With Writing Comes Serenity and Strength

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God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

--Reinhold Niebuhr
Inside the mind of Michaela Byron

Unique, this is one of many words that can be used to describe Michaela Byron. After being asked what she thought her best characteristic was, she feels that she is compassionate and enjoys putting others before herself. Further into the interview the subject of her Sister came up. With a smile on her face she began to talking about her sister. Michaela describes her sister as strong, independent, wonderful, “All that good stuff in a sister”. One thing that I thought was very meaningful about her sister was, “she rolls with the punches and she is confident is situations. How can you not be strong when you’ve gone through all the things she’s been through?”

At the end of the interview I asked Michaela what her favorite quote was, she answered with a smile and laugh. “Everyone is a genius. But, if you test a fish’s ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid” (Einstein).
Chapter 1

“Kari, would you mind going first to give your presentation?”

My Social Studies teacher Mr. Kurtman was a short stout man with black hair and a quickly receding hair line. I slowly stood as everyone wheeled their bodies around to stare at the “new girl”. I’ve never been one to speak in front of a class, it usually resulted in me fainting or making a connection with my up-chuck reflex. As I approached the front of the room I felt as though the whole classroom was going to completely collapse around me. “No, I could not make a mistake this time, I kept telling myself”. I had been a Hukerton High School for just a little over a week now and I have made no progress in making any type of a friend. It was your normal typical High School scenario. You had your jocks, you had your cheerleaders, the nerds, the people that were really into there drugs, and then there was the normal people that just were not interested in including a new person to their table. I cleared my throat and began my presentation.

“Hi, my name is Kari Wessman and my presentation is on President Kennedy.”

My six minutes went by faster than I thought, concluding my presentation. The class clapped but seemed to lack sincerity with it. I scurried back to my seat in the back row as Mr. Kurtman called up the next student.

“Alec, you’re up next.”
I watched as the group of immature boys nudged Alec laughingly to the front of the room. Of course all the girls straightened in their seats and gawked over him. I looked to the clock just counting the minutes until I can be out of this place I felt was hell, and continue to my nice relaxing weekend.

“Hi, my name is Alec Pierce, and I also did my presentation on President Kennedy.”

My eyes shot to the front of the room locking with Alec’s as he seemed to give me a small smile. Minutes passed and I could only think of how I hadn’t possibly noticed Alec before. He was not only one of the most popular kids in school but also the quarterback of our schools football team. Tall, tan, muscled, and completely handsome. His voice encased me in my thoughts and the image of him could not leave my mind. His short brown hair was perfectly quaft and not a hair was out of place.

“And that is my presentation on President Kennedy.”

I quickly snapped out of my day dreaming and joined the class in applause. The bell rung three times which signaled it was the end of the day. I quickly walked to the right side door when an arm reached out blocking the doorway.

“Hi Kari, I’m Anna. You probably don’t know me but I thought I would introduce myself.”
But I already knew all I needed to know about her. Anna Hall, head cheerleader, student council president, skinny, blonde, blue eyes, had all the boys in the school completely wrapped around her finger, and also one of the biggest snobs.

“Oh my god your eyes are so pretty!!”

Feeling the unnecessary awkward attention, I averted my eyes. Ever since I was young I’ve been considered different, weather good or bad it really depended. I was born with eyes two different colors. One a sky blue and the other a soft emerald green.

“So anyway, as you may know the Homecoming Dance is tonight and I wanted to know if you would like to get ready with me and a few of my girlfriends.”

I contemplated in my head about how this could get any worse. I knew I couldn’t say no.

“Sure, I just don’t have anything to wear or a date.” Yes, I thought to myself that’s a clever one now you won’t have to go with them.

Anna answered back with a grin, “Don’t you worry, none of us have dates it’s more fun that way, and I have a closet full of dresses which half of them I haven’t even worn yet.”

Not really knowing how to take this small act of kindness smiled feeling that someone was finally making an effort to be my friend.
“Thanks so much Anna I really appreciate it.”

“Anytime, just consider it as a nice welcoming to the new school.”

We exchanged numbers as well as Anna giving me her address, and we went our separate ways. A feeling of relief fell upon me as I felt that I could finally relax after my brief encounter with Anna. Just then I collided with someone knocking all my books from my hands and scattering them to the floor. I dropped to my knees with embarrassment and began shuffling my books and papers back together.

“I’m so sorry I wasn’t looking where I was going, I was in such a rush; let me help you with your books.”

“No its fine don’t worry about it was my entirely my fault I should’ve been watching…”

I looked up only to meet eye to eye with none other than Alec! With my heart doing flips in my chest I looked down and rapidly kept piling my belongings together.

“Nice presentation today.”

“Thanks, you too”

“So are you going to the Homecoming dance tonight?”

“I wasn’t planning on it but Anna kind of just roped me into it.” I said with a slight smile.
“Great me too.”

Alec seemed to get a tad bit nervous at this point, his hands were fidgety and he was biting his lip, almost shy in a way. I would’ve never imagined someone who seemed so popular and outgoing to actually seem somewhat shy in asking someone like me a simple question like “are you going to homecoming?”

“Well I guess I will see you there.” I replied and turned to walk away from him.

“Wait Kari?”

I slightly turned to meet his gaze once again.

“Um, never mind. I’ll just see you tonight.”

That’s where it ended I thought to myself, the one and only time I would get to talk to Alec and I barely even said anything! Shaking off all the possible outcomes that should have happened from my encounter, I began my walk home, slinking down the sidewalk, thinking of Alec with each step.
Chapter 2

I walked just about a half a mile and arrived at my new house. It was peach in color with a white porch that wrapped around it. It is a gorgeous house don’t get me wrong, but it wasn’t the same as my old house, it lacked the sense of family. I unlocked the front door and made my way to the kitchen. I opened the fridge to find nothing but ketchup and salad dressing. That’s a four course meal right there! Finding nothing I closed the fridge and saw there was a note on the door of the fridge. “Dear Carrie, Mom and I went to Florida for our business trip, we will be back in a few days, we left some money in an envelope in the cupboard next to the sink. Love, Mom and Dad” they dragged me to a new town where I don’t know anyone, and then they leave me by myself. I shook of my frustration feeling a little selfish and went up to my room. I found an old soccer bag and started to shove some things I thought I might need for tonight. I packed some sweat pants a tank top, some ripped jeans and a blouse that I got for Christmas the year prior. I also packed some makeup that I kept at the back of my closet that I only used for special occasions. Zipping the bag up I looked at the clock and notice I was going to be late, I had just remembered that Anna had told me she wanted me to be at her house for three and it was already ten past. Running down the stairs, I last minute remembered the money in the cupboard. I grabbed the envelope and shoved it in the side of my bag.

It didn’t take as long as I thought it would take to get to Anna’s house. Her house looks as if it is a mansion and there is no doubt in my mind that it is one. Four stories tall, with big grand
windows and a large green spacious lawn. I can only imagine what her back yard looked like. I walked up to the front door, and before I was even able to ring the door bell, Anna and two other girls who I recognized as Marie and Carla, burst out of the door schreetching.

“Yay, oh my god you’re here!”

“It was getting later and later and we didn’t think you would show!” said Marie.

I was grabbed by the wrist and yanked into the house. Unable to even take in the beauty of this magnificent house, I was dragged up the stairs and down a long tiled hallway leading to what I assumed to be her room. Before I knew it I was flung down in a chair. Carla began brushing my hair out except it was more of a yanking and tugging of my hair. On the other side of the room Marie and Anna were looking me up and down with puzzled looks on their faces.

“Ah ha! I know the perfect dress for you!” said Anna.

Anna and Marie walked into the huge closet behind them and shut the door. Five minutes later they came out with a dress in hand but a dress cover over it.

