

'FRIENDSHIP AT STAKE'

By

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CAMERA ANGLES DOWN ON

1 **EXT. WOODS - DAY**

1

The sky is grey and miserable but still fresh.

A MAN (40s) jogs along the mud track - music blaring into his head from his ear phones.

He huffs and puffs along the country road and begins to slow down for a breather.

He takes out his water bottle and downs some of it.

As he screws his cap back on the bottle, his eyes catch something in the bushes.

He slowly takes a few steps towards the bushes.

Flies swarm an object and the noise of buzzing fills the airwaves.

He tries to make out whatever it is he's looking at before finally realizing and gasping!

2 **INT. LIZZIE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON**

2

LIZZIE (30) - a pretty and confident woman is sat at a desk typing away at her keyboard.

She's disturbed by her sister NEVE (16). Neve bursts into the room.

NEVE

Liz, you won't believe what I've just heard.

Lizzie breaks focus on her work and turns to her somewhat annoyed.

LIZZIE

Can you knock?

NEVE

Sorry I didn't know you were working. I can come back?

Lizzie lowers her glasses.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE

Well, you're here now so you might as well tell me.

Neve sits on the side of the bed.

NEVE

There's been another murder.

LIZZIE

(taking interest)

What?

NEVE

The body was found in the woods.

LIZZIE

You're joking, I mean that's the third one in three weeks. Do they have any idea on this one?

NEVE

No, clueless. The body was pretty much skeletal so who knows how long it'll take.

LIZZIE

Who would do such a vile thing?

NEVE

I don't know. Katie said she reckons the blood was drained from their bodies. How cool is that?

Lizzie is annoyed by that.

LIZZIE

Cool? Yeah *real* cool. Especially for their families or for whoever found them.

NEVE

Some guy was out jogging. We don't know him. He found it then he fainted and then *he* was found by someone else. Everyone's pretty shaken up.

LIZZIE

Well wouldn't *you* be?

Neve feels she's hit a nerve with her sister.

(CONTINUED)

NEVE

Sorry.

LIZZIE

(a beat)

No. I'm sorry. I shouldn't be so snappy. It's just this damn story.

NEVE

What's it about?

LIZZIE

It's the '*Princess of Allistone*' one I told you about. I just feel like it's going nowhere.

NEVE

Leave it and come back to it when you're ready.

LIZZIE

It's not just that. I've even been pondering on giving a brand new genre a go. I feel my stuffs getting a bit too samey. Plus sales were down quite a bit with the last 2 of my books so I think I should escape my comfort zone. Tackle a genre I've not done before, I just don't know which one.

NEVE

(after a beat)

How about a horror? Maybe use these dead bodies as a basis for it?

Lizzie grimaces but then thinks about it.

LIZZIE

I don't like the thought of exploiting those poor souls but, having said that, horror *had* come to mind. But it would have to be the absolute best horror novel the world has ever read and unfortunately I don't have experience in that.

NEVE

Then do research. Mary Shelley was 19 when '*Frankenstein*' was published. That's hailed as one of the greatest. I live for all things horror. I can help you write it.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE

Oh no it's okay.

NEVE

Do a Vampire one.

LIZZIE

Vampires...like the ones from
'*Twilight*'?

NEVE

Well you can make them scary again.
Big, intimidating, red eyes, needle
like fangs -

LIZZIE

Sounds ghastly.

NEVE

Good. It should. Here.

She whips her phone out and begins tapping away. She then
looks over to Lizzie as Lizzie's phone pings.

NEVE (cont'd)

That website is a goldmine for all
things Vampire related.

LIZZIE

But Vampire's don't exist.

NEVE

That website makes it seem like
they do.

Neve gets up and goes to the door.

NEVE (cont'd)

Good luck with your research.

She exits and Lizzie looks at the website and scrolls down.

LIZZIE

Vampire's...let's see this then.

FADE TO

NEVE

I'll be upstairs if you need me.
Good luck.

