



Unlocking the Orion Code - BOOK I

The Killer's Daughter

By

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READ THIS FIRST - IMPORTANT

Although this book series falls into the fantasy genre of fiction, it provides a means for a factual message to be delivered. The storyline is fictional, and all the characters are fictional. However, the author believes that the details provided in this book are both factual and true.

This book is about you; it is about awakening your inner capabilities, skills and superpowers.

These supernatural powers are factual. Things like bi-location, instant miraculous healing, manifesting out of thin air, seeing the future, past life viewing etc are all capabilities well reported in the past history of all world traditions, as well as in the present times.

I, the author, have witnessed and achieved many skills thought impossible by current understanding. This book series will translate this knowledge into exercises that you can do in your own time, anywhere on the planet.

PLEASE NOTE: THE REAL ESOTERICAL/SUPERNATURAL POWERS TRAINING WILL START FROM BOOK 7.

In fact, by means of this novel series, I will teach you, as I have done with hundreds of people before you, how to see your past life (Book 7); if this really is one of the things you wish to achieve. I am not kidding; I am serious. However, as this spiritual discipline and practice requires at least two individuals, and is even better with four or more, I advise you to get some of your friends to read these book series also.

In many cases, and wherever possible, references, video clips, and scientific and medical evidence showcasing so called 'special powers' will be provided in the form of web links that you can use to expand on the knowledge provided (From Book 7 Onward). For example, in the case of the boy who has re-trained his brain to see without eyes, a link to the You Tube video will be provided. The author believes that this is the best way for you, the reader, to make up your own mind on the validity of such a skill set and knowledge.

There is so much that science has yet to uncover, as we humans use only a small fraction of our genetic potential and the capabilities of our brain/mind. This book will guide you to unlock some of this inner potential. It will be up to you then to, either read this manuscript as a simple story like all others, or get actively involved in the process.

Although the story is about the fictional character of Blair and a few others main characters, I invite you to take the journey with her. The knowledge gained will, not only unplug you from the matrix of illusion that is clogging your life right now-not dissimilar to the character Neo in The Matrix movie, but will also give you a set of skills and knowledge that you will need in order to recognize what is happening around you, and to deal with events unfolding in your real life.

A lot of real changes are going to happen shortly in your lifetime, changes, for which reading this book will help you prepare.

Every time I, the writer, want to speak directly to you, the reader, I will write in CAPITAL LETTERS.

This book is also very time sensitive. This is the reason why I felt the urgency to create this series at this particular time. Many of the events in the book that have not yet come to pass, will in all probability happen within the next twelve or so years of your lifetime. So this manuscript could be used by some even as a reference book, or a map to prepare and understand the unfolding of certain human and natural events in the future.

This is one of the reasons why the writing of this series of book has been rushed. The author asks for your forgiveness if at times the book is not written as well as it could have been. As time and more funds become available, better-written versions will be published with new editions of the books.

Although many of my readers love the first 6 book, for me the real 'great content' and 'true training' will only begin from book 7. The first 6 books serve as an introduction to the Plot and characters and to set the scene for what is to come...

ENJOY!

Unlocking the Orion Code

Book 1: The Killer's Daughter

CHAPTER 1

This was not how I imagined I would die. Not that I spent a lot of time thinking about death but...this was definitely not how I thought it would end.

My body felt like it was on fire. The pounding in my head had gone from merely irritating to excruciating. Another flash of pain shot up my spine - straight into my brain. My back arched against the cold concrete. I clawed at my skin.

I could hear a familiar voice calling my name, yelling for me to get up. Someone else was screaming.

Get away from her! Get up! Please! Get up! Blair!

Blair - that was my name. Blair Mallory. I was sixteen years old. I lived with my dad and worked in his comic book store. My favourite colour was yellow, I had a cat named Scratch, I was allergic to chocolate...and I was going to die.

CHAPTER 2

I first met Aden six months ago.

It had been a slow day at the store. Tamika had called in sick, so I was manning both the register and the café. The café was a stroke of genius my dad had a few years back. It not only gave our customers an area to relax in while browsing our stock; it also offered overpriced coffee and snacks with funny names. If the other big chain bookstores were doing it, he reasoned, why can't we? Strangely enough, the concept did appeal to customers and we were doubling our profits within the first two months.

That day, however, there were only four other people in the store aside from myself. Joe MacGuffin was a regular and fit almost every conceivable stereotype about comic book nerds. I knew better than to try to help him, as his knowledge of comics far surpassed mine. Besides, he had this uncanny knack for making me feel like a complete imbecile every time I tried to strike up a conversation. There was also a woman looking for a birthday present for her seven-year-old son and I had recommended several titles. But it was the high school kids that had me worried: two shifty looking boys around my age. They kept whispering to each other, throwing obvious looks over their shoulder in my direction every now and then. Any idiot could have seen they were about to try to steal something. It must have been their first time or they would have been subtler about it.

The door chimed and I turned to see someone else enter the store; another teenager with hair so black I was almost sure it had to be dyed. He nodded at me - that head jerk thing that all guys seemed to do when greeting each other - and wandered towards the indie section.

It was then that I heard the commotion and knew that the boys had tried to make a break for it. I turned back to see them struggling to get up off the floor. By the time I reached them, they had attracted the attention of everyone else in the store. One of the boys was frowning at his feet; his shoelaces had come undone. He must have tripped over them, knocking into his friend, sending the both of them crashing to the floor. His backpack had been unzipped and half its contents were strewn across the tile. And peeking out of the open backpack was the corner of a plastic wrapped comic book.

