

# 1

I stepped off of the bus. I wasn't nervous about anything, but I wasn't happy either. The reason for my lack of excitement was that this was not the college I wanted to attend, but the moment I received the scholarship to Lance Fields University, they'd insisted. It was a prestigious school and all, but didn't generally interest me. I wanted to study in another country, maybe in Europe, so I could see something different, but again, my parents insisted.

I didn't really care for the prestige of a school; it wasn't like I would need it. If I was allowed to go to a school out of the country, I would have fun doing it at the very least. It was early January in Northern Colorado, and the weather was uncomfortably cold. I could feel my bare face and hands freezing.

I was wearing plain jeans and sneakers with a thick fleece jacket, not exactly cold weather gear. I hadn't bothered to buy a pair of gloves, so, of course, I stuck my hands in my pockets. I did not like the cold. In fact, I

despised how I had to dress up just to stay comfortable due to weather. It only worsened the fact that my hair was still damp from rinsing it at the airport. The wind chill burned the tips of my ears. I decided to think about something else to get my mind off of the weather as I walked among many other students to the main building.

I was majoring in forensic psychology. This was not really a field I was particularly interested in, or even one I had a use for; however it was a handy career path. There was not really any other field I would have an interest in anyway. I had considered double-majoring; the admissions board here at Lance Fields suggested it with my grades. I disregarded it; I was not about to waste my time on two fields. My scholarship came from remarkably high scores on pretty much every test I took.

I was considered almost a genius... almost. People called me gifted; I agreed with them, but not for the reasons they believed. People always called me a troublemaker, and that I also agreed with. Although, is someone really deserving of the title *troublemaker* when he has never actually been caught in the act?

I walked among a mob of students into the main building. There were big, red, bold letters that read: “Lance Fields University of Science,” and the building was

constructed almost entirely of large, light brown bricks with grand statues and windows and other useless expensive adornments.

As I walked in, warm air swarmed over me, and I breathed a sigh of relief. I walked forward into the lobby and found a sign that read: *“New students proceed down the hallway to the left toward the auditorium for orientation.”*

I wasn't in any hurry, so I followed the hallway a little and detoured into the restroom. I rinsed my face a bit with warm water and looked into the mirror. I was a mess. My face and hands were red from the cold. In fact, the few minutes in the cold had turned my once healthy-looking face into pale white and red. I hadn't bothered to shave carefully so I had a couple of cuts. I hated being cut, because, despite the minor pain that occurs in a split second, the injury causes distraction for its duration.

My wavy, black hair was down to my ears and still shiny from the dampness. My jacket was brand new and, with my ragged face, looked as if it was stolen. I grabbed my backpack and walked out of the bathroom.

I followed the significantly emptier hallway toward the auditorium. I walked in, and immediately a small woman walked over to me and asked my name.

“Felix Faust,” I said.

She looked up and glared at me, “You’re late Mr. Faust.”

“Huh,” was all I bothered to respond with, since I wasn’t about to let this woman pester me. She must have been one of those people that liked to make others feel guilty and insecure, using her minor power to express the utmost disrespect. She handed me a laminated nametag that had my name on it, and motioned for me to sit.

There must have been at least thirty other students all sitting on overpriced chairs that probably weren’t even comfortable. Money... it was a nuisance that led people to make the dumbest choices. I sat in one of the chairs. To my surprise, the wooden chair was rather comfortable, despite being heavily polished and too slick. It was almost as if the chair would throw me off if I didn’t sit tightly enough.

I looked up at the speaker. He was standing on a small stage with a luminous wooden floor. He had already begun speaking, but it wasn’t until I looked at him that I heard what he was saying. These are the inner workings of my mind. It didn’t multitask, and it only focused on what I was paying attention to at that particular moment.

