

THE ADVENTURES OF

MW

Every hero has a beginning
no matter how different

The Chills

REXFORD RICH

The Adventures of Mark Wills

Mark Wills

and the

Chills

Rexford Rich

Part 1: Wanted Dead

He taunts me, laughing; mocking me. “No matter what you do, Mark, I will always win.” He pauses, letting the moment intensify. “I can see every outcome before my eyes; there is only one way that you stop me, but this is not the dimension in which you do. All the events leading up to now prove you to be unsuccessful. Mark, you can try all you want, but you will just let everyone down.

“You will let the whole world down.”

I suddenly wake. I was dreaming. I find that I am in my bed, immersed in my sweat. It’s a nightmare I have been dreaming over and over; it has been getting worse every day.

The man in the dream is named Drigor ... he's not from around here. Not from Earth actually. It’s ... a long story.

He is ... unstoppable. I mean that in all seriousness. Since he has appeared I have been trying to plan so many different ways to stop him. But ... how do you stop an unstoppable villain?

I actually believe him. I believe it when he says that I will not stop him, that I will just let everyone down. It is the same feeling Penny had when she first met us. The feeling of dread and misery that he somehow instills into us.

This, I’m afraid, will not even be my last triumph; I cannot stop him. I just ... I don’t see how. You know that saying: “I am only human”? I would be saying that right now if it were true.

I think to myself: *How did I come from being what I believed was an average teenage boy to being a troubled superhero who has the weight of the world on his shoulders?*

I planted my feet, standing firm and readying my bat as I waited for the pitch. I looked at the girl with long, dark hair standing at the pitcher's mound. She looked down the center, nodding, as if pretending to confirm her pitch to a catcher, although we didn't have one. We were by ourselves; myself, the girl and my other friend; him being in the outfield.

The girl threw the pitch straight down the center. I swung and missed. The fence behind me rattled as the ball hit it.

I lowered my bat, miserably going after the ball. I threw the ball back to the girl, Rachel. She was smiling, knowing that she could pitch well. I smirk to myself.

Rachel prepared to pitch again. The boy in the outfield got ready as well; his name was Bruce. He had dark hair that went just to his eyebrows. Bruce looked as if he were sure to catch this one; that is if I hit it.

I concentrated harder this time. Rachel pitched the ball and I started to swing just a second before the ball came to me. As my swing followed through, I made contact with the ball, hitting it directly off the center of the bat.

The ball went flying. Immediately Bruce started to run after it. I hit it perfectly, though. Bruce was not going to get it; I hit it far out of the field.

I suddenly felt horrible, knowing where the ball was headed. The ball went far out of the small park. Sure it was a homerun, but it was heading right towards the direction of the crazy scientist's house. We all heard a faint sound of something breaking. I cringed. This was how I was going to start our summer vacation from school. Rachel and Bruce looked at me. For whatever reason, Bruce was smiling.

The three of us walk towards each other.

“What?” I asked Bruce, wondering why he could be smiling when I have broken something.

“Nice hit,” Bruce started, “but uh ... maybe you hit it too hard.”

“I hit it so perfectly ...” I trailed off, feeling bad for having broken a window or something else that was glass.

“Let's hope we can find the ball before that crazy scientist does,” Rachel said. “Hopefully he's not home.”

“He's always home,” Bruce said, being too serious in the moment.

“Oh, thanks for the comfort,” I told Bruce. “Umm ... How about we just leave it there? That guy's a nutcase.”

“Don't worry about it,” Rachel exclaimed softly, trying to calm me while smiling and shaking her head. She was already walking towards his house, ready to confront the man for me.

Obvious the whole purpose of playing baseball is to hit the ball, though I was starting to regret doing so. We begin walking towards the scientist's house; it not being a long walk. We arrived immediately seeing that the man already had found the ball; it was in his hands.

Ha! Great! I thought to myself. *Some luck I have.*

“Looking for this?” the scientist asked, though he was smiling—crazy for sure.

“Umm ... that would be mine,” I said, grabbing it from his hand, without making eye contact. “I'm sorry,” I said, trying to sound sincere.

The scientist looked at the three of us, but then let out a deep sigh. “Don't hate yourself, just come in and clean up the mess,” he said.

I had been trying to prepare myself for a long speech or something, but instead he was going to just have us clean it up and get out.

I felt relief, this guy is known for his craziness and it seemed that he was going to let us off easy.

As we walked towards the mess, it felt as if eyes were setting on the back of my head, as if they were burning two holes into it. I dared a glance to reveal to myself that the scientist was looking at me strangely. He seemed to be mumbling something to himself, but then disregarded it by shaking his head.

“The broom and dustpan are in the corner,” he told me, pointing.

I went to the corner, grabbing them. I returned to the mess, immediately sweeping it up. Rachel held the dustpan in place. Bruce just stood around, gawking at the whole place.

This whole room seemed to be a garage from the outside, but in here on the inside it looked to be a laboratory. All around there seemed to be chemicals and machinery. Nevertheless, I continued sweeping.

Rachel and I cleaned up the mess, throwing it into a trash can.

“You know,” the scientist started, looking at me, “you shouldn’t believe everything that people say.” I wasn’t sure where he was going at with this, at first. “But I’m not as bad as most people think. I know that everyone thinks that I’m crazy, but that’s only because I like science so much. I’m not that bad of a guy.”

“Okay,” I wasn’t sure what else to say.

“Here,” he told Bruce. “Follow me.” He led Bruce up to a machine that had some sort of head cap. “I saw you looking around, so here put this on.” Bruce grabbed the head cap from the scientist and he, in turn, put on another one on his head. “I’m going to attempt to read your thoughts.”

I held back a laugh and forgot his whole speech about judging him. This was guy was indeed crazy. There was no way that that machine could enable him to read Bruce's thoughts.

"Obviously," the scientist began, "you're thinking about how impossible this is; anyone could guess that. Think of something random." The scientist paused and seemed to be waiting on Bruce. "This guy is crazy. He thinks that he can ... Uhh, wait ... one second. Is he really ... Roses are red ... elephants are big ... my favorite color is ... green ..." Bruce gasped.

I narrow my eyes. But it seemed he must've read Bruce's thoughts. Bruce thought of other things.

The scientist started up again, "Computer speakers, gala apples, hamburgers, roller coasters ... no way, this machine actually works?! And he is reading ... my ... thoughts." The man smiles.

Bruce laughed and smiled.

"Wow!" Bruce exclaimed. "I can't believe that this really works!" He paused. "This is amazing!" He laughed.

I had to force myself to close my open jaw. I couldn't understand how that could be possible.

“By the way,” the scientist said, “my name is Doctor Alex Randall.” He pulled his head cap off and set it down as Bruce did the same.

We were all still amazed at his mind reading machine. The scientist noticed this and smiled. We were speechless. Without embarrassing ourselves any further, we started saying our goodbyes to leave, but the scientist stopped us.

“Hold on a minute here!” he exclaimed as if to realize something. “*You’re* Mark Wills!”

“Yes,” I said, feeling that this was very awkward.

“*You are* Mark Wills ... I can't believe it! It's really you!”

“What?” I asked. “How do you know me?”

“Well ... don't ... don't you know?”

“Know what?”

“That you're ... uh ...” he paused. “Crap. Your parents didn't tell you yet?”

“Tell me what?”

“No, I can't say.

“Can't say what?” both Bruce and I asked at once.

“It's for your parents to decide when to tell you.”

“Tell me what?” I demanded.

"I can't. In time, you will know." He paused. "How old are you anyway?"

"Fourteen," I said.

"Okay, your parents are being patient then, waiting for the right time."

"For what?" I asked.

"You will know what I mean when it's time."

I became puzzled and felt very awkward staying around. We were left with only the choice to leave. I couldn't figure out what the scientist was trying to say.

"What was that all about?" Rachel asked. "Does he know your parents or something?"

"Apparently so. But, what does he know about me that I don't even know?" I asked mainly myself.

"You're Mark Wills!" Bruce exclaimed, mimicking the man.

I smiled. "Bruce, shut up."

We all laughed when we came to a realization that this scientist *was* indeed crazy.

"You know what," I asked. "Maybe everyone's right; this guy is *that* crazy."

"Yeah," Bruce agreed. "But you guys saw how he read my mind with that machine ... he was repeating my exact thoughts. It was scary, but that machine worked."

"That guy ..." Rachel began, "spends too much time alone."

We all headed our separate ways back to our homes to eat supper. I thought about the scientist and what he said. As I ate supper, I

couldn't help but look at my parents to think about what it is that they weren't telling me. I didn't want to ask, because I wasn't sure if the doctor/scientist was trying to actually say something or if he was just being crazy. What if it wasn't really anything? I didn't want to sound foolish by asking, so once I finished supper I just headed to my room.

I laid in my bed, staring at the ceiling; just thinking. What a strange day. What was planned to be a day at the park, turned out to be the day to finally see the crazy scientist in person. Suddenly, something caught my attention. It came from the window, from outside. I sat up and looked out of the window, but I didn't see anything at first.

I got off my bed and jumped backwards. I saw some sort of shadow of a strange ... figure in the middle of the yard outside. The figure didn't look human at all. Then I saw it stand. Instantly, I knew for sure that it was nothing like a human.

This thing seemed muscular, hairy and had wings. It was the ugliest bird that I had ever seen. But ... I knew that it couldn't be a bird ... it had a beastly figure.

That was when it looked at me. It used its evil eyes to stare directly in mine. Even though I was inside and it was outside, I couldn't move; I froze in my stance. It began to show its fangs, apparently growling, but I couldn't hear it, since it was on the other side of the glass. Then it roared, and *that* I heard.

I heard mom and dad shuffle through the house, apparently hearing the roar too. Mom ran in my room. "What was that, Mark?" she asked and I looked at her.

"It was that," I said, pointing out of the window, but it was gone. The beast disappeared.

"It was what?" mom asked.

"It was just there."

It was silent for a moment. “Whoa, Mark,” mom said. “It’s getting late,” she said looking at the clock. “Why don’t you get some rest?”

“Alright,” I said, knowing not to argue, since I could never win. Just before, I was in my bed ready to sleep anyway.

I got in bed, finding that I was no longer tired; especially since what this day has brought me. Not only was I thinking about what happened at the scientist’s house, but now I couldn’t get the beast out of my head. I knew that I couldn’t have imagined it; it seemed so real.

I lifted my head to look outside; there was no sign of the beast anywhere. I knew it was out there, out of sight. I tried to listen for it, but didn’t hear a sound.

I woke up the next day, as tired as can be. I walked into the kitchen, seeing that it was past ten O' clock. Mom saw me then shifted her eyes to the table. I followed her gaze, seeing that there were about five pancakes left; surely they were cold. Mom didn't say anything and neither did I.

I ate the pancakes cold and then headed to Bruce's house. I knocked on the door of his house. His mom arrived at the door.

"Hello, Mrs. Anderson," I said. "Is Bruce home?"

"Yes, he's in his room," she replied. She let me in, walking aside and allowing for me to walk to his room.

Bruce looked up to see me. I stepped inside.

"I saw some sort of ... beast last night," I told him.

"You saw it too?" Bruce asked. "Okay, then I wasn't imagining it."

"Yeah, what was it?"

"No clue. It was nothing like I have ever seen. It was big, hairy, and had wings. I think that it had claws too."

"Yeah, it was scary-looking."

"Have you talked to Rachel yet?"

"No I haven't." I paused. "But, I don't want to scare her, so let's not tell her."

Bruce smiled, lowering his head. He looked like he was trying to suppress a laugh. He ended up snickering.

“What?” I asked.

“You love her, don’t you?”

“Well ... I ... uh ... yeah,” I decided not to deny it. “I thought you already knew that, anyway.” I scoff quietly, but felt awkward.

“Yeah, I just never asked you before.” This time he didn’t hold back his laughter.



Later, the three of us meet up back at the park to play some more baseball. This time we were a little more nervous, having that I have been able to hit the ball out of the park, knowing that we could break someone’s house. The crazy scientist let us go off easy yesterday, but I wasn’t sure that he would be alright with it for the next time.

We played for a long while, getting caught up into having so much fun. We were still there until dark, though having the bright moonlight. We had lunch and supper breaks earlier, but we had come back, not feeling ready to quit just yet; we were having tons of fun.

Bruce was up to bat, while I was pitching. Bruce hit the ball, popping it up. The ball went straight up, but then hit something, disallowing it from reaching its peak. Then we heard a roar; it had come from whatever Bruce had hit in the sky.

We saw the shadow of the thing above us. It was the shape of a huge beast in the moonlight. All of us froze. It was the same beast that I saw last night, or one of the same. Bruce looked at me then very quickly looked back at the beast.

The hairy beast landed, lowering its wings. It looked directly at Bruce, revealing its fangs to him, growling. Bruce had never looked so terrified in his life. We were all terrified, because it could attack any one of us. It looked directly at Bruce in the eyes to roar at him. It started to run towards him, but then it stopped to smell the air.

Suddenly, it spun around to glare at me, apparently it smelled me. It charged at me, causing my heart to about jump out of my chest.

I spun around, sprinting. I looked back to see that it had gained up on me. As if it couldn't get any worse, I tripped over second base. I threw my arms out to save my fall.

The huge hairy, winged beast had reached its way two feet from me, but it stopped. It looked hideous, angered. He glared deep into my eyes, growling intensely. My heart never pumped so fast in my life. The beast stuck its face closer, roaring directly into mine.

Just as it was about to bite my head off, it got hit in its head by baseball bat. I look at the bat in Bruce's hands.

It cried out in pain, backing away from us. Bruce didn't want to let it do anything more, so he hit it again. The beast roared in frustration. As Bruce went to swing the bat again, it grabbed the bat with its mouth. It bit down and broke it.

I could see a little blood dripping from its head; Bruce exerted full force upon it. It flapped its wings, floating two feet above the ground. It lifted its feet to reveal its claws. It, then, kicked Bruce, sending him ten feet through the air. The beast roared once more before flying off.

Rachel and I ran up to Bruce to see if he was alright. He quickly sat up; making sure that the beast was flying away.

"Are you alright?" Rachel asked him.

"I'm fine," he said, getting to his feet. He felt his chest, letting out a soft groan. He slowly lifted his shirt to reveal red scratches on his chest.

"Are you sure you're fine?" I asked.

"I'll live," he said.

"What was that?" Rachel asked.

"We're not sure," I said, "but both Bruce and I saw it last night."

"Where did it come from?"

"No clue," Bruce said. "But we should get home." He was worried it'd come back.

"I'm with you there," I said.

We practically ran all of the way home, not looking back at the park. Once we started running we couldn't stop. Mom and dad jumped when I barged through the door.

"Whoa!" dad exclaimed. "Slow down ... What's wrong?"

"There's ..." I panted. "Uh ... these hairy ... huge winged beast out there."

"What," mom asked. "What do you mean?"

"I don't know what they are, but they attacked Bruce."

"Is he alright?"

"He's fine, he's at his house."

"What, winged beasts? Like a bird?" dad asked.

"No, it wasn't a bird," I said. "It was way bigger."

"Okay," dad said. "Let's get to bed; it's been a long day."

“What? You don’t believe me?”

“Mark, do not fool around. Huge beasts? Seriously?”

“Never mind,” I said, giving up. I went straight to my room and into my bed. I would try to go to sleep, but there was no way I was going to.

I looked out of the window and coincidentally the beast was standing right there, glaring at me. I got out of bed and ran into my closet, scared for my life. I peeked out to see that it was out of sight. After what seemed like an hour, I went back in bed, though afraid to be close to the window.

I woke up in the middle of the night, awoken by something. I immediately looked out of the window, thinking that I would see one of the flying beasts, but I didn't. I walked out of my bedroom and looked around in the living room. I walked into the kitchen and I found out what it was that woke me up. Right in front of the kitchen table stood one of the beasts. Its eyes glowed as it stared right into my eyes.

I couldn't move. It was as if it had a paralyzing effect on me. It roared and I stumbled backwards, tripping over. Immediately, I heard mom and dad shuffling their feet, jumping from their beds. The beast charged at me and with its foot it shoved me to the floor. The claws on its foot dug into my face. I screamed in pain. Just as it was about to bite me, dad flipped the lights on it the beast froze. It literally froze.

Suddenly, my face felt as if it had a solid two-hundred pounds on it, not the four-hundred pounds that it was exerting just a second before. Dad ran up to me and pushed the beast off. I immediately got up and was about to run, but I noticed that the beast just lay on the floor, not moving, seeming stiff. I saw that the beast had no color, or seemed dull. It almost looked like it was stone. It was completely still.

I felt blood run down my face and down my neck. I saw that mom was in the room now. The first thing she noticed was the cut on my face. "Oh, my god, Mark!" she exclaimed, and then she froze; next she saw the beast, frozen on the floor. "What is that!?"

"That's ..." I started, "the flying beast that I told you guys about."

"Why is it still?" mom asked.

“I don’t know,” I said. I took a moment to try to think it through. I turned my gaze to dad, coming to a realization. “It stopped moving once dad turned the lights on. Then it felt lighter as if it weren’t pushing its foot down on me as hard, just its weight.”

“What are you try to say?” dad asked. “It froze when I turned the lights on?”

“Yeah,” I said. “Turn the lights off for a second.”

Dad went to the light switch and looked at both of us, and then he looked at the beast. I took a few steps back, not wanting to be too near. He flipped the switch, the lights turned off, and immediately the beast came back to life, standing up in a heartbeat. Dad instantly turned the lights back on.

The beast froze again, turning to stone; standing up this time. It was as if it were now a statue. It was creepy. It was looking directly at my eyes again, but this time it was frozen. I started to feel throbbing in my cheek. Blood was pressuring up at my cut.

“Mark,” mom said, “let’s get that cut clean.”

I walked to the sink and mom grabbed a clean cloth, wetting it with warm water. She started dabbing my wound and wiped away the blood, cleaning the cloth out. It stung as she cleaned it, but even so, I couldn’t help but look over at the statue of the beast.

“What are we going to do with this?” dad asked.

“Well,” I said, “since its stone,” I thought, “don’t you think we could break it?”

“That’s seems reasonable,” dad said. He ran down the stairs and thirty seconds later he returned back up with a hammer. “Here we are,” he said.

Dad walked up to the front of the statue and he seemed to be very nervous. He extended his hand with the hammer, but was afraid to get the rest of his body close to it. Mom had stopped dabbing my wound with the cloth to gaze over at dad and the statue. All three of us watch the statue.

Dad swung the hammer and made contact with the statue, immediately backing up to be prepared for anything. But the statue didn't move an inch. The statue now had a small dent in its chest. Dad swung again, making the statue actually crack, though still it didn't move. Dad hit it harder this time and a chunk broke off from it. He hit it again and it fell over, breaking completely, shattering.

Dad tested to see if this worked, to see if he killed it. He walked up to the light switch and turned the lights off. The chucks of the beast didn't move at all, and they were still stones. Then he turned the lights back on.

"I did it," dad said. "I killed it."

"Where'd that come from?" mom asked whomever.

Mom and dad looked at each other for a long time, seeming to be communicating with their faces. Dad was shaking his head and he lipped with his mouth, "*not yet.*" They were hiding something, but I had no clue what.

"What?" I asked. They both looked at me, and dad spoke.

"It seems to be ..." he started, "well ... uh ... um ... I don't know, actually. But this is so unreal."

Suddenly we heard a roar from outside. We all spun our heads. There were five more of them outside. And what was even scarier was that none of them were looking at either of my parents; all of them were staring directly at me. It was as if they wanted to come after only me. I was hated.

They all charged towards the house, but once they stepped foot into the kitchen doorway—of what used to be the doorway—they froze upon being touched by the light. Two of the beasts had noticed this and stopped coming any closer, not wanting to turn to stone. So it seemed that they had at least some intelligence.

Dad looked at these two, getting an idea. He ran to the fridge to grab a flashlight off from the top of it. He turned it on, shining it on the beasts after returning to the doorway. They partially turned to stone and were finding it difficult to move, being that they were half beast and half stone. They were trying to flee.

“Mark,” dad exclaimed. “Turn on the outside light!”

I ran to a series of light switches, flipping on the outside lights. Immediately, the remaining beasts turned to stone as the light turned on. Dad already had his hammer ready and he started beating away at the statues. He broke them all.

As things started to seem to calm down, mom went back to cleaning the wound on my cheek.

Dad came back inside and turned off all of the lights, seeing that it had worked. None of the beasts came back to life, all still stones; broken stones. Dad turned the lights back on and then grabbed a broom. He swept up mostly stone, but also the broken glass from when the first beast had broken through the glass, sliding kitchen door. He pushed all of the mess outside and swept it all onto the ground.

Mom had finished cleaning my wound, throwing the cloth away and grabbed a fresh one, still dry. “Hold this up to keep pressure on it,” mom told me.

I grabbed the cloth and pushed it against the wound on my cheek. It was still bleeding, so I had to use the cloth to stop the bleeding.

“Well,” dad said. “That was ... quite an experience.” He paused. “Hopefully there aren’t any more of them.” He paused for a long time, thinking. “We should get back to bed.” He said finally. “Just in case,” he continues, “sleep with the lights on.”

We all headed back to our rooms and into our beds. I don’t think that anyone got any sleep. For one, thinking about these beasts, and another for trying to sleep with the lights on. I stayed up all night, staring at the ceiling in bed.

The next morning—which, merely felt like the same day—I got out of bed, seeing that mom and dad were talking. Once they saw me they stopped. They pretended that they weren’t talking in the first place. Mom started making pancakes and dad started to read the newspaper.

“What’s going on?” I asked them both.

Dad didn’t even look up. “Looks like the local bank got robbed,” dad said, shaking his head with disgust.

“What?” I scoffed. “No, what were you talking about before I walked into the room?”

“Nothing.” They made faces as if they are clueless as to what I meant.

I knew that they were lying. I didn’t pursue it any further and just entered the living room to sit on the couch.

Mom finished making the pancakes and dad was the first to eat. Once he was finished he went off to work. I ate breakfast next with mom.

“Mom,” I asked. “Can I go to Bruce’s house?”

“Sure,” mom said, not really giving it much thought; she didn’t care where I went, so it seemed.

I took a moment to think about that. At times it seemed that my mother didn’t care what I did or where I went, but I knew that she cared. My mom is a great mother.

When I met Bruce, he had just woken up. I waited for him to finish his breakfast so that I wouldn’t let his mom hear us. Bruce met me back in his room. I explained to him about what happened last night with the hairy, winged beasts. I explained how they froze in the light, turning to stone. Bruce was amazed and he seemed a little more relieved. He started nodding his head.

“This is good,” he said. “Now we know how to stop them. We just have to get them all trapped in the light, and then we can just do what you guys did; break them apart.” He paused. “Have you guys seen any more around?”

“No,” I replied. “We slept with the lights on so that they would freeze if they got close enough, but no more came. They probably all hid somewhere safe to freeze when it becomes daylight.”

“So, we should try to find them now; it’s the safest time of the day.”

“We should tell Rachel about this,” I said, getting up.

“Good idea,” I couldn’t help but notice how Bruce was looking at my face, specifically my cheek.

“What?” I asked.

“Does your cheek still hurt?”

“Now that I think about it; it doesn’t.” I said.

“Are you sure that it ever had a puncture wound?”

“What, of course!” I wasn’t sure what Bruce was talking about, but when I felt my cheek I knew. I gasped. The wound was gone, completely. “It’s gone!” I exclaimed. “But how can that be. It was about an inch deep and three inches long ... but now it’s gone!”

“You know what, Mark?” Bruce asked. “You look very tired. Did you get any sleep at all?” I shook my head. “Well, maybe you were imagining it the whole time, because when you first came in here, your cheek never had a scar on it.”

“Even ask my parents,” I said. “My mom spent five minutes cleaning it.”

“Hmm. Well, let's just go to Rachel's house.”

I nodded. I just found it hard to believe. The wound was deep and it really hurt, but now there was no trace of an injury and it felt as if nothing had even happened.

“Alright,” I said. “Let's go to Rachel's.”

I knocked on the door of Rachel's house. There was a plate on the door with their last name on it: Stanbury. They had decorated the plate themselves, it being plain when they first bought it.

Bruce and I met Rachel in her room, and I explained what had happened, but I left out the part where the hairy winged beast cut my cheek, because now there wasn’t anything to prove it happened.

“So,” Bruce started saying, “I was thinking that we should go find them right now, while its daylight and they’re frozen.”

Rachel didn’t say anything for thirty seconds; she was still taking all of this in. She had seen them at the baseball park and now she was putting it together. “That sounds like a good idea,” she said. She paused. “That's just crazy. So ... these monsters freeze in the light?”

“Exactly,” I said.

“That's unbelievable.”

“Well, I could show you the broken stones of them.”

“You could, Mark, but ... these monsters are all so unbelievable, but I've seen them. I think that I can believe this too.”

“Alright, then,” Bruce said. “Let's go find these things.”

The three of us headed outside to look for the beasts frozen as stone. We checked the woods first. Where we live there are trees; tons of them.

We walked around the woods, stepping in swamps, and get whacked by tree branches, but nowhere did we find these monsters or beasts. We searched for hours and could not find a single hint or clue. These beasts found my house easily, but we couldn't find them within a few hours. Then I came to a realization.

"Guys," I said. "These beasts didn't show up at your houses. That's obvious, right?" I paused. "But, they showed up at my house; a whole bunch of them. *And* they were at the park, when *I* was there."

"What's your point?" Rachel asked.

"They only showed up when I was around."

"That's weird," Bruce said.

"They were only around for a couple of days, so that could be a coincidence." Rachel said.

"But here's another thing," I said. "You haven't heard anyone else talk about these things, except for us. These things are only coming after us ... why?"

None of them knew the answer and I didn't expect them to know.

