

I want to make an interactive story website where viewers can make choices that affect the ending. I want to be able to add puzzles, music and use a lot of css animations. It will have a mystery/ thriller vibe so I can be free with anytype of puzzle or animation I decide to choose.

- **Main Themes:**
 - **:Choice and Consequence:** Every decision the view makes will shape the storyline. Choices regarding who to trust, what to investigate, and how to approach mysteries will have direct consequences on the path ahead. So if the viewer decides not to click on the door it may or may not affect the game
- **Topics:**
 - **Family Secrets:** The manor's history involves a family's dark and twisted legacy, which the user must slowly uncover.
 - **Escape and Survival:** Depending on user choices, the story could lead to escape from the manor, or the user could become trapped by uncovering secrets that are better left hidden.

Design:

- **Color Palette:**
 - A moody but warm colors like maroon, red, gold and maybe some gray or brown to show aging
- **Typography:**
 - I want like old, gaming and vintage type fonts so **Gothic, Serif Fonts for titles, Sans Serif for body and Typewriter type fonts for Dialogue.**
- **Layout:**
 - The layout will be simple and easy to navigate, with a focus on storytelling. A single-page, scrollable layout will work well, with the ability to show text and images dynamically as the user progresses through the story.
 - Choices will be placed as clickable buttons below the narrative text, with a slight hover effect to indicate interactivity.
 - Images of the manor, rooms, and clues will be shown dynamically as the user progresses to enhance the atmosphere.

Animation:

- Fade-in/Fade-out Effects and Paragraph Scrolling for text
- **Interactive Objects:** Users can hover over certain objects

STORYLINE

Summary:

Nalani Crews, an ambitious journalist competing for a job at CNN, is sent to investigate Blackthorn Manor, a long-abandoned estate with a terrifying reputation. The manor is infamous for strange disappearances, whispers of a cult linked to dark rituals, and its eerie presence at the edge of town. However, when Nalani arrives, she finds the manor isn't abandoned at all. It's inhabited by a group of "guests," who all have odd reasons for being there, though their stories never seem to quite add up. Nalani learns that the manor was once home to a powerful cult, whose members disappeared under mysterious circumstances, leaving behind rumors of dark practices and a curse that binds their souls to the house. Soon after her arrival, Nalani starts to experience strange phenomena: time seems to warp within the manor, and rooms rearrange themselves. As Nalani digs deeper into the manor's history, she finds disturbing connections to her own family, and her brother Jacob, who disappeared years earlier. Her brother, it turns out, was researching the manor and its cult before he vanished. As Nalani explores the manor, the boundaries between reality and illusion begin to blur. The whispers of the guests, who seem both familiar and alien, and the presence of her brother in fragmented visions force her to confront her grief and the unsettling truth about her family's connection to the manor's curse.

Will be racial aspects

Characters:

All ppl of color except vivian

Nalani Crews, 23, journalist intern

- **Backstory:** Nalani is a determined, headstrong young journalist intern, wants to follow in her older brother Jacob's footsteps. She throws herself into work, using it as a way to avoid dealing with her grief over his mysterious disappearance.
- **Personality:** Stubborn and driven, Nalani is used to being independent and rarely asks for help, often pushing people away when they try to get too close. However, her vulnerability around her brother's death makes her reluctant to confront her feelings.
- **Role in the Story:** Nalani is the player's guide through the manor, uncovering hidden clues, solving puzzles, and interacting with the other guests. She'll grow as she learns to confront her grief and her family's connection to the manor's dark past. Nalani's arc will

challenge her to decide whether to break the time loop at the cost of her past or find a way to escape without letting go of her family's legacy.

Jacob Crews, 29, Nalanis brother and famous journalist

- **Backstory:** A renowned journalist who vanished under mysterious circumstances while investigating Blackthorn Manor. Jacob had a deep fascination with the manor's dark history and the rumors of a cult tied to it. He left behind a cryptic journal that may hold the key to unlocking the manor's secrets.
- **Personality:** Jacob was brilliant, resourceful, and passionate about uncovering the truth, often pushing boundaries in his investigations. His disappearance left her heartbroken and unsure of what really happened to him.
- **Role in the Story:** Jacob's presence is felt throughout the story as Nalani uncovers his journal and pieces together his investigation into the manor. His final letter to her offers cryptic clues, revealing that the manor is tied to their family's past, and that it might hold the key to his disappearance. Jacob could also appear to Nalani in fragmented visions, guiding her through moments of doubt and grief, ultimately helping her break the time loop.

