

THE SECRET TRUTH by Barry Finlay

EXCERPT

Ground trembled under Jake's feet, and streetlights and trees rocked as if a sudden fierce wind grabbed them by the throat and shook. The entire street shimmied for interminable seconds, and the pavement seemed to heave toward the heavens as if from an earthquake before settling back to earth. The sound of the blast echoed off the surrounding houses, and a car siren bleated nonstop. Jake's muscles wound themselves into knots for the second time in minutes.

Goosebumps popped on his arms and the back of his neck, and his stomach twisted. Once again, his gym bag thudded to the ground from his unclenched fist as fiery roofing materials rained down onto the street and the cars in the B&B's driveway. As Jake's mouth hung open, a tree in front of the house burst into flames.

For the second time, instinct took over. People lived in that house! Jake shook himself from the shock gripping his body and leaned forward to rummage through his gym bag for his phone. He unzipped one end of his bag but located only his running shoes. He tossed the now bloody towel into the bag and fumbled with the zipper at the other end, hands shaking until he brushed against what he looked for. His heart sank when he held his phone in the brightness of the overhead streetlight to reveal a jagged crack snaking across the length of the screen. It must have cracked when the bag flew out of his hands during his earlier dive for safety.