

The title 'POSSESS ME' is rendered in a bold, black, distressed font. The letters are thick and have a rough, ink-splattered texture. The word 'POSSESS' is on the top line, and 'ME' is centered below it. The entire title is surrounded by numerous black ink splatters and dots of varying sizes, creating a chaotic and edgy aesthetic.

**POSSESS  
ME**

K. R. Alexander

Scholastic Inc.

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**The world is filled with hidden treasures. You just have to know where to look.**

My friend Javier and I have spent our lives scouring every inch of Marshall Junction for oddities and collectibles. We've combed through garage sales and flea markets and pawnshops, poked around the woods and the parks, and even brought a metal detector down to the lake to see what we could find. Over the years, we've assembled quite the collection of rusted rings and neglected necklaces, discarded dice and creepy cameras. We even found a stuffed squirrel hidden in the trunk of a tree.

Really, if you're willing to look in strange places, there's no telling what treasures you might find.

But there's one place we never dared to go. The one place *no one* in the town dared to go.

At school, kids called it the Blood Manor.

It was built by an eccentric old woman in the middle of the woods, just outside town. Bigger and grander than any house in Marshall Junction, filled with artifacts she'd collected from all over the globe. Some said there were treasures in there that were stolen from kings and queens. Some said every artifact was cursed.

There were hundreds of rumors, but no one knew the truth. Because the old woman never let anyone past the high iron fence that surrounded the property.

There were other rumors, too. Rumors that kids had gone missing from town. Rumors that, at night, you could hear terrible noises coming from the Manor. Screams for help.

And then, in the middle of the night, it caught fire.

This was a long time ago, before I was even born. But my dad once told me: "Kaden, when that place burned, it burned green. And those fires didn't

crackle and burn like normal fires. They screamed like the wails of the dead.”

The house mostly survived, but no one else did. The owner was never found. Nor was there ever a confirmed cause for the fire. It was a mystery. One everyone in town was more than happy to forget.

Especially because, at night, rumor had it that people could still hear the owner hammering away, eternally building a house she'd never complete. Waiting for unsuspecting visitors she could trap inside her endless halls.

Most people have been too scared to enter. Or maybe they were too smart to take such a risk.

But I knew I had to go in.

I knew I would find artifacts that would make my own collection complete.

I just had no way of knowing that what I found would do everything in its power to unmake *me*.