



***SNIP. DEAD GUY. SNIP, SNIP. ANOTHER DEAD GUY AND HIS WIFE.***

*Snip.* Along with their son. The dog's dying tonight, too, in the raging house fire that's killing his owners, but at least executing animals isn't my responsibility. My shears hover over the next lifeline and I pause for a moment, doing some quick math in my head. The son was my sixty-six billionth kill. I've reached another milestone in my career tonight.

I don't celebrate, though. *Snip.* While adding another billion to my total is impressive, I stopped celebrating after five-billion kills because it just seemed like spiking the ball in the end zone in front of the other team's players when the score was already eighty to nothing. It's rude. It's not like killing is difficult for me or that the humans can challenge me in any way. *Snip,* and you're dead. It's a job, not an accomplishment. *Snip, snip, snip.*

I'm the McDonald's of Death. I really should get a light-up sign for the front yard that says, *Billions and Billions Killed.* Just like McDonald's serves as many people as it can, as quickly as it can, my job is to put 'em on the assembly line, kill 'em, and serve 'em up to Hades. The difference is that McDonald's pays their workers. I don't get anything except immortality, which,

when you consider the monotony of an infinite lifespan spent doing the same crappy job, isn't anything to get excited about.

It's been an unusually busy day for me, and I'm up to my calves in lifeline pieces. There's a war going on in the Middle East, a train derailment in Japan, a bomb in a hotel in Germany, and a cruise ship sinking off the coast of Florida. Not to mention all the humans simply dropping dead from natural causes and accidents. I chop through a fistful of lines and wonder what possessed my sister, Lacey, also known as Lachesis, to mark this many humans for death on this one day. She knows this kind of carnage forces me to create horrible disasters so I can kill the most humans in the least amount of time. I don't enjoy it, but killing hundreds at one time is the only way I can keep up on days like this. She was either seriously pissed off at the human race or at me the day she drew up this schedule. Knowing Lacey, I'm betting it's the latter.

I'm finally nearing the end of this miserable day. I have one person left to kill, and she's the one I've been dreading the most. Amy Brickhouse, the most popular and cruel girl in school, is going to die tonight when she wraps her car around a tree. I'm not dreading it because I care about the girl, but because her death is going to make my life a living hell at school for a few days and I don't need any more drama in my life.

I glance at the digital clock hanging next to the door. The large red numbers read 01:33:45 AM. Amy is scheduled to die in a little over five minutes. Once I kill her, I can finally go to bed. While I wait, I sweep up some lifelines and put them into an oak box with a picture of my shears burned into the lid. I haul the box to the back of the room where I pile it with about a hundred others just like it, mentally reminding myself to put them in the chute and send them to Thanatos before I go to bed. He needs to start picking these souls up tonight and escorting them to the Underworld. Otherwise, there are going to be a lot of ghosts terrorizing the humans tomorrow.

That's what ghosts are, you know. They are souls that haven't yet been escorted to the Underworld. Thanatos usually does a

good job of keeping the ghost population down, but sometimes he gets behind. Or lazy. Those souls left behind wander around, looking for the remnants of their old lives. They're just lost, but the humans freak out and scream about being haunted. We who run the death business try to keep the freak outs to a minimum, but we're not perfect. Sometimes, Thanatos likes to mess with the humans and leave a few ghosts around intentionally. When you do the same monotonous job for thousands of years, you start to do strange things.

Walking back to the front of the room, I check the clock again. *One minute.* I pick my shears up off the table and snip them twice in my hand, trying to work out the growing cramp brought on by overwork. It's a wonder I don't have carpal tunnel syndrome by now.

Amy's lifeline whizzes into place before me, thanks to the computerized racks that are programmed to bring each lifeline to the front of the room when it's time for me to cut it. I move my shears into position over her line and watch the clock. Three. Two. One.

*Snip.*

Amy's line falls to the floor, landing on the heap of lines already there. Reaching up, I unclip the other half of her line from the rack and drop it onto the floor, too. I'm done for the night. Sweeping the remaining lifelines into piles, I check under the desk and in the corners to make sure I don't miss any. I transfer each pile into a box and lug the boxes to the back of the room.

Dropping the boxes I'm carrying atop the closest pile, I thread my way through to the back of the room where a small, metal door is set into the wall. I open the door, place two boxes into the opening, shut the door, and push the green button on the wall. A loud whoosh sounds, and the boxes are on their way to Thanatos.

