

Creepy Cursmeyer

and the Ghosts of Wallace Towers



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The Wallace Funeral Home

Henry Wallace grew up as his family passed away. Two of his brothers died in serving their country. An uncle and a sister perished in a train crash. Five others, including his mother and father, died from illnesses. Henry became the last surviving Wallace before he turned twenty-five years old when his brother, Patrick, died in 1918 in the First World War.

Henry Wallace didn't want to become a businessman, but he had a talent in working with the dead. He opened the Wallace funeral home to put to work his natural gift in preparing funerals and arranging corpses.

Wendy Martin's wake would begin in two hours, but Henry still had an extensive checklist to complete. After finishing with the casket, he took off his apron and gloves and went through the checklist item by item. He put chairs neatly in rows for the ceremony. He setup beautiful plants and flowers to surround Wendy's coffin. He placed a pen and guestbook at the entrance. Lastly, he pushed a podium in place for the preacher to do his eulogy.

The hall was ready for Wendy Martin's funeral with more than forty-five minutes to spare. Henry decided to check in on the food.

Henry opened the kitchen door and said, "Will everything be ready?"

Sheryl Wallace, Henry's wife, yelled back in a thick Irish accent, "Pay me no mind!"

"I will be in the back," Henry said. "If anything happens, get me right away." Henry closed the door and quickly fled from the kitchen.

He retreated out the back door to the alley. He let out a big sigh as he sat on an old wooden chair in the shade of an awning which protected his white skin from the sun. He anticipated everything being perfect, so he prepared himself to remain

there for about two hours. It would be a lot of time to think, but Henry did not think. He didn't read newspapers or magazines. He didn't think about the funeral about to get underway. He just sat.

Henry did not have a talent in working with people who are alive. He couldn't even stand in the back of the room during a funeral. His white skin, bad teeth, and tall, bony body made people uncomfortable. Even his wife thought one of his hugs felt a prickly, leafless tree in the dead of winter.

Sheryl was very good at comfort. Her bright red hair and lightly freckled face attracted many to the comfort of her arms. Her lengths spent in the kitchen, cooking the meals for reception after reception, could never be washed out from her skin. Each embrace provided a family member with the sweet smell of past meals cooked.

Their routine worked well. Henry would set everything up while Sheryl cooked. Once people would arrive for the funeral, Henry would disappear and Sheryl would provide comfort to sorrowful mourners.

Henry jumped when the back door swung open and Sheryl poked her head out. "Mrs. Glenn is at the front with Charlie. Something about a black eye," she said with an Irish authority.

"The family will arrive at any time," Henry said nervously.

"I have a roast in the oven and pastries to fold!" Sheryl replied, "I have enough items on my hands."

Henry stood up from his chair and went to the front door. He only had ten minutes before Wendy's family would arrive.

Charlie's teacher, Mrs. Glenn, was at the front of the reception area holding Charlie's ear high up in the air. Like his father at his age, Charlie was already six feet tall, but his head still tilted upward from Mrs. Glenn pulling on it. His skin was as white as his father, making the black eye easily visible from across the room.

Henry said cautiously, "What can I do for you Mrs. Glenn?"

Mrs. Glenn began to deliver her already prepared speech, "I won't tolerate this type of behavior any more, Mr. Wallace. This behavior must stop immediately or I promise you, this behavior will be the reason your son will no longer be welcome at school."

"Yes, ma'am," replied Henry and Charlie at the same time.

"What did you do this time Charlie?" asked Henry.

Before Charlie had a chance to speak, Mrs. Glenn continued, "He was caught again fighting with another young man on the school steps. Fighting! Again! On the school steps!"

"He started it!" Charlie said.

"That's enough Charlie," said Henry quickly. "You know where to go. I will be there soon."

Charlie began to walk forward but Mrs. Glenn did not let go of his ear. Mrs. Glenn was hoping to yell at both Charlie and Henry for a while longer.

"Mrs. Glenn, I will take care of this," Henry said. "A funeral will begin in less than ten minutes."

After a moment, Mrs. Glenn let go of Charlie's ear. Henry stood aside as Charlie headed to the preparing room where Wendy Martin's body was waiting for the funeral to begin. Knowing that people would arrive soon, Henry quickly guided Mrs. Glenn back to the front door.

"Again, I am sorry Mrs. Glenn," Henry continued to say. "I will take care of this."

"Be sure that you do!" Mrs. Glenn demanded. "If it happens one more time, he will not be allowed back."

Henry tried to escort Mrs. Glenn a little more forcefully and quickly opened the front door. Wendy Martin's family were walking toward the front entrance.

Henry said quickly and softly, "Okay. I will do what is necessary." He closed the door after Mrs. Glenn then made a dash for the preparing room where Charlie was waiting for him.

Charlie hated funerals. He hated what his parents did for a living and for good reason. When he was three, Charlie was playing with blocks in the preparing room when a dead body fell in front of him. Students at school nick named him "Weirdo Wallace" when he was seven. Charlie got his first driving lesson in the oldest hearse in his father's fleet. "No girl will want to get in that with a coffin in the back of the car!" Charlie had thought.

Henry entered the preparing room through its one and only door. Charlie sat in a chair facing the wall. There were three clients covered in sheets, lying on metal tables. Wendy Martin was in a casket near the door.

"You only have two more months of school. Why do you keep doing this?" asked Henry.

Charlie quickly turned around and said, "I didn't start the fight. He called me Weirdo Wallace."

Henry replied, "I don't care what he called you. You were in a fight. You have a black eye."

"He is in much worse shape than I am."

Henry pointed to the casket on his right as he said, "What about Wendy and her family?! Her funeral could have been ruined."

Charlie didn't say anything. He only turned back towards the wall.

Henry then pointed to another dead body as he said, "Or what about Mr. Ulness!? He was practically a saint. His funeral is tomorrow and what is he going to tell God and our family in heaven. A spoiled, brat of a child with a black eye kept interrupting the peaceful atmosphere of those who have died. Don't you think they deserve better than that?"

"I hate it here," Charlie said quietly.

Henry received few complaints from their patrons. The deceased were easy to please. The only person that ever complained was Charlie. Henry could only wonder if he hated the preparing room or if he hated everything. He then turned around and peered through the small window, looking out into the hall. Wendy Martin's family, a few distant relatives, and a couple friends had already arrived for her funeral. A few of them had even sat down in the hall already.

"Wendy's ceremony is about to begin," Henry said as he sat down. "I cannot be seen and you know this is the only door out of here. There's no way of going anywhere until it's over. We are here for an hour."

Charlie tried to hate what his father did for a living, but he knew the Wallace Mortuary and Funeral Parlor had made his father a wealthy man. Men from the bank would appear at the funeral parlor all the time. Charlie imagined living in a mansion with servants and butlers, living the high life.

Sheryl came into the room to retrieve Wendy's casket. Charlie hoped for a way out and asked, "Can I help with the casket mom and then go upstairs to the office?"

Sheryl hadn't had a moment to give Charlie a stink eye, so she gave him one now. "Not with that shiner, young man!" She quietly shouted.

Charlie leaned against the wall and started to dream about all the things he could do with his father's fortune. He dreamed of building such a large estate of money, stocks, and property for himself that everyone would know who he was. He dreamed of escaping to Hollywood and becoming a movie star. He dreamed of shocking the world by truly living and living big! He wanted to do something so astounding, so extraordinary that it would make him immortal.

Sheryl left the room with the coffin. Henry and his talent for sitting without thought or entertainment had no problem doing nothing for the rest of the hour. Henry even somewhat enjoyed it. Charlie became angrier as time passed when he thought of a solution. He didn't have a way out of the preparing room but he thought of a way out of the funeral business. It was a plan his father would agree to and he would pay for it.

Wendy's ceremony concluded. Her family and friends left the main room and went into the reception where food was waiting for them.

Henry stood and said, "People are leaving. We can go now."

Charlie attempted the first step in his plan, getting his father's approval and his check book.

"I won't get in any more fights," Charlie said.

"Good," replied Henry.

Charlie then continued, "...if you pay for me to go to college."

"What college is that?"

"I don't know yet," Charlie said, but what he really thought was, "Any college that's far away from here."

The Ghosts of Wallace Towers

"There are new episodes, mom!" Danny yelled from the living room couch. He had waited months since his favorite show had a new episode.

Screams, music, and ethereal sound effects erupted from the television. A dramatic voice then said, "It's been called the most terrifying place on Earth, the scene of countless reports of paranormal phenomenon, satanic rituals, and psychotic breakdowns. It gained the most attention after three students were dared to spend one night inside Tower B; one of them was sent to a psychiatric ward, one was sentenced to life in prison, and one was brutally murdered. Tonight, we dive deeper into the abyss, into the darkest corners of hell. I am your host, David Landers. This is *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*."

Flashes of light and scenes from last season exploded on the television. Danny's eyes grew large in anticipation. Finally, the title of the show dripping in blood appeared in front of a picture of the massive structure of towers and buildings.

The last new episode back in May had made huge promises for this upcoming one. It hinted that they caught a ghost on film. The host is going to be so frightened, he screams like a girl. And one of the cameramen becomes possessed and viciously attacked another crew member.

Danny was sure the next hour would be the greatest of his life, or he could miss it all.

"Danny, you don't have time," his mom yelled back. "Come downstairs and start practicing."

"But mom, *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*! It's a new episode!" Danny replied loudly.

“The episode will be there later,” his mom said. “And, Danny, I don’t like you watching those scary shows. You won’t be able to sleep.”

“Mom, I was eight. It’s been five years,” Danny said. “I can watch R rated movies without getting scared.”

Danny had watched a scary movie at a friend's house five years ago. It was about killer spiders and was the only night in his life that he knocked on his mother’s door to tell her he couldn’t sleep. He was now thirteen and felt he was more than mature enough to watch these types of shows.

“Alright, Danny,” his mom said. “If you would like to watch your show instead of practicing, that’s fine. But you have to practice for an hour after your lesson.”

Danny didn’t want to practice after his lesson either, but he could at least watch a little more of his show.

“Alright. I’ll practice for an hour after my lesson,” he said.

“Come down at 7:25 sharp.”

Ethereal music continued to play as David Landers said, “Gold Sterling Inc. once occupied the 32nd floor of tower C, but the employees of this once shining enterprise were not well...”

Creepy Curstmeyer

Danny was glued to the television for twenty minutes. He was broken out of his trance when he heard his phone beep. "It's 7:26! Time to come down and get ready for your lesson!" the text message from his mother said.

Danny paused the show with a sigh and a grunt. He trampled down the stairs, firmly planting his foot on each creaky wooden stair to be sure his mom heard him coming down. He stopped and looked at the piano in the living room. It was black but with a visible layer of dust. It was out of tune. Some of the keys were broken. The pedal would get stuck all of the time. The piano bench was very tall with a hard, flat surface that was very uncomfortable. The piano had been in the corner of the house as long as Danny remembered.

Danny's mom was in the kitchen, working on the computer. "I don't hear anything," she said loudly through the door. Danny's mother enjoyed playing the piano more than Danny, but she wasn't very good. She acted differently when she played. She usually only played the same three songs.

Danny sat down and poked and pecked the keys randomly. It was not fun. He put in as little thought as possible. Instead, he started to imagine what was coming up next on the show.

"Danny, what are you doing?" his mom asked from the other room.

"I'm just waiting for my lesson," he replied.

Danny's mom peeked into the living room and saw Danny being very unproductive. "Where's your music?" she asked.

Danny had a sudden moment of panic. He couldn't remember where he put his music. Mr. Curstmeyer would make him play boring scales up and down the piano for the entire half hour lesson if he didn't have it. Mr. Curstmeyer always

said it builds technique and skill at the piano, but Danny considered it punishment for forgetting his music.

Danny looked in the stacks of papers on top of the piano as he asked, “Do you know where it is, mom?”

Three loud knocks rang through the oak front door and into the entire house. Mr. Curstmeyer never used the doorbell. Danny’s mom walked to the door as three loud and deep sounding knocks again rang through the front door. She reached the door and opened it.

“Hello, Carl,” she said sweetly.

“Greetings, Claire,” Mr. Curstmeyer said kindly.

Few people in the world called Danny’s mom Claire. Everyone called her Mrs. Smith. Danny never understood why they always greeted each other like this. As far as Danny knew, they never saw or spoke to each other outside the weekly torture of his piano lessons.

Mr. Curstmeyer walked slowly over to Danny and the piano. He wore the same suit every week, dark brown faded from years of use. He wore a brown hat that at one time held its edges upright, but now the hat just flopped down towards the ground. Danny was glad Mr. Curstmeyer didn’t remove his hat. He had wild, spastic white hair that pointed out in different directions. There was a dusty, ripe odor that followed Mr. Curstmeyer in as he walked. Danny’s friends called him Creepy Curstmeyer.

Mr. Curstmeyer turned to Danny who received the full and horrible blow of Creepy Curstmeyer’s appearance. The old, short man held his natural grimace. He rarely smiled. The few times Danny saw Mr. Curstmeyer open his mouth, he saw exceptionally bad, yellow teeth that were spread apart and jagged.

“Danny?” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Whenever Creepy Curstmeyer said Danny’s name, it sounded like a question. This greatly annoyed Danny and gave him chills up his spine. It reminded Danny of the things Mr. Curstmeyer always asked him to do: play this chord, play this scale, use this finger, play it again...

“Hello, Mr. Curstmeyer,” replied Danny.

“Where’s your music, Danny?”

“I don’t know,” he said reluctantly.

Mr. Curstmeyer and Mrs. Smith looked at each other. Mrs. Curstmeyer said, “Well, Claire, what should we do?”

Mrs. Smith replied, “Well, Danny has a choice. He can have his lesson without music or he can practice for another half hour tomorrow evening.”

“I’ll practice tomorrow,” Danny said immediately. He didn’t think there was much of a choice. Anything was better than playing scales for a half hour.

Mrs. Smith smirked and said, “You put your music in the piano bench like I had asked last week.”

Danny sighed. He lifted the top of the piano bench. It was within his arm’s reach the entire time. Mrs. Smith smiled as Danny grabbed his music and headed back to the kitchen to continue working.

Mr. Curstmeyer sat in a wooden chair next to the piano and instructed Danny to play the G major scale. Danny played it with moderate success, but Mr. Curstmeyer was out for perfection today.

“You can’t miss a single note when you play your scale,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “Play it again, slowly.”

Three minutes of playing the same eight notes led to eight minutes of playing the same fifteen notes. After finally playing the scale perfectly three times, Mr. Curstmeyer asked Danny to play the song they had been working on for the past three months. Danny didn’t play more than a few seconds of the song before Mr. Curstmeyer interrupted.

“It’s supposed to be an F#,” Mr. Curstmeyer interjected. “Play it again.”

Danny tried it again but still missed the single note.

“Missed it again,” Mr. Curstmeyer announced. “From the beginning.”

Danny continued to play the first ten seconds of the song over and over again without any luck of getting it right. Every time Danny would start the song, Mr. Curstmeyer would say that he missed a note or was playing too fast or paused too long or didn't pause long enough or he forgot to play softly.

Mr. Curstmeyer never looked at the music. He didn't look at Danny. He would often close his eyes and lower his head listening until Danny would make a mistake. He would then look up slightly to tell Danny and instruct him to start again from the beginning. This was the pattern for most of Danny's lessons.

Danny then heard a sudden yell of excitement from the house next door.

"That was so cool!" screamed Danny's friend Jack.

Danny could see Jack's room through the window next to the piano. It flickered with light from the television. Danny knew Jack was watching *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*.

"You missed the F# again," said Mr. Crustmeyer with frustration. "I think we need to play the G major scale a few more times."

Danny looked up again at Jack's window. He tried to figure out what was going on in the show through the flicker of light that bounced off of Jack's walls. Was a ghost in Wallace Towers caught on film? Were the cameramen attacking each other? Danny's gaze was disrupted as Jack again yelled, "Awesome!"

"Danny?" said Mr. Curstmeyer. "Are you still there? You need to play the piano."

"How about you play the piano and I'll tell you that you aren't playing it right?" Danny said without thinking.

Mr. Curstmeyer replied, "I am not the one who needs the practice."

Both Danny and Mr. Curstmeyer waited for the next person to speak. After a couple minutes, Mr. Curstmeyer stood up from his chair and began to walk to the door. In the kitchen, Mrs. Smith noticed the music had stopped and heard Mr. Curstmeyer get up from the creaky, wooden chair. She looked at the clock on the

microwave. The half hour lesson had only lasted twenty minutes. She entered the living room only to see Mr. Curstmeyer at the door ready to leave.

Mr. Curstmeyer turned to Mrs. Smith and said, "Claire, my dear, I think we are about done."

Mrs. Smith watched Mr. Curstmeyer open and walk through the door. The question Mrs. Smith thought to herself was, "are they done for this lesson or permanently?"

Danny felt victorious. His lesson was over. He smiled but this smile quickly vanished when he looked over at his mom.

"No TV tonight, Danny," Mrs. Smith said.

The Last to Know

Danny had missed it and now all of his friends are giving it away.

“Did you guys see a ghost?” Andrew asked.

Danny, Jack, Andrew, and Mike were talking vigorously about *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*. Jack answered with excitement, “Yeah! It was this light that moved around the room really fast. And Carl getting possessed?”

“That was awesome!” Mike said. “They were in that room with the heater.”

“A furnace,” Andrew said nervously.

“Don’t we know all about Wallace Towers?!” Jack said teasing Andrew.

Andrew was a short seventh grader with glasses who didn’t watch *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*. He wanted to watch the show, but couldn't bring himself to turn it on. He knew everything about it though from asking his friends. Jack was the opposite and the most adventurous one at the table. He was tall with a large mop of bright red, curly hair.

Jack continued to play with Andrew. “You better be careful. If you know too much, the ghosts will come after you!”

“Shut up, Jack Campbell!” Andrew said with as much courage as he could muster.

Danny joined in and mocked both Jack and Andrew saying, “Yeah! Shut up, Mr. Camp Bull!”

It was the Friday before Fall break and the lunch room was noisier than usual. Every student in the school was ready for a week away from teachers, lectures, and homework.

Andrew anxiously asked, "Did the ghost say anything?"

"Don't say anything!" Danny said. "I haven't seen it yet."

The table grew quiet. How could they not talk about the biggest topic in the school that day? After a few seconds of blank stares and empty brains, Danny gave in. "Go ahead," he said.

"You couldn't hear the ghost talk," Mike said. "But you could hear this low howling. Like a foghorn." Mike made a big, low foghorn sound. Mike was good at being the tough guy. Almost everything Mike did was big.

"How bad did the host guy freak out?" Andrew asked.

"Don't say anything else!" Danny yelled sternly. Even if it was the hot topic of the lunchroom, he had had enough. "I'm watching every episode from the first season again, all the way to that episode over the break. Don't spoil it for me."

Andrew, Mike, and Jack knew this meant they were done talking about it. They wanted to make fun of Danny, but didn't want to spoil something he liked. They instead turned to something they left as a last resort in the lunchroom. They ate their lunch.

The Marathon

Mrs. Smith let Danny choose whatever he wanted to do during the first two days of Fall break. She didn't like that Danny choose to spend both of those days sitting in front of the television. She put every game, sports equipment, and toy they owned in the room next to Danny's bedroom. There were board games, basketballs, action figures, and Legos, but it also had an okay television and a mostly comfortable couch. She even organized the room to discourage Danny from watching a lot of TV. She put a long, wooden desk against the wall opposite the television screen so you couldn't see the TV from the couch, but Danny simply watched TV by sitting on the floor.

Danny began his *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* marathon at 8:30am on Saturday. Since there were 26 episodes likely lasting a day and a half, Danny spent a few minutes rearranging the furniture.

The television was big and fragile. Danny only moved it a couple inches at a time. The couch was very old and heavy, so he felt fine kicking it until it moved to where he wanted it to go.

Mrs. Smith was working on her computer in the kitchen when she heard the furniture being shuffled around upstairs. She went up the stairs and cracked open the door to see what Danny was up to. She saw that the television and the couch were now facing each other.

Danny was well prepared for binge watching his show. The couch was covered with extra pillows and cushions from the rest of the house. Danny had brought up some bottles of water, a box of cookies, and two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Mrs. Smith left Danny alone and decided to plan out some activities through the rest of his Fall break.

David Landers came on the television screen and the very first episode of *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* started to play. He said, “The Wallace Towers were an experiment of modern architecture. In 1971, it was becoming the busiest center of business in the state of Pennsylvania, but sounds and creaks, panic and screams heard in the distance shut down Wallace Towers. Abandoned for sixty years, it is now known only as the birthplace of fear, an infestation of evil. I am your host, David Landers. This is *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*.”

Danny usually would start to shout and dance at the beginning of his show, but he conserved his energy. He knew he would see the title credits at least twenty-five more times. He simply waited for them to finish in the comfort of pillows and cushions on the couch.

Danny knew the very first episode by heart and recited many parts of the opening monologue. David Landers was filmed in front of a massive building sometime during the night when he said, “Henry Wallace, founder of the Wallace Funeral Parlor, wanted his only son, Charles Wallace, to follow in his footsteps and take over the family business. But Charles clearly did not share his father’s business interests. So Henry Wallace used his fortune to buy a large piece of land to build a beautiful cemetery. But Henry Wallace and his wife Sheryl died three days before the cemetery was set to accept its first residents.”

The show turned to a historian named Dr. Alexander Mickelson. He was frequently a guest on *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*. He was an older man with gray hair, thick glasses, a high voice, and a mouth that always seemed to be puckered. He was very excited to be on the show.

“After Henry and Sheryl Wallace died,” Dr. Mickelson said, “their son, Charles Wallace, did everything he could do to stop the cemetery from opening. He locked the front gate and refused to bury anyone. A few funeral processions arrived on the day the cemetery was set to open, but Charles turned them all away. He even yelled at the widow of Sherman Montgomery. Mr. Montgomery had been scheduled to be buried at the Wallace Cemetery for two weeks before Charles arrived.”

A picture of an old Charles Wallace appeared on the screen. His hair was neatly combed. He wore an expensive suit. He tried to maintain a dignified

expression, but Danny thought he looked extremely unhealthy. His eyes were sunken into his head. His hair was thin and receding.

The voice of David Landers continued behind the picture and said, “Charles Wallace was in a panic. People were demanding the cemetery be opened so they could bury their loved ones. His phone rang every fifteen minutes with people furious over the closing of the cemetery. Even the mayor of the city demanded the cemetery be opened as promised.”