For the rest of the day we decided to play some baseball, having nothing else to do and not having luck with finding these beasts as stone. We quit before it got dark, playing it safe.

It came time for bed. I was extremely tired, but I couldn't go to sleep, expecting any minute for a beast to show up. But none did. I waited for a half hour, until I fell completely asleep.

I dreamt about the beasts. They were everywhere, cornering me and only me; Bruce and Rachel were not in the dream. I tried to look for a way out, but I found none.

I looked at my surroundings, but I couldn't tell where I was. There wasn't any grass, but it was all dirt. The only place I knew of that was completely dirt was the pitcher's mound and home plate in the park, but this wasn't it; I had no idea where I was. But I didn't care. It was irrelevant; I just had to get away.

I tried to escape. Suddenly a beast jumped on top of me and pinned me to the ground, stabbing its claws of its foot into my chest. It roared, opening its mouth to eat me, but that was when I woke up.

I felt horrible. I was covered in sweat. I realized that it was just a dream. I immediately looked outside through the window, looking all around outside. There was no sight of the beasts at all. None of them were out and about.

The next day was completely the same. There was no sight of the beasts. They seemed to all disappear. Either they ran away in fear, or dad killed them all by shattering them with his hammer. Nevertheless, I didn't worry and I got right to packing for vacation.

The next week was planned to be our summer vacation; we weren't going to miss it. Bruce, Rachel and our families were taking a camping trip. I didn't mention, but we lived in Clyde, Ohio. Our vacation was in the upper peninsula of Michigan. We were going to visit the waterfalls.

A week passed without any more occurrences of the beasts. We carpooled, taking only two cars rather than three. There were nine of us total. Bruce, Rachel, myself and my parents were in one car group and Bruce's and Rachel's parents were in the other. It was a thirteen hour drive and dad insisted on not stopping, except for food and bathroom

breaks. My dad and Bruce's dad were the ones that stayed up to drive; the rest of us slept.

We made it to the camp site at eight in the evening, having left seven in the morning. We set up our tents and aired up the air mattresses. We roasted hot dogs over the campfire for dinner. We were all whipped and we collapsed in our beds to sleep some more.

I woke up in the middle of the night being awoken by a roar; it was from the hairy winged beast.

I looked all around, but I didn't see any shadows seeping through the tent. I looked at Bruce, and Rachel, but they were sound asleep. I realized that it was from my dream. With that I started to calm, trying to go back to sleep.

It was so silent that my ears started to ring. It became very irritating, resulting in making it hard to get back to sleep right away. The sounds of crickets chirping wasn't making it any easier. After a few more minutes I managed to fall asleep again.

The next morning I woke up and got out of the tent last. I saw Bruce and Rachel sitting at a picnic table by themselves. All of the adults were either standing or sitting by each other at another table. Rachel's dad was cooking some sausages over the campfire. I sat down next to Bruce and Rachel. Bruce looked as if he just woke up. Rachel confirmed it too; he had waked up just before I did.

We sat there for a minute before deciding what to talk about. We decided to discuss what we were going to do that day. Bruce was thinking about doing a hike, with everyone. A couple minutes later we all ate breakfast.

"I was thinking," Bruce spoke up, interrupting some conversations, and everyone looked. "We should take a walk around through the woods, to explore."

“That sounds like a good idea,” Bruce’s dad said. “Why don’t you go ahead with Mark and Rachel, we’ll be right behind you.”

Bruce’s mom looked at her husband, and then at Bruce. “You guys should get bug spray and first aid just in case.”

“Hon,” Mr. Anderson groaned. “Don’t worry about it.”

Bruce didn’t like his dad talking back to his mom like that. “No,” Bruce said. “We could use bug spray and first aid.”

Bruce, Rachel and I were already dressed for the hike and then Bruce’s mom sprayed us down with the bug spray. We all had backpacks to use, and Bruce’s mom, Mrs. Anderson, put first aid in his backpack. We were all set to go, all we needed now were hiking sticks; those we could find on our hike.

All of our parents were sitting next to the campfire, just talking. That must've been a life outside of work for them, just talk. I wasn’t even really sure if they were going to join later with our hike. But we weren’t going to wait anyway. The three of us set off on our hike.

We almost immediately found long sticks to use as our hiking sticks and we found the trails that led to some of the waterfalls and we started walking down them. This trail was four miles, so we got right to it and started walking.

The trail was sort of hard to follow at times, being just bare ground and packed dirt. There wasn't very much grass around, being that it was underneath the trees, out of the sunlight. At times we got to a point where we didn't know where it went. We had to look around to see where it seemed to start up again.

If we walked off the trail a bit, we would walk towards some mucky parts. Amazingly, Bruce decided that was where we were going to go once we lost the trail again. He led the way, walking right into some mudding ground, getting his shoe stuck. We couldn't help but laugh at him; I mean, what are friends for, right? We were just trying to spark the enjoyment of having this vacation. Bruce had to yank his foot out of the mud, almost losing his shoe, but it broke free.

We continued down the trail, thinking about how long we have walked already. It probably had been fifteen minutes.

There were numbers that we walked by, to tell us how much we have walked. We had reached the number two and we knew that that couldn't have meant that we've already walked two miles; it barely even felt like one mile. Maybe they were half miles.

Just then we saw an outdoor john right off the trail ahead. "That's strange," I said.

"What?" Bruce laughed at the sight of it. "Is this for people that can't hold it for an hour hike?"

"Apparently so," I said.

"Wait, guys," Rachel said as we go closer. "I don't think it's an outhouse."

“What else could it be, then?” Bruce asked.

We approached it, realizing that there wasn’t any sort stench to it like that of an outhouse. It didn’t have an in-use or occupied switch or anything of that nature above the door handle. I opened it up to see that there wasn’t even a toilet. Instead there was only the floor and walls. On the walls were buttons.

We realized that it was deeper than what it looked like from the outside. I walked inside, taking a look at the buttons.

Rachel and Bruce realized how big it was as they walked inside behind me. They then saw the buttons.

“What is this?” Rachel asked.

I studied it and saw that there were buttons to input numbers. There was a panel above them that displayed a date already in it. I pointed to it.

“Sixty-million B.C.E.” Bruce read from it.

“What?” Rachel asked. “Is that a year?”

“Yeah,” I said. “It looks like it.”

“That’s dinosaur time!” Bruce exclaimed. His face lit up. “Is this a time machine?”

I scoffed, disbelieving immediately. But then I think about the unreality of the beasts we encountered. “If it is, we probably don’t want to be in here,” I said.

“Why not?”

“Because we’ll be sent back to the dinosaurs’ time,” I clarified.

“Dude, time travel is not possible,” Bruce scoffed.

With just our luck, the door closed, seeming to by itself. The whole box started to rumble, emitting a humming sound. There were flashes of green and white.

“Open the door!” Rachel exclaimed.

I reached for the door handle and tried to open it. The door opened an inch and then forced back shut as if someone were on the other side pushing on it.

“Looks like it’s too late to leave now,” Bruce said.

It felt as if the box started to spin. We all lost our balance, falling down. The rumbling of the box and the humming grew stronger, causing us to feel very dizzy. It all finally stopped abruptly.

It became silent, except for birds singing and the hums of insects and bugs, though it all seemed louder. We all got to our feet. I reached for the door handle. I turned it, opening the door easily this time around.

We stepped outside, realizing that we weren’t in the forest anymore. We were standing out in an open plain, though there were trees in the distance.

Some of the trees snapped, falling over with a loud thud. What was worse than that was the sound of huge footsteps. We all heard a roar, the loudest we have ever heard. It was so strong and bold. I knew for sure that it *had* to be a dinosaur; we had to be in dinosaur time.

“Quick, back in the box; the ... time machine,” I exclaimed.

We all backed up into the time machine and I closed the door. We all waited for the time machine to rumble, hum and flash of light, but nothing happened. I pressed some buttons, but it didn’t do anything.

“Maybe we have to wait,” Bruce said.

“Yeah,” Rachel added, “maybe we have to wait for a timer to end, or something.”

We all realized that we were stuck here for a little while. Bruce knew now that this wasn't going to be cool. Not dinosaurs.

We were forced to leave the time machine, since it wasn't working. Having no idea where to go and what to do now, we were afraid. We knew that sooner or later dinosaurs would come out. We heard a faint screeching sound from above. We all looked up to see a pterodactyl high in the sky.

We would have liked to stay with the time machine, but it was rendered useless without its ability to travel through. So we walked away from it, hoping to find a safer place to be. We started to hear some chattering, but it wasn't people talking, it was some sort of dinosaurs. Then we heard some barking, not that of a dog. Spinning around to see what the sounds were coming from we saw a pack of velociraptors. Without a second of hesitation we ran for our lives.

I dared a glance behind as did Bruce a second later; they were gaining on us, getting ten feet closer each second. I couldn't imagine surviving this. It didn't take long for them to catch up to us; they were fast. A few run in front of us, forcing us to halt. A few come at our sides, and surely there were some behind us, but we couldn't move; we froze.

I looked for a way out, but found none. There was no opening. We were all terrified, our hearts pounded hard in our chests. Suddenly we all heard a scream, that of an insane looking man that jumped out of nowhere. The raptors all looked at the guy and they backed up a little, seeming to fear him, as if they knew him.

This guy was wearing rags as clothing; he had long hair and a full grown beard that needed severe trimming. He was carrying a spear and a bow. He threw a spear at a raptor and it struck into its the back. The raptor cried out in pain, running off, though struggling, while also trying to

pull the spear out of its back with its mouth. The guy then shot some arrows at the raptors with his bow. It looked like he made the spear, the arrows and the bow by himself.

I was kind of expecting this guy to be some sort of caveman, but he looked nothing like the drawings. I caught a glimpse of his face and I gasped. He looked like a normal human, being just a little older than us; maybe five to ten years older. He managed to scare off all of the velociraptors, amazing us.

“Are you guys alright?” he asked. He spoke English.

“How do you know our language?” Rachel asked, apparently thinking the same thing as I was.

The guy laughed. “What? Did you think that I was a caveman or something?” he paused, but we didn’t answer. “No, I’m sorry ... I’m just like you, but I got stuck here about a year ago, by that time machine.” He pointed to it, which was standing about three-hundred feet away. “I assumed you guys just got here, right?”

“Yeah,” I said.

“Have you tried to see if the time machine will go back?”

“Yeah, but it didn’t worked.”

“We’ll probably have to wait a little bit for it to charge.” A tear-drop rolled down his cheek. He began to shake his head. “It’s finally back!” Now he broke out in tears, not holding any bit of it back. “I can’t believe my eyes! I’ve been here too long, fighting to live with dinosaurs, eating disgusting plants and cooking unlucky small dinosaurs.”

I began to feel for him.

“But, we’re not safe here,” he said. “We’re out in the open; we’re just asking to get eaten.” He paused and looked around. Straight out from the time machine was a group of trees that he pointed at. “I think

that there's a Tyrannosaurs in there. He could hear us. We better find somewhere to hide, while we wait for the time machine to warm up or whatever. Follow me to my camp." He coughed to clear his throat. His voice seemed groggy.

We ran for about five minutes, following this guy. We made it to his camp, which had pointy sticks sticking in the ground at every angle at the entrance to keep large dinosaurs out. He had a house made out of tree branches and broken trees, which looked like he put together by tying together with vines and tree sap. We entered the house. The floor was just like it was outside; sand.

"We'll be safe in here," the guy said. "This place has worked for six months, thanks to my defense system that you guys saw out there."

"Those sticks in the ground?" Bruce asked.

"Yes," he said. He coughed. "Wow, it feels funny to be using my voice ... if I were stuck out here another year, I would become insane! I have to fight to keep my sanity." He paused. "By the way, my name's Adam."

"I'm Mark," I said.

"Bruce."

"And I'm Rachel."

"Nice to meet you guys," Adam said, "just it would be better if we didn't meet *here*."

I smirk at him, trying to make myself feel safe here.

"How long does it take for that time machine to warm up?" Bruce asked, becoming impatient.

"Someone doesn't like this place already," Adam said. "I'm not sure. It's not like it's mine. I only used it once, you know? I would have to

guess and say that we have to wait a half hour. You know, I arrived in it just like you guys did. I tried to go back, but it didn't work. I assumed it needed to recharge, but I waited too long. Until then, we stay here."

We heard a roar; a loud one.

"I thought you said that this place was safe!" I exclaimed.

"It was," Adam said. "I think that the dinosaurs got used to my scent, knowing that I was a threat to them, so we didn't bother each other, but you guys are new to them."

Adam grabbed some spears, knives, bows and arrows, and slingshots, and he handed them to us. Then he grabbed some for himself. "Just in case," Adam said. "Hopefully, my defense system over there will work."

"Hopefully?!" Bruce exclaimed.

Adam hushed us. "Quiet!" he exclaimed in a whisper. "And, have a little faith in me, please."

We heard the roar again and I couldn't help but take a peek through the opening.

"It's a Tyrannosaurs, right?" Adam asked, and I nodded with fear. "I know that kind of roar. The fiercest roar in the world."

"But, isn't the spinosaurus bigger?" Bruce asked.

"That's a misconception. The Tyrannosaurs' are the biggest. That's why they're named after king lizard." He paused. "Trust me, I know." Bruce couldn't help but look at one of the many scars on Adam's skin.

The Tyrannosaurs Rex started walking our direction, sniffing the air and growling.

"Can it hear us?" Rachel asked.

“Yes, but not that that matters,” Adam said. “It doesn’t know the difference between our voices and the wind. But, it does smell us.”

The Tyrannosaurs walked up to the defense system and stopped just short of it to smell the air. Then it looked directly at us; it smelled us entirely. Then it roared loudly, bigger than before.

“Get ready to use your weapons,” Adam said quickly. “But wait, I want to see how my defenses work.”

The Tyrannosaurs got through roaring, starting to run forward towards us. It started shrieking, its feet getting stabbed and poked from the sticks pointing in everything direction sticking in the ground.

The Rex tried to continue walking, being stubborn, but it only stepped on more, causing it more pain. Finally it couldn’t stand anymore, backing up. I looked at its feet; they were bleeding badly, actually gushing out blood.

Now Adam’s defense had been a little damaged. The Tyrannosaurs roared at us and then walked off, limping, still having some sticks stabbed into its feet.

“It worked,” Adam whispered to himself. “My defenses worked!”

We were terrified for our lives, but thankfully the Tyrannosaurs had gone. With Adam’s presence we felt at ease, starting to calm down.

“That thing looked smarter than I thought,” Bruce said.

“Yeah,” Adam said. “They’re not dumb as you think. People think that they can’t see you if you don’t move. But it can smell you; that’s how it finds you. They don’t have excellent eyesight, but it’s enough to know where you are, enough to move around. It was smart enough to know better than to keep walking on my defenses.”

Adam smiled, he was proud of his defense system and how it worked so well. It wouldn’t work for Velociraptors, though, but they probably didn’t bother him anyway, for other reasons, most likely.

I couldn’t imagine living out here for a year. I wasn’t sure if I would survive. I looked at Bruce and Rachel; they were looking all around, trying to be conscious of their surroundings. Adam, on the other-hand, looked excited. He was probably still happy that his defenses worked.

Suddenly, we all heard a tree snap, followed by heavy footsteps. The three of us flinched, but Adam didn’t even move.

“Brachiosaurus,” he said, showing no fear at all. “They won’t bother you.”

“How much time has gone by?” Bruce asked, nervously.

Adam looked up at the sky and then thought. "About twenty minutes since you guys arrived." He paused. "I guess we could start heading back to the time machine."

Adam led the way to the time machine, and we all stayed close to him. We arrived at the open plain moments later, seeing that an allosaurus was now examining the time machine. It was just a bit smaller than the Tyrannosaurs, but not as bulky. It had a figure more similar to a velociraptor, but it was bigger. It took only a second after we spotted it that it spotted us.

It looked away from the time machine, completely ignoring it. It looked at us and growled, drooling. It came right for us.

"Follow my lead!" Adam exclaimed. "Run towards it now!"

"What?!" Bruce exclaimed.

Before anyone could answer, Adam started running towards the Allosaurus. We ran with Adam, wanting his protection. The Allosaurus was within ten feet of us and then it jumped right over us. It misjudged the distance, since we were running. Adam kept running, though, going right for the time machine, but he stopped short.

"Drop your weapons and get inside!" he exclaimed.

We all dropped our weapons right outside and jumped into the time machine. Adam threw his spear at the Allosaurus and it struck it in the shoulder; it cried out in pain. Adam jumped into the time machine and closed the door.

"Do you know what to do?" Rachel asked.

"Not really," he admitted. "Just like you guys, I've only been in this thing once."

Adam looked at the buttons and found one that looked like a "summit" button. He was about to press it when the whole machine fell

to the side. We were piled on top of each other. The Allosaurus ran into it. Adam didn't hesitate and he pushed himself up, lifting all of us up that were on top of him, and with his other hand he pressed the button.

Suddenly the machine started rumbling and humming. The flash of green and white light came. The machine started to spin uneasily, banging against the ground, being on its side. We rocked back and forth inside the machine, hitting each other. As the machine picked up speed it spun fast, standing itself straight up. At the last second it got the brightest it could ever get, and then it all stopped.

It became silent again and still, except for the sounds of birds and insects. Adam opened the door and smiled. He couldn't believe his sight. He stepped outside. "Oh, how I missed Tahquamenon Falls!" he exclaimed.

We all stepped outside and we all realized something that didn't seem right. We heard a creaking sound coming from the time machine, as if there was weight on top of it. Then we heard the growling. All at once, as if right on cue, we all turned around to see the Allosaurus on the top of the machine.

It looked right at us, growling. It was in pain and it still had the spear in its shoulder, but it also looked dizzy, probably from the machine just spinning before. Somehow it was attached to it. We all backed up, even Adam. He didn't have any weapons, only the spear that was in the Allosaurus' shoulder.

The Allosaurus jumped off of the machine, though not easily. One of its claws had a catch on the machine, which must be how it hung on. It landed right before us. It wobbled to keep its balance. Adam smiled, sensing weakness. He quickly stepped forward to pull the spear out of its shoulder; it let out a cry. Adam used the spear and stabbed the Allosaurus in the stomach several times, over and over again. The Allosaurus groaned and hissed at Adam as it fell over to the ground. With Adam's

final strike he stabbed it in his eye; it went through to its brain. The Allosaurus let out a last breath of life.

The three of us just stood there, grasping this all in. We looked at Adam, viewing him as some sort of warrior or something along those lines. Adam just started back at us, as if nothing just happened.

“We can't leave this here,” Adam said. He looked behind the machine at the trail and saw the river, which would lead us to the waterfalls. “We gotta dump the Allosaurus in the river.”

We all helped Adam drag the Allosaurus in the river. You could see where we dragged it, because of the blood trail we made to drag it into the river. Hopefully people would think that an animal killed another. But then we thought that that would scare some people. So just in case we pushed leaves and dirt over the trail, covering the blood trail.

Adam turn to face the time machine, scowling at it. He kick the door closed. It didn't do anything, since it would need to *recharge* again. He pushed it close to the river, then kicked it, sending it over into the river. It electrified and sparkled green and then blue; something inside of it exploded and it burst into flames.

“There!” Adam exclaimed. “There's no way I'm going back now!” Adam looked around to see where he was, even though he already knew, It was probably just hard for him to believe. “Tahquamenon Falls,” he sighed. “I can't believe my eyes; I'm back.” With that, he didn't even so much as say a goodbye and he ran off.

Poor guy.

A year in dinosaur land, but only a half hour for us.

We continued our hike, not focused on looking forward to seeing any of these waterfalls at all. All we could think about was the dinosaurs, the time machine and the Allosaurus. We had come so close to having an Allosaurus come into our world. It had come back with us, but thanks to Adam he had killed it. If it weren't for Adam, we probably would've died once we set foot on the ground back in sixty-million B.C.

I felt so relieved. We were only waiting for the time machine to warm back up; we weren't there to find a home. Things could've been much worse. We could've been surrounded by dinosaurs in every direction to be killed by, but the one time it did happen Adam was there to scare them off. We didn't even get as much as a single scratch. All thanks to Adam ... wherever he went to.

I felt happy for Adam. He had to live with the dinosaurs for a whole year and now he was finally back home. He could finally be back to living a normal life. Or I would like to think so, though it should be obvious that he wouldn't have a normal life anymore. His life changed.

"Where could that time machine have come from anyway?" Bruce asked.

"No idea," I replied. "I was thinking the same thing."

"And why was it in the middle of the U.P.?" Rachel asked.

"Yeah," I added. "Why was it here of all places?" I paused. "Right where we would be?"

That statement sparked something in my brain, making me wonder about that fact.

“Did someone put it there on purpose hoping we would get trapped back in time?” Bruce asked, speaking my exact thoughts.

“I wonder,” I said. “If so ... why? Does someone want us dead?”

Rachel gasped and stopped walking. “Those hairy winged beast! They could’ve come from the same people that made that time machine!” She paused. “I think that someone wants us dead.”

“You could be right,” I said. I couldn’t imagine why, though.

“No, I think she *is* right,” Bruce said. “Why else would two impossible things happen to us? Especially you, Mark. Those beasts were mainly after you.”

“Now you say it.”

“We gotta find this out.”

“We gotta tell our parents.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” Rachel said. “They won’t even believe us. We destroyed the evidence.”

“Okay,” I said. “Let’s hold off on that for now.”

“Man!” Bruce exclaimed. “I feel like we’re living inside a scary children’s book.”

I chuckled softly, agreeing.

We continued our walk, having about two miles left until we reached the waterfalls. We looked back every once in a while to see if our parents were behind, but they weren’t. We arrived at the waterfalls and saw what a beauty Tahquamenon Falls was. We also saw how all of our parents were lazy. They had beaten us here by driving, taking probably about five minutes at the most. Apparently that had to wait for us.

“We were so worried about you guys,” my mom said. “What took you so long?”

“Honey,” my dad said. “Don’t worry about it; they had to walk four miles. I told you.”

“Yeah,” I added and looked at Bruce and Rachel. “That’s the least of your worries.” I was referring to the journey to back in time, but I knew that we should not tell it, even with what happened with the hairy winged beasts.

Instead, we tried to enjoy all of our company and the waterfalls. Tahquamenon Falls looked like root beer, or tea; it was brown water. Where it sat it looked clear, but as it fell it looked like root beer. I almost wanted to drink it. But of course it was unsafe to go over the fence to take a sip.

We looked over the railing to see that there were many different coins in the water. People had most likely made wishes and flicked their coins into it. Or ... people just wanted to flick a coin into it for fun.

The rest of the vacation was very fun, though we would never forget what had happened in a short period of time of our hike. Those dinosaurs, Adam ... I often wondered how Adam lived from then on; I never have seen him since. Hopefully, he was doing much better now that he was back here.

The least favorite thing about vacations is unpacking and tearing down. We had to take down our tents and power cords and such. That took about an hour and it seemed harder to repack it into the vehicles, as it always would.

We took our time heading back to our homes, taking bathroom breaks, gas pumping breaks, and breaks to eat. We watched some movies on the way as our parents alternated in driving. We used the vehicle’s stereo for the movie, having surround sound, but only having a portable DVD player as the screen.

I didn't know about Bruce or Rachel, but I wasn't paying any attention to the movie. I was looking directly at the screen, but I was completely zoned out.

I couldn't stop thinking about the time machine and the dinosaurs. Surely, someone had made that time machine, someone smart. The smartest person I knew was Dr. Randall, but he was also the craziest person I have known. I doubt that he made the time machine. How could it end up in the upper peninsula of Michigan anyway? I figured that it was made from someone who had something to do with the hairy winged beasts that turned to stone. It just had to be it.

Another thing that bothered me was the fact that the hairy winged beasts were mainly after me. Bruce and Rachel only saw them when I was with them in the baseball park.

Then there's this deal with the time machine. Bruce and Rachel had only bumped into it because of me being near ... right? But what about Adam being stuck back in time?

Then a thought occurred to me. What if Adam had travelled back in time a minute just before us, but the time machine went ahead a year? I could've been just for me, but Adam could've just stumbled on it a minute earlier.

It seemed likely for that to be the case. It made me wonder, though, about the time it took for the machine to warm up, or recharge. Maybe Adam went through it a half hour before.

I had no idea when the movie finished, but I didn't realize that it had until we arrived at home, well Rachel's home. She grabbed all of her stuff and her parents grabbed their stuff. We dropped Bruce off at his house next and he and his parents grabbed their stuff. Lastly, we arrived at our house, with just our vehicle. We unpack and I collapsed on my bed in my room. I realized how much I had missed sleeping at home.

Thoughts were still storming around in my mind. I couldn't get it out of my mind that someone could be after me; after me, not Bruce or Rachel as much. They were just stuck with me; it was unfortunate for them. Two impossible things being possible; happening to me. I couldn't help but think that someone wanted me dead. But who? And most importantly, why?

I drifted off to sleep and dreamt of weird dreams. I dreamed of falling off cliffs, riding a bicycle, watching TV, turning on a fan, listening to music, and tons of other random stuff. I woke up in the middle of the night, remembering what I just dreamt. They were bizarre, stuff I never knew that I would actually dream about.

I fell asleep again. This time I dreamt about totally different things. I dreamt about a horrible lightning storm, it destroying a lot of things. Even some things were falling from the sky, other than lightning.

Something landed in our yard of my house that I was in when I was a kid. I had moved to a different house that I am in now. But this almost seemed like a past event coming back to me. My parents walked out of the house, looking younger. They looked at the sky and saw the horrible thunder and lightning storm. But the reason that they had walked out of the house was to satisfy their curiosity to what had landed

in the yard. Whatever had landed had created a crater in the ground and it was smoking. My parents walked up closer and they saw what seemed to be some sort of foreign equipment. It looked like a ship.

