

Evelyn Rivers had lived by the sea for as long as she could remember. Her grandparents had the most wonderful quaint little cabin by the seaside and it filled her with such joy she could barely contain herself. Never was there a moment in which Evelyn couldn't look out of her bedroom window and not be greeted by the sweet smell of the sea rolling in. It was something Evelyn adored so much that her bedroom window was rarely ever closed, much to the dismay of her grandparents who often complained about the freezing temperatures.

When Evelyn awoke on September first, she awoke with a spring in her step. As much as she adored being by the seaside, there was something about Hogwarts that simply made her feel safe, like nothing bad could ever happen to her whilst she was there, it was a feeling she hoped would last forever.

"Evelyn, you need to get going." She heard her grandmother call from the kitchen in her usual hushed voice.

Coming!" Evelyn called back as she glanced around her room one final time. "Trunk, wand, robes..." She repeated to herself, mentally ticking off each item as she spotted it around her bedroom.

"Hurry up! Your bus goes in ten minutes!" Evelyn sighed loudly, she did not enjoy being rushed. She knew she would make it to Hogwarts one way or another.

She stuffed her wand into her jacket pocket, grabbed her trunk by its unstable handle and made her way into the kitchen. "Okay, I'm ready."

"Say goodbye to your parents first!" Her grandmother reminded her, causing a lump to form in Evelyn's throat, oh how she missed them.

Evelyn dropped her trunk in the kitchen with a loud thud and made her way out of the cabin into the back garden. Instantly, the smell of the salty sea grew stronger and Evelyn knew she would miss this place greatly. She made her way towards the rose garden her grandmother had planted in her parents' name and crouched beside the largest bush. She placed one of her hands in the soil and closed her eyes. "Goodbye, mum and dad. I'm going to make you proud this year, I promise. I'm even a Prefect, just like you were." She smiled as she felt the pin in her trouser pocket. "I'm going to get top grades in my OWLS so I can become an Auror just like you were." Evelyn stood up, opening her eyes with one last smile. "I'm going to make you proud."

Evelyn wiped the soil off her hand onto her trousers and returned to the kitchen. "I'll be back before you know it," she smiled at her grandma.

"I know," her grandma paused, "it's just hard to see you go. It will be strange to have the cabin to myself again."

"At least you won't freeze to death anymore," Evelyn chuckled.

"You did close your window, didn't you?"

Evelyn had, of course, not closed her window, but that was not something her grandma needed to know. "Yes. Now I have to go, I can't miss the bus or I'll never make it to Hogwarts!"

"Alright!" Her grandma took her in a warm embrace, rubbing her dainty hand across Evelyn's spine. "Make them proud for me," she released her granddaughter.

Evelyn lifted her trunk from the kitchen floor, "I will." She smiled one last time at her grandmother before making her way out of the cabin and onto the country roads. Evelyn knew that she only had a few minutes until her bus arrived but she could already see the shelter just a few hundred yards in front of her. By the time she made it to the shelter, the bus was already pulling up behind her, her favourite bus driver sat in the driver's seat, beeping his horn at the sight of Evelyn.

"Where to this time?" He smiled as he opened up the doors.

"London Kings Cross, but I have baggage," Evelyn nodded at the hefty trunk she had been lugging behind her.

"No problem, take your seat and I'll get it sorted for you." He took the money she had offered in her extended hand, not bothering to count it before he pocketed the cash. Evelyn made her way down the aisle as he sorted out her baggage, making sure she found a seat by the window so she could admire the seaside as they drove.

With a quick beep of the horn, the bus driver was off and Evelyn began her journey to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Although Evelyn had taken this bus before, she had never stayed on long enough to reach Kings Cross in London, she had only ever used it to get into her local town to say the butterflies were fluttering around in her stomach would be an understatement. By the time Evelyn was entering the outskirts of London, Evelyn was no longer sure if she simply felt anxiety, or if she was about to be sick all over the bus, hoping it was the first option, she closed her eyes and drifted off to a peaceful slumber.

"Evelyn, this one's you," called out the bus driver from the front, awakening Evelyn with a start.

"Coming!" She replied, checking her pockets to ensure she hadn't forgotten any of her belongings on the bus before making her way back down the aisle.

"You off to that boarding school of yours your grandma always talks about?" He asked, his accent becoming more prominent the closer Evelyn got to him.

"Yep, I won't be back until Christmas." Evelyn smiled at the thought of an uninterrupted term at Hogwarts, it was something she urgently needed.

"Well, best of luck to you." He gave her one last smile as she exited the bus. Evelyn quickly lifted her trunk out of the bus and made her way into the bustling crowds heading towards London Kings Cross station. As much as Evelyn usually enjoyed the peace and quiet of being by the seaside, she had to admit that the crowds in Kings Cross were somewhat beneficial to her. Whilst most individuals at the station were commuters or businessmen, Evelyn certainly was not and her aged trunk stuck out like a sore thumb amongst them, but with the crows, Evelyn was able to blend in and only earn a few dirty looks from those around her.

With a toothy grin on her face, Evelyn made her way deeper into the station until she found herself between platforms nine and ten. As Evelyn mentally prepared herself to run at the wall, she took several steps backwards until she stumbled into someone.

"Evelyn! It's so good to see you!" She turned around to see one of her closest friends Lily stood behind her, carrying a strangely small, black kitten. "This is Midnight, Jack got him for me, so I had a pet at Hogwarts, isn't he beautiful?" She cooed down at the creature lying in her arms.

Evelyn had to admit he was gorgeous. "He does look like a perfect pet."

"Right we should go if we want to get somewhere nice to sit or all the first-years will take the good spaces thinking they deserve them!" Lily chuckled lightly, gesturing at Evelyn for her to go first onto the platform.

Evelyn closed her eyes and ran at the wall. She wouldn't have even had to open her eyes to know she had made it safely onto the platform, the smell of smoke from the Hogwarts Express was a dead giveaway.

"Take my trunk and I'll see if Sara is already on the train," Lily said, tightening her grip on Midnight as though she were afraid he would be stolen.

Evelyn took hold of Lily's worn-down trunk with her spare hand and began to make her way to the front of the train where the other students had left their trunks. She dropped the two trunks gently onto the floor in a safe-looking spot before heading towards the entrance to the train.

As soon as Evelyn stepped onto the Hogwarts Express, the butterflies in her stomach stopped. It felt as though the whole world was melting away, she felt safe inside her little bubble of Hogwarts joy. "Lily?" Sara?" She called out as she made her way throughout the train. It didn't take long before she found the pair inside one of the side compartments.

"Evelyn, ready for OWL year?" Sara greeted as soon as she spotted her friend at the door.

"Don't remind me!" Evelyn took her seat, dreading the idea of taking her exams in only a few short months. "I haven't even started revising yet!"

"None of us have, don't worry about it Evelyn" Lily smiled at her. "Here take Midnight, he'll calm you down." She thrust the kitten into Evelyn's arms.

Evelyn looked down at the kitten resting in her arms who seemed unbothered by the fact he had just been thrust into the arms of a stranger. "He's very calm." She noted.

"Oh yeah! Jack says he barely even makes a sound, he just sleeps and eats."

"Just like me!" Sara smiled.

"Well..." Lily began.

"You tend to do perhaps one thing more."

"Kissing barely counts, speaking of I need to find myself a new target for this term." She began with a smirk. "Anyone got any ideas?"

"Why don't you revise instead?" Evelyn suggested.

"Well, kissing helps me revise. I could find someone smart who can coach me after I finish kissing them. How about Daniel, I heard he was Prefect this year?"

Evelyn grunted audibly. "No! Merlin, I can't bear the thought of having to carry out Prefect duties with that!" She pulled out the Prefect badge from her pocket and fastened it to her jacket, ensuring it was completely visible.

"Looks good on you, maybe this year we will have a chance of winning the house cup?" Evelyn knew Lily was being far too optimistic, Ravenclaw was never in with a solid chance. It was always either Gryffindor or Slytherin and that wasn't about to change this year.

"I am not about to violate my position as a Prefect!"

"You're so boring," joked Sara, rolling her eyes at Evelyn.

"It's called following the rules, one of us has to do it." Evelyn was a stickler for the rules, she always had been. After all, rules wouldn't work if nobody followed them.

"Well, I think rules are made to be bent a little bit, where's the fun in following them?"

"I'm with Evelyn on this one," Lily added, "sorry Sara, but we need rules, without them, chaos ensues."

Evelyn smiled triumphantly at her small victory. "Anyway, I have to go to the front cabin for a meeting with Headmaster Dippet, apparently all the Prefects have to go so I'll give you all the details on who we have."

"Well, we already know it will be the golden boy Tom Riddle."

Evelyn knew Sara was right. She passed Midnight back to Lily who remained asleep, despite Evelyn being rather awful at handling animals, and made her way to the front of the train. The trio had chosen a cabin at the front of the train, so Evelyn only passed a few cabins before she found her Headmaster beaming graciously at her.

"Miss Rivers, glad you could join us." He nodded at her as she shuffled into the cabin. "Now that everyone is here, I will begin. I won't keep you long, but I just wish to inform you of your duties as Prefects this year."

Evelyn glanced around the room at her fellow students who were all tucked rather tightly together in the cabin. Instantly she spotted the raven-haired Tom Riddle whom she knew would be chosen, but his house partner was none other than Astrea Black, a witch who would certainly not have been Evelyn's first choice. Beside them was a pair of Gryffindor twins, Freddie and Mona and tucked behind them was Eliana and Adam from Hufflepuff. Evelyn was lucky enough that her house partner Daniel was on the opposite side of the cabin or she knew all too well that his hands would be in places she would rather they were not.

"So, at the Welcome Feast, you will each be expected to lead the first years to their common rooms, help them settle in and answer any questions they may have. I expect you to treat them how you would have liked to have been treated as first years yourself." Headmaster Dippet took a deep breath. "After the Welcome Feast, I shall send you all timetables of when you will be patrolling the corridors after hours, anyone you find out of their dormitory without valid reason should have house points taken from them and their name reported to their Head of House, is that clear?"

Everyone in the compartment mumbled in agreement.

"How do we know how many house points to take from them?" Tom Riddle asked with his usual charming voice.

"Well Tom my boy, I should expect you will be able to judge the situation then act accordingly. You have all been trusted with this position and I expect you shall prove that you deserve that trust by acting appropriately within your role. I expect you to keep your house rivalry for the Quidditch pitches."

"Of course."

"Well then, that is all I have to ask unless anyone has any questions?" The students glanced around at each other blankly. "I assume that will be a no, so return to your compartments and act responsibly. You are Prefects now!"

"So, how was it?" Sara asked the second Evelyn returned to their compartment.

"Very informative." Evelyn was glad that Headmaster Dippet had been able to straighten out the rules and explain them to the Prefects, it made sure they were all followed.

"Well, who else is a Prefect?" Lily questioned, leaning forwards, knocking her elbow on Midnight as she did. "Sorry, kitty." She whispered down to him.

"Daniel from our house." Sara wolf-whistled. "Really? You're going for him?"

"Well, he is one of the easier targets, but he doesn't lack the academic abilities I am looking for," she giggled lightly.

"You aren't exactly going to be reciting runes whilst you kiss Sara!"

"Just because you and Jack don't do that, it doesn't mean it isn't possible." She winked at Lily who's face flushed coral as she lifted her eyebrows. "So, who else?"

"Well obviously Tom Riddle, but for some reason, Dippet chose Astrea Black to be the other Prefect, I find it rather odd but there aren't really any better candidates in his house." Evelyn knew that Slytherin students were notoriously rule breakers in her year and it seemed that picking the second Prefect had just been done by choosing the lesser of several evils. "Those twins from Gryffindor, then Elina and Adam from Hufflepuff."

"So, a rather boring bunch then!"

"I wouldn't consider myself boring!" Evelyn exclaimed in a jokey manner, hoping it covered the slight annoyance in her voice.

"Well, you aren't exactly the most spontaneous girl, are you Evelyn?"

"And that is fine," Lily butted in, plopping Midnight on Evelyn's lap. "We love you either way."

"Oh of course!" Sara chimed.

"Well, maybe I'll get more spontaneous this year, you never know!"

Sara and Lily both giggled. "Oh, we know. I doubt that will happen."

Evelyn sighed deeply. "Well, I'm going to finishing reading Hogwarts: A History so you two keep it down."

"Ah." Sara muttered. "Definitely not boring."

Evelyn thoroughly enjoyed reading *Hogwarts: A History*, it was one of the things that brought her comfort. She knew almost everything there was to know about the castle and its creation and every time she read the book, she truly felt as though she learned something new. She thought it helped to keep her immersed in life at Hogwarts, particularly during the tedious summer holidays. She had started re-reading it for quite possibly the hundredth time only a few days ago and had been unable to finish it whilst at home so had packed it with her to take to Hogwarts.

By the time the Hogwarts Express pulled up to the station, it was pitch black. Although Evelyn had to admit the night sky looked beautiful, she would also much less willingly admit that the dark was not her most favourite thing.

"Right, I am starving!" Sara announced as she jumped off the train behind Lily and Evelyn and followed them onto the carriages. As soon as Sara's foot hit the ground the carriage zoomed off towards the castle. "Thank goodness for that, the sorting ceremony had better be incredibly short this year or I may be forced to consume one of the meagre first years!"

"I hope they have that strange meat pie they had the last term; I could devour the whole thing if they do!" Evelyn's mouth began to water at the thought of the buttery pastry crumbling in her mouth.

"No more food talk or I might simply pass out with hunger!"

"You ate on the train up here!" Exclaimed Lily with an eye roll.

"Well that barely counted, it was just a Pumpkin Pasty!"

"And a packet of Drooble's."

"And far too many Bertie Botts." Evelyn added.

"And three chocolate frogs."

By the time the girls arrived at the castle, they had only just finishing listing off all the confectionery Sara had consumed on the train journey to Hogwarts. "I like my food!" She cried in her defence.

"So do we, so let's get inside, hope the Sorting Hat speeds through the Sorting Ceremony and then eat!"

Nodding in agreement, the trio dashed into the Great Hall and made their way to the Ravenclaw table, sitting down in their usual seats by the exit. "Ready for Quidditch this year? What position will you try out for?" Sara asked.

Evelyn had been on the Ravenclaw Quidditch team since her third year at Hogwarts, first playing as a Chaser and then eventually moving on to play Keeper during her fourth year. "Well, I have statistically better odds of getting Chaser, so I'll probably go for that. I still want to play this year, but I don't know how much I'll be able to commit when we have our OWLS in May!"

"Don't let the Aiden hear you say that! You won't even be allowed to try out if he hears you won't commit!" Sara warned her, partly as a joke but she knew the Quidditch Captain was less than forgiving.

"Hush, he'll never hear me from all the way over there!" Evelyn looked down the table at Aiden who had more than contently seated himself right at the front of the Ravenclaw table, ready to greet the first years that were sorted into his house.

"You never know!"

By the time the last student was sorted into Hufflepuff, Sara looked as though she might faint due to the hunger she was feeling. "If Professor Dippet doesn't give us food in one minute I will personally make sure he regrets it!"

As if on cue, Headmaster Dippet raised his hands and as he did, food appeared all over the tables in the Great Hall. Roast potatoes, vegetables, steamed dumplings, mashed potatoes, pies and rolls of bread were all piled high on the table. "Thank goodness!" Sara cried out as she shovelled a bread roll into her mouth.

Evelyn piled her plate high with the golden-brown pie, mashed potatoes and added a small serving of vegetables to keep up appearances. Before she had seen the food, Evelyn had not realised just how hungry she truly was, she hadn't eaten properly since she left her house earlier that day and the sight of food had made her all too aware of that.

The trio ate in silence until all the girls had wiped their plates clean. "Ooh, dessert!" Lily spoke with wide eyes as an assortment of desserts arrived. "I might have to sneak some of them for tomorrow."

"Day-old custard tarts? Lily that sounds awful!" Evelyn was not the largest fan of custard tarts, especially not ones that weren't fresh. She was far more interested in the chocolate eclairs she had spotted across from her. "Sara, pass me those eclairs!" Sara handed over the plate of eclairs to Evelyn who slid two onto her plate with a toothy grin. "Merlin these are beautiful!" She took a bite of the eclairs and sat back as a flavour explosion took place in her mouth. Evelyn tucked into her eclairs whilst Lily devoured several custard tarts at once.

"Evelyn, are you excited to help the first-years and give them the grand tour of the Ravenclaw Tower?" Sara asked.

"It doesn't exactly need a tour!" Lily spoke with her mouth full, crumbs of pastry falling from her mouth as she spoke.

"As long as they were all rightfully sorted and can actually answer whatever riddle the knocker asks, then everything will be alright." Evelyn sighed as she recalled several instances in which she had arrived outside Ravenclaw Tower to find a gaggle of stranded first years, unable to answer the riddle.

"Merlin I can't deal with finding first years waiting outside the Tower anymore, it ruins the fun of the riddle!" Sara said with annoyance.

"We were first years once, I'm sure they're not too dissimilar to us!" Added Lily between custard tarts.

"Well, none of us were ever dumb enough to get locked out of our own common room though were we."

Sara opened her mouth but before she had a chance to share, Headmaster Dippet's voice boomed throughout the Great Hall. "I should hope you have all enjoyed this Welcome Feast, now I should think you would want to rest in your common rooms after such a feast. First years hang behind the other students and your prefects will lead you to your common rooms! Alright, off we go now students!"

Then the Great Hall was in chaos. Evelyn stayed firmly in her seat, merely watching as all the students raced out, darting between the slower students to get to their common rooms first. When the hall eventually cleared out, all that was left were the eight prefects and four small bunches of meek-looking students.

"Right everyone, we'll wait for the other first-years to leave before we do so that we don't all get caught on the stairs at the same time." Daniel said from beside her, watching as the first batch of students made their way out.

"So when we get out of the Great Hall, you'll all need to stick quite close to us, especially on the staircase, so that you don't get left behind. Then we'll head to the Ravenclaw Tower."

"Now," Daniel butted in, "when we get to the tower, the knocker on the door will ask you a riddle, if you answer correctly then you can go inside and if you don't then you'll just have to wait for someone else to come and get the riddle right."

A few of the first years squealed, in excitement or fear, Evelyn couldn't quite tell which. "Right follow me now, stick close together!" She called out in an authoritative voice as she made her way out of the Great Hall. She led them out onto the staircase, earning several giddy laughs as the stairs around them began to shift. "Now, you'll see that the stairs move so pay close attention whenever you're here!"

By the time that they arrived at Ravenclaw Tower, Evelyn had grown tired of the first years. Despite being more than grateful to have been made a Prefect, the number of peculiar questions she had had to answer for them almost didn't seem worth it.

"What comes down but never goes up?"

Evelyn pointed at the bronze knocker on the door. "This is the knocker it will ask you a riddle and you have to answer it to gain access."

"Does anyone know the answer?" Daniel turned to face the small group of first years, eyeing each of them up and down one by one. When the only response that he received was a group of blank stares, he was all too happy to share the answer. "Well of course it's rain." He flashed them a toothy grin as the door flung open.

"Everybody, welcome home."

As much as Evelyn had wished the evening would only get better from there, she was very much mistaken. Almost instantly after she had stepped into the common room, she felt an all too familiar hand sweep past her chest. "Daniel!" She shouted, forgetting that there were first years present. She turned her attention back to them momentarily, "right, so you should all make your way to your dormitory now and get some rest."

Once the first years had left the common room, Evelyn let the rage from within her unleash. "Daniel if you dare touch me again I will hex you badly that Madame Trickle won't even be able to fix you!" She pulled her wand from her pocket, pressing it into his abdomen. "And let's not forget that one of us actually has the intelligence of a Ravenclaw and not just the curiosity." She twisted her wand before pulling it away. "Now, if I hear complaints from any girl at Hogwarts about you, I will hunt you down and hex you and that is a promise."

"It was just a joke," Daniel laughed it off, surprised at Evelyn's serious tone.

"Do you see anybody laughing?" She looked around at the empty common room.

Daniel's eyes followed the same pattern as Evelyn's around the bronze and blue common room, "well no, but-

"Exactly!"

With that, Evelyn made her way into the girls' dormitory. "If Daniel bothers any of you this year, let me know and I will crush him like the bug he is." She threw herself on her bed with a sigh.

"Does someone need a kitten cuddle?" Lily asked in a singsong voice.

"Wha-?" But before Evelyn could even question what Lily was doing, she felt the paws of Midnight digging into her shoulder. "He's finally awake!" She exclaimed as he began to dig his paws deeper into her shoulder in a rhythmic manner.

"I think he appreciated the custard tart I brought back for him, I know a custard tart would wake me up." Lily looked as though she had zoned out again at the thought of another custard tart.

"Are cats even allowed them?" Sara sat up from her bed, glancing over at Lily and then Evelyn who shrugged her one free shoulder. "Anyway, we should all get to sleep if we're going to survive tomorrow."

Sara was right, the first day of OWL year was bound to be a complex one. Evelyn had many things about the terrors of OWL year but she hoped it was all just a scary story, she didn't want another bad year, it could just possibly be the thing to tip her over the edge.

After Evelyn had been able to pry Midnight off of her shoulder, she changed into her blue nightdress and jumped into bed. She leant over the side of her bed and grabbed the spine of her favourite potions textbook, much to the dismay of her friends.

"Evelyn! You do not need to read up on potions we haven't even learnt how to make yet!" Lily exclaimed as soon as she saw the dreaded textbook in Evelyn's hands.

"We haven't studied them yet?" She thought back to the summer holidays in which she had spent far more time than her grandmother would have liked practising fifth-year potions. "I think you mean you haven't studied them yet." She smiled devilishly at Lily before cracking open her textbook.

Evelyn was by no means falling behind in potions, but she wanted to be quite the opposite. She wanted to be the star pupil, or at least as close to the star pupil that she could be considering the golden boy Tom Riddle was in her class.

She spent half an hour reading up on how to correctly brew a Strengthening Solution before her eyelids became so heavy she knew she would be unable to even finish another page. "Good night!" She called out to her friends after she slid her textbook back into her trunk.

"Night Lily, night Evelyn."

"Goodnight girls and Midnight."

And with that, the lights went out and Evelyn fell into a bumpy sleep.

Evelyn found herself alone. Alone and in a dark corner of a room. With very little light, she was relying heavily on her other senses, taking a deep breath in she smelt

something familiar, but what she couldn't quite put her finger on. As she took a step forward, the smell didn't change. Every step felt exactly the same, her surroundings felt as though they were not changing but she was certain that she was moving.

It felt as though Evelyn was being puppeteered, she had no control of her limbs, only her mind was her own. As though a piece of invisible string was pulling her forward, she moved further into whichever room she was in, deeper and deeper until she reached a door. It was unlike any door Evelyn recognised, it looked out of place for Hogwarts, out of place for her old home and even out of place for her seaside cabin.

Evelyn's hand reached out towards the door, her fingers tracing the raised wooden outline that surrounded the brassy knocker. Her fingers grasped the metal knocker, causing her to flinch as a shiver ran down her spine, and she pushed open the door. "Hello." She finally spoke, her voice coming out raspy and hoarse as though she had never spoken before.

"Hello?" She called out again, unsure if hearing an answer would even slightly put her mind at rest.

She took another few hesitant steps forwards but this time it felt different. Her previously loud shoes no longer clashed with the cobblestone flooring, instead, they collided with some form of liquid. Evelyn was certain it wasn't water, but other than that she was clueless about the liquid. It felt heavy, each footstep becoming harder and harder the deeper into the room she went.

Once she was in what felt like the centre of the room, she could finally see. Whatever little light shone through the window was enough for Evelyn to be able to make out where she was and when she did, she still felt none the wiser. She was in the girls' bathroom, one she rarely ever used but had stumbled across during her third year whilst wandering the castle.

Uncertainly, Evelyn crouched closer to the floor, reaching her hand out towards the liquid. With a deep breath, she submerged her hand, pulling it back in disgust almost immediately after. "It's slimy." She noted, furrowing her brows.

Evelyn wanted answers, she wasn't sure what they might be but she was certain she wanted them regardless. "What is going on?" She whispered to herself as she stood herself upright once again.

As soon as she did, Evelyn noticed the damage that surrounded her. Evelyn could not see a single bathroom stall left unharmed, each one looked as though it had been beaten with full force. Sections of the wooden stall lay around the bathroom, scattered like a tiresome jigsaw puzzle thrown in anger. "Well, at least I didn't trip on one of those."

Evelyn wondered silently around the bathroom for a few moments until she came across an anomaly; a single bathroom stall had been left untouched. Not a single

scratch on its wooden surface, but as Evelyn approached closer, it started to become clear as to why. From the side of the cubicle, a single leg protruded out, so small Evelyn could have easily missed it. A child was dead.

Evelyn knew now would be the time to leave, but she simply couldn't, she had to find out who it was, she simply couldn't resist. As she leant closer to inspect the body, she felt a warm breath on the back of her neck, somebody else was here.

Evelyn shot up from her bed, screaming. "Murder in the bathroom!"

Evelyn tapped her feet against the floor of the Great Hall in time with her heartbeat. Her nightmare last night had left her shaken, to say the least. Evelyn felt like she was drowning in the Great Hall, something that she always despised about the first day of term was how busy it was. Not a single table was empty, each one was crammed with first-year students piling their plates high with the food before them. It was usually like that, the younger students were almost afraid to miss breakfast but by the time they finished their OWLs, they rarely turned up.

Evelyn found she could rarely skip breakfast, her brain simply didn't function without it. If she didn't shovel down two buttery slices of toast, she was as useless as a music box without any sound.

