

The Astonishing Bike.

Born as a slave to evil. A sidekick used for manipulating the purest of souls, ruled over by a master who desires power. I am that sidekick, a rather unique one too. My body a smooth steel, made by the cruellest of hearts. Violet orchids ripped from dry dirt and twisted around my wheels, my handles, my chains. A blood red liquid poured within me, poised to burn the hand of anyone who touches me, and make them fall into unconsciousness-where they become the worst of themselves: werewolves, sirens, witches. No one has ever escaped the grasp of evil once lured into it, and no one has become human ever again. I would know. I was mesmerised and charmed by the doe, skipping and hopping over logs-until it turned deadly and changed me too. Though, I was changed into something more valuable. A new object that deceived others. I am a rather special and different weapon of evil-an astonishing bike.

Leaning against a stone wall, I stand motionlessly, haloed by light. It was what I did every day from 7am to 6pm, waiting for the next child to grip my handles. I feel the sun beating down on me as green moss falls off the wall and lands on my seat. I stare blankly at the children ahead, rolling in grass and dirt, praying they don't come over here. People had been avoiding me this week, and I didn't want that to stop today. I hear chatter around me, a certain conversation involving me, but thankfully they didn't touch me, assuming my owner would get me soon. The light around me dims and is replaced with a chilly breeze. I feel my chains get frosty and the streets around me quieting down. Almost 6 o' clock. Just a few more minutes and I would be taken back to my chamber. I wait in the cold for a few more minutes, as a wave of relief crushes over me. No one would take interest in me today! I would be- "gimme a minute mum!" a young and bubbly voice chimes behind me. "I'll meet you inside!" At that moment, a girl-maybe 8 or 9-steps beside me. She has short ebony hair and curious hazel eyes. She's wearing a fluffy blue jumper with a matching pastel skirt, and has glossy black shoes and lacey socks. She smiles, revealing sparkling white teeth, and slides closer to me...this could not be happening! Just when everyone and everything was safe, this child comes along and decides to ruin her life. If I could steer myself away, I would, but I can't move, only other people can drive me away. "you're a pretty bike," she comments, cocking her head. Panic rising, I start-or really, I try- flailing helplessly, hoping I would maybe fall and draw attention to us, or somehow roll away-but it was no use. She studies me a moment longer, then slowly starts reaching out to my handles, her fingers inches from me- "NIKO GET IN HERE! WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING!?"

"Sorry mum! I forgot you existed for a moment!" Niko giggles. The mum huffs loudly from inside her house. "Well come on! don't want you getting sick too...least I remembered you exist." The mum laughs too. In a hurry, Niko grabs my handles and starts dragging me away-she lets out something that was probably meant to be a scream but was too quiet to be one-dropping me instantly. An ugly red rash starts clawing from her hand and up her arm. It's bright red and though I can't see it, I know it's searing hot. I see her arm twitching and fingers blistering, and just as she opens her mouth to cry for help, her legs buckle and she hits the pavement hard, drifting to sleep.

Waiting in my dark chamber, I dreadfully think about Niko, who was probably sitting in her chamber also. It's cold and empty and scary in these rooms-if I can even call it one-and she's probably scared out of her wits. In front of me is my cell door, where I keep hearing murmuring and the clash of steel, and I realise I'm about to go pick up Niko and see our master. A torch gets lit up outside and I see a flash of green, wrinkled skin. "Why we gotta' bring the bike?" An old and crabby voice moans. The handle to the door turns. "cause'... if the girl don't start talkin' then Christian will" growls a low and scratchy voice. *It's Tristan*, I think bitterly. The least they could do was get my name right! My cell door creaks open and in walk two hideous trolls. They both have axes in their hands and clumps of white hair keep falling out of their wrinkled scalps. They have grotesque webbed toes and boils on both cheeks. The older one of the two lifts me by my handles-somehow immune to my poison-and carries me out of my chamber. It seems they collected Niko first. Glaring at me through pained eyes, I see that her new features were utterly noticeable. The larger troll grabs Niko by the back of her fresh dumpy black uniform and shoves her onto my seat. I feel her tense up. She was probably worried she'd get burned again. At that moment, both trolls take my handles and the four of us ascend the stairs, preparing ourselves quietly to meet our master. After walking, or in my case rolling, past several luxury lounges and other uniformed students, we finally arrive at the main throne room. Niko looks confused as to why we have a throne room. I would have told her that we were in a castle where kids like her are taught to defeat a good army and that our leader is a queen in a way-but I can't talk. The grand doors magically open and the trolls walk us in, lean me on a stand, and leave as if they had rehearsed a thousand times. The doors closed behind us. It was time.

