

The Colony

The lights flickered and then there was nothing. No snowy TV, no light breeze from the small fan that served as my life source on the hottest day in August, nothing. I knew what it was so I ran and opened the front door to the old run down house that mom and I lived in for all of 3 months. The power guy named Charlie; no matter where we live their names are always the same...Charlie. We stared at each other he shrugged as he finished his work of cutting off our power. I leaned on the paint chipped banister of the front porch and watched the power guy walk away. I did this many times in my 16 years of life. I pushed off of the banister as I thought about how mama, Gail James was going to be when she found out the lights were out. She would be depressed for a month, and then next we would have moved on to a new place, a new rundown house, and I would have started a new school. I closed the front door and waited on the small 1970s looking yellow and brown floral chair that mama and I got off of the street the next block over from our house. We waited until night to carry the thing home so no one would see us. I watched the clock tick to fifteen minutes, and decided to make my last refrigerator lunch so I made a bologna sandwich and pulled myself a glass of cold water. I knew in a few hours the bologna would be bad and the water would be warm. I figured I could read the last chapter of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice before it got dark and before I had to listen to the cries of Gail James. So I hurried and finished the last bite of my sandwich. The door slammed, and I waited. Not even a minute past before I heard her sobs and the same words I heard a million times before.

"I can't do this anymore."

Gail James can't do a lot of things anymore. Ever since I entered her life 16 years ago all Gail James ever wanted was to be a singer and enjoy the fame and fortune that comes with singing. She always said she was on her way too... she was moving to LA. But she took a detour to Indiana where she met Troy Robinson...my daddy. She said that he promised her a recording contract, but my Aunt Bea; my mama's sister said mama was foolish. She said mama can't sing and my daddy's recording studio was nothing more than a run down shack storing hubcaps. When my mama was real happy she always said that Troy did give her precious diamond...me. So she named Tori James, but when she was upset (and that is most of the time) she would say "I must have been drugged to actually name you after your no good daddy".

"Tori come here." Gail called from the other room.

I knew something was wrong...something different in the air. I walked into the small cluttered living room, and there she was my beautiful mother. People always looked at us weird. I assumed that they always wondered why someone so beautiful and petite could have had someone so plain and fat. I am not really fat but next to her I look like a hog on wheels. I watched her flick her long straight black hair.

"I've been thinking," she said as she looked down at the faded blue carpet. "Don't you make me feel bad about this, Tori."

"About what?" I asked as I slide down into the floral chair.

"I've done all I can for you, and I know you want your mama to be happy," she said.

She looked at me...expecting my agreement so I nodded. Of course I want her to be happy.

"Well your mama ain't happy. So tomorrow I'm sending you to your daddy in Indiana."

I just stood there, I didn't say a word. Mainly because she always says the same thing when the power was cut off or when something happens to ruin her day.

"Mama, it will be alright the lights can always be cut back on." I said out of routine.

"No! Tori you're ain't gonna make me feel bad," Gail said as she reached into the lopsided table next to the faded plaid couch she was sitting on and pulled out a ticket.

"I let the lights get cut off so I can buy you this."

There was silence. She has never went this far.

"Your flight leaves tomorrow. Your daddy will be waiting," she said as she got off the sofa and handed the ticket to me.

I stared at the ticket. So she finally is doing it. She always talked about sending me to my dad; a man that was a total stranger, a man who has never tried to meet me.

"Tori, don't make me feel bad," she said as she sat the ticket on the dented table in front of me. She stood and looked at me, turned and walked to the door.

"Be a good girl and get on that plane."

Gail walked out the door. I stood for a long time looking at the plane ticket that would send me to Indiana at 10 AM the next day. Then I turned and walked up the stairs. The next morning carrying my tattered suitcase I walked slowly downstairs and to the front door. Stuck to the door was a faded torn photo of a man, I assumed was my Troy Robinson. I tuck the photo into my back pocket and did what my mother always wanted...I walked out of her life.

He is late... I pulled my Jane Austen book out of my backpack and started to read. I was turning a page when the man resembling the photo sat down next to me. I got nervous so I stared at the page the only words I could recognize is Mr. Darcy.

"Hello Tori," my dad said softly.

I looked up into my own eyes, his eyes where kind. He smiled.

"I've been waiting to meet you for a long time, Tori."

I nodded. Yeah, well you could have met me say...at birth. I thought.

"I didn't abandoned you ...you know."

This was way too heavy of a conversation to have in the airport plus he was too close. I got up and grabbed my backpack and waited. Troy Robinson sighed and stood up. He towered over me and I am pretty tall myself so I guess that is where I got my height. He gently took my backpack. I reached for my old suitcase. He took that too. Troy smiled at me and began to walk away. I stood and stared at him.

"Well are you coming?" He stopped, looked back at me. I ran to catch up. Troy didn't try to talk to me as we got into his Chrysler 300. I bet mama would fly off the handle if she saw his car since we have been catching the bus since I was born. We drove the hour drive from Indianapolis, Indiana in silence. I looked out the window at my new neighborhood. It was a whole lot different than my previous homes. No one was standing on the block, it was actually quite. No loud music and certainly no trash. Troy pulled his car in front of a small brick house that had flowers out front. He cut the car off. The thing I noticed about Troy, he likes to talk and it was killing him not to talk to me. I don't talk much so I am not sure how we are going to work out.

"Here we are. Welcome home."

"Thanks."

The house was a lot different than anything I had ever lived in. No faded carpet or 1970s chair. The house was elegantly decorated. Troy leads me to the back of the house –he seemed to get excited. Putting down my bags he flung the large door open.

