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English B41A

Mr. Mitchell

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Soul Eaters

Chapter One: The Missing Step

There were exactly fourteen steps leading into the church, she knew because she'd count each step every time she came. This morning, however, she only counted thirteen steps – she must've missed one in her haste, she stopped just before reaching the doors and contemplated going back down the steps, *Fourteen steps, you know there are fourteen, it's just one step. You'll be fine*, she thought to herself as she forced herself to just go through the doors. They were locked, it was only a few minutes past seven, but they should have been opened by now. She went around the side of the building to a side door, she had seen Father Johnathan hide a key once under a plant, *amateurs* she had thought to herself. She pushed the door open silently and made her way inside.

Just as she had anticipated, the church was empty. Her shoes squeaked slightly on the marble floor as she made her way towards the pews, she shuffled into the second row up towards the front and let herself sink into the polished wooden seat. The church itself was very beautiful, she wasn't sure when it was built but she assumed it was very old. It had that gothic look to it with its large glass stained windows, high arched ceiling supported by columns of pillars, and intricately carved sculptures of religious figures throughout. Her favorite was the one of Mary near the entrance, it wasn't one of the more ornate statues but the way that her arms were

outstretched slightly, as if she were waiting for a hug, reminded her of her mother. She used to come with her mother as a child often so, when she passed, the church became a place of comfort. She didn't know any prayers, as she never bothered to pay attention to any of the sermons, and she didn't consider herself particularly religious, but coming here was therapeutic enough for her, the smell of the burning candles helped to ease her and would help her fall asleep sometimes.

As she lay there, she felt herself starting to drift off when all of a sudden she heard two voices and what sounded like an argument coming from the confessional. She opened her eyes and lifted her head from the pew slightly, not wanting to be seen – maybe she shouldn't be in here, maybe the doors were still locked for a reason. She quickly wondered if she could maybe sneak her way back out but just as she made a move to go the commotion at the booth got louder. It sounded like there might be a fight in there, she wondered if she ought to do or say something. No, the best thing she could do was run and get help. Once again she made for the door, but just as she did, two bodies came crashing out, sending broken chunks of wood flying in different directions. Quickly, she ducked back down into the pews and, for once at church, prayed that they wouldn't notice her there.

Back across the room, she saw that one of the bodies was definitely Father Johnathan trying to hold off an attacker. The attacker was holding some kind of dagger, he took a swipe at Father Johnathan but missed. Father Johnathan hit the attacker in the chest with enough force that it sent him flying backwards, which surprised her, she didn't think Father Johnathan could be that strong. Father Johnathan was on the heavier side and she had seen him run out of breath walking from one end of the church to the other, it seemed impossible that he be capable of fighting off this man. The attacker was clearly some kind of professional fighter, though Father

Johnathan's hit sent him reeling back, he was back on his feet quickly and ready to make his next move. The attacker inched his way forward, he jabbed to the left, but with an ever surprising speed, Father Johnathan grabbed his arm and twisted it upwards sending the dagger flying off into the pews. As Father Johnathan watched the dagger fly off, the attacker was quick to use the opportunity to uppercut Father Johnathan in the stomach causing him to double over, he then let his elbow crash down into the back of the priest's neck.

"Leave this man, soul eater, show yourself and fight me," the attacker yelled to Father Johnathan. Father Johnathan was on his hands and knees, desperately trying to catch his breath. She watched on, frozen, still unsure of what she should do, suddenly Father Johnathan let out a loud shriek that was strong enough to shatter the windows. She tried to cover her ears while still trying to protect her head from raining shards of glass. Thirteen steps. She knew she ought to have gone back and recounted, she should have known something would go wrong it was those damn thirteen steps. When all was quiet, she lifted her head again, doing her best to stay calm in this madness while trying to reassess the situation. She looked over at the two men and saw that an inky black substance was coming out of Father Johnathan's mouth.

It was like something out of a nightmare, long spider like tendrils that quickly formed into long fingers, then arms, a torso, a head. Father Johnathan's body lay unmoving as this creature made its way out of him, it stood at about six feet in length with bony arms and legs. Its black skin hung off its body and it had no face, except for a giant hole with hundreds of little razor sharp teeth. She could do nothing except stare at it, completely horrified at what it was that she was seeing. This had to be a nightmare, she must've just fallen asleep on the pew or maybe she was still at the shelter and even the thirteen steps was part of some horrible dream she was having. The creature let out another deafening screech, startling her and causing her to let out an

audible yelp, which caught the creature's attention. It turned its head and pointed its frothing mouth directly at her, fear like she had never felt before completely froze her in place. She didn't think today would be the day she would die, but then again no one ever starts their day actually expecting it to be their last, she should have at least had some breakfast.

The creature jumped across the room at her, flying over the pews, and landing directly in front of her, it opened its mouth wide and inhaled deeply. She felt as if all the air was being sucked out of her and she felt herself starting to get very weak. She managed to keep her eyes open, staring into the dark empty void that was this creature's mouth, she saw movement off to the right and it was then that she remembered about the attacker. She wasn't sure where he had run off to when the creature had revealed itself, but she saw him now and was surprised that she was able to feel slightly angry. It was his fault that the creature had appeared in the first place and now he was just standing there letting it suck the life out of her. Her body was becoming heavier and she decided she would just close her eyes and accept death's cold embrace...

Outline

1) Main Characters

- a) Jade – female, orphaned teenager, becomes an apprentice to Denise, is afraid of the number 13
- b) Dennis – soul eater hunter, mid 40's, lost his son to a soul eater, takes Jade on as an apprentice to hunt for soul eaters
- c) Soul Eaters – supernatural beings that take the souls out of humans and inhabit their bodies

2) Plot

- a) Jade discovers the existence of creatures who suck the souls out of humans and use their bodies as hosts.
- b) Dennis takes Jade on as an apprentice, both working to hunt and kill the soul eaters, though Dennis is reluctant to do so after the death of his son.
- c) Together they both discover where these creatures come from, what they are after, and what they can do to rid the world of them.