

The Exquisite Corpse

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# The Exquisite Corpse

A Novel by Julie Kushner

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*To Carla, without whom I never would have survived high school, and people like the characters in this book . . .*

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### *Teen Found Slain in Billionaire's Home Continues to Baffle Police*

Two weeks have passed since 17-year old Bellamy Elizabeth Jordan was found dead on the floor of her bedroom, with blunt force wounds to her head, and multiple stab wounds to her chest. Yet, the Silvercrest Police Department appears no closer to bringing the young girl's killer to justice.

Friends of Bellamy Jordan described her as a popular girl, smart, athletic, and well-liked. She was a varsity athlete, and an honor student, due to attend Princeton this coming fall. "I just can't believe she's gone," said Becca Castellano, a close friend of the victim. "We were supposed to be picking out prom dresses, planning spring break, getting ready for graduation. Bellamy was just so beautiful. She had so much going for her. What happened to her . . . I don't know . . . It just doesn't seem real."

Bellamy was the eldest daughter of Victor Jordan, President and CEO of the Fortune 500 Company Tech-Loch, best known for its line of luxury smart phones and tablets. His wife, April has become somewhat of a local celebrity in the Silvercrest community, chairing many of its local charitable events. Both parents have been highly outspoken in their criticism of the Silvercrest police's stalled efforts to put their daughter's murderer behind bars. "It's an outrage," exclaims Victor. "Each day that passes is another day that this animal, my daughter's killer, continues to walk the streets. He or she can strike again at any minute. My youngest daughter is in danger. We all are."

The Jordans have started a website [BringBellamyPeace.com](http://BringBellamyPeace.com), where community members can share memories of Bellamy's life, and leave anonymous tips that might help bring this case to its long-awaited conclusion. They have also put up a \$500,000 cash reward, along with a free Tech-Loch 8Z phone, for any information leading to the killer's capture.

Officer Eli Mendoza, who is leading the investigation into Bellamy's murder, has taken the Jordan's public criticism of his efforts in stride. He insists that the Silvercrest police are doing everything in their power to solve this murder. "My men are working day and night on this case," says Mendoza. "It is our number one priority right now. We are questioning family, friends, neighbors, everyone who may have had contact with the victim in the days leading

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up to her death. It's only a matter of time before one of those individuals helps crack this case wide open."

One person the Silvercrest PD may have difficulty questioning is the Jordan's eight-year old daughter, Skye Elizabeth Jordan, who was reportedly present in the home at the time of the murder. It was her screams that prompted the neighbors to first contact the police. "Skye is exhibiting signs of selective mutism," instructs County Social Worker Amy Durante. "It's a condition that is not uncommon among young children who have experienced the kind of extreme violence we believe Skye to have witnessed. We are working with Skye every day, in hopes that we can get her to open up as to what happened on that fateful night."

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### *Things That People Don't Know About You . . .*

*From the time you were four, until a little before age nine, you were 100 percent certain that you were an actual Disney Princess, raised in an "ordinary" home due entirely to some mix-up at the hospital where you were born. You assumed this mix-up would be ironed out sometime before your sixteenth birthday (because that's the average age of most Disney Princesses, obviously). But you secretly hoped it would happen much sooner than that . . .*

*When people ask you your favorite color, you always tell them that it's pink, but it's actually orange. Real orange . . . dark orange, not tangerine, salmon or peach. You're not sure why that particular color appeals to you so much. There's nothing particularly feminine or beautiful about it. But it has always been your favorite color, and likely always will be.*

*Similarly, when people ask you about your favorite animal, you tell them it's a cat, but it's actually a meerkat, like the ones that used to be on that show on The Discovery Channel. (When Flower died on that show, you locked yourself in your room for hours. You can't remember the last time you cried so hard.)*

*You love your little sister Skye so much and so fiercely that sometimes it hurts. If a situation ever came up where her life was on the line, you are quite certain you'd kill for her.*

*You'd like to think you'd do the same for your parents, but deep down you aren't so sure you would. . .*

*You used to suffer from terrible anxiety as a child . . . so much so that on the first day of school, or on a day when you had a big test, or speech in front of the class, your mother would slip a half a Xanax into your morning bowl of Lucky Charms. They looked just like the marshmallow blue moons, so most times you couldn't even tell the difference.*

*You don't always like your friends very much . . .*

*You've envisioned how you would die many times over. It became this kind of lurid past time for you . . . something to do before bed, or while you were waiting for your friends to pick you up and drive you out to whatever party happened to be going on that weekend . . . You would always cook up these elaborately tragic scenarios in your head: fiery car crashes, unfortunate falls from great heights, an exotic drug overdose in college, while on Spring Break, a rare incurable disease with horrible, disfiguring side effects . . . but*

