2013- Loreto Two

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Primary Character 1: Geologist
Primary Character 2: Spy
Setting: Tunnel
Non-Human: Spider
Issue: Heatwave

Random words which must appear:

- Molten
- Scribble
- Precarious
- Encourage
- Curiously

Acknowledgments
Thank you to Loreto College Marryatville for sponsoring and funding this project.
We would like to dedicate this book to the kids of the 
Women’s and Children’s Hospital

To the children of the Women’s and Children’s Hospital,

Here at Loreto College Marryatville, we have written a 
book for you. There were ten of us that all contributed to 
it and we all had heaps of fun. We took a day off of school 
and spent around 12 hours; making our fingers type and 
draw as fast as we could. In the end, it all came together 
and we are really proud of it. We hope it puts a smile on 
your face and you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed 
writing it.

xoxo

LC Girls #lcdoesitbest
Jackson paused in the hallway, facing the closed door. He hadn’t been in this room for five years. His hand shook slightly as he reached for the door knob. The door creaked open as he stepped forward into his father’s study. Looking around it was untouched; exactly as he left it. What was once the ‘state of the art’ computer screen, now seemed ancient in Jackson’s eyes. ‘Where do I start?’ He thought to himself as he began to rifle through the loose papers that covered his father’s old fashioned scribble.
He still remembered sitting here, watching his father work while he played with his Gameboy. Until now Jackson had not been able to face this room and the memories it brought back. He was aimlessly sorting through his father’s folders when he found one tabbed with ‘MAX.’ ‘Who is Max?’ he muttered to himself. He opened the file where he found one of his father’s old family portraits. The old grainy photo showed his father, two brothers and his parents. Around one of the juvenile faces was a red circle. Jackson recognised this person; it was his uncle Max.
‘Why is there a file about Uncle Max?’ Jackson had never met his uncle, though his father had showed pictures of him before. Jackson started rifling through the various pieces of paper in the file when he came across a locket. The locket was unlike any he had seen before. It looked like a puzzle piece and as Jackson looked closer he recognised the family crest on it. Jackson slipped the locket into his pocket. In the file there was a map, and scientific pictures of spiders. Under one of the pictures of the spiders there were words like genetically enhanced, venomous, injected, and evil. ‘What does this have to do with my uncle?’ The map was complicated and used symbols Jackson couldn’t decipher, he turned the page and came to the incomplete report page. ‘My father never left his files unfinished.’ Jackson frowned in confusion. The report status hadn’t been filled in. He was familiar with his father’s work; he was a spy and was known as one of the best in his field before his death. An unfilled report meant that it had been interrupted rather than abandoned. Jackson flipped back to the front of the report, his eyes scanning the dates. His mind raced as he reached for his phone to call the agency that he worked for, the Australian Secret Services. His father had still been working on the case when he died. This was the information Jackson had been waiting for.
Chapter 2

Melanie

The streetlights glowed on the dark city lane, illuminating the office building in front of her. Melanie walked to the building staring into the dark windows, her unsure reflection peering back at her. The late night phone call, from this supposed agency, had sparked her curiosity and pulled her here; the mention of her old mentor had intrigued her. Glancing at her reflection again she adjusted her long dark hair, pulling it over her shoulder. She stood a little taller than average, with long lean legs and a small upper body; a long distance runners’ physic. She was always grateful for her natural body shape; she had inherited her looks from her Mum. Her mother’s large green eyes, with a sprinkling of light freckles across her nose and waist length dark brown hair, lightened at the ends by the sun. She spent most of her time out in the open, mapping and planning charts across the Australian dessert. She was the only girl to be accepted into the Junior Geologist Association. She had spent the last few years out in the dessert. Melanie had organised to have her school lessons via computer conference and chose to spend every day outside. The downside to this life was that she missed the coast where she lived, and the dessert was very far away from home. It also meant that the closest person to her age was her 30 something year old mentor. For Melanie, life was sometimes pretty lonely. So here she was, peeling her thin orange tank top away from her skin, sweating, ‘great’, even at night it was just so hot out there. She pulled out her phone and played with it, not wanting to feel as if she had been called there as a practical joke, the thrill of being offered her own assignment, just to find out it was all some cruel prank. That would really be the icing on the cake of her seventeenth birthday. She hadn’t had a party or a celebration, but had at least expected a card from her parents, who were currently travelling overseas. They were overjoyed at the fact she had received the geologist scholarship; not because of her achievements but because it meant they could get rid of her. Free to travel, free to have ‘life experiences’, or so they said at the airport as they had waved goodbye six months before.

