

ALIUM

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**by, John M.
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*To All MY Loyal Fans. It's been
a while.*

PART I:

Lucas

I

The woods were endless, with only the light of the moon shining down on him. Lucas remembered nearly nothing. Nothing about his family, nothing about his friends, not even where he lived. What he did remember was his own name: Lucas Wright; his age, fifteen; and some basic education facts. Lucas was mad at himself for knowing how to find the perimeter of a triangle, but not knowing who his parents were. He was in the middle of a woody clearing somewhere in the middle of nowhere. He had had on a pair of

gym shorts, an Under-Armor shirt,
and a pair of those over-hyped
basketball socks.

“It was particularly chilly,”
Lucas said aloud, to no one.

“Temperatures felt like they had
even dipped down to the thirties,
which was off for the end of
October.” Huzzah! He remembered
something else: the month. “Could it
be gradual? Could I possibly regain
my memory over time?”

Lucas then decided he should
probably focus on the bigger
problem at hand: where the hell was
he? The woods looked like they
went on for a long time behind him,
with many trails looping in and

around the forest. However, the woods in front of him looked like they ended in about a kilometer. He walked with his hands in his pockets, shivering at the unrealistically cold weather.

Lucas came out of the woods eventually, and saw he was on a gravelly cliff. There was about a twenty foot drop down to a dirt road, that looked like it went on for a tiny bit, and then trailed into some more abundant woods. This happened both ways. The cliff had many dangerously sharp rocks on it, that looked like he may cut himself on if he wasn't careful.

Then he realized the most out-of-place aspect of the whole situation: there was a house across the dirt road that looked like it belonged in some Rhode Island suburb. It was completely out of place for the middle of the woods.

He thought about going towards the house, but was wondering if it was a ploy for some serial killer to chain him up and cut him into little pieces. There were several lights on in the house, which was strange for the middle of the night. And although his mind told him not to go near the house, he instinct told him it was the right thing to do. If some serial killer didn't get him in the house,

then he would die of starvation from being out in the woods. Although, he had seen enough Man vs. Wild to get him through at least a week...

Regardless, Lucas went to his right, down some rocks that looked like they were fashioned into some sort of stairs, and walked down them, until he was at a point to get off the rocky cliff.

As he approached the house, he saw some details more closely. He saw a basketball hoop that had been lowered down to about eight feet instead of the regulation ten. He walked even closer, and noticed that the basketball hoop was mounted into a black-tarred driveway. Lucas

saw two, white, large garage-doors that were on the side of the house, about 20 feet from where the basketball hoop was mounted in.

Next to the garage, there were some strange panels that looked as though they managed the heating and air-conditioning of the house.

Lucas peered past some bushes lined down the very end of the driveway, beginning at the garage, and noticed a black, gate that seemed to open and lead into a pool, which appeared to be closed for the season.

Lucas decided it was time to stop looking around, and actually enter the house.

He tried to tug one of the garages up, but they were locked. He looked in through one of the garage windows, but it was too dusty to see through, and looked as though it had been locked from the inside.

Lucas figured there was only one thing left to do: knock on the front door.

Lucas made his way along the small rocky, walkway up to the recently painted black front door. When he finally reached the front door, he knocked on it with two large THUD's. He looked in through the small glass panels into the house, and observed that the front door led into a front foyer, with a closet and

large, wooden staircase upstairs. He was moving over the lock through the panel on the other side, when the door finally opened.

Lucas was about to be confronted with fear itself. He was expecting a middle-aged guy with a gross, unshaven beard, weird eyes and unwashed clothes, who would grab him and pull him into the kitchen where the man kept his knife collection.

Fortunately, Lucas was wrong.

The door was answered by a pretty girl with long black hair, jeans and a tank-top. Lucas looked at her for a moment, like an old-western film where the protagonist and the villain

would size each other up. But then realized she probably didn't pose a threat.

“Uh, hi,” Lucas said to her, offering a hand, “my name is Lucas. Could you tell me where I am?”

“Hi there,” she said, flirtatiously, “Kelly Nemmer.”

II

“Well Hi Kelly,” Lucas said to her. “Do you live here?”

“No. Well... Kind of?” she replied back to him. She was sizing him up, judging what to make of him.

“You kind of live here?” he asked her. “Look, I woke up in the woods, and have some kind of amnesia, so I don’t really remember where I’m from.”

“Then you’re one of us!” she said to him. “Come in, come in! It’s gotten cold out huh?”

“Uh, yeah, I guess,” he said back, entering the house. It was nice inside, lots of decorations, and a red armoire lighting up the room. “Uh, so where am I?”

“We don’t know,” Kelly said to him, standing there in the foyer.

“There are four of us here at the house, two more at the infirmary. We all woke up in the woods and

made our way to the House from there. None of us remember anything before that. Nothing personal anyway, we know how to talk and the presidents and everything like that.”

“So who’s house is this?” Lucas asked, looking around the place, and seeing a nice living room through an open-wall, which was to the left of the foyer.

“When Lily, the first girl to get here came, there was a message playing over a loudspeaker system. It said we’re at a place called the ‘Facultas House’, and that it’s a place that serves a paradise for teenagers.”

“What if we don’t want to be here at paradise?” Lucas asked her back.

“Well see, as each one of us came here, we learned more and more about the house. Its run by a supercomputer called Antallon and there’s a Barrier in the woods to prevent kids from leaving.”

“Are you kidding me!?” Lucas asked her. “That’s insane!!”

“Well Lucas,” she said to him, “where would you go to? All your memories are gone. You don’t know who your family is.”

