



Not Cute At All (Verfallen Asylum)

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Category: Horror

Description: Three years before Cute but Psycho, Bree met Doctor Orson

Court. Appointed. Therapy.

Some people got diplomas when they graduated, I got forced rehabilitation.

Which was going to be a pain until I saw my therapist. Its not easy falling in love. Hes handsome, manipulating, and has no idea Im stalking him.

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Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:38 pm

Court. Appointed. Therapy.

The day my high school peers had paraded across a stage, I'd stood in front of a judge in a moldy courtroom. They'd gotten a smile, a handshake, and a diploma. I'd got stapled papers demanding forced rehabilitation or else . How ominous.

I rolled my eyes and leaned on the steering wheel, looking at the brown office building in the night. Everyone else was going off to college while I had a year long date with cognitive behavioral therapy.

My new therapist I'd yet to meet, Doctor Orson, was sitting up in his office right this very minute, probably staring at his watch and wondering if he should call my probation officer to report me as a no show. Most of the offices were dark but on the second floor I saw one light on. Was that him? Maybe I could lob a molotov cocktail up there to find out.

Therapists were tedious and I hated them. I always had to balance on a tightrope to get the right result—sharing just enough for them to be happy but not enough I'd end up involuntarily hospitalized. I definitely should be but that wasn't my problem. Everyone else's problem? Yes. Not mine though. I was perfectly okay being a free roaming terror one breath away from psychosis, even if it was lonely... Perhaps being institutionalized would let me meet some people I had something in common with. Fun food for thought.

I groaned. The choice was simple here and I couldn't keep putting it off. After a quick swig of warm energy drink that I nearly gagged back up, I opened my car door and got out. I smoothed my short skirt down as my pink platform boots hit the pavement.

I couldn't afford to piss my new therapist off for too long or I'd level up to incarceration. I'm sure that would do wonders for my rough edges... not .

Outside the office building was quiet. The sky was already black and a long dark pole held a bright yellow light with insects swarming the glass. The wind shook the leaves of the large tree that shaded the entrance. I liked the sense of solitude as I opened the front door to an empty, dim hall. It made me feel like I was trespassing, which was infinitely more interesting than the truth.

The large foyer smelled like cleaning solution and there were yellow signs cautioning me the floor was wet. The janitor had already come and gone.

The nine pm meeting time was pretty odd but I dragged myself up the stairs to suite 203. I'd rather listen to a therapist tell me everything that's wrong with me than have six months of bright lights and bologna sandwiches in the adult justice system. It certainly wasn't the first time I'd been to therapy, I'd survive. What's the worst that could happen?

I brushed long strands of red hair out of my eyes as I stomped into the office suite, starting to get pissed before I'd even met the guy. But seriously, screw whoever this dude was—making a fucking job out of judging me. I could just imagine him, Doctor Orson, some unwashed asshole who was going through the motions to get his government paycheck.

Luckily, being a bitch was my speciality and I was looking forward to making my case a special little nightmare. As long as I showed up for each meeting and avoided any more arrests, he couldn't easily do jackshit to get rid of me. So he and I were going to ride this ship to the bottom of the ocean and see just how miserable we could make each other before drowning in Hell.

The waiting room was empty and dark. Behind a plexiglass protected counter a

buzzing light illuminated the gray carpet that I walked across. A blonde woman in scrubs looked up at me from her chair. The nametag read Katie. Her voice was marred behind the plexiglass, a sleepy mumbled collection of words. I understood enough to slide my court paper through the little hole and explain I was late for my very first appointment. I considered apologizing then allowed myself to forget that thought immediately.

“If it’s too late...” I trailed off, hopeful I could turn around and go back home.

“Not at all, come this way, Miss Hamilton.” Bleh, fuck this. She showed me down the hall and I was creeped out by the fact this place looked closed entirely. All the office doors were shut and the lights were off. There were no other doctors or patients here. Even the hall light was off for some strange reason I couldn’t fathom. Could they not afford their electricity bill?

“Here we are,” Katie said and I groaned internally while turning into the room. One year with Doctor Orson. I hoped I left him mentally scarred. Creepy office space, meet creepy stupid middle-aged therapi—

I blinked at the man standing in front of me.

“Miss Bree Hamilton, I was afraid you weren’t coming,” a smooth, deep voice said. I stood there blinking without a thought in my head as the most attractive man I’d ever seen stood ten feet away. “Please, have a seat,” his muscular arm swept the room, his finger pointing at a chair. I nodded and quietly dropped in my seat while he went to his.

Doctor Orson sat in his chair with the grace of a prince. His shoulders were back and his back was straight. The vest he wore showed off a slightly tapered waist. I didn’t know what to do with myself. Where did I put my hands? Hang them limply beside the chair? Was I staring?

Why did he smell so good? I never thought people smelled good. The receptionist had smelled like chemical flowers trying to roughly assault my nostrils.

Why was every move he made precise and smooth? Most people walked around jerky and rough. His looks were otherworldly but his presence was something else. Nothing about him was abrasive or coarse. My therapist was refined, subtle, strong...

Was it an age thing? No, I'd known plenty of older men and none of them made my mind want to purr. I didn't know anything anymore because he was now smiling at me. My throat started to close up as dimples appeared beside his perfectly sculpted lips.

He looked like he should live behind a paywall.

What was wrong with me? I frowned. I'd never in my life felt like this for someone I just saw. Why were his eyes violet? That couldn't be real. I swallowed thickly, trying to convince myself he was an apparition—a tan body built on lies. But the facts were right there in front of me. Whereas nearly everyone I met was too loud and clumsy, smelled too strong, and just overall grated my sensitive nerves... he was not.

I was comfortable, I realized. Comfortable around someone else for maybe the very first time in my life because he spoke soft and smooth, because the lights were dim, because he walked gracefully, and smelled subtly divine. I didn't have to ask him to do any of those things either. It was as if he knew I needed that. Or maybe he was just like me and couldn't stand buzzing overhead lights and strong scents.

Well, not just like me or I'd be in trouble.