"Morning!" Lily exclaimed as she made her way into the empty space beside Evelyn. "Oh, I am starving!"

"Those custard tarts didn't fill you up enough last night." She let out a nervous giggle.

"Absolutely not! I need hot food and I need it now." Lily began to help herself to everything on the table: bacon, eggs, sausages, tomatoes, toast, potatoes and a large helping of orange juice. Evelyn's eyes widened at her friend's selection, she was more than content with just her toast. "You got your Daily Prophet then," Lily looked down at the brand new copy of the Daily Prophet tucked underneath Evelyn's plate.

"Well, I have to stay informed somehow." Evelyn liked knowing things, even when she knew it didn't concern her, she found it comforting to have an idea what was happening all over the world. After she had finished her toast, Evelyn flicked through the Daily Prophet.

Cecilia Moores, Divination teacher at Beauxbatons Academy predicts 'unavoidable darkness'.

"Rubbish isn't it?" She heard Sara call from behind her.

Evelyn kept reading, "hmm..."

*Madame Moores claims to have had her visions blocked by this darkness. She has been unable to make an accurate prediction since the middle of August on the account that the darkness is preventing her from using her sight. Madame Moores seems to have hinted at this darkness emerging from an academic setting, but one she could not divulge. **Read more on page 14...***

"Well, what do you think?" Sara questioned her as she began piling up her plate with food. "I think it's a load of rubbish."

Evelyn wasn't sure what to think. She was never the firmest of believers in The Sight or Divination, she personally considered it a fairly woolly subject, but something about this felt compelling. "I don't know.."

"I think she'll be locked up within a few months, that lot always tend to go crazy. Lily, what do you think?" She looked over at Lily who had somehow managed to plough through all of her breakfast already.

Lily finished her mouthful, chewing quickly. "I think it's rubbish. Why should we believe her with no proof?"

Sara nodded along in agreement. "Exactly."

"So, you still think you're interested in Daniel or are we picking a new boy to prey on this year?" Evelyn began, changing the subject. "I heard there was a new Hufflepuff student."

Sara rolled her eyes, "I wouldn't go for a Hufflepuff." She looked around the Great Hall, her eyes eventually pausing and hovering over the Slytherin table. "You know who is looking nice? Tom Riddle."

"As if."

"Yeah, Sara that won't happen."

"Why not? We're both attractive students.." She smiled over at the Slytherin table.

"Well, he's him..." Lily motioned over to where he sat, surrounded by his gaggle of followers. "There's nothing wrong with you of course!" She added hastily, "it's just that I have never seen Tom Riddle once have any interest in a girl, he barely even talks to Slytherin girls, let alone a Ravenclaw one!"

Evelyn closed her copy of the Daily Prophet, placing her hand on top of her friends, "Sara it might be worth setting your sights a little bit closer to home, I think Slytherin is already a risky move, let alone the golden boy of Slytherin."

Sara paused for a moment, "I guess you're right, but if the opportunity presents itself, I won't hesitate!"

"I wouldn't expect it any other way!" Lily beamed at her. "Come on, let's get to Potions..."

The trio rose from their seats, "Evelyn we can see if all that revision has paid off for you or not!" Sara linked her arms to both Lily and Evelyn, smiling as she pulled them down towards the dungeons.

Professor Slughorn arrived at the Potions Classroom at the exact moment the girls did, however, he appeared to be far less energetic at this time of day. "Now, I have decided that we will be trialling a seating plan this term to see if it helps some of you improve in time for your OWLs!" He called out, suddenly filled with energy, it was as though simply being in his classroom was enough to bring him to life. "In order to also promote house unity, you will be sat beside a student from a house other than your own!" With a flick of his wrist, a fully formed seating plan appeared on the chalkboard, earning audible groans from the students.

Evelyn scanned the board for her name but before she had a chance to find herself and her partner on the board, she heard the voice of Tom Riddle behind her. "You had better not be incompetent Rivers, I don't want you slowing me down."

Evelyn was offended at such accusation, "Incompetent, me? Never Riddle."

"As we have been away for six weeks, we will be starting with a simple Wit-Sharpening potion that I expect you to have learnt and perfected last year. I expect one vial turned in to me by the end of the lesson." Slughorn sat down at his desk, picking up his copy of the Daily Prophet from his desk and beginning to flick through it slowly.

Although Evelyn had revised the new content they would be learning this year, she was all too happy to hear that she would only be tasked with concocting a Wit-Sharpening Potion, she had luckily never been able to create an incorrect batch before and she was certain today would not be the day she did. After the scramble for ingredients ended in the store cupboard, Evelyn strolled over peacefully, collecting her ingredients and storing them in her cauldron as she made her way over to her desk.

She placed her textbook on the table beside her, flicking it open to the page she needed before dropping her cauldron beside it. Taking a handful of ginger root, she added it to the potion and set it to simmer. After a short while, it turned lime green and she knew she was on the right track. She unscrewed the lid of her armadillo bile and added it all into the potion, stirring it over the heat until the combination turned a pale blue. Whilst watching the colour change, Evelyn noted it down in her textbook, she knew that any extra help she could give herself would be greatly appreciated when it came time to revise.

Taking the pestle and mortar, she placed in two scarab beetles and crushed them. Looking beside her, she saw Tom doing the same, however with much greater ease than Evelyn, who had begun to break a sweat. Wiping the sweat from her forehead with her sleeve, she found herself out of breath, something she certainly hadn't expected to be an issue this year, let alone in a Potions class as opposed to on the Quidditch pitch.

"I thought you played Quidditch," Tom muttered under his breath, just loud enough for her to hear.

"Playing Quidditch and grinding scarab beetles are not the same thing, they require the use of vastly different muscle pairs!" She wiped the beads of sweat with her sleeve, "I'll have you know-" But Tom was no longer paying her any attention, he had returned to his potion without another word.

Not wanting to fall behind him, Evelyn returned to her potion, deciding that her beetles were crushed sufficiently. After several stirs, the potion slowly became blood red, she added a final splash of ginger root and armadillo bile before giving it one last stir. Looking around the classroom, Evelyn saw that the other students seemed to be on the same step as her, with only a few straggling behind and still attempting to grind their beetles. As Evelyn poured her finished product into a phial, she saw Tom leaving the classroom after handing in a Wit Sharpening Potion that would by far be superior to her own.

Nevertheless, Evelyn was proud of her work, she hadn't been first, but with Tom Riddle in her class, that was unlikely. "Wonderful job Miss Rivers! I heard you had been working on your Potions over the summer, is that correct?" He examined her potion, lifting it up to the light.

"Yes Professor, I hope to continue on with NEWT level Potions and I thought it would be beneficial to start revising as early as possible."

"That is exactly what I hoped to hear!" He grinned at her, putting her potion into his top drawer. "I do hope to see you in my Potions class next year, mind you, it does become rather challenging if I say so myself. Anyway, off you go!"

Evelyn quickly returned to her table, placing her used equipment inside her cauldron and sliding it under her desk. Spotting that Lily and Sara hadn't yet finished their potions, Evelyn made her way out of the dungeons and into the courtyard, smiling as she felt the sun beaming down on her. She opened up her textbook to the Wit Sharpening Potion page and began adding to her notes again, her hands drawing small intricate flowers as they led with a mind of their own.

"Vandalism doesn't seem like your thing Miss Rivers. I thought that was a crime..."

"Well you hardly know me, Riddle," she mimicked his tone.

"That," he looked her up and down, "is correct." He peered over at the splotches of black ink in the margins of her book, furrowing his brows. "Now, why are you vandalising your textbook?"

Evelyn shut her book, sliding it into her robe pocket, "well, firstly I wouldn't call it vandalism, the book belongs to me, and secondly, I am making notes."

"Interesting," Tom said.

"What is?"

"Well," he began, "I would personally find it rather embarrassing to require extra notes simply to pass my OWL exams, but I guess some Ravenclaws simply aren't as intelligent as legend has it."

"Excuse me!" She scoffed, standing up so she was directly in front of him. "I'll have you know I am very intelligent, possibly even the best witch in our year!" She wasn't entirely sure how true that was, but it didn't matter to her.

"Possibly, but I am certainly the best student in our year." With that, he simply left. He gave Evelyn no chance to respond before he turned hot on his heel and made his way out of the courtyard.

"Evelyn! What was that all about?" She heard the familiar voice of Sara giggling behind her. "Tell me everything!" She squeezed her best friends arm.

"He was simply informing me that he is smarter than me as if I wasn't already aware of that fact." She rolled her eyes.

Sara batted her eyelashes, fixing her hair with one hand and applying a fresh coat of lipstick with the other. "Do you think he noticed me when I walked into the courtyard?"

"Oh absolutely," Evelyn lied to her friend, Tom seemed more interested in the moss growing on the walls than in Sara but she couldn't crush her best friends spirits. "Is Lily not done yet?"

"No, she dropped her first phial so she's had to redo the whole Potion! She will probably only just make it to Charms on time!"

"Speaking of, we should probably go."

Evelyn led the way out of the courtyard and the pair made their way across the castle towards the Charms Classroom. Charms had always been one of her favourite

lessons, she adored how one wand could hold such power, it could cause destruction or peace, depending on how the user chose and that was simply incredible.

By the time the duo arrived outside the classroom, Lily was waiting for them. "How are you done so quickly? I thought you would take ages!"

"I stole some of my partners, there was no way I would get it done in time and I didn't exactly fancy detention!"

"Well, it's good your here because I want to go find Tom so you can keep Evelyn company in Charms," Sara gave the pair a quick smile before she darted out of the corridor.

Lily and Evelyn exchanged a confused look. "I guess it will just be us two then."

They took their usual seats, pulled out their parchment and quills and waited in silence. Once all the students had done the same, Professor Blackburn stored into the classroom with far more excitement than Professor Slughorn had displayed.

"As all of you know, you will be taking your Charms OWL this year, there will be one written part and one part practical, we will start today with some very simple revision questions to prepare you." He smiled at the class, waving his wand over the pile of parchment causing it to float around the room, one piece placing itself in front of each student.

Evelyn knew this work would be a breeze, something about Charms came so naturally to her. She pulled out her quill from her bag and dipped it into the pot of glistening ink, slowly beginning to write and form answers in her mind to each question. After gathering answers in her mind, she transferred them onto the parchment with ease. Within half an hour, Evelyn was done. She sat back and watched as the other students worked away on their questions, each one scribbling away hurriedly on their parchment.

After her simple Charms lesson, Evelyn was feeling refreshed. She breezed through the rest of her lessons with ease and feeling content as she only received one piece of homework all day. Once all of her friends had finished their lessons, they met up outside the library. "How much homework have you two got?"

Lily smiled, "only one piece!"

"Two, and detention for missing Charms!" Sara dropped her shoulders with a sigh. "It's not fair, finding Tom was academic, it probably taught me as much as I would have learnt in Charms anyway!"

"And what did you learn?"

"Well, I don't think I'm going to get anywhere with Tom Riddle this year!" It was the answer Evelyn had expected, but nevertheless she didn't enjoy seeing Sara look so let down. "He wouldn't even look at me when I sat next to him!"

"Maybe next year?" Lily suggested, squeezing her friend's hand lightly.

"Maybe not, I don't think I'll ever be able to even hold a conversation with him, he is utterly impossible and I can't stand it!"

Evelyn sighed deeply, "I know exactly what you mean Sara, even talking to him for a few minutes felt like someone was sucking the life out of me, it was horrific!" The trio strolled into the library, taking their usual seats without a word and began to lose themselves in their work.

That night, Evelyn's sleep was uninterrupted. From the moment her head hit the pillow until the moment the sun shone in through the dormitory window, Evelyn was in a deep sleep.

"Breakfast time!" Lily exclaimed from her the edge of her bed, somehow already in her robes and ready for the day ahead. She far too loudly for Evelyn's liking, earning a loud grunt from both her and Sara. "You coming?"

Evelyn took a deep breath in, "give me two minutes. I don't think Sara is up to it this morning." She gestured over to Sara's bed which appeared as though had been inhabited by not only her but also Lily's cat.

"I hate your cat," Sara muttered into her pillow, but nevertheless one of her hands remained resting on Midnight's snoozing body.

Evelyn quickly slid into her robes, pocketed her wand and linked arms with Lily as they made their way down to the Great Hall. The duo collected their usual breakfast and took their usual seats. As Evelyn leant forwards to take a bite of her toast, she saw her usual copy of the Daily Prophet drop in front on her. "Bloody owls, my Daily Prophet is covered in butter!"

She wiped off her copy with a napkin and a growl, shaking it in an attempt to dry it off. As she shook it, a small sealed envelope went flying towards Lily. "Sorry! I didn't know that was in there!" Lily shook her head, handing Evelyn back the letter as she returned to her food.

She picked up the envelope and inspected it, Evelyn only ever got post from home but as she turned the letter around, she spotted the Hogwarts crest sealing it.

Her fingers slid under the seal, popping it off and pulling the letter out from inside its envelope.

Dear Miss Rivers,

It has come to my attention that you are already exceeding expectations in all academic aspects, an obvious favourite being Charms judging by your test results from last year. It would bring me great pleasure to have you attend the first of hopefully many Slug Club dinners. During these gatherings, we will simply talk and eat with other students of similar interest to me as you.

If you wish to attend, they shall be held fortnightly, the first meeting will be starting on the third Sunday of November at 6:00 in my office. I very much hope to see you there.

-Horace Slughorn.

Evelyn's eyebrows furrowed again in confusion as she read the letter. Her eyes glanced across the room at the other students in the hall, scanning to see if anyone else had seemingly received the same letter but there was barely anyone in the Great Hall other than first years. She couldn't see another Ravenclaw with the letter, any Gryffindor, or any Hufflepuff.

Turning to look behind her at the Slytherin table, she spotted one of the few people she would have hoped would not be attending fingering the very same letter. Upon looking at Tom, she could tell that he too was scanning the room for others with the same letter and had finally stopped searching when he saw Evelyn looking him dead in the eyes, holding the same letter he had in front of him. Neither Evelyn nor Tom looked away, instead, they seemed to be investigating each other, running their eyes across their whole body a few times before looking away.

After Evelyn looked away, she could tell that Tom had not yet done the same. With an uncomfortable feeling in her body, Evelyn pocketed the letter and headed towards her next lesson.

A thin stream of light shone through the arched window, illuminating the whole common room. Evelyn sat by the window with her book, glancing out at the morning sunrise. The sunrise wasn't grey, it was a soothing lavender, a twinkling amber; the colours merged forming pinks and peaches.

"Morning," Lily said with a yawn.

"Ready for Quidditch trials today?" Evelyn asked.

With that Lily shot up from the sofa with a grin. "Oh, I can't wait! It's always so much fun!"

"I don't know exactly how fun it will be this year, we've never had Aiden as a Captain before and you know how seriously he takes his Quidditch!"

"He takes it just as seriously as it should be taken!" Lily moved from the sofa over the notice board beside the fireplace, "Quidditch is important!"

"Go on then, who signed up for trials..." Evelyn wanted to know who her competition would be so she knew if she could beat them easily, or if it would require a little bit more effort than she usually put into her matches.

"Well, there isn't many of us," Evelyn had expected this, Ravenclaw wasn't particularly notorious for its Quidditch team, in fact, there was rarely an opportunity in which they would win a match that wasn't against Hufflepuff. "There's me, you, Daniel, Eloise, Markus, Jolie, Aiden, Estella, Bradley, Roger and Mary-Grace."

"So pretty much everyone will be making the team then..." She wasn't too sure how she liked that, as much as Evelyn appreciated that the trials would be easier than usual, she didn't want to feel as though she hadn't earned her position.

"Let's go to breakfast now so we can get to the trials on time." Lily smiled, pocketing the signup sheet and making her way out of the common room, Evelyn following closely behind.

Sliding onto their usual table, the two girls joined Sara who was already sat, happily munching on her own breakfast. "Will you watch the tryouts, Sara?" Evelyn asked as she piled up her plate.

"Oh, well I wasn't sure that was something you two would want..." She trailed off, "I sort of made other plans for this morning,"

"Oh," Lily tried her best to hide her disappointment. "It's fine..."

Evelyn stared down at her plate, not wanting to make the situation any more uncomfortable than it already felt. She gently cut a small slice of her tower of bacon and syrup pancakes and devoured it with little elegance. The bacon broke over her tongue, perfectly crisp, perfectly salty. The flavour was like a bomb in her mouth, exploding in all the right ways. It was the way she started trial and match days, a sort of edible party to prepare herself for the exercise. When she was finished, she washed it all down with a glass of water.

Lily and Evelyn received one last reassuring look from Sara and made their way to the pitch. Every step they took down the path causing the anxiety to grow inside them, gnawing away at their stomachs. Once they had their broomsticks firmly in their hands, all the worries in the world slowly drifted away. Nothing else mattered when they were flying, all they had to do was win.

Evelyn adored her broomstick before her parents had passed they had bought her the newest Comet 220. She had used it for every Quidditch match since and even when she didn't win, she still felt victorious. When she stepped onto the pitch, she felt as

though every fibre of her being relaxed, despite the adrenaline coursing through her veins, she felt calm.

Evelyn and Lily weren't alone for long, within a few seconds of their arrival, a gaggle of Ravenclaw students filed onto the pitch, lead by Aiden. The duo joined behind the rest of the students ensuring they were still stood somewhere where Aiden would be able to see them.

"Everyone shut up!" He bellowed across the pitch. "Now, I don't let just anybody onto this team so you had better show me your absolute best of I will hex so you far you will never fly your broom again."

Lily chuckled quietly, "Merlin, are we sure he isn't in Slytherin?"

"You will all be warming up by yourselves, do whatever gets you ready to play and then I want to see 110% effort from all of you!" He looked them all up and down before mounting his broom and zooming off around the pitch.

Whilst the other students had gone for simple stretches, Evelyn and Lily preferred to opt for a little bit of friendly competition to warm themselves up. Every year at Quidditch trials they would race around the pitch with the prize of knowing they were faster than their opponent.

"Ready to lose again?" Lily teased, clambering onto her broom and readying herself to race.

"I'll be hotter on your tail than last year, I can promise you that." Evelyn knew she likely wouldn't beat Lily, but that didn't stop her from trying. Despite being much better at flying than she was in previous years, Lily was still much better; she had flying in her genes.

"Ready," called Evelyn, tucking a final strand of hair behind her ear. "Steady. Go"

And with that, they were off. Evelyn took an early lead, hovering a few feet ahead of Lily. Just as Evelyn began to get cocky, turning around to see Lily with a taunting smile plastered on her face, Lily began picking up speed. Lily came flying up beside her on the inside as though her body was on fast forward.

By the time they were on the home straight, a crowd of students had gathered beneath them, watching the race intently in various stretching positions. With just seconds left in their race, Lily pulled ahead of Evelyn with a smile. As she passed her, Evelyn could hear her sharp, restricted breaths, each one getting shorter as shorter. As their broomsticks ground to a halt and their feet touched down firmly on the ground, it was clear that Lily had won.

"You've definitely gotten faster," Lily smiled at Evelyn, still panting from the race, "but I still won!"

"Well deserved Lily." There was always next year.

"Right, everyone pay attention to me now!" Aiden shouted as he swooped back down to the ground, "We will play a half-pitch game, everyone will play the position they are trying out for unless we need extras for any reason. Chasers, it's every man for themselves..."

Evelyn slid on her gloves and took to the skies. She positioned herself on her broom, watching the Quaffle in Aiden's arms, watching and waiting for it to be released. As soon as the Quaffle was released, she darted forward, flying across the pitch in an instant, her fingers only just missing out on it as it dropped into Jolie's hand.

She cursed under her breath as she turned, tailing Jolie on her way up to the goalposts. As soon as she was hovering beside Jolie, she reached out, grasping the Quaffle with one hand and pushing her broom away with the other. Once Evelyn had possession, she sped up, making her way to the goal post and launching the Quaffle straight through the goal post.

With a cheer, she made her way back to her starting position and prepared for another round. After several rounds, Aiden blew his whistle and the players all made their way down to the grounds of the pitch.

"Right, gather around everybody!" He beckoned them forward with his hands, "So I have finalised the team. Our Keeper will be Lily, Estella and Daniel are our two Beaters, Evelyn, Marcus and I will be the Chasers and Eloise, it is your job to find the Snitch." He held up the small Snitch in his hand. "Practice times will be posted on the noticeboard, fail to attend practice without valid reason and you will be replaced. I will not let our team come anything below second place this year!"

"As if..." Evelyn heard Daniel mutter from behind her.

"Well, thank you to everybody for coming, now go!" He took off down the pitch to the exit, the students all following behind him slowly.

Evelyn turned to her friend, "what do you think?"

"Well..." Lily paused, frowning her brow, "it is definitely an improvement from last year but I can't say by too much.

"Yeah, I would say we have a good lineup but certainly not Slytherin good yet!"

"You never know, we might do better this year, this could be the year our luck changes"

By mid-November, a thin layer of snow coated the cobbled pathway that led to the Quidditch field. Students began to lose their initial excitement of being back at school

and the dropping temperatures meant that Quidditch practise had been exceptionally challenging.

Hogwarts had only been in session for a month and yet somehow Slytherin was already powering ahead with house points, setting them up for a clear win at the end of the school year. Slytherins weren't necessarily the best students, however, the teachers adored them or were too scared to ever remove house points from them; either way, no other house stood a chance against them.

Despite her OWLS being in May, the upcoming mock assessments had Evelyn revising every free hour of the day. Between revision and Quidditch, she barely had any time to herself and had already begun to feel worn out. Due to all the stress of revision and her extracurriculars, Evelyn had forgotten to reply to Professor Slughorn's peculiar invitation to join him and other students for dinner.

After her final lesson of the day, Evelyn headed to the Owlery, careful not to slip on the icy paths on the castle grounds. She pulled out a piece of plain parchment, leaning it against the wall and beginning to write.

Dear Professor Slughorn,

Apologies for the delayed response, I have been rather busy with Quidditch practise and revision for my upcoming OWL exams. However, I am owling to you to let you know that I will be able to attend the first Slug Club meeting. As I have a prior commitment to Quidditch practice, I may appear a few minutes late to the meeting.

Thank you for the opportunity,

*Evelyn
Ravenclaw Prefect.*

M.

Rivers

Evelyn sealed the envelope with a cobalt blue wax seal and handed it to the closest owl to her. Despite Professor Slughorn being inside the castle, she felt it more professional to reply via a letter. Plus, Evelyn simply adored spending time in the Owlery, the atmosphere brought her calm amongst the most chaotic of days. After her parents had died, she found herself going to the Owlery far more often, she had no more letters to post but being around the animals made her feel safe. Nobody could hurt her when she was here.

Despite the frosty chill in the air, the upcoming Quidditch game against Hufflepuff was still continuing as planned. Only once Evelyn stood in the wings of the pitch did she feel as though the game was truly happening, despite the team's many practice matches, it hadn't felt real until she mounted her broom and prepared to push off.

Aiden stood at the front of the team, "right!" His voice echoed against the wooden walls of the wings. "We have to win this one! We cannot, and I mean cannot lose against

Hufflepuff. Anybody that doesn't play their best will answer to me, and especially if we don't win, I will break you."

He took a look at the team before him who seemed unfazed by his words. "This is an easy win, play like it!"

Without another word, they flew out onto the pitch in formation and did the traditional loop before taking to their positions. As soon as Evelyn was in position, butterflies danced around inside of her, twisting and turning in unsettling movements.

When Madame Oakley flew onto the pitch, Evelyn knew the game was about to begin. "Right, now! I want a clean and safe game- no pushing, hitting, spitting or intentionally wounding the opposition. And with that- let's begin!" She threw the Quaffle up into the air and quickly darted out of the way as the two central Chasers darted forwards towards it- Jolie successfully swooping down and picking it up.

Jolie flew forwards, signalling for Evelyn to move to the right before launching the Quaffle across the pitch to her. Once Evelyn had the Quaffle, her nerves vanished almost instantly, she weaved between the one Hufflepuff Chaser left defending the goalposts and threw the Quaffle into the central goal.

"Ten points to Ravenclaw!"

When the game reset, Evelyn was faster getting the Quaffle, securing it in her arms before the other team even got close. She passed it over to Aiden who dropped it to Jolie who then carried it all the way to the goal.

Despite Hufflepuff putting in a good effort, their Keeper was unable to save a single one of their goals. Evelyn lined up for another shot but just as she launched the Quaffle she heard the announcement "Eloise had caught the golden snitch! Ravenclaw win the game!"

After the game, the Ravenclaw common room was a mess. Students lingered on every surface, drinking stolen butterbeer in celebration of their victory. Despite most students having no interest in the sport, they were interested in the after-party and the stolen alcohol that came with it. Music blasted across the room, muting the sounds of celebratory cheers coming from the Quidditch team. After staying what Evelyn seemed a socially acceptable amount of time, she quickly made her escape out of the common room and towards the library.

"Where are you off to?" She heard Jolie call from behind her.

Evelyn froze like a deer caught in the headlights. "Jolie, you scared me! I'm just heading to the library, far too loud in there for me." She pointed to the common room where she could still hear the music blasting.

"I understand, it's quite overwhelming for me in there too. Playing today though, it gave me such a thrill." Jolie beamed with confidence, she hadn't played the best but she had certainly improved vastly since the tryouts.

"It's like that, worse when you lose but it still makes you feel all warm inside." Evelyn fondly recalled her first-ever match on the Ravenclaw Quidditch team, she may have lost horribly but the feeling she got afterward was worth it. "You played really well today, anyone would think you'd been playing for years not months."