I repeat this process until there are no boxes left. Finally, I can head to bed. Placing my shears carefully in their protective box, I lock it in the bottom drawer of my desk. I open the door

to my workroom, stepping into the larger workspace that Lacey and my other sister, Chloe, also known as Clotho, share. It swings shut behind me, and I turn to make certain the security panel blinks red, indicating the lock is engaged.

It's a long walk, the equivalent of two city blocks, from my workroom to the stairs that lead up into our house, and I massage my aching hand as I walk. I trudge up the stairs and into our kitchen. The fridge is right in front of me. I think about getting something to eat but decide I want my bed more than food.

I tiptoe past my sisters' rooms to the bathroom and dry swallow two aspirin, hoping they will ease the aches in my hand and head. Crossing the hall to my bedroom, I flop onto the bed, still fully dressed. Morning will come soon, and, with it, the fallout from Amy's death. I need rest before I can deal with either.



When I pull into the parking lot at school the next morning, I see that my fellow students haven't wasted any time in creating a shrine to Amy. The early spring sunshine bounces off the flowers and Mylar balloons that are already taking over her parking space. It's bright, festive, and totally out of place. Death isn't festive. Well, it can be in a select few cases, but I'm not supposed to admit that.

I pull my midnight-blue, 1959 Thunderbird into my assigned space, but I don't get out of the car until my sisters are parked on either side of me. The kids at school always wonder why we don't carpool. We laugh it off as an inability to settle on one radio station, but the truth is that Creation, Destiny, and Death operate on very different schedules. We rarely leave or arrive at school together. Today is a rare exception.

The three of us push through the mass of grieving students loitering outside the front doors, show our IDs to the security guard, and head inside the school. On every hall, kids are crying,

talking in whispers, and hugging each other. Some kids are even physically supporting others who are about to collapse under the weight of shock and grief. I shake my head. The over-the-top human response to death always disgusts me. Death is a fact of life, so why all the drama? Just accept it and move on.

“Well, it’s going to be one of those days,” Lacey says. “Better glum up. Look sad, blend in.”

“I know,” Chloe says. “It’ll be hard, though. She wasn’t a nice person.”

“No, she wasn’t,” I add. “She accomplished nothing in her seventeen years except to make other people’s lives miserable.”

“Well, just try not to act like you enjoyed ending her life too much,” Lacey reminds me.

I smile at her. “Do I ever? At least in public?”

“Nope, and that’s what makes you great,” Chloe says, leading the way to our lockers.

Even as I snipped her line last night, I knew the mourning for Amy would be extreme. Death doesn’t happen often in high school. When it does, it’s a big deal, although it’s a bigger deal when the dead person was popular. Everyone mourns, even if they didn’t care about or even know the deceased. Each person has to grieve harder than the one before, just to prove their own life matters.

I grab my books out of my locker and sigh as the herd of kids flows past me, talking of nothing but Amy.

“I’ve known her since the fifth grade,” says one boy to another as they pass my locker.

“Yeah, well, I helped her with her physics homework last week,” says the other boy, as if that forms a greater bond than six years’ acquaintance. As if either of these two dorky kids were ever more important than a gnat to Amy.

I know this one-upmanship of grief will play out in the halls and even in the teachers’ lounge in the coming days. Everyone, even the people who hated Amy, will try to grab some of her star power through imagined and exaggerated dealings with her. She will become a hero even though she doesn’t deserve to be.

Sickening behavior, but it's typical of the human reaction to death.

Slamming my locker shut, I heft my backpack onto one shoulder. I arrange my face and posture into what I hope is a grieving, pained look. It probably looks more like constipation, but it's the best I can do.

I say goodbye to my sisters and walk toward my first class, keeping my head down and shoulders hunched so no one will see that I'm not quite sad enough. Perhaps they'll just think that I'm bowed with grief.

I bump into someone and look up to see Sarah Moore, co-captain of the cheerleaders, in front of me.

"It's just terrible, isn't it?" she says, and then heaves a big sigh. "At least Amy is an angel now." She drops her face into her hands and sobs.

"Yeah, terrible," I mutter as I push past Sarah. I have to get away before I burst out laughing at the thought of awful Amy as an angel. Besides, I'm pretty sure that since Sarah will now inherit Amy's kingdom of popularity, she's not exactly as broken up about her death as she wants everyone to believe.