Either way, it was so refreshing I was completely flabbergasted by it. Calm and relaxed weren't things I experienced often but the feelings spread out across my limbs until I was subdued and warm in the nice leather chair that hugged me.

Even the walls were nice, a mellow taupe instead of harsh white. The entire room, really. Now that I took a moment to pull my eyes away from my therapist I was intrigued by his collection of things—modern woven tapestries hanging up, little round tables with collections of colored glass jars. A couch covered in a lush red blanket.

“Bree, before we get started I wanted to tell you,” he began. His hair was nice—black and cut stylishly. It looked like he used product to keep it up and out of his eyes. The front sat on his head in a soft wave. “I’m here to help you.”

Ugh, he was ruining the mood already. I sighed in disappointment. Well, here we go. The whole “you can trust me, I’m not like everyone else” spiel that made my eyes roll in the back of my head.

Doctor Orson observed my reaction and then leaned back in his chair with a frown. My eyes detoured over the details of his suit. It looked expensive—pants, shirt, and vest that hugged him in all the perfect places to allow my eyes to understand exactly what was underneath.

Maybe he wasn't like everyone else.

For a heavy moment, he stared right back at me, his eyes digging in like meat hooks to tender ham. My face began to heat, goddamnit . He smirked. Fuck . He totally could see my painfully apparent blush.

Suddenly Doctor Orson leaned forward, plucking one of his business cards from his desk to write something on the back.

He slid it across the table towards me and I saw a phone number.

“That’s my personal cell phone. You can call me outside of therapy.” I plucked it up

and eyed his looping calligraphy. He had the opposite of serial killer handwriting, whatever that was.

“I don’t like talking ,” I said pointedly. AKA fuck your therapy. He smirked and dimples blossomed on his face again. Shit. Fuck. God, he could see me blushing again . I tried to will the heat away from my face but it only grew hotter.

“If you don’t like talking, text me. I’ll always respond.”

I stared at his face, dumbfounded. I felt like laughing. I actually had to suck my lips into my mouth to stop myself. He was trying to make besties with me. This was not going to go smoothly for him.

“Now, why don’t you tell me why you’re here,” he said, his voice smooth and warm.

His eyes were purple. That’s why I felt hypnotized. That’s why I opened my mouth and giggled my way through explaining kidnapping and attempted homicide while sliding his card into my pocket.

“It wasn’t a real kidnapping,” I explained. Doctor Orson smiled and nodded. I stared at his hands. He’d rolled up his sleeves while I had been talking. He had very nice forearms. Doctor Orson managed to hit the perfect combination of refinement and masculine power that made me feel like I was vibrating in my chair. Where had he come from? Were all the men there like this?

“But you did make this boy from school go with you on this little joy ride?”

“He was into it,” I responded automatically.

“Didn’t he beg you to let him go?” Doctor Orson asked. I rolled my eyes.

“Eventually. And I did let him go when he asked.” Actually he overpowered me and got away. “The sobbing was just him being dramatic.” Because I’d tried to kill him. “Plus, he was all for it when he got into the car because... “ I trailed off, unsure if I should talk about that here... with him.

“All for what?” Doctor Orson asked smoothly, the corners of his mouth twitching like he was holding back a smile.

“Well...” I nibbled on my bottom lip.

“Did you two have sex?” He asked in entertainment.

“That was the idea,” I whispered back. God, when have I ever been shy? I was intimidated by this man for some reason. He was making me feel every bit like the patient I was.

“When did things go bad then?” Doctor Orson was giving me all his attention and I was giving him all of mine right back. I felt like I could tell him everything. Might as well, really. It all already came out in court. But before I could admit anything, he answered for me.

“You tried to slit his throat, didn't you?” He'd read the court case then. I swallowed thickly then nodded. I didn't even manage a nick either. All this trouble for not even a scratch. That's what I got for trying to overpower someone twice my size.

“Bree, this next part is important.”

“What next part?” I asked in confusion. He stared me down and I started to feel nervous. My eyes darted to the door.

“Did you want to drink his blood?” My eyes widened in shock and I recoiled away,

my face flaming.

“You're sick,” I hissed, my voice shaky. How the fuck did he know that ? Here came the straightjacket. Where were all my plans of being a bitch? I should definitely get back to that.

“It’s okay, Bree. I like your honesty. Especially about this.”

“Okay,” I said tentatively, not trusting him. He was acting abnormally calm though. I licked my lips and put my hands back on the desk between us. If he could be calm, I could be calm... maybe.

“Have you ever drunk someone else's blood?”

“What?” I asked, letting out a nervous laugh. Doctor Orson leaned forward on his desk so he was closer to me. His hand gently laid on top of mine. It made my entire body feel on fire.

“Have you ever drunk someone else’s blood?” He asked, eyes boring into mine. I shook my head. He was zoning in on my pressure point, the one part of the entire ordeal that felt sensitive and shameful. This conversation was suddenly way more intimate than it had been a moment ago.

How did he know? Who told him? It had to be my aunt. My face flamed and I had to work to control my breathing. God, he really knew.

“Are you very certain you've never drank someone else's blood?”

“I swear,” I whispered, wanting him to believe me. I’d been fighting the urge to taste blood for as long as I could remember and I nearly lost it that day in the car. It was fortunate I wasn’t very strong or I’d have killed that guy and finally succumbed to the

freakish desire.

It was a strange, shameful kink. Not something fun and quirky like handcuffs. It was fucked up and disgusting is what it was. I'd tried to bury it until the want overflowed and I had found myself holding a knife at someone's throat, frantic to get a taste of ruby red gore.

"It's okay, Bree," he said and I looked into his eyes. It genuinely felt like he wasn't judging me as I shook in his office chair, peeled open and exposed.

"Can you make a promise to me?" Doctor Orson asked, leaning forward further. I found myself leaning towards him as well, my body pressing into the desk to eat as many inches as possible.

"A promise?"

"Never drink someone's blood." His words sunk into my mind.

"Fuck you, I wouldn't." I snatched my hand back, feeling too ashamed to keep talking about this. My eyes found the colorful glass collection and I kept my attention there, following the finely crafted swirling lines. They looked like antiques from another country.

