

Secrets of the Facultas
House:
Trent's Journal

Secrets of the Facultas

House:

Trent's Journal

by, John M. Hayeck

All Rights Reserved

All rights and restrictions of the following manuscript are FICTIONAL. In no way, shape, or form are any of these events true, nor have they ever been.

Any nonfictional characters, inventions or places mentioned and used are in no way affiliated with this story. The rights belong entirely to John M. Hayeck, as of the novel's publication date: December 27th, 2011.

©Secrets of the Facultas House, 2011

©Trent Posterus, 2011

©Book 1, Trent's Journal

Description: Trent Posterus wakes up at a mystery boarding house that is presumed to be frozen in time, and in an isolated part of the Earth, where he soon discovers a secret ability inside himself. Trent soon meets four likewise residents, and the five plan to make an escape from the House.

*Genres: 1.Fiction→2.Thriller→3.Escape→4.Mystery/
Suspense→5.Drama*

First Edition: December, 2011

To the Four People Who Inspired this Book.

Part 1

Day 1: 12:00 a.m.

It was awful, like it would never end.

Like I had fallen into one of my dreams, except it had turned into a nightmare.

This forest looked strangely familiar, but I couldn't remember where I had seen it before. That was when I could tell something was wrong: I couldn't remember. This place, the woods, had no lights on, and there were only trees and reflections tormenting me around it. I had to consider what was going on, and who was standing behind me, before it was too late.

I had to turn around, because of who was there, and why. I turned, and saw myself: Trent Posterus.

Day 1: 8:03 a.m.

Trent Posterus is my name, and this is me making a note of myself waking up at the Facultas House, on... Well, I don't really know when. What I've realized is that the Facultas House is used for 'special' kids.

When I say 'special', I don't mean like mentally insane, but kids that can do things that other kids don't. I'm here because I got a two for one deal, when I was born I got this thing called an eidetic memory, which is like I remember everything I've *EVER* seen, done or heard (it's like a *TRULY* photographic memory). My other ability is to use my very vigilant senses to predict an outcome, so kind of like telling the future five seconds ahead of

time. (Senses, Outcome, SenCome. When I have a SenCome moment, I'll mark it with three asterisks, *, and I'll write 'SenCome'.)

Yeah, it's pretty cool I guess, but when I start to forget things, even with my eidetic memory, it's going to get bad. Here's a quick note from when I woke up.

I woke up in a single size bed, in a small bedroom that was in the top most, left corner of the Facultad House. I looked around, and I saw some things from home on the small desk, and on the bedside table. I noticed some of the objects: my laptop, iPod Touch (this one is pretty bad, because it doesn't have a camera like the newer ones), camera, Yamaha Audio Recorder (usually used to record music, but it works all the same with regular audio), a few novels I was reading, and a new journal (this book). The thing

that was the most weird though, was that the bedroom was set up just like mine back home, except cleaner.

I noticed something wasn't right, when I noticed that I wasn't wearing the clothes that I had on at midnight so it must have all been a dream, or something.

I quickly pulled out my laptop, and looked at the time again: 8:09 a.m. I opened a Safari Web Browser, and clicked on my email link in the 'Bookmarked' bar, and a support message came up: I'm Sorry; The Web Address 'www.gmail.com' does not exist anymore.

As of August 1st (today) at 12:00 a.m., this page was cancelled from your current Wi-Fi Position Hotspot. Thank You For Your Cooperation!

What the heck is this? I went to a whole bunch of email sites, and the same message came up on each one. I finally decided to get up and put on some clothes: an Under Armor t-shirt, and shorts.

I tried to open the door, and saw a note attached to it: CHECK THE RECORDER. Which I did.

I went onto my Yamaha Recorder, and saw a file that was brand new; I plugged in my headphones, and clicked play.

“Hello,” said the sound of an electronic voice.

“Welcome to the Facultas House. My name is Antallon, and I will be the first one to welcome you here. You have exceptional abilities that you will be developed over the next few weeks. When you leave this room, you will take forth your abilities, and learn how to enhance them. I warn you, not to go

into the woods too far, and to go into the basement, if you want your abilities to go even farther. There are four other kids with you here and you will meet them soon. They are 11, 12 and 13, basically the same age as you. Good Luck with All.”

Well that was cheerful.

I’ve been dragged out somewhere in the middle of the woods, my brain thinks that this is normal, me and four other kids will be tested on our ‘abilities’ and I’m out of connection with the rest of the world.

Hmm.

I went back to the jammed door, and pulled hard on it, and still nothing. I looked out through a small hole and saw two guys out there, they both looked a few years younger than me (13) and they were talking with another girl about something.

The guys were built tall and scrawny and one of them looked really tired, and was talking with the girl, while the other looked out one of the windows in the front of the house. Both of them were wearing sweatpants, t-shirts and sweatshirts over them. I was on the upstairs floor, and they were talking in a small gap between my door and another.

There was a railing, and long stairs beneath it, and a huge window looking out at a small grass clearing, and a small road that I couldn't see that entirely well, and deep, thick woods beyond that.

The girl was pretty, had brownish, black hair, and a small frown. She wore a t-shirt and jeans, and looked around cautiously. I wanted to talk with them both if only I could get out of this room.

I heard them whispering some things to each other.

*“... I’m telling you Kelly,” the guy said to her,
“he’s in there!”*

*“No way, they said to expect a girl next. All I
have is Jill, and I just want someone else to talk
with, you know?”*

*“We haven’t ‘improved our abilities’ like Antallon
said we were.”*

*“Why do they keep us here then? You and Antonio
were here first, on August 1st, and then I came a
week later, on August 1st. Is that even possible?”*

*“We’ve already thought that Antallon has us
trapped in a time-warp!””*

*“How advanced is he? He’s probably evil or
something.”*

*“Yeah, but you gotta admit, this place sure can
whip up an awesome meal! When this guy wakes up,*

you can wait for him to find his key, cause Antonio and I gotta eat. See you later Kelly!” Then Antonio and the other guy left down the hall, and the girl Kelly who looked my age, stood, leaning against the railing. I wondered what the guy meant by ‘his key’. Was it a test? I looked around for a minute or so, and didn’t see anything.

I went back to kneel down and look out the keyhole, and saw the girl, Kelly, still leaning against the rail. She then noticed the keyhole and smiled. I would have had more time to think about her if, one, I wasn’t in some psycho home, and two, if Kelly wasn’t coming right at the keyhole.

I ducked, out of the way, and looked through the room, and saw nothing, nothing in the desk drawers, nothing in the bedside table, just nothing in general.

Key.

Key...

KEY...

I remembered that we stayed at a hotel a few years ago, and I kept the key to the room, because the lady at the front desk forgot to take it back. I dug through my book stack quietly, and saw one book entitled 'The Works of Edgar Allen Poe', and remembered that I used the key as a bookmark on a story I had briefly began reading called 'The Masque of the Red Death'.

*Please let it be in here, please let it be in here...
Score! 'The Gateway Hotel' was sprawled across the front in fancy letters, and a picture of the hotel was on the front.*

I looked out the keyhole, and saw Kelly taking out

an iPod Nano or Touch, and putting in her earbuds. I put the key in front of the keyhole, and nothing happened. The door still wouldn't budge. I put the door on the side of the door, and nothing, the door still wouldn't open. Third times a charm, I thought.

I sled the key card like a credit card down the door side, and there was a small DING! I opened the door, and saw Kelly standing there right in front of my door.

Day 1: 8:47 a.m.

“Uh!” I said. I bumped into Kelly outside, and she just looked at me weakly.

“Um, hi!” she said. “I’m Kelly Nemmer, and I’m one of the other four kids here. You must be kind of confused, and ...”

“Good to meet you, Kelly,” I said, kind of stunned. “I’m, I’m Trent. I already heard the introductory message, but one thing it didn’t mention is what happens if I don’t want to be here. So, where exactly is this place, and how can I leave?”

“We don’t know,” she said. “All I know is that you probably have a special ability, or something that you can do, that most other kids can’t, and until all of us improve our abilities, we stuck here.”

Any ideas on yours?"

"Yeah, yeah, but I think I have, like two abilities, but they're kind of ridiculous. What's yours?"

"Well, most of us four have weird abilities, like me. Could I see your hand?"

"Uh, sure." I put out my hand, and she took it and held my wrist in her hand. It felt hot and cold at the same time, and I saw a kind of vision.

I was watching some kind of dream state, and saw Kelly in the middle of the woods, in the middle of the night. It looked just like it did for me, except it started to rain.

Kelly's eyes widened, and she looked around. I was watching her, circling around, and trying to see if I could be noticed.

"KELLY!" I yelled. "KELLY!!! Can you hear

me?!?!”

“Where am I?” she asked herself, apparently not noticing me. I tried to pick up a rock, but my hand seemed to go right through it.

I was being pulled from the collar, farther and farther back, I couldn't see her anymore. I screamed, trying to get her out of the woods.

I gasped. I was back in the house, and it seemed like real life again. What just happened?

“You can, what, show people your thoughts and memories?” I asked.

“And while you saw the dream on the night I arrived, I saw your dream from last night. I don't what I'm supposed to 'improve' on here, but, ya' know.”

“So what can I do now that I'm here?” I asked

her.

“Well, it’s like a regular home, meals are served, people get to know each other, there’s a T.V., and you have all of your stuff. One other kid here, Brandon, he and I were talking, and we think that now that someone new is here, we might have enough people to help us get out of here.”

“What do you mean,” I asked. This is what I needed to know.

“Well, we have a plan, that we think might work, when all six people are here. You’re number five, and if you get enough practice, and do some things for us, then we can all just walk right out of here. We’re even talking that we might only need five people.”

“Really?”

“Really. Can we talk, later tonight?”

“Why then?” I asked her.

“Me, Brandon, and my friend Jill always meet then because the House version of Antallon boots down after 10:00 p.m, and only his security is in place. We always meet in the basement, then. See you then?”

“I’m already looking forward to it. I’ll see you guys downstairs in a few minutes, I’m gonna find a bathroom to clean up.”

“There’s one right though that door there,” she said, pointing in my room through another smaller door I hadn’t noticed. “See you downstairs.” And then she went down the hallway and out of sight.

Day 1: 9:10 a.m.

I was looking forward to formally meeting all the house members, but not as much as I was looking forward to learning about how Kelly, Brandon, the others and me could escape.

I walked downstairs after a cold shower, and saw four other kids, and two men sitting around a circular wooden table, that must be the breakfast table. It was light outside, light circling through windows and a slider door.

“Good Morning son,” one of the men said. “Would you like to introduce yourself?” The man was slim and very tall. If I ran into him at the supermarket, I’d assume he was an NBA player I’d

never heard of.

“Um, hello. My name is Trent Posterus and this morning I woke up in some kind of weird house.

