

Her name was Abra Miller, and she would die that night inside the dark stinking sewers of Hobart, torn apart and eaten by a beast she had the bad luck to come across after what she would have called 'her worst day so far' if she had lived.

Abra and her family had lived in Wellington, New Zealand, for almost fifteen, years until Alvin Miller, her father and a former teacher at the Victoria University of Wellington, passed away in a tragic car accident involving a drunk driver (no her father, of course) who also happened to be under the effect of cocaine, and due to the lots of money and contacts that asshole's family had, no justice was made for Alvin Miller's death. That, of course, if one did not count the fact that Anthony Ringwald, Abra's uncle from her mother's side, and some of his most fearless friends had bought some clown masks, caught the guy in a lonely alley in the middle of the night and beaten him to death with baseball bats. That had been too much for Alvin Miller's widow and Abra's mother, who, before the media started harassing her and her family, took her two children and moved to Hobart, Tasmania, leaving everything and everybody behind.

Abra had been against leaving their lives and friends behind, but she had as much weight on the family's decisions (that now were all on Olivia Ringwald's shoulders) as had the meaning of justice for the judges and authorities who accepted the money of the drunk guy's family (A.K.A., none), so the Miller family moved to the capital of Tasmania to start a new life from the ground.

Olivia found a job quickly as a waiter at a local restaurant. That, along with the money of Alvin's life insurance, would be enough to send Abra and Sam to school and have three foods at day for at least two years if everything went well. Everything, at least in appearance, had been going pretty well for the Millers, until Abra's tragic death.

The next thing the widow had done after getting a job, was adopting a cat, an american bobtail Abra called Mews, who she liked to think about as her best friend. She was young, so she had had few pets (all of them except for Mews deceased by now) what had shown the fourteen year old Abra Miller that pets, if treated properly, could be like angels, unique friends. Humans on the other hand...

Abra had always been too shy, and since her arrival, she had become target of bullying, mostly by the rich and popular girls, guided by Rachel Winslow, the worst of them, who even dared to call herself and her friends the 'Anti-Abra Squad'. The other classmates just did the same thing the people of Derry, that fictitious town Stephen King created for his book *It*, about the horrors that haunted them; nothing. They just ignored the daily torment Abra was a victim of, and the teachers did not do much else besides scolding this or that time Rachel Winslow, who never actually got punished for being, as Abra used to think, 'the bitch she was'. Sam was three years old, so he spent all day on the kindergarten, and Olivia was most of the time at work, doing inhumanly long shifts, all to get money to feed her children, so when Abra, tired or just beaten by a terrible day at school, Mews was the only one that was there for her. 'A tail God put on Earth when he ran out of wings', she used to think.

The cat used to sleep on the couch until, by some reason nobody ever knew, knew when Abra was about to arrive, and wet to sit two meters in front of the front door

inside the house, so he could meow like saying 'Hi, Abra', and sob his back on her thin legs as she caressed him, to then probably take him up and let him sleep on her legs as she watched reruns of *Kung Fu*, where David Carradine kicked the shit out of a different asshole (sometimes portrayed by an actor that had appeared before as another character) every episode, or when David Carradine was not on screen, she used to go to YouTube and watch different episodes of *The Saint*, where it was time for Sir Roger Moore to be the hero. And since she had the house for herself, almost every afternoon, it was time for they three: Abra, Mews and David Carradine/Sir Roger Moore, and this afternoons watching old TV shows about either mister Carradine or Sir Moore had cultivated on Abra'a young mind the wish, the desire, of becoming a famous actress someday. A wish that would never come true. One that could have happened if she just had stayed inside the safety of her house that day.

That day, instead of watching Sir Moore or mister Carradine kicking some asses, she had been outside, crying. Abra was a tough girl (her father's death had hardened her heart), but that day had been simply too much. As they say, everybody has a limit, and Abra's was not reached but also crossed that day.

Rachel Winslow and her minions, as Abra called them, had emptied the classroom's trash can on her backpack, and given her lunch to the janitor's dog, and as dessert, say goodbye to Abra at the end of classes by throwing a balloon full of disgusting fake blood that smelled like honey and sugar, what ruined her clothes and left her skin sticky, and caused everybody she came across on her way home to look at her as if she was the weirdest thing they had ever seen.

Some of them, in fact, as saw her getting out of school in a pink dress, and with her whole body covered in fake blood, just thought that the school had a recreation of Brian De Palma's *Carrie*, and that young girl had taken the same role that belonged to Sissy Spacek in the film, and now was just crying because she was taking her role too seriously, or simply had stayed in character, when actually she cried for how alone and damaged she felt.

