

A summer alone

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Charlotte is very angry about being left with her grandparents but an unexpected visitor and his gift excites the vacation more than wanted.

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Chapter 1 - Illusions or not?

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1 - Illusions or not?

A summer at Gram s and Gramp's

I woke up with a crash. I rubbed my eyes tiredly and reached for the old lantern that stood crookedly on the chipped nightstand. I ran down the long stairway to find Mrs. Smith motionless on the floor with a wire in her hand and a notebook in the other. She had broken in from the living room window. I stood there, thinking of what to do, until Gram came running towards me. I hugged her tight and Mrs. Smith's cold body disappeared into a dusty, abandoned screen&

It was summer. Mom and Dad were sending me to rot at my grandparent s house for four weeks of the vacation. They had a business trip in Europe and couldn t take me with them. I was angry. I had only been at Gram s and Gramp s once before when I was a very little girl. *This summer I am basically grown up and don t need to be taken care of like a baby*, I thought to myself on the way. The car slowed at a rather small but engaging street. From the corner of my eye I could see Gram walking out of a clearly old, little brick house. Gramps came slowly after Gram, hugging Mom and Dad and kissing me.

I laid my backpack on the floor and crossed my arms. The house was polished. A big maroon colored carpet was thrown across the entire house, which smelled of lavender. I was slightly stunned when I found the room I was to sleep in. It looked like a wooden box with two giant windows covered with yellow pale drapes. A small, but fairly sweet canopy bed was shoved in the corner. It was a rather cozy and nice room to me despite its size.

I marched back downstairs to look for something to do and found nothing. Gramps was reading a book and Gram was in the kitchen. I walked over to Gram and hopped up on the counter. Charlie, the over-sized ragdoll cat came and sat near me. Gram smiled, You know I m sure he would like if you d play with him, he s turned into such a lazy cat. She said, shaking her head and chuckling. I sighed and groaned, Okay& come on Charlie. I went out to the front yard and sat on the thick, dusty fence, with Charlie of course. A boy, fifteen or so came by riding a bike. With much hope of meeting him, I quickly combed my hair behind my ear and started walking. I looked towards the house and then looked back, I gasped. The boy was bleeding, head to toe, still happily riding his bike, and then he disappeared, just vanished. I looked around, breathing hard, looking for someone, or something. I didn t move, I couldn t. Gram came out, Charlotte dear, there is warm bread and honey in the kitchen, come and have some. She called from the window of the living room. No response. I could not talk nor move. Was I going crazy? I thought to myself desperately. Gram sighed and came out. Now Charlotte, I know you re not very happy about staying here but you could *try* and have a bit if fun. I wondered if Gram or anyone would believe me if I told them, I decided to give it a shot, Gr-Gram? D-did you see&did you see what happened? Did you see that boy? Gram looked dreadfully at my fear. What boy Charlotte? She asked, looking around There was a boy, I said for some reason more confidently There was a boy with black

hair and-and he was riding a bike, a big yellow bike with black stripes! He passed and then& Just& started bleeding& but-but he didn't know and-and he vanished& I said, at my own words a shiver ran down my spine. Gram looked at me with her eyes wide and her face pale. Charlotte, I know you don't want to be here but you can't joke with me like that! She said sharply, grabbing my hand. But there wasn't there?! Gram you have got to believe me, I'm scared! Gram looked back at me, pale as ever. A few years ago a boy came riding his bike and was run over by an irresponsible driver, but Charlotte, who told you? Gram, no one! I saw him! I said, now screaming Charlotte, go inside now! she said pushing my wrist inside.

I stayed in my bed the rest of the afternoon, tears rolling down my cold cheeks. I was frightened. Who wouldn't be?

Later there was a knock on the door. I sneaked to the side of the stairs, and listened. Hello Mrs. Masterson, Mr. Masterson- said the voice of an old man. Why hello Mr. Peters, what brings you here? Asked Gramps eagerly. Well, you see, I couldn't help but overhear your& discussion with your little visitor, and I hate to see a child like that so if this in anyway could keep her busy or happier, and maybe easier to handle? Said Mr. Peters furtively. Oh, Mr. Peters, thank you so much but why such a favor? Asked Gram, a little uneasily. I like doing my favors Mrs. M, besides, I'm old and cannot concentrate on such things, therefore it's just a waste of room in my small old home on my old wooden desk. Explained Mr. Peters. Why, we thank you a great deal Mr. Peters, would you like to come in for some coffee or tea? Asked Gram and Gramps unsurely. Thank you for the invitation, but I have some things to take care of, good night Mrs. M, Mr. M. Said Mr. Peters and left. Gram laughed a little. Charlotte, come out from behind the stairway and see what Mr. Peters had brought, besides, there tend to be spiders behind there. She said, and I came slowly down.

