UNCOVER THE VEIL
UNCOVER THE VEIL

TALES OF DECEPTION

CHAM LABAM
CORNELL DANIELS
B.J SSCOT
C.J.² MS
JOHN SMITH
For Eubie
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tips for Writers From Famous Writers ......................... 9

Introduction ......................................................... 13

“Dude, What Happened?” by Cham LaBram ................. 17

“Jane Doe” by Cornell Daniels .............................. 27

“In Too Deep” by B.J Sscot ................................. 41

“Dark Occurrences” by C.J.² MS .......................... 51

“Feathers Fade to Black” by John Smith ................... 63
TIPS FOR WRITERS

STEPHEN KING

“If you want to be a writer,” says Stephen King, “you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot.”

King, who has written over 50 books, emphasizes that writers have to be well-read. He adds that he has no patience for people who tell him that they want to be writers but they can’t find the time to read. The answer is simple: if you don’t read, you can’t be a writer. You have to read just about everything. In addition, you also have to write in order to develop your own style.

When it comes to the reading part of it, King explained during a lecture at Yale that if you read enough, there’s this magic moment which will always come to you if you want to be a writer. It’s the moment when you put down some book and say: “This really sucks . . . I can do better than this . . . And this guy got published.” So go ahead, read all you can, and wait for that magical moment.

“On Writing” – published in 2000 – is both a textbook for writers and a memoir of King’s life. Here’s an excerpt from “On Writing” in which King offers advice on pacing:

“Mostly when I think of pacing, I go back to Elmore Leonard, who explained it so perfectly by saying he just left out the boring parts. This suggests cutting to speed the pace, and that’s what most of us end up having to do (kill your darlings, kill your darlings, even when it breaks your egocentric little scribbler’s heart, kill your darlings) . . . I got a scribbled comment that changed the way I rewrote my fiction once and forever. Jotted below the machine-generated signature of the editor was this mot: “Not bad, but PUFFY. You need to revise for length. Formula: 2nd Draft = 1st Draft – 10%. Good luck.”
**JOHN GRISHAM**

John Grisham—a former lawyer best known for his legal thrillers—advises young writers to find their career, and adds that at first it won’t be writing. He explains that before you can be a writer you have to experience some things, see some of the world, go through things—love, heartbreak, and so on—, because you need to have something to say.

You also need to have something to fall back on. Once you’re secure in life and you have a regular paycheck, then you can think about becoming a serious writer. (This is basically “The Survival/Sacred Dance” theory.)

He goes on to say that at first you have to treat writing as a hobby; you write a page a day in your spare time. Grisham explains that he created spare time to write, although he had a full time job. He adds that he always tells young aspiring writers that if they’re not writing a page a day, then nothing is going to happen. But if they make sure to write a page a day it becomes a habit, and before long they have a lot of pages piled up.

**KURT VONNEGUT**

Kurt Vonnegut was a prolific American author known for works blending satire, black comedy and science fiction. He offers the following advice to aspiring writers: “Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, and not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style.”

In the book “Bagombo Snuff Box”—an assortment of his short stories published in 1999, Vonnegut listed eight rules for writing a short story:

1. Use the time of a total stranger in such a way that he or she will not feel the time was wasted.
2. Give the reader at least one character he or she can root for.
3. Every character should want something, even if it is only a glass of water.
4. Every sentence must do one of two things—reveal character or
advance the action.

5. Start as close to the end as possible.

6. Be a Sadist. No matter how sweet and innocent your leading characters, make awful things happen to them—in order that the reader may see what they are made of.

7. Write to please just one person. If you open a window and make love to the world, so to speak, your story will get pneumonia.

8. Give your readers as much information as possible as soon as possible. To hell with suspense. Readers should have such complete understanding of what is going on, where and why, that they could finish the story themselves, should cockroaches eat the last few pages.

ANNE DILLARD

Annie Dillard has written eleven books, including “An American Childhood” and “Pilgrim at Tinker Creek”. In “The Writing Life” she goes into her life as a writer, and explains the ins and outs of what a writer needs to do to have a successful book.

Here are some gems from The Writing Life:

1. “One of the few things I know about writing is this: spend it all, shoot it, play it, lose it, all, right away, every time. Do not hoard what seems good for a later place…. Something more will arise for later, something better.”

2. “Write as if you were dying. At the same time, assume you write for an audience consisting solely of terminal patients. That is, after all, the case.”

3. “It is no less difficult to write sentences in a recipe than sentences in Moby-Dick. So you might as well write Moby-Dick.”

4. “When you write, you lay out a line of words. The line of words is a miner’s pick, a wood carver’s gouge, a surgeon’s probe. You wield it, and it digs a path you follow. Soon you find yourself deep in new territory. Is it a dead end, or have you located the real subject? You will know tomorrow, or this time next year.”

5. “A work in progress quickly becomes feral. It reverts to a wild state overnight. . . it is a lion growing in strength. You must visit it every day and reassert your mastery over it. If you skip a day, you are,
quite rightly, afraid to open the door to its room. You enter its room with bravura, holding a chair at the thing and shouting, ‘Simba!’”

**MAYA ANGELOU**

Maya Angelou is best known for her series of six autobiographies, which focus on her childhood and early adulthood experiences. In 1971 she was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for her volume of poetry, “Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water ‘Fore I Die.”

The following quote by Angelou is very reminiscent of Elizabeth Gilbert’s talk at Ted.com entitled “A Different Way to Think About Creative Genius”:

“What I try to do is write. I may write for two weeks ‘the cat sat on the mat, that is that, not a rat.’ And it might be just the most boring and awful stuff. But I try. When I’m writing, I write. And then it’s as if the muse is convinced that I’m serious and says, ‘Okay. Okay. I’ll come.’”

Beginning with “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, Angelou has used the same writing ritual for many years (from: “Conversations With Maya Angelou”):

“When I’m writing . . . I get up at about five . . . I get in my car and drive off to a hotel room: I can’t write in my house, I take a hotel room and ask them to take everything off the walls so there’s me, the Bible, Roget’s Thesaurus and some good, dry cherry and I’m at work by 6:30. I write on the bed lying down—one elbow is darker than the other, really black from leaning on it—and I write in longhand on yellow pads. Once into it, all disbelief is suspended, it’s beautiful.”
This anthology of stories is based on team-writing exercises assigned in the University of Baltimore’s ENGL200.LC4. The “LC” designation stands for “Learning Community,” unique course groupings as part of the freshmen experience at UB. In the past two decades, colleges and universities of all sizes and types have implemented them for some or all of their students, usually with the aim of improving student learning, improving students’ experiences in and out of the classroom, providing integration of ideas and disciplines across campuses, and increasing rates of student retention and degree completion. Colleges have turned to learning communities as an effective way to change the behaviors and organization of students, faculty, and student affairs professionals such that they work together to form a more holistic learning experience than what is experienced when courses are taken in isolation from one another.

For the Fall 2012 semester, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies Daniel Page recommended an “LC” that combined English taught by Gregg Wilhelm, Psychology taught by John Gasparini, and Information Technology taught by Lorraine Bergkvist. For his English 200 level course, Mr. Wilhelm developed the theme “iBook, eBook, uBook: How Technology Has Changed Writing, Publishing, and Reading.” For digital natives, which covers essentially the entirety of this freshmen class, various devices have inherently been part of each of these steps of creating, disseminating, and consuming the “printed” word. The fundamental premise of literature has not changed: it remains an effort to transfer content from a writer (the “I”) to a reader (the “U”). The practice of that transference is called publishing, the Latin root of which means “to make public,” which at its core remains much as it has through the centuries.

What has radically changed is the method of getting content from producer to consumer (the “E”). Word processors make the act of writing accessible, digital print and digital formats create new
publishing models, and electronic devices redefine the ways books are promoted and read. What does new technology mean for writers, publishers, and readers...and you, who might be all three...and is it reshaping our notion of literature?

Students participated first-hand in exploring these concepts via an experiential learning and team building exercise. Five groups of five students each wrote a short story, based on a provided prompt, wherein each student contributed to the five parts of a traditionally structured story: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

This anthology is the result, impossible without the combination of human creativity and digital technology. Here are the five story-writing teams and the author pseudonyms they selected:

“Dude, What Happened?”
by Cham LaBram
Amber Adams
Marie Frazier
Lauren Latimer
Chastity Poe
Brittney Spencer

“Jane Doe”
by Cornell Daniels
Christian Algood
Taylor Gates
Courtney Matthews-Bey
Danielle Preidt
Erica Sterling

“In Too Deep”
by B.J Sscot
Jamal Ali
Steve Haas
Brianna Nibbs
Clifton Reid, III
Shelby Sullivan
“Dark Occurrences”  
by C.J.² MS  
Jasmine Armstrong  
Marquis Holmes  
Christopher Nicholls  
Samuel Wright  
Jared Rixter

“Feathers Fade to Black”  
by John Smith  
Jacob Darr  
Jakiha Johnson  
Ikechukwu Opaigbeogu  
Nicholas Shrievess  
Carlene Young

These stories, respectively, chart plots that deal with students who mysteriously find themselves in Russia and need to get home, a woman’s spirit transported through space and time to possess her grandfather’s body and reveal her grandparents’ killer, three friends who find themselves in over their heads when it comes to trying to make some quick cash, school friends hunted and haunted in an eerie forest, and a dystopian adventure set in the not-so-distant future. After a very lively class discussion exploring each story’s literal content, deeper issues, and some interrelated themes—ideas such as mortality, morality, justice, and maturity, all aspects of what the students agreed involved confronting the human condition—they agreed on the title Uncover the Veil. Each story, they discerned, involved some sort of deception, whether a character was being deliberately (and often nefariously) deceptive or whether a character refused to see reality. One thing is true: these stories are wild rides and creative collaborations.

We hope you enjoy these “tales of deception.”
Dude, What Happened?

Cham LaBam

I’m not sure how this happened, suddenly waking up on the edge of a balcony that was hanging off the side of a cliff. The wind blew violently across the treetops almost blowing me off the balcony causing me to rush towards the screen door. It was hard for my body to catch up with my brain leading me to topple over and smash into the screen door.

“Fuck!”

It was hard to gather my bearings after such a crash, but I made it inside the house. I looked around to what seemed to be the den, all the books were mountains themselves rather than having bookshelves. Under a pile, I noticed a foot and rushed over to push the books aside to reveal Jeff underneath.

Jeff, my college roommate and best friend, who I’ve known for who knows how long, was under a pile of books, things he would never pick up to actually read. Somehow, he would find ways around projects without picking up any book. He would rather draw extremely obscene pictures in borrowed books for whoever would get it next. And with this, he’d pass his classes like they were the easiest things in the world, so I guess he has the right to clown around. Although he tends to joke with everything, I’ve tried multiple times to convince him that it’s not always good to joke around so much with relationships since it doesn’t always end well, especially for him. In many instances, I had to help him get over some girl who couldn’t handle his sense of humor.

But right now, there’s no time for reminiscing, I still have to figure out what’s going on. I tried to flip Jeff over onto his back, and when I did, what a sight, both of his eyebrows were shaved off. I had to stifle my laughter as I picked up a book and slapped him with it
to wake him up. I could have used spit, but that would be indecent. After hitting him for the third time, Jeff jerked awake missing me by an inch when he threw a punch.

“Stop flailing and get your ass up, we have to find Morgan and then get out of here,” I said while extending my hand for Jeff to grab, which he didn’t.

“No Sean, just let my lie here for a bit more, we can find Morgan later, it isn’t the end of the world,” was his response, of course. I noticed Jeff only had on rust colored cargo pants spotted with black paint, which I didn’t mind pointing out. “How the hell am I supposed to know how that got there, man?” he retorted as he finally decided to get up.

“OK, so do you want to split up to find Morgan or just find him together?”

“Sean, you should already know where Morgan’s gonna be even if he’s passed out.”

We looked at one another and said in unison, “The bathroom.”

It was easier said than done. There were a countless number of rooms in this mansion, and we had to check each of them. On our side quest, we discovered an S&M dungeon theme in the basement, a game room as the living room, and a room where the walls were covered in Polaroid pictures of family, friends, and events. The place was like a massive modern maze, with trap doors...I wish. There weren’t trapped doors, but there were a few hidden rooms behind things like wardrobes or even walls. Behind a bookshelf was a hallway that led us to a massive bathroom, marble everything, waterfall shower, and a jacuzzi tub. There was Morgan in this empty tub with another dude, both of them naked.

“Every single time, nothing is going to change with this guy,” Jeff complained as he looked the other way. “Next thing you know, he’ll pin one of us under his arm.”

