

He stared at the crumpled up heap of metal on the side of the road. He leaned against the side of the ambulance, holding the blanket around his shoulders as the firemen cut off the passenger door. Lucy was sitting calmly, probably somewhat in shock. John held the blanket tighter then rubbed his aching head.

It was amazing that Lucy wasn't hurt, considering how much the car seemed to be folded up on that side. The fireman finished cutting off the door and then helped Lucy out. God, she stepped out of that crumpled wreck like some actress stepping out of a limo at the Oscars. John even imagined that the clouds broke for a second, casting a spotlight of the setting sun's rays on her sparkling dress.

The paramedic helped Lucy into the ambulance where she started examining her, while her partner came over to John and asked him to get in to the ambulance as well.

"My parents are on their way... I should wait for them," he mumbled.

"Young man," the paramedic began,- and John winced as she said it, which made him remember how his head felt - "You have had a concussion and you need to be examined. The firemen will tell your parents where you've gone."

"Just give me a moment," said John. He walked over to the car, now destroyed. Life in a small town was hard enough, but looking at the twisted metal and plastic and glass he realized that he'd had it good before, and part of his freedom had just disappeared on a patch of black ice. Tracing his finger over the Mercury Topaz logo, he said goodbye to his old friend, then got into the ambulance.