Lucas sighed. He knew she was right. But what could he do? Just stay in the weirdo house and live it up? He could have family out beyond the sea of woods worried sick about where he was.

“What about school?” Lucas asked her.

“What about it?” she replied. “They probably only have a set amount of time kids are in here before they’re returned. Our memories of it may even be wiped clean afterwards!”

Lucas sighed. He understood what she was saying, and realized that she may be right, and he could just stay here with her and whatever other kids were there. That could be nice, he thought. Kelly was pretty and she was doing one of those things girls

did when they were attracted to you: the flipping of the hair, the fluttering of the eyes, and that one voice tone. He sighed again.

“Alright. Would you mind showing me around?” he asked her, with a smile on his face (not sure whether or not it was real).

“Not at all!” she replied back, joyously. He took his hand and tugged it, dragging him a little bit to the small room to the left of the foyer.

They entered the room, and Trent noticed it was mostly decoration. There was a nice couch, and a little coffee table with some small empty picture frames. There also appeared to be some other useless decorations, like a rug and some fake flowers on a stand in the corner.

“This is the room that we pretty much just go past on our way to the living room or the kitchen,” she said.

Still having tight hold of his hand, she pushed decorative glass door

open to reveal a nice room with a leather couch, leather recliner and several windows. As they entered the room further, Lucas saw a medium-sized TV against one of the walls, and a couple iMacs against the other.

“The TV is pretty good, we can’t watch in real time, but it has a Netflix-type service. The computers are sweet too, but there’s no Facebook, Twitter, email et cetera.”

“Okay,” he said to her. She pulled him in a loop out of the living room and through the nothing room into the kitchen. The kitchen was actually quite impressive. There was a large fridge, a bar-type counter and a dining table with six seats.

Through the opening-way was a fantastic second living room. There was an enormous television mounted on the wall over a fireplace, and a long, fluffy, felt couch right in the center.

Lucas, contrary to all other opinions, thought that this was a nice house.

III

“Hey guys! Come on down, we have a new friend!” Kelly shouted up a flight of stairs that ran up the living room wall. She waited, still having hold of his hand, which Lucas wouldn’t object to. What he object to a bit, though was being called a ‘new friend’. It seemed a bit strange to refer to him as such, but Lucas couldn’t think of a much better term. Several feet were heard running down the front steps, then took a few turns into the kitchen, and then to the nice living room.

“Guys, this is Lucas,” she said, gesturing to all the three of them, “and Lucas this is Lily, Sabrina and Harrison!”

Lucas took a moment to judge them all, because apparently he could do that best. His favorite of the four was still Kelly, but Harrison seemed cool. Mainly because he was the only other guy. Harrison was a medium height, around the age of a fourteen year-old, and had a mopyy blonde head of head that sat atop a lanky body. He didn't look like he was into weight-lifting that much, but was well-built either way. He wore a New York Yankees shirt and

a pair of boisterous, bright
strawberry red gym shorts.
After Harrison was Sabrina. She
was *pretty*. That was the first
reaction because it was the first
thing that mattered. She was a pale
caramel skin tone, short and a little
chubbier. She wasn't fat by any
means, but Kelly was so incredibly
trim, she was bigger than Kelly.
Lucas thought of her as a potential
girlfriend, but figured she probably
already had a boyfriend wherever
she came from, who wouldn't be
happy to learn about him. She was
out of his ugly league anyway. But
Kelly wasn't.

And Lily wasn't either. Lily seemed to be some kind of goth, with black eye shadow and weird designed pants. She was genuinely nice though, so there was no reason to hold that against her. She also had blonde hair, which is usually a normal trait, but she was one of those people whose hair was much closer to white than blonde, with small streaks of pink on the back edges.

Lucas let go of Kelly's now-sweaty hand to shake Harrison's which was equally sweaty. Or he hoped it was, and that it wasn't his own. Lucas hated those guys who always shook

with a hand that felt as though it had just been pulled out of a hot tub.

“It’s a pleasure,” Harrison said, with a small smile. “Welcome aboard!”

“Thank you,” Lucas said to him, moving a foot over to shake Sabrina’s hand. She gave him a small smile, shaking back, and then one more small step to shake Lily’s hand, which had a couple of rings on it.

He then took a few steps back getting next to Kelly between the couch and the wall.

There were about 12 awkward seconds of silence.

“So, uh, what exactly can I do here?” Lucas asked them.

They all gave a ‘uhh…’ moment before Lily replied.

“Well, you can watch TV, I’m sure Kelly showed you, go onto the super secure internet that’s pretty much locked up.”

“I’m sure your room will be unlocked by tonight,” Sabrina said.

“Unlocked?” Lucas asked them, perplexed.

“At the house we have a key card system that opens the doors to special rooms,” Kelly said, turning to him, “like our own personal bedrooms, and the living room if it isn’t open, and the basement.”

“What about the front door?”

Lucas asked her back. He observed the others, who had apparently quickly caught on that Kelly was interested in him.

“That just has a straight-up key to unlock it,” Harrison added, trying to get Lucas and Kelly out of staring at each other. “Your room is always locked until you show up, and is opened either the morning you get there or that night.”

“Where do I get my swipe key?” Lucas asked.

“Well, the pantry and fridge have a sort-of lever system that navigate down to who-knows where,” Lily explained, “and food is

placed on to restock them both. We all got our keys when more food came up.”

“Where does the food come from?” he shot back at them.

“Dude, we don’t have all the frickin’ answers!!” Harrison said, obviously mad at him by now. He decided to leave through the kitchen, and was heard going up the front wooden stairs.

“Is that it?” Lucas asked them.

“Yup,” Sabrina said to him.

“Pretty much,” Lily agreed.

