

Flashback

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Preface

Life. Death. Rebirth.

For the last few months my life has been a series of questions.

Was it possible that a person could be born again? Was it possible that some dreams are not dreams at all but memories of a past life? Was it possible that I, Ivy Christina Drake, could have a second life to finish unfinished business from a previous life? Was it possible that my unfinished business was intertwined with someone else's unfinished business?

If it was possible, then what was the probability that those two lives would come together again? Could they pick up where they left off? Could they start over based on whom they were today?

I thought my new life in Iowa, seriously who starts a new life in Iowa, would be boring.

As I stood at the edge of a cornfield, a real cornfield where corn grows in row after row after row, I couldn't believe what I was searching for. At the edge of a cornfield on the outskirts of my new home town, I was searching for the remains of a body; a body that might have been mine. I watched Jack as he scanned the ground with the flashlight on his phone. Jack didn't think I was crazy, he believed. He believed in us; past and present.

What would happen if we found the body? I wondered as I continued to search through the brush.

Maybe some questions should be left unanswered.

Ivy's Story

Chapter 1

“Ivy,” Mom called from the kitchen, “your friends are here.”

I glanced around my room for the last time. It was so bare. All the posters and pictures were packed and loaded in the moving van along with my furniture and my clothes. The memories, however, were abundant. Memories of my dad painting over the old baby pink paint from before I was born with a more sophisticated Tiffany blue paint as a surprise when I entered high school. Memories of my mom explaining our fire safety drill and how I was supposed to crawl out of my window to safety if she or my dad couldn't reach me. Memories of the hundreds of sleepovers with the friends who were waiting for me outside. Taking a deep breath I wiped the tears from eyes, picked up my back pack and turned off the light for the last time. “Goodbye room,” I whispered as I softly closed the door. Closing the door was kind of well, symbolic; like I was closing a chapter in the book of my life, the chapter known as *The First Sixteen Years*.

Placing my hand on the railing, I slowly walked down the steps leading to the front door. Funny how the hardwood made me think of my dad. He liked to slide across the floor in his white athletic socks saying he was Tom Cruise in *Risky Business*. Mom would look at me, roll her eyes and say, “Thank God he's not in his tidy whities and a button-down.”

I walked through the dining room and into the kitchen. Bare, it was totally bare. “Hey, Mom,” I said as I entered the room. Mom leaned against the kitchen counter staring at the empty kitchen. “This was my favorite room in the house,” she said as she gave me a sad smile. “I loved to hang out here with you and your dad. I remember when we got the granite counter top. The guy at the store told your dad that if the house burnt down we could install these babies in our

new house.” She patted the black granite and looked at me with a real smile, “I think that’s when we decided you needed a fire evacuation plan. Your dad worried about the craziest stuff.”

I gave her a quick hug as I headed out the back door. “I’ll be ready in about ten minutes,” Mom called as I walked out the door. Since my dad died, everything here reminded my mom of my dad; staying here was just too hard for my mom. As hard as the move was for me, living here without Dad was even harder.

Alex, Erica, Claire and Audrey were leaning against Alex’s car waiting patiently for me to walk down the drive. “Thanks for coming,” I said softly. I was trying really hard not to cry. Claire ran up the remainder of the drive and hugged me so tight it was hard to breathe. Claire and I walked down to the end of the drive. Audrey reached over and gave me a hug too, “I’m going to miss you,” she said. “Hey, my turn,” Alex said as she pushed Audrey out of the way. “Ivy and I have been friends the longest, we went to pre-school together.” Erica came up and hugged me and Alex at the same time.

“Okay,” Audrey said, “we have a present for you.” Alex pulled a large package from the trunk of her car.

Shaking my head I accepted the package, “This is so nice.”

I tore the wrapping from the package, “Oh,” I exclaimed, “I love it.” I carefully examined the poster, it was pictures of us. “Look at this, it’s from Kindergarten, we were so cute.” Glancing at my friends and then looking at the photographs documenting our lives together caused a lump to form in my throat. Losing my dad, leaving my friends, moving away from the only home I’ve ever known, a girl can only take so much. My eyes started to sting and I knew I was going to cry...again.

“I think you’re missing the most important point,” Claire said pointing to the captions under each picture. “It’s to help you review for the vocab on the college entrance exam. We know you love big words.”