That fake blood bath took half an hour in the shower to be removed, and after that and getting dressed, she had just gone outside to fall on her knees and start crying on the gray and rough sidewalk.

The house her mother had bought, and where they had been living since then, was located in a middle class neighborhood located almost in the frontier the city and the forest that covered the mountains shared, so it was normal to see wild animals by those streets. Another reason to not let Mews get outside the house. If he was outside, was because, somehow, he had managed to escape. Not because Abra had let him out.

A long distant meows with echo, ones Abra would recognize anywhere, came from that big mouth opened at one side of the sidewalk in front of her.

"Mews?" asked Abra as she stopped crying. Another long meow came from the black rectangular hole as an answer. She knew when it was Mews and when it was another cat. Mews was **her** cat, after all. "Oh my God..."

Abra, with her eyes red and still wet of salty tears, stood up and walked towards the hole that led to the sewers, in front of which she crouched, hoping to see her cat jump out of there like a ninja, thing it didn't.

"Mews?" asked Abra again, and this time, a pair of eyes shone in the dark with the light of the car that stopped behind Abra, Mews meowed again, this time slower and deeper.

"What the hell are you doing?" asked Mrs. Gibson, one of the Millers' neighbors, when she saw Abra looking down to that hole of darkness.

"Oh. Hi, Mrs. Gibson. I think I heard my cat down there." answered Abra.

"Do you need help? I can send Harold to help you getting him out of there."

"No, thank you. I've got it."

Dayna Gibson looked to the girl again, not sure if she actually was. Abra had always been a very flexible girl. In fact, she had even entered down in one of those a couple of weeks ago, precisely to help a puppy getting out of there, and nothing besides getting dirty had happened to her. But the fact that precisely the cat that had never got out of the house it lived in was he one that was now trapped down there was weird. Weird... But not impossible.

"If you say so... Just be careful, okay?" said the woman.

"Okay." answered Abra Miller with a smile.

"Sewers are not a safe place, especially at night. Are you **sure** that you don't want me to send Harold to help you?"

"Very sure. Thanks."

"Okay... Take care." said Mrs. Gibson and kept driving.

Abra looked down to the hole. The eyes, identical to her cat's, were still there, and the cat meowed slowly, as if telling her to come inside.

"Don't worry." said Abra to her pet. "I'm here." she said and turned around to start getting inside the sewer.

Once Abra had half of her body inside, she raised her eyes, just to be frozen for what she found. Mews was inside her house, over the couch, staring at her through the window, with the curtains forming a white wall behind him at the light of the full moon that shone up in the sky.

The order the Abra's brain sent to her body to get the hell out of that hole got interrupted by a titanic wave of pain that burst through her body when a giant mouth, one of the many the thing had, closed over her legs, shattering her bones and tearing her flesh and skin apart as the girl screamed in pain.

Abra tried in vain to drag herself (or what was left) out of there, but as she started getting out, with bloody stumps where once had been her legs, four long, black, drooling and repulsive appendages came out of there as the mouth that had bitten her legs chewed them, and wrapped themselves around her arms, neck and chest, while the cat looked alarmed to the scene. Then the girl was dragged to the underground darkness.

"DADDY!!!!!" were her last words, cut when one big, disgusting and drooling mouth bit her stomach, tearing and stretching guts, flesh and skin as a person does with

melted cheese in a slice of pizza, as her body became victim of disgusting and violent convulsions.

Then, Abra's screams were changed by the bubbly sound of air coming out of her lungs, stopped by the blood that came out of her mouth, and then, Abra let her arms fall useless, and then her head, as the beast kept eating her flesh. A second and smaller mouth severed the head from the neck in one bite, and started chewing, as the thing started moving back to its nest, to the shadows under the feet of the residents of Hobart.

"Andi. Are you dressed?" asked Dexter Hall, a man with brown hair and blue eyes while softly knocking on the door of the room that belonged to Andrea Everett, his 23 year old demon hunting partner.

He had been bothering her with that since that time on which he knocked without speaking and she opened the door, thinking that who was knocking was her girlfriend Clarissa, showing up with nothing but an apron tied to her narrow waist and neck, what had left her long legs exposed and also the shape of her breasts marked on the fabric. An image that, for his shame, he found exciting, even if he was married and the next thing Andrea Everett did was blushing violently and closing the door violently on his face. However, both were good friends.

