

Trucker

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One stormy night Flow seeks shelter in an old tatty truck, where she witnesses what she believes to be a murder!

In fear she flees for her life, hotly pursued by a seemingly crazy trucker who is determined to make sure she never completes her journey!

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Chapter 1 - All

2

1 - All

CHAPTER ONE

"I understand where you're coming from," the truck driver Bill said. He pushed a button and the windscreen wipers came to life fighting off the onslaught of heavy over night rain. "Being lost and a long way from home. I think we've all been there at some point in our lives."

Flow nodded, she understood some of what the driver was saying, but others didn't mean much to her. Surely no one could be as lost and alone as she had felt for a long time now. She had got tired of running. At first she had feared hitch hiking, it was the very first time she had done it. She hoped all her lifts that followed would be just as warm and friendly. He really seemed interested in her. He had compared her story with that of the periodical son from the Bible. He had left home and made a mess of his life, just like Flow had done to hers! But in that story his father had welcomed him with open arms.

Flow hoped that her parents would do the same for her, but somehow she truly doubted it would happen. Her parents weren't the sought to forgive easily! She stared out the side window of the truck, noting her own tatty reflection. It was the result of living in many dirty flats, without any proper water or electric, but they were the cheapest. She had deep soulful brown eyes; her grease filled hair barely keeping to the style it had been crafted into.

"But Flow," the driver said turning his head from the stormy road ahead. "That's how God sees people, He sees them as lost children. When they turn to Him He welcomes them with open arms."

Flow knew nothing of God; her parents never went to Church or anything like that. For Flow's parents image had been their idol, they always had to look the best as everything they did, even though behind the front deep rot had set in and had seemed to many areas of their lives, including their relationship with their only child.

She had this dream over and over again since she had messed up her life that one day she would be able to go home to her parents and they would welcome her home with open and loving arms. Fear had been the monster that had prevented her from making that choice till this moment.

Could it ever come true? There was always this doubt in her mind that followed her all the time. Thoughts that insisted that she could never ever be forgiven for what she had done, but she hadn't given in to those thoughts, not yet at least.

"Looks like it's time to drop you off little lady," Bill said, bringing the truck to a halt, he then turned to her and placed his hand on her shoulder. "I hope everything works out with your folks."

Flow nodded in thanks.

"I'll be praying and routin' for yah," he stated. "An' that's a promise."

She hadn't asked Bill whether he was a father or not, but from what she had seen of him she sure would have loved to have a father like that. Picking up her bag, she draped it over one shoulder and jumped down into the heavy downpour of rain. She gave him a wave as the truck pulled away. Then she noticed the bold words on the backdoor of the trailer, they proclaimed that 'JESUS IS ALIVE!'

Standing there for a while, Flow waited for the truck to vanish from her sight. He had been so kind to her, if she met more people like him on her road home, then she truly believed that she could make it home. He had just seemed too different from so many of the other people she encountered on her travels.

There's a glimmer of hope for her yet!

Now all she needed to do was to find her-self somewhere to rest and dry herself off, maybe even spend the night the out of the rain. It seemed that Bill had once again gone one step further for her, he'd dropped her not that far off from a small bar, she could make out the flashing sign, a sign of warmth and

home in the midst of tall woods on both sides of the road.

Flow managed a little smile, before she dashed through the rain. Her only fear now was that the place would be shut! As she neared, she felt her heart beginning to pound faster and faster, then she sighed with relief, she could see that the place was open for business.

The door was a very heavy wooden, she found it a real struggle to get it to stay open, before she could slip inside. The door slamming after made her jump, even though she knew it would make a bang. Once inside, she could here the sound of the heavy rain pounding on the hollow steel roof. Flow could hardly hear the background music coming from the old jukebox in the corner. There were quite a few people sitting around their tables talking. She spotted a place to sit down in the corner by the window, so she headed over to it and took her heavy rain sodden coat off and draped it over the seat next to her, and then she sat down and stared out through the spots on the window to the drowning world outside. She wondered how long this bar would remain open, it must be getting late she thought, but it was just a guess, her watch had stopped working ages ago, she just hadn't bothered to remove the thing from her wrist. Perhaps she thought that if she did take it off, she would be left with a permanent mark. Taking her eyes off the window, she peered around. None of the waiting staff seemed to have bothered to ask her what she wanted, perhaps from the look of her they assumed that she would have little or no money and they would be right. Oh how she wished there were more people like Bill in this world, who looked for a person's soul, not their bank account or what they looked like. He had been someone who truly cared. In fact she figured that she would be kicked out of here at any moment, but at least for now she was dry.

Flow fixed her eyes back on the window, when she saw someone shuffling into the seat opposite her. Glancing round she saw the face was a young man, he was she guessed in his mid twenties, with kind eyes and a boyish grin.

"Hey," he said in a friendly voice. "Look do you want a drink or something' I couldn't help but notice you've been pretty much ignored since you came in."

The idea of a drink or maybe even something to eat appealed to her, but no one, no guy had asked her if she wanted a drink since, well since she used to look good, but lately people just pretended she wasn't even there.

"No worries, you don't have to answer if you don't want to." He still smiled at her; it was beginning to make her feel uneasy to say the least. She was a tired, thirsty and very hungry, how could she afford to not take the offer.

"I'll have a hot chocolate please," she asked. Then to her complete embarrassment her stomach began to rumble loudly.

"Sounds like you're running on empty there," he laughed. He picked up the menu and handed it to her. "Here pick something to eat."

Flow took the menu from his hand, feeling her own shaking wildly, and it kept on shaking while she peered down the food list. She really felt like she need something cooked that would last her a good long while, for there would be no telling when she next meal would be.

"Ah," she mumbled. "I'll have the large burger and double fries." Just saying those words and thinking of meals she had when she was a child made her mouth water and she stomach crave for some good tasting a warm food.

"Boy, you're not a cheap girl." She thought she had asked for too much and she was about to say she didn't want it when he said, "Hey, don't worry, I'm only kidding. You look like you could really do with some real food." Then he jumped to his feet and shouted to a waitress who was serving near by and she promptly came over and took the order and hurried away.

"Oh by the way, I'm Lance," he said putting his hand out. She reluctantly put out her hand for him to take.

"My names Flow," she informed him.

"That's a very interesting name. Flow I like it, mind you I always have like girls with different names to your standard Sarah or Anna."

"Short for Florence, isn't it" he asked.

"No, its' just Flow."

"Would I be guessing wrong here, but are you a very well bought up girl"

"You could say that," she replied keeping her eyes fixed on the table.

"So you're on the road" Flow nodded. "Well I would offer to give you lift, but I'm here to see my parents, they live quite near here. I don't get to see them that often and they are getting on a bit. It may even be the last time I see them. So where are you headed"

"I'm going home," she replied as the meal was laid out on the table in front of here. And it's a long way from here, I just came to stop the night." With that statement his features dropped.

"I'm sorry Flow, but I think there's no vacancies here tonight. I mean I would ask you to stay with us, but there probably wouldn't be enough room, besides my parents probably wouldn't like you." Then he said something a little startling, more to himself that to her. "My parents never liked any girls I bought round for dinner." He then laughed. "Hey eat up Flow, don't let me keep you from your meal."

The food tasted so good that for a moment she seemed to lose touch with the world around her, she hadn't tasted or smelt anything so good for a long time.

"I'm glad you're enjoying it," Lance stated.

Time went by, but the endless rain carried on. Flow and Lance just sat in silence for a long time while she ate. Then when she had finished he climbed to his feet.

"Well I'd better be off," he stated pulling on his coat. "This place should be closing soon, besides my parents will be beginning to wonder whether I'm going to show up. I hope you find a bed for the night Flow." He paid the bill and headed out of the door, after he gave her little wave.

Flow just sat there savouring her drink, it was lukewarm by now. She glanced up when she heard some shuffling. Everyone around her started getting up and leaving, she guessed it must be closing time. There was no choice for her now, she had to hurry up and drink up otherwise she'd have to leave without it.

Her coat had dried off a little, but it still felt cold and heavy to her touch. What she needed now was somewhere to rest her head, she just felt so tired; it had been such a long trip so far.

Going outside, she huddled the coat up tight around her. Perhaps she thought someone would notice her standing there and offer her a bed for the night, but no one did. Soon enough all the cars had gone and the place was locked up. Flow just shrugged and carried on walking on her way down the empty road. The rain seemed to have got harder, but at least there stood some shelter from the trees, but she found they weren't much help, every so often a sharps gust of wind through the trees would send down heavy droplets of rain water.

Flow's mind seemed to drift as she wandered down that road, in fact she had grown so worn out that she didn't realise that she had wandered out into the middle of the road till it was to late. A truck came roaring up behind her! She screamed as she was caught in the silhouette of its' bright headlights!

CHAPTER TWO

Flow froze in total fear, but the truck swerved to the others-side of the road and just missed her. It then shot right past her and carried on going. Flow stopped walking; she felt her heart thumping in her chest!

That had clearly woken her right up! She had never been that close to death before, maybe even this trip home would wind up even killing her!

After calming herself a little, she carried on walking. She didn't even notice the rain anymore, she couldn't get anymore soaked than she already was. Getting to the far side of the road she let her thoughts go again, about how she had come to be in this mess. It was hard, she didn't want to remember, but she would have to in order to drink her on!

She thought back to her hometown of East Ville a nice small and out of the way community where everyone seemed to know each other. Oh but it was plain, nothing ever seemed to happen there. It wasn't a town for living; it was just a place for existing.

Flow's parents were very upstanding members of the community and liked a nice reputation, there were no outsiders in her family; both her parents had been born and bred locally.

Flow never belonged to them or so it seemed, she never could fit into that life style and her parents resented her for that. In many ways they always looked down her. They were both impossible to please! This fact could be no better demonstrated than this event, she had still been in grade school. Flow had never had many good grades and this time was no different, but this time she swore to her father that she would improve and he agreed. She had worked her hardest, she put her marks up, that time she had been convinced that her father would approve and see how hard she had worked at this. But B- wasn't what he had meant by improvement, he wanted at least an A! He went mad when he saw the card and went on about the promise I'd made and he had punished her harder than ever. But that hadn't been the point when she had given up all hope.

Her thought chain was broken when she rounded the corner. She spotted an abandoned truck to one side of the road. It wasn't much, but at least it would be a place where she could rest her head for one night. Hurrying towards the truck. It looked like a tanker of some kind, a small one though with the tank attached to the cab, with no trailer. She grabbed the door-handle, first time she tugged it the door refused to budge, so she gave it one last tug with all her might and it popped open sending her sprawling onto the wet and muddy road.

Flow pulled herself up and climbed into the cockpit and slammed the door. Once inside she took a huge sigh of relief to be in the dry again. It wasn't that comfortable in there, but it was better than nothing. She glanced around her, but there wasn't much to look at apart from a small Mickey Mouse attached to the dust-covered dashboard. It wasn't easy to tell whether it had been abandoned or not, she didn't know much about trucks, but it didn't look in good condition, but sure was a perfect place for the night.

Dropping her backpack on the seat next to her, she huddled up and closed her eyes. All around her she could hear the rain pelting down all over the truck's cage like exterior. She was glad for the protection. Yawning, she drew her arms up tight around herself to keep warm and closed her eyes. It wasn't long before the tiredness caught up with her and she drifted off into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER THREE

It was so hard to believe that Flow had finally got home safe and sound, it had been such a long trip and it had taken so much out of her. It was ages ago when she had left East Ville, yet she was back here again and she had to face her parents and beg for their forgiveness. She was dreading this more than she had ever dreaded anything in her entire life, part of her wanted to turn around and leave, but there was also the force that drove her on, that had bought her this far, right to the end of her parents street. As she neared, she could see that the house hadn't changed much at all since the last day before she had run away. The day was bright and the sun warmed her, just like so many days she remembered from her younger days, it was just a shame that people and their behaviour towards each other had to ruin it.

She froze at the front gate and took a deep breath and closed her eyes. It had to be now or never, she

lost her nerve this time she may never regain it. Pulling herself together she stepped through the gate and up to the door. Flow was about to knock when she realised that the door was unlocked, so she pushed her way inside.

“Hello!” she called out. “Mum, dad! It’s me; it’s Flow! The front door was open so I came in!”

There was no answer, only the lonely dripping sound coming from the kitchen tap. She stepped into the lounge; it was empty, with only small signs of life. All pictures of her were out of sight and most likely out of mind. That hurt Flow a lot and it also made her angry! Had her parents really tried to forget her? Surely no one, not even them! But it was as clear as the nose on her face. She felt a tear rolling down her cheek, she wanted to run from the house again and never come back.

Reaching the front door, she was about to leave when she heard a cry from upstairs. At once all thoughts of running left her mind! She felt her heart begin to race.

“Mum!” she called up the stairs, but there was no reply. Then she heard it again, it sounded like an awful moan like someone dying. She felt afraid, her whole body shivered at that sound, but she had to go up. Then she saw it, a shadow slopped across the upstairs wall. Her hand flew to her mouth for a moment then she called out, “Dad! Dad is that you?”

Again no answer just the sound of shuffling.

This is too weird! I have to go and see what’s going on up there! Maybe they know I’m here, but they just don’t care!

Doing her best to put her fears to one side she slowly began to steady climb to the top of the stairs. She knew her way around this place all too well, she dreaded seeing her old life unfolding so differently than in her perfect dreams.

She saw it again, that shadow. If it were her parents up there, surely they would at least answer her, even if it was only to tell her to get out and never come back! This was so odd!

Once upstairs she glanced around, all the doors were open apart from the one that used to be her room. She went into them one by one, each bringing back its’ own flood of memory, but at the very last she was reluctant to go into her old room! It would be much too painful, but this time she was spurred on by a banging sound coming from within!

Steadily she made her forward and gripped the handle tightly in her hand, but she couldn’t turn it. She had to though, there was no other way, so she closed her eyes and flung the door open.

Flow screamed when she saw her parents; they were dead on her bed on bloodied sheets. She was about to back out when she felt someone give her a hard nudge from behind and she fell forward and the door slammed behind her.

It took a while for her to realise what had happened to her-self, then she pulled herself together. The whole thing was just so shocking. Then to the left of her she saw some movement, but it was only her reflection, she had forgotten her old vanity mirror. The one she had spent hours in front of, being lorded over by her mother.

There was something wrong! It was her reflection; it was holding a bloodied knife! She screamed and looked out at her own hands they were covered in blood. In one shaking hand she held the knife! The murder weapon that had just killed her own parents! She screamed again!

CHAPTER FOUR

Flow awoke with a start her heart pounding. She was still in the rusty old-truck; the whole thing had been an awful nightmare. It had been so far removed from all the happy dreams from before. She hoped this dream wasn’t real. Like they say, reverse your dreams, but it had seemed too real to her and was really shaken up.

Outside it was still pouring with rain. There was no telling what the time was, but it must be very late or

early morning it was hard to tell. Flow leaned forward and peered out onto the flooded road ahead of her, with millions of ripples breaking the surface. The thought of that nightmare made her shiver again, the idea of her murdering her own parents seemed impossible, she hoped that she would never find it in herself to end the life of another, no matter what they had done. All she needed in her life right now was forgiveness, not hate and retribution.

Straightening herself up, she took the Mickey from the dashboard and held it in her hands for moment. As it was an abandoned truck no one would notice, perhaps it would make a good luck charm, so she stuffed it into her pocket.

Suddenly the corner of her eye caught some movement outside. Flow leaned over and peered out the side window and she gasped! There was someone out there, a tall figure dressed in a black coat and Weston style hat. The figure appeared to be dragging something along the wet ground. It was a wrapped over sheet with something in it! No it wasn't just any old wrapped sheet, it looked like a body! Flow screamed!

