

Broken Wings

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Then

Windom, Minnesota – 2006

"Mom...? Dad...?" The blonde 14 year old girl was standing on top of the staircase, wearing her pajamas and listening if she could detect any sound or voices. The alarm clock on the nightstand had shown her that it was around midnight. It was quiet. The lights didn't work and it was so dark she could barely see the end of the stairs. Maybe, there had been a storm which would explain the loud noises that had woken her.

Anyway, where were her parents?

'They could be in the basement, fixing the electricity.' She thought and eventually, she began walking down the stairs. The only light provided was that by the streetlamps shining through the small window on top of the staircase. Nevertheless, she took one step after another; her green eyes were already trying to catch any sign of her parents. When she reached the first floor, her heart was pounding fast and she was sure you could hear it in the entire house. The front door was on her left side and for a second, she thought about leaving the house. She quickly dismissed this idea. Why would she go? Everything was fine.

Therefore, she decided to look for her parents in the living room. Perhaps they had fallen asleep while watching TV, which was often the case, so they weren't aware of the power outage.

She was moving again when she suddenly saw something on the ground in the doorway to the living room. As she came closer and thanks to the light from the streetlamps coming through the windows in said room, she recognized that it was her father. He was lying on the floor on his back, his eyes closed as if he was sleeping. He was also in his pajamas, except there was a stain on his shirt almost in the middle of his chest. Immediately, she got on her knees next to him and put her hands on his shoulders.

"Dad?" She asked worried while gently shaking the man a bit. There was no reaction. "Dad, wake up! Please, wake up!" She begged, still shaking the lifeless body. At this moment, she realized that her father was actually dead and the stain on his shirt was blood.

The next thought that came into her mind was her mother. She had to be alive. She simply had to. The girl stood up trembling, yet she walked towards the couch, where her mother might be sitting and telling her that everything would be okay. Unfortunately, her mother was not okay.

"No..." She breathed out, unable to fully comprehend what she was seeing right now. Her mom was lying on her back in front of the sofa with a hole in her forehead. Shocked, the girl held onto the couch's backrest with her right hand to prevent herself from falling over, her left hand was covering her mouth. The sobs came out anyway and she dropped on her knees once again. After a few moments, she managed to crawl over to her mother.

"No, no, no, no,..." She repeated this word several times – God knows how often – as she held her mother in her arms, crying heavily.

"Y-You... You were not supposed to be home." All of a sudden, an unfamiliar voice spoke to her. She looked in the direction the voice supposedly came from and saw a young man – he couldn't be older than 25 – all dressed in black. He was sitting on the

floor, a few feet away from her and looked extremely upset.

True. They were supposed to be on holiday this weekend but the girl had caught a bad cold, so they had decided to postpone the trip for another week. This is why she had been asleep early in her room upstairs while her parents had stayed up watching TV. They never had much money. Her dad was an office worker in a big company and her mom was working only a few hours in the local hospital. Nevertheless, they lived a good life and the relationship with her parents had always been great.

She couldn't say anything. She was still crying and looking around as if searching for something or someone.

"I... I'm so sorry!" The young man spoke miserably and lifted both of his hands to his face.

Once more, she turned her attention towards him. By looking at him she thought of several questions to ask him but the words wouldn't leave her mouth. Instead, she just continued sobbing and didn't realize that she was still staring at him. He noticed though, which is why he eventually looked back at her. His expression had changed, yet she couldn't quite figure out what it meant. She was scared but something told her that she wasn't in danger. In addition to that, she was suddenly very tired. She closed her eyes, just for a moment, until she would be able to think straight again. Surprisingly, she now felt calm and peaceful.

This moment, however, didn't last long due to the fact that the front door abruptly burst open and the sheriff and three policemen stormed into the living room.

"Hands in the air where I can see them!" The sheriff screamed harshly. He and his colleagues were pointing their guns at the young man in black as well as the girl in pajamas. Both did as they were told. The police officers needed a few seconds to understand the present situation. Who was the culprit, who the victim? Certainly, they figured it out fast so they stopped pointing their guns at the traumatized girl. After a quick gesture from the sheriff, one policeman wasted no time. He put handcuffs around the criminal's wrists, dragged him to his feet and led him outside. "Search the house!" The sheriff demanded afterward and the two remaining officers instantly followed their boss's order.

At the sight of the kneeling girl and her dead mother, the man let out a sad sigh and briefly rubbed his face with his left palm. He knew the girl named Amelia well. He had gone to high school with her parents, Sara and Noah Clarke, and like them, he had stayed in his hometown. Often, he had bumped into them in the city and had chatted with them about the latest news. They were good people. And now, they were gone. Just like that.