“It’s a surprise so when you’re done getting your hair and makeup done you can go into the bathroom put the dress on and come out like a fashion show.”

“Are you sure about all this? Like letting me where your dress and everything?”
“Oh please don’t worry about it, we love a good reason to give someone a makeover, and the dress that you’re going to wear was just an impulsive buy, it has the tag on it still and everything.”

“Alright enough chit chat and get in the bathroom and try it on.”
Not even five minutes later, I emerged from the bathroom and the room fell silent.

“Does it look okay?”

“You. Look…beautiful!!!”

The three girls started screeching again in excitement of there accomplishment. While they were basking in their glory I turned to the look at my self in the full length mirror. I gasped seeing my reflection. A subtle above the knee strapless flowy dress, lay against my skin. It was a bluish green color and accented my auburn hair as well as my heterochromia eyes. (Ding Ding)
Everyone except for me looked at thier phones to see if they had gotten a text.

“Its mine” Marie said with a big grin on her face. “I’m going to read it out loud and you have to guess who it’s from.”

“Hey Marie, I just wanted to know if Kari was still going with you guys to the dance and party tonight?”
As if on cue all the girls screeched again, but almost louder this time.

“Who is it, who is it, don’t keep us waiting just tell us.”

“Alright, it was Alec!”

Again the screeching began but all I could do was sit in astonishment that Alec had just texted Marie that.

“Looks like you got someones attention.” Carla giggled from the bathroom.

A chime went of in the living room beneath us marking that it was almost eight o’clock which was when the doors to the dance would be open. All of the girls slipped into their dresses and finished their make up and decended down the large stair case.

“Hey Anna, I forgot to ask about that party that Marie mentioned.”

“Oh right the after party, so Maries parents are out of town and we invited like everyone over for a party. Is that okay with you?”

“Yeah its fine, my parents are out of town too, so I don’t have to go home.”

“That’s awesome, next party we should have at your house.” Anna said with a devious grin.
Walking towards the garage, I noticed a bright red car and could not believe my eyes.

“Are we taking this?”

“Duh, its my car what else would we take?”

Rounding the side of it I recognized exactly what it was.

“This is a porche convertible!” I said with astonishment.

“Of course it is silly, I got it for my birthday last year and I will probably get another one this year too.”

As Marie and Carla hopped over the side of the car and into the back seat Anna got in the drivers seat and I in the passengers, relishing every moment in this beautiful car. Buckling my seatbelt, Anna shoved the key in the ignition turned on the car and sped out of the driveway down the street.
Chapter 3

The school was lit up with thousands of small lights. This year’s theme was starry night and the homecoming committee indeed went all out. Stars covered in glitter were hanging from everywhere leading to where there was a photographer in the front of the gym. Taking a quick picture with the girls we sauntered into the dance. It was magnificent, everyone was dressed to the nine and the gym was completely transformed. A crowd of people hovered in front of the stage where the DJ was stationed. Looking to the sides of me I noticed that only Carla and Anna were next to me and Marie had disappeared into the crowd. Not thinking anything of it I started to dance with Anna and Carla.

“Thank you so much for even asking me to come get ready with you guys, if you didn’t I probably would’ve just stayed home.”

“Oh please don’t be thankful, we can just have a party at your house next time your parents go away and that can repay me.” Anna said with a smirk.

With that I saw Marie emerge from the crowd and grab me by the arm.

“So I was just walking around and thought we should all come over this way, and would you look at that.” Marie then pushed me forward.
Feeling so confused and disoriented I just let gravity do its work when I stumbled into someone.

“Well looks like we are starting to make a habit out of this knocking each other over every time we see each other”

Staggering to get my barring’s straight I realized that Marie had pushed me right into Alec.

“Sorry about that I think Marie had a bit of an arm spasm” I said giving a side glare over to Marie who only shrugged it off and gave me back a little wave.

“Kari, you look amazing.”

“Thanks, you look pretty good you’re self.” I managed to say feeling so embarrassed

“Kari would you like to dance?”

Butterflies began fluttering in my stomach and all of the blood in my body ran to my cheeks.

“Sure, I’d love too.”

Alec guided me to the middle of the dance floor where we began to sway with the gentle slow song that had just started. As we were dancing I couldn’t help but notice that we were getting
some sideways looks. Probably because I was the new girl that nobody wanted to get to know and he was the most popular kid in school.

“Alec are you sure you want to be dancing with me in front of people, everyone keeps staring at us.”

“Of course I want to be here with you, and everyone is probably just staring at your beautiful blue and green eyes.”

Feeling self-conscious of my eyes I looked down only to have Alec guide my face back to looking at him.

That sure got some more looks but it was fine with me.

Hours went by and Alec and I danced to a countless amount of songs, and talked about almost everything. Anna came twirling over two us with a big smile on her face.

“Looks like you two hit it off”

Alec grinned and placed his arm around me.
“So Carla, Marie and I are going to head out now and go set up for the party at Marie’s. Since you two seem to be enjoying each others company, Alec after the dance do you want to drive Kari to the party?”

“Yeah that’s fine with me, I just have to stop at my house and grab some clothes, if Kari doesn’t mind taking a detour?”

“I don’t mind at all.”

“Great! We will have the party going for when you guys get there.”

“Oh wait Anna; I just remembered I left my clothes at your house so I don’t have anything to wear.”

“Already ahead of you, I grabbed your bag and made an outfit for you when you were changing in the bathroom, I’ll put it in Alec’s car when I leave. Goodbye lovebirds.” Anna mischievously said with a smile while twirling away from us.

Alec looked at me and smiled, “why do I feel like they really planned this out?”

“I have no idea but there is no doubt in my mind that she did.” I said with a big grin.
The dance was starting to come to an end and we decided to leave and head to Alec’s car. As we came up to Alec’s black SUV he jogged ahead of me and grabbed my bag off the top of the car. Then he continued to the passenger door and opened it.

“Here you are madam” Alec said in a goofy accent.

He handed me my clothes and shut the door and we were off. His house was reasonably distanced from the schools it wasn’t long. We pulled into his driveway and I couldn’t help but notice how similar his house was to my old one, it made me happy to be reminded of the place where I was so happy. His house was three stories, porch on the front, two car garage, garden in the front yard, it really reminded me of home.

“I’ll be right back; you can change in here while I’m gone.”

Before I could answer he had already shut the door and running toward his front door. I hastily opened my bag to see what kind of outfit Anna had thrown together for me. I pulled out my ripped jeans, some Sperry’s, and a beautiful pink blousy tank top. I squirmed out of my dress and pulled on my outfit just in time to see Alec coming out of his front door.

“You ready to partay?” Alec said with a small glisten in his eyes.

And we were off.
Marie’s house looked scary identical to Anna’s. Every light was on in the house and you could hear the music from the speakers pulsing out of the house. There were already about 3 dozen cars parked all on the street and even in the driveway so we pulled on the grass next to a tree. Alec came around and opened my door for me.

“What a gentleman.”

“Hey its how I was raised.”

“Its nice, I like that.”

Just then I felt Alec’s fingers interlock with mine, he looked and me and smiled.

“You don’t mind do you?”

“Of course not.” Squeezing his hand a little for reassurance

“Your eyes are so gorgeous, and I’m not just saying that like one of those cheezy pick up lines either.”

“Thanks, I never know weather to be embarresed by them or proud of them y know? ”

“One day you’ll realize that you should be proud of them.”
Reaching the door, Anna and Marie flung the door wide open and the blasting music became more audible.

“I knew they would wind up liking each other.” Anna said somewhat tipsy and stumbling over her words.

“Come on in have fun have a drink , literally everyone is here.” Marie said looking as if she might fall over at any second.