“I hope you like it.”

I stepped around him and peered into the room. The room was freshly painted, a large bed with purple bedding sat in the middle of the room. I stepped further into the room—up against the wall was a bookshelf filled with books. I swung around and looked at my dad.

“How did you know? How did you have time?” I asked.

“Gail called me weeks ago.” Troy shrugged. “She seemed serious this time so I sent the money and began fixing the place up.”

I stared at my father.

“Sent money.”

“Yeah, for your plane ticket,” he said. “I hope I didn’t over do it.”

So she had been planning this. I thought she at least scrapped up the money to put me on the plane. At least that said she cared a little but Troy paid for ticket, man that hurt. It hurt bad.

“Thanks.” I said. “It’s nice.”

“Ahem, well tomorrow is a big day...school. So I am going to let you get settled.” Troy said as he put down my bags in the room.

He walked to the door.

“Troy.” I called.

“Yeah.”

“Thank you.” I said. He nodded.

“For everything.” I continued.

He smiled. “Everything will be alright, Tori, I promise.”

The next morning I rummaged through my suitcase to put on my outfit for my first day of school that I wore to every school I went to. An old pair of Calvin Klein jeans and a black t-shirt that I found in the Thrift –N-Save two years ago when Gail and I lived in Newport News, VA. I found a 20 on the ground. I didn’t tell Gail about the money I just went and spent it quickly. Gail was so mad when she found out that I had 20 dollars.

“Girl you are selfish. You didn’t even think about me at all,” she said.

Of course I felt bad and offered her my jeans.

“Please like I could fit those. I would need more than a belt to keep them on.”

I didn’t care what she said I was glad I got to keep my clothes. I didn’t get to buy clothes very often so I was excited.

It was 7:30 AM; I didn’t want to be late for school. So I dressed quickly, grabbed the book *All the Pretty Horses* off the bookshelf and ran out the door. The smell of bacon and eggs hit me as I walked to the kitchen.

“Hungry?” Troy asked as he stood at the stove scrambling eggs.

This is a first. Gail never cooked. And I don't believe I ever had a breakfast but maybe a Pop Tart.

"Uh, thanks but I should be getting to school."

Troy looked at the clock. "Yeah, I don't know much about school, 8 AM right."

I smiled, grabbed a piece of bacon, and popped it in to mouth.

"Thanks." I said as I chewed the bacon.

"You are welcome. We better go." Troy said as he cut off the stove.

I slid into the leather seats of Troy's car, and waited as he started the car. *Ribbon in the Sky* blared through the radio. I listened to the music as I thought about this man sitting beside me.

"What type of work do you do, Troy?"

Troy glanced at me but smirked. "I own the local movie theatre here." I nodded. Troy turned down Sims Street it seemed like a parade, there were so many cars filled with teens. Troy pulled up in front of Caviler High School, it seem like any other high school that I attended. I had a feeling that my life was about to change. I stepped out of the car, paused, and turned back to the car. "Thanks, Troy have a good day." He smiled, "Good luck, Tori." I walked up the sidewalk of the large school, looked back to see that Troy didn't pull off. I took a deep breath and continue to walk. The kids were much the same as any other high school, jocks, cheerleaders, goths, etc. The difference is everyone was completely beautiful and they noticed that I wasn't. Everyone dressed in the latest clothes, they all drove the coolest cars in a way it all seemed strange. For the first time in my whole life I felt uncomfortable with myself. I tugged on my black t-shirt, touched my hair that was pulled back into a ponytail; I kept my head high and walked straight ahead. As I enter the pristine white hall of Caviler High every eye was on me and every whisper was about me. I followed the signs that lead me to the principal's office. When I pushed the door open to the office, everything felt normal again. A woman dressed in a long skirt and blue blouse stared at me as I walked to the desk.

"You must be Tori James," she said in a squeaky voice. I nodded and step closer to the desk.

The woman pulled out a white folder with my name on it and handed to me. "Welcome to Caviler High, your class schedule is in there," she said as she pointed to the folder. "There is also a list of school events. Have a good day." "Uh, yeah thanks." I stepped out of the office, reading my schedule. My first class was Calculus—I hated math. I usually took all math classes in the middle of the day so I can mentally work up to the challenge. My thoughts were interrupted when I walked right into a solid body, and my papers scattered around the floor; great. Everyone is already looking at me—now I am not only lacking in beauty but I am a clutz.

"Hey, aren't you Tori James," the boy said as he smiled at me as I tried to pick up my papers.

"Uhm, yeah." Is all I said.

"I'm Chase Matthews, I live next to you."

I finally looked up at Chase; he wasn't so beautiful like the rest of the kids around here. He had blue eyes and brown shaggy hair. He wore his shorts baggy, his shirt was wrinkle, and he carried a skateboard. He seemed out of place in this school of perfection but he at least wasn't whispering about me. He knelt down, scooped up the last of my papers, and handed to me.

"Thanks."

"So you have Mr. Henry," Chase said "I have the same class. Come on..."

I was relived to walk with someone down the hall. It kept my mind off the fact that the beautiful

people still stared. Chase seemed to not care what the others thought so I tried not to care.

“So how do you like our little town?”

“Ahem, I just got here last night.”

“Yeah, right I knew that.”

“I eat lunch during 5th period. We can have lunch together, if you like.”