Dex and Andi had met in Ogunquit, Maine, five years ago after Dexter's previous partner was killed by a Z'yax demon in the Kleiner Gleichberg mountain, located in Germany, and she had just graduated from the training with honours, so Axl Everett, Andi's adoptive father, introduced them both and assigned them the mission to check one of the local woods for the rumors of a wendigo habitating the area, what was weird since wendigos preferred extremely cold weathers, and despite there was no wendigo, both happened to do an incredibly job together, so they were nominated hunting partners, and a demon they were sent to hunt was a dead one.

A heavy cough was the girl's reply.

"Fuck you, Dex." she said, evidentially ill. "Come in."

Dex entered her room, all dressed in black clothes with an Amon Amarth shirt, as if he was going to one of their concerts. His wedding ring, made of pure gold, shone under the light of another bright Sydney morning. He dedicated his partner a bright smile while he closed the door softly, remembering when he saw her almost naked, with only that apron tied to her body.

Andi's room was wide and comfy, with a big white bed on the middle, a balcony that had an amazing sight of the city, the sea and even the distant Sydney Opera House, a round table made of oakwood with four chairs of the same material around it, and an expensive bathroom that could perfectly pass as an hotel's located at the right of her bed. The ground was covered with a soft white carpet, and the walls were painted beige, what reminded Dex of the coffee ice cream.

"I thought you were 'having fun' with Clarissa." he said, smiling, as he took one of the chairs and sit backwards on it, with his arms laying on the top of the chair's back.

"Only you think that having sex at the same time as having asthma is a good idea." she said and coughed violently again.

"There's no bad time for sex."

"Ha. Good luck convincing me of that."

Something he had always wondered about, was the fact that, no matter what, she would always look beautiful. If he discounted Rita, his wife, he would consider Andi the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

Her hair as black as obsidian, beautiful cerulean eyes, perfect and soft pale skin, big and natural breasts, narrow waist, strong and beautiful legs and a butt that was the cause of envy among other girls. But she didn't just have a beautiful body, she also had a beautiful personality. She was funny, sarcastic, and an awesome friend. She was one of those people that always made you laugh. If he wasn't married, was younger, and she wasn't a lesbian, he surely would've tried to flirt with her.

Andrea coughed again, indicating her lungs were full of phlegm. A machine with a mask from which came a silver medicinal smoke was at her left side. Andrea put the mask on and breathed a couple of times before staring again at her partner.

"Let me guess." said Dex after a pause. "You're gonna shave your head and ask me to cook meth with you."

"It's not lung cancer, you idiot. It's **asthma**." she said. Andi could become really grumpy when ill. "But thanks anyway for saying I would be the badass of the team. However." she coughed again, breathed into the mask, and kept talking. He could hear sibilant noises coming from her chest. "I wanted to ask you if you're taking the job."

Axl Everett, Andrea's adoptive father and also the leader of Sydney's demon hunters, had called them both three days ago to tell them about the thing that had killed Abra Miller and many other before.

"You both are my best hunters." the old black man had said. "Normally a job like this would take four, maybe six hunters, but I think you two can handle it on your own."

"It depends." Dexter said. "We can be good at hunting, but we're not immortal." The old Axl laughed softly.

"I know." said the old man. "But well. Getting to the point, my agents at Tasmania have confirmed that an Uvsathla demon has been terrorizing Hobart, Tasmania's capital, killing mostly children, pets and teenagers to feed itself. It apparently lives in the sewers of the city, and since we don't have a quartel in Tasmania, we have to deal with it. The mission is to track down this beast and kill it."

"'Beast'? Uvsathla demons never hunt or live alone." said Dex, a bit confused.

"This one does, thanks to God. If it was a colony, Hobart would be doomed and the safest thing to do would be to burn it all down, or blow the whole place with an atomic bomb, what would affect us in the long run. Returning to the mission; You'll probably have to face it in its own territory: the sewers of Hobart, with no help but each other and your weapons."

"More than enough." had said Andi. "We'll need also graffiti cans to mark the way back to the surface. And transport. How do we get to Hobart discreetly, Dad?"

“I already took care of that. I bought two tickets for a cruiser that sails from here, Sydney, and Hobart is between its stops. You shall get down there with those bikes they lend to the passengers, and hunt that thing down. If you lose the cruise, it's okay. Hobart is a gorgeous place to stay at until another ship that goes to Sydney arrives.”

