Matthew C Bush

1790 Lisa Dr. #3

Indiana, Pa 15701

lsvv@iup.edu

724-422-7942

Kudzu

July 23rd

 An ancient tree, perhaps hundreds of years old or more, is actually integrated into the home’s woodwork. Even with my years of experience and expertise, I am unable to identify its genus. The homeowner is of little help in shedding light on the situation, claiming “It was here when I moved in.”

July 30th

 A multitude of blue flowers have seemingly cropped up overnight—their vines have quite literally choked out all other plant life around this home. Not even grass will grow on the lot anymore. Even more surprising is the house itself. The blue flowers have begun to grow from the walls and roof of the structure. Finally, Wallace (the homeowner) is becoming a little more forthcoming. According to him, he initially noticed the strange tree in his basement after the earthquake several months ago. I found a cat crushed to death after lunch today, vines had begun to grow through its flesh. The longer I stay here the more questions I have, despite all the information I’ve gathered.

August 2nd

 It is around 3 in the morning. Marcus awoke the entire camp with screaming. Despite us being more than five hundred meters from the home, a vine somehow made its way to his tent and wrapped around his left thigh. The flowers have thorns now, as if it evolved them in the space of a day. His leg is a disgusting black/purple color—like a tourniquet, the plant has completely pinched off his femoral artery. We had no choice but to clip the vine off and leave the rest attached to him. As I looked upon the vines accosting him, I noticed that the flowers had become even bigger and more beautiful; their scent was wonderful, enchanting even.

August 10th

 The samples I’ve taken with me are beyond interesting—upon inspection under the microscope, it becomes apparent that instead of decaying, the vines are actually still very much alive. Without aid of soil, sunlight, or water, they have grown a full five centimeters since I initially cut them! I’ve taken to inhaling deeply of the flower’s aroma every morning when I arrive for work: the euphoria experienced makes the room appear to spin. Even now I’m having trouble putting my thoughts to paper.

August 13th

 That *bitch*. I caught her in my office smelling *my* flowers. She insists that she was just waiting for me so we could “talk about” the building change that’s coming next semester, but I know better. I’m going to lock up anytime I leave from now on. Kathryn James, you’ve made an enemy today. No one attempts to steal my work. *Nobody.*

August 18th

 A sabbatical? Now? I’m not stressed! I’ve missed one meeting this year and suddenly I “need to take some personal time”? They’re just jealous of my discoveries and progress with the vines! The only person I’m “belligerent” towards is Kathryn and that’s for good reason. They just want to get at my work! Luckily, I’m a step ahead. They’ll never find my flowers; they’re hidden in a place only I know, and I’m not stupid enough to write it down or speak about it with anyone! Nice try *assholes!*

August 26th

 I think this time away has actually done me some good: reflecting on the past few weeks at Manchester is actually alarming. I usually consider myself to be polite, but the red mist of anger I was experiencing was all too real. I actually got a nosebleed in traffic while I was making my way to Michael’s home last week. The cause: a lady took too long to cross the street in front of me. I almost lost control of the car when I sped past her, shaking with rage at the wheel. I’ve noticed that the key difference in my daily routine is not being in contact with the blue flowers anymore: I’m better for it, but *my God* do I crave the feeling their aroma gives me.

August 28th

 I’m flying out of England now: Michael’s private two-seater doesn’t seem like such a joke anymore. A mob of people barred our entrance to Heathrow, and I’m pretty sure we’ve committed a felony by taking off without permission, but we’re safe. A man tried to hang on to the plane as we were moving down the runway. I caught a glimpse of him rolling violently on the tarmac when he could no longer hold on. His mangled corpse is all too telling of the fear that must be felt across the nation. It’s the vines! Over tea this morning we watched the local news: Manchester is destroyed, the home where I found the tree is destroyed, *everything north of the Thames is destroyed.* My teacup fell to the floor and exploded when they showed images of the destruction. The vines had grown around both buildings, crushing them and killing everyone inside. The report stated that before the vines appear, a multitude of blue flowers crop up seemingly overnight.

September 9th

 England, my home, is gone. Precious few people escaped: even Her Majesty barely made it out with her life. Reports have come in: vines sited off the coast of Normandy. An emergency summit has been called to deal with this threat, and must of the major nations have come. Armed men have come for my brother and I, “We need your help, whether you want to give it or not” is their opening. I have one day to summarize my findings on the plant. I’ve never attended a summit before.

September 10th

 I think it went well, all things considered. I answered all of the questions asked of me to the best of my ability. They mainly wanted information I simply just didn’t have, like “how can we kill this thing?” and “how can it grow underneath the ocean?” Putin himself asked me a few questions, and smashed his fist on the table several times. He kept shouting something like “*Prosto unichtozh' etu proklyatuyu shtuku*!” the translator informed me that it roughly means, “Just destroy the damn thing!”

September 11th

 I’ve gone over my notes at least ten times. How could I not have predicted this? The failure seems to be mostly on my shoulders… I was more interested in the psychotropic effect the blue flowers seem to have on people than anything else. Michael assures me that no one could have foreseen this, he’s been doing that since we were children. He’s a much kinder man than I would be roles reversed.

October ?

 I’ve lost track of the date. As I write this, it is snowing lightly outside of our shack. We’ve flown to a small fishing village on an island north of Iceland, Grimsey. Iceland has been forcibly taken over by the United States. The death toll is staggering. The last time we got decent radio reception, the total body count was estimated at 3.5 billion people. That was probably about two weeks ago now. Michael and I look emaciated now, but we’re still alive. That has to count for something. The villagers have been more than accommodating to us and our fellow refugees, sharing what little they have with us. It’s strange to see so many different people from so many different places cooperating amicably. I guess my father was right in saying “Fear of death is the only true equality.”

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He put down the pen and rested his face in his hands. His wrist-watch claimed it was 4:00 in the afternoon. “Why do I even still check this?” flashed across his mind. It had long since ceased being a useful tool. His quiet reverie is interrupted by a loud rapping on the door—it almost seemed like someone was trying to break the door down.

“Come on, radio’s up! Radio’s up!”

Michael’s heavy stride could be heard crunching the ice as he jogged away from the shack. His body felt weak, but he had to hear the latest: someone could have figured out how to combat the vines after all. The air rushed in past him as he opened the door, its frigid embrace ensured that he was now fully awake. The radio was quite hard to hear—static was the predominant thing being received but a voice could be heard underneath. Excited murmurs from the crowd drowned it out still further. It spoke for less than twenty seconds. A local man leaning against the side of house lit his cigarette and inhaled deeply. He asked the man for a translation:

“Reykjavik has fallen. Blue flowers are everywhere.”