

# Superpower

## By Mohammad Khan

"I'm sorry, but I don't know how to tell you this," says a doctor talking kindly with a husband and wife. "But your son is normal. It's a 1 in a billion chance, but he's normal."

"Is there anything we can do", asked the Sam Jensen. "I mean, surely there's some way we can fix this." Mr. Jensen gripped the wooden arm rest of the chair he was in. His fingers left impressions in the wood, warping it to his hand.

"Mr. Jensen, there's no cure to fix this. I'm sorry."

Mallory Jensen stifles a cry, but breaks down in her husband's arms.

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Many years later. In a middle school classroom.

The teachers stands at the head of the class. "Now everyone needs to focus. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath."

The students close their eyes. The teacher continues. "Imagine yourself in the future. What are you doing? Focus on that. and Do it."

The group of students all have spoons in front of them on their desks, eyes closed, and the veins of struggle are apparent on their foreheads. Soon the spoons start floating in the air. First centimeters above the desk, then inches, then feet for some. A few spoons reach the ceiling.

"Open your eyes", says the teacher. "And look how far you've gotten."

The students open their eyes and see their achievement. Their spoons are floating in front of them.

Except for one student.

One of the students is obsessively trying to levitate the spoon to the point of sweat beading down his forehead, but spoon remains grounded.

The teacher walks up to the student.

"Keep trying Norman. Visualize what your desires and goals are. And make them happen. I know you have greatness within you."

The teacher turns to the class. "Now, let's prepare to build our mental fortitude to keep unwanted people out of our heads."

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In a gymnasium, Norman stands in line of students waiting for their turn at the incline.

A teacher stands at the top of the incline. A student approaches the incline and the instructor pushes a large heavy ball to the student and the student must catch and stop the object.

"When the ball barrels towards you", shouts the teacher in an authoritative tone. "Do not move. Do not cower. Do not budge. Stand your ground. Be firm. And catch it. Bring it on!"

The first student stands at the base of the incline. The instructor pushes the ball down the incline.

The student doesn't move. The ball comes hurling at her and she stands her ground and catches it, screeching back a few inches on the gym floor.

The following students have similar outcomes. Along comes Norman. He stands at the incline in a stable stance to catch the ball.

The instructor pushes the ball down the incline.

Norman stares at the incoming death. Every thought of breaking bones and dying runs through his mind. He fights himself trying to remain poise and still. The ball, now 10 feet away, picks up speed.

Norman dives out of the way as the ball zooms past.

Norman picks up his disappointed self off the ground.

The instructor offers a hand up. "Don't worry Norman, Happens to all of us", says the Instructor. "You're on your way. Remember, what do we say to hardship?"

Norman stands. "Bring it on."

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Norman sits alone in the cafeteria. A room filled with levitating food trays and people having wrestling contests.

A boy sits beside Norman. His hair is large and frizzled.

"You're getting better at telekinesis", says Ike jokingly. "I think I saw your spoon move."

Norman laughs. "I've been practicing at home. Soon I'll be able to pick it up. Maybe I'll be teaching you."

"How was the strengths class?"

"I dived out of the way. And bruised my arm. That really hurt."

"You're lucky man."

"What do you mean?"

"You're not stuck in 1 class every day. You get to see what other people do."

"But, I'm stuck as me. While everyone becomes stronger, faster, I'm stuck with limits." They sit in silence. He's right. Norman's body physical and mental limits will never surpass those blessed with strength or telepathy.

Norman changes the topics. "Got any plans for the summer."

"My dad's been teaching me how to use a gun", replies Ike. "To defend myself. I'll get my license soon."

"That's awesome. Maybe you can teach me."

"Maybe. But you might not need it. I've heard they might be able to give people more abilities. A drug to give you abilities."

"Who made it?"

"Don't know, but it's called EGO."

"EGO? And how long do the powers stay?"

"I don't know, but I've seen people leave their families and friends for this. Promise me you won't do that."

"I promise. We'll have each other's backs. Anyway, where -" Before Norman could inquire more, an apple hit the back of his head with a loud thud. He turns to see one of the older kids in the cafeteria wielding an apple in his hand, ready to launch again.

He throws another apple at blinding speed. Norman & Ike freeze. But the apple stops in mid-air. It stays floating in the air.

A girl is levitating the apple. This is Natalie, one of Norman's older two sisters. She bears a jacket and has wavy brown hair. Her bracelet jangled as she used her telekinesis to hold the apple.

