm hungry can you help me get food?" She asked

me. Because the counters were too high for her Erika couldn't get food on her own, I was often the one to help her. I slid her off my shoulders and smiled at her. I put her in her booster and went over to the counter and made her waffles.

"plain or chocolate chip?" I asked her.

"Chocolate chip please!" She called. I put two chocolate chip waffles on her plate.

"Strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries?" I asked her.

"All of them!" She called. I smiled and put the fruit on the waffles. I then put whipped cream, chocolate syrup, and a cherry on top.

"No bacon?" She whined.

"You have enough food for two of you." I said.

"Please?" she whimpered. I scoffed at her and took two strips of bacon on her plate. Right before I set it down on her place mat I went back and drizzled syrup all over the waffles. I placed it in front of her and her eyes lit up like the small child she was. Mia stopped eating her fruit salad and turned to Erika and said,

"Be careful, Erika. If you eat too much of that shit you'll get fat." Mia sneered at her. Erika dropped her fork and stared at me with a worried look. Our parents turned around in their chairs and stared down Mia.

"Is that true?" She asked me sounding like she was going to cry. I shot daggers at Mia,

"What the hell, Mia?" I growled at her.

"What? It's true." She stated as if she had no idea what she did

wrong.

"She's a kid, unlike you she didn't have a shrew for a big sister so knock it off." I warned her.

"Awesome, since I made the brat cry, that means I can leave. Right?" She said as she grabbed her phone and headed up stairs.

"That's not the case." Our mother said. Mia turned around and looked at them in shock.

"What?" She asked them.

"You heard her, letting you leave would be a reward. So you can give your mother your phone and Ipod and purse while you sit at the edge of table and don't say another word until you eat all your food and then do the dishes." Our father said. Our father was still her alpha so even if she didn't want to she had to. She crossed her arms and rolled her eyes and slammed her things down on the table.

"There happy?" She said as she dramatically went to the edge of the counter and sat on a bar stool. I rolled my eyes and shook my head at her.

Just then Ash and Allen walked in. I looked over to where Mia was sitting and cursed under my breath. Mia and Ashlin got along about as much as North and South Korea, and Mia had decided to sit right next to the seat Ashlin had marked as hers.

Ashlin sauntered over to her seat and pivoted the seat away from Mia, so she wouldn't have to look at her. She then crossed her legs and refused to even share the same air as her. I glanced over at Allen who was preparing Ashlin and himself food like he did every morning. I opened my mouth to say good-morning to him and Ash but didn't have the opportunity to when I heard a *splat*

sound followed by a

"You little shrew!" from Ashlin. I turned around to see Ashlin boiling

red, glaring at Mia who had a smirk on her face. I then looked at Ashlin's hair to see it caked with pink strawberry oatmeal.

"How do you know it was me?" She asked her with a smirk.

"No one else eats this disgusting low fat, tasteless, crap. So how do you think I know?" Ashlin yield at her.

"Listen you homeless skank," The second that I knew Mia was going to say that word I covered Erika's ears. "I didn't do it." Mia fired back at her as she slid her bowl of oatmeal down to to Chris. Chris raised his eyebrows at her and got up and placed it once again in front of Mia. Ashlin was one who didn't take shit even from a middle schooler. She stood up and slammed her hands on the counter and towered over Mia. Mia eyes widen out of fear of Ashlin touching her.

"No you listen here your future whore"" I once again covered Erika's ears. "You remember what I am and what you are. This is whats going to happen you apologize and own up to it or your going to get a bane's burn the size of my fist right on your artificial face." Ashlin said in a menacing tone. Mia cowered under her out of fear, and had obviously forgotten that Ashlin was more threatening, stronger, and powerful then she was.

"I'm sorry. It was me." Mia said in a shaky voice. I scoffed at the fact that Mia was nothing but a coward. Ashlin smiled in satisfaction and sat down and began to eat her food.

"what's a skank?" We all turned and looked at Erika ,who in all honesty was so quiet that we all had forgotten she was even there.

"A mean word you should never use." My mother said. She then glared at Ashlin and Mia for using bad language around Erika, and Chris.

We all sat in a long heavy silence as we finished our food. After I finished and so did Erika, I picked up our plates and placed them on the sink.

"Jericho," I heard my mother say.

"Yes.." I answered.

"Why don't you go run some errands and take Erika with you." She said.

"Alright." I said. I then walked over to Erika and scooped her up in my arms.

* * *

Somehow I had ended up taking Erika to her favorite places instead of getting groceries for mom. I doubt she will mind though, I think she had planned this would happen from the beginning. Erika and I walked down the sidewalk passed the small shops hand-in-hand and she swung our hands and lapped away at her mint chocolate chip ice cream. Her pigtail braids bounced with each step that she took as well as her ruffled dress.

I came to a rough stop as a familiar and pleasantly intoxicating smell engulfed me. The smell of fresh rain water and lilacs was beginning to become my favorite sent. I stranded my keen eyes to search for that florescent orange color. My heart skipped a beat when I saw her about five stores down reading a book at a small table in front of a flower shop.

"Jeri?" I heard Erika ask. I snapped back to the present when I felt her tug on my arm.

"Come on kiddo, we're going to go say hi to a friend of mine. I said with a grin as I hosted her up onto my left shoulder. As we approached her I noticed she was to absorbed in her book to notice the world around her. As I stood right in front of her and my large mass blocked out the sun and casted a shadow over her. She noticed the sudden darkness and glanced up at us. she slightly squinted her green eyes and brushed her wavy orange hair out of her way.

"Jericho." She said as she noticed who was towering over her.

My Sunshine

Avery

It was a un usealy warm and sunny day. The type of day that even the girls in California would be envious of. I had slipped out of the house through my window not wanting to cross paths wit my family. I had managed to grade my sling tote bag and fill it with my umbrella, sun glasses, chap-stick, wallet, cellphone, and my novel. I was currently sitting at a small table in front of an unknown flower shop, simply reading my book as I enjoyed this rare and short Indian summer. It was as simple as that. I young normal girl enjoying her weekend by basking in the warm sunshine that was about as rare as snow in Florida. That was the only flaw of Washington state. The sun never shined and the skies cried day and night. However I still loved it here. The greenery that stretched for miles and the constant smell or fresh air and rain.

As I continued to read my novel in the sunlight, a sudden darkness cascaded over me. I looked around at my surrounding and noticed that my surrounds were still bathed in light. I looked up in front of me and saw that it was a figure that was blocking my light. I squinted my eyes and tried to identify the person in front of me. I pushed my hair out of my face. As my eyes adjusted I made out the large build and dirty blond hair-

"Jericho." I said As I realized who it was. When I said his name I could see him smile against his black silhouette. The tips of his hair seamed to expand into a halo of light. I looked over to his left shoulder and saw a small frame of a child perched on his should.

"Mind if we sit?" He asked me. I nodded my head as I said,

"Sure why not?" As I said this he slid the chair back and sat the

small girl on his lap. She looked to be an older toddler with her dark hair pulled back, and the same teal eyes. Perhaps she was three or four- at the latest.

"Say hi ,Erika." He whispered into the child's ear. I then took a sip of my iced tea.

"Hi, I'm Erika. I'm Jeri's baby sister, and I'm seven year's old." When she said seven I choked on my tea and gasped for air. Seven? she so little. I looked over at Jericho who was snickering.

"I'm Avery." I said awkwardly as I dabbed my face with a napkin.

"Are you Jeri's friend?" She asked.

"You could say that." I told her. After that the three of us were silent until Jericho spoke.

"Does your Family know your here?" He asked me.

"No. They think I'm in my room sleeping or studying." I told him.

"Then how did you get out?" He asked me.

"I took a screwdriver to the window." I answered simple.He scoffed at my comment.

"So I take it you have work today?"

"No, not today."

"So what are you doing here?" He asked me.

"Enjoying to sun like the rest of the city."I said.

"That's all?" He asked me. I nodded my head.

"I don't exactly have anything else to do." I told him. After that we returned to the awkward silence as I continued to read and sip away at my tea. Every now and then I would look over to see Jericho taping away at his sleek iphone.

"Okay it's done!" He jumped up excitedly and yelled. When he did this I jumped from the sudden shock and spit my tea all over. He grabbed Erika's hand I had assumed that they were going to say their good-byes to me. Of course I was proved utterly wrong. Jericho Grabbed hold of my hand and yanked my up and started running. I was lucky to grab all my things when he started to drag me away. I held my Straw boater's hat down with my hand and slung my bag over my shoulder as we ran. I laughed at his child like behavior and Erika squealed with excitement as we ran down the sidewalk, the three of us hand in hand. People shouted at us, others

laughed along, but we didn't mind them. I hadn't laughed and smiled like this for a while now. As We ran I looked around and wondered where Angela was. Most likely perched somewhere watching this little scene. A smiled played on my lips as we halted to a stop in front of his car.

He opened the door and buckled up Erika up in her seat. He then opened the passenger door and said,

"Get in." His smile beamed at me.

"What? Why?" I asked him.

"Were going on a field trip. Don't worry it will be fun." I hesitated and shifted my wight from one foot to the other.

...

...

Go on

. I heard the voice say. I looked around but once again saw no Angela. I squeezed my eyes shut And took a beep breath. *They wouldn't find out. I'll be careful.*

I said to myself. I urged my feet forward and got into the car. I quickly buckled my seat belt and closed the door. Jericho soon got in as well.

"Glad you could join us." He said.

"You know this counts as kidnapping. Right?" I told him he snorted at my remark and said,

"Sorry, but you got in the car on your own will." He said with a cocky smirk on his face. I laughed and rolled my eyes.

"So where are you taking me?" I asked him.

"Were going to Erickson Park. I told Ashlin, Allen, Tyler and the others to meet us there." We then heard Erika groan

"Is Mia going to be there?" She said with a pout on her face.

"Yes she was invited but I doubt she will show up." He told her as he started the engine of his car. Erika crossed her arms and pouted.

"I liked Carolin better. She would have come." She pouted.

"Erika..." Jericho said in a disproving voice.

"Who's Carolin?" I asked. Jericho's shoulder's dropped slightly and I

could tell it was a touchy subject just from the feeling of grief rolling of his chest.

"My older sister." Erika said in a quiet voice. I had a feeling that she was no longer with them. After that it was some what quiet. I rested my head against the door and let the hum of the engine rock my to a gentle sleep.

To be continued....

Rain on My Parade

Avery

We pulled up to park after about a full twenty minutes of peaceful sleep. By the time I had woken up the tension and grief had both disappeared from the atmosphere of the car.

As we made our way over to the field in the distance I saw Ashlin and Allen tossing a Frisbee back and forth. We walked up to them and Erika ran over towards Ashlin. Ashlin scooped her up in her arms and lifted her up. I looked around and recognized Allen Tyler and Ashlin, but did not recognize two younger looking boys.

Jericho waved at her and her and Allen walked towards us hand-in-hand. Ashlin was dressed very simple for once. At school she wears trendy clothes, like the things you see at Forever 21, Wet Seal, and Betty Jonson. But today she let her hair down in wild natural curls, wore a simple baggy gray t-shirt, a pair of black Wayfarer sunglasses, flip-flops, and dark grey skinny jeans.

"Hey." She said with a warm smile.

"Hey." Jericho said back to her. I only nodded and smiled at her. Honestly it felt awkward being in a group of people. I felt like I was being observed and dissected. I shifted my weight uncomfortably from one leg to the other. I avoided eye contact and scanned the area hoping to see Angela. Once again she was nowhere to be seen.

"Right Avery?" I heard Ashlin say. I then looked back at her.

"What was that?" I asked her.

"I said 'I barely see you around town.'" She told me with a smile still on her face. She did say it in a snobbish tone she was just saying it with her girlish Ashlin-ish voice. Well then again Ashlin Powell could tend to have a "sharp tongue" ... to put it nicely.

"What um.. yeah. I don't go out much." I said awkwardly. She was taken aback by my comment.

"Then what do you do?" She asked me.

"Well I work..." I trailed off.

"Oh! So your like- one of those serious type girls who's all-work-no-play?" She tried to understand but failed to.

"Well no I-"

"well which is it?" She asked me.

"Well its not that I don't want to go out it's just that I end up staying home... that's all." I said as I looked down at the ground.

"Well we can change that. Right Jer?" She said as she nudged his shoulder. Jericho rolled his eyes and scoffed.

"I'm not taking her to Quinn's party." He told her. Ashlin pouted and said,

"Why not? I want some girl time." She told him. I raised my eyebrow at her.

"Sorry but it's not my scene." I told her. She shrugged at me and

then said,

"I guss a nother time then." She said as she walked away back to Allen. Jericho and I sat down on the grass and watched the others play.

"So what will you do if your family catches you?' He asked me.

"They won't." I told him. He raised an eyebrow at me. I scoffed at him and shook my head.

"I do this almost evry day I work. I say I'm not feeling good, go to my room, lock the door, and slip out the window." I told him.

"You avoided the question." He acussed.

"Fine. If I get caught it won't be good but I wouldn't let them touch me." I said as I smiled remembered Angila.

"Then why do they still..." He trailed off not wanting to finish the sentence.

"You can say it. I won't be affended. And to answer yoour question: I let my guard down and as soon they se that they" I tailed off not knowing how to finish the sentenece.

"Go for it I guess." I finaly said. I looked over and saw that Jericho was stiff, his fists clenched, and his mussles flexxed. His breathing became heavy ad he begne to shake. Litterly shake. I could feel his frustration and anger rolling off of him. I didn't know what to do, I just had a feeling that if I didn't do something it wouldn't be good. The others had stopped tosing the frizbe and were now looking at Jericho with worried faces.

"Jericho, calm down." Tyler said. I looked around and sarterd to panic. Did this happen offten? I placed my hand on his shoulder. I

ignored the strange feeling I got in my hand when I touched him. He seemed to relax a little, but was still shaking.

"Hey, are you alright?" I asked him. He seemed to relax more when I spoke. He slumped over and his muscles relaxed completely and he was breathing deeply.

"Yeah... I'm fine." He said.

"are you sure? What happened?" I asked him. He shook his head at me and combed his hand through his hair.

"Nothing." He told me. He had a stern look in his eyes and I knew not to press. We sat there in silence. Jericho stayed with me despite the others insistent pleas. I looked down at my hands and fiddled with a blade of grass. I could sense that he wanted to end the silence as much as I did but lacked of words. So we simply sat there. We sat with my legs crossed and he laid on his back with one knee in the air... just staring at the clouds. I laid back as well. I folded my hands and rested them on my torso. I stared up at the perfect clouds.

"the sun is nice... especially after these last few cold days." I heard him say. I looked over at him in almost shock. Was he seriously talking about the weather?

"Yeah I guess." I said. And then we fell back into silence.

Erika came up to us and pulled me up. I opened my mouth to say something but always failed to find the right words. She pulled me to the middle of the field and then ran off again. I just stood there in the middle of the field looking like a fool. Suddenly I sensed a moving energy on my left and quickly turned around. I saw a red blur flying towards me. On an instinct I caught the object. I looked down at my hands to see it was a harmless (well at most times harmless) kickball.

"Hey!" I heard a child's voice say. My head snapped towards the voice to see Erika pulling Jericho by the arm and two younger boys tailed behind them. She let go of Jericho and ran up to me.

"You'll play right?" She with hopeful eyes. I couldn't say no to her.... that would be like hitting a puppy.

"Um... sure." I said, unsure of how to respond. Her face lit up as her face broke out into a large smile.

"Okay!" She yelled she picked up the ball and ran away from me. I looked around to see that the others had formed a diamond shape. Erika stood in the center of all of us.

"I'll kick the ball to one of you, and then you kick it back to me, but if you miss then you're out. Okay?" She explained the rules to me and I nodded at her. She kicked the ball to me and I kicked it back to her. She fell to her knees and stopped the ball with her hands. She placed it back on the ground and kicked to the youngest looking boy. His leg flew up and the ball rolled under his elevated leg. He shrugged with a smile and went to get the ball. He brought it back to Erika and kissed her forehead and said,

"I guess I'm out." With that he walked away to the table where Ashlin and Allen were sitting. I smiled knowing that he did that for Erika's amusement.

It continued like this until it was Jericho and the younger boy. I had lost towards the end of the game. The younger boy purposely missed and then ran to the bathrooms. I take it his full bladder is what cost him the game. Erika squealed and ran up to Jericho and he picked her up. Then Tyler shouted at them to come get lunch.

We all sat at the table eating ham and cheese sandwiches and fruit. Well just fruit for me.

"Are you feeling alright?" Ashlin asked me. I looked up at her and smiled.

"Yeah I'm fine. I'm just don't eat meat is all." I told her. Her mouth formed an 'O' shape and nodded slowly and then went back to eating.

"So you're a veggie monster?" Tyler asked me. I looked over to him with a confused look.

"Excuse me?" I asked him. He laughed and said,

"You know a vegetarian." he said.

"Yeah. I am." I told him.

"To be honest, Avery, I didn't think you talked until recently." He told.

"I normally don't, I just liked to stay to myself most of the time. I figured that if I didn't talk then no one would ignore me." I said as I felt something wrap around my hand. I looked to see Jericho's hand intertwined with mine. I smiled to myself as he squeezed my hand. I debated whether or not to let him continue to hold my hand. That would have been nice, and I enjoyed how nice it felt. However it also scared me that he had such an effect on me. That's why I yanked my hand away from his. I instantly missed the warmth of his hand.

"So why do you like being alone?" A new voice asked. I looked over to see the younger boy with blond hair, Hazel eyes that were hidden behind his glasses. He looked like Erika and Jericho so I assumed that he was one of the other Levi siblings.

"I never said I did. It's just easier to be alone." I said. He was taken back a bit and then the youngest boy with red hair and teal eyes

said,

"You'r really weird." He said in a small voice. Evryone turned and looked at him. I was taken aback by his comment. I didn't need a kid to tell me that. That was something I already knew, but the reality of what others thought still stung like needles.