He seemed nervous, like he was expecting me to say no. “Sure, thanks,” I said as I followed him into the classroom. “Ah, this must be Tori,” a small man dressed in jeans and a button down shirt said. I knew this man had to be Mr. Henry. Mainly because he was the only adult in the classroom, and all the students were already in their seats. “Welcome Tori, Chase show her to her seat.” I followed Chase to the back of the room, and then I saw him. He sat right in front of the seat I was taking. He was glorious, almost breathtaking. His smooth skin seemed to glisten against the overhead lights. He never looked at me as I walk down the aisle to my desk—I didn’t exist. Of course for someone like him I wouldn’t exist but he existed to me. I shouldn’t even look at him, but I couldn’t help it. Every part of me was drawn to him. When I neared his chair, a jolt went through my body. He felt it too. He glanced up at me as if he struggled not to look at me. I thought he might smile but he looked angry, as if how I dare look at him much less walk past him. I hurried and sat down. Most guys in my limited experience that look that good are jerks and he seemed to fit that bill. He laughed like he knew what I was thinking. So I quickly opened my bag, to pull out my notebook, and my book I was reading fell out onto the floor, right next to his chair. Great, I should just let the book stay there. I was thinking just that when a girl just as glamorous reached down, picked up my book, and handed to me. She smiled a perfect smile.

“Thanks,” I said.

“Don’t worry about Camron,” she whispered as she nodded to him.

I nodded quickly I was a little embarrassed that she noticed my rejection.

“Don’t be embarrassed—Camron just wasn’t expecting you to be so tempting.”

“Tam, shut up!” he said as glanced back at me. Then he scooted his chair away from my chair.

Tempting; me yeah right was she making fun of me. Great I am sitting next to a bunch of beautiful jerks. I looked over to Chase and he seemed to be obviously to what was going on so I scooted my chair closer to him. He looked and smiled. “Can I share your book?” I asked so I didn’t look so obvious. At least I have tact. Camron glanced back at me and frowned. Tamara giggled.

“Tamara do you have something to share with the class?”, Mr Henry asked.

“Ahem, no Mr. Henry, please proceed,” she said as she winked at me.

I looked around the class not everyone was beautiful as I thought before. Half of the class was ordinary like me including Chase. So I relaxed and thought about Tamara’s comment, and thought about Camron’s attitude. The dude doesn’t even know me. I contemplated if Carmon and what he thought even mattered to me—I finally decided to classify him as jerk when the bell rang. Everyone was leaving, with Camron and Tamara being the first to leave. Tamara looked back at me, but Camron grabbed her hand and pulled her through the classroom door. “Yeah definitely a jerk,” I mumbled as I gathered my things. “Don’t let them worry you, Tori.” Chase said as he waited by my desk. I forgot about him. “Yeah, what is their problem?” I said as we walked out of the classroom. Chase shrugged as we began walking down the hall. “They are just a bunch of popular kids who get whatever they want.” I couldn’t believe that was all there seemed to be a mystical aura around them. I guess I been

reading too much fantasy it is not like they are vampires. Chase and I walked down the hall, I still felt people looking but it was like someone or something was lurking around the corner. "So what do you like to do? We like to hang out at the Ridge." Chase said as he stopped in front of the gym. "Wha... What is the Ridge?" Chase didn't answer I wondered what the problem was so I turned around. The group of beautiful people where approaching. I felt the overcoming jolt in my body as Camron walked past me as he pushed the gym door open. I looked at me as if I was an insect.

"What is Ridge, Chase," I said as I ignored the group. Well at least I tried to ignore the group. Tamara smiled and waved at me as she followed the group into the gym. I just ignored her.

"The Ridge is a place where we skate, hang out. We go there after school. Wanna go?"

"Yeah, sure. I gotta go." I hurried down the hall so not to be late for my class.

Chase and a group of his friends where waiting for me after class. Some of the guys were dressed like Chase same baggy shorts, wrinkled t-shirt.

"Ready for lunch," Chase said. "Let me introduce to you the group."

"This here is Mark." Chase nodded to a boy with dark hair with a blond streak in his hair. He seemed shy so I smiled. He smiled back.

"This here is Mandie, Kyle and Jay." Chase continued as we entered the cafeteria. The cafeteria was like any of high school cafeteria; everyone divided up into the respective groups.

"So I heard that you going with us to the Ridge," Mandie said as we went through the lunch line.

"Yeah, what do you do there?" I asked as I grabbed milk and an apple.

"Mainly just skate," Mandie said as she looked back at the guys. "Well they do. I hardly skate."

I followed Mandie from the lunch line. I tried to keep focus on what she was saying but I felt my eyes being drawn to the table in the corner. I knew who sat there. I fought the urge to look that way but in the end I could not resist. He was sitting there staring at me or maybe through me. His group was all around him, and I felt there stares too. They were all beautiful of course so why are they bothering to look at me. Mark shyly nudged me, and I tore my gaze from them.

"Can you skate?" Mark asked. He wasn't beautiful like Cameron but he was kind and cute too.

"No." I said as I sat down beside of him at the table. "I would like to try, though."

Mark lopsided grin was contagious so I smiled back. "I'll teach you."

Suddenly there was a loud scrap across the floor. I knew where it came from so I ignored it, well at least I tried. I felt Cameron get up from his chair, and he walked over to our table. I didn't look up. He was standing there and I wanted him to know I didn't care. That I've classified him as a jerk so he wasn't worth my time or thoughts. It was a lie all of it but it sure sounded good—in my head.

"What's up, Chase," Cameron's smooth voice slide across my body. My body betrayed me as my nerves tingled throughout my body. Chase seemed cool about Cameron's intrusion, but I felt Mark tense.

"What's up?" Chase said.

"Skating at the Ridge today?"

Chase nodded.

