

Restricted Territory

Unveiling

[Letters From Home]

The glamorous Four Roses Inn in San Francisco's North Beach District overlooks the San Francisco Bay, Yerba Buena Island, Treasure Island, and, in the distance, Oakland Harbor. Above the door is the Four Roses Inn medallion: A square-on-point, divided into four more squares-on-point. Each of the smaller squares depicts a different artistic rose identical to the roses on the boxes given to Julia, Liz, Niki, and Bai as gifts from Ren.

A smartly attired courier enters the inn, passes through the massive, opulent lobby, through a huge double door leading into the expansive convention hall, and then to a passage door into a side room.

The 'family'—Sam, Trish, Bill, Susan, CJ, Tylor, and Austin—is wearing business attire and is seated at the longer of two tables. Water bottles and various snacks are on the table in front of them. The private room they are in is the staging area for the event hosts. While waiting for the event to start, they engage in idle chatter.

Susan takes notice of items on the other table. "What's with the tux and flowers?"

"Oh," replies Austin. "That's for later. I promised Park Ji Yeon I would take her to dinner in the Four Roses Restaurant upstairs since she had to get all dressed up for this."

Susan looks at CJ and Tylor, ensuring they pay attention. "That was very thoughtful."

CJ and Tylor give Austin the 'Thanks for making us look bad' look.

Austin shrugs and sheepishly smiles at them. "I asked the hotel if it would be okay if it were just Ji Yeon and me. They said yes and would pay for it, too, as long as we dressed nicely."

"The restaurant wants some publicity photos for Valentine's Day," adds Trish. "We, including Ji Yeon's parents, made a deal - if they covered the dinner, it would be okay for the photos."

Tylor musses Austin's hair. Austin looks at Tylor angrily and makes a fist. Tylor quickly straightens Austin's hair, and they both laugh.

There is a knock on the door. Trish gets up and answers it. A female messenger in her early twenties, dressed in business attire, is at the door.

Looking into the room, the messenger announces, "I have an envelope for Captain Sam Reynolds."

Sam: (Raising his hand.) That's me.

"Is he being served?" asks Trish.

"No, ma'am." The messenger hands her a manilla envelope. "These are just documents from a trust agreement. You can expect similar deliveries for many years. We are not able to disclose the exact number of years."

A little bewildered at the timing and the mention of additional deliveries, Trish accepts the envelope. "Um, okay." She motions to Sam to get the tip.

The messenger sees Sam begin to get up and catches his eye. She shakes her head no and discretely holds her hand to signal him to stop. "That's not necessary. Have a good day." She smiles before she turns and leaves.

A little befuddled by the delivery timing and the fact that someone in San Francisco is not accepting a tip, Trish returns to the table while reading the envelope's exterior.

"This is from a law firm. She said it wasn't a summons, and since she handed it to me, Sam hasn't been served." Trish looks at the people around the table. "Anybody else find it strange they would send it on a Saturday?"

Although it has been a while since something bizarre happened, Sam and the boys don't find it unusual enough to give it a second thought. Susan and Bill, on the other hand, still find these unusual occurrences a little disturbing.

Together, nodding their heads, Bill and Susan agree, "Yes! It's strange."

CJ chimes in, "That's the first thing they agreed on all morning." Tylor gives him a high five.

Sam gives Trish a nod, indicating that she should open the envelope. Trish returns to the table while opening it. She pulls out a medium-sized envelope. It is addressed to Captain Sam Reynolds, Folsom, California, in very good cursive. Trish studies the envelope for a few seconds as she retakes her seat.

Smelling the letter, Trish addresses Sam teasingly, "Interesting handwriting."

Sam counters in an innocent yet defensive tone, slightly sarcastic, "I've got no idea who it's from, Honey." He indicates he has no fear of revealing the contents, adding, "You may have the honor of opening it." His calm demeanor completely deflates the specter of mystery.

Trish opens the medium-sized envelope and removes its contents: a newspaper clipping with the article "My Week at Harmony Valley by CJ Davis," two letters, and a note. One letter is addressed in the same perfect cursive as the larger envelope: "To Austin."

“That’s strange.” Trish hands the letter to Austin. “This is for you.” Trish, Susan, and Bill are beginning to find this delivery very strange. First, it is a Saturday, and they are at an event in San Francisco, two hours from home, and now there is a letter to Austin from a law firm.