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*only below the neck, a natural disaster that literally rips you from your father's arms, a freak shark attack on the beach where you and your friends hang out on weekends in the summer, falling off the side of your grandfather's boat and drowning in the depths of the sea. A part of you never really expected to live to see old age. So, imagining how you'd die was your admittedly morbid way of coping with that terrible knowledge.*

*You never expected your death to be anything like this . . .*

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## Skye Elizabeth Jordan

**Relationship to Decedent: Younger Sister**

**Part 1 of Recorded Interview**

**Location: Silvercrest Police Station**

**Conducted by Officers from Silvercrest Police**

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Now, your parents tell me that you haven't been speaking  
2 lately. Is that true?

3 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Silence]

4 **INTERVIEWER:** I don't blame you, you know? What happened to you was  
5 very scary . . . something that no girl your age should have to go  
6 through . . . no girl any age should go through. But here's the  
7 thing. I know you want to help your big sister. And right now, the  
8 best way for you to help her is to let us know what happened that  
9 night. You do that, and we can absolutely make sure that the person  
10 who did this to your sister never hurts anyone again. Do you  
11 understand?

12 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Nods]

13 **INTERVIEWER:** That's good. You're a smart girl, Skye. Your parents  
14 said you were very smart. And talking to you now, I can tell that  
15 they were telling the truth.

16 OK. So, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you this  
17 yellow notepad here, and this black marker. And I want you to write  
18 on the notepad the name of the person who hurt your sister. OK?

19 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Writes the word "No" on the pad.]

20 **INTERVIEWER:** No?

21 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Folds her arms across her chest and shakes her head  
22 solemnly.]

23 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. That's OK. Let's try something else.

24 I have a group of photos here in this folder of people in your town.  
25 Some of them you may know, some you may never have seen before. Now,  
26 when I give you these pictures, I want you to look at them very  
27 carefully, and then I want you to put an "X" on the picture of the  
28 person who hurt your sister. Can you do that for me, Skye?

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29 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Appears to consider the instructions for a moment, then  
30 nods slowly.]

31 **INTERVIEWER:** [Hands a folder containing 15 photographs to the  
32 eyewitness.]

33 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Scans each photo for a few seconds, before carefully  
34 drawing an "X" in the upper left hand corner of each photograph.]

35 **INTERVIEWER:** [Flips through the photographs.] Skye, I'm not sure you  
36 understand what I'm asking you. I want to know which of the people in  
37 these photographs hurt your sister.

38 **SKYE JORDAN:** [Retrieves the yellow pad and marker from the center of  
39 the desk. Writes on the pad in large capital letters, "ALL OF THEM."]

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## Office of Stuyvesant County Coroner - Autopsy Report

<b>Date and Hour Autopsy Performed:</b>
8:30 a.m. April 30 <sup>th</sup> at Stuyvesant County Hospital
<b>By:</b>
Pritha Bishara, M.D.
<b>Name of Deceased:</b>
Bellamy Lynn Jordan
<b>Date of Birth:</b>
May 7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Age:</b>
17
<b>Sex:</b>
Female
<b>Body Identified by:</b>
April Jordan, mother of the deceased, at the Stuyvesant County Mortuary
<b>Drug screen results:</b>
All toxicology reports were negative

### EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:

Decedent suffered blunt force trauma to the head from a heavily weighted object with squared edges (possibly a large book or granite plaque) causing discoloration near the base of her skull and a bit of bleeding near her scalp.

Decedent exhibited no less than 38 stab wounds to numerous areas of her body, each of these wounds appear to have been created by the same

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serrated edged object. This includes three stab wounds to her inner thighs. Nine wounds to her upper abdomen. Six wounds to her lower abdomen. Fifteen wounds to her chest. Three wounds on her left shoulder. Two wounds on her right shoulder. There were also strangulation marks and nail indentations on her neck.

The decedent's body positioning, along with evidence of some clothing fibers in her nail beds, indicate that she and her attacker struggled briefly before the decedent was knocked unconscious. All of the stab wounds appear to have occurred following the decedent's lapse into unconsciousness.

### INTERNAL EXAMINATION:

At the time of her death, the decedent appeared to be a well-nourished, healthy, 17-year old woman.

The decedent appeared to be roughly four weeks pregnant at the time of her death. Puncture wounds near the decedent's abdomen were in close circumference to the gestating fetus.