Lizzie mouths 'thank you' then gets up to the front door.

5

I/E. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

5

Lizzie opens the door to reveal MELISSA KING (mid 20s) standing there. Matching Lizzie's prettiness and confidence. Her big round sunglasses hide her big brown eyes.

She smiles.

MELISSA

Elizabeth?

LIZZIE

Yes, hello Miss Herbert.

MELISSA

Hi, it's lovely to finally meet you. Please call me Melissa. I've read all of your books.

LIZZIE

Oh thank you. That means a lot.

MELISSA

I'm a big fan.

Lizzie nods shyly but appreciated.

LIZZIE

Well it's always nice to meet a fan.

They stand there for an awkward beat.

MELISSA

Are you going to invite me in or -

LIZZIE

(feeling foolish)

Oh, yes. Sorry of course.

MELISSA

You'll have to forgive me if I was late, I'm not that used to the roads around here.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE

Oh that's fine. How long have you been here?

MELISSA

Only a fortnight.

LIZZIE

Oh. Well...welcome to the town. Please come in.

She stands aside and let's Melissa enter.

6

INT. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A WHILE LATER

6

Melissa is sat down holding a half empty cup of tea.

MELISSA

One thing I've always found very...vague in your books, if you don't mind me saying, is when it says 'About The Author'. All it tells me about is where you hail from. I want to know you. Do you have any siblings, do you still live with your parents? That sort of thing.

LIZZIE

Well, I'm generally an open book, no pun intended, But I can talk about anything.

Melissa looks up at her and waits patiently.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

My parents passed away in a car crash 5 years ago. I've been the legal guardian to my sister since then.

Melissa, shocked and saddened by the news gently strokes the top of Lizzie's hand.

MELISSA

You poor thing.

LIZZIE

Oh it's all fine now. I mean, she's a pest but I love her all the same. I started writing around that time...escapism. One day I just

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE (cont'd)

booted my computer up, opened a word document and typed away, no research or plot or title but it all developed over the course. I liked what I wrote, decided to publish it then carried on with romance novels.

MELISSA

So, why the change, Lizzie?

LIZZIE

Now that's to do with the low sales from my previous books. I can only do so many stories about love.

MELISSA

Are you in love?

LIZZIE

Not anymore. My boyfriend of nearly 12 years broke up with me last year.

MELISSA

Oh I'm sorry to hear that. May I ask why?

LIZZIE

He told me he's not ready for commitment. If you ask me, he was absolutely clueless about what he wanted in life. He couldn't hold a job for more than a month.

MELISSA

Do you still speak to him?

Lizzie sadly shakes her head.

MELISSA (cont'd)

Do you miss him?

LIZZIE

There's times when I do, how could I not, I mean, the man was around for nearly half my life. It wasn't easy to get over.

(pause - then pleasantly)

But I did and here we are now talking about the future.

(CONTINUED)

MELISSA

Yes, yes of course.

She places her cup down next to her.

MELISSA (cont'd)

Now, in regards to your email,
you're tackling horror.

LIZZIE

Yes.

MELISSA

Horror is a very great genre. Great
in that it's huge. What will have
your name standing out with the
likes of, say, Stephen King?

LIZZIE

Well I was hoping you could help me
with that part. My previous agent
did that until she gave up with me
after dropping romance.

MELISSA

Oh did she? Oh.

Melissa seems lost for words.

LIZZIE

I mean, my name didn't really
stretch further than the town. I
wouldn't call myself a prolific
writer. Definitely not famous.

Melissa stands up and takes Lizzie's hands. She looks into
her eyes. Deep into her eyes.

MELISSA

It's okay, Elizabeth. I can change
that. I can make you famous - no -
I *will* make you famous.

Lizzie seems in a trance. They look into each others eyes
almost lovingly.

Lizzie then snaps out of it. She clears her throat.

LIZZIE

Did you want to stay for dinner?

(CONTINUED)

MELISSA

What are you having?

LIZZIE

My sister made garlic chicken.

