



# *ORPHEUS*

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The Note [a continuation]

By: Sarah Lewandowski

Chapter 2: Traveling with a New Friend

“Why are you looking for your brother Brian? Is something wrong?” Hannah asked questioningly. I told her everything that happened yesterday and caught her up from my perspective til now. She had a worried look on her face when I told her about what happened in the past when we hunted alone. “I feel so bad for you Brian. I’m just out here hunting. Since you told me what happened to you guys when you hunt alone, I agree to teaming up with you to make sure we find your brother,” she said with dreariness. “First thing we need to do right now is to set up camp for the night. It’s already sunset.”

I nodded my head in agreement, took off my backpack, and started setting up the tent. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw her clearing off some leaves and sticks so she could make a fire. I was almost tempted to ask her on a date in that moment. But I had to focus. I had to find my brother first, hopefully alive.

I watched the sun slowly descend and started thinking about my parents. I haven’t thought much about them but I wish they weren’t taken from my brother and me so quickly. I missed them so much that every time I thought about them I found I was holding back tears. My brother is the only family I had left.

I watched Hannah finish up and walked towards her. “Hey Hannah...Did you bring a tent for yourself?”

“Yes I did. I hope that it won’t be too cold tonight,” she said, lighting the fire.

“I have plenty of food left if you want some. I probably won’t be able to eat it all alone anyways,” I said with some confidence. I watched her just stop and then resume what she was doing.

“Fine. I’ll have some. I’ve been trying to hunt something all day. I couldn’t find anything” she replied in a tired voice. Her face started to show that she was getting tired and had a rough day hunting.

She walked over to me and hugged me. "I hope we'll find your brother," she said. I stood there in amazement as she hugged me. I started to think about my brother Steve...I could only hope that he was still alive and walking.

### Chapter 3: The Hopes of Finding My Brother

The only thing I could do right then was hope. That's the only thing that I could think about. I hoped every night and day since that note was left on the counter. I had to look for the good and the will to keep moving on, staying alive to find him. Since I told Hannah what happened in our past, she hoped and willed for him too. He's the only last, living and caring bit of family that I have left to hold on to. The last piece to keep the puzzle from being left an unfinished scene and memory. The wilderness surrounds me, willing that I kept looking for my brother and not give up. I wanted to quit and walk away, but his life was on the line.

I suddenly woke up, pulled back my sleeping bag, and stared in fear. A poisonous snake was wrapped around my legs sleeping. I swallowed my fear and quietly called for Hannah. "Hannah," I whispered. "Hannah!" I whispered more desperately.

"What Bri-" She didn't bother finishing. She stared at the snake wrapped around my legs. She quickly went to get a stick, carefully put it under the snake without waking it, and got rid of it in the dark and gloomy night. When she came back to my tent she gave me a hug, even though we were both in pajamas. She snuggled next to me in the sleeping bag. Suddenly all my worries and torturous thoughts were gone. Only faith, relaxation, peace and that we both found our true love remained.

We were both freshmen in high school, although I am a year older. We have the same classes every day except block days, and we already found true love. I pulled her towards me, kissed the top of her head, and fell asleep with her in my arms. She snuggled close to me while we both slept. We have found our soulmates and it was only November- the perfect time for hunting.

The sunlight started to shine through the canvas tent's walls. I wanted the night to last longer but

it wouldn't. I looked at Hannah still sleeping, and decided to wake her with a kiss. We stay in that captivating kiss for a few minutes, break it off, forehead against forehead, and smiled. At this moment the question I have been wanting to ask her for awhile now falls out of my mouth. "Hannah?" I asked confidently.

"Yeah?"

"Will you go on a date with me?" I ask, notice my voice starting to shake.

"Yes! Yes I will go on a date with you Brian," she replied, pulling me close in a kiss. We got out of my tent into the nice morning air and sun and started to pack up our camp. Once we were both done packing, we decided to start tracking my brother. At midday, we found his tracks and started to follow them. Then there was another set of footprints beside them. Hannah and I looked at each other with a mixture of fear and hope. We followed those tracks to a camp with two hunters living there for the night.