I moved to pick it up, but someone else beat me to it.

The black haired teen turned the book over in his hands, levelling a cool stare at the other two boys. No one said a word as an uncomfortable silence descended on the store. Even I felt the urge to fidget after a while. The would-be thieves avoided our eyes; attempting to muster whatever dignity they had left as they helped each other up, shovelling their possessions back into the backpack. Finally, the teen spoke.

"Were you planning on paying for this?" he asked, his voice quiet and politely curious. The boys flinched, as if he had struck them instead. When they did not answer him, he turned to me, holding out the comic book. "You might want to call the police."

The boys blanched. I felt sorry for them.

"It's all right," I said as I took back the book. "No harm, no foul."

Joe sputtered indignantly. The woman frowned. The boys stared at me in a mixture of confusion and suspicion. The black haired teen merely shrugged.

"Whatever."

He turned away, seemingly bored with the whole thing, and headed back towards the indie aisle. The two boys pushed past me, practically running out of the store. Joe protested.

"Hey! Come back here! Blair! How could you just let them go? When your dad finds out about this"

"I doubt he'd care much either," I said, cutting him off. "Besides, did you really want to hang around to deal with the police?"

That shut Joe up. In a town like ours, the local police force tended to have an overdeveloped sense of entitlement. I did not want them stomping through the store, and I could certainly do without their condescension.

In the end, the woman left without buying anything. Joe returned to browsing our new arrivals and I went back to my post behind the café's counter. Fifteen minutes later, I was slipping into a bored stupor when someone dropped a stack of comics onto the countertop. My head snapped up violently to find the teenage boy with black hair standing in front of me, his gray eyes twinkling in obvious amusement. I felt my cheeks heat up in embarrassment.

"Will that be all?" I asked, picking up the books and moving towards the register.

"Yeah. Do you know when you'll get the new Kitchener?"

I looked down at the stack of comics I was holding and, sure enough, they were all by local independent artist, Eric Kitchener. His art was known for being particularly violent and his characters were usually the dark, brooding, anti-hero type. I arched a brow and slid a notepad across the counter towards him.

"Just leave your name and number and we'll give you a call when it comes in," I said, as I proceeded to ring up his purchases. He wrote down his contact details in an almost illegible scrawl.

"Shouldn't you be in school?" he asked.

"Shouldn't I be asking you the same thing?" I retorted.

"Well, I asked first." I resisted the impulse to scowl at him. He was a customer and I really should not have been arguing with him. Not that I believed that the customer was always right, but letting them think they were usually ensured repeat business.

"Home schooled," I said simply.

"Taking a break before college," he replied.

"So your dad owns the store, huh?"

I nodded, counting out his change.

"Growing up, his parents wouldn't let him read comics. So, as soon as he raised the money, he went out and set up his own comic book store," I explained.

He laughed appreciatively.

"And what does your mom think about all this?"

I shrugged, handing him his change and his books.

"I wouldn't know."

He took the hint and abruptly changed the subject.

"So, the Kitchener...can you give me a rough estimate on when it'll come in?"

"Probably within the next two months or so. I'm afraid he's pretty unpredictable with his updates."

"That's all right. You have my number."

"We'll call you," I reassured him.

CHAPTER 3

That night, as I arrived home, I felt the familiar tingling in the base of my skull that told me my dad was back. I found him in the kitchen, his sleeves rolled up to his elbows, leaning over a bubbling soup pot. Scratch sat by his feet, no doubt hoping for scraps. I smiled at the picture of domesticity.

"How was New York?" I asked, coming up to hug him from behind.

"Boring," he replied. "How were things here?"

"Good. Nothing burned down."

"But we were almost robbed," he pointed out, wrinkling his nose as he tasted the soup. "Needs more salt."

"'Almost' being the key word. I took care of it. Besides, it was just a comic. And you know I hate it when you poke around in my head," I grumbled, bending down to scratch under my cat's chin. Dad chuckled good-naturedly.

"You'd never tell me anything otherwise," he laughed. "Here...taste this." I forced myself to swallow the spoonful he fed me.

"Needs pepper. And seasoning. What kind of stock did you use?"

He looked down at the pot despairingly. I hid my growing grin.

"How about we just order pizza?"

I dumped my bag on a chair while dad poured the failed soup attempt down the sink. It was then that I remembered I had brought the notepad back with me. Rummaging for it, I finally located it under my phone and keys. I flipped to the page where the boy had scribbled out his contact details and read the name written there: Aden Conley.

"By the way, someone came in today asking about Kitchener's series. Do you know when he's releasing the next book?"

"You know as well as I do that the man's unpredictable," said my dad, as he searched for the takeout menus. "Did this someone leave a name?"

"Yeah. Aden Conley."

Dad looked back at me, questioningly.

"Conley?"

I held out the notepad.

"I got him to leave his number too."

He took the notepad from me, scanned the page and nodded absently.

"I'll give him a call when we get it. Now, deep dish or stuffed crust?"

CHAPTER 4

I always knew my dad and I were special - the kind of special that could land you in a government lab as someone's experiment. For most parents, the dreaded talk comes in the form of the 'birds and the bees'. For mine, it was trying to explain to a three year old what psychokinesis was.