Her cheeks flushed a light shade of pink at the compliment, his hands finding their way to his face in an attempt to cover it. "Thank you, I can't wait for the next match." With that, she swung open the common room door and headed back inside into the chaos.

By the time the clock struck nine, the library almost empty. Taking up her usual seat, she lit the lanterns beside her and began to work. Her eyes flicked between textbooks and notebooks for what felt like hours until she had written so much her hand ached. When she stopped, the library was already dark, the lanterns failing to illuminate the room sufficiently for Evelyn to see where she was going. With a quick wave of her wand, the tip of it illuminated, sending out light into the library. She packed her books away briskly and made her way out of the library.

"Good evening Evelyn," Her heart jumped out of her chest for the second time tonight as she spun around to see Tom Riddle stood behind her. "What are you doing here so late?"

"I could ask you the same thing..."

"Well I was simply studying," he gestured to the collection of textbooks in his arms.

"I thought you didn't need to study, what with you being the smartest student in our year," she threw his words back at him.

His lips curled upwards, "Evelyn, how kind of you to compliment me in such way, I know as a Ravenclaw it must be difficult to admit to the fact you are less academically able than me."

Evelyn growled. "That isn't what I meant and you know it!"

"You ought to be getting back to your common room, it's not safe to be out alone this late at night."

"Hogwarts, not safe?" It was a preposterous suggestion, Evelyn had never felt safer than when she was on the grounds of Hogwarts. "You must be joking Tom. Hogwarts is the safest place in the north."

"I'm sure it is, but that doesn't mean bad things couldn't happen. Be safe Evelyn." He clutched a book to his chest, turning and walking away.

On the night of Evelyn's first Slug Club meeting, she was unusually on edge. Something felt off but what, she couldn't quite tell. After her lessons had finished for the day, she had collapsed on her bed and simply pet Midnight, something she had found herself doing far more since the start of October, it helped her manage her anxieties and stay above water.

"I thought you would be at Quidditch practise..." Sara looked at Evelyn with confusion as she entered their dormitory.

"It got cancelled," she looked out of her window at the snow-covered grounds with a sigh, she would far rather be playing Quidditch than attending this meeting.

"What about your Slug Club?"

"It's in half an hour, I might not go I don't think I feel very well."

Sara darted over towards her, lifting Midnight off of her body and putting him on the floor. "Maybe it was that demon cat! Anyway, you have to go, I could help you get ready, it would be far more interesting than writing up an essay on trolls!"

Evelyn sighed deeply, "go on then, but nothing over the top." She sat up, watching as Sara dove straight into her trunk searching for the perfect combination. After throwing almost its entire content on the floor, she finally settled on a grey knitted dress, that Evelyn hadn't worn in months, with a small necklace. At the end of the silver chain sat a small eagle, with a sapphire gemstone set where the eyes would be.

After a short while, Evelyn was changed and ready to go. "Wonderful. Go and have fun for me! Pray that I survive this essay on trolls because I very well might not!" Sara laughed lightly, looking down at the blank piece of parchment before her.

"Will do!"

Evelyn began making her way towards the dungeons at a leisurely pace, almost knowing that she would be one of the very first to arrive. Her footsteps echoed across the hallway, alerting everyone to her presence, something she wasn't particularly sure she wished to happen. As she made her way closer to Professor Slughorn's Office, she walked on her tiptoes to remain as quiet as possible, she would feel too uncomfortable being the last one and being alone with her Professor.

Once Evelyn was just outside the office, she spotted Tom Riddle heading towards her, "Miss Rivers," he nodded his head at her.

"Tom. How were your books?" She asked him.

"Rather curious, you would be surprised how much new information you can find out about Hogwarts Castle, especially considering we reside in it for the majority of our year. It's rather curious how much some students wouldn't know."

Evelyn was intrigued, "like what?"

"Well," he took a step closer to her, "if a boy were to attempt to enter the girls' dormitories or vice versa, the stairway would turn into a slide."

"I would say that is a rather wonderful solution, what else?"

"Muggle technologies cannot function inside the castle, quite how it should be I suppose, why would we need muggle technologies when we have these?" He brandished his wand.

"I suppose you are correct, we can do an awful lot with our wands that muggles could never dream of doing." It was honestly quite incredible how much Evelyn had been able to learn to do with her wand. Even growing up in a wizarding household, she found it breathtaking whenever she saw her parents utilising a new piece of magic.

Before Evelyn had the chance to press him any further, Professor Slughorn appeared at the door. "Tom, Evelyn!" He smiled graciously at them, "You're a little bit early but please do come in, we're just getting set up." He beckoned for them to follow in behind him. "Take a seat you two, I'll be back shortly."

With slight discomfort, the two took a seat at the round table in the centre, sitting as far away from each other as humanly possible. While Evelyn waited for Professor Slughorn to return, she began surveying the room. Dainty crockery was arranged on the table, set up for a three-course meal, something that Evelyn had never had before. Covering the rest of the white tablecloth were small black and gold sequins, a muggle invention that Evelyn adored. When Evelyn looked up again from the table, she was joined by a collection of fifth and sixth-year students, as well as Professor Slughorn. Once everyone was seated, two house-elves emerged holding golden trays on which goblets filled with punch sat. Circling the table, they dropped a goblet beside each student before making their way out of the office through the side entrance.

After a few awkward moments of silence, Professor Slughorn took a swig of his punch and spoke. "Evelyn, do tell me about your parents, I heard they were wonderful Aurors!"

"Well Professor," she took a sip of her punch, "they worked as Aurors for around fifty years between them, I would say they know the Ministry of Magic better than anyone, maybe even the Minister himself!" Slughorn chuckled light as he finished off his drink. "They were working to track down Grindlewald himself before they passed away, well my Father was, my mother began to get awfully interested in Helga Hufflepuffs lineage, she even went as far as to tell me she thought she had a living relative still!"

"Well!" Professor Slughorn raised his eyebrows, "wouldn't that be incredible if it were true! If there were a living relative, they would help us track down Helga Hufflepuff's cup, now nobody has seen that in several decades!"

"Now that would be incredible!"

"Now, let's eat." He clapped his hands, summoning the house-elves back to deliver plates of steaming food.

Everyone quickly tucked into the food, Evelyn keeping food in her mouth at all times, fearing that Professor Slughorn would return to question her next, there was very little of interest she would be able to say.

Luckily, he struck somewhere else, questioning Mary, a sixth-year Gryffindor who sat a few seats across from Evelyn. "I heard your father recently invested in some rather peculiar artefacts from Borgin and Burkes." He paused, waiting for Mary to divulge information to him.

"Yes sir that is correct, he has recently taken some interest into historical artefacts and once he was in Borgin and Burkes, he was very quickly persuaded to purchase some goods," Mary said as she pushed her inky black hair behind her ear.

"What particular things has he found?" Slughorn leant forwards, obviously intrigued in what she was saying.

"He recently collected some seeds for a silver-leaved tree that he hopes to plant in our garden and sometime in the near future, he hopes to acquire a time turner. It has always been his dream to have one in his possessions"

"How very interesting," He sighed, "Perhaps Arnold's father could assist him in finding one."

"Oh yes! My Father has heard there is a large collection of time-turners at the Ministry of Magic, apparently, they keep them under tight security. Evelyn, perhaps your parents told you something about this?"

Evelyn sighed at the thought of returning to the conversation, she felt drained, there were far too many people in one enclosed space for her liking. "Well, just like your father said, my Father was also aware that they were somewhere in the Ministry, he thought they may be in the Department of Mysteries but he never told me why."

Evelyn opened her mouth to speak again but as she did, she felt a sharp piercing pain in her skull, as though someone was pushing a pin through her ears.

"Fascinating, truly fascinating! Now, would everyone like dessert?"

"Professor, my deepest apologies but I was wondering if I would be able to be excused, I seem to be coming down with a headache." She pressed her hand against her head, hoping it might bring her some relief.

"Of course! Do look after yourself!" He smiles gleefully at her before returning to question another student.

Almost instantly once she escaped the office, Evelyn suddenly took on a pale look, as if she'd been painted with white-wash - even her lips were barely there. Then with one step backwards she crumpled like a puppet suddenly released of their strings.

"Evelyn?"

Her eyes fluttered open, scanning the room as soon as she could see clearly; she was still in the dungeons and stood towering over her was none other than Tom Riddle. "W-what happened?" She tried to sit up but her attempt was futile.

"I heard a thud after you left so I thought I would investigate, you're lucky I did or who knows what would have happened to you."

Evelyn thought she ought to thank him, while she was sure nothing bad could have happened to her, she still felt as though she owed him something. "Well, thank you, Tom."

"You really ought to go to the Hospital Wing..." He stared at her whitewashed face, "Madame Trundle could surely do something to make you feel better."

"I'll be fine," but as she tried to sit again, her head spun.

"At least let me walk you to your common room,"

Evelyn closed her eyes, finally finding enough strength within her to lean herself against the dungeon wall. "I can walk myself."

Tom looked her up and down, "I do rather doubt that." Evelyn hated to admit that he was likely right, she could barely see one foot in front of her, making her way up the Ravenclaw Tower would be almost impossible alone.

Niether Evelyn nor Tom said another word for several uncomfortable minutes. By the time Evelyn finally spoke again, she had managed to lift herself to her feet, "Come on then," she glanced blankly at him before making her way leisurely out of the dungeons. Although she could still not yet see properly, her vision was clear enough to manouvre her way around any obstacles she might stumble upon on her journey up to the Ravenclaw Common Room.

"So," Tom took a deep breath, "how did you enjoy yourself tonight?"

"I can't say it was something I look forward to doing again, too many people." She thought about how trapped she had felt on the circular table, students sat all around her, houseelves rushing in and out of the Office, it was certainly not an event she could say she would recommend.

"I have to agree with you there,"

"I don't know why Professor Slughorn invited so many of us, and such a peculiar combination of students too."

Tom stopped in his tracks. "Didn't you realise it?"

"Realise what?" She turned to face him with a furrowed brow.

"Everyone there had something he considered interesting about them, didn't you hear him spending half the night asking about hidden artefacts or famous relatives?" Tom found it almost impossible that a Ravenclaw had been unable to identify that fact.

Evelyn thought about the students she had seen around the table, "Mary?"

"Her father is an investor, did you not hear her talking about those silver leafed tree seeds?"

"Arnold?"

Tom sighed, "his parents work at the Ministry."

"Amoria?"

"Well her Mother plays Quidditch for England."

Evelyn looked him up and down, "well what about you then?"

"I suppose it could have been a number of things, my dashing good looks, my academic abilities, my sheer charm..."

She rolled her eyes, "of course." She wasn't sure if she was indulging in his little fantasy or if Slughorn may very well have selected him for those reasons.

By the time the pair arrived just outside the Ravenclaw Tower, Evelyn felt far better than when she had left the dungeons. Her vision had cleared up again and her head no longer felt as though it was being beaten.

"When you need me, you throw me away. But when you're done with me, you bring me back. What am I?"

Evelyn turned to see the knocker speaking, she thought deeply for a moment before the answer came to her, "It's an anchor." As soon as she answered, the door opened slightly, allowing her to enter the Common Room.

"Peculiar..."

She turned to see Tom still stood behind her, "pardon?"

"You simply answer a riddle and the knocker lets you in, surely that means that anyone could enter the Common Room, not solely Ravenclaws."

"Well I suppose you would be correct," Evelyn had never truly thought about that fact, "but why would anyone want to enter a Common Room that wasn't their own?"

Tom smiled. "I'm sure people would have their reasons. Anyway, you ought to get to sleep, I'll see you around, Evelyn."

Evelyn gave him a small smile and made her way up the to the Ravenclaw Common Room. As soon as she entered, she was approached by Lily, "Evelyn!" She called out with a smile, squeezing her best friend with a smile. "How was it?"

Evelyn considered telling them about her fainting, she truly did, but she couldn't find the words. She knew it would just worry them, especially Lily, and she didn't want that for her friends. "It was okay."

Sara sighed in the corner, "just okay? We need details!"

Evelyn glanced over at Sara who was now stroking Midnight peacefully, "well, we all ate dinner and dessert and spoke about our families."

"Who was there?"

"Me, Arnold, Amoria, Mary, Tom..." She trailed off as she took a seat on the end of her bed.

"Did you find Tom simply as impossible as I did?" Sara asked, clearly still frustrated at her failed attempts to communicate with Tom Riddle.

Evelyn found the lie slipping off her tongue before she had even noticed, "absolutely, he's a nightmare." But she knew that wasn't true, she had found it difficult to interact with Tom, but no harder than talking to anyone she barely knew. Evelyn wasn't a fan of how easy lying had come to her, especially to her best friends.

"I haven't even spoken to him in all my years here but by the sound of what you two are saying, I am very glad I haven't!" Lily moved over to Sara's bed, picking up Midnight in her arms as though he were a baby.

"Do you know when the next meeting will be?"

Evelyn had almost forgotten that there would be another one. "The letter said they would be fortnightly but I don't know if I really want to go to another one."

"Oh Evelyn you have to! It's such a great opportunity, you can use it to make connections and it's always useful to be well connected! I wish I had been invited!" She threw herself down on her bed after dropping Midnight carefully onto the floor.

"Maybe next time you will be!" Evelyn doubted this, Lily wasn't exactly the most well connected individual, but she wasn't about to break her best friends' spirits. The trio went to sleep without another word, Evelyn not even bothering to change out of her knitted dress before she snuggled up under her covers.

Although Evelyn hadn't planned on attending the next meeting, by the time it had ended she was certainly glad she had. Professor Slughorn had booked the Great Hall to host a Slug Club Christmas Party and as much as parties were not something Evelyn enjoyed all too much, Christmas was. She couldn't wait to see how beautiful the Great Hall would look after it had been decorated, but as she stared up at her ceiling, she realised "I can't go to a party without a dress,"

Evelyn was filled with excitement once she spotted the other fifth-years gathered in the courtyard, ready for their trip to Hogsmeade. As soon as Evelyn entered the crowds, she felt the crisp winter's air nipping at her nose, turning it a light crimson.

Evelyn's eyes scanned over the crowds in search of Lily and Sara, "Evelyn," she spotted Tom Riddle stood across from her, wrapped tightly in a winter's coat.

"Tom, anything, in particular, you're hoping to find in Hogsmeade?"

He looked her up and down, "I wouldn't be opposed to some new dress robes, I suppose you'll be searching for a dress too..."

Evelyn nodded, "yes, that would be ideal!"

As soon as he spotted Lily and Sara heading in her direction, Tom disappeared into the crowd once more, out of Evelyn's view. "I can't wait for a hot chocolate!" Lily said with a smile, taking one of each of her best friends' hands.

"Me neither!"

"A hot chocolate sounds perfect right about now," Evelyn knew a hot chocolate would be enough to warm her up and fuel her for the day of shopping ahead.

After a short journey, the students all arrived at Hogsmeade, disbanding as soon as they saw the familiar shops in the distance. Evelyn, Lily and Sara all made a beeline straight for Madam Puddifoots, eager for the chocolatey goodness that awaited them.

The trio took seats at their usual table, Lily heading off to order the three hot chocolates. "Mmm, they smell incredible!" She muttered airily as she made her way back to the table and placed one before each of her friends.

"What kind of dress do you want for the ball?" Sara asked as she began to drop sugar cubes into her drink.

"It has to be simple, I don't think I would look good in anything too fancy."

"Whatever it is, you'll look great. Maybe the ball will be the perfect chance to find yourself a boyfriend," Lily smiled mischievously at her.

Evelyn smiled back, taking one last swig of her hot chocolate and getting up from her seat. "I very much doubt that!"

"I want to go to Honeydukes!" Lily smiled as she thought about the rows upon rows of chocolate delights she could purchase.

Sara could feel her mouth beginning to water, "I do too!"

The thought of confectionery made Evelyn feel sick. "How about you two go and then meet me at Gladrag's Wizardwear whenever you're done?"

Lily looked seriously at her friend, "are you sure you'll be okay alone?"

"Of course I will."

Evelyn made her way out of Madam Puddifoots and into the snowy streets of Hogsmeade, once she spotted Gladrag's Wizardwear, she made her way towards it, walking carefully in the snow as to avoid any accidents. Just as Evelyn was about to step inside, she spotted Tom making his way out, "find your dress robes?"

Tom lifted the bag in his hands, "indeed I did. I assume you're here for a dress, I almost wouldn't bother, they certainly aren't up to my taste."

"I think you'll find we likely have largely different tastes, Tom." She knew that for sure, whatever he had seen and been disappointed by would surely be enough to please her, she simply wanted something plain and easy.

"Perhaps," he held open the door for her, keeping his arm on the doorway to prevent her entrance. "Evelyn, I was wondering if you might like to come with me?"

"To the party?"

"Well, yes."

Evelyn furrowed her brow, "but I am attending anyway, why should I require your invite?" Evelyn realised her mistake once the words had left her mouth.

He growled under his breath, "I think it would look good for us to attend together, two of the brightest students at Hogwarts, it would please Professor Slughorn I'm sure of it."

"Then yes, I suppose that would be agreeable." She moved his arm from the doorway, "now excuse me whilst I find something to wear."

By the time Evelyn had surveyed the whole shops offerings, she realised Tom was right. Although Evelyn had wanted something simple, she couldn't help but feel let down by how simple the dresses Gladrags had to offer.

"Evelyn! Did you find anything yet?" Lily asked as she bundled into the shop carrying far more than she should have.

"No luck," she gestured to her empty hands.

"Let me help!" Sara thrust the two bags she was holding into Evelyns hands and got to work. Within a few minutes, she had collected several dresses that Evelyn despised, "Here, try these few on!" She smiled as she took a seat beside Lily. "We'll wait here for you."

Evelyn dropped Sara's bags outside the dressing room and hesitantly made her way in, she already knew she would dislike the dresses before she tried them on but there was no harm in trying. After she had slid on each dress, she made her way out, gave her friends a spin and quickly placed it in a reject pile. She spent far too long for her liking inside the shop, trying on countless frocks that made her feel hideous.

"We'll find something else. You have to have something that we can make work back at the castle." Lily smiled but all three girls knew that was an unlikely event. Evelyn had a plan wardrobe with only one formal dress that she had likely grown out of.

"Never mind. Something will have to work." Evelyn handed the dresses off to the shop assistant with a polite smile, taking her friends hands and leading them out of the shop. Hand in hand, the girls made their way back to the castle through the snow, throwing themselves into their beds almost instantly boxed they arrived at their dorms.

Only once Evelyn got up to go to the bathroom did she spot a brown paper package beside her bed. On a small piece of stretched card, there was a note.

I can't take a girl to a dance without a dress.

Grasping hold of the string, she pulled it up, revealing a black dress folded inside it. Evelyn lifted out the dress, twisting it in her hands to inspect every inch of it. It was a long, silky dress with slit carefully position up the side. Turning it around, Evelyn saw the clear focal point of the dress; a golden snake slithering up the exposed back. Despite adoring the dress, Evelyn found herself feeling unsure about it. Tom Riddle wasn't the sort of person that gave out gifts, especially not to her.

Evelyn found the next day flying before her eyes. Classes were either cut short or went so fast that Evelyn barely felt as though she was even in them. By six o'clock that evening, there was not a single student outside of their common room, every single one was inside preparing for the night to come. Although the Christmas Party had initially started as being exclusively for members of the Slug Club, Professor Slughorn had been convinced by Headmaster Dippet to extend the invitation to all students, meaning that Sara and Lily would be able to come after all.

Preparation began for Evelyn as soon as class ended. Once she was in her common room, she snuck into the bathroom, claiming it for a calming soak. Bathing was a chance for Evelyn to clear her mind; as the water drained out of the bath, it was as though all of her problems went away with it. Evelyn soaked herself for what felt like hours until her skin began to prune and the water began to turn her nails blue. Briskly, she dried herself off and headed back into her dorm where Lily and Sara were already getting ready. She slid onto the bed with her friends and began applying her makeup.

When Evelyn was ready, her face had been painted and her dress flowed as she walked. "You look wonderful Evelyn." Lily beamed at her as she got up from the bed, her own turquoise dress hugging her hips.

"You too," Evelyn smiled at her two best friends, who sat looking more beautiful than ever on their bed. Despite wanting to stay and appreciate her friends further, Evelyn despised being tardy and she knew Tom did as well. She wasn't sure how attending the party with Tom would work but she assumed she would be to meet him prior outside the Great Hall. "I have to go early, I assume Tom will be waiting for me."

As Evelyn hurried through the corridors, she felt her heart racing, she barely knew why she agreed to attend with him considering that before September the two had likely not exchanged more than one word. Every step fuelled the anxiety inside her body, sending a hurricane coursing through her veins. As soon as she saw Tom, everything stopped. It was only him and her in the world; nothing else mattered. Evelyn locked onto her target, making her way towards him with a smile.

"You got my dress then." His eyes met with hers, "it looks nice."

"I was surprised to see it, it doesn't seem like the kind of gesture you would usually perform," she admitted truthfully to him.

"Well, it is a special occasion, I thought I ought to treat you after seeing the disappointing options for you at Gladrags Wizardwear." Evelyn almost thought he was being heartfelt. "After all, I didn't want to be seen with someone who looked noticeably worse than me."

She rolled her eyes, "how considerate of you..." Tom extended his hand to hers, "and what do you expect me to do with that?"

"Take it." And so she did, and before she could say another word, she felt herself being whisked away into the centre of the Great Hall. "Now, we dance."

Evelyn did not know how to dance, but Tom took the lead. Neither of them said a word, their eyes simply meeting each other was enough; the slow music twirled like a thread around them, pulling them closer together. Somehow, their bodies moved as one and it felt as though the world was melting away from them.

In the corner of her eye, Evelyn spotted Lily and Sara dancing together and as much as she longed to dance with them, it was as though an invisible string stopped her from leaving. As they spun, Evelyn glanced up at the enchanted ceiling, watching it spin as she twirled across the dance floor. Emerald, crimson and gold fabrics hung from the ceilings, intertwining as the wind blew in across through the open windows, as Evelyn spun, the colours merged to form one, their energies erupting from their centre as though they were a thousand fairies.

Evelyn felt so at peace she barely noticed when the music had stopped. "Let's sit." Tom said, taking her hand and leading her to one of the empty tables. "Tell me about your parents."

Evelyn was taken aback by his question. His voice was quiet, yet confident; his eyes locking onto hers as though she were his prey. "They were great wizards." She paused, looking at Tom who leant in closer towards her. "They worked as Aurors for the Ministry after they left Hogwarts. They died a year ago."

"How?"

"In a muggle accident, someone hit them with their automobile." Evelyn shivered, recalling the moment that her grandmother had told her of their fate.

Tom looked her up and down for a few moments of uncomfortable silence, "Evelyn, I do not believe that is true."

"Tom. You weren't there." Evelyn rolled her eyes at his remark. "It's true."

"It isn't Evelyn. Did you see it happen? No, you didn't." His face remained calm despite Evelyn's voice beginning to shake as she spoke. "Your grandmother lied to you."

"No, you're lying." By this point, tears had begun to form in her eyes, threatening to fall as she spoke.

"What would I gain from lying Evelyn?"

"Why would you tell me this?" Evelyn couldn't stop the tears from falling from her eyes. "If you knew then why did you even bother asking me?"

"I wanted to know what your grandmother had told you, I wanted to see what lie they had convinced you to believe. Your grandmother manipulated you," he spoke with such confidence it frightened her, "she is hiding something from you, from everyone. Why would she hide how your parents died?"

Evelyn took a deep breath. "It doesn't make any sense."

Tom looked at her intently, "often the truth doesn't."

"I don't believe you," she spoke with as much strength as she could muster, rising from her seat.

"I didn't expect you to." He stood as well, "perhaps you ought to ask your grandmother over the Christmas holidays."

"I will!" She almost shouted as she stormed out of the Great Hall, who was he to tell her what was and wasn't true about her own family?

Although she felt calmer, Evelyn knew she could not return to the Great Hall; if she did, not only would she have to face Tom, but also Lily and Sara. Deciding the best place for her would be her dormitory, she made her way through the corridors, doing her best to avoid Peeves, and headed into her dormitory. As soon as she spotted her bed, she threw herself onto it, her eyelids falling shut as she slipped into an uneasy slumber.

Tom Riddle wandered through the castle with a menacing look plastered across his face. His wand was out and positioned ready to attack his next unsuspecting victim. His shoes were silent against the tiled floor, his movements slow and steady.

Evelyn had just awoken from a painful nightmare and had decided to take a stroll through the castle. Nobody was ever in the corridors this late so it gave her time to think as she felt the cool air against her bare legs.

She took her usual path through the castle, strolling around the common rooms yet ensuring she was close enough to the Ravenclaw Tower to quickly dart inside at the sign of a teacher. The corridors were dark, Evelyn having to squint to find her path through the castle. A few metres away, Tom Riddle turned the corner, coming face to face with Evelyn.

"Tom," She began with a quivering voice, "You have to understand. I had no other choice."

"Don't. Evelyn, you defied my trust, and you defied me." He snapped. "You made a big mistake Evelyn."

"No please." She pleaded as he aimed his wand at her.

"It has to be done," He said plainly. "Avada Kedavra"

As much as Evelyn adored Hogwarts, she was grateful to be home for the holidays. Although she wished for the holidays to be a getaway from Hogwarts, she couldn't help but keep thinking back to what Tom had told her about her parents.

On Christmas Eve, Evelyn finally decided to confront her grandmother on the matter after buttering her up with several hot chocolates. "Granny," she asked as she took a seat on their sofa, "I wanted to talk to you about mum and dad."

