

The Collection



David J. Rouzzo

Maathín



SAMPLE

David J. Rouzzo

CHAPTER 1

“How do you feel?”

“Fine.”

“Any better?”

The man smirked as he looked at Dr. Andrews in disbelief.

“Same as yesterday.”

“Your feelings?” The doctor asked.

“Your questions. They are the same as yesterday...and the day before.”

“Look...”

“I come to you because I am trying to get help. I am trying to find the answers to who I am, and where I came from.” The man sighed as he stood up from the couch that he was laying on. “Any word about my past?”

“The lab hasn’t sent back any information regarding the fingerprint tracking. Keep in mind, you came to me only weeks ago, and I have not only done what I can to be a friend to you and help, but I have also offered to be a psychiatrist to you at no cost.”

“It’s been two months.”

“Yes, I suppose it has. It should be any day now.”

“Any day now? With all due respect, Jon, you’ve fed me that line for a week and a half now. For the past eleven days, all I’ve gotten from you is that response. Jon,

you can't help me if you're not going to be completely open and honest with me." The man expressed with desperation.

"I'm sorry. I can only tell you what I know. I'll tell you what. I'll call the lab personally this evening and request them to speed up the process. Have you started your journal yet?" Jon Andrews asked, hoping the man had taken his advice.

"Yes, I just started it last night before I went to sleep." The man answered, nodding.

"Good," Jon replied, "it should help your memory."

"Thank you." The man stood to his feet, shook hands with Dr. Andrews, and slowly left the office.

As the man walked out of the psychiatrist's office, he glanced around at the empty lobby. He remembered the family that he had seen sitting in the lobby the day before. He remembered the brown-haired girl who sat in the old rocking chair in the corner, rocking back and forth, with a still look on her face. He remembered the man sitting on the couch, mumbling random words and staring at the floor. Last, he remembered the little boy who was sitting at the table, playing with a small toy car. He began to visualize the family sitting in the lobby once again. The image suddenly changed, as the man on the couch turned pale. The vision became frightening as blood began to run from the girl's mouth and her eyes rolled to the back of her head. The image of the little boy changed as his face became covered in blood.

The man stared at the horrifying images that he was visualizing in the room and he began to scream. Dr. Andrews ran out of the lobby and began to shake him.

“What’s wrong?” he yelled as the man continued to panic.

“The family! Save them! Help them!”

“There’s no family. Nobody’s here!” The doctor exclaimed.

“Save them!” The man screamed again.

The doctor continued shaking the man, until he finally fell backwards, lying on the ground. The man looked up at his doctor with confusion.

“What happened?” The doctor asked.

“I saw them.” The man answered.

“Who? Who did you see?” The doctor asked.

“There was a boy, a girl, and a man. They were sitting here. The blood...”

“There’s nobody here. There hasn’t been anyone here all day. You were my only patient today until later this evening.”

“It was...the family who was here the other day. The man and the children.”

“Young children?”

“No. The boy was young, but the girl was older. She was in the rocking chair.”

“Nobody was in the rocking chair. Nobody was here.” Dr. Andrews said, trying to understand what was going on. The man stood up and stared at the room. He sighed, as he stared at the table where the little boy was playing. He was soon distracted by the ringing of a

telephone. Doctor Andrews began walking toward his office.

“I have to answer that. Don’t worry, you are okay now. You should try to get some rest. Come back tomorrow. We’ll see how you’re doing, alright?”

“Alright.” The man nodded before leaving.

The man walked out onto the sidewalk, and made his way around the street corner. As he walked past an alleyway, he caught a glimpse of a young boy who looked very familiar. He walked up to the boy and realized that he recognized the boy from one of his visions. He remembered the vision of the three boys staring at the old house. This was one of those three boys!

“Who are you?” He asked the child.

“Your sign of hope.” The boy answered. Confused, the man decided to ask the boy more questions.

“How do you know me?”

“All of us know you, Hathin.”

“I’m sorry, what did you call me?”

“Hathin; that is what we call you.”

The man stared at the boy curious and confused about the name. The boy looked at him, with a look of understanding.

