

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 THIRTY – ONE

## Pig

For the first time since Emily returned that night from the Pathfinders House she was allowed out. Officially, that was, since she had been out to talk to Erika in the park the week before. The start of term was looming, the summer coming to its end, and with the curfew lifted and no more children stolen, the people of Lancaster had convinced themselves that the season of terror was over. Emily wasn't quite as confident as the adults around her but didn't refuse Rupert's suggestion that she pop along to the Spar to pick up some milk, eggs and bread.

It was as though her shackles had been removed. She walked with a spring in her step along the pavement of the A6. She hardly noticed the traffic whooshing past or even the heat of that August day. She felt only elation. She was finally free; breathing fresh air and walking further than to the kitchen and back to her bedroom, which had become her prison.

But the elation only went so far. The deep seated ache for her friends lived inside of her. That's if they *had* been her friends and not a mirage. Looking down at the bandage still secure around her forearm, Emily was certain.

*This was no dream.*

*This was real.*

*I had friends. Real friends. Friends who loved me.*

*And Will.*

She gave a small sigh of misery. Like a dark cloud on this perfect summer's day, the reminder of Will Bennet and her longing to see him again ate the last of the elation in her chest. She thought of the postcard then and that sweet, lovingly handwritten poem. Had it been from Will? The same Will Bennet who had produced a plaster from his pocket from their first meeting? Had he sat and written this poem for her?

*Just for me?*

She pictured him then, sat in his bedroom – however it may look – with Bruce beside him, writing this postcard. It seemed unreal. Why would Will do that for her?

*Fat Emilia Fox.*

Since losing her friends, the feelings of worthlessness had crept back in. They comfortably filled the spot her friends had once sat in; sighing contently like an old man sitting down in his

favourite armchair after a long day. Her hatred for herself, for her body, for her very reflection, had disappeared for a time. She had been far too preoccupied trying to find a way to kill the Clown to worry about her body image. But if the party and Samantha Rose's words hadn't brought it all home to her, the separation of her friends had. Without them, she was no longer special. She was just Emily.

*Just fat.*

It was all she would ever be.

Using the money Rupert had given her Emily paid for the pint of milk, the carton of twelve large free range eggs and a loaf of brown bread, and started on her way back home. While she'd hoped to bump into Tom or one of the others on her trip, so far she hadn't passed anyone she knew and that last linger of hope dribbled away like the sweat accumulating on the back of her neck. There was a whiff of autumn in the air – rustling through the leaves and singing in the smell of burning wood somewhere far away – but it was still warm that August afternoon and Emily, in her thick cardigan, felt the heat even more so.

Passing the muslin shopping tote onto her other shoulder, Emily touched the back of her neck. Her palm came back damp. She cringed.

*Why can't you be normal?!*

*Why can't you be thin?!*

*Why must you be so fat?!*

Blinking back the angry tears in her eyes, Emily continued walking.

She wasn't far from home. There, she could make herself a sandwich, eat a bag of crisps and a chocolate bar, and fill the emptiness inside of her. There she could fold herself away and be quiet. Be still and exist solely in her mind. There, it didn't matter how large her thighs were or whether they rubbed together when she walked. In her head, reading her favourite books, her dress size, her growing bust that older men leered at, and her chubby fingers didn't matter. She could just be.

*Just Emily.*

As she returned her focus to the pavement ahead, a shimmer of red caught her eye. For a single soul-shattering moment Emily was convinced that it was It pacing towards her.

The Clown. The Merman. The Crab, the Crone and Executioner.

Every nightmare. Every fear. It embodied them all.

But no, this wasn't Pennywise the Dancing Clown with Its razor sharp teeth – teeth that stayed embedded in Emily's head and made the healing wound on her arm twinge. This was something far worse.

It was Samantha Rose.

And she was coming straight for Emily.

She'd never seen Samantha alone. Usually, like a sovereign, she was surrounded by a pack of people; be that vicious bitchy girls who stunk of body spray and mint chewing gum, or girls and boys

who all knew when to jeer and when to snigger as if on cue. Today, however, Samantha was alone and for some reason unbeknown to Emily then as she darted right down St Paul's Road, instead of continuing on along the A6 to take her usual short-cut through the church yard to save the steep climb of St Paul's Drive, this fact frightened her more.

There was no one here to jeer Samantha on and yet she followed. There was no one else to sing that song –

*Eh fatty boom boom, have another cream cake!*

And yet Samantha chased her and screamed those words anyway.

She was totally alone and there was no one to hold her back. No one to stop whatever Samantha had planned. And she did have something planned. Emily saw that in her piercing blue eyes; saw that Samantha had had enough of their petty altercations. Something had changed and today, she was out for blood. And she would stop at nothing until she got some piggy blood.

Clinging to the strap of the tote bag, Emily passed by the junction of St Paul's Drive. It was too steep. She would never be able to run the whole way up without passing out. And then Samantha would get her.

*Eat you whole.*

No – Emily continued running the best she could, the milk in her tote weighing her down as she stumbled the last few steps down the steep decline of St Paul's Road before skidding left along the dirt track. The track which led to what Emily hoped would be her saviour once again.