CHAPTER FIVE

Flow didn't wanted to scream; she didn't want to let that figure know she had seen it, but it was too late! He had heard her and dropped the sheets and was now coming right for the truck. In that split second she had seen his white beard and frizzy white hair falling out from under his hat.

Screaming again, Flow grabbed her bag and climbed onto her seat and crawled across to the passenger side. The drivers' side, behind her the door flew open and the old man tried to grab hold of her, be she was to fast for him. She opened the door and stumbled out onto the rain washed road. She heard her leg crack and pain shooting up it like a rocket; she had no time to worry about that now! She had to get away; her adrenaline was now pumping over time, but she knew he couldn't be that far behind her!

There was only one option, run for cover. Despite her hurt leg she bounded for the trees as she could still hear the slogging footsteps right behind her! Then she was under their cover, she heard the roar of the tucks engine and she turned to see the headlights come on and the truck roared right towards her. As she looked around, there was no sign of the body! Had it even been a body' It could just as easily have been something else, she wasn't sure now! But when was the last time she had ever been sure of herself'

Flow had to keep running as the truck made ground on her quickly! The rain pounded into her face almost blinding her, as her hair flapped like drapes in front of her eyes. She could here the roar of the truck as it came up behind her! There was only one chance! Without thought she flung herself sideways and into the grassy woods!

The truck just missed her and sailed on up the road! It had been far to close for her. She lay there in the dirt her heart still pounding! Had someone just tried to kill her' But she dare not hang around, just in case he turned around and came back to look for her!

Making up her mind, she chose to make her into the woods, but she must make sure that she never lost sight of the road, otherwise she would end up more lost that she already was.

The ground beneath her feet was sopping with mud, she was finding it hard to keep her feet on top because they kept sinking. It seemed that this wood idea wasn't as good as she had first thought. She was just about to head back to the road when she noticed a small log cabin; its' lights beamed at her like a beacon. She wondered if the owners would mind taking her in for the night. It was at least worth a chance.

As she got closer, she peered through the open window. The room was cosy, with a nice fire burning in the corner, but the room was empty, there was no sign of the owners, perhaps they had go into another room for a but, they would still be able to hear her knocking.

Heading around to the front door she pounded as hard as she could, but to her total surprise the door flew open making her jump. Suddenly she had the most awful feeling, it had happening as in her

nightmare, except this wasn't her home this; was someone else's!

"Hello," she called out as she stepped in out of the rain. "Is there any body home?" The only answer she got from the gentle ticking clock in the corner and the rain thundering down outside. Flow knew it was silly, but she didn't want to go back out there again, not tonight. It would be so nice for her to just hang up her sopping-wet clothes in front of the fire and drift off to sleep. She felt drained after her dash from that Trucker and her leg still thudded with pain!

She made up her mind just to go in and sit down for a little bit and dry off. Of course she knew it was a silly idea, as soon as she got back out there she would get soaked through again, but she wasn't going to argue with herself.

Quickly she pushed the door closed on the storm outside and took off her coat placing it in front of the warm fire. She didn't want to make the chairs wet, that clearly wouldn't please anyone who found her in here, so she squatted down in front of the large armchair and took a huge great sigh.

This was just what the doctor had ordered. She closed her eyes and let her mind drift slowly away, but she was awoken suddenly by the front door opening heavily. Flow shook herself and peered round the corner of the chair. It was him! It was the Trucker who had chased her into the woods!

CHAPTER SIX

Flow was about to scream but her hand flew to her mouth so no sound emerged. He slowly stepped into the cabin; his heavy raincoat came down to his large boots. Under his hat she could see white hair tumbling out and he had a beard, she guessed he must be quite old.

She felt her breath catch, what would he do to her if he caught her in his cabin, would she end up in one of these bags! She had to get away from here, but how!

In the centre of the room he stopped and glanced around, she could feel his cold eyes taking in the whole room, but he hadn't seen her! Not yet!

She could hear his squelching footsteps as he walked. Were his steps getting nearer, she couldn't tell. Then they stopped again! She expected to see him peering over at her, but no. He seemed to have turned around and walking back to the door and the light flicked off and she heard the door close and lock.

Flow let out a huge sigh of relief; he'd gone. Stumbling to her feet she peered through the blackness. She couldn't risk turning on the light, after all he might still be out there. What if he came back! This had to be his cabin, otherwise why would he be in here! She had one theory, but she didn't want those words in her mind. They came anyway to spite her. He might have come here to kill someone and she might have seen him; that would make her a possible witness! Well she had no intention of telling anyone what she may or may not have seen! Besides who would have believed her anyway!

The thought of a warm bed was too overpowering her, so in the firelight she stripped down to her vest and pants and placed her sodden clothes near the fire, then she went into what she guessed was the bedroom and she was right. It was a lovely cosy looking double bed; it kind of reminded her of one her grandparents had. She had always loved snuggling up in it when she was younger, and that warm snug feeling remained as she drifted off to sleep as the rain continued its assault, but this time it wouldn't get her, she was safe!

CHAPTER SEVEN

Flow awoke to the sound of birds singing in the trees around her. She sat up confused about where she was, she had totally forgotten. Sleeping in someone else's bed she was, but clearly no one had returned. For a moment she thought about Goldilocks and the three bears. Perhaps the owner had taken pity on her and let her stay.

She didn't want to get up, this bed was just so cosy, and in fact she couldn't remember having such a great nights sleep in such a long time. But there was no other choice, so she forced herself up, yawning as she went.

Creeping over to the door, she slowly opened it and peered out. The room was pretty much the same as it had been the night before. There was no sign that anyone had come in since the Trucker. Thinking it was safe, Flow made her way into the room and looked around.

Her wet clothes were still exactly where she had left them, but the fire itself had almost burnt out, but at least the room was still warm. She quickly gathered them and folded them up the best she could and chucked them on the chair.

She knew this might be wrong, but she couldn't head out for another day on the road without having something for breakfast, her stomach wouldn't let her get away with it. Heading into the kitchen she opened the cupboard and helped herself to two bowls of cereal and a glass of milk. Along with both this and the meal she had last night, she was doing very well for herself! What's more she had a roof over her head and spent the night in a bed like her grandparents.

After she'd finished eating, she found herself into the bathroom and washed her face, neck and behind her ears. It was odd seeing her-self with a clean face again, she didn't look all that different from what she remembered from the last time she'd washed like this. The next thing naturally was for her to wash her hair.

Leaning over the bath she ran the warm tap water over her head. She watched with open eyes as all the grease and grime Flowed off her head, down into the bathtub. Her hair had grown long in the time since she had left home; it used to come down no further than her ears, now it was over her shoulders. When she'd shampooed it twice and conditioned it, she had to use all her might to scrub the bath clean and give it a good rinse.

After giving her hair a long brush, she kept on crying out every time the brush struck a knot in her hair. Now at least her mousy blonde hair would look something like it was supposed to, rather than a mucky mop.

As she was doing this, a memory came into her mind, a memory of Royce!

A former friend, well you'd hardly have called her a friend of Flow. Royce's parents had been old

childhood friends of Flows', so it was only natural for both sets of parents to want their little girls to mix. At first Royce had seemed very nice, she acted so sweet and loving towards Flow when their parents had first introduced them and Flow had been more than happy to be friends with this sweet girl, but it wasn't to be. As soon as both Children were left alone then Royce turned on Flow and started to be really nasty to her, the first thing she said was, "I bet I can make you cry." This wasn't an empty threat, to make her cry if she didn't do what Royce wanted. But she put up the act again whenever they were in sight of either set of parents. She made Flow cry lots of times.

Royce threatened to beat Flow up if she ever told her parents the way she had been treated. Flow had been afraid that she meant it so she had kept her mouth shut and did whatever could appease her supposed friend, which meant doing everything Royce wanted her to do, which included stealing, keeping watch while bad things took place and being part in cruel jokes.

They attended the same school and Royce had no real friends, she would always badmouth people. As a result of the alliance no one wanted to be friends with Flow either.

Royce was perfect though, she had amazing good looks and hair; it was due to this that she winded up thinking she was better than everyone else. Flow's parents sure thought that this girl was far superior to their own fast failing daughter! But it was her wild personality that led Flow into this whole mess. She had little to thank Royce for.

Wrestling into her clothes, she grabbed her bag and slung it over her shoulder and headed out of the door into the first sunshine she had seen in days. She took in a long deep sigh of fresh woodland air. Part of her wanted to remain here in this nice peaceful place, not have to go home and face her parents but it was impractical, someone would have to come round sooner or later. So pulling on her backpack she made her way back towards the road. The ground was still very damp and sodden. She was glad to get back on the road, now all she had to do was walk along and wait for someone to come along. She whistled as she went, focusing her mind away what she might have seen the night before.

She walked about quarter of a mile before she was past by a van which refused to stop. A few minutes later she thumbed for a white station wagon and it pulled over.

She was greeted by the smiling face of a middle-aged man in a suite and tie, "Where are you headed' I can drop you off at the next town if you like"

"That would be great," Flow said climbing into the seat behind him and the pulled away.

"I'm Eddie," the driver stated. "As you may or may not have guessed I'm in sales. So are you heading anywhere nice"

"I'm going home," she replied, reluctant to give to much away, after all she didn't even know this man. She hoped he would nice to her, he didn't seem like a monster of any kind. "My name's Flow."

"Cool. So you've been on the road a long time' Home's a really great place to be. I had a home, I guess I still do." His mood seemed to drop and became more thoughtful. "I had a son, he will be about your age now, mind you I don't know how old you are." He smiled again. "I haven't seen him in ages, we got on so well."

His words sadden Flow, she did feel for him, he seemed like he could be a really caring father. By the way he was talking she guessed that his son was gone and he hadn't seen him in a long time. I made her wonder again what her parents may have though when they found that she had gone.

"I thought everything was going so well with my wife as well as my son, but I lost a good office job, but I didn't mind that much because I thought I would have them. My wife took the news very well, so I went job-hunting the next day and I found this job and went for it, but when I got home that evening I found that both of them had left me."

"I'm sorry," she replied not really knowing what to say next. Her thoughts once again began to drift, she didn't know what to say to him she suddenly felt all clammed up inside. It may sound awful to you, but

she hoped that her parents would feel dreadful about her leaving, because that would mean despite everything they did to her, they still really loved her, but just didn't know how to say it. She wanted them to have missed her so that they would want her back!

Her life had turned out far from what she had thought it would, long before she had chosen to leave she had already resigned herself that she would never really be able to please her parents, or ever really have a life of her own in that town's community, she figured she'd always be known as her parents' daughter and not her own person, if she knew what that meant!

She always disliked hanging with Royce, she was always on the edge wanting to try new things, always wanting to find new ways of hurting people and disrupting their lives, but she had tact, she only got at people whom she knew would be too afraid to report her, just like Flow had been!

It was in the girl's first year of high school that a new family came into East Ville, they were the Takers and everyone in town thought that they were troublemakers because their father was in prison and they were a big family of seven children, two girls and five boys.

She had only ever encountered two of them. Blaze, the eldest daughter, worked in the local supermarket. To Flow she didn't seem like a nasty person, but the customers seemed to have a lot to say about her in the queue, none of it very nice at all.

Blaze didn't keep her job very long though. One time both Flow and Royce were shopping for their parents. They were both at the back of the queue when a senior from school started insulting Blaze and her family very badly. For a long time Blaze took the abuse, and carrying on running the products through the scanner for her tormentor, but she didn't look happy at all.

Royce seemed to be lapping up the tension, she guessed just as Flow had, that something was going to explode very soon and it wasn't going to be very nice. As far as Flow knew Blaze had done nothing to deserve this kind of abuse, apart from the fact that she came from a rough background! To her this seemed ever so wrong, but she didn't have the courage within herself to intervene.

Then it happened! Blaze caught the senior off her guard and thumped her hard in the face. A fight ensued and the manager was called and questions were asked of the other staff and customers, that included both her and Royce. Royce did all the talking and Blaze had a very unfair trial.

Everyone in the checkout area insisted that it was all Blaze's fault and that she had struck out at the senior girl for no reason. As a result Blaze lost her job and she couldn't get another job in town, no one would employ her, so she had to start looking beyond the small-minded world of East Ville!

Flow still felt guilty for not standing up for Blaze, but there was nothing she could do. The past was in the past and it couldn't be changed no matter how much she wanted it to.

There she was looking back again! She had to focus on the here and now again. Of course the events that led her to the place would still be constantly on her mind, there was no escaping her history! She kept her eyes fixed on the road ahead, past endless spent fields and endless trees. There seemed to be no sign of much life out there at all!

One moment she glanced at the wide empty road that outspread behind her, there seemed to be no traffic whatsoever behind her. She found herself drifting into her thoughts and fears. It wouldn't be long before she would be back in her hometown! When she thought about it, the whole thing seemed almost too much to bear.

A sudden jolt of the car forced Flow to open her eyes. She gasped in horror this time, right behind them coming up fast was the old rusty tanker she had stole away in last night! The old man was still clearly after her!

CHAPTER EIGHT

The truck was baring down on them fast, it seemed to be gaining all the time. Through wide of eyes of terror, Flow could make out the form of the over-powering old man in the drivers seat, crazily cranking the gears, threatening her! Forcing her eyes closed, she could still hear the row of the truck as it bore down on them, so very fast.

“DARN YOU!” she heard the driver yell and the truck beeping it’s horn!

Flow opened her eyes just to see the truck zoom past! She sighed with total relief, it wasn’t the same truck; it was much longer with a full trailer on the back. She relaxed; it was safe to breathe again!

“Some people really need to learn to drive,” he scorned the truck driver again. “Think they own the whole darn road they do! What does he think he his, a racing driver or something!”

Flow wasn’t bothered by mad truck drivers, she was just glad that she was safe and that no one would be after her. She had most likely witnessed nothing that night, just some old man moving things into his truck. How silly could she get, thinking such silly things. Her life’s crazy enough as it is without her inventing more things!

She thought of Ron, it was time to think of something nice, how great he had made her feel while she was still a school, he seemed to have been the only person who truly cared about her in the whole town!

* * *

Before the incident with Blaze in the supermarket, it had been a bright summers day in a stuffy art class. She had never liked art; she wasn’t creative enough! The class were sat down doing portraits of each other; of course she ended up partnering Royce, who kept on making funny faces and moving about, so it made an almost impossible task, into a total disaster! Oh how she had wished that Royce would just leave her life all together, the bond that their parents had forced them into wasn’t working at all, at least not from Flow’s point of view!

Then he came in! Flow couldn’t help but look. He wasn’t what you’d call drop dead gorgeous, he was rather rough looking in his large leather jacket and trousers. He had a ring in one ear that seemed to glisten in the sunlight.

“This is Ron Take,” the teacher introduced his to the class, he then addressed Ron himself. “Take a seat.” The class laughed (A little). “I’m sure you’ll be made to feel welcome.” The teacher then asked him a few questions, before telling him the work he had set us.

Ron just slumped in his chair all lesson and did no work. He didn’t seem to care about the frequent comments that came his way from the rest of the class; he just seemed to stare into space.

Weeks went by and little improved. All the boys in the year seemed to see Ron as some kind of threat, so they all broke of into their own little groups and refused to invite him in, not that it bothered him mind you, he was far to mature to play their silly games.

The girls to found him dangerous, but in a sexy way like they thought he was wild. He had them hanging from a thread, the way he came to school on his motorbike. Any girl would have gladly thrown herself into his arms, but again he didn’t seem that fussed. In fact he refused to date any of them!

Little did Flow know that he had his eye on her!