What am I going to do next? I’m going anywhere but here!” I had always heard the Super Bowl winners make comments like that, and I decided to get some humor going.

I heard a few laughs and chuckles. I think even that other guy (that wasn’t the NBA player) held his hand to his mouth and laughed a little bit. I saw Brandon and Kelly sitting at the table, and across from Brandon was a boy that looked just like him, and must’ve been that one looking out over the railing called Antonio.

There was also another girl across from Kelly who must’ve been Jill. She looked like a Jill, whatever

that meant.

Brandon had short hair that fell down like a mop, and had hair gel that held the front of it up.

Brandon also wore Under Armor clothes and had a depressed look on his face. He had kind of tanned skin.

Antonio had a strange look on his face and sat up right, but said nothing, like the others. He didn't laugh, didn't move and didn't show any emotion whatsoever. Strange.

Kelly waited, and looked at me, at Brandon, and then out of one of the windows in the back of the house, at the woods that never seemed to end. She had long black hair that she fidgeted with in her seat as she waited.

Jill had on thick glasses and a long sweater. She

had very white and pale skin. She resembled Antonio, and had a blank stare, that made me question her.

“Ah! Funny Guy, huh? The NBA player asked. I had almost forgotten about him in describing everyone. “Well, Posterus I’m Smith, and this is Gunshot,” he pointed to the larger guy.

“And, what are you guys doing here,” I asked. “I thought some supercomputer was supposed to run this place.”

“He does,” Smith said. “ I see you got your welcome message. Antallon has been designed to incorporate your ability in with everyone else’s. A lot of kids can do strange things, but you and these four, you are truly exceptional to Antallon, and whatever he has in store for you, it’s coming soon.”

I looked around kind of suspiciously.

“We are here to make sure that the new arrival gets out of his room, and passes the very first test here,” Gunshot said. “We want to make sure that by coming out of your room, you have set foot in the Facultas House, and belong here. We’ve had three other kids that don’t belong here because they couldn’t find a key in their room. But you five are up to the test and you have what it takes.”

“We’ll be monitoring your behavior for today, to decide what program to set you towards,” Smith said. “Antallon runs different programs, Kelly and Brandon have become good friends by running the same program on Team White, Jill, well, is not in their program but coming along very well on Team Blue. Antonio,” Smith said moving over towards him, “Antonio runs on a program that none of us really

know about called Team Black. Better for him better for us, I guess.”

“Can I look out in the woods? Antallon says not to, but I like the woods.”

“You can look, but you won’t find nothing,”
Gunshot said. “Thank You very much. I’m going to look out there after breakfast, actually, if anyone would like to join me.”

Was that a trick question? Nobody did anyway.

Day 1: 10:16 a.m.

Smith and Gunshot went over some more basics about the house for a while meanwhile everyone sat in silence. No breaking things, no stealing from others, inside by 9:00, lights out, my call.

After they finally left for the woods, Jill and Kelly went outside, and the kid that must've been Brandon came over to me.

“Did Kelly talk to you about what’s going on?” he asked.

“Uh yeah, she did,” I said. “I’m Trent by the way.” Brandon looked younger than me by maybe two years at the least. He was maybe eleven? Ten?

“We know who you are. Sit down at the counter and I’ll give you the basics. This plan is something

that cannot fail. We're all gonna to be somewhere on Antallon's hidden cameras, and he'll have to set a mode to get us out of there. If someone is doing something on his Woods Cam then they can get past this thing called the Barrier. The Barrier is this invisible force field that's used to keep us in the House Boundaries."

"Hey, wait a sec," I said. "Would you mind if I record this, for later?"

"Uh," he said, kind of creeped out, "sure."

"Thanks," I clicked record on my recorder. "So this thing, is it like a wall?"

"Kind of, but invisible, and if you try to cross it, you'll get static shocked. So, we think that when Antallon boots down for a few seconds to restart his files because of all his cameras crashing, the Woods

Cam Person can run across the Barrier and run farther up the forest and get help.”

“How do you know we’re not on an island?” I asked.

“One time Kelly monitored Smith and Gunshot leaving through the forest, and she heard them saying that we’re in the forest on a larger landmass.”

“You’re sure that it’ll work?”

“Definitely. Meet us downstairs tonight and we’ll talk about what we need.”

“Okay, see you then.”

Day 1: Somewhere Between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

I spent about a while talking to everyone else, and exploring the house. I took a nap, and actually filled in a lot of these entries so far. I spent the last half hour in the woods, seeing what I can find. I talked with Jill, and she said that the Barrier would give you a static shock if you try and pass it.

I searched around for the Barrier, and went through the forest, and after a while, found one spot where there was an enormous branch across the forest floor.

“I think I just found the Barrier,” I said. I was recording this on my camera like everything else I did at the Facultas.

SNAP!!!

I heard something loud coming from a bush right

next to the Barrier.

“What was that?” I asked. I made sure to zoom in on the bush, watching it move. There was something weird going on. I felt like something had just moved. I was watching the camera, and zig-zagged it from one end of the Barrier to the other. I put my finger out, and tried to cross the Barrier.

ZZZ!!!

“Ah!” I yelped. It hurt like heck! My finger got practically burned!

SenCome

In my vision, I saw a face. I turned the camera back from facing the House, and turned right to the Barrier and saw it.

I saw (believe it or not) one of the least disturbing things that would come in the time I spent at the Facultas House.

He spoke quietly, but clearly, and was very mysterious as I backed up.

“Are, are you over the Barrier!?!?” I asked him.

“Hello Trent. Yes I am, but you never will be, even after you leave.”

I tried to run, I ran out of the woods, but couldn't go even the short distance to the House.

I fell over a log, my head hurt, and everything went black. My camera caught it though. It'll be recording until the battery dies, or someone stops it.

Even in my dreams, he haunted me. I saw the solid face of him out in the woods, past the Barrier, and I was scared.

I knew what I saw that night and I knew it would mean something, something important, but not this important.

What I saw was disturbing, and made me think whether or not I should tell the others about what I saw. I decided not to, but figure it out myself.

What I saw, was strange, and made me reexamine my entire experience at the Facultad House.

This was one of the least disturbing things from the Facultad House in my opinion, but I'm saying this because, if you're ever to find the video of this, then you'll know what I mean.

The up-close version of that face. The solemn stare. His face.

That night, my first night at the Facultad House at 8:47 p.m., with Night Vision, I saw something

questionable.

And I'm Going To Tell You What It Is.

*On that night, I saw, over the Barrier, the
hollowed out face of fellow resident, Antonio Barons.*

Part 2

Day 1: 10:34 p.m.

He's found me. Antonio's small, hollowed face still gives me shivers while I write this. I couldn't help but think that he had found me. I wasn't sure what had happened out in the woods, before I tripped, but if I really did see Antonio over the Barrier, then I could predict that he was working for Smith and Gunshot. I wanted to look at the video I was taking on my camera but I couldn't for a few reasons. A, my camera's battery died somewhere when I was passed out, B, because it was too dark out to find my camera on the forest floor, and, C, it must've been too dark to see, and too noisy to hear Antonio speak to me, even if he had. I pulled out my iPod from my pocket and tried to use the dim light

to illuminate the forest floor , and looked for my camera, however, saw no traces of it. I looked at the time that read: 10:35 p.m. I remembered this morning, Brandon and Kelly telling me about the escape meeting that started at 10:30. I'm already late, I don't want them to think that I bailed.

I jumped over some logs, and down a small rock ledge to the little dirt road. ran to the House, and unlocked the door with a key Smith gave me. I went from the main forum to a small hallway with a door on the left, which I cracked open. There was a light switch on the left side of the wall, which wasn't on, either because the group didn't want to be caught or it was broken. Either way, I didn't need to find out. There were wooden stairs leading down to basement, that seemed hollow. I went down the stairs, and

almost tripped over the fourth one, which seemed loose.

I carefully tip-toed down, and came to the bottom. The floor was cement, and covered with boxes. The strange thing, though, was that the basement was really big. I couldn't exactly see how far it went back, but I could tell that when I reached the bottom of the stairs, there was limited space on the side to my right, and a huge space to the left.

I heard whispers to my left. The meeting had already started.

Day 1: 10:47 p.m.

“We can’t let him into the group!” Brandon said.

“Why not?” Jill chimed.

“We need him to get out of here!” Kelly said.

“I think Gunshot and Antallon know we’re gonna escape, and made him a little spy for us,” Brandon said. “This morning, he asked to record me talking about our plan!”

“Well did he hear all of it?” Jill asked.

“No, I mentioned most of it before he got to recording it, but I don’t trust him.”

“Again,” Kelly said, “we need him to escape, and there are other reasons why he would wanna record your conversation.”

“Like what?” Brandon asked.

“Like,” I said, stepping to right, “maybe leaving my recordings here, so the kids after us will know how to escape.” I noticed some flashlights spread out across the dark basement. I saw Jill and Kelly sitting on an old air hockey, that I’d soon learn to be LONG-broken, two ping-pong tables, one of which was on its side, and the other one, Brandon had laid out some papers. Antonio was on the other side by a window, looking out into the forests.

“Trent!” Brandon said. “How much of that did you hear?”

“Enough of it,” I said. “Look, the five of us need to work together if we every want to get past that Barrier. I am not a spy for Antallon. I don’t only want to escape, but I want to find out what the real point of this place is. Where is it? What are Smith

and Gunshot even improving our abilities for? What do they want us to not find in the forest?"

"You know what," Brandon said, "you're right. I hate to say it, but I was wrong, and we all do need to figure out what's going on."

I wanted to tell Brandon, Kelly and Jill about Antonio, but I didn't need them losing his trust. I don't even know whether it was real or not.

"Now," I said, "am I in?"

"Well that depends," Jill said. "We need to take a vote, and it needs to be unanimous." She turned her head around the room. "Is he in?"

"I say yes," Kelly said.

"Yes," said Antonio, solemnly, still facing the woods, with his hand raised against a wood banister, which he was leaning on.

“Sure,” Jill said.

Brandon looked at me, hesitant. He looked at the rest of them.

“Sure,” Brandon said. I smiled. “Well?” Brandon asked.

“What?” I asked.

“Is it okay with you?” Brandon asked.

“Yeah it’s okay! So I’m in?” I asked.

“Sure, but you need to swear not to give our group up. No matter what!” Jill said.

“I swear.”

“Now,” she said, “Brandon basically gave you the lowdown on how we’re gonna escape, and you might’ve come at the right time too, because we’re getting closer and closer to figuring out when to expect our plan to go into action.”

“How soon do you think?” I asked.

“A month?” Brandon suggested. “Maybe less, if we’re lucky. Me and Jill can work out all of the kinks, you guys won’t have to worry about it.”

