**Relics #1: The Journey**

by Jonathan Gutheinz





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**Chapter 1**

-Leo-

“I’m so proud of both of you!” the words pierced Leo’s train of thought. He looked over at his mother who was glowing with pride. She gave him a warm smile before looking back at his little sister Cordelia. When she locked eyes with her daughter the warm smile turned into a blindingly bright smile. The pride just radiated off of her. It was a look that Leo remembered seeing only once as a child. Before his dad had passed. “Especially at you Cordy, I mean I knew our Leo could get the internship, that was never in question. But you getting it right out of high school, your dad would have been so proud.” She turned her gaze forward as the light turned green. “He is so proud, watching over you from above.”

“Thank you, mom. That means so much to me.” Cordelia said from the back seat. She sounded so proud of herself. And why shouldn’t she be? She stole the spotlight from Leo. He worked so hard for this. Worked his ass off. Like he did for everything in life, but did he ever get recognition? Of course not! Excellence was expected of him. When he did something great it was just par for the course and there was no reason to mention it.

It wasn’t that he didn’t love his sister. He did. But this internship was supposed to be his thing. It was being hosted by the greatest teacher to ever take a job at San Diego State University, Dr. David Geller. He was the foremost expert in the field of archeology. The stuff he discovered right out of college was still the stuff of legends. That’s what Leo wanted. When he was truly honest with himself about his plans for the future. It was always as some great discoverer. His name in the history books as someone who did something that no one else had done before. Something that no one else could have done. How could he ever hope to accomplish that with his little sister tagging along and showing him up?

“You did really good little sis.” He told her without looking back. “Those application exams were no joke.” He tried to sound proud of her, he really did but he knew the bitterness slipped out. How could it not?

“Both of my children are such geniuses. I couldn’t be prouder if I tried!” The pride in her voice was too much. This woman, his mother had hardly been there for him since his father died. He understood intellectually that everyone deals with grief differently, but it was a whole other thing to see it firsthand.

“We get it from you mom.” Cordelia said, her voice full of excitement. A pang of guilt hit Leo in the gut. She was so happy to be going on this internship. This had to be such a big deal for her. Everyone was aiming for this internship and she got it right out of high school. That was unheard of. He hated to even think it, but she might even be smarter than him. That wasn’t something he ever wanted to admit, even to himself.

He looked out of the window. The city zooming by as they sped down the highway towards the airport. His stomach lurched as signs for the airport’s exit started to show up. This internship, even with his little sister tagging along was his chance to shine. He could hitch his wheel to Dr. Geller’s ride and use him to make a name for himself. Draco and Shaw being there with him at the start of his journey was a great plus. He didn’t know how he would handle this summer without them.

-Draco-

The airport was crowded with people coming and going. Draco couldn’t help but be amazed at the diversity of everyone at the airport. People from all over the United States and even the world. He couldn’t help but wonder if any of them were from Egypt. He still couldn’t believe that he was going to spend the summer in Egypt. Digging around the great pyramids just like Sir Joseph Whemple in The Mummy. The original not the Brendan Fraser one, though that one was good too. But the original, that one was gold. Everyone now a days loved all these modern horror movies, found footage and more blood and guts than actually plots. But not Draco, he loved the classics. Movies with good stories, with good characters. The old universal horror movies were the best. Nothing that came out nowadays, in the age of the remakes, could touch them.

To his right Shaw, a tall lanky kid who never knew what to do with himself, was bouncing his leg up and down. His thumbs fiddling as he looked around, watching all the people running from terminal to terminal. Draco loved Shaw like a brother, he did. He told himself that every time Shaw pissed him off, which was a lot. He knew it wasn’t Shaw’s fault, not entirely at least. He was just socially awkward, everyone had a cross to bear and that was his.

“You think Leo is close?” Shaw asked. Draco could hear the nervous tone of his voice and it made him smile. He cracked a smile at his friend.

“He’ll be here when he’s here.” He answered simply. He knew it wasn’t a real answer but the frustration on Shaw’s face made it the perfect answer. He knew he shouldn’t tease his friend but what else were friends for?

“What do you think Egypt will be like?” He fumbled in his bag again looking for his passport. He had been checking for it every ten minutes since he got here, as if it was going to get up and run away on its own. Shaw needed confidence. He needed someone or something in his life to kick him in the ass and help him feel important. To feel powerful. What that thing was, Draco had no idea.

“Hot.” He said as he rose to his feet. At his side Shaw nodded his head quickly before jumping to his feet.

“Where are we going?” he asked excitedly. Draco was excited for this trip because it was an adventure, he couldn’t fault Shaw for feeling the same way, but he really needed to learn how to cool off. Learn how to just take things as they came and not blow his load over every step that was taken.

“We aren’t going anywhere. I’m going to the restroom. I’ll be back.” He set off down the hall as Shaw sat back down. The sound of his bouncing foot was soon drowned out by all the hustling and bustling of those around him. He was on his way to the greatest adventure of his life. An adventure that might just change his whole world and all he could think about was the butterflies in his stomach. It was a feeling that he wasn’t really use to, but it excited him. Archeology wasn’t his dream job, but it was an experience and at the end of the day that was all life was truly about. Experiences.