Ghost Town! It's an odd name for a town where people still live, but it was true. Flow noticed the sign as they drove past the welcome post. She sat up in her seat; she must have dropped off.

"I was just beginning to worry," said Eddie, "that you weren't going to wake in time, but I guess this is where you and I part company."

She nodded, as she peered around at the sleepy town. The car pulled to a stop and Flow thanked Eddie and waved to him as the car pulled away. She shrugged, not quite sure what to do, it had been a long car ride and she was very hungry! At least she still had the money Bill had given her. She made up her mind to wander around town till she found a nice place to have a meal.

Threw dark tinted sunglasses, the old man watched Flow as she was dropped off. He rubbed his white beard slowly what she had seen the night she had been hiding out in her truck. If she had seen anything, she could go to the police, not that it really bothered him, but it was a risk. He would have to warn her away from doing anything so fool hardy! So far his plan had worked perfectly, he wasn't going to let some meddling girl ruin the whole thing for him! It was time to scare her into keeping her mouth shut!

CHAPTER NINE

Flow failed to notice the rusty truck waiting down a small side ally, her mind was far too busy thinking things over. For it could surely only be a few more days before she was back home one in East Ville, so there was an awful lot to be thinking about. What's more she really needed something to eat, but there didn't seem to be anywhere around.

There, she spotted a small diner on the street corner, so she headed as fast as she could. Once inside she found her-self a window seat and studied the menu, there wasn't that much choice, but at least there was a few things on there that she liked. In order to pay though, she would have to use some of the money Bill had given her, if it hadn't been for him and that guy she had met the other night in that bar she wouldn't have had anything to eat! She was truly grateful to both of them in turn; before she set down to eat.

Flow took a large sip of her milkshake, enjoying the taste that swirled around her mouth. It reminded her of being a kid again, hanging around the local food places in and around East Ville because there wasn't

anything much else for the well bought up children to do. Food was indeed an indulgence, but one you could have without getting into trouble. She was just about to take a bite from her burger, when the woman behind the counter called to her.

“Hey Miss!” she called out. “There’s a phone call for you, take it round the back!”

I didn’t register with Flow that she was talking to her, but the place was empty, she was the only one there. How could she have a phone call, she didn’t know anyone who could be call her. Suddenly she felt a little afraid!

“Miss!” the assistant called her again. “I’m not going to stand here and hold this for you all day, I’ve got jobs to do!”

Jumping to her feet, Flow crossed the floor to where the woman was stood hold the receiver for her.

Reluctantly she took the phone in her hand and held it to her ear. “Hello,” she said in a shaky voice.

“You were there that night,” a dry gritty voice said. “You’d better not tell anyone what you saw, otherwise your going to die!”

“Who are you” demanded Flow. Her hand was shaking as she held the phone in her hand.

The voice at the other end was silent for a moment; then he spoke again. “I’m your Godfather.” Then he laughed! But as he did it seemed to die away, she glanced out the window across the street, to see the figure of the old man slip out from inside a phone booth across the street and slip away!

CHAPTER TEN

Flow banged the phone down, catching the woman’s attention. “Hey!” she yelled. “Don’t you dare treat my stuff like that otherwise you’ll be out on your ear whether you’ve eaten or not!”

Flow just ignored her, she just slumped down in her chair, but she couldn’t eat a thing. She had witnessed something that night! Had it been after a murder, and that old man moving his victim’s body? Or had it be something else, but one thing was clear someone was after her. She bit her lip.

There had to be something she could do, she had to go to the police. Why would she worry about some cocky old man in a rusty truck? Yeah a man in a rusty old truck who just happens to be a killer! Oh what am I supposed to do? He’s out there somewhere watching me! He has to be!

In the end she made up her mind not to eat the rest of the meal, if she did she was most likely going to wind up being sick. Laying the money out on the table she got up and left.

“Don’t even like the food now do we!” the woman called after her, but Flow wasn’t in the mood for a confrontation with anyone, especially a trigger or knife happy Godfather, or whatever he called himself! I can’t go to the police, if he finds out that I told on him he’ll come after me and kill me like they do in the movies and there’ll be no hunky Hollywood hero to save me from him in the nick of time! But even that my not be enough, he may change his mind and try to kill me anyway, just for his own piece of mind! Knowing that there wasn’t anyone alive to testify against him!

Flow walked quickly through the town, her mind ground round and round. She even walked out in front of an on coming car, it slammed on brakes and the driver hurled her a load of abuse!

Is everyone in this town so darn grumpy? Then she noticed she was nearing the town’s police station. Slowing down, she placed a finger in her mouth, pondering what she should do next. Part of her wanted to forget the whole thing, pretend that she hadn’t witnessed anything, and it would also please her Godfather!

The other part of her wanted to go and get the whole thing off her chest and this would be her only chance! Option two, won! She would have to tell them, then for helping them catch a killer, they would give her lift in a police cruiser all the way home!

Pushing her way inside, she peered around. There was a young police officer stood behind the desk, doodling on a pad, a police radio crackled in the background. He looked up at her and smiled.

"Can I help you ma'am" he asked, resting his pencil down.

Flow nodded, but it took a long time for the words to form in her mind, let alone in her mouth. "I . . . I ah, think I may have witnessed a crime, a murder I think."

The smile vanished from the officer's face. "Oh I see," he said. "Hang on a moment I'll go and get the Chief." He promptly hurried from the reception area, leaving Flow on her-own. She leaned forward against the desk and taped her fingers on the pad; then she turned it round to face her. The doodle was of a funny looking policeman with a grumpy face. She guessed it maybe have been the chief he had drawn.

"Yes Miss," a big-built police chief strode up to her with a look of suspicion on his red face. His small beady eyes seemed to peer out at her from the flaps of hair that hung down over his face. Flow guess that he wasn't thinking very nice things about her. "Todd here tells me that you witnessed a murder or something"

Flow nodded.

"Well, would you like to follow me into the office," he said, forcing a smile. She felt uneasy around him; he didn't trust her that much was clear. He probably thought that she was a bum just trying to make a name for her-self! Or cause trouble.

He led her through to a small office with a large fan in the corner; to her surprise he had it turned on. It wasn't exactly hot; Flow shivered in the cold, and fear of what she was about to do. There was not get out clause now! It was Hollywood or bust.

At first it was hard for her to find the right words, but as she got used again to sound of her own voice she began to relax. It didn't last very long though, the officer across from her, studied her with a look of scepticism in his eyes, she guessed he wasn't buying her story for one minute.

"So let me get this clear," he said clearing his throat; he then sat up. "It was dark, rainy night, with no lights around you." Flow nodded, her eyes now fixed on the desk. "From that you saw some man moving around outside carrying wrapped up sheets" This time he didn't wait for an answer. "So you're hundred percent sure that he was lumbering dead bodies around"

"Well no, but . . ."

"He could have been carrying anything and as far as chasing you goes. You were sat in his lorry. He probably thought you were about to steal it or something. Oh yes, then there's the weird phone call." He leaned fully on his desk this time. "Look I know the Jacobs, the cabin where you saw this, they're both away on holiday for a few weeks. I spoke to their son the other day, a really nice young man."

His face then broke into a soft smile.

"I think there must be a little misunderstanding here. I think you had a scare. I know the stories about the freaky old men with bodies in their trucks that have hooks for hands and skin their victims alive. Well when I was a boy we had one in our hometown about the old coal man, the children all thought he was a crazy. One night I saw him out in the back yard digging something up, it also was a dark and rainy night, I thought he was unearthing one of his victims, so I told my dad, the Sheriff. I wasn't a troublemaker or liar so he believed me. He called his men out and they stormed the place and arrested him."

He thinks I'm seeing things and making things up! I don't know why I even bothered! She began biting her fingernail.

"It turns out the pour guy was burying his pet dog who had just died."

Suddenly out of character. "What about the phone call, he threatened me not to tell anyone."

"I could have just been some kids being cute," he stated. "But it seems to me like you must've been dreaming."

That comment hurt Flow deep inside. He was treating her like some troublemaker, or a teenager with an

overactive imagination! She didn't even know why she had bothered!

"To make your mind at ease," the Sheriff said. "I'll go and check the cottage out and make sure everything's in order." A smile crossed his lined face. "If there's anything out of order. So you stay here while I'm out, then you may go if nothings wrong."

Flow felt like she'd just been trampled all over by heavy boots, she felt angry that her claims had just been shrugged off like she was the boy who cried wolf. I'm not a child anymore! I guess he just can't trust me because I'm scruffy and I've been on the streets. He probably thinks I'm doing drugs or something and that's how I hallucinated that phone call.

Flow was escorted back to reception where she was left on her own, while the Sheriff and another officer went out to their police car and drove off.

There was always a small chance that they would find some evidence of a murder, she hoped that they would, then her mind would be put at ease. Well at least as much as it could under the circumstances! Ghost Ville seemed to be the perfect name for this sleepy little town, she felt so alone sitting in the police station with no company. Even the officer behind the desk seemed to have gone. No one seemed to come or go the whole time she was in there. She just sat back in her chair and thought of happier times.

Flow's life seemed to be a never ending bore of being at home with her nagging parents or going out with them to various charity functions that they ran. Of course they weren't doing this to be kind, it was just another way for them to get praised for their lifestyle! The rest of the time was spent in school working hard in lessons and hanging reluctantly around with Royce, as she endlessly slagged off the other students around them, calling them "Lame ducks."

She had longed for something to change in her life; she just didn't know how much more of the endless cycle she could take, before she wound up pulling her hair out!

The change came on a dreary day in school, one-lunchtime. It had been drizzling pretty much all morning. There was a feeling of depression in the air she guessed it must be the surroundings.

"They said it was going to be sunny!" Royce hand complained bitterly, but Flow wasn't really paying any attention to her so-called friend.

"If we didn't have rain," voice from behind Flow said suddenly. "Then we'd end up with a drought and you wouldn't like that." She turned around to see Ron Take standing just behind her.

"What do you want?" asked Royce.

"I just felt like a change of company, the rest of them are so annoying that it totally does my head in."

"Tell me about it," Royce said, rolling the gum suspiciously in her mouth.

Then to Flow's total surprise he turned to her and smiled. "You're Flow, right?"

She just nodded.

"It was you I wanted to see," he said, reaching into his back pocket he pulled out a rolled up question paper. "You seen like a really brainy kind of girl."

Royce snorted and Flow was stunned, she never expected to be spoken to by Ron, it seemed impossible to her, but it was happening! She felt herself blushing as she shrugged, being modest as always.

Brainy! My parents don't seem to think I'm brainy! They think I'm thick!

"That's cool," he said, running her hand over his mess of black hair. "Most of the others can't even spell or add up properly. I need some help with this Math paper, I was wondering if you could help me"

Royce gave out a throaty cough that turned to a laugh. Flow felt the other girl's eyes on her, she didn't look happy; perhaps she was even jealous' She didn't know why, Royce always bragged that she was going out a twenty-six year old man, a bouncer at the town's only nightspot.

"So what do you say?" Ron asked, his eyes meeting hers, but she had to turn away. "If you do I'll love you forever." He laughed at his little joke.

"I could teach you," again Royce put in, weaving a thick strand of her hair between her fingers.

"Yeah right," Ron retorted.

"I'll have a go, but I'm not a good teacher," Flow said, hoping to put him off of course it failed.

"Well, neither's Mr. Scrubs, but he can still take classes. So how's about tomorrow lunch time?"

She agreed and Ron went away, leaving Flow to see the look of contempt in Royce's eyes! Little did Flow know at the time, how this meeting was going to change her entire life!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Bright sunshine shone down through frequent breaks in the clouds above, but more rain didn't look that far off. Flow wonder aimlessly down the road, she backpack straps hanging from her shoulders. She let the sun gently warm her face and the breeze tug at her hair.

She wouldn't bother with the police again they just didn't want to know! After all that time she had been sitting in that station waiting to know what was going on. She had guessed that they wouldn't find anything, after all she had spent the whole night in their cottage and she found nothing.

When the Sheriff did get back, he said, "Everything's in order, but I did some extra checking. I rang their son on his mobile; he said he'd spoken to his parents this morning from their holiday home and they were fine."

Flow wanted to protest, to say that the body she had seen could have been someone else, but that didn't explain why the old man had been in the cottage. Perhaps the he would have thought the threat over the phone would be enough to scare her, so that he wouldn't need to keep track of her'

She walked for a long time, as evening drew in so did the rain, it started with a light drizzle, but soon grew into a downpour. Flow hurried for the cover of the trees at the side of the road, but it did little to keep her dry.

She had been on her feet much of the day without a rest and her legs were now starting to feel numb. But where could she stop, she didn't really want to sleep out in the rain all night! Keeping on going, Flow felt the rain beating against her face and water falling down from her hair.

Then at the right moment a car came speeding down the road, she hoped and begged that this car would stop and pick her up, so she stuck her hand out as the car came closer. It began to slow, Flow felt her heart begin to pound as it drew nearer to her, but it didn't stop, instead it drop right by her, going to a puddle it drenched her right through!

The car sped on leaving Flow cursing! Did that give you a kick, did it! She yelled bitterly in her mind.

"Thanks a freakin' bunch!" Kicking water angrily she continued on her way. Some people can be so darned inconsiderate!

Suddenly all the angry thoughts about the driver came to a stop when she noticed a run down shed on the other-side of the road, it was falling apart, but it would keep her dryer than she would be if she stayed out in the tempest.

Quickening her pace, she reached the shack. Its door lay propped up against its frame of rotten, wooden boards, but there was just enough room for her to slip inside. What's more, once she got inside, she saw that it had no back wall, there was nothing there but a view of the trees, but at least there was some covering over her head. There were some leaks in the roof, but beggars can't be choosers.

Dropping her pack to the muck ground she crouched down. Her eyes just felt so heavy that she felt as though she could drop off at any moment, but it was just so uncomfortable, that she had to keep moving to stop her legs from hurting.

Finally the need for sleep became overwhelming and she couldn't fight it any longer, so she just drifted away into a deep sleep.

It was hours later that Flow awoke suddenly, she didn't quite know what had woken her then she knew. There was a heavy rumble of thunder; it was almost right overhead. Rubbing her eyes, she peered around into the blackness around her.

But it wasn't dark! There was a light coming through the cracks in the shack coming from the road outside, she panicked and pulled herself up. There was someone out there! What was she going to do? Who was it? She didn't know, but whoever it was had no reason to stop in the middle of nowhere! Suddenly it was black again apart from the odd flashes of lightning. Had whoever it was gone? She hadn't the sound of a car or trucks engine! Flow had no idea what she was going to do. Part of her wanted to go out and find out what was going on, the other wanted to cower in the shack till they had gone, if they ever did. Perhaps it would be best to make a run for it!

What was that? Her mind started churning with thoughts when she heard a sound coming from outside! Was it the rain? The thunder? It could be! No, it was a branch breaking on the ground! He's out there. The trucker! Her Godfather as he called himself!

Staring out into the trees behind the back of the shack, she saw a shape moving around. Was it the wind blowing the trees? No! Then she saw him, his dark shape against the night, like a ghostly cowboy with his hat and heavy cloak. Flow couldn't move! She could breathe!

Does he know I'm here?

The dark figure seemed to be moving away from her. Flow stood huddled, trying to keep in the shadows, so that if he didn't know she was there, then hopeful he wouldn't see her!

She had to get away! Making up her mind, she planned to wait till he was far enough away, then she would make a run for it at full speed and hope that he wouldn't even notice! It was risky he could just be playing games with her! She felt her whole body shaking in terror as she watched the scene around her unfold!

Then his form seemed to merge into the background! Flow had her chance; she grabbed her bag and darted from the back to the shack and out to the road, running as fast as she could. Glancing over her shoulder, she wonder whether he had seen her, but there was no one following!

