



WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR LOVE?

AURELIA

ALICE LOGAN

"Sometimes there is no darker place than our thoughts, the moonless midnight of the mind."

-Dean Koontz

To my wonderful Family, thank you all for your support on this crazy journey we call life. I wouldn't be where I am without you. I am extremely thankful for all of you. Including my wonderful husband. I love you. To the moon and back.

Let Us Begin

I hopped down from my husband's truck and examined the scenery around me. It was getting dark, and the path through the woods was becoming narrow, too narrow for the truck. "I guess I'm walking from here." I said to myself. Grabbing my purse and locking the truck, I realized how nervous I felt leaving one of the last things from my husband in the middle of nowhere. Hopefully, it won't be a problem for much longer. It has been three months since Tyler was killed, and it has not gotten any easier. I do not sleep, and when I do manage to fall asleep with the help of Trazodone, I have dreams that I wish I could just stay in forever, or they are nightmares that I wake up screaming in. There is no in between. I barely eat, I stopped working and seeing friends.

Aurelia was something like a myth in my small town. The scary old witch in the abandoned cabin in the woods kinda myth. Myth or not, I was desperate. I needed her to bring my husband back to me. I want the love of my life back, and this is my chance.

Walking through the woods, the cabin appears through the thicket of giant trees. I almost stop in my tracks, but will myself to keep moving. This has to happen. No matter how scared I get, Tyler is worth it.

I did however, stop about five feet from the walkway, when I noticed the door begin to open. My heart races, no one knows I'm out here. I am scared out of my damn mind, but I have nothing else to lose.

A beautiful young woman appears at the door. She has long dark hair that ends at her hips, dark grey eyes, and she's wearing a simple dark purple long sleeve dress. With her looks aside, I still felt uneasy. She is a witch, and not Glenda from Wizard of Oz either. She smiled at me, "You must be Ruby." She stated. "We have been expecting you." She moved to the side and swept a single hand, motioning me to enter. I take a big breath, and successfully encourage myself to walk up the walk, into the cabin.

The cabin was small, a single kitchen, wooden dining room table with two chairs, and bed all within first glance of the place. The entire cabin is bright with candlelight, and there are various labeled jars and fabric bags with different things in it all through the cabin. It is clean, but very cluttered. The woman goes to sit in one of the chairs accompanying the table. A cauldron sits in front of her, as well as a mortar and pestle for grinding spices, and a athame knife.

"I am Aurelia, please tell me what brings you." As she speaks, she motions to the empty chair in front of her. I sit in the chair, and clear my throat.

"Aurelia, I wish you to bring my husband back from the dead." I say. "It's my fault he was killed, and I want him home." My eyes start to water.

Aurelia simply nodded. "I can help you, Ruby. I do need to warn you, the path you are about to go down is not going to be pleasant. The benefit will need to outweigh the risks. Are you prepared for these risks?"

I have a hard time speaking, but I am prepared. I simply nod. Aurelia smiles, but this smile is dark, as if something else entered her body at this moment. "Then, let us begin."

I love you, Bee

Aurelia began working. Putting some things in her mortar, grinding them into a fine powder, putting them into the cauldron. I only caught a glimpse of what she grinded. Spices, plants, is that bone?

"Let me explain how it will work." Aurelia starts. "energy cannot be destroyed or created, only replaced with something of equivalent worth."

"So, in order to bring life back, I have to take a life?" My heart dropped to my stomach. I couldn't imagine myself killing anyone. Aurelia smiles at me.

"Yes, but not in a way you think. It's not a murder, but a self sacrifice. Using another person will be easier and better. That person must understand the agreements and sacrifices as well. Stealing energy by murdering someone won't work the same. Do you have anything from your husband?"

I nodded, dug into my purse, and handed her a plastic bag, containing Tyler's beard comb. Aurelia took it, pulled some hairs from the comb and added it to the cauldron. She then gestured for my hand and I gave it to her. She picked up the knife, and pressed the blade into the palm of my hand, hard enough to draw blood, but not hard enough to be aggressive. Carefully, she puts a few drops of my blood into the potion, as well as mimicking the same moves for herself, adding her own blood into the potion. She stirred, picked up a vial, and filled it up with the potion.

"Now" she starts, as she hands me the vial, "Once someone has given their okay to have your husband occupy their mind and body, have them drink this, and they will become your husband."

"Just like that?" I asked. It seems too easy.

"Just like that" she smiled at me.

