



Book 1:

Dark Town:

Rancid

Prologue:

The Return

The night was colder than usual and a lot harder to see within the pitch black woods. If you were to run, all you would feel would be the air piercing through your clothes and skin. The only light that could be seen for miles was Butch's gas and stationary. The gas station was far from the town of Ellengulf. The owner of the station, Butch Bennett, was an old rugged looking man. And even though he seemed mean, he had a kind heart. He used to be cold, probably because he's a veteran, but after the death of his son, something in him changed. Butch had to fight for everything in his life. Not only because of his upbringing, but the color of his skin. It may have been a few years since the loss. But his cold heart, he believed, was the cause of his son's demise. He wanted his son to be tough and resilient so he could be ready for the world. Sadly, death took him too soon. And it haunted Butch that he wasn't a better father, a better protector.

It was getting late. Butch stopped with his daily regretful thoughts for a moment to check his watch. It was almost time to close up for the night. I'll wait ten more minutes, Butch thought.

Just then three teenagers, two boys and a girl, came in with hoods on. The two boys went into the back of the store where the beverages were and the girl walked up to the old man.

"Can I help you?" asked the old man.

The girl pulls out a gun and points it to the old man's head.

"Yes, you can empty the cash register, please." the girl smiled with a grin.

The look in her eyes showed no remorse. Like she would kill the old man with no shame, no guilt. Afraid, slightly, the old man hurried up and pulled out all the money he had and put it in a plastic bag.

"Thank you." said the girl in a bubbly voice. They all ran out of the store and headed for their car.

Once they got in their car, they discover the old man outside, aiming a shotgun at their car. Pow went the shotgun and the discharge hit their right tail light. They scurried out of there and started calling the old man racial slurs.

The old man gasped for air as he waited for his adrenaline to calm down. Just then something fowl filled his nostrils. The smell of death. He looked around and was frightened by what he heard. The sound of his son calling out to him.

Butch hurried into the store before it was too late and locked the door. The power went out. All he could hear was his son crying out to him like a howl in the night.

“Dad?” said the voice, “Dad, it’s me, Richard. Open the door, please.”

The old man cocked his shotgun and aimed it at the door. “You are not my son.” The old man’s shotgun vibrated in his hands. He knew what was outside his store. And it most definitely was not his son. All he could see was a fog. A bluish gray fog that smelled rancid. There was a maniacal laugh coming from the voice of the so called son.

“You’ll never escape me.” Said the voice. “One of these days, you’ll see me when you least expect it.” It laughed again and it’s voice distorted into a higher pitch tone. Whatever it was, it was going away. Butch could tell by how far away it’s laughter was going.

Butch looked outside to see the blue fog going in the same direction the teenage thieves were going.

“Now I won’t be the only one death took from.” the old man walked back to the store holding his side.

In the getaway car, Jacob Harris, was driving recklessly while Robert Brennan made out with Jessica Williams, the girl with a grin that held the gun. Butch Bennett would never forget that sweet smile with a sinister monster making it. It was like looking at a demon that escaped hell. But that wasn’t the only thing that escaped hell. Little did they know they were being followed by death himself.

“Did you see the look on that old fucker’s face?” Jessica cackled.

“He looked like a deer in headlights.” Robert laughed as he took a swig out of his alcohol bottle.

“Where to now?” asked Jacob.

“To black lake. We can lay low there.” said Jessica.

When they got there, they park near the water. Jacob strips naked and headed into the water and the other two followed suit. They were all in the water having a good time and a few hundred dollars richer after they robbed the gas station. They were in the water for a few seconds when they started to smell something horrid all around them. Then they saw the blue fog coming from the other side of the lake.

“Hey, look at that.” said Robert. “is that fog?”

“That’s not fog.” Jessica’s voice had a sense of urgency. “Get out of the water. NOW!”

Jessica quickly swam for shore and the other two did the same. When they got out, Jessica ran to the car. The other two were worried about her.

“Come on, let’s go!” Jessica screamed. “Hurry up!!”

“What the hell is wrong with your girlfriend, dude?” asked Jacob.

“I don’t know- get the keys, I’ll talk to her.”

Before Robert could get to the car, they were surrounded by the thick, dark, blue fog. They hear whispers all around them and that dead rancid smell. Jessica saw Robert and Jacob gag and cough.

“Oh, god.” Jacob coughed. “What the fuck is that?”

“Guys, hurry up, please!” Jessica shrieked. She knew what was going on but never told anyone about it. All she wanted to do was to live her life without ever seeing the thick blue fog ever again. Sadly, she knew what was going to happen next. Death was going to take them. Jessica realizes they weren’t going to leave alive, so she locked the doors and raised the windows without Robert and Jacob.

“Jacob hurry up!” Robert too felt the urgency Jessica had.

Jacob picked up his clothes and keys and when he turned around, standing before him, was a child. But this child had the smell of death all around him. The fog hid the child’s face. Not only that. The clothes the child wore were worn out and ripped and stained with dead blood. The child giggled and had blood dripping from their wrists.

"I'm missing something." said the child. "Can you help me find it?"

"Wha- what is it?" asked Jacob.

The child walked forward out of the fog to reveal its face, but only to show it's head missing. Jacob screamed at the top of his lungs.

"Never mind.." said the headless child, "I found it."