"Dylan." Jericho said in a warning voice to the blond boy.

"What?" I heard Dylan ask. Not to long after that I heard Dylan say "Ow!" most likely from Jericho kicking his shin.

"Sorry... I shouldn't have called you weird." He said.

"It all right." I said as I stared down at my food. I didn't say anything else I just looked down at my food and continued to eat. I didn't say anything else for the rest of the lunch. I'm weird. That part was true. Suddenly I felt a strong hand on my shoulder and knew from the familiar electric currants that it was Jericho. I tilted my head back to look up a him.

"Avery, come walk with me." He said. I didn't say a word to him i only stared up in him with a dazed look in my eyes and nodded. He helped me up and we walked away. I walked with my hands behind my back and kept my eyes focused on the ground.

"Sorry about Dylan. He can be a pain." He said.

"No it's fine. He's right." I told him. He stopped in his tracks and looked at me in shock.

"What? Don't tell me you took him seriously. I mean- I know he said your wired but he's *Dylan*

He's an idiot of a kid. So don't listen." He walked up to me and took my hands in his. He rubbed his thumb over the top of my palms

as he tried to sooth me. However it had the opposite affect. It only made me more self conscious then before.

"Your not some freak. I know that's what your family wants you to think ,but your not. That's there ploy to get you to stay. They want you to think no one could ever love you. I'm here and I'm telling you your not a freak your a wonder amazing girl that's extremely broken. Alright?" He told me. I still had yet to make eye contact with him. I wanted to believe him, but I just couldn't. Then all of a sudden I felt to strong hands wrap around and bring me to his chest. He rested his head on top of mine and exhaled. I brought my arms up and wrapped them tightly around him. I then thought back to what Angela said to me bout trusting him. I need to trust her. More importantly I need to trust him as much as I trust her. I will always have that fear of him laving me more alone then before, but he hasn't yet, and he isn't at the moment. So for this moment I'm going to trust him.

"Thank you." I whispered. After we stood there in each others arms for God knows how long we finally broke apart. He took my hand in his and began to walk.

"Okay now that's that settled, lets get to the main reason I brought you here." He said.

"Kidnapped." I corrected him. He sighed and looked a me with a cocky smile,

"Once again, It's not kidnapping if you come willingly." He said. I rolled my eyes at him.

"So why did you bring me here?' I asked him.

"To get to know you." He said. I scoffed at him and ran my fingers through my hair.

"Really ,Jericho? Another Edward Cullen moment? *'Oh Bella I must know your favorite color, shampoo, music, and I must know what you say in you sleep!'*"

" I said imitating my take on Edward Cullen. Jericho shook his head at me and laughed. I looked up a him and smiled with a triumphant look.

"I am not that bad. I don't watch you sleep." He said. I laughed at him and then said,

"Fine, then what do you want to know?" I asked him.

"What's your favorite color?" He asked me.

"light pink or spring green" I said.

"Favorite food?"

"mushroom tortellini."

"Dream Job?"

"Doctor."

"have you ever been kissed by someone else?" I looked down at the ground and stayed silent. I had been kissed... just not the way I wanted my fist kiss. Tarrance had forced me to kiss him two years ago, but to me that didn't count.

"Avery?" I heard Jericho say. I snapped back to reality and looked up at him.

"What? Oh- um- no." I told him

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

"No."

"could I be you'r boyfriend?" I stopped walking when I fully processed what he just asked me. I shook my head and continued to walk.

"That's okay." He said as he kissed my cheek.

"Just friends." I said. He wrapped his arm around me and pulled me closer to him.

"I can live with that." He said.

A loud roar came from the sky and I looked up at the sky. Blue lightning illuminated the sky, and it began to pour rain. I shrieked as Jericho picked me up by the waist and ran for cover with me in his arms. He ran to a covered area near the bathrooms. He noticed I was shivering from the rain and rapped his jacket around me. I leaned up against the brick wall and Jericho towered over me.

"sorry, I didn't think it would rain." He said. I smiled at him and said,

"You know... I have an umbrella." I told him giving a smirk. He scoffed and shook his wet hair on me. I shrieked and tried to dodge the water. He laughed and said,

"You could have told me that!" He laughed. I faintly heard my phone go off from inside my bag. I reached into it and pulled it out. My bright smile fell when I saw the ID Ben. I looked up at Jericho who was glaring down at the phone. The truth was I wasn't surprised to get the text. I saw it earlier. However I still dreaded re-reading it.

"Are you going to read it?" He asked me. I slowly nodded my head.

"Yeah. I have to." I flipped the screen open and opened the

message and flinched when I read it.

Ben: You little slut! How dare you sneak out. Get your fucking ass back here now! And when you do we'll all deal with you. Maybe you'll fucking think twice about sneaking out. You wouldn't even want to go out side when were done with you

I stared down at the screen shaking with fear. I felt Jericho wipe away a stray tear that I was unaware of.

"Are you okay?" He asked me in a saddened voice. Don't Jericho, please don't be in pain for me. I silently said to my self. I didn't want pity and I didn't want him feeling sad for me. It wasn't fair. I gripped my phone tightly in my hands and tried to breath.

"Ju-just take me home." I said. His hands engulfed mine as he said,

"Hell no out of the question." He told me . I shook my head at him.

"No, Jericho. you have to take me home. If I don't go back there, they'll go looking for me, and then when they do find me, they'll find out about us, then they'll take me away, move somewhere, and then You'll never see me again. I know going back seems worse, but the reality is.... that if I don't it will only make things worse." I told him. He wrapped his arms around me, and rested his head on top of mine, and just stood there like that.

"Jer?" I asked him. I tried to pull away from him but he tightened his grip around me.

"Just give me a moment." He said. I sighed and nodded. We needed a moment once in a while. He stood there like that for what seemed like forever. I felt safe for that short moment, only to be ripped away by reality. I was pushed back into the 'real world' when Jericho pulled away.

"Okay... let's go." He said. I looked down at the floor with a blank look. He took my hand and started to walk towards the parking lot but I didn't move. He looked back at me with a worried look in his eyes.

"Avery?" He then realized what was wrong. He came towards me and cupped my face in his hands and tilted my face up to look at him.

"Hey, It's going to be alright okay? Your going to go home, they'll be asleep, you'll go to your room, maybe take a shower, then go to bed like nothings wrong... Okay? that's what will happen. I promise."He tried his hardest to calm me down, to make me believe that everything was going to be okay. I could feel the tears streaming down my face. I wish that was the case, but it's not... and we both knew it. Well, mostly me. I could see it. I was on the floor in fetal position trying to shield myself from the pain. While three figures stood over me. I could see the flash of my camera as I added a new addition to my "collection" . I then saw my self crying myself to sleep with Angela sitting on the edge of the bed. Unlike last time there was no way out. But for Jericho's sake I smiled up at him and said.

"Okay." I said. I then let him take me back to the car. I opened up my umbrella and we both took shelter under it from the rain. We didn't say a word. Not when we got to the car,or on the way to my "home". It wasn't until we pulled up in front of the house he said something. The rain was so heavy that we could park in front of the house with out being in risk of being seen. It was that thick. He stopped the car and turned of the ignition. He ex hailed and we both took a deep breath.

"We're here." He said.

"Yeah." I said in a small voice.

"Avery listen. As soon as you get to your room call me. I need to

know your okay. If you can't call then text-or email- fuck! I don't care if you use a carrier pigeon! I just need to know your alright." He said. I could feel how upset he was.

"I'll be fine. I'll go to my room and they won't even see me." I told him. I said as I reached for the door handle. As I pushed the door open I heard Jericho call my name,

"And Avery..."

"Yeah?" I said as I turned around. As soon as I turned around he leaned up from his seat and brought his lips gently to mine. As I was in state of shock. Jericho pushed the car door open and pushed me out. Before he closed the car door he said,

"Go... and be careful." He then closed the door. I nodded and faded into the rain. I dragged my feet up the walkway up to the front porch. I stopped at the door and slammed my eyes closed as I turned the door handle. The door creaked open and I walked in and switched on the light. There in front of me were three figures.

Happy Places

I stood there frozen, unable to move. I could feel that Jericho was still parked outside the house, and would most likely not leave until he knew I was alright. Cathy stood in front of me with her arms crossed glaring at me.

"Where the hell have you been?" She demanded.

"I was studying. I went to the library. I swear." I told them. Ben came forward and grabbed me by the hair. I shrieked but I refused to cry.

"Shut the hell up and tell the truth!" He yelled in my ear.

"I- I'm not. You all were watching TV and I didn't want to bug you so I just- I just left." I said. I could feel his anger. I could also hear his- their thought. To be honest what they were thinking was scaring me shit-less. They weren't planning on letting me walk away.

"You fucking liar!" And with that his large hand made contact with my face. The next thing I knew was I was thrown against the wall and my head made contact with a picture frame. I let out a blood curdling shriek. I fell to the floor and reached for the back of my head. I pulled my hand away and stared in horror at my red covered hand. I looked up to see that all three of them were walking towards me. My eyes widened when I heard their thoughts and realized what was going to happen.

"Please no!" I yelled. Terrance's lips pulled back into a cruel and wicked smile. I let out another cry of pain when I felt the first blow. I curled up into a ball and hugged my knees as I tried to protect myself from unneeded harm. I did the only thing I could. I thought of

my happy place, and right now my only happy place was Jericho. I could see his smile as the sun shined down on him. Just the thought of him seemed to ease the tremendous pain all over my body from their repetitive kicks. I took a deep breath as I could feel my consciousness slipping away from me. I was then engulfed in a dark dreamless rest.

Jericho

I watched as she faded into the rain and out of my sight. As soon as she was out of sight I let down my strong front. I punched the steering wheel and cursed.

"Dammit! Dammit to hell!" I yelled. I rested my head on the steering wheel. My wolf whimpered for his mate, and I didn't blame him. I knew I shouldn't have let her go in three, but what choice did I have? It was just like she said, "the consequences of not going would be greater." I wanted to go in there and grab her so I can take her far far away from them.

I composed myself and went to turn my keys but stopped when I felt a sharp pain on the back of my head. Followed by a loud shriek. I could recognize that voice anywhere. Avery! I unbuckled my seat belt and reached for the door.

'No!'

I heard my wolf yell.

'What?'

I asked him in shock.

'Don't go! If you go they'll take her away from us... or worse.'

he told me. I rested my head on the steering wheel once more. I let the tears fall this time. I didn't hold them back. I could feel her pain and hear her cries, yet I couldn't help her. Instead of helping her- saving her- I was stuck on the side lines just waiting for her to tell me she's alright. That was all I could do, just wait for her. I thought about her smile, her timid manor, her eyes , all of her.

I sat there for what seemed like forever until the pain stopped. BY this time I had stopped crying. I let out a sigh of releaf. but then I only began to worry more when I couldn't hear her anymore. It was like she wasn't there any more.

I sat in my car, debating whether or not to go in there and see if she was okay. Just then I saw red flashing lights and the load sirens could be heard over the pounding rain. I felt my heart stop as the ambulance pulled up in front of Avery's house. Oh God please no! Don't let this be happening. However my prayers went unheard. The paramedics wheeled a gurney into the house. I flung myself out of the car and ran towards the house. I stopped in my tracks when I saw the Paterson's standing on the front porch watching the paramedics. I stayed far enough away to where they couldn't see me. I felt a part of me die when I saw then wheel a figure out of the house. I saw her orange hair and knew it was her. Her hand fell limp and cold.

No.

They hauled her into the ambulance and sped away. I ran to my car and got in and started the ignition. I followed the ambulance to the hospital. I swerved into a parking spot and threw myself out of the car. I saw them bring her out of the ambulance and then they took her into the massive concrete building. I ran into the hospital and went up to the receptonist's desks.

"Hi... could you help me?" I asked the young receptionist. She looked up at me with a way smile. Her light brown hair was pulled

back into a neat bun and her lips were painted in a bright red. She looked to be at least twenty.

"Sure. What could I do for you?" She asked me.

"I'm looking for someone, they just brought her in. Her name is Avery, Crawford." I told her. She nodded at me and then turned to her computer and typed in her name. After about several minuets she then turned back around to face me.

"I'm sorry. She's not ready for visitors yet. Why don't you take a seat and I'll call you." She told me. I nodded and dragged my feet towards the waiting area and sat down. I cupped my head in my hand and exhaled. I'm going to tell her. I have to. Not everything, but I'll tell her what I am. I have to... If she comes out alright. I scolded my self mentally after that morbid thought. Of course she's not dead. I would be slowly dieing if she was, but still I can't shake the possibility if she is. Breath Jericho. Breath. She's going to walk out of here 100% okay. I wanted to beat the Paterson's until they couldn't breath. They did this! It was them! They hurt my mate and now there's a chance they took her from me for good! No. They didn't kill her. I'm still alive so that means she is too.

'Jericho? Where the hell are you? You disappeared at the park.'

Allen said through the mind link.

'I'm fine I'm at the hospital.'

I told him.

'The Hospital! Are you alright?'

He asked frantically. I sighed.

'Yes... I'm fine. It's not me it's Avery.'

I told him. Even in my mind my voice was shaky.

'Is she alright? What happened?'

He asked me.

'I-I don't know if she's okay. I dropped her off at her house and then an ambulance came. I'm so fucking scared right now I'm shaking!'

I told him. I heard him sigh and then he said.

'Just relax. Just think of her and everything will be fine.'

Then I felt him leave my mind. I was snapped back to reality when I heard the receptionist call,

"Sir! She's ready." She told me. I got up and followed her to a small hospital room.

What I saw broke my heart. I saw her small figure underneath the thin sheets wearing a hospital robe. An IV of blood was attached to her wrist. A white bandage was wrapped around her head and bruises the size of apples covered her arms. The heart monitor had a steady beat that filled the room.

I heard someone clear their throat. I turned around to see the Doctor. He was a middle aged thin and tall man. He looked to be Indian, and by the look of his name tag, which read Sanjay, I take it he was. His dark eyes were hidden behind his glasses.

"Are you her friend?" He asked me. I nodded my head at him.

"What happened to her?" I asked him. He sighed and looked down at what I was assuming to be her medical report.

"Well according to her family, she snuck out and when she came home she was badly beaten, they said that they assumed she was mugged because her cell phone and wallet were missing. She collapsed and hit the corner of their walkway, which caused

excessive bleeding on the point of puncture. She then passed out due to pain, blood loss, and the collision to the head. Honestly we'll be lucky if she wakes up... let alone remember who she is." He told me. My heart sank. I did all I could do and went over to where she was sleeping. I heard the doctor leave, and then close the door.

I gripped her left hand, and breathed.

"Avery?" I asked her. I heard the monitor start to beep quicker and then I felt her squeeze my hand. I looked at her face, and watched as her eyes fluttered open.

"Jer?" She said in a weak voice. She squinted and tried to cover her eyes with her arm but stopped when she felt something pull on her arm.

"How are you feeling?" I asked her as I rubbed circles on the back of her hand.

"I feel fine. I'm just a little dizzy is all." She said with a smile. I felt a tear slip from my eye.

"Fuck! I was so worried!" I sobbed. I brought her hand to my forehead and rested it there.

"Shh.. shh. It's okay. I'm fine ,Jericho. A little battered up is all. I'm alive arn't I?" She told me in her attempt to comfort me.

"I let you go in there." I said in a guilty tone. She took her hand out of mine and rested it on my cheek she lightly rubbed her thumb against my face to sooth me.

"You didn't have a choice. It's not your fault. Okay?" She told me. I nodded my head at her and my eyes traced over her arms and studied the bruises. She followed my eyes to see where I was looking. I heard her sigh and then she said,

"Could you please stop looking at the bruises? The more you look at them the more you'll beat your self up about it. I told you it's not your fault. I chose to go in there. I snuk out. I got them angry." She told me. I didn't say anything I just replayed that moment in my mind: her disappearing into the rain, me sitting in the car, her screams of pain, and the pain I felt not being able to help.

"Jericho!" I heard her say. I snapped up to look at her. Her face was untouched which was a relief for me. She must have protected her face and torso with her arms and legs. I releases her hand and got up and walked to the door.

"I'm gonna... go tell the nurse your up." I told her. She nodded her head at me.

"Do you think you could get me some water?" She asked me. I gave me a reassuring smile and nodded and then walked out the door. I saw the same doctor from before and he stopped me.

"Is she up?" He asked me. I nodded my head at him. He extended his hand towards me.

"Doctor, Sanjay. Paranormal doctor." He said. My eyes jumped out of my head.

"What?" I asked him in shock.

"I smelt you on her and said I would work with her. I take it your a werewolf?" He asked me.

"Yeah... how are you not-"

"I'm half- well a more common word would be banshee." He cut me off. I nodded at him and extended my hand to him.

"Jericho, Levi." I told him. He shook my hand and then walked towards Avery's room.

"I'll go heck on her." He told me. I nodded my head at him and walked away. I walked down the hall to where I saw a vending machine.

I walked back to the room with two waters in my hand. As I walked into the room I noticed the Doctor was gone. Avery snapped her to look at me with a frantic look.

"Every thing alright?" I asked her. She hesitantly nodded her head at me. I knitted my eyebrows together and looked at her with a confused look. I walked over and sat in the chair next to her bed. I handed her her water.

"Every thing okay? Did they say something was wrong?" I asked her. she hesitantly took the water from my hands and when my hands touched hers it was like I was seeing through a new pair of eye. I jumped back in my seat at what I saw. The room was filled with other people. They all had unfamiliar faces. Most of them were pale and dressed in hospital robes except for one. I focused my attention ofn the girl with black curly hair that wore a floral top and denim jeans. I looked around the room and noticed that all the people in the room were transparent.

"What the hell?" I said under my breath. I looked over at Avery who hung her head in shame. Apparently she wasn't going to explain what was happening. I then looked over to the curly hair girl.

