

### **Kathlyn POV**

It's the last day of school and I'm already late. I grab my backpack and out the door with no time to lose. Surprisingly, the bus is still there. I check my watch after I get on and notice that I was early. I set my clock to be an hour late.

*How embarrassing.*

"OMG. Kathlyn! Come sit with us!" my friend calls and waves for me to come to join her. I look up from my watch and join my friends Nicole and Cathy.

"So, what are you doing this summer?" Cathy asks.

"I'm moving to a new town called Oakton after school today," I say.

"Ohmygosh. That means we won't we won't see each other anymore," says Nicole. "Let's sneak out so you can stay *forever*."

"Not a chance. My mom can watch me like a hawk. I'm going to miss you though," I lie with a forced tear.

The one good thing about moving to Oakton was getting away from these girls. They are just mean, We weren't friends. They decided to initially hang out with me all because of my name. My name is Kathlyn Briggs and - to them - it sounds like a snarky pop singer's name that they like who is very controversial. I overheard them talking about it in the girl's bathroom and I never once mentioned it to them. I am just glad to get out of this dump.

After school, there was a carnival but I decided to call my parents to pick me up and we left for Oakton with my little sister Zoey. As we drove to our new home, I look out the window and see a boy about my age on a motorcycle. He is wearing a leather jacket with a rat sewed on the back.

*A gang member*



Daddy catches me gazing at him and tells me to stay away from those boys because they cause trouble. The boy meets my eyes and grins and waves. I wave back. The boy turns right and I watch him go.

**Roland POV**

I saw her.

I saw the new girl.

I walk into my small house and collapsed onto my couch next to my younger brother, Lucam who was being bored. Lucam almost never stepped out of the house without me because he had been harassed by his fellow peers at school. They called him names and pulled mean pranks on him and it's always me who stood up for him.

"Want to go for a ride?" I ask him.

"Sure, where?" he asks.

"You'll see, bro," I tell him handing him his helmet. We left and rode to the new girl's house. We dismount and stand near the house.

"Why are we here?" Lucam asks.

"Trying to see a girl I like," I say.

"Ooooh. You have a girlfriend," he teases me.

"Shut up," I chuckle and he grabs a ladder from nearby and placed it under a bedroom window. "What are you doing?" I run after him.

It was too late he had climbed up all the way up the ladder. Man, he is fast. He can outrun anyone. Even me.

# The Lucam Project

## Elizabeth Sharp

### **Kathlyn POV**

Zoey and I head upstairs to our bedroom. It is a small room, but it has four walls with windows so big that the sun makes our dark skin glow. We begin to unpack and start claiming our sides of the room.

"I claim that side," she announces, pointing to a side. I followed her finger and saw a boy with blue hair and green eyes about her age, peering through the glass window right at us. I drop my box full of fragile objects in surprise. She waves at him and opens the window. "Come in."

He climbs in and introduces himself as Lucam Richardson. He and Zoe begin chattering away and I find that a ladder was mounted near the window. I climb down and turn around. I see the boy who was on the motorcycle.

"Hi," he says as he approaches me

"Hi."

"Just moved here?"

"Yes. From Fell Tree, Missouri."

"Sounds nice. I'm Rolland Richardson."

"Kathryn Briggs," I introduced myself. "I guess your brother is in your room."

"Oh, yeah right my brother. I forgot," he seemed to remember. "Lucam! Let's go!" Lucam climbed down from the ladder and leapt onto the motorcycle like Flash. We chuckle. "Would you like my number?"

"Yeah," I say and we trade numbers.

"So, see you around?" he says.

"Yeah, see you around," I say grinning and blushing as he mounted his motorcycle and left.

I will never forget that fateful day weeks later on July 28th.

Roland frantically called and asked me where Lucam was. I told him he was with Zoe at the park. We met at the park and found Zoe weeping on a bench. Her clothes and hair matted in hot sticky mud. The only word that came out of her was 'Lucam.' Immediately, as if on impulse, Roland bolted into the woods, and I gave chase. He was following a blood trail. He halted at a riverbank and stared at a dead body in grief. I caught up with him.

The body was lying face down in the mud. It had a large gash on its back with blood coming out. The clothes were matted with blood, water, and mud and torn up.

"No, it can't be," he cried in grief.

It was. Lucam Richardson was dead and everything changed.

The Lucam Project  
Elizabeth Sharp

One the first day of school, I walk through the corridor and notice something peculiar. There was a massacre of teddy bears in front of a locker and in blood red lettering the words on the locker read:

HAHA, YOU'RE DEAD  
HAVE A HORRIBLE TIME :)

"I see you have found Lucam's locker," Roland says as he comes over to stand next to me.

