

JODI MAY'S



HSA vs IT

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FOREWORD & DISCLAIMER

First and foremost, I do not own the characters of 'IT' nor the original concept. All rights remain with the original author, Stephen King. It's important to note that this is a homage to the original story, which happens to be my favourite book. I was inspired by every single page and read it once a year, every summer, to be whisked away to Derry all over again. It occurred to me, after the two recent films (I prefer the 1990's television series) that a lot of people love the story and adore 'Pennywise the Dancing Clown' but they never get the chance to read the book. Put off by its length, they miss out on the magic of the tale as King wrote it. With this crossover homage fan fiction I wanted to bring a piece of that magic (and horror) to life and it's my hope, above all, that I'll be able to encourage just one person to pick up the original book.

Secondly, the '*Hillside Academy*' characters featured in this fan fiction are all my own. The only character I took from King's story was 'Pennywise'. The rest are mine and all belong to me by law. I will also add that much of the main characters' backstories have been changed to fit this specific 'alternative universe' and several of the minor characters of the story have also been altered. To conclude, there are no spoilers to the main '*Hillside Academy*' series. Rather, it is a way for me to highlight the main eight (Erika, Dominic, Sam, Anna, Emily, Will, Elivia and Tom) in this horror fan fiction that is dedicated to not only Stephen King for inspiring me to keep writing all these years, but also to the people of Lancaster, Lancashire.

Thus bringing me to the penultimate point of this disclaimer. Throughout the book, Lancaster is referred to not always kindly and sometimes in a negative light. This is fiction. I wanted to set this gruesome fan fiction homage in this city because for one, it's truly beautiful and has a rich, fantastic history, and secondly, because I love it. I moved here just over two years ago and fell quickly in love with the history and architecture. My babies were born here and in a way, so was I. By leaving the place I grew up and all its ghosts, I was liberated. This city has quickly become not the place I was raised but the place I was born. And the people? The people of Lancaster are wonderful. They're community-orientated, kind and generous, and during a rather arduous period, the community of Greaves specifically aided us greatly. My partner and I are eternally grateful for their generosity and kindness during this time and this is my strange way of saying thank you; of bringing Lancaster to the forefront again and displaying it in all its glory. So whatever you may read, remember it is fiction and that Lancaster, UK is my favourite place in the world. So to the people of Lancaster, thank you.

And last but not least, a disclaimer to say that the content of this chapter and all the following contain strong language, violence against children, sexual references, scenes of gore and peril and is quite frankly inappropriate for young readers or anyone easily offended. But if this is all to your taste, go ahead and read.

I hope you enjoy reading this 'alternative universe' fan fiction homage as much as I enjoyed writing it. All comments are welcome (though don't be mean), shares are encouraged and remember –

Once you begin this story...*you'll float too.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Bloody Bathroom

Marianne had agreed to let Erika back into the house. It wasn't out of kindness or even a maternal draw to her daughter. It was necessity. She couldn't look after Vicky, Erika's six year old sister. Marianne didn't have the time to bathe, feed and take care of her youngest daughter when she was busy getting high all day. Erika didn't care for the reason why she was allowed back into the flat on the top floor of Heaton House, she was simply glad she wouldn't have to sleep in a sleeping bag on Dominic's shed floor anymore. Though there were plenty things she hadn't missed about the council flats.

The unsavoury characters for one were something Erika tried to avoid that Thursday morning as she climbed the steps, a shopping bag in her grasp. She skirted around the cluster of black clad men on the first floor landing, smoking and chatting under their breaths. She knew these men, or at least one of them, and who they worked for. They, like the creature that was snatching and murdering children – a monster she and her friends had faced personally – wanted Erika. But not to eat. They devoured young girls like her in other ways. It was the road her own mother was heading down. Unable to afford her drugs, she would turn to desperate measures for the money. It wasn't as if it hadn't happened before. Marianne would do absolutely anything for her next fix and as Erika considered it, the fear wasn't for herself. It was for Vicky. She was just six but what type of life was waiting for her? In just three years she would be the same age as Erika when she had had to grow up and face the world. The real world. Not the one through the television screen. But the one those men held the key to. The one they'd unlocked for her when she was just nine.