"Can you see me?" She asked me.

"Why the hell am I seeing you?" I asked her.

"Because she's letting you." She told me. She directed her eyes over to Avery. Avery was doing this? Wait- Ashlin was right!

"What about the others?" I asked her. Looking around the room.

"What were we supposed to do? We've all been dead for a hell of a long time. I'd like to move on, and to do that the little one needs to call forth the door of Gabriel." An old man said with venom in his voice. It dawned on me that all the people in the room were dead. I only got more confused. I then looked over at Avery.

"Is this what you were hiding?" I asked her as I remember her saying she had secrets and that her demons were bigger than mine. When she said demons she meant Demons - or ghosts at least. I realized why she was so scared of me hating her, and why she thought she was a freak.

"She's not going to say anything right now. But to answer your question yes, this is what she was hiding." The raven haired girl said.

"And who might you be?" I asked her.

"I'm her guardian. I've been watching over her since she was thirteen." She said. I then heard Avery sigh.

"Jericho met Angela, Rosen." She said. Then there was a long uncomfortable silence.

"I told her to-" Angela started but I cut her off.

"I want to hear it from Avery." I then waited for her to speak. She took a shaky breath.

"I'm a seer. I'm like the in between - I help spirits find peace and help them move on. Angela is like my guardian angel. She's also my best friend. I guess you can call me a medium. I can do things like read auras, hear thoughts, see the future, and the worst one is that when I touch someone I basically see their entire life. So I'm not claustrophobic I just don't enjoy getting a migraine when I touch

someone. I don't have full control yet so that's why I'm always getting sick in the middle of class, but still have straight A's." She explain to me.

"And you thought I would hate you if you told me." I didn't say it as a question- more of a statement.

"Yeah..." She said under my breath.

"So why now?" I asked her.

"Angela told me it was time I told you." She said simply. I looked over to Angela who just shrugged, but I could tell she knew something, but i didn't press.

"Jericho please say something..." I hear d Avery beg me. I didn't know what to say. It made since though. A werewolf can't mate with a human- and still cant'. I'm mates with Avery because she wasn't human. Well she was more human then me, but not a regular human. I looked over at her and saw her looking at me with worried eyes.

"I don't care." I instantly slapped my self for saying that. I didn't mean it like that! I sounded like I hated her now. And by the looks of her reaction, she thought I hated her too. Even Angela was shocked by my reply. I could see the tears thretning to spill in Avery's eyes.

"You-" I cut her off and grabbed her small little hand.

"No no no! Not like that! What I meant was- I don't care- Shit! What I mean is it doesn't matter. You had these.. abilities for how long?" I asked her.

"since I was born.. but they got stronger when I was thirteen." She told me.

"Right. And I've known you for about a year and a half- So you've always have had these power. So your still Avery. That's why it I don't care because you've always have had them and your no different." I told her. I could see that she had relaxed now. She smiled and me and I smiled back.

Next it was my turn to tell her... But not tonight. Or not for a while at least.

Shinny and New

Avery

Beep Beep Beep Beep Bee-

I smalled my hand on top of my alarm to stop it. I moaned and rolled over to look at the clock which read 5:30 am. Mon. Oct, 3, 11. I sighed and threw my legs over the side of my bed. It was going to be sunny today and my bruises had faded so ... so far it was a good day. I walked over to my closet and smiled when I saw my new clothes. Charolet's nice was about my size and had gotten rid of a lot of clothes. I pulled out my yellow sundress, a cropped denim jacket, and cowboy boots. Once I was dressed I walked into the kitchen and started the pasta. I had made a deal with Cathy that I was allowed to "babysit" as long as I still cooked dinner. So I would wake up early, cook a quick dinner and put it in the fridge for them. What they didn't know was I wasn't baby sitting, I would go to work and then go to Jericho's house until late at night. Some times I would spend the night but not in his bed. I would have a sleep over with Ashlin who I've become good friends with over the past month. Once I started the pasta I walked down the hall to the bathroom and locked the door. I stared in the mirror at my self and wondered what to do with my hair. I then took my hair and put it up in a messy bun with white rose hair pin to hold it in. I only wore a little makeup like powder and mascara.

After I was done with that I walk out of the bathroom and grabbed my bag. I walked back into the kitchen and stopped the pasta. I drained the water and the heated up the spaghetti sauce. When I

saw the floating chunks of meat I remembered why I vegetarian in the first place. Then again... any one would go vegetarian if they saw how the animal died when they touched it. I took the sauce out of the microwave and poured it over the pasta. I put the pasta into a glass dish and put it in the fridge. I then pulled out some food to make my lunch. Ben and Cathy were gone this morning so I didn't have to make them a sandwich today... thank God. However that meant Terrence and I were left alone. I quickly made my lunch and shoved it in the paper bag and ran to the door. I then turned around and went back to the kitchen and wrote a note saying that I was going to "babysit" tonight and that dinner was in the fridge. I then froze when I heard a door creak open and foot steps coming down the hall. I then started to sprint for the door. As I was fiddling with the lock on the door. I shuddered when I felt two arms snack around my waist.

"So why are you so dressed up?" Terrance slured into my ear. I felt sick. I stopped messing with the door and pushed his arms off me.

"I'm going to school moron." I said with venom. I then went back to the door and unlocked it finally.

"Come on sissy, let me give you a ride. You don't want your dress to get dirty do you?" He said.

"Sorry already got a ride." I said with a smug tone.

"Who? Whit him that Levi boy? He's just playing you once he gets some he'll throw you in the dust." He said. A opened the door and said,

"First of all... I'm not your sister. Second I'd rather walk. Third the saying is 'leave you in the dust' so get it right." I then smiled at him and shut the door. I tried not to laugh at his face, but e looked so stupid! I was in a good mood again. I walked don the street wen I saw Mikes feed truck right on time. I started running, but stopped

when the truck stopped and backed up. Mike smiled at me when I looked at him in confusion.

"What's wrong girly?" He asked me.

"Nothing I was just expecting to jump on like I always do." I said. He laughed and said,

"So was I , but then I saw how gussied up you look. So just hop in for today alright?" He told me I smiled and then walked over to the passenger side. I could just imagine how Jericho would react. I rolled my eyes at the thought.

"So why do you look so nice? What no sneakers?" He scoffed. I blushed. Was I really so over dressed? I've been dressing like this for about a week now.

"I just felt like doing something different." I said with a shrug. Mike scoffed and nodded and me while he said,

"Whatever you say ,kid." Under his breath. The rest of the ride was silent until we drove up to the school.

"Alright little one, where here." He said as he pulled the car to a stop. I looked out the window of the car to try to find my new found friends. I turned back to Mike and said,

"Thanks, Mike." As I gave him a hug. I then opened the door and slid my self out of the car. I walked towards my friends when I saw Ashlin's blond mass of hair. I came up behind them and said,

"Boo!" Ashlin jumped and turned around to look at me.

"Oh my god! You scared me so bad- Oh my God You look so cute!" She shrieked and brought me into a tight hug. I tried not to seem awkward and laughed when she hugged me. We all heard the rev of

an motorcycle and turned to see Jericho pulling into the parking lot with Tyler tailing not far behind him. Jericho took off his helmet and smiled at me. I waved at him. My breath caught when I realised he was walking towards me. Suddenly Tyler pushed him out of the way and ran up to me and hugged me. He threw his arms around me and hugged me tightly against his chest. I looked at the others for help but they all just rolled their eyes.

"What are you doing?" Jericho yelled at him. Tyler- being Tyler- laughed and said,

"I called first hug!" He shouted at him. Jericho's face twisted into a ... well a "not so happy face". He stormed up to Tyler and ripped his arms off me and pulled me away from him. He then wrapped his arms around me and rested his head on top of mine.

"Hey." He said.

"Hey." I said back. He pulled back and looked down at me and smiled.

"You look nice." He said. I averted my eyes in an attempted to hide my reddened cheeks, but of course failed.

"Thanks." I said quietly. We all cringed when we heard a loud squeal. I turned to see a girl, named Lilly, running towards us. She came up to me and smiled and looked me up and down.

"Oh my god , Amy!" She squealed. I looked around at my friends and they had clear annoyance on their face. I could tell that Lilly was a sweet girl ,but she was fake. She wanted to be someone else. But that didn't change the fact that her voice was like nails on a chalk board.

"It's Avery..." I said under my breath.

"Oh sorry!" She laughed.

"I just came over to say that you look really cute!" She said with a smile. I smiled back at her. Besides her voice, Lilly was a pleasant girl... the one I didn't like was the one that followed. Taylor walked towards us with her arms crossed and her glare focused on me.

Jericho wrapped his arm around my shoulder and pulled towards him, as if preparing me for the blow. Taylor stood in front of us and her eyes narrowed at Jericho's arm around me.

"hi." She said in a warm voice. Her eyes focused on me still. That oh to familiar feeling of being in the spotlight settled in the pit of my stomach.

"H-hi." I said nervously. Taylor smirked at my reaction.

"Avery- right? That's your name?" She said- more like sneered- to me. I nodded my head not trusting my voice to speak.

"Do you think I could talk with you?" She asked me. I didn't know how to reply. The aura swirling around her told me to not trust her and stay away.

"go paint your nails, Taylor. She doesn't need your threats." Ashlin snapped at her. Taylor's head snapped in her direction.

"What the hell yo bitch! God, why do you hate me? Huh? I wasn't going to threaten her! why don't you share with us why you thought that!" She yelled at Ashlin. When her attention was diverted from me a relaxed some what. this was why I stuck to myself... the "bimbo drama" as Ashlin calls it is too much to worry about.

"Gee... I don't know why I thought that! Maybe it has something to do with the fact your an evil, selfish, lying bitch!" Ashlin yelled at her. Taylor gasped and the tears started falling down her face. Ashlin

rolled her eyes.

"Oh my God... Really? Is that your only response? Someone tells you the truth so you break down in tears hoping for some sympathy. Suck it up you wuss. You've got a vagina- you can hold in those hormonal emotions as long as you want." Ashlin sneered at her. Taylor whipped her eyes and then turned back to me. Her glare pierced thought me. I didn't have time to react when she raised her hand and it connected with my cheek. That's when I saw it. I saw her entire life, and I saw why Jericho broke p with her.

I snapped back to reality when I heard,

"You whore! I'll slap you so hard you'll need a jaw replacement!" I looked over to see Allen and Tyler holding Ashlin back. I shook my head at her outburst, but in some ways was grateful towards her.

"Ash, It's fine." I told her. She stopped thrashing and looked at me. She then tore away from their grasp and huffed.

"I'll shill hex her in my sleep." She grumbled. I scoffed at her.

"Well, if you don't mind... I need to go to my locker." I turned, and made my way to the school. As I walked towards the school, I heard heavy footsteps behind me and knew who it was. He slung his arm around my shoulder, but I shrugged it off. I heard him sigh and then he firmly grasped my hand. I then tried to pull away from his grasp, but his hand constricted around mine.

"Jericho... what are you doing?" I asked him.

"Holding hands with my friend." He said in an innocent tone. I shook my head.

"Friends don't hold hands." I told him.

"Well you're my friend, and I'm holding hands with you ... so therefore they do." He stated. I tried to pull away from him, but I failed again.

"Jeesh Jer, could you let me go?" I asked him. He scoffed and shook his head at me. However, he never met my eyes.

"Nope." He said popping the 'P'. I let my hand go limp and decided to let him have his moment. I was about to walk around the corner, but was quickly yanked back by Jericho.

"Ouch!" I yelled when he pulled back on my arm. I turned and glared at Jericho.

"What was that for?" I asked in a harsh tone. I then noticed he was not staring at me. He was staring down the hallway, and his sights laid on a certain object. I slowly turned my head to see what he was staring at. When I saw what he was, looking at my blood ran cold.

Butterflies

I stood there frozen. It felt as if everyone within a 10-mile radius was gossiping about me. However, in reality, the only ones who were gossiping about me were right in front of me. There at the end of the hallway stood Taylor, Maverick, and Terrance. They talked in low voices with serious visages. They all turned to look at me. I felt the bile form in my throat start to form.

"Sense when were they friends?" I asked Jericho. He slipped his arm around my waist in an attempt to comfort me.

"I don't know." He said as he ushered me away. When we were out of there sight, Jericho rested me against the lockers. His face came down close to mine and I could feel his breath. I stared into his teal eyes with flakes of green and blue in them.

"Avery, listen to me. I don't know what they are doing, but if any of them come over to your house...go into your room, lock your door, and don't come out until you know they're gone. Do you understand? Better yet text me or call me and tell me what's going on. I just want to know your okay." I could feel my cheeks heat up from his words. Then Taylor's face invaded my mind and I felt guilty. I know knew why they broke up. I looked down at the floor.

"What's wrong?" He asked me. I shook my head. I did not want to tell him out of fear that he might go back to her if he found out.

"Avery, tell me." He said in a compelling tone.

"I saw why you broke up with Taylor. I saw it when she slapped me."

"So why is it bothering you so much?"

"Because I know that you think she cheated...she didn't. She was forced to." I told him. Realization dawned on him followed by grief. I knew it... he still felt for her and he was going to run to her now that he knew the truth. He shook his head and then locked eyes with me.

"I don't care. Taylor is selfish. I feel pity for her, but what's done is done. Avery, I like you not Taylor, and that isn't going to change." My heart skipped a beat hearing him say it. I had always known what he felt for me, but I was not sure if I felt the same way. However, I knew one thing... I hated Taylor so hearing him say that he favored me made me happy, and I could not help but smile.

"I know you do, but it's not like we're dating..." I said in a tiered voice. He rested his forehead on mine and caressed my face in his hands as he said,

"I plan on changing that." I was going to say something but the bell rang, and he pulled me along saying that we needed to get to class.

After science class, I walked away with an unpleasant scowl on my face.

"Come on, Avery talk to me." Jericho whined to the twentieth time.

"Dude, she isn't going to budge." Tyler said. I was mad at him because he had decided to sit behind me in science, and the entire time he played with my hair, and to make things worse he kissed me! Well- not on the lips... on the neck but that's worse! A boy had asked me if I wanted to be his lab partner for the day, but Jericho- being Jericho- came up behind me, wrapped his arms around my waist, and kissed my neck... and I accidentally moaned. I just wanted the ground to swallow me whole! All because he was letting, his "Mr. Hyde" show. I really did hate it when he was sweet on

moment and the next he was an ass.

"Avery, I really don't see what the problem is. The kid was practically eye raping you!" He yelled. I turned around, and looked at him with a mortified look on my face.

"You did not just say that." I said in a disgusted tone.

"But he was!" He yelled. He really does not understand.

"The point is that I'm pretty sure that everyone in that room now thinks we're dating! That's the point! There was no need to do that!" I yelled at him. He put his hands in his pockets and looked down at the ground.

"It's not like that's a bad thing..." He mumbled under his breath. This boy is impossible. I released a frustrated groan and walked away to the girl's bathroom. I heard Jericho call my name, but I never looked back at him.

I turned on the water on and splashed some on my face.

Jericho

My mind always seems to wonder back to him. He was a good friend, and I did not want to lose that. Did I like him? I was not sure. I was attracted to him, sure. However, I was uneasy at the thought of being with him. I have seen the girls that he dated. He dated pretty and tall girls like Taylor or even Ashlin. He liked the girls that were athletic and perfect in every way. I did not want to be compared to that. I had learned to push all emotions towards Jericho away. Besides, look at me. I was a girl that could see dead people.

However, another part of me made me unsure of my emotions. I already know that he likes me so why not give him a chance. For instance in the Hindu culture it is a rarity to marry for love, instead

they marry for security and then learn to love their partner. Maybe I should do something similar? I could not believe I was even thinking like that! Learning to like him? How shallow was that? I mean sure he was good looking, sweet, thoughtful, good with kids, smart, rich, funny, athletic, and he has made it clear he likes me. However, that would not be fare! To either of us! However, what if he gives up on me and then started dating another girl? How would I feel?

The intense feeling of lose answered my question. I looked at myself in the mirror. I had already let my walls down when it came to him, and I was starting to think I need to let them down even more. My eyes drifted to the corner of the mirror, and I almost jumped out of my skin. Angela stood against the tile wall with a smug look playing on her lips. I turned around to face her. However, she was not the only one in the room.

"What do you want?" I asked Taylor. She crossed her arms and stuck her nose in the air, while never taking her eyes of me. I will admit that Taylor was intimidating as heel, and her cold stare always scared to no end. However, no matter how much she scared me I was never going to let her know that.

"I was going to say that to you." She said in a warm voice. The simple sound of her voice scared me. Terrance and Maverick were terrifying as well, however, there was no place I was safe from her. The difference between her and the other two were that she had no fear. If she wanted to hit me, she could. If she wanted to follow me into the locker room, or bathroom she could. The saying "girls are viscous" was all to true.

"Taylor, don't patronize me." I said harshly. She pulled her lips back in to a cruel and ugly smile. She was about to show her true colors.

"I'm glad you said that. Now I can get to the point." The tone of her voice made me want to vomit. However, I stood my ground. I narrowed my eyes at her and locked my knees. She smirked and

said,

"Why are you hanging around Jericho? He seems nice, but he's not." She told me bluntly. I tried to read her emotions but something was off. It was as if she wanted to seem angry, but she was happy at the same time. Was she forcing herself to feel a certain emotion? From what Angela had told me, this was impossible. I scoffed and said,

"Of course he seems like that to you." I narrowed my eyes at her. Her sickening smirk and choking perfume suffocated me.

"That didn't answer the question."

"It's strange how I don't need to answer."

"I think you do." She practically snarled.

"Not to you. What sane person you answer to you, the ex-girlfriend? Whatever I say to you you'll just twist to make me sound like I'm the one attacking you." I hissed at her. My fists curled into too tight balls.

"You do have to answer to me."