I wiped my eyes and read the caption under the photograph of our first day of Kindergarten. “Oh my God,” I said as I started to laugh, “No, really,” I read, “Alex, Erica, Claire, Ivy and Audrey suffer from hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia as they enter Kindergarten.”

Alex was sniffing, struggling not to cry as she laughed, “Do you see the irony, we’re standing under the word wall. Look, the biggest word is ‘and’.” Alex said as she pointed at the photograph. “I guess when you’re five ‘and’ seems like a big word.”

“I did the tie dye background,” Erica said. “We have your two obsessions, big words and the 1960s, with your favorite people, us.”

“I’m going to miss you so much,” we sort of stumbled into a really awkward group hug.

Claire, the most matter of fact member of our group, said, “Okay, so it’s not like we won’t be able to talk and text all of the time. I mean cell phones do work in Iowa. I even heard they have the internet, maybe even wireless.”

We all kind of laughed. “Hey,” I said, “don’t hate on Iowa. It’s my new state.”

“Hi, girls,” Mom called from the top of the driveway. “They have cell phones and wireless internet in Iowa, I know, it’s really quite shocking, but true.” She was shaking her head and laughing. It was great to hear her laugh.

“Come on girls, give me a hug,” she said as she embraced each of my friends. “You girls have been great friends. You know you are always welcome to visit us at our new home. It’s only a five hour drive.”

“Look at the poster we made for Ivy, Mrs. Drake,” Audrey said as she held up the poster and turned it to Mom. Mom examined it carefully. I knew what she was thinking, my dad took most of the pictures; the first day of school, Halloween, 8th grade dance, pretty much all of them. He made sure we had a well-documented life. “This is great,” she said with a smile, “it will be perfect in Ivy’s new room. Nice use of multisyllabic words,” she paused. “Way to support her addiction.”

“Ivy, we need to go. I’ll back out the van and you can give your friends one more hug.”

I looked at Claire, Audrey, Alex and Erica, my four best friends. I tried to hug them all once and I tried not to cry, “I love you guys,” I said. We stood hugging at the end of the drive until Mom drove the mini-van to the street.

“Bye,” I said as I waved and got into the car. I flashed them a smile and said, “I’ll text you in a little.”

“Wait,” Claire shouted and my mom stopped the car. “I forgot to give you your reading material.” She handed me the latest issue of *Seventeen*. “It’s got everything you need to know for starting the school year right.”

I looked at our house for the last time and waved at the girls until they were out of sight. Tears rolled slowly down my cheeks as I stared out the window seeing nothing.

Mom and I sat in silence until we reached Highway 40 and headed away from St. Louis toward Iowa. I continued to stare out the window trying not to think about anything.

“Well, that was hard,” Mom said to the windshield. She reached over, grabbed my hand and gave it a squeeze.

“Mom,” I said, “why don’t you tell me a little about Newton? I Googled it, but didn’t find out much.”

“What did you find out?” she asked.

“Well, not much. Um, it was on *60 Minutes* in a show called *Anger in the Heartland*. I watched the video, it was kind of depressing. The town looked cute, but it looked kind of, I don’t know, barren. I also checked out the high school website. I’m really glad you forced me to submit a video for cheerleading tryouts. The captain friended me online and now I’m friends with all the girls on the squad.” I paused, “Mom, why didn’t we visit Newton when Daddy was alive?”

“That’s a fair question, but kind of complicated,” Mom said as she stared out the window and I stared at her. It was hard to believe my mom was in her forties. Her brown hair was pulled back in a ponytail and she was wearing a pair of my dad’s running shorts and t-shirt. Mom is cute, I thought. The only lines she had on her face were laugh lines around her eyes; she looked sad, but not old.

“You know I have an older sister, or had an older sister. Anyway, she disappeared or left town in the early 1970s around the time I was born. My parents would never leave town because they were waiting for her to come home. When I graduated from high school I was determined to force my parents to leave Newton even if for only a few days at a time. Christine hadn’t contacted them in seventeen years. I don’t know why they thought she was going to show up at the house one day, seriously.” Mom sounded kind of mad. I think my mom was a little bitter over the whole thing. My aunt’s name was Christine, who knew?

