

## Coffee Addict

### Chapter 21 – Defence Perimeter

**‘North was the ruined Wilkins place again, David was beginning to know where that was on the map. So much seemed to originate there, yet it had been almost totally destroyed. There was a forest further north, where Jorge had suspected many of the creatures had their underground lairs. Ideally that forest would have been looked over, but with everything else going on.....’**

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Lidia Fernandez had left Teresa with her mother, who refused to live in a hut in the defence perimeter. Teresa seemed to be happy to be back in her old room at Hacienda Yago, at least for now. Some of her problems were emotional, but mostly it was good old fashioned physical injuries. Her body had taken far too many bumps and bashes in a very short period of time. Teresa was tough; a few days rest and recuperation back home and she'd be fine. That left Rocky, who'd either starve if no one came to feed her, or break out of Doc's old house.

“Don't worry; no one knows where I am half the time.” Lidia had told Teresa. “Communications are still chaotic and Mateo still wants to evacuate everyone in a five mile radius of the plantation. In all the chaos.....I can get to Doc's place and feed Rocky twice a day; maybe three times on Sunday.”

“My knight in a cop uniform.” Teresa had replied. “As soon as I'm well enough, I'll move back to Doc's. Shouldn't be long, just a few days.”

Mateo Rodriguez had been talking to military commanders in Bogotá; begging them to evacuate the entire region. Everyone knew the effort Mateo had put into it, but each time he was told no. It seemed Bogotá wanted to see how things developed. Lidia thought they'd agree to an evacuation, a day after there was no one left to evacuate. Then they'd blame Mateo of course, who'd already been demoted from being a full general. It was all politics according to Julie Yago and as she knew all the important people in Bogotá, she was probably right.

Lidia was currently opening the door to the room where Rocky lived. Their pet had already missed two meals, with no idea if anyone was ever coming back to feed her. Lidia trusted the creature; but if anyone had abandoned her with no food, she'd have been pretty pissed off.

“I am so sorry, Rocky.” Lidia said as soon as the door opened.

Not that Teresa's pet could talk, though Luke said that was a possibility as she grew and learned. Being around humans most of the time, Rock was bound to try and mimic their sounds. She definitely had a voice box, which could make a massive variety of sounds. Whether Rocky understood what she might say ? That was another question. Luke was unsure, but hadn't ridiculed the idea that Rocky might talk and understand what she was saying. Rocky was currently stood on the table where she was usually fed. In a human her manner would have been described as well pissed off.

“You're hungry, I get that.” Said Lidia. “I promise it will never happen again. We'd never abandon you.....I brought lots of your favourite things to eat.”

She could have added that the problem had been caused by Rocky's fellow creatures, attacking the village. It wasn't Rocky's fault though, she been with humans every day since she'd hatched out of an egg. Lidia had been alone with Rocky quite a lot, though she always suspected Rocky would have

preferred to see Teresa opening the door. Lidia hugged the strange creature Teresa and her had kind of adopted and fallen in love with.

"We would never abandon you.....Ever." Said Lidia.

Feathers ruffled a bit, but there were none of the usual sounds associated with Rocky's feeding time. The creature had always seemed so happy and excited. It was upsetting Lidia to see the creature looking so sad.

"Teresa would have come, but she was injured during the fighting." Said Lidia. "The village was attacked by huge creatures. We know that is not your fault."

Lidia was opening tins, packets and boxes; to create a bowl full of Rocky's favourite foods. It might have been her imagination, but Rocky did seem to react to hearing that Teresa had been hurt. Their pet was a civilised eater, no trying to grab things as they went in the bowl. She always waited until the bowl was given to her.

"Here you go.....And I'm not rushing away." Said Lidia. "I'll stay with you for a while."

Rocky didn't go at the bowl the way a dog would have done, or the feeding frenzy of a hungry cat. She was obviously pleased with what was in her bowl; the fed up expression left her face. While Rocky ate her first meal in close to three days, Lidia cleaned out her dirt box a little. No cat litter, Luke had told them a mixture of sand and dry soil was best.

