

GHOST TOWN

The Genesis Event Part I: Destruction

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Ghost Town – The Genesis Event

Part I: Destruction

The small village of Whiterock had been left devastated. Ghost Town Labs, led by Doctor Victor Tesla, had concluded their tests—turning almost the entire population of 800 into ghosts. The ghosts had performed better than Doctor Tesla could have ever hoped—causing death and destruction wherever they went. The government-funded project that Victor had started so many years ago, had now been completed by his company, Ghost Town Labs. His former government had no idea the terrors he was about to unleash.

Ghost Town Labs had discovered that when people turned to ghosts they would move through four different classes of ghosts. First, was a spirit—someone who was unaware they were dead and very easy to move around and get rid of. Next, was the shadow—someone who knows they are dead, who will attempt to kill the living, and is more difficult to destroy. Apparitions are next—cunning, vengeful creatures that enjoy killing, can set traps, and are very hard to destroy. The final class—phantoms. Phantoms are almost impossible to kill as they can set traps, disappear in the blink of an eye, and will not stop killing for anything.

All people who are turned to ghosts, start at the spirit class. The way they develop further is based on how many people and other ghosts they take—merging the souls of the living and dead to make themselves stronger. To date, only one ghost has developed to the phantom class—Hannah Jones. Hannah, a former FBI agent until her untimely death in the labs beneath the forests of Whiterock, was carefully monitored by Doctor Tesla and his team as she grew and developed. Doctor Tesla now plans to show the world his power with what he's dubbed *The Genesis Event*.

Starting in Genesis, Minnesota, Ghost Town Labs plans to allow Hannah to ravage the metropolis—turning its millions of citizens into ghosts, all the while being carefully monitored by Ghost Town Labs and Doctor Tesla himself. Much planning went into picking Genesis as the testing grounds. Ghost Town Labs has

complete control over the cities cellphone towers, radio and television linkups, internet, and landline phones. They have placed cameras all over the city to monitor what happens. The city has been sealed so that once Hannah is released, no one will be able to get out.

Doctor Tesla, always determined to have the best data available, has sent a number of Ghost Town Labs' employees into Genesis under the guises of normal working-class citizens to gather intelligence in real time. His daughter, Morgan Tesla, being the youngest of the employees at 25, had used fake documents to get into the Genesis Academy—the top year-round high school in Genesis. Erin Minot, a British super spy, has accepted a sales position at The Mall of Genesis—one of the largest malls in the world. Mackenzie Hanson, former FBI partner of Hannah Jones will be positioned in the Genesis First Bank and Trust. Mackenzie is always working for Ghost Town Labs. Maria Diego, Victor Tesla's lover, is working with city workers throughout the city. Ryan Minot, Erin's husband, and Jake Arnold, a mechanic for Ghost Town Labs, will be posing as city police.

Doctor Tesla chose these positions to have a good representation of what happens in the city and to see how the people of Genesis will react in and around his ghosts. Tesla is planning to show the world the power of his ghosts and he wants everyone to know the damage that can be done. In Doctor Tesla's mind, he must have reliable eyewitness accounts to what is happening in Genesis.

One of the many questions Doctor Tesla and Ghost Town Labs wants answered, is how fast it takes a normal population to discover the secrets of how to disperse a ghost—that is, to banish it from this plane of existence. Currently, Ghost Town Labs knows that fire and electricity will destroy any ghosts, if enough is used. They have developed E.P.D., or electro-plasma distorter bullets that can be loaded into normal guns and are quite effective on the ghosts.

From the tests in Whiterock, they know that without a working separator—the device they built, which is put underground and binds the soul to earth after the body has died—how Ghost Town Labs created their ghosts. The ghosts can only survive for up to

twenty minutes. Ghost Town Labs has buried separators all over Genesis to ensure that no matter where in the town the ghosts are, they will stay until taken out.

The events that took place in Whiterock, as detailed in ‘*Ghost Town – The Whiterock Incident: Parts I II & III*’—are nothing compared to the destruction that Doctor Tesla and his team have planned for Genesis. As military troops are racing to Genesis to prevent the attack, a black, 1965 Cadillac Hearse with the most dangerous payload is heading toward the Colfax Gallery—an open-air mall with upscale shopping and dining in the heart of Genesis. Inside the hearse is a custom-made casket—the lid magnetically sealed with an electric field running throughout to ensure the Genesis Ghost, Hannah Jones, remains inside until the time is right. When the electric field is turned off and the lid opened—nothing will contain Hannah, nor be able to stop her from unleashing Doctor Victor Tesla’s madness and destruction on an unsuspecting population...