Just then I woke up; mom had flipped on the bedroom light. I quickly sat up and looked at mom. She smiled and said that breakfast was ready and she walked off. I was confused about the dream. It was even more bizarre than dreaming normal things, obviously. It seemed so real. Even now that I was awake, it still seemed real.

I kept seeing the image of my parents looking down at a ship. The image of the ship was burned in my mind. It was a space ship. An alien ship.

I walked out of my bedroom, feeling sick. My whole body ached and I felt wet, soaked in my sweat. I got up to the table and got ready to eat bacon and eggs. Somehow something left my mouth.

“A space ship?” I mumbled to myself.

Mom and dad lifted their heads in unison and looked at me in shock.

“What?” I asked.

“What ... did ... you say?” dad asked me.

“I ... uh ... spaceships.”

Mom and dad looked at each other for about a minute, somehow communicating with their faces. They shook their heads and then they went back to what they were doing.

“What?” I asked.

Mom looked up. “Nothing,” she said.

“Okay!” I exclaimed feeling frustrated. I knew my parents were trying to hide something from me, acting strangely. “What is it? Spill the

beans. You guys are not telling me something, and I'm sure it's about me!"

Mom looked at dad and then back at me. "Honey, I wish we could tell you the truth, but not right now. You're not ready."

"Ready for what?"

"We can't tell you," dad said. "It's not time. In time, you'll know ... just not now."

I sighed, having no idea what they were talking about, but, oh, how I wished I knew. Instead, I went to eating my breakfast.

I thought about the dream again; it was a lightning storm and a spaceship that my parents found. I mumbled "spaceships" and my parents were dumbfounded, as if it meant something. What, have our lives been invaded with aliens that I do not know about? Is that how these flying beasts and time machine came about?

I found myself exhausted. Vacation made me tired. I went back into my room and collapsed on my bed. I stared at the ceiling, thinking about the time machine.

Thankfully what happened back in time wasn't bad at all. We could've got eaten by dinosaurs, or stepped on ... but we didn't get so much as a scratch. We were so lucky.

I felt bad for Adam; he had lived a year in dino-time.

If all of this was true, and this wasn't coincidental, then who was doing this? Who could've released those hairy flying beasts and the time machine? I hadn't had a clue. I didn't want to mention the time machine to my parents; either they wouldn't believe me, or they would look at each other funny and say that I'm not ready to know yet. I had no idea what they were talking about, but I was dying to.

That day I went to Bruce's house, having the theme: *time machine* basically written on my forehead. It was the same for Bruce. Once we entered his room, we burst into a discussion about this time machine.

It must've been all that was on Rachel's mind as well, because then she opened the door, entering the room and closing the door behind her. She probably called one of our parents to see where we were at; or she knew to come here, we usually met at Bruce's house to just talk.

They both talked about how sorry they felt for Adam and how lucky we were. I couldn't agree more with that, but I just had to bring up something more.

"Guys," I said. "I feel that I'm the center of attention for these ... events ... first with those hairy flying beast, well ... remember about how all of those beasts were at my house and my dad and I had to break them to pieces when they froze in the light?" They both nodded. "Well, they didn't show up at your houses; the only other time you really saw them was at the park, right?" They both nodded.

"Well, except I did see one in my yard," Bruce said, "but only for a second and it was gone. But we already know this Mark, what are you getting at? Someone is after you?"

"Yeah, well that is my point; they were after me. The time machine; I think that it was for me. You guys were just with me."

"Mark, don't say that," Rachel said. "How could this be all about you?"

"Yeah, it's not like someone wants you dead," Bruce said.

I tilted my head. “Are you sure about that?” I asked. “I mean those flying beast were seeking death.” I was about to tell them about the scar it created on my cheek, which I thought mom had cleaned, but it was never there; I had tried to tell Bruce, though. I started to think that I imagined it somehow.

I took a glance outside and saw how depressing it looked. It was so rainy and mucky outside. It was very unlike summer. It was also humid and sticky, it felt horrible outside. I was glad to be in here, in Bruce’s house; or any house for that matter, I didn’t care. It just felt icky outside.

For most of that day, we stayed at Bruce’s house. We talked about the time machine for another hour and finally we got to talking about normal stuff; stuff we missed talking about. Stuff about what made us friends, having fun and laughing.

I said goodbye to both Rachel and Bruce and headed home, being only just about two blocks from his house. I didn’t have a hoodie, or any hat for that matter, to help with the rain. I usually walked by myself on my walks home. Normally no one else would be around. But this time I felt a pair of eyes coming from somewhere.

I just had that uneasy feeling that I was being washed. No matter where I looked, though, I didn’t see anyone. Just then I felt a tug on my pants.

I froze and immediately looked down at my feet and behind me, but I didn’t see a single thing. I could’ve sworn that I felt someone touch my pants, as if someone pulled on them or something. I finally made it home, never easing the feeling of being spied on. I entered my room and took off my top layer of clothes to change and took off my shoes. I changed shirts and I sat on my bed. Suddenly I heard something hit the floor.

I looked down to see that something had fallen from my pocket. There was a glassy-looking ball, or sphere, on the floor. I picked it up. I

have never seen it before. Then I realized that that was what I must've felt earlier; what I thought was a tug at my pants, but it was probably this ... marble landing in my pocket.

I looked closer at the marble and realized that it looked like it had an image inside of it. I could see trees inside of it. I thought that it was a reflection at first, but my curtains to the window were closed.

I set the marble down on my dresser not worrying about it. Instead I ate supper with my parents and later went to bed. The next day I got up, remembering about the marble. I look on my dresser expecting to see it still there, but it wasn't anymore.

I shrugged. It was not like I needed it. It's just ... where'd it come from? One of the many wonders in my life now ...

Flashback. Year: 2009

Senior Year, HS

Being a senior actually felt exciting. I was happy to be done with school. I wasn't sure if I wanted to attend a college or not; my parents hadn't. I wasn't sure about whether Bruce's or Rachel's parents had either. In the years that had past, there hadn't been any events where our lives were put at stake; no encounters with mythical beasts or anything of that sort. I was starting to forget about these things that were happening, until this morning.

I woke up to see that something that I had put on my dresser five years ago had now reappeared in the same exact spot; the marble. It was shocking to see it there; I had no idea where it had come from. I yawned and stretched, picking it up.

Immediately, I felt different. The whole room felt different. The lights flickered and wind picked up in my room, even though I didn't have any windows opened. The wind grew stronger and the lights burned out. A second later the lights lit back up, but they projected purple light.

I felt nervous. Something strange was happening. I blamed the marble. I look down at it.

The whole room started to shake. A picture of myself fell off of the wall. A calendar fell. Suddenly, the marble fell out of my hands and fell to the floor, rolling to the middle of the room. The marble then started to float into the air. I couldn't believe my eyes. Just then the marble seemed to open up, smoothly, and the air started spinning.

The air started to warp and a purple circular field of energy started to form. It looked like what would be a portal. Once it finally transformed, my whole room changed and all of the wind and shaking stopped. My room was no longer my room.

I looked around; I was not anywhere near my room. I was outside, but it looked completely different. The sky was sunnier than what it was a minute ago. The grass seemed too ... pointy. The air felt different, but it was breathable. Suddenly, I heard a roar; of course, right?

I spun around to see an overly sized man, with rags as clothing. He had pointy ears and a pinkish-red skin color. This guy was the thing that had roared, and then I realized that it wasn't a man at all, but it was an ogre.

For a split second the whole sky filled with lightning and it went back to being sunny the next split second. I couldn't help but notice the bizarreness of it.

The ogre looked up at the sky, curious to what that was about or just to see what I was looking at, because maybe that was normal here; wherever *here* was. He quickly lost interest in the sky and he looked back at me, roaring again.

"Who are you?" he asked, furiously.

"Mark Wills," I said.

"Is that supposed to mean something?" he grunts.

"Apparently not," I said, terrified.

"Well, whatever you are, you don't belong here, so therefore you're dead." He picked me up by my arm. "I'm hungry!"

The ogre threw me over his back but kept a hold on my arm. The sudden weight of my body being put onto my arm was very painful. I had felt a pop in my shoulder. Something had dislocated. I screamed in pain.

The ogre did well to ignore my screams and continued walking. I knew that this ogre was serious and would probably eat me ... there was no one to help me. I had to flee.

Each step the ogre took made the pain in my arm worse. It took all of the strength I had to hold myself together. I tried to pull my body up with my arm with the dislocated shoulder, but only caused myself to scream in pain. With my free arm I grabbed a hold of the ogre's shoulder to release some of my weight off of my dislocated shoulder.

"What are you doing?" the ogre asked me without even looking over his shoulder.

With the ogre's free arm, he threw his arm at me and hit me in the head. It was almost enough to knock me out, but I held on to consciousness. Instead, I lost a grip of his shoulder with my good arm and all of my weight fell back onto my dislocated shoulder. I was going to pretend that he knocked me out, but failed, not being able to hold back a scream for the pain.

With my feet, I started kicking the ogre. At first it didn't do a thing to him and he even laughed, but then suddenly something *kicked* in, so to speak. I kicked the ogre in his back, where I had been kicking him, and it sent him down the ground. He had to let go of me so as to catch his fall. I jumped backwards and stood my ground. My right arm was limp, the one with the dislocated shoulder. I tried to pop it back into place, but it hurt too much. I started running backwards and then I turned around and ran. I didn't want the ogre to get me, obviously.

It took even more strength than before, but I used my good arm and popped my shoulder back into place. It felt better now and I felt relieved, but it hurt in the process. It still hurt though, but it was healing, stinging and warming up; burning; a lot better than being dislocated.

I dared a look back and realized that the ogre was still on the ground and I stopped running. I couldn't believe my eyes. How could a

puny human, like myself, knock an ogre over? Especially when I was on him; not having any sort of advantage. The ogre was trying to get up, but he struggled while holding his back, trying to relieve pain. I thought that there was no way I kicked him that hard. No freaking way. I heard a sound come from behind me, and I spun around.

There was another ogre. First he was looking at me, but then he saw the other ogre cry in pain from his back. He was confused, and then he looked at me. He picked me up by my shirt. "Did you do that to him?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I did," I said, proudly, but I was also scared of what this ogre would do. I was trying to make my voice sound strong.

"How? You're so little ... what are you anyway?"

"A human being."

"Never heard of such a thing." He scoffed, throwing me down to the ground. He placed a foot on me to pin me down.

He stepped right on my bad shoulder and I groaned in pain.

"What's the matter?" he scoffed. "Wow, you really are feeble!"

The ogre pushed down harder on my bad shoulder. I couldn't stand any more pain, so with my other arm I hit his foot. To my surprise I pushed his foot off of me. He lost his balance and fell.

I jumped to my feet and I couldn't believe my eyes. I couldn't believe that I just shoved an ogre off of me. These things had to be stronger than me, right? I looked back at the first ogre. He had finally got up and he walked slowly back to his *house*, holding his back up. The ogre in front of me got up as quickly as he could.

I wanted to test something; I was curious, feeling less nervous.

I lifted my arms. "Come on," I yelled. "Is that all you got?!"

He lifted his arms and was about to push me, but I grabbed a hold of his hands and pushed back. His hands were huge compared to mine. We stood in place, trying to push each other. The ogre looked very confused, and I was sure that the look on my face wasn't very different.

"Wow," the ogre said. "You're a strong little bugger, aren't ya?"

"I guess so," I said.

I tried to push him harder, succeeding in shoving him backwards, causing him to have to take a couple steps to keep himself from falling. I stepped towards him and swung my fist, connecting it with his nose. Immediately he grabbed it as to try to relieve the pain as it started to bleed. With his other arm, the ogre swung at me, very slowly and I quickly ducked.

The ogre groaned loudly, yelling in pain. He gave up holding his nose and came towards me, determined to kill me. He threw both of his

heavy arms at me, trying to grab and squeeze me, but I ducked underneath him, somersaulting between his legs.

I stood to my feet from behind him while he spun around. We made eye contact. I readied my foot and kicked high, hitting him in the chest. He was sent flying through the air ten feet until he hit the ground.

I couldn't hold back a smile and I actually laughed. I couldn't believe how easily I could take on these ogres. It didn't make any sense, there was no way I was this strong.

This was a different world, that's for sure. And maybe the gravity was different in this world.

What else didn't make any sense was what had happened in my bedroom. The glassy sphere, or marble, had come to life and it must've opened up a portal, sending me here. But ... where did the marble come from?

The ogre slowly got to his feet, hollering very loudly while charging at me. When he was within a couple feet from me, I was going to jump out of the way, but instead I jumped to the side and resulted in being ten feet in the air. I had jumped super high! I landed down properly onto my feet. I couldn't believe myself. My weight felt as it normally should, but somehow I was exhibiting incredible strength in this strange world; I knew that this just couldn't be Earth.

Suddenly, ogres appeared in every direction. They looked to see the ogre after me, and then looked back at me. They realized how the one ogre wanted me dead, since I didn't belong here. They all charged at me.

An ogre from behind me picked me up and threw me over an ogre and into another ogre's arms. The ogre pulled me up by my shirt with one arm, and with his other arm he punched me in the nose. Now I knew how it felt and it hurt. I felt weak and defeated. I didn't go anywhere, since the ogre was still holding me by my shirt.

I kicked my leg out and hit him in the face, returning the favor. He cried in pain and dropped me. I landed on my feet, having to bend my knees a bit as to not hurt myself from the height I dropped, even though it wasn't as much as it was when I jumped.

An ogre in front of me hurtled at me, but I held my ground. When he was a foot away he threw his arms out to grab me, but I backed out of the way and pulled his arms down; sending all of his weight crashing down into the ground, head-first.

Another ogre from behind grabbed me, pulling me by my neck. My neck was lodged in his elbow. I couldn't breathe and my vision started to blur. I lifted my arms and started punching the ogre in the eyes. He tried to keep hold of me, but I hit him harder this time forcing him to drop me. I landed, realizing that I had gouged his eye ball. He was screaming in more pain than any of the other ogres I've touched. His eye ball was bleeding and he was holding it, but seemed to fail as it actually fell out of its socket!

I couldn't believe my strength here.

I heard heavy footsteps come charging at me from behind. I jumped ten feet into the air and did a single back flip, jumping over several ogres. All of the ogres were amazed at the height that I had just jumped, just as I was. This was unbelievable.

Suddenly, an ogre's fist came out of nowhere and punched me in the face, sending me backwards. Another fist hit me in the stomach, and another hit me in the back of my head. I fought back, punching every ogre that got in my way. There was just too many of them, no matter how many I hit, another would follow through and hit me back. I had to flee. With that, I jumped over all of them in a single leap and started running, having absolutely no idea where I was going.

I realized that I was aching everywhere in pain; having cuts and bruises all over. In the moment, I had thought that it was just my shoulder that hurt, but now I felt pain everywhere else as well.

I kept running, looking everywhere for a way to get out of this place. There was only one thing that had stood out as different. Aside from all of these trees, rocks, grass, and these crappy houses stood a very tall building. It had to be a couple of miles away. I decided that that was where I was going to run to.

I wondered if it was the right choice; running towards the place that stands out the most. But it was the only thing that was different. I had no other choice, so I ran towards the tall building.

I felt something dripping from my eyebrow, immediately whipping it away; it was blood. I reached to feel the back of my head, collecting blood onto my fingertips. I could swear that I was covered in blood.

Strangely enough, it seemed that all of my wounds were starting to feel tingly; burning up as if they were starting to heal. I imagined that with these wounds it would take a few weeks to heal.

Right now my priority was getting to that building, having nowhere else to go.

I ran past so many ogres, all confused as to *what* I was, where I was running to and why. It seemed that these things haven't seen a human before, but I knew what they were, only because of seeing them made up on TV, and yet here they were; real ogres. It makes me wonder how they came about on TV ... did someone else visit this place and tell

stories about it ... and it eventually wound up on TV? It's one of life's many mysteries.

I wondered if taking big leaps—taking advantage of my strange strength in this unusual world—would get me there faster. I begin running with a spring in my steps, taking long jumps. It surely sped me up, saving me about a half hour. I was amazed with every leap I took; this profound strength was astonishing.

I looked behind and saw that ogres had gave up running after me. It took another five minutes before I had made it to the tall building. Now being present before it, it seemed to look more like a castle.

There was a gate in the front guarded by two ogres. I wasn't going to even bother stopping, I just kept running, using my speed and strength and I jumped right over the gate. The two ogres spun around and tried their quickest to unlock lock the gate to run on after me. I ran up a long path and made it to the castle door.

I hesitated for a second and opened the door. Inside the castle was a huge room with a huge chandelier hanging from the ceiling. Typical room for the entry of a large building, I assume.

I heard the two ogre guards running after me. I sprinted, running deeper into the castle to get away from them. There weren't any ogres inside anywhere. There were rooms everywhere, though, but none of them seemed appealing, all except one. I ran up to the door and opened it.

Inside sat a man, an actually man, in a rocking chair. "You're the first human I've seen all day," I said.

The man looked up from the desk he was sitting at. He had his legs crossed and his fingertips together, looking as if he were meditating about something; obviously I just interrupted him.

“And where'd you come from?” the man asked, as I closed the door behind me.

He didn't seem *too* upset that I just barged in here. He kept calm and collected.

“Earth,” I replied, still not sure of what this place was.

The man's eyes lit and he sat up straight, being very surprised.

“Earth!?! How in the world of St. Reynolds did you get here?” he exclaimed.

“I found some sort of marble looking thing and it opened up a portal and sent me here.”

“Well, that's unfortunate.” He paused, seeming to know what I was talking about.

“How'd you get here?” I asked.

“What?” he chuckled, knowing what I was thinking. “I was born here, along with my parents and their parents and so on.”

“So, it's not just ogres that live here?”

“Of course not.” He saw how beat up I was. “How'd you even survive those ogres?”

“I don't know; I must have some kind of strength here.”

He narrowed his eyes at me. “What were you doing in their land?”

I shrugged. “I don't know; that's where the ... portal sent me.”

He scrunched his eyebrows and shook his head. “That shouldn't have happened. Portals are supposed to be sent in the middle of both territories, not directly in one or the other. Someone must've reprogrammed your Reynotic sphere.”

“Reynotic sphere?” I asked.

“The marble,” he replied. “Where'd you get the sphere?”

“I don't know; it just showed up one day.”

“I think someone wanted you to end up in the ogre's territory ... for whatever reason. I can only imagine that the person who did that to you hates you. Because anyone who enters the ogre's territory is asking to be killed. Maybe he wanted to have you killed ... but apparently he failed.”

“What? Who?”

“I have not the slightest clue!” he scoffed.

“Alright,” I held up my hands, not wanting him to get angry with me. “Can you get me home, back to earth?”

“Yes, I can,” he said, getting up from his chair. I realized that he was very tall, a little over six feet. “You'll have to follow me to the ... *portal base*.” He seemed to have simplified the term for my understanding; surely the portal base had another name for it.

The tall man led me out of the back entrance of the castle and we walked to a facility with a very large base. After ten minutes, we finally made it to a very large room that had some sort of huge circular structure. The tall man walked me up to some men running the structure, or machine.

“This guy needs a free pass to Earth,” the man said. “He unfortunately arrived here, in the ogre's territory. He's not even supposed to be here.”

“I'm sorry,” the worker said. “I'm not allowed to give free passes, even if you say so your Excellency.”

The man, or Excellency, sighed and pulled out some coins from his pocket and handed them to the worker. The worker put them through a slot and the machine kicked to life and a portal appeared in the middle of the circle. The man pulled up a hologram that showed Earth.

“Where exactly do you live?” he asked me.

I stepped forward and zoomed in on the US and into Ohio. Then I zoomed way in and found our house. “There,” I said.

“Okay,” the worker said. He selected the house as the location and typed in something and pressed a button.

The portal changed colors from green to purple.

“You're all set,” the worker said. “Just step through the portal.”

I looked at the tall man and nodded my head to him. “Thank you very much,” I said.

“No problem at all,” he said. “Now go on and get out of here.”

I walked up some steps and slowly walked through the portal. Suddenly the large room changed into my backyard; I was back home. I looked behind me and saw that the portal had disappeared.

I looked at myself, all beat up and sore. I ran up to the back door of our house and ran to my room. I went to open the door, and had to push hard to shove it opened. I looked inside to see that the portal was still opened. I was unsure of what to do. It felt very windy and I noticed that the portal was sucking everything in my room towards it. My dresser was scooting across the floor towards the portal. It stopped just a few feet away.

I looked up and saw that the light was still purple. I reached for the light switch and turned the light off, but the light was still lit purple. I flipped it on and off, but the portal was still there. Mom and dad ran up to me, and stood behind me and the doorway.

“What is that?” mom shrieked.

They must've just now heard the wind now that my door was open.

“It's a portal,” I replied. “A portal to a world that you don't want to go to, trust me I've just came back from it. Look at me.” I referred to my cuts and bruises.

My mother looked at my very quickly, being terrified at the injuries she saw on me. She looked as if she wanted to inspect me, but looked back at the portal.

“How do you close it?” dad asked.

“I don't know.”

My dresser gave way and was pulled into the portal. The wind was picking up and I held myself in the doorway. I looked underneath the por-

tal to where it was coming from and I saw the Reynotic sphere. It was still controlling the portal. I had to destroy it.

“Dad,” I said. “Hold onto the door frame and hold me!” I had to yell now over the wind that had picked up in the room. “And mom, back up!”

“Why?” dad asked me.

“Just do it!!”

Dad grabbed a hold of the door frame and then he grabbed me by my arm. I let go off the doorframe and slid on the floor towards the portal, stopping when I reached the end of my dad’s reach. Dad squeezed my arm very hard, not wanting me to be pulled in. His hand became white, just as mine did. I reached my other hand out, grabbing the Reynotic sphere.

The wind picked up even stronger now. Dad lost his footing and slipped, falling down, getting sucked towards the portal; still, he held on to the doorframe. We began to float in the air, but thankfully dad kept a hold.

Mom had backed up further in the hallway, away from the pull of the portal.

With the Reynotic sphere in my hand, I hoped for the same strength that I had in the land of St. Reynolds, and surprisingly I did; I closed my fist, crushing the Reynotic sphere. The portal suddenly closed; all of the wind and gravity stopped, returning to normal. Dad and I fell to the floor.

Mom peeked into the room and saw that the portal was gone and we were still there. Dad looked at the crushed sphere in my hand, seeing that it was broken in a few pieces.

“Mark that looks like it’s as hard as marble,” he exclaimed. “How did ... did you ... brake that with your bare hands?”

“I don’t know,” I replied. I paused. “When I was in that world, I was very strong, having this strength, but ... now I still have it.” I scoff in disbelief. “I don’t know how that could be possible.”

Even though I wasn’t even in the world that long, it was long enough to have a story to tell. I began to tell them both the whole story about the place.

Mom and dad looked at each other very amazed. They started whispering something to each other. “It must be another one of his gifts,” I heard mom say.

“Wait, gifts?” I asked.

Both of my parents look at me and didn’t say a thing for ten full seconds. Dad sighed and looked at mom. “Should we tell him?”

“I don’t know,” mom said. “Is he ready?”

“Ready for what?” I asked them. “You know I can hear you.” I paused. “This is not the first time something bad has happened to me you know? If there is a reason for it, I need to know. You guys need to tell me what you're hiding.”

Dad looked at me and saw how beat up I looked; I look horrible. Then he looked back at mom. “I don’t think he's ready yet; I mean look at him.”

“I had twenty ogres attack me all at once!” I exclaimed. “And, ready for what?!” I was growing impatient.

Dad saw that I was telling the truth about fighting all of those ogres.

“Twenty ogres at once?” mom asked. Then she looked at dad. “Are you sure he's not ready?”

“I suppose he needs to know now,” dad said. He looked at me and sighed, seeing how impatient I was to know what they were talking about. “Mark,” dad said. “First of all ... these things that had happened shouldn't even be possible for someone normal. Those hairy beasts and then this —”

I cut him off. “I forgot to mention a time machine that sent Bruce, Rachel and I to dinosaur time on our vacation.”

“What?!” mom exclaimed.

“I didn't tell you guys, because I thought that you wouldn't believe us, because we destroyed the machine once we came back.”

“Hmm.” My dad nodded. “Yeah, that too then. That wouldn't just happen to anyone normal, Mark. That's because you're not normal. You have gifts. We noticed your first one; the power to heal faster than normal. Those hairy winged beasts gave you a huge cut on your face and the next morning it was gone. I assumed those cuts and bruises you have now will be gone in a couple days at the most. And now, you have this strength you talked about. You have these gifts because ...” My dad paused for a long time before saying, “Mark ... you're an alien.”

My jaw dropped.

I was speechless except for saying, “Wha ...”

“It's true,” mom said.

Dad took a deep breath. “Someone ... wants you dead. That's why these things have been happening to you.”

I looked at both of them. “Who?” I asked slowly, thinking about how the Excellency said the same thing.

“Mark,” dad said. “About four or five years ago, we remembered you mumbling, ‘spaceship.’ Well you must've dreamed about it that night, right?”

“Yeah ...” I remembered the dream very well, it was strange.

“Well, it was real then. You came here in a small spaceship through a horrible lightning storm.”

I had dreamt about it. I could tell that they were dying to tell me everything, having held it a secret for all of my life. I just couldn't believe this.

“I'm an alien,” I started by mumbling.”

I looked at myself, but I didn't look any different than before, just having tons of cuts and bruises. I realized that I wasn't in that much pain. My shoulder didn't hurt as much now. I could see and feel that I was already healing. I must've had a power to heal faster than normal; or ... accelerated healing.