"What's matter Curtis", replies Natalie mockingly. "Too weak to throw it faster?"

Curtis punches the table. "What'd you say?" He storms towards them. "Keep talkin like that and you won't have arms any more."

Another girl zooms in between Natalie and Curtis. People brace against the sudden rush of wind. Roseanne, Norman's eldest sister, stands confidently with her siblings. A tower of protection for her younger brother. Her blonde hair swings past as she comes to an abrupt stop. Her piercing brown eyes invite conflict and her stance exudes power and control to demonstrate who's in charge.

"Is there a problem here?", says Roseanne authoritatively. She was leanly built and optimized for super speed. "You throw a punch and you'll get one right back. Guarantee you won't see it coming."

Curtis glares at Norman. "Lucky they're here." He backs down. "But they can't protect you forever."

"They won't need to", replies Norman with false conviction. "I promise."

The girls turn towards Norman.

"You ok Norman", asks Natalie kindly. "Ike?"

Ike and Norman nod. Roseanne continues to search the cafeteria for other contenders.

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School is over. The 3 sibling walk together out of the school.

Norman walks in the middle of them. Natalie bounces a tennis ball and Roseanne constantly searches the area as if under constant stimulation. They don't say anything as they walk down the sidewalk home. Roseanne begins to fidget and ravenously scratching her arm.

"You alright Roseanne", asks Natalie. "You're jumpier than usual." Natalie looks harder at Roseanne. Her scrutinizing glare disturbs Roseanne. "Who are you waiting on?"

"Get out of my head Nat", responds Roseanne annoyed by her sisters advance.

Norman walks in the middle in confusion. He looks between them thinking 'what are they talking about'. Entirely unaware of the world his sister's inhabit. The 3 of them continued to walk down the sidewalk. It's a calm day, the breeze gently blowing. Kids are playing outside. Some zooming throughout their yards and playing tag. Norman and Natalie only see a blur. Natalie uses her telekinesis to levitate the ball.

Norman kicks the rocks as they walk. He picks up one of them and tosses it into the air and opens his palm to try to levitate it like Natalie. The rock plummets to his hand without the slightest hint of levitation. He sighs and his hand drops from heavy disappointment, the rock crashes to the ground.

Natalie lovingly pats his shoulder.

Norman whispers discouraged. "I wish I had powers."

Norman has been taken care of and catered to for his entire life. He hasn't held up his own ground.

"Ah Norman" says Roseanne ruffling his hair. "You'll get it when you're older. And reach higher than anyone thought possible."

Norman didn't understand, but he trusted his older sisters.

"Hey Rosie." Shouts a boy from one of the yards. "There's a regionals track meet in a few minutes. You coming?" The boy is playing catch with his younger brother. A great deal of dust emerges from each catch of the ball. They have super strength and aren't afraid to show it.

Roseanne's face blushes strawberry red. Natalie and Norman ponder the strange boy whom they've never met prior to now. 'Rosie?' Norman wonders to himself.

"Track meet?" Natalie tries to analyze the boy's intent and stares at him, peering through the words.

Roseanne looks at him. She replies nonchalantly.  
"I don't go to track meets. Too many people."

The boy walks closer to the 3 siblings. He leans on the fence.

"I get that. I don't like people either. I usually stand and watch from afar. I've heard this meet is going to be close. Best in the region competing." Roseanne quickly zooms away. And the boy is gone too.

"Roseanne!" Natalie shouts at them.

"Where'd they go?" Norman looks around. "What were they talking about?"

"We should follow them. There's something not right."

The two of them turn around and head back down the same path from which they came.

"How do you know?"

"Mom's been training my telekinesis abilities. She's been teaching me to read minds.....sort of. I read their minds and caught a few thoughts of theirs and a few feelings."

They made it back to the school track field. Natalie and Norman head for the bleachers searching for Roseanne and the boy. They're not on the bleacher seats. Norman looks behind the stands and Natalie follows behind. Two large buildings lie beneath the bleachers. A large locker room for boys and girls, a bathroom building, and an open space between them. Norman and Natalie stands at the end of the bleachers staring down the large area.

Norman spots a blurry figure emerging from behind the distant bathroom building.

"Is that Roseanne", whispers Norman. Sure enough, Roseanne appears. She's staggering and stumbling. What's the matter with her? Roseanne collapses.