With a grunt, Erika ignored a jeer in her direction and sped up the last set of stairs, racing down the open hallway balcony to her flat, keys jingling in her hand. Just like the monster, *It*, she wouldn't let them take her. Not her or her sister.

Her mother had given her ten pounds. It was the most amount of money Erika had seen in her palm for a while. Most of the money Marianne received from the council went on drugs and booze as though her mother could survive without food now. The drugs were her sustenance. But Erika and Vicky still needed to eat. Teachers at Vicky's school had started to ask questions at the end of term;

Why is she so thin?

She gobbles her lunch so quickly she's sick.

Is everything okay at home?

Erika had dismissed it all everytime she collected Vicky from school. What was the point in telling them the truth? Nothing was ever done. She'd made the mistake of telling her teacher in primary school, or rather, tried to, about how Marianne had used her to buy her drugs. How she'd offered up her nine year old daughter as payment. But her teacher hadn't listened. She'd called her an attention seeker. A liar. And ever since, that was all Erika was, apparently. Why would it be any different this time? Social services had visited on numerous occasions; seen Erika's bruises, Vicky's malnourishment. They'd promised:

We'll be in touch.

In other words, *we don't give a shit.*

No one gave a shit about Erika or Vicky. They were the lowest rung of society, and someone always had to be at the bottom. For the elite to continue stuffing themselves with riches there would always need to be people like Erika and her family to hold up the rest of society. People to clean away the shit and rubbish. People to grow the food and make the pretty things the rich indulged in. They were as necessary as the plague to even out an overpopulated planet. Ugly to look at, best to be ignored, but necessary nonetheless.

With the ten pounds Marianne had given her, Erika had bought bread, milk, butter, cheese, apples, oven chips, chicken nuggets, biscuits and a carton of orange juice. She could make this stretch. One portion each, with most of it going to Vicky. She was what was important. The sisters were drowning in choppy seas and Erika was holding Vicky above the waves, sinking in the depths just to do so, and she would continue to do so for as long as she was capable. If at least one of the Waterstone sisters could survive this, let it be Vicky. Sweet, emerald eyed Vicky with hair as black as night and a beaming grin. Erika softened at the sight of her waking from her nap that Thursday morning. Dumping the shopping in the galley kitchen, Erika headed into greet Vicky sitting on the mattress they shared.

"Bath I think," Erika said, lifting her sister up into her arms.

Next door, she could hear her mother's snores. It was a good sound; a relaxing one that let Erika know that for a few hours she could just be.

Vicky hated bath time. She had a strong aversion to soap and water which no doubt came from a lack of hygiene throughout her short life. She cried the entire time Erika washed her hair and some days, it was impossible to even get her into the water. Today was not one of those days. Today, her little sister was compliant and persuaded by the promise of orange juice as a reward for bathing.

After Erika finished washing her hair, she left Vicky to play in the soapy water while she set about brushing her teeth. It was the first time in a week, since she'd had no way of brushing her teeth living in Dominic's shed. She also washed her grimy face. She too needed a bath but it would have to wait. She needed to get Vicky dried, fed and distracted with a book or a game. She would not plonk her in front of the television for the droning noise to kill her growing brain cells. Then, Erika would run a bath for herself and use the last of the minutes before her mum woke to relax. To allow the hot water to wash away the dirt and the

memories. Even so, everytime she closed her eyes she came face to face with that crone all over again.

It sent a shudder of terror down her back as she hunched over the sink and spat out her mouthful of toothpaste. Turning on the tap, she rinsed her brush and leant down to collect some of the water into her mouth. Behind her, Vicky splashed happily, which was a change; usually she couldn't wait to get out of the bath. Like their mother, Vicky's mood swings were just as unpredictable. Then again, so were Erika's. Crazyness must run in the family, though she didn't remember her older sister having mood swings. Perhaps the eldest Waterstone daughter had been saved from the inherited hormones. But not saved, apparently, from an untimely death.

They called it suicide. Erika didn't believe it. Enid would have never left them willingly, or so she hoped. In truth, the belief that Enid hadn't left them of her own accord was the only thing keeping her going.