"Do you mind if I join you?" Cameron said as I looked at him.

"Why would you want to skate at the Ridge—when you probably have a ramp at home?" Mark said as

he slides a fry into his mouth, glaring at Cameron. Cameron glared at Mark and Mark just smiled. I looked at Mandie and she just shrugged. The tension was unbearable so I did the first thing that came to me mind.

“Ugh, guys I almost forgot I can’t make it today.” I said.

Everyone spoke at once, except for Cameron.

“Why,” Mark said calmly.

“Man, I was going to show you my moves,” Chase said as he pushed his hands out into a skateboard move.

I glanced at Cameron, he was staring. He was angry.

“I—I have some unpacking to do.” I mumbled as I look down at my half eaten apple. “I can probably go tomorrow.”

Chase and the rest seemed pleased with the arrangement. Cameron wasn’t he stalked away from the table.

“What was that about?” Mandie asked the group. “They never speak to us—much less their leader Cameron.” I looked at Mark I was expecting some comment. He didn’t say anything.

“Mark, are you going to show me how to skate tomorrow?” I asked mainly to draw him out of his stupor. Mark got up from the table and smiled down at me. I knew something was very wrong but he was trying for me not to see it. “Yeah, sure tomorrow. I got to get to class I’ll see you later.” Mark left the table and I watched him go. I glanced over at Cameron and his group. He of course was staring at me. Lunch was over everyone seemed to drift into their own thoughts. All because of a jerk named Cameron. I looked at my schedule, “Well guys I got to go.” I got up to go when Mandie stood up. “See you guys later,” she said as she walked with me. “So what do you think of, Chase?” So Mandie liked Chase, she didn’t have to worry about that. “He is cool.” I said as I pushed the cafeteria doors open. “I think we are going to be good buddies.” Mandie took a deep breath as if she was relieved to hear that I had no interest in Chase. The bell rang to announce that school was over. I was glad today was over so grab my things and rushed out the class. I walked out of the school, through the school yard and towards my dad’s car that was waiting for me. Cameron and his friends were standing by the cars hanging out. As I passed the group, I kept my eyes on the object at hand getting to my dad’s car—safety and sanity.

“Hey! Tori!”

I heard my name being called but I just kept on walking.

“Tori!”

I stopped what if it was him. I was such a coward. I couldn’t stand him looking at me. I felt exposed. I inhaled and braced myself for his angry face, turned to find Mark running up to me.

“Was your first day that bad,” he laughed.

“No, I just didn’t want my dad to wait too long for me.” I lied.

Like a fool of course I had to glance back to Cameron. He was there, watching, and angry. Mark walked with me the short distance to the car. My dad waved.

“I am sorry about how I left today—you know from the cafeteria.”

“Yeah, well it’s okay.”

"Still want me to teach to skate," Mark grinned.

"Of course, tomorrow."

Mark nodded. I reached for the car door.

"Tomorrow," Mark laughed. "Make sure you were pants. I have a feeling you're going to fall."

"You got that right," I laughed as I got into the car. "See ya later, Mark."

"See ya." Mark said as I got into the car.

As we drove away from Calvier High, my dad didn't say anything. He just had this smirk on his face. I guess he was trying to figure out what to say.

"So Tori, how was your first day of school," I blurted out I got tired of waiting.

My dad burst out into laughter.

"I guess I deserve that," he said. "So how was it? Seems like you made a friend."

"Yeah, and I meet our neighbor, Chase."

Troy rolled his eyes.

"Lord, Chase the skateboarding boy, right."

Troy pulled his Chrylser 300 into a parking lot, parked, and then looked at me.

"Don't tell me that you are skating chick," Troy smiled.

"Yeah, right. I've never been on a skate board a day in my life, but I did tell Chase and the others they can teach me tomorrow."

Troy rolled his eyes the same way I do, and then stared out the window.

"Okay, Troy what are we doing at an auto dealer?"

Troy didn't say anything for a while.

"Tori, how old are you?"

You should have known that, I thought to myself. Troy is a nice guy but I still have some issues that he never came around to see me. He doesn't even know me, but he is trying and I guess that is all I can say for now.

"Do you drive?" he asked.

No I don't drive. I rode the bus all my life what do I know about driving. I took the course in school but have actually practice and got a license, no.

"No and I am 16." is all I said, there was no point in getting into the details with him.

Troy sighed and looked out the window again.

"Do you want to learn?"

"Yeah, well actually I did take the class at school. I just didn't get the driver's license."

Troy seemed to perk up.

"Well your getting your license it is rites of passage, so come on." Troy said as he got out of the car. I got out of the car, followed him, around the dealership.

“Pick a car—Tori.”

“What!”

Troy grinning looked at me.

“I am sorry I wasn’t there for the majority of your life. I wanted to...”

What is wrong with the man? It seems to want to open up in the wrong places. I hope doesn’t think that buying me a car is going to make up for the last 16 years of my life.

“I am not trying to buy your love or anything like that, Tori.” He said as if he read my mind. “I just want to be here for you now, and it seems that you went with out for a long time.” I looked away this was way too much to deal with right now. Putting his finger under my chin, Troy turns my head to face him.

“I won’t bad mouth your mother. Just say...I wanted to be there. I wasn’t, and now I can for a little while at least so let me be there.”

Troy seemed to be a gentleman, and I don’t know what happen between him and my mother. It would seem like he wasn’t going to share it. So I guess I would have to let the man buy me a car. It wasn’t that bad, I guess.

“All right,” I smiled.