I laughed at the thought. “Maybe this is a sign, you could try something new, or someone,” I said as I gestured to Morgan, whose morning-wood twitched as I made the statement.

“Just wake him up already!”

I took a hold of the shower head and turned on the cold water, spraying Morgan and his mystery man.
Morgan, the first gay best friend I will ever have. He’s known for getting a lot of men with his subtle swagger. Jeff and I can figure out how he does it, it’s as if men just flock to his side, he’s a pimp. Every outing we make, it’s a different guy every time and they don’t seem to mind since most of the time they know what they are in for. So, they never last long, the longest he’s ever been with another guy was for a month, which was somewhat impressive, even for Morgan.

There I go again.

Morgan and his mystery man woke with a scream, flailing around as Jeff did when I first woke him, but this time there were no punches thrown.

“What the hell, Sean?! Couldn’t you just shake me awake like a normal person?” Morgan looked down at himself and noticed he was nude, smiled, and went to grab a towels. He returned to the side of the mystery man and handed him a towel. As they exchanged whispers, I noticed the mystery man’s thick accent that was hard to comprehend. “This is Erik and this is his house, from what he tells me, he had a massive party and we are the only ones who have yet to leave,” as Morgan explained this, he was tracing Erik’s collar bone.

“OK, well where are we?” I asked impatiently, “Because Spring Break isn’t going to last forever.”

I can’t believe something like this happened. Jeff and I exchange glances then we both stared at Morgan who looks back and forth between the two of us. Erik finally took a deep breath and said:

“We’re vin Russia.”

When Morgan’s lover said where we were, I had trouble absorbing what he had said. I had to ask him again.

“What did you just say” I wasn’t sure if I heard right or if my hangover from last night was messing with my hearing.

“Russia, vee are vin Russia,” he said. “And you’re in my house. I came and saved your asses last night.”

Jeff later comes in behind me. Even though he is well aware of Morgan’s homosexuality, it still makes him uneasy to see him in “action” with his boy toys.

“Dude please put some fucking clothes on. Your dick is not the first thing I want to see when I wake up,” Jeff blurted.

“Well, if you don’t like what you see then you can turn your ass
“OK guys. Stop it. This is serious. What do you mean you saved our asses last night? What the hell happened?”

While I asked him that question, I tried to recollect what had happened. How the hell did a party turn out to be a trip to Russia? Me, Jeff, and Morgan were invited to a party on a yacht by these girls from school. It wasn’t hard to say yes, mainly because they were hot. Since we haven’t been at a party almost the majority of that semester, the first get together we heard about we were all in. Besides, Jeff knew one of the girls that invited us.

Jeff, Morgan, and I met up that night and went to the party together. We arrived to the yacht and were greeted by beautiful people, good music, and crazy amounts of food. As we started to mingle amongst the crowd, the yacht started moving and before you know it, about an hour later, we were in an area I didn’t recognize. Usually my common sense would kick in to at least ask to see where we were, but I was too wasted to care. The last thing I remember was being carried off somewhere, then waking up here.

Morgan’s lover finally told us his side of what happened.

“Well, you and your druzya got into some trouble with the Politsiya when you crossed into Russian waters. I kept them from locking you up. All of you were too wasted to do for yourselves so I took you in. My special friend over here,” he looked over to Morgan and winked his eye while biting his bottom lip, “decided that he wanted to continue a private party with me.”

Morgan blushed.

Jeff said “Look, how the hell are we going to get home? We’re stuck in fucking Russia!”

As we sat there and pondered how we were going to get back home, Morgan’s lover said, “I think I know a way, but how badly do you want to get home?”

“Imma do whatever the fuck I gotta do to get home, what about y’all?” Jeff questioned. Morgan and I agreed.

Erik jumped while clapping his hands and replied, “The costumes are waiting in your room. Put them on and meet me back here.”

We got to the room and saw a huge picture of Vladimir Putin
hanging over three boxes with our names on them in cursive. The boxes were red, white, and blue, with a black bow wrapped around them.

Morgan exclaimed, “This reminds me of a Halloween party I went to where my boo and I dressed as naughty butlers!”

Jeff and I exchanged looks and ignored him. The costumes were all black, included a bow tie, a jacket with no buttons, boots, and bikini bottoms. After putting on our costumes, we retreated downstairs. As we headed down, I heard techno music and Russian conversations.

“The voices sound so angry,” I whispered.

Erik met us at the bottom of the stairs. He grabbed Morgan, looked him up and down, spun him around, and kissed him. “You look krasiviy,” Erik says with a smile. Jeff and I stood there feeling uncomfortable as we watched the spit run down their mouths.

“Ugh I feel sick. We didn’t come here for this shit!” Jeff angrily stated while pointing his finger at them.

Morgan whispered something in his lover’s ear. “No one stays here for free, so you are here for my party as exotic dancers. When the guests tell you to do something, do it. Tonight is about their pleasure, not yours. In return, they will give you money and once the three of you reach 33,000 rubles, I will personally give you tickets to fly home tonight,” Erik explained.

“This is some bullshit! I’m out,” Jeff yelled, trying to pull off his clothes.

“You’re not going anywhere, I own you,” Erik said getting in Jeff’s face. “One call and I can have you working the streets of Moscow and they would love an American like you. So the choice is yours.”

“Chill, it isn’t worth it,” I said while rubbing my arm in discomfort.

Jeff pushed him out of his face and irately agreed.

“Get to 33,000 rubles by midnight,” Erik said smirking as he walked away.

Morgan meekly apologized as they joined the party. The floor vibrated under my feet from the music. There were speakers strewn on every wall and on the floor. There was no food, but a bar in every corner of the room. Two tables sat in the middle of the room with
what looked like candy. When I moved closer to the table, it was sprinkled with what looked like ecstasy pills, so I took one to relax. The women were dressed in short dresses and skirts, while the men were dressed in slacks and shirts. Two women grabbed Jeff and Morgan, coaxing them to give lap dances.

Women were pulling me, so I jumped on the table and flexed my pecs as the group went wild. The drug kicked in as they threw wine at my chest and stomach while I felt them trying to drink it off of me. The money flowed everywhere, which encouraged me to do more. I grabbed a chair, sat a woman down and gave her a lap dance. I felt the money sticking to my back. I got up and thanked the women, covered in sweat.

A man told me he enjoyed my show. My vision blurred as he reached over and rubbed my thigh, grazing my dick. I jumped up overwhelmed, it felt good, it must be the ecstasy. The man licked his lips and reached again when I swung on him. A fight broke out as we fell on the floor. I was bashing the man’s head on the ground. Blood was gushing everywhere, but I couldn’t stop. It felt like something snapped in me.

I looked over to see someone grab Morgan’s shoulder to stop him from fighting, and as he jerked around, he cried, “Dad?!”

Morgan fell to the floor wet in what smelled to be sweat and liquor. He widened his eyes to see if the man that he saw was really his father. It was Erik, he dragged Morgan into the nearby hallway and didn’t return. Jeff and I were so high. My eyes burned and I sweated profusely as I tried to dodge and weave through groups of delirious men, swinging fists, and women grabbing for my legs. Jeff, who was following me, was having a tougher time, some of the women reached just high enough to graze his crotch. As he walked on he would hold their gaze as if he and the women were holding raunchy telepathic conversations. Neither him or I were used to this much attention from females so it was a challenge to not indulge. It seemed like the room grew larger as Jeff and I navigated through it; we were trying to get to Morgan. I felt angry, excited, and horny all at the same time, but within those mix of emotions I knew it was time to leave right at that moment.

When we made it to the hallway, Morgan was sitting against the
opposite wall in a fetal position with his head between his legs. As I stumbled over, he looked at me and focused his eyes. “I’m sorry, Sean, for doing this to you guys. I need to stop being so reckless with my decisions.”

Slamming down next to him resting my head on the wall I said, “Dude, what happened? Please don’t tell me you got us here and into this mess.”

Morgan replied, “Yeah, I did, but this was supposed to be a celebration, that’s why Erik throws these parties. The whole theme was me trying to get you two to try something new, maybe bring a little fag out of you. It’s hard being friends with two straight guys.”

Jeff chimed in, still standing, “So what the fuck was the point of bringing us all the way to Russia?”

“See this is what was supposed to happen, we were supposed to get on the cruise, which we did, my friend was supposed to slip you two some sleeping pills so that you could go to sleep, which she did, and I could surprise you when we got here. But earlier you didn’t give me the reaction I was hoping for and you didn’t even remember the crazy party we had last night. Y’all was druuunk, y’all were extremely wasted, y’all was like Chipotle with no sour cream wasted. Eric had to end the party early because of you, you have a temper when you’re under the influence,” Morgan ended with smiling at me.

I didn’t think anything was funny or worth smiling about, I kind of wanted to hit Morgan in his face, but he was being so gay that it would feel like hitting a chick. Jeff, now lying on the hallway floor asks, “So how do we get home?” As soon as Jeff asked that, a nearby door swings open. Erik walks through the door holding our stuff. As he hands us our clothes he commands in his thick Russian accent, “Now, you must go, Politsiya vill be here soon to arrest you. You owe me no debts, I will handle this. Earlier vuzz just an act, ve are good friends who party together; Vy ponimayete?”

“Oh babe I love it when you give commands,” Morgan said lightly and fluttered his eyelashes.

Rolling my eyes at the exchange, I grabbed Morgan by the arm desperately trying to get the hell out of there. Jeff ran by with our stuff almost knocking us over screaming a bunch of incoherent phrases about going home and getting the hell out of Russia. Run-
ning around the house, it was hard trying to find an exit.

“I think we have to go back through the party. It’s the only way
through the front door,” Morgan yells.

Jeff turns looking around the house. “It doesn’t matter how we
leave, I just know we need to get the fuck outta here before Russian
authorities come. If I’m not fit for American jail, I know damn well I
won’t survive here.”

Morgan looks at the door to the right then back at us. “Well,
how bad do you two wanna go home?”

Jeff spins around grabbing Morgan by his collar. “What the
fuck’s up with the double meaning. I swear if this is another ploy to
just bring a little fag out of us, I swear I’m kicking your ass.”

Pushing Jeff away from Morgan I yell, “Hey! We don’t have time
to argue. We need to get outta here now!”

Just as I finish, a bang comes from downstairs along with a
bunch of yelling and screaming. Jeff starts pacing the floor mum-
bling. “Awww fuck! Aww fuck! It’s the Commies it’s the KGB! We
need to get out now.”

Morgan runs to the door and we follow behind him. Jeff closes
the door pushing a dresser in front of it. Morgan opens a window
and points down.

“This is our only way out,” he said. “We need to jump from this
window and into the pool below.” Jeff and I look down then at each
other.

“Are you crazy? Did you have some of those ecstasy pills at the
party?”

Morgan glares at me, “Unless you want to be taken by the Rus-
sians, I suggest you jump.”

Before I could I say anything, Jeff grabbed his stuff and dived
head first out the window. I watched as he dives into the pool. Erik
bursts into the room just before Morgan is about to jump.

“Wait you forgot your plane tickets and you,” Erik points to
Morgan, “You forgot to say goodbye.”

I grab the tickets just as Morgan says, “Sorry, Erik, it’s been real,
but I don’t do goodbyes.” And with that he grabs his stuff and jumps.

Looking down, I see Jeff and Morgan impatiently waiting for
me. I stuff the plastic-bag-rapped tickets into my backpack before
taking a deep breath and jumping into the pool. Entering the water, I can hear the shouts of the Russian authorities as they scramble to catch us. Jeff and Morgan rush to help me out and we run into the night looking for some type of transportation.

Morgan looks at Jeff and me and says, “You have to admit, that this was the greatest Spring Break we have ever experienced. You two should be thanking me,” he says smiling.

Before I can react, Jeff swings at Morgan, punching him in the face. He screams out, “You fucking idiot, you almost got us stranded in Russia because of your twisted version of fun!”

Morgan grabs his face as tears fill his eyes, “I just wanted us all to have some fun and just let go. I didn’t expect all this to happen.”

I watch as Jeff stomps off down the road. “Morgan you went overboard this time. We aren’t kids anymore, this type of stunt has major consequences.”

Morgan looks down, “I know and I’m sorry, it’s just that I wanted us to all have good time.” I pat him on the back, “Listen dude, everything is going to be alright, you know how Jeff is. He just needs to clear his head.”

Morgan smiles and before he can respond he is cut off by the familiar sound of a car honking. Turning around, I see the familiar lights of a car approaching. As the car drives by we see it is a taxi. Jeff pops his head out the of window and chimes, “Hey, I caught us a taxi!” The taxi halts right in front of us and we climb in. The driver has a heavy Russian accent and we can only understand that the ride will be 115 rubles.