'Poor thing...' He thought, pitying the girl. He put his gun back into its holder on his belt and stepped up to her.

"Amelia, are you alright?" He asked calmly while bending down to her. What a stupid question. Obviously, she was not. He had to rephrase it. "Amelia, are you hurt?"

She looked at him, although all she could do was shake her head. But that was enough for him. Before he could inquire more, he was distracted by the two policemen who returned with the information that no other culprit was found in the house. The sheriff nodded and turned his attention for a second time towards the girl. Amelia had stopped crying, however, she was shivering and staring at nothing.

"Amelia, we have to go." He said friendly. She could barely move or understand what he was saying because she was in shock. She just let him pull her to her feet and escort her out of the house.

Outside, many of her neighbors were gathered and there were police cars as well as an ambulance. Right away, some woman, a paramedic, came up to the girl, wrapped a blanket around her and went with her to the ambulance. Due to the fresh air – it was a cold November night – Amelia finally came to her senses and could replay the events of this evening in her head. She endured the medical examination the paramedic carried out and the questions she was asked. Even though she knew that she was the one sitting there and talking, it didn't feel like it. To be honest, right now, she didn't feel anything at all. There was only emptiness.

"Mia!"

She heard a very familiar male voice scream her nickname and when she looked past the paramedic, she spotted her older cousin.

"Adam..." Amelia spoke, but it was merely a whisper. Without considering the woman in front of her, she stood up and ran towards the boy. He immediately covered her in a hug and once again, she started sobbing uncontrollably on his chest.

"Ssh... Everything's gonna be okay. I promise." Adam consoled her while gently stroking her blonde hair.

He and his mother, Kate Milligan, had gotten here as fast as they could after they had received a call from Mrs. Jackson, Amelia's next door neighbor. Mrs. Jackson had also been the one calling the police. While walking her dog late this evening she had seen the two culprits breaking into the house.

After this, everything went down pretty fast. They drove off to the police station where Amelia was questioned. She was glad that she could pull herself together and tell what had happened tonight. It was the least she could do for her parents. She on the other hand was told that the burglar – the young man she had met in her house – had an accomplice who fled the crime scene after he had shot her parents. Luckily, he was caught at a nearby gas station where he attempted another armed robbery. Mia was relieved they got him. She had never been a resentful person but in her opinion, everyone should take responsibility for their actions.

The same night, she moved in with Kate and Adam. She was grateful to have them as her family, especially Adam. He was like a big brother to her, caring for and worrying about her all the time.

Three months later, the trial took place. Amelia wanted to go; even so it was very difficult for her. But she had to speak for her parents because they couldn't anymore. And she wanted to hear what the burglars had to say.

The man who had killed her parents had been so surprised they were home that he had panicked and accidentally shot her father as he had tried to fight the intruder off. When the burglar had noticed that her mother had watched everything, he shot her too. "I had a blackout." He stated in court. And that he was truly very sorry.

Sure, this was no excuse and Mia would lie if she were to say that she had never been angry. However, she forgave them. Forgiveness was a very important part of life and she could tell that they were telling the truth. She believed that they never intended to hurt anybody to begin with.

In the end, they got their rightful punishment and she could start a new chapter of her life.

Seven years later

Another nightmare. Again. Three years of therapy had helped Amelia coping with the

trauma of losing her parents. For a while, the nightmares had even stopped but when she felt extremely upset or stressed, they returned. And she had to admit, the last few weeks had been really demanding. She had studied every day, often until late in the night and had also worked at the local hospital as part of her required internship. Lying in bed and looking at the ceiling, she let out a sigh. What would her life be like if her parents were still around? Maybe quite similar because she had known for a very long time what kind of job she wanted. Her mother had worked at the local hospital and her aunt Kate still was a nurse there. This is why Mia got interested in this kind of job early on, except instead of a nurse, she wanted to become a midwife. She was thankful that she could study at the local university. She didn't want to leave her hometown or Adam and Kate – yet.

Adam had enrolled at the same college four years ago, his majors being biology and pre-med. He was exceptionally smart and had no problem remembering facts, so for him, learning was quite easy. If Amelia struggled with her studies, he was always there to help. He supported her in any way possible as he had done seven years ago and basically her whole life.

Smiling, she got out of bed and opened the curtains by the window. It was a beautiful summer's day and her mood improved immediately. She didn't have to hurry, it was the beginning of the summer break and she was really relieved she could finally relax. She now opened the window as well, before going to her closet and picking out the clothes for the day. Then she went to the bathroom, changed her clothes and came back to her room to make the bed and close the window.