“Your ignorance was expected.” The boy informed him. “The name that we call you is a name given to the one who holds the power to start the resurrection of this town against the darkness that hinders it.” The boy reached his arm out and pointed his finger at a box lying nearby. “Inside is a gift we have made for you. The image you will find can show you who you are. You must learn about the symbol, and study it. You must learn about yourself. The past holds

no answers, but you still must remember it, for it will help you understand your future. You must allow your faith to guide and carry you.”

The man began to grow more curious and more confused by what the boy was explaining to him.

“Faith? Faith in what?” he asked.

“Faith in yourself.” The boy answered.

“I don’t understand.” The man replied. A lady walked up behind him.

“Sir, who are you speaking to?” she asked him.

“The boy.” He answered her.

“There’s no boy around here, sir. I think you had better go home and get yourself some good rest.” She shook her head and walked away. The man looked back at where the little boy was standing before, but no one was there.

Confused, the man looked over at the box that the boy had pointed to. He walked over to the box and carefully opened it. Inside the box there was a black cloth. He pulled the cloth out of the box and unfolded it, revealing a shirt. The black shirt had a mysterious symbol on the front of it resembling the letter H, with a few noticeable differences. The man placed the shirt back into the box. He picked up the box and headed towards the old church he had first found himself in. He had been sleeping in this church every night, and leaving early enough so that nobody would come in and find him.

Back at the church, the man set the box down underneath a chair. He then sat down with his journal to write down the events and emotions he had gone through

that day. After writing, Hathin laid down on some blankets that he had gathered together, and slowly fell asleep.

JOURNAL ENTRY #2

More visions have appeared to me today. My current emotions are bewildering and confusing at the same time. I feel afraid, but at the same time, I feel prepared. Then again, perhaps I am just crazy. Perhaps I have lost all my sanity, and that is why I am seeing these visions. Either way, I can't help but wonder if there's something more, something big, behind all of this. I just can't help but ask myself why I am the only one who is able to see these things. Nothing makes sense anymore.

One benefit from these visions is that I now have a name for people to call me. The boy in the alleyway called me by this name, and the way he explained it made it sound to me like there are others who know me by that name as well; others who look to me as some sort of leader. How am I to lead people who know me and expect something of me, when I do not even know myself? The only thing I know about myself is the name that I have been given from my visions. From this point on, I will learn who I am, and I will learn who I am supposed to become. I will learn the meaning of the symbol that was on the shirt that I was given. From this point on, I will be known as Hathin.

*Signed,
Hathin*

The background of the image is a vibrant, futuristic landscape. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged rock formations and a bright, glowing horizon. In the sky, a large, textured planet is visible, and the background is filled with a colorful nebula and stars. A large, red, diamond-shaped stamp with the word "SAMPLE" in white, bold, capital letters is overlaid on the center of the image. The text "SOME PLANETS AREN'T SO CLOSE TO EARTH" is written in a large, white, serif font at the top of the image.

SOME PLANETS
AREN'T SO CLOSE
TO EARTH

SAMPLE

DAVID J. ROUZZO

CHAPTER ONE



He woke up in a cold sweat. Who was she? Whoever she was, she sure was beautiful, and when she touched him, the feeling it sent through his body was invigorating, pouring some sort of energy over him and through him that he had never felt before. Yet, it was just a dream. How unfortunate and yet, so very typical that was. Was it so much to ask to find love in reality? He thought about what it would be to see her, to touch her, to be able to hold her. She was exhilarating. But she was just a dream. While it felt so very real, it was just a dream. Wasn't it?

It didn't matter anymore. He was awake now, and that was the only thing that mattered at 3:00AM on a chilly fall morning. He had a long day ahead as it was and planned to watch the meteor shower that night through his new telescope. How he would manage to stay up late enough for that at this point was beyond him, but he figured he'll do what he did every other time he had to stay awake – consume what often seemed like an ocean's worth of coffee. No cream, two

packs of sugar, lots of caffeine. That was the only way he'd pull it off, and he couldn't miss this meteor shower.