Her grandmother was taken aback by this, Evelyn usually avoided the topic of her parents where possible. "What is it?"

"How did they die?" She blurted out, there was no other way about it, she had to be upfront.

Evelyn watched her grandmother flinch, "well, you know how they died Evelyn, they were hit by a motor vehicle."

"Someone at Hogwarts made me think that wasn't quite true, that it might have been something else..."

"Evelyn!" She stated abruptly, "whoever that was was greatly mistaken, I remember very well how my only child died and I would appreciate it if you did not bring the subject up again!"

"How do we know that that's what happened? None of us were ever asked to identify a body, what if they're still alive?" Evelyn knew the possibility was slim, but she wanted it to be true. "What if-" She felt the tears begin to form in her eyes, "what if they weren't hit by an automobile?"

Evelyn had never heard her grandmother shout before, "they were!" Her voice faltered as she spoke and as Evelyn watched her, there was something about her demeanour that made her doubt her grandmother was telling the truth.

"I just miss them, I don't want it to be true," by now the tears were streaming down her face.

Her grandmother held out her arms and took her in a warm embrace, one which could never last long enough for Evelyn. She was safe in her grandmother's arms, in that embrace she was cocooned better than any butterfly-to-be, she was safe from all that could harm her.

When Evelyn awoke the next morning, she spotted her grandmother over the stove who welcomed her with a smile into the kitchen, seemingly having forgotten about their conversation the previous night. "Good morning, pancakes?" She asked, nodding over to the stack of pancakes beside her.

As soon as Evelyn spotted the pancakes, her stomach rumbled. "I'm starving," she helped herself to three pancakes before taking her seat at the kitchen table.

By the time she had finished two of her pancakes, her grandmother came and sat opposite her, placing a large, gift-wrapped box onto the table. "I got you a few things,"

Evelyn quickly cut her off, "you said we weren't doing any gifts this year! I haven't got you anything at all!" She felt uncomfortable at the thought of not being able to give her grandmother anything back.

"You are the only gift I need, my dear," she squeezed her hand. "Now, dig in..."

Evelyn took one last bite of her pancakes, pushed her plate aside and began to inspect the box. It was too small for a broomstick, too large for a book, too square for a hat, Evelyn had no idea what could be inside. She carefully tore back the wrapping paper and opened up the large chest.

"Wow!" Evelyn exclaimed, causing her grandmother to beam at her joyfully. "There's so much in here," she began to lift out various boxes of confectionary from Drooble's to Bertie Botts Every Flavour Beans. "Is this a remembrall?" She asked as she picked up a small glass sphere.

"Yes, they're wonderful for alerting you when you have forgotten something, one of my dear friends told me about it and I thought it would make an excellent gift."

Next, she moved to the stack of books in the corner, "The Tale of the Three Brothers, Advanced Potion Making..." she called each one out as she began to stack it, "Protection Charm Your Mind: A Practical Guide to Counter Legilimency, what's that?"

"Legilimency? Well, it's the act of mind-reading, although a Legilimens would not be happy if you called it that!" Evelyn liked the idea of being able to read other people's minds, she had always wondered what others were thinking. "I gave something similar to your mother when she was younger..."

Evelyn's eyes lit up, "really?"

"On this exact day when she was in her fifth year at Hogwarts, we sat down at this table and exchanged gifts," her grandmother smiled fondly as she recalled the memory. "Learning legilimency is a great gift, it is incredibly valuable as an Auror."

Evelyn nodded, she knew instantly that she would devour the book later that night. "I can't wait to read it! Thank you so much!" She squeezed her grandmother's hand tightly.

"Well, Evelyn if you don't mind I ought to head out for my daily walk, I would rather like to collect some seashells for your parents..." She trailed off as she glanced out of the window, "will you be okay on your own?"

Evelyn nodded again, "of course," she was grateful that her grandmother would be getting out of the house; although her grandmother may have forgotten about their conversation last night, Evelyn certainly hadn't.

Whilst her grandmother got ready to leave, Evelyn took her gifts into her bedroom, placing the textbooks on her bedside table and storing the confectionery in her trunk to take back to Hogwarts and share with Lily and Sara who would be over the moon if they knew. "See you soon Evelyn!" Her grandmother called out, shutting the door loudly behind her and as soon as she did, Evelyn knew it time to start her investigation.

Their cottage only had four rooms and only one was out of bounds, her grandmothers bedroom. If anything was being hidden, that was exactly where it would be. Despite knowing that her grandmother was out, Evelyn still tiptoed around the cottage, opening up her grandmothers door as quietly as she could and leaving it ajar so she would hear her grandmother return.

She started with the drawers, digging through their contents as though she were a starved predator hunting for some prey. Then, she looked under the bed, then the trunk, then behind the chair, then inside the wardrobe. Only when she was about to give up did she spot something peculiar, part of the back of the wardrobe was hollow, Evelyn could see markings in the shape of a square, surrounding the hollow area. Pressing her fingers against the corners, she felt them move, slowly but surely revealing the perfect hiding space. Evelyn had expected to spot vast amounts of hidden items but there was only one, a small folder which Evelyn knew she had to read if she ever wanted to figure out the truth.

As Evelyn went to open up the first page, her body froze. She simply couldn't, she wasn't ready to find out if everything had all been a lie, she wasn't ready to have her life changed by the contents of the folder. Taking a deep breath she whispered, "I'll do it at Hogwarts." That way she wouldn't be alone, Lily and Sara would help guide her through it, whatever it said inside, it would be okay, it had to.

Evelyn took the folder, making sure she returned everything in her grandmothers room to how it had been before she left. She slid the folder into the bottom of her trunk, loosely wrapped in her Ravenclaw scarf and tried t forget all about it.

Later that evening, Evelyn opened up her copy of Protection Charm Your Mind: A Practical Guide to Counter Legilimency and began to read.

The mind is not a book, to be opened at will and examined at leisure. Thoughts are not etched on the inside of skulls, to be perused by any invader. The mind is a complex and many-layered thing. It is true, however, that those who have mastered Legilimency are able, under certain conditions, to delve into the minds of their victims and to interpret their findings correctly.

To a victim of Legilimency, it might feel as though several pins were being pushed through their ears and into their skull, creating a whole from which their thoughts may escape.

Evelyn stopped reading as the realisation hit her. Someone had been trying to read her at her first Slug Club meeting and she was almost certain she knew who.

When Evelyn returned to Hogwarts, there were two things on her mind, her parents, and Tom Riddle. Knowing that her folder was unlikely to get up and leave her trunk, she decided to tackle Tom first.

With a newfound sense of confidence, Evelyn strode up to him. "It was you," she shouted accusingly.

"Well, hello to you too," he looked her up and down. As soon as Tom realised what Evelyn meant, he lifted his hand, causing his group of followers to disband. "What was me, Evelyn?"

"You used legilimency on me!"

"I wouldn't know what such thing was, although it sounds like magic you wouldn't want to go getting involved with, it sounds rather dangerous to me." He looked up at the teachers passing by with his usual golden boy smile.

Evelyn huffed, "do not lie to me! I am tired of being lied to!" She hadn't wanted to, but she could feel the tears beginning to form in her eyes, threatening to spill down her cheeks, "I am not a child, I don't need to be lied to."

"I am well aware you are not a child. But I do truly have no idea what you are accusing me of, and what evidence do you have for such claim?" He was right, she couldn't prove it, she would never be able to.

"Just stay away from me!" She said through gritted teeth.

Tom smirked lightly, "I was under the impression it was you who had in fact approached me."

"You are unbelievable Tom, you really are." Evelyn stormed out of the courtyard with a sigh. "I am not a child," she muttered to herself.

Knowing she was not in the mood to be mocked, Evelyn made sure to avoid the corridors in which she knew Peeves would likely be lurking, instead taking the longer, yet more scenic, route back to the Ravenclaw Tower. Although Evelyn was not in the mood to interact with anyone, it brought her some peace to see the Grey Lady in the Tower.

"Evelyn, you seem troubled." She floated over towards the common room entrance.

"Just stressed about exams..." lying was getting far too easy and it wasn't something Evelyn was fond of.

"You know, you can talk to me..." Helena made her way closer to Evelyn, placing her transparent hand on Evelyn's shoulder as though she had forgotten she was a ghost, "it's not like I have anyone to talk to, you're the first student to speak to me properly in a decade."

Evelyn felt her heart sink, she had always spoken to the Grey Lady when she could, but she wasn't sure how much she could trust a ghost. "It's about a boy."

This piqued the Grey Lady's interest, causing her to zoom around the room before returning to the spot in front of Evelyn. "A boy? Tell me everything."

"I think he's lying to me, he said he didn't do something but I think he might have done it...." Evelyn wasn't sure how much it would be safe for her to share.

"Well do you trust him? Has he given you a reason to do so?"

Evelyn thought hard, he hadn't exactly, but he had given her some information that he knew she would research. It was only a matter of time before she found out about her parents and that would be thanks to him. She thought about the folder in her trunk, "I think he has."

"Excellent! Then trust him is what you shall do, you must update me on this boy, I hate being trapped here with nobody to talk to-"

Daniel burst into the common room, cutting her off, "Evelyn we need to start patrolling the corridors. It is our duty as Prefects, I should hope you haven't forgotten, I know it wouldn't please your parents."

Evelyn flinched. Her parents were her soft spot and he knew that. "I lost track of time, thank you Helena," she smiled at the Grey Lady before heading off with Daniel to begin patrol.

For an hour, the pair patrolled in silence, neither party having anything to say to the other. Although Daniel was evidently uncomfortable in the silence, Evelyn rather enjoyed it, it meant she could hear everything, every sound in the castle. She could hear Peeves a few floors away terrorising another set of Prefects, she could hear the plants in the Herbology Greenhouse, she could hear the house-elves scrubbing away at plates in the kitchens.

"Someone's crying," although she couldn't tell where it was coming from, she could hear the faint sound of a child sobbing.

Daniel stopped walking momentarily, "I don't hear it."

"Listen!" Evelyn stopped, closing her eyes in an attempt to locate the noise. "It's downstairs, second-floor."

"Alright." Daniel and Evelyn made their way down to the second floor, "what are we supposed to do with someone crying?"

"Do you have no empathy?" She rolled her eyes, hitting him a little harder than playfully on the shoulder, "we will comfort them, like nice human beings."

"Speak for yourself," he paused outside the girls bathroom, "it's in here, I'll wait outside."

Evelyn sighed as she made her way into the bathroom. Hello." She called out, "are you okay in there?" Silence followed. Evelyn stood outside the door for a few more moments, her eyes eventually falling on the unlocked sign displayed on the door. "I'm coming in," She whispered gently, pushing the door open with the tips of her fingers to reveal a small crying girl. Her glasses were steamed up, tears falling from her eyes and settling on the apples of her cheeks. Tissues covered her nose and mouth, blotting away the tears that had made it that far.

"Myrtle Warren?" Evelyn recognised the girl from the frog choir auditions one-year prior where she had unsuccessfully auditioned. "Are you alright?" Evelyn knew it was an awful question, the girl was crying so she quite clearly wasn't alright but she didn't know what else to ask. "What happened?"

Myrtle stood up, disposing of her used tissues in the bin beside her and stepping forwards, closer towards Evelyn. "O-Olive Hornby keeps making fun of my glasses." She stuttered every word, her chocolate brown eyes peeking out from behind her giant frames.

"Well, Olive Hornby should mind her own business, I think you look lovely in them." She smiled at Myrtle. Evelyn hoped it wasn't obvious that she was lying, Myrtle's glasses were the kind of monstrosity she didn't think people still wore.

Myrtle looked up sheepishly, the corners of her lips twitching upwards as she wiped away the last of her tears with her sleeves. "You really think so?"

"Definitely." She smiled through the lies, hoping it would be enough to convince Myrtle. "Now you better be heading back to your dorm otherwise another Prefect might give you a detention. You shouldn't be wandering around this late," She glanced down at her watch to check the time, looking up at Myrtle with a disapproving glance once she saw the time.

Evelyn saw tears reforming in Myrtle's eyes at the thought of a detention on her squeaky clean school record. "Head back to your dormitory and get some rest." Myrtle didn't need another warning, with that, she fled from the bathroom, leaving Evelyn alone.

Seeing how she had almost missed a student whilst patrolling, Evelyn checked each and every toilet cubicle before returning to Daniel, "Merlin it was Myrtle! I can't lie I would be crying if I looked like that,"

Evelyn didn't hold back this time when she hit him on the shoulder, "show some empathy! You really are an awful person!"

"Ladies love me for it though..." He smirked seductively at Evelyn, "I know your friend Sara does."

"Finish this floor on your own! I'm going back to the common room where I might find some actual functioning human beings, unlike you!" For the second time that day, Evelyn found herself storming through the castle, back to the comfort of her common room.

Once Evelyn arrived inside her dormitory, she spotted her two best friends laying on their beds. Evelyn opened up her arms, causing them to both run into them for an embrace, "I'm so tired," she began to cry, tears streaming down her face onto Lily's shoulder.

"It's okay Evelyn," Sara ran her fingers through her hair, "it's all okay."

"I need you two to help me." She pulled herself away from the embrace and made her way over to her trunk.

Lily sat herself down on the end of her bed, stroking Midnight who had curled up beside her. "Of course Evelyn, what is it?"

Evelyn lifted up the folder from her trunk, "I think someone lied to me about how my parents died."

Evelyn, Lily and Sara stayed awake for hours searching through the folder, but they found nothing. Neither girl could understand what any of it meant, there were various articles from the Daily Prophet, random sketches, letters with each individual house crest on it, but none of it made sense.

"It's okay Evelyn," Sara said with a comforting smile, "we can read it all tomorrow and see if we spot anything."

Lily perked up from where she had thrown herself onto her bed hours earlier, "what about asking a teacher?"

Evelyn had thought about it, but who would she ask and how. Investigating her parents' death wasn't exactly the kind of project she would get set for extra credit, it would raise alarm bells that she did not want to raise.

"Let's sleep on it, it can all wait until tomorrow." Sara was right, there was no point going over it all again, the sun was already rising and if they didn't get to sleep soon, they would likely not make it through the day.

Despite the few hours sleep that the trio were able to get, they still barely made it through their lessons. As soon as they entered the library after their final lesson, Lily rested her head on her textbooks and immediately began to zone out.

"So," Evelyn began, looking at Sara with slight concern, "last night Daniel said something about the two of you... being together."

Sara blushed lightly, "he did? That's so wonderful!"

Evelyn took her friend's hand in her own, "Sara, he won't be good for you, he isn't a good person, have you not seen him over all these years?"

"He treats me different though, I'm not like the others he's been with, he said I was special."

"He's just saying that."

Sara rolled her eyes, "well, what would you know? You've never had a boyfriend and the only boy you talk to is Tom Riddle who barely even counts!"

"I'm just worried about you, I want to make sure you're safe, you're my friend..." She trailed off.

"Well, there's nothing to worry about! And even if there was, it would be none of your business anyway!" Sara slammed her textbook on the table, waking Lily with a start, before storming out of the library.

"W-what happened?" Lily asked airily.

"Did you know Sara was dating Daniel?"

Lily chewed on her cheek, "yes."

"And nobody thought to tell me? I thought we were supposed to be friends!" Evelyn could feel the anger boiling inside of her, "Friends tell each other things!"

"Evelyn you've been so distracted lately, you're so busy revising or going to Slug Club meetings, we don't hang out like we used to anymore!"

"Real friends would still talk to me, they would make an effort!" She knew she had hit Lily where it hurt. Her eyes were brimming with tears as she left took her textbook and left the library, leaving Evelyn alone.

Evelyn sighed deeply, everything since returning to Hogwarts after the holidays had gone wrong. The only hope of changing that would be to figure out what had happened to her parents, it was all she needed, she had to do it.

Knowing she was unlikely to retrieve more information on her own, she knew exactly who she had to turn to. "Evelyn, I believed we were staying away from each other?" Tom said eyebrow raised as he spotted her making her way towards him.

She took a seat opposite him, pulling out the letters she had stored inside her textbook from the previous night. "I need your help." She said plainly.

Tom looked over at the textbooks, inspecting the protruding sections of the letters, his hand reached over "may I?"

Evelyn nodded and he took the letters in his hand. "I thought about what you said at the Christmas Party and I think you were right-"

Tom cut her off, "no surprise there then."

"I found these inside my grandmother's wardrobe, there are more too but I don't understand them. I- I was hoping you might..."

"And why would I help you, Evelyn?" He placed the letters down on the table.

"Because it would be a nice thing to do,"

"I like to trade in favours," he began, "if I do this for you, then you will owe me one, how does that sound?"

Evelyn thought it through, she wasn't sure what Tom might want her to do for him, but if it got her answers then she would do it. "Okay," she took the letters back in her hands.

"Excellent, how about we meet here tomorrow to get started?" He suggested.

"I will see you then," she left the library swiftly and headed back to her common room to review the documents once more.

When she went to meet Tom the next day, she still hadn't spoken to Lily or Sara since their argument but she simply didn't want to try. Right now, her parents were the most important thing.

Evelyn clutched the folder tightly to her chest as she made her way into the library, "good afternoon Tom,"

"Evelyn," he nodded at her, pulling out the chair beside him, "I'm glad you managed to join me. Now where do we begin?" He stared at her folder with eager eyes.

Placing the folder on the table before her, Evelyn took a deep breath. "I think you ought to read it all first, then we can choose." It didn't take Tom anywhere near as long as she had expected for him to read the contents of the folder, he scanned the documents, finishing only moments after Evelyn took the seat beside him. Although Tom had been able to read the documents quickly, it didn't speed up their process.

Only in late February did they finally have what Evelyn would consider a breakthrough. "Why did your mother think Helga Hufflepuff had a living relative?" Tom asked, looking at her with a puzzled expression.

Evelyn paused, "what? It doesn't say anything about that in there!"

"I know," he closed the folder, "you mentioned it at the first Slug Club meeting, I thought it might be relevant..."

Evelyn knew it wasn't worth discounting any of his ideas before she had given them a go. "She had always been interested in the Hogwarts founders, but then one day she put all of her efforts into Helga and abandoned the rest. My father said a friend may have tipped her off about the relative but I don't know who the friend could be or how they knew."

"Interesting."

"That's what she said she was doing when she died, she told me she had found the relative, tracked them down and she was going to protect them, but I don't see why they would need protection..."

Tom tilted his head, "Haven't you heard of Helga Hufflepuffs cup?"

Evelyn nodded, "well yes, who hasn't? But it's just a cup, it doesn't serve any purpose..."

"It is believed that the cup possesses powers, nobody knows what powers those might be, but it is highly sought after. Legend has it that it is passed down the to Hufflepuffs descendents, meaning that if there is one, they would have the cup. "

"So is that why someone killed her? My mum, that is. Because she knew where they were."

"It might seem so." Tom said.

"But why didn't they just get the information and then leave her alone, she didn't have to die!"

Tom took a deep breath in, "whoever was searching that cup likely wasn't searching for it to display, they presumably wanted it for their own gain, to utilise the powers it held. If your mother saw who they were, she would have been able to stop them I assume."

Evelyn felt a tear forming in her eye, "so whoever killed her likely has the cup?" She wiped away the tear before it could fall.

"Possibly, if your father was with her at the time, he may have been able to apparate away with the cup, only to be killed later."

"But then where did the cup go?"

"It could be anywhere," Tom seemed frustrated, "anywhere at all."

"Oh..."

Tom took a deep breath, "now I believe you owe me a favour."

Although Evelyn had a better idea of what had happened to her parents, she didn't know how much she could trust it, it was just a theory created by a schoolboy. If the Ministry of Magic had been unable to uncover the true nature of their death, then why would she?

Her relationship with Lily and Sara had improved, although each party rightfully held a grudge, she had been unable to return it to what it had been prior to their conversation in the library. It had been easier to rekindle her friendship with Lily, she simply brandished some of the confectionery she had been given at Christmas and was forgiven almost instantly, but Sara, Sara was harder.

Sara went four days without speaking to Evelyn. It wasn't until she came to their dorm crying one evening that she finally broke her silence. "Daniel broke up with me!" She sobbed against her pillow, the sound of her tears muffling.

"It's okay," Evelyn kept her distance, unsure of how close Sara would want her. She watched as Midnight jumped onto the bed, curling up beside Sara with a soft purr.

"You don't need him, you are fine on your own!" Lily stroked her best friend's hair, "Evelyn," she whispered, "come here."

"It's just not fair!"

"I know," Evelyn hesitantly made her way over to the bed, gently placing her hand on Sara's head and beginning to play with it.

Sara rolled over to face Evelyn, "I missed you, I'm sorry..."

"I'm sorry too," she leant into her friend's arms for an embrace.

"Yay! We're all friends again!" Lily joined in the hug.

Laying in each other's arms, the trio felt safe. The dorm was silent except for Midnight's quiet purrs, which although annoying at first, Evelyn was grateful for, "I have to go and do Prefect Duties," she whispered, sliding out of the bed and making her way into the common room where Daniel was waiting, staring at the clock on the wall.

Without a word of warning, Evelyn walked up to Daniel and slapped him. "That's for Sara."

"Merlin, I hate girls!"

"Cry me a river." Evelyn rolled her eyes.

"If you think I'm going on duty with you, you are sorely mistaken. I don't plan on an early grave!" He stormed back into his dormitory, his hand clutched to his reddening cheek.

"Suit yourself," Evelyn didn't mind having some time to herself. She left the Ravenclaw Tower and began patrolling the corridors.

After spotting Myrtle in the toilets on one of her first patrols, Evelyn always made sure to double check them, having been made aware that it was often where students went to cry, particularly Myrtle. "Myrtle?" She called out as she entered the toilets.

"Evelyn? Is that you?" She peered out of the toilet cubicle at the end, her face blotchy and red.

"Is Olive Hornby making fun of you again?" She sighed as she made her way closer to Myrtle, "you really ought to tell your Head of House, it isn't okay Myrtle."

Myrtle pushed her glasses up with a sniffle, "I don't think it would stop her, I don't think any of them will stop."

"They will! Why don't you go and wait outside the Great Hall and I will go with you to Headmaster Dippet? We can report them together," Evelyn hoped the idea seemed promising.

"Okay." She wiped her tears away with her sleeve, "you promise you'll be there?"

"Promise." Evelyn wouldn't go back on a promise. "Now off you go, I'll just finish up patrolling and then we can go."

Myrtle traipsed out of the bathroom slowly, sniffing loudly after every few steps.

When Myrtle had gone, Evelyn checked each and every toilet cubicle. Although she hadn't heard anyone else, she knew that she ought to check, it wouldn't feel right if she didn't. Once she was inside the final cubicle, she heard the sound of harsh footsteps flashing against the tiles and almost immediately she could tell whoever entered wasn't a girl. Evelyn was about to step outside of the stall, ready to confront whoever had entered but something inside her made her stop. Evelyn closed the door, leaving just enough room for her to see out, but not enough for someone else to see in.

Evelyn couldn't tell who it was in the bathroom with her, but whoever it was didn't want to be interrupted. Every step they took, they looked around the room, keeping their eyes focused on the door to ensure nobody else entered.

Abruptly, Evelyn heard a hissing noise, causing her to draw her wand. It sounded as though there were a snake in the bathroom with her but that was impossible. As soon as she heard the rumbling and felt the ground begin to lightly tremble, Evelyn knew she had to leave.

Peering out of the stall once more, she saw the boy in a trance and took her chance. Quietly, she pulled open the door, sliding out and sprinting as soon as she left the bathroom. Evelyn ran as though her life depended on it because she knew it could. She ran until she reached the only place she knew she could. As soon as her finger

latched onto the doorknob, her body went numb, time passing slower as she fell to the floor and was engulfed by the darkness.

When Evelyn awoke, she did not know where she was. She could barely see a few feet in front of her and everything that she did see melted into one blurred picture.

"Miss Rivers lay back." She felt a hand on her shoulder, pushing it back to the bed. "You're okay, do not worry."

Evelyn slept for hours, yet when she awoke, she was still plagued with tiredness. When she tried to sit up, she felt the blood rushing around her body, sending stars into her field of vision. She grasped hold of the railing on the side of her bed, using them to lift herself up and steady herself. On the small tables beside her, there was a note: a small piece of paper was crumpled into a ball and upon further inspection, Evelyn could just about make out the words.

Eagles are easy birds to kill

It wasn't signed, anybody could have left it. Before she had a chance to think about the possible culprits, Madame Truckle was by her bedside, "get some rest, Headmaster Dippet wishes to speak with you tomorrow morning."

Madame Truckle walked off again, leaving Evelyn alone with her thoughts. She knew that rest would help to heal her body, but sleep didn't welcome her as a friend. She laid awake for hours, her eyes tracing the intricate designs on the ceilings until sleep eventually greeted her.

Professor Dippet came and woke her early in the morning. He left her with Madame Truckle to dress, waiting for a while in uncomfortable silence. Once Evelyn came out of the Hospital Wing, she was shaking, as though an electrical current was pulsing through her. Dippet took her arm, carrying as much of her weight as he could as he led her to his office. Evelyn couldn't even begin to feel uncomfortable at the thought of her Headmaster holding her up, she was grateful that he was supporting her, without him, she thought she might fall.

"Evelyn, are you aware of what happened to you?" He questioned as he helped her down onto the seat beside his desk.

Evelyn shook her head.

"No-no, I thought that might be the case." He took a seat opposite her, "you were cursed."

"C-cursed? How? By who?" Evelyn hands began to shake, "I-I don't understand..."

