

**The Amazingly Magical Story of the
Different Flavors of Apple Cider**

**Book 3:
The Dark Side of the Island**

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Chapter 1 Marty

Let's make this short and sweet. Me, Carlos and Ally are in grave danger and we have, oh, say an hour before we are totally destroyed by some very unfriendly islanders.

We broke into Stratsford's office (again), stole some coins, went to the dark side of the island, found a locket, someone went missing, we went back to the dark side and now we're dead meat.

Let's just start from the beginning, shall we?

Carlos and I had just joined Ally into the alliance and she told us what she knew. Turn's out she had found the pipe that lead across campus, and had already broken into the castle. Carlos and I were not too sure about Ally after that, all though, what am I saying, I'm in an alliance with Carlos!

We were all thinking about what we should do next on the field outside the dorms. It was about nine o'clock at night, and everyone was already in bed.

"So what should we do?" Carlos asked.

"Hmm..." I thought. "What if we back into the forest? There's gotta be a pipe leading there. Carlos, we've been there before, when I found that journal entry."

"Your right. We saw that light behind us! If we find out what, or who's, out there, we could find out more secrets of the island!"

"Then let's go!" Ally said. "We can go and be back by morning."

“Is that really safe?” I asked. “What is some crazy scientist is out there?”

“There’s no scientist!” Ally said. “Let’s just go. We haven’t even seen Coach or anyone since Kate and Jen disappeared.”

“Fine,” Carlos said. “But we go to Stratsford’s office first. There could be more journal entries, voice recordings, warning videos, or who knows what that will tell us what’s on that side of the island!”

Carlos and I went through Carlos’s room’s pipe and Ally went through her rooms. We had both loosened them, and were now able to access them easily. Carlos and I crawled in, and then traveled left, right, left, left, left and dead ahead.

“This isn’t the right place!” I complained.

“I’m doing my best!” Carlos said, teeth gritting, in somewhat of a sarcastic tone.

We were officially lost.

A few minutes later we came up on an air duct, with a metal ladder leading from the pipe down. There were enormous tunnels, large enough to walk in, filled with boxes and other useless junk.

“Maybe these pipes will lead to Stratsford’s office?” Carlos suggested. We followed them down a hall, and then made an immediate turn left.

Carlos and I approached a door that looked like it hadn’t been opened in decades. Carlos cracked it open, enough for both of us to see where we were.

It was at the other end of Stratsford’s office.

“Psst!” We heard whispering. I looked forward, at the jiggled pipe in which Carlos had opened when we were in there last week.

In which, was Ally. She apparently got lost and found this one. I told Carlos that Ally was there, and we turned to who was in Stratsford's office.

Coach.

He was right where we had seen him last time, opening Stratsford's desk. He pulled out a roll of coins, again.

"Ah hem!" he shouted. "I see that door cracked open! Carlos, Marty!" We froze. He was approaching the door, Carlos and I backed away, panicked. How did he know where we were?

Good thing I had been carefully practicing my powers, being an undetermined, I have a bunch of random, strong powers. I opened my hand to reveal a small ball of yellow light dancing across my palm. I threw it on the ground, and soon enough, I didn't see Carlos anymore.

We were somewhat dizzy at first, but got used to it.

We were invisible.

Coach came over to the door, and looked through the crack.

"My powers are going. The next group is here anyways..." he muttered.

As soon as he walked out the door of Stratsford's office and shut off the light, we walked out of the door, the invisibility slowly wearing off. Ally wriggled the tile, until it came off, and was big enough to climb through.

"Wow!" Ally said. "That was amazing! Can I be invisible?"

We looked around the office, and decided to go find that roll of coins.

We went to the desk where Coach had been, and opened the first desk.

Ally gasped.

The entire drawer was filled with rolls of coins. Ally took one of them, and shoved it in her pocket. We had a lot to go

over, and we all got into the door, and walked back to the dorms.

Chapter 2 Marty

We were ready for the dark side of the island. Carlos and I packed up some fruit, water bottles, and iPod Touches, his laptop, and an extra set of clothes.