Dad started up again. “You were from The Experimental Galaxy, from planet Rexton, which is right next to planet Mason. Both of those

planets survive by their rulers. The planets are small and ruled by one ruler. If the ruler dies and they can't get a replacement in the proper time, the planet dies.”

I nodded, waiting for him to continue.

“Anyway, there was a criminal from that same planet that you were from and for his punishment; he was banished, sent here to Earth. He then heard later that Rexton had died and that some of you guys were sent here. Back on Rexton, he was a scientist. He always had a desire to create life. He wants to take different breeds of life forms and mix them together, especially with humans; to make human hybrids. Now he's here on Earth, doing that somewhere.”

“Why are you telling me about him? Is he the one that wants me dead?”

“Yes. He's seen the future, where you apparently stop him from doing his illegal experiments.”

“How do you know all of this?”

“It's from your ship. It somehow carried memories and visions for us to see once we found you in that lightning storm. It taught us everything we know about you. It told us to be the ones to raise you and it told us about this scientist. Apparently, you stop this guy after you develop more of your gifts.”

“Why do I have to stop this guy in the first place?”

“The ship said that you were destined to save the world,” mom said.

“This guy's name is Martin Intex,” dad said. “He's very dangerous ... that's why we didn't want to tell you all of this right away. You wouldn't be ready, and we fear that you're still not ready, but Intex is not waiting and he wants you to die before you develop your powers.”

“So, he's the one sending these monsters and this time machine and this Reynotic sphere?”

“Yes,” mom said.

“I think he's only doing it now because he found out where you are,” dad said.

“He didn't know where we lived?” I asked.

“I don't think so, at least not five years ago.”

“Wow, this is a lot to take in,” I sighed. “How can this be true?”

“We can prove it to you,” mom said. “We can show you your space ship.”

“It's in barn,” dad said.

I followed my parents outside into the barn. Dad walked to the back part of the barn. He lifted up some boards apart from the floor. There was a hole in the floor underneath the boards where the ship laid.

It was very small and dusty. It was the perfect size for a baby, probably the size I was when I was an infant.

Dad struggled a little bit, but he managed it lift it out of the hole and he set it down on the floor. He whipped the dust off.

“Wow,” was all I could say.

I stepped forward and touched it and I got a sudden flash of unclear images that took over my vision, and I quickly pulled my hand back.

“What happened?” mom asked.

“I saw something,” I said.

“Hold your hand on it,” dad said. “It probably wants to show you something.”

I extended my arm and placed my hand on it. Suddenly I felt like I was in space, all I could see were the stars.

ing to alter their DNA to make them live longer, handle different exposures, or to possess unnatural qualities. He was thrown into prison for many years for breaking these laws.

A laboratory was brought into my sight, showing what Intex looked like and some of his experiments. He was then thrown into a prison.

Intex broke out of prison about two years later. He hid somewhere unknown at the moment in time and continued his experiments. He progressed and became very smart in his studies. He, then, tested his experiments on other Rextonians, succeeding in making them Rextonian-hybrids, mixed with various animals' DNA. He even altered his own DNA, making himself a hybrid of a Galapagos Tortoise, resulting in giving him the ability to live longer than normal or even forever.

When Rextonians had heard the fatal news of this and had found out where he was staying, the law enforcement—commanded by Rexford himself—banished Intex to earth. An accomplice of Intex, named Jackson, was sent to prison, although not banished.

Several years later Rexton was attacked by a dangerous plant virus that riddled all of its plant-life. With the planet dying, Rextonians were sent to different places to survive. Some were sent to the next planet, Mason, some to other galaxies with life, and very few were sent to Earth, as you were.

Rextonians were unaware of the result of entering the milky way; its radiation, or energy, effected Rextonians' DNA, enhancing them in various ways, though not necessarily harmful. This actually gave Rextonians some sort of abilities.

Intex became acquainted with another Rextonian that had developed the ability to perceive time. He looked into the future to see that you would stop him from accomplishing his desire to take control of Earth with his hybrids. As a result of learning this, he has been trying to send his creations after you. But you must still stop him, Anthony.

Anthony, you will develop these abilities, none of which will be certain, but you will need to use them to stop Intex, to bring him down. You are the only Rextonian that can do this, being that you're the only Rextonian, besides Intex and the precog Rextonian, left on Earth. You may not be capable to do this alone, so you might find that you need to get a team assembled ... but rest assured a group of individuals fit for this will arise. You will need to save Earth from destruction; you can't let Intex win.

You will be Earth's savior.

I wish I could tell you a lot more, but there's only so much you can process at once. Who is this speaking? Well, I am your father, Bart Millar. I am alive and well, according to the time in which I have recorded this; I am safe on planet Mason. Your parents on Earth have been taking care of you well, and I am proud of them, but I don't want you to worry about me, just stop Intex and save Earth.

Stop Intex and save the world.

I came back to reality, coming back into the barn. My eyesight was a bit blurry, but gradually it was brought back to the barn. My hand was still on the ship. My parents, adoptive parents, were looking at me, waiting for me to say something.

I pulled my hand back slowly to my side, wanting to tell my parents everything that my real father had just said, but I had a feeling they already knew.

“I know everything now,” I said. It was breathtaking, so much to process.

I went to my room, sitting down on my bed. I felt the absence of my dresser in my room; thanks to the portal my dresser was in ogre-land. I lay on my bed, thinking about my ... origin.

I lay there for hours, just pondering. I wasn't sure if I could even go to school the next day, being that I wouldn't be able to focus. The last few days of school of my senior were approaching. I just lay there on my bed, letting six hours pass. I skipped supper. I don't even recall my parents calling me. I'm sure they tried, but I was completely zoned out, as if I was touching the ship all over again.

I believed it all, although it seemed farfetched. I'm an alien.

Never once in my life had I ever thought of such a thing. I'm a Rextonian; from the planet Rexton in The Experimental Galaxy. My planet was dead, since the plant-life was purged from the face of the planet. I went sent here to Earth to survive, but also to stop Intex. What I didn't understand was why did I get separated from my biological parents?

I thought and pondered on everything for the rest of the day; for the rest of the night and until morning. I couldn't go to sleep and I couldn't eat. I couldn't move out of bed. I wasn't tired one bit; all I could do was think and blink.

After a whole day of thinking about Rexton, I finally got out of bed. I immediately saw that mom was standing in the doorway. She had a tray of food ready for me. I gladly accepted it.

I realized that I was extremely hungry, thought I didn't feel sick for not having food for a whole day. As I ate, I noticed the cuts and bruise on my arms were almost gone already. My accelerated healing was working for sure.

I knew what I had to do now, but didn't think I was capable ... I had to prepare myself to stop Intex; someone I didn't even meet yet, but I knew that soon I would find out.

I realized that my biological father, Bart Millar, had called me Anthony. That must've been what they named me. Mom and dad must've been told this by my ship, because they kept it with me, for it is my middle name.

I finished my meal, realizing that it was lunch and breakfast that mom had given me. I put my tray in the sink. I sat on the couch next to mom; dad had left for work. I realized that it was a school day; mom must've called me in sick. I started telling mom all I have learned, regardless if she knew either all or some of it. I told her everything. I just couldn't hold it in.

"You kept my name," I said after I finished telling her. "Anthony. It was my name on Rexton, and you guys kept it as my middle name."

"Yes," mom said. "We felt that we had to."

"How'd you guys adopt me then? You know, since I wasn't born here."

“We said that we found you abandon in an unlicensed vehicle and we adopted you.”

“Wow, you make it seem like it was easy.”

“Well,” mom scoffs. “It wasn’t easy, that’s for sure. But, that’s the gist of it.” Mom sighed. “You realize that you have a big burden on your shoulder now; you know the truth.”

“I know.” Mom reminded me of my dislocated shoulder by the mention of having a burden on it, though now it felt fine; completely healed now.

I now had to save the world from Intex. I didn’t know where to start. I sat on the couch, and all I could think about was the fact that I grew up on Earth, not even knowing my origin. I wasn’t from Earth, but I was from Rexton.

I was a little upset that my parents didn’t tell me right away, but I had to respect that. Bart must’ve told them that they couldn’t tell me until I was ready, or until too much had happened to me. I wondered if Bart knew what was happening right now. If not, it must’ve been devastating for him to not know.

I wish I could meet my biological father in person, so he could tell me everything. I could understand everything crystal clear. This was all hard to believe, but I knew that it was true.

I thought about how I had to stop this Intex. I would have to prepare myself. I would have to train.

I thought about my profound strength that I used yesterday in St. Reynolds. I was able to fight of the ogres that existed there. I wondered how strong I was. I decided to test it.

I went downstairs into the basement, walking to the weight room. I walked up to a bench. There was already fifty pounds on the bar. I easily

picked up two hundred pounds and put them on one side. I grabbed two hundred more pounds and put them on the other side of the bar. I lay down on the bench and lifted the bar off of the bench. I lifted the bar up and down, benching it easily.

A grin grew on my face. I realized that my strength was a lot stronger than I originally thought. I looked at the weights and saw that I had lifted four-hundred fifty pounds—easily!

I couldn't believe it.

I grabbed five hundred more pounds to put on each side of the bar; now equally a total of one-thousand fifty pounds. I got underneath the bar, struggled a little bit, but still managed to lift it!

I was very amazed at how heavy this is supposed to be, but I could lift it! It didn't even seem that I trying my hardest yet. I wanted to add more weights on it, but I had used that last one; all of the weights were on the bar. I knew, though, that I could still lift a lot more weight; I was very strong.

I sat up on the bench for a minute; thinking about Rexton, Intex, myself, and it all.

I snapped out of it when I heard the bar on the bench creaking. I looked to see that the bar had too much weight on it that it was breaking the bar rest. I took the weights off and it relieved the stress.

The next day I made it to school. Being a senior and it being the end of the year, I only had about two more months left of school. I had completed most of my credits in my freshman and sophomore years, so junior year was easier; senior year was by far the easiest. All I had for core classes were math and English, so for the rest of the day I had signed up for vocational classes.

By lunchtime I met up with Bruce and Rachel; we made sure that our schedules matched so that we had the same lunches.

I told them everything that I had learned that weekend. They were both speechless; jaw-dropped. Finally Bruce fell out of his haze.

“Are ... you serious?” he asked me.

“Dead serious,” I said. I saw that the looks on their faces were still the same. “I know, it was hard for me to understand at first and it still is. But, don’t tell anyone.”

“Of course not,” Rachel said. “After all we been through, and we haven’t said a word; we definitely wouldn’t tell about this.” Rachel paused and smiled. “I actually think that it’s kind of cool,” she mumbles to herself.

“Yeah,” Bruce agreed. “Now you’re starting to develop powers, right?!”

“I guess that you could say that,” I looked back at my arms and hands to see that I was completely healed from my cuts and bruises. I thought about this Intex guy; what would he try to do next; what would he try to send after me?

Out of my peripheral vision I saw a large student start to walk up to me. It was another senior, his name was Lester. He had always picked on me, but hasn’t since last year. I wondered why he picked today to start up again.

“Hey look,” he said. “It’s Willis!” He walked right up to me.

I hated being called Willis. Even though there was only two months left in school for the seniors, he had to come bother me. He wacked me across the back of my head.

Usually I just put up with him, but he hit my head hard enough to piss me off immediately; I stood right up to face him, my nose a foot from his.

“I could kill you with my bare hands!” I said to him, though not very loud; really only loud enough for him to hear.

“Ooh, I’d love to see you try,” he said.

Lester scoffed, shoving me so that I bump into the table. I smirked at him and hit him in the shoulder, sending him to the floor, which resulted in sliding across it on his back about ten feet away. He quickly got up. I walked up to him, and finally, once in my life, I saw fear in his eyes.

“Leave me alone,” I said. I was about to walk away, but he spoke up.

“Now, why would I just do that?” Lester asked.

I looked at Bruce and Rachel before turning around to face Lester. He was a lot bigger than me. He raised a fist and punched me in the cheek. I raised my fist and then punched him back in his cheek sending him over, backwards. He didn’t get up; I knocked him out!

I ran, scared. I couldn’t believe I just did that.

He woke up a minute later. I was sure, though, that he would never pick on me again.

“Whoa,” Bruce exclaimed. “That was epic!”

“Whatever, Bruce,” I said, and I laughed, feeling better now that Bruce was here to calm the situation.

Bruce and I high fived.

“You showed him up, for once,” Rachel said.

“I thought that he was done with me since last year,” I said. “Now he should be for sure.”

I walked into the bathroom alone, while Bruce and Rachel headed off to class. I looked in the mirror and saw that a bruise was already forming on my cheek. I assumed that this new bruise would heal in a couple days. Lester, however, would probably have his bruise past graduation. I smiled by the thought of it

I headed off to class, just making it in time before being tardy. I continued my day with the last couple class periods left with no further problems. I went home, trying to avoid revealing to mom the side of my face that had the bruise. I didn't want to explain to her that I had got in a fight. Lester must've been too scared to tell the principal or whatever, or maybe he just didn't want to look stupid. Thankfully the bruise of my face healed by the next morning.

Two months later graduation arrived. The graduation ceremony was boring as ever. I had to sit through all of the valedictorians, and salutatorians give their boring speeches. That seemed long enough, but going through the names of all of the seniors getting their diplomas was just as long. Sure enough, as I had guessed, Lester had a bruise on his face from when I punched him, and I chuckled softly to myself. He smiled, getting a picture taken when he shook the principle's hand, while holding the diploma in his other.

The most exciting part was getting my diploma and then moving the tassel to the other side of the cap; and then throwing the caps; and then when it was all over.

We all took tons of pictures, celebrating. My parents took me out to a restaurant, while Bruce and Rachel went their separate ways with their families. My family and I headed home where I had a surprise waiting.

First, we ate cake together; me getting the first piece. Mom took a picture of the first bite and held back a joyful tear. Next, dad threw confetti. "Guess what, Mark?" dad asked.

"What?" I asked, not wanting to guess.

"We're going to New York for vacation and on the way back we are going to ... Cedar Point."

"And guess what else?" mom asked, but I didn't guess, but just let mom spit it out. "Rachel and Bruce are coming too, and their parents."

"So, you better get packing," dad said.

I couldn't believe how well my family was acquainted with Bruce's and Rachel's family. We almost always did things together.

I jumped into the air hitting my hands into the ceiling, creating a little dent in the ceiling, though not quite a hole. I still wasn't used to my new strength. My parents didn't care anyway; or they didn't show it.

I ran to my room, snatched a suitcase from my closet and started packing two weeks' worth of clothing, not knowing exactly how long this vacation would last.

We left the next morning, carpooling; Bruce, Rachel, my parents, and I in one vehicle, and Bruce and Rachel's parents in another; just like last vacation where we met the time machine. Dad drove the whole way there, and we only stopped for a break once.

We already had a couple of rooms booked out, so all was prepared. We took our suitcases into the rooms; Myself, Bruce, Rachel, my dad and Bruce's father were in one room, while the rest in the other.

There were still a couple hours of daylight left and our parents didn't want us wasting it; they told us to check out the nice hotel. We thought about taking a swim in the pool, but decided to check out the game room.

There was an air hockey table, and a pool table. I decided to play some pool, even though we were sort of forced to, since there was only one other group in the whole room, who were playing air hockey.

We played pool for a while, finishing three games. Once we finished we played some air hockey, as the other group finished. As we played, the other group first started by watching us from a distance. The longer we played the more they watched. Before long, they started to circle us. It took no time to get irritated.

I spun around to face them. One of them seemed to be the main guy to talk to, the leader of the group as you could say.

“Can I help you guys with something?” I asked.

“Wow,” the main guy said. “Don’t bite our heads off, alright?”

“Well ... why are you guys circling us?”

“Because ...” the guy began, smirking horribly “We’re here to kill you ... Mark Wills.”

It wasn’t until then that I realized they were all only looking at me. Strangely they started to change their appearances, literally. Their bodies became bulkier and hairier, and their noses became longer, just like snouts. They began to portray the face of a wolf, even though still having their human figures. They transformed into werewolves.

The ... leader of the pack charged at me, with fully retracted claws. He whacked at my face, giving me four long cuts on my face. They bled, stinging right away. He was about to attack me and again, but I punched him in the stomach, forcing him to double backwards in great pain.

“You’re ...” he groaned and began muttering to himself. “You’re already developing your abilities.” He noticed my strength.

I punched him again in the cheek. Another came from behind me and it grabbed my face. I threw a fist over my shoulder, hitting him in the face, knocking him off of me. I was punched in the nose, unsure of which one the fist came from.

It hurt right away, but it didn't bleed. With frustration and anger building up inside me, I started punching every one of them in sight. I actually noticed a bit a fear overcoming them. They weren't expecting me to develop abilities yet, it seems.

The leader werewolf seemed the least feared. He charged at me again, being swifter, punching me in my face several times, and then knocking me over.

He stole my wallet and phone. The werewolves laughed, running off together. All of the while, Bruce and Rachel only watched, there was nothing that they could've done anyway.

“Those guys work for ... I-Tech?” Bruce asked.

“You mean Intex?” I asked in reply, getting up. “Most likely.”

I looked at the two of them, both of them looked freaked out; Rachel looked the most worried, her being a girl. I looked at myself, looking fine, although my face didn't feel fine. My jaw hurt. I opened and closed it to test the pain. My cheeks felt crispy from already dried blood. There was still fresh blood coming from the four cuts on my cheek.

Rachel suddenly put an arm around my shoulder. “Come on,” she said. “Let's get back to our room.”

Rachel helped me walk back to my room, even though I didn't need help to walk. I was fine, all except for my face. Despite that, it felt nice for Rachel to be helping me. It wasn't until then that I realized that I secretly loved her. I knew that I always had feelings for her, but I never expressed them ...

“My word!” my mom exclaimed as soon as she saw me. “What happened, Mark?”

Dad had already seen my injuries before mom, but I wanted to explain to them at the same time. Bruce and Rachel's parents were with them in the other room, and they were explained by Bruce and Rachel that I was robbed. They weren't told about any werewolves.

“Intex ...” dad said.

“Yes,” I said. “It's him; I mean he's the reason for these guys to want to kill me.”

“I don't understand why he didn't try to finish you up,” dad said.

“Well it’s good they didn’t, and don’t say that,” mom exclaimed.

“I think that they feared that I could kill them with my strength,” I said.

“I hope so,” dad said.

“Mark,” mom sighed, looking at how bad I looked. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

“Mom, don’t worry about it,” I said. “I can clean myself up.”

I went into the bathroom and washed up my face, having to rinse the washcloth out over and over again. I finished cleaning up and noticed that my cuts on my face were already started to close up, scabbing. I walked out of the bathroom, seeing the worried look on my mom’s face.

“Mom,” I said. “I know that you’re worried, and well ... I guess you have the right to be, but I don’t want you to.”

Dad didn’t say a word. “Hon, I can’t help it,” mom said. “I mean, someone wants you dead ... and it’s dangerous here at this hotel.”

“So much for a vacation, right?” I said.

“That’s not important now,” dad said. “We gotta get out of here, and leave this place. We can’t let these werewolves touch you.”

“Is that what we’re going to do?” I asked, puzzling my parents. “Just run away from the danger?! We can’t keep running. I’m not. Intex is going to keep sending things after me, and all we have been doing is running. Well, I’m going to put an end to this!”

“Mark,” dad said. “You can’t, not yet. You’re not ready ... we only told you the truth because of what was happening, you’re not ready yet.”

“Really? When should I be ready then?”

“When you make wise decisions,” mom said. “You can't just ... just try to find Intex right now; he's too powerful. He could kill you with a snap of a finger.”

“Then why doesn't he? He wants me dead, right; why send things after me when he could kill me in a snap?”

“Didn't you learn the answer to that question from the ship?” dad asked.

“I guess,” I said. “He's too busy working on his experiments.”

“Mark,” dad exclaimed, not wanting to discuss this. “No arguing, we're leaving!”

“What about my wallet and phone?” I asked.

Dad sighed. “You don't have much in that stuff anyway, do you?”

“I'm going to get them back,” I said. I turned around and headed to the door.

“Mark, come back here!” dad exclaimed.

I kept walking, reaching the door. Just as I was about to turn the knob, it started turning on its own. The door opened and Bruce showed up. I forgot that he had a key.

“Whoa,” Bruce exclaimed, surprised by me standing there. He saw the looks on our faces. “What's going on?”

“Nothing,” I said.

I walked past Bruce as he just stood there. I wasn't sure if my dad started to dart after me or not, but if he did, he didn't yell, because we were in a hotel. I wasn't sure where to go, but I was going to find the werewolves. I walked up to an ice machine at the end of the hallway. Suddenly, I was surrounded by the werewolves, as if they were expecting me here.

I purposely scoff, shaking my head. "I'm tired of seeing so many different ugly creatures come after me," I said, before they could say anything.

"Excuse me!" the leader werewolf exclaimed. "I'm not ugly,"

"Well, it's not fooling me."

"I am the greatest hybrid Intex has ever made!"

"I don't think that he's supposed to know Intex yet, Blade," one of the werewolves told the leader one; apparently called Blade.

"So what?! Leave him clueless, he can die that way."

"I'm not going to die clueless," I said. "I know about Intex ... and I'm not going to die." I said.

I wasn't going to wait for anything to happen; I punched the one called Blade in the nose; the leader. I didn't hesitate and punched the werewolf that ran up to me. A fight erupted. Five werewolves all against me. My fist connected with one of the werewolves' head, and I heard a loud crack as he fell unconscious. Right now, I didn't care if I killed him; I was angry.

Even though I was strong, it wasn't helping me much to win at this fight. There were now four of them, all being just as strong as me. I got punched in the nose and cheek over and over again. I knocked another one out, hitting it in the head.

One of the remaining werewolves kicked me in the stomach, causing me to pause; Blade took this advantage, whacking me across the head. I fell backwards, my back hitting the ice machine. I was still con-

scious but now felt so weak. Blade came closer to me, extracting a long claw from his index finger.

“Any last words?” he asked.

I knew what was coming. If I didn't do anything, he would surely kill me. It would be too soon.

I wasn't going to let anything happen. I threw my feet out, kicking Blade, which sent him flying into the wall behind him. The other two werewolves came up at me, but I gave them both a punch in the head. One of them was knocked unconscious immediately, while the other fell backwards. Blade got up, immediately charging at me with full rage. I jumped unexpectedly high, hitting the ceiling, which was even seven feet higher than an eight foot ceiling. I came down, unprepared so Blade punched me in my cheek with the first chance that he had.

I felt really dizzy. He just kept punching me over and over and over. I felt a claw dig into my gut. This guy was really going to kill me. I kicked my legs out, hoping to make contact with him. I was struggling, holding onto consciousness. Suddenly I just jumped up and I went through the ceiling. I found myself on top of the ceiling tiles, in between this floor and the next.

My vision cleared and I felt pain everywhere. I felt unconsciousness creeping up to me, but I determined myself to stay awake. Just then the ceiling tiles gave way and I fell back down to the floor. Blade was right there, ready. I kicked Blade in the chest and he fell backwards. I decided that my parents were right; I had to run. I started running off, increasing the sharp pain in my gut. The other two werewolves came at me and I shoved them out of my way. I ran to the stairs, running down them; forgetting about my phone and wallet.

Every step I took hurt. The pain from the stab in my gut hurt, just as well as all of the hits that Blade made contact with on my face. I made it down the end of the stairs and I ran out the exit to get outside.

Someone saw me and he immediately looked concerned. I must've looked horrible. "Are you okay," he asked.

"No, I am not," I said.

I looked around to see where I could run to. Just then the exit door swung open and the werewolves appeared. The man's jaw dropped immediately as he saw them. I was sure that he couldn't believe his eyes.

I ran towards the back parking lot, having no idea where to run to. The werewolves were right on my tail. I ran up to a car, grabbing it by the bumper and lifting it off of the ground, and I threw it at the werewolves. The car hit all of them except Blade. They all stupidly stood lined up. Blade had jumped into the air at the last second. I was now down to just one werewolf, not that that was any different.

"Please, don't kill me," I told him.

He busted out laughing, mocking me. "Intex's orders are to kill you, and I would never disobey him."

"Do you even know why he wants me dead?"

"Because supposedly he has this bud that told him that in the future you would interrupt his plans; so he wants you dead."

"So, he fears me?"

Blade scoffed, "No!"

Blade took a step forward and I took a step backwards. Blade smirked, sniffing the air.

"I can smell your fear."

I raised my fists, ready. Blade scoffed, smiling. He must've thought about how pathetic I looked. Right now I didn't care, I just wanted to live. I found out that I kept walking backwards, because I ran into a light pole. Suddenly, Blade charged at me, all of his claws extended.

I turned around and I wrapped my hands around the light pole, pulling it out of the ground. Blade already approached me, and I swung it at Blade like a bat, hitting him. It sent him ten feet back. I raised it in the air and I swung it down, hitting Blade hard in the head. That knocked him out.

For a while I just stood there, paralyzed. I just looked around at the damage. I looked at the pole in my hands, realizing that it must've been pretty heavy, but not as heavy as the car. Just then, I dropped the pole, feeling suddenly weak; I fell to the ground, falling unconscious.

I woke up in our car, which was on the road. I was in so much pain. I looked around to see that everyone was here. "He's awake," Bruce said.

Immediately everyone looked at me. Rachel hugged me, gently. She must've been terribly worried, maybe even as much as mom was.

"How are you feeling?" mom asked.

"Where are we going?" I ignored the question, asking one in return.

"We going back home," dad said.

"What?!" I sat up, ignoring the pain it caused. "What about the werewolves?"

"We left them the way you left them."

"Are they dead?"

"I didn't bother to check."

"Here's your wallet and phone," Bruce said, handing me my wallet and phone. "I found it in the one werewolf's pocket."