David Landers was now in front of the Wallace Towers as he continued to say, “So, the first thing Charles Wallace did to show everyone the property will not be a cemetery was take down the beautiful wrought iron sign welcoming people to the Wallace Cemetery. In its place, he posted the sign that still exists and hang at the site today.”

The camera panned upward to a large board with letters painted in black saying, “Future Site of Wallace Towers, The Gateway to Financial Immortality.”

Dr. Mickelson again picked up the story and said, “So, Charles Wallace hired the Kingman Construction Company to begin working on the towers, but there were no architectural plans. The cemetery was filled with construction workers and lots of equipment: bulldozers, cranes, and lots of piles of steel, but no one knew what to do. There were no blueprints, no plans. They were put there as a diversion.”

David Landers came on the screen again. He was standing near a hole in the ground just outside of Wallace Towers. He said, “Charles Wallace lost a great deal of money every day the construction workers showed up for work on the property but didn’t do anything. If it continued for very long, he would have no money to build the Wallace Towers. So, he started making the construction company workers work on whatever he could think of. The first thing Charles Wallace had them do was dig. Specifically, he had them dig holes, like this one.” David Landers pointed to the hole in the ground next to him. It was just large enough to fit a dead body or a casket.

Dr. Mickelson continued, “Even though Charles’s father, Henry Wallace, lived like an ordinary man, he was a financial genius! He had a modest home, a

small business, and never spent a lot of money, but he had quite a bit of it and was set to take in that much more! The two city cemeteries were almost full if not completely full. The mortuaries were filling up. People were struggling to find a place to bury their loved ones. Henry Wallace gave his son an opportunity to make thousands and even millions of dollars selling plots of the cemetery to families of the recently deceased. Instead, Charles Wallace was losing a fortune every day.”

David Landers’s voice then resonated behind a ghostly old picture. It showed the property's front gate wide open. The site was completely deserted. David said, “Construction workers were on the property during the day, but when they left the site, there was no one to guard the cemetery. On May 7th, 1968, Wallace Towers received its first ghostly residents.”

Dr. Mickelson then said, “The mayor was furious with Charles Wallace. He constantly demanded the cemetery be opened. After six days of demands and no response, the city took a drastic measure to try and force Charles Wallace to open the cemetery. The city broke the lock of the cemetery gate one night and brought nineteen bodies into the cemetery. They saw the holes in the construction site and assumed they were made before Charles Wallace took over the property.”

David Landers’s voice then became very compelling. He said, “The next morning was a nightmare for the workers of the Kingman Construction Company. They continued to fill and empty holes, excavate and work on the property. They worked for hours before they realized dead bodies were scattered throughout the construction site.”

A newspaper article from May 8th, 1968 flashed on the screen. The headline said, “Hell on Earth!”

The Season Premiere

Danny was through half of the first season by 11pm. He was tired, but one of his favorite moments was just ahead. David Landers was interviewing John Copeland, the former assistant manager of a popular and widely used company called Theatre Sets, Inc. They constructed sets and made costumes for theatre companies around the country. John was twenty-eight when he worked at the company, but his youthful days of working for a theatre company were long gone. Heavy bags were under his eyes, his face was covered with wrinkles and he was obviously nervous about the topic of the Wallace Towers.

David asked, “You were in charge of Theatre Sets, Inc. in 1972?”

“Yes,” replied John.

“Are you responsible for the disappearance of Amy Lipska?”

“Theatre Sets had nothing to do with her disappearance,” John answered aggressively.

“Do you know that her soul still haunts the 12th floor of Tower A?”

“The towers had taken her!” John yelled. He quickly retracted his emotions as he continued. “It wasn’t the fault of anyone. She was there one day and gone the next. The last anyone saw of her, she went inside her office, which has no other exit. She never came out.”

John was still quite frightened and distraught from the thought of the disappearance of his friend, Amy Lipska, but Danny didn’t notice. He was getting tired and falling asleep.

The door opened and Danny jumped. “Danny, are you going to sleep?” his mom asked.

“No, I’m staying up to watch the show,” Danny said with determination.

Mrs. Smith new Danny would eventually fall asleep. She saw how comfortable Danny was in cushions and pillows, so she let Danny stay in the room for the night.

“Okay," she said, "but you need to brush your teeth and get ready for bed now. Then you can stay in here as long as you like.”

Danny threw off the blankets and pillows that surrounded him on the couch. He quickly went to the bathroom, washed his hands, brushed his teeth, and put on some comfortable clothes. He was back in front of the television within five minutes, just in time to see David Landers and his crew step into Amy’s office on the 12th floor, where the young woman disappeared. In another two minutes, Danny fell asleep.

There was a shriek, then a scream! Danny tried to jump up from the couch but became tangled in the blankets. He feel on the floor with a thud. He then looked up at the television to see Mr. Mickelson on the screen describing the murder of Ellen Carpenter in 1974. It was 3:06am. Danny chuckled a little then fell back asleep on the floor, right where he fell.

“Is it almost over?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“The season premiere that I missed because of Mr. Curstmeyer is next,” Danny replied.

“Well, tonight is our night to have dinner,” Mrs. Smith said. “I hope there are more things going on in your life than this haunted building.”

Danny had planned on talking with his friends about his marathon. “Do we have to?” he said.

“Yes! Sunday night, we always have dinner.”

Danny folded his arms and turned back towards the television as he said, “Fine.”

“Come down when your show is over,” Mrs. Smith said as she closed the door.

Danny vividly remembered the first twenty-five minutes of the season premiere he had seen on Thursday. After more than twenty-four hours of watching old episodes, he was ready to watch something new and fresh. His attention spiked as that moment approached. He even said out loud, “Okay! This is when I had to go play the stupid piano.”

Something then happened that Danny didn’t expect. David Landers, who was usually in or near the Wallace Towers, was sitting in a chair in a studio looking right at Danny. The host of *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* was rarely in the studio unless he was interviewing someone.

David Landers looked into the camera and said, “On a few occasions, we must all look at our progress, our art, our craft and ask is our product, our show worth the sacrifices we make. I ask that question now because we at *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* have knowingly put members of our own crew in harm’s way.”

David Landers then looked through the screen with intensity. Danny could swear the host of his favorite television show was looking specifically at him. David Landers said, “What we now show you, the terrible things that happened this past summer, we show you with a new goal in mind; a goal for this season and for the remainder of this show’s existence. The Wallace Towers should be destroyed.”

Danny gasped as he heard David Landers say this. Danny had dreamed of some day exploring the Wallace Towers for himself. He wasn’t afraid. He could run through that place and not think anything of it. He suddenly feared he wouldn’t get the chance.

David Landers continued, “Over the course of last season, we have shown you the depth of horror, the evil presence infested in this haunted building. Until now, we have dismissed the horrible events that have happened at the Wallace Towers as being brought on by the mistakes and own foolishness of those who

have caused them. We now know the level of hideousness, immorality, and wickedness in these towers and collectively believe they should not exist, even at the expense of losing this television program.”

David Landers paused for a long time. Danny was shocked. *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* wasn't a huge show and it didn't have any popular stars or actors, but every kid Danny knew watched it.

The screen flashed white. David Landers again appeared on the screen. He wasn't in the studio anymore. He was in the Wallace Towers.

The time and date, 11:35pm, June 7th, 2015, were shown in the bottom right hand corner of the screen when David turned around and said to his crew, “You guys ready?”

The crew was in high spirits and each one said enthusiastically, “Ready!” “Yep!” “Let's go!” David Landers then walked up to an old, metal door that said FURNACE ROOM – MAINTENANCE ONLY.

11:35pm, June 7th, 2015 - Furnace Room

The cameras were rolling as David, Bill, Larry and Brad walked up to an old, metal door that said FURNACE ROOM – MAINTENANCE ONLY. David turned around and said to his crew, “You guys ready?”

Bill replied enthusiastically, “Yep!”

Brad also replied with energy, “Let’s go!”

Larry simply said, “ready.”

David took a breath then looked into the camera and said, “The largest concentration of paranormal activity has occurred in Tower B. It is also the location of the most horrific events in the history of the Wallace Towers. We now enter the heart of...wait a second!”

David motioned for Bill to lower the camera. Bill was surprised. He thought it was going great. Bill was a big, hairy guy who always thought it was going great, but he was paid to hold the camera.

“What’s wrong?” Bill said. “You were doing fine.”

David said, “I know. I’m just thinking about what should happen next.”

Larry was a few steps behind them, intrigued by David’s thought. Larry was the creative mind behind the show. He was a young, skinny guy carrying his own very small camera just in case the other two cameras had missed something.

David said to Larry, “I think we should open the door then the camera should go through first. It will make the audience feel like they are actually entering the room themselves.”

“Great idea!” Larry replied. “Bill, when David opens the door, I want you to go through and get a great panoramic view of the room.”

“Sounds great!” Bill said. “Let’s do it!”

Larry then turned to Brad just behind him. Brad was the smallest of the four guys, but he was tough and carried the other large, heavy camera. Larry said, “Brad, make sure you’re watching Bill when he enters.”

Bill was thrilled by this news. Every time he appeared on camera, his mom would call him to say she saw him on television and he would receive a little bonus in his paycheck.

Larry then shouted, “Places!” Everyone was ready to start shooting again.

David began his lines once more, “The largest concentration of paranormal activity at Wallace Towers has occurred in Tower B. This is the tower with the most horrific, gruesome events in the history of the entire structure. We now enter the heart of Tower B: the Furnace Room, the place of the first suicide and the first murder to occur in Wallace Towers. All that remains is the decrepit ruins of multiple satanic rituals that occurred in the 1980’s. Underneath the Furnace Room, mixed in with the steel and foundation of the entire building, is believed to be the final resting place of the sixty souls unfortunately buried here.”

David Landers opened the creaking door and Bill stepped forward with his camera. Beyond the door, Bill stepped onto a catwalk, a narrow metal path high in the air. Bill and the camera looked down over the railing. The catwalk was three stories up. Robes, sticks, and paint were scattered throughout the huge room. He saw a large metal box in the middle of the room when a large flame suddenly burst out of the top of the metal box.

Bill and his camera were knocked backwards. He landed on his back. The camera fell down from the catwalk onto the ground three stories below. Bill flipped over and looked back at Brad. Brad was pointing his camera directly at Bill.

"You okay, Bill?" Brad asked from behind the camera.

“Did you get the shot?” Bill said.

“Yeah! It looked awesome!” Brad said with a smile on his face,

“Then I’m just fine,” Bill said as he again rose to his feet.

“You are most definitely not fine, Bill!” Larry yelled. “That camera costs ten thousand dollars!”

Bill looked over the side of the catwalk down at the camera below.

Larry continued, “We can’t leave the camera down there.”

“I’ll go get it,” Bill said annoyed. “Have I ever left a camera behind?”

Bill made his way around the catwalk, shielding his face from blasts of heat that came from the furnace. He went down a circular stair case in the corner and walked over to his camera, picked it up, and looked at it.

“It’s still filming,” Bill yelled up to everyone still on the catwalk, “but I’m sure there are a few things wrong with it.”

No one on the catwalk could hear him. The furnace was making too much noise. When he saw that no one had heard him, Bill again yelled even louder, “It’s busted!”

Larry was not pleased. “Great,” he said sarcastically. “That will make this so much easier.”

After Bill examined his camera, he began to look around the room. Dried red paint was splashed over the walls. Pieces of wood were on the ground around his feet. There was a robe hanging on a metal spike.

“You guys have to come down here!” Bill yelled. “There’s so many great shots...I can’t even explain.”

“Brad, go down and get some shots,” Larry said quickly. Brad did as he was told and made his way to the circle stair case, filming as he walked.

David Landers was ready to go down too, but Larry stopped him. “Not you David,” Larry directed. “I’ll continue to film things up here. Let’s do some more lines.”

David however was not thinking straight at the moment. All he could do was look down at the giant metal box that spewed flames up in the air. Brad filmed his way down the stairs. When he reached the bottom, he pointed the camera at Bill, who was reaching for the black robe hanging on a piece of metal.

“Bill, what are you doing?” yelled Brad.

Bill did not answer. He continued to slowly reach for the robe.

“Hey Bill,” Brad yelled again, “is this furnace supposed to be on? I thought this place was abandoned.”

Bill’s hand had reached the black robe. He grasped it tight. Liquid started to ooze between his fingers. Suddenly, the furnace let out a ball of fire rising very high. Brad turned away from the massive furnace to protect his skin from the heat. Bill did not flinch. His arm was still stretched out holding the robe. His skin sizzled from the burst of heat.

David woke from his trance at the sight of the massive burst of fire. He saw his cameraman getting singed from the flames. He yelled, “Bill!” as he ran to the circle stair case in the corner.

Larry stepped forward and tried to grab David. Then, an even greater burst of fire and heat rose from the furnace. Larry was exposed high on the catwalk and the flame headed straight for him. He covered his face as he screamed. He jumped back through the old, metal door and landed hard on the ground. The clothes on his arms turned to black.

Brad again yelled for Bill. “Bill, we got to get out of here!”

Brad felt David reach the bottom of the stairs behind him. He pointed his camera again at Bill.

Bill was still not fazed from the blasts of heat and flame. He slowly turned towards David and Brad. He still clutched the robe in his hands. His eyes narrowed. A sound came from his mouth like a growl and a slow gasp for air. At first, he walked slowly towards Brad and David. His pace quickly sped up as he leaped for Brad.

“Bill! Stop!” yelled Brad. He dropped his camera as Bill swung his arms at him. Brad tried to protect himself when Bill’s mouth, still making a hideous sound, bit down on Brad’s neck. Brad screamed in pain.

David jumped from the stairs and tackled Bill. Bill and David were thrown to the ground and Bill’s grip on the black robe was lost. David immediately rose to his feet. Bill remained motionless on the ground.

“Get the robe! Get the robe!” Brad yelled to David.

David began to reach for the robe when Brad again yelled, “Don’t use your hands!”

David stopped. He remembered that Bill had reached for the robe just before this chaos. David picked up a stick off the ground and used it to pick up the black cloth. With a great push, David threw the stick and robe on the fire that leapt out of the furnace.

As the robe hit the flame, collections of screams erupted from the furnace and everyone plugged their ears. Brad again dropped his camera. They suddenly felt light headed, like they were going to pass out. The added kindle of clothing and wood to the furnace made the flames reach even higher in a great burst. None of them could move as they dropped to their knees in pain. They knew it was the screams of souls burning in the steel underneath the furnace.

"What happened?" Bill asked as he woke up and looked around. David and Brad backed away from him, not knowing which Bill woke up.

Each of them then heard a voice speaking to them. The furnace was talking to them, saying something different to each of them.

Bill heard, “Get out!”

David heard, “You will not survive!”

Brad heard, “Your end is near!”

Larry awoke from his fall. He stood up, ran back into the furnace room and out onto the catwalk again. He looked down on the other three. Each of them had

looks of horror on their faces. Larry then heard a deep, horrifying voice come from the furnace. The voice said, “Run!”

Larry yelled down to his friends, “Move it! Get out of there!”

Larry’s feet then suddenly fell from underneath him. The catwalk was dropping. Larry ran for the circle stairs and grabbed a pole just as the catwalk fell to the ground. The sharp sound of metal twisting and bending filled the room as the long catwalk fell on the steel below.

David, Brad, Bill, and Larry clung to the circle stair case as the ground started to shake.

“We got to get out of here!” yelled Larry.

Each looked around the room, desperate to find a way out when Brad yelled, “There’s a door!”

Brad and Bill grabbed their cameras as the four crossed the room to the door. The door didn’t have a hinge, so the four tried to make it slide back. The door was metal and hot to the touch, but each man grabbed a part of the door and pushed. It wouldn’t budge.

David began to look around the room as the other three continued to try to open the door. David then yelled, “There’s another circle stair case! Come on!”

The three men gave up trying to move the door and followed David up the other circle stair case. They crossed another short catwalk to a door. The four managed to open it and dropped to the floor of a small, white room. There were no doors, just a row of windows that led to a fire escape.

“Out now!” ordered Larry.

They gave a short attempt at opening the windows when another ball of fire filled the room behind them. Bill then swung his camera at the window. On the third hit, the window and metal frame gave way and the window broke open. Each of the men went out the window and on to the fire escape. They lowered a ladder. Larry was the first one down, then David. As soon as Brad put his weight on the ladder, it started to creak and buckle.

“Move it!” shouted Larry.

Brad hurried down the ladder, but as soon as Bill put his weight on it, the ladder came crashing down. Brad fell a few feet. He started to feel lucky until the metal ladder landed on his legs, pinning him to the ground. Bill fell a long way and landed awkwardly. He remained motionless on the ground.

Larry began to think more clearly. He ran to the crew’s van and picked up his cell phone and a wrench. He called 9-1-1 as he walked down the side of the building.

“Hello? Police? We have an emergency!” yelled Larry. After walking twenty feet down the side of the building, Larry stopped. He took the wrench, found the pipe that supplied gas to the building and turned it off, hoping that would turn off the furnace.

David helped Brad push the metal ladder off of his legs. Brad and David then tended to Bill. Bill was breathing, but he was unconscious.

“Did you hear those screams?” Brad asked David. “Who was screaming?”

“The damned,” David said. “They were screaming. This place IS hell on earth.”

The Stinger

The screen went black. Danny ran up to the television and placed a hand on each side. He was in a panic, thinking the television had shut off. "What happened? Was everyone okay?" he thought as he was getting ready to shake the TV violently, but the screen faded in again.

David Landers was back in the studio. He calmly said, "The fate of this evil building rests with one man. He is the only man who dares to live on the grounds of Wallace Towers. He is the sole owner of the property and the only man who controls the destiny of this terrible, horrific place."

The screen again switched to David Landers running along the side of the Wallace Towers sometime during the day. He and his camera crew ran up to an old, slouching man on the street corner.

In a low, scratchy voice, the old man said, "What do you want?" A moment later, Danny jumped to his feet in shock.

"My name is David Landers, from the show *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*."

"Go away!" the old man said.

"Don't you think the towers should be destroyed?!" yelled David Landers.

The elderly man quickened his pace to his house as he said, "It's just a building. Nothing would be wrong with a building if you people would just leave it alone!"

"What about the bodies and souls of the sixty who lay in its bowels?!"

"That's just a myth."

"Haven't you seen ghosts? Have they come after you?"

“That’s it! Go away,” yelled the old man. He disappeared down a narrow hallway that cut straight into the massive structure.

“Mom! Mom! Mom!” Danny cried.

Mrs. Smith was startled and instantly in a panic by the shouts coming from upstairs. She ran as quickly as she could. From the uproar, she had prepared herself for the worst. She climbed up the stairs and thought to herself, “Is Danny hurt? Do we need to go to the hospital?”

Mrs. Smith opened the door to the activity room and saw Danny jumping up and down on the couch. “What is it Danny?” She asked frantically.

Danny shouted, “It’s Mr. Curstmeyer!”

A Stunning Piano Performance

Danny's mouth was stuffed full of chicken, rice, and broccoli. Still chewing, he attempted to speak. "Ill Oo el ee ow?"

"Don't talk with your mouth full, Danny," replied Mrs. Smith.

Danny continued to chew for another two minutes. Mrs. Smith had barely started to eat her dinner when Danny repeated what he said. "Will you tell me now?"

"I said I'll tell you after WE finish dinner. You're almost done, but I'm not."

Mrs. Smith greatly enjoyed Sunday nights. The Sunday night dinner had always been reserved for the two of them to eat and talk. There was no television, no phones, and no internet during the meal. It was either talking to each other or complete silence.

Danny could eat no more. His plate was already empty and he didn't care about getting more food. Mrs. Smith cut up her chicken and pushed around her broccoli before putting some salt and pepper on them. She used her fork to grab a little rice with a little broccoli and topped it off with a piece of chicken. She ate the forkful trio of food and took a moment to enjoy its deliciousness.

Danny knew his mom was stalling, but she had the upper hand tonight. Mrs. Smith felt she wouldn't have known her son at all without these dinners. So, she was going to take her time.

"So, what are you going to do over the rest of Fall break?" Mrs. Smith asked.

"I hadn't thought past my show."

“Well, there are plenty of chores for you to do. I also assume that you have homework to do over the next week?”

Danny unenthusiastically nodded. He didn't like to think about school, especially when he's on break.

Mrs. Smith continued, “Well, I'll be away at work on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but Jack's mom will be home. You'll be over there for most of those days.”

Mrs. Smith wanted to find out as much detail about Danny as she could. She was constantly thinking of questions she could ask him on Sunday nights. She even placed a notepad on the dresser of her bedroom so she could jot down things to ask him.

“So, what homework do you have?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“Mr. Gilbert gave us three pages of Math homework.”

“Should you do that tonight?”

“Can I do it with Jack tomorrow?” Danny asked.

“That sounds fine.”

Mrs. Smith ate a few more bites of food and the silence resumed. Sunday dinner was quiet if she didn't ask Danny questions.

“How are your friends?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“They're fine,” Danny replied quickly.

“Is Andrew okay after his fall last week?”

Danny at first didn't know what his mom was talking about, but then remember that Andrew had come over to his house last Wednesday and skinned his knee. “He's fine.”

“Are there any sports coming up?”

“No.”

“Nothing at all?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“Not until after break.”

“Fall break or winter break?”

“Winter.”

Mrs. Smith had stopped eating and was playing with her food. She wasn't even that hungry. She was only attempting to continue the dinner for as long as possible. She wanted to catch up with Danny. She also wasn't ready to talk about Mr. Curstmeyer and the Wallace Towers, not yet at least.

In between her last few bites, Mrs. Smith asked, “You could still have a piano lesson on Thursday if you would like. I'm sure Mr. Curstmeyer wouldn't mind.”

Danny thought about this for a while. Mr. Curstmeyer would have the greatest insight to his favorite television show, but he would have to play scales and endure a half hour of agony.

Danny didn't answer. Mrs. Smith knew her son was at the breaking point of needing to know. She ate two more bites, wiped her hands on her napkin, and said, “Okay. Clear the table and put the dishes in the sink. I need to go up to the attic.”

Danny rarely cleaned up on Sunday nights, but he did as he was told. He hoped the information she would give him tonight will pay off. He could have the inside information that everyone at school would want to know.

Danny had cleared the table in a few minutes and entered the living room. Mrs. Smith returned from upstairs. She was carrying an old box filled with pictures, medals, and old newspapers. She put the box on the piano bench and said, “Come and have a seat, Danny.”

Danny sat on the couch opposite the piano. Mrs. Smith handed him a newspaper clipping with the headline *Stunning Performance Wows Delighted Crowd*. There was a picture of a young man in a tuxedo bowing to a crowd in front of a grand piano.

“Is that Mr. Curstmeyer?” Danny asked.

“Yes.”

