ONE

“Of all the times and places to cut a tire!” Mr. Albertini groused, heading back into the driver’s seat of the small Toyota Camry.

“Here I can call triple A,” Mrs. Albertini offered whipping out her cell phone.

“You do that, dear,” Mr. Albertini said flipping the button that popped open the trunk, “meanwhile I’ll get to work on fixing the flat. Junior you come with me.”

There was a grunt and a whine from their rangy oldest son who had otherwise been engaged with his cell phone and ear buds. He grumpily hoisted himself out of the back seat to join his father at the back of the car.

“Oh now don’t strain yourself dear,” Mrs. Albertini warned while waiting to talk with the always ready AAA agent.

“You guys’ll all need to get out of the car,” Mr. Albertini ordered to the youngest two of his breed along with Mrs. Albertini. “That shed over there looks like the perfect spot to hang out,” he nodded in the direction of a small lit shed across the street from where they had stopped. “Junior and I will be just a minute.”

Mrs. Albertini had reached the AAA agent and begun a spirited conversation with her, interrupted only by Mr. Albertini’s vocal be- ration of Junior who wasn’t moving fast enough and if the elder Albertini was to be believed, lacked all kinds of gumption.

As was often the case in the Albertini family the youngest two Derrick and Arlene were once again left to amuse each other. It had not been lost on these two that there was something odd, unusual and different about the place where they had been momentarily stranded.

“DJ where are you going?” Arlene Albertini had asked her brother whose attention had been commanded by a strange sight that he had seen just off of the road.

“DJ! Mom said not to wander.”

“I’m not wandering,” he replied as he ventured closer into the dense wood that lipped the street.

“DJ, I’m going to tell,” Arlene said halfheartedly, nonetheless following her brother into the wood.

The two youngest Albertinis ventured deeper into the woods, a creamy lullaby tune was heard in the distance. Rich orange lights lit up a meadow up ahead where a smallish carousel stood making its rounds in the night.

“A Carousel!” Arlene gasped running up to the brightly lit edifice. Her brother, hoping for something more jolting, nonetheless followed after her. The two children stood and gazed at the circulating horses, clowns and ballerinas smiling down so invitingly at them. “It’s going slowly enough,” Arlene said to her brother, “let’s get on!”

“I suppose it’ll be alright,” DJ said.

The two climbed aboard the carousel. DJ picked a bluish gray horse and Arlene picked a ballerina’s butterfly to ride. The two children had barely gotten comfortable when the carousel began to pick up in speed, the music became more arcane and less velvety. The lights blared uncomfortably and the images of the clowns, ponies and ballerinas became strangely terrifying.

“DJ, I’m scared!” Arlene cried out.

Her brother did not answer for a thick dark figure had emerged from the surrounding woods and moving with the speed of light, boarded the spinning ride. Lights fell onto this figure’s face just as he approached the two children. Arlene and DJ both screamed to the top of the lungs as they beheld before them a slobbering and vicious werewolf.

“No worries, my pets,” the beast growled in an unbelievably low voice. “I’ll make this quick and painful.” He licked his chops ravenously. “Now who’s first?” He asked, wicked eyes darting from DJ to Arlene amidst the heaving ponies, clowns and ballerinas.

Then suddenly the carousel screeched to an abrupt stop. The children were thrown from their cars landing on the carousel’s floor. DJ scrambled over to Arlene. But there was the werewolf right in front of them. He leapt and a huge paw snatched DJ by the leg. Screaming, Arlene began to pull on her brother hoping against hope that she would be able to pull him from the beast’s grasp. It was a losing battle as both children were pulled closer and closer to the wolf’s gaping mouth.