"And why's that?" I cocked one of my eyebrows up at her.

"Because you're right. I can twist your words. I could run and tell your mommy that you have been snooping around. I wonder what they'll do?"

"I don't need your threats, Taylor." I snapped at her.

"Why are you going to cry?" she teased and she swayed her hips in a playful way.

"No. Just stop." I said as I closed my eyes.

"Not until I get what I want. I don't want Jericho. I want to hurt him."
My eyes shot open and I stared at her in shock.

"So why tell me." I shouted at her. She smirked at tilted her head to the side.

"Let me ask you this. Do you know? About his big secret?"

"You haven't have you. Well when you do, you will end up like me. He will whisper sweet words to you then leave you when you need him. He is not a caring person. He'll just fuck you and just leave you. He'll leave you-"

"I don't want to hear it." I cut her off. I glared at her and crossed my arms across my chest. Why would I want to hear his secret from her? If he wanted me to know, he would tell me. Unfortunately, for me this pushed her over the edge. In two swift steps, she made her way across the small bathroom and pulled my hair. I let out a shriek of pain as she pulled my hair tighter as if she was going to scalp me. I pulled and tugged at her hands, but every time I did, her grip became worse. She pulled my head up next to lips and whispered,

"I know what you are- so do the others. I can hurt you. Just remember that you ugly whore." I rested my hands on her shoulders. I took three deep breaths and evaluated my next move. If she already knew what I am then why hold back? In addition, how did she find out? All I could think of what getting the hell out of here.

"Good that means I can do this." I felt my energy waves expand uncontrollably into her chest and sent her flying into the tile wall. She yelled in pain as her head hit the wall. I turned around and ran for the door. Right before I opened it, I looked back at her. I enhanced my senses and could here water flowing through the pipes. I expand my energy waves to the pipes and could sense the water pressure rise. Suddenly a wave of water burst through the wall and sent particles of pipes, tiles, and concrete flying everywhere. The room was filled with a cloud of smoke. The explosion sent Taylor flying

from to the other side of the room, and hit one of the stales. I could not help but smile. For once my powers were a benefited to me. I walked over to her and squatted down in front of her so I was at her eye level.

"I can hurt you to." I told her. I then got up and left the bathroom. I saw Jericho who was rushing towards me. As he came up to he wrapped his arms around me in a tight bear hug.

"Avery! What the hell was that? Are you okay?" He asked me. He pulled away from me and jerked my head around so he could inspect me. He lifted each arm to look at them.

"I'm fine. I need to go to the principal's office." I told him as I tugged him along.

"Wait what? What did you do?" He asked me. I ignored him and continued to walk quickly. I burst into the office and accidentally startled the poor secretary.

"Avery? What is wrong hon? You look pale," she said.

"I need to talk to Mr. Fisher immediately." I told her. She nodded her head at me and pressed the intercom. She then looked up at me.

"Go on in hon." She said with a warm smile. I hesitantly walked into the office. I say Mr. Fisher looking down at papers scattered across his desk. He took one look at Jericho and began to sweat like a pig.

"What is it Avery?" He asked me.

"One of the pipes exploded into the bathroom. I just came into the bathroom to wash my hands and this girl named Taylor was there. She started yelling at me- I honestly don't know about what but- then all of a sudden there was an explosion and water is everywhere, and Taylor needs help. She's hurt and won't get up-"

"That's enough information Crawford. I will alert the nurse and well start investigating. Thank you." In addition, with that I nodded my head and left with Jericho close behind me. Jericho caught up to me and caught my shoulder.

"Hey whet exactly happened in the bathroom?" He asked me. I shook my head at him.

"I" tell you latter. I'm just going to go to the nurses office. I'm not feeling well." I told him. His face dropped and he said,

"Are you sick?" He asked me. I shook my head at him.

"Just a migraine is all." I told him. I heard him sigh and he pinched the brig of his nose. He draped his arm around me to block the voices out. Without a word, he walked to the nurse's office.

"I'll bring you some food. Okay? Do not leave without me." He said as he rested his forehead on mine. I nodded my head and walk into the nurses office. The nurse was not in yet so I went ahead and laid down on the thin bed. I stared up at the ceiling light and the four white walls. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. Before I knew it sleep found me.

I was woken up in a strange way. I am not quite sure how to describe it. It was as if I was gently being lifted from the numbness of sleep. It was as if a presence drew my eyes open. I cringed at the bright fluorescent light that flooded the room.

I noticed the shadow in the room and turned to see Jericho slouched over sleeping in a plastic chair across from me. In his hands rested a white Styrofoam box filled with chow mien, tofu, and steamed veggies. As the smell over whelmed me, my stomach let out a distressed groan of starvation. My face flushed from embarrassment and I clutched my stomach as if I was attempting to silence it.

That was when I noticed Angela looking at me from over his shoulder. She looked at me and noticed I was awake. She then

lowered her mouth next to his ear and whispered,

"She's awake." As soon as his words touched his ears, he jolted awake and almost sent the box of Chinese flying across the room.

"Hey." He said in a composed voice.

"What time is it?" I asked him. His eyes softened as he glanced at his phone.

"A little after 5th period." my face fell into a frown.

"I missed lunch." I said in a sad voice. He nodded his head, and handed me the box of food.

"That's why I got you this." He told me. I opened the lid of the box and steam hit my face. I smiled at the food and thanked him. I snapped the chop sticks apart and started to twirl the chow mien and was ready to take a bite. Right when I took a bite, I heard Jericho speak.

"what happened?" He asked me. I hung my head and hid my face with my hair.

"Avery..." Angela said in a harsh tone as if she was speaking to a small child. I took a shaky breath then replied.

"I went into the bathroom, and Taylor was there. She began to threaten me. She said something. Then all of a sudden- I lost control." I told him. I looked up at Angela, who gave me a reassuring smile.

"Avery, It will happen sometimes. You just need to learn how to control it. Your abilities are finally fully coming in. So you need to slowly adjust to them. I think the best thing to do would be to keep your emotions in line." I nodded my head.

"She's right." I heard Jericho say. I rolled my eyes.

"Great so you can see her now?" I said in a sarcastic tone. He scoffed and shook his head at me.

"No, your pushing it on me." For that slight moment I felt ashamed. I put the chop sticks

"Sorry..." I said in a quite tone. I felt like hiding. I could not even contain my "abilities" to my self. Instead I was pushing them onto the closest person near me. Perhaps this is the reason it would be best if I kept to my self.

"Avery- Exactly what did she say to you?" He asked me. My head shot up and I looked at him. I felt my eyes glaze over. Honestly I did not want to share what she had said to me because in all truth I was not willing to accept the truth. My secret was no longer mine. The Paterson's knew, Maverick, and Taylor all knew what I am. What scared me even more what the fact I had been oblivious to this. I would never know how long they knew. frankly I did not want to know.

"Avery..." Jericho's voice drew me from my thoughts. I then realized he was waiting for an answer. I decided that he should know, even If I was not willing to face the reality of it.

"She said that she know 'what i am' and so do the others." I looked over at Angela who was trying to hide under her hair. She felt guilty and scared as well.

"I should have help you more." She said in a weak tone. I shook my head at her.

"You've helped me as much as you can."

"No, I'm suppose to be your keeper, yet I let things like this happen to you."

"Angela, I know you feel like it's your fault, but it's not. only only so much you can do." I gave her a small smile to show her I'm fine. However that smile quickly faded. She whipped her hair side and smiles at me. However her smile quickly fades as well. She then whipped her eyes, and I can tell that if she had the ability to cry... she would. However that was robed from her as well when her life was taken.

I took deep breath and swung my legs over the side of the bed. I slowly lifted my self up, but winced at the pain that throbbed in my head. I felt Jericho rest his hand on the small of my back as he tried to help me up.

"What do you think your doing?" He asked me.

"Going to class." I said simply. I then felt his hands pushing me down.

"Oh no you don't."

"And whys that?"

"Because I can tell just by looking at you that your still in pain. You really want to expose your self to all those thoughts?" He asked my in a questioning tone. I did not answer him instead I picked up my unfinished box of Chinese and began to eat it once more. Jericho instead on getting an answer form me, however I simply avoided it by pointing out I was chewing. I finally swallowed and looked over to see he was still in the room.

"Shouldn't you be in class?" I asked him. He brushed his fingers threw his short, sandy hair, and said,

"After what happened with Taylor, I'm not extremely found of leaving you alone." I could not help but blush at his words.

"Thanks." I guess. I stared down at the food and then closed the lid. I handed to him and laid down.

"I'm not hungry anymore." I told him. I heard him exhale as he stood up to throw it away.

"You should sleep some more." He told me. I remained silent for a short while until I finally work up the nerves to say,

"You arn't going to leave are you?" It became deadly quite once more, I held my breath to hear his answer.

"No." As soon as I heard him say this I was able to exhale and let sleep take over.

* * *

I once again woke up to a bright light, but this time there was no throbbing I looked over to see that Jericho had fallen asleep as well and Angela had vanished. I then made a mental note to ask her where she goes when she's not with me. I slowly stood up and walked over towards him. I gently shook him awake.

"Jericho, seventh period is over, we should go." I told him. He groggily shook his head and stood up from his chair. I went to sign out and then we left the nurses office. It was quite between us as we walked side-by-side down the crowded hallway. We didn't say a word. We went to his locker. We went to mine and continued to walk down the hallway. Right when I though things could not get more tense, he did something surprising. He swung his arm around my shoulder and pulled me near him. I raised my eyebrows up at him and asked him,

"What are you doing?" He did not look at me in stead he kept his gaze in front of him.

"Keeping you from getting a migraine. You said that I somehow block out you abilities so that's what I'm doing." I smiled rested my hand on top his, and leaned my head against him.

"Thank you." I whispered. I could tell that he was smiling just by his energy signature that rolled off him. As I look at our hand intertwined and how my body almost disappeared next to him, I realized how small I was compared to him. His hand swallowed mine in comparison.

"So exactly what did Taylor look like when you kicked her ass?" He said in a jocular tone. I did my best to stiffly my laugh.

"Completely mortified. It reminded me of a shocked frog." I joked. I heard him snicker.

"About damn time she got her ass kicked."He said in a proud voice. I scolded him afraid someone would hear us.

"What ass?" Although I knew I should not be joking about this I could not help but to do exactly that. Judging by the way Jericho threw his head back to laugh, I took it that he though the same thing.

"so are you going to watch me practice?" He said with a wide grin. I scoffed at him and said,

"I honestly don't see why not." His smile grew as he walked me towards the gym. We continued to laugh loudly at ridiculous things. Jericho pushed open the door of the gym, and when he did, my good mood vanished.

My eyes zeroed in on Tarrance and Maverick sitting on the bleaches laughing. Maverick took notice of me and nudged Tarrance to look over in my direction. Tarrance turned to look at me and snickered at something Maverick said. I could feel my face pale as I stood there frozen. I quickly turned and ran down the hallway. Jericho quickly ran after me.

"Avery!" As soon as I heard him call my name I stopped in my tracks. I pivoted around on my heels to face him. He skid to a stop just inches from me. His face expression was softened and -just as I was- the joking mood from seconds ago was gone.

"I'm not going in there. Maverick and Tarrance are both in there, and I'm not going anywhere near them." I said in a panicked voice. I was expecting him to lecture me about how childish I was being, but instead, he wrapped his arms around me and pulled into a hug. He kissed my forehead and pulled back to look at me.

"Hey, it's going to be okay. You just go to the library to study and meet me in front of the school. " He told me with a smile. I smiled back at him and got on my toes to kiss his cheek. I then quickly turned around and walked down the hallway as I waved at him. His eyes shined as he stared after me. I felt like I should run back to him, but another part of me did not want to look foolish. So I kept walking, and decided I would see him after school.

The Werewolf in the Room

*(A/N: THIS IS IMPORTANT! Haunted is beginning to develop a darker storyline. This chapter contains violence mild nudity and attempted rape. I have but the parts to be cautioned in **bold***

in case you are not comfortable with read "that" sort of thing. Haunted will have a more mature plot line, but nothing that would deem it "rated R". Enjoy and remember to comment)

I stood outside the gate of the school and waited for him to peel out of the parking lot.

However, he never did. The streetlights flickered on and the cold air kicked up. The wind howled down the empty street and swept up my dress. I shuddered at the cold and pinned my dress to my knees. I regretted wearing a dress when I lived in Washington. I pulled my leather jacket closer around me and adjusted my scarf. I looked around and debated whether to walk home.

I sat down on the curb and focused my energy. I hated forcing a vision. It hurt like hell afterwards, but right now, I need one. I saw the flickering neon sign of one of the stores I pass on my way home. I then saw the slightly rusted street sign that marked the halfway point. My shoes were damp from the rain and my soaked hair clung to my face. I carried my book bag over my head as I ran trying to shield myself from the rain.

My eyes shot open and the vision ended. I was walking... I took one last look at the school and sighed. I guess something came up. I figured it would happen eventually. I stood up, brushed my dress off, and started walking down the road.

It was not a big deal. I have walked home millions of times. This one was no different- yet it still stung. Where was he? He told me he would take me home. What if he had planned this from the beginning and all of them were watching me stand at the side of the rode like a fool. It made since... it natural.

That was when I stopped walking. I stood there and just stared straight ahead of me with an empty, glass look on my face. I have been played. I trusted him knowing this would happen and now that it did ... I do not know. I do not know how I should react. Am I jumping to conclusions? Was I over reacting? If I was then why was I so hurt. Why I was crying- oh, I am crying...

I then let the tears fall as I wiped them away from my face repeatedly. I sniveled and continued to walk. I heard a shuffling noise come from the alley in between two stores. It was probably just a storekeeper throwing out trash.

As I walked by a pair of hands reached out and grabbed me. I cursed myself for not watching the vision longer. No wait- It was not raining yet so that meant the vision happened after this. Dammit! I wish I could have just waited for him! Now I was being dragged into an alley by some creep. I screamed against his hand as loud as I could. I thrashed my legs around and tried to get out of his grip. I was so terrified that I had blocked the vision I would have gotten from his touch. That confirmed that it was not Jericho.

I was pinned up against the brick wall. IT was too dark to see my attackers face. I was so scared that all visions, auras, even my common sense were blocked. I was so terrified that I could not see Angela. My tears flowed from my eyes. From the tight grip my attacker had on my wrist, I knew two things 1.) This was intentional. 2.) This man planned to hurt me.

I squeezed my eyes shut and imagined someone coming to my rescue. The man leaded down and whispered in my ear. His sticky and warm breath clung to my neck and made me feel sick. He pinned my body against the wall with his and ran his large rough hand down my side.

"I warned you." Then I knew who it was. I had nightmares about the same man. Terrance. He then laughed and his warm sickening breath clung to my face.

"Oh, how I warned you." He said again. I heard a click and then I felt a sharp item press again my thought. It was a knife. I began to cry harder.

"If I uncover your mouth... will you promise not to scream?"
I slightly nodded my head, but winced when I felt a warm liquid run down my neck. I then realized that even the slightest movement and the blade would puncture my throat further.

"Good." He said as he removed his hand from my mouth.

"Not a sound or your dead." He snarled. With that, he threw me on the ground and before I could react, he was on top of my with the knife pressed against my neck. His hand traveled up my stomach to my breast. He trailed along the neckline of my dress. He then pulled the neckline down and exposed my breast. I gasped in shock when he pressed the knife harder against my neck, but was cut off. I choked on my own whimper and tried to sink in closer to the ground.

"Not a sound." He growled. I needed to get out of this. Therefore, I did what any logical girl would do. I pretended to enjoy it. I let out a moan as he fondled my breast. In return, I felt the knife loosen against my throat. I continued to do this until he had placed the knife on the ground. What a stupid move that was. I felt sick, but I needed to get out of this alive. As much as I wanted to bolt, up and run... It still was not safe. He had moved both hands to my breast, and now was my chance. I arched against him as if I was enjoying it. Then I slowly slid my leg up between his legs. I slowly slipped my arm from under him and curled my fingers around the knife. I took a deep breath and slammed my leg against his crotch. He groaned and rolled off me to grip his crotch. As soon as he was off me, I leapt up and yanked my dress up. He went to reach for the knife, but found it curled between my fingers. I turned to run, but before I could, He grabbed my ankle. As I felt myself falling, I stabilized myself and kicked the toe of my boot against his jaw. He yielded in pain and released me to grip his jaw.

I ran out of the alley and headed towards the woods. It was my best bet. I knew it better when he did, and I could hide from him

quickly. I looked over my shoulder to see him on the cell phone looked after me. He was not chasing me! However, who he was calling I did not know- and I currently did not care. I was not going to stay in Port Angeles- it was not safe any longer. Terrence had snapped and I would never put killing past him. My plan was to hope on a bus to God-Knows-Where, and if they tried to drag me back, I will confess about everything. I will make it to where they will be the ones leaving.

I came to a stop when I realized where I was. I was too far deep in the forest to where the light of the sun was barely seen. However, I recognized this place. I tapped my heel on the ground and recognized the sound of solid ground. I knelt down and brushed away the layer of dried leaves to see the familiar Celtic design that was etched into the stone. I brushed it away further to reveal the first tip of the star. I then knew exactly where I was. I was at the platform of the "door of Gabriel"

"What are you doing here little one?" I pivoted around to see Mr. Robert Pine. However, like most of the people in my life- he was also dead. His hair was dark, his eyes were tired, and he wore his wedding day tuxedo. He did not die on his wedding day. No, his spirit was happiest at that moment so when he was "separated" from this world his soul reverted to that moment.

"I-" I stammered at him unable to form word.

"You're running from something. Aren't you?" His eyes darkened when he said this. I felt my shoulders stiffen and hung my head to look at my feet. I did not want to admit I was running. I knew that I was brought to Washington for a reason; however, I was not ready to admit I belonged here. Yet somehow being in this exact spot reminded me of my true potential. I then looked up at him and in a meek voice said,

"Not exactly... more like to somewhere. Although it might be pointless- I don't think God himself wants me to leave this place."