It pointed at Jacob. Jacob felt something gently rested on his left shoulder. He quickly turned to his left to meet eye to eye with the head of the child. It's eyes were white like milk and the meat of the face falling off because of so much decay. It opened it's mouth and it's tongue turned into a long needle that pierced Jacob's head so fast, pink mist spewed out the back of Jacob's head. Jacob shook where he stood and fell to the floor. Robert saw the car and ran towards it. He tried to open the door but they were locked from the inside.

"Jessica open the door!" Robert screamed so hard, his voice was breaking. Jessica didn't respond or moved from the curled up position she was in, in the back seat.

"Jessica, baby, please. PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR!"

There was a loud thud and Robert stopped talking. Jessica couldn't tell what it was because she had her eyes pressed on her knees. She moved her head and looked at the door to find Robert missing. A hand abruptly placed itself on the window.

"Jessica." it was Robert. "It's gone. You can open the door now."

Jessica cried and had her eyes focused on the hand. It wasn't Robert's.

"Jessica. Please... You know you can't escape me a second time."

"Leave me alone!" Jessica cried.

"But, Jessica." the voice changed from Robert's voice to a child's voice. "What about Robert? He's on the other side of the car."

Jessica slowly turned to the window to find Robert with his head snapped and his throat ripped out.

"Just open the door Jessica." said the disembodied voice. "I promise it'll be painless. And you can join the others. Including Robert."

"FUCK YOU!" Jessica screamed.

"Very well. Slow and painful it is."

The car then turned on without the keys and a song from Mazzy Star, "look on down from the bridge," plays. Strange noises came out of the air conditioning ducts. Blood, dead blood, came shooting out like water out of a fire hose and right on Jessica. She had nowhere to go. Either be ripped to shreds by death. Or die from drowning on cold rotten dead blood. Like death said, "Slow and painful it is."

She was in the car for ten minutes and the whole inside was filled up. The blue fog was already gone, and so were the bodies of Jacob Harris and Robert Brennan.

The cops got there and saw the car. James Brennan and Hobb Harris were on the scene. When they got closer, they saw the windows all red.

"What the fuck is that?" asked James.

Hobb got closer to the window and a hand smacks the window. Hobb jumped back.

"Oh, god! someone's in there!"

They both tried to open the doors but they were locked from the inside. They both hit the windows with the butt of their guns and the blood rushed out the car. Inside was the naked, terrified Jessica who coughed up the smelly blood she ingested.

James unlocked the door and pulled Jessica out by her arms and gently placed her on the ground.

"Jessica?" Hobb tried to get her attention and she freaked out, thinking it was the monster.

"It's ok, it's ok." said Hobb. "It's Hobb and James, Robert and Jacob's dads. Where is James and Robert, Jessica."

Jessica cried hysterically. "Death got them. I couldn't save them."

"What do you mean death got them?" asked James.

"There was a blue fog. And something was in it. Something dead."

James and Hobb looked at each other and both knew what she meant. And they hoped they would never see the day. The day death had returned.

1

It was hot that day on the highway. Staying in a car for four hours can really put a toll on someone's patience. Luckily there wasn't any road rage in sight. Sarah Marsh was driving her and her son into Ellengulf. She looked at her son, Victor sleeping in the passenger seat peacefully. And she thought, why not play a trick on him. Victor was the king of tricks. He pretended to get hurt, scare her, even put salt in her coffee. And he did it just to get a laugh. She had to get him back. Sarah let out a loud scream like they were about to crash and Victor sprung out of his sleep and skin. He screamed so loud, it made their Yorkshire terrier bark at him. The look on his face was priceless. Victor realized his mother was laughing. He was mad and yet relieved.

"Not funny, mom." Victor was blushing with embarrassment.

"Oh, don't be like that." Sarah laughed. "You should've seen the look on your face."

"I almost had a heart attack." He regretted telling her that. She started to laugh hysterically again. "It's not that funny...Are we almost there?"

"Yup. We're a couple of miles away from me and your father's hometown. But we got to stop for gas. We're running close to empty."

Sarah turned the car clockwise into the gas station. When they entered the station, they were shocked to find cops swarming and searching the area for something or someone. They parked the car, but didn't get out for a few minutes.

"What the hell is going on?" Sarah asked herself but spoke it vocally. "Victor, stay in the car while I pump the gas."

"Hey, mom. Can I get a snack?" asked Victor.

"Ok, fine. But don't bother the policemen. Come back straight to the car when you're done."

Victor got out the car and headed into the store. Two officers were speaking with the store clerk. One of them had blond slick hair which was James Brennan. He glanced at Victor for a moment then put his focus on Butch Bennett the store clerk and owner. Victor went about his business and picked up some chips and a drink from the fridge. As he was turning he jumped out of his skin once again by a loud thump coming from the front of the store.

The once calm officers quickly turned their tone and screamed at the clerk.

"That's bullshit, Bennett! You know something don't you? That's why you're making a story. Now What really happened?"

Butch was still shocked by what he experienced that night. Victor peaked his head out to see the altercation take place.

"Like I told you." Butch said as he looked at James square in his eyes, "They robbed me and drove away."

"Oh, yeah!? If that's true, where's the tapes?"

The old man's faced scrunched slightly as he said, "Your thief of a child and his hoodlum friends took them and drove off. If death got em'. That's what they deserve!" What was the old man talking about? Victor thought.

Enraged and no longer thinking correctly, Officer James grabbed the old man and cocked his fist back. Before his fist dare make contact, the other officer Hobb Harris stopped him. He pointed to Victor who looked like a deer in headlights. Victor thought he was about to witness police brutality.