For a moment, Danny couldn't believe the picture was of Mr. Curstmeyer. He looked so young. His bright smile beamed through the black and white newspaper clipping. His hair was not wild and spastic. It was dark and long enough that it dropped down to his shoulders. Danny assumed Mr. Curstmeyer was as young as he was at one point in time, but he had no idea Mr. Curstmeyer would have his picture in the newspaper by the time he was Danny's age.

“So, he can play the piano?”

“Of course,” she quickly replied. “Hasn't he answered every question you have about music?”

“But he never plays the piano.”

“He played enough to win all of these medals,” Mrs. Smith said pointing to the box.

Danny stood up from the couch and looked into the box. Mrs. Smith continued saying, “Mr. Curstmeyer played three concerts every year here in Davenport. Your father and I attended every concert.”

The box was filled with medals, trophies, certificates, and newspaper clippings. The majority of them said “First Prize” with a few saying “Second Prize.” Danny began to count them, but stopped counting after he reached thirty.

After looking through the medals and certificates, Danny picked up a large, old piece of paper and looked at it closely. He didn't understand most of it. There were a lot of legal words that didn't make sense to him.

“What does deed mean?” He asked.

Mrs. Smith didn't want to talk about it, but there was so much to say and this was at least a way to start.

“A deed is a piece of paper that gives ownership of property to someone,” Mrs. Smith said.

“So, Mr. Curstmeyer owns something at 1313 West Twenty Third Avenue?” Danny asked.

Mrs. Smith said, “Mr. Curstmeyer owns the Wallace Towers.”

Danny’s gut reaction was to drop the piece of paper and back away. The deed could have been just as haunted as the Wallace Towers, but Danny held it fast. He couldn’t believe he was holding the piece of paper that says Mr. Curstmeyer owns the Wallace Towers.

“Can I take it to school?” Danny asked.

“No, Danny,” Mrs. Smith quickly said. “This is a very important document. That’s why Mr. Curstmeyer gave it to me, for safe keeping.”

Danny continued to stare at the piece of paper until Mrs. Smith reached for the deed. Danny willingly gave it back to her.

“Did Mr. Curstmeyer buy the Wallace Towers?” Danny asked.

“No,” Mrs. Smith said. “All of the businesses moved out and the building stood empty for a few months. Charles Wallace then gave Mr. Curstmeyer the deed before he disappeared. Mr. Curstmeyer still owns the towers and the house on the property.”

Danny didn’t remember ever seeing a house in *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*. He asked, “There’s a house on the property?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Smith said. “It’s back there; you just can’t see it from the street.”

Danny couldn’t wait to tell everyone at school. Mrs. Smith could see the excitement on his face.

Danny asked, “Has Mr. Curstmeyer seen ghosts at his house?”

“Perhaps you should ask him that,” she replied.

“I’m done playing the piano,” Danny quickly said.

“Okay,” Mrs. Smith attempted to say casually.

“If he comes here to give me lessons, he must live close by,” Danny said. “Then the Wallace Towers must be here too!”

“But, you are no longer taking lessons with Mr. Curstmeyer,” Mrs. Smith said. “I guess this is where the story ends.”

Mrs. Smith packed up the box and headed back towards the attic. She would give Danny a few days. She was nervous that she gave Danny too much information, but there was so much more she needed to say and she wanted him to play the piano again. She tried not to worry. The Wallace Towers were close by, but she knew Danny could never walk there.

1313 West Twenty Third Avenue

Danny opened his eyes. He saw his alarm clock next to the bed. It was 5:03am. He attempted to mumble a response, but only gibberish came out of his mouth. His mom was sitting on the bed next to him.

“I’m leaving for work,” Mrs. Smith said.

“Mmm...uhmm,” Danny replied.

“You can sleep in, but as soon as you’re up, brush your teeth, get dressed, then head over to Mrs. Campbell’s house.”

Mrs. Smith felt lucky and blessed as she kissed her half conscious son on the forehead. She worked three ten hour shifts per week at her office and the rest at home. She always left as early as possible.

Jack and his parents next door were Mrs. Smith's saving grace. Without Mrs. Campbell watching Danny, she wouldn't have been able to keep her job. Without her full time job, Mrs. Smith and Danny wouldn't have been able to stay in the home that Danny grew up in.

“Remember,” Mrs. Smith said, “be nice to Mrs. Campbell. Do everything she tells you to do! If I couldn't work, who knows where we would be. See you by 5pm tonight, Okay?”

Danny said, “Okay.” Before Mrs. Smith closed his bedroom door, he fell back to sleep.

Light began to fill Danny's room and he was quickly up and full of energy. He had only one thing on his mind. He needed to find the Wallace Towers.

The landline phone rang. Danny expected his mom to call him to make sure he had gone over to Jack's house, but she usually didn't call this early. He quickly ran downstairs and picked up the phone in the kitchen.

"Hi mom!" Danny said.

"You're up! Did you sleep well?"

"Yes. I just got up."

"Okay. I'll give you another ten minutes to brush your teeth and get changed," Danny's mom said with authority. "I'll call you over at Jack's house."

"Alright, mom," he said.

"Bye," Mrs. Smith said. She quickly hung up the phone.

Danny did as he was told. He couldn't look up the Wallace Towers on his computer or his phone. Mrs. Smith kept a close watch on everything Danny did online. If Danny looked up the address he saw on the deed, his mom would know about it by the end of the day. Jack's mom, Mrs. Campbell, wasn't as computer savvy as Mrs. Smith.

Danny put on his clothes, brushed his teeth, and headed over to Jack's house. He locked his front door and walked twenty feet to Jack's front door which was already open. He headed straight for the kitchen. Jack was already there and on a computer.

"Jack, look up the address for Wallace Towers," Danny said excitedly.

"Good morning Danny!" Mrs. Campbell said. "What are you looking for?"

Danny hadn't seen Mrs. Campbell behind the kitchen counters. She barely knew how to use a computer, but she was the toughest parent to trick. Mrs. Campbell looked like a school teacher to Danny. She had a presence about her, like a police officer in a dress. Danny worried that she heard him say the Wallace Towers.

“No need. I know how to get to the movie theatre,” Jack brilliantly covered.

“What are you going to see?” Mrs. Campbell asked.

“*Heads Up*,” Jack said.

Jack had actually wanted to see the new blockbuster movie *Heads Up*, but something in Danny’s voice alerted him to a possible change in plans. Jack knew about Mrs. Smith’s ability to monitor Danny’s computer use, but they could look up almost anything on his computer.

Mrs. Campbell began to clean the refrigerator, so Jack casually moved out of the chair in front of the computer and let Danny sit down. It took only a little bit of digging past the television show to find what Danny was looking for, 1313 Twenty Third Avenue, Davenport, PA.

"There are alot of places called the Wallace Towers," Jack said quietly.

"This is it!" Danny said quietly intense. "It's here in Davenport."

Danny looked up the directions. It wasn’t in a part of town Danny or Jack had ever been to, but they recognized some of the names of the streets. It was close to downtown Davenport, which had always been a ghost town. There were businesses that operated during the day downtown, but at night, the entire area shut down. People avoided downtown Davenport at night.

Danny zoomed in on the address of the Wallace Towers only to find a massive open space with nothing around it. It gave no hint that this was the Wallace Towers. At a certain point as they zoomed in, the map only said, “Unavailable.”

Danny and Jack needed more evidence. If this wasn’t the Wallace Towers from their favorite television show, then it wasn’t worth the risk of getting into trouble, but Danny had another idea. He typed in "Kurt Curstmeyer Piano Davenport Pennsylvania."

"Your piano teacher?" Jack asked.

The address that came back was 1315 West Twenty Third Avenue.

Danny flipped back to the map and looked at Jack. Mrs. Campbell was still in the room, so Jack couldn't ask any questions and Danny couldn't verbally give him any answers, so Danny found another box he could type into.

Danny typed, "This is the Wallace Towers is! Curstmeyer lives right next to it!"

Jack stared at the screen astounded. He couldn't believe the Wallace Towers were in Davenport. Without blinking or breaking his stare from the screen, he nudged Danny off the chair. He wanted to track down the place where *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* was filmed as much as Danny. With one click, the map lit up a purple line from his house to the Wallace Towers. They were only fourteen miles from where they stood to the haunted place that had intrigued them for the past year and a half. He quickly gave up the idea of seeing a movie today, but he knew the movie would be a great cover story for their adventure.

"We could get there in about an hour," Jack said.

"Get where?" Mrs. Campbell asked.

Jack momentarily forgot his mom was still in the room, but having dealt with his mother's investigations all of his life, he was quick on his feet.

"It would take us an hour to walk to the movie theatre," Jack said. "It would be better if we took our bikes."

Mrs. Campbell didn't say anything. They assumed the cover story of seeing a movie was working.

"So, mom," Jack said, "can we go see *Heads Up*?"

"Well, what is *Heads Up*?" Mrs. Campbell asked. She was definitely suspicious.

"A movie," Jack replied.

"Yes, I have that information already. What is it about?"

"About some kids who play baseball," Jack said. "It's showing at 11:30."

“Which theatre?”

“Thunderbird Megaplex.”

“Why don’t you see it at Crescent Place?” Mrs. Campbell continued to probe.

“We wanted to stop at the arcade and food court at the mall,” Jack said without even blinking.

“Should I drop you off?” Mrs. Campbell asked.

“We don’t want to bother you, Mrs. Campbell,” Danny said sweetly.

But Danny's sweetness made Jack panic. It was sure to set off his mom's alarms.

“We’ll also stop by the park,” Jack said. “It's nice out. We can call Mike and Andrew to hang out.”

Danny thought it was actually quite cloudy and dreary outside and Jack had not looked out the window since he woke up, but there was a lucky break in the clouds just as Jack said it was nice out. There was even a momentary ray of sunshine that dropped down into the Campbell’s kitchen window. It reassured Mrs. Campbell that the two boys would be fine in their trip to the Thunderbird Mall and Megaplex.

“Alright,” she said. “Let me know when you boys are going to head out to the movie theatre.”

The Long Bike Ride

Danny and Jack never really looked at how their bikes worked until they were getting ready to make the trip to the Wallace Towers.

“Is the chain supposed to go around that wheel?” Danny asked.

“Yes,” Jack replied. “I think if it falls off, you just have to put it on again.”

Neither of them had ridden their bikes even half as far as the ride to the Wallace Towers. They knew if either bike broke on the trip, they would get caught.

“I think we’re ready,” Jack said as he pedaled around the driveway. “Let’s go tell my mom.”

Danny and Jack walked in the house but didn’t find Mrs. Campbell in the kitchen. Jack walked up to the doorway that led to the basement and heard his mom doing the laundry downstairs.

“Mom, we’re ready to go!” Jack yelled.

Mrs. Campbell soon climbed up the stairs. Danny and Jack stepped out of the way as Mrs. Campbell entered the kitchen and found her purse.

“Thunderbird Mall is on Thunderbird Rd., right?” Mrs. Campbell said as she reached for her wallet.

“Yes,” Jack and Danny said at the same time.

“Which road is that again?”

“Thunderbird Road,” Jack and Danny again said at the same time.

“What is so special about Thunderbird Road?” Mrs. Campbell asked.

Jack replied, "I'm not allowed to cross it under any circumstances."

"Under any circumstances," repeated Mrs. Campbell. She liked to repeat these kinds of things. "So, Thunderbird Road is the street you are not allowed to cross."

"Yes," Jack replied obediently.

"Okay," Mrs. Campbell said as she pulled out some money from her purse.

"Thanks, mom!" said Jack.

"Thanks, Mrs. Campbell!" said Danny.

Jack and Danny made a very quick exit. In a few seconds, they were out the front door and in the driveway getting on their bikes.

"Be very careful!" Mrs. Campbell yelled out the front door. "Always look both ways before you cross the street! If you get into any trouble or if anything happens, use Danny's cell phone to call me right away!"

"We'll be careful, mom," Jack yelled back as they rode their bikes.

"No matter what, be home by five!" Mrs. Campbell said. "Your dad will be home by then."

Danny and Jack took off down the road, pedaling fast. They couldn't believe they tricked Mrs. Campbell. They couldn't believe they were on their way to the Wallace Towers.

After five minutes of burning off adrenaline, they began to slow down.

"This is going to be awesome!" Danny yelled in anticipation.

"I know. It's going to be so cool!" replied Jack.

There were several large hills Danny and Jack had to climb just to get to the Megaplex on Thunderbird Road. The first hill wasn't very big, so they remained on their bikes and muscled their way up to the top. They enjoyed coasting down the other side until they reached a second hill. This one was so tall that they climbed off their bikes and walked.

“We’ll make it, right?” Danny asked breathing heavily.

“Yep, we’ll be fine.” Jack said confidently. “We have six hours.”

After coasting down the second hill, their trip to Wallace Towers quickly turned into an endurance workout. They stopped talking to each other to conserve their energy.

They stopped at the intersection just beyond the shops and restaurants of the Thunderbird Mall and Megaplex. They climbed off their bikes, and found a bench to sit on.

“What time is it?” Danny asked.

“It’s 11:15.” Jack replied.

“It took us thirty minutes to get here. How far is that?”

“It’s about four miles.”

Jack was showing his athleticism. The trip so far was nothing for him. Danny however was suddenly a bit worried. He was already tired.

Danny said, “We have ten more miles to go, right?”

“Yep,” Jack replied.

“So, if it takes us thirty minutes to ride four miles, we should get there in about 90 minutes.”

“We better get going then,” Jack said spiritedly. He climbed back on his bike. After taking another second to breathe, Danny stood up and climbed on his bike too.

The light at the intersection changed to green, the walk sign was on, and they continued to the Wallace Towers. This was the farthest Mrs. Campbell would ever let them venture without parental supervision. With their next steps, if they got caught, they would get in big trouble.

The sidewalk ended. They could have turned back and found an alternate route, but that could have taken a long time.

“We can’t stay on this road,” Danny said uneasily.

Jack and Danny were now riding their bikes on the side of the road. Cars zoomed by on their left. A solid wall of trees was on their right. Only a couple feet separated them from a collision with a tree or an accident with a truck. The possibility of an accident may have terrified Danny, but the slight thrill of danger made Jack that much more determined to get there.

“We’ll be fine,” Jack said. “Ride in the grass and stay as far to the side as possible.”

Danny saw another hill coming up and said, “If there isn’t a sidewalk by the time we get over that next hill, we have to turn back.”

A large, gray semi truck honked and sped quickly by the two boys. In the rush of wind from the massive truck, Jack suddenly became aware of the danger of traveling down this road and was much more receptive to turning back.

“Alright,” Jack said. “If there isn’t a sidewalk on the other side, we’ll turn back. We could probably still catch a movie.”

Danny and Jack worked their way up the hill. It was a small hill, so they stayed on their bikes and again muscled their way up to the top. They both took a sigh of relief when they saw civilization again on the other side, including a sidewalk. They coasted down the hill and immediately pulled on to the sidewalk to get as far away from traffic as they could. They also looked to their right and appreciated the large, gray parking lot instead of trees.

“Let’s pull in there,” Jack said when he saw a gas station.

Jack pulled in and jumped off his bike. Danny was close behind him and needed the break. He immediately sat down on the curb.

“I’m going to get a slushy,” Jack said. “Do you want one?”

“Yes!” Danny said. He was desperate for something cold.

Jack disappeared into the store as Danny looked around from the curb. Danny and his mom had never traveled through this part of town before. They had never gone to downtown Davenport. There had never been any reason to go beyond the Thunderbird Mall.

Danny then looked up beyond the next hill. He could see something in the distance. He stood up as Jack came out of the store.

“So how big do you think it will be?” Jack asked.

“Look!” Danny said, pointing just above the next hill.

Jack stopped and looked. He could see a small tower reaching just above the trees. “Is that...” Jack began to ask.

“Yeah. That’s where Margaret Dean jumped to her death in 1978,” Danny said.

The small tower on top of tower D, the very top of the Wallace Towers, was still far into the distance, but since it was within their sights, their energy returned. They wanted to get going as fast as possible.

“Here!” Jack said as he threw the slushy into Danny’s hands.

Danny and Jack both took a deep breath and took a huge gulp of their slushy. It quenched their thirst and cooled them off. They felt so good, they took another huge gulp of slushy.

“Ow!” Jack yelled.

“Brain Freeze!” Danny yelled back.

Jack and Danny shook off the frost from their brains before continuing to chug their slushies. They finished them quickly.

“Let’s go!” said Jack as he threw away his cup and straw and began to ride his bike. Danny momentarily stopped him though.

“Wait,” Danny said. “I need to avoid Mr. Curstmeyer’s house. He would call my mom.”

“Alright,” Jack said.

Danny threw away his slushy cup as Jack began to pedal away. Just beyond the gas station, they began to coast down a steady downhill slope.

“You don’t think the camera crew will be there, do you?” Jack asked.

“I don’t know. They must still be filming this season.”

“If we are caught on camera, we could be on the show!”

“We could be the most popular kids in school,” Danny said enthusiastically. “But, we would also get in trouble.”

“It would be worth it,” Jack replied.

They wanted to keep their sights on the Wallace Towers, but their bikes quickly picked up speed on the downhill slope. They began to go so fast that they completely ignored the sight of the towers in the sky and remained concentrated on riding their bikes. They continued to coast downhill for two miles. Danny was nervous about how fast they were going while Jack loved every second of it. Danny did at least appreciate that the ride was a lot easier.

The downhill slope evened out momentarily and they began to slow down. Danny looked up at the small portion of the Wallace Towers in the sky. He couldn’t help his jaw from lowering from the sight. His mouth was wide open in awe of the giant complex. When they began to coast down another hill, he quickly closed his mouth suddenly and spit.

“Auuggghh!” Danny yelled.

“What is it?” Jack asked.

“A bug just flew in my mouth.”

The easy, downhill ride stopped as they reached the outskirts of the city of Davenport. The city was flat and crowded with houses, shops, restaurants, and

stoplights. The massive structure of the Wallace Towers dominated the sky. It loomed over everything.

Danny and Jack continued to ride to the Wallace Towers. The closer they went, the less people they saw on the street. The shape and quality of the buildings around them deteriorated very quickly. They saw more and more cars on the side of the street with rust, broken glass, and flat tires.

At 1:30pm, Danny and Jack found themselves looking at the sign that once said “Wallace Towers: Gateway to Financial Immortality.”

Someone had defaced the painted sign. Jack read it out loud.

“Future site of Wallace Terrors: Gateway to ~~Financial Immortality~~ Hell.”

The Wallace Towers

The Wallace Towers stood quietly before Jack and Danny. It was built with a rusty, yellow colored brick and covered in small squares of windows they couldn't see through. Danny and Jack immediately knew why *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* mostly filmed the outside of the building at night. It wasn't very nice to look at.

The Wallace Towers were massive. The first four floors were a solid building that took up almost every inch of space on the city block. After the fourth floor, the building split apart into four separate towers. Each tower varied in size. The smallest tower was seven stories tall. The largest was over twenty.

Jack and Danny looked at the towers for five minutes. When their necks began to feel soar from looking up, they took a moment to look at the street around them. Twenty Third Avenue was deserted. On the opposite side of the street, there were empty lots and homes that have been bulldozed. A few dark trees were barely alive. The grass had died a long time ago leaving only dirt and dead weeds. Beyond the empty lots, they saw the backyards of the houses on the next street.

“Who is that?” Jack asked.

An old woman in a backyard rose from an old, metal, rusty chair to leer at Jack and Danny. She was very aware of kids who found out about the Wallace Towers. Likewise, Jack and Danny were very aware of this woman who gave them a cautious look.

“Let's go this way,” Danny said. Truthfully, he wanted to go around the building to get away from the old woman.

They hopped on their bikes and headed to the first corner. The lot the Wallace Towers stood on was so large, it took Jack and Danny a minute to make it around the first turn and out of the woman's sight.

Around the corner, Danny and Jack came to the main entrance of the Wallace Towers. There were a few more trees and some brush next to a small, curved driveway that went up to the main doors. Jack and Danny made their first discovery in the dirt next to the driveway.

"There's the hole from the first episode!" yelled Danny.

Danny and Jack pulled their bikes up to the hole. They slowly inched their way forward so they could see the bottom. There was a lot of litter in the hole.

Danny said, "You really could fit a casket in there, couldn't you..."

"That's where they shot the second episode!" yelled Jack. He pointed just beyond the hole, next to the building.

Jack dropped his bike in the dirt and ran up to a large crevice between the sidewalk and the huge building. He kneeled down next to the opening. Danny caught up to him quickly and peered down into the narrow space.

"Remember what David Landers and that guy said?" asked Jack.

Danny remembered it very well. He replayed it in his mind.

Dr. Mickelson had said, "The Wallace Towers were an experiment in modern architecture. Charles Wallace was determined to make history with the construction of these towers, so he laid a slab foundation of steel."

David Landers, pointing down into the crevice, then said, "But mixed into this foundation of steel are the remains of those who were accidentally buried here. Now they will forever remain here as residents of the Wallace Towers."

Dr. Mickelson then said, "The massive amount of steel underneath the Wallace Towers is virtually unbreakable. Even if the Wallace Towers were completely destroyed, the steel foundation would remain there. It would take a decade to cut through it. Nothing could lift it. It will remain there forever."

Jack grabbed a large rock and dropped it down into the crevice. The rock hit the steel foundation. Suddenly, a very loud tone rang through the crevice and through part of the building. The building quivered and shook. After a few seconds, the building rested again and stood silently.

“Cool!” Jack whispered.

“That’s weird,” Danny said. “If you dropped a rock on the basement of my house, it wouldn’t ring like that.”

“It’s made of steel, like cymbals or triangles or something.”

Jack found an even bigger rock. Using two hands, he grabbed it and dropped it into the crevice on the steel foundation below. The loud tone again rang through the entire side of the building.

“Look out!” Jack said.

Dust and parts of brick began to fall. A window above them cracked. Danny and Jack took five huge steps back as the loud tone continued to shake the building for over ten seconds. They took a sigh of relief when the building finally stopped trembling.

Danny and Jack looked at each other nervously. “We wouldn’t be waking anything up by doing that would we?” Danny asked.

Jack shrugged it off and said, “You’re as bad as Andrew.” He continued to walk down the side of the building. Danny again approached the crevice when Jack again yelled, “Over here!”

Jack was in front of a narrow opening. Danny quickly caught up to him as Jack continued, “Look! Isn’t this that hallway that old guy walked down in the season premiere.”

Danny quickly ducked back. “I can’t be seen by Mr. Curstmeyer,” he said.

“That creepy piano teacher?” Jack replied. “Who cares about Creepy Curstmoe or whatever his name is.”