We walked around the dealer’s lot. Troy wanted to buy me a Lexus and I refused. We argued for an hour about a Mercedes Sedan, I won. Finally we agreed upon a small Ford truck only if I agree to let him buy me a cell phone. I couldn’t drive the truck until I got my license but Troy insisted that I will be driving in a month’s time. I wasn’t expecting spending the whole evening in the company of my dad. We ate at the mall because Troy insisted I get new clothes. I just brought a pair jeans and 3 t-shirts. I just didn’t feel comfortable about him spending so much money on me. Usually Gail James would buy me a cheap pair of under wears, but nothing like this. When we got home I took my purchases to my room, hung up my new clothes, and began to undress. I didn’t have much time to think about what happen during the day at school. As I drew on my bathrobe, I thought about Cameron. Why is he so angry with me, he doesn’t even know me. Entering my bathroom, I felt a tingling on my senses. The same tingling I felt every time I saw Cameron, I felt it now. I looked around the bathroom, there was a basket of bath products sitting next to the tub. It still felt strange like someone was here watching me. I knew no one possible could be here so I ran the bath water. I was excited about the basket of bath products; I never had a bubble bath. With Gail James it was usually water and soap, and usually in a sink. I sank down into the tube, and closed my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I was no longer in my bathroom. The steam from my bath turned to fog, and I was standing in a clearing in the middle of a forest. It was dark, cold, and wet, as I stood in the forest in my bathrobe. I should have been afraid, but I wasn’t—I just waited. My feet squished the damp leaves as he came through trees. A light glowed around him like he was an ethereal being; every fiber in him exuded danger. He glided gracefully toward me, so quiet I should have run. His blazing red eyes pierced mine, I couldn’t cower away. I was drawn to this encounter, Cameron stood in front of me. I could not breathe as he walked around me. His hand sneaked out to grab my neck but instead it hovered. He wasn’t going to kill me—he didn’t want my death he wanted more. A movement from the trees caught our attention, something lingered just beyond the forest. It stood quietly menacing in the trees it did not reveal itself. I had the feeling that Cameron knew what it was he smiled, drew closer to me, and whispered into my ear, “Choose me, Tori.” I looked back at the forest into the darkness, I didn’t see anything but for the first time I was afraid so I took Cameron’s hand. I looked up at him, at the blazing red eyes and I wasn’t so sure that he was any safer than the intruder in the forest. His breathing was ragged, and he growled but he held my hand tighter as he glared into the forest. A

powerful growl shook the forest, I felt the intruder coming for us. Cameron looked down at me as I tried to pull away. "Tori, go home." Cameron said as he let go of my hand, and I fell backward. The splash of water woke me. Glancing around the bathroom, I realized that I fell asleep. I stared at the bath products; it was a dream on the surface. I knew it wasn't a dream, though. I climbed out of the bath, dressed, and sat in my bed. I waited to dream again or whatever it was that put me in the forest. I fell asleep but the dream alluded me. "Tori!" I heard my dad call from the kitchen. "Wake up." I have been up for hours trying to figure out these weird thoughts and Cameron's reaction to me yesterday. I stood at my bedroom window fidgeting...I was nervous. Maybe I am just cracking from my mother's rejection to this new lifestyle. There are no strange mysterious dangers lurking around. I'm just crazy.

"Get it together, Tori." I mumbled as I grabbed my backpack and open my bedroom door.

"Hey good morning." My dad said as he leaned against my bedroom door.

"Morning."

"You've made quite an impression at school yesterday," he said as he grinned.

Walking past my dad and toward the kitchen I said, "What do you mean?"

"I guess my duty of taking you to school is short lived." This is one of those times that I wanted to kick Troy, but out of the respect that he is my sperm donor I don't. Cocking my head to the side, I stood still so not to give into the impulse of kicking him so I waited for him to give me an explanation it is easier that way. Troy sighed and threw his hands up. "Fine. Mark Lawson is here to take you to school." I stared at my dad and his candid smirk. "He is waiting in the kitchen..." I walked towards the kitchen. "Eating your breakfast," he called after me. Mark was cute. If it wasn't for this unnatural dangerous attraction that I have for Cameron the jerk. Mark looked up when I entered the kitchen. He was dressed in a black t-shirt, pair of jeans, and flip-flops. He smiled he had a nice smile. It wasn't like Cameron's vicious one.

"I hope me coming to pick you up didn't weird you out. I grabbed a piece of bacon from his plate. "Or you eating my breakfast," I said. He seemed embarrassed so I quickly said, "No problem."

"You two are going to be late." My dad said as he entered the kitchen. Mark got from the table, when I reached for the plate on the table I realized that Mark didn't eat anything. He'd just moved his food around the table. I looked up to see Mark staring at me. He looked at the plate. As if he was trying to tell me something. I waited. "We better go," is all that he said. I arrived for my second day at Caliver High on the back of Mark's motorcycle—it was cool. My dad's permanent smirk was wiped off his face when he saw what Mark was taking me to school on. Troy Robinson was having a fit, I just reminded Troy we were going to be late, and I hopped quickly on the motorcycle. We pulled into the school yard, just like yesterday all eyes were on us this time instead just me—especially Cameron and his people.

"Today we will start with the basics on skating." Mark went on as we walked by the beautiful people.

Chase and the others were waiting for us at the entrance of the school so I tried to focus on my new group of friends. Instead I was conscious of every move that Cameron made. They walked behind us not directly but they might as well. I knew Cameron listened to every word we said.

"Hey Mark, Tori I didn't know you needed a ride today." Chase said as he looked between Mark and me. Mandie twirled her hair as she watched Chase. Chase seemed to be oblivious to Mandie's interest.