The hunters turned away from their blazing fire to see us standing right on the edge of their camp. "Come on in. Have something to eat. We have plenty of food with us that is cooking over the fire," one hunter said with a rifle in his lap. Hannah and I stared the broken rifle. For some strange reason I thought that the broken rifle was my brother's. I felt like asking what caliber it was, so I did. I had to work up enough courage to even up my mouth.

"Is that a 12 caliber rifle" I asked.

The man stared at me in disbelief. "That is a very good guess. And yes. How'd you guess so well?"

"My family and I hunt. My father and brother with rifles, and my mom and I with bows. My brother taught me about guns even though I don't like them much. But I can tell what type they are from just looking at them."

"It's good to know how to hunt. My name is Jonathan and my friend with me is Calvin. What are your names?" the hunter asked, the same curiosity in his voice.

“My name is Brian and this is Hannah...my girlfriend,” I said, putting my arm around her. She immediately blushed.

“Nice names,” he said, gesturing towards the fire and Calvin cooking venison. “Come and warm yourselves. We have plenty of supplies if you need them. Take whatever you need. Oh and by the way, call me John.”

“Thank you, John. Hannah and I are trying to find someone so I think I’m going to have to turn down your offer though, sorry.”

“Oh it’s okay. We’re only out for hunting season before the weather gets bad later on,” Calvin said while walking towards us. “Aren’t we Entity?” he said, winking in John’s direction.

“Shut the heck up Calvin! Now please!” John yelled, glaring at Calvin.

“Wait, you’re the famous Entity 303?! That’s awesome!” I said in adoration. “This is the best day ever!”

“Calvin! I told you not to tell anybody! Now I’m going to get death threats for goodness sakes! Geez!” John said in an angry tone and stormed off with the fire light bouncing off his black hair.

“What was that about Calvin?” I asked.

Calvin sighed and started to talk. “He has to hide in the shadows to avoid death threats...Markus and Jeb still hate him after all these years and never forgave him. I don’t think they will for quite a long time.”

“What did he do wrong that Notch and Jeb won’t forgive him?”

“He hacked into Mojang while he was helping create Minecraft. Markus fired him because of it. He wanted revenge so he started to hack into people’s servers, tried to make them change their minds about him and that didn’t go well. People started to give him death threats because they hated him so much. He thinks everybody absolutely hates him now and is trying to hide his past,” said Hannah.

Calvin looked at her in surprise and said, “Since when did you find that out Hannah? I’m

curious.”

“Fine,” she said sighing. “I do a lot of research. Is that a bad thing or something?”

“No, it’s not. I’m surprised people actually do research any pay attention to it. So far, you two are the only kids that I know that do their research properly.” All of a sudden, John started to swear in Swedish. He glared at his laptop, stopped swearing, and started to back away from it slowly. Hannah, Calvin, and I immediately ran over to him and stared at his computer. The screen was covered in death threats in so many different languages that I couldn’t even speak. We stared at him only to see that his eyes were still on the computer and completely filled with fear. The threats finally stopped with the harshest and most disturbing one in English. I read it out loud: My friends and I know where you are. We have our weapons up and ready to kill, so don’t bother running. We will only keep following you Entity 303.

John’s gaze moved up from the computer and stared at the crowd with their guns and arrows aimed directly at him. He gulped harshly, shut his eyes, and started to hope that this wasn’t happening. All three of us stood around him to protect our friend. We stood firm and held our ground. The fighters started to surround us, their weapons poised right at our chests to take us down or even kill us. They told us to move out of the way or things wouldn’t be going too well for us...

To be continued...