I remember waking up from a nightmare, screaming, only to find myself floating above my bed, surrounded by my stuffed toys, storybooks, blankets and the bedside lamp. My parents ran into the room, but whenever they tried to approach me, my toys and books would pelt them. My dad almost had his skull cracked open by the lamp. And then I remember seeing my mom floating next to me; only she was still standing by the door beside my dad, and I was so confused. She told me not to be scared, that she was there for me, and slowly I found myself drifting back down to my bed.

They explained later that my mind was just trying to protect my body; that my nightmare had scared me to the point that I was having trouble differentiating my dream from reality. Strange, I do not really recall what I was dreaming about.

Later, when I asked my mom what I saw; asked how she could have been in two places at once, she told me about thoughtform projection - about how she created a mental image and projected it into three-dimensional space - it was the only way they could get past the defences I had erected around myself.

It probably helped that I was so young. I mean, it was a hard enough story to believe; that you could directly influence things just using your mind. Psychokinesis encompassed a wide range of abilities: levitation, teleportation, pyrokinesis, cryokinesis and metamorphosis just to name a few. My talents just happened to manifest in the form of wildly uncontrolled telekinesis.

My parents pointed out that everyone possessed psychokinesis to a certain extent. But it was usually so minute as to be almost non-existent. It occurred mainly in the form of prediction; it was why some people had such strong feelings of déjà vu. And they explained that, in a small handful of people, evolution had allowed the mind to nurture this ability to the point where they could directly manipulate matter with a simple thought.

A few things started to make more sense after that. Like how my dad always seemed to know where I was or what I was thinking. He and mom were telepaths. But where she specialised in projections, his strengths laid in reading people's thoughts. It explained the tickling feeling in the back of my brain that always seemed to occur when I was near him. They taught me how to control my 'gifts' and they drilled into me the importance of secrecy; people feared what they did not understand. The need for this was affirmed the year I turned seven - when my mom was murdered.

The police report simply stated that it was an attempted mugging gone wrong. But my dad knew better. How could a mere mugger get the upper hand on a telepath? He told me that our kind were being hunted down and that I needed to be more careful from then on. He pulled me out of public school and focused on training me to protect my mind and use my telekinesis defensively.

For the next nine years, it was just my dad and I. We supported each other. We protected each other. Life was pretty good and as close to normal as it would have ever been for us.

CHAPTER 5

The store's door chimed as Tamika buried her elbow into my hip. That alone was all I needed to tell who had just arrived.

"Lover boy's here."

I rubbed my side where Tamika had none too gently nudged me. Subtlety was not her forte. Blonde and bubbly, with a personality as big as she was tiny, Tamika was not the type of girl people would have normally expected to work in a comic book store. But growing up with three older brothers and no sisters ensured that she could hold her own with the boys.

"He's just a friend," I insisted for the hundredth time.

She simply nodded knowingly.

"You keep telling yourself that."

"Hi, Blair."

I smiled at Aden as he came to a stop before my register. He had started dropping by the store regularly ever since that first day, usually to ask about the Kitchener. And when that finally arrived, he stopped by just to say hello. I would recommend a new comic series, he would tell me about a band he liked, and before we knew it, we had gone from mere acquaintances to good friends. He too was an only child and had been home schooled as well, so we were able to bond over quite a few things. Both of his parents were in law enforcement; his father was a cop and his mother was a lawyer. Their erratic work schedule was one of the main reasons why he took to spending most of his time at the store.

"Don't you have any other friends?" I teased.

"Nope," he replied, with no hint of shame or embarrassment in his voice.

"Lucky me," I quipped.

Tamika ignored us both and set about making Aden's usual order. Aden picked out a candy ring from the lollipop display on the counter. He tore open the wrapper and popped the sweet treat into his mouth.

"So, your dad's away again?" he asked, grinning at me around the candy ring.

"Another book sourcing trip."

"Where'd he go this time?"

"Philadelphia."

"Fun. So you're not doing anything tonight then?"

Tamika chose that moment to have a rather conspicuous coughing fit that distracted me from answering him for a while. Aden completely ignored her. I quelled the urge to chuck a lollipop at her head.

"Actually, Mika and I were going to have an eighties horror movie marathon at my place - "

"You should totally come," she piped, sliding Aden's coffee order across the countertop.

"Sure," he replied with a careless shrug.

I opened my mouth, and promptly shut it again. What was the use of arguing with them?

CHAPTER 6

Four hours later found us sprawled about my living room, sitting in the dark; surrounded by enough junk food to put us into a sugar coma.

Aden ducked as the cushion flew over his head and smacked me in the face. Scratch, who had been sitting in my lap, hissed in irritation. Tamika threw up her hands triumphantly while I glared at her. I half-heartedly threw some popcorn in her direction, crossed my arms and sulked. No one was really watching the movie.

"I'm afraid you asked for that one," said Aden, not in the least bit consolatory. "You did say she threw like a girl."

"She is a girl!"

"So are you," Tamika shot back.

"That doesn't even make sense!"

Aden laughed as he reached for the popcorn bowl.

"I'll go get us a refill."

We were having a surprisingly good time. I had not been sure how Aden would react to our monthly movie night. The focus was more on spending quality time together; gossiping and picking on each other, instead of the actual movies. But he did not seem to mind. In fact, he gave just as good as he got. Tamika slid into the spot he vacated on the couch, the light from the television reflecting off her hair in the darkened room.

