

I finally found a guy. Too bad he wants me dead...

dating 4 demons

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Dating Demons

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FANGS4FREAKS

DATING4DEMONS

*This book is dedicated to my daughter, Taylor Lynn—and
I promise to use only the juiciest stories from your
adolescence for my books. Mwuahahahahahaha!*

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Colby Blanchard
Undead Living 102
Being Undead
Short Essay

Being Undead: What It Means to Me

In the fall of my senior year of high school, I walked home after a football game, alone. I was attacked by a rogue vampire who changed me into a vampire. I quickly discovered (after a visit from some Vampire Investigators) that I was Undead without a license—and not even a full-blood vampire, only a half-blood. Normally, I would have been destroyed, but I provided a pretty compelling argument. In the end, I managed to get a license, emancipate other half-bloods and was given a job as their Protector. But full-bloods still don't like us. At all.

Why? Well, it appears I am prophesied in some ancient texts to bring about the end of the world.

*This time the mixed blood will rise,
The One who is Undead but Alive,*

*Who is pure but not whole,
And they will bring forth the beginning of the end.*

So, what's being Undead mean to me? It means I have no time. Since full-bloods don't like me, they all want to kill me so I'm constantly dodging stakes and swords, and I never have time to finish my assignments. Which is why this essay is late.

One

COLBY

found it hard to believe that such a big guy was even attempting to look inconspicuous while obviously following me, but there he was, *again*. This time he was feigning interest in some shades while I cruised the Sunglass Hut. He was handsome in a bad boy, no, scratch that, in a *Piper* sort of way. I giggled at the thought. My best friend, Piper, would love the seriously dark vibe this guy was emitting. It would appeal to her whole, I'm-not-Goth-I'm-alternative persona.

I took a deep breath once more and relaxed. He wasn't a vampire at least. Of that I was sure. And he smelled like oatmeal raisin cookies with a hint of cinnamon. It was my experience (admittedly limited) that men who smelled like cookies were probably not evil. Yeah, it was pigeonholing an entire olfactory type but hey, stereotypes exist for a reason, you know.

He might not have been a vampire, but that didn't mean I shouldn't be cautious. It seemed like every other night I was

being attacked by some ancient vampire who followed the Prophecy. Occasionally they even brought a human pet or two with them. They believed Colby Blanchard (that would be me) was the one who would bring about the end of their existence as we knew it. Tell a friend. Film at eleven. Sheesh, start a small revolution by emancipating half-blood vampires, and suddenly everyone thinks you're up to no good. It wasn't my fault that half-bloods were considered an abomination by all. But not anymore. I was a half-blood and proud of it. No one who dressed as well as I did was an abomination. Period.

No, this guy wasn't a vampire and I thought it unlikely he was a pet. Pets tended to be very robotic and couldn't think for themselves. They were under a spell and looked spaced-out all the time. Nope, this guy could never be anyone's pet.

Maybe he was just shy and wanted to meet me? Probably. I mean, I looked pretty hot today with my spray-on tan and Psi Phi tank top. Sure, it was the middle of April and still a bit chilly for the Northwest, but when you're dead, er, Undead, a couple degrees didn't matter much. Call it a perk, if you will.

I made my way upstairs to the food court. I wanted Piper to meet me before the sun went down, but no, she was doing some homework and couldn't break away until the evening. As a half-blood, I was able to walk around during the day. Sure, I had to wear lotion with an SPF of about a gazillion but I didn't mind.

I wasn't thrilled to meet Piper after dark, though. What with all the kill-the-prophet-chick stuff going on. I mean,

putting your best friend in danger meant she wouldn't be your best friend for long. That was unacceptable. I needed Piper. I needed her like I needed sunlight—wait a minute, I didn't actually need sunlight and should really avoid it. Okay then, I needed her like I needed food. Hmm. I didn't need food either. Well, I needed Piper and I really shouldn't have to justify keeping my friends safe.

I reached the third floor and found her standing in line at Hot Dog on a Stick. I picked out a table and waited for her, shaking my head when I saw what she was wearing. Why, oh why did she have the fashion sense of a transient?

