

Prolouge

I waited with my back against the hallway, staring daggers at anyone who passed.

“Come in,” The voice in the darkness says.

“Why?” I grunted.

“Curiosity or do you just want to go with life on not knowing what happens if you listened to a stranger.”

I follow the shadow down a dim hallway, into a vast room. The room filled with chairs.

The ceiling is low, and the floor is polished wood.

“Sit,” the stranger demanded.

I sit down in the front row.

I waited in silence, waiting to see the figure step out of the shadows into the dimly lit room. As I waited the figure paced along in the shadows, shoes clicking across the polished floor. The stranger seemed to pick a side in his mental argument.

“If I asked you a question would you possibly answer with honesty?”

“Possibly” my stern tone seemed to make him stop pacing.

“You killed your father, didn’t you?”

“No,” I lied. I did but never would admit it to a stranger. Even one who seemed to exist in the shadows. Who knows, after all, maybe I just made up this figure from guilt. My mind going insane after the murder? If someone came into this empty building perhaps all they will see is a girl talking to herself in an empty room.

Chapter 1

I wake up with sweat running down my face. Coating my body. I get up and get a glass of water. I see a shadow along the wall.

“Leanne? What are you doing up?” My brother stands behind me.

“I had a bad dream, that’s all.”

“Sure, just don’t kill anyone.” He says not knowing what the words actually meant.

I walked back to my room and stared at the ceiling till dawn. While the sun lit up my room with shades of pink and orange, I dozed off.

The next morning, I make pancakes. There were a few burnt ones from my absent mind but I didn’t care. I was too tired to function.

“Smells good, Le.” He calls me by my nickname. I turn around I ignore the nickname but see him grinning like a cheshire cat... He knows that nickname ticks me off, I hardly know why I bother to correct him anymore. “Please call me Leanne, the name our parents gave, not Le. ” I glare at him and repeat my identity through my head. Leanne, nineteen, and yet I still get called Le by my older brother.

I flip the pancakes.

After breakfast I go out on a walk trying to get away from my house, the air feels like it’s suffocating me.

I go to Starbucks, and get a vanilla hot coffee . I cross the street, and bump into somebody dropping my coffee . I glare at the person as they walk off without apologizing.

I shout “Yeah, thanks for apologizing.”

The coffee spilt on my arm stings, and I look back. He looks back and I stare into his eyes glaring with all the anger I have.

“Sorry” he says.

“It’s fine,” I reply.

He looks at me then walks away.

I walk back to the house. When I open the door, it smells of chicken noodle soup.

“Something happened, I can tell by the curiosity in your eyes.” Ben says with a worried look worn on his face.

“I bumped into somebody that’s all.” I lie to him, because something was making me curious. The boy who bumped into me. The way he looked at me before he left.

“Fine, I left some soup for you on the counter.” He goes back to reading his book.

After I finish having my soup, I go into my room, but before I enter, I tell Ben, “I am going out tonight.” “Why?” He asks.

“Because I want to.” I walk into my room.

Chapter 2

It is about five o'clock when I leave. I get into my brother’s Toyota, as my car hasn’t returned from the shop.

I head to downtown Ft. Myers, and go to the pier. I see a familiar face. I walked towards him next to the railing.

“The water is like glass, undisturbed” He says.

“Yeah. Just wait until a boat comes and ripples it.” I respond.

“Sorry about earlier. I’m Matthew.”

“I’m Leanne.”

“Let me buy you something.”

“Why?” Why would he even bother to buy a drink for me?

“It’s my way of apologizing to people.”

“Oh, where?” I start to worry about the decision I’m going to make.

“The Coffee House,” he says.

We walk side by side, a few feet apart. He opens the the door saying, “Ladies first.”

What nice manners, I think.

“Whoa, a girlfriend, that’s surprising Matthew.” A man says behind the counter making a coffee. “Haha but reality no, I spilt coffee on her and this is my apology, buying her something.”

“Sure... what do you want?”

“I will have a black coffee, and you will have...” He looks at me his dark green eyes on mine.

“A raspberry lemonade.” My mother used to make me raspberry lemonade.

“Let’s sit down.” Matthew leads me to a table. I start to get scared, this complete stranger is being too nice to me. I sit across from him.

“Le! What are you doing here?!” My brother stands now, next to the table with his beady eyes glaring at me.

“I’m sitting down having an apologetic raspberry lemonade from Matthew.”

“No, what I mean is that, what are you doing here on a date! We have gone over the dating talk multiple times!” My brother honestly isn’t the best person to go to talk to but I had no other choice at the time.

“First of all, I’m not on a date, second of all, I wish I never had gotten the “talk” from you, and third of all, you are not my mom, now if you excuse me, I would like to get back to my “*date*!”