## The Princess and the Rebel (Part 1)

By Pauline Sparks

One sunny, summer day after school had let out, I had ran to the one spot I always find to be the best place to just calm down and relax. It is a big rock on the beach where if the time is just right you can see the sun rise and set over the vast blue ocean. I am always wanting to be there when it happens so I can always picture it when I go to school or at night. So here I sat as the calm summer breeze off the ocean whipped around me and blew my hair all over the place. I was looking at the dolphins playing in the water when I heard the distinct sound of footsteps on the sand. All of a sudden everything goes dark as two big hands cover my eyes. I squirm and move to get out of the clutch of hands but suddenly I was pulled back into a strong chest. I could feel their heavy breathing behind me. I turn around and I look up at the person and I smile. "Marshall Blackblood don't you know not to sneak up on a girl?" I say as sternly as I can manage without laughing. Marshall looks at me with a smug smile and shrugs. He says "I like to keep things interesting." I laugh and hug him.

Marshall is a tall, 11 year old boy whose parents... well his mom is human and his dad is... umm... a demon. He was born on earth and was raised by his mother after his father disowned him. He is a strong independent boy who has a life of his own. He likes fights and war but when he is around me, well he is a nice cool guy. He fell in love with me when I was alone on a hill or I thought I was. I heard a growl and turned and saw a wolf with black fur and dark blue eyes. Suddenly the wolf changed to a young boy

who fainted at my feet. I helped him out and brought him to the village and left but soon he woke. I soon had other problems.

Soon three guards were after him. He ran right up to where I was and fell into me and got captured by the guards. *Well it might have happened because of me but I was only ten what was I supposed to do?* Anyway I look over Marshall's shoulder and I see my best friend April looking at me with a quiet look of what the heck are you doing. I smile and wink at her. April is my best friend ever since her mom is one of the maids at the castle; she gets to hang with me. April is a small 11 year old girl with reddish hair and bright yellow eyes. She wears a lot of pink or yellow while Marshall and me both wear black or when I have to I must wear a dress in all different colors. Marshall turns his head and see April. "Oh god she is here?" he groans as I lean up and kiss him on the lips. He pushes away after that and leans on the rock. April walks over and smiles at me. "Hi guys what up?" She says coolly like she was not just spying on us. I kick at her lazily and fall on the soft sand. Marshall, April, and me have been the best of friends since like ever. Marshall became part of our group when I was 5; I had asked Marshall to show me his his true self in the forest and I had not seen April standing there. I made her promise never to tell anyone and so far she kept her mouth shut. Marshall and April sometimes don't get along, but once and awhile they become good friends that sometimes fight or try to hurt one another but it's all just fun and games.

I sigh and kick up some sand with my foot as Marshall and April after a tight little fight that makes me scared they decide to spark up a conversation about school then about soccer then skateboarding. I soon was zoning out as they talked. Suddenly April

decides in the middle of something Marshall was trying to say that she would walk over to me and hand me a letter. I looked at her with confusion as she just shrugged and said sourly "Your mother asked me to give this to you." I grabbed the letter and looked at who it was from Prince Andrew. *Blah another boring prince trying to meet a princess.* I thought sourly. Oh sorry must have forgotten to tell you I am a princess. Princess Kate Moon to most people, and Kat von Hellsing to my friends and Zoe Hunter to the gang members. I might be a little bit of a rebel child. I learned most of everything I know about rebelling from Marshall who also taught all the gang, and even April, who was kinda sceptical about the whole thing till she tried a couple of kicks and found she liked it. Marshall is the gang's leader after the last one was let's just say eliminated by the enemy and Marshall was the one who got me into rebelling. The only people who know is Marshall and April.