Morgan turns to Jeff, “Look, I’m sorry I got us into this mess. I was just trying to have some fun.”

Jeff shrugs his shoulders, “I know, man, it’s been a crazy-ass Spring Break.”

We all laugh recalling events at the party when a ding snaps us back into reality. Looking at each other we realized we never checked our phones. Fumbling through all our stuff, we find our phones. While looking through mine, Jeff yells, “Shit!”

Looking at my phone I see messages upon messages from half of my contacts. Panic sets in, as I look around. On each of our phones are hundreds of pictures and videos of what had happened the entire
trip. Right at that moment we pull up to the airport.

Morgan whispers, “We are in deep shit when we get home.”
JANE HAD SPENT HER ENTIRE CHILDHOOD in the house that was handed down to her parents by her grandparents. From the years of neglect, what was once a beautiful Victorian style mansion in the woods of Long Island is now a rotting stump left prey unrelenting natural elements. Ever since Jane’s parents died when she was eight in a gruesome car crash, she’s never been completely able to move on with her life. After they died, her Uncle Tom, a stockbroker, was instructed by their will to keep the house for Jane until she turned twenty-one. He lived with her for thirteen years until she graduated from college. It was then he retired from his job in New York and moved to the Hamptons. Jane was left in the creepy old house all by herself. Her Uncle Tom visited a few times a year to check on her, but other than that, she lived a pretty solitary life. With her degree in criminology, she worked at the local police department solving cold cases. One case she couldn’t seem to solve was the murder of her grandparents. The 50th anniversary of their death was coming up, and she was planning on forgetting about the case if no other clues were found.

Her grandparents were Joe and Grace Hawkins. They were very kind people who would have done anything for anyone. They were originally from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, but moved to a large mansion on Long Island when Joe got a new job. Grace never understood what her husband did at work, she was just finally happy to be living the lifestyle she dreamed of. Although, some days she would go to greet him and find blood on his suit coat, and other days she would catch him peeking out the window curtains as if someone was outside watching. It was the evening of December 23, 1946, and a thick layer of plump snow had freshly fallen on the willow trees
in the front yard making them scratch against the stone facade of the house. The icy temperatures forced Joe and Grace inside for the night. It was so cold in fact that Joe brought their dog into the basement, which he never did. To heat their massive house they had an enormous stone fireplace that required lots of wood. Joe had just stoked the small crackling fire and realized there wasn’t much wood left. He suited up in his snow clothes, grabbed a wheel barrel, and trekked out through the cold quiet streets down to his secret spot where he had always kept his wood. He always liked chopping wood; it helped him relieve his stress.

As he was heading back up the hill to his house, his neighbor spotted him, came out of his house and called out, “Do you need help? Looks heavy!”

Joe replied, “No thanks, Dan! I just hope I can get back in time for my wife’s chowder!”

Dan laughed and said; “I can hear your music playing all the way down here sometimes! Its great!”

Joe replied, “Yeah, Grace loves that new song ‘White Christmas’ by Bing Crosby!”

Dan chuckled and slowly closed his door. It was the last time anyone had seen either one of Jane’s grandparents. They were mysteriously murdered and their frozen bodies discovered by the local milkman a week later.

Jane never got to meet her grandparents, but felt like her grandfather’s spirit was still in the house. Every once and awhile she’d be able to smell the permeating stench of cigar smoke. The thing that made her creep out the most though was the music that would play when she was alone in her home office. Around Christmas the entire house would be dead silent. Jane would be working a case and all of the sudden she would hear the faint sound of an old song playing, but she would never find a source.

Jane has a problem when it comes to change and believing in things that cannot be explained. Because she’s so pessimistic of the world around her, she rarely leaves the house. Some might consider her to be agoraphobic. She often feels depressed by all the death around her and completely frazzled by how she’s supposed to pay the bills on a home of such magnitude.
It was the fall of 1996 and Jane began seeing a therapist to work through her problems. On her way home from therapy Jane was driving and made a sudden sharp turn. The turn caused her purse to fall on the floor of her car and her stuff spilled everywhere. Jane then began screaming at the top of her lungs in anger. Not in the right mindset, Jane started picking up her stuff off the floor while driving through a long wooded road at 50mph in the dark. All of the sudden she felt a thump under her car and immediately slams on her breaks. She cautiously got out of the car and looked behind it, and saw that she had killed a small dog that had run away with its collar still attached. Crying and still in shock, she heard something rustling in the bushes next to her. A little Yorkshire puppy popped out and started licking the tears from her hands. Feeling responsible for the death of the puppy’s mother, Jane took him and placed him in the inside of her coat pocket to keep warm. The next day she talked to her therapist about the puppy and how she killed its mother. He recommended that she keep the puppy so she wouldn’t feel so lonely all the time. She normally thinks her therapist is the crazy one, but this time she thought, why not? She realized she did have a connection with him since they both lost their parents via car accidents.

Two months had passed and Jane was just beginning to feel a sense normalcy for the first time ever. She had just received a promotion at work that moved her from cold cases to high profile crimes. With her puppy she had named Pumpkin by her side, she was finally able to let go of solving her grandparents murder. Feeling swamped with her new job, Jane lost track of time and rarely knew what day it was. Jane knew she needed a good night sleep so she took some sleeping pills and knocked back a glass of water. She was fast asleep when she started smelling the familiar aroma of cigar smoke. Then, the barking she was just recently able to tune out came back into focus and woke her. As soon as she woke, her eyes and lungs began to burn from all the smoke. All she could hear was a distant Pumpkin barking down at the end of the large hallway and that faint music she always heard around Christmas. Teary eyed, she stumbled out of her bedroom into the hallway that led to the living room which she had assumed was Pumpkin’s whereabouts. As she started down the long hallway through the smoke, Pumpkin’s barking stopped.
Now, all she heard was the pulsating music fading in and out as if someone was turning the volume knob back and forth. This time she could make out the words to the song. “I’m dreaming of a white Christmas, just like the ones I used to know…” She realized that she knew the song, and that it was by Bing Crosby from the 1940s, but she didn’t have a stereo. The tune reverberated off every surface in the house and rattled the wood beams that framed the house. Feeling extremely scared that the house was going to crumble she started to panic. Confused she checked her watch to check the time and saw that it was 11:59pm on December 22. Feeling somewhat shocked that Pumpkin had stopped barking; Jane called out to Pumpkin with no reply. Jane started running down the hall to Pumpkin. As she was running, Pumpkin’s barking returned but this time it was much deeper. Being deafened by the sounds of “White Christmas,” and Pumpkin’s deep barks while being partially blinded by all the smoke, Jane finally made it to the living room. As soon as she entered, everything stopped. She walked over to see if Pumpkin was all right. As she approached she was startled by the music being blasted once again as well as the family’s old grandfather clock bonging. As she reached for Pumpkin, a shock went through her entire body and she became very stiff and began to pass out. Falling to the ground, the words of the music were the only thing she could still hear,

“…I’m dreaming of a white Christmas
With every Christmas card I write
May your days be merry and bright
and may all your Christmases be white….”

After feeling what seemed like all her weight being lifted off of her, it all rushed back on when the bonging of the grandfather clock right next to her started again. She felt paralyzed and couldn’t move or speak. Then all of the sudden her eyes began to flutter open.

The music she just passed out to penetrated her ears once again through the faint crackling of a record playing, which started up right where it left off.

“…I’m dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know  
Where the tree tops glisten and children listen  
To hear sleigh bells in the snow…”

The light reflecting off the bleach white snow in the yard was blinding. She could barely make out little white chunks of snow that were falling from the willow tree onto the perfectly manicured bushes in the front yard. Jane was very confused once again and said in her head, “It was just dark and now its daytime? And when did it snow?” It was then she noticed she was still in the corner of the room, but now in a rocking chair that she’d never seen before. She couldn’t see much, but she could make out the dog right next to her. It was a slightly larger dog, but unfamiliar to Jane. The dog came over and licked her hand affectionately. It was then that Jane became aware of all her surroundings.

While she knew that she was still in her living room, the furniture was not hers. They resembled the way the house had looked in her old family photo albums from the 1940s. It was also around the same time her grandparent’s were mysteriously murdered while they enjoyed listening to a favorite new record after dinner. She had seen the old police report that had few details, and had never been solved. It was then she noticed the sound of pots and pans clanking in the direction of her kitchen, along with the voice of a woman humming to the music. As she got up and headed towards the kitchen, there was the loud bang of a vehicle backfiring, followed by footsteps up the front walkway and a rapid knock at the door. Puzzled, she went back and opened the front door. A man in a white uniform with crisp stitching that read “Falls Creamery” greeted her. As she looked past him she saw a world from a different time period, which mimicked the interior décor of the house. The man held out a large bottle and said, “Good morning, here’s the bottle of heavy cream Mrs. Hawkins ordered yesterday, heard she was making a wicked batch of her famous clam chowder.”

Feeling not totally in control, Jane took the cream and slowly shut the door. She headed over to the hall table and saw pictures of her grandparents wedding as well as her mom and Uncle Tom as small children. She picked up one of the photos of her grandparents
taken on their 25th wedding anniversary and noticed it was taken in the very room she was in. As Jane lowered the picture frame, her focus fell on the mirror directly above the table. The image that reflected back was not of Jane, but of her grandfather Joe.

Jane took a double look in the mirror.

“What’s wrong, Joe?” Grace asked.

Jane heard her grandmother, but she isn’t really paying attention. Fear picked up in her panicked breathing. The rise and fall of her flattened chest frightened her. Joe told Grace “I’ll be right back.”

The voice was not her own. She took a step back. “Joe?” her grandmother called as she moved toward her slowly.

“I’m alright!” Jane said a little too loudly. “I’ll be right back.”

She turned on her heels and walked as slowly as her fragile body would allow. She passed a doorway that she assumed was her bedroom. The next door in the long hallway was the bathroom. It was a smaller more old-fashioned replica of her bathroom. She staggered in. Grabbing the sink, she felt the cold marble beneath her wrinkled hands. Peering into the mirror, she touched her face. With sagging skin and bewilderment in her eyes, her mouth opened in horror. She covered her mouth as a slight whimper erupted in her throat.

“Joe what’s going on? Hurry, dinner will be ready soon.”

“I’ll be right there Grace.” How weird was that? How do your address your grandmother as “Grace?” Jane splashed her face with bitterly cold water to try to wake up from this dream. When nothing happened, Jane walked over to her bedroom that was completely different and fell onto the bed. Staring at the ceiling for a good twenty minuets, she tried to ponder what was happening.

It was getting dark and colder as dinnertime approached, Jane headed down stairs for dinner with her grandmother. When she walked into the kitchen, the smell of the clam chowder made her very hungry. Grace instructed Joe to bring the dog inside from the cold and make sure the fire was stoked.

Jane replied, “The dogs already inside.”

Jane headed into the living room to check on the fire, which was almost out. She then went to the hall closet and put her grandfathers snow clothes on, and headed down the icy path to the woodpile she had always used. She forgot to bring a wheel barrel so she was only
able to carry a few pieces of wood. This made it so Jane could take a shortcut and climb the wooded hill, which was shorter, but bypass all the neighbors’ houses. As Jane came back inside the house and took off her gear, she carried the three wood pieces over and laid them in the fireplace. By this time it was dark outside and it was time for dinner. Jane joined Grace at the table, and they prepared to say grace. Jane let her grandmother take the reins because she isn’t that religious and doesn’t really feel comfortable at the moment. After a very silent dinner, Jane did the dishes and went upstairs to get ready for bed.

While in the bathroom brushing her teeth she heard Grace shouting about listening to “White Christmas.” She stopped brushing her teeth to listen to what she was saying when, the song started up once again. It was then Jane heard someone making their way toward the bathroom. Jane then heard the kitchen door fly open with a loud cry from Grace. Footsteps of one…no two people ran in. Who are they? Grace cried out once again. Jane quickly froze. Jane’s grandmother eagerly snuck into her bedroom closet. While the burglars searched around the house for whatever they were looking for, Jane quickly ran to Grace’s side as fast as her legs would carry her, while being as sneaky as possible. The footsteps stopped. There was silence throughout the small house. The only sound heard was the silent sobbing of her grandmother and the sound of “White Christmas” playing in the background. Jane saw Grace kneeling on the floor as the tears ran down her face. Feeling her warmth and strength through her hands. Suddenly the records volume was turned up. Her senses were diminished. There were faint whispers coming from the opposite end of the hallway where they once stood. Silently Jane placed her hand over her grandmother’s mouth. Jane directed Grace to stay quiet in the closet as she began to go towards the bed. Seeing the fear in her eyes Jane decided to protect her with her life. After all, this was her grandmother.

