

A few dawn dewdrops glistened on the tall brown grass. The sky was brightening but mercifully still cold, the morning both welcoming and foreboding. He hadn't seen another soul in months and food was becoming very scarce. His belly sounded its discontent at his meagre diet as he pulled the decaying door to and walked out into the wilderness.

Since the end of things there had been fewer wanderers in the scrublands around his home, fewer friendly visitors and fewer hostile scavengers alike. He had gotten used to the silence, the soft purr of the grasses in the wind, punctuated by the crunch of dirt under his boot or the soft padding of his dog at his side.

The Sun had grown so very strong, scorching the once green pastures around his home and robbing him and the animals around his homestead of much needed sustenance. The only place where life had continued to thrive was underground, where funguses and moulds and creatures from the darkness dwelt. He was loath to go to the caves nearby, abundant with life as they were. He even feared the basement of his own house; it was as if, as the sun had grown in strength, the dark did also. As if to compound the fear, in his few meetings with wandering folk he had heard tales of strange creatures lurking in the dark crevices of the earth.

The Man put such thoughts from his head and pushed onwards, wanting to climb the hill to the south as it afforded a commanding view of the surrounding area. He felt old as he climbed up the rock slope. The Dog would once have been many strides ahead sniffing and scouting, but the end had taken its toll on her too, she was weakened and thin but still strong willed and fiercely loyal.

At last they reached the summit and he took a pair of worn binoculars from a pouch on his pack and brought them up to his eyes. Burnt trees and the rigid swaying of too-dry grasses and dead earth was all he could see in all directions. Despondently he dropped the binoculars to his side.

A flicker of movement caught his eye; he dropped down to his knees and brought the binoculars up once more, squinting to focus on a patch of brush at the base of the hill. A small rustle in the broken branches, something was rooting around down there, something alive at last.

He brought his rifle down from his shoulder, flipping up the cover on the back of his scope and slowly lowering himself prone in the dirt. He zeroed in and watched patiently as it shuffled out from under its cover. A fat, bristly snout and a short tusks came followed by a pair of dark, beady eyes. He moved the crosshairs back past the head and aimed just behind the shoulder, hoping to hit its heart and take it down without a fuss. He took a breath, held it, and squeezed the trigger.

The loud crack bounced around the silent hills and the pig looked up towards the source of the noise just as the bullet hit, tearing between two ribs and tumbling through its heart. It let out a brief squeal and slumped forwards, dead almost instantly. The Man jumped up and let out a whoop of joy, his dog circling him and barking encouragingly.

He put his rifle on his shoulder and ran down the hill nearly falling but managing to keep his footing despite his excitement. As he approached he slowed and his excitement faded as the scraping, shuffling noises reached him from where the pig lay dead. He pulled his pistol from his hip and brought it up, walking softly towards the pig.

Several sharp snaps he thought sounded like breaking bones came from the bush and the sound of gushing wetness then a loud clacking like someone breaking open a crab. Fear gripped him as he edged around the bush, looking past the snout he could see thin shadows flailing in the shade. Taking a deep breath he took two big steps to the right and came right around the other side of the bush and everything that was hidden came into view.

There was a dark hole in the side of the pig just behind its left leg where the bullet had left, but that wasn't the only one, and it wasn't the hole he was looking at. He felt warm wetness descend his leg as he tried to make sense of what his eyes told him was in front of him. The pig was a sow and she had been carrying a litter near to birth. Her distended belly was torn open and several stillborn piglets lay just outside the tear. They were small and malformed but that was not the worst of it. There was something alive inside, something wriggling and making that dreadful clacking sound. He stood, mesmerised, as the body of another piglet issued forth. This one was fatter than the others but the top half of its head was missing, and the half that was left was empty.

Resisting the urge to vomit he watched the piglet slide out of the tear. He saw when it was fully out it had not come of its own, it had been pushed out and he got a glimpse of what had pushed it. Looking like a grotesque, slender, black crab leg covered in bristly spines and ending in what looked like a baby's hand with long serrated claws. With a shaking left hand he rubbed his eyes. What he saw could not possibly have happened.

As if to answer his doubting mind the arm flicked out from the dark wetness of the pig's belly and grabbed another of the piglets dragging it head-first back into its mother. Another clacking crunching noise and this piglet was also ejected, this time only a stump of a neck remained, the entire head having been devoured.