As they left, Kelly interlocked her fingers between his, and said softly, “not quite.”

IV

Kelly led Lucas through the kitchen and nothing room back into the living room with all of the computers. She sat in the chair in front of the many computer screens, and Lucas pulled up a chair to sit next to her.

“This is probably the most fun game you will ever play,” she said to him. She was typing in many weird things onto the computer that Lucas couldn’t recognize at the moment.

“What happens in it?” he asked her back.

“Well, you put on this helmet,” she said to him, crawling under the table and pulling up a strange looking helmet from below, “and the computer program simulates whatever you’re thinking at that time.”

“What does that mean?” he asked her back.

“You can think of yourself flying somewhere in the world, and you will,” Kelly said back. “It pretty much gets as simple as that.”

“But I can’t imagine my family or friends or anything?” he said back to her.

“Not unless you have memories of them.”

Lucas hesitated for a moment before moving over to where Kelly had sat. He put the helmet on his head. It smelt strongly of leather, and there were goggle components over his eyes that seemed to be screens, like those Google-Glass things.

“How long am I under for?” he asked her, moving the helmet up a little bit from over his eyes.

“Until the dream’s over.”

“What does that mean?” he asked. She sighed.

“Well the longest I’ve ever been under for is about four hours, and the longest any of us have been under for is Harrison with 2 full days.”

“Two days!?” Lucas asked her, pretty worried now. “How do we even know I’ll wake up from this?”

“We all did. I mean, Sabrina doesn’t do it anymore because whatever she tried to imagine really screwed her the hell up.”

“That’s reassuring,” he gave her a look in the eyes while saying. “Can anyone else see what’s being projected on the screen?”

“No, that’s what the helmet’s for. The computer screen will be entirely green while you’re under. When you wake up, you’ll see the screen for a minute, then it will go entirely black. That’s when you know you’re awake.”

“So are you saying this could turn into some kind of Inception, and if the screen doesn’t go black then I’m still dreaming?” Lucas was pretty proud of himself on that one. He was starting to regain some pop culture reference skills back.

“Yeah. But don’t worry about really. How bout this: if you aren’t back by 8 tonight, then I’ll turn the program off?”

“Uh,” he hesitated once more.

“That’s safe right?”

“Completely!” she said back.

She took his hand again, to which Lucas just smiled, and put the helmet back on, fully over his eyes.

He heard her press a few buttons on the computer, and she let go off his hand.

There was a large flash. And then he was gone.

V

There were very few things he could remember. Lucas's head was spinning from the whole experience, and there were bright lights that kept going up and down in his head. He remembered walking around in the woods outside. And Kelly was there briefly. He couldn't even focus on what was happening in real time his mind was so discombobulated.

There were random flashes in and out of scenes from the dream, including a knife, a pistol, a huge drop down to a watery death, some

blood for a little while, and even a flash of his own face.

Lucas pulled the helmet from his face, and immediately was rubbing his eyes. He had a terrible headache that made it feel like his brain was splitting in two.

He saw the screen lit up in green for a split second before it disappeared to black. Lucas could now not see anything. He fell from the wood chair where he was sitting onto the carpeted floor, and it was there he realized that his hearing was gone too.

There was ringing in his ears that got louder and louder over several

seconds before they ‘popped’ and his ability to hear had returned.

Lucas crawled a few inches forward, behind the chair and felt around him to make sure he wasn’t going to smack his head on the coffee table.

The window blinds were shut, which wouldn’t make much of a difference to the room’s interior since it was pitch black out. Lucas wished he was wearing a watch to tell what time it was, and to know how soon Kelly would come to get him.

Lucas crawled a few more inches forward before seeing pink sock on the floor in front of him. The sock clothed a foot, and the foot connected to a leg, the leg, was of

course supporting a person: Kelly. She was smiling a lot, and reached out her small hand for him to use as support to stand up.

“What was the meaning of that!?” Lucas asked her, as he stood up.

“It’s eight o’clock! You were under pretty deep!” she said back.

“I can’t remember much of it,” he said to her.

“Hmm. That’s odd. Maybe it’s an effect of me shutting the system down?”

“Well I’d rather that than missing a few days of stuff.”

She gave a small giggle, and he grinned. They joined hands and

Kelly lead them out of the living
room, towards the kitchen.

VI

When they entered the kitchen, Sabrina was sitting at the round table using her iPod Touch, while Lily was going through a couple of cabinets and Harrison was pulling stuff out of the fridge.

“Dinner time?” Lucas asked them all.

Sabrina remained motionless, but Harrison gave a nod of his head, and a small ‘yeah’ could be heard from Lily.

“What do you guys usually have?” he asked them, just seeing if any of them might reply.

“Uh, it depends on what we get sent,” Harrison said to him, pulling out a large bowl of freshly made mashed potatoes. Lily was taking out some bottles of water from the cabinet. “Sometimes we’ll get basic stuff like hamburgers, and other times we’ll get things like filet mignon and squash. Tonight is turkey and mashed potatoes! Yum!” Lucas wanted to ask them the obvious question that was staying on his mind: how long have you guys been at the house? He felt it would be an uncomfortable question to ask them, though, as someone like Harrison talked about the food like he had grown

accustomed to what the schedule was each night.

Harrison had finished pulling the food out of the fridge, and he pulled out a small credit-card looking object that he tossed to Lucas.

“That’s your card,” Harrison said to Lucas. “You’ll use it to get into your room, sometimes the living room when it’s locked and open any windows.”

Lucas took the card and looked at it. It seemed very basic. There were no numbers or letters on it. It was just a plain, white, plastic card with a black dot on the back side.

