

Becoming prefect was everything Evelyn Rivers had ever dreamt of. Although she expected the honour after being a model student since arriving at Hogwarts, when she was presented with her glistening badge, her heart still skipped a beat. Seeing the sun reflect off her metal pin made the world feel as though it had stopped. It wasn't the role than Evelyn was interested in, she didn't particularly want to boss others around or have powers over those younger than her, but simply having the title made her feel closer to her parents.

Considering the dangerous spells that her parents were often practising, the entire wizarding community had been shocked to see them pass in such a normal accident. After working as esteemed Aurors for over fifty years combined, they had accumulated a large influence over the community and when they suddenly stopped existing, everybody noticed. The Daily Prophet even included them as front-page news, a space reserved for the most important and shocking information around the nation. Although they died in a muggle accident, the Daily Prophet held them to such level of prestige that almost no other would be granted. Details of their greatest achievements were explored in great depth in the issue published immediately after their death, with hundreds of references from colleagues and friends published alongside. Even though Evelyn's wound from their death had finally begun to scab, it still felt fresh. It was though one of her limbs had been torn from her body and she would never stop feeling phantom pain.

Both of her parents had been prefects for their respective houses in their fifth and sixth years at Hogwarts and they had done Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw proud. Ever since Evelyn received her acceptance letter into Hogwarts, she had dreamed of becoming a prefect and doing her parents proud.

Arriving at Hogwarts always made Evelyn feel the same magical feeling like she was overflowing with love. The opening ceremony was one of the few magical moments that made Hogwarts feel like a home. Every new student piling into the Great Hall made Evelyn recall her first time seeing it, her first time truly believing in the magic of wizardry.

Once the final student had been declared a Hufflepuff, cheers erupted from the respective table. After the final declaration, Evelyn knew it was almost time for the classic welcoming speech. Turning to her best friends, she found herself genuinely smiling, "How was your summer Lily?" She asked to the pale blonde sat beside her.

"Oh it was truly wonderful!" She smiled with a heart full of hope. "The weather was beautiful so we went down to Cornwall with my family. No magic, no wizardry and it was still the most magical moment. We ate, we swam and we laughed for hours on end. You'll both have to come down sometime soon!" She turned to face Sara who sat beside her, gazing off into the distance.

Although Evelyn adored hearing of her friends' enjoyment and happiness, she found it challenging to talk about her own summer. When her parents were still alive, they had gone travelling every summer, backpacking across remote areas of the globe in

search of new magic to practice and explore. Ever since their death, summer hadn't been the same. Even though her grandparents tried to make summer more enjoyable for her, they age prevented them from the level of spontaneity and adventure she was usually used to for the sixth bliss weeks off school.

When on holiday, Evelyn's favourite place was the sea. The sweet smell of the sea rolling in with each wave was something she couldn't get enough of. As soon as her grandparents had heard of her parents' death, they had immediately offered to take Evelyn in, to care for her as their own child in their quaint cabin by the English coastline. Although Hogwarts was more of a home than the cabin ever could be, she couldn't fault her grandparents for lack of trying. Rows of rose bushes were planted alongside the walls of the cabin in memory of her parents, charmed to make them appear every colour of the rainbow. Every summer, Evelyn would dedicate her time to gardening, to making the garden at the cabin reflect the beauty and kindness of her family.

Both Lily and Sara knew not to ask Evelyn about her summer, although it seemed impolite to not ask, the consequences of asking were worse than those of not.

"Ready for Quidditch this year?" Lily asked turning her full focus to Evelyn as she spoke.

"Always. Quidditch is what keeps me sane at Hogwarts. I'm not sure how lucky I'll be this year though, with our OWLS coming up I'm not sure how much spare time I'll have." Evelyn's eyes lit up when she spoke about Quidditch, it was one of the things that despite it all had made her smile.

"We'll have to make time no matter what, even for just a quick non-competitive game,"

Sara suddenly locked onto the conversation, "Non-competitive, that's not something that will happen if you're playing Lily, you don't know the meaning of the phrase!"

Evelyn felt herself chuckle slightly, Lily was quite possibly the most competitive player she had ever seen on the pitch. It seemed to be her arena and the second she stepped in, she became a gladiator.