Crawling to the side of the bed, Jane found a small box hidden under the bed. Lifting the lid off of the box, Jane heard the footsteps approaching. Reaching into the box, she found a small rifle. She had never shot a gun before. Being on her knees for such a long time, she suddenly felt all the pain. The adrenaline that guided her into
the bedroom had somehow vanished. The footsteps presented themselves as a man and a woman. Jane couldn't see the faces. Hearing the man's voice, he seemed to be in control, he commanded the woman to search the bedroom. Jane's eyes drifted to the closet door, hoping her grandmother kept as quiet as possible. She slowly slid under the bed. Hearing the woman barge through the doors, Jane held the gun to her chest. For some reason she knew this was the end.

“I can't find it!” the woman said.

“Keep looking, I know its here,” the man replied. “Look everywhere. They said it would be here so I know it's here. What's that noise?”

Jane listened hard as she could and tried to emerge herself from the bed and shoot the intruders before losing her grandmother forever.

“Check the closet!” Looking from underneath the bed, Jane saw the back of the man's head as he opened the closet door. “Look at her, she's so helpless. Kill her!”

The woman followed the man's command and began shooting. Jane saw her grandmother murdered right in front of her very eyes. She shot at the bed but the bullets were passing Jane. She looked out again to see her grandmother being dragged out from the closet with a trail of blood flowing from a shot to the head.

“No!” Jane screamed out.

Startled by her presence, the man and woman stopped. Jane looked up and saw the man.

He said, “Is that you? Joe? Is that you?”

Sobbing, Jane replies, “I don't know you.”

The man replies, “Oh, yes you do. It's your old friend Jimmy! Remember? One of the guys you fucked over! Where's our fucking money?”

Jane tried to get to her grandmother's side, but couldn't quick enough. Jimmy shot him in the neck. Holding his neck until she loses all of her strength, Jimmy comes over next to Joe; “You don't mess with the mob!” This was it. She had failed. There was nothing she could do. It all felt like a horrible nightmare. But it was a nightmare Jane would never wake up from.

Darkness. Then as the extreme pain she felt all throughout
her body lessened she then saw light. She looked up to see what appeared to be clouds and bright warm sun. As she walked toward the light it suddenly got warmer. She looked down at her feet and saw what appeared to be fluffy soft cotton. She was gliding over it as if she didn’t have any weight. As she got closer to the light she heard a soft deep whisper in her left ear. It said, “The opportunity is only given to those who are special, you have a purpose and I have the power. I’m going to send you back now and I want you to take advantage. Close your eyes and LOOK UP!”

All of a sudden Jane was right back where she had begun, what seemed to have been just minutes ago but this time she was looking at her grandfather staring in the mirror. This time she got to see what actually happened by observing. She watched her grandfather walk in the room as he repeated the same process that she had just completed, without all the drama. Jane watched him go to the door happily and take the cream from the blonde haired, blue-eyed deliveryman and set it on the table. He then took the cream to his wife in the kitchen and kissed her on the cheek. She saw him go out to get firewood, but this time he took a wheel barrel. But while he was getting the wood, Jane thought she saw a locked door under the woodpile. Being an observer, she couldn’t investigate any further. She saw him chat with the neighbor on the way back from getting wood like the report had said. She also watched as Joe and Grace told jokes to each other and laughed uncontrollably, which made Jane giggle a little also. After dinner he got up and put on their favorite song. He bopped to the beat and then went upstairs to grab his favorite hat to dance around the living room with. As he walked up the stairs Jane followed, unseen of course, she watched him go into the bedroom, grab his hat, then run into the bathroom to check himself in the mirror. He turned toward the bathroom door and then paused after hearing a loud slam and his wife scream with terror. Jane watched as her grandfather grabbed his gun and then peeked down stairs to see who had invaded his home. As he slowly crept down two stairs and stopped, fleeing back into his bedroom Jane followed though it was impossible to be harmed, it felt as though fear had overwhelmed her in a way where she didn’t know to make a move or not. She stopped and thought about what the mysterious voice had said and then went
forward past her grandfather down the steps. She saw a tall dark-haired tan man with large chains around his neck and a small-framed woman in a white dress with an ankle bracelet that caught Jane’s eye that read CB. They had rifles in their hands and her grandmother was crying for mercy. Wondering why this wasn’t the same scene she had witnessed just minutes before Jane looked around, looked out the window, and saw a skinny blonde-haired man who seemed oddly familiar standing at the back door keeping watch.

Jane stared at him for moments and realized “Famous Clam Chowder?” it was the delivery man who had just moments before dropped off the cream. Yet why? Why is this happening?” She paused, and saw the two robbers heading upstairs with her grandmother in hand yelling, “Where is it?”

Crying and overwhelmed, Grace broke loose and ran. Shots were fired and missed as the intruders ran up the stairs chasing her and cursing! “Its not in this damn house!” said the woman.

Stunned Jane didn’t want to follow because she knew already what was going to happen upstairs, she had felt it before so she stood her ground watching the blonde-haired man precisely. She watched him stand by the door and then suddenly begin rummaging through the cabinets. He stopped after finding a brown piece of paper. Jane being curious as to what he was doing, read what was on the paper also. The milkman immediately folded up the paper and ran out of the house and drove away. Three shots were then fired and the two robbers came down the steps.

“Where’s milkman?” the woman asked.
“What?” replied the man sweating profusely.
They ran out the door, where there was no car to be found.
“Now what?” screamed the woman.
“Shut up!” he replied.

As he began to panic the man started talking to himself while running away from the scene. The woman behind him yelling “Jim? Don’t leave like this! Where can we go? We don’t have anything and the combination to Joe’s bank account was on the back of the family recipe.”

“I don’t know,” responded Jim. They headed through the woods past a giant boulder in the direction of the woodpile. A few minutes
after they had passed the woodpile, Clara started yelling, “The boss is going to kill us! We needed that money and now we are dead!”

Jim yelled back, “You not coming with me as extra weight! I’m just going to tell the boss you took the money and ran.” Shots were fired and the small women lie in the middle of the woods bleeding from her mouth. Jim ran into the night as Jane followed behind him slowly.

Jim looked back to see if Clara moved, when she didn’t he continued to run farther lost in darkness. As he ran, Jane watched him stumbled on a tree branch and fall into a hole in the ground. Jane went over to investigate, when she saw that he had fallen into a cave and hit his head. With the amount of blood, Jane soon began to realize he was dead.

Back in the house Jane stood perfectly still, her mouth open in bewilderment her instincts kicked in and she went to phone the police when she heard voices. “I found the combination, but Jim didn’t tell me where the safe was,” a man said.

Jane couldn’t make out the voices, so she quietly went and hid and listened as the conversation went on.

“Why didn’t you get the location of the safe before? How did you think you were going to open the safe without the combination?”

The man scowled. “I didn’t think Jim would go crazy and start shooting. We were supposed to be in and out.”

As Jane listened on she realized the milkman came back to see if there were any clues where the safe could be. The other man’s voice was still unrecognizable to her. She wanted to call the police, but she then realized she couldn’t affect anything this time.

“Hey did you here that?”

“Here what?”

“The noise coming from the living room.”

“Man, you’re always paranoid, that’s why I didn’t want to bring you over here” the milkman said in a shaky voice, but he was actually too scared of the man to say no.

“Whatever, I know I heard something coming from the other room,” the other man said, but the milkman ignored him and continued to look for any clues to where the safe could be.

Seconds later there was rustling in the direction of the living
room. As the men approached, they heard breathing coming from a door nearby. They slowly turned the knob and pulled open the door. Joe and Grace’s dog jumped out and bit the faces of both men. Both blinded by the wounds on their face, they ran out of the house, jumped in the car, and drove off.

The house became extremely quite as Jane sat there in her grandfather’s chair taking in all she had just witnessed. All of the sudden the grandfather clock started to bong once more, this time it made the whole room go white. When she woke up she came to she realized she was back in her own living room with Pumpkin next to her. She tried to put together all the events that just occurred and realized she knew who her great grandparents’ killers were and felt at peace. Jane could hardly believe that she saw the killer was someone so close to her grandparents, but without proof the murder will remain unsolved.

In the weeks following Jane’s journey through time to solve her grandparent murder, she finally felt like she was complete. She began making friends and getting out of the house more often. But when she told her therapist what had happened, he told her she dreamed the whole thing and that it was her mind helping her move on and finally solve the case. Jane grew to accept that the events that unfolded didn’t really happen and that it was from an unhealthy combination of Pumpkin’s incessant barking, sleeping pills, and lack of sleep.

One day while sitting outside on the porch, Pumpkin began pulling on the bottom of Jane’s pants. Jane took this as a sign of Pumpkin wanting to go out for a walk, so she took him down to the woods. Pumpkin began getting very excited and started to try to pull Jane. Pumpkin’s leash snapped and he got away. Jane ran after him, chasing him all over the woods. It seemed like Pumpkin was on a scent, which Jane thought was a rabbit. As she caught up to him, she took a few deep breaths and said, “Pumpkin! What are you doing?” He then started digging in a patch of weeds a couple feet off the path. He seemed persistent that he find whatever he was looking for. Just as Jane started to yell at Pumpkin for getting dirty, She spotted what looked to be a bone in the dirt. She immediately pushed Pumpkin to the side and started digging with him. As she uncovered the human body, she saw something shinny on the person’s ankle that caught
her eye.

She said to herself, “It can’t be!”

But it was. It was the girl in the white dress who was shot and left in the woods fifty years ago. To double check, she turned the ankle bracelet over and it read CB. She realized she wasn’t crazy and now there was proof. As she walked back home with Pumpkin, she took a break at her grandfather’s woodpile he had loved so much. She them remembered that when she was observing her grandfather collecting wood the night of his murder, she had seen a locked door under the woodpile. Feeling very eager to check it out, she began rolling each log off the pile one by one. As she removed the final log, she could see the outline of something buried under the dirt. Excitedly kicking off the dirt, she found a giant metal door with a lock on it. It required a key; the only key Jane had on her was her house key. She tried it, and it worked. As she pulled up the giant metal door, a dark vertical tunnel with a ladder was revealed. She pulled out her flashlight and climbed down into it.

Inside was a small bunker with a door. The door needed a combination to open and Jane didn’t know what it could possibly be. Until, she remembered that the milkman had stolen a code off the back of her family’s recipe for clam chowder. She remembered the digits and said them out loud as she remembered them and turned the dials, “8-2-7-7-1-0-9-4-3-5.” She heard a click and the massive door creaked open. She shined her flashlight inside and revealed millions of dollars stacked up to the ceiling.

Jane finally realized why everything happened the way it did.
In Too Deep
My name is Jake Edward Brown. I was born and raised in the suburbs of New Jersey. I come from a middle class family that does not have much to be proud of. My life story is not great. It’s just an ordinary one. I am not living the American dream that my parents always talked of. They say that dreams do come true, but I have yet to see that happen. They also say that stories have an ending, but I am not quite sure how mine will end. In fact this one begins as the summer ends.

As the sunlight faded from across the horizon, indicating the last day of summer vacation, and the start of a new school year the next day. I was officially a high school senior, but there were so many unknown things that I would have to face, but the most stressful thing was how I would pay for college. You can say I kind of wasted my summer doing pointless things, with people that were stuck in the same predicament as me. One of those people happens to be my best friend, Thai, who I have known ever since I was a little kid. He was like the brother that I never had. Without him it would have been an uneventful and unmemorable summer vacation.

As the night approached, I began to pack my school bag for what seemed was going to be the start of a long school year. I was anxious like every kid is for their first day of school. The phone sitting on my dresser rang, it was my girlfriend Melissa calling, probably to see what I was up to. I picked up the phone.

“Hello.”

“Hey, what’s up? What are you up too?” Melissa asked.

“Not much, just getting my stuff ready for school tomorrow”.

“OK cool, I still have to do that, but umm I called to tell you that I kinda found a way to make some quick money.”
“So, you found a job?” I asked.
“I guess you can say that, I’ll show you what I mean tomorrow,” she replied. Not knowing what she was talking about I decided that I would wait till tomorrow to see what exactly she meant.
“OK cool, well I am about to go to sleep, so I’ll see you to tomorrow then.”
She replied, “Goodnight.”
I hung up the phone and placed it back on to my dresser. I was anxious to find out what she meant. Maybe she could be able to get me a job as well, and maybe a new pair of sneakers that didn’t have holes in them.
“I can’t wear these to school tomorrow,” I said to myself as I shook my head in embarrassment.