Mia eventually entered the kitchen downstairs, where Adam was sitting by the kitchen counter, sipping his coffee and reading the newspaper. Her aunt Kate was cleaning the dishes. Today, she had to work the nightshift so she had time to do the housework and grocery shopping. Although Amelia and Adam helped with the chores as well, she wanted them to concentrate on their studies and leave the rest, at least for the most part, to her.

"Good morning!" Mia greeted her family cheerfully.

"Good morning, sweetheart!" Kate replied, smiling softly.

"Morning, Sis!" Adam said, looking at her with a broad grin on his face. How she loved that grin. It cheered her up all the time. "Someone's in a good mood." He pointed out the obvious.

"Why wouldn't I be? It's summer, the weather is great and I don't have to study or work."

"Good point." He agreed smirking.

Happy, Amelia made some tea, sat down next to her cousin and began eating her pancakes.

Once they had finished breakfast, Kate drove to the store to get some groceries and Mia cleaned the house. Adam left too because he had promised a friend to help with 'computer stuff'. Besides, the housework wasn't his thing but fortunately, his two girls were understanding about that. In return, he often did the grocery shopping or technical work in the house.

Around midday, Amelia went to meet some of her fellow students for lunch in town. Since her parents had died she found it more and more difficult to open up to someone. She didn't have friends, only classmates or colleagues. She was fine with that for now. Someday, she would be able to form real friendships and even enter a serious relationship with a man. She had had a relationship a few years ago and the boy had been friendly, smart and very considerate. However, they had broken up after

two years because they simply didn't love each other 'that way'. They had remained friends but had lost contact over the years.

Anyway, lunch lasted two hours and after that, Mia took a stroll through the city and the park. There, she sat down on a bench and read a book she had brought with her. At 5:30 pm, she decided to head home.

"I'm back!" She shouted as she entered the house and closed the front door, just in case Adam was here.

"Welcome home!" Kate said smiling. She was standing in the doorway to the kitchen, much to Amelia's surprise.

"Oh! Hi! I thought you had to work the nightshift. Why are you not at the hospital?" Normally, her aunt left at 5:15 pm to get to work and started the shift at 6:00 pm. It was already past that time.

For a moment, Kate had to think about what she was saying. "Right! There has been a change in the work schedule so I'm home the entire night." She explained, still smiling widely.

Somehow, Amelia found that a bit odd. The older woman never laughed that much although she wasn't a sad person. Nevertheless, Kate was rather reserved and didn't have emotional outbursts. In addition to that, Mia asked herself what could have happened that would make the hospital change the work plan at the last minute.

"What should we have for dinner?" Kate asked now, surprising the girl yet again.

"I... I don't know. Let me take a shower and then I'll help you cook."

"Okay, sweetheart!"

Amelia went upstairs to take a quick shower and then to her room to change her clothes. As she was standing beside her bed, she heard a noise coming from the corridor.

"Kate?" She spoke cautiously, turning her head towards the door behind her. No response. "Adam?" Still no answer, but she heard footsteps approaching her room. The moment she wanted to storm out and confront whoever was there in the hallway, she noticed it was her cousin.

"Hey, it's me!" He greeted low-voiced while entering her room and quietly closing the door.

"Adam, you scared me!"

"Sorry! I waited for you to come home. We need to talk." The concerned expression on his face made Mia feel uncomfortable.

"Adam, what's going on?"

"Something's off with mom. I can't explain it but I think she's behaving really strange. Don't you?"

"Yes, but..."

"And why is she not at work?"

"A change in the work schedule."

"Yeah, she told me. I don't buy it."

"Stop being so suspicious! Work plans change, you know. And maybe she's just in a great mood today."

"You can't possibly believe what you are saying."

"Adam..."

"No! I know my mom and I know that something's not right. I just don't know what."

"Okay, calm down. Tell you what. When you do, let me know. Until then, I'll go and help Kate with dinner."

"Alright..." Adam sighed surrendering.

Amelia left her cousin standing in her room and headed downstairs, ignoring the weird feeling in her stomach.

"How about some pasta?" Kate inquired when her niece entered the kitchen.

"Yeah, sure!" The younger woman replied, trying to smile.

Right away, she got some vegetables from the refrigerator, but as soon as she closed the refrigerator door and turned around to put them on the kitchen counter, her aunt was suddenly standing in front of her and holding up a big knife in her right hand.

"Kate? Is everything okay?" Mia was alarmed. The wide grin on her aunt's face was in fact very creepy.

"No. But it will be soon." Kate spoke calmly and without any further warning, the knife flew at her niece. Luckily, Amelia had taken a self-defense course after what had happened to her parents, so she was able to react instantly. The vegetables fell to the ground but she didn't care. She had to catch her aunt's arm to keep herself from being stabbed. What followed was a tussle between the two women in which Mia managed to push Kate's right arm a few times against the refrigerator. As a result, the knife dropped onto the kitchen floor and the fight came to a break.