Too caught up in their conversations, Evelyn had missed the majority of the welcome speech, only turning her head to see Headmaster Dippet already waving his hands to summon the food. Evelyn barely had time to appreciate the spread in front of her before hands began grabbing at the plates of food. After the storm of hands calmed down, Evelyn helped herself to a slightly over-portioned meal of chicken, carrots, peas and potatoes, all coated in a thick layer of gravy. Tucking into her meal, Evelyn took the time to notice her surroundings and inspect the new set of students parked at the end of the Ravenclaw table. To her surprise, they all seemed different this year, larger and less afraid of what was to come. Magic didn't seem to faze them one bit.

Soon, the sound of students eating and chatting began to fade out as Headmaster Dippet rose from his seat. He strolled towards the podium, his dress robes dragging behind him, flowing across the front of the Great Hall. "Settle down students," He bellowed as he reached the podium placed in centre stage. "As you are likely all aware, new prefects have been selected for the next year. First years, they will be your mentors, your friends, your siblings. They will guide you on to the path to greatness, even if that means using the powers to deduct house points for reckless behaviours. If you are not aware of this year's prefects, I will now introduce them to you. From Hufflepuff, we have Marcus Cole and Eleanor Hill. From Gryffindor, Theodora James and Freddie Weasley. From Ravenclaw, Evelyn Rivers and Daniel Harvey. Finally from Slytherin, Tom Riddle and Eliana Parry." After each set of names, he pointed towards the respective house table, resulting in a scattered round of applause coming mainly from first and second years. "Please head to your common rooms and get an early night, magic awaits tomorrow!" He smiled, waving his wand and causing all the food that once was in front of them to disappear.

The serenity that once filled the Great Hall quickly faded away as students began rushing up from their seats and heading towards the entrance. A flurry of students manoeuvred their way out, speeding past Evelyn as though they were being chased. Once Evelyn had a clear view of the Ravenclaw first years, she placed two fingers in her mouth and whistled, the sound echoing across the hall, silencing all the students left inside.

"Alright!" She called, the sound of her voice silencing the last few students. "Daniel and I will take you to your common rooms where you will find lists of names for each dormitory. There is no swapping rooms or complaining, you have been placed where you have for a reason. If everyone understands, we'll get going now." She walked out of the hall alongside Daniel, students following behind her like baby birds, afraid to step in the wrong place. When they reached the staircase, Evelyn found herself smiling fondly. "Keep an eye on the stairs," She turned to face the students crowded around her, "They have a tendency to move."

After the initial awe of seeing the magic of Hogwarts, the first years picked up their pace, following so closely behind Evelyn that they almost collided once she ground to a halt. "What comes down but never goes up?" Evelyn turned to face the eagle-shaped knocker that had just spoken.

"As you can see, when you arrive at the door the knocker will ask you a riddle. Fail to answer correctly and you will be denied entry, answer correctly and the door will open for you. Anyone know the answer?" She scanned the crowd of first years, hoping someone would be brave enough to volunteer.

Soon enough, she heard a quiet voice from the back of the gaggle of students, "It's rain," they whispered. Taking a step forwards, they spoke again, this time with more confidence, "The answer, it's rain."

On cue, the door swung open, revealing the Ravenclaw common room in all its glory.

"Welcome home."

Bronze and blue silks were draped across the walls, flowing down onto the floor. As Evelyn looked up, she saw the sky she used to dream of. Swirls of blue and white paint collided in the most beautiful way, dancing around each other to form clouds with stars lingering in the background. After her first year at Hogwarts, Evelyn and her parents had painted the exact same mural on her bedroom room so she could always feel as though she was at Hogwarts.

"Your dormitory arrangements are on the notice board. Unpack, get some sleep and get ready for the magic of tomorrow." Evelyn slouched down into a chair as the first years scuttled away towards the notice board; a few grunts and groans later and they were gone.

"That was impressive." Daniel smiled at her, seating himself in the chair beside her. "It honestly looks like you were made to be a prefect Evelyn, you seemed complete back then. I've only seen fragments of you since your parents died but that, that made you seem whole again."

Evelyn was taken aback by Daniels kindness, she had never really interacted with him in anything other than an academic capacity, she barely even knew his last name but still, he went out of his way to be kind to her. "Thank you." Evelyn couldn't think of much else to say to him, she didn't know him in the way he seemed to know her. Sensing Evelyn's discomfort, he rose from his seat and disappeared into his dorm, leaving Evelyn alone in the common room. Evelyn took a moment to be still before she wandered into their dormitory to see both Lily and Sara sat on their beds.