When I woke up the next morning, I did not feel any less anxious or less stressed. In fact, it was even worse. Everyone says senior year is so great, but how can that possibly be true if I did not have a clear future plan? I rushed around the house gathering everything I needed and finally leaving for school. Melissa and I met behind the dumpsters in the parking lot at about 7 am.
“Look,” she said as she shoved something into my hands. I looked down to see a tiny clear plastic baggie filled about halfway with white powder.
“What is this?”
Her face was lit in a mischievous grin. “Try some,” she insisted. “What is it?” I repeated.
She grabbed the baggie, opened it, scooped some of the white powder up with her long finger nail, and snorted it up her left nostril.
“Melissa!” I shouted.
She put her finger to my lips, “Shut up.”
I stared at her.
“Do you even know how dangerous this is? This is your idea of making quick money? Why, so you can feed your addiction?” I didn’t even wait for an answer. Instead I just walked away.
“Jake!” She called after me. I didn’t turn around and headed to my first class.
“What a crazy day this has already been,” I said to Thai.
He laughed. “What’s up?”
“I’ll tell you later” I shook my head. “I don’t even want to think about it right now.”

“Cool, I have something to tell you, too,” he replied.

Our teacher began talking so I attempted to pay attention. Of course, I couldn’t because my girlfriend was outside blowing lines of cocaine. Who would believe me? Probably no one considering Melissa had always been the one to try her best and want good grades. She was always the perfect child, and now she’s blowing coke?

“Mr. Brown, am I interrupting you?” I was bolted back to life by my teacher.

“Uh, sorry sir.” He glared at me.

Soon the bell rang and class was over. As I walked to the bathroom, I still couldn’t believe what Melissa was doing to herself. All these years that I had known her and not once did she show signs of unhappiness or tension in her life. Now all of a sudden senior year she wants to start doing drugs?! Leaving the bathroom I decided to go and meet up with Thai for lunch. I was curious to find out what he had to tell me.

I spotted Thai in the crowded hallway. He was already on his way to the cafeteria but he was talking to Melissa. I caught up with them.

“Hey! Thai and Melissa! Wait up!” I yelled.

I decided not to tell him about how I was feeling about Melissa just yet because she was there. So I just decided to keep it to myself.

“So Thai, you had a story to tell me?”

Thai gave Melissa a look, shook his head and said, “Yea we both do”.

I was confused, but didn’t let it show. At this point I just wanted to know what’s up. But just as he was about to tell me the late bell rang for our last class.

Melissa jumped up, “I can’t be late! I already skipped third.”

She ran down the hallway yelling that she would see us later on. Thai got up too. I stopped him.

“Hey, what’s up with you and Melissa?” I asked.

He brushed me off and said, “I’ll just tell you later. Bye.”

After school, I couldn’t find Thai or Melissa. I didn’t want to miss my bus so I decided to go home and meet up with them later. When I got home I tried to call Thai, but he wasn’t answering, so I
decided to stop by his house.

As I got closer to Thai’s house I saw him and Melissa standing at his front door talking. Then I saw a black car pull up and they hopped in. When they drove off, I hid behind the bush so that they wouldn’t see me. I just knew something wasn’t right, so I stole the neighbor’s bike and followed the car down the street.

After about ten minutes the car finally stopped. It pulled into the drive way of this old looking house that had a lot of noise coming from it. I hopped off the bike and hid behind another bush. Melissa and Thai got out of the car with a man. I stepped to my right try and get a better view. I heard a branch crack beneath my feet and as I looked down at the ground someone grabbed me dragged up the stairs and into the house. I was so scared I didn’t know what to do or think. While I was being dragged down the hallway all I could see were people in the kitchen cooking and it didn’t look like a hot meal. People were laid out on the couches just staring at the ceiling, while others were swaying their bodies back and forth as if they were in a trance.

They dragged me downstairs and threw me on the floor in front of a huge desk. As I was lying on the ground trying to pick myself up, I was soon surrounded by feet, familiar feet, it was Melissa and Thai helping me up. Thai had my hands in a hold behind my back while Melissa whispered very hard in my ear: “What are you doing here?! You’re not supposed to be here!”

Melissa just acted as if he didn’t know me.

There was a huge fat man sitting behind the desk with the man that I saw earlier standing behind him.

He looked at Thai and said “Do you know this boy?” in a harsh and firm voice.

Thai said “Well, uhh…”

The man cut him off and yelled, “You know I don’t like to have surprise visitors in my home, especially when you’re on the job!”

Thai looked down at the floor and said “I’m sorry sir; I didn’t know that he was even following me.”

I shouted at Thai, “You told me you had something to tell me, so I stopped by your…”

The man cut me off and looked at Thai. “You mean to tell me
that I was nice enough to let you into my home and work for me?!
Hell, I even let your little coked out girlfriend work for me, too!”
“Her’s MY girlfriend!” I yelled.
“SHUT UP!!” He told me. I got quiet.
All of the sudden shooting noises were coming from upstairs.
One of the body guards ran down the steps.
“Boss, Deuces was hit! We’re being ambushed!”
“Dammit!” the fat man yelled.
Thai ran out the backdoor and me and Melissa followed. But as
soon as we ran out we saw people shooting. It was crazy! I’ve never
been so scared in my life! That’s when I knew that Thai and Melissa
were into to something serious and so was I! We were all in deep.
“What do we do now?” Melissa asked.
“We gotta stay calm,” said Thai.
“Stay calm?!” I yelled. “We could die out here!”
“Just follow me,” Thai said.
Thai ran around the side of the house and Melissa and I fol-
lowed closely. Suddenly bullets began to fly in our direction
“THEY SAW US!” yelled Melissa.
“Get down!” I said to Melissa.
Seeing no way out, we ran back into the house. We ran into the
fat man from earlier, who was holding a large duffle bag.
“What do you want us to do, Boss?” asked Thai.
“Take this!” Boss harshly yelled as he handed Thai a gun.
Thai grabbed the gun and got into a defensive stance. With Boss
in the front we advanced out of the house. We ran to an all black
Lexus truck and jumped in. Boss threw the bag into the passenger
seat and pulled off. Looking back I saw a black van tailing us.
“They’re following us!” I yelled.
“SHIT,” said Boss as he sped up.
“I got it, Boss!” Thai said as he rolled the window down, stuck
his upper body out of the window, and began to shoot at the van. The
van swerved to avoid the bullets. A bullet went through the wind-
shield on the drivers side and the van swerved to the left and hit a fire
hydrant, causing water to shoot into the air.
“YEAH!” Thai screamed as he sat back down in his seat.
We noticed Boss nervously looking around for something. We
pulled up to an old dirty desolate house. Boss grabbed the duffle bag and headed into the house, Thai followed him. Melissa and I stayed in the car and just stared at the house. Seconds later we heard gun shots and then Thai came running out of the house holding the bag. “Come on!” he yelled to us.

We got out of the car and ran behind him. As we ran down the street we heard Boss yell, “You are dead!” After running for about ten minutes, Melissa said, “We need to stop, I’m about to die.”

“What do we do now?” I asked.
“I have a friend that lives not too far from here,” Melissa said.
“Cool, let’s go then,” said Thai.
“Wait, what’s in the bag?” I asked.
“Nothing,” Thai said.
Not trusting him I grabbed the bag and threw it into a sewer hole. Thai didn’t get angry and just kept walking. Thai and I followed Melissa to a park. We walked through the park for about five minutes.

“Her house is across the street,” said Melissa.

Melissa ran across the street and rang the doorbell. We impatiently stood there for three minutes and no one answered the door.

“Someone is home!” Melissa shouted.

A woman opened the door and said “Melissa, what are you doing here?”
“I just wanted to stop by and say hi.”
“Hi, now what are doing here,” the woman said with a little edge in her voice.
“I just wanted to pay you a surprise visit, that’s all,” said Melissa.
“Well I don’t like surprises.”
“Come on guys,” said Melissa as she pushed past the woman and entered the house. Thai and I looked at each other and then followed Melissa into the house.

“Who are your friends Melissa?” asked the woman.

Melissa was silent so I introduced me and Thai. We all sat down in the living room and I noticed that Melissa was staring a hole into the woman, who had yet to disclose her identity. After a couple more minutes of awkward silence, Melissa finally spoke.
“You don’t seem too enthused to see me,” she said to the woman.

The woman directed her attention to Melissa and replied, “You show up here unannounced in the middle of the night and you bring company and you expect me to jump for joy?”

“I didn’t say you had to jump for joy, but you could have at least hugged me or something,” said Melissa as her voice cracked and tears welled up in her eyes.

Thai and I just sat there in silence wondering what the hell was going on. Not seeming to be affected by Melissa’s tears, the woman replied nonchalantly, “Melissa you and I don’t have that kind of relationship and you know it.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” asked Melissa raising her voice.

The woman stood and replied, “It means exactly what I said.”

The woman left the room and Melissa started after her, but I grabbed her by the arm and said, “Would somebody mind telling me what the hell is going on here?”

“None of your business,” said Melissa.

“What do you mean none of my business. I almost got killed because of you, so somebody better tell me what’s going on!”

Melissa jerked her arm away from my grip and said, “I don’t have to tell you a damn thing!”

Before I could react the woman came back into the room and said, “Melissa, for the last time what are you doing here?”

Melissa took a deep breath, looked around the room and replied, “I got into some trouble and I thought I’d be able to count on my mother to help me.”

“Mother?” Thai and I said in unison.

The woman just stared at Melissa.

Melissa continued, “I just need a place for me and my boyfriend to crash for the night.”

Thai jumped up and said, “What about me?!?”

Melissa looked him up and down and asked, “What about you?”

“Fuck you, you junkie bitch,” Thai screamed as he got in Melissa’s face.

“Fuck you, Thai, we wouldn’t even be in this mess if it weren’t for you!” screamed Melissa.
I stepped in between them, “Whoa, man calm down.”
I turned my attention to the woman and said, “Mam, would you mind if the three of us stayed here for the night while we figure things out?”
“One night and then you’re out!” the woman stated firmly.
I sat down on the couch and put my face into my hands and just shook my head. I couldn’t believe the situation that I was in. First, I find out that my girlfriend is a coke head, then I end up in the middle of drug war, and now I was sitting in the house of a woman who may or may not be Melissa’s mother. I heard footsteps and looked up to see the woman entering the room holding three pillows and three blankets.
“Here,” she said as she sat the pillows and blankets on the coffee table, “you guys can sleep on the couch.”
I stood and said, “Thank you.”
The woman turned to leave the room. When she reached the doorway, Melissa spoke, “Lorrine,” finally revealing the woman’s name.
The woman stopped in her tracks.
“Thanks,” said Melissa.
The woman disappeared without acknowledging Melissa’s gratitude. Too drained to do anything else, I kicked my shoes off, grabbed a pillow and a blanket, and found a comfortable spot on the couch. I felt a familiar frame lay next to me and opened my eyes to see Melissa snuggling up to me. I didn’t protest even though I wanted to, I had no energy for a fight with Melissa. I closed my eyes and drifted into the peaceful darkness of sleep.
I woke up to the smell of food and the sounds of pots and pans clanking. I tried to move, but I felt someone pull me back. I looked and saw that Melissa was still sleeping peacefully next to me. I looked to see if Thai was still asleep and saw that he was. Not wanting to wake either of them, I gently removed Melissa’s arm from my waist and slid down on the couch until I could get up without disturbing her. I stood up and stretched my body. As I was stretching, my stomach started to growl and I tried to remember the last time that I had eaten anything. I followed the noises and smells to the kitchen. I found the woman from yesterday standing in front of the stove flip-
ping pancakes. I cleared my throat to make my presence known. She turned around and smiled,

“Good morning,” she said.

“Good morning, mam, do you mind if I use your bathroom?” I asked.

“Sure, down the hall to your right. And, please, call me Lorrine,” she said.

“OK, thanks Lorrine,” I said as I headed to the bathroom.

When I emerged from the bathroom I found Thai, Melissa, and Lorrine sitting in the kitchen eating and watching the morning news.

Lorrine looked up from her plate and said, “Your plate is in the microwave.”

“OK thanks,” I replied as I went into the kitchen.

I sat down, started to eat, and directed my attention to the small television in the corner of the room

“Breaking news, local drug kingpin Eugene ‘Boss’ Harris was killed during a raid last night.”

Melissa and Thai dropped their forks and listened intently.

“The authorities received an anonymous tip informing them that Harris had arrived at his stash house in Teterboro at about 12a.m. this morning. Reports state that Harris was fatally shot in his chest three times. We will have more on this story as it develops.”

