

## Ghost Boy

### Chapter 8

"So," his mother said, "what's her name?"

Kyle looked up from his breakfast, saw his mother smiling over at him. She didn't work until later that day and, instead of sleeping in and resting, she'd woken up early to make Kyle breakfast before he left for school. A rare treat, and one Kyle half wished his mother hadn't given. Of all the people Kyle knew, his mother was the one who deserved rest and relaxation most.

Her eyes were shadowed, permanent dark circles showing how constantly tired she was. Tiny little creases had started to form at the corners of her lips and eyes, not quite wrinkles yet but still a sign that she wasn't as young as she used to be. Though, despite her ever-advancing maturity, his mother was still as stunningly beautiful as ever. Shadowed though her eyes may be, they still shone with kindness and affection.

If Ana was the most beautiful girl Kyle had ever seen, his mother was by far the most attractive *woman* in Kyle's life. Possessing the matured and refined beauty of a woman in her late thirties.

She wasn't a flawless beauty. Her skin didn't shine, her hair wasn't glossy and flowing in an unseen wind. Right then, his mother's dark hair was messy and wild – she hadn't done it up before coming to make Kyle his breakfast. She had attractive features; high-cheek bones, full lips, bright eyes, a nice body. But she wasn't some impossibly hott, unreal goddess.

And yet, despite not being dolled up, despite the fact that she wasn't trying to look good, despite the fact she looked tired and exhausted and worn, somehow Kyle's mother was amazingly beautiful all the same.

It was the way she smiled, the way her eyes shone. The way she sat there with an aura of love and joy, the tiniest hint of playfulness in her irises.

If Kyle ever ended up with a woman half as beautiful as his mother, he'd consider himself a *very* lucky man indeed.

And, with how well things were currently going with Ana and his nightly dream visits, the chances of him ending up with a stunningly beautiful girl as his bride one day were exceptionally high. Every day, he and his crush grew that much closer together.

"What?" Kyle said, the word coming out garbled. He gulped down the food in his mouth. "Who's name?"

"Your girlfriend," his mother's smile grew.

Kyle blushed, quickly shovelled some more breakie into his mouth to hide his embarrassment. "I don't have a girlfriend," he whispered.

"Really?" Kyle's mother asked, eyes twinkling. "With how you've been strutting around the place, grinning and smiling all the time, I figured you might've hooked up with someone. And with how you're reacting right now..."

"I don't." Kyle stammered, face turning red. "I haven't."

"It's alright," his mother giggled softly. When was the last time he'd heard her laugh like that? "You don't have to tell me. Just make sure you use protection. I'm far too young to be a grandmother."

"Mom!" Kyle squeaked.

His mother winked at him, rose from her seat at their tiny dinner table. Kyle's eyes followed her body before he could stop them, admiring the ample curves and lean figure – the shape of her body so clearly visible in the thin-fabric nightie she was wearing. If only the nightie were transparent...

Blushing, Kyle dragged his eyes away from his mother.

Usually, she wore her work-clothes or else a robe around the house, it was unusual for her to walk around in only a nightie. A treat as rare as her making him breakfast before

school.

"They grow up so fast," his mother said, raising a finger to the corner of her eyes and pretending to wipe a tear away. "One day he's a mommy's boy who wants me all to himself, the next he's off chasing a younger woman."

She giggled, the sound musical and magical, and left the cramped kitchen; walking over to the doorway of her bedroom. Likely, she'd go back to bed as soon as Kyle was out of the apartment.

"Hurry up with breakfast," she smiled, yawned. "Or you'll be late for school. Wouldn't want to keep your girlfriend waiting..."

Kyle rolled his eyes, tried to hide his blushing as he ate.

School was normal. Barely any different than before. He went to his classes, barely paid attention, stared at the clock and watched the seconds and minutes and hours tick slowly away. The sooner he got home, the sooner he could go ghost mode again.

One thing that had changed at school, though, was Ana.