Peter, 25, 1940s

Backstory: Peter is from the 1940s, an era marked by the end of the Second World War. He was a soldier who came home to find everything he knew changed. Haunted by the war's impact and the loss of his friends, Peter found solace in Blackthorn Manor, though it's unclear why he came to stay there.

Personality: Quiet, reserved, and thoughtful, Peter struggles with post-war trauma, often retreating into himself. He tries to hide his pain but occasionally lets his guard down, especially with Nalani, who reminds him of simpler times.

Role in the Story: Peter is Nalani's love interest, and their budding relationship will help her emotionally break free from her brother's death. He provides emotional support and helps her navigate the complexities of the manor. As the story unfolds, Peter's past begins to tie into the manor's curse, and he may hold a vital piece of the puzzle regarding how to break the time loop.

Vivian, 53, 1800s

- **Backstory:** Vivian is from the 1800s and was once a matron of the manor. She became involved with the cult that originally inhabited the manor, though she was never a

full-fledged member. Her nurturing nature often made her a reluctant participant in their dark practices.

- **Personality:** Nurturing and warm, Vivian speaks in riddles and often expresses herself in cryptic phrases that are difficult for others to understand. Despite her eccentric speech, she deeply cares for the other guests and tries to protect them from the darker aspects of the manor even if it means betraying them cuz she doesn't really understand the dilemma.
- **Role in the Story:** Vivian's riddles and cryptic advice can guide Nalani when she's lost or struggling. Her deep connection to the manor's history makes her a key player in unraveling the dark past and its effects on the present. Vivian may be the one who provides Nalani with the information about her family's involvement with the cult, though she might not be fully aware of her own role in perpetuating the curse.

Maddox, 17, 1990s

Backstory: Maddox is a teenager from the 1990s, rebellious and allusive. She was drawn to Blackthorn Manor by its mysterious reputation.

Personality: Rude and sarcastic, Maddox is difficult to work with. She refuses to take the situation seriously, dismissing the other guests and the manor's eerie happenings as mere coincidences. She has a softer side and occasionally offers help when she realizes things are more serious than they appear.

Role in the Story: She can provide comic relief but also deepens the sense of mystery surrounding the manor, offering hints or pieces of knowledge she accidentally comes across.

Sam, 45, 1960

- **Backstory:** Sam is from the 1960s, a product of the turbulent social changes of the time. He came to Blackthorn Manor seeking peace and quiet, but his outdated attitudes and prejudices cause tension among the guests.
- **Personality:** Annoying and dismissive, Sam is unaware of how out-of-touch he is with the present. His blatant racism and inability to recognize the manor's time loop make him an uncomfortable presence in the group. However, he might have important knowledge about the manor's history that could be useful—if Nalani can get past his problematic behavior.

- **Role in the Story:** Sam's ignorance of the time loop and his offensive behavior serve as a conflict

George, 21, 1970s

- **Backstory:** George is a young woman from the 1970s, full of energy and curiosity. She came to the manor looking for answers, drawn by rumors of strange disappearances and ghost stories. As an aspiring detective, she has a sharp mind and a knack for problem-solving.
- **Personality:** Like Nancy Drews George is adventurous, clever, and fearless, never backing down from a challenge. She's determined to figure out what's really happening at Blackthorn Manor, and her inquisitive nature often leads her into dangerous situations.
- **Role in the Story:** George's detective instincts will be crucial in piecing together the manor's mysteries. She and Nalani could form a strong partnership, sharing clues and solving puzzles together. Her role is to provide another perspective on the manor's happenings and offer solutions to escape

Marty, 27, 1920s

- **Backstory:** Marty is from the 1920s, an era of jazz, prohibition, and societal upheaval. He arrived at Blackthorn Manor looking for refuge after a troubled past filled with crime and betrayal. He might have been a criminal or someone on the run, hiding in plain sight at the manor.
- **Personality:** Charming and confident, Marty has a smooth demeanor that helps him talk his way out of most situations. Likes to drink
- **Role in the Story:** Marty is the kind of character whose charm masks deeper secrets. He might be hiding important information about the manor or its previous inhabitants, and his knowledge of the time loop may come in unexpected ways.

The manor,???,???

- **Personality:** the house uses the victims souls as energy and can warp how the house looks to each victim. It is constantly working against nalani because since shes new she hasnt been tied to the house so she can see how it really looks. It can jump throughout time.

Plot:

Act 1:

OPENING SCENE: OUTSIDE BLACKTHORN MANOR

Nalani Crews arrives at the edge of the long-abandoned Blackthorn Manor.