“Excuse me, but can I get past... please” Melanie turned, hearing the obnoxious voice, with the sarcastic ‘please’ added as an afterthought. Standing behind her was ‘Mr Obnoxious.’

“Excuse me... well that was...”She stopped mid-sentence taking in the boy standing before her. He was the most handsome boy she has ever seen, with his luscious light brown hair with a pop of blonde throughout it and his tanned and toned arms coming out of his top. She could
almost see his large muscles from his chest, obviously he works out. She could not get over
his smug appeal and went red with embarrassment at what her face must have looked like.
‘Snap out of it’ she told herself trying to continue her sentence. “Rude, you don’t just ask
people you don’t even know to move out of the way”. He looked over her, almost lazily, not
even listening to what she was saying. He was one of the most infuriating boys she had ever
met, not that she had met many. “Jackson, come here”. Melanie whipped around, hearing the
voice from behind the tinted glass doors that were now opened, revelling an older man,
maybe in his forties, walking towards the boy. “Jackson. Jackson Carter, come in we’ve been
waiting for you for a while now, it has been a long time since I’ve seen you”, the older man
smiled.

“Yes, well I’m here now, I got caught up in traffic on the way”, Jackson turned, glancing
back at the old blue jeep that was leaning against the wall behind him, “The motor got busted”
he pulled an apologetic look. The man smiled and had a ‘what am I supposed to do’
expression on his face. Melanie couldn’t believe the old man was falling for this. She
coughed, hoping to gain the attention of the two people in front of her.
“Come inside, it’s not safe out here” The old man smiled again, pulling Jackson by the arm. When he reached the door he glanced back over to her. “Wait, are you Melanie. Melanie Harper?”
“Yes sir, yes I am” Melanie said in a polite voice. She had always believed in respect for her elders. Behind the man, Jackson pulled a saintly expression, mocking her. Melanie could barely contain her dislike for this boy. She was here at this agency to do a job, he looked about as professional as a puppy, come here to play with his old friends. “Well, welcome and come in”. He turned back to Jackson, waving for her to follow them. Melanie rolled her eyes and followed them both inside.

They were standing in a very professional office. The high-tech computers, smart screens, and electronic tables. She looked around, her eyes widening at all the people and the intense noises, it was making her dizzy. ‘Get a grip’, she told herself and she focused back on the man in front of her again.

“Melanie Harper and Jackson Carter, you have been called here today to help the ASS, the Australian Secret Service. This is a top secret mission and before we tell you anything, you will need to sign a code of silence.”

‘Whoa’ this was not what Melanie had been expecting. If anything she thought she had aced her last exam, not being accepted into some top secret mission for the government!

She signed the form; she could always pull out later if things got bad. Jackson stood next to her, pushing her arm out of the way. He was such a kid, pushing people away to get in first. Really. How pathetic. Melanie ignored the shiver she got as their arms brushed, she could not afford to lose concentration over a boy, which she hated. Hate, no question. She could not even imagine why they would want such an irresponsible teenage boy trying to protect the government.

“My name is Hector Robinson and I am the head of the Australian Secret Service. You have both been selected to take part in a secret government investigation into the workings of Maximus Carter; we have received private information of the whereabouts and plans of the man in question. Jackson here has found files on suspected plans for creating an artificial heatwave to hold the world to ransom as well as ludicrous ideas about genetically altering animal species. We need the two of you to investigate into the details of this plan out in the field.”
“Just wait a moment” Melanie interrupted “I am sorry but why us, why me, I don’t know anything about spies or being a field agent?”

“Melanie, you topped the state of Queensland in geology and fitness testing as well as being the only girl under 25 who was selected for the Junior Geology Association, did you not?”

“Well yes but...” Melanie stuttered.

“Well, then there is your answer. This mission requires the skills of both a very skilled geologist and the specified training of a field agent.” He gestured to Jackson “Jackson here, is the son of a world renowned spy, Andrew Carter, who was the leader of this investigation before his untimely passing about five years ago. Jackson found many unknown files and information that were crucial to the re-starting of this investigation. There is one map in particular that has special importance, however our best geologist, Curt Douglas, who I believe is your tuition mentor out on the station, is in Antarctica, mapping out the passage of climate change. He has recommended that in his absence, we allow you to join the service in his place. We would like you, Melanie, to help decipher this map and lead us to the underground hideout of Maximus Carter.”