“Where’s my room?” Lucas asked them.

“Yours is right across the hall from mine,” Harrison said, finishing putting silverware and placemats on the table. “I’ll show it to you after dinner.”

Harrison and Lily had finished setting up the table with plates and foods bowls and drinks.

“Dinner is served!” Lily announced.

They all walked over the table which had two heads, and two chairs on each side. Sabrina sat at the head of the table where she was while she used her iPod, and Kelly on her left. Lucas sat across from Kelly, and to Sabrina’s right. Harrison was next to Lucas, and Lily was next to Kelly.

Harrison began scooping mashed potatoes onto his plate, Lily took a spoonful of corn and Sabrina began to carve the turkey. Lucas sat there for a moment, not sure what to say in a conversation. When Harrison was finished, Lucas took a big helping of mashed potatoes and dug right in, waiting to get the turkey after Sabrina was done. The turkey was passed around the table, each of the teens getting a good portion of it. Not many people went for the corn, only Lily and Sabrina, which was understandable to Lucas: if he was going to be by himself without any parents, then he would help himself to eating whatever he wanted.

They all ate somewhat fast, and Lucas wasn't sure whether or not to open discussion, since they were all so in love with the food.

“So how old are you guys?”

Lucas asked them, as he was about finished with his supper.

“I don't remember, but I guessed around thirteen or fourteen,” Harrison said. “Everyone else remembered how old they were but me.”

“I'm fifteen,” Kelly said. “So is Sabrina, and Lily's fourteen.”

“Yeah,” Sabrina said, smiling lightly. Lily didn't look up.

“I'm fifteen too,” Lucas said.

Lucas hardly knew the other kids at the suspicious house with him, but he had begun to profile them. He could tell that Harrison was the cliché sidekick in the story, and was only there to add exposition to the story. Lucas could see himself bonding with Harrison over time though. Kelly was easy, since he had talked with her the most. She liked him, and he liked her. Her seductive ways were all that was on the surface, though, which made Lucas unsure whether or not she actually had a good personality, or was intelligent or anything like that. That probably didn't matter though, since they would have a good relationship

together at the house. Unless of course it was Lily's foot on his during dinner. Lily was a very hard-to-read person, and seemed like 'that goth kid'. She apparently didn't talk much, even less than Sabrina, and Lucas could assume she spends most of the day in her room.

Sabrina, the final one there, was the hardest to read. He already knew how drop-dead hot she was, and she seemed to have a nice and bubbly personality underneath her extremely shy face. He thought she and Kelly might get along well, and they may be even similar if Sabrina ever got a boyfriend, or another guy

came to house she was into, because Lucas knew Harrison was not it. Lucas began to wonder if while he was judging them all that he had awkwardly paused and stared at each of them individually for a time. Before he could find an answer, he had to pee.

“Is there a bathroom here?”

Lucas asked them.

“No,” Harrison replied, extremely cartoony and sarcastic. He also shook his head back and forth in an animated fashion while saying this, confirming that he was terrible at telling jokes. Lucas gave him a solemn stare, and waited for a reply for someone.

“It’s in the little hallway there,”
Sabrina said, pointing behind her,
where there was apparently a little
hallway. Lucas got up to head to the
bathroom, and saw the little hallway
lead to the front foyer, and hidden in
front of him, next to the foyer was
an opened door, that revealed a pink
bedroom.

He looked to his left and right, white
doors on both sides. He used his
swipe card to open the one on his
right. He looked down and saw
there were unfinished wood stairs
leading down to a pile of darkness.
This must be the basement.

VII

“Hey guys, what’s in the basement?” Lucas asked them, staring down into the deep darkness beyond the wood stairs.

“We don’t really go down there,” Lily offered.

“Well have you ever been down there?” he asked, looking at them at the end of the little hallway.

“I have,” Harrison said. “It’s really dark and the lights don’t work. I was afraid of what might be down there, but it’s actually mostly empty.”

“Why don’t we all go down there then?” Lucas said to them all. He walked out of the little hallway to see their reactions.

Kelly looked down at her food, before replying, “sure!” with a smile. Sabrina gave the same reaction, and Harrison and Lily just kind of went along with it, not sure what they had gotten into.

Lucas went to the bathroom, and as he was washing his hands wondered if this had gotten him into the group, or if it had dug his grave.

He returned to the table, where he sat as the others finished their food. It was still awkwardly silent, which made Lucas wonder if he was

keeping the group back from acting as they normally would. He also thought it may be awkward if the others thought he and Kelly were a thing. With only five kids, it would be awkward if two of them were dating and showed it publicly all the time.

When the time came and their meals were done, Lucas enthusiastically cleaned up the table. Harrison instructed him to drop the plates and unfinished foods in the fridge and it would replenish the next night.

Lucas was kind of confused on how the whole 'supercomputer running the house' thing worked. His memory had nearly dulled from his

arrival that morning when Kelly told him about how the house worked. He wasn't sure if his food was drugged or if it was still his trying to regain consciousness from the computer-dream thing.

Lucas felt really guilty how much he was enjoying the house though, since he probably had parents somewhere in the world wondering where he was. He also felt guilty if he had a girlfriend wherever he lived worried about him. He couldn't remember though, so he would live it up while he was at this house.

“Do you guys have any flashlights?” Lucas asked them.

“Yeah, in the back room there,”
Sabrina said pointing at a white door
behind her, and next to several
cabinets. “They’re on top of the
washing machine.”