“Cool,” I said. “What about school, though, I’ve never missed a day, and I don’t intend on starting now.”

“Me, Antonio, Jill and Kelly think that Antallon is using his advanced technology to slow down time outside of these walls,” Brandon said.

“Explain,” I said.

“Well, you know how if you time travel, you can set your machine to only come back a second after you left, and it’s like you were never gone?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, time could be frozen right now,” he said,

snapping, “and we wouldn’t know, because it would resume a second later. Gunshot let slip once that that might be what’s happening here, and time kind of resumes for your life when we step outside these walls.”

“So, I have nothing to worry about?” I asked.

“Ditto,” Jill said.

“It’s been a long day Trent,” Kelly said. “You must be beat. I’m gonna head up towards bed.”

“Same here,” Jill said.

“I’m tired too,” Antonio said, trailing ahead of the others.

“I’m with you guys,” Brandon said. “Trent, you comin’?”

“I’ll go up in a few minutes,” I said. “I want to check something out.”

“Suit yourself,” Brandon said. He left me with two flashlights, in the dark basement, alone.

Day 1: 11:32 p.m.

I walked over from near where the window Antonio was at, to the large gap, which I noticed had a sliding door near it, leading out to the pool, which was now closed for the season. I saw a few board games, and some bookshelves, with creepy looking books on them. I saw the side of one shelf, written in red paint, it read: FORBIDDEN. I went past that and saw a small walkway, crowded with old boxes, decorations, and even some shelves with holiday things. There was a water heater, regular heater, furnace and some other strange looking machines near them.

I saw next to me, a blue, flashing light. Not big, but really small. About the size of a keychain

flashlight, flickering. I noticed the light illuminating a word beneath it, that read: ANTALLON: 2.5.

Was this Antallon's main frame? There was no time to ask. Basements at night creep me out, they always have me thinking that there's some creeper, or murderer, is coming up behind me, ready to strike when I turn around.

Before I went upstairs, I noticed something weird at my shoes: a key, and a small, plastic container. These things didn't look like they belong in a basement. Although, then again, this is the Facultas House.

I picked up the key, and noticed that this was no regular key, because the end of it, the part that unlocks the door, was in a shape of three letters: TAE. Initials? A word? Other Things? I stuffed

the key in my pocket, and decided to figure it out later. I took a flashlight and shined it on the small bottle. It had some strange letters written across it in some foreign language, like Latin or something.

It had a liquid in it that looked like purple food coloring, or dye or something. I put it into my other pocket, and raced back to the main spot and up the stairs.

Day 2: 12:00 a.m.

I went back up to my room, and when I got there, I saw something strange. Brandon and Antonio were looking at the same thing from their room across the hall, and even Kelly and Jill had come down the hall from their rooms to look.

On my door, in silvery spray paint, were the words: *TEAM WHITE*, written diagonally.

“Welcome to the White Team,” Brandon said. “Us three stick together, no matter what.”

“Good,” I said. By this point, each of us five had gathered around the small space in between me and Brandon/Antonio’s rooms. “Then promise me one thing.”

“Yeah Trent?” Kelly asked.

*“When we escape, we all escape, not just one of us.
Is that fair?”*

*“Trent, we might only get one chance to leave, and
we can't waste it. Getting everyone out,” Jill said,
“it might be hard. These are some risks we'll need to
take in order to get out of here. As long as one
person gets over, it's like a full team.”*

*“Henry Ford once said ‘coming together is a
beginning, keeping together is a process and working
together is success.’”*

“Yeah, but it might be impossible to even...”

*“Napoleon once said ‘Impossible is a Word Found
only in the Dictionary of Fools’.”*

“Yeah but this is TRULY impossible.”

*“Nelson Mandela once said ‘it always seems
impossible until it's done’.”*

By this point, Jill seemed to have given up.

“Trent,” she said, “I want this just as badly as you do, but sometimes things just don’t work out...

But it wouldn’t hurt to try.”

I put my hand in the middle of the circle that the five of us had formed. Brandon put his on top of mine, and then Kelly put hers on top of his. Jill reached hers in, and finally Antonio put his in.

There was thing I was certain at this point, which was that I had found some true friends, and we would stick together until we escape or die, whichever one comes last.

“We’re a team,” I said. “No matter who we are. Or where we are.”

Day 2: 12:13 a.m.

I went into my room, and closed the door a little bit. I went over to my bed and sat down, untying my shoes, and placing them on the floor, and then pulling off my socks, and tossing them in my dirty laundry hamper. I carefully took the key and vial out of my pocket and put them in the safest place I could find: a hollowed-out version of "The Charles Darwin Theory". I locked it up, and put it beneath my bed.

I looked over at my big desk, after sitting back up on my bed, and noticed something rather peculiar. There was a large note, about the size of both my hands put together, tacked up on the bulletin board which was the back of my desk.

I saw the very visible handwriting, that read:

Don't Worry. I'm Scared Too.

Scared? Who's scared? Scared of what? Whoever wrote me this note knew that I was scared of being at the Facultas House, and what was to come.

Day 2: 12:16 a.m.

I had gotten the whole group out of bed and shown them the note, and the vial of strange liquid. I didn't show them the key, because I didn't want them to get in trouble if or Smith or Gunshot found me with it.

"So did any of you write this?" I asked them.

"Wasn't me," Kelly said.

"Me neither," Jill said.

"Ditto, bro," Brandon said, "wasn't me. Antonio?"

"No, I didn't write it," he said. Antonio walked into his room.

"Well if none of you wrote it, who did?" I asked.

The girls shrugged their shoulders and walked back to their rooms. Brandon gave me a pat on the back,

wishing me a good night.

At that moment, I wasn't sure what I had gotten myself into at the Facultas House, but whatever it was, escaping wouldn't get me out of it that easily.

Everything at the House wasn't what it seemed, and I was gonna figure it out. Whether Smith, Gunshot, or Antallon, liked it or not.

Part 3

Day 17: Somewhere After 10:00 p.m.

“That was three hours of my life I’ll never get back,” Brandon said.

Brandon was right, that movie was terrible. Here at the Facultas House, we have a load of movies, but Smith had brought in a new one for us to watch. Let me just say, it was pretty bad.

“Worst movie I’ve ever seen,” Jill agreed.

“Smith could bring us this stupid thing, but not like a scary story book?” Kelly said.

“Well we could always go down to basement, on the forbidden book shelves and find some stories,” I suggested.

I knew first hand that previous kids that lived here at the Facultas House had scary stories, and wrote them down in a book that's on a shelf downstairs.

"Yeah sounds fun," Brandon said. "It's too bad Antonio is already asleep, he loves scary stories."

"Let's go," Jill said.

"I'm comin' too!" Brandon said.

"Me too," Kelly said.

We all went from the living room next to the kitchen, with T.V, to the small hallway off the kitchen, through the door on the right, and into the basement.

Kelly flicked the light switch up, but the lights

didn't turn on. Weird. We all went to the bottom of the stairs, and Jill and Kelly grabbed some flashlights we used for the meetings down there. Brandon tapped his on, and we turned left, into a big gap in the basement.

"I see some shelves!" Jill said.

"Trent," Brandon said, "do you know which one it is?"

SenCome

"Yeah," I said. "My SenCome just showed me. Red cover, black side, it has initials SFH on the side."

Brandon threw some old boxes on their sides, and saw that very book I saw in my vision on the top shelf. He reached his hand up and grabbed it.

“Maybe we can use these kids notes on the House in our escape plan,” he said.

“And, well,” Jill said, looking over at Brandon.

“We have some news.”

Kelly and I exchanged looks, and then looked back at Jill.

“Well,” Brandon said, “I wanted the whole group together to say this, but I have no choice now.”

“Just tell us!” Kelly said, anxious.

“I was talking to Jill,” Brandon said, “and we think we can set the plan into action sooner than we thought. Like really soon.”

I smiled and exhaled. I could see the relief on Kelly’s face, followed by excitement.

“How soon?” I asked.

“You guys won’t like this,” Jill said.

I looked at Brandon, eyes forward.

“Tomorrow night,” Brandon said.

“Tomorrow night!” Kelly exclaimed. “When were you gonna tell us? We need to pack, store food, it’s a long process!”

“Antallon is weakest only once a month, and that’s tomorrow night. We don’t know whether

we're in a time warp or whatever, but it's been twenty-nine days since Antallón booted down last, and tomorrow, that might be the weakest he will get for a long while."

"It's a long shot," Kelly said. "Ideas?" she asked me.

"It may be a long shot, but it's our only shot. Let's just enjoy the rest of the night," I said, "and tomorrow we work out all the kinks and we go for it. If we mess up, worst case, we try again. And we don't stop trying until we get out."

Day 16: 10:37 p.m.

“Devon Ferrell tried to escape. He had made it so far outside that clearing, no one had even ever been there. But he found something he shouldn’t have. And Fanger caught his scent. He could smell the beast’s rancid breath, and ran even farther from it. A few more inches, and he might’ve even gotten past the Barrier. But Fanger, the beast, would not be denied. Closer and closer, salvation lied ahead, yet it was already too late. All Devon could hear was a crack and a growl, and he was gone.”

“So,” Kelly said, after Brandon finished reciting

the story, “Goldilocks goes into the woods, Papa Bear finds her, and Papa throws her out for wondering on his property.”

Jill and I let out a mix of chuckles.

“Honestly,” she continued, “how will this help us escape? It’s some fairy tale that GUNSHOT probably wrote to teach us not to go into the woods.”

“How about another one?” Brandon suggested. “Trent, since you came up with this fabulous idea, why don’t you read it?”

Brandon handed me the book, and I looked at a Table of Contents. One of the I found interesting was called “The Outsiders”. I began to read it

aloud.

“When the moon is full, and the forests are quiet outside a woods familiar to us residents, we begin to see things. Whether they are real or not, I can tell you now. I can tell you firsthand that outside the Barrier, they are waiting. The Barrier may keep six of you prisoners here, but on the other side, near Fanger’s territory, there is a group of individuals, dying to get in. They may or may not have special abilities, but they know things we don’t. They can tell us why we’re here, where we are, and what the purpose of our abilities are. They are called ‘The Outsiders’. They wait, and wait and wait, for months, sometimes years at a

time, and it is only when the moon is full, you may see some things moving from across the boundary. Join the Outsiders, and make A Choice.”

There was a dead silence in the room for at least a minute after I stopped reading. It might even have been more.

“Is that the end?” Brandon asked.

“Yeah,” I said. “And strangely enough, that’s the end of the book.”

“Maybe the kids that wrote this thing actually got out of the House.”

“Now this,” Kelly said, “this story speaks to me. What if people are actually waiting to get in from

the other side? If we shut down the Barrier tomorrow night, not only can we get, but they can repossess the House, make it for the purpose they want.”