I looked at Melissa and Thai and asked, “Is that the guy from yesterday!”?

They smiled and nodded their heads.

“So can we go home now?” Melissa asked Thai.

“I guess so,” Thai replied.

“I still want to know how the hell you two get involved with that guy in the first place,” I said.

Thai took a deep breath and said, “It started out as just a one-time thing. I made a drop off and he gave me $200 and he told the next time I could make more, so I did it a couple more times. Then I brought Melissa in and it kind of started to spiral out of control.”

“So, why didn't you get out then?” I asked.

“I couldn't, we couldn't, we were in too deep and then you showed up at the stash house and shit got crazy. Melissa wasn't even supposed to tell you anything,” Thai said as he shook his head from
Melissa finally spoke, “You seemed really stressed about money so I figured it would help if we brought you in.”
“Your involved with drugs?” Lorrine asked Melissa.
“Like you care,” Melissa replied as she rolled her eyes.
“I do care, I’m your mother.”
“Since when, you gave me up remember?”
“Yes, I remember, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t care about you,” Lorrine said as a tear fell from her left eye.
“You didn’t seem to care much last night,” said Melissa.
“You caught me off guard, I’m still trying to figure out how to have a relationship with you Melissa,” said Lorrine in apologetic tone.
“Wait,” I said, “so your folks aren’t your real parents?”
“No they’re my foster parents,” Melissa replied.
I thought about my parents who must have been worried sick about me.
“Speaking of parents, Lorrine do mind if I use your phone to call mine,” I asked.
“No, not at all,” she said as she slid her cordless phone across the table.
I picked up the phone and went into the living room for some privacy.
The phone didn’t even ring twice before my mother picked up.
“Hey Mom,” I said.
“JAKE, thank God. Frank, he’s OK,” she said. “Honey where are you?”
I explained the situation from beginning to end and when I finished to my surprise she didn’t yell or scream.
“Sweety, someone from the admissions office at Rutgers called yesterday and said if you keep your grades up that they can offer you a full scholarship!”
“WHAT?” I said as I began to cry.
“Jake, just tell me where you are so I can come and get you,” she said as she started to cry, too.
I asked Lorrine for the address and gave it to my mom.
“OK, your father and I are on our way. Just stay there.”
“Ok, Mom, I’ll see you when you get here.”
ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO, there was a professor who wanted to take his class on a field trip to the Science Center. It was rainy and there was a flood watch, but Professor Smith was determined to take his class on this trip.

“I better take a short cut so we can get there quicker,” says Professor Smith. “I absolutely hate to be late.”

The rain begins to come down harder, and the road becomes slippery. Professor Smith tries to keep the bus on the road, but it becomes increasingly difficult. The rain pounds the windows and they start to fog up. The tires make a loud screeching noise, and the bus goes off the road and slides down a muddy hill. The students scream and Professor Smith tries to calm everyone down.

“We’re gonna die!” shouts one student.
“Oh God please help us!” shouts another.

Suddenly the bus stops and all the students fall forward.

“Is everybody okay?” shouts the Professor as he tries to stand.
“We’re okay,” the students answer.
“Everyone stay here, I’m going to see how far off we are from the main road.”

As Professor Smith leaves, the students look out the bus windows to try to see where he is going, but it’s difficult to see him out of the cracked windows.

“He better come back,” says Ashley.

A couple hours go by and it begins to get dark.

“I wonder where he is,” says Michelle.

The temperature drops at an alarming rate. Since the bus broke down, there was no heat and no light.

“We were supposed to get to the Science Center by noon, it’s
now seven o’clock,” yells out one student.
“Maybe we should go look for him,” says Kenneth.
“No, Professor Smith said stay here,” exclaims another student.
“He could be dead, and if he’s dead then we’re dead,” cries out Max. “We have no food, no water, and no professor, all we have is a broken down bus.”

The other students look at him as if he is crazy, but four other students agree that they need to leave the bus. “Maybe we can find a nearby cave to sleep in for the night,” says Michelle. So Kenneth, Michelle, Max, Ashley, and Tamera climb out of the bus and head deeper into the woods.

“Professor, professor!” yelled Kenneth.
“Can you hear us?!?” yelled Tamera with tears running down her face and her body shivering.
“Don’t worry we’ll find him,” whispered Kenneth.

As the group of students walked deeper into the woods it gets darker. The temperature has dropped even more. The wind was blowing a little harder. As they walked, Ashley saw something white in the deep dirty brown grass.

“Hey you guys, check this out,” said Ashley.
She pulled up a white ID card out the grass.
“What is it?” asked Max.

Ashley lifted the ID card high in the air for everyone to see. The bottom of the ID card was covered in the blood.

“Holy Shit, holy shit is that the professor’s ID card? We’re dead, we’re fucking dead,” says Max.
“Calm down, we have to stay calm,” said Michelle.
Max looks all around him. “Listen, we are out in the middle of nowhere. For all we know the professor is dead,” he said.

“Wait we don’t know that yet. All we have is this ID card,” Ashley points out.
“Ashley, listen to me he’s dead we have to get out of here,” said Max.

“No. I’m not leaving without the professor,” said Tamera.
“Do whatever the hell y’all want, but I’m getting my black ass out of here!” screamed Max and he left the group.

Max was trying to find the main road that will lead him back
to the bus. As he walked through the trees, he pulled out a half of a blunt from his pocket and smoked it. A few seconds later, he saw a little girl skipping towards him. She was wearing a white dress and her hair was pulled into two long ponytails. As she got closer to Max, her body completely disappeared, then she reappeared, then disappeared again. As Max was looking around, the little girl reappears right in front of him.

“What the...,” Max stammers.

“You have to go, you have to leave now,” the little girl cries out. “You and your friends need to leave now before she wakes.”

“Before who wakes?” Max questioned.

“Please just leave,” said the weeping little girl.

Max ran back through the woods where he came from.

“You guys, hey you guys, where are you?” says Max.

“Max, Max over here!” yelled Michelle.

Michelle and Ashley were standing out in front of a cave.

“Kenny and Tamera went into the cave looking for the professor,” says Ashley.

“Listen we have to get the hell out of here now!” says Max.

“What are talking about?” says Michelle.

“There’s something out here, c’mon we have to go. A little girl told me that something bad is going to happen if we don’t leave right now,” says Max pacing back and forth biting his fingernails.

“What little girl?” Ashley snickers.

Inside the cave, Kenneth and Tamera are walking down the long dark cave. “Professor, professor!” yells Tamera.

“Do you feel that?” says Kenneth. “On the walls, let me see your cellphone I need some light.”

On the wall, they saw newspaper articles taped to the cave. On the newspapers were pictures of little girls who had been missing and a picture of a man who was accused of being a molester. The newspaper read that the molester was never arrested, even though one of the mothers had proof of him molesting and killing her young daughter.

“Wow, I wonder if this bastard was ever caught?” says Kenneth.

“Hey look at this” said Tamera. Tamera stoops down and finds an old dirty white dress with stains all over it. “Kenny I think this
dress belonged to one of those little girls. That bastard killed her out here. Look let's find the professor and get out of here.”

“Wait what the hell is that?” says Kenneth.

He held up the cellphone to try to shine some light in front of him. He saw a shadowy figure walking slowly towards them. The figure was getting closer and closer, then he saw a woman with long black hair, gray skin, barefoot, wearing a long tan dress with red spots on the shoulder and torso. Her neck bent to the side towards her left shoulder.

“Stay back or I’ll shoot,” says Kenneth.

The woman was still walking slowly with her right arm extending in front of her.

“What is that she's holding?” says Tamera.

Kenneth looks and saw the woman is dragging a long sharp axe behind her that had blood all over it. Ahhhhhhhrrrr, she moaned.

“Let’s get the fuck out of here!” says Kenneth.

Tamera and Kenneth ran like a bat out of hell out the cave. As they got out the cave, Ashley says, “What happened, what happened?”

Kenneth yells” we’re leaving ... now!”

Ashley was confused until she looks at the cave and saw something walking towards them. All the students are running for their lives away from the cave with that woman still walking chasing them with her bloody axe. As the whole gang was moving, Michelle took a quick look behind her to see if the monster lady was still chasing them. She tripped over a large rock and badly sprained her ankle.

“Help me, help me please!” Michelle cried out.

The gang doesn’t hear her because they’re still running. When they stopped Ashley says “where is Michelle? Oh my god, where is Michelle?”

“She was right behind us,” says Kenneth.

“Michelle!” Ashley screams out.

As Michelle tries to crawl, she tried to scream back but all that running took away all her breath. Michelle can hear somebody walking towards her.

“Tamera, Ashley I’m over here, help me,” says Michelle.

Out of nowhere the woman smacks Michelle in the face with
the wooden part of the bloody axe knocking her unconscious. The monster woman puts her foot on Michelle’s chest and starts chopping at Michelle’s midsection completely splitting her belly in half. The monster kept chopping and chopping until Michelle’s body was completely broken in two. Michelle’s guts gushed out and blood ran like water from a faucet.

“Michelle, Michelle!” the gang yells out as they’re looking for her.

“What the hell was that thing?” said Ashley.
“It’s a woman,” said Kenneth.
“Where did she come from?” said Ashley.
“I don’t know,” said Kenneth.
“A little girl came to me and told me to leave this place,” said Max. “She said that something bad was coming.”
“What girl?” said Tamera.

Max pulls out the left over blunt and lights it. He takes a hit and holds it in the air. Nothing happens.
“We have no time for games, Max,” said Ashley.
“C’mon guys we have to figure out who is that woman,” said Tamera.

“She’s my mom,” a little voice said.

The gang looks around but sees nobody. The little ghost girl suddenly appears. “Leave now or you all are going to die, she will not stop, please leave now!!” yelled the little girl.

“Look, I’m not leaving without the professor,” said Tamera.
“We’re going to find the professor and kill that ugly bitch. Now let’s go.”

As they began the search for the professor, Max catches a shimmer of light from the grass in his peripheral view. He walks over to it and discovers a school card. “Guys come check this out!” Tamera and the others turn around to investigate Max’s finding.

“That’s a school access card!” Tamera exclaims.
“No shit Sherlock,” Max retorts. “It says Faculty on the back. It’s the professor’s!”

“But why would he leave it here?” Kenneth inquired. “And... ewww... why is there blood on it?” He looked around everyone else as they inspected the blood on the card.
Max grew impatient. “Who cares about the card guys, let’s just find him and get the hell out of here.” As Max and the other students continued to walk he wondered to himself, “C’mon professor, where the hell are you?”

He’s running. Over a rock, under a branch. “Don’t stop, Charles, don’t you dare stop,” he says to himself. “Gotta keep moving.” He looks ahead. So many trees. He can’t see the end of them. He turns around, he see no one.

“Where did she go?”

The sting of a cold wet branch and leaves against his cheek forces him to look ahead. It doesn’t bother him, he had to keep moving. “Where is the damned road?”

While his eyes searched and hoped, his legs were still moving as fast they could. They were on fire but wet and cold. His shoe and socks were soaked and dirty. The left shoe was lost a while back but he hadn’t noticed. He wipes the streaming water away from his burning eyes, looks back and once again seeing no one. Oh how his legs hurt. He hadn’t run like this in a while.

“How did she find me? Wait a minute, how is it even possible? She should be dead!” he thinks, utterly confused.

He could now feel a sharp pain in his knees. “Ahhh!” he exclaimed, as he stopped running.

Gasping for air, he still looks around surveying the area. “Great job, Charles, you try to get back to the road and somehow you manage to get even more lost. You’re a regular Columbus,” he says mockingly.

He walks aimlessly but in as straight of a path as he can, to avoid walking in circles. “A Ghost? No. Absurd. You’re way too intelligent to believe such an asinine notion Charles, come on pull it together! You’re just seeing things.”

He snaps his fingers, “That’s it! You’re dehydrated! Of course!” He cups his hands under some leaves and collects water to drink. Most of it escapes because he could barely keep his fingers together. They won’t stop shaking.

Charles keeps to his path and eventually sees an opening. “Is that a cave? How random is that?”
Little had he known that he’d been alone so long he mastered the art of having a conversation with himself. “Hell no, I’m not going in there,” he said out loud. He took two steps away from the cave and the pain of his ailing body decided otherwise. “I guess it doesn’t matter, at least I can get out of this crappy weather.”

Charles goes to the cave, but sits near the entrance as it was a little dark further inside. A cold wind blew from the darkness and rustling could be heard. Another strong gust and a few feet from where Charles sat landed a piece of paper. He crawls to it, picks it up soiling the base of it with his wet hands. He reads.

