They call America the new world. You would think that it just sprung up overnight instead of having existed along with the rest of the continents, slowly drifting apart from their original positions on great Pangea. The western world calls it new but only because they know nothing of what came before. Natives to this land had oral traditions and manifest destiny took care of stamping out any knowledge we could have gained from those noble peoples. As for what came before them, we may never know, especially since no one bothered to ask. So, it may be that we deserve anything we receive, for our own ignorance and arrogance are to blame for the lack of historical context. Can those people who experience a thing, simply by proximity to it, be responsible to the lack of investigation done by those who came before them. This was the case for the poor souls who had the great misfortune of putting down roots in the town of Wyatt Falls. Don’t bother looking it up on a map, it’s no longer there. Can these simple folks be to blame for not knowing, for not searching through the past to find what came before? For not knowing what was there before it, before man himself walked the planet. What came before, was important. What came before was crucial to the survival of life as it evolved on this planet, and we should never have forgotten it.

Wyatt Falls was a fly spec on the map of Oregon. A nowhere and nothing town whose only significance was a gas station and its presence on a mildly used route to Crater Lake. If you blinked your eye you might miss it but for those who lived in this little town there was no other place they’d rather be. Everybody knew everybody from Pastor John Clark to the town drunk Tom Douglas. Everyone and everything had its place. No real crime to speak of, at least nothing that Sheriff Dean Murphy couldn’t handle. Everyone was greeted with a friendly smile and a hello. The town square was decorated for every notable holiday occasion and those that left to see the world generally ended up right back where they started after a while. It was a picture-perfect town that could have come right out of a Norman Rockwell painting, with one exception. Nobody, I mean nobody was ever set foot in Stone View Park.

Stone View Park was as old an anyone could remember. Folks in Wyatt Falls said it existed even before the founding of the town. The park consisted of a small patch of flat ground in the northern most portion of town. It was in the oldest and least used portion of Wyatt Falls, no one lived around there and the structures that still stood were considered historical landmarks, though nobody visited them any longer. The dilapidated old buildings and unused fields gave a sorrowful ambiance to the area. Folks stayed clear of that part of town, and most hoped that everything there would be torn down and built over one day. The park was surrounded on the east and west by thick forest and the approach from the south, which was the only clear way to get there, was a single dirt road that extended a quarter mile from the last forgotten structure in old town. North of the park was its namesake. A single stone protruding from the ground surrounded by a small clearing, twenty feet in diameter, where nothing ever grows.

The stone was unremarkable in its appearance. Rising a mere three feet from the ground and made of a mineral that could not be found in the surrounding area, it was clear that it was only the tip of a larger mass buried in the barren cracked soil that comprised the clearing. To the north beyond the dead clearing was the steep foothills of Mt. Thielsen. Weathered by centuries the stone had no markings or visible shaping. Its purpose was unknown and of even greater vexation was the reason why a park had been erected in an obvious capacity for viewing the thing.

The park had obviously gone through renovation throughout the years in an attempt to make the place more desirable to the local denizens. A few haphazardly placed and haphazardly dated children’s toys were installed overtime which looked as if they were as weathered and forgotten as the stone itself. An ancient teeter totter made from logs, a wooden merry go round with rusted components half buried in the dirt, a precarious looking set of swings and several other deteriorated items that, in their current state, one could not recon what they had been when originally placed there.

The locals believed that not only the park but the whole section of old town that surrounded it was haunted. Every misfortune that befell the good people of Wyatt Falls was blamed on the place, from crop failures and missing animals to a string of unexplained missing persons cases that stretched back as far as anyone could remember. The town motto was “Live Life Better”. It was written in bold cursive letters on the welcome sign posted at the outskirts of town. What it should have said however was, “Live Life Better and Don’t Ever Go to Stone View Park”.

This was the status quo for the little town of Wyatt Falls and generation after generation lived there without questioning the abandoned part of old town or the strange park whose purpose seemed only to be the focusing of attention to the oddly placed stone that was the parks namesake. Plans were often made to tear down sections of old town to allow new business to take root however the plans always soured during the planning phase. In fact, there were cases of larger businesses from out of town coming in to snatch up the real-estate at dirt cheap prices only to abandon the project after the initial inspection of the area. So old town and the park fell to disrepair giving it a visual representation of the town folks sentiment regarding the place. Old, run down, abandoned and haunted.

Things changed in the early summer of 1946. The country was putting the pieces back together after the second world war. Men and women returned to their normal lives trying to bury the horrors of war. Some succeeded and some did not. In Wyatt Falls a large portion of the men had gone off to war and left their wives and children to carry on waiting for their eventual return. Many did return, but many did not. In a small town like Wyatt Falls the loss of so many had a profound effect on the emotional landscape of the place. A sadness prevailed around town that was almost tactile in its oppressive presence. The happy families who welcomed their war heroes back home living side by side with those who had lost someone or had no word at all.

It was June of 1946 when Ted Bilken arrived in town.