MELISSA

Oh no. No it's alright, thank you.
Garlic - uh - it's not my thing.

LIZZIE

Oh okay.

MELISSA

But don't worry, this has been a
very informative couple of hours.
I'll definitely be in touch in a
few days.

LIZZIE

Okay, brilliant. Thank you so much.

Melissa picks her bag up, places sunglasses back on and
extends her hand.

Lizzie takes it.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

I'll see you out.

7

I/E. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

7

Melissa puts her shoes back on and looks down.

MELISSA

Oh shoot, I'm so sorry.

Dried mud is on the floor.

MELISSA (cont'd)

Must've been a muddy field after
all.

LIZZIE

Oh it's fine. I can Hoover it up.

Melissa opens the door.

MELISSA

Well, I'll be seeing you. Take
care.

(CONTINUED)

They wave goodbye and Melissa walks off along the pathway. Lizzie clothes the door and looks questioningly at the muddy floor.

FADE TO

8

INT. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A LOT LATER

8

Lizzie is sat on the couch, curled up as if hiding from something. Her nose deep into her phone and reading about the Vampires.

Neve enters and Lizzie jumps.

NEVE

Is everything okay?

LIZZIE

Yes. Yes fine. Why?

NEVE

You look scared of something.

LIZZIE

Oh it's nothing. Just reading that website you sent me.

NEVE

It's not that scary, sis.

Lizzie closes her phone off and puts it aside. She takes a deep breath and looks at Neve.

LIZZIE

My meeting with Melissa was...odd to say the least.

NEVE

Why?

LIZZIE

Well...she was really interested in knowing things about me. Like, really interested.

NEVE

Because she's going to be representing you?

LIZZIE

I keep telling myself that but...there was something...off about her.

(CONTINUED)

Neve pulls a chair out.

NEVE

Talk to me.

Lizzie gets more comfortable.

LIZZIE

Okay, you can't laugh at any of this.

Neve makes a 'halo' over her head.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

I think she tried to hypnotize me.

NEVE

What?

LIZZIE

Put me in a trance. It was the strangest feeling.

NEVE

So it worked?

LIZZIE

Not really. I mean, I felt lost. Felt like we were looking at each others eyes for an eternity. I seemed to have snapped out of it and changed the subject.

NEVE

Weird.

LIZZIE

You're not laughing?

NEVE

No, why would I?

LIZZIE

Okay then there's something else.

Neve listens with baited breath.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

It was overcast today...and she wore sunglasses. I offered her a place at the table for dinner, she was interested until she found out it was garlic, she waited to be

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE (cont'd)
invited in...she trod mud in the
house...then add that to the trance
and -

NEVE
You think she's a Vampire?

Lizzie stops herself and lowers her head in frustrated
embarrassment.

NEVE (cont'd)
I think you need to sleep. You get
paranoid so easily, I mean treading
mud in the house is a real stretch.

LIZZIE
It says on that website that a
Vampire stays with soil from their
native land...she said about
walking across a muddy field
but...the fields are miles away.

NEVE
How'd you know it's even soil?
Maybe the Armstrong's didn't clean
up after their dog.

LIZZIE
Look, heckle me all you want.
Personally I put it down to
tiredness but...it's just too much
of a convenience.

NEVE
She's not a Vampire. She probably
has light sensitive eyes, an
allergy to garlic, and practicing
hypnotism as a hobby. But you
forgot one thing. Vampires are
works of fiction. They don't exist.

Lizzie, unimpressed, ignores her sister and gets cozy on the
couch.

LIZZIE
There's something weird happening
in this town, Neve...and I don't
like it.

Neve raises her eyebrows then rolls her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

NEVE

Right well, I'll be upstairs. Don't get too scared now.

She exits the room.

LIZZIE

Thanks.

She sits there thinking.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

(to herself)

Vampires...

(putting a pillow to her face)

What am I thinking?!

She puts her head back on the pillow and looks at us.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

They don't exist.