Uvsathla demons were a rare and ancient species of those beings that have haunted humanity for thousands of years, feeding usually on the weak ones. Uvsathla demons used to live in colonies of thousands, forming a giant repulsive mass with eyes, thousands of hungry and drooling mouth, with appendices that usually had more mouths at the end, with which they dragged escaping victims back to them, creating a horrifying, gory and obscene picture that could perfectly pass as one that came out of the worst place of hell. Lurking and living usually in dark and wet places, mostly sewers or caves, and also capable of imitating both animal and human sounds, this creatures also grew up with the more they ate, to the point that attacking a big colony would be considered a suicide mission for any squad of demon hunters, and the best thing one could do was to nuke the place until the colony, or at least most of it, was dead, and then send a squad of hunters to eliminate the survivors, so the formation of a new colony was avoided.

In the end, both Andi and Dex had taken the mission after the Old Axl showed them the long list of missing people, mostly kids, so one could say the Uvsathla demon's days were counted... Until Andi fell sick, prey of the same asthma attacks that had been haunting her her whole life, and this one was one of those asthma attack on which one could not even cof without feeling the lungs being torn from the inside, muh less hunting, so, this time, only one of them would go to Hobart to slay the beast. And Dex had been given two choices, since going alone against an Uvsathla demon was a suicide mission: 1) Finding somebody to take Andi's place in this hunt, or 2) Leaving this mission for another team, and since Andi knew Dex as she knew her own hand (and how proud he could be sometimes), she knew which one he had chosen before he had even arrived that day to tell her.

“I'm going.” he said as Andi took the mask again to her mouth. “I want to kill that motherfucker.”

‘And your pride does not let you give this mission to somebody else after you said you would do it.’ thought the girl.

“Who did you choose to go with you?” asked Andi and then she cleared her throat with a discrete pain expression on her face. “I hope it is not Jesse Cranston.”

“No, not him.” he said, and then remained silent, as if hesitating.

He knew Andi would understand, but it didn't make it any easier for him. He felt exactly like he had when he was a teenager and had to break with some girlfriend. But, of course, it was a completely different situation. On none of the times he had broken a relationship he was about to go somewhere he was not sure he would return of.

Lost on his thoughts, Dex stretched the silence until it became awkward and extremely uncomfortable, at least for Andi.

“Come on, Dex.” she said, after breathing some more medicinal smoke. “Just tell me who it is.”

Silence.

“Seriously? Do you think I'm gonna get bloody jealous? I won't, I swear. I understand you have to replace me, at least for this mission.”

“It's... It's Frannie. I mean; Frances White.”

Frances White was another hunter, and a very good one. She was definitely not excellent, but good enough to not get herself and her constantly changing partner (by some reason nobody wanted to be her permanent companion) killed. Maybe Fran was not as good as Andi, but the other option (and what had made Dex definitely choose the young and apparently asexual and aromantic girl as his temporal hunting partner) had been the previously mentioned Jesse Cranston, a boy who happened to be the best friend of Clarissa, the already mentioned girlfriend of the young woman who now laid on bed feeling as if somebody had been using a cheese grater inside of her throat and lungs all night. Jesse was new, inexperienced, and had a not very appreciable tendency to appear where he was not called, especially if Clarissa was there, what made his intentions pretty obvious for anyone with two fingers in front, and that, of course, had gained the boy Andi's antipathy.

Jesse was handsome in his own way, but Dex knew that if he took Jesse to Hobart to hunt an Uvsathla demon, it would not just be the guy's first mission, but also their end, since, as it was previously mentioned, he was inexperienced, and inexperience plus a strong bloodthirsty beast equaled death, so Jesse was discarded before the choice between him and Fran even started.

Dex always had the suspicion that the Jesse guy could become a problem and even an obstacle in Andrea and Clarissa's relationship (he had obvious feelings for the last one), but, of course, it was none of his business, so as he usually did, kept his thought for himself, and maybe his wife after making love.

Frannie was the daughter of a sixty-year-old nurse who probably had been extremely beautiful on her youth and now kept a trace of it, named Holly White and some guy that probably had left her as soon as he found out she was pregnant. Fran was as beautiful as how her mother had probably been around the 70's or 80's, just that had the dark eyes and the dark brown hair of whoever her father was, instead of the blue eyes and black (now silver) hair her mother had.

Dex, after choosing the nurse's daughter over the inexperienced guy with who Clarissa would cheat on Andi a year later, had gone to Fran's room, where, after sharing a pair of coffee cups and a piece of cake he had bought in a near Starbucks, he asked her if she would join him to hunt the Beast of Hobart as media had called it (thinking it was a **human** serial killer, of course), and she had accepted with a happy smile, what indicated she had not a single drop of fear on her system, and both of them would take a ship that afternoon so that they could arrive in Hobart that night. Now both Dex and Fran were giving farewells to their friends and family.