Earlier on the bus, I’d been lost in my thoughts and it had seemed a little too quiet, as if I was the only student on the bus. The second I realized it, my mind opened up to the

sounds of my environment, and I heard the loud chatter of an overfilled bus saturated with obnoxious new students who were picked up at the same airport. The speaker was giving an introductory speech about our different schedules, how punctual we needed to be, where to find stuff, who to talk to, et cetera. Nothing I hadn't heard previously. I looked at the speaker's assistant. He was a rather tall student who couldn't have been much older than twenty. He had short-standing, brownish hair and thin glasses, and he was overly fit. He was handling slides which I had only just noticed. The slides consisted of maps of the campus and how the classroom environments worked, but I barely paid attention to them. I would find out what I needed later, much like anyone who even bothered to listen to the orientation.

My focus drifted back to the assistant and his awkward physical appearance. It was such a strange combination of fit and nerdy that I didn't know what to think of him. My gaze drifted around to some of the other students, only to find the expected. In some areas, there were overachieving students whose attention was focused directly on the speaker, but in the back rows, there were the more obnoxious students who were constantly chit-chatting amongst themselves, completely disregarding the speaker. Finally, there were

those like me... who really didn't care for the present situation.

Before I knew it, the orientation was over, and we were herded like sheep into separate buses, based on our gender, off to the dormitory areas. I really hoped I didn't have a roommate; I didn't care much for dealing with people, and I wanted a fully private room. I liked my independence. The dormitory buildings appeared smaller than I expected (they were single story). I looked at one of the many papers I had been given, to see which room I was assigned. I was to be in building 20, room 129A. I walked through the only hallway of the winding building, looking at the room numbers. What the place lacked in height it made up for in length, and I was walking for a good five minutes before I reached room 129A.

I walked in and, to my disdain, found bunk beds. I proceeded into the room and found my suitcase set on the bottom bunk. Good... there would be no fighting about who would get which bunk. Everyone wanted the top bunk, but, in my opinion, the bottom bunk is the better one. On the opposite side of the room there was a large double desk for two and a mini fridge. Toward the back of the room there was a door which could only lead to the bathroom. At this thought, someone stepped out of the bathroom: my

roommate. I sized him up: muscular, greasy, long hair in a hat, and he definitely had attitude across his face, not unlike mine. I decided that he must have been on a sports scholarship based his physical appearance. Yes, Lance Fields had its own basketball team, which I imagined was his strong-suit. He returned my glare.

“What are you staring at?” he tested. I ignored his question and proceeded to my suitcase and began unpacking.

“What? Are you too good to answer me?” he continued. He could test me all he wanted; I would continue to ignore.

He obviously wasn't worth my energy. Apparently, he also determined I wasn't worth his and continued about his business. Underneath the bunk beds were two sets of drawers. Due to the lack of scattered undergarments and profane magazines in the room, I guessed he hadn't bothered to unpack yet, and I claimed the left set of drawers for my own use. I began tossing my clothes into the drawers. I didn't bother folding them. None of my clothes were formal, and as long as they were in a place where I could find them, I didn't care what condition they were in at that point. I didn't want to risk leaving any of my bathroom items in obvious view where this guy could easily reach them, so I left them in my drawers as well.

After I finished, I moved over to the desk and put notebooks, pencils, and my padlocked laptop case on the left desk. The desks each had a desktop, but I doubted I'd be using it much. I loaded the schoolbooks from my bag onto the bookshelf on top of the desk I'd selected. At this point, my roommate had started unpacking; we both worked in silence. I liked that. If the rest of the semester stayed like this, having a roommate wouldn't be an issue. After I fully unpacked, I looked at my class schedule.

My first class wasn't until 7 AM the following morning, and it wasn't even noon yet. I guess that meant I was allowed to wander. I left the room, only to be reminded of the bitter cold waiting outside. *Great*, I thought. I walked quickly through the building and took note of a map on a bulletin board. I studied it and memorized the route to the campus cafeteria. It took me about twenty minutes to get there on foot. I sincerely hoped we had some kind of daily shuttle transportation that I had missed.