"So, lover boy's - "

"Mika - "

" - pretty cool," she continued, as if I had not spoken. "He has my approval, just so you know."

I rolled my eyes.

"Oh, I know," I muttered.

Tamika grinned cheekily. It was all the warning I needed.

"I'm going to see if Aden needs help," I blurted, as I scrambled up from my seat, dislodging Scratch from my lap. He hissed again and took a swipe at my ankles. Tamika's laughter followed me all the way down the hall.

It was not as if the nickname and Tamika's teasing were completely unwarranted. Despite my numerous claims to the contrary, she had known me long enough to know that I liked Aden. He was fun to have around and his boyish good looks usually had girls turning their heads to get a second look.

Now, I would be the first to admit that I could be pretty clueless where guys were concerned. It was one of the downsides of having been home schooled; I did not have a lot of opportunities to interact with other people my age; much less other boys my age. I had never even been on a date before and would not know what to do if a guy ever told me he liked me. But that was not the problem.

The fact of the matter was - Aden was normal. I already had enough trouble convincing my dad that being friends with Tamika would not lead to the end of the world. I was sure that if I were to even bring up the possibility of dating someone normal, he would lock me up in my room for the rest of my life.

"Aden?"

I called out again but there was no reply. Walking into the kitchen, I found it empty with the exception of a steaming bowl of popcorn sitting on the island. The stove was clean, the sink empty and the lights were turned off. I frowned.

Our microwave had not been working for several days, which meant that Aden would have had to pop the popcorn in a pan on the stovetop. Surely he had not been gone long enough to do that and clean up as well, had he? I shook off the feeling of unease that gnawed at me. It was a sure sign that I needed to spend time with people other than my dad - his paranoia was starting to rub off on me.

"Blair?" called Tamika from the living room, laughter still evident in her voice.

"What are you two doing in there?"

"Shut up!" I yelled back, reaching out to pick up the popcorn bowl.

I hissed, promptly dropping the glass bowl as it burned my fingers. Natural instinct kicked in, stopping the bowl in mid-air, barely inches from the floor. I exhaled sharply, blowing on my palms. The glass had been scorching hot, as if it had just come out of a furnace. I looked at the bowl accusingly. Why had it been so hot?

"That's a pretty neat trick."

I whipped around to find Aden standing at the entrance to the kitchen. I could not read the expression on his face, but he did not seem surprised to see a levitating bowl of popcorn. Warning bells went off inside my head.

"Aden?"

I hated how small and uncertain my voice sounded.

Aden smiled. But where his smiles had seemed friendly before, this one was positively predatory. I took an unconscious step backwards. The popcorn bowl fell the rest of the way, rattling loudly against the kitchen tile.

"Yes, Blair?"

I glared at the mocking tone in his voice, making a mental note to tell Tamika that Aden was definitely not boyfriend material. And then it hit me, like a punch in the gut - Tamika. Was

she all right? She had to be. I just talked to her. But who knew what Aden could have done between now and then? Was his name even Aden? I was almost positive he had to have psychokinetic abilities, or else he would not have been so calm at my display of telekinesis. But what could he do? Then it hit me again - the popcorn - heat.

"You're a pyro."

The smile turned into a smirk.

"Gold star for Blair!"

I scowled.

"Who are you and what do you want?"

He tilted his head, ever so slightly, to the side, and I had the distinct impression that he was studying me. I folded my arms across my chest, realising belatedly that it was a defensive manoeuvre that only served to highlight my discomfort. His smirk grew.

"Your father never told you, did he?" It was obviously a rhetorical question, as he did not wait for a reply. "Of course he wouldn't. He probably wanted to keep his little princess out of it. Can't have her knowing just what daddy gets up to when he goes away on his 'sourcing' trips."

"What are you talking about?" I snapped.

He chuckled, shaking his head pityingly.

"Nine years ago, when your mother died, weren't you in the least bit suspicious?"

I was not even aware of having moved, but I was suddenly standing in front of him. I would have probably cut a more intimidating figure had I been taller. As it was, I barely reached his chin. But that did not stop me from snarling at him.

"What do you know about my mother?"

He shook his finger at me, as if I were a misbehaving two year old.

"You want to know what I know," he taunted, "you'll have to come with me."

I blinked. The boy was crazy. I toyed with the idea of throwing him out of the house, but that kind of telekinetic display would no doubt grab Tamika's attention. And I was sure he would retaliate if I were to do something like that. As if to confirm my thoughts, he smirked again, reaching out to flick my nose.

"And don't you get any funny ideas. Now, you go back in there and tell Tamika that you and I need to go out and run an errand. I'd really like to keep her out of this. And I know you wouldn't want anything to happen to her, would you?"

He had me cornered and he knew it. The last thing I wanted was for Tamika to get involved and I knew that, if I did not do what he wanted, there was a very high chance that she would get hurt. I needed to ensure her safety.

"What errand?" I bit out.

He smiled, taking my question as acquiescence.

"You're a smart girl. Make something up."

He took a step back, giving me just enough room to edge past him and into the hallway.

I found Tamika exactly where I had left her; with Scratch perched next to her, tearing up a cushion. She shot us a mischievous grin and waggled her eyebrows.