Switching off the tap creaking on its rusty washer, Erika held the sides of the basin and stared back at her reflection in the stained mirror. She looked, for want for a better word, like shit. Lines dragged across the youthful skin beneath her tired emerald eyes where the light had all but gone. Her skin was pasty with a yellowy tinge which she doubted all came from her exhaustion and hunger. Hand falling to her stomach, that queasiness remained. The one that found her every morning and made her vomit until noon. Blinking slowly, she ran her wet fingers across her cheeks, pushing back her loose raven feather hair that was far too long and in desperate need of a cut. But she could never cut it. It was the one part of her old life she still possessed.

She'd been about to tie it up when she heard a giggle. Turning around, she noted that Vicky was quiet in the bath, swimming one of her battered dolls through the water.

“You okay, Vicks?” Erika questioned.

“Mhmm,” her sister mumbled in reply. “Can I get out?”

“In a minute. Just a little longer and then you'll be all clean.” Erika smiled.

Vicky didn't look at all happy with this arrangement but for once, didn't argue as she muttered to herself in her doll's voice and Erika turned back to the sink.

There was another giggle.

Erika viewed her sister in the mirror. She wasn't laughing. Talking yes but not giggling. Besides, she knew her sister's laughter and this wasn't it.

There came another giggle. It was too close to be coming from outside and with the windows closed, Erika was mystified. As the giggle came once more, her eyes fell to the plughole.

Rust and mould circled the small black hole. Cautiously, Erika leant down to hear the giggling again, which was clearer this time. Was she hearing laughter from the flat below? Was it echoing through the drains?

“Erika? Erika!”

Eyebrows frowning deep with confusion, she edged closer and closer to the plughole, peering down into the drain. Her hair fell from her shoulders and into the damp basin.

“Erika? Help me...help me please,” came the voice again, that of a little girl.

“We all want to meet you,” said another.

Erika’s grip on the basin grew tight as she listened, struck by their voices; the confusion and fear inside of her mounting.

“Erika.” It was a boy’s voice this time.

“Come find us, Erika,” said another boy.

“Come find us and float,” said the first girl.

“We all float down here,” they all said in unison.

“Who are you?!” Erika shouted, closing one eye to peer down into the drain, unable to believe what she was hearing. Was someone playing a game? Were the people in the flat below making a game of her terror?

Just when she went to scream at them to stop and leave her alone, the voices came again –

“Shaun McDonald, Kelly Edwards, Penny Smith, Danny Collins, Maggie Alex, Katherine Dennings... Charlie Hope.”

The missing children.

No. This can’t be real.

Yet even as Erika hung there, grasping the basin and staring down into the plughole, she knew it was real. The ghostly voices of these children...these *dead* children...were no prank.

“We float...” they giggled and gurgled, their voices sending another wave of fear down Erika’s spine, her knees weakening where she stood.

“We change.” This voice was different. This one was deep, foreboding and full of threat. Of promise.

It was coming.

Suddenly there was a rapturous giggle, warbled and distorted as it echoed up the drain pipe. Pulling back, Erika would have lost her footing if not for her hair being sucked into the drain.

With a wail of anguish, she grasped the clump just above the plughole before it snatched it all. Ripping back, the burning pain rippled across her scalp. Tears in her eyes from the sheer agony, Erika begged to be let go, each strand yanked by a great unseen force. Any minute now, her hair would be torn from her very scalp.

Fumbling in her panic and fear, Erika reached into the cupboard behind the mirror; toothbrushes, medicine bottles and other items clattering down around her face and to the floor. When her fingers found the scissors, she grasped them tight. Without hesitation, she cut through the thick wad of her black hair. She cut without precision or mercy until the pressure was released. She flew backwards from the sink, skidding to a halt on her behind by the bath.

Still grasping the scissors, the remains of her hair hanging about her earlobes, Erika listened as the drain gurgled like a ravenous animal, scoffing up her hair. But it wasn't satisfied. It was still hungry.

It wanted her.

With her back pressed to the side of the bath, Erika watched through her tear-blurred vision as a shining red balloon emerged from over the side of the sink. It grew and grew, rising up higher from the plughole, swelling to a giant size; the words '*I Heart Lancaster*' written in white across its bulging side. And as she read those words, blinking with disbelief and anguish, it burst.

Blinking once, Erika felt something warm and wet dribbling down her face; across her closed eyelids, nose and mouth. Down her cheeks and neck; drenching her hoodie and leggings and bare skin. Peeling open her eyes, Erika stared back at the bathroom. Gone were the hideous 1960s yellow sink, mouldy tiles and smoke-stained ceiling. Replacing it was red.