"We are not aware of where such event occurred, when Madame Trickle returned from collecting herbs, she found you on one of the beds, no note, nobody around, just you. She believes someone used dark magic on you, magic far darker than we would expect anyone your age to know." He looked at her with wide eyes, "we will find who did this to you, and they will be punished. Now, I heard Professor Dumbledore wishes to speak with you so I will escort you to his office if that would be alright." He left Evelyn little opportunity to respond before linking his arm in hers and supporting her towards the Transfiguration Department. "Professor Dumbledore will be right inside,"

Evelyn pressed hesitantly on the door, watching it open to reveal Professor Dumbledore sat at his desk, tucking into a Sherbet Lemon. "Do come in Miss Rivers,"

Evelyn took a seat opposite him, glancing around his office as she did. His office was fairly small with little trinkets scattered around the room. What little furniture was in his office was a muted Gryffindor red, matching the emblems he had painted on the walls.

"I do have rather a lot of house pride!" He said calmly as he noticed her observing the decorations. "Now Miss Rivers I must say how wonderful it is to see you well again. I must say it was quite a fright to discover you in the Hospital Wing. Now, I do wish to speak with you regarding something important," he flicked his wand, closing the door to the office. "I also do not wish to be overheard, *Muffliato*."

Evelyn raised her eyebrows, "what is it Professor?"

"I believe you have entered some form of agreement with Tom Riddle-"

"How do you know that?" She felt unusually defensive.

"Perhaps students ought to realise that the Library is not the best place for conversations that they do not wish to be overheard. Nevertheless, I am aware you are now indebted to him, you owe him something and he will claim that from you, I am certain of it."

"Well, yes. I owe him a favour, he helped me with something important," Evelyn thought back to the hours they had spent in the library together.

"I wish to show you something, something that you cannot let change your opinion of this boy, but something you must nonetheless be aware of, something you must take into consideration over the coming years." Dumbledore stood up, making his way towards something Evelyn recognised as a Pensieve from her textbooks. He took the cover off the pensieve gently, making it hover beside him as he spoke.

"Sometimes I find that I simply have too many thoughts or memories and during those times, I use this pensieve. Now this particular memory is not one of mine, it is that of a very brave wizard who happened to be in possession of a time turner. A

time turner which they used to travel forwards in time, rather than backwards. I think what they saw will interest you." He reached out to the shelf beside him, popping the cap off a small phial and pouring the silvery liquid inside. "Dive in."

Evelyn stepped forwards hesitantly, glancing up at Dumbledore one last time before submerging herself in the liquid until she felt herself falling. With a thump, she collided with the ground beneath her. Almost instantly, she jumped up from the ground, pulling out her wand and surveying the area. She was surrounded by darkness, her hearing the only thing that could guide her as the sound of footsteps began growing louder. Spotting a nearby bush, she positioned herself behind it, keeping her eyes above it, staring into the distance.

Evelyn could tell that whatever was marching towards her was strong. They worked together in unison, remaining in an army formation as they moved. From the crowd, a cloaked figure emerged, positioning themselves in front and raising their hand, grinding the army to a halt.

"Tonight I kill the boy." From the voice alone, Evelyn knew exactly who was controlling the army: Tom Riddle.

Evelyn's mouth hung wide open once she'd emerged from the water. Tom Riddle would become a monster. After regaining her breath, Evelyn finally found the confidence to speak. "What was that?"

"Evelyn that was the boys future. That was what he will become without intervention." Dumbledore strolled back to his seat, tucking into a liquorice lace.

"Well, why haven't you done something yet then? If this really is the future, why haven't you reported it?" Evelyn found herself becoming defensive. "Why have you shown me such a thing?"

"A memory gained through unlawful time travel is not exactly the evidence that the Ministry of Magic would want. I cannot do anything to stop this, I cannot change the course of my own destiny, but you can. Your future is not set in stone and his doesn't have to be either, although this event will occur in the future, it could occur anywhere in the future, it could occur differently from how it did before, and that could be down to your actions."

Evelyn's eyes widened, "mine? Professor I do not understand, what are you asking of me?"

"I wish for you to do whatever Tom Riddle asks of you in the future, but I wish for you to have this memory in your mind. I wish for you to continue to befriend him, show him empathy, show him the emotions that make you human, I wish for you to help him. You cannot stop him, you can only delay, or alter his future, and I believe that this is a job that only you can achieve."

"I-I" Evelyn stuttered, she could barely believe what she had just heard, "I-I don't think I can..."

"Oh but you can, it's what your parents would have wanted for you, trust me." Both of them knew that mentioning her parents would convince her, it was exactly why Dumbledore had done it.

"You knew them?" She leant closer to him.

"I taught both your mother and father, in fact I was one of their references to become an Auror. They would be very proud of you for what you are doing Evelyn, very proud indeed." He popped another Sherbet Lemon into his mouth.

"I'll do it Professor, I'll do what I can, but I'm only a child!" Evelyn had no idea how much she would be able to do, but she knew it would likely be less than someone older than her.

"And that," he rose from his seat, opening up the door for Evelyn, "is what makes you so powerful."

Evelyn found the energy to lift herself up and made her way independently out of his office and towards her common room, pausing to lean against the wall and regain her strength every few steps. As soon as she entered the common room, Lily rushed towards her and grasped her arm in an attempt to support her.

"You look awful," Sara smiled lightly as Evelyn walked down the stairs towards their dormitory with Lily's support.

"Thank you," she attempted sarcasm, barely managing to smile as she collapsed onto her bed.

"Dippet wouldn't let us visit you, we tried, but he wouldn't budge!" And in that moment, Evelyn was glad to have rekindled her friendships with Lily and Sara, she wasn't sure where she would be without their support. "He wouldn't tell us what happened either. Was it linked to that time you fainted a few months ago Evelyn?"

"I think so." She couldn't say anything else, she didn't know how to carry on lying, especially to the people that had known her since she was just a child.

Lily opened her mouth as though she had more questions but before she could speak Sara quickly cut her off. "You missed so many assessments! Lucky git!"

"I'll have to catch up on those later but first we should get to class. We're already late I think." Evelyn said, levitating her books beside her and slowly making her way out of the common room.

"Be safe Evelyn," Lily warned, following closely behind her, her hands held out as though she expected Evelyn to drop like a ragdoll.

Walking into History of Magic, Evelyn had expected people to look her way, but to the extremes that she experienced. As soon as she entered the classroom, the students simply stared, they asked no questions, said nothing to her, but just observed as she took her seat at the front of the class.

Noticing the tension in the classroom, Professor Binns began the lesson. "Now!" He clapped loudly, causing students to avert their gaze, "we will be looking at the ability to converse with snakes, formerly known as..."

Lily raised her hand, "parseltongue!"

"Excellent, five points for Hufflepuff-"

"Professor, I am in Ravenclaw," Lily glanced at him, then at Evelyn with confusion.

Professor Binns waved his hand in the air, "yes yes, Ravenclaw. Now everybody open your textbooks and read the passage on parseltongue, I will be questioning you after so you must read it in full!"

Evelyn flicked open her textbook with shaky hands, searching for the correct page. "It's one hundred and forty two," Lily nudged her gently, helping her friend turn to the correct page. Evelyn gave Lily a sweet smile before beginning to read the passage.

Parseltongue is everything but simple, but it is very concise. Snakes will only give you the information they feel you need and expect you to read between the lines to understand them. This is what has led to the belief that they are being shady, or manipulative. In reality, that is simply how their language is built. Most sentences will be very short and consist only of the subject, object, and verb. The rest has to be pieced together based on the listener's knowledge, context clues, and loose interpretation.

Parseltongue is, when spoken, a hissing sound, similar to that of a snake; as such, normal people cannot understand it (one known exception being). Apart from merely communicating with serpentine lifeforms, Parselmouths also seem able to influence the will of serpents to a certain extent. Aside from serpent-based creatures, Parselmouths can communicate with each other with the language. Nearly all known Parselmouths are descended from Salazar Slytherin

"Has everyone finished?" Professor Binns did not wait for an answer before he began the questions. "Now do sentences in Parseltongue tend to be long or short, Bradley?"

He turned to face a Ravenclaw boy in Evelyns year who turned crimson as the students turned to face him. "Lo- no short, no it's long!"

Professor Binns sighed, "you were so close boy! They are in fact short! Now, who are nearly all know parselmouths descended from, Evelyn?"

Evelyn was lucky her brain had been able to absorb the final sentence of the passage. "Salazar Slytherin."

"Excellent! Now, to an individual who does not speak the language, what would it sound like, Eliana?" He turned to a small Hufflepuff student.

"I believe it would sound like hissing."

And that's when the cogs started turning in Evelyn's mind.

As much as Evelyn hated Peeves, if anyone would know who spoke parseltongue in Hogwarts, it would likely be him. She tried to avoid him whenever possible, but for the first and likely last time, she sought him out.

Evelyn knew where he was by tracing the screams. As she got closer, she saw him pelting chalk at a group of unsuspecting first-years, "Peeves!" She called out to him, causing him to stop momentarily.

He chuckled mischievously, "you plan on joining them?" Before Evelyn knew it, he turned to face her and began to throw more chalk.

Evelyn simply let it hit her, placing her hand around her ear as though she had heard something. "Is that the Bloody Baron? It sounds like he's coming this way!"

Peeves stopped, "he isn't!" But Peeves did not seem convinced.

"You know," Evelyn took a step closer to him as the first-year students ran away. "He and I got rather close, I would say he would be willing to come up here to see you if I asked him..."

"What do you want, girl?" He huffed in annoyance.

"I would like to ask you a question-"

Before she could finish, he cut her off, "well do it then!"

She cleared her throat, speaking louder this time, "as I was saying! I want you to answer a question for me and I want it answered honestly." She leant close to him, close enough to whisper, "have you seen anyone hanging around the girl's bathroom on the second floor? Anyone going in regularly?"

"I might have."

"Who?"

"A student."

"Who?" Peeves flew up in the air, zooming back down behind Evelyn. "If you don't tell me, I will get the Bloody Baron and that is a promise!" She wished he were human so she could simply threaten him with violence, it would save her a lot of time.

"I've seen ugly Myrtle, she cries all the time!"

"I know about Myrtle!" Evelyn was at the end of her tether, "who else?" Peeves blew a raspberry at Evelyn, causing her to roll her eyes in response. "Who else?"

"I hear him all the time in there, hissing like a snake. A boy, in your year." With that, Peeves vanished into thin air.

"Merlin! Peeves I will talk to the Bloody Baron right now! You will be sorry!" She shouted into the courtyard at nobody.

As soon as Evelyn found the Bloody Baron and told her what she wanted, he was on board. "I'll get a name from him, I'll get Helena to tell you."

"Thank you!" Evelyn was grateful for the Baron in that instant and she knew that would be an event unlikely to occur again. Although some of the Hogwarts ghosts were rather fond of the students, engaging them in conversation every now and again. the Bloody Baron was unlike any other. He barely spoke to the students and when he did, they were almost always Slytherin, as though he did not wish to mix with those who Salazar had not considered pure. As much as Evelyn hated the idea of blood purity, she was glad that both her parents had been wizards, it was simply a fact that made her feel safe.

Evelyn felt her stomach rumbling, clutching it with one hand as she realised that dinner had likely already begun. She made her way to the Great Hall, walking as quickly as her short legs would take her, sliding into her usual seat as soon as she spotted her friends.

"Where did you get to?" Lily asked as she tucked into a helping of pie.

Evelyn dropped a slice of pie onto her plate, "I got distracted by Peeves." It might not have been the whole truth, but it made Evelyn feel better than an outright lie, her friends deserved to know as much as she could tell them.

Lily groaned loudly, "Merlin, is that the first time this year?" Evelyn nodded, "you've done well to avoid him for that long!"

"He's caught me so many times! Mostly with boys..." Sara giggled "but it really does ruin the mood! Nobody exactly wants to do anything with me when there's a poltergeist around!" Sara tucked into her slice of pie with a grin, "you know they really ought to find a way to get rid of him!"

"They already tried!"

Evelyn nodded her head, "In the nineteenth century, the caretaker tried to trap Peeves but somehow Peeves ended up armed with weapons, threatening students with death!" Sara gasped. "Eventually, the Headmistress signed a contract with Peeves to give up the weapons and he got extra privileges..."

"And that was the last time they tried to get rid of him!"

Sara raised her eyebrows, "I can see why! If only he would go and annoy other students, I would finally be able to get somewhere with boys!"

"Speaking of boys, Evelyn what are you doing hanging around Tom Riddle so much now?"

Sara nodded, "yeah since Christmas you've been with him so much! How come?"

Evelyn had already thought of a lie for when her friends eventually questioned this, "he's my partner in Runes and I might be falling behind a bit so he's been forced to tutor me." Neither Lily or Sara were in her Ancient Runes class, they would never know she was lying.

"How bad is it?" Sara thought back to her disastrous attempt at conversing with him at the beginning to the year.

"Well, he isn't Peeves," she chuckled lightly, "but he also isn't you two! At least he talks to me, it could always be worse..."

"Merlin I'm glad I don't take Runes! I would never be able to pass, especially not if I had to be tutored by Tom Riddle!"

"It's certainly a challenge."

After discussing the possible matches for Sara's next romantic partner, the trio made their way back up to the Ravenclaw Tower, stuffed full of food and ready for a long night's sleep. "Good evening Helena," Lily said as she walked into the tower and Evelyn was sorely reminded that Helena likely had something to tell her, something she wasn't sure she wanted to hear.

"Good evening girls," she looked over at Evelyn with a sweet smile.

"You two go ahead," she glanced at her friends, "I need to talk to Helena a moment."

Lily and Sara nodded, making their way out of the common room and into their dormitory at once.

"The Bloody Baron asked me to give you a name...."

Evelyn took a deep breath, "yes, just tell me Helena."

"Tom Riddle."

Evelyn didn't head to her dormitory after her conversation with Helena, instead, she made her way out of the Ravenclaw Tower and towards the girls' bathroom. She wasn't sure if Tom would be there, but that was one of the only places he could be.

"Evelyn!" She heard him call just as she entered the hallway. Evelyn turned to face him and saw that he was with a friend, a boy she recognised as Abraxas Malfoy.

"I've been looking for you!" She almost yelled.

Tom chuckled lightly, something Evelyn had never once seen him do before, "how funny, we were just looking for you too! Malfoy has something he would like to say to you..." He turned to face Abraxas with a threatening smile.

Evelyn waited, tapping her feet impatiently against the ground. "Look," she said after Abraxas did nothing other than stare at the ground, "I don't have time for this, I need to talk to you Tom," she glanced at Malfoy, "alone."

"I need to say something," Evelyn was surprised to hear Malfoy speak, she had never heard his voice before, "it was me."

She raised her eyebrows, "what was?"

After a prompting glance from Tom, he stepped forwards. "It was me that cursed you. Tom only just worked it out and made me confess to the Headmaster, I'm leaving school now."

Evelyn nodded. "Right, is that it?"

Tom looked at her with a puzzled expression, "do you understand what he is saying?"

"I am not an idiot! I know what he is saying but there are far greater matters to attend to. Go away Malfoy, I need to talk to Tom." She didn't even wait to see if Malfoy left

before grasping Tom's forearm and dragging him into the bathroom. "I'm sure you're already familiar with this room, seeing as you're here all the time."

Tom stuttered, "I-I don't know what you mean, I rather hope you aren't accusing me of anything."

"Oh, you know exactly what I mean! You speak parseltongue in this bathroom, I've heard it before."

"Now, why would I be speaking parseltongue in a bathroom, who exactly would I be displaying such gift to?" He smirked at her, taking a few steps forward towards the sink.

"I don't know why, but I know that it happened, just like how I know it was you that used legilimency on me at Slug Club. You need to tell me what is going on and you need to tell me now!" She stomped her foot against the floor. Evelyn felt like a child but there was nothing she could do about that, her emotions were in control and her thoughts no longer were.

Tom took another step closer to her, and another, and another until he was close enough for her to feel his breath. "Let me show you. Close your eyes."

"How will you show me with my eyes closed?" She furrowed her brows.

"Don't question it, just close them." He watched as she closed her eyes before making his way to the sink.

At that moment, she trusted him. familiar rumbling sound erupted from in front of her, closely followed by a quiet hissing. "Don't panic Evelyn. Don't make a sound." His hand touched her back, sending shivers up her spine, the hairs on her arms suddenly standing up.

Evelyn could feel his body against hers, his arms wrapping themselves around her body as though acting as a shield from what was to come. When she heard something beginning to slither across the floor, she held her breath. "She won't hurt you, breathe." Evelyn felt Tom's arms tightening their grip on her body, calming her down as she felt the pressure of his grip against her.

She heard the slithering circle her before it got quiet again. "She's gone, but keep your eyes closed."

"What was that?" She had a feeling she knew the answer, but she almost wished she didn't.

"That..." he paused, "was a Basilisk."

Evelyn knew what that was, "where did it come from?"

"Oh, you'll find out soon enough. But now I need to take out a little insurance policy."

She held her breath again, panic rising inside of her, w-what?"

"You can open your eyes,"

And when she did, she was somewhere else entirely.

Evelyn awoke in her bed, almost drowning in the blanket covering her. Her hands patted down the sides of her bed, looking for her wand which usually stayed beside her at all times, but instead feeling liquid. Once she lifted her hand to her face, she couldn't help the scream that escaped her lips. Blood trickled down her hands as she sat up, rivers of crimson flowing across her dormitory floor, all the way from the window to the door. As Evelyn looked around, she noticed that more and more was wrong: her possessions were almost all missing, her window was smashed, her friends weren't there. Everything was wrong.

Hesitantly, she swung her legs over the side of her bed, her whole body recoiling in disgust as her feet hit the pools of blood below her bed. As Evelyn continued to assess her room, Tom Riddle strode in, swinging the door open and slamming it behind him. "Evelyn." He nodded at her in acknowledgement.

"You can't be in here, this is the girl's dormitory, Tom." Her mind blanked on everything around her once she saw him enter. "You need to leave."

He ignored her, strolling further into the room, running his fingers across the blood-soaked bed, "I guess we both ought to keep each others secrets now, shouldn't we?"

Evelyn awoke to the sound of screaming. A primal scream, with a raw intensity to it that told of the urgency. Without a second thought, Evelyn was out of bed and by the light switch, quickly switching it on an illuminating the dormitory. Lily and Sara both instinctively turned away from the light, their eyes shutting tighter as the light grew brighter.

"What's happening?" Lily asked, shooting up from her bed and running her fingers through her golden hair. Her beady eyes were now wide open, staring in shock at Evelyn and Sara who were both wide awake by this point.

Evelyn didn't know how to react. The uncomfortable silence in the common room was quickly broken by the jittery voice of Professor Ellesmere, Head of Ravenclaw house, "Everybody up now!" She called into the dormitory, quickly moving on to the next dormitory and repeating the message.

Quickly, the girls stepped out the dormitory, in nothing but their nightdresses, and followed the crowd of panicked students out into the dormitory. "All students head directly to the Great Hall." Students stood in awe, unsure of how to respond to their Head of House in such a state. "Immediately." Her face flushed red as she directed students towards the open door.

Nobody spoke a word as they hurried towards the Great Hall, not even Lily who always had something to say. By the time they arrived, the majority of the school had piled into the room, standing with their bodies almost touching as they watched Headmaster Dippet at the front of the hall. "What's going on?" Lily questioned.

"It had better be good, I was having the best dream," Sara said, Lily, responding with a nervous laugh and Evelyn remaining quiet. She couldn't speak; she was frozen.

Every teacher was positioned at the Grand Table, staring into space with broken spirits. They seemed frozen in time, barely moving except the occasional glance to their side to reassure those around them. Nobody spoke a word until the last house finally arrived, strutting in with frowns painted on all their faces except Tom's. His eyes seemed to shine a little brighter and his expressionless face seemed more emotive than ever, holding a sinister grin on in that quickly vanished once he saw the panel of teachers in the Hall.

Once everyone was quiet, Headmaster Dippet rose and began to speak. "Students, I'm afraid there has been a very serious incident and although this news may shock and upset you, it is my duty to make you aware. This morning, a student has been found in the second-floor bathroom. That student was Myrtle Warren, and she is dead."

Evelyn couldn't help but let out a cry of grief, placing her hand on her mouth to muffle it. Evelyn felt as though she was drowning in the sea of terrified students, slowly losing herself below the surface as she felt her lungs begin to fill with water.

"Unfortunately, the school cannot remain open with the tragic recent affairs. You will all be returning home tomorrow," He said with a grave expression.

Quickly, the students grew uneasy, a mixture of terrified and disappointed comments erupting through the Great Hall and spreading like wildfire. Evelyn felt her heart

sinking in her chest- a student was dead. A student she knew, one she knew spent time in the bathroom that Tom Riddle was housing a monster.

"Students please return to your common rooms and prepare to go home," Headmaster Dippet said with a sigh, turning his head to the other Professors, and then exiting the hall alongside Professor Dumbledore.

As the Hall began to empty, Evelyn scanned around it for Tom, eventually finding him by the exit, following closely behind Professor Dumbledore. Evelyn scurried out of the Hall behind him, parting the sea of students forcefully with her hands in an attempt to catch up with him. By the time she was outside of the Hall, she spotted Tom stood by Professor Dumbledore, quickly she slid behind a pillar in an attempt to conceal herself.

"Professor Dumbledore," Tom said, causing Dumbledore to turn around in an instant.

"It's not wise to be wandering around this late, Tom. You should be back in your common room." He warned.

"Is it true sir, is the school really closing? They wouldn't really close Hogwarts, would they professor?" He asked with more emotion in his voice than Evelyn had ever heard before.

"Headmaster Dippet may have no choice, I'm afraid," He said with sadness, Hogwarts was his home too.

"Sir?" He paused, "If it all stopped if the responsible person was caught..." He trailed off.

Dumbledore looked at him in a state of utmost confusion, "Is there something you would like to tell me, Tom?"

Tom paused again, pondering. "No, sir. Nothing"

Dumbledore studied him for a moment before muttering, "Very well then, hurry along."

Tom hurried around the corner and waited for Dumbledore to leave before circling back around again. He turned to face Evelyn with a sinister expression, "I take it you heard all of that,"

"You aren't really going to turn yourself in, are you?" Evelyn queried with a puzzled look on her face.

"Evelyn, why would I turn myself in if I have not done anything wrong?" He said, shooting her a smirk.

"I don't follow."

"My, for a Ravenclaw, you really aren't the smartest." He stated, receiving a stark glare from Evelyn. "I never did anything wrong, though I have heard that a Gryffindor is currently keeping an acromantula as a pet. Perhaps that's the beast that killed the poor girl."

"You're going to blame somebody else, you're unbelievable" Evelyn sighed deeply.

"Actually, many Professors find I'm quite the believable student which is why I'm sure they'll have no problem with expelling the boy and keeping Hogwarts open."

"Why would you even want Hogwarts to stay open, you hate it here?" Evelyn asked, squinting her eyes at him.

"Believe it or not, Hogwarts isn't the worst place I could be." He said simply, and with that, he was off.

Evelyn didn't know how to respond. The events from the past few days were enough to overwhelm her completely, and now she knew someone innocent was about to be expelled. Evelyn barely had time to think before she felt Lily and Sara behind her, grasping at her hands and leading her towards the common room.

"Where have you been?" Lily said as she took her hand, "We didn't know if something had happened to you?"

Quickly, the three girls made their way into their dormitory, each one collapsing onto their respective beds with an exaggerated sigh.

"I can't believe someone dead," Lily spoke in a hushed tone, breaking the silence between the three girls.

"People die all the time Lily," Sara told her, staring up at the ceiling.

"Yeah but it was here, in our school, it could've been any one of us. We have no idea what's going on and we're just going to be sent home. What are we supposed to do?" Lily spoke quickly, almost as though she feared she would run out of oxygen.

"We do whatever Headmaster Dippet tells us, we comply with his rules and we go home," Sara said, sensibility overcoming her. She knew that somebody had to be composed in this situation and judging by the state of her friends, for once it had to be her.

"Aren't you even the least bit curious to find out what's happened though?" Lily questioned, "I mean somebody has died and we're just expected to shove it under the rug and pretend it never happened."

"Well, what do you want us to do?" Evelyn said with irritation, she didn't want anything more to do with this.

"I think we should find out what really happened. Let's go to the second-floor girl's bathroom," Lily smiled and looked at the other two girls, looking for their agreement.

"Fine," Sara and Evelyn sighed, seeing it easier to just agree than to argue. Evelyn wasn't sure how she would be able to cope with returning to a place she only had negative memories of, but she knew her friends would worry more if she didn't come.

As the common room emptied, the girls rose from their seats and quickly snuck out. It was highly likely that they would be caught but putting Lily's mind at rest was important. They crept through the darkened corridors, the only light being a dim *Lumos* from Evelyn's wand, following after Lily who seemed to have declared herself in charge. By the time the girls got the bathroom, it was extremely late; Evelyn had almost hoped it would be shut, preventing the girls from entering but much to her dismay, they walked straight in.

Silently, they crept into the bathroom and as they turned the corner, their mouths dropped: the cubicles were shattered, pieces of wood were thrown about the room like an unfinished jigsaw. The bathroom was silent except the eerie sound of a dripping tap, the sound echoed across the room and sent a chill down Evelyn's spine- this felt all too familiar. The floor was wet, pools of water swirling together.

