"Alex, Alex wake up" alex stirred and stared sleepily at the clock. his mind felt fuzzy and he become increasingly aware of a frantic banging on the door. He rolled over and looked at the clock.  
  
8 am, I'm definitely gonna be late for class he thought. He closed his eyes but the banging started again, "Alex, Alex" He heard his name as it was Amuffled through the door. Finally he rolled over and reached for the gold colored lamp near his bed and turned it on. He let his eyes adjust to a picture in a gold frame of flowers near the bed  
  
 This isn't right he thought, I don't have a lamp by my bed And these comforters are far too fancy to be mine and I definitely don't have a picture of a vase of flowers hanging on my wall. Suddenly it hit him I'm in a hotel! I'm in Europe! 8 am that means I have to catch my plane in 45 minutes. Jolted awake he slammed out of bed And fumbled in the half dark towards the door. His French teacher was outside. She was still rather young but showing the telltale signs of turning into a spinster as alex briefly puzzled over the fact that someone so frail could make so much noise her large glasses Came flying into his vision. "Are you awake she screamed with far too much intensity for 7 in the morning. "you're going to miss your plane we're going to be late your parents will have to buy you another ticket. the school won't let us take this trip to Europe anymore, the children won't learn, think of the children Alex!! We have to hurry!" A bit dramatic thought Alex but as the French and drama teacher she had a flair for commotion.  
  
But then he realized it was pretty serious it would not be good to miss his plane and be stuck.  
  
Suddenly the seriousness   struck himhe had to get ready! Ms white barged further  in, Do you need any help what can I do?" "Yes could you please look for my passport" he said Realizing he hadn't seen it since the day they had gotten to Europe. He began frantically shoving everything into his suitcase.  
  
Suddenly everything stopped as Jenny walked in. Alex gulped and suddenly felt self conscious of his wild bed head and how he always managed to mess things up. Even though Jenny was the kindest girl he ever met she still made him feel nervous.  
  
  
He realized she was hiding a smile and he followed her gaze to where Miss White was frantically opening and closing the blinds. Apparently she had gotten her watch caught on the string that opened them And she couldn't get it loose. It reminded him of a skinny chicken with her frantic movements and noises. He tried not to smile and then realized he had set his alarm for 6 and he had no Tome to waste. He began throwing all the souvenirs he had bought for his family in the suitcase along with his clothes and anything else he saw laying about. As his sister Katie walked in and Saw him putting a roll of toilet paper into his suitcase she said "so...who did you buy that fancy toilet paper for?" Oh whoops Alex said as he pulled it back out feeling even more embarrassed than normal. With jenny watching. "Well" katie said "at least your presents Are improving from what you bought us last Christmas"  
  
And then she burst out laughing at her own joke It would have been a better joke if she hadnt laughed so hard, out if the corner of his eye he caught site of Jenny trying to hide a smile. Alex just mumbled, I'm not totally awake still. Then resumed to tossing any and everything in to his large black roller suitcase. Jenny came over I have that same suitcase! And you know what she laughed gently so does everyone else that travels. I know the conveyor belt is flooded with them one of these days I'm gonna bring the wrong suitcase home with me.  
  
Well if you do katie said maybe you'll find something exciting in it like pirate gold.  
  
Yes I bet Alex said because pirates usually travel on airlines with their pirate gold in a roll on suitcase.  
  
Hey I'm just saying katie said you never know what you might find. And you act like there are no more pirates remember that guy we saw in San Francisco with a parrot on his soldier he was definitely a swashbuckler.  
  
He freaked mom out alex laughed. Oh ya Alex laughed we were pretty little when you went to pet it you freaked mom out she grabbed you like a flash.  
  
They both laughed at the memory but were brought back by the antics of miss white.  
  
Miss White had freed herself  from the blinds and was frantically buzzing about the room picking things up setting them down looking under the bed behind the tv And asking a million questions. Do you have your passport do you have your ID did you get your souvenirs did you grab all of your clothes Your parents will never trust me again if I don't get you home on time!"  
  
Almost I think I have everything. Do you need help katie asked , ya what can we do Jenny joined in. I think I am good Alex said with his eyes frantically buzzing about the room. He felt like he was packing for a trip to mars and anything he left would be lost forever.  
  
Katie plopped down on the bed looking amused she seem to always find humor in any situation and this one for some reason was a striking her as incredibly funny. She passed the time by frizzing her curly blond hair and trying to make it as big as possible while watching herself in the hotel mirror.  
  
Her plane wasn't until the next day. But Alex was heading back early to join his dad in a scientific exposition to a remote town in the northwest.  
To collect some data from a small town high in the northwest  
We Actually it wasn't really an expedition but they were going to meet with a local Who claimed to have found a strange creature on his property.  
Some other scientist had already gone up a couple days earlier and hadn't found anything he said the creature had miraculously disappeared he didn't no where. Of course there wasn't a creature Alex thought. But for some reason his dad wanted to go back up and look around and see if he could figure anything out. He figured it was just an excuse for his dad to get away from his more serious research  
  
Miss White sat down to clean her glasses but when she stood back up she had somehow managed to sit in a leftover danish from the day before.  
The paper plate still sticking to her long denim skirt "Oh l of mercy, good heavens what is this! I have to go change finish getting ready I'll be back"  
  
Ok Alex said he found a small stack of books that he had left on the dark cheery wood hotel table.  
"Crash" something glass broke as Alex three his heavy books on top of  
Everything.  
  
Oh no! Jenny exclaimed. Alex pulled out a broken thing he had bought him for his mom. Jenny looked seriously concerned. Oh you were so happy to give that to your mom! I'll go to the store and buy you a new one and bring it back...  She stopped suddenly and made eye contact with Alex, I mean since you're moving I can ship it to you, ok? Alex felt his heart wrench, He had spent for all of freshman and  half of his sophomore year wanting to talk to Jenny. It wasn't until the plane ride over when they sat side by side that he finally been able to talk to her. They had been  inseparable the whole trip since then. Then when he finally had gotten the nerve and realized how nice she was he had to move  
  
The rest of the trip was a blur as he got on the bus and rushed through the airport barely making it onto the flight on time.  He Barely had time to say goodbye to Jenny since he was leaving the day before the rest of the class was heading back.  To go on a scientific adventure with his dad. Some crazy backwoods man but apparently claimed to capture some sort of strange creature and they were going to investigate.  
  
Maybe that was a good thing he thought, Goodbyes are always so hard, he was starting at a new school And was moving from the north west all the way to Arizona. As he sat in the van to the airport things started to sink in he wasn't going back to school like normal he had worked so hard to make friends and now he was going to a brand-new school in a state that had no trees.  
  
His dad was a professor and was doing quite well but then he'd been offered a research position as vice president of research a large company. He also would be able to continue doing his research part time At the nearby University  
  
For Alex and his sister Katie it was the worst news ever yeah they would get a brand-new much larger house and there dad would be quite important but none of that mattered, it Never had before which is why him and his sister were so confused his dad had taken the position. it just didn't seem worth it to have to move to a new state with no friends and start over in a new high school. It wouldn't be so bad for Katie with her curly blond hair everybody just seemed to love her always everywhere she went. He Used to be a little bit jealous but two years ago she had gotten really sick and almost died and now he felt more protective than anything about her.  
Well that and everybody seem to be worried about her even though she was just fine. During school up until about her sickness fourth-grade everybody talked about what a prodigy she was. she was one of the smartest students ever met. By fourth-grade she was even starting to take college-level classes. She was also getting quite a bit of attention but then around six grade she suddenly seem to get quite stupid She failed her upper division courses and went back to just struggling with B's and C's and her regular six grade classes. It was like she never fully recovered from being sick.  With her bright and sunny personality she was still in eighth grade was still the most popular girl although she didn't really care She took after her mom and was sweet to everyone which gained her quite a  bit of persistent admirers.  
  
In fact now everybody thought her a little bit ditzy. But Alex wondered about that she would always have little flashes that would come through of Genius. He felt she got tired of the attention and was smart enough to hide it.  
  
But Now his thoughts turned to himself and how he would survive having to start over in a new school. Is school soccer had been big but at his new school it was football that everyone cared about. He worried too if the school would be hard at all I struggled as a student and even had to repeat sixth grade. Kind of funny that he would have two parents who were both geniuses and he couldn't pass algebra. He was boring and a bad student The only thing he could think of that it never happened interesting to him as one time a scientist and said oh is that the star child,  
Was when a strange old man had  
  
He knew he was slow in fact the last two years he was last in his class. He was held back one year and was going to be another year but the school let him move forward. He had heard his parents talking about it one night and he felt sick. At school he used to get teased a lot for being slow but finally just Embraced it. Everyone still joked about it and he did two laughing along with everyone else. But deep down it really bothered him. He fell in adequate and would get down on himself, what I can't get into college. Or get a job that pays enough to live on.  
  
He made it onto the plane out of breath and totally flustered. The stewardess smiled at him and said with a heavy French accent you're cutting it kind of close aren't you here I will help you do your seat. He walked back and saw an empty seat next to an elderly lady with white hair and a knitted sweater. He wanted to ask her, are you miss whites grandma?" She looked like she was born to be a grandma or she could be anyone's grandma. As he apologized and squeezed past her to his seat she didn't even seem to notice him. She was staring intently at the book in front of her he didn't see what it was but he sat down sat down and put in his headphones. But then the next thing he know the book was on his lap, and the lady next to him  pointed her wrinkly finger and there that's fluffy the sweetext little kitten you'll ever meet she is my little baby, And pointed to a picture of an enormously large  and mischievous looking white cat.  
Alex was about to ask if she Had a daughter named Miss White, What are the chances of finding to set strange people  
  
  
She proceeded to show him all the pictures in her book it was an enormous  alblum Of what look like pictures of every single cat she owned.  
And look there is Precious and winky  I took that picture on Winkies one and a half year birthday. Oh the memories she dabbed her eyes which appeared to be tearing up behind her glasses.  
  
It was like missed  whites twin well at first glance They did not look like Miss White I looked crazy  
  
And that's Ozzie you know?  
  
Oh totally the singer from black sabbath!  
  
Hahha no dear Ozzie from Ozzie and Harriet she sighed, that Ricky he made all the ladies swoon,  
  
singer black sabbath iron man  
  
She had a strange way of talking almost like she was talking to get  
  
She kept taking about her cats he started eventually he started a game starting the  timer on his phone to see how long she talked for she literally talked for an hour and a half everytime he put his headphones in she would start up again and set her photo alblum in his lap her carry on was just three photo alblums of cats  
  
The stewardess came by and gave him a knowing smile and dropped off a snack but before she could leave miss maple asked, "dear do you like cats?" That's precious right there he hates flying" when I was your age I didn't have any cats yet but don't you worry you still have plenty of time.  
  
Mam, she said to the flight attendant can you help me get something from the overhead it's frightfully Important.  
  
Oh yes for sure she replied.  
  
She sat back down alblum is some of my favorite photos this is my favorite of my photos. I Just know you are gonna love it.  
  
She prattled on showing and discussing each picture in detail. Look at little pookie she is very playful she loves to scratch things. It's so cute.  
  
Alex was almost totally dozed off when she said something that caught his attention. You seem like a good lad who doesn't do anything naughty. I wish I had been less mischievous when I was young. She sighed and suddenly seemed a little more serious.  
  
Then abruptly she began They always told me to never go in the attic in that big house in the country back in England. Unfortunately  When i was young if you told me to do something i did the opposite.  
  
Alex found himself suddenly paying full attention as she went on.  
  
It was a beautiful old estate with room upon room that rambled forever but something wasn't quite right about it. I stayed there after the war it was fun during the days we played in the bright green grass and splashed though the creeks in the woods looking for fish. In the autumn the trees would turn brilliant shades of reds and oranges the sun would light the leaves fallen on the grass and forest floor.  
  
But at night when the dark came and the fog rolled in I  felt afraid and hid beneath the blankets, i tried to be a big girl but i missed my father and mother terribly and often cried myself to sleep.  
  
At night I lived in terror of the dark windows that looked out over the grounds that hours earlier had been so beautiful and full of the autumn sun. When I had to walk the empty halls I would pad silently my mind racing with dark possibilities. I would stand afraid in front of the gaping open doors even blacker then the darkness around me. Then when I had gathered my courage i would dart past my mind full of thoughts of dark possibilities reaching out and following me. and would race past.  
  
But in the morning the sun chased away some of the fear and emptiness and playing with my cousin and Elsie helped to further the sorrow that seemed determined to find me.  
  
She was tired of the war.  
  
It was me and my two cousins and a neighbor girl. She was a sweet young thing. We loved to play but sometimes at dusk the fog would creep in and darkness would cover the whole world. The strange lights would glow few and far between about the countryside the house was mostly dark too. I was scared to go out and scared to stay in. The earth seemed to be lamenting the cruelty of the war of what man had done to each other as it lay quietly blanketed in the silent and pressing fog.  
 It's difficult to understand the cruelty that man can inflict on man.  
  
Move up  
  
But most days in the morning the bright sun would come chasing away the night terrors and I would forget for a time my worries and fears. I liked it best when the neighbor girl would come to play she was such a pretty thing bright blond hair and so sweet.  
  
Move up  
  
Did i tell you about the neighbor girl?  
  
Yes Alex said politely and your cousin who lived with you.  
  
She was younger then me the neighbor girl, so I don't think the war troubled her as much.  
  
 It was a shame she went missing I always blamed myself.  
  
It was the day after The incident in the attic that's what started all the strangeness. It still haunts me what I saw up there she said. Well it wasn't so much just an attic but a series of rooms and passages and attics all along the top of the great house. All of them closed and boarded off but I found a way in even though i was forbidden to go up there.  
  
The rooms were all full of curios things and dust from years and years brought by the passing of time. amongst the rainy countryside. Old portraits , books in strange languages, rooms of furniture with white civets that made them appear ghostly. A forgotten world forbidding the curios from searching out its dark secrets.  
  
Some rooms were totally dark but some had small windows in Curios places.  
  
Alex was confused he felt his skin prickle with fear as he looked over at the old lady. She had a faraway look on her face. Alex wasn't sure if he wanted her to keep talking or go back to taking about her cats.  
  