Trish opens the letter to Sam and reads it aloud:

“This letter was written one year after I last saw my beloved brother. I have employed a law office to receive my letters and then forward them to you exactly one hundred and forty years later.” The mystery is now solved; Bill, Susan, and Trish let out a collective ‘Oh.’ Sam and the boys take it in stride. Trish continues reading the letter, “I thought this might bridge the gap of time and still keep us connected as a family in some way. I’m not sure if my letters will even reach you, but I have been assured they will. Sam, CJ, and Tylor - Thank you for helping Austin and me. Please keep Austin safe. Eternally grateful, Victoria Owens.”

Sam and the boys get lost in reflecting on Victoria's memory. They are abruptly brought back into reality when referring to the letter addressed to Austin; Susan asks Austin, “So that must be from your sister, Victoria?”

Battling with emotions he does not understand, Austin stares at the letter, then quietly responds, “I guess. It looks like her handwriting.”

Picking up the other letter, written in not-so-neat printing and simply addressed “Mr. Fry, Editor,” Bill asks, “What’s this?”

Austin is relieved that everybody’s attention has been redirected to the letter Bill is holding.

Raising his hand like he was answering a question in a classroom, CJ offers to explain. “It’s a letter I was going to send to Mr. Fry, the editor of the town paper. I didn’t get a chance to send it, though.”

In a tone of anticipation, Tylor asks, “Anything else?”

“Sorry, Ty. That’s all there is.” Trish looks in the envelope again and sees something stuck in the bottom seam. “Oops, there is something else. How’d you know?”

Trish immediately regrets asking the question because she knows the answer—everybody knows the answer. Tylor obligingly answers, “Just a feeling.” Tylor’s feelings have become more detailed, frequent, and consistently accurate. His carefree mood has become sullen with the pressure of the increase. Obvious to his family but even noticeable to acquaintances, his mood now is less lively than it was just a couple of months ago.

Hoping to erase the effects of her last question, Trish reaches into the envelope and takes out a small card. She looks at it with a quizzical expression. “What’s this about?”

Tylor sees what is on the card and takes it from Trish, hoping she didn’t see what was on it. “Oh, that’s for me. It’s nothing. Just an inside joke.” He becomes flush with embarrassment that is oh-so evident to the family.

Sam voices the question now on everybody's mind: "What did it say?" He first looks at Tylor but gets no response, so he looks at Trish for a response.

"It was just an animal print," reveals Trish. "Then it said, 'You're a little strange too.' Then there was a heart and a plant of some kind."

Sam, CJ, and Austin all start laughing. Tylor becomes even more embarrassed.

Trying to join the fun, Susan asks, "What's so funny?"

Laughing, CJ responds, "It's a love note from our friend Falling Leaf to Tiger." Now directing a stare at Tylor. "Better known to us as Tylor." Trish, Susan, and Bill now get broad smiles too. CJ continues in an almost matter-of-fact tone, "If we stayed in the 1870s, I'm sure they would have gotten married. She was someone extraordinary."

As the truth is revealed, Tylor looks at Austin for his reaction, afraid that Austin will feel betrayed.

In an instructive tone, Austin explains the note. "The animal print is the Miwok symbol for a puma, but since we don't have tigers in California, she used that symbol to mean tiger."

Tylor sheepishly asks Austin, "You mad?"

Austin, still chuckling slightly, "Of course not. I told you before she was like a sister to me, not a girlfriend. Everybody could tell that you liked each other."

Sam and CJ nod their heads.

CJ states, "Pretty obvious, bro."

Austin brags, "I even helped her choose your nickname."

Tylor playfully pushes Austin, then makes a fist and an unrealistically angry face at him. Austin feigns fear.

As the table calms a bit, Austin picks up the news article. "Victoria must have sent your letter to Mr. Fry."

CJ is speaking while looking over the article Austin just handed him. "I'm surprised he printed it. It's not very good. I was in a hurry when I wrote it. I wanted to let people know the facts surrounding that week and thank them for their kindness."

"Well, CJ," Susan prods, "Why don't you read it to us? I'm sure we'd all like to hear what you had to say."

Everyone focuses their attention on CJ. Tylor and Austin glance at each other in anticipation. "Okay," In a narrator's voice, CJ reads the letter, not the article. Tylor follows along by reading the article.

