

[Prologue](#)  
[Chapter One](#)  
[Chapter Two](#)  
[Chapter Three](#)  
[Chapter Four](#)  
[Chapter Five](#)  
[Chapter Six](#)  
[Chapter Seven](#)  
[Chapter Eight](#)  
[Chapter Nine](#)  
[Chapter Ten](#)  
[Chapter Eleven](#)  
[Chapter Twelve](#)  
[Chapter Thirteen](#)  
[Chapter Fourteen](#)  
[Chapter Fifteen](#)  
[Epilogue](#)  
[A Note From the Author](#)  
[About the Author](#)

*My Daylight Monsters*

By  
Sarah Dalton

Copyright © 2013 Sarah Dalton

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this work, in whole or in part, in any form. This is a work of fiction. All characters, events, organizations and products depicted herein are either a product of the author's imagination, or are used fictitiously.

Cover Design by Najla Qamber

**Also by the author:**

The Blemished (Blemished #1)

The Vanished (Blemished #2)

The Unleashed (Blemished #3)

The Fractured: Elena (Blemished #2.5) (Fractured 1)

The Fractured: Maggie (Blemished #2.5) (Fractured 2)

**Follow the author:**

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Author Page](#)

[Website](#)

[Mailing List](#)

## Prologue

The flames are unbearable. The skin on my arm blisters from the heat and it forces me back, away from the others. One moment I'm next to Anita and the next I'm alone—cut off by a wall of flames. Acrid bitter smoke curls in my nostrils and my stomach roils in response.

“Mary!”

“Anita?” I call back. I can't see anyone for the wall of thick, dark smoke. I stumble over the collapsed bodies on the floor.

I cough. My lungs heave. If I stay much longer, the smoke will pull me under its spell. I'll collapse and die. I clamp my mouth with my sleeve. *Where is she?*

The flames eat into every part of the room. Behind me lies the exit and I know I should go to it, now. Or I'll die. *I should go.*

“Anita?”

I can't step forward. The flames lick my skin. *I'll die.*

I can't step forward.

I have to back away. I have to run for the door. I have to leave her behind.

## Chapter One

We all have morning rituals, don't we? I wake earlier than my parents; shower, dress, go downstairs and make a cup of tea. There, in the still silence of morning, I stand by the kitchen sink and stare out of the window, with my tea in hand. Some mornings the sunlight warms my face as it streams through the glass, and everything seems clear—even if it only lasts for a little while. My mind is peaceful.

We have a wide-reaching view from the kitchen as our house sits near the summit of a hill. On our street the terraced houses rise from the valley in a higgledy-piggledy of difference heights and chimney lengths, window sizes and coloured bricks. Our neighbour even has a kitchen extension, attached to the back like a Lego piece stuck on by a child.

I survey the garden. It slopes down as the hill fades away to the flattened park beyond, which slowly slopes into tennis courts and reaches towards the playground, before finally dipping to the duck pond. Beyond that lies a patchwork of streets. Beyond the streets there are lines of identical trees—like an infantry on-guard—and even further toward the horizon is the hospital.

My eyes are drawn to the main building, a high-rise of stories reaching upwards from the maze of pavements, outbuildings and car-parks; the tallest building for miles. Clad with cold grey concrete, decaying and dirty, I feel as though it somehow looks back at me, challenging me.

On a normal day I stand by the kitchen sink sipping my tea, enjoying the morning calm. The hospital doesn't bother me. In fact, I get a sense of triumph knowing that I'm safe and well, that today I don't have to go anywhere near it. I can live my life as normal, without having to even think about what happens inside that formidable grey building.

But today is not a normal day. Today, my tea cools as I stand rigidly by the sink. My mind is not at ease. It's swimming with the kind of thoughts that make me want to reach into my skull and grasp them, drag them out and throw them away. I'm not safe anymore. Today I will enter the tall building with the dirty concrete, and I don't know when I'll come out again.

I switch my focus from the far-away scene to the much closer reflection of myself in the glass—a ghostly version of me, with eyes so dark and hollow they frighten me. I think of the long corridors and shiny white walls. In scary stories, the monster hides in the dark. Well, not my monsters. My fears are in the daylight. They lurk in the clinical scent of bleach and the lonely blinking of a fluorescent light. Their roars echo in the sound of heels clicking on linoleum and the swish of long coats.

My reflection splits in two and I frown. What now? Who wants me?

“Mary?”

Scary Mary. That's what they started calling me—after the incident.

I saw it. I didn't make it up. I saw the monster.

“Mary? Are you all right, love?”

The second reflection smiles. Her long, black hair is different now. I see the strands of grey. Otherwise it could have been mine.

Mum puts a hand on my shoulder. “You won't be in for long. Just until you're better, I promise.”

“What's better?” I mumble. “How will I know?” *Will someone tell me?*

“You'll know, sweetheart. You'll know.”

\*

Dad lets out a long breath as he pulls up the handbrake. He's sworn three times in the car-park, once at another driver. Mum has remained uncharacteristically quiet about the incident. As the engine stops the rain starts—drumming its tattoo on the car roof. Dad's hand doesn't move from the handbrake, he grips it so tightly that his knuckles whiten. Mum reaches across, for some reason with her left hand, and places it on his, their wedding rings on top of each other.

The rain drums harder and I find myself snapping, "I'm sorry to be such a nuisance to you both." I see the pain and hurt in that one gesture. The two hands together. Me in the backseat. Alone.

Dad raises an eyebrow at me in the mirror.