Ok sorry way off track. Let's get back to the story. As I put the letter in my bag on my hip April looked up at the sky as she sat on the sand and I saw her eyes gleam. Marshall looks over at me and gives me his normal smug look. I do a stink eye at him but then I see the guards walking up during afternoon practice. April sees them and pushes Marshall to a tree. "Stay here till they leave and don't do anything to alert them ok?" April says behind her as she runs back to me just as the guards are about a minute away. We stand still as they come closer and see Eric, who is one of the most highly respected guard and also the the most annoyest pearson in the world if I could say that. He stands tall and looks at us with his look of a maybe mean stern look I could never really tell by the way he acts it might be but I don't know. I hold my hands behind my

back so it looks like I am not squirming at all. Eric has his hand on his sword as if he would need to use it at anytime which is mostly never. April looks at him with a look of why are you here annoying us? I keep myself as still as I can as Eric looks at the sun as it sets. *Crap that was for me to see not you Eric.* I scream inside my head as he turns at asks "Huh what? Was that what you wanted to see princess?" I grit my teeth and answer back as harshly as I can. "Yes it was you no good rotten miserable retch. I know even if you got thrown in a lake you would just come back and be all smug. You disgust me." Eric just smiles his smug smile like what I had just said did not bother him at the least. He just smiled and looks at the letter on the ground which must have fallen out of my bag. "What's this Kate?" He picks it up and reads it out loud so everyone even Marshell could hear.

*Dear Princess Kate,*

*My name is Prince Andrew and I was wishing to get together with you and have a friendly chat. I hope to get to know you more then what I have heard of you from my royal vizier. I love to know more about the things you like to do or what stuff you wish never to do again. I will be happy to hear back from you or if so I can come to your kingdom and talk to you in person. It would be an honer to meet such a lovely girl whom I have heard such great things about. Think of your answer and please write me a letter back or just ask my reser to come and get the answer from you lovely lips. I hope to see you soon. I hope to see the lovely flower I can only imagine to see which is you.*

*Lots of hope and wishes,*

*Prince Andrew*

*"Sorry but my answer is no"* I scream in my head even after I had already read it but it even is gross the second time. Marshall looks ill from behind the tree and April looks sickly. Eric smirks at me and whispers in my ear "I think you should go for it. But that's just my idea not yours" His words whip around me as I sit down and cover my face so no one can see me cry. Suddenly a voice above me says "it's Marshall get him!" I raise my head just in time to see Marshall get captured by the guards. "What a catch. I thought I would never find you again Marshall" said Eric smiling at him with a smug smile.

"Well there was never a time you could have caught me ever" Marshall spat as he went limp. Eric stared at him then back to April and me. "You better head home Princess before you catch your death out here" I look at him like *are you kidding me right now* but suddenly April nods and walks over to me and grabs my wrist and drags me back to the castle. I catch a glimpse of Marshall as we walk into the garden and out of sight. As we get closer to my room I pull back and glare at April.

"What is the matter Kate?" she asks quietly.

"Are you kidding me right now?" I scream as April shrinks back into the wall as she looked scared. I winced and sighed. "Sorry April I shouldn't have yelled at you but I can't believe you just did that" April looked up at me with sad eyes and started crying. I put my arm around her and told her to be quiet with that sweet motherly love. April got up and went out the door. I closed it after her and fell on my bed tears threatening to come out. I heard from my open window the guards talking about the king talking to Marshall about the trial he would be in if he chooses that or he would be stuck in the

dungeon forever. *Crap this can't happen to him* I say to myself as night fell. Soon everyone was asleep except for patrol officers. I slipped on black jeans, black shirt, combat boots. I also tied my black hair back in a ponytail and put on contacts to hide my bright green eyes which might give me away. I slip out of my room by a rope I had placed there just to be on the safe side though it was hidden from the guards. I climb down and when I reach the end where the rope did not reach the ground but it was only a small jump so I jump and landed as quietly as I could. Thanks to years of practice with Marshall and the others that I could be able sneak around quietly and keep my breathing under control.

