

The Station  
A Story of The Paranormal

by Clifford Beck

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For my wife Sara

Many thanks to Katherine  
Allen for playing along.

"In a dismal place of madness lives a painful  
vengeance, bent on uninterrupted solitude. A  
lost soul, screaming in pain and rage,  
consigned to the ruins of a former life."

## Chapter 1

The town had been settled during the late eighteenth century under the name 'Rustfield'. But as everything has a tendency to change, so did Rustfield. Now, it lay nestled among the Pines of southern Maine as a small industrial town, mostly warehouses and product packaging. Some of its residents would say the town had been there forever and to a few of its elderly, time had stopped altogether with an unbreakable bond linking them to its history.

It was the day before spring break and to the surprise of Norway High School's students,

the last class of the day was let out early. The students raced out of the building. Apparently, the teachers had conspired amongst themselves to also begin spring break early. Some had plans to briefly vacation somewhere along the coast while those of hardier stock would wander up into the mountains, driven by a need for respite and escape. Still, there were other members of the faculty who would make the trip into Portland's 'old port' district and nurse their stress with alcohol. The students, on the other hand, were simply glad to be out of school for the week. For them, life would take a dramatic change of pace from the drudgery of lectures and assignments to the obligation to do as little as possible.

Within the hour, the streets of Norway had become flooded with teenagers. They walked blindly, their attention focused on their smart phones, Facebook pages and text messages. It seemed that every year at least two were struck as they wandered across the streets of downtown Norway, their eyes fixed not on the flow of traffic, but on the pocket-sized technology they had become dependent on. Parents and drivers would repeatedly scold them, yet their warnings went unheard. Life in a small town rarely sees any noticeable changes, unless something comes along and forces change upon it, and Norway would soon be visited by the specter of this unwelcomed force. No one could foresee this coming invader, nor would anyone imagine the form it would

take.

## Chapter 2

Main Street was several blocks from the high school. At the end of the school day, any students not living on the outskirts of town would walk into Norway's business district and fan out toward their respective homes. That day, most took the opportunity to gather amongst the towns fast food restaurants and video game stores. But there were always those who saw time off from school as a chance to catch up on assignments, start papers and read ahead in their textbooks. One particularly industrious student was Samantha Thompson, otherwise

known as Sam. She was a small girl with a thin frame and hair dyed an almost platinum blonde. Yet, in spite of her studious nature, one of her few passions was comic books and when she wasn't studying, she could almost always be found in the town's only science fiction book store. However, today was different and Samantha, choosing to bypass the bookstore, decided to go to the library for a quiet place to study. But two blocks from her destination Samantha was startled by a voice that had suddenly come up from behind her.

“Hey, Sam!” the voice shouted.

Samantha turned to find Henry at her back. They were in one or two classes together, but were barely acquainted. In fact, Samantha saw him as somewhat of a

nuisance and in trying to distance herself from him made him that much more interested. He had grown a faint mustache and let his sideburns grow down in an attempt to impress her. However, this only resulted in attracting the attention of everyone else and it didn't take long for him to earn the nickname 'Wolfman'.

“Hey...uh...Henry, how's it going?” she asked.

Her discomfort should have been obvious, but Henry had been blinded by infatuation.

“Uh, not much”, Henry answered. “So, what are you doing this week?”

Samantha was exceptionally intelligent and having anticipated Henry's question, already had an answer.

“This week?” she replied. “I thought I'd get

caught up on some homework and I've got that paper on the paranormal to start, so I'm going to be in the library a lot.”

Samantha was kind with her lie and Henry believed every word of it.

They stood on the corner in a tense moment of discomfort as Samantha waited for Henry to leave.

“Well,” she began. “I should get going.”

“Oh, yeah,” Henry replied. “You know, if you need any help...”

“Oh, thanks,” she interrupted. “But, I got this paper to do. So...I guess I'll be seeing you.”

Henry replied after a pause as he stood admiring her boyish hair style and the curves of her cheeks.



“Um, yeah. Sure.”

Samantha turned and made her way toward the library, leaving Henry flushed and sweating, his eyes fixed on her as she walked away. But his moment of admiration was broken as he was startled by a familiar voice, accompanied by a sharp slap on the shoulder.

“Wolfman! How's it hangin'?”

Eric was the kind of person most people would refer to as a 'smart ass', someone who was constantly trying to prove himself while taunting others. As intended, Henry was startled by his sudden appearance.