Melanie looked over at Jackson who was looked at her reassuringly; a small playful smile was on his lips, almost daring her to decline the offer.

“I’ll do it” Melanie smiled triumphantly, excitement building up inside of her at the idea of having her own assignment.
Jackson strode out of the office lobby, assuming Melanie was following him. He spoke over his shoulder to her, “Come on, we need to leave now.” He pulled his car keys out of his pocket for his father’s old Jeep.
“Really? Right now?” Melanie questioned.

“Yes now. What is so important that you can’t leave now?” Jackson watched as Melanie crossed her arms.

“Well, I would actually like to celebrate my birthday.”

Jackson reached for the door handle of his car. “Happy Birthday, now get in. We will have a party on the way.”

“Okay, I remember mapping this area a few years ago. There is hardly anything but desert and a few abandoned mines.” Melanie was studying the map that Jackson had passed to her as they drove out of the city. She seemed accustomed to the map and all its different codes.
“So Melody…” Jackson began.


“What made you get into rocks?” Jackson asked.

Melanie looked out the window and Jackson took a moment to study her. “It’s not what my parent’s expected.” Melanie had a look of longing on her face and Jackson noted the finality of the statement. Stray hairs had escaped from her ponytail and Jackson had a sudden urge to push them back from her face.

“What about you?” Melanie asked, “Are you an actual spy?” She looked at Jackson and her green eyes danced with faint amusement.

Jackson cleared his voice, slightly transfixed by her beautiful eyes, “In training,” he replied, “I attend a boarding school that feeds directly into the A.S.S.”

“Is that where the scars came from?” Melanie asked, gesturing to the thick long scar that ran down Jackson’s forearm.

Jackson’s glanced at his arm, surprised that she had noticed. “Something like that,” he laughed, “I fell out of tree when I was a kid, had to have five stitches.”

Jackson smiled, refocusing on the road. When Jackson glanced at her again, her eyes were closed and he realised she had fallen asleep.

Jackson turned up the air conditioner of his jeep and drummed his fingers on the steering wheel. His original irritation at having another person involved in the mission had lessened.
Once he had realised how knowledgeable Melanie was about the maps, and that she was more than just a pretty face, he had welcomed her expertise. Jackson pushed down on the accelerator, and his car surged forward on the empty highway.

Jackson had been driving for most of the night when he noticed his eyelids were getting heavy. His head started nodding down as the car swerved into the empty right lane. Melanie woke at the sudden swerve of the car and sat up straight. She rubbed her eyes and Jackson felt her questioning stare. “I’m going to pull over at the next service station and get some coffee,” he explained.

Jackson pulled into the deserted service station. Country music was on the radio outside and through the window there was an elderly man reading the paper. Jackson walked to the fridge and filled his arms with cartons of iced coffee. He walked to the cash register and placed them on the counter.

“Oh, this as well please,” Melanie placed a raspberry ice block on the counter. Jackson smirked at her choice.

“What?” Melanie asked, shrugging her shoulders, “It’s hot outside.”
When the jeep finally crossed onto a desert highway, the early morning sun was rising overhead and the heat was already stifling. Jackson looked over at Melanie, who was studding the map again. “When we mapped this area we were studying the different soil sample that indicated rock layers, it was really extensive and took over a year to complete just this section alone.”

“But isn’t geology kind of select field? How would anyone be able to access this?” Jackson pointed to the map, wanting to ask the question that had been playing on his mind; *how had this map ended up in his father’s file?*

“The map was the first of its kind because it looked at rocks from all over the Australian desert. It was really famous in the geological world and there was a lot of publicity about it. Anyone would have been able to access it easily.” Melanie explained. There was silence in the car and Jackson remained quiet, not wanting to drive the conversation towards his father. If there was anything he truly hated, it was other people’s pity.

“Okay,” Melanie said, tilting the map sideways, “If we drive straight for another ten kilometres we will reach the marked location.”

“Alright,” Jackson replied, changing the jeep’s gear, “But we’re going cross country.”
Chapter 4

Melanie

Jackson’s driving was absolutely terrible. More than once she had the urge to push him out of the way and grab the wheel herself, even if she could barely drive, she still felt as if she could do better than him. Jackson laughed, whooping in exhilaration as he sped over the barren landscape, the jeep bumping up and down. She screamed, bouncing out of her seat.