"Kate, what's wrong? Why are you doing this?" Amelia asked frightened and breathing heavily.

The older woman didn't respond. Instead, she attacked again screaming and consequently, they landed on the ground as well. At this instant, Kate choked Mia and latter grabbed both of Kate's arms trying to get them off her throat. It was to no avail. When did her aunt get so strong? It was... not human. Then she remembered a lesson in her self-defense course. She removed her hands and poked her thumbs tightly into Kate's eyes. Kate cried out in pain and moved her hands to her eyes, still kneeling above the younger woman. Amelia crawled backwards in order to kick her aunt vigorously with both of her feet and away from herself. After this, she grabbed the knife by instinct and got on her feet. Kate however was faster, already standing and grinning evilly. She approached her niece but unexpectedly stopped right in front of her. She slowly looked down on herself. Mia had stabbed her in the stomach, blood immediately coming out of the wound.

Kate glanced back at the younger one, her grin remained. "This won't work on me, sweetheart!" She stated self-assured, pulled out the knife and threw it on the floor.

"Now, I won't hold back anymore. Playtime's over!"

Amelia was terrified. This couldn't be her aunt anymore. She took a few steps back, the other woman following every one of them. She increased her pace, walking backwards around the kitchen counter and restlessly searching for another weapon. A frying pan on the stove caught her eye, yet she was uncertain about using it. Before she could ponder any longer, Kate assaulted her once more. Mia was able to elude, grabbed the frying pan and the moment her aunt turned around she beat her hard on the head. Therefore, Kate hit the kitchen counter and sank motionlessly to the floor. Shaking, Mia stared at her. She didn't know what to do next, the only thing she was certain about is that she wanted to get out of the house. But she wouldn't leave without Adam. She put the frying pan back on the stove and ran into the hallway to get upstairs, where she assumed her cousin was. She stopped in her tracks when she saw that the door to the basement was left wide open and swallowed hard. She was afraid of what might awaited her there. Despite that, she cautiously went downstairs and tried to make as little noise as possible.

"Mia?"

"Adam!" Highly relieved, Amelia jumped down the last two steps, ran towards her cousin and hugged him tightly.

"Are you okay?" He asked worried, pushing her slightly away from him and checking her from head to toe.

"No! But I'm not hurt." She answered honestly. "Adam, what are you doing in the basement?"

"About two minutes after you left to help mom, I thought I'd join you, to keep an eye on her. As soon as I reached the hallway, I heard loud noises coming from the kitchen and I wanted to run there to see what was happening. But suddenly, *he* grabbed me from behind and dragged me down here." Her cousin explained angrily and pointed at a man lying on the ground a few feet away from them. She noticed him just now. "He tried to bite and even kill me, so I fought back and killed him by bashing in his head with that iron bar." The mentioned object was lying next to the dead body.

"What the hell is going on? Kate tried to kill me too. Why would she do that?" Mia said with tears in her eyes.

"I have no fucking clue." Adam told her baffled while running a hand through his dirty blond hair.

"Humans." All of a sudden they heard Kate's voice. The woman was coming down the stairs and holding the kitchen knife from before in her right hand. "Always resisting, thinking you are better than everyone and everything else." She finally reached the basement floor. "Let me tell you something. You are not!" She spat out furiously.

"Who are you? What do you want from us? And where is the real Kate?" Adam inquired harshly.

"So many questions, so little time." Kate spoke while approaching them. The young man pushed Amelia protectively behind him. "But since you're going to die anyway, I will answer them." She grinned wickedly and stopped walking. "Firstly, I'm a ghou. I eat dead people, sometimes live ones as well and take their form." She explained proudly while sliding down the knife at her body. "Secondly, my brother and I..." Now, she pointed the blade at the body on the floor. "...just want the good old-fashioned revenge. Your father, John Winchester,..." She then aimed at Adam. "...killed our father 23 years ago. I tried calling John, posing as Kate, but sadly, his phone is out of service. However, after I kill you as well, I will wait for him to show up and when he does, I can finish him." She laughed satisfied.

His father. Adam didn't know John Winchester very well. They had met for the first time when Adam was twelve and after that, John had occasionally visited. He had taught his son pool and poker, had taken him to ball games on his birthday, had bought him his first beer when he was 15 and had given him driving lessons. Nonetheless, for Adam, his mother and Amelia were the only ones he considered family.

"What do you mean by 'kill us *too*'?" Mia asked distressed, snapping her cousin out of his thoughts.

"Right!" The ghou grinned, stepped in front of the freezer which was also standing here in the basement and opened it. "Thirdly and lastly, I killed her this afternoon."