Scanning the room, Evelyn quickly laid eyes on her owl, Olympia, perched on the balcony. Due to Evelyn's grandparent's cabin being in an unsafe area for both muggles and wizards, Olympia stayed in an owlery over summer to keep her safe. Evelyn's fingers ran across Olympias soft, brown feathers, their eyes locking onto each other. "I swear she knows me."

"Of course she knows you, she sees you at school every day for half the year," Sara muttered, looking up from her book.

"No but she really knows me, it's like we have a connection." Evelyn had first got Olympia in Diagon Alley, only a few days before she had begun at Hogwarts. Within seconds of first seeing her, Evelyn knew that Olympia was the one for her.

"She's just an owl, I'm not sure how much she could really understand you Evelyn" Lily chimed in.

After changing into a nightdress, she climbed into her bed and slid on her reading glasses. Despite being a talented witch, her poor eyesight was something that she was unable to correct with magic, much to her dismay. Reaching down into her open

suitcase, her fingers grasped at the spine of a Potions textbook. Pulling it onto her lap, she opened it up to the page of a potion she had been struggling with over summer. Much to her grandparents' dismay, she had been badly practising potions all summer, only perfecting around half of them before the six weeks were up. She skimmed through the page, her eyes focusing on the key information in the hopes that it would stay in her brain for her first lesson tomorrow.

After a few minutes, she gave up. She decided it would be best to tackle the potion again another day. Sliding the book back onto her bedside table, she slipped under the covers. "Goodnight." She called to Lily and Sara, who were both already tucked up in their beds. Before long, Evelyn found herself sucked into the deep abyss of sleep.

Evelyn found herself in a dark corner of the room; what room she hadn't quite figured out. The scent was familiar, almost like old wood. She followed the corridor, keeping her eyes set on the tall oak door at the end of it. Evelyn had no clue where she was, she just knew what she was doing, and she just had to go through that door. It was though something was controlling her body, taking over her mind and preventing her from making her own decisions. Her legs grew weaker with every step, as though she might collapse before she even got close to the door.

"Hello?" She called, to nobody in particular, hoping for a response to give her some idea of where she was. She kept pacing towards the door, her pace increasing with each step; eventually, her hand clasped the firm golden knocker and slid the door open. The floor was slimy, almost wet, drenched in a thin substance that Evelyn had never encountered before. Flecks of red ran through the substance, pouring fear into her heart. After one final glance around the room, Evelyn knew her location; she was in the girl's bathroom.

On instinct, Evelyn pulled out her wand and held it in front of her, ready to attack. The stalls are destroyed, wooden frames from the stalls were flying everywhere, landing all across the room; scattered like a tiresome jigsaw puzzle thrown in anger.

"Hello?" She called again, unsure of whether she wanted a response, she wanted assurance of what was occurring but she didn't know who from. She just wanted somebody to tell her what was going on, someone to get her out and stop the terror that was clawing at her heart. 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. Her heart froze with every step she took closer to the pile of broken cubicles in fear of what she might find. Dust particles scattered themselves through the air, Evelyn, unfortunately, gathering the dust in her breath and coughing heavily. Sheepishly she took another step forward, another, eventually she stood before the pile of wooden frames. She bent down, assessing the positioning of the wood and cautiously removing a few from the top; throwing them towards the sinks.

Her eyes widened with fear, shock, and pain as she removed another piece of wood revealing something that she had prayed she wouldn't find. A body. The leg lay

twisted and bent in an awkward angle. Evelyn didn't want to take another piece of wood off the body but the curiosity was growing inside of her, begging to escape. Before she knew it, her hands found their way towards another piece of wood, removing it to uncover another piece of the body. This time an arm was uncovered, holding tissues drenched with tears. Evelyn didn't dare remove another piece, scared for a life to uncover the identity of the body. She stood up and stared down at the mess that lay before her, sighing. Somebody was dead, she had to tell somebody. She opened her mouth to scream but no sound escaped her lips. She quivered softly, hands shaking with fear and collapsed mentally. Tears streamed down her face, moistening her skin and running onto the floor.

She tried to move but her legs were jelly, the sound of heels clashing with the floor awakened her senses and she ran towards the other door in the corner. Something fell from her pockets but she had no time to check what it was as the clashing noises grew louder. She ran as fast as her legs could carry her and collapsed as the door slammed behind her.

Despite Evelyn still feeling anxious about potions, she was looking forwards to her lesson today. Although she wasn't perfect, she had vastly improved over summer and wished to show off her new talents to Professor Slughorn. Potions was something difficult to master and although it wasn't easy, Evelyn found herself enjoying it more and more after practising over summer.

