

OVER AGAIN
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There was something in the air, dark and twisted, unnatural. Colin knew what was coming. It was the same thing that happened every time. He picked up his pace being careful not to trip on the broken chunks that were supposedly a sidewalk. The drizzle turned into a steady downpour as he turned a corner into an alley. His heart raced with each step, *what would it be this time?*, he thought. His hands began to shake as he pulled his jacket closer around him and took a deep breath, trying without success to calm his wry nerves.

Get it over with, he thought. He was shaking so bad, Colin tripped on a broken crate in the alley. As he lifted himself up from the mud, he saw the legs of a man standing before him. *This is it*, his mind whispered definitively. Rising to his full height, Colin took in the rest of the darkened figure; his eyes stopped at his hand. There in the gloved form was a knife; the object he knew would serve as today's fate.

Slowly his eyes fluttered open. He gripped the blankets as if tearing at them when his consciousness revealed his reality for what was now a countless number of times. He was in his bed, destined forever to wake up to the vision of the dilapidated ceiling and his own personal hell called life.

Colin laid there for a few minutes staring at the cracks, longing to escape his misery. He wouldn't let it happen again, he couldn't. He took a deep breath and gripped the blankets harder. His muscles quivered as if tearing the covers was the most exhausting act he had ever done. Anger, fear and pain filled him, and he felt as if he would go insane, if he wasn't all ready there. He had to get a way.

He rose from his bed, walking to the bathroom, tripping over the trash and clothes that covered his floor as if he were a blind man. Finally reaching his destination, Colin stood in front of the mirror, staring at his haggard face. The once youthful face now was marred by lines, dark bags under his emerald eyes, and facial hair that left him looking dirty and old. He cringed; this couldn't be his face, he was only twenty-seven, at least he had been when the nightmare started. His heart began to race, and a knot formed in his stomach, enough was enough. He was going to get out of this, and maybe this horror would be left behind.