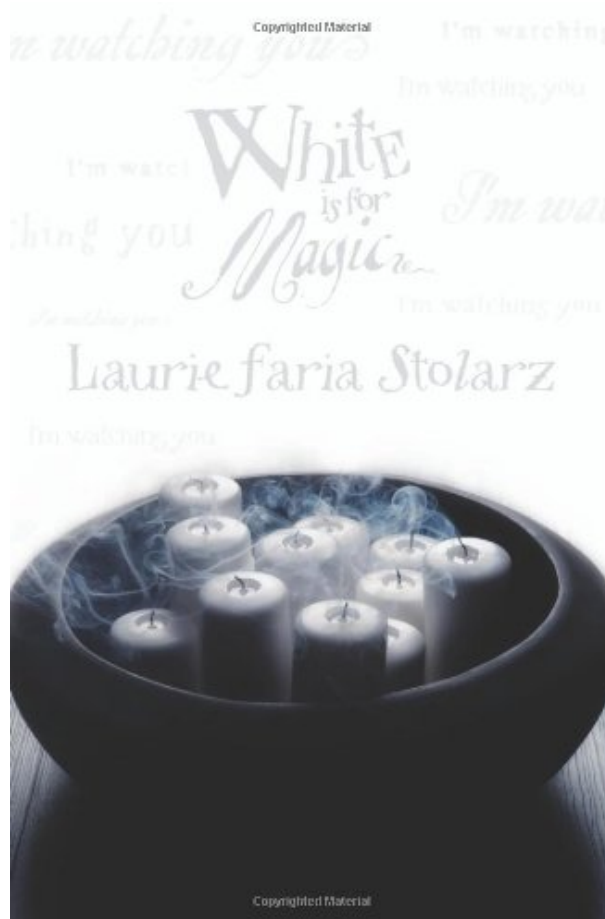
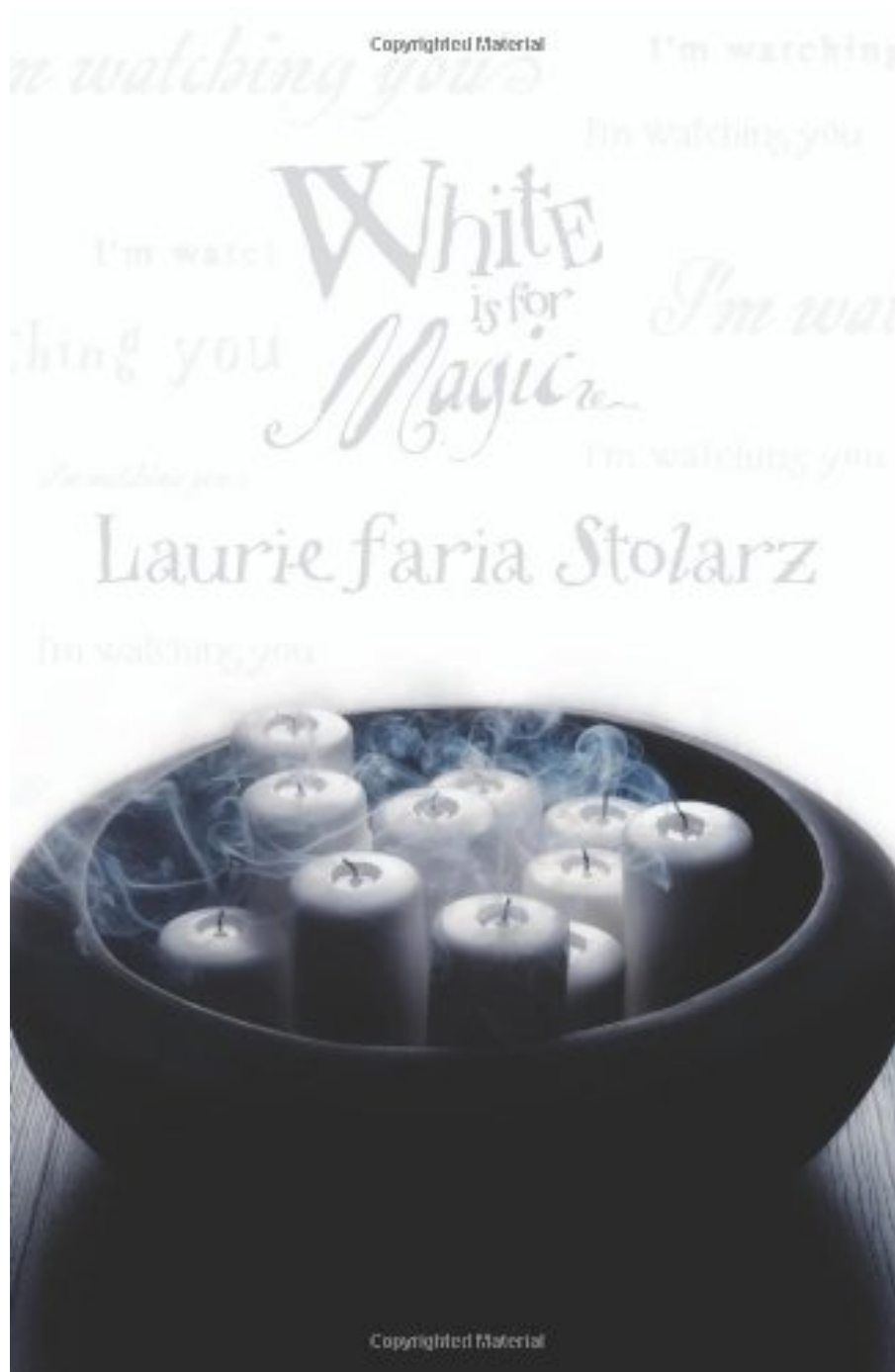