When they crossed each other in the corridor, she'd smile at him. When she spotted him across the school's cafeteria she'd give him a little wave.

Others had noticed. Kyle's friends and people he barely knew at all. They talked to him, asked him why Ana was showing interest in him, demanded to know that Kyle's relationship with the most popular and beautiful girl at school was. None of them actually believed Ana and he were dating and, in truth, they weren't. Not yet. What the guys wanted to know was if Kyle's family knew Ana's, if they had any kind of interactions outside of school. One small rumour implied that Ana was tutoring him in his free time.

Kyle lied. Told them nothing.

He let them believe whatever they wanted to, let them stew in their annoyance and jealousy – left them to wish they were in his shoes, friendly with the school's angel.

But, for all the smiles and waves and glances Ana gave him at school, she never actually came over to talk to him. The only time they ever spoke was inside her dreams.

And so Kyle watched the clocks, counted down the time, waited.

For now, the only time he could chat with Ana was at night, in her dreams. That was fine. It was while she slept and dreamt that Kyle had all his power, the ability to influence her mind and feelings. If she only wanted to talk to him during her dreams, that was totally okay with Kyle. It gave him all the opportunity he'd need to win her over.

And, eventually, he'd break the barrier.

Talk to the real Ana, instead of just the dream version of her. He'd win her heart in her dreams, claim her body in real life.

All he had to do was wait – be patient – and continue his tiny, nudging pokes at her mind. He'd win her over. It was no longer a matter of 'if', but 'when'. Ana would be his and, together, they would be happy.

The only problem Kyle truly faced was the other Wanderers.

He needed to keep them away from Ana and her family at all costs.

But how?

"Power corrupts," Ana said, sitting on a large rock and leaning back, enjoying the dream sunshine. "And absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Kyle turned to look at her, took in the breathtaking sight of Ana wearing nothing but a torn and shredded nightie. What had once been a modest, unsexy nightgown had been slutified during her flight from the invisible thing chasing her. A wide gash at the nightgown's collar showed plenty of Ana's chest and cleavage while a few more scuffs and tears revealed a luscious view of a toned, athletic leg.

"Philosophy," Ana stated, noticing Kyle's raised eyebrow. "It's our assignment. We have to write an essay based around that statement, giving our thoughts and reasoning on

what 'power' is exactly and why humans are so easily corrupted by it. What do you think?"

One of the many classes Kyle didn't share with Ana. He didn't even take philosophy. "Power?" He said, stopping for a moment to think about it. Kyle had power. *Real* power. If anyone should be able to talk about what 'power' was and what it meant, it was Kyle. "I don't know," he said instead.

"The power part is easy," Ana said, eyes on the sky. "Power is one's ability to influence and change the world around them. The greater someone's ability to affect change, the more 'power' they possess. It's the other part that's complex. Power *corrupts*."

Ana did this a lot. Started talking about school assignments and projects. It was like her dreaming brain had two modes; running in terror from and unseen monster, and thinking about school and her studies.

"I disagree with it," Ana stated matter-of-factly. "I don't think power corrupts at all."

They were in the countryside somewhere. A place Kyle had never been before. A place that might not even exist in the real world. There were hills and trees and rocks, and a lot of grass. A clear sky above them, sun shining brightly. Blue and green everywhere. It was a beautiful place, even if it might not be a real one.

"God is the most powerful being in the universe, and also the most pure and good. If power corrupted, God would be the *most* corrupted, not the least."

That was common too. Not the God talk, but the statements of fact. Like Ana was so used to being correct that she assumed she must be right about everything she said. A side-effect of being top in every class she took, Kyle guessed.

"I think power is more like a test," Ana went on, brows knitting together in concentration. The world around them flickered and fuzzed for a moment – though it didn't seem like Ana noticed the unusual distortion. "It's a temptation. A corrupt person with power will do corrupt things, while someone pure with power will use that power with pure intent. Power doesn't corrupt people, people corrupt power."

Power. Kyle had power. A lot of it.

And temptation. He had a lot of that, too.

