

Belonging

by Faydra Deon

Vanessa wasn't going to get another choice in this game. This was her only chance to be a part of the Ian-crowd. All she had to do was choose correctly from the three cards sitting between her and the group facing her. In the cold and dimly-lit room, Vanessa stared intently at the cards.

"They've all done it, Vanessa. They wouldn't be here if they'd chosen incorrectly. Those who are connected to our vibe always choose correctly," Ian said.

Vanessa looked at the girls in the semi-circle behind Ian, with their pale faces, their black-rimmed lips and eyes and their jet-black hair, and her heart ached even more to be in the coolest, most-feared clique in school. Goth goddesses they were called; Ian's minions.

Vanessa looked for and found Cassidy, who seemed to be as anxious as Vanessa. Ian had chosen Cassidy to either welcome Vanessa into the group or cast her out, depending on the card Vanessa chose.

"The monkey is on one of these cards," Ian said in an eerily inviting voice.

Vanessa looked down at the three cards.

"You want to be one of us, don't you?" Ian asked, and Vanessa nodded that she indeed wanted to be one of them.

Vanessa leaned forward and held her hand over the left card. Finally she put her fingers on the card in the middle before lifting and moving her hand over and picking up the card on the right.

She held it up for the group to see, and everyone gasped. She waited for the applause that Cassidy said would follow when she chose the correct card.

Before she could figure out why Cassidy wasn't in the spot where she'd last seen her, Vanessa felt a pillow slam hard against her face as she struggled into eternal darkness.

The entire group circled around Vanessa and stared down at her.
It was Ian who broke the spell.

“Whose turn is it to bury the body?”