I went out to the field at around quarter of midnight. Carlos came out about ten minutes later, and Ally at about midnight.

“Come on!” Ally said. “If we hurry, we’ll be back by morning.”

We plunged into the abundant forests, and followed an old drainage pipe for about ten minutes; we jogged farther in, and didn’t know where to go from there.

“Hey,” Ally said. “I saw this movie once where these people used some rock moss to tell what direction to go in.”

“Or,” Carlos began, “we could use twigs, build a camp for the night, and use the sun tomorrow to follow the island perimeter back to the castle.”

“It’s the middle of the night!” Ally complained. “We’re tired and hungry!!!”

“Well, it’s the middle of the Pacific!” Carlos said, angry, “where are we going to find moss!?”

“How long will it take to find twigs and a cover for the tent?”

“Why don’t we just keep going?” I said.

They looked at each other for a moment, than took my idea of keeping moving. We were getting really tired, and then we started seeing lights.

For three crazy people who are tired and hungry on the middle of a really bad situation, Carlos kept going.

“Don’t worry!” he said, somewhat nuts. “This happens all the time in the desert all the time. People imagine water in hot places, and we’re just imagining being saved in the middle of a dark forest at five a.m.”

“No that’s not a police light,” I said. “It’s a bonfire.”

“What’s a bonfire doing in the middle of this island?” Ally asked.

“Beats me,” I said. “Why don’t we check it out from behind some bushes?”

“Why!” Carlos asked. “It could be some nut job who ran away from training like fifty years ago and is now gonna turn us all into bugs!”

“So you believe that but not my crazy scientist theory?!” I asked, somewhat confused.

“Hey, hey, hey! Guys!” Ally said, calming us. “If anything’s out here, it’s obviously a mutant crocodile that crawled in from---”

“Never mind!” I said. “Let’s just find what’s out here.”

We snuck up to the bonfire, where there were about fifteen or so people on logs sitting around the fire.

“Tonight we welcome in our newest member, who will forever try and learn the secrets of the Stratsford Island. They will be the first of this generation to join our group.” The speaker was a man at about thirty years old. He had a buzz cut and five o’clock shadow.

The new member turned and looked towards the bushes, where we were hiding. We didn't entirely see the kid, but she did look vaguely familiar. We scurried off around the campfire towards the other side of the island.

Chapter 3 Marty

We looked back only once. Ally was really scared, and ran the fastest away from the people. I paused for a second after she and Carlos ran ahead. I found a gold locket. It looked like it opened if you have some sort of access key. It was scorched, as if burned, but not hot.

I fiddled with it as I ran to catch up with the others. It wouldn't open, no matter how hard I tried, no matter what I tried prying it open with (rock, paper clip, fingers, Carlos's tooth, long story).

It looked like you needed to open it with something. Almost as small as a paper clip, but it would fit in the locket perfectly. Whatever it was that fit in there must be closely guarded, because this locket could not be picked, broken or pried open.

I caught up to Carlos and Ally, and then told them how I found the Scorched Locket, as I'm calling it.

"Well," Carlos said. "I think we should worry about this locket when we get back to the castle. We found the beach shore, now we'd need to run/walk twelve miles back to the Castle, at about four miles an hour that means we'll get the castle sometime around... uh let's see...two days from now!"

"Or, we could see what Ally and me can do when our stable powers collide," I suggested. When our unstable powers

collided last, it sent Jennifer, Kate and Josh back to the day the world was frozen and we all got sent here, Stratsford's Island.

"Okay," Ally said, getting her hands ready. "So this is either going to send us back to the castle, back to the day we were picked, or blow us all up?"

"Yeah, pretty much," Carlos said.

We let different color liquids dance across our hands, and then threw them against the ground, erupting in an enormous eruption, as daybreak began.

Chapter 4 Marty

I was scared to open my eyes, but we were back on the field, at about eight o'clock the next morning. We went back to our rooms, and slept for all of about an hour, and then had to get up for training.

Carlos, Ally and I met up a few minutes before to discuss what had happened the past night.

"Um. Guys?" Ally said weakly, "I don't know what happened to the coins."