He knew too much already. Why was I spilling my guts? Because he was so hot I was forgetting who I was. It wasn't just that though. It was because this fucker was flirting with me. He was manipulating my attraction to get what he wanted. It had to be that but... I didn't mind.

"That's very good, Bree," he purred, leaning back in his chair. Pretty sure I forgot how to breathe. My eyes were wide as I stared at him, hearing the words "very good, Bree" echo in my head. I wanted praise from this man more than I wanted my next

breath.

His eyes flicked to the wall above my head and his smile dried up.

“Time’s up,” he announced, shoveling all the papers on his desk into a deep drawer in one sweep. He slammed it shut, locked it, and then looked at me as if confused as to why I was still sitting there and hadn't raced out the moment he spoke.

The weird thing was, I didn’t want to leave. I wanted to have him manipulate a few more honest confessions out of me. It was embarrassing but made me feel a little better, to be honest. How could someone be this good? Understanding, non judgemental, hot...

“That didn’t seem very long...”

“Then don’t be late next time,” he responded smoothly with a charming smile.

“I didn’t even tell you about—” my words stopped when Doctor Orson stood up then walked to the door. He opened it before calling for the receptionist.

“Katie will show you out,” he told me as if he was doing me a favor. A moment later the receptionist was grabbing and shooing me like a wild seagull that found its way inside after scenting a french fry.

“Same time next week,” Doctor Orson called out chipperly, not even bothering to watch as his receptionist dragged me from the offices. Oh, fuck this guy. Fake ass motherfucker, flirting with people to get them to talk.

I hated him. I planned to march home and tell everyone who would listen that this guy was a fucking sicko. Of course, I’d sound deranged saying it was because he smiled at me. Ugh.

The receptionist deposited me in the building hallway and closed the door in my face. I heard the deadbolt snap. Fuck her too! I'd find out where she lived and send her pictures of herself from outside the window. Let's see how confident she was then. She'd be too busy looking over her shoulder to sweep me into the corridor.

I stomped all the way back to my car and slammed it shut once I was inside.

My phone dinged and I ripped it from my pocket expecting to see a text from my job. Instead, it was an unknown number.

“Text me if you feel like drinking blood again.”

I eyed the number then pulled out the business card Doctor Orson gave me. It was the same one he'd hand written on the back. I bit my lip to keep a stupid grin from blooming on my face. Then I searched his phone number online to see what sort of information I could get.

My eyes tipped up to the single light shining on the second floor . I can't wait for us to get to know each other, Doctor Orson.

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I'm thinking about it...

I typed the message and sent it to Doctor Orson. I couldn't find anything on him. He had no social media footprint, no webpage, no fucking nothing. He was nonexistent and it was making my brain itch.

Add on to that he always insisted we meet at night in a building entirely empty—besides him and Katie, the receptionist who I hated. She had a digital footprint at least. I had a nice notebook with all her details written down in case they came in handy. Her social media names, her relationship status, her phone number, her address...

The info was very handy right this minute. I stared at the beige luxury apartment building. Her boyfriend wasn't over tonight because they'd taken a break.

My phone meowed and I looked at the screen.

Drinking blood?

What else?

Well... him I guess. Him and blood. I wasn't very creative or varied in my thoughts. I liked obsessing—latching on to something dangerous and never letting go. Blood and Doctor Orson. Doctor Orson and blood. What else was there to care about in life besides those two things? Everything else was unimportant, like shedding hair. You just pinch the strand off your clothes and let it flutter to the ground forgotten. Family, work, morals... pinch it off and let it flutter away.

Yes, blood.

With a sigh, I looked back at the building and walked across the parking lot in red platform heels. The straps around my ankles had golden chains. The wind blew right through my black chiffon mini-dress. Clothing and makeup were a distraction, not an obsession. I'd binge watch shows about werewolves and online shop when I had money.

Fuck, I shouldn't be doing this. Nerves were starting to kick in, reminding me that the last time I brought a weapon to a friendly little chat I'd ended up making an embarrassing failed attempt at murder. Which had left me with a migraine's worth of shit to deal with. Like jail time, parole, court-appointed therapy...

If I got caught this time there was going to be no leniency. Straight to jail, do not pass go. Goodbye, Bree Hamilton, have fun spending your young adulthood locked up. And yet I didn't stop walking across the parking lot. I just had to not get caught, how hard could that be? And maybe I wouldn't kill her. Maybe I wouldn't really try to taste her blood.

That's right, I just wanted to scare her. That's all this was, even if my mouth was watering to rip open one of her veins and indulge.

Never drink someone else's blood. Doctor Orson's words rattled around in my brain like shaken pennies in a mason jar. It was grating and headache inducing. I ground my teeth and pushed the memory aside. Was I really so pathetic to listen to my therapist's demands?

Katie was smaller than the first person I pulled a knife on. Still, she was bigger than me and I was running on two hours of sleep, a spoonful of peanut butter, and two highly caffeinated energy drinks burning holes in my intestines.

To put it simply, I was tired and starving. I was always starving but food just didn't feel right. The textures and tastes—ugh. There were only so many safe foods and let's be honest, I was shit at taking care of myself so sometimes I just skipped instead of bothering with a meal.

With a thick swallow, I thought of what it would feel like to have Katie's blood in my mouth. Thick and warm... god it would taste just right. I'd be satisfied , full even. When had I ever felt that way? I couldn't remember.

That fueled me forward. She lived on the first floor, unit 108. I had to walk past the stairs to find it. The white numbers were nailed to the dark gray door and the light above me hummed as I stood there. Cicadas screamed like dying yard sprinklers.

My phone meowed again.

I'm glad you messaged me.

I bit my bottom lip, gnawed on it really. The drip-fed drop of praise made me feel warm and gooey. I wanted more. I wanted him here. He'd come, wouldn't he? Maybe, maybe not. Maybe he'd just call the police but I was wildly hopeful he wouldn't.

Are you at home?