NALANI (recordind):

“Okay, Jacob. Let’s see what all the fuss was about...”

SCENE 1: ENTERING THROUGH THE WINDOW

Nalani avoids the front entrance and spots a half-broken window on the first floor. Pushing it open, she struggles to climb through, landing with a soft thud in a darkened study.

Sound Effects: *The floor creaks ominously. Distant whispers echo faintly in the background.*

Change background

Nalani dusts herself off and shines her flashlight around the study.

NALANI (muttering):

“Way to make an entrance, Crews...”

SAM (off-screen, harshly):

“Who’s there?!”

SAM (pointing at her):

“You! What do you think you’re doing in here? Thief? Spy?!”

NALANI (startled):

“Who the hell are you nobody is supposed to be here. This place is supposed to be abandoned ”

SAM (cutting her off):

“Save it. I don’t know who let you in here, but you’re coming with me.”

Change background

SCENE 2: MEETING THE OTHERS

SAM:

“look what i caught in the basement”

PETER :

“Who is this?”

SAM (irritated):

“She’s the one who crawled in through the window.”

GEORGE:

“Through the window? How... peculiar.”

NALANI: “just let me leave please ill go”

VIVIAN :

“We don’t let strangers in here unless we know who they are.”

SAM :

“I don’t trust her.”

PETER (pauses, then speaks slowly):

“Maybe it’s best to keep her locked up for now. Until we figure out what’s going on.”

GEORGE:

“I don’t know... it feels strange, locking someone up without knowing who they are, but Sam has a point. She could be trouble.”

VIVIAN (nodding slowly):

“I’ve had the strangest feeling since we saw her. Something feels off.”

They all look at each other, and after a long silence, Sam speaks again.

SAM:

“Alright then. She stays locked in a room until we can figure this out. We’ll keep her out of the way.”

They all reluctantly agree, and Sam motions for Nalani to follow him down the hallway.

SCENE 3: LOCKED IN THE ROOM (PUZZLE 1)

Maddox :

"Hey, new girl. Looks like you’re the lucky winner of a one-way ticket to Room 23. Hope you like it—'cause you’re stuck here."

Maddox is on the other side of the door peeking thru a hole

NALANI (snapping):

"Who are you? What is going on here? Why is everyone acting so weird?"

Maddox (shrugging, unfazed):

“Maddox. We live here.”

NALANI:

"Can you please let me go, I dont know what is going on here"

Maddox:

"I dont think you can leave idk ive never tried but they’ll let you out soon. Theyre not terrible ppl”

Orb comes and leads her to a vent

PUZZLE 1: ESCAPE FROM THE LOCKED ROOM

Nalani crawls through the vent

SCENE 3: DISCOVERING THE RITUAL ROOM

Hears whispering follows the whispering

Discovers the ritual room

Explores

She finds a journal on the ground

NALANI (softly, confused):

“...Jacob? How did your journal get here?”

Orb is watching her but is dulled oyt by black shadows / whispers save us

She leaves chanage background

SCENE 4: THE JOURNAL CLUE (PUZZLE 2)

Nalani runs out but bumps into george but george isnt shocked and acts like shes known nalani for ever.

George: hey you ive been looking for you everywhere

Nalani: huh what why

George: dinner is ready come get you share before sam eats it all

Nalani is confused but follows

Change to library with them after eating

GEORGE:

"PETER MADDUX Found her wandering the halls. Thought I'd keep her from getting into too much trouble."

Peter

"There you are. Took you long enough to find your way back."

Maddox (muttering):

"She's doing a great job of that already."

Nalani shoots Maddox a glare before sitting down across from George.

NALANI :

"Why are you acting like you know me? I just got here."

George:

"What are you talking about silly, we've lived together for years"

Nalani

"Back? I've never been here before."

Peter

"You're funny, you know that? I guess you've always had a flair for the dramatic."

Nalani

Plays along and pulls out the journal and look at it and ask her what it is she tries to hide they see the riddle to open the book and she doesn't want their help and they help either way

PUZZLE 2

Nalani reads and figures out in order to leave they need to finish the ritual.

The three are confused about all of that but Nalani comes them down and then she leaves

They go to bed

Act 2

Next day Nalani is searching the house for the first relic

Puzzle 4

Gets the relic #1

She sees George reading a book

NALANI:

(half-joking)

You really think that book is going to make anything different?

George looks up from the book, raising an eyebrow.

GEORGE:

(smirking)

It's better than sitting around doing nothing.

Nalani turns away from the window and sits down on the couch, still tense but trying to relax.