"Thanks," I said

I got up too quickly, feeling the pain all over. I looked around outside to figure out where we were. By looking around at signs, I could tell that we were a half hour from getting home.

I slowly lifted myself in my chair so I could put my wallet and phone into my pockets. I laid my head back. I couldn't believe what had happened.

All of this knowledge of my past, or origin, was still new to me. I was definitely new to these werewolves. They were the worst, yet! I felt horrible. I sat up again after realizing that I slouched back down. I felt Bruce and Rachel's eyes upon me. I leaned forward, attempting to look in the rear view mirror, but it wasn't angled right. Maybe that was a good thing; maybe I didn't want to see myself, because if I looked as bad as I felt ...

I was now regretting to look for the werewolves, but I was telling myself that they would have just found me anyhow. They would've tried to kill me anyway, that's what they were told to do anyway. I was wanted dead, and I knew that it was because of something that I would become in the future.

I wondered ... would I become powerful? These abilities ... would I get something awesome? It felt excited for just that second, because in the next I was brought back to the pain. In the following second, I forgot about all of my feeling and looked straight ahead through the windshield. There were two heavy-bodied cars in both lanes. I turned around in my chair and noticed that two more were behind us.

"Umm ... dad?" I said.

Suddenly the heavy vehicles in front of us slammed on the brakes and dad did immediately after. We couldn't slow the car down in time, hitting them, though they didn't budge. The two vehicles hit us from behind; we were trapped. Just then, bulky, hairy figures with long noses stepped out of the vehicles; the werewolves. One of them pulled out a huge weapon and pointed it at our car.

"Get DOWN!!!" dad exclaimed, and we all ducked.

A huge missile hit the hood of our car, causing us to rise into the air, and coming back slamming to the ground. I looked around, unbuckling my seatbelt. The windshield was broken. No one was hit directly, but everyone had already had cuts from glass and metal shards.

I realized that the missile just grazed the hood of the car, but then went through the dash and out through the floor.

I noticed that the two vehicles weren't behind us anymore, but were now in front of us; the missile had sent us backwards a little bit. Dad must've just noticed this too, because he quickly spun the car around and hoped to flee. He gunned it and started off. Just then the pavement in front of us exploded and we were sent flying, some of us being forced out of the car; all in different directions.

I came crashing down to the ground, finding it hard to see since my vision blurred. I slowly got to my feet, waiting for my vision to clear as I wobbled around. Finally it cleared. I saw that our car was totally annihilated, but my family was nowhere to be found. I hoped at least that the other family and friends were long gone. The whole area was wrecked, debris everywhere.

Blade started walking towards me. He wasn't carrying any weapons, but I knew that he wasn't going to need them; he was the weapon. He had the ability to kill me anyway; he didn't need the weapons.

I had to admit that I was afraid of him, but I couldn't show him that. I had to fight him. I had no choice.

He was five feet from me and I prepared myself, still in pain from my previous battle with him and just landing a hundred feet from the air.

Blade laughed. "You're pathetic, and weak," he said. "This makes it sad ... I wanted to have a nice fight with you, before I kill you."

"Then what are we waiting for?" I asked him. "Let's have that fight."

Blade raised his eyebrows. "Really? Now you want a fight? That's fine with me!"

Blade swung first. I attempted to duck, but Blade made contact with my ear. It felt as if my whole head spun and my ears rung at an annoying high pitch. I threw a punch at him, completely missing as he stepped aside. I was way too slow. Blade hit me again in my nose; I doubled backwards, and I held my nose. It began to bleed immediately. Blade didn't seem to have any apparent injuries, but I was going to fix that.

I charged at him, finding a new energy within. I tackled him to the ground, starting to hit in his face over and over, until finally he kicked me off; I landed on my back, hitting the pavement. I jumped to my feet, feeling adrenaline pumping throughout my whole body.

Traffic all around was stopped. People ran from their cars, fleeing the scene. Police sirens whirled in the distance.

Blade came forward, throwing a fist at me, but I grabbed it in mid-air and squeezed it, depending on my great strength to help. Blade yelled at the pain as his fist started to actually bleed. I let go and he swung it down to hold between his knees. I punched him in the face, swinging my fist upward. He felt backwards as I heard a snap. Something had broken.

He quickly got up. My strength had to be better than his, him only have the use of one hand. Blade was mad, but he forced a smile.

“Now ... I guess this is more like the fight that I was looking for,” he said.

We charged towards each other, swinging our fists like crazy, making punches contact and blocking some. A few of his punches sent me back, but the ones that I made sent him back further. I was feeling worse and worse from each punch. We couldn't continue like this. I backed up and Blade laughed, thinking that I was scared, which was partially true, but I knew that it was the same for him as well. I looked around and I found a light pole that was knocked over on the ground; conveniently located for me. I picked it up, and swung it like a bat, hitting Blade square in his side. It sent him three hundred feet into the air.

“Homerun!!” I exclaimed.

Blade finally fell down to the ground, onto his back. That ought to stop him for now, if it didn't kill him.

I ran and looked around for my family, limping and in pain everywhere. I saw a car door from our car and another one about twenty feet away from that. There was a car seat thirty feet from that. Then I found the engine; it was on fire, but it didn't explode; the gas tank was out of sight.

I looked around for the heavy duty vehicles and saw that all four of them were still here. One, though, was starting to drive off. I looked inside of it to see my family in it, with some of the other werewolves inside.

Suddenly I was knocked to the ground. Then I was stomped on. I quickly turned over and jumped to my feet. There was two werewolves in front of me, neither one of them was Blade; I was sure that Blade was either knocked out or dead at the moment.

One werewolf swung a fist at me and I quickly grabbed it and pulled him to me. All of his weight came towards me and I hit him with my knee, breaking his nose. I kicked him into the other werewolf. They

both were knocked to the ground. I didn't hesitate or wait for them to get back up. I stepped forward and kicked them both in the heads as hard as I could. That knocked them unconscious; right now I didn't care if they were dead. In fact, I think that I wanted them dead.

I was furious. I already hated these werewolves. I hated Intex, whom I've never met. I had to get my family.

I turned around and looked at the other three heavy duty vehicles. All of the engines were running. I sprinted towards one and opened the driver's door, jumping in. I put it in gear and floored it. I had to save my family. I had no idea where they were. I was just hoping that they were in front of me and that I could catch up to them and other werewolves. I looked in the mirror to see if there were any werewolves following me, but it didn't seem so.

I felt horrible, but it wasn't stopping me; I was determined to find my family. I couldn't let them get killed, and I wouldn't let myself get killed either. I noticed a pair of taillights in front of me in the distance. I hoped that it was the other vehicle.

Behind me sirens flared, finally arriving at the scene. I was already going too fast for them to even notice that I was fleeing the scene.

After a minute I slowly made it close enough to see them; it no doubt looked like the other vehicle. My family was in it. I had to save them, and I was hoping that Bruce and Rachel's family wouldn't come looking for us.

The werewolves in the vehicle noticed me right away and they sped up; driving this big vehicle is hard to miss. Angered, I tried to speed up more, but not having a lot of room to work with, since I was already going fast.

It made me wonder, though, why were they fleeing from me? Did they fear me? No, that wasn't it. It was this Intex; they didn't want to let him down. Or wait, if they didn't kill me, then they would let him down. So, *why* were they fleeing then?

We weren't gaining or losing any distance between us, now going about the same speed. After a few minutes I somehow started to get closer to them, which could only mean one thing; they were letting me.

Before I knew it, I was surrounded by identical heavy-built vehicles. They boxed me in so suddenly, giving me no preparation. All at once they slammed on the brakes. I hit the vehicle in front of me, the one my family was in, but it didn't budge, forcing my vehicle to halt. Before waiting for something else to happen, I opened the door, jumping out and over the other vehicles. I ran towards the vehicle that my family was in.

Rachel was trying to tell me something through the window, but I couldn't figure out what she was saying. But it was already too late, and I was knocked unconscious by a blow to my head. She must've tried saying: *Watch out.*



I woke up some time later, which felt like the next day; I wasn't sure. I felt horrible and I found myself strapped to a chair, alone in a room. I tried to pull my hands apart, depending on my strength to break the chains, but felt weak and failed. I looked around the room; it was very empty. There was just me, the chair I was sitting in, and some vents on the walls; there was also a vent directly on the floor under where I was sitting.

I noticed a misty form in the air coming from the vents. I feared that it was poison, though it seemed that it has been there for a while and I was still alive. I wasn't sure what it was, but I was breathing fine.

I looked at the vent directly beneath me and wondered what came out of that when it was used. Flames of a fire? Probably something like that that would be used to torture the person in the chair. Then I noticed that the chair was also bolted to the floor.

Suddenly the door rattled and I looked up to see a muscular man starting to unlock it. He stepped inside. As soon as he step foot in the room, the gas in the air dispersed, whatever it was. The man had short and thin hair, large upper-body muscles and was definitely built. He walked towards me expressionless. He looked to be in his late forties.

"Who are you?" I asked.

He didn't answer. He stared at me for a whole minute. Gradually anger began to show on his face. He whacked me across my face, finally breaking he awkwardness. I immediately felt the sharp from my jawbone, which began to grow very warm.

"You ..." he began, and he sighed. "I hate you."

"But, I haven't even done anything to you," I said.

“Yet, but you will.”

“You're Intex.”

“So, you've learned the truth about your past? You and I are from the same planet. You should join with me to rid this planet of its humans.”

“No. I would never do that!”

“That's why I gotta kill you.”

He raised his hand again to hit me. I pulled at the chains, breaking them. I swung my hand out and blocked his punch.

“So, you got your strength back,” he said.

I was a little puzzled. Why didn't it work before?

“You saw that gas in the air, right? Well, it disables our abilities, but only if it's confined in one area. So when I opened the door, it spread out through the air and wore off. I'm working on a better formula, one I can use on someone like you to negate your powers indefinitely.”

I stood to my feet. “Why do you hate this world?”

“For the same reason I hated Rexton,” he yelled. “Now, stop asking me questions!” He paused briefly. “Who is your mentor?!” he asked me.

“What?”

“Who is your mentor?”

“I ... I don't have one.”

He shook his head. “Who's putting you up to this? Who wants you to stop me?”

I refused to answer so he, then, shoved that thought aside.

His face lit up as if he had an idea. He whacked me across the face, sending me to the floor; I was unprepared.

“I know what I can do; since you're not going to help me. I am going to make you suffer. I won't kill you ... yet. I could experiment on you!” He seemed to be thinking aloud. “Yeah! Then I'll kill you, but first I'll have my fun.” He paused. “Now, let me see if you developed any sort of healing ability yet.”

He grabbed me by my hair and started beating the crap out of me. I tried to fight back, but his strength was way stronger. Without further ado, he knocked me out.

I was dreaming that I was in my room back at home. I was reading a book, but I wasn't sure what it was, it was a blur. It must've not been important in the dream.

The TV was on, but I couldn't hear it or tell what was playing on it. I set my book down because I was hearing something. It was someone calling me by my real name. *Anthony! Anthony! You got to save your parents ... you got it protect them!* I realized that it sounded like my real father's voice; Bart's. *You need to stop Intex, but your parents are in danger of your presence. You must leave them. You must devote your life to stopping Intex. It is critical to earth's survival.*

Suddenly I woke up. I had a killer headache. I looked around; I was in a different room, but this time instead of being chained to a chair, I was strapped to a cot. I leaned my head off to the side to throw up onto the floor.

Was Intex already getting prepared to *experiment* on me? I looked around the whole room; no one was around. I tested to see if my strength worked, but I couldn't break the straps. I looked in the air for that gas, but it wasn't there. Maybe these straps were very strong, or I was very weak. Or both. I realized I felt horrible.

I had to save my family, so I tried to break them again. I recalled the dream. My father was talking to me. He told me that I had to leave my parents in order to take on Intex. I had to protect them by leaving them. Maybe my father did know what I was doing, how I was doing, and what was happening here on earth right now. It seemed that he really was talking to me.

My mentor ... Intex was asking me ... maybe I do have one; it's my own father, Bart Millar, who is currently on planet Mason. I realized that this was sort of something I was hoping for; because I wouldn't know how else to stop Intex. Firstly, I had to protect my parents, but even before that, I had to get out of this bed.

I tried again, tugging at the straps; this time they started to wear. After a few minutes they finally gave way, breaking apart. I jumped out of the bed, running to the door. It was lock, so I kicked it down. This super strength was awesome; apparently I still had it. If only these super abilities developed earlier in life, when I was being hunted. I was now in a large hallway with a lot of doors. This place seemed so empty.

I wasn't sure which way to run, so I chose the way to my right. I ran past door after door. I dared a peek inside one. I saw what seemed to be scientists according to the white coats they were wearing. Almost all of them had clipboards and were looking at chemicals. I felt that I didn't have time, so I kept running. I had to get out of here.

Just as soon as I began running again, an alarm went off. It gave off a warning that the prisoner escaped: *me*. I hoped that it was only me here. The hallway made a turn and there was only a door at the end of the hall. I ran up to it and opened it. It led to a big room that looked like it was an eating area, or the cafeteria. There were tables, chairs, and registers. People had to pay for their meals here; working here didn't grant free food, apparently.

I looked in the distance to see an exit door, maybe so you could eat outside. I ran to it, immediately opening it and running outside.

All of my hope vanished. Sure enough it led outside, but I was still surrounded by walls. It was only a little closed area for gardening.

I ran back inside, starting to hear yelling voices and approaching footsteps. I ran into a corner and hid behind a vending machine. A bunch of armed men ran into the cafeteria. They looked around the whole

room, looking for me. Just then, as if he could sense me, one of the men jerked his head and made direct eye contact with me. He narrowed his eyes.

“Check by that vending machine,” the armed man said. “I think I see something.”

One armed man ran up to the vending machine, immediately finding me. He smiled. “Found him!” he yelled, and then to me he asked, “Are you lost? Hungry?” he laughed. “This is the cafeteria, not an exit, despite what that sign says over there.” He pointed at the garden door.

I looked down and moaned. He yelled at me to get up and I did. Even though I cooperated he kicked me anyway. A minute later I was in a similar room, chained to a chair and I was shocked with a taser. As I was shaking and passing out, I saw them close the door and immediately the room started to fill with that familiar gas.

Anthony yelled a voice. I tried to look up to see who it was, but I was asleep and everything was black. Anthony, you got to get out of there!

What? I thought. I still tried to look around, but I knew for sure that I was dreaming; I didn't feel awake.

Don't endanger your family and friends; you have to leave them behind. Get out of there and save them.

I ... I ... can't. I tried to remember why that was—oh! The gas ... it ... negates my powers.

It suppresses them, it's not a complete formula; you still have your strength. You can escape and when you do, leave you family. Keep your family out of danger. Now ... wake up!

But I didn't wake up. I tried to but I was completely out of it, or maybe I was awake, or I wasn't mentally there. I tried moving; suddenly it felt like I was going to fall out of the chair. I woke up. I saw the dim lit room. I was definitely awake now. I was chained to a chair and I noticed that gas in the air. I couldn't get out of here; that gas negated my powers.

No, wait! What did ... did he say? ... No! It suppresses my strength.

I tried to pull my hands apart, but the chains wouldn't budge. I tried again, but the cold metal chains only hurt my wrists from putting tension against them. The door opened.

I expected to see Intex, but it was one of his armed men, or soldiers, of his. He checked on me to make sure I wasn't trying to escape and then he closed the door and went back outside. I realized that this

was my chance; the gas had dispersed a little bit when he opened the door.

I struggled and pulled at the chain, causing them to creak. I let out a yell as I tried harder. Then the door opened again and the gas dispersed, and the chains broke completely.

“You idiot!” one soldier said. “You let that powerless gas stuff get out!”

I stood to my feet and the soldier or guard raised his gun at me. “Stay where you are!”

I froze. I knew that I had strength, but I didn’t have incredible durability. I threw my hands up in surrender. I *had* to get out of here. The only thing that I *could* grab was the chair, but it was bolted to the floor.

“Now ... sit back down!” the guard yelled, and he cocked his gun.

I turned slightly, grabbing the chair pretending to get ready to sit. Instead, I yanked the chair out of the floor and held it up to cover my face. Sure enough the guard started shooting at me, but the bullets were hitting the chair, which was fortunately made of metal. I threw the chair forward as I charged at him. The chair hit the guard square in the face, knocking him out. The other guard didn’t see me coming and I threw a fist in his face, knocking him out immediately. There was another guard who tripped me on my way out.

I fell to the floor and he cocked his gun at me. “Don’t move!” he yelled.

I turned myself onto my back and raised my hands in surrender. He pulled me to my feet. He was going to put me back into the room when he realized that the chair wasn’t bolted to the floor. I realized that I was still way stronger than him. I easily broke free of his grip and grabbed his gun, whacking the side of his head with it. He fell to the floor, uncon-

scious. I put the gun in my pants, because it wouldn't fit in my pockets and it would be quicker to access it.

I ran off turning left this time, hoping for the exit to be that way despite it being a different room. This time, I looked closely at the other doors, looking for exits and to see if my family was here.

Most of the rooms had tinted windows. The ones that I could see into were rooms with scientists working on experiments in them, or rooms with filing cabinets. I continued running down the hall until the hallway got bigger seeming to turn into what must be the main lobby.

I saw four glass doors right next to each other. On the other side of them was outside. I sprinted towards them and ran outside.

I immediately realized that I wasn't in Ohio. I had no idea where I was. It smelled like a city, and it sure looked like one too. It was way too big to be Ohio, though. There were tall buildings everywhere, busy streets and people. I could smell the sour taste of the building behind me that I was just in, which mixed in with the smell of restaurants and the rest of city. I tried to figure out where I was, but then heard running footsteps coming from behind me.

I spun around to see guards charging at me from inside. I started running down a sidewalk, brushing past people. I realized that there were so many people walking around; it was crowded. There were taxi cabs everywhere, people honking, so much traffic ... it seemed very much like New York. I knew that it had to be New York, because of the sight of one of the biggest buildings here; the Manhattan Daily News building; a newspaper company.

I looked behind me, but didn't see anyone chasing me. I looked around, there didn't seem to be anyone running. There could've been, but I couldn't see much in this crowd. I felt my pocket for my cell phone, but it wasn't there. I saw, across the street, a phone booth. I ran up to it and realized that my wallet was missing too.

I started asking people if they had fifty cents. By the time I asked the thirtieth person or so, I was finally given fifty cents and I put it in immediately. I dialed Bruce's cell phone number. I waited as it rang several times. It couldn't be reached. I tried to call my parents, and they couldn't be reached. Then the phone couldn't be used anymore.

I had to get back home, but had no idea where my family was. I had no idea if they were safe or not. I wasn't sure if they were in that one building that I ran from, or if they were back in Ohio.

I was unsure of what to do. I didn't have my wallet or my cell phone. I had no way to figure out how to contact my family. This time, instead of asking people for money I asked to borrow their cell phone. I asked so many people and was about to give up and someone walked up to me, offering to help me. He let me borrow his cell phone. He didn't mind me not wanting him to hear me. I had my back to him and we were both standing on the grass as hundreds of people walked on the sidewalks.

I dialed up my mother and waited. There was no answer. I tried calling dad; no answer. I tried calling Rachel ... Bruce. No answer. I didn't know Bruce's and Rachel's parents' number off the top of my head, but it was on my contacts in my phone, which I didn't have with me.

"Nothing?" the man that I borrowed the phone from asked. He realized that I couldn't reach anyone.

"No," I shook my head. I handed him back his phone. "Thanks for trying to help me, though. I appreciate it."

"No problem. I would be happy to help at any time." He looked genuinely upset that he couldn't help me. "Well," he finally said, "I hope you get the help to need. I'm sorry that I wasn't much help."

"Don't worry about it," I said.

"Okay, then. Have a great day."

"Thanks, you too." With that, the nice man walked off and carried on with his business.

It was surprising to find a man like him in New York, because most of the crowd walked by without a care in the world, so focused on their own business. I was sure if someone just up and died right on the sidewalk no one would care; they would just walk around him.

I shook my head. I was back to being clueless of what to do.

I thought about just taking a cab back home, but I knew that I didn't have any money, and there was no way I was getting a free ride. I was left to assume that everyone must be captured as I was. They must be in that building. I looked back in the direction that the building was in.

I wasn't sure if I wanted to go back in there. I felt that I would get killed, because that is what that Intex guy wanted. But then I remembered something: I had snatched a gun off one of the guards and I stuck in my pants under my shirt. Thank goodness no one noticed. I started walking back to the building. I had no idea what it was even called in the first place.

It's called Creative Works, Anthony, a voice said.

I immediately looked all around me. There was no one talking to me, just people walking by wondering what the heck I stopped in the middle of the sidewalk for as they kept walking, ignoring me.

I remembered that I had heard the same voice when I was in the building, barely awake. What was that voice?

I think you mean: whose voice was that?

I jumped again and looked around; there was no one talking to me. The voice was in my head. *Yeah*, I thought, *whose voice is that?* I asked.

Anthony, just get back to Creative Works ... your family is trapped in there.

Bart? I asked, but received no reply.

I snapped out of it, starting to walk towards the building; Creative Works. I remember the experiments that I barely got a glimpse of in that building. I wouldn't call it creative. That Intex guy must've been very sick; running experiments on people: sick.

I made it back to the building, immediately turning the knob though it wouldn't budge; the door was locked. I forced the door forward and with a loud cracking sound it burst open, breaking the lock. Thank you super strength.

I had to immediately duck to avoid a blow to my head. There were guards waiting for me. Another fist came towards me, but I moved out of the way, throwing a punch at him in return. The guard fell backwards onto his back, not moving for a few seconds.

The two guards still standing started punching at me excessively. I could tell that they had some great strength just as I did. Fighting with them, we threw punches back and forth, right in front of the door that was left wide open. I wasn't sure if anyone from outside was watching, probably not; it was New York. People had their own lives to attend to; they didn't care about anything else. But that didn't matter anyway, because next a guard shoved me into the door, causing it to slam shut.

I pushed the guard off of me and punched the nearest guard. I kicked the next one nearest to me. I kept kicking and punching until five minutes had past, knocking them all out. It wasn't easy, though. I was going to have quite a few bruises. I could already start to feel them developing; it was probably my accelerated healing in the works.

I walked down the halls, deciding to take closer looks into the windows of the doors; of the doors that had windows, that is. So far all of the twenty-some doors that I looked at were offices with a lot of filing cabinets. I wasn't sure what kinds of files were kept here, probably some sort of records on their experiments.

I started to see the rooms where the experiments were. They were strapped to cots. Some of them were awake, looking to be in much pain; some very deformed. I felt sorry for them. I wanted to free them all, but I wanted to get my family safe first.

I continued down the halls, only finding more and more rooms with either experiments or offices. I came across some rooms that looked like prisons, but they were empty. I found some rooms that had chairs in the middle of the whole room, like the one that I had escaped from; again no one was in them.

I looked down the hallway, seeing that there was a door at the end. I started walking towards it, but the distance between me and the door stayed the same. It was as if I was walking in place.

This felt strange. I kept walking, but the door didn't seem to get any closer. I looked to my side; I was passing doors with empty rooms. It still seemed that I was walking in place, not making any distance towards the end of the hall. I began to feel dizzy. The end of the hall actually seemed to get farther away, as if I was sliding backwards.

I stopped walking and the end of the hall seemed to get further and further away. I looked behind me and to my left and right, but didn't seem to be going anywhere. Once I looked in front of me, the hallway seemed to get longer and longer. The size of the door at the end of the hall was now getting smaller by the second.

I started running towards the end of the hall. The end of the hall was still getting farther and farther away but at a little slower pace now that I was running. Nothing before had ever felt this strange. I stopped running and I turned around; I was further away from the other end of the hall, because I had ran the other way. I started walking towards this end of the hall, or the beginning of the hall. The same thing was happening. Now this end of the hallway seemed to get farther away.

It first seemed that I was walking in place, until it felt like I was walking backwards, despite the fact that my legs were stepping forward. Now I felt like I was sliding backwards. I looked at both ends of the hall. This hallway began to feel very long, because now I was getting farther and farther away from each end.

The only thing I felt that I could do was open a door nearest to me. There was a door on my right. I turned the knob, opening it. I stepped inside, finding myself in a room with cabinets, and a large desk; it was one of the rooms that looked like an office. Suddenly the door closed behind, startling me.

I looked at the door; it seemed to shut by itself. I looked around the room. I began trying to open the cabinets, but they were locked. I walked up to the desk, trying to open any of drawers on it, but they were locked too. There was nothing to do in this room, so I walked back towards the door. But the door wouldn't open.

I turned the door knob harder and ran into the door, but it was locked. How had the door locked? It wasn't before. I hated this building with my heart; it seemed to get weirder and stranger by the second. I tried to use my super strength, plowing into the door, hoping it would knock down; but it didn't budge. I looked around in the room for that gas in the air, but I didn't see anything.

I was trapped in this room. I knew that I still had my strength, because I was able to move the cabinets around with ease. I moved them away from the walls, hoping to find an alternate route to exit this room; an alternate escape route. I moved all of the cabinets around, but I didn't see any other doors.

I pounded on the walls; they sounded very solid. Just then, one part of the wall sounded hollow. I could see a crack that made a rectangle on the wall, as if someone had tried to put up new dry wall on an old wall, trying to cover up something and then repaint it. I punched the wall hard, puncturing it. This was my escape. Through the hole I could see an-

other room, but it was bigger. I tore the wall apart and climbed through into the other room.

This room seemed to be one of the experiment rooms. There weren't any scientists roaming around. I took a walk around the large room, finding some cots. There weren't any people on them. This room seemed like another empty one. I walked around a corner and saw more cots, hundreds of them ... all of which had people on them. All were asleep.