Elsie was her name she said abruptly after a long pause.  
  
Who Alex asked?  
  
The girl the girl who went missing. It was quite a scene. The whole district was in an uproar.  
  
Alex sat silently not sure what to say. He wanted her to go on but something about her story seemed so real and haunting he felt he was being drawn into it and it terrified him.  
  
He shook his head that's silly I'm just tired and emotional about having to move and missing my friends.  
  
Look at that she said again with surprising intensity.  
  
Alex almost jumped practically spilling his small cup of orange juice perched on a small napkin on his tray. As he went to clean the spilt juice he knocked his small bag of pretzels down to his feet. He awkwardly tried to track them without further upsetting the tray.  
  
She was pointing again at her book and a photo of a plump orange tabby. Look at winky she chuckled i bough him his very own recliner since he liked mine so much. She smiled wistfully then went on but he is a bit of a character he wants them both so I can only use mine when he is out making friends with the other cats.  
  
Alex looked at the picture of the large overweight cat and thought i can only imagine what making friends entails.  
  
that looked like pure trouble and wondered exactly she meant by making friends.  
  
This lady's crazy he thought I mean shes even got the cats.  
  
He felt better as the thoughts of her story drifted away seeming to float out the window and be Carried far away by the winds across the tops of the clouds. He stared at the white clouds and the brilliant blue sky. His thoughts turned back to himself. He felt lonely and empty and wished he had been able to fly back with katie.. Or Jenny what if I never see her again he thought desperately. He had her number I wonder how long I should wait to text her.  
  
The flight went smoothly for another hour she seemed to have fallen asleep or was deep in her own thoughts. But then she began to tell him the rest of the strange tale.  
  
I spent a couple weeks exploring up there.  The attic was a strange place, not a single room but a collection of meandering rooms and halls and passages. Full of dust and old artifacts. I found a boarded off room and it burned inside me to know what was in it. It was close to twilight and I lost my nerve i ran downstairs to look for my cousins.  
  
You look like you've seen a ghost Maggie, Guinevere said.  
  
Elanor  
  
I tried to play it off, well it is england in the middle of winter, it's not like I've been out sunning lately.  
  
True g replied and it's either dark and rainy or foggy.  
  
I determined to make my way into that room. I wanted to know why it had been so heavily boarded off. The next day when I had Time I slipped like a shadow back up into the attic. I had brought tools to force my way inside. But after I had peeled off all the layers of wood I met my match; an iron door padlocked shut. I was discouraged and sat beside the door as the slanting rays of the sun played on the dust that hung in the air. i sat lost in thought the setting sun filled the room as I sat thinking of how to get in. but then another emotion overtook me, terror. The sun had finished her great arc across the skies and though hidden by the  
Hidden behind the horizon  
  
English clouds the setting sun had filled the room with dark and despair. I hurried back downstairs at a full run picturing all manner of evil creatures dogging my footsteps.  
  
The fear was so great that I forgot for a time my curiosity and played with my cousins.  
  
I woke the next morning to a beautiful late autumn day, the sun shone on the leaves as they snone in gloryous reds and golds. It was two days before Halloween which is when the barriers between our world are the weakest I think that may have changed things.  
  
Elsie came over and we decided to go to the creek to play.  
We splashed in the cold water of the shallows and chased the fish. I felt my courage return under the autumn sun and whispered to Elsie do you wanna hear a secret?  
  
Of course she laughed.  
  
There's something strange about our attic and there is a fulll room locked and padded.  
  
Oh she whispered back what do you think is up there?  
  
Something other worldly, I can feel it in my bones maybe an artifact from the faerie folk.  
  
It was a cold gray day stretching over the moors the world was covered in thick fog and the heather and wild grass was tipped white with frost and the trees rose white and eerie, like a quiet reflection of our world where the dead wander trying to remember what it feels like to have hope and be loved.  
  
Like a spectral world  
  
World one where the dead walk desperate to remember what it feels like to feel love and pain, hope and despair. Anything, to feel alive to be loved and to love.  
  
A world of wraiths and pale shadows. Frost clung to the tips of the grass and bushes.  
  
A chill wind blew cutting through clothes and chilling to the bone.  
  
And now we come to a strange part of the story one which I've struggled to understand.  
  
Alex wondered what could be stranger then what she had already been talking about.  
  
She went on,  My father had been in the Great War and it had been hard on him. The last time I saw him he was haggard and withdrawn he held me on his knee but didnt laugh and joke like he used to. Towards the end of the visit he had cheered some but he still seemed distant.  
  
I was young and remember the hushed and quiet conversations.  
  
  
Then one day he came home unexpectedly it was October 4. well i say home but he went to his parents house the estate I have been staying at, but at the time my grandpa, his father was living there along with the groundskeepers servants and caretakers.  
  
He showed up and  locked himself in that room upstairs for three days.  
  
His father my grandpa was worried about him but he said he was fine. Eventually he sent for my mother on the second day when he sense something wasn't right this was October 6th.  
  
  
  
My grandpa was getting old people wondered if his mind was slipping.  
  
  
We ghosted thought the house like silent shadows  
  
  
I screamed in fright and bolted for the way out.  
  
But I was stubborn and Curiius and that helped overcome my fears. One fateful late autumn rainy day I went back up and managed to pry out a small section of the wall, quite a naughty thing for a young lady to do but I could only think about finding out what secrets lay in that room.  
  
Eventually I had enough of the wood torn away and crawled through the wall into the strangest room I had ever seen. It was completely free of any dust was the first thing j noticed, that was strange because the whole attic was dusty. There were no windows and everything was laid it a perfect bedroom with strange charts and maps all over the walls. I heard a humming noise and stared at the walls all covered in books. There were also strange instruments laying everywhere and curiously carved wooden boxes on many of the shelves.  
  
The whole place felt forbidden, I knew I should leave but instead opened a box laying on the desk.  
  
I recoiled in terror and horror at the photos like they had burned my fingers. The grotesque vision burned into my mind.  
  
The forbidden photos should have been enough to quell my curiosity but something drove me on.  
  
I saw a curious journal laying on the desk and was drawn to it. I looked around guiltily feeling like there were eyes upon me but I was alone in my strange world.  
  
I slowly opened the old journal and began to leaf through the pages. It was a journal of the Great War and the pages slowly drew me in, like I was actually there experiencing the hardships, fear fatigue and hunger punctuated by brief moments of hope that they clung to desperately. joy followed by hopelessness.  
  
The camp food the tired soldiers sitting in the forest sleeping fitfully in ragged tents.  
  
  
the parts I read were an account if his that described his experience during the great world war.  
  
Mostly it was the day to day experiences of the war. The cold that they suffered during the battle of all ones.  
The journal took a strange turn a few weeks into the authors story.  
  
But then I came to a strange story. Some soldiers were high up in the mountains near the Russian border. It was snowy and bitter cold. They were sledding across and set up camp near some woods on the mountainside.  
  
A page from a diary  
The words of the d  
  
Let the d bury there own d  
  
  
They were cold and tired seeking shelter in the remote and forbidden mountain range. It had snowed all day and they desperately fought there way through the thick snow.as luck (or what would seem like luck) would have it they found a cave in the mountains.  
  
  
A vision a strange figure in white carried him out.  
  
The message clear flee this place this place is death. Great evil lies here  
  
The journal was mostly in some strand language. Part of it was English and it painted a strange story,  
  
I fell into black terror, i was wandering the snowy Moors lost  pale faced ghosts came out of the fog. Come stay with us forever, they chanted.  
  
I stumbled lost into a forest dark. I saw lights and drifted towards them, I heard whispers all around me.  and headed for burning lights a great bonfire, pale children danced all around there faces painted with blood they grabbed my hands and I joined the wild dance your one of us now they chanted in a strange language.  
 Then they dragged me to a strange place  
The forest  was hung with black leaves dripping blood the forest  floor was all rot around a strange table skeletons and bones seated at the head a well dressed man with handsome features.  
  
It was just a waking nightmare haunted by the photos Id seen I'm sure of it but it was so real.  
  
But the story in the journal was real I looked it up but I didn't realize for a while because it had been classified. Originally they thought it was some secret german weapon that had committed the atrocities .  
  
"Do you think a young soldier could go to sleep a strong young man  
And die in his sleep of old age by the next morning? I would never have though it possible, what were they protecting that's what id like to know, they found something in that cave, im sure of it, he never once spoke of it but i know it haunted him. And the forbidden box I found in the Attic well you should always listen to your elders that's what I learned and I paid a terrible price for my curiosity, i was only 9 but it left me traumatized for months. All the terrible pictures of those d b  staring lifelessly  id see thee eyes whenever the dark closed in. They were coming for me i knew it there wordless mouths would whisper, come join us. father he was the one in the Great War, they got lost in the mountains " and do you know what they found? There tent torn open from the inside  
  
  
It was the strangest thing She said. It happened during the first great world war to my daddy I'm not sure if the lucky ones are the ones that lived or died, He wouldn't talk about it but I found it in his journals by accident one Sunday morning when he was gone It piqued my curiosity. Hi it happened high up in the mountains between They said they found a great treasure but it was cursed  
  
She says aliens they said ghosts  
  
For some reason it seemed incredibly real and made the hair on the back of his neck stand up. The weird thing was she said when they went to explore the area and found deep in a cave a smooth wall When the camp there  
They had strange dreams of men walking in and out of them And in this journal when he woke up he had marks from where they had worked on him and his dream  
  
The Stewardess went to set a drink down in front of them Alex jerk scared Oh I'm sorry she said I didn't mean to startle you  
  
You've heard about the alien walkers  
  
  
  
He got off the plane his Heath leaped 3 texts from Jenny!  
  
  
Alex how was your flight? Did you make it safe? Miss white spilt a full cup of orange juice on herself during the plane ride I was sitting by her and she talked the whole way.  
  
Oh sweety you say by yourself, you were asleep almost the whole plane ride you must have dreamed it. She smiled.  
  
What no I'm sure there was someone here he stammered, louder then he intended as the other passengers getting off the plane all turned to stare. Alex felt his face go red and lowered his voice.  
  
  
Oh sweety she said, what do you mean? There was no one on the seat next to you it was one of the only spots on the plane.  
  
Alex was dumbfounded.  
  
Yes there was, I'm sure of it I talked to her about her cats and she told me a strange story about England and, oh and she asked you to get her bag down and you did she said It was important but it was just another album of her cats.  
The words came out rapidly.  
  
Alex felt confused was this a joke.  
  
The stewardess put her arm around him it was probably just a dream. Here sit back down.  
  
alex felt hot and confused.  
  
Here lets ask the people around you the stewardess said sweetly.  
  
They talked to the people in front and back but they were all French.  
  
Do you speak French she asked?  
  
No I don't Alex replied, What did they say.  
  
They also said they didnt see anyone.  
  
She seemed concerned I'm sure it was just a dream, can I get you something to eat or drink?  
  
Umm ok Alex felt everyone around looking at him like he was crazy so he sat down and out his head in his hands and leaned forward. He rubbed his face and tried to figure out what was happening. Maybe I had dreamed it he thought?  
  
No no it was far to real and I wouldn't have dreamed the story she told me.  
  
The stewedess Amelie came back and handed him a chocolate croissant.  
  
As he looked up he caught a fleeting look of concern on her face.  
  
He felt worried maybe she thinks im crazy.  
  
Maybe I am crazy, no I know I saw someone.  
  
He chewed thoughtfully on his chocolate croissant. It would have been more delicious but he felt confused and muddled.  
  
It spite of her strange stories he had liked the old lady she was kind if not a little batty. The stewardess came and sat in the seat next to him she was young and beautiful. Her perfume smelled faint and delicate and beautiful.  
  
I had an idea she said in her French accent.  
  
What Alex asked hopefully? And thank you for my croissant he said.  
  
Your welcome she laughed lightly.  
  
Also I have an idea just to make you rest easier how about when the plane lands you can stay up front and watch everyone get off and maybe you will see her maybe she is on the plane and you just thought you were sitting next to her?  
  
Thank you Alex said that's very kind of you I think I will take you up on the offer or this Will keep bugging me.  
  
  
One by on the passengers deboarded the plane. Families tourists business people. A beautiful blond lady she looked preoccupied and when she saw Alex she smiled briefly then looked away and hurried off the plane. She was strikingly beautiful and Alex noticed the other passengers all looking at her she was dressed elegantly .  
  
Alex snapped back to attention watching the passengers waiting for the old lady.  
  
  
  
A dwarf and elf have to team up to save the people  
  
Chapter 2  
Alex had never felt so humiliated with his hands handcuffed behind his back and the bright flashlight shining in his face.  Rough voices asking what are you doing out here? Why did you climb the fence!? He was surrounded by black trucks and SUVs. Two police cars were outside the fence and the officers were  
  
His mind raced to how he had got to this point all he had wanted to do was go for a bike ride and enjoy the warm late summer night. He had laid around all day in the air conditioning and had felt bored and lazy. Around 8pm he went for a run and it had woken him up. Hw figured that a bike ride would get the rest of his energy out and then he could be lazy the rest of the night.  
  
The night air rushing around him felt feeeingn and he kept on and on into the night blanketed with the sharp outlines of the summer stars. Hope began to take the place of the frustration, depression and loneliness he had been feeling.  
  
He was biking down a straight country highway his bike light illuminating the grass and desert scrub around him.  
  
He had forced the strange incident on the plane behind him and was wondering... Maybe we won't stay here long we still own our house in oregon maybe will move back again. His thoughts turned to Jenny.  
  
He stopped his bike and straddled across with both his feet on the ground. A large pickup truck barreled down the highway he briefly wondered were the people were going and if they liked living in the desert.  
  
He pulled out his phone and the bright light blinded his eyes a little he turned down the brightness and began to write her a text.  
  
Then be paused be had texted her three times the first time she didnt respond when he texted her again the next day she apologized and said she was really busy. A couple days later he texted her and she had responded but didn't write back much. He paused then put his phone back.  
  
He felt frustrated again and decided to keep biking along the lonely country road. He came upon a smaller road to his left and decided to go down it. His thoughts dwelt on how terribly things had turned so quickly, life had been so nice why did they have to move here now?  
  