-Shaw-

Shaw watched Draco as he walked down the hall. He couldn’t help but feel a pang of sadness. He always tried so hard to fit in with Draco and Leo, but he always felt like an outsider. No matter what he did. Draco and Leo earned this internship, even Cordelia earned it. Shaw on the other hand only got in thanks to Leo cheating for him. Leo always looked out for him. Always protected him, while Draco treated him like a nuisance. To be fair Draco picked him up and drove him out here and he was always nice to him, more or less. It was just a vibe he gave off whenever they were around each other. More so when it was just the two of them. Like he wanted to be anywhere else.

He couldn’t stop his leg from jumping up and down. People walking by kept glancing at him. He could feel the blood rushing to his face. He tried to stop it, but he was so nervous. He hates heights, and this was the first time he was going to be on a plane. All the way up in the sky speeding away to an internship that he wasn’t ready for. That he wasn’t qualified for. This was going to be the longest most stressful summer of his life and no matter what he did, there was no way he could make this work for him. After all, if there was one word that you could use to describe Shaw Riddle it was failure.

His stomach let out a loud growl. He had been so nervous all morning that he didn’t even think to eat anything. Now his stomach was starting to get angry with him for it. There were some fast food joints not far from there. He couldn’t help but be amazed at how the airport resembled a small city. They had everything in here. He got to his feet and started to walk towards the smell of food. He would be back before Draco even knew he was gone.

-Cordelia-

The airport loomed large all around them. Cordelia couldn’t believe her luck. Just out of High School and she was already on her way overseas on an internship. Most people didn’t get internships till their senior year, but she was about to be a freshman and was already doing hers. It was a dream come true. The only thing that made it better was that she was going to be with her big brother and Draco.

She couldn’t believe it when Draco helped her get accepted into the internship. She would never have passed the test on her own, but he stepped in and made sure she got the last spot. He was always so sweet to her. She never met anyone so sweet who was also so cute before. She couldn’t help but smile every time she thought about him. If only he wasn’t her brothers best friend, she knows he would have asked her out by now. Or so she would have liked to believe.

The car came to a stop in front of terminal D. Her mom looked at them with such pride in her eyes. Cordelia liked seeing her mom so happy. She might of had help earning this internship but now that she had it, she was going to do everything she could to prove that she was the best one for it. She would earn that smile from her mom on her own next time!

“So, do you know where your terminal is at?” She asked. Leo rolled his eyes in the front seat as he opened the door.

“Yes mother. I have everything written down and Draco and Shaw are already waiting on us.” He got out of the car. Cordelia leaned forward to kiss their mother goodbye. She loved her brother dearly but could never understand why he was always so hard on their mom.

“Don’t worry mom, we’ll be fine!” With that she got out of the car. Leo already had their bags out of the trunk.

“You ready?” He asked. Humor gone from his tone.

“Yeah. I can’t believe we are going to Egypt!” She said excitedly as she got her bags. He stopped.

“Cordelia! This is not a vacation! This is an exciting opportunity for the both of us! While we are over there it is to work, not to goof around and have fun!” His eyes drilled into hers. He had been hinting around all along that he didn’t want her around. He had been like this since their father died. She missed him too, but she never took it out on him. Leo acted like she killed their father. He always pushed her away. Well this trip was her chance to fix things. Her chance to finally get close with him again. “Are you even listening to me?” He demanded.

“Yeah, I won’t let you down Leo. I promise.” She told him. Hoping that would reassure him. He shook his head and turned around, heading into the airport.

“We’ll see.” The doors closed behind him. She took a deep breath and started after him.

**Chapter 2**

-Draco-

Walking around always helped Draco clear his head a bit. Leo and Cordy were due to arrive at any minute and he could feel his butterflies multiplying by the second. It was almost as if the butterflies had nothing to do with the internship and were really caused by Cordy coming with them.

He kept trying to convince himself that that wasn’t the case. But he knew better. He had known for years that he had feelings for her. That he was in love with her, but he couldn’t be. It wasn’t right. She was younger than him. Only by two years but still, she was Leo’s little sister. His loyalty to Leo had to take priority over his feelings for Cordy. It just had to, no one had ever been as good a friend to him as Leo had. He had been there for Draco even when his parents were getting divorced and it just seemed like his whole world was coming apart. How could he ever do anything but be Leo’s best friend? He couldn’t.

He made his way back to where he left Shaw. He fully expected him to be just sitting there, leg shaking waiting for Draco to come back. He wouldn’t be surprised if he had a panic attack while Draco was away. The airport seemed even more crowded now than just a few minutes before when he left Shaw. He had to fight his way through the hordes of travelers, only to find that Shaw was nowhere to be seen.

“Shaw?” he called out. More annoyed than worried. He was a grown man, he didn’t need Draco to babysit him, but it didn’t stop Draco from feeling like he needed to. Something about Shaw gave you the impression that he was a helpless child. He felt guilty about feeling that way but couldn’t help it. He was the most irresponsible person Draco had ever met. He knew deep down that Leo had to help Shaw get this internship, there was no way in hell he could have done it on his own. But Draco couldn’t say anything because he helped Cordy get the internship. If he was truly upset by his friend getting a leg up in order to get this opportunity than that would make him a hypocrite, as well as a bad friend. He just had to keep his doubts to himself.