The Great Hall was always full of life on the first morning of term. On day one, almost every student found themselves needing the fuel of breakfast to keep them going through the day. Evelyn had always found herself enjoying breakfast and made it her mission to ensure she went every single day. A vast array of food was always provided at breakfast, with enough to ensure nobody ever went hungry. Sitting on her regular table, Evelyn helped herself to a selection of everything; two slices of buttery toast, sausages, eggs, tomato and bacon, all washed down with a large glass of orange juice.

With breakfast, Evelyn always made sure she read the Daily Prophet. After the great things they had said about her parents, she made sure to repay the favour by being an avid reader. Taking a bite of her toast, she flicked open the first page and began reading.

Cecilia Moores, Divination teacher at Beauxbatons Academy predicts a 'dark year'

Cecilia claims to have seen the darkness that will occur early in the coming year and warns students to avoid snakes of any form. She believes that this year will be a dark one and unfortunately one to remember, she also believes that 'dark forces are rising and lives will be lost'. Is this something we should worry about? Or is Ms Moores purely looking for the attention?

"Rubbish isn't it?" She heard a voice call, turning around she saw Lily stood half-awake behind her. "Another one has gone crazy I think," She took her seat next to Evelyn, punching the last slice of toast from her plate and immediately devouring it.

"I don't know," Evelyn was sceptical when it came to prophecies and prediction. "Sometimes they're right you know."

"Most of the time they're crazy, prophecies are made by people who end up in St Mungos," Lily said between bites.

She wasn't wrong. Evelyn had read the news almost every day during summer and in those short six weeks, she had heard of hundreds of witches and wizards being cast off to St Mungo's.

"You know who's looking gorgeous this year," Lily began, changing the subject. "Tom Riddle, I heard Sara has her eyes on him."

"As much as Sara could get anyone here, I don't think Tom Riddle is an easy fish to catch. If you hadn't noticed, he's not particularly sociable." Evelyn glanced over towards the Slytherin table where Tom Riddle sat alone, scribbling into a little black book. She couldn't deny that he was attractive, but his personality ruined it for him. He would worm the teachers around his fingers and then not utter a word to any students other than his gang of Slytherins.

Looking down at her watch, Evelyn knew it was time to leave if she wanted to make it potions on time. Taking a final bite of her breakfast, she rose from her seat, "Lily it's time to go! Potions is a long walk away and we need to get good seats." She pulled her friend's arm up, dragging her to her feet.

Walking alongside each other, Evelyn and Lily made their way speedily to potions class. As soon as they got close to the classroom, Evelyn could feel it. Potions was in the dungeons where the temperature evidently shifted from the rest of the castle. Professor Slughorn arrived at the same time as Evelyn and Lily, marching into the classroom in front of them and taking his place in front of the chalkboard.

"I've decided that this term we will be trialling a seating plan!" He smiled, with evidently more excitement than his students. "You will each be sat next to someone from a house other than your own to help you mingle with other students." With a flick of his wrist, a fully formed seating plan appeared on the chalkboard behind him as groans began to fill the classroom.

Evelyn's eyes scanned the board, searching for her name and the name of whoever had been unfortunately paired with her. Before she could find her name, she heard the voice of Tom Riddle behind her, "I guess we're partners then." He said simply before making his way to their table. Evelyn followed him hesitantly, looking around at the other students for support. Tom Riddle was not a team player and that's exactly what she needed to succeed.

"As we have been away for six weeks, we will be starting with a simple Wit-Sharpener 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 and

picked up his book as the students ran around the classroom to the storage cupboard, wanting to collect the best ingredients possible to ensure that they impressed their professor.

Relief washed over Evelyn's face as she heard what potion she would be tasked with making. Although she hadn't perfected the recipe, she was much closer than with the majority of other potions. After the scramble for ingredients had ended, Evelyn made her way peacefully over to the cupboard and collected her ingredients, carrying them inside her cauldron to her desk.

Placing her potions textbook on the table, Evelyn opened the page and read the instructions once more, something that Tom Riddle beside her clearly felt no need for. 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. Taking the pestle and mortar, she placed in two scarab beetles and crushed them. Looking beside her, she saw Tom Riddle 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. "I thought you were supposed to play Quidditch," She heard Tom Riddle mutter under his breath. Turning to face him with a confused expression, he spoke again. "How are you out of breath from something that is wildly easier than Quidditch?"