Summer School Part I

Two girls crept through the hallways of the old brick school building. The air conditioning had been on the fritz so the red brick walls bore a sweaty look as the humidity of the air made sitting in the building almost unbearable. With as beautiful a summer day outside, no one could expect high school kids to pay attention to the boring lectures in the year-round school.

The girls reached their destination—the weight room door. The female in the lead, a twig-skinny, freckled teen with wild autumn-red hair dropping just past her neck and deep green eyes, paused outside the door and looked around. The girl scanned the hallway, making sure no one was paying attention. No one would have questioned the first girl entering the weight room wearing red baggy gym shorts with a plain white t-shirt that was tucked in—and sneakers with no socks showing.

Her companion would draw more attention in the weight room. A five-foot-ten-inch girl, who looked more like a woman trying to act younger than a teenager with her brunette hair in a sloppy ponytail, adventurous brown eyes, a mature body, and a thin face. Her makeup was already smudged from sweat and it wasn't even ten in the morning. The girl wore the required school uniform—a black pleated skirt that touched her knees, a purple pullover, a wide black belt, black platform boots that went up to her knees and she was dripping with accessories as she followed her friend into the workout room.

Once in the empty room, full of iron and reeking of sweat, the girls looked around with pause, like they were waiting for someone. The girl in the uniform looked at her watch as she sat on a weight machine. She looked to the other girl who motioned for her to be patient. The girl in the gym shorts laid down beneath a bench-press bar that was loaded with one-hundred and forty-five pounds of weight. She attempted to lift the bar, but she couldn't even move it. Her friend giggled as she struggled.

From the bowels of the old building, an air conditioning system wheezed, sputtered, and coughed to life. The fans barely moved any air—air that was no cooler than the air that was in the room—but the humming and knocking noise of the system was just what the girls had been waiting for.

The girl in the gym shorts quickly moved to the wall of the room, where a three-foot by three-foot air duct grate was easily slid off the wall. The girl motioned her friend into the air duct. Both girls disappeared from the weight room through the duct as the girl replaced the grate, leaving no trace of their trespass to the room.

The girls moved quickly on their hands and knees through the duct. They didn't need to move very far, less than fifty feet before they were at another grate—this one already open. The girls quickly went through and found themselves in a janitorial storage room. The grate opened toward the rear of the room, underneath a shelving structure that ran along the length of the wall. On the shelving unit were cleaning supplies, paper products and an inventory of spare parts for the school. The red-haired girl quickly rushed to the door, making sure that both the knob and the deadbolt were locked.

“It's locked,” a male voice rang out behind them. “I already checked it myself.”

The girls spun around to see a handsome, buff male standing behind them. He was big—six-foot tall and very well-muscled, in black gym shorts showing off his six-pack abs, broad chest, and massive arms. The boy was tan, and even though he stood without a shirt, there were beads of sweat running down his face and chest. The boy had a block head, with wavy brown hair that broke to his neckline all pushed back. With thin eyebrows and sharp features, the boy was the all-American handsome quarterback star of the school.

The twiggy girl smiled at the guy as he walked up to her, grabbed her hand, spun her around, and planted a deep kiss on her lips—holding her left hand in his right. He placed his left hand on her stomach before slowly running along her side, allowing it to rest a little too far below her waistline. The pair shared a sloppy but

passionate kiss while the other girl continued to look around the room. The boy tried to untuck the girl's shirt, and that's when she stopped the kiss, pulling her head away but leaving her body in his grasp. She gave him a seductive smile and a wink as she turned from him.

"This is my boyfriend, Sam," the girl said. "He's the quarterback and the captain of the football team."

"He looks like it," the other girl said, smiling.

"Sam, that's Morgan Tesla," the girl said. "She's the one I was telling you about. Lived out in the country...some ghost town. But her dad got a job here in Genesis, so she's starting school."

"So, you're a country gal?" Sam asked, extending a hand to shake Morgan's.

"I am," Morgan said, shaking his.

"You tip cows and stuff?"

"Never."

"Chew tobbacy?"

"Never."

"You ever..."

"She's okay," the girl said, interrupting. "Don't mind him, the only thing he can think about is sex and football."

"You're gonna love that football thought when I have a full-ride scholarship to state next year. Four years there, then on to the big leagues."