Draco looked around for any sign of Shaw but saw none. The crowd was just too thick. Leo and Cordy were going to be here before too long and the plane not long after that. If Shaw didn’t make it back soon he would miss it. Draco couldn’t help but feel like it would be his fault for making him stay while he went to the restroom. He knew that Shaw couldn’t handle being alone. He needed too much attention. Needed people to look after him far too much. Just like a child.

-Shaw-

The line for food was longer than Shaw would ever have guessed. He knew it couldn’t have been more than ten minutes since he got in line, but it felt like years. His stomach was yelling at him, crying out for food. He was so hungry he couldn’t even think right and the closer he got to the front of the line the worse it got. The smell of the fresh made burgers were calling out to him as a siren would a sailor.

He looked back to where he was sitting, trying to catch sight of Draco. He had to be back from the restroom by now. Hopefully Draco didn’t get mad at him for wandering off. He didn’t like to give Draco more reasons to think he was a child than he already had. Part of him wanted to forget the food and go back to find Draco but his stomach vetoed that thought just as quickly as he had it. After all this line couldn’t go on much longer.

-Leo-

The line to get through the security check point seemed to go on forever. It didn’t help that Cordy kept going on and on about how exciting the trip was going to be and what she thought Egypt was going to be like. Leo wanted desperately to get away from her, even if only for a few moments. A few precious moments of peace and quiet was all he really wanted, but she would never give it to him. He could already tell that she was going to be glued to his side this whole trip. At least Draco and Shaw were coming along. He would have other people to talk to. People who understood him and didn’t always have to be so clingy.

“What do you think Dr. Geller is going to be like?” She asked for the millionth time. She seemed really worried that Dr. Geller wouldn’t like her. Leo didn’t understand her concern. She was the youngest person at the site. A prodigy of sorts. He was going to love her; Leo and the others would be lucky if he even noticed them. That didn’t sit well with Leo. He worked too hard to get the internship. He even got Shaw a spot on the team to ensure that he would come off as the golden child. When he was truly honest with himself he knew that Draco was smarter than he was, but it didn’t matter. Draco was lazy. His intelligence was wasted due to not caring. It was Leo who worked hard and was acknowledged as the smart one. At least till Cordy got the last spot.

“Strict. I’ve had a class with him semester before last. He takes all of this to heart and doesn’t have the time or patience to deal with mistakes.” He said in a tone far harsher than was warranted. He didn’t know what he hoped to accomplish by being so hard on her. It wasn’t like she was going to turn around and run home. He was stuck with her. Just like he had been since their father died.

-Draco-

Draco made his way through the mall portion of the airport, checking in the random stores for any sign of Shaw. So far he had had no luck. His phone battery had long since died trying to call him, only to have Shaw never once answer the damn phone. The shops ended and broke off into a fork. He could go right or left, he didn’t see the point in going either way. There was no reason why Shaw would have gone any farther. There was nothing ahead of him but other terminals.

With a long sigh he turned around and started back. He figured he would check out a few of the shops again just to make sure Shaw wasn’t there then go wait for Leo and Cordy. If Shaw wanted to miss the flight that was his problem. Draco had done more than enough. After all he went and picked him in the first place. He didn’t have to, but he did. That had to count for something.

By the time he made it back to the start of the stores he still had no luck finding Shaw. He was tired and annoyed and knew the departure time had to be close, it was time to give up. Shaw would just have to find his own way back. Like the other side of the long strip of shops this side ended in a split. To the right was terminal D 120-150 and to the left terminal D 50-119. For the life of him Draco couldn’t remember what his gate number was. It was saved on his phone. His now dead phone. He could feel panic starting to set in. He didn’t have time to guess and be wrong, he had to go the right way and fast. He took a deep breath and went left. Praying he was right.

-Shaw-

Shaw sat in front of terminal D gate 132 taking a big bite of his burger, finishing it off. It hit the spot. For the life of him he couldn’t tell if it was really that good or if he was just so hungry that anything would have tasted like a 5-star meal. Truth be told he didn’t care. He was satisfied and eating always made him sleepy. Maybe he could just sleep through the plane ride and not have to worry about being so high up in the air. He could only hope!

He glanced around looking for any sign of Draco. He had to have finished up in the restroom by now, unless he was as nervous as Shaw was and it was affecting him. Shaw shook his head. The thought of using a public restroom for something other than taking a piss grossed him out more than he cared to think about. He reached into his bag to make sure he still had his passport. His mother and father kept warning him not to lose it and it put the fear of god into him that he would lose it. That it would just vanish out of his backpack like magic. He knew it was stupid to be so worried about it, but he couldn’t help it. The passport was just where he left it. He smiled to himself and put it back.

“Yo Shaw.” Leo called out to him from past a small crowd. Shaw could feel his mood picking up. Leo was always happy to have him around, unlike Draco. As Leo and Cordy, looking more beautiful than the last time Shaw had seen her, came closer to him Leo started to look around. “Where is Draco?” it was a good question.