Lucas opened the white door and
saw a small room. Inside the room
was a couple of jackets hanging up
and a large clothing washer, and a
dryer right next to it. The flashlights
were on top of the washing machine
as promised, and he grabbed all
three of them. Lucas pressed a
button on the bottom of it and the
unrealistically bright, bluish white.
He immediately turned it off, since it
had nearly blinded him.

Lucas took them and handed one of to Lily and one to Sabrina.

“So are we gonna partner up?”

Sabrina questioned.

“That will work,” Harrison said.

“Kelly and Lucas will go together, obviously.” Lucas didn’t really like the way he said that, but knew Harrison wasn’t wrong, because he would have chosen Kelly anyway.

“I’ll go alone,” Sabrina said.

“There are five people, so one of us needs to be.” Lucas felt bad. If there was a murderer, a pretty face like Sabrina’s would definitely be the first to go, being all alone. And in the horror movies, somebody like

her would definitely be the cliché
'first to die'.

“And myself and Harrison
would work,” Lily said, going
towards the little hallway.

Lucas wondered why they would all
go with him down to the basement.
He had a feeling they were all really
good friends until he got here; but
they never did anything interesting
or fun. Maybe that was Lucas's
contribution to the team of teens?
Maybe he was the one who would
bring them all to life. He had a
feeling that if they all still had their
memory that together, the team
would find a way out of the house.
However, he really liked Kelly, and

wouldn't mind staying with her for a while. The others were alright too, and he had already begun thinking of them as a joint band of lovable misfits.

With that, Lucas and the Lovable Misfits began to descend to the basement.

VIII

Lucas and Kelly were without question holding hands. The basement could be a frightening place, and he was happy to be there for Kelly.

Going to the basement was kind of like taking a girl to a horror movie, Lucas thought, where she would be terrified and he score. The only difference is that the 3D is so real, if there was an axe-yielding lunatic around, they would actually die.

Lucas also questioned what his relationship with Kelly would turn out to be. She obviously liked him,

and he, over the day, grew to like her, but he wondered what asking her out would mean. He understood that there were no adults around and all, and what teenage couples usually do in that scenario, but Lucas wasn't ready to rush into anything. Did he even really have to ask her out since they already held hands and obviously liked each other? Lucas figured it was probably the right thing to do.

They just about got to the bottom of the stairs and Kelly's hand began to get really sweaty. When they got to the very bottom his bare foot touched the chilling concrete, and it sent a chill up his spine, and

throughout his whole body. He felt the same thing happen to Kelly.

He clicked on the flashlight, and saw Kelly's illuminated, pretty face. She ultimately closed her eyes when the powerful light shone deep into her skull. The two separated from the others, taking a left instead of right, and visualizing what was in the basement.

Firstly, the basement was enormous. There were many cardboard boxes around that were entirely empty, and many pipes running along the walls. The basement was unfinished, so it wasn't as nice as many other basements. There were many shelves around the basement with

some books on them. They looked really old and boring in Lucas's eyes. Lucas and Kelly proceeded forward towards the shelves, and just kind of in every which direction until they came to a little opening between a huge shelf and a wall. There were weird panels covering the entire wall on the left, and a bunch of decorations and other junk on the right. They walked down the little hall until they came to a cement wall with an awkward shaped piece of wood making up the bottom half. Lucas felt it and wondered why it was there, and why it looked so odd in that sort of design. It stuck out a little bit, and Lucas wondered

whether he should pull it off or not to see if there was any treasure hidden behind it. Kelly was ultimately pulling him away though, and he wouldn't damage the house anyway. Lucas and Kelly wondered throughout the basement a little more, seeing very little, and wondered why it was perceived as so creepy. They eventually came across the other three again.

“This place isn't that bad,” Sabrina said to them. “It's actually kinda cool.”

“Yeah,” Harrison added, “we found a couch and old TV over there.” He pointed behind him. “I

think I'm gonna chill down here for a while."

"Not me," Lucas said. "I'm pretty tired, and it's been a long day."

"A long day you spent almost all of on that stupid computer?" Lily asked.

Lucas did think it was a little ridiculous that he had spent too much time on it.

"I'm gonna head up too," Kelly said. Lucas wondered if there was any subtext to this.

"We'll be down here," Sabrina said to them, waving bye.

Lucas's eyes had adjusted, so he left his flashlight with Lily, Harrison and

Sabrina. He then lead Kelly and himself

IX

After opening the door to a little light, Lucas wondered how long he would be at the house. He wondered whether he and the others would stay there for only a few days more or even maybe a few weeks. He began to wonder if he would stay there his entire life, and would never remember who he was. What would it be like when he was sick, or if he hurt himself badly? Lucas also wondered about education. At best guess, he was a freshman, and that was no education to get through life on. If he remained at the house,

though, he wouldn't have to worry about getting a job or providing for his family. As of that moment, no matter how sappy it seemed, the other teens at the house with him were his family.

Lucas was wondering where Kelly could be taking him, and how many more places in the house he hadn't seen. He felt his card wobbling around in his shorts pocket and wondered if there were any other pointless things like that in the house.

When he shut the basement door, Kelly lead him to the right and through the white door to what Lucas believed to be her room. She

left the door open, and looked
directly up at Lucas.

Lucas had no clue what to say at all,
but it looked as though he didn't
have to do any talking whatsoever,
because that was when she kissed
him.

X

Lucas wasn't sure whether it was a joke or not when the doorbell rang. He thought that Kelly could have told the others and they were playing a practical joke on him, but he doubted it. He was stuck in that very moment and didn't feel like anything beyond it mattered.

Kelly didn't feel that way, though. She stopped kissing him, and made an irritated look at the door.

“We should probably get that,” she said to him.

Lucas couldn't tell whether or not she was going to add an “or not…”

onto the end of the sentence. It looked like she was serious because she opened the door for him, and they both stepped into the hallway.