WHITE IS FOR MAGIC (STOLARZ SERIES) BY LAURIE FARIA STOLARZ



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My world is falling apart. I stand up from the toilet and stumble over to the mirror. My eyes are red, the skin beneath them a dark, smoky color. I reknott my hair with a rubber band, noticing my chin-wet from puke spooge. I wipe the goo with my fingers as best I can and tuck the stray strands of dark hair behind my ears. What I really need right now is a hot bath, but the knocking in my head is so intense I want nothing more than to just lie down.

After a thorough toothbrushing and several gargles of mouthwash, I stagger my way back through the

common area and into the room. Drea and Amber, my roommates, are asleep. I know I could wake them up, that they'd want to know what's going on-especially after last time-but I almost don't even want to know myself. Not tonight, anyway. I grab a lipstick from Drea's vanity table and the notepad from beside my bed. I flip the notepad open to a fresh sheet and write the letter M across it in the dark-red lipstick, trying my best to make it look smudged, messy-the way it did in my nightmare.

I rip the page free of the pad and stuff it into the pocket of my pajamas. Then I lie back on my bed and pull the covers up over my ears to block out Amber's snoring. But I still feel sick, the juices in my stomach churning away, bubbling up like molten lava. There's only one way I'm going to get any rest tonight.

From my spell drawer, a.k.a. the bottom drawer of my dresser, I pull out a stick of incense, a virgin black candle, a razor blade, and some other assorted spell supplies, including a bunch of red grapes courtesy of Drea's mini-fridge. I collect it all inside my terra-cotta pot and stand up to leave. Except my head is throbbing. I sit back down and peek over at Amber and Drea, in their bunkbeds, the light of the waxing moon casting a shadow over Amber on the top bunk. She turns over, but she's still snoring-her mouth arched open, chest heaving, six cherry-red ponytails sticking out from her head. Drea moves her forearm up over her ear in response, her golden-blond hair separated into two perfectly frumpled braids.

I wonder if I should even bother telling them anything. If maybe I'm just overreacting. It's only happened twice now. And Maura's birthday is a week from Saturday. So, maybe that's what's causing it. Or maybe I'm just coming down with the flu.

The terra-cotta pot tucked under my arm, I grab a pocket flashlight from the drawer and make my way out of the room and through the common area. The door to the boiler room is just out in the lobby.

I travel down the dusty wooden steps using the slender beam of the flashlight to guide my way. I know I could flip on the light switch, but the sudden blast of artificial light would only make my head pound more. Instead, I try to make peace with the darkness; I try to imagine it like crushed velvet, enveloping my skin, inviting me further down the creaking stairs and into the boiler room.

It smells musty down here, like leaking pipes. I try to focus on my breath, but for some reason I'm feeling a bit disconnected. Maybe it's because I don't feel well. Or maybe it's because it's been a year since my last bout of nightmares, and a part of me is afraid that, this time, I won't be able to stop it.

I take a deep breath and make my way across the cement floor. There isn't much down here-an old and rattling boiler, a rusty water tank, dorm room furniture in need of repair, and lots of copper pipes that travel along the ceiling. But it's a place where I can be alone, where I don't have to worry about being interrupted or waking anyone up.

I set my supplies down on the altar I've set up-an old computer desk with a crack down the middle-and light the stick of incense. I start with the bunch of grapes. I pass it through the incense smoke, making sure it gets fully bathed in the lavender fumes. I continue charging all the ingredients, concentrating on the long, gray swirls that rise up and wash over my skin, focusing on lavender's ability to soothe.

