

## The Neck

### **(Part of Section I)**

Downstairs as she entered the kitchen, she found her bratty little sister, Becky Anderson or better known as the Delicate Disaster already sitting at the kitchen table. To everyone else, she was a sweet, although slightly spoiled angel. To Emily Anderson, she was a grade A, eight-year-old devil. Her mom was standing behind the black stove about two yards from the table, mixing some more pancake batter.

“Morning, mom,” Emily Anderson said nonchalantly as she pulled out her chair and sat down. She was ready to attack the layered stack of banana nut pancakes with maple syrup deliciously dripping over the sides and pooling around at the bottom of the plate. “Good morning, Emily,” the mother replied on cue. Just as Emily Anderson was about to knife her way into the topmost pancake, the Delicate Disaster started giggling, her lips forming an evil smirk. “What is it?” Emily Anderson asked her.

Eyeing her breakfast from all angles and looking at her sister, her eyes jumped back and forth. Then, her eyes settled on her sister’s face, and she asked with a doubtful angry look, “What did you do to my breakfast, you little worm?” A few more giggles escaped the Delicate Disaster. “Oh, nothing,” she said slyly. “Nothing at all. What makes you think I did something?” Emily Anderson continued to glare at her. “Mooooommmmm...” the Delicate Disaster whined. “Emily thinks I did something to her breakfast. Why is she always accusing me?”

“Emily, I put your breakfast on the table just two minutes before you came downstairs. Trust me, there should be nothing wrong with it and if there is...”, she said as her eyes fell over her younger daughter. “Becky,” she said in a stern manner knowing her trouble making tendencies, “we’re going to need to have another talk.” “I didn’t do anything! Honest, mom,” the Delicate Disaster replied, a little exasperated. Emily Anderson and her mom both kept their eyes

fixed on the Delicate Disaster. “I swear. Emily, I didn’t do anything to your breakfast. No bugs, no hidden surprises, nothing. I promise.” And for once, Emily Anderson saw that the little girl was being sincere.

A few more minutes of speculation passed and she decided to just put her life in the hands of the devil for once. She sliced the right side of the top pancake into smaller pieces and began stabbing and shoving the fluffy pieces into her mouth. So far, so good. She couldn’t find anything peculiarly strange about the taste or texture of her pancakes. She was about halfway done and as she was about to cut into the fourth pancake, the tip of her butter knife nudged something solid. She tried to slice with a bit more force, but the knife wouldn’t cut further. Hmmm, Emily Anderson thought. This must be the work of the Delicate Disaster. She looked over to her sitting on the left and Emily Anderson realized that the Delicate Disaster had been eyeing her as she was still prodding the pancakes with wonder. She looked a little confused. Maybe it’s not her, Emily Anderson thought.

She decided to leave the rest of the task to her hands in order to uncover what the solid object buried within was. She picked up each layer and tore through the middle and once she scraped the last pancake off the object, she was bewildered. What the hell? It was a neck, about two inches tall and fourteen inches in circumference. A very familiar neck at that. She recognized that tattoo anywhere. The little black music note with five small stars outlining it labeled the back of the neck as none other than that of Chloe Katastrophe, one of the snarky popular girls from her high school.

For some inexplicable reason, she’d always be assigned the seat behind Chloe Katastrophe in most of her classes. She’d been starrng at the back of that neck for so long, she’d be ashamed if she didn’t know who it belonged to. It looked sort of like a curvy-sided trapezoid from where it rested on her plate. Soft, squishy tan skin outlined the edges, but the more she

prodded it with her finger, she could feel the hardness of the muscles within. She didn't know if she was imagining it, but she could feel the muscles contracting inside as if it was still alive.

**(These next few pages jump ahead but are still part of the first section.)**

Emily Anderson was becoming more desperate and feeling hopeless. As time went by, all the stores were opening up for a day of business, which meant there were more people to catch her in the act. She went back down Ballard Road with Max now pulling her instead and decided to head to a small lake she knew of near a hospital parking lot. But I apologize for I have realized that I haven't said anything about Emily Anderson yet, a popular girl in many ways.

Like most high schoolers, Emily Anderson tried her best to blend in. She didn't belong to a particular clique yet everyone knew her. Even the nerds took turns teasing her and whispering about her weirdness behind her back. The jocks would push her around in school and make her life miserable. They'd stick out their feet and trip her in the hallways especially when she was coming down a flight of stairs. Emily Anderson was really skinny, a twig almost but the problem didn't reside in anorexia or anything like that. It was her metabolism system. And the popular girls would sarcastically compliment her skinny body. Chloe Katastrophe never passed up the opportunity to make her feel like trash, saying on more than one occasion, "Hey, Dipstick, don't you worry about finding a costume for Halloween. Go as yourself! That'll scare the shit out of people plenty." Emily Anderson would reply, "Just leave me alone," her angry plea never of any help in such situations.