Alec guided me into the large and crowded house. The inside of Maire’s house was very modern looking it had a divided grand staircase as soon as you walked into the door, a living room to the left a dining room to the right and the kitchen straight ahead with all the rooms connecting there. A group of Alec’s friends were sitting at the kitchen counter playing cards when we walked in.

“Let me introduce you to the guys, you’ll love them.”

“Are you sure? None of them have ever talked to me before and I don’t want to interrupt their game.

“Nonsense, hey guys I want you to meet Kari.”

Only two of the group of five boys turned their heads my way to say introduce themselves.

“Hey Kari I’m Mike and this is Liam, you’ve got a keeper right here, led us to states three years running” said a tall, medium sized boy with blonde hair and bright blue eyes.

Next to him was a shorter, skinny boy with black hair and dark brown eyes who I presumed to be Liam. Both very attractive which didn’t surprise me because so was Alec. A boy from across
the table yelled out Alec’s name and tossed him two beers. Alec snatched them from the air and handed one to me.

“Alright guys I’ll let you continue your game, don’t drink too much, you know what happened last time.” Alec said chuckling to himself and looked at me and gave me a wink. We found a quiet area off to the side of the kitchen with a leather chair and ottoman. He sat down first and pulled me over to sit on his lap. Next to us there was a wall long window which allowed us to see the many people who were flooding the backyard. As we were sitting and talking about the dance, something caught our attention outside.

“Did you just see that?” Alec said quizzically

“Yah I thought it was just like a plane flying fast across the sky.”

Just then there was a rumble in the distance and the ground shook and almost instantly the electricity went out and everyone went silent. We stood up looking out the window to try and get a better look. About a mile past Marie’s yard a green smoke began to bellow into the sky.

“What just happened?” Alec said turning away from the window to look at me

“I have no idea, do you think a plane crashed or something or maybe even a satellite?”

“No that would have had a bigger impact.”

“I have no idea then, did you want to go check it out?”

“Yeah we can jump in my car and go see.”

“Should I ask if Anna and Marie want to go too?”

“Yeah you go ask them and I’ll go ask Liam and Mike if they want to come too.”
“I’ll meet you at the car after I talk to them”

I ran over to where Anna and Marie were staring at the sky. People had already started leaving out of curiosity and concern on what had just occurred.

“Hey guys, Alec, Liam, Mike and I are going to go see what the hell happened do you guys want to come?”

Anna and Marie perked up after hearing Mike and Liam’s names.

“Sure we’ll come but we just have to go change our outfits.” Anna answered in a cheery manner

“Okay, well I’ll meet you guys at Alec’s car and we are leaving in five minutes.”

Not even waiting for a reply, I jogged around to the front of the house to meet Alec at his car.

“Mike and Liam went to go drop off Mike’s car at his house and we will pick them up on the way.”

“Alright, and Anna and Marie will be right out they are just changing their outfits.” I said laughing and rolling my eyes

We both hopped in the car and Alec started the engine.

“Wait were coming!” Marie said yelling towards us as her and Anna ran to the car

Both of them jumped in the back seat and buckled in.

“Where’s Mike and Liam?” Anna said in a ditzzy tone

“They went to go drop off Mike’s car and we are getting them on the way” Alec replied trying not to laugh at Anna’s question
We started off down the road and the green smoke was still visible in the sky. Mike’s house was about two streets down and the two boy’s were waiting on the curb. Mike opened the door and him and Liam got in there eyes seemed to light up when they noticed that Anna and Marie were there. Just as everyone settled in two ambulences whipped by.

“Jeeze I wonder what happened, and I hope no one’s hurt.” I said breaking the silence

“Well lets go find out” Alec said stepping on the gas

And once again we were off.
Chapter 5

We came up to a street light that was completely shut down and a crowd was starting to make their way towards the crash site. The green smoke had noticeably dissipated and there was eerie screams in the distance.

“Do you guys hear that?” Anna said nervously from the back seat

“That’s people screaming!” Liam said unbuckling himself to inch closer to the front

We turned a corner and the crash site became visiable. There were all types of cars flipped over and on fire. There was a crater in the middle of the street only a few yards away from our approaching car. One of the two ambulences was turned on its side with its lights still flashing. At that point fear hit all of us.

“Oh my god” Alec said slowing the car down

“Are those bodies on the ground up there?” Mike said from behind me
“Ew why does it look like that guy is like eating that person like that’s so super gross.” Anna said coming closer to the front

“Look there’s people running toward us.” Marie said

“Why are they in such a hurry?” Mike said jokingly

Just then a man covered in blood stepped out from behind one of the burning cars and grabbed one of the people running by and bit her on the arm. Her scream was ear piercing. The crowd of people neared our car and a man covered in blood put his hand on Alec’s window.

“You’ve got to listen to me, I’m not crazy so you listen, get away from here, leave now while you can whatever it was that fell from the sky, it it released something a smoke, and everyone near it just fell to the ground. I was in a store across from the crash site when it happened and and, I cant even describe it.” The man said with terror visable in his eyes

“So why do we have to leave can’t we just go home and close our windows, the smokes gone.” Marie said with much attitude in her voice

“You listen to me girl” the man said sticking his head in the window “let me finish, remember the people that I told you collapsed, well they started seizing so of course you had your nice Samaritans go and try and help get them to safety, well stupid them, the people on the ground started attacking them, biting them, eating them. It is going to sound obscured but I think the green gas was a chemical of some sort that changed them into zombies.”

“That’s crazy you old man.” Mike said from his back window

“Wait guys, guys look” Liam said pointing his arm past my fast and out the front window
We all turned away from the man at the window and saw the bodies on the ground seizing and then just as the man said, staggering up off the ground. The part that made me believe the man the most was the person that Anna thought was getting eaten, as he stood up all of his entrails fell to his feet as he kept slowly walking forward.

“Oh my god Alec we need to get out of here” I said looking at him completely stricken with fear

“I told you, I told you, just make sure they don’t bite you because that’s when you’re done.” The man said as he ran away from our car

Alec wheeled around and away from the site.

“Where are we going to go, is this happening everywhere?” Mike said in a concerned voice

“I have no idea, we can go to my house though, my dad used to be in the marines, so he has a bunch of his old radios and stuff we can go grab all of that.” Alec said speeding down the street.
Chapter 6

We reached Alec’s house in a matter of minutes and we all piled out of the car.

“Hello.. is anyone home? Mom, Dad?” Alec said as we all came in the front door behind him.

“They must be at their friends house, they were having dinner with some people a few towns over.”

“Where is the radio you were talking about” Mike shouted from the other room

“It’s in the basement with all his old stuff” Alec answered back

We all one by one went down into Alec’s basement where his dad stored all of his old Marine belongings. There were plaques and medals and certificates covering all the walls in the basement. In the far corner there were two dark green backpacks and a case which Alec was opening.
“These two backpacks are filled with all sorts of food and water and supplies that my dad kept down here in case of an emergency and in this case there are some walkie talkies and a CB radio.”

Alec opened the case revealing the walkie talkies and radio with a large antenna. He took the walkie talkies and tossed them to Liam, then he pulled out the radio and turned it on. It was static at first but then a channel came in.

“Hello if you are just turning in, we are under attack, I repeat we are under attack. At approximately 11:47pm Eastern Time the government’s radar picked up drones flying under our radar. Attached to these drones were canisters filled with a chemical that on impact released a green smoke. This agent caused harm to any of those who were in very close vicinity to the impact site. This caused a violent reaction in people causing them to have cannibalistic type tendencies. All of those bitten by the infected were unfortunately brought the same fate. The USA armed forced are doing all they can to contain and aid all those in the affected areas. The government medical facilities are working very hard to find a cure for this agent that was released onto our soil. The following towns and cities were affected by this attack: Massachusetts, California, Washington D.C., Rhode Island, Florida and Ohio. If you are in the affected area do your best to get to the nearest Government Armed Base. Thank you stay safe and god bless.”