"Letter to the editor."

As a person of no bias, except squarely against using violence to satisfy personal greed and criminal activity, I would like to make known my personal observations of the past week. With my Uncle and brother, I arrived at the old miner's cabin on the southern five acres of the Ben Creighton ranch." CJ continues reading the letter. Family members who stayed in 2017 are glued to every word. He finishes: "Therefore, it is with mixed feelings that I leave the town of Harmony Flat. I have met some truly remarkable people that I will sorely miss; at the same time, I will be haunted by the evil that once shrouded your beautiful town for many years. I am deeply touched by the love and support given by this town to the Creighton family and my family. We sincerely thank you.

PS. Mr. Fry, Here is a note about my uncle: Don't expend too much effort looking into his military background. He kept a low profile and used many names to keep his missions secret. Just as he did in Harmony Flats, he seeks not fame nor credit, simply that which is just. — CJ Davis."

With motherly pride, Susan says, "I thought it was written very well."

Taylor double-checks the article. "Mr. Fry didn't print the PS parts."

Touched by the postscript, Sam tries to remove himself from the pedestal on which CJ put him. "Thanks, CJ., but –"

CJ interrupts, "Just the facts."

Satisfied with the previous offerings from the envelope, Bill is eager to discover what the last item might reveal. "Okay, Okay." He looks at Austin. "Now for the letter from Victoria."

Austin looks at the letter sheepishly. Bill sees that Austin is uncomfortable and is a little upset with himself for being so impatient. Taking it down a notch, he opens a path for Austin to decline to read the letter. "Of course, if you'd rather read it privately, we'd understand." people at the table nod in agreement.

"No, it's not that," admits Austin. "We're all family, and I'm sure this was meant to be shared. It's just that I don't know how I'm feeling about reading this – whether anyone else is around or not."

Austin looks at the family, then stares back at the envelope. The memories of his sister, healthy and alive just a year ago, and now, one-hundred-forty years later, he then gets a letter from her, knowing she has passed. Austin tries to wrangle the thoughts that tumble in his mind. Speaking with his head down and in a soft voice, he explains, "I'm happy and sad at the same time – and – maybe a little scared. I'm not sure I can read it."

Sam calmly offers suggestions to ease Austin's fears. "We can have someone read it to you if you'd prefer, or you can wait until you feel better about it. It is totally up to you."

Austin gathers his determination. "No. . . No. I can do this." In a hushed tone, "I think."

Taylor reaches out and places his hand on Austin's arm: "I'll help you out if you get stuck."

Austin nods his head.

As if he were jumping from a rock cliff into the ocean, Austin bravely declares, "Okay, here goes." Austin nervously opens the envelope and takes out the letter. Due to his nervousness, a photo drops to the table without his notice when he unfolds the letter. Tylor carefully picks up the very old photo and looks at it. After a short study, Tylor passes the photo around the table. Austin looks at the elegant handwriting and starts to tear up. He then clears his throat and dries his eyes. He begins to read the letter, but his voice breaks. He clears his throat once more and reads slowly. Austin hears his sister's voice in the words he reads.

Dearest Austin,

A lot has happened since I last saw you. As planned, Colin and I got married. We were wed Saturday afternoon, January 19, 1878. The weather was agreeably warm and spring-like. It has been the warmest winter that anyone can remember. I have enclosed a photograph of Colin and I. You should also know that you became an uncle on the sixth of November! Fortunately, he is a boy; as I decided on the trip to Ohio, the name Samuel Austin Owens was to be the name of my firstborn. We are all well. Please give my regards to Sam, the boys, and the rest of your new family. I'm sure they love you dearly.

Austin looks at Tylor, surprised and unsure how Victoria would know he was living with Sam and the boys.

Understanding the look, Tylor tells him, "I'm sure Falling Leaf assured her that you would be with us."

Austin, content with the explanation, continues - hearing the words in Victoria's voice.

I received news that, shortly after we left, Julia and the girls, using Ren's money, moved to San Francisco and bought a hotel. They are no longer prostitutes but run their upscale business, the Four Roses Inn. I hear they are doing well. I have much more to tell you so that I will write often.

Your loving sister, Victoria.

PS. I sent along a note from Falling Leaf. Tell 'Panther,' Captain Reynolds, and CJ that I expect them to keep their promise. I miss you all."