“Yeah,” Brandon said, “but we’ve seen Smith and Gunshot pass the Barrier a thousand and one times, so don’t you think that they would have seen them?”

“Maybe not,” Jill said. “Maybe The Outsiders can just, get away.”

“You buy this Trent?” Brandon asked me.

“I see no reason why not to. I guess we can figure out tomorrow.”

Day 17: 8:32 a.m.

One thing I actually respected about the Facultas House is that, while I've been here, I've caught up on my sleep, although I couldn't sleep at all last night. I thought about all the secrecy surrounding the Facultas House, and how much I still didn't know.

I had set my alarm to wake me at nine, but got up earlier. I noticed Brandon and Antonio were already awake across the hall, and packing some things up. I walked down the hall, and the girl's rooms' doors were opened wide, and I saw them gathering some things up.

I took a cold shower and put on some jeans and a t-shirt. I walked downstairs with the other four, and we got scared when we saw something strange: there was a boy who looked about thirteen or fourteen, sitting at the breakfast table, hands folded, staring strait ahead, not acknowledging us.

“Uh, guys, who the heck is this?” I asked.

Brandon looked dead ahead at the kid, and so did Jill.

I walked down the rest of the stairs by the living room off the kitchen, and the kid turned around, acknowledging us. He looked puzzled.

“Don’t worry,” I said. “You’re at...”

“Don’t bother,” the kid said. “I got up early,

left my room, and bumped into Smith and Gunshot out in the woods. They gave me the shpeel.”

“Okay,” Brandon said. “Well, I’m Brandon Barons, this is my brother Antonio,” he said pointing to Antonio, “this is Trent Posterus, that’s Kelly Nemmer, and this is Jill Brittle.”

“Hey guys. I’m Owen Fergon.”

“Look, we’re planning to get the heck out of this place tonight, do you want to come, or something?”

Brandon asked.

“Uh, sure?” he asked, not knowing whether or not we were tricking him.

Owen left the kitchen, excusing himself to go

take a shower.

“This guy is not who he seems,” Brandon said.

“I used my ability on him, and I could tell. He must be an Antallon plant. He stuck him in with us cuz we’ve all been getting reckless talking about the escape plan.” I knew Brandon’s ability, he could interpret people’s emotions, and predict their actions in the future, which he could easily use on the rest of us.

“Brandon, how many people did you think were plants for Antallon? You thought I was,” I said.

“Don’t worry, he thought I was!” Kelly said.

This conversation made wonder whether or not Brandon’s abilities had actually been working.

“He didn’t say it to me,” Jill said.

“Well, maybe he’s in love with you,” Kelly said.

She, Antonio, Jill and I burst out laughing, but Brandon turned bright red.

“Look,” he said, “I just think that we should be a little bit more careful about who we talk to and what we say, especially with the escape plan so close.”

“I can’t believe I’m saying this, but Brandon’s right,” I said. “We need to be on guard at all times and we can’t slip up, especially not now.”

We all basically sat in silence for a little bit, until Owen came back downstairs.

“So, where you from Owen?” I asked, making

small talk.

“Oh, I’m from from Philadelphia,” he said.

“Oh, interesting. I’m from a suberb outside of New Haven.”

“Connecticut?”

“No, Ottawa!” Jill said sarcastically, “Yes Connecticut. So, do you know what your ability is?”

“Yeah, I’ve always felt like I can affect people’s dreams, like I can talk to them in their dream states, and almost create their dreams.”

“Oh cool,” Kelly said.

“What about you guys?” Owen asked.

“Oh,” Jill said, “well, Kelly can show people her

past thoughts and memories, Trent can see a few seconds into the future and affect the future by making the right choices, Brandon reads micro-emotions, and I can hack technological devices to make basically anything I want.”

“And him?” Owen asked, pointing to Antonio, who just was looking out the window.

“Oh,” Brandon said, “uh, we, uh, we don’t know.”

I shook my head.

“Oh, cool. So... I’m gonna head out to the woods after breakfast, anyone wanna come with?”

The last time someone asked me to go out to the woods with them, was Gunshot on the day I

arrived.

“Uh, sure,” Brandon said.

“I’ll come too,” Jill said.

“Yeah, sure,” Kelly said, somewhat hesitant.

Peer Pressure, I said to myself.

“Yeah, I guess I’ll come,” I said.

Day 17: 9:32 a.m.

Owen, Brandon, Jill, Kelly and I jogged out to the woods, later that morning. We went up the small ledge, and to the clearing. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw something. There was a sparkling circle on the forest floor, that I hadn't seen in a while: my camera. The rain hadn't soiled it, and Smith and or Gunshot hadn't found it and taken it. I snatched it up, and put it into my pocket.

"There's the Barrier," Jill said. "That's where we're hoping to go past."

"Well, why not just run south of the House?" Owen asked.

"We went back there a few weeks back, and there's a huge ledge leading down to an ocean," Kelly said.

“Oh,” Owen said. He waited another second before talking again.

“So, I hear that Fanger roams these woods,” Owen said. “Maybe we should go past here, and check ‘er out.” Something in that sentence didn’t seem right, I thought.

“Smith says it’s not safe down there,” Jill said.

“Oh, come on, have some sense of adventure!”

Owen said.

“Maybe we could go, just for a few minutes,” Brandon said. Owen lead him down a trail, past the clearing. Jill quickly followed Brandon, and Kelly and me trailed behind.

Once I knew Owen couldn’t hear us along the trail, I grabbed Kelly’s wrist, and dragged her over to the side.

“I think Brandon’s right,” I said.

“What, we’re all snitches?” she asked.

“Not all of us,” I said, “just Owen.”

“Why?”

“We read the legend of Fanger last night, and then hid the book back in the basement.”

“So?”

“So, if he had never been in the House before this morning, how did he know about Fanger, if Smith and Gunshot are trying to cover it up?”

Kelly looked up the path, then back at me, knowing I was right.

Day 17: 9:47 a.m.

Kelly and I fell long behind the others, and at one point, got lost, and felt like we started hearing things.

GRRRRR....

“What was that?” Kelly asked.

“What was what?” I asked.

“What do you mean what was what?” she asked, hitting me on the shoulder. “You remember everything! You can see into the future, how do you forgot a huge growl?!?!”

GRRRRR!!!!

“Okay, that I heard,” I said.

SenCome

I dove onto Kelly, getting us both onto the forest ground. Something jumped out from behind us, a creature that was hairy all over, and looked ready to kill, as it pounced along the trail.

“Ha ha ha!!!” said a too familiar voice that belonged to Owen. “You guys are too easy!” He pushed some leaves and fur off of him, that made him easily look like a mistaken version of Fanger.

“Pain in the...” Kelly began.

“Kelly!” I said. “Language!”

“You guys trail off together!?” he asked. “Ooh! I smell love!”

“You smell that old fur in your hair!” Kelly said.

“There is nothing going on here.”

“Not yet!” he said snickering.

“Did you hear those growls?” I asked him.

“Growls?” he asked. “No, I actually didn’t.

Whatever.”

“Why did you come back anyway, I thought you guys were trying to find proof of Fanger.” Kelly looked at me after acknowledging how Owen knew about Fanger.

“No, I’m sorry, guys!” he said. “I don’t usually pull jokes like this, this one was just too good to be true! Anyway, Jill and Brandon found something down by the rock ledge and the clearing.”

Owen lead us back to the clearing, so we were looking at the house, and we turned left, over a rock ledge, and into the abundant woods again. We could see the clearing and the House from this place, and we saw Jill and Brandon kneeling down by a tree.

Nailed into the tree, was a wood post that read, in big capital letters: *WHEN THERE IS ONE*. The Red Paint on it reminded me of the note I got the night I arrived that read ‘Don’t Worry. I’m Scared Too’.

“When there is one?” Kelly asked. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“We don’t know,” Brandon said, “we just found it out here. Could Smith or Gunshot have put it up?”

“It doesn’t look like there handwriting,” Jill said.
“Could it have been someone that came here in the

past?"

"Who knows?" I asked. "After tonight, nothing that happens here will matter to us."

Day 17: 8:32 p.m.

Night couldn't arrive sooner, especially on the night of the escape. We all got into position, Kelly in the basement, Jill in the back woods, Me over by the strange sign in the woods, Brandon in front of the Barrier, Antonio in the kitchen and Owen in the upstairs hallway.

We had all decided to let Brandon cross the Barrier. This was probably the toughest decision in the escape, of who got to actually escape, even though

I had hoped by now to find a new way so we can all get out of this place, but no such way was ever found. Not yet at least.

I was probably close enough to cross the Barrier too, but since Brandon was the first at the House, and actually came up with the plan, it was his privilege. I saw him pull out his walkie-talkie, and hit the button on the side, and he spoke a message into it, that came across on all of our walkie-talkies.

“Guys, we’re only one minute and twenty-three seconds away from initiating the plan and I just wanted to say how awesome of of you guys have been,” he said, a crack coming in over his voice. “I’m sorry we all couldn’t leave, but I’ll be back for you guys, sooner than you may think. I might actually miss the food, and all of you guys here. If I see

Smith or Gunshot on the road, I'll give them both a punch from each of you guys."

"Twenty seconds," Jill talked into the walkie-talkie.

"Bye guys," Brandon said. "I'll be back real soon."

Jill counted down, and Brandon got read to run.

"Five. Four. Three. Two. One. RUN!!!"

At that moment, I could see Brandon charge at the Barrier, and a large flash of light came about, and something flew across the forest: Brandon's body. The Barrier had rebounded Brandon.

"Did it work?" Kelly's voice asked.

"No," I said. "They knew we were coming, and the Barrier was ready against us, somehow. Owen, you're positive you were on the camera? That was a tough one to mess up."

No response.

“Owen?”

“Antonio,” I said, “where’s Owen?”

I could hear Antonio running and he looked up.

“Owen is gone, Trent,” Antonio said. “His walkie-talkie is still here, but he has left us.”

“What? You know what, I gotta go help your brother, he looks pretty banged up, see if he’s around.”

I turned off my walkie-talkie, and ran towards Brandon, who was sitting, and leaning himself up against a large branch.

“Brandon!” I shouted. “You okay, man?”

“I think so,” he said. “Someone ratted us out, and Antallon knew that we were coming. It must’ve been Owen! Now Smith and Gunshot are onto us, we

can't try again until they trust us again."

"What if they come after us?"

"Too late for that! I never trusted Owen. That kid is NOT from Philly!" Brandon pulled out his cell-phone, and put in the letters A-N-T-A-L-L-O-N, and there was a dial.

"Let me put this on speaker," Brandon said. There was a click, and Brandon could tell Antallon had picked up.

"Antallon," he said. "Why did you bring in Owen Fergon to the House?"

