

# **Monsters Get Whatever They Want #1.**

## **“Gift from My Dead Granny”**

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## Chapter One

### What Do You Know About Monster Kids?

I knew there was something different about my two adoptive young children, who never belonged in our family to begin with. I wanted them to feel like they were wanted into the Changeling family. Who wanted the best from them. They always seemed to be out of control and never wanted to do anything their overly protective parents wanted to do.

I wanted to tell my husband, Russell Changeling the difference between having children of our own. And accepting children into our family who were different, and nothing like us. I wanted everything to be normal and happy in our family. Russell and I don't come from a big family. So, it was important we keep our two children, Mark and Valentino, and make them part of our independent family. To accept them for being different and nothing like us.

Even though we tried to get our two kids to get along in our family, they never wanted anything to do with me or Russell. They always seemed bored and uninterested in anything we had to make our life better. Even though Mark and Valentino never complained about living together in the same room, they never fought. Mostly kept to themselves.

If something bothered them, they would just ignore whatever it was bothering them. I tried to get my kids to accept themselves for their unique differences. Being something different can make a person change how they feel about what it means to be normal.

I wanted to make our lives interesting. Most importantly, I wanted to keep our kids happy. I knew they had a birthday coming up in October. They were both going to be turning thirteen. I wanted to give them a surprise birthday party with their two best friends from middle school, Nathan Chronicles and Kaleb Hope. They were all in the same class, Nathan and Kaleb were in a grade year ahead of my children. But they have been tight friends since third grade.

I often worry about change. I knew it was going to happen to both of my kids on Halloween this year. I didn't want to tell them they weren't like normal kids in this town. But once they go through puberty, they will need to know they are different.

Was I going to do anything to keep my two kids, Mark and Valentino, from changing? I didn't have a plan. I knew it would be uncomfortable when they start to feel strange. But it's part of going through puberty. Everybody goes through at some point in their lives. Some, later than others. But I knew their birthday on Halloween this year was going to change their lives for the worst.

I wanted to do my best to protect my two children from getting exposed to the darkness plaguing their imagination. They needed to know the truth about what they know about the world around them. Why should they be afraid of even their own shadows? It wasn't going to be easy going through these scary new changes on their birthday. But I believe they will get used to them, after they finish changing into something not human.

My husband, Russell, doesn't know anything about where our children come from, exactly. He doesn't believe in Halloween curses. Or just because they are nothing like us, they

have nothing to worry about. I wanted children who were not like us. To be accepted for their differences. And come into our lives, to make us a happy, family, every day. Nobody wants to die alone. So, that's why I agreed to my husband to adopt two new children to come into our lives.

"No matter what happens, to love our children, unconditionally, okay love?" I asked my husband, Russell, at breakfast in our warmly lit kitchen, one morning. I held a cup of hot chocolate in my hands. I blew on the surface of the coffee mug and took a little sip.

I don't think my husband was paying attention to me. He was staring lost deep in thought. Looking out the kitchen window. I think he was mad because he didn't want us to celebrate our children's birthday this year. He knew it was going to be different this time. Russell wasn't going to be ready for our two boys to go through dramatic changes to make it more difficult for them to be accepted into today's society.

I took a seat at the kitchen table and then put my coffee mug on the table. "I know you must be concerned about our children, Russell," I said, slowly. "But you know, they will no longer need us to be their parents," I said, trying to calm my husband. "Once they grow up, we'll just be us together, like before we even had children of our own," I said. Russell just scoffed and shook his head, unable to believe anything I was telling him.

"What do you think will happen to our two children who don't want to become themselves on their birthday?" Russell asked, turning away from the window. "How can we tell them they are not going to be normal kids forever?" he asked me, frowning and folded in his arms in disgust.

I didn't know what to do to keep my husband from worrying about our kids. Suddenly, we heard screams coming from down the hall in our children's bedroom. Russell and I both got out of our seats. As we saw our two kids, Mark and Valentino barrel out of their bedroom. Valentino had his arms wrung around Mark's neck, choking him. I didn't know what to do to break up their fight. I couldn't tell if they were just playing around. Or really getting on each other's nerves?

## Chapter Two

### Double the Darkness on Halloween

“Break it up, you two!” Russell, my angry husband shouted at my two children. Who were fighting and wringing each other’s neck in the hallway. Russell and I quickly hurried over to separate Mark and Valentino from fighting and yelling.

Mark was pulling on Valentin’s long, bushy hair. Making him squeal like a pig. Using his strength, my strong husband quickly pulled the two twin brothers apart from one another. Sighing with relief, I quickly hurried over to assist my husband.

“He started it!” Mark spat out, vigorously. “He wanted to take turns playing his new XBOX fighting game!” Mark said, tears rolling down his cheeks. He turned his back away from Valentino who also turned his head away from him. They each looked away and folded their arms in disgust.

“Mark, apologize to your brother,” I said, sincerely. Valentino sneered playfully and shoved Mark’s shoulders. Almost knocking him down. Mark angrily shoved his brother back again. “Don’t make me take your games away from you two for a week!” I snapped, holding my arms in front of Mark and Valentino to keep them from slugging the other one.

Sighing with relief, Mark and Valentino turned around to face each other. Even though Mark was embarrassed to hug his brother, he let Valentino hug him. Then, Mark quickly shoved his brother off him. He dusted his green short-sleeved shirt, like he was dusting Valentino’s germs off him.

“I was in the middle of collecting all the magic gems in the enchanted forest. To keep a greedy, ugly old troll from stealing them from a princess locked in her cabin. And getting a high score in the XBOX game! When suddenly, my annoying brother unplugged my XBOX connection. Making me lose points in the game and starting back over!” Mark said, unhappily. “Making the troll steal all my collective gems in the game and kidnap the supernatural princess in her locked cabin. And lock me in a cage in some dark cave,” Mark complained.

I rolled my eyes. “You two should take a break from video games. And do your homework, first,” I explained, uneasily. It wasn’t like my kids were going to listen to me. But I knew they would obey their parents before they do what they think is best for them.

“Alright done, mom!” Mark whined and tossed his hands in the air in frustration. “I always do my homework in school, before doing something fun,” Mark said. “Our teacher makes us do our homework assignments in class, before going home,” he continued.

Mark was sounding as believable to trust him. But I didn’t want to argue he wasn’t telling the truth, either. “Alright, that’s fair,” I said. “I just want you two kids to share your toys and electronics if there’s going to be some kind of sibling rivalry over it,” I snapped, angrily. My husband, Russell, put a comforting arm around my shoulders. “Thanks, babe,” I said, feeling loved and secured.

Russell turned to look sternly at our two kids. “Listen, here! Your mom and I mustn’t go through this every day! You two kids *must* get along, or we will have no choice but to ground you from your electronics for a whole week! No fun whatsoever, for a week. If you can’t enjoy each other’s company in the same room, we’ll have to eventually separate you two kids into different rooms,” Russell said, making a promise.

Mark and Valentino suddenly whirled around to face us both. “You’re joking, right?” they said, at once. They started talking and yelling back at us at the same time. Trying to calm them down, Russell and I hugged each one of our kids, to keep them relaxed.

“No matter what goes on around here,” Russell said, as he was hugging onto Mark. “We will love each other every day. Do what’s right. Do our homework at school and daily house chores, before playing, okay kids?” Russell asked, trying to get them to settle down a bit.

But Mark and Valentino were squirming uncomfortably in our arms. “You’ll get used to following our rules, kids,” I said. “Living here is very simple. Don’t fight, and you’ll get to do whatever two children want,” I continued. I could tell Mark and Valentino weren’t paying attention to us. They were trying to get away from Russell and myself.

“Okay! We promise!” Mark and Valentino uttered at the same time. I eyed my husband who was staring into my dreamy eyes, as well. “Just let us go back to playing our video games! Please, mom and dad?” they begged and urged us to let them go.

Looking directly into my eyes, Russell nodded and smiled at me. “Of course, kids!” Russell said, urgently to Mark and Valentino. “But remember you still live on the same roof as your parents. Obey us, and you can do whatever you want,” Russell said, smiling.

“Yes!” Mark and Valentino high fived each other and quickly hurried back into their bedroom. And *slammed* the door on us. Making Russell and I jump with fright. It was going to be hard letting our two kids go.

## Chapter Three

### Change Me into Something Uncomfortable

“Do you know I’m not going to be myself on our birthday, on Halloween this year, bro?” Mark asked his brother, Valentino. Who was sprawled onto his bed across from his bed covers, reading a monster comic book. He turned the page, not paying attention to his brother.

“That’s nice,” Valentino said, not caring. “Let me know how it works out for you,” Valentino told his brother. Suddenly, Mark got angry. He tossed his XBOX game controller in front of the TV. Then, Mark walked over to his brother’s bed. He quickly and madly took the comic book out of Valentino’s reach. And tossed it into a wastebasket next to our desk.

Sit upright in bed, Valentino turned his attention to his annoyed little brother. “You never believe anything I say, seriously, bro!” Mark yelled, putting his hands on his hips, sternly. Not taking his eyes off Valentino.

Valentino sighed and tried to show his brother some affection. “Look, Mark. I know we are both going to have another birthday coming up on Halloween. But it doesn’t mean anything. We’re just both getting another year older,” Valentino said. Mark wasn’t going to keep something he’s been hiding since he could remember Halloween was not going to be unlike any normal holiday tradition this year. It was going to be different. And Valentino didn’t believe he and his brother would be ready for a change so different, everybody would notice how strange they have become.

“You’re not worried if the change will be permanent, Valentino?” Mark asked, suspiciously. Valentino wasn’t concentrating on responding to his brother. He got off his bed covers and sat at his desk chair and twirled around. Mark quickly grabbed hold of Valentino and stopped him from spinning his desk chair.

“We’re going through puberty! On our birthday, this Halloween, bro!” Valentino announced, shouting a little louder than he meant to. “Everybody goes through changes when they get older. You shouldn’t fear going through changes,” Valentino yelled, angrily. His brother was making him mad. He couldn’t let him feel like they would be treated like a monster hellbent on tormenting their poor souls for the rest of their lives.

“But I *am* afraid of going through changes on our next birthday, bro!” Mark snapped, tossing his hands in the air. “Don’t you know we’re no longer going to be kids on Halloween, this year?” Mark said. “We’re going to be grown-ups—or something else. I’m not sure. We’re going to have to get jobs and live on our own. Mom and dad won’t be able to take care of us anymore. Aren’t you scared we’ll be cursed because both of our birthdays are the same day on Halloween?” Mark asked. It was a little suspicious. But Valentino didn’t think anything odd about it.

Valentino grabbed a fluffy pillow off his bed and whacked it across Mark’s chest. Catching the pillow in his grasp, Mark grabbed hold of the pillow. And smacked Valentino across the side of his head, knocking him out of his rolling desk chair he sat in.

“Come on, I don’t want to fight you early this morning,” Valentino complained. “Just don’t worry about changing into something too uncomfortable this Halloween, okay bro?” he asked, politely. Mark laughed and did a little dance in front of Valentino.

Valentino was getting dizzy watching his brother twirl around him. He was getting faster and started to smoke. Valentino quickly grabbed hold of Mark by his shoulders and stopped him from dancing around the room by his shoulders. “Dude, chill,” he snapped, trying to grab hold of his anxious and annoying little brother.

Mark smiled and laughed some more. “I’m so excited about the change on our birthday, in a couple of weeks, bro!” Mark said. “I should change into something everybody should be afraid of,” Mark continued. “Make you have nightmares you won’t even begin to dream of” he said, beaming with excitement.

“I’ve never seen you this happy about getting older, before, bro,” Valentino said, amusingly. “I think it’s something not to anticipate too seriously at this point,” he said. “It’s just another day to get older and maturer. It doesn’t mean anything, okay bro?” Valentino said, trying to reason with his brother, Mark.

He wasn’t paying attention to Valentino. Mark now gripped hold of a stress ball in his hand and tossed it in the air. Catching it and squeezing it before tossing it in the air again, to catch it in the air.

Suddenly, the two boy’s bedrooms squeaked open, swiftly. Russell, their father, appeared in the doorway. Looking worried, he said, “Boys, come into the living room. I have something tragically important to tell you both. Your mother was in an accident,” Russell said, bursting into tears as he buried his hands into face and cried.

## Chapter Four

### Everybody Likes the Darkness

Mark and Valentino didn't believe what their father was telling them. "How could this be, dad?" Mark asked their father, urgently. Valentino put a comforting hand on his brother's shoulder. Mark was breathing uncomfortably. He was having trouble coping with hearing such a tragedy happened in their family.

"Is she going to be okay, dad?" Valentino asked, trying to be strong. Russell wasn't done crying. He continued bawling and didn't stop the waterworks. "Oh. Come one, Mark. Let's settle this in the living room, together," Valentino continued.

Russell followed his two sons into the living room down the dimly lit hallway. Taking a seat at the love seat, in front of their mounted TV on the wall, Russell stood next to a coffee table. "How can I say this, kids?" Russell asked, taking a deep breath. "Your mother is in a coma in the hospital. She was in a crazy car accident on the way home from the grocery store, buying Halloween decorations for us. When a drunk driver sped through a red streetlight. Slamming into your mother's car. Causing your mom to get shaken up and banged badly into a coma. It killed the drunk driver. He went through his front window shield. Causing the road to have a traffic jam during the crash at the time. We don't know how long your mother will be in a coma. But it's something we're going to have to let time take its course," Russell said, taking a deep breath.

"Oh wow," Valentino and Mark said in union. "That's crazy," Mark said, finally. His eyes were wide and filled with watery tears, too. "Will they let us go visit our mom?" Mark asked. Valentino could see Mark was trembling and shaking like a leaf.

Russell took a seat on the coffee table. "They won't allow visitors only on the weekends. It's Wednesday today. Your mom has been in an accident since Monday this week. Nobody knows when your mom will wake up from her coma. They have doctors and nurses watched over her all day and night long. All we can do right now is keep mom in our prayers. And hope she'll make it through," Russell said.

"I can't believe this happened," Mark sobbed, whipping his watery eyes. "I hope the drunk driver was charged with causing such a tragic accident," Mark said. "He can't get away with something like this," Mark complained. He started to rise to feet in protest, but Valentino grabbed hold of his right arm and told him to stay put.