The Perseid meteor shower was beautiful last August, and the new telescope was going to make them seem as if they were lights in his backyard. He sat in bed and longed for a couple hours more of sleep, but he knew that wasn't going to happen. He had slight insomnia as it was, so getting to sleep in the first place was hard enough, but once he woke up he was doomed to be awake for the day. In fact, there had been many nights where he fell asleep at 1:30AM and woke up just half an hour later at 2:00AM. He hated time. Mainly because there never seemed to be enough of it to go around, but also because the little bit of it he actually had was often spent working. He hated working because it consumed most of the day. It felt redundant, and it was. But he didn't care. He hated work and he hated time, and that wasn't going to change anytime soon.

He poured his first cup of coffee and stared out the window at the dark sky. He glanced at the clock on the wall. 3:08 AM. He rolled his eyes and looked back out at the sky. He thought about the girl in his dream and the vision of her captured him with what could only be described as a paralyzing embrace of admiration and adoration. His head filled with thoughts of the dream.

He remembered the dream in its entirety. First, he recalled the dream opening with a large field, the stars in the sky raining their beautiful light down upon the field where he was standing. Then she showed up. A beautiful girl walks into the field and stares at him. The next thing he knows, they are dancing, laughing, enjoying the presence of one another. He remembered leaning in to kiss her as her lips glistened and pushed out slightly towards him.

That's when he woke up. He longed immensely to return to his slumber and see her beautiful face once again, but he knew it wouldn't happen. Now that the dream had come and gone, it was but a short and sweet trip down a dead-end road in a rich neighborhood. He would give anything to see her again because he has never been so close to a woman as he was with her, at least not that he could remember.

You see, he lived a life filled with very simple and typical memories, as most of us do. He had his ups and downs, his bullies and crushes, and even his battles of teenage dilemmas in which thirteen isn't just an unlucky number but is also the age in which you fully learn every possible way to defy and disappoint your parents. Top those memories off with the lack of nostalgia and truth be told, he felt as if his life was more lackluster than a 90-minute film focused on real-time fungal growth and development. His biggest accomplishment in life was the purchase of his new telescope, something he was very anxious to put to use. So, it is to no surprise that seeing her and knowing her even for just that short moment in his slumber, was more significant and real than anything else he had ever experienced in his life.

Zane Pierce was sitting at work and doing everything in his power to avoid thinking about the girl from his dream. He felt like such a fool, being infatuated with someone he had met once who, of course was not even a real person but instead was someone his mind made up completely on its own.

"How are you today, Pierce?" Asked Rowan Slater, a co-worker of Zane's who spent most of his time flirting with the females in the office. Still, Rowan was the best friend Zane had made at the office, mainly because he was one of the very few people who even acknowledged the fact that

Zane worked there. Zane worked in accounting, and while his job mostly kept the office afloat, it was not something many people cared to know existed in any way, shape or form.

“Actually, I’m having a hard time focusing today, Rowan.” Zane replied. “I can’t seem to stop thinking about a dream I had last night.”

“A dream?” Rowan laughed. “Zane, you know dreams aren’t real, right?”

“Yes, I know that.” Zane replied. “But this one was… different. Very different.”

“Alright, spill it.” Rowan said, pulling a chair close and sitting in it, intrigued by Zane’s obsession over the dream.

“No way! I’m not telling you anything more than I already have.” Zane insisted.

“And why not?” Rowan asked, grinning.

“Because you’ll tease me for a year and a half over it.” Zane answered, turning back to his desk and attempting to get back to work.

“It must have been something real special if you’re not willing to let me tease you about it.” Rowan said. “Either that, or you’re wising up to me.”

“Perhaps both.” Zane joked. Rowan grinned as he walked back over to his desk and returned to work.

The day was going way too slow. Zane was excited to try out his new telescope that night. If there was anything that could take his mind from the girl of his dreams, it was staring up into space at all the beautiful stars and planets. In fact, the only thing he could think of other than the dream he had was in fact looking through that telescope and seeing what his old

telescope couldn't see. Yet, he had about 4 hours of his work shift remaining.

"Of course, this day would drag on like this." He mumbled. "There isn't enough work in the world to speed this day up." Just at that moment, Zane's boss walked by and overheard his griping.

"Am I hearing correctly, Mr. Pierce? It sounds to me like you need more work." Zane clenched the pen in his hand. He despised his boss, Leonard Ross, intensely.