We all sat shocked not knowing what to do. We had just been attacked, we didn’t know by who and everyone was getting eaten around us.

“Well what do we do then, we can’t just stay here.” Marie said in tears
“Why not we can bunker down here and wait it out, I’m sure we have enough food and water here to last us, and you heard the government is doing all they can to aid the affected areas.” Mike said standing to his feet

“No the guy on the radio told us we have to find an Army Base or something, so we have to leave.” Anna said wrapping her arms around Marie who was now sobbing.

Liam was sitting in the corner completely shell shocked and not saying a word. Alec stood up and put a back pack around his shoulder.

“There is a Medical Research/Air Base two towns over, it’s a little over an hour drive we can stay tonight all get some good sleep and we will all leave early in the morning.” Alec said reaching for my hand

“Fine, that’s fine but we should all stay down here because one, we don’t know what those things are capable of and two, we don’t know if there are looters or people trying to find a safe place to stay.” Mike said crossing his arms across his chest.

“Okay Mike and Liam come help me get some blankets and sleeping stuff, and Kari do you mind going into the kitchen with Anna and grabbing some food and water, things like that? You can put it in this back pack” Alec said while emptying out the backpack

“Of course, Anna lets go” I said heading for the stairs

“I’m staying down here, I’m not leaving Marie down here by herself.” Anna said back still trying to calm Marie down

“Are you okay getting the stuff by yourself?” Alec asked

“Yeah, I don’t mind, I’ll be quick.” I answered back giving him a small smile
The four of us headed upstairs with great caution. The boys ran up to the third floor to get anything we might need from up there while I stayed in the kitchen to grab some food and water and supplies. I was able to fill the pack with six water bottles, two boxes of granola bars and half a box of cookies. I was getting ready to go back to the basement when I looked out the window above the sink. There I saw two people slowly hobbling around the yard. There was no doubt in my mind that they had been bitten and had become one of “them”.

“Hey guys?” I quietly sounded up the stairs

The three boys came speeding down the stairs with supplies in hand.

“You guys might want to take a look at this.” I said waving them over to the window

“Oh shit, they’ve already gotten this far, I would’ve thought they’d stay around the site.” Mike said looking to the three of us

“Maybe we should go back downstairs” Liam said nervously

“Or maybe we should go try and kill em.” Mike said dropping all of the stuff in his hands and reaching for a drawers

“No, there still people, and people we might know, you heard the radio to, they are trying to find a cure.” Alec said grabbing Mike’s arm stopping him from opening the drawer

“Fine but tomorrow when there are more and they are trying to bite us and we have to kill him then you’ll wish we killed these two.” Mike said

Liam followed him leaving me and Alec in the kitchen alone.

“I promise I’m going to get you to some place safe.” Alec said pulling me into a hug
“I trust you.” I said reaching my arms around him and holding him

“We should probably go get some sleep, we have a big day tomorrow.”

We both headed downstairs to find Liam curled up next to Marie, Mike with Anna, and a stack of blankets next to them. Alec went over and started to unfold the blankets and lay them out on the ground next to Anna. I went over and helped him unfold a couple blankets and lay don some pillows. Alec sat down on the blankets first waving me to come next to him. We both settled and Alec put his arms around me and pulled me in close to him. It felt nice to be in his embrace, it felt right, I felt safe. We all drifted to sleep not knowing what the next sunrise had in store for us.

Chapter 7

I was awakened by a scream that made the hair on the back of my neck stick up. I sat up and looked around to see where the scream had just come from. Nobody else but me seemed to hear the scream because everyone was sound asleep. It was still dark so it was hard for me to make out who was sleeping still. As my eyes adjusted I could see that the blankets on the far end were tossed meaning somone was awake and proably upstairs. I stood up and walked towards the stairs.

“Kari?” I heard a male voice say from behind me

“Liam?” I answered back just guessing who was calling my name in the dark

“Yeah it’s me, what are you doing up its still kind of early?”

“Didn’t you hear that scream?” I asked puzzled that I was the only one that heard it
“Oh my god it must be Marie, I felt her get up a little before I heard you get up.”

We both bolted up the stairs to go find Marie. We came to the kitchen and the sunrise was just starting to shine through the window over the sink.

“The slider door is open a crack.” Liam said as we stood in the kitchen

“You don’t think she would’ve gone outside would you?”

“Well she didn’t know about those two biters out there since she was downstairs all night.” Liam said as we both rushed to slider door

I couldn’t help how clever a name that was to describe the zombies. I felt so idiotic calling them zombies so biters is a good compromise. As we came to the slider door we saw Marie hunched over on the deck.

“Liam go get Alec and Mike”

“What’s wrong with her?” Liam asked shocked

“I don’t know yet now just go get the guys!” I yelled and Liam turned and ran to the basement

I walked out onto the deck first checking to see if those two biters from before were anywhere out there. I went to Marie’s side only to have her grab me into a bear hug and start sobbing.

“I don’t want to die, I don’t want to be one of them. I didn’t even see her until I was already on the deck.” Marie said sobbing into my chest

“Marie, what are you talking about, who is she?” I asked

“I came out here to get some fresh air when all of a sudden the woman came and attacked me, I knew she was one of them because her eyes were completely white and she had blood all over
her. I killed her though, I smashed a flower pot on her head and pushed her over the side of the deck.” Marie gasped retelling what had just happened to her

“Marie, did she bite you?” I said scared to find out the answer

Marie looked at me with a nervous blank stare that’s when Liam, Mike, Anna and Alec came barging out onto the deck.

“Marie, did she bite you?” I asked again

“Yes.” Marie sobbed and held her arm out to me, there on her arm was a gaping bite wound that was gushing blood

“Anna, go get a towel, quick” I yelled and Anna ran back into the house

Alec and Liam both knelt by my side to hear what had happened.

“Guys we’ve got company!” Mike said pointing to the bushes at the edge of the yard

“We’ve got to get out of here.” Alec said looking directly at me

“I’m not leaving Marie here.” I said back to him in a stern voice

“Well we can’t bring her with us, you heard the guy at the crash site, don’t let them bite you or your done.” Mike said raising his tone

“We will bring her with us. We will figure out what happens when the time comes.” Alec said back to Mike

“She’s losing a lot of blood, we’ve got to go now, before she goes further into shock.” I said

“Mike go get Anna and get all the supplies downstairs and meet us at the car, Kari you and Liam take Marie to the car and lock the doors until we get there, I have to go get something.”
We all listened to Alec, he was really starting to take charge, which was good because that’s what we all really needed. Liam and I grabbed Marie and brought her through the house. We checked out the front door to make sure there weren’t any biters out there so we could safely get to the car. The coast was clear and we made it to the car and laid Marie in the back seat with Liam with her. I got in the passenger’s seat and locked the doors.

“Liam how long has it been since she’s been bitten?”

“When we went upstairs my watch said 6:34am. It’s been almost 45 minutes.”

Just then Anna, Mike and Alec all came running to the car, Alec had a gun in his hand. They all got in the car and buckled themselves in.

“Alright, Newport is a little over an hour away so we should be there in no time.” Alec said to all of us trying to sound a bit positive

“Guys, Guys, Marie is seizing, what do I do!” Liam shouted from the back seat

“Come up here Liam” I said waving him forward

Mike then pulled a huge butcher knife out of the backpack and kept it in his hands.

“What do you think you’re going to do with that?” Anna shouted at Mike

“If she turns into one of them we have to put her down, she will be harmful to us.” Mike barked

“But she’s my friend you can’t just stab a knife through her head!” Anna yelled

As if prompted, Marie’s eyes turned completely white and she slowly sat up, she didn’t look living anymore, she looked green and rotted and horrific. And without any hesitation, Mike stabbed the knife in Marie’s head in which Marie toppled over on the back seat.
“Liam help me take her out of the back of the car” Mike said opening his door to get out.