“I don’t know.” Cordy sat down next to him. She smiled at him before looking away. Shaw could feel the blood rushing to his face as his heart started to beat faster. He quickly looked to Leo, hoping he didn’t notice. “He went to the restroom and I went to get a bite to eat. He never came back.” Leo looked worried.

“He never came back?” he asked, concern in his voice.

“Could something have happened to him?” Cordy asked, she sounded scared. Shaw gave her what he hoped was a reassuring smile. Leo pulled out his phone and tried to call Draco.

“No answer. It goes right to voice mail.” He said as he put his phone away.

“Did he try to call you?” Cordy asked, her voice sounding so soft, so sweet.

“I don’t think so.” Shaw said as he started to pull out his phone. He would have heard it go off if he had. No sooner did he unlock his phone did he realize his mistake. He had his phone on silent. “Or he could have called me 8 times and sent me a few texts.” He said defeated. He tried so hard not to mess up in front of Draco and he went and fucked up royally.

“And you’re just finding out now?” Cordy yelled at him. The anger in her voice made him feel small, insignificant. He didn’t like it when she was upset. He liked it even less when he was the one who upset her.

“What do the texts say?” Leo said, his voice flat. He wasn’t happy, Shaw could tell but he was always so good at keeping a level head when shit hit the fan. Shaw started to look through them.

“He went looking for me. I don’t think he was too happy with me.” Shaw said as he handed the phone to Leo. Leo read the massages.

“How long till our flight?” he asked not even looking over at them.

“20 minutes.” Cordelia answered, her eyes drilling into Shaw. He already felt so bad for letting Draco down, but she somehow made him feel so much worse. Leo nodded and handed the phone back.

“The last text said he was heading back. Since he isn’t here I think it’s safe to assume he got lost.” Leo said getting to his feet. Cordelia followed suit.

“So we need to go find him.” She said. Leo shook his head, he seemed pissed. Shaw couldn’t blame him.

“Stay here. If he comes back give me a call.” Without waiting for them to respond he took off towards the shopping center. Leaving Shaw alone with a very angry Cordelia.

-Draco-

All of the terminals started to blend together as Draco sped past them, looking desperately for any sign he recognized. Worry had started to sink in. He was almost positive he didn’t come this far but than where did he go wrong? Since leaving the mall he had made quite a few more turns. There was no way he could backtrack and figure out which one was the mistake in time.

He sat down in one of the chairs nearest Terminal C gate 111. He knew he was in Terminal D somewhere. This was nowhere near where he needed to be. He took a few breaths and tried to weigh his options. Without his gate number he was a bit on the screwed side. This was why technology was the devil. He should have just printed it out like his aunt told him to. She was always against using machines to do our thinking for us. She would tell him every chance she got that “smart phones just makes us stupid”. She seemed to really believe it.

He looked up and it dawned on him that she might be right. There in front of him was a list of all the flights and where they were going. How did he not think of this earlier? He scanned the machine for the different flights of Terminal D. They had planes going to China, England, New York, Florida, Toronto and Cairo, Egypt. He found it! Gate 132.

Without wasting another second, he turned and started at a light jog that quickly turned into a full-on sprint back down the way he came. Every few seconds glancing up at the passing signs to make sure he was headed the right way. He didn’t want to miss it again, not with such little time left before his flight took off with his friends leaving him here alone for the summer.

-Cordelia-

Every few minutes Shaw would try and make conversation with Cordelia, but she wasn’t having it. How could he be so irresponsible as to lose Draco. How hard would it have been to just have his phone on low or full blast or check it every once in awhile, like a normal person! She couldn’t understand how people could go this long without checking their phone. It was unamerican.

“All other passengers please board now.” The flight attendant called out to the few people who had not yet boarded the plane. Shaw jumped to his feet looking at the open door leading to the plane that would whisk them away to their internship. Cordelia couldn’t believe the nerve of him. He better not so much as take a step towards that door until Draco and Leo showed up.

“Where could they be?” Shaw asked. Cordelia rolled her eyes but didn’t answer. She wasn’t in the mood for him. Why did Leo and Draco always put up with this loser? Just then she saw her brother running towards them. He seemed out of breath and exhausted, but he pushed forward till he made it to them.

“You find Draco?” she asked him, looking behind him as if Draco would just show up out of the blue. Leo was too out of breath to answer, just shook his head no. Worry started to creep into Shaw’s eyes. Cordelia knew he was too poor to buy another ticket if they missed the flight. But oh well, he shouldn’t have lost Draco in the first place.

“Final boarding!” the flight attendant called out looking right at them. Leo looked at Cordelia and Shaw, she could see his brain running scenarios. He was good at weighing pros and cons in a hurry to keep them out of trouble. This had to be so hard for her big brother. This trip meant the world to him, but Draco was his best friend. His only friend besides Shaw and who would want Shaw as their only friend? Cordelia didn’t even want to know him.

“We should get on the plane before they take off without us.” A voice from behind them said. At first Cordelia didn’t recognize the voice. But as Leo and Shaw broke out into smiles she figured it out. Turning around she saw an out of breath Draco lifting his bag up and ushering them towards the runway. The doors were just starting to close but the flight attendant let them on. She didn’t seem happy about it. More put out than anything else.

“Where were you? I looked everywhere.” Leo said with a smile as they made it onto the plane.

