

# THE TRUTH ABOUT UNSPEAKABLE THINGS

by Emily A. Myers

## EXCERPT

I jump and twist to see Julian standing at the edge of the truck. Up close, his hair is even more perfect, his eyes icy green. He's wearing ripped blue jeans and a black t-shirt that drapes over his long torso, hanging almost to his knees. The contrast of the darkness of his shirt and the bright colors in his tattoos makes for a vibrant appearance.

"Um, I..." I catch myself staring. "I'm sorry, I—I shouldn't have invaded your personal space. I was just curious. I've never seen a painting like this before," I say, turning back to it. "I'm still not sure I understand it."

"Sure, you do," he says, jumping up into the cargo hold. I sense him moving closer. My heartbeat quickens. "It's just hard to admit to ourselves."

He stands beside me now, towering over me by at least a foot. In such proximity, the smell of mint and rain floods my nostrils. If I weren't so tense, I'd inhale it.

"I...um," I stutter. "I see..." I focus on the painting once more, allowing my nerves to dissipate. "I see a girl," I say. "But I don't think she's what's important."

He turns towards me. Surprise washes over his features. I glance between him and the painting, taking a deep breath.

"In the lines of her hair, face, and body, I see words, contrasting in good and evil," I say, pointing to the painting. He still hasn't taken his eyes off me.

I drop my hand to my side and take a step back to assess the painting once more, moving out of his line of sight.

"You're right," I say. "It *is* hard to admit, but I think it's telling us we all have both good and evil inside. And...and the expression on her face, though not fully drawn, depicts a struggle, like the one we all face each day we choose to be happy versus sad, to trust instead of not, to be good instead of evil."