My stomach gurgles impatiently. I dab my finger with a bit of the oil and touch the top end of the virgin black candle. "As above," I say. Then I touch the bottom, "So below." I touch the center, drag my finger upward, and then run it back down, continuing to moisten the candle's length. When the candle is fully anointed, I hold it around the base and, with the razor, carve Maura's name into the wax surface, my fingers shaking slightly from the mere thought of her.

Of what happened.

Of what this all might mean.

I rotate the candle counterclockwise three times, focusing on the idea of riddance, and carve the words "rest in peace" on the opposite side from her name-so the guilt will die from my conscience once and for all. I light the candle and watch a few seconds as the inky black wax heats up and begins to pool around the wick. Then I take the slip of paper from my pocket and stare down at the M-M for Maura, for Murder, maybe. I really don't know.

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"Maura, Maura, rest at last," I whisper. "You shall not make me repeat the past." I chant the words over and over again, concentrating on the black candle as it begins to burn Maura away. I concentrate on the mint coating my stomach, soaking up the grape.

After meditating on the spell for several minutes, I hold my watch up to the candlelight-it's 4:05. I'll take the candle back to my room and set it by my bed so it has time to burn down completely. I smother what's left of the incense, spoon the mint and grape mixture into a plastic sandwich bag, and collect everything inside the pot. Thankfully, I feel my stomach begin to ease. Maybe now I'll be able to get some sleep.

I grab everything and am just about to make my way back upstairs when I hear a banging noise coming from the corner, by the water tank. "Hello?" I stand up, the wheels of my broken chair squeaking back against the cement. I aim the flashlight out in front of me, but the beam is too narrow to see much in the darkness. I take a few steps toward the tank, noticing the window just behind it is open a crack. There's a shifting against the floor, like someone taking a step.

"Hello?" I repeat. "Who's there?" My hands shake. My heart tightens. I try to tell myself that it's probably just someone who forgot her key. Probably someone who decided to sneak in since the resident director locks the door at midnight.

Closer now. The tank is just a few feet away-just out of reach. "Come out NOW!" "Stacey?" says a male voice from behind the tank. "Is that you?"

My mouth trembles open. I don't know that voice. It's not Chad's voice. Not PJ's, either. It doesn't belong to anyone I recognize.

"Stacey?" he repeats. His shadow on the wall moves toward me. I panic. The flashlight tumbles from my grip, the terra-cotta pot slips from under my arm, and I hear it smash against the floor.

I whirl around and run for the stairs. The sudden motion causes the candle flame to flicker out, leaving me in complete darkness. I can hear him behind me, his feet hitting against the cement floor with each stride.

"Wait!" he shouts. His voice is followed by a clanging sound, like maybe he crashed into something. I trip up

the stairs, my chin smacking down against the wooden step, wax dripping on my fingers and burning my skin. I grapple my way up, on hands and knees, toward the boiler room door, but I can't quite find the knob. "Don't run away from me, Stacey." His voice is frantic and insistent.

Wrestling up another step, I impale my knee on something sharp. A nail. A splinter maybe. I hear myself whimper. My stomach turns. Bile coats the insides of my mouth. His footsteps are following me up the stairs. I pull my knee back and hear a cracking sound, like wood. I reach up for the doorknob, this time able to wrap my fingers around it. The knob turns but the door won't open, like something is barring it. Like someone wants to trap me inside.

Two

I twist and turn the knob, pound at the door. "Help!" I shout, over and over again. I pivot as best I can and throw the candle-hard-toward his voice. I hear him cry out. I try at the doorknob again. This time it opens. It's Amber; she's let me out. I whip the door closed behind us and grab Amber by the arm.

When we get back to the room the lights are on and Drea is sitting up in bed. "Are you guys all right?" But I'm breathing so hard, my heart pounding like a fist, that I can't answer.

"Stacey's gone completely whacked," Amber says, closing and locking the door behind us. "I found her Nightmare- on-Elm-Streeting in the boiler room. Maybe slasher flicks are not such a nifty idea before bed." "What are you talking about?" Drea asks. "A guy," I say, gaining my breath. "There was some guy down there."

"Who? Freddie Krueger?" Amber giggles. "No," I say. "I'm serious. I don't know who it was. They locked me down there somehow. I was trapped."

"Wait," Drea says. "Start over. What happened?"

"This is what trapped you," Amber says. She plucks a big fat pencil from her pajama pocket. "It was wedged underneath the door. Probably got kicked there by accident." "I'm gonna call Keegan," I say.