"Look kids, I know how worried you are right now," Russell explained. "But there's nothing we can do. I'll call the hospital this evening at about six p.m. tonight. And check on the doctors to see how your mother is doing. I don't want you kids to go without a mother in your life. I know how important she means to us. Do whatever it takes to wake her up," Russell said.

Valentino and Mark nodded in agreement. "We understand, dad," they said together. "No matter how long it takes, we'll keep mom in our thoughts and prayers," Valentino said, thoughtfully. Russell smiled and put a comfortable hand on his son's right shoulder. "Is there anything we can do right now for our mom?" Valentino asked his father, urgently.

Suddenly, the telephone rang in the kitchen. Making us all jump with startlement. Russell quickly turned away from his two boys. He hurried into the kitchen and grabbed the red phone receiver hung on the wall in the kitchen.

Valentino and Mark stayed on the couch, trying not to worry about what's going on right now in their lives. They barely heard their dad's concerned phone voice into the receiver. With his bad turn against them. Then, Russell quickly hung up the phone. There was a brief, silent moment from them. Then, Russell said with his back turned against his two sons, "Your mother's dead," Russell whispered and cried.

## Chapter Five

### How to Come Back from the Dead

After the funeral arrangements were made, Russell drove his two sons back to their home. Mark and Valentino both remained quiet. Not saying anything after their father took them home from the funeral. Russell, himself, was quiet. His mind was wandering off into space, as he tried to concentrate on driving to their place.

It was dark when Russell finally got there, where they live in Sparkle Town. After driving their family sports car into the garage, Mark and Valentino went straight to their bedrooms. Russell was not in the mood to be around his two sons. So, the two boys got the message to stay in their rooms for right now.

“Do you think dad will ever find love again?” Mark asked his brother, Valentino. Who was at his wooden desk, writing in his journal. With the desk lamp turned on. Valentino just shrugged and wasn’t in the mood for talking this late at night. He just put in headphones and turned on his music player in his pocket. And turned up the volume on the way. Ignoring his brother.

Mark sighed and plopped his back onto his bed. He closed his eyes and tried to go to sleep. It was later in the night, when Mark and Valentino were both startled awake in their beds. Sitting up, they heard some kind of banging against the side of the wall, down the hall. Getting out of bed, Mark and Valentino walked out of the room.

Taking a flashlight in his hand, Mark had grabbed off the floor next to the wall, in their room, Mark and Valentino poked their heads in the dark hallway. Seeing their dad’s shadow floating in the dim lit hall, Mark and Valentino both uttered cries of shock and dismay.

Russell Changeling was glowing and floating in the air. He was pounding his fists into the dry wall, next to the two boy’s bedrooms. “Dad?” Mark and Valentino cried together. Seeing there was blood on the brown carpet in the hall, the two kids noticed their dad’s hands were bleeding. From punching a hole into the dry wall.

“STOP!” Mark and Valentino both yelled. It was no use. Their dad was in some kind of sleepwalking trance. They hurried over to their father. They saw with fascination he was pounding his fists into an old family portrait in a glass frame of them on their vacation to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida at the petting zoo last summer.

But Russell wasn’t listening to his two kids. Still floating in midair, Russell cocked his head quickly toward them. He opened his mouth. Howling at them, his eyes glowed brightly. Making the dark hallway light up like a firecracker exploded into the house.

Shielding their eyes, the two little boys turned away from the possessed dad. “What’s the matter, dad?!” Mark asked, suspiciously. As Valentino tried to bend down to the floor and pick up the bloody stained glasses from the floor.

Before anything unlike what they've experienced, dad howled extremely loudly at his two kids. He started floating at them and vanished as Russell went through Mark and Valentino. Knocking them to the ground, Valentino and Mark uttered a scream of pain. As Valentino was picking up the bloody pieces of glass off the floor, he had accidentally jabbed a sharp edge of the broken glass portrait into his brother's sides. Stabbing a wound into his side.

"I'm so sorry, bro!" Valentino shouted, trying to get the piece of glass out of his gut on his side. Valentino started to take the bloody glass. But it was making the wound even worse. As more blood from Mark's gut, pour out of his side.

"Don't pull it out!" Mark yelled, grinning painfully at the wound down in his side. "Just leave it there," Mark sobbed. "I don't know what's going on, bro. But I don't like it," Mark said, as more blood from his gut at his side dribbled down his side.

Valentino looked away from the wound in his brother's gut. "Let me take you to the couch in the living room. I'm afraid if we don't take it out, the wound will get bigger. And eventually kill you," Valentino said.

"Where did our ghost dad disappear too?" Mark asked, trying not to pass out. As they watched, another pool of blood came out of Mark's gut at his side. "He must be sleepwalking again," Mark said, cringing at this bloody wound.

Mark nodded, as if agreeing. Valentino carefully lifted his wounded brother off the floor. Careful not to let the puncture in the wound stab him badly. Valentino wasn't strong. But he wasn't weak, either.

When Valentino carried Mark into the living room. He stopped and almost dropped his wounded brother to the floor. They were both shocked to see their mom standing in the living room front door. I don't know how I got here. Nor do I remember being in the car wreck last week. But I was so happy to see my loving kids. Even though I knew they were not in good shape.

I frowned and gasped. As I watched Valentino drop his brother, Mark. And they both collapsed to the floor. This was not how I wanted to come back to life to be remembered. I wasn't going to eat their brains or anything. I was just happy to be given a second chance. Now, I was in more trouble than I thought.

## Chapter Six

### My Imagination Gets Carried Away

Mark doesn't remember much after waking up in the middle of the night, during a thunderstorm. Mark's face was drenched in sweat. He looked around his shadowy bedroom. He noticed his brother, Valentino, was turned over on his side, sound asleep, snoring heavily.

Then, Mark got out of his bed and went to look out the blinds in the window. In their front yard, he didn't see anything in the darkness of the storm. There was a big tree in their yard, blocking the glow of the full moon in the cloudy, night sky. Lightning crackled and struck the tree branch. Mark jumped back in shock as he watched the tree branch sprawl to the ground.

Valentino snorted and rolled over to face his brother's side. Trying to wake his brother's sleep, Valentino just groaned and snorted loudly at Mark's face. Thunder boomed and made the walls in their dark room rattle.

Then, Mark turned to look at their bedroom door. It squeaked open quickly. Their father, Russell Changeling, entered, carrying a burning candlestick in his hand. "You kids okay, in here?" Russell whispered, trying not to be spooked by the shadowy figures from the lightning outside the window, getting him jumping up and down with fright. "The storm blocked out our power. So, I'd thought I would come in here to check on you two," Russell said, wind blowing in from the open windowsill in Mark and Valentino's bedroom. Blowing out the candlestick Russell held in his hands.

Screaming in their dark room, Valentino and Mark both got to their feet. Hearing the strike of a match being light, they saw their father had another box of matches in pajamas. And light the candlestick again, shakily. Russell quietly walked over to our open bedroom window and closed it shut. Then, he locked it.

"You boys should be okay here, tonight," Russell said, lovingly. "It's just a normal thunderstorm making us nervous," he continued. "I'll be in the kitchen making some peanut butter and celery for a midnight snack. If you two kids get scared in your dark room, you can come join me," Russell said, thoughtfully.

Their dad started to walk away from them. Then, Valentino and Mark turned to look at each other skeptically. Finally, the two brothers followed their dad out of the shadowy, cold bedroom. Following the glow of the candlestick in his hand, they all stopped in their tracks. They heard something drop to the floor above the top floor in their parent's bedroom.

It sounded like somebody was jumping up and down on the bed or something. Hurrying up the stairs, taking them two at a time. Russell and my two kids made it upstairs to their parent's bedroom. Taking a shaky hand, Russell used his other free hand and opened their bedroom door quickly.

Looking in the darkness, Russell and the two kids gasped with fright. Their son Mark and Valentino's mom was jumping on their big bed up and down. Like she was just having fun being

a grown-like child having fun in a thunderstorm power shortage. Because it seemed to be giving her energy and her excited face was brightening up the dark room.

“How did you get here, dear?” Russell asked me impatiently. “You got in a tragedy. And you somehow came back to life only to pretend like you’re not sick,” Russell reasoned. I just smiled and started laughing at myself. I was in my pajama robe, jumping on the soft bed mattress in our room.

If Russell and my two kids understood what I had to go through to get back home alive, they wouldn’t judge me in a way to see how happy I am being back to life. I started tossing bed pillows onto the carpeted floor in front of me.

I spread my arms out to my side. I turned and looked at my loving family. Then, I fell backwards and collapsed into a heap of feather pillows on the carpeted floor in front of me. I laughed and giggled like a little girl. Who didn’t realize how undead I was.

“You’re acting like an immature child, Emma,” Russell scolded me. I just laughed at his face. “I know you just got back from the dead for us. But you shouldn’t behave in such a way to make others feel disturbed to be around you,” Russell explained, unhappily.

I started to roll around the pillows and covers on the floor in my bedroom. “Every time I’m happy...or you see somebody else happy...you don’t seem to want them happy,” I said. “Why is that? I try to be myself and not let anybody get the best of us. Because I have a family and we’re supposed to have each other’s back no matter what. If you don’t want me happy and back from the dead to be with you and my kids, forever. I’ll just go back to the underworld, where I belong,” I said, matter-of-factly.

Lightning flashed outside the closed draped curtains in our bedroom. As I walked over to the bedroom window. Open the blinds. I turned to look out at the cold, dark rooftop at the two-story floor drop to the backyard. I saw if I dropped to the ground, I could jump into our six-foot deep swimming pool. I could easily survive the drop. I started to climb out the window and plummet to my death...

## Chapter Seven

### Happy to be Alive

So after I went sprawling to my death, I didn't expect to have survived so easily. I landed on a plastic alligator rafter in the deep of our pool. My head plopped on the snout of the green, tooth plastic alligator rafter I landed on. I was shaken up a bit. Seeing how disturbed I made it seem.

When I turned to look up at my husband and two worried kids at the top of the floor of our house, in Sparkle Town, I smiled at them gloomily. And then I gave them a wry double thumbs up. Russell, Mark, and Valentino just stared at me, with blank stares. Then, Russell and my two kids pumped their fists in the air, cheering me on. I couldn't feel more relieved to see how happy they were to see me alive, again.

"Get out of the pool and the rain, love!" Russell shouted at me. I started to scramble off the alligator rather than wobbling my balance onto it. When suddenly, a bolt of lightning struck from the storm clouds in the stormy night sky. It struck the water next to the alligator rafter I fell off from.

Making the bolt of a sizzling hot lightning rod from the sky, electrocuting the water in our pool I was drowning in the deep end. "I'm coming, honey!" I barely heard, my husband, Russell after me. I was drowning in sorrow. As I was going all the way under the deep waters of our swimming pool.

Then, I heard a loud splash from the surface of the pool I was going under. Opening my eyes, groggily, I saw my husband, Russell swimming to the bottom of the pool after getting me. I saw he had his shirt off, and I can see his hairy chest coming toward me. I couldn't hold my breath any longer. My chest was burning for oxygen. I was drowning to my death, slowly.

Before I gained unconsciousness, Russell quickly grabbed hold of my lifeless dead body on the bottom of the pool. He quickly swam back up to the surface of the cold, dirty swimming pool. Gasping for air, Russell propped my unconscious dead on the alligator rafter, bobbing on the surface of the swimming pool.

Suddenly, a young boy's hand reached out to Russell and me, who were both exhausted from swimming underwater. Turning to look up, we saw it was Mark and Valentino coming to help us out of the deep end of the pool. We were hanging on the side of the green, ugly alligator rafter.

We both gladly grabbed hold of each of Mark and Valentino's hands. They hoisted our soaking wet bodies onto the side of the swimming pool. It was still lightning and thundering. But Russell and I just rested on the sidewalk next to the swimming pool, trying to catch our breath.

"That was *awesome*, dad!" I heard Mark exclaim, happily. I looked at my husband drearily and smiled. Russell smiled back at me. Then, we both burst out chuckling nervously to ourselves. Our two kids helped Russell and me to our feet. We were all soaked from the rain. And jumping into the deep of our swimming pool in our backyard.

Mark wrapped an arm around Russell's shoulders as Valentino helped carry me around his shoulders onto our wobbly feet. Careful not to sleep on the wet pavement in our backyard, we all trotted back inside of our family rental house.

After getting back inside, the thunderstorm finally stopped. Everything got quiet as we entered the back kitchen sliding doors to our patio. Then, we heard the click coming from our circuit breaker in the kitchen. It turned the kitchen lights back on.

"Okay kids, don't be scared," Russell said, scolding onto our two worried kids. "Now the power is back on, we can all go back to bed. I don't want any of us getting sick because we got a little carried away," Russell said.

Mark and Valentino both looked at each other and laughed nervously. "We want to do this every night, mom and dad!" Valentino exclaimed, cheerfully. "Having an adventure never gets boring at our house!" Valentino laughed more and slapped his brother a high five.

I wanted to hug my boys. They let me. Even though we were all soaked to the bones. "Don't tell your friends at school, what we do at home, okay kids?" I asked my two sons. They looked at each other frowned. Nodding, they agreed and shook my damp, cold hands.

We started in our separate bedrooms. I didn't know what else to expect during a night like this. I had to make sure nothing too wild happens to us again. The dimly lit house groaned and creaked from the strong wind outside. It wasn't anything to worry about.

Except, when Russell guided us up the stairs, a big, fat rat scurried across our feet, coming out of a hole in the wall in the kitchen. I jumped and screamed into my husband's arms. As Mark and Valentino started grabbing hold of a broomstick out of the kitchen pantry. Following the ugly rodent with the broomsticks in their hands, they cornered the rat up the top of the stairs. It was nibbling on a piece of yellow, stinky cheese it got from our refrigerator.

It ate the rest of the yellow, square piece of cheese. Squeaked and hurried back under Mark and Valentino's legs, who were in the kitchen. But the rat disappeared into the mouse hole and poked his twitchy nosed head out of the mouse hole. Squeaked noisily and disappeared back into the darkness of the mouse hole in the kitchen. Just as Mark and Valentino cornered the brown rodent, barely missing the ugly creature disappearing after them. They screamed in defeat.