I run down the stairs to the dungeons and look inside. The lamps shine brightly as I walk past. Some wave and move by the wind. I step close to the door I know they would keep Marshall inside of, Slowly I creak open the door and peer inside. Darkness was everywhere. I hear close to almost no breath from the middle of the room. I close the door and turn on my flashlight on a dim setting. Marshall was chained all over, Arms, legs, wrists, ankles, even his neck which scared me. *Could he even breath with that thing on?* I wonder as I step closer. Marshall's eyes open and look right at me but he says nothing. I see a gag in his mouth to keep him quiet. I step closer and kneel down and take the gag off. Marshall's eyes light the place up with their dark blue color. He lightly coughs and smiles at me. "Nice to see you princess. Which type of punishment do you want for me?" he asks smugly. I close my eyes and feel the tears falling. Oh god no not right now, Not in front of him. I think as Marshall looks at me sadly. I knew he wanted to wipe my tears away and hold me tightly like when I was

around five when I had fell on the sidewalk when we were out biking. I wipe them off with my sleeve and looked up at him. "Sorry Kate I never meant to hurt or make you cry" he says quietly. I kiss him on the lips and pull back softly. I would never guess he would be the guy I would fall in love with but I know I had made the most best choice with him. Marshall pushes his head into my shoulder and nods to the door as if to tell me time is up. "Go to bed, It's late." he says as I slowly get up and walk back to the door. I turn as I go just to see his face once more. I clasp the door handle and close it behind me. Suddenly a bright light flashes in front of me as I turn away from the door. I cover my eyes and after it was dimed I look up and see Eric standing there with a flashlight. I gasp and try to act natural but I knew it would never work because he already knew. "Princess princess princess" He said shaking his head. "Don't you know better then that to be down here at night?" he asked with his arm out. I take his hand and I am dragged, I mean literally dragged out and pulled back up to my room as guards standing guard look at us with surprise and confusion.

I am thrown in my room and Eric shut the door and stayed outside. I get dressed in PJs and get in bed and fall asleep with a nightmare. I dreamed I was with Marshall in the secret garden no one else knew about except April and us. He was eating a apple and was joking about something. Suddenly an arrow came out and hit him straight in the chest. I backed up shocked as Marshall's body fell onto the ground. Blood pooled around the wound and Eric appeared with a bow and arrows. I screamed and suddenly I was back in my room and I had woke up screaming and my maid Lilly was looking at me surprised. I looked at her and made a small smile. "Are you ok princess? You

seemed to be screaming” Lilly said as she put my breakfast on the nightstand. I got up and after I had gotten dressed in a blue and white cotton dress and matching flats I walked over and sat at the vanity and saw tears and a flushed face staring at me. Lily walked over and took my hairbrush and brushed my hair into a bun and put a blue rose on my right ear. After she put eye liner, mascara, blue eyeshadow, and red lipstick on me and saw how amazingly beautiful I looked she smiled at me and lead me back to my bed and gave me breakfast. I ate and walked down the hundreds of flights of stairs to the throne room to see mother and Father sitting as they always do: Straight back, hands folded on lap, calm and quiet. I looked almost the same as I sat next to Father just as Eric and two other guards walked in dragging a squirming Marshall between them. “Stop making a show about this boy and just stand still and face your punishment” Mother said shaking her head and falling back into her chair. Eric with a smile pushes Marshall onto his knees and holds him on his back so he can’t get up. I just look at Marshall with my stone cold face. He looks up at us from his kneeling position. Father looks at Mother with a frown and says “I think the best thing is to let Princess Kate decide his fate.” I almost jumped out of my skin to hear that.

“Really Father do you mean it?” I say contain my excitement. Marshall keeps his look of sadness and hate though I know he likes that I get to choose what happens. “I say his punishment should be to be by my side for life” I decreed in my royal voice.