“I got lost looking for this loser,” he said with a wink to Shaw to let him know he didn’t mean it. How could anyone not love this guy? He was so sweet, even to people who didn’t deserve it. “Somehow ended up in terminal C.”

“You got that lost?” Shaw said. His voice rang with quilt. He lowered his head in shame. Good Cordelia thought to herself. He should feel shame, and guilt and a whole range of other negative emotions.

“I’m glad you made it back.” She finally managed to say. Blood rushed to her face as he smiled at her. She couldn’t help but feel happy. This was going to be a good trip and who knows maybe by the end of it things would be different. She could be on good terms with her brother and Draco would admit that he cared about her as well. Or at least she hoped.

Chapter 3

-Shaw-

The flight wasn’t as bad as Shaw thought it was going to be. He sat in the aisle seat and never once looked out the window. Taking off and landing were the worst parts, but he just kept his eyes shut tight and gripped onto the armrests as hard as he could. His knuckles turned skull white, but it helped him overcome his fear. He was proud of himself. If only his friends had said one word to him during the flight he might have been in a better mood.

When they first made it onto the flight Draco gave him some friendly ribbing and that was to be expected. Shaw messed up. He knew it as well as anyone else. He always messed up. It’s what he did. He didn’t mean to, he never meant for Draco to get lost looking for him. Sometimes things just happened, it wasn’t really anyone's fault. His friends didn’t see it that way. They blamed him for almost missing the flight. They blamed him for the stressful twenty minutes waiting to know if Draco would make it in time. Maybe if they yelled at Shaw it would be okay. Things would go back to normal but instead they just ignored him. Well that wasn’t fair. They would respond when Shaw spoke to them, just in as short a manner as they could muster. And none of them tried to engage him in conversation.

Part of him was used to this. It wasn’t like they ever really went out of their way to include him, well but for Leo who at least always tried to. But now even Leo seemed annoyed with Shaw. How long could this go on? The plane was just pulling into the airport, they had the whole summer ahead of them. They couldn’t stay mad at him all summer, could they? He stole a look over at Cordelia, her bright blue eyes shining in the low overhead light as she smiled at something Draco said. She was the one who mattered most to Shaw and he knew she would be the one to hold this against him the longest. She loved Draco. No one else knew it, he wasn’t even sure if she knew it herself, but Shaw knew it. He could see it in the way she spoke to him. The way she spoke about him. It was love.

She hated Shaw, he knew that as well. When the two of them were alone in the terminal waiting on Leo and Draco she never uttered a single word to him. Just shot him dirty looks as if he were Hitler reincarnated. He made a mistake and she hated him for it. He tried to say sorry, but she just huffed and moved over a few seats. He never understood girls and he didn’t think he ever would. They were a mystery to him, one that he wanted desperately to unravel.

-Leo-

The seatbelt sign turned off as the plane stopped. The flight attendant opened the door and started letting people off. Leo could feel his heart beating faster and faster. He couldn’t believe he was finally here. All of his hard work and dedication was finally paying off.

He thought back to his youth when his father would tell him stories of worlds lost long ago. Of ancient civilizations that helped to shape the world. He loved every second of it. He couldn’t stop smiling as he got his bags down from the overhead. It was his turn to find out about the past. Uncover something that no one had ever figured out before. He was going to change the world, one discovery at a time. The best part was that he had his best friends around to help him. Even his little sister. For the first time since he found out that she was coming on the trip he didn’t mind. Draco always helped him lighten up and the three of them had a great time on the flight over. Shaw had mostly kept to himself, but Leo couldn’t blame him. He messed up and just wanted time to help them all forget. Leo would have acted the same. No one liked to be the one to mess up.

“You ready?” he asked Shaw with a smile as he got behind him, moving towards the front. Draco and Cordy were in front of him. Shaw’s face lit up like Christmas at Leo’s words.

“Yes! This is going to be so amazing.” He said. Sounding just as excited as Leo felt. Watching Shaw always made Leo laugh. Just as quickly as the excitement hit him the fear set in. “But what if I’m not good enough? Or Dr. Geller hates me?” He looked past Leo, towards Draco and Cordy. “Like they do.”

“They don’t hate you. Just give them time.” Leo said. He meant it, Cordy and Draco were annoyed but there was no ill will. Not really.

-Shaw-

Waiting for the luggage to arrive seemed to take forever as far as Shaw was concerned. Leo’s kind words as they exited the plane had cheered him up a bit, but he was still feeling down. He couldn’t shake the feeling that Leo was wrong. Maybe Draco would move past this, in time but Cordy wouldn’t. She was good at holding grudges. She was off to the side talking to Draco in hushed tones, she kept shooting Shaw dirty looks. He never caught her doing it, but he could feel it. Leo was fighting his way through a crowd of tourists, each jockeying for a position nearest the luggage returns. Almost as if the first one to get their bags would be rewarded with some insane prize. Shaw wanted no part of it.

He leaned back against a support beam and looked around. It all looked the same. If it wasn’t for the words on the posters and the fact that he knew he was in another country, he would have sworn that they were still in California. He could only chalk it up to all airports looking more or less alike. After all, what was the point in being different? In standing out. It never led anywhere good.