"What about the risks?"

"I cannot tell you what the risks are. They happen differently for everyone else. You just need to be prepared."

"Thank you Aurelia, I don't know how to repay you."

Aurelia smiled, "You will repay me, and you will see how very soon."

I thought about those words on my way home. I started to think if it's worth it, but it is too late now. It's done, and I already have the person who is willing to give me their body and mind.

Zackery has always been there for me when I needed him. He agreed to meet me at my house and drink the potion. His car was already in the parking lot of my apartment. I park my car next to his, clutch my purse to my chest as I exit the car, and make my way to my apartment.

As I enter the apartment, he is sitting on the couch, with his shoes propped up against the table, drinking a beer. He smiled as I walked through the door. "Hey Bee." He always thought it was weird that people take the first part of their names as nicknames, so he took the last part of my name as a nickname. He thinks it's the most clever thing he's ever done. I am hoping his personality stays while my husband takes control of him.

He jumps from the couch, and rubs his hands together. "Let's do this thing." I pull the vial out and hand it to him.

"You really don't have to do this." I am suddenly afraid of losing my best friend. I am not sure if I could lose my best friend and my husband within a few months.

He shrugs me off. "I want to see how much this hocus pocus works." He takes the vial, "What am I supposed to say again?"

"I sacrifice my mind and body to bring back Tyler Williams."

Zach beams at me, "I love you, Bee." He repeats the magic words, and chugs the whole vial.

You are in Danger

We stop and wait for something to happen. Anything to happen.

"So....." Zach starts to rock on his heels, "is this it?"

I start to become frustrated, but relieved. Aurelia seemed to be a fake, but why? She didn't ask for money or anything. Did she just give me something just to mess with my head? I sigh.

"I guess it is." Slowly sinking down to the floor, tears begin to trickle down my face as I cry. Zach's hands find my shoulders, holding them steady, as he pulls me in for a giant bear hug.

"Hey Bee, it's alright. We did what we could right?" Zach holds me to his chest for a moment as I sob. Once I was done, Zach got up. "You should eat. You haven't eaten all day." Without an answer, Zach goes into the kitchen. I stay on the floor and stare off. I'm not hungry. But I suddenly feel exhausted, the day weighing on me. Not wanting to use energy, I crawl until I reach the couch, and pull myself onto it. I cover myself with the throw blanket and cry until I am asleep.

I awake to a noise and the smell of spaghetti. The sun was starting to set, casting beautiful rays of orange and purple through my window.

I get up, and make my way into the kitchen. I freeze in the archway into the kitchen. The back of Zach sure looks different. He is taller, and broader. His hair turned darker, almost black.

"Zach?" I asked. Hoping someone didn't just break into my house, kill off Zach and decide to finish dinner before offing me on my own couch.

The man turned around and smiled at me, showing beautiful white teeth underneath a thick beard.

"Hey Ruby." Tyler said when he made eye contact with me.

My legs give out. Tyler reaches out and catches me before I face plant onto our kitchen floor. I didn't think this would work, but here we are.

My dead husband is currently hugging me, smiling at me, and he looks GREAT. Like nothing happened. How am I supposed to explain this? To real life people. I'm starting to realize my choices may have been rash. Looking at my husband's face. His amazing face. Something is wrong though. I don't know what.

"Tyler? Is it really you?"

"Yes love, it's me."

"You died."

"I know."

"And.....you're alive now."

"Yes, I am."

This moment, I realized he had let me go, and continued dinner. Just like nothing had ever happened.

"Do you know what happened with, Zach?" I asked. I noticed Tyler's shoulders tense. He does know.

Without turning to me, he says.

"Maybe you should be grateful for your husband being alive. You can't have everything you want like some spoiled bitch."

I am taken back. Really? Tyler wouldn't say this to me. He is also avoiding my question.

"Tyler, your first night back and I don't want to fight. I just want to know Zach is safe."

Tyler hits his fist hard against the counter, so hard I jump. He turns and gets inches from my face and says, "I don't want to hear that name in my apartment again, are we clear?"

I have no words, so I nod.

Tyler stomps out of the kitchen. I hear the bedroom door slam. Great, what have I done.

I walk toward the counter to dish dinner. Maybe dinner in bed will make this fight go away.

I grab plates from the cupboard, and place them on the counter. As I opened the silverware drawer, something caught my eye. Something was carved into the wood inside the drawer. Tears begin to form in my eyes as I read a warning from Zach.

