

## The Trouble with Ghosts and Time Machines

### Chapter 1

I didn't know I was staring, until I blinked, and the world came into focus. What was I staring at? A mangled mess of metal? Where was I? I got to my feet and slowly wandered around the mess. There were rails of different colours. Was this a sculpture? The building was silent. Maybe it was a quiet exhibition? But where were all the people? I couldn't remember anything. Why couldn't I remember anything?

I went around the mess of metal. It was huge and more than just the mangled bit that I originally saw. It had twists and turns, and different heights too. It must've taken the sculptor ages. How did they get it in the building? Surely, they didn't build the sculpture in the building? What sort of place was this?

A multicoloured metal cart laid, dented and broken, next to the sculpture. I slowly approached it. A man laid amongst the debris. He had cuts all over him and his neck wasn't at a natural angle. Looking around again, I realised that this sculpture was a rollercoaster. It was a broken rollercoaster, and someone had died in the crash.

What sort of sick artist made something like this? Was it a memorial to someone who died in a rollercoaster crash? Either way, it was far too big, and the man was far too realistic. There was way too much blood.

Then I saw a man in the control building. Maybe he had a clue what this thing was? Maybe he knew where I was? I treaded over the rails and tracks, making sure not to step on it, and tapped on the glass, but it didn't make much of a noise. What if the control building was part of the sculpture? It probably wasn't made of sturdy stuff and probably wasn't made to take the force of someone knocking on it.

"Hey, do you know what this thing is?"

The man ignored me. I studied him for any indication that he knew I was there. His white t-shirt was covered in stains of sorts and it barely contained his enormous belly, which poked out from beneath. The stubble on his face did nothing to disguise the obvious double chin. Was he the artist? He had a green baseball hat on which had some sort of logo on it, but the glass was too dirty to see it in detail.

"Hey, are you the artist?"

Again, he ignored me. He was vaguely familiar. Maybe he'd been on the news with his humungous sculpture? Maybe I'd seen it? Maybe that's why I was here? Wherever...here was. I looked around again for any indication as to where I was. The building was a big warehouse, with a few logos and fancy writing in various bright colours and bold fonts.

The sounds of different sirens filled the air, and the man ran as fast as he could, out of the building. Paramedics came in, followed by the police and firefighters. Maybe it was a show? Like an open-air theatre or something? I didn't know whether I was allowed to be close to the action, so I stayed where I was. The paramedics were taking the man's pulse, while the police searched around for witnesses and the firefighters cut the metal. If this was a show, someone had gone a hell of a way to make the metal look real. There were sparks as the metal was cut through.

"We got a name?" one of the police asked.

"Caspian Granger."

Wow, that was spooky. Fancy picking an unusual name like that? I'd never met another Caspian in my life, let alone one with the same surname. I would've said something but didn't want to interrupt the show.

"Twenty-three years of age, male, theme park employee."

I felt a cold shiver run through me. That was my age. It had to be a coincidence. It had to be. Unless it was a cruel prank. I got up.

"Okay guys, very funny, shows over."

No-one stopped or even looked at me. Maybe it was a show, and they were in character?

A woman came in. My mum, the woman was my mum. She ran over to the cart, screaming, "Caspian, Caspian, no, not my boy!" She fell to the ground, while people held her and guided her away.

A strange sort of feeling came over me. A realisation slowly hit. This wasn't a sculpture, neither was it a show. It wasn't a coincidence the casualty had my name and my age. The logo on the walls was familiar now. It formed the letters G and S for Green snake, the name of the theme park. This was our main attraction, Multi-snake. I had been testing the coaster for faults after some guests had complained about strange noises. As I rode it, the structure had clanked and clunked and then the track had crumpled into the ground, sending the cart into oblivion and me with it.

That body wasn't an actor, that was me, dead. This wasn't a show, this was reality, the aftermath of my death. As for me...I looked at my hands and then around. As for me...I was dead. I was a corpse.

My mum's cries bled in from outside, and the emergency services worked on my body. Some news reporters had turned up, ready to inform the nation of my death. I stood, watching everything. No-one could see me or get my version of events.

All anyone cared about was the story. Not me, not my death, just the story.