NALANI:

Right. Just... how long do we stay here? You think this place has anything to offer?

George tilts her head, considering the question.

GEORGE:

What do you mean? It's not like we have anywhere else to go. It's not like we're in any rush to leave.

Nalani's frown deepens. There's something in the air, something that gnaws at her, but she doesn't know how to explain it.

NALANI:

It just doesn't feel right, you know?

George looks up from her book again, a playful glint in her eye.

GEORGE:

It's called settling in. We're not trapped, Nalani. We're just... here.

Nalani sighs, more to herself

NALANI:

(quietly)

If you say so.

George:

we should have a sleepover in my room later tonight. You look so stress

Nalani hums and leaves

Shadows lead her to another relic

Puzzle 4

Interaction with orb

Now its dinner time

Now after dinner time

Nalani is at the table thinking over the facts she has

PETER:

(quietly)

You've been kind of quiet tonight. What's on your mind?

Nalani hesitates for a moment before speaking, her voice soft.

NALANI:

(softly)

Just... a lot. You know? Everything feels like it's changing so fast, and I'm just trying to keep up.

PETER:

(sincerely)

I get that. There was a war. I cant really remeber what it was about but It's like sometimes you're running, and you don't even know what you're running toward anymore.

Nalani chuckles dryly, lifting her mug to her lips but not drinking. Her eyes meet Peter's for a second before she looks down again.

NALANI:

Yeah... it's like I'm chasing something, but I don't even know what. I don't think I even have a clear picture of what I want anymore. I became a reporter because of my brother. Im in this house because of him. And im this close to figuring out why he loved this place so much. But ive been chasing after him so long when i reach whatever he wanted, is this still the lif im going to want

Peter nods, his voice quiet but reassuring.

PETER:

Sometimes, it's not about knowing exactly where you're going. Maybe it's more about just figuring it out as you go.

Nalani lets out a soft breath, a small smile tugging at the corner of her mouth. She's not sure why, but she feels comforted by his words.

NALANI:

(sarcastically)

Well, I'm great at figuring things out on the fly. Really, I'm an expert at it.

Peter smirks, his eyes lighting up with amusement.

PETER:

I've seen you handle worse, actually. You're more resilient than you give yourself credit for.

NALANI:

(quietly)

I don't feel like I've been handling anything very well lately.

Peter shifts in his seat, his tone gentle but firm.

PETER:

You're allowed to have moments where you don't have it all figured out. It's not all on you to keep everything together.

Nalani looks at him, a little taken aback. The vulnerability in his voice catches her off guard, and she feels something stir in her chest—something soft and comforting.

NALANI:

(softly)

I don't know. It's just... hard, sometimes.

Peter gives her a small, understanding smile, leaning forward slightly as he looks at her.

PETER:

(sincerely)

I get it. But you don't have to go through it alone, you know? You've got people here.

Nalani holds his gaze for a moment, feeling a quiet warmth in his words. It's a simple thing, but it means more to her than she can express. She smiles softly, not fully knowing how to respond.

NALANI:

(small laugh)

Thanks, Peter. You've got a way of making things sound... simpler than they feel.

Peter shrugs, a light chuckle escaping him.

PETER:

Guess I've got some practice at it.

Nalani chuckles, her smile lingering a bit longer as she looks away for a moment, still processing everything. The atmosphere between them feels different now—more open, less heavy.

NALANI:

Maybe I could use a little more simple.

Peter grins, his eyes soft but teasing.

PETER:

Well, if you need someone to talk to... I'm always around.

Nalani walks to georges room where shes covered in face mask and even has maddox and sam involved

Next day.

The orb is floating over nalani and not its turning into a person and boom we figure out it was jacob this entire time jacob is trying to tell her not to do the ritual but we dont knwo that and but the shadows get him

NALANI:

(cheerfully)

You know, I'm starting to think the cook here might be a wizard. These eggs are *too* perfect.

Sam laughs, picking up a piece of toast and smirking.

SAM:

Anything i make should taste good to you

MADDOX:

Rlls his eyes

His attitude hasnothing to do with you your just black

Every body at the table just shrugs continues

Peter chuckles, reaching for a glass of juice and leaning back in his chair.

PETER:

If you keep complaining about everything, sam, we might just start putting you in charge of the cooking permanently.

Sam grumbles in annoyance

Nalani chuckles,

VIVIAN:

Maddox might want a turn tho

Maddox chokes on his water

NALANI:

(teasing)

What's the matter, Maddox? Scared we'll find out your secret talent is... a chef?

MADDOX:

(grinning)

No, my secret talent is burning water.