“He could call my mom,” said Danny. “Then we would both be in trouble.”

“Okay,” said Jack. “Let’s keep going around the next turn.”

Both Jack and Danny turned around and picked up their bikes. They quickly rode to the next corner. They kept their eyes on the giant building, trying to find connections between what they’ve seen on *the Ghosts of Wallace Towers* and what they could see with their own eyes.

In the quick sprint they took to round the next corner, fatigue began to set in. Danny could barely feel his legs. Even Jack was getting tired of riding his bike. Once they made it around the corner and out of sight from anyone who could walk out of the narrow hallway, they dropped their bikes and began to walk again.

Jack suddenly pointed up. “There’s the window!”

Danny recognized it right away and played the episode of *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* in his mind.

David Landers said behind a picture of this window, “What started as a prank for three college students quickly turned into a nightmare. Anna Rogers had felt strange ever since she set foot in the building. Sarah Hayes took Anna’s queasiness as something serious, but Kelly Hudson laughed it off as nothing more than being scared. Anna however would soon succumb to these feelings. They would overcome her. She became possessed by one of the ghostly inhabitants who reside at the Wallace Towers.”

Dr. Mickelson then said, “Anna Rogers first struck Sarah Hayes repeatedly with a piece of wood. After knocking her unconscious, Anna, or the ghost who possessed Anna, then went after Kelly Hudson. Ms. Rogers pushed Ms. Hudson through a window where she fell to her death.”

Jack was pointing at the ground when he yelled “The glass is still broken!”

“Danny?”

Danny suddenly felt the true feeling of fear that comes with a visit to the Wallace Towers. He recognized the voice right away. It was the voice who couldn’t say his name without it sounding like a question. It was the voice who constantly spit out demands for him to play this song and play this scale. The same voice that constantly told him he was playing it wrong.

“Danny? What are you doing so far away from your home?” Mr. Curstmeyer asked suspiciously.

Danny turned to Mr. Curstmeyer. He searched his mind for any excuse to give him. He said, “I saw you on *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* on Sunday. My mom let me come by to check out the buildings.”

Mr. Curstmeyer said skeptically, “Claire let you ride your bike fifteen miles to take a look at an old, rusty building?”

Danny continued, “She also wanted me to come for a piano lesson while I was here.”

“It’s true,” said Jack.

“Okay. Let’s give her a call,” said Mr. Curstmeyer. “I’ve been meaning to check in with her.”

Danny and Jack both had the same instinct. They wanted to ride their bikes home as fast as possible to try and beat Mr. Curstmeyer’s phone call to their parents, but after walking around for a little while, they both felt the exhaustion of the long bike ride. Jack knew they wouldn’t get down the street and out of sight before Mr. Curstmeyer made it to a telephone. Danny even thought about the long, giant hill they coasted down. He knew he couldn’t ride his bike back up that hill.

“Please don’t call my mom, Mr. Curstmeyer,” said Danny. “She’s at work and she would more than kill me if she had to leave to come pick me up.”

“Well, you boys aren’t riding your bikes back,” replied Mr. Curstmeyer. “I guess I’ll have to call the police to come pick you up...”

Jack had been imagining the look of disappointment and anger on his mom’s face since they had been caught by Mr. Curstmeyer. When Mr. Curstmeyer mentioned the police, his mental image of his mom went from upset to devastation, from anger to furious.

Jack interrupted, “Wait! We can call my mom. She’ll come pick us up.”

Danny reached into his pocket and pulled out his cell phone. He opened it up, found Mrs. Campbell's number, and pushed talk but nothing happened. He tried it again with no luck.

"What's wrong?" Jack asked.

Danny looked up to give Jack the bad news. "It's Monday. It's a school day. My phone is blocked until 4pm."

Mr. Curstmeyer stood patiently next to Jack and Danny, but Danny soon stopped attempting to call. Jack and Danny looked up helplessly at Mr. Curstmeyer.

"Follow me up to the house," Mr. Curstmeyer said as he turned around.

Danny and Jack picked up their bikes and followed Mr. Curstmeyer around the corner of the huge building. Mr. Curstmeyer walked slowly, but Jack and Danny didn't mind. They could barely walk themselves. They both leaned on their bikes to take weight off their legs.

Danny and Jack were worried about getting into trouble, but since they knew a punishment was inevitable, they enjoyed what they could of the Wallace Towers. They kept their eyes on the building, looking for more things they had seen on the show. To both Jack and Danny, the trip to the Wallace Towers was worth any punishment their parents could dish out.

Danny, Jack, and Mr. Curstmeyer approached the narrow hallway. Mr. Curstmeyer began to walk down the dark passageway.

"Where is your house?" Jack asked.

"It's at the center of the buildings," Mr. Curstmeyer said. "I can't let you boys out of my sight. This area isn't very safe. I'm surprised you haven't run into trouble on the street already. You'll have to follow me this way."

Mr. Curstmeyer continued to walk through the hallway to his house. Danny and Jack soon followed.

The path was only five feet wide. Danny and Jack held their bikes close to fit through. The floor was dirty and the air was stale. The path quickly narrowed

even more as the brick walls that surrounded them reached into the sky. Danny and Jack had a sudden realization. They were in the Wallace Towers!

The three rounded another corner and continued down an even darker path. They could no longer see the sky. Spiders and their webs hung over their heads. The only light they could see came from behind them and from the area ahead of them.

“Be careful down this hallway,” barked Mr. Curstmeyer. They walked another five feet when he again yelled, “Watch out through these newspapers and stay to the left.”

Danny and Jack did as they were told. The ground suddenly made a noise and gave way slightly. Danny suddenly realized he wasn’t walking on concrete anymore. He was walking on wood.

Mr. Curstmeyer heard the noise too and yelled, “Be careful!”

Danny and Jack slowly moved forward. They soon felt solid concrete below their feet again. The three had walked for four minutes when they finally came to the center of the Wallace Towers. There was a small patch of dirt and dead grass and a little house. The windows on the side of the house were boarded up. The old, creaky door barely hung on by its hinges.

A light shined down from above. Danny and Jack looked up. The brick wall sides of the four towers rose high into the air. There was a small opening far above them between the four towers. Danny and Jack realized they were in the very center of the Wallace Towers complex.

Jack was lost in the moment. “Who would put a house here?” he asked.

“This is where Charles Wallace lived,” Mr. Curstmeyer grumpily replied. “He stayed here while they were building the towers.”

Mr. Curstmeyer walked up a couple stairs and opened the door to his house. He said, “Wait here. What’s your mom’s phone number?”

“555-1127.”

Mr. Curstmeyer left the door open as he disappeared into the house. Jack and Danny quickly stepped forward and looked inside. The inside of the house was similar to the front door. Everything was old and covered with dust. The wood of the stair case was splintered in many places. The color of the furniture was faded and dirty. Danny reached out and felt the brick of the house. It left a yellow dust on his fingers. He brushed it off on his pants.

Only one thing in the house looked new. Danny and Jack saw a grand piano next to the stair case. The grand piano was in beautiful, perfect condition.

In a short time, Mr. Curstmeyer started to come back to the door. Danny and Jack quickly jumped back. They grabbed their bikes and tried to look inconspicuous.

“She’s on her way,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “Let’s head back out.”

Both Jack and Danny let out a sigh knowing their punishment was coming soon. Jack was the first to turn to head to the street. All three continued down the narrow passageway when Mr. Curstmeyer yelled at Jack.

“Stay on this side!” screamed Mr. Curstmeyer as he frantically pointed to the right. “Be careful going through there!”

Jack had already stepped from the concrete floor to the wood floor. It let out an even louder creak. He quickly moved over to the right side and the creaking stopped.

The three continued down the dark path. Some cobwebs floated down on Jack. He brushed them off nervously. A loud sound, like a brick falling, spooked Danny, but he continued to walk down the hallway.

When they rounded the corner and saw the street, Danny and Jack quickened their pace. Even though they had wanted to see the Wallace Towers, they were ready to get out.

A Chance Encounter

“What do you think we’ll get?” Jack asked.

“Chores,” replied Danny. “Lots of chores. We have the rest of the week completely open to do whatever they want us to do.”

After having their fill of fun at the Wallace Towers, Jack and Danny awaited their punishment. They sat on the street curb next to their bikes. Mr. Curstmeyer was standing behind them, not too far away, looking off into the distance.

A creak then a sharp sound of metal screeching against metal came from the narrow passageway behind them. Jack and Danny jumped and spun around. They quickly looked for what could have made that awful sound, but they only saw Mr. Curstmeyer who continued to stand, indifferent to the sudden, creepy disruption.

Jack and Danny stared at Mr. Curstmeyer. They couldn’t believe that awful sound had no effect on him. Mr. Curstmeyer’s look however did change from calm to frustration as he looked off into the distance. Jack and Danny spun around and saw a white van driving down the street towards them.

The van pulled into the driveway and main entrance of the Wallace Towers. Jack and Danny could clearly see the words *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* on the side of the van. They realized they stood about thirty feet away from the crew and host of their favorite television show.

Jack and Danny didn’t recognize the first person that came out of the van, but the host of the show, David Landers, quickly followed the first person. David stretched his arms up and looked around.

David Landers quickly pointed over to Mr. Curstmeyer and said, “Larry, look.”

Larry snapped his fingers, looked into the van, and said, “Bill, Brad, get ready, now!”

Jack and Danny recognized Bill as he came out of the van. Bill’s arm was in a sling. He still had cuts and bruises on his face. Jack and Danny recognized Brad too from the season premiere. Brad had a huge scab on his neck.

“That’s where the guy bit his neck!” Jack said quietly to Danny.

Brad and Bill grabbed their cameras. Danny and Jack saw the little red light on their cameras flicker on. The cameras immediately started to film when they picked them up. After a quick huddle, they began to walk towards Mr. Curstmeyer.

“Mr. Curstmeyer!?” yelled David Landers.

David Landers began to wave and walk towards Mr. Curstmeyer. He had reached a comfortable distance away and said, “Mr. Curstmeyer, have you thought more about that question I had asked you. Shouldn’t the Wallace Towers be destroyed?”

Mr. Curstmeyer remained silent and refused to acknowledge David Landers’s question. He wanted to run back down the hallway to his house, but he needed to stay with Jack and Danny to be sure they were picked up safely. Jack and Danny however couldn’t hold in their excitement any longer.

“Mr. Landers! Mr. Landers!” Jack and Danny yelled as they started to jump and scream to get his attention.

David Landers saw an opportunity. He walked the few steps over to Danny and Jack. The cameras followed him as he went.

“Hi guys!” David Landers said as he walked the few steps over to Danny and Jack. “I’m David Landers. What’s your names?”

“I’m Danny Smith.”

“I’m Jack Campbell.”

“We love your show!” Danny said frantically.

“Great,” said David Landers. “Did you see the season premiere last week?”

“Yeah!” shouted Jack.

“It was awesome!” continued Danny.

“Well,” David Landers continued, “since you’re both fans of the show, I’m wondering if I can ask you a few questions.”

“Anything!” shouted both Jack and Danny at the same time.

Jack and Danny were ecstatic! David Landers was going to ask them questions. They were being interviewed! Jack straightened out his clothes and Danny fixed his hair. They wanted to be on the show more than anything.

“Could you tell me about this gentleman right here?” David Landers said as he pointed to Mr. Curstmeyer.

“Don’t make a couple kids do your dirty work!” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Jack and Danny didn’t know what to do. If they told the host of their favorite television show who Mr. Curstmeyer was, they could be on television, but it could make Mr. Curstmeyer upset.

“Well, kids, do you know Mr. Curstmeyer?” asked David Landers again. Jack and Danny hung their heads as they decided not to say anything. David Landers asked again, “anything?”

David Landers let out a sigh as Jack and Danny remained silent. He stood up and turned around. He was about to walk back to the film crew when he stopped and again turned to Danny.

“Did you say your name is Danny Smith?”

Danny didn’t see any harm in answering questions about himself. “Yes,” Danny replied.

“Is your...” David Landers began to say but stopped. He then asked, “What is your mom’s name?”

“Claire.”

“There will be no more talking,” Mr. Curstmeyer said authoritatively.

David Landers quickly retreated back to his film crew and motioned for Bill and Brad to lower their cameras. David and Larry began talking quietly to each other.

“Thank you,” Mr. Curstmeyer said sincerely to Jack and Danny.

Danny and Jack walked closer to Mr. Curstmeyer. They didn’t want to hurt him by talking with David Landers, but they were curious.

“Why do you live here, Mr. Curstmeyer?” Danny asked quietly.

“It’s none of your concern.”

“But your house, these towers,” said Jack. “They’re creepy. Lots of people have got hurt here.”

“They are not creepy,” Mr. Curstmeyer said softly but defiantly. “And for those people who get hurt, it’s their own fault.”

“Don’t you have any family?” asked Danny.

Mr. Curstmeyer calmed down at the question, which was a surprise to Danny.

“That house,” Mr. Curstmeyer said, “this place, those things are the only family I have.”

Mr. Curstmeyer saw, out of the corner of his eye, that one of the camera men had continued to record everything. Brad had caught the conversation on his camera.

“Stop it,” yelled Jack. “He doesn’t want you to film him.”

Brad did not lower his camera. Instead Bill also raised his camera as David walked over to Mr. Curstmeyer.

David said calmly but firmly, “Yes, Mr. Curstmeyer, you own 1313 Twenty Third Avenue, but remember, you haven’t paid your property tax for two years.

The only reason this building is still standing is because we pay the bank to film here.”

“Then stop paying the bank and stop filming me,” Mr. Curstmeyer replied. “Then they can destroy this place and my home.”

“Mr. Curstmeyer,” David said. “No other show about ghosts and paranormal activity has ever received the ratings and publicity we have. It’s because of these towers! If we stopped, Pennsylvania National Bank would let someone else film here tomorrow.”

Mr. Curstmeyer could not argue this point. He knew this annoying host was correct. If they stopped filming, the bank would allow another group to start another show.

“There is something you can do,” continued David. “When you are ready to talk, when you agree that the best thing for this building is to no longer exist, Mayor Burland and the City of Davenport will be there to pay for everything, both the demolition of this complex and its clean up. And we will film all of it!”

Mr. Curstmeyer said softly but angrily, “Stop filming me. Film the towers for all I care, just leave me alone.”

Jack and Danny were glad to see Mrs. Campbell’s minivan pull up. They ran to their bikes, picked them up, and tossed them into the minivan door. By the time Mrs. Campbell got out, they stood there almost happy to see her. But then they frantically looked from Mrs. Campbell to David Landers to Mr. Curstmeyer.

“What is going on?” Mrs. Campbell asked.

“Mom, this is David Landers from *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*,” Jack said. “He wanted to know about Mr. Curstmeyer.”

“Mr. Curstmeyer?” asked Mrs. Campbell. Mr. Curstmeyer felt he had said enough, so he only raised his hand.

Mrs. Campbell saw the uncomfortable look on Mr. Curstmeyer’s face.

“Well, I hope you didn’t say anything,” Mrs. Campbell said to Danny and Jack. “David Landers can ask Mr. Curstmeyer himself. If Mr. Curstmeyer doesn’t want them to know, they shouldn’t know.”

“We didn’t say anything, Mrs. Campbell,” said Danny.

“Good. Now get in the van,” said Mrs. Campbell. Jack and Danny did as they were told as Mrs. Campbell started to speak to Mr. Curstmeyer. “I’m sorry about the trouble these boys have caused you today.”

Mr. Curstmeyer replied, “It’s no trouble compared to these intruding jerks.”

“As for you,” Mrs. Campbell said to David Landers. “I hope you know what you are doing to impressionable young minds!”

“This building is history,” David Landers said. “We are a show about history.”

“If you want to make a history show, do something that is actually history,” Mrs. Campbell lectured. “Don’t put some irrelevant trash about ghosts and creaking noises on television and call it history.”

Mrs. Campbell returned to the van, grumbling every step of the way. Jack and Danny were sitting in their seats with their seatbelts buckled. As Mrs. Campbell drove away, Jack and Danny could see Mr. Curstmeyer walk as fast as he could back down the dark, narrow hallway.

The first three minutes of the trip back home were in silence. Jack and Danny knew once Mrs. Campbell started, she wouldn't stop.

It only took a few more minutes. “I am very disappointed. Very disappointed!” Mrs. Campbell said. “My feelings right now, disappointment. Thunderbird Road. Thunderbird Road! That is the street you are not allowed to cross without me or Mr. Campbell. Thunderbird Road.”

She continued the entire ride home focusing mostly on three words: disappointed, Thunderbird, and Road.

Aftermath

Jack was filthy. His jeans and shirt were covered in dirt, mud, and grime. He didn't know whose clothes he was wearing, but they smelled. It was Wednesday and Jack's second day of punishment.

On Tuesday, he had cleaned his room, the living room, and the basement. There was still light outside when Jack finished cleaning those rooms, so Mrs. Campbell sent him to the attic to sort and stack boxes and to find some old clothes for yard work. When Jack brought relatively nice clothes down from the attic, Mrs. Campbell went up herself. The shirt and jeans she found still had some baby barf and other crusty things on them from when Jack's sister, Ava, was a baby. Mrs. Campbell was nice enough to scrub the nastiness off the clothes, but she was still mad enough to make Jack wear them for yard work.

And now Jack was in the back yard where a thousand weeds waited for him. After this back-breaking work on his hands and knees, he was to move a large pile of dirt, one shovel at a time, from the back yard to a small hole on the side of the house. He was supposed to make the entire mound of dirt fit in the small hole, which he thought was impossible. Finally, he was to clean the gutters with his father when he returned from work that evening. He had helped his father clean the gutters once before. He remembered having to pick up slime and goo from the gutter with his bare hands.

"It was still totally worth it!" Jack said. Jack and Danny could easily talk to each other through the wood fence that separated their back yards.

"Yep," replied Danny.

Danny was raking the grass in his back yard. Mrs. Smith followed the same pattern as Mrs. Campbell, making Danny work inside on Tuesday and outside on Wednesday. Danny however didn't get a list of chores. Mrs. Smith was inside,

working on her computer. She would give him the next thing to do whenever he had finished each task.

“I can’t believe we got to meet David Landers,” Danny said. “Mom could make me do chores for two months and I still would have done it.”

Jack kneeled down next to the house and started to reach for more weeds when he groaned like an old man.

“Do you still hurt from the bike ride?” Danny asked.

“Don’t you?” Jack replied. “My legs hurt so much.”

“I can’t bend my knees at all,” Danny said. “I’m glad raking grass doesn’t make me use my legs.”

Danny continued to stab at the ground with the rake. He wasn’t sure why he was ordered to rake the grass. There weren’t any leaves or branches on the ground. For the most part, the rake didn’t pick up anything. Every once in a while, old dead grass would come up from the ground, but it seemed like a lot of busy work for a little dead grass.

Jack put his left hand on the ground and reached for a weed with his right hand. His left hand suddenly sank into the mud. Water and dirt ran into his glove.

“Yuck!” Jack said.

“What happened?” Danny asked.

“Why do I have to get on my hands and knees when you can rake?” Jack complained.

Mrs. Smith opened the door. “The grass looks good, Danny,” she said.

Danny agreed. The grass did look better. “Thanks, mom.”

“I’m glad I called in sick today,” Mrs. Smith said.

“Sorry you had to miss work, mom.”

“Well, your single chore Thursday will make up for that,” Mrs. Smith said. “Trim the two trees and the row of bushes back here then quit for today. In the morning, you are cleaning the garage.”

Danny’s heart sank and Jack no longer felt cheated. Jack had only seen Danny’s garage once. It was cluttered with more junk and moldy boxes than Jack’s attic and basement. Jack would have chosen yard work any day over cleaning that.

Unexpected Discoveries

Mrs. Smith woke Danny up early on Thursday morning and made him march out to the garage. He tried to open the garage door, but it wouldn't budge. He went over and opened the side door. He stood there for quite a while, not knowing where to start. There was so much old stuff that hadn't moved for years.

"Danny, what are you doing?" Mrs. Smith asked from the kitchen window.

"I don't know what to do," Danny yelled back.

"Use the trash bags on the ground! Go inside the garage and fill them with all the clothes you can find. I'm taking them to the Salvation Army later. Organize all the tools you can find because I'm going to take those too."

Danny grabbed a bag and was ready to head into the garage when his mom yelled for him again. "When you're done with that, there are more things you'll have to do," she said.

Mrs. Smith disappeared from the kitchen window. Danny poked his head into the garage and looked around. He saw a light bulb with a metal cord hanging down. He reached in with his hands and pulled on the chord and the garage glowed softly with a yellow hue.

Danny stepped inside. An old work bench was next to the door. Old, dirty tools were spread everywhere. He didn't want to start with the tools. They were heavy and some of them were sharp. A small but old and rusty car filled the majority of the garage. Danny had never seen it move or even start. He bypassed the work bench and walked around the car to the back of the garage.

The back wall was completely covered by stacks of old boxes. Since most of them were filled with clothes, they were easy to take down. Danny however noticed that they were covered in dust and dirt. He carefully put the top row of

boxes gently down on the ground so he wouldn't get a face full of dust or a shower of dirt.

There were lots of baby clothes in the first three boxes. The first garbage bag was filled with Danny's old baby clothes alone. Danny didn't remember them at all. Most of them were covered with clouds, frogs, and musical instruments. He would have been less than three years old when he would have worn them.

Danny dragged the first bag out of the garage and placed it in the driveway. He grabbed another bag and headed into the garage. Boxes of clothes continued to come down from the wall. He found two boxes of his mother's dresses, shirts, and pants. He also found a box of his mom's underwear and other garments. He didn't even look in that box. He just dumped them into a bag.

Danny found a box full of clothes he had worn just a couple years ago. Then he found another box of clothes that were larger than anything he had ever worn. They were obviously boy's clothes. He even liked some of the shirts and jeans he saw in the box. He realized the clothes must have belonged to his dad.

Danny only looked at the clothes for a second and then put them in the bag. His mom rarely said anything about his dad. If she knew they were here, she wouldn't have had him clean the garage at all. Danny could have told his mom about it, but he continued to empty the boxes instead.

It took four large and very full garbage bags to finish the boxes of clothes. Danny took a breather outside and looked at the progress he had made.

Mrs. Smith again poked her head outside. She said, "How's it going Danny?"

"I'm done with the clothes," he replied.

Mrs. Smith was much more calm and nice when she saw how much work Danny had already completed.

"Good," Mrs. Smith said. "Will you do the tools next?"

"Yes, but how am I supposed to pack them up?" Danny asked.