Suddenly the whole place lit up, Flow froze to the spot, as the rusty truck seemed to come out of nowhere and was now charging right for her! She screamed! Bolting headlong down the road as the truck continued to gain ground on her, its engine roaring angrily! Menacingly!

There was no way she could outrun a truck, she had to find cover as the truck got closer and closer. In a panic Flow turned to run for the woods, but in so doing she tripped on something and fell flat in her face. The truck didn't stop it just kept coming till it had run right over her!

CHAPTER TWELVE

Flow covered her head, unable to do anything else, she was dead that was for sure! Her whole life seemed to flash right before her eyes, as the constant drum of the engine came so close and the truck roared right over her! All of its six wheels going around her; they just missed her by inches!

She looked up for a moment through the rain as the truck vanished into the night and it dawned on her what had just happened! Flow fainted!

She was still lying on the edge of the road when she woke up to another grey wet day. Her head and legs stung when she moved them, she cried out. Her clothes were totally drenched right through. As she reach up to touch her head, she felt some blood on her fingers, it much have been quite a trip!

Climbing to her feet, she reached for her bag, when she noticed a smudged note resting on top. Careful not to rip it, she took onto the palms of hands and read the blurred lettering.

GOOD JOB THE POLICE DIDN'T BOLEIF YOU!!!!

LAST NIGHT WAS A DOMO!!!!!! NEXT TIME IT'LL BE FOR REAL!!!!!!!!!! YOUR GODFATHER!!!!!!!!!!!!

Flow felt her blood freeze as she read and re-read the note! She remembered the night before. The way she had tried to outrun that Truck! It had just missed her! Whoever this old guy is, he was bound to be crazy or something, let alone a murderer! She had to do something! She couldn't go to the police, not after the way she had been treated back in Ghost Ville! She would have to keep her mouth shut from now on! It was the only way she was going to get home alive.

All of a sudden an idea flashed into her mind! She would keep quiet till she got back to East Ville, then she would confide the whole story to someone she could trust and take it from there!

What's the point! He seems to know every move you make! What makes East Ville any safer! She had no answers to her own questions, but it seemed to be a good enough plan for now.

Gathering up her things, she tossed away the note and she slowly carried on her endless walk home. Hours and cars seemed to drink by, as Flow continued to flag down cars, but they all seemed to be in such a hurry that they couldn't pick her up. Why should they care about a lost girl trying to find her way home! There was no reason for them to care apart from Bill! He was different from the others he had reason to care for the lost souls of this earth!

Her mind began to wander again and she began to drift into the middle of the road, till the sound of a horn tooting woke her up and she moved aside to let the car pass. The station wagon did drive by, but it pulled over to one side and the passenger door opened.

At first Flow was about to rush for the car, but she stopped dead! She didn't know who was driving this car! For all she knew it could be the old man who was stalking her! She froze for a moment she did not know what to do.

She edged closer and peered in and gasped!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"If it isn't my little Flow," Lance stated. "I didn't expect to see you again." He smiled softly. "Still on the road are you?"

"Yah," she replied, still surprised to see him again after the meal he paid for her.

"Well hope in and I'll give you a lift."

Flow felt herself relaxing as she climbed in next to Lance, who was now studying a map.

"Looks like you're in luck," he stated. "So where are you heading?" Lance pulled out a large map and unfolded it as Flow told him. "Ah, it looks like you're in luck. East Ville is the next stop town on this route."

That means I have some business there.” He gestured to the paperwork on the back seat. “I’m a travelling salesman.”

“What do you sell?” she asked pulling on her seatbelt.

“Vacuum-cleaners. I know it’s not much of a job, but it brings in the money.” Lance gunned the engine and carried on down the road. “I’m hoping to move onto something better one day. Going up and down this great country of ours isn’t my first choice.”

Flow nodded, understanding what he meant, but at least he had a car to travel in, instead of having to rely on others.

“So what are you running from?” he asked jokingly. “Or have you been on a site seeing tour.”

“Something like that,” she replied, all the time keeping her eyes fixed on the road behind them, expecting to see the rusty truck come speeding round the corner and trying to run them off the road. “Now I’m on the way home.”

“Cool.” He tapped his hands on the steering wheel. “Me, I’m a City guy myself, but I’ve always wondered what it would be like to live in a small town. Man going to High School has to be bliss, right?”

“It’s okay,” she replied settling down in her chair.

“My old school was totally packed out, between lessons it was almost impossible to move.”

Lance did most of the talking as they drove through many heavy showers, she still kept looking behind her, but there were no trucks for miles. Her eyes began to feel heavy, but she forced them to stay open till she could no longer keep it up. The whole dark world about the car and inside seemed to blur for her and she gave way to sleep.

When Flow awoke, they were still on the road, but it was dark and it had stopped raining. She shifted in her seat and turned to Lance who still had his eyes locked on the road, stretching out in front of them.

“We’re almost there,” he stated, turning to glance at her for a moment. “What’s in East Ville anyhow?”

“I’m going home to my parents,” she told him, not really wanting to delve into the details of her current ordeal. “I haven’t seen them in a while.”

“What, you taken a year out or something to hit the road?” he asked.

“Yeah, something like that,” Flow replied, feeling a little uneasy with the situation.

“Your luck to have parents that are worth going back to,” he stated rather harshly. “I couldn’t do a single thing to please mine, I was never good enough for them when I was in school. When I was old enough I go out of there as soon as I could and never looked back.”

Flow didn’t tell him about her parent’s, she just listened to Lance feeling a bond of understanding form between. He seemed to have come from a similar situation from which she had come.

When he had finished talking, she turned to look out the window at the shadowy evening when they drove past the welcome sign. It looked totally different from the one she recalled. For one thing it had bright lights running all the way round it, like a stars dressing-room mirror.

Carrying along the road, they drove along side the old Sheriff’s ranch style house. She guessed he would have been retired by now; he was over fifty-five the year she left. She had always found it odd that the head of a town’s law enforcement would want to be alone out in the sticks. She always thought they would have to be part of the community in which they lived and took charge of.

A strange feeling of unease grew in her stomach. It had been so long since she had last set eyes on this place, it seems so un-imaginable that she had come back. She had come to far now to turn away again, it was time to get her crooked life back on the straight road!

As they drove deeper into town, Flow noticed some new houses that had clearly been put up in the last year or so. They were coarse ugly things compared with the town’s buildings she had grown up with. It made her feel a tinge of sadness, but she guessed nothing could stay the same forever.

Now in the town square, she asked to be dropped off on the street corner.

“Home sweat home, huh,” said Lance. “If you need anything, I’ll be in town for a while. You know trying to bring modern vacs into an unsuspecting little town. Here’s my mobile number.”

“Thanks,” she replied, taking the card from his hand. “And thanks again for the lift, I don’t think I could have made it without you.”

“Well that’s what I believe people are here for, to do things for each other.” He smiled warmly.

“Well thanks again, you’re a life saver.” Flow clambered out the car and gave him a quick wave as the car pulled away and she was alone again with her own thoughts. She knew the way to her house from here by the back of her hand, but just standing on the street where she used to hang out as a kid made her feel very strange indeed!

“Well there’s no point in standing around,” she told herself. “Let’s get this thing over and done with before you start chickening out.” She had to force everything else to the back of her mind, even the horrid thoughts of the trucker they may or may not be on her trail, it was time to focus.

She started out at a quick pace, but slowed the nearer she got to her street. The houses that lined the road looked pretty much the same the same gardens and coloured paint work. This area had changed little.

Flow’s heart rate soared when she saw her house! It didn’t look all that different, apart from the large hedges that had grown up on both sides. The gate was the same shade, but she guessed it had been repainted.

Coming to a dead stop, she peered at the house for a long time. A soft light could be seen through the drapes at the windows. This could not be happening! She wanted to turn away and not face this, but she had to go on. She forced herself to move forward, her hands tightened into fists as she went.

For a moment she stopped and peered around! She could have sworn she heard a sound behind her, but there was no one there. It must have been her imagination, or an animal. But even now she felt as though she were being watched. It sent a cold shiver down her spine.

Reaching for the gate, she forced it open with a struggle and went up to the front door and knocked with her shaking hand. Flow bit her lip as a light came on in the hall and the lock clicked and the door opened! Flow raised her hand to her mouth to stifle her scream!

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Lessons with Ron began slowly at first, he did seem to struggle an awful lot, even things Flow found simple, but he did seem eager to learn. There seemed to be a lot more to this boy than his hard reputation gave him credit for.

What had began with a simple math paper, turned into help in many subjects. Flow didn’t ever see herself as a good teacher and she told Ron this many times as they sat in the library over lunch times, be he would only tease her and then flatter her about it. He even made her giggle!

From not only lunch times, it spread to after school sessions as well. When questioned by her father, Flow had told him she was doing extra after school classes, which was true, but as teacher rather than student.

As a result things worked out in her favour. She was spending more time with Ron and less with Royce, who had been coming out with all kinds of nasty comments while they were in lessons together! Envy had taken its toll. She even began spreading rumours about her! But they didn’t get very far as Royce was a bitter outsider, no one gave her rubbish any credence.

For a great deal of time after that it seemed that the nightmare of the forced friendship had come to an end. Royce not longer waited for Flow after school she rushed home with her mind spinning on how to get effective revenge.

* * *

After one really long English lesson, Flow made her way home. She smiled to herself when she thought of the jokes Ron had told her and made her laugh. Today he had called her pretty. That was something no one had ever said to her, the best comment she had ever had came from her mother's camp, which was you're too plain. He had even played with her hair, taking some long strands from out of her standard ponytail and let them hang down over her face and she hadn't tied them back again.

"Hey Flowy," Ron said, pulling up beside her on his motorcycle. "Hop on, I'll give you a ride home."

"No thanks Ron," she told him, feeling herself blushing. Things like this only happened to the real babes in school, not the plain likes of her. "I'm okay walking."

"If it's your parents you're worried about, I'll drop you at the end of the road. Besides we're later than normal. You hitch a lift with me and they won't even notice."

It was true, a ride home would make things easier and she would be home by the normal time. I would save her a lot of hard questions. But she'd never been near a motorbike, let alone ride on one. It was a bit risk being out in public with him. The adults in the town were far worse than the children. Sooner or later her parents would find out that their daughter was seen with the local job from the Manor House. But she also wanted to take a risk for herself for once and not for Royce!

"Okay, I'm with you," she said, a grin breaking across her face.

"Hope on then babe, let's burn some rubber!" She struggled a bit with getting on the back, but finally managed it. She felt her stomach churn when he said, "Okay hold on tight this is going to be the ride of your life!"

He gunned the engine and headed out into the road. Flow felt the wind pounding her face and her two hair strands blew wildly about her face. Her heart was thudding as she gripped onto Ron's strong back! Her mind was filled with all sorts of conflicting thoughts and emotions.

Finally they came to a stop and Flow climbed off. Her legs felt weak and she had to steady her-self. That had most certainly been different!

"Thanks Ron, you're a life saver," she told him, straightening her backpack.

"No probs, see you at school tomorrow. It's Global-Studies." He winked at her and roared away.

Flow pulled herself together and rushed over to her house. Quickly she un-locked the door and let herself in.

"Hi dad," she said, walking passed the lounge doorway, where he was seated watching baseball on TV. There was no reply so she went into the kitchen.

"There you are Florence," her mum said coldly as she finished washing up. "Your dinners in the oven, I hope it's not over cooked like yesterday." She swung around and studied her daughter. "What on earth have you done with your hair girl! It look's dreadful."

Bang! Another chance for a normal family chat gone out the window! Flow ate her dinner in silence and crept up to her room and watched TV for the rest of the evening.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

No one answered the door! It was just like in many nightmares she'd had about coming home. This couldn't be happening! She peered down at her hands to make sure she wasn't carrying the bloody knife.

"Can I help you?" a short, but stern looking woman asked, her fingers tapping on the open door. She was know one Flow knew, perhaps one of her parents knew friends.

"Hi," she said, feeling her face burn, she never had been too good at addressing aggressive strangers.

"Is Mr. or Mrs. Kirkby in?"

The woman was silent for a moment studying Flow as though she were some kind of alien thingy that had just stepped out of her spacecraft. Then she straightened herself up.

"Who is it Tanya?" a male voice boomed from the living room.

"It's nobody!" she woman replied harshly, tightening her jaw. Then she addressed Flow. "If you mean the Mr. and Mrs. Kirkby that used to live in this house, they were killed in a car crash last year."

They were what! Flow nearly stumbled, but didn't quite fall! But it struck her like a stake through the heart! How could this be? This isn't the way it was meant to be! She felt herself begin to sweat uncontrollably.

"So I'm afraid I can't help you."

"Is it that weirdo again?" the man's voice yelled again.

"Look Miss, we're busy. I'm sorry about the shock of losing your friends, but that's life." She then closed the door leaving Flow standing in the doorway in a state of disbelief and shock! At once everything seemed to shatter all around her! The dreams she had of coming home and sorting it out had gone! Her parents were dead and she was on her own.

Her mind flooding with uncontrolled thoughts, she aimlessly wandered down the path to the gate. She didn't know where she was going or what she was doing. These last few travelling days of her life had been totally meaningless and a waste of time! Now she would have to live with the guilt for the rest of her life!

It had started raining; as Flow walked down the empty roads the whole place was dead to the world. Sleeping and not caring about what she was going through! Again she had run head long into a nightmare! This trip sure hadn't been worth it; she had just learned that she had not one left. No family and no friends to turn to. No one would believe what she had to say about what she had witnessed that rainy night! The only company she had now was that of a shadowy, possible murderer who drove around in a rusty truck!

Flow's scream echoed through the dark night, as a hand landed firmly on her shoulder!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"Wow, Flow!" someone said, as she swung around expecting to see the old grey haired truck driver.

"Chase!" Flow yelled, feeling her heart rate ease off just a tad. Chase was one of Ron's younger sisters. She had been the only one to get involved in the relationship secret. As Ron had once put it, she was the only trustworthy member of his whole family. "You scared the life out of me."

"Sorry," she said rather sheepishly. "I saw you being dropped off, but I didn't know one hundred percent, you've changed."

"Well so have you," stated Flow. The last time she had seen Chase she had been a small sliver of a girl with mousy blonde hair and a really dreadful taste in fashion. She had always worn really bright clothes.

She had clearly grown up and had died her hair a really dark shade of red.

“For the better I hope,” she flushed. “Look if you haven’t got anywhere to stay, you can come over to ours.”

“You mean the Manor?” said Flow, feeling uneasy about it.

“We haven’t moved, or at least I don’t think we have. But I’m the only permanent resident. Mum left for a two week break and that was four weeks ago and the others, well they stay over at their mates houses.” Flow nodded. She followed Chase to a parked Ford estate car that looked like it had gone ten rounds with a ten-ton truck.

It took Chase a while to get the engine going, while the rain poured harder. Flow felt an uneasy silence, with a heavy weight on her shoulders. What she had learned had hardly begun to sink in. She had so many questions spinning through her brain! She needed to know what had happened to her parents! What had caused the crash? Where were they going? Was there another car involved?

“Sorry you had to learn about your parents like that, I just didn’t get there soon enough.”

Flow didn’t really hear her, she just stared blankly ahead taking in the road she had travelled on many times. This isn’t how she had planned it! This isn’t how it was meant to be! Her parents weren’t meant to die while she was away, it didn’t seem right! Now she had lost her only chance to make things right! It had all gone totally wrong!

“What happened to Ron?” Chase suddenly asked; it caught her off guard.

“What?” Flow said, almost to herself.