The track to the woods.

It hadn't failed her before. By running into these woods all those weeks ago, she had found Will. She had met Erika, Tom and Dominic. In turn, she had found friendship in them. In Sam and his loud thunderous laugh. In Anna and fierce temperament. In Elivia – sweet Elivia Spencer. These woods, while had held terror one night, had saved Emily.

Surely it would save her again?

"Where're you going, piggy!" Samantha hollered after her.

She sounded close but Emily didn't look back. Items clattering in her tote bag swinging on her shoulder, she jogged up the track as fast as her legs would allow and was quickly engulfed by the overgrown hedgerows and forestry of the woods. Woods she hadn't stepped foot in since that night.

The night of the Crone.

Emily wouldn't fear It now. Samantha Rose and her venomous tongue were far more frightening as she headed for the inner path leading her down deeper into the forest.

The daylight couldn't penetrate the thick canopy of trees above. The shadows grew long and dark, snuffing out the sound beyond. Still, Emily ran. She ran with Samantha right on her tail. Unlike before, there was no hesitation from Emily's pursuer.

*She's got the Devil in her!*

Nothing would stop Samantha today and rapidly, and perhaps too late, Emily realised she'd run straight into a trap. And with a whack to the back of her head, she plummeted to the dry dusty ground of the forest.

Mouth full of dirt, her lip bleeding from where her front teeth had caught the skin, Emily had just enough time to roll onto her back before Samantha was upon her like a ton of bricks.

"You've been asking for this, piggy!" Samantha hissed, spittle flying through her perfect teeth and smattering Emily's face contorted with pain and fear.

"Please!" Emily begged, pressing her forearms against Samantha's chest in an attempt to push her away. But she was stronger than her skinny frame seemed.

Smacking Emily's arms away, sending a shooting spike of agony up Emily's bandaged forearm, Samantha laid her own forearm across her throat, crippling Emily. Suffocating her. Paralysing her. Silencing her –

*Once and for all.*

"There's no one here to protect you now," Samantha grinned a gruesome grin that was almost alien to her handsome face. Her eyes were wide as if possessed. And as Emily lay there, writhing in the dirt on that forest floor she wondered if this was Samantha at all or if this was just more of its tricks and games.

"Your pathetic fucking friends can't help you now! Eh? Where are they? Did they realise what a fucking fat fuck you are and leave you?! Hmmm? Poor *fat* Emilia Fox! You fat pig!" Lifting her forearm ever so slightly, Samantha shoved back down, sending Emily's head slamming back against the ground.

Dots danced across her eyes. She wriggled and fought to be free but it was useless. This was, as Samantha said, everything she deserved.

Her summer had started this way, it seemed only fitting it would end this way too. The perfect bookend to her summer. The summer she would never forget.

"Stop, please!" Emily whimpered to no avail.

"*Stop, please,*" Samantha mimicked with a snarl. "I'm going to teach you a lesson you will never forget. Everytime you look at it you'll remember. So you never forget who are you! *What* you are! FAT! A fat fuck! A fat fucking PIG!" With a hysterical cry of laughter, Samantha reached into the pocket of her jeans.

The pressure on Emily's windpipe never loosened, leaving her coughing and choking for air; pushing desperately against her arm in an attempt to fill her lungs. Just once. Just one more breath.

*Give me that.*

*Lord, give me that!*

Oh, the sick irony. To have survived the flesh being almost torn completely from the bone of her arm, only to end up here. Beneath her bully. Her bully who raised a penknife to Emily's face with a promise. No threat. Samantha was done with threats. She was out for blood.

“I’m going to make sure you *always* know!” Samantha growled almost inhumanly, fighting with Emily who shoved and slapped at Samantha now; screaming out into the forest for help. Beseeching that somebody hear her! Hear her just as Emily heard Erika. Somewhere deep in her conscience, she had heard Erika’s cries that night and she had run.

But who would come for Emily?

And then, there was a noise.

Approaching footsteps, the snuffle of a dog’s muzzle in the undergrowth. Emily stopped writhing and the knife in Samantha’s had stilled. Then slowly, the two girls watched as a man appeared on the forest track, leash in hand and a large black dog at his feet. He stopped, staring back at the two girls on the ground.

Emily stared back into the man’s vacant eyes and screamed; “Help me! Please! Help me!”

But the longer she lay there beneath Samantha’s almighty weight, that penknife waving before her eyes, the more Emily realised that this man – he was just like the other adults. He couldn’t see them. Not really. And just as she’d feared, he walked away without a second glance.

Choking for breath, another attempt to scream for help oozing through her lips, Emily stared after the man, the dog galloping away, also seemingly unaware of them. It was then, as Emily whimpered for mercy, the man looked back. Not for long, but just long enough for Emily to see that bulbous bright red nose and those glowing yellow eyes. To see the triumphant grin of It.

And all at once, Emily understood.

*It will never stop.*

*Never, ever, ever.*

*It will keep feasting, keep stealing, keep devouring until the next...*

*Unless...*

*Unless...*

*We stop It.*

*Once and for all.*

“Fat fucking *pig!*” Samantha bellowed, snapping Emily out of her reverie. There were tears in her eyes as she ripped up the front of Emily’s dress; one of those pretty floral dresses that she’d never felt comfortable in but today had felt confident enough to wear.