Before anyone says anything Eric coughs loudly and says, “Your majesty if I could say something” Mother nods and I bite my bottom lip as Eric continues. “I feel I must say your daughter was..” I jump in before he could say anything. “Was thinking

that I want to meet prince Andrew. He seems like a nice boy and I find his letter excellently nicely written.” Everyone even Marshall look shocked by the news. Father clears his throat and says “are you sure that you would like to meet this prince?” I nod and close my eyes so I can’t see Marshalls disapproving look. “Well that settles that matter and I think Kate should let her punishment be aloud.” Mother cried as I opened up my eyes. Marshall looks at Eric smugly and Eric stammers to say something but comes up with nothing. I get up and bow to my parents and walk over to Marshall who at the time is roughly being pulled up. I look at the two guards and make a shooring motion with my hand. They leave and the only ones left are Marshall, Eric, Mother, Father and me in the throne room.

Marshall looks at me and I pull on his arm and drag him so it looks rough but it was actually soft. Eric stays behind with Mother and Father and I knew he was going to tell them and ruin my plan with Marshall. I drag him to the garden that was in my dream. Marshall sees my concerned look and asks quietly only not trying to upset me which is something he can do and I think it's the best thing ever. “Kate what is the matter?” I gulp and turn to look at his bright dark beautiful blue eyes. “I had a dream about this place” I say and I tell him the whole nightmare. He stands there listening then after I was done he looked down pondering something. I look confused at him and sit down on the bench in the middle of the garden. Marshall sits down and looks at his hands which still were chained. I took out the key that I had gotten from one of the guards and opened them and Marshall rubbed his sore wrists. I unlocked his ankles aswell though i had no slight idea how he could walk with them on. Another strange mystery. I get up

and suddenly Marshall hugs me tightly and I feel a tear fall down onto my cheek I dont know whos crying but I just keep hugging him till he says "I love you Kate but it's time I need to go." I push away from him and look at his face shocked and scared. "What do you mean by that?" I ask as he picks up a blue rose which I had made all the roses in our secret garden blue. He places it in his pocket and climbs up a ivy wall behind the bench and climbs out. I watch him go knowing I could never stop him. Suddenly a door slams open and I hear mother high pitched voice is blown everywhere. "Kaitlyn Moon you are in so much trouble being down in the dungeons and talking to...:" Mother stops mid sentence as she sees I am alone. I know she would freak if Marshall was here but he was not but the look on Mothers face told me I was so busted. "What is this all about?" Mother says looking at me with a look of either sadness or anger. I look up at her then bow my head. "Sorry Mother I did not mean to upset you." Eric looks down at me and snarls. "She is lying just like that Marshell boy." I look up at him and all the anger and hate inside gets let loose and I explode with anger. I lunge at him and wrestle him to the ground and got a couple of good punches in before two guards pull me off. I growl and struggle to get back into the fight. Eric gets up and stares at Mother and Father. They nod and say "Kate it's time you go to a school which will teach you about being a proper princess" I look at both my parents with shock. "Are you kidding me mother I can't go to a princess boarding school full of ...." Mother cuts me off. "It's going to be just a year or more if you don't get it. We are trying to help you" I shake my head and run from the garden and up to my room. I slam the door as hard as I can and take

out my weapon drawer. I slam it shut as I hear a knock on my door. "Go the heck away" I yell and scream as I hear mother's voice and Father's rage.

Suddenly my door is thrown open and Father is standing in the doorway looking angry as ever with me. I fall onto my bed scared as he walks over and grabs my arm and pulls me up. "Kate you must learn your part in this family. You will go to Ms. Bellaire school for proper princesses and princes. school and you will go with no complaint." I shake and see Mother standing there in the doorway looking at this with tears in her eyes. "You will be leaving in one month." said Father and I just hung in his arms. Soon Mother and Father leave and Lily walks in and starts to pick clothes for me to wear at the new fancy princess school. I walk out of the castle and I walk to the secret base which is only open in a library and a secret elevator. . I stand still as the door opens and Crystal one of the rebels stand in the doorway. "What up Zoe Hunter?" I smile quietly and walk in. The rest of the gang including Marshall sit on the sofas all around the large room we have under a library. The rest of the gang was looking at the map lying with books piled on top of it to keep it down. I just sit next to Marshall who smiles at me and puts his arm around me. I snuggle next to him and see the others staring at us. I blush and turn away as the others cough and look away.