“What happened to my brother? Is he okay, or what?”

The question triggered her memories. The thought of Ron did make her smile; it was just a shame things had to change between them!

Flow really began to enjoy the daily bike rides Ron would give her. There became less time for study, as he drove her around town and stopped off in shops and brought her all kinds of gifts and little things she wanted! Flow had never been treated like this before. But as time went on, she began to feel uneasy about their ‘Romeo and Juliet’ love affair that took place mostly in secret. No guy had ever shown an interest in her, not even to be her friend. As a result she began to distrust his motives, but she kept quiet, wanting to enjoy it while it lasted.

This did start to go down hill then, Ron wanted her to stay out with him after school for longer, sometimes even bunk off. She felt she had little choice but to do what he wanted otherwise he would leave her for someone else.

Royce of course kept on making threats to tell on her, but for some reason she never did. Flow guessed she had never been anything more than a nasty mouth that had just lost its teeth. Royce had lost her hold over Flow! What’s more Flow was now dating the guy she clearly wanted! But it wouldn’t be long before it exploded.

It was a warm summer evening as Ron and Flow walked through the local park. They held hands and chatted about the lessons of the day, what funny things certain teachers had said and done. But Flow couldn’t hold the question inside her much longer.

“Ron, why are you going out with me?” she asked him, feeling her cheeks burn.

“Because you’re a great girl, that’s why.” He turned to her and winked, with a nice smile. “Why?”

“It just seems odd to me,” she replied, not meeting his eyes. “You could have every girl in the school and out you want and yet you pick me. I’m not sexy, I’m just plain.”

“You’re different Flow, there’s so much more to you than those other girls, okay. I guess I’ve got bored having them drooling over me the whole time, it’s just pathetic. I can talk to you Flow and you listen. You’re not superficial.”

Flow smiled, hoping that what he had just told her was the truth. He stopped her and pulled her close to

him. Flow felt nervous, this wasn't like the small kisses they had shared before; she could feel her whole body shaking as their lips pressed and he held her close.

The next minute he was on top of her and she was starting to panic, this hadn't happened before, when a sound grabbed both of their attentions.

"Way to go Flow!" Royce yelled at the top of her silly giggly voice.

She pushed Ron off climbed to her feet.

Royce and her Man were walking arm in arm right by them. Flow felt sick, this hadn't happened to her.

How could this have happened to her! This was a nightmare.

"Take me home Ron!" she ordered, feeling her head pound. This wasn't good! Only bad could come out of it! She had never sounded so bossy before in her life, but this wasn't normal!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

"I don't really know what happened to him to be honest with you," Flow replied. "I guess we just drifted apart." She had to change the subject, or there might be more tension between them, and Flow needed a friend right now.

"What happened the night my parents were killed?"

Chase was silent for a moment as though thinking carefully what to say, then she turned to Flow and said, "They were on their way home from one of these functions and they were hit by a drunk driver. I can't remember all the details, I think we may still have the paper at home, I'll have a go at digging it out for you."

"Thanks," Flow replied, resting her head on her palm and staring out the side window.

With a sharp left turn, Chase turned the car down onto a dark overgrown side road. Flow knew this place well, the long run that led right up to the manor house. She had walked this road many times when she was growing up, it was of course Royce's favourite hang out, but the place always used to scare Flow. She had heard many horror stories about it.

Away from the streetlights now, the world outside seemed to get darker, if it wasn't for the car's headlights, it would be pitch black out there. The thoughts of being scared brought the thought about that truck driver into her mind. He could have followed her here and she may not have even known. The thought sends a shiver down her spine.

Out of the gloom of many twisted trees, the manor appeared, it just seemed to fade into view like a large ghost. The headlights barely illuminated half the huge structure, with its' large dominating porch and distinctive round window that sat just above it.

"Well, home sweet home," stated Chase with a chuckle, as the hum of the engine died away. "Let's get inside then shall we?"

Flow, feeling reluctant climbed out the car and promptly followed Chase up the small path to the porch.

The air around them seems so still, with no sound about from the girls' footsteps across the gravel.

"I'm afraid mum didn't have much money to spend on renovation, so I'm afraid much of the house is still pretty much as it was when we moved in." Chase unlocked the door, and with a hard shove she pushed it open. "Here we go. Man, I hate this door. It's always getting stuck."

Flow swallowed hard as she went over the threshold of the door in the dark world of the East Ville manor house. Once inside, Flow froze in front of the large ascending staircase, with its' wide base, narrowing till it reaches the next floor.

Everything comes into dim focus when Chase turns on the lights. They keep flickering and make Flow's eyes go all strange and hard to keep open.

"Are you hungry, I could fix you something to eat?" she asked. "The one thing I'm not short of is nosh."

"Thanks but I'm not really hungry," Flow replied. "I'm just tired, it's been a very long trip."

“How’s about something to drink”

Flow agreed and she followed the other girl into the lounge, with its tatty furniture, with yellow foam poking out from all over it. She takes a seat, but it isn’t comfortable.

“Here you go,” Chase said, breezing into the room. She then sits down and sips her own cherryaide. “I’ll have a dig around tomorrow and see if I can find that paper for you.”

“Thank you.” Flow held the cup tightly in her hands, like it were a warm cocoa on a cold day, even though it provided no heat. She just felt so tense. Things were not going well for her, not in the slightest. Her head was filled up with so much stuff about what she might have witnessed, the threatening note and phone call! No her parents were dead! Her whole trip had been a waste! She had blown her only chance of patching things up. She felt so guilty and weighed down with it all. It was too much for her alone to bear.

“So Ron was okay when you last saw him” the other girl asked. “I don’t mean to press you like this, but the guy is my brother. His running away pretty much tore what was left of our family to shreds.”

The question only served to grief Flow even more. If it hadn’t been for her, then Ron would never have needed to run off.

“He was fine,” she replied, biting her lip. “He was pretty much Ron, if you know what I mean.”

“Yeah, he could be a jerk sometimes. I think he had a head full of dreams with what he wanted from life, that everyone else around him didn’t matter. But if you were part of that dream then he would be so nice to you.”

Flow took a long sigh, and replied, “I guess I stopped being part of that dream.”

“You won’t be the first or last I’m afraid.”

“Thanks for stopping for me, I don’t think I would have been in a fit state to sort myself out and find somewhere to stay.”

“That’s cool, you can stay here as long as you like. I don’t think there’s much danger of my mother, or brothers or sisters coming home.”

A while later, Flow was shown to the guest room. It was very plain, with a large window, with only one flimsy white curtain. It looked out over the back garden and the woods beyond. But the bed was nice and soft, which is all that mattered at that moment in time. Chase had also lent her a nightgown.

She lay back in her bed, just as she heard the sound of rain pouring outside. She closed her eyes, but couldn’t hold it for long. The pale moonlight shone through the half covered window, projecting its’ eerie light onto the wall. It vanished. Flow guessed it was cloud blocking the light. She rolled over, listening to the sound of the old house groaning in the wind. She pulled the blankets tight around her, trying to fight the feeling of cold that reached her whole body. There was nothing warm about this house whatsoever. A while later, she rolled over and peered over at the window, the single curtain blew back and forth in its’ own crazy dance. The rain had stepped up its’ attack on the single pained glass, it made the most dreadful noise.

Then Flow realised she had been asleep and the pounding rain must have woken her up. She made up her mind to go over to the window and close it. With a reluctant sigh, she climbed out of bed. The rain wet her face and hair, as she battled to close the window, when she stopped dead!

There was something moving in the yard! At first she thought it was a tree, but when she looked her blood froze! He was stood down there, the trucker!

CHAPTER NINETEEN

He stared up at her, his coat bellowing in the wind. He held his black cowboy hat tight to his head, but she could still see his white hair tufts and his beard. But he didn't move, like he was a statue, like it was a nice calm evening!

Flow froze, her hand still holding onto the open window! In panic, she quickly pulled the window closed and wiped the rain from her face. When she did finally look out again, he had gone. There was nothing out there but the howling wind and the driving rain.

There was no way Flow could get to sleep now she just paced up and down for a long time. Finally she became fed up with her pacing, she slumped down on her bed and began to sob. She didn't even know which of the many reasons she was crying for, perhaps all of them'

"Hey Flow," said Chase, giving the other girl a good shake. "Wake up. I've gotta go to school in a while, but I've made you breakfast."

Flow groaned, she couldn't even remember where she was or even if she had been asleep, she just felt so tired that she just wanted to roll over and go into an eternal sleep and never have to face the world again, but with Chase shaking her and going on at her she had no choice but some come round.

"Sorry I had to wake you like that, I just didn't want you going hungry while I was out."

"Thanks," she reluctantly said, not really feeling the slightest bit hungry, but if she had one bite of her toast she would most likely wind up being sick. That would only cause more hassle for Chase, and Flow didn't want that. She had after all take her under her roof with the danger of insults from the members of her own family.

"Are you sure you'll be okay here on your own?" Chase asked as she reached the door. "If you won't just . . ."

"I'll be fine, really," Flow stated. "I know what they're like at that school when you don't turn up without a good sick note." She tried to smile, but it didn't even show through her expression-drained face.

"Catch you later then," she stated, she turned and left the room closing the door behind her.

The sound of the front door being slammed seemed to echo throughout the entire house. Flow suddenly felt very alone there, with the thoughts of what had happened last night. She could have dreamed it, but when she locked up the window was closed, but it had been open went to bed, she was sure of it! Was she' She didn't know anymore.

Forcing herself out of bed, she went across the darkened landing, where the lights didn't even work. Going into the bathroom and locked the door and started to run the bath. There was an awful groaning sound, before the water finally started to run. She poured some bubble bath in and roved her nightgown and climbed into the warm water, she hadn't felt something so good for such a long time; she finally felt able to relax. Ease some of the tension in her body. She did her best to clear her mind and laid back. She didn't notice the hours drifting by, as she constantly heated up the bath with more and more hot water. When she finally made up her mind to get out, she had to force herself to get out by letting the plug out with her foot, otherwise she would most likely remain in there for the entire day.

She put her nightgown back on, not feeling like putting her old dirty clothes back on. It was a long time

since she had a proper clean and she didn't want to have the feeling ruined by dirty clothes. In fact she just went and tossed the whole lot in the bin. She felt better for it afterwards.

Then she just led still on the bed taking deep breaths, she felt safer in that little space, unlike the rest of the house. Outside the rain hadn't stopped, but this once she hadn't been soaked to the skin.

She couldn't hold off the guilt about her parents. She wondered how long it would take Chase to find the newspaper. She had meant to ask Chase how long after her and Ron had run away did the accident take place. Perhaps knowing more of the facts might help her come to terms with it. Something that the towns' people had already grieved and got on with their lives, Flow felt as though she had been on another planet those last few years.

It never should have happened the way it did.

After the close encounter with Royce, Flow had gone home filled with dread, but her parents said little to her, which was of course normal. She had been worrying about nothing, or had she. But for her own reasons she tried to cool things off with Ron, but he was having none of it. He said she should tell Royce where to go! But she couldn't do that, it would tip things over the edge and she was more likely to tell on her!

In the end it didn't matter, because a few days later she was confronted by her red-faced-father as she came in from school.

"Where have you been our daughter?" he asked, his arms crossed his chest.

Flow's mother appeared behind him, her normally pale face flushed.

"After school classes, like I told you," she replied, feeling her throat catching, she had a good feeling where this was going. Her parents only paid her attention when she was in trouble.

"Who with?" her father continued.

"Just a friend."

"Who?" Her mom added.

"Don't play mind games with her Julia!" he suddenly shouted. "You were with that horrid Taker boy."

Flow said nothing. She knew there was no point in lying, so she kept her mouth shut, trying to hold back her tears.

"Are you dumb or something? Were you with that lout or not?"

Her mom didn't even give her a chance to answer, she said, "Why him Flow? There are plenty of respectable boys in that school."

She couldn't answer, she was struck dumb and she couldn't even defend herself.

"What does it matter!" her father stepped in again. "John's daughter saw you! You, shall we say in a compromising position! You could at least do it with someone half decent. You're not to see him again.

You are going to come straight home from school! No, in fact I'm going to pick you up everyday."

Flow couldn't believe what she was hearing! She felt her cheeks blushing! How could he talk about her like that! She was unpopular as it was, without having her respectable father in his suite coming to pick her up. She was fifteen years old! She was just about to storm from the room.

"You're also grounded. And don't you even think about meeting him in school, because we have eyes and ear everywhere!"

Royce! Her hands tightened into fists as she flung herself down on the bed in tears! She hated this house and her parents! She hated them. They didn't even seem to care whether she got pregnant, just as long the father was to their tastes! They were not going to do this to her! She wouldn't let them!

CHAPTER TWENTY

That afternoon, Chase was late returning. She came in with her school stuff and couple of carrier bags and a plastic wallet filled with paper. Dropping her stuff of, she rushed upstairs into Flow's room.

"Good to see you've had a nice wash," she stated, sitting herself down on the end of the other girl's bed.

"How has it been to day Flow?"

"Okay I suppose," she reluctantly replied, she still felt tired and groggy, the bath had helped a little, but right now she felt very much like another one.

"Well, I got you some new clothes, I hope you don't mind!" She reached into the bag and pulled out a couple of vest tops and a red fleece, followed by a pair of sand blasted boot-cut jeans. "I just hope I got the right size."

"Thanks," Flow replied, doing her best to sound a little enthused, but it didn't seem to work.

"It's like I always say, there's nothing better on a cloudy day than some new clothes. I guess that's why I have so many." While Flow climbed off the bed and tried on the new clothes, Chase pulled out the sheets from the wallet. "I'm afraid I can't lay my hands on the newspaper at the moment, so I went to the library and found it and photo copied the article." She then handed the papers to Flow and she thanked her. "Well I'll leave you with that, and I'll start dinner." She then breezed from the room.

Picking up the small pile of paper, Flow began to read and the blood drained from her face. It was like Chase had said; they had been hit side on by a speeding drunk driver, who was getting away from the police, because he had just beaten his wife. The further she read on, the harder to take in the whole thing became. Her father, who had been driving had been killed outright, but her mother was still alive, she died while being cut from the wreckage.

I must have been awful for her. Flow felt like crying and stop reading, but she had to go on. The drunk driver survived, with a few broken bones and ribs. He openly blamed the police for making him speed, because they were chasing him. He was tried and sentenced for two counts of death by dangerous driving, assault and a few other things.

It was then that Flow looked at the date, it was about two to four months after she had run off with Ron. Would it have happened even if she hadn't run off, most likely, nothing could keep her parents from their functions. But even knowing that didn't make her feel any better.

She just rested the photocopies down and just stared at the opposite wall and cried again. This whole thing was senseless to her! Other children ran away from home and when they came home their parents were still alive! Why did hers' have to die! I just didn't seem fair to her. What's more she felt angry! Angry with herself! Angry with Ron and angry with her parents for dying, without giving her a change to sort things out! She was also mad at the crazy trucker that now stalked her! She hated that murderer for taking away someone else's parents or children, whoever was in this wrapped up sheets he was carrying! It had to be murder, otherwise he wouldn't be afraid of her going to the police! Why did people have to kill others! There would be enough death caused by nature, without people doing it as well!

"Dinner's up!" Chase yelled from the bottom of the stairs, breaking Flow's chain of thought.

Reluctantly she climbed off the bed and went down, but not feeling very hungry.

The night that followed let Flow get some more sleep, as the wind and calmed and the rain had gone. She dreamed, but they were the kind of dreams that stuck in her mind. When she awoke the following morning, she found a cold cocoa at the side of her bed and soggy cereal.