The loose flap of skin that used to be the sow's belly began to bulge as whatever was inside shifted its weight and looked like it wanted to come out. He raised this pistol again trying to steady his hands, stinging sweat running into his eyes. A spindly crab arm slinked out followed by another, and a third. Feeling across the ground, grabbing at anything within reach and testing it with the infant-hands the monstrosity started pulling itself out of its mother. More grisly appendages sprang forth, smaller versions of the longer arms, fatter and arranged in rows, supporting something as yet hidden under the skin-flap. Another heave and the creature pulled itself free. The Man couldn't help but utter a small cry as he saw it in the light. The rows of legs supported a bulbous, pulsating sack covered in weeping sores. From the front probed a pair of foot long tubes ending in small mouths full of very sharp-looking teeth, biting at anything they could get close to. From the top sprouted dozens of stalks ending in lidless eyes, swivelling around, surveying the surroundings, and finally settling on him, as he stood there, unable to move.

The Dog let out a sharp bark and that was enough to wake The Man from his stupor. He shook his head, focussed his aim at the middle of the thing and fired. The bullets tore open the fetid sack and the pair of mouths let out a single shriek before falling silent. He kept pulling the trigger, even after the magazine was spent, uselessly clicking his gun at the tattered rags of flesh in front of him.

After regaining what composure he could he decided he wasn't very hungry after all.

Another few minutes of staring in bewilderment and he stretched out a boot and tapped one of the long spindly arms, jumping back after, ready for any movement. The thing didn't flinch. He bent down and took up a short length of withered old tree branch and prodded the pulpy red mess. Still it lay completely inert.

He decided it wasn't going anywhere and thought he had best take a look inside the pig to make sure there weren't any other surprise waiting for him before he examined the thing.

Using the stick he lifted up the side of the pig and shone his torch inside the cavity. It was a mess inside. He could see where the thing had been trying to eat its way out and wondered how the hell the pig could keep going with that going on inside it. Lowering the flap back down and placing the stick on the floor, he knelt down now to examine the thing.

Gingerly he picked up one of the four thin crab-arms. Each was divided into three segments of nearly a foot long, and no more than an inch wide, black in colour and covered in tough and very sharp little spines. At the end of each was a small chubby hand. What looked like more of the hard, black, shell-like material grew down the backs of the fingers and thumb in a ridge, and ended in a sharp point. The opposite side to the ridge tapered into a serrated blade. It was like the hand had grown its own set of built-in steak knives.

He moved closer picking up one of the mouth-tubes. It was like picking up a soggy kitchen roll tube made of flesh. The lipless mouth opening was full of rows of razor sharp piranha sized teeth; disgustingly there were small chunks of undigested meat stuck between them. The Man gave an involuntary shiver and dropped the tube back to the ground.

There wasn't a lot left of the body to examine so he instead picked up an eyestalk, one of about three dozen lifeless staring eyes at the end of muscular tubes the size and thickness of a pencil. The dead eyes had no colour just a black spot in the middle of a yellowy white, veined blob. The Man had had enough he let go of the eyestalk and it remained erect for a few seconds before bending back down under its weight to join the others.

He didn't want to wait here any longer and he had exhausted his fascination with this creature. He walked away backwards, not wanting to show his back to it until he felt sufficiently safe to do so. Fifty yards of shuffling back and nearly falling over rocks seemed sufficient when he turned and started walking, rather briskly, back home.

As he got back the Sun had risen over the horizon and it was getting hot, he was glad he hadn't stuck around any longer than he had or he might have gotten into even worse trouble. He pushed open the heavy front door, walked through, and The Dog ran in after. He closed it and bolted it after himself and walked through the cool, conditioned air to the kitchen, his appetite had returned after he had metabolised away all of the earlier adrenaline.

He took the tin of sausage and beans and plopped the contents into a cracked bowl and buzzed it in the microwave for a couple of minutes. Putting it onto the table with a worn spoon when it was hot. He repeated the preparation, this time putting the bowl on the floor for The Dog. He had repeated these same actions hundreds of times before today, albeit not always sausage and beans, and it had become a comforting calm in what was otherwise a thoroughly tumultuous sea.

