

“Safe”

15-year-old Mariah, who never got over being abandoned by her father is continually neglected and put down by her mother; has a drug dealing brother who keeps bringing his friends over who'd give anything to take advantage of her; and even though it has been two years since they moved, she still hasn't made any friends and remains the target of the meanest bully in the school.

Finally fed up and not able to take it a moment longer she decides to end her life and as she walks into her room, Vodka and pills in her hand, she finds Toby sitting on her bed. Toby has no memory of his own life and the only thing he is sure of is that he is dead.

In that moment they become stuck together - an invisible bond that keeps them within five feet of each other. Toby can only affect limited amounts of his physical environment and usually only when the two of them are alone. Mariah is the only one who knows Toby is there, no one else can see or hear him.

For the first while Toby watches Mariah's tortured life, but he feels there is a bigger reason behind their bond to each other so he tries to help. With each improvement Mariah makes things appear to get worse in ways and although she starts to make friends, the bullying gets nastier and deadlier. Yet Toby is able to save her from some situations that would have turned out disastrous if he hadn't, and through the experience Mariah is able to move past a few of her issues. Toby in essence teaches her how to overcome the hurdles she found too overwhelming to face on her own.

Then Toby starts to have memories from his own life: Toby was like one of those boys that girls have been warned to stay away from, yet they find them irresistible. He used his charm and talent for quick thinking to gain all he wanted in life; only in his death does he feel remorse and now desires to make a change.

He implores Mariah to help make amends for some of his bigger mistakes which puts her in more danger than before. Will she be able to stay safe? Will Toby have to face his own death with those mistakes never righted? What will become of both once their time together is done?

... Aviva B.