

The X Files:

The S.G. Chronicles

Episode 1: Crash Landing

Episode 2: The New '52

By Daniel Smith

Character Bios

The Skinner Family

Ava Skinner – White, 14/15, high school student. An independent but likeable schoolgirl, her family relocating to Washington D.C. has caused her to become isolated, lonely and something of an outcast. Although she is perfectly capable of looking after herself, alongside her younger brother Ethan, she is looking for a straightforward and trouble-free life in D.C. Unlike The Spooky Gang, she is a sceptic when it comes to the supernatural and paranormal.

Ethan Skinner – White, 9/10, elementary school student. Unlike Ava, Ethan is much more at ease with the family's recent move, being better able to adapt. Whilst he is reliant on his family, he has strong sense of excitement for adventure. He looks up to his sister and enjoys spending time with her, something they do more regularly since the move.

Jennifer Skinner – White, 40-45, FBI Agent. Competent and hard-working, Jennifer is a driven agent and caring mother. Focused and dutiful, given the nature of her job, she can sometimes be absent as a parent. Moving to Washington D.C. was her idea, in conjunction with her uncle, Walter. She is a role model to Ava and they share many traits, even if Ava would never admit this.

'Uncle' Walter Skinner – White, 69, former FBI Assistant Director. Knowledgeable and experienced, Walter is now retired from official FBI duties but retains many of his previous connections. Still diligent, he has firsthand understanding of the paranormal which Jennifer, his niece, alone seems to be aware of. To her he is something of a mentor, to Ava and Ethan he is a kindly older relative with some 'cool detective' stories.

The Spooky Gang

Sofia – Hispanic, 14/15, high school student. Despite a shy and quiet persona, Sofia is considerate and caring. Accustomed to being an outsider because of her overwhelming love of the paranormal, she sympathises with Ava's plight. She is intelligent, in an understated way, but will gladly demonstrate her encyclopedic knowledge of 'extraterrestrial incidents' when given the opportunity. Loyal and true, she is, arguably, the heart of The Spooky Gang.

Brendan – White, 14/15, high school student. Brendan is laid back and easy going. Outspoken, he enjoys having the last word and this can make him seem standoffish and brusque. He is technologically savvy, capable of researching and manufacturing for The Spooky Gang, and these abilities have fed into his superiority complex. A conspiracy fanatic, he is distrusting of authority but is a good person who values The Spooky Gang because they don't doubt him.

Izaak – Black, 15/16, high school student. Izaak is upbeat, friendly and almost popular. An athletic student, he came into contact with Brendan and Sofia after a sports injury and took a liking to their weird theories and stories. He is charismatic and energetic and, even if he isn't as obsessive concerning the supernatural and paranormal as Sofia and Brendan, he believes something else is out there. He is The Spooky Gang member most happy to go physically investigate.

Episode One - Crash Landing

Premise

New to Washington D.C., Ava Skinner is forced to navigate life in the capital, deal with family drama and somehow avoid becoming a high school outcast. If it wasn't for a group of paranormally obsessed social misfits and mysterious lights in the sky it might even be easy.

Synopsis

Washington D.C., modern day. A car laden with cardboard boxes pulls up outside an empty house. A middle-aged woman, Jennifer Skinner, climbs out of the vehicle, excitably followed by her son, Ethan. Less enthusiastic is the teenage girl still sat in the car, still glued to her phone. No matter how anybody else feels, she, Ava, is clearly not happy to be moving.

At school Ava is equally unhappy. She spends her days alone, sitting by herself on the bus, in class and in the cafeteria. Despite being told she'll fit in eventually, she is running the risk of becoming a high school outcast. When a girl from one of her classes, Sofia, takes pity on her, things start to look up. Inviting Ava to join her and her friends for lunch, she reluctantly accepts. Only when Sofia proceeds to introduce Ava to her paranormally obsessed friends, the school's self-proclaimed 'Spooky Gang', does Ava realise that being a social loner isn't always a bad thing.

Full of misgivings, about both the group and their interest in the paranormal, Ava gives The Spooky Gang a chance, deciding that for now weird friends are better than no friends at all. Getting drawn in, they introduce her to all their favourite stories and how they work together as a group to investigate hidden 'truths'. Full of scepticism, Ava sticks with The Spooky Gang, recognising them as a lovely, if not slightly unusual, group of people, who can at least solve her current social problems.