He rushed down a small Decline and the cool night air felt good as it blew around him. His thoughts kept returning to the fact that it made no sense they had moved here. Katie was making the most of it but he knew she was miserable too. It was so unlike his parents to do something so selfish. But then he paused it was there life maybe he was being the selfish one. And they had been very understanding he realized he hadn't opened up much to them of how sad he felt maybe if he explained they could move back. But then would he be selfish? He resolved to at least mention how he felt maybe his parents would end up not liking it here too.  
  
  
Soon he noticed tall fences with keep out signs. Must be the military base he thought.  
  
Suddenly he noticed something strange lights flying low and erratically he paused to watch them. If I believed in aliens now would be the time I would be convinced I was seeing them. He laughed to himself convinced it was some strange military plane or drone.  It was still  
Interesting to watch as it buzzed around.  
  
His hands grasped the strangely cold chain link fence as he hurtled himself up and over it. He began to run towards the flames up ahead. He breath came in ragged gasps from the fear and exertion as he raced towards the flames. We're there any survivors was anyone hurt.  
  
As he got closer he could see the flames rising from the desert floor.  
  
-and also saw lights blocking and flashing over the driving over the desert. They looked like emergency vehicles but most were black. -  
  
The next thing he new he was blindsided with tremendous force that knocked him sideways into the dirt, sand and small bits of grass. It knocked wind out of him as rough hands shoved his face harder into the dirt. His hands were wrenched violently up and around him and he felt rough handcuffs out on. One pinched his skin terribly and he tried to cry out in pain all the while thrashing and tryin to breath. He started to panic.  
  
  
The strike had come from the side a person dressed in a black military uniform with his face covered. He was surrounded his hands were yanked roughly behind his back and he was handcuffed.  
  
He had been so focused on the flames he hasn't noticed the stranger coming from his side. His face rested in the sand and a small patch of grass was filling his mouth. He breathed heavily as sweat poured from his face and into his eyes.  
  
He was yanked roughly up.  
  
This is closed what are you doing here?! A voice roughly challenged. He was confused then saw fire tricks and a police car zooming over the desert.  
  
The fire trucks worked to put the blaze out and overheard them talking, it was an unmanned vehicle he felt relieved and very exhausted.  
  
One of the police officers noticed him and walked over he was young and handsome Alex felt he had an all American look to him. Even though he didnt know him he could tell he was someone you could trust with your life, someone who would never break there word.  
  
His presence had a calming effect on the soldiers too, he noticed they seemed to ease a little from their state of high tension.  
  
Who's that he said in a carefree and gentle manner.  
  
He was trespassing on government property. We're bringing him in for questioning.  
  
Alex suddenly found his voice, though he could barely speak with the nerves running through him.  
  
No no he stammered I saw the crash I was worried someone was hurt that's why I climbed the fence!  
  
Unfortunately We have no idea if your telling the truth or how long you have been here or what you've seen. You could have been the one who caused the crash were going to have to bring you in for questing.  
  
Alex noticed a subtle look of concern pass over the young officers face.  
  
He moved towards Alex.  
  
Now now he said with a smile, he still is in the outer lands. Nothing happens out here and you know it, it's just empty desert in case of crashes like this.  
  
Take these handcuffs off he said to one of the soldiers.  
  
The soldier seemed reluctant, come on now he said again you know we had trouble last time there was a situation like this. One of the soldiers seemed to know Jason.  
  
And besides Jason said he looks like someone who may have been out causing trouble so you can have him when we get done talking to him. Two of the soldiers looked at each other.  
  
Take the cuffs off he said. Alex felt relieved but the next minute the officer placed his cuffs on him and began you have the right to remain silent.  
  
There very secretive luckily my father pulls a little weigh and they recognized me.  
  
How did you know I was telling the truth Alex asked, then quickly followed up with, I was telling the truth! But I'm curios how you knew?  
  
Well because they wouldn't have let you go if you werent that place has massive surveillance they were pulling up the footage to see how far you had gone. They have all kinds of cameras and drones motion detection and this first fence is nothining compared to the second wall which is nothing compared to the third wall that's a fortress.  
  
What is this place Alex asked in awe.  
It's a department of defense military base I think they build and test all kinda of advanced military stuff.  
  
Advanced stuff Alex laughed sounds complicated.  
  
Oh it is Jason smiled not as complicated as the old chevy pickup I'm restoring.  
  
There are some silly rumors about the place though he said. Have you heard any of them. No Alex said are they exciting.  
  
Well they are interesting if you like fairytales Jason laughed. You know Aliens and that kind of junk. The base has developed quite a reputation drawing on Roswell lore and embellished through the passage of time.  
  
Working at the police station we get a fair number of calls. People call In to the police station all in a panic, I seen a UFO the sure we better get out there to investigate.  
  
You would think it would occur to them that their next to a military test base. Of course you're going to see things flying around.  
  
The nut jobs think that they're testing out alien technology from crash sites around the world. And they got a bunch armchair sluice on Reddit talking about it.  
  
Alex laughed well I mean maybe they are who knows.  
  
Yeah I don't mean to make a mockery of it Jason said just the evidence never seems to really play out.  
  
In the old days back on there is castle that was elves and spirits And now that our technology is advancing turned in the alien spaceships.  
  
Oh sorry Jacob said let me take those handcuffs off.  
  
She was blond and pretty and stylish Alex felt a bit nervous but she was so sweet and kind he warmed up to her quickly.  
  
Chapter 2  
Strange lights hung in the distance. They moved erratically weaving though the night sky. Alex stopped pedaling and steadied himself with his right foot while still sitting half astride his bicycle  on the lonely country road.  
  
A large fence topped with rows if angry barb wire ran all along the small road with no trespassing signs every hundred feet or so.  
  
Alex had never felt so humiliated with his hands handcuffed behind his back and the bright flashlight shining in his face.  Rough voices asking what are you doing out here? Why did you climb the fence!? He was surrounded by black trucks and SUVs. Two police cars were outside the fence and the officers were  
  
His mind raced to how he had got to this point all he had wanted to do was go for a bike ride and enjoy the warm late summer night. He had laid around all day in the air conditioning and had felt bored and lazy. Around 8pm he went for a run and it had woken him up. Hw figured that a bike ride would get the rest of his energy out and then he could be lazy the rest of the night.  
  
The night air rushing around him felt feeeingn and he kept on and on into the night blanketed with the sharp outlines of the summer stars. Hope began to take the place of the frustration, depression and loneliness he had been feeling.  
  
He was biking down a straight country highway his bike light illuminating the grass and desert scrub around him.  
  
He had forced the strange incident on the plane behind him and was wondering... Maybe we won't stay here long we still own our house in oregon maybe will move back again. His thoughts turned to Jenny.  
  
He stopped his bike and straddled across with both his feet on the ground. A large pickup truck barreled down the highway he briefly wondered were the people were going and if they liked living in the desert.  
  
He pulled out his phone and the bright light blinded his eyes a little he turned down the brightness and began to write her a text.  
  
Then be paused be had texted her three times and she had responded but didn't write back much. He paused then put his phone back.  
He felt frustrated again and decided to keep biking along the lonely country road. He came upon a smaller road to his left and decided to go down it. Soon he noticed tall fences with keep out signs. Must be the military base he thought.  
  
Then he noticed something strange lights flying low and erratically he paused to watch them. If I believed in aliens now would be the time I would be convinced I was seeing them. He laughed to himself convinced it was some strange military plane or drone.  It was still  
Interesting to watch as it buzzed around.  
  
His hands grasped the strangely cold chain link fence as he hurtled himself up and over it. He began to run towards the flames up ahead. He breath came in ragged gasps from the fear and exertion as he raced towards the flames. We're there any survivors was anyone hurt.  
  
As he got closer he could see the flames rising from the desert floor and also saw lights blocking and flashing over the driving over the desert. They looked like emergency vehicles but most were black.  
  
The next thing he new he was blindsided hit with tremendous force that knocked him sideways into the dirt, sand and small bits of grass. The strike had come from the side a person dressed in a black military uniform with his face covered. He was surrounded his hands were yanked roughly behind his back and he was handcuffed.  
  
He had been so focused on the flames he hasn't noticed the stranger coming from his side. His face rested in the sand and a small patch of grass was filling his mouth. He breathed heavily as sweat poured from his face and into his eyes.  
  
He was yanked roughly up.  
  
This is closed what are you doing here?! A voice roughly challenged. He was confused then saw fire tricks and a police car zooming over the desert.  
  
The fire trucks worked to put the blaze out and overheard them talking, it was an unmanned vehicle he felt relieved and very exhausted.  
  
One of the police officers noticed him and walked over he was young and handsome Alex felt he had an all American look to him. Even though he didnt know him he could tell he was someone you could trust with your life, someone who would never break there word.  
  
His presence had a calming effect on the soldiers too, he noticed they seemed to ease a little from their state of high tension.  
  
Who's that he said in a carefree and gentle manner.  
  
He was trespassing on government property. We're bringing him in for questioning.  
  
Alex suddenly found his voice, though he could barely speak with the nerves running through him.  
  
No no he stammered I saw the crash I was worried someone was hurt that's why I climbed the fence!  
  
Unfortunately We have no idea if your telling the truth or how long you have been here or what you've seen. You could have been the one who caused the crash were going to have to bring you in for questing.  
  
Alex noticed a subtle look of concern pass over the young officers face.  
  
He moved towards Alex.  
  
Now now he said with a smile, he still is in the outer lands. Nothing happens out here and you know it, it's just empty desert in case of crashes like this.  
  
Take these handcuffs off he said to one of the soldiers.  
  
The soldier seemed reluctant, come on now he said again you know we had trouble last time there was a situation like this. One of the soldiers seemed to know Jason.  
  
And besides Jason said he looks like someone who may have been out causing trouble so you can have him when we get done talking to him. Two of the soldiers looked at each other.  
  
Take the cuffs off he said. Alex felt relieved but the next minute the officer placed his cuffs on him and began you have the right to remain silent.  
  
There very secretive luckily my father pulls a little weigh and they recognized me.  
  
How did you know I was telling the truth Alex asked, then quickly followed up with, I was telling the truth! But I'm curios how you knew?  
  
Well because they wouldn't have let you go if you werent that place has massive surveillance they were pulling up the footage to see how far you had gone. They have all kinds of cameras and drones motion detection and this first fence is nothining compared to the second wall which is nothing compared to the third wall that's a fortress.  
  
What is this place Alex asked in awe.  
It's a department of defense military base I think they build and test all kinda of advanced military stuff.  
  
Advanced stuff Alex laughed sounds complicated.  
  
Oh it is Jason smiled not as complicated as the old chevy pickup I'm restoring.  
  
There are some silly rumors about the place though he said. Have you heard any of them. No Alex said are they exciting.  
  
Well they are interesting if you like fairytales Jason laughed. You know Aliens and that kind of junk. The base has developed quite a reputation drawing on Roswell lore and embellished through the passage of time.  
  
Working at the police station we get a fair number of calls. People call In to the police station all in a panic, I seen a UFO the sure we better get out there to investigate.  
  
You would think it would occur to them that their next to a military test base. Of course you're going to see things flying around.  
  
The nut jobs think that they're testing out alien technology from crash sites around the world. And they got a bunch armchair sluice on Reddit talking about it.  
  
Alex laughed well I mean maybe they are who knows.  
  
Yeah I don't mean to make a mockery of it Jason said just the evidence never seems to really play out.  
  
In the old days back on there is castle that was elves and spirits And now that our technology is advancing turned in the alien spaceships.  
  
Oh sorry Jacob said let me take those handcuffs off.  
  
She was blond and pretty and stylish Alex felt a bit nervous but she was so sweet and kind he warmed up to her quickly.  
  
Chapter 3  
How are you liking it out here jason said?  
  
Well honestly not much Alex replied they quickly followed up with, meaning no offense I mean I just miss my friends and the trees and the northwest. It's so flat and dry out here and the sun is nice but I never really minded the rain and here it's just always hot.  
  
He looked over trying to see if he had offended Jason he was such a nice guy but with the police uniform on he was a bit intimidating.  
No I totally understand, I don't plan to stay here too much longer I liked it out here for college but I miss the green I grew up in a small town in northern Idaho so it was quite an adjustment for me to.  
  
So you like the rain?  
  
Well I love sunny days but for a whole in the winter it's not bad it's kinda cozy especially when it gets dark by like 5 pm.  
  
Ya I know what you mean I like the rain and some good snow here. But I do like how much sun we get here. I have thought about moving to southern californa but I would take a job in the northwest if one opened.  
  
Oh I bet but at least college i bet it's easier to make friends living in the dorms and all?  
  
Ya it is but you still have to try my first room mate was quite a hermit always hunched over up to something on his computer.  
  
He smiled at the memory and alex looked around the squad car it was his first time in one and he liked it.  
  
Thanks for not making me ride in the back alex joked.  
  
Oh your welcome he laughed you don't quite fit the profile of a dangerous criminal he said.  
  
They drive down the dark road and all Alex could see was the Arizona desert landscape and occasional lights off in the distance.  
  
Thanks for spending some time im with me Alex said, I'm not gonna lie I was pretty scared when all that went down. I do hope that no one was hurt  
  
Me too jason said. They are rather closed mouth up there.  
  
  
It's been pretty lonely so far I feel like ill never have any friends again sometimes. I woke up at 8 am and couldn't go back to sleep and I pretty much just laid around the house.  
  
Katie already made some friends and they went swimming this afternoon.  
  
  
Whose katie he asked?  
  
Oh that's my little sister well she is starting high school this year so not like too little but she met the neighbor girl when her and her mom were out and they invited her over.  
  
Every body always loves her but I feel like I have the hardest time fitting in.  
  
Alex paused not sure why he was opening up so much to a police officer he had just met. He figured its probably because he was so nice and reminded him if a cool older brother.  
  
At that moment dispatch came on the radio "we have a report up the north fork road a farmer says he saw lights and his  
  
Wanna go on a patrol call?  
  