"It's not the same!" Evelyn found herself feeling defensive, "In Quidditch, the excitement keeps you going, grinding up beetles doesn't exactly give you the same thrill." By the time she had finished speaking, Tom had already turned back to his potion.

Evelyn turned her attention back to her potion too, taking the ground beetles and stirring them into her mixture. After enough times stirring, 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 that Tom Riddle had already left the classroom after handing in a no doubt perfect batch.

Evelyn smiled as she took her finished potion up to the front of the classroom and handed it to Professor Slughorn. "An excellent phial Evelyn, I'll be expecting high-quality work from you throughout the year; I've heard that you've been practising over the holidays, is this correct?" He said, examining the vial thoroughly and holding it up to the light that was streaming into the Dungeons.

"Yes Professor, I was hoping to improve my grade in time for our O.W.L.S" Evelyn smiled, shyly looking around the room.

"Well my dear, I hope to see you blossoming in the Potions department" he grinned as he slid the vial of Wit-Sharpening Potion into his robe pocket, "You are dismissed,"

Evelyn quickly returned to her table, placing her used equipment inside her cauldron and sliding it under her desk. As Lily and Sara hadn't yet finished their potions, Evelyn took the time to find somewhere quiet to sit and open up her potions book. Seeing that the sun was shining, she took the opportunity to sit in the courtyard, one of her favourite locations at Hogwarts. Whenever the sun was out, Evelyn enjoyed sitting in the courtyard and doing some work, or simply admiring the view

As Evelyn lost herself in the difficult potions she knew she would be tackling over the next few months at school, she found her quill colliding with the paper and beginning to draw intricate flowers. Before long, there was a dark figure blocking the sunlight that previously illuminated her book.

"You shouldn't be doing that"

Although Evelyn had barely ever spoken to Tom Riddle before, she knew it was his voice before she even had the chance to look up. "Tom," She said as her eyes locked onto his.

"Vandalism isn't the sort of thing I had you down for Evelyn Rivers," He looked away from her eyes, remaining standing in a way that made him seem more menacing than Evelyn believed he was.

"I wouldn't call it vandalism, this book cost me more than enough for me to be able to do with it as I please. What sort of thing did you have me down for then?" She closed her book.

"Quidditch, being a prefect, head girl, that sort of perfect student thing."

"I can do both." She rose from her seat so that she was stood at his level.

"One might get you in more trouble than the other though, we wouldn't want that for you, would we?" He said.

"I'll keep that in mind Tom. Thank you so much for your concern," She rolled her eyes, strolling past him out of the courtyard and back into the dungeons.

Evelyn knew that Lily and Sara wouldn't be done yet, not that they weren't capable, but they simply couldn't multitask and enjoyed talking far too much. Peering into the classroom, she saw them both still stirring their potions and adding ingredients to their mixture. She gave them both a pleading look, hoping that they would speed up their work so Evelyn could leave the dungeons. No one particular thing made Evelyn dislike the dungeons, but simply the overall feeling she got when she walked down

the steps was enough to make her uneasy. It didn't help that the stench of poorly brewed potions was the only smell that circulated the area, making most students wish they couldn't smell to save them from the horror. Many students tended to struggle with potions which meant that the smell was present after every lesson.

Eventually, Lily and Sara were able to pull themselves away from their conversations and finally finish up. "I'm going to see if I can find Tom, maybe he can help me with my potions." Sara giggled as she made her way out of the library on a futile quest to seduce Tom Riddle.

"I guess she'll be late to charms class then," Lily stated, beginning to make her way to the next lesson alongside Evelyn. They strolled across endless corridors until they found the charms classroom and took their usual seats beside one another.

Evelyn adored charms classes. She adored learning about each charm and how it worked, the fact that she excelled at it also made her enjoy it more. Since her Ordinary Wizarding Exams were fast approaching, she knew it would quickly become a more challenging lesson but Evelyn felt prepared. She had revised the content they would begin to cover this year so that she didn't feel overwhelmed when the work began to pile on, especially since Quidditch would continue to take up large portions of her time.

Once all the students were seated and silenced, Professor Blackburn strode into the classroom, seemingly as excited about the subject as the day he began teaching it. Professor Blackburn was another reason that Evelyn enjoyed her charms lessons more than most, he favoured her above many other students and didn't try to hide it. Every time she got an answer right, he beamed with pride as though he was looking at his own daughter.

"As you all know you will be taking your charms O.W.L 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, 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 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 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. Evelyn met with her friends outside the library, finding herself smiling as she caught sight of them.