“I’m just trying to help you after...”

“No-one, not even you needs to talk about it. Go.” My voice is stern and all I do is look at Matthew.

“I actually think it would be best if you left.” Matthew says with the start of a smile going across his face. Ben walks out of the restaurant frowning.

“Sorry about that”

“No, no it’s fine, your brother is quite a character.”

“Yep.”

“Hey, before you leave, can I take you somewhere else.” I think for a moment. He wants to take me somewhere after he bought me something. Is he asking me out? Well, it’s better than going home to Ben.

“Sure.”

Chapter 3

He gives me his phone number so that in case I get lost, I can call or text him. We separate and head to our own vehicles.

When I get in and start the engine, I wait to see his car. He told me that he has a silver Nissan Frontier . After a minute or so, I see his truck. I follow him, and finally see where we’re going. We’re going to the truck pulls.

He gets out of his truck, and I get out of mine.

“I was going to go with my sister, but she had an emergency meeting, so I thought that you could accompany me.” To think about it, that was a really good excuse. I don’t believe him, but I go with it. We walk near the stand where we pay, but instead we just go by.

“How come you didn’t pay?”

"I already prepaid."

"Oh."

"Over here." A man stands on one of the bleachers, and waves at Matthew.

We walk over and start to climb the bleachers.

"I thought you were bringing Kristina." A man with blonde hair and a black loose t-shirt says.

"She had a meeting to go to, so I brought Leanne."

"Is she like you girlfriend or something."

"No, long story."

"Wanna get some boiled peanuts?" Matthew looks at me.

"Sure." We get up, and go to the concession stand.

I get a text message. I pull out my phone, and it's from Ben, of course.

Ben

Where are you?! You have been gone for awhile, and you would've have been back by now

Ben

Seriously?! You need to come back. Father wouldn't be proud

Me

I'm at the truck pull with Matthew, calm down.

Me

I'm staying, I honestly rather be here, bye

"Come on, this is going to be fun."

After a few trucks had gone, it was at the last round. We have been here for over an hour. "Who do you think is going to win." There is a silver Chevy going against a red Ford.

"I think that the Ford is going to win." I exclaim.

"I actually think that the Chevy is going to win." Matthew says.

The Chevy wins, and the crowd whoops. Then the Ford wins the next round. I stand up screaming.

The last round the Ford wins. Everyone yells, especially me.

"Wasn't expecting that."

Matthew looks at me, and smiles.

He walks me to the truck.

"I'm going to follow you just incase anything happens."

"Ok" There's a daze in my eyes, but I think it's from sleep loss.

I get in the car, and a Bon Jovi song comes on. I skip it because I'm not in the mood for classic rock.

I put the radio on silent.

I park in the driveway, and Matthew gets out.

"I had fun tonight. Maybe again sometime?"

"Sure, I'll text you." But then I realize that he is asking me out on a date this time. I head toward the front door. Then he stops me, and touches my hand and pulling me closer to him. I look into his green eyes, and smile.

"Can I call you Le?" I think for a moment. When he said "Le" is sounded like he wasn't making fun of me. He was being sweet.

"Yeah. You can."

Chapter 4

I wake up with a text message on my phone. It's Matthew.

I look at the message and it says that he wants to go out. I respond saying yes, because it feels right. He answers saying that he is going to pick me up Saturday night. It's Friday so I got a day of peace.

"Wake up, sunshine." Ben opens my door, and opens my blinds.

"Why?"

"We're going to go see Aunt Jessie. She called me around seven."

"Oh, let me get dressed then."

Ben leaves the room closing the door, leaving a quietness in the room.

I get a white blouse and some slacks, because that it basically the only appropriate thing that Aunt Jessie will accept. She hates it when we she sees us wearing jeans, or leggings.

Ben and I get into the Toyota, and we head of to Cape Coral.

When we get to her house, Ben rings the doorbell.

"You've decided to come." Aunt Jessie has a sly smirk on her face making her blush become brighter than it already is.

“Yes, Le, I mean Leanne needs to talk to someone.” Ben looks at me.

“Well then, leave Ben.” Ben hugs me, and he gets in the truck leaving the driveway. Leaving me alone with the one person I despise. He left me to talk to Aunt Jessie, and I know why.

She holds the door open for me, and I sit on the couch. It is brown, and smells like wet dog. I forgot she had a dog. A Golden Retriever.

“Sorry about the smell, ya know Gypsy.”

“Yes I do. Where is she?”

“She is in her bed, taking a cat nap.” She snorts.

“Cat nap, get it, because she is a dog.” Her face went from pale, with a little blush, to dark red. The laughter fills the room.

