

Ghost Boy

Chapter 20

Kyle walked up the staircase, body feeling too large and heavy.

He pushed all other thoughts aside when he reached the bedroom door, forced himself to focus on the task at hand. Lucy and her games could wait. Right now, he had more important matters to attend to.

Ana's attic bedroom was dark. Eerily still.

Using the father's body as a vessel, Kyle stepped into the bedroom. His hands roamed the walls around him until he found the attic's light-switch. He flipped it on, winced at the sudden burst of fluorescent light. And, after instinctually glancing around the attic room in search of a Wanderer he knew he'd be unable to see, he strode over to his love's bed.

And was, of course, asleep.

If he wanted to, Kyle could pinch her or shake her or slap her, and Ana wouldn't so much as flinch. She was out-cold. Dead to the world thanks to the sleeping medication in her system.

If Kyle wanted to, he could act out the father's perverse fantasies himself.

Instead, though, knelt down next to the bed – looked into the serene, beautiful face of his soulmate. The girl he'd sworn protect, no matter the cost. A heart-shaped face with full, alluring lips and cheeks that, if she wasn't sleeping, would've been round and rosy with Ana's smiles.

He reached out, brushed a stray strand of blonde hair from the girl's face.

"This is for your own good," he told the sleeping girl. "I promise."

Kyle stared at her face a moment longer, sighed. He pulled out the note he'd written just a few minutes ago, set it down on Ana's night-stand atop her phone – where she'd be guaranteed to find it in the morning.

Slowly, he rose to his feet.

The body he was possessing ached, it's knees groaning softly at the motion of getting up. Kyle ignored it, walked to the staircase and made his way back to the master bedroom. He fought off the urge to dump the man's body on the floor, ignored a wicked idea to position himself in such a way that the body would drop in a dangerous place – head to the sharp corner of a dressing cabinet or the like. He climbed onto the man's bed, positioned the body so that it'd appear to the outside world as if Ana's father were simply sleeping.

And he pushed himself out, away from the bastard's body.

In ghost-mode, Kyle could see the man's ghost in the room – floating limply just a few feet away.

Hopefully, when Ana woke up in the morning and read the note and came to ask her father's permission, she'd see the man sleeping and – unable to wake him – would do as Kyle wanted her to. With a bit of luck, she wouldn't try too hard to wake up her father, wouldn't realise he *couldn't* wake up.

Kyle examined his handiwork for a moment – making sure that there was nothing unusual or suspicious about the way the man's body was positioned. Then, satisfied, he turned to the ghost.

A middle-aged man who'd tried to take something that didn't belong to him. A monster who'd tried to take advantage of beautiful, innocent Ana.

Kyle glared at the ghost of Ana's father.

He drifted forward, grabbed hold of it, flew through the walls of Ana's home with the man's ghost in his grip.

Just as Lucy had once done with Ana, Kyle would hide the man's ghost away where no-one would find it. Only, unlike Lucy, Kyle wouldn't return the ghost. He'd make sure it

was hidden away in a place no Wanderer would ever have reason to go, and he'd leave it there. Forever.

Kyle flew through the city in search of test subjects.

Night-time meant most people were sleeping, their minds inactive and hollow. But, even with the lateness, there were still plenty of minds for Kyle to practice on. Drunks wandering the streets, men and women just now getting out of work, even those who were unfortunate enough to be working night-shifts.

He decided against testing his powers on the inebriated. Their minds, under the influence of alcohol, should be easier to access and toy with. But that same weakness which made them a breeze to read and warp would make long-term alterations more difficult – and those were precisely the type of powers Kyle needed to master.

He also ruled out using his powers on men. It was, after all, a woman he wanted to repair the mind of. Who better to practice on than other women?

The first test subject he found was a woman attending an all-night gym. A fit-bodied office worker who liked to come to the gym after work, wear herself out with exercise so that she'd be able to sleep when she got home. An insomniac, with dark circles under her eyes and a deep-seated fear of octopuses.

Kyle sank his hand into her back as she jogged on a treadmill, reading her mind and *knowing* her more intimately than anyone else could ever hope to.

A cascade of the woman's – Vannika's – memories battered against Kyle's mind. Everything she'd ever experienced, everything she'd ever felt, all colliding with him at once. But, through sheer willpower, he fought the flood off – resisted the overwhelming sensation and experiences.

And, mentally gritting his teeth, he got to work on Vannika's mind.

There was a man in the office she worked at, a loner who always seemed to be staring at her whenever she looked up from her work. A harmless creeper that Vannika avoided when she could, talked to only when she didn't have any other options. A man she'd never consider dating.

Kyle summoned up images of this man in Vannika's mind, anchored them in her subconscious.

Not a creep, he told her subconscious. *Not a loner*.

The guy kept his distance for the most part. Didn't really interact with anyone else in the office. No-one knew much about him, other than he looked kind of odd and unusual.

Mysterious, Kyle whispered into the woman's mind, pulling images from her memories and anchoring them to the images of her co-worker – thoughts of action-movie spies, dreamy and dangerous characters in romances, handsome and aloof guys that a teenage Vannika had once crushed on.

