



CHAPTER 1

The remote Alaskan island looked like the setting of a horror novel. Seriously, it was like some monster had swallowed everyone, leaving an empty shell of a town. Ten-year-old Noah Burton swore he hadn't seen a soul since he and his family landed on the island and picked up their rental car — a dented, rusty old truck with an extended cab. From the back seat he shared with his twin sister,

Emma, Noah stared out the window at a single plastic bag floating on the wind down an otherwise still street. Icy fingers of cold seeped in, making it seem all the more dismal. But Grandma Tilda didn't seem to notice. She hummed a happy tune from the front seat, next to his father, oblivious to the creepy surroundings.

"After all the planning, I can't believe we're finally here!" Dr. Burton said.

"Well, we are, Dad!" Emma laughed.

Noah shook his head. How could his family be so cheerful about this weird vacant town, especially since they'd be calling it home for the next twelve months?

Sure, the sky's the same blue as it was in Hawaii yesterday, Noah thought. *And, yes,*

it's still mid-June and the sun is shining just as brightly. But what Noah saw out the truck window could only be described as eerie.

The island had once held a busy military base, but it had been abandoned and shut down years ago. Empty office buildings and derelict duplexes lined the streets.

“This place looks like it should be full of zombies,” Noah said. “It’s practically apocalyptic.”