"Roseanne!" Shouts Natalie as she runs towards them. Norman follows behind Natalie. They're approach the collapsed Roseanne until another person appears from behind the bathroom. The boy. He appears to be holding something in his hand. A small bat? A knife? Norman peers harder as he and Natalie runs towards them. The closer they got to the boy, they see he's holding a syringe.

20 feet away now. Norman can clearly see Roseanne on the ground. Something by her hand. A syringe. He's about to shout until CLUNK. A heavy object hits him on the back of the head. He collapses from the pain and as he fell he saw Natalie collapse from what he assumes is a similar impact. Norman's face kissed the concrete and he blacked out.

He woke up in an unfamiliar place. He's lying on a mattress in a rundown room. He gets up feeling a large bump on the back of his head and a few bruises on his cheek from his hard landing on the concrete.

The room is dirty and unkempt. There are papers thrown on the ground and the paints peeling off. There's one cracked wooden door leading outside of the room to somewhere. Norman stands and tries to open the door. It's locked. He jiggles the lock but the fragility of the knob nearly breaks it.

Someone unlocks the door on the other side. A large man stands and pushes Norman back to his mattress.

Two more large men, mercenaries, walk into the room and stand around Norman and the door.

Another person walks in. He's wearing circular glasses and a taxi driver cap. He speaks in a kind and calm voice.

"Hello Norman. It's nice to finally meet you. I've heard so much."

"Who are you?"

"Call me Hugo"

"What am I doing here?"

"One of my boys was reckless, you weren't supposed to see it yet."

"Where're my sisters?"

"They're ok. Natalie's probably just walking up. Roseanne'll take a while."

"What did you do to Roseanne?"

"I didn't do anything. She choose this. She choose to take a shot of E.G.O."

"The drug?"

"Exogenous Growth Oxymetholone. A drug that gives you a super power based on your genetic potential. One injection and you get another super power temporarily. It's highly addictive stuff."

"She's addicted to drugs?"

Hugo's tone becomes passive aggressive. "Yes. Like many others. Made it myself."

"We won't tell anyone", says Norman. "Let us go and we'll forget everything."

"You know I can't do that Norman."

Hugo moves closer to Norman. "You know why I'm talking to you?" Norman nervously shakes his head no. His hands tremble slightly. "It's because I understand you. I know what it's like to feel powerless. To feel like everyone can run over you whenever they want. And you crave the power to stand up for yourself."

Norman stops trembling. He grows more calm.

Hugo continues. "Everyone has abilities to a certain extent, but no one has any real power. Anyone's life can change and they'd be helpless to change it. Like losing a loved one.....or yours right now. You were helpless to change what was about to happen to you and your sisters. You were powerless. Your sisters with all of their abilities were powerless. They never had real power. The power of control."

Hugo sits beside Norman and puts his hand on Norman's shoulder.

"Norman, How would you like a taste of real power?"

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## **YEARS LATER**

Norman is with Ike eating lunch in an outdoor cafe under the awning. They're older now and nearing adult age.

Ike sips his glass of non-alcoholic wine, and asks Norman. What are you going to do in college?

"I might study business. Not many paths for someone like me. How about you? Are you going to specialize in a field of telekinesis?"

"Maybe. I'm considering telepathy or advanced telekinetic abilities. I'm not sure yet."

"What you doing here?", says Curtis walking closer to the cafe. He jumps the boundary of the outdoor dining area and pulls up a chair next to them.

"What do you want Curtis", replies Norman. Norman doesn't look at Curtis.

"Haven't seen old faces in a while. I'm just seeing the place one last time before I head off to college."

"You're going to college", asks Ike surprised. "What are you studying?"

"Peak Physical Form. Honing my strength abilities to all corners of physical activity."

Curtis snatches Ike's food and takes it for himself. He gobbles down the food.

"More like training your ego", says Norman confidently and takes a sip of his glass of water.

Curtis knocks the food off the table but Norman picks up his glass before Curtis could hit it. The food and trays and glass clatters to the ground. The other attendees at the cafe are startled by the commotion.

Curtis towers over Norman and Norman doesn't flinch. He drinks his water calmly. Norman stands. Curtis snatches Norman by the collar and lifts him off his feet.

"Don't have your sisters to protect you now", snarls Curtis as he prepares to throw Norman.

"You don't want to do that", says Norman with a dead stare at Curtis.

"Why?"