## Chapter Eight

### It Doesn't Take Much to be Scared

The next morning was filled with empty promises. Even though I was feeling better, my husband, Russell Changeling wanted to take me to get a doctor's examination at the local hospital in Sparkle Town. I was in no mood to visit some unimportant doctor who would tell me nothing good will come to my health. Give me some pills to pop in my mouth every night. And pretend everything was normal.

"Darling, you should be scared to go back the way you were," Russell said, looking at his darkly handsome reflection into a tall, dressing room mirror in our bedroom on the top floor. "Aren't you worried what might happen to you, if you don't get professional help, dear?" Russell asked me, impatiently.

"I would just tell those doctors I was in an accident that shook me up, badly," I explained, taking my earrings off my right and left ear. Putting them into a jewelry box on my side of the dressing room. "Which was like telling them the truth," I complained. Trying not to get my husband in a bad mood, I wanted him to feel relaxed and calm. "It wasn't my fault anyway. Who drives through a red light, at full speed, and not paying attention to what they're doing on the streets, in their cars?" I asked, worriedly to Russell.

He remained silent and pounded an angry fist onto his dressing room table next to the bedroom door. "The other guy shouldn't have been so lucky enough to survive the car crash, dear," Russell said, now pacing back and forth in front of the dressing room mirror in our bedroom.

Closing the jewelry box, I turned to my worried husband. I walked over to the end of our queen-sized bed and sat on the edge of the bed. Russell sighed heavily and walked toward me. He sat in my lap, and I rocked him back and forth to keep him calm. "It was just an accident, dear. Let it go, these things happen," I said, truthfully.

He turned his head away from resting on my right shoulder. "Everything is fine, then, okay?" he asked, seriously. I stared into space, thinking hard about what was going to happen to us next. "I mean, how are we going to get another car if you wrecked our last family sports car, love? I don't have the kind of job security to afford to buy us another car," Russell complained. "I mean, we'll have to get an Uber car ride to take us everywhere we want to in Sparkle Town," Russell announced.

I sighed and stoked my husband's bushy hair out of his dreamlike emerald eyes. "It won't be so bad," I explained. "Just until I can do another office job. Save money to buy a rental car for us. Let's just take it one day at a time, okay?" I asked, pleasantly. Dad nodded and rested his head on my shoulder again.

"I'm not going to get any sleep tonight, again, dear," Russell said, sobbing. "Medicine is not good for me. It wears off and makes me wake up in the middle of the night. Sleepwalking the halls at night. Stalking our two twins, like I'm some sort of mad man out to do something

harmful to our boys,” Russell said, sniffing his wet nose. He blew snot on the red bathrobe I wore.

I cringed with disgust and turned to look away. “I take care of everything with my job as a receptionist at the dental office. We’ll just hire an Uber car ride to work every day. Until we make enough to make a down payment on another car for our family,” I said. “Our lives aren’t over yet, love,” I promised.

Russell looked up from my shoulders. “I hope you’re right, honey. I’m tired of fearing the supernatural activity bumping us in the darkness of our town at night, love. If Sparkle Town is anything but a normal town, we must prove it to our two sons. We can live here like normal citizens in everyday living. Without something weird happening to us. I just want to live a normal life with my love and caring family, with everybody else here in Sparkle Town, together,” Russell said, sniffing his wet nose, and drying off his watery eyes.

“Don’t worry about anything, love,” I said, lifting his chin up. So, his eyes gazed into my own blue-diamond looking eyes. “Take it easy, one day at a time. We’ll make it work out with everybody here, who lives here, too,” I said, matter-of-factly.

Then, there was a pounding of knock coming from our bedroom door, making us both jump to our feet, with fright. “Who-who’s there?” Russell and I cried together, in union, Russell walked shakily over to our bedroom door and unlocked our bedroom door, for privacy.

Opening the door, squeakily, there was nobody there. We got close together, expecting one of our kids to be there. When suddenly, Mark and Valentino both jumped in front of our bedroom door. Wearing scary monster Halloween masks, they growled and howled at us. Trying to grab our attention.

Making them laugh, as we watched Russell Changeling faint from exhaustion, removing their Halloween monster masks off their faces, Mark and Valentino looked at their unconscious father next to me on the bedroom floor. They turned to look at each other with dread. Then, they slapped each other and laughed and pointed at our unconscious dead on the floor, next to me, in my bedroom, upstairs. This was going to go well...

## Chapter Nine

### Be On Your Best Behavior

I wanted my two sons to say how sorry their behavior has been for treating their father over the weekend. “It was a joke,” Mark would say to me. We were in the kitchen the next morning. Dad was at the table, holding onto an ice pack on his head, where he hit his noggin on my feet, from falling. After getting scared by our two monster kids. “We didn’t mean anything by it,” he continued, trying to smirk at me, looking at his brother.

“Be as it may be,” I said, scolding my sons, “do you want to go trick-or-treating with your two best friends from middle school this year on Halloween? I want you two kids to apologize for causing your father to have a heart attack and pass out on us,” I screamed, angrily at Mark and Valentino.

Trying to keep from laughing and keeping a straight face at us, Mark and Valentino just shrugged and turned to look at their wounded father at the kitchen table. “We’re sorry, dad,” Mark and Valentino both said. They turned to look down at the kitchen floor, feeling totally embarrassed again.

“You two kids know how easy I scare,” Russell whined. His voice squeaked a little. “I could’ve had a heart attack and not wake up next time,” he continued. Mark and Valentino weren’t being serious from giving their father’s attention. It was making Russell upset. He quickly sat the blue ice pack down on the table. Quickly scrambled to his feet. Rushed toward the two startled boys and pointed an accusing figure at them.

“Boys, if you don’t be on your best behavior, I’m going to ground you for a whole week of no fun entertainment, whatsoever around here!” Russell yelled at us. “I’m going to shut down our internet connection for a week, if you don’t behave for your mom and I’s Halloween party with the neighbors next weekend. While we let you go trick-or-treating with your friends, we’re going to throw a little party ourselves,” Russell warned the two boys, seriously.

Mark and Valentino suddenly got upset, themselves. Turning to us, Mark and Valentino quickly changed their attitude. “We’ll be good, all Halloween month long, mom and dad,” Valentino told me and Russell, and of course, Mark.

“You better behave *all* the time!” Russell groaned in complaint. I wanted to warm up some chocolate pop tarts in the microwave and eat them for breakfast. Before getting the school bus ride, here to take our two boys to school.

I opened the top cabinet shelf and grabbed an open box of blueberry pop tarts out of the cabinet. I quickly closed the squeaky hinged doors. Grabbed a package of blueberry pop tarts out of it. And put them in the toaster over the bar. Waited for them to cook for a minute or two.

“Before the bus gets here children, I want you two kids to have a balanced breakfast,” I told them, excitedly. Suddenly, the toaster oven popped. Making the warm, gooey blueberry pop tarts up out of the slots. Grabbing a paper plate out of the cabinet above the bar, I handed one

plastic plate with a blueberry pop tart to Mark and Valentino. “Have a seat for you two,” I said, cheerfully. “This will get your day going,” I said, smiling at my kids.

Opening the white refrigerator, in the kitchen, I grabbed a jug of half-used milk. I poured a glass of cold milk to my two sons, also. They looked at each other and shrugged. “Thanks, mom. You’re the best,” they both said, giving me a sweet kiss on the cheeks.

They both sat down on either side of Russell at the kitchen table. I smirked, as I watched Russell try to snatch a piece of blueberry pop tart from Valentino’s plate. He quickly slapped my husband’s hand, making him jerk back and wince in pain. “Get your own breakfast, dad,” Valentino said. Taking a long, thirst-quenching drink of milk from his glass at the table. The two kids laughed and started eating their breakfast as I watched them with anticipation.

It wasn’t much longer until the yellow Sparkle Town school bus pulled into our driveway, waiting to take my two boys, Mark and Valentino to middle school. It was on time. My clock on the wall said seven-thirty a.m. School begins sharp at eight a.m. Taking one more bite from the warm, blueberry pop tarts, I watched as Mark and Valentino both washed it down with a glass of cold milk.

Setting their glasses down on the kitchen table, they grabbed their backpacks around their chairs. Hugged Russell lovingly, and myself. They each gave me a kiss on the cheek. Before I watched them hurriedly grab their jackets off the coat hanger next to the front door. I turned to watch them climb on the steps to the yellow school bus. The friendly school bus driver closed the double doors and pulled away from the driveway.

It wasn’t until later I got a call in the afternoon from the principal Sparks, at Sparkle Middle School. I was not happy to get the call from him. Because our kids had just got suspended from the Halloween games next Friday at school. Because they kept scaring all the other kids with their Halloween monster masks again.

What am I going to do with my two boys? How can I gain their trust in keeping my kids from misbehaving? They’re going to have to miss Halloween this year.

## Chapter Ten

### What's the Matter with My Monster Kids?

After my two kids got home later in the afternoon on Friday, before the weekend started, they weren't in the best mood to be around their parents. Mark and Valentino completely ignored us as they slammed the front door shut. Tore off their cozy, warm, leather jackets at the coat rack, next to the front door. And Russell and I watched from the living room couch, as Mark and Valentino both, grumpily stormed to their rooms.

Russell turned to look at me with concern and affection in his eyes. "I'll go talk to them, love," he said. Kissing me on my forehead, I collapsed on the sofa and passed out. As I heard my husband, Russell hurrying through the hallway, down the dark aisles, I knew it was going to take my kids to gain a *lot* more trust to get their father's attention again.

While I was passed out on the love couch in the living room, I could hear Russell, my husband, pounding on their bedroom doors. Making the walls in the hallway and living room shutter. "Boys! Open the door! It's your father! I want to talk to you both and explain to us your behavior," I overheard Russell shout from down the hall.

I heard the doorknob in the hallway, to my two sons bedroom door, click open. It swung open. Russell tried to check in on them. When nobody was there, one of the ornery boys had tossed a banana cream pie at my husband's face! Creamy white foam got all over his casual t-shirt he wore.

Groaning with disgust, Russell wiped his face off and slung the gunk onto the floor. Frustrating Russell, he was about to barge into my two son's room from down the hall. When I heard the two wacky kids bursting out into hysterical laughter. I heard them *slam* the door onto my husband's face. He jumped back and flinched. Wiping more whipped cream off his eyes and bearded face, Russell stormed away. Walking back toward the living room, I stood in front of me by the couch in the living room.

Opening one eye slowly, I carefully looked at my husband's angry, cream splattered face and pointed and laughed at him. "You think this is all a joke, honey?" Russell demanded, angrily. He started pacing back and forth in front of the living room.

I sat up and leaned over. "Darling, they're just kids blowing off some steam. Let them be kids while they still can. We can only keep them with us for so long. The house will settle and be quiet when they are both gone, out of the nest," I said, trying to make a promise to my husband, Russell.

Nodding, I could see my loving husband's face filled with relief. He sat on the coffee table in front of the sofa and our widescreen television and sighed heavily. "I can tell how much those two boys really love Halloween," Russell was telling me. "But they can't just go all year long in their Halloween costumes, scaring everybody with them. Because they think it's funny," Russell said.

I stopped laughing and turned to look seriously at my husband, Russell. “You’ve also got to understand they are still our kids, dear,” I said, honestly. “Kids will always be kids. No matter what they do. Kids do things we’re not always proud of. But just be grateful they still have parents who are both still in love together. And want to do our part in protecting them the best we can know how,” I said, trying to keep my husband calm and relaxed.

I could tell Russell was not looking his best. He was breathing heavily and coming out in short wheezy breaths. “We should just let them be kids, you’re saying?” Russell asked me. I nodded as I wiped some smeared whip cream off my husband’s blubbery right cheek. Stuck the white whipped cream on my long right finger and took a bite of it. Russell turned away and cringed with disgust; I laughed at him in response.

“I’m going to go get myself cleaned up, dear,” Russell said, swallowing hard. He got off the brown, wooden coffee and walked to our bedroom down the hall, past our two son’s bedrooms. After Russell passed their bedroom, he jumped back at the sound of the two brothers’ fighting each other. As one of the other boys had *slammed* one of brother’s back across their bedroom. Making one of our family portraits fall to the ground and shatter the glass off the wall, next to their bedroom.

“What are they *up* too, now?” Russell growled, impatiently. Trying to open their bedroom door, they were both *too* busy fighting with each other, to pay attention to us. I got off the couch and hurried over to comfort my startled little family.

I gently knocked on their bedroom door loudly. “What’s going on in there, kids? What’s the matter with you two?” I demanded. Putting our ears against their bedroom door, Russell and I both jumped back again. And collapsed onto the floor. As our two sons, Mark and Valentino, slugged each other. Then, everything got eerily quiet.

I turned and looked at my husband, worriedly. Then, we turned to look at their bedroom doorknob. Hearing it clicks open. Standing up wobbly onto his feet, Russell grabbed hold of the doorknob, shakily. It swung open, knocking Russell and myself back to the floor on top of each other.

Grabbing hold of their skateboards, Mark and Valentino both wore helmets and kneepads as they hurried out of their bedroom. Not bothering to notice us and stormed out of the front door.

## Chapter Eleven

### Kids Like to be Monsters

It wasn't until later in the evening, my two little kids returned home from skateboarding in the skating arena by the park in our small town. Russell and I sat at the couch in the living room, as we turned to see them come back home late on this day.

Mark and Valentino didn't say anything as they took off their helmets and put them on the hook of the coat hanger next to the front door as they entered. Mark and Valentino looked up at us, watching them, coming home from their night outing, their faces were smeared in dirt filth.

"Do you kids feel better, now?" Russell asked Mark and Valentino. They just looked at each and then turned to us and shrugged. "Your attitude is getting on my nerves, kids," Russell growled, angrily at them. "I'm going to take your privileges away if you don't obey our rules in this house. We're going to stop letting you two kids do whatever you want. And not telling us what your plans are. If you two aren't coming home until late hours in the night," Russell said. He sat up off the couch. Got a smoking pipe out of his red, cotton bathrobe he wore. Then, he took a match, struck and lit his smoking pipe.

Blowing a puff of smoke into my face, I coughed and waved my hands in the air. To get the smoke out of my eyes. "There was nobody to play with in the park, anyway," Mark said, grumpily. With his head down. He and Valentino marched down the hallway to their bedroom. "It started raining on us. And we couldn't finish playing," Mark continued, still not looking back at us.