“Anyway, at first grandma and grandpa refused to visit me at college. My sophomore year at Iowa State my dad started visiting me when he realized I was not coming back, I refused to go home for holidays, summer, it was pretty miserable. Finally, after you were born, they started traveling together to see you. So, we just never had a reason to go because my mom and

dad came to our house for the holidays.” She paused and took a deep breath, “I know this move is hard for you. It seemed like the right thing to do. Everything about St. Louis reminds me of your dad. I just couldn’t stay. I’m sorry, honey. I wanted to make it work until you graduated, but it was too hard, it was hard to breathe. For some reason Newton was the only place I wanted to live. I actually loved growing up in a small town; I don’t think you are going to hate it.”

Not hate it. Well, I guess that’s something to look forward to, not hating it. “Well, that’s interesting. What do you think happened to Aunt Christine? You never talked about her before. I don’t think I even knew her name.”

“I don’t know,” my mom said softly, “it was the early ‘70s. Maybe she hitchhiked to California and joined the peace movement or something. My parents never talked about her, but her pictures were displayed all over the house.” Mom stopped talking for a moment, “I named you in honor of her, the sister I never knew, only I added the “a” on the end because I liked how it sounded. Ivy Christina Drake.” Mom turned on the radio. She was done talking.

Maybe it wouldn’t be bad, I thought as I stared out the window. The girls I met online seemed nice and the pictures of their friends and parties looked like ours. Okay, maybe the picture of people at a party in a barn, a real barn with real farm equipment, wasn’t the same. But different could be okay. I had two choices; I could sit around and wish I was in St. Louis or I could make the best of my new life in my new town. My dad would have said, “Ivy, make the best of it, whatever it is.” He would emphasize the “it” to make his point.

“I love John Mellencamp; I love this song,” Mom said interrupting my musings.

I listened for a moment, “Mom, *Small Town*, really?” I turned up the volume.

“Oh, the irony,” she said with a laugh as she play punched me on the shoulder. We sang; really loud and really bad.

Jack's Story

Chapter 2

"Jack," Mom yelled. "Jack, get up here now."

The woman did not respect my work. I know she thought I spent way too much time in the basement working on my show. I shoved my chair away from the desk and carefully placed *Abbey Road* in the cube next to the turntable.

"Jack," she yelled again.

What the hell, she had the patience of a friggin' flea.

"Mom," I said as I took the stairs two at a time, "you have the patience of flea."

"Take a seat," she said gesturing to one of the chairs at the kitchen table.

"Son, I just got off the phone with Dr. Marx. She said you were supposed to discuss your condition with your dad and me."

"Which dad are you talking about, Mom?" I asked sullenly. "My real dad, the one you dumped who moved to California a couple years ago, or the one you married whom I refer to as Stan." Mom looked hurt; sometimes I was a real ass, I played the 'dad card' when I didn't want to talk about something.

"Sorry, Mom," I said, "Stan's a good guy, he's just not my dad."

"Okay, Jack," Mom said with a sad shake of her head, "we are not having the 'why your father left us discussion' today. We need to talk about your diagnosis."

"I left the notes on the counter. Didn't you read 'em?" I asked, resorting to sullen and angry as I stood to leave the kitchen.

"Sit down, Jack," she said as she pulled the notes out of the junk drawer. "I read the notes. Then I looked up Dissociative Identity Disorder on my phone. I still don't understand the

diagnosis.” I watched as she fidgeted with her wedding ring. That was her tell, she was pretty upset.

“Dr. Marx is not exactly sure why I have memories from the Vietnam War or why I have an apparent fixation on the years 1969 and 1970. She doesn’t know why I suffer experiences of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder either. She actually has an opinion on PTSD; she thinks that’s connected to the Vietnam War memories that I couldn’t possibly have.”

Stan walked into the kitchen and joined me at the table, “She doesn’t seem to know much about anything.”

“You got that right,” I said to Stan. He really was a good guy, but I wasn’t ever gonna call him Dad.

“Her best guess was Dissociative Identity Disorder. It used to be called Multiple Personality Disorder,” I explained.

“And,” my mom said as I paused trying to figure out how to explain DID.

