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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Diary Wars

### Letters of Love by Alastair Nightshade

*Liam, My Love.*

*I worry that when the store closes, I will never see you again and the thought makes me cry five million years into an ocean of regret that I've never shared with you the deep, yearning passion that I feel for you. I wonder where you'll work next, and if I'll be allowed to gaze at you from afar there too. I hope it's not McDonald's. My sister works there and she always smells bad when she gets home, and while*

*I can't imagine your wonderful scent of herbs and candle wax ever disappearing, I know I must prepare myself for this fact should it come to pass. But know that even if thou must work at a fast food restaurant, I shall always be there, ready to purchase the potatoes you have so magnificently dipped in hot oil to make French fries.*

*Forever and ever and probably ever yours,  
Alastair.*

Alastair Nightshade gazed longingly across the store at Liam, who spoke to a customer. The customer said something, and then broke into a laugh at her own joke. Liam smiled politely because he was just cool like that, and oh how Alastair wished he could be that calm. Instead, he fumbled with what to say and felt like a total fool.

Something moved in the front window. Alastair's eyes darted to see what it was, and spotted that stupid blonde teen girl peering in at them. She'd been with the protesters before, and now she spent all her time hanging around the store. Her gaze met Alastair's, and her face went red. She pulled out her notebook and wrote furiously for a few moments, then turned and left.

*Hmph. Wierdo.* Ally brushed some of his long black hair from his face, and pulled his hand back to see some of the make-up he used to make his skin even more

alabaster had made it onto fingers. Curse it all.

Footsteps on the hardwood alerted Alastair to someone's approach, and he looked up to see Liam. Behind him, the customer walked towards the door with bags of her purchases.

*No one else in the store. We're alone.*

Alastair's heart hammered in his chest.

Liam pursed his lips for a moment, as if pondering his words. "So our last day is Friday," he said at last.

Alastair nodded. Or at least he thought he did.

"Lilith is having us invite the regular customers to...some kind of social event afterward." His mouth twitched a little. He didn't seem fond of what Lilith had planned. "I think it involves alcohol. She asked me to ensure you know you're invited."

Alastair nodded again.

Liam was about to walk away when he stopped and turned back to face Alastair. "You've been very loyal to the store. Thank you."

Alastair nodded once more.

*He spoke to me. Again!* As Liam walked away, Alastair pulled out his notebook and wrote yet another love letter. Surely this was a sign! They were meant to be. Such a pity that tragedy seemed to be bringing them together.

### Sara Gosling

I'd been standing outside of Jesus' heathen store for an hour and thirty-seven minutes.

The sign on the window said they were closing. I was so conflicted. I didn't want him to be out of a job!

Only two people had gone in the shop to buy something in the time I'd been

standing out there. I wanted to go inside, but the hermaphrodite was hovering around. Ugh. It wouldn't go away. Even when Jesus/Liam went next door to get salad for lunch, the hermaphrodite hung by the door, being all creepy and immoral.

He/she/it stared at my Lord like *a lot* and it was way weird. It had a black covered notebook with that star symbol of the devil. I was pretty sure he was like way evil. Maybe he was Lucifer. I think Lucifer would look like an emo hermaphrodite. So "Ally", which is what that hooker called it, followed around Liam but never said anything to him and I was pretty sure he was in love with him, only not really because hermaphrodites and gay people don't know how to love, they only have evil sinful lust.

Everyone knows that a storm is gathering, and sinners like gays and lesbians and genderless abominations are trying to teach children like me that it's okay to sin against the bible and that all people are equal. I do think that yeah, all people are mostly equal, at least when they're white, but sinners like that aren't *actually* people, so I don't think anyone needs to be tolerant of them. Love is only between a man and a woman and Jesus. And God. And probably the Holy Ghost. It's like...a polygamy thing, only not bad. Maybe polygamy wouldn't be so bad, though, because I would totally marry Jesus/Liam *and* Zeke from school, although I didn't think Zeke was that great anymore because he wasn't divine or anything like that, but just a flawed human. Flawed humans fell for the charms of slutty girls like Kerri McLeod, so I knew Zeke would never be good enough for someone like me who was holy inspired to continue the bible.

I saw Ally writing in its notebook. I should try to get a hold of it. Then I could burn it like we did Harry Potter and that Judy Blume book at my youth group.

I hadn't yet told anyone from my youth group that I was spending my time at a supposed sin den. I didn't think they could handle it. Not yet. One time I told them I heard the voice of God while eating corn flakes and he told me not to keep eating them, but I did, and I started choking, but no one believed me that I actually heard Him speak. But it *must* have been God, because who else would I hear telling me that I was about to choke on my cornflakes? It so wasn't my dad. That's what Lizzie said, but she's nothing but a slut who tried to seduce my brother one time while we were

camping. *No one* holy would ever try to seduce Josh because he was gross.