"No sir, I have plenty of work to do." He replied, forcing a calm tone upon his voice.

"It doesn't sound that way. But it's alright; I've got plenty you can do." Leonard put a file down on Zane's desk and smirked. "In this folder there are details regarding a new bank account of ours, along with instructions on the exact numbers I want you to move from our sales account over to the new one."

"What's the reason for this new account?" Zane asked, curiously.

"That's most definitely not any of your business, Pierce. Do your job and think again before you ask nousey questions." Leonard demanded.

This wasn't an unusual situation for Zane. Leonard Ross spent much of his time insulting and critiquing just about every single aspect of Zane and his work. Zane was denied the privilege of knowing any details, talking to anyone ranked higher than Leonard, and of course, from leaving anything at his desk overnight that wasn't work related. Zane watched as Leonard Ross walked away and shook his head.

"What a jerk." He uttered. Leonard turned around and glared at Zane as if he had heard him, though it couldn't have been possible. Zane faked a smile and motioned the folder

towards Leonard, implying that he was going to begin working on it right away. Leonard nodded in approval and went on his way.

“Problems with the boss man again, Pierce?” Rowan asked from across the room. There was snickering from around the room.

“Of course.” Zane thought to himself. “They notice me enough to laugh when the boss gets down my throat.”

The next few hours of work seemed to drag on even slower than they did before the extra work was assigned, and Zane barely got through the day. Still, just when he had reached the point in which he was ready to get up and walk out on the job, the clock struck 5pm and it was time to go home. He stood up and grabbed his coat.

“What’re you up to tonight, Zane?” Rowan asked as he walked over from his desk.

“I’ve got my new telescope now; I’ll be spending the night looking up at the stars!” Zane said with excitement. Rowan stared at him for a moment as if he wasn’t sure if Zane was being serious.

“You’re... you’re actually excited about that?” Rowan laughed. He didn’t understand the love Zane had for the stars.

“Yes, very much.” Zane answered immediately.

“No.” Rowan insisted. “You’re not going to do that, you’re going to come and join me and these two lovely co-workers of ours, Emily and Erika. Twins, you know!”

“Rowan, it sounds nice and all, but I’ve been looking forward to setting up the new telescope all day.” Zane declined.

“You’re choosing Space over twins, Zane. Come on, Erika thinks you’re cute!” Rowan pleaded. Zane stared and thought for a moment.

“You want a date with Emily and can’t get it unless someone doubles up, so she can bring her sister?” He guessed. Rowan nodded.

“So, will you do it?”

“Rowan, I…” Before Zane could answer, he was interrupted by a soft voice behind him.

“I like stars.” Zane and Rowan turned to see Emily Watkins, the girl Rowan had finally landed a possible date with. She smiled, and Rowan knew what he was going to have to do to make this date night happen.

“Alright, so why don’t we all come to your place tonight, Zane?” He asked. Zane honestly didn’t want company at all, and had no interest in dating anyone at that point in his life, but he could tell how much Rowan wanted this date with Emily to happen.

“Okay.” Zane said. “I’ll have to set it up and get the settings right on it first, but why don’t you guys come over around 11:30?”

“That sounds perfect.” Rowan said, grinning at Emily. He moved closer to Zane. “I owe you one, buddy.” He said softly. Zane could tell he was doing the right thing. Still, all he could think about was looking at the stars, and then going to bed and, as unlikely as it was, hoping to see the girl from his dreams once again.

**THE
WELL STRATEGIZED
AND
THOROUGHLY
THOUGHT OUT
SELF INSTRUCTION
OF
HARRY FLYNN**



DAVID J. ROUZZO

1

In every good tale of fiction, there is love, adventure and mystery. This is not one of those stories – because this is a tale of fact. Before we continue, let’s take a moment to focus on and take in the definition of that 4 letter F word, courtesy of the Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

fact \ˈfakt\ *noun*

1 : a thing done: as **a** *obsolete* : **FEAT** **b** : **CRIME** <accessory after the fact> **c** *archaic* : **ACTION**

2 *archaic* : **PERFORMANCE, DOING**

3 : the quality of being actual : **ACTUALITY** <a question of fact hinges on evidence>

4 a : something that has actual existence <space exploration is now a fact> **b** : an actual occurrence <prove the fact of damage>

5 : a piece of information presented as having objective reality
— **in fact**: in truth

And so you see amidst the mumble jumble of the definition at hand – that the word fact means a thing done, actuality, and something that has actual existence. A fact is, in fewer words, something that actually happens. And so it is explained and now undoubtedly understood that everything in this book is complete truth and undeniable actuality. If it were a lie, it could not be fact. If it were fiction, it could not be truth. Do you understand this yet? Alright then, let's move on.