"It is okay, he was cool about picking me up." I said as Cameron and his friends pushed by us.

"Yeah, but live right next you. Mark lives in Point Edge that a long way from us." Chase seemed put out about Mark bringing me to school.

"It was a one time deal. I got a new car." I blurted out

"Really, so why didn't you drive?" Mandie said as stood between Chase and me. Looking up I made eye contact with Cameron, grinning. The jerk actually found the situation funny.

I "I have to get my license." I said as I walked around Mandie

Chase and Mike took this as an opportunity to offer their assistance in teaching me how to drive. I thanked them but I let them know that my dad was planning to teach me. The bell rang for the first class of the day—Calculus and Cameron. I hated how my mind lusted for his rejection but I was giddy inside to get to class. I said goodbye to everyone and I hurried into the school and right into Cameron. There was no one in the hall. He said nothing to me and I couldn't think of anything to say to him. So I walked around him, and kept walking. He walked slowly behind me. He said nothing but he followed quietly. I fought the urge to not look back, but I did. When I reached the classroom door, I looked at him. He continued to walk as I paused at the door I expected him to walk past me, but he stopped and stared at me. "After you.." he said as he reached around me and opened the door. I stared at him, he arched his eyebrow and said "Well." I hurried into the classroom and to my seat. Cameron calmly went to his seat. Tamara giggled as I sat down. I wanted to tell her to shut up but all I did was open up my Calculus book and pretended they did not exist. Short lived. As Mr. Henry wrote on the chalkboard a problem, I pretended to be engrossed in my Calculus book. My thoughts went to the dream I had last night when the voice spoke, "I choose you, Tori." I looked up no one seemed to hear what I heard. No one was speaking..."It is done, I choose you." I looked at the back of Cameron, he turned and smiled. I was shocked how could he be speaking to me. I looked at Tamara, she glanced at me. She knew. She heard what he said. This was crazy I had to get out of here. "Don't be afraid, it is me Tamara." I looked at Tamara as she sat staring straight ahead. What type of freaky place is this? I grabbed my bag, stumbled out of my seat toward the front of the classroom.

"Miss James is there a problem?" I glanced back at Cameron and Tamara.

"I-I am not feeling well. I need leave."

I didn't wait for Mr. Henry's response. I just ran out of the room, through the halls, and out the front doors of Caliver High. Standing in the parking lot, Cameron waited for me. I thought about screaming but something wouldn't let me open my mouth. How did he get out here.

"Stay away from me."

"I don't think that I can," he said as he glided towards me.

"What are you?" I asked as I backed up from him.

"I am Cameron."

I should be scared, I was curious about who he was.

"I know you are Cameron." I said. "What are you?"

He didn't say anything he just walked up to me, and extended his hand to me. I just looked at his hand.

"I know you are not as afraid as you are curious. Come."

I looked around wondering if Chase, or even Mike would come out. So I would make a mistake and go with this being. In the end, I followed him but I did not take his hand. I thought he was going to lead me somewhere away from school. Instead we went back into the school, and up to the third floor of the school. This floor was abandoned, dusty. We walked quietly down the abandoned hall. He didn't try to touch me, he just walked quietly beside me with his hands behind his back. Like he was some diplomatic.

“Where are we going?” I asked.

Cameron didn’t say anything he just stopped at one of the abandon classrooms, and open the door.

“Shall we?” he said as he held the door.

I walked in to the dark, dusty room. A small part of me thought this might be my last hour, but another part thought I was embarking on a discovery.

Cameron raised his hand and the lights came on. I watched him as he walked closer to me.

“What are you?” I whispered.

He smiled. “I am Cameron, I am a Valkrie.”

I stepped further away.

“What is a Valkrie.” I asked impatiently.

“I am a vampire, Tori.”

For some reason I wasn’t shocked. I was just concerned about what he wanted.

“You are not surprised.”

“How come you said you are aValkrie?” I asked as I looked around.

“A Valkrie is sorta like a prince. I am prince of a vampire colony.”

“Tamara.”

He nodded.

“She is a vampire that belongs to my colony.”

“There is a colony.”

Cameron laughed as he watched me through hood eyes.

“The first vampire came over on the ship with Christopher Columbus.”

I couldn’t say anything I just stared.

“What do you want with me?”

Cameron walked closer to me and I backed against the window.

“There is a legend in the colony.”

“A legend?”

Cameron nodded as he watched me struggle to stand before him.

“I’ll show you,” he whispered.

Cameron walked slowly to me, took my hands, and placed them on his heart.

“Watch.”

Cameron voice caressed my ears as he began to speak. “In England, a young debutante was promised to the most powerful and wealthiest man in England—Duke VanPoint. The Duke was accustomed to getting whatever he wanted and he wanted Eliza a simple Baron’s daughter. It would be advantous marriage for her family. Eliza was consigned to her future marriage to the Duke of VanPoint even though she did not love him. The night of the engagement ball the Duke summoned Eliza to his library. Although this is not the custom for young girl’s to be in the company of men alone—even if

engaged Eliza's family sent her to the Duke. The Duke wanted Eliza to perform her martial duties—early. Eliza refused but the Duke insisted. The rape was brutal. The guests of the ball heard her cries, screams, and the Duke's laughs. Eliza was humiliated. Eliza fled from the ball, and she ran into the heart of the England slums. Into a dark cold damp alley, Eliza laid in the alley to her it seemed hours hoping for death to overcome her. Death, she thought finally visited her when she saw the dark cloak angel float by her. The darkness from this angel engulfed the alley, and nearly choked Eliza. His smooth white skin glowed; his dark hair shined in the darkness, everything about him was breathtaking. Eliza was immediately in a trance from his beauty. In his strong hands he carried a woman as if she was a rag doll. Eliza dared not to draw attention to her—for she truly believed she had entered hell. She watched in horror and in awe as the angel or perhaps the devil captivity his prey. He made the woman feel beautiful and loved. He kissed her down her throat, and then suddenly she gasps as he bit her throat. As quickly as he bites the woman, she lay lifeless in his arms. Eliza whimpered, and tried to sneak from the alley.