Even with some extra dawdling in the halls and reading the announcement board twice, I'm early to English class. Without looking at the other kids, I slide into my seat and pull out my copy of *Anna Karenina*, opening it to a random page. I hunch over my book, trying to look like I'm hurrying to finish the assigned reading before class begins. Never mind that I've read this book fifteen times for fifteen different English classes and practically have it memorized. I just don't want to be drawn into fake reminiscences by kids who think that grief should be a shared experience.

As the students filter into the classroom, they gather in clumps to talk about the horrible news. A few minutes before class starts, though, the hum of conversation shifts from whispered remembrance to speculation. I look up from my book to see what could possibly distract the kids from their grief.

A new kid stands in the classroom doorway. His thick, sandy-

brown hair hangs just past his chin, curling a bit where it brushes the collar of his polo shirt. His lower lip protrudes in a slight pout. The smallness of his upper lip accentuates the problem. On anyone else, that mouth would look ridiculous. Fortunately for him, his straight nose and square jaw are proportioned just right to negate the flaw and make him cute, if not stunning. The kid's attractive, but he's certainly not model perfect.

Cocking his head, he looks around the room, seeking a vacant seat. He doesn't seem uncomfortable, even though everyone is staring at him. Instead, he stares back, seeming completely at ease, as though he's known these kids all his life. Most kids would just slink into the nearest seat and pretend to be oblivious to the whispers and stares, even as their faces turned bright red.

Not this kid. He walks confidently into the room, drops his new student form on Mrs. Lapp's desk, and slides into the empty seat next to mine. After setting out his pen and notebook, he turns in his seat to face me.

"Hi, I'm Alex Martin," he says, holding out his hand for me to shake. He smiles as he speaks and the pout disappears, leaving an open, friendly face. Up close, his eyes are a strange greenish-blue with a hint of brown mixed in. It's like looking into a shallow ocean where you can see the sand through the water.

"Sophie. Sophie Moraine," I answer, taking his hand. Who shakes hands these days, especially among kids? I don't think a boy has shaken my hand since the nineteenth century. Someone has obviously drilled some manners into this boy, and I'm charmed in spite of myself.

He rests his elbow on the back of his chair and stretches his legs out in front of him, looking for all the world like he's been in this school forever.

"So, Sophie, is this school always so depressed? The lines to see the guidance counselors are backed up down the hallway with crying kids. I had to cut in line to get my paperwork so I wouldn't be late to class. Nearly started a riot. I hope my starting school here hasn't brought everyone to tears," he jokes.

“Ha. You’re a funny guy,” I say. “Seriously, though. The most popular girl in school died last night. She crashed her car into a tree.”

His face instantly changes into the typical expression of sadness. “That’s sad. You don’t seem bothered, though,” Alex says. “Did you know her at all?”

I lean in closer to him so I can whisper my answer. When I do, I catch a faint whiff of his cologne. It’s clean and pleasant. Not the stinky, overbearing stuff that most of the boys wear.

“I knew her. She was mean, spiteful, and vindictive, and she was doing a hundred-and-two miles an hour, drunk, on a curvy road in the rain. She kind of asked for it, don’t you think?”

“Maybe so, but someone’s still dead. It’s a sad thing when a life ends. You should show more respect.”

I bristle at his subtle rebuke. What does this boy know of death?

“I see too much death every day to worry about the death of one mean little girl,” I say, and then I immediately want to take it back. I’ve said too much to this stranger.

“What do you mean?” Alex asks.

I’m saved from a lie or evasion when Mrs. Lapp calls the class to order. I turn toward the front, but Alex keeps his body angled toward mine. He watches me the whole period. I keep my head turned away from him or stare down at my notebook, but I can feel him watching me whenever Mrs. Lapp’s attention is elsewhere. It makes me itch to get away from him.

*Great.* Curiosity about me is something I can’t afford to encourage. I avoid talking to my classmates for just this reason. It’s not always that I don’t want to get involved... I just can’t. Getting involved leads to questions I can’t possibly answer and attention I cannot repay.

When class is over, Alex follows me out into the hallway. I try to hustle on down the hall and away from him, but the slow-moving traffic keeps me pinned close to him.

“What did you mean earlier? That you see too much death?” he asks.