Warning: **PG-13**

## Euphoria in the Eyes of a Serial Killer

By: Ashley Chae

Paintings were hung on the old walls and looked as though they were alive. The crystal chandeliers were **pendulous**, and the dull crystals seemed as nothing more than a couple of rocks placed for decoration. The peeling walls and the eeriness brought a strange sense of comfort for her; she had always been fond of such **eldritch** appearances. Her footsteps made the wooden floor groan as she made her way towards the empty room.

She didn't really harbor any attachment to that room, but something compelled her to keep returning. She couldn't quite put her finger on it, but the room seemed to be of threat to the **dodderly** cats that were still hanging by an attenuated thread. The creaks and moans seemed to reverberate throughout the decrepit house as the hoary cats walked between her legs.

The elfin rats skittered back and forth between the vents, causing dust to fall from the already - old ceiling, and she could imagine them laughing at her for coming back to this forsaken house. She was foolish, she wasn't going to deny that, but she felt as though it were her duty to take care of what was in that room.

She squeezed through the door, pieces of wood getting stuck within the loose threads of her cloak, and smiled in a preternatural way. The cats clawed at the broken door as she pulled on the ring that was attached to the floor. Spiders that had weaved their way through the cracks of the wooden floorboards now scattered in distress. She held her breath and sluggishly went down the creaky stairs.

She touched the clammy walls that were covered in vines, and grabbed the torch that was covered with a layer of moss. She involuntarily shuddered at how moist the base of the torch was, but constrained herself to hold onto it tightly.

The pungent **fetor** made her retch, and it baffled her since it was a scent that she was used to. She could hear the light footsteps of the cats above her, and she wished that they were here with her. Coming here by herself was never an idea she fancied, and yet, she never attempted to bring a companion with her.

She never cared to admit that she was **terror - stricken** because there was no one for her to tell her tale to. She was always alone whether it was before or after her parents' death, but she didn't mind such trivial things anymore. No one cared to ask what was down here, nor did she think they cared. **Her hair was tied, but the little wisps that escaped skimmed over her neck, inducing goosebumps all over her body.** Little drops of water fell from the ceiling, creating a puddle in which she dirtied her pants in.

Reaching the door at the end of the corridor, she placed a hand on the doorknob and entered. She glanced around the room, somewhat relieved, to see that nothing had changed since she last visited. She should've known that no one would ever come visit this abomination, but there was still a sliver of hope in her.

She hummed a tune that had long been forgotten as she capered around the room while being careful not to ruin any furniture. The windows had been bolted shut and red splatters beautifully coated the walls and curtains. **Canvases were laid out on the ground with claw like scratches, that aesthetically complemented the artwork.**

She tapped her fingers lightly on the tools as she closed her eyes and took in the scent that invigorated her. There were times when she wished she could bottle this scent up and make it into a candle.

A slight movement **galvanized** her to raise the tool and wave it in a diagonal motion. Red splattered on her and she smiled in the usual preternatural way. She squatted and admired the beautiful artwork. She was overly **ebullient** to see such a masterpiece before her. She took the tool and began to cut the artwork into smaller

pieces so it would be easier to use. A smile appeared as red splatters covered her hands and clothing.

She pulled back on her tool, and sighed as she rested her back against the red - covered wall. Looking around the room, an overwhelming sense of pride emerged at the sight of bodies piled up. She had made sure that 14 bodies piled into the shape of a birthday cake. She had prepared all the necessary materials, and now, the final body was going to complete the image. She grabbed the decoration she had cut down, and placed it on top of all the others. She was glad that no one had come with her to this house; she would've had to cut them down as well to add to her cake.

“Happy birthday,” she sang, “to me.”



