

## **THE AUTHORS SHOW – Young Adult**

**Author: Vicki-Ann Bush**

The Passion Released

Reflecting on my life's journey as an author, I realize how fortunate I am to do something I love. More importantly, writing has unlocked my courage. Enabling me to express my thoughts for issues that capture my heart.

Alex McKenna & The Geranium Deaths, is the first book of a series, and the introduction to a character that I hope will have many adventures. Alex is a seventeen year old transgender boy, who comes from a long line of Italian witches. He sees spirits, and helps them come to terms with their death.

Using my love for the paranormal, I created Alex as a way to bring focus not on the transgender aspect of his life, but rather the supernatural. To let transgender kids know, they are defined by all components of who they are, not just one. Alex is a talented Strega, and although there will be struggles with his transgender journey, it won't be the foundation.

Introducing, Alex McKenna.

Alex held Margaret, his firm hand pressing her head to his shoulder. His breath brushed across her ear. "Don't look, no matter what you hear. That's how it gets you."

All the other victims had turned to ice. Alex couldn't understand why, but the rules didn't apply to him. None of the deceased were family, so maybe that was his armor. His family history protected him somehow.

They were huddled behind the furnace in the basement while they attempted to construct an escape plan. Although in a frenzy, Alex knew the heat from the unit should be enough to throw the beast temporarily off their trail. The foul spirit followed the change in temperature, which made hiding from its ghostly grips, difficult. The tighter he held Margaret, the more he worried about Wilby. His little brother had bolted in the other direction.

Alex was careful not to touch the hot metal tank as peered around it. He made the mistake a few years back of carelessly brushing against it while moving some boxes. The scar on his right arm left a permanent reminder. Alex crinkled his nose, the damp walls and seventy-year-old pipes needed more than a little fresh air.

It was dark in every corner except for a sliver of light emanating from the single ground level window. He hated the basement, especially the furnace room. It was the part of the below ground space that wasn't finished and he felt like he stepped into a portal to hell every time he was there. He could sense the darkened soul still lurking in the shadows, but couldn't hone in on it. Only the goosebumps standing to attention on his arms confirmed his suspicions. Easing back behind the tank, his plan worked for the moment, but it also limited their options. Now he needed a solid way to find Wilby and escape.

"I think I know how we can get out of the house." Alex spoke softly. "But you're gonna have to trust me."

She nodded her head, her eyes widened with fear. Not one to rattle easily, this one had them both off balance.

"I know you're really scared right now. So am I. But I also know you can do this. I'm going to lead the apparition toward the attic."

"Alex. No." Margaret grabbed his t-shirt and gripped tightly.

He gently pressed his forehead to hers.

"It will follow me. Then you get the hell out of here and find Wilby. Try my mom's room first, he used to hide under her bed when he was little. It made him feel safe. Luckily, that thing stayed on our heels. I know it's down here with us. My bumps are strong. After I get its attention, I'll run for the stairs. You give it a minute before following. Get Wilby and then head back down here and out that window." Alex pointed to the ground window. It was big enough for Wilby and Margaret to fit through. "See the large wrench on the bench? Use it to break the glass. My mom has rags over there too. Line the ledge so you guys don't get cut."

"Why don't we just break one of the windows in the den? They're larger."

"No. It would be harder to break through one of the double panes and it would attract a lot more attention. This way you'll barely be heard."

Margaret shook her head. "I can't leave you." A tear streamed down her cheek.

"I need you to do this for Wilby." Alex kissed her salty lips. "Text me when both of you are out."

"How are you going to get the hell out of the house?"

"Don't worry, I got a plan." He gave her a reassuring smile and another kiss. He knew he had no plan, but he had to tell her something so she would agree. Margaret's fierce when it comes to protecting the ones she loved, especially him.

He pulled away and eased out into the open. A chill ran up his spine—it was close. Alex squinted trying to distinguish the difference in the shadows. He took a step forward. A blast of cold air startled him. He was headed straight toward the evil spirit.

A low, gravelly hum tainted his ears. Could Margaret hear it? He shook his head. No, he was not about to call out and give up her location. He shifted his eyes toward the right, his heart pounding. The beast lunged forward and reached out with a translucent icy hand. Alex ducked and swerved. Spinning around, he ran straight for the door, crossing the threshold before it could stop him. Scrambling up the stairs, he made the mistake of turning back. It was a costly move. Tripping, his body collapsed. A frozen grip seized his leg. A layer of ice spread across the denim like a fungus. Furiously, Alex kicked free and scrambled back to his feet, running for the staircase to the second level. The entrance to the attic was in the hallway. Once he got the spirit there, he could buy Margaret the time she needed.

Coming to the top of the staircase, he rounded the corner and reached for the knob. There was no need. The door flew open, slamming it into the wall. Chips of plaster exploded and nicked Alex near his left eye. He didn't stop. Taking the steep steps two at a time, he ran to the center of the room. He heard the door slam and knew his plan had worked.

He was alone with the dark soul and nowhere to go.