"What do mean?" He said suddenly.

"I want to leave Washington- I want to go far away, but I don't think I can. If I were to leave, no one would be here to help you move on. What if me leaving would cause the door to close forever?"

Wouldn't that mean all of you who never crossed over would be stuck here until when?" Of course, there was more to it than that, however at this exact moment- that was my concern. Not Jericho, not Terrance, nor Taylor. No, right now my concern was for those whose life had ended much too quickly and I was their only way to find the Paradise they were promised. The lost souls who no longer wanted to remain on the earth- they were my concern.

"Avery, let me explain something. If you are meant to be here, you will realize that. If not then you will be able to leave without feeling guilty." I glided over the thought for a second or two. Perhaps that is true, however in some ways I would never be able to know if I was meant to be anywhere unless I tried leaving.

"Mr. Pine..."

"Hmm..."

"I have to ask... why you stay. Why don't you cross over?"

"Because I have Ruby, our children and their children to look after. My presence helps them not to grieve. Have you ever felt grief, Avery? It is a terrible and paralyzing feeling. When one feels grief it is a gaping hole in your heart that continues to grow as the amount of departed loved ones increase. It is true that you can move on from it; however, it creeps up on you and washes over you. Sometimes to the point where you no longer want to live. I do not want that for my family. If remaining on this earth helps them to not feel that... then so be it." He said with a cold tone. His face was contorted into a pained expression as water filled the brims of his eyes. For a man of his age, there are painful memories he harbors, and like us all, those memories tend to show their ugly faces.

"I can't say that I've ever felt that sir." I told him honestly. His dead eyes bore into me and sent chills down my spine.

"Then pray to your maker that you don't." His head suddenly snapped and looked behind him. He then slowly turned to look back at me. In that instant I was petrified with fear. The expression he wore was so alarmed, terrified, fearful, worried, simply scared. That was all he was at that moment- pure fear. However, for a spirit, there is not much to fear. He began moving forward-

"Avery, we'll talk about this another time, but right now you need to run." Suddenly he reached out his hand and without even making contact with me; I was propelled backwards about three meters. My back collided with a tree, yet the pain quickly faded. I looked up at Mr. Pine suddenly in shock and confusion.

"What? Why-"And then I felt it. I felt another presence rushing towards us at impeccable speeds. I could sense the aura of the entity. This entity was lethal with an intention to kill. Whether or not it had the intention to harm me directly was unknown, however if it came across me I highly doubt I will remain unharmed.

"Go!" He shouted at me. Without another word, I began to run with this newfound burst of energy.

I did not dare to look behind me. I felt if I did that I would see something far more terrifying than the things I had seen in any nightmare. I could feel the creature chasing after me. I did not know what or who it was.

I did my best to keep my balance as I ran. The forest trees rushed by me in a wave of blurred colors.

Thousands of thoughts and scenarios rushed through my mind a mile a minute.

I had concisely summoned the door of Gabriel and hiding in the "limbo" until I felt it was safe to emerge. However turning back now would be a suicide mission because whatever was behind me were becoming closer and closer by the second and I knew very well that our running this newfound entity was impossible.

I found myself suddenly skidding to a stop, mud and leaves flung up around me and coated my legs. My hair clung to my face and formed a wet and uncomfortable curtain. That was when I saw it, the mangy Mexican Gray wolf that haunted my every dream. The ironic thing was that I had been thinking I would see something worse than any nightmare, but in truth, I was seeing my nightmare. The wolf's black eyes bore into me, as I stood there frozen with the rain pouring down on me. The wolf lowered its ears at me and bared its teeth. I gasped and started running in the opposite direction. That was completely foolish of me. I wanted to smack myself! I should have known! Those repetitively dreams were visions planted into

my subconscious. However whether or not I made it out alive... well that part was up to me. I honestly had no idea. Some times that very wolf would tear me to shreds, and other times I would barely make it out alive.

Of course with my luck I was too busy scolding myself to not notice the wolf closing in on me like a wounded shrew. I just stand there debating whether to run. I have heard that you should never run from a predatorily animal. However, under the circumstance I do not think matters anymore. I was dead anyway. I was dead if the wolf catches me, and I was dead if I made it out alive.

"Run to the left." My eyes widened at the haunting voice. I have heard it before. Yet at the time, I have not. Yet I knew one thing. I need to trust it.

My legs took control and sprinted as fast as they could. I could feel my heart running just as fast as my legs. Tears were beginning to make their way down my face. From the fear, the stress, and the raw emotions that were over flowing. I was dead. I was going to die. That was the only thing in my mind.

The tip of my boot caught on a branch and sent me tumbling down a slope. As I barreled down the hill at unknown speeds, I could feel the cold and wet textures of the mud stick to my skin. My body ached and I wanted it to end. It felt like I had tumbled for hours although in reality I know that it has only been seconds. I finally came to a stop as I groggily stood up. I was battered and coated in blotches of mud with clusters of leaves and twigs clung to my hair. My head was spinning and I saw things threw a kaleidoscope lens.

The one thing I did see though was the same mangy Mexican wolf staring down at me from the top of the hill.

The wolf lifted its paw and began to make its way towards me. However before it even reached the slope, a golden blur collided with the wolf and sent it tumbling down the slope. I sprinted away from the wolf as I saw it barreling down the hill just as I had.

I turned to look at the wolf and saw that the sand colored blur was another, much larger wolf. I do not know why I did not take this opportunity to run. I felt like I needed to stay here. The two wolves leaped up off each other and began to slowly circle each

other. As they snarled and growled at each other saliva dripped from their snouts and the fur on their backs were on end.

The Mexican gray wolf lunged at the larger one. However before the wolf even got a chance the large wolf swiped it out of the way. The Mexican wolf fell to the ground and let out a whimper. The larger wolf walked up to it and shoved it roughly while growling and snarling at it. The smaller wolf leaped up on its feet and scampered away with a heavy limp.

As soon as it left I felt, my fears disappear. The other thing I felt was my abilities disappear as the sandy wolf walked towards me. I noticed that its left paw was bleeding heavily and I could not help but feel bad for it. Despite this, I still backed away from it and hid myself behind a tree. Even though that wolf helped me, it might have been fighting off the other wolf because it was claiming it is pray. Therefore, I did not want to take a chance.

That was when I heard it. The terrible sound of bones snapping and pain full groans. After it had stopped, I then heard heavy breathing. My curiosity had gotten the best of me and I poked my head out from behind the try.

I was in shock at what I saw. I saw a man laying face down on the ground breathing heavily. A part of me told me exactly who it was but I did not want to believe it.

I stayed like that for what seemed like hours. I simply curled up behind a tree as he laid there. I listened closely to his breathing to make sure he was okay. At one point, I had heard him get up and walk away for a bit, but I did not move from my spot behind the tree. I simply sat there drowning in my thoughts.

I heard heavy footsteps approach my hiding place behind the tree, but I did not move. I saw a shadow descend over me. I slowly looked up to see Jericho staring down at me. His face was hard with regret. He extended his hand to me and I timidly took it.

"Are you okay?" He asked me. His eyes rested on my neck, and my finger unconsciously traced over the thin cut Terrance had left earlier.

"Yeah... yeah I'm fine.

"You weren't supposed to find out this way." He said in a sad tone.

I shook my head at him.

"...Werewolves?" I said to myself more than anyone did.

"No... This has to be some hallucination that is being inflicted by a spirit- I've h-had those before you know..." My eyes wandered up to look at him.

"It's not. I am a Werewolf, Avery so are all our friends- except for Ash. I need you to accept me." He said in a stern voice. I snapped my head up and looked him.

"Why?" I snapped at him.

"What?" He said with a gob smacked look on his face.

"Why would I? May, I remind you that you left me out on a curb. I know it may not seem like much, but it is to me. You did the one thing I feared- and in some ways expecting. You forgot about me... right when I was beginning to trust you. Then what happened? I almost was raped because I was walking in the rain alone! Do you know what that was like?" I ranted as I wrapped my arms around myself and leaned up against the tree for support. My eyes stayed focused on the ground in front of me as I refused to look him in the eyes.

"You were almost raped?" He said in an angry tone. I shook my head at him and pressed my fingertips to my temples.

"The sad thing is *that* is somewhere far in the back my head. Right now, I am focusing on the fact you just turned into a fucking wolf. Explain that one to me. Explain to me what you are, and how the hell I got dragged into this." I let my words spew out in a heap of frustration. I turned to look Jericho in the eyes and say him flinch when he saw the hurt in my eyes.

"Explain that to me right now... or I'll walk away." I said as I pushed myself off the tree and began to walk away. I kept waiting and waiting for his response but by the time, he finally spoke up... It was almost a whisper.

"I know... and I'm sorry." I heard him say quietly. He then looked up at me and took a deep breath.

"I'm a wolf. I am next in line for the alpha title. We have a large pack of about over 300. We live together in a cluster up in the mountains. This includes Tyler and Allen as well as my entire family. Maverick is the son of a Beta from the neighboring pack, which is why there is tension between us. He wants my territory so to take it from me; he has been trying to start a war between the two packs. The thing is- Wait I should have told you this first..." He paused, closed his eyes, and exhaled. He then opened his eyes and continued.

"Werewolves have mates. It is your other half. Another 'you' you feel the same thing, you love them deeply, to you they're perfection, and you would give you last breath to see them happy.-" I began to grow antsy as a question gnawed at my mind. Before I knew it, I had asked it.

"Do you have one?"

"Yeah, I do. I do have a mate, and I love her endlessly." I felt my heart sink in my chest and I averted my eyes.

"...oh. I-I see. Um well I guess I'll just-" I said as I turned to walk away however, I stopped when I heard him speak again.

"Avery you're my mate. That is what I needed to tell you before I continue. Maverick is trying to use you against me. You are my weakest link. I did not mean to drag you in between any of this, but I did. For that, I am sorry. "I looked at him in disbelief. I was unsure of what to feel. Should I feel happy?

"But I'm Human." I said as my mind hazed over with confusion.

"Not exactly. When did you start developing you abilities? When you were around 13? Maybe early then that, I am I right? You are human, but not fully. You started to change right when I had my first shift, so that way you would be allowed to be my mate. So yes, it is true that wolves cannot mate with humans. However, Avery, Crawford, you're not human." I flinched at the truth of his words. I did start to change around when I was 13. What scared me was that he knew this.

"Sorry... just trying to wrap my brain around this. Therefore, this means evry single creatures is real... and I am one of them. I guess

I should just throw away the idea of ever being normal." I shook my head as if I was trying to shake an idea out of it.

"You don't need to be normal." He said to me in one breath. I just stared him as if he had hit me. My body began to shake and I could feel my emotions began to overflow as I stood there silently.

"That's all I've ever wanted. Just a normal life with a happy family that loves me and takes care of me. I wanted friends that I can call at any hour of the night, and have sleepovers with as we gossip about other girls. I wanted to be surprised for once, or even get an F on a test. I never got that! I do not know what love feels like. I mean- all my life I have been shoved into a corner, and all I could ever do was watch other people live the way I wish I could. Then there's *you*-" As I listened to my own voice it scared me. It truly did. I had started out in a gentle and calm tone however, it quickly grew and sounded like I was on the brink of tears as every pent up emotion I had ever carried over flowed. I felt bad for him. He stood saying he loves me and all I did was expose every feeling I possess to him. Yet he took it. He took in my emotions and troubles willingly. When I had cut myself off I then took a deep breath as an attempt to straighten my emotions. Then I continued.

"You just appear out of nowhere and just literally barge into my life. And you made me happy. It was just for a moment but you made me happy. It was as if you flipped some type of switch and my abilities were gone! Just completely gone! So just for a second I was normal... The one thing I've always wanted." I said the last part in a whisper and I felt my emotions settle down. I knew that if they continued to grow, I could end up exploding the whole forest. As I looked at him, I knew that there was one last thing he deserved to know.

"I mean for years you didn't even look at me! Now you are just declaring your love for me and telling me we are meant to be? I am sorry but that is not possible. It is - just... strange. It has to be strange even for me. I do not love you- not yet anyway. I wouldn't even know if I did." When I said my final word, I felt at peace. I felt like I had said everything he needed to hear and that there was nothing more.

As I looked up at him from across the way, I knew that now it was his turn.

"But the thing is I *do* love you and I don't need you to love me back right now. All I need is for you to trust me." I stood in awe at him when he finished. It took me a whole novella to convey my feelings, and yet he did it in two simple sentences.

I found myself remembering something that seemed like eons ago. That single moment in my bedroom, when Angela had told me I need to trust Jericho. At the time I did not understand what she meant, but now I realize that she knew his secret long before me. She was right.

I released what she meant and what she wanted. I also released what I needed to do. At that though I felt water well up at my water line and threaten to over flow. I do not know what came over me. I suddenly began moving towards him and as I did, he understood and did the same. He rushed to me and engulfed me in his arms as I buried my face in his chest sobbing.

"And I do. I do trust you. I just need-" I said in a rushed tone. He cut me off in an effort to calm me.

"What do you need?" He asked me in a calm voice. I went ridged and did not want to say what I truly needed. A part of me knew it would kill him, yet I knew it was exactly what I need. I need to think, to breathe, and to try to reconcile. With my mind made up, I said,

"...time. That is what I need. I need time to just sort out my thoughts." I said in shaken voice. I felt him go stiff and then heard him say,

"Alright."

into the unknown

Draft 4

Jericho

I heard the water turn on as I sat on my bed reading. I glanced up to see the door cracked just enough to where I could just barley see Avery washing her face. Her damp orange hair clung to her face and formed a curtain over her face blocking her from my view. She turned her head suddenly and looked at me. However as quickly as she had glanced at me. I turned away. She hasn't said a word to me. I just brought her here to clean up. she was covered with mud and leaves. Her dress was torn and she had several cuts and bruises.

She gently knocked on the door which had caused me to looked up at her. Her eyes were unfocused and help a glassy haze to them, and she carried herself with a protective demeanor. I could tell her walls were slowly building back up.

"Do you have some gauze? And... and a bit of rubbing alcohol?" My face fell when she said this. She had refused anyone's help to tend to her wounds. I then considered the possibility that she had been in a similar situation before.

What hurt was the fact that Avery Crawford was a girl of solitude. No matter what I could never change that. She was almost fully independent as well as brave. She didn't want help. She wanted to handle everything on her own. Her nature of solitude was engraved in her just as her secrets dictated her. That was the truth and even the fact that she was my soul mate would not change that.

I took a beep breath and studied her. Completely studied her. With that single outtake of breath I accepted her- all of her for the first time. Her secrets, her overly independence, and her bravery- every single thing about her- I needed to accept.

"Sure thing." I told her. She nodded her head and disappeared into the bathroom. My heart sank when I heard the lock set in place. I was not sure if this was out of fear of me, or out of habit. Yet apart of me felt it was because she did not trust me.

On the way here she would tell me nothing. I had pushed for her to tell me what had happened to her neck, but she said that " It has absolutely nothing to do with you. I can tend to myself just fine." After that i did not push. I could tell she did not want me to know.

It was my fault. I am willing to admit to my self when I am wrong, however to her is a different story. I wanted her to find out what I was at my own terms. Instead I had lost control.

I took in a jagged breath as I walk down the hall to to get the first aid kit. What was a simple thing, I was at practice, and they were there. They were talking about Avery in ways they should not have, yet the way they observer me and pushed me further, and challenged me told me they knew exactly what they were doing- they were ripping my wolf out of me. They did that perfectly.

As I had stared at them, their voices seemed to fade into murmurs as they laughed about her pain. That was the most sickening thing of all. I saw red as blood blurred my eyes.

He was going to hurt her.

Before I could do a single thing my wolf broke free. My eyes glowed and he shoved me to the back of my own mind. Whenever he possessed me, I was forced into a black void. It felt as if my soul was levitating in a horizontal motion. I could feel and I could see the world around me However I was not in control. I could not move nor could I talk. I was now the continues of my wolf just as he was to me. Yet I had willed him to flee, which he did.

He was going to hurt her.

That was what happened, and that is why the now is. I needed to accept it, and work through it. Yet one thing echoed throw my mind.

They did hurt her.

It was a nasty thought but it was the truth. Even with all the supernatural abilities, the hexes, and all possible strength , it will never be enough. Everyone is mortal, everyone dies, and there's not a single thing I can do about it. I can not fully protect her to the point nothing could possibly harm her. There is still her self. There will always be her past and the horrible thoughts that linger within her. I can not protect her completely, but I can fight to do as closely as possible. I can defend her with my last breath, and comfort her when she does get hurt. Because the horrible truth is I am mortal, and so is she.

I snapped to the present and noticed the open wooden cabinet before me. I reached in and pulled out the plastic red case with the white cross on it. I opened it up and retrieve what she had asked for. Then I closed the cabinet and made my way back down the hallway. Back to a girl I thought could love me. Back to the girl I was scared hated me....

Back to the unknown.

When I walked back into my room I knocked on the bathroom door and waited for her to open it. I could hear her heart quiken and I knew that she was hesitant to open the door. When she fianly did she craked it open and only reached out her hand to take the guze and rubbing achohol. She then slammed the door and my heart sank when I heard the lock click into place.

She did not come out for another hour or so after that. After she did come out She asked Ashlin to drive her home, and did not even look at me or tell me she was going.

When Ash came back she said "Give her time. She needs to think." Then I went up to my room and tried to sleep.

I tried.

into the unknown part 2

Avery

I dabbed the cloth soaked in rubbing alcohol over my wounds and tried to hold in my rasps of pain. I knew that if anything... he was waiting outside the door, and I never wanted him to hear me in pain. I didn't want him to see me hurt, vulnerable, and weak. I knew he would internalize my pain, and then I would have to see that horrid pained look in his eyes.