Next to the beds were machines that were hooked up to them. I saw a long table with computers on them. Sitting at the computers were the scientists. I was surprised that they didn't hear me break down the wall from around the corner in this large room. They must've been really busy *experimenting*. This made me feel very sick. These scientists were experimenting on people.

The scientists hadn't spotted me yet; I was still peeking around the corner of this wall. I looked around the whole room, feeling sorry for all of those hundreds of experiments. I couldn't imagine what they were doing to them. I didn't want to know. I took a look at some of them from where I was. A lot of them had distorted bodies; failed experiments, but they were still being experimented and tested on. This place was sick as can be.

They were treating these people like lab rats.

Something suddenly caught by eye; *someone* caught my eye. I spun my head towards a set of beds. I gasped out loud and I was sure that the scientists had spotted me. On the cots were my family, Bruce and Rachel. They had kidnapped them and were experimenting on them now! I grew furious.

Part 2:

Sabotage or Acquisition?

Scientists started to surround me. I completely ignored them, running towards my family and friends. Scientists ran after me, while some others continued working on the experiments as if they would die without treatment.

This place was sick.

I grabbed a hold of the strap that was around mom, pulling it off.

“Mom,” I yelled. “Wake up!”

Mom didn’t move. Suddenly a scientist grabbed my neck, starting to choke me. I tried to fight back, hitting him, but these scientists were super powered just as I was. They must've run experiments on themselves, even. I couldn’t breathe. I struggled and he continued to squeeze. My vision started to blur as I got very dizzy. My head felt like it was going to explode.

Suddenly, I felt free, but I could still feel the scientist’s arms around me. He was still squeezing, but I felt fine. The burning in my face, neck and lungs were gone. Oh, yeah ... my healing power must've kicked in ... this was the fastest it ever worked.

I took this opportunity to strike back with this new strength and stamina. I threw a fist behind my head and knocked the scientist out on the spot; he immediately dropped to the floor unconscious. Scientists started piling on me, and I threw punches and kicks at them all, hitting them in the jaws, noses, shins, chins, and heads. They were falling left and right. With a few more minutes’ time the scientists left were the ones working on the experiments. They looked at me with terrified looks on their faces, quickly running out of this very large room.

I ran up to mom, dad, Bruce, and Rachel. I took all of the straps off of them and noticed the IVs going into them from computers. I was afraid to take those out. What if I took them out and it killed them? They might need them in. Whatever experiments were being ran on them probably couldn't be terminated in mid-process.

I looked up at the computers and saw that they had the images of them on it. Their bodies were on it, spinning in place. Their status was shown as well as their heart rate and blood pressure.

I found a category in the status that said something in a different language. It looked very similar, but I couldn't put a finger on it. I studied and realized that I *had* seen it before. It was the same language that was on my ship! It was the same language that my father, Bart, spoke to me at first with. It was ... Rextonian.

I already knew that this was Intex's building and that he was from Rexton ... but he must've known that I haven't learned the language yet, because what was this that he didn't want me to read.

Suddenly I felt someone's presence behind me. I spun around to see Intex himself. He smiled at me. I noticed again that he had bulky shoulders and big muscles.

"Whacha doing," Intex asked me.

"What am I doing," I exclaimed. "What are you doing to my family?!"

He smiled again and laughed. "They're perfectly fine, Mark. I'm preparing them."

"For what?!" I was furious. I wanted to take him out, but I knew that I couldn't. I didn't know what he was capable of.

"For my plans to take over the world."

"Let them go! They are not a threat to you!"

“But you are?” Intex busted out laughing from his gut. It took him a whole minute to calm down and wipe away tears. “Whoo! That’s hilarious!” He paused. “So, you're going to stop me?! You're merely a *kid*!!” He chuckled.

“Yes, I am.” I said. “I am going to stop you; but, I thought that you already knew that.”

His smile faded.

“How'd you know?” He paused. “Bart.” He paused again and shook his head. “No, you're not going to stop me. My friend, the precog, had warned me so now I know how to not screw up. You're no threat to me.”

“Well, then let me and my family go.”

“No.” He raised his fist, whacking me across my head to knock me out.

I woke up in another room, where I was strapped, yet again, to a chair. I looked around the room, seeing the misty form in the air—that power-proof gas was in here. I was alone. My family was probably still being experimented on. I felt guilty for not saving them when I had the chance.

I shouted, “Hey!” Neither guards nor soldiers appeared. They must've learned not to open the door, because that would cause the gas to disperse and let me free. I was stuck here again.

Anthony, you've got to get out of here! I heard that voice again and I jumped. I looked around and, of course, saw no one. *Anthony, you need to find a way to get that gas out of here. That door needs to open, and then you need to get your family out and save them. You need to then leave them, move away from them. You can't risk putting them in any more danger.*

I thought it was strange to be having some other voice in my head. I had to get out of here; had to get rid of the gas.

Suddenly I started yelling at the top of my lungs. I was acting as if I had a fear of something in the room.

“Get them away,” I yelled. “They're all over!! Get them OFF!!! Shoot them!!”

A guard opened the door, but he was pulled back by another guard and that guard closed the door. “Are you stupid?!” I heard the guard say to the other. “If you open that door, it will clear the air and he'll get out!”

I tried to pull my wrists apart from the metal chair. I looked in the air and saw that there was still quite of bit a gas, but not as much as before. It seemed that the gas was growing. I had to hurry. I pulled at the chains, struggling to break free. Finally one broke, my right arm was free. I tried to break the other one, but it wouldn't break.

I didn't know what to do. I looked around for something to use for something to do something. I noticed that the only thing that I had was the broken piece of the chain. I picked it up with my right hand. I looked at the door, feeling relieved to see that it had a window. This was my only chance. I cuffed my mouth with my right hand, with the chain still in it and I took in a deep breath, not trying to breathe in the gas. Then with all of my might, I threw the chain at the window, breaking just a little chip out of it.

The guards immediately jumped and looked to see what had happened. I looked at the gas in the room, seeing it slowly seep out of the room through the little hole in the window. I pulled at the chain that was around my left wrist until they broke five seconds later. I kicked my feet out and broke the chains around my ankles.

I was getting stronger as more gas left the room through the hole. The guards saw that I was out of the chair and they got their guns out. One of them shot at me, through the window. I ducked and his aim was way off. But he had completely shattered the window and the gas completely left the room. That guard was then wacked in the head by the other guard, hence being called an "idiot".

I ran towards the door, kicking it hard so that it shot right out, hitting both guards. They were knocked unconscious immediately. I looked around to see that five more guards were there. I was surrounded.

I kicked at one guard, as another guard shot me in the foot. I cried out in pain and swung around on my good foot, punching that guard as hard as I could, knocking him out. All of the other guards were on me,

trying to hold me tight. I pulled free, throwing punches and kicks at them as they did the same.

One guard hit me hard in my nose; it bled immediately. I returned the favor at him, but another guard hit me in the mouth. Another in the cheek. I hit one in the eye. He reached for it as if to relieve the pain and backed away. I kicked another between the legs. I punched hard at a stomach and another I punched in the head. I kept kicking and swinging my fists at them until they were all lying on the floor.

I'm sure I looked as horrible as I felt. I could see many bruises in which covered my arms.

I sighed and looked around. This was just like last time; there was a long hallway that went in both directions. I had to choose a way to turn. I chose to step over the guards and go the way I was already facing. Suddenly an alarm sounded, blaring away. It was an ear-piercing alarm: *wha-wha-wha*.

I made it around a corner, finding guards whom immediately drew their weapons, firing at me. I ran back around the corner. I took a deep breath and charged at the wall in front of me, plowing right through it.

I broke into a very large empty area, seeing nothing but the wooded structure of other rooms around me. I ran towards one wall, breaking through it, finding myself in another room with experiments in it. I looked around for my family, but they weren't in this one.

I heard the guards coming from behind me. I ran into another wall and broke through it, this one hurt. I was sure to have a nice, big bruise on my arm. I was started to get a headache from the annoying alarm going off, and plowing through walls wasn't making my headache any better.

I had to at least run through twenty more walls and ran over fifty more guards, until finally I found them. My family was in a prison-like room that I was in.

They were all awake and if there was a power-proof gas in the room, it had dispersed when I broke into the room. "Come on! Let's get out of here," I exclaimed, as I broke them free from the chairs.

"Mark!" Bruce exclaimed. "You won't believe what happened to us."

"Tell me about it in a minute," I cut him off. "First, let's get out of here!"

I ran towards a wall but it broke down before I even touched it. I was puzzled at first and Bruce was smiling, but I didn't have time to figure out what was happening; we had to get out of here.

My family, Bruce, Rachel and I ran for our lives as I plowed through a couple more walls; some other walls fell down without me touching them. I had no idea how it was happening, but I didn't have time to question it. Finally, we made it outside, but kept running. We practically almost knocked down people that were walking around here in New York City.

It was busy and we had to run around everyone. Dad whistled for a taxi and we all piled in.

"Where to," the cab driver asked.

"Drive!" I exclaimed.

"You gotta tell me where—"

"DRIVE!!" dad and I yelled at the same time.

"Okay, okay." He said and he drove forward. "Are you guys in trouble or something?"

"Yeah and you will be too if you ask any more questions," dad said.

The cab driver nodded, thankfully understanding. He saw my bruises and cuts, looking shocked. "Wow, you could you're in trouble, couldn't you? You look like you got ran over by a bus." He paused and we didn't say anything. "Okay, you guys got to tell me where you want me to go."

We stopped at a red light.

"Ohio," I said.

“What!?! That’s a pretty long ways.”

“We don’t care,” mom said, “we gotta get out of here.”

“You guys aren’t from here are you?”

“No,” dad said. “We’re from Ohio.”

“Where in Ohio?”

“Clyde.”

“Okay, Clyde, Ohio it is, then.” The cab driver paused, and accelerated the car once the light turned green. “You do realize that that’ll cost quite a bit of money.”

“Yes.”

I used my shirt to wipe the sweat and drywall powder off of my face. I felt horrible. I looked behind and saw many other cabs and cars, but I wasn’t sure if we were being followed or not. I hoped not. I lay back in my seat exhausted. *Home; we’re going home.*

You’re parents are going home. The voice said again, and I almost jumped. *But, you got to leave your parents, for their safety.*

Are you my father? I asked the voice. It didn’t reply. *Are you Bart Millar?* I asked again, but got no answer. I gave up on getting an answer and tried to get some sleep. I was whipped.

I drifted off asleep. I had no idea what was going on, but it was peaceful. When I woke up we were in Clyde. The cab driver was asking more specifically where we lived, and he was told by dad. With ten more minutes he dropped us off at home.

The cab driver told dad the price and he swiped his credit card. We all immediately ran inside, calling up Bruce’s and Rachel’s family. They were worried sick and were on their way to my house.

“Guys,” I got everyone’s attention. “You all know what I am supposed to do. I am supposed to stop Intex, when I get more ... well, when I get more skilled. But I’m going to need to move.”

Bruce and Rachel looked disappointed, but my parents looked understanding. They looked at each other and nodded.

“We knew that this moment would come,” mom said. “Your biological father warned us that we could not protect you forever, but you would have to protect us.”

“How'd you know to do this,” dad asked. “Did he tell you?”

“Yeah,” I said. “He’s been talking to me, in my head.”

“Oh,” Dad grunted.

Bruce face lit up as he remembered something. “Mark,” he exclaimed. “Remember me telling you that I had a surprise?”

“I guess,” I said.

“Well, Intex was experimenting on us —”

“Are you alright?” I immediately felt guilty all over again, feeling concerned.

“Yeah, but we’re not just perfectly fine; we’re awesome. Those experiments that they ran on us, gave us powers!!”

My jaw dropped and my eyebrows shot up. “What?! But, why?” I paused. “Why did he give you powers?”

Bruce shrugged and Rachel replied, “He may have wanted to use us, but you helped us escape.”

“Guess what I have,” Bruce asked. I didn’t bother guessing. “Telekinesis!”

I grinned and nodded. “That’s a pretty awesome power,” I frowned. “I wished I had that.”

“Don’t worry, Mark,” dad said. “Bart said that you will develop more powers as time goes on.”

“Wait,” I said. “That explains why some walls fell down before I ran into them. I thought I was going crazy, but you were knocking them down, right Bruce?”

Bruce nodded.

“I have super senses, super strength and umm ...” Rachel said, “fast reflexes—what’s that called?”

“Agility,” I said. “Wow, this is pretty awesome! I thought that I would be alone in stopping Intex.”

“Wait,” Rachel said, seriously. “We’re coming with you?”

“Oh,” I said, realizing that I was jumping to conclusion. It made me recall back to what the ship told me about getting a team assembled. “Well, you don’t have to.”

“I don’t want to get involved in anything dangerous.”

“Well, you better stay here; Bart says that Intex is pretty dangerous and that I have to prepare to confront him, to stop him.”

“But what if I want to come?!” Bruce exclaimed.

“I guess. Your telekinesis might come in handy.” I paused. “Well ...” I said, “I guess I better pack up, and do some searching for a house, and move to ...” *New York*, the voice said in my head, which I figured was Bart’s. “New York.”

Everyone look worried, especially at the mention of New York, but they all ended up agreeing with me. My parents knew that it would come to this.

I went to my room and Bruce followed; Rachel hesitated, but decided to follow me to my room as well. I grabbed a suitcase and started throwing clothes in it.

“Are you really going?” Rachel asked me.

“Yes,” I replied. “I don’t really have any other choice.”

Rachel looked disappointed. “Well, I’m going to miss you, but ... be careful.”

Rachel was definitely saddened. She walked out of my room. As I packed some more, I took a look at Bruce, he looked excited; a complete opposite expression of Rachel’s. I continued packing, though the expression on Rachel’s face lingered in my mind’s eye.

I packed up three suitcases and was ready to go house searching. Bruce and Rachel went back to their families. I wondered if Bruce was going to come with me or not. I got a shower, and I changed my clothes, throwing away the dirty ones. I knew that Rachel wasn't coming, because it was too dangerous, though Bruce *might*.

I thought about what would happen. I would somehow find a house and I would live in New York. But what about a job? How else could I support myself? Then what? How would I stop Intex?

"Hey mom, dad?" I asked them, and they both turned to me, giving me their full attention. "Did you guys get experimented on?"

"No," mom said.

"They just gave us something to knock us out," dad said.

"Apparently, if it's true that they were going to use Bruce and Rachel, they didn't see a need to use us."

"Probably because you know too much already and that you wouldn't side for Intex." I nodded and looked at them. "I'm going to miss you guys," I said.

"You bet," dad said.

"I'll miss you too, sweetie," mom said.

She gave me a hug and I hugged her back. I hated goodbyes. I stood there, looking at my briefcases. I looked back at my parents. I sighed deeply.

I realized that I was waiting to see if Bruce was going to come.

“I don’t know,” I sighed. “I think that I’ll leave tomorrow.” I waited for the new subconscious in my head to interject, but it didn’t. I nodded in agreement with myself.

“Hon,” mom said. “Okay, but we both know what you have to do. I don’t want to say it, but you are going to leave tomorrow, or you never will, but you must.”

“I know ...” I sighed. *I’m the world’s only hope*, I thought.

I sat on the couch with my parents all night. We talked and talked, trying to enjoy this time; maybe the last time we would have together. We reflected on many memories and talked about our great times we’ve had together. I’m not a man with many words, but I was able to talk freely with my parents. Somehow we had something to say all night. It wasn’t until three in the morning that I finally fell asleep.

In my sleep I was still thinking; I wasn’t dreaming. I was thinking about what I was supposed to do, to leave my family and save the world from Intex. I was born on a different planet and brought here because my planet’s destruction. I didn’t understand why I was separated from my family, though. That was the greatest wonder of them all.

The next morning the smell of the biggest breakfast ever woke me up. There were pancakes, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, hash browns, sausage, and tons of it. I went up to the table, finding my parents, Bruce, Rachel and their parents there. I wondered if Bruce’s and Rachel’s parents knew where I was going. I looked at Bruce and questioned him with my face. We knew each other so well that we could do some small talk with our faces; their parents didn’t know where I was really going. Before I could spill it, dad saved me.

“I wanted to let you know, son,” dad began, “that I am really proud of you. Moving to New York City and getting a nice, high paying job ... You really surprised me.”

I smiled. “Thanks, dad,” I said. *What job?* I was thinking.

“It’s a good thing you took building trades in school,” mom said, “Now you have the experience needed in a building company.” It was true that I had taken that class, but I never thought that I would’ve got a job doing that.

“Yep, that’s for sure.”

“Congratulations, Mark,” Rachel’s dad said, and his wife nodded in agreement.

“Well,” I said, “what are we waiting for? I’m hungry.”

With that we dug into our food, filling our plates. I ate and looked at the excitement on everyone’s faces, but I also saw their sadness. I was going away. I was going ... away. I knew that I would miss them too. Then I remembered: was Bruce going to come with me? I mean, he had just gotten an awesome power; he could help me. I thought about Rachel, looking at her; I would miss her too, but I knew Bruce more; he was my best friend.

“Well,” I said, breaking the silence, “My new boss said that my job would require another helper other than me, and he said that if I brought a friend that he would hire us both, since my résumé looked so good.” I paused. “Can Bruce come? After all, we both had that Building Trades class.”

Bruce looked at his parents then back at me. They shook their heads. His mother especially.

“No, he can’t,” his mother said. “He just ...” She kept shaking her head.

“Mark’s already told me this,” Bruce began, “and I have given it some thought. Sooner or later I will need a job. Mark and I get along very well, and you know that. And ... mom, dad?” he asked, showing his soft side. He actually looked as if he would cry. “I am an adult now, and I feel like this is what I want to do. I want to go with Mark.”

“Hon,” Bruce’s mother said with her voice breaking. “Shouldn’t we think about this for a couple of days?”

“Well,” I said. “We only get the job if we leave now.”

Bruce’s parents looked at him. Bruce’s dad stared at him and me, thinking of it in his mind. Finally he spoke up.

“It is true, Bruce, that you are an adult, but ... is this a wise choice?”

Bruce doesn’t reply. He knew it would be like this, but he still wants to come.

His father licked his bottom lip. He sighed. “Are you two responsible together?”

“We will have to be,” Bruce replied.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” Bruce’s mother asked him.

“Yes, I’m sure. I’m going to miss all of you.”

Bruce’s mother started to cry. “I mean ...”

“Yes, mom. I’ve always dreamed of working alongside with Mark with whatever work.”

They discussed it for another half hour, finally giving into the fact that Bruce has the right to make his own decisions.

Bruce’s parents were saddened, but they felt they had to respect Bruce’s decision.

Bruce was coming with me. It was kind of hard to believe. After breakfast Bruce had another long talk with his parents, and me with mine. I was already packed, so we were left to go to Bruce’s house so he could pack. We said our goodbyes to everyone; ready to go. We got into

a cab and headed to New York City. I wasn't going to have enough money to get to New York, so dad given me some.

We waved our goodbyes until they were out of sight. I was off to save the world, with my best friend, Bruce. I wasn't even sure if he was ready. This was really last minute, but I had to do this to save my parents. I could tell that Bruce was very excited, but I knew that he was also nervous, just as much as I was.

Within a couple hours we had arrived in NY City and I paid the cab driver our bill, which was pretty large. We stepped out of the cab, walking out onto the sidewalk.

“What did I get myself into?” Bruce asked.

“This is for the best,” I said. “This is for the world’s sake.”

“We’re doing this for the world.” He paused. “I never dreamed of saving the world, not even with you.” He paused again. “So, where to?”

“Umm ...” I honestly had no idea. I just knew that I had to get to NY and here I was, in Manhattan, NY. *Find 22nd street, there is a house for sale; buy it.* “22nd street.” I said.

“Did that voice in your head tell you that?”

“Yes, there’s a house for sale there.” I looked around and found a street sign; we were at second street, we had to walk some more.

Let me tell you something that you may already know; NY City is very crowded. We probably got bumped into ten people in less than thirty seconds in our whole walk so far.

We finally made it to the house. I called up the realtor and was given an application. Bruce and I both filled it out. I filled most of it out and wrote down my yearly salary that the voice has told me it would be. We urged the realtor to accept it right then and there. He gave in, immediately looking over the apps.

“You know,” he said. “Usually I don’t allow young people like yourselves to be moved into my houses. Not just them alone. And ... I usually do not move them into the place on the same day, but this house

is completely empty, unoccupied and motivated. But ...” He paused and sighed. “These applications look wonderful. And you guys both, surprisingly, make good money. It makes me wonder ...” He paused, looking at us both suspiciously. “Where do you to work?”

Stanley’s Building Company.

“*Stanley’s Building Company,*” I replied.

He scoffed. “You’re kidding?” he saw that I seemed serious. “That’s one of the biggest companies here in New York.”



Finally the realtor had asked us for the first and last months’ rent and I bought it with all of the money that dad had given me. Being that the house was already ready, we moved in right away. We unpacked, picking a room for each of us. There were two extra rooms, a living room, kitchen and basement.

Thankfully, excitement started to kick in.

“So,” Bruce asked, “Where’s this building company at?”

“That was originally a lie,” I said.

Bruce laughed. “I know. And the voice went through with it.”

“I know you know.” I nodded, confirming to Bruce that the voice did tell me to say the Stanley’s Building Company.

“What about money? How are we going to live?”

That’s the least of your concerns, the voice said in my head.

“Umm, the voice said that it’s the least of our worries.”

Bruce grunted. "So, what next?"

"I guess we go back to Creative Works and take it down." I waited for the voice to interject, but it didn't. I knew that's what we had to do anyway. "But ... we have to be careful. We must have a plan to take it down. And I don't think that we can do this right away. We are not ready yet."

Bruce nodded. "We have to train ... but how?"

"Umm ..." I didn't know.

"How about we help you?" A familiar unwanted voice said from behind me. I turned and saw Blade, the werewolf. Right now he was in his human form. I could see that he was Hispanic in his human form, but while he was a werewolf all I could see was his fur. "Well, you idiots made it easy for us to find you. You moved here, right where we want you to be."

"How'd you find us so quickly?" I asked.

"We could smell you."

You're not ready to fight him yet, said the voice. Tell him that he fears you because if someone as strong as Intex wants you stopped, then you must be difficult.

"Now we're going to kill you guys," Blade said.

Bruce tried to use his telekinesis to choke Blade, but it was still weak and it barely did anything to him. Blade laughed at how pathetic it felt. He shook his head and looked at Bruce. "You guys are weak!"

I smiled and laughed. "Bruce!" I scoffed. "He's just along for the ride. It's me you should fear." I winked at Bruce, hoping not to offend him.

"Fear you?!"

“Yeah, if Intex fears me and wants me dead, shouldn’t you fear me?”

Blade wasn’t sure what to say. I walked towards him and he took a step back. He made a pathetic smile; he *was* showing fear. I threw a punch at his face. It knocked him unconscious immediately. I looked at his other werewolf friends.

“You better get him home,” I said to them. “Get out of here, and don’t plan on coming back anytime soon.”

They grabbed Blade and ran off in great fear. Bruce laughed and high-fived me. “That was great!” Bruce exclaimed.

“Yeah.”

I waited for the voice to tell me something, but I got nothing. I tried to think of something to do; how would we train?

“Mark, do you think there’s any sort of combat training here in New York?”

“I don’t know, maybe. We should probably check, because that’s a good idea.”

Bruce and I headed outside and picked up some newspaper, books and maps. We headed back home to do some research. We searched hours upon hours, looking for such a thing of any combat training.

“Bruce, we’re going to need to get computers with internet.”

“My phone still has service, it doesn’t expire until the end of the month; I have internet on it.” Bruce pulled his phone out of his pocket and looked up Kung Fu in NY. Sure enough there was; tons of them, too. There must've been at least ten Kung Fu training programs that you could sign up for. All of them had similar hour limitations. You only could sign up for ten hours a week, two days in a row.

We signed up for all of the week days from three different places. We hoped that the more training from different people the better. We had to wait until Monday of next week, today being Saturday; we had a couple of more days. I wondered what to do for supper.

The evening was all about looking for job openings anywhere. Here in NY, we only found a couple jobs. One involved working at a bakery and another, believe it or not, was what our cover story was: a building company; Stanley Building Company. We were both sure that the building company would pay more, as did the realtor, for he said it was one of the biggest companies in New York.

We decided to apply for the building company. We both applied online, hoping one of us would get the job. We may not, because we didn't have any college degrees. We made sure to mention that we've had experience in school and know a thing or two about building. I was actually a little nervous, more than before. I had to save the world and get a job, too bad saving the world didn't make money, but I hadn't really started that either. I guess I would see.

We got good sleep that night, despite not having any supper. We probably wouldn't have any food the next morning either; we definitely would need jobs soon.



I woke up the next morning and was unsure of where I was. I looked all around, realizing that I was in a different house. I remembered I was in New York, in our new house.

I got out of bed, walking towards to door. I grabbed the door knob and turned it to open it, causing it to creak. I realized that it sound like metal creaking. I let go of it and saw the imprint of my hand's grip on the knob. I had crushed it! Whoops. I didn't realize my own strength yet.

I realized something else; if I would train Kung Fu with some other people, I might hurt them with my strength. I shoved that thought aside, assuring myself that they would have all of the many ways to block or avoid my hits.

The next few weeks were really hard on us. We had no money and no jobs. We did a few of the Kung Fu classes and we were going to have to pay up at the end of the month. I had no idea where to get the money. I used my phone, which service expired at the end of the month, and called up dad and explained our situation. He said that he would loan us some more money, but I would need to step it up. We got the money and paid for the classes and got enough to get by.

We started doing more research for jobs. By the end of the month, we finally got calls because of having followed up ourselves by calling earlier. Bruce got one from The Manhattan Bakery, and I got one from Stanley's; the building company. We both went our separate ways and went to do our interviews. It happened to be on the same day, because both of us followed up yesterday.