“Frances White...” said Andi, thoughtful, and coughed again. “I've heard she's good at hunting, despite her tendency of changing her hunting partners as she could change a shirt.”

“It will just make it easier, then. Just a mission and then we’re only friends again, not partners. And about her being good, I hope so. If not we’re both gonna die there and be an Uvsathla demon’s food.”

“Mindy and George have gone hunting with her. They say she's awesome, so, in your place, I would not worry.” said Andi with a warm but soft smile on her face, and then made a pause to inhale more smoke. “When do you sail?”

Dex checked his wrist clock, a black Citizen Eco Drive with expensive air, and then returned his sight to Andi.

“In an hour and a half, more or less. We’ll be in Hobart in two days.” he said and made a brief pause. “I came to say goodbye.”

“No.” replied Andi. “‘Goodbye’ is for the people you're not gonna see again. You've come to say 'See you later, Andi.'”

“Andi, you know that our life expectancy...”

“Shut up and promise me you'll survive, Dex.”

“I can't, but I'll try.” he gave her the most honest smile he could find. “For you and my family.”

Andi smiled back.

“You better come back walking and not inside a coffin.” she said. “If you do I will bring you back to life, even if you have to spend the rest of your existence in a big metal armor that does not fit your voice.”

“Ha. Nice reference.”

Andi smiled, coughed, inhaled some more medicinal smoke and then sighed.

“See you, Dex.”

“See you, Andi.” he said, stood up, and walked towards her to then give her a strong hug, giving a shit about the possibility of catching the sickness.

“Hey.” said a female voice at the door. “I've brought soup and movies for you, Andi, so we can have a nice afternoon.” said the girl, and Dex turned around. It was Clarissa Morgan, Andi’s girlfriend. “Hi, Dex. How are you?”

Clary was a beautiful redhead thin girl with hazel eyes and a smile so honest and a spirit so happy that she could spread joy wherever she went. Her hair was as red as wild raging fire, and her eyes (Dex had seen many hazel eyes in his life, but none like hers) were unique in the universe, like a caramel star with obsidian core over a heavenly green meadow. No wonder why Jesse Cranston was crazy for her.

“About to go, if that's what you're asking. I'm sailing to Hobart with Frannie White to go hunting an Uvsathla demon with Pennywise complex.”

“Are you sure it is not a shape-changing alien?” asked Clary with a smile that indicated she had understood the reference as she closed the door with a soft kick.

“Very sure. I think.” he said as he smiled. “Fran and I are gonna take the role of The Losers' Club.”

“Well, I wish you both luck, then.”

“They won, didn't they?”

“I don't know. I have not finished the book yet.”

“Oh.”

Dex realized he had just become the third wheel.



"Well, gotta go." said the middle-aged man. "See you later, girls."

"See ya." said Clary and Dex got out of the room after kissing both girls' cheeks, not sure if he would see them again.

Fran and Dex did not get on the ship to Hobart together. Not because they did not wanted to be seen together (they were after a beast, not a criminal organization with eyes and ears everywhere) but because Frannie was a very punctual person that was not known by her patience when it came to wait for other people, and also Dex had arrived late, just a few minutes before they stopped receiving passengers. The reason? The traffic there was after he went to say goodbye to his wife and children. In fact, he had left his own car in the parking just after sending Rita a text message, asking her to take it from the parking (she had the second key) before it was taken away by one of those annoying cranes.

After getting inside the cruiser, the first thing Dex did was getting up the stairs and getting inside the main room, where tourists, sitting on tall chairs around chrome tables and wrapped in the freezing A/C air, spent most of the journey from Sydney to Hobart, unless they wanted to sit outside, in the heat, and watch the sea, or take some pictures. Others just went to their cabins to make love with their couples, read a book, watch TV or something. Anyway, Dex would not do any of that, at least yet. He could not remember the last time he had ran so much and arrived exhausted to the destiny.

'Two days to get to Hobart.' he thought. 'Enough time to think and accept the possibility of my own death... And Fran's.'

"Can I help you, sir?" asked a fat bald man with an imposing black moustache that reminded Dex of Michael Cudlitz's character in *The Walking Dead*.

Dex, who had travelled all around the world hunting demons, and travelled on planes, cars, motorcycles, horses and even elephants that one time he went with his previous partner to India in order to hunt a fire-breathing chimera demon, but never on a cruise, guessed he was a staff member.

"Yes. A bottle of water, please." said Dex, who paid to the bald man as he got the bottle.

After drinking half of it in six long swallows, Dex closed the bottle, accommodated his backpack belts, and started looking for Fran.