Sure said Alex it sounds interesting.  
Alex laughed but inside he felt a little nervous it all sounded kind of strange. I wonder if this has anything to do with those lights I saw Alex said.  
  
It could be he said but I doubt it probably just some coyotes or wild dogs. It sounds like the cow was sick any sways. And to be honest I'm nota big believer in the supernatural, spooks and ghosts comin and grabbing people and scaring people. You like country music he said abruptly?  
  
Uhh ya said Alex  
  
Try not to be too enthusiastic he laughed we can compromise classic rock.  
  
He turned on the radio to an eagles song playing.  
  
I'm kinda glad it's not hotel California Alex said its kinda spooky out here. If we see any hotels I say we keep drifting Alex said.  
  
Ok deal Jason laughed.  
  
They turned off the freeway and began to bump and bounce up a small country road, the squad car kicked up lots of dust and even though it was a dark night in the country you could still see the clouds behind the squad car.  
  
Ya jason said its been a wild night must be the full moon he laughed.  
  
Dispatch came back on,  
We have four more reportings of lights out by the north fork reservoir. Most callers are saying they are in a triangular formation and hovering over the reservoir.  
  
Wild night huh jason laughed. It's like these people have never heard if drones, probably a bunch of high Schoolers up there.  
  
Ya alex said but I saw something pretty big too maybe the military's up to something tonight. Alex though that it seemed likely it was something else but he felt silly saying it.  
  
The farmer called again he wants to know when you'll get there he said he found two more dead cows. Do you want backup?  
  
Nah will be fine said Jason wait who would you send,  
  
Um Ryan she said  
  
Oh ya send him up here. Thanks.  
  
After the call ended he laughed he is probably sitting down at 7 11 drinking slurpees I swear he drinks 2 44 ozers a night. It will be good for him to get up here and do something he laughed.  
  
They pulled up to the farm and parked in the gravel. There was an older farmhouse that was well kept up and a number of barns and fences. As Alex got out he heard dogs barking frantically the night had cooled off but the evening felt eerie as he felt the hair on the back of his neck stand up. He was glad he wasn't out here alone everything felt too still.  
  
He realized it was probably his imagination. Justin got out and the front door of the small White House opened and a stream of light came out as the old rancher came down the steps he had Wranglers, a plaid shirt and a cowboy hat on. He was smaller from age but looked like he had been a big man when he was younger.  
  
Do you hear those dogs barking he said, they never do that something up, by this point they had reached each other and he put out his hand thanks for coming I'm earl he said.  
  
Alex liked him he seemed like an honest hard working man, salt of the earth as his dad would say.  
  
Jason said  I'm Jason and this is Alex.  
  
Alex realized he didn't try to explain that he was just along for a ride on but introduced him like an equal.  
  
The rancher went on, we got three dogs and there going wild tonight. Here lets go back up to the house I'm gonna see if I can get fang to come along. He noticed the look of concern on Alex's face and said dont you worry he is a big sweetheart, still thinks he is a big puppy but he is barking like crazy tonight had to shut him in our room but hopefully he will calm down.  
  
Alex looked up at the crescent moon, ragged clouds drifted across the sky and a large cloud drift hung by the moon earily reflected in the moon light. A soft but warm breeze blew across the desert and Alex felt a tinge of fear. As they walked up the gravel to the farmhouse a sweet looking older women opened the door.  
Good evening she said to alex then hello, officer thank you for coming out she said.  
  
This is my wife the farmer said. Alex could tell they were still deeply in love and he had a quick moment imagining him and Jenny still in love married as an old couple, but not living in the desert he thought maybe a high rise in Seattle or Portland or a cozy house in the mountains nearby.  
  
Would you like to come in for some cookies, I just backed them and to be honest I was not expecting to have such a strange night she smiled.  
  
They walked into the nicely kept and perfectly clean ranch house. Alex was surprised to see that the design inside was elegant and almost everything  inside was almost brand new he had expected something more rustic from the ranch barns and fences.  
  
My granddaughter helped is decorate she said. She is studying interior design we helped of course. Ill go get some refreshments she said, alex smiled at her she seemed like the perfect grandma.  
  
He stared around the front room taking in the comfortable furniture and pictures.  
  
He was snapped back to attention by the rancher explaining how things started, well it was a weird night no doubt. The cattle and horses and dogs have all been acting jittery and strange. About 930 was when we saw strange lights. Now don't get me wrong I'm a rancher I've spent many nights camped out in remote areas and I don't scare easy but there was something strange about those lights. They sorta hung off to the south.  
  
Unnatural was the word you used his wife offered as she walked in with cookies and milk. Thank you alex said as he took one it was warm and smelled delicious.  
 Would you like one she offered to Jason, yes please he replied thank you mam.  
  
She poured them some milk and gave a glass to each of them. The milk was delicious and cold.  
  
Is this your milk from the ranch he asked?  
No she laughed its Costco milk, but it's particularly good around here.  
  
Thank you Jason and Alex both said and looked over at the rancher as he continued his story.  
  
Yes, yes unnatural well the animals were acting strange but I didn't think too much of it. That's when I went out and saw the first cow. It was a young one and was dead, well will go see it soon, it was lying in an in unnatural position. I could see anything wrong with it. I went and got a large flashlight and came back.  
  
Alex panicked a Little as he heard something outside then realized it was another car coming up the driveway.  
Backup jason smiled. Hopefully we don't need it he said disarmingly its brad he is a good guy but he has quite an imagination. I'm sure we could convince him whatever we want is going on, in fact he swears he saw a chipacabra we all tease him about it maybe he will see something else tonight and give us some more ammunition he said with a laugh.  
  
They all went outside as the second patrol car pulled up. As grad got out Alex was surprised by how lathe he was he looked like a linebacker for an nfl team. In fact he had been in college but chose to Join the police force.  
  
Hey he boomed as he got out holding a slurpee.  
  
He pulled up and Jason and the rancher walked out to his car. sure enough he had a slurpee heya he boomed out, he was a giant of a man probably 6 and a half feet tall and thick. He looked like a lineman and in face he was a linebacker in college but he had grown since then.  
  
Alex smiled he was a very like able guy. You guys all out here looking for snipes. He laughed as he saw Jason. Well not exactly jason started then brad saw the rancher and his wife, hello mam he said taking off his broad brimmed office hat and reaching out his hand. He then introduced him self to the farmer. Nice place he said looking around I'm brad he said to Alex. Nice to meet you alex said.  
  
Would you like some cookies the ranchers wide offered.  
  
Yes please mam he said they will go good with my vegetable smoothie.  
  
Jason's eye brow raised. Vegetable smoothie? Looks like a cheery slurpee to me.  
  
Brad laughed most have they got my order wrong.  
  
At the self vending machine in 7 11 brad laughed now now this is official business we can worry about that back at the office lets get some cookies.  
  
Brad just laughed and took a big sip. Mmm healthy he said with a smile.  
  
They walked back to the house and Alex was feeling less concerned by now.  
  
Brad dipped his cookie in his slurpee oh that is just disgusting Jason said woth a look of horror as brad shoved the whole thing in his mouth.  
  
Brad gave alex a Roughish look. Want a dip he said offering the slurpee cup.  
  
Oh um I'm ok Alex said.  
  
After they finished they all decided to go take a look at things Alex wasn't feeling very concerned anymore even though when they stepped back outside the night did have a strange feel to it.  
  
As they walked jason and the farmer were Engaged in deep conversation.  
Alex asked brad, so do you really like cookies dipped in a cheery slurpy?  
  
He laughed then said quietly dont tell Jason but no I just like to do things to get his reaction.  
  
Alex laughed I wish my sister was here she would have been grossed out too. But there is worse things to eat. It's just a little strange.  
Brad replies occasionally we go out in the same squad car and I can tell you it's texas size buckets of fun.  
 Jason laughed oh I bet that is.  
  
Oh gosh they heard Jason exclaim, his voice sounded shacky and full of disgust. Alex saw him and the rancher standing over a cow.  
  
As he came up he felt horrified and sick.  
  
Both brad and Jason looked serious. Who would do that Jason said with obvious disgust in his voice. Maybe it was an animal? Brad asked quizzically.  
  
The rancher responded I don't think it looks like anything an animal I know could do. And the other weird thing, no blood anywhere. They all shown their flashlights over the ground covered in short grass dirt trampled by the herd.  
  
Everyone sat quiet for a bit.  
  
I've read about this before Alex said in fact the government  did a study on it but they never really figured out what was doing it.  
  
Well will definitely file a report lets look around and see if we can see any footprints.  
  
Brad spoke up, you know it is rather strange there is not any blood. Could someone have done that then brought the cow back? And why would they do that and go to all the trouble.  
  
Hey come over here they heard Jason yell. He was standing about 30 feet away with his flashlight pointed at something.  
  
They hurried over, their feet crunching the dried grass as they went up a small hill. Jason was standing near another cow.  
  
Brad whistled, I have never seen something like that.  
  
Alex stood speechless, his fears came suddenly back and he turned to look behind himself expecting to see some strange creature stalking them. The warm breeze blew around them as they stood around wondering what could have done such a thing.  
  
What do you make of it?  
  
No blood anywhere they both searched around the area with their flashlights. I don't see any footprints either but the ground is pretty dry so I'm not surprised.  
  
The rancher stood quietly. What a shame I wonder who would do this.  
  
It could be an animal? Jason stated with the tone of his voice implying he didnt really thing so.  
  
Strange animal if that's the case, brad said.  
  
Yes but an even stranger human Jason added.  
  
Alex do you want to head back jason asked?  
  
What and miss all the action. No way alex said!  
  
Ok just checking Jason asked this is a little stranger then I was expecting. We should probably take a look around and see what else we might find. I think I may go get some heavier firepower just to be on the safe side. They walked back to the patrol cats and both Jason and brad grabbed shotguns. The rancher already had his so they see back out up the hill.  
  
There is a watering hole about a quarter mile from here should we head over that way. The cattle are over there a lot the rancher said.  
  
Ya that sounds good jason said. And lets keep our eyes open for anything strange.  
  
Look at that, brad whistled under his breath. A mountain lion a big one too. What could have done that.  
  
Oh my Alex said the mountain lion was.  
  
should we wait to go in the mud Jason asked? In case we can see any tracks. That a good idea the farmer said.  
  
Well we can go in slow and use the flashlights.  
  
Well that was not what I was expecting Jason started hesitantly I'm sorry you had to see that. It's ok Alex replied it was just cows but ill admit it was pretty strange and disturbing.  
  
Ya totally I really wasnt expecting that.  
  
It's ok Alex said, it was my decision and last year we dissected a pig in biology and that was far more gross. This was fascinating.  
  
They were bumping back down the road towards the city with brad following them.  
  
  
  
I'm sorry I didn't expect that to be so strange or gross.  
  
It was pretty disturbing but it was just cattle if it had been a person I wouldn't have slept for days.  
  
That's what concerns me a little Jason said.  
  
What do you mean Alex asked  
  
Well I really don't think that was done by an animal he said, which really only leaves one other option.  
  
A human Alex asked?  
  
Yes Jason said thoughtfully.  
  
Or a second option Alex queried.  
  
Like what.  
  
Well something supernatural or unexplained.  
  
I suppose Jason said but I'm a but skeptical of those types of things.  
  
But I do know something did that and that whatever it is needs to be caught or trapped.  
  
Jason sat quietly musing for a bit, you know the other weird thing was no prints in the mud. Just cow prints no predators no human boots. That mud was pretty thick too.  
  
It is strange maybe it happened and the rain washed them away.  
  
Ya but it hasn't rained in a whole the grounds only soggy around the lake bed from it shrinking from the summer heat. And rancher found the other cow tonight near his house so I think it all happened very recently.  
  
The other thing is house on edge the dogs and all the other animals were. Animals can sense things, I feel like whatever it was it had happened recently and was still nearby.  
  
I hope things stay calm. Tomorrow in the daylight will get a posse together and go back on horseback and take a look around.  
  
  
Anyways, im hungry Wanna get some pizza? Would your parents mind.  
  
Oh I would love to Alex said. And they won't mind there gone for the next two days.  
  
A true delinquent Jason kidded. I know your parents are amazing people. I remember all the students were in love with your mom.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
chapter 3  
Alex pondered over what the cryptic writing could mean, was he making to much of it and it was something Meaning less just some numbers from a budget or the cats names. Or was there a deeper meaning in the writing. He was inclined to think it meant something because of the way the lady disappeared off the plane. But what it was he couldn't guess he had seen numbers like that before he thought.  
  
He was puzzled he went downstairs into the kitchen to get a snack.  
  
It went out if his mind but the next night he remembered something odd she said on the plane. Well everything she said was odd but this was a strange rhyme she had said.  
  
Cause if your looking  
The first With the last  
The last With the first  
And the middle loves the middle.  
  
in ruins  
if your looking  
The middle loves the middle  
and the first the first with the last  
While the last dances with the first  
  
  
There were six sets of numbers. Maybe he should arrange them. He lay in bed thinking the obvious thing would be to substitute numbers for letters.  
  
He puzzled over it, the numbers reminded him of something but whatever it was Strayed at the edges if his memory taunting him to remember but whatever it was it remained elusive.  
  
He put the first lap number into Google maps but it didn't reveal anything. He wondered if maybe he did it backwards and try to get the other way. This time it came up with a scary place in Europe interesting if that but it doesn't mean much. He put the next two coordinates in Antarctica that's very strange.  He wasn't ready for what would happen when he put in the next coordinates. The map centered exactly on his house OK that's very weird if that.  
  
What could it all mean. Was it a clue or random chance.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Chapter 4  
Everyone at school was talking about the lights over the mesa range. It had Even made the local news.  
  
Tell him Austin said. No I don't want to get the rumor spread all around Dustin laughed barely able to contain himself.  
  
Alex just kept eating ignoring them both.  
  
Dustin stopped laughing well don't you want to know he said?  
  
Alex looked up I mean I guess if you want to tell me I'm not really that worried about it. He actually wanted to know but he figured the best way for them to tell him would be tho act different.  
  
Well OK fine I'll tell you Dustin said but don't tell anyone else you swear.  
  