I'd test him. I had to. This mild obsession with him was irritating me. Honestly, I wanted to stop thinking about him and end whatever fascination I had with him as fast as possible.

I'd been in weekly sessions with him for two months now. I could imagine how his voice would sound speaking his texts aloud—a deep purr. I lifted the phone and snapped a picture of Katie's door before sending it to him.

I'm visiting our mutual friend.

He'd either call the cops and help kill this fixation or he'd show up here himself. Show up and see just how fucked up I was, scream at me, and say he wasn't going to be my therapist anymore. Or worst of all, show up and make it clear he was fucking his receptionist.

I had to test him. I couldn't keep this infatuation up. It was weird and disturbing and he didn't deserve my thoughts like this. Right? Little arguments sprouted up—about how hot he was, how understanding, how pleasing. He was like no one else I'd ever met. He made my senses purr and my mind numb. But he was my therapist and he was way older than me.

Would a man near forty even want to fuck around with an eighteen-year-old? Some would, for sure. Him though? I didn't know. Which was weird—women had a sixth sense for this shit and I couldn't get anything off him. He didn't feel entirely safe... but I couldn't figure out why. If he didn't want to fuck me then what did he want? What made him feel not entirely safe?

I pressed my ear against the door and listened to Katie's apartment, holding my breath. There was some banging around. I could smell the scent of pasta sauce.

Dinner time... maybe for me too. Shit, don't think that. But the thought had been here the whole time. All my shitty excuses of only wanting to scare her were sinking out of sight while the need inside me surged to the surface.

Plus, Orson knew where I was now. I was on limited time which motivated me to act fast and think later. Fuck, I bet she tasted so good. I bet she'd gush after a good cut to the side of her neck. It'd pump out and paint whatever off-white carpet her apartment had. It'd spill all over the place and I'd roll in it like a hot pig lost in mud.

The door swung open and Katie looked down at me. My eyes zeroed in on her neck and I swear I saw her pulse flutter. Blood, blood, gallons of the stuff... that MCR song was suddenly running through my head—an upbeat soundtrack to what I planned to do.

“Yes?” She asked. There was no recognition on her face. Which was weird. I knew she knew me. I saw her every week for the past eight weeks and I always made an impression.

“I was wondering if we could talk?” I asked. She looked perturbed. My hand slid into my pocket and I fingered the self defense weapon I planned to use on her. It was a pink kitten keychain. My fingers fit into the eyeholes and the ears were sharp, thick plastic points that could sink into someone’s neck with the right effort.

“Talk about what?” She asked. Something was off with her. How did she not recognize me?

“Can I come in, Katie?”

“How do you know my name?” She asked defensively.

“It’s written at your desk,” I said, giving her attitude. Her mouth popped open in a perfect o and her confusion cleared up.

“You shouldn’t be here. Look, if you need to reschedule an appointment— “ she started to close the door and I shoved my foot in the opening.

“I don’t need to reschedule anything. I just want to talk!” Christ, why was it so hard killing people? Admittedly my plans pretty much relied on people just letting me kill them. Wasn’t really a plan.

“What the fuck!” She snapped, yanking the door back open. She stepped into my space and shoved me hard . I stumbled away and my back hit the wall. Cool, cool. This counted as self-defense now, right? Except in court, self-defense was only a good defense when someone used reasonable force. Pretty sure drinking the blood of my enemies would seem unreasonable to most people. Oh well.

I pulled my fist out. My pretty pink plastic keychain was ready to be christened with violence. A smile spread over my face and my mouth watered. Fuck, was I really doing this? It was like I couldn’t accept this was truly reality, that I was really about to kill someone even though my arm was moving to do just that.

“Bree!” His voice was sharp. It felt like a physical force, a rubber band being snapped on my arm. Doctor Orson appeared from behind the staircase, coming out from the darkness like an apparition. It stopped me dead in my tracks.

How did he get here so fast? How did he know exactly where to go? He knew exactly where Katie lived is why. I ground my teeth and decided I wanted to kill her even more now. I lunged at her, swallowing a war cry of rage so the neighbors wouldn't come out and bear witness to the crime. Katie’s eyes rounded to saucers as she saw me coming at her with something in my hand.

“Orson hissed a curse and then his hand wrapped around my wrist. I gasped at the connection. I couldn’t move an inch. He was so fast and strong. He pushed his body between Katie and me. His back filled my vision, along with his smell.

“Go inside, lock the door, and forget this happened,” I heard him tell Katie. A second later her door closed and the chain jingled as she slid it into place.

“Does she always listen to you so well?” I snapped. “Are you two fucking?” I spat rapid fire. Fuck me, make it obvious why don’t you? Jealousy isn’t attractive, Bree. Especially when you aren’t even dating.

Doctor Orson sighed while he marched us to the parking lot, dragging me along by the wrist. I stared at where his hand touched me, marveling at our differences.

“You shouldn’t kill my receptionist,” he finally said. “An no, we aren’t fucking.” I tried to read the emotion in his voice. Was he angry? Frustrated? He didn’t sound like any of those things. He didn’t really sound like he cared at all. So maybe he was done with me. This was it, he was breaking up with me... as a therapist. That was going to make seeing him harder.

“Are you going to report me? Guess I’ll go away for a year for the first offense and now this one...”

“Nothing happened,” Orson said. He pulled me to my car and pressed me against it. The metal was hot on my back. His hands left me and my wrist felt empty.

“What?” I asked, looking up at him.

“Nothing happened, did it? As far as I saw the only thing that happened was she shoved you but that doesn’t matter because neither one of you are going to report this. She’ll forget all about it and you’ll never do this again.”

“She’ll forget because you told her to?” I asked. He looked at me for a moment. I squirmed under his purple gaze. I’d never seen him outside his office before and I liked it. It felt like there was less between us—a desk for one. My eyes dipped down to his chest. There was just a few feet of air between us and my face felt hot. Always fucking blushing. I sighed in annoyance at myself.

“I’m glad you messaged me, Bree.” His voice had softened. I liked it when his voice softened. Though, I wondered what it would sound like when angry. Maybe one day I’d find out and like it even better than his soft voice.