With a big grin, Tylor looks at Austin excitedly. "We're uncles!" Tylor fist bumps Austin. Austin begins to smile broadly. Then CJ high-fives Sam.

CJ bubbles, "I can hardly wait for the next letter."

"I hope there's a photo of little Sam," adds Susan.

Bill looks at his watch and is surprised by the time. "Hey folks, hate to break up a good time, but it's already started. We should go mingle. As the hosts, it's poor manners to be late."

[Friends and Family]

There is a crowd of about a hundred people in the main exhibit room at the Four Roses. They are standing in small groups having conversations. There are waiters and waitresses serving beverages and hors d'oeuvres. Wac ih a' and Savanna are among the attendees. The mood is light and cheerful. The people are all dressed in business or evening wear. Austin is talking to Sam and Trish. CJ and his girlfriend Tracy, Tylor, and a few others their age talk in a group near them. A waitress with a tray of beverages approaches the group and offers them some. CJ, among others, takes one of the glasses of water.

A pretty girl of Korean descent approaches Austin from behind and taps him on the shoulder. Austin turns around to see the girl, and a smile spreads across his face.

"Ji Yeon." Austin bows at the waist to thirty degrees. <Korean> "an nyong ha se yo." </Korean> (Trans. > Hello -formal.)

"Hi, Austin," responds Ji Yeon.

Behind Ji Yeon are her parents, Jin Woo (dad) and Jae Eun (mom). Austin bows first to the father at ninety degrees. <Korean> "An·nyong·ha·se·yo Abeoji."</Korean> Then he bows to the mother at ninety degrees. <Korean>"An·nyong·ha·se·yo Eomeoni."</Korean>

Chuckling slightly at the cuteness of Austin as he formally does his introductions. Jin Woo speaks in a purely American Southern California accent. "Hello, Austin. You're looking rather handsome in your suit."

Austin bows again, but only slightly, to Jin Woo, <Korean> "Gam·sa·ham·ni·da." </Korean> (Trans. > Thank you.)

Austin turns to Sam and introduces Ji Yeon's parents. "Father, this is Park Jin Woo and his wife Kim Jae Eun."

Austin continues his introductions, now addressing Ji Yoen's parents, <Korean> "Abeoji, Eomeoni, I-bun-eun (gesturing to Sam) Sam Reynolds, (gesturing to Trish.) Trish Reynolds Seon-saeng-min-i-se-yo." </Korean> (Trans. > Father, Mother, this distinguished person is Sam Reynolds and Trish Reynolds. Note: In Korean culture, it is proper to call another's parents Mother and Father as a sign of respect.

Jin Woo reached over to Sam and then Trish to shake hands: "Please, just call us Jim and Leona."

Ji Yeon looks at Austin and gets his attention, then glances at CJ's group. She uses a slight head tilt to let Austin know that she wants to leave her parents and hang out with people closer to her age. Austin gets the hint.

"Please excuse us." Austin glances at Ji Yeon to include her in 'We.' "We should join the other kids."

Trish: "Of course, we'll see you soon."

Austin and Ji Yeon bow slightly to both sets of parents, step back, and leave to join CJ's group.

Jae Eun tells Trish, "Austin is such a good influence on Ji Yeon. She used to be timid about being a foreigner, but Austin's interest in her culture has given her pride in her heritage and helped her confidence. She seems to like him a lot."

"He is a good influence on us, too," Trish discloses. "His unique perspective can be quite refreshing. And, as you can see, he is very interested in different cultures. Our friend's granddaughter has invited Austin down to Belize to check out the ancient Maya culture in that area. Thankfully, he said we could tag along."

"Ji Yeon must also rally his confidence," suggests Sam. "Hanging out with the daughter of his Taekwondo master takes either guts or stupidity, and I know he's not stupid."

"I've gotten to know Austin pretty well over the past few months," replies Jim, "And I know he has a stable and honorable character, but should he step out of line, his biggest concern isn't me. She's at least three belts above him."

The adults know neither Ji Yeon, age 12, nor Austin, age 11, have any romantic inclinations, but the thought of Ji Yeon putting Austin in his place makes them chuckle.

CJ is the center of his group. Recounting yesterday's ball game, CJ gets excited, "You couldn't ask for a better ending. The bases were loaded, and only one out. We were leading by two runs. The batter hit a line drive between the second baseman and second base. It looked like it would be a base hit, but the second baseman leaped up and caught the ball before landing on the bag. The runner had started to third and couldn't get back, so double play and end of the game."