Sure Alex said I won't tell anyone. Well Dustin said those ufos that was actually me and Austin flying our drones.  
  
Brad Had overheard what that's totally not cool he said.  
  
Your Freaking people out And the ranchers to.  
  
It's just a prank Dustin said looking somewhat mollified. Besides if people get freaked out over a couple little lights then maybe they Deserve to be scared.  
  
Yeah but everybody knows there's been strange things going on and you're just adding to the frenzy. I still don't think it's cool Brad said.  
  
Like the vampires in Russia oh please don't tell me to believe that!  
  
Then what happened to that whole village.  
  
It was an avalanche they proved it they even have footage  
  
  
Sees lights gets arrested  
Goes to pizza home team won  
Gets call farmer  
Dogs are barking lights cows deaf goes up its eerie there  
  
  
  
He was shacking and breathing heavily the handcuffs ate into his hands and his arms were pinched in an uncomfortable position behind his back.  Sweat was pouring off him as he tried to regain his breath and make sense of what was happening.  
The merciless Arizona sun beat down on the black SUV and the temperature inside skyrocketed. Keeping him comfortable was clearly not one of their priorities.  
  
Luckily the backseat car door was open and a small breeze blew in yhe air was warm but better then nothing.  two agents stood guard outside the door and everywhere else was a swarm of police officers, fireman and government agents.  As he sat watching the scene 3 cars came flying down the road two more large black SUVs with tinted windows and a rolls Royce even with the chaos he was amazed with the luxury of the car.  
  
They sped up and parked next to the SUV he was in and more agents in suits got out.  
  
A man got out in a suit he was handsome but his eyes were vacant and evil. he was handsome but he looked cold and proud not a man to cross alex thought. he reminded Alex of a  
  
  
He was furious, how did you screw this up even through he spoke quietly there was cold and calculated fury in his voice.  
  
There will be trouble and where is his sister? We need both of them!  
  
The agents hung nervously back not wanting to be the bearer of bad news.   Well said one of the braver ones were locating her right now.  
  
He saw the lead agent's face go red you better find her.  
  
What happens if people ask about them. Well one will be in prison will have to make it look like the other one died in an accident .  
  
  
  
At this Point a police officer started to walk up. Sir  you need to step back one of the agents said roughly pushing him back. One of the other police officers saw and stepped up hey, there's no call for that he said Alex noticed his hand move reflexively towards his gun. He almost wanted to see them fight maybe he could escape.  
  
But mr x stepped up. Do you want to lose your job he said to the police officer? Ill make one call and you'll be flipping burgers and you'll never find work as an officer again and that's if your lucky I could make you disappear he hissed.  
 You hear me?  
  
There was something about his cold calm that chilled Alex  
  
The officers both stepped back.  
  
The Lead called one of the other lead agents away closer to the car alex could barely hear them talking.  
  
But he caught some of their words.  
  
We need them both the lead agent said in a much quieter voice. Which one do you plan to keep alive the other agent said.  
The boy seem healthy he replied when we run the tests if that's the case will probably keep the boy alive I think we can learn more from him But we haven't decided yet, But we need them both.  
I doubt the girl will survive the tests we run on her but we have to run those on one of them, how did this happen? They walked away at that point and Alex couldn't hear them.  
  
Alex couldn't believe what he had just heard he had to find a way to warn katie. He tried to get his phone to fall out of his pocket and moved from side to side he was looking intently to his left not paying attention to the open door when smack. One of the agents hit him in the head none of that he said with an evil grin.  
  
Alex felt his ears ringing and with the combined heat felt disoriented as his head throbbed.  
  
he smiled and his manner seemed friendly but the way the other agents interacted with fear Alex felt he was cold and someone to fear. He was speaking with the lead agent you had one thing to do get the boy and the girl and you messed this up, I'm wondering how.  
  
Well he said nervously they always come gone together but tonight the boy came alone. Some of  the agents grabbed him  
  
indeed he interjected  
  
The agent licked his lips nervously and went on we secured him and decided to quietly wait for his sister and wait for his sister  
  
And where is his sister?  
  
We're not sure she left her phone at home this morning and the agents who were supposed to follow her somehow lost her she went in the store and didn't come back out.  
  
And is there another exit yes he said but things were in control we just had to wait here for her and I'm sure she will still show up.  
  
Did the boy warn her?  
  
No we have his phone and we have been monitoring his communications.  
  
Alex felt shocked he had been being watched?  
  
Well you better get the girl he went on quietly as Alex strained to listen.  
  
We need to have one if them alive. He turned abruptly and walked off.  
  
Alex sat in shock at what he had just heard. The whole day  had had a numbing effect but this was just too much. He had to get out somehow and save Katie and himself.  
  
The agent turned and lashed out at the agents under him he grabbed one of them by the shirt you better get the girl he said then shoved him roughly away.  
  
The house exploded,debris was blown everywhere the whole world felt concussed. Everyone was blown off there feet  
  
Chapter 5  
Alex and katie stood anxiously at the bus station waiting for the Greyhound bus. It was only 930 am but the hot Arizona sun beat down mercilessly on them. There was an old thermometer on the wall. It's already 94 degrees Alex said. I know katie replied I'm so Tired I didn't  sleep at all Last night well that's a lie I know I drifted off a little but I'm so tired.  
  
Me too Alex said I would give anything for a nice cool shower or dip in the ocean.  
  
Or a nice swim in the pool. It's Gonna be a hot one today.  
  
Ya I Can't believe it's this hot still in October  
  
I know all though back home we did get some warm days in October but it was rare. I wish I had my phone I would check the temperature.  
  
Ya remember that one summer when we were kids  
  
Katie laughed what is it Alex asked  
  
Well we kinda are kids still  
  
That's true Alex laughed I think you get to be a kid tell you graduate college.  
  
Anyways Alex said remember that fall day when we all went to the corn maze  
  
Ya it's hard not having a phone or seeing what people are up to on social media.  
  
he was tagged and gaunt his eyes had a vacant haunted look that hid intelligence.  
  
There Gonna say I'm insane a cold blooded killer but you gotta believe me I'm not there the killers.  
  
High security psych ward patient do not pick up.  
  
Ya I think they called it an Indian summer.  
  
Alex saw katie clench up and pull back against the station wall. Look she mouthed breathlessly Alex looked over to the parking lot and saw a police car as panic struck him.  
  
Oh no oh no he said we still have twenty minutes before the bus comes. Alex felt frozen like his feet had sunk into the ground and this was all a bad nightmare.  
  
Should we run for it out the other side of the station away from the parking lot katie asked.  
  
I think he would notice Alex said its so barren and flat out here.  
  
oh no look Alex said ad fear gripped him another police car had pulled into the parking lot from the other entrance. Do you think there looking for us?  
  
I don't know but we can't let them see us.  
  
He is going inside the station katie said. Alex was pressed against the station wall his whole body aching with fear and panic and exhaustion.  
hey! Katie said lets hide in the bathroom she tried the handle but it was locked they tried the next one and it turned and unlocked.  
  
  
We are kinda trapping ourselves she said quickly.  
  
Yes but we can't go in the station.  
  
Hey look one of the cars is leaving.  
  
  
  
Black bus driver think she is listening in but helps them she is nice.  
  
  
Alex stepped off the bus and a wave of homesickness hit him everything felt so calm and peaceful. It was a late fall day and the brilliant autumn leaves stood out across the small town. Brilliant shades of golds and reds that contrasted with the green grass and bright blue autumn skies far above.  
  
 In the green and grassy park surrounded by oak and trees there was a festival going on.  
a tree filled park meandered its way downtown and happy crowds talked and laughed.  
  
The park meandered through the city eventually ending up downtown.  
  
 The last time he was here he was with his patents. And last fall they were all happily living here and he had no idea that they were gonna be leaving it all Behind or that soon he would be on the run with no idea what had happened to his parents.  
  
I miss it here he said to katie.  
  
She smiled and Alex looked over her smile was tired and sad.  
  
Me too she said.  
  
Wanna sit on the bench in the park for a bit for old times sake?  
  
I mean it's not like we have anything else to do.  
  
The hidden weight of the words hit them both.  
  
Sure she said hey wanna split a churro I'm hingry.  
  
Oh that would be amazing Alex said! They walked beneathe the trees as the autumn evening began to close around them the white tents in the park were full of food vendors and at the far end near a grassy pavilion was a large stage.  
  
The happy crowds and the busy festival transported them briefly away from their worries and troubles.  
  
They strolled happily through the crowds lookin at all the different food and arts and crafts that were being sold in the open air booths and small white tents.  
  
I wonder who is going to be playing we should mingle in the crowd a bit and watch.  
  
Sure Alex said happily but first lets eat out churro.  
  
I think being in a band would be a lot of fun.  
  
They had no idea the dangerous net closing around them or how precarious there position was.  
  
I like wearing my hood Katie laughed do I look more like a skater or a rapper?  
  
Alex laughed well honestly no you have too much blond hair you just look like a teenage girl with a hoodie on.  
  
Katie laughed whatever. I think I look like a hipster.  
  
They wandered through the evening twilight the festival and lights hanging from the trees felt pleasant and dream like.  
  
The evening fell around them as the bright stars came out a soft breeze blew through the trees and they sat on the grass in front of the stage.  
  
They watched as the roadies set up equipment. The crowds talked excitedly around them young couples on dates groups of wild high Schoolers.  
  
But seriously how are we going to get money?  
  
I will out up an add to sell out jet skis and some of the other stuff we have.  
  
Alex felt disappointed he wandered aimlessly back along the city streets night had fallen and the large green trees spread their canopies over the the quiet world below.  
  
He realized how foolish all his daydreams had been. She was wealthy and athletic and beautiful but it really seemed like they connected, he realized he had misjudged things  
  
  
i just realized how are we gonna get a hotel.  
  
What do you mean Katie replied  
  
Well we have no credit card and you need I'd and a credit card  
  
Oh no Katie said  
  
Do you think they world do it with just cash?  
  
I don't know I really doubt it I could call a couple  
  
We don't have a phone though Katie said.  
  
Chapter 5  
Whitney sat twisting her fingers she felt so nervous she thought she would be sick. Cars parents student ras where everywhere it was move in day at college and the southern California sun shone brightly through the green leaves spread across the beautiful campus. People laughed and chatted happily as they Carried boxes clothes bedding plants microwaves. The student helpers wore matching shirts as they moved students in and answered questions.  
  
Whitney felt a dark cloud of worry what if she couldn't make friends what if her new room mate didn't like her. Her parents were going to take her but at the last minute had left on a trip to Asia you'll be fine they said sweetie. Her parents had always been rather distant which had taught Whitney to hide her emotions.  
  
Whitney looked Around nervously trying not to make eye contact she thought about running away someplace quiet were she could be alone.i could be a Hemit like Maybe I should have stayed on the east coast she though I wonder if my parents will even miss me.  
  
She smiled slightly at the thought then pulled out her phone. Cold and rainy on the east coast. It made her feel more homesick she wished she was curled up in her bed reading a nice book.  
  
She missed her bedroom and her horse and all the familiar things in it that had become a part of her. it was like her own sanctuary but it had been torn from her. all she had was what fit in the two suitcases she carried on the plane.  
  
Whitney was poor, well sort of poor her dad was very wealthy but her step mom didn't like her Whitney was sure of it.  
  
They had mutually decided not to spoil Whitney so everything she had she bought herself. At 18 they told her she could stay in the house but would have to pay rent. She tried to tell herself that was fair but it seemed cold and it helped her in her decision to move away for college.  
  
her favorite blanket filled almost half of one of her suitcases and she planned to buy the other things she needed when she got here. She had made a list and double checked it on the plane. Now she was begging to worry she didn't have a car and the college was set back in the hills above the city. She started to realize she just might have to sleep curled up in her one blanket and go to the store tomorrow and get sheets and a pillow. I wonder if the bus comes up here we sure do seem pretty far from the city. If it doesn't maybe I could walk I don't have much going on tomorrow anyways.  
  
Moving in had been easy the room was furnished and she had unpacked her small amount of things then sat down on the bed. She looked at the schedule. There were a lot of events coming up but she wasn't feeling very social. A BBQ tomorrow ill have to go to that if I want dinner she thought.  
  
She moved on the bed and the plastic cover squeaked noisily. I need to get my bedding before to night.  
  
She began to winder how she would get her sheets and get them washed before the night. I knew I should have brought them. She decided to go outside and walk around.  
  
She looked up and saw some people looking at her and realized she was chewing on her long hair.  
  
She quickly looked away and walked up the small path that meandered through the grounds to sit on a small bench beneath an oak tree that threw its shade on the ground beneath it.  
  
It was a good place to watch everyone. She saw three girls and a group of patents carrying a desk and boxes into the dorms on her right. She pulled out a campus map that must be Hawthorne. She felt overwhelmed by all the commotion and people and once again wondered how everyone seemed to know each Other and be best friends.  
  
She was shy and didn't have a lot of friends growing up but she had hopped to make a new start In college but so far it wasn't going very well. She looked around everyone was wearing shorts and flip flops and she looked prim and proper, no wonder no ones wants to talk to me she thought looking down at her formal clothes. Kinda stupid to think I was supposed to dress nicely for move in day. It made her realize how little she knew about college and wished her parents had brought her. She had assured them she would be fine but now wished she had asked them to skip there trip. She pulled our her phone to see of anyone had called or texted her. Nothing.  
  
 She felt tears welling up and thought I need to stop it I'm being emotional I'm sure things will get better soon.  
  
She tried to gather her courage as she stood up from the bench, she noticed a pretty girl with a bunch of other girls wearing volleyball gear laughing and talking happily as they all made there way someplace i think the athletes move in earlier to start practice. another group of students were sitting together in the grass under the shade of a tall oak tree. A group of the student helpers were talking and hugging as they were reunited with old friends from the summer.  
  
How does everyone know each other she thought worriedly its only the first day. I mean I can see how the helpers know each other but everyone else seems to be best friends already.  
  
She looked down at the piece of paper clutched tightly in her hand. Weather ford hall, well I might as well go find my room I got an email with my physics syllabus so I can start studying she thought moodily. She liked to learn but the thought of being the only person studying on this Thursday  that felt like a holiday was a little to much for her.  
  
