

A TASTE OF
DARKNESS

AMY McCAW
AND
MARIA KUZNIAR

KAT DUNN

KAT ELLIS

RACHEL FATUROTİ

KATHRYN FOXFIELD

DAWN KURTAGICH

AMY McCULLOCH

CYNTHIA MURPHY

MELINDA SALISBURY

LOUIE STOWELL

ROSIE TALBOT

MARY WATSON

A TASTE OF DARKNESS

 SCHOLASTIC

Published in the UK by Scholastic, 2023
1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG
Scholastic Ireland, 89E Lagan Road, Dublin Industrial Estate,
Glasnevin, Dublin, D11 HP5F

SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or
registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Anthology © Amy McCaw and Maria Kuzniar, 2023
“The Visiting Grey” © Kat Ellis, 2023; “The Beast and the Beast”
© Rachel Faturoti, 2023; “Come Find Me” © Kathryn Foxfield, 2023; “And the
Waters Crept In” © Dawn Kurtagich, 2023; “The Wolf and the Witch” © Maria
Kuzniar, 2023; “The House With Teeth” © Amy McCaw, 2023; “Something Wicked”
© Kat Dunn, 2023; “Til Death Do Us Part” © Cynthia Murphy, 2023; “Saint Clover”
© Melinda Salisbury, 2023; “The Party” © Louie Stowell, 2023;
“How to Disappear” © Rosie Talbot, 2023; “The Chiming Hour” ©
Tiger Tales Ltd, 2023; “The Midnight Kiss” © Mary Watson, 2023

The right of each author to be identified as the author of
their story has been asserted by the authors in accordance with
the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

ISBN 978 0702 32917 3

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library.

All rights reserved.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, hired out or otherwise circulated in
any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published. No
part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any other means (electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior
written permission of Scholastic Limited.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A
Paper made from wood grown in sustainable forests
and other controlled sources.



1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, incidents
and dialogues are products of the author's imagination or are used
fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual people, living or dead,
events or locales is entirely coincidental.

www.scholastic.co.uk

CONTENTS

How to Disappear <i>Rosie Talbot</i>	1
The House with Teeth <i>Amy McCaw</i>	35
Come Find Me <i>Kathryn Foxfield</i>	70
The Wolf and the Witch <i>Maria Kuzniar</i>	98
Saint Clover <i>Melinda Salisbury</i>	131
The Visiting Grey <i>Kat Ellis</i>	163
And the Waters Crept In <i>Dawn Kurtagich</i>	191

The Party	
<i>Louie Stowell</i>	223
The Chiming Hour	
<i>Amy McCulloch</i>	260
Something Wicked	
<i>Kat Dunn</i>	281
The Midnight Kiss	
<i>Mary Watson</i>	306
The Beast and the Beast	
<i>Rachel Faturoti</i>	337
'Til Death Do Us Part	
<i>Cynthia Murphy</i>	362



THE HOUSE WITH TEETH

AMY McCAW

The house was whispering. It had a tendency to do that. Violet preferred it slightly to the slow expand and retract that simulated breath. And it was so much better than that chewing thing it did. When you lived in Vivus Manor, it was better not to ask questions. As long as the house behaved tonight. She turned up the stereo, blasting “Girls Just Want to Have Fun”. Maybe some Cyndi Lauper would get it to chill the hell out.

Violet spun around her room as she sang along, the pale pink walls and curtains blurring with movie posters. Her mother had insisted on the sickly pink, hoping to smooth Violet’s sharp edges. In response, Violet had plastered her interests all over it. It was the 1980s, not the 1880s. A girl could decorate for herself. She had a thing for love stories and happy endings, contrary to what most people would

believe, so her walls were covered with posters of the latest John Hughes movies like *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty in Pink*.

“Alone” by Heart replaced Cyndi, and Violet returned to her make-up, applying thick black mascara until her eyelashes looked like spindly spiders’ legs. That was appropriate since the extra four legs of her spider Halloween costume fanned out on either side of her, with a full-length black leotard and leg warmers. She’d already secured her auburn curls with a black scrunchie on top of her head. Her little sister, Tina, would’ve loved to have done her hair, plaiting and twisting and taming the curls with surprising skill for a thirteen-year-old. But her parents had made certain that Tina was far away tonight.