"5786 Floral Lane." Curtis looks into Norman's eyes for a bluff, but sees nothing. Nothing in Norman's soulless glare.

Curtis slowly lets go of Norman's collar and backs off.

Norman fixes his shirt, he leans in closer to Curtis and whispers, "I told you I wouldn't need them. I keep my promises."

Norman looks to stunned cafe audience with an intimidating and confident look, ready for other contenders.

Curtis hops the boundary and runs off.

Ike sat amazed at his friend's confidence. "Looks like your job has paid off."

Norman looks in the direction Curtis ran. "Took 6 years. But I'm stronger now because of it." He looks back at the table and the shattered dishes and food on the ground.

Norman's phone buzzes. 'GET HERE NOW. -H.G'

"I'm sorry", says Norman. "I need to go. Family's calling."

As Norman leaves, Ike says. "Stay in touch alright?"

"I will. I promise."

Norman speeds off leaving Ike to clean up.

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Hugo sits in a wheelchair surrounded by his 4 associates. An IV drip is hanging near his wheels chair.

Norman knocks on the door and walks in. One of the associates, Bruno, pats Norman down.

Bruno has the face of an attack dog and build of an ox, a hulk of a man. The rest of Hugo's close associates sit around him.

Marty and Frankie. Twins, inseparable. They are mirror images of each other. Marty has a birth mark on the left side of his face, Frankie has one on the right.

Then there's Rust. No one knows his real name, he only speaks in metaphors. Legend has it, when he met Hugo, he introduced him as the rust of the earth.

"What're you doing? Of course I'm clean." Norman looks at Hugo. "I would never betray you"

"Can't be too careful", Hugo replies weekly. He waves to Bruno to leave Norman alone. "Norman we have a problem. The police are closing in and we need to stay low for a while. Can you do that Norman?"

"Of course."

Hugo nods in agreement. "We need to stay in the shadows."

"What about the police department's money", says Bruno.

"That only goes so far", says Hugo. "But they'll keep any leads from reaching us. There is one detective I'm worried about. Carver. Detective Carver." Hugo turns to Norman. "Watch yourself Norman. Now's not the time to be ambitious."

"I'll be careful. I promise", says Norman.

"And the crypts", asks Marty. "Some have said they're making your product."

"I heard they're all held up in one place", replies Frankie. "Like um...3538?....No. 3765 Rome street. Yeah, Rome street. In the high rise lofts."

"We have more in the basement", says Bruno.

"What if they police catch us", says Marty.

"Let's hope it doesn't come to that."

Suddenly two associates burst into the room holding a girl in their arms.

"Sorry boss", says on the associates. "But we caught 'er outside. Spying and such."

They throw the girl towards the center of the room. It's Roseanne.

"I thought she quit Ego", says Norman.

"We found a phone on her.", says one of the associates.

"Doesn't matter, she's seen my face", says Hugo. He leans closer to Roseanne and looks at her. "And she knows who I am." Hugo nods to Bruno. He stomps the phone, shattering it.

"Please", cries Roseanne. "I didn't see anything. I didn't hear anything. I don't know who you are."

"Yes you do", whispers Hugo. "Find anything else?"

"Found a small vial", says Marty. "It looks like EGO but not ours."

"Crypts quality", says Hugo.

Norman grabs the vial and looks at it.

“Yeah-Yeah. I remember her. She was at the crypts when Frankie and I were passing through”, says Marty.

Norman pipes up. “Check her pupils.” Everyone looks at Norman oddly. “If she’s using right now, her pupils will be dilated.”

Bruno shines the flashlight into Roseanne’s eyes. “Dilated. She’s on the off-brand Ego. But so what? She can’t leave here alive.”

“Yeah Waste her”, says Marty. “She’ll tell the crypts about our hideout.”

“An ant will always return to its colony”, says Rust.

Norman pleads to Hugo. “She’s high. She won’t remember any of this.”

Hugo turns to Norman. “It’s your choice. How do you want to handle this? It’s your choice.”

Everyone looks to Norman waiting for his decision.

“Let her go”, says Norman. The associates shift uncomfortably but don’t move. Norman speaks sternly. “Let. her. Go.”

“You sure”, asks Hugo in a warning tone.

Norman looks Hugo dead in the eye. “She’s family.”

The associates grab Roseanne by the shoulders and drag her out of the building.

“Call her a cab at least”, says Norman calling after them. “If you’re going to throw her out. She won’t be able to speed home in that state.”