I walked into the cafeteria and was glad to see that they served at all hours of the day. I wasn't happy about paying for the food though. I got a breakfast sandwich and water. It was coffee, tea, or water. I wasn't a fan of coffee, and the only tea I drank was herbal, which they didn't have. The food was fairly priced and tasted okay to my surprise. I ate



slowly. I had to find a decent way to pass the time. It was too cold to walk around and chat, had I even been interested in doing so, and my own room was infested with that nameless jock whom I wasn't too fond of anyway.

When I finished, I proceeded outside of the cafeteria and to the map that was placed on a pillar under the brick awning. I decided I would put up with the cold and find out what the other students did throughout the day. I walked around and finally found a shuttle bus; most of the others on the bus were students that already had classes, but since I didn't, I rode the shuttle until they announced the library stop.

The library was actually part of the main building, but through a side entrance. I walked in and was immediately approached by one of the librarians.

“You must be one of the newer students here?” she asked me. I nodded my head.

“Well follow me, I can get you registered. Have you received your school email address?”

I nodded again; although, I guess she didn't know that I was issued my school email upon being accepted to this school, over a month before I'd actually flown out here from Montana.

She took me to one of the main reference desks and had me sit down in the chair. The librarian appeared to be in her late thirties. She was nearly obese and had long, gray-brown hair in a ponytail. She asked me to hand her my nametag which I found out was my full student I.D.; she also had me give her my school email, and after that I was good to go. I thanked her with a nod and walked off to explore the library.

I headed straight for the fiction section, as I was not a fan of anything non-fiction. I would save all of that for my classes. I browsed through the large section through a series of unknown authors making mental notes of any titles that interested me. I found a few and was actually quite impressed. The library (or maybe the more fad-following students) seemed to have carefully filtered out most of the generic titles, leaving only the more original books available. The only problem with that was my own high expectations of these books.

I decided it would be best to check one out and read it today to pass the time. I selected a moderately large book that appeared to be about a scientist's story through an apocalypse. As I carried the book to the checkout, I thought out the cliché. The scientist would find out the cause of the apocalypse and then learn how to stop it. He would receive a lot of criticism from mild antagonists that led to public

humiliation, and he would finally convince them he was right, and finally he would save the planet. I would find out if I was correct that night.

I got back to my dormitory room to discover that my roommate wasn't there, and his area was rather cluttered. Well, pretty soon mine would be cluttered so I couldn't hold it against him. At least he was gone. I plopped on my bunk and began reading. The book held my attention but didn't really grab at my curiosity or emotions like I could tell it was trying to. It was a little thicker than I was used to, but I still finished it quickly. I read at lightning speed compared to most people. For the most part I was right, but the end was a little different.

The scientist dies toward the end, and his wife convinces one of his friends to take action behind the back of the public, and thus he ends up stopping the apocalypse. Apparently, this was a series of solar flares barraging Earth, stopped by some futuristic contraption that fired bolts of some non-existent artificial element that safely dispersed each flare into thin gases a little above the ozone layer. I looked at my watch; it was late afternoon. I didn't feel like returning the book yet. All of that time spent sitting on the bed put me in a lazy mood.

As if on cue, my roommate returned, laughing loudly with one of his new acquaintances outside. He walked in and eyed me.

“Man, you seriously got yourself a staring problem. Show some respect,” he said to me.

I looked over at his friend. His apparent teammate was actually a lot smaller than you’d think of most basketball players. However, despite his size, he was still giving me that same condescending leer.

“What do you know of respect?” I asked him.

“Excuse me?” he tried. “What do I know of respect? What do *you* know of respect? You been giving me that same pretentious look all day. You even bother to learn my name?”

Tch, *pretentious* was a word I got a lot, and I couldn’t deny it. I had a feeling of superiority around most people with whom I associated.

I didn’t bother trying to suppress it though. I looked at his nametag and back at his face.

“Maurice? What’s mine?” He did an exaggerated double-take.