In Ana's eyes, would he be 'pure' or 'corrupt'? How would she see his use of Wanderer abilities?

He could do so much more as a Wanderer than he currently was. Kyle knew it. Knew that, with practice, he'd be able to do what the other Wanderers could. Change a person's morals in a matter of days, make them do things they never would have otherwise.

Kyle *could* do that. He felt that *temptation*.

Yet all he did, all he was doing, was joining Ana in her dreams. Saving her from her unknown fear. Helping her feel relaxed, content. Happy. Was what he was doing really *that* bad, at the end of the day? Surely it wasn't enough for him to be considered 'corrupt' in her eyes, right?

"God does some pretty bad things in the Bible," Kyle found himself saying. "Killing children, flooding the world, that kinda stuff. Doesn't seem all that *pure* to me."

He blinked at Ana, surprised at the words that'd just come out of his own mouth. Why had he just said that?

Kyle felt a moment of panic, afraid that he'd upset Ana by disagreeing with her. Would she be mad at him for contradicting her, or for questioning her faith? Ana's entire family was religious, the last thing he should do was push her away by questioning her faith like that!

She turned her gaze from the sky, focused her stunning irises on Kyle. Surprisingly, she didn't seem upset. Just curious, thoughtful.

"God does bad things," she stated simply, "but not *evil* things. Everything He does is for the good of humanity and to create the best possible world for us. Even if He uses his power for unfortunate things, it doesn't mean He is corrupted by those powers. He acts in

our best interest, which shows how pure and righteous He is.”

“So,” Kyle spoke slowly, contemplative. Again, the world around them fuzzed and blurred without Ana seeming to notice. “It’s possible to do bad things if it’s for a good reason? Doing bad things doesn’t necessarily mean you’re evil or corrupt?”

“I guess,” Ana replied after giving herself a few seconds to think it over. “God knows everything – what is and what will be. He *always* knows what the correct thing to do is. Humans don’t have that foresight, so the best we can do is *try* to be good and pure and just. I think, as long as we’re trying to do good, we’re on the right path.”

Kyle didn’t listen to the last part. Just those two wonderful words. ‘I guess’, Ana had said. In her eyes, a person could do bad things while still being a good person – as long as they had a good, noble reason.

And what better reason to do anything than for love and happiness?

What Kyle was doing – gently twisting and manipulating Ana’s mind – had an end goal. He was doing it so that they could be together. Both of them happy, in love with each other. Both of them living perfect, ideal lives alongside one another. The future Kyle dreamed of was pure and joyful, happy and perfect.

More than worth the little ‘bad’ things Kyle was doing to make that dream come true.

In Ana’s own words – the ends justified the means.

Lucy wasn’t with the rest of the Wanderers. That was unusual.

Tubby and Lanky were there, Kyle hovering a few feet away as the fat man quietly rambled about his ‘projects’. There was an odd, uncomfortable energy to the midnight meeting. Everyone knew Lucy was missing and, though they were all attempting to act normally, Kyle could feel their weariness and uncertainty in the air.

Lucy didn’t miss the midnight meetings. Not ever.

Sometimes Lanky wouldn’t be there, sometimes it was Tubby who didn’t show up. But never, in all the times Kyle had flown to the top of the Morsen Building at midnight and attended Wanderer gatherings, had Lucy not shown up.

“Well,” Tubby stammered, eyes flicking from Kyle to Lanky and back again. “I don’t know where our Lucy might be tonight. Perhaps she’s ill or-”

“She’s not ill,” Lanky stated firmly, eyes drawn to Kyle. “You know that, Tubbs.”

The fat man licked his lips; an odd thing to watch a ghost-like apparition do. Probably, Kyle guessed, it was one of the man’s nervous tics. But that begged the question, what did Tubby have to be nervous about?

It was Lucy. She was up to something.

“Yes,” Tubby spoke quietly, eyes flicking to Kyle’s face. “Yes.”