The decedent showed signs of substantial internal bleeding in her abdomen and near her pulmonary and aortic heart valves.

Cells will need to be taken and tested from the fetus of the decedent, before any information relating to the unborn child's paternity can be determined.

### EVIDENCE COLLECTED:

One pair of gold heart-shaped earrings, one bangle friendship bracelet, one gold necklace with the inscription "Bellamy," one bloodied and torn blue tank top, one bloodied and torn pair of blue and green flannel pajama pants, one bloodied Sociology textbook, one Positive pregnancy test.

Both the object used to strike the decedent unconscious, and the object used to stab decedent appear to have been removed from the scene prior to the police department's arrival on the scene, possibly by the assailant.

### OPINION:

#### **Time of death:**

Body temperature, rigor and liver mortis and stomach contents of the decedent approximate the time of death as between 5:00 and 7:30 p.m. on the night of April 28<sup>th</sup>.

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### **Manner of death:**

Homicide

### **Immediate cause of death:**

Loss of blood resulting from critical stab wounds to the abdomen, chest cavity, and heart.

Neither the blunt force wound to victim's head, nor the strangulation of the victim, appear to have been fatal.

### **Remarks:**

Based on the following factors: (1) positioning of the body at the time of death; (2) the direction and impact of the stab wounds to decedent's body; (3) the evidence of blunt force trauma to the head; (4) skin cells and blood in decedent's nail beds; (5) strangulation marks and nail marks on the victims neck; and (6) the pattern and direction of the blood spatter on decedent's body, the decedent's attacker appeared to be a few inches taller than victim, of slightly larger build than the decedent, and left-handed.

No evidence at the scene is definitively indicative of the assailant's sex. The nature of the crime and the manner in which it was completed was such that it theoretically could have been completed by either a male or a female.

Given the disorganized and "passionate" nature of the crime, there is no evidence to suggest that decedent's attacker has killed before, nor is there evidence to suggest that extensive planning went into the carrying out of this murder.

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## Jessica Lee Mason

### Relationship to Decedent: Best Friend

#### Part 1 of Recorded Interview

#### Location: Silvercrest Police Station

#### Conducted by Officers from Silvercrest Police

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2 **JESSICA MASON:** My first memory of Bellamy Jordan . . . gosh that's  
3 tough. I mean, Bellamy and I were basically best friends since  
4 nursery school so . . . I'm pretty sure I met her before I even had  
5 "memories." Is that a weird thing to say?

6 I could probably spoon feed you some BS about Bellamy and I, like,  
7 playing Barbies, dressing up in our moms' high heels and stomping  
8 around the living room like "grown-ups", or going to ballet classes  
9 together. But none of that would be true. Not entirely, anyway.

10 I think that when we don't know we are going to lose something . . .  
11 *someone* . . . we don't exactly catalogue stuff the way we should. We  
12 gloss over things, summarize them, make them seem brighter and cleaner  
13 than they actually were.

14 It's kind of like what they did to Bellamy at her funeral? You know,  
15 like, right around the time Bellamy died, she had these two pimples?  
16 Like on the corner of her chin? I mean, Bellamy rarely broke out.  
17 Her skin was always totally perfect. It made us all super jealous.  
18 But every once in a while, if she had her period or something, she'd  
19 get these pimples . . . always two of them, and always in the same  
20 spot on her face.

21 And Bellamy, being Bellamy, would, of course, go absolutely nuts  
22 trying to cover them up with concealer, foundation, bronzer, gel pens,  
23 you name it. You could still see them though, just peeking out  
24 beneath the surface. I would never tell Bellamy this, obviously, but  
25 the fact that she got those pimples sometimes made me like her more.  
26 Because, Bellamy was always untouchable in a way, even to the people  
27 who were closest to her. I think it was because she was always trying  
28 so hard to look perfect . . . to be perfect. So, she kept people at a  
29 distance, afraid if she let them get closer they'd see her for what  
30 she really was . . . *human*.

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31 Bellamy had an open casket at her wake. Hayley, Becca, and the rest  
32 of our group stayed as far away from it as possible the whole time.  
33 They all basically said that they thought it was too creepy and  
34 morbid. Ironic, considering it was a funeral, right? I mean, aren't  
35 those, by definition, morbid? Saying something is too morbid for a  
36 funeral, is like saying something is too smart to be a genius, or too  
37 short to be a midget, you know?

38 Anyway, they didn't want to remember Bellamy that way. So, I went up  
39 to the coffin by myself, just to pay my respects. I felt like I owed  
40 her at least that, you know?