"Bee, this isn't Tyler. You are in danger. We need help."

Go, Ruby

I stand there, staring at the message from Zach. What am I going to do? I hear a crash coming from the bedroom. Shit. I walk over to the bedroom door and knock on my own bedroom door, afraid of what I might find.

"Tyler? Are you okay?" No answer.

I take a deep breath, and slowly open the door. Tyler has his back to me, and he's breathing heavily. In front of him is my vanity that was smashed to pieces. The pictures of me and Tyler that were on my vanity were ripped in colorful strings of confetti all over my bedroom floor, along with clothing from Tyler's dresser. Books from Tyler's bookshelf were shredded and thrown throughout the bedroom. Just

about everything that gave me any memory of Tyler was destroyed. My mouth dropped open, and tears stinging my eyes.

"W.....why?" I managed to get out. Why is this Tyler ruining my husband's things? His memory? I have left it untouched since he died, and in five minutes, he completely defaced all of it. Tyler whipped his head toward me. Oh shit. He looks livid.

"You ungrateful bitch!" Tyler spews at me, spit coming from his mouth. He points a finger at me and continues.

"Noone can love you! Only I will ever love you! Only I can bring you up!" He then starts to walk towards me, chest puffed out, eyes wild with rage.

"And only I can have you. Only I can bring you down. For us to be together, we both need to die." He growls at me.

At this moment, there is no doubt in my mind. This thing has Tyler's face, his voice, but this is not Tyler, and I have made a mistake. This mistake I made in love, may in fact cost me my life.

Tyler, suddenly, slams into the floor. As if someone tackled him onto the ground. I stare in shock as Tyler fights this entity holding him back from me. I will myself to move, but I can't. Tyler is thrown against the wall. His arms pinned above his head and bent at the elbow. His legs spread shoulder length apart. He's stuck, but pushing back. His head turns toward me, no longer filled with hate. His eyes softened.

"You have to run, Ruby." Tyler says to me, urgently. My husband Tyler. I step toward him.

"No! Don't come any closer. I don't know how long I can hold on. Don't even ask me how I did this, but I saw everything. From the inside, I yelled for you to go, but you couldn't hear me. Once I realized you were in danger, I just... appeared."

"Tyler, I can't. I can't leave you. I can't be without you again. Please Tyler....I need you to come home. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have sent you to the gas station. I wished I would have went instead everyday. Dying would have been so much easier than losing you." I'm crying again. Tyler smiled at me.

"Babe. You didn't tell that guy to rob a gas station. You weren't able to be there to stop me from stepping in and saving that woman at the gas station. If not there, I would have done it somewhere else. That's just who I am."

It's who I married. Someone willing to risk their life for a stranger. Because it's the right thing to do.

"I love you, Tyler."

"I love you too, Ruby. You have to let me go, babe. You're stronger than anything, stronger than I ever was, you'll make it through this, I promise."

Tyler suddenly smacked his head into the wall and screamed.

"Go Ruby!" He yelled.

Finding my legs and run, grabbing my truck keys on my way out the door.

We May Have Our Chance

I drive down the road towards Aurelia's cabin. The only way I can think of to fix this is by going down there and begging her to make things right. Or make her. Before I pulled out of the parking lot of the apartment, I located Tyler's .45 handgun in the glove box of the truck.

It was dark and raining by the time I made it to the woods outside of town. I drove through until I found the narrow path I walked down earlier today, except this time, I didn't bother to stop and walk. I continued to drive, rain and mud being picked up from my tires and splashing all over my windows and the side of the truck. The truck was suspended enough for the tires to drive along each side of the walking path, bumping me in my seat. It was so dark, when I reached the cabin, I almost drove into it. I slammed on my breaks and skidded to a stop. I pulled the gun from the glovebox and clipped the holster to the waist of my jeans, concealing the weapon under my sweatshirt.

No one opened the door to greet me this time. I opened the door myself and peeked my head in.

"Hello?" I called. No answer. I let myself in and looked around. The cabin looked the same. The further into the house I walked, the more I saw something all over the floor that wasn't there earlier today. I leaned down to investigate. It was black hair. I walked through an archway of a room and noticed it resembled a bedroom. Someone was lying in the bed.

I walked up to the bed and noticed Aurelia lying there, her hair now frayed and white, her beautiful grey eyes faded and her flawless skin wrinkled. She looked up at me and smiled.

"You're still alive, I see."

"Am I not supposed to be?" I asked.