Our story starts in a small suburban town on January 17th of the 85th year of the 20th century – that being 1985. You see, a century is, of course, 100 years long, which tells us that 20 centuries would be 1900 years. Add in the extra 85 years, and you find yourself in 1985 – but I probably didn't need to explain that, now did I? Let's see – where was I? Oh yes, now I remember quite well. In a small suburban town on January 17th, Maggie Flynnnt gave birth to a 9 pound 6 ounce baby boy. She decided sometime amidst her second trimester of pregnancy to name her son after the man who had gotten her highly intoxicated and seduced her at a highly sophisticated fraternity party at her college – and by highly sophisticated, I simply mean that half of the men in that fraternity could in fact spell the word fraternity. If you would ask her, Maggie Flynnnt would quickly confess to you and anyone else willing to listen that she was easily and quite aggressively attracted to brutes with big egos and small

brains – and by brutes, I simply mean sex-driven 19 year old males in their sophomore year of college who have nothing better to do than drink, play football (sometimes with Frisbees), party, and impregnate impressionable young women who are stepping into the open world for the very first real time in their fortunate – or unfortunate – lives. Did I mention the big egos and small brains? I did? Very well then, and away we go into the depths of our great tale of facts that explains once and for all the process, or series if you will, of events that we have now come to know as *The Well Strategized and Thoroughly Thought Out Self Destruction of Harry Flynnnt*.

Now, let's get back to that impressionable young woman by the name of Maggie Flynnnt. Maggie was a sweet girl who, at one point in time, had the ability to make even the angriest, meanest, bitterest people fall madly and passionately in love with her. Then, with a sudden growth that failed to properly initiate the maturity level one would hope would assist it, Maggie hit an age that brought terror and treachery into the lives of everyone affiliated with her. That's correct! Our dear sweet Maggie Flynnnt hit the rotten, angry-dwelling age of two years old. To everyone around her, Maggie was defined as being a part of a mythical, legendary occurrence known only as the Terrible Twos, but to Maggie, she was simply learning about her kingdom and trying to teach the simpletons around her that she would soon be their queen. The reason Maggie knew she would soon be their queen is because her mother and father, her grandmother and grandfather, and her aunts and uncles constantly called her a little princess. In her very complex

young mind, she associated the word princess with the very thing it was displayed to be in all of the movies – a position of ruling, leadership, respect and honor. Therefore, if a princess is going to be spanked, scolded, or even tsk-tsked, then it is only appropriate that she bares the right to express her anger and to show disappointment in her kingdom for bidding against her rulings.

As Maggie Flynnnt grew older, she became much wiser, and soon realized that she was not a princess at all! In fact, her kingdom was nothing more than a broken down trailer in a dusty field, ruled by a drunkard and a whore. In case you are not familiar or comfortable with my use of the word *whore*, then please, take a moment to observe its definition on your own time – by doing so, you will find that a whore is someone who engages in sexual activities for money.

Now please, let me take a moment to note that I do not enjoy calling anyone a whore, especially if they are not – but when it came to Jane Flynnnt, the mother of Maggie and the soon to be grandmother of Harry, the term is nothing more than completely appropriate, for Jane Flynnnt worked as a prostitute whose rates varied only to accommodate her blood-alcohol content level. You see, if Jane was drunk (which she almost always was) and a man wanted to pay her for a specific sexual request of his to be filled, she would simply charge him a six-pack of cheap beer and about five dollars cash. The five dollars would then be placed into a jar and placed on top of a very high shelf in the far back room of that broken down trailer in which they lived. However, if she was sober (or more likely so, just a little less drunk than

usual), Jane Flynnnt would charge a man 10 dollars and a twelve pack of beer for such undisclosed actions requested instead of the previous mentioned rate. Either way, the money she made would be placed in that same jar that was stored on top of that very high shelf in the far back room of that broken down trailer. The beer, however, would usually end up in the lake about three miles away from their dusty little field.

