I was dying.

There was no other way to describe the pain coursing through my veins, the pounding in my head. My mouth was dry, and I felt my knees buckle into the snow before I could stop them. I placed my palms against the sides of my head and tried to breathe.

Through bleary eyes, I tried to take in my predicament. Not only did it appear I was about to kick the bucket, but I was now entirely alone. The merry band of weirdos who’d carted me into the middle of nowhere had conveniently vanished, leaving me to battle an invisible foe. After a few agonizing minutes, the pain began to ebb, and it appeared I was no longer in danger of spontaneously combusting. I lifted my hand to rub my eyes and nearly screamed.

A swirl of orange danced across my palms, lighting my across my fingers. They flickered with the wind but refused to disappear. Certain I was likely already dead, I examined the strange flickers for a few moments.

It didn’t take long to realize I was on fire.

With a screech, I shoved my hands into the snow, waiting to feel the burn of melting flesh. Instead, I felt liquid pool around my wrists. The snow around my hands had melted, and the orange swirls continued to merrily dance. I sat back on my heels and took a second look. I didn’t smell anything rancid, and I wasn’t in pain. So how the hell was I on fire?

Perfect. Of all the disastrous scenarios I’d conjured for this hellish trip, I’d somehow missed this one. I still wasn’t entirely sure I wasn’t dead.

A harsh gust of wind blew through the trees, and I realized night was falling. I was alone, I was hungry, and I was potentially a zombie. None of these boded well for the coming hours. The pool of liquid my hands had caused stirred my interest, however. Maybe if this fire didn’t hurt me, it could be of use. At the very least, it might save me from some nasty frostbite.

Invigorated, I hoisted myself up and leaned against a tree as the world spun. A wisp of smoke drifted from the bark, and I retreated with a yelp. Right, I was apparently a fire hazard now as well. At least that was something new I could add to my college application. Maybe I could figure out how to light a fire with these bad boys too. The world was my oyster-better yet, the world was my inferno.

My parents thought this camping trip would give me a spark. Who knew for once they’d be right?