I feel Niko climb off me, but she seems unsure of what she should do. Scared and probably feeling awkward, she sits down cross legged beside me. Even though I brought her to this awful place, this awful life, she sees now that I am a

prisoner as well. We wait together. I sense a bond forming between us. We wait longer. Nothing happens. Niko sighs and begins to stand- "Hello Tristan" says a soft yet intimidating voice. Niko sits back down. Out of the corner of the room, a figure steps out of the shadows. She's wearing a pointy shouldered midnight black gown that drags behind her flawlessly. She has long wavy hair that was the colour of the sun, and atop it was a dark spiked crown. She has a beautiful yet merciless face, with cutting emerald eyes. "I see we have a guest" she says in her calm whisper like voice. Her head whips around to face us. She grins. "I see she is one of us, now." Niko looks frightened, yet her face is swelling with rage and her hands are clenched into fists- "I'm not like you at all! You're mean and selfish and...I don't really know but you are dressed over the top as well! I hate you!" What else could you expect. She was only 9. Our master is glaring at her harshly, but Niko babbles on. "-I know you look fabulous and stuff but that doesn't change anything! you made me like this," -She flips a hand to herself and waves it around- "Now I have REALLY pale skin, which is ALWAYS cold and I have creepy red eyes and I feel really strong which is scaring me and now I have THESE!" She opens her mouth wide and points at two small, shiny fangs. She's going nuts, I think to myself, but she doesn't stop. "YOU MADE ME A VAMPIRE!" She blurts. She wipes away tears. Our master's eyes narrow. "Aren't you a treat." In a blur, she was in front of Niko, holding her cheeks in red cat like nails. "You're more like me than you think." She pauses and closes her eyes. "Niko." She smiles. She too, has glistening white fangs. Niko stares at her through raw eyes. "how do you know my name?" She mumbles. "I am Viola." Our master says, completely ignoring Niko. "You may not see it now, my dear, but you will love being the way you are...you will love being like me. Come." She holds a hand out to Niko. Viola grimaces at me "you stay put, Tristan." Niko frowns and folds her arms. "I'm not going." "Well why not?" Viola asks in her soft yet frustrated voice. "Cause I'm not Evil!" Niko growls. I am shocked! No one defies the Queen. "Pity. I was looking forward to working with you." Her red eyes glowed. "WE LEAVE NOW!" She swishes her dark gown around her and heads for the balcony to... wait, I don't believe what I am seeing...!

As the Queen saunters off, Niko sees her chance and runs, jumping onto my seat. It seems she will not accept this life after all. She starts to pedal as fast as she can, there is rain outside, so loud that we ride unheard. Niko weaves amongst trolls and furniture, she picks up the pace, her eyes on her target, together we fly through the room. She approaches Queen Viola and, without hesitating, rams me into the back of her knees. Queen Viola, looking over the balcony edge, gasps and buckles, giving us one last death stare,

before she falls into nothing, the enchanted moat below swallowing her whole. Who was this girl-now-vampire? Niko looks at me pleasantly. "My dad taught me self-defence once. He calls it 'pop-the-knee'." She smiles. "Guess it works." The rain is clearing and blue-sky peeks through. I can feel the shift in the air as the enchantments start to weaken. The villains were going up in puffs of green smoke and becoming human again. Niko slowly looks at herself, she was turning back to normal, a vampire no more. She lets out a squeal of joy and a breath of relief. Then she looks at me and smiles the biggest smile in history. I feel myself changing. I get smooth hands and feet. I feel my fluffy red hair fall back into place, and I feel...hungry?! "Guess you're an astonishing person." Niko grins. Looking at me as I start to take my human form. "Maybe..." I say, still amazed by the fact I was myself again, "but I still liked being the astonishing bike."