A big burly man, speaking what Shaw could only guess was Egyptian. Whatever it was Shaw couldn’t understand it. The words anyway, the meaning was quite clear get the hell out of my way and it was meant for Leo. Shaw backed up even farther into the support beam he was leaning against, sweat beating down his head as he watched on. His best friend was being pushed aside by an angry man twice his size. A small voice in Shaw’s head told him to do something to help Leo, who was now attempting to push the man back. To no avail.

The big man was holding onto Leo’s arm, trying to force him out of his way but Leo wasn’t having it. The rest of the people jockeying for position in front of the conveyor belt paid them no mind. How could people just sit idly by while a kid was manhandled in front of them. The irony wasn’t lost on Shaw, how could he call these people out for not helping while he stood by and did nothing.

“Hey!” Cordy yelled as she saw what was happening. Shaw’s heart started racing. He should step in and help. It would make up for his mistakes back home. He forced himself off of the wall. It took every ounce of willpower he had just to do that much. By time he took a step forward Draco was already pulling the big man off of Leo. The big man was more than double Draco’s size, but they locked eyes. A fight was coming, Shaw could feel it. No sooner than they arrived in Egypt than they would get locked up. His mother would be so proud.

Time seemed to stretch on and on. Leo took a step back, holding onto his arm where the man had held him. It was a bright red color. Draco never even blinked as he stood toe to toe with the big man who let a big roar of a laugh that made Shaw think of a lion about to eat its prey before he reached past them to pick up a lone black suitcase. He pat Draco on the back and took off. Cordy rushed over to Draco and Leo and gave them each a hug. Not a one of them looked over at the ‘man’ who stood by and did nothing while his friends were in danger. And why should they? After all, he was nothing more than a fuck up.

-Cordy-

Cordy could feel her heart beating faster than she had thought possible. That man could have killed her brother, and for what? To pick up his suitcase a few seconds earlier? How could people be in such a rush? What could a few seconds do in the long run?

Draco was laughing at something Leo said, she wasn’t paying attention to what. All she could think about was how amazing he was. He singlehandedly saved her brother's life. He was a hero. He was her hero.

Bags of all shapes and sizes moved along the conveyor belt. She finally saw her bag roll past, she meant to grab it, but she was terrified of someone attacking her the way they went after Leo. She knew that was silly. It was a fluke. She started to move towards her bag, but some old lady moved into her path, Cordy tried to move around her but the bag was gone. Great, now she was going to have to wait until it made the circuit all the way around. This was going to take forever.

“No luck on your bag?” Draco asked from behind her. She could feel her face blushing before she even turned around. She could only hope he didn’t see her miss her chance to grab her bag. How embarrassing.

“No luck. You?” She asked as she turned around. Draco and Leo both had their bags in front of them.

“Yeah we got ours.” Draco said.

“Just waiting on you.” Leo pipped in. His normal annoyance present as usual. “And for Shaw. Wherever he is.” He continued as he looked around for their missing traveler. She refused to call him friend, even in the privacy of her own mind.

“I’m right here.” Shaw said from somewhere behind a small crowd of people. His voice seemed strained as if he was having trouble breathing. A young couple moved out of the way and Shaw was standing there holding not only his bag but also hers. “I found your bag too, Cordy.” A weak hopeful smile crossed his lips as he watched her with bated breath. She hated to admit it, but he just did her a huge favor. He saved her from making a fool out of herself in front of Draco. But that didn’t mean she had to like him.

“Thanks.” She jerked the bag out of his hand and turned on her heel to walk away.

“Someone's in a hurry.” Draco said with a laugh. She wasn’t really. Truth be told she was terrified of this summer starting. She had no idea what was in store for her. She just didn’t want Shaw to think she forgave him. He almost ruined her summer plans for a burger and fries.

“Thanks for getting her bag Shaw. Don’t mind her.” Leo said, she could tell he was annoyed at her. She couldn’t understand why. This guy got Draco lost and stood by as Leo was almost beaten up. He did nothing! Why were they always so nice to him?

“She hates me.” Shaw said, his voice so whiny and pathetic.

“Her loss man, you’re a great guy. Don’t let her get to you.” Her heart sank. That was Draco telling him that. Once more Shaw was messing up her shot with Draco, this time by being such a loser.

-Leo-

Getting manhandled by some random guy was not the way Leo would have thought this trip would start. This trip was just the first step on his path towards his goals and to have his bubble burst right out of the gate was a rude awakening for Leo. He wanted to portray himself as the big man of the group. The man with a plan, who had everything together and was going to keep the group together while surrounded by people who knew more than all of them. Who had been doing this for years. Leo had to keep his friends and little sister safe and make sure he moved his own career forward through all of this but in one quick movement he was put in his place and Draco stepped up.

His whole life Draco had been his best friend. He never hesitated when it came to looking out for Leo, when it came to keeping him safe. Leo loved that about his friend, but it did sting his pride a bit. How could it not? How could Leo be the boss hog if Draco was the more forceful of the two? If the others knew how smart he was on top of that than Leo had no hope of being the head honcho, and if he couldn’t lead his group than how could he ever hope to make a name for himself amongst the rest of the world?