"COME HERE, BOY!" yelled James. Victor bounced slightly where he stood. He then walked over to them cautiously.

“What did you hear?” James’ face was red like he ate the world’s hottest pepper. And looked at Victor like he gave him that pepper.

“N-Nothing, sir.” Said Victor.

“Good, keep it that way. Now get the fuck out of here.” Said James. Hobb chuckled under his breath.

Victor quickly plopped his would be purchases on the store counter and hurried out the store. He didn’t want to leave the old man alone, but what could he do?

When he got outside, he didn’t dare look around to see the beauty of Ellengulf. Instead, he darted to the car and looked forward and waited for his mom to finish pumping gas. His mom’s terrier came from the back seat and sat on his lap. The dog knew something was wrong with him. Victor heard the gas pump stop and seconds later his mother returned to the driver seat. She looked at Victor with a strange face.

“Was the store closed or something? Where’s your snack?”

“I changed my mind. Not hungry.” Victor gave a concerned smile.

“Are you sure you’re fine?”

“Yes. Can we please go?”

Sarah shrugged it off and entered the car. They drove out of the station and headed toward their new home.

When they got there, Victor looked at the small home and was glad it wasn’t too bad of a dump.

“We’re here.” Sarah smiled. Victor said ‘yay’ in a sarcastic tone and got out the car. “What do you think, Victor?”

“It’s pretty cool.”

“Do you want to know what’s even more cooler?” Sarah put her arm on Victor’s shoulder. “This is the same house your dad grew up in.”

Victor looked at his mother with wide eyes. “Really? No way.”

Victor didn’t know anything much about his dad, let alone his childhood. So seeing where he lived at his young age made him wonder what kind of teenage life did he live. Victor never met his father. He left his mother when he was seventeen before Victor was born. He tried to pry any sort of information out of his mother just to get a taste of knowing him a little bit. But every time he brings him up, she cries hysterically. They were putting their last stuff into the home. After Justin, who’s Victor’s father, parents died they gave it to Sarah in their will. She was unsure if she wanted the home let alone live in it after Justin’s death. She hasn’t been in Ellengulf for 14 years. But she knew she missed the place, her home.

“Alright, are we finished?” asked Sarah.

“Yup, that’s the last of it.” Said Victor as he walked outside to look at the beautiful neighborhood. Then something caught him off guard. Across the street there was a girl, Jessica, looking down at Victor from the second floor window. It made him very uncomfortable. She didn’t break eye contact. Weirded out, Victor went into the house to eat the pizza his mom ordered.

Weirdo, he thought.

2

As night rolled in, Victor and his mother were in their new home eating pizza at the table. He had the old man and those asshole cops on his mind. What were they talking about? Was there really a supernatural death roaming around Ellengulf taking people? He had no idea if it was true or not. But if it was. That was terrifying.

“Mom.” Said Victor, “Is there a supernatural being called death that lives in this town?” Sarah coughed because she choked on her pizza. “What!?” she chuckled with a smile. “No, honey. Why would you ask something so weird?”

“Well, remember when I was going to get a snack at the gas station? There were two officers hawking the store owner and he said if death got them that’s what they deserved.

“How strange.” Said Victor’s mother. “I don’t know what that means, but it sounds like a legend I heard about in a book called the dark town legends.”

“Dark town legends?” Victor was curious.

“Ellengulf is also known as dark town because of all the strange things that happen here. When I was a teen, a lot of people went missing. Your father was one of them.”

Victor’s eyes widened. “What? Dad went missing?”

Sarah nodded. “A few of his friends went camping near the black lake one night and three guys, including your father vanished. All that was left was a necklace I gave him, which you now wear.”

Victor held the necklace he wore in his hand. “This belonged to dad? Why didn’t you tell me?”

“It was too sad to tell you. But yes, your father went missing. And some people said too at that time that death took them. But it’s not real.”

“Did anyone try looking for them?”

Sarah sighed deeply. “Yes but not a body was found. Just their belongings... and one more thing. A strange thing happened on the night they disappeared.”

“What.” Victor was invested in the story.

“The other boys at the site said there was this horrid smell and laughter. They said the smell smelled like-“

Just then, there was a loud bang at their door. Like someone ran into it. The two were so surprised by the sound they jumped in their seats.

“What was that?” asked Victor.

Without saying a word, Victor’s mother got out of her chair and slowly went to the window to look. “Oh, no.”

“What is it, mom?” he was slightly scared.

“It’s a bird.” Said Victor’s mother. “A bird hit the door?” asked Victor.

When Sarah opened the door she was hit with a horrible odor. A stench of death. “Oh, god. It smells horrible.” When she got a closer look, she was shocked to discover the bird was badly decayed. Victor went to the door and made an eww noise once he saw the bird. “That flew into our door?” asked Victor.

“No, it’s impossible. It looks like it was dead before it hit the door. Let me get something to pick it up.” Said Sarah.

Sarah walked back into the home while Victor stayed outside with the bird. From across the street, Victor saw the strange girl before looking down at him from her second floor window. She then walked back into the darkness of her room. “Did she do this?” Victor thought.