"Cheap and easy to obtain." Luke had told Michelle and her. "Also easy to dump somewhere out in the woods, without causing any concern among the population."

There were pre-prepared sacks of the dry mixture, which went into her dirt box. It wasn't a hard job, but Lidia found the smell quite unpleasant. Rocky was stuck in there with it though, in a room that no one would call huge.

"We've looked at a bigger place for you to live, a disused poultry shed." Said Lidia. "A massive place, there's even room for you to fly around inside. I think you'll love it."

But there'd be much less getting out to fly around the woods, or wherever else Rocky went when Teresa let her out. What happened when the huge poultry shed was too small for her, or they weren't able to bring enough food to satisfy Rocky's growing appetite? It was a question Teresa had avoided, as had Lidia. They'd either have to let Rocky go, or put her down. That would mean Michelle shooting their pet with a supergun; in the head and many times. Lidia had already decided that Rocky was just one creature among many; so if it came to it, she'd let her go free. Rocky was their friend; more than that, she was like their child. You didn't shoot a child, even a dangerous one. "I love you Rocky." Lidia muttered.

Rocky was munching at the contents of the bowl, with what seemed to be her smiling face. She even made a couple of her birdlike happy sounds.

"Good huh?" Asked Lidia. "When I come back later, I'll bring a couple of burgers from Café Loco; I know you like those."

There was a chirrup, a definite happy chirrup. Even if Rocky didn't know many words, she knew that burgers from Café Loco meant one of her favourite foods. Not that their pet was hard to feed, she seemed to like just about all types of meat and quite a few vegetables. The meat she liked cooked and the vegetable crisp and raw.

"You've got me for a while longer." Said Lidia. "Let's see what else needs a little cleaning and tidying up."

Rocky was never neglected, Teresa was always cleaning something. Their feathered buddy did have a habit of taking food away from the table to eat it. Lidia found several small heaps of decaying leftovers.

"Can't have this.....It'll attract bugs." Said Lidia. "Actually.....Do you like bugs to eat?"

As Lidia felt proud of the newly cleaned shelving in the room, Rocky put her cheek against hers and very gently rubbed back and forth. There was also a deeper tones version of the famous Rocky happy chirrup.

"Lidia." Said Rocky.

The voice was a million miles away from anything that sounded human, but the word had been clear. Rocky knew her name and could say it pretty well. Lidia stroked the tufts of feathers on Rocky's head.

"Well done.....Do you know any other words?" Asked Lidia.

There was a lot more rubbing of Rocky's cheek against hers; a lot more chirruping. No words though, it seemed that Rocky had a one word vocabulary, or was biding her time for some reason. Lidia looked the room over before leaving and was pleased. It looked a lot cleaner and shinier than when she'd arrived.

"Right.....I'll be back later with burgers." Said Lidia.

The door to Rocky's room was open; Lidia was making sure she had the right key to lock it. Rocky had made a lot of happy sounds; but hadn't said a word since saying her name.

"Love Lidia." Said Rocky.

Lidia hugged their strange pet and felt Rocky do the rub cheeks thing again.

"I love you too." Said Lidia.

She'd left her car some distance from Doc's house, which was just as well. It gave her time to settle down; by the time she was sat behind the wheel. Her mind was still full of idea on how to protect Rocky and keep her safe.

"No one will hurt her.....If I have to release her in the wetlands, I will." Lidia muttered.

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David Sullivan had received a call from HR in Calgary; he was expected to arrive in Vietnam within the week. He'd tried to call Jacob P Wilson, the CEO of Tessera Coffee Holdings. A man who was famous for avoiding calls he didn't want to take. Jacob was busy it seemed, yet another contract being signed for yet more coffee from South East Asia. There was voicemail, but David hated talking to those things. With no other sensible option, David had put his refusal of the move to Vietnam, on an email. An ordinary non-encrypted email, sent from his Yahoo account.

'Jacob, I do appreciate your faith in me. Sadly I can't accept the move to Vietnam.....'