“Oh wow! Pretty boy can read... how lovely,” he said.

I was enjoying the mixture of common degenerate insults of Maurice’s style blended with proper English;

someone who is trying to sound dumber than he actually is, but just to impress people. I often do the opposite, and end up sounding pretentious, but there's a difference between thinking you're better than someone, and—case in point—knowing you're better than them. It was amazing how my peers would behave on a lesser level and succeed in impressing those around them, but not me.

“Well I showed you the respect of learning your name. Do you have the respect to learn mine?” My nametag, or student I.D. (I'd have to get used to calling it that), was in my pocket. I'd put it there when the librarian handed it back to me.

“Man, how do you expect me to learn your name when you ain't wearing your nametag?” he said.

“Yeah, no respect,” his friend chuckled.

“You could have the courtesy to ask my name,” I suggested. I was growing weary of the word ‘respect’.

“Whatever, yo,” Maurice sighed obnoxiously. Ah, the word ‘whatever’, when someone refuses to give up an argument by either admitting they're wrong, or, in this case, can't overcome their own pride. He whispered to his friend a bit, and then he came in while the other left. He looked at me and grunted as he passed on his way to the bathroom. Yeah, if he continued to behave like this around me I would not

survive the semester... at least not without having to invoke my gift.

Then again, using that would give me enough of a migraine to keep me from focusing on my work, defeating the purpose. Oh well, I laid back and reminisced about my childhood a bit. How had I gotten here in the first place?" I actually angered myself remembering the hostile conversation with my parents when I initially refused to go to this school. I regretted letting them win that argument, but life is full of regrets; I'd never won an argument with them anyway. Although, Lance Fields was a large, popular university. They probably had an exchange program. I'd have been more surprised if they didn't, and I'd enjoy the opportunity to study abroad. Maybe I'd get my chance after a few semesters.

## 2

I was far too tired when I woke up at 6 AM the next morning. It wasn't that I had any problems sleeping. It was just that I am not a morning person, or a day person for that matter. My roommate seemed annoyed by my alarm, despite being on the same schedule; I imagined he was just trying to be a jackass about it. I wondered why my first class was a calculus class. I mean, honestly, who do they expect to pay attention to mathematics at 7 in the morning? I didn't bother with breakfast; I wasn't hungry.

After I packed my bag, I headed immediately to the shuttle outside of the dormitory. I was beginning to wonder why it wasn't simply a multi-story building; it was not pleasant having to walk for what seemed like a mile to get out to the street. Wouldn't it save room just to have several stories? I disregarded it as I finally reached the bus. It took

me over to the main building where most of the standard classes were held and I walked off.

I was reading the paper that had my class information on it, when someone shoved past me forcibly. I glared at the offender to see Maurice.

“What’s the matter? Needed to wake you up a bit,” he chuckled. I was already cranky from having to rise early so I didn’t feel like putting up with this showoff. I focused my mind a bit. I concentrated just well enough and channeled my energy toward his backpack. It wasn’t a lot of energy, but it was enough to make it spill open. He bent down to pick up the contents, but gave me a good stare-down first.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” I asked. “What did I do?” I chuckled triumphantly, only to feel a minor pain in my head. Much like a brain freeze and it lasted about as long. The only thing I hated about using my telekinesis was the strain it put on my mind. If I used it too much, I would come to regret it. I entered my classroom to see it half-filled already and assumed a seat. The seats were up for grabs and not assigned so I got to choose one in the back. The teacher, whom I realized was the man who'd conducted the orientation the previous day, looked at me as I sat down.

He sighed, “I guess you weren’t paying attention yesterday morning; I have all of my students fill in from the



front first.” I knew his sigh was fake, and I could gleam the joy he felt from calling me out. Gleaming was the name I’d given to my ability to hear the thoughts on the top of peoples’ minds.