"Who?" he asked. The fake, computer-like voice actually made the voice sound more real, whether that makes sense or not. "There was no resident here named Owen Fergon. There never has been, there is not and there never will be anyone named Owen

Fergon here.”

“What are you talking about?” I asked him.

*“We saw him, he was here. He met Smith and
Gunshot.”*

“Did you see him meeting them?”

“Well, we uh,” Brandon began.

*“He lied,” Antallon said. “There was no one
brought here called Owen Fergon.”*

There was a silence at the other end of the line.

“Barons, get out now,” Antallon said. “Good-bye.”

The line went dead.

Day 17: 9:04 p.m.

“Get out now?” Brandon asked. “What do you think he meant by that?”

“They must be coming for you!” I helped Brandon to his feet, and we looked at both the ends of the Barrier, and then the parts of the clearing.

“Whoa!” Brandon said. “What was that? Look across the Barrier, way down there, I thought I saw someone.”

“Wait, Brandon,” I said.

“Yeah?” he replied.

“It’s a full moon. The Outsiders maybe?”

“We may never know. We should probably—”

“We should probably what?” I asked, turning around.

Brandon was gone.

I knew that they would take him because he tried to escape. They would come for me next.

I ran out, farther and farther out of the clearing, away from whoever took Brandon. I ran, but there was something I didn't notice: the same log I had tripped over sixteen nights ago, I had tripped over tonight, and I was unconscious.

Day 17: Dream

I walked out of my room, and walked so fast down the front stairs, it was like we were in fast motion. I walked towards the woods, and I walked in fast motion again towards the clearing, and saw someone near the Barrier.

He was wearing a suit that consisted of a black sport coat, black tie, and dark pants, white dress shirt, and a monocle.

I grabbed him over shoulder and turned him around.

Beneath the suit, and behind the monocle was Owen Fergon.

“Owen,” I said. “How did you know about the legend of Fanger, without the book. It’s like you saw

him personally.”

“I couldn’t have made it here without your help,” Owen said, turning, and walking a little bit towards the House. “Thank You.”

“You’re not who you say you are, are you?” I said to him.

“Who is?” he asked.

“Who ARE you?” I asked him. He smiled.

“I have to leave, sooner than I may have hoped. I’ll be back though.”

“Leave? You just got here. Why weren’t you in Antallon’s system data?”

“Because he was right. I was never supposed to be here in the first place.”

“Is that it?” I asked him.

His head dropped, as he approached the Barrier.

Owen's face got darker, and he spoke slowly and clearly, in an almost dark fashion.

"There are people out there," he said, in a way that sent chills down my spine. "Exiles. They want into the Facultas House, even more than you may want out. That's why I was sent here, I am a scout, Trent. You helped us out, and we'll be back. Thank You."

"A scout? You've known all along?"

"You've been dying to know, and yes, it's true. Fanger, is real, and Devon Ferrell is gone. As for the Outsiders, they have been waiting even longer than when that book was written."

"Tell me more!" I said.

"We'll be back. Good Bye Trent."

*“Ah!” I exclaimed. I woke up, out in the woods,
and I checked my watch. It had only been a minute
since I had tripped and fallen over.*

Day 17: 9:55 p.m.

“Closer and closer,” I narrated, “salvation drew near. Brandon Barons was so close to escaping the Facultas House, but something caught his scent. Whether or not Fanger got to him, only he knows, but he is no more. I make a vow to you all, here and now that I will find Brandon Barons AND we will escape. For now, we are here at the Facultas House, but Brandon will be with us when we escape, and when we cross to that other side, Owen Fergon, and the other Outsiders will be waiting for us, but all we know for sure right now is that Brandon Barons and Owen Fergon are gone. But they will return, and they will get to the sides of the Barrier they choose to be on. Whether Smith and Gunshot are alive or

dead, and whether they like it or not. And that's not a threat. That's a promise."

The crackling fire seared behind me, in the room we were watching the movie in last night, not even worrying about escape, but now, we had attempted, we had failed, a legend had found us, one of us went missing and now we're all targets or Smith and Gunshot. They're hunting us, and they're going to try and kill us, so I say: give it your best.

Part 4

Day 18: Prelude

People don't just up and vanish like Brandon did, and I was determined to find him. Before I knew it, a whole line of kidnappings began. Now, here I am, all alone, plotting to find everyone and get them back. It would involve a trip to the basement, the woods, another trip to the basement, finding a secret, an underground tunnel, finding a strange attic, listening to the story of a past resident who turns out to be quite famous, redesigning the escape plan, reading some stories, another trip to the attic and a third trip to the basement.

*Well, I guess I should start from the beginning,
11:52 a.m., Day 18.*

Day 18: 11:52 a.m.

“Well where could he have gone?” Jill asked.

“Maybe BRANDON was the spy, the one we all originally thought there was. Maybe they took him away because he helped them.”

“Brandon came up with the plan, why would they take him away? He wanted out as much as the rest of us,” Kelly added.

“Look,” I said, “maybe it’s not important where he went, but the fact that we get him back. We need him, otherwise, we’ll never get past that Barrier.”

“I want him back,” Antonio said. “I’m going to the basement.” That has to have been the most I have EVER heard Antonio talk while I’ve been here.

“Antonio, what are you gonna find down there?”

Kelly asked.

“Antallon is set up down there,” he said, “and that’s where I am going to find my answers, and that’s where Brandon will be.”

Antonio stormed out of the room, and to the small hallway, through the door and down the hollow wood stairs.

“He’s not the only one,” Jill said. “I want Brandon back NOW, and if he was in the woods one second, and gone the next, they couldn’t have taken him far.” Jill got up from the breakfast table, and went directly out the front door, leaving it open behind her. The open door let in a cool breeze, that made the House seem colder.

We waited a second, before I said:

“Why don’t you go calm Jill down, and I’ll get

Antonio?"

"Sure," Kelly said. "But we better be careful, remember, they know we're planning to escape, they could grab us just as easily as they grabbed Brandon. Jill is right, though, Brandon has to be on campus, it's impossible for them to have taken him over the Barrier."

"Napoleon once said 'Impossible is a Word Found Only in the Dictionary of Fools'. Even though I believe that he's still here too. If he was trying to escape, then that's a way out. Let's go!"

Kelly raced out the front door, slamming it behind her, and I jogged down the stairs to the basement. I knew where Antallon's setup was, and that's exactly where Antonio was. I stood on the last step of the stairwell, shrouded by the same wood walls to the

side of the stairs that I hid between for my first escape meeting, and listened in.

“...I can’t keep doing this.” I heard almost sadness in Antonio’s voice, like he was crying while he spoke.

“We know what you are doing, Antonio. Antonio,” said the computer voice of Antallon. “And your sacrifice is admiral. But until the time is right, we fear we must conceal you from the others.”

“I just want my brother back,” Antonio said, wiping his tears with his shirt sleeve. This had to be the most informal conversation Antonio ever spoke in.

“When Posterus knows his fate, he will find your brother, you, Nemmer and Brittle.”

“Okay,” he said, in his normal voice. “I’ve trusted

you thus far. Do what you have intended for me.”

I heard a large SWOOSH and turned around the corner. Where the blue light flashed, Antonio no longer stood where he was before.

He was gone. 2/5 members had disappeared.

Day 18: 12:17 p.m.

“KELLY!” I called, running up to the woods.

“KELLY!” I was up in the clearing, and didn’t see Kelly anywhere. I traveled over on the rock ledge to a tree, where I saw Kelly standing by.

“Kelly?” I asked.

“Jill’s gone!” she said. “I followed her out here, and I went into the clearing, heard her yell from here, and when I came over she was gone.”

3/5 of the residents were now gone.

“It gets worse,” I said. “Antonio’s gone too.”

She gave me a look of question.

“Yeah, he was in the basement talking to Antallon, and Antallon said that Antonio needed to be concealed until the time is right.”

“Well, how long until they come and try to grab one of us?” she asked me.

“Okay, how ‘bout his? We stay together until I find a safe place that Antallon doesn’t monitor, and we hide there and figure out a plan to find the others.”

“All right.”

Day 18: 7:53 p.m.

Kelly and I stayed together all day, and finally gave up. There was no where we could stay that Antallon wasn't watching, which made me re-think whether or not it was one of us that was giving away the plan, or Antallon was able to figure it out himself. Kelly and I were sitting in the living room, after it got dark, and began thinking.

“Is this even worth it?” Kelly asked.

“Is what?” I said.

“You know, trying to escape. We'll have to get out eventually, but now we're sure to fail. We messed up once, we're just gonna do it again.”

“F. Scott Fitzgerald once said ‘Never Confuse a Single Defeat with a Final Defeat’.”

“Yeah, but it seems really hard to do, we’re almost certain to fail.” There was a silence for a while.

“This is the part where you give me a quote to make me feel better,” Kelly said.

“I don’t have any,” I said. “Sorry.”

We sat in silence for a little bit, and I finally thought of something.

“Kelly,” I said. “I want to check something out in the basement, I’ll be back in a few minutes.”

“What is it?” she asked. “Should I come?”

“No, that’s okay,” I said. “You’ll be safer here.”

I got up from the living room, and walked into the kitchen. I went to the small hallway, and down the basement stairs, once again, attempting to flick on the light which would not go on.

I felt the purple liquid dancing around in the

plastic bottle inside my pocket, and the silver key with the letters 'TAE' on the part that unlocks some door, make my ankle really cold.

I walked down the wood stairs, still tripping over the loose fourth one, and made it down to the concrete floor. I walked over into the large gap, and saw the blue, blinking light, where Antallon's setup lived. I walked to the end of that small pathway, and saw something at the end.

There was a white sheet of plastic covering half of the wall diagonally across my left side. The bottom of it looked like wood, like nothing I had seen before, but I did notice something else, that I hadn't seen before, a small hole. It looked like there was some light coming from inside, almost like it was a a door.

I decided that I should go back up to get Kelly

before I went in there.

I ran as fast as I could up the stairs, all the way to the living room, where I saw Kelly no longer sitting on the couch and some pillows on the floor.

They had taken her. 4/5, gone.

Day 18: 8:19 p.m.

I decided to avoid them from getting me, I looked for somewhere I could hide for a while, and plan to find the others, escape or both.

I looked at my room, with some of my things in it. I grabbed my journal, camera, iPod and Recorder, and my backpack filled with some non-perishable fruit I had stored for the escape, leaving everything else behind.

One thing I hadn't noticed before was that there was somewhat of a large gap in between my room and the set of carpeted stairs leading down to the living room, which was at the end of the hallway.

I saw how many pictures had been hung up over

the wall, and wondered if there was something else there.

It took down the picture at the very end of the hall and saw nothing, and then one in the middle: nothing.