But not today, today there was no comfort from the ritual. His nerves were still jangling and a million thoughts whirled in his head; what was it? Where was it from? How many were there? How big do they get? Where do they live? What do they eat apart from the pigs that carry them? Does anything else carry them? What if they're in the food? Or the water? What if they come for me when they're bigger? What can I do? I'm all alone, I'm all alone, I'M ALL ALONE!

He smashed his fist down onto the table, making The Dog jump back from his bowl, but clearing his head for the moment. They both went back to eating with considerably less relish than usual.

Daytime was spent the same way pretty much every day; sleeping, checking the house and supplies and reading one of the same books or magazines he had already read a dozen times over. His mind started to drift back, trying to remember what it was like before the incessant heat.

When the days had started getting much warmer, the equatorial belt had become uninhabitable; all the rivers, lakes and streams had boiled away, the ground was baked hard as rock, and anything alive went North, South, underground or died. The more temperate places had also gotten hotter, and with the seas constantly evaporating into the sky, it was a cycle of blazing hot sun and torrential downpours. Outside of the cities great swathes of southern England had become like a tropical jungle. It only lasted a decade or so because it didn't stop getting hotter.

The one handy side effect had been the abundance of solar power. Panels were everywhere and powered pretty much everything. When they weren't providing direct power to things they were charging great banks of batteries for the nighttime. Consequently even after the collapse of normal civilisation there was still juice for every piece of unused electrically powered equipment in the country, there just weren't any people around to use it.

The massive shift had not been a smooth and easy transition, the total abandonment of fossil fuels, whilst long advocated, hadn't happened until it was far too late to change anything. The rich countries had stood idly by while the deserts at the equator had spread, displacing and killing millions. It was only when the remains of these millions of hungry desperate people were threatening to flood into their countries that they acted. Rather than open their borders to feed, cloth and help, they erected walls and fences and instead of giving the refugees food, shelter and medicine they dispensed bullets, minefields and bombs.

It wasn't long before the refugees were all dead, the shantytowns they had constructed lying wasted and empty. The defences offered no protection from the encroaching heat, however, and it would soon come to claim those who had tried to wall it away behind a mountain of corpses.

The rap of gunfire in the valley brought his thoughts racing to the present. He gathered his rifle and tucked his pistol into his trousers. Grabbing a pair of goggles and his binoculars he ran upstairs to see what was happening.

The top floor of the house was one large room with just the supports for the attic crawlspace and the roof breaking up the space. In the centre of the room there were three large chest freezers, their glass tops rimed with frost. In the far corner sat in a plastic bathtub were the high capacity batteries that powered the house after dark. There were a few other chests and cupboards containing spare clothing, weapons, tools and other supplies, but there was no furniture and no bed; he had slept downstairs for as long as he could remember. It was too hot to stay upstairs for an extended length of time.

The outside walls were coated in a reflective metallic surface and on the inside of the wall he had further reflective material and alternating layers of polystyrene foam and air cavities to prevent heat transfer from the outside. There were three air conditioning units built into the walls, two on this floor and one on the ground floor. A small two-foot square porthole was cut into each of the four walls, with an inch of polarised heat-treated glass as a viewing port. In the extreme temperatures of midday the south-facing window became hot enough to fry eggs on. This is the one he peered out of now; glad he had cleaned the windows a few days earlier.

He caught sight of movement a little way off so he brought up his binoculars for a closer look. Staggering towards his house was a cloaked and hooded figure, stooped over in the morning heat. The figure shambled onwards looking back over his shoulder every few paces. After the third time looking back the figure turned and aimed his rifle at something in the tree line and squeezed off a few shots, before turning and continuing forwards.

The Man focussed on the trees seeing movement but as yet unable to determine what or who it was. He kept watching. The figure was much closer now, and whatever had previously kept to the shadows saw it might lose its meal for the day. It sprang forth, a tangle of eyes and legs and hair and flesh glistening in the morning sun. The Man backed a few paces away from the window, nearly stumbling over his own feet. He rushed downstairs and began unbolting the door that lead onto the scant shelter of the front porch.

Drawing back the bolts he heard more gunfire and swung the heavy door back to see the figure turning and running towards him now, as fast as was possible and less than a hundred feet from the door. The beast had been seriously wounded but was still pursuing, and was gaining fast. He took his rifle, knelt and aimed low at the creature hoping to stumble or incapacitate it fast. He flipped the selector to automatic pulled the trigger and the gun roared into life, hot spent cartridges pinging and jingling off of the doorframe. The stream of fire caught its underside at first and then drew upwards with the recoil, nearly cutting it in half. Its momentum carried it on a few strides before it fell, the heavy sack of its body bursting as it hit the floor, legs and arms writhing as the contents spilled out on the hot sand. The figure ran past him, diving into the house, and he slammed the door after, ramming the bolts home.