Vivian, who has been quietly sipping her tea, lets out a soft laugh, her voice light and melodic.

VIVIAN:

(chuckling)

Well, I'd say that's a gift all on its own. Not everyone can manage such a feat.

Everyone laughs, including Maddox, who takes a playful bow.

MADDOX:

(shamelessly)

Thank you, thank you. I'll be here all week.

George finally sits down at the table, looking slightly groggy but amused.

GEORGE:

(grinning)

Did I hear something about burnt water? Sounds like my kind of talent.

SAM:

(smiling)

Oh, we were just trying to convince Maddox he's got some hidden culinary skills.

George raises an eyebrow, clearly entertained.

GEORGE:

(playful)

I don't know about that. But if Maddox ever decides to open a restaurant, I'm sure the novelty will make it a hit. "Burnt Water and Mystery Meat."

Nalani laughs, raising her coffee cup in mock salute.

NALANI:

(cheerfully)

To the most unique dining experience of all time.

Everyone laughs, the atmosphere light and easy as they continue to eat. Peter leans over to Nalani, offering her some of the fruit on his plate.

PETER:

(smirking)

You know, you're really slacking in the fruit department. I'll take a bite for you if you're too busy with the eggs.

Nalani gives him a teasing glare but takes a piece of fruit from his plate.

NALANI:

(mock serious)

Careful, Peter. You don't want to get between me and my eggs.

Peter raises an eyebrow, feigning innocence.

PETER:

(innocently)

What can I say? I'm just trying to help you balance your diet.

The table giggles

VIVIAN:

(gently)

You all have quite the sense of humor. Makes the morning feel a little lighter.

Nalani sees Jacob and she excuses herself from the table

Jacob tells her to not listen to them

Nalani thinks he's talking about the ppl at the table

ACT 3:

After breakfast she gets Peter alone and asks him about what he knows about Sam and Vivian.

Nalani approaches Peter, who looks up as she nears him.

NALANI:

(softly)

Hey, Peter. Can I talk to you for a minute?

Peter turns his body toward her, an easy smile on his face.

PETER:

(smirking)

Sure. What's up?

Nalani hesitates for a second, her words carefully chosen.

NALANI:

(quietly)

I've been thinking. About Sam and Vivian. They both seem... off.

Peter raises an eyebrow, sensing the tension in her voice.

PETER:

(casually)

Off how? They're just... themselves. Sam's a bit much sometimes, but Vivian's harmless, right?

Nalani crosses her arms, her voice lowering as she presses him.

NALANI:

(seriously)

You don't think something's strange about how comfortable they are here? Sam's... racist. Have you noticed that? And Vivian, she seems like she's hiding something.

Peter shifts uncomfortably but hides it behind his usual grin.

PETER:

(grinning)

Well, yeah, Sam's a bit of an ass. But, you know, I don't think he realizes it. It's just... the way he was raised. You can't fault someone for ignorance.

Nalani narrows her eyes, frustration bubbling beneath the surface.

NALANI:

(angrily)

You can't just ignore it, Peter. It's not about where he's from; it's about who he chooses to be. And Vivian... she keeps talking in circles. It's like she's trying to hide something from me.

Peter steps closer to her, his expression softening. His voice is quieter, a little more serious.

PETER:

(softly)

Nalani... sometimes it's not about what they know. It's about what we think we know. They've got their own issues, sure, but it's not always as clear-cut as you think.

Nalani looks up at him, a beat passing between them. The tension in the air is undeniable. She opens her mouth to speak, but just as she does, a voice cuts through the moment.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(interrupting)

Nalani... don't listen to them.

Nalani freezes, her breath catching as she turns around to find the orb floating just behind her. It glows with an eerie, otherworldly light.

Peter turns to look at the orb, confusion written on his face.

PETER:

(surprised)

What... What is that?

Nalani quickly turns back to Peter, her heart pounding in her chest.

NALANI:

(distracted)

I—I... I need to go.

Without another word, she turns and walks away, leaving Peter standing there, a mix of concern and confusion on his face. He watches her leave, a frown settling on his features.

INT. BLACKTHORN MANOR - HALLWAY - LATER

Nalani moves swiftly through the manor, her mind racing. She stops in front of Sam's room, knocking lightly before opening the door. Sam is lounging in a chair, reading a newspaper. He looks up at her, surprised but welcoming.

SAM:

(surprised)

Nalani. What's up?

Nalani shuts the door behind her, stepping into the room with a purposeful air. She crosses her arms, her gaze cold as she addresses him.