Later that night, everyone in Ellengulf was asleep, including Victor and his mother. Victor, in the middle of the night, woke up in a cold sweat because he heard someone call his name. He looked around in the darkness and saw nothing. Except for his mom’s dog hidden by its silhouette. Hey kibble, come here. The terrier walked into the moonlight and Victor was shocked by the sight of the dog. Its eyes were gouged out. And seconds later it quickly decayed with its skin falling off and maggots covering its entire body. The maggots turned into a hand and lunged at Victor, grabbing his face. He heard the man’s voice again calling his name and telling him to wake up.

Victor screamed for a moment when he discovered it was a dream. And the dog was at the foot of the bed asleep.

After having that strange nightmare, Victor decided to go to an arcade and play some games. From next door there was a girl with brown hair, somewhere around his age, coming out of her home. She waved at him and rode her bike down the street. He waved back and rode his bike into town. When he got to the arcade, he discovered the games there weren't that great, so he decided to go to a small park called Park Pine Woods. While he was there, he swung on the swing set, while other kids hung out with one another. Everyone was in their own group. Then all of a sudden, a girl, his next door neighbor he saw earlier, came up to him.

"Hello." She smiled.

"Hey." Said Victor.

"You're new in town right? I'm Hayley Jenson."

"Nice to meet you Hayley, I'm Victor Marsh."

"Nice to meet you. How long have you been living next door?"

"Just yesterday. My grandparents used to live there before they died."

"Oh, they were nice people... Hey, do you want to hang out with me and my friends?"

Victor looked at her with a slight smile. "Really. You want to hang out with me?"

"Yeah. You don't seem too weird- come on." Victor and Hayley walked to her friends. It was two boys and a girl. "Guys, I'd like you to meet Victor."

Victor said hello and they all did the same. "Nice to meet you, Victor, I'm Randy." Randy said in a country accent. Randy then pointed to the girl and the other guy. "And this is my sister Berta and our other friend Brandon."

"Wassup." Said Brandon as he shook Victor's hand. "So is it true you live next door to Hayley?"

"Yeah, that's true. Just moved in yesterday."

"Cool. Did you know the people that lived there before?" Brandon continued.

"Yeah, they were my grandparents."

"Do you know there's an urban legend around that house?"

"Brandon." Said Hayley, who was slightly ticked off.

"Urban legend? What urban legend?" asked Victor.

Hayley sighed. "There's a legend that there were some people who followed the occult and cursed the house. They say that's the place a group of cultists summoned one of the dark town legends, Death himself."

That made Victor's heart drop. Did everyone know about this legend? Victor thought.

"Not only that. Some people believed your grandparents knew something about what was happening, when people went disappearing. Including their son... Wait, wasn't that your dad?" Victor was getting pissed off, so he walked away. "Will you shut up, Brandon." Said Hayley as she followed after Victor. She stops Victor in his tracks. "Victor I am so sorry my friends are assholes. Please, they were just curious."

Victor doesn't say a word. He didn't know what to say. "Please, don't go. I promise we won't bring it up again. Please?" Hayley begged. Victor sighed deeply and nodded. "Thank you." Said Hayley.

So for the rest of the day, Asking about Victor's family and their history was off limits. Majority of the day, they were just hanging at the park and getting to know more about Victor. They really liked him. As the sun was setting they found themselves in the woods by a fire they made. Randy always carried a lighter and they burned nearby sticks to start and keep the fire going. "So how do you like it here so far Victor?" asked Berta.

"It's pretty chill. This is my first day and I think I'll kind of like it here."

"Good." Said Randy. "Hey, we're having a sleepover over at our house tomorrow. Why don't you come."

"Really? Sure, that'll be cool." Brandon never been to a sleep over. Probably because his mother uprooted him from wherever they were living at the time and he didn't get a chance to make friends. He hoped he wouldn't get uprooted again.

The street lights were turning on. Seeing Hayley lived next door Victor asked if she wanted to walk home with him. But she told Victor she was sleeping at Randy and Berta's for the next two days because her parents would be out for the next two to three day so he decided to ride his bike home. Sadly, something tragic would soon happen once he got home.

4

Victor left his new friends in the woods and headed for home on his bike. He couldn't believe he made friends so quickly. Not only that, they liked him. But even though he was in high spirits, something was off-putting. Something didn't feel right. He didn't know if it was the night or the fact he was alone. Or the smell of death that seemed to follow him.

'Maybe, the urban legend was- no. Impossible.' Victor thought. The thought of something following him was getting to his nerves. Did something really bad happen in his father's childhood home? Not only that. Did his mother know?

When Victor got home, the smell still followed him. And it grew stronger and stronger. His mother's car was in the parking lot. He opened the front door and a gust of the smell hit him.

"Mom?" Victor's voice shook. "Are you home?"

He looked around and found no sign of her. All he saw was a note next to an open box of pizza with a few slices missing.

The note said: "Dear, Victor. I'll be out for a while. Here's your favorite pizza, pineapple. Love, mom." Once Victor finished reading the note, he heard heavy footsteps from upstairs. In his fear, victor grabbed a knife and carefully not to make a sound upstairs.

"This is stupid." Victor thought. "I should be calling for help."

But being brave, he refused to be frightened out of his house. He didn't know what was going on, but he was going to solve it.

When he got to the top of the stairs, all the doors were open. His mother's dog was on her bed, not making a sound. Not only that, papers were flung all over the floor. Like the dog had got into one of the boxes and went on a paper ripping frenzy.