Evelyn took off in a different direction to Lily and Sara who wanted to explore what had happened. Evelyn already knew what had gone down in the bathroom, she knew it all too well. As soon as Evelyn noticed the flecks of red dancing in the water, the fire inside her began to burn. Her mind felt like it was being crushed and strained with confusion and her breaths were rapidly increasing. Her anxiety was spinning out of control, her hands trembling visibly. She couldn't take it anymore. And as she heard the familiar slithering sound fill the bathroom, she fled.

"Good morning students," began Headmaster Dippet, "I have gathered you here this morning to alert you all that Hogwarts shall not be closing." Loud whispers from excited students broke out, quickly rising in volume only to be hushed down by Dippet. "The beast that attacked Myrtle Warren has been found and its owner has been prosecuted."

"I guess they found whatever it was yesterday then," Sara said, eyeing up Lily.

"Yeah." She faded out, tucking her hair behind her ears. Lily was disappointed by last night's events, shortly after Evelyn had fled, the other two girls had followed suit.

Evelyn turned away her focus from Dippet and glanced over at Tom, who sat smugly at the Slytherin table. His eyes met hers for a moment before he harshly looked away and continued muttering to Abraxas Malfoy.

"I firmly believe that Hogwarts is now safe, you can all sleep at peace thanks to one student. Without this student's help, Hogwarts would still be closing and the perpetrator would still be at large however thanks to his bravery, Hogwarts is safe. If you could all give your applause for Tom Riddle!"

A round of applause erupted throughout the Great Hall, however, Evelyn did not clap. Instead, she glared right at Tom as he walked up to the front of the Hall. She sent him a stare so powerful she hoped it would burn right through him. It wasn't right for Tom to be celebrated when an innocent boy was awaiting trial in Azkaban for a crime he didn't commit.

Tom shook Dippet's hand as cameras flashed around the Great Hall, "Tom Riddle, I award you this trophy for Special Services to the School." Dippet said, releasing his hand and collecting a large golden trophy before handing it over to Tom.

All the teacher looked at Tom with delight and pride- tears even glistening in Professor Ellesmere's eyes as she stared at the boy. All except one. Professor Dumbledore did not clap, he did not stare in awe, instead, he sat with an unusually detached expression on his face. After Tom had received his award, Dippet dismissed the students, sending the Great Hall into a flurry. Evelyn quickly made her way out of the Hall carefully swerving around the clumsy first years on her way.

"Professor Dumbledore," She called upon spotting him in the corridor.

"Yes?" He turned to face her, stopping in his tracks.

"I was just wondering if I could have a word with you, you see there have been some," she paused, looking for the correct word, "complications."

"Come to my office, we can discuss all we like there," he said, leading the way along the endless corridors, Evelyn following closely behind him.

"I do believe it's been a while since we last spoke Evelyn," he said, taking a seat in his large red armchair and beckoning for Evelyn to take a seat opposite him.

"Yes Professor," she took a seat in the chair and sat up, looking him in the eyes, "It's just that I am not sure what to do with myself. You and I both know that the boy is innocent but he is going to go to Azkaban for a crime that he did not commit, it is simply unfair!" She felt tears prickle in her eyes and she hastily wiped them away.

"Unfortunately, there is not much that can be done. It is everybody's word against mine however I will see what I can do to help him." Dumbledore said with honesty, looking into his eyes, Evelyn could see he meant well: she could see his pure intentions from a mile away.

Evelyn had so much to tell him, she could feel the information threatening to slip from her tongue, but she knew she couldn't. "Professor I must admit I am unsure of what I am doing, I do not know if I wish to do this anymore."

"Evelyn, you must persevere with your task. The boy must be stopped, he must be helped, and he must be changed. I firmly believe you are the only one who can do this," Dumbledore spoke sincerely.

"But why me, why not somebody else?" Evelyn said with a quivering voice.

"It just must be you, you must believe it can be you. It is important to fight and fight again, and keep fighting, for only then can evil be kept at bay, though never quite eradicated."

Although Evelyn was unsure of what Dumbledore had meant, she knew she had to keep going. Tom Riddle had to be stopped and she would be the one to do it. After her talk with Dumbledore, Evelyn headed towards the library, unsure of what she could do next.

The library was almost silent, with only a few sixth-year students sat whispering in a corner; it was just what Evelyn needed. She needed some time to think, and the quiet certainly helped her do just that. She pulled out her textbook and began studying the facts, copying out notes onto her spare pieces of parchment. She revised for almost an hour of uninterrupted silence before she noticed a rather odd-looking Tom Riddle cruising into the library.

She swiftly packed away her belongings and made her way over to him, "Are you alright?" She asked upon noticing his appearance. He looked dead; his skin looked whitewashed, purple bags hanging beneath his eyes and dry, cracked lips.

"Evelyn, as though you care." He huffed, dismissing her question.

"I do care, you should go down to the hospital wing, and you look as though you could collapse." She said with her arms ready to catch him if he did.

"I'm just rather tired and I would prefer it if you left me alone," He retorted.

"I'll leave you alone once you give me a good enough reason to do so," She pestered, placing her hands on her hips and staring him dead in the eyes.

He leant closer to her, his lips nearing her ear and whispered, "Meet me outside the Prefects Bathroom in two hours and I'll show you."

With that, he stormed away, out of the library and out of sight. Evelyn was hesitant at first, she had no idea what Tom could be showing her but her curiosity was overwhelming. She needed to find out what he was doing next: he was enigmatic, a

mystery, a challenge. However, no challenge was impossible and Evelyn would not give up until she had solved him.

Evelyn spent the evening playing muggle chess: she had always preferred it to wizard chess, it was less violent and far more enjoyable. She fingered a black pawn, waiting for her opponent. Underneath the table, her feet shuffled impatiently, but her expression remained cold and stoic. She stroked her chin, anticipating many moves ahead. She placed the pawn on the chessboard, in a direct line to the King. He was trapped. She found a simple grin forming on her face, she found it amusing how somebody of such power could be brought down by a simple pawn. How, in a game with no violence, one could be struck down.

Like a tonne of bricks, it suddenly hit her. She realised why she had been failing her task, why she was lagging behind. She was playing muggle chess whilst Tom was playing wizard's chess. She wasn't attacking but he was, she was merely observing and occasionally acting upon her thoughts, she was thinking about her moves far more than she should be; Evelyn needed to be strong, she needed to finally do something. She watched the clock tick as her opponent sighed, giving up.

"You won again!" The sixth-year said, looking rather distressed.

Instead of replying, she just shot him a friendly smile and began packing away the chessboard. By the time that the table was cleared, it had been almost two hours since she had spoken with Tom and she decided it best to leave. She placed the chessboard back where it belonged and left the common room and left the common room. She stalked the corridors with confidence, occasionally checking her watch to reassure herself of her timekeeping abilities.

Tom waited for her against a wall his eyes watching the hands tick on his own watch.

"I think you'll find I'm right on time," She smiled as she saw him glancing down at his watch.

"Well, congratulations." He huffed with frustration.

"Now," She took a deep breath, "What was it you were going to show me?"

"Follow me," He said, leading her through countless corridors and eventually coming to a halt opposite a wall.

"This is a wall," Evelyn stated with confusion, glancing at Tom who seemed to be pacing up and down with a thoughtful expression on his face. He paced beside the wall three times before pausing as though he was awaiting something. Evelyn opened her mouth, ready to ask what in Merlin's name he was doing when a low rumble caused her to stop. She glanced up at the wall, her mouth falling open as a large door began to appear on the previously empty wall. Evelyn found it almost impossible to suppress the curiosity that was simmering within her.

As soon as the door was fully formed, Tom swung it open, gesturing to what was inside. Evelyn hesitated, eyeing him warily, but after a short moment, Evelyn stepped into the large room. She was quickly overwhelmed by the vast size of the room and furrowed her brow, wondering how she had never seen this room before. She walked slowly forwards, her fingers trailing across the wooden drawers, and looked around her at the stone walls, which were covered in large paintings. Each painting held the same malevolent-looking man in emerald robes; wearing a small golden locket with the letter 'S' engraved on it.

She furrowed her brow before turning to the rest of the room and that's when she stilled for breath. There were hundreds upon hundreds of books, covering a vast majority of the room and towering above Evelyn like guards. "What is this place?" She asked in awe, turning to face Tom who waited behind her.

"I stumbled across it one night whilst I was on a walk, it turns into anything you require," Tom said with a small smirk. "I like to think of it as a Room of Requirement."

"Why are you showing me this?" There had to be some kind of catch or at least a twisted reasoning behind it. She walked towards the green armchair that sat beside a bookshelf and took a seat, placing her elbow on her knee and looking at Tom intensely.

"It's an interesting place; perhaps you would find a use for it. I find it rather lovely to study in," His lips curved upwards at the sides in an attempt at a smile.

"Well," Evelyn said, quickly rising from her seat and scanning the bookshelves, "I do believe we study quite different things," She gestured to the large, black book on the shelf in front of her, "Secrets of the Dark Arts hasn't quite taken my fancy Tom, and I find the library perfectly accommodating."

"I'm sure you will change your mind, Evelyn, after all, Secrets of the Dark Arts will be a very useful book for the near future I believe," He shot back with a smirk.

Evelyn sighed deeply, glaring at Tom. "What was wrong with you earlier?"

"I was simply drained, being this incredible takes it out of you." He simply said to her.

"I do quite believe that is a lie, Tom," She said, "And if we are going to be working together, I think it would be easier if we were truthful to one another."

"Yes, I agree it would be much easier. However, how do I know that I can trust you, Evelyn?" He queried, studying her,

"You don't, but if we are to work together then you might just have to believe me whether you like it or not."

Without another word, he began scanning the bookshelf, his eyes darting from cover to cover until they finally came to a halt upon sight of a worn-down cover with his initials faintly carved into the spine. He cautiously took the book in his hands, pushing it closer to Evelyn with hesitation. Tentatively, Evelyn took the book into her hands and examined it, Tom watching her every move. She ran her fingers gently along the spine before opening it. "It's empty," She said rather curiously, flicking the pages to ensure she was correct. "What is it?"

"It's a diary; it's a rather special one. It holds something very important to me."

"And what would that be?" She asked with furrowed brows, examining the diary once more, unable to find the speciality of the torn book.

"A piece of my soul, it is my first Horcrux." He said with pride, quickly snatching it back into his own arms.

"A what?" Evelyn asked, hoping that she had misheard him.

"Horcrux. It holds a piece of my soul so th-"

"I know what a Horcrux is! But why on earth do you have one?" Evelyn fumed.

"I made it." He said with a hopeful glint in his eye.

Evelyn was shattered, she felt hopeless. "I can't believe you!" She snapped, her voice growing louder with every syllable, "Why would you do that?"

"Evelyn, if I wish to be immortal then I need Horcruxes." He added, unaffected by Evelyn's outburst of fury.

"You plan on making more?" She began pacing up and down, taking deep breaths in an attempt to pause the growth of anger inside of her.

"Yes."

"How many?" She inquired.

"I don't know yet. Now I seem to be the only one speaking truthfully, so how about you begin telling the truth." He insisted.

Evelyn was taken back by his tone, her mouth opening and closing but no words coming out. "I-I don't know what you mean."

"I assure you I will not be as tolerant as I have been before if you continue to lie. You have been meeting with Professor Dumbledore rather regularly haven you?"

"Yes," She stuttered.

"And why is that exactly?" He questioned, pacing up and down the room.

"He wanted to make sure that I was still okay, you know after your friend Abraxas Malfoy cursed me." She lied with as much confidence as she could muster.

"Now, what I am struggling to understand Evelyn," he said, edging closer to her, "is why you continue to lie to me." He placed one hand on her chin, forcing her face to stare at him.

"I'm not lying!" She protested, trying to pull away from his strong grip on her chin.

"Well, why would Professor Dumbledore, a Professor of Transfiguration, have an interest in you being cursed?" He said, beginning to loosen his grip on her.

"Unlike some, he actually has the ability to empathise, to show emotions!" She snapped, finally breaking free from his clutch. "

"Evelyn, I assure you I can show emotions." His voice was silky smooth.

"Do it then, for once! Act like a human, rather than a machine!" She cried out, turning away from him.

But Tom grabbed her wrist, pulling her towards him with such force she almost fell. In an instant, his lips slammed against hers, her brain lighting a fire that spread warmth throughout her entire body. They kissed like strangers because in reality, that's what they were, it was formal and mechanical, lasting only briefly before he pulled away.

Evelyn couldn't find the words. Her mouth hung open, unsure if she was expecting more, or trying to speak. It was though she had blinked and the moment was over.

Tom didn't say another word before he left the room, but even if he had, Evelyn wouldn't have heard it, she was miles away but what she couldn't tell was if she was in a nightmare or a daydream.

By the time Evelyn felt alive again, she tried to call out for Tom, but he was long gone. "What the hell was that?"

Evelyn thought about exploring the room she was in, the room Tom had called a Room of Requirement, but she could barely compose herself.; anything she found would get lost in her mind, rendering it entirely useless. She made her way out of the room and back to the Ravenclaw Tower.

"Something on your mind, Evelyn?" Helena Ravenclaw called out to her, noticing the flush of her cheeks. Evelyn bit her lip. "Would that mean boy troubles? I wish I had had more of those when I was alive..."

She nodded, "something like that," Evelyn didn't wish to divulge the details of her boy troubles to Helena, she knew that they were far unlike anything the average student would experience.

"Well, you can't let it interfere with your OWL examinations next week, especially not if you still want to become an Auror!" Evelyn had almost forgotten about her exams next week, it felt as though the events of the Room of Requirement had melted any knowledge she still had in her mind.

"I won't!" Evelyn was almost certain it would interfere with her OWLS and there was very little she could do about that matter. "See you soon!" She walked into her dormitory where Lily and Sara sat waiting on her bed. "Hello," she smiled at the sight of them.

"I think we need to talk," Lily said bluntly. Evelyn stopped in her tracks, looking at Lily as though pushing her to continue.

"We're worried about you, you've been" Sara paused, looking for the right word, "distant. Evelyn, you've changed. You used to be with us all the time, but now you're barely around..."

"I-I don't understand," she took a seat on the edge of her bed, "I'm the same as I always have been."

"But you aren't!" Sara butted in, "you are not the Evelyn we became friends with!"

Evelyn could feel her face reddening further, "well I am not the same person you became friends with! If you didn't notice, my parents died, that changes someone Sara! I'm not going to be the same weak little girl I was last year, even last month. Change isn't always a bad thing, sometimes change helps you realise who you really are and who really matters. If you can't appreciate me for who I am now, then don't." Evelyn quickly rose from her bed and stormed back out of the dormitory, into the common room.

She wanted to cry, she wanted to release the pressure that had been bubbling inside of her but she felt weak. She had a volcano inside her waiting to be unleashed but she didn't know how to control it. Evelyn didn't know if she was even in control anymore, if she was in control then perhaps she didn't even know who she was. Amongst the storm that was becoming her life, her path had become blurred by the storm clouds and she was slowly fading into the background.

Sleep didn't come easily that night, it took Evelyn until the sun came up to finally doze off on the sofa in the common room.

Evelyn didn't speak another word to Lily and Sara for the whole two weeks of her OWL examinations, she had also been able to avoid Tom Riddle, although she wasn't sure if that was a positive or not.

Even as Evelyn prepared to go into her final, she felt nervous. Although it was a subject she found easy, she simply wasn't sure if mentally she could complete another exam. All week, her mind had felt scrambled, she had barely even been able to concentrate for any of her exams the previous week.

As she entered the Great Hall and took her seat, the nerves seemed to simply melt away, her mind zoned into the exam and every other worry in the world began to fade away. She took in a deep, ragged breath before placing her hands, enclosed together, onto the table. She picked up the raven quill and the ideas began flooding her mind faster than she could write. Her mind quickly took control of the quill and soon her page began filling up.

Although Evelyn had not enjoyed the exam, it still ended far too quickly for her liking, resulting in her rushing her conclusion on Wand Legislation far more than she would have liked. As soon as she left the Great Hall, a small smile plastered on her face, she felt herself being pulled to the side.

"Evelyn," he nodded at her, "I have a request."

"Oh, so you finally want to talk to me! And what would make you think I am going to grant your request..." She wriggled free from his grasp, crossing her arms.

"Well," he leant closer to her, "you do owe me a favour."

And of course, he was correct, "I guess that would be correct..."

"I need you to accompany me over the holidays," he stated.

"And where exactly would we be headed?" Evelyn began tapping the sole of her shoe against the cobbled floor along to the beat of her heart.

"Little Hangleton," he nodded at her, "You will get off the Hogwarts Express at Yorkshire and accompany me, we have business to attend to." He turned hot on his heels and took off, quickly disappearing from Evelyn's eyesight.

Despite Hogwarts being home, every student was excited to go home for the summer; summer was a six week holiday with bliss weather and no stress from school whatsoever. The only school-related event during the break would be the results from the OWLs that the fifth years had taken during the last few weeks of term. Every student was excited to some extent, yet Evelyn seemed to be the only exception.

After her encounter with Tom earlier in the week, she was unsure how to feel about going to Little Hangleton with him. She barely knew the place and she knew even less about him. As more time passed, she began to regret her decision to go with him yet she knew it was never really her decision to make, she knew she wasn't really in control, Tom was.

Evelyn packed her trunk with great care, ensuring everything was sorted by colour and style before closing it and sealing it with a quick wave of her wand. It felt strange to Evelyn, saying goodbye to Hogwarts, even if it was only for six weeks: a lot could change in six weeks.

She made it to the Hogwarts express with plenty of time to spare. Leisurely, she strolled onto the ruby carriage and took a seat in the first empty compartment. Evelyn knew that Little Hangleton lay close to Birmingham and since she was without further knowledge from Tom then she had to go on her own gut feeling.

She had heard little about Little Hangleton before Tom had told her that they would be visiting, and of course, like a true Ravenclaw, Evelyn had visited the library before Hogwarts had closed for the summer. Yet even when using her strongest intuition, she could barely find anything about it. All she had found out was that there was an impressive graveyard located in the centre of the small town.

Interrupting her train of thought, smoke began to pour into the station and the Hogwarts Express began its journey across the rolling hills of Scotland. Evelyn barely even saw the train rolling out of the station before her eyes closed and she drifted into a tranquil slumber.

Whilst she slept, her body rested but her mind was more agitated than ever before. Pictures of the horrors that could unfold at Little Hangleton poured into her mind, flashes of all the terrible curses that Tom could be casting were like fireworks in her mind: explosive and bright for a moment, but quickly fading into the distance with no trace of them to be found after the explosion.

Evelyn still did not know what events would unfold once she arrived at Little Hangleton with Tom and the curiosity that flowed within her began to feel overwhelming. Her heart was palpitating uncontrollably with the fire of a thousand suns and the thoughts that rode the carousel around her mind did not want to stop.

Her mind flashed back to the moment he had first asked her to delve deeper into Tom Riddle's world and she wondered why she had even thought that she could do anything to stop him. Dumbledore had left her stumbling in the dark when he had the power to turn on a light. Evelyn had gone into this blind and she would come out of it exactly the same way as well.

She knew that large scale results would take time, time that she did not possess, but if she aimed for marginal gains then perhaps she would finally achieve progress in the task she was given at the beginning of her fifth year, a task that only *she* had been given. For unknown reasons, Dumbledore had chosen her for the task, not

anybody else, just Evelyn and Evelyn alone would change Tom Riddle's life. She was not sure how, and she was not sure when, but she was certain that she would.

When Evelyn awoke, it was dark outside. The train was still in motion and the vast fields passed by the window in fractions of seconds. The Hogwarts Express travelled at such speed that any muggle would be physically sick if they travelled on it for a journey of such length as the one to Scotland.

The rest of the journey passed by slowly, every second ticking by precariously on Evelyn's golden pocket watch. After a total of almost five hours, the Hogwarts Express pulled up outside Birmingham station. Without missing a beat, Evelyn was off the train and leaning against the platform wall in an attempt to look casual in front of Tom. Her attempt was clearly not successful by the displeased look on Tom's face when he walked by. A scoff escaped his lips as he held out his hand for Evelyn to take.

Evelyn made a mental note of his bitten-down nails as she looked at his hand with wide eyes. "What do you expect me to do? I am not holding your hand." She chuckled to herself.

"Evelyn, how do you expect we are getting to Little Hangleton?" He asked with a sigh, rolling his eyes deep into his head.

"That's not for me to work out, you planned this!"

"We are wizards, we use magic. Take my hand and we will apparate to Little Hangleton."

"You can't apparate! That's against the law, the ministry will have your wand!" Evelyn shrieked in disbelief.

Tom saw that Evelyn would not obey him without force so he forcefully pulled her hand and connected it with his own, and then they were away.

Evelyn felt her body being torn in different directions, her limbs being pulled from her torso and her skin being stretched. She was being pulled in every direction possible and the pain overcame her. Although the moment only lasted a few moments, for Evelyn it was a memory she wouldn't forget. The feeling was unbearable and the second Evelyn felt her feet touch the grass, she emptied the contents of her stomach onto the floor.

"Welcome to Little Hangleton," Tom said with a chuckle.

Little Hangleton was a quaint village: there was almost nothing alive within Evelyn's eyesight and the weather reflected the gloomy mood much better than anything else ever could. Although it had a dark atmosphere: it was magical.

Tom cleared his throat with a loud raspy cough. "This way," he started walking towards a quaint-looking house peeping over the hill and Evelyn took off following him. The ground felt hard against her feet, dried up from the evident lack of rainfall in the village. Tom made no attempt to make polite conversation along the brisk walk so Evelyn assumed it best not to try. She usually found it better that way.

It didn't take long to get to the building but when they did, they both stopped in their tracks. "We'll be staying here overnight and then tomorrow morning I expect you up early for our little job," Tom commanded. Before Evelyn could get a word in, Tom stormed off into the B&B.

Evelyn reluctantly followed him again, she'd found herself doing this quite often, much to her dismay, yet she knew acting otherwise would land her in trouble. The foyer of the B&B was dimly lit by a rugged lamp in the corner of the room. Evelyn shrivelled her nose in disgust when she first laid her eyes upon the receptionist; a stumpy man with a coiled grey beard, dirt trickling down his forehead, trapped in beads of sweat: he was a mess.

In the space of time it took Evelyn to fully digest the situation, Tom had already collected their room keys and was waiting impatiently by the wooden staircase. Evelyn took one last glance at the man before following Tom up the stairs, cautious not to step on any weak floorboards.

"Mudblood," Tom simply said, sending Evelyn into a state of confusion, "the man you were just looking at."

"Your point is..." she trailed off.

"I saw the way you looked at him, it was the way I look at them too. You're much more similar to me than you think Evelyn."

"I-I don't know what you mean," Evelyn stuttered, pausing in her place behind Tom.

"You don't have to try and hide it around me, I feel the same way too." He said with a look of disgust on his face.

Evelyn stopped herself before she said anything else. She could keep up the act with Tom and infiltrate further into his ranks or she could jeopardise the whole task with one simple word. She thought about it intensely, furrowing her brow before coming to a conclusion.

"They're unworthy." Evelyn spat, mimicking Tom's tone of voice.

Without another word, Tom passed Evelyn the key to her room and bid her goodnight before disappearing down the corridor. Evelyn inspected the key, turning it in her palms three times before placing it in the keyhole and unlocking the door. She

tried to hide her disappointment when she entered the room but the look on her face gave it all away.

As much as Evelyn knew she wouldn't be staying in a five-star resort, she had at least expected a room that wasn't crawling with mould and didn't have a severe rat infestation. Tom Riddle had higher standards than a room like this so she wondered why it had even crossed his mind to stay here. They could have simply apparated in the morning and then do whatever was needed to be done during the day. Evelyn knew that sleep would not come easily in a room such as this.

Evelyn had not brought anything with her on their journey other than what she was wearing so she hesitantly removed her top and skirt until all that remained on her skin was her pale underwear that tightly clutched her naked skin. She felt bare. With lightning speed, she threw herself into the bed and under the covers, breathing a sigh of relief as the blanket heaven drowned her. She shut her hazel eyes tightly and attempted to drift away to the sound of scurrying creatures.

A loud thud awoke Evelyn from her peaceful slumber. With a groan, she rolled over in the bed and stretched. "What is it?" She called out, her voice crackling with every syllable.

"Evelyn hurry up!" The voice replied, ringing bells in Evelyn's ears.

During her peaceful slumber, she had almost completely forgotten about Tom Riddle and his stupid good looks. Hesitantly, she rubbed her eyes and stood up beside the bed. Before she even got the chance to adjust to her surroundings, the door swung open revealing the mysterious Tom Riddle stood in her doorway. He leant against the doorway with a look of pure disgust, a look that could kill.

His snake-like eyes stared with such intensity, Evelyn swore they were about to pierce a hole through the wall. Without a word, he shuffled out of sight and Evelyn proceeded to get changed with a sense of hurry that his look had installed.

Once she was appropriately dressed, she swung open the door to reveal exactly what she had expected: Tom leant against the wall with his wand already prepared in his hand. Evelyn took one last look in the rusting mirror at her reflection before closing the door behind her and placing herself beside Tom.

"Well, at least you're finally wearing some clothes," Tom muttered as he caught a glance of Evelyn.

"Is that humour I just detected Tom?"

With a stern look, Tom immediately silenced Evelyn before she could dig herself a deeper grave. "Follow me." He ordered.

Evelyn knew better than to disobey his command yet as she trailed behind him, she made sure he was aware of her curiosity. "Where are we going?"

" Gaunt House."

"Why are we going to Gaunt House?" She asked.

"Somebody that lives there has something that I want, need" He quickly corrected.

"And what is that exactly?" She pestered, picking up her pace so that she walked beside him.