Mr. Peters had brought an old, *very* old, *and* dusty, computer and screen. Despite its looks, it *did* keep me busy a great deal. One day, the rain raged piercingly on the house's roof. Gramps had come home with a pale face and sad eyes, The doctor should come any minute now. He said, hanging his coat, and hugging Gram and me. Late we were informed of the death of Mr. Peters. Although I was awfully big, I sat on Gram's lap sullenly, as the rain, full with grief, ran down the windows, and swiped away any joy.

A week or so later, I sat blankly at the computer, given by Mr. Peters. I turned it on. Nothing. I tried again and again, nothing. As I got more and more frustrated I whacked the screen and kicked the computer, then laid my head down on the desk. I groaned, the computer made a loud screech, but at least turned on. Charlie ran around the house, panicked, and then stupidly sat on my lap. I rolled my eyes and looked down to pet Charlie. I looked up at the screen. I saw the reflection of the boy riding his bike, I saw the reflection of Mr. Peters, and I saw people, pale people with cuts on their skin, or bullets in their hearts. I looked behind me. No one was there, nothing was there. I looked back and heard screams, gunshots, yells, tires screeching, and other dreadful sounds. I scam, loudly, I started to cry. Gram came running in, not bothering to ask why I was screaming or what happened, she just held me tight, and the screen went blank.

Words couldn't express how scared I was. I wanted to crawl into a dark corner and disappear from the world. I tried and tried to tell Gram or Gramps what I saw, and that what I saw was real. They too, were scared. They thought I was crazy, I knew it. They called Mom and Dad to ask if I did this often, they, of course, said no. They said that, probably, I plainly wanted attention. If only there wasn't such a thing as being selfish or crazy, they'd maybe believe me, or was I really crazy? Thoughts filled my mind and hurt my brain until I fell asleep.

I woke up sometime later after falling asleep. I scooped up Charlie and walked slowly downstairs, popping my head slightly to see if anyone was there. No one. I walked apprehensively to the kitchen to find Gram baking some muffins and Gramps next to her, his hand on her shoulder. As I tried to see the

expression of their faces, I noticed how tall they both were. They had few wrinkles for their old age, and they both had brown hair, with white streaks. Gramps caught a glance of me, all scared in the corner, tapped Gram's shoulder, and smiled a little wryly. Come here sugar, said Gram softly. You know Charlotte, it is okay to have an imagination and it's okay to need attention, but you really frightened us dear, she said. I started to open my mouth to give it another shot, but right before I did, the doorbell rang. Gramps opened the door. A short, young lady with long blond hair was at the door.

Hello there, she said, peeking into the house. She was a journalist. I would have believed her more if she said she was model, My name is Nora Smith. I've been hearing from you neighbors, the Lohans next door, that you have been having some problems here after and before the death of Mr. Robert Peters. If you don't mind I would like to ask some questions and maybe look around. She said, pulling out a notebook. I never *did* like the Lohans. Gramps looked at the women with disgust, Okay, and what if we *do* mind? He said harshly. Mrs. Smith looked surprised

Well Sir, I-I

Maybe some other time madam

It will only take a few minutes Sir-

I said, maybe some other time. Said Gramps finally, and closed the door. Gram sighed. I sighed too, then looked down. I *am* sorry Gramps and Gram, but what I saw was real! Please believe me! I won't give up till you believe me! Do you *really* think I'm just doing this to make you miserable? Well I am *not* crazy, please, Gram, please! I said, furiously but quieter, for the fear that Mrs. Smith was still outside.

Charlotte, I don't know what to say to you, here, come on then, show me what you saw, go on, I'll have to witness it to believe it. Said Gram, a little too peacefully. I walked foolishly over to the blank screen and pointed at it. Then I turned it on, I crossed my hands confidently. Windows, loading your personal settings. I heard from behind me. what? I gasped. No! Gram, Gramps, you have to understand! This stupid computer it-it It popped in my head without me thinking. It separates us from the dead! It sounded awfully stupid to me. Gram pulled my wrist painfully and dragged me upstairs. No, Gram! I saw the kid on his bike! I saw Mr. Peters! I did! Gram threw me inside my little box-room. And left me there, scared, to think, not to know.

Gramps and Gram sat down stairs, dreadfully troubled. They didn't know what to do about Charlotte. They didn't know what was wrong with her or if there was a slender chance that she was telling the truth. They couldn't handle it. They were as terrified as her, so after little discussion and not much thought, they had decided to call up her Mom and Dad, to take her home.

I had trouble falling asleep, how could I? Gram came in, no expression of joy nor fear showed on her face. Your mother and father are coming to pick you up, they'll be here tomorrow by noon. I'm sorry Charlotte, but maybe I haven't gotten to know you enough, I only met you as a baby and now you're all grown up. I just am not sure what to do. I am old and have not taken care of children since thirty two years ago, I'm sorry. she said, looking down, as if scared to look into my frightened eyes, as if it would break her heart. A single tear ran down her cheek, and a many more down mine.

Gram please- I started, but she hushed me and left the room. I fell asleep, more disappointed than scared, and then, a light sleep fell over me, after my last tear.

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