He found her sitting on one of the outside chairs, with sunglasses covering her eyes and white small headphones, which cable went down to her old MP3, on her ears, listening metal, probably Slayer or Judas Priest, at a deafening volume. Dex identified *Painkiller*, from this last band, when he took seat. Even with Rob Halford making his iconic high scream on the song, Fran noticed Dex and paused what Dex called 'the best metal song that has ever existed' to then remove the headphones from her ears.

"G'day, Fran." he said.

"Dex, you bastard!" she answered with a smile and fist-bumped him. "How ya going, mate?"

"Well, if we don't count the fact that in two days we're gonna face Death, heaps good."

Frannie laughed.

"Are you nervous?" Dex asked.

"If I weren't, it would mean that I have no human emotions whatsoever."

"Good point."

"What about you? Are you nervous knowing that your family will be worrying about you?"

"Yeah, I'm as nervous as you. Your mother, like my family, will be worrying just as much."

"Yeah... My mom..." she said.

"She's a good, strong, brave and independent woman. It took Jack Bauer-level ovaries to survive that nightmare that took place in the McKinnon Asylum. But back to the present; if I gave her a dollar for every single thing she's done for me and my family..."

"She would be rich." completed Fran. "She's also tough. I don't know why, but it always makes me wonder that she could... Build a new life here after, precisely, what happened in Scotland in 1983." she said as she pointed to Dex, retaking the topic of Holly White's past as a nurse in a Scottish mental asylum that had a dark ending in the eighties caused by, probably, what Fran and Dex knew as demons.

"As you said, she's tough. After all she had to do there, I consider her capable of anything, and that I don't know the whole story."

"I guess so." Frannie stared at him. "Do you know that she met Andrea's father? Her biological father, I mean."

"She did?"

"Yeah, when she worked in, precisely, the McKinnon Asylum. He was one of the patients." she paused. "It's a pretty small world, don't you think?"

"Very small." he agreed. "Smaller than we can imagine. If you don't mind me asking... What did mister... Mister Whatever to end there? If he was a patient it means that Andi has mental issues sleeping on her DNA."

"Pyromania and murder, I think? Like you, I don't know the whole story. And frankly, I don't want to ask Mom about it. Everything I know about the McKinnon Asylum and what happened there, what caused it to burn down and a lot of people to die, was what that woman that reminds me of Clary spoke on the BBC. I think she was Mom's coworker, both were nurses."

"Who knows? Maybe after coming back to Sydney from Hobart and slaying an Uvsathla demon she will be more open. You're her bloody daughter, Fran."

"That's precisely why I haven't pushed her on with that. If Mom came down to Sydney from Skye, to never talk about it, to never even mention it or trying to contact that woman we suppose was her coworker, was that she lived something really fucked up."

“We’ve seen fucked up things too, Fran.” said Dex as he gave another drink to his bottle of water.

“Yes.” she agreed after a long uncomfortable silence. “But I repeat; something, call it ‘glowing’ or simple feminine intuition, tells me to **never** ask Mom about it.”

“Why?”

“Because, Dex, as I already told you, if whatever happened there made Mom leave everything behind to never look back, it is far worse than all the demons we’ve seen together. Now if you excuse me, I am tired, and some sleep would really be great.” she said, stood up, and left to her room.

Dex did not even try to stop her.

After some days of traveling and having fun with the other passengers in the cruiser, Dex and Fran finally left the cruiser once they were in Hobart, taking two bikes that were borrowed to the passengers, and getting down the ship and start circulating in Hobart’s streets, pretending to be a couple of Australian tourists.

They finally got installed in a three star hotel called ‘Gold Town’, which was near a big entrance to the sewers, and a couple of streets to East from where Abra Miller had died not long ago. But of course, they did not know that fact. They did not even know that a blonde girl with blue eyes called Abra Miller, a girl considered disappeared for the Hobart police, a girl whose ‘disapparition’ got her mother in tears and hysterical since then, to the point that she needed constant medication to be calmed down and her remaining son was now at the care of, precisely, Dayna Gibson for her own will until this calmed down (to what it would take years until Abra was finally seen as deceased to the eyes of her family and the city).

On the nights, on that period in between the end of effect of a group of pills and the taking of the next round, Olivia Ringwald cried for her baby, for her firstborn, imagining only the worst things like a paedophilic asshole had taken her or that she had been kidnapped and murdered in order for some criminals to get her organs, or something she feared to even imagine. The world was a place full of bad and terrible people, after all. Had she not learned that with her husband’s death, or that time when her cousin’s son disappeared and returned shattered by life six years later, or when her childhood friend died in a pretty similar way as her husband but with an ending on which the assassin had not received any kind of justice for being related to a local and influential politician?