I stood up from the couch and tried to grab my kids' attention. "You two will stop there!" I said, halting my hands in the air to stop them from going into their bedrooms. They slowly turned around, looking red from embarrassment. "You know how much we both love you kids, very much," I started, hoping they would pay attention to me. "But you can't come and go as you please. Until you turn sixteen. You have to tell us everything going on in your lives," I continued, angrily. Russell put a comforting hand on my shoulder, making me jump a little. He laughed and took another puff of smoke from his black smoking pipe.

"There's nothing to do in this crummy little town," Valentino complained, finally. "We've been in Sparkle Town too long, mom and dad. Nothing's changed. We just earn our freedom and trust you have nothing to worry about. We're not doing anything wrong. Just want to have some fun like old times sake," Valentino said, honestly.

I rolled my eyes and folded my arms across my chest in disgust. I turned to look up at my husband, who was looking at the ceiling, smoking his pipe. Like he was daydreaming. And not caring about anything that goes on with our kids.

"We just want the best for you kids," Russell said, finally. Turning his head to our kids, standing in the hallway. Taking another puff of stinky smoke from his pipe, he smiled at them. Mark and Valentino looked back at us like they had a cramp in their legs and turned red.

“I know you kids are looking forward to going to the Halloween party at school on Friday,” I said, changing the subject. “I want you two kids to the mall tomorrow after school. And pick a scary Halloween costume and some candy for the party goers to share with everybody,” I continued, smiling wryly at my two adorable boys.

Mark and Valentino turned to look at each other frowned. They both laughed nervously, to break the tension. Then, they each high fived each other. “Okay, sounds awesome, mom!” Mark declared, excitedly. “I can’t wait to scare the daylights out of everybody at the Halloween party at school next week. It’s going to be *sick!*” Mark laughed and Valentino bumped knuckles with each other.

Russell and I tried to get our two boys to calm down. “Kids, listen,” Russell said, loudly. “You’re only pretending to be scary at the Halloween party at the school dance, right?” he asked, worriedly. “You’re not *really* going to hurt anybody, right, kids?” Russell asked, frowning and looking worried.

Mark and Valentino looked at each other and shrugged. “We’re just going to get on some squeamish little girls’ nerves and give them something *really* to celebrate at the Halloween dance,” Mark said, laughing. The two boys laughed and bumped each other’s chest, like they were excited and looking forward to going to a party to be remembered.

I looked at my husband, with concern. He just frowned at me while sucking on his smoke pipe and inhaling on the smoke. “What can I say? They’re *your* kids, Emma,” Russell, said through gritted teeth. While sucking on the brown, plastic smoking pipe.

“*Our* kids, dear,” I corrected my love. “We both had to make these two monster kids, together,” I said. I turned back to look at Mark and Valentino. But the two boys had disappeared back into their bedroom down the hall. I sighed and rolled my eyes. I wrapped an arm around my husband’s body and squeezed onto him. “They won’t always need us, you know,” I told Russell, looking down at the floor, and daydreaming.

Russell nodded, still sucking on his brown smoking pipe. “Let them have the time of their life at this Halloween party at their school next week, love,” Russell said, suggesting. “It could change their lives forever. Everybody deserves a chance to be happy, every once in a while, in their lives,” Russell said, pulling strands of stringy blonde hair out of my eyes.

“Okay,” I said, sighing, finally. “But if they get hurt because they got out of control, they’re going to blame us for not raising our kids, right,” I said, hoping to make sense. Russell laughed, his belly blubber on his round stomach, bounced on my face. Making me shake and shudder. I laughed too, and didn’t care about anything else. Except for making my kids happy.

If I didn’t let our kids learn to be on their own, how will they survive when it’s time for them to be in the adult world, by themselves? If they don’t grow-up, they’re going to have trouble dealing with their attitude adjustments. I knew they were good kids. They wouldn’t do anything too dramatic to get into real trouble. They know how to be awesome without even trying.

I didn't want to have to worry what would happen if our kids never want to leave us. I know how scary being alone can be sometimes. Something somebody knocked on the front door. Making Russell and I both jump with fright.

Russell blew out some smoke in his mouth, quickly. And put out the smoking pip in the ash tray on the coffee table. We both quickly hurried over to the front door. Opening the screen door, Russell and I peered out in the front yard.

"Hello, dears," it was our friendly neighbor, Ms. Stargazer. She carried a yellow and white striped umbrella over her head. Smiling, she wore a yellow and flowery skirt and pink sandals. "I was in the middle of cooking some chocolate chip cookies for the children's Halloween dance party next Friday," Ms. Stargazer said. "I ran out of sugar. And I didn't make enough for the students going to the dance party," she said, smiling. Lightning flashed and rain dribbled down the side of Ms. Stargazer's umbrella. "Can I borrow a cup of sugar so I can finish another batch of homemade chocolate cookies, for the kids?" she asked, her smile grew wider.

Thunder boomed, making us all jump. We jumped again, as a black cat jumped in front of Ms. Stargazer's sandals. It started rubbing against Ms. Stargazer's legs, purring and meowing up at us. "Bad kitty! You'll bring me seven years of bad luck!" Ms. Stargazer complained.

Taking her leg in the air, she kicked the black cat in the stomach. Making it howl and screech as Ms. Stargazer kicked the kitty into the wet, stormy night. It turned around to look at us and the creature's eyes turned red. It hissed at Ms. Stargazer and hurried away.

Trying to shake it off, Ms. Stargazer turned back to Russell and myself. We quickly turned away from our concerned trance. Put on a smiley, happy face, we just stared out at our neighbor, zombified. "Let me see what I can do," I said, finally, snapping out of my sleepy trance. "Excuse me," I apologized.

Laughing nervously, Russell quickly turned his attention back to our nosy neighbor, not taking her eyes off Russell. Who was just giving Ms. Stargazer the most devilish grin on his face at her. Ms. Stargazer just grinned back and laughed nervously at him.

"Do you like kids, Mr. Changeling?" Ms. Stargazer, suddenly, changed the subject. Russell just let out a loud, high-pitched laughter. Trying to contain himself, Ms. Stargazer didn't stop staring and smiling at Russell.

After Ms. Stargazer didn't stop smiling or say anything else, Russell's face suddenly got sweaty and turned red from embarrassment. "Sure, I guess," Russell finally said, letting out some air. "I have two monster kids of my own," Russell continued.

Suddenly, the thunderstorm struck lightning and turned out our power. Plunging everything and everybody into total darkness. I lost my balance in the kitchen, looking through our pantry for a bag of sugar for Ms. Stargazer. Suddenly, we heard sinister laughter coming from our children's bedroom. I knew they were planning something devious.

I hope our kids won't get away with their rambunctious behavior. They came out of their rooms, wearing glow-in-the-dark hockey masks, with arms outstretched. Moaning, they were

coming for me. “Kids? What’s going on?” I said, and as they floated closer toward me, I fainted and plopped my head on the hard linoleum kitchen floor and passed out.

## Chapter Twelve

### Halloween Is Around the Corner

After realizing my two kids were playing a mean joke on me, I heard them bursting out into crude laughter. Opening my eyes slowly, I found myself staring at their shocked faces, mocking and pointing at me. I saw they had their creepy hockey masks lifted over their faces.

“Was that called for, children?” I heard my husband, Russell asks, coming from the living room. Adjusting my eyes to the bright kitchen light, I saw Mark and Valentino get out of my face. As Russell came over to me. He leaned down and held out his hand for me to take. So, I could sit up and get comfortable and conscious again.

I politely took his strong, firm grip. As he hoisted me onto my wobbly feet from lying flat on my back on the ground. I turned to glare angrily at my two kids who quickly turned their attention away from me. They pretended they were scavenging through the white refrigerator, looking for a quick snack.

“It’s nothing to worry about, darling,” I said, finally catching my breath. Russell smiled and wrapped a comforting arm around my shoulders. And he wrapped his strong, muscled body into me, giving me a big, bear hug, hard. Some of the muscles in my back made an unbearable popping sound. I groaned loudly, and Russell quickly apologized and let go of my skinny body.

I shuddered and told the kids to go find something to do in their rooms. They both laughed at my face, as they grabbed some chocolate Jell-O out of the shelf on the refrigerator and slapped each other a high-five. And didn’t say anything to my husband or myself. As they went down the hallway to their bedrooms. With a slam of the door, they clicked it locked. Then, we heard them turn their boombox stereo up. Making an annoying loud vibration on the walls in the hallway. It was going to give me a headache. I furrowed my brows and sighed heavily. I turned to look at my worried husband. “You think we’re being too hard on them?” I asked, Russell.

He shrugged and poured himself a cup of warm, already made coffee, from the kitchen counter, next to the stove. Then, he blew on his white coffee mug before taking a sip of it, slowly. “They’re just growing up, is all. Let them do whatever they want. As long as they obey, they can have all the fun they want all day long,” Russell said.

It made sense. We don’t want anything to happen to our children. As long as they be themselves, and love us, unconditionally, they won’t think about getting into trouble. “Whatever our kids want, we will give them and support them, right dear?” I asked my husband, quietly.

Russell nodded and then put a comforting hand on my shoulder. “We’re doing our best,” he reassured me. I was starting to feel better. I knew our kids understood doing things from right and wrong. Never to judge anybody for their differences. Always be themselves, and they can experience the most enjoyable time of their lives with their parents.

“I’m going to sit on the patio outside by the swing and read a book, dear,” I said, quietly. “You can care to join me, if you like?” I said honestly to my husband. He shrugged and carried

the coffee mug in his hand, as he walked into the living room. Sat down in the middle of the couch and turned on the TV.

“I’ll be alright, love,” Russell said. The TV glowed in the living room. “I’m going to watch the six ‘o clock news. See what’s happening in the real world, today, babe,” Russell said, turning up the news anchor woman who was giving the weekly forecast on the news report.

Grabbing one of my new Danielle Steel romance novels off the kitchen counter, I put on some reading glasses. And went out the screen front door. The front door hinged as I squeaked closed. I noticed our Halloween jack-’lanterns placed around our patio were still glowing with light. Their eerie carved mean-spirited looking faces made their shadows dance in the glow of the burning light.

I gasped with fright, as I noticed somebody was already sitting on my white swing seat on the patio at my house. “Who—who are you?” I asked, nervously. The little girl dressed completely in a black dress and top pointed hat and wore pale makeup. She had a brown, hairy mole on the center of her forehead. Also, wore thick black lipstick and knew she was somebody I shouldn’t trust.

## Chapter Thirteen

### I'm No Ordinary Fairy Godmother

I let out a startled gasp and clumsily slipped my romance paperback novel out of my hands. I watched as it fell and dropped on my shoes. The paperback fell on its sides. As I watched the pages of the Danielle Steel romance novel open on its side. The patio was damp from the morning mildew. I knew the cover would already be ruined. As I bent down and picked it up.

I slung dripping wet water off the front of the pink cover I wanted to read. Which was now ruined and would have to go to the library and borrow another copy of it, tomorrow. Right now, I didn't know who this mysterious woman was doing, swinging back and forth on the rocking swing seat on our patio. Making me uncomfortable, trying to get her attention.

I started to back away against the front screen door. I grabbed hold of the metal handle to the screen door. But as I tried to open the door, it wouldn't budge. Trying as hard as I might, the front door wouldn't open for me.

"Calm down, Emma Changeling," said the strange woman, who was waving her hands in the air at me. Trying not to get her to be scared of her. "I'm not here to do anything to hurt you or your loving family you are raising here in this town," she slurred, a little. Because she was nervous being around me.

Suddenly, as the goth woman walked into a path of sunlight on the front patio, I screamed. As I watched her face quickly broke out into warts and red rashes over her ghostly pale face. I screamed again, louder this time. I took my damp, ruined paperback book in my hands, and tossed it at the evil person, trying to scare me to death.

"No! You don't understand!" the wicked woman said, trying to make a confession about herself. But I wasn't listening. I started to run from the patio and hurried around the side of our backyard.

I didn't look back. As I opened the wooden, grey gate to our backyard. But as I opened the backyard gate, I stopped and gasped. As I turned to look in front of me. I saw the mysterious strange girl appear in a puff of smoke before me, startling me again!

"What do you want from me, *us*?" I stammered, slowly backing away from the backyard gate. Where the little girl was floating toward me. Backing me back up into the front steps of the patio. Where we first met.

The wart-faced little witch cackled at me. She showed me her pee-green stained sharp, pointed fanged-teeth at me. "I'm here to make things better for you and your family, Emma," the witch rasped at me. I didn't want to believe anything she was telling me. I wanted to stop looking into her glowing, red, haunting eyes. Because she was paralyzing me with fear.

I almost stumbled on the patio step as I tripped on the top step and stumbled to my feet. The little, annoying witch girl just laughed at me. Still floating in the morning sunlight, she wasn't giving up on introducing herself to me.

“You don’t need to be afraid of me, dear Emma Changeling,” said the girl witch, with a high-pitched cackle. “I want to help your two boys prepare themselves for a most unforgettable night at their school’s Halloween party,” she said, trying to make a promise with me.

I didn’t know what to think or how to react to this stranger danger before me. I tried to sit up. But the wicked little witch girl waved her right hand in the air at me. And forced me to stay flat on my back. I raised my head up and watched her float at the foot of steps to our patio.

“Halloween is Mark and Valentino’s favorite time of the year,” I said, confessing to the witch. “How do you know us? I’ve never seen you before. Are you some kind of evil spirit or angel coming to haunt us?” I asked, nervously.

The little girl just laughed and continued floating on a dark storm cloud in the air, before me. “Think of me as your fairy godmother, for your gifted young sons, you have,” she said. “I know how much they go through, it’s difficult for them to get along. I want to help give them something to make their Halloween to be remembered for a lifetime,” she promised.

I gasped as I watched lightning strike the ground in front of me as she hovered in the air on her dark storm cloud. Taking a tiny bottle full of glowing liquid, out of her dress pocket coat, she showed it to me. “What’s that for?” I asked, suddenly interested.

She just smiled and cackled some more. Showing me the glowing bottle of purple liquid, she tossed the tiny potion at me. “It’s a little magic of my own. To help your two sons, feel more special at their Halloween party, next Friday,” she answered. “Have them drink it in a small drinking cup of water, an hour before their party. It will help them get in the spirit of Halloween,” she said.

