

FEAR FILES

HIDE and
SEEK

CHRISTOPHER EDGE



WALKER
BOOKS



There is only one emotion that is as old as life
on Earth - and that emotion is FEAR.

Scientists have identified four levels of fear:

LEVEL 0: NO FEAR

LEVEL 1: LOW FEAR

LEVEL 2: MEDIUM FEAR

LEVEL 3: HIGH FEAR

But there is another secret level reserved
for the most extreme cases of this emotion:

LEVEL 4: BEYOND FEAR

CAUTION.

Nobody knows who started the DARKIVE - a database
of the strange and unexplained. The files
recovered in the DARKIVE leak have all been given
a LEVEL 4 rating, indicating that the experience
took the subject beyond the normal bounds of fear.

CONFIDENTIAL

DARKIVE FILE NUMBER: 454707

SUBJECT: ADAM FLYNN

LOCATION: [REDACTED]

FILE NOTES: HIDE AND SEEK

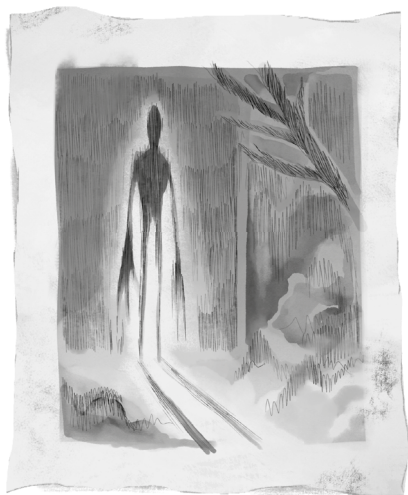
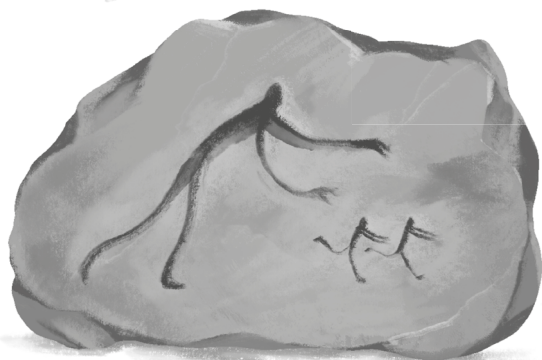
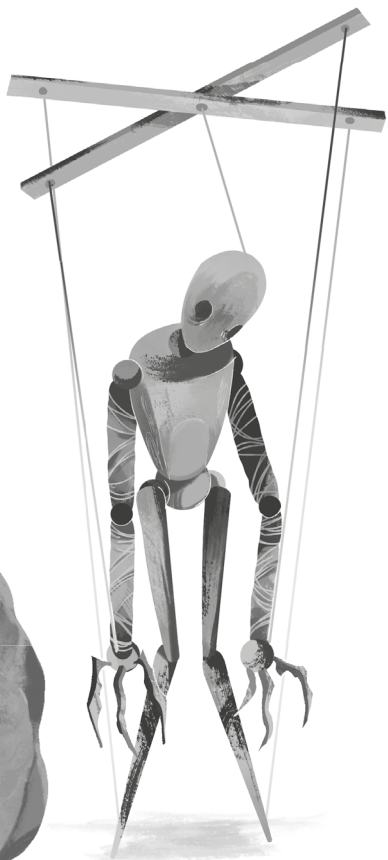
THE SUBJECT CLAIMS TO HAVE NO MEMORY OF THE EVENTS
DESCRIBED IN THE FILE, BUT THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT
WAS OBTAINED USING THE EXPERIMENTAL BURIED MEMORIES
RECOVERY PROCEDURE, ALLOWING HIM TO RELIVE THE
EXPERIENCE. NOTE: THE SIDE EFFECTS CAN BE DANGEROUS.

DISCLOSURE OF THIS CLASSIFIED

INFORMATION MAY ENDANGER PUBLIC SAFETY.

TOP SECRET. AUTHORIZED EYES ONLY.
LEVEL 4 CLEARANCE REQUIRED.

**DESTROY
AFTER
READING**



“Adam! Wait for me!”

I ignore Sol’s shout as I hurry across the field, dodging past cowpats as I try to put some serious distance between us. Milky swirls of mist roll across the meadow, making it difficult to see exactly where I’m heading, but that doesn’t matter now. I’ve just spent the last ten hours trapped in a two-man tent with Sol, listening to him snoring as I tried to get to sleep on an inflatable mattress that had sprung a leak. And when I finally did drop off, Sol woke me up ten minutes later saying he needed a wee.

I thought it would be fun to come camping with my best friend, but I didn’t realize how annoying he could be.

“Where are you going?” Sol asks, panting for breath as he falls into step beside me. “I thought we were going to play cards in the camper van.”

When Sol invited me along on this weekend camping trip, he said his mum and dad had booked a wild

glamping experience. I thought there'd be safari tents and solar-powered showers, cosy hammocks, a fire pit and an outdoor pizza oven – maybe even a games room with table tennis and air hockey. But after they picked me up on Friday evening, Sol's parents drove for miles before parking their camper van in this farmer's field in the middle of nowhere. There's nobody else around and the only facility I've found so far is the grubby toilet block at the bottom of the field.

"I don't want to play cards," I reply, still feeling like Sol's tricked me into coming along on this trip. "I'm going to explore. There's got to be *something* we can do around here."

"Maybe we should wait until the mist clears," Sol says, peering ahead into the soft white haze as the field starts to slope upwards. "We don't want to get lost."

I shake my head as I keep walking. "We're not going to get lost," I tell Sol, wondering when he became such a worrier. "I just want to see what I can find."

He shrugs. "Suit yourself, but I don't think there's going to be much of a view."

He's been like this since the trip started. Sol's

usually always up for an adventure, but it seems like he's determined to make this the most unfun weekend ever. The only game he's brought to play is Uno and I'm getting bored of him beating me every time.

I thought we'd stay up late telling ghost stories, but last night Sol got spooked before I even finished mine and said we had to go to sleep straight away because his mum had a migraine after the drive. That was his excuse, anyway, after his dad knocked on the flap of our tent to tell us to keep it down. Sol nearly jumped out of his sleeping bag when he saw his dad's shadow crawling up the canvas. I think maybe the only reason he's invited me on this trip is because he's scared of the dark.

I gaze up into the morning sky. The sun looks like a silver coin, hidden behind clouds that seem to stretch all the way to the ground. There's a slight dampness in the air, but it doesn't feel cold as we trek towards the top of the field. In fact, I'm starting to wish I was wearing a T-shirt like Sol instead of my light grey hoodie.

"The sun will soon burn this mist away," I say, sweating a little now as we reach the brow of the hill. "Look, it's already starting to clear over there."

Over the rise, the field rolls away towards the edge of a woodland. The thin line of trees is still veiled in the lightest of mists, but beyond this I glimpse the blurred outline of roofs and chimneys. It looks like the ghost of a village, rising above the treeline.

“There you go,” I tell Sol with a grin as I start in this direction. “Now we’ve got somewhere to go.”

The sky seems to brighten with every step as we tramp down the field, the twirling trails of mist slowly melting away as Sol hurries to keep up with me.

“I didn’t notice this place when we arrived last night,” he says, frowning a little as he follows me over the stile in the far corner of the field.

“It was dark then,” I reply, heading down a track that looks like it leads to the village. Through the gaps in the trees, I can see a high stone wall that stretches in both directions. The honey-coloured stone seems to glow as the sun finally breaks through the clouds. It almost looks like the wall circles the village, keeping it safe from prying eyes. “But we’re here now and I hope the shops are open.”