She made it to her room and sat on her bed she could hear the laughter and talking drifting though the window and it made her sad she felt tears filling her eyes and laid back on her bed as she tried to fight them off. I can't believe neither of my parents have even bothered to call.  
  
bang!  
  
The door slammed open and the pretty girl from the volleyball team pushed in with her arms full.  
  
Oh hey she said dropping everything carelessly on the floor and shoving it with her foot. I'm Justine and umm that's my dad she said as a handsome and well dressed man walked in and that's my mom she said  
a young looking pretty blond lady walked both her parents looked wealthy and Whitney felt intimidated by them.  I'm a freshman Justine went on happily I moved in last month but it was a temporary dorm so they could make us practice all day but this will be my room for the year. It's nice she said as she went to look out the second story window at the grounds and trees that stretched out.  
  
My parents came back to help me move in and I said they could come help if they also took me shopping.  
  
Her dad coughed her dad cut in Whitney thought maybe he seemed a little embarrassed.  
  
Justine laughed I'm just kidding you don't have to buy me anything. But seriously we do need to go shopping.  
  
Her mom smiled as her dad set his armload of stuff down on her bed.  
  
When did you move in she asked?  
  
just a couple hours ago Whitney replied  pointing at her suitcases. Oh And it's Nice to meet you she said politely to her parents the pauses. She wondered if they could tell she had been crying.  
  
Anyways  
Um I need to go...And.. Study  
  
she said abruptly grabbing her physics book and feeling awkward wondering if they had noticed she had just been crying.  
  
Study Justine queried class doesn't start tell next week.  
  
Oh yes Whitney said I, well i wanted to get a head a little I have a busy course load.  
  
She turned abruptly and out the door but she heard her dad say hey Justine maybe you'll learn something from her, he sounded kind. Whitney thought about going back but instead hurried thought the crowded dorm room hall ignoring everyone. Pushing past the people carrying boxes and furniture and the open doors full of new students and there friends and families.  
  
Hey there you are i have been looking for you my parents want to take us to buy stuff for our room we had almost given up. So unless you want the room to be covered in. You might want to come. She laughed  
  
Oh thank you Whitney said. I really am busy she looked up Justine was strikingly beautiful and she seemed very kind also a bit wild.  
  
Come on she said trust me free lauding off of my dad is the best. I You'll love it I do she said then laughed at her joke. Then she gushed on but trust me I'm not spoilt love my parents it's just fun to tease my dad I don't tease my mom through she is a little to nice but my dads sarcastic so he can take it. She talked fast but don't worry he is only sarcastic with a few people like me I think I bring it out in him she smiled.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Little realizing how close the strange and dangerous events coming would bring them together.  
  
  
Chapter 5  
While they were shopping a man sat in total darkness on the floor of a small prison. The room had no windows and was deep under ground. He was still alive because They were not sure if might still be of use. So far he had been a disappointment. There attempts to use him had left him broken, His thoughts were crazed, the thoughts of a broken man. But in the silence and dark only interrupted  by the soft drip of water he forced his mind to try to remember what it was like to be sane. He had a vague memory of grass and of someone picking him up. He was young, a small child he felt love in the darkness he couldn't recall anything else. The darkness was around him but it was becoming him he thought with a panic.  
  
Then more thoughts crashed in uninvited there was more to life then this small cell the tasteless food that kept him alive, he tried to remember more but his mind slipped back into the confused and tortured paths of insanity darkness. But a faint light began to shine, A thought pierced him he must escape he must tell  
Someone anyone he needed to warn them!  
  
Back to other story.  
Chapter 6  
Justine was bored, she lay sprawled out on her southern California dorm room bed she had been looking out the window but the slow rain dripping down the sill was making her depressed. So she rolled over and lay on her back with her feet pointed towards the ceiling resting against the wall. She used her right hand to repeatedly and moodily bounce a volleyball off the roof. Volleyball was her life and had been since elementary school. she got a full ride to westmont college to play and couldn't have been happier. But last week she had taken a tumble trying to long Board down a hill And broken her wrist And gotten some nice looking road rash down her left side.  
  
"I'm bored she said out loud to her roommate for the 20th time in the last hour." And in her mind she thought I really need to get a hobby.  
"Well" said  her roommate Whitney You could you know like do your homework?"  
  
Eww Justine responded back Id rather be bored.  
  
Well heres the thing whitney responded back, If you did your homework You would be bored and your homework would be done  
  
Hmm Justine mused I'd rather be bored and not do my homework.  
  
Whitney turned slightly in her chair to look at Justine with her eye brow raised slightly.  
  
You know your gonna have to do it at some point right? She said I mean that's kinda how college works.  
She paused then went on We're you in school before this you seem rather new at the concept of homework.  
  
Justine laughed, it's all about priorities, is it due tomorrow?  
  
No  
  
Ok then don't do it right now.  
  
Whitney rolled her eyes oh my  
She said have you started on or history paper due next week it's a 20 page paper.  
  
Of course I have Justine shot back with a mixture of guilt and indignation then mumbled under her breath 3 paragraphs.  
  
Heard that! Whitney laughed  
  
Anywayyys Justine went on im doing fine so far not a single b. Justine said innocently hoping Whitney wouldn't question he claims further.  
  
Well that's good Whitney said enthusiastically I got a b+ on my physics test it was really annoying.  
  
Before or after the curve Justine asked sitting up a little.  
  
Before Whitney said quietly.  
  
Justine whistled you know the average was a 55 percent I knew you were a genius.  
  
Whitney smiled well thank you but a genius would have gotten the questions right and I didn't get them all right but ill do better next time.  
  
Please don't Justine said you'll throw the whole curve.  
  
. She was a kindhearted girl but whenever she got tired and bored she got a little bit antagonistic One of the drawbacks of being a rich spoiled only child. But it could have been a lot worse she really wasn't too bad.  
  
anyways What are you working on over there she said then grinned mischievously as she bounced the volleyball off the wall right above Whitney's head"  
  
I bet the day you went to college was the best day of your parents life Whitney  responded without looking up or flinching  
  
The best day of my parents life was the day I was born Justine shot back with a smile on her face.  
  
I'm sure it was, whitney responded Sarcastically, Do you ever wonder why your parents stopped having kids after you? Whitney said with a smile  
  
Yes of course Justine said they managed to reach perfection on the first try!  
  
Or maybe their Smart enough to learn from their mistakes  
  
well maybe I was a little bit of a handful as a infant its not my fault i was colicy.. and maybe my terrible twos were a little terrible  
Well and maybe a little bit to in elementary school, And I did get suspended in junior high for And I guess in high school I did but other then that practically an angel.  
  
Justine smiled to herself, She was the only person that could get kind sweet Whitney To respond in a little bit of sarcasm. She was Pretty sure Whitney was the kindest girl in the whole college.  
  
Justine lazily reached over for her Starbucks sitting on her desk And tried to take a sip still lying on her back with her legs pointed towards the dorm room ceiling. She  almost got it and then choked as it went down wrong,  she coughed and sputtered and then made it even worse by trying to hide it and laying on her back. When She stopped coughing and chocking she Tried to play it off like nothing happened. what we should do suppose very small Siri on her back choking for a couple of seconds. It didnt work.  
  
Very lady like  Whitney said  
  
I am the very image of Lady likeness Justine responded back throwing the volleyball with her casted hand at the roof, a stupid move. The volleyball came crashing down and hit her cup of Starbucks spilling the warm drink all over her and her bed  
Luckily it was almost gone.  
Whitney turned around to laugh but also jumped up to help her.  but then her true nature came out,  She laughed  a little but jumped up to help and grab a towel to clean up.  
  
I should get paid to be your nanny.  
  
Justine got up from her lazy position as she tried to wipe up the coffee with her still damp towel from her shower earlier that day. As she wiped the coffee up with Whitney's help she looked over And noticed Whitney had been and was chatting with a very attractive looking man over Facebook messenger. Who's that she said. A po.. A family friend  Whitney responded blushing a little.. purely scholarly I assure you.  
  
Ha ha OK sure whatever you say Justine said back, You weirdo. And here I was i thought you were too shy to talk to boys..  or girls.. or human beings.  
  
Well I have known him for a while he is Older then me but our parents were best friends. I didn't see him much when he left for college though but we still keep in touch.  
  
What are you guys talking about anyways she said forgetting her boredom for the moment.  
  
Well Whitney said pausing a little just chit chat  
Also he was helping me on something  
Like what Justine responded  
Well if you must know you know how I would want to work for the school newspaper  
Yeah and I think you'd be great at it  
Well there's been a lot of strange rumors floating around on different news outlets and I've been researching them and putting them together  
I found kind of a strange pattern like for instance have you heard of the Belgian wave?  
  
Oh yes Belgian waffles are my absolute favorite Justine said deliberately misunderstanding  
Whitney carried on I'm talking about the Belgian wave a strange grouping of alien sightings that occurred in Belgium in the late 80s We found a group of a number of alien sightings over about 40 years And the strange thing is in a number of photographs we found a picture of a guy it's kind of blurry but we're almost sure it's the same guy but he never gets any older his Clothes change to reflect the time but we're almost positive it's the same guy. And he looks just like a wealthy senator that and that is what the police officer and I were talking about anyways the photos always take place near where these sightings occur and also around stage same time period.  
he has been helping me look at some strange photos that I found.  
  
Umm ok Justine said wanna go get dinner? She was intrigued but It all sounded a little bit weird.  
She quickly threw on a pair of baggy sweatpants and a baggy sweater over her volleyball shorts  
Her curly hair was a mess so she put on a baseball cap  
OK ready she said.  
  
Just a second Whitney responded almost ready.   She came out wearing stylish jeans. Looking Like she was about to go to a fashion shoot.  
  
Oh gosh Justine said now you're making me look bad Maybe I should lose the hat. No it's fine Whitney said you look nice.  And quietly mumbled under her breath loud enough for Justine to hear "for a middle-aged dad. "  
  
See Justin laughed I'm gonna make a spoiled rich girl out of you yet. Your parents are going to love me they will  wonder what happened to their quiet shy studious daughter.  
  
Well Whitney said suddenly getting serious You're the only person that I would ever really tease or feel comfortable teasing. I didn't have a lot of friends in high school My best friend was my horse id have to say  
  
Enlough with this shhh ow of emotions she said repeating a home alone lone.  
  
Haha I love that movie  
  
I know it's so good  
  
We should make Christmas cookies and watch it  
  
Well let's go to dinner when you said wanting to change the subject. They left out of their dorm room and walked down the hall and down the stairs They then stepped outside and started walking up the grassy tree covered path towards the dining commons. Whitney opened her umbrella but Justine just stomped along and let the rain cover her hat and sweatshirt. The sky was gray and it was raining but the clouds seemed to be moving fast like they were trying to break apart for the autumn sun to come free.  
  
Whitney was glad they were friends she had called her mom crying the first night wanting to move back home. She had felt so homesick she was naituos. She also didn't think her and Justine would get along. She was pretty, athletic and from a Wealthy family. she remembered being intimidated by her handsome dad and her prim and proper mom dropping her off in their brand-new Audi. But they had all been so sweet she thought maybe it might work out. They had taken them all out to target and bought them a microwave bedding and treated Justine like she was one of their kids.  
  
Will you go to volleyball practice tomorrow  Whitney said. Coming out of her muse  
  
Yes of course I'm still on the team though I'm out for the rest of the season at least the seasons almost over.  
  
What are you going to get for dinner Whitney asked  
 Pizza Justine responded without missing a beat Did you really even need to ask?  
I guess not I'm pretty sure that's ten nights  in a row right or is it 11? Well Justin said I got it every night starting after our midterm so actually 15 days Because our midterm was Thursday Morning and now it Sunday. You know Whitney said there are other healthy options in the Commons  
  
Ya but I'm trying to ruin my complexion Justine said.  
  
Whitney gave her a sideways glance not sure what to say and then responded, well it's going well.  
Well it seems to be going well.  
  
Justine jumped up grabbed a tree branch and pulled it down dumping water over the both of them, in fact it mostly got on Justine so Whitney just calmly responded brat and keep waking.  
  
Hey your the one who said I have a  bad complexion you shouldn't say that kind of stuff to a lady Justine said.  
  
A lady? Whitney asked her quizzically.  
  
Yes a lady Justine said pulling her baseball cap further down.  
  
Do I look like a gangster she said.  
  
Sure Whitney said.  
  
You look like you were born and raised on the streets then quietly mumbled of the hamptons.  
Ha Justine said you just confirmed I do have a nice complexion  
  
I don't think I follow your logic Whitney said.  
  
You just said I look Rich and wealthy people always have good skin.  
  
And what scholarly article did you get that fact from.  
  
Oh please Justine said.  
  
Everyone knows it.  
  
Will see who has the last laugh When  
  
I'm large divorced have eight kids living in a dirty old trailer You'll look back and realize that you made the wrong decisions in life. Justine said in a perfectly serious tone.  
  
So do you believe in UFOs? Well honestly no not at all and I think most of those photos are just kind of random But it's fun and I think it would make a good news story for the paper I'm also going to try to put it up online  
 They got to the dining commons which was surprisingly full, "no one else has anything to do either on a boring rainy Sunday" Justine laughed. I hope next Saturdays nice we should go down to Santa Barbara and then to the beach.  
  
Oh I'd like that Whitney said. She noticed all the boys looking at Justine, it's a wonder they see anything to look at thought Whitney she is an amorphous blob of sweatpant material.  
  
Do you wanna go get pizza with me? I think I'm gonna go to the ring of fire and get Chinese food Whitney said.  
  
"Ah yes Chinese food" Justine said In a terrible impression of a asian voice.  
  
Justine! Whitney shot back that is so not appropriate she felt her face go bright red as people around looked over at them.  
  
"Ach I'm sorry my girl she tried again in a terrible impression of an Irish voice.  
  
Whitney laughed in spite of herself. "Ok well I'm gonna go get my food then swing by the housing office to see about room mate reassignments  
  
Ok you do that Justine said I know Ashley needs a new room mate, Justine paused waiting for white by to respond but she was distracted looking at the food signs, so she went on ashly the center, on the volleyball team, the tall girl?  
  