Keegan is the resident director in charge of our dorm. She's basically this granola-and-yogurt-eating, Birkenstockwearing throwback from the sixties, complete with yoga mat and tie-dye apparel. But she is a huge improvement over Madame Discharge, the resident director for the underclasswomen dorms.

I pick up the phone, but Amber nabs it and clicks it off before I can dial.

"You're not gonna go all schoolmarm on us, are you?" She holds the phone behind her back.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Think about it." Amber twirls one of her mini-ponytails in thought. "It was probably just somebody's juicy downstairs-you know, sneaking in for some cuddle. Wouldn't you be upset if Chad was sneaking in to ladle with you, and someone ratted him out?"

"Don't you mean spoon?" Drea asks.

"Not the way I do it." Amber arches her eyebrows up and down.

"Give me the phone NOW!" I insist.

"Why are you being all wiggy? The boiler room is where everybody sneaks in-guys, guests after midnight, people carrying curious liquids," Amber smiles. "Why ruin everybody's fun by finking to the RD?"

"Maybe I just don't think people should be sneaking in," I say. "Or locking people down in a basement."

"Are you kidding?" Amber says. "One of the benefits of the senior houses is that people can sneak in. Plus, you were penciled in, not locked in. And it was purely an accident." "He didn't try to attack you or anything, did he?" Drea interrupts. "Wait-what happened to your knee?"

I look down. My pajamas are ripped; there's a giant splinter sticking out through the belly of one of the gingerbread- cookie men patterned across the flannel fabric. But my fingers hurt just as much; there are bits of wax caked to the skin. I break one of the leaves off the aloe plant by the window. The clear, syrupy goo oozes from inside the thick, green plant flesh; I apply the goo to the hardened wax droplets to help soothe the burn.

"What the hell happened to you?" Drea moves toward the edge of the bed, her perfectly toned, tanning-bed legs sticking out from a school T-shirt, the giant Hillcrest letters stretched across her chest. She stares at my waxy fingers. "Candle wax," I say. "My candle blew out when I started running."

"You know, Stacey," Amber begins, "your primitive living thing does have its charm, but modern electricity is way cooler."

Amber's sarcasm spares me the trouble of explaining my knee.

"Maybe we should call someone to look around a bit," Drea says. "Just to be sure."

Amber tosses me the phone. "Go ahead if you want, but it was probably just some prank. You know, some Michael- Meyers wannabe, inspired by tonight's horror movie marathon. I don't know what Student Activities was thinking, especially considering we're coming up on the one-year anniversary. Case in point." Amber pulls an envelope from the pocket of her pajamas. It has my name, Stacey Brown, written across the front.

"Not again." Drea rolls her eyes and sinks back in her bed.

"Someone slid it under our door tonight," Amber says, tearing at the seal. "One of the ghost groupies, no doubt." She unfolds the paper and reads the message aloud: "Five days till death."

"Great," I say.

"Oh, and someone's drawn a cute little knife here beside your name." Amber flashes me the ink sketch.

"How is a knife cute?" Drea asks.

"It has a curly handle." Amber points out the stylish detail. "See what I mean? This stupid school is full of immature urchins with nothing better to do."

It's true we've had our share of pranks this year-phone calls, "I'M WATCHING YOU!" notes stuffed in our mailboxes, the occasional hockey mask or pool of ketchup blood left outside our door or window. All because of last year.

Last year, I was having nightmares-nightmares that turned out to be premonitions, forewarning me that Drea was going to be killed. And then all this stuff started happening. Drea was getting these weird phone calls from some guy who wouldn't tell her his name. And then she started getting these notes and packages, telling her he was coming for her. In the end we were able to save Drea from Donovan, a guy she had known since the third grade, a guy we all knew as the one who would be crushing on her until the day he died. Of course, he wasn't the one who ended up dead.

That was Veronica Leeman.

Despite Amber's efforts to convince me that the incident down in the boiler room was just another prank, I call Keegan anyway and tell her everything that happened, including the part about the window being open a crack but minus the part about the spell. She tells me that she'll check it out and get back to me. I know there's a chance that Amber might be right, but I honestly don't feel that she is. Why else would I be feeling this enormous sense of déjà vu?

I rub the aloe gel into the burn and, with my other hand, assess the damage to my knee. It's not as bad as it feels. I can see the splinter piece through the skin on my kneecap-a good sign. I grip the part sticking out and pull, watching the splinter move its way toward the puncture spot.