NALANI:

(casually)

I've been thinking about something. About your... opinions.

Sam raises an eyebrow, but doesn't say anything.

SAM:

(defensively)

My opinions? What, you don't agree with how I talk?

Nalani's tone sharpens.

NALANI:

(accusing)

No, I don't. You've made some pretty nasty comments about people—about *me*. You don't even realize how hurtful it is, do you?

Sam scoffs, leaning back in his chair as if not taking her seriously.

SAM:

(defensive)

Oh, come on. You're just making a big deal out of nothing. It's how it is, all right? You can't change it, so why bother?

Nalani steps forward, her gaze hardening.

NALANI:

(firmly)

You should bother. You can change. You don't get to pretend like your ignorance is an excuse anymore, Sam. It's *not* okay.

Sam's smirk falters, and he looks at her with a mixture of irritation and something else—uncertainty. He looks down at his hands, fidgeting, avoiding eye contact.

Sam mutters as he walks away

Nalani leaves to get the relic

INT. BLACKTHORN MANOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nalani walks out of the relic room, her breath steady but her heart racing. She freezes as she spots Vivian standing at the end of the hallway, watching her.

VIVIAN:

(softly)

I see you've found it.

Nalani tries to hide her shock, her voice steady as she confronts her.

NALANI:

(guarded)

Yeah. I found it.

Vivian steps closer, her expression unreadable. She lowers her voice.

VIVIAN:

(somerly)

You're doing the right thing. It's all part of the plan, the only plan. You can't change it. Not now.

Nalani looks at her suspiciously, her hands tightening around the relic.

NALANI:

(distrustful)

What plan, Vivian? What's going on here?

Vivian's eyes flicker with something distant, like she's fighting to hold onto something she doesn't want to remember.

VIVIAN:

(softly)

It's too late. You'll see soon enough.

Nalani's expression hardens, and she shakes her head slightly.

NALANI:

(softly)

You're not making any sense. You're hiding something, and I'm going to figure out what it is.

Vivian doesn't respond. She simply watches Nalani with a sad, knowing smile as she walks away, leaving Nalani to question everything.

JACOB:

(urgently)

Nalani... You can't finish this. You don't understand. If you do this, you're going to trap everyone—including yourself—here forever.

Nalani's heart skips a beat as she stares at the familiar figure of her brother. The tears she's been holding back threaten to spill over.

NALANI:

(whispers)

Jacob?

JACOB:

(somberly)

Don't do it, Nalani. The whispers... they're controlling you. They're controlling *all of us*. If you complete the ritual, it'll be too late.

ACT 4:

Nalani is at the library

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(gently)

You look like you're ready to pull your hair out.

Nalani stares at the page in front of her, biting her lip as she tries to process the tangled mess of clues. She smiles faintly at Jacob's voice, despite the situation.

NALANI:

(sighs)

I'm just trying to make sense of all of this... all of *you*.

She looks up at the orb, a touch of sadness in her eyes.

NALANI:

(somberly)

I... I don't even know where to start. The more I try to figure it out, the worse it gets.

Jacob's orb flickers, the light softening as if to comfort her. His voice, though faint, is full of warmth.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(kindly)

It's okay to be confused, Nalani. Hell, I'm not even sure I understand half of this. But you're doing better than I ever did. You always had a knack for piecing things together, even when everything seemed impossible.

Nalani's heart stirs at his words, the familiar comfort of her brother's encouragement filling the room. She leans back in her chair, running her fingers through her hair as she glances at the orb, almost as though she's searching for something she can't quite find.

NALANI:

(softly)

You always believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(smiling warmly)

That's because you're *smart*. You always have been. And you've always had this... drive. It's one of the things I admired most about you.

Nalani looks down at her hands, her voice tinged with a hint of vulnerability.

NALANI:

(quietly)

I'm scared, Jacob. I don't know what's real anymore. I've been chasing answers for so long, and now... I feel like I'm just chasing my own tail.

The orb flickers again, a wave of warmth pulsing through it as Jacob's voice takes on a more soothing tone.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(supportively)

Hey, I get it. You've been through a lot. We both have. But you're not alone in this, okay? Not anymore.

Nalani nods, her voice cracking as she speaks again, her words heavy with unspoken grief.

NALANI:

(softly)

I miss you so much. I keep thinking if I just work hard enough, if I just figure this out, I can bring you back... But... you're never really coming back, are you?

Jacob's orb shimmers, and though it flickers briefly, the warmth in his voice never wavers.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(softly)

I'm always with you, Nalani. You don't need to bring me back. You're carrying me with you, in everything you do. You're stronger than you think.