The effect of cross pollination was bad, David had mentioned that. It might have a bad effect on Tessera's bottom line, which he also mentioned. He'd gone on to talk about knowing the team very well, and Julie Yago's people at the plantation. There was now the likelihood of death and serious injury among his team and the locals, which he'd emphasised. He said he hoped Jacob would understand him wanting to deal with the situation, rather than a cross pollination in Vietnam.

'After all Jacob, it's a matter of money in Vietnam. Here in Colombia it's a matter of trying to minimise the number of dead and injured. I hope you understand why I can't leave the Yago Plantation at this time?'

He'd ended his email, knowing that Jacob wouldn't understand. David wouldn't be sacked, he'd be invited to find another job, it was what Tessera did. The corporate wheels turned slowly, but he'd soon be looking for another job. Effectively his career with Tessera Coffee Holdings, was over. He had savings and wouldn't starve. It might well turn out to be a change in his life for the good.

David was currently looking at a smashed mobile command vehicle, the one Jorge Alvarez had been using; the one Gabi Alvarez had died in.

"Where did the creature go to ?" Asked David. "I heard it was wounded, but survived."

"We hit it with everything we had." Said Julian. "Jorge used his supergun, but nothing seemed to work. It was bleeding though, as it headed north."

Julian should have received first aid, before being sent back to the village for proper medical attention. The guy looked as though he'd fought a mincing machine, and lost.

"Are you alright, Julian ?" Asked David. "I'll understand if you need to get your wounds looked at."

"I'm fine; one of the first aiders bandaged me up a bit." Said Julian. "Once I've talked to anyone who needs questions answered, I intend to rest up for a while. Until then I'm staying.....I feel I owe it to Jorge and poor Gabi."

It was the kind of attitude David had heard a lot. Gabi had her gang of female ex-cops, or ex-cops wives. The housewives from hell Gabi had called them. One of them had died and two were giving first aid to people who looked less wounded than them. They'd only let someone drive them back to town after every wounded cop had been looked at.

"One last question from me, is that alright ?" Asked David.

"Yes, of course.....It's what I'm here for, ask away ?"

"All I keep hearing is that this creature was different." Said David. "I'm told it was nothing like the others. What did it look like, Julian ?"

"It may sound crazy, but it looked like something that's been extinct for a long time." Said Julian. "A dinosaur and big for one of those. Layers of hard bone on its head and shoulders; it shoved the command unit over with those. Big, I'm sure I mentioned it being big. The wolf creatures are tough and huge, but this dinosaur.....I don't see how we'd fight it. The army would have to use artillery, or tactical nukes."

"Crap.....It really was that big ?" Asked David.

"Whatever you're imagining.....It was bigger." Said Julian.

"I can imagine pretty big." Said David.

"I guarantee the creature was bigger." Said Julian.

North was the ruined Wilkins place again, David was beginning to know where that was on the map. So much seemed to originate there, yet it had been almost totally destroyed. There was a forest further north, where Jorge had suspected many of the creatures had their underground lairs. Ideally that forest would have been looked over, but with everything else going on.....

"I know Olie thought the creatures came from north of the Old Wilkins place." Said David. "Not my job to go digging around up there, but the police already seem busy. If I can put a team together, do you fancy joining us ?"

"I've been saying for a while, that the army should have been digging there." Said Julian. "Are you going there to dig them out of their lairs ?"

"Not yet, we'll just be going to have a look around." Said David. "Are you coming with us ?"

"Oh yes, I definitely want to come." Said Julian. "I know a few retired cops who'll want to come too."

"Great, but tell them the first visit won't be like the Alamo." Said David. "Make a point of telling them we'll just be searching the forest."

No use, Julian had the look in his eyes, the one that said he needed payback for all the people they'd lost. No matter what was said, the retired cops would open fire at the first hint of a creature.

Revenge for Gabi, Olie and the other cops or retired cops. David was hoping to find evidence of a facility of some kind; an underground and buried deep facility. It wouldn't have to be huge, just large enough to hold the young creatures until they were released. Eggs too maybe, spread throughout

the forest. Who was going to so much trouble to cause so much mayhem ? David had no idea, but he was hoping to find out.