The brave soul now arrived at the lake and started to creep down the hilly area surrounding the edges of the lake. A slight breeze rustled the leaves in the trees nearby. Max sat down next to her once she reached the edge. Emily Anderson looked around the area and

realized this was the perfect opportunity to dump it, because nobody was close enough to see what she was doing. She picked up a few stones off the grassy ground and began to skip them onto the water. She skipped two stones and on the third try, she threw the neck in instead. However, it didn't bounce off the water. It landed with a great plop and drowned into the murky water with one throw. Emily Anderson breathed a sigh of relief, a burden having been lifted off her.

A few minutes later, she turned around to head back home and saw a middle-aged man with dark brown hair and some scruffy facial hair in a navy blue uniform approaching her. It was Mr. Dick Douchebag, one of the security guards that watched over the hospital parking lot. He was nodding his head at her in irritation, yelling, "Hey, Emily! What do you think you're doing? You know nobody's permitted to go near this lake. I saw you throw something in there. What was it? Did you not see the sign that says 'No Littering'?" Mr. Dick Douchebag knew Emily Anderson, because he went on several dates with her mother until she broke up with him. He desperately tried to get her back. He even stalked them for a while until her mother filed in a complaint and he was forced to stop. Emily Anderson decided to use this to her advantage.

"Honestly, Mr. Douchebag, I was just skipping some stones," Emily Anderson said. "No, no, I saw you throw in something in a plastic bag. Come on, tell me what it was," he snapped back. "Mr. Douchebag, I am speaking the truth. By the way, I recall my mother saying she wanted to get back together with you again. You should give her a call. Or even better, shall I tell her you're interested as well?" Emily Anderson replied hastily. "I am no longer interested in dating your mother. I have plenty of other women willing to go out with me without breaking my heart," he said bitterly. "Now, you've got some explaining to do. You'll need to come with me to the security office."

Emily Anderson took a big gulp of air and started choking on her own spit. She looked pale against the bright sunlight. As they walked to the security office, Max started to bark at Mr. Dick Douchebag and here the events of what happened after seemed to have become lost in Max's loud barks.

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**(Part of Section II)**

"This is just a bad dream, just a bad dream," she said to herself again and again, closing her eyes and hoping it was true. She opened her eyes again to the same horrific sight. Chloe Katastrophe slapped both hands on her face at the same time to snap her out of it, but there was no change.

Before I continue any further, it is only fair that I tell you something about Chloe Katastrophe. Chloe Katastrophe was a stuck up, obnoxious eighteen-year-old drama queen that enjoyed bullying other students for the imperfections that they were according to her. She thought of herself as the Queen Bee with the power to do anything she pleased. Everyone knows her and anyone who is anyone wanted to be her in her sad, little mind. Her grades consisted of D's and F's, but her mother didn't really care about grades. Popularity came first in their rich family, which no doubt Chloe Katastrophe had achieved, seeing that she had established herself as the Queen Bee of her high school. However, she'd usually bribe her teachers with large sums of cash throughout the year to make sure her grades were still top notch.

Chloe Katastrophe tried to calm herself down. Maybe it fell off in my bed, she thought. She twisted herself around again, her legs moving like a penguin and searched her bed and shook the pillows and blankets, but no luck. She searched her room and some small boxes around her room just to make sure her neck wasn't in there, even though she was completely clueless as to how this managed to happen. A neck doesn't just disappear, she thought. She was sure her neck

was in its proper place when she went to sleep the night before. It has to be somewhere nearby, she thought. Why is this happening to me?! Chloe Katastrophe then decided to search in her neighborhood. Maybe she had dropped it somewhere in the limo. She didn't bother to change out of her satin nightgown, but she picked up a purple, zebra printed scarf lying about and wrapped it around the space where her neck should have been.

She rushed down the stairs and outside the back door to the garage where the limo rested, the garage door being open. She walked towards the limo when she saw the reflection of a police car passing by across the shiny black surface of her limo. She did her penguin walk to turn around and saw her neck! It was wearing a police uniform and had a navy blue police hat on top as well. Chloe Katastrophe ran towards the police car and in front of it, forcing the police officer to stomp his foot down on the brakes. He got out of the car and started yelling at her. "Are you crazy?! What's wrong with you?! I was so close to hitting you," he said. Now Chloe Katastrophe knew for sure that this was her neck. Her tattoo was plainly visible on it. "Where do you think you're going?" she demanded to the police officer. "You belong right here, you see," she said as she pulled off her scarf. "You don't just get up and leave when you feel like it. The nerve! My own neck abandoning me!"