“Put them in the boxes,” Mrs. Smith replied. “Don’t worry about organizing them. Just put all of the tools from that old work bench in the boxes as best you can then put everything in the car. I’ll go drop it off once it’s full.”

“Okay,” Danny said.

“If you find anything else that the Salvation Army could use, put it in the car too. Books, DVDs, CDs. I think there’s an old stereo back there too.”

Danny needed a breather outside of the garage. He grabbed two of the bags of clothes and dragged them over to his mom’s car.

The old, brown car in the driveway was covered in dents and rust, but it was the only one that worked. Danny thought nothing of throwing the garbage bags full of dusty and dirty clothes in the back of the car. He didn’t think the car could get any dirtier. After putting both bags in the trunk, Danny went back to grab the other two bags. All of them fit into the car easily.

Danny slowly walked back to the garage, breathing deeply as he walked. Danny knew this was a lousy job and a horrible punishment, but he didn’t want to complain. He felt grown up and responsible, but he did want to get it over with. So, Danny stood in front of the door again, took a deep breath, and walked into the garage.

Danny made his way back to the pile of boxes that he just created. He grabbed one and put it on the floor next to the work bench. With a brush of his hand, a bunch of tools fell into the box. The box quickly filled up and became very heavy. With a lot of effort, Danny carried the box over to the car then headed back into the garage again.

Danny easily filled up three more boxes of tools. There were hand tools, small saws, bolts, screws, and just random pieces of metal. Danny threw all of it in boxes and put them in the car. He grabbed a stereo so old, it had a tape deck. There were also a few more boxes of videos that Danny easily put in the car too.

The old, brown car was almost full. The load was so heavy the car was riding close to the ground. There wasn’t that much more stuff to move in the garage. There were no more old clothes and no more tools. Most of the random

items were gone. The only items yet to be moved were three more boxes underneath the work bench.

Danny tried to pick up the first box but it was extremely heavy. He slid it out instead and looked inside. It was filled with books. Danny looked at a few titles. There were a lot of books about music: *Repertoire of the Piano*, *Music of the Classical Period*, and *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Danny even found old copies of *Rolling Stone Magazine*. After skimming through the box, Danny didn't find any of them interesting enough to keep. With a lot of effort, he picked up the box and put it in the station wagon.

Danny slid out the next box. At first glance, Danny didn't want anything from this box either. It was filled with old music and songs that Danny had never heard before. Just to make sure he wasn't throwing away something special, he flipped through some of them: *Over There*, *Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree*, *Butterfly Song*. Danny didn't want to play the piano, so there was no reason to keep any of it.

Underneath the sheet music, Danny did find something. He saw the name "Daniel Smith" written on the spine of a book. Daniel was Danny's real name, but he never used it. His mom had called him Daniel a few times, but only when he was in trouble. If this was his book, he had never seen it before.

Danny picked it up and looked at it. It was called *Roger Meyer's Guide to Piano Tuning and Piano Maintenance*. Danny opened it. Many of the pages were marked with pencil sketches and highlighted with a yellow marker. There were a lot of notes written in pen along the borders of many pages. Danny then turned to the inside cover. It said, "Daniel, You could start quite a business with this book alone. All the best, Karl."

Danny realized this book belonged to his father. He even assumed that Karl was Mr. Curstmeyer. From the etchings and markings throughout the book, Danny thought it might be special. He put it aside and took the box to the car.

He didn't spend a lot of time looking through the final box. He assumed they were old books belonging to his mother: *The Babysitter's Club*, *Sweet Valley High*, *Jane Eyre*, *Little Women*. Danny immediately knew he would find nothing

of interest in this box. He didn't have much strength left, but found enough to pick up the box and put it in the car. The car sank another few millimeters. It was completely full.

Mrs. Smith came out of the house with her keys. She was a little worried about the car being so full, but she didn't have far to drive.

"Looks great! Thank you, Danny," Mrs. Smith said. "I'll drop these off just around the corner. You can take a break while I'm gone. I'll be back in less than ten minutes."

Mrs. Smith started the car and inched forward. She pulled out of the driveway as slow as she could. From the weight of clothes and tools in the car, it was extremely close to the ground and Mrs. Smith didn't want to scrape the bottom of her car. The car scrapped the ground anyway. Once she cleared the driveway, she picked up speed and headed down the block.

Danny went back into the garage and grabbed the book. He didn't want to play the piano, but he would like to fix the piano, especially if that's what his dad wanted to do! If he could fix the beat up and out of tune piano in his living room, his mom could play it.

Danny turned to the first chapter, "Tools you will need." Danny had a moment of panic. He just put all the tools in the car! The first tool pictured in the book was in an "L" shape. Danny had seen the tool before. It was in a box that was taken away.

Danny was bummed. He was about to give up this new endeavor when he saw his mother pull back into the driveway. Danny ran up to her as she exited the car. The boxes of tools were still in the back of the station wagon.

"They didn't want them?" Danny asked.

"No one was at the donation station yet. We can drop it off later."

Mrs. Smith began to walk towards the house when she saw Danny open the car door and take out a box of tools.

“Don’t worry about it, Danny,” Mrs. Smith said. “We’ll just throw all of it away.”

Danny had found the tool that looked like an "L".

“Mom?” Danny said.

“Yes, Danny?”

“Could Mr. Curstmeyer come over for a lesson tonight?” Danny asked.

“Mr. Curstmeyer is not going to come over to answer questions about the Wallace Towers.”

“I will not say anything about ghosts or the Wallace Towers,” Danny said.

“Or anything about haunted buildings or demons or paranormal activity?”

“I won’t say anything,” Danny said reassuringly.

Danny didn’t want to ask Mr. Curstmeyer about the Wallace Towers, he wanted to ask Mr. Curstmeyer how he could fix the piano.

“Alright, Danny,” Mrs. Smith said. “I’ll call and see if he can stop by.”

Mrs. Smith felt a sigh of relief. She hoped this obsession with ghosts was almost over.

As soon as Mrs. Smith went inside, Danny took the boxes of tools back to the garage and found his father’s book. He looked through the first chapter and saw five tools he didn't recognize but looked important, but as he skimmed through the rest of the book, he knew he would need more than just those five tools. He lifted each tool out of the box and organized them on the bench. He put the five tools from the first chapter in a place where he could easily grab them. He was going to bring them to his lesson tonight.

Mrs. Smith yelled from the kitchen window, “Danny?”

“Yeah, mom?”

“Stop messing around in the garage. You’re done with your punishment. Mrs. Campbell called and Jack is done with his too. Why don’t you boys go to the park and do something outside?”

Chapter 16

The Last Nice Day

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Campbell expected Thursday to be the last nice, sunny day before the end of Fall break, so they sent Jack and Danny to the park to have fun with their friends. They assumed Danny, Jack, Mike, and Andrew would want to talk about what happened on Monday. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Campbell resolved that at least they would be enjoying it outside in the park.

“We went down this long, dark, narrow hallway,” Jack said.

“Was that the one the creepy old guy vanished into during the season premiere?” Mike asked.

“Yeah. He lives back there,” Jack said.

“Would you guys stop calling him creepy?” Danny asked. “He’s just an old guy who used to play the piano.”

“Did you see the broken window and fire escape that leads to the furnace room?” Andrew asked.

“Did you watch the show Andrew?!” Jack asked.

“Yes, I watched it from beginning to end. It was awesome!” Andrew said. “I’m all caught up.”

“Nice!” Jack said enthusiastically.

“So, you finally aren’t a baby anymore,” Mike said.

“We didn’t see where the furnace room was,” Danny said.

A lot of people were at the park. Danny, Jack, Mike, and Andrew were at a picnic table underneath a large tree. There was a pickup basketball game going on. People were playing tennis. Little kids were playing on the swings. Danny looked at all the people in the park as the other boys talked.

“What did you say to David Landers?” Mike asked Jack.

“Just that we loved his show,” Jack said.

“Mr. Curstmeyer didn’t want us to talk with anyone from the show,” Danny said.

Jack then continued, “So, we asked Curstmeyer why and the cameras were rolling. We could be on soon!”

“The next episode is supposed to be available soon, right?” Andrew asked.

“Yes, but we have to start planning how to get back to Wallace Towers again,” Jack said. “We need to get inside and just start exploring!”

“Let’s go over winter break!” Mike said.

“What should we tell our parents?” asked Andrew.

Danny had enough. For the first time in a long time, he felt like playing basketball or maybe just to swing on the swing sets. He didn’t really care about the Wallace Towers anymore. He wasn’t even looking forward to the next episode. Danny wanted to ask Mr. Curstmeyer about how he could fix the piano. He even hoped that Mr. Curstmeyer could teach him how to tune the piano tonight. Maybe Mr. Curstmeyer could even tell him about his dad.

“They should just tear down the Wallace Towers,” Danny said.

“What?!” Mike said.

“Are you kidding me?” Andrew asked.

“That building just hurts people,” Danny explained. “People scream, yell, break their ankles, jump out of windows, and even die there, just over a building.”

“But people are buried in its bowels,” Jack objected.

“So what. I’m sure they wouldn’t want people to keep getting hurt.”

The table was suddenly quiet. The existence of ghosts in the Wallace Towers and the awesomeness of exploring it had never been questioned. It had remained popular for well over a year and a half.

“Let’s play some basketball,” Danny said. “There’s an open court over there.”

Jack, Mike, and Andrew wanted to set up their adventure to the Wallace Towers, but they all suddenly realized how nice it was outside. They were the only ones sitting down and talking. Everyone else was doing something: playing basketball, tennis, or simply walking around. The boys then agreed, they wanted to enjoy the day too.

The Untold Tragedy

Danny was sitting on the couch reading the book that used to belong to his father when *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* popped up as having a new episode. He didn't think he and Jack would be on the show, but just in case, he turned it on. He continued reading while David Landers was speaking in the background.

It was 7:05pm. At 8pm, Danny was going to convince Mr. Curstmeyer to teach him how to fix the piano. He would spend all day Friday fixing it including the keys that wouldn't move and the keys that didn't make any sound at all. He enjoyed fixing things. He almost finished reading the first chapter and felt ready to ask Mr. Curstmeyer about it when he heard the sound of his own voice.

"Why do you live here, Mr. Curstmeyer?" Danny's voice said on the television.

Danny quickly looked over at the screen. He couldn't believe his eyes. He was there, on television.

The voice of David Landers then filled the room as another picture flashed on the screen. The picture was familiar to Danny, but he didn't recognize it until David Landers said, "This simple question must have moved Mr. Curstmeyer, since nine years ago, Daniel Smith, the father of this child, was killed at the Wallace Towers."

Danny dropped the book. He scrambled down from the couch and sat in front of the television as David Landers continued. "After helping Mr. Curstmeyer move a piano into his home in the Wallace Towers on May 27th, 2003, Daniel Smith suffered an epileptic seizure."

A news clipping from an article about Danny's father was on the screen. The headline said, "Another Victim Claimed by the Wallace Towers."

Dr. Mickelson continued to tell the story. “Daniel Smith was more an unfortunate victim of circumstance rather than a victim of the paranormal activity in the Wallace Towers. The epileptic seizure he suffered would not have been fatal, but in order to move the piano into Mr. Curstmeyer’s house, which was in the center of the complex, they had to go through the Wallace Towers. After completing the move, Kurt Curstmeyer and Daniel Smith walked back through the Wallace Towers, locking it up when Daniel Smith had his seizure.”

A picture of an ambulance appeared on the screen as David Landers then said, “Kurt Curstmeyer called the police. Paramedics arrived, but they became lost in the labyrinth of the towers. More than twenty minutes had passed before they reached Daniel Smith. By this time, he had already joined the ghosts of Wallace Towers.”

The screen again flashed to Danny, Jack, and Mr. Curstmeyer as David Landers said, “We now witness the first confrontation between a fatherless child and the man who holds the deed to Wallace Towers.”

The Danny on the screen asked Mr. Curstmeyer, “Don’t you have any family?”

The screen cut to black. The only thing that followed was "To Be Continued."

The First Confrontation

Danny was at the piano, waiting for Mr. Curstmeyer. He looked like he was waiting patiently for his lesson to begin, but underneath his expressionless face was a mix of betrayal, hurt, and most of all, hate. He knew he wanted to yell at Mr. Curstmeyer, but beyond that, he wasn't sure what he was going to do.

Three loud knocks rang through the oak front door. Mrs. Smith quickly came into the room. She was surprised to see Danny already at the piano.

"Great, you're already here!" Mrs. Smith said happily. She walked to the front door and opened it.

"Good evening, Mr. Curstmeyer," Claire said merrily.

"Good evening, Claire," Mr. Curstmeyer replied.

Mr. Curstmeyer came in and made his way to the piano. He was in good spirits as he walked to the chair next to the piano. Mrs. Smith told him earlier that Danny may be past his obsession with ghosts. He should look forward to teaching a piano lesson without worrying about answering questions about the Wallace Towers. However, when Mr. Curstmeyer reached the chair, he found a reason to worry. There was a book about tuning pianos and piano maintenance on the chair. Mr. Curstmeyer had not seen the book in twenty years.

"Do you recognize the book?" Danny said trying to cover his anger.

"I do," Mr. Curstmeyer said. He picked it up as he sat down in the chair. He opened the cover and saw the inscription he had written to Danny's father.

Mr. Curstmeyer continued, "I gave it to your father so he could tune this piano."

“Oh,” Danny said. “That must have been before he died moving a stupid piano for you!”

“Danny!” Mrs. Smith shouted. “Where...where did you hear that?”

“*The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* said my father died from moving a piano through the Wallace Towers,” Danny said furiously.

Claire quickly walked to the couch across from the piano and sat down. “Danny, there are a lot of things we should talk about,” she said.

Danny quickly interrupted, “is it true?”

Mrs. Smith tried to speak saying, “Wait, Danny. I can...”

“Is it true?!” Danny asked again angrily. He only wanted to hear one of two words, yes or no.

Silence filled the room. No one moved until Mr. Curstmeyer spoke. “It’s true, Danny. Your father died in the Wallace Towers.”

“So, you killed him,” Danny said accusingly.

“Mr. Curstmeyer did not kill your father!” Mrs. Smith said quickly.

The room fell silent again. Mrs. Smith had always told herself she kept the story from Danny to protect him. But in that moment, she realized she never told Danny because she didn’t know how to tell him.

“I’m so sorry you found out this way,” Mrs. Smith said.

Danny was still angry. He was so angry, it held him there silently until one of them would tell him what had happened. Mrs. Smith couldn’t bring herself to say anything.

“Danny,” Mr. Curstmeyer said after a minute. “I will tell you what happened.”

Mr. Curstmeyer knew his relationship with his mother was more important and Danny was barely his student. He was willing to be hated to help Danny.

“After I tell you," Mr. Curstmeyer continued, "you can ask me anything you want about your father, what happened, me, or the Wallace Towers.”

Up until yesterday, it was everything Danny would have ever wanted, but at that moment, he wished he didn't have to hear anything about the Wallace Towers. Any wish though was not as important as him needing to hear about his father.

“Your father and your mother came to my concerts back when I still played the piano, but people gradually stopped coming. No one wanted to hear me play the piano let alone pay to hear me play. I had no money and was about to have no place to live. Owning the Wallace Towers was a curse. At that time, the city wouldn't pay to destroy them. It would have cost millions of dollars. So, I moved into the house in the middle of Wallace Towers. Your father kept in touch with me and knew that I was living there.”

Mrs. Smith finally found the strength to speak. She couldn't tell Danny the story alone, but she could help as best she could.

She said, “Your father knew where Mr. Curstmeyer's piano was. It was your...”

“It was my father's piano,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Danny then remembered seeing the piano in Mr. Curstmeyer's house. He had come so close to the thing that caused his father to die.

Mrs. Smith continued, “Your father wanted to move Mr. Curstmeyer's piano into his home so he could play. Mr. Curstmeyer refused at first, so Daniel rented a truck and drove it to the Wallace Towers himself.”

May 27th, 2003

Kurt Curstmeyer was more than surprised to hear a knock on his door. It was such an unusual event that for a second, he considered the possibility of ghosts actually haunting the Wallace Towers.

“Greetings, Mr. Curstmeyer!” Daniel said merrily.

“Daniel? What are you doing here?”

“I have a surprise for you. Come on.”

Daniel Smith began to walk down the narrow passageway that led from the house in the middle of the Wallace Towers back out to the street. Mr. Curstmeyer was feeling anti-social, but the charm and smile on Mr. Smith’s face convinced him to follow. Daniel usually had this effect on people.

“It’s great to see you Mr. Curstmeyer,” Daniel said as they walked down the passageway.

“Watch out for that step Daniel,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Daniel suddenly realized he stepped from cement to a piece of wood. The wood creaked but held fast.

“That’s strange,” Daniel said.

“I know, Daniel. I’m not sure why they didn’t make this entire passageway out of concrete. I think there’s a system of pipes that connect the towers underneath those strips of wood.”

“Want to go exploring later?” Daniel said jokingly but slightly serious.

“No, thank you,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Daniel and Mr. Curstmeyer continued down the passageway. Up ahead, Mr. Curstmeyer was surprised to see a moving truck parked on the street. Daniel immediately hopped into the back of the truck.

“Why do you have a moving truck?” Mr. Curstmeyer asked. “I moved in three months ago. Everything has already been moved.”

“Not everything,” Daniel said.

Daniel lifted the back gate of the truck. Inside, Mr. Curstmeyer saw his father’s grand piano wrapped in layers of cloth. The piano’s legs were removed and it was on its side lying on two carts. The piano was ready to be moved.

Mr. Curstmeyer was surprised. He had moved the piano to the Water Street Theatre in Downtown Davenport fifteen years ago. Back then, he was playing regular concerts there, but he hadn’t played in the theatre for the last six years.

The manager of the theatre wanted Mr. Curstmeyer to officially donate the piano, but Mr. Curstmeyer refused. This piano was too important to him. Every time Mr. Curstmeyer had asked for the piano to be returned, the manager would hint at the possibility of Mr. Curstmeyer playing another concert. Mr. Curstmeyer knew he would never get another chance to play in the theater again, but removing it from the theatre would admit that his career as a pianist was over.

“How did you get it?” asked Mr. Curstmeyer.

“I showed up at the Water Street Theatre with a moving truck and a contract for you to play a concert,” Daniel said. “I told the manager he would either sign a contract giving you a concert next season or I was loading the piano on the truck. I’m sorry he didn’t give you a night to play, but now you have your piano back.”

“Thank you, Daniel! But I don’t know where we can put it.”

Daniel said, “That house back there is pretty big. There’s plenty of room.”

“How will we get it back there?” Mr. Curstmeyer asked.

Daniel lowered his head. He usually had two other people to help him move a grand piano as big as this one, but his co-workers refused to go near the Wallace Towers.

Daniel said, “We don’t have any help, but I have the best wheeled supports I own underneath the piano. We just have to find smooth, level surfaces so we can wheel it back there.”

“I have two steps in front of my house,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“We can reserve our energy for those two steps, but I don’t think we can take it over those planks of wood we crossed over.”

Mr. Curstmeyer then said, “There is a way we can get to the house through the main entrance. I used it to get my heavier things back there.”

“Do you have the keys?” asked Mr. Smith.

“I have the master key, yes,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “It’s the only key that locks the house. Drive up to the main entrance and let’s get to work.”

“I can’t do this completely on my own, Mr. Curstmeyer,” Daniel said.

“...And I’m just an old man who can’t do anything,” Mr. Curstmeyer said sarcastically. “I haven’t moved a piano in a long time, but I have the strength for this.”

Mr. Smith strapped the piano down and closed the back of the truck. He carefully drove up to the driveway. Mr. Curstmeyer decided to walk and helped Mr. Smith back the truck right up outside the main doors. Mr. Smith climbed out of the truck and lowered a ramp that moved straight into the main entrance.

Mr. Curstmeyer unlocked the glass doors in the front entrance and swung them open. Both men gently wheeled the grand piano down the ramp and into the Wallace Towers. Mr. Curstmeyer locked the front entrance as soon as the piano was inside.

Daniel had moved plenty of pianos, but walking into the Wallace Towers was an extra thrill for him and his labor intensive job. He wanted to look around, but he concentrated on keeping the piano on the carts. If the piano tipped over, Mr. Curstmeyer and Mr. Smith would not be able to get it back on the carts and no one would be willing to help them in this building surrounded by urban legends.

“We’ll be going through these offices over here,” Mr. Curstmeyer said as he unlocked a large wooden door.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer pushed the piano into a long hallway that connected a lot of small offices. Mr. Curstmeyer tried to turn on the lights, but none of them came on. There were enough windows however that light was not a problem. There were also a few tight turns and corners, but the hallway was wide. The piano easily swung around the corners as they continued through the building.

“Mr. Curstmeyer,” Mr. Smith said. “I must admit, this is the most exciting piano move I’ve ever moved.”

“Has business been good?” Mr. Curstmeyer asked.

“Very much so! I can’t believe it’s been ten years since you gave me that book and convinced me to tune and repair pianos for a living.”

“I’m glad I could help.”

The hallway ended. Mr. Curstmeyer unlocked a small door and flicked the light switch in the next room. The light turned on and Mr. Smith pushed the piano through.

Mr. Smith noticed the décor of the room had changed significantly. There were no offices in this long hallway. It wasn’t used for business. It was used for maintenance. The light that shined on the walls made them look slightly yellow and plain. They continued down this hallway for a long time.

“How is little Danny?” Mr. Curstmeyer asked.

“He’s going to be three years old soon. He’s growing like a weed!”

Mr. Curstmeyer didn’t tell Mr. Smith that the trip through the Wallace Towers was twice the distance as the passageway. He also didn’t tell Mr. Smith there were a few doors and locks he was worried about being able to open, but having his piano back in his home or even in the Wallace Towers was worth every effort he could afford.

There were no doors in this hallway except for one at the very end. It was one of the doors and locks Mr. Curstmeyer was worried about. It was a metal door with a deadbolt lock and a sliding latch mechanism.

The door, the lock, and the handle were rusty and difficult to move. Mr. Curstmeyer turned the key inside the padlock. At first the padlock wouldn't unlock, but Mr. Curstmeyer soon heard a click and the padlock sprung open.

“Now for the unpleasant part,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “You might want to move back a little.”

Mr. Smith moved the piano back to give Mr. Curstmeyer some room.

To unlatch the door, Mr. Curstmeyer had to slide a handle three inches to the right. He knew the handle and latch were so rusted that there was no reason to try using his hands. He lifted his foot and kicked the handle. It didn't budge on the first kick. Mr. Curstmeyer kicked it again and it moved. On the third kick, the handle moved completely to the right and Mr. Curstmeyer pulled on the door.

