

# The Invaders

By: Faryn C.

The wolves stalked the house in chorus with the wind. The snarl sounded so far, but it was right next to me. The full moon gleamed, as if to taunt me, that I was victim to one of its creations.

I heard the piercing battle cry slice through the air. I heard the yelps of injured wolves in agony. Then, an eerie silence. I held my breath as it hung in the air. I heard the jiggling of the door handle, followed by the squeaking of boots on the hardwood floors. The air stood still in my stuffy bedroom closet. The light that was seeping into my closet from my bedroom was soon blocked by the stranger's shadow.

"Open the door miss, I mean you no harm," a voice came from outside the closet. I really didn't want to, but something in his voice made me open the door. I brushed my hair out of my eyes. My face was wet with tears.

I stood to find a boy no taller than me. For such a young man his face was very worn. He had dirty blonde hair and his bangs covered one of his dark green eyes. He was wearing an old worn out black jacket. One of the arms of the jacket was torn off and I could see scratches all around his shoulder. In his hand a silver knife. "What is your name?" The boy asked. "Who wants to know?" I replied. He calmly put out his hand for me to shake. "My name is Caleb."

I reached out to shake it then stopped. On his hand I saw specks of blood. "Um, mine is Helen." I said. "Okay, now that we are properly introduced -," "Properly introduced?" I interrupted. "You are literally a random guy that broke into my house carrying a knife. I do not think that we are properly introduced." "Whoa, back off I "literally" just saved you from a pack of werewolves," he replied arrogantly, "You don't have to be so rude."

"Sorry, it's just that this is all so crazy. I never been a situation like this. Usually I sleep through this stuff because my parents are here to protect me, but they disappeared last week, and I never got attacked until tonight," I said.

There was a flash of something in the Caleb's eyes. Usually I can catch stuff like this, but it went by quick I could barely get a glimpse, but I could still see it.

"Well, we should get some rest so we can start walking in the morning. We don't want to be walking around while it's night" Caleb said, nodding his head toward the window. As if right on cue, a wolf howled. I did a mock gasp and said, "Really? Because I was thinking on walking and enjoying the moonlight and being eaten by wolves". To my surprise, Caleb cracked a smile.

"Okay, but before you do that, can you show me where I'll be sleeping? I haven't slept in a comfortable place in ages" asked Caleb. "What do you mean sleeping?" "Well I have to stay somewhere don't I?" After a long pause I finally said, "Down the hall 3rd door to the right." After he left, I crawled into bed. As soon my head hit the pillow, I fell into a deep sleep.

When I woke up the next morning, I could smell pancakes, bacon, and eggs, which all made my stomach growl. I walked in the kitchen to find a feast piled on the tiny table. I heard water running in the bathroom. About 5 minutes later, Caleb came out looking startled at first then said "Good morning. I thought you would be out for another hour or so," I shrugged and started digging in.

The food tasted almost as good as my mother would have made it, you know after the breakout...The clap of hands in front of my face startled me out of my thoughts.

“Good, now you can finally listen to the plan”, said Caleb. He spread a map of all of Montana on the floor. “Okay, there is a Walmart about 100 miles down South” He traced his finger towards the bottom of the map and stopped at a happy face sticker 10 centimeters off where we are. “We can get there by night if we take an ATV down the old dirt road. No one has ever claimed any of the land yet, so we can take it without any inconvenience”.

I nodded like I understood.

“Alright, we better get ready,” said Caleb

I went into the bathroom to wash up and stopped to look at the mirror. I inspected my face and hands. I realized this was the 1st time I have looked in the mirror since the outbreak.

My hazel eyes had bags under them and my dark brown hair was so tangled, it looked like a birds nest. I didn't know how to use the washing machine so my clothes were extremely dirty.

I then noticed Caleb standing in the doorway, a look of concern on his face. I turned to look at him. “How old are you?” He asked. “Twelve,” I replied. His face then went from concerned to sympathetic. “What?” I asked. “Nothing,” he quickly replied. “It's just that, um, we should get going,” he said. I put my most important belongings into my favorite blue backpack. It used to be my mom's favorite, too.

I tied my mangled hair in a bun and met Caleb in the dining room. He brought a duffel bag of his own and it looked so stuffed I was afraid it might explode. We walked out the door with our bags and started walking. Caleb turned around to face me. The sun was in my eyes but I could make out a smile on his face

“The quest begins”