"What took you two so long?"

I forced a smile, hoping it looked natural.

"We ran out of popcorn. Aden and I are just heading out to get more. You want anything?"

Tamika gave me a shrewd look, her grin threatening to split her face in half.

"Nah, I'm good," she drawled. "You two go ahead. No need to hurry back or anything."

And, with that, she returned her attention to the movie still playing on the television. She did not even question why it would take the both of us to simply go out and buy popcorn.

Aden held the front door open for me, smiling amiably, as I pulled on my coat. He sketched an exaggerated bow.

"After you."

CHAPTER 7

Walking down the street with Aden, it was hard to believe that it took me so long to figure out that he was pyrokinetic. It was an unusually cold night and I was shivering in my coat. He, on the other hand, was dressed only in a band t-shirt and a thin, hooded jacket, and did not look the least bit bothered by the weather. I pulled my coat tighter around myself. Aden adjusted his grip on my arm.

"Don't even think about making a run for it," he warned.

I rolled my eyes.

"Please. Give me more credit than that. We're still in the middle of a populated neighbourhood. I'm not about to start anything."

He arched a brow challengingly.

"And the minute we're in a less populated area?" He shook his head, seemingly amused. "Relax, Blair. I'm not going to hurt you."

"Really?" I scoffed.

He shot me a look out of the corner of his eyes. If I did not know any better, I would have said he looked almost apologetic. But then his gaze hardened.

"You're just a means to an end."

Neither of us said a word after that.

The silence gave me a chance to properly go over the events that had just occurred. There were quite a few things to process. Fact: Aden was definitely not normal. Fact: He had more or less kidnapped me. The question was: why? Back in my kitchen, he had hinted that my dad was not who I thought he was. And he claimed to know the real reason behind my mom's death.

My eyes narrowed as I connected the dots. I was almost certain his real target was my dad. After all, he had said I was only a means to an end. Had his offer to refill the popcorn bowl been a ruse to buy time to search my home? It was plausible. It would explain why he had not been in the kitchen when I went to check on him and why he had even bothered to make more popcorn in the first place; he was covering his tracks. And if he really did know more about my mom's death than my dad was willing to tell me, then it stood to reason that he must have somehow been involved.

I frowned.

But that was impossible. He would have only been ten at the time. So maybe he knew the people who murdered my mom.

I gritted my teeth and felt my body tense up reflexively.

Dad! - I thought as loudly as I could - *Where are you?*

"Cold?"

Aden's question snapped me out of my musings.

"What do you care?" I muttered.

He did not reply and we returned to walking in silence. It, therefore, caught me off guard when my coat started to gradually heat up until it was toasty warm. He smirked at the look of confusion I gave him.

"You're welcome," he said, smugly.

I grudgingly thanked him.

"I'm not the bad guy, you know."

I found that hard to believe.

"Who are you then? You never did answer my question earlier."

"Well, I already said I'm not the bad guy. So, by process of elimination, I have to be the good guy."

"Nothing you've done so far supports that claim. The good guy doesn't kidnap innocent girls or threaten their best friend."

He laughed derisively.

"This isn't one of your comics, Blair. In real life, things aren't always black or white."

"Then explain it to me so I can understand!"

We had stopped walking; had, in fact, been standing still for a while. Something flashed across his face; an emotion I could not decipher. He let go of my arm.

"You're not going to believe me even if I tell you."

"Try me," I challenged.

His gray eyes bore into mine, as if searching for something. He sighed.

"We're almost there. Once we get to my place, I'll tell you everything. And show you the evidence to prove that I'm telling the truth."

He looked so determined, so sure of himself. He was convinced that what he was doing was right; that it needed to be done.

"Ok," I conceded.

Aden's 'place' turned out to be the abandoned corner house two streets down from where I lived. Considering he was after my dad, it was a little unnerving to realise how close he had been to us this entire time. He climbed in through an open window and then held out a hand to help me up.

"Come on."

I stared at him, knowing that this was the point of no return. I had followed him so far because I knew that; out in open space, in the middle of a neighbourhood I was familiar with; I had at least stood a chance in escaping if I needed to. Once I climbed through that window, I would literally be in enemy territory. I had no idea what waited for me on the other side.

"Blair." I looked up at Aden, still holding out his hand to me. "Trust me."

I barely stopped myself from snorting in disbelief.

"I don't."

"But you want answers, don't you?"

I ignored his hand and hauled myself through the window.

The house had been abandoned a year ago after a particularly vicious storm blew off half its roof. The ceiling on the first floor showed signs of water damage; there was broken glass everywhere, and evidence that Aden was not the first squatter to pass through the place. I briefly hesitated when he disappeared down the door that led to the basement, but reminded myself that he had not hurt me yet and he was unlikely to hurt me now.

Aden must have tapped into someone's power line, for the lights in the basement were switched on. He must have cleaned up as well for the room looked in better condition than the ones upstairs. He swept his arms out dramatically and a part of me registered that he was speaking, but I had stopped listening. Instead, my eyes were glued on the wall directly opposite the staircase I had just descended.

Newspaper clippings, photographs that looked several years old and multi-coloured post-it notes covered the entire wall. Each of the articles seemed to deal with unsolved murders and suicides, with the oldest clipping dating back over eleven years. I turned my attention to the photographs and felt my breath catch in my throat. Though each picture was of a different person, it was not hard to pinpoint the commonality in all of them: there were all shots of dark-haired men in their early forties, men who bore a striking resemblance to my dad.