“Are there any side effects?” I asked, looking at the glowing, sparkling liquid in the potion bottle. When I looked up, she had disappeared in a puff of smoke.

## Chapter Fourteen

### Pretend Everything's Normal

I didn't want my husband Russell to suspect anything was going on. As I entered the front door to the living room, I hid the glowing, purple potion bottle in my grasp, around my back. I turned on the front porch light and locked the front door.

I walked in the living room. I turned and saw the TV was static and there was no good signal on. I looked at my husband who was resting on the couch, with the TV guide magazine covering his face. And he was snoring, annoyingly loud.

I walked over to the coffee table in front of the couch. I saw the black TV remote on a little brown coaster. Grabbed it and turned off the television with the power button. Putting the remote back down on the coffee table, I thought about what to do with my secret formula to give to my two adoptive kids in the house. Without them knowing about it.

Walking into the kitchen, I turned on the light. I walked over to a wooden cabinet, next to our family refrigerator. I grabbed two plastic cups out of the cabinet. Opening the refrigerator, I grabbed a jug of half-emptied orange juice out of it.

Setting the orange juice jug down on the kitchen counter, I poured some cold, orange juice into the two plastic, red cups. Taking the potion bottle out of my hands, I carefully poured the purple potion liquid into the two plastic red cups, in front of me.

It made a smoking, sizzling sound. Like acid eating and hissing from a hard, concrete ground. After it settled, I grabbed a silver spoon out of the drawer. I stirred the drink mixes thoroughly.

Suddenly, I heard my two sons, Mark and Valentino, fighting in their bedroom, down the hall. As I heard them slamming their bodies hard against their bedroom door. I sighed heavily and rolled my eyes.

Taking the two red plastic cups in my hands, I carefully carried it to them. Before anything else is going on, I would know about it. I could hear my kids arguing in loud voices, like they wouldn't get along.

When I reached their bedroom hall, next to their bathroom, I gasped and jumped out of the way. As one of my kids, went crashing through their bedroom door. "Boys?! What's going on here?" I shouted, almost dropping my plastic red cups with their liquid medicine in it for them to take.

Looking to see who had gone crashing through the bedroom door, I saw it was Mark. He was doubled over in agony in his pajamas. I hurried over him and sat down with the two plastic cups in my hand. "Mark! Are you okay?" I asked, trying to believe everything was normal.

Moaning, Mark didn't open his eyes. He had deep, purple bruises on his forehead and face. I realized I held the two red plastic cups in my hand for them to drink. I carefully put one

cup down and used the other cup in my hand. To get Mark to sit up and gain consciousness so he can drink the flavored medicine.

Mark slowly sat up and sipped the juice in the plastic red cup in my hand. “This will help you, feel better Mark,” I said, honestly. I didn’t know if this was going to make matters any worse, but I needed to let my two sons know I’m always going to be there to support them.

I turned to look at their broken bedroom door. Valentino stood in the open doorway, staring at the two of us. He wore his black leather jacket and zipped up the jacket. “I’m going to the mall, mom,” Valentino said. “Nobody’s going to stop me from getting another monster costume I need for the school play,” he said, announcing he didn’t want anybody to disturb him.

“But you’re not in the drama club at school, honey,” I said, trying to keep Valentino from passing us in the hall. “Shouldn’t you take your medicine, now, huh?” I asked, holding the other red plastic cup in my other hand for Valentino to take.

Mark stared at the bubbling orange juice in my hand. He scoffed and quickly snatched the red plastic cup out of my other hand. He sniffed it and scrunched up his eyebrows in suspicion. I watched as he slowly gulped down the medicine.

After halfway through the cup, Mark stopped. He started getting dizzy. Dropped and spilled the rest of the potion liquid in the cup on the floor, next to us. And passed out next to his brother, Mark, on the floor in the hallway, next to their bathroom.

I didn’t know how much time I had to get my two monster kids, to get them to behave on their birthday, this Halloween. But I knew they wouldn’t remember anything after they’ve woken up. Which was the way I wanted it to go. I quickly dragged Mark and Valentino by their feet. Took them down the stairs into the basement. And locked them in the dark unknown, until they get the opportunity to wake up and be their normal selves again. I couldn’t be more wrong.

## Chapter Fifteen

### What's the Matter with My Monster Kids?

Nothing unusual was happening in my house, later in the night. I was having a nervous breakdown. Because wasn't waking up from his nap on the couch in the living room. And my children were still unconscious in the basement, where I last left them.

I knew I couldn't do anything to protect my kids from becoming something I wouldn't have any control over. It was something I had to do on my own, to make my two kids believe they are worth having around in my life.

It wasn't until a little after midnight, when I was sitting nervously in my soft, red armchair in the living room, watching after my sleeping husband on the couch. I heard movement coming from downstairs in the basement.

I tried to stir my husband, Russell, awake, but he was lost deep in sleep. So, I put my red pillow I was clutching to my chest, aside, and walked into the kitchen. I headed over to the basement door and unlocked it.

When I opened the basement door, I turned and gasped when I looked to see my two kids appeared at the front of the basement stairs. They seemed to be in some kind of sleepwalking trance. Their eyes were open...but they were hypnotized and they were both snoring loudly.

"Kids? What's up?" I asked them, trying to get their attention. I didn't know what to think. They were starting to scare me. I started to wrap them in a hug. But Mark and Valentino didn't want to be disturbed.

They quickly shoved me aside and started to strangle me in their grasp. "Ru-Russell!" I choked out in a dry whisper. I didn't want it to end this way. I think I must have given my kids poison or something to drink. I don't know if the fairy godmother could be trusted.

I couldn't fight them off me. They pinned me to the ground on the white kitchen floor. I knocked my head against the side of the counter next to the refrigerator. Mark and Valentino were still strangling the life out of me. There wasn't much I could do but let them take control of myself.

"Pl-please don't d-do this to me," I choked out in a whisper. As Mark continued to strangle me, Valentino got on top of me. He started to open mouth. Valentino then started sucking my life out of my mouth. I was gasping desperately for some fresh breath. But my monster children were too strong.

I couldn't believe my two children were like this. I didn't raise them to be monsters. I made them to be loving and caring so we all could get along with each other. I had to find a way to call forth the fairy godmother again. She had to help me find out what kind of potion she gave my children to drink.

As Mark continued strangling around my neck, and Valentino was sucking my life force out of my body, I started floating above the floor in the kitchen. I felt a cold draft wash over me. Mark and Valentino were not giving up taking my life out.

I don't know what was happening to me. But if I didn't fight what was becoming of myself, I knew I'd never be the same again. As my life was being choked out of me by my two monster kids, I couldn't do anything to fight them off me.

Suddenly, the lights in the kitchen started flicking on and off rapidly. A swirl of cold fog started coming up from the basement door in the kitchen. It was going to be over before I knew it. I was going to do whatever it took, to keep my children from sucking my life out.

After my last breaths were out, I gasped with fright! As I heard something like a baseball bat hitting the side of my son's Valentino head. As I opened my eyes, I saw Valentino knocked out on his side, next to me in the kitchen.

Another thwack aside Mark's head with the baseball bat, and Mark was also unconscious next to me. I looked up and over to my side. Russell, my husband, appeared before me with a serious and frightened look on his face. He gripped the baseball bat from our kid's little league baseball team in his hands.

And noticed I was still floating in midair. I gasped when I started to fall on top of my sprawled children on the floor, next to them in the kitchen. When my husband quickly dropped the baseball bat in his hands and caught me.

"Honey! What's going on?" Russell asked, worriedly. I didn't know how to respond. I just looked at him with nervousness. I let out a wry laugh and wrapped my husband in a frightened hug.

I don't think it's ever going to be the same in our lives again.

## Chapter Sixteen

### Granny Only Wants the Best

After getting our two kids settled into their beds in their bedroom, later in the night, Russell and I didn't know what to think about them. "They're going to be okay, my love," Russell said, hugging me, and kissing my forehead, sweetly.

I hoped he was right. But somehow, I wasn't in the mood to believe him. "They're wearing me out, dear," I said, honestly. "What are we going to do with them, if this keeps happening to us?" I asked, worriedly. I don't think my husband was paying attention to me. He kept looking at our children and seeing how they were disturbed in their coma.

We both gasped and watched them start to float under their covers on their beds in the air. Wind blew in from their open bedroom window. Letting in cold fog air, as it swirled around us, in the room. Suddenly, a little ball of sparkling light entered through the foggy bedroom window.

A ghostlike woman appeared before in my children's foggy bedroom. She had glittering, sparkling fairy-like wings on her back, and wore a silky pale-blue dress and wore a golden crown on her head. She was smiling and laughing at us. Like she was somebody we should be friends with.

"Who-who are you, miss?" my husband asked, nervously. Not taking her eyes off our two floating children in the beds, under their covers, the fairy godmother wasn't interested in my husband or myself.

"You need my help, I see, Emma and Russell Changeling," the fairy godmother said, laughing. It was obvious she was right. "I came in time just before your children started to change," she said, smiling and laughing at my two floating and sleeping kids in their two separate beds.

Russell wrapped an arm around me in a tight bear hug. "What's happening to them? Tell us who you are? Are you someone we should trust?" Russell asked, not taking his eyes off the friendly spirit.

The fairy godmother waved her wand at Mark and Valentino's head. As they continued floating in the air, under their covers on their beds, the friendly fairy godmother turned to our attention. "Everything is going just the way it's supposed to be," she said. "I'm their fairy godmother who grants children's wishes come true. Whatever they want or need, I can give them anything their heart desires. When your children wake up on Halloween at midnight, they won't remember anything. They will be like nothing ever happened. Do you believe you can trust me that I won't let your kids get hurt after they go through their monster personality change on Halloween?" she asked us, politely.

"Why is this happening to my children?" I asked, uncertainly. "They weren't raised in an animal barn. I will do whatever it takes to get my two kids back to normal. What do I have to do, fairy godmother?" I asked her.

Smiling, the fairy godmother laughed and waved her magic, glowing wand in the air. Making magic pixie dust come out of it. “Your children must see their dead granny in the graveyard on Halloween at midnight. Only their ghost granny has the antidote to keep them from becoming undead monsters to walk the earth, permanently,” she answered.

“How is this possible, fairy godmother?” Russell asked, suddenly interested. “Normal humans can’t see the dead. It will make us go blind if we see the dead who are not meant to be alive anymore,” Russell said.

“Their granny is no ordinary ghost, folks,” the fairy godmother said. “She has been fighting to keep the secret to eternal life to herself, since she was a little girl herself. If we can get your kids to the graveyard before midnight on Halloween, their granny will keep them safe and well-protected from undead creatures of the night for the rest of their lives,” she said.

It was beginning to make sense to me. “How can my mom keep something like this a secret from us? She never mentioned anything could happen to us, even when she was alive with us,” I said, hoping to make sense.

“Because there are dark supernatural forces keeping her from exposing the secrets of everlasting life to the ghostly reaper who is doing everything in his power to keep your kids from having a normal life,” the fairy godmother said.

My heart sank. I didn’t know how to respond, the two monster kids stopped floating. Their eyes still closed, they had their arms outstretched, like this were in a deep sleepwalking trance. We watched helplessly as they both climbed out of their bedroom window. And disappeared into the foggy night.

Not knowing where our two children were wandering off to, Russell and I went to their bedroom window and tried to stop them. But no matter how loud we tried calling after them, the two kids ignored us.

Looking out the window, at our front yard in the foggy, stormy night, we saw the kids weren’t alone. There was somebody else standing in the driveway. It was covered in a black cloak with a hood over its head.

Staggering toward the skeleton-like creature in the driveway, Mark and Valentino, continued to float toward the mysterious figure before them. “Come with me, children,” the ghost-like reaper, carrying a long, sharp-pointed scythe in his hand, hissed. His face hidden in shadows of the hood of the black cloak he wore, but we could see his eyes glowing bright, evilly red.

Making us look away from the window, there was nothing Russell and I could do but let the grim reaper kidnap our two children against their will. There was a flash of lightning from the thunderstorm. Thunder boomed. And we turned to look back out the bedroom window. There was no trace of our missing children or the creepy, grim reaper.

“We can’t just sit around here all day, doing nothing, Russell!” I screamed at the top of my lungs. I grabbed hold of Russell by his plaid cotton shirt and wrestled with him. But Russell stopped me from fighting with him.

“Calm down, honey,” Russell said, soothingly. “We’re all just having some kind of bad dream,” he continued. “None of this is real. I’m sure how kids just went to the park to skate or hang out at the mall with their friends. You know nothing bad is going to happen to them,” Russell said.

I couldn’t believe Russell was pretending nothing serious had happened to our children. I walked and turned away from my husband. I pushed and shoved the confused and grumpy fairy godmother aside. I quickly poked my head out of my children’s bedroom window, and screamed a rage of fury into the stormy, foggy night.

There was *no* way I was going to let our kids get kidnapped by a creep. Nothing I could do to protect them, now. The fairy godmother was acting like nothing was wrong. I turned and watched her jump on my son’s two bed mattresses. Hoping and fluttering to the other side of the room, using her wings.

“I don’t think you two proud parents have anything to worry about,” the fairy godmother said, happily. Jumping and flying in the air on either side of the room. “If you don’t believe me, I will let each of you have one wish each to make everything get better,” she said. The fairy godmother landed in the middle of the bedroom, and she leaped off Valentino’s bed on his side of the room.

I didn’t know what to think. I turned to look at my husband. “Do you want to do this, babe?” I asked, Russell. “What could it hurt?” I asked, suspiciously. I heard the fairy godmother snap his fingers, and made a small brown, round table appear in the middle of my son’s bed. She snapped her fingers again. Then, made a glowing, crystal ball appear in the center of the brown wooden table, covered in white, cotton cloth.

Russell and I shrugged and turned to watch as the fairy godmother was fluttering her wings in the air. She was hovering above the table, with her hands waving around the glowing, crystal ball on the wooden, brown table in the middle of the bedroom.

“I’m seeing something I shouldn’t,” the fairy godmother said. Looking into the crystal ball, the table started to float in the air, too. Russell and I turned to look at each other. We grabbed each other by the hand.