“Stop! You’re going to run into something” Melanie yelled to Jackson. Jackson laughed again at her expression “Lighten up; I’m just having some fun.” Melanie rolled her eyes, turning away to hide the involuntary smile that played at her lips. She couldn’t believe that she was finding him funny, but she was. Melanie turned back to him, taking in the angular line of his jaw, with his cute, lake blue eyes; dark and light at the same time. The early morning sun was shining through the window, making his hair light up, catching the blonde highlights. She wondered, off topic, if they were natural or dyed. ‘Focus,’ Melanie reminded herself again.

“What do you look so happy about?” Jackson looked over at her, a goofy grin on his face. Melanie looked up, jumping out of her reverie.

“Oh, not much…just looking out the window at the…the… kangaroos” She finished lamely, cursing herself for saying something so stupid.

“Okay well, which kangaroos were they?” His voice was playful; annoying, like he knew she had been thinking about him. But he had a point, on the usually abundant landscape; there was not a single animal anywhere.
“They were there before” Melanie knew she sounded winey but she didn’t care. She was frustrated that she had given him the satisfaction of annoying her.

“Wait. Stop the car.” Melanie studied the map, examining the bottom-left hand corner. “I think we’re here”. Jackson jammed his foot on the brake, Melanie jerked forward her hair flying.

“Sorry, I thought it would be better to stop, you know, quickly” Jackson looked at her nervously, like he had done something wrong.

“Hey, it’s fine I only just like, broke my neck!” She said jokingly, tapping him on the shoulder. Jackson pushed her back. Melanie was secretly pleased that he actually seemed to like her, but she didn’t want to get too comfortable. The people she cared about never stuck around.

They jumped out of the car, landing on the red dirt with it blowing out around them. It was so hot. Melanie was still wearing the clothes from two days ago; she hadn’t even changed from the orange tank top, brown cargo shorts and army boots. It was her ‘go to’ outfit in emergencies, and the other night getting called into the A.S.S at 10:30, definitely classified as an emergency.

“There is nothing here” Jackson commented critically “You must have read the map wrong.”

“I doubt it, I know what I’m doing” Melanie looked around, bent down about twenty metres away from the car and picked up some of the soil, letting it blow back down in the breeze. The heat was stifling. “Okay, I am pretty sure that this soil is the type found around mines, it has traces of old coal in it. This soil is actually really rare; I haven’t seen it in this area before.”

“Ok, but how exactly does that help us?” Jackson still looked sceptical; unfortunately Melanie found it impossible to dislike him as he looked so good, even in the heat. He was
slouched on one foot, his muscled arms crossed over his chest. Melanie tore her eyes away, focusing on the landscape, looking for something, anything, and then…

“There, over there” Melanie strode over to what looked like a pile of rocks. Jackson helped her push them away, uncovering what seemed to be an abandoned mine shaft.
“This is it; this is what we are looking for. It has to be the entrance” Melanie glanced over at Jackson. He looked a bit sick. “Are you ok?” Melanie asked, concerned.

“Yeah, it’s just… well this is the first real mission I have had, I mean it just got real, you know being out in the field and everything”

“Hey, it’s fine, it’s not like I have any experience.” Melanie said trying to encourage him, “We are going to need a rope or something; it’s the only way down”

“Right” said Jackson; back to his usual self “I’ve got some in the jeep, regulation to have supplies for any situation.”

Melanie looked down, inhaling at her precarious position, she secured the rope around her waist, it wasn’t like she was a stranger to physical activity and she had abseiled before and really, this was no different.

“Are you sure you want to go first” Jackson looked doubtfully down the large hole “Maybe I should, I mean, I’m the one with spy training”

“Too late now!” Melanie called and began to shuffle carefully down the mine, watching her feet, trying to find the natural holes in the wall. Finally, she reached the bottom; it had only been about 15 metres up. Piece of cake! She untied the rope throwing it back up to Jackson. She whipped around; she thought she had heard a whisper. “Jack, Jack hurry up” she called up to Jackson. “Please, hurry”

“Don’t worry I’m here, I’m here. You know, you actually sounded as if you really needed me just then.” Melanie watched as he turned on his torch, illuminating the surroundings. It was a dark cave, very dusty and old looking. The heat was oppressive.
“Alright, I think we should stick together a…” Jackson broke off pushing Melanie out of the way as he rushed past her.