“Basically, Dr. Marx believes I had a traumatic event occur during my life that I can’t deal with. So, I revert to my 1969 personality and act totally different from myself as a dude from the 1960s.” I waited a moment for their response.

“That doesn’t make sense,” Mom said as she perused the report again. “You always are you, you just have really bad nightmares and sometimes you totally zone out, but you never have a,” she read directly from the report, “second personality with its own posture, gestures and ways of talking.” She looked up from the paper and glanced from Stan to me, “You guys were right. Dr. Marx is a waste of time and money.”

“I’m sorry, Jack. I really wanted to help you.” Her voice cracked, damn she was gonna cry. I hated it when Mom cried.

“Mom, I’m okay,” I said as I got out of my chair and walked to where she was standing next to the fridge. I hugged her and she hugged me back with all of her strength.

“When did you get to be so big Jack?” she asked somewhere into my mid-chest. She stepped back and looked up at my face, “Wow, my little boy isn’t so little.”

I stepped out of Mom’s embrace and lifted her out of the way of the fridge.

“And you’re strong too,” she said as she swatted me with the report she was still holding in her hand.

I really wasn’t okay. I didn’t think I had multiple personalities or dissociative identity disorder, but something was not right. “Some of the symptoms,” I said as I opened the refrigerator door and grabbed the carton of milk, “are similar to what I experience.”

“Like this,” she said pointing to something on the paper, “headache, amnesia, time loss.”

“Nah, I was thinking more about the drug and alcohol abuse listed in column two,” I replied with a grin.

“Jack, you are not funny,” Mom said as she handed me a box of cereal to go with the milk.

“I think the flashback thing is what stands out to me,” I continued ignoring the remark about my comedic talent. “The dreams, or whatever, are phantasmagorical, I wonder if Dr. Marx could hypnotize me and figure out what’s really going on.”

Stan looked up from his paper and smiled, “Nice use of the word phantasmagorical.” Mom lifted a brow; a sure sign she wanted the definition.

“Probably the best definition of that word connected to what Jack experiences is a constantly shifting complex succession of things seen or imagined. Jack, would you agree?” he asked.

I nodded in response to the question.

“Hypnosis might be a good idea,” Stan said. “It could also uncover any traumatic events that you might be subconsciously hiding.” Mom and Stan shared a look, not sure what that was about.

“I guess if I was hiding something subconsciously I wouldn’t know it, hence the subconscious hiding,” I didn’t say anything for a few minutes. Mom and Stan patiently waited for my reply.

“I actually think I’m up for hypnosis,” I said. “Can you schedule it for, umm, November.”

“Jack,” Mom said in exasperation.

“Football starts tomorrow. I don’t want anyone messing with my head until the season is over.” Mom looked at Stan, maybe she was hoping for support or something.

Stan shook his head, “This is Jack’s decision. If he is comfortable waiting, then we should be too.”

“You sure you’re okay waiting? The nightmares seem to be getting worse.” Stan looked at me carefully as he waited for my reply.

“Nah, I’m sure,” I replied. “I know you guys think they’re getting worse; I kinda think they’re getting better.”

I didn’t believe they were getting better, as in less than before. But the content was better. Lately the dreams were about an incredibly beautiful girl who seemed to be as into me as I was into her. Damn, into, that was the 1960s talking for sure. No need to share that with the adults in the room.

“Are we good?” I asked. “If we are, I’m taking the milk and the box of cereal and returning to the basement to finish my weekly show.” I paused at the top of the stairs and looked

back at Stan and Mom, “I make big bucks doing the show; for whatever reason *Flashback 1969* has some serious internet crowd appeal.”

“Don’t spill anything,” Mom called as I walked down the steps to my basement studio.

I put the cereal and milk on a table away from the electronics. Mom didn’t want me to spill on the carpet; I didn’t want me spilling on my stuff.

My head was pounding again. I leaned back in my chair and closed my eyes. The headaches increased in intensity after I started dreaming about the girl. Now, not only was I messed up with the Vietnam stuff I also had this empty feeling in the pit of my stomach like I forgot something or someone really important. She seemed to be the key. The weird thing was, okay seriously this is all weird, I thought, she looked familiar. Not like familiar as in I see her in my dreams of the 1960s and I remember her, but familiar like I’ve seen her recently.

