INK HARBOR STUDIOS

ISSUE #1

HUSHGRAVE

MAN OR MYTH

The First Night

MAGNOLIA CROWN UNIVERSITY

1892

HUSHGRAVE

MAN OR MYTH

THE HOOKS WE KEEP

Issue #1
The First Night

MAGNOLIA CROWN UNIVERSITY
EST. 1898

BELLWETHER RESIDENCE HALL
OCTOBER 14, 2010
10:47 PM

Some stories don't find you on purpose.

They find you by accident.

Naomi
You almost back? We still in the lib.
10:32 PM

Asha
Yeah. Headed to Bellwether. Be there soon.
10:33 PM

Naomi
Lock the door.
10:33 PM

ASHA REED
23 | GRADUATE STUDENT
HISTORY (AFRICAN DIASPORA)
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

Bellwether is one of the older halls on campus.

People say it has character.

I just say it's old.

BELLWETHER

Old buildings hold a lot more than history.

It's late. Most people are already in for the night.

At least that's what I thought.

The closer I get to my room, the quieter it gets.

305

Not peaceful quiet.

The kind of quiet that feels like someone's holding their breath.

I tell myself it's nothing.

Just an old building, old pipes, old noises.

But something about tonight feels different.

Like I'm not alone.

And like something is watching.

Some doors should stay closed.

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The building is old, but it's home for now.

Home is where I can be tired and still breathe.

Just me. My books. My future.

Same routine. Same night. Nothing strange.

Or so I thought.

My space. My peace.

HISTORY BUILDS BETTER FUTURES

Books, a hot shower, and maybe an early night.

Some things can wait until morning.

History has a way of repeating itself.

That's why I study it.

You learn the patterns.

You see what others miss.

Around 11:28 PM, I heard it.

A soft sound. Not loud. Just... wrong.

CREAK...

Like the hallway settled when it should've been still.

I looked, but saw nothing.

Maybe it was just the building.

Old buildings make old noises.

Right?

I tried to let it go. Focused on my notes. Told myself I was overthinking.

Simone
You good?
You been quiet.
11:46 PM

Yeah. Just studying. You?
11:47 PM

Simone
Same. Don't stay up too late. Bellwether be weird at night.
11:48 PM

We always say that. Bellwether be weird at night.

But tonight... it feels different.

Some stories don't find you on purpose.

Sometimes they just wait until you're still.

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I tell myself it's just an old building.

People hear things at night and make it bigger than it is.

I'm not like that.

Tea. Notes. Early class tomorrow.

Back to normal.

Just one more chapter.

Then sleep.

11:52 PM

HISTORY

Research Methods

Archives & Memory

A sound. Soft. Distant. Like footsteps.

Probably nothing.

THUMP....

THUMP...

THUMP...

It stops. I wait.

Maybe someone on the floor.

I should check the door anyway.

Can't hurt to be sure.

Locked. Still good.

The window too.

Everything looks about the same.

Just rain. Just campus.

Just me overthinking again.

Until it's not.

That wasn't there before.

My stomach gets tight.

For a second I think it's just a shadow.

But it's still there when I blink.

No. I'm done for tonight.

Some doors should stay closed.

But even with the lights off...

...the feeling doesn't leave.

And somewhere in Bellwether...

...someone is still watching.

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I try to ignore it. Maybe it's just the wind.

Bellwether is old. Old buildings make old noises.

But the noise keeps coming back.

Same spot. Same rhythm.

So I finally look.

And that's when I see it.

Standing there.

Across the quad.

Not moving.

Just watching.

I can't see a face.

But I know I'm not imagining it.

Because when I look away...

...and look back...

I close the curtains.

Heart racing for no reason.

11:58

Thursday, October 14

Too late to text Simone.

I don't want to sound crazy.

It's probably nothing.

Just a long day. A vivid imagination.

I tell myself that over and over...

...until finally I fall asleep.

But somewhere around 2:17 AM...

...I wake up.

Because this time there's no doubt.

The curtains are slightly open.

And they're still there.

Closer now.

Still watching.

And this time...

...I don't think they're alone.

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Morning hits different when you didn't sleep but still have to show up.

Magnolia Crown University. Same place. New day. Same questions.

Tired eyes. Same goals.

Can't let a strange noise steal my day.

ASHA REED
23 | HISTORY GRAD
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

Asha! You alive?