Finally, I just tried the one closest to my room, and saw something even more disturbing, carved into the wall. It was a wood keyhole, etched into the wall. A keyhole that was morphed into the three letters: TAE.

I took the key out of my sock, and put it into the wall. I turned it to the left, and there was a wooden/metal CLANG. I saw a small part of the wall fall outward, revealing a dark stairwell leading upwards.

*I hung the picture back on the wall, and climbed
inside, shutting, and locking the door behind me,
going to a place where no one could find me.*

Day 18: 8:41 p.m.

I saw a pretty supported wooden staircase that looked like it dated back to the days when the house was built. There was rope that made up the base of a railing, which I held onto, and climbed up.

I got to the top of the wood stairwell, and saw another floor, which must've been an attic. I saw two desks set up there, one of which still having things on it, another, covered with a sheet.

I saw spiderwebs, dust, and other things covering the floor.

I went over to the desk with things still on it, seeing what seemed to be a recording device, but it seemed, decades, or even centuries ahead of its time.

There was a tube-like structure that would record

you, and a play button that would play the tape. I couldn't tell if it took a cassette, or whatever, but it looked, well, *ANCIENT*. I consider myself somewhat of an expert on electronics, but I had *NEVER* seen a model like this one.

I sat down at the old desk, leaning back against the leather chair I sat in. I placed my things on the maple desk, which was still standing. I clicked the play button, and heard brief mumbling I couldn't make out, and some more noises that made me think that the thing was broken.

I saw a dial on the side of the mechanism, which I spun to the left, and I heard a tape rewinding. This device reminded me somewhat of a twisted phonograph machine, which was believed to be the first actual type of audio recorder. Then, I heard a

small muffle, and a voice began to tell a story.

The voice was from a teenager, no older than sixteen, but had the crackle of an old man in it too.

“I’ve forgotten where I left of, so let’s just start from the beginning. My name is Thomas Alva Edison,” I clicked the play button, which made the tape stop. Thomas Edison knew about the Facultas House? Then it hit me. How blind could I have been? T’AE. T’AE was some kind of person, who seemed to be connected to the House in one way or another, and he created all kinds of twists and turns in it. And his name was Thomas Alva Edison.

Some of the language Edison used in this recording may not be understood, for those of you who are reading my journal now, so I’ve tried to translate it to modern English as best I could. I

clicked the play button again.

“Now, my early years were uneventful, and boring, so let me get to the part that may interest you.

*About a month after my fourteenth birthday, I woke up scared and confused at a strange facility in the middle of an unknown woods, that is called by its owners, the *Facultatem Domus*, which would be the most accurate translation, or *Facultas Domus*, which would translate to the ‘Abilities House’ in English.*

*This may seem strange to you, but Latin is the foundation of the House itself. Some say that the Founders were the last people in the America to actually use Latin to converse with each other. One called himself *Gun Offa*, and the other, *Fabrum*. I’m having some trouble finding the loose translation of the name of the first, but the second one translates*

from Latin to some form of Blacksmith, or Gunsmith, or something.” I clicked pause on the tape, and began to click my Audio Recorder on. I realized something very strange that very minute, and it better be a coincidence. I found it strange that both of the names Edison mentioned had the word ‘Smith’ in it, and that the first one had the word ‘gun’ in it.

A little bit too strange for me.

“As far as I’m aware, the two partners have been alive since the Dark Ages, and have been repeating the same trick. Every 150 years or so,” I clicked play, which paused it. I took out my iPod touch and Googled ‘Thomas Edison’. It sent me to his Wikipedia page. He was born in 1847, and fourteen years later would be 1861. 150 (number of years) plus 1861 (Edison’s year) would equal this year,

2011. *If you don't believe me, then do the math for yourself. I clicked play again. "They find the six children with the most powerful abilities alive, searching from all over the world. What these children don't know, and what I've figured out, was that there is only one of them that matters. The collective group will despise being brought to this place, and will immediately try to get out, but upon their attempts, one by one, each member will be kidnapped, until only one remains. That one is the one that is chosen (i.e. the Chosen One). The Two Partners, as I like to call them, as I don't know what they call themselves, use the blood of the kidnapped kids, to restore themselves to youth again."* I clicked pause, and realized what was really going on here at the House.

Assuming that they were the Two Partners, Smith and Gunshot were and still are using our abilities and blood to make themselves young again. I clicked play again.

“As far as I know, they have been pulling off their same scheme since they themselves grew old for the first time. They somehow, just, know... They pick the people that will have the most impact on the future of the Earth. As far as I know, the people here with me are known as Alexander G. Belle and Robert L. Stevenson among others. A recently dead poet has seemed links to this mystery, and attempted writing them down before his untimely death. I believe the Two Partners had something to do with his death as well, although I have no proof. I have little to no time left here, yet there is one thing I

know positively: there's a passageway in the facility's basement, behind a diagonally shaped wood door, it had another connection to the poet, with seven different rooms: blue, purple, green, orange, white violet, and black. Whatever importance these have, they relate to the ones that were chosen, in each, the blood chamber of each facility resident." I stopped him. My eidetic memory was failing me again, but there was something about these rooms that I remembered about when I first arrived at the House, I just forgot what it was. I clicked play again. "The final chamber however, the black one, is used to mix the ingredients, the blood, the metal and one more thing: an ingredient lost since one of the first restorations to youth in 1011 A.D., was a purple form of liquid that has come into my possession. As far

as I'm aware, this can give the user true immortality. The Two Partners have been using an elixir that restores their youth for a period of one hundred and fifty years, in which they go without aging even a crack. The elixir will not turn them to teenagers, but keep them the exact SAME as they were the day they first had it, and continue having it. As far as I know, the two have looked the exact same since the first time they consumed the elixir.. This purple fluid however can make them stay their current form upon it being consumed, until the end of days, and the end of time. I must be going now. I'm locking up this attic, and hopefully, when you find the key, and these recordings, you'll have also found the elixir that restores permanent youth. Destroy it, before it's too late."

There was a muffle, and I clicked the pause button. I realized that this was, well, simply, a LOT to go through.

I didn't even know if I could trust this dead crackpot, but I had to reassure myself that my science teacher once said that great thinkers were often thought to be insane, because no one could understand their true genius.

Maybe Kelly was right, I should just give up. I had run out of quotes, teammates, and plans to escape. There was of course the question of the purple liquid, and whether or not it really did make you truly immortal, and if that's why Gunshot and Smith seem older than they appear.

Then, I realized that the tape still had some more room on it. I clicked play again. On this recording,

a much older, steady man spoke, with a the same crack he carried as an adolescent.

“I’ve carried these secrets for seventy-one cruel years of my nearly faded life, since I was fourteen, as the Two Partners may think, but you, the one who has found this tape, will know the truth. I have moved around, from place to place, never stay anywhere for too long. I have reentered the boundaries of the Facultas House, determined to find the place I have hidden the final elixir. I am beginning to forget, but you, you will remember every word, when it is your turn. I have found the black room, the seventh and the final, the one with the mixing rooms, containing something left over, something with all of our bloods mixed into it, with a few more secret ingredients. I have left it

here, in drawer, at the desk that you listen to this on right now. It is empty now though, as if it never was." I stopped the old man mid-sentence, and opened the drawer, seeing a small, glass vial, with a tiny drop of fluid in it, that Gunshot and Smith must've realized by now is long gone. I clicked play again.

"I have had the last of it, so I will survive until at least the next batch is made. By the time this message has been heard, I will have already faked my death, but I have plenty of life left in me. I will wait, oh, say fourteen years or so, and fake my own death? I will be gone by then, trying to reach the inside of this House yet again, for reasons I cannot disclose. Whomever is hearing this tape must be ready to give up on him or her's self, but do not.

For, I myself have always been fond of quoting others, but I myself say that: Sometimes, Many of Life's Greatest Failures are the People Who Did Not Realize How Close They Came to Success, when They Gave Up."

The tape went dead, as it had run out.

I now knew that Edison wasn't pretending, and that I am so close to success, but I can't fail myself now.

Day 19: 1:02 a.m.

I replayed, and replayed the tape for the good part of three hours on end, trying to analyze parts of it I hadn't payed attention to before. On the third time, writing it down in this journal, and the fifth time, recording the full thing, including commentary.

Even I made a recording on my audio recorder, and put all the audio files, the ones I made, and the ones Edison made (and I recorded) onto a red, perfectly visible USB drive, and put it on the desk. I slung my backpack open, and took an apple out, and walked around the room as I ate it, noticing some pictures hanging up, around the room. I went over to the other desk, and pulled the white, plastic tarp off of it.

I saw some sketches of the house, that weren't dated, but definitely looked eighteenth century era (which is 1700s, if you get them confused like me). I saw that not only were these sketches of the House from when it was first built, but they showed structural weaknesses and points I had never noticed before. I saw a label on the basement level right near where I found the key labeled: Computing Function.

Now, contrary to popular belief, you actually only needed to have a fifth grade computer knowledge to know that the first computation devices were actually manufactured during the Renaissance, we know these devices today as Modern Day Calculators, that needed no human assistance. Computing Device was professional lingo for 'Computer'.

But, I thought that the earliest computer proto-

types started developing in the twentieth century, I mean, weren't they?

I saw the passageway that Edison mentioned in his recording, and it seemed to be right behind that wood door I saw in the basement. The maps showed a staircase leading down, a short hallway, and in between the different hallways were seven rooms.

Edison was right. Again.

I noticed that the hallway went over, and had some loops, and twists, and turns, but it looked like it lead out to the woods, to the end of the clearing, and I realized that this was it.

This was our way out. Past the seventh room, and down the hallway, somewhere far underground is not only where I realized I'd find my answers, but it's also where my friends and I would finally escape

from the Facultas House.

Day 19: 3:32 a.m.

At one point, I fell asleep looking at the maps in the attic, but I noticed that none of Antallon's cameras were upstairs in the attic, and no one came in and grabbed me. I remembered everything that had happened: everyone's gone, I'm next, Gunshot and Smith are gonna keep living forever, that is if I don't stop them.

I grabbed my backpack, and even stuffed some of the maps into it. Then, I walked down the stairs to the door, and used the key to click open the picture frame. I hopped out, and saw how dark it was outside the House.

I looked into my room for a final time, trying to remember if I had forgotten anything important before I would make my descent to the basement.

There was something I knew I had forgotten, and many questions left unanswered, but for now, all that mattered was stopping Smith and Gunshot.

They, as far as I knew, were not on the House grounds, so they wouldn't have caught me if I did manage to release the captives. I looked at some books in my room, and...

SenCome

I just remembered where I had seen those colors before. I looked around my room again, and my eyes caught a book. I went over to my desk, where

books and papers began piling up from my attempts of reading, to shadow the despair of my relatives, so far away.