"Did you manage to find Tom then?" Evelyn asked, turning to Sara who seemed embarrassed.

"I think I've given up on that task. I don't think I'm qualified enough"

"How can you not be qualified enough? What other qualities do you need?" Lily asked, confused.

"I need more patience, he just didn't talk to me and I don't want to be the only one carrying the conversation. I'm not skilled enough to get him to talk." Sara felt the corners of her lips begin to turn down into a frown.

"There's always someone else Sara." Evelyn gave her friend a brief hug, feeling surprised at how strongly she felt about Tom. "I didn't realise you cared so much, I thought you just wanted a challenge.

"There's not another Tom though, he's exciting. Everyone else here is too easy for me." She sighed.

The trio strolled into the library, taking their usual seats without a word and began to lose themselves in their work.

When Evelyn went to sleep, she lost herself in nightmares the same way she had lost herself in her work the previous day. Each night was different but when Evelyn tried to recall them, they all merged together into one blurry picture, a puzzle missing half the pieces.

When Evelyn awoke, the sun was barely visible, still hidden behind the horizon. She was alone in the common room with not a single sound coming from either of the surrounding dormitories. Although Evelyn was always quiet, she tiptoed as an extra precaution to prevent waking up the other students. She tiptoed until she reached the corridor where the sound of her shoes hitting the ground quickly began to echo across it.

With homework still left to do, Evelyn made her way towards the library which was where she tended to spend the majority of her free time. Once she got there, she unfolded the parchment tucked between her arms and took her usual seat by the window. After dropping her parchment on the table to secure her seat, she set off towards the rows of bookshelves scattered across the library. At the charms section of the shelves, Evelyn paused, taking the time to read each of the book titles before carefully selecting one on summoning charms and retaking her seat.

Once she had all of her materials ready, Evelyn got to work. She had been assigned charms homework which involved writing an essay on the summoning charm Accio, one of Evelyn's favourite charms to use. As soon as she had skimmed through the book, Evelyn was away. Words were flowing from the bottom of her quill with barely a thought required. She wrote and wrote until her hand ached and she could barely hold a quill any longer.

By the time the sun was up, Evelyn was done. She rose from her seat, placing the book in midair and watching as it floated away back to its rightful place on the shelf.

With still almost an hour to go until she had her first lesson, Evelyn decided to get her broom and take it out onto the Quidditch pitch. She took herself outside onto the grounds, shivering as she took a step outside and felt the cool morning air on her skin. Inside the changing rooms, Evelyn made sure to change into her gear as quickly as possible to maximise her time outside.

Flying gave her a sense of freedom that nothing else could. Feeling the air against her skin with no resistance made her feel invisible, but at the same time, she felt more alive than ever before. With a non-verbal command, her broomstick was firmly within her grasp and a split second later, she had mounted it. In an instant, her broomstick lurched forwards as she took off in flight.

Evelyn flew a figure of eight loop, climbing higher as she circled back round to face the castle. With the wind in her hair, she felt unstoppable. After she had got her bearings of the pitch, she began making more dangerous moves. Her broomstick took control, sending her flying in loops until her insides had been twisted around so much she thought she would be sick. Her entire body felt as though it wasn't real, the chill of the autumn air barely touched her as she soared higher into the September sky.

As she watched the sun creep higher, Evelyn became aware of the time and knew it was time to go. Breakfast was something she didn't want to miss, especially after such an exhilarating flight, her body needed refuelling. Leaning backwards, her broomstick began to lose speed and height, sending her closer to the ground and closer to the reality of life.

After changing back into her robes, Evelyn scurried across the Hogwarts corridors and made her way to the Great Hall for her favourite meal of the day. Before she had a chance to serve herself, her attention was diverted from the glorious food and towards the bundle of owls flying in above her. Evelyn barely thought to look up at the incoming post-delivery as she never got post, so when the familiar call of her owl erupted in the hall, she furrowed her brow and turned to see Olympia swooping down towards her. Beside her, countless copies of the Daily Prophet were being dropped to her friends, with only a small envelope finding its way onto her table. With a great red Hogwarts crest sealing off the envelope, Evelyn knew the post had come from inside the castle. 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 without her glasses, she could barely tell. The only other person she could make out in the hall with a similar-looking envelope was Tom Riddle, an obvious option to invite as almost every person in Hogwarts found him interesting. Whether they liked him or not, nobody could deny that he was mysterious.

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.