I was not sure what hurt more... my wounds... or the distant agonized look in Jericho's eyes. I wanted to crawl away. I wanted to crawl into my dark little room with a ghost girl, and never come out. I wanted to forget about everything because now I was not sure what to think. Jericho was still Jericho. He was a wolf when I met him... I just didn't know it. He was that over bearing, charming, and radiant guy I had gotten I know one of his greatest secrets.

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Ash dropped me off in front of my house around 10:30. I used the back door and slipped in without making a sound. I knew the Paterson's were asleep, but I didn't want to risk it. By some miracle, I was able to make it to my bedroom door with very little noise. I slowly shut the door and locked it without nothing more than a slight creak. Looking down at the door knob, I thought about everything that had happened today. I leaned my head on door and sighed out.

Jericho- it hurt to think about it. He had accepted me for what I was without hesitation, yet I couldn't do the same. That thought alone killed me on the inside and made me regret everything.

"Avery!!" I was ripped from my thoughts by a whisper in the dark. Turning on my small lamp sitting on my dresser, I saw Angela staring at me with large, concern ridden eyes.

"are you alright? I'm so sorry." She came up to me and wrapped her arms around me in a tight embrace- granted I couldn't feel her , but the gesture was nice. When she pulled away her face was contorted with an overwhelming amount of emotions. Fear, worry, dread, and compassion... and so many more. She looked as if she was going to cry, but god knows she wasn't capable of that anymore.

"It's not your fault- none of this is," I told her. She shook her head while rubbing her eyes. "no-I-just wish I could do more, but I can only do so much. As your keeper! - I just keep failing you."

"you being with me is enough." I tried to reassure her. She forced a smile and shook her head. "still you don't deserve this." She said in a whisper.

I stared at Angela for a long time, and recalled her words from that one afternoon,

"You need to trust him." her words echoed in my head as I realized something,

"Jericho... did you know?" I asked her firmly.

"honestly, I did. I should have told you, but it just didn't feel right. I don't think he'd want you to find out that way."

"Well, I don't think he wanted me to find out like this." I said, referring to the events that conspired hours before.

"I..." Angela let out a long sigh. She remained silent for a moment, as if she was gathering her thoughts.

"I'm not sure what to say, other than I'm glad you're safe." She finally said.

"yeah..." we sat there in a solum silence for what seemed like ages. I could tell there was a question, rattling around her head, but

she looked hesitate to ask. Eventually she asked the words I dreading to here,

"What are you going to do?" Her question scared me to be honest. Because in truth... I didn't know. I knew what I needed to do... but whether or not I was capable of doing so.... that was where I was unsure.

Shaking my head at her I told her,

"I'm not sure." I then watched as shock settled into her face.

"You're not sure? Avery how could say-" Angela flew backwards away from me, her hair swaying in the wind only she could feel, as something that can only be described as distress washed over her. She cupped her face in her hands and tried to calm her self. In her frustration, she sent a wave of energy through the room, causing the loos objects in the room to momentarily levitate, only to come crashing back down.

I felt the aura in the room become tense as I stepped towards her,

"Ang?" I called out her, but she didn't look up at me.

"There are things even you can't see, Avery." She whispered.

"You need to accept him. It's crucial, other wise-"

"I'm not sure I can." I said in a small voice. Angela looked at me as if I was mad, but before she could say anything I continued.

"I try to pretend to be level headed, selfless, and mature- but I'm not. No matter how much I want to just be a grown up... I'm some 17 year-old kid, all I ever wanted was normality- a stable life- is that really so much to ask? To feel like an average teenage girl?" I felt my frustration boil down, and then my mind wander backed to Jericho, and I felt guilt make its home in my stomach.

" with Jericho.... all I ever wanted was something that was normal. When he just walked into my life I though I had that, I thought that just for a moment- at least while I was with him, I was a normal teenage girl. But, choosing him means giving up any hope of every having a quiet life. God, I was so stupid-" I abruptly cut myself off when I realized something. I felt the lose of a presence . I whirled around in a panic. This wasn't like how sometimes she disappears, she's never really gone- I can always feel her presence. No, this felt

as if she had vanished from existence, almost as if she was never there . Leaving the room as quiet as the night, and the only sound was my frantic heartbeat. This was complete and utter loneliness. I felt my self crumbling towards the floor as my emotions swept over me.

"...Ang?" I whispered into the darkness. Yet I still didn't feel her presence. Then it sunk in that was really gone.

"God i'm a fool!... I'm such a fool." I wept into my hands. I had chased Angela off and I had rejected Jericho. For a girl with no family- this was the most worthless and alone I had ever felt. I cried out my anger and frustrations. I let my vulnerability show. I wasn't strong. I wasn't cunning- I was absolutely unextraordinary Avery.

I was awoken up by my alarm the next morning and realized I had cried myself to sleep on the floor last night. Confirming that the events of yesterday were not an elaborate dream. As I pulled myself up off the floor, everything flooded back to me. I realized Angela was still gone, and I had still hurt Jericho.

I brought my hand to my face and groaned out a string of curse words.

I had somehow worked up the energy to school, I had managed to go unnoticed, which I was relieved about because in all honesty I don't think I could face any of them. Alan, Mavric, Terrence, Tyler, Taylor and even Jericho and Ashlin. Granted I tried my best to avoid *the unfavorable three* on a daily basis, but I didn't have the energy to face my friends.

That is until I saw Ashlin leaning up against her locker. I came to complete stop as I stared at her. She was leaning against her locker, she looked exhausted and pale as Angela. Her curly blond hair , which she usually styled or pulled back, looked wild and disheveled.

The way she looked at me told me she had been waiting for me.

"you, we need to talk." She said as she grabbed my wrist.

"we talked last night..." I said under my breath as she dragged me along.

"Not enough apparently." She retorted back, making it obvious she had heard me.

I swallowed my nerves and begrudgingly followed the spitfire of a blonde through the hallways, and eventually out of the building. I felt my breath catch in my throat when I realized we were behind the dumpsters at the same bench Jericho and I came to all those months ago. Ashlin sat next down next to me and lounged back as she sighed. She ran her hand through her unruly hair as we sat in silence for what seemed like forever.

"So just in case you didn't know... I'm a witch. Well half any way but that's another story." I did not say anything I just nodded my head. She then let out a breath of relief and continued.

"My mom... she was a witch too. One day a spell recoiled and she became sick... she died when I was about sixteen. By the time she passed, I was still getting use to my abilities. I always knew I was different from most witches, but I did not realize how powerful some of my abilities were- especially the ones controlled by grief and anger. I have never felt so alone" It was strange really, to see Ashlyn Powell show an emotion other than cheerful or full on rage. That was the first time I saw pain in Ashlin's eyes. The grief she felt from losing her mother so suddenly was still. I could feel her sense of desperation and abandonment from her aura; reminding me that some mental wounds never heal.

"I'm part bane too-on my dad's side. My skin secretes an acid that's harmful to full-blooded werewolf's. As you can imagine, my dad didn't like werewolves very much, and they didn't like us very much. So when I found out Alan was a wolf... and I was his mate- it was difficult." Ashlin's hand unintentionally brushed against my arm, and then I saw it. The vision flooded through my mind as I saw fragments of her life. I saw her baby brother, her mom and dad, all with wide smiling faces. Then they slowly faded into ash and vanished forever. I felt her numbing loneliness as she cried herself to sleep. Her self-loathing from dreading what she was. But I also felt the warmth Alan had brought back into her life. Then the vision faded away, allowing me to come back to reality.

"he's half so I'm able to touch him, but it still hurt when he almost rejected me." Never had I experienced a series of visions like that. So much had been missing, as if she repressing most of it. As if, her

abilities only allowed me to see pieces of her past. However, those small fragments helped me to understand that Ashlin Powell was so much more than she appeared.

"So, I understand what you're going through. I understand wanting to be normal, and having weird abilities, but no one there to teach you how to use them. Therefore, I know what it is like to feel like a ticking time bomb. I also understand about the werewolf thing. "Her brown eyes searched mine for understanding, as she rung her hands out of nervousness. Then I realized that just like me, Ashlin Powell, had experience more than her fair share of heartache.

"I heard that you can see ghosts but that's about all I now about your abilities, and judging by the aura you're giving off, it's a lot more than that, isn't it." She said as she let out a big breath of air.

"Yeah... it use to be seeing ghosts, but then the visions started. After that I started hearing peoples thoughts, and I could see someones entire life- birth to death- with just one touch. A few years ago, I found out I was a guardian, and I'm suppose to help those who's souls are trapped move on. then a few days ago I.... " I stopped mid sentence and squeezed my eyes shut, not really wanting to admit what had happened. *I felt my face become beet red as i remembered the incident, not truely sure how to say it.*

"I...made a pipe in the girls bathroom exploid." I said in a small voice. Ashlin's eyes widened and she leaned intowards me and said,

"I didn't hear that last part." she urged me. I took a deep breath and said it one more time.

"I made the pipe in the girls bathroom explode!" I brought my hands to my face and tried to hide the shame that rushed over me.

"Shit that was you?t. If it makes you feel better I made a whole school bus crunch up like a soda can." The look on Ashlyn's face could only be described as pride. Beaming pride. Yet after a minute, she came back down to reality and took a deep breath.

"but man... that must be exhausting. Are you sure you're a human? Not some half vampire of something like that?" She said in a serious tone- well half serious any way.

"I think I would know if I a vampire."

"Your right. but wow, I'm really sorry, it must have been lonely growing up... avoiding touch, constantly hearing others thoughts, random visions, and dead people as you're only company. I'm... really sorry. All those years I thought you were just sickly or something." She ran her hand through her curls for the second time. In that moment something washed over me.... this was real empathy. Ash was probably the first person to truly understand everything I've been through.

"it was lonely... I was pretty normal until I was 13. I was living with an elderly couple who wanted to adopt me, but then when my powers came in all of a sudden- I lost control and-" I had never told the story out loud before... and saying the words were proving to be difficult .

"i hurt someone, Ash- so they sent me away." When I finally did... I felt the tears form and threaten to spill over. I quickly wiped my eyes and looked over at Ash. The look of shock on her face would haunt me.

"Your foster mom... the one who died? I though she dies of a heart attack." She asked me, wanting to here a more direct answer. Yet my silence said it all as it resonated with her.

"For the next two years I was I shuffled around. each one ending the same. they always though I was a freak, dangerous, one family thought I was possessed." When I was finally done telling her my story, I wrung my hands nervously, waiting for her to say something. But she never did.

"I'm not meant to be normal, am I?" I asked her. She was silent for a longtime.

"All I can tell you is, your meant to be so much more then a face in the crowd."

"But after everything, that's all I really wanted." I said in a whisper. The tears were over flowing now, but no matter how much I wiped them away there always seamed to be more.

"Is it really? Do you really want to be invisible? Unnoticed? How is that any better? Maybe being normal isn't what you really need." She slowly looked up at me. her brown eyes boring into me with so

many emotions. Then she wrapped her arms around me and brought me towards her chest. I clung onto her shirt and just cried.

"Avery, I know you feel hurt, alone, unloved, and have been constantly abandoned. But you don't have to any more. You won't be abandoned anymore. I know it's not conventional, and until a few days ago, you didn't think it was possible, but Jericho wants to love you unconditionally. You have friends and an entire family who will do nothing else but be there for you. We will never leave you because we're tied together by something far more stronger than emotions. So no more. No more being alone." She rubbed my head and tried to soothe me. Her words shook me to core., and in that moment I realized I wasn't so alone anymore.

"I don't know anything. I don't know what's fiction and what's not. I don't know if my powers are a blessing or a curse. I just hate not knowing anything any more. just want to be human. that's all. I just want to far far away. I feel like I might shatter any minute." Between the sobs the words were hard to get out. Almost as if they wanted to stay hidden. Yet when I did say them, I felt a wave of relief wash over me.

"You're so much more. you're so important, and you can't even see it. I know it's hard burden, and I don't know how you can do it on your own, but you don't have to now. Avery, sometimes it's good to go into the unknown." She brought me tighter into her embrace.

"Okay." I said. I was finally willing to let go.

Into the Veil

ASHLIN

I walked into my room carrying a basket of laundry. As I set it down on the bed I started to fold it.

"ashlin...." I felt a chill in the room and everything went silent. I watched as the light flickered on and off. I could feel a presence behind me, but I was too afraid to look. I looked over at the mirror and saw that there was no one behind me. I looked over my shoulder."

"Jesus Christ!" I screamed out and fell onto the pile of laundry on the bed, and clutched my chest. There I saw the faint figure of a young girl. She was barely there, and was struggling to manifest herself. She looked tired and desperate, and that was when I recognized her.

"Angela?" I said in disbelief. I watched as she tried to speak, but no sound came out. She was flailing her hands around in frustration, but to no avail could I hear her. My eyes flickered to my bookshelf filled with my mother's tomes and I had an idea- a stupid one, but it would work.

I walked over to the shelf and took out the deep purple tome, encrusted with jewels. It was my mother's research on the paranormal, and spells and rituals dealing with spirits. I had never practiced any of the spells before, because this tome dealt with dark magic.

From what I understood the world of the spirits and living were separated by a thin veil, and people like Avery had the ability to break it. As I looked over at Angela's panicked specter, I knew what spell I needed.

I opened the book and found the spell with the "Broken Veil" ritual. It would allow me to pass to the other side of the veil for a brief amount of time. However if I failed to return to my body I'd be stuck in the world of the spirits. I knew the risks, but I also knew I needed to take it. Following the spell I put my crystals in an ellipse a

I took the herbs needed and crushed them in a mortar. Pouring the elixir into a glass dish, I lit a candle and heated it slowly. I watched as the yellow substance bubbled and turn black.

I placed the dish on the ground and took the salt, and sprinkled it around me as I said the chant.

"Knasha Ver akamura Eno va tulla backyin, Ina ver Kusha ala Ahmid vore ... Ispania." I then lifted the elixir and drank it, trying not to wince at the bitter taist. I watched the Candel blow out and I looked at Angela with wide eyes. I let out a gasp as I felt my soul leave my body.

I looked down at my body, still and unmoving. Not even the flutter from my lungs could be seen. I looked over at Angela, who was as shocked as I was. I saw the veil, it was a wave of purple light that stood between me and Angela, rippling and flowing on it's one accord. I took a step forwards and reached out my hand.

When I reached the other side of the veil, I felt weightless, my wild hair floated in all directions and my clothes rippled around me as if I was under water. I looked at Angela with a wide smile and hugged her tightly.

"I've missed you so much." I whispered. Because I was in the same realm as her, I could touch her, smell her, and hear her as if she was still alive, and I was over joyed. Growing up, Angela was like my big sister. A big sister that lost her life far too soon. It had been four long years, and I was finally able to hold her again.

"You're so tall now!" She said as she smiled, and ruffled my hair.

"But you're hair is as curly as ever." She said in a teasing voice.

"I've missed you too, but I need you're help." she said as she pulled back . I nodded my head and took a step back.

"Anything." I told her.

"Avery she-"

"Rejected Jericho? I know."

"Yes, and that can't happen, I tried to talk to her, but she wouldn't listen. Avery is extremely important, her duty is to help us spirits move on, she's our bridge. If she leaves, then we'll have to find someone else with a similar capability, that could take a week, a month, years even! And in that time, souls will become restless

because they can't move on. Even worse they might- " She cut her self off as a sob escaped.

"They might actually win this time." She whispered to her self. The word They echoed in my mind.

"Who? Do you mean the black water pack?" I asked her. Yet I highly doubted she was referring to Marvick and his pack. Marvick might have been a nuisance, but for him to conniving enough to cause concern... it sounded ridiculous.

"No- I can't tell you- I really can't. If I did it would change things terribly. All I can say is there's someone malignant at work. Jericho is going to need her as much as she'll need him. I can't tell you- I really can't- but a chain of events is going to happen. If she rejects him - what will happen will be terrible... and I can't let it happen to her- or any of you. So please, help me. " Her voice was heart breaking to listen to.

"Alright, what can I do?"

"She didn't listen to me, so just talk some sense into her. I know she wants a normal life, but she's too crucial, and her abilities are getting stronger every new moon. So just comfort her, help her accept things as they are." She then buried her face in her hands and let out another sob. I took a step towards her and reached out to comfort her, but she shied away from my hand and shook her head.

"I tried to tell she didn't have a choice, but it only angered her- I approached it completely wrong- but you and her are similar so maybe she'll listen to someone who's empathetic. " She said in a shaking voice. I was silent for a long time... deep in my thoughts. I milled everything around in my mind. Without hesitating I wrapped my arms around her and brought her towards me in a tight embrace.

"I understand... I'll talk to her tomorrow I promise. I need to go though- before the spell wears off." I then released her from my grasp and walked over to the veil. Before I passed through it, I looked back at Angela.

"Thank you." She said in a small voice, I then returned it with a small smile, and disappeared into the veil.

When I re entered my body, I state up, gasping for air. I rolled over onto my side coughing, unable to take in enough oxygen to stop my lungs from burning.

I looked over at the closet, and let out a sigh when I saw she had vanished. I stood there in shock as what just happened settled in and her words echoed in my mind.

someone Malignant at work...

Oh my god- Jericho! I turned to run out of my room but be for I even could make it to the door Allan walked in. It didn't take him very long to notice how frantic I was. There was no doubt in my mind he could hear my hammering heart. His perfect chocolate eyes narrowed at me as he studied me intently.

"Why do I have this feeling you just did something you shouldn't have." he tried to peer over his sholder, but I blocked his view. He noticed this and took a step forward trying to get around me.

In a panic I threw my self at him and wrapped my arms around him.

