



BLUE DELTA BOOKS™

JUST IN TIME

SHANNA SILVA

CHAPTER 1

IT'S TIME

Sam Cade put in one earbud and turned up his music. The heavy drumbeat was soothing. He started to unwind as he walked home. It had been a long day. Sam had taken three hard tests. All the stress had given him a headache.

“Hey, Sam! Wait up!” Tori rushed up behind him. “Dude! You tore out of the building. Are you avoiding me?”

He took out his earbud. Tori had been his best friend since first grade.

“Sorry,” he said. “It’s just been a long day.” He winced at the sharp pain in his temples. “I have a massive headache.”

“That’s rough.” Tori frowned. “I’m sure walking in this freezing weather doesn’t help.” She brightened. “Just think! I’ll be driving soon. Then you can ride with me.”

Tori planned to get her driver’s license on her 17th birthday. That was just a few weeks away.

Sam grinned. “You? Driving? No thanks. I’ll take my chances walking.”

“Hey!” She laughed. “How about a movie later? There’s a new horror flick out.”

“Maybe. I have to check in at home first.”

For Sam, home life was tough. His dad had died when Sam was a baby. Sam’s mom struggled with mental health issues. His grandma was battling cancer. Whenever he could, Sam helped out. But it was a lot for him to handle.

He and Tori chatted until they reached his corner.

“Text me and let me know about tonight,” Tori said. “Unless you’re too scared to see a horror movie.”

Sam smirked. “Yeah, right. You’re the one who jumps at the scary parts.”

Laughing, Tori waved goodbye.

Sam took a deep breath and entered his apartment building. In the lobby, the janitor pushed a broom. “Hi, Sam. How are you?”

Sam’s head throbbed. “Hey, Jack. I’m fine,” he lied.

Seeing the strain on Sam’s face, Jack raised an eyebrow. Jack spoke gently. “I stopped by earlier and brought lunch.”

“Thanks. You’re the best.” Sam was grateful for Jack’s kindness.

“That’s all right. I’m happy to help. I’ve

known your family forever. Your grandpa and I grew up together.”

Sam nodded. He didn't know what to say. He'd never met his grandfather. But Sam couldn't help but think that if his grandpa were alive, life for his family would be better.

As he left, Sam grumbled. “I wish my life were different.”

Jack overheard him. He knew the time had come.

CHAPTER 2

BUS STOP

Sam checked on his mom and grandma. They were both napping. He sank into the couch and watched TV. His eyes grew heavy. Within minutes, he fell asleep.

Soon, Sam was dreaming. It was the same dream he'd had many times. In it, he wandered. A presence drew him to a shed. It wanted him to go in. But he didn't know why. At that point, he always woke up.

Later, Sam sipped coffee. He was worried

about his mom. She always stayed in bed. Nothing motivated her.

His grandma worried him too. Since she'd been sick, she looked thin and weak. She acted like she wanted to give up.

His grandfather was a mystery. Carl Cade had gone to war. Then he went missing. His body was never found. The war ended. But his family's grieving didn't. Carl's absence had changed everything.

Sam's family was broken. Sometimes, the sadness was crushing. Sam felt it in his bones.

He picked up his phone and texted Tori. "I have to get out of here. Let's meet at the movies."

Tori texted back. "The next show is in an hour. I'll buy the popcorn."

Sam rushed to catch the bus. It was hot and

stuffy. He soon fell asleep against the window. When he woke, he saw that he'd missed his stop.

Quickly, Sam got off the bus. Then he realized he'd left his phone on the seat. He turned back. But it was too late. The bus was pulling away.

Sam looked around. The area was unfamiliar. Streets were vacant. No cars passed by. He walked down the empty sidewalk until the street ended. There was a dirt road in front of him that led to the woods.

He paused. *Should I turn back?*

The wind picked up and tousled Sam's hair. A sudden sureness came over him. Somehow, he knew he was supposed to be there.

A hawk flew overhead. It circled him. The bird flew lower and lower. Soon it was close enough to touch. They looked into each other's

eyes. Sam understood. He was meant to follow it.

“Okay, bird.” Sam took a deep breath.
“Let’s go.”

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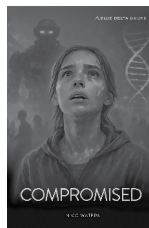
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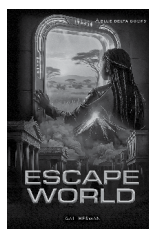
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Sam often wonders what his life would have been like if his grandpa had survived the war. After all, that was the moment when his family started to fall apart. But what if there is still a way to change everything? When Sam gets a rare opportunity to alter the past, will his decision reshape the future for better or worse?



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