

Corey remains suspiciously quiet.

“Alright. The last stop is the abandoned warehouse, but it’s really creepy,” I say.

“Lily’s right. There’s rodents and all kinda things crawling around in there,” Sophie chimes in.

Corey just continues looking out the window, his twitching working overtime. *Could the old abandoned warehouse be where Ethan’s hiding?* After another twenty minutes, we arrive at the long, unpaved road that leads to the warehouse. The place honestly gives me the willies. I drive carefully, as twigs and pinecones hit and scrape the bottom of my car. *If Ethan’s here, he’s a whole lot braver than me!*

“You want me to check it out by myself?” Corey asks as he opens the door, much too calmly.

“No, I think we should all go,” Sophie says.

“Yeah, who wants to stay out here in the car in the middle of the woods?” I ask, trying to provide a reason for us not wanting Corey to go in by himself to tip off Ethan.

“I actually have the key for the main door so we can look inside,” I add, as we all climb out and begin walking towards the building.

The building is brick with multiple broken, paned windows, probably due to kids throwing rocks at them. The moonlight casts an eerie glow, highlighting the peeling beige trim paint.

“Ahhhh!” Sophie yells and starts jumping up and down and wiping her hair like she’s lost her mind.

Corey and I just stare at her, perplexed.

“What happened?” Corey asks.

“I walked right through a spider web! Do you see anything on me?” Sophie asks as she continues to jump around, bend down and run her hands through her hair.

“Hold still,” Corey says as he uses his phone light to check for spiders.

Sophie finally stops jumping, but continues to pound her feet up and down, too freaked out to completely stand still.

“I don’t see a thing,” says Corey.

“Can we just go inside?” I ask, growing impatient.

Sophie glares at me as I begin walking quickly towards the entrance while she and Corey follow. I pull the key out of my pocket and open the door. It makes a squeaky sound, like we’re entering a haunted house. We walk inside and look at the high ceilings with wooden beams. There’s old crates scattered all over the floor as if the prior owners decided to flee in the middle of the night, leaving all their belongings.

The three of us all use our phone lights to illuminate the dreary interior, as much as we can. In one corner is a staircase that leads up to a closed door. I hear peculiar noises as I get closer. It sounds like something clanging against another hard surface.

“You guys hear that?” I ask.

“Yeah,” Sophie says.

“It’s probably nothing,” Corey says.

*Corey’s response seems very peculiar. I wonder if Ethan, Beth and Nicholas are hiding up in that room with the closed door?* I decide to climb the dilapidated stairs, hoping they don’t collapse under my weight. I turn and notice Corey right behind me, but Sophie decides to stay

on the lower level, still freaked out from the whole spider web incident. I finally reach the landing and grab the knob. I'm pleased to find it's unlocked. I slowly turn the handle, open the door, aim my phone light into the darkness and see multiple red glowing dots. Just as I peer in, confused, I see two of the dots heading my way. I stand there, silently, in shock and finally pull myself out of my frozen stupor to release a quiet whimper.

"Bats," I say softly.

"What?!" Corey asks.

"Bats!" I scream a little louder.

"What did you say? Corey asks again.

"BATS!" I yell as I turn around and run down the staircase, almost knocking Corey down.

We run like crazy towards the entrance. Sophie is well ahead of us. I'm too scared to turn around to see how close they are. Corey's in front of me. All of a sudden, I trip over one of the crates on the floor and begin yelling uncontrollably. Corey turns around and runs back to help me up. I'm in pain and can't walk on my own so he helps me hobble to the door. We finally reach it and a few bats fly out ahead of us. Corey turns around to slam it shut. I'm breathing heavily and my adrenaline is on overdrive. *There aren't many things I fear, but bats are at the top of the list. Maybe it's from watching too many Dracula movies or it could be those piercing eyes that give me the heebie-jeebies.* I finally regain my composure as Corey turns around to lock the door. He then helps me back to the car and we get inside, where Sophie's

already waiting. I start the engine, turn the vehicle around and head out to the road. *I never plan on setting foot in that place again.*