



Night of the Living Queers

13 TALES OF TERROR & DELIGHT

*Edited by
Shelly Page & Alex Brown*



WEDNESDAY BOOKS
NEW YORK

WELCOME TO THE HOTEL PARANOIA

Vanessa Montalban



~~Her~~ grandmother told her once that the sea gets what it wants. If you go against it, it'll show you who rules. So when her grandmother's hat had been carried off by the wind, touched its rim to the water, the hat belonged then to the sea. The earth was a lot like that too. You could take and take, build and build, but eventually, the land would take back.



Bathed under the garish tinge of a strange blue moon, Anabel knew for sure she was going to die tonight. From mortification. One glimpse through the hotel's double doors at the other costumes, and it was obvious she'd made a mistake. No one else was dressed like her. Their masks were ornate, dresses grand. The disguises were more Shakespearean and romantic literary than the polyester shit show she'd expected. These were *rich* kids—the foamy white cream of the crop, and they'd spent most of her adolescent life making sure she knew she was nothing but the grainy dregs.

She hovered on the gravel road—the never-completed roundabout to the hotel’s entrance. A stiff wind cut across her collarbones through the rips of her tank. Everyone else was already inside, not a car in sight because the only way to get to the abandoned hotel was by a mile-long trek through the swampy forest littered with DO NOT ENTER signs.

She debated for the millionth time if this was a good idea.

The crumbly brick hotel looked like it was only a season away from growing teeth. At three stories tall, the hotel was built on land that had been dubbed Ghost City. The entire up-and-coming community had been deemed hazardous and abandoned due to a lawsuit over protected wetlands, grounds that had gone untouched for centuries. The bed-and-breakfast was the only structure ever completed on the acres of forested land, and it was rumored to be haunted by more than just unpaid contractor debts. She knew this because her father had told her stories. Like mostly everyone else in this shitty town, he’d been involved with the project in the ’90s. He’d worked the land until his back gave out and his life boiled down to Percocets and beer.

People come back changed from that place, Anabel. It’s bad soil. Sometimes you get so deep in the muck, there’s no getting out.

But she was here for another reason. She was here for Chrys.

She pushed back her unruly hair again. From her pocket, she took out the note she’d found earlier today in her locker. The handwriting was so clearly Chrys’s that she felt something sharp and parasitic take root behind her ribs.

Sinkhole Hotel. Ten o’clock.

So she was here, despite the warning bells clanging in her head. Despite Chrys's silence these past months since their kiss. Anabel had shown up.

She paused at the hotel's threshold. She could see the silhouette of a girl looking down at her from the ivy-covered balcony. She was dressed in a tattered brown dress and a skull mask that reminded Anabel of Santa Tierra—a sort of mother earth who dealt more in death than in growth. A long black veil crowned the girl's head with a stillness that set Anabel's teeth on edge. The costume was kind of messed up, considering their town had a long history surrounding Santa Tierra. An entire village who'd worshipped her centuries ago wiped out for their beliefs.

There was something familiar about the girl's silhouette, though, and the soft incline of her head, almost as if she were grinning from behind the mask. But she couldn't be sure, and by the time Anabel glanced away, toward the sound of a sharp laugh from inside, the veiled girl was gone.



Anabel had no idea the hotel would look like this. With all the rumors of it being deserted and haunted, she figured the walls would be stripped bare, the furniture absent, the interior a carved-out carcass eaten by time and neglect. But it must've been nearly ready for operations before they shut down. But that still didn't explain the electricity, the polished floors, or the full staff of servers. The split staircase wrapped the foyer in a homely circle, showcasing a small, intimate chandelier right in the center. The only sign of negligence were the sporadic plants, less a product of interior design and more a consequence of the encroaching

wilderness outside, but the structure was unnervingly whole despite the trace of rotten wood in the air.