“How the hell did she catch up to me so quickly!” Charles turned around to run and saw the little girl in front of him at the entrance. She looked exactly like the pictures in the articles, the same way she did the last time he saw her. Sprinting past her in an attempt to escape, Charles made it outside just long enough to feel a few drops of water on his face. Suddenly he was being dragged by the collar of his shirt back into the cave. He kicked and screamed until she turned him around and he had a good close look at her face. Beaten, disfigured, covered in scars and open cuts. In shock, he couldn’t move, paralyzed when forced to gaze upon his own work. The woman put
him on his back then placed a heavy foot on his chest, quickly raising her axe in the air. Fresh, warm blood from the edge drips on to Charles’ shirt.

“Please, please don’t do this!” he begged.

The little girl came over him and said calmly: “Now it’s your turn professor.”

Charles Smith, weeping uncontrollably, closed his eyes. The bloody axe came down swiftly, snatching the life from his body.

As the night begins to settle, it becomes darker and colder. “We have to go back and get Michelle,” says Ashley as she tries to catch her breath.

“No way, she’s dead, there’s no point,” says Max

“Enough,” says Kenneth. “She must’ve ran towards the bus and maybe that’s where we should be headed also.”

The wind starts to blow and the drizzle gradually turns into rain. “It’s freezing cold and it’s getting dark, maybe we should just leave,” says Max.

“No!” screams Tamera as she wipes the tears from her eyes. “I know the professor is around here somewhere, we’ve got to keep looking.”

“We found his ID card a few miles back, maybe we should try looking over there again,” says Ashley.

“It was covered in blood!” screams Max.

“Calm down, Max,” says Kenneth as he tries to catch his breath. Ashley begins to tie her shoes, “Did you guys find anything in the cave?”

“You mean other than a friendly old lady with an axe?” yells Max.

“Shut up Max!” screams the entire group.

“There was a dress,” says Tamera as she begins to get herself together.

Kenneth then reaches into his pocket and unfolds an old paper. “Here I found this old news article”

Ashley grabs the article and begins to read. “Child molester?” says Ashley with a confused look on her face. Max quickly snatches the article and looks at it.
“Did you find anything else?” says Ashley.
“No that’s all, it was dark,” says Kenneth as he begins to sit on the ground.
As Max stares at the article, a sudden shock hits him. “Man either I’m tripping, or this guy looks familiar.”
“What guy?” says Kenneth with an annoyed look on his face.
“The guy on this paper” says Max.
A puzzled look transitions onto face of the entire group as Ashley takes back the paper from Max.
“You need to quit smoking,” says Kenneth.
Suddenly, a shock comes from Ashley as she stares at the paper.
“What wrong?” says Tamera. “Where did you find this?” asks Ashley.
“I already told you, we found it in the cave, what’s wrong?” says Kenneth.
“It’s the professor!” Ashley then shows the group the paper “Look closely, its him!”
The group looks at the article and Tamera screams.
“You’re right it is the professor” says Kenneth.
A loud clap of thunder frightens the group and the rain then starts to pour even harder. “I’m cold, I’m hungry, it’s raining, and I just found out my professor is a creepy pervert,” says Tamara.
“CAN WE GO NOW!” yells Max.
“Yeah, he’s right, maybe we should leave,” says Kenneth.
The group decides to head for the bus, but as the sun begins to disappear, the group gets lost.
“Kenneth, are we even going the right way?” says Ashley.
But before Kenneth replies, a voice comes from behind them.
“You hear that?” says Kenneth as he looks to his left and right.
“It’s her, it’s the little girl again,” says Max.
The group looks around, but it’s too dark to see anything. Suddenly a voice begins to speak. “I told you to leave; now it’s too late!”
The group turns around and sees the little girl facing them.
“What do you want from us?” screams Kenneth.
The group stands frozen for a moment as the girl calmly stares at the nervous wreck before her. Then she breaks eye contact and focuses on something behind the group. Kenneth turns and as he
sees what has caught the girl’s attention, he attempts to scream but is so afraid nothing comes out his mouth. At that instant Kenneth, Tamera, and Max watch in horror as the axe comes down and splits Ashley’s head in two. As fear consumes them, they run in the opposite direction as fast as they can. After sprinting almost nonstop they come across a dried up riverbank and collapse from exhaustion.

Max looks at his hands as they shake uncontrollably, then at Tamera whose face is covered in tears.

“We just, left her,” whispers Tamera through her crying and panting.

“We didn’t have a choice,” says Max.

“You wanna take an axe to the face like she did?!” Kenneth replied.

“But couldn’t we have done something?!” cries Tamara.

“No,” says a soft voice. The little girl appears from behind a tree. Kenneth panics and looks in every direction for the girl’s murderous mother.

“Don’t worry, you’ve outrun her, for now, but time is still short.”

“Get away! Ever since I first saw you things have only gotten worse!” Max yells.

“I’m sorry, its not her fault,” the little girl says.

“What the hell is that supposed to mean, you mean she didn’t mean to chop my friends in half?” says Max.

“Just, leave. If you get out of the forest, she’ll leave you all alone, so just go!” the girl says as two tears falls down her cheeks. The girl lifts her arm and points to her right. “If you go that way you will find the road which your bus fell off.”

“Why are you helping us?” asks Kenneth.

“I just don’t want anymore people to die because of what happened to me,” says the little girl.

“You’re the girl in the picture aren’t you?” says Tamera, and the little girl nods. “And she’s after our professor isn’t she?”

Again the girl nods.

Tamera, feeling sorry for the poor girl, tried to press on into her past; but suddenly the girl’s head sharply turns to look over her shoulder. “She’s close. Go!”

The group makes a break in the direction the little girl pointed
them in. Max, who is struggling behind the more athletic Kenneth and Tamera, looks back and sees the woman step out of the bushes. He screams and quickly passes his friends. Once the woman is out of site again the three of them slow down because of the wooded terrain and large sloping hill ahead of them.

“Hey guys,” asks Max. “How do we know we can trust that girl?”

“If you know where to go, I’d love it if you would share that information,” retorts Tamara. “If not shut up and keep moving.”

“Guys! Shush!” exclaims Kenneth.

The group stops and it gets quiet except for the faint siren of police cars. They look at each other and rush through everything in their way. The group starts yelling for help hysterically when something flies past Max’s head. He falls to the ground and sees the blood-stained axe wedged in the tree right next to where he was standing. The woman lets out a chilling shriek and charges at them. Max gets up pulls the axe out of the tree and chucks it back at her and yells “GO TO HELL!”

The axe flies through the air, the woman catches it, straightens and cracks her neck and glares at Max.

“Why the fuck did you give it back to her you dumb-ass?!” yells Kenneth as he pulls Max by the collar as they run.

“I was trying to hit her! I’m still high! How was I supposed to know she would catch it?”

“SHUTUP AND RUN!” Tamara screams.

They almost reach the top of the hill when police officers hear the movement up in the hill’s brush. They draw their weapons and shout “Police! Show yourself!”

Tamara, Kenneth, and Max burst through the bushes and a police captain yells, “Its them, hold your fire!”

The group yells simultaneously at the top of their lungs, “Shoot her! Shoot Her! Shoot the Bitch! Do it now!”

They run onto the road behind the squads of police cars and watch as the policemen wait for something to emerge. A few seconds pass and the police send in the k-9 units and several armored officers. The officers put the three friends in a squad car. After a few minutes they return. One officer has the bloodied axe in hand. Through the glass the friends can make out the faint statement, “This
is all we found.”

An officer climbs in the car and says, “We’re gonna take you kids to the station and try to figure out what happened.”

“You didn’t see her?” says Kenneth.

“I don’t know what your talking about, we just found that axe,” replies the officer. “Don’t worry we will catch whoever was chasing you.”

The car turned silent with an uncomfortable air as the officer does a u-turn. Max looks up, smacks Kenneth’s arm, and points to the rear view mirror. The three of them see the little girl standing at the forest’s edge smiling and waving goodbye.
“TARGET; CEO OF ELECTRIC POWER CORP.” of sector B3, Jeffery Davis,” a voice sounds through the man’s earpiece as he is standing on a rooftop overlooking the street.

“Vincent you there?” the voice says again.


Vincent sees the target’s car approaching the building, guarded by an armored SUV in front. “This should be fun,” he smirks while running his hands through his shaggy black hair. He begins to make his way through the building. The year is 2031, multiple wars have reduced the world to a barren wasteland. People have tried the best they can to rebuild.

The CEO’s security detail scans the area before letting him out the car. “All clear sir,” states one of the officers. The team, accompanied by the CEO, makes their way to the door.

“You sure about that?” Vincent says mockingly.

“Who are you!?” demands one of the guards while pulling his fire arm out and pointing it at Vincent.

“I wouldn’t worry about that if I were you,” Vincent laughs while slowly walking toward them.

The guard, shaking, tries to fire his weapon. However, before he is able to do so, Vincent side steps the barrel and grabs his arm while kneeing him in the stomach. The other guards begin to fire, but Vincent draws his gun and shoots the men, hitting vital spots and fatally wounding each one of them. After seeing his security team being picked off one after another, the CEO starts running in an attempt
to escape.

“Why must they always run?” questions Vincent in an irritated tone. Vincent rushes in front cutting off his victim, smacking him to the ground as if it were nothing.

“Who are you?” asks the CEO, shaking in fear.


“Dark Angel? I thought they were only a myth,” protests the CEO.

“Oh we’re very real, and for those unlucky enough to have their name come to us, we can be very dangerous.”

Vincent smirks and gives off a quick laugh as if he just said something funny.

“You’re evil,” says the CEO.

“And you’re a waste of precious oxygen. Maybe I am evil, but look at the world in which we live. A world where the very idea of good or evil are blurred to the point where they’re unrecognizable!” protests Vincent.

“We can change all that! Together! We can rebuild it from the ground up! Dark Angel, and...” starts the CEO.

“Why? So we humans can just destroy it again? I’m done talking to you! “Vincent puts his gun up to the CEO’s head and pulls the trigger, causing but a single drop of his crimson blood to splatter onto Vincent’s cheek.

Vincent looks up and gazes at the sky. “Rebuild huh?” he mumbles to himself. “876 requesting evac,” he says into his earpiece. But there is no reply. “What the hell, number 876 requesting immediate evacuation! What, is this piece of crap broken?”

Vincent thumps the earpiece with his palm. “If I have to walk someone’s losing there head.”

Just then he feels a sudden uneasiness come over him. A shadow behind him catches his attention. He is attacked from behind but quickly reacts by side kicking his assailant, knocking him back. Vincent is shocked when he discovers the identity of his attacker. It is a fellow Dark Angel member, number 980, Spike Highwind.

“Just what the hell do you think you’re doing Highwind?” he demands.

“Not bad Fairheart,” smiled Spike.
“You didn’t answer my question!” Vincent demands.
“Fine if you must know, I’m simply carrying out my orders…” replies Spike “…it seems that the powers that be have no further use for you, and want you gone!”

Spike pulls out a knife, his signature weapon, and charges for yet another attack. Vincent blocked it and countered with an elbow to the face and a knee to the stomach. Spike then returned with a thrust, that Vincent is just barely able to dodge, however not without being cut deep in the stomach. Just then, Vincent hears a blood-curdling voice:

“That’s enough playing around 980!”

Vincent turns around to find himself faced with an entire Dark Angel infantry with assault rifles all fixed on him. A shot is fired which pierces Vincent’s chest.

“Target down,” an infantry men said. Then the men leave and Vincent was left to die.

Sometime after he opened his eyes.

“You…,” he mutters as he begins to regain consciousness. He is just able to make out the outline of a woman as he finally fades to black.

_hours or maybe a few weeks later Vicnent opens his eyes dizzily.

“He’s waking up,” a little boy shouted.

Vincent looks over at the child and is overwhelmed by the child’s innocence and kindness. It reminds him of a sense of natural purity, something that has been long since forgotten by what is now a twisted and dark version of the old Vincent. Vincent stared at the young boy intrigued. He had never seen him before and was curious as to who he was. As he started to sit up to take a look at the “big sister” the boy referred to, a piercing sharp pain shot his chest.

“Arrggh!” Vincent shouts.

“Settle down.” A warm voice floods the room and surrounds Vincent and the young boy. Soon the lady enters the room and comes over to them. Vincent recognizes her as his “Keeper.” The Powers assign each Dark Angel a Keeper to tend to wounds and nurse them back to health after missions.

Vincent rushes to talk, asking questions and stating things all
at once. “Amanda. What happened? Where are we? And who is this kid?”

Amanda smiles at him, scoots the little boy out of the way, and begins to change the bandages on Vincent’s chest.

