

JODI MAY'S



HSA vs IT

Copyright © 2020 Jodie May Mullen

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the author, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

All characters and events in this publication, other than those clearly in the public domain, are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental

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

TWENTY-SEVEN

The End of the Eight

Will practically carried Emily home. Dirty, dishevelled and defeated, the eight dragged their tired aching bodies back to Greaves. While Anna and Elivia lived in the opposite direction, and it was well after curfew, they didn't leave the group. They stayed together as they headed up Bridge Road, past Dominic's house on the left, along Heaton, up St Paul's Road, right up St Paul's Drive and finally along the track of Ardengate. They came to a halt at the end of Emily's house's garden path. It was just gone ten o'clock and the lights of the downstairs blared out into the night.

It was time to face Rupert's wrath.

But Emily was in far too much pain to care about Rupert and how angry he would be as Will and Erika helped her along the garden path and up to the front door. No, it seemed the night's events had taken precedent in them all as they stood on the vicar's doorstep, crowded around Emily as they waited.

Blood soaked their clothes. The pain in her arm was excruciating; blinding even. She could barely think straight as the front door opened and she came face to face with Rupert. Her guardian. The person her parents had left her with. The person who was supposed to love and take care of her. The person she now looked to in her hour of need.

And what did she get?

"What in seven hell's has happened to you!?" Rupert boomed, his dark eyes wide and outraged at the sight before him. "Who are you!?" He turned his rage outwards to the seven faces of Emily's friends.

Her real family.

"Mr Matthews –," Will began when he was quickly silenced by Rupert's wife appearing beside him, dish towel in hand and her face pale with horror at the sight of Emily hanging limply in Erika and Will's arms.

"Oh my goodness!" Lindsay yelped, beckoning Emily into her grasp.

Reluctantly, Emily went, leaving behind her friends and stepping over the threshold of this home. This home that had never and would never belong to her.

“Did *you* do this to her?” Rupert said, either hand on his doorway, blocking Emily from view as Lindsay pulled her farther into the house.

Will watched her go with longing eyes; that overpowering need to protect her electrified inside of him tonight. He had failed her. He held all the blame for her tears tonight.

“Do you think we would bring you to her if *we’d* done this?” Erika sneered, evidently in no mood for Rupert and his righteousness tonight.

“Excuse me?” Rupert choked on his disbelief, glowering down at Erika. At them all.

And what a sight they were.

Erika’s eyebrow was bleeding desperately from where It had tossed her into the wall. Her back ached from the bruise emerging. The rest too, looked worse for wear; covered in dust, dirt and grime from their evening in Pathfinders House. Clean streaks run down Elivia’s face, left there from her tears. But none of them were in worse shape than Emily.

She had taken the brunt of It and in turn, Elivia had failed. They all had.

“I said –,” Erika went to repeat herself when Tom stepped forward.

Rupert recoiled with revulsion. “*You.*”

“Emily was hurt!” Tom said. “Not by us! But by something else! Something right underneath all of your noses! You deem not to see It! You *can’t* see It! But we can! And tonight, we tried to stop It! We tried! We failed! But we *did not* hurt, Emily!” he thundered, speaking for them all then when they couldn’t. There was simply no energy left. “She’s our friend and we love her!”

“*Friends?*” Rupert scoffed. “I’ve never even met you. And it’s a good thing too. Emilia knows the rules. She knows what’s *right.*”

“What the fuck does that mean?!” Sam shouted.

“We love her!” Anna yelled.

“She’s one of us!” Erika screamed, her eyes firmly upon Emily sobbing in Lindsay’s arms. “*You’re* one of us.”

“No, she isn’t,” Rupert said, grabbing hold of his door.

Will stuck his foot in the way before it could close. Strong hand pressed to the door, he held it ajar, peering up into Rupert’s wide, ever so slightly fearful eyes.

“She’s better than us all, we know that,” Will said. “But she’s one of us whether you like it or not. Tonight was an accident. Tonight was never supposed to happen but I promise you, I would never have put her in harm’s way intentionally.”

“She’s just a child, you hooligans!” Rupert roared.

“She’s not!” Elivia shrieked. “She’s stronger than that!”

“A child,” Rupert reiterated. “I never want to see any of you darkening my doorstep ever again. If I find out you’ve come within even a mile of Emilia, I will be contacting the police, do you hear? Stay away!”

The front door slammed shut, barring Will’s way to Emily. Shutting her away from them all.

Will staggered backwards, comforted only by Tom’s arms around him, keeping him steady. Slowly, one by one, they traipsed back down the garden path and back into the night. Away from the warm lights of Emily’s house and along the track until they found themselves outside the garage. Their clubhouse. The place they’d left four hours ago with such hope. The place they now returned void of any hope at all.

Erika tossed the dagger onto the tool cabinet with a loud careless clatter. The others stayed near the opening to the garage as if they didn’t want to enter. As if this place no longer belonged to them. And perhaps, since their failure, it didn’t. Why did they need a clubhouse now? It was over.

Erika slumped down on the sofa. Her eyes stayed trained upon the wall of posters, newspaper clippings and the map. And that photo. The one of the eight of them, Pennywise in the background taunting them. But it didn’t matter. That day, they had been so strong It couldn’t touch them. Tonight, It had torn them two.

It may not have killed Emily but they had lost her nonetheless. Who would be next?

“This is bullshit! He can’t stop her from hanging out with us,” Sam bellowed, his voice filling up the small draughty garage.

“He can. He’s her dad, isn’t he?” Elivia said.

“Guardian. *Just* guardian,” Tom mumbled.

“He can’t do this,” Will whispered. Anna went to touch his shoulder when he shrugged her away. “He can’t do this! She belongs with us!”