She sported Lucky jeans with a white leather belt, ritually studded with metal brads in a uniform pattern. She'd paired a long-sleeve black mesh shirt, ripped at the collarbone and along one elbow, over a fitted burgundy tank with a black bra. Piper was short, around five-four, and curvy. That was to say she had a small waist, huge boobs and rounded bottom. She was wearing black Converse high-tops, natch. We wouldn't want to spread our wings and wear another pair of shoes or anything.

Still, with her shoulder-length, jet-black hair with burgundy streaks and her fondness for eyeliner, she had a style all her own. Coupled with a row of earrings and pierced nose, she was exotic, in a don't-sit-next-to-me-on-the-bus sort of way.

"Dew?" I inquired as she sipped some liquid through a straw. Piper lived on Mountain Dew.

"Nope, cherry lemonade."

I made a gagging sound in the back of my throat. Piper sure loved syrupy sweet drinks. And apparently, fried food on a stick. She'd bought a corndog as well, then smothered it in mustard. I shuddered.

"Did you drag me all the way to the mall to insult my taste in drinks or did you have a real reason for meeting here?"

She plopped down next to me, maneuvering her drink, plate and the monster-size tote bag at her side.

"Bag lady," I muttered under my breath.

"I heard that, and for your information, I have a present for you in this bag," Piper said, not bothering to look up from her task of finding a portion of floor that was not too sticky to deposit her tote.

"A present? For me?"

"Yep. Cyrus made a bunch of wooden stakes for you. Thought you should keep them around the House and stuff. I just saw him."

"You went to training?" I was incredulous. Getting Piper to go to self-defense practice was like pulling teeth. I insisted the House attend training with Cyrus but Piper always had other things to do.

She ignored my comment and reiterated, "So, we're at the mall, why?"

"Do I need a reason to hang at the mall with my best friend?" I said brightly.

Piper was instantly suspicious. I guess I said it a little too brightly.

“What’s wrong?”

“What do you mean ‘What’s wrong?’ Can’t we get together outside the House for a little girl time at the mall without something being wrong?”

Piper just stared at me.

“Yeah, okay. Well, I was wondering if you’d made any progress on deciphering that stupid Prophecy yet.” I hated to sound needy but I was kind of getting tired of being jumped every time I strolled around the park looking for a little midnight snack.

“Were you attacked again?” Piper asked, concern replacing her normal sarcastic tone.

“Aw, shucks, Piper. Are you worried about me?” I fluttered my eyelashes at her. Piper snorted.

“If you’d quit dressing like a streetwalker, the attacks would stop.”

I blinked once. Twice. Not sure if I heard her correctly. She laughed at my expression, no longer able to hold a straight face.

“Oh hardy, har, har.” My voice dripped acid.

“Don’t you think if I found the true meaning of the Prophecy, I would have called you right away?” she questioned after her laughter died down.

“Yeah, I’m just getting tired of playing dodge the stake and last night, well”—I shook my head in remembrance—“I

was dodging a sword. A freakin' *sword*, Piper. I mean, who walks around campus waving a sword without getting busted by campus security?"

Piper sat up straighter and demanded, "Did you tell Thomas?"

I nibbled on my lower lip wondering how to answer that one. "I would have told Thomas," I ventured slowly, "but he has a lot going on right now with all the rogue vampires attacking people and stuff."

Thomas was my Vampire Investigator boyfriend and a full-blood. He'd helped me when I was first changed and we'd grown pretty close in the last year. Yet lately, well . . . I didn't want to burden Piper about Thomas's weird loner behavior. I mean, he was working his cute butt off nightly trying to keep the public safe from vampires who were freaking out about the stupid Prophecy that had everyone thinking I was going to destroy their existence—Puh-lease, like I would if I could—but I was a big girl now. I was the half-blood Protector, for goodness' sake.

"It's Thomas's job to protect the people and get the bad vampires. He can handle it. He would want to know, Colby."