Oh is she Whitney replied?  
  
Yes Justine said and I hope you like loud snoring cause Ashley's a snorer she gave Whitney a superior look and started to walk over to the pizza place.  
  
Wait Justine" Whitney said grabbing her gently by the arm you know I was kidding right? I'd be lost here without you I honestly think I would have went home that first night"  
  
I was kidding too Justine said suddenly serious, well Except about the snoring everyone fights not to share a room with her usually she gets her own, makes me wish I was a Snorer, she sighed  
  
Whitney looked around at all the options and all the students bustling about with their food trays.  
  
As she stood there two guys she recognized from her biology class came up and stood by her they seemed to be contemplating something. A girl joined them and one of the boys, she thought his name was justin asked her hey Whitney wanna come eat with us? I think your in my biology class with mr Higgins. The hyper guy that plays loud 60s music at the start of class as we all get there.  
  
Whitney felt her face go red and she wished she wasn't so shy. No thanks she said curtly and walked off  
  
She heard one of them say told ya as she walked away  
  
She felt bad but decided to try to talk to them in biology she felt to awkward with so many people around.  
  
and ill come back over if I get mine first or you can meet me at the ring of fire."  
  
Sure sounds good Justine said  
  
Justine spotted a couple of her teammates who called her over to eat with them Whitney  preferred just eating alone she's kind of nervous around them even though they were nice  
  
It's gettin nice out Whitney said as she looked out the window next to their booth in the dining commons. Would you wanna walk the long way home?  
  
Sure Justine said, hey! You just called it home you only ever call it the dorm!  
  
Ya well I guess it is starting to feel more like home.. I guess that just means I have two homes now" Whitney said pensively  
  
They walked out side and looked up at the gorgeous sky as the clouds cleared in the late autumn sunlight. The grass and trees were drying and soft sunlight filtered over the world. "I wish I had my camera Whitney said  
Ya it sure is nice out Justine responded looking up at the tall beech and oak trees blowing softly in the evening.  
It's a really pretty campus here  
  
Yes Whitney said we sure are lucky, well minus all the homework and classes, then laughed.  
  
Ok you have to listen to this it's so strange Whitney said.  
  
Ok sure Jenna said she walked over and flopped down on the floor next to Whitney's well organized desk.  
  
Are you sure your bit gonna make fun of me Whitney asked?  
  
Hmm I'm not totally sure Jenna said but ill do my best. Ok so this paranoid caller calls into a lathe radio program. He is totally freaking out.  
  
Umm ok ok, ok so I don't have much time there gonna I m me there looking for me.  
  
They are gonna triangulate oni  
  
Ok here is the weird thing about 3 minutes into the call the when radio station goes down.  
  
Justine laughed how can you be so smart and so gullible. That's so fake!  
  
Well it did happen Whitney responded back feeling a little hurt.  
  
You know what never mind she got up abruptly and hurried from the room feeling foolish. Then she started thinkin about missing her family and the d she got on her chemistry midterm. The first she had ever gotten. She wondered what would happen if she failed a class.  
Frustration washed over her and she started to cry.  
  
There you are! She heard a voice behind her. Your Crying! Oh my gosh I feel terrible Jenna exclaimed putting an arm around her I'm really sorry.  
  
No no it's not you Whitney felt embarrassed she didn't like people seeing her cry. It's just school and I've been feeling kinda homesick I think that's why I look up stupid things it keeps my mind busy. Also I for a don my chemistry test that's my major what if I fail the class I'm really stressed out I studied a lot.  
  
I have never been very close with my parents we don't not get a long there just busy I'm like a trophy to them. There both very cold. And it's weird because I'm homesick but I don't really know what exactly it is I miss. Being away from home kinda made me realize that maybe I never fully belonged there in the first place. I mean ill always visit on the holidays and stuff but my parents were never around.  
  
I kept count I incited my dad to 147 events and he never came once. My step moms in her own world too. We have never been close. My dad emailed me and said if I can't make it home for the holidays he would understand.  
  
I mean I feel like he should have just said dont bother coming home.  
  
But you said you almost left and went back home.  
  
Well yes Whitney responded but that's because it was everything I was familiar with my horse my room, I had created my own little world in my room and it was all I had ever known. But I'm getting used to it here. It was just a big transition. And even if my parents are distant it was still people in my life.  
  
Jenna whistled I'm sure you'll do better my grades haven't been that good either to be honest.  
  
Jenna tried to joke and hey trust me after you get a few bad grades it gets easier.  
  
Whitney smiled weakly.  
  
Ya I guess I'm just being emotional.  
  
No Jenna said I understand, hey wanna come home with my family this weekend.  
  
That night Jenna lay in bed thinking about Whitney she still felt bad for her careless words. She was confused because they teased each other all the Time she decided to listen to her conspires and not tease her about them.  
  
She also tried to figure her out she seemed so strong yet also seemed delicate and fragile. She realized she was a complicated person.  
She was glad she opened up she was always so closed off.  
  
The next day in class the teacher called out at the start is Whitney here? Yes I am Whitney said.  
  
  
Justine Opened her and her face To pale white.  She covered her mouth with a look of horror.  
  
What is it Whitney said?  
  
Justine showed her the text and wrote on a piece of paper, there listening to us.  
  
Creepy Whitney mouthed back her face turning white.  
  
She grabbed the pen and shielded what she was writing as she wrote very small. Or watching? The scribbled it out.  
  
How did you get a picture of my mom you creep! I'm gonna call the police if you don't leave right now.  
  
Go ahead and do it he said. He handed her a piece of paper whats this she said? A warrant for your arrest and here is yours he handed one to Justine.  
  
We didnt do anything Justine said with a note if panic rising in her voice.  
  
The man spoke again he didnt seem threatening at all almost devoid of any emotion which made it more alarming.  
  
Are you going to call the police he said? They will arrest you both she they arrive on suspicion of murder. You'll both be tried and sentenced to life in prison.  
  
Whitney looked like she was about to cry.  
  
This doesn't have to happen just don't mention what you saw and you won't be bothered again. It's quite simple.  
  
Ok we won't Justine said now get out of out room.  
  
Now now he said no need for anger. In return for your cooperation I can answer some questions probably not as many as you would like but j can answer some of them.  
  
Chapter 8  
Jenna and Whitney sat both nervously and excitedly waiting for their plane. They had never been to Europe and it seemed a dream to be on their way to France.  
  
  
  
Ceaos how do you communicate with your students  
  
  
  
  
Chapter 4  
"Do you have any idea whats going on?"  Katie said. A thousand images flashed through Alex's mind, their house exploding and the dazed feeling the sound concussion caused, his strange dream of attacking a remote Russian village and seeing it on the news 1 week later, the cryptic end to the strange phone call he overheard his dad making, Katie's early genius.  
But all of that made no sense, just chance and coincidence nothing solid that would explain their blown up and burned down house, their missing parents or why the police and some government agency would be after them.  
  
"No, I literally have no clue I keep hoping ill wake up and none of this ever happened." I wanna wake up and have a normal rainy Saturday in our real home. Then watch a movie with our family and eat some home made cookies." But something tells me that may never happen again. I mean we may spend the rest of our lives in jail.  
  
He looked up and saw katie she looked like she was about to cry.  
  
Sorry kat I didn't mean that honestly we didnt do anything we know our parents out alive and is coming to meet us and I know he can straighten this out. He smiled at katie and she smiled back I really believe the worst is behind us I bet we have this all cleared up by Christmas long before then actually  
  
"Do you have any idea whats going on?"  Katie said. A thousand images flashed through Alex's mind, their house exploding and the dazed feeling the sound concussion caused, his strange dream of attacking a remote Russian village and seeing it on the news 1 week later, the cryptic end to the strange phone call he overheard his dad making, Katie's early genius.  
But all of that made no sense, just chance and coincidence nothing solid that would explain their blown up and burned down house, their missing parents or why the police and some government agency would be after them.  
  
"No, I literally have no clue I keep hoping ill wake up and none of this ever happened." I wanna wake up and have a normal rainy Saturday in our real home. Then watch a movie with our family and eat some home made cookies." But something tells me that may never happen again. I mean we may spend the rest of our lives in jail.  
  
He looked up and saw katie she looked like she was about to cry.  
  
Sorry kat I didn't mean that honestly we didnt do anything we know our parents out alive and is coming to meet us and I know he can straighten this out. He smiles at katie and she smiled back  
  
"One thing that doesn't make sense is why there after us."  
Well katie said, I think they think we blew the house up and, she stopped short of saying anything about their parents.  
  
Yes that makes sense but why so many government agents it seems an over kill. I think there are fbi and some other group and did you see how many were dressed in suits? It was like the secret service. Also I'm sure I heard two of them speaking Russian.  
  
they haven't caught us yet so maybe it's not enough agents katie said with a weak smile.  
  
Ya I guess your right alex said smiling back at his sister. But we know we are innocent which means something is up and we need to figure it out which means staying safe.  
  
He heard a strange humming sound in the background It seemed to percuss the air in a strange way. Just as he was wondering what it was it started to get louder and he turned and saw a helicopter off in the distance with a massive strobe light.  
  
 He realized there were three helicopters spread out and searching the desert with the strobe lights. Oh no kat said quietly The fear evident in her shaking voice. We need to run Alex said Sideways so that the spotlights don't come over us. He was already exhausted from not sleeping through the desert daytime And hiking most of the night but Adrenaline and fear charged him back up again. They both took off running as fast as they could to the side so that the helicopters wouldn't pass directly over them They were making good distance but the helicopters were closing in fast.  
The bright strobe lights making ghoulish shadows in the desert night  
  
Faster faster we have to run faster he said. Oh! He heard a crash and turned to see Katie sprawled out with her to backpack on top of her, He rushed back to help her up As he pulled her up and asked if she was OK his eyes frantically scanned for any cover on the ground under which they could hide.  I'm OK I'm OK she said her breath coming ragged and heavy we Have to go lets go And she started running The whole desert around them was flat just small cactuses and undergrowth there's nowhere to hide  
  
  
Katie grabbed his arm Alex looked at her and followed her silent eyes to the tv, where both of there pictures were displayed.  
  
Over there katie said as she grabbed and began pulling him a few seconds later Alex saw it a small creek bed mostly dried up but over time it had burrowed itself deep into the desert floor.  
  
  
Alex finally felt like he could relax a little for the first time in a long time. The hotel room was clean and nice and they ordered a pizza for dinner. He had just finished a nice hot shower and it felt so nice to be clean. Katie had just finished hers and she came out smiling, that smells so good she said. Ya also I swing by the store and got us some milk and a salad and some cookies for desert.  
  
Oh yay! She exclaimed. Both of them were beginning feel like it was only a matter of time tell they found their parents and got things straightened out.  
  
What kind of pizza did you get she asked. I went with half pepperoni and half cheese. I figured we should avoid public places so I also got us some cereal and bagels and cream cheese. And a bunch of other stuff.  
  
Katie was looking in the bag. Oh yay, bananas and strawberries. Ya the strawberries were on sale so I bought two of them.  
Alex plopped down on the bed and ran his hands through his hair. He was feeling exhausted but the thought of a good meal and rest was appealing to him.  
  
They turned on the tv looking for something to watch to take their minds off everything. Lord of the rings is on.  
  
We should watch something else katie said its so good and I don't wanna start it from the middle.  
  
What about the office?  
  
Ya that sounds good.  
  
They were able to relax and eat pizza while watching the office. There spirits Rose as they felt that they would be able to get things figured out and find their parents. That's good pizza katie said, ya it's hard to go wrong with pizza but this is particularly good.  
  
  
It was a nice late fall Evening the sun hung low in the sky as she began to set thin clouds covered the pale blue sky and the autumn trees had most been stripped bare a few dull leaves still clung to the branches.  
  
  
Intro  
Belgian ufo wave  
Encoded DNA trying to regrow  
  
Plot  
Separated high in mountains  
Meets drawf he disappears  
Girl comes  
They leave attacked  
She does magic  
She hurt  
Goes to village and befriends beat  
Old doc helps  
Travels to wizard meeting  
At village meets young wizard  
Soldiers come  
Older wizard helps  
Travel to wizard meeting  
  
  
Chapter 5  
Whitney looked over nervously at Jenna. Her heart was racing and she felt sick she saw Jenna staring straight ahead and one glance at her pale face showed she was equally as freaked out.  
  
Whitney's mind raced how close was the nearest town and how they had gotten it o this mess. Everything had been going fine it was a nice night even a little warm. They had taken a small road off the highway because on the map it had looked like a short cut.  
  
ok listen to this this is totally weird it's a radio broadcast someone uploaded and ok you just gotta listen  
to this.  
  
It happened the same night  
  
That gives me chills.  
  
  
Whitney was flipping though the radio stations  
Wow what was that turn it back Jenna said.  
Well that was weird  
Ya totally creepy  
It's gotta be a joke  
Ya but the whole station cut off  
That's a pretty big joke  
  
You should turn it this is totally creeping me out.  
  
Oh Come on its interesting its probably all a joke  
  
No Leave it see if the station comes back on.  
  
  
  
It had ended up being windy and though desert terrain it was hilly.  
  
They travelled along the windy rode and slowly ascended into the desert mountains.  
  
Look at that Whitney said.  
  
Weird Jenna replied  
  
Off in the distance there was a bright light shining down  
  
Oh look there is another one Whitney said.  
  
I wonder what that is  
  
Well I don't think there planes they are moving to slow.  
  
Jenna leaned over Whitney and tried to look out the drivers window  
  
I think there is a third one in the distance she said.  
Maybe they are helicopters.  
  
They watched the lights for a while but they seemed to be drifting away and moving in the opposite direction that they were traveling.  
  
They kept climbing higher and higher into the desert mountain pass.  
Things were going fine until the car started to make a weird thumping qnoise.  
  
Whats that Jenna asked as Whitney started to slow the car which was clearly having a problem.  
  
Shoot I think it's a flat tire.  
  
Oh no? Jenna exclaimed.  
  
don't worry Whitney replied I have a spare its just so creepy out here at night I don't want to pull over.  
  
