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Secrets

Elizabeth G. Stottlemire
Concordia University - Portland

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Secrets

Elizabeth G. Stottlemyre

It's as dark as death and 12:12 in the morning. Her 4'11" stature silently slinks toward me in the middle of the night, a baseball bat in one hand and a bag of rock climbing chalk in the other. She slowly lifts the bat over my head while simultaneously flinging the powdery chalk into the air, blinding me.

Before I can feel the crushing blow to my skull, my eyes open and relief floods through me. In the bed with the cushy mattress pad, no more than five feet from mine, I can make out the tiny figure of my best friend, Carly, curled like a puppy with a full belly in her yellow comforter.

Why would someone that sweet want to kill me? I try and push the reason from my mind, yet what I have done is impossible to forget. My entire body is riddled with grief and an ever-present fear hangs over me. I revealed her deepest secret to the world and she will never forgive me.

"It's fine Alex. Really... Don't worry about it," she whispers with a half-smile. Her eyes, one green and the other

hazel, stare into me, unwavering. “Now that they know,” she says, “there’s nothing I can do...”

Her hair flicks out like snakes’ tongues as she walks away, our conversation over. I lean toward her as she stomps off and hear her mumble the words that will ice my bones for the rest of the day: “But there’s nothing I won’t do to you.”

I can’t sleep. When I do catch a brief fragment of shuteye, my mind replays our conversation over and over like a bad song on the radio, haunting me. Image after image flashes in my mind, revealing the dread that I now associate with her beautiful, heartless smile. I wonder how long it will be until she strikes.

If only I had never mentioned her dreaded sixth toe.