As I grabbed my bag and headed to the front most vacant seat, I had several pairs of eyes on me. Most of them were sizing me up. I gleamed one of the male students that was staring at me, and determined that he could tell I was a nerd and was contemplating sucking up to me so I’d help him. Nice try. It took a few minutes for the professor, Mr. Reynolds, to begin the class. I wasn’t wearing my watch so I couldn’t exactly tell if he was waiting until 7 AM on the dot. As I expected, his calculus class was nothing new, and I began to drift off into my own train of thoughts for a little while.

I started thinking about what I had done to Maurice earlier and the thought brought a smile to my face. I was tickled just at the thoughts of bewilderment that crossed his mind. He had known I had done it, and had wondered if I had used some kind of *telepathic* abilities. Of course, he couldn’t figure out the actual word in his mind.

He wasn’t in this class otherwise I’d have tried to gleam him probably denying what happened. I eyed the little card on the front of my desk. Mr. Reynolds had told us to write

our names on it with a marker so he could get introduced to us, since our nametags were nearly impossible to read at a distance. I looked around the classroom a bit. This class was in one of the smaller rooms and consisted of about twenty students, which was a surprisingly small number for the size of this campus.

“Mr. Faust... Mr. Faust!” I heard his words pierce my bubble of protection from the outside world. I looked at the speaker; and of course, it was none other than Mr. Reynolds.

“I don’t suppose you know the answer to this question?” he tested. He was obviously calling me out because he noticed I wasn’t paying attention. I let out a fake sigh mocking him from earlier. The sigh gave me time to gleam his mind to see if the answer to the question was present, and to my success, it was. I told him the answer. Cockiness turned to surprise as he looked from my face to the blackboard, and back to my face.

His brain was clouded with the chaotic, indescribable sounds a mind emits when a person is surprised, and no words fill their mind. I looked at the blackboard and found out why. On it were a few solved equations but his hand was hovering over a newer one. This new equation was only about halfway written. I swore to myself. He knew anyone that had been paying attention would have known he’d need

to finish writing the problem for it to be solved. Some of the other students chuckled as they thought the teacher had caught me in a trance.

“That’s correct,” he said. I could read the confusion that filled the other students’ minds.

*How am I going to explain this?* I thought.

“Mr. Faust, I’d like to see you at the end of the class,” he told me. I was not too keen on being interrogated.

“Sorry, I have a physics class right after this that I can’t be late for,” I protested. He pursed his lips.

“Well, then, I assume you’ll be free during lunch time?” he asked. He wasn’t really asking; he was telling me to be here during lunch. I wasn’t going to waste time with him, but he’d have to deal with that later. After class ended, I headed straight for the physics room, which was in the same building.

I’d lied to Mr. Reynolds; I had a good thirty minutes before this class started, and I didn’t really care about punctuality or the content. I just wanted to avoid his questions.

“Ah, an early bird I see,” said the physics instructor, as I assumed a seat in the middle part of the room. By sitting in the back, I was just asking the teachers to pull me to the front, but by sitting in the middle, I didn’t seem too distant,

thus it would be something I could get away with easily. I nodded at the professor, who was a female with graying brown hair in a bun.

She was tall for a woman, and just a little too slim, but wasn't wearing glasses which you'd expect someone with her overall appearance to have done. She probably had contacts.

"I am Professor West," she introduced herself, walking over from across the room. She extended her hand out to me. I stood up and shook her hand.

"Name's Felix. Pleased to meet you," I said. She smiled and walked back to her desk.

"You know, last year we had a few more students like yourself; I am surprised you're the only one this semester," she said, attempting to make conversation. I wasn't in the mood for conversation.

"Students like me?" I asked.

"Yes, you arrived pretty early. That means you're either in a hurry to get to class, which is unlikely, or you're in a hurry to avoid something, which is a bit more common," she explained.

"You're keen," was all I said. She seemed to have taken the hint and nodded her head before sitting back at her desk. I rubbed my face and realized I still hadn't shaved. It

actually felt good to scratch, but I imagined a razor this afternoon would feel better, as long as I was more careful this time.