As Mr. Curstmeyer pulled the door open, a rush of wind started to blow into the door from behind him. The metal and rust started to grind and the door started to vibrate until Mr. Curstmeyer opened the door completely. Once it was open, the door rested and remained open. To be on the safe side, Mr. Curstmeyer went into the room, found an old chair, and used it to prop open the door.

The room inside was large and dark. Mr. Curstmeyer reached for a light switch and flicked it on, but the lights didn't come on. He turned the switch on and off a few times hoping they would work, but they didn't turn on. The only light in the room came from the hallway behind Mr. Curstmeyer and Mr. Smith.

“Daniel, wait here for a second,” Mr. Curstmeyer instructed.

Mr. Curstmeyer thought nothing of the Wallace Towers and its past, but this room did give him an uneasy feeling. He looked around. There were lockers and an old and dusty, wood table on his left. There was a pile of greasy equipment in the corner to the right. Mr. Curstmeyer then looked up to see a giant maze of pipes above his head. It was a ventilation system for the towers and he could hear air quickly moving through it.

Mr. Curstmeyer again felt a large breeze come from the door behind him. He looked up to see the reason for the rushing air. He saw a broken part of the ventilation system that went straight up through the ceiling. Mr. Curstmeyer felt the air zoom up towards this broken shaft.

“Everything alright, Mr. Curstmeyer?” Mr. Smith asked loudly so he could be heard above the sound of the rushing wind.

“Yes, Daniel. Let me open the next door and it shouldn’t be so windy.”

Mr. Curstmeyer walked up to another metal door on the opposite side of the room. He again unlocked the deadbolt and kicked the handle to open the door. It was much easier to push this door open.

As soon as the other door was open, the rush of wind was not nearly as bad. Air still moved through both doors, but much more gently. Mr. Curstmeyer found a small cement block and put it against the door to make sure it wouldn’t shut.

“Alright, Daniel. Come on through,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Mr. Smith pushed the piano through the first door and entered the room with the ventilation system. Daniel couldn’t help but look up at the vast array of pipes that zigzagged around the room. Mr. Curstmeyer however continued to be uneasy with this room.

“This is amazing, Mr. Curstmeyer,” Mr. Smith said.

“We have a job to do, Daniel,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Just to be safe, Mr. Curstmeyer let the piano and Mr. Smith go into the next room before him. Mr. Curstmeyer took another look at the ventilation then joined Mr. Smith in the next room.

“I wonder if those pipes go through the entire complex,” Mr. Smith said.

“They do. It is a ventilation system for the four towers we attempted to install. But it didn't work.”

Mr. Curstmeyer felt comfortable with the remainder of the trip. If he remembered correctly, each room beyond the ventilation system had a window to

the outside, so light was not a problem. The rooms were dirty and dusty, but for the most part, they were free of furniture and debris. He continued to unlock the doors. He moved much more quickly than Mr. Smith who was beginning to struggle with moving the piano as his arms began to become tired.

Mr. Curstmeyer looked out the window. He could see his house. He looked ahead and saw the door that would lead them outside and to his front steps. Mr. Curstmeyer quickly and excitedly walked up to the door, unlocked the deadbolt, and moved the handle to pull open the door. He had walked through the Wallace Towers using this route only five times. At the end of each trip, he always walked outside and breathed a deep sigh of relief.

“Are we there?” Mr. Smith asked desperately.

“Yes, Daniel, we are here!” Mr. Curstmeyer said enthusiastically.

Mr. Smith pushed the piano out the door and wheeled it to the front steps. He then stepped away from the piano and put his hands on his knees. He needed to take a break. He looked at the two steps in front of Mr. Curstmeyer’s front door.

“Now for the difficult part,” Daniel said.

Daniel and Kurt were very familiar with the process of setting up large pianos. Daniel knew this one was going to be a little more difficult since he didn’t have his usual coworkers here to help, but he was determined to get the piano into the house. He walked up the steps and opened the front door.

“Should we put it right next to the stairs?” Mr. Smith asked.

“Yes, let’s definitely put it there.”

Mr. Smith cleared a path for the piano. In his experience, he knew trouble most often occurred when something was in the way. After making sure everything was set, Mr. Smith moved the tail of the grand piano to the end of the stairs. He lifted the end up while Mr. Curstmeyer removed the cart. Mr. Smith immediately put the piano down.

Daniel's eyes grew large. It was the first time he felt the weight of the piano in his arms. He was worried that he wouldn't be able to do it, but since he had come this far, he knew he had to give it his best shot.

"Ready, Mr. Curstmeyer?"

Mr. Curstmeyer placed the cart at the top of the steps and said, "Ready."

Both men lifted the tail end of the piano up the two steps and quickly set it again on the cart at the top of the stairs. They both then stepped away from the piano to take a breather.

"I hate stairs. Right, Kurt?" Daniel said.

"They're the worst part of the job," Mr. Curstmeyer replied.

"Now, it's time for the heavy end," Daniel said.

Mr. Smith braced himself and lifted the keyboard side of the piano slightly as Mr. Curstmeyer removed the cart. Mr. Smith then put the piano down again.

"I can't believe you talked me into this line of work," Daniel said.

"You've been making good money, haven't you?" Mr. Curstmeyer objected.

"Yeah, but I'm moving this piano for free."

Mr. Curstmeyer smiled. He put the cart right next to the piano at the top of the stairs. This was the most difficult part of moving a piano. Mr. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer lifted the keyboard end of the piano, walked it up the two stairs, and quickly put it down on the cart.

After a moment, Mr. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer pushed the piano inside the house. They stepped back to make sure they had moved the piano as close to the final spot on the wheeled carts. It was much easier to move the piano on wheels than on its legs.

"Actually, Mr. Curstmeyer," Daniel said. "There was something I wanted to ask you in return for moving the piano."

"I don't know what I can offer you, Daniel."

Daniel said, "Could you teach my son to play the piano?"

"I haven't had a student for a while. You were one of my last."

"I want you to keep playing and I want my son to learn."

Mr. Curstmeyer hesitated for a moment. Most of his other students left when he stopped playing at the Water Street Theatre. They moved on to other teachers, ones that were in the prime of their careers. But Mr. Curstmeyer did want to keep playing the piano.

"I would greatly enjoy teaching your son," Mr. Curstmeyer said.

"Well, you don't have to start for a while," Daniel said. "He's only two."

"Alright, how about we start when he is six?"

"Perfect!"

Mr. Smith easily attached the legs. Mr. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer then rolled the piano onto the attached legs. With a razor blade, Mr. Smith cut off the wrapping that held the cloth that protected the grand piano. The large and shiny, black piano glistened. It was an old piano, but still looked brand new. Mr. Curstmeyer immediately and enthusiastically played a few notes.

"This is wonderful," Mr. Curstmeyer said.

"Well, it is yours," Daniel replied.

"Thank you for bringing it!"

"It was my pleasure."

Mr. Curstmeyer stopped playing the piano and lowered the lid that covered the keys. He then said, "I need to go lock up."

"I'll come with you," Daniel said. "I have to take the carts back to the truck anyway."

"Alright," Mr. Curstmeyer said. "I'll lock up as we head back out to the street."

Mr. Smith grabbed the two wheeled carts and dropped them at the bottom of the stairs. He was showing his youthful side as he began to push them with his foot into the door and into the Wallace Towers.

“Be careful in there, Daniel,” Mr. Curstmeyer said merrily.

Mr. Curstmeyer walked through the door and into the Wallace Towers. He then pushed the door closed, moved the handle back into the latched position, and locked the deadbolt.

Mr. Smith continued ahead of Mr. Curstmeyer. He could still hear the sound of Mr. Curstmeyer closing and locking doors behind him. He looked around intensely at everything that surrounded him. He had read a lot of stories about the Wallace Towers. He even heard about a few gruesome urban legends but nothing stood out as anything scary to Mr. Smith. The rooms simply seemed old and run down.

Mr. Smith pushed the wheeled carts into the ventilation room when he suddenly had a very strong and bad feeling. He then felt a rush of wind push him into the room. Mr. Smith felt the need to get somewhere safe. The only idea of a safe place was on the street, outside of the Wallace Towers. He began to quicken his pace forward when he suddenly became very faint and began to panic. He looked up and saw the pipes and the direction of the rushing wind. Mr. Smith then fell to the floor.

“Daniel?” Mr. Curstmeyer yelled. He had heard something ahead but didn’t know what it was. “Daniel, are you okay?”

Without a response, Mr. Curstmeyer began to run ahead when he saw Mr. Smith on the ground, shaking violently. Mr. Curstmeyer was terrified as he saw a chair behind Daniel give way and the door behind him slam shut in a loud bang. The room ahead became much darker. Mr. Curstmeyer rushed forward to try and reach his friend, but a rush of wind from behind Mr. Curstmeyer pushed him to the ground. Mr. Curstmeyer lifted his head to see his friend engulfed in complete darkness as the metal door in front of him slammed shut in a loud bang.

Mr. Curstmeyer picked himself up and ran up to the door. He immediately kicked the handle, trying to open the door, but the handle wouldn’t move. Mr.

Curstmeyer took a closer look at it and was horrified to see that the sliding handle was no longer in the right place. It was bent and lodged within the metal of the door.

Mr. Curstmeyer suddenly heard a buzzing sound. He began to look around to see what was causing it when he saw a crack in between the metal door and the door frame. The lights in the room had turned on and glowed in a faint yellow. Mr. Curstmeyer could see Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith continued to shake violently but gradually under the soft glow, he became calm and relaxed. Soon, Mr. Smith completely stopped shaking but he remained motionless on the ground.

Unable to get in the room, Mr. Curstmeyer rushed back to the house. He unlocked and opened the metal doors and kicked down the smaller doors. He quickly reached his front door and ran inside. He picked up the phone and dialed 911.

“I have an emergency at 1313 West Twenty Third Avenue,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“What is the nature of your emergency?” a calm but authoritative voice said on the other end of the phone.

“A young man named Daniel Smith fell to the ground and started shaking violently,” Mr. Curstmeyer said frantically.

“I have dispatched a paramedic to your location. Was he having a seizure?”

“I believe so.”

“Has the seizure stopped?” the voice asked calmly.

“Yes.”

“Is he still breathing?”

“I don’t know,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “He’s in the Wallace Towers and I wasn’t able to get to him.”

“The Wallace Towers? He isn’t there next to you?” A hint of panic began to sound in the person’s voice.

“I have to go let the paramedics in,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“I am dispatching fire and police to your location.”

“Very good.”

Mr. Curstmeyer hung up the phone and began to run down the passageway leading to the street. After thirty feet, Mr. Curstmeyer heard the snapping of wood. His right leg suddenly gave way and he fell to the ground in pain. He reached down with his hand to feel his right leg. He couldn't find his knee cap.

Pain or not, Mr. Curstmeyer rose to his feet and moved down the passageway as fast as he could. Up ahead, he could hear the sirens and squealing tires of the paramedics. As soon as he made it to the street and in view of the paramedics, he pointed to the main entrance of the Wallace Towers.

“There! He's in there!” Mr. Curstmeyer yelled.

A fire truck arrived just after the paramedics and Mr. Curstmeyer continued to hobble and limp toward the main entrance. Mr. Curstmeyer didn't attempt to find his keys. He picked up a rock and through it at one of the glass doors. It broke and cracked but did not give way. A fireman, armed with an axe, took this as a hint that they needed to go through the main entrance. Without a second thought, the fireman swung the axe into the glass, shattering it. All of the pieces fell to the ground.

Paramedics attempted to aid Mr. Curstmeyer but he refused their attention. He was one step behind the fireman and yelled, “I know the way. Let me through!”

Mr. Curstmeyer led the paramedics and the firemen into the Wallace Towers. They quickly headed through the wooden door, down the hallway and offices, and into the maintenance hallway.

Mr. Curstmeyer saw the metal door up ahead. He could still see a faint glow coming from inside the room.

“Inside that door!” yelled Mr. Curstmeyer.

One of the firemen ran up to the door and inspected it. He found the handle. Mr. Curstmeyer was shocked that the fireman moved it with ease and opened the door. Once the door was open, the ominous glow faded away. The room was dark. The only thing Mr. Curstmeyer could see was Daniel Smith, on the ground. His skin was blue. He was not breathing.

Mr. Curstmeyer's Burden

"The paramedics made it to your father very quickly," Mr. Curstmeyer said. "Just not fast enough."

"No one could have seen this coming, Danny," Mrs. Smith said.

Danny felt that Mr. Curstmeyer and his mother had finally been honest about the entire story, but their words were no help.

"This is your fault," Danny said to Mr. Curstmeyer quietly, but nonetheless angry.

Mr. Curstmeyer was again powerless. Danny's father's death was a burden he willingly carried to keep it from Danny's shoulders, but now it had been passed to Danny. At that point, Mr. Curstmeyer could do nothing but leave, so he stood up from the chair and walked to the door.

"The piano is stupid," Danny said coldly to Mr. Curstmeyer's back. Mr. Curstmeyer stopped walking and stood in place for a moment.

Mrs. Smith wanted to stop Danny, but she couldn't speak. She had worried every day of her life about how she was going to tell Danny about his father. This was her worst nightmare.

"You spent your whole life at something that is just stupid," Danny continued with his assault. "You've wasted your life. Would anyone care if you were even alive tomorrow?"

Mr. Curstmeyer remained motionless. If being hurt made Danny feel better, he felt he deserved it. After another moment, Mr. Curstmeyer continued to walk to the door and headed outside.

"Danny?..." Mrs. Smith said. "I'm sorry you found out this way."

Danny climbed up the stairs. "My dad died over a stupid piano," he said as he headed to his room.

Mrs. Smith heard Danny close his door. It remained closed for the rest of the night.

Escape

Mrs. Smith wanted to plead with her boss to let her stay home, but she was already on thin ice having called in to take Wednesday off. She was the only income for the house. Danny was always her first priority, but keeping the roof over his head was included in that priority.

Danny's door remained closed since a little after 8pm last night. She opened it and looked in on Danny. He was asleep on his bed still in his clothes, facing away from the door.

Mrs. Smith looked out Danny's window and decided not to wake him. It was 4:25am and it was pouring rain outside. It was supposed to rain all day which made Mrs. Smith feel better. She wasn't as worried about Danny getting into trouble. She decided to get to work as soon as the security officers opened the building at 5am. She would work without a break and without lunch. She would be finished in eight hours and would immediately return home. As long as she could reach Danny by the landline in their house or Mrs. Campbell's house, then she would know that he was okay. She shut the door and headed to her car.

The phone rang at 9am sharp. Danny was lying on his bed awake. He knew his mother was calling so he didn't pick up the phone.

Without putting the phone down, Mrs. Smith immediately called Mrs. Campbell's house phone.

Without saying hello or using any greeting at all, Mrs. Smith asked "Is Danny there?"

Mrs. Campbell said, "Not yet. He hasn't been by."

Without a goodbye, Mrs. Smith hung up the phone. She then quickly texted her son, “Where R U?”

Mrs. Smith watched her cell phone closely for three minutes, and then a single word returned via text message, “room.”

Mrs. Smith texted Danny back saying, “Pick up the phone!” After fifteen seconds, she called the landline again.

Danny, still in his clothes from yesterday, exited his room and headed downstairs to the kitchen. He reached the phone as soon as it started to ring. He picked it up but did not say anything.

“Hello?” Mrs. Smith finally said.

“I’ll head over to Mrs. Campbell’s house after I shower and get dressed.”

“Okay. Don’t forget to brush your teeth and call me when you get over there.”

Danny hung up the phone. Mrs. Smith wasn’t happy but she was content in knowing where Danny was. When work forced her to be away from her son, her mind played tricks on her. She would imagine that Danny was in bad and life threatening situations. She often just wanted to be reassured that he was still alive.

Mrs. Smith sent another text to Danny. “Please go over to Campbell’s house soon.”

Danny had no intention of going to the Campbell’s house at all today. He had been waiting for his mom to confirm he was at home. He turned on the lights in his room, the room with the TV, and the living room. He even turned on the television and played it loudly. Danny then headed to the back yard and pulled out his bike.

He looked over at Jack’s house. Mrs. Campbell was in her kitchen when the phone rang. As soon as Mrs. Campbell turned away from the window, Danny made a sprint for it and started pedaling his bike toward the Wallace Towers.

“Hello?” Mrs. Campbell said.

“I’m sorry for hanging up so quickly, Jackie,” Mrs. Smith said.

“It’s okay, Claire. Is everything alright?”

“No it isn’t,” Mrs. Smith said. “Danny found out about his father last night. It was on that stupid television show.”

“Oh no,” Mrs. Campbell said. “How is he taking it?”

“I don’t know yet. He’s been ignoring me since he found out.”

Mrs. Campbell looked over at Mrs. Smith’s house. She said, “Well, I see the lights are on. He must be up.”

“He said he was going to take a shower, get dressed, and then come over.”

“I’ll keep an eye out for him,” Mrs. Campbell said reassuringly. “It’s also pouring down rain. I couldn’t imagine him going anywhere in this.”

“Let’s give him an hour,” Mrs. Smith said. “He’s probably going to move pretty slow today.”

Danny’s adrenaline surged. He was recklessly pedaling his bike as fast as he could through the rain. He didn’t stop and walk up large hills as he did before. He pedaled up each hill. He even increased his speeds on each downhill by continuing to pedal. He ignored stops signs in the neighborhoods and even flew through large streets whenever he spotted an opening in traffic.

The rain hit Danny’s face and soaked the front half of his clothes, but he didn’t care. The water that soaked him felt refreshing and cooled him off.

Danny didn’t have much time to get to the Wallace Towers before his mom would find out he wasn’t at home or at the Campbell’s house. He crossed Thunderbird Road and stopped underneath an awning at a bus stop. He pulled out his cell phone and checked the time. It had been forty minutes since he communicated with his mother in some form.

Danny text messaged his mom, “Am out of the shower. Can I watch TV over here? Want to be alone.”

Mrs. Smith texted back, “you can watch one half hour show, then go over to the campbells by 1030.”

“Thanks, mom,” Danny texted. He then continued on his way to the Wallace Towers.

Mrs. Smith returned to work but within a few minutes, she needed some further reassurance. She called Mrs. Campbell again.

“Hello?” Mrs. Campbell said.

“Hi Jackie, it’s Claire again. Are you still in your kitchen?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Campbell said with the patience of a saint.

“Can you see Danny?”

“The curtains are closed, but something’s going on in there.”

“Is the television on?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“Yes, there’s some flashes of light going on and off.”

“Thank you,” Mrs. Smith said. “Danny should be over by 10:30.”

“Sounds good, I’ll continue to look for him.”

Danny felt exhausted but incredibly relieved as he approached the gas station he and Jack stopped at on Monday. Danny knew he had spent all of his energy in the first half of the trip, but he also knew a three mile downhill section was just ahead. He could then coast and recover. He pulled into the gas station to get out of the rain. He checked the time on his cell phone. It was 10:35am. Danny could think of no other way to stall. His mom would soon find out he was not home or Mrs. Campbell's house.

Danny looked up. In the far distance, he could see the top of the Wallace Towers again. He wasn’t exactly sure what he was going to do when he reached the towers. Danny wanted to destroy them. He wasn’t sure how he could do it, but that was his goal, even if Mr. Curstmeyer and his house were still inside it. He

would destroy it all. Danny shut off his cell phone and put it away. He hopped back on his bike and continued to the towers.

Mrs. Campbell noticed it had passed 10:30 and she had not seen Danny yet. She called Mrs. Smith at work, but she did not pick up.

Mrs. Smith was in a meeting with her coworkers and her boss. She quickly checked the time on her cell phone. It was 10:37. Without the ability to call on a phone, she text messaged Danny saying, "Are you at Campbells yet?"

Mrs. Smith lifted her head to give everyone in the room the impression that she was still listening, but she kept one eye on her phone. Without a response within five minutes, Mrs. Smith excused herself from the meeting and returned to her desk. She immediately called Mrs. Campbell.

Before Mrs. Campbell had a chance to say hello, Mrs. Smith asked, "Is Danny over at your house yet?"

"Not yet, Claire," Mrs. Campbell said. She looked out of her kitchen window. She could see Danny's room. She said to Mrs. Smith, "The lights are still on in his room. Should I send Jack over?"

Mrs. Smith sent another text message to Danny, "Where R U?", and said to Mrs. Campbell, "Yes, please send Jack over."

"Jack," Mrs. Campbell yelled upstairs, "come down here please."

Jack was soon in the kitchen. Mrs. Campbell said quickly, "Is Danny with you?"

"No," Jack said.

"Go over and bring him over here for me, please."

Mrs. Smith overheard this exchange and immediately had a mild panic attack. She texted Danny one more time saying, "GET OVER TO THE CAMPBELLS NOW!"

Mrs. Campbell said, "Jack's on his way over."

Mrs. Campbell remained on the phone, looking out the kitchen window. She saw Jack go into the Smith's house. In a short time, Jack stepped out of the Smith's house. He looked over at Mrs. Campbell and shrugged his shoulders.

"Claire," she said. "He's not here or in your house."

Mrs. Smith hung up the phone. She looked up from her desk at the meeting that just concluded. Everyone except her boss had left the conference room. She quickly went back in.

"Sam, I have an emergency," she said to her boss.

Sam, a fair but sometimes strict employer, replied, "It's only 11am and you were not here on Wednesday."

"I know, but I've been here since 5am and my son has disappeared."

"Oh, that is an emergency," Sam said. "Go find him. Call the next few hours a long lunch while you get things cleared up. It would be best if you came back for your remaining few hours at some point today though."

"Thank you, Sam," Mrs. Smith said as she quickly ran out the door. She grabbed her keys and headed to her car.

Mrs. Smith drove home as fast as she could. She bent if not broke many traffic laws from her work to her home, but she didn't care. She needed to find her son.

She pulled into the driveway and noticed all of the lights in the house were on. She immediately ran through the front door and into the house. If Danny was home, Mrs. Smith would never forgive him for the turmoil he put her through.

"Danny?!" Mrs. Smith yelled.

She climbed the stairs and looked in all of the rooms. She even opened the attic door to look for him. Mrs. Smith soon found herself alone in the kitchen of her home. She didn't know where Danny was. She didn't know that Danny had completed his journey and at that moment, stood in front of the Wallace Towers.

Destroying the Towers

The rain continued to pour down. Danny was soaked from head to toe, but he didn't care. He stood before the Wallace Towers. He looked at them for a long time, trying to devise a plan to make them crumble to the ground.

Danny dropped his bike in the water and mud on the curb. He picked up a rock as he walked toward the building and threw it at a window. A faint crack was heard through the rain as the rock hit an already broken window.