I opened up the book, and saw it the key card from the 'Gateway' hotel on the page I had left off on. A page with a story entitled 'The Masque of the Red Death' by Edgar Allan Poe.

I went back up to the attic for at least twenty minutes and began reading the story. I began to realize that whatever symbols these rooms were, they related a lot to the ones underneath the basement. In the story, there's a terrible plague striking a city, and almost everyone is being killed by it, but in a castle, hidden inside, is a prince and some of his privileged, rich friends. It's like an ongoing party, inside, especially inside seven of the rooms, each one

marked by the same colors as ours. At the end of the story, the prince chases a strange guest, and when he finds the guest, he drops dead on the spot. The guest, turns out to be death itself. The moral of the story is that no amount of hiding from death can completely annihilate it.

I guess maybe that's why the seventh room is the mixing room, because it's reminding Smith and Gunshot that the end is coming, whether they like it or not.

Day 19: 4:09 a.m.

Before I could stop, I began reading another Edgar Allan Poe story called 'The Oblong Box'. In this story, a narrator begins to tell the story of when he, his college friend Cornelius, Cornelius's wife, and his sisters embark on a voyage on a boat to New York.

The strange thing about this story, though is that that there were the perfect amount of people for us to be the main characters. The narrator, me, Cornelius, Brandon, the captain, Antonio, the two sisters, Jill and Kelly and a maid, who must be the sixth person Smith and Gunshot are gonna grab to complete the life ritual.

In the end, Cornelius winds up giving up his life

for a strange box he's been acting suspicious about the whole story. In the box turns out to be his recently dead wife. I still haven't figured out what the symbol of the wife is, but I'll figure that out after we escape. In both of Poe's stories, death is a recurring theme that Smith and Gunshot will keep avoiding.

They're proving, in this story, that they'll never be dying for one another, or anyone else for that matter, as Cornelius did for the box.

They'll be there (if the ritual continues) forever.

Day 19: Somewhere Between 4:00 and 5:00 a.m.

*Recorded and Written After Further Consideration
of These Events*

I now realize that Gunshot and Smith didn't only use these tales of Edgar Allan Poe, but they created them. Edison said that a recently dead poet (which was nineteenth century lingo for author) tried to record the strange events of the House.

Unfortunately, Poe was only able to tell the story in a morphed way, without fully revealing what was going on.

After I had read the stories again, I tried to find some connection between Smith and Gunshot, as opposed to Cornelius and his box.

I tried to think of what was going on here at the House, and how if the parallels to the story and the people in it weren't the same as I thought.

Brandon seemed to be my closest friend here, a perfect match to me being the narrator, unless of course, I wasn't the narrator at all.

Those thoughts aside, right now, I needed to get out of this mental case of a home, so I needed to finally make my descent. I recorded some more notes on 'The Masque of the Red Death' and 'The Oblong Box', via my camera and Audio Recorder, and then stored it all to one USB Drive, again.

I had finally realized that I could leave everything behind, and know for sure that the kids that came next could handle it. I realized that if we got away, Smith and Gunshot would have to re-collect six more

kids, or rather five more, because there's still another sixth coming that was supposed to be in our group.

I realized that 'The Masque of the Red Death' is a very appropriate story for our circumstance because in this instance, the Guest, or rather Death himself, makes the Prince die. I think that all of the room's symbols are used just to remind Smith and Gunshot that the end is coming, and possibly, sooner than they may think.

Day 19: Somewhere After 5:00 a.m.

After I had recorded and stored everything in the attic, there was one thing that I realized I had to do: hide the key. Thomas Alva Edison's key. I knew that hiding the permanent life elixir would only lead to Smith or Gunshot living forever, so the best solution for that would just be to take it with me, or get rid of it entirely. I looked back in my room one more time, still having that feeling of something being left behind, but I forgot what it was again.

I walked down the stairs that lead to the main forum right behind the front door, and went into the small hallway. I noticed that right next to the front door, another door had been carved out.

Someone new had arrived.

I looked into the small keyhole on the door, and saw pink walls, with posters hanging up, and a small desk next to the bed. I also saw the girl inside the room motioning around, frantically, realizing she wasn't at home anymore.

She banged on the door, still not realizing I was there.

"HELLO?!?" she called.

"Don't worry," I called through the door, "it's going to be okay. Did Antallon give you the message already?"

"Yeah, I heard it on my radio," she said. "Who are you?"

"Look, it's a long story. My name is Trent Posterus. It's going to be okay. You're going to be okay. Wait till the morning, and find a key that is

special to you, and find a way to unlock your door using it. Now, you're gonna wanna get out of here A.S.A.P., but before you leave, you need to go to the secret attic. I'm gonna slip a key under the door. Don't worry, everything will be okay."

"Thanks Trent, I'm Sarah, Sarah Victoria."

I slid the key underneath the door and knew I had to get going.

"Sarah, I gotta go!"

"Well, hurry up then, and thanks."

With that, I went into the small hallway, and opened the door to the cold basement, tiptoeing down the wood stairs for possibly the last time.

Day 19: Approximately 5:20 a.m.

After I finished something I had to do before I left, I ran past the open space, and into the small opening between Antallon's setup and the trap-door. I went in past that and to the wood. I kicked the wood with my foot, and then my knee, finally cracking the door open. I went through the small doorway, and saw a variation of long, fluorescent lights on the ceiling, and a somewhat short hallway.

The hallway resembled the attic, and the stairs leading down to the basement, because they were made up entirely of sturdy wood. I also noticed that the floor there was ground (dirt), not cement. I was definitely underground now. I walked down the small hallway, and saw many things. On the side of

one wall, there was some Latin written that I recognized immediately: *E Pluribus Unum*. That's the motto of the United States, meaning: One From Many. There was a door carved into it, which I pushed at, and forced open. I saw a small wood staircase that lead up, and had a hallway down, and to the right.

When I reached the end of the hallway, I saw some bark, almost of wood, and I pushed on the almost hollow part of it, and it cracked open. I saw some trees, and I was overlooking the house from almost an aerial view, above a rock ledge.

I knew where I was. I was in the tree with the sign: *When There Is One*.

I shut the door, ran back down the hallway, down the stairs and out the door, back to the strange

passages in the basement. I realized that I had to keep going.

I saw, coming up, the first of many doors to come. On it, in what looked like the same handwriting as the one on my door that read 'Team White' read 'Blue' in blue paint, that smeared a little bit at the bottom of the 'e', like it had been rubbed off.

I opened the door, and saw a table in the middle of the room, that looked big enough for a body to fit on. I saw that the room's paint was chipping at some places, and was painted in a nearly faded shade of navy blue.

This made me think of how each of the rooms were split up. If you've ever had your house robbed, then you'll notice that the robbers will open drawers from the last one up, because if the first one is opened up

first, then you'll have to close it to look at all the others. Antallon or Smith, or Gunshot or whoever probably brought Brandon into the violet (sixth) room, and Antonio into the white one (fifth), Jill into the orange (fourth) room, Kelly into the green (third) room, and they were planning on setting me up in the purple (second) room, and Sarah would be in the one that I'm in now (the first and blue one). That way, Brandon wouldn't see Antonio, Kelly or Jill being brought into the first room. I went to the end of this seemingly large room, to the doorway at the other end, and saw another hallway resembling the one I was in originally (lights on the ceiling, fading wood, ground floor). I went down this hallway, this one even shorter than the original, and opened up the next door. This one was in dark purple that could

easily be mistaken for black, or violet.

My colored room, I thought. I saw another table in the middle, and went to the door at the other side of the room. I opened it up, and realized that at the end of this even shorter hallway, would be Kelly. I ran, my backpack swaying behind me, and I opened the door, seeing this room painted in an extravagant green, that seemed like it was jade green.

On the table, was Kelly Nemmer. She was strapped down to the table, and had a neckerchief over her mouth.

“Tre...” she said, the bandana muffling her words. “Help!!!” I ran over and pulled the tight clips from her hand, releasing her. She pulled the neckerchief out of her mouth. I untied her legs, and she hopped off the table.

“Trent, what’s going one?” she asked.

“It’s a really long story. I’ll explain when we get Brandon and Jill back!”

“Where are they, are they close?” she asked.

“Where are we now?”

“They’re closer than you may think.” I opened the door at the end of the fading green room, and we ran faster down the hallway (this one about the same as the one between my purple room and Kelly’s green one), and we tugged open the door.

Jill was on the table in the middle of this room, her long legs sagging off the table.

“Jill!” Kelly exclaimed. Jill must’ve been asleep, because she wasn’t moving. Jill’s eyes opened, and they got wider, seeing me and Kelly.

“You untie her,” I said, “and I’ll go get Antonio

and Brandon. Long story short, at the end of these long halls, is a way out of the House, it's how Smith and Gunshot get out so quickly every time."

"Yeah, but what's this all about?" Kelly asked. "I mean, the colored rooms and the secrecy?"

"Again, long story, but this is where Smith and Gunshot take our blood to mix with their own to become immortal. They've been using this isolated peninsula as their headquarters for nearly nine hundred years."

"What?" Jill asked, as Kelly and I were untying her. "That's impossible!"

"Impossible is a word found only in the dictionary of fools," I reminded her. "Thomas Edison was brought here when he was fourteen or so. He figured it out, and Edgar Allan Poe is connected too, I

think that he recorded some of the strange things that go on here in his stories.”

“Whoa, that’s a lot to process,” Kelly said.

“They’re using our blood with our abilities to make themselves immortal *AND* have our skills, so let’s make sure it doesn’t happen this time.”

Jill was now completely untied, and we all rushed through the door at the end of her room, and went down the hallway, through the door and into the room that was supposed to be Antonio’s.

We opened the door, and saw that he wasn’t tied down to the table, in fact he wasn’t even in the room.

“Well, where’s Antonio?” Kelly asked, as if I knew.

“As if I know!” I said.

We left Antonio’s white room, and continued into the next hallway, still lit up from the lights. We ran

down to the final door, and saw Brandon tied down to his table, in the room that was a bright violet.

“Guys!” he exclaimed. I noticed that Brandon didn’t have a neckerchief, on him, but I did noticed a small vial filled up with a reddish fluid: his blood.

Kelly and Jill untied him, while I started telling everything that I had heard happen. I grabbed my Recorder, and took the earbuds out and played Thomas Edison’s recording. After the recording stopped, I played my recording, with my side notes, about ‘The Masque of the Red Death’ and ‘The Oblong Box’.

“So, they’re using us?” Brandon said.

“Sounds like it,” I said. “Look, guys, I found some maps in the attic, and found a structural weakness outside the mixing room, which is the room after the

next. We could be out of here in five minutes!”

“But, what about Antonio?” Brandon asked. “He wasn’t in his colored room, right?”

“Maybe Antallon’s extracting his blood in the mixing room right now?” Kelly suggested. “I mean, he was the second one taken, and Brandon’s blood is already out!”