“Nothing. It was just a comment.”

“I don’t think so. That kind of statement has to be explained. Do you work in a morgue or something?” His tone is light, joking, but I know there’s a serious question in there, and he wants an answer.

“No. Look, it just came out wrong. All I meant was that people die. It happens. I’m not going to get worked up about it, particularly when the dead person was a horrible human being.” I lower my voice so those around us won’t hear my betrayal of Amy’s sainted memory.

He shakes his head. “That’s harsh.”

I shrug. “You get your arm slammed in a locker because some popular girl thinks she’s a gift to the gods and you might feel differently,” I say.

Alex looks down at me as we walk, and I can tell he doesn’t believe I misspoke earlier. I’m not a good liar, and I know it. My poker face would lose me millions in a casino. At least he has the good manners to drop it.

“So, can you tell me how to get to the gym?” he asks.

I don’t want to be a complete asshole to the kid, so I choke back my first response, which is to tell him to find it himself. Instead, I try to be polite.

“You go down this hall to the end and turn right, then take the next left. Go down the stairs at the end of that hall, and you’ll end up in front of the locker room. Oh, and don’t let anyone tell you to take the elevator. There isn’t one you’re allowed to use,” I add, and then curse myself for being friendly.

I’m off my groove today, I think. The stupid behavior of my classmates must be getting to me. Usually, I wouldn’t even speak to a human kid like Alex. Yet, here I am, helping him. I must be desperate to find someone else who isn’t flogging themselves over Amy’s death.

Alex watches me, probably trying to figure out what’s wrong with me, too. I look away from him, instead watching the kids crossing the quad outside the windows. I hope he’ll just walk away.

He touches my arm and says, “Thanks. See you later.”

Watching his back as he walks down the hall, I hold my hand over the place on my arm that he touched. I know it’s in my head, but it feels warmer than the rest of me. When he turns the corner, I exhale. Hopefully, he’ll forget my comment by tomorrow. Most likely, he’ll find other kids more appealing as the day goes on and he’ll forget about me. Humans don’t have long attention spans. That should work in my favor.

I push Alex Martin out of my mind and suffer through the rest of my morning classes. Even the teachers are sniffing through their lessons, and it makes me want to toss a chair through a window or pull a fire alarm. Anything to get them to stop and focus on something that’s actually important.

At lunch I sit at my usual table, alone, as I prefer. Chloe and Lacey have the next lunch period, so I usually put my nose in a book and try to ignore the chaos around me. In the fall and late spring, I can escape to the yard outside, but though it’s early March and spring is coming, it isn’t here yet and it’s too cool to sit outside.

Today is actually a decent day to be stuck in the cafeteria because all the kids are quiet, slumped into despair. Other than the occasional wailing sob, it’s easy to read since I don’t have to deal with the usual clatter and chatter from the other kids.

Lost in my copy of *The Eye of the World*, I don’t notice anyone else until a blue cafeteria tray appears in my field of vision. I look up to see Alex Martin standing in front of me.

“Can I join you?” he asks.

“No,” I say, immediately seeing the hurt on his face. I feel like I’ve kicked a puppy.

He turns and starts looking for another table with an empty seat. It’s sad to watch him size up and dismiss the other tables. Jocks? *Nope*. Geeks? *Nope*. Burn-outs? *Nope*. Cheerleaders? *Absolutely not*. Being a mid-year transfer, he’s as much of an outcast as I am. The other kids glance at him before quickly looking away. No one offers him a chair. I need to get rid of this boy, but I don’t have to be cruel. I’m not like Amy.

“Oh, all right. Just be quiet,” I say, pushing my own tray out of the way so he can put his down.

Relief and gratitude spread across his face. He sits down across from me and eats his pizza. I go back to my book, making it clear, I hope, that I don’t want conversation.

After a few minutes, Alex pulls out his schedule, reads over it, and says, “I have Mr. Sturdivant for history next period. Anything I should know?”

I huff and slap my book shut, pushing it off to the side. Obviously, Alex is one of those people who is uncomfortable with silence and ignores the requests of others to be quiet. I can forget reading. Alex is likely to babble to himself if necessary to keep the silence from engulfing him.

“Do you like history?” I ask, folding my arms on the table and leaning forward.

“It’s my favorite subject,” he says.