Blood in every nook and cranny. The whole bathroom positively dripping with hot blood. She tasted it on her tongue; the metallic taste making her wince as she drew herself up and twisted around to look at her sister.

Just like the rest of the bathroom and the water she sat in, Vicky was drenched in blood. But she didn't move. She didn't even look up as she played in the pink murky water with her doll, splashing joyously in a bath for the first time ever. Erika reached out a tentative trembling hand, her forefinger wiping down the side of Vicky's small cheek. She held it up to view the blood. She wasn't imagining this. This was here. So why didn't Vicky care? Why did she not even look up as Erika let out a sob of terror? Could she not see it?

When the bathroom door slammed open to reveal Marianne, Erika's worst fears were confirmed.

“What the fuck is going on in ‘ere?” Marianne roared, her wide vicious dark eyes dancing from Erika on the floor to Vicky in the bath. The youngest Waterstone turned to face their mother, arms up and the tears welling in her eyes as she called for Marianne.

“I –,” Erika stammered. She didn’t move from her spot on the floor. She couldn’t. She simply stared agape as Marianne paced across the bathroom, her bare feet slopping against the blood on the floor, and collected Vicky from the water, her face and torso red with more of that blood. Blood that had burst from a balloon from her plughole.

“Well?” Marianne asked, one hand on the hip of her nightie, which was see-through in this light revealing her skeleton-like nakedness beneath.

Erika averted her eyes, blinking at the room. Her mother couldn’t see it. Did that mean it wasn’t real? That it was all in Erika’s head? She lifted a palm from the floor where it came back thick with oozing red blood. How could this be in her head?

Like the crone, it was all too real.

“You just needed to give her a bath and you couldn’t even do that!” Marianne spat, “You’re a useless little cunt, you know that?”

“I saw a spider!” Erika said hastily, her body shaking where she sat; the only thing keeping her upright the bath behind her. “A big one.”

“A spider?” Marianne gave her a look of disdain. “You need to get your head screwed on right, girl. You’re losing it.”

“There was a spider, I swear. I just –.”

“You’re losing it just like your sister did.”

“Don’t!” Erika snapped, all fear being replaced with that unyielding loyalty she felt for her dead sister. “Don’t you dare!”

“You and your sister are just as mental as your father! One day soon, you’re gonna lose it completely and I don’t want you anywhere near Vicks when that happens!”

The words of defence got caught in Erika’s throat at the mention of her little sister. She would never hurt Victoria. She would protect her till the end. Stand before her like a shield to the world. And in this world, Erika was perhaps the only one who truly gave a shit about little Victoria Waterstone.

“I want you gone, for good this time. Pack your shit and fuck off!” Marianne bellowed, taking a weeping Vicky and slamming the bathroom door shut behind her, leaving Erika cocooned within that bloody space, faced with the stark reality.

She needed help.

“Bloody hell,” Sam breathed, stepping into the bathroom with a look of astonishment and horror. “What the fuck happened here?” He glanced over his shoulder to where Erika hung back in the hallway alongside Emily. Meanwhile the rest of the group eased into the small bathroom, their shoes sticking to the drying blood.

“You see it?” Erika asked, searching each of their horrified faces as they all nodded. She breathed a deep sigh of relief, though she wasn’t totally relieved. There was still the case of her bathroom covered in blood.

The moment she’d been able to pick herself up from the floor, Erika had washed the blood from her body, in the kitchen sink, the best she could before changing her clothes. Her mother and sister may not be able to see the blood, but she could. She could smell it. It couldn’t stay this way. Once dressed, she’d flown out of the apartment, past the drug dealers in the hallway and out the block of flats; racing down Heaton Road and to Bridge Road where she banged on Dominic’s front door, practically battering the door off of its hinges. When he’d opened the door, he’d known straight away something awful had happened.

Within five minutes, he’d messaged them all and after knocking for Will, they all met half an hour later outside Heaton House, urgent to know what had happened. Her mother had left with Vicky to go for a walk to the park, where she was no doubt meeting her drug dealer for her latest fix. It would give Erika enough time to clean the bathroom. She may be kicked out but she couldn’t leave the bathroom this way. For Vicky’s sake, she had to clean it.

But she would need help.

“Course we fucking do,” Tom murmured. “What happened?”