Yawning, she forced herself to climb to herself to climb out of bed into her clothes, putting her vest on back to front and not even realising it. She did feel a bit peckish, which was most likely a good sign. She wondered down the dark corridor to the stairs, when there came a sharp knock at the front door.

She froze! Chase hadn't said anyone would call round. She could just see the shape of someone

through the frosted glass. They were wearing black and a hat! It was he! It was the trucker! He pounded the door again and again, and then he presses his face against the glass! The hairs on the back of Flow's neck stand on end! Then he stooped down and put something on the step, and then finally to her relief, she watched him turn around and walk away. Her heart rate was still sky high as she made her way down the steps to the front door.

There she waited, her whole body shaking, but she was still sweating. About five minutes past and Flow opened the front door and looked around. He had gone, but she could clearly make out the large tracks in the wet grass where the truck had been parked.

Resting at her feet was a small box. Her hands were still shaking when she bent down to pick up the little package and took it inside. She shook it; there was something loose inside rattling.

Flow sat herself down and struggled to open the box. She pulled out a toy; it was a small tanker, just like his, sprayed rusty brown. Then putting the toy down she pulled out a small note on the inside and unfolded it.

ROAD KILL!!

THIS IS A REMINDER NOT TO TELL THE COPS!!!

Love your 'Godfather'

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Flow dropped both the note and the truck to the ground. She had to do something this couldn't go on! How long would it be? She could be hounded like this till either she lost her life, or the trucker did. It became clear to her that there were no easy options for her to take. It could easily change and he could rid himself of the danger of a witness by killing her now.

She had to tell someone, she couldn't keep this all inside. She dare not risk telling Chase, she might become afraid and kick Flow out for her own safety, or call the police herself. There was no reason for them to believe her before; there was no reason this time. She was now miles away from that cabin, and she had witnessed ages again. She would have no leg to stand on.

There was only one person she could think of. Lance, perhaps he could help her. She could just meet up with him, there would be no way the trucker could know what they were talking about. Lance had given her his number. She made up her mind, totally forgetting to pick up the note and toy.

It took a while, but in the end he did answer. When she told him she needed to talk he agreed. So she told him where she was staying and how to get there.

It was a long and stressful wait, but Lance did finally turn up and she hurried out and directed him to a small café she had known since she was a child. He talked about his sales, the fact that not many people were interested in his product and many of them hadn't even asked him into the house.

She knew it was wrong, but Flow couldn't care less about that at this time, she had something she needed to get off her chest. She kept on looking around her the whole time, making sure there was no rusty truck following them down the road.

They pulled to a stop at MEGS' CAFÉ. It was the place where all the kids from Flow's school used to hang out, but it seemed to have lost its attraction to the current grades.

Lance ordered the drinks and sat down opposite Flow and started by complimenting the drink. "This is great. Best coffee I've tasted in years." He then glanced up and both their eyes met. "So Flow, what is it you need to talk to me about?"

"I didn't tell you much about myself when you drove me here, it's just been difficult, if you know what I mean!" She felt uncomfortable. She at once had the feeling that he didn't have a clue what she was

going on about. He just smiled at her and nodded his head.

So she told him. First how she came to be on the run and about Ron, he didn't even give her a chance to reach the part about the trucker before he spoke.

"Man, I thought I was the only person who had parents like that." He shook his head. "Bummer huh' No matter what you do you can't please them. My parents boy did they put me down." Lance turned the cup around in his hands. "I could do nothing good in their eyes. When I got the chance to get out I did and never looked back, just like you. I haven't seen my parents in donkeys' years."

"Wouldn't you feel guilty if you tried to get in touch and found out they were dead?" Flow questioned, peering out the window. Then a shop's name caught her eye, 'BAILIES MOTOR BIKES'. Why had that name rung a bell in her mind, she didn't know'

"That's quite the question Flow. To be honest it's not something I've thought about. I guess it just seemed that my parents would be the sort of people who would be around for ever."

"Mine died four months after I left with Ron," Flow explained, a lump forming in her throat. She felt a tear run down her cheek and the guilt once again rose to the surface, quickly she wiped it away and tried to smile. "That's why I came back here, to make it up with them, but I found it was . . . was to late."

He gently reached across and put his hand on hers'. "I'm so sorry to hear that. What happened?"

"Drunk driver rammed into them," she answered, keeping her eyes fixed on the motorbike shop. But that's not what I came to talk to you about."

He raised his eyebrows a bit. "Okay, what's on your mind despite your parents?"

"I think I may have witnessed a murder."

"What!"

She explained to him, how on the night she had met him in the pub she had found what she thought was a derelict truck and gone inside to shelter. How she had gone to sleep and when she woke up, she saw the old driver coming towards the truck with the folded sheets, with the bodies in them!

"Are you sure they contained bodies?" he questioned.

"No. That's what the police said when I told them. They went to the cottage and said everything was fine and they were on holiday. I think the officer must have thought I was crazy. But there's no other explanation."

"What do you mean' There could have been anything in those bags, right?"

"It's not that, it's the threats. He's trailed me all the way here. He's sent me notes; he's threatened me on the phone and he ran right over me." He had a look of disbelief on his face. "But the truck went right over me, but he says he'll kill me if I go to the police again. You think I'm losing it don't you?"

"I didn't say that," Lance soothed her. "I believe you okay. What are you going to do now' I mean this guy could change his mind and decided you were a lose canon and chose to kill you anyway?"

"I've thought of that, but the police won't believe me. He must have hidden the bodies, buried them or something." She sighed, when it hit her. "Unless."

"Unless what?" he asked, sipping his drink.

"Bailies. My Uncle Bailies, I haven't seen him in years. My dad and he never used to get on very well. He was in the police force. I used to get on with him really well. He seemed to really care. He will have listened to me."

"Great, where does he live?"

"Up state," she replied. "A town called. Baker Grove."

"Darn," he said, thumping his fist on the table. "I wish I could give you a lift, but duty calls me the other way. But going to the police is the best thing to do, otherwise this guy may never get off your tail."

"When you take me back, I'll show you the latest gift from him."

Lance agreed and they both go to their feet and walked out.

Neither of them had noticed the old man sat a short distance away, he had heard every word they had

said. Straightening his hat, he climbed to his feet and left the café without paying his bill.

Back at the house, she showed Lance the toy truck and there were no further questions, only deep regret that he couldn't drive her there safely. She remembered her uncle's number, she would always call him when she was younger. He was the only one who seemed to understand about her father's bad attitude. It took her hours before the reply came.

"Deputy Bailies," came the answer.

"Hi Uncle Bailies, it's Flow."

There was a long pause and hollow breathing.

"Is that really you Flow?" He sounded relieved, but on edge. "Thank God you're safe. Where on earth have you been all this time?"

"It's a long story," she replied, biting her lip. "So you're a deputy now?"

"Sure thing. Gone up in the world since we last spoke." Again he went quiet. "Do you know about your parents?"

"I know, their dead."

"Pretty rough huh. So what can I do for you little lady?"

"I need your help." She was about to explain the whole thing, when a crackling on the line made her stop. She knew very well there were various phone extensions in this house. It could be him listening she dare not mention it. "There's nothing here for me in East Ville and I need somewhere to stay."

She hoped that he would be able to come and pick her up, there would be no way the trucker would mess with the police.

"Would you be able to make it here on your own? Only it's been very busy here, we've had our own little crime wave."

"Sure," she replied, feeling the hope fade. "See you in a while okay."

"Sure thing, see you little lady, take care of yourself." He then hung up leaving her with the dial tone ringing in her ears. How on earth was she going to make it all the way to Baker Grove on her own! It would be hard enough normally, but a nightmare with a nutty murdering trucker on her tail!

Suddenly Flow knew she was no longer alone in the house! She heard the sound of someone moving around up there! And whoever it was had heard every word she had said!

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Slowly, Flow replaced the phone, again her heart doing double time. Was the trucker in the house? If so, how on earth did he manage to get in? But this was an old house, there was likely to be all manner of secret entrances. But which was he in? She guessed he would be in hers!

What on earth could she do against him anyhow? He was quite an old man, but he would still be more than a match for her. Not forgetting the fact that he was most likely a killer! So if he'd killed once, he was very likely to kill again! She had to be very careful.

Edging towards the stairs, he peered up into the near darkness up there. Even if the lights were on, they would be very little help to her as they would alert him that she was going up. She was going to have to be very careful.

When she reached the top, she peered around at all the closed doors. She froze when she saw a figure emerge from one of the rooms; it was hard to make out whom it was. But she knew it was him it had to be! She edged deeper into the blackness, her whole body shaking. Would he have worked out she was planning to tell the deputy, her uncle what she had seen? Would he try to kill her on the way to him?

She moved forward a bit, but her foot got caught in a loose floorboard and she tumbled forwards. He rushed right towards her! Flow screamed as she tried to pick herself up and make a run for it, but it was too late, he had already grabbed her and swung her round to face him and she screamed! In the rush she slipped again and stumbled to the floor, she was now at his total mercy!

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

“Be careful Flow!” Chase yelled. “You scared me half to death!” She didn’t look at all happy.

“But it’s too early!” Flow exclaimed, still shocked. “You’re not supposed to be . . .”

“It’s gone four,” Chase answered. “Yesterday I had some things to do in town before, for you. ”

But Flow was far too shaken up! She only had one thing on her mind, “Why were you listening on my call?”

“I . . .I,” Chase stuttered. “I thought you were on the phone with Ron. I’m sorry I did it, okay, I’m just worried about him.”

Flow bit her lip and said nothing. She understood, but she was still upset about it. That had really frightened her. She raised her hand to her forehead she felt a headache coming on.

“Are you okay Flow?” the other girl asked, a look of concern on her pretty face.

“Everything’s just getting on top of me at the moment,” she replied, letting her eyes drift self-consciously to the floor. It was then she made up her mind to tell Chase her plans to move on. “Thanks for being so kind and taking me in and all, but I’ve got to move now.”

The other girl looked a little confused, “Oh right, I’m sorry to hear that, I was kind of getting used to the company. It can get very lonely here on your own so much of the time.” She looked up and gave a small smile. “Where will you go, with your parents dead and all?”

“I remembered I’ve got an uncle who lives up state from here, it was him I was chatting to on the phone. So I guess I’ll be doing some more hitching, it’s not that far, only a few hundred miles.”

Yeah! A few hundred miles of open roads and fields with little or no cars or anything, the perfect target for a crazed murdering trucker!

“Can you drive Flow?”

She nodded in reply. She had got her licence while she was with Ron and they both had jobs.

“Well in that case follow me.” She then headed downstairs, Flow followed. She had no idea where she

was being led too. "You can use my Ron's car, he hasn't used it in ages. As you know he was more of a biker man. Chase went into the lounge and rummaged through one of the drawers and pulled out a set of car keys. "He won the car in a bet with one of his friends."

Ron always did like to take risks.

Chase then led Flow out the front of the house and round the side to a small battered looking shed. Which she then proceeded to unlock it and pushed the heavy door open to reveal a Delorean sports car. "I think he's only ever driven it once, so I hope it still works." She moved to the side of the car and opened its' gull-winged door. At first it refused to start, but after about three goes it finally started. "It's a bit low on the fuel side of things, so we may have to go to a gas station after tea and get it filled up." "It's very kind of you and all, but . . ."

"Don't mention it. I'm sure you could return it once you've settled in with your uncle. Well I'll pop in and get dinner going. You coming in?"

"I will in a bit," Flow replied, giving the car a look over. She hoped that it would be able to outrun a rusty old truck, but it also made her think of Ron again, only this was the part that made her smile.

Ron had tried again and again to see Flow, but it wasn't easy at all. She knew Royce was pretty much watching her every move. But he wasn't the sort to take the thing lying down! He had got it into his head that he wanted Flow, and he was going to get what he wanted.

First he let his test grades slip and begged her to begin teaching him again, but she couldn't. It tore Flow's heart to hurt him. He was really the first and only guy to have really shown any interest in her. But she was afraid of her parents, they had friends all over town and none of them would have a second thought about dobbing into them. Their relationship had in some ways become a 'Romeo and Juliet' sort. He would ride up to her house at night and throw small stones at her window to get her attention. At first she refused to come down, but finally she gave in and climbed down the drainpipe. This went on for quite a while, but after a very close call with her father, she made up her mind it had to stop! But as she guessed, Ron still wouldn't give up. So she made up her mind to go down and see him one last time, and she would tell him so. But she wanted the night to be one she would never forget. She had never really thought much about sex, but it was on her mind that night.

She lay awake in her room, waiting for her parents to go to bed, she knew from habit that they would never come in and say good night to her, so as soon as the hall light went out, she went into her wardrobe and pulled out the nicest dress she had. It was meant for the end of year prom, which her parents made her attend. If it had been down to her, she would miss it and spend the night with a movie and popcorn.

On time, she heard the crack of the stone against the window. She made a last few adjustments to her garment and peered in the mirror. It was odd, but she even quite like what she saw.

Flow guessed she'd look like a complete fool climbing down the pipe in a dress, but it was the only way. Her parents always went to sleep with their bedroom door always wide open.

Quickly, she hurried over to the window and began to climb out as normal, but she was worked up and a little excited. About to grab hold of the pipe, her foot slipped and she fell forward, just grabbed the pipe by the skin of her teeth. Her heart flew into her mouth.

Ron rushed over, but before he could do anything, she let herself slide to the ground.

"Man, that was close Flow," he said, helping her to her feet.

"I noticed," she replied, brushing herself off.

"Boy, you've gone up in the world, that's a very posh night gown."

"This is the last time I can see you," Flow told him, "I wanted to make it special for us." The thought of what her dad said came into her mind, about him only being bothered if she had sex with what he would call the lower classes. She wanted to get him back! She wanted to have Ron's baby just to spite both

him and her mother.

The next thing she knew, he was down on his knees in front of her and said, "I want you to come away with me Flow. Get away from town full of bigots. We can be free from this, from your parents." He had this pleading gleam in his eye, like he really meant what he was saying.

His words were so appealing to her, after what had just happened. The idea of going off with on the bike, riding for miles, miles away from her parents and from the overloading of Royce. She wanted to be free of it all, so without as much of a second thought, she had agreed. They both clambered on the bike Flow didn't care how silly she looked riding around in her dress!

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Again Flow lay awake in her room, but this time it wasn't for a budding romance, it was for the sake of her life. She felt that the trucker would be out there watching her every move. Could he know that she would be moving on from her hometown? She didn't want to take any risks. She had made up her mind to sneak out under the cover of darkness; she had the keys to the car. The tucker would not expect her to make a break for it at such a late hour.

She had gathered all the photocopies about her parents' death and put them in a plastic bag and left Chase and note to tell her what he been going on and why she had to steal away in the middle of the night.

The chime of the alarm clock she had set early made her jump, signalling the fact it was now one am. She felt uneasy and very tired, three or four times she had almost drifted off to sleep. It wasn't ideal conditions, but she didn't have much choice.

Sneaking out into the hall, she crept downstairs and opened the front door. Once outside she stole away into the darkness of shadows, the trees around her whispered in the soft night breeze. The darkness around her was thick, but she dared not use the torch till she had reached the shed. He could be out there somewhere watching the house. Perhaps his plan was to keep her prisoner in one town, where he could know every move she made!

She was about to make a break for the shed, when someone grabbed her foot and she sailed forward, crashing to the ground. She cried out in pain and closed her eyes! The torch fell from her hand, hitting the soily ground!

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The pain shot up her leg. She reached out and held it for a moment and peered back at what had grabbed her. Nothing, she had caught her foot on a twisted old tree route. She freed her foot and struggled to her feet, but her ankle still smarted. She stumbled along and picked the torch and hurried as fast as she could to the shed.