Shaking my head, I cleared my thoughts. My online show really was making money. I was going to be able to pay for college. Well, that’s if I wanted to go to college. Ironically, I was kind of thinking military. I stared at the turntable contemplating life.

I won’t be going anywhere if I don’t get my show up and running I thought as I rummaged through my album collection. Who should be the featured artist today? I grabbed *The Foundations*.

I flipped over the album and read the list of songs. *Build Me Up Buttercup*. I checked my list of the Top 100 from 1969. There it was; number nine. I wondered why I hadn’t done this one before. I looked up the band on the internet. My viewers would like the story. The group was from the UK and they were composed of dudes from the West Indies, the UK and Sri Lanka. Nice. I quickly typed up my notes, found some pics and video to add to the show.

“Hey, Jack’s back with your Sunday night addition of Flashback 1969. Tonight’s featured artist *The Foundations*.” I talked into the camera adding the video footage and pictures of the band as I shared a brief history of their brief history. The pit in my stomach was gnawing and I was feeling pretty light headed. I just needed to make it through the show. I pulled the album out of the cover and placed it on the turntable. “Tonight we’re listening to *The Foundations* number nine hit from 1969, *Build Me Up Buttercup*. To all of you listening, let me know what you think at Flash1969 hashtag buttercup. That’s right, hashtag buttercup. Or just leave me a message on the channel. Peace, Love and Rock ‘n Roll.” I flashed a peace sign, turned on the turntable and placed the needle on the album. The song blasted out of the speakers. My head felt like it was going to explode...

“How can you not love this song? Come on Johnny,” she said as she turned up the volume on the radio in my new Camaro. “I think it’s groovy.”

“I think you’re groovy,” I said as I reached across the console to pull her into my arms. She looped her arms around my neck and smiled. “It’s a great make out song,” she whispered as she pulled my head down to hers.

“You’re right,” I replied with my lips touching hers, “I love this song.”

“Now, call me buttercup,” she giggled as she pressed her lips to mine.

The sound of the needle signaling the end of the album pulled me out of my, damn, trance. I gently removed the needle off the album hoping my stupid trance hadn’t resulted in a damaged album or a damaged needle. I carefully examined the album and then the needle, it was all good.

I watched the show, made a few edits and posted it to my channel. I put the album back on the turntable and played the song again. God, it was so elusive. She was so elusive. I knew I knew her. I just couldn't place her. Maybe I should do the hypnosis thing now, before football.

"Jack," Stan yelled from the top of the stairs. "We're going to the Mexican place for dinner. You ready?"

"I'm coming," I replied as I placed the album back in its cover. The gnawing feeling was back, maybe I was just hungry.

Ivy's Story

Chapter 3

“Ivy. Ivy. Ivy Christina. Ivy Christina Drake. Wake Up. We’re almost there,” Mom said as she gently pushed on my shoulder.

I looked out the window just as we passed a sign indicating Newton was the next exit. I stretched my legs, my arms and moved my head back and forth trying to get comfortable. I picked up my phone and saw a ton of messages.

“Don’t start responding now,” Mom said, “we need to take in the moment. Absorb the scenery. Pick out the landmarks.”

I shook my head and kind of laughed as I surreptitiously looked at the messages. Surreptitiously, I thought, well, that’s a good word for being sneaky. I sent a text to Claire sharing my thoughts.

“Ivy,” Mom said in a slightly disgusted voice. I tossed the phone into my backpack and dutifully looked out the window at the, well, fields and cows. “The scenery looks pretty much like the scenery I was staring at around the time I fell asleep.”

“What were you dreaming about anyway?” Mom asked. “You were smiling in your sleep.”

“Hmm, I don’t remember. Maybe I got a good score on my ACT,” I said as I stared out the window. And then I did, I remembered. My dream was not about my score on a college entrance exam. My dream was way more interesting; I was making out with a boy named Johnny in a vintage car; a vintage car with a boy with a vintage name, kind of funny. Maybe, I’d find the boy of my dreams in Newton. I closed my eyes and pressed my forehead against the glass, the boy reminded me of someone.

“Hey,” Mom said loudly, “it’s the Newton exit. So, look to your left. You’ll see the NASCAR race track. Isn’t that totally amazing that Newton has a NASCAR track? Grandpa said I should be sure to point it out.”