“So what did you want to talk to me about?” I ask because I don’t want to stay here any longer.

“Let me get you some lemonade. Then we can talk.” She walks down the hallway toward the kitchen.

About a minute later she comes back, with two glasses.

“You’re dad, I know what happened.”

“What! No you do not!”

“You killed him didn’t you?”

I sit there, tears running down my cheeks, and then I begin to sob. I didn’t mean to. I didn’t. I shot him. I gulp.

“Yes.”

“Why! What in your right mind were you thinking. He was a good person! I’m his sister! I’m your aunt!”

“I killed him because I had a reason to! He was going to kill me! He had always wanted to kill me! After mom died in the car accident.” I look the other way.

“How did you know that he was going to kill you.”

“He told me one day. He said, quote “I am going to kill you, no matter how long it takes me.” I turn back to see Aunt Jessie. “I know he said that. He also said that if he wasn’t able to for whatever reason, that I should help.” She pulls out a kitchen knife from the beige pillow behind her.

“This is for your own good, Le.” She points the tip of the knife at my stomach.

She backs up with knife in her hand, and she throws the knife at me, but I duck, the knife going past me. I run out the front door. I run. All I can do is run.

Chapter 5

I start my way to the house. I pause, grabbing my phone out of my back pocket. I dial Ben’s number. The phone rings. Once, twice. He finally picks up.

“Leanne?”

“She tried to kill me. Aunt Jessie tried to kill me.”

“I know. If you come home, I will too.”

I immediately hang up. Where do I go. All I do is keep running. I run toward the B.J’s and go into the parking lot. It’s hot, so I go in the store. The air conditioning chills me at first, but it feels good calming me, just a bit. I walk around the store not knowing what to do at the moment. There is one person that I can call, but not sure if he’ll accept the “invitation” for helping me.

I find Matthew’s contact and tap his number on the screen, and put the phone to my ear.

“Matthew?”

“Yes?”

I speak in the most cracky voice, with tears rolling down my face like little individual waterfalls. “You need to help me, My aunt and brother are trying to kill me... I have no other relatives, so I need a place to stay.”

“Ok, um you kinda sound crazy, and seriously, your aunt and brother are trying to kill you?”

“Why would I lie about that kind of thing! My aunt threw a knife at me! A kitchen knife! And then I called my brother because I thought he was a person that could be there for me!” I breathe in and out, all of the air around me filling my lungs, and all the air in my lungs going out. I start to cry again.

“Fine, but this doesn’t mean I believe you. Where are you at?”

“I’m inside the B.J’s in Cape Coral.”

“I’ll be there in fifteenth minutes.”

After about twenty minutes he pulls up.

He goes through the door of the store and walks up to me .

“You ok?”

“Yep, totally. I am perfectly fine after my aunt threw a knife at me.”

“Leanne, I was just using manners. Get in the truck. I’m taking you to my place.”

When we get to his house, and we go into the house through the garage door.

“It’s late, so you should get some rest. I’ll sleep on the couch, you can take my bed.”

“Thanks.”

The next morning I wake up. I smell scrambled eggs. I walk out, and see Matthew next to the stove. He wears a gray plain t-shirt, khaki shorts, and Reebok tennis shoes.

“Would you like salt on your scrambled eggs, Le?” He turns and smiles.

“Yes please.” He puts the scrambled eggs on a paper plate. He places the paper plates on the table next to each other.

I taste the eggs, and it’s delicious.

“Do you like them?”

“Yes, they’re delicious.” I take another bite. It is mouthwatering. I didn’t think he would be capable of doing such a thing.

“You look surprised or something.” Matthew takes a bite, and then looks back at me waiting with curiosity for my answer.

“I just wasn’t expecting the eggs to be this good, I mean, well, um…” I look down at the plate embarrassed.

“You weren’t expecting a boy to be good at cooking.” He corrects my sentence.

“Yes, right.” We eat in silence.

After we are done eating, I head back into his room and get dressed. There is a black shirt on the bed, that belongs to Matthew, I would suspect, and slip on the t-shirt while I keep the slacks on that I was wearing yesterday. They smell like my aunt, which reminds me of what she has done. I come out the air conditioning giving me the chills. I fold my arms across my chest, trying to keep me warm.

“So, what do you want to do today?” Matthew asks.

“I don’t know, it is like ninety degrees, so we could go swimming.” I think about it, it would be nice to go to the pool again.

“Cool, do we need to get you a bathing suit?”

“Are you insisting we go shopping?” I ask.

“If you want a bathing suit, and clothes for yourself. I don’t think it would be a pretty picture if we went to your house. If Ben was really set out to kill you.”