“How often do new kids get here?” Lucas asked her, as they made their way to the door.

“You’re the first in three days. I got here before you.”

“You’ve only been here three days?” Lucas asked. He should have been opening the door, but was astonished. The way Kelly talked, it seemed like she had been at the house for several weeks at the very least.

Kelly shrugged, and Lucas guessed that it didn't really matter, she didn't lie or anything.

Lucas looked at the door, and noticed he had to swipe his key to open it, which seemed a little odd. He pulled the card from his pocket, and gave it a swift swipe through the card holder.

Lucas then turned the bolt lock on the door from one side to another, and pulled the knob right.

Standing on the mat outside of the door was a boy, about his age, with well-trimmed hair and a clean t-shirt and cargo shorts. Lucas was sizing the guy up, and wondering if he was another kid to be at the house. It

seemed off, since there were only five bed rooms. There was a couch, though... The circumstances were still weird.

“Hi, I’m Lucas Wright,” Lucas said to him, offering a hand, Kelly standing right behind.

“Trent Posterus.”

PART II:

Trent

December 2014

Trent always liked the seashore. There was a nice, cool breeze; water not too far away in case it was too hot; and just the right amount of people with him.

Only this trip to the shore was not like any other.

Trent was entirely alone.

It was very cold where he was, and the wind was strong. It was the end of October, so the water had gotten so cool, he dare not put his hand in to try the exact temperature. He wore a large wool jacket, and jeans that had some tears in them.

He would have worn a hat, but sometimes the wind would feel good in his long uncut hair. And his skin felt so exposed it was uncanny.

Trent stuck his freezing hands into his coat pocket, where on one side he felt two unopened boxes of matches, and on the other side, he felt a barely-loaded pistol.

Trent looked up to his left, at the long drop down to the deep ocean below. He would never have predicted there was a bit of beach down there, or he would have gone down there more often.

Trent began to think that he should start heading back, and that this was not the place for him. Too much pain. Too much suffering.

He walked up towards the woods again,
and looked back once more at the ocean
beneath the cliff, hoping he may never
have too see it again.

I looked into the small camera and saw the little light flash at the other end. I didn't know how long it would be before I was back, but I knew I didn't have long. Standing there, in that house that I had moved away from more than two years ago, I began to think that it was weird to be back. And that little camera that was set up between two dusty books when I was there last, was there when I returned.

Three Hours Earlier

When I heard a stern knock on my front door, I was wondering if my parents had returned early from their vacation for some reason. This was the first multi-day vacation they had taken in two years, since the whole 'Facultas House incident'.

I was delightfully surprised, thought, to see it wasn't my parents knocking on the door at 7:00 a.m., but my old friend Brandon, who I hadn't seen for at least four months.

“Hey Brandon,” I said to him, somewhat shocked to see him here. Brandon had moved to Philadelphia after the incident, and myself to New York City. Even though we were closer than the old North Carolina to New Haven difference, it was still weird to see him out-of-the-blue. All of our families agreed it was pretty much the safest thing to move states, in order to make sure we weren't kidnapped again. We never really got across the reason why we were kidnapped to them, because we would have been asylum-ed if we had told them that two scientists formerly associated

with Edgar Allan Poe harvested our blood in order to create their immortality serum.

“Hey Trent!” he said to me, strangely joyous. “How ya been!?”

“Uh, I been good thanks. How you been?” I replied to him. I could tell something strange was going on, but I didn’t really know what. Brandon had always been the jokester in our group of kidnappees, however this seemed weird happy, not jokester happy.

“Not bad, not bad! You mind if I come in?” he asked me.

“Not at all,” I said, opening the door wider, to let him into the house. Our new house was considerably big, since it just my parents and myself living in it. My dad’s job had some offices out in New York, and we found this place at a

reasonable rate for being just outside the city. "I'm making some coffee in the kitchen if you want any."

"I'm good," he said. He was looking around the house, which we had redecorated a bit since he was here last. "Where are your parents at?"

"They're at my mom's high school reunion upstate. They won't be back for a few more days."

"Hmm," I could hear him say, as he followed me into the kitchen from behind. He took a seat at the head of the kitchen table, so I sat at the other head, like we were at a meeting from one of those Mafia movies.

"How's Antonio been?" I asked him.

"Not bad at all," he responded back to me.

These conversations seemed like they were strangely one-dimensional.

“So, uh, why are you here?” I asked him. “No offense.”

“None taken,” he replied back to me. He paused for a couple of seconds. “Have you heard from Kelly lately?”

I hadn’t. Last time I saw Kelly in person was over a year ago. We had briefly exchanged some text messages since, but I hadn’t messaged her in the past month or two.

“Uh, no. Why do you ask?” I asked him. He had a straight face on now, like he was about to get some really heavy weights off of his chest.

“There’s no easy way to say this,” he told me.

I had a feeling I knew what he was going to tell me. He was going to say that she

met a hunk of a guy and they're dating. To which, I don't really care. I mean we never really had anything serious going on, we held hands like twice, and that in no way justifies we're dating. While this processed through my mind, I realized Brandon hadn't finished what he was going to say.

"Trent," he said, "I think she's been... Taken." My eyes widened and I had to process what he had just told me.

"What do you mean she's been taken!?" I said to him.

"Well, she won't reply to any of my messages, and she hasn't been on any social networks in the past two days!" I actually knew what he meant. Kelly could barely do English homework without tweeting it. "Plus, her sister's at college

now, and her parents are on a 'romantic weekend getaway'."