Nobody in the car made a single move all shocked by Mike’s non guilty action.

“Listen I had to do what had to be done, either one of you helps me get her out of the car or I’ll do it myself.” Mike angrily stated.

He got out of the car and no one followed, opening the back door Mike grabbed Marie and carried her out of the car and placed her against a tree.

“When all this shit is over we can come back and bury her, but for now why don’t we try and save our own asses.” Mike said getting in the car and slamming the door behind him.
Chapter 8

We had been in the car for just about forty-five minutes and everywhere was a waste land, there was no one and the only people we saw were biters, tons of them. Alec reached over and grabbed my hand. His touch sent chills up my arm, but I still felt safe and the sense of relief.

(Sput sput sput sput)

“What’s that?” I asked looking at Alec

“Crap!”

“What’s the matter?” Mike said leaning forward to see the front of the car

“We just ran out of gas” Alec said punching the steering wheel

“Looks like we are going to have to walk from here.” I said opening my door

“I’m not going!” Anna yelled from the back seat

“Well you can’t just stay here by yourself Anna.” Alec said wheeling around to face the back
“Anna we only have like five miles to go it’s not that bad.” Mike said putting his arm around Anna trying to persuade her

“I don’t care, I’m done with this whole running away, I just want to stay here and wait. You all can come back for me but I’m staying here.” Anna said pouting like a small child

“Listen, I’ll stay with her in the car, you three go and get help and then come back for us, okay?” Liam said leaning back in his seat

“Are you sure you two want to stay here it might not be safe.” Alec said questioningly

“Yeah, like Anna said I’m kind of done with the whole running away thing, besides I haven’t even seen any around here so we should be fine.” Liam said with a smile

“Alright, we’ll leave the two of you with one of the packs and then we will go get help and come back for you.” Alec said handing Anna a pack

The rest of us got out of the car and said our goodbyes, only hoping that this wouldn’t be the last time we would see our friends. We started our way down the street, not knowing what to expect on the road ahead.
Chapter 9

About three miles down the road we came to a small diner. We decided to take our chances and head in to sit and try the radio again. All of us equipped with weapons we went into the diner ready for biters.

“I don’t see any.” Mike said as we entered the worn diner

“Here let’s set up in this first booth and try the radio.” Alec said pulling the radio from the pack

Alec turned on the radio and a message came through.

“Attention, if you are just tuning in we have breaking news. Researchers in Newport California have just reported that they are close to a breakthrough with the cure, they are only one component off from it being efficient.”

“Did you hear that? They almost found a cure!” Alec said hugging me with excitement.

“We are literally 15 minutes away from Newport, we could be there so soon!” Mike said smiling with relief
“Before we head out, I just need to go find a bathroom, and then I’ll meet you guys back out here.” I said smiling to Alec

“One of us should go with you just in case there are any biters back there.” Alec said getting up out of the booth

“I’ll be fine don’t worry, I’ll take a knife and if something happens I’ll scream for you two, okay?”

“She’ll be fine Alec, don’t worry.” Mike said slapping me on the back

I left the booth and headed towards the bathroom, I didn’t see any biters on my way there, so I was glad about that. I entered the bathroom with precaution and entered the first stall. I was about to get myself situated when I felt a sharp pain on my leg. I looked down only to see a biter latched on to me biting my leg. I let out a huge scream and tried to kick the biter of but she was clenched down on my leg.

“Kari what’s the matter.” I heard Alec say as him and Mike barged into the bathroom

“Oh my god!” Mike yelled as he quickly ripped the biter off my leg and killed her.

Alec scooped me up and carried me out of the bathroom. The pain wasn’t as bad as I expected but it was still really uncomfortable.

“I knew one of us should’ve went in there with her.” Alec kept saying to himself over and over while shaking his head

“How long until Marie turned into one of them?” Mike asked

“Liam said about forty five minutes.” I choked out
“So that’s what we’ll do, we will wait and see what happens.” Mike said sitting down in the booth next to us.

Chapter 10

Time seemed to go by slow, but it was fine with me because Alec had been holding me the whole time ever since he carried me from the bathroom. Both Alec and Mike had fallen asleep and I didn’t want to wake them because they seemed so tired, but I just had to know how much time had gone by because I felt perfectly fine.

“Hey Mike how long has it been?” I said tapping him on the shoulder

“Huh?” Mike said grogally waking up

“I said how long has it been since I was bitten?”

“Umm.. holy shit!” Mike said sitting straight up in his seat. “Alec! Wake up!”

“What..What” Alec said jolting awake

“Dude it’s been two hours!” Mike said with a huge grin on his face

“Are you sure your reading your watch right?” I said so puzzled
“Dude I completely promise, it’s been two hours.”

“Kari, do you know what that means? You must be immune to the infection!” Alec said holding me so tight I could barely breathe.

I could barely believe it. I was immune, something in my genetics was keeping me alive from this virus.

“Now we really have to get to this medical place in Newport.” Mike said standing straight out of his seat.

We all gathered our stuff and prepared for our journey to the medical center when we looked out the glass window only to see a heard of biters slowly making their way towards the diner.

“What are we going to do?” I said quickly shoving things into the pack.

“I have no clue I don’t know if we can out run them with your leg all messed up.” Alec said disappointed.

“I know what to do. You have to trust me though and let me do it. I will run back towards the car, making lots of noise to attract them that way, then when I have them a safe distance away you get to that medical center. It’s only about one more mile away.” Mike said strapping the pack over his back.

“No, Mike that’s a suicide mission, we won’t let you do that.” Alec said grabbing the pack on Mikes back.

“I’m a fast runner don’t worry about me, if she is immune, she might be exactly what those scientists need to finish the cure.” Alec said already head towards the door.
“You loop round and come back to the medical facility okay?” Alec said to Mike while lifting me out of the booth

Before Mike could even answer, he was out the door running in the opposite direction making noise to have the walkers follow him, and it was working too. Waiting until they were all far enough down the road, Alec and I left the safety of the diner and headed towards the medical facility.

Chapter 11

The medical facility was within sight. There were only a few biters in front of it. It was nothing that we could not handle. We ran up to the gate only to be met face to face with armed guards.

“Back away from the gate.” The guard shouted

“But we aren’t infected” Alec yelled back to them

“Have you been bitten?”

“I have, but I never became one it’s been over two hours.” I screamed through the gates

“Did you say over two hours?” The guard asked

“Yes it’s been more than two hours.” I said

Just as we weren’t paying attention a biter came and bit Alec in the arm, the guard through the gate shot the biter in the head killing it instantly.
“Alec!!” I screamed

“I’m fine, I’m fine” he gasped

“I’m sorry but we will only be able to let you in your friend could jeopardize the base’s safety.” The guard explained to me through the gates

“I refuse to come in without him, right now you need me more than I need you and if I come into the base so does he.” I shouted to the guard while holding Alec up straight

Just then a second guard came up to the first and said something to him.

“We just got word that we will admit both of you but he will have to be put in quarantine and you will be rushed straight to the labs. Okay?” the guard said while preparing to open the gates.

I nodded my head with relief that we would both be here together, and my hope was that they could find a cure in the next forty five minutes. The guard opened the gate and four guards rushed towards us. The ripped me and Alec away from each other and carried him to a large white tent. I on the other hand was taken away to a lab within the main building. I was never given a chance to say goodbye.
Chapter 12

I awoke to the sounds of beeps and the smell of rubbing alcohol. I opened my eyes to see none other than Alec holding my hand and sitting next to me.