Back at home, Ava and Jennifer talk. Jennifer asks about school. Ava talks about meeting new people but it is clear the two are still at loggerheads over the move. Jennifer confesses that she's not 100% happy herself but there is now just her looking after her two children and it is easier to be in D.C., near to work and family. Ava says she doesn't understand why her mother would even want to work for the FBI anymore, after what happened to her father. The two reach an impasse and Ava leaves, heading to bed.

In her room Ava lies in the dark, angry, until she unexpectedly receives several messages from Sofia, the last one a video. Watching in disbelief, Ava crosses over to the window and throws open the curtains. The city skyline stretches out in front of her the same as every night but now with one change. High up in the sky, mysterious lights blaze over the capital.

Step Outline

1: EXT. Skinner House – Day

A minivan pulls up outside a suburban house. Jennifer Skinner climbs out of the vehicle, followed by her son Ethan. He rummages through boxes, she flags down the removal van following them. Ethan runs toward the house. Jennifer turns her attention to her daughter, Ava, still in the car, still on her phone, still sulking.

2: INT. Skinner House – Day

Removal men unload the van. Jennifer helps. Ava remains on her phone, indifferent. Mother and daughter talk, one trying to encourage the other, but Ava remains unexcited. Refusing to help, the two almost row before Jennifer is distracted by a phone call from her uncle. She answers. Ava slips away.

3: INT. Skinner House – Day

The family stand in the hallway, everyone getting ready for their first 'proper' day in Washington. Jennifer plans to take Ethan to school before work, something Ava refuses. Jennifer tells her daughter everything will be fine, hugging her. Ava hugs her back, wishing her good luck, tussles Ethan's hair and leaves.

4: EXT. Street – Day

Ava stands apart from a group of similar aged teenagers waiting for a bus. A few throw her glances, most ignore her.

5: INT. School Bus – Day

Ava sits alone on the bus, staring out the window.

6: INT. English Classroom – Day

Ava sits alone in her class, textbook open in front of her.

7: INT. School Cafeteria – Day

Ava sits alone in the school cafeteria. She finds a note in her lunch from her mum.

8: INT. School Bus – Day

Ava sits alone on the bus.

9: INT. Science Classroom – Day

Ava sits alone in her science class, lab coat on.

10: INT. School Cafeteria – Day

Ava sits alone in the school cafeteria.

11: INT. School Bus – Day

Ava sits alone on the bus.

12: INT. Sports Hall – Day

The class play dodgeball. Ava stands alone at the back of the hall before being hit by several dodgeballs.

13: INT. School Cafeteria – Day

Ava sits alone in the school cafeteria.

14: INT. Skinner House – Night

The Skinner family sit around the dining table. Ethan talks about friends, Jennifer about work. Ava says nothing. Understanding, Jennifer says that everything will be ok. She mentions Uncle Walt visiting them once he's back in DC.

15: INT. School Cafeteria – Day

Ava sits alone, unaware of Sofia until she sits opposite her. She recognises her from class. Sofia invites her to come sit with her and her friends, Brendan and Izaak. Ava is hesitant but Sofia reassures her. She goes and, for the first time, doesn't eat lunch alone.

16: EXT. School Playground – Day

Ava, Sofia, Brendan and Izaak sit together. They explain that they're the school 'misfits/outcasts' because of their love of the paranormal and supernatural. People call them The Spooky Gang but they like it. Ava is invited to join them again but is sceptical of their interests. She neither agrees or disagrees.

17: INT. Skinner House – Night

Ava searches social media for Sofia, Brendan and Izaak. Jennifer comes home from work. The family talk. Jennifer asks if school was better. Ava, her phone still showing a picture of The Spooky Gang, tells her it wasn't any worse.

18: INT. School Cafeteria – Day

Ava walks toward her usual table. Sofia sees her and waves. Ava looks at The Spooky Gang. She looks at the empty table. With a shrug she waves back and moves over to Sofia and the others. They gladly welcome her.

19: EXT. School Playground – Day

Sofia catches Ava after school and asks if she wants to hang out. Ava tells her she can't, she has to babysit her brother. The two swap numbers with Sofia saying she'll add Ava to The Spooky Gang's group chat.

20: INT. Skinner House – Night

Takeaway boxes cover the dining table. Ethan is sent to bed. Jennifer and Ava talk. Jennifer is pleased when Ava mentions Sofia, Brendan and Izaak, telling her she said things would get better. Ava disagrees and the two argue about the move. Ava storms upstairs, angry.

21: INT. Ava's Bedroom – Night

Ava lies in darkness, unable to sleep. She is back on her phone, researching The Spooky Gang. She receives several messages from Sofia. She reads them. A video message arrives. Perplexed, she watches. Moving to the window she throws back the curtains and looks over the capital. As in the video, mysterious lights fly high over the city.