"Here," said Aden, coming up beside me and pulling down one of the clippings. "You might find this one interesting."

It was an article from nine years ago, describing a mysterious triple murder that had taken place right outside a police station. There were no witnesses and the bodies did not have the typical signs of a defensive struggle. All that was known were the victims' names: Detective Lewis Conley and his wife, Mildred. But it was the third name that caught my attention - Elizabeth Mallory - my mom.

I looked up to find Aden watching me, wearing a wary expression, and holding a manila envelope in his hands.

"What is this?" I breathed.

"Proof," he replied, holding out the envelope to me.

The manila envelope contained several transcripts, printouts, photographs and a memory stick. The pictures were of different crime scenes. But like the photographs on the wall, they had one thing in common: there were no signs of a struggle on the victims, no gunshot wounds - no blood, no gore. If it were not for the police tape and markers evident in the photographs, I would have believed they were simply sleeping. And then I came to the mug shot and felt my heart stutter to a stop. Looking back up at me from the grainy police photograph was a face that I would have recognised anywhere. It was my dad. In fact, every single piece of paper in that envelope was about my dad. The transcripts were of several interviews, all with the same person, Elizabeth Mallory. I scanned the printouts, the frown on my brow deepening with each one I read. If this was all true, then...

"Are you saying my dad's a criminal - no - a murderer?" I asked, glaring at Aden incredulously.

"It's all there, whether you choose to believe it or not." He took the memory stick from my hands. "The recordings of your mother's interviews with my parents are on here. If you don't believe me, maybe you'll believe her."

CHAPTER 8

"Are you sure you want to do this, Liz?"

"Yes."

There was a pause in the recording and the sound of paper being shuffled. When the man spoke again, his voice had taken on a more official and commanding tone.

"Elizabeth Mallory, what can you tell us about the recent spat of murders that have cropped up across the country."

The woman cleared her throat, a sign of nervousness. But then her voice sounded - loud, clear and confident.

"I came to you because I knew you would understand, Detective Conley. As you know, all the victims so far have been associated with the Genesis program; people who have been identified as 'gifted'...much like you and your wife are."

A new voice protested at this.

"Liz!"

"It's all right, Mildred," said the man. *"The Chief has been read in. He'll make sure this never reaches the ears of any reporter. Please continue, Liz."*

"The Genesis program, as you no doubt are aware, was created to study the brainwaves of individuals who have displayed psychokinetic abilities; to pinpoint what exactly it is that makes us so different from everyone else, in the hopes that we may help in the betterment of mankind. The focus was on those with healing capabilities, Joshua Leroy the founder, was training individuals in awakening all of their skills. What you might not know is that, within the program, there were certain individuals who believed that such a study was not only intrusive but...unnatural as well. In short, they believed that those who were 'gifted' were superior to those who were not. This faction attempted to recruit more people within the Genesis program to their cause. It started out harmless enough, as these things always do, until their leader felt that they weren't being taken seriously enough and decided that more drastic measures need to be taken."

"Thus the murders?"

"Yes. At first he targeted the scientists. But when others in the program started speaking out against him, he decided that they too needed to be eliminated."

"Joshua Leroy was one of those people going against this person. He is still alive but also in hiding as has been one of the main targets."

I tried to contact him, as I still believe in the Genesis Program, and to help my daughter, but I could not find him."

"If you're not with me, you're against me'."

"Something like that. I believe the Genesis program has since been shut down and most of its original subjects have gone into hiding."

"But the murders have not stopped."

"No. Because the leader of the renegade faction still believes that as long as there are people out there who know of our existence, we will never be safe."

"So he believes that these killings serve a greater good?"

"Yes."

"And what is his name? The leader of this group; the man who orders these murders?"

"He not only ordered the murders, he has had a hand in most of them as well." The woman paused and took a deep breath.

"His name is David Mallory. He's my husband..."

CHAPTER 9

I did not know how long I sat at the bottom of that staircase, listening to the recordings over and over again; hearing my mom accuse my dad of orchestrating the deaths of at least thirteen people, many of whom she claimed had been close family friends - like the Conleys.

I stared at the wall of clippings and photographs. Aden had been tracking us down for years. He had picked up right where his father left off. His father, the cop; he had not lied to me about that. I was starting to believe he had not really lied to me at all.

But my dad did.

I was having trouble associating the warm, caring man I knew with the picture of a murderer that the newspaper clippings and printouts were painting. There was, however, no denying that it was my mom's voice on the recordings. She believed he was capable of murder.

I knew what Aden had been trying to hint at when he pointed out the article on her death. She had died in front of a police station, in the company of his parents. She had tried to turn my dad in. He had allegedly killed people for less.

I covered my mouth with both hands and screamed. I felt the tears running, unchecked, down my cheeks. And I screamed.

I sat there, at the bottom of those basement stairs, crying and screaming until I had nothing else left.

CHAPTER 10

I was alone. Aden had left when I first sat down to listen to the recordings on the memory stick; had said he wanted to give me space to take everything in. I knew he would not have gone far though. Not when I was the bait in his little trap. I knew he would be somewhere close by, just waiting for my dad to show up.

