

Excerpt from “Sons & Daughters of the Gift” a copyrighted novel concept

They're after me. I know it. I can feel it. I think I hear them. They might be down the block, or maybe a mile away. I don't know. I can't tell. Papa told me I would be able to tell soon. When I get older, I'll be able to tell how far away they are just by listening just like Mama. Papa's not here to help me anymore. They got him and now are coming for me. I need to stop crying and be brave like he taught me, but it's hard. It's really hard.

I look around and I just see darkness. I'm afraid to come up to the light because then they'll see me. I've gotten used to the smell down here but I haven't eaten or drank anything in a long time, and I'm getting really tired. The sewers are disgusting and I'm trying not to think about what else might be down here with me. Papa told me to run and hide and not to stop until I was sure I was safe, but I may never be safe. I don't know how long I've been down here, or how far away I've gotten, but I can still hear them. I remember every crunch of their boots, and every crisp swish of their pants, and his voice. I'll never forget his voice because that's the voice that stole my father away from me. The other man that was with him had a weird heartbeat. That's what I listen out for. The crisp swish, the weird heartbeat, and the man with the scary voice.

The scary man is speaking again. "Michelle Martinez. Ten years old. Orphan. Principle of sound. She'll hear us coming. Subject may hear us now." There is a click and all I can hear is the swish and the heartbeat. I think he was making a recording.

I hear another click. "Alejandro Martinez. 39 years old. Father of one. The last Principle of time. Subject terminated."

"Papa," I whisper in pain.

Not before long, I hear another click. "Desiree Saunders. 24 years old. No family documented. Principle of air. Subject relocated."

Another click. "Tyler and Trent Ringer. 15 years old. Documented family is normal. Principles of motion. Subjects in constant relocation."

Another click. "Martin Samuels. 52 years old. No living relatives. Principle of light. Subject terminated."

They go on and on just like that. Names upon names of people with abilities. Hailee, Alexis, Brandon, Dawn, Ralph, Griffin, Priya, Myles. Names of people I don't know. Some of them are dead. Killed by him. Them. I can't help but listen. My fear spikes and I continue down the dark pungent tunnels, listening to the men.

Click. Swish. Heartbeat.

Click. Swish. Heartbeat.

Click. Swish. Heartbeat.

Click. Heartbeat.

They stopped. They stopped somewhere. Maybe it's safe to come up now. I have to sooner or later. I need something to drink. My head is starting to hurt really bad. I want my Papa. I start climbing the rails, pretending they are like the rungs of the monkey bars at the playground at my school. Pushing away the ceiling cap, I crawl out.

The first thing I see is blinding light. Quickly shutting my eyes, I want to go back under, but my body is screaming for food and water. I try opening my eyes again, slowly. I'm in the middle of the road. Cars all around me are honking. It's so loud and it hurts so much. I can't hear the heartbeat, or the clicks anymore. They've died out and have been replaced with an earsplitting, bellowing sound. I cover my ears in pain, crouching down on the ground in a fetal position.

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And then I hear it.
Crunch. Swish.
Crunch. Swish.
But not Heartbeat. Where is Heartbeat?
Crunch. Stop.
They're right in front of me.
Click. I anticipate his voice, but it's not him. Scary voice isn't here. Someone new says
"Subject to be termina-"
Before he can finish his sentence, I scream, like I've never screamed before. Everything
else in the world lulls and for the first time I hear nothing. When I stop the only thing I can hear
is a loud thud.
When I open my eyes, I see blood. Lots and lots of blood. I stare frozen. I didn't. I
couldn't.
The insides of all the cars seem to be splattered in blood.
The lights and windows on all the cars are shattered.
The men that were above me are on the ground.
In pieces.
Covered in blood.
No.
I didn't. I couldn't.
Getting up on wobbly feet, I run. I run as far as I can. And then I hear it. Heartbeat.
A few cars have been driving by, but one stops. The heartbeat is louder. I am frozen in
place. I feel warm pressure on my shoulder and a chill runs down my spine.
"Hello Michelle." It's scary voice.
Before I can scream, I hear something moving quickly through the air and
Click. "Michelle Martinez. Ten years old. Orphan. Principle of sound. Subject
Terminated.

Excerpt from “The Kiss List”, a copyrighted novel concept

I have always wanted someone to kiss me so passionately that I can feel it in my toes. I wanted a life changing kiss, a love story type of kiss. I wanted a kiss that makes shivers run up my spine, like they say in all my favorite books. A kiss that could make me happy. All that said, I have never kissed a guy that I truly like. With saying that I guess I should apologize to any of these guys that are reading this, but this is my kiss list.