Amber grabs her wallet off the night table and hands it to me. "Here, gnaw down on Scooby. That's what I do when I have to pluck my eyebrows." She feeds the wallet into my mouth before I can object. "From what I can see," Drea runs a finger over one of Amber's eyebrows, "it looks like Scooby hasn't been nibbled in a while."

"Maybe not," Amber says, feeling between her eyebrows for fuzz. "But at least he gets some tongue action." "What's that supposed to mean?"

"If the nun habit fits . . ." Amber flops down atop my bed, knees bent, feet facing in toward one another, making the Porky Pigs of her slippers kiss.

I ignore them as best I can and resume my splinter plucking, trying to keep my hand steady so it comes out in one piece. Despite excess drool, the wallet actually helps, and, with only a few grunts, I'm able to pull the splinter out. Except there's still some dirt left under my skin. I pull a fresh lemon from my spell drawer and cut it in half with a plastic knife. Like my grandmother, who basically taught me everything I know about the art of kitchen witchery, I always keep a healthy supply of spell items on hand. You just never know when you'll need them. Like last week when Drea asked me to help her make a luck sachet for an English exam. Or the week before that when I whipped up a batch of moon soap for Amber's PMS.

My grandmother always used lemons for cuts. She would squeeze the fruit of its juice, allowing the juice to drain into a bowl, add a teaspoon of vanilla extract, mix it up, and then apply the mixture to the wound. I make an attempt to do the same, but it seems I've run out of vanilla. Weird-I could have sworn I still had a full bottle. I dip a rag into the lemon juice anyway and apply it to the wound, hoping it will suffice.

The phone rings a few minutes later. It's Keegan. She tells me she checked out the boiler room and aside from the open window-which she has since closed and locked- everything looks clear, except, she adds, for a broken pot of some sort and a weird candle left behind. I thank her and hang up, feeling somewhat relieved but still uneasy. "Keegan said everything looks okay," I say. "What were you even doing down there?" Drea asks. But I don't feel like explaining my Maura spell. "I just thought I heard something."

I hate having to lie to them, especially after everything they've been through with me. But I just don't want to say anything yet. I have no idea why Maura is, once again, haunting my nightmares. I thought I had closed the book on that. I thought I forgave myself for everything that happened. But maybe I haven't. Maybe somewhere deep inside me there's this rotting place of guilt. Maybe that's why I've been throwing up.

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Features

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"Wait!" he shouts. His voice is followed by a clanging sound, like maybe he crashed into something. I trip up the stairs, my chin smacking down against the wooden step, wax dripping on my fingers and burning my skin. I grapple my way up, on hands and knees, toward the boiler room door, but I can't quite find the knob. "Don't run away from me, Stacey." His voice is frantic and insistent.

Wrestling up another step, I impale my knee on something sharp. A nail. A splinter maybe. I hear myself whimper. My stomach turns. Bile coats the insides of my mouth. His footsteps are following me up the stairs. I pull my knee back and hear a cracking sound, like wood. I reach up for the doorknob, this time able to wrap my fingers around it. The knob turns but the door won't open, like something is barring it. Like someone wants to trap me inside.

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I twist and turn the knob, pound at the door. "Help!" I shout, over and over again. I pivot as best I can and throw the candle-hard-toward his voice. I hear him cry out. I try at the doorknob again. This time it opens. It's Amber; she's let me out. I whip the door closed behind us and grab Amber by the arm.

When we get back to the room the lights are on and Drea is sitting up in bed. "Are you guys all right?" But I'm breathing so hard, my heart pounding like a fist, that I can't answer.

"Stacey's gone completely whacked," Amber says, closing and locking the door behind us. "I found her Nightmare- on-Elm-Streeting in the boiler room. Maybe slasher flicks are not such a nifty idea before bed." "What are you talking about?" Drea asks. "A guy," I say, gaining my breath. "There was some guy down there."

"Who? Freddie Krueger?" Amber giggles. "No," I say. "I'm serious. I don't know who it was. They locked me down there somehow. I was trapped."

"Wait," Drea says. "Start over. What happened?"

"This is what trapped you," Amber says. She plucks a big fat pencil from her pajama pocket. "It was wedged underneath the door. Probably got kicked there by accident." "I'm gonna call Keegan," I say.

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"You're not gonna go all schoolmarm on us, are you?" She holds the phone behind her back.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Think about it." Amber twirls one of her mini-ponytails in thought. "It was probably just somebody's juicy downstairs-you know, sneaking in for some cuddle. Wouldn't you be upset if Chad was sneaking in to ladle with you, and someone ratted him out?"

"Don't you mean spoon?" Drea asks.

"Not the way I do it." Amber arches her eyebrows up and down.