“What the hell was that?” the visitor pulled her hood down, shaking off clouds of dust.

“That’s the first one like that I’ve seen. Saw something similar but much smaller this morning that ate its way out of a pig.

“Seriously? I’ve heard a few stories moving from place to place, but I thought it was mostly booze, imagination and lack of human contact, I never thought there might have been some truth to the talk.”

“What stories? What have you heard? I’ve not seen a soul in weeks, maybe longer.”

“Hospitality not your strong suit? If it’s been a while since you’ve seen anyone I can’t say I’m surprised. Help me up off the floor and I’ll tell you what I’ve heard.”

“Yeah sorry, it has been a while. That and its been a real weird morning” he reached down and pulled her up, the coarse sand on her gloves rubbing against the palm of his hand.

She pulled a chair out and rested her rifle against the table. Tugging at a couple of Velcro straps, she pulled open her poncho, shrugged it off and let it drop to the floor. She was wearing a heavy pack, a pouched vest full of extra rifle magazines and a couple of pistols on her hips. She reminded him of some sort of apocalyptic cowgirl. He smiled to himself as she took off her pack and sat at the table.

Walking past her to the kitchen he opened the fridge and took out a bottle of water, taking it back to the table and filling two glasses with the cool, clear liquid. He sat down at the opposite end of the table and took long refreshing gulps.

“First thing I heard was about the spiders and insects in the dark. There were a bunch of people living in some caves not far from here I passed a few months ago. They had built themselves shelters inside and had panels set up for power, trying to make a go of it and doing quite well. The only thing was as soon as the lights went out they heard things skittering around, running across the walls and roofs of their shelters. They told me when they brought torches out to see what was there they found spiders black as night and big as your fist with long spiny legs. When they shone the light on them they hissed and ran off. I didn’t really believe it much at the time only a couple of them had claimed to see them and there wasn’t really anything physical to say they

even existed. I definitely had a strange feeling in that place though, I didn't want to stay there for long, so I didn't and I moved on. About a month later I went back that way and there was no one there. I figured they had moved on or something, now I'm not so sure."

"I've seen the same spiders. They started showing up in my basement a couple months ago. Not huge ones but ugly black spiny things that hid in corners and behind cabinets staying away from the light. Was damn strange because there's really no way for them to get down there. I bug-bombed the place and that seemed to stop them for a week or so but they came back so I took to sleeping up here. With all the lights on."

"You've not been back down since?"

"No, I locked the hatch and put a locker on top of it and tried not to think about it. I'm sure I've heard them moving about down there but I just put it down to my imagination."

"Maybe we should take a look?"

"Feel free, the lights don't work that well anymore though, the cables need replacing; they were worn as hell, nearly cut through in some places. You can guess as well as me what might have done it. If they do that to copper wire I don't feel like finding out what they might want to do to something softer, like me."

She got up from the table, unclipping her vest and leaving it on the chair. She moved to the locker and pushed effortlessly off of the hatch. Returning to her pack she took out a large torch, flicked it on and off to test and stood back at the hatch, pulling one of the pistols from her hip and aiming both it and the torch down in readiness.

"Come flip this thing please"

"You sure you want to go down there?"

"Yeah, very sure. Who wants to live forever anyways?" she gave him a wink and a cheeky smile.

He smiled back at her. She was feisty, that's for sure, and he was enjoying her company already.

"Hold on let me get some more light. And something bigger than a pistol."

He opened the locker she had moved aside and pulled out a hefty pump action shotgun with a light duct taped to the to the right hand side of the barrel. The thumbed in some shells and flicked on the torch.

"I like to keep this handy" he cocked the shotgun with a loud cha-chunk, "for close encounters."

She gave him a strangely puzzled look.

“Movie quote, something I’ve wanted to say since I picked this thing up months ago.” She still looked puzzled but at least the tension was lessened. “Ready?”

“As I’ll ever be.” She clicked her torch back on and readied herself, “go.”

He pulled the rope tied to the door handle and heaved the door up and open, the creaking of the hinges nearly as loud as the clang when the door slammed back down, the stairs beckoning down into the darkness.