“Mom,” I said with a laugh, “and I am now interested in NASCAR because...”

“Oh, don’t be a spoil sport,” she said with a smile, “you can Tweet about it to your friends.”

I reached for my phone, “Not now, you need to take in the ambiance.”

“Ambiance, really?” I shook my head and laughed.

We drove past a Wal-Mart and a few other stores. Mom said, “Now, we are going down First Avenue. It’s like the main street in Newton. We would drive around First Avenue when I was in high school.”

“Drive around?” I asked.

She explained, “Well, we would get in cars and drive around town. It was a fun thing to do.”

“Oh my God,” I whispered, “people ‘drive around’ for fun. Seriously?”

“Maybe they don’t do that anymore. I mean I’m sure there are lots more exciting things to do since I graduated from high school.”

“This is the Newton square,” she said proudly. “I worked in a clothing store called Leonard’s with some of my friends. Hmm, it’s gone now. Lots of the stores are gone. But it looks like they added new stuff like a coffee shop. Oh,” she said gesturing to a little restaurant with floor to ceiling plate glass windows, “that’s the Maid-rite where we would go for cherry Cokes and French fries. I wonder if they’re still as good.” She sounded kind of wistful.

“Mom,” I asked softly, “are you happy to be back?”

“I really am. This really was the right choice,” she wiped the corner of her eyes and then squeezed my hand. “Let’s see your grandma and grandpa’s house is...” she turned on her turn signal and we pulled into the driveway of one of the houses on the main street, First Avenue. “...here.”

Mom placed her head on the steering wheel and started to sob. “It’s okay, Mom,” I said as I rubbed her back.

She pulled herself together and wiped her eyes and nose on the bottom of her t-shirt. She grinned though her eyes were still teary, “Kind of gross, right?”

“I don’t know, Mom,” I replied. “You could call it abhorrent, repulsive or just plain nasty.”

“Ha! Ha!” Mom replied; at least she wasn’t crying, I thought.

Grandpa and Grandma stepped on to the porch. I waved from the car and grabbed my backpack from the floor. We’d be staying with Grandpa and Grandma for a while. Hopefully, it would all work out.

“Come on, Ivy,” Mom said, “let’s do this.”

I got out of the car. I stood on the driveway and stared. I had the weirdest feeling, I felt like I was coming home. I’d never been to this house before, but I knew this house.

“Come on, Johnny,” I whispered. “If we are very quiet, I’ll be able to convince Mom and Dad that we fell asleep on the porch swing.”

“Watch out for the second step,” I said just as Johnny stepped down hard. The creak was so loud it sounded like a clap of thunder. The porch lights came on in an instant. “It squeaks,” I whispered loudly and glanced at Johnny with a grin. He rolled his eyes in response. He’s such a hunk, I thought.

“Christine,” Dad said, “you are thirty minutes late.”

“Johnny’s just leaving,” I reached up and gave Johnny a quick kiss on the cheek. “You better split.”

“Christine,” Mom said in her angry voice.

“Coming,” I called. I ran up the remaining steps. As I opened the door, I turned and blew Johnny a kiss.

“Ivy,” Mom said, “come on, honey.”

What just happened? I wondered. Did I just have an awake dream about Johnny of my car dream? Weird, kind of phantasmagorical, stop with the big words, I said to myself. People would think I was weird if I actually said them.

I waved at Grandma and Grandpa. “We’re here,” I called as I walked toward the steps. Nothing like stating the obvious I said to myself.

Grandma stretched out her arms like she was a zombie or something. “Christine,” she whispered. “Oh my God,” now she was speaking loudly, “Christine is home. Dave,” she turned to Grandpa, “Christine is home.” Grandpa just stood on the top of the steps frozen in place. I rushed forward as Grandma began to collapse. Mom caught her before she tumbled to the ground.

I snatched the phone out of my backpack and punched in 911. “Hello,” I said, “my grandma just collapsed. She’s breathing and everything, but she’s unconscious.”

My grandfather gestured for my phone, “My wife experienced a shock. She probably just fainted, but I’m concerned it could be a stroke. That is correct. We live on First Avenue. Thank you.”