“The Powers have gotten rid of operatives. You along with four other agents were to be disposed of. So far I’ve heard that the other four were fatally shot. The Keepers were reassigned to other agents, except for me. I was released from my duties because there wasn’t a need for me. I found you laying in street and as soon as it was clear, I brought you here.”

Vincent twisted his face with pain as Amanda began to re-bandage his chest.

“They are going to pay for this!” Vincent barked.

“Vincent, look at me and listen to me closely. You mustn’t go after anyone. As far as anyone knows you’re dead. Leave it that way. Promise me you won’t” she begged.

He looked at Amanda with an expression of bewilderment. He could not believe his ears. Not fight? The only thing Vincent knew in his life was darkness and fighting.

“I promise,” he growled.

Looking over at the young boy playing, he was reminded of his youthful innocence and the fact that he still had no idea who he was.

“Who is the boy, Amanda?”

“An orphan I found stranded. His name’s Michael, he’s eight.”

“Michael huh?” Vincent responds with curiosity.

“Agrhhh,” Vincent screams as he tries to move.

“Vince! Stay still, you can’t move around yet,” Amanda said concerned. “You still need to rest.”

Vincent did as he was told. Amanda seemed to be the only one he actually listened to and Amanda seemed to be the only one who really cared for him. As the days pass Vincent continued to recover.

One night Vincent is stuck in a nightmare haunted by his actions. He is walking down a hallway soaked with blood. He then opens a door and points his gun at a man shaking in fear. Vincent suddenly jumps up in bed.

“What the hell?” he mutters shaking.
Days had past and Vincent is finally able to move around. He gets out of bed and looks outside and sees Michael practicing kicks and punches. Vincent smiles: “Check you out Bruce Lee. Who taught you those moves?”

“Big Sister taught me some moves so I can protect her,” Michael said. “I think it’s called Jeet Kune Do.”

“Protect?” Vincent thought. He began to smirk: “You’re too tense, relax...you’ll never hit anyone like that.”

“How do you know that?” Michael asked.

“Because I am the one who taught your big sister,” Vincent said. Amanda looked out through the doorway and smiled.

After Vincent watched Amanda and Michael he knew that couldn’t stay there. “Do you have something to protect?” he thought to himself. Those words forever followed him.

“Where will you go?” Amanda asked

“Don’t know,” Vincent shrugs. “I’ve got some figuring out to do.”

The boy stood next to Amanda at a loss for words. “See you around kid.”

Vincent walks off in the distance. “Will you come back and play with me more?” Michael asked.

“Sure, kid, why not?” Vincent shouts back.

A few hundred miles outside of town sits a rundown mechanic shop. Old rusted vehicles surround the place.

“Damn it!” a man in his early 50s shouts as he attempts to start an old Mustang.

“It’s not going to start, don’t know why you keep tying,” Vincent said just before he sips from a bottle of whiskey.

“Shut up, that’s the problem with young punks like you,” replied the old man. “You don’t want to put the time in to fix things that are broken, lazy all of you.” He reached for the bottle Vincent was drinking.

“And that’s the problem with you old bastards, you complain too much,” Vincent countered as handed the old man the bottle. “Check the carburetor pops,” Vincent mocked while he walked inside the shop.

“Wise ass,” the old man muttered to himself.
From a distance a car speeds toward the old mechanic shop. The car pulls in the front of the shop. A familiar woman steps out; it’s Amanda.

“Hey pretty lady, what can I do ya for?” the old man said. “Name’s Jed.”

“Where’s Vince?, I know he’s here,” Amanda said trembling. “You poor girl what happen?” Jed asked as he helps her sit down. “Hey, Vince, get out here!” “I’m coming pops what’s the hurry!?” Vincent yelled as he strolled out of the shop.

“Amanda? What are you doing here?” Vincent asked stricken by shock. A year had past since the two last saw one another. “They took him, they took Michael!” Amanda said. “What’s going on Vince?” Jed asked. “Nothing you need to worry about old man, it just looks my past is finally catching up with me,” Vincent said with a smirk.

Vincent’s memory flashes back to when he was being operated on by strange doctors, injecting him with unknown chemicals, when he was younger.

“I think I know what’s happening,” he said. “Michael is going to be the next Dark Angel agent.” “They can’t!” Amanda shouted. “They are,” he replied. “You’ve got to save him,” begged Amanda

Vince stares off in the distance, “I am not much of a hero type.” “Will you stop?” she shouts “I know what you’re going through, you’ve done horrible things and it haunts you. But that’s in the past now, you can make amends.”

Vincent is shook to his core. “I think she’s telling you to get over yourself kid,” Jed said. “Do you have something to protect?” Vince thinks to himself. “Hey old man, that piece of shit motorcycle still work?”

Vincent approaches the Dark Angels’ headquarters, which is well disguised as an office building. He parks his motorcycle at a distance to the building. He opened a compartment under his seat and grabbed several blocks of T-4 and a detonator along with an MP-5.
“Just another day at the office,” he mutters to himself.

He began to climb the side of the building. Reaching the second floor of the ten story building, he jumps through a window and surprises the guards.

“What the hell?” one guard shouted.

“It can’t be! You...you’re dead!” the second guard shouted

“Funny thing about tormented souls like me,” Vincent grins, “we don’t die.” Vincent slices the two guards’ throats with his knives. He then placed a T-4 charge on the wall.

He began to make his way up the stairs, but is stopped by three guards who open fire. Vincent runs through a doorway and takes cover, firing back killing the three guards. Six more guards jump out and begin opening fire. Vincent takes cover behind a wall firing back hitting all six of the guards.

Vincent continues his infiltration of the Dark Angels’ headquarters, gunning down guard after guard. “Where in hell are they keeping him?” Vincent thinks to himself as he walks into one of the laboratories. Suddenly he is grabbed from behind and injected with a tranquilizer by Agent 845—Raven Black.

“Damn it...,” Vincent whispers as the room around him fades to black.

Vincent opened his eyes, his vision began to clear making out the image of an older man dressed in a jet black suit with a red tie. He is leader of the Dark Angels—Robert Shadow.

“What’s going on Boss man?” Vincent said.

“Hello, number 876,” the man replied

Vincent was than punched in the stomach by Raven. Vincent gasped for air: “Not bad, but you need to put your hip into it.”

“Tell me Vincent why have you returned?” Robert asked.

“To say hi, see how everyone is doing,” he mocked. “I gotta say you really need to decorate.”

“For the boy, is it?” Robert asked. “Since when did the great Vincent Fairheart start playing hero?”

“Since someone started strying to kill me,” Vincent said

“You were perfect, Vincent: fast, accurate, smart, and ruthless. A perfect killing machine.” Robert rubbed his hands together. “But
the worst thing an assassin can do, you allowed to happen. You grew a conscience.”

“So that’s why you wanted me dead?” Vincent said.

A new, but familiar voice responds to Vincent: “The drugs we use to keep agents like you in control have worn off. It effects the memory. If we control the memory, we control the agent. This explains why you’re starting to remember your past. However, your physical abilities are still sharp.”

“Dr. Vex,” Vincent growled, “remind me to kill you when I get these restraints off.”

“I am going to offer you a deal,” Robert said. “Join us once again or die.”

“Blow it out your ass!” Vincent barked.


Raven pointed his gun at Vincent’s head, but just before he pulled the trigger, he changed his target and instead shot Robert in the chest and Dr. Vex in the shoulder.

“You bastard!” Robert cringed.

Raven freed Vincent from his restraints.

“Raven, what the hell?” Vincent said.

“I was planning to take down Dark Angel for while, I was just waiting for you return,” Raven explained.

“Pretty clever,” Vincent said.

“I try to be smart about my attacks, instead of just storming in the front door like some people I know,” said Raven as he threw Vincent a gun.

“But I like storming in the front door,” laughed Vincent.

Vincent walked over to Dr. Vex and put his gun to his forehead.

“Where is the kid?” Vincent demanded.

“Ninth floor, in the cells,” Dr. Vex responded.

Vincent pulled the trigger killing the doctor. He then walked over to Robert and placed his gun on his throat.

“You don’t want to do this!” Robert shouted.

“Shut up!” Vincent said as he pulled the trigger.

“Lets go.” Raven said.

As the two men ran out of the room they were shot at and forced into cover.
The two agents fired back hitting a few guards, but more guards kept coming putting the two on the defensive.

The building violently shook.

“What the hell is that now?” Raven asked.

“Damn it, my T-4 charges,” Vincent responded.


“I’m not leaving you here!” refused Vincent.

“Will you listen for once? Go! I’ll be fine,” demanded Raven. Vincent nodded and ran to find Michael.

Amongst all of the noise and chaos going on in the Dark Angel headquarters, Vincent somehow manages to find Michael locked in one of the holding cells.

“Come on kid! We’re getting out of here!” he yelled.

The boy gets up and follows Vincent down a number of hallways, all filled with the smell of blood. He stops a moment and pushes Michael into a small crevice in the wall as three men approach them. Vincent doesn’t hesitate before killing all three of them in an instant. He looks back and sees Michael watching the whole thing.

“Close your eyes kid,” he says to him.

At that moment, his words remind him of his childhood and how his mother had always told him to close his eyes when a group of men stormed in his home and began to attack his mother. He pauses for a moment, not sure whether he was more shocked by the timing of this memory, or the fact that insane Dr. Vex was right. He and Michael continue to make their way out of the headquarters.

“Vincent, slow down. I’m tired,” Michael complained.

“There’s no time to slow down. This place is going to blow,” he warned. “Now hurry up!”

They get outside only to find none other than Spike waiting at the gate. “What do you think you’re doing Vincent? How do you think this is all gonna play out? You bust in, take the kid, and never hear from us again? Then what!? Hide out and play house with the kid and that bitch Keeper of yours!?”

“Something like that”, Vincent responds sarcastically.

They stare at each other for a few seconds and then each charge
at the other, weapons drawn. They make contact, and for a moment there is nothing but silence, as the two stand no more than a few inches apart. Someone definitely was hit.

Then Spike spoke: “We were a hell of a team.”

Vincent laughed: “I think we were more focused on beating each other than the mission.”

They both laugh. Just then Spike drops to the ground revealing a knife that had pierced his chest. Vincent grabs Michael and makes for the gate. Just before they reach it he stops and looks back one more time and whispers in a hushed tone, “Goodbye old friend.”

They cross the threshold and as they make their way out of the area, they heard a loud explosion. The T-4 had detonated, leaving only ash, rubble, and several charred bodies in the place where the Dark Angel headquarters once stood.

Vincent yelled back, “Hurry up kid, Amanda’s waiting for you.”

To Vincent’s surprise an old Mustang pulled up to the two of them.

“Old man, I see you finally got that piece of shit to run,” Vincent said

“Shut up, smart ass, and get in,” Jed replied.

They drove off toward the mechanic’s shop.

“You handle your business?” Jed asked.

“Do you have something to protect?” Vincent thought to himself once again. “Yeah, it’s all taking care off,” Vincent replied as he leaned back in the passenger seat.

The three finally make it back the to the shop. Amanda stood waiting out in front of the shop.

“Big Sis!” Michael yelled as he ran out of the car.

Amanda hugged him as tears ran down her face. “I’m so glad you’re okay!” she said.

Vincent and Jed looked on with a smirk.

Next day Amanda, Michael, and Vincent left the Jed’s mechanic shop.

“See you around old man, try not drink yourself to death,” Vincent said

“I’ll be fine ya’ punk,” Jed countered.

“Thanks for everything, Jed,” Amanda smiled.
The three drove off in the distance.
Later that night Vincent walked out to a hilltop. He stared out into the sky.
“There you are,” Amanda said.
“I remember now, my past. My father was killed when I was a baby. My mother ... one day when I was eight a group of men came to the house, she told me to go hide and close my eyes. I heard her!”
Vince began to shake.
“They beat her to death and I didn’t do anything!”
Amanda places her head on Vincent’s chest wishing she could take the pain away. “Let’s dance” she said.
“Dance?” Vincent asked.
“Yeah dance, my father use to take me dancing, lets do it,” she smiled at him.
The two dance in the moon light. Amanda spun herself into Vincent’s arms.
“Thank you,” Vincent whispered as he held her.
“Vincent,” she said as she looked up at him. She placed a small revolver against his ribs and pulled the trigger. Vincent fell to the ground and Amanda broke out in tears.
“Don’t cry,” Vincent said as he touched her face. “Smile, I always liked when you smiled.”
As he fades to black he remembers when he was child on the street. He was alone, a man dressed in black walked up to him.
“Are you alone?” the man asked. “Tell me, do you have something to protect?” the man asked. “Come, you call me Robert.”