"oh, no. Poppy, what did you do?" Victor walked into the room to pick the dog(poppy) up, when he heard heavy breathing coming from his mother's closet. He turned around and a black silhouette charged at him. Victor tried to stab whoever it was, but it grabbed hold of him and slammed him to a nearby wall.

I'm done for, Victor thought. Then he looked into the person's eyes. It was his neighbor (Jessica) from across the street. She had a look in her eyes that was quite unsettling. Like looking into the eyes of a lunatic.

Victor tried to scream, but Jessica covered his mouth. She quietly told him to shush. Then she spoke.

"Listen carefully." Jessica said urgently, "You and your mom are in danger. You carry death's heart. You need to follow me."

The front door was opened. It was Victor's mother. Jessica was caught off guard. Victor kneeed her and stabbed her on her back and ran downstairs. "Mom!" said Victor as he ran to her.

"What's wrong, Victor?" asked Sarah.

"The girl from across the street is in my room. She's covered in blood and--"

"Wait here." Said Hobb as he pulled out his gun. When he was about to go upstairs, there was a loud crash like a piece of glass shattered and something heavy hit the floor. Hobb quickly ran upstairs. There was silence for a moment, then Hobb spoke. "This is officer Hobb, we need paramedics at--" As Hobb continued to speak, Victor felt a cool breeze blow past him. Thirty minutes later, Jessica was pulled out of the home on a stretcher with her arms and legs tied around the handles. Hobb went across

the street before Jessica was on the stretcher to her home. And when he came out, other officers went into Jessica's home with body bags.

"What happened, Hobb." Asked Sarah.

"Well, it seems the girl killed her parents then came across the street to kill you two."

"Oh, god. We should've never came here."

"Now, it's ok." Said Hobb. "I promise you I'll keep the two of you safe ok?"

Victor heard what Hobb said. But something was off about him. He couldn't put his finger on it, but he was going to be wary about him.

The next day, which was Friday, Victor and his mother was looking for clothes and supplies for school. He was completely bored. He was sitting on a bench with his back turned to a giant glass window. There was a tap on the window. Victor turned around to find his new friends, except Brandon, just walking by when they saw him. They then entered the store.

"Hey wassup, Victor?" asked Randy.

"Wassup guy what are you guys up to?" asked Victor.

"Brandon wanted to show us something in the woods. What are you doing here?" asked Hayley.

"School shopping." Victor's mother walks up to them. "Hello." Said Victor's mother. "Victor, you've already made friends?"

"Yeah, met them yesterday at the park... Hey mom, can I go and hang out with them?"

"You mean, ditch me?" asked Sarah. "Ok, but you're going to miss all the fun looking at rulers and pants."

"I'll manage." Victor smiled as he walked away with his friends. Sarah was happy Victor finally had friends.

On the way to the woods, Victor filled in everyone on what happened on the night before. They were shocked by what they heard. "So that girl killed her parents?" asked Berta.

"Yeah, there were cops everywhere and everything."

"Yeah, I know that girl. Her name is Jessica. I can't believe there was a murder across the street." Said Hayley.

"That's insane- where's Brandon? He told us to meet him here." Said Randy.

There was a sound of a twig breaking to their left. It was Brandon. "Brandon what took you so--"

Brandon quickly shushed Randy and signaled them to follow him and keep quiet. When they were following Brandon, Hayley whispered, "Brandon. What's going on?"

"I found some weird shit in the woods." Brandon whispered.

When they got to a certain spot in the woods, there was blood, symbols and dead animal corpses nailed to the trees.

"What the hell is this?" asked Victor.

"Remember that urban legend we told you about?" said Brandon. "I think we stumbled into their secret hide out."

"How did you find this?" asked Berta.

"I saw these guys pull up from a truck while I was far away. They were putting markings all over themselves then--" before Brandon could finish, he heard a guy say 'hey'. They look to find three men that discovered them. "Run!" Randy yelled. They all scattered in different directions and ran as fast as they could. Victor and Berta ran in the same direction while Randy and Brandon did the same. They found themselves around a river. They were tired and out of breath. "Is everybody ok?" asked Victor. They all looked at each other then realized Hayley was missing. They were still scared, but they decided to try and find her before those cult guys did.

Hayley found herself deep in the woods. She was lost and tired. She couched down holding her knees, trying to catch her breath. Then she heard a child's giggle. "Guys, is that you?" She looked around and saw a blue fog. It surrounded her. And she started to cough because of the horrid smell of death. All the animals and everything went silent. I was a quiet that made you alert to every small sound. The laughing continued moments later. "Then all the children's laughter spoke in unison. "I see you." It said in a laughing, but angry tone. Without paying attention to what was in front of her she tried to run, only to bump into a standing dead corpse. And more than one hundred dead animals and people surrounded her. Their mouths were drooling blood and saliva. They were hungry. They all charged at her and the fog hid the horrible sight of them all eating her. Hayley was gone. Victor and the others searched and searched for her. Sadly they'll never find her. For death had took his next victim.

5

Sarah was driving after another night out with Officer Hobb. They were good friends when Victor's father was around. She didn't care much for James, for apparent reasons, but Hobb was different. She reminisced about the good times and the friends she had. And Justin. It was then she was finally able to feel the emotions she bottled up for so long. She didn't know how long until she was able to feel them until she saw Hobb again. And like an explosion, all her good memories came back to her. She kept wiping tears from her face and couldn't stop shaking inside. Justin was gone. And she was going to miss him.