They all turned to look at Erika who used Emily’s solid sturdy body as support. She glanced first to Emily who put a tentative arm around her shoulders and gave her one of those reassuring smiles that Erika had come to rely on. It gave her enough strength to face the others.

She told them all about the voices in the pipes – the voices of the dead children – and then her hair getting caught. She touched the trimmed strands that hung sharply and unevenly around her jaw. All her hair...the curtain of black she’d hidden behind since her father had been arrested on her ninth birthday. The hair she’d sworn to never cut. It was gone. Sucked down the drain; to where, she wasn’t sure but she knew she would never see it again. Finally, she explained the balloon bursting and the blood exploding everywhere. Vicky hadn’t noticed. Marianne hadn’t seen it. But Erika did and so did they. It was written on their expressions as they hung close, sticking to the centre of the small bathroom viewing the mess.

“We’re gonna need buckets, mops, cloths and some bleach,” Tom said, clapping his hands together like a man on a mission.

“You want *us* to clean this up?” Anna stuttered, glancing to Elivia’s horrified face. “You called us over here to *clean*?”

“We need your help. We can’t do this alone,” Tom beseeched.

“This is going to take hours,” Elivia said, with much more empathy than her best friend who folded her arms and glared over at Erika wilting against Emily in the hallway.

“Why does it matter if you’ve been kicked out?” Anna scoffed.

“I can’t leave it like this!” Erika exclaimed, stepping into the doorway and gesturing to the bloody bathroom. “My sister –,” her voice hitched. Emily’s hand came to rest on her shoulder, keeping her from falling to her knees. “Please, I can’t do it alone,” Erika hiccupped, her eyes going to Dominic stood in between Sam and Will, their eyes on the ceiling where the blood had crusted.

“Alright,” Sam said, “but we’re gonna need tunes.”

Armed with mops, two buckets of soapy hot water they’d filled up from the kitchen sink, several cloths, two pairs of yellow Marigold gloves for Anna and Elivia, and plenty of bleach, they set to work. With Sam’s iPhone playing in the hallway, *Green Day* pumping out its speakers, they cleaned. Watching them work was the cat Will had brought with him in his backpack and introduced as Bruce. It stayed out of their way, sitting alongside Sam’s phone as they scrubbed and washed, draining the buckets in the bath when they became filthy. It was tiresome, hot work and none of them spoke much for the next two hours, taking swift breaks for water and cigarettes. Once the last specks of blood had been wiped, the tiles dried, and the basin, bath and toilet cleaned, they stood back.

With the small window open, the summer breeze cooled their hot faces and heads of sweaty hair. Stepping into the middle, their group clustered in various points of the bathroom taking breathers, Erika viewed their work with a grateful, teary smile.

“Thank you,” she breathed, wiping the back of her hand across her forehead. “Thank you,” she gulped again, the tears burning in her eyes.

“It’s okay, Erika,” Emily said softly, one hand on her back. “We couldn’t leave it like that.”

Erika nodded slowly, taking Emily’s hand and holding it tightly. In a very short space of time, these people had become her lifeline. Even Anna and Elivia, who she looked to now perched together on the closed lid of the toilet. They looked dirty and exhausted.

“It’s fucking with us,” Sam grunted as he stood up from the edge of the bath, mop in hand. He used the bottom of his t-shirt to wipe his red sweaty face. “*This*, this wasn’t supposed to hurt you. It was supposed make you scared.”

“Well it fucking worked!” Erika coughed.

“You can’t let It,” Will said, standing to join Sam, Bruce clinging to his broad shoulder comfortably. “We can’t let It make us scared. Then It wins.”

“Will and Sam are right,” Dominic said, arms folded as he leant against the freshly cleaned wall. “It feeds on our fear. When I told It I wasn’t scared, It seemed to waver. Lose Its power.”

“It can’t hurt us as easily,” Emily spoke up. “Like we’re too old for It.”

“Too old?” Anna frowned.

“The children being murdered are young, six or seven. It can scare them. But It struggles with us.”

“So why doesn’t It leave us alone?” Elivia spluttered.

“Because we’re a challenge,” Tom said to which they all seemed to agree. “It can’t understand why It can’t hurt us. It doesn’t know what we are.”

“What are we?” Erika questioned, searching each of their faces.