Care of Magical Creatures was a subject almost everyone seemed to enjoy. It was an easy pass and getting to understand the world of magical creatures was usually enough to satisfy anyone. Evelyn was not one of those people; although she did not despise the subject, there was nothing about it that drew her in.

Although lessons typically took place inside the castle, today was one of the few times that the students would be doing a practical task. Before summer, they had been tasked with researching how to care for Nifflers, strange horse-like animals that served almost no purpose to society other than to hunt for treasure.

Evelyn stood in the clearing outside of the forest, her eyes wandering around and admiring the scenery. 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. Once Evelyn stepped deeper into the forest, the light began to fade; the canopy too dense to let in anything other than a sliver of golden sunlight. 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 other students, Evelyn began to grow impatient, glancing down at her watch and then straight. Even though Evelyn preferred not to use magic where possible, when she found her mind beginning to wander, magic was the first thing she turned to. Taking one final glance around the clearing, she

turned and glanced at a pile of crisp, sunset orange leaves and envisioned them floating upwards. Slowly a group of them shot upwards in a swirling motion, the colours of the leaves shimmering against the light shining in through the canopy. Using magic when not required felt unnecessary, especially when that magic was complex. Most young students did not learn non-verbal magic until their last year at Hogwarts and often even the brightest few struggled to fully grasp it.

As soon as the students began piling in Evelyn felt more at ease. She knew the lesson would not be too challenging due to her prior research on the topic, especially since she knew her partner would also be prepared. Evelyn was partnered with Eli Jameson, a peculiar Hufflepuff who stood quietly during the whole lesson, referring back to his notes all too frequently and almost blatantly refusing to converse with her. Despite his lack of social skills, training their Niffler to hunt for treasure was rather simple and by the end of the lesson, they were both content with their work.

As Evelyn left the forest, she felt her heart begin to race, realising what her next lesson would be; Study of Ancient Runes. Although she had chosen it as her second elective, she had quickly learnt that it was much harder than she once thought. By the time she arrived at her classroom, it was full of students who sat already with their work out in front of them.

"Miss Rivers, please take a seat next to Tom and we will begin the lesson." Professor Griffith said, ushering Evelyn to her seat. Sending her Professors urgency, she sped towards her seat and quickly pulled out her books and parchment out, placing them in a pile on her desk. "Your partners are the student sat beside you and they will remain there until the end of the course," He said, leading to an eruption of groans from Evelyn's fellow classmates. "Settle down. I will set you off with a fairly simple translation piece and those who complete it should ask me for further work." Waving his wand, parchment began to float towards the students, one sheet placing itself in front of each student.

Although Evelyn began her work at a pace, after a few minutes she began to slow down significantly. With a furrowed brow, she turned to face the other students, praying that they were also struggling as much as she was with the work so she felt less alone; much to her dismay, the other students all had their heads down and seemed perfectly content with the work that they had been set.

"Miss Rivers these are extremely simple runes, we covered this many times last year!" Professor Griffith called from his desk, "Tom please help her." He smiled at Tom, hoping he would be able to reduce his workload.

Evelyn turned to face Tom half expecting no reaction to his Professor, but still, she found herself praying that he would help her. "Tom." She said, wondering if his attention simply hadn't been caught. When yet again he failed to look up at her, she knew he had no interest in helping her. "I don't care if you don't want to help me, but I want you to help me." She began, waving her hands in front of his translation in an attempt to avert his attention. "Please." She added.

"Evelyn I have far better things to do, it's really not my fault that you're incompetent." He shifted along the desk, moving further away from Evelyn in the hopes that she would give up.

"Professor Griffith told you to help me and I would really like your help, Tom."

Knowing that she wouldn't give up, Tom sighed as he turned to face her. "It's really quite simple."

He moved his body closer to hers, placing his quill on her parchment as he began sketching the intricate symbols with their meanings beside them. Evelyn knew these weren't runes she could remember but it was unsurprising that Tom had been able to memorise them and store them in his mind for later. With a mind like his, anything was possible. "Use this as a key," He said pointing towards his sketches in the corner of the parchment. "Then find the rune on the translation and copy it down on your parchment."

As soon as Evelyn set off trying to finish her work, Tom rose from his seat and collected further work, burying himself in it as soon as he was seated. Remembering his instructions, Evelyn slowly but surely made her way through the translation piece, completing the work despite being unsure of what she had done.

"Homework will be to complete the extension task on my desk by next lesson and no later, please!" Professor Griffiths dismissed the class with a wave of his hand, slouching back in his chair at the thought of a moments peace.