Amelia gasped, immediately shaken by the sight of her dead aunt lying in the freezer.

"You monster!" Adam yelled. Disturbed and enraged at the same time, he attacked the ghou without thinking about it any further. He ran at it and consequently, it dropped the knife on the floor once again. Adam pressed it against a rack, yet it only laughed at him.

"You can't hurt me, boy!" The monster hissed arrogantly, putting its right hand around his throat and lifting him up. Next, it turned around and shoved him against the shelf. "Maybe I can!" Mia said unexpectedly. The ghoul turned its head to look at the young woman and before it could comprehend what was going on, she rammed the knife she had picked up into its skull. The monster no longer did make any sound, except when it collapsed onto the ground with the blade still stuck in its head.

Being able to breathe and stand on his feet again, Adam coughed and rubbed his hurt throat. "Is it dead?" He asked doubtfully.

"I think so." Amelia wasn't pleased though. How could she be when her aunt got killed by a monster which she just stabbed in the head?

"Come on." Her cousin spoke softly. He took her hand and they quickly left the basement.

They stopped by the kitchen where Adam used the landline to call the sheriff's department. Afterward, they went outside – neither of them wanted to stay in the house – sat down on the stairs of the front porch and waited for the police to arrive.

About ten minutes later, the sheriff and his officers along with an ambulance and the coroner got there. Amelia and Adam were immediately examined and questioned. For Mia, it felt like déjà-vu. Well, it was. The look on the sheriff's face didn't help either. He had seen her in this kind of situation nearly seven years ago.

However, the two young adults told the police exactly what had happened – apart from mentioning the ghouls. While waiting for the authorities, they had discussed that it would probably be best if they kept this little detail to themselves. Because who in the world would believe them?

Of course, the police couldn't quite wrap their heads around all this. In the end, they declared the intruders had been stalkers who wanted to take over the life of their victims, even going as far as having plastic surgery to look like them.

Once the investigations were over and Kate's funeral had taken place, Adam and Amelia moved back into the house. Living there wasn't easy but it was their home regardless.

What was almost worse was the fact that they both were left behind feeling unsettled and puzzled, Adam in particular. He was a rational person. Therefore, he wanted answers, mostly regarding his father.

Amelia on the other hand just wanted to forget everything. Obviously, that was easier said than done. In the two months after the funeral, she cried a lot and knew that Adam did too. She sometimes heard him sobbing in his room. At least, they both dealt with Kate's death and somehow got through the toughest time.

Adam found yet another way of coping. He immersed himself in research about his father and ghouls, which worried Mia. She couldn't lose him as well.

Still, whatever help he needed, she would be there for him. The same way he was always there for her.

Now

Windom, Minnesota – 2016

"Morning..." Adam greeted while slowly walking into the kitchen. He immediately got a cup of coffee, sat down at the kitchen counter and put his left elbow on it, just to let his head rest in his left hand. A long yawn escaped his mouth so he used his right hand to cover it.

"Good morning!" Amelia said, smiling lightly. She had finished breakfast a few minutes earlier and was about to clean the dishes, but when she spotted her cousin she stopped what she was doing right away. Instead, she went over to him and placed her arms on the kitchen counter.

"Did you sleep at all last night?" She asked frowning. Adam looked very tired and he was a bit pale. It was Saturday; however, he wasn't hung over or sleepy from a night out. Sometimes, she wished it would be because of that.

"Nope." The young man replied shortly without looking at her. He couldn't stand the worried expression on her face; it always made him feel guilty or sad. He took a sip of his coffee.

"Adam, I know you still want answers. But it's been almost three years. Let it go."

"I can't." He spoke, glancing at her and then focusing on the coffee cup in his hand. "I know I'm close to finding what I'm searching for, I only hit a dead end. That's all."

„Maybe you should take a break. You know, find a job or go on holiday or start a hobby. And then you can get back to research." Since Adam had finished university, all he did was searching for information about his father. Unlike Amelia, he didn't get a job after his degree. She wasn't angry with him, yet she wished he would work at least a few hours a day to get his mind off of the incident that had happened three years ago. Thanks to the insurance money left by her parents as well as Kate, they didn't have to worry about their financial status. So that wasn't Mia's concern. It never was. She cared firstly about Adam and his mental state.

Suddenly, Adam's face lit up and he stared at his cousin like he just had the biggest idea ever. You could nearly see the lightbulb above his head.

"Sis, you are a genius!" He shouted excited, jumped on his feet, took his coffee cup and rushed out of the room, leaving Mia perplexed. She sighed and eventually went back to cleaning the dishes. Whatever idea he had, she would know soon. Even if she didn't wanna know.