**1st Place Winner of the Kent Memorial Library “Anything Goes Short Story Contest”**

**The Blanket Theory**

**By: Karissa Stanio**

I wouldn't call myself a servant. I would say that I am more of a people's assistant (if I had someone to talk to). Now don't get me wrong, I'm not lonely per say, there's plenty of people around, they're just thousands of miles away.

My job is a simple one, only requiring my huge black blanket. There was no resume to fill out for this job, no interview, no paycheck. It is the only thing I've ever done and the only thing I'll ever do. I create “night” on Earth. The common phrase of, “night is falling,” is incorrect. It is my blanket that is falling.

It started by accident. All I wanted to do was prepare for bed, but I dropped my blanket. It ended up draping itself over planet Earth, the peaks of the tallest mountains holding it up. I was going to pull it off right away, but then I heard...nothing. The world was silent. The people could finally sleep, and who was I to wake them? I slowly pulled my blanket off Earth as the hours passed, and as I did so the people were woken up by the sunlight. I couldn't bear the thought of taking sleep away from these people, so at that hour every day I have repeated the process.

But since then I have gained skill in my practice. I noticed that the people stare up at my blanket quite a lot, and what fun is it to stare at pure blackness? Not fun at all in my opinion, and trust me, I have experience in the matter. So, I have carefully poked holes in my blanket, letting little tiny specs of light through. I have allowed myself to have fun with this, making shapes with the holes for the people to awe at. I hope some of them do.

I can feel the cold through these holes in my blanket when I try to sleep, but it is okay, the people get what they call, “stars,” and I think they like them. I am tired, but it is okay, the people get to sleep. I like to think that the cold and tiredness of one man is worth it if billions of people can comfortably sleep. But sometimes, I see lights on the planet, even though I have spent my life giving the people darkness. I can only hope that they are good and that I do not labor in vain.



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*Season of Haiku*

*By: Grace George*

Summer

The soulstice is nigh  
As is the heat this time  
Here, I shall suffer

Fall

The dropping of leaves  
Fills me with dread  
For winter is nigh

Winter

Cold seeps into me  
My warmth is stolen from my  
Body. Death Awaits.

Spring

Here, I get better  
With the sky's light longer  
Lifting up my soul.



*Flight of the Lovers*

*By: Grace George*

Oh should we fly above this world so high?  
Lest we e'er from the path we are on now,  
The wings unfurled at the break of dawn ligh'.  
When we e'er from the path we are on now,  
Shall we see such wonderful things out there?  
As we would here on this path, day and night?  
Be our lives still as the fluff of a hare.  
Would it still be like that? Would it have changed?  
I believe it not to be as true for  
me, strayed from the path we are on, no other.



*Fight.*

*By: Grace George*

Screaming-  
Anxiety-  
Fight or flight, activate.  
Your fault, all your fault, not mine. Leave  
me, please.

## The Robin

By: Leslie Welker

Grey skies, grey earth, grey trees trembling.  
The world wears dreary colors in winter.  
The wind whips over snow drifts,  
white cyclones around,  
and all is silent.  
It is cold.

On a thin woody branch hangs bright red berries.  
Dry dusty twigs rustle and rattle in the wind  
Berries mirror the liveliness of summer,  
So strange in a wasteland  
of muted skies  
and earth.

Alighting on the branch, a small bird ruffles up.  
Dark eyes glint, brighter than snowlight.  
His breast matches the berries,  
which he picks with care,  
enjoying his winter  
feast.

With its berries, bushes and birds, sky, earth and trees,  
The world is more than a simple, dark scene  
And the timely arrival of the robin,  
heralds the approach,  
long awaited,  
of spring.



## My Pain

By: Anonymous

Searing scars in its wake

Boiling blood as its effect

Ripping repairable holes with its stake

Hoping one day to resurrect

Appearing from thin air

Burning my world to a char

Leaving life in a state of despair

Painting the heart like a burning star

Asking me to go the distance

Challenging my persistence



Haiku

By: Anonymous

Fleeing Jack Frost's grasp

Shows his appreciation

For his love of warmth