EPISODE 1: SCENE 16

Written by

Daniel Smith

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Ava, Sofia and Brendan sit on a bench beneath a tree. The two girls sit together, slightly apart from Brendan who tinkers on his phone. Izaak hangs singlehandedly from a branch.

AVA

So you're all cafeteria rejects too?

SOFIA

No, Brendan and me have always been friends. Well, since kindergarten. We had no one else and we just kind of...

Sofia gently claps her hands together.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

...stuck. It helps that we have lots in common.

AVA

Yeah, what sort of things?

Sofia glances at Brendan. He remains focused on his phone.

SOFIA

Oh, all sorts of things.

A loud CRACK sounds, followed by a falling Izaak and broken branch. He lands, looking sheepish before grinning broadly. He drops the branch, carelessly.

AVA

And Izaak?

SOFIA

We met at middle school. He was a football player. He broke his leg though and had to stay in a wheelchair. The school kept bringing him to the library...

IZAAK

Where I met these nerds.

Izaak tries to sit next to Brendan. Still on his phone, he doesn't move. Tussling, Izaak pushes him closer to Sofia and sits.

BRENDAN

We hated you.

Izaak laughs.

IZAAK

Even back then everyone knew about freaky Brendan and his weird girlfriend.

BRENDAN

Not my girlfriend.

Ava looks from Sofia to Brendan and then at Izaak, who grins.

IZAAK

So I kept getting stuck with them. And they were always on his computer, making notes and whispering. So one day I walked over...

BRENDAN

Wheeled over.

IZAAK

...and I asked what they were doing.

AVA

And?

BRENDAN

We were mapping the government's secret spy satellites. They're everywhere.

Ava looks from Brendan to Sofia, eyebrows raising. Sofia blushes, Brendan remains oblivious. In the distance a BELL RINGS, calling students back to class.

The group stands, grabbing bags. Izaak picks up a football. The four head back to the building, Brendan still on his phone.

Izaak looks past him, gesturing with the football. Sofia shakes her head. Ava nods and the ball is thrown her way.

AVA

So, spy satellites...

Ava throws the ball back.

IZAAK

Yeah, totally weird, right? I turned right round and walked away.

BRENDAN

Wheeled.

IZAAK

But then a few days later I heard them talking about Bigfoot and I love Bigfoot so I asked what they were looking at.

He throws the ball back to Ava.

SOFIA

And I said Brendan had found all the government's secret facts online and Izaak should look and he was like 'Whoah' and 'No way'. The next day he just sort of came and sat with us again and we've been friends since.

Placing a hand on Brendan's shoulder, Sofia steers him around another group of students.

IZAAK

Yep. That's how I joined The Spooky Gang.

Ava snorts.

AVA

The what?

SOFIA

(sheepishly)

The Spooky Gang. It's what they called Brendan and me at school but we kind of liked it.

AVA

Because of the spy satellites and Bigfoot?

IZAAK

And aliens. Don't forget aliens.

Ava laughs.

SOFIA

It's not weird. I know it sounds weird but it's real. Brendan finds all this stuff online. Don't you, Brendan?

Brendan grunts affirmingly.

AVA

Like, on forums? Or are you a hacker? I'm sure you're a real pro.

Looking at Izaak, Ava smiles. He remains straight faced.

BRENDAN

I'm pretty good.

Brendan finally looks up. Turning the phone he reveals a picture of Ava. She scrolls, perplexed.

AVA

That's my school record! But...how?

Brendan grins, smugly.

BRENDAN

Imagine if I tried.

Sofia snatches the phone and closes the window down.

SOFIA

I'm sorry. He likes showing off.

She slaps Brendan's arm but passes the phone back to him. The group arrive back at the main school building.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Come have lunch with us again tomorrow?

Ava tosses the football back to Izaak and looks the group over.

AVA

Yeah, maybe.

EPISODE 1: SCENE 21

Written by

Daniel Smith

INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark, the hour late. Through cracked curtains a sliver of light darts across the floor, illuminating discarded clothes and snaking electrical wires. Ava lies in bed, her face lit by the dim blue light of a phone screen.

She flicks between photos of The Spooky Gang. Each shows the group smiling, happy, having fun. Even Brendan.

At the top of the screen a banner appears, a message from Sofia. Ava ignores it.

Another message. Ava swipes it away. She scrolls through more photos, trying to gain a sense of who these people, Sofia, Brendan and Izaak, are.