This small act of vandalism made Danny feel good. He had never broken a window or wall on purpose before. He suddenly wished he had all the standard items he thought trouble makers had: cans of spray paint, a slingshot, a crowbar. Danny didn't have any of those things, so he put his rage into the rocks that surrounded him in the mud on the ground. He picked up a large rock and hit a window, breaking it. He picked up an even bigger rock and threw it at the building, hitting the bricks. The rock left a scuff on the wall.

The temporary delight in damaging the Wallace Towers soon wasn't enough for Danny. He wanted the entire building to collapse, but didn't know how he could do it. So, he decided to create the largest visual impact possible. He picked up a small rock so he could work on his aim. He threw it and hit his target, a small window on the second floor. The window shattered but did not break. The rock fell to the ground and landed in a small crevice near the building. Danny then heard a familiar ring. He ran up to the crevice and remembered what had happened on Monday. Throwing a big rock on the steel foundation made the entire building vibrate like an earthquake.

Danny was exhilarated by the possibility that he could destroy the towers by himself. He looked around for a large rock. He found one, picked it up, and carried it over to the crevice. The mud from the rock stained his clothes but Danny

didn't care. He went up to the crevice, lifted the rock above his head, and with both hands Danny threw the rock down into the crevice. The rock hit the steel foundation and the building began to shake.

“Break! Damn it, break!” Danny yelled as he stood back to watch.

A few windows cracked and some dust and tiny pieces of brick fell to the ground. Danny was even more enraged by the building's refusal to collapse. He went back across the street and found an even larger rock. Danny had trouble carrying it to the crevice, but the thought of destroying this evil place pumped through his veins. He lifted the massive rock as high as he could. The rock went as high as his chest when he hurled it into the crevice.

The loud ringing from the steel foundation was deafening. Danny plugged his ears as he stood back to watch the building. He wanted the entire thing to come down.

The building shook violently. Dozens of windows broke. Bricks began to fall. The low, grumbling sound below the ringing was loud, but the vibrations soon began to dissipate and the tower before him still stood.

Danny went across the street to look for big rocks and found two. He was going to throw one rock as hard as he could, then throw a second rock when the towers were already shaking. He walked back to the crevice and threw the first rock. The building began to shake as Danny threw the second rock, but Danny noticed a problem. The second rock had hit another rock already in the crevice. The building soon stopped shaking with very little damage.

Danny looked down into the crevice. He could see only broken patches of the steel foundation. Danny picked up a small rock and threw it down the crevice, but it mostly hit the other rocks. The ringing was weak. The building did not shake at all.

Danny's determination did not subside. Without being able to destroy the Wallace Towers from the outside, Danny decided to find a way to get inside to confront the ghosts and demons that haunted the building. They were the ones who killed his father. Danny needed to get inside and destroy whatever possessed the Towers.

Danny found a metal door on the side of the building. He kicked it as hard as he could, but the door did not move. He went to a second door. He threw a rock at it then kicked it, but the door did not budge.

Danny continued to look for the next door, when he came to the passageway leading to Mr. Curstmeyer's house. Danny thought of trying to find more doors and crevices, but decided it was time to confront Mr. Curstmeyer. Mr. Curstmeyer would know a way into the towers. He could show Danny where his father was killed.

Danny marched up the passageway. Rain poured down the bricks as he sloshed through puddles of water. Danny was ready to pound on Mr. Curstmeyer's front door. He rounded the first turn, marching straight down the hallway. He saw Mr. Curstmeyer's front door as he walked through some newspapers. Danny then suddenly heard the sound of wood cracking and then breaking.

Danny fell through the floor. He landed on the wet ground with a loud and deep thud. He fell far enough that it hurt, but he knew right away that he could get up and walk.

He opened his eyes. Beyond the small light that shined down from the broken floor above him, the room was pitch black. The only thing Danny could see was the faint, white outline of a door frame next to him. Danny felt the ground beneath him. It was wet from the hole above him that he had just created. Danny then realized the ground was metal. It was steel.

Danny yelled, "Help! Help!"

Danny waited for a minute, but no one came.

Trapped

Danny looked around the room for anything he could climb. He looked again at the narrow hole he fell through. The hole was more than ten feet above him. He gave a quick jump for the ledge of the hole, but he was at least two feet short. Danny then looked to the only door out of the room.

Danny slowly proceeded to the door. Each footstep caused a small vibration in the ground that rang the steel foundation. Danny then heard a footstep that wasn't his. Danny quickly turned around but in the process accidentally hit something. Whatever he hit fell to the ground. Danny heard the shattering of glass followed by the shriek of grinding metal.

Danny ran to the door and opened it. He clutched the inside of the door, frantically looking for a light switch. When he found one, he turned it on and a light inside the room glowed. Before looking in this next room, he turned and looked back where he came from. The additional light shined into the room where he fell. The ground was covered in mud and grime that had dripped down from the wooden boards above for years. A broken glass bottle also lay on the ground with scattered trash. It was not a place where he would want to confront something paranormal.

Danny turned back to the lighted room and stood in the doorway. It was a small room that was mostly empty except for one wooden and wheeled chair, a few shovels, and some work boots. Danny tried to stand on the chair, but it immediately tipped over. Danny caught his balance, but he knew the chair wouldn't help him get back out to the passageway to Mr. Curstmeyer's house. He needed to go into the Wallace Towers. The only way out of the haunted structure was through it.

Danny stepped forward but then smelled something burning. He looked up at the light bulb. Like the entire room, it was covered in dirt and dust. The heat from the light bulb was burning the dust.

Danny proceeded to another door and the only way out. He opened it just a crack and peeked in the next room. There was already a little bit of light, so he opened the door completely.

The room was large and filled with wooden and metal desks. Danny assumed it used to be an office. There were still some papers on a few of the desks. Danny picked up a piece of paper. It was stationary that had a symbol on the top of the page. It said Kingman Construction.

Danny looked beyond the desks to the corners of the room. He saw shovels and hard hats and construction tools. Danny realized this office had been the headquarters for the company that built the Wallace Towers.

Danny wanted to find a way out. He still wanted to take on the ghosts and demons that plagued this place, but he wanted to have an escape route if necessary. Danny looked for the source of light in the room. He saw one small window less than a foot high that was just a couple inches away from the ceiling. Danny immediately grabbed a chair and sprinted to the window. It was at the top of his reach and covered with crisscrossing wire. Danny knew any attempt to break the window and crawl out would result in a lot of cuts and bruises. He decided not to try it and then looked around the room for another exit.

There were two doors on the other end of the large room, but Danny realized these two doors would take him farther into the Wallace Towers and away from any windows that would reach the passageway. Danny opened the first door. The next room was pitch black. Danny reached for a light switch and turned it on, but nothing happened. Danny closed the door and hoped there was a lighted room beyond the other door.

Danny opened the second door. On the other side, there was a large hallway with doors on both sides of the hallway. There was already a light shining around the corner, so Danny headed down this hallway. He carefully checked each door

to see if it was unlocked. If there was a door that was unlocked, Danny opened the door slightly, reached in his hand, and checked for a light switch.

The first door that was unlocked had a working light. Once the light was on, Danny opened the door. Danny stood in the doorway of a large empty room. He took a quick look around. There were no doors. There were no windows.

Danny found two other unlocked doors, but the lights inside them did not work, so he continued down the hallway. He turned a corner and approached the light that had already been on. Just beyond the light, Danny found a door with a push bar. The door was very stiff, heavy, and difficult to push, but he opened it. He could see a light inside the next room.

Danny saw a metal stair case beyond the door. He looked up. The stairs led up as far as Danny could see. There was one light that continued to glow about three stories up. It was another old light that gave off a yellow glow.

Danny pushed the heavy door until he could feel it lock in the open position. Danny let go of the door and checked to make sure it would stay open. Once he felt comfortable that it wouldn't close, Danny placed his foot on the first step and began to climb the stairs. Danny hadn't walked up more than five steps when the door behind him suddenly slammed shut behind him with a bang. Danny turned around, ran down the few steps, and pulled on the door. It wouldn't budge!

Danny was nervous that something in the room made the door close. He spun around and put his back to the door, looking for anything that would have caused the door to close, but Danny didn't see anything.

Danny didn't like being in this helpless position any longer. He pulled out his cell phone and turned it on. He wasn't going to call anyone just yet, but he wanted to make sure he could use it if necessary.

The cell phone glowed in the dark light. It vibrated and a short theme erupted from the phone as it turned on. The short song echoed loudly through the staircase. Danny looked up to make sure he hadn't disturbed anything.

The cell phone was in a normal working mode, but Danny's heart sank as the phone couldn't find a signal. He held it up in the air and waited a few seconds,

but the phone still could not connect to anything. Danny then realized that he was deep inside the Wallace Towers, in the middle of a massive steel structure. Trying to get a signal would be hopeless.

Danny put his cell phone away and looked around the room again. When he felt reassured that he was alone in the room, he walked up to the first step and looked up. The stair case did not have any windows. Danny's only choice was to go up and hope he could find an open door.

Danny climbed the stairs slowly, attempting not to make too much noise on the metal staircase. He reached the first floor and tried the door, but it wouldn't open. He climbed to the second floor, but that door also wouldn't open. Danny didn't want to go farther up the staircase, but he had no choice. Without an exit from this staircase, he could not escape.

Danny soon climbed past the old, yellow light and into the dark, creaking stairs above, checking each door as he climbed. He had reached what he thought was the twelfth floor. The light had become very dim and the door was difficult to see. Danny reached out towards the place where he thought a door knob should be, but there wasn't one there.

Danny then realized he could use his cell phone as a light. He pulled out the phone and a small light shined on the door. Danny looked at it very closely. The spot where the door knob should be was heavily beaten. The metal door was gashed and broken. Danny reached in with his fingers and pulled at the gash. After a small tug, the door became loose and swung open.

Danny shined his cell phone into the dark room. There were two doors that proceeded farther into this floor, but before going, Danny shined the phone on the outside door in the staircase. If he was on the twelfth floor, he needed to know what tower he was in.

Danny found a placard on the outside of the door. It said, "12th Floor, Tower A."

Danny slowly and carefully went up to the door on the right. It didn't say anything. He then shined the cell phone on the door on the left. The door said, "Theatre Sets, Inc."

Danny backed away from the door. He knew from the TV show that the ghost of a young woman named Amy Lipska still haunted this floor, the ghost of a woman who suddenly disappeared from this company. Danny slowly made his way back to the staircase and decided to continue to climb the stairs to look for another exit.

The light below seemed quite distant as Danny approached the fifteenth floor. He continued to use his phone to light the way, but each door was locked and Danny started to become nervous about going higher up Tower A. On the sixteenth floor, he saw another door that was missing a door knob. He tried to pull open the door with his fingers, but it wouldn't move.

Danny turned around and shined the light of the phone up the next set of stairs when he saw writing along the wall. The writing didn't form a sentence. It said, "Margaret say...you...now...jump...or"

Danny turned the corner and shined the cell phone light on the door of the seventeenth floor when he saw the words "GET OUT" in massive, dripping letters that covered the entire wall. The door was open but suddenly, Danny heard a rustling sound on the stair case above him. The footsteps then shot up the metal stair case in quick, ringing hits.

Danny panicked! He wasn't ready to take on something paranormal. If he came across something he couldn't handle, he had no means of escape. He turned around and bolted down the staircase, jumping frequently to skip multiple steps at a time. The sound of his feet landing on the metal staircase thundered throughout the room.

He had reached the twelfth floor again. He quickly turned and formed a defensive stance as he looked back at where he came from. The echoes of footsteps slowly faded away. Danny waited a few more seconds and listened. He could only hear the slight breeze that came from the open door that led to the twelfth floor. Danny then decided to not disturb the ghost of Margaret towards the top of the tower. Amy may have disappeared, but Margaret had jumped to her death from the top of Tower A.

Danny turned and entered the twelfth floor. “Amy?” he said. “I’m sorry that I am interrupting you. I’m only looking for a way out.”

Danny proceeded and went through the door on the right. The room beyond was massive. On this half of the floor, there were no inner walls. In every direction, there was glowing light that came from dirty and barred windows.

Danny quickly rushed to the windows and wiped away the dirt to look outside. It was still pouring rain. The rain was so thick he could barely see the ground from the twelfth floor.

Danny checked his cell phone. He was glad to see that something was coming through, but only one bar of service went in and out. He could send a text message, but since it was Friday and his service was blocked, he would only be able to text his mom. He wasn’t ready to ask for her help.

Danny then looked over at the next tower. He saw a fire escape and realized each tower had multiple fire escapes on the outside. He went to the edge of the windows and followed them all the way around the room. There wasn’t a fire escape to be found. Danny then knew the fire escape must be through the Theatre Sets, Inc. offices on the other side of the floor.

Danny retraced his steps and went back into the room adjacent to the stairs. “Amy,” he said softly and nervously. “Again, I am sorry. I only want to find a way out.”

Danny pushed the Theatre Sets front door slightly open and peeked inside. The next room was very small and dark. Danny could see a long desk and multiple doors that could lead beyond the room. Danny didn’t see or hear anything move, so he finished opening the door, turned on a light switch, and stepped inside.

The room Danny had walked into was very different than the rest of the Wallace Towers. Everything still seemed in place. The desk was covered with papers, pencils, and pens. There was an old telephone and a typewriter on the desk. There was even a fake plant in the corner. Danny thought if someone came in and cleaned and dusted, Theatre Sets, Inc. could be open for business tomorrow.

There were two glass doors that led out of the room. Danny walked up to them and looked through. On the opposite side, Danny could see two elevators! He pulled on the doors, but they wouldn't move. Danny then found and pulled on a latch near the top of the door. The door opened.

Danny ran up to the elevator and pushed the button to go down. He was thrilled to see that the button glowed. He looked above the elevator door at numbers that also glowed. The numbers tracked the elevator's progress. It started on the ground floor and moved up. Suddenly, Danny heard the grinding of metal come from the elevator shaft. The glowing numbers above the elevator suddenly disappeared after three. It was enough to convince Danny to move on.

Danny went back inside the Theatre Sets, Inc. He continued past the front desk and went deeper into the other half of the twelfth floor. The next room was just as small as the previous one and the light did not work, but there was enough light that Danny could check the next door. Beyond the next door, Danny found a small hallway that connected a dozen offices. A small light shined bright enough that he could walk down the hallway.

All of the doors were open to the offices, so Danny slowly checked each one. Danny thought they were the most unusually decorated offices he had ever seen. They didn't have typewriters, phones, and stationary like the one next to the elevator. One office had lots of makeup. Another office had sketches of sets and drawings scattered throughout the room.

Danny turned a corner and was losing light from the hallway quickly, but he could see a faint light up ahead. He could also hear the light sound of rain. There were two more offices. He quickly looked inside the first one. He ran past a large wooden desk and up to the window to look for the fire escape. He could see one just a little farther down the side of the building.

Danny turned around and was about to head out of the office but then he saw the name Amy carved into the desk in large letters. Danny backed away slowly, but accidentally tipped over a small table. There were a lot of things on the table that fell to the ground. Suddenly, a loud and deafening roar, like a siren, erupted from the floor. The floor shook from the massive sound.

Danny fled to the other office, looking for the fire escape, but there wasn't a window in this office at all. Danny then saw that the office was covered in paintings and pictures of a young woman. Danny's eyes then saw a mirror just ahead of him. He looked into the mirror. Amy was right behind him, reaching out her hand. She was going to grab him!

Danny quickly turned and fled. The siren behind him still roared. He was running to the stairs and heading back down to the hole he fell through. He would climb up and out of the hole, even if it meant cuts and bruises, even if he had to drag everything he could find into the room to build a pile he could climb to reach the edge of the hole.

Danny ran past the front desk when something caught his eye. A faint red light now came from the lobby just beyond the glass doors. Since the siren was beginning to die away, Danny quickly stepped through the glass doors to check it out. An elevator door was open and a red light shined from inside the elevator. The siren had stopped completely. Danny remained in front of the elevator, contemplating whether to step in or not.

The siren began to erupt again in an even louder, deafening roar. Danny looked back at the glass doors. Something was touching the glass doors! Danny stepped inside the elevator. He wanted to get as far away from this place as possible. He pushed the button for the first floor. The elevator doors closed and it began to descend.

With every passing floor, Danny felt more at ease. On the first or even second floor, he wouldn't have to find a fire escape. He only needed to find a window to jump through.

The elevator light above the door shined a little light behind the number of each floor. 11. 10. 9. Danny was extremely cautious with his luck. He didn't want anything to happen, so he remained motionless in the very center of the elevator. 8. 7.

A horrific sound of screeching metal came from everywhere! The elevator's descent had slowed down. The lights above the elevator door that showed the floor numbers had vanished. It had been far enough for Danny. He pushed all of the

buttons on the elevator. He didn't care what floor the elevator stopped on, he just wanted the elevator to stop and the doors to open.

The elevator suddenly and quickly stopped its descent. There was a long pause when nothing happened. The doors of the elevator then slowly opened. Danny lightly stepped out of the elevator.

Danny had not expected the sight before him. He was now in a large lobby and meeting area. It was especially surprising to him because the room went farther than the side of the building of Tower A. Danny then realized, he must be in the main complex, which meant he was as low as the fourth floor. If he continued straight, he could reach the next tower. However, Danny didn't know if the next tower was Tower B or Tower D.

The elevator doors behind him closed. The sound of grinding metal continued as the elevator tried to continue its descent. Suddenly, a loud but dull bang echoed through the elevator shaft. The sound of grinding metal stopped. Danny knew the elevator couldn't have reached the first floor yet. He then heard the sound of a loud bell ringing. The elevator was stuck.

Danny realized how close he had come to getting trapped. He tried not to think about how long it would have taken someone to find him in the elevator. Danny wanted to get away from this tower.

There was a large row of windows out toward the street. Danny went up to a window and looked out onto the street to check how high up he was. It was still pouring rain. He could see his bicycle in the rain. He could also see a street light that was still below him. Jumping through a window onto the street was not a choice.

Danny continued down the large meeting area until he came to five connected doors and a sign that said, "Now entering Tower B."

Danny wasn't happy about going into Tower B, but he had no other choice. The majority of doors in the stair well of Tower A were locked and Danny was not stepping foot in another elevator. He opened the door and walked inside Tower B.

Confronting the Demon

Danny was surrounded by precisely organized tables and chairs. The fourth floor of Tower B was a cafeteria. It was set up for another day of selling and serving food, but no one had eaten anything in this room for a long time. Danny then saw a place where the tables and chairs were pushed apart. He pushed a few tables and chairs around to get to the open space. There was a large, red stain on the floor. He then saw a red stain on a table and chair next to him. Next to these red stains were cards standing upright. Danny had seen this type of card on television before. It wasn't on *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*. It was on a detective show. He was looking at a crime scene.

Danny took a quick glance around the room. He saw a large broken window covered in plastic. He also saw a sleeping bag over in a corner and a backpack. Danny then remembered the biggest story that uncovered the Wallace Towers and its horrific past. Danny was looking at the place where three students spent the night. And one of them was murdered.

Danny backed away from the crime scene and walked to the sleeping bag and backpack in the corner to check them out. He was about to open the back pack when he saw a fire escape next to the broken window!

Danny tried to open the window that led to the fire escape, but it wouldn't open. He went back to the window with plastic and ripped it away. He looked down to the ground. He was still really high up. The rain still poured, but Danny still wanted out. He reached out the window and could touch the rail of the fire escape. It was about a foot away. He would have to climb onto the ledge of the window and grab the rail of the fire escape, then jump on to it.

Danny could easily slip and end up like the student who died by falling to her death. He went back to the window that led right to the fire escape if it would

open. He pulled again on the window, but it wouldn't move. He reached up and found a latch, but it was rusted tightly together. Danny didn't want to jump onto a wet, slippery fire escape, even if it was only a foot outside the open window.

Danny grabbed the back of a chair and looked around. He didn't see anything, so he swung the chair around and hit the window. The glass shattered and fell to the ground in front of him. He dropped the chair. He cut his hand on broken glass as he climbed out onto the fire escape. The rain washed away the blood from the small cut. Danny made his way down, but the fire escape quickly ended at the floor below.

There was a giant hole in the metal platform. He looked through the hole at the ground and noticed a metal ladder lying on the ground. It was the rest of the fire escape. Danny contemplated jumping. He didn't think he would die, but he knew jumping would probably mean broken bones.

Danny looked at the building from the platform. Someone had broken through the window of this floor before and climbed down. Since Danny had reached the third floor, he felt that much closer to escaping. So, he climbed in the broken window.

Danny found himself in a small white room with one door. The door was already open. Danny went inside and reached for a light switch. He didn't find a normal light switch, but found two buttons. Danny pulled out his cell phone and shined its light into the room, but the room was so large that the light didn't illuminate anything. Without an alternative, Danny pushed the bottom button.

Danny heard the hum of electricity and the lights above him began to turn on. Danny stepped forward and found himself walking on some kind of metal that he could see through. Once the lights warmed up and brightened the room enough to see, Danny saw that he was on a catwalk. The ground was three stories below him. He then looked beyond the catwalk at a large metal beast. Danny recognized it. He was in the furnace room.

Danny's first instinct was to run, but he had made it to the heart of the Wallace Towers. It was his time to destroy all the evils that lived here. He could avenge his father's death. He could get rid of the source of so much wickedness.

Danny walked to a circle stair case and descended down to the ground floor. He kept his eyes on the giant metal box in front of him. With every step, the lights became brighter and brighter. He looked at the giant metal box for a long time. It smelled very strange. Danny began to approach the furnace when he suddenly stopped and took a step back. The mangled remains of a black robe were at his feet. It was the robe that caused a cameraman to become possessed.

Danny needed to destroy this black robe. He looked around the room but didn't see any way of destroying it. Then, Danny saw a small flicker of light come from the bottom of the furnace. He bent down on his knee and looked into the furnace. There was a spark that flashed every five seconds.

Danny picked up a long piece of metal. He used the tip of the metal to pick up the black robe. He stuffed it into the furnace. He heard the sound of the spark a few times. Finally, he heard the black robe catch on fire. He pulled the black robe out with the long piece of metal and dropped it to the ground. It burned very slowly.

A light from above suddenly erupted. Sparks fell down to the ground on top of Danny, but he wasn't going to run. He was going to fight back! He swung the piece of metal and hit the furnace. Sparks began to shoot out from the side of the furnace as the black robe continued to burn. Danny took another swing on the other side of the furnace. Each strike of metal against metal rang through the room.