Austin and Ji Yeon enter CJ's group.

Tracy hugs them as they enter the circle. "Hi, Austin. Hi, Ji Yeon."

"Tracy, wow!" Ji Yeon tells Tracy. "That dress is amazing on you."

Tracy takes a turn to show off the dress and then compliments Ji Yeon. "Thanks. Of course, you're as cute as ever."

Feeling left out, Tylor opens his arms to get a hug from Ji Yeon. "Hey! What about me?"

Austin quickly steps into Tylor's waiting embrace and hugs him. Then, in an entirely artificial tone, he says, "You are looking particularly handsome today."

The group laughs.

Tylor pushes Austin away. “Not you!” He moves over to Ji Yeon and gives her a friendly hug. “The pretty one.”

While the group is drawn to Tylor, a large display panel in the background falls, causing two loud bangs. The sound is identical to the sound of the shots that killed Austin’s parents and the shots fired at the sheriff.

Austin has a flashback of his parents lying on the floor after being shot, then a flashback of the sheriff getting shot, and a flashback of himself slipping into the creek. An unexpected fear shoots through Austin like an arrow. CJ sees the fear in Austin’s eyes as his pupils dilate to open fully, and the color drains from his face. Austin’s subconscious emotional spike causes him to wet his pants.

CJ sees the results, then, without hesitation, falsely trips and ‘spills’ his beverage all over Austin’s front, masking Austin’s embarrassing reaction to the noise.

Drying Austin with his handkerchief, CJ apologizes, “Oh! Sorry! I’m so sorry. I must have tripped.”

With attention drawn back to Austin getting splashed, the others also start to look for things to dry him. Austin steps away from the help, afraid that they might discover the real reason he is wet. “It’s okay. I’ll just change. I have clothes in the other room.”

Austin quickly makes his way away from the group. CJ starts to follow him.

Not understanding what just happened, Tylor whacks CJ on the shoulder and sarcastically mutters, “Nice going.”

Because of his focus on Austin, CJ is unaffected by the assault. At the same time, he is pleased that even his brother didn’t pick up on the issue. CJ smiles slightly as he continues his pursuit of Austin.

[Cover Up]

Austin enters the adjoining staging area they were in before, then enters a smaller room they used as a changing room before the event. CJ is on his heels.

As soon as the door closes, Austin turns to CJ. “Thanks, CJ. That’s super embarrassing.” Austin looks toward the floor. His voice becomes softer, and the words slower. “I don’t know why it happened.”

Austin embraces CJ and begins to sob quietly. CJ holds Austin in a comforting bear hug.

With gentle confidence, CJ tells him, “I do. It happened because a strong, brave, and caring person, who had some terrible things happen to him just over a year ago, got a surprise visit from all those scary, tragic memories and emotions — in a split second.” He gently pries Austin away, holding onto his shoulders so he can see Austin’s face. He wipes a tear from Austin’s face and smiles. “If it were me that went through what you did, I would have let loose with more than just a little pee, if you know what I mean.”

Austin gives a little chuckle. He then wipes off any remaining tears and stands facing CJ.

Looking for a total cover-up, Austin asks, "It's our secret, right?"

"Yep," CJ answers matter-of-factly. Austin is pleased to hear that. But CJ continues, "Until, of course, you tell Sam and Trish. They're your parents now, and we both know they need to know if stuff like this happens." He embraces Austin in a bear hug again. "It's not a big deal. Sam and Trish just need to know what you're going through. They can help." CJ releases his embrace.

Austin looks disappointed and slightly betrayed. CJ sees this reaction and suggests a compromise: "I'm sure it can wait until after your dinner date when it's just the three of you."

Austin gives a little smile.

Relieved that Austin can smile, he asks for a status. "How ya feeling?"

After evaluating his attire, Austin responds, "Wet, but better."

CJ smiles. "Okay then."

Austin smiles at CJ. CJ holds his fist out. Austin bumps it, and they both make the explosion gesture.

CJ checks his phone because the alarm sounded. "Hurry and get changed. The unveiling is in ten minutes. I'll see you out there." CJ leaves the room and enters the main exhibit hall.