"You want to play professional?" Morgan asked. "What team?"

"Doesn't matter, as long as I'm getting paid. That all I care about. So, Amber," Sam said, turning his attention back to his

girlfriend, Amber Dean, “it’s awfully hot. You should probably take your shirt off. You’d be much more comfortable.”

“Not even ten and you’re already trying to talk me out of my shirt,” Amber smiled. “You know that you need to work harder than that, Sam.”

“I don’t mean to be that person,” Morgan said, “but won’t we get in trouble for cutting class?”

“Right now, we have a school wide study hall,” Amber said. “The teachers don’t keep a very close eye on us.”

“What about if the janitor comes in here to get something?” Morgan asked. “We don’t have to keep him silent somehow, do we?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Amber said. “We lock both the knob and the deadbolt. We switched out the original deadbolt with our own so they don’t have a key for it. He’ll cycle through his key ring...trying to find a master key to open it...give up, go to the office for a different set of keys, at which point we open the deadbolt and scam from the room. It’s a nice setup.”

“Sounds good,” Morgan said.

Amber was about to continue when more people entered the room from the same grate that Amber had led Morgan through. First out were two boys like Sam—tall and muscular, with soft high school faces that had yet to fully mature. Both boys had let their hair grow too long, looking scruffy as neither had shaved in days. Both in gym shorts and plain t-shirts, gave a high five to Sam as they looked over Morgan like she was a piece of meat for them to devour.

Behind the boys was a haunting Latin beauty of medium height, with a curvy and developed body. She was darker skinned, with long, thick black hair that shimmered like it was from a shampoo commercial as it cascaded down to her lower back. Her spider-black eyes sparkled like a star in the night as her plumped lips were curved into a bright smile. The girl wore red and white short nylon running

shorts, a black tank top that didn't touch the top of the shorts and black running shoes with no socks showing.

"Thank God Principal Ross suspended the dress code this week," the Latin said. "There's no way I could have worn one of those uniforms in this kind of heat."

"There were rules that we were supposed to follow," the boy with the glasses said. "At least six inches of inseam on shorts and no stomachs showing. You're violating both."

"Are you complaining?" the beauty asked as she posed for the boy.

"No." He smiled. "Just commenting. Who's the new chick that didn't get the dress-code memo?"

"Morgan Tesla," Amber said. "Morgan, the one with the glasses is Jack. The dopy looking one is Todd, and..."

"And I'm Isabella Corvus," Isabella said. "But call me Is."

"Is?" Morgan asked.

"Yes," Is said. "Is. You're the new farm girl, right? Let me give you a few pointers for surviving the Genesis Academy. The boys here are very easy to figure out and play with. Sam's the quarterback, Jack and Todd are the running backs, Amber's the cheerleader, and I'm the volleyball captain. We're all pretty laid back. No drinking or drugs during the season, and if you need homework or tests, you can buy any of them pretty cheap."

"Sounds like my old school," Morgan said, with a smile. "Except, back there we had only ten to fifteen kids in each grade. One hundred and fifty in my school, K through twelve, all in one building."

"Wow," Todd said. "This building is freshman through senior and we have over six hundred here. So, why did you move here? What town were you from?"

“Whiterock,” Morgan said. “I’d been there for over ten years. My dad’s a scientist and he’d been working on a research project out there. He went as far with his work as he could in the small town, so we had to move here so he could finish.”

“Any siblings?” Sam asked. “What does your mom do?”

“Well...” Morgan looked down. “I had an older sister but both her and my mother passed away. I’m sorry, but I really can’t talk about it. Just too painful.”

“Sorry,” Sam said. “What do you do for fun?”

“I helped dad with his work,” Morgan said. “And I read a lot. I didn’t have a lot of friends in Whiterock. I spent a lot of time with dad’s girlfriend, Maria. She’s pretty fun.”

“Nice,” Is said. “Any sports?”

“Never really took to any,” Morgan said.

“I just got to say it,” Jack said, looking Morgan over from head to toe. “You look older...like mid-twenties or something. How old are you?”

“I get that a lot,” Morgan said. “I’m eighteen. I was held back.”

The entire group looked at Morgan, all thinking she looked much older than a high school student. Morgan hoped they would believe the lie. She thought that with her school uniform, and the way she did her makeup and hair, her true age would be disguised. As Morgan looked over the group, she noticed Sam couldn’t take his eyes off Amber. Amber knew it and was deliberately playing with her hair and posing with her chest out to drive him nuts.