"What are-" But before her could say anything I crashed my lips against his, catching him off guard. He let out a growl and wrapped his arms around my waist and melted into the kiss. As he passionately kissed me, and fought for dominance, I shifted us back towards the bed. I then kicked the grimier under the bed. I fell back onto the bed and pulled him down with me. He rotated me on top of him never breaking our sensual kiss. I then broke away and bit his earlobe.

"**Sen vaniaj**" I whispered into his ear, and watched him slip into a deep sleep. I hopped off the bed, knowing he was going to be furious with me. I groaned and dragged my hand down my face,

I just used a sleep hex on my great... Perfect!

Walking over to the other side of the bed, I cleaned up the ritual circle and poured the left over elixir into a vial and placed it on my dresser.

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After School the next day I walked into my room fuming mad. I felt relieved Avery had complied, but Allan's questions were starting to agitate me. He was always like this. I tried not to be mad but it was difficult to stay leave headed with him. If it was up to him he'd make me give up the craft all together. He never said it but I could see it in his eyes- he knew what happened to my mom- and he was scared the same thing would happen to me.

Slamming the door shut, making the walls rattle, I let out a scream of frustration.

"Dammit all!" I shouted as I swung my fist and knocked a stack of books off my desk. I trusted Allan.... I loved him so damb much it hurt... but there were things I couldn't tell him. There were things about my mothers death that would keep me up at night. For a witch like her to be killed by her own spell... It didn't make much sense. But if I expressed this to him I knew that it would just reaffirm his fears. He'd tell me to stop searching for answers. He'd tell me to stop practicing the craft. But I couldn't- it as much as part of me as his wolf is to him.

I felt a presence in the room and with out even turning around I knew it was her. walking over to my dresser, I picked up the small vial and brought it to my lips.

I did what Angela needed me to, now I might finally get my answers.

I felt the familiar rush as I left my body as I passed through the veil. I came face to face with Angela. Neither of us said a word, we simply held each others gaze and shared a moment of understanding.

"I can't thank you enough." She said.

"Now I need *your* help." I told her. She gave a curt nod.

"Anything."

"My mom died a while ago, A spell went wrong and she died of an illness. But the thing is non of it makes sense. It was her own spell- she created it- so it doesn't make sense for it to poison her that badly- and nothing we tried help. "

"So why do you need me?"

"Because I think she was cursed... Angela, I need to see my mom." I told her. Her face fell slightly at my words.

"Ashlin... I'm not sure I can. She might have moved on already. To find one wondering spirit- even if they were powerful- It's difficult. It takes time." She said as she turned to leave, but I ran after her before she could vanish and grabbed her wrist.

"Please... I'm begging you. I'm scarred- every since she died, I've been having these terrible. If someone did curse her I'm worried they could come after me. If I die Allan dies! So please help me." I begged her, letting all my fears show. Her eyes softened and she was quite. She looked back over her shoulder, as if looking for something, and let out a sigh.

"Okay... fine... fine I'll help." She said as her sympathetic eyes bore into me.

I felt relief wash over me, thinking I would finally have the clarity I sought. Then the tears overflowed, as I felt as if a wieght had been lifted off my shoulders. Never in my life had I felt such ovewhleming releief.

" Thank you." I said as I ran to her and wrapped her in my arms.

My moment of peace was short lived though. Angela asked me to tell her everything I knew about my mom- anything that would help her find her. the words flowedout of me andI told her everything. Her favorite places, favorite childhood memory, where she grew up,where she died- and where she was barried. Itold her how she ided- I rememed it like it was yesterday. I was still struggling to accept that it all happed almost two years ago. Yet talking to Angela, and talking about her and remembering her- instead of trying desperately to forget her- that helped me more than any therapy session.

When I finally finished telling her everything I could, I hugged her one last time and turned to leave. As I walked towards the veil, I couldn't stop the smile pulling at my lips. It felt strange. It felt surreal. That was the first time that I felt my grief dissipate- just a little- and the memories of my mother were finally becoming beautiful memories. For the first time in a long time I had hope.

Yet when I tried to pass through the veil something felt wronged. The veil stretched with my hand, but never let me pierce it. It snapped back into place like a sheet of gelatin. I looked over and my body, still unmoving. Then the panic settled in.

I took to long...

I was trapped with the spirits- unable to get back- and sure how too. I cursed under my breath and gripped my hair, trying to think of any spell that could help.

But nothing came to mind. My mom- hell even my dad- would know... but no matter how much I tried to denied it... I wasn't her. My abilities as a witch couldn't even hold a candle to hers.

"Angela!" I frantically shouted. My voice was hoarse with hysteria and sheer fear. With in a heart beat she appeared next to me and tried to coax me into a calmer state. She repevily asked me what was wrong, but the shock was still settling in- making it hard to talk.

"I- I can't get back- I'm trapped!"

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AVERY

It wasn't long until I found the days pass by. I found my self alone and simply drifting through my daily life in a daze. I would wake up, go to school, work at the bookstore, and go to sleep only to repeat the same thing. I had returned to my life before Jericho came crashing into my life. I never realized how alone I was before, but with Angela's absence, I was even more alone then before.

After talking to Ashlin, that night I called Jericho, but he didn't answer. I texted him, but he didn't reply. Then I didn't see him at school. The truth was I didn't see any of them at school, it was like they had all vanished. It's been almost two weeks and no sign of any of them.

I shifted down the hall and towards my locker so I could head home, but then I saw him. I saw him coming towards me, shoving people out of the way. Jericho's gazed was strained on me as if I was the only thing he saw. That was when I started running towards

him. I collided into him and wrapped my arms around him and buried my face in his chest. I realized in that moment how much I had missed him.

He engulfed me in arms and brought me tightly to chest, until there was no room between. I closed my eyes and finally released the breath I had been holding in for the past week. Then I felt him bury his face in my hair and breath in. I smiled widely felt my face heat up, and was thankful he couldn't see it right now. We stayed like that for what seemed like forever, standing in the middle of the hallway, oblivious to the others around us.

I finally broke a way, and looked up at him in a panic, with the sudden urge to tell him everything.

"Jericho I'm s-" But before I could say a single word he cut me off.

"That's fine. Just get in the car for now, I can explain the rest on the way." He said as he walked around to the other side. The frustration was clearly visible on his face. He raked his hands through his hair right before he opened the door of the car and slide in.

I didn't say a word as he started the car. I simply waited with a bated breath, waiting for him to brief me.

"I don't know why, but Ash started meddling with one of her mom's old tomes- we should have burned that book a long time ago. Anyway here-" He started to talk, but cut himself off when he reached back into the back seat and picked up a large book and handed it to me. He spoke as I examined it. The book was this-easily 500 pages or more. It was bound in in a dark velvety leather, and encrusted with glistening gemstones. I was careful when I opened the large tome to where a marker had been placed. The pages were yellowed and frayed, but I noticed that it was handwritten.

I Dragged My hand over the elegant writing and found myself being sucked into a world of my own. In the vision I could see the author. She had flaxen colored hair that fell in wild ringlets that she had pulled back. I could see her eyes vividly, they were warm like honey with flakes of green and blue, they seemed as vast and

endless as the ocean, and lost in thought. But it was her eyes who told me who the authore was- it was ashlin's mother. But just as quickly as the vision came, it ended.

When I came back to the present,I looked down at the tome in my hand and my heart droped to my stomach as I saw the word "veil"

"She was practicing that spell, I don't know much about the paranormal so I don't really understand what happened but-"

"She was trying to pass through the veil?" I said cutting him off. He glanced over at me as we sped through town.

"so you know about it?" I looked away from him and leht out a sigh.

"Well yeah, it's almost like a thin sheet, it separates our two worlds, which is why most people can't see ghosts. But spirits can see us. Once in awhile they can conjure up enough energy to reach through the veil, move objects, touch us, stuff like that. That's all I really know." I explained. I turned and looked out the window, preparing for more questions.

"So how does the veil affect you?"

"Angela said I basically create a hole in it. Which allows me allowing me to interact with them freely." I explained simply.

"And what about Angela? Can she help?" I felt a lump form in my throat and I heard the thunder roar in my head,warning me of the storm of tears threatening to overflow.

"... I haven't seen her for a while now. It's like she just disappeared." I quickly looked down and brushed my hair forwards,in an attempt to hid my face. I quickly wiped my eyes. And tried to remember that there was a greater issue at hand. Then my eyes strained down on the bookandfocusedonthe words "Time is limited"

"Jericho, where's ash?" I asked him, fearing his answer.

"Her body, at the estate, but she isn't waking up- she's not even breathing. She's not dead, but it's like-" I Felt Panic race through me.

"Her soul isn't there?" I asked abruptly. As he pulled to a stop at an intersection, he looked over at me and held my gaze. His eyes softened almost sympathetically.

"Yeah. So can you help?" When he asked me this, I was raking my brain for a million possible solutions. They all seemed impossible- except for one. There was one that I knew could work- in theory anyway- but it was reckless. It was stupid.

But it was the only way.

"I can try. Can you drive towards Peabody creek? Also can you have Alan bring Ashlin with him. " He turned his eyes back onto the road and sped up, the town passing by in a blur.

"Just tell me where to go." was all he said. I gave him directions of where to go, and he followed them with ease.

Quite some time latter, we found ourselves at the trailhead for Peabody creek. We walked down the winding path, treading through mud and moss, with our hoods pulled up to protect us from the drops of dew from the trees.

"So what are you doing here?" I heard him ask.

"I have an idea, I'm not sure if will work. Do you remember the door of Gabriel? I can summon it, and allow lost souls to pass through. That's my duty anyway, I summon the door every new moon. Anyway- what if Ashlin is stuck in the spirit realm? that spell mentioned something about returning in time, so I think she wasn't able to pass to our side of the veil. So, I'm going to summon the door, and pass through it." I told him.

We came to a part of a path with a fallen redwood tree leaned up against the hill on the other side of the path. I stepped off the path and climbed on top of a boulder, and reached down to help Jericho up. I then grabbed onto a tree branch and hoisted myself up, and climbed up the steep hill side. I knew that just on the other side was the door of Gabriel. Unfortunately for us, climbing up the embankment was the quickest way there.

"When I do so, I'll be in limbo almost. I'll actually be *inside* the veil itself- directly in-between the two realms. I won't be in our world, but I won't be in their world either. I think I'll be able to walk freely until I find her. And then I should be able to grab her and bring her back. Once she's on the other side of the veil, she should be able to re enter her body. " I explained to him.

"And what about you?" When he asked this my heart ached, and I looked down at him unsure of what to say.

"Don't worry about me," Was all I said. His teal eyes softened once again, and held so much affection and concern.

"But I do- I always do. what if you stay in there to long?" He said with dread filling his words.

"I'm not like most people remember? I'll be fine I promise." I tried to reassure him yet I still felt incredibly guilty. Previously I never really had others worry about me.

"So how do you know it will work?" He asked me as I hoisted myself onto another boulder and continued my treed upwards.

"I did something similar a few years back... there was a spirit who was becoming dangerous and too powerful. So think about this way, there are three realms, ours of the living, the spirit world, and the afterlife. There are two veils, a thin one separating us from the spirits, and one- which is more like a steal enforced brick wall- that separates the spirit world from the afterlife. I make it easier for those lingering spirit to pass on. When you die, you have a straight shot to the afterlife, but some people aren't ready, but the thing is, once you miss that opportunity it's difficult to move on your own. I already create a gaping hole between the fist veil, and then I have to summon the door to act as a hallway to the third realm for spirits. " I explained as we reached the top of the hill.

"so what happened a few years ago?" He asked behind me.

"There was a spirit, who was becoming resentful, and angry, he died young, and his wife moved on and remarried. He was starting to develop into a poltergeist, but then he started becoming demonic. He would follow around his wife, causing her to feel dread, guilt, and slowly driving her into madness. I saw his wife all the time when I visited the bookstore, so that's how i found out about him. So I what did was I went to the second veil and found him- it wasn't easy but I pulled him into the afterlife. To be honest I was scared out of my mind, he was too powerful for me, and when I finally managed to pull him in, I almost fell into the afterlife with him. My powers weren't very strong then- and so If I did fall in I'm not sure I could get back

out." I took a step and slid down the hillside covered in moss and dead leaves.

"How old were you exactly?"

"I had just moved here so I was about fifteen I think." I said, not looking back as we finally came to level ground.

"Fifteen?!" I heard him cry.

"What?" I looked back at him with raised eyebrows.

"you were fifteen, and you did something like that? You took on a fucking demon- and you almost died- you were fifteen? How tall were you anyway? Like three feet- three fucking feet tall and I bet barely 90 pound- and you took on Satan's helper?"

"Get a hold of yourself . " I mumbled under my breath as I tried to put distance between us.

"one more thing; when I do open the door there will most likely be other spirits who will rush to the door.... so you need to stand back." Glancing at the trees around us, I knew we were getting close.

"Why? Can't I just go with you?" I looked back at him, realizing how close he had gotten to me. Then I realized how the last time I was in this part of the woods I had almost rejected him entirely. Guilt settled in once more. But I shook my head and kept moving.

"No, only a seer can. If you pass through- well I'm not exactly sure what will happen, but I know you won't be able to pass back through. That's why you need to stand back, when those spirits rush for the door, it could feel like anything from a breeze to a cyclone in transit, so I can't risk any of you being sucked in -" I stopped and knelt down to brush some dead leaves away and realized we had made it, once I saw the familiar stone.

" So please just stay back." I said as I gave him a pleading gaze. He reluctantly nodded and then glanced around.

"Alright. So this is it?" He asked me. I nodded my head.

"Yeah, this is the gateway. Are they almost here?" I asked as I started having second thoughts about this plan. "Yeah, I can feel them." I glanced over at him, with confusion clear on my face. He looked over at me briefly and just tapped his forehead as he kept his eyes focused in front of him.

As each second passed I felt my anxiety rise and my confidence in my abilities fall. I was worried about Ashlin. Unsure of how I would find her. Unsure if I *could* bring her back.

"you okay?" He reached for my hand and brought me out of my thoughts. I looked up at him and felt my concerns melt away.

I needed to try.

"yeah... just nervous about Ashlin." I said in a small voice. He let out a puff of air and gently grabbed my chin, making me look up at him. He was going to say something but he never got the chance.

"Jericho!" Our attention was pulled away from each other. We looked over and saw Allan walking towards us with a motionless Ashlin in his arms. Allan looked as pale as Ashlin did- as if he hadn't slept in days.

As he came closer I pointed to the side of the stone platform and said,

"Just lay her down gently." He nodded his head and gently laid her down.

"So what's the plan?" He asked.

"Avery is going to open a spirit door, and literally drag Ashlin's soul back." Jericho briefly explained.

"Okay, sounds good." Was all he said as he sat down next to her.

"So now what?" Jericho asked.

"You guys stay near Ashlin's body at the left end of the platform. I'll summon the door." As I went to move away he grabbed my wrist.

"Avery," I looked up at him.

"Be careful, please. " He said with pleading eyes.

"I promise." I said in a whisper as he slowly let my hand fall.

I went to the center of the platform and brushed away the dead leaves. I stood with my head lifted high, and placed my palms out each side of me. I steadied my breathing and willed the door to appear. I could feel the presence of spirits as they milled around me, whispered, and waited.

then I felt it. the familiar pulse of energy, that rushes from me and into the stone dais. I felt the bright wave of light engulf me and then flood the forest around me. I felt the rush of energy, that

became stronger and stronger with each new moon. exhausted, I fell on to my back and tried to regain my strength. I heard Jericho call my name and as I slowly opened my eyes I saw his perfect blue ones staring down at me with panic.

"avery, are you okay? Are you sure about this?" He helped me into a sitting position and rested his forehead against mine, searching my eyes for any signs of dote.

"I'm fine... really." I said breathlessly. He held on for me for dear life, I clung onto the sleeves of his jacket and he helped lift me onto my feet. Yet, when I finally looked away from him, I saw it, the door of Gabriel.

I looked back at Jericho he slowly turned to look at the door, his mouth becoming agape. Alan as well stared at it in amazement.

The door was a flawless silver, with panels twelve panels each depicting different parts of the bible, all intricately designed. In the center of the door was a medallion of Angel Gabriel, willing you to come forward. The door it's self floated effortlessly above the ground, as a white mist and light seeped out from under the door.

I turned to Jericho and looked up at him, and tried to memorize every detail. The truth was I was afraid and unsure of what was going to happen. I wasn't sure if I'd actually be able to find Ashlin. I wasn't sure how long I'd be inside the veil, but when I looked over at Alan, and saw the worry on his face, I knew I needed to try. I wasn't sure when I'd be able to tell Jericho that I accepted him.

I leaned up as far as I could and whispered,

"Go back to Ashlin... ." His eyes snapped away from the door and looked down at me with softened eyes. He pressed his lips into a thin line and nodded. I then hugged him one last time, and as I slowly let go of him he leaned down and kissed me right above my temple.

"Come back soon, please." I nodded my head, and let my hand slip out of his as I walked towards the door. when I finally approached it I looked back and the spirits,

"I'm going to open it, but please, just walk slowly, I'll let everyone get though, but please..." I looked over at Ashlin's unmoving body,

Alan, and Jericho. then I placed my hand on the door handle and with all my strength, pulled open the door.

Ceremoniously, the spirits, listened, one by one walked through the door. I Looked over at Jerico and saw the small breeze from the passing spirits only caused his hair to blow around. I smiled with tears brimming my eyes,

They're all safe.

Once all the souls passed through, it was finally my turn. I turned to step into the door and looked back at them, I looked at Alan who was still speechless at the whole ordeal. I smiled at him and gave him a curt nod, letting him know I'd bring her back. Then I disappeared into the door.

Numbness

When I entered the door, on the other side It was another world entirely. It was something only I could experience. I felt at peace, I felt as if all my worries had melted away.