“What?” Melanie called from the ground, and then she saw. Behind them stood two men, tall and muscular, both looking menacingly towards Jackson. Jackson began to use his spy skills to fight off the overly large men. He was amazing and started to fight the larger of the two men; so agile it looked like a dance. Unnoticed by Jackson the second man came up behind him, prepared to deliver the final blow. Letting her instincts take over, Melanie jumped up and grabbed a splintered and sharp plank of wood then with all her energy she struck the man as hard as she could over his head, leaving him unconscious on the ground motionless.

Jackson spun around surprised; his attacker stationary on the ground “Whoa, that was Amazing!” exclaimed Jackson, looking at Melanie.

Jackson looked at her admiringly, a small smile at his lips. She allowed herself to smile back, letting for once, her emotions take over. Jackson stepped forward, shirt ripped and a trickle of blood running down his arm and his forehead. She reached up wiping it off with the corner of his shirt. He gently clasped her hand, and lightly pushed her chin up to face him. Melanie’s heart was pounding; their faces were only inches apart, “Wait. Is that water?” Jackson said in surprise.

“Uh, wait the water is rising” Melanie broke apart from Jackson, “Where is it coming from?”

“I think it’s from over here” Jackson was in the far corner of the room, bent down kneeling on the ground. “The water seems to be seeping through here; I think this part of the floor is wooden.”

“Jack, Jack be careful, you don’t know how stable the floor is. This is one of the first things we learn in geology”
“Mel, I will be fine, it’s not like I am going to fall through the ground. It’s totally solid”
Jackson turned around, Melanie saw the look on his face as the floor gave way and he fell through the hole.

“Jackson!” Melanie screamed “Jackson! Jackson!” Melanie bent down by the hole, on the jagged edge of the snapped wood. The water seeping from the water table had weakened the wood over the years. “Jackson!” No reply. Melanie started crying. She never cried, ever. “Jackson, please reply!”

“Well, well, well. What do we have here?”

Melanie turned gasping, as rough hands grabbed her hands and shoved a coarse bag over her head.

“Jackson!”
Chapter Five

Jackson

Jackson felt the crushing weight of the water flushing over him. For a moment panic overwhelmed him until his years of academy training kicked in. He calmed his mind and began to attempt treading water. His flailing limbs righted themselves and he rose to the surface. He gasped as his lungs filled with air. The flashlight remained in his hand, his strong instincts not allowing him to relinquish it. He looked around, calling out for Melanie. The flashlight illuminated the walls of the tunnel and Jackson swam forward calling out for Melanie again. As he moved he noticed the water level decreasing until he was able to stand in the tunnel. Jackson realised the shallower the water became the hotter the temperature was. He puzzled over this, unsure of what this meant. He felt for certain that Melanie would know, the realisation crashing over him, they had been separated. The water sloshed around his legs and once more he called out her name. Praying that Melanie would be safe wherever she was, he headed deeper into the tunnel.

Jackson had continued into the tunnel when his phone slipped from his pocket. It splashed into the now shallow depth of the water. As he reached down to retrieve it, Jackson noticed the water was now scalding his skin. He placed his phone back in his pocket and looked down as his fingers caught on the locket that still remained in his pocket. Jackson looked up and came to an abrupt halt. He had come to a dead end in the tunnel. The heavy steel door looked incredibly out of place in the dark. He flashed his light across the entry point to, what Jackson assumed, was the entrance to Maximus’ hideout. The light’s beam froze on the computerized panel to the side of the door frame. Jackson rubbed his fingers along the indented metal, frowning at the familiarity of its shape. Suddenly his hand reached for his pocket and he pulled out the locket he had touched only moments ago. He studied the elaborate “C” and pushed the locket into the panel. The door made a loud grinding sound, which reverberated through the tunnel. Jackson pushed on the door and entered into a darkened room.
Endless rows of fluorescent lights switched on, and for a moment Jackson was blinded by the sudden brightness. As his eyes adjusted Jackson noticed the sterile laboratory benches and equipment. He moved towards a glass tank and recoiled when he noticed the spiders that were inside. They seemed impossibly huge and unnatural; Jackson guessed they were all larger than his hands, suspended and strand blue liquid. *What is Maximus doing with spiders? What do they mean in my father’s report?* The swirling questions in Jackson’s mind were interrupted by noises at the end of the chamber.