“Ok where do you wanna go?”

“Target.” He stands up, going to the counter where the keys to his truck are.

We walk into Target. “Take your time.” Matthew says. He walks over to the hat rack.

I smiled at him then turn to the women’s bathing suit section. I look around and see a white bikini, with navy blue ruffles covering the front, a one piece, that is purple with pink stripes, and a plain yellow bikini, with white polka dots. I choose the plain yellow bikini with white polka dots, and also go to the women’s clothing section and pick out outfits.

When we leave, we head back to the house to get changed, and lather sunscreen on me, and so does Matthew. He wears Under Armour swim trunks with the gray shirt he has been wearing.

We head to the North Fort Myers Community Pool, and we have to pay.

“Let me pay.” I insist.

“No, I will pay.” He smiles.

“That will be four dollars.” The lifeguard says.

Matthew hands him a five dollar bill. The lifeguard puts the money in the register handing Matthew a one dollar bill.

We walk out to the shallow end and dip our feet into the water. The water is cold and makes me shiver “Cold?” Matthew asks.

“Yes.” I say.

Matthew gets up, and starts to back up.

“You wouldn’t.” I say knowing what he is going to do. He is going to jump.

“Don’t.” But he does the splash soaking me.

I jump in, after him, and make a splash, not as big as his though. He takes his hand under the water, bringing it back up, and splashes me.

“Seriously?” I splash him after that.

“Want to get some ice cream?” He says getting out of the water, reaching for his towel on the bench.

“Ok,” I pull myself out of the water, and reach out for my towel.

We walk up to the same area where we paid.

“Y’all want ice cream?” A lifeguard says turning around leaning against the counter.

“I will have a ice cream sandwich.” I say.

“And I will have a dippin’ dot cup.” Matthew says.”

After we eat our ice-cream, we leave.

Chapter 6

When we get to the house, I get in the shower.

After the shower, I get ready. I put on a light pink long sleeve shirt, and high waisted white shorts. I put my hair back in a ponytail, and put on my black flats.

When I walk out of the bathroom Matthew was sitting on the couch, and I go sit next to him.

“Why did you call me today?” Matthew sits up straighter.

“Because, um, my brother and my aunt were going to kill me, and I had no other choice but to call you, as I already told you.” I look to the side, tears filling my eyes, but I hold them back.

“What happened to your other relatives?”

“My grandparents died, and my great grandparents died also. My mother was an only child. She died in a car accident. I survived with a broken arm. After about a day in the hospital my dad, I mean Jakob, came he said quote “When you get home I will literally kill you, and this is not funny, a joke, or threat.”

I look at the tile floor my heart pounding.

“Why were you in the hospital?”

“The paramedics wanted to make sure I didn’t hit my head or spine or that I didn’t get medically hurt in some other way.” I still look down at the tile floor.

“Ben picked me up, and took me to the house the next day. He went inside immediately. I suspected something, so I went through my window. My mom told me to keep a gun somewhere, always, just in case of an emergency. My dad said he was going to kill me, so I call that an emergency.” I finally lift my head up looking at Matthew.

"I heard someone go out the front door. I suspected that it was Ben to go and get me. I opened my door slowly, and as quietly as I could, but it squeaked, and my da- I mean Jakob, came running down the hallway. The gun was in my hand and I shot him in the rib. I threw the gun out the window, I guess to hide the 'evidence'. Ben came rushing in, and stared at Jakob. His face became red, and asked what happened. I told him I heard a gunshot, and opened my door, to see Jakob outside my door laying on the ground." I start to cry even more, and bury my face in my hands. I feel like I had made that way to dramatic.

"I know what it's like to kill someone."

I look at him, and sit back trying to relax. Matthew puts his arm around my shoulder. I scoot closer to him and lay my head on his shoulder crying, still. I eventually fall asleep. I wake up on the couch with a blanket over me. Guess I fell asleep.

Matthew comes out of his room.

"I must've fallen asleep." I sit up looking over the couch

"Yeah, oh and after you went to sleep Ben texted you. He said he knew where you were."

"Oh can you hand me my phone."

Matthew picks up my phone and hands it to me, and sure enough there's a text from Ben.

I text "*Then where am I?*"

"*Check outside the door.*"

"He says he's outside the door, or at least he said check outside the door."

"Do you want me to go check?" Matthew's eyes are gleaming.

"No, I'll go."

I get up, and he grabs my arm gripping his fingers around my skin.

"Be careful. I wouldn't do that if I were you."

He lets go of my arm gently and slowly. I slowly walk to the door and slowly unlock the deadbolt following the lock on the doorknob. I carefully open the door. I see a shape and everything goes black.