Another light bulb blew up above Danny's head and sparks again began to fall. The furnace suddenly erupted! Flames ignited inside the machine and heat radiated from it. Danny swung the metal stick around and hit the top of the furnace leaving a massive dent. He felt he was winning and destroying the beast, but Danny began to feel very weak. Before he could strike again, he suddenly couldn't see straight and began to wobble in place. His head hurt and he started to hear voices.

“Stupid...wasted your life...,” Danny heard inside his head.

Danny then heard the sound of metal hitting metal again, but he hadn't made the sound. Another light bulb blew on the opposite side of the furnace and a loud

metallic bang again rang through the room. Danny looked down at the black robe as voices began to fill his head again. The black robe wasn't on fire anymore.

“...you killed him...”

Danny tried to lift the metal stick, but he felt like he was about to pass out. Another loud bang rang through the room and Danny started to feel sick. He fell to his knees.

Voices continued to cloud his head as they said, “...die for nothing...”

Danny looked at the black robe. He felt ashamed that the Wallace Towers was destroying him so easily. He knew if he became unconscious, like his father, he would never get back up again. He grabbed the robe with his last ounce of strength and quickly stuffed it and his entire arm inside the furnace. He heard the robe catch on fire again. He let go of the robe and fell back away from the furnace.

“...is your fault...”

It was dying. He had beaten it. A fire grew quickly underneath the furnace. The banging continued as more lights exploded. Sparks showered down on to the floor.

The room quickly lost light. After a final bang and a final burst of sparks, the room was plunged back into silence and darkness. All that remained was the fire before Danny and a ray of light coming from beyond the furnace. Danny began to tip towards the ground. He couldn't lift his arms to catch himself. He knew he was done, but he felt comfort in the fact the ghosts and demons of this building would never hurt anyone again.

“...Danny!...”

Danny didn't feel the cold steel of the ground. Something had grabbed him. It was lifting him up and moving him. His feet dragged on the ground.

“Danny!” a voice again yelled inside his head.

Danny barely had the strength to lift his head. Above him he saw Mr. Curstmeyer, holding him close, dragging him out of the room.

“Danny, don’t fall asleep! Stay with me!” Mr. Curstmeyer yelled.

Mr. Curstmeyer dragged Danny from one room to the next. He was also becoming light headed, but then he saw a window. Mr. Curstmeyer dropped Danny, grabbed a typewriter, and flung it at the window shattering it to pieces. A metal grate still stood between Mr. Curstmeyer and the outside, but he didn’t care. Mr. Curstmeyer grabbed Danny and held his head up against the metal grate.

“Breathe! Breathe!” Mr. Curstmeyer ordered. “Breathe, damn it!”

Mr. Curstmeyer was losing energy quickly. Holding Danny with his left arm, Mr. Curstmeyer flung his right shoulder against the metal grate. He hit it again and again. The metal grate cut through his clothes and into his arm. In one final strike, the grate became loose and fell outside. Mr. Curstmeyer lifted Danny out of the building and dropped him on the wet ground below. He then rolled himself over the window ledge and outside.

After falling to the ground, Mr. Curstmeyer crawled over to Danny and said, “Danny, just breathe. That’s all you have to do.”

Danny could feel small drops of rain and the cool air filled with mist. He could feel it replenish him. His next breath was a little bigger and he felt much better. Danny then took a giant breath of air and filled his lungs. He opened his eyes and looked up at Mr. Curstmeyer.

“Mr. Curstmeyer, what happened?” Danny asked.

Mr. Curstmeyer was ecstatic to see Danny breathing and more awake. “I thought you knew everything about this place,” Mr. Curstmeyer said jokingly.

Danny took a few more deep breathes and felt fifty times better. He began to sit up as he said, “What’s going on?”

“There’s a reason why everyone in this building went crazy,” Mr. Curstmeyer said as he helped Danny sit up.

“How did I get outside?”

“Let’s get you up to the house so we can call your mom.”

Danny soon felt good enough to stand up with the help of Mr. Curstmeyer. The rain had slowed down to a trickle and Danny began to walk on his own.

Chapter 26

Air

“Have a seat,” Mr. Curstmeyer authoritatively suggested. He pointed to a comfortable chair in his living room. Danny sat down, feeling exhausted and relieved to be out of Tower B.

“How did you find me?” Danny asked.

Mr. Curstmeyer disappeared into the kitchen. Danny could still hear him as he said, “Your mother called. She was worried you might show up here. Then I heard someone throw a rock at the steel foundation of the building through one of the crevices. Lots of kids have been doing that lately. I can easily hear it. It’s how I found you the last time. It shakes this house too.”

“Sorry, Mr. Curstmeyer,” Danny interrupted.

Mr. Curstmeyer reappeared from around the corner with a glass of water and a wash cloth. He put the wash cloth on the cut in Danny’s hand then said, “Drink some water.”

Danny held the wash cloth against the cut. He tried to collect his thoughts when Mr. Curstmeyer asked, “How’s your head?”

“I’m feeling a lot better and I’m not dizzy anymore,” Danny said. He took the glass and took a big gulp of water.

Mr. Curstmeyer continued, “I went out to check the street and I saw your bicycle. I looked up at the towers and lights were turning on.”

“What happened in that room?” Danny asked.

“Charles Wallace was an idiot. That’s what happened,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“Did something attack me or control me?”

“Danny,” Mr. Curstmeyer said sincerely. “There are no evil demons or scary ghosts in the Wallace Towers. If something attacked you, it was carbon monoxide.”

“The stuff from cars?”

“Yes, kind of. That’s why people were freaking out in Tower B just before they shut it down. Charles Wallace is a lousy architect and even worse engineer. He forgot that people need to breathe.”

“Is that why the cameramen and Mr. Landers went crazy in that furnace room?” Danny asked.

“Those guys are as big of idiots as Charles Wallace. I saw one of them, a skinny guy with glasses, come around the side and turn the gas on to the building. The furnace hadn’t been on for forty years. That room must have been blazing. It will take months for the air in that room to be breathable.”

“What about Amy?”

Mr. Curstmeyer didn’t recognize the name and asked, “Who?”

“The woman in Theatre Sets?”

“Oh, Amy Lipska?” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “She did disappear from the Wallace Towers, but they found her a month later. She had run off and got married to someone in Pittsburg.”

“Wait. I saw her in Tower A.”

“I highly doubt that. I don’t think she ever came back to Davenport after she got married.”

Danny asked, “You mean she’s still alive?”

“I wouldn’t see why not,” Mr. Curstmeyer said surprised. Mr. Curstmeyer suddenly became much more concerned as he asked, “How did you get from Tower A to the Furnace Room?”

Danny replied, “I took the elevator down to the fourth floor and...”

“You went in the elevator!?” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “Who cares about ghosts and demons? That was the scariest thing you’ve done tonight!”

“Why?”

“Those elevators are rusty and haven’t been checked in years. They probably haven’t even moved in decades. You could have been killed!”

Mr. Curstmeyer’s front door quickly swung open. Mrs. Smith looked around the room and shouted, “Danny?”

Mrs. Smith saw Danny and quickly ran up to him. She put her arms around him and squeezed tightly. She never wanted to let go, but she also wanted to say something to his face.

Mrs. Smith pulled back. Still grabbing Danny’s arms with her hands, she said, “Why on earth would you come here and start wandering around by yourself?!”

“I wanted to destroy the towers,” Danny said. “They killed dad.”

“Danny, this building did not kill your father,” Mrs. Smith said. “He had a disease. It isn’t the type of disease that you can see or predict. Your father was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Epilepsy killed your dad.”

Danny wasn’t satisfied with this answer, but remained silent knowing the answer would not change.

Mrs. Smith saw the cut in her son’s hand. She looked into his eyes and sensed that something had been wrong. She said, “We should take you to the hospital.”

“I feel fine mom,” Danny said.

“We are still going to take you to the hospital.”

“No!” Danny yelled as he stood up. “I want to see where my father died!”

“Danny, not now,” Mrs. Smith said. She still held his arm in her hand.

“If epilepsy killed my dad, I want to see where it happened,” Danny demanded.

Mrs. Smith looked over at Mr. Curstmeyer.

“It sounds like a reasonable request,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Even though she didn’t want to, Mrs. Smith slowly let go of Danny’s arm. She stood up and said, “Okay. We can go.”

The Ventilation Room

Mr. Curstmeyer unlocked a large metal door a few steps away from his house. He swung the door open and walked into the Wallace Towers. Danny and Mrs. Smith followed close behind. All three of them were very quiet as they walked through the rooms to the ventilation room.

Mrs. Smith remembered making this walk eight years ago, just after her husband died. She had wanted to see the ventilation room too. She wasn't afraid eight years ago, but with Danny next to her, she found herself trembling at the thought that the towers might attempt to take her son. Mrs. Smith then reached up and put her hand on her son's shoulders. She kept it there until she had been reassured several times that he was safe.

Mr. Curstmeyer, Danny, and Mrs. Smith had walked into a room without windows. Danny then asked, "Are there any ghosts that haunt these rooms, Mr. Curstmeyer?" Danny asked.

"Danny," Mr. Curstmeyer replied. "There are no ghosts in Wallace Towers."

Danny didn't believe Mr. Curstmeyer. He had been in the Wallace Towers only for a short time and found plenty of evidence that ghosts haunted the building. He became nervous as a breeze pushed him forward. He saw a large, metal door on the ground. The doorframe looked like it had been beaten with a sledge hammer.

"Mr. Curstmeyer, is that the door?" Danny asked.

"Yes," Mr. Curstmeyer replied. "I didn't want anyone to ever get trapped in there again."

Mr. Curstmeyer, Danny, and Mrs. Smith entered the ventilation room. The lights did not turn on and the room was dark. The only light in the room came from the door they had just walked through. Mr. Curstmeyer and Mrs. Smith had seen the room before, so they stepped closer to the wall and let Danny venture into the room.

Danny looked up. The ceiling was high and metal tubes zigzagged all around. Danny could hear air moving through them. He looked at the dusty machinery sitting on the ground. It all looked in working condition, but none of it had been touched in years. He saw a metal table that looked heavy. He grabbed the side of the table, lifted it off the ground, and dropped it. The sound reverberated throughout the room. Danny looked up to see if anything had happened. After a few seconds, Danny went up to the lockers in the room and looked through them. Most of the contents of each locker had been cleared out, but Danny found a few things. One locker had a rag in it. Another one had a magazine clipping. Danny found some old clothes in another locker, and then Danny found a book.

Danny didn't look at what the book was called. He picked it up, stood a few feet away and threw the book at the lockers. The sound of the book hitting the metal lockers rang through the room. Danny looked up to see if anything had changed. Mr. Curstmeyer and Mrs. Smith were puzzled, but they remained silent. After a few seconds, Danny went over to the equipment and machinery. He found a hammer mixed in with the other equipment. He picked it up and threw it as hard as he could at the lockers then looked around the room.

Danny was disappointed. He was looking for evidence. He was trying to prove Mr. Curstmeyer wrong by calling out whatever killed his father. Danny picked the hammer up, stood back from the lockers, and threw the hammer again as hard as he could.

“Danny,” Mrs. Smith said timidly. “Why are you doing that?”

“There is something here. I know it!” Danny said still looking up for a sign.

“Danny, there's nothing here,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“What about the sixty people that are buried here?” Danny asked.

“That’s just what that television show says,” Mrs. Smith said. “It isn’t true. There aren’t sixty people underneath the Wallace Towers.”

“There is only one,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Danny turned away from his mom and Mr. Curstmeyer. He picked up the hammer and walked up to the lockers. He hit the lockers several times with the hammer as though he was hitting a nail. The sound was incredibly loud. After being convinced that he had created a sound that would wake up anything alive or dead, Danny stepped back away from the lockers and looked up. Again, nothing had happened.

"What are all of these pipes doing here?" Danny asked.

"Charles Wallace tried to save the towers once," Mr. Curstmeyer said. "He tried to get air to the rest of the building through here, but he ran out of money."

Danny was disappointed. There should be a continuing story. This can't be where it ends.

“Come this way, Danny,” Mr. Curstmeyer said as he walked back out of the ventilation room.

Mr. Curstmeyer took Danny and Mrs. Smith back towards the house but passed the exit. Mr. Curstmeyer then led them deeper into Tower C. They took one flight of stairs down and found a padlock that Mr. Curstmeyer unlocked. He swung open a hatch. There was a flashlight and a few steps down.

“Down this way,” Mr. Curstmeyer said as he stepped down through the hatch. Danny was right behind him.

“Where are we going Mr. Curstmeyer?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“I’m giving Danny his proof,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Danny looked at the walls around him as they went down the stairs into the small room. He was surrounded by the steel foundation of the Wallace Towers.

“Why are the walls dripping?” Danny asked.

“They were pouring molten steel down onto the ground. The only thing they thought could withstand the heat from the steel was a shaft made of steel that was cold. The sides of the shaft melted from the heat, but it still stood.”

Danny stepped off the staircase onto the ground. Danny noticed the ground had some give to it. He looked at Mr. Curstmeyer’s light on the ground. He was stepping on dirt, on earth. Danny saw a block on the ground that stood out.

“This room was put in by the Kingman Construction Company,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “They didn’t tell Charles Wallace about it. They knew he was doing something crazy.”

Danny saw a cement block on the ground. He walked up and read it. “Here lies Kurt Curstmeyer, Sr. with our deepest sympathies to him and his family.”

“Charles Wallace brought me down here when I was fifteen,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“Who is this?” Danny asked confused.

“It’s my father, well, not exactly right there. My father is the only person still buried underneath the Wallace Towers.”

“But what about that newspaper article saying that sixty people were buried here?” Danny asked.

“You don’t think they willingly left all those people here, do you?” Mrs. Smith said,

“They stopped construction as soon as they saw that people were in the ground,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “They dug everyone up except for my father. They couldn’t find him. After the building was complete, Charles Wallace apologized and said I could come down here as often as I wanted. He’s the only family I’ve ever known. My mother died just after I was born. I don’t have any brothers or sisters.”

“Is that why you don’t want the Wallace Towers to come down?” Mrs. Smith asked.

“It’s also my home now,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “It’s the only home I have.”

Mr. Curstmeyer looked around the room. He recalled all the times he visited his father underneath this giant steel beast. He remembered how Charles Wallace forced the dwindling and decaying Wallace Towers on him then disappeared. He may have considered the Wallace Towers to be a curse, but it was one of the few things he had left.

“This isn’t right, Mr. Curstmeyer,” Mrs. Smith said. “This is no way for you to live.”

“I don’t have a choice,” Mr. Curstmeyer said. “I can’t make my father go through the demolition of this building. If people would just go away, then everything would be fine.”

“But that’s the problem,” Danny said. “People aren’t going to go away. This place is famous and spooky.”

“You are always going to have trespassers,” Mrs. Smith said. “Isn’t there anything else that can be done with this place?”

“Didn’t Henry Wallace want this to be a cemetery?” Danny asked.

Danny jumped and Mrs. Smith screamed a little when they heard a shuffle come from up the stairs.

“We need to go, now!” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Danny was the first one up the stairs quickly followed by Mrs. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer. Danny crawled out of the hatch and steel foundation when he heard a familiar voice. He looked up the next stair case and saw a light coming down the stairs. It was David Landers and his crew.

Danny heard David Landers say “...which could not necessarily be destroyed, but other things could be developed here. Paranormal activity is concentrated within the steel that supports the entire building because just on the other side is the decaying remains of those who were buried here.”

Mrs. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer came up through the hatch. Mr. Curstmeyer quickly threw down the door and locked the hatch with the padlock.

David Landers and crew were startled by the noise and turned around. David said, "No! Don't close the hatch! That was going to be a great episode!"

"Go away!" Mr. Curstmeyer demanded. "There are no stories here!"

David Landers and crew finished descending the stairs and walked over to Mr. Curstmeyer. The cameramen were still filming as David Landers said, "Do you realize how long we have been looking for a way to get through the steel foundation, to get to the very bottom of the towers?"

"You can't go down there," Danny said.

"Padlocks are easily broken," Larry said from behind his cameramen. "But there is something that would keep us from going down there for now. Mr. Curstmeyer, you could give us an interview."

Mr. Curstmeyer quickly realized he would not be able to guard this hatch forever. This television show would eventually disrupt his father's resting place and turn it into a circus act.

"I will give you an interview upstairs if you get out of here right now," Mr. Curstmeyer said.

David Landers was thrilled. He said, "Alright, everyone upstairs!"

The Interview

David Landers walked with Mr. Curstmeyer, Mrs. Smith, and Danny to the main entrance and lobby of the Wallace Towers as the remaining crew rushed back to their van to get the equipment ready for an interview. By the time David Landers reached the lobby, the film crew had set up chairs, lights, and a tripod for the camera and was ready to shoot.

“Please sit down, Mr. Curstmeyer,” David Landers said. Mr. Curstmeyer reluctantly took his seat and the interview quickly began.

“Thank you for giving us this interview today Mr. Curstmeyer,” David Landers said as the cameras rolled. Mr. Curstmeyer did not reply.

“First, could you tell us how you came about owning the Wallace Towers?”

“Charles Wallace cursed me with it,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

Mr. Curstmeyer obviously didn’t care to elaborate, so David Landers asked, “Could you tell us how Charles Wallace cursed you with it?”

“My father owned a grave site here before the towers were built. When the towers were crumbling and all of the businesses moved out, Charles Wallace found some records indicating that my father owned the land before he inherited it. Therefore, I was the one who owned the property, not Charles. He shoved the deed into my hands then disappeared.”

“But how were you cursed with them?” David Landers asked.

Mr. Curstmeyer didn't say anything. He simply waited for the next question.

“If they are a curse, don’t you think the towers should be destroyed?” David Landers asked.

Mr. Curstmeyer looked up at the cameras, the lights, and the people who showed the world his biggest weakness to make money. He didn't want his father's grave site to be at the bottom of a massive demolition, but Mr. Curstmeyer thought a onetime disruption would be better than the constant exposure and spectacle this television show would bring. They may have promised to stay away from his father's grave site for now, but he knew they would eventually go down there.

"Yes. The Wallace Towers will be destroyed," Mr. Curstmeyer said.

"Wait. Wait," David Landers said as he motioned the cameramen to stop filming. Brad and Bill turned off the blinding lights as David Landers continued, "Why are you changing your story?"

Mr. Curstmeyer was confused. "I'm agreeing with you," He said.

Larry, the producer, came out from behind the cameras. "We don't want you to agree with us!" He said. "If the towers come down, we won't have a show!"

"But you've been following him and constantly demanding that the towers come down!" Danny exclaimed.

"Yes, we have been demanding that the towers come down," Larry said condescendingly. "It has given us spectacular ratings. It has made my career! We would like those to continue. Don't you and your friends love to watch this show?"

"Not anymore," Danny said.

"I guess the interview is over," Mr. Curstmeyer said as he stood up from the chair. He motioned for Danny and Mrs. Smith to follow him outside.

"If that's all the interview we get, then we are going down through those hatches!" David Landers shouted.

Mr. Curstmeyer, Danny, and Mrs. Smith headed back to the house as they heard someone start to break the padlock to the hatch.

The Series Finale

Danny was shocked that a reunion special of *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers* had appeared. The show hadn't had a new episode in over a year. A part of him didn't want to watch it, but it had been a significant part of his life. He felt compelled to give it a shot.

Now that Danny knew there were never any ghosts inside the Wallace Towers, he was ready to laugh at the flashes of light and scary opening of the show, but he was surprised when David Landers was on the screen peacefully walking across a large patch of grass.

David Landers said, "On this peacefully ground, there once was a large building with four towers. It was the most evil place in the world. Now it is the most peaceful place I know. It is truly a place where people can find rest. This once was a nightmare created by Charles Wallace, but it is now the dream of his father, Henry Wallace. The Wallace Towers are now Wallace Cemetery."

The title of the show, *The Ghosts of Wallace Towers*, came on the screen with peaceful music playing in the background. David Landers continued to walk through the grass away from the camera.

Danny received a text message from his mom saying, "Come downstairs soon."

The mayor of Davenport came on the screen and said, "We are very happy to offer this peaceful and vital place to our community. Our loved ones now have a place to be buried and this surrounding community now has an opportunity to again flourish outside the dark shadow of the complex that once stood here."

"Danny, Mr. Curstmeyer will be here in a couple minutes!" Mrs. Smith yelled from downstairs.

“Okay!” Danny replied.

David Landers again came on the screen and said, “After the towers were demolished and the rubble was cleared away, the city still had a massive slab of steel they could not break. So, instead of trying to get rid of the steel, they brought in tons and tons of dirt and soil and buried the steel foundation. The ground is now twenty feet higher than it used to be.”

Dr. Mickelson came on the screen and said, “Once the owner of the property, Mr. Kurt Curstmeyer, came forward and agreed to anything the city would want to do, the city of Davenport made him a fair offer. In exchange for demolishing the Wallace Towers, the city would own the property. The city would then own the cemetery that they would build. The city of Davenport could then earn back all the funds from the project by selling grave sites. Mr. Curstmeyer would not leave empty handed though. The city was going to build him a small house in the middle of the property just as Henry Wallace envisioned. But since the city also knew of Mr. Curstmeyer’s talent as a concert pianist, they built a steel platform up from the steel foundation of the Wallace Towers where they put a grand piano.”

David Landers was standing underneath a tree in front of a beautiful white house. The wind blew gently through the tree and David Landers could be seen enjoying the fresh air as he said, “Behind me is Mr. Curstmeyer’s new home. Inside, there is a grand piano on top of a steel platform. Whenever this piano is played, the sound reverberates through the steel foundation and can be heard throughout the cemetery. There are also a few steel rods placed throughout the cemetery where anyone can put their ear up to it and hear what is being played.”

David Landers walked up to a piece of steel not too far away and put a microphone up against it. The slight sound of beautifully played piano music came from the screen, but this was disrupted by piano music that wasn’t played very well coming from downstairs.

Danny climbed down the stairs and saw Mr. Curstmeyer in his chair with his mom at the piano. His mom was playing a song when she hit a bad note.

“Claire?” Mr. Curstmeyer said. Danny was still thankful he wasn’t on the piano stool anymore.

“Hi, Danny,” Mrs. Smith said.

“Greetings, Danny,” Mr. Curstmeyer said.

“Hi, Mr. Curstmeyer!”

“I have three requests for your services this week,” Mr. Curstmeyer said as he passed Danny a piece of paper with names, addresses, and phone numbers.

“Doesn’t anyone else in this town know how to fix a piano?” Danny said with frustration.

Danny went into the kitchen to call the numbers as Mrs. Smith and Mr. Curstmeyer continued her lesson.