"Do you ever stop asking questions?" He said with a sigh.

"No. I'm a very curious person. I like to know what's going on all the time. I like to know people and things. It makes me uncomfortable not knowing." She explained.

"You don't know me. Do I make you uncomfortable?"

Evelyn thought about her words before she spoke them this time. Tom Riddle definitely made her feel something but uncomfortable wasn't it. "No."

"Is that a lie?" He began to slow his pace.

"No." She said with a hint more confidence than the previous time.

"Good, because we're here."

Evelyn stepped into the Gaunt House with more confusion than when she had left the bed and breakfast. It was nothing at all how she had expected - it was more a shack than a house.

"Stay behind me," Tom muttered, drawing his wand.

Evelyn obediently fell into line behind Tom, keeping her wand clutched in her hand as she tiptoed over the mess that was the floor. She crept with as much stealth as she could, unaware of the dangers lay inside. If Tom had his wand out, she knew there was something big coming.

In silence, the two trailed the perimeter of the house and finally came to a halt in what Evelyn assumed was once a living area. There was one chair, riddled with cobwebs, sat in front of a small sofa, other than that the room was bare. There was nothing on the walls, no pictures or memories- the house was devoid of all signs of life.

"Wait here," Tom commanded, sauntering off down the halls in a flash.

Evelyn began pacing impatiently whilst she waited for Tom to return. With each step, the floorboards below her began to creak, building up the anxiety inside of her. Before another second passed, Tom came storming back in, his hand balled into a fist and grasping at the coat of a familiar-looking man. Tom pushed him onto the wooden chair and quickly muttered a spell before taking a seat opposite him. For a few moments, nobody spoke. Everybody simply acknowledged one another and Evelyn inspected the man. He had hair matted with so much dirt, it could've been any colour, and his tiny dark eyes wandered in every direction, filled with so much energy they almost burst. He was almost in a worse state than the house.

"Why are you here boy?" The man asked, grinning and revealing the several gaps between his teeth.

"I'm here for answers," Tom said simply, crossing his legs and twirling his wand about in his hand. "Where is Marvolo?"

"Dead- died years ago. Marvolo hasn't been in this house in years."

Riddle shot him an icy glare. "Care to explain who you are then?"

"I'm Morfin, Marvolos son. I thought you were that muggle. You look mighty like that muggle" Morfin whispered.

"What muggle?" Tom spat the word 'muggle' with disgust, clenching his jaw.

"That Muggle what my sister took a fancy to, that Muggle what lives in the Riddle House big house over the way, you look right like him. Riddle. But he's older now, in 'e? He's older'n you, now I think on it... he come back, see. "

"My father was *not* a muggle." Tom spat back at Morfin.

"Your father was as much a muggle as any other. He fell for that filthy slut. She disobeyed us all. Who are you to come back here and ask these questions? I want you out" Morfin's agitation grew by the minute.

Tom raised his wand and before Evelyn had a chance to stop him, sent a stupefy straight into Morfin. He leant over, grabbed hold of Morfin's wand and bolted out of the shack, leaving Evelyn breathlessly following behind.

"Tom!" Evelyn called from behind him. Her breath faltering as she spoke. She ran in front of him and blocked his way. "Wait!"

"Evelyn go back." He commanded, stepping to the side and continuing to speed down the lane.

"Tom, tell me right now what you are going to do. I'm not leaving." Tom halted in his track in front of a large manor.

As Tom raised his wand, Evelyn knew exactly what he was about to do. "No. Tom, it's not worth it." She shook her head vigorously; this would only make him a worse person. He was almost too far gone and this would push him over the edge.

"I want him dead. You heard what Morfin said – he abandoned my mother, he abandoned me!" Anger rose inside of him, coating his body like a second skin.

"Tom you can't do this."

"And you can't stop me. Go back, Evelyn. Go back." He said. And with that, he began walking down the winding path that led into the Riddle Manor. And with that, he fell further and further into the darkness.

Evelyn didn't bother waiting for Tom. She headed straight back to the Bed and Breakfast, collected her few belongings and was on her way. She didn't know where she was, or how on Earth she could get home. Evelyn was lost- but there was nothing she could do about it. She was lost in the midst of Little Hangleton; she was caught up in a web of lies that Tom had spun around her and she didn't see an escape.

Evelyn spent the last weeks of the summer holidays drifting between accommodation, sleeping a few nights in each place and then moving on. She could bring herself to go back to her Grandparents house. If she did- she was admitting defeat: she couldn't do that to herself. Evelyn wanted to prove to herself and everyone else that she could do it alone. She wanted to be independent, she wanted this to be all her. Evelyn wanted to be in control of her own future, and that she would be.

By the time September rolled around- Evelyn would be ready for anything. She would walk into her sixth year at Hogwarts with a sense of confidence, and as the year progressed, she would finally take down Tom Riddle.

When Evelyn returned home after Little Hangleton, she wasn't sure how to feel. She knew that she had to go back to Hogwarts stronger, smarter and braver than ever before.

On her way home from Little Hangleton, she had purchased a copy of *Secrets of the Darkest Art* and ever since she had made it home, she had been unable to pull her nose out of it. She had to become smarter if she wanted any chance of stopping Tom Riddle.

By the time she arrived at her front door, she had almost forgotten about the events that took place the time she was previously here, she had forgotten about the folder

stuffed in her trunk that had helped both her and Tom create a theory as to the true fate of her parents.

"Evelyn, I think it is time you and I had a talk," her grandmother said to her from the kitchen table.

Evelyn nodded her head, "yes, I think it is..." She took a seat opposite her grandmother, crossing her arms.

"I know you took the folder," she began

"Yes, and therefore you know why I took it, I had to know!"

Her grandmother shook her head, "but you shouldn't have taken it your parents would be disappointed."

Evelyn rolled her eyes, "I did it for them, they would be proud of me, I had to know what happened to them."

"Well, did you find out?"

"Yes."

"And..." Her grandmother urged her to speak.

Evelyn studied the expression on her grandmothers face, "you don't know do you? You don't know what happened to them..."

Her grandmother shook her head, "I never found out. I've been looking for years."

And so Evelyn told her, she told her everything, everything Tom had told her all those months ago, everything she knew, and everything she had an inkling about.

Evelyn spent the next few weeks at home eagerly awaiting her OWL results, the morning when they were due to arrive, she was filled with nerves. She had barely slept the night before and when she saw the envelop waiting on her doormat, her heart almost burst straight out of her chest.

Dear Miss Evelyn Meliora Rivers

Below are the results that you achieved in your O.W.L. exams:

Astronomy: Outstanding

Ancient Runes: Exceeds Expectations

Charms: Outstanding

Defense Against the Dark Arts: Outstanding

Herbology: Outstanding

History of Magic: Outstanding

Muggle Studies: Exceeds Expectations

Potions: Outstanding

Transfiguration: Outstanding

If you have received Poor or above in any of your chosen subjects, please consult with the appropriate Professor to discuss resitting the examinations in the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Armando Dippet

Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

"Congratulations Evelyn!" Her grandma said, "your parents would be so proud of you!"

Evelyn smiled, "I hope so!"

"You should go and tell them! I know your mother would be especially proud of that grade in Ancient Runes, especially considering how challenging you found it!"

Evelyn scurried out of the kitchen with her OWL results in hand. She sat down on the patch of grass beside her parents gravestones, placing one hand on the soil. "I did it, mother and father, I got the grades, I'm going to be an Auror, just like you two were." She leant in and smelt the roses, "I'm going to study Charms, Herbology, Potions, Defence Against the Dark Arts, Potions and Transfiguration and then I'm going to apply to be an Auror and work in the same department as you!" She closed her eyes and took a deep breath in, "see you at Christmas."

When Evelyn entered back into the kitchen, she spotted her grandmother at the table with a copy of the Daily Prophet, "you want a read?"

"Oh yes!" She hadn't read the Daily Prophet since before leaving for Little Hangleton and was eager to catch up on the news. Evelyn took the copy of the Daily Prophet in her hands with a smile that began to falter as soon as she saw the front page story.

Murder In Little Hangleton - Riddle Family Found Dead

The Riddle family were found dead last night in their manor. Thomas Riddle Sr, his wife, and son were all found by authorities in a perplexed state. A cause of death has not yet been identified however Frank Bryce has been named the main suspect in the case and has been taken into custody. (More on page 5....)

Evelyn's heart sank when she read the news, she knew deep down what Tom had done, but part of her had hoped she was wrong, for once, she didn't want to be right.

Reading the article had solidified in her mind who Tom Riddle really was, he was simply a monster, nearing the point of no return and it was up to Evelyn to stop him. Somehow, she had to pull him back from the edge, she had to save him.

When Evelyn went to sleep that night, all she could think about was him.

With Morfin Gaunts wand in his hand, Tom Riddle made his way into the Riddle House. He spotted his father first, sat in the drawing room with a cup of tea, and like a snake, he struck.

"Avada Kerdavra!" His father's body fell onto the floor, earning a loud exclamation from his grandmother and grandfather.

"Tom!" His grandmother called.

His grandfather turned to look at his wife, "it's him, it's him."

"You filthy muggles, I will cleanse my heritage, you will pay!" He turned to his grandparents, and in an instant, they were slumped on the floor beside their son with horrified expressions plastered on their faces.

Tom's lips crept up into a smile, "oh and by the way, it's not Tom anymore. It's Lord Voldemort."

When it was time to return to Hogwarts, Evelyn found herself becoming more and more uncertain. She hadn't been in contact with her friends for the past six weeks and she hadn't spoken to Tom since Little Hangleton.

Evelyn took a seat in the empty carriage at the front of the train, with an empty carriage, she could do anything, but all she really wanted to do was sleep. She wanted the weight of her eyelids to finally glue them shut, she wanted her eyes to stay closed for more than ten minutes at a time, she wanted just a few hours of calm.

She leant her head against the carriage window, watching the green hills speed past her. As Evelyn looked out the window, she wondered what would've happened to her if she had just ignored Tom Riddle. Her life would be entirely different from how it was now. She wouldn't have spent the summer gallivanting around Little Hangleton, following Tom and his every move. She wouldn't have wasted hours of time researching useless details about his heritage. She wouldn't have countless sleepless nights. She wouldn't have experienced some of the worst moments of her life.

However, if Evelyn wasn't willing to continue the task that Dumbledore set her, Tom Riddle would spiral further and further down a dark path, never to see the light again. If Evelyn hadn't risked her life for Tom Riddle, she would most likely lose everyone around her; and although she knew she was far from finished with her task, she felt a sense of accomplishment. Although Tom was still spiralling, Evelyn was controlling the spiral, she was watching his every move.

She watched the rolling hills pass her by, waving goodbye to every last inch of doubt that lived inside of her. Instead, she welcomed a strange newfound sense of confidence and radiated it.

As the train pulled up outside of Hogwarts, Evelyn stepped out of her carriage with confidence. She kept her head held high as she strolled down the platform and as soon as she saw the Great Hall, she felt warmth beginning to bubble inside of her. She walked into the Hall, her eyes scanning the sea of students for the familiar faces of her friends. She knew she had to make amends, or at least try to, she couldn't do this alone.

"Lily, Sara," she began, stopping in front of them with a smile on her face. "I need to apologise." She quickly added, hoping they wouldn't walk away.

"You certainly do," Sara said, her eyes darting between Evelyn and Sara. "I don't even want to begin to describe how worried we've been about you. Before summer you were acting crazy and you better have it under control."

"That's a bit harsh Sara, but you are right, you certainly do need to apologise," Lily glanced at Evelyn with a neutral expression, "you haven't been yourself, and that's okay, but you need to be honest with us."

"I have made mistakes. Last year, I wasn't myself at all, my mind was consumed by other things and I had no time for my friends. I wasted all of last year gallivanting after Tom and ruining the perfect friendship we already had, just the three of us. I was shifty, keeping secrets from the two people I trust the most, I was a monster. I can't promise I'll change instantly, I still have to keep some secrets for everyone's safety and there are still some things I have to do, but I promise I will try my hardest to keep you involved and spend time with you." Evelyn spoke with confidence, looking up at her two friends with an apologetic smile.

"I think we know exactly why you were so strange last year. It's all to do with a certain boy and some certain feelings you are undeniably having for him." Lily finally spoke.

"You 100% fancy Tom Riddle." Sara smiled gleefully, "I have to admit, I have no idea what you see in him, other than his beautiful exterior, but we don't hate you for it at all. We haven't told anybody about it though; your secret is safe with us."

Evelyn couldn't deny there were feelings there, and they had definitely grown stronger over the past months, but she was still unsure of what her feelings even were. All she knew is that they were strong, they dictated her every decision and consumed her.

Evelyn held her arms out for a hug, embracing her two best friends and pulling them close to her. As the three-parted, they grinned simultaneously and when Lily held her hand out, Evelyn didn't hesitate to grasp it with all her might. The three girls giggled as they found seats at the Ravenclaw tables and began to gossip loudly, a tradition which they certainly enjoyed. As the girls spoke, Evelyn realised how much she had missed out on, so much had changed in the past year that Evelyn hadn't even noticed was happening at the time. Lily had changed her hair and now wore a crimson shade on her plump lips and Sara wore thinly framed circular glasses, whilst Evelyn had been focusing on the bigger picture she had completely forgotten to zoom in and admire the details.

Her train of thought stopped abruptly as a loud-voice echoed across the great hall. "Settle down now students," began Headmaster Dippet with a broad smile. "Now, although last year we may have had some difficulties, Hogwarts is proud to still be open thanks to one student in particular: Tom Riddle" He began a round of applause as Tom rose to his feet and gave a forced smile to the teachers and students, as the noise began to fade out, Tom retook his seat and felt his eyes glancing towards Evelyn table.

Headmaster Dippet continued with his welcoming speech, the hall remaining silent until piles of food appeared on the four tables running down the hall. Evelyn licked her lips as she grabbed a spoonful of roast potatoes and placed them on her plate alongside some greens and chicken. She was overwhelmed for choice of different aromas, tastes, and textures but eventually settled on a full plate of steaming food that met all of her needs. With every bite, a new burst of flavour exploded in her mouth and she ate until she could fit no more in. As the feast came to an end, students began leaving the hall and heading towards their dormitories.

Evelyn rose from her seat and waved goodbye to her friends, heading out of the Great Hall and making her way towards the Ravenclaw common room. "Evelyn," She paused in her tracks at the sound of her name being called and turned instantly to see Tom Riddle stood behind her.

"What do you want Tom? I'm tired." She asked, sighing dramatically.

"I was just here to welcome you back to Hogwarts; I heard things would be different this year."

"I certainly hope they are." She smiled, turning hot on her heel and entering her common room. She headed straight for her dormitory and immediately sunk into her warm bed, wrapping the blankets around herself and closing her eyes. She tried to avert her focus from Tom Riddle and as she felt him leaving her thoughts; her mind dragged her into the oblivion of sleep.

As the sun began to rise, Evelyn pulled herself out of the comfort of her bed and rubbed her tired eyes. She had slept well yet the anxiety of school quickly made her feel nauseated and uncomfortable. She glanced at her alarm clock and jumped as she saw the time: it was late. She looked around her at her empty dormitory and sighed, her friends had left for breakfast which meant she had already missed it.

Evelyn knew she had damaged her friendships during her past year spent following Tom around like a puppy dog and she wished she could change the past she knew that she would just have to change the future. Her friends were her life. Sara and Lily had been her rock when her parents died; they had been her shoulder to cry on and had held her up when she fell down. She didn't know them like she used to, they'd all changed and so had she, they weren't first-years anymore.

Evelyn put on her robes and brushed her teeth in a state of grogginess. She was exhausted. She could barely think straight but she couldn't miss her first day of classes. She pulled herself together as best she could and put her wand inside her robe pocket, holding it tightly as she wove her way through the students piling up in the corridor. She didn't let go of her wand until she had taken her seat in Potions. Her wand made her feel safe. She felt so safe clutching her wand that she didn't even bat an eyelid when Tom came into Potions and took his seat beside her.

Professor Slughorn walked into the classroom with a peculiar grin on his face. "Welcome back to potions everybody," He smiled dimly, "today we are going to completing a Polyjuice potion that I prepared for you all a few nights ago. Open your textbooks and begin brewing."

Evelyn quickly took out her copy of *Advanced Potion-Making* and flicked through it until she came across the recipe for brewing a Polyjuice Potion.

"You will all need to start with a phial of my potion and a cauldron. We will be starting from Part Two, Step Two." Slughorn informed everyone before taking a seat at his desk and beginning to watch the students for talent.

She poured a phial of Polyjuice potion into her copper cauldron and began brewing it. There were only two steps that she had to complete however Evelyn was renowned for overcomplicating simple situations. She carefully added her Lacewings and began to stir her potion, counting carefully with each motion. When she was satisfied with the colour of the Potion, she filled up the phial she had been given and cleared away her cauldron. Surprisingly the potion had been moderately easy

however now she had to annotate her recipe and provide an analysis. Her eyes darted across her scroll as words began to flow from her quill.

"Evelyn, may I have a word with you?" Professor Slughorn requested politely, beckoning Evelyn towards his desk.

She stalked towards his desk, clutching the handle of her wand again. "What is it, Professor? Have I done something wrong?"

"No not at all Evelyn," he began with a warming smile, "in fact, it is quite the opposite. As you recall, I held several dinner parties last year and I am planning to continue them this year and would very much appreciate it if you came along!"

"Absolutely Professor! It would be an honour to attend!" Evelyn said, smiling in a manner she hoped would please her Professor.

"You'll see my owl very soon; I have invited many of the same students as last year."

At the end of the class, Evelyn collected her book, placed it under her arm and exited the classroom, turning down the corridor and making her way up the stairs.

"Wait a minute!" Called a voice that by now she knew far too well, Tom Riddle.

"Again?" She stopped in her tracks, "People are going to think you fancy me or something, Tom,"

"I don't have time for feelings, especially not towards you." He spat, poison dripping from his every word. "Meet me tonight in the Forbidden Forest, we have something to do."

Evelyn knew better than to question Tom so she simply agreed and continued up the stairs. She turned down the corridor that led to the common room and increased her speed at the thought of a warm bed. When she entered the common room, her body fell limp across the navy couch and her eyelids quickly fluttered shut. The exhaustion had caught up with her and quickly took its toll on her body.

Her nap was cut short as the common room began to fill with students finished with their lessons for the day hustling and whispering as they walked towards their dorms. Evelyn sat up and looked at the grandfather clock that stood proudly beside the fireplace - It was almost time to meet Tom.

She put her textbook away in her room and left a note for Sara and Lily so they didn't worry before heading out of the common room door. She clutched her wand as she walked, following her usual route to the grounds. The grounds were illuminated with a special cold, pale light that only the brightest winter moon could provide, Evelyn's breath formed in front of her sending a chill down her spine. It was the kind of cold

that told her winter was almost here. Gone were the days of careless summer and along came frosty nights.

She made her way to their usual meeting space in the forest and stood against a tree in the clearing, she was early. Although Tom was always much more strict with punctuality than Evelyn, it didn't cross her mind that he was late, she was too concerned with what daring task he would ask of her this time.

Footsteps rustled the frosty leaves, crunching each intricate layer with every step and Evelyn braced herself. She stood tall and proud and wiped every inch of panic off her face before she saw Tom yet the person who emerged from the shadows was not him. It was Astrea Black.

"Why are you here?" Evelyn asked precariously, "I thought that I was meeting Tom."

"You were, however, there was a change of plans. He set me a little task first. He wanted me to make sure you never breathed a word of this to anyone, of course, I said the only option was death but surprisingly he seemed rather hesitant to that idea. It seems he has some kind of attachment to you, rather a shame considering. He just needed me to make sure you knew exactly what would happen should you share any kind of information about him with anyone. Understand?"

Evelyn nodded, unsure of how to react. Her grip tightened on her wand as she inhaled a deep breath, shaking as she released.

Astrea poised her wand in her hand, tightening her grip as she muttered the word that had haunted Evelyn's dreams - *Crucio*.

Evelyn dropped to the floor, the frost melting as it touched her skin and her whole body convulsing with pain. It came in waves yet the pain was debilitating, Evelyn couldn't think or speak. Her mind was being tortured with every method possible. She was crying out in pain, screaming and writhing until one last wave finally drowned her.

Although Evelyn knew that everything at NEWT level would be harder, she had not anticipated how little free time she would have, she had even had to abandon the Ravenclaw Quidditch team due to the workload, something she had hoped to avoid.

Even when it came to the weekend, Evelyn spent her time in the library with Lily, whilst Sara spent her weekends with a boy and then copied their work. She missed the Quidditch team, but once she saw the training schedule, she was glad she had made the difficult decision to quit the Quidditch Team.

"Do you have much work left?" Lily asked, looking up from her essay.

Evelyn looked down at her incomplete essay, "I still haven't finished the essay for Charms!"

"Is it alright if I go back to the common room?" Lily looked guilty, "it's just that I could really do with a nap and I know you have your Prefects meeting later!"

Evelyn shook her head, "no, no it's fine! This essay looks like it will take me all the way to the meeting anyway, you go sleep!" She watched as her friend packed up her parchment before returning to her essay. It took Evelyn a good few hours before her essay felt complete, and by the time it did, the library had emptied out.

"What are you still doing here?" She heard Tom call out to her from across the library.

Evelyn sighed deeply, "well, I was doing my work until someone who I do not want to talk to came over and interrupted me rudely!" She kept her eyes on the essay.

"I thought you might want to hear what I have to say, I feel as though it may interest you..." He trailed off. When Evelyn didn't respond, he continued, "it's about Astrea Black."

Evelyn raised her eyebrows, glancing at Tom. "Why would I have any interest in her?" She spat, flinching as she recalled her encounter with Astrea.

"Well, I hear she wished to duel you."

"And why would I want to do that?" Evelyn began rolling up her essay, keeping her eyes on Tom at all times.

"Well," Tom began, "it would feel good to win against someone who did such thing to you, it would help you practice your magic, it would make your parents proud."

"Would it make you stop talking to me?"

"I guess it may, although I would like to be present for the duel, I'm sure it would be interesting." He tilted his head, staring intensely at Evelyn.

She stood up, "and whereabouts would this be?"

"She'll be waiting for you in the Forbidden Forest at midnight, as will I. I do hope you both leave in one piece,"

"Really?"

"Well, perhaps one more than the other." He stood up, leaving Evelyn alone in the library.

Evelyn sat quietly for a few moments, alone in the library, before she decided to make her way to the Prefects meeting. Like most meetings, it was taking place in an

unused classroom and being headed up by the Head Girl and Boy, both of whom were rather stuck up Gryffindor students whom Evelyn had taken a quick disliking to.

"Glad you could finally join us," Amos Abbott said, rolling his eyes at the Head Girl Evangeline.

She scoffed loudly, "yes, as Amos said, glad you could grace us with your presence. Now, where were we?"

Tom Riddle piped up, "we were just discussing the abuse of the Prefect system..."

Evangeline blushed with a light giggle, "why thank you, Tom. Of course, as I was saying although being a Prefect is a great honour and allows you certain privileges, I do not want these abused!"

Amos wiped his badge, "I expect you all to be wearing your Prefect badges at all times, any individual seen without theirs will be reported back to the Headmaster, it is simply unacceptable!"

"Let me remind you of the certain duties and privileges you all have," Evangeline took a seat on the edge of a desk, "you are allowed to take house points away from houses, and that does include your own, however, you may not take points away from other prefects! You can also give out detentions as appropriate punishments if you deem necessary, although I would hope you attempt to avoid this option!"

"Shortly," Amos took over, "we will be sending you the patrol schedules and I expect you all to stick to them, you will be in charge of making sure students are not breaking curfew, and if they are you shall provide an appropriate punishment!"

"You also have use of the Prefects Bathroom this year, this is located on the fifth floor. The password to get inside will be *Lily Blossom* and you are not permitted to share this, or the bathroom with anyone other than the other people in this room! Is that understood?" Evelyn felt as though she were in a class again once all the worried Prefects nodded beside her. "Now, I shouldn't have to say this, but we have had some issues. Please refraining from involving yourselves with the other Prefects! It makes my job so much harder!" Evangeline clapped her hands together once she had finished speaking, looking around the room at the Prefects with raised eyebrows as though to reinforce the message.

"Well, it was great to see you, please ensure you follow your timetables and keep Hogwarts safe!" Amos smiled at the group before heading out of the office, closely followed by Evangeline and the rest of the Prefects.

Evelyn sighed, glad to be freed from the meeting, but also dreading her encounter with Astrea Black later.

"You heard what they said," she heard Tom Riddle behind her, close enough to feel his breath on her neck, "please refrain from involving yourself with me Evelyn, it makes my job harder than it should be."

When it came time to prepare for her duel, Evelyn felt confident. She knew that she was better at spells than Astrea, but Astrea would likely have been exposed to far darker magic than she had ever seen. Evelyn snuck out of her dormitory as silently as she could, avoiding Peeves on her route down to the forbidden forest.

With her wand in her pocket, she stalked out of the castle and down toward the forbidden forest. Although Evelyn knew she had plenty of time, she made her way across the castle grounds with haste, wanting to be there far before either Astrea or Tom in order to assess the area. She barely remembered her surroundings from her last adventure to the forest and surroundings were always important in a duel, especially in a duel she knew she had to win.

The forest was ancient: the trees thick and old, roots that were twisted around each other in a tangled display of affection. Although the forest was once filled with birdsong and animals that roamed freely, it was now aged past its former glory and was primarily used for teaching and detentions, or in this case duelling. Once Evelyn stepped deeper into the forest, the light from the moon began to fade; the canopy too dense to let in anything other than a sliver of silver. Crisp autumn air blew through her, rustling her hair and chilling her bones. With a shiver, she turned and made her way even deeper into the forest.