First on the list is Miles Bennet. He was my first kiss and it happened when I was 13 as part of a dare. Miles kissed me in the science museum while my straight, probably heat damaged hair, was caught in between. It was a sweet, and hairy, 13-year-old peck.

Number two on the list is Malcolm Owens. We semi-dated when I was 16. We had a strictly “no label” type of relationship, that I made sure to enforce. The first time we kissed, he pushed me against the lockers, meanwhile his best friend was a few lockers down, doing God knows what. It was weird, but I went along with it. It seemed like the second his lips touched mine, his tongue slipped past my lips. I didn’t know what the hell I was doing and tried to imitate what I had seen on tv and read in books, but this was nothing like that. I didn’t know if I liked kissing him, but I did it anyway because I thought I was supposed to. I continued making out

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with him during the two months of our non-relationship until it abruptly ended. We never talked after that.

Number three on the list, continuing with the M's, is Marvin Wayland. I was 18 and a senior in high school. He was a junior with a crush on me. Though I only saw him as a friend, I had always found him attractive. We made out in the recording booth of our music productions class after performing together at our school's Coffee House. While I didn't feel it in my toes, I did feel it in other places. It was everything I wanted at that moment and for once, I knew what I was doing. I didn't mean to take advantage of his crush, but he didn't seem to mind, so I figured it was okay.

Number four on the list is Sean Doe. I don't exactly remember his last name, but I didn't want to mess up the flow. I kissed him at a frat party that same year. It was my first party as a college freshman. It was the smallest venue for a party that has ever existed. Everyone was cramped up together, and both of us were drunk. I don't really remember the conversation beforehand, but I do remember the kiss was sloppy and he kept trying to cop a feel. I had to take his hands off of my breasts a good ten times. I eventually pushed him away and tried to squeeze through the crowd to find my friends and obviously tell them all about the ordeal in hyperbolic detail. The next day I found out that he made out with another girl that night, at the same venue. She coincidentally had the same name as me. That's a college story for the books.

Number five on the list, is a guy I don't really like to talk about. His name is David Sykes and ... he got what he wanted. That night went from crap to shit. I thought David could be a friend. When I thought I could confide in him, it went to hell. I didn't want to do it, but I didn't know how to say no. I let it happen because I didn't know what else to do, so it wasn't like he was a bad guy, or forced me, I was just naïve ... and scared. I didn't want to kiss anyone after that. I didn't want to go to parties. I didn't want to do anything. I went back to counseling. It helped, and time had a way of healing.

Number six on the list, is Malik Kinley, a.k.a. my toxic ex. We dated in our freshman year of high school. The relationship lasted a week. If he tells you it was a month, don't believe him. He probably got me confused with one of his other girls. Trust me, there were a lot of them. He tried to cheat on most of them with me. To say the least, my high school experience summed up to hating him and trying not to like him at the same time. We didn't kiss until I was 19. It happened in his mom's car, in a parking lot a mile from my house. I was pretty sure he still has feelings for me, and I just so happened to be curious. I knew I didn't like him anymore. To say I used him was an understatement. I kissed him to get my phone. It was fun. That's all it was. Fun.

Number seven on the list, is number three. Just go back a few numbers and you'll remember. Two days after making out with Malik I went to the movies with Marvin. Was I being a little slutty? Yes, I was, but with what he looks like, you really can't blame me. Light skin. Curly hair. Standing at least a foot taller than me. He walked me to my car. We were talking about kicking a punching bag when he kissed me. His hands on my waist guided me so that my back was leaning against the car. He suggested we get inside because he was cold. It was May, but nevertheless, I let him in, and guided him on top of me. This time, he was what I wanted. He pushed the bottom of my sports bra up and over my breasts, taking the right one in his mouth. I never knew why girls like having their breasts licked and played with until I experienced it with him. He went back to kissing me, taking and almost sucking in my bottom lip. With one hand on my breast, his other slipped down between my thighs and started rubbing me through my leggings. I had never felt this kind of pleasure with a guy. I was about to take my leggings off

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when he asked if this was really going to happen. Unfortunately, neither of us had protection. I drove home that night extremely frustrated, but even his kiss didn't make my toes curl.

So, here's the list.

- 1. Miles Bennet**
- 2. Malcolm Owens**
- 3. Marvin Wayland**
- 4. Sean Doe**
- 5. David Sykes**
- 6. Malik Kinley**
- 7. Marvin Wayland (I still don't know if I should count him twice)**

None of these guys met my one simple request. All I ask is for a toe curling, mind melting kiss. I am making it known now that I will find it. I don't care if I have to add 100 names to this list. That's all they are, random names of random guys, but whoever he is won't be random. Not. At. All.