I began imaging this was probably something I could do during lunch period. At least I'd have proof of where I had been. I was back in my thoughts when the class began to fill. I decided I would try to focus on Professor West a little today. I couldn't afford two of the staff members wondering how I could predict everything. If it didn't happen again, Professor Reynolds would convince himself it was a fluke...that he'd imagined it or had spoken more of the equation aloud, or that I'd chosen the correct answer at random. People are good at fooling themselves in order to keep their narrow worldview safe. My telekinetic and mind-reading abilities were something I kept to myself. Only my little sister Arabella knew about it.

Arabella was nine. I'd always used them to entertain her by animating her dolls while hiding. It was good practice for my abilities, and it kept her entertained as no other little girl would be. One day she found me. I had sneezed while hiding under her bed and explained to her what I was doing there. She was amazed that her big brother could do such a thing, and was kind enough to have kept the secret for me. The only problem was I could only do that for her every so often

as the strain of animating those tiny dolls for more than ten or fifteen minutes gave me constant migraines.

I was always getting medicine prescribed for my headaches, but those always clouded my abilities. I had to learn to be careful because the only real treatment that wouldn't disrupt me was caffeine, and even caffeine could create mental obstacles. I came back into the real world as class started. Professor West began speaking about Isaac Newton, which was to be expected on the first day of Physics 101.

The class was pretty easy because the professor didn't linger on one topic too long. She had us go through our books and answer the questions independently. On top of that, she didn't issue any work since it was the first day. This might end up being my favorite class, I thought to myself. I wasn't sure quite yet, since I still had four others.

Lunch period came quickly, and I headed straight to my dorm room. The main building, which for some reason was building number 3, had a side exit, which I used in case Professor Reynolds was scouting for me in the hallway. Once inside my room, I found no sign of Maurice. Good, I had alone time.

I grabbed my overused razor out my drawer and headed to the bathroom. My mental abilities faded easily so I made

sure I did very simple tasks using telekinesis. That way it wasn't too taxing on my brain, and I wouldn't find myself using twice the energy on the same task a week later. I levitated the razor and brought it to my face mentally. It was a little harder to shave with it than by hand, but it was worth it. It kept me occupied an extra ten minutes since I wasn't planning on eating. It might have been the stress of the travel, but I had absolutely no appetite. After I shaved, I headed out of the room only to see Maurice and yet another one of his new sports buddies.

It looked like their morning was spent in practice because they were in gym clothes despite the cold weather. Maurice glared at me.

“You broke my back pack earlier. You thought that was funny, didn't you, little punk?” he shouted.

“Don't be ridiculous. You know I didn't touch your backpack. Wear both straps on your shoulders and maybe it wouldn't break,” I replied.

“Oh, I see how it's gonna be now. You gonna try and ridicule me? How about you pay the forty dollars and I'll let it go?” he said.

“Oh? Really? 'Cause it seems to me you're in a bit of a situation. Ask anyone, and I'll bet they didn't see me lay a finger on your backpack. Therefore, I am not responsible for

the damages,” I challenged. At this point, I gleamed his mind to see how angry he was, and it turns out I had invaded his mind in just the right time.

He threw the duct-taped back pack at me, and I easily sidestepped it, letting it hit the floor. He charged at me, and at the point of impact, I grabbed his wrist and took the full charge, stepping backward. I went to the side forcing his wrist to follow my lead, sending him sprawling headfirst into the door behind me. He turned around and I was ready to predict his next attack, but his friend grabbed me from behind.

Ugh, what else could be expected from people like this? This loser was too afraid of taking a hit to take me on himself. Maurice sauntered toward me in angry triumph, but I channeled my mental energy toward one of his eyes. I couldn't physically see the energy, but I could sense it with my mind. I watched as the energy swarmed past his skull and carefully enveloped his eyeball.