Still, between the open concept and her crappy costume, she'd never felt more exposed. Everyone in the entire lobby seemed to stop what they were doing as Anabel came in. She didn't recognize a soul. She was glued to the middle of the room under the sharp, precarious chandelier with nowhere to run.

"Anabel." The breathless voice was one she instantly recognized. She turned to see Chrys standing there in a full-length dress of white lace dusted with silver. She looked like a dream. "You're here."

Anabel's breath caught. It'd been so long since she'd seen Chrys this close. Seen the way her heavy bottom lip pinched in the center when she was stewing something over. The way her wood-grain-colored eyes pinned Anabel to the earth and made her forget her own name. The last time Chrys had said Anabel's name, she'd just kissed her. Chrys had taken the syllables of her name and framed them like a question. But Anabel had frozen up, and the surprise of something unexpected must've translated into something else. Something she could never take back or set straight, because right after, Chrys ran from Anabel's room and out of her life for good.

"I came because I saw your note."

"Right. My note." Chrys's expression looked pained for a moment before clearing. She tilted her head, studying Anabel's costume. She expected Chrys to say it was ridiculous and laugh, because it's what she would've said before. Back when they were brutally honest with each other and they were just two weirdos in a pod. Chrys looked over Anabel's makeup, the ripped tank and

black jeans, the black jacket that used to be hers. “Superhuman undead female lead?” she asked, nailing it on her first guess because of course she did.

“Zombie Jessica Jones.”

Chrys nodded at this. “No one ever considers the implications of an outbreak on the superpowered community.”

“I know! That’s what I keep saying.” They laughed, and for a moment it felt like no time had passed.

“I like your hair this way,” Chrys said, picking up a strip of Anabel’s long, black wavy hair, like dipping her fingers into an oil spill. “Loose and wild.”

Anabel’s throat felt horribly dry. “I haven’t unbraided it in so long.” A last-minute decision. Chrys always liked when Anabel undid her braid that seemed permanently affixed to her head. Her large bounty of hair she hadn’t cut since her mom died made Anabel’s face look smaller, smaller than it already was.

Chrys smiled. “I know.”

Anabel wanted desperately to keep the conversation going, tell her everything that had happened this past year without her, how much she needed her, but Chrys’s expression suddenly cracked, a desperate panic leaching from her eyes that drew Anabel back. Like a holographic card turned to reveal someone else. “Why did you come here?”

Anabel felt struck. “W-what?”

A waiter showed up then, producing a tray of smoky drinks that smelled of burnt orange. “Spirits?” he asked. Anabel was about to say *No, thank you* when Chrys plucked two of the drinks and handed her one. The darkness in her expression was completely gone, almost as if Anabel had imagined it to begin with.

“Like I was saying, why don’t you come with me? My friends are right over there—” And Chrys turned toward a dark corner of the room where an old-fashioned couch and pin-cushioned chairs were nestled in an alcove of mirrors. Anabel shook off the wave of shivers, the annoyance at the mention of *friends*, having no choice but to follow.



Luckily, conversation didn’t halt when they approached. In one of the alcove’s reflections, Anabel could see how weird she really looked. How out of place. Standing beside Chrys, she couldn’t blame her friend for never having looked back.

Anabel swigged the orange drink, welcoming the burn down her throat.

Of course, Elisa was perched right in the center of the couch, her coven of followers glued to her sides like they’d been all through high school. Blair and Sasha, the twins, as they were called, though not related, made space so Chrys could settle in beside Elisa, their skirts like two bodies of water becoming one. Elisa’s pretty face held a secretive grin that set Anabel’s teeth on edge, and Chrys seemed like she was waiting for Anabel to say something or make an objection at the seating arrangements, but she didn’t. How could she? This was Chrys’s world now, not hers.