That was everything done up here, so she turned off the music and locked her door. Who knew what unthinkable things could happen in bedrooms at a high-school party? Especially in this house.

She stepped on to the landing and looked down the mahogany staircase that opened out into the entrance hall. With any luck, the Halloween decorations, food and beer combo would keep the party guests on her side. Her mum had pinned a garland along the wall, its black plastic thorns and fragile white ghosts dangling down. They drifted back and forth, but try telling the house there shouldn’t be a breeze inside.

She walked down the stairs, imagining the panelled walls and sour-faced ancestors’ portraits as her peers would

see them. There were skull and bat motifs carved into every surface as if they’d always been there. The house probably thought it was adding to the Halloween ambiance, if *thinking* was the word for whatever the hell it did. Violet was glad she’d never had friends around before to notice the difference. She was a core member of the popular crowd but had always preferred to keep them at arm’s length.

Violet ran her finger around the new skull frame on the nearest painting. The tiny heads were the size of newborn babies. How lovely. Her finger came away coated in dust. The house could change its décor at a moment’s notice, but learning to clean? Forget about it. Her parents had tried hiring cleaners and groundskeepers, but they tended to up and leave without a word. Easy to understand why.

Her sequined stiletto boots clacked on the polished floor as she crossed the entrance hall to the dining room. The kegs were still set up in the corner where she’d left them, so that was a promising start. Her parents treated her like the adult that she’d be in a few days. They’d bought the drinks on her assurance that things wouldn’t get out of hand. Surely they knew she couldn’t keep that promise in a house like this.

The long table was laid out with plates of snacks covered in clingfilm: cubes of cheese and pineapple on sticks, cocktail sausages and pizza rolls. One end of the table was taken up by rows of brightly coloured drinks with names like “Witches’ Brew” and “Pure Poison”.

Everything was perfect. Most importantly, her parents

were out for the night, dragging a reluctant Tina with them. Her mum and dad had insisted that Violet needed to do this on her own tonight.

Her guests should be along any minute. She strode back up the stairs, ready to make her entrance.

Jake had picked the *Top Gun* flying suit and sunglasses because he'd thought it would be an easy costume, but he was already regretting it. Why had he gone for Tom Cruise, with all of his swagger and hair gel? It was completely out of character. The whole night was out of character, if he was being honest. He technically wasn't even invited. He'd tagged along with the crowd, and no one had called him out so far. But Violet Vivus hadn't handed him a glossy black invitation, looking right into him with those strange grey eyes.

He'd only moved to the school a few months before, following his mum's job at a brand-new law firm, and he doubted Violet even knew his name. But maybe he could change that tonight.

"Dude! I should've gone as Goose to your Maverick." Dom hooked an arm around Jake's neck and half-dragged him towards the gates of Vivus Manor. Jake and Dom had only become friends the past couple of weeks, discussing everything from Ted Bundy to Ralph Macchio. For the first time in his life, Jake had been folded into a fun, rowdy group of friends – a mixture of newspaper and theatre kids. He hadn't figured out how he felt about abandoning his

lone wolf status, but his mum was thrilled. It was just the two of them, and she'd almost cried with happiness when he'd told her he was going to a party.

Dom had gone for a Danny Zuko look, rolling his hair into a gelled quiff and donning a leather jacket over black jeans and a white T-shirt.

Bella Lake tottered alongside them in heels. She was the smartest girl in their class and often considered the hottest, though not his type. He preferred his girls on the brooding and mysterious side, like a certain party host. Bella already looked like Whitney Houston in the "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" video, with her mass of tight curls lightened to a sun-kissed gold. She'd decided to embrace it. Jake knew nothing about fashion, but even he could see that the body-hugging lilac dress and vibrant make-up looked amazing against Bella's brown skin.

The three of them were at the front of the group when they reached the gates. Dom plucked a piece of paper from the ornately spiralled iron. He was Bella's match in every way, and Jake knew some girls in their year would trample their friends if it meant getting close to Dom – he of the angular cheekbones and long eyelashes. Their words, not Jake's. Dom would've ruled the school if he hadn't channelled his ruthless ambition in other directions.

Dom read the note in a clear, confident voice: "Proceed to the back entrance. Follow the path between the graves, and then the fun can begin." He paused for effect, holding up the card. "Looks like it's written in blood."