When she got home she was surprised to see another dead animal on her front door yet again. That's odd, she thought. It was two birds this time and they were freshly dead. She then heard something hit the roof with a loud thump. Then another and another. Three birds rolled off the roof. Then a bird fell from the sky and landed in her hair. Sarah screamed and ran into the house flailing around.

"Victor! Where are you?" Sarah screamed in urgency then coughed by the strong smell of death running all throughout the house. She then ran upstairs and called out to Victor once again and only find their dog looking outside his window. She ran to the dog and picked it up. But she would soon regret it. When she picked the dog up, its head fell off and maggots spewed out of its neck. There were maggots all over her and she quickly frantically brushed them off her then she heard her name being called by many voices. "Sarah, where's Victor?" said the voices. "Oh that's right, he's with his friends. But one of them is with us."

There was a loud scream. It was Hayley's voice. "What the hell are you!" Sarah yelled. There was a loud growl. "You know who I am. And I'm here for your son...I'd like to play a game. I'd like to see if you can make it to Victor before I can."

Sarah's phone rang. It was Victor. "Victor?"

"M-Mom." Victor was shook up. "Mom. Something happened when me and my friends were in the woods."

"Honey, where are you?"

"At Randy's."

"Can you text me the address?"

"Yes- hold on." There was a text from Victor. "Mom, please pick me up."

Seconds later, there was static and Hayley's voice came through with a loud scream. The phone hung up. "The clock is ticking Sarah. I'm almost there. Oh and one more thing. Thanks for the address." The voice laughed. In a hurry, Sarah ran downstairs and to her car. She got in and hauled ass to Randy's home. It was a long shot because she felt that death was everywhere. She feared death already got her son like it took Justin. But she couldn't think that way. All she could do is hope and pray death wasn't close by to him.

6

It was night time again. And things were getting serious. Victor was at Randy and Berta's house. Their parents weren't home but they knew Victor and the others were sleeping over. Everyone was accounted for, except for Hayley. They tried to get a hold of her all day to let her know they were all at Randy's, hiding from the cultist. Brandon kept trying to get a hold of Hayley but no luck.

"Anything?" asked Berta. Brandon shook his head. "Where could she be? Do you think those weirdo's got her?" asked Berta.

"I don't know. All we can hope for is if she's safe." Said Victor.

Seconds later, there was a loud shriek and screams. It was a girl's voice surrounding them. It was Hayley's. "Guys help me please, don't let him take me too. PLEASE!!!"

Something then crashed through Randy's bedroom it was heavy and sounded very mushy once it hit his white tiled floor. What's worse, it was bleeding. They all screamed and stayed away from whatever it was for moment. Then Victor, the brave one, slowly crept to it and then felt his heart drop. "Oh, my god it's Hayley." What He saw on the remains of Hayley was a horrible sight to see. Like she was ripped to shreds. All that was left of her was her head and her ribcage. The remains started to shake and her eyes opened. It was bloodshot red. It looked at Victor and gave an unnerving grin.

"Hey, Victor." Said Hayley, "You guys abandoned me. Now I'm dead. Let's all be dead." Hayley's head sprouted legs and jumped toward Victor. Victor dodged the attack and the all ran out the room. The ribcage turned into a creature too with it's teeth as the bones of the ribcage and chased after them. When they all got outside, they were shocked to find thousands of dead bodies standing before them like they were waiting for them to come out. Just when all hope was lost, Victor's mother came pulling into the side of the street and the dead corpses vanished. "Get in!" yelled Victor's mother.

The kids did what they were told and they all drove off with the head and ribcage of Hayley chase them down. Luckily it stopped pursuit. "Is everyone ok?" asked Victor's mother. They all started to cry. "What's wrong." Asked Victor's mother.

"That thing that was chasing us." Said Victor, who seemed heartbroken. "That was Hayley."

Sarah gently put her hand on her son's shoulder and rubbed him to console him. "So where are we going?" asked Randy.

"To the gas station outside of town. I have someone there who can help us." And so they drove out the city limits to meet with her friend.

7

They were a few yards away from their destination. The kids, including Victor, were still mourning the death of Hayley. And just seeing her corpse attack them, let alone she was a corpse, made them realize they were deep into something supernatural and extremely dangerous. When they finally get to the gas station, they saw Butch Bennett, the old man Victor saw being harassed by the policemen, sitting outside the store, with a shotgun laying across his lap.

Butch had a grin on his face once he saw Victor's mother. "Hello, Sarah." He said. "It's been a long time since I've seen your face."

"Hey, Butch." Said Sarah. "It's happening again." His smile slowly disappeared from his face as he got up from his chair. "Yup, I've known this since Wednesday night. Death came to me impersonating Ricky. When did you get back in town?"

"Not that long ago." Butch then saw Victor. "This your boy?"

"Yes. His name is Victor."

"Well, we met the same day all them cops were here- Pleasure to meet you Victor. Victor and Butch shook hands and Sarah then said, "We need your help. Death is after us and it took one of the children."

Butch then cocked his shotgun. "I'll help as much as I can- Y'all follow me."

Butch guided everyone into the back room of the gas station. Inside the room there were guns, machetes and other items to be used as weapons all over the place. There were also papers of missing people plastered all over the walls. Victor had his eyes focused on one picture. It was four boys. Two, who looked like the cops that harassed Butch and one who had the same necklace as Victor. And the other was a dark skinned teenager who had his arm around the others.