“Yeah, maybe,” Brandon said. “Speaking of which, I better hold onto this,” he said, taking the vial, “so they don’t get it.”

“Well, why don’t we get going then?” Jill asked.

She pushed the door at the end of Brandon’s room open, and we instantly noticed that there was no hallway, and that the mixing room was already in there.

There was a light switch, that Kelly flicked on,

and we noticed that the room was crammed in with long tables, vials, empty cans and bottles, among other things.

“Nice job,” said an almost too familiar voice.

“You’ve made it to the mixing room.”

The door slammed shut, and in front of the now closed door, was Antonio Barons.

“Antonio!” Brandon said. “Are you okay?”

“I’m fine Brandon,” he replied solemnly. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” he said. “I’m good. What are you doing here.”

Antonio paused for a moment. He looked around the room, and then back at us.

“I never wanted to do it,” Antonio said, “but Antallon was right. They needed help that I was

willing to give," he said, his voice cracking on 'give'.

"Where are going with this Antonio?" Jill asked.

"Brandon was right all along," Antonio said.

Antonio's voice didn't seem like that of a robot's anymore, it seemed like a laid-back, regular kid's voice. "Brandon just never suspected me. That's right. I've been Antallon's spy all this time."

There was a dead silence around the room for a moment or so.

"Antonio," Brandon said. "Why?"

"Because I would know everything about the House, and Antallon convinced me that you, the leader, would never suspect me, because I'm your brother. I never wanted to, but Antallon trusted me. Look, this doesn't change anything," he said. That's a lie, I thought. "I still wanted to have escaped with

you guys. But, now I feel more attached to this place, like Antallon is really keeping me here, so I can improve my abilities.”

Another period of silence.

“But, Antonio,” I said, “they’re not really improving your abilities here. They’re using you to make them younger.”

“But, Antallon told me that we are improving our abilities, even if they are using us. They may be taking a little bit of our abilities, but we keep almost all of them.”

“You really want to stay here?” Jill asked.

Antonio shook his head up and down, meaning yes.

“Well,” Brandon said, “it IS your choice.”

“There’s this new girl upstairs,” I said, “called

Sarah Victoria, so make sure she doesn't figure out what's happening here, until she's about to successfully escape."

"Okay," Antonio said. "But what about Smith and Gunshot? They'll try and find you, right?"

"As far as they care, they can just find four others," I said.

"Okay, you guys better get going then," he said.

"Maybe we should look around here first," Kelly said. "Search for anything that may be crucial to Smith and Gunshot's experiments."

"Yeah," Jill said.

While the others searched around, I am filling in most of this in my journal, realizing everything that has happened since I've been at the Facultas House.

I thought of Owen Fergon, and if he or the

Outsiders, or Fanger or both really ARE waiting on the other side of that Barrier. We can show them the passageway in (or rather OUT for us), and they'll just have to go through it.

I realize now that the story of 'The Oblong Box' was right, except it was me that was wrong. I am still the narrator, passing the story down, and Jill and Kelly are the sisters, Sarah Victoria is like a maid who we don't find out about until the end of the story, but it was Brandon and Antonio I was wrong about.

Brandon was the captain, who tries to talk with the narrator, but is delayed, and it was the parallel between Cornelius and ANTONIO that is the most related in our circumstance. Antallon, the computer, is like the Oblong Box itself, containing the corpse, a

secret Cornelius has been hiding all along, and he loves the box so much, he stays behind to be with it.

Do I believe that Antonio has fallen in love with a computer? No, I honestly don't. But, Antonio is attached to the computer like Cornelius is to the box, just not the same love-like attachment.

I realize now that I'm just about out of room in this journal, so my wrap-up on the escape will have to be via my recorder, or camera, but you'll find it.

One other thing that you'll find, if you're ever taken to the Facultas House is a small bottle.

I don't know where I dropped the bottle that used to contain the elixir of eternal life, but wherever it is, it's nowhere that Smith or Gunshot will find anytime soon.

You may find the vial, but don't freak out if the

liquid itself isn't in there, because I already took care of that.

I'm not going to be like Smith or Gunshot, because I'm never going to cheat death, because I know that the end will come for me, but even sooner for Smith and Gunshot.

I took the eternal elixir, and put it into a half-empty water bottle, the water turning dark purple. The reason I took so long going into the basement, was that I finally TOOK CARE OF the fourth step to the basement. I grabbed a screwdriver and sealed the water bottle with the life elixir inside. Like I said before, no one can avoid death forever, because Death has a 100% Accuracy Rating, and the Bullet, this time, is being Launched Right at Smith and Gunshot.

Day 19: Daybreak

I have now run out of pages in my journal, but fortunately, I was able to switch over to my recorder.

RING... RING... RING...

On the third ring Antonio picked up his cell phone and answered it.

"Hello?" he said. "Antallon? What?! Okay thanks, I'm sure they'll appreciate it! Bye!"

"What is it?" Jill asked.

"Smith and Gunshot are coming close, you guys better book it if you want to get out at all!"

"Thanks Antonio!" Kelly said.

"You've really been helpful pal," I said, giving him a quick handshake.

"We'll miss you," Jill said. "Call us when you get back out of this place!"

"You're sure you don't want to come?" Kelly asked.

"Positive. Go!"

"Well, I'm gonna miss you bro," Brandon said, giving Antonio a big hug. "I'll tell Mom and Dad that you're doin' all right, and you'll be home soon."

"Yeah, you do that," Antonio said. "Now go!"

"You guys go," I said, "I'll catch up."

The three ran to the other end of the room swinging the door open, and exiting. I made sure that they were gone before I talked again.

"I saw you over the Barrier that night," I said.

"What did you mean that I never will be?"

"Well, I can't exactly tell you," Antonio said, "but there will always be something that keeps you bound to this House, Trent. Whether you like it or not. Oh, and yeah, you are the Chosen One in our group."

I felt a feeling of shock emanate my body, all around.

"MY ability is being able to teleport anywhere I want, at anytime," Antonio said. "I didn't want to tell the others, but you saw me that night, so I kind of owed it to you."

"Thanks," I said.

"Now, Hurry UP!" Antonio said. "They're coming!"

"Thanks, see you soon!"

I ran across the room, jumped on some of the

tables, and ran on them, jumping off at the other door. I opened the door wide, getting one last glance at Antonio, before entering into it.

I ran down another small, this time, dimly lit hallway, and to a wood door at the end of it.

I opened the door, and saw a small flight of stairs, going up, with Brandon, Kelly and Jill waiting on the top.

"What's goin' on?" I asked.

"We need to crawl through this pipe, and then we're out!" Brandon said.

"But we wanted to wait for you," Kelly said.

"You can hop in first!" Jill said.

I got on my hands and knees, and saw a small barred sewage pipe exit at the other end of the pipe.

"Guys, when we reach the end of this pipe," I said, "we'll be out of the Facultas House!"

I saw smiles all around, as I crawled down the pipe, farther and farther. It seemed to go upwards at one point.

Kelly followed behind me, Jill behind her, and Brandon last. I crawled as fast as humanly possible down the pipe, and I finally reached the other end, trying to open the door, alas, it was sealed closed.

"Guys, it's locked!"

"What!" Brandon said. This wasn't the question 'what?' it was the statement 'WHAT!'.

"Try to kick it open!" Kelly said, next to me now!"

"Human force against rusted metal," Jill said.

"Impossible!"

"Impossible is a word found only in the dictionary of fools!" I said for at least the third or fourth time while I was here.

I kicked as hard as I possibly could on the metal, and kicked with the heel of my shoe, three of the bars finally breaking off!

I crawled out of the pipe and stood up, offering my hands to Kelly, helping her up, Jill, raising her up, and Brandon, helping him to his feet.

We all looked back at where we had come from, and, as it turns out, the passageway had been concealed in the right Barrier rock, which none of us could surpass.

We now looked back at the House from across

the Barrier, never imagining this day to come.

"Guys," Brandon said, looking at his iPod Touch, showing it to us, "it's about 6:00 a.m. August 2, 2011."

"What?" Jill asked. "That means it's only been a day since we all got here, but... What?!?"

* * *

SenCome

* * *

"Guys!" I said, "they're not even a tenth mile away from here! We gotta move so Smith and Gunshot don't see us!"

We trailed up left towards a path leading upward, to another clearing, when I heard something move.

* * *

SenCome

* * *

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" I said. "Hold up!"

At the top of the hill, we saw an old man, who looked in his eighties, if not older, and was wearing an eye-patch. He held a cane in his hand, and began to speak slowly and clearly.

"Congratulations on your escape. You are the only Facultas House escapees in the history of this very house."

"Who the heck are you?" Kelly shouted.

"I have come as a messenger for Antallon," the old man said. "I bear a message."

"Okay, well we're kind of in a hurry, so speed

it up a little bit."

"Smith and Gunshot, the immortalists, as I call them have indeed been alive since the time of the Crusades, possibly the eleventh or twelfth century, but they're not the only ones."

"What's that mean?" Brandon asked.

"It means, that there is another group, called the Immortalists, who are currently developing different ways to stay alive forever, alas, their plans have been foiled every time."

"So they're using us?" Jill asked.

"They are using me as well," the old man said.

"But, you're working WITH the Immortalists right?"

"They want to raid the forests, and the House, finding a permanent elixir of life. They want to

upgrade me. I will cease to exist, instead of Antallon 2.5, there will be Antallon 3.0. I basically run the Outsiders. I am working with the Outsiders to ensure that the elixir is destroyed and the Immortalists are brought down, but I am VERY scared."

My head was looking at the ground, but then turned up and faced the old man.

* * *

SenCome

* * *

I just remembered what I had forgotten in my room.

"I'm scared," I said. "You've known all along haven't you? You've known about our escape plans, and you was scared of us leaving,

because we wouldn't be able to protect you.

YOU wrote me the note the first day I got here."

"There are only seven people alive," the old man said, "who know of my future plans, or who have ever escaped the Facultas Grounds, or both. There is myself, the four or you, Thomas Edison, and Edgar Allan Poe."

There was a moment of silence, and we turned to look at each other.

"Well Edison we knew about," I said, "he had some of the blood, so he'll be around and he still is. Even Edgar Allan Poe, HE'S still alive?"

The old man seemed to ignore me.

"We are the Outsiders, and just like you read, We Offer a Choice." The image of Antallon's messenger hologram flickered, and flared,

leaving the hillside as if it never was, leaving
four teens scared and confused.

Book 2: Fall 2012

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who inspired, and helped publish this book, including my Mom, Dad, Brother, Friends, and to my teacher Mrs. L., who encouraged and believed in me.

And also to the person who said I'd never know how to write, I'd like to thank the most; for without those words, I may never have written this book.