As soon as I sensed his muscles contract for a punch, I forced the energy to implode, crushing a lot of blood vessels in his eye... nothing permanent, but painful, I was sure. It was a trick I picked up a long time ago and had mastered. Due to my height and my refusal to simper, I had been a



target of bullies who felt they had something to prove for years.

Maurice still faintheartedly landed his punch, but immediately afterward staggered back, hand over his eye. At this point, I head-butted his noticeably smaller friend with the back of my skull, causing him to push me toward Maurice. Maurice was enraged and shoved me toward the wall. I absorbed the impact with my right arm, and then hit the brick wall lightly with my back.

Before we could do anything further, there was a loud *boom*. The boom was followed by screaming, and we could see a pillar of flames in the distance. I ignored the other two and ran over. To no one's surprise, the shuttles had suddenly paused in their routes, but the explosion was nearby over in building 16. I ran over toward the explosion and had to focus on the rising column of smoke to block out the incessant chatter of the gathered mass.

Building 16 was actually a small communications center where our school public affairs and other affiliated classes were handled. Somebody had blown it up. It took about thirty minutes for the fire department to get to the site of the explosion and save the day. In the meantime, the school security and random faculty members had been handling crowd control, keeping the wannabe heroes from

endangering themselves (and, in the process, the real emergency workers would have to rescue them).

I looked at my watch: 12:27. Good... lunch period for me was over at 12:45; I could use this as an excuse for Professor Reynolds, who I spotted nearby. After a little over an hour, it was released that a female student had carried a hand-made bomb inside and blown the building while inside it; people started believing it was some kind of terrorist attack.

“Could it have been a terrorist?”

“Why this school though?”

“Why would anyone want to do this?”

These were some of the questions asked.

A little way off from the gathered crowd, I saw the oddly shaped assistant from Professor Reynolds' orientation. I found it suspicious, the way he was just standing there looking like he knew exactly what happened. I walked over to him. I decided to play dumb while I tried to gleam his mind, and see if he really did have a connection to all this. I was studying forensic psychology, after all.

“What do you want?” he asked.

“My name's Felix... yours?” I asked. *Randy* filled the top of his mind. He looked at me blankly.

“Randy J. Simmons. You didn’t answer my question,” he responded.

“I was just wondering if you knew what happened here,” I said. The words became foggy as if he was trying to say his own words before thinking them.

“A student here blew the place up,” he answered. I tried harder.

“Did you know the student?”

“Yes,” he said.

Hmm... this guy was as cocky and anti-social as me.

“Do you think it was a terrorist?” I asked him. The wordless, jagged energy of anger filled his mind, and I knew I’d hit a soft spot.

“No, she was a graduate student here, and a good friend, thank you very much,” he huffed as he began walking off. I didn’t want to exacerbate things too much, but I began following him.

“I’m sorry for your loss,” I said to him, but he kept walking.

“No you’re not. You don’t even know either of us.” Well, he was right. I was just trying to hold his attention while I cracked into his mind. I could only sense what people were thinking, but this guy seemed to speak before he thought, which made things complicated.

“Why are you following me?” he asked.

“I just want to talk,” I explained. I was not going to get through to his thoughts like this. The bad thing about being socially independent was when I needed to persuade someone, I could not always do a very good job of it.

After he walked off, I took one more step, as to follow, but felt a telekinetic wall hit me. It was literally like running into a brick wall, similar to the fight I’d been in earlier, but it was thin air. I stopped and thought about it for a second.

There was no way I could have accidentally done this, not a chance. That kind of energy would leave a severe headache that would last at least an hour. I looked at Randy; he kept walking like nothing happened, and I couldn’t sense any kind of pain coming from him. Was he the one that did this? Did he have the same abilities as me?

I looked around. There appeared to be no one that was acutely focused on me so I headed back to the crowd casually. I was no longer worried about Randy Simmons’ involvement in the bombing. I needed to figure out who else in this school possessed similar telepathic abilities. This person was much better at it than I was, and that could prove either very helpful, or very troublesome.