"Olie thought people made these things." Said Julian. "He said Jorge felt the same way."

"So do I, Julian.....So do I." Said David. "Mother Nature doesn't go backwards; evolution doesn't have a reverse. The dinosaur type creatures have made me certain that people made these things in a laboratory somewhere."

"Who ?" Asked Julian.

"I have no idea, not yet." Said David. "We might not be the final target; the plantation might be a test run. Imagine these creatures being let loose near New York, or Washington.....Or maybe even Moscow."

"Crap.....Makes you think." Said Julian.

"Every nation has lots of enemies, Julian."

A farmer had arrived with a large tractor, a really huge machine. Chains had been used, along with tough nylon ropes. The idea was to bring the huge mobile command unit back onto its multiple wheels. It had two fixed high calibre machine guns, which were likely to be needed at the new defence perimeter in the village. The tractor's wheels spun a little, before finding traction. The mobile command vehicle came back onto its wheels with a crash.

"Now we'll see if it'll start." Said Julian.

"They're tough.....Same as the military use." Said David.

The engine sort of started, but there was a lot of smoke from the exhaust. Some coughing too, but the engine didn't stop. As whoever was testing it revved the engine, a general cheer went up. It was a minor triumph at a time when they'd desperately needed something to cheer.

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Kate Doyle had noticed the cremation remains in the street. With luck the weather would wash most of it away. Yoon had told her how there came to be a man's body to dispose of, she even knew his name was Gunter Nielsen. She'd had his wallet, which Kate had agreed to pass onto the police. Eventually someone would tell his wife what had happened to him. Yoon was remarkably relaxed about cremating a neighbour in the streets.

"It's the large rats, Kate." Yoon had told her. "Leaving a body out in the open just encourages them. The rat creatures are around here in large numbers. Petrol works well, but leaves a lot of bone and gristle. The next morning Valeria from over the road helped me. We used petrol and firewood. Unless the rats eat ash, we've left nothing to attract them."

Kate had brought Chad with her; he was yet again the hero of the village. The tale of his exploits was growing, even without the help of V-Boom. It seemed he'd saved everyone at Jaimie's, while killing no less than four of the creatures while he was there. Chad denying it all was just seen as him being over modest. He was currently sat quietly at the kitchen table, trying not to ignore Yoon, but not to really engage with her either. Of course that was an impossible exercise.

"No one is forcing you, Yoon." Said Chad. "We've come to invite you to live inside the defence perimeter; at least until the creatures are dealt with."

"Some are calling it the defence zone." Said Kate.

"Yes, of course.....Mateo is calling it the defence zone." Said Chad. "It's an area of the plantation not far from Hacienda Yago. There are huts to live in; comfortable huts with running water. You'll be protected there; the army are bringing in heavy weapons from Bogotá."

"The perimeter fence is electrified." Added Kate.

"But I can stay here if I want to ?" Asked Yoon. "I quite like your apartment and I now know Valeria quite well. A good neighbour is one who'll help you dispose of a body."

Yoon laughed, but Kate would never look at Yoon and see her in quite the same way. It was dreadful out there though and Yoon had concentrated on the one thing that really matters in a war; survival.

"No one is making you move." Said Kate. "The power is back on now, but we brought you lots of tins; all things you can eat cold."

"You designed and built the pocket howitzers." Said Chad. "We owe you so much.....So many would have died if it wasn't for your invention. So no.....No one is asking you to go anywhere you don't want to go."

"Good.....I'll stay here." Said Yoon.

Not the conversation Kate had wanted to have, it should have all been about keeping Yoon safe; not forcing her to move. Yoon wasn't going to budge now, unless she was drugged and tied up. For better or worse, Yoon was going to be living on her own, in Kate's apartment.

"They're flying a transmitter in from Manizales." Said Kate. "Julie is paying for it to be brought in by helicopter. Craig's college friends will soon get V-Boom going again. You'll have a friendly voice on the radio every morning."

"That is good news." Said Yoon. "So it's agreed then ? I'll continue to live here."

"Yes, Yoon.....You'll continue to live here." Said Kate.