There was light seeping through the dusty basement window, so I knew that the sun had risen. I had been there all night. I vaguely wondered if Tamika had gotten worried. Had she called the police? Or better yet: my dad?

Something creaked upstairs, catching my attention. I turned around, staring at the door at the top of the stairs. It was slightly ajar. There came another creak, this one sounding directly over my head.

I frowned.

It seemed like there was someone creeping about on the floor above me. I did not think it was Aden for he had no need to creep around. It could have been a neighbourhood kid, but somehow I doubted that.

That left one other option.

"Dad?" I called out timidly.

There was silence; then the sound of hurried footsteps, and then the basement door swung open the rest of the way. Standing at the top of the stairs, with a look of worry etched across his face, was my dad.

"Blair," he breathed. "Oh, thank God!"

I stared at him in a daze. It was all too much.

"Dad?" I asked again.

He flew down the basement stairs, and the next thing I knew, I was being enveloped in his arms. I froze. He pressed a kiss into my hair, then held me at arms length and began checking for injuries.

"Are you all right? I called last night to check on you but Tamika said you had gone out with Aden and still weren't back yet. I was so worried."

I felt a tickle start up at the base of my skull and, without even stopping to consider what I was doing, threw up a mental shield that I knew would keep my dad out of my head. He jerked back as if I had physically hit him.

"Blair?"

I removed his hands from where they were gripping me on the shoulders and took a step back. But I could not look him in the eye.

"You know I hate it when you poke around in my head," I said in a quiet voice.

My dad stared at me curiously. I could feel him poking at my mental shield, testing its strength. I clenched my fists, squeezing my eyes shut against the intrusion.

"I'm worried, Blair. I just wanted to make sure you're all right."

"As you can see, she's fine."

Dad's head snapped up at the sound of the voice and I knew instantly from the look in his eyes, that he recognised Aden. Which was funny since they had never met before. Aden never came by when my dad was working in the store. Now I knew why. He had been gathering all the pieces he needed, bidding his time until I trusted him.

You're just a means to an end. It came to me then, what that 'end' was - revenge.

"What did you do to her?" dad snarled.

"I just told her the truth," said Aden, his eyes narrowed dangerously.

"I gave you a chance. I warned you to stay away from my family."

Aden shrugged.

"Yeah well, I've never dealt well with threats."

I could feel the air around us heating up; a sign of the anger Aden was trying to keep hidden. It was obvious my dad felt it too. He laughed mockingly.

"Do you really want to challenge me, boy?"

There was something in his voice that scared me. Looking at my dad then, I could not recognise him at all. There was a light in his eyes I had never seen before. Was it pleasure? Anticipation? I could feel the basement wall pressed against my back. When had I moved? My dad did not even seem to notice that I was no longer standing by his side.

I felt the fire before I saw the flames. And then my dad laughed again. It was a harsh, cruel sound.

I watched, unable to move, as Aden descended the now blazing staircase. The fire seemed to dance away from him, never once touching his skin or his clothes. My dad simply stood there, smiling. Aden had almost reached the bottom when he made his move.

Suddenly, Aden doubled over, clutching his head in his hands. He opened his mouth to scream, but no sound came out. I knew the instant he lost control of the flames for it started to lick out at him, catching the edges of his hoodie. But Aden did not even seem to be aware that he was on fire. And my dad just watched him, his eyes never even blinking.

"Did you really think you could take me on, boy? Your parents tried. And look what happened to them? What made you think you would do any better?"

His words dripped acid. Was this my dad? Was he even the same man? My dad was kind and loving. He was the one who rushed me to the hospital that time I was two and had eaten chocolate for the first time. He stayed with me until the doctors got the swelling in my throat to go down and I could breathe normally again. He was the one who rescued Scratch when he was a kitten from a group of boys who were throwing rocks at him. He helped me raise him and show me how to properly take care of a kitten.

The man standing before me was not my father. The man standing before me was a monster who had more or less admitted to killing Aden's parents.

"Did you kill mom?"

The question slipped from my lips before I was even aware I had thought of it. It had been asked in a voice barely above a whisper, yet had the affect of a grenade being dropped in the middle of the room. My dad - no, not my father - the monster rounded on me, baring his teeth in a rage.

"She betrayed me!" he roared. "After everything I have done for our family - to keep us safe - she turned around and stabbed me in the back!"

"Keep us safe?" I exploded. "You're a murderer! How does killing people keep us safe?"

"They would have hunted us down! Experimented on us! They *were* experimenting on us! Elizabeth" - he spat her name out like a curse - "would have led them right to us!"

"She was your wife! She was my mother!"

"*THAT WOMAN DOES NOT DESERVE TO CALL HERSELF A MOTHER!*"

In the midst of our shouting match, we had both forgotten about Aden. However, we were certainly reminded of his presence when my da - the monster was tackled from behind. I stared at them, mouth practically hanging open in stupefaction.

But the element of surprise did not help Aden for long; especially when the monster fought using his mind instead of his fists. Aden was a pyro and did not have the ability to protect himself against mental attacks.

I watched in horror as Aden curled up in pain only to have the monster land a punch on the side of his head. It did not stop there. Whatever it was that the monster was doing, it was causing Aden to bleed out from his ears. He clawed at his head, as if trying to peel the skin back from his skull. My hands flew to my mouth, stifling the scream that threatened to burst forth. I had to do something.