“So, what do you guys do in this room?” Morgan asked, hoping to divert the conversation. “Nothing too extreme, I hope.”

“We do,” Sam said, as he grabbed Amber’s hand.

Amber smiled and walked with Sam as they went around a storage shelf. Morgan could hear them kissing as she saw Amber's t-shirt hit the floor. Morgan raised an eyebrow as the pair moved themselves onto a pile of floor mats. She looked back to the others. Todd and Jack were already looking at a tablet computer with a certain intensity. Morgan tried to get a look at what they were watching but couldn't see the screen.

"Last year's football games," Is said. "They are already getting ready for the season. Watching games to see what went right and what went wrong."

"How far are those two going to go?" Morgan asked, pointing to Sam and Amber.

"You don't need to watch your hair," Is said, smiling, "if that's what you're worried about. They'll just make-out for the hour. They save the heavy stuff for after school. So, what should we do Morgan, watch old football games...or make out?"

Morgan's eyes got big as she looked over Is. Morgan was caught off guard by the comment. She had been paying attention to her watch, knowing that very soon Hannah would be released from the casket and there would be destruction in the area. Morgan looked back to Is, to see a giant smile across her face.

"Just messing with you, girl," Is said. "You gotta realize that I'm not the most serious person around."

Is moved to the back corner of the room and moved some boxes around to reveal a small duct grate which she quickly removed. Is pulled out a pill bottle and a bottle of Rum. She quickly took the cover off the pill bottle and took one of the small, round white pills—swallowing it with a giant swig of Rum from the bottle. She then offered a pill to Morgan.

"What is it?" Morgan asked.

"A synth," Is said. "We have a nerdy, science geek friend that makes them. She makes us these right here in the school."

“What does it do?”

“Makes you feel amazing,” Is said. “It feels somewhat like X but you don’t feel the need to listen to crappy techno music all night. It’s really euphoric. The Rum enhances it. You’ll feel great the rest of the day.”

“I’d better not,” Morgan said. “I’ve never really done anything like that before and I don’t want my first experience to be in school. I’ll take some of the Rum though.”

Is handed the bottle to Morgan and she took a couple gulps from it. Morgan handed the bottle back to Is, who took another drink before putting both bottles back in the vent and returning all the boxes to hide the grate. Morgan noticed that Is’s eyes were already dilating and she had a distant look on her face.

“So tell me, Morgan,” Is said, as she made herself a chair from the items on the floor, “what do you think of Genesis and our school so far?”

“It’s nice,” Morgan said, sitting next to her. “The country has a certain charm but there’s something to be said for excitement.”

“What were the boys like out there?”

“Same as here,” Morgan smiled. “Two things on the brain...sports and sex.”

“Boys are so predictable,” Is said.

“I thought Amber said you don’t drink or do drugs during the season,” Morgan said. “What’s up with the stuff you’re taking?”

“Practice doesn’t start for another month,” Is said. “This is the only way I can get through a day here. No one understands.”

“Understands what?”

Is sighed a heavy sigh as she looked at Morgan. Morgan couldn't tell if Is was mad or upset at the question. Morgan worried that she may have crossed a line. Morgan didn't really care about these kids but she wanted to get a good handle on them before the incident occurred. She wanted to have good data to report to her father.

“My parents moved here from Spain before I was born,” Is said. “I’m 100% Spanish. But when I was twelve, they divorced, and it’s been hell ever since. Mom has a different boyfriend every month. Each a bigger loser than the last. Dad’s been remarried twice, both were psycho women. My time living with them is split, and I never know where they are going to be or who’s going to be with them. Right now, I’m with Mom, and we’re living with this guy who’s in the process of getting a divorce. Think about this...he has three kids living with him, plus his ex-wife...well, wife, they aren’t fully divorced yet...living in his house, and then my mom and I move in. I can’t stand him...or his son, who’s a year younger than me. He thinks that we should be hooking up. I’m worried he’s going to do something some night. He drinks a lot. No one around here understands. I just can’t wait to turn eighteen in a couple months. Then I’m moving into a place of my own. I have a plan all mapped out.”

“Sounds like a lot,” Morgan said. “You open up to me pretty easily.”

“You’ve been through stuff,” Is said. “If you’re mom and sister died young, you know the kind of pain I’ve been through. There are so many times I just want to get revenge.”