The rest of the associates glare at Norman.

“what’d you do that for”, exclaims Marty. “She’ll go back to the crypts with our location.”

“We need to move”, says Bruno.

Hugo nods. “We need to prepare for the worst.”

“Nothing will bad happen”, says Norman.

“What will you do when something does. ”, replies Hugo.

“Bring it on.” Norman stands firm. Hugo chuckles at Norman’s bravado

“She won’t talk”, says Norman. “I promise.”

“You make a lot of promises my friend.” Hugo looks to the associates. “I hope you’ll fulfill them.”

A silence falls the room as Hugo and Norman converse. The associates give an aura of hostility directed at Norman. Hugo senses this. “Norman, why don’t you go home”, says Hugo kindly. “Take the night off this time.”

Norman looks around. The associates continue to glare at him. His presence isn’t wanted. He places the vial on a nearby shelf and storms off.

Hugo rubs his forehead in frustration.

Frankie voices his concerns. “Boss, what do you want to do about her? About-about the crypts?”

You want us to take care of him?” asks Marty. “Frankie and I can do that.”

Hugo looks at the vial. “I have an idea.”

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Evening time in the Jensen household.

Norman enters his home. His parents are on the phone rapidly talking.

Natalie sits near them. She sees him and she rushes over to him and embraces him in a hug. “Oh Norman! You’re ok.”

“What’re you doing here? I thought you were at the Horizon university with Roseanne”

“Roseanne didn’t return to her apartment. Her roommate called us. I came home as soon as I heard. We don’t know where she is. Mom and Dad are calling everyone we know. ”

Norman joins his panicking family. "Where have you looked", he asked Natalie.

"She went to the corner store. Her car's still there. The police are canvassing the scene and looking at cameras."

Norman remembers the address that Frankie said. 3765 Rome street. High Rise Lofts. Apartment 5.

Norman speaks up. "Are there other apartments Roseanne goes too? With other friends? Maybe in her sorority?"

His parents look at each other. His mother learned advanced telekinetic powers and communicated telepathically with dad. Natalie seems to join in on the conversation as well, nodding and gesticulating with them.

Norman sat alone, but no longer annoyed by his lack of the powers. He leaned against the wall with his arms arrogantly folded across his chest waiting for his family to catch up.

Natalie nods in agreement. "Ok. We'll look there. Her sorority sometimes goes there." She grabs her car keys and turns to Norman. "We know where she is. We're meeting with the officers. We'll take my car."

Natalie and Norman drive to the apartment building. It's on fire. A sea of red and blue lights cover the street as the inferno paints the night sky orange. The squad of cars surrounded an apartment building. Officers and fire fighters are working to smother the flames and save people/.

Norman and Natalie tried approaching, but the officers held them back.

An officer came out of the building with Roseanne under his arms. He guides her to the paramedics. Natalie and Norman rush over to her. The police and ambulance sirens blare so loudly that the siblings are not able to hear each other. Roseanne sits petrified. She's wearing long sleeves and her hair is disheveled.

Natalie and Norman hug Roseanne. Natalie places a reassuring hand on Roseanne's shoulder and brushed her hair behind her ear.

A paramedic approaches them and checks Roseanne one last time. He holds a bagged vial. He pats her on the shoulders and gestures for Natalie and Norman to take her home.

Norman looks at the vial. It's the same one he held at Hugo's.

Under the caring wings of Norman and Natalie, Roseanne is guided to the car.

Norman looks back to see the paramedic talking to a detective. He's barely able to overhear them.

"They're all dead", says the paramedic. "She's the only one alive."

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Mom and Dad embrace Roseanne refusing to let her go again. Roseanne remains stoic and unfazed. Something's off about her.

Mom takes Roseanne in her arms and walks her to the couch and has her lie down. Dad brings a blanket and places it over her.

Natalie and Norman stay in the background as their parents continue to dote over their eldest daughter. Norman feels proud. He was able to find her, he had the power to find her. He folds his hands across his chest in triumph. Everything is alright. He remembers the vial. Why was it there? He left it at Hugos.

Norman takes out his phone. He texts Ike. I NEED FOR YOU TO BUY A GUN.

Norman looks up. Roseanne peers at Norman with weary eyes. Norman shifts his stance slightly. "Does she remember?" Norman thinks to himself. Roseanne continues her stare before she gently lies down on the couch and falls asleep.