After a few minutes of waiting for the Astrea, Evelyn began to grow impatient, tapping her feet against the forest floor until she heard leaves rustling and from the clearing came Tom and Astrea. "Ready to be beaten, Rivers?" Astrea spat, pulling out her wand.

On instinct, Evelyn clutched her wand in her hands. "Now, you have the whole forest to duel, so keep it interesting," Tom began, " and I assume you both know how to duel correctly so take your positions ladies." Evelyn took her position opposite Astrea bowing before taking several steps away from her. "Wands at the ready?"

"Ready." Astrea and Evelyn replied and the duel began.

At first, Evelyn felt frozen, unsure of what spell to cast and when to cast it, but when Astrea called out "*Stupefy*", she flew into action, deflecting the spell with a simple movement.

"*Confringo*," Evelyn called out, sending a blast of fire towards Astrea, which she narrowly avoided by jumping to the side.

Astrea growled, "you could have burnt my hair! *Incarcerous*."

But this time Evelyn was too slow, and quickly several ropes began to form around her, trapping her body in its current position. Her skin burnt as the ropes dug in deeper, "*Diffindo*," they broke apart, revealing rope marks across her arms. The redness on her arms began to spread like wildfire, her anger quickly following suit. As she began to shoot non-verbal spells, she recalled her previous interaction with Astrea in the forbidden forest, every flashback earning her next spell to be shot with even greater force.

Evelyn shot spells with such force, she felt as though her wand may fly out of her hand at any moment. With each spell, she grew closer to Astrea, who had taken refuge within the thickness of the trees and with each step, she grew closer to victory. "*Reduc*-"

"*Depulso*" Astrea called out before she could finish, sending Evelyn flying backwards into the clearing.

She wiped the leaves from her body as she stood back up, watching Astrea giggle maniacally at the sight of Evelyn on the clearing floor. Evelyn began to charge at Astrea with her wand at the ready, non-verbally deflecting all of Astrea's spells with increasing difficulty.

Astrea smiled, "*Cruci*-"

"*Expelliarmus!*" Evelyn cried out before she had a chance to finish. "Unforgivables are not used in duels!"

"*Cruc*-"

"*Petrificus Totalus!*" Evelyn shouted, causing Astrea to freeze immediately. She took Astrea's wand from her hand, "you won't be needing this now will you."

Tom nodded at her from the edge of the clearing, "not bad Evelyn."

She curtsied dramatically at him, "now can I go?"

"Not yet, we should put Astrea's wand somewhere for her," he glanced over at Astrea's frozen body, "somewhere that will make her think before challenging you again."

"Not a bad idea," Evelyn got closer to him, "what did you have in mind?"

"Perhaps the Whomping Willow is in need of some company, I'm sure her sycamore wand would suffice, aren't you?"

She nodded, "I'm sure it would," a grin began to grow on her face as they made the journey to the Whomping Willow.

"That was some impressive duelling Evelyn," Tom said, breaking the silence between them.

"I am aware."

He glanced in her direction, "perhaps you ought to consider duelling more often."

Evelyn stopped in her tracks, "perhaps not." She began to walk again, speeding up and leaving Tom trailing a few metres behind her.

"Evelyn, I think you're just like me." Tom said simply once they arrived as close as they safely could to the Whomping Willow.

She glanced at him with a furrowed brow, "I do beg your pardon? I am nothing like you Tom, we both know that." She threw Astrea's wand as far she could towards the tree.

"What you did just there," he gestured to Astrea's wand, "you're just like me."

"Only I am not a monster." She added, resisting the urge to turn around and face him.

"Evelyn, I am not a monster, I promise you. I do the things I do because I have motivations, I have desires, hopes, dreams. Do you not?" She paused and thought, although she had an aspiration, she wasn't sure she had any real hopes or dreams. "You want more from this life Evelyn, and I could be the one to help you find that. Come with me," he held out his hand.

"Where?"

"In life." He spoke with such seduction, Evelyn could find herself becoming unable to resist. "I can give you everything," he took a step closer and Evelyn flinched. "I can give you money, knowledge, power. I can fuel your deepest desires, your burning passions, the ones you are not yet aware of." He took another step closer, Evelyn finding herself being pulled towards him. "I can change your life, I can make it anything you want, together we can do anything." His hot breath touched her neck, then his tender lips followed. "Come with me."

Evelyn was unsure what her desires were, what her burning passion was, but at that moment, none of it mattered. "Yes," she breathed out heavily as the rain began to pour down on them.

At that moment, she could no longer resist, she turned to face him and as she did, their lips collided. He kissed the droplets from her lips, sweeping her hair away from her face as the rain began to fall harder. As Tom pushed his lips in more, the wave that ran through Evelyn was intoxicating, intoxicating enough that the outside world

simply faded away. She could no longer feel the cool chill of the droplets running down her spine, her soaked through clothing was simply a passing thought. At that moment, it was just the two of them.

When the pair pulled away, Tom's eyes were like every fantasy Evelyn could ever imagine, every moment she wished they had shared and every moment she wished she could forget.

"We ought to head back," she spoke softly, searching for her breath.

Tom nodded, "yes, it's getting late."

Without another word, the pair made their way back into the castle, traipsing leisurely as though the rain were merely an inconvenience. As soon as they entered the castle, Evelyn spoke again, "why did you let her do that?"

He furrowed his brow, "Astrea did nothing, you won."

"I mean before, when she used the unforgivable." She shuddered at the thought.

"Evelyn I was unaware at the time, I simply asked her to make sure you would stay quiet, I had no idea of the lengths she would go to," his voice was silky smooth.

"Would you have done the same?" She looked into his eyes with a sigh.

"No," he stopped in his track, placing his fingers under her chin, "I would not," he lifted her chin up, "I would not, I promise you."

And Evelyn made the mistake of believing him. "Goodnight Tom," she pulled away from him and headed back to the Ravenclaw Tower. As silently as she could, Evelyn made her way back into her dormitory and into her bed, sighing once she felt her body hit the bed.

"Evelyn, is that you?" She heard a quiet voice calling from opposite her, lifting her head, she spotted Lily staring sleepily at her from her bed.

"Go back to sleep Lily, it's okay." Evelyn spoke with such softness in her voice she was unsure she was capable of, she sounded exactly like Lily.

"What are you doing awake?"

Evelyn whispered, "Lily, go to sleep. Go to sleep"

And then, as though she had commanded herself, her eyes began to flutter shut and she slipped into a carousel of dreams.

Darkness surrounded her. Stepping into the forest robbed Evelyn of one sense and heightened the others. It was disorientating to be almost blinded but given the ears of a wolf. Blackness nurtured a sense of claustrophobia inside her that she was unaware she possessed, although the woodland stretched unbroken for miles, Evelyn felt trapped inside the darkness.

Ahead of her was a narrow path, which was made uneven by the knotted roots that crossed it, branching at intervals: there was no map to follow, but even if there was, the perpetual dark prevented her from even considering using one.

Evelyn wished to stay still, but an invisible force pulled her forward, deeper and deeper into the forest. Silence was broken by a piercing metallic screeching in her ears, causing Evelyn to let out a muffled scream. Something or someone was calling out to her, demanding to be heard, and Evelyn had to oblige.

She traipsed through the darkness, using only her hearing to help her navigate herself toward a tall tree. As soon as she looked up, she saw the source of the noise, she spotted a sapphire glow emerging from atop the tree, a sapphire glow she knew she had to explore, it was calling out to her and she had to listen.

With the light from the glowing sapphire, Evelyn could finally see her surroundings, hundreds of trees surrounded her, but this one was different. Whilst everything about it seemed usual, upon closer inspection, Evelyn saw it. Hidden within the grooves was a shape, a shape she had seen in her common room for six years, the shape of Ravenclaw. She ran her fingers across the markings with a sigh, she had done it.

Looking up, Evelyn knew what she had to do, she had to climb. Her hand latched onto the first branch and she used her strength to pull her body up, grasping onto another branch and continuing the climb to the source of the light. Whenever she felt as though she could carry on no longer, she simply glanced at the glow and felt revitalized, it was calling for her, begging her to come and Evelyn was willing to oblige. She simply had to.

As she got nearer the top of the large oak, she noticed a silvery peak peering out from the tree, a diadem. A diadem she had been seeking, a diadem that for some reason, she needed to find, she simply had to do it.

She kept climbing until the diadem was within arms reach. Extending her dainty fingertips, she shivered as she felt the cool metal against her skin. "I did it." She found herself whispering, and just as she reached out to grasp the diadem, she felt a sharp stab in her back and she fell. Her hands lost any grip they had on the diadem and her body was flung to the ground like a rag doll.

When Evelyn awoke the next morning, she hadn't expected Tom Riddle to be one of the first people she saw. As she left her common room, there he was, leaning against a wall with a cool smile, "good morning Evelyn," he called out to her.

Evelyn was taken aback by hearing his voice, particularly first thing in the morning, "what are you doing here?"

"No good morning for me?" He smirked at her, "that isn't like you at all."

"Well, good morning Tom, now," she tapped her foot against the cobbled floor, "what are you doing here?"

"I had a question for you..."

Evelyn rolled her eyes, "and it is?"

"How would you like to come to Albania with me?" He leant in closer to her, "we have some business to attend to."

"In Albania?" She furrowed her brow, "what could you want in Albania?"

"Well, that's part of the mystery, you'll find out in the Christmas holidays when you come with me."

She took a step back, "oh I'm coming with you now, am I?"

Tom closed the gap between them, "yes, you are," he breathed into her neck. "I'll see you at the train station." He gave her one last smirk before heading down the corridor and away from the Ravenclaw Tower.

With a trip to Albania looming, Evelyn knew she had to talk to Dumbledore. She had to tell him what was on her mind, she had to let him know

"Professor," she called out once she spotted him in the corridor outside his office.

"Evelyn," he nodded at her, "I believe we are overdue a talk." Evelyn smiled at him, it was though he had read her mind. "Do come into my office," he held open the door as Evelyn walked in, taking the seat opposite his desk. Dumbledore followed her closely, taking his seat behind his desk before helping himself to a liquorice lace.

"He's asked me to go to-" she began.

Dumbledore cut her off, "Albania, yes, I am aware."

"How?" Evelyn furrowed her brow, she had only found out about Albania herself a few moments earlier.

"Evelyn, I am aware of far more than you know." He took another liquorice lace.

She paused, wondering what else Dumbledore could possibly know. "What do I do?"

After finishing his sweet, Dumbledore replied, "you must go, Evelyn."

Although Evelyn planned on going anyway, hearing Dumbledore advise her was somewhat comforting. "And then what?"

"Then, you must do whatever he requires, you must assist him." He stated simply, "now, do get going, Albania awaits you." He ushered her out of the room with a smile, shutting the door behind her.

When Evelyn finished her lessons for the day, she began packing immediately. She wasn't sure how long they would be in Albania for, but either way the Christmas holidays were the perfect chance to continue revising for her NEWT examinations at the end of her seventh year.

As the Christmas holidays drew nearer, Evelyn became more and more nervous about the endless possibilities of her trip to Albania with Tom. She spent the whole of her journey on the Hogwarts Express in a state of anxiety, unable to keep herself calm about the trip. Tapping her feet against the floor to the rhythm of her heart, she read up on non-verbal jinxes until they arrived at King's Cross station.

Just as he had said, Tom was waiting at the train station, stood at the end of the platform, "glad you could finally make it," he rolled his eyes at the sight of Evelyn.

"I can't exactly go any faster Tom!" She exclaimed.

He rolled his eyes, "follow me, we're late." He pulled her then, dragging her into a dark corner of the station. When he was certain that nobody was watching, Tom's grip tightened on her hand, and he apparated.

When Evelyn opened her eyes, she was no longer in the station. "Where am I?" She asked when she finally laid eyes on Tom, stood a few feet away from her.

"Hurry, we can't miss our Floo Powder time, or else we won't make it to Albania."

"Floo Powder?" Evelyn questioned, but Tom had already left her. Spotting Tom walking further away from her, Evelyn sped up until she was close behind him, "I've never travelled by Floo Powder."

"I assumed so," he turned away from her and glanced over at the bar. "We're here to use the Floo Network?" He stated bluntly.

"Albania, is it?" Asked a cheerful elderly man behind the bar, when Tom nodded, he left the bar and led them toward the large, stone fireplace in the corner of the pub. "I assume you've both travelled by Floo Network before,"

"Yes," Tom stated, before Evelyn had a chance to respond. "I'll go first."

Tom stepped into the fireplace, taking a handful of grey powder in his hand, "The Wizard Inn, Albania," he dropped the grey powder at his feet, emerald flames engulfing him as he did.

"Not scared are you?" The barman smiled at Evelyn with a toothy grin.

"Of course not," her voice faltered as she spoke.

"In you go then."

Evelyn obliged, stepping into the fireplace with a nervous smile. She collected a handful of the power in her hand, "The Wizard Inn, Albania," Evelyn dropped the power and as the flames engulfed her, everything around her began to fade away.

"You took your time Evelyn," Tom tapped his foot against the floor impatiently.

"I did tell you I had never travelled by Floo Powder before! It's not my fault you ran off." She rolled her eyes, making her way towards him at the desk.

"Go up to your room," he handed her an old golden key, "get into something warm, we'll be out for a while."

Evelyn made her way up the wooden staircase, glancing briefly at the moving portraits on her journey. She followed behind Tom until she found her room, "see you soon," she nodded politely at him before she disappeared into her room.

Evelyn unlocked her door with one swift movement and hurried inside, dropping her bag to the floor and glancing in the room. The room contained a small bed, neatly made, two straight-backed chairs, a washstand, a bureau--without any mirror--and a small table. There were no drapery curtains at the dormer windows, no pictures on the wall. The room lacked any signs of life. Although Evelyn supposed they would be spending more time outside, doing whatever Tom had planned for their visit.

Evelyn pulled a navy jumper over her sweater and bundled her coat around herself as though she was preparing for hibernation. She picked up her bag and flung it over her shoulder, pacing in her room until it was almost time to meet Tom. After five more minutes, she hurried down the grand staircase and headed out of the door, her heart racing with every step she took.

As soon as she noticed Tom appear behind her, her face quickly turned sour. "Why are we even here Tom?"

"We are here for business," he muttered, beginning to walk towards a dense patch of woodland.

"What business do you have in Albania?" She trailed behind him, speeding up until she was walking directly beside him.

"There's something hidden in this forest, something that I desire."

Evelyn searched her mind, exploring every memory she had until she remembered her dream. Tom was searching for a diadem: not just any diadem, Rowena Ravenclaw's diadem. "What do you want with Rowena Ravenclaws Diadem?"

"So you figured it out, took you long enough. Why I want it is none of your business though Evelyn, you will find out soon enough." He picked up his pace.

"Why am I here then?"

"You agreed to come," he reminded her.

Evelyn sighed, "well yes, but you asked me here."

"I require something from you, something you know that I do not."

"You don't know where the Diadem is, do you?" He shook his head. "That's why I'm here, I know something you don't."

He scoffed lightly, "unfortunately, you do indeed."

Evelyn smiled briefly, before continuing forwards and disappearing into the dense woodlands.

All of the trees were tightly knit, just one strand in a massive web of life. Green leaves, yellow leaves, red leaves. It was a rainbow of rich, autumnal colours. The scent of earth and water drifted through the air. It was a picture of serenity, one which would endure for many long years. Evelyn and Tom trekked for hours until the sun had dipped below the trees and the moon has risen to its peak.

"When do we stop?" Evelyn asked, her breath becoming raspy as she spoke.

"When we find the Diadem," Tom replied bluntly, picking up his pace and delving deeper into the forest.

"I'm tired," Evelyn said stopping in her tracks, "we are stopping right now."

Tom turned to face her, "what makes you think I take orders from you now?"

"The fact that you just stopped." She smiled at him, his face scrunching and twisting in discomfort. Evelyn dropped her backpack on the dusty ground, reaching deep inside and pulling out a tent. With a swift movement of her wand, her tent assembled itself and stood upright.

She put down her bag and placed it inside of her tent before turning around to see Tom had already assembled his and was unzipping the tent door. "Goodnight Evelyn." He said, turning away and entering his tent without another word.

Evelyn felt the corners of her lips slowly turning upwards at the sound of his voice but quickly stopped them in their tracks. She climbed into her tent cautiously and sat down. Tom and Evelyn had walked for hours and her feet were killing her, slowly she lowered her body onto the ground of the tent and the second her body hit the ground, she was out like a light.

Her sleep was surprisingly undisturbed. In her sleep, she was a child again. In her dreams, she had comfort, freedom and love. In her sleep, she had it all, everything she had missed and everything she had ever wanted or needed. She didn't want to wake up. A carousel of dreams continued through her mind, happy memories causing her lips to curl upwards into a smile. Evelyn felt blissful. She finally felt at peace.

Abruptly, her bliss was cut off by a sharp screeching sound. Her body instinctively flung upwards as though she was being pulled. Her mind was aching with curiosity as her body pulled her out of her tent and into the forest. It was as though there was a magnetic force calling to her, she wasn't in control of her body.

Darkness surrounded her. Stepping into the forest robbed Evelyn of one sense and heightened the others. It was disorientating to be almost blinded but given the ears of a wolf. Blackness nurtured a sense of claustrophobia inside her that she was unaware she possessed, although the woodland stretched unbroken for miles, Evelyn felt trapped inside the darkness.

Ahead of her was a narrow path, which was made uneven by the knotted roots that crossed it, branching at intervals: there was no map to follow, but even if there was, the perpetual dark prevented her from even considering using one.

Evelyn wished to stay still, but an invisible force pulled her forward, deeper and deeper into the forest. Silence was broken by a piercing metallic screeching in her ears, causing Evelyn to let out a muffled scream. Something or someone was calling out to her, demanding to be heard, and Evelyn had to oblige.

She traipsed through the darkness, using only her hearing to help her navigate herself toward a tall tree. As soon as she looked up, she saw the source of the noise, she spotted a sapphire glow emerging from atop the tree, a sapphire glow she knew she had to explore, it was calling out to her and she had to listen.

With the light from the glowing sapphire, Evelyn could finally see her surroundings, hundreds of trees surrounded her, but this one was different. Whilst everything about it seemed usual, upon closer inspection, Evelyn saw it. Hidden within the grooves was a shape, a shape she had seen in her common room for six years, the shape of Ravenclaw. She ran her fingers across the markings with a sigh, she had done it.

Looking up, Evelyn knew what she had to do, she had to climb. Her hand latched onto the first branch and she used her strength to pull her body up, grasping onto another branch and continuing the climb to the source of the light. Whenever she felt as though she could carry on no longer, she simply glanced at the glow and felt revitalized, it was calling for her, begging her to come and Evelyn was willing to oblige. She simply had to.

As she got nearer the top of the large oak, she noticed a silvery peak peering out from the tree, a diadem. A diadem she had been seeking, a diadem that for some reason, she needed to find, she simply had to do it.

She kept climbing until the diadem was within arms reach. Extending her dainty fingertips, she shivered as she felt the cool metal against her skin. "I did it." She found herself whispering. As she touched it, she recoiled, as though an electrical current of power was surging through her, she felt like a true Ravenclaw.

Evelyn clutched the Diadem tighter as she heard a rustle deep within the forest, "is anyone there?" She had to protect it, no matter the cost. She raised her wand, aiming it in the direction of the noise, a spell resting on her lips ready to be sprung at any moment.

Suddenly, a jet of bright amber light collided with her body at full force, pushing her from the branch and causing her body to tumble to the floor. The Diadem fell from her grasp and as her vision began to fade she heard a voice that she wished she hadn't. The realisation only truly sunk in as she drifted into unconsciousness.

Evelyn woke up alone. She woke up as though the events that had unfolded last night never occurred. She woke up asleep in her tent. She woke up rested. She woke up afraid. When she lifted her body from the ground and looked around her, there was nothing. Tom had left her. He had gone, just like that.

Evelyn had never felt as scared as she did at this moment. Tom had abandoned her and although she knew it would happen, she had always hoped it wouldn't. He had the Diadem, he didn't need her. What good was she to him now?

She rubbed her tired eyes before standing carefully, pulling her wand from her pocket as she rose, who knew what traps Tom had left lying around? As Evelyn began trekking through the dense woodlands, she assembled a plan in her head. She was going to confront Tom, she was going to expose him to all his dirty lies. Everyone would see what a monster he truly was.

Evelyn had been through too much for him, flashbacks passed through her head of all she had lost to a boy who lost nothing for her. Evelyn had lost her friends, she had lost her talent, she had lost everyone that once loved her, but most certainly she had lost herself. If Dumbledore had never given her that task, everything would have stayed how it was supposed to, she would have two loving friends and be succeeding academically but instead, she was risking her life for a boy: a boy that wouldn't even do the same for her.

She didn't care anymore. She couldn't carry on. She knew that it was wrong but she couldn't stop him, he was too powerful. She knew what would happen if she gave up, and Evelyn wasn't a quitter but even now she had to admit, it was too much. It was far too much to ask of a teenager, it was far too much to ask of anyone, let alone Evelyn.

As Evelyn looked down at the blanket of pure white snow beneath her, she noticed she had been following footsteps through the forest. She knew they must be Toms, but why would he leave them visible to see unless he wanted her to follow him. Was this a trap?

Evelyn had unknowingly been following the footsteps for hours, trekking through the snow towards wherever he had been. She knew that when she saw him, she would have to unleash hell.

She followed the footsteps for what felt like hours until she arrived at a peculiar looking cabin, hidden behind some dying trees. This was it, it had to be. Tom was here. She ploughed forwards, tiptoeing towards the wooden door as though she were sneaking up on her prey. The rotting wooden door creaked slowly open and echoing footsteps invaded the silence that hung like a cloak around the house. A thick carpet of dust clung to every object, the rays of light shining through the shattered glass windows catching on the particles suspended in the stagnant air. She moved deliberately, dust billowing into clouds as he passed. She continued to move through the house, kicking up more dust until it was difficult to see through the billions of particles that now swirled in the air. Then she came to a door, faded green, paint curling with age, brass handle almost consumed by a thick network of cobwebs, reaching out, she turned it.

Behind it, just as she expected, was Tom Riddle. He sat lounged in a velvet armchair, his hands locked together on his lap as though he had been waiting.

"I was expecting you would come faster," He said with a smirk, releasing his hands and relaxing them by his side.

Evelyn felt her hand rising, the tip of her wand pointed directly at Tom. "You left." She felt her voice rising and the anger boiling up inside of her but she had to be strong.

"I had what I needed," he turned to face the Diadem, "thank you for retrieving it for me."

Evelyn wanted to punch him, she could feel herself about to explode with rage and the worst part was, she wanted to. "Tom, listen to me right now. You have manipulated me, controlled me, made my life living hell for the past year and I want to know what the hell you are doing. I need answers!" The words flew out of her mouth so quickly, she felt as though she might be sick.

"Evelyn, do you not see it?" He asked as though the answer to all her questions was blatantly obvious. "You're different, you were willing, you were easy."

"So that's all I was to you, easy? Tom, you made me do things I never dreamed of doing, I had to witness you for the monster you truly are," she spat the word monster, gripping her wand with even more force.

Tom rose from the chair. "Put your wand away Evelyn. You were much more than just easy to me." He took a step forwards, edging his body closer to Evelyn's. "I know what Dumbledore put you up to."

Evelyn shuddered, her heart sinking to the bottom of her chest. "How?" She knew there was no point denying it.

"I've known all along. I used legilimency months ago. I knew."

"No." She couldn't believe it. How could this have happened? He knew what she was doing all along but he still kept her alongside him. She felt herself lowering her wand slowly, "If you knew all along, why am I still here?"

"Because you're different Evelyn. You don't follow me around like the others, you aren't absurdly infatuated with me. You were a challenge." He shuffled forward again, stopping himself only inches away from Evelyn.

Evelyn couldn't understand. "Well, I failed what Dumbledore wanted me to do, so none of it matters anymore." Disappointment hit her like a tonne of bricks, she couldn't handle it.

"You may not have done exactly what Dumbledore," He spat his name with disgust, "had asked of you, but you didn't fail. You have changed me, Evelyn Rivers, even if you can't see it. I have changed and so have you."

"But it isn't enough, I was meant to help you and I failed." She couldn't stop the tears from running down her face, she had failed and there was nothing left for her to do.

Tom hadn't seen such a display of emotions in years. He couldn't understand it, yet somehow he knew what to do. The last few inches began to disappear between them and before either of them truly understood what was happening, he made his move.

He kissed her and the world fell away. It was slow and soft, comforting in ways that words would never be. His hand rested below her ear, his thumb caressing her cheek as their breaths mingled. She knew he didn't feel the same as her, but she couldn't resist. She leaned in a little closer, their foreheads touching. Evelyn pulled away, a smile plastering itself on her face.

Tom opened his mouth to speak, to end the moment that Evelyn had longed for, "Don't," She whispered, "let me have this moment."

Evelyn felt like the world was hers, she could do anything. Feeling Tom's heat against her body built a fiery passion inside of her that she had never felt before, at that moment she was invincible. She felt alive, all the hate that had been boiling up inside of her had vanished and she was vulnerable. Tom placed his fingers on Evelyn's chin, tilting her face upwards. "I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Me too," he sighed, carefully drawing his wand from his pocket. As he felt Evelyn's warm breath against his body, he muttered the spell he knew he had to.

"Obliviate "