Not creepy, he thought at her – made her think. *Mysterious*.

Not a loner. Independent.

Not unusual. Unique.

That's what chicks were into, right? Mysterious, handsome, independent men. That's what they found dreamy and sexy, if movies were to be believed.

Kyle held onto the image of the guy in Vannika's mind, summoned pictures of men she found attractive – celebrities and past lovers. And, slowly, he melded the images together. Warped the woman's mind ever so slightly so that, when she looked at her co-worker, she wouldn't see the man himself, but instead she'd see her own, personal Adonis.

Lucy had made Kyle's mother see her son as a girl.

Surely, then, it was possible to make a plain-looking guy appear handsome in Vannika's mind.

When he was done with the woman, Kyle drifted back wards.

She ran on the treadmill, oblivious to the fact that her mind had just been invaded

and altered.

It was impossible to tell if his alterations had worked, if the changes he'd made would stick. But Kyle grinned all the same. Somehow, he knew he'd done it. Tomorrow night, he'd return here and read her thoughts, see if she still felt the same way about her colleague.

He nodded his head, flew out of the gym and went in search of his next subject. The night was young and filled with plenty of women for him to practice on.

It was after sunrise when Kyle finally returned to his body, mind swimming with possibilities.

These powers he had, the Wanderer abilities he possessed, there was so much he could do with them. So many possibilities that it boggled the mind.

Another few nights of practice and he'd be ready to start fixing his mother's mind.

But only using these mind-bending powers to fix his mother? That felt like such a waste. A way to squander his potential. Kyle had the power to alter minds, make people think and feel and see whatever he wanted them to. To *not* use that power felt wrong.

He lay in his bed, wide awake.

Even though his mind had been out wandering the night, he didn't feel even the slightest hints of fatigue. His body and brain had rested plenty during the night, slumbering peacefully.

These powers. They were *amazing*.

He'd been so caught up in dealing with Lucy and winning over Ana that Kyle hadn't fully appreciated what he'd become.

A Wanderer.

Someone who could separate their mind from their physical body and roam around invisibly, touching and influencing the minds of anyone he desired. He could, with time and practice, remake entire personalities. Rewrite identities into whatever he desired. He could *snatch* bodies away from people, possess them and use them to his heart's content.

He was, in everything but name, a god.

After he'd dealt with the Lucy situation, after he'd returned his mother's mind to the way it'd been before, Kyle would be free to do *anything* he wanted.

Ana. He could transform *her* into anything he wanted.

A loving, dedicated wife. A loyal servant. A cock-hungry slave. He could do anything, make her believe anything. He could become the God that she worshipped, the thing she prayed to every night.

It was all within his power.

The only real roadblock he faced was Lucy. A thorn in his side. But one that'd soon be removed for good. Less than a week from now, he'd catch the bitch in a trap.

Then, there'd be nothing to get in his way. No-one to stop him.

Kyle's thoughts were interrupted by his phone ringing.

He turned to look at it, letting it ring for a few seconds. His heart throbbed in his chest. Slowly, his grin widening, he picked up his phone and answered it.

"Hello?"

"Kyle?" A girl's surprised voice said through the phone's speakers. "Is that you?"

"Yes," Kyle answered, trying to keep his smirk under control.

"How did..." A silent pause. "You wouldn't happen to live in an apartment complex, would you? On Halting Street?"

"Actually," Kyle said, trying to force himself to sound surprised. "I do. Why?"

She wasn't supposed to know where he lived. Or his phone number. In the shared dreams, he hadn't told her either of those things. Yet, here she was – on the phone with him, knowing exactly which apartment he lived in.

"I don't..." Ana sounded confused, baffled.

"Is everything okay?" Kyle asked. "How do you know my number?"

"It was on a note," Ana said, bemused. "Next to my bed. A phone number, an address, and a message..."

A magical note containing information that Ana didn't know, materialising on her night-stand while she slept. An impossible thing, unexplainable save for the one simple fact: Ana believed in God, believed that she and Kyle were being paired together by Him.

In Ana's eyes, it wouldn't be unexplainable. It'd be 'Divine Intervention'.

God, nudging her towards Kyle, giving direct instruction.

"What was the message?" Kyle asked, though he already knew the answer. He had, after all, been the one to write it.

"That..." Ana said, the confusion in her voice giving way to wonder. "It says I should go to the apartment written down. *Your* apartment."

Kyle's mother was already long gone before Ana arrived.

He waited for her outside the apartment complex, eyes roaming up and down the street while his heart raced in his chest.

It was the first time – dreams notwithstanding – that the two of them would be alone together. At school, she was always surrounded by her friends – an ever-present barrier that prevented Kyle from ever getting close.

When he saw her round a corner, her blonde hair flowing in a light breeze, Kyle couldn't stop himself from grinning like a madman.

Finally. After all this time, she was here. With him. In the flesh.