“She’s playing with *my* toys again, isn’t she?” Kyle didn’t want to believe it, didn’t want to have to face off with the naked little bitch. But if she was messing with Ana and Ana’s family again, he had no choice. Ana was *his*. Kyle would *not* allow another Wanderer to taint her.

But how in the world was he supposed to stop Lucy? He’d spent hours and days thinking on it, but still had no answers. What could he possibly do to prevent Lucy’s meddling?

“If I had to guess,” Lanky shrugged. “That’s where you’ll find her.”

Kyle passed through the house’s roof, drifted down into Ana’s attic bedroom fully prepared to face Lucy and her meddling.

The room, however, was empty. No naked, glowing girl in sight.

It was dark – the lights were out – and quiet. Ana was in bed, blanket wrapped snugly around her body. She lay unmoving, eyes closed - sleeping soundly.

Normal. Everything looked normal.

Slowly, hesitantly, Kyle drifted down to his crush.

It didn't look like anything was off. Wasn't like Ana was being mounted by her father, or being forced to suck on her mother's tits. She wasn't doing anything strange or unusual. Just sleeping, face blank. Nothing out of the ordinary there.

And no sign of Lucy.

Had he just been overreacting?

Maybe Lucy hadn't been interfering or meddling, perhaps her absence at the meeting was totally unrelated. Somehow, though, Kyle didn't quite believe that.

He reached down, swept his hand through Ana's sleeping body as he usually did – intent on pulling her ghostly form out. Only this time, nothing happened. His eyes widened in shock. Kyle thrust his ethereal hand inside Ana's sleeping body, tried to grasp onto the beautiful girl's ghost.

Only it wasn't there.

Horrified, he backed away, eyes wide.

"Looking for something?" A familiar, feminine voice spoke behind him.

Kyle spun in the air, turned to face a smirking, naked Lucy.

"Dream tampering is easy but ineffectual," the girl said smugly, crossing her arms over her naked chest. "No wonder your progress with Miss Melons has been so slow."

"What have you done?" Kyle growled, tried to sound as intimidating as possible. "Where is she?"

"Where's her mind, you mean? Somewhere safe," Lucy answered, smirk curling in amusement. "That's what our 'ghosts' are, by the way. Optical manifestations of human minds. That's what Teach used to say, at least."

"Put it back," Kyle snarled, drifting closer to Lucy.

"No," the girl said simply, tilting her head to one side.

Kyle lunged, fist clenched. He struck at Lucy, though his punches did nothing but pass through her. He tried to grab hold of her, toss her around, but he couldn't grip onto her. He attacked, roared, did everything he could to hurt or scare the naked bitch. None of it worked. She simply hovered there, a bored expression on her face as Kyle swung wildly at her.

He might as well have been attacking air, for all the good it did.

Finally he stopped swinging, drifted a few feet away from her. His eyes roamed Ana's bedroom, searching in vain for any hint of Ana's lost ghost.

"Done?" Lucy asked, rolling her eyes.

Kyle's eyes snapped to her, glaring viciously.

"Good," Lucy smiled. "Truth be told. That was more than a little embarrassing."

Kyle ignored her, began roaming Ana's bedroom – poking his head through walls and drawers, sliding under her bed – looking for Ana's ethereal body. Lucy couldn't have taken it too far away from the body. Could she? It had to be close by. It just *had* to be.

"You have a decision to make, Ghost Boy," Lucy said, watching Kyle with that ever-present smirk on her face. "You can either spend one whole day possessing Big-Tits here, and I put her 'ghost' back inside her body afterwards. Or you can not do that, and I *never* return her 'ghost'. Either you spend a day possessing her body, or she spends the rest of her life as a brain-dead vegetable. The choice is yours."

Kyle froze in his search, turned to face Lucy – looked into her eyes.

Cold, calculating, amused eyes.

She was serious.

"Don't worry," Lucy added, her heartless eyes drifting over to Ana's unmoving, empty body. "I'll make sure you have a very *interesting* day. I promise, it'll be *fun*."