"We'd like to check that the place is secure." Said Chad.

"Do you mind us doing that ?" Asked Kate.

"No, not at all." Said Yoon.

It was never going to take long, no matter how thorough they were. Half a dozen window locks to check, to make sure they really did lock. Two outside doors with locks, chains and several dead bolts for night time security. Two outside lamps over those doors, one needing a new bulb. It was a small apartment; there really wasn't a great deal to check. Kate still felt better though, once Chad and her had made sure the place was as secure as it could reasonably be expected to be.

"And of course I have this.....Should help." Said Yoon.

Kate wasn't that into guns, but she knew something a bit special when she saw it. The gun Yoon was holding was matt black metal, crafted into something truly beautiful. Slightly smaller than the supergun Chad carried everywhere.

"Wow, this must be version three." Said Chad.

"Version four actually."

"Please, can I hold it ?" Asked Kate.

"Then I want to hold it.....I need to hold it." Said Chad.

Kate held the gun which didn't really shout lethality at her. It hissed it; like a lethal black mamba snake. It was wonderful, superb. Kate knew she now wanted a version four supergun.

"How did you get it here ?" Asked Chad. "The airlines are so good these days at finding gun shaped pieces of metal in luggage."

"I have my contacts, as you have yours." Said Yoon. "Can this weapon be our little secret ?"

"Yeah, of course." Said Chad.

"We'll never tell a living soul." Added Kate.

"I'm going to try for one of the really big ones, if I get a chance." Said Yoon. "My latest toy should kill one of the huge wolf like creatures with two rounds to the head. If I get a chance.....I'll let you both know how it goes."

"Just stay alive." Said Kate.

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David Sullivan was leading the team, as it stopped about two miles north of the Old Wilkins place. Deep in the forest, as far as the old farm track went. It seemed strange to see David in command of armed cops and a few volunteers, but everyone was there because they wanted to be. Julian kept talking about getting some payback for dead colleagues. Not usually a good sign, she'd seen soldiers talking that way go crazy; once the fighting started. Julian needed to be watched and Jorge was about to make things a lot worse.

"My supergun on loan; I want it back." Said Jorge. "I'm also giving you all the ammunition I have for her."

"For her !" Said Julian, as he took the bag from Jorge.

"That's it; make fun of the wounded guy." Said Jorge, with a grin.

Jorge was quite badly wounded, but he'd have tried to go with them on foot, if David hadn't told him that was never going to happen. The general consensus seemed to be that Jorge would be fine; just so long as he stayed in one of the cop SUVs. He was a bit of a liability, but half the volunteers were only there because Jorge was. They'd all known Gabi, who rarely had a bad word for anyone. People might moan about Jorge, but everyone had loved Gabi. If only wounded Jorge hadn't given Julian his supergun and enough ammo to start a world war.

"They've found tracks going further north, huge tracks." Said Jess Fisher.

Jess had found a hunting rifle almost larger and heavier than herself. Michelle had borrowed Julie Yago's angel's sword, but now Jess had it tucked down her belt. Jess was small and the sword occasional dug into the ground as she walked. Michelle had refused to give her the sword, until Jess had briefly touched it with the tip of her index finger. The sword had glowed a kind of mauve colour. At that moment Michelle had given up on the world making any sense at all. Jess now had the sword and Michelle was bumbling along and interested to see what other craziness was waiting for them; further north into the forest.

"One of the first aiders should stay with Jorge." Said Ana. "We need her, but her hip was hurt when the command vehicle rolled over."

"I know who you mean and she can walk." Said David. "We need all the medical help we can get.....Justina can go with us."

Ana was there because she had one of the superguns; they were almost an all areas pass for wherever the latest battle might be, or was likely to be. Her presence also gave the team some authenticity in the eyes of the followers of Muisca.

"Supposing she gets worse ?" Asked Ana.

"Then I'll carry her.....No more arguments; she's going with us." Said David. "If you want to help, carry her medical kit for her."

Michelle had never seen Ana flounce off before, but she said fine with a definite flounce as she walked away.