It was just a thought. Before I even knew that I would carry through with it, I had cast a force shield and sent it towards the monster with enough force to throw him into a wall.

His eyes snapped to me, anger raging in them.

"What are you doing, Blair?" he hissed.

I felt myself shaking my head.

"Stop."

A look of understanding dawned on him. He smiled and for an instant I saw my dad again; the loving, caring father I always knew him to be.

"It's ok, honey. It'll all be over soon and he'll never bother us again."

I stared at him. His smile grew, but now there was a crazed glint to it. I knew then that the man standing before me would not stop until Aden was dead. I shook my head again.

"I can't let you."

His face twisted into an ugly scowl.

"Fine."

Without warning, I felt him slam into my mental shields, tearing through it as if it were paper. I screamed as the force of his attack slammed my head back into the wall behind me.

"Blair!"

It was as if my insides were boiling. My brain felt as if it were being turned to mush. I tried re-erecting my mental shields but the mere thought of it caused more pain. I fought the monster for control of my brain and body. But he was stronger. And he was winning.

How do you protect your mind against a telepath?

I struggled to push myself off the floor - *how did I end up on the floor* - and felt another mental blow hit me. It was as if I had been run over by a tank. My breath left me in a rush. A shadow fell over me and I looked up to see the monster smiling down at me.

"Stay there, Blair," he said, his voice strangely gentle. "I'll deal with you later."

I could see Aden trying to crawl towards me, determination burning in his eyes. I had distracted the monster long enough for him to regain some control over himself.

"Blair!"

The monster turned around to kick him in the chest.

"Get away from her!" he growled.

It was getting hard to focus on things. Their voices were starting to sound muffled, as if I had cotton wool stuffed in my ears. I shook my head in an attempt to clear it, but that only made things worse.

The heat was getting stronger. Aden had long lost control of the fire he had started and it had spread to the ceiling. I was sure the floors above it were ablaze as well. The monster was still kicking Aden, venom dripping from his lips with each blow.

"Beg, boy! Beg me to spare you life - just like your father did!"

A groan sounded somewhere above us. The flames had weakened one of the ceiling's wooden support beams - directly above Aden and the monster. The part of my mind that could still piece together a coherent thought knew Aden was in no condition to get himself out of the way of the falling beam in time.

My brain screamed at me as I ruthlessly forced myself to cast a force shield over them. I could feel it flicker in and out of existence. It was not strong enough.

Just a little more...

Pain raked down my back and I was sure someone was ripping out my spinal cord as I channelled whatever energy I had left into casting a shield over Aden that would hold up against a falling wooden beam.

"What are you doing?"

The monster towered over me, a curious look on his face. At some point, I had tried to crawl closer to Aden. I had not even realised it. I blinked up at him.

Suddenly, a hand clamped itself around the monster's ankle. I looked on in wonder as Aden glared up at him with blistering hate, blood covering his face. And then he smirked.

The monster drew his free leg back to kick him again. But he never got the chance to. The next instant, his leg was on fire. The flames spread quickly. The monster yowled in surprised outrage and agony.

Another groan sounded and the support beam gave way.

No!

I found myself stretching out my hands, as if to physically stop the rapidly falling beam, and felt the force shield form just feet above Aden's head. The monster was not as lucky.

Aden stared, wide eyed, as one end of the burning beam struck the monster on the head while the other end slid harmlessly off of the shield I had cast. The monster crumpled to the ground like a marionette whose strings had been cut.

I fell back onto the cold concrete, staring unseeingly up at the ceiling.

I knew the house was on fire. I knew that I could not move. This was not how I imagined I would die.

"Get up! Please! Get up!"

Dead. The monster was dead - my father was dead. I could have saved him but I chose not to. Did that make me a killer?

Someone was shaking me. I hissed in pain and tried to tell them that they were hurting me. But I could not form the words.

"Blair! You have to get up! We have to get out of here!"

Aden - he was the one calling my name; trying to get me on my feet.

Sorry...

"No! Don't you apologise, Blair! Just hang in there!"

I could not even begin to imagine how Aden must have been feeling. He had suffered the worst of the monster's attacks but here he was, on his knees beside me, trying to get me to safety - the daughter of the man who murdered his parents.

I felt the urge to laugh at how absurd the whole thing was, but the only sound to escape my lips was a low, keening wail. It was a dirge, not for the life that had been a lie or the hollowness I felt, but for the loss of the man who had called himself my father. No matter what he had done, he was still my dad. He had raised me; taken care of me. A part of me knew that I had done the right thing. Someone had needed to stop him. But knowing I was right did not make his death any easier. My eyes fluttered close.

The sound of breaking glass cut across my morbid thoughts.

"Stay with me, Blair!" Aden whispered harshly in my ear.

I felt him slide his arms under my knees and behind my back, lifting me up. I was carried and pushed and jostled until, suddenly, a rush of fresh air filled my lungs. I blinked and was looking up at a pale blue sky - I was outside.

"Blair?"

A pair of familiar gray eyes stared at me in concern.

Behind him I could see the abandoned house, completely engulfed by the flames. Glass littered the grass where the tiny, basement window had been smashed open.

Aden leaned down to brush my hair away from my face.

"It's over."

Somewhere in the distance, I could hear the sound of police sirens getting louder and louder. I had a feeling that this was far from over, it was in fact, only the beginning...

END OF BOOK I

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