Jackson turned. He walked; his pace quickening with each passing moment. By the time Jackson reached the end of the long chamber he was in a flat out sprint. The chamber turned sharply and Jackson skidded as he took in the new surroundings. He now seemed to be standing in the main laboratory. A huge machine reached up through a tunnel, giant dishes and solar panels. Jackson was astounded at the depth of a huge tunnel with reinforced steel framing that stretched above him, to the sky. It was strangely beautiful, small yellow flowers covered the expose rock that grew all the way up the tunnel. Computer screens and scribbled notes covered a huge desk, the familiarity of it striking Jackson cold.

“Welcome Jackson,” a voice called from the shadows. Jackson turned again taking in the horrifying scene. Melanie tied and bound, next to his uncle who was standing by her, smiling coldly.
Chapter Six

Melanie

Melanie’s heart raced as Jackson sprinted around the corner. Her knees shook and her eyes watered with relief that he was alright. “Melanie!” Jackson cried, taking a step forward.

“Move any closer and your lovely friend dies,” Maximus spoke and Melanie was reminded of her terrifying situation.

After Jackson had fallen down the hole, Melanie had been captured by Maximus’ guards and taken to what she assumed was the heart of the operation, the main laboratory.

“Well, the incredible Jackson Carter. Here, in the flesh. Well I never, you are the spitting image of your father. I can already see it; just as obnoxious, just as stuck up, you even stand like him”

Melanie watched Jackson clenched his fists; it looked like he had molten running through his veins. Melanie prayed that Jackson didn’t rise to the bait his uncle was setting, deliberately trying to make him angry.

“Don’t talk about my father that way. He was a good man. He was a great man and a great father to me.” Jackson spoke through clenched teeth, his muscles bulging under his nearly destroyed shirt.

“You don’t know anything about your father,” Maximus answered, his words sneering. “He helped me to build this place, encouraged me with my break throughs on the spiders. See, the compound is built on this exact location for a reason, these flowers that surround us,” He
gestured above him to the tunnel, “Are the only anti-venom that exist in this world which are powerful enough to reject the venom from these beauties.” Maximus walked over to Melanie, plucking a spider from one of the many tanks that lined the room. As soon as it was out of the strange blue liquid that it was suspended in, the spider began to move, writhing in his hands, its unnaturally long legs scuttling and wriggling. Melanie shivered in spite of herself, she was determined not to show how freaked out she was. Maximus strode over to her, letting the spider hover over her head.

Melanie saw Jackson move forward, making a strange sound in the back of his throat.

“No, no Jackson,” Maximus reminded him conversationally, “Like I told you before, no closer.”

Jackson’s jaw worked but he froze where he was. “Of course, your father’s interests lied in government matters. Inspired by the desert, he became intrigued with the idea of the full potential of solar power. I couldn’t understand his interest in it, what’s the point in an energy source that is going to implode and destroy us all,” Maximus laughed softly, at his joke. “But he continued in his work, and I, the loving brother assisted him. Soon your father was making huge break throughs and it was then that I had the idea. I told him how much money we could make, how much energy we were harnessing, already it affected the seasons. Can’t you tell? That is why the weather is so hot. This was my plan: to black mail the country’s government, threaten to release the vast amount of energy and heat, if they did not meet my ransom.” Maximus paused, his eyes meeting Jackson’s, “But in the end your father didn’t agree, he blindly followed the stupid organization that he loved so much. And with the knowledge of my plan, he was a risk. A risk I eliminated.”

Melanie gasped as Jackson ran forwards, jumping on top of his uncle, knocking him flat to the ground. The spider fell from his hand. Melanie felt it land on her back. She froze; her heart beating out of her chest. Jackson was oblivious to her. He was fist fighting with his uncle, both of then throwing punches to the face and the stomach. She had never seen Jackson like this; he looked like a machine programmed to destroy. His facial expression was beyond furious and he was grinding his teeth. It was scary how much he seemed to be enjoying himself.
Melanie turned her attention back to the monster that was still sedentary on her back. She thought that if she was still, it would just stay or crawl off her. She was wrong. The spider began to move, running over her back and over her shoulder. Melanie tried to scream to Jackson, but it was lost in her throat, she was paralysed with fear. It felt as if she was being felt over with a feather, creepy and unnatural. The spider came to a rest under her chin, she looked forward, daring herself not to look down; she knew if she did she would lose control. She tried to call for Jackson again but she still couldn’t find her voice. The spider had paused, just resting on her left collar bone. It was a heavy wait, just sitting there, patronising her. She looked forwards, trying to focus on Jackson and Maximus. Jackson punched Maximus in the stomach and he flew across the room.