"You're actually pretty good at the leadership thing, David." Said Michelle.

"I hope to impress while I'm here." Said David. "Our CEO wanted me on the next plane to Vietnam. Those pesky cross pollination issues again. I chose to stay here, where we've a few real problems."

"Oh shit.....You said no to Jacob P Wilson ?" Asked Michelle.

"I did.....I'm waiting for the invitation to find another job." Said David.

Michelle knew the rules of working for Tessera Coffee, most of them were reasonably fair and easy to follow. Rule number one was the irrational and unfair exception; never say no to Jacob P Wilson, ever.

"Thanks for staying; we might not have survived some desk jockey taking over." Said Michelle.

"I appreciate that." Said David.

Jaimie Gosse was there too, he'd driven his old Lincoln town car down every rough muddy lane the SUV's had used. He seemed to have more incendiary rounds for the hunting rifle over his shoulder, though no one knew where he'd obtained them; they were a secret everyone in the team knew about.

"Come on David, we're burning daylight, old buddy." Yelled Jaimie.

"Ok, I need two seconds, maybe three." Shouted David.

David leant in towards Jorge and said something Michelle couldn't hear, but their faces looked serious. He was probably telling the local chief of police to behave and remain in the vehicle. Not an easy thing for Jorge to put up with, but he was nodding his head a lot.

"Alright.....Let's set up a good pace." Said David. "No one wants to be out in the open after nightfall."

Michelle counted a force of fifteen, but two were mainly there to give urgent medical assistance. Not a bad number, it had been a lot less until they'd heard Jorge was going. They had several of the superguns and quite a lot of their special ammunition. If they came across an entire pack of huge wolf type creatures, they'd be in trouble. Otherwise, they were a force capable of looking after themselves. Officially they were only out past the Old Wilkins place to reconnoitre a little and gather intelligence.

"Do you think Jorge will be alright on his own?" Asked Ana.

"He's in a metal box with bullet proof windows." Said Jaimie. "He'll be fine.....It's us you should be worrying about."

"You haven't changed Jaimie, not one little bit." Said Ana.

There was a story there, one rainy afternoon when Michelle had the time to run it down and snag it. Had Ana and Jaimie once been.....It seemed strange in the extreme, but he did have oodles of charm. For the moment, Michelle concentrated on watching the surrounding woodland for potential enemies.

"What I don't understand." Said Julian. "Is how some enemy nation could build a base out here and no one notices it. Someone would be bound to trip over it. Teenagers come out this far to drink and have sex."

"If they found part of a building, they'd just think it was another abandoned farm. Like the Old Wilkins place." Said Jess. "There's a lot of land not being used for anything and a low population density. I know.....I did a lot of research on it for David. You could build just about anything out here; use a lot of camouflage and no one would give it a second glance."

"And if they did.....Give it a glance; What then?" Asked Ana.

"Operation slaughter the locals, begins a little early." Said David.

"That's not amusing, David." Said Ana.

They were noisy, like an outing from school noisy. David yelled a few times, but his yelling was likely to carry as far as the general noise of their team. Michelle remembered a story her grandad had told her; about the days when the US had fought in Vietnam and the Canadians had been there as allies. The Americans had kicked coke tins down the road, as though it was the most natural thing in the world. A few attacks by the local bad guys had cured them of their addiction to noise. If Michelle closed her eyes, it really did sound like a high school picnic. Then someone saw a snake and things got worse.

"It's a Cat-eyed Snake; harmless to people." Someone yelled.



No one cared, they'd have probably fired a few rounds at a cardboard cut-out of a snake. David yelled, but they took no notice. The number of rounds fired, made that poor Cat-eyed Snake a very expensive snake to kill. When everyone calmed down and Jaimie had thrown the dead snake into a bush, David had given them a serious talking to. Basically if there was an enemy out there, they were getting a lot of pre-warning of their approach.

"Yeah, they needed to be told." Said Michelle.

Might have been imagination, but Michelle thought everyone was better behaved after that. A lot less unnecessary talking and almost no yelling at all. When those scouting ahead found the disused farm, Julian came back with the news; delivering it in a normal voice.