How all of that beer wound up in the lake is actually quite simple to explain. You see, after a hard day of – work, Jane Flynnnt would drink her beer as she walked home, which resulted in her need to use the bathroom almost immediately upon arrival. Jane’s toilet flush would carry the alcohol through the pipes and into a small sewer stream. The small sewer stream would run for about a mile and a half before it would drain into a larger sewer stream which ran for an additional mile and a half. There, just three miles away from the Flynnnt trailer, the large sewer stream poured into a well known family-oriented location, frequently visited (despite the strange sour smell that filled the air) by families everywhere and famously known as the wonderful, refreshing Corn Lake.

Corn Lake is not only a family-oriented vacation spot during the day, but spins into a complete vortex at approximately 11:57pm each night, shifting it into an alternate universe where people do not go to play or relax, but instead go to park with the girls they’ve picked up from local street corners – which is exactly where Jane Flynnnt was working the night that the light switch in her womb was suddenly and instantly flipped to “On.” And all it took was

one night with a man who would soon move into the trailer with Jane and raise his pups like a good boy should.

The news of Maggie's pregnancy was just as shocking but unsurprisingly brought the same reaction of acceptance and understanding as Jane's pregnancy – that is until Maggie informed her parents that she would not be marrying the father after all. Her parents were not happy to hear this news, and in the long run it may have been better for Maggie to have told them otherwise, despite the actuality of the situation. Actually, there are two reasons that Maggie would have been better off telling her parents. The first and slightly smaller reason it may have been better for Maggie to tell her parents that she would of course be marrying the father of her baby was that the father's name was Harry Spencer. Personally, I feel Maggie Spencer to be a better (though less zesty) name than Maggie Flynnnt. The second reason that Maggie should have claimed to be marrying Harry Spencer is that in the long run she wouldn't have needed to go through with the wedding anyways because just two months after impregnating Maggie Flynnnt, Harry Spencer was hit and killed by a very large bus. If Maggie would have known such an event was going to take place, she most likely would have lied to her parents, but she didn't, and her parents were very unhappy. Though they didn't enforce abstinence, they did enforce their beliefs that if a woman becomes pregnant, it is her responsibility to make sure the man marries her, or else take him to court for child support.

Yes, Maggie's parents believed it is strictly the man's responsibility to provide for his family, and Jane

believed that more than anyone, as it almost seemed to be a Flynnnt tradition that the man cares for his family no matter what. From Great Great Grandpa Joe Flynnnt to Uncle Ester – which is a surprise, because Great Great Grandpa Joe was 97 years old, and Uncle Ester was disabled (and by disabled – you guessed it, I simply mean that he had one blind eye – his only eye – only one leg, no arms, and to top it off, or not top it off at all, he was bald.)

Perhaps it was things like this that caused the stress that quickly led to the heart attack of Great Great Grandpa Joe. In fact, it very well could be that the thoughts of karma – that being the cause and effect, what goes around comes around theory. Perhaps it was the rules and beliefs that Great Great Grandpa Joe had started for his family that led to his stress, which led to his heart attack, which overall, led to him just barely living long enough to see his great, great, great grandson, Harry. You see, Great Great Grandpa Joe wanted the best for his children and grandchildren, and even his great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren. The problem is, Great Great Grandpa Joe didn't want to have great great great grandchildren. This is why to this day even following his death he simply goes by Great Great Grandpa Joe. If one should ever refer to him as Great Great Great Grandpa Joe – then they will most likely find themselves haunted by a very angry old man with a disastrously large grudge.

And so, now I have given background on the Flynnnt family, but have yet to touch on our dear friend, Harry. That is because knowing Harry's family is very important – and even if it's not important, and I manage to mention very

little about them through the rest of this book, it is still fun information to have shared. If you did not find it to be fun information, then I suggest you go back and read the entire chapter over again until you find the ability to allow yourself to smile. If after reading it several times, you still have not smiled, then at the very least, you have proven yourself to be a simpleton who can be manipulated into reading over an entire chapter multiple times for the mere sake of one smile.