A knock came at the door. They all looked at each other curiously.

Norman opens the door. A detective and officer were standing at the door.

"Evening", says the detective. "I'm Detective Carver. This is Officer Lyell." Norman stands aside and the detective and officer meet the rest of the family.

"How can I help you", Norman responds. Natalie and their mother walk up behind Norman standing a few feet behind.

"We think Roseanne's one of the victims of an underground performance enhancing drug called EGO that's been plaguing our town for 6 years. May we come in and speak with Roseanne?"

Norman lets the officers inside. Norman felt a probing presence in his mind. "Was it the detective or the officer", thought Norman. "It isn't Nat or mom."

Norman stands in the open doorway. His hands tremble slightly but he quickly squashes the fear. Norman takes a deep breath and focuses on his future and what he needs to do next.

He walks in front of Carver and Lyells as he walks them into the living room where his parents, Natalie, and Roseanne wait. Roseanne sits wrapped in a warm blanket and rocks in a near catatonic state.

Carver is the first to speak. "I'm detective Carver and this is officer Lyells. I would like to speak with Roseanne about her encounter with the performance enhancing drug called EGO and her encounter with the crypts."

"She's not a drug user", says Mrs. Jensen. "I would've read it before now."

"Mrs. Jensen", says Carver respectfully. "Roseanne is a user. I can read it. She's suppressed it, but it's there."

"You mentioned the crypts", says Mr. Jensen. "What does she have to do with them?"

"They're all dead. The building she was in was the last crypts HQ before it burned. She was the only who survived", says Carver.

"It must be the detective", thinks Norman to himself. "He has telepathic powers like mom and Natalie."

"Mr. and Mrs. Jensen", continues Carver. "Have you or your family heard of Hugo?" Norman stays still and purges his mind of Hugo. He calmly breathes quietly. His family nods no. "We have reason to believe he's a powerful telepath. He controls his victims to do his bidding. We believe that Roseanne succumb to his influence."

Officer Lyells shifts uncomfortably in his seat. "This is purely speculation", adds Lyells. "We think this is Hugo, but we're not sure." Carver looks to Lyells curiously.

"Was this the same drug you ran into 6 years ago?" Mr. Jensen asks Natalie.

"Maybe", says Natalie. "It was in a different place. But I think so."

"You've run into this before", asks Carver turning around. He walks closer to the family and takes out his notepad.

"yes", says Natalie. "The 3 of us. Me, Roseanne, and Norman were attacked 6 years ago by people. I think it's the same people."

"How did this happen", says Carver as he writes notes.

"We were walking home one school afternoon", begins Natalie. "And a boy begins chatting up Natalie. I get a sense they are trying to hide something, but I was young and inexperience then. Anyway, they zoom off. Norman and I chase behind."

"Why didn't you call the police", interrupts Lyells. "if you thought malicious intent, you should've called your parents at least."

"I never said malicious", replies Natalie annoyed at his remark. Lyells shifts uncomfortably again and walks slightly towards the door. Natalie continues. "We get to our high schools stadium. We go underneath the bleachers and find Roseanne struggling to even walk. We rush to her aid until we're both knocked out."

"Then what", says Carver. "Do you remember anything?"

Natalie shrugs. "I remember waking up in the hospital with a head wound."

Carver looks to Norman. "Do you remember anything?"

Norman's eye dart around the room pretending to recall a memory. He shakes his head in discouragement. His left shoulder shrugs. "No. Sorry. I don't."

Carver looks at Norman for a few seconds and nods. He stands, placing his notepad in his pocket. He looks to the parents. "Thank you for your time tonight. You've been very helpful." Carver hands Mr. Jensen a card. "Please let us know if you remember any info that can help us stop the drug from spreading." Carver and Lyells stand.

He turns to Natalie and Norman. "I'll need the two of you to come to the station so we can get your statements."

"What?" Exclaims Mrs. Jensen. "You think they're lying?"

"No", says Carver. "We just need to record everything they remember about their encounter 6 years ago. This might help us stop the drugs."

"It's ok", says Norman feigning confidence. "We'll do this."

"Ok", says Carver. "we'll need to speak with Roseanne as well. She might remember something from her two encounters with EGO."

Lyells pulls Carver aside. "Which one do you want to start off with?"

Carver glances back to Norman and Natalie. "start with Norman."

"why?"

"His one-sided shrug. Sign of no confidence of what I just said. He's hiding something." Carver walks to Norman and Natalie.