"No, but with the way I am feeling, I'm not surprised either." She paused and coughed. Almost struggling to get air. The more I stood in front of her, the more she seemed to age.

"I get to keep my youth from the souls I sell. By giving away that potion I gave you, I get two souls in one. The soul from the body, and the soul from the widower. That way, I stay young and beautiful. You though. Something happened. The demon posing as your husband's spirit didn't kill you. And that body you put him in. That spirit is hanging on somehow. Don't ask me how. Like I said before, it works differently every time. But this is the first I've ever experienced this in my years."

"You need to fix it." I tell her. Tyler saved me and Zach is now holding on. I can get Zach back instead of losing them both.

"I'm afraid it's not up to me. It's up to you. I cannot give you the answer, you have to find it yourself." She seemed too content saying this. I'm uncomfortable enough to leave. As I turned my back to leave, Aurelia began laughing. I glance in her direction.

"We may have our chance now." She says, almost to herself, and she started laughing a loud cackle kind of laugh. As if on cue. A loud banging came from the door of the cabin. I wait a good distance, watching the door. No movement. I slowly pull the gun from its holster. As I pull back on the slide to chamber my round, the door burst off its hinges and against the opposite wall.

I'm Okay, Zach

I point my weapon to the door, listening carefully. There is an animalistic growl, as the demon posing as my husband emerges in the doorway. Taking a deep breath, I process my ability to shoot my husband. He lunges at me, I dodge him but barely. He recovers quickly and tackles me out the doorway, knocking the gun from my hand a few feet away. I have to act fast.

Remember this is not your husband anymore. He is bigger, but I can use that against him. I hook his left knee with my right leg, locking it into place. Then, I lock his left arm above the right side of my head with my right arm. Finally, I flatten my left foot to the ground, and pushed up as hard and fast as I could with my hips, knocking him off me. I land on top, and take my left knee, and knee him as hard as I could in the groin. Demon or not, that hurt him. He let out a yelp. I half crawl half crouching run and pick up the gun.

Tyler recovers quickly and is on my heels. Don't stop, I tell myself. I run to the truck, open the door, before I can jump in, he grabs my shoulder and throws me to the ground on my back, this time, I keep hold of the weapon. I aim and fire twice in his chest. He crumples to the ground.

Without stopping to think, I jump into the truck and drive. In my rearview mirror, I see him get back up as if nothing happened, and start to chase after my truck. I keep the gas pedal floored until I don't see him anymore. I take a breath. No time to cry, I have to think. Aurelia said she couldn't tell me what to do, I have to figure it out myself. Tyler said I had to let him go, but how? I shot him, and he lives. I think about materialistic things. The demon already ruined everything I kept of Tyler's that I kept untouched since he died. I suddenly realize I still have one more thing. Driving out of the forest, I make my way to our little town lake not far up the road. Finding good place to, I park, and sit, while taking a few deep breaths.

Flipping down the visor, a stinging familiar gleam of gold catches the light just right. Our wedding rings hang on a chain, taped to my favorite wedding photo of the two of us.

"I love you so much, Tyler." I say out loud, holding back tears. Before anything else can come out of my mouth, there is a banging on the side of the truck. Looking up, I notice the demon in my side mirror, running to my door. I put the truck in park and gun it, driving the truck towards the lake. I have to let go. Images of Tyler flash through my mind as the front of the truck breaks the surface of the water, bouncing my head into the steering wheel and knocking me unconscious.

I awake to someone dragging me from the water, for a minute I'm not sure what happened. Then, I start to remember. Shit, did it work? Who is dragging me from the water. I look up into the face of Zach. Wonderful Zach. It worked. Zach is yelling at me, " Oh Jesus, Thank God you're awake, what the hell were you even thinking?!" I smiled at him.

"It worked didn't it?" I responded. Zach cocked his head at me, confused.

"What do you mean it worked? What worked?"

"Remember? You drank a potion, to help me bring Tyler back. Why do you think you're in the forest? A demon possessed you and you followed me. Now it worked, because you're Zach again."

Worry creased Zach's face. He shook his head.

"Bee, you called me. That's why I'm here. You called me and told me you couldn't live without him. I went to your apartment and everything was trashed. I drove down to your favorite lake, I saw the truck..." He trailed off. I sat up and looked at the truck sinking in the water, feeling content. I squeezed Zach's hand and smiled.

"I'm okay, Zach. I learned I can love Tyler, and I learned to let him go."

The End.