“Then you’ll like Mr. Sturdivant. He actually talks about why events happened instead of just making you memorize a bunch of names and dates. His exams are all essay, though, so most kids hate him.”

“Sounds like my kind of teacher,” he says. “I prefer to think.”

I wait, knowing there will be more questions. With extroverts like Alex, there always are. I don’t have to wait long.

“Have you lived here all your life?” he asks.

I chuckle. If only he knew exactly how long that was. Asheville, North Carolina didn’t exist when my life began.

“No,” I say. “We moved here a few years ago. We move around a lot.”

“Military brat?”

“No. My mother gets restless. She doesn’t like to stay in one place for long.”

It’s as good an explanation as anything else, and somewhat true. My mother does tend to get restless if left in one place too long. That isn’t the real reason we move around so much, of course, but I’m prohibited from telling Alex any truth about myself.

“I’ve lived in Asheville my whole life,” he says. “I only transferred here because there was an incident at my old school. I used to go to Saint Luke’s.”

“The boarding school. What kind of incident? Smoking? Drinking? Drugs? Vandalism? Did you get a girl pregnant?” I ask, running down the usual *incidents* that get kids transferred. “Were you the resident bad boy?”

“Depends on your interpretation of events,” he says. “I drove a car through the headmaster’s office one night.”

Interested, I lift my head to look at him. He doesn’t seem upset about his actions, merely indifferent.

“Well, that’s a new one,” I say.

He shrugs.

“Were you hurt?” I ask, and then follow it up with, “Why would you do something like that?”

“Not seriously, and I did it because I felt like it. I got some bad news and couldn’t deal with it. I flipped out. I was kind of hoping I might die, but that didn’t work out.”

“So you tried to kill yourself?”

“Well, suicide wasn’t my primary goal, but I wouldn’t have been upset if it had happened. Of course, now I realize it was stupid, but at the time—” He trails off.

I could tell him that suicide is usually a waste of time. For it to work, I have to choose suicide as the person’s manner of death and the attempt has to occur on their assigned death date. Unless those two conditions are met, the best someone can hope for is to avoid seriously injuring themselves. The worst case is that the attempt fails, and the person ends up on life support for the rest of their life. But I don’t try to explain that to Alex.

“Amazing you didn’t end up in jail,” I say instead.

“Well, that’s where the school wanted to send me. But I passed all the toxicology screenings and mental evaluations, so they settled for expulsion on the DA’s recommendation.”

“Huh. You probably know my mother, then. Thelma Moraine. She’s the DA,” I say.

“Ms. Moraine. Yeah, I know her. I thought your last name

sounded familiar. Your mom's cool. Tell her thanks for me. She really could have screwed me over, but she didn't."

"She'll appreciate that. But what was so bad that you felt the need to drive a car through a building?" I ask.

I've seen a lot of things in my three-thousand-plus years, but the picture of this seemingly normal, polite, somewhat preppy kid driving a car through a school building isn't coming together for me.

"Lots of stuff that I don't want to talk about," he says.

"That's fine. I'm not into forcing people to talk about themselves."

"Thanks. Maybe I'll tell you sometime."

I nod and reach for my book, but I stop when he starts to speak again. *For Zeus' sake, shut up*, I think.

"So, what's your story?" he asks, mimicking my posture by folding his arms on the table and leaning toward me.

"I don't have one," I say, moving away from him.

"You must. I've only been here half a day, and I've already heard rumors that you're depressed, crazy, possibly schizophrenic or, at best, simply rude. There's got to be a story behind that."

"Then why are you sitting with me?" I challenge. "If I'm so defective, you're going to get a reputation for consorting with the crazy girl. You don't want that kind of rep on your first day here. You don't seem shy. Go make friends with the cool kids."

"I don't care because I don't think you're any of those things. A little rude maybe," he amends with a smile. "It's my experience that people who are judged to be crazy are simply different from the rest of the herd. I like different, though, and I despise normal. If no one here thinks you're normal, then that makes you interesting to me."

So he thinks I'm some kind of interesting specimen who needs careful observation. That's not good. I can't have him watching me too closely. Best to end it right here. I give him what I hope is my most dismissive look.

"So I can add abnormal and interesting to, what was it? Oh, yeah. Rude, crazy, and depressed," I say, and I am gratified to

see him flinch from the coldness in my voice.