“Life sucks, Ollie.” used to say her big brother Ray. “Get used to it.”

Those kind of things crossed Olivia Ringwald’s mind until she was given the next round of medicines. And from the day of Abra’s death on, she would not be the same. And even to the day of her death, many decades later, she would sit staring at the window with a picture of her firstborn baby and her favorite stuffed animal, waiting. Waiting in vain for her baby to come back to her mother’s arms... As she asked herself over and over again what would be of her little, happy, innocent, blonde and blue-eyed creature, away from home.

In vain but not losing hope, Olivia Ringwald would spend the rest of her life waiting for Abra to come back to her mother, while only the girl's bones rot under her feet. Under the ground of Hobart.

Dex and Fran waited for the nightfall and the street to be clean of people and cars in order to enter to the sewers. Dressed in their black leather combat suits and with their shotguns loaded with blessed bullets and lanterns pointing at everything that moved, and attentive to every sound, the two hunters started their hunting of that hellish beast.

They had masks over their faces, so the rotten smell of the sewers wasn't that bad. From where they were, right under the heavy metal disk used to cover the circular entrance to the beast's labyrinth, there were three tunnels, all dark and humid. One in front, the other to their left, and the last one to their right. Frannie took out a can of red spray paint and made a sign on the wall behind them. A circle with an X over it was painted in red over the humid black wall, next to the stairs.

"Be sure to mark our way as we move." said Dex as he looked around, always aiming with his shotgun which canon was tied to a flashlight to wherever his sight went.

"Ha. You say it as if I was a forgetting person. Me, who remembers with detail discussions that happened years ago." she answered.

"I just wanted to be sure I had warned you."

Even with the mask over her face, Dex could notice her smiling.

"Enough talk. Let's go hunt that motherfucker." said Frannie, pointing her shotgun at the middle of the tunnel, the one she was approaching.

Dex followed her quietly as both entered the river of residual waters that reached their knees. Some rats ran by as both hunters moved through the sewers, as quiet as ghosts. There was nothing in that tunnel. In fact, it was a dead end. It just led to a wall of dark bricks where there was a circular hole with rusty metal bars. A brown, stinking waterfall fell from it. Fran painted a giant X on the wall, as both hunters retraced their steps. This time they took the one on the left. This one led to the intersection of two tunnels that together had an L shape. The girl painted a red arrow on the wall to her left. The arrow was pointing to where they came from.

They took the left again. Another dead end, so they turned back and took the one on the left. The silence was spectral and cold, like a corpse left on a fridge. When they thought they were about to take another path, something big touched Dexter's feet, and he and Frannie looked at the water, thinking it was the Uvsathla demon. But it wasn't. Frannie bent to see what was under the dirty and polluted water.

"An arm. From a little kid. Like... Five or six years old." she said, in such a calm tone that it would have made a normal person have goosebumps.

"Oh God..." said Dex, thinking of his son, who had that same age.

None remembered there that the masks didn't let them detect the sulfur smell of demons, and that the Uvsathlas were silent.

“That motherfucker is ne...” started Fran, and the demon's long appendices fell from the roof of the tunnel, taking her by the shoulders and throwing her away as if she was a doll.

“Fran!!” Dexter shouted, and then raised the gun to shoot the demon, but the blessed bullets only hit the humid stone.

The beast appeared in front of him, pushed the gun out of his hands, and hit Dexter with it's free appendix as the mouths of another four bit the hunter, then it raised Dex and threw him five meters back. Dexter sunk in the dirty water, noticing it was full of shattered human bones, mostly of children, and rotting parts of corpses that were being cleaned from the meat by the rats and insects or were just decomposing under the stinking dirty water.

With a raging scream and the sound of all those mothers, fathers and siblings crying for those dead kids on his mind, Dex took out his 9mm gun and shot four times, and four times he failed. The Uvsathla demon, even if it looked fat and amorphous, was very fast, and kept scaling the walls to then land in front of the man. Its babbling appendices reached Dexter's right arm, sinking the fangs on the flesh until the man released the gun due to the pain, and the weapon sunk in the water, where it got lost.