“So where are we supposed to go?” Cordelia asked excitedly. It was a valid question. The e-mail that Leo was sent said they would have a driver take them to the dig site. He was so excited about the trip and everything was happening so fast that he never stopped to think about how he would find the driver.

“I’m guessing the guy holding up the sign that says SDSU students might have an idea.” Draco said pointing out a tall man in a suit holding a cardboard sign reading SDSU students.

“He might have an idea or two.” Leo said with a laugh. He worried too much. Sometimes things could go smoothly. Hopefully everything else followed suit.

-Cordelia-

The ride to the dig site was a short one. Cordelia couldn’t help but feel a sense of awe as they drove through the city. There was a sense of history to the place that Cordelia had never witnessed back home. She would give anything to sneak away from the dig and explore.

She knew that Leo wouldn’t approve of that, but he never approved of anything fun. He was always so uptight about everything. He spent the whole car ride going on and on about how much responsibility this internship was and how they all needed to live up to it. She had every intention of pulling her weight and making her brother proud. But did that mean she couldn’t have some fun along the way?

The driver never spoke to them. He gave Cordelia an uneasy feeling. Draco seemed to feel it too. The whole car ride he never took his eyes off the driver. Shaw on the other hand just kind of shrunk into the seat. A look of overwhelming fear across his face. Cordelia hated to admit it to herself, but she felt it too. They had a lot to live up to.

-Shaw-

The car pulled off of the main road and started across the desert sand. Shaw could see the rows and rows of tents. It had to be the camp site. They were only minutes away from arriving for their internship. The one that would show Cordelia how much of a loser he was. How much of a failure he was. He would prove Draco’s disappointment in him to be correct and let Leo down in the process. There was no way he was going to be able to hold his own.

“I can’t believe we finally made it.” Leo said as the car pulled to a stop. Shaw swallowed hard. “You guys ready?”

“I’m nervous.” Cordelia said with a tiny giggle. Leo gave her his ‘don’t fuck this up’ look. Shaw knew the look well. It was one he saw far too often. She had no need to feel nervous. Next to Shaw she was going to look like a saint. It killed him inside.

“Cordy,” Leo started but Draco put his hand on his shoulder and shook his head no.

“You’re going to do great Cordy. We believe in you.” Draco said with a grin. He turned to look at Shaw, who had the seat next to the door. “Get out! We gotta go!” He snapped at him. Shaw smiled weakly and opened the door to get out.

Chapter 4

-Leo-

The driver opened the door for them. He seemed so stern and businesslike. Leo couldn’t help but wonder if everyone here was like that. He shuddered to think just how out of place he and his friends would be if that was the case. He always tried to act like he had it all together, like he was a man with a plan, but he was far from it.

Draco helped Cordy out of the car as Shaw got their bags. The driver didn’t say a word to them. Just got into the car and took off. It wasn’t like they needed him to show them the way. The dig site was clear as day just up ahead. Hundreds of people working it, leaving Leo breathless. He was here at last. Now all he had to do was get through the summer without making a fool of himself.

“You ready man?” Draco said with a laugh as he patted Leo on the back. How did he seem so together, so at peace while Leo was on the verge of having a panic attack?

“Never been more ready in my life. This is it my brother. The first step towards everything we ever dreamed of.” He said with as much forced confidence as he could muster. He picked up his bags and started forward, being careful to move just ahead of Draco. This was his crew after all, he wanted to make sure everyone knew it.

“Where are we supposed to go?” Shaw called out from the back of the group. It was a fair question, one that Leo had been trying to figure out himself but not one he was willing to admit not knowing the answer to.

“It’s just up ahead.” He replied praying he was right. They started to pass by groups of people digging through the dirt. It was a scene right out of Raiders of the Lost Ark. Leo was eager to play the role of Indiana Jones.

-Draco-

Leo seemed to know just where he was going but Draco had no clue. As far as he could tell there was no real center to the dig site, so where did that lead them? To search around until they stumbled across Dr. Geller? None of them had ever met the man, but for Leo, the rest had just seen pictures.

Draco let out a sigh as he continued forward. Part of him couldn’t help thinking that Leo was as lost as the rest of them and was only leading them around so that he could save face. He knew that he should just go ask somebody for help, if they even spoke English. It was a different country after all. Who knew if they would understand a word he said.

“Did the email say anything about where we are supposed to meet him?” Cordy asked at Leo’s side. Leo shook his head and looked around.

“Yeah.” He said, not really paying attention. “Just up ahead.” He said absentmindedly. Draco rolled his eyes. Five more minutes and then he’ll just go ask someone. It was far too hot to just be walking around. Besides this internship was the most important thing in the world to Leo, Draco couldn’t let him get in his own way. After all, sometimes friends had to save you from yourself.

“Leo, it’s hot and I don’t feel like dragging this stuff all around.” Draco said. Leo turned to look at him.

“You think I do? I told you it’s just up ahead.” He snapped. Draco couldn’t help but chuckle. Leo had no clue where they were going and they all knew it.

“Is it close? It’s so hot.” Cordy said, sweat pouring down her face. Leo spun around to face her.

“It’s hot? Really? Who would have thought it’d be hot in Egypt of all places. Go figure.” Leo screamed at her, spitting sweat out.