She had forgotten who she was. *What* she was. And just how cruel this world could be.

No one was coming to help her. No one would save her. Not Will, not Erika. No one. Emily was alone with the devil and there was only one way she could see today’s sunset.

*I have to do this myself.*

“Now you’ll know. *Piggy,*” Samantha oinked again and again, snorting uncontrollably as she laughed, pressing the point of that knife to Emily’s skin.



With a howl, Emily drew her stomach inwards away from the knife. In reply, Samantha slapped her stomach; again and again, her nails like claws as she turned Emily's soft stomach into red raw skin.

"Please! Stop! *Please!*" Emily cried, tears flooding down her cheeks and into her ears as she writhed and fought to be free. To be as far away from Samantha Rose as possible.

But, of course, that could never be true. Come next week, they would share the same school again. The same hallways and classrooms. Same lunchroom. And Samantha would hound her. She would hunt her down again and again. There was no respite.

*No escape for the fatties of this world.*

Defined only by her waistband, Emily was destined to spend the rest of her life apologising for her weight as though it was something she needed to be sorry for her. As if her body, the shape of it, sorely offended all the people around her so much that she should *have* to say sorry.

But it wasn't all she was. Emily Fox was more. A person was *more* than their dress size, more than their weight and she was done! She was sick of being defined this way! If this summer had taught her anything it was that death would come for her no matter how much she weighed and if that was true, if her death wasn't defined by her weight, why should her life? Why should she wear her stomach like a prison sentence?

*Because of everybody else.*

For as long as she lived that way, allowed them to treat her that way, the longer it would continue. She would never be free if she didn't liberate herself. It was *she* that needed to stop defining herself by her weight. It was *she* where the change needed to start. For if she didn't change soon, it would kill her.

If she didn't start standing up for herself, believing in herself, *loving* who she was and *what* she was, it would kill her. Maybe not now, maybe not tomorrow or in a year – but later. When the wrinkles of age became apparent, when her body sagged beneath the weight of time and the years of bullying, of prejudice and hatred had finally drilled all the way to her soul. Then, it would kill her.

And that was no way to live.

It was no way to die.

So as Emily stared up at her fate, at her future, at a thumbnail photo of the rest of her life as Samantha dragged the point of her penknife across Emily's stomach, carving that curve of a G onto her skin, Emily Fox made a decision.

*No more.*

She had tasted a life without the constraints of worrying about her body image. She had known true friendship. Emily Fox now knew what it meant to be loved unconditionally and without judgment.

And she wouldn't forget.

*No more!*

“Fat pig! FAT! PIG!” As Samantha went to draw a second G onto Emily’s stomach, Emily acted.

With a great growl which started in the depths of that large stomach Samantha and so many others, including her guardian, so despised, Emily roared with fury as she gave her bully one almighty heave. Rolling onto her side, Samantha’s skinny frame flew sideways. Her penknife went clattering to the ground of the forest and with a yelp, Samantha disappeared over the ridge.

Panting for breath, Emily lay still listening to the undergrowth being trampled upon as Samantha tumbled down the very same ridge Emily had fallen down all those weeks ago. The fall that had changed her life forever. Now, she watched as Samantha Rose, her bully, her nemesis, came to a shuddering halt at the bottom.

She didn’t move.

Sniffing back the snot and fluid seeping from her nose, Emily brushed a dirty hand across her mouth. Her focus stayed upon Samantha’s unmoving figure in the bushes and nettles at the bottom of the ridge. Still, she didn’t budge and Emily decided once again to act.

Blood pooled and dampened the waistband of her leggings as she inched herself up into a sitting position. Her bandaged forearm ached and pinched where the stitches had no doubt ripped apart. But it was the pain on her stomach that hurt the most. The stinging that seemed to penetrate her core. Looking down, past her bust, Emily winched at the red-lipped lacerations which from this angle looked like deep bloody squiggles.

But she knew what they said. What would forever brand her skin.

*Pig.*

But not her mind. Emily was done being the fat girl and after shooting Samantha’s unmoving figure in the brush at the bottom of the ridge one last look, she climbed to her feet.

Staggering, falling sideways as her head swam, Emily used the trees for support as she stumbled out of the woods. Gone was her tote bag. She didn’t need it now. She wouldn’t be returning home.

Not yet.

And when she did, milk, bread, eggs – none of it would matter. After tonight, nothing mundane would matter again.

Once free of the woods, Emily took a long exultant breath. And even while the blood from the wounds on her stomach seeped through the floral pattern of that pretty dress, Emily didn’t change her mind. She didn’t look back as she stepped out onto Chatsworth Road and kept on walking. Soon, her walk turned into a run and Emily knew, not even the rubbing of her thighs would stop her now as she ran.

At first she didn’t know where she was going. She trusted her feet, she trusted in this instinct that carried her, that kept her going with only one thought in mind.

*End it.*

*Once and for all.*

And so she ran.

Emily Fox ran all the way to the Burrow Beck one last time.