We met back together and called our hoped-to-be-bosses the next day to ask them about getting the jobs. Bruce had gotten his job, amazingly, good thing he happened to take culinary arts in school. I had to wait another day, but I called again the next day and the manager said that he appreciated my repetitiveness; it showed that I was determined to get this job. It paid off; I had gotten the job.

It was very surprising, considering that it was New York City and we had gotten jobs within a few weeks; amazing. Both of us went our separate ways the next morning to our separate jobs. It was pretty tough for me.

Once I got there, immediately I was getting trained and taught safety. The rest of the week was the same as the first day. There was a lot to cover. The next week they put me to work; they had a building to finish right away.

Bruce was already baking bread and making doughnuts. He mostly cleaned, made coffee, and served costumers, though. At least we were both making money to support ourselves. Neither of us had cars, so no car insurance to pay. It was not like we weren't going to need cars anyway; I couldn't see how we could drive in New York City anyhow.

We continued to take the Kung Fu classes, as long as they didn't interfere with our work. I had to say that we were improving. We had been taking these classes for a couple months now and our sensei said that he was noticing some improvement. Surely, though, I had to say that Kung Fu was a lot harder than our jobs, especially mine. Bruce's though could be dangerous I guess: he could burn himself, whereas I could fall from the jobsite. I couldn't tell you which is more dangerous (sarcasm intended).

We both actually found to be enjoying this, as our sensei encouraged; but we had to remind ourselves the very purpose for doing it. We had to take down Creative Works and save the world. Our sensei said that we had a ways to go; I was hoping that it didn't mean another year. I was fairly certain that was what he meant.

Of course, we couldn't keep this routine, because the werewolves came back and barged into our home. We only had three months of Kung Fu training; hopefully it was enough for now.

“Blade,” I smiled. “It’s been a while. Were you getting some brain surgery?” I joked and he grew angry. Last I had seen him I hit his head.

“No!” he exclaimed. “I wasn’t.” He growled. “You’re dead ... I'm going to kill you now.”

“Because Intex wants you to?” Bruce asked.

“Duh!”

“Why doesn’t he kill me himself?” I asked. “What is he afraid of?”

“He’s busy doing more important things.”

“Like destroying people’s lives and turning them into monsters?”

“Exactly.”

Blade and his fellow werewolves storm towards us. A fight immediately forms. I could tell that they were a little surprised at how we were a little better in our fighting skills, but they didn’t try to show it. We fought for a good five minutes and they finally backed off. They couldn’t take it; I probably gave them a lifetime supply of bruises and Bruce probably gave them sore throats and backs, using his telekinesis; he had been practicing it.

They kept their scowls on their faces, didn’t say anything more, and just left.

I looked around the whole living room; it looked like someone trashed the place. We cleaned up the place and afterwards cleaned ourselves. I took a nice long shower with my cuts stinging nonstop. I went

back into the living room. It was better, but you could tell that there was a fight in it; most of it was clean, though.

We had just bought a decent TV for at least watching the news and thankfully it was still good; the werewolves didn't break it. I looked around for the remote and found it hovering in the middle of the air in front of me. This was freaky.

"What the heck?" I walked towards it and then saw Bruce standing beside it with his hand motioning it to stay in place.

"Looking for this?" Bruce asked me.

"I didn't realize that that was you, but yes I was looking for that."

"I'm going to need to practice it more." I looked at Bruce and saw that he was disappointed. The remote dropped to the floor. "I was trying to use my telekinesis to back the werewolves off, but it wasn't enough. They were stronger and they still got to me. My telekinesis isn't strong enough yet."

I nodded. "Yes, we need to do some more training."

"Yeah ... on our Kung Fu and our powers. But your super strength must come naturally; you shouldn't need to practice that."

"Well ... I could accidently break something; it wouldn't hurt to practice *controlling* it."

I picked up the remote and was about to turn on the TV, but some sound stopped me.

"What?" Bruce asked. "What is it?"

"I thought I heard something." Then I heard again; it was a beeping sound. "There it goes again, shh, be quiet."

I heard another beep, and then another; each beep was faster than the first.

“That sounds like —” Bruce started.

I kicked the couch up and saw the source of the beeping. It was a bomb. We both panicked. The bomb had a countdown timer on it and it said thirteen seconds left.

“Oh god.” Bruce said.

I snatched the bomb up and looked at it, having no idea what to do. I ran outside with the bomb. I looked at all of the people around. Millions of people in all of New York, they could be killed. Who knew how big the bomb could be. I looked at my house. What was I going to do with this?

Throw it into the sky! The voice yelled.

The bomb was at three seconds and I threw it as hard as I could into the sky, straight up. The bomb hurled directly upward and three seconds later it created a large explosion in the air. The explosion created a large air disruption that sent everyone down to all fours. I quickly looked around everyone, thousands of people all around me, all on the ground, but they all seemed fine. The explosion didn't hurt anyone or anything, it just create a shockwave.

Tons of people look upwards; all shocked and clueless as to what just happened. I was just as clueless.

I got up and Bruce got up behind me. “That was a close one,” Bruce said, though very scared.

I looked at him and at the rest of the people around. Everyone was all looking up. They had no idea really where the explosion came from. No one that I could see looked at me.

“Bruce,” I said. “One of the werewolves planted the bomb in our house.”

“I know. Like they said, Intex wants us dead.” He looked nervous. “They almost did it.”

“This isn’t good,” I said. “The bad guys aren’t supposed to know where you live. That’s the worst thing for a ...”

What was the word I needed?

“Superhero?”

“I guess that’s what you could call us.”

“But we don’t have any disguises.”

I shrugged. “We have to take down Creative Works first, that’s why.”

We went back inside and collapsed on the couches. I was going to turn the TV on, but now I didn’t even know why I wanted to. I was furious. Intex was only doing hideous things and he wanted me dead for going to stop him.

It was strange; the only way I knew to stop him was by getting told by my biological father, Bart. I wouldn’t have been preparing to stop him if it weren’t for the voice. So, then, how would I stop him in the first place? Obviously, time must’ve been altered.

I couldn’t see how I would stop Intex. He was powerful; he had to be because of all of the experiments he ran. All I had was my strength.

Intex had sent the werewolves to kill us, but they failed. Their backup plan must’ve been to plant the bomb at our house and kill us along with a few thousand of New Yorkers. The explosion in the sky looked big enough to do that.

“Bruce,” I said.

“Yes?” he asked.

“We have to step it up with our training. We have to talk with our sensei and tell him that we want to train harder, and we have to prove it to him. And we have to practice our powers. You need to control that telekinesis. We are going to need to take down Intex, but right now ... I'm not seeing it.”

Bruce nodded in agreement. We were both barely keeping ourselves alive. If we continued as we were, the werewolves would kill us next time, but we had to stop them, stop Intex ... save the world. I was even less certain about the saving-the-world-part. I wasn't sure that I could stop Intex, and if I couldn't stop him, then I definitely couldn't save the world.

Believe, the voice said. You must believe in yourself. You can stop Intex, and you're right, you must step up your training.

I waited for more, but got none. I already knew what we needed to do now. We had time right now; weekend, no work.

“Bruce,” I said. “Let's get started.”

With that, we took no hesitation to immediately train. We trained down in the basement, using our Kung Fu on each other. We also practiced our powers, using some weights we had set up down here. I lifted a ton of weight with my strength while Bruce did the same with his telekinesis. He was going to need to practice a lot for his telekinesis was just as good as his physical strength.

We used up all of the weekend to train, not wasting a minute of it.

We survived another week without any interruption from our intense training. Our sensei said that he actually noticed some improvement with our training. That made me feel proud, but I couldn't let my guard down. We had to try harder still. Right now we were living with just enough food and Kung Fu; yummy Kung Fu ... well not exactly. We had to keep our jobs and earn money to support our system going on right now.

Today was a Monday. I woke up feeling exhausted; yesterday was training with our sensei all day. He said that though we were improving a lot, we still had a lot to learn. I agreed. We also had a lot to learn with our abilities, especially Bruce. He had to learn how to strengthen his telekinesis and learn to control it. At times he couldn't even use it, but he was working on it.

That morning I got dressed and headed straight to work. In the meantime Bruce went to the bakery. At the job site we were working on the same building. My job was working on hauling, handing and putting up drywall. They had only the strongest work on that and I was definitely in that category. The other workers were surprised to see how easily I could pick up the drywall by myself, but they had no idea really *how* easy it actually was. I decided to pretend that it was a little difficult.

Manhattan Bakery

Bruce had started right away with frying doughnuts. He had to wait three minutes until they were done. He set a timer to three minutes and made some coffee. When he was done with that, the doughnuts were ready to take out of the fryer. He let them cool for a minute and

glazed half of them and frosted the other half. Next he put them on a tray and took them out into the diner, then into the display counter.

“Perfect timing,” Bruce’s boss said. “The Bakery opens in two minutes.” He started nodding his head. “I like you Bruce; you’re right on task. Keep up the good work.”

Some workers were setting up the tables, cleaning them and such, while another worker was waiting at the cash register. Bruce went back into the kitchen where most of the workers, or chefs, were found.

By the end of his shift, Bruce had finished all of his tasks right on time. His boss found him and congratulated him. “Nice work today, Bruce,” his boss said and patted him on the back. Bruce suddenly felt weak. He had a sharp pain in his gut and his back started tingling.

“Bruce?” his boss asked. “Are you alright?”

“I ...” Bruce started to talk, but he couldn’t finish and he fell to the floor, sprawled out on his stomach.

“Bruce!” His boss quickly went down and flipped Bruce over onto his back. “Bruce!” He was unconscious. “Wake up!!” The boss, Albert, shook Bruce and yelled at him.

Suddenly, Bruce gasped, waking up, and sitting right up. He saw that his boss, Albert, and some of the other workers were looking at him. “What happened?” Bruce asked.

“You passed out,” Albert said. “You were in pain and then you passed out. Are you alright now?”

“Yeah, I’m not sure what just happened, but now I feel just fine.”

“Are you sure?”

Bruce concentrated on any pain, but felt none. “Yeah, I’m fine.”

Bruce got to his feet as did his boss. He looked around and smiled. "That was embarrassing." He paused. "I guess, I'll see you tomorrow ... I hope."

"I hope so too, see ... ya." He said slowly.

With that Bruce walked out the door, avoiding running into people and walked towards home. Bruce wasn't sure what had just happened, but he had a few ideas. Either it was his exercising, lack of food, or ... his powers developing. Why would his telekinesis make him faint? It had to be something else.

Bruce made it home before Mark, so he decided to practice his telekinesis while he was waiting. He went into the basement and sat at the bench with the weights. He focused his mind on lifting fifty pounds and succeeded as one floated into the air. Next he went to one-hundred, struggling a little bit. Then he added another fifty pounds and held it in the middle of the air for ten seconds. He felt like giving up, because it was very difficult. He forced himself to lift it higher in the air and then he added fifty more pounds.

It began to feel too heavy as if he was going to drop it all. It lowered a foot, but he held on. He concentrated and threw up his hands as if to help with his telekinesis. He lifted the weights two more feet into the air, holding it there. It kept getting harder and harder, but Bruce forced himself to keep a hold on it and lift it high. Bruce kind of thought that his training with his sensei gave him some endurance.

The weights started to drop slowly and he forced himself to lift it a foot higher and then he added another fifty pounds. He held the weights in place in the air for a few more seconds, and then he closed his eyes and while still focusing on them. He dropped his arms and kept the weights in the air. Somehow, it felt lighter. Blocking out his vision and relaxing and only focusing on the weights made it easier. He concentrated, feeling the presence of the other weights, and lifted a bunch more. He had no idea how much he was lifting now, but he was sure that it was

around five-hundred pounds. He slowly opened his eyes and looked at what he was lifting.

He was wrong. He saw that he was lifting more like a thousand pounds. Suddenly, the weight seemed to take a toll on him and he dropped it all. He felt weak and collapsed. He just lay on the floor panting.

“Bruce, are you home?” I yelled and set my wallet down on the counter, next to the coffee pot. Bruce didn’t respond and I couldn’t hear him, but I thought to check downstairs and I saw him on the floor.

“Bruce!” I ran towards him.

Bruce suddenly started laughing. I thought he was passed out, but he was only out of breath.

“What?” I asked. “Why are you laughing?”

Bruce lifting his hand and pointed towards weights that were on the floor, not neatly laid out. “I ...” Bruce panted. “I lifted ... all of those weights with ... my telekinesis.”

I walked towards the weights and counted them by fifty. I counted altogether twenty-three. He had lifted one-thousand one-hundred fifty pounds with his telekinesis. I scoffed.

“What!” I was shocked. “You could barely lift a hundred before!”

“I know,” Bruce sat up on the floor. “I just concentrated hard and forced myself to keep them in the air. Then I closed my eyes and that really helped. It made it all feel lighter, but when I opened my eyes ... I saw how much I was really carrying and then I dropped them all.”

“When you opened your eyes, were you still holding them in the air?”

“Yeah, but only for a few seconds until I dropped them.”

“Maybe you didn’t believe in yourself. Maybe you saw how much it was and lost concentration.” I paused. “Bruce I know you could lift way more.”

“I think so too.”

“No, I know so. You’ll get there. One day you’ll be able to lift all of these weights at once.”

Bruce raised his eyebrows. “Are you sure about that?”

“I’m sure of it ... if I can then you can.”

“Can you?”

“Let’s see.”

I started adding the weights onto the bar at the bench. Bruce helped by using his telekinesis, sliding some weight onto the bar. We got all of the weights onto the bar and I lay down on the bench, underneath the bar. I got ready to lift.

“Bruce spot me with your telekinesis.”

“Okay,”

I wrapped my hands around the bar and exhaled. I tried to lift, but it wouldn’t lift. I tried harder and I got it off the bar and I pulled it towards my chest. “Oh, god!” I exclaimed as the bar started falling to my chest. I tried really hard to pull it up, and somehow it didn’t hit my chest. My face had to have been really red, and I saw that Bruce’s was too. He was helping me, spotting me. Without his help the bar would’ve killed me. Together we put the bar back up.

I sat up and exhaled deeply. “Wow! That’s a killer!”

Bruce’s eyes were wide open and he nodded. “You got that right.” He gave a deep sigh. “Whoo, that’s heavy.”

“Thanks for helping me ... I could’ve died.” I laughed. “That would’ve made it a lot easier for Intex, wouldn’t it?”

“Mark. That’s not funny.”

“Hey, I was talking about myself.”

“Yeah, but where would that leave me?”

“Okay, alright. I was just joking.”

“Let’s not try to lift all of the weight all at once.”

“Okay ... yeah that gave me quite a scare.” I paused. “At least, let’s not lift it above us, or we would risk our lives.” I looked at all of the weights on that bar. “That must’ve to have been ... about five-thousand pounds! And together we lifted it!” I paused. “That’s over two-thousand pounds each!”

“We were lifting it with our adrenaline too.”

“Yeah,” I sighed.

Suddenly Bruce looked pale. He started reaching for his back and groaned. “Ahh!!” he screamed.

“Bruce? Are you alright?”

“My back, it hurts,” he said. “This happened at the bakery too.”

Just then he fell to his knees in great pain. I knelt down next to him and saved him from falling onto his face. “Bruce!” he groaned even louder and looked in even more pain. I looked at his back and saw that it was getting bigger. Two humps were coming out!

“AHHH!! MY SHOULDERS!!!!” he yelled. “AHH!!! They hurt.”

I touch the ... bumps on his back feeling that they were ... soft. I wasn’t sure what it was. I thought they were his shoulders at first, but they suddenly stretched, tearing right through his shirt, exposing them-

selves. The humps were made of bird feathers! Bruce gave his loudest roar, and dropped all his weight on me. The humps expanded dramatically, extending outward. The feather humps became ... wings. The wings extended all of the way out. Finally Bruce stopped screaming.

“Whoa! I feel a lot better now.” Bruce was puzzled. “Now, my back feels heavier. Mark, what happened?”

“Uhh ...” was all I could say.

Bruce shook his head. “What are you looking at?” Bruce saw me looking at something behind him. He turned his neck and was even more shocked than I was. “Wings!!! Ahh!! Are ... are ... are ... those mine?”

“Umm ... Bruce ... I believe they are.”

“I have wings!!??” he was as surprised as I was.

Bruce reached his arm out and touched them. "I can feel them," he exclaimed. "Well, I mean ... my wings could feel it too! My wings can feel my hand! It's part of me." I nodded. He tried moving them. They started to move up and down, then side to side, and then he started flapping them. "Now this ... this is pretty awesome!! This is going to have to get some getting used to."

"Yeah," I paused and just admired them. They were huge. They were bigger than any bird that I have ever seen. But of course, Bruce was bigger than any bird that I have even seen. They must've been at least twenty feet wide. Twenty-foot white wings! "How'd ... how did this happen?"

This question never reached Bruce's mind. He was just in awe admiring them. "Intex," he said. "It had to have been Intex. His experiment that he did on me. I thought that I only had telekinesis, though."

"It makes sense, though," I said. "Intex always makes his experiments into hybrids. Sorry, Bruce I don't mean to call you an experiment."

"Don't worry about it, this is awesome! Even more awesome than telekinesis!"

"Bruce, you're part human and part bird."

"Avian, it actually called part avian."

"Avian, yeah that means bird. An avian-human hybrid."

"Pretty sweet, huh?"

Just then my cell phone rang. I took it out of my pocket and answered it. "Hello," I replied.

"You won't believe what just happened to me!!" It was Rachel.

"What? You got wings too?" I asked Rachel, being sarcastic.

"What?!?! How'd you know?" It was true, though. I scoffed.

"Because, Bruce has wings too."

"Is that Rachel?" Bruce asked and I nodded.

"It's so amazing!! My parents are here and I just told them everything. I couldn't just tell them why I just got wings. Intex ... he did this to us!!"

"I know; Bruce and I were just talking about it."

"Mark ... I ... I miss you."

Now that I thought about it, I felt the same way. *"Me too,"* I said.

"I gotta talk to my parents more. I'll talk to you later, bye."

"Bye, Rachel." I put my phone back into my pocket.

"So," Bruce said. *"Rachel has wings now too."*

"Yeah, and it all happened about the same time. She was probably in pain until they ... you know, came out."

"Oh, no." Bruce said. *"How am I going to go outside with these?"*

"What do you mean? Just walk out the door and bend then in."

"No, I mean people'll see them."

"Can you ... uh ... tuck them in?"

"I'll try," Bruce started to concentrate hard to move his wings, but then realized that he didn't have to; they were easy to move, being a part of him. He started tucking them in and held them close to his body. *"Whoa, now they're starting to feel tingly."* Just then, as he tucked them

closer, they started to seep into his skin. They actually ... absorbed into his back.

“They’re gone,” I said. “They —”

“They sucked into my back,” Bruce finished. He pushed the wings back out easily, as they came out of his back. “My back feels empty when I extend my wings.”

“Your wings probably made room in your back for them.”

“That must've been what the pain was, the wings making room in my back.” Bruce practiced tucking his wings back into his back and extending them again. Back in and back out, back and forth.

“It’s easy to move them!” He said.

“I bet, but is it easy to fly?”

“Probably not,”

“Now you have something else to practice.”

“Yay!” Bruce paused. “Are you sure that you're the one that Intex wants to stop?”

“I was originally, until Intex did experiments on you guys.” I laughed. “I don’t know why Intex gave powers to you guys. Did he really think that you would work for him?”

“Maybe ... he was going to alter our thinking or something.”

“Maybe. That seems more like it.”

Bruce admired his wings and couldn’t stop smiling. He jumped up and down and ran upstairs. “I gotta go outside and try flying!”

“No! Bruce!” I yelled. “You can't just go outside and start flying. You need a disguise, so no one will recognize you.”

“Yeah, you're right. Duh!” Bruce exclaimed. “I think I have a hoodie that I can use.”

“And don't try flying around here, try the park.”

“Yeah, I think that I will.”

“We don't want anyone to suspect something when we have a bird person above our house.”

“Yeah, of course.”

Just then my phone vibrated and I pulled it out. Bruce ran upstairs. “Hello?” I answered.

“Hey, Mark.” It was Rachel. *“I could pull the wings back into my back! It's like they suck back into it.”*

“Yeah, Bruce can do it too.”

“And when I have my wings out, it feels like there's more room in my back; room where my wings go. These wings are great.”

“Have you tried flying yet?”

“No, I haven't.”

“Bruce is going to practice in The Manhattan Park, but he's going to wear a disguise, of course.”

“A disguise? What kind of disguise?”

“A hoodie.”

“Oh, some disguise.” Rachel chuckled and I joined her.

“Yeah ...”

“Well, Mark ... talk to you later. Gotta go.”

“Okay, talk to ya later, bye.”

“Bye.”

I stood there, in the basement, standing still for about a couple of more minutes. I was zoning out, thinking about Rachel. I didn't realize that I would miss her this much. It was so great to talk to her. I could tell in the sound of her voice that she wanted to talk in person. I wished she was here, or I was with her. I couldn't believe this ... I loved her. I always had loved her, but I just never admitted it. Then I realized another thing. Rachel loved me back; she called me twice today to tell about what happened with her, she didn't call Bruce. She didn't even mention him, I did.

“I'm heading out now!” I heard Bruce yell from upstairs. “What do you think of my disguise?”

I ran up the steps and saw Bruce in the kitchen, wearing a hoodie that covered most of his face.

“Can you even see?” I asked him.

“Just barely,” he replied.

“Then it must be a great disguise.”

“The only problem is that I'm going to have to make holes in it for my wings.”

For the rest of the week, we continued our routine of working and training. Bruce's boss, Albert, was worried about him; about how he collapsed at work in pain. Bruce assured him that he was fine. Albert calmed down a little but still was cautious

I started working harder on my building job. My boss, Stanley, was impressed with my strength. He had me to continue working on hauling stuff and putting up drywall from now on. I tried to make it seem that I was trying, not to make it look too easy. If I became well-known as a ... superhero, then I couldn't be popular here. People would catch on that Mark Wills is ... that one superhero. Whoever I may be, if I ever become a superhero.

Our training with our sensei has improved. He said that he has noticed how we are getting quicker, swifter and smoother with our Kung Fu. He said that he could tell that we were just beginning, but we were going along a lot fast than most of his other ... warriors. He could tell that we were continuing our training at home; he even asked us if we did and we said that it was true. He told us not to let that go to our head and to continue our good work, not letting our guard down.

Bruce had been flying in the park for two days now, and people were bug-eyed. Everyone couldn't believe their eyes. They weren't sure to believe if that was a person with wings or not. They all saw it together and they knew that they were really seeing it. Of course, though, no one could see Bruce's face. The Manhattan Daily News came to check it out. They interviewed people about what they saw and thought. Some thought that it was an angel. They got some pictures, but when Bruce saw them doing that he dived down out of the way and clumsy flew away.

In New York there is not any place where anyone isn't, besides a few alleys. Bruce dived down in one. The only person who saw him was some homeless guy, and he couldn't believe his eyes.

Bruce managed to make it home undetected. People had no idea it was him, and no one knew of Bruce Anderson anyway. He was only known at the Manhattan Bakery, not elsewhere in NY. At home, Bruce and I trained on each other for hours when we didn't have work. When one of us had work and one of us didn't, we would practice our powers on things, like lifting weights, or flying, or practice fighting against a punching bag.

The last day of the week, when we were training on each other in the basement, we heard a voice from upstairs that interrupted us. It was a voice that we didn't want to hear; it was Blade's.

"Hello!" he yelled. "Anyone here?"

Bruce and I ran up the stairs. "Yes, we're here." I said. "Can I help you?"

"Yeah, you can die."

"You first!" Bruce exclaimed and he started to choke Blade and hold him a foot in the air, by his neck, using his telekinesis.

Blade choked and laughed at the same time. "You're becoming a little popular. It turns out the Intex's experiment worked on you ..." he coughed. "It's ... too ... bad that Mark helped you escape. We could've used you ... but ... now ... we have to kill you."

"Not by the looks of it," Bruce said.

Bruce concentrated and squeezed harder. Blade's face grew red as his arms started to get hairy along with his face. He transformed into his werewolf form.

"Stop it!!" Blade growled.

I looked at Bruce, regretting it a little bit; he looked scary. He was concentrating hard on telekinetically choking Blade. Finally Bruce let go of Blade and he hacked and cough. I wasn't going to waste any time and I kicked him hard in his stomach. That knocked the wind out of him for a minute. He couldn't breathe and looked like he was going to die when he suddenly gasped.

Blade quickly jumped to his feet and threw up his fists. "Let's dance!" he exclaimed. He started throwing fists at us, but we easily dodged them and made contact with our fists and his face. He was surprised with how easy it was looking for us. Blade really didn't look like he was throwing any fists at us, because we were the ones making connections with his face and gut.

"How?" Blade backed up. "How are you guys so good at fighting all of the sudden?"

"Shouldn't you know?" Bruce asked. "Don't you stalk us?"

"Somewhat, but you guys are boring!" He paused, panting. "All you do is work."

"Well, we're not telling you how we do it," I said, "we just do!" Then I suddenly kicked him square in the face and Blade fell over unconscious.

He was completely out and he slowly turned back into human. I guess that it was his anger and ... maybe fear that made him turn into his wolf form. Now being knocked out he turned back into human.

"We should tie him up," I said. "Bruce, let's take him downstairs."

"Yeah, and get some bright lights to shine in his face; make him not know where he's at. Blind him."

"Great idea."

Blade woke up and couldn't move, nor see. He looked all around and saw that he was in a white room. Heaven? No, he was tied down to a chair. The chair was pretty strong. He was still in his smelly, stretched-out clothes. He couldn't figure out where he was. There was a bright light shining in his face. Then he heard footsteps.