Ya it's pretty in the car but I'm not gonna lie I am a little nervous to get out but look on the bright side at least we can stretch out legs.  
  
  
Are you sure it's a flat Jenna asked. No she replied but it sure feels like one. Ill just pull over and we can check.  
  
They oled over and got out. As Jenna opened the door the desert air blew gently in her face. It had cooled considerably and was almost chilly.  
  
It was a cool night, the moon hung in the desert sky giving a faint outline to the desert.  They were in the mountains and the road was climbing up the mountain pass. It cut through the side of the mountain and on the right rose up above them and gently slopes away on their left.  
  
Bree she said reaching as she opened the back car door and rummages for her sweater.  
  
Yep Whitney said sounding less then enthusiastic its a flat.  
  
Jenna walked around the front of the car to where Whitney was crouching. The tire was totally flat.  
  
Jenna whistled that's not good.  
  
It's cold too Whitney said.  
  
I have a sweeter you can use one sec. Jenna went back to her bag and pulled out another sweater for Whitney.  
  
Thanks Whitney said .i guess were having an adventure she laughed as she out the sweater on.  
  
Ya I wish it was an adventure with more lights and less dessert wasteland.  
  
Well on the bright side at least there is probably no one else out here.  
  
Ya all the same maybe we shouldn't have taken that shortcut.  
  
Well it was still nice and sunny when we got on the road and the deser was warm and pretty besides we had no idea we would get a flat or have to drive so slow over all these curvy roads.  
  
Oh no Whitney said  
  
What asked Jenna  
  
Well I just remembered all our stuff is in the trunk were gonna have to unload everything to get to the spare tire.  
  
Fun fun Jenna said.  
  
Well we might as well get started. They began to unlock the trunk piling it high on the side of the road by the car. After they had gotten everything piled out Whitney said ok  
fingers crossed that the spare is in their and works and that the jack does too.  
  
Whitney opened the cover and smiled well their is a spare and here is the jack!  
  
Jenna laughed happily. Lets hope it works now.  
  
  
Whitney was crouched down trying to tighten the lugnuts while Jenna was offering advice and eating a granola bar she had pulled from her backpack. You know she said its kinda nice snacking our here I don't have to worry about getting crumbs all over your car.  
  
Ya that's true Whitney repllied and also its a Good thing tomorrow's Sunday and we can sleep in she said.  
  
Yes I'm glad we left today.  
  
Both their spirits were rising a little.  
  
It's a good thing you had a spare because I have no service out here at all.  
  
I know Whitney said! What would we have done. I don't think we could make it out of here for at least twenty miles.  
  
I suppose at some point someone might have driven along but id still be nervous.  
  
Ya I'm sorry Whitney replied I wouldn't have take this road if j would have know how small and remote it was.. And windy!  
  
Oh it's not your fault Jenna said it was my idea anyways remember I said it looks like a nice short cut?  
  
Hey do you want a granola bar? I have q couple more and they are really good.  
  
Oh yes I would love one once we get back on the road.  
  
Ok ill go grab one from my backpack. And i think i have some water and maybe some starburst. Jenna's feet crunched over the rocks and desert soil she opened the car door and began to rummage in the backseat through her backpack for one.  
  
whitney had started to tighten the wheel lugnuts when Suddenly She got a strange feeling and shivered she felt chills running up her spine.  
  
What's that she heard Jenna say with a not of panic rising in her voice. Jenna was turned around and staring intensely down the desert slope.  
  
whitney jerked up from crouching beside the car and turned to look, she felt a chill someone or something was was coming up the hill fast and their movements were strange and erratic she lurched fully up and grabbed jennas arm.  
  
she felt paralyzed with fear  
  
as Jenna turned and saw someone she almost jumped out of her skin with fright.  
  
  
  
Out in the dark in the middle of the desert Whitney felt so helpless. She tried to glance at him in the rear view mirror. He wasn't bad looking his eyes showed intelligence but what we had happened had changed who he used to be. It made her bloodrun cold. At least he hadnt done anything dangerous yet.  
  
He was breathing heavily, clearly in a panic.  
  
There is great evil buried beneath the earth.  
  
Where did he go? Whitney stood perplexed and confused.  
  
After her out burst she was lost for words and so was Jenna they both stood staring for a couple of minutes looking this way and that. He had totally disappeared.  
  
Finaly Jenna said in a small voice ok this is totally weird.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Jenna took a flying leap and landed on her bed, she was going so fast she almost catapulted off the other side. She wrapped herself in her blankets and sat up with an enormous smile of relief and exhaustion on her face and her wild hair practically exploding off her head.  
  
Whitney laughed and plopped down in the chair next to the bed. Half sitting and half lying. Jenna handed her a blanket and she wrapped it around her self.  
  
Home sweet home Jenna said I mean that was a crazy day i don't think I ever wanna leave my bed again.  
  
Whitney laughed and ill stay in this chair... Except I'm hungry and that may be a problem.  
  
Here ill help you Jenna laughed and leaned off the bed far enough to kick the chair towards the small mini fridge in their dorm room.  
  
Whitney laughed should have kicked me harder I'm only half way to the fridge and too tired to move. She was sliding father down the chair to where now she was almost lying in it with her feet spread out in front of her.  
  
Jenna sighed comfortably ya I really don't wanna get up but starvation may force me to I couldn't fall asleep being this hungry and I'm thirsty too.  
  
what if there was a third thing Jenna mused like you know we eat food and drink liquids maybe there is something else and I'm just hungry enough to try it.  
  
Whitney raised her eyebrow I have no idea what your talking about and most of me doesn't want to know.  
  
I'm just saying Jenna responded maybe were missing out on something cool.  
  
Well I think some food and a drinks gonna be cool enough for me Whitney replied and you know what I'm gonna take the journey to the fridge ... Wish me luck.  
  
Oh the best of luck Jenna said your bravery in the face of adversity will be remembered by countess generations.  
  
Whitney slowly started to scoot her chair closer to the small dorm room fridge as she said you know come to think of it im not just hungry I'm starving we havent eaten since lunch time.  
  
Ya and that was a small lunch we shared a sandwich and we had those granola bars around 9.  
  
Ya but I think that just made me hungrier Whitney said.  
  
  
She finally made it to small fridge and sat up just enough to open the door without totally sliding out of the black chair.  What do we got in there she said.  
  
Ya full me in Jenna said.  
  
ok lets see whitney said We have a frozen pizza and some salad mix  
 Do we have any dressing Jenna interrupted  
  
Umm I don't think so oh wait she said here is some little ranch cups from the dining commons and Whitney paused as she dug her hand in further we have cookie dough and milk. Looks like we dinner planned.  
  
Is it dinner if its one in the morning?  
  
Ya I guess it's more a late night snack. Ok Whitney said ill put the pizza in.  
  
Ok ill find us something to watch what are you in the mood for.  
  
nothing scary maybe something funny.  
  
both girls paused as they quickly pushed their terrifying ordeal from their minds.  
  
Hmm Jenna started calling out shows friends, the Simpsons family guy the office.  
  
Yes the office Whitney said that sounds relaxing after a stressful day.  
  
Whatever we do we can't burn the pizza I do not wanna have to go to the store.  
  
What temperature do the cookies and pizza bake at I don't wanna have to wait Jenna said.  
  
Well im pretty sure the pizzas way hotter and id Prefer my pizza to taste like pizza and my cookies like cookies.  
  
Ahhhh! Whitney screamed someone was looking in the window!!  
  
 That vampires live up in the remote mountains.  
  
Ok gross no way. I'm not even Gonna go up there that's literally the worst idea I've heard Jenna said nervously.  
  
  
They were sitting out at the patio at Starbucks in the bright California sun but she felt a chill. She was surprised at her self through it sounded like a rumor that normally wouldn't bother her at all.  
  
Maybe it was since they were actually gonna be going close and could go.  
  
Ya no she said again I don't wanna check those creepy mountains out.  
  
Ok fine Whitney laughed, you always tease me and say you don't believe in that kind of stuff.  
  
Well that's true Jenna said. I don't believe that's its vampires or ghosts or whatever.  
  
But at the same time, well you know it's ill the expression where the is smoke there's fire. So while I don't believe there is something supernatural I so think maybe there is something up there.m  
  
  
Whitney laughed i think your just a fraidy cat.  
  
Ugg that's not creepy at all  
  
  
Chapter 8  
Officer Jamison sat in his patrol car it had been a strange night and officer though he was he felt uncomfortable sitting out here.  it was an unusually dark night on a remote highway that ran through the rugged and rainswept mountains of the Pacific Northwest. It had snowed earlier and there was still traces of snow turned to slush in the gravel that his patrol car was parked in. Snow lay in the woods and mountains that rose all around him, there dark shadows barely visible against the night sky. Angry storm clouds hung about the mountain peaks blocking out the starlight that shown brightly far above them.  
  
 He reached over to the passenger side to double check it was locked and turned up the the country music as he rummaged for a snack. He was surprised he felt uneasy he had grown up hunting and spent many a night alone deep in the woods. But he had learned to trust his instincts and something was bothering him. If he had been asked to describe it he would have said some presence something that felt dark. But he wasn't asked and if he had been he would have just said the night felt creepy ya know sometimes you let your imagination get the better of you.  
  
He laughed and said gently to himself maybe I should get a partner for these night shifts. He chuckled to himself as he thought of how the conversation would go about speaking to the chief a rugged and manly leader who used to be a navy seal  
  
Uh chief id like to start working with a partner.  
  
And why is that the Chief would respond gruffly probably still staring at his paperwork with his massive arms bulging.  
  
Well it's just that I'm a little scared of the dark lately.  
  
What! I thought you used to be a marine I always knew you were a bunch of pansies I'm glad I joined the navy.  
  
He chucked again probably best not ask he smiled to himself.  
  
That and he had a great deal of respect for the chief he was a good man and the hardest worker he had ever met. The other officers and his wife all worked to get him to take brakes and relax.  
  
 felt he needed to stay alert.  
  
There had been unusual reports of speeders. Back at the station they had drawn straws and the loser got to come sit out here and wait for whoever it was that had been alarming the other drivers and the locals. There had only been a couple of cars in the last hour and he was getting bored and sleepy. There had also been strange stories from hunters who had been seeing things in the woods. There had been three reports of alarmed hunters who claimed to have been stalked by a dark shape or shadow fleeting ghost like through the woods.  
  
One hunter claimed to have caught a glimpse of it in the woods. He said it had been a windswept night mostly covered by clouds fleeting across the moon. He said the hair stood up on the back of his neck and he turned and caught a fleeting glimpse of something ghosting through the woods. He said it was Human like but moved on all fours and just like that it vanished. He said it may have been the shadows or a cougar.  
  
I need some jerky he thought as he rummaged though his bag and found some this will keep me alert.  
  
There had been other strange reports out here the last couple months but nothing that had been substantiated. One of them, a hysterical 911 call had left everyone in the station a little shaken. Now everyone thought it was a prank but Jamison wasn't so sure.  
  
Jamison knew the callee he was from a neighboring small town and both their sons played on rival high school football teams he was a good man. They had struck up a friendship over the years at sporting events football in the fall badketvall in the winter and track in the spring.  
  
They liked to talk about hunting and football.  
  
He was a solid rancher which was why Jamison was so shocked to hear his panicked and terrified 911 call.  
  
911 whats your emergency  
  
There were two dark shapes crouched over them.  
  
  
that doesn't sound like him at all I may drive out and pay him a visit  
  
He caught some movement out of tr corner of his eye and quickly turned to try to peer into the depths of the dark forest.  
  
it's kind of an addiction  
They tried to kill us but we escaped  
  
Most are more animal like then human  
  
We can't control out emotions.  
  
he hoped no speeders would come by because there was a bitter wind and he was warm and comfortable with the heater blowing on his feet.  
  
He rubbed his eyes it seemed something was approaching at an enormous speed but the road ahead was dark and he was not sure.  
  
Chapter 11  
  
No way!get out of my room before k call the police you creep!  
  
I don't think you Want to do that he said calmly.  
  
And why not Jenna responded.  
  
She had never been so angry in get life and wasn't sure if she was gonna scream or cry,  
  
Please sit down he said calmly  
  
The other agent stood with his hands calmly behind his back.  
  
How about no  
  
Ok that's your decision  
  
He was calm and showed no emotion at all.  
  
Here he said handing Jenna an envelope.  
  
And what's this she said.  
It's a warrant for your arrest he said calmly.  
  
What she practically screamed I didn't do anything  
  
And here is yours he said and handed an envelope to Whitney.  
  
Whitney stared wide eyed but didnt reach out to take it.  
  
Jenna had calmed some we didn't do anything so I don't know what your taking about so get out or I call the police as she said it she pulled out her phone.  
  
I wouldn't do that he said again calmly.  
  
Those are warrants for your arrest for the m of.  
  
What?!  
  
Jenn ripped it up and three both pieces at him. Get out get out now! She said her voice shacking with emotion.  
  
He smiled gently but devoid of any real human emotion or sympathy. I wouldn't do that again he said. Lucky for you I have another copy.  
  
But you know it doesn't matter to me if you spend the rest of your life in prison.  
  
Whitney leaned over, her already pale face even player we better listen she managed to get out as she put her hand on Jenna's leg. Jenna grabbed her hand ok she got out. She knew if she said another word she would bust out in tears that wouldn't stop.  
  
Will hear you out Whitney said.  
  
It's fairly simple he said Jenna glanced up and shuddered at his eyes that seemed devoid of all human emotion or empathy.  
  
You don't talk about what you have seen and we don't turn your warrants in. And I'd you make trouble people have also been known to disappear and we wouldn't want that now would we?  
  
We used to make people disappear but it lead to to many questions so now we try to avoid that.  
  
  
What do we so Whitney said breathlessly.  
  
I don't know Jenna responded I mean at this point I guess just what they say.  
  
Whitney held up her phone  
a single text message from  
I wouldn't do that.  
  
I think this might be his YouTube channel.  
  
  
Jason was sitting at the station drinking a cup of coffee.  
  
Brad walked in  
  
Jason looked up and smiled.  
  
Howdy brad said have you seen this? It's strange