"The two of you will ride with Officer Lyells. And I'll meet you at the station. Mr. and Mrs. Jensen, please bring Roseanne as soon as she wakes. I'll send an officer to pick her up."

The interrogation room is lit with one lamp, cold, and damp. The steel chair and table are cold, dead, and pristine, void of any dirt. Norman sits, laid back on his chair in a casual manner. He leans forward in his chair and rests his arms on the table.

Carver walks into the room. "sorry to keep you waiting, your sisters had a lot to say." He sits down. "What do you remember?"



"Well I remember -" Norman is interrupted. Someone entered the room carrying a polygraph.

Carver looks at the person. "Almost, forgot", says Carver. "Norman, would it be alright if we attach a polygraph to during this? This way we can tell the fake memories from the real ones."

"Can't you read my mind", replies Norman proud of his deduction skills.

"I can", says Carver. "But knowing your sister and your mother's skill level, I assumed you've built a mental block to prevent them and possibly others from reading your mind."

Norman shifts uncomfortably in his seat. That's exactly how he's been slipping underneath his family's radar.

"So, do you consent to taking a polygraph test", asks Carver smiling.

Carver and Norman glare at each other. Norman taps the table and breathes calmly. "Of course."

The person attaches the polygraph to Norman and sits in the corner of the room.

"now that the polygraph is attached", says Carver taking out his notepad. "We need to establish a baseline. State your name."

"Norman Jensen."

"Do you have abilities, Norman?"

"Yes." *Lie.* Says the polygraph operator

Carver nods. He flips through his notebook. "Have you ever lied?"

"Yes." *Truth.*

"What were you doing on the first day you and your siblings ran into EGO?"

"It was when Natalie and I first ran into it. Roseanne was using it before, we didn't know. We were walking home at first until Roseanne sped off to some place. We found her, but were all knocked out." *Truth*

"Then what", asks Carver.

"Then I woke up in the hospital." *Truth*

Carver looks at his notepad. "Witnesses say they saw you and your sisters being dragged and placed in a van. Do you remember anything about this?"

Norman pauses. He feels his pulse increase. "I do' ". Officer Lyell walks into the room.

"Sorry", says Lyells. "Carver I need to speak with you. "

Carver stands. "Excuse me" . He exits the the room with Lyells. Norman watches Carver leave.

"it's about the crypts", says Lyells before he closes the door. Norman catches a glimpse of two people walking behind Carver and Lyells. It's Marty and Frankie.

"What are they doing here", thinks Norman. His pulse increases a bit. He's still connected to the polygraph and he can no longer hear Carver and Lyells.

It's just Norman and the polygraph reader. Norman taps impatiently on the table.

Norman turns to the operator. "Can I go to the bathroom?"

The operator nods.

Norman walks to the door and the operator follows behind him.

"I'll wait here", said the operator standing in the doorway of the interrogation room. "the bathroom's down the hall and around the corner."

Norman walks to the bathroom. Inside the bathroom, he finds Marty and Frankie laughing and flushing stuff down the toilet.

"What're you doing", asks Norman.

Frankie turns to him. "Um.. uh. Can't you see?" Frankie gestures to Marty and the toilet. "We're saving your butt."

"Everything was going ok. I had the detective on the ropes. He didn't suspect a thing."

"No he knew", says Marty. "He was onto us from the start. Hugo told us to avoid him."

"Hugo thinks I'm weak?"

"We're following orders", says Marty. "And we had to save you before you messed up. Took care of some loose ends."

"He thinks I'm weak." Another cop walks into the bathroom. They stop talking. Norman walks over to the sink and washes his hands. Frankie and Marty vanish from the bathroom. Norman exist and heads towards the room. His mind swirling in thoughts. Loose ends? Hugo doesn't trust me? He doesn't think I'm strong enough to stay loyal under pressure?

He sees Carver and the operator standing by the door and regains composure.

"C'mon", says Carver ushering for Norman to enter the room. "Let's finish this."

Norman plops into his seat. Carver stays standing. It's just Norman and Carver in the room. The polygraph isn't connected to Norman.

"One last question: Roseanne places you at an oblivion parkway before she went to the crypts. She says you're working with Hugo."

"I don't know who that is", replies Norman sternly.

Carver nods, seeing that he's going no where. "Ok. You're free to go."

Norman stands. "What happened to the crypts? Did you find out who did it?"