Jackson ran over, tying his uncle’s hands behind his back with the bottom of his ripped up shirt. Jackson leant over him “This is for revenge, from my father. Revenge is sweet” He pushed the man back down to the hard ground.

Melanie exhaled with relief, she was saved, and she began to breathe again, letting out all the air she had been holding. The spider moved, dislodged by her exhale. It lunged, just as Jackson got up, turning, with a look of triumph on his face. The pain was excruciating, worse than any needle she had ever got. “Jackson, Jackson it bit me”. Her last vision was Jackson’s face falling as he ran to her. Melanie’s vision went white, like she was under anaesthetic. She heard a buzzing in her ears, the light was bright all around her, and the feeling devours her mind. She thought she heard Jackson’s voice calling her, calling to her but she wasn’t sure. She stopped thinking and slipped into oblivion.
Chapter Seven

Jackson

Jackson’s body slumped, his breathing ragged. Blood still rushed to his head and he couldn’t stop his limbs from trembling. “Jackson,” Melanie called, her voice came out broken and frightened. Jackson turned sprinting towards her, “Jackson, it bit me.”

Jackson dropped to his knees and began untying the ropes that bound Melanie. She kept on speaking his name, her voice terrified. “Jackson, I can feel it,” Her head rolled back, “Jackson…”

“Melanie! Melanie, look at me!” Jackson pulled the last of the ropes from her body. He pulled her face into his hands. “Melanie, focus on me. Look at me, please Melanie.”

Melanie moaned and pushed her face against Jackson’s shoulder, her voice fading, her breathing light on his shoulder. Jackson sprang up; he sprinted to the edge of the tunnel. What was it his uncle had said? The flowers, he needed to get the flowers.

He plucked a single yellow flower, a sticky sap emerging from the flowers stem.

“Take this,” He said holding the stem over her mouth. He soothed her hair and placed her hand on her neck, listening to her pulse. He exhaled when he realised it was becoming regular, “I think you’re going to be okay Melanie.”

Melanie looked into his eyes and smiled, “I think I am too.” Jackson watched as she reached up to him. He closed his eyes when they kissed; her lips were warm and soft. Melanie broke it off with a smile.
“C’mon,” she said, “Let’s go home.”
Epilogue

Melanie – Four weeks later

It had been four weeks since Melanie had seen Jackson. She was still shaken by what had happened in the desert. After leaving Jackson at the spy headquarters after the successful mission, she began to miss him and his smug attitude. She dwelled on how he was coping after the publicity of his uncle being arrested. Melanie wondered if the kiss they shared really meant something or if it just happened in the spur of the moment. Had he actually wanted to kiss her? She had contemplated this for the entire four weeks. Melanie drifted back to her homework and tried hard not to imagine Jackson again.

The doorbell rang unexpectedly. Melanie walked barefoot to the door and she slowly opened it with anticipation.

“Jackson!” He looked up at her with a half-smile. Melanie opened the door wide and Jackson stepped in, looking around curiously.

“Sorry about the mess.” Melanie said, looking down at her feet in embarrassment.

“Don’t worry about it. My place is ten times worse.” He said looking affectionately into her mesmerising green eyes.

“Do you want anything to drink or food or..?” Melanie asked stumbling over her words.

“No thanks, I just came here to talk.” Jackson grinned at Melanie as they both sat on the couch.

As they sat, his arm accidently brushed against hers. Melanie looked up at Jackson, unable to keep a smile off her face. He looked at her, gently clasping her hand in his. Their eyes met as he confidently said “I have never met anyone like you, I don’t want to pretend like nothing happened between us and
I think we owe it to ourselves to give this a try. I know our mission has just ended, but our new one is about to begin.”

Tears started to well in Melanie’s eyes. She was speechless and all she could do was vigorously nod her head at Jackson. She wrapped her arms around his shoulders and without even thinking their lips pressed together. Melanie thought to herself quite ironically,

Jackson was right.

_Revenge is sweet._
Melanie Harper is a young and rising geologist who is not the most outgoing person. This is all about to change when her and a secret spy agent, Jackson Carter are assigned a mission together to save the world from an impending heat wave made by the evil Maximus. Can Melanie and Jackson get past their differences and ultimately save the world, or will their lives be cut short.