“What’s going to happen now?”

“You’re going to go home and sleep,” he said. I scoffed and rolled my eyes but then it hit me. He came, he de-escalated, and he wasn’t going to tell on me. My eyes went up to his, searching for reasons why.

“That’s it?” I asked.

“That’s it,” he said with a small smile. “Maybe next time, give me a heads up a little sooner. I almost didn’t make it in time.”

“Shouldn’t there not be a next time?” I asked with a smile. Were we flirting? Kinda weird to flirt about my attempts at homicide but perhaps that was our style.

“You can’t help who you are,” Orson said and I looked away sharply. God, why did he say these things? How could he just accept it like that? Shit, I liked him. I really fucking liked him.

“Go home and eat something rare. Maybe it’ll help with that bloodlust of yours,” he said teasingly.

“Stop that,” I hissed, my face heating. I hated how easily he talked about my strange fetish for blood. He chuckled at my reaction.

“It’s cute how ashamed you are,” he said and my eyes bugged.

“You think I’m cute?”

“No,” he said quickly, looking perturbed by himself. He grimaced before running his hand over his mouth. “Go home. You did good tonight, Bree. I’m proud of you for texting me. For letting me help you.” The words soaked into my skin.

He turned around and walked back towards the apartment complex where his car was still running with the door still open. He'd raced here for me. To stop me, to help me. He didn't even go to check on Katie, just stood there by his car, waiting until I finally got into mine.

She could live another week I guess.

I slipped into my car and drove home. Then I flopped in bed, gripping my wrist where he'd touched it, and replayed the conversation again and again. Sleep never came easy for me, not any night. But at least tonight I had pleasant company. I imagined the shape of his mouth and the color of his eyes. I listened to his words replay in my head.

He had every opportunity to get rid of me tonight if he wanted to and he didn't. Instead, all he did was help stop me from ending up shit's creek. Then he complimented me, commended me... fuck. I really did like him a lot.

I wanted to see him again—right now. I wondered where he lived.

It was driving me even more crazy that I couldn't find anything about him. Really, the only place I'd seen his name written down was on my court papers. I needed to look through his stuff, find something, anything because he was too good to be true, wasn't he?

I liked shitty dudes and he appeared to be the opposite of my type so why him? Because he smiled and told me I did good when I opened up? Because he was off limits as an older man who was also my therapist?

Okay, yes because of that. And because of helping me out. What kind of therapist did what he did tonight? What kind of court-appointed therapist also has no website, no online presence, no nothing. And the whole Katie thing was weird to me. She really

didn't seem to know who I was. Was she on drugs?

I rolled over in bed and unlocked my phone. Again I searched his name. Again it appeared to be a dead end. I kept at it for a while regardless, forever hopeful I'd find a little scrap of information. This was turning into an obsession. A bad one.

On a whim, I started to search all the psych offices in the area. The first thing that popped up shouldn't have been surprising. Verfallen Asylum was notorious. I tried not to think of it much because I'd always had the oddest sensation that one day I'd end up there. Everyone else was intrigued by it in the same way as a car wreck or a horror movie. They wanted to leer in and see just how bad it was—give themselves a fright. Verfallen wasn't a mental hospital, it was a prison—an archaic asylum for the criminally insane. People thought it was haunted and there were rumors the patients ate each other.

Nibbling my bottom lip I typed in Verfallen Asylum followed by Doctor Orson. I jolted up in bed, shocked when Google fed me a result right at the top.

Holy fuck.

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Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:38 pm

“You’re fucking nuts,” Mary hissed, trying to grab my arm and stop me in my tracks. I danced away from her hand.

“You just realized that?” I asked with a laugh. Her concern was palatable—shining along with the moonlight in her eyes.

“What if they have big guards and those big guards have big guns,” she said, looking to the others for help. I’d dragged a few work friends with me to go check out Verfallen. Mary was nervous but the other two were excited while telling her to calm down. They traded stories about Verfallen.

“Apparently everyone here is a serial killer,” Thomas said in excitement.

“They say you can hear howling on full moons,” Emma said with a wide smile. We all looked up at the sky and saw a round, white moon.

“Is it full?” Mary asked, attempting to sound excited instead of terrified. Before any of us could answer a noise came from behind the trees. It started low and slow so I couldn’t be sure what it was until it reached its crescendo. Goosebumps popped up on the back of my neck as the howling continued. It didn’t sound like a wolf, it sounded like a man—a maniac who was howling at the moon.

Mary, the scaredy-cat, remained silent.

“Fuckkk,” Thomas said.

“Freaky,” Sara commented. They looked at each other with big giddy smiles even

though you could see fear shining behind the elation. We walked into the tree line, it was only five feet of bushes and trees but it was thick. Branches snagged my stockings, creating pale lines in the black fabric. When we spilled out the other side there was a moment of silence. It was one thing to see this place in pictures and an entirely different experience to have it looming in the dark right in front of you.

My hands slipped around the bars of the cast iron fence. Verfallen Asylum was old, with Victorian architectural flourishes, whatever that meant. It was gothic-looking to me. The place was huge and old and looked more like a museum than a hospital.

Not a hospital, I reminded myself. I'd been to a mental hospital and this definitely wasn't that. This was a prison with doors that always stayed locked. The people here didn't get rehabilitation plans and they didn't get weekend visits home. There were movies about this place, books, fucking franchises. It was a thing of mystery and terror.

The scent of the iron fence in my hands reminded me of blood. I took my hands off and looked up at the sharp spikes at the top. Was that really all we had to deal with? It seemed too easy. Shouldn't there be barbed wire? An electric fence? A swooping spotlight and barking German Shepherds?

We started to climb. Our words had dried up the moment we saw the place with our actual eyes. I don't know whether it was fear, awe, or some combination of the two but I didn't mind the silence. I was giddy with anticipation. Doctor Orson worked here. There had been one small article online talking about the new hire. Of course, that article didn't offer much else other than that. How could they when Doctor Orson was a mystery?