“I see your two kids being led into the graveyard against their will by the mysterious grim reaper,” she continued. “It seems the tombs in the graves are moving. Like I see it’s as if the dead are trying to crawl out of their graves. I’ve never seen anything like this. Your two kids are so scared and helpless. The grim reaper has them handcuffed and dragging them to a mausoleum by a rope tied to their handcuffs,” said the fairy godmother.

I don’t think this could get worse. “How do we get the ghosts to stay asleep?” I asked the fairy godmother. She wasn’t listening to me. Her eyes were glowing hauntingly white. “Tell us what we have to do,” I said, urgently.

Suddenly, the fairy godmother was humming now. Waving her hands with her long purple and pink-painted fingernails over the glowing crystal ball. “You have to die to be with your children again,” she said. Then, the fairy godmother belted out loud, crude laughter.

## Chapter Eighteen

### Proud Zombie Parents

I didn't like the sound of what the fairy godmother was telling Russell and me. I wasn't ready to know what it's like to be undead. I was barely getting used to what it means to be an alive human being. But I wanted our children to know how much we missed them back with their family. Who really loves and cares for them. I couldn't let them stay unhappily undead for the rest of their miserable lives in the graveyard.

I gazed into the fairy godmother's crystal ball on the floating table in the middle of my two son's bedrooms. "They *have* to get out of there, alive!" I screamed, pointing a shaky, nervous bony finger at the glowing crystal ball on the floating table.

The fairy godmother just let out crude laughter and wiped watery tears from her eyes. "You seem worried they are going to be stuck being undead zombies to walk the earth, forever, dear," she said, still laughing. The stout, elderly fairy godmother, adjusted her rainbow-colored turban she wore on her scrunched-up red hair in a bun.

She sneezed a glob of snot on her glowing crystal ball. Making the ball roll off the wobbly, floating table with a white, cotton cloth covering it onto the floor. It shattered into small, sharp, broken pieces of glass. It spilled some thick slime from inside of the crystal ball on the floor, next to the floating table. Suddenly, the wobbly floating table dropped to the carpeted floor. Almost smashing all of our little toes.

Tossing the table aside, it rolled to its side as we all started hopping up and down on our feet in agony. Suddenly, the fairy godmother hollered at the top of her lungs. Trying to grab my husband and myself's attention.

"I can help make this get better," she told us, matter of fact. The fairy godmother fluttered her little wings in the air and hovered above the crashed table next to Mark and Valentino's unmade beds.

Russell and I turned to look at each other. Then, we both turned to the fairy godmother's attention. She snapped her fingers and disappeared in a blink of light. The turned-over table and white cotton tablecloth and broken crystal ball also vanished into thin air, right before our very eyes.

"I can't believe her," Russell said, angrily. "She ditched us. And took our kids somewhere against their will. Never to come back home with us," Russell said, sadly. I wanted to tell Russell he was right. I knew he must be so scared our kids are in the graveyard, not feeling welcomed in the midst of a supernatural ghost.

"There's nothing we can do right now, Russell, dear," I said, reassuringly. Lightning flashed outside the closed draped window of our boy's bedroom window. We heard some childlike laughter echoing throughout the dead of night.

Russell and I exchanged worried looks. “The children!” We both cried out. Turning to hurry to look out the bedroom window, Russell and I parted the draped curtained window and peered out the back yard, where their window was facing.

We saw two kids, staggering in the backyard. Their clothes were shredded and worn and they wore sandals and looked hurt and lost. “How did you kids get back here?” Russell shouted at them. The two children, who seemed like they were ours, Mark and Valentino, suddenly hid behind the big, oak tree in our backyard.

“Don’t be scared of us, children,” I called out to them. “Come on back inside the house, where you belong,” I said, trying to comfort them. I don’t know where they’ve both been. But they both seemed so scared and covered in dirt stains. We watched from their bedroom window as the two frightened children poked their heads around our large, dead, oak tree in the backyard.

“How-how did we get here?” I overheard one of the startled, and scared kids, ask their father and myself from the window. It was Mark who spoke up first. Valentino cowered behind his brother and wasn’t sure they were welcomed home after what they’ve been through.

We didn’t want to scare the kids anymore. “Come home, children,” Russell called after them. “We can make hot chocolate with mini marshmallows for you,” Russell said. “You belong with your parents to take care of yourself,” he continued.

Suddenly, we watched from our window. There was the sound of black, birds cawing from the dead oak tree. They flocked from the tree, making Mark and Valentino scream and stagger away from the tree in the backyard.

Trying to grab my children’s attention, they had already staggered away from the house. Heading into the dark of the night. Where they would not belong anywhere else.

## Chapter Nineteen

### Always Hungry for Humans

“They must be so scared, Russell,” I said, sobbing in the living room of our house later in the night. “What are we going to do? Should we call the police to go help search for our children?” I asked, continuing to sound disappointed.

Russell rested his arm on the fireplace mantel. As he took a match out of his purple bathrobe, struck it and lit his long, brown plastic, smoking pipe. “If they don’t want to belong in our family, they can choose to be runaway orphans,” Russell said, blowing smoke out of his pipe. He coughed and blew smoke out of his mouth.

I couldn’t believe Russell felt that way about our children. “You shouldn’t say things like about children! They need to know they are loved and always have a home to come to with us. We will not neglect our kids for being different. Not everybody is meant to be perfect, dear. We are to love our children unconditionally. No matter what they go through in their life,” I said, seriously.

Russell laughed and coughed as he blew out more smoke from his smoking pipe. “Our kids are nothing but a mistake,” he said, blowing more smoke out of his mouth. “Now we have the whole house to ourselves. We can make it the way we always wanted it to be. If our children want to be disrespectful of their lifestyle, they are better off without us,” Russell said, suddenly not caring about our children.

How could Russell Changeling, my dearest loving husband, feel this way about our caring two children? I was pacing in front of the couch in the living room. “Do you think they could be starving without us giving them support?” I asked, angrily. I turned around and pointed an accusing finger at my husband. “If you were harder on them, they’d listen to you!” I snapped. Russell laughed some more, not understanding my leadership.

“If I was in charge of disciplining our children to be more obedient to us, we’d all still be here together, getting along,” Russell said. He had a point. I don’t want our children to be abandoned in our small little town. “We’ll call the police. See if they can go search for them throughout the neighborhood. They can’t be too far,” Russell said.

He walked into the kitchen, holding onto his smoking pipe. He grabbed the yellow phone off the hook hanging on the wall, next to the kitchen wall. He punched in 911 on the telephone. He waited for it to ring a couple of times. Finally, a young, female operator answered on the fourth ring. “Hello? Police? Hi, I need to report two missing orphans on their own. Who need to be found immediately with their loving father and mother. Name? I’m Russell Changeling. And our two children are Mark and Valentino Changeling. They could be lost and scared without knowing where they are going,” Russell said, taking another puff of smoke from his pipe. He waited for the operator to reply. “Thank you. My wife and I will not rest until the police have found our missing children. Who knows what they must be going through, right now?” Russell said, and hung up the phone receiver, hanging on the wall.

“There, dear,” Russell said, taking a moment to relax and remain calm. “They should be looking for them now,” he said, reassuringly. I nodded and gasped. The lights in our house went out. The glow of the warm fireplace was the only light providing us in the living room.

Russell hurried over to wrap me in a hug. “What’s going on, love?” I asked, nervously. “I don’t like what is happening here,” I said. Suddenly, hearing footsteps walking on the rooftop of the house, made us freeze in fear. We jumped with fright at the sound of children’s laughter in the dark.

“Get the shotgun, babe, in the storage closet,” I said. Nodding, I watched Russell in the glow of the darkened living room walk over to the storage closet in the hallway. I watched my husband open the closet door. Hear him rummaging through the storage closet for the shot gun, stored away. Then, without warning, the lights flickered on and off in our house.

Flames from the burning fireplace leaped out of the mantel. Before us, we gasped. Russell went over to protect me. He cocked the shot gun. In the light of the fireplace, we saw we were surrounded by an army of undead, shadowy zombie kids. They came for us.

## Chapter Twenty

### I Don't Mean to Be Dead

“Don't hurt the children!” I shouted, angrily forcing the shotgun out of the undead zombie children, staggering toward us. “They don't mean to be dead!” I continued, trying to prove a point. Suddenly, Russell defensively hit the butt of the gun at my face, knocking me over.

I landed on the floor in the living room in front of the couch and TV on the wall. As I was trying to stir awake, I rolled my head around in circles. As a couple of zombie kids nearby me, reached their skinny, zombie dead hands by my shoulders. And started dragging me away.

A couple more undead boys walked in front of me. They grabbed me by the feet. Struggling to stand to his feet, Russell grabbed hold of his shotgun, as he tried to stop the zombie kids from taking my unconscious away from him.

More undead zombie kids started to grab hold of Russell around his back and held him prisoner against his will. As my unconscious body was being dragged into the kitchen, Russell wasn't giving up trying to protect himself from being taken into the dark basement.

“Honey...-please don't hurt my wife...” Russell said, his voice trailed off. As the two, stinky, undead zombie boys squeezed hold of Russell's hands behind his back. Moaning and groaning loudly, the zombie children ignored the fact Russell and myself were their slaves in our own home.

They started dragging Russell down into the basement after my unconscious body after me. Then, before I knew what happened next. The zombies roughly shoved and tossed me down the rest of the basement stairs. I fumbled and landed on my side with a hard thud on the basement floor. I still didn't stir awake as I heard the ornery zombie kids laughing mischievously. I heard them toss my husband beside me.

As Russell sat up, slowly, he watched from the top of the stairs, he watched as the undead, shadowy zombie kids slammed the basement door. And locked us in the darkness of our smelly, old basement, trapped together.

“Is this happening to us?” Russell asked himself, out in the cold, moonlit basement. Russell turned to look at me. “Honey? Please wake up,” he begged, silently. Propping my head on my on his thick lap.

I didn't stir a response. I moaned and rolled my head onto my husband's lap. “We've got to get out of here,” Russell said to himself out loud. Putting my unconscious head, next to him, on the hard basement floor, Russell turned and walked over to the high-reached window above the washer and dryer on the other side of the basement.

Grabbing hold of a small stool, Russell stepped onto the second step. Then, he climbed on top of the dryer machine. To look out the moonlit basement window. Looking out, Russell saw the group of shadowy, undead zombie children staggering away from our house. They were

just staggering in our front yard. Just moaning and groaning. Like they were expecting us to come after them.

They couldn't see Russell looking out at the tiny windowsill in the small, cold, stinky basement, as one of the undead kids stepped onto a dead twig and snapped it in half. Russell gasped, as he turned and saw Russell ducking his head underneath the wall above the window.

The zombie leader turned and saw into the dark basement window as moonlight washed into the window. Making Russell's shadow move and dance in the path on the floor in the basement. The living dead leader waved his hand in the air at the undead kid's attention. "They're lurking in the shadows of their basement," said the zombie leader, in a deep, scratchy gravelly voice.

Staggering into the side of our rental house, the zombie leader led the army of undead stalking, shadowy children started coming after us. As I lay out cold, on the hard floor of the basement, Russell quickly jumped down off the dryer. He hurried up the basement steps to try to open the basement door. It wouldn't budge open. We locked inside.

"What are their plans going to do to us?" Russell asked himself, out loud. "I've got to get the police to help control this zombie population," Russell said. Taking out his cellphone in his pants pocket, he punched in the emergency number. But it wouldn't ring. He looked at his connection service. It was dead. Russell angrily tossed his cellphone onto the floor in front of himself and yelled a scream of frustration.

Suddenly, the basement door opened. And the zombie kid leader stood at the top of the stairs. "There is no choice but to surrender to the leader of the undead society," snapped the angry zombie boy leader. He started staggering down the steps. "You're going to be undead servants like us. We will take you and your loved one to the graveyard on Halloween at midnight," the undead zombie kid leader continued. "It's going to be quick and fast. Don't make it hard," said the zombie kid leader.

There was no point in defending himself. Russell found himself feeling weak and passed out next to my unconscious body on the moonlight basement floor. It was going to be over soon.

## Chapter Twenty-One

### Granny's Ghost Isn't Going Anywhere

I don't think this could get any worse. There was nothing to make the undead, shadowy zombie kids go away. I knew they would do anything to make us like the undead, themselves, too. If only Mark and Valentino could come to our aid. They had to believe the dead must be getting restless.

The zombies surrounding us next to our washer and dryer in the basement floor, started to grab hold of us by the feet. Dragging us out of the basement. Taking us up the stairs. The basement door swung open.

Mark and Valentino appeared in the front of the steps in the glowing lit doorway. They both carried baseball bats, gripped in their hands. Taking a dimwitted look at the two brothers, carrying baseball bats, the zombie children dropped Russell and myself, who were both still unconscious. And staggered up the basement stairs. Going after Mark and Valentino.

Just as a staggering zombie boy was reaching out to grab hold of Valentino's basement ball by the handle, Mark quickly smacked his baseball bat across the undead zombie kid's head. Mark had knocked off the zombie boy's head. It flew off his undead body and went flying in the crowd of other dead children at the bottom of the stairs. One dead girl caught the zombie boy's head in her grasp!

Her glassy white eyes went wild with shock. Tossing the undead zombie boy's head into the air, it landed in the laundry basket next to the washer and dryer. Trying to push and shove past the zombie kids at the basement stairs, Mark and Valentino fought their way to get to Russell and my unconscious body at the bottom of the stairs.

Tapping against the side of my face, Mark tried to wake Russell and myself up. Valentino was busy battling against undead zombies, with their arms outstretched. Trying to choke the life out of him. Valentino swung his baseball bat at the nearby undead children, staggering toward him. He missed, as they dodged his attacks.

Before any of us knew what was about to happen to Russell and myself's unconscious bodies on the bottom of the staircase in the basement. Russell and my body had risen out of our unconscious bodies on the floor!

Mark and Valentino gasped and jumped back with surprise! "Mom! Dad! What's up with this?" Mark cried in shock. It didn't make sense. Russell and I were invisible ghosts floating above the basement floor.

Grabbing hold of Mark and Valentino, Russell and I grabbed hold of our two sons around their waist. Lifted them up off the floor and carried them out of the basement door. After we reached the top of the basement stairs, Mark and Valentino quickly slammed the basement door on the undead shadowy zombie kids in their faces.