Shall we move on?

2

Wavy brown hair and breath-taking blue eyes complimented the bashful man of which this story is told. Harry Flynnnt stood at 5 foot 7 and delivered a whopping eyeful of 220 flesh-covered pounds. Harry was a poor man in most aspects of life, paying his bills with each and every check from his unfortunate career of fast-food restaurant employment at the Fry Shack (Although, I should note that the Fry Shack was not a provider of very fast food or service, nor were they much of a restaurant). The Fry Shack consisted of a door for employee entrance only and two drive-up windows at which customers could place and receive their order. The choices available to all customers were small fry, medium fry, large fry, jumbo fry, or fry bucket. Customers also had a choice of drinks available to them – water, or water with ice.

Harry Flynnnt did his best to pay very little attention to the fact that his life was very unpleasant and his living situation was no more enticing than the 200 dollar paychecks he brought home each week. At minimum wage, it took Harry months to find a place to call home, and when he did, he quickly found that many cockroaches and other roaming insects had called it home long before he did. To

top it all off, Harry Flynnnt was very alone, as he could never find the courage to ask Laura Davis, the woman of his dreams, to go out on a date with him. In fact, Harry didn't even have the courage to speak to Laura Davis at all. This explains why, despite bumping into each other every day in their apartment hallway, Laura Davis does not know of Harry Flynnnt by name, if at all.

Once, a package was delivered for Harry, but accidentally dropped off at Laura's door. Not knowing the name on the package, Laura tried to send the package back. Interestingly enough, the package made a reprise visit to Laura's door and consequently found itself in her trash, which is taken out on Thursdays. That Thursday, the package found its way across town to the city dump, where a homeless man found it and opened it. Fortunately for the homeless man, the package contained a brand new set of dress clothes, shoes included. The dress clothes were exactly what the homeless man needed to go out into the world and land a great job. This unfortunately left Harry Flynnnt with no decent dress clothes on Friday, which caused him to miss an interview (which he obtained by mistake but felt it was best not to bring up to the management of said occupation) for a major position with a very successful business. Oddly enough, the clothes didn't help the homeless man get a good job either because instead of trying to get a job with them, he sold them for a few dollars and spent the money on cheap Canadian alcohol. On a good note, the woman he sold them to gave them to her husband and demanded him to seek a job, which he did to avoid the alternative choice of which she gave him: that being a

drastically long and dragged out divorce that would result simply in him losing everything, including, of course, what he loved most – his 60 inch, high-definition, flat-screen television.

When Harry saw Laura Davis in public, his heart skipped a beat. To be fair though, his heart skips beats quite often anyways, as he has a slight murmur which causes irregular beating to take place. Regardless of that fact, Harry took special notice of each time his heart skipped around Laura. Her hair (which ironically enough could be compared to the exact tone of which he likes his chicken nuggets to bare – a soft golden brown) and warming smile brought a strange feeling upon Harry – a feeling most of us know as comfort – which is not a common feeling for Harry and therefore can only be truly described as discomfort. I know this is a lot to take in at once and only a select few of you will truly understand that explanation. The rest of you will just have to shrug it off and hope that the rest of the book is a little easier to follow. Of course, I suppose I should give you the heads up that this book may not get any easier to follow, which could leave you unsure about your feelings towards it. To make up for that possibility, here are a few small words to get you back on track. I will do my best to include a series of small words like this to maintain steady flow for those who have trouble following along. At this moment, the small words I've chosen for you are as follows: at, shoe, and car. You're welcome.

Now that we've gotten past all of that, I do believe we can move on with our tale. Harry Flynn had a very steady routine. He would wake up, eat a waffle and wash it

EUPHORIA



DAVID J. ROUZZO

“What... what are you? Are you friendly?” He asked the creature, slowly reaching his hand out towards it. The creature looked at him and started to move towards him slowly, but then suddenly stopped and looked at him in fear.

KWAH! KWAAAAAH!