“It extends further than the walls of the house down there, you go left and Ill take the right, watch the corners and behind the cabinets on the walls, that’s where they liked to hide last time I was down.”

She descended first, light, eyes and gun scanning as one, down the steps as she went, and along the walls, floor and ceiling. He followed closely, keeping to the right as they reached the bottom. The light switches were on his side and he flicked them all down with the side of his hand. Nothing came on at the far end but the fluorescent tubes that covered the first few feet of the basement flickered on and off.

“You should come see this.” She said over her shoulder, pointing her gun and torch into the far corner.

He walked behind her then to her right and brought his light up and shone it in the same place. There was a three-foot high hole in the basement wall and what looked like a tunnel stretched back and down away from them. In front of the hole there were several purplish football sized sacks. Covered in coarse hair and spines and torn open from the inside, they were obviously some sort of grotesque eggs left by whatever burrowed that tunnel.

Captivated by what they saw they didn’t notice something shuffling across the ceiling towards them from the darkness of the opposite corner. There was a small puff noise and a strand of sticky silk descended from the darkness onto the Man’s foot. Two more puffs and two strands were held fast on his leg, still without his notice. The Dog had worked its way gingerly down the stairs while they stood engrossed and now stood, head cocked sideways looking at the thing hanging upside down from the ceiling in the darkness. Another puff and this time the dog let out a bark, the strand landed on the back of The Man’s hand.

“God girl you nearly gave me a heart attack” The Man turned towards the dog his face pale from fright, “what are you barking fo…” he looked down at his hand, squinting his eyes against the dark, noticing the strands disappearing into the darkness by the ceiling. At that moment he felt a tug on his hand followed by rapid strong jerks on his leg. His leg went from under him and he fell on his back letting go of his shotgun as he hit the hard stone floor.

“HELP!” he yelled as he started to slide across the floor, scrabbling to find some purchase with his fingers to pull against whatever had him.



She turned her torch towards The Man and shone the beam along the strands towards the darkness in the corner. Hanging upside down from a silken web draped across the ceiling was dark shape. Light played across a quivering leg, black, veined with a reddish purple, and covered intermittently in porcupine-like spines. Following the leg back to its source with the torch, the body came into view. Strands of silk played from its bloated body and were being pulled back in by two pairs of the slender, powerful legs.

“SHOOT IT!” He ordered, stretching his arm towards his dropped weapon.

She took aim at its smooth head and fired. The bullet dented the smooth shell but appeared to do no other damage. She fired again, with the same effect. She kept firing until the gun was empty, the spider stopped pulling and The Man dragged himself back a couple of feet while it was distracted. It shook its head blood dripping from the gouges rent in its shell. It resumed pulling.

”The shotgun, use the shotgun.” He was still stretching for it but it was tantalisingly out of reach.

Heedless of the danger the Dog darted forward and grabbed The Man by his coat and tried to pull him back. The spider hissed and its head started to rotate a split forming down the middle. The two sides peeled back revealing a cavernous maw lined with circular rows of long yellow fangs and two enormous eyes, tinged green and heavily veined with pupils the diameter of coffee mugs. It blinked twice in quick succession and darted forwards gathering up the slack in the silk threads as it went.

The Girl wasted no time in grabbing the shotgun and brining it up to her shoulder, walking towards the spider, bringing her weapon to bear on the exposed face. The spiders’ eyes twitched and blinked in the light, it hissed again, raising its front legs away from the ceiling in a threatening gesture. She pulled the shotgun close to her shoulder and fired; the flash illuminated the room like a camera flash, the boom was deafening. The shot was a little wide to the left and hadn’t had time to spread at such a short distance. Barely missing the head, the pellets tore off three of the spiders’ legs, flinging them away in a spray of blood.

Dropping down from the ceiling, the spider lost its grip on the silken strands and tried to back away, hissing and raising its legs. Jerking back the slide and pumping it forwards she fed a new shell into the chamber, the spent case arcing over the dog and skipping away under a locker. She took aim again, the second shot tearing right through the spiders’ head, one of its eyes exploding in a shower of blood and green fleshy chunks and smashing away the whole left side of its mouth. The spider staggered, let out a pitifully weak screech and coughed up a mess of broken fangs and blood and then turned over onto its back, curling its legs up over itself. She walked over to where it lay, chambering another shell as she went. The remaining eye blinked once and she took aim and it and pulled the trigger, the blast destroying what was left of the spiders’ head.