When I open my eyes, I'm on a bed. Matthew's? The bed moves scaring me, and I turn my head and see Matthew laying there. I look at the clock. It reads 3:47. I sit up on the bed moving my legs to where they are dangling over the bed. I stand up falling to the ground with a loud thump. Matthew sits up, and I hear his feet running to where I fell.

"Are you ok?"

He grabs my wrist and put his other palm behind my back helping me stand up.

"Yeah, what happened? I mean how did I get in your bed?"

My legs start to weaken and I fall. Matthew lets me fall on the bed, and goes to lay next to me.

“Your brother hit you, you fell to the ground, and I saw you were laying there, not moving. I went over to your brother, and threatened him, and he left. I carried you back to my bed. I did a little cleaning up, and made myself dinner. I came in here, forgetting you were here, and fell asleep.”

“Are you sure you forgot I was in here? Because to me it looks like you meant to.”

“Maybe I did, maybe I didn’t.”

There is a silence. The sound like if you were in outer space. I look at him. His brown hair is messed up from moving at night. From not brushing it after a shower.

“Thank you, for helping me with all of this stuff. Thank you for letting me stay with you, and helping me from my brother.”

A smile appears on his face.

“No problem.” He sits up while a struggle to sit up.

He leans in his lips touching mine and in that second I feel that as I don’t have any worries. He backs away. I smile and look down at the sheets. I put my head on the white pillow. Matthew lays next to me, closer than we were before I fell. He puts his arm around me and I drift off to sleep.

Chapter 7

When I wake, I sit up and get off the bed, falling to the ground again. “Right, you can’t stand” I say to myself.

“Matthew!” I call out his name in order for him to help me up.

“Ok,” he says as he walks out of the bathroom.

He picks me up and sits me on the bed.

“Thanks, again. Why can’t I stand up?” I say looking at my bruised legs.

“I think you landed on them wrong, and broke them. Both.” He says standing up.

“Should we go to the hospital. Am I going to need a wheelchair?” I start to get worried my heart pounding in my chest, making me weak inside.

“I don’t know, to be honest. We should go to the hospital, but your brother, I mean Ben, seems to know where you are wherever we go.” He walks out of the room, his feet hitting the tile floor. I sit there, my heart pounding still. I hear a thump that startles me and look at the window, to see a blue bird sliding off the glass. Matthew comes back, holding two water bottles. He opens the cap of one, handing it to me.

“Thanks, so what should we do?” I ask.

“I don’t know if there is much you can do.” He sits down next to me.

“Well, I don’t want to sit around bored all day”

“Don’t worry, I’ll keep you occupied.”

After a few seconds of staring at each other, he puts his hand on my cheek bring my hair behind my ear. He kisses me and I kiss him back. I feel him pull me closer to him, but I resist. I pull back from him and look down.

"I don't want to go too far this fast." I stare down at the sheets, and he laces our fingers together.

"Ok."

I feel bad that I stopped him that I made myself stop. I just had to.

"I fall backwards, on purpose, my face facing the ceiling. Matthew gets a pillow and places it underneath my head gently. I close my eyes, tired, and forget my worries.

I wake up to hear the shower running, I sit up, and position myself to where I am leaning against the bed board, with a pillow propping myself up.

Matthew comes out.

"You fell asleep for a good three hours." I was tired. I get off the bed determined to get to Matthew. I walk feeling good, and wrap my arms around his neck, and kiss him, He puts his hands on my waist kissing back, and eventually, we pull away from each other.

"How did you get to me, your legs, how?"

"I don't know, I felt that I had enough strength to come over to you. Maybe my legs aren't broken." As I say it though my legs feel weak, again. I fall to the ground, the tile cold on my hands for catching myself.

"But, you're still weak." He says as he supports me and helps keep my balance,

"Can I get out of this room, I'm sick of it." I am sick of it. Its bland walls, and the one window. The walls a bright white. The bedspread just dark blue.

"What's wrong with the room?" Matthew's eyes skim the room, looking for something that is wrong with it.

"It just bland, that's all. Can you help me to the living room." He nods, and puts his hands under my arms, to help balance me as I try to walk to the couch, The light in the living room reminds me of how warm the sun is, and how it felt on my skin at the pool.

I'm finally at the couch, and fell my body sink inside the cushion I sit on.

"I have Netflix, so we can watch a movie, What do you wanna watch?"

"Whatever you want" I say casually.

Matthew turns on the TV when I hear my phone ringing from Matthew's room.

"My phone is ringing. Can you go get it please?"

"Sure, be right back," he says leaving me alone on the couch. My heart is pounding, I think it's my brother threatening to come back. Matthew comes back into the living room facing the screen of the phone to me. "Oh it's my dentist." I grab the phone and answer.

