

A swift breeze ruffled Jennifer's mousy brown hair, while she walked home with her best friend Patricia.

"Yo, watch out!" A boy called from behind them. CRASH! A boy on a skateboard slammed into Jennifer. They landed in a heap of arms and legs.

"Jenny!" Patricia cried while she untangled the two.

"Sorry 'bout that. I'm pretty bad at skateboarding," the boy paused. "My name is Rork." Rork extended out his hand. Jennifer hesitated at first, but then shook it.

"My name is Jennifer," Jennifer introduced.

"I'll just call you Jen," answered Rork, and with a wave he was skateboarding away.

Patricia waited until he was out of earshot before she exclaimed. "Do you know who that is?" she demanded, but plowed ahead. "Rork Shun is the coolest person in the whole school! He is rich, handsome, and the most popular guy in the whole state practically!"

Jennifer was speechless; she looked at her friend then over to where Rork skated away. "That's just.... That's just wow," Jennifer stuttered. After a few moments she spoke. "I guess I'll see you tomorrow!" Jennifer called out as she paced up towards her looming house. Patricia waved and started for her home. Jennifer opened her door, to be greeted by a faint mew. An orange cat with green eyes walked towards Jennifer with purrs.

"Hey, Flames, how're you doing?" Jennifer asked while walking up to her bedroom. Flames followed her. In her bedroom she had a loft in the corner, an orange bed, and a green fuzzy carpet overtaking the area. She walked up to a case and took out her flute. She glanced at the music again then started to play. Notes filled the air, her cat danced to the music. Sound flowed from the flute, smoothly and swiftly. The phone rang but Jennifer was too late getting to it. The answering machine got it.

"Hi, you have reached the Reign residence; we are not home right now we will try to answer as soon as possible." There was silence on the phone, and then a man picked up.

"You will suffer from revenge!" cried out a mysterious voice. Jennifer backed away, she stumbled on Flames.

"I am so sorry!" Jennifer apologized. "How could they find us already? We moved to the most hidden place, I better not tell my parents yet, until I have proof," she mumbled under her breath. Just then the garage door opened, Jennifer jumped. Someone opened the mud-room door.

"Hi Jenny!" her mom called as her mom and dad walked through. The mom looked down at Jennifer's bulky backpack.

"Jenny, you haven't taken care of your homework yet," she scolded. Jennifer sighed and picked up her heavy backpack, then emptied out her binder.

As the sun was shining brightly into Jennifer's bedroom Jennifer got dressed for her big day at her friend's famous party. Downstairs, Jennifer greeted her dad with a cheerful hello; he was on his computer at the dinner table. Her mom came in and asked Jennifer if she had everything for Shadow's bash. Jennifer nodded, doing a mental checklist in her head. Patricia's mom had volunteered to pick up Jennifer, so Jennifer had to be ready a bit earlier.

When Patricia's car pulled up the Jennifer's driveway, Jennifer hung around her shoulder a special purse that was a bit dusty. It contained a pen that had a small laser to detect fingerprints, a small knife, some rope, four earpieces to communicate, and a flashlight that could blind or stun someone for a few seconds. Jennifer said goodbye to her parents and told them that she would be back tomorrow.

The car got to Shadow's party, which was at a lake. Jennifer's body quivered with excitement, not just because it was a birthday party, but it was time for Jennifer to go on a mission. *A spying mission*, she thought. Patricia and Jennifer got out of the car to find themselves at a park; there were a few pavilions set up, and a big banner saying "It's Your B-Day!" Jennifer had a plan: she needed to get Shadow and tell her the truth, nothing but the truth.

Bright lights lit the place up; there was a sweet smell of food, a flowing sound of laughter, and dazzling outfits. A conga line had started and somehow Jennifer and her friend were pulled into it. The line dispersed after a bit while a fun game of pin the tail on the donkey had started, except somehow the donkey was changed into Patricia. Jennifer laughed hard as she watched her buddy being chased after by a couple of blindfolded people with stick-on tails. Suddenly a shadow fell over her. She looked over to see Rork, the boy she crashed into the other day, smiling at her.

"Having a good time?" he asked with a goofy smile. Jennifer nodded and grinned back.

"How about you? I didn't know you were invited here. I thought you were too rich and fancy to come to a party like this," Jennifer teased. Rork punched her arm playfully.

“Oh, so you found my true identity? Don’t turn me into the police I beg you!” he laughed. Jennifer shook her head.

“So, want to get some punch?” Jennifer asked. Before he could answer a roar of anger filled the air, Jennifer tensed, she knew that growl from anywhere, they had found her. Jennifer grabbed Rork’s hand and led him through the crowd.

“Come on!” Jennifer urged. Rork reluctantly followed her. Jennifer searched the swarm of kids to find Shadow. Shadow’s hair stood out from the rest, it glowed brown, but had a red tinge to it when the sun hit it right. Luckily, the sun was just right. Jennifer ran towards Shadow.