Morgan looked at Is. Morgan knew what revenge was going to cost the city. Revenge is what drove Doctor Tesla to destroy a small town, and now revenge was going to destroy a city. Morgan knew that their former country needed to pay for the death of her family, but what Victor was going to do was going too far. As the girl’s eyes met, there was an understanding of pain there. Morgan moved up and hugged Is. Is was confused but accepted the hug, squeezing tight as a tear rolled down her cheek.

“Thank you,” Is said. “What’s your pain?”

“My dad worked for the government,” Morgan said, knowing she had to tell Is something. “Classified work. There were a lot of rules about what he could do and who he could talk to. The stress was unbelievable. Things happened and they were murdered. They tried to get Dad too, but he was already gone. He’d asked one of his most trusted friends to get my mom and sister out, but the friend was already paid off by the government. They never knew about me, which is how I was able to get out.”

“That’s horrible,” Is said. “How could a country get away with something like that?”

“I don’t know,” Morgan said. “It was a strange setup. I don’t know if they know where my father went, or why they stopped hunting us, but we’ve been in the small town for a long time.”

Is hugged Morgan. It was a hug that lasted slightly too long, with Is slightly too close to Morgan. Morgan didn’t know what it meant, but she felt a connection to this girl. She didn’t want to see Is get hurt in the events of the day.

“You should live with us,” Morgan said. “We have a spare bedroom that you could stay in. I think that would be a great plan. Dad wouldn’t mind.”

“Are you serious?” Is asked.

“Sure,” Morgan said. “Stick with me, Is, and things will be okay.”

“Thank you so much,” Is said.

“What the hell is this?” Jack said, as he smacked the side of the tablet. “There’s no internet.”

“What?” Is asked as she pulled out her phone. “Damn. No service, phone, or net.”

“Mine too,” Todd said. “Even the Wi-Fi is down. I wonder what happened.”

“Hang on,” Is said.

Is walked to the door, picked up a phone receiver, and dialed a four-digit number. A strange look came across her face as she depressed the receiver latch a number of times before hanging the phone up.

“That’s dead too,” Is said. “The last time something like this happened was when a construction project accidentally cut a fiber-optic line. I’m sure that’s what happened.”

“What are we supposed to do then?” Jack asked.

“Two boys,” Todd shrugged, “and two girls.”

“Why the hell not,” Is said, feeling the effects of the drug kicking into high gear. “Come on, Todd. Morgan, you down with this?”

Morgan looked like a deer caught in the headlights. She had heard and read about teenage behavior, but she didn’t think she’d get caught in something like this. Morgan looked over the other kids and knew they were waiting for an answer. Morgan found it funny. She’d done so much, seen so much in her life, but basic romance and fooling around was something that she’d never had time for—although she’d always wanted to find someone. Morgan was pretty sure that this wouldn’t lead all the way to sex but she was nervous about how far it might go.

As everyone was waiting for Morgan to answer, a spunky looking girl entered the room from the grate. She was petite, with bleach-blonde hair in a ponytail, pale skin, and darting blue eyes. The girl looked younger than the other kids, her body still developing, and an air of immaturity about her. She wore gray sweatpants, flip flops, and a black t-shirt with cartoon characters on the front. The girl pushed her black-rimmed glasses up as she looked around the room.

“Tiffany,” Is said, with surprise on her voice, “what are you doing here?”

“Something big is going on, guys,” Tiffany said, quickly, in a nervous voice. “I don’t know the extent. Who are you?”

“This is Morgan Tesla,” Is said. “Morgan, this is Tiffany, Jack’s little sister and a friend of ours. She can do anything with computers. She’s incredibly smart.”

“She got the brains of the family,” Jack said. “I got the brawn and the looks.”

“Don’t flatter yourself,” Is said. “What’s going on, Tiffany?”

“I was in the computer lab networking with some teams on the other side of town,” Tiffany said. “Net and phones started dropping out everywhere. Television is out, too. The radio hasn’t started talking about anything yet. I don’t get it.”

“I wonder what’s going on,” Jack asked.

“I don’t know what’s going on,” Tiffany said. “I’ve never seen systems drop offline like this. Here’s the head scratcher...this wasn’t a single point event.”

“What?” Jack asked. “A single point event?”

“If a server went down,” Tiffany explained, “or a line was cut, everything on that server or line would drop off at once. What happened here is that systems started dropping...one by one. The only possibility is that someone was shutting them down. I don’t know what’s going on, but it’s big...really big.”