My arms and legs shook and my lungs burned as I scaled the fence. I wasn't sure I had the energy to do it but I was motivated. After a few minutes of gasping and sweating, I finally found myself on the other side with the others. We stood there,

waiting for something to happen now that our feet were officially on Verfallen soil.

The howl came again, much louder than before. It seemed to grow from the ground and I eyed the bottom of the building, trying to see evidence of a basement. There were no windows though. Not for the basement and not for any other floor. No, that wasn't right. There were windows but they'd all been covered with thick sheets of metal. All the windows except for one. I stared at the light but saw no sign of movement.

"This feels like a trap," Mary commented, craning her neck like she could see around corners.

"It was almost too easy," Thomas agreed.

"I think the hard part is getting inside the building, not climbing the fence," I said.

"Shouldn't the hard part be getting back out?" Thomas asked. That made everyone go silent while we considered for the first time that maybe we wouldn't be able to get out after getting in.

"Come on," I groaned, stomping forward. "It's not like they'll lock us up here if we get caught."

"No, the howling man will just kill us," Mary grumbled. We spent the half hour wearing ourselves out by walking around the building. There was no obvious way in or out. I wasn't even sure if they used the front door anymore, it was boarded up with metal. We decided to split up and I was currently standing in front of a small metal door that had a flashing red light above it.

This had to be it but now that I'd found the door I realized how dumb this entire venture had been. How was I going to see Orson or find out anything about him here?

I considered finding the others and telling them it was time to go.

This was weird, right? I kept telling myself I'd come here as an adventure, not because of the obsession with my therapist. The truth was I would have never come here if I didn't hope to learn something about Doctor Orson. While staring at this stupid impenetrable door I realized I was on a precipice. This single situation could be explained away by my interest in Orson getting the better of me, along with curiosity about the infamous Verfallen Asylum. I could brush this off and shut myself down from trying to find out more about Orson.

If I didn't brush it off and accepted this wasn't going away—that I didn't want it to, that I wanted to indulge in it... then I wouldn't stop trying to find things out about him. I wouldn't limit myself to the one-hour, weekly visits. I'd keep texting him, keep googling him, and keep showing up places where I thought he might be.

Thinking about giving him up made my stomach twist in knots. It felt wrong.

Guess I'm a stalker now. I blew out a breath and wondered if stalking was an official diagnosis in the DSM-5.

Just then I heard a beep on the other side of the door and some type of bolt moving inside it. Then it creaked as it began to open. I stood there watching with wide eyes as the man in question stood in front of me. If this wasn't fate, I didn't know what was.

Doctor Orson stilled in shock when he realized I was standing in front of him. I only just decided to stalk him and literally got caught thirty seconds later. I really wasn't made for a life of crime. I kept fucking it up gloriously.

His purple eyes swept left and right then he reached out, gripped my arm, and roughly tugged me into the building. The door slammed back shut and he glared at me. Looked like I Was finally going to hear his angry voice. I pressed my thighs

together and tried not to look excited.

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Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:38 pm

At this very moment, I wanted to murder Bree Hamilton and I knew exactly how to do it since I'd murdered before.

I could never have anticipated she would be this much of a pain in the ass. It was going to be simple. She was young and dumb—naive, modern, coddled.

That's what I thought when I first heard her name uttered. I remembered the night vividly because it was the last victim I'd taken before uprooting myself from Maryland and finding my new patch of earth in this sleepy New England town.

I loved to kill and I especially loved when my victims' blubbering and begging actually resulted in something interesting. I'd thought he'd lied, to be honest. I mean, how ridiculous to claim you had a half-human child.

"She's—" he had gasped in a wheezy inhale. I'd punctured one of his lungs with a slim knife when I'd snatched him. First, was the confusion—why would a vampire attack another of his kind? Then there was anger and fighting. Which didn't last long since he was restrained in a chair. Now he was begging.

"She's?" I had asked, my eyes tracing the line my knife would eventually take across his throat.

"My daughter. Half... half vampire," he had gotten out eventually, gasping for breath.

"Stop being so dramatic," I had sighed. It's not like a vampire needed its lungs. "Explain to me why you'd leave a dhamphyr alone."

“Wanted her... to have... a good life.”

“No one told me I was in the presence of Father of the year.” I clapped and the dull thuds of my gloved hands had echoed in the abandoned textile plant.

“Fuck... you,” he had attempted to hiss, glaring at me with blue eyes.

“How old is she?” There was no way he was telling the truth but if he was...

“Thirteen... no, wait. Shit.” I had rolled my eyes.

“If this half-vampire somehow exists and is vaguely a teenager I’m guessing you figured there was no rush, right? Have a good life ,” I broke off in a scoff. “More like wait until she was aged up. Then you could sell her for all sorts of things.”

“That’s life,” he had admitted with a wheezy laugh—pleased with himself. If this half-vampire existed, she didn’t need a father like this.

“What’s her name?”

“Bree... Bree Hamilton.” The name changed everything, I just didn’t know it yet. I’d lifted my knife, slipped it right under his ear, then dragged it across his throat. The blood curtained out. Vampires, of course, didn’t die so easily. Which worked well for me. Sometimes I wanted my victims still breathing when I started on dismemberment.

Every choice I’d made since then had been about her. Finding out if she existed. Finding out where she existed. Finding out every little thing there was to know from afar.

She existed, she was real... and she was a dhamphyr.

Everything was crystal clear after that. I made my plans to come to her, to worm my way into her life, and to take control of it. My plan of action had to be thorough this time because they didn't involve just me and my morbid hobbies. Now and forevermore, my plans would involve... the biggest pain in my fucking ass .

“Are you angry?” She asked, looking vaguely pleased by the idea of driving me to outrage. How many red flags did I brush off before coming here? The rap sheet was thorough. Bree's life was well documented because she was a fucking nuisance.

I'd ended up the naive fool—not her. I thought all these little warning signs were good things. That they were ways for me to control her. As if I was going to find some waifish, insecure, anxious little girl. Instead I got Bree in all her confident, casual rule breaking and burgeoning psychopathy.