I found a picturesque meadow before me scattered with wildflowers, violet trees, and lush green grass as far as the eye could see. the sky above me was composed out of vibrant hues and of blues and pink and stayed in a perpetual state of twilight. It was to most beautiful sunset I had ever seen, and If I wanted to I could stare at it for all eternity. It drew you in-captivated you. called you to walk down the path towards your next stage in existence. It evocated tears in your eyes and it felt as if the universe it's self-was saying "welcome to your new life of peace. it's okay." Its purpose was to soothe you and to make you realize that all of the pain, all of the hardships- it was worth it. It was to lead you home.

I fought the urge to lay downing the lush grass and lose my self in its beauty. Then I saw what I was looking for. I saw a small sliver of light gleaming from the bark of a plum tree. The funny thing about the vail was that it was ever changing. always shifting and changing. I knew that inside the vail, a spirit had free reign. For a short while, they could distort reality and make it their own. they could use the vail to amplified their emotions, to help them push through into the world of the living. For this was the world in-between all, and there was anything was possible. They could use the veil to their benefit, or they could let it consume them.

I didn't know what was on the other side and that rattled me to my core. If Ashlin was in emotional turmoil and let her pain manifest its self-then I might as well have been walking into hell.

As I reached my hand out, I could feel the endless supernatural power seeping through, begging me to take it. The instant I touched it, I was enveloped by a bright light and I felt my self-being pulled in.

I felt like I was I was an insect in a tub of water, and someone pulled the plug- forcibly sucked down the drain. I let out a scream as

I felt as if I was forced through the eye of a needle as blinding light enveloped me.

But barely a second later I found my self in the veil. the first thing I noticed was how quiet it was. It was a type of silence that burned your ears and felt like a weight on your chest because you knew that it shouldn't be that silent. Sometimes silence was worse than screaming. Something was wrong-something wasn't right.

the second thing I noticed was I seemed to be in a white endless void. The veil was supposed to seem like a narrow hallway between the worlds. The living on one side with the "beyond" on the other side. But here- there was nothing.

I opened my mouth and called out her name with all the force I could muster. But my voice was lost- there was nothing to be heard. I tried again, but I still couldn't hear my own voice.

As I looked out into the endless void I rattled my brain for possible causes.

Maybe I was in an air bubble of some sort.

Maybe I never entered the veil, to begin with.

Maybe Ashlin had moved on already.

Maybe this was Ashlin's doing.

I took a deep breath and took my first step. I promised I would find her and that was what I was going to do. I walked further and further into the void- if I was in a pocket then all I had to do was keep walking. But after what seemed like hours of walking I was still a prisoner in the vast nothingness. exhausted I fell to my knees gasping for air. But even my gasps were silent.

As the panic filled me I laid on my back and tried to sort my thoughts. I found my self-looking up into the endless white void, trying to remember everything I had learned about the veil.

1. the veil is a curtain separating the first and second world.

2. the veil is a void that can be manipulated. It has a tendency to amplified emotions.

3. Ashlin was probably somewhere in the second world scared maybe in shock... and in a state of panic.

I dwelled on the last fact for a long time. If she was afraid, then the veil would have reflected that. I would have felt like I was

drowning like I'd never see my loved ones again. I'd be filled to the brim with anxiety and fear to the point I couldn't bear to take another step, but without knowing why.

I focused on what I did feel. I felt lonely and lost yet at the same time I felt calm. I wanted it all to end but at the same time stay here in my solitude forever. I could stay here with a blank mind and not give a damn about anything. Once I let the veil take me fear was something I could no longer feel.

Numb... numb was the feeling that the veil had been flooded with. the thing is I had felt this before.

I thought back to that time on the bench when Ashlin had brushed up against me and I saw her life in a split second. I felt it then too. I knew it wasn't always like this. when he brother died I saw her pain. That image of her uncontrollably sobbing over her brothers mangled body was forever burned into my mind. An innocent boy who was more of a son than a brother to her was ripped out of her life in an instant and it broke her. I could still see her cooing over her brother when he was little, and playing make-believe with him until he was laughing so hard his stomach hurt. She had more love for that little boy then I had experienced in my lifetime. So, in the end, she felt the most heartbreak when he was taken from her. that was when I first felt the numbness.

Nevertheless, even if this was all Ash's doing, I still needed to find her. The last time I was in the veil, I focus on a certain emotion, in that case, it was the vengefulness of the spirit. I took another deep breath. But looking up into the endless white void, I knew there was no dominant emotion to lead me to her. I was just in a vacuum of emptiness at the hands of Ashlin.

A crazy idea sparked in my head, it wasn't much of an idea but it was something.

what if I was the one manipulated the veil? repeated in my head. If I was the one to project my emotions, there was a possibility I could find her easier that way.

To be honest I had no idea if I even had the ability to manipulate the veil. Compared to spirits, my supernatural energy was barely

noticeable. But my best chance was to flood the veil with my emotions- emotions I understood and could navigate through.

In a sense, I felt like I opened up the floodgates. All the fear, loneliness, desperation, confusion and hope flooded out. I focused on each emotion that I felt. I focused on memories to amplify each one. But I focused on hope the most. I pictured Alan, I could only imagine what he felt. I pictured what it would feel like that when I found her- when I brought her back. That was hope.

As I laid there, with my eyes closed I felt my body becoming weightless and little by little I felt my clothing becoming heavier then I felt the water pooling around me like a flood. Startled, I flung my eyes open and when met with darkness. I then realized I was sinking deeper into the depths of the water abyss I had created. My lungs burned from the instinctive need for air, but the black water suffocated me.

I saw a glimmer of light at what looked to be the surface. With all my strength I urged my limbs to swim. However, it seemed like the water was never-ending. As if there was no surface. For a second I thought about just giving up- just letting myself sink into the watery void, but that light urged me to come towards it. That light urged me to try to reach it.

After what seemed like hours of treading water, I broke the surface. I gasped for air, and it felt like my first breath in so long. as odd as it was, I felt relief wash over me, and I smiled up at the dark sky.

I looked around my new environment. The tall cypress trees emerged from the water and their canopies reached to the heavens. a thick fog lurched on the surface of the murky black water, and in the moonlight, I could see something moving in the water.

Just beyond the trees something was lurching, watching me. I could hear a low rumbling hiss coming from whatever was watching me. I suddenly felt the need to get out of the water. I swam over to a nearby tree and climb to safety. I was cold, dripping wet, and afraid as I cling to the trunk of the tree. I gripped to the tree and grabbed hold of an air root and hoists my self up.

Looking around I knew that this was indeed my own creation. The water was the loneliness, the trees were the desperation, the fog was confusion, and the beast watching me was fear. Looking over at the moon just above the horizon, that must have been my hope.

"Great job Avery... great job letting your fears of being eaten alive by a swamp monster and drowning in a watery grave manifest themselves. Jer would be fussing over me- dangerous that- reckless this- I just know it. he's probably freaking out about me right now."

Staring at the moon an idea sparked in my mind. It was a stupid and impossible one but it was an idea. With a deep breath, I reached out to the next tree and, then hopped over to it. Looking towards the horizon I wondered how many I had left. God only knew.

Meanwhile:

JERICO

I watched her disappear into the door. She smiled back at me as she stepped through, the white light behind her illuminated her and made her seem celestial. Then when she closed the door, the wind died down and she was gone. I fell back onto my back and ran my fingers through my hair as I tried to come to terms with what I'd just seen.

"what just happened?" I heard Allan say in a high-pitched and panicked voice.

"Did that really just happen? Were those shadows ghosts?' I saw him stand to his feet. He stood in front of where the door had appeared and he stared into the forest in disbelief.

"Oh my god- Avery- she went in there." I brought my hands up and covered my ears with my hands, and tried my hardest to block out Allan. I figured eventually he would work out his panic.

"Jericho, what is Avery? I've never met a medium who could do that. She's not your average ghost whisper is she." he frantically continued.

A seer? a guardian? bridge to the afterlife? But those barely described what Avery was capable of. I wasn't quite sure, and I don't think Avery knew herself. I had come to terms with that a while ago.

"Allan you need to breathe," I said, trying to stay calm as well.

"our mate just summoned a fucking demon door to the afterlife- and then walked through it. It's a lot to take in."

"says the werewolf with a witch-bane mate."

"How are you calm?"

"because I've seen my fair share of weirdness. Not like this, but I trust her." My eyes rested on the trees before me and a thousand and one emotions washed over me. What I found the most frustrating about all of this was no matter what there was nothing I could do. It was out of my control, and I had to trust Avery to finish this.

"she's been in there a long time." Alan's voice was beginning to sound frantic. I rolled over and pulled out my phone to check the time.

"It's only been two hours." He walked over to the middle of the platform and stared intently at where the door once was.

"What if she doesn't come back?" I asked.

"What if she comes back but didn't find Ashlin." Then he became silent, as the weight of the situation washed over him.

"What if I lose Ashlin, Jer?" He turned back to face me and his fear was clearly written in his wild eyes.

"Alan...." I said calmly.

"There's nothing we can do... Avery will find her, but you just have to trust her. Come sit with Ash until Avery gets back. All you can do right now is wait." Alan's expression softened, and he exhaled as he finally accepting things as they were.

Then he slowly walked over to where Ashlin laid and sat down next to her. Gently he lifted her head and placed it on his lap. He brushed her hair away from her face and kissed her forehead.

"Come back to me soon." He whispered to her. My heart tightened when I thought back to when I had said those same words to Avery.

Then we sat in the silence of the woods and waited.

AVERY

As I reached out towards the next tree, I wrapped my hand around a long air root and hopped onto the next tree. I let out a gasp as my foot slipped and fell into the fridged black water. I clung

to the trunk of the tree and began to slum into it as the exhaustion took a toll on me.

Looking around me, the trees seemed endless and the horizon seemed to be farther and farther away. My arms and legs felt limp and my heart hammered against my chest and sweat blurred my vision.

I pushed the pain into the back of my mind and pressed on. After a while, the pain and exaction were overcome by my need to find Ashlin. Eventually, that became my only thought. I had no clue where I was going but something was drawing me towards the horizon. Yet every tree I climbed was like a drop of water in a bowl- I knew eventually I

How long have I been at this? It seemed like hours but there was no way to tell. I took a big breath and attempted to work up the energy to leap onto one more tree. I clung to the tree for dear life and placed my foot in the grooves and rivets of the trunk as I made my way to the other side of the tree.

I whipped the sweat off my brow and rested my forehead against the trunk of the cypress tree, allowing my self to rest for a moment. then I heard movement come from the water and I watched as a pair of golden eyes breached the surface of the water and peered out at me. The beast let out a bellow the vibrated through the water and echoed through the trees around me.

I stared into the eyes of the beast defiantly, as if to say "you won't get me". then with my last remaining strength, I continued on.

I can to a halt when I heard something within the darkness. Voices. Female voices. I could not make out what was being said. The voices sounded muffled as if I was underwater. I stood there trying to distinguish the voices- I counted three- one sounded frantic. Something in my gut told me I knew that voice.

"Ashlin!" I called out, and before I could think I had pushed my self my cypress tree and began falling into the dark waters below. Yet, I never did. Instead, I watched with wide eyes as the swamp faded and the cypress trees and the beast ceased to exist. the world around warped and twisted around me and I felt as if I had found my self in a cyclone.

Then everything came to screeching halt. I stumbled forward and crashed into a wooden wall, and causing things come crashing down on top of me. I hissed out a curse word as I felt a broom fall forward and hit me on the back of my head.

I then took in my surrounding. the room was small and pitch black- and judging my the cleaning supplies It seemed like I was in a closet. A sliver of light beamed out from beyond the door, and I could hear those three voices as clear as day.

I stepped forward tried to peer through the crack of the door. through the crack, I could see three figures passing about the room. I adjusted myself several times to try to catch a glimpse of the women on the other side of the door.

"How long do we have?" I heard the frantic voice say.

"knowing her- summer solstice." Through the gap, I could see the speaker. She was a tall woman in her mid-forties, with blond hair that was pulled back in a French twist She wore a red shawl wrapped around that seemed to swallow up her thin frame. Her lips were pressed fine line and you could by the way she carried herself that her spirit had been broken a long time ago. In the way she smiled and from the sound of her voice, it was apparent that she had felt grief and tragic loss to many times in her life. Yet her eyes still held kindness.

"Why is everything on the solstice? what's wrong with a random Tuesday? "

"Because Tuesdays aren't dramatic." The woman said in a dry voice.

"So that's what- seven months?" At the sound of the voice, my breath caught and I pressed into the wood more, hoping to get a glimpse of the speaker. There was no denying who that voice belonged to. The woman the voice belonged to stepped out into my small plane of sight and when I saw her my mind went blank. I recognized her yellow sweater and dark curly hair. It was Angela.

My mind raced with a million questions. The women kept talking, but their words fell deaf on my ears. All I could do was stare at Angela in disbelief. Then I heard the other voice. I barely got a

glimpse of her, before Angela unknowingly stepped in front of the door and blocked my view.

"So that's seven months to figure out how to send her back to hell- and for good this time." With my line of sight blocked all I could do was listen. But now I found myself becoming more confused. The word "her" echoed at in my head and tugged at my curiosity. The woman talking seemed younger than the older woman, the frustration was clear in her voice

"Ladybug-"

"Do not call me that right now." I could hear the third woman- the younger one- begin passing around the room.

"You guys are just kids. it will be easier to just seal her away." The older woman said.

"Why? so she can just rise again in ten years? Not happening.... The shepherds what about them?"

Shepherds? I made a mental note to badger Angela about what that meant.

"a bunch of dead white guys isn't going to help much," Angela said.

"You said yourself that every time she breaks the seal she becomes stronger. You said She broke the seal early this time- early enough too--- " She stopped herself, as is the words she was about to say were poisonous, or too much to bear. The room fell silent.

Then Angela moved away from in front of the closet door and walked towards the other girl. When she did I finally saw the third girl. The third girl the purpose I ventured into the spirit world. The third girl was the reason I was in this dark and cramped closet. The third girl was Ashlin Powell, safe and sound. She was a disembodied soul, sure, but for the most part, she was safe.

"Hey... hey just breath." Angela wrapped her arms around Ashlin and tried to soothe her.

"- and you think just sealing her away again is our best option? For who?" Ashlin said towards the other woman. Her eyes were unwavering and were filled grief.

The woman returned Ashlin gaze with a challenging defiance, but I watched with the curiosity of a child as she slowly allowed her

resolve to crumble. When she looked at Ashlin, the sternness in her eyes was replaced with an emotion that seemed foreign to me, that I had yet to experience.

"Ashlin please-"

Before I could even think I rose to my feet and pushed the closet door open. The three of them froze and mirrored my confusion. The room was deathly quiet but it was broken when the older woman spoke.

"Angela, you are officially the worst keeper that ever happened." Stepping forward she turned to face me and carried an air of confidence to her.

"Never mind the other shepherds, If Avery is capable enough to make it here, then She's the only shepherd you'll be in need of." She then extended her hand towards me, which I hesitantly took.

"Avery, Crawford... I'm Cynthia, Powell. I've heard quite a bit about you, so It's a pleasure to meet you. Now if you don't mind," she then pulled out a chair from the small table in the middle of the room.

"Please come sit... we have a lot to talk about." I had come into the veil hoping to find Ashlin. I had found her, but in doing so I found even more questions.

(A/N: This concludes chapter 25. I recently made an outline so I'll start working on chapter 26. So I recently discovered that someone posted my book on goodreads? which I geuss is a good thing? I'm still alittle shocked that someone cared enough to post it. The book only had 10 chapters when the goodreads page was posted so the reviews arn't great but hey what can I do ￣(ツ)￣. So go check it out if you want to. I found it amusing.)

Growing Pains

We stumbled out of the door. Ashlin clung to me and our exhaustion had both taken a toll on us. Once we were through the door, the door vanished and we were left in the silence of the woods. I watched as Ashlin was serenaded in a golden light as she seemingly faded away. Slowly I saw her unmoving body be slowly enveloped in a warm light that was only visible to me.

Alan, Jericho and I stood there, silent, frozen in our places, with our breath caught in our throats. Then, after a mere moment that felt like an eternity, we saw her chest slowly rise as she took her first breath. Her eyes flew open and she gasped aloud. Abruptly she shot up and as she sat there on the damp forest floor, her large brown eyes were wide with amazement as if she was seeing the world for the first time. She became aware of the presence next to her. She became overwhelmed with the reality of the situation, and seeing Alan in that moment brought a wave of tears to her eyes.

"Alan- oh my god-" She said in between her tears, she crossed his face and peppered his face with sweet kisses. His arms wrapped around her and he brought her close to him as she sobbed into his shirt.

The only sound to be heard was Ashlin's sobbing. The woods were eerily quiet that day. I let out a startled gasp when I felt Jericho reach for my hand, enveloping it in his larger one.

I looked up at him and held his gaze for a moment. As if I was silently pleading with him to say something. I felt him rub his thumb over the back of my hand. His eyes softened and he smiled gently at me.

"Thank you." That all he said. It was simple but that was all that was needed to be said.

"I'm sorry for-" I whispered back, but was cut off by the lump in my throat. Realizing I never apologized for how cruel I was to him just a few days ago. I didn't have the strength to say it out loud. Evidently, there was no need to. I watched as his face fell slightly

and he brought me close to him, burring me in his chest and resting his chin on top of my head.

His actions said it all, he had forgiven me the moment I hurt him.

we stayed there for what seemed like forever, stewing in the situation. Just let the whole ordeal wash over us.

I played it back in my mind. My thought felt dry, and I felt shaken to say the least. I lifted my eyes up to ash, and our eyes met. We silently promised not to speak about what happened in the vail. Ash slowly rose up and started walking. Alan followed. Soon so did we. There was an air of mellencoly amoung us. We were unsure what to say or where to go.

After all... what was left to be said?

to be continued.....

Small update but this is all I've got right now for chapter 26. I didn't like my last draft so I scrapped it. my chapters tend to be between 2000-5000 words so this is about 1/4 of the chapter.

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