Suddenly, I felt dizzy. I started disappearing and reappearing in the dim light in the kitchen. Russell grabbed hold of me and tried to comfort me. “Try not to let this bother you, dear Emma,” Russell said, trying to make me feel better.

“Mom, Dad? What’s going on?” Valentino asked, looking at us, spooked. I didn’t want to startle them with false hope. I wanted to let know everything will be under our control, soon.

Suddenly, the lights in the kitchen flickered on and off. Making us jump at the sound of the telephone ringing in the receiver. Mark and Valentino walked over to the phone on the wall, next to the refrigerator. Mark waited for its ring again on the fourth ring, before picking it up.

Slowly, Mark picked up the yellow phone off the wall. “Kids, this is granny!” said a high-pitched voice, sounding like our long-dead granny! Mark dropped the phone in his hands. And let the cord swing to its side on the wall.

“Are you crazy, bro?” Valentino asked his brother, Mark. He pointed at the swinging yellow phone by the cord on the wall to pick it back up in his hand. “We can’t ignore our granny. She may need our attention, too,” Valentino said, nervously.

Picking up the yellow phone from the receiver, we all gathered closer to the receiver. “Something is causing the ghosts to be disturbed in the graveyard. I can’t rest until the spirit of the ghost summoner goes to sleep, forever. Come to the graveyard tonight. I have something I want to give you, two boys, a gift from your dead granny,” said the voice of our undead granny, on the phone.

Then, the phone went dead. Mark and Valentino gasped and looked up to see Russell and myself had both vanished before them in a puff of smoke!

## Chapter Twenty-Two

### What Does the Darkness Want with My Monster Kids?

It wasn't until later in the middle of the night, I found myself waking up from a bad dream, in my bedroom. I was sleeping next to my husband, Russell, who had his back turned against me on his side of the bed. And he was snoring loudly; he didn't give me the chance to wake up.

So, I grabbed my feathery, white pillow from behind my head. Took and gripped hold of the pillow in my grasp. Then, I started to smother Russell's face with the feathery pillow. Trying to get my husband to wake up, he started screaming and flailing his arms wildly around me.

"Help! Stop this!" I heard Russell murmur loudly, in a muffled voice. I carefully lifted the white, fluffy pillow off Russell's smothered face. Russell turned over to my side and sat up madly in our bed. "Honey! What is the meaning of this?" He cried, sitting up on his side of the bed.

I playfully shoved my feathery white pillow at my husband's stomach with a noisy grunt in reply. "If you must know, darling," I began, sitting upright next to him, and folding my arms across my chest. I betted my eyes angrily at Russell. "Our children never came home from the arcade at the shopping mall, last night!" I said, angrily shoving my white, fluffy pillow against the side of my husband's chest. Taking his breath away.

Russell quickly snatched the feathery white pillow out of my grasp. He tossed it on the other side of the floor in our bedroom. "I'm sure they're with their school friends. You know how much they like to hang out on the weekends," Russell said.

I nodded and sighed. "Sorry I got physical," I apologized, hugging and kissing Russell on his bald forehead. "I shouldn't have to worry about them, staying out at odd hours in the night," I said, trying to feel better. "I'll give them until four in the morning to show up. If they don't return home by six a.m., I will have no choice but to call the police on them. To look for them," I said, as I got out of our large waterbed.

I walked over to my dressing room mirror in the bedroom, next to our bed. I grabbed a little brown brush, and started brushing my long, golden stringy hair in the dressing room mirror. Suddenly, there was a pounding knock on our bedroom door.

Jumping and gasping with fright, I put down my brown brush on the table of my dressing room mirror. Russell got out of bed quickly. We hurried over to the bedroom door. Still, hearing the sound of knocking rapidly in our bedroom, didn't make us feel comfortable about answering the bedroom door, without protecting ourselves, first.

Grabbing a baseball bat, standing up aside the bedroom wall, Russell told me to cautiously open the bedroom door for our guests. Unlocking the bedroom door carefully, I swung open the bedroom door. As Russell stepped in front of me and held the baseball bat swinging in the air, wildly.

Hearing the cries of little children, trying to shield themselves from being hit by Russell's basement, I quickly snatched it out of Russell's reach. "It's the children, Russell!" I yelled, pointing out the obvious fact.

Mark and Valentino both stopped screaming and had their hands shielding at their faces to block my husband's attack with the baseball bat. "Mom! Dad!" Mark and Valentino both yelled together.

I gave Russell a dirty look. Then, I quickly hugged both of our scared and worried little boys. "Tell us everything that's happened to you kids," I said, trying to keep our children calm and relaxed. They were both sweating and didn't stop looking at us with fear in their eyes.

"The darkness wants us dead, Mom and Dad!" Mark and Valentino both started talking again at once. They were shaking and trembling with fear. Wrapping them in my pajama robe, I tried to get them to be brave.

"What are you talking about, kids?" Russell asked, angrily pacing back and forth in our bedroom. "I'm sure you just had a bad dream experience together, or something," Russell said, trying to explain.

I tried my best to comfort our frightened two young boys, from fidgeting with fear. "Do you remember anything I taught you two kids, on how to fight the darkness?" I asked them both, not taking my eyes off them.

They were still shaking like a leaf. "We don't have much time left to live, Mom," Mark said, finding his voice. "The darkness doesn't want kids to be alive," Mark continued. "Take us to the church on Sunday morning, okay, Mom and Dad? There, the preacher can cast out the darkness from ever coming back to haunt our lives," Mark said.

This was going to be harder than I thought.

## Chapter Twenty-Three

### Let Kids Be Monster Kids

Getting our kids the proper help they needed was going to be a challenge. The following day was Saturday in October. I had made an appointment for our two children, Mark and Valentino, to see a guidance counselor at our town's family doctor. They needed someone to talk to about their scary situation.

I was in my husband and myself's bedroom, upstairs. I had just hung up the phone, next to our bed on a table. "It's done, babe," I said, softly. "I called the doctor about getting our kid's help," I continued. I turned to look over my shoulder to see Russell laying on his side, with his back turned to me. He had his shirt off and was wearing shorts in bed.

I knew Russell must be upset with me about this as much as I am. "You did a good thing, Emma," I heard Russell say, quietly. "They will thank us once we get them the help they need," he continued, turning over his side, resting his head on the pillow, facing me.

I nodded and rubbed my watery eyes. "What are we going to do, if this doesn't work, babe?" I asked my husband. He just laughed at me like he wasn't paying any attention to me. "I'm serious, Russell. They might want to listen to a guidance counselor with their monster problems," I said.

"Honestly, I think we should just let our kids be themselves, hon," Russell said, resting his hand on his head on the fluffy white pillow. "They won't always be around, you know? We'll have to eventually get used to living in a quiet house together again," he said, smiling at me.

I nodded and returned a wry smile back to my husband. He put a warm hand on my leg, where I was sitting on the bed, next to him. "I understand, love. I just want the best for our children. They've been through so much. It could stress them out. And not be able to concentrate on their schoolwork," I said, matter-of-factly.

It started to thunder outside the small, family apartment. I got off the waterbed, as I heard the neighbor's hound dog barking at something. I cautiously walked over to the bedroom window. At first, I couldn't see anything in the dark of the night. I turned on the porch light switch.

Squinting in the dark shadows of the front porch, I saw the next-door neighbor's little dog, trying to bury something next to the muddy ground, by the tree. I could see in the flash of lightning as the owner of the little brown dog was digging furiously at the dirt ground. "Honey, come look at this," I said, insisting to my husband.

He groaned loudly as he crawled out of our big, waterbed. Turning to look out the curtained window, I pointed out the front of our porch. I gasped! The little brown neighbor's dog had vanished!

“What are we looking at, dear?” Russell asked, trying to get water out of his eyes. “I’m sure it’s nothing to get worried about,” he said, putting an arm around my shoulder. Suddenly, it lightened in the thunderstorm again.

Looking out the curtained window in our bedroom, I pointed out the window again. “Look! The neighbor’s little dog is out on the loose again!” I pointed out the bedroom window. Pushing me aside, we both watched as the brown little dog from next door, was burying some bloody bones in the ground, next to the tree in the yard.

“What is that hound dog up to?” snapped Russell, angrily. He quickly walked away from the window. Opened the closet door. He then grabbed a pajama robe out of the closet. Then, he put it around him. Putting on his warm, cozy slippers, next to the closet door, Russell grabbed a flashlight out of our dresser drawer. He quickly walked out of our bedroom door.

I didn’t know if I should follow him or not. I feared what was happening to us. Then, I turned to our closed, curtained bedroom window. Looking out, I heard my husband, Russell yelling and shouting at the neighbor’s hound dog. Who seemed frightened at Russell’s sudden movements to scare it away.

The dog quickly scampered away in the stormy night. I didn’t know what else to think. I kept watching out the window. As I saw my husband looking at the hole the neighbor’s hound dog was making. I couldn’t believe who the little brown hound dog’s bones belonged to!

## Chapter Twenty-Four

### Everybody Has a Monster They Must Deal With

I turned to look out the bedroom window outside our apartment window. As I saw our two young children, staggering toward my husband, Russell from behind him in the moonlight. “Look out, Russell! The children, behind you!” I screamed my head off.

I knew something was different about them. Because they didn’t look like themselves. They seemed to appear to be a little...undead! Staggering toward my husband, the two children were staggering and outstretched their arms in front of themselves. Groaning and bloody running down their chins, I could tell our children needed some medical attention, fast!

Dropping the bones to the ground, next to the tree in our front yard, I gasped and turned away from watching my children brutally attack my husband from behind him, As they quickly grabbed hold of Russell’s arms. And taking a bite out of them!

I ducked below the bedroom window and cried from disgust. “If only the children would take their medicine!” I thought, to myself. As I covered my ears. To block out the screaming coming from my husband. While Mark and Valentino were feeding on him. “Babe! Help me!” I heard Russell cry in defense.

I slowly raised back up from the windowsill and peered out the front yard. Mark and Valentino were hungry, eating at Russell’s arms. “Just kill me now, babes!” yelled Russell at the top of his voice, angrily. “No! They’re taking me down, love! Help me, now!” Russell demanded.

But I was so scared of not knowing what to do! I couldn’t help but watch in horror as our two children hungrily devoured Russell, by feeding on his arms. Like they were crispy, chicken legs or something crunchy.

“No! Don’t eat my husband!” I shouted to the kids. But I don’t think they could hear me. I slowly got to my feet. I hurriedly walked toward the table by our waterbed. I picked up the red phone off the receiver. I started to call the police.

But as I put the phone receiver to my right ear, I couldn’t get a signal. The phone was dead! And my family is all in mortal danger! Hearing my husband scream bloody murder, was not what my ears wanted to hear.

I couldn’t look away from the window, as Mark and Valentino were eating on my husband’s legs, now. It was so disgusting to watch. I had to do something to stop the kids from eating my husband, until there is nothing left of him.

I remembered from horror literature I had read in high school; zombies don’t like bright lights or burning fire. So, I quickly walked to my dresser drawer next to my closet in our bedroom. Opened the drawer and pulled out a silver lighter fluid.

I opened it up and sparked the lighter. It still had flames coming out of it. “This should stop them,” I said, closing the lid to the silver lighter. I put in my pajama robes. Got on my pink house slippers. And quickly hurried out of the bedroom.

Walking out of the apartment door, I only saw my husband, who was wounded. Lying next to the tree in the front yard of our apartment. Grabbing hold of the silver lighter out of my pocket, I showed the flames still burning brightly to my husband.

“Where did our children go?” I asked, patiently. But my husband was too brutally wounded to even care to respond to me. I looked at him. His arms and legs were chewed to bites. Blood stained everywhere on his shirt and pants he wore.

“It’s important you tell what happened to our children,” I continued, trying to keep my husband from passing out.

But Russell wasn’t giving me any attention. He was dreary and passed out cold, resting by the big apple tree in our front yard.

Okay. It was up to me. I had to stop the zombies getting whatever they wanted. Or fail trying to survive what is left of my existence.

## Chapter Twenty-Five

### It's Hard Losing a Loved One

I couldn't believe something like this could have happened to my family. After discovering my two undead children had gone to the graveyard, I had to find a doctor to help get my husband to recover from his animal attack.

"Stay with me, love," I said, trying to keep my love from passing out on me. He kept moaning and rolling his eyes in the back of his head. "Don't let the children drink from the fountain of youth," I whispered to my man, who was not in good shape.

Trying to shove him away from me, Russell didn't want to be helped any longer. He was moaning in pain and blood continued to dribble down his chin. "Go save yourself...!" I heard Russell tell me, in a deep, gravelly voice.

It wasn't going to be over anytime soon. The zombie children know how much I loved them and want them to be themselves again. I had to get to the priest in this town who would help me with some zombie repellent.

Storm clouds covered the glowing, white full moon. Casting the front yard in shadow. I didn't want to stay out here for long. Grabbing hold of the silver fire lighter, in my right hand, I looked around our quiet, emptied apartment complex.

Nobody was around. I took another look at my wounded husband, unconscious on the ground, with his back propped against the side of the big tree in the yard. "I'm going to bring you back to life, dear. Be patient with me," I said, praying out loud to myself and to my dead husband, on the ground. Covered in blood, I knew it would take more than a miracle to bring the dead back to life again.

I quickly hurried away from my husband, lying on the ground, covered in bloodstains. As I grabbed the handles to my son's blue bicycle and hopped on the seat. I peddled through the foggy town in wheezing gasping silence.

Everywhere I was riding in town, I kept thinking some of the zombie resident locals would appear out of the darkness, to get me. I knew if I didn't think about it. Just get me to the church of Christ. Find Father Miracle and see if he can tell what's happening to the poor, defensive little children in our spooky little town?

I was about to stop on the breaks to Mark's blue bicycle as I got closer to the church at the end of the block in the neighborhood. The front lightbulb above the chapel's front door had just turned on by itself. As I crashed the bike to the ground and hurried up to the front of the chapel.

When I reached the front of the church's door and started to knock on it. The door quickly swung open by itself. Carrying a big, leatherbound book in his hand, and wearing a priest's black uniform, the town's preacher appeared to be answering the front door, with a confused look on his face.