Dexter drew the sword out from his belt, drawing an arc that reached the beast in what should've been its stomach. Along with a squeal from the beast, stinking blood came out of the wound. It had no shape, no face, and was nothing more than a black glowing red mass with countless eyes of all sizes and colors, spread all over it's amorphous body, a pair of tentacles that worked like arms, several mouths full of sharp and yellow teeth, and from which black saliva fell and black tongues writhed like dead snakes. The beast roared and charged at Dexter, who gave another gash with his sword, reaching some of the eyes, which exploded in pus. The beast squealed with all it's mouths, and slammed Dexter with its appendices as it bit his armed arm, which did not get torn apart by the protection the combat suit gave to him, but that did not mean that it did not hurt like hell. Dex screamed loudly, incapable of doing anything else, and the Uvsathla demon released his wounded arm in order to take him with its appendices and start hitting him against the wall over and over, as if wanting to not stop until Dex was a crimson pulp.

Frannie came out of the water and shot the beast three times on the back, making lots of eyes explode in pus and the mouths open in a deafening and horrible scream. It roared and threw Dexter against her. Eighty kilograms of the man that was her partner fell over her, sinking them in the water while the beast approached at a lightning speed and Fran noticed the air absence on her lungs and Dex's weight over her body, avoiding her to stand up. Frannie pushed Dexter aside and shot again, hitting the beast, which fell over her with the biggest mouth opened to rip her face off, and it would have if she did not put the shotgun in the middle.

As the demon's fangs closed around Fran's shotgun and the beast pushed, trying to get to her, Dexter took out a hunting knife with his less wounded arm and stabbed the beast over and over with it until it released Fran's shotgun, but one of it's mouths closed over Dexter's right shoulder. The man screamed in pain as he felt the meat

and skin sinking under the pressure of those dirty teeth, but kept stabbing the demon over and over while it shook, roaring in anger. Dexter, feeling his skin hanging like stretched cheese, slipped from the demon's back, which sunk him in the water probably trying to make him drown, and then threw him against another wall, which impact dislocated the man's shoulder. There, Fran found her partner's double edged sword and shoved it into one of the demon's many drooling mouths. Stinking blood and saliva came out of the hurt mouth, splashing the girl's body. It was so disgusting that anybody would have preferred the polluted sewer waters over that disgusting mixture. Fran sunk the sword deeper and the demon squealed in agony, and pushed her back with a strong hit of one of the same appendices that had dragged Abra Miller down, breaking one of Fran's ribs, which by some miracle did not pierce her lungs. There, after dragging herself on the dirty water full of excrements and decomposing bones and corpses, she found Dex's shotgun.

"Kill it, Fran!!" yelled the man, barely audible over the screams of the demon, which was rolling its appendices over him, with their mouths biting Dex on several places. If that thing was poisonous, Dex was fucked. "Kill it NOW!!!"

She threw a bottle of holy water, which shattered against the demon's back, which got burned as if Fran had used acid instead of holy water. The beast squealed in agony, and released Dex, just to turn around and look in Fran's direction.

Faster than ever, it ran towards Frannie, roaring with a sound that would make a pack of lions escape scared. Dexter, barely processing what was happening due to the pain, just saw the beast fall over Frannie.

"Smile, you son of a bitch." said Fran with the weight of the demon over her and her appendices biting her and her mouths trying to follow the example, and then she took out the shotgun, nailed its canon on the biggest mouth, and shot.

After a good part of the superior part of the demon got blown, it froze, and then fell dead over its back, leaving the sewers in silence as Fran, not giving shit about the dirty water, let her head fall back and rest over a dirty corner of cement.

Dexter, wounded and in a clear hurry of medical attention and also the risk of getting a horrible infection on his wounds, walked towards Frannie and the Uvsathla demon's corpse. At least she was breathing. The demon had a huge hole in the top of its amorphous body, and its blood made a huge stain on the next three meters of the walls and the roof of the tunnel, as also dyed the dirty water of the sewers. Frannie was just lying there, breathing.

Both remained silent until she spoke.

"I thought we would not make it." she said, standing up. "Fuck..." she spat to one side and then stared at her partner.

The crystal of her mask was now broken, and formed a spider web. The man could see she was hurt too. Not as bad as him, but she was bleeding on one side of her head. She noticed he saw the children's rotting corpses, and dedicated him a soft smile.

"Everything we could do for them is now done, Dex. We made sure others would not share the same fate."

Dex did not answer.

“They can now rest in peace. In a better place. Come on. Let’s get you to a doctor.”

“Just take me home, Fran.”

“Sure. But before we are going to a hospital, and we’re also gonna need an alibi for... All you have.”

“Let me worry about that. Now let’s get out of here. This place is a fucking nightmare.”

“As you say, Captain Hall.” she said, trying in vain to cheer him up, and both walked from where they came from, leaving the Uvsathla demon’s corpse behind to rot with its preys’, and be food for the rats.