“Shadow!” Jennifer cried out to her friend, but it was too late, they got her. Strong hands clamped down on Jennifer and Rork. Jennifer grabbed an arm and did a seoi-nage Judo flip over her shoulder. Unfortunately the man was ready so he sidestepped away from the throw. Rork fought like a madman, trying to free himself. Jennifer tried to cry once more, but a rag had hit her face, she knew she couldn’t win this fight. She let them drag her and Rork into their van. Rork panicked when he saw Jennifer’s face all bruised. His own face didn’t look too good either. His red eyes portrayed that he was scared, his face had modest bruises, but his body was bedraggled.

The van had started when she heard a thud against the rear of the vehicle. The man at the wheel swore under his breath and then got out. Jennifer tried to get out of the ropes that she was tied up in, but she was already feeling drowsy. Her limbs wouldn’t agree to what she wanted them to do. Her eyelids were drooping. Sounds blended together, just before Jennifer blacked out she heard a faint mew of Flames.

Jennifer was woken up by the laughter from the men in the van. Bright daylight shone through the small windows of the van. She felt disoriented. Then, she remembered the performance earlier which hit her like a sack of potatoes.

“Rork?” she managed to croak out. Pain shot through her leg and her ribcage. She could feel the soreness on her hands from the ropes. She moved to face where she saw Rork last. He was still there, except sitting up. “Rork, I’m so glad to see you’re okay! Do you know how they found us? Where are we? What time is it?” Jennifer poured out the questions.

Rork snuck a glance at the men driving the van then his dark blue eyes settled to an object behind Jennifer. He motioned for Jennifer to be quiet. She strained her neck to look

behind. She gasped at the sight. It was Flames! The cat was injured in its hindquarter and her muzzle was scratched.

“So you were the one to try to get in here! I guess that wasn’t a fist I heard. Do they know she’s in here?” she asked Rork. He nodded his head. Jennifer knew she had to get out before her parents noticed she was gone. Then that would be an even worse situation. She reached to move her hands into her pocket to get the pocket knife out of her jacket. More tenderness stabbed her in her ribs.

“Do you need help?” Rork asked. He moved towards Jennifer. She explained that she needed to get the knife out of her pocket. He turned his back towards her and moved his hand into her pocket. She could feel that he was struggling to get it. Finally he latched onto the knife just as the van lurched to a stop. Rork went rolling to the front of the van. He stopped himself with his new blade. “Got it,” he alleged. He slowly made his way back to Jennifer along with starting to get her binds off. After her wrists were free Jennifer cut Rork’s ropes on his hands. Once they put the knife away they devised a plan.

“Okay, Rork, I want you to make a ruckus about needing to go to the bathroom. Then once they compel they will have to open the back doors to the van. You got to keep you hands together as if they are still strung together. The second you think you have a chance, Rork you will get out of the men’s grip, then run, don’t think about me. I’ll be perfectly fine,” Jennifer reassured with a wink. Rork breathed a sigh of unhappiness but then obliged with the arrangement. “I’m glad at least we’re together. That’s the greatest part. They will do anything to get to us now. From the performance of what they did to get us I think they’re desperate,” Jennifer managed to add. Her mind swung back to when she was captured earlier in her secret life.

She was only a six year old girl with no friends in an academy for spies. She was raised there all her life with only a mother far away. Then one night she abducted to another academy called Cleevix. It was horrible. She couldn’t even think about what she learned to do. She found a way to break out later, after four years in that horrible imprisonment. When she broke out she found Rork, a nice boy who seemed to have the same problem. They walked for days in forests, trying to find the spy academy they could feel were close to. Some nights Jennifer couldn’t even get to sleep that’s how scared and hungry she was. After they stumbled across civilization they called the spies. They were almost home when news struck that the Cleevix had a bounty on

their heads and that they had to take a detour. After Jennifer and her new spy friend arrived, Rork and Jennifer grew to become the greatest spies yet in that academy. They were so experienced that they graduated early, in addition to be sent on a spy mission. That mission was corrupted by the other academy. They barely escaped. The spy academy decided to let Jennifer and Rork heal and maybe bounce back later with the spying job, so they took some retired spies and assigned them as parents.

They settled down in that little town, getting new parents. They were there for about a year. Jennifer made great friends and had finally gotten used to growing up like this. Jennifer was hoping for more of that.

“Jen!” Rork snapped Jennifer out of her daze. “Are you ready to do this? This’ll be fun!” Rork smiled mischievously. He grabbed a small box and gave it to Jennifer. “I connected out earpieces so that we can communicate. I hope this works out.”

Jennifer smiled. “It should, my plans always do,” she assured Rork. Rork grinned with the same goofy beam of his. He nodded at her, telling her that he was ready.

Then he started to whine. The men in the van did just as Jennifer thought they would. Rork was pulled out. Jennifer counted the seconds it took him. Suddenly she heard a few grunts of pain and footsteps in her earpiece. Only one other man remained on guard. She jumped out at him, hands grabbing his shoulders. He was knocked out by the weight of Jennifer onto the ground. Jennifer headed to the woods with Flames at her heels. She called out Rork’s name. Suddenly, he appeared from the trees.