"Don't go sweetheart," the dark angel with blood dripping from his teeth whispered.

Eliza wanted to run but his voice captured her heart. She stood quietly as he laid the woman on the ground.

"Eliza is your name," the angel spoke as he glided to her. "I am Sir Raphael."

The dark angel bowed to Eliza and she curtsy to the vampire called Sir. Raphael.

"I saw what your fiancée done to you. What would you have me to do?"

Eliza looked down at her feet she could not bear to know that someone or something had seen her disgrace. It was already enough to know that her peers and elders heard her cries and screams and no one helped her. She wanted Duke VanaPoint dead and this creature could do this for her.

"What could you do?" Eliza asked as she shyly looked up at the beautiful face.

"Is that what you wish?"

Eliza nodded.

Eliza looked at the woman and thought about her own disgrace, and was immediately angry. She would not be the cause of someone suffering as she was.

"No, I don't wish you to do anything to Sir Raphael."

Eliza looked down at the ground for she didn't want Sir Raphael to see her weakness.

"You have a good heart, Eliza. I did not think that such goodness lived in this world."

" You're good," Eliza said as she nodded to the woman. "You were kind to her."

Sir Raphael smiled at Eliza and explained that the woman was dying, she begged him to kill her.

Eliza placed her hand on his chest and said, "I knew you were good. Your heart doesn't carry blackness as Duke VanPoint." At that very moment Sir Raphael and Eliza fell in love. In the morning, Eliza and Sir Raphael planned for her to go home and tell her parents that she would not marry the Duke of VanPoint, but she planned to marry Sir Raphael.

"I don't want you to go. You can stay and we will tell your family together," said Sir Raphael.

"No, if I do not return they will look for me. They will find out who you are. No I must go alone, my love."

Eliza went alone to speak to her father. She told her father that she could not marry Duke of VanPoint

because she loved Sir Raphael.

"I am sorry about what happen at the ball," said her father

Her father agreed to meet with Sir Raphael, and insisted she bring him to her father. Eliza was very excited and went immediately to Sir Raphael. In the meanwhile, Duke VanPoint and Eliza's father followed her to Sir Raphael's home. The Duke and the peers of the ton found out what Sir Raphael was. They came to Sir Raphael and demanded that he leave England. If he did not that Eliza and her family would be destroyed in England society. Sir Raphael loved her so that he left England that very night on the ship that would set sail to the New World—with Christopher Columbus. Eliza waited for Sir Raphael to arrive at her father's house—he never came. She waited in her bedroom window for Sir Raphael—he never came. Eliza's wedding day came, before she was about to walk down the aisle. Her mother explained what happen to Sir Raphael. Before the actual wedding Eliza ran to the docks. Crying Sir Raphael's name, now he could her anguish across the waters, and he felt her despair. Eliza ran into the waters crying Sir Raphael's name and drowned. Her last breath he felt ripple through his body—he cried out in for his love. Sir Raphael was devastated so when the Duke of VanPoint's final plans where revealed—his death once he reached the New World. Sir Raphael didn't fight. The men of the ship were ordered to tear his body apart and burn him at the stake. He didn't put up a fight, as he laid in the burning flames Eliza appeared to him.

"My love, fight! I'll come to you. Fight."

In that moment, Sir Raphael got up and walked through the flames of fire. Duke VanPoint's men were foolish for they didn't tear Sir Raphael's body apart. They realized their mistake, but it was to late through his rage, Sir Raphael massacred all of Duke VanPoint's men. Sir Raphael remained in the New World, this very place waiting for Eliza to return to him. He waits at the dock that he arrived at, waiting for his love. Flash. Standing in the shadows, of Plymouth Rock , stands a disfigured vampire looking over the water.

"What does this have to do with me?"

Cameron smiled and shrugged as he looked out the window.

"Nothing," he said.

I knew he was lying but I could tell he wasn't going to tell me. That conversation was over.

I realized that my hand was still on his chest. I snatched away. It was amazing how he communicated with me like that, it also felt sort of...forbidden. Cameron watched me when I pulled my hand away. He didn't seem like the same guy—like his angry with me was gone. He seemed gently even kind through his eyes. The room got really cold suddenly, and Cameron became tense. He moved in front of me, I immediately felt his anger return with a force that I could not describe.

"Reveal yourself, Tosha," he coldly said.

"You could not resist her after all, Cameron what a bad boy you are," said a low seductive female voice.

"Reveal yourself, now."

The voice cackled as a beautiful woman with long dark hair, skin like porcelain glided graceful into the room. Her prescene radiant through the gloomy room. I was in awe. This girl definitely belong with some like Cameron. They were perfect together.

"Don't think foolishly!" Cameron snapped at me.

His eyes gleamed black, and I stepped back from him. While Tosha laugh filled the room.

"You are absolute right, we do belong together." Tosha said as she hovered in front of Cameron. "The human is smart, Cameron."