"Who would do such a thing?" I say, "Especially after his death."

"I don't know, but this is pure bullshit," he asserts, clenching his fists and teeth, not caring that he was cursing in school. I glance around and notice people staring. I unclench his hand and hold it. He relaxes.

"Let's go to class, okay?" I say to my boyfriend because he is embarrassing. He agrees and we enter our first-period class. As we enter, there is an Asian boy sitting with head resting on his knees and arms hugging his legs. and weeping on top of a desk. Roland let's go of my hand and sits with the boy. I stand in the doorway, arms crossed, watching Roland console him.

"Timoshi? Did those bullies get you again?" Roland asks him.

"Yes," Timoshi sobbed, not looking up.

"If it makes you feel any better, I have someone I would like for you to meet," Roland told him.

"A therapist?" he asks.

"No," he chuckles. "My girlfriend." Timoshi glances up at me and says hi. I introduce myself and the three of us converse until class starts.

The Lucam Project  
Elizabeth Sharp

### **Roland POV**

A few days after the first day of school, I walk into the Midnight Diner and sit in a booth. I had invited Kathryn, Timoshi, my friend Brianna, to come to hang out. I haven't seen Brianna since the funeral. After the funeral, she went back to camp and missed the first few days of school. They will be here any minute now. I order a drink and tap my foot against the tile floor. The bell rings. I get up to see if my friends have arrived. My mind races and blood rushes through my veins.

*Oh no.*

It's Pigaxe and his gang, the Rat Pack. The gang that I joined to help my brother and me after our parents ran off for a vacation for eight years. I was eight and he was seven. Too young to be abandoned.

Too young.

It is also the gang I betrayed by not going to their mandatory gang meetings since Kathlyn moved here. There is the death penalty for this crime. They say you'll be beaten to death at dawn in front of everyone you love.

I don't blame Kathlyn for my misdeed. She changed me and I believe I did too. We opened each other's eyes to see something *more*. We both had to start over and we helped each other through.

I'm not fast enough to hide and Pigaxe catches me. He grabs a fistful of my shirt and holds me close like a school. He breathes in my face like a dragon. It smells like a gut. I want to barf.

The Lucam Project  
Elizabeth Sharp

"YOU!" he bellows in my face. "EXPLAIN YOUR CRIME!"

"I-" I stammer, trying to explain.

"YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU ARE A USELESS PIECE OF SHIT," he interrupts and throws me down to hard tile floor. I try to get up but his hard boot pins me to the ground. He points his knife at me. "CROSS OUR TERRITORY AGAIN AND YOU WILL BE DEAD!" They leave, but not before kicking me unconscious, ensuring I don't get up, and I close my eyes cowering in pain. Later, I could tell they had left because I can feel the presence of other customers around me. They are deciding about to do with. The bell rings and I feel three people approaching me. One of them feels my pulse.

"What the hell did he do to end up like this?" a female voice says. "I thought that gang trusted him."

*Brianna?* Only she wouldn't know how I betrayed the gang. I was scared to tell her in a letter in case I got caught. She lifts my body up and puts me in the backseat of her car.

"It's okay, Roly," she coaxes me and rubs my hair. It's Brianna.

# The Lucam Project

## Elizabeth Sharp

### **Brianna POV**

I can't believe it. I was at camp for the whole summer, except for the funeral, and now this happens?! Maybe I should not go to camp next year.

I push harder on the pedal. Timoshi sits next to me trying to get control of the wheel because I am going crazy. I don't care. Kathlyn seems to be the only quiet one. I slow down in concern.

"Kathlyn, why are you so quiet back there?" I ask her concerned.

"I have joyrode with my friends before," she tells me.

"But, we aren't joyriding," I assure her. "We are bringing Roland to safety."

"Brianna," Timoshi says, poking my shoulder.

"What? Are you trying to get control?" I ask him.

"No. Look to your left," he tells me and I do expecting there to be a police cruiser or the Rat Pack. Instead, there is a white truck with yellow paint (I swear it is pee) on it that reads:

LOSER LUCAM IS DEAD

LET'S PARTY

There are five drunk teenagers on it with all kinds of stuff in their arms from balls to fruits.

"Oh shit," I mutter to myself and flip the bird as they grow closer, "Hang on!" I push down on the gas pedal and the speedometer almost breaks. I zip through the highway, through streets, and neighborhoods, and finally slow down in my driveway. "Is everyone okay?" I ask after I put the vehicle into park.

"Everything's fine Brianna," I hear Roland say and I turned in my seat to face him

"Obviously, not," I call him out. "We need to talk."

To be continued...