“Teenagers,” Tom smirked. “Not adults, not children. We’re an age group that has, in the last twenty-seven years, become stronger. More feared. Uncontrollable. It doesn’t know what to do with us. We reek of childhood and yet we’re strong like adults. After everything we’ve all been through, It finds us especially appealing.”

“What we’ve been through?” Elivia asked, her eyes suddenly frightened.

“Let’s not pretend we’re normal,” Tom said with a sigh. “*Will* – your dad.”

“Yeah.” Will nodded, stroking a hand down Bruce’s back, the cat snuggling closer to him.

Emily reached out to touch the cat’s ears, to which Bruce pushed his head into her palm, making her giggle. “My parents,” she whispered. “My sister...”

“Yes,” Tom said, running a gentle hand across her forearm. “E?”

“My mum,” she said tightly, eyes down “My dad. My sister. Everyone.” Her focus raised to Dominic whose jaw was tight. “Me.”

“Never,” Dominic said firmly. “My brother.”

“My fucking asshole dad,” Sam spat.

“My mum,” Tom whispered, his face always shadowy at the mention of his mum. “Lil? Anna?”

“I don’t know who my parents are, not my biological ones,” Elivia said, her eyes skittish as if she had never spoken these words out loud. “I was abandoned four days after I was born. I almost froze to death.”

“And Anna?” Tom said, drawing all attention to her.

Anna opened her mouth to object, to deny, to get angry, to throw up that wall to stop anyone from penetrating, just as she had done ever since Christmas when her family had been devastated by the news of her mother’s diagnoses. When she stopped.

Eyes upon Erika, thinking of all she knew of this girl, then the rest of them – this bathroom full of broken teenagers all trying to keep going no matter what – Anna realised. It was okay to be weak with these people. It was okay because with them, she was strong. Together, they were one.

“My mum,” she said, Elivia’s hand on her shoulder. “She has cancer. Third stage. She’s going to die and there’s nothing I can do about it.” Tears sobbed from her throat as she buried her face in her hands.

Elivia hugged her close as Tom fell to his knees at her feet. They all seemed to edge closer, acting like a shield to the world while Anna cried. She didn’t have to be strong for a few minutes. She could be weak. She could cry. She could let down her wall for just a few moments for she knew she would be safe. With these people, people she hadn’t even known a week, she would be safe.

Once they’d packed everything away, the group prepared to leave. Standing in the hallway, they chatted quietly as Erika packed her things in her backpack. Not that she had much; an old ratty teddy, a few books Enid had left behind, her homework, and a few pairs of clothes. Standing back at the doorway, she viewed the mattress she and Vicky shared and wondered how her little sister would fare. Would Marianne neglect her? Would she hurt her? Erika was sure of it but felt powerless as a fourteen year girl just kicked out of her home. There was nothing she could do and no one to listen to her pleas.

“E? You coming?” Tom stepped into the dingy bedroom.

She felt his judgemental eyes scanning it. She could hear his sharp intakes of breath at the smell of the mould and damp. But it was her home nonetheless and she was being forced out, for good this time.

And she had nowhere to go.

“I don’t know what to do,” Erika hiccupped, holding her backpack to her chest, her neck cool and exposed without her hair.

Soon, the rest of the group were stepping into the room to peer down at her dirty old mattress. Not totally unlike the one Will slept on. He seemed to be the only one not judging her then as he gave her a grim smile, passing Bruce into her arms.

“He helps,” Will assured.

Erika held the black and white cat close, Bruce nudging his head up under her chin to get comfortable in her arms. She nuzzled her face into his soft, warm smelling fur, the tears leaking from her eyes and onto his coat. He didn’t seem to mind as he purred and kneaded her chest with his paws. He was kind enough to keep his claws retracted; only making Erika hug tighter.

“I have nowhere,” she whispered.

“You can stay with me, E,” Tom said.

“But your grandparents –.”

“Will be fine. They’d rather you were with us than out on the streets. That goes for all of your cretins, by the way,” Tom joked softly, causing a small ripple of laughter across them all. “Come on, let’s get out of here.”

With a gentle hand on her shoulder, Tom navigated Erika out of the bedroom, backpack on her back and Bruce in her arms. They would keep Erika safe. From now on, they would all keep each other safe. It wouldn’t be able to touch them.