“Welcome back sleepy head.” Alec said with a bright grin on his face

“What happened?” I asked still disoriented and confused

“Well after the separated us the took me into quarantine where they isolated me by myself, from what the doctors told me was they took a sample of a gene in your body and added it to their vaccination cure. They then injected it into me since I was so close to turning into a biter. It worked Kari, you were the cure it worked.”

“What gene did they use?”

“It had something to do with your eye color, I guess when we were at the gates they saw your eyes and knew right away what gene they wanted to work with.”

“How long have I been out?”
“Just about two days, you haven’t missed much I promise, oh and look who I found.”

Just then the door opened and Mike walked in with a bunch of flowers.

“Morning super start.” Mike said chuckling to himself

“What about Anna and Liam?” I asked sitting up in bed, but both Mike and Alec looked down at the mention of their names

“When I ran back to the car, the windows were smashed and there was blood everywhere, I looked inside and they were too far eaten to have become biters.” Mike said scuffing his feet on the ground

“The doctors said that you can start walking around by the end of the day.” Alec said smiling trying to lighten the mood

“Well I’ll leave you two alone.” Mike said as he hugged me and left the room

Alec came and sat next to me, this was the first time in the past 48 hours that we finally felt safe. Alec then reached up cupping my face in his hands and placed his lips to mine. He pulled away from me and smiled looking me straight in the eyes.

“I told you that one day you would feel proud of your eyes.”

Then he pulled me back kissing me again. We were finally safe, and I was finally home.
My Goofball

It all started out like any other day. I climbed out of bed groggy and grumpy and trudged to my shower. Lathering my hair in shampoo I started to awaken. After my 30 minute shower I started to get ready for the rest of my day. With my mood well shifted my phone started ringing next to me. I read the caller id and it was my boyfriend. I picked up and was immediately greeted by a British women’s voice saying “ello poppet”, knowing all too well I replied “hey Kul” and with no surprise he responded “darn how’d you know it was me.” Shaking my head the only thing I could manage to conjure up was “lucky guess”. After being on the phone and discussing what time he would be coming over that day I hung up and kept with my morning routine. Forty-five minutes later there was a knock on the door and Kullen came waltzing in. We spent the day with my family watching movies and hanging around the house but I seemed to notice that Kullen was texting more than usual. Let me just make a note here that he absolutely hates phones and will do anything to lose them. Anyway, I asked why he all of a sudden was attached to his “social media box” as he liked to call them. He looked up a little nervous and said that he was just talking to his mom. Rolling my eyes and still thinking in my head my mom interjected looking at Kullen asking if we all wanted to go out and get some sushi. Kullen, doing anything for food, jumped out of his seat and immediately ran out to the car and buckled himself in. (This is no exaggeration either) All during dinner I still noticed how Kullen was always looking at his phone and texting. Getting a little aggravated I kept my composure and ate my dinner. After our bellies were filled to the brim with sushi we hobbled our way to the car. My mom and dad asked if I could drive everyone home instead of my dad driving. Not thinking anything of it I climbed into the driver’s seat as Kullen climbed into the
passengers and my mom and dad in the back seat. As we started getting closer to my neighborhood I noticed once again Kullen getting fidgety looking at his phone and then back to my parents. At this point I was just about fed up and wanted to be let in on whatever everybody else seemed to know about but me. I turned to everyone and said “alright that’s it what’s going on, Kullen keeps acting all nervous and everyone is really quite.” As I was saying this I was making my way down my street. Looking back to the road I noticed a car parked inform of my house and two people running and ducking behind it. “Who is that?” I said as I got closer to my driveway. Pulling up I noticed it was my friend Kara’s car and her and my other friend Emily were ducking behind it. I pulled over and we all got out of the car. As I came around the side of my car I say spelled out in my drive way with candles was the word prom with a question mark and a rose. I actually started getting teary eyed right then and there. Apparently Kullen was texting them the whole time and had planned with them and my parents that when they all took me to dinner distracting me they would light the candles in my driveway. All I could do was give him a hug and call him what I always call him and that’s my goofball.
Winesburg Ohio

In the small town of Winesburg Ohio, there lived a young boy named Peter. His mother worked down at the local Plastic Mill and had the whole weight of the world on her shoulders. Her husband had walked out on them when Peter was born. Seeing that he would never be a “perfect child” really sent him over the edge. Some say he went to go get flowers for the hospital room and just never came back. For the first few years, the newly abandoned family made the best of their predicament. It consisted of long hours at Physical Therapy and doctors and numerous sizings for leg braces for the growing boy. But what an imagination he had on him. At the young age of two he colored like crazy. Never anything that made sense, but it was absolutely beautiful. The colors he mixed together on the paper with his crayons, danced across the paper. Suddenly the world wasn’t so colorful anymore. Mary, Peter’s mother, reached her breaking point and turned to drugs and alcohol for her emptiness. The nights became so repetitive, Mary would come home from the bar reeking of booze and would pass out anywhere she landed, leaving Peter to fend for himself. This became normal until the age of twelve. Peter, now an older boy, could confidently verbalize what he was feeling. One day Peter came home from school to find his mom lounging on the couch in the living room. He hobbled his way through the door and gave his mom a smile and hug.

“What the hell do you want boy?” she said groggily.

“Nothing, I just wanted to say I love you, that’s all,” he answered back, happy he was finally able to croak out the words.

“Well, don’t, you cripple piece of shit. I don’t need love. The only thing I love is my Captain,” she slurred standing tall, towering over Peter.

“But..”

Just then she punched Peter square in the face, leaving him bloody and bruised. He crawled up the stairs to the safety of his room. Alone, that’s what he always felt was alone. But that was fine with him; he always enjoyed being alone to dream and imagine of a world where he could laugh straight without getting laughed at, and where his mom and dad were happy together and they lived in a pretty house. This is where Peter could escape. He soon went to bed dreaming still of the magical world where he drifted too. This happened repeatedly, almost as if Mary enjoyed hitting him and taking out her anger on him, leaving her destructive marks. But no matter what, Peter always managed to find his happy place where everything would be alright.
“Peter can we talk to you?” A young kind women poked her head into the classroom.

“Sure” He hobbled to the door leaving a path of murmurs in his dust.

They guided him down the hallway to a room in the guidance department, where a group made of his principal, guidance counselor and some strangers in suits.

“It’s been brought to our attention that you have been coming to school with more and more bruises every day.” Said the kind faced women

“Noope.” He answered somewhat intimidated

“Peter we know you mother is probably a nice women but she does need help. If we promise we can get her help will you tell us weather or no this was her doing?”

“You promise to help her?”

“Of course we want her to be safe. Just as much as you do!”

“I love my mother no matter what and I know there is a place where we can all be happy with my dad, I come home and she hits me, but I always deserve it.”

“How do you deserve it?”

“Well, because I’m not normal like the others”

“You are normal. Just as anyone else is. You are intelligent and creative and kind.”

“We are going to come home with you tonight and talk to your mother; we will grab some clothes and bring you with us.”

“I have to leave my mom?!”

“Yes Peter. It’ll be better for her to get herself better if you aren’t there, she needs to fix herself.”

The day came to an end as the final bell rang and the strangers in the suits drove Peter home. They entered the house and Peter was told to gather belongings, so they could talk to his mother. He made
his way upstairs but was immediately distracted by his mother’s screeches and wails coming from below. Just then, the sound of glass shattering filled the house. The strangers came upstairs and helped Peter with his belongings. As they followed him down the stairs his mother’s yelling and screaming was still echoing through the house. He looked to his mom a last time and exited the house. He was placed into the back of the black tinted car, and the door was shut behind him. The young man’s mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams. One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp. With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.
Riding to the top

“You will never be a rider like us, you but shame to our family name!”

Trevor hung his head in shame as his two tall and muscley brothers stormed away from him.