I needed to get it together. Things were still fine. I had her perfectly under control. And her being a nuisance was still a good thing. That's how I was now a guiding force and capable of maneuvering her life. I could send her ass to jail and maybe she needed a reminder of that fact.

“Do I need to make a call to the judge?” I asked.

“Wow, you really didn't like me showing up here,” she said, brushing off my threat. I pinched the bridge of my nose. Seven months I'd been dealing with her now and it was only getting harder, not easier as one might assume.

Bree peered around me, looking down the hall. I realized she was looking at someone and tensed. My body pressed closer to hers, shielding her. I gripped her arm to keep her in place.

“Who you hiding there, doc?” The chipper voice asked.

“Basil,” I hissed. I glared at Bree as she attempted to stand on tiptoes to look around me. I heard his boots take a step closer and tensed. His taking a step closer was as good as a death threat. How did he get over here? Patients were supposed to get into this hall. Then again, Basil did whatever the fuck he wanted.

“I’m hiding no one. Now leave.”

“No one?” Bree hissed at me. I stared at her in utter disbelief. Was she offended that I implied she’s no one to a violent psychopath who could kill her in an instant? I ground my teeth.

“Be quiet. Please ,” I asked, trying to sound anything but furious. Her face went slack as she nodded. Maybe she was a nuisance but she was still a naive young woman.

“Doctor Orson... are you fucking one of your patients?” Basil asked with entertainment. “Can I watch?”

“Exactly,” I said. “And yes, you can.”

“Fuck! My year has been made. People rarely let me watch. I ask all the time but they find me off-putting. You think it’s the whole murder everyone I’m close to thing? Or maybe it’s the masks?”

“I think it’s the smell,” I responded.

“The what?!”

“Your body odor,” I said. He busted out laughing so hard I thought he was going to choke.

“That’s hilarious. Complete nonsense. I literally can’t smell bad. I tried once—didn’t

shower for a month. Weird, really. I even slept next to a dead— You know what? Enough of that. Can I make position suggestions while you two go at it? There's a few specific acts I've been dying to see up close and personal."

"Basil."

"Not too close! I promise. Although I could theoretically touch one or... both of you for a couple minutes—"

"Basil."

"Okay, okay! Not both of you. Of course not both of you. That would be weird," he broke off in a nervous chuckle.

"Basil!" I finally yelled.

"Yes?"

"You can only watch if you turn around, walk away, and never bring this up to anyone ever," I said.

"But I've already got a half-chub! Blue balls can't be good for my mental health."

"I told you, you can watch just not right now."

"I'll be very sorely angry with you at our next therapy session if you're lying!" He called out to me as he walked away. "And someone tell Nemo to shut the fuck up. His howling is cringy."

"He sounds charming," Bree said once he was gone.

“He killed his parents,” I responded.

“Nice,” she said with a smile.

“You are going to fit right in here,” I said under my breath.

“I will ?” she asked, looking at me with bugging eyes.

“I meant you would, not that you will. Sorry, bad joke.”

“No, maybe you’re right. Maybe I should come here. Who was that?” She asked. She was giving me whiplash.

“No one.”

“Oh, another no one like me. He’s your patient?” She asked with something burning in her eyes. “You two seemed friendly. Really friendly.”

“To be honest, I think I hate him more than any of my other patients.”

“How many patients do you have?”

“I’m currently the main therapist on staff here at Verfallen. It’s my job, Bree. I do see other people than you.” This fact seemed to upset her. She looked ready to do something wild, like start crying.

“You’re a special patient to me, Bree. I work with you more thoroughly than the people here. I’m committed to your treatment in an entirely different way.”

“Why?” She asked. I smiled at her, patting her cheek gently. Why was she special? Because she was going to become my little pet.

“Because I think you and me are similar. I see a bit of myself in you—”

“Jesus,” she hissed, her face flaming as she took my comment entirely sexual.

“Don’t be crude.”

“You just told that Basil guy he could watch us fuck! Of course, my mind is in the gutter.”

“I’d say anything I’d need to, to get that person far away from you. He’s the most dangerous person in this place.”

“I find that hard to believe. He seemed so chipper.” She looked up at me with big blue eyes.

“Well appearances are deceiving,” I said with a broad smile. Just like me, Bree. Your kind therapist who is always there for you has the absolute worst intentions.

“I suppose...” she said, looking over my shoulder. “Wish I’d got a good look at him.”

“Don’t we all,” I said, rolling my eyes.

“What does that mean?”

“It means you need to leave. Come on, I’m taking you home.” I pulled the badge from my shirt and pressed it to the card reader. The door buzzed, the red light blinked to green and I opened the door and pulled us out of the building and to my car.

Her eyes scanned the property surrounding the building as I helped her into the passenger seat. I looked up at the building as I rounded the front of the hood. There was a single window that wasn’t covered with thick iron sheets. I could see the shape

of Basil's shadow in the window, staring out at me.

He was going to be insufferable at his therapy appointment tomorrow.

I got in the car and started it. Bree kept looking out the window as if she was searching for something.

"Forget something?" I asked. She turned and looked at me. There was a strange weight behind her eyes, assessing and loaded.

"No," she finally said and I couldn't tell if she was lying or being honest because she was just being weird. All the emotions were wiped off her face—just a blank mask as she turned forward and stopped looking around.

She was lying, I realized. She'd come with others. Why else didn't she have a car? That confirmed something I already figured—that Bree had shallow friendships. She wouldn't leave anyone behind she actually gave a shit about. That was good. It would have made things harder for me in the future if she had someone who would try to find out what really happened to her.

"Where are you taking me?" She asked.

"Your home, where you will attempt to stay put and out of trouble," I said in exasperation. She was quiet for a while.

"That's it?" She asked in confusion. "You aren't going to report me for trespassing? You're not going to call the courthouse? You're not even going to inform my aunt?"

"I think it's best we keep this little field trip between us for now."

"Why?" She blurted out. "I don't get it. I don't get you! Why keep covering for me?"