"Give me the phone NOW!" I insist.

"Why are you being all wiggy? The boiler room is where everybody sneaks in-guys, guests after midnight, people carrying curious liquids," Amber smiles. "Why ruin everybody's fun by finking to the RD?"

"Maybe I just don't think people should be sneaking in," I say. "Or locking people down in a basement."

"Are you kidding?" Amber says. "One of the benefits of the senior houses is that people can sneak in. Plus, you were penciled in, not locked in. And it was purely an accident." "He didn't try to attack you or anything, did he?" Drea interrupts. "Wait-what happened to your knee?"

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Amber's sarcasm spares me the trouble of explaining my knee.

"Maybe we should call someone to look around a bit," Drea says. "Just to be sure."

Amber tosses me the phone. "Go ahead if you want, but it was probably just some prank. You know, some Michael- Meyers wannabe, inspired by tonight's horror movie marathon. I don't know what Student Activities was thinking, especially considering we're coming up on the one-year anniversary. Case in point." Amber pulls an envelope from the pocket of her pajamas. It has my name, Stacey Brown, written across the front.

"Not again." Drea rolls her eyes and sinks back in her bed.

"Someone slid it under our door tonight," Amber says, tearing at the seal. "One of the ghost groupies, no

doubt." She unfolds the paper and reads the message aloud: "Five days till death."

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"Oh, and someone's drawn a cute little knife here beside your name." Amber flashes me the ink sketch.

"How is a knife cute?" Drea asks.

"It has a curly handle." Amber points out the stylish detail. "See what I mean? This stupid school is full of immature urchins with nothing better to do."

It's true we've had our share of pranks this year-phone calls, "I'M WATCHING YOU!" notes stuffed in our mailboxes, the occasional hockey mask or pool of ketchup blood left outside our door or window. All because of last year.

Last year, I was having nightmares-nightmares that turned out to be premonitions, forewarning me that Drea was going to be killed. And then all this stuff started happening. Drea was getting these weird phone calls from some guy who wouldn't tell her his name. And then she started getting these notes and packages, telling her he was coming for her. In the end we were able to save Drea from Donovan, a guy she had known since the third grade, a guy we all knew as the one who would be crushing on her until the day he died. Of course, he wasn't the one who ended up dead.

That was Veronica Leeman.

Despite Amber's efforts to convince me that the incident down in the boiler room was just another prank, I call Keegan anyway and tell her everything that happened, including the part about the window being open a crack but minus the part about the spell. She tells me that she'll check it out and get back to me. I know there's a chance that Amber might be right, but I honestly don't feel that she is. Why else would I be feeling this enormous sense of *déjà vu*?

I rub the aloe gel into the burn and, with my other hand, assess the damage to my knee. It's not as bad as it feels. I can see the splinter piece through the skin on my kneecap-a good sign. I grip the part sticking out and pull, watching the splinter move its way toward the puncture spot.

Amber grabs her wallet off the night table and hands it to me. "Here, gnaw down on Scooby. That's what I do when I have to pluck my eyebrows." She feeds the wallet into my mouth before I can object. "From what I can see," Drea runs a finger over one of Amber's eyebrows, "it looks like Scooby hasn't been nibbled in a while."

"Maybe not," Amber says, feeling between her eyebrows for fuzz. "But at least he gets some tongue action." "What's that supposed to mean?"

"If the nun habit fits . . ." Amber flops down atop my bed, knees bent, feet facing in toward one another, making the Porky Pigs of her slippers kiss.

I ignore them as best I can and resume my splinter plucking, trying to keep my hand steady so it comes out in

one piece. Despite excess drool, the wallet actually helps, and, with only a few grunts, I'm able to pull the splinter out. Except there's still some dirt left under my skin. I pull a fresh lemon from my spell drawer and cut it in half with a plastic knife. Like my grandmother, who basically taught me everything I know about the art of kitchen witchery, I always keep a healthy supply of spell items on hand. You just never know when you'll need them. Like last week when Drea asked me to help her make a luck sachet for an English exam. Or the week before that when I whipped up a batch of moon soap for Amber's PMS.

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The phone rings a few minutes later. It's Keegan. She tells me she checked out the boiler room and aside from the open window-which she has since closed and locked- everything looks clear, except, she adds, for a broken pot of some sort and a weird candle left behind. I thank her and hang up, feeling somewhat relieved but still uneasy. "Keegan said everything looks okay," I say. "What were you even doing down there?" Drea asks. But I don't feel like explaining my Maura spell. "I just thought I heard something."

