



CHAPTER 1

RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE

Run!

It was the only thought in Eric Penny's head.

Run! Run like his life depended on it. Ha! His life *did* depend on it.

Blanking out the last few sickening moments, Eric ran. Long legs sprinting down lamp-lit streets, jacket flying open, heart pounding, hands sticky with blood.

He tore on, zig-zagging traffic as horns blared. Passers-by jumped out of his way, shouting angrily.

“Sorry!”

Sweat trickled into his wild eyes, bile rose in his throat. He didn't look back, didn't dare stop. Far off, a police siren wailed. Its high-pitched whine grew louder till it was screaming. In his head, *he* was screaming.

Headlights blazed, blue lights spun, blinding him.

It was all too close, too close...

His feet skidded, but it was too late...

Thud!

Now *he* was spinning — up and over the roof of the police car. Life went into slow motion. The number 101 was on its roof. 101 — the same as his house number; 101 — the number of times he'd been belted by his stepdad. And then the road rushed up to meet him.

And total blackness swamped him.

* * *