“Now what?” he asked. Jennifer thought for a few moments. She looked around to find a way out of the woodland and to the society again. She shrugged, but at that moment she remembered she had a compass! She turned to grab it out of her purse when she found the bag wasn’t there. Her heart sank quickly like a bathtub being emptied.

Flames started to sniff the air. She lifted her head towards the setting sun. “I guess we’ll follow her,” Jennifer suggested. She twisted her earpiece nervously as the trio walked beside the cracked gravel road with Rork and her cat.

Darkness settled on top of them. Jennifer had no flashlight, but she still had a knife. She walked closer to the forest’s edge with Flames following. Jennifer grabbed a stick with some rocks. She could try to make a torch out of those. Shortly after they had a warm light glowing brightly. Rork motioned for Jennifer to catch up with him. They trekked for ages.

“This is just like the old times,” Rork observed, breaking the silence. Jennifer nodded, still fearful.

“Don’t you feel like someone is watching us?” she asked her companion. He nodded, nervously looking behind his shoulder every now and then. Their hometown started to appear in the distance when a growl sounded from the forest. Yellow eyes peered out at them. Flames hissed, trying to guard her master. The beast sprung out, tackling the orange cat. Flames doubled back, trying not to show her underbelly. She leaped back at the dog character.

“A wolf!” Jennifer pointed out in amazement. They watched in bewilderment as Jennifer’s cat fought the creature that was twice her size. A few scratches soon appeared on Flames’ pelt. Her coat was getting grimmer from the ground. The two animals rolled onto the gravel. Flames jumped away from the wolf’s snapping jaws. She swiped at the wolf’s head. It howled when Flames made connection with its ribs, furthermore the wolf charged at Flames. Flames was taken by surprise and was thrown hard onto the path.

Two bright lights stared down the road. Jennifer yelled at Flames to get off the highway. Flames was too busy fighting the wolf to pay attention. She rolled over and leaped back at the wolf. The wheels of the truck rolled down the road, which created a deadly vibration. Jennifer jumped to get Flames out of the way but Rork seized her and pulled her back. Jennifer screamed at the driver in the truck to stop. He probably didn’t even see her. Flames looked up for a quick second, once she saw the truck she tried to hop out of the way. The wolf wouldn’t let her go. The truck was coming closer and closer to the cat.

“FLAMES!” Jennifer cried out. Flames leaped once more. The truck hit her back leg and sent her spinning out of control. The truck didn’t even stop when it hit the wolf. Jennifer sobbed. She ran towards the disheveled cat. Her beloved pet was almost gone.

Flames let out a faint mew. Jennifer felt her wounds, thinking she needed to help her in some way. Jennifer got up, remembering that she needed to have something to stop the bleeding. She took some soft leaves and pressed it against Flames’ leg where there was a small gash. The bleeding finally stopped, but there was still red flesh showing.

“She led us home with only a nose, without a GPS or even a compass, that’s pretty cool,” Rork comforted.

“We should treat her as soon as we get out of town again,” Jennifer agreed then started to carry Flames along the highway back to their hometown.

When they arrived, Jennifer convinced Rork to let her talk to Shadow before they cleared things up with their parents. When they arrived in the town she went straight towards Shadow's party area. Rork lingered back in the street. The park was a disaster. The banner was already falling, and litter scattered the land.

"Shadow? Are you there?" Jennifer called out. A girl appeared from behind the banner. Her hands were full of trash from her party. She dropped the garbage when she spotted her friend, in shock. "Shadow, I need to talk to you about something. I'm not really who you think I am." Jennifer explained in a low voice to Shadow about her real life. How she was really a spy. Shadow's eyes were round with disbelief about what she was just told.

"Does this mean we're not real friends?" Shadow managed to ask after a few moments of her absorbing what she had heard.

A cry came from behind Jennifer. It was Rork! Jennifer told Shadow that they he needed help. She grabbed Shadow's hand and ran around the bushes to see the some Cleevix people latching onto Rork.

Jennifer was struck with terror as Rork was pulled away by the men. She cried out, but her voice was cracked with fear.

Her friend Shadow pulled her back to hide from the group. Rork tried to escape the men, but he was already weakened from their adventure. He was pulled into the unknown darkness while Jennifer crouched low. Shadow sat down next to her.

"He was my friend, my only friend. How will I ever feel the same way? I can already feel the emptiness in my heart. There's no replacement. There'll never be. There'll never be," she murmured under her breath while she rocked back and forth.

"Yes there is, *I* am that friend. I may not be as good as he will ever be. For I will help you get him back." Shadow's eyes flashed with determination.

Dawn was arising, with a new day and a new friend. Jennifer stood up, brushing the dirt from her journey. She thought that with her new companion she will be able to see him again.