Her eyes slowly close.

FADE TO BLACK

9

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

9

FATHER PHILIP MEARS (40) is outside the church sorting out the towns display board.

Lizzie is slowly walking around the corner. She is clutching books to her chest and gives the church a double take.

She stops and thinks of something - then - takes off her heavy backpack and takes out a bottle of water. She unscrews the top and pours the remnants of the bottle down the path.

She walks up with a merry bounce in her step - her ponytail swings left and right.

LIZZIE

Afternoon, Father.

FATHER PHIL

Hello Elizabeth. How are you?

LIZZIE

All good, can't complain.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER PHIL

How can I help you today?

LIZZIE

This is a strange request -

FATHER PHIL

I live and breathe for strange requests, my dear.

A shy laugh escapes her mouth.

LIZZIE

I'm so so thirsty. Am I able to fill my bottle up with -

FATHER PHIL

Wasn't strange at all. Of course you can. It's free for everyone.

She enters the Church for a brief moment then steps out screwing the lid back on.

She waves back to the Priest, who returns the gesture.

FATHER PHIL (cont'd)

Any new books coming out?

LIZZIE

Ah you'll have to wait and see. Take care.

The Priest returns back to sorting out the display board.

10

INT. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A WHILE LATER

10

Melissa sits at the dining room table and looks in thought. She has a pen in hand and paper in front of her.

MELISSA

I've got supernatural, ghosts, werewolves, goblins, gremlins, blob monsters -

Lizzie walks up behind her.

LIZZIE

They all sound a bit daft though, don't they. Blob monsters aren't scary. I want to write the scariest one of all.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE
(rolling her eyes)
 Possibly.

FINALLY Melissa drinks from the cup. No boils forming, no smoke - nothing. But Lizzie still waits with trepidation.

SUDDENLY MELISSA COUGHS AND SPUTTERS.

Lizzie backs off. Mouth agape. Shit she's a Vampire!

Melissa gets up from the table and covers her mouth.

MELISSA
(through coughing)
 I'm so sorry. I need to go.

She runs and exits from the house.

Lizzie remains frozen in fear.

LIZZIE
(through quick sharp breaths)
 Shit.

FADE TO

13

INT. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

13

Lizzie sits at the table and she's sharpening a stick into a stake. She looks sleep deprived.

Neve enters and looks at her.

NEVE
 Liz...what are you doing?

LIZZIE
 I'm fashioning a stake to kill the Vampire.

NEVE
 What?

LIZZIE
 Melissa Herbert? My new agent?
 She's a Vampire. She choked on Holy water. Hates garlic. Hates the sun...she's a Vampire.

(CONTINUED)

NEVE

Liz, I think you're overreacting.

LIZZIE

This stake can kill a her.

NEVE

That stake can kill anyone. Idiot, it doesn't matter what or who you are, a stab to the heart is the finisher.

Never takes the stake from Lizzie. Lizzie looks like she's on the edge of insanity.

LIZZIE

Nobody believes me.

NEVE

I just think you should take a break. I feel bad for sending you the webpage.

LIZZIE

No...don't feel bad...maybe this is it...maybe I should just stick to writing Romance novels?

NEVE

Why don't you just take a break? You're working yourself up too much. Go and watch a film or something.

Lizzie ponders the thought.

LIZZIE

I could, couldn't I?

She looks at her sister.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

God, could you imagine if you weren't here to stop me?

NEVE

You would've seen yourself sooner rather than later. You wouldn't have gone through with it.

LIZZIE

You're right. I'm too much of a wimp.

(CONTINUED)

NEVE

Besides, I'm sure Melissa had a reflection, right?

LIZZIE

What?

NEVE

Did you not see one?

Lizzie looks at her curiously.

NEVE (cont'd)

A Vampire casts no reflection in a mirror. That should be you surefire proof that she's one of them.

LIZZIE

I never noticed...I didn't know to look.

She covers her mouth slightly as if it's a brand spanking new worry for her.