Chrys introduced them as if Anabel had never met them before. It was bizarre. They’d both known Elisa and her horde since elementary school. Everyone knew Elisa. Her father owned the town, including this plot of land and the hotel that was slowly sinking into the earth, that never should’ve been disturbed to begin with. But Anabel was just supposed to pretend like she’d

never met these people at all? Like Elisa had never taunted her in middle school or the twins had never held her down in fifth grade while they rained tampons over her head?

“Isn’t this place lovely?” Elisa asked, settling back. Her fingers played with the ends of Chrys’s chestnut hair.

“Lovely,” Anabel parroted.

From the love seat, someone spoke up. “Holy shit, what are you wearing?” The guy’s name was Michael, another town founder baby—he was a senior who’d gotten suspended last year for painting all the urinals. “I fucking love it. Sit by me,” he said, and she was immediately grateful. Michael didn’t shut up about *The Walking Dead* or cult classic zombie movies. He barely took a breath between his rants, and she was honestly okay with it because the drone of his voice kept her from having to come up with something to talk about.

She wanted to ask about this place, though. Wanted to find out how they kept the hotel running and how they’d gotten permission to have so many people brought into a condemned building. But she’d downed her entire burnt orange drink and didn’t think she could string a sentence together even if she tried, and besides, she knew money could buy anything.

But it wasn’t easy watching Chrys with her new friends. She hardly recognized her. The held back laughs, the defeated hunch of her shoulders. Last Halloween, Anabel had lost her best friend. First when she fumbled the kiss, and then again when Chrys had been the only one invited to the annual Halloween party, crossing over the social gap she’d always wanted to. After that, Chrys made it clear she wanted nothing more to do with her, going as far as pretending they’d never even met. Erasing

their years of history. Leaving Anabel alone in their shit town when their plan had always been to stick together. And now here she was like a glutton for punishment.

Because of the note. Her second chance.

Anabel's attention snagged back on the conversation.

"Looks the same as last year—"

She interrupted. "The party was here last year?"

The group went silent. Chrys leaned forward, her eyes strained. Urgent. "It was."

"But I thought—don't you all throw the Halloween party somewhere different every year? Wasn't that the big secret? The whole point?"

"Some things change," Elisa said, shrugging a thin shoulder.

Michael leaned back, crossing his feet. "And some things stay the same."

The mirrors—their reflections—were all looking at her differently. They looked . . . wrong. Anabel had to shut her eyes, rub them to shake the image. The lights were playing tricks on her.

Just then another waiter came by with more orange drinks, ending the conversation. "Spirits?"

As everyone got up to dance, Anabel stayed back, nursing her second cup. Michael tried pulling her after him, but she waved him away and he accepted this good-naturedly, taking the twins instead. He was the type of guy who pretended to get along with everyone, but she knew he had a mean streak. She'd seen him in the halls, lurking like a predator. She couldn't forget that this whole group was dangerous no matter how nice they were being now. She was here for only one reason.

There was a point when it was only Anabel and Chrys alone

in the alcove, an infinite version of them reflected in the mirrors. Anabel thought one of those versions of her had to be brave enough. Chrys kept cutting her a glance, inching her way closer, and Anabel found herself doing the same, blocked only by the armrests of their respective lounges. Anabel wanted to shake her awake, shake loose that dark fog that had settled over her friend for months.

If you would've just waited for me to tell you I felt the same, if you would've never come here, I'd be yours. We'd be ours.

Anabel swallowed down the sour taste of nerves, wanting to ask what was wrong, what had happened to them, but Elisa and Michael came barreling back.

Elisa hooked a slender arm over Chrys's shoulders. "Guess what just got here?" She wiggled her body in anticipation. By this time, Michael sat on the armrest, producing a tiny bag of little blue pills.

Dread dropped into Anabel's stomach. Parties, drinking, drugs. Duh. She wasn't sure why she was so surprised. She watched movies, she heard things—she wasn't *that* sheltered. But she'd been left out of these functions for so long, she hadn't expected to run into this choice now.