Nalani closes her eyes for a moment, taking in his words. She swallows hard, wiping away a tear that has escaped her eyes before she speaks again, her voice trembling but determined.

NALANI:

(sniffles)

I don't know how to do this without you. But... I'll try. For you. For me. For everyone stuck in this place.

Jacob's orb glows brighter, as if sending her an encouraging surge of energy. His voice, now full of warmth and pride, resonates through the room.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(assuring)

You *can* do this, Nalani. You've always known what to do when things get tough. Just trust yourself, okay? You're stronger than you think, and you've got the courage to do what's right.

Nalani lets out a breath she didn't realize she was holding. She smiles faintly, wiping another tear from her cheek as she looks at the orb with a soft expression of gratitude.

NALANI:

(softly)

Thanks, Jacob. I don't know what I'd do without you.

The orb glows with a soft, ethereal light, as if Jacob is smiling at her from wherever he is.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(laughing softly)

You'd figure it out. You always do. But I'm proud of you, Nalani. Just... remember I'm still here. Even when it feels like I'm not. Head to bed we still have time for you to rest.

NALANI:

(surprised)

Come in.

The door creaks open, and Peter steps inside hesitantly. He looks slightly awkward, like he's not entirely sure if he should be there. Nalani straightens in her chair, raising an eyebrow.

PETER:

(softly)

Thought I'd check on you. You seemed... off earlier.

Nalani lets out a small chuckle, closing the journal and leaning back in her chair.

NALANI:

Off? That's putting it lightly.

Peter offers a faint smile and steps closer, his hands shoved into his pockets. He nods toward the bed.

PETER:

Mind if I sit?

NALANI:

Suit yourself.

Peter sits on the edge of her bed, leaning forward slightly. There's a silence between them, not uncomfortable but heavy with unspoken things. Nalani looks at him, her expression softening.

NALANI:

Why are you really here, Peter?

Peter shrugs, his gaze flicking to the floor before meeting hers again.

PETER:

I don't know. You just... seemed like you needed someone.

Nalani snorts softly, crossing her arms.

NALANI:

(sarcastic)

Well, I'm doing just fine, clearly.

Peter raises an eyebrow, smirking faintly.

PETER:

Oh, yeah. Totally fine. That's why you're sitting here, staring at that journal like it owes you answers.

Nalani rolls her eyes, but there's a trace of a smile tugging at her lips. She exhales, leaning forward and resting her elbows on her knees.

NALANI:

I just feel... stuck. Like I'm running in circles, and every time I think I'm getting somewhere, it's just another dead end.

Peter watches her carefully, his voice gentle when he speaks.

PETER:

You're not stuck. You're doing everything you can. And honestly? You're handling all this way better than I would.

Nalani looks at him, her defenses slipping slightly. There's a vulnerability in her eyes now, something raw and unguarded.

NALANI:

Why do you always say stuff like that? Like you believe in me more than I believe in myself?

Peter hesitates for a moment, then leans forward, his voice quiet but steady.

PETER:

Because I do. And because... I like you, Nalani.

Nalani's breath catches. The words hang in the air between them, heavy and electric. She searches his face, trying to process what he just said. Slowly, Peter reaches out, brushing a stray strand of hair from her face. He leans in slightly, giving her the chance to pull away. She doesn't.

Their lips meet in a soft, tentative kiss. It's not rushed or dramatic, just warm and genuine, a moment of connection in the middle of the chaos. When they pull back, Nalani exhales shakily, her forehead resting against his.

NALANI:

(softly)

We might not have tomorrow, Peter. Everything could change.

PETER:

(quietly)

Then let's just have right now.

Nalani smiles faintly, nodding as she leans back against the pillows. Peter shifts beside her, wrapping an arm around her shoulders. She rests her head on his chest, the steady rhythm of his heartbeat calming her. For the first time in days, she feels like she can breathe.

NALANI:

(softly)

Right now sounds good.

Peter presses a light kiss to the top of her head, holding her close as the silence settles around them. Outside the window, the faint rustle of the trees sways in the wind, but in the room, everything feels still and safe.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(gently)

You've been quiet for a while. That's not like you.

NALANI:

(sighs)

I've been thinking. About everything. About you, mostly.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(softly)

I'm flattered.

Nalani lets out a dry laugh, shaking her head.

NALANI:

I just... I didn't think I could do this without you. When you died, I thought my drive to be a journalist was because of you, to keep your memory alive. But now I don't know.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(seriously)

Nalani, you're not a journalist because of me. You're a journalist because you're damn good at it.