"Oh," I said back to him. "Well that's no sign she's been taken! But it is weird that she hasn't been on any Internet things."

"But, wait," he said. "Kelly is the only one out of the original five of us that stayed in his or her original house after we were sent to the Facultas House. You remember my theory that they had small scanners and cameras all over our rooms to vet us!? Maybe hers were still there!"

"Yeah," I said, "but didn't we kill Smith and Gunshot?"

"Antallon never died though, because it's a computer. And what if it's programmed to try this again?"

"Still, there are plenty of logical explanations," I said to him. I was starting

to buy that this may be real though. We all made a pact when we got out of the Facultas House two years ago to never joke about the incident, but Brandon could still be mistaken right?

“Only there’s one more thing,” Brandon said to me, “we all put the ‘Find My iPhone’ feature on our phones after we got out of the house. And I used Kelly’s forgot my password option on hers, and tracked it to the Facultas House’s coordinates in northern Canada.”

Session I

August, 2011

I don't need therapy.

That's a perfectly reasonable response

Trent.

Look, I know you're paid to get me past me over my emotional issues, but...

You don't need it. I get it. Another perfectly reasonable reply, Trent.

Yeah. And I totally appreciate how often you're saying my name.

...

...

Have you been seeing things at all since you arrived back?

No.

On a scale of one to ten, how much have you thought about the house?

I don't know maybe a four?

You don't know?

Look, this is really tiring, I'm only hear
under an order from state police.

I understand.

Do you know if they've found the house
yet?

*Even if they did, I wouldn't be allowed to
tell you.*

Then why am I here?

...

...

...

...

Have you felt depressed at all?

No!

*Tell me about the other kids that were
there with you.*

Well... There were two guys and two girls.

Brandon, Antonio, Jill and Kelly.

What were they like?

They were nice, I guess. I didn't talk with Antonio much. No one did.

Good! See, now you're opening up!

Fantastic.

What about the others? Would you consider yourself friends with any of them?

Well yeah. I never had many friends before the incident, and now we've all been through this together.

I see.

Brandon's pretty cool. He's already texted me a lot. Jill I don't expect to hear from, but she and Brandon were close. And, Kelly... Well she was pretty cool too.

You and her were close?

I never said that.

But you were?

Well yeah. I kinda liked her a little bit.

Did she like you?

I think so. I never made a move though,
so nothing could have happened.

I'm sure that isn't true.

...

...

How much time is left in this session?

10 more minutes.

...

What about the men there?

Yeah, ya know I already talked to the FBI
last week about them, so it's really...

Did they hurt you at all?

You're not a cop! And no!

What were their names?

How much time is left in this session?

*If you try to repress these feelings, then
you'll be killing yourself on the inside, and
you may never be healthy Trent.*

I told you about the kids there! That's probably enough for at least two more sessions!

Trent, you've been ordered to be here until a practicing psychiatrist, myself, considers you to healthy again. Only I can determine when that is.

...

...

How much time is left in this session?

...

...

You're free to go.

END OF SESSION I

**The Following is a Taped
Questioning of Kidnapping Victim
05: Trent James Posterus,
Conducted in the Presence of
FBI Special Agent Sean Johnson**

AUGUST 9th, 2011

SJ: Hello Trent, I'm Special Agent
Sean Johnson, how are you?

TP: I'm good Agent Johnson how are
you?

SJ: Good thanks. I'm going to ask
you a few questions about the terrible
incident that happened to you okay?

TP: Uh, sounds fine!

SJ: We've listened to the 911 call from your group several times, and we're understanding that you were taken to a mysterious house somewhere in Northern Canada?

TP: That's right. We got out through the woods, and we had a travel for a while before we reached a road.

SJ: How long?

TP: I'd say, like two, three days? We stopped to eat along the way of course, but only for not too often.

SJ: You flagged down a car once you came to a highway?

TP: Yep, and they took us to they authorities. They contacted you guys and we were on a plane down here to D.C. that night.

SJ: Okay. And who were the men who took you? Did they mention any names, or did they have any

distinguishing marks? Tattoos, scars, really anything?

TP: Yeah they called themselves Smith and Gunshot. There were no distinguishing marks I can think of. Smith was really tall though, like 6'10.

SJ: Okay, just try to keep calm and remember them. We'll get a sketch artist in here in just a few moments. What happened to them?

TP: Well I only saw them the first day I was there, and they never came back after that.

SJ: Okay. Repeat to me again how long you thought you were at this house?

TP: 20 days exactly.

SJ: Even though you were only gone for a few days.

TP: Yes.

SJ: Well, I'm no therapist, but it could be some kind of post-traumatic stress, or hallucination.

TP: Yeah, maybe...

SJ: Alright, thank you Trent, I appreciate your time. We may have to call you back in, in about an hour, but just for some small follow-up stuff.

TP: Uh, great. I'm glad to help! And I hope you guys find them.

SJ: One more thing though, and just know this isn't my call. The Bureau is going to relocate your family until this blows over, and your house is likely still a watch-point for these men.

TP: That sounds reasonable.

SJ: And, the Bureau also thinks you should go to weekly therapy in your new location.

TP: Uh, what?

SJ: Don't worry about it too much,
it's just for a little while until he or
she thinks your doing better.

TP: But, I'm not scarred or anything.

SJ: You may be and you don't know
it. You never know, it may just help
you more than you think.

TP: Thanks Agent Johnson.

END OF RECORDING

Session XLV

February, 2012

Have you talked to any of them since August?

Yeah, I text Kelly and Brandon a lot. Jill not so much. Last I heard she was witness-protection-ed to Nevada.

You're about halfway through the school year now. How's that been?

Not bad, I have a ton of new friends!