"Who's there?!" Blade's voice sounded weak and hideous.

I laughed to myself. I gave Bruce a hand sign to not talk. I wasn't sure if I wanted to talk myself. Maybe it would be crueler to not talk at all, to make Blade go insane not that he wasn't already. I made an attempt to make an evil laugh and it worked.

"What do you want?" Blade screamed. "Please don't hurt me!"

"Blade, is that you?" I asked him in my normal voice.

"Mark?" his voice changed. Bruce looked at me in surprise, *what are you doing?* He lipped. I shushed him.

"You're here too?" I asked Blade. "Who is this guy that kidnapped us?"

"They kidnapped us? Me ... *and* ... you?"

"Yeah."

"Shut up!!" Bruce yelled in a low, creepy, unusual, not-so-Bruce-like voice. I shut up and Blade did the same.

We were really selling it. Blade actually thought that we were kidnapped. He couldn't see anything. I whispered something to Bruce; a plan.

“Stop muttering to yourself, Mark!!!” Bruce yelled in his scary voice. Then he slapped me hard in my face, I could take the hit too, thanks to our endurance we’ve developed in our training. We had to continue to sell it. I pretended to pass out. I slowly walked around the bright light shone in Blade’s face.

Blade’s fear increased. He didn’t want to say anything. All Blade could see was a dark figure, he couldn’t point me out with the bright light in his face. I walked behind him and then I laughed evilly. Then I whacked him across his head, knocking him out.

Bruce and I ran upstairs, cracking up. This was hilarious. We had Blade thinking that he and I were kidnapped. This was great. He had no idea where he was. I don’t think he even knew about our basement. He definitely didn’t know about our training. We went into our rooms and couldn’t contain ourselves; we just burst out laughing until we cried.

“You know what?” I asked Bruce when we calmed down.

“What?” he replied.

“We need to find something to alter our voice so that we can fool Blade into thinking that we are someone else.”

“Yeah, but where are we going to find something like that?”

“I don’t know —and hey—that would be a great idea for when we use our disguise. We could use it to alter our voices. Right now people have seen you in your hoodie and wings. We should get some voice distorters.”

We were set out to find some voice distorters. We pulled out our phones and looked it up. There were a few places in NY that we could check. We headed out together and we checked a few of the stores. We had found nothing of the sort at the first two, but by the third store, we found something that we could use. The clerk thought maybe we would like to play around with it.

It was about ninety dollars; although it weren't the greatest, it would work. I guessed that in the future we could get better ones, and maybe get them online.

I gave it to Bruce and he put it onto the low voice setting. He immediately started talking. Basically it was a little microphone that you attached to your collar. You would speak softly, and then it would alter your voice, amplifying it by itself. The sound quality wasn't that great, but it wasn't very noticeable.

Bruce and I walked very slowly downstairs, as to not make as much sound. "Who's there?" Blade panicked.

"Shut up!" Bruce spoke in a low voice through the distorter. "I despise you guys! You, Blade, you work for Intex who alters people's DNA, but I believe in creating actual powers. I have Intex locked away, dying by poisonous gas."

"No way. You're lying!"

"You don't believe me?" Bruce started choking Blade using telekinesis. Blade started choking, "Okay, okay! I believe you."

"Do you really?" Bruce asked, choking him harder.

"Yes!!"

Bruce let go. Blade gasped, and started breathing. "What are you going to do to us?"

"Us'?" Bruce asked. "Oh, you mean you and Mark. Well, I already killed Mark, he was getting to talkative." Blade kind of smiled, he believed every word that Bruce said. "As for you, I'm going to have to think about reasonable torture. Something to make you change your mind about life."

With that, Bruce motioned me to hit Blade. I slowly walked around the light and then behind Blade. I raised my fist and whacked

Blade across the head. My fist actually hurt for a second, I couldn't imagine how much that hurt Blade.

Bruce and I ran back upstairs and laughed some more. Suddenly my phone vibrated in my pocket. I took it out and answered it. "Hello?" I replied.

"Mark! Thank god!! Rachel's been kidnapped!!" It was Rachel's mother. *"Those hairy ugly ... things took her. You gotta save my baby."* My heart started racing, and then I grew angry.

"Don't worry Mrs. Stanbury, I'll find her." I said.

"Oh, thank you ... please find her and bring her back to me!" She was crying.

"I will. Bye."

"What?" Bruce asked. "What happened?"

"It's Rachel; she's been kidnapped."

"What?! Intex! He took her."

"Yeah, and we're going to go to Creative Works right now. We gotta to get Rachel back."

"She's probably not there yet, though. She just now got kidnapped, right?"

"Then, we'll wait for her."

With that, Bruce and I got on our shoes and ran outside. We immediately were slowed down with the traffic and we headed towards Creative Works.

We made it to Creative Works within fifteen minutes and obviously the door was locked. I easily forced it open, in such a way that no one would notice. I push the door open and closed it behind us. In front of us was a long empty hallway. That was the second worst thing about this place; the hallways. The first worst was the experiments being done here. It was sickening. Then it hit me; I could put an end to this place right now.

Intex couldn't keep going like this; I had to end this. Bruce and I walked down the hallway, checking rooms, looking inside through the windows. Most of them were either prisons or experiment rooms. I was expecting to see Rachel in a prison, either in an actual cell or chained to a chair.

If we weren't here to save Rachel, I probably would've have laughed at the thought of escaping several times from being chained to a chair, but not now. We had to save Rachel.

Suddenly an alarm sounded: *Intruder Alert!* And it kept repeating that over and over again. Bruce and I ran around, looking at all of the rooms. We came to splitting hallways and in each hallway were guards. They raised their weapons and started firing at us. There was nowhere to run, so I ran towards them, dodging bullets. A couple of bullets went right past my head, or my shoulder. And then one actually hit me in my left forearm. It stung right away, but I didn't stop. I charged right into the guards and threw punches and kicks, knocking them all out. I know that sounded easy, well, it was. All these guards knew how to do was fire a weapon, and that's not to say about their aim either.

I looked back and didn't see Bruce; I figured he took the other hallway. Bruce probably used his telekinesis, hopefully. I couldn't stand not knowing if Bruce was okay or not, so I ran back and looked down the

other hallway. Bruce was already running down looking in other rooms. There were guards knocked unconscious on the floor. I should've known that Bruce could withstand them, we were both equally well with Kung Fu. I ran back down my hallway and immediately started looking in all of the rooms for Rachel. I saw many experiments locked in prisons or on cots, being experimented on. *Don't worry, I thought, I'll get all of you guys out soon. We just have to rescue Rachel first.*

Last time I thought the same thing, but decided to save her, Bruce and my family. I would have to save these people soon. Time was surely killing them.

I made it to the end of the hall, finding some offices, all of them were empty. I turned the corner and started running down that hallway, looking into the rooms. I searched all of the rooms and made it to the end of that hall, meeting up with Bruce. This whole building was one big circle. Now it left us with one big hallway in front of us. We ran down it, one of us on each side, and we checked all of the rooms.

We made it to the end of this last hallway, having no luck in finding Rachel. We were only left with one door that was made of metal and had no window. I reached for the door knob and turned it, but it was locked. I kicked it, but it didn't budge. I kicked it again and it still didn't budge.

"Let me try," Bruce said.

I stepped out of the way and Bruce concentrated on the door trying to push it inward, but it was going nowhere. He raised his hands and made a pushing motion, as if to help out his telekinesis. I decided to try to help him out. As he used his telekinesis and pushed the door, I started kicking it over and over. After a few more minutes one of the hinges gave out and broke. I kept kicking and Bruce kept pushing telekinetically. Finally the door completely gave way and it flew inward ten feet until it fell to the floor.

Inside was the largest room in this whole building. There were actual jail cells covering everyone inch of the floor, only separated by hallways in between. In each jail cell was a prisoner, chained to a metal chair that was bolted to the middle of the floor within the cell. This was horrifying. All of the prisoners' eyes were upon us. They all must be experiments or unfortunate people who had found out about Intex and were locked up. Just then I found Rachel. Bruce and I ran down one small hallway in between the cells, to Rachel's cell.

"Rachel!" I exclaimed, but she wasn't awake and didn't look up. "Rachel!" I yelled again, but she didn't move. "Oh, god!!"

"She's dead," a displeasing voice said from behind us. Bruce and I turned to see Intex.

"You're lying!!" I yelled.

"Nope."

I was mad just as was Bruce. Bruce raised his hands and telekinetically started choking Intex. Intex didn't show any emotion and wasn't acting like he was choking, because he wasn't. Bruce realized this and stopped to save his energy.

"You can't kill me," Intex scoffed. "I'm invincible!"

"You can't be completely, because I'm destined to stop you!"

That made Intex terribly mad in a heartbeat, resulting in thrusting a fist into my gut, sending me flying into Rachel's cell hard. That hurt a ton, a lot more than the bullet that was in my left forearm; I couldn't even feel that pain anymore, not to mention that bullet that went in my foot a few months before. My back felt completely broken and I hoped that my accelerated healing power was getting faster and I would heal soon. But nothing happened. I just lay there on the floor in the most pain I have ever experienced in my entire life.

Intex came towards me again and was going to stomp his foot on my head, but his foot stopped in midair, a foot above my head. Bruce had stopped him. Bruce shoved Intex away, but only a few feet. Intex laughed.

“You guys are pathetic, I can't see how you guys are the ones that are supposed to stop me!” he exclaimed and laughed some more. “I don't know who told you that your destiny was to stop me, Mark, but he was obviously wrong, because you're the one that's on the floor!!”

“I think you do know,” I groaned.

“Oh, yeah. Bart Millar, my friend told me about your father. But who cares about him. He was no one!”

Was? I wasn't sure if my father was dead or not, but now I was angrier than before. I wanted to get up and beat the crap out of Intex. Even moving a little bit hurt every inch of my body. Intex just laughed even more.

Bruce was as furious as I was and he started Kung Fu-ing Intex. He was doing no harm to him. Intex was impressed, though, at his new skills, even though he wasn't trying to show it. Intex raised his hand and a spark was created that jumped from his fingers. He created a ball of electricity and threw it at Bruce. Bruce was sent backwards, landing on his back, sliding across the floor. Bruce didn't get up; the bolt had knocked him out. But here I was, in way more pain, I was sure, but I was still conscious.

I heard a moan as I tried to get up; even though I was moaning, it wasn't the moan that I heard. The sound came from behind me; it was Rachel! Intex was lying; Rachel wasn't dead! I tried to get up to see if Rachel was alright.

"Need some help?" Intex scoffed. He came up to me and helped me up.

"Let go of me!" I yelled at him.

"Okay," Intex said and he threw me towards the tall ceiling.

It felt weird to fall upwards. In no time I hit the ceiling only to fall right back down. I closed my eyes and held my hands in front of my face. I was terrified and sure that the fall would kill me; it must've been a one-hundred fifty foot drop. I realized that I hadn't hit the ground yet. Did I already hit it? Was I unconscious?

"What in the world?!" Intex exclaimed.

I opened my eyes and couldn't believe it. I was a foot above the floor, hovering. I turned my head to look at Bruce, but saw that he was still unconscious. Rachel was moaning, slowly awaking, and Intex defi-

nately wasn't doing it; he wanted me to die. It was me! I was floating! Then I fell ... a foot.

I slowly got to my feet and looked at Intex. He was shaking his head.

"Your powers are developing faster now," he said. "That means that I have to kill you now, because you'll supposedly get powerful enough to kill me."

I knew that Intex was going to try to kick me or do something to kill me, so I prepared myself. I was still in pain from Intex hitting me into the prison bars. Both Intex's arms starting electrifying and he made fists; as did I.

He ran towards me, throwing a fist towards my face; I quickly dodged it. He threw a fist at my side, but I jumped out of the way, although a bolt of electricity jolted me. I was temporally paralyzed and fell to the floor. Intex took this chance, starting to beat me, while his fists were sending me bolts of electricity.

Somehow I found the strength to kick my foot straight out, and it was enough to send Intex into the air and onto the floor in front of me. I immediately got up, running towards him. He threw a bolt at me and I did a front flip, missing it. I kicked and punched Intex in the nose. I stood back on my feet and threw punches at Intex, as he tried to do the same. Intex kept shocking me, but none of his fists were making contact now.

I had to jump back because Intex didn't let up with his electricity. Intex put his arms out only to electrify me more. I jumped straight into the air, surprised at my strength, which caused me to jump pretty high. I landed, hurting my feet, but it felt like nothing compared to the rest of my pain. I ran towards Intex as he threw bolts of electricity at me. I did my best and dodged most of them.

I continue punching and kicking him as he ridiculously tried to block the attacks. He managed to punch me, but only a few times. Finally he stopped me by shoving a big bolt of electricity at me.

I was thrown through the air and hit some prison bars. I fell to the ground and was momentarily paralyzed. My head was spinning and my ears were ringing, and my back never felt in so much pain. Intex electrocuted me and wouldn't stop; it felt like death. I was starting to black out as my vision blurred. My eyes started to drift close as I saw a blurry body behind Intex, and then I blacked out.



Rachel woke up feeling horrible. She expected to see herself alone with other prisoners stuck in their cells, but instead she saw that Intex was electrocuting Mark. "Mark!!!" she exclaimed. "Stop IT!!! Intex, STOP!!!"

"Make me!" he yelled, laughing like a maniac, because he was, as he kept electrocuting Mark.

Mark was unconscious and couldn't look any worse. Rachel looked to her right and saw that Bruce was knocked unconscious too, lying on the floor. Then she saw someone walking towards Intex from behind. It was a tall, skinny, young man about their age, with dark, slightly long hair. He looked like he was about to whack Intex across the head, but Intex must've knew that he was behind him; suddenly, Intex stopped electrocuting Mark, turned around, and electrocuted the tall guy. The young, tall man was sent through the air and landed on his back fifty feet in front of Intex.

Intex shook his head. "Leave me be, Nick!" he yelled. "And go back to you cell!!!"

The man, Nick, got up clumsily and turned around. A guard grabbed him and took him to his cell which must've been in another room, because he walked out of this big room. Intex looked mad that he was disturbed by Nick. "How many times do I have to ..." he sighed heavily. "Prisoners these days ..." He turned back around and looked at Mark. "Now, where was I?"

Intex raised his hands up again to shock Mark.

"NOOO!!!" Rachel yelled, outside of her cell. Intex looked at her cell, the door was broke open. "STOP!!" she yelled.

"Looks like your enhanced physical traits that I gave you work." Intex said. "But get back in your cell!! I just got through telling that other rebel, now I'm telling you. Get Back!!"

"NOOO!!!" Rachel yelled and stood her ground.

"No?"

"I can't let you hurt Mark."

Intex shook his head and electrified his fists. "I can't believe this!" he exclaimed. "You love him, huh? This weakling?" He pointed at Mark. "Just look at him!! He's lying on the floor, hopeless, and hopefully he's already dead. I have to make sure."

Rachel was furious and with that last remark from Intex, she practically had steam coming from her ears. She charged at Intex and almost made it to him, but Intex shot a bolt of electricity at her and she was forced backwards, falling down right next to Mark.

"Now, you'll join Mark!" Intex yelled. He raised his hands and started electrifying Rachel and then went back to electrifying Mark. He was having fun and laughing. Rachel groaned in pain, swiveling around on the ground in pain.

Suddenly, Intex's ray of electricity bent right in front of Mark and Rachel and hit the ceiling. "What the heck?" Intex stopped and looked at his hands. He shot back at Mark, but just a foot before it would hit Mark, the electricity bent straight up and hit the ceiling. Just then, his throat felt tight and now he understood it all. He turned around, holding back a choking sound, and saw Bruce standing concentrating on Intex's throat.

"You don't get it, do you?" Intex asked Bruce. "I already told you, I'm invincible!" Intex yelled, his voice sounding raspy.

"It doesn't sound like it!" Bruce yelled back. Bruce concentrated and focused his telekinesis on Intex's throat willing himself to squeeze harder. This only made Intex laugh.

"It doesn't feel any worse!"

Bruce closed his eyes concentrating as it felt so much easier. He could feel his surroundings and could feel Intex's throat with his telekinetic grip. This time he squeezed even harder than before, hearing Intex coughing and gagging.

"OK!!" Intex yelled. "STOPP!!!" This only made Bruce squeeze even harder. Bruce opened his eyes while forcing himself to keep the same grip on Intex. He saw that Intex's face was turning purple and he looked like he was going to pass out. Intex was grabbing for his throat, trying to pull back an invisible hand, which would be Bruce's telekinesis.



I gasped and couldn't see. I coughed and took in deep breaths. I came back. I sat up, hoping my vision would clear, but I lost that energy and lay back down. I felt horrible, I couldn't move any longer. My vision was fuzzy. I could hear someone gagging, and some grunting and a different voice of someone gasping, as if they were excited.

"MARK!!!" it was Rachel, she was awake. I heard right next to me. She stroked my hair. "Mark, are you alright?"

"I ..." I croaked and coughed. "I can't see ... and ... I-I feel awful. I can't move." I groaned.

"I thought you were dead!" Rachel exclaimed. "I'm so glad that I was wrong." Suddenly I felt the warmth of something on my lips. They felt like lips on my lips. Rachel kissed me, for a good while too. I started to kiss her back, poorly though; I couldn't really move at all.

"Oh, how I've been dying to do that," Rachel said.

I had to say, that made me feel a little better. "Yeah that was great," I told her. "But could we do that again when I can move?"

"Yeah."

"Who's that that choking?"

"It's Intex."

"What!!?" I exclaimed as my vision only now started to slowly get clearer.

"Yeah, Bruce is choking him with his telekinesis."

"I thought he was invincible."

"Yeah, well he lied."

"Bruce!!" Rachel yelled. "Look out!!!" It was already too late, because next I heard a sound of a whack and then a thud of Bruce's body hitting the floor. Intex made a huge gasping sound and cough liked crazy.

"Boss, are you okay?" a broad voice asked, and then I heard the sound of a bat hitting the floor.

Intex coughed a little more. "I'm fine!!!" he yelled. "Where have you been, Bryan!!?"

"I ... uh ... was working on some stuff."

"Yeah? Well finish this work here! Kill them! Leave the weak one to me, he's mine!!"

"Which one?"

My vision cleared some more and I saw two muscular guys. One was hunched over, that one was Intex, and the other one must've been Bryan.

“The one next to the girl!!” Intex yelled. “He's mine.” He coughed again.

The slightly-blurring muscular figure of Bryan started walking towards us, but I knew he was going to try to kill Rachel. He picked up Rachel by her hair. Rachel screamed grabbing his arms to hold on to relieve some of the pain.

“Let her go!!” I yelled from the floor. My vision clear a little more, but I still felt like crap.

Bryan just laughed and grabbed Rachel by her throat, letting go of her hair and started choking her. As Rachel started choking, all of my muscles tensed up as I grew angry. I jumped up on my feet, feeling dizzy. My vision got blurry all over again and I could barely make out Bryan and Rachel.

“I said ‘Let her GO!’” I yelled.

Intex laughed. “You guys are all weak; it’s pathetic!!!”

Rachel gagged some more and coughed. Something inside me snapped; I quickly hit Bryan square in his face. He dropped Rachel and stumbled backwards. I caught Rachel, stopping her fall. She started hacking and caught her breath back up. I could tell that she was looking at me, but my vision was still blurry and I felt weak.

I turned my head to look at Intex and Bryan and saw one blurry figure hunched over. The other one was still stumbling. “To me,” I began, “you guys look weak.”

Suddenly, Intex stood straight up, but he was still rubbing his throat. Bryan stopped stepping backwards, but he was grabbing his nose. My vision started to clear, and I could tell that his nose was bleeding. Intex deeply exhaled and shook his head.

“No,” Intex said. “You look even worse ... you can't even see me, can you?” I didn't answer. “Your eyes are searching for me, and you look like a blind person!” he scoffed.

As if right on cue, my vision got clearer, fast. The pain all over in my body started fading and I felt my strength coming back. My ability to heal fast had finally kicked in. My vision completely clear and I looked directly into Intex's eyes.

“I can see you perfectly!” I exclaimed. I let Rachel stand on her own feet and she seemed to be alright, recovering from being choked. I looked at Bryan and saw what he really looked like. He looked very angry, and I could see that his nose and lip were both bleeding. He wiped the blood with his hand. I took a step towards both of them and Bryan raised his hand, shooting a flame of fire at me; my shirt immediately caught it. I patted my shirt right away to put the fire out. I looked at Bryan's hands to see that they were still on fire. It appeared he had what was called pyrokinesis.

Bruce suddenly stood up, holding the back of his head. He looked at his hand and saw blood; it came from dabbing his head. He looked forward and saw Intex with some other muscular guy; he realized that he was the one that whacked him in the head. I was thankful that he was still alive.

Intex ran up to me and grabbed for my throat. I spun in a circle and kicked him in the chest, knocking the wind out of him for a second. Then I hit him in the throat. He gagged and I punched him in his nose; it didn't bleed and my hand actually hurt. It appeared that he was tough, but not as much as he said he was.

Bryan ran up to me and attempted to push me away from Intex, but Intex stopped him. "I can handle this idiot!" Intex yelled at him. "Go kill the others!!!"

I threw more punches at Intex and he took them all, not really feeling them. He threw punches at me, but I dodged all of them. Intex must've been impressed with our mad Kung Fu skills. I could see that Rachel was entirely. Intex tried to hit me, but he couldn't even touch me; I was on fire!! Yeah!! I punched and kicked Intex, but I couldn't make one scratch on him. I only could knock the wind out of him.

Bryan walked up to Bruce, throwing fire at him. The fire caught Bruce's shirt he immediately patted it to put the fire out. Bryan took this chance and kicked Bruce in his face. Bruce fell backwards after flying through the air then landing on the ground. He quickly came to, got up.

Bruce threw his fists up, ready this time. Bryan threw more fire at him, throwing a ball of flame, but Bruce jumped out of the way. He threw a fist at Bryan, connecting with his jaw. Bruce threw his arms out and tel-

ekinetically shoved Bryan down. He took this opportunity to stomp on Bryan's chest, immediately taking away his wind.

Rachel was stunned with both of us. We were both taking on these powerful guys, Kung Fu-ing them. We had told her that we were training, but she had no idea how we really fought, now she could see. Suddenly, I let my guard down, allowing Intex to sock me in my nose and I stumbled backwards. He kicked my chest, sending me over.

He jumped and landed on my chest, knocking the wind out of me. Intex jumped up and stomped on me several more times, until Rachel shoved him off of me. Intex grew furious and was about to hit Rachel, but I stuck my foot out, tripping him. I jumped up and kicked him in the jaw.

Suddenly I was sent backwards, hitting a prison cell behind me, as a result of Intex throwing a lightning bolt at me. I felt the horrid feel run through my body all over again. Intex grabbed me, throwing me upward. I went high into the air, hitting the ceiling and came fast down to the ground. I remembered last time how I stopped myself somehow and levitated a foot before I hit the ground, but not this time; I hit the floor hard. Intex then kicked me in my chest. He started electrocuting me again.

Rachel ran into him, hitting him again and again. It had no effect on him and he shocked Rachel, which sent her backwards into, you guessed it, a prison cell. It hurt me to see Rachel hurt and I jumped up as Intex shocked me some more. I should've been dead already with all of the electricity being shot at me, but I had a healing ability; it must've been helping, but just barely keeping up with it.

Suddenly, Bryan was thrown through the air and knocked into Intex. Intex fell over and pushed Bryan off of him. "What are you doing!!?" He looked at Bruce and knew that it was him that did it.

Bruce looked at Intex and picked him up telekinetically, throwing him into Bryan. Intex was furious as well as Bryan. Intex got up, actually throwing Bryan at Bruce. Bruce just jumped out of the way and let Bryan

fall to the ground. Bruce raised Bryan in midair and threw him at Intex. Intex stopped him, catching him and then he let him fall to the ground.

I got up, regaining my strength, running right at Intex. I plowed my fist into his face, knocking him down. I kicked him in the side and stomach, over and over again. It hurt my feet and I could tell that I wasn't really doing anything. I knew that we couldn't keep doing this; we couldn't keep fighting and hurting ourselves. We were wasting our energy.

I picked up Intex and threw him down the long hallway. I kicked Bryan directly in the face, just as he was trying to get up, but once I kicked him it knocked him out.

I ran to Rachel and picked her up. She groaned as I carried her and ran towards the door. "Come on, Bruce!" I exclaimed. "Let's get out of here, NOW!!"

I didn't have to tell Bruce twice and he started running with me. We both made it out of the big prison room and Bruce slammed the door behind us. We started running down the long hallways, which seemed to take forever until we finally made it outside.

We ran to our house and I set Rachel down on the couch. She was awake, but in pain from being thrown by Intex. "Mark," Rachel said. "Thanks for saving me."

"Hey!" Bruce exclaimed. "I helped too."

"Thanks."

I sighed. "We're going to have to go back there." I said.

"What?" Rachel exclaimed.

"When we get our energy back. We have to bring down Intex; we have to stop that place he's running. Let us rest for now."

I knew that this was only the beginning to my whole journey. The first thing I was going to do next was take down that hideous Creative Works.

I thought back to when Intex had sent creatures and ugly monsters at us; it was amazing how we survived them without powers. Now that we were gaining abilities, we were facing Intex ... we had to succeed. We had to stop Intex, he was delusional and insane. He had to be stopped; it was my destiny ...

To Be Continued ...

What would it be like to **discover** something new about yourself that you never known?

Something **kept** from you?

What would it be like to be **destined** for something great? Something extraordinary?

This is Mark Wills' story. The truth is unveiled.

Unknowingly he is being hunted now.



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