“Leo relax, we need to put the bags down.” Shaw said, he was trying to get on Cordy’s good side again. Cordy rolled her eyes having none of it. Draco had to give the kids props for trying.

“Look, there has to be a tent around here somewhere.” Leo told them, relaxing a bit. “Is that what you guys want to hear? I have no idea where we are going.” The look of failure washed over Leo. He always tried so hard to act like he knew everything. For the life of him Draco couldn’t figure out why.

“Leo, we’ll find out where we need to go. Don’t be so uptight.” Draco said, putting a hand on Leo’s shoulder. Leo looked up at him.

“I’m not up tight.”

“You are.” Draco replied with a laugh.

“Uh guys, people are coming.” Shaw pointed out. Sure enough a few people started to head towards them from one of the dig sites close by.

“I told you we would find them.” Leo said far too proudly. Almost as if he knew they were there ahead of time.

“Good, maybe they can take us somewhere to cool off.” Cordy said hopefully.

“Wouldn’t count on it.” Draco said as the newcomers stopped in front of them. In the lead was a tall older white man, with just a splash of gray in his hair. He was flanked by two younger guys who looked like soccer hooligans.

“What are you kids doing here?” The older man asked, he had a strong British accent and a tone that sounded more annoyed than Draco thought possible. If he didn’t know better he would have thought this guy hated them with a passion, but they had never met this cat before.

“Um, hi, I’m Leo Cox, me and my friends are here for the internship from SDSU. We’re looking for Dr. Geller.” Leo said, his voice cracking just a bit. Draco knew he was nervous. Draco took a step up to stand at Leo’s side. Trying his best to give his friend moral support.

“Aw,” The older man turned to look at the soccer hooligan man on his right. “Americans. Explains why” he turned to look back at the foursome. “They seem so lost.” Shaw looked down at the ground, just what they needed was for Shaw to piss his pants.

“Could you point us in the right direction?” Leo asked, trying to put some force in his voice.

“Is the wee American lost? How cute.” the man on the left all but spit at them.

Shaw took a step back and Cordy looked pissed, but Leo stepped forward before she could say anything.

“Yes, we’re lost. In case you didn’t notice it’s a big place and we’ve never been here before. So how about instead of being a smart ass you point us towards Dr. Geller.” the three men seem taken aback by Leo’s forcefulness. “Or is that too hard for the likes of you?”

The older man looked as if he wanted to slap Leo across the face. The two men flanking him start forward, but he motioned for them to stay back. The look of anger was replaced by a small laugh.

“The boy has spirit.” he said with a condescending tone that sent shivers down Draco’s spine. “Too bad he can’t read.” He said, his voice suddenly hostel. “Boy tell me, why did you come here?” Leo opened his mouth to reply but the older man stopped him. “You can’t expect to become an archaeologist someday. This job is all about finding things lost to time underground, whereas you can’t even find things out in the open.”

“What?” Leo asked, his voice shaking. Draco knew Leo better than anyone and yet even he couldn’t tell if Leo’s voice was shaking because he was upset or pissed. The three men facing them all started to laugh.

“Dr. Doran, the Yankees didn’t even see the sign in pavilion.” The man on the right said with a laugh.

“Why should they, Americans never see anything past their own wants and desires.” Dr. Doran said with a sneer. Draco could feel his blood starting to boil. Whoever this cat was he did not like him.

“Sign in pavilion?” Cordy asked innocently. Draco would have given anything to have kept her from saying that. It was a legitimate question to be sure but the look of utter delight on the soccer hooligans face told Draco they weren’t going to hear the end of this for some time.

“It’s where you sign in luv.” the one on the right said with a grin. He stepped closer to her. “Perhaps I could show you?” Leo moved forward to block his path.

“Or you can back the hell up!” Leo said, all but screaming. Dr. Doran stepped between them.

“Step back boy. You don’t want to be put down like the dog you are.” the doctor said. His eyes narrowed in hate.

“Leo let’s go find the pavilion.” Shaw said, his voice shaking uncontrollably. Draco didn’t like backing down from a fight but this one wouldn’t end well for them. It would mess up their internship right out of the gate. Leo clearly didn’t want to hear it.

“Leo, please.” Cordelia pleaded with him. Draco stepped forward.

“We’re leaving. But if you so much as look at Cordelia again I’ll put you in the ground.” Draco said, he turned and headed back to the front. He could only hope that Leo followed his lead. It wasn’t long before he heard the others coming after him.

“Goodbye children. Don’t get lost now.” Dr. Doran called after them. A laugh in his voice.

“I don’t like that guy.” Shaw said what they were all thinking. The four of them made it back to the front before too long. The pavilion was just to the side like Dr. Doran said. How could they have missed it?

“This is it.” Leo said walking up to the table and signing his name. Draco and the others followed suit.

“Aw, you must be the SDSU students.” A loud commanding voice said from behind them. “A bit late, but at least you all showed up. I was beginning to think I made the wrong choice.” They turned around to find a tall man with dark curly hair and blue eyes behind dark rimmed glasses. It was Dr. Geller, he was the spitting image of the picture Draco had seen back at school.

To Be Continued. . .