Once inside, she turned on the torch and fumbled in her pocket for the car keys. It was a struggle to get it unlocked. Finally she managed to get the gull-wing door open and squeezed herself inside, it was quite a tight fit; she had never sat in a car so small in her life.

Well, here goes nothing! She turned the key and after a moments pause the engine came to life. Then she turned on the lights and sped out into the night. There was just a few hundred miles of open road between her and her hope of safety with her uncle.

As the car sped by on up the road, a pair of headlights turned on and the trucks engine came to life. The driver rubbed his beard for a moment, giving the little car a chance to get a little way ahead of him; then he turned the truck out onto the road and started to follow Flow!

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Dawn soon broke as Flow drove along a tree-lined road. She had a map lying open on the seat beside her. She had already worked out her route and the amount she planned to travel each day and where she planned to stop. There were gladly a few small towns and gas stations along the way. Without that, the trip would be pretty much impossible.

She kept yawning and she felt the need to pull over to the side of the road and have a rest. She guessed it wouldn't hurt, there had been no sign of the truck behind her, she thought she must have made a clean break from him. The only problem now was when told her uncle what she had seen, she didn't know who the trucker was, there for could not ID him. Well that was down to the police to work out, she would have done her stint as the helpful citizen.

In the end she had to give into her sleepiness, so she pulled the car over to the grass verge at the side of the road. Flow then layback in her seat and undid her seat belt. Closing her eyes, she rolled her head from side to side for a while trying to get comfortable. It wasn't long before she had drifted away into her world of silent dreams, with hope of finally being able to make out of this whole nightmare alive!

The trucker gripped onto his cowboy hat to prevent it from being carried away in the wind. He had the small sports car in his sights; it was a sitting duck for him. She was in there, resting most likely after leaving so early in the morning trying to elude him, but it hadn't worked, he was far to clever for that slip of a girl. There was no way she could get away from him now. These thoughts brought a smile to his face.

Reaching into the folds of his heavy black coat, he pulled out a knife from one of the many inside pockets. He pace quickened, he didn't want to miss this chance to finish the job so she couldn't tell the police about what she had seen!

Standing at the side of the car, he peered in at the sleeping girl. She looked so peaceful and harmless, but looks were deceiving she could mess up the whole thing before his very eyes.

Stirring, Flow began to wake. She yawned and opened her eyes, at first everything was fuzzy, but the inside of the car soon came into a dull focus, it was almost dark. But when she looked up, she screamed when she saw the trucker peering in at her! She sat bolt upright and in panic she got the engine going

and headed the car out onto the road! Her heart was pounding now she needed to get away! She floored the pedal and the car sped up!

With her heart in her mouth, she watched in horror as the rusty tanker poured out onto the road just a short distance behind her! Its' driver tooted the horn wildly as it slowly gained on her! There was no escape!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

With her foot down, Flow swung the car from one side of the road to the other, as the truck gained ground on her. It seemed like the driver had in some way beefed up the trucks speed. No matter how hard she tried she could not seem to be able to put enough distance between her car and it.

The trucker kept wildly tooting his horn at her as though she was somehow in his way, but she knew it was only an act to frighten her! Oh how longed for there to be another car on the road, she wished someone would come racing down and see what he was doing and try to help! Not that there was much anyone could do against the trucker, unless a bigger one came along!

The road stretched out in front of her for miles and there was no sign of anything coming for them, she was totally alone out here with him hot on her tail! There seemed to be no way she could shake him. She could feeling her heart rate rising as she tried to force the car to do what she wanted, but it didn't seem to want to co-operate with her in her panicked state!

Again and again he blew his horn at her! Flow peered into her mirror and saw the huge grill of the truck almost on her! Then there was a crash as the huge lorry went right into the back of her! Flo screamed out as the car rocked and the truck backed off, ready for its' next strike! She couldn't breathe let alone think, as it smashed her from behind again.

What on earth was she going to do' As she thought, her mind wondered and the car slid to one side of the road! The truck ploughed into her again and the car reared sideways and right off the road and came to a stop! Flo was flung forward, but she was saved by her seatbelt! The truck carried on its' way up the empty motorway like nothing had even happened.

For a long time, Flo sat there in her seat totally stunned by what had just taken place. Her heart pounded like a drum and her mouth tasted like a dreadful woolly carpet. There were no thoughts running through her mind as she wiped a drop of blood from her lip.

This whole thing shouldn't be happening to her! If only she had never run away, she never would have witnessed those body bags! She would have been used to the fact that her parents were dead, and she

would have been around to grieve with the rest of the family. Instead she was now in a mess, with some nutcase, determined to make sure she never let the cat out of the bag!

But she had come this far; she wasn't about to be stopped now! Because in the end she knew he would have to come after her to kill her sooner or later. At least her uncle could offer her some protection! Forcing the door open she went round the car assess the damage. The backlights were smashed! If she got pulled over by the police she could be in real trouble and it wasn't even her own car. What a mess she was in! She had to press on though, for the sake of her own sanity!

Before driving on, Flo studied the map. The next town was still a few miles off, a small place called Winterfield. She had been there once with her parents, it was a boring place with very little to do, but like her own town there was a large spooky house that had all kinds of spooky goings on!

From this point on, she couldn't afford rest; she would have to keep her eyes peeled the whole time. There was no telling when he would be back on her tail again. She kept on expecting to see the tanker lying in wait for her, just in case she hadn't given up! Never! It was personal now.

The hours drifted past as the miles rolled by and Flo still felt tired and struggled to keep her eyes on the road! She kept on shaking herself, forcing herself to stay awake! She could sleep all she wanted once she had reached safety, and that was at least a day or so away of solid driving!

It was now really dark. Flo took a long sigh when she finally crossed the 'ALL WELCOME TO WINTERFIELD' sign, and came into view of a Gas Station with lights burning on. It was the perfect place to stop and get something to eat and drink.

She left the car with the keys still inside and crossed the rain covered forecourt and pushed her way into the shop. Inside there was a boy behind the counter and a girl with glasses chatting to him, from where she was seated on the counter.

Browsing the shelves, Flo picked up things that took her fancy as she thought about the damage on her car. Would they be able to fix it here for her? What if it took a while? She had no time to mess around!

"Hi," both of them greeted her. The guy had 'Jeff' on his polo shirt. "Nice to have a dry evening," he stated, smiling at her. "You know I never thought it was going to stop raining."

Flo tried to smile as he listened to them chat, but she wasn't in the mood! She needed to get her car fuelled up and repaired! Not standing around chatting! She just had to wait.

"You know it rains loads in Winterfield," stated Barbara. "'Cause this is the place the horror takes place." She smiled at Flo and nodded towards her and coughed.

"Sorry," Jeff said. "Let me run these through for you. So you're on some late night shopping, huh? It's a good job you stopped by when you did, we're due to close."

"I'm sorry to bother you," Flo said, feeling the dread rise within her. There had to be someone who could help her with her car. "But I had a bit of an accident on the way here and my car got damaged. I was just wondering if . . ."

"He'll take a look at it, won't you Jeff," his girlfriend teased him. "After all, you've got plenty of time to mess around with that old banger of yours."

"She is no banger, Barbed-wire," he joked back.

"Don't you dare, only my dad calls me that," she replied giving him a punch on the arm. "No lets go and take a look at her car, okay."

"Sure thing Barbie," he joked, coming out from behind the counter. "But I'm not in my mechanic's uniform now."

"Thank goodness," Barbara answered, taking the lead as the small group made their way towards the door. "Where did you park your car?"

"It's just out there," Flo told her as they stepped outside. She pushed ahead onto the courtyard and peered at the spot where the car was! It was, but it wasn't there anymore! It had gone!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The pale lights of the garage forecourt illuminated the place where the Delorean had been! Flo raised her hand to her mouth, but she didn't scream! He had taken it! He had again tried to stop her from reaching her destination! She put her hands in her pockets, but felt no keys! She had left them in the car with the doors unlocked! How stupid!

"Are you okay? Is everything alright?" Barbara asked, but her question felt on deaf ears.

"He stole it," Flo said. "He stole it!" She found herself shouting into the cool night air.

"Who stole it?" Jeff asked, rushing up beside Flo. "Hadn't we better call the police or something?" He peered across to the road beyond them and he said, "Is that it?" He then pointed ahead of him.

Flo followed the line of his finger and she felt a surge of relief! There stood the car, parked at a slight angle across the road.

"Yes, that's it!" She then began running towards it and the others followed shortly after asked questions that Flo couldn't hear. Suddenly in a sharp gust of wind she stopped! She could here the distant roar of an engine coming down the road! It was a truck! No! It was his truck!

All eyes turned at the bright lights of the small tanker appeared, gaining speed! In total horror, Flo realised that he was going to ram her car off the road! She quickened her pace to a run!

"Wait!" yelled Jeff! "He's not going to stop!"

She only had the car in her sights and the vision of her getting in the car just in time and avoiding him! The car got closer and closer as she ran headlong for it. She was almost upon it and so was the truck! Suddenly Jeff leapt on top of her knocking her to the ground and winding her as the huge truck crashed into the car! There was a loud crash as the truck dragged the car along the road in a ball of screeching sparks! It carried on for a long time as Flo lay there on the ground, her heart pounding!

Finally the wrecked car flopped to one side and the truck poured on more speed and was soon out of the panting Flo's view!

"Was he freakin' crazy or something!" exclaimed Barbara rushing to help Jeff and Flo. Jeff was fine so she asked Flo, but she said nothing. She just stared at the wreck of the car! There was no way she could get to her uncles now!

With Barbara's help, she finally got to her feet. She wanted to cry again, but she held it in. She wasn't going to be beaten by her 'Godfather'.

"We've gotta go to the police!" Jeff exclaimed. "That guy must have been insane or something! That car was a classic!"

“Take me to the police station,” Flo said. She knew it was the only way to shake these kind people off! The station was right at the other end of town, they could drop her off there and she would have to carry on to her uncles on foot. Again!

“It would be quicker to call,” he replied, but she insisted. So Jeff and Barbara led her round the side of the garage where they climbed into an old metallic-blue Cadillac ‘59’ that looked as though it had seen better days! Many of them at that!

It took Jeff a little while to get the engine going, but they were soon out on the road driving through Winterfield.

“So do you know who the guy in the truck was?” Barbara asked, looking around from the passenger seat. “Not really,” Flo admitted. “He’s been trailing me for miles.”

“What did you do, cut him up or something? It’s like that film *Duel* when that guys being chased by that mad tanker driver, the difference is, his truck was a lot bigger than the one that trashed your car.” They chatted on and Flo learned that they both had a very close run in with their own crazy killer a few years back when Barbara and her family had moved in from San Francisco. They also asked her more questions about her run-in’s she had had with her nut case, but she gave them very little detail and didn’t volunteer the information about the murder. In the end they both accepted the fact that he had just taken a dislike to her. After all, what good reason did people need for doing crazy things in this day and age? It took them about half an hour to reach the police station. Flo insisted that she would go and tell the police herself and hurried out of the car. She didn’t like making them wait like this, but she had no choice!

Once she was out of their sight, she slipped away and left town. She was now backing out on the long road again and it looked like it was about to start raining again! It was time to hitch hike.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Flo managed to hitch a lift with a guy in a brightly coloured car; he looked like something from the sixties. But he could only take her as far as his girlfriends who were waiting for him to pick the up. He chatted a lot but said little and insisted on offering her weed.

Flo had tried it and she didn’t like it, Ron smoked the stuff the whole time they were away together. She had also tried other stuff to, that’s how she found herself in rehab not long after he had left her. She’d much rather keep her nose clean, in more ways than one.

Despite the heavy rain that now assaulted the car, his two girls were waiting at a Greyhound bus stop wearing tiny skirts that weren’t much bigger than the bold belts the wore and very skimp tops that looked

like a pieces of torn rag.

Flo was quick to make an exit as the car roared away with music pounding inside. She shivered in the cold rain. She had now idea how many more miles she had to travel as her map had been destroyed with Ron's car. So she began to trudge along, hoping that the next town would be her stop. The idea of getting the bus crossed her mind, but she didn't have enough money. She tried to stop a few more cars but they just carried on driving and ignored her totally. Part of wished she could look sexier, that way guys would be more likely to pick her up, like Drew Barrymore in MAD LOVE. She once again thought about her parents. She felt guilty about being unable to grief for them properly. She had just been so pre-occupied by everything else going on around her.

She walked all night in the rain and she felt so cold and she couldn't stop sneezing and when she coughed it went deep into her chest and caused so much pain, a few times she even had blood come up into her dry mouth.

Again, more cars shot right by her, but the next car that drove by wasn't stopping and she knew why, it was Lance. He was clearly moving on to his next town for sales.

Leaning across he opened the door and said, "Hi there Florence, I never expected to see you again. I take it you haven't been to your uncles"

She shook her head, slumping into the seat beside him and slammed the door. "The trucker destroyed my car."

"Wow, that guy must have done something really bad," he stated, pulling the car back onto the road.

"Maybe he's killed loads of people"

Flo shrugged! She just wanted him out of her life for good, so she could start getting on with living it!

With Lance there, she felt safe so she relaxed in her seat. Outside the view had changed from trees into masses and messes of corn. She began drifting off to sleep, but she was quickly snapped out of it!

"What the heck is that guy doing!" Lance exclaimed wildly.

Flo screamed when she peered round to see the rusty truck almost up their tail pipe. "It's him!" she yelped as the truck repeatedly rammed the back of Lance's car!

He began tooting his horn wildly as he rammed the back of the car! Lance put his foot down and panic, but the truck kept on coming! Flo kept on screaming wildly, she couldn't take this anymore! He was quite prepared to at her even when she was with someone else!

"Hold on Flo!" Lance yelled, "I've got an idea." Again he got more speed from the car and the gap began to grow. Flo watched as the massive front grill fell away. He then turned the car sharply to the right and it skidded. Then with a roar of the engine he turned the car off into a cornfield that lined the side of the road. The huge corn towered over the top of the car, which pulled to a stop.

The truck also turned into the corn and came to a dead stop and the door opened and the old man stepped out. He peered over the mass of corn, he could see the train of flattened corn that led to the car, so he floored it, but the car was abandoned!

Lance had hold of Flo's hand as they raced through the corn. She didn't protest, her heart pounding! This was truly life or death; she had to trust Lance to get them both out of there in one piece! Going back to the car was clearly not an option!

"Okay, stop," he panted. "I'm going to need to take a jump up and see where the truck is okay" She said nothing, just panted to get her breath back. So he leapt up a little way and took her hand again. "Come on. There's only one chance for us."

They hurried through the endless corn! Somewhere out there the crazed trucker was hunting for them! Like a game of deadly hide and seek! She had no idea what Lance had in mind, but she had a feeling of what it might be.

Suddenly something grabbed Flo's foot! She screamed and fell to the ground! The trucker had her foot in a grip like iron and was trying to drag her into the corn!

"Lance!" she cried, kicking her attacker.

He quickly ran back to her, but she had managed to kick him off, so he helped to her feet and they began to run again till they reached the truck.

"Quick, get in!" he ordered her, as the trucker made haste towards them she could just make out appearing through the clearing. Flo quickly slammed the door and Lance struggled to get the truck going.

The trucker began to climb up and Flo saw his wrinkled face for a moment before the engine started and Lance put it into reverse sending him to down to the soft bed of corn.

Back! Back the truck rolled.

"You know how to drive one of these thing" Flo asked, peered out the window.

"My grandpa was a trucker!" he said, as he straightened the lorry up. "He gave me more attention than my dad ever did." There was bitterness in his voice as he headed the truck down the road away from the crazy trucker.