That's great! A lot of people have trouble moving after something like this, but I'm glad to see you're adjusting.

Yeah, they're all really nice and all.

Any girls you met that you like?

Actually yeah.

That's fantastic, what's her name!?

Madison.

Are you going to ask her out?

Since when did this become a
conversation about my romantic life?

Since this became therapy.

...

...

Well actually, yeah I was thinking about it.

That's so wonderful to hear!

Yeah, but there's one thing that I feel is
holding me back.

Which is...

Well, do you remember I told you about
Kelly from the house?

The one that liked you?

Yes. I'm afraid that she may not be okay
with it, if you know what I mean.

*I do, and I think I know why you might feel
guilty. You've mentioned on several
accounts how excluded you were by peers
before the incident at the house. I think*

that the friends you made there you have a strong connection to. You've put them on a pedestal that no one can take them down from.

Actually... Yeah.

And because of this you feel that if you take down Kelly from the pedestal you've placed her on as romantic interest that she may never be placed back where she was. And I want you to know that this is perfectly normal to think. But you shouldn't feel guilty. Kelly will always be there for you as your friend.

...

...

Yeah. Yeah, you're right.

I usually am.

I'm gonna go for it!! Thank you so much!

It's what I do. At this point our time had expired, I'll see you next Wednesday!

Thanks Doc!

End of Session XLV

October, 2013

We haven't met in a while.

Yeah.

Any particular reason you wanted to meet?

Kind of.

Which is?

...

...

Actually no.

Alright then. How's school been going?

It's fine. It's a little awkward when I see

Shelly now.

It's been what, six weeks?

Something like that...

I think that feeling awkward is perfectly normal. It's high school, and breaking up with someone can be weird.

Yeah, I guess you're right.

I have been in the past right?

Yeah.

Have you talked to any of your friends from the incident?

...

...

I texted Brandon about two months ago.

Not anyone else though.

Trent, I've noticed looking back at some of these sessions that you've been getting a little dark.

What's that supposed to mean?

It means that when I first met you, you were a typical teenager, doing things like resisting therapy and taking my advice, but since last April or May, you've been consistently declining.

How so?

Well I thought you were fit to live without a psychiatrist at the beginning of this year, 2013.

Right.

You've met with me a few times since then and your behavior has been constantly worse and worse.

Am I gonna be, like, a serial killer or something?

I seriously doubt it, but I've occasionally tried to figure out why. Have the men who took you talked to you since the incident?

No.

...

...

No they haven't!!

Alright I believe you. You're the most possibly-damaged client I've had in my career and because of that it's my responsibility to make sure you're fit to live

within society. Not just my job, my responsibility. If there's something weird going on with you, I just want to address it.

So why do you think I've been getting darker?

I have a working theory.

Let's hear it.

The time you spent at the house during the incident was an escalation from your normal life. I think that's when you were the most alive. That was the peak of your childhood, when you were the leader, and you would die to get back to it.

...

Wouldn't you?

I won't argue it. Being there wasn't bad.

All of us were on our own, time seemed to freeze, and we were in charge of ourselves. I'm not saying that I'd die to go

back, but it wasn't miserable and we
weren't hurt!

Now I can work with that.

We're done here.

End of Currently Final Session

I was still reeling from the horrifying news Brandon had just delivered to me.

“On the way out of the House, we theorized that there was some kind of scanning technology planted in our homes to bring us there. When me and my parents left our house, we didn’t even check my room to see if there were any,” I said to Brandon. He gave me a look of enthusiasm.

“So we’re goin’ to New Haven?”
Brandon asked me.

“We are indeed.”

I grabbed a backpack with a couple of things we may need when we find Kelly at the house: knife (just in case), small,

portable tent to use when returning home and three umbrellas. We caught the next train to New Haven, Connecticut, and when we got there, we grabbed the closest taxi.

8

I looked into the small camera and saw the little light flash at the other end. I didn't know how long it would be before I was back, but I knew I didn't have long. Standing there, in that house that I had moved away from more than two years ago, I began to think that it was weird to be back. And that little camera that was set up between two dusty books when I was there last, was there when I returned.

Brandon was doing the same as I was, looking into the little camera, hoping to be magically brought to the woods we had mapped out so well, over two years ago. We spent nearly a month plotting our escape from the terrible place and we

were so eager to get back to help our
friend.

December, 2014

Trent stood atop the cliff again, wondering if it could be the last time he would ever see it. Trent pulled two flimsily bound paperback books from underneath the back of his sweatshirt. They had been wedged between his pants and waist. Trent sat down underneath a tree and scrolled through a few pages in the two books, some of which was handwritten and some of which was typed. He opened the book labeled "*Trent's Journal*" to the first page, and began reading from page one, day one at midnight. Trent tore the page out of the book and crumpled it up. He closed the book, and took the first crumpled page, and through it as far as he could into the water below.

Trent then went to the edge of the woods, where he saw the small hole he had dug before. He held the books close on last time, but ultimately tossed them in, and kicked some dirt in on top of them.

Trent walked into the woods, beyond the cliff and wretched ocean, praying that the horrible books he had written would never have to be read by anyone, and had never been read by anyone except for himself.

Epilogue

The man held the long knife tightly in between his two sleek, black gloves. He looked in through the basement window and saw the kids congregating in there, in the dark. This would be the optimal time to kill them, but he knew that this was not the right time.

He wondered if the kids would ever check under the pool's cover to see that the water had become red from the blood of the Betrayer.

The man, holding the knife tightly, went back into the woods behind the house from where he came.

Coming Soon:
Limetown: The Series

Episode I Launches

12/2/13