

The Haunting Muse, 6-8, 1

It wasn't my idea. Tori said that it would be great. The memory haunts me every day. It was last summer and I Katherine Torrell, (Kat for short) was over at Tori Withers' house a few days after her parents both lost their job. Both of us were bored out of our minds so we decided to walk. We would take a walk to nowhere is particular and hopefully get lost. As we strolled down the streets of Highland, Virginia, we came across the Mansions. Tori with her chaotic mind somehow found a way to suck me into this mess. We walked into this remarkable suburb filled with dazzling mansions. We could now see the proverbial sunset over the buildings nearby. We walked down the marvelous streets until about 3/4 of the way to the end. Tori stopped with a wry look beaming in her eyes.

* * *

The school year had just begun and everyone was filtering off their buses into the building of their new life in high school, and everyone nervously walking into their new classes. I have my regular core classes (History, Science, Math, and English) then I have P.E, Drama, and German.

I manage to get to every class on time unlike the other half of my class. My teachers are nice. My history teacher Mrs. Kaiser is probably my least favorite. She's about the height of students in school; she is a little plump, has short dark brown hair and wears very teacher type clothing. We also found out that Kaiser means Emperor in German. That doesn't surprise me. She's a very powerful and intimidating looking teacher. She has been teaching at our school for about 38 years now. She is a very critical person. Mrs. Kaiser also teaches German, I learned. Lucky me.

School finally ends and I walk down the halls of the school that are new to me, then she bumps into me. Tori Withers. After that frightening, regretful night I never wanted to see her again. "Hey what's up, Kat? I haven't seen you in awhile." Tori looked different. She had gotten taller than her normal, already tall self, her dark brown hair now shown black. Her light green eyes darkened as did her hair. She looked...older.

"Oh hi, yeah I've been busy." No I haven't, I've had nothing to do all summer, and the only thing I remembered was those haunting memories of that horrible night where I turned into a machine.

No matter what, your memories follow you. The biggest are the ones that you remember every day. This is something you can't help either, the memory just floods into your mind like a waterfall. It'll pour down into your brain then drift off down the stream, only to fall down that waterfall once more. If you ever noticed, every happy memory you have, you are with someone else. Is there ever a time when someone is happy and they are alone? Now I'm not saying that as long as you have another person you will have happy memories with them. Tori's and my experience was not a happy memory. Flashbacks of scarlet blood splash my face and I can hear the screams reverberating from a poor rich man.

I manage to stop the conversation, saying how I need to get to an after school class, and do an awkward run off down the hall into the girls bathroom. I sit in the blue bathroom stalls, crouching, looking at the nasty hate notes and love notes about

people's crushes and a bra size here and there. I sort of like it in here. I feel safe and secure, like nothing can harm me, nothing exists except me and this stall.

After a few minutes of taking this feeling in, I unlock the stall door and stroll down the almost empty halls. I see the occasional empty classroom with a hard working teacher inside. I've always wondered how long they are actually in school. You never do really imagine teachers having a life away from school, or a childhood for that matter. Some lockers was peeked open a bit; I could not see what's inside them, but lines of black gaps, almost like the locker is a black hole. As I walk by a sloppy looking room, I can tell that is the delinquent class where all the bad students stay after school for not turning in work, bad grades, or just for getting in trouble.

I peer in and right away see Tyler Grey; Tyler is in 11th grade. He is wearing his famous gray woolen hat with his brown hair swooping just above his dark blue eyes. His Cerulean sweatshirt is cut into a low cut T-shirt type sweatshirt. His silver military dog tag around his neck and his black pants sagging low, giving him that extra rugged badass look. I've heard some pretty interesting stuff about this guy; he has permanent detention for the rest of high school because last year the teachers caught him with drugs, drawing graffiti on the back of the school. That isn't the only thing he has done, though. Tyler looks at me and I dash off down the hall, finally getting to the doorway leading outside.

As I walk down the sidewalk, I glance at the still summer trees just waiting to turn. Some trees have gotten so impatient that they have already started turning yellow. Along the mile walk to my house I keep thinking about that night, the flashback occurs daily.

We broke the window to the mansion. You would think that mansions would have some kind of safety glass or no glass at all. Not this one, I guess. Tori's elbow was now bleeding from smashing the glass. This was a chaotic idea. Why was I still going with it? We starting looking around for the money or some gold, perhaps a treasure chest filled with sparkling jewels. Then we heard the footsteps. I froze in fear while Tori grabbed an iron candle stick holder and held it up like it was the most powerful weapon. "Where's your money Old Man?" Tori hissed.

The man stood frozen as did I. I couldn't tell if he was frozen in fear, or just didn't want to say anything. We stood there for an awkward 15 seconds. "Won't talk...Ok Kat tie him up" I started moving; my body was controlling its self. It was on autopilot before I knew it, I had tied up this man. Tori handed me a fireplace poker made out of hard cold steel icy to touch. She still held the large iron candle stick holder, but I could see she had a bulge in her pocket. She had found a gun. "Where is your money?!" She screamed at him with the candle stick holder held high in hand, ready to strike.