“You sure that thing is dead?”

She kicked the remains with her boot; it didn’t move, “looks dead to me”

“Well then it’s your turn to help me up off the floor!”

She came back over taking out her knife and cutting away the silky strands and pulling him up off the floor, returning his shotgun.

“Thanks, I suppose now we’re even” he said thumbing fresh shells into his gun.

There was a fresh scuttling noise that caught their attention. The Dog sniffed and growled towards the tunnel opening.

“Maybe we should discuss things upstairs,” she said slipping a fresh magazine into her pistol and picking up her torch.

“Well don’t just stand there looking pretty, get on up.” He pointed the shotgun at the tunnel and started to back up towards the stairs.

“Way ahead of ya.” She ran past grabbing the dog by the collar and running to the top of the stairs. She started pulling the metal door up from the floor, readying herself to slam it shut fast.

“There’s more of ‘em coming through, get ready with the door.”

“Its ready, just get up here.”

The noise of the shotgun booming in the basement started her, and the door nearly fell from her hands. “Come on this thing weighs a ton.”

Four more blasts and he came running up the stairs, throwing himself out of the way as she slammed the metal door down hard, the mighty clang throwing up dust and flecks of rust. Pulling the latches shut she drew the locker back over the hatch and sat on it, breathing hard.

“You know how to show a girl a good time, that’s for sure!”

“Well you should see when I really plan something, not just do things on the spur of the moment like this.” He said with a smirk. They both burst into laughter, the dog joined in, bounding from side to side barking.

“ I wonder how long that thing was down there for, and how long it was going to wait before it tried to come up for something to eat?”

“I’d rather not think about it thanks. I’m glad you’re my uninvited dinner guest rather than what was down there.”

“So what’s for dinner then?”

“ Do you like beans and sausages? It’s that, or just beans, or if I look very hard maybe just sausages. An extensive menu I’m sure you’ll agree. I’ll give you a little time to decide in the mean time can I get you a drink? We have water. Again another extensive choice but from the look of you I think you’re going to go for the water.

“ I have to tell you I always hated smarmy waiters”

“ Well I wouldn’t tell this waiter that if I were you, he is best friends with the chef and you wouldn’t want him spitting in your beans would you!”

She smiled at him again, “beans and sausages it is then.”

“Certainly Madame” he replied with his best, albeit quite terrible, French accent. Reaching into a cupboard he brought out three tins, the dog barking approvingly. “Now you would have been in for a treat if that pig wasn’t carrying something extra along with a litter of piglets. Haven’t had roast pig in years would have been wonderful,” closing his eyes he licked his lips.

“So what was in the pig?”

“I don’t know, and I don’t really know how to start describing it to you, apart from, like those spiders, it was ugly as hell and didn’t look in any way natural. It was all eyes and claws and long, horrible, spindly legs and had these horrible clawed little hands.” He shivered involuntarily, remembering the way it slinked out from the sows open belly.

“You ok?”

“Yeah I was a little bit freaked out by it. Well, that’s kind of an understatement; I was really fucking shook up by it. I was trying to get my head around it all when I heard your gun outside. What were you doing out so late in the morning anyway? Any later and you would have been burnt to a crisp.”

“ I know, but I had company, there were four of those things after me from the break of dawn this morning when I came out. I put two down and wounded one but the last one was hiding, I think it was biding its time until it got too hot outside for me, then it was going to pounce. I was lucky I stumbled into your place, I was getting very tired and I could smell the dust on my poncho starting to singe.”

“When the Sun goes down we’ll have to go outside and make sure there’s nothing else lurking about, and I’ll show you that pig, see what you think about it.”

He finished cooking and dished up the food. The table was silent, both of them lost in thought about what had happened, and the dog just lost in the food.

“ Are you planning on sticking around for a while or you just going pass through?” He kept his head down looking at his plate. “We’d need to find you some place to sleep if you’re going to stay.”

“Hadn’t given it much thought to be honest. I wouldn’t mind staying a while if you didn’t mind. Don’t think I’ve stayed anywhere more than a few days since I left the cave-people. You got a nice place here. That and I really like your dog!”

He looked up from his plate and smiled to her, he was glad she was going to stay.