Tosha finally looked at me, her eyes held contempt and mockery. I was definitely out of my league here and I just wanted to run from the room. Something held me there...I had a feeling that it was Cameron. His power over me or maybe just his power was overwhelming so I stood. Tosha watched me and Cameron with intensity.

"She wants to go, let her," her deadly voice vibrated off the walls.

Suddenly I felt very cold, and ice shot through my body. The pain was excoriating, I tried to scream, but when I opened my mouth it felt like my teeth were going to shatter. I felt my blood begin to run cold, and my heart slow down. All my senses were fading, and I collapse to the floor.

"Release her, now." I faintly heard Cameron.

"You plan to change her, I feel it." Tosha said.

Ice glazed over my eyes, but through my blurry vision I saw Cameron stalk Tosha.

"Release her or I will kill you."

Tosha laughed penetrated my ears, and I felt my eardrums tingling with sharp pieces of ice. My body convulsed.

"You can't kill me, Cameron. That would go against everything you are, right." Suddenly warmth filled my body. I gasped for air. Tosha walked closer to Cameron, and kissed him. As the ice cleared from eyes I saw Cameron bite down her lip, and threw her against the wall.

"Stay away from her," he said.

Tosha laughed and pushed him back against the wall.

"You stay away from her and maybe I will." Tosha said as she stepped over my body and left the room. Once she left my body thawed. Kneeling Cameron picked me up and sat me on a nearby table.

"I am sorry," He whispered as his warm breath enters my ears. "You will be okay I promise.

"I—I think I should go." I said as I tested my legs.

He watched me, as I stumbled to the door. I looked back at him, he was reserved to let me go. Even sad.

"I won't stop you, Tosha is right I can't have you."

I nodded and walked out the door. As I walked I could feel my body returning to me. I just wanted to get off of Caliver High School's third floor and back to a normal life. Once I reached the second floor and back to the high school civilization, I realized that I wasn't relieved to be away from Cameron the vampire and the dark world he represented. I was angry that he didn't fight her—he didn't fight to have me. No I wasn't angry I was pissed off. By the end of the day I was exhausted and I just wanted to go home. Chase and Mike reminded me that I promised to go to the Ridge during lunch...loudly. Of course I agreed to go plus my dad had no idea to pick me up. Although if I allowed him to buy me a phone last night I could probably call him. Great. After the lunch performance, Cameron seemed to be his angry self again. He coldly glared at me in the hall, and since I was mad at him. I glared back. Tamara found the whole thing hilarious. I didn't know what to exactly make of the whole incident upstairs and I really didn't want to think about it. After school, Chase and the rest of the group waited for me in the parking lot so much for escaping.

“I don’t want you going to the Ridge.” Cameron spoke to me in my mind as he watched me from across the parking lot. I wish I could turn it off. I looked at him and he had the nerve to smirk and turn away. “Ass, did you get that.” I thought Cameron turned around, looked at me, I smirked and walked to my new friends and ignored him. We all crawled into Chase’s Jeep, we drove past Cameron and his group. Cameron looked so angry but I finally succeeded in blocking his thoughts out—with the help of Chase’s music blaring. Skateboarding is a sport that I realize you have to be coordinated to do—my face agrees too. Since my chin found itself hitting pavement. I arrived home glad that the day and my obligation of going to The Ridge were over. All I wanted to do is take a hot bath, and go to bed. First I need to do some homework and talk to my dad.

It was Friday morning, dad said he would be at the movie theater for much of the evening. He wanted me to hang out the theater. It really wasn’t what I wanted to do but I told him I would go. After accepting his invitation dad seemed to be pleased so he was off in his own world. Which was fine I was dreading the day of ahead—seeing Cameron. I didn’t think much of him when I was hanging out with Chase and Mark; probably because I was trying not to fall on my ass but instead I fell on my face.

“You might want to think about not skateboarding for a career,” my dad said as he pointed to my chin.

“Wasn’t planning on it.”

My dad laughed. I didn’t care much about scars—I kind of found that to be shallow to worry about things like that. I had an uneasy feeling about it now as I walked up the sidewalk to the school. It wasn’t a big deal—at least not to me. So I just kept on walking, if felt like it was my first day of school all over again. Everyone was looking I looked around the school yard for Chase, Mike, even Mandie. Let’s face it I wasn’t looking for them—I was looking Cameron. My eyes found him immediately and he was staring at me or rather my chin and of course, he was angry. My body was tingling even though we were several feet away from each other. His golden brown eyes seemed to go up in flames...fire. He stalked towards me and I knew it was time for me to turn the other way. Not because I was afraid of him because I knew it was going to be a fight. He was angry but I haven’t gotten over my angry. Yes I wanted to see him but I also wanted to kill him.

“Well I don’t think it is that bad,” Chase smiled as he walked towards me.

Refuge. I looked at Cameron’s advancement, turned and made my beeline to Chase and the others.

“I am alright.”

Mike came up and hugged me. I could tell that he was looking at something behind him. I just didn’t want to acknowledge who he was looking at. So I slipped out from under Mark’s arm and began walking towards the school building. Everyone fell into step and somehow I knew that Cameron did not fall into step. He wasn’t the type. He did not follow, he lead. When I entered Calculus class, Cameron and some of his friends where already there. They all stopped talking when Chase and me walked in, at least they stopped talking out loud. I knew they were definitely still talking. I kept my head down, and walked past the group. I made it to my desk, slipped into the seat, pulled out my books, and looked up into Cameron’s eyes—still blazing. He leaned hands on my desk, and lowered his face into mine. I wanted to look away but I could feel my anger rising. He said nothing. I said nothing.

“Okay, class I hope everyone has done their homework because we are having a quiz.”