"Hello"

"Is this Leanne"

"Yes sir"

"Yes, your brother missed his appointment this morning at 10:30. Do you have any idea why?"

"Well let's just say he has been pretty distracted lately"

There's a sudden knock on the door, and Matthew goes to answer it. I hear a gunshot and drop the phone. Ben. Ben. Matthew. I breathe heavily, and look behind me. Ben stands right in front of me. In his hand: A gun.

"It looks like your little boyfriend isn't around to save you anymore. Hmm. Such a shame, isn't it. Who would do such a thing?"

A sly smirk goes across his face reminding me of the Grinch. I feel my pockets for anything, and feel a, pocket knife? I grab it and open the knife part, and throw it at Ben. He screams with agonizing pain, and I rush over to Matthew no matter how bad my legs sting. "He can't be dead", I say so quiet that I can almost barely even hear myself. I feel a squeeze around my hand, a signal Matthew gives saying he is alive. I run back to the living room where Ben lies on the ground with his hand on his grazed shoulder. I fall to my knees next to Ben. I try to talk over his yells of agony.

"I'm sorry, I never wanted to hurt you."

I grab his hand gripping it tightly, while I shed a single tear.

"I killed dad because I was scared for my life, do you want to kill me because he told you to? Are you just mad at me" I don't talk for a few seconds.

"What if dad *did* hurt me?" I cry even more.

Ben lifts his head looking up at me. Ben stands up, I stand up after him. He looks me in the eyes then starts running out the front door and down the street. I step out onto the porch.

"BEN... BEN"!

He keeps running just like I did when I was running away from Aunt Jessie's. I hear a grunting noise and see Matthew laying on the floor, holding his hand to the bullet wound Ben gave him.

"Oh my gosh, we need to get to the hospital!" Tears roll down my face. Matthew holds my hand.

"I will be ok, It was just a little graze. Your brother has bad aim." He chuckles and so do I. I hug him. He struggles pulling himself up, but he manages to do it. I help him pull himself up, and help him on his way toward the couch.

Chapter 8

When I head toward the fridge, I notice that my legs are working. I don't know what happened with them. I go open the fridge, to get Matthew a water, but instead there is a sticky note attached to the milk. It reads:

Hello Leanne,

If you would like to die, instead of your boyfriend person surrender yourself. Go to Aunt Jessie's house. If you don't come in two days, which it's Monday, May 8th. You have until Wednesday to come.

Love,

Aunt Jessie

I pull the note off the milk jug.

“Um, what are we going to do about this?” I hand Matthew the note my head aching. Aunt Jessie, of course. Matthew reads it. His eyes staring down at the paper, his eyes moving with the words.

“We need to keep you someplace where she wouldn’t know where to find you. We are going to my parent’s house.” He gets up going into his room. I stand there, sinking in all of the stuff that has happened. I don’t want Matthew to die, but I don’t want to die either. Would I die for Matthew? I walk into his room, and he is packing up.

After he is done packing up, he puts the luggages into the back of the truck. While I just stand at his bedroom doorstep the whole time, thinking.

“Dang it!” Matthew kicks the truck tire. His face turns red, with rage, and he looks up at me.

“I need to go to work, can you call them.” I nod and he hands me his phone. It’s a Samsung, so I get confused with how it works, but eventually, I find the keypad.

“What’s the number?” I look up at him.

“239-555-9007” He has calmed down, but still has rage.

“Hello?”

“Um, Matthew?”

“No, his friend. I wanted to talk about why he has been missing work.”

“Oh, yeah, I’ve been wondering why he hasn’t been here. I was going to call in a while anyway.”

“Oh, well he has been helping me and has been distracted with multiple stuff. I hope this is a good enough excuse. He might come later today or tomorrow.”

“Ok, can you tell him that we expect him back by tomorrow.” The other line hangs up.

“They say that they want you back by tomorrow.”

He calms down.

“At least I’m not fired.” He gets into the truck, and I get in after him.

After about five minutes he grabs my hand, holding it the rest of the ride.

We pull up to a purple house, two stories.

“So, yes I grew up in a magenta house. My mom got a little crazy after her mom died.”

He let’s go of my hand, and I get out. He opens the door. There is a tall skinny girl with blonde hair.

“Kristna this is my *girlfriend*, Leanne.” Matthew’s voice cracks at the word ‘girlfriend’, knowing that we are not far into our relationship.

“Girlfriend, right, sure.” Kristina looks at me her eyes moving up and down looking at my body.

“Are you actually his girlfriend?”

“We are early in our relationship stage, but I don’t blame him calling me his girlfriend.”