Trevor lived on a ranch with his two older brothers Jacob and Ralph, his younger sister Emily and his dad Paul. Trevor’s mom had died in a fatal car accident two years before. On this ranch the family raised and tamed horses. In the far couple acres of their wide spread of land, they created a stadium that would hold contests for who could stay on a wild bucking horse the longest. The prizes were either a small profit of the revenue made that day or sometimes even the horse itself. But nobody ever chose the horse, they always took the cash. One day the family was taking a ride horseback to catch some stallions.

“I don’t see anything Pa” Jacob yelled form behind

“There should be a few coming through this part soon, there was a sighting just yesterday a few miles north of us.” Paul said back to his son

“Look over there; I see em, there white and grey, past the tree line.” Ralph said kicking his horse to move

The family took off like lightning, Ralph, Paul, and Jacob sped towards the horses, but nobody seemed to notice that Trevor didn’t follow. Trevor was locked into place staring at the majestic horses making their way across the land. That’s when something caught his eye. To his left just behind the trees was a black stallion, beautiful beyond belief. All he could do was stare in awe. He snapped out of his trance he was engulfed in and guided his horse to the stallion. Not wanting
to scare the horse, Trevor tied his horse to a branch a few trees away from the stallion. He started to inch closer to the being. Just close enough to touch, the horse and Trevor’s eyes met. It was a connection that was indescribable. Trevor reached out and pet the horse’s muzzle. The horse inched closer and nuzzled him. Just then something startled the horse and before he could make it out of the tree’s a rope was around his neck.

“I got one Pa! It’s a black one, and its feisty, could make a lot o’ money on this one” Ralph yelled to his father

“That’s my boy Ralph! Trevor what do you think you’re doing? You know you can’t catch a horse on foot. Thought I taught you better”

Trevor could not speak, fumes were rising inside him. All he could do was stare at the horse as it stared back at him.

“Trevor take it back to the stable and tie him up real good there always feisty there first night.” Paul said with a wild grin on his face.

The family made their way across the vast land and back to their home. Emily had food waiting for them on the table. As the family sat and ate there supper all Trevor could think about was the majestic horse in the stable so close to him. He wanted it. Looking into the horses eyes he finally felt peace. As they finished their dinner they all cleared their plates, none of them except for Emily looked at Trevor.

“Let’s go out to the barn and take a look at that stallion.” Paul said to his boys

Trevor scurried after his family who made their way to the barn.

“Go get the stadium set up were gonna test this baby!” Ralph said to Trevor
Trevor walked down the path to the big stadium that he and his family made. After his mother’s death they needed some sort of another income to support them. So since then they built a stadium type structure that attracted many people. They would take wild untrained; bucking horses and have people pay money to see if they could make it on the horse the longest. Whoever won had their choice of the horse or some money. They always chose the money. Trevor went down and opened the gate so they could lead the horse in, flipped on the lights and looked back just in time to see the horse barreling down the gate towards him. His brothers came running in after it.

For about three hours both Trevor’s brothers tried to train the horse but neither of them could stay on longer than ten seconds.

“Clean up the ring and put the horse away Trevor” Paul said as Trevor’s two brothers and father left Trevor with the bucking horse.

Trevor dropped his head filled with emotions. Just then the horse came up to him and nuzzled Trevor. The horse had calmed down just for him. Trevor looked into his eyes and immediately again felt the peace he did before.

“I’m gonna try something, just please don’t hurt me.” Trevor said patting the horse

Just then Trevor jumped on the horse. The horse started galloping but not bucking. He was tame with Trevor. Trevor felt similar to the horse; the horse wasn’t accepted by the other horses he was traveling alone. Trevor felt alone. Trevor knew that tomorrow would be the day that he could possibly loose his new friend.
“I don’t know if you can understand me, but we have to win tomorrow. If we do then I can keep you and you don’t have to go away with anyone or be a show horse.”

Trevor hoped that he could pull this off. He but the horse in the stable with no trouble and went to the house climbed into bed for anticipation for the next day.

The sun rose the next day and Trevor was already awake. He ran down stairs and already saw all the cars pulling down the drive. He ran out to the stable where he saw his brothers struggling to get his horse into the gate.

“He’s up first, Trevor why don’t you go help Emily” Ralph said with a smug grin

“I am actually competing on that horse” Trevor said with confidence and marched away

His brothers’ jaws dropped with awe in the fact that he was going to take on the toughest horse that has gone through their stables so far.

Two hours went by and Trevor was waiting his turn, last in line. Almost all of the men in the stadium tried the horse and nobody could make it past 27 seconds on the horse. Trevor’s turn came up as he jumped on the horses back. His two brothers were giving him dirty looks as he prepared himself.

“It’s me boy” Trevor said patting the horse, the horse immediately showed relief.

“We’ve got to make it look real but make sure I stay on you, Ill pat you when you should buck me off.” The horse sniffed in agreement.
The gate opened and Trevor was thrust out of the gate. The horse started bucking but he could tell that it was trying to keep him on. Moments later Trevor heard his father’s voice from the crowd.

“You’re at 34 seconds!” Trevor’s dad said with excitement in his voice.

Trevor patted the horse and then was bucked off. He flew to the ground with the biggest smile on his face. His father and brothers would now respect him and he just won himself a horse.
Then everything went black

CHARACTERS

KEN, main character of the story, high school boy, tall, dark black hair
JIMMY, ken's friend who gets shot, short/medium height with brown hair
MOM, ken's mom
POLICE OFFICER, questions ken in the story
JENNY, ken's friend/neighbor who was in the shooting
NURSE
GROUP OF GIRLS
RICHARD
CARL
CONDUCTER
CONDUCTER

The first scene takes place in the hall way of a high school. The hallway is mostly empty except for Ken and Jimmy who are at Ken's locker, and also a small group of girls down the hall and a well-known bully and a “nerd”, Richard.

SCENE 1:

KEN and JIMMY enter from [UP] and open ken's locker. They start talking about the quiz they are going to take and how they think they are going to fail it.

(KEN and JIMMY are at Ken's locker getting books before their civics test)

KEN I am really not ready for this test today

JIMMY Dude I already know I'm gonna fail

KEN So Martin Luther King Jr. was assonated on what day?

JIMMY April 4\(^{th}\) 1968

KEN That must have sucked getting shot like that I can't even imagine

JIMMY I don't know what I would do

[DL] (They see a kid down the hall push the “nerdy kid” Richard into the lockers and hit his books)

(Richard pulls out a gun)
(He shoots the bully)

KEN Richard no!

(Richard whips around and pulls the trigger and shoots ken)

KEN oh my god!

(Jimmy runs over to Ken)

JIMMY Hang in there buddy stay strong we are going to get you out of here

KEN Jim I cant feel anything below my waist

JIMMY Don’t worry man you’re a trooper just...

(Just then a crack ripped through the hallway and Jimmy was struck with a bullet to the head)

(Jimmy collapsed over Ken’s paralyzed body)

[UL] (Ken could hear screams from down the hallway; he looks up to see Richard shooting at a group of girls)

(He goes unconscious)

SCENE 2:

CONDUCTER

KEN is lying in the hospital bed with his MOM at his side [C], she hasn’t left. A police officer enters from [UL] and asks to speak with ken to get a better understanding of what happened. His mother is extremely hesitant but allows it after kens ensures her it will be fine.

KEN He’s gone, my best friend is gone, all because he came to help me, hes dead because of me

MOM Its not your fault there is nothing you could’ve done

KEN I could have pushed him out of the way or told him to watch out

MOM Kenny you couldn’t have done anything, do not put the blame on yourself when it was Richard who pulled the trigger

[R] (A knock filled the room) ( A police officer was standing in the doorway)

POLICEMAN Mam’ do you think I could talk to your son alone for a few minutes

MOM Don’t you think you have all asked him enough question? My son is paralyzed now and you come in here asking questions like he’s a suspect
KEN Mom its fine

MOM No its not fine hunny you need to recover physical and mentally from this accident

POLICEMAN Mam’ I mean no disrespect but the boy who did this shot himself after shooting the other students, we are just trying to figure out what caused this because he is not with us to tell us why he did it.