Elisa and Chrys took theirs. Chrys threw her neck back. She didn't even pause to debate it, as if the girl Anabel knew, the one who wouldn't eat anything with red dye or refused to take aspirin for headaches, never existed. As if, together, they'd never driven Chrys's mom to the hospital when she'd started foaming at the mouth.

Michael mimicked Elisa and dropped his heavy arm around Anabel, leaning too close. His breath hot and uncomfortable on

her face. He was holding out a pill for her to put on her tongue. “Want to dream?”

Chrys’s eyes already looked different. Or maybe it was the lights, or the fact she was wavering as if she were only a mirage. “You don’t have to do anything, An. There’s time now for everything.”

What she said should’ve sounded hopeful, promising, but it only made Anabel’s stomach turn. She declined Michael’s offer to dream. Instead, they danced.



The lights cut across her sweaty skin. Her jacket was abandoned in some chair or consumed by the old walls.

What the sea wants, it takes. Like the earth.

The sense of abandon was contagious, even if she didn’t take anything. It felt like she had. Like something was severed inside her, and she’d become untethered.

One second, they were all dancing. Chrys was in her arms. Smiling, laughing, and it did feel like a dream. But now Chrys was leaving. Elisa was tugging her away toward the top of the steps where other couples grappled for each other in the dark. Chrys turned back once, met Anabel’s gaze, and disappeared. Again.

The twins were swaying their hands toward the ceiling, eyes closed as if they were wading through air. Michael held Anabel, pulling at her hips.

“I—” she started, but the music was too loud. Her voice too choked.

“Wait, baby zombie. Not yet.”

She pulled away from him and he let go, eyes already shuttering as if he didn’t care one way or another.

There were too many people crowding the front door, too many servers asking her if she wanted more spirits. She needed air. She stumbled upstairs, pushing past sweaty bodies, hearing snatches of strange conversation.

“This used to be her land, her people.”

“They worshipped her. Then the village was desecrated.”

Anabel couldn't meet anyone's glassy eyes. She made it down a dark hall, opening doors until she found an empty suite, relieved that no one seemed brave enough to venture into the privacy of the vacant rooms.

Again, she was surprised by how everything was so intact. The furniture hadn't been looted. Instead, it was charmingly arranged to welcome any weary traveler. A bed made with pristine white sheets. She didn't dare disturb it, though. She opened the balcony doors and relished the wind that blew inside, the unusual moon with its bluish tint making everything colder. Shadier. The moon made the entire night feel off. As if she were looking out at an old, forgotten film rather than reality.

Anabel spun around. She felt something glide across her shoulder, heart lodging in her throat. Until she noticed the drapes. The billowing drapes. She gripped her chest and went inside toward the bathroom.

It was a mistake coming here. Maybe Chrys *was* cruel. Maybe she invited Anabel to show her what she'd lost. Remind her that she was too late. Or maybe Chrys was pushing her. Testing her, and she was failing.

In the bathroom, Anabel stared at her reflection. Her wild mane of dark hair, her elfish face, and her huge dark eyes that always made her look lost or helpless. *Stupid*. Stupid zombie makeup

and stupid hope that led her to this place. She ran the tap, because of course the water ran just fine. Maybe everyone in town had lied about this place being too dangerous. About it being shut down and uninhabitable. About it being cursed. Maybe the entire sinking forest was a cover-up, a money pit the town founders used to embezzle fortunes. Maybe Anabel's dad broke his back for no reason.

She scrubbed at her face furiously, washing off the powder that made her brown skin pale. She was engulfed in the dark when Chrys's whispered voice called, "*Anabel. I'm sorry, Anabel.*"

She quickly rubbed the water from her eyes, looked behind her, and glanced into the room, but there was nothing there. No one was standing in the bathroom except her. She was losing it. This place. Something was wrong with this place.

When she turned back to the mirror, a scream ripped from her throat. Santa Tierra stared back with her skull face and tattered brown dress.