[The Model]

The kids are standing around a sizeable white-clothed display table. This grand event, attended by sponsors, hospital administrators, engineers, legal advisors, and special guests, is to unveil the proposed project's model.

Tracy stoops, peeks under the cover, and then stands upright as if nothing happened. She whispers to CJ, "What's 'Creighton Valley'?"

"Stop that!" CJ gently grabs Tracy's hand. "You're going to get me in trouble." Looking mischievously at CJ, Tracy maneuvers her fingers between CJ's so they are now holding hands.

CJ smiles at her. "Creighton Valley is the place they're going to put the project. That's where we went riding last weekend. It once belonged to Austin's, um," Backing himself into a conversational corner, CJ's mind searches for the right word. ". . . relatives, remember?"

"Oh! That place is so cool," responds Tracy.

Bill is standing at a podium, just a few feet from the model, speaking on the PA. "Can I have everyone's attention?"

The crowd quickly quiets down.

Gesturing to the back area of the model, Bill calls out the names of people to assist in the unveiling. “Can I get Sam, Trish, Susan, CJ, Tylor, and Austin up here, please? I also need BK engineering consultant Janis and Bi-o-Tech Environmental Steven up here.”

All the called people get into position; Austin is wearing his tux.

Gesturing to the called guests, Bill announces, “These are just a few of the hundreds of hard-working people who helped develop what was an incipient thought just a couple of years ago into a full-fledged project plan.” Bill addresses the people he just called up. “Now, if you will all get a hold of the cover, we will unveil the joint hospitals’ Children’s Family Retreat on three. One, two three—.”

The cover is removed by the group Bill called up, while the crowd responds with grand applause. Press photographers rush in to get close-ups of the model. Reporters corner unsuspecting interviewees, and the hosts for the various displays report to their stations. The hosts remove the covers on the rest of the exhibits.

“This will be the first Children’s Family Retreat facility of its kind,” boasts Bill. “It is both a fully equipped and staffed specialty hospital and a family retreat complete with dining venues, sleeping accommodations, and a long list of indoor and outdoor activities for all ages and abilities. Take a look around at the various exhibits. The hosts at each exhibit will be happy to answer any questions you might have.”

The attendees applaud as Bill happily ends his role as MC.

People gather at each display, including Medical Facilities, Family Activities, Wildlife/Nature Conservation, Green-Based Infrastructure, Dining, Transportation, and Communication.

Next to each display sign are experts in that topic to answer questions. The central model is a scaled representation of Creighton Valley. The train tracks circle in front of the five main buildings and beyond to the building reserved for the terminally ill.

The five main buildings, named after the former land owners, are Ben, Marsha, Bryan, Gwen, and Gregory. Each building becomes an extension of the train car parked in front of it. The style and appointments of the units are uniquely themed to the character of the person for whom they are named. Family accommodation, dining areas, treatment rooms, and other support functions are provided in these self-sufficient units. The train cars offer lakeside views of the natural beauty Creighton Valley provides.

The last building is White Squirrel Manor, an extended-stay facility for the terminally ill and their families. The family and patient can be more at ease during the final stage of life by removing the stark, sterile atmosphere of a standard hospital room and replacing it with an open, natural environment. The track siding that accesses the manor has a covered section that conceals the train car, preventing others in the valley from knowing if the manor has guests or, more importantly, when the guests leave.

The old miner’s cabin is renamed the ‘Caretaker Cabin,’ and a track spur is shown leading past it and stopping next to the barn. The cabin will be home to the maintenance foreman and the hub for logistics—food, equipment, medicine, etc.

The model shows intact ranches and a fenced cemetery at the burial site. The ranches are to be rebuilt as close to the original as possible. Under staff supervision, the guests may use the ranch houses if medically appropriate. The 'adventure' of a one-night cabin stay can boost a patient's mindset and help with recovery. The cemetery is not considered one of the property's amenities, but the family stipulated that the hidden burial site be transformed into an accessible, visible site that recognizes the sacrifice that made this special place possible.

The train track continues past White Squirrel Manor and makes a loop to the end of the valley, up the other side, along the old ranch road past the cabins, and back to the valley's entry point near the caretaker cabin.

CJ knew he had to be well-prepared for his post. His friend, Marcus, is a train aficionado and is sure to ask some very detailed questions.

Marcus, pointing to the model train on the spur track at the Caretaker Cabin. "Well, how do you get this supply car up here?"

