

Travel Detective

It hasn't been the same. I haven't been the same, not since dad was murdered and I walked into mum's room finding little white pills on her bedside table. Anti-depressants. I felt as if the world was ending. Mum was a formal lady with black suits and tightly pulled up hair. All I knew was that mum had one flaw: anger. The death of my father, Dr. Malcolm Childers, took a toll on everyone. Many people showed up at his funeral. He was a scientist. As a child, I always asked him to create something that would do my homework for me. Instead, on my fifteenth birthday, he got me a small, caramel Maltese puppy with massive brown eyes. I named him Mal.

When dad was at the lab and mum was at work, I would read some of dad's old notes. He always had the next idea that 'would catch on.' Mal would sit at my feet and try to read along with me.

I wander mindlessly into the garage. Brown boxes of all sizes line the room. I haven't wanted to remind myself he was gone. The first box I open is a couple of his formal button-up shirts he would wear when he took mum on a date. I grab one, hoping they'd still smell of his strong cologne, but when I inhale the only smell I get is dust. I wrinkle up my nose to hold in the sneeze. I place the shirt back into the box, only for a small, plastic one to catch my eye. I shift the heavy box that sits on top of it. Cautiously, I look at it as if it will explode. But it doesn't. I quickly grab the box and run to my room. Mal jumps and yaps, hoping that what I hold is a treat. He jumps on my bed as I sit down and eyes the box.

Many brown leather booklets are stacked on top of each other. Mal tries to bite at one but I grab it before he runs off. I flick through the familiar pages. His handwriting was always neat. Soon after, the pages turn blank. I flick through a few more times and begin to lose hope but more of his black cursive writing comes into view. Carefully hand-drawn objects of a round silver platform sit on the pages. A time machine. He was trying to build a time machine. I read carefully. Dad has his heart set on it. Small news articles of time travel possibilities are glued evenly through the last few pages of the book. 'Not physical time travellers themselves, but rather informational traces left by them' is highlighted in bright orange pen. Other sentences are highlighted, like 'maybe travellers don't want to be found.'

Mal's yapping can be heard through the window. Forgetting my helmet, I jump on my bike. The wind whips at my hair as I push faster. Dad's lab comes into view. The tall, white buildings stare down at me knowingly. A wave of sadness instantly rushes over me. He died here. I throw my bike to the ground and run to the back door. The small box beside the massive metal door is my only way to get in without being caught. I open the case and it reveals a small rectangular screen and twenty-six, glowing blue buttons of the alphabet. I type in Malcolm.

Error.

"Mindy", Dad's primary school family pet.

Error.

"Bella", Mum's name.

Error.

"Nancy", my name.

Correct.

A small click alerts me and the metal door opens. I mentally cheer and slip through the door, closing it behind me. I run silently through the white halls. I rack my brain, trying to remember the direction to his lab. I stop in front of a door and type in my name again and the door opens. This must be dad's lab. I close it behind me. The mumbling of dad's work colleagues tells me I'll have to be quick. When all their backs are turned, I rush for the silver platform. The platform buzzes softly and blue hoops begin to spin, silently around me. I lift my hand to see parts of me floating away. Panic rises in my chest. Papers fly around, causing the other scientist to turn in my direction. They open their mouths to say something but it's too late. I close my eyes.

I feel nothing. My eyes shoot open and I'm standing in the lab. My hands are normal but the other scientist aren't there. Instead, it's my dad. A smile forms on my face. He wears his white lab coat and you can see his black shoes poking out underneath. His brown hair messy, as if he just woke up. I hear a small noise. It is barely noticeable. But mum isn't. Her normally pulled back hair hangs roughly on her shoulders. Her eyes scream. She shakenly raises the gun, her eyes blood shot.

"Dad!" I scream.

Bang!

It all comes clear to me. It isn't dad's funeral; it's mine. I run in front of him. I pull my hand away from my stomach. My fingertips are covered with a dark, red liquid. I stare as I fall into Dad's arms, choking and pale.

By Kaylee Lovegrove