### **(Jumps ahead but still part of Section II)**

An hour later, the doctor arrived and met her in her room. Lucielle was filled with worry, especially when the mother was at work and Chloe Katastrophe wouldn't tell her what was wrong with her. She paced back and forth in the living room while the doctor was working with Chloe Katastrophe.

"Dr. Delirious, please, I need your help," she said. The doctor upon entering the room immediately saw that the girl was missing her neck. "Oh dear, how did this happen?" the doctor

said staring at the awkward position of Chloe Katastrophe's head on her body. "Does it look like I have a clue?! I just woke up this morning and my neck wasn't there. Just put it back in for me and hurry." The doctor picked up the neck and examined the edges and then, she got closer to Chloe Katastrophe and did the same for the area where her neck should have been. Her long index finger traveled from Chloe Katastrophe's chin straight down to her shoulder blades and then, from side to side along the region. Hmmm, Dr. Delirious thought. It was sealed tight, no space between, not even a crack as if there hadn't been a neck there in the first place.

"I'm terribly sorry, Chloe, but it just isn't possible. I advise you to go without it. Of course, I can always surgically replace it, but those are high-risk operations. My professional opinion is to just wash the area more often and let nature take its course. You'll be just as healthy without it, maybe even more," said Dr. Delirious with an air of confidence. "I can't go without it!! I have no neck! I'll look like a freak and a lot of people look up to me, you know," said Chloe Katastrophe, her heart jumping both in fear and fury all at once.

"Again, I'm sorry but there's nothing I can do to help you. However, I'm willing to buy it from you. It will greatly assist me in my.." Chloe Katastrophe cut her off. "Buy it from me? Buy it?! What does it look like? Just a piece of meat?! This is my neck we're talking about. What kind of doctor are you if you can't even fix my neck?" Chloe Katastrophe said in anger and desperation.

"I may ask for payments upon every visit, but I assure you that I'm only speaking out of your self-interest. Any doctor would advise you the same." "That's it! Get out! Get out now!" Chloe Katastrophe said almost screaming. Dr. Delirious stepped back out of the room almost tripping over a black, strappy heel lying about as Chloe Katastrophe marched right behind her and slammed her bedroom door shut.

Chloe Katastrophe began pacing around furiously in her room and started throwing various items at the walls. Stuffed animals, satin covered pillows, and wandering shoes crashed into the walls and floor. A lamp near her bedside table was knocked down, the glass shattering silently as if not to further anger Chloe Katastrophe. After moments of this tantrum, she calmed down and sat on her bed, staring at the mirror above her dresser table. Suddenly, she wanted to throw another tantrum, only this time through text.

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### **(Part of Section III)**

Unfathomable things happen in this world. Sometimes, no logical explanation can be provided: suddenly, the very same neck that had been making mysterious appearances around the community in its spiffy-looking police car turned up, as if nothing unusual had happened, in its regular spot between Chloe Katastrophe's head and shoulder blades.

It occurred during Chloe Katastrophe and Emily Anderson's 9<sup>th</sup> period class between 2:32 pm and 3:15 pm on March 17. The students were in the middle of a calculus test. Emily Anderson, having finished early, waited patiently for the school bell to ring. While she was doing so, she noticed Chloe Katastrophe's head raise about two inches and her purple, zebra print scarf protrude out a bit compared to other days. She didn't know if it had been a long day and she'd been imagining things or if this was actually happening before her eyes. The little black music note peeked slightly out above the scarf. Unable to resist her typical fascination, Emily Anderson reached out and poked Chloe Katastrophe's tattoo just to make sure it was really there.

"Hey, Dipstick! What do you think you're doing?" Chloe Katastrophe said getting ready to slowly turn her body around counter clockwise but her head turned upon instinct. She didn't even realize it at first. She continued on by saying, "Don't touch me with those bony fingers of



yours.” And then, just as easily, she turned her head back around to look down at her test. A complex calculus problem stared back up at her and as she tried to figure out how to go about solving it, it just hit her. She didn’t have to strain to look down. She gasped suddenly and immediately reached up to touch her scarf. Her neck! Her neck was there! “It’s back in place!” she accidentally said with joy a little too loudly. The teacher looked up from behind her desk and raised a finger to her lips, motioning Chloe to keep silent.

Chloe Katastrophe didn’t care. She quickly got up from her desk, took the hall pass from the hook next to the door, and ran to the girls’ bathroom. Upon entering, she rushed to the large, rectangular mirror besides the first sink and stopped mid-track once in front of it. With ease, she turned her body and neck around to face the mirror. She tugged at her purple scarf and pulled it off. She was right! Her neck was back! Her hands ran over her neck and she angled herself a little more, so she could see the tattoo on the back of her neck. It was there. She turned around and her reflection smiled back at her.