

K.R. Alexander

Twin sisters are best friends
for life... and death

Identikill

 SCHOLASTIC

Identikill

K. R. Alexander

Scholastic Inc.

If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as “unsold and destroyed” to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this “stripped book.”

Copyright © 2025 by Alex R. Kahler writing as K. R. Alexander

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or used to train any artificial intelligence technologies, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

ISBN 978-1-546-11649-3

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

25 26 27 28 29

Printed in the U.S.A.

40

First printing 2025

Book design by Christopher Stengel

D

Angelica was Chelsea's best friend.

They were twin sisters, inseparable since the day they were born.

They did everything together, confiding their deepest secrets, staying up late into the night discussing the kids at school and the teachers they did or did not like. Angelica was as close as a shadow to Chelsea; wherever Chelsea went, Angelica was right by her side. They even slept in the same bedroom, even though they were twelve and there were enough bedrooms in the house for them to each have their own.

Chelsea didn't know what she would do without Angelica, and vice versa. It was a bond deeper than friendship or even sisterhood. At times, it felt like they were the same person.

Which was good, because Chelsea didn't have many friends outside of Angelica. Maybe because the two of them were always off in their own little world, playing games or sharing stories that no one else

understood. Chelsea had tried making friends in the past, but these friendships always ended in tears, with her running back to Angelica's side. Angelica, who was always there for her, ready to comfort her, ready to tell her that it was the big bad world that was wrong, or weird—not Chelsea. Deep down, Chelsea knew that no one understood her like Angelica did.

There was only one problem.

Well, *other* people thought it was a problem—Chelsea didn't think it made much of a difference.

Angelica had died five years ago, when they were seven.

But that didn't stop her from sticking around.

Everyone thought that Chelsea was making Angelica's continued presence up. A coping mechanism. An imaginary friend. No one else thought Angelica was real.

Chelsea didn't care what others thought.

She knew Angelica was real. *She* knew that her sister would never, ever leave her side.

After all, Angelica promised she would always be there.

To the very end.



Chelsea was terrified of starting sixth grade.

She knew it was a silly fear. After all, the only thing that was changing was the school building, and even *that* was only a few blocks away from her old elementary school. She would still be with the same classmates and still have the same amount of homework. She would even know some of the teachers, since her mom was a secretary there. But there was something about the first day that set her nerves on edge.

“It’s going to be okay,” Angelica said as they walked to school.

“Are you sure?” Chelsea asked.

“Positive.” Angelica reached out and squeezed Chelsea’s hand. “After all—you’ve got me!”

Chelsea smiled over to Angelica, then noticed a kid on the other side of the street watching her. He probably thought she was smiling at him.

She quickly looked away.

“Ignore him,” Angelica said. “He’s just jealous of our friendship.”

Chelsea nodded and felt Angelica’s assurance wash through her. Chelsea was the timid one of the pair. She was the one who worried what people thought, or choked up when giving an oral report, or hid under the covers during a thunderstorm. She needed Angelica’s strength almost as much as she needed her friendship. Angelica seemed more than okay to be that strength.

Which was good, because when they reached the front steps of the school, Chelsea’s knees went weak.

“I don’t think I can do this,” she whispered as crowds of kids surged past her. They all looked so much older than her, so much cooler and meaner and stronger. Even the kids she’d been in class with last year.

Was she the only one who hadn’t grown over the summer?

“Sure, you can,” Angelica said. “You can do anything you put your mind to. Especially with my help.”

Chelsea tried to open up to Angelica’s confidence—sometimes she could *feel* what her sister felt—but at that moment, it was hard. There were too many other kids. Too many other thoughts and fears crowding her brain. After a few concentrated moments she began to sense it. A cool, calm confidence . . .

At least, until someone slammed into her from behind.

Chelsea fell to her knees, scraping her shin on the rough concrete steps. Tears immediately filled her eyes, even before she looked up to see her nemesis towering over her.

“Move it, loser,” Riley said.

Then, to add insult to injury, Riley pulled out the wad of gum she’d been chewing and tossed it at Chelsea. It landed right in Chelsea’s hair.

Angelica balled her hands into fists. Chelsea knew she was about to deck Riley, and quickly thought out, *Don’t!*

Angelica glowered. But she didn’t punch Riley.

Chelsea didn’t know if Angelica even *could* punch Riley, or if Riley would feel it. It was rare for Chelsea to feel her sister’s touch, and only then if they were both concentrating very hard. They’d tried in the past to get Angelica to do things like move a fork or hold their parents’ hands, but it had never worked. Chelsea was the only one who could see and sense Angelica.

This wasn’t the first time that they both wished that wasn’t the case.