“Jesus fucking Christ!” he began. “Why do you have to do that?!”

Eric giggled as he continued teasing him.

“C'mon Henry,” he replied. “You know I'm

just messing with you.”

Henry was clearly irritated by Eric's behavior.

“Jesus, you're such an asshole.”

Without a moment's hesitation, Eric put an arm around his shoulder while looking at Samantha as she entered the library.

“So,” he began. “You got a thing for Sam, huh?”

Henry was becoming more irritated by the moment. But both being in the eleventh grade, he had no choice but to put up with him.

“Dude, what do I keep telling you?” Eric said. “She's not interested. I don't even think she likes guys.”

Henry became infuriated by what seemed to be an accusation.

“That's not true!” he yelled. “Sam's just a loner. She just needs a little more time to figure out her feelings!”

With this response, Eric saw an opportunity to continue his harassment as he made an obviously transparent attempt to be supportive. “

Henry, look, I'm just trying to look out for you. I mean, if I didn't like you I wouldn't bug you so much, okay?”

This was of little comfort to Henry and as he pulled away from Eric's playful grip, turned and stormed away. But even as he made his way back down Main Street, he could hear Eric continue calling to him. His only response was to turn back and angrily raise a middle finger. Eric, of course, found his display of anger amusing and went on his

way with a smile of satisfaction.

### Chapter 3

Norway's library was relatively small compared to places like Portland and once inside, Samantha found a cubicle near the back of the second floor. Henry was right about one thing. Samantha was a loner and enjoyed a life of quiet anonymity. Socially, she was invisible, with only a handful of friends and was not one to be mingling downtown. In school, she was seen as being distant and something of an oddity, mostly because of her interest in comic books and science fiction. These were seen by her fellow students as tomboyish and not something the average student would

participate in. But there was one thing she secretly obsessed about - the paranormal. Ghosts, Bigfoot, UFO's. Samantha's imagination was driven by anything of an unknown nature and she had taken a recent Saturday to explore the older cemeteries of Portland and became fascinated with gravestone art. The skull and cross-bones used during the eighteenth century set her imagination on fire, but this was not the subject of her paper. She chose instead to write on the topic of hauntings, centering on both speculation and the science of ghost hunting. She would include documented investigations as well as the technology used to gather evidence of earth-bound specters, roaming through dark places in search of solace or a way back to a familiar place. The only other person who

knew what she was writing about was the teacher. Samantha knew how her fellow students perceived her and didn't want to add to the strange glances, giggles, and rumors that had circulated throughout the school. Being a loner made it easy for her to pursue this particular interest and there were many nights when the air was clear that Samantha would stay up late, sitting at an open window watching the sky, wondering. She had snuck into a few of the town's abandoned houses and cemeteries as well, mostly at night. The potency of her curiosity muffled any fear of entering such places alone. But in spite of the dark silence around her, she always left without the terrifying satisfaction of the experience she craved. She sought a degree of certainty that there

was something more than what she saw around her. More than the ordinary. If she could witness the unearthly only once, it would be evidence enough that there was more to human existence than what is seen on the surface.

When Samantha wasn't stalking the dead or anticipating first contact, she could be found wandering the aisles of Norway's only science fiction bookstore. Her interest in comic books closely followed her interest in the paranormal with stories of ghosts, vampires, and demonic invaders. Anything dark was more than sufficient to hold her imagination in its grip. Yet, the life of a loner was also fraught with confusion and Samantha's life seemed to define the word

itself. Naturally, as a teenager, she was looking for identity, to find her place. This was especially difficult without friends, other people with whom she could identify in her commiseration and was well aware that she stood out from other students and learned that their glances, whispers, and rumors were not worth the aggravation of an emotional response. Even though she struggled to discover herself, she was, at least, able to be comfortable with herself and live in her own skin.

## Chapter 4

It was Wednesday and spring break was at its halfway point. Once again, Samantha



found herself walking amongst the shelves and display cases of Norway's science fiction bookstore. Wandering through the back she felt the slight nudge of an unnoticed presence. She was someone who was easily startled and nearly leaping out of her skin, turned to find Henry hunting through the books behind her. Buried in his own search, he barely noticed her as well.

“Oh, excuse me,” she said.

She turned to find Henry with a well-worn book in his hands, skimming its table of contents.

“Henry, I didn't know you came here.”

Henry's nerves immediately ignited as his forehead beaded up with sweat.

“Um, yeah,” he replied. “I come down here once in a while.”

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