“That was my son, Ricky. The other you probably know already.” Said Butch as he stood beside Victor.

Victor hesitated for a moment “Is that?”

“Justin Marsh. Yup, that was your father. You both look alike. The other two you’ve met. Those damn asshole cops.”

Butch then saw Victor’s mom calling someone. She was just punching in the numbers when Butch lunged to her and grabbed her phone. “What are you doing, Sarah?”

“I was trying to call Hobb. Maybe he could help.”

“All he and James is going to help you with is your death.”

“If they knew you were here they’d try to kill you like-“

Butch stopped what he was saying like he was hesitating to say anything. “Butch. Is there something you’re not telling me?” Butch looked at the kids, especially Victor. He knew if he told them whatever it was it would break both Sarah and Victor’s heart.

“Sarah. They’re trouble. They’re the reason Ricky and Justin is dead. The same day you came into the area, after they scared Victor out of the store, they told me they ‘fed’ Ricky and Justin to death to be a part of some cult that worships the monster. I was told never to tell you because they would come after you and your son. They swore to me nothing would happen to you two. But they lied. I’m so sorry, Sarah.” Butch burst into tears. Sarah hugged him and told him it was ok.

“It’s ok, Butch. I forgive you. But it’s taken too many lives. We need to stop death from taking others.”

“Ok, but how are we going to do that?” asked Butch.

“Jessica!” Victor exclaimed. “That girl that lives across from us. Before Hayley died, she said Jessica was the only one that survived death twice. Then when Jessica was in our house, she said I carried Death’s heart. Maybe if we can find out which hospital she’s in, she can tell us how to kill it..”

“That sounds like a plan, but which hospital could she be?”

“What kind of hospital are you guys looking for?” asked Randy.

“A mental hospital. Why?” asked Victor.

“Then you’re looking for the Liturn well asylum.” Said Randy, “That’s where they send all the crazies.”

“Ok, you guys stay here with Butch. That’s the only way to be safe.”

“No way, mom.”

“Listen, Victor-“ said Sarah as she was interrupted by Victor. “No, you listen. I lost my father and Hayley. I refuse to lose you too. So we’re all going.

“Alright.” Sarah finally said after a long pause. “But if you guys are going out there you need weapons. I assume you guys don’t know how to use a gun.”

“Ms. Marsh. We’re from a small rural town. Of course we know how to use guns.” Said Berta.

“Good. Gather as many weapons you can hold and let’s get to the car.” Said Butch.

Seconds later, there was a loud explosion. They went outside to discover Sarah’s car blew up. And standing in front of the flames were Hobb and James holding guns. Their skins were pale and droopy and their eyes were black and oozing oil from their sockets.

“Hey, Sarah.” Said the slowly decaying Hobb who’s grin was abnormal. “How you doing, Baby?” Sarah cocked her shotgun and shot Hobb’s right arm off. “I’m not your fucking Baby!” Sarah roared.

Hobb at first looked at his nub in shock, then slowly turned back to Sarah and the others. "I assume Butch told you everything. It's a shame." Said Hobb. Then his voice turned into Victor's father's voice. "I know you miss me, Sarah. But you'll be with me soon enough."

"Kids!" yelled Sarah. "Raise your guns and blast these bastards back to hell!"

The kids did what they were told and shot the two officers of hell into tiny pieces. When James fell, both of the officer's bodies started to bubble. Something bad was about to happen. "Butch?" said Sarah.

"Yeah."

"Do you still have that old red truck."

"Yeah, its in the back."

"We need to get to it now- Kids run!"

Butch, the kids, and Sarah ran to the truck and these butterflies made out of the remains of Hobb and James spewed out of them and went after them. Everyone was In the truck and drove off while the butterflies, thousands of them, chased the car. All of a sudden, the butterflies fused together and morphed into a four legged creature with two heads that was the shape of Hobb and James. "You can't run from us!" yelled the creature. The kids, who were in the bed of the truck, shot at the creature. They kept missing because they were shooting in a moving truck. But Randy got a shot. He hit the front left leg of the creature and the monster rolled and shattered into pieces. It left them alone.

Randy and Berta sat down after the battle and were in shock of everything that was happening. Then Randy saw something in the distance. "Guys." Said Randy as he pointed to see a thick blue fog moving very fast and heading towards them. "I don't know what that is. But we need to get to where we're going fast!"

"Hang on tight!" said Butch as he made a sharp turn into Ellengulf. Everyone was dead in the town. Their bodies were scattered everywhere.

"Oh, god." Said Sarah. That's when they realized they were all alone. When they got to the asylum, they found a message written in blood on the main entrance floor. They believed it was left by Jessica. "Go to black lake."

"Should we trust it?" asked Butch.

"I don't know." Said Sarah. "But it's the only thing we got. Let's go to black lake."

And so they were off to a place they hope not to run into the monsters or a trap. All they could do is hope. Hope Jessica was there and she knew how to kill death.

8

There was no action, no attacks, no ambush nothing. Just the strong smell of death in the air. All the bodies of adults and children was nerve wrecking. Everyone they knew and met, dead. Like something swiftly blew through there and everyone shut down. The people were in the spots they were last.

Victor and the others got to the black lake. When they drove into the woods, the truck stopped running.

"What happened?" asked Sarah, talking to Butch. Butch tried starting it again. But no luck. "It's completely dead. Just like everything else in this damn town."

"Great." Said Sarah. "Guess we gotta walk to the lake."