Grandpa handed me back my phone and I put it in my pocket. We could hear the sirens. “Wow, that was fast,” I said to no one in particular. I hope this wasn’t an omen, I thought as we

waited for the ambulance. We're here for like a minute and Grandma passed out, that can't be good.

"The firehouse is just a few blocks away," Mom said. She was rubbing Grandma's hand.

The ambulance and fire truck pulled up to the house. The paramedics jumped out of the car and ran across the lawn. They checked Grandma's vital signs.

"Christine. Christine." Grandma mumbled, "Christine is home. Praise Jesus, Christine is home."

I gave my mom a look. My mom's name was Suzie not Christine.

"We're going to take her to the hospital," one of the paramedics said, "they will be able to determine what caused the issue. It doesn't appear she suffered a stroke, but we need to be certain." The paramedics gently lifted Grandma onto the stretcher and rolled her into the ambulance.

"We'll meet you at the hospital," Grandpa said to the paramedic as he climbed into the passenger side of Mom's minivan. I climbed into the back and my mom started the car.

"Your mother thought Ivy was Christine," Grandpa said as we drove quickly to the hospital. "We noticed the resemblance at the funeral, but that was over a year ago. Ivy looks just like Christine." Grandpa glanced at me in the rearview mirror and smiled, "Don't worry Ivy, you look like you too. The way the sun hit you as you walked across the lawn made the resemblance uncanny."

"I hope Grandma's okay," I managed to whisper. How strange is that, I had a trance like moment about a girl named Christine just as my grandma, and apparently my grandpa, thought I was their daughter Christine? Definitely strange. I've been in Newton less than an hour, so far, not boring.

Mom dropped Grandpa at the emergency room entrance and parked the car. We walked in silence to the ER. “Maybe coming back wasn’t such a great idea,” Mom said as she squeezed my hand.

“Mom,” I replied, “Grandma is going to be fine. She just had a moment.”

Grandma and Grandpa were waiting for us in the ER. “I’m fine,” Grandma said, “I just fainted. I’m so sorry, Ivy. For a moment, you looked just like your mom’s older sister Christine looked around the time she disappeared. I’m so sorry.”

I reached down and hugged her, “That’s okay, Grams,” I replied, “I’m glad you’re okay.”

“I’ll get the car and be right back,” Mom said as she walked toward the exit.

“I am so sorry, Ivy,” Grandma said again.

“Seriously, Grandma,” I said. “You don’t need to apologize.”

We waited in silence until Mom pulled in front of the ER doors. I walked next to Grandma as Grandpa rolled her in a wheel chair to the car.

Grandma seemed to be in much better spirits as we approached the house. “Suzie, we put you in your old bedroom. It now has a queen bed. We didn’t think you’d appreciate sleeping on a twin.” Grandma laughed. “I boxed all of your things and stored them in the basement. When you and Christine, I mean Ivy, move into your new home you can sort through them then.”

“Ivy,” Grandma continued, “we made you a bedroom in the attic. We hope you like it, if not; we can change it to whatever your heart desires.” She took a deep breath and continued, “Grandpa and I are so happy you have come back to town. You know you can stay with us as long as you like, as long as you need.”

“Thanks, Mom,” Mom said to Grandma, “Ivy and I really appreciate it.”

We pulled in front of the house; the sense of déjà vous was pretty overwhelming.

“Mom,” I asked, “have I been here before?”

“No,” she replied, “why?”

“I don’t know,” I said, “it just seems so familiar yet not familiar. Maybe I just remember the house from photos or something.”

We grabbed a couple of suitcases from the back of the van. I walked up the stairs and into the house overwhelmed with feelings of, I’m not exactly sure of what. Like nostalgia, which makes absolutely no sense, I mean you can only feel nostalgic if you were remembering something.

I knew this house. Inside the front door was a sitting room with a baby grand piano. A staircase led to the second floor. The kitchen was in the back of the house. In the kitchen pantry there would be a cookie jar full of chocolate chip cookies or maybe pecan ice box cookies too. The upstairs had four bedrooms.

I looked at the steps leading to the second floor; several of the steps creaked. You had to be careful if you were going to sneak out. Whoa, I wondered, where did that come from? How did I know about the house? I must have been here before. Maybe, I came to visit Grandma and Grandpa and Mom just forgot. Maybe mom told me stories about her old house and now I remembered.