Flo finally felt herself relax; it was over. He had no way of stopping her reaching her uncle now.

"Can you take me to my uncle's" she asked him, feeling hopeful. She would have somewhere to stay and get the whole thing finally off her chest!

"Sure," he replied a smile creeping across his face. "Boy was that close or what" She agreed wholeheartedly!

CHAPTER THIRTY

A little way down the road, Flo spotted Lance's car coming from behind them. She guessed that Lance had already noticed because he said, "Doesn't this guy ever give up! I'll sort this thing out once and for all!"

To her total shock he began to slow the truck down, allowing the car to come beside them. Finally he pulled over and climbed out the truck. Flo stayed right where she was, afraid to breathe let alone move. She watched Lance vanish from her line of sight; she hoped he would be okay. Time ticked coldly by and he didn't come back, she began to worry. Peering out through her window told her nothing, in the end she made up her mind to go and look for him.

Opening the door she jumped down from the truck and looked around. She could only see Lance's car parked a little way behind, but there was no sign of him or the trucker. Her heart was pounding, almost out of control in its' rhythm.

"Lance!" she called out, her voice echoing across the empty fields that surrounded her. Where could he be? She didn't know. Where was the trucker? She needed to get help or something, but how? She couldn't drive the truck there was only one option! Take the car. Looking around one last time, she swallowed a lump in her throat. What had happened to Lance? Was he dead?

Quickening her pace she got in the car, the keys had been left in the ignition! She breathed a long sigh of relief before gunning the engine and she pulled out from behind the battered for of the truck and headed past. Her palms were sweating as she tightly held the wheel in her hands. She wasn't safe and she knew it, she wouldn't be safe until she reached her uncle. Flo expected to soon see the tanker gliding up behind her ready for the next round, but it didn't seem to happen. Part of her wished so much that it would, because not knowing was the worst part of the whole thing!

It was then that she saw Lance he was laying at the side of the road! Slamming on the breaks the car slid to a halt and she climbed out and hurried over to him. He looked lifeless; she didn't know whether he was dead! Stooping over him she was about turn him over when some struck her between the shoulder blades and she fell on the Lance. The trucker towered over her, his coat still blowing in the breeze. He struck her again and everything went black.

The world around her faded into dark grey focus, her head thumped like a never-ending dance track. It hurt opening her eyes like someone was stabbing a knife through her brain. Squinting, she looked around. She was in a she or a barn of some kind, in a state of dereliction. Her hands were tied to on the supporting poles. She tried to pull away but wound up hurting her wrists.

Alone she sat there, with no sign of the trucker or had he just left her there to starve to death with no danger of her ever going to the police about what she'd seen. She thought about dieing alone with so much left undone in her life, the things she regretted.

Time went by and the barn grew dark as the day fled from her. Again and again she pulled at the ropes but it was no use, they were far too well tied for her to get undone. She sat quietly listening to the silence of the night and the crickets and all the nightlife began to sing.

That wasn't the only thing she heard! There was also a shuffling sound! Was someone coming? She sat up trying to get her ears to home in on the sound. Then the door began creaking open and the dark coat

figure stepped in.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

In came the trucker, he flicked on his torch and shone it right into Flo's eyes. It was a tense moment, like the first time prey and predator had come face to face. Not that she could clearly see what he looked like, only dark shadowy features that never seemed to move. He said nothing to her he just stared down at her. She wished he would just get on with what he had planned and get it over with. But there was something she needed to know.

"W . . .Who d . . .did you kill" she asked and cleared her throat.

He said nothing, just pulled out a knife. He loomed large over her and moved the weapon down towards her. To her total surprise he didn't start slicing her, instead he started at the rope. That meant he intended moving, it could be better or worse for her depending on what he did next.

"Why don't you answer me" she demanded. "Tell me who you killed."

Grabbing her arm he forced her to stand up then he drew the knife up towards her neck, she even felt the cold of the blade. It was it, Flo closed her eyes and waited for the fatal blow, but it didn't come. Instead there was a sound of a struggle! She flung her eyes up but the room had gone dark again. Something grabbed her and she screamed, and a body nearly fell on top of her! She stumbled backwards over some hay when the torch came back on. She almost cried to relief, it was Lance.

"Come Flo we've got to go!" he yelled, pointing the torch at the body of the trucker on the ground. "He won't be out for long!"

"Who is he" she asked, wanting to see his face. Ignoring Lance's calls she knelt over the body and was about to remove his hat when his hand shot out and grabbed at her! She fell backwards in flight as Lance grabbed her hand!

They ran out of the barn towards the truck that lay parked round the back. Flo turned round to see the figure coming out after them! She screamed again!

"Get in!" yelled Lance as he got the engine going. She didn't have a second thought.

The trucker had other ideas; he strode right out in front of them as it built up speed and Lance showed no sign of swerving! In fact he was driving right at them! Flo was far too breathless to breathe let alone move! The trucker on the other hand finally took the hint and dived out the way!

Flo remained silent despite that fact she wasn't happy about the way Lance had handled that. It seemed at best to her to be odd, but she dared not risk getting on the wrong side of him! She just kept her eyes fixed on the road ahead of them. She had no idea where they were, she hoped that Lance did or she'd never make it to her destination!

After a long time dreaming, she woke up to a bright warm day with the sun shining through the window. Lance seemed to have been awake and driving the whole time. Surely she must be some where near her uncles now!

“Morning,” he said. “Looks like we’ve out run the shadows.” Turning to her he smiled. “You slept well.”

“Yeah.” Flo thought for a moment, reflecting on what had happened at the barn and something frightened her a bit. She remembered how Lance had come so close to running the trucker down.

“Would you have killed him?”

“Who?” he asked

“The trucker, you almost ran him over last night.”

I thought you would have been please after all that rotten stuff he did to you. Besides you said the guy was a killer right?”

“Wouldn’t tell me who he killed. He said nothing to me at all.”

“He’s most likely some psycho would didn’t even know who his victims were, he just doesn’t care.”

The way he was talking stunned her, what he did next almost gave her a heart attack! He suddenly swerved the truck down a quiet country road! It most certainly didn’t take her to her uncles! She became afraid!

“Where are we going Lance?”

“We’re taking a short cut, okay.” He sounded rather a little on edge. She suggested that he try to ring the police on his mobile, but he snapped at her! “What is it with you! Don’t you trust me or something!”

Suddenly to her total dismay he slammed on the brakes and they were thrown forward with a load of other stuff that had been piled up in the space behind the seats.

Flo picked up something that lay near the large gear stick, it was fluffy and white! It was a fake beard!

But why would the old trucker need a false beard when he had a real one?

Suddenly she had a feeling of dread as she looked up from the fake beard to Lance’s eye and she suddenly knew he was the trucker!

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Flo was about to scream, but stopped when he pulled out a knife so no sound came from her mouth! It had been him all along! The night she had met him in the bar, he was on his way to kill whomever he was going to kill!

“This is the moment I have been waiting for, for a long time.” He smiled at her. “We’re two of a kind Flo, both with parents we couldn’t be good enough for! I knew after I spoke to you that we’d make good partners.”

"You killed your parents, didn't you? It was their cottage I spent the night in. You were the son who was supposed to be on holiday! But why the disguise?"

"I'm known in those parts," he explained. "You were lucky Flo, you had your parents killed for you, but that wasn't the case for me. Now I've got something to show you."

"What are you going to do to me?" Flo asked.

"Just do as I tell you and everything will be fine and don't try anything either!" He climbed out first, but she didn't want to find out what he had in store. Quickly she forced her door open and jumped out! On hitting the floor, she knocked the breath out of her, but she started to run, even though it really hurt.

"STOP!" Lance yelled from behind her, but she didn't! She carried on going! Suddenly there was a crack of gunfire and Flo went down!

She lay low, her whole body shaking! She had never ever been shot at before and her heart was thudding in her chest! Quickly she climbed to her feet and was about to run when she felt the cold metal of a gun at the side of her head.

"I told you not to try anything Flo," Lance said coldly. "Now come back with me, you haven't seen what I have to show you!"

I don't want to see it either you crazy man!

But she did as she was told, knowing that this guy was a killer! She had no choice but to follow him to the back of the truck.

"Come this way." He led her right to the back of the tanker.

Is he going to kill me? She had no idea what he had in mind. But Lance knew very well what he was doing. He strode over to one side of the tanker and undid what looked like a bolt and he pushed the back of the drum open.

"Pretty neat, huh?" he laughed. "A bit like something out of James Bond."

Flo screamed when she saw what was lying inside the tankers drum!

She stared in utter disbelief at the two figures in the back of the truck! But they weren't dead the man had his ears covered, while the woman had her head covered over with a bag.

"Have ever seen Meet the parents?" he asked. "Well this is that movie but with a very different twist." He gave a crazy laugh. Both his father had frightened look on his face and asking questions. Flo guessed that he had to be blind. "You didn't witness a murder Flo. I slipped sleeping pills into their drinks and carried them outside when I caught you in my truck."

Flo was still speechless! Her mouth dropped open in total shock. He had kidnapped his own parents to get them back for the way they had treated him while he was growing up.

"It was a perfect plan. You being a witness are a minor problem but it's all sorted now, but my problem is I don't know what to do with them now I've got them. I could kill them, or I could humiliate them by making them beg for mercy. Flo you can help me choose." He stepped closer to his mother. "Let me tell you a story Flo. Like the one I told you before but in much more detail, with witnesses to defend their actions before we pass our final judgement!"

"Okay, let's introduce our first guest for today." Whipping off the bag, he stood back away from her, the gun at the ready.

She peered around, disorientated by the whole thing and said, "What's going on Lance?" she questioned. "Where are we, what are you doing, I don't understand."

"That's just your problem mother," Lance stated coldly. "You never understood. You never wanted to understand! I tried and tried to talk to you about dad, but you just didn't want to know. You just said that he wanted what was best for me in the end! You didn't see that I was trying my darned hardest to improve me work at school, even the teachers said so on my reports, but no, it was never good enough though was it?"

"We . . . We just wanted to do the best by you," his mother tried to explain, noticing the gun in her son's

hand. She looked as white as a sheet, she clearly knew what this was about and she looked so very frightened. "I . . . I admit that he could be harsh sometimes, but not one moment did he intend harm towards you."

"But you never said anything, though did you mother! You never questioned him though did you! You just let him treat me like dirt! You were just weak! But this is death do us part, so if and when he goes you go as well."

"You wouldn't!" she begged, her eyes pleading too Flo to do something.

Flo couldn't hear own mind was blank she herself was filled the most dreadful fear! The fear that she might witness a dreadful shooting at any moment and the last thing she wanted to do was get herself shot! Her whole body was frozen like stunned prey.

"Now I think it's about time we bring in the star of the show, my father." He went across and removed the coverings from his father's ears and tossed them to the ground.

"Beth," he said.

"I'm here," his wife replied.

"What's going on, where are we?"

"You're in the country father, don't tell me you can't hear the birds singing old man, or are you going as deaf as you are blind!"

"Who are you?" his father asked. "What are you doing with us?"

"I should have known, you don't even recognise my voice, it shows how much worth I have in your eyes, doesn't it. You see Flo, this is what I've had to put up with all my life!" he yelled. "I'm your one and only son father!"

"Lance," he said. "Where are you, what's going on! Where's the cottage?"

"Right where we left it dad," his son replied. "This is my father Flo. The great man I was never good enough for. Do you know who's supposed to be the most important person in a boy's life! That's right; you guessed it's dad! Only he wasn't there for me, he just told me what to do and that was it! Other than that he wanted nothing to do with me!"

Flo felt her body tense as Lance pointed the gun at his father, who sat there listening to his son, with no idea that he even had a gun or intended to kill him at any moment. His mother had fainted with the total horror, she was the only one to come in-between Lance and his father, she had to deal with her fear, otherwise something very nasty could take place!

"Don't!" she yelled. Her sudden outburst stopped him and he held his gun in there air! "Don't do it Lance." His father asked him questions about Flo's voice, but he just told him to shut up!

"Why! You've heard the evidence; I've been waiting for this moment for years! Then I'll be able to get on with me life!" He lowered the gun again at his father's head.

Flo's voice caught in her throat as tears rolled down her cheeks! She had to fight her body, she would have to speak loud and clear.

"You won't!" she yelled. "I spent a long time after I left with Ron, hating my parents! Oh, I so much wanted to make them pay for the nasty way they had treated me. I wanted to mess up the perfect reputation they had branded me with and I did everything under the sun to do that!"

"Good on you!" Lance stated, turning to face her. "A bit shocking though, for a good little girl you are!"

"It destroyed my life Lance! I got so bitter about it! Even after having sex, booze up's and God knows what else the hurt didn't go away! The hate was eating away at me soul and consuming me till there was almost nothing left!"

"You never dealt with them like I am, you just let that eat away at you!" he retorted. "But this is going to be end of my pain!"

"You think it's going to be that easy!" she said. "If you do this, your pain and hate won't go away! You'll

still hate them! So please, don't do this!" She felt a few raindrops beginning to fall on her forehead.

"What if things change Lance! It'll be a lot harder to find peace with yourself afterward!"

"I can live with it!"

"I'm . . . I'm sorry son," his father suddenly said. Lance froze for a moment, his finger still firmly on the trigger. "What did you say old man!" It was then that he pointed the gun right at his father's head.

"He said sorry Lance!" she yelled.

"Oh come on Flo, anyone can say they're sorry with a gun pointed at the at their heads!"

"He didn't even know! He's blind and you never told him!"

He was silent for a moment thinking when his father began to speak again. "I'm sorry." His voice was hoarse and he was clearly crying. "I never meant to hurt you so much son. I only wanted you to do the best you could. That is what your grandfather did to me."

"No!" Lance yelled. "You're lying!"

"He isn't Lance!" Flo cried out. "He knows what you've been going through! If you kill him now you'll destroy any hope of getting the hurt and pain that is inside you out!" The tears really began to flow out of control. "I lost my chance to make things right with my family, but you still have a chance!"

"No!" He quickly swung the gun around and dashed right at Flo. She screamed as the bullet hit her as she fell!

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

When Flo came to, she felt a sharp pain in her arm. She panicked when she saw Lance over her, but he didn't have the gun. There were tears in his eyes and he made the most awful noises as he tried to come to terms with the torture he had put himself through all those years since he was a boy. Her heart went out to him, but she was afraid to move, just in case he still had the intention for reaching the gun that laid not that far away from him.

It was a long time before he looked up, tears still streamed down his face as his eyes locked with hers. What could she do? She struggled to her feet and peered down her arm where the bullet had just grazed her, but the wound looked much worse than it felt.

"I thought I could do it," he said suddenly. "I thought I could kill someone! I almost killed you Flo! I'm sorry."

They both cried together in complete silence as the rain came down more heavily. Flo felt herself relaxing! The whole thing was over. She struggled to her feet and hurried up into the truck, causing her arm to hurt she undid the ropes that tied Lance's parents. He did nothing to stop her; he was curled up like a little child, crying.

The final part of Flo's journey to her uncles seemed to take an age. She had taken the bus the rest of the way, thanks to Lance who paid her fair. She hadn't called the police; it seemed all that family now needed time to heal itself. There had been an awful of pain for them to work through.

She had a long cry for her parents on the trip back, and there were still tears streaming from her eyes when she climbed off the bus and made the short walk to her uncles house, where she was given a warm welcome, a change of clothes and a very nice homemade meal. Her uncle rubbed her shoulder gently and smiled, "Are you okay kid, I'm sorry you had to find out about your parents death like that." He smiled. "You sure must have had quite a journey to get here." She nodded! "Yes, it was," she agreed and went up to her new room for a good night's sleep.

TRUCKER by M.J. Wood