“Oh, ok.”

We follow her to the kitchen, and there is a woman, in her late fifties standing near the stove, stirring something in a pot.

“Hello son,” She walks up to Matthew grabbing his head and giving him a kiss on the cheek, along with a coral colored lipstick stain. “And who’s this,” she looks at me, then goes back to stirring.

“I’m his girlfriend, Leanne, and I need to stay here for a while, so that my aunt won’t find me.”

“Well you can stay in Matty’s old room.” She smiles saying the nickname.

“Matty?” I look at Matthew, one eyebrow raising.

“Mom, my name is Matthew.”

He grabs my hand and we head to his room.

I sneeze, because of the dust that has been collected in his room.

“Nice, better than your room at the house.” I sit on the red plaid comforter.

“Yeah, this was me, I guess when I was a child.” He sits down next to me. There is a silence until I break it.

“You think she will find me here?” I start to worry. The feeling she is following us.

“Unless she followed us, than no.” He puts his hand on my back trying to comfort me, but I still worry.

Chapter 9

“You really thought you could hide from me?” There is a hand over my mouth. It smells of kiwi hand soap. I know who it belongs to also: Aunt Jessie. “There is no reason to kill me, I killed him, self defending myself.” Sweat rolls down my forehead. My heart pounds, and the blood runs faster in my veins.

“My darling, it’ll be ok. It’s not like he believes you.” She jerks her head to the body beside me. I look and-

“Ahhh!” I sit up.

“You’re ok!” Matthew scoots closer to me, his hand on my back.

“Bad dream?” His hand is now on my shoulder.

“Yeah, it was horrible. Aunt Jessie, had her hand over my mouth, and was saying that we couldn’t hide from her. She told me to look behind me and I saw my dead dad, with the bullet wound. It scared the crap out of me.” I lay down again, Matthew laying down next to me. He cups his hand on my cheek, and kisses me. It reminds me of our first kiss and I kiss him back. He pulls me closer to him, and I feel his heartbeat against my chest. He keeps kissing me. His breaths are synchronized with mine. He stops, and laughs through his teeth, smiling.

“What?” I ask. He just shakes his head saying to make me forget it. He kisses me again. “Goodnight” He lays next to me, and puts his arm around my body. I drift off to sleep too.

The next morning, I hear, music. I shake Matthew so that he can wake up.

“What? Oh, my sister likes to listen to music while she gets ready for work.” The song that plays is Grenade, by Bruno Mars. It plays above us, upstairs.

“Kind of annoying,” I say, and get up, going to the suitcase with my clothes in it.

“Yep, she always used to listen to music.” He shakes his head. He gets up also, and he goes through his luggage on the other side of the room, to get clothes for himself.

After we’re done getting dressed, we go out of the room, and get breakfast.

“Good morning.”

“Good morning Mrs. Wite.”

“Oh, you can just call me Gloria.” She smiles.

“How many pieces of toast?”

“Oh, I’m really not hungry right now, sorry.”

“That’s ok.” She sits down at the dinner table.

Matthew grabs my hand, and takes me outside.

“I want to show you something.”

He leads me to the backyard. He let’s go of my hand, letting me be at my own pace.

“Follow me.” He goes through the woods following a pathway. I follow him curious.

When we reach the end of the path he steps to the side for me to look at the scenery.

There is a tombstone marked:

Camillya Roberts

“Who’s Camillya Roberts?” I touch the name of the tombstone.

“She is my...” He looks down.

“My ex-girlfriend.”

“Why is her tombstone here?”

“Because, nobody knows that I killed her. Everyone thinks she has gone missing.” He grabs my hand to comfort himself.

“Why did you kill her?” I have an idea why.

“She killed my grandma, Fable Wite.”

“Why?”

“Jealousy. She asked me if I loved my grandma. I said I loved her more than anything. One day she started yelling at me, saying that she was supposed to be my only love. She punched me in the nose. I became furious. She was going crazy. I made a decision. I don’t regret it though.” He let’s go of my hand.

“The thing is I don’t want to hurt *you*.” He backs up, ten feet away from me now.

“You won’t, I know you won’t. I love that you love your family. I’m not a psycho, like your ex.” I walk toward him. At first, he backed up a few steps every time I got closer, then

stopped moving. I stood in front of him and grabbed both his hands then pulled them close to me. I looked up to his face with sympathy, then slapped him right on the side of his face with my right hand. Matthew jerked his torso and head to the side holding his cheek.

“Ouch”!

“Don’t assume that I’m stupid like other girls” I say in a stern voice pointing to his face.

“Wait” He grabs my arm pulling me toward him.