I stared out the windshield and thought about the truth. Because I'm a vampire and right this minute there's someone in my basement, half dismembered. I'm not going to kill you though. I'm going to feed from you every day for the rest of our lives once the time is right. I'm not telling anyone all the shit you are putting me through because they'll lock you up in county and I want you right where you are, right beside me, where no one can save you.

"Because you need to be close," I said aloud. Might as well since I was about to make her forget. I waited for her to freak out but instead, she sat quietly in her chair, not speaking the entire time back to her house. When we parked I lunged at her without warning. She gasped.

I gripped her head in my hands and held her in place.

"Forget about Verfallen Asylum," I insisted, staring deep into her eyes and demanding she listen. Her mouth popped open and she inhaled sharply. For a moment, Bree said nothing and I grew concerned it didn't work.

"Forget everything about Verfallen Asylum. Forget I work there, forget who you saw, forget it even exists." Bree nodded. "Tonight you..." Why had she gone to Verfallen? I had no idea. She was lucky I was there, that I found her before anything happened. "Tonight you went for a walk. You were trying to break into the office we meet at. You saw me and I took you home."

It was best to stick with things that were similar to the truth, then memories made more sense.

"You took me home," she said back lifelessly.

"We didn't say anything on the car ride home." She nodded in agreement. Before I let her go I realized I could do more. I could taste her and make her forget.

“How old are you now, Bree?” I asked.

“Eighteen,” she responded blankly. Her mind was currently rolled—half hypnotized.

“That’s good,” I sighed, leaning closer. I had rules and eating children was a definite no. Serial killers always got caught because they degraded. I was not going to degrade, I was going to maintain my status quo. That meant rules that I followed strictly.

I buried my nose in her hair. Bree smelled delicious—savory and mouthwatering. I had rules I was supposed to follow strictly. She wasn’t a child but even so, eating Bree, even tasting her... it wasn’t right. Not yet. I had a plan and I needed to stick to it.

Instead, I pressed closer, setting my nose against the thin skin of her neck and listening to her heart beating. It was fast and strong, picking up speed the longer I stayed close. The sound filled my ears almost as if it could be my own long-dead heartbeat, thumping in my ears.

My mouth opened on her throat and I dragged my lips across the pulse, flirting with it, teasing myself. I shouldn’t taste her. My mind started spinning excuses why it would be okay. Why waiting was only torture. My fangs elongated against her, scrapping her pale skin. One little flex of my jaw and I’d sink inside her, fill my mouth with her, and swallow her down.

“You’re far too tempting,” I whispered against her neck. I mouthed the place I wanted to bite—dimpled the skin with my fangs. She squirmed in my grip. One little taste could ruin everything... could make me start changing all my plans. Bree and I were going to have so much time together, starting it messy meant it would always be messy. It meant I’d never be able to control myself with her and I needed control. Without control, I wasn’t sure what I’d do. Not with her, not with anything.

I cursed and pulled back, looking into her blue eyes.

“Forget I just did that,” I sighed before letting her go. Bree settled back into her side of the car. For a minute she just stared out the front windshield but then she blinked and shook herself off before looking over at me quizzically. She opened her mouth and then snapped it back shut before getting out of the car.

I drummed my fingers on the steering wheel, watching as she walked inside her house. Her smell was everywhere in my car. I got the feeling this wasn’t going to be the last time I had to make her forget something.

There’s no getting away from me, Bree.

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Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:38 pm

Today was terrible. The worst day ever.

It was the last day of my court-appointed therapy with Orson. I sat in my chair across from him, pouting. Maybe I just wouldn't leave. I'd refuse to leave the chair. I wondered if he'd try to pick me up. If I didn't daint from him doing that then I'd cling to him and never let go.

Shit, I needed a better plan.

I eyed Orson. He was watching me pout and squirm without saying a word. His purple eyes looked over his steepled hands just observing me slowly dying inside.

Maybe I could blurt something out that made him concerned. Suddenly scream out I'm suicidal. Shit, that would get me a grippy sock vacation, not more therapy appointments with Orson.

Maybe I could say I tried to kill someone again.

Maybe I could tell him I'm in love with him.

No, no, no. None of these would work. I wasn't the anxious type but suddenly I felt like I was going to have a panic attack. I was never going to see Orson again unless it was from afar. Dreams filled my head. Dreams of being in his car, him clutching me in his arms, pressing kisses to my neck, telling me how tempting I am. I didn't want to lose these therapy sessions. I needed to be close to him or I'd go insane.

"I have some bad news but I'm hoping you'll handle it with some grace," he finally

said. I looked at him with wide eyes, gripping the chair's armrests tightly.

"We've known each other for a year now and in that time, well..." he sighed and took a moment to frown slightly. I frowned too. What was he getting at?

"Last week I had to submit my assessment to the court."

"Oh," I said, eyes darting around.

"I'm supposed to sign off that your therapy was successful but I didn't."

"You didn't," I said in confusion. "Like, you didn't submit the paperwork?"

"I did submit the paperwork but I did not approve you. Actually, I requested that you continue in therapy for another year." He waited for my response but I was masking hard.

"Another year of therapy... with you?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "I know this isn't what you wanted to hear but Bree," he reached across the desk with an open hand. I unlatched one of my hands from the armrest and set my hand in his. He gave it a polite little grip.

"Mhm?" I couldn't say more than that or I'd start jumping up and down and screaming.

"This isn't me saying you aren't getting better. This is me saying that I think you are better... with me here to talk to. You understand? I think we need to continue seeing each other for as long as you need."

"Another year," I said, wanting him to confirm it again.

“Or longer,” he said. There was a gleam in his eye as if he wasn’t sad at all. That in fact, he was just as happy as I was that we were going to stay together.

“I see,” I said blankly, trying not to show how happy I was.

“I hope you aren’t too upset we’ll be stuck together for much longer.” He flashed a strange smile at me.

“I’ll try not to be,” I said back with a smile I couldn’t help. He squeezed my hand and I squeezed his back. If his smile looked a little weird then I’m sure mine looked twice as strange.

There’s no getting away from me now, Doctor Orson.