A third message. This time Ava accidentally opens it. She grunts in frustration but decides to read it. Her face creases with consternation as she does. She re-reads, disbelieving. A video appears in the message feed.

Ava plays it, without hesitation. There is an ambient buzz overlaid with the occasional comment from Sofia, 'CAN YOU SEE THIS?' and 'NO WAY!'.

Throwing back the covers Ava jumps from her bed, the phone staying nestled amongst the bedding, and rushes over to the window. Pulling back the curtain she searches for something. Until...

AVA

What the...

In the distance, hovering high over the capital, mysterious dancing objects, weaving from left to right.

As Ava watches, Sofia's video plays again, uninterrupted, the same unidentified objects lighting up the night sky.

Episode 2 - The New '52

Premise

With news about the mysterious lights over the capital being downplayed, Ava joins The Spooky Gang in their hunt to uncover the truth. Finding nothing, things look bleak, but when Ava inadvertently catches Jennifer in a lie, she is left wondering what is really going on in D.C.

Synopsis

The morning after the mysterious lights appeared in the sky, Ava awakes to find The Spooky Gang are in overdrive. Ignoring them, she heads downstairs to find her mum's mysterious uncle, Walter, visiting. A former FBI agent, he shrugs off the idea that 'aliens' were flying over the capital saying that there will be a reasonable explanation. Reassured that not everyone is UFO obsessed, Ava goes to find Ethan. Walter leaves, telling Jennifer he'll be in touch soon.

The Skinners settle down to some much needed family time, all the while Ava is being messaged by The Spooky Gang, who are desperate to investigate the 'UFOs'. Not wanting to join them, Ava has the perfect excuse to refuse when Jennifer is called into work, babysitting Ethan. Sofia invites herself round but brings Brendan and Izaak with her.

The group talk about 1952, the last time 'UFOs' were seen over Washington, with Sofia in her element. Ava remains unbothered by all the extraterrestrial talk but Ethan is entranced. Brendan tells the group he's still trying to find 'something' online but it's eluding him. Izaak still wants the group to go investigate, even if it just means physically looking for unusual things. Ava refuses. Ethan, however, accepts, and they join.

The group decided to look around the major D.C. tourist sites, The Lincoln Memorial and The Washington Monument, and even the perimeters of The White House but, without Brendan being able to unearth any leads online, all they find is other conspiracy enthusiasts. Ava, sceptical to begin with, only grows more so. Regretting coming, she suggests the group do something else. Sofia says one more expedition and the group head to The Jefferson Memorial. They find nothing. When Ethan wanders off The Spooky Gang split up to look for him. Recovering him, Ava is shocked when she sees her mum, who is 'at work', and Walter also at the memorial.

Avoiding them, the group head home. The Spooky Gang are curious about who Ava saw and she explains. At home, Ava tells Ethan to say nothing about their day to their mum. When Jennifer arrives home Ava and Ethan say they stayed in, bored. Jennifer says she was in the office all day, also bored.

That night Ava and Ethan talk about the day together. Ava wonders what Jennifer and Walter were doing.

Step Outline

1 - INT. Ava's Bedroom - Day

Ava wakes up the morning after the lights were seen in the sky. She checks her phone, The Spooky Gang are in frenzied overdrive. She ignores the messages.

2 INT. Skinner Kitchen - Day

Downstairs, Ava finds her mysterious great uncle, Walter, visiting. He and Jennifer talk over coffee. He shrugs off the lights in the sky and says that they'll be a reasonable explanation, that there always is.

3 INT. Skinner Living Room - Day

Ava joins Ethan in the living room. She changes the television channel to the news. They report the lights in the sky being part of 'a military training exercise gone wrong'. Walter leaves, saying he'll speak with Jennifer soon. The family settle down to some quality time. The Spooky gang are keen to go investigate the 'extraterrestrials'. Ava isn't interested and, when her mum is called into work, says she has to babysit so can't.

4 INT. Skinner Hallway - Day

Sofia invites herself round to keep Ava company, bringing Brendan and Izaak.

5 INT. Skinner Living Room – Day

Sofia discusses 'UFOs' and their history with Washington. Brendan reveals he has been searching for information online but is struggling to find what he's looking for. Ethan takes a liking to The Spooky Gang and they to him.

6 INT. Skinner Kitchen - Day

Brendan and Ava talk. He tells her the 'explanation' for the lights is wrong but he can't prove it yet. He says Ava ought to be more open minded to 'hidden truths'.

7 INT. Skinner Living Room - Day

Izaak maintains that The Spooky Gang should go physically 'investigate', until Brendan gets a lead. Ava wishes them luck but refuses to go. Ethan accepts. They go.