Just then, something unusual happened. Victor heard someone call his name. "Victor." Said the voice. It was the same voice from his nightmare. "Don't follow the path. Walk through the woods. Danger is waiting for you through the path. They want the heart." Then he saw a man standing with a white aura around him. From the distance he could tell the man was smiling. Then it hit him. "Dad?" said Victor.

"What did you say Victor?" asked His mother.

"I saw dad- there." Said Victor as he pointed to a part of the woods. "He said there's danger waiting for us on the path and we need to walk into the woods to the lake."

"Victor, how do you know it wasn't death?"

"Because I know. What I saw wasn't like the other things I've seen. He also said they wanted the heart."

"What are you talking about?" said Sarah. "What heart?"

"The necklace." Said a female voice. They turn to the driver window to find Jessica, who was bloody and injured. "Your necklace is a part of Death's heart. That's why it came back, because you two came back to Ellengulf. We haven't got much time, death doesn't know you're here yet, neither does the cultists."

"How do you know?" asked Berta.

"I know because I carry a necklace just like it." Jessica showed her necklace and as she said, was completely identical to Victor's. "Not only that, I can sense when death's around. And I know you can sense him too, kid."

"She's right." Said Victor. "Do you know how to kill it?"

"Yes. There's a hidden path in the black lake. I almost died there, but something that night drew me to it. If we can get into it's domain, we can kill it. All we have to do is destroy these necklaces in it's domain and it'll die- we need to hurry, follow me." Said Jessica as she walked towards the woods.

"Why are you helping us?"

Jessica turned around. "Because that thing possessed my parents and made me kill them."

Everyone got out the truck and followed Jessica into the woods. When they get to the lake the water was oily and bubbling like it was made out of tar. It was a huge lake, so they had no idea where the entrance could be. "Kid, put your necklace in the water- like this." Jessica took her necklace off and held it by it's chain. She then gently placed it in the water and Victor followed her directions. Once they did that, the water shaped itself into a giant home, the size of a small mansion. "I had visions of this day." Said Jessica.

"You have?" asked Victor.

"Yes. This will be the day I might die."

"We won't let that happen." Said Victor. "We'll see." Jessica said with her eyes focused on the mansion.

Then there was a loud bark. Everyone turned around and was horrified to find Poppy, Victor and Sarah's dog. She was bloody, mangled with it's body parts deformed.

"It knows we're here!" yelled Sarah. "Run to the house!"

Poppy's body, as tiny as it was, morphed and cracked it's way into the shape of a tiny man and it's eyes rolled back only showing the white part of it. It ran towards them in a maniacal chuckle as it ran and each step it took it made a 'hup' noise.

Everyone got into the house and they closed the door behind them leaving poppy scratching at the door, trying to get in.

When they looked around, they were shocked to find themselves in a bright lit living room with windows and a blood red sun beaming on them. Not only that, there were taxidermies of people and animals scattered everywhere. Everything in the home was made of bones. They were in another dimension.

"Where to now?" asked Butch.

"The basement." Said Victor. "It lives in the basement. I can feel it."

So off they went into the basement. When they got to the bottom. They started to feel light. Like they were floating in space. Even the area turned dark and no one was able to have a sense of direction. Then a bright light in the distance appeared. In the light was a child, but it wasn't a child, it was death. It was sleeping. Then something around Victor and Jessica then told them to open the locket of the necklace. Within it was a half of a tiny beating heart. Victor had one piece of the heart while Jessica

had the other. Just when they were about to crush the pieces with their fingers, they heard a child giggle. "You don't think it'll be that easy, do you?" said the child's voice all around them. "You can kill me now. But I'll come back. I always come back."

"Oh, yeah." Well we'll be waiting for you." Both Victor and Jessica crushed their piece of the heart and the child started to scream and they all felt themselves being sucked into a tube and shot out into the black lake. And as they were shot out, the blue fog was sucked into the small mansion. Everyone was floating in the air when all of a sudden, when the last of the blue fog entered the home it exploded and let out a pulse wave. After that happened thousands of tiny lights flew out of the black lake. It was the souls of the living things death took. Victor and the others fell into the water. And when they landed they swam to shore. It was a beautiful sight to see. All those souls, free.

One of the lights flew to Victor and turned into the shape of his father. "Dad?" said Victor. "Hello, son." Said Justin. "Victor. I'm so proud of you. You freed us. But you must know death will return. But there's a way to stop it from happening. Before I died I was learning of the legends of Ellengulf. They are the keys to stopping all the deaths. But you must be careful. If you go down this path, there's no turning back. All the legends will come after you, you mother and your friends. Do you understand?"

"Yes... Hey dad? Did you ever think of me?" Justin gave a warm smile and placed his hand on Victor's shoulder. It was warm. "All the time." He smiled. Then he faded into a white ball of light and disappeared into the sky. It was over... For now.

When they got into town by walking, they were shocked to find people, living people, going about their day like nothing happened. Everything was back to normal. But Victor and his friends and mother's lives from this day forward wouldn't be normal.

Months had gone by and people were talking about strange happenings all throughout Ellengulf, what Victor now acknowledged as Dark Town. He went to school with his new friends, sadly, Hayley didn't return. It made him sad but it made him remember his mission. To save Ellengulf and the world from the legends. And he was going to fight for his mother, his friends, Hayley and most of all, his father. And he was going to fight to his last breath.