Nalani looks up at him, startled by the conviction in his voice.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

You solved the mystery of this cult while the whole house was working against you. You figured out things even I couldn't when I was alive. That's not me. That's all you.

Nalani's eyes well up, her voice breaking as she responds.

NALANI:

(softly)

But I wouldn't have even started if it weren't for you.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(shaking his head)

You would've found your way, Nalani. You've always had this fire in you. I just gave you a nudge.

Nalani wipes her eyes, her lips trembling into a small smile.

NALANI:

(softly)

I miss you so much.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(tenderly)

I know. And I miss you, too. But you've got this. You've always had this.

Nalani presses her palm against her heart, nodding as she swallows the lump in her throat.

NALANI:

(whispering)

Thanks, Jacob.

The orb flickers warmly, sending a soft wave of light around her. Jacob's presence is still faint, but somehow, she feels less alone.

INT. BLACKTHORN MANOR - PARLOR - NEXT MORNING

George is pacing the parlor, looking at a map of the manor spread out on the table. Nalani walks in, clutching a mug of coffee, and raises an eyebrow.

NALANI:

You're up early.

GEORGE:

(sharply)

Mysteries don't solve themselves.

Nalani smirks and sits down across from her, watching as George circles something on the map.

NALANI:

You really remind me of someone.

GEORGE:

(looking up)

Oh? Who?

NALANI:

(smiling)

Me.

George blinks, caught off guard, before a small grin tugs at her lips.

GEORGE:

(sincerely)

High praise, coming from you.

Nalani chuckles, taking a sip of her coffee.

NALANI:

You've got guts, George. And brains. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

George's grin widens, and for a moment, she looks proud. She sits down across from Nalani, her voice softer now.

GEORGE:

You're not so bad yourself.

Nalani laughs, shaking her head as the two share a moment of camaraderie.

INT. BLACKTHORN MANOR - STUDY - LATER THAT DAY

Maddox is sitting in a chair, flipping through an old book with clear disinterest. Nalani walks in, raising an eyebrow as she notices his slouched posture.

NALANI:

(snickering)

You look like you're being forced to study for a test.

MADDOX:

(grumbling)

Feels like it. This place is boring as hell.

Nalani sits down next to him, smirking.

NALANI:

You know, you don't have to help.

MADDOX:

(smirking back)

Yeah, well, someone's gotta keep you out of trouble.

Nalani rolls her eyes, but there's warmth in her expression. She nudges him lightly with her elbow.

NALANI:

Thanks, Maddox. For everything.

Maddox shrugs, trying to look nonchalant, but there's a faint blush on his cheeks.

MADDOX:

Yeah, yeah. Don't get all sentimental on me.

Nalani laughs, and for the first time in a while, it feels genuine.

INT. BLACKTHORN MANOR - RITUAL ROOM - NIGHT

Nalani stands in the center of the room, the relic glowing faintly in her hands. The whispers are louder than ever, urging her to complete the ritual. She hesitates, her breathing shallow.

NALANI:

(to herself)

I can't let this keep happening.

Jacob's orb appears beside her, flickering brightly.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(urgent)

Nalani, you don't have to do this.

NALANI:

(tearfully)

Yes, I do. Someone has to stop this.

She steps closer to the altar, ready to sacrifice herself. The orb flares, and Jacob's voice grows stronger.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(sternly)

Not you. Me.

Nalani freezes, her eyes wide with disbelief.

NALANI:

(pleading)

No! Jacob, you've already given up everything. I can't let you—

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(interrupting)

And I'm your big brother. It's my job to protect you.

The orb glows brighter, enveloping Nalani in light as Jacob's form begins to fade.

JACOB (ORB FORM):

(softly)

I'm proud of you, Nalani. Always.

Nalani screams as the light explodes, shattering the relic and breaking the ritual. She collapses to the ground as the room shakes, and then... silence.

ENDING: Everyone Returns to Their Times

Nalani wakes up on the lawn outside the manor. The morning light is soft, the manor now dark and lifeless. She looks around, seeing Peter, George, Maddox, and the others disappearing one by one, fading back to their rightful times.

Peter approaches her, his expression bittersweet.

PETER:

(softly)

Guess this is goodbye.

Nalani nods, tears in her eyes.

NALANI:

(quietly)

Thank you. For everything.

Peter leans in, pressing a soft kiss to her forehead before fading away. Nalani stands alone, the weight of everything hitting her. She looks to the sky, her voice barely a whisper.

NALANI:

(tearfully)

Goodbye, Jacob.