Wearing jeans and a pink hoodie, looking every-bit the angel he knew she was, Ana walked down the street towards him. Radiating beauty like the sun, she somehow managed to make everything around her – the drab, run-down, trash-covered streets – look ten times better. Her pretty faced glowed when her eyes met his, a shining, white-toothed smile washing away all of Kyle's doubts.

She waved at him as she approached, cheeks flushed pink.

"Hey," Kyle stammered when she reached him. "Hi. H- How are you?"

"This is where you live?" Ana asked, head turning to look around. "It's very... *nice*. Lots of personality..."

"It's a shithole," Kyle said before he could stop himself.

Strawberry. The faint sent of it filled Kyle's nostrils. Was Ana wearing strawberry perfume?

"Come on," he continued, "my apartment's this way."

He led her inside, up a flight of stairs and down the corridor that led to the apartment. All the while, his heart thumped a rapid rhythm in his chest. Just him and Ana, alone in his apartment...

"Sorry about the mess," he said, opening the apartment door and stepping inside, Ana right behind him.

Whatever she thought about the cramped space, Ana kept to herself. Her eyes roamed the apartment, took in the sight of the old, stained sofa and the small television and the kitchen area with its piled dishes. And she said nothing. Just smiled and blushed and stood there awkwardly.

Silently, a part of Kyle wished this were a dream. Ana's dream. So that he'd have been able to read her thoughts and emotions. Here, in the real world, he felt blind.

"My room's this way," Kyle told his crush, "that one there is my mother's."

"It's just the two of you?"

"Yup," Kyle nodded his head. "Just me and Mom."

"I'm sorry," Ana said, voice filled with sympathy.

Kyle turned to look at her, raised his eyebrow. "What for?"

"Oh," Ana blushed. "Your father. I- I thought he passed away."

"Nah," Kyle smiled. "Not that. My father bailed on Mom after he knocked her up. I've never met him. Don't even know his name or what he looks like."

"I- I see," Ana said, unable to meet Kyle's gaze. "Well, I'm sorry that you grew up without a father then."

"Nothing to be sorry about," Kyle shrugged. "Me and Mom are fine. She's at work right now, won't be back until this evening."

He led her into his bedroom, sat down on the bed and waited for her to do the same. Then, awkwardly, they sat there in silence. Seconds ticked by, Ana fidgeting nervously and Kyle at a loss for words. What should he say? He'd never been in this situation before. How was he supposed to break the ice?

Seconds turned into minutes, the awkwardness growing exponentially with every tick of the clock.

Finally, Ana inhaled a deep breath, gazed into Kyle's eyes.

"Last night," she said, cheeks flushing, "I had a very strange dream. Did you have the same one too, or was the you I saw in it just a part of the dream?"

The distorted dream, a result of Ana's drugging.

Kyle struggled to remember what he'd said, what Ana had said, during that dream – came up blank.

"Yes," he said. "I was there too."

"It's scary," Ana confessed, laying back in bed and staring at the ceiling. "We've been put together by God himself."

She'd been in his apartment for hours now.

They'd chatted about their shared dreams, about *God's* plan for them. They'd gossiped about school, about the future and their goals in life, what they wanted to do and where they wanted to go. All stuff they'd spoken about during the dreams, yet somehow the conversation felt new and fresh. They chatted about everything, laughed and joked and shared. The awkwardness had evaporated away completely, leaving relaxed chatter in its wake.

"I know," Kyle lied from his seat on the bed's edge. "It's terrifying."

"I think," Ana said, not looking at Kyle, "He wants us to be together. Like, a couple. I *feel* it. That probably sounds silly, huh?"

"No," Kyle told her. "I feel it too."

Her head tilted, eyes focusing on Kyle.

"I've never had a boyfriend before," she admitted softly. "My parents have always told me to wait until I'm done with education before worrying about that stuff. They're not gonna be happy when I tell them about you."

One of them might not be happy, Kyle thought. But the other would never find out to begin with.

Ana didn't know her father was a vegetable yet.

"I don't know," Kyle shrugged. "Maybe they won't mind. It is God who's putting us together, after all. They can't really argue against *that*, right?"

"You don't know my father," Ana snorted. "He'll flip out when he finds out I have a boyfriend."

Kyle turned his head to hide the smirk.

"That's what we are," Ana continued. "Isn't it? Boyfriend and girlfriend. Or are we, like, engaged? Betrothed?"

"I have no idea," Kyle said, rolling himself onto his bed. It wasn't a wide bed – only really meant for a single person. He scooted up, laid next to Ana – only a few inches separating her body from his. "All I know right now is that I want to kiss you."

Ana blushed brightly. Her face turning a bright, glowing red.

Her eyes drifted from Kyle's eyes to his lips, her own lips twisting into a small smile.

"I've never..."

"Neither have I," Kyle said, leaning forwards.

His body came into contact with Ana's, his chest brushing up against hers – those humongous tits. Heat flushed through him, dizzyingly hot.

"But," he continued, "practice makes perfect, right?"

Slowly, the blushing girl nodded her head.

As Kyle leaned closer towards her, Ana closed her eyes, puckered her lips.