The young man didn't leave his room for another few hours and she didn't bother him. She decided to go for a walk as it was a sunny spring day and it often helped her to clear her head. Unfortunately, this time it gave her the opportunity to think about her life and mostly all the bad things that had happened in the past ten years. Her birthday was coming up. In two days she would turn twenty-four but it didn't matter anyway. She had stopped celebrating this special day after her aunt Kate had died. She knew it was dumb, however, from time to time she thought that the deaths in her family had been her fault. That somehow, she was bad luck.

After an hour, Amelia came back home. Today was her day off and she was bored. She liked working, it kept her going and from thinking too much. Perhaps she was the one who needed a hobby, except with the frequently twelve-hour shifts at the hospital that wasn't so easy to manage. Adam and she spent as much time together as

possible, still she felt more and more lonely. To distract herself from these depressing thoughts, Mia sat down on the couch in the living room and turned on the TV. Later, she cooked dinner although she knew that her cousin probably wouldn't eat with her. As long as he ate, it was alright with her. Besides, she would make sure of that.

"I got it!" Adam exclaimed thrilled. He was walking into the living room at a hurried pace and with his characteristic grin on his face.

"You got what?" Amelia asked confused. She was sitting on the couch, looking up from the book she was currently reading and focusing on him.

"Everything." He seemed as if he had found the cure for each illness in this world.

"Could you be more specific?"

"Okay, listen." Her cousin sat down on the coffee table in front of her. "You said I should go on holiday and that reminded me of something. So, I went through my mom's stuff again and I found this picture." He paused to show her the mentioned photograph. "Of course, you recognize my father on the left. And the man standing next to him? His name is Mike Guenther, he owns the auto repair shop you can see in the background." He flipped the picture so that she could see the text written on the back.

"Dear Kate and Adam! Greetings from Lawrence, Kansas. See you next holiday. John." Mia read out loud.

"Why didn't I notice this sooner? The whole time, the answers were right in front of me!" Adam laughed.

"What do you mean? It's just a picture."

"Don't you wanna know how I could identify the man beside my father?"

"Okay... How did you identify the man beside your father?" Amelia inquired for fun.

"I'm glad you asked!" He grinned. "I googled him. Well, the auto repair shop to be exact. And I found it along with a phone number. So, I called Mike. He told me that he hasn't heard from John in a very long time but perhaps his sons could help me contact him. Unfortunately, he doesn't know where to find them either. However, he also told me that John once has talked briefly about his father, Henry Winchester, who has been working in Lebanon, Kansas while he was still alive. John apparently often went there too." Adam finished his explanation, proud that his hard work finally paid off.

"I can't believe it." Mia spoke bewildered by the news.

"We have to go to Lebanon!"

"What? Hold on a second! Adam, do you actually realize what this all means? You have brothers!"

"I realize that!"

"Do you?"

"Yes! Maybe we can locate them there along with my dad."

"What do you think they will say when we show up out of the blue and ask them about... ghouls?"

"Only one way to find out."

"I don't know... How long does it take to drive to Lebanon, anyway?"

"Approximately seven hours."

"Seven hours?"

"Mia, please! I'm so close to getting all the answers I've been searching for. But I won't leave without you."

She sighed. She certainly hadn't been expecting this. Adam stared at her, pleading and

hopefully at the same time.

"Alright..." Amelia gave in. "When do we leave?"

"Thanks Sis, you're the best!" Her cousin was overjoyed and gave her a brief hug. She had to smile. "How about Thursday morning?" He suggested, well aware of her work schedule.

"I have to work the nightshift on Wednesday. If nothing comes up, I can be home Thursday morning as usual, maybe even sleep in the hospital beforehand and then in the car. Friday is my next day off. So it works for me, I guess." She reflected.

"Great! We leave on Thursday." Adam confirmed eagerly and stood up. "Thanks again, Sis!" He grinned and left the living room as fast as he had entered it.

Mia on the other hand was still very skeptical about their plan. Did they have a plan? Well, they would figure something out.

The following days went by quickly. Nothing interfered with their schedule; this is why they could leave on Thursday at 8:00 am. They arrived in the small town called Lebanon at around 3:45 pm – they had taken a short break at noon to eat something at a diner and to use the restroom. Without further detours they drove into a parking lot in the town center and got out of Adam's car – a navy blue Chevrolet Cruze.

"So, this is Lebanon." Adam said as he looked around. He was not exactly impressed by his surroundings.

"Yes, here we are." Amelia spoke and yawned. She was tired. She had merely slept two hours in the car and not at all at night. Preferably, she would lie down in a motel room and take a nap. But she knew that her cousin wouldn't let that happen until the evening.

"Okay, then let's go." He was highly motivated to walk through town and ask the residents if they had any information on his father and brothers. He only knew their names – John, Dean and Sam Winchester. However, in a small town like this it wouldn't be too hard to meet someone who could help finding them.