"No. We're still processing the evidence, but the fire didn't kill them."

"What did?"

"Poison. From a vial we found. Checking for prints now." Carver glares at Norman.

Norman leaves the precinct. The evening sun shines brightly.  
He sits on a bench outside the precinct. I can't believe it, he thinks to himself. Roseanne talked.

His phone rings. It's Ike.

"I got it. Where do you want to meet?"

"By autumn lane and sunrise lane." Norman ends the call. He meets Ike at the location.

Ike hands him a bag. "Shouldn't we call the police?"

"Doesn't make much sense to call the criminals for help." Norman takes the bag. "You need to get out of here."

"I will. I'm leaving tonight for college."

"Good luck", says Norman.

"Can't you quit? Or run away?"

"And leave all I've worked for behind?" Norman shakes his head. "No way. I'll stand firm. I can't lose everything."

"Ok, Good luck Norman." They shake hands and Ike heads off.

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Norman begins to walk home.

A car pulls up beside him. He sees Bruno and Rust inside.

"Get in", says Bruno. And they drive off.  
The sun is low in the sky as night falls upon the world. They drive to a forest.

"Where are we going", asks Norman.

"End of the line", says Rust coolly.

Norman knew he only had one chance. He pulls out the gun. BANG. BANG.

The car swerves into a tree. Norman stumbles out with his gun ready. He looks into the cracked passenger window, both Bruno and Rust are dead.

Norman is alone in the dark woods. Clouds slowly cover the bright moon, shrouding the forest in a veil of darkness.

He begins the trek back.

He reaches his home. The window is open and he can hear people talking inside. It's his family and detective Carver. He crouches in nearby bushes to listen in.

"—prints on the vial were Norman's", says Carver. "We'll send a search party for him. Let us know if he returns home." They stop talking.

Carver exits the house. Norman moves slightly in the bushes. Carver looks into the bushes. He moves on to his car and gets inside.

Norman runs off to Hugo, oblivious to Carver's car tailing him.

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Hugo is in the apartment with Frankie and Marty. Night has fallen.

"Where are they", asks Frankie.

"They'll be here soon. It shouldn't take long", replies Hugo.

A knock came to the door. Marty goes to open the door. It's Norman.

"Norman", says Marty. Marty looks around Norman. Norman walks into the room. "Where's Bruno and Rust", asks Marty.

"Gone", says Norman. He walks into the middle of the room and faces Hugo. Marty sits beside Frankie to the right of Hugo.

"Gone", says Hugo. Hugo studies him and grew tense. Hugo turns to Marty. "He's about -" But it's too late, Norman takes out his gun and shoots Frankie and Marty Hugo jumps slightly back in his wheelchair from the gunshots.

Norman points the gun at Hugo. "You tried to have me killed!"

"What're you talking about", says Hugo. "I tried to save you."

"Bruno and Rust were going to kill me."

"Yes. They were going to fake your death."

"You're lying!", snarls Norman. He walks closer to Hugo and puts the gun on the Hugo's forehead. "You thought I was weak and framed me with the vial to get rid of me."

"I used the vial to take out the Crypts. I knew the police would find your prints on the vial, so I had Frankie and Marty destroy the evidence. But informants in the station said they were able to pull your prints before the evidence was destroyed. I had Bruno and Rust fake your death to remove the target off your back."

Norman steps back, lowering the gun. Hugo relaxes slightly, feeling that he barely escaped death.

"I was going to have you take over", whispers Hugo.

Norman looks at Hugo. He blew it. He flew too close to the sun.

There are many steps rushing to the top floor. Carver and Lyells bursts into the room. He points the gun at Norman.

"Drop the gun! On your knees!" Carver sees two bodies.

Lyells rushes over to check if they're still alive. Lyells turns on his radio. "Need an ambulance at 1804 Phoniex Lane. Two bodies"

Norman places the gun on the floor. He stands on his knees as Carver comes to cuff him.

"Norman Jensen, you're under arrest for the murder of—"

Norman stops listening. He's lost. He's weak and defeated. Carver takes Nolan out of the building.

Nolan looks back at Hugo. Lyells is there with Hugo asking if he's alright. Hugo pats Lyells on the shoulder. Norman could read Hugo's lips as he spoke to Lyells. Hugo said two words; 'good job.'

Norman is thrown into the back of the police car and driven away to prison.

Forever chained to the earth. Powerless. And weak.

THE END