Excerpt from "Never Been Kissed" a copyrighted concept novel & prequel to "The Kiss List"

I wasn't a small thirteen-year-old, not by any sense of the word. I was overweight and at that age my height was grouped into the "tall" range. Since this is that awkward time when half the boys I knew were shorter than me, and the other half were completely out of my league, taken, or idiots, it didn't really matter that I had never kissed anyone.

At least that's what my best friend Rana kept drilling down my throat. Just so you know, I'm the one that added the out of my league part. Rana always told me that we were in the same league. Rana is a beautiful, skinny, Indian girl who could have anyone she wanted, whenever. Guys didn't look at me, like they look at her and, in a society, where your worth was determined by the attention you get from the male species, I was worthless. Girls like Rana were worth it. What I would give to be worth it. I lost a lot of my ignorance and childlike innocence when I started to notice what I looked like in comparison to society. I was woken up by the talks I would have with my mom after doctor's appointments. By my sister's impossible ability to never gain a pound. By my startling realization that I was different.

Because I am different, and have known this for years now, I know Rana lies to me. She lies because she loves me and doesn't want me to be in pain. No matter how much we all say we want the truth, we would all rather be fed a delicious lie, after all, the truth hurts. I would smile at Rana's lie because lying is the only way we can really be happy.

All the writers for my favorite, cheesy ass, online romance novels were liars. Every last one of them was a liar. All my favorite writers were liars. All my friends are liars, and so am I.

I lie to myself when I say that I don't believe in love. It's easier to go through life saying this than to deal with constant rejection. At thirteen I had come face to face with a lot of rejection. I was a hopeless romantic and wanted a life just like the lives of the beautiful girls I read about in books. Their lives had meaning. *They* got the fairy tale endings with these perfectly made-up men, and with that they got to enjoy mess free, life changing, knee weakening, toes tingling kisses. Kisses that I could only dream of. Kisses that can only be found in cliché teen fiction novels and movies. These liars manipulated me into believing that a kiss like this is possible, and even more, determines whether or not I should be with someone.

It was at thirteen that I had my first kiss, which brings us to number one on the Kiss List.

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Story Concept Idea # 1

Let's get one thing straight. My life isn't a love story. If you came here for happy endings where everything is tied up and a pretty pink bow, just leave now because you will be completely and entirely disappointed. If you expect me to tell anyone's story but my own, get the fuck out right now. I'm not a fucking stenographer and I'm not God. You get one story. Mine. And if you don't like it, I truly don't care. I'm not here anymore to give a fuck.

It's July 2nd 2024. I'm in Seattle, Washington enjoying this overcast Monday on a ferry. Staring at the water. Today is my birthday and funnily enough, it's also my death day. My name is Olumara and I died 1084 years ago on this day in what is now a country called Senegal. Before you go assuming what happened, I'm just going to tell you how I died. It's honestly not that interesting. I was born with what doctors would now call cystic fibrosis. Back in my time, we used natural medicine that extended my life longer than most would think. I believe the life expectancy for someone with cystic fibrosis in this modern world is roughly 30 years. I lived a few years longer than expected for my people at the time. I died on my 25th birthday, in the middle of the celebration. I died happy and surrounded with those I loved. Then there was darkness. When I saw light peeking through my eyes again, I was scared. I was confused as to why I wasn't being welcomed by the ancestors and Orishas. I was even more confused seeing my own body limp on my resting stoop with the elders all praying around me and our healer telling everyone that I had transcended to the next realm. I didn't transcend. I was right there. I tried screaming at them, tapping on their shoulder, hitting, kicking, anything that would get them to notice me. They couldn't see me. At first I thought I was an Egungun and I tried and failed on many occasions at ceremonies and celebrations to jump into the bodies of tribal members. I couldn't be a Yumboe because my skin was still dark like the earth on a rainy day. I had no wings and I certainly was not 2 feet tall. I was simply a spirit aimlessly living on...

Story Concept Idea #2

Every year people from all over the world make new year's resolutions in hopes to make their year better than the last. Here there's a law that says that everyone over the age of 5 has to make a new year's resolution every year. The best part about it is that every resolution comes true. The worst part about it is you forget most of the year. You remember basic things like, your name, some of the people you've met, talents and skills, educational things learned in school/where you work, all the things the government wants you to remember, but everything else is gone; poof, like it never even happened. No one ever questions it. It's been like this for as long as anyone can remember. Talk about starting the year with a clean slate. A group of teenagers start to wonder why they are forgetting everything and what it is they are forgetting. What does the government not want them to remember? To find out, they make their new year's resolution to remember. And what they find out only gets more shocking as the year goes on and it's even worse when they have to hide from the government.