"Dean? Oh, yeah, I know him! Comes in here several times a week, buys mostly beer and chips and such stuff. Don't know where exactly he lives, though." The guy in the convenience store they were now standing in told them good-tempered. It meant that his brothers were in fact staying in this town. Adam paid the two water bottles along with the chocolate bar and thanked the other man politely. Back on the sidewalk, Mia unwrapped the chocolate bar and took a bite. She loved chocolate and at the moment, she urgently needed some. They continued their search right away, which meant walking into a few other stores as well as the post office. Some of the people there knew the Winchester-brothers; yet no one could enlighten the two strangers with any more details. "Somewhere out of town." Was the response they received the most when it came to the question where Sam and Dean lived.

After three hours of wandering and asking around, they decided to call it a day and eat something at the diner before heading to their motel.

"Hi! What can I get you guys?" The young waitress inquired smiling as they were still looking at the menu.

"I'll have a glass of water and a salad, please." Amelia ordered friendly. She wasn't very hungry since they had eaten lunch.

"I'll take some French fries and a coke." Adam replied. "And can I ask you something?"

"Sure!" The waitress responded cheerfully and took the menus back.

"Do you know Sam and Dean Winchester? They are supposed to live around here somewhere."

"Yes, I know them. They occasionally come here and eat. I remember they once said they stayed out of town, but that's all."

"Okay, thanks anyway." Adam was slightly disappointed.

"You're welcome!" The woman gave him another smile and went to serve another table.

"We should drive out of town tomorrow and search the area. They can't be staying too far away." He pondered afterward.

"We can do that. Sounds like a good idea." Mia approved smiling. They couldn't give up just yet. They were close to finding the brothers. Very close, as they would realize soon.

"Hey, it's your lucky day!" Their waitress declared delighted while setting their drinks on the table. "Sam and Dean... there they are." She pointed at the two men who entered the diner right at this moment and left again. Adam turned around immediately.

"Unbelievable!" Then he faced his cousin, excited and surprised at the same time.

Amelia was puzzled as well. They had searched for hours and now the brothers were standing in the same diner they had dinner in.

"Do you wanna go talk to them?"

"Not yet." Adam reckoned as he observed Sam and Dean. They sat down four tables away from them.

So, Adam and Mia ate their dinner, paid the bill and eventually went outside to wait for the brothers there. A few minutes later, the two men were also leaving the diner and it seemed as if they were having an animated conversation over something.

"Dean, how can you always hit on the waitress when she clearly said that she wasn't interested?" Sam asked reproachfully.

„Because I can, Sammy. Because I can." The older Winchester answered teasingly and tapped his brother firmly on the shoulder. Sam scoffed and shook his head in disbelief. Dean would probably never change.

"Sam and Dean Winchester?" Adam interrupted their little argument while approaching them. He already knew who they were; nevertheless, he wanted to make sure. Mia kept a little distance to the three men.

"Yeah?" Dean grunted, eyeing the younger guy suspiciously.

"Hi! My name is Adam Milligan and I'm your brother."

"Sorry, what?"

"John Winchester, he is my father too."

Dean looked at Sam, skeptical of what he had just heard. Sam shrugged with his mouth open in disbelief, but he couldn't say anything.

"I have proof." Adam added and pulled a photo of him and John out of his pocket to show it to his brothers. Sam received the picture and stared at it. Although Dean took a look at it as well, he still was doubtful. There was so much shit going on in their lives that he couldn't trust anyone that easily.

"Who's she?" He therefore inquired and nodded towards the blonde woman behind Adam. His voice sounded a bit softer than before.

"I'm Amelia, his cousin. But you can call me Mia." She replied smiling.

"How did you find us?" Sam asked astonished.

"The guy who owns the auto repair shop John worked at told me that he went to Lebanon a few times. So I thought we should start our search for him and you here."

"Well, you found us. Now what?" Dean stated a bit harshly.

"We wanna talk to you and John. We have questions about an incident of three years ago."

The two older brothers faced each other once again, considering the request of the younger one.

"Okay." Dean agreed, surprisingly smiling lightly. "Follow us."

"Where are we going?" Amelia was somewhat anxious.

"To our car, we better talk there. And after that, we can drive home to John. But if you don't want to..."

"No! It's alright." Adam cut him short. "It will be fine." He turned to his cousin with a soft smile. She nodded tentatively and consequently, they followed the Winchesters to their parking spot. "Nice car!" He spoke impressed as they were standing next to the black Impala. It was the same car John had always driven.

"Thanks!" Dean smirked briefly and cleared his throat. "Before we talk, we have to check the water in the trunk."