Some people run on coffee. I run on spite and deadlines.

Girl you look like you fought a ghost and lost.

NAOMI WHITFIELD
20 | CRIMINAL JUSTICE
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

I just didn't sleep.

You know how Bellwether be at night.

Old building. Old pipes. Old everything.

Mmhm. Sure.

Don't listen to her. This girl was probably up binge-watching conspiracy videos again.

SIMONE CARTER
19 | MASS COMM.
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

Or writing another paper at 3 a.m. because she overthinks everything.

BRIELLE WASHINGTON
19 | SOCIAL WORK
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

Y'all leaving or we standing here all day?

TERRENCE COLE
21 | COMPUTER SCI.
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

I'm coming. Let me just breathe.

New day. Same place. Different feeling.

Classes. Assignments. People. Noise. Life moving like nothing happened.

First stop, Crown Grounds. I need a real cup of coffee.

Y'all coming or what?

But some stories don't stay quiet. They just wait.

MCU
TRADITION
KNOWLEDGE
POWER

Because on this campus...

Not everything you hear at night is just your imagination.

CROWN GROUNDS
COFFEE CO.

So what's the move tonight?

Library grind. Early.

You say that now...

Same campus. Same people. But somewhere in Bellwether...

...someone is still watching.

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A new day.
Same campus.
Same questions.

Classes, people, assignments... and a night I can't stop replaying.

MCU
MAGNOLIA CROWN UNIVERSITY

Girl, you almost missed this class too. Again.

I made it though, didn't I? That's what matters.

You always running late but somehow still fine.

NAOMI WHITFIELD
20 | CRIMINAL JUSTICE
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

SIMONE CARTER
19 | MASS COMM.
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

Don't get used to it. Professor Grant don't play.

I heard he's tight about attendance this semester.

Ugh. Always something.

Maybe I should switch my major to "Showing Up Late and Still Passing."

You'd be the dean.

What do you have after this?

Communications. Then I'm free.

You wanna grab something from the Crown Grounds before that?

Yes. I need caffeine and real food. Not just this.

Same. And we need to talk about Friday.

Oh? Now I'm scared. What we getting into?

You still going to the Founders Week event this weekend?

Girl, you know it. It's tradition.

Just be smart. Last year was a lot.

It always is. That's the point.

Everyone is living their normal.

Laughing. Making plans.

But last night still sits in my head.

It felt real. Too real.

Maybe it was just my imagination...

Or maybe not.

HIST 210
Southern History and Memory

Good morning. Take your seats. We'll begin.

Different people. Different stories.

Same campus. Same classes.

But something feels different.

Same day. Same people.

And somewhere in Bellwether...

...someone is still watching.

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Same campus. Different corners. Stories moving at the same time.

MCU
MAGNOLIA CROWN UNIVERSITY

Everyone's got somewhere to be. And something they're trying to leave behind.

Library first, then I'm grabbing a real breakfast. Not another vending machine.

NAOMI WHITFIELD
20 | CRIMINAL JUSTICE
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

You always say that and we still end up at Crown Grounds.

Food hits different after pretending to be academic for three hours.

SIMONE CARTER
19 | MASS COMM.
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

I actually need to focus this semester.

Girl, we both need to focus.

But balance. We study, we eat, we live. Can't do just one.

Y'all got room for one more at Crown Grounds?

Only if you not coming to talk about cells and depression again.

TERRENCE COLE
21 | COMPUTER SCI.
BELLWETHER RESIDENT

Hey, that's important!

Not before food, Terrence.

Truce. Food first. Then you can educate us.

CROWN GROUNDS
COFFEE CO.

This place is the only thing keeping me sane.

Good coffee. Good people. For now.

It really is beautiful here when you stop and look.

Almost makes you forget the rumors.

Almost.

Back to it.

Research for my paper. Try to stay ahead for once.

Maybe this semester can be different.

HISTORICAL PATTERNS
Cycles, Myths, and the Power of Place

History Repeats Itself.
Pay Attention.
— ?

But some things have a way of finding you...

...even when you're not looking.

A movement outside the glass catches my eye.

Just a figure. Hood up. Standing still.

Too far to tell if it's a student.

Or just my imagination.

But it's there. Watching. Waiting.

I shake it off.

Tomorrow is just another day.

Right?