

By Alyanna O. and Julia L.

February 14th, 2017

It was too late. Alex was dead long before the police arrived. Once they did, he was found in the bathroom, lying on the cold, bloody tiles. As soon as the police saw his lifeless body, they declared it a suicide. No autopsy, no investigation, nothing. Only a grave, a funeral, and the loss of a great friend.

February 17th

"Why would Alex do this? He had everything he wanted in life." Pierce wondered. Raina, Pierce's twin, found him crying his heart out in the corner of his dark room.

"Pier-" "Go away Raina. I know you're trying to make me feel better, but nothing will help. He's gone. Alex is gone."

Raina sighed. "I'll leave you alone, just tell me this, did Alex have any reason to kill himself?" Pierce shook his head, but didn't meet her eyes. "No. And the police didn't even try to investigate. He was a gay boy in a cruel world, and that was a good enough reason to ignore it. What are you trying to say, Raina?"

"I'm just saying that maybe it wasn't a suicide."

If he wasn't still grieving, Pierce would've laughed. "That's impossible. Nobody had any reason to kill him." Raina soon left, leaving Pierce alone with his thoughts. The more Pierce thought about it, he realized that it could've been a murder. And whoever killed his boyfriend, his *best friend*, was going to pay.

"Pierce! Raina! Come downstairs for breakfast!" Their mother called, ending Pierce's sleep. As he walked downstairs, the scent of bacon and eggs shot up his nose and through his body. Pierce quickly sat down and began devouring the breakfast set before him.

His parents clearly felt bad about what had happened, and were trying their hardest to help. Pierce quickly ate his food, thanked his parents, and went back upstairs. Bacon and eggs couldn't bring Alex back to life. Pierce was determined to figure everything out.

After an hour of racking his brain for ideas, Pierce heard his parents arguing. He got up to find out what they were talking about. "I'm worried about him." Pierce's mother said. "He's depressed. What if he...ends up just like Alex?"

"That's not going to happen." Pierce's father assured. "Maybe Alex killing himself is for the better." Pierce gasped and took a step back. How could his father say that? Anger surged through him. "I know you didn't approve of Pierce and Alex dating, but our son just lost his best friend and you need to be considerate." His mom shot back.

This was too much for Pierce. He retreated to his room and prayed that his parents didn't see him.

The Next Morning

"Pierce, I know you don't want to go to school, but you've missed a lot, and I don't want you failing." His mother argued. "Please go to school."

Pierce had no intention of going back. Then again, his mother had a point. Going to school would make her less worried, and that was certainly better than her constantly barging in.

"Ok." Pierce replied hesitantly. His mother's face lit up with joy. As he got ready, an idea slowly seeped into his head. Who said that the horrible kids at school *didn't* kill Alex? It was a possibility that Pierce couldn't ignore.

Soon enough, he was back in a classroom, as if nothing had happened.

"You know, I'm glad your boyfriend killed himself. Just one less gay in this world to mess everything up,"

"What is your problem Sean? Just because he was gay doesn't mean he wasn't a good person," Pierce shot back with anger.

"Nothing. This LGBTQ community is the problem. They don't belong here."

By Alyanna O. and Julia L.

“Sean, shut your mouth before I do something I’ll regret,”

“Calm down Pierce. I’m just speaking the truth,”

At the end of the day, Pierce felt more drained than ever. He had spoken to everyone he suspected, but got nothing out of it. He was so confused and was skeptical about Sean. If only he could go back and find out what happened.

A week earlier

“What was that noise?” Alex wondered. He heard footsteps downstairs. “Mom? Dad? Is that you? Pierce? If you’re trying to scare me, then you win!” Alex heard no reply.

He decided to take a quick look, since his friends had tried to scare him before. Halfway down the stairs, he froze in fear. This wasn’t a prank. It was a large man dressed in black, holding a knife, about to enter the kitchen.

Alex’s mind raced. He needed to escape, fast.

“If I can get back to my room, I can call 911.” He thought. Alex, shaking in fear for his life, quickly but quietly started up the stairs, his mind racing faster than ever. Suddenly, he and the burglar locked eyes. Panic set into Alex’s mind, and he sprinted up the stairs. He could hear the intruder’s heavy breathing, and soon felt it tickling his neck. Alex was pulled back, forced to look at the man in black.

Up close, he recognized the face. How was this possible? He had so many questions, and knew that he wouldn’t live to get answers. “Pierce’s dad?” Alex choked. “That’s right. Say your last words, I never approved of you and my son anyways,” Pierce’s dad laughed as he dragged the helpless boy to the bathroom, sliding a knife right through both his wrists, and leaving him to die a slow and painful death.

Soon, the whole town moved past the incident, even Pierce. He came to the realization that he wasn’t an investigator and would never solve it on his own. He only had himself though. No one listened to him and thought he was just delusional because of his dead boyfriend. Pierce may never find out about the hatred his father had for their relationship, or will he? The truth will come out, but for now, it’ll stay hidden, buried deep in his parent’s other secrets yet to come out.