I hate having to lie to them, especially after everything they've been through with me. But I just don't want to say anything yet. I have no idea why Maura is, once again, haunting my nightmares. I thought I had closed the book on that. I thought I forgave myself for everything that happened. But maybe I haven't. Maybe somewhere deep inside me there's this rotting place of guilt. Maybe that's why I've been throwing up.

Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

As Good as the First

By Jarrod T Thompson

White is for Magic is a very interesting read. The suspense is superb, and the book is fast-paced. I have no interest in wicca, but the suspense and mystery far outweighs the embedded wicca elements. The main character, Stacey is easy to like and she brings the reader into the story. From there, Laurie Faria Stolarz does the rest by creating an intriguing plot with just the right amount of surprises and twists. The new character, Jacob, adds just enough to make this novel just a little bit more intriguing than Blue is For Nightmares.

If you like suspenseful novels, this book is very satisfying.

Great book. I am starting Silver is for Secrets today.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A bit of repetition that bothered me a little

By iLeana

I thought the first book was really good, this one is not as good good (just good). It may be that while I read it I felt I had already read this story in the first book. Did they had to kidnapped again the exact same friend that was kidnapped in book 1? That just bodered me. The story felt to easy too come up with. But don't get me wrong; it was a really fun read and I read at any chance I had. Just to give you a hint:

*Stacey and her mom have a heart to heart

*Love triangle again, well this time it looks more like a square

*There's a new guy in school. His name's Jacob and he's magical...

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Amazon Customer

Excellent series

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WHITE IS FOR MAGIC (STOLARZ SERIES) BY LAURIE FARIA STOLARZ PDF

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About the Author

Laurie Faria Stolarz (Massachusetts) has a great interest in teen culture, and admires young adults for their passion, energy, and creativity. Blue is for Nightmares is the product of her desire to write a novel that would have appealed to herself at that age, namely one that has a blending of suspense, romance, and the art of keeping secrets.

Stolarz has an MFA in Creative Writing with a concentration in Young Adult Literature from Emerson College in Boston. She currently teaches writing and is a member of the SCBWI as well as several professional writing groups.

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One

It's happening again.

The bile at the back of my throat burns. I swallow it down and wipe my bottom lip. My head feels like it's cracking open, like an archeologist is trapped inside, chipping away at the bones of my skull. I lean back against the cold ceramic wall tiles and try to hold it all together-the puking, the headaches, the nightmares, my sanity.

My world is falling apart. I stand up from the toilet and stumble over to the mirror. My eyes are red, the skin beneath them a dark, smoky color. I reknit my hair with a rubber band, noticing my chin-wet from puke spooge. I wipe the goo with my fingers as best I can and tuck the stray strands of dark hair behind my ears. What I really need right now is a hot bath, but the knocking in my head is so intense I want nothing more than to just lie down.

After a thorough toothbrushing and several gargles of mouthwash, I stagger my way back through the common area and into the room. Drea and Amber, my roommates, are asleep. I know I could wake them up, that they'd want to know what's going on-especially after last time-but I almost don't even want to know myself. Not tonight, anyway. I grab a lipstick from Drea's vanity table and the notepad from beside my bed. I flip the notepad open to a fresh sheet and write the letter M across it in the dark-red lipstick, trying my best to make it look smudged, messy-the way it did in my nightmare.

I rip the page free of the pad and stuff it into the pocket of my pajamas. Then I lie back on my bed and pull the covers up over my ears to block out Amber's snoring. But I still feel sick, the juices in my stomach churning away, bubbling up like molten lava. There's only one way I'm going to get any rest tonight.

From my spell drawer, a.k.a. the bottom drawer of my dresser, I pull out a stick of incense, a virgin black candle, a razor blade, and some other assorted spell supplies, including a bunch of red grapes courtesy of Drea's mini-fridge. I collect it all inside my terra-cotta pot and stand up to leave. Except my head is throbbing. I sit back down and peek over at Amber and Drea, in their bunkbeds, the light of the waxing moon casting a shadow over Amber on the top bunk. She turns over, but she's still snoring-her mouth arched open, chest heaving, six cherry-red ponytails sticking out from her head. Drea moves her forearm up over her ear in response, her golden-blond hair separated into two perfectly frumpled braids.

I wonder if I should even bother telling them anything. If maybe I'm just overreacting. It's only happened twice now. And Maura's birthday is a week from Saturday. So, maybe that's what's causing it. Or maybe I'm just coming down with the flu.

The terra-cotta pot tucked under my arm, I grab a pocket flashlight from the drawer and make my way out of the room and through the common area. The door to the boiler room is just out in the lobby.