NEVE

But you don't have to worry, right? Cause Vampires don't exist.

LIZZIE

Yes...yes of course. You're right.

CAR HORN OUTSIDE.

NEVE

That's Kyle, I'm going to his for a few hours.

LIZZIE

Okay, go and have fun and stay safe.

NEVE

I will. Bye.

She exits.

Lizzie is hatching a plan in her head.

FADE TO

SERIES OF IMAGES

Lizzie cleans the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE

(V.O)

Hey Melissa, I'm really sorry for calling late. I feel really bad about earlier. Hope you didn't strain your throat too much.

Lizzie angles the mirror in place then covers it with a cloth.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

(V.O)

I'd really love for you to come back over and...we'll finish off our little planning session. I know we could probably do this over the phone but...

Lizzie admires her work.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

(V.O)

I could do with the company.

14 **I/E. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT**

14

The door opens and Melissa enters and smiles.

LIZZIE

Thank you for coming over.

MELISSA

What are friends for?

LIZZIE

Yes...I suppose we are friends, aren't we. We'll be spending a lot of time with each other so...may as well make the most of it. Please go through.

15 **INT. LIZZIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

15

Melissa takes her coat off.

Lizzie enters behind her and closes the living room door.

LIZZIE

It wouldn't be mean of me to offer you a drink would it?

(CONTINUED)

MELISSA

It's not mean but I'll pass. My throats been playing up. Perhaps something I've eaten.

LIZZIE

Very well.

Melissa looks a little worried as her eyes land on the covered up frame.

MELISSA

What...uh...what's that?

LIZZIE

I was having a creative moment today and decided to create a front cover for the book. Maybe I'll be inspired by it to come up with a story to go with it?

MELISSA

Oh really? I'd love to see.

LIZZIE

So would I.

MELISSA

What?

LIZZIE

Oh...nothing. Here. I'll show you.

Lizzie takes the sheet off the frame revealing a

MIRROR!

She stands next to it, looking back at Melissa to see her back away defensively like Vampires do in situations like this.

Melissa stands looking at her reflection - with minimal surprise on her face.

Lizzie turns to look at what the mirror holds and becomes speechless at the sight of Melissa's reflection.

MELISSA

I...don't get it.

LIZZIE

What...I don't understand.

(CONTINUED)

MELISSA

Lizzie, you're acting pretty
bizarre lately.

Melissa takes a breather and steps away from the mirror. She takes a seat and invites Lizzie to sit with her on the other side of the table.

MELISSA

What's the deal here? I mean,
you've been acting really strange.
I'm starting to believe you've lost
the plot.

Lizzie gives in and follows her orders to sit with her.

LIZZIE

I guess this is what I get for
being an over-thinker. Your brain
can be your best friend or your
worst enemy.

MELISSA

What's wrong?

LIZZIE

You can't interrupt me. You have to
wait until I finish before you
speak. Okay?

MELISSA

Sure, whatever.

LIZZIE

No. Promise me. You'll wait until I
get the whole of my side of the
story out.

Melissa looks at her - deep into her eyes.

MELISSA

I promise.

Lizzie takes a beat before she begins.

LIZZIE

You're going to think I'm crazy -

She stops herself as Melissa touches her hand and urges for her to continue.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Primarily, I'm known as a Romance writer, as you know, but there's times where I've wanted to write something out of my comfort zone...this horror novel. I wanted to write an absolutely terrifying one. One that would send shivers up and down the spine of the reader.

(beat)

I'm not a fan of horror. Never have been - far too scary for me. My sister, on the other hand, she shoved me in the direction of Vampires. You know, to make them scary again. Anyway, I went and did research on Vampires and then you moved to town.

Lizzie looks at Melissa - she is sat in deep concentration - not a blink of an eye.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

You moved to town around the same time as those murders happening. My sister told me that their bodies were partially eaten, yes it could've been wildlife that finished them off but they had little to no blood in them. Quite literally drained of their fluids. Something a *Vampire* would do, right? I didn't think much of it until you knocked on my door. You were so pale. Deathly like. You waited to be invited into my home, you don't like garlic...you coughed up your drink that I gave you...the one I had blessed.