"What!!!" Carlos and I shouted.

"Well, last night we came back, and I checked under my mattress, where I had hidden them, and they were just gone. I don't know. Maybe whatever's in that locket can help us find out what's really on the dark side of the island? Maybe the locket has to do with the disappearance"

I took out the locket from my jean pocket, and searched around it for anything else I might have missed last night in the dark.

"Hey guys," I said. "Here's something."

"Did you open it?" Carlos asked.

"No," I began, studying it, "but look at the scorches around the locket."

"What about them?" Ally asked. Carlos looked for a minute, then his eyes widened.

“They’re in a pattern,” he said.

Bingo.

The scorched all weaved around the outside of the locket the same way, in an squiggly line, as if it was burned this way for a reason.

“Well,” Carlos said, “let’s try to open it later, Coach is coming.

With everything about the Scorched Locket, the Dark Side and the bonfire man, I had forgotten how Coach nearly caught us the night before. He said his powers were going, and it was time for the next group anyway. Was Coach in the last generation on the island to be trained?

At least we have more questions to be asking, so something is defiantly going on.

“Morning trainees!” he shouted. “This morning Cliff Hangers and Jake Masters will use their powers against each other.”

Jake and Cliff looked at each other for a moment, not sure how their powers worked, but slowly walked to the front.

Jake could repair and make things with his power, and Cliff could yield fire as his power.

Jake let purple energy jump from his upper arm to his fingertips and out, shooting a liquid shaped wrench at Cliff. Cliff shot green fire from his fingernails out towards Jake.

The energy combined and formed an enormous explosion, jetting up towards the sky, and creating darkness.

It was night.

Coach was gone, and Nicole wasn’t there either.

“Was Nicole even here today?” Sarah asked. “I haven’t seen her since yesterday.”

We looked around for Coach and Nicole. According to Sarah, Nicole’s room was locked, and even though all the girl’s rooms were unlocked, this one had locked.

Ally, Carlos and I met up on the field about ten minutes later.

“What do you think happened to Nicole?” Ally asked.

“Well,” Carlos said, suspiciously, “I don’t know what happened to her, but we can definitely go into her room.”

“What?” Ally asked.

“Well, we go with you over to the girl’s dorm, crawl into the pipe, go into Nicole’s empty room, find something suspicious, and leave unnoticed.”

“Alright,” Ally said. “But what if she was just sick, or set up some security in her room?”

“She’s right,” I pointed out. “Nicole could build anything. Emphasis on *anything*. She could easily have set up cameras, or laser censors.”

Carlos paused.

“Well what would happen if she isn’t there?” Carlos asked. “She could have easily gotten lost in the pipe, or she might have made a boat and got off this nut job of an island! Really, now that I think, is anyone else concerned that we don’t even know who Stratsford is, or who else is in the castle, or maybe why there’s a pipe leading all over on the campus?”

I shrugged. She could have just as easily won the prize by passing some secret test, and not questioning anything.

“Well,” Ally said, “I say we take our chances. She could be in danger, or if she is *just* sick, we can tell her everything and join her in.”

“No,” Carlos said. “We don’t need anyone else.”

“Well,” I said, “I think we should search her room, and we can just go through that A.C. pipe. The same one Ally took to Stratsford’s office.”

“You’re right,” Carlos said, “but not all of us can fit in that pipe, it may be cement but could all get claustrophobic.”

“Okay,” Ally began, “I’ll wait outside her door, invisible, while you two go in the pipe through my room and open the door.”

After we had all the kinks worked out, this was our final plan.

Chapter 5 Marty

Carlos and I met up with Ally at about mid-day, while everyone had lunch (everyday, a chef from the castle would come and give us breakfast, lunch and dinner) on the field.

“Guys,” Carlos said, excited. “Do you know what this means?”

“What what means?” Ally asked.

“Sebastian’s in a coma for two more months, Josh, Kate and Jen were sent back to the frozen U.S., and now Nicole’s gone. Guys, we’re in the final six. This means we’re defiantly going to be in the competition!”