“*Yeah*, she can live in the garage with me,” Erika said with a deriding tone. The others fell silent. In the meantime, she lit a cigarette, her eyes still upon the noticeboard. “Face it, it’s over.”

“Well with that attitude,” Anna scoffed.

“The dagger didn’t work!” Erika exclaimed, shocking them all. “The only time we *really* injured It tonight was when Emily stuck her cross in Its head. That light? *That* was something.”

“So what do we do?” Dominic asked, searching all of their faces.

“Nothing,” Erika grunted. “There’s nothing left *to* do. It’s over.”

“Will you stop saying that!?” Anna shouted. Erika looked up and matched her fury. “It’s *not* over. *It’s* not dead!”

“We can’t kill It!” Erika retaliated, jumping to her feet, that cigarette between her fingers. “Rupert’s right. We’re just kids!”

“No!” Dominic interjected. “No! Emily proved that! She hurt It! Like you said! Really hurt It!”

“And maybe we would’ve had another go if ole butter fingers over here hadn’t dropped the dagger,” Sam sneered.

“Oi!” Anna snapped.

“I didn’t mean to!” Elivia wailed.

“She tripped! It was an accident!” Tom added.

“A fatal accident! Erika’s right! We had It!” Dominic said, rounding on the three to stand with Sam and Erika.

Only Will was excluded from the argument that ensued; standing on the outskirts, thinking only of Emily and how he could have lost her tonight. How, in a way, he had.

“I’m sorry!” Elivia shrieked, tears once again running in rivets down her dirty face. “I’m sorry! I’m sorry! *I’m sorry!*”

“Shut up!” Dominic hissed.

“Don’t tell her to shut up!” Tom said, pushing Dominic back from where Elivia sobbed violently in Anna’s grasp. “If you hadn’t pussied out!”

“Pussied out!?” Dominic spluttered. “You heard what It said!”

“Yeah! About your brother! It’s always about your fucking brother!”

“My brother’s dead, Tom!” Dominic roared. “*Dead!* He’s not coming back! None of those kids are! And we had a chance to end It tonight and we failed!”

“But that isn’t Elivia’s fault!” Tom spat.

“Then who’s is it?” Erika questioned.

“Maybe!” Tom started, rounding on Erika. “It’s yours!”

“Mine?!” she choked.

“Always with the negativity!” Tom whined.

“It was *me* who got you all going the other week! It was *me* who took us to Pendle! It was *me* who got that dagger!”

“Erm, excuse me, bitch,” Anna cut in, “me and Sam were there too.”

“Yeah?” Erika laughed incredulously. “And what exactly did *you* do? Eh? Spray some perfume at it? Swish your hair and flutter your eyelashes! Gonna suffocate it to death with your daddy issues!”

Anna slapped Erika then, the sound of which ricocheted off them all.

“Stop it!” Will howled, grasping the doorway of the garage for support. As strong as he’d acted, his leg was stiff and painful and he couldn’t take it any longer. “All of you! We’re a family!”

“Not anymore,” Erika said through gritted teeth, Anna’s hand mark shining on her pale face. “Whatever weird alliance we found has *gone*.”

“Emily will come back,” Elivia squeaked.

“No,” Erika said firmly with a shake of her head. “No, she won’t.”

“We can’t give up,” Dominic hiccupped. “I have to do this.”

“So you do it,” Erika grunted, returning to her spot on the sofa.

Forgetting everyone else, Dominic marched across to the sofa. He loomed over Erika as she sat defeated and wasted, sucking on that cigarette once again. It took every ounce of his strength to stifle his emotions as he glowered down at her. Erika. His best friend. His oldest. Rapidly, he was realising that the girl he had once played in the alleyway with behind their old houses in Skerton, was gone. In its place was a bitter young girl. A stranger. Hollow.

Erika Waterstone was almost gone and Dominic didn’t like this new person. This new shell.

He clung to the last ray of hope as she met his eyes and there, past the horrific memories, the self-harm and depression and trauma, he found her again.

Airrr-reee-caaar – with a K.

That’s pretty.

Thank you. What’s your name?

Dominic – Door-maaa-nick.

Doormaanick. Pretty.

Thank you.

“Erika, please,” he beseeched her. Not this girl. But the girl she had been.

The girl with long raven feather hair always plaited in two braids down either side of her head. The girl who had made daisy chains and draped them around his neck. The girl who had buried dead birds they found but always after she was totally sure there was nothing she could do to save it. Oh how she had wept for each and every single one.

And then one day, she stopped crying.

One day, she changed.

And now, she sat before him an alien. Yet still, he tried. Reaching into her, begging the little girl he had loved since he was five, when he’d never known pain, terror or grief, to listen to him. To hear him. One last time.

“*Please!*” he wailed.

Erika took another drag of her cigarette. She stared blankly back at him and without saying, Dominic knew.

Erika was gone.

Chewing on his bottom lip, Dominic marched out of the garage. He didn’t look back. He couldn’t.

Tom raced after him, shouting his name down the empty street lined with cars illuminated only by the silver streetlights.

And soon, the rest left too.

One by one. Anna and Elivia together. Will staggering away on his own. Until only Sam remained.

“Leave me alone,” Erika whispered.

“Door open or closed?” Sam said, biting back his emotions as he willed her to look at him. As he yearned to see her one last time. Not the girl she had become, but the one beneath all her layers. The one he had glimpsed in those moments tonight as she’d banged her fists on that manhole. The real girl.

When Erika didn’t reply, Sam, like Dominic before him, finally understood. It was over. Their family torn apart and its pieces scattered to the wind.

It had won. It had defeated them all.

Sam closed the garage door on Erika and her cigarette, shutting the door on the losers he’d met at the Burrow Beck *once and for all*.