“You *have* to help me, Father Miracle!” I begged the priest. He was clutching hold of his prayer Bibles in his grasp. I stepped back as I watched Father Miracle step onto the front of the chapel’s steps.

“Calm down, Emma Changeling, dear,” said Father Miracle in a relaxed voice. “Something must have scared you to death. Tell me everything,” he continued, putting a comforting hand on my right shoulder.

I didn’t know how to begin. Everything was happening so suddenly. It was like experiencing a bad dream coming to life all at once. I don’t know how to explain to our preacher. I knew how much he cared about everybody who lived in our little community.

“What do you know about resuscitation coming from the dead?” I started to ask, slowly. “The children in our town have all become deceased. I need to know what’s causing it to happen to the innocence around here,” I said, trying to make sense.

The preacher didn’t respond. He must think I’m crazy or something. “Yes. You must refrain from the last days on Earth. When Jesus Christ will come back from the dead. To take us all to our permanent home in Heaven. The dead will walk the earth. Causing everybody to experience eternal life without knowing what’s happened to them,” Father Miracle explained.

“No,” I gasped. “Not what I’m talking about,” I cried, trying hard not to lose my breath. “You have to believe when I say it’s only affected the children in this sleepy little town. When I need to stop the undead infection from spreading to everybody else in town. You *have* to help me, please, Father Miracle!” I begged and pleaded with mercy.

Before I could do anything to defend myself. I turned to look back at Father Miracle. Who was growling angrily at me. His eyes were glowing brightly white. His white, flaky skin suddenly started turning pale.

“You leave me no choice, Emma Changeling,” said the priest. “But I must turn you, too.”

## Chapter Twenty-Six

### Granny Knows Best

I had to get away from Father Miracle, the priest who was going to do something even worse to me, too! But I wasn't fast enough. The possessed preacher quickly snatched the hold of me with my pajama robe I still wore. And pulled me inside the dark chapel.

There was nothing I could do to defend myself. I struggled to free myself of the angry priest. I tried to scream and call for help. Suddenly, the priest grabbed some white cloth tissue out of his pocket. I used it to smother my mouth with its chloroform smell on my nose. I passed out quickly. He carried my unconscious body to the altar in the candle lit church.

While Father Miracle continued dragging me up to the front of the chapel, it seemed there were my two sons, Mark and Valentino and their granny at the altar. They wore black robes and covered their faces with long hoods over their faces.

"This will go easier, once I get your mother to cooperate with the ritual of the gifted ceremony to start soon," Father Miracle said to my kids and their granny. They didn't respond, only stared unconsciously at the altar.

There was a pile of bones, making up the Satanic upside down cross, in the middle of the altar. Where the priest put my unconscious body over the bloody bones next to my two kids and their undead granny. They laughed mischievously as I smacked the back of my head on the bone of the star in the middle of the altar, we all gathered around.

"We only have one try to make this happen," Father Miracle said, making a promise to us. "If we get your mom to join the living dead with everybody else. It will make it easier for the graveyard to come to life on Halloween," said Father Miracle with a big grin on his face.

Suddenly, as Father Miracle stepped away from the altar, there was a strong gust of wind coming from the windows around the steeple of the church. Blowing out the burning candles on the walls of the chapel. Casting everybody into total darkness.

Mark, Valentino, and Granny turned to watch as the front doors of the chapel blew open. Fog swirled in from the outside of the church. From the glow of moonlight, appeared to be my husband, who was wearing a black robe. He was floating unconsciously as he entered the front of the empty chapel.

Father Miracle turned to greet Russell, who outstretched his arms, and staggered toward us. "You will complete the ceremony for raising the dead back to life, Russell Changeling!" said Father Miracle, who grabbed hold of Russell by his outstretched arms. And guided him to the altar. Where I found myself floating above the bloody bones on the altar in the church. I opened my eyes and saw I was floating above the floor. Looking at my two kids, and my undead granny, have their arms outstretched and moaned in front of me. Their eyes glowed and they didn't stop their chant.

“You are lucky, sir, you still have a brain that hasn’t gone bad, yet,” Father Miracle said, laughing to himself. While the small, religious chapel was in the shadows, I couldn’t help but watch as Father Miracle handed Russell what looked like a spiky, wooden vampire’s stake! I couldn’t believe what he was doing to me!

I was paralyzed with fear. Unable to move my body. I couldn’t free myself from the ritual. Russell was getting closer to the altar. If I didn’t do something to break this curse, I may still free everybody before I get slain to death.

I couldn’t relax. My muscles ached in my entire body. I didn’t know how much longer I had to survive. Would they believe anything I tried to tell them wasn’t right? I don’t think anybody was going to listen to me, at this point.

The priest was at the podium at the altar reading from the Bible. Floating closer toward my doom, I knew I couldn’t let Russell do this to me. How to break free of this trap? I knew how much Russell loved me and our family. Not to do anything stupid. But he wasn’t going to keep from using the vampire stake to take my life out.

Then, suddenly Russell tripped over his feet as he stumbled toward the altar at the front of the stage. Dropped the vampire stake. As I watched it roll under the seats in the church. I couldn’t believe my luck! Now, I had to think of something fast to stall the priest before I got staked through the heart! Before the kids prevent the ritual of the undead, to keep our family from getting any peace.

## Chapter Twenty-Seven

### Be Afraid of the Monster Preacher

Growling and baring his teeth, I dodged out of the way. Just as the hungry, bloodthirsty creature of a preacher, jumped on top of me. I was frantically searching for the vampire stake I saw had rolled under the pews. As I started crawling under the church seats in the chapel, I gasped.

Watching from the glass-stained windows, next to the pews, fog started rolling in from the outside. I couldn't see anything under the pews, I was crawling under. Looking frantically for the vampire stake to defend myself.

I jumped and gasped with fright. As I heard the preacher leaping over the church in the pews on the other side of the chapel. "Now, you know I'm not going to hurt, my dear," said the preacher. "I'm just going to give you a little taste of everlasting youth. You'll be able to walk the earth forever. Never be afraid of getting old or learn to get along with the other living dead corpse I plan to bring to life, myself," shouted the preacher.

Crawling under the foggy, cold pews, I found my hand on the vampire stake in front of me. I quickly grabbed it. Just as the vampire preacher had leaped over the pews, next to me, I thought he saw me at last.

I quickly tossed the vampire stake in my hands, in the opposite direction of the chapel. Growling in anger, the vampire bared his sharp teeth. And jumped over the pews on the other side of the chapel. I had to get away from this crazy bloodsucker! If I didn't get out fast, I wouldn't last much longer.

I made my way to the back of the pews. I started to slowly get up. I was about to walk out the church doors. Turning to look at the stage, I saw the preacher was still looking for me in the pews, thinking I was still hiding somewhere.

I quickly and slowly opened the big, wooden doors. As I was about to walk out of the foggy church, the vampire preacher heard the door squeaking open. He growled and bared his teeth. Standing on top of the pews in one of the middles of the rows, the monster preacher whirled around and spotted me, going out the door!

Gasping with fright, I quickly grabbed hold of the heavy, wooden church door, and hurried out into the front yard of the church. Screaming, I tried running all the way from the chapel as fast as I could go!

Swinging my arms, I tried not to look back. But as I continued running away from the church, I heard the vampire preacher pound the front doors open. He let out a furious howl at the glowing, white moon.

I didn't know how much farther I got away from the church, but as I got closer, to the main road into town, I clumsily tripped over my feet. I fell headfirst on the grass lawn. I was screaming hysterically. As the vampire preacher flew after me from my behind!

I saw Father Miracle hold the vampire stake I had lost from earlier, in his right hand, grasp. His arms outstretched, baring his poisonous teeth at me, I shielded my hands to my eyes. “Please—don’t hurt me!” I screamed for mercy.

I didn’t want to be turned into an ugly, undead creature of the night. I fought trying to keep the preacher from stabbing me in the chest with his wooden vampire stake. I rolled onto my back and struggled to free myself of the vicious preacher man.

“You don’t have to change your religion to join us, in the undead, Emma Changeling!” the vampire priest explained. “What would you do for a taste of everlasting life?” snarled the priest.

I didn’t think this would end well. I was going to be a victim of a bloodthirsty vampire preacher before my eyes! And there was nothing I could do to stop him!

## Chapter Twenty-Eight

### All the Ghosts Are in Grave Danger

“Don’t fight me, Emma Changeling!” snarled the angry, vicious preacher. Pinning my arms to the ground, I struggled to free myself of Father Miracle’s grasp. I screamed and squirmed to free myself of his trap.

I couldn’t stop screaming my head off. “No! No! Get off me, now!” I said, kicking and thrashing my legs to kick the vampire priest off my body. He didn’t give up whatever he was about to do to me.

I screamed madly and tossed my head aside back and forth. As I struggled to pry myself loose of the preacher’s wrath. My eyes opened wide with fright. As I stared at what Father Miracle was about to do next to me.

He started laughing wickedly. I watched as his mouth opened. Showing me his sharp fangs, drooling on my face. I screamed high-pitched wails of defeat. As I watched the vampire priest continue to open his mouth wider.

I couldn’t help but scream even more. When I saw a black cobra snake crawl out of the priest! I couldn’t believe he was still laughing about this! I was beyond grossed out myself. I tossed my head and forth and tried kicking my legs to knock the priest off me. “No! No! No!” I screamed, like a frightened little scaredy-cat.

“Shut up!” Father Miracle cried in a deep, demonic voice of pure evil. Then, he took his long, pale hand, and slapped me against the side of my face. He continued laughing evilly at my face. I watched with horror, as the black cobra snake continued to crawl out of the preacher’s mouth.

Taking his pale, long skinny black-painted fingernailed hand, he used it to pry open my mouth. I squirmed and continued to scream muffled in my voice as I tried to bite the vampire priest’s hands off my face. But he got mad and slapped me again. I had no choice but to watch as he pried my mouth open with his skinny fingers.

As my eyes grew wide with fear, I watched as the black cobra snake continued slithering out of Father Miracle’s mouth. I could feel the snake’s red forked tongue flicker out of its beady little head at my lips. Before it started entering my mouth, I knew this was going to gross me out for life.

Just as the black cobra snake started going into my pried open mouth, I closed my eyes and waited for it to be over with. I could hear the snake hissing as it started to go into my open mouth. When suddenly, I closed my eyes. Then, I heard the sound of something slicing a body part in half. As I heard a heavy thud roll across the front lawn.

I croaked and opened my eyes. Staring into the face of the grim reaper, carrying a bloody scythe in his hands. He kindly helped me to my feet. Taking the black cobra snake in his other

free hand, the grim reaper tossed it in the air. Waved his fingers at the snake before it fell again. Then, suddenly, it transformed into a white dove. And flew away into the night.

I turned to watch the grim reaper pick up the severed head of the priest, on the ground, next to me. “You’ll thank me later when I get the ghosts to keep from getting restless, around here,” said the grim reaper, in a deep, robust, manly voice.

Suddenly, I gasped. When I heard my two children coming out of the chapel. “Mom?” they both asked, sounding spooked. I didn’t want them to be afraid of the grim reaper. But I didn’t know how dangerous this spirit would be to little kids.

“Go back inside the chapel, kids!” I shouted to them. “Don’t walk on soil ground! Or you’ll wake up the dead!” I spoke. But they weren’t listening to me. They continued walking toward me, hugging themselves from the cold, chilly night air.

It was too late. Looking around the side of the church, I saw the graveyard was filled with staggering zombies coming out of their graves. “I really don’t have time to save everybody, around here,” snapped the grim reaper, angrily.

I could hear them howling and getting closer step by step. “Kids! Listen to me! You’re safe in the chapel!” I cried. But they weren’t listening. That’s when I turned to the side of the church as I watched hopelessly. As I saw a couple of undead zombie’s stagger toward my kids at the steps of the church.

My children didn’t see them, at first. But when they disappeared in the shadows of the moonlight, they turned to their side. And screamed! “Do something, reaper!” I shouted and screamed for help to the ghost.

“There’s nothing I can do, Emma,” growled the grim reaper, angrily. “The only way for this to get any better. Is to let your children join the ranks of undead. If you don’t let me, get them turned, you’ll be sorry,” said the grim reaper.

“Get inside the chapel, kids!” I said, completely ignoring the grim reaper. But my two children were too frightened to obey. When suddenly, we all jumped with fright. At the sound of a gunshot being fired. Looking back at the chapel, we turned and saw Russell, my husband came to our rescue!

He carried a silver shotgun in his hand. And started firing silver bullets at the heads of the little zombie kids, who kept staggering toward us. “I can’t hold them all forever, kids,” Russell said. “Granny is waiting for us on the side of the afterlife. She is waiting for us to be turned into undead walking zombies. If we get what your Granny wants from the monsters, to make us gifted, the curse of this town will be lifted,” said Russell.

I don’t think my children were listening to my husband. I quickly grabbed hold of the grim reaper’s bloody scythe in his bony skeleton hands. I started screaming a victory cry and started whacking the heads off the undead zombie children, staggering all over the church lawn.

I didn't care how violent I was getting in front of the children. But I didn't want to be bloodsucking monsters of darkness to be cursed for eternity. "Stay here, kids," Russell said, to my kids. They nodded and watched from the open front door to the chapel.

As Russell and I started attacking the zombie kids who kept crawling out of their graves from behind the church in the backyard. Too many undead souls couldn't be stopped just by two mortals with no real power to do anything about them.

But as Russell and I continued attacking the zombie children, there was nothing I wanted more to do, than make sure all the dead children in this town stayed dead. The grim reaper laughed and watched with guilty pleasure as Russell used his gun to fire silver bullets at the walking dead child's forehead. It was so easy to do. I continued protecting my children as I crazily whacked off another zombie girl's dead head.

It was almost midnight on Halloween. I wanted this to be over before I knew it. When suddenly, granny's ghost appeared in the moonlight in the front yard of the chapel. All the undead dead kids stopped coming after us. We stood in awe as granny's ghost appeared in a glow of beautiful light and warm welcoming spirit.

"Emma, love," granny said, "the ghosts in the graveyard are on the loose. I don't have much time until I go back to the afterlife. It will be over for all of us, very soon," granny said. There wasn't much we could do to get away from Granny's ghost. She floated toward us, arms outstretched. Then, she went through our bodies. We fell to the ground, defeated.