We all looked at each other for a moment, than grinned.

“But,” Ally said, “Nicole isn’t necessarily gone. Let’s find out.”

We made our way over to the girl’s dorm, which inside looked just like the boy’s, grand hallway and doors with fancy names scrolled across the doors.

The second to last one read: *Ally*

The last one had strange symbols on the door, just like the boy’s dorms.

We entered Ally’s room, and saw it was decorated like a guest room in a Floridian Beach house. Everyone’s room was decorated like their favorite bedroom (Carlos’s was his room back home with a laboratory behind the bookcase).

Ally showed us the tile she had removed earlier. Carlos and I climbed into it and took out our flashlights to get better light. We climbed for about five minutes, before arriving in Nicole’s room.

Carlos looked around, but didn't see any cameras, lasers, censors, or anything. We climbed out of the A.C. pipe, and into Nicole's room.

It was decorated like a sun setting in a Las Vegas hotel. The bed was neatly made, the lights were all shut off, the only thing that was giving the room any light, was the sunset.

We looked through the desk, the dresser, and even under her bed. Nothing.

What we did see was a wooden box that was painted amber and black. It was padlocked on. Carlos took the tile that lead to the room and smashed the padlock off.

Inside was a hair clip.

Just a hair clip.

"Wow," Carlos said. "Maybe we should take it."

I kept it in my pocket with the Scorched Locket, my iPod, and a vial of my invisible powers (just in case they momentarily stop).

We crawled back through the pipe into Ally's room, and she met us there.

"Guys," Ally said, "I think we should go back to the Dark Side of the Island. I mean what were they really doing out there?"

"You're right," Carlos and I both said.

"Tonight. At eight, after everyone's asleep."

Chapter 6 Marty

Carlos and I stayed in my room until later that night. We were talking about how concerned we are that there has been, what, three practices for our powers. The final six have already been chosen, and we don't even know half of why we're here.

I kept gazing over at the picture of parents and brother. I missed them. We had only been gone about a week, but it has felt like a month.

As soon as this competition is over, I want to go back to normal.

Anyway, we studied the locket over, and a microscope to see how it's locked. It looked like a key lock, but not just any key. It looked like it was made for a particular non-key.

At around eight-thirty we met up with Ally and followed the drainage pipe into the forest. We jogged and saw the bonfire at about half the time it took us the night before.

We tried to get a better look, but tried not to get too close. All of a sudden, we felt great pain on the side of our sides, and then everything went black.

We woke up tied up to an enormous oak tree, behind the bonfire. We saw the guy with the five o'clock shadow tossing an apple up and down.

“Well, well, well. You three are in a bit of a predicament here aren’t you?” He spoke with a British accent and gazed at us for a moment.

He then shot fire through his arms at the ground. The other people disappeared too, leaving us in the dark, behind the bonfire, and for dead.

So now you know our story. We have about an hour before the fire closes in us, and we’re burned to smitherines.

“What do we do?” Ally asked, scared.

“Our powers don’t work,” Carlos said. “This tree has metal all over it. The only thing that stops our powers from working is metal and mini golf.”

“Not exactly,” I said. “I have a vial of my power in my pocket. Will that work?”

“No,” he said. “It completely has no effect.”

“What about the hair pin?” Ally asked.

“She’s right!” I said. “Ally you’re a genius!” I took out the hairpin, which I could just pull out of my pocket, and punched a hole in the plasticky rope. We pulled out of it, and then I took a good look at the hairpin.

The fire gave us a good image of it. I saw it had a black dot on its side. The same from the locket.

I took out the Scorched Locket, and place the hairpin in it, as if a key, and turned it left.

The locket popped open.

Inside were two pictures:

One was of a girl, about nine or so, and the other was a screeching bonfire.

“Where do we know this from?” Carlos asked, pointing to the bonfire.

“But who’s the girl?” Ally asked.

I looked at the picture closely, examining where I’d seen her before. Then it hit me.

“That’s Nicole.”

Coming Soon:

**The Amazingly Magical Story
of the Different Flavors of
Apple Cider:**

Book 4: Final Preparations

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