

I dragged myself to the bathroom and before I could check the mirror to see if I was still alive, I heard a squawk—kind of like the goose call that comes out of a police cruiser. I saw the blinking red and blue through my window shade, and figured they must have nabbed somebody. The trouble was, there weren't no roads back behind my house. They was in my corn field.

I peeled back the shade, and what did I see but a crap load of state police parked sort of in a big circle. With the ground mist, I barely made out the cut corn stalks running along the rows. Them police looked like scarecrows poking up out of the fog. They was all facing in, staring at the same something. Whoever they got cornered was shit-out-of-luck, that's for sure.

Funny thing though—nobody moved. They just stood at their cruisers. My eye drifted back over the rows leading up to them. Something was itching at the back of my mind, and then the sun peeped up over the tree line on the far side.

I threw on a pair of overalls and a flannel shirt, and practically jogged out to the back porch. "Hey, y'all. What's going on?" They was only about fifty yards off, but it seemed I wasn't yelling loud enough for anybody to hear me. "I said, hey."

Nothing.

My lungs weren't all that strong and screaming was going to get me to coughing, so I stepped off the porch. And this officer shows up like out of nowhere.

"Sorry, Sir. Please return to your dwelling."

*Dwelling?* "What are you talking about? You know you're on my land? What's going on out here, anyways?"

The guy was wearing one of them black outfits, helmet to boots. When he spoke, all I could see was his chin wagging. He raised a hand and pointed back to my house. "Sir, there's nothing to see here. Please move back."

I noticed his motorcycle laying in the field, which I thought was a bit peculiar. And that's when I seen it. The top of a silvery ball stuck up through the soup. It reminded me of one of them mirror balls they use at dances. With all them cruisers around it, I got a pretty clear impression of what might be going on. "Is that one of them UFOs?"

A second officer cut through the gray. Same outfit as the first, except he was carrying what looked like a shotgun. "You're Grady Pearson, is that right?"

*Damn.* "How d'you know my name?"

All I got was a blank stare.

"You must return to your dwelling." He pointed his shotgun at my house. "It's for your own safety, Mr. Pearson."

I pretty much figured by now there was no way I was going to win an argument with these fellas. "What the hell is that thing?"

The first guy got closer. "There is nothing to see here."

*Like a broken record.* I shrugged and threw them both my best scowl, and made a show of shuffling over to my back porch. As I sat in my rocker, the two turned away and join the rest of them. They got right back to staring.

I sat and I watched. The sun rose over the tree tops on the far side of the field and it wouldn't be long before the fog lifted. *Damn*, they couldn't rightly tell me to go inside my *dwelling*, least ways I didn't think so. I'd just wait and see what the fuss was all about. After all, they weren't going to stay out there all day, was they?