"In my safe."

"So where the hell is that?"

He didn't say anything. There must have been a billion dollars or something really important in that.

"Tell me!" She slashed at him with fury.

A faint wince escaped the man, you could tell he was trying to stay strong. He took a deep breath then said, "No."

"Tell!" Tori kept whacking him with the candle stick holder as hard as she could. The pain in his eyes was so saddening and heartbreaking. With every whack I felt it a little on the inside. Then he began to bleed.

Tori stopped, "Now do you want to tell us?"

"Nothing will ever make me tell you girls, why must you do this to me anyways?"

"Because...I...want.....Money and lots of it" She whispered in a harsh tone ready to hit again, I could see it in her eyes, she liked doing this. She liked to make people hurt.

"Kat, Help me. Use the Metal stick I gave you."

Just like that I was beating away at this poor rich man. Blood splashed us like water. I tried to stop myself, but it was like I wasn't in control. I was standing next to two girls, one 15 and one 17. The 15 year old just beat away blankly while the 17 year old beat with passion. The man was so beaten and bloody, the girls could tell that he was close to being dead.

"Tell us." the 17 year old, breathing hard now from all the beating demanded.

The man just kept in his bubble of pain. He was trying to make the pain stop. "Please stop", managed to escape his lips.

This 17 year old Tori pulled out the gun in her pocket, loaded it, and shot the man in the heart. The deranged 17 year old stared at the other girl. "Let's go."

Before I could realize it, I am walking up the front doors of my small Victorian home. My mother casually greets me as I trudge my way upstairs and lay my backpack down, slip off and throw my jacket on the floor. All I want to do is sleep.

I have finally gotten used to school after about two months. The late autumn's chill has arrived and the leaves are now all orange, red, yellow, and some are brown. This is one of my favorite times of the year. I can feel the cool icy breeze on my skin. While walking to school I saw Brianna Stone. She is an odd one. Every day she relates to a sandwich.

The Haunting Muse, 6-8, 4

“Today is a Turkey and cheese day.” Brianna speaks blandly, loud enough for me to hear. Turkey and cheese means it’s going to be a so-so day. Club Sandwich means it will be a great day, and a bologna and mustard sandwich means it would be a horrible day. I rely on seeing her everyday to see how my day will be.

I finally get to school; I still don’t understand why if you live a mile away you still have to walk, but I guess I don’t really mind. I like it. School is a turkey and cheese day, it isn’t horrible, but it isn’t good.

This turkey and cheese day lasts for a long time, about three dull months of the same School, Eat, Drink, Bathroom, Sleep, and repeat. At school the phone rings, Mrs. Fig (my science teacher) answers. A few nods and she hangs up, raises her head, and says “Kat, You need to go to the office.”

I have never been called to the office this year, and I assume it’s my mom giving me some extra lunch money, or perhaps to drop off my forgotten homework I have not discovered yet. I stroll leisurely down the halls and into the main office.

“Um, Hi I’m Kat I was called down.”

“Oh yes, your mother is on the phone in the teachers’ lounge, she wanted to tell you something in private, but she couldn’t make it here. Just go right into that room and pick up the phone sweetie.” As I walk into the room the secretary directs me to thinking, what could my mom possibly want to tell me that couldn’t wait? I answer the phone. I must have been standing there for about a minute until a “Hello” manages to escape my chapped lips.

“Oh Hi, Kat I need to tell you something.” I could hear the grief coming from her voice. “Your grandmother, my mother, has just passed away from a heart attack.”

I collapse to the ground and sit in the fetal position. *My grandmother?* The one who was with me for my first walk? The one I have had tons of sleepovers with as a child? This cannot be true.

“What?”

“She’s dead, Kat.”

Dead. . . How I loathe that word. Death is a thing I hate in general.

“You can leave school early if you want; I’ll call back the office saying you can leave.”

“That would be nice. . .” I hang up with phone, there is nothing more to say.

I walk out, give the secretary a nod, and trot myself up the stairs into my classroom again. I gently gather my things. I feel so numb right now. I pack up and leave.

The Haunting Muse, 6-8, 5

The viewing is today. It has been exactly a week since her passing. I dress in a short black dress with some lace flowers on top for detail. My light brown hair is up in a swirly bun with only my face frame hanging loose. I wear my black flats with wavy patterns on them. I am dressed for death.

We arrive at the Funeral Home at around one in the afternoon. The viewing process is always so strange and eerie to me. It seems as if someone was having a black tie party and someone saw what looked like a bed and decided to take a nap. The smell of formaldehyde and asbestos fills the room; I won't be amazed if I die right here. We stay there talking to strangers we have never met, accepting condolences until nine at night and then finally leave.