Riley and her friends laughed as Chelsea picked herself up. Chelsea put a hand to her knee, which was bleeding. The other hand went to the gum tangled in

her hair. She gave it a pull and winced as it tugged at her scalp—it was really stuck. Angelica stood by her side, watching with frustration, her gaze switching between Chelsea and Riley. Angelica’s form blurred, but it wasn’t because she was fading away like she sometimes did when Chelsea was sleepy or concentrating elsewhere—she was blurring from the tears in Chelsea’s eyes.

The first day of school, and this was already the worst. Chelsea wished she could go back to summer break. Back to hours spent reading, or watching their favorite shows, or playing their favorite video games. Just her and her sister, as it should be. She tugged once more at the gum in her hair, felt it tangle deeper, and truly started to cry.

“Chelsea, it’s okay!” Angelica called out, but Chelsea didn’t hear her. What could her sister do to help right now?

The world blurred as Chelsea ran through the crowd and straight to the bathroom. Kids stopped to stare or laugh at her as she ran. She ignored them. Thankfully, the bathroom was empty, save for Angelica. Chelsea let the door slam behind her and broke down into fresh tears.

Angelica wasn’t crying. She was angry.

“I can’t believe she did that!” Angelica seethed.

“She’s such a bully! If I had my way, I’d—”

Chelsea tuned her out and focused on the task at hand as best as she could. She grabbed some paper towels and soaked them with soap and water, then winced as she cleaned off her scrape.

“I need to get the gum out of my hair,” Chelsea began. “I can’t start school looking like this.”

“I can—” Angelica began, then stopped.

There wasn’t anything she could do. Angelica couldn’t lift up a pair of scissors. She was helpless. Just like Chelsea was helpless against Riley.

“It’s okay,” Chelsea whispered. She pressed the towels to her scrape. At least it had stopped bleeding. “I just wish I knew why she hated me so much.”

Riley had been friends with Chelsea and Angelica once. Best friends. Back when Angelica was still alive. They all had sleepovers and playdates. But then Riley had grown distant. And after a while, she had grown mean.

Chelsea had made the mistake early on of telling Riley she still saw Angelica. She insisted Angelica was still around. Naively, she’d thought Riley would believe her.

She didn’t. Just like everyone else in the school.

But unlike the others, who just treated Chelsea like she was weird or infected, Riley took it as a

personal offense. She was embarrassed she'd ever been Chelsea's friend.

"She's just a bully," Angelica reminded her sister. "They don't usually have a reason."

They both jolted when the bathroom door opened. A girl popped her head in. She had thick black hair and broad glasses. Chelsea was positive she'd never seen her before.

"Oh, sorry," began the girl. "I'm Janette."

"Hi? What do you want?" Chelsea said. It sounded rude, and she didn't mean for it to come out that way. She was just honestly surprised that someone was talking to her. Someone who wasn't Angelica.

"Are you okay?" Janette asked. She stepped inside and let the door close behind her. "I saw what those girls did to you. That was really mean."

"I'm fine," Chelsea replied, dropping her head and voice. "I'm used to it."

"You shouldn't have to be," Janette said. She walked over to the sinks and grabbed some paper towels. "Here. Let me help."

"It's okay. I've got it."

Janette smiled sadly. "You shouldn't have to do this alone."

Chelsea felt her breath catch. Because she wasn't alone—Angelica was right there, beside her. She'd

been there the whole time. Not that Janette would ever know or understand that.

As usual when a conversation started with someone else, Chelsea looked over to Angelica to check out her reaction. If Angelica thought the other person was bad news, she didn't hide it.

This time when Chelsea looked over, Angelica was gone.

Chelsea's heart flipped. It wasn't the first time Angelica had disappeared because someone else was around, but it *was* the first time it had happened when Chelsea really needed her presence. Suddenly, she felt terribly alone. Janette *seemed* nice, but she was definitely a stranger. And Chelsea knew well enough that eventually, everyone she met would laugh at her. She'd tried making other friends after Riley, but even if things started out fine, they eventually left or laughed at her. She started to curl in on herself, waiting for Janette to proclaim, *Gotcha!* and start saying mean things about her.

Then Janette stepped over and held up the dry paper towels.

"Here," Janette said. "We'll get that cleaned up, and then I'll try to get that gum out of your hair. What's your name, anyway?"

"Chelsea. Are you . . . are you new here?"

“Yup,” Janette said. “This place is a lot smaller than my old school. But the girls seem just as mean.”

“That’s just Riley,” Chelsea said. “She’s always mean.”

Janette sighed. “There’s one in every school.”

Then she smiled and handed Chelsea the dry towels. Chelsea took them and smiled herself.

“It’s nice to meet you,” Chelsea said.

She was very surprised to realize that she meant it.

ORDER YOUR COPY!




 Get it on
Apple Books

amazon.com

BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS

 **Google Play**

BOOKS·A·MILLION

 **Bookshop**