“You don’t think I should sleep on the second floor?” I asked as I started to climb the staircase with my two suitcases.

“You’re going to love your room,” Grandma said with a smile. “We even added your own bathroom.”

“Awesome,” I said as I climbed to the top of the stairs. Three of the doors were opened. The door at the end of the hall near the steps to the attic was closed. I glanced in each room as I walked down the hall. I wondered why the last door was closed. I placed my suitcases on the floor and turned the handle. The door was locked.

“Hurry up,” Johnny shouted from the bottom of the stairs. Boys were not allowed on the second floor of my parent’s house. I laughed to myself. Mom was so square, didn’t she realize we could do whatever she thought we might do upstairs pretty much anywhere. Oh well, I thought as I closed the door to my bedroom.

“Hold your horses, Johnny,” I said as I walked down the stairs. “It’s not even dark yet. Drive-in movies don’t start until it’s dark.”

“Wow,” Johnny said as I walked down the stairs.

“You look pretty groovy yourself,” I replied as I admired Johnny, he was boss. I loved everything about him; his black hair, his blue eyes, his really broad shoulders.

“You kids be good at the passion pit,” Dad said with a laugh as he and mom walked us out to the porch. He tried so hard to be hip using our lingo.

“Dave,” Mom said as she squeezed his arm, “don’t call it that. You might give them ideas.”

“Goodnight Mr. and Mrs. Van den Berg. I’ll have her home by curfew. I promise,” Johnny said as he opened the car door for me.

“Nice ride,” Dad said as he and mom stood on the porch watching us leave. “You’re going to need to take me for a spin. I bet that Camaro has a bit more under the hood than my old station wagon.”

“Sure Mr. V.,” Johnny replied, “I might even let you drive her.”

“Bye, Dad,” I waved as we pulled away. Johnny put his arm around me and pulled me as close as he could. Passion pit, I thought, Dad was probably right. I shrugged as I snuggled into Johnny’s side, who goes to the drive-in to watch the movie anyway?

I sat down with a thump on the steps leading to my attic room. I was obsessed with this Johnny from my dreams. He reminded me of someone; who, I wondered.

I walked up the steps to my new room trying not to bang my bags on the steps. The room was perfect. I stuck my head out the door and yelled, “I love it!”

“That’s great, Ivy Godivy,” Grandpa yelled back.

I took out my phone, took pictures of my new room and sent a group text with the photos. I re-read my text “aesthetically pleasing”.

Claire was the first to respond, “Love the room. Nice use of the Top 100.”

Alex replied, “Room is great. Top 100?”

“ACT vocab,” Erica said. “Love it!” I think she meant the room not the word.

Flashback 1969 started in five minutes, I realized. Sure, I thought, I could watch it whenever, but I liked to watch it on the first run. I turned on my tablet. Shoot, I needed the WiFi code. Crap, my grandparents probably don’t have WiFi. I ran down the steps and into the kitchen. I went to the cookie jar stored in the pantry next to the fridge. “Grams,” I said, “oh, hope you don’t mind that I grabbed a few cookies. I love these rectangular ones, the ice box cookies...mmm. Do you have a WiFi code?” I asked with my mouth full of cookie.

“Yes, we do,” Grandpa said handing me a piece of paper. Grandma was staring at me. I guess I must look like Christine again or something.

“Thanks!” I said as I dashed up the stairs. I quickly typed in the code. Yes, connected and I just made it, I thought as the familiar Flashback 1969 logo appeared on the screen.

“Hey, Jack’s back with your Sunday night addition of Flashback 1969. Tonight’s featured artist *The Foundations*.” I stared at the boy on the screen. That explained it. Jack from Flashback 1969 looked pretty similar to Johnny the dream boy. Apparently I had a very big crush on a boy I will never meet. Great.

Oh well, I thought as I turned up the volume. I love *Build Me Up Buttercup*. Actually, I thought, I was kind of obsessed with pretty much everything from the 1960s particularly 1969. Flashback Jack was part of my obsession.

I finished my cookie as I listened to the song. I was right about the icebox cookies I thought as I started texting. I took a selfie looking sad and texted, “When are you coming to Iowa?”