41 The first thing I noticed was that the mortician or whatever, covered  
42 up Bellamy's chin pimples. It was like they were never there.  
43 Bellamy would have loved that. I almost wanted to take a picture on my  
44 camera phone, so that I could show . . . [gasps, and covers her hand  
45 over her mouth] She'll never know how good she looked, even at the  
46 very end. Will she? [Sobs]

47 I'm sorry . . . I . . . [Composes herself]

48 You know what? I actually *would* like to share a memory of Bellamy  
49 with you. It's not my first memory, but it's definitely my favorite.  
50 Is that OK?

51 It started with a guy. Doesn't it always? His name was Aaron  
52 Finkelberg. I remember that his desk was two rows in front of me and  
53 one to the right. He was so hot, I mean, at least to the extent that  
54 nine-year olds can be considered hot? I remember he had slightly  
55 curly brown hair, with just the slightest tinge of red . . . and blue  
56 eyes . . . such gorgeous eyes! Nine-year old me was totally ass over  
57 heels in love with Aaron Finkelberg. At least, I thought I was at the  
58 time.

59 Somehow it got out to Aaron that I liked him. I don't remember  
60 exactly how. I guess one of my friends told him? Rumors always  
61 travel fast in schools like mine, even when you are nine. Anyway, all  
62 during lunch, I could feel him staring at me, to the point where I was  
63 so sure that during recess he'd ask me to be his girlfriend.

64 It happened by the swings. He and his friends were walking toward the  
65 basketball court, when they saw me sitting on the swing set with a  
66 couple of my friends. He whispered something to his buddies, and  
67 starting walking toward me.

68 "Do you like me?" He asked, in that really blunt way that nine-  
69 year olds always ask personal questions, like they are no big deal.

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70 I must have been blushing so hard. Gosh, I was such a nerd back  
71 then . . . big red glasses, a face full of freckles I hadn't yet  
72 learned to cover with foundation, braces that always made me spit when  
73 I talked . . . But at lunch he looked at me, like he liked me. So, I  
74 said yes.

75 "Well, I don't like you," he said, before pushing me off the swings  
76 and into the sand with both hands. "You are ugly, and stupid, and I  
77 wish you would just leave me alone!"

78 I can still hear all of his friends laughing their asses off at me, as  
79 he ran off ahead of them to the basketball court. I literally thought  
80 I was going to die, like my entire world had just been crumpled up  
81 into a ball of used notebook paper and tossed in the trash. So, I did  
82 the only thing I could do, hugged my knees to my chest, rocked back  
83 and forth, and cried like the baby I still was.

84 The girls that were with me at the time tried to comfort me . . .  
85 patting me on the back, wiping my tears, and telling me it was going  
86 to be OK. But I could tell that deep down they were just secretly  
87 happy it didn't happen to *them*.

88 Then, Bellamy Jordan comes walking toward the swing sets. Instantly,  
89 all the girls part to clear a path for her. She always had that kind  
90 of power over people, even at age nine.

91 So, Bellamy kneels down in the sand in front of me, looks me straight  
92 in the eye . . . and slaps me in the face.

93 I was so shocked by what she did, I actually stopped crying. "What?  
94 Why?" I asked.

95 "Get up!" She scolded. "Wipe that sand off your butt."

96 I did exactly what I was told. We all did, when it came to Bellamy.  
97 "You see all this?" She said pointing to the playground. "Him?" She  
98 said pointing to Aaron. "Them?" She said, pointing to the other girls  
99 who were comforting me earlier. "It's all fake. It's not real. It  
100 doesn't mean anything. You want to be popular? You want to be  
101 pretty? You want Aaron Finkelberg to like you? Pretend that you are,  
102 and you will be. It's that easy."

103 And it was that easy. Two years later, Aaron Finkelberg asked me to  
104 the seventh grade dance. I said yes. Then, I totally ignored him, and  
105 spent the whole time making out with Brian Embry.

106 Anyway, that's how I'll always remember Bellamy, as someone who didn't  
107 take crap from anyone . . . someone who was above it all . . .

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108 popularity, school, boys. She was definitely above all of us. I  
109 think that is part of what makes it so crazy that she's gone, and  
110 we're still here. It, like, doesn't make sense, you know?

111 **INTERVIEWER:** Did Bellamy have any enemies? People you think might  
112 have wanted to hurt her?

113 **JESSICA MASON:** Honestly no. Everybody loved Bellamy Jordan. How  
114 could they not?

115