

****GIVEN PERMISSION FROM AUTHOR TO USE FOR EXAMPLE****

"Sounds like you're needed over there. I won't hold you up!" Blair thanked Gwen and scurried across the street.

Commented [1]: Who said this, and who scurried across the street? Gwen or Blair?

Hours later, the Campesinos sat on their front porch as they commenced a ceremonious cracking of beers after all of their hard work. They watched in admiration as the sun started to descend upon their new neighborhood. "Did you talk to any of the new neighbors? All of the people I met seemed pretty nice," Guillermo piped up.

"I did. The one lady caught me exploring the next-door neighbor's trash, though. She didn't call me out on it, at least."

"Why were you fucking with the neighbor's garbage?" Guillermo asked, cracking up. Blair paused, reflecting on her interaction with Gwen.

"Does the house to the left of us seem kind of off to you?" Blair asked with a slight uneasiness.

Guillermo shook his head. "I dunno, I guess I didn't really notice anything. Why?"

"It's probably just me. It doesn't didn't seem very...well taken care of or lived in. No one came out and said hi or anything."

"I'm not mad about it. The fewer neighbors to make small talk with, the better!" Guillermo responded, raising his beer. Blair laughed with a bit of relief but still didn't feel entirely convinced. "To being first-time homeowners," Guillermo announced, raising his bottle. "Cheers!" Blair exclaimed as she clinked bottles with her husband.

Commented [ak2]: Each chapter should end on a question or tiny cliffhanger of some kind to keep readers intrigued.

Commented [3]: End of chapter notes: Pacing is a tad slow, and I am not really getting an inciting incident. I like the curiosity of the trash and the house, however it wasn't enough to keep the reader interested. Really think about what you want the reader to get from this chapter. Right now its a lot of dialogue that doesn't really have anything to do with anything (normal neighbor talk, I get it.). If that is the purpose, that's great, but then I would suggest some thoughts between the spoken words with Gwen. Not too many just because it is 3rd person, more or less something like "Blair wanted to chat, but the curiosity of the bag and its stench kept pulling her attention back to the trash." This keeps us thinking about the house and what not. Then her name is called and snaps her out of it. (This is a simple example, but it makes her seem like a more curious person as you started her to be.) Overall though, good job. I saw this whole scene in my head as a complete scene.

Chapter 2

Blair experienced difficulty sleeping in the new house for the first couple of nights. The Campesinos' house was built in 1914, which appealed to Blair because of her love for horror and obsession with spooky old

houses. However, she became less and less enamored with its old charm at nighttime as she was trying to get used to its creaks and noises.

On the third night there, Blair grew tired of being on high alert from house noises and being plagued by racing anxious thoughts. To top it all off, it was torrential downpouring that night. Therefore, Blair heard every raindrop ricocheting and pitter-pattering on the roof above her in the attic bedroom. So, Blair sat on the back cement steps and smoked a cigarette as any tired, anxious person would do.

Watching the rain fall that night was cathartic for her. It had the warm, nearly summer smell and fell rhythmically past the porch light, creating a gorgeous, foggy ambiance. Blair felt soothed by Mother Nature and began to nod off slightly. "I can't sleep out here; that's crazy."

As Blair struggled to flutter her eyes open, she witnessed a shadow of a Mother Mary statue in front of the garage. Mind you; the previous owner had left behind many angel baby lawn ornaments and nicknacks. However, Blair had no recollection of there being a Mother Mary statue on the property. She stood up and began to slowly inch herself toward the garage when she heard a crashing sound of metal against metal. She cautiously turned toward the noise to realize it was an elderly woman with long, wispy, tangled white hair repeatedly banging a short ladder against the dividing chain link fence. Her face was pale and gaunt, and her eyes appeared vacant.

"Oh my god, ma'am!!!!" Blair flicked her cigarette aside, and sprinted after this woman, intermittently slipping on uneven driveway slabs with puddles that resembled small lakes. Blair's mentality was that if she was losing her balance as a young, able-bodied person, then surely this woman was going to fall off of this ladder and break a hip. Blair continued to shout and try to get the old woman's attention. But the old woman was unphased by her yelling and continued her ladder routine, intensely staring across the yard without breaking concentration.

As Blair finally reached her side of the fence and tried luring her down from the top step, she began to feel something slender and hard tap her right shoulder. It was a decked-out "Happy 80th Birthday" cane decorated in golf garb with a scoliotic, arthritic old man at the receiving end. "Jesus!!" Blair yelled, jumping backward and nearly eating shit once again.

Commented [4]: I had to look this word up. Nothing wrong with it. The point of reading is to also expand vocabulary. But, maybe perhaps add something within the next sentence that eludes to what kind of rain that is specifically. "To top it all off, it was torrential downpouring that night. The falling rapidness of the heavy rain, had Blair hearing every drop..." again, simple example to show what I mean.