She was right, of course. He *would* want to know, but I felt bad adding to his workload. He was having nightmares when he slept and they were really unnerving. I didn't even like to cuddle next to him anymore because they bothered me so much; and once, well, once he'd swung out as though he were fighting some unknown foe and knocked me right out

of the bed. When I woke him he didn't remember a thing. He claimed he wasn't having them anymore but the dark circles under his eyes told me another story. He wanted to protect me as much as I wanted to protect him. Boy, did we have control issues or what?

"Yeah, I know. I plan to tell him. I just hoped I could add good news with the bad like, I was attacked with a sword last night but Piper figured out the Prophecy so hey, there won't be any more pin-the-sword-through-the-Colby night games."

"Sorry to disappoint," Piper said, rolling her corndog around in the mustard, trying to gob on more—if that was even possible.

"You're gonna get a stomachache," I warned as she took a bite.

"You're just jealous because I can eat real food," she gloated.

"You know, a true friend wouldn't rub that in and probably wouldn't even eat in front of me." I pouted prettily.

She took another bite and chewed with her mouth open, showing me everything I was missing.

"Ew, gross!"

She smacked her lips after swallowing and smiled smugly.

"Fine, next time I'm hungry, I'll feed in front of you." It was an empty threat. I wasn't about to let Piper watch me suck down a pint of O negative from some unsuspecting victim. Piper had a very weak stomach.

Ignoring me, she asked, "How is Aunt Chloe doing?"

I rolled my eyes in answer. Aunt Chloe was actually my great-great-aunt but everyone just called her “Aunt Chloe.” She used to be a nurse during World War II and the Korean War. She was feisty and opinionated and was currently acting as the Psi Phi House’s sorority mother.

“It’s only temporary. A big façade, actually. I can’t believe the administration threatened to revoke our sorority status because we didn’t have a live-in housemother. Sheesh. I’m glad Aunt Chloe is helping us out, but I think she misses her friends at Providence Point, and frankly, she’s getting downright bossy.”

Aunt Chloe normally lived in an upscale retirement community on the Eastside, but when I needed a housemother ASAP, she packed her bags and moved in. All without my consent, might I add. In theory, it was a good fit. She knew I was Undead and knew that all the girls at Psi Phi House were half-bloods as well. She wasn’t even squeamish about sleeping in the same room where we found a murdered half-blood hidden in a trunk last year.

“Pish posh,” she’d said when I objected to her sleeping there. “There isn’t a day gone by I don’t see an ambulance picking up a body somewhere in Providence Point. People die, Colby. That’s part of the cycle. Nothing to be scared of.” And that was basically Aunt Chloe in a nutshell. She was one tough ol’ bird.

“Bossy? How?” Piper wanted to know.

“Well, first of all she gave us all household chores and

harps on us constantly to get them done. She even made us a chart! She decided it was much too important to trust us to make our own study times, so she instituted set Quiet Time sessions—and attendance is mandatory. She claims the girls lack discipline and need to understand the importance of passing their Undead courses. Seems to me everyone understands if they don't pass the course, they don't get a vampire license; without that, they'll be relieved of their Undead status. You know." I made a swift cutting motion across my neck to emphasize my point. "They all get how important the classes are to their existence."

"Sounds like she's just trying to help," Piper noted.

"Tell that to Sage. Aunt Chloe put her on a diet."

Piper looked shocked, "How do you put a vampire on a diet? And for that matter, why put her on a diet? You guys stay the same after you die, right?"

"Only full-bloods apparently. Sage, for some weird reason, is able to consume milk products. And she loves shakes. Has them all the time. She is forever walking to the Starbucks and getting a Frappuccino after her nightly feeding. Anyway, we all noticed she had to go out and buy new clothes, 'cause her other ones were too tight. Her face was getting rounder and finally Aunt Chloe told her she was getting fat. I mean right to her face she said, 'Sage, you're getting fat. I'm putting you on a diet.'"

Piper made a noise somewhere between a gasp of dismay and a chortle of laughter.