8 INT. Bus - Day

The group travel into Washington DC. Brendan asks Izaak when he's getting his driver's license. Ava questions where they're going to start. No one knows but is too excited to worry about it.

9 EXT. The Lincoln Memorial - Day

The group visit The Lincoln Memorial. They find nothing but the group stay enthused, Ava less so.

10 EXT. The Washington Monument - Day

They visit The Washington Monument. They find nothing. Ava is bored.

11 EXT. White House Boundaries - Day

They walk round The White House perimeter. They find nothing. Ava lags behind.

12 EXT. The Lincoln Memorial Pool - Day

Sitting by The Lincoln Memorial Pool the group see other alien enthusiasts, all hoping to make 'first contact'. Ava is increasingly sceptical and wants the group to go get food. The others are still enthused, as is Ethan. Sofia says just one more stop, The Jefferson Monument.

13 INT. The Jefferson Monument - Day

The Jefferson Monument proves equally 'alien' free. Ethan wanders off. Panicked, the group split up to search for him.

14 EXT. The Jefferson Monument Grounds - Day

Brendan and Sofia head off together, both bothered by Ava's lack of commitment to the search.

15 EXT. The Jefferson Monument Grounds - Day

Ava and Izaak search and find Ethan. As they head back to meet the others, Ava is surprised to see her mum and Walter together at the monument. They successfully sneak past, unseen, and rejoin Brendan and Sofia.

16 EXT. Bus Stop - Day

Ava explains who it was she saw. The Spooky Gang have lots of questions. Brendan and Sofia are especially intrigued that Jennifer is an FBI agent. Ava is curious about what her mum and uncle were doing.

17 INT. Skinner Hallway - Day

The Skinner children return home. Ava tells Ethan that they need to keep today a secret from their mum. She doesn't need to know they were out or that they saw her.

18 INT. Skinner Living Room - Night

Jennifer returns home. Ava and Ethan say they were home all day. Jennifer says she was at work all day.

19 INT. Ava's Bedroom - Night

Ava is alone in her room. Ethan comes in. The two siblings talk about the day and The Spooky Gang. Ava wonders what Jennifer and Walter were doing but Ethan is unconcerned. He asks if she believes they're really aliens out there. She says no and sends him back to his room.

EPISODE 2: SCENE 18

Written by

Daniel Smith

INT. SKINNER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ava and Ethan sit watching the TV. His attention is on the screen. Hers is a million miles away. A half empty takeaway pizza box sits between them.

A KEY TURNS in the front door lock as Jennifer returns home.

JENNIFER

(O.S.)

Hello. Anyone home?

She wanders into the living room, looking flustered. Ethan stands and hugs her. Jennifer reaches over to Ava. Ava takes her hand.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late. Is that pizza? I'm starved.

Uncoupling Ethan, Jennifer picks up a slice of pizza. Ethan sits back down, legs on the sofa.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Mmm, that's good.

AVA

Busy day?

JENNIFER

Totally crazy. You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

AVA

We probably wouldn't.

Placing the pizza down, Jennifer starts to take her coat off.

JENNIFER

But you don't want to hear about my day at the office. How are you? What have you two been up to?

She turns, looking for somewhere to hang her coat. As she does Ava looks to Ethan, shaking her head.

AVA

We didn't do much, did we?

ETHAN

No. Ava's friends came round. It was really boring.

JENNIFER

The alien hunters? How exciting!

AVA

It was ok. They just wanted to talk about the lights in the sky. I probably won't invite them back.

JENNIFER

Oh?

AVA

Yeah, they liked this little dweeb too much.

Ava playfully slaps Ethan's leg. He goes to reciprocate.

JENNIFER

No fighting please! Sweetie, could you take this?

Jennifer holds out her coat to Ethan. Ava looks at her phone.

ETHAN

But Mom...

She keeps her coat held out. With a sigh he gets up and takes it. Jennifer takes his seat.

JENNIFER

I'm glad to see that someone has found their sense of humour again. Thank you for looking after him today. I know you didn't sign up to babysit but things are...hectic. More hectic than I'd anticipated.

Ava looks over her phone screen.

AVA

With work?

Jennifer smiles.

JENNIFER

Yes, with work. But it'll get easier.

AVA

I know.

JENNIFER

Thank you.

She takes Ava's hand again, squeezing.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
And thank you for trusting me.

The two look at each other. Ethan comes back in, breaking the moment.

AVA
I'm going to go upstairs. I've got homework.

Ava rises. Jennifer watches as her daughter leaves.