Everything inside Anabel erupted. Falling back, she cracked an elbow against the wall, pain shooting up her bones. She bolted from the bathroom, nearly tripping on a broken piece of floorboard she was sure wasn't there before.

There was a horrible buzzing in her ears. The room was dim, but it didn't prevent her from seeing the tangle of stringy blond hair splayed over the bed. Elisa stared back at her, hollow cheeks and empty eyes. Flies buzzing from her open mouth. Dead.

Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead.

A strangled scream burst from Anabel. She ran for the door and rushed outside into the dim hallway with crooked pictures

and peeling paint. A figure's fluttering black veil turned the corner, a scrape of nails against the decaying walls. Everything was different. Everything looked old and withering. She wanted to scream, but she couldn't make a sound and the music was so loud she was afraid no one would ever hear her. She went the opposite way, toward the main stairs.

She grabbed hold of the first couple she could find and shook them apart. "She's dead," she yelled into their faces, but they swayed in her grip, eyes cloudy. They were dreaming. Was she dreaming?

She grabbed the more lucid of the two—a girl in a ragged flapper dress and a dark stamp of circles under her eyes. "She's dead," Anabel repeated. "Elisa is dead in there!"

"Hey." Chrys showed up, her cold fingers gripping Anabel's feverish arm, pulling her away before she could shake loose the girl's teeth. "What's going on?"

"Chrys!" Anabel threw her arms over her. "Oh my god, you're okay." Chrys held her close, inhaling her hair, warm and alive, but then Anabel felt nails sharpen against her back.

She pulled away, watching Chrys's face flicker between panic and something colder before reverting to normal. "It's okay," Chrys soothed. "Elisa is fine. Look—" She pointed to the bottom of the steps, where Anabel could see the tail end of Elisa's pink dress before it disappeared toward the dark. "She was probably just scaring you. Why don't I get you a drink?"

A prank? Anabel shook her head. "No. I don't want another drink. Can you just—look in the room—" She pulled Chrys toward the hall, marveling at its now-meticulous state, before peering into

the bedroom she'd ran out of. The door was still open. "See!" But when they looked inside, the bed was empty. The crisp white sheets untouched. The room whole and welcoming.

Anabel felt her heart contract, twist in on itself.

Chrys wore a pitying look. "I'm sorry, Anabel. Let me go get you something to drink. Stay here and try to breathe. It'll all be over soon."

"The party?"

"Yes."

Anabel swayed on her feet. None of this was right. She knew what she saw. Chrys grabbed hold of her hand, smiling softly. Her finger traced Anabel's palm. It was a game they used to play. Writing invisible words on their skin and guessing what it said. *GO*.

Anabel's throat went dry. *Go?* Chrys wanted her to leave? She let go of Anabel's hand, still smiling like she hadn't even registered the word. Like she wasn't even fully there. Anabel didn't recognize this Chrys at all.

Chrys's hand touched Anabel's cheek as if checking for a temperature, but she lingered before letting her hand fall to her side. "It'll all be over soon."

Chrys left her in the hall again, the bedroom still empty save for the distant sound of buzzing insects. Maybe the person dressed as Santa Tierra took Elisa's body. Maybe they were hiding her in another room. Or maybe it was just a prank and Elisa was downstairs in the kitchen with Chrys, laughing at Anabel's horrified scream. *Go*.

Anabel checked the closest rooms, but they were all empty, dark like cavities that lead to nothing. A rotten scent filled her nose, growing worse by the second.

The hall seemed to constrict until she could barely squeeze herself out. Or maybe her panic was just too big. When she stepped out onto the mezzanine overlooking the lobby, it was empty. No one was there, though the music was still blaring downstairs—a disjointed ballad that turned her stomach. The people were all gone like they'd never existed at all. No dreamers. No servers. Everyone left.

Anabel swayed in place. “No, no.”