He gave Sam a meaningful look. Still, it took a few moments until the younger realized what his brother intended. "Uh, yeah, right. Just a sec." Sam said a little tense.

Adam and Amelia were frowning and wondering what the two men were about to do. Maybe it hadn't been the best idea to just follow them here?

Nonetheless, Dean and Sam opened the trunk and momentarily rummaged in it. They seemingly found what they were looking for since they now closed it and stepped in front of their new acquaintances. Each of the brothers was holding a silver bottle in their hands which they unscrewed instantly.

"What's that?" Adam examined them suspiciously.

"Water." Dean replied and without further warning, he and Sam splashed some of the liquid in Adam's as well as Mia's face.

"What the hell?!" The youngest Winchester shouted, angry and perplexed at once.

"What was that for?" Amelia was equally irritated and in addition to that extremely exhausted. "We have driven seven hours to get here, were running around all day searching for you and you spatter us with water? You could've just told us to leave."

"Listen, we are sorry. Let us explain." Sam apologized genuinely and since he didn't get a rejection, he continued. "This is holy water. We wanted to make sure you weren't demons."

"What? This is a joke, right?" Adam asked unconvinced.

"Look, we are hun-"

"Sam!" Dean stopped his little brother. "Don't say it."

"But-"

"First, let's call Cass. He should check them out. Then we can tell them everything."

"Alright..."

"Who's Cass? What the hell is going on?"

"Cass?" Dean called out, ignoring the questions of his youngest brother. "Cass, come on! We need you!"

Suddenly, a man in a beige trench coat appeared out of nowhere. "Hello, Dean! Hello, Sam!" He greeted calmly.

"Dammit, Cass! I told you not to do that. Personal space, remember?" Dean scolded his friend who was standing right in front of the two brothers. A bit too close, which is why they took a step back.

"I'm sorry." Cass said regretfully.

"Yeah, whatever... Cass, do your thing on these two. We need to know if they are who they say they are."

The man in the trench coat turned around to face Adam and Amelia, who were still perplexed by his sudden appearance. "I understand."

"Whoa, wait a second! No one is doing anything until you explain to us who this guy is." Adam demanded flustered.

"My name is Castiel. I am an angel of the Lord."

"You are... an angel?" Mia asked stunned. She didn't believe in God, yet she had always believed that there was... something else.

"Yes. And I am going to read your mind now." He answered friendly and approached her.

Her cousin wanted to interfere but she stopped him. "It's okay." She assured him smiling.

Therefore, Castiel placed two fingers on her forehead and immediately, his eyes began to glow. After a few seconds, he removed his hand and his eyes returned to their normal form. "They are human and mean no harm." He confirmed softly.

"Thanks, Cass!" Sam was relieved. It didn't happen too often that they met someone who wasn't tricking them.

"Alright! Now we know you're not going to kill us. Let's talk!" Dean declared, still not very pleased that they had to take two strangers home. They couldn't chat in the parking lot of the diner though.

About fifteen minutes later, they were sitting in the bunker where Sam and Dean lived. The two brothers really told Amelia and Adam everything. That their father had died in 2006. That angels, demons, vampires, werewolves and many more monsters existed. That all of it was real and not only folklore or fairytales. That they were hunters who killed those monsters. And that they had to stop the Archangels Michael and Lucifer from carrying out the Apocalypse.

Understandably, Mia and Adam were speechless. However, they asked the brothers about ghouls and what these monsters had to do with John. Sam and Dean didn't know either, so they read in their father's diary. He had indeed written something about ghouls. In January 1990, he had killed a male ghoul but was hurt in the process, which is why he went to the hospital where Adam's mother Kate had worked. They spent a night together and nine months later, Adam was born.

Now, everything made sense – especially the circumstance that his father had rarely visited. He had been hunting all the time.

"And that's it." Sam said and closed John's diary.

"Thanks, I guess." Adam spoke hesitantly.

"Well, I think we occupied you two long enough. We should go. Thank you for everything." Amelia reckoned while putting her left hand on Adam's right shoulder and standing up from her chair.

"It's late. You can sleep here if you want." Sam suggested kindly.

"Sam!" Dean wasn't happy about his brother's idea.

"Come on, Dean! It's really late and we can't let them drive to a motel when they are already here. It's only one night."

Dean briefly thought about Sam's suggestion. "Alright... Dammit! I swear to God, if you two do anything stupid, you are out on your asses in no time!"

"We won't, we promise!" Mia smiled, not at all intimidated by the angry man in front of her.

So, they got their bags from Adam's car and went straight to bed because they were exhausted anyway.

Only one night. Neither of them knew then that this was simply the beginning of a journey they had to accomplish together. And that they would soon get company – even if *he* was not really welcome.