Liam went over to talk to Ally. I got up on my tip toes to stare through the letter “C” pasted on the window. I couldn’t tell what they were saying! Darn it!

As Liam walked away from it, I ran to the door and burst inside.

The hermaphrodite’s fake looking blue eyes were staring at me. I stuck my tongue out at it, and walked to where Liam was putting stuff on a shelf.

I stood beside him for a few moments, gazing up at him, clasping my diary—which I’d been chronicling his daily activities in—to my chest. I was ready to explode. I had to say something, and bazillions of thoughts were in my brain, but I chewed my lip in silence. *My first* official words to the Lord incarnate had to be really, really special...

*I love you.* No, that was way obvious. Of course everyone loved Jesus, except for gay people and heathens in other countries.

*Your Dad is my favourite author.* Aw, but he probably got that one a lot too. My mom made my brother and I read the bible all the time when we were kids and I think we read just about every version of except for the Mormon one which was kind of like fanfiction, which I also wasn’t allowed to read, but one time, online, I *did* read some based on that old show Davey and Goliath. It was totally gross.

*Your hair is like a golden halo!* No, that was lame too. Of course he knew what his hair looked like. It was so shiny. I *really* wanted to touch it...

I knew that I’d be divinely inspired to say something as soon as he turned around to face me...but...he didn’t turn around. He still kept rearranging stuff on the shelf.

“I’m your biggest fan!” I suddenly blurted out.

He paused and looked down at me. His face scrunched into another of those most holy scowls. “Do I know you?”

“I’m so sorry your store is closing! If any of the praying that I did—which was way before I saw how awesome you are—did anything to bring about the place closing, I am so sorry and I hope you forgive me because I don’t want to go to hell for making you jobless.”

“Um..okay then. I...” He gestured vaguely over his shoulder. “...have to go back there. To do...something. Ring the bell at the counter if you’re buying anything.”

Surely he was going back there to talk to his father, God, about what a great Christian warrior I was.

“What are you even doing here?”

I spun around to see Ally behind me.

“None of your business. I belong here more than you do!”

“You were picketing in front of the store calling everyone devil worshippers!”

“Yeah, well, you *are* a devil worshipper! You’re unholy and made of evil wickedness.” It wasn’t getting out of my face. It was even *more* annoying than my little brother. I had to make it go away...

I stormed past him to the barstool where he’d been sitting and snatched his evil spell book from the counter.

“What are you doing? Hey!”

I flipped open. Pages and pages of calligraphy. Words like “yearning” and “forever” and “heart” and “torrents.” My gaze settled on the familiar line that started each and every page.

“Holy—‘Letters of Love’? By ‘Alastair Nightshade’?” Each and every letter was addressed to Liam.

“Give that back!” It tried to take the sinful book from me, but I pivoted back out of its reach.

I couldn’t *believe* what I was seeing! “I’m going to show the Lord *all* your immoral thoughts and—”

It reached forward to snatch the book from my hands. Instead of its journal, though, I realized it had grabbed him.

“Give that back!”

Ally held my diary high above its head and opened it. “‘The *New Chronicles of Jesus?*’ Are you insane?”

“Gimme!” I folded his book closed and whacked him with it.

“Give *mine* back first!”

“No, you first!” I whacked him a few more times before he held up my diary in defence and started trying to hit me back.

Clearly I wasn’t getting anywhere, so I reached forward and grabbed a lock of his ungodly black hair and tugged.

The bell over the shop door sounded. “Hey, hey, kids!” The hooker from the other day stepped between us. She grabbed me the arm and pulled me away. The Japanese or Chinese or Oriental—or whatever they’re called—guy with her grabbed Ally to pull it away from me, and I figured the guy caught hermaphrodite disease or something like that.

“What the fuck?” the hooker said.

I shrugged her off of me. “Don’t profane in the house of the Lord.”

She rolled her eyes and looked at Ally. “Hmm?”

“She stole my diary! And pulled my hair!”

“It stole *my* diary!”

As if they’d timed it, both the hooker and the Oriental grabbed the books from us and handed them to each other, and then back to each of us.

I glared at Ally. He glared at me.

“Anyone not buying anything, get the hell out of the store *now*.”

I had ten dollars left over from the bus ride. I plucked a candle from the shelf and walked to the cash register. My mom would probably freak out and say I was worshipping the devil or something, but she was always freaking out over something. Uh, mothers suck. Except for the holy virgin mother of Jesus, of course.

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