"Sorry," I mumble.

"Mary," he begins. His chest decompresses like a balloon and air whistles through his nose. "I know you're afraid. We're afraid, too. We're afraid for you—"

"Simon, don't talk like that to her. We have to be strong—"

"We need to be *honest*. As a family we need to be honest and *that* will make us strong."

We all fall silent. Dad places both hands on the wheel and stares out through the windscreen. I unclick my seatbelt but the thumping rain swallows the sound. I should be the strong one. I should try to reassure them.

"I'll be okay, you know."

Smiles are shared through the car mirror. It's time. Despite my bravado, it's Mum who opens the door first.

I can't help but raise my face to the rain as I climb out of Dad's Ford saloon. Usually, when it rains in England, water falls from the sky in little more than a pathetic drizzle that barely gets you wet. Now, torrents pour from the sky in sheets, soaking me in an instant. Mum bustles around the side of the car, battling with her umbrella, with mascara running down her cheeks. The powder on her face shines and water droplets form on her forehead. Her eyes are wet and full of an expression I only see when I've fallen down or had the flu. It's a furtive, desperate look, one that makes me think of how it feels to lose control, or what it would be like to have to sit back and watch the people you love suffer.

The umbrella goes up over my head and Mum shuts the car door behind me. She wraps an arm around me and pulls me close, so that we huddle together like conspirators. Dad does that thing most men do, instead of ducking under the umbrella he hunches his shoulders and flips up his collar, as though it's going to make all the difference. Still, it makes me laugh for the first time today.

Just like that, the Hades family cross the car-park, and I see it up close: my new home. First the umbrella shields me from the hospital building, and all I see is faded parking spaces, broken glass from a headlight, and a few empty cider cans. But then, as we come under the cover of the hospital walkway, Mum puts down the umbrella and stops to reapply her make-up, right outside the tall, grey building I see every morning.

The automatic doors open and close to let people in and out. A woman with weathered skin and thin lips limps out of the building, wheeling her IV stand along with her. The sight of the plastic bag and the squeaky sound of the wheels repulse me, but it doesn't seem to bother her. She finds a spot to lean against the dirty wall and lights up a cigarette. Her arm is connected to the drip, and I try not to look, because I hate the sight of it. I hate the thought of the needle in her vein.

So I stare at the walls. Up close I can see that the cladding has been applied in huge, grey squares of a rough, pebbly type texture. In some places, bits of pebbles or chunks of cladding have come away from the wall. The shadow cast by the roof of the walkway throws everything into gloom, along with the thick storm clouds hanging above us. I shiver, and it's not because my clothes are stuck to my skin, or because my hair is sopping wet; it's because the building gives me the creeps.

"Come on," Mum says. "Let's go in. We'll find Dr. Harrison and everything will be all right. Simon, did you remember her bag from the car?"

I'd forgotten all about it so I whip around to check. Dad lifts up the hold-all with a grin. When I see his proud face I want to hug him tight. He's always so happy when he gets something right, like when I was little and he remembered to only toast my bread for thirty seconds and use the seedless jam. A little of the tension eases from my shoulders.

“I guess we should go in, then,” I say.

The smoking woman says hello to us as we approach, “Awful weather, isn’t it?”

I don’t want to look at her. She’s sick and it brings me too close to illness. Who wants to think about what’s it’s like to be sick? I mean, really sick. We don’t want to be reminded, do we? Well, I don’t. I don’t want to think about it at all.

It’s so bright and warm inside that I already feel stifled. My ballet pumps slip and squeak on the floor; they aren’t great on slippery surfaces. Dad keeps an eye on me and moves closer. For how much longer will I have him walking next to me, ready to catch me if I fall? When does that stop... for good?

“This way.” Using some sort of Mum-voodoo, she manages to direct us through the hospital to the correct ward.

We get in the lift and an ancient woman with wrinkles as deep as my belly button is wheeled in by a nurse. She glances at me and nods at my wet appearance. “Ooh, by ‘eck, yer soaked, love. Terrible summer we’re ‘avin’.” Her false teeth slip a little and she sorts them with shaking fingers. I try to smile politely.

Mum saves us from an awkward silence. “The wettest since the eighties, apparently. Here’s hoping for a nice autumn!”

But the old lady can’t stop staring at me. “C’mere, love.” She rummages in her handbag. “Aww, yer a pretty girl. But yer need to smile more, love. Here. Have this.” She presses a sticky boiled sweet into my hand. Up close she smells like disinfectant, powder and something sickly, like blood. There’s a faint waft of urine.

I pull back. “Thank you.”

The nurse wheels her out at floor five and I watch her leave. That wriggly, creeping feeling of discomfort and guilt worms its way through my body. I didn’t want to be near her. I didn’t want to smell her or see the brown patches on her skin. I didn’t want to think of how close to death she is. And all she wanted to do was talk to me; to talk to someone young and pretty and full of life. *That’s me?*

When floor six lights up I’m first out the door, hugging my body for warmth, or something. There’s a man staring at me through the open door of the opposite ward. There’s something wrong with him, his skull shines through his face like an X-Ray. It’s one of those things that the doctors say I’m making up, or that my brain is making up for me. There’s no point screaming, or shouting or drawing attention to myself. I want to run and never come back. The man with the skull keeps watching me. His feet don’t touch the floor.

“Everything all right, Mary?” Mum asks.

I want to say no, *hell no*, get me out of here now. But instead I let her guide me away from the man with the skull, down yet another hospital corridor, until we reach the Magdalena Ward.