KEN Mom its fine go get something to eat it won’t take long, I don’t mind

MOM Alright, but I’ll be back soon [EXITS R]

POLICEMAN Thank you mam’

KEN So what do you want to know?

POLICEMAN Let’s start out on where you were standing and what you saw, we already know who you were with. I am sorry for your loss

KEN Jimmy and I were going to my locker to get my book for our test. We looked down the hall to see Carl one of the big jockey kids, push Ricard into the lockers and knock his books out of his hand.

POLICEMAN Is that Carl Franklin one of the three deceased?

KEN Yes he was shot straight in the head. So then Jimmy and I saw him reach into his bag and grab a gun, I shouted for him to stop but he shot Carl and turned the gun at us, we turned to run but then I felt a pain in my back I fell to the ground, I knew then I was paralyzed because I couldn’t feel anything below my waist.

POLICEMAN You’re a very strong young man Ken

KEN I don’t feel that way

POLICEMAN So what happened after that?

KEN Jimmy ran over to me and held me in his arms, he was telling me I was strong and that help would be on the way soon. Just then Richard shot off the gun again and it hit Jimmy straight in the head.

POLICEMAN Jezze Ken I’m so sorry that must have been tough

KEN Of course it was tough! My best friend bled to death on top of me and I couldn’t do anything to help! Do you want to hear the rest or not!

POLICEMAN Yes I’m sorry

KEN I managed to move my head towards the screams down the hall and saw him shoot at a few people in the hall, and then it all went black
POLICEMAN I know you don’t want to hear this Ken but you are strong just like Jimmy said, and you have to remember to keep being strong in honor of Jim. You and Jenny made it out of there alive you both lost something that day, but you are both strong through it

NURSE [ENTERS R] Excuse me but I have to give him his morphine

POLICEMAN Goodbye Ken, remember to stay strong [EXITS R]

(And then it went black)

SCENE 3:

CONDUCTER

6 Months later, Ken was brought home and deemed paralyzed from the waist down. He went into somewhat of a depression never wanting to leave his bed. It’s a warm sunny day and KEN is sitting in his bed [C] There is a knock on the door and his mom enters [L] she says how he has a visitor and its his childhood friend and neighbor Jenny. JENNY enters behind kens mom [L] She talks ken out of his room and they go to her house [Exit stage R then come back on] they are sitting poolside when she pushes him in [C]

MOM Kenny you have a visitor

KEN Who?

MOM Its Jenny

JENNY and MOM entered through the bedroom door [L] Ken hadn’t seen or heard of her since the hospital, but as soon as she walked in he noticed the eye patch she wore with pride, MOM exits [L] while JENNY sits [C]

JENNY Hey Ken how yah feeling?

KEN I mean I’ve been better

JENNY I understand

KEN So did he hit you in the eye?

JENNY Yup. Doctors said it was a miracle that I’m even here. Missed my brain by a millimeter

KEN Jeeze Jen

JENNY Your mom told me you haven’t wanted to get out and do anything since you’ve been home from the hospital
KEN I can’t do anything so why even leave the house?
JENNY Stop being so hard on yourself, I can’t see out of one eye and you can’t walk.
KEN And that’s supposed to make me feel better?
JENNY Come with me, I want to show you something
KEN I don’t want to leave Jenny really.
JENNY We’ve been friends since 4th grade. Shut up and come with me

(She helped Ken into his wheelchair) They exit [L] Then enter [L]

KEN Where are we going?
JENNY You’ll see

(She rolled him into her back yard and to the side of her pool)

(Without any hesitation she pushed him into the pool)[C]

KEN What the hell Jenny I can’t swim I’m going to drown
JENNY Look down ken you’re in the shallow end
KEN what?
JENNY I was looking up ways of movement with people with paralasis, and they said swimming, so I thought hey why not push him in the pool
KEN I can move (pulling himself around)
JENNY I know that’s why I pushed you in
KEN Hey Jen can we make a deal
JENNY Depends on what the deal is
KEN I’ll be your eyes if you be my legs
JENNY I’d love that ken I really would
"STRENGTH AND COURAGE"

It takes strength to be certain, It takes courage to have doubts. It takes strength to fit in, It takes courage to stand out. It takes strength to share a friend's pain, It takes courage to feel your own pain. It takes strength to hide your own pain, It takes courage to show it and deal with it. It takes strength to stand guard, It takes courage to let down your guard. It takes strength to conquer, It takes courage to surrender. It takes strength to endure abuse, It takes courage to stop it. It takes strength to stand alone, It takes courage to lean on a friend. It takes strength to love, It takes courage to beloved. It takes strength to survive, It takes courage to live.

Author: Sylvia Kelly
When Will They Listen
By: Rachel D’Ambrosio
Credit to: Audre Lorde “Hanging Fire”

I am seventeen now
I was only eleven then
Too young to have to grow up so fast

It hurt, not going to lie
But it’s better than the evil spreading,
Spreading like tree roots

I want to help,
Help people learn
What they can do so the evil doesn’t catch them

I spend my time
Hours on end
Waiting for someone to listen
So the evil won’t get them

Some will listen
Some will not
All I can do is hope evil doesn’t get those who don’t

If only people knew
How many I’ve lost
To a spot so small
But I know telling them is not enough

If I could show them their faces
Show them the families they’ve left
To sit for a bit
In a coffin with lights

I know, no matter what
My evil will come back
But for now all I can do
Is try to make people listen
I can make a smoothie
By: Rachel D’Ambroiso

I can make a smoothie,

First you need a blender

Blocking out everything around you

A blender is as loud as a construction site

I can make a smoothie,

I prefer strawberries, blueberries, and bananas

But that’s just me

I can make a smoothie,

Orange juice is better than yogurt

I can make a smoothie

Can you?
America

Work shoulder-to-shoulder

Millions of reasons to stop and think

leads to

Split Personality Disorder

and

Making awesome wings is easy as 1-2 (there is no 3).
Reflection
Choosing this class was probably one of the best decisions I have made. I was really hesitant on taking this class because I knew I would have to probably have to share my creative abilities to the class. It has opened me up to become better in sharing what I write and to be proud of it as well. When I write I normally ramble on and on and seem as though I don’t make any sense. After completing this class I was able to get in touch with my creative side and not just having to write an essay or research paper.

My favorite assignment had to have been the short story. My short story was about finding love in a zombie apocalypse. Although it sounds weird with that explanation, it was a very good story. Most people in my class ranged from 5-8 pages long, but I let my creativity go crazy and mine turned out to be 12 chapters and 42 pages long. I stayed up endless hours to finish the story but loved every second of doing so. This story will stay with me forever and I already began edits to make it longer. You never know maybe it’ll be a book. I didn’t really have a least favorite
assignment because I feel that each assignment stretched and trained my
current writing abilities, as well as my creativity.

I couldn’t have asked for a better class to be assigned with. Each
person was so respectful of everyone’s writing and it really made the
atmosphere welcoming and close knit. I plan on continuing my new
found love for creative writing, it’s a change from those drab research
papers. It gives you an outlet to do something more with your writing
and I love that. I think that choosing this class was one of the best
decisions that I have made during my senior year. It was a relaxing class
that I didn’t mind waking up and coming to first thing in the morning. My
teacher made it fun and allowed everyone to feel welcome and
comfortable. I would recommend this class to anyone, because you truly
do learn so much. Not to mention its super fun!