"There an old farm just the other side of the wood." Said Julian. "About the same size as the Wilkins place, but in a slightly worse condition."

"There are abandoned farms all over this region." Said Jess. "The map I have is covered in them."

"But not here, not where the woods end." Said Jaimie. "I know this part of Colombia and you can trust me.....There is no unused farm where you found one."

"You're saying these, whoever they are, built a fake farm to hide under?" Asked Julian.

"Wouldn't be hard to do." Said David. "And as Jess just said, there are a lot of abandoned farms out this way. No one will take a second look at one in the wrong place."

"Sneaky bastards." Said Michelle.

"We need to move quietly now, I mean it." Said David. "Someone run ahead and tell the forward scouts to shut up a bit.....I can hear some of them from here."

"I'll go." Said Jess.

Julian looked unhappy; he was the guy Jorge usually got to run anywhere that needed running to. He was limping though and looked as though he needed at least a week of rest and recuperation. As they came out of the wood, Michelle knew the abandoned buildings were a fake. Too tidy in a way and way too uniformly old looking. Derelict farms aren't like that; many of the buildings have usually suffered neglect for decades. It looked like a movie set; albeit a very well made movie set.

"This place is too tidy to be genuine." Said Michelle. "And nothing has fallen down.....One of the barns should have collapsed, it's what they do if you neglect them."

"Yeah, I had one fall apart on me, in the middle of the night." Said Jaimie.

"Looks alright.....Feels like a fake." Said Ana.

"Yep." Said Julian.

"Spread out, but be careful." Said David. "We're looking for where these things come out from underground. Whoever is looking after them can't get rid of every track."

"What do we do if we see one of the creatures?" Asked Jaimie.

"Shoot at it.....Kill it if you can." Said David.

"A few pictures would be nice too." Said Jess.

"You heard the lady and you've all got phones." Said David. "If you spot anything that looks important.....Take a picture of it. Pass that on to everyone."

Michelle cringed as they started yelling at people some distance away, telling them to take pictures of anything strange, or weird. Most of them had done time in the military and should have known better. Julian was looking a bit abandoned, as the others ran to various parts of the fake derelict farm.

"Come with me if you like, Julian." Said Michelle. "I intend to take a good look at everything and.....I won't be yelling at anyone."

"Sounds good to me." Said Julian.

Ana was staying with David and Jaimie had already run off somewhere. Jess joined them though, as Michelle headed towards the smallest and least interesting looking of the farm buildings.

"Gut feeling guys, I have a feeling about that building with the corrugated iron roof." Said Michelle.

"It does look out of place." Said Jess.

"Just give me a bit of warning if we need to run away." Said Julian.

Michelle had already looked Julian over and done the math in her head.

"I think I could stick you over my shoulder and get us both to somewhere safe." Said Michelle.

"What about me ?" Asked Jess.

"You.....I've seen you run, Jess." Said Michelle. "You could outrun a greyhound.....You'll be fine."

When they saw the drag marks, they were clear and obvious. Something had come out of a set of sliding doors at the back of the building and there had been an attempt to wipe away the tracks. The building was in the middle of nowhere, so there had been no real effort put into wiping away the creature's tracks. A few tracks remained and Michelle recognised them. A creature like Rocky had come out of the building, but the size of the tracks meant it was older than her, maybe fully grown. "You know what David wants." Said Michelle. "Lots of pictures of the tracks. Some of the building too, so it can be found at a later date."

Everyone was busy filling their phones with pictures of tracks and the building. When the whirring sound started. Michelle knew what it was, as did Jess.

"There's an elevator coming up from somewhere below." Said Jess.

"May I suggest that we need to hide ?" Asked Ana, who'd obviously decided to join them.

A really good idea, but hide where ? The only bushes were a good twenty yards away. The only real option was a bit of a gamble. There was a ruined building quite close to them, with only three walls and part of the roof. It would do though, to hide from whoever, or whatever was coming up in the elevator.

"Into the ruined building." Said Michelle. "Follow me.....It's the only place to hide."

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