This couldn't be happening. This wasn't real. She made her way down the stairs, shaky hands gripping the railing that was flaked with rust. The chandelier was missing crystals and overwhelmed with cobwebs. The steps had holes. It had all gone rotten. It had all aged in a matter of minutes.

“Hello?” she cried. Nothing.

The kitchen. Chrys said she was going to get her a drink. She wouldn't have left her here alone. Anabel went to the unmanned radio first and turned off the music. The silence was worse. An echo of wind and creaking wood. She passed the mirrored alcove they were all in earlier. The cushions were gutted, the coffee table collapsed. The infinite, cloudy mirrors reflected her pale, frightened face.

“Chrys?” she called, gulping hard, making her way to the swinging doors off to the side that led into the kitchen. She tried pushing a door open, but it was stuck on something, only budging when she put all her shoulder's weight behind it. The door moved, and she slipped on something wet, plummeting into the dark room and onto the sticky floor. The ground was uneven beneath her. She was tangled around someone else's legs. When her eyes adjusted to the dark, horror wrapped itself around her throat.

The twins. The twins were tangled in a heap on the floor, mouths gaping. Limbs—oh god. They looked like broken dolls. A *prank*. Anabel's body vibrated.

She scrambled off them. "This isn't funny. You can stop now!"

The twins didn't move. Their chests didn't rise and fall like something alive would. *It's a prank. Just a prank.*

"Please stop." It was impossible. They were practically husks. Anabel touched Blair's skin with the tips of her fingers, and her body was paper-thin. Disintegrating. As if she'd been decomposing for years.

Anabel covered her mouth, backed into the door, backed into the hall, and let the door swing shut on the gruesome scene, stifling the stench of corroded metal and old forgotten things.

She didn't think she was breathing right. Maybe she'd forgotten how to breathe entirely.

She shouldn't have come here. Anabel ran for the front door, needing to leave. Needing to find anyone else.

And she found her. Chrys stood at the entrance, her lace gown dirty and tattered. Her face sunken in and ashen. Anabel felt everything inside her collapse. "Chrys? Chrys, what's happening? What's wrong with you?"

Chrys came closer, her voice a cracked, wispy thing. "Did I tell you my mom was supposed to work here? She was here on opening day, before she started using."

Anabel shook her head. "What does that have to do with anything? What's going on?"

"It's bad soil, Anabel. We were already tainted from the start." Chrys reached out a pleading hand, but Anabel was backing

away. She was afraid of this Chrys. This Chrys wasn't right. None of this was right.

A wail vibrated around the lobby, shaking the chandelier, causing Anabel to lose her footing. She clutched the end of the banister, the old wood cracking in her grip. Like a flicker in film, Chrys's expression changed. Morphed into something bitter as she came closer. "You can't build on bones. We should've never built on her land."

Anabel couldn't take it. She ran past her friend. She'd come back with help. She'd always come back for her. The front door was solid wood. A fortress door. There was no handle, no lock. She tried pushing it open, but it wouldn't give.

"I never wanted you to come here. I'm sorry, Anabel. She knew my weakness."

"Then help me get us out!" She turned to plead with Chrys, but it wasn't Chrys standing there.

It was Santa Tierra. There was no mistaking her face for a mask. Where her eyes should have been, there were two dark pits. Her bone mouth was stripped of muscle and flesh.

Anabel cried like something wounded. She backed away and ran up the stairs. There had to be a way out of here. The stairs were withering with each step, collapsing under her weight. The entire lobby seemed to be disintegrating in front of her.

Michael stood at the top step, his tuxedo in strips. His muscular shape was gone, leaving nothing but gray skin over a skeleton. "How long have I been here?" he asked. "Is anyone even looking for me anymore? You'll help me, right?"

Anabel was sobbing. She was slipping back, the stairs too

precarious. Michael reached out as if to rest on her, but she could barely support herself anymore. She pushed him away and, like a sack of bones, he tumbled down the stairs. She only had time to see his neck at an odd angle before the ground swallowed him up.