“What.” I roll my eyes ticked off.

“I love you,” All the anger in me melts. “I know I wouldn’t hurt you. I just don’t want to.”

“Promise”

“ Yes”

“I know”. He smiles. I look up to where our eyes meet. I hug him tightly.

“You’ve never said that before.” My eyes water with joy.

“Tomorrow, might be our last day together. Aunt Jessie might find us. She basically knows everything.” Now the tears coming out are of fear. I hug him tighter.

“I’ll make sure that won’t happen.” I bury my face in his shoulder.

When we go back in the house, I make a sandwich. Matthew and I sit next to each other.

“Crap, I have to go to work, but I don’t want to leave you alone.”

“It’s fine just go.”

“Are you sure” Matthew’s face worried.

“Yes, I’m positive.” We stand up, he hugs me and leaves through the front door, leaving me alone.

I go into his bedroom and sit. I see an outlet on the wall behind the bed. I connect my phone charger and charge it while sitting on the bed. It’s the first time looking at it in a while I see that I have 137 messages. Confused, I check them. They are from the dentist’s office. Asking many strange questions, not related to teeth. I soon realise that he was still listening on the phone when Ben broke into Matthew’s house. Before I could think anymore, there is a knock at the door. I run upstairs, looking through a window, so that they can’t see me. It’s Ben. I run down stairs, and slowly unlock the door.

“If you are here to kill me get on with it. At least Matthew won’t be here to see”

“Actually, I need to tell you something.” He let’s himself come in and sits on the couch.

He pats on a cushion beside him telling me to come and sit. I go sit next to him.

“So, I got mad about dad for a reason. I got mad that you killed *my* dad.”

“What do you mean?” Because I honestly don’t know what he is talking about.

“He wasn’t...”

“He wasn’t, come on spit it out.”

“Not your real father.”

I stand up.

“What the f-”

“Shhh.” He cuts me off by putting his finger on his mouth.

“Your dad’s real name is Daren.”

“How ev-” he cuts me off again.

“Mom was cheating on Daren. You were little. So was I.”

“She had me with Jacob when she was cheating on Daren. He was a business trip for a year in Italy. He then came back. She had you about a year later with Daren, and then Daren figured out that she was cheating and had a one year old, me.” Ben explains a bunch of different stuff. Before he leaves. He stops at the door saying, “Oh, my real name is Benjamin.” He leaves.

Chapter 10

When Matthew gets back, he starts complaining about his day. I get distracted thinking about what Ben said to me earlier.

“-then Joey came up to me and was like, you lazy butt finally came here didn’t it. That’s surprising. I wanted to say that I have been helping my girlfriend out with her life, but then he would be like, oh, what about your other girlfriend and-”

“Wait what?” Matthew looks at me with a surprised face.

“You didn’t hear what I said?”

“Sorry, I just feel a little distracted”

“What happened?” He looks at me.

“Ben came, and I let him in. He told me that I had a different dad, Daren.” I tell him what Ben told me.

The next day, Wednesday, I feel sick. Aunt Jessie said she would find me.

“You’ll be fine, I promise.” Matthew hugs me and leaves. It is 1:51, and Aunt Jessie could arrive at any moment. My heart pounds. I go to our room, and fall onto the bed. I go to sleep.

There is a pounding at the door. The clock reads 2:17. The door flies open.

“Where are you little girl?” Aunt Jessie. Aunt Jessie. How? I run out of the room not knowing what to do. I look behind me and no one is there. Then someone punches my side, making me fall to the ground. She punches me again, making my nose bleed. I breathe heavily. Matthew comes barging through the front door, with a gun, he shoots Jessie, leaving me on the ground. Then Ben comes out of nowhere pointing a gun at me.

I get up. Ben won’t shoot me, he’ll shoot Matthew.

I get up shaking walking toward Matthew. Tears roll down my eyes.

“You have to shoot me. I look down. You have to.”

“No I don’t. I won’t.” A tear runs down his face.

"You would do anything for me right?" He looks down.

"I would but no-"

"Fine, I'll do it myself" I grab his wrist and yank the gun out of his hand.

"I can't let you do that" As he yanks the gun back.

"I love you" I kiss him, and walk with a slow pace toward the middle of him and Ben. I close my eyes. There is a good reason for this choice. I fall down to the ground an aching pain in my rib. The last thing I see:
Matthew's green eyes staring down at me.

He doesn't know it but,

I protected Matthew.

I see a whole new world.

I protected Matthew for a reason.

A Reason to Die.

To be continued...

I open one eye, a stinging pain in my rib. There are stone bricks around me. Five doors.

One chance. One choice.

A Reason to Die Part 2: One Escape to Live