“Well, not in a bad way,” he says. “I just meant—”

“I know what you meant,” I snap. “I’m definitely not normal, but let’s just say I find people intolerable and I have a lot going on that doesn’t leave me time for the petty bullshit that is high school, or the narrow-minded kids who populate it. Especially kids who are stupid enough to try to commit suicide by driving through school buildings.”

“I’m not intolerable,” he says. “Or narrow-minded. Or stupid. Maybe you’ll find that out if you can get past your condescension long enough to spend some time with a lowly worm like me. I might teach you a few things. I dare you,” he adds with a wicked smile so impish that I almost smile back.

I sigh. Is he mentally challenged? A glutton for punishment? This kid isn’t getting the message. How mean do I have to be to get rid of him? I can’t explain to him that his very humanity, with all of its frailties and inconsistencies, makes him intolerable to me.

“Look, Alex, I’m sure you’re a nice guy and all, but you have to understand I can’t be your friend, so just get that through your head.”

“Can’t or won’t?” he asks.

I pinch the bridge of my nose to tamp down the insulting reply that comes to mind. “Just leave me alone. I’m not unhappy, and I don’t need to be fixed.”

He holds up both hands to ward off my next attack. “Who said anything about fixing you? I don’t think there’s anything wrong with you.”

“You haven’t known me long enough to make that judgement,” I say. “And it would be a mistake to think that I’m someone you want to hang out with.”

“Then it’s my mistake to make. I think you and I might be more similar than you think.”

“I doubt that.”

We sit in silence for a few moments, watching each other across the table. I’m waiting for him to realize that he doesn’t

want to be near me, get up, and leave. He doesn't.

Instead, he picks up my discarded book. "I just finished this series," he says, leafing through it. "You'll love the ending."

"Don't spoil it. And don't lose my place," I say, grabbing for the book before my bookmark falls out.

"I won't. Just pointing out that we at least have similar tastes in reading material. Who knows what other interests we might share?"

He hands the book to me across the table. I snatch it from him and roll my eyes. *Please*. As if I have the time or inclination to share anything with this boy.

"Tell me something," he says when I don't immediately begin searching for our similarities.

"What?"

"How'd you know Amy was drunk?"

"Drunk?" I ask.

"Yeah. This morning, you told me she was drunk when she hit the tree. But you seem to be the only person in possession of that bit of knowledge. I've heard the story from probably two dozen people today, and they were all shocked to hear that. Said it hasn't been in the news reports."

Well, crap. I let slip the one detail that wasn't public knowledge. I knew yesterday was too much work. It made me careless, my brain melted by exhaustion.

"Uh, Mom told me," I say, scrambling for cover. "She got the police reports this morning and mentioned it over breakfast."

"Uh-huh," Alex says. "Must be a damn fast medical examiner in this town." His eyes bore into mine, and I know he doesn't believe me. Again.

"I guess," I mutter. *Crap, crap, crap*, I think. Two mistakes in one morning. I'm losing my edge.

Before he can start tearing my story apart, my phone vibrates in my pocket, notifying me of a calendar reminder. Alex raises his eyebrows. Students aren't allowed to have cell phones in school. My sisters and I are exempt from that rule, but Alex doesn't know that. To him, I'm now probably some

kind of troublemaker, as well as crazy and depressed. *If only that would make him go away*, I think.

Pulling out my phone, I check the screen. The reminder reads, *112, New York to London, 12:30*. I look at the current time displayed in the corner of the screen. It's now noon. I have to get home.

"Gotta go," I say to Alex as I put on my coat, gather my backpack and trash, and speed walk toward the cafeteria doors. I dump my trash in the can without slowing down.

"Is everything okay?" he asks as he trots behind me.

"Yeah, I just have some things to take care of at home."

"Don't you have to get a note from the office or something? You can't just leave school," he protests when I don't stop.

"Sure I can. I walk out the door, get in my car, and leave. I have a standing arrangement with the school," I add when his jaw drops at my brazenness. "It's fine. This happens a lot, and they give me some slack."

"What happens a lot?" he asks, but I'm already pulling my pass out of my pocket and waving it at the security guard standing by the front door. The guard waves me on.

I run to my car, glad to be away from Alex, his relentless questions, and his strange eyes that see too much. As I pull out of the lot, though, I can't resist. I glance in my rearview mirror and see him still standing in the doorway, watching me.