The creature quickly climbed up a nearby tree, and Damien watched, startled by the quick and sudden reaction of fear it had displayed.

“What’s wrong?” He asked, curious what he had done to frighten the creature.

Then, he felt it. The shaking of the ground around him, the presence of something else in the forest, coming up behind him. Damien turned and saw the shadow of a large, dinosaur-like creature through the trees, and could barely see enough to know that it was heading straight towards him. He turned and started running, the ground beginning to shake more and more as the monstrous creature drew closer to him. Damien ran as fast as he could, but regardless of how fast he ran, the creature seemed to move even faster. As the gargantuan creature got closer, it saw Damien and decided he looked like a great snack, so it began to pursue him aggressively.

Damien thought at that very moment that his life was going to be meeting a very terrible demise, but then several people came out of the surrounding trees and bushes and launched spears at the large creature.

“What is going on?!” Damien asked, overwhelmed by everything he had experienced. He didn’t know if these people were friendly, but at this point it didn’t matter because the creature had fought them off and stared right at him. He looked around for a way out, and noticed a girl staring at him and pointing off in the direction. He looked at her, realizing she was trying to get his attention.

“Run! The ledge! You have to jump!” She shouted. He nodded and realized she was helping him.

Damien charged towards the ledge and was ready to jump, but then as he reached the edge he realized it was going to be quite a jump, and he was not at all prepared for it. The girl saw him stop, and realized the danger he was in as the creature was catching up to him. She charged towards him and tackled him off the ledge just in time. The two of them toppled down the ledge, falling through trees and bushes, until they landed in a large pond. Damien had the wind knocked out of him and desperately tried to swim out of the pond and onto land, on which the girl who rescued him from the large creature had already made it to.

Damien crawled onto the land and spit out the water he had gotten in his mouth while trying to breath after having the wind knocked out of him. He rolled onto his back and looked up at the girl who had saved him.

“Who...who are you?” He asked.

“My name is Sienna.” She answered, helping him to his feet. He looked up at the ledge they had jumped from.

“And, what was that?” He asked, looking surprised to have survived the attack.

“That was a baby Gargun. Don’t worry, it doesn’t enter this part of the forest very often. It usually stays near its nest on the other side of the jungle.” Sienna explained. Damien looked at her, complexed.

“A... did you say a *baby*? That was a baby? They... They get bigger?” He asked, terrified.

“Well sure, at least a little. Maybe twice the size?” Sienna answered casually. She smiled at the fact that Damien seemed so concerned.

“And the other creature, the monkey looking creature, what... what was that?” Damien asked. Sienna thought for a moment, and then laughed.

“What, you mean a Kwah? Those are harmless, they just like attention.” Sienna explained.

“A Kwah. Of course, that, well, it makes sense.” Damien stuttered.

“Okay, now it’s your turn. Who are you?” Sienna asked.

“My name is Damien.” He answered. “I’m not really sure how I got here, there was this flash of light and then...”

“I know how you got here, we’ve seen it all take place before.” Sienna interrupted. “But you seem different than the others.” Her words caught him by surprise.

“Wait... others? There were others who came here... however I did... before me?” Damien asked, confused.

“A few. Not many. We thought the doorway was sealed.” Sienna explained.

“How did you even know I was here?” Damien asked.

“We didn’t. We were chasing the Gargun, trying to scare it out of our area of the woods. It’s easier to scare the babies away, and if we don’t do so soon enough the parents come looking for it. That’s when things get messy. We just lucked out that it was preoccupied by whatever that scent is you’re giving off.” She answered. Damien laughed.

“What? Oh... my cologne! Well, had I known it could have brought me an untimely death, perhaps I would have skipped it today.” He joked.

“It’s time to get you back home.” Sienna insisted. “It’s not safe for you here, things are dangerous, and your prolonged presence will alarm the others.”

“Speaking of here... where am I, Sienna?” Damien asked, curious where he had ended up. He followed her to another ledge and watched as she brushed back the leaves of the trees, revealing a beautiful land with

waterfalls, trees, wildlife and villages. Damien stared in awe at the beautiful scenery they were overlooking. Sienna looked at Damien and smiled.

“This is Euphoria.”