

Chapter 1

I always knew I was different from other kids but I didn't realize how different until now.

For one thing, my memories of being really young are few and far between. I mean, sure, I remember a few details, but most of it's fuzzy, not up to snuff at all. I'm eleven years old, but I can't remember anything from when I was younger than five or six. How weird is that?

I don't remember any of my friends before we moved here (me and my mom and dad). I don't have a clue where we came from. Did we used to live in an apartment? A house? A spaceship? I just don't know. Country or city? Not a clue, but I can vaguely remember trees.

It's like I was born at six years old. When I try to think hard about any time before we moved here, something fuzzy pops into my head, then poof! It's gone. So I can't be sure if I really remembered something or my mind is making something up to make me happy. Because I really hate not knowing.

We've lived here since I was six, in a little town called Dakota Youth, twenty minutes from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. This town is so small it doesn't even have a convenience store. You have to drive to Yarmouth for gas, groceries, or even a quart of milk.

The only school here in Dakota Youth starts at kindergarten and goes right up to grade twelve. One school, three churches, one Catholic, one Protestant, one United. That's it for my town.

But do you know what? I like it here. It feels like I've lived here all my life, not only because the only memories I have involve this town.

I finally know why that is. Why I'm different.

It all started last Friday, after school. Me (my name's Gavin Carragher) and my two best friends, Mike O'Rourke and Jason Baxter, had just finished playing basketball on the outdoor court at the school, and were trying to decide what to do before we had to go home for supper. Mike is eleven, like me, but Jason won't be eleven for a few weeks, right after Halloween.

"What was that?" I asked. I was sure I'd caught a glimpse of something.

"What?" Jason followed my gaze.

"I thought I saw something running under the bleachers." I squinted, trying to see better, but the sun was beating down on the metal bleaching, reflecting the blinding rays directly into my eyes.

"I don't see anything," Jason said, shading his eyes with his hand.

Mike took a quick glance. "You seeing things, Gavin?"

I shrugged. "Guess it was nothing. I can't see anything anymore."

"I'm starving," Jason complained. "I'm going home to eat."

Mike and I laughed when Jason's stomach rumbled loud enough to wake the dead.

"Man, you're always hungry," Mike said.

"Yeah," I agreed. "Let's get home before Jason dies of starvation."

We set out for home. The three of us live on Cranberry Lane, which is only three blocks from the school. It was cool living only houses away from your best friends.

I met them the first day we moved here, before Mom and Dad had even taken the first box out of the car. Mike and Jason walked by, saw the boxes, asked if we were moving in, then asked me to play basketball. I said sure, and from that day on, the three of us have been inseparable.

We walked by the United Church, right before the cemetery. Every day we walk by the Church, then the cemetery, to get home from school. But today, the cemetery looked different. It wasn't like it was dark and spooky or anything. It was just...a bit off. And I could see things. Things moving between the tombstones.