I travel down the dusty wooden steps using the slender beam of the flashlight to guide my way. I know I could flip on the light switch, but the sudden blast of artificial light would only make my head pound more. Instead, I try to make peace with the darkness; I try to imagine it like crushed velvet, enveloping my skin, inviting me further down the creaking stairs and into the boiler room.

It smells musty down here, like leaking pipes. I try to focus on my breath, but for some reason I'm feeling a bit disconnected. Maybe it's because I don't feel well. Or maybe it's because it's been a year since my last bout of nightmares, and a part of me is afraid that, this time, I won't be able to stop it.

I take a deep breath and make my way across the cement floor. There isn't much down here-an old and rattling boiler, a rusty water tank, dorm room furniture in need of repair, and lots of copper pipes that travel along the ceiling. But it's a place where I can be alone, where I don't have to worry about being interrupted or waking anyone up.

I set my supplies down on the altar I've set up-an old computer desk with a crack down the middle-and light the stick of incense. I start with the bunch of grapes. I pass it through the incense smoke, making sure it gets fully bathed in the lavender fumes. I continue charging all the ingredients, concentrating on the long, gray swirls that rise up and wash over my skin, focusing on lavender's ability to soothe.

My stomach gurgles impatiently. I dab my finger with a bit of the oil and touch the top end of the virgin black candle. "As above," I say. Then I touch the bottom, "So below." I touch the center, drag my finger upward, and then run it back down, continuing to moisten the candle's length. When the candle is fully anointed, I hold it around the base and, with the razor, carve Maura's name into the wax surface, my fingers shaking slightly from the mere thought of her.

Of what happened.

Of what this all might mean.

I rotate the candle counterclockwise three times, focusing on the idea of riddance, and carve the words "rest

in peace" on the opposite side from her name-so the guilt will die from my conscience once and for all. I light the candle and watch a few seconds as the inky black wax heats up and begins to pool around the wick. Then I take the slip of paper from my pocket and stare down at the M-M for Maura, for Murder, maybe. I really don't know.

I toss it into the terra-cotta pot and then pluck the grapes from their stems. "Maura, Maura, rest in peace," I whisper. "May your haunting spirit finally cease." I toss the grapes into the pot, mash them down with my thumb, and picture the contents of my stomach churning and mixing as the purpley pulp juice smooshes against the tips of my fingers. I chase the grapes with several splashes of peppermint oil, and then mix it all up with my fingers, the minty, candycane scent mingling with the breath of lavender, overpowering the smell of grape juice.

"Maura, Maura, rest at last," I whisper. "You shall not make me repeat the past." I chant the words over and over again, concentrating on the black candle as it begins to burn Maura away. I concentrate on the mint coating my stomach, soaking up the grape.

After meditating on the spell for several minutes, I hold my watch up to the candlelight-it's 4:05. I'll take the candle back to my room and set it by my bed so it has time to burn down completely. I smother what's left of the incense, spoon the mint and grape mixture into a plastic sandwich bag, and collect everything inside the pot. Thankfully, I feel my stomach begin to ease. Maybe now I'll be able to get some sleep.

I grab everything and am just about to make my way back upstairs when I hear a banging noise coming from the corner, by the water tank. "Hello?" I stand up, the wheels of my broken chair squeaking back against the cement. I aim the flashlight out in front of me, but the beam is too narrow to see much in the darkness. I take a few steps toward the tank, noticing the window just behind it is open a crack. There's a shifting against the floor, like someone taking a step.

"Hello?" I repeat. "Who's there?" My hands shake. My heart tightens. I try to tell myself that it's probably just someone who forgot her key. Probably someone who decided to sneak in since the resident director locks the door at midnight.

Closer now. The tank is just a few feet away-just out of reach. "Come out NOW!" "Stacey?" says a male voice from behind the tank. "Is that you?"

My mouth trembles open. I don't know that voice. It's not Chad's voice. Not PJ's, either. It doesn't belong to anyone I recognize.

"Stacey?" he repeats. His shadow on the wall moves toward me. I panic. The flashlight tumbles from my grip, the terra-cotta pot slips from under my arm, and I hear it smash against the floor.

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How if your day is begun by reading a book **White Is For Magic (Stolarz Series) By Laurie Faria Stolarz** However, it is in your gizmo? Everyone will certainly still touch and also us their device when getting up as well as in early morning activities. This is why, we expect you to likewise read a publication **White Is For Magic (Stolarz Series) By Laurie Faria Stolarz** If you still confused how to get guide for your gizmo, you can comply with the means right here. As right here, we provide **White Is For Magic (Stolarz Series) By Laurie Faria Stolarz** in this site.