

Amor Vincit Omnia

Michael, Justin, Rob. Talking to my true love. My everything. My Anna. Everyone says otherwise but I know that we were always meant to be. In my heart, I know it's bound to happen, no matter what she might say. But not if any of these demons break our true destiny.

Michael was a short, frail boy. The red scabs crossing his arms and the purple bags under his eyes contrasted with the almost sickly shade of white that was his skin. His black hoodie, emblazoned with a bloody smiley and some band's name scrawled underneath, covered his long, shaggy, tangled mess of hair. It had been dyed black, but the light brown began to show through at the roots. I watched, leaning from around a corner, as he spoke to my angel Anna as they walked to Science. I saw his pallid lips speak and grin. She giggled. I shuddered. His retribution would be swift.

It was morning. I sat on the sidewalk across from the home that housed the scum who called himself Michael. As I absentmindedly picked off crumbling bits of the pavement, I watched as his mother and father left for work. About an hour later, I watched as the bus pulled up to his house, and he and his sister climbed onto the bus. Then, the time had come. I made my way to his house, opening the door with ease with the key that I knew hid under the third and fourth railings on the steps. I lightly treaded up the stairs, just in case, and looked around the hallway. Which room belonged to him was apparent: his room reeked, trash and dirty clothes littered the floor, and posters plastered the walls. It has to be here somewhere. I worked my way over to his

nightstand. Inside the drawer, I found it. A blood-crusting razor. I pulled a Ziploc bag out of my pocket. A piece of dog shit was inside, bobbing in piss that had turned brown from the growth of bacteria. I had let it sit for weeks. Dog shit. As disgusting as it was, I still think even this is too good for him. Slowly, I slid the zipper open. The rotten, rancid smell hit me seconds later. It almost made me throw up, but I settled for a grimace when I remembered my resolve to end this waste of life. I dipped the razor into the putrid fluid, holding it by the corner, and set it back down in the drawer. I sealed the bag and crept down the stairs.

Days later, I noticed Anna walking alone to Science class. I put on my best concerned face and asked a girl in the same crowd as Michael about his absence.

“You know he was a... a cutter, right? Apparently, he was cutting the other day and the cuts got infected, like, it went into his bloodstream or something, and it ended up going all over his body. He’s in the hospital, but...” she glanced back to make sure his sister wasn’t around. “they don’t think he’s going to make it.”

Justin congregated with Anna at lunch, along with all her other friends. They all sat there, laughing, eating, enjoying each others’ company, none of them knowing of the snake Justin who lay in their ranks. He was a strong, well built guy who always wore neon athletic wear. He was popular. He did sports. So of course he would be able to rip Anna from me. He was well liked, even invited to a big party tonight. Drinking, girls, the works.

Across from Justin’s house that evening, I sat on the sidewalk, running my finger down the cracks in the cement as I sat and waited. After a couple hours, he came, stumbling down the

sidewalk on his way home from the party, drunk as a lord. Fitting, considering he was probably arrogant as one anyway. Just as I expected, in his drunken state he barely could open the door, much less close it. I slipped in the door he left ajar. As he stumbled back to his bedroom, I pursued, keeping in the shadows and out of his sight. He fell into his bed, face down, and passed out. I crawled into his room, sat in his chair, and waited. After half an hour, I almost decided to give up and find a new way to off this disgusting asshole, but suddenly he shook. I leapt up and rolled him over as he began gagging. I clamped my hand over his mouth and nose as the vomit came up. His cheeks swelled as it filled his mouth, until it drained into his lungs. He began thrashing about, coughing and choking, causing the spew to shoot out of his nose, leaking through my fingers. Soon, he settled down. I wiped my hand off on his blanket as I stepped back and left.

Anna was visibly torn up, having lost two of her “friends” in such a short amount of time. In class, she barely did any work, often staring off into space with a vacant look. Time and time again she’d break out of it, only to have tears well up in her eyes. *“Don’t worry,”* I told her in my mind. *“you’ll know it’s all for the best when this little mess is all over with.”* She might not have heard me out loud, but soulmates like us have a kind of mental connection. I think she could feel my comforting words, and I soothed her and warmed her. Strangely, though, she didn’t seem to show it.

Rob was the final obstacle standing in the way of our intertwined destiny. A chronic stoner, he rarely came in without red eyes. Often he would zone out, until questions being thrown at him by his teachers sent him crashing back to earth, inquisitions to which he could only respond “...what?” Albeit inattentive and rather apathetic, most people regarded him as a pretty nice guy.

But they didn't know about his hidden agenda: his campaign against the true love that Anna and I held in our hearts. Never mind the public opinion; he had to go.

It was a brisk morning, the morning of the final part of my plan. I felt peaceful, knowing that after this, Anna and I would be star-crossed no more. I sat on the cool sidewalk across from his house, head leaning against the chilled light pole, watching him trudge his way to school. After he was out of sight, I hoisted myself up by the pole and hurriedly walked to his door.

Interestingly enough, the door was unlocked. I opened the door and lightly paced down the hallway, but I wasn't stealthy enough, even over the television's rambling. A feminine voice called out from a room on the left.

"Robbie? I hear you out there, don't tell me you're skipping again..."

"Heh, no Mom... just forgot my bag..." I replied in the most tired, distracted, Rob-like voice I could. Some kind of affirmative mumble emerged from the room, which I took as a success. I proceeded down the hall, eventually finding Rob's bedroom by the sheer skunk-like odor. After some careful examination of his room, I found a stash in a bag inside a PS2 case for *Resident Evil 4*. Taking out the bag I had in my pocket, which was inhabited by dried, crumbled poison ivy leaves, I poured the ivy in with the weed, shook it, mixed it, and put the cache back in its rightful home. I slipped out the door without being heckled again.

I went through the day at school almost on autopilot, a wavering feeling in my heart whenever I looked at Rob. Not from anxiety, but from anticipation. Time went on slowly, like a child waiting for Christmas morning. Finally, the bell rang, and we all went home. Late that night, in the distance, ambulance sirens lulled me to sleep.

The next morning, Anna was walking alone to her first block. I took a deep breath. "*Today marks the beginning of the rest of our lives, beloved,*" I thought to her. I sped up my walking until I was right beside her.

"A fine morning to you, Miss Anna," I began to greet her. She whirled around, in her eyes a mixture of sorrow and rage.

"I don't have the time or the nerve to deal with your shit today, Amir." she said with tears in her eyes. I was astonished. "In case you didn't know, three of my friends are *dead*. I don't have the energy nor the patience to deal with your fucking "courtship" now, or ever. Leave me alone, you fucking creep." She stormed off before I could even begin my spiel. I stood there in a daze, dumbfounded by the verbal blitzkrieg she had just unleashed, before snapping out of it and going on to class, albeit heartbroken and defeated. From class to class, and on the way home, I was numb. I didn't know what to do with myself. Ultimately, after hours and hours, the effect wore off. I left my house, an old habit on my mind.

I strolled down the road, and took a seat on the sidewalk across from Anna's house.