CJ moves the train as he explains, "The locomotive is a steam /electric hybrid, and it does all of the heavy pulling and braking, especially on the trip up and back. However, all the cars are electric-driven, making it easy to move them around without the locomotive. The supply car is put on the end of the train. After the train stops here," CJ puts the model train in front of the main Buildings. "We just uncouple," he said, moving the model car on the tracks to demonstrate. "Back the car up the track under its own power and park it over here."

"That's pretty cool," admits Marcus. "But how can you get patients up and down the stairs on the car platforms? Doesn't the right turn into the cars keep you from using gurneys?"

CJ was ready for this. "The cars are loaded and unloaded on special platforms at the hospital and the retreat. The platforms encircle the train car, making everything the same level and access at the ends is straight."

Marcus nods his head in appreciation of the detail of the design. "Looks like you thought of everything."

CJ smiles, "We tried." He thinks, "If we can impress Marcus, we must be on the right –. I'm not even going to think about it. I don't do puns. Marcus throws them at me all the time. I have to think of something else."

Over at Austin's display is a model of the communications infrastructure. One area of Austin's new world that he has excelled in is communication technology. Because of that, he has been placed as the host of the communication display. He is explaining the communication system to Ji Yeon.

Ji Yeon asks, "What if a storm knocks out the phone lines? In the foothills, they lose phones and internet several times a year. Won't that be a problem?"

Pointing to the various items as he speaks, Austin shows her how robust the communications are. "First and foremost, the train won't come up if a storm is predicted. But, just in case, they have a redundant fibreoptic system that goes east and west. If one goes out, then the other is used. However,

since they are both underground, it is unlikely that will ever happen. If they both go down for some implausible reason, they also have cellular, microwave, and satellite systems.

Tylor's love of nature and animals made him an ambassador for Environmental and Wildlife preservation. He is trying to explain the animals in the area to five girls his age.

He holds a photo of an eagle's nest with an eagle sitting on the side. "There's even a nesting pair of Bald Eagles on the southeast ridge. This," He points to a small flip chart. "Shows just a few of the animals we've seen here." As he flips through the book, he names the animals. He doesn't notice that the girls are more interested in him than the animals. His list falls on deaf ears, "Ground squirrel, chipmunk, tree squirrel, fox, deer, Steller's Jay, . . ."

Bill, Susan, Trish, and Sam are hanging out in a quieter area of the main hall.

Bill remarks, "Pretty good turnout."

Susan emphasizes the unusual press presence: "I've never seen the press even one-tenth as interested in any other hospital project, ever."

"I would certainly call this a success," adds Trish.

A slim, attractive female server, Sayla, stops at the group. She is carrying a tray of champagne glasses. Adorning her neck is an amulet like the one worn by Wac ih a'. Sam accepts a glass from the tray.

Sayla pauses, looks around at the crowd, and then says to the group, "This is really something special."

For some reason, what she said and how she said it struck a chord of familiarity with Sam, but he couldn't quite place it. Shrugging it off, he holds up his glass of champagne, "To a successful start of a very important project." They all clink glasses.

As Sayla turns and walks into the crowd, Sam notices the amulet. He follows her with his eyes but soon loses her as she mingles with the crowd. He stares blankly at the crowd, slightly confused and thoughtful, as he wonders about a possible connection.

Beyond the crowd and up the stairway on the mezzanine, Tylor is also staring blankly. His gaze is fixed on a building across the bay, just outside the Oakland waterfront. He gets a cold chill that shoots a shiver down his spine. He shakes it off, but the feeling lingers.

CJ quietly approaches and asks, "What's up? It's not like you to miss a good party. Are you hiding from all the girls?"

CJ's question startles Tylor from his deep thought, returning him to the consciousness of his present surroundings. "Huh? What?" He sees CJ standing next to him, "Oh, sorry. It's just that I suddenly got a bad vibe from that building over there." Tylor's voice trails off. "No details, just a feeling."

CJ puts his arm around Tylor's shoulder, "That's not good. Seems like you're always right about that kind of stuff now. Are we ok?"

Once again, Tylor's gaze is fixed on the office building across the bay. Unknown to Tylor, Thaddeus Wilson's office casts the evil vibe he abhors. "Yeah. We're good—" He finishes his sentence, under his breath, "For now."