The land will take back.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry.” It had turned into a chant as Anabel climbed what remained of the stairs, jumped onto the mezzanine with holes that revealed the hotel’s desolate bones, stumbled down the hall, and pushed her way into the collapsing room where she’d found Elisa dead.

The hotel must’ve swallowed Elisa up too because she was no longer there, but Anabel couldn’t stick around to wonder about it. The second-story balcony looked out over the forest, still glowing blue from the moonlight.

Anabel peered down. The roundabout road was still there, jagged stones in a sea of gravel. The fall could kill her, but so could staying here. There was no other choice. She looked once behind her.

“I promise to come back for you, Chrys. I promise.”

She jumped, closed her eyes, and braced for the blow.



Anabel cracked open her eyes. She wasn’t hurt. She wasn’t in pain. But she was distraught.

She sat in the alcove, the mirrors reflecting the party in full swing. Elisa, Michael, and the twins were dancing beneath the glowing chandelier. No.

No.

She was too stiff to move. Too petrified to scream. From the reflection, she saw Chrys sit down beside her. Beautiful, beautiful Chrys. She perched her head on Anabel's shoulder, grabbed her hand warmly in hers.

Chrys's fingertip traced a pattern on the inside of Anabel's wrist.

NEVER LEAVE

She could never leave. She would rot here, sink into the ground where nothing flowered. Except she wouldn't be alone again.

From this angle, Anabel could see the front door, open and waiting for the next guests to arrive. She saw a tattered brown dress and a black veil. Santa Tierra was leaving. But in place of the skull was Anabel's own face reflected back. Dark wide eyes no longer innocent.

"What a lovely, lovely face."

The land will eventually take back when she's hungry, when she's had enough. Sometimes places are never meant to be disturbed.

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, organizations, and events portrayed in these stories are either products of the authors' imaginations or are used fictitiously.

First published in the United States by Wednesday Books, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group

NIGHT OF THE LIVING QUEERS: 13 TALES OF TERROR & DELIGHT. Copyright © 2023 by Michelle Page and Alessandra Brown. WELCOME TO THE HOTEL PARANOIA. Copyright © 2023 by Vanessa Montalban. THE VISITOR. Copyright © 2023 by Kalynn Bayron. A BRIEF INTERMISSION. Copyright © 2023 by Sara Farizan. GUESTED. Copyright © 2023 by Rebecca Kim Wells. ROCKY ROAD WITH CARAMEL DRIZZLE. Copyright © 2023 by Kosoko Jackson. THE THREE PHASES OF GHOST-HUNTING. Copyright © 2023 by Alessandra Brown. NINE STOPS. Copyright © 2023 by Trang Thanh Tran. LEYLA MENDOZA AND THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LANE. Copyright © 2023 by Maya Gittelman. IN YOU TO BURN. Copyright © 2023 by Em X. Liu. ANNA. Copyright © 2023 by Michelle Page. HEY THERE, DEMONS. Copyright © 2023 by Tara Sim. SAVE ME FROM MYSELF. Copyright © 2023 by Ayida Shonibar. KNICKKNACK. Copyright © 2023 by Ryan Douglass.

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. For information, address St. Martin's Publishing Group, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

www.wednesdaybooks.com

Designed by Devan Norman

Moon art © Croisy/Shutterstock.com, Halloween icon art © DenysHolovatiuk/Shutterstock.com

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

ISBN 978-1-250-89296-6 (trade paperback)
ISBN 978-1-250-89298-0 (hardcover)
ISBN 978-1-250-89297-3 (ebook)

Our books may be purchased in bulk for promotional, educational, or business use. Please contact your local bookseller or the Macmillan Corporate and Premium Sales Department at 1-800-221-7945, extension 5442, or by email at MacmillanSpecialMarkets@macmillan.com.

First Edition: 2023

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1