Melissa raises an eyebrow.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

I thought the surefire way I'd be able to find out if you are is by showing you a mirror...because Vampires cast no reflection in...a mirror...

She looks at the mirror to see her and Melissa sitting there.

She feels completely and truly stupid. Embarrassed.

(CONTINUED)

She looks sheepishly back to Melissa.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

That's why my behaviour has been erratic. You must think of me as being an idiot but I -

Melissa strokes the side of Lizzie's hair slowly and carefully calms her down by shushing her.

Lizzie takes it in and calms herself.

MELISSA

Is that your story?

Lizzie nods.

MELISSA (cont'd)

Wow. Well I can certainly see what you meant about your brain being your worst enemy.

Lizzie smiles in the corner of her mouth - shy.

MELISSA (cont'd)

I won't lie to you but I didn't expect you to say any of that.

The two start laughing.

LIZZIE

I know. I know. It's crazy.

MELISSA

I guess that's the problem with you authors, you all have overactive imaginations.

They both calm down and take a breather.

MELISSA (cont'd)

You are silly, though.

Melissa stands up and begins walking around the room.

MELISSA (cont'd)

I mean, I can understand why you'd think that.

LIZZIE

Really?

(CONTINUED)

MELISSA

Yeah. I mean, let me explain myself. I waited to be invited into your house because I grew up in a really strict household where manners were essential. "Please" and "May I" and "Thank yous" were a must. The garlic? I have an allergy to it - I mean, I won't die or come up in rashes or anything but it makes it awful for the next person to go into the toilet after me.

Lizzie grimaces but laughs at the same time.

MELISSA (cont'd)

I simply drank the water too quickly, plus my throat was dry and so it went down the wrong hole. You're not telling me you've never done that.

Lizzie holds her hands up guiltily.

MELISSA (cont'd)

So you see I'm no Vampire.

LIZZIE

The mere thought of me thinking you were should be enough proof to have me locked up.

MELISSA

I'm just glad you didn't start off with a wooden stake!

LIZZIE

Oh God don't, could you imagine?

MELISSA

And although you've never been there, I have no crosses around my place because I'm an atheist and not because they repel me.

LIZZIE

And the dirty shoes?

MELISSA

Okay I admit, I didn't walk over the fields - too far to walk. I stepped in a muddy puddle in the town. Guess it had dried up by the time I got here.

(CONTINUED)

LIZZIE

Well...what can I say? I'm sorry
Melissa. Truly sorry. Is there
anything I can do to make it up?

MELISSA

(playfully)

I'll let you off with a warning.

The two laugh.

MELISSA

Besides you forgot a cardinal rule
about Vampires.

LIZZIE

What's that?

MELISSA

They don't exist.

Lizzie's had the wool pulled over her eyes for a while now
and it's finally great to see again. How could she ever
think that Melissa was a Vampire?

LIZZIE

You're right about that.

Melissa locks the door. Lizzie takes notice.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Oh don't worry about locking the
door, I'm sure you'd want to get on
your way now.

MELISSA

I'm going to be sticking around.

LIZZIE

(still joking)

Why - are you going to get your
revenge by sucking my blood?

MELISSA

Silly...Vampire's don't exist...

Lizzie feels she's just walked into a trap.

MELISSA (cont'd)

...But Cannibals do.

It's too late for Lizzie. Her blood turns stone cold and her
legs have no strength. Her eyes are wide with fright, her
mouth shut tight - she can't scream.

(CONTINUED)

Melissa pulls out a knife from her sleeve and holds it up to Lizzie. She smiles then a small laugh...then a big laugh...now she's laughing maniacally as she descends over Lizzie.

CAMERA TILTS UP TO THE CEILING

CAMERA TILTS DOWN ON