The real thing is tomorrow. The day I see a family member get lowered into the ground. I fall asleep on the car ride home.

At the funeral I wore the same thing only with a different black dress; this dress was a black cocktail dress with a satin ribbon. As I sit in the pews listening to my grandmother's life story I think of the man I helped kill. What was his funeral like? Did they burn him? Did they stitch him back together and cover up the marks? Who came to his funeral? How many people have we caused grief? The man seemed lonely, like when we broke into his house he seemed amazed someone was actually here. I think what might have also been in his safe. Was some keepsake from his deceased wife? I bet he only had a handful of people at his funeral, maybe twenty at the most for the viewing. I start crying, not for my grandmother, but for the miserable man. I need to leave, I struggle against the tears that are seeping from my eyes and fast walk out the door and into the ladies room.

I stay in the bathroom until someone comes in and asks if I'm ok. Gathering myself up I nod, and quickly make my way down the aisle to sit down in the pews again.

It's been three weeks of grief. Today however, I was doing my usually morning walk to school and Nathan Mooney skateboards right up to me. He has the total Skater boy look. You can tell he's just been dying to talk to someone. He waves for my attention

"Hey Kat!"

"Oh hi Nathan, what's up?"

"Did you see on the news about the old rich guy that they just found dead?"

My mind raced with questions. Just found? But Tori and I killed him about four months ago. They just found his body?

The Haunting Muse, 6-8, 6

“Oh really? How did they find his out?” I acted cool about it even though my heart was pounding faster and faster with every word he spoke.

“One of his neighbors got some of his mail and was walking to go return it to him and noticed the window was broken, so she walked in and saw his body. It’s totally creepy!”

“Hmm. . . Do the police have any leads?”

“Yeah and get this, the old man has security cameras set up. They showed the clip from the security on TV and it showed two people! Couldn’t tell who they were though, they had their sweatshirts covering their hair and faces. “

There were security cameras? How did we not catch that? So the police are investigating now. When we left we just dropped the murder weapons by the murder scene. They could do a DNA test and find us. I need to talk to Tori. My stomach was in knots and cold sweat broke out on my forehead.

In 5th hour I find Tori and lead her down the hallway into the janitors closet and lock the door. The smell of the chemical cleaners made me feel lightheaded.

“Tori did you see the news?”

“Kat you know me well enough that I don’t watch the news”

“They found the body.”

“What body?”

“Tori don’t be stupid you know what body and if they find us we will go to jail!”

“Shh. . . Lower your voice. Chill, they won’t find us, everything will go along as usually, just don’t look suspicious.” Whispered Tori moving her hands in calming motions.

“Ok. . .” I unlock the door and leave while Tori stay’s for a second and leaves in the other direction.

I don’t know if I can handle this anymore. I wish I could go back to the moment when I met Tori, and walk away.

I’ve kept myself on the down low for a few weeks now. Police have narrowed it down to 2 girls, in high school. Today in school the police came in and talk to every person in class. Asking them about the murder. One by one, people were called down to the team office room to talk with Ted Newman, Highland Virginia police officer.

The Haunting Muse, 6-8, 7

It was finally my turn, after 20 minutes of English class. I walked in nonchalantly, like I didn't kill someone with my so called friend, like I didn't murder someone with a fireplace poker tool. I didn't do it.

"Hello Katherine, I'm just here to ask a few questions to see if you have any idea who these people could be"
Questioned Officer Newman in a voice meant to put you at ease.

I nod in agreement, I don't want to speak.

"So where were you on July 25th?"

"I was uh...at a friend's"

"And what friend would that be?"

"Tori...Tori Withers"

"So what did you guys do?"

"We just hung out at home, watched some movies... Girl stuff"

"Ok, well did you guys go out anytime?-"

"No." It burst out before he even finished his sentence. I quickly looked away.

"Ok then...I'm going to talk with Tori and get back to you, you seem like you're not telling me everything."

My mind is going insane. So many thought rush through my head and I can't handle it I begin to bawl my eyes out.

"What's wrong?"

I scream like the person who has been scratching at my brain and heart just to come out has finally escaped.

"Tori and I did it! Tori just wanted his money, but he didn't. He didn't give it, and before I knew it I was..." I went into an anxiety attack.

"Put your hands behind your back, I'm talking you to the station."

I put my hands behind my back and my head drops crying. I let him lead me out of the class room in front of everyone. They all know now, they know I did it. Ted tells another police officer named Paul to go get Tori and drive her to the station.

The Haunting Muse, 6-8, 8

My police officer puts me into his cop car and drives me away. I get to the station now calmer and only silently crying. He puts me into a cell. I get no calls, or anything. I sit on the hard cold uncomfortable bed putting my hand on the cold metal holding it up. My crying has stopped and I sit emotionless waiting for the wrath of Tori.