Evelyn looked up for Tom to thank him but by the time she had stood up, he had vanished into the flurry of students at the front of the class. Taking her time, Evelyn made her way to the front of the class, eventually collecting the parchment and joining the sea of students in the corridor. Weaving her way through crowds was a skill Evelyn had been able to develop greatly since starting at Hogwarts. Learning the times which corridors were busy had benefited her greatly on the rare instance that she was late and more frequently when Lily or Sara were late to their lessons.

After a short adventure through the crowds of students, Evelyn made her way to the common room and immediately took a seat at one of the many desks lining the common room walls. Assuming that Lily and Sara were likely in one of their elective lessons, she decided to attempt her challenging homework before the common room got so busy she couldn't think. Using Toms key, Evelyn eventually managed to complete her homework, only beginning to pack up once the sun had dipped below the horizon and the common room had begun to fill up.

Although dinner seemed tempting, Evelyn knew that her body would appreciate sleep more than nutrition. Despite being back at Hogwarts for less than a week, her body was already beginning to tire, her joints starting to stiffen from writing and the purple bags beneath her eyes becoming more defined. Despite her body craving sleep, she knew she would be disappointed if she didn't see her friends before she fell asleep. Living with her friends had made her far more appreciative of them,

especially their peculiar habits that she would not have known of without boarding at Hogwarts.

Soon, it began sprinkling, through the window Evelyn could see little droplets of water drenching the grass. The sprinkling was soon a downpour of icy droplets crashing against the grassy ground and pooling together into puddles across the grounds. With nothing else to do but wait, Evelyn watched the sky. She watched until hundreds of stars were dotted across it like sprinkles and that was the final thing she saw before her eyes began to close.

A thin stream of light shone through the arched window, illuminating the whole common room. Evelyn sat by the window- 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, Evelyn adored watching the sunsets, after all, nobody ever knew how many more they would see.

Beautiful birdsong could be heard faintly through the window and the grey clouds of yesterday had finally disappeared. Her eyes waltzed around the common room, falling upon her best friend asleep on the couch, her blonde hair in tangles sprawled across it. With a loud yawn, she awoke from her slumber, stretched her whole body as she swung her legs off the couch. "Morning," She beamed, her eyes still fluttering shut.

"Good morning, excited for Quidditch trials?" At the sound of Quidditch, Lily suddenly shot up.

"Oh, I wonder who's signed up!" She sprung from the couch towards the parchment-covered notice board in the centre of the wall. Her fingers picked at the pieces of parchment stuck awkwardly on the board, until she eventually found the sheet and pulled it from the board.

"Lily Blake, Evelyn Rivers, Daniel Harvey, Markus Trent, Jolie Markson, Estella Jones, Roger Knotts, Bradley Stretton, Mary-Grace Prewett"

"We don't exactly have much choice for who we want on the team," Evelyn sighed looking at the brief list before her, "Hopefully we'll get some more turn up otherwise I'm not sure how well we'll do this year." Evelyn knew how unlikely this was, the majority of Ravenclaw had no interest in Quidditch, especially those with exams looming. Those without exams in the coming few months were involved in too many extracurricular activities to even be able to consider doing Quidditch.

"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 breakfast.

Evelyn stared down at her meal, the steam floating off of it and dispersing around the hall. She shivered as the cold metal cutlery touched her skin, shaking and almost dropping it on her plate on instinct. 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.

Evelyn was quickly finished with her meal, washing it all down with a tall glass water. Her fingernails anxiously tapped against the wooden table, a repetitive motion that gave her comfort in times of anxiety. Before long, Lily had also finished her meal, traces of syrup still left dripping from the corners of her lips.

With one last reassuring look from Sara, the two girls were ready for trials. Even though they were almost guaranteed a spot on the team, they both felt their anxiety growing louder with each step towards the pitch. 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, stopping in front of Lily who would be running the trials.

As soon as the group arrived in front of Lily, her entire persona shifted. "Shut up!" She called out, silencing the students before her. "You lot had better be ready to play for your lives, I don't let just anybody on to this team. Warn yourselves up and be back on the pitch in ten minutes!"

Instantly, the students dispersed into small groups around the pitch and began warming up. They all did simple stretches or short flights across the width of the pitch but Evelyn and Lily preferred a little bit more friendly competition to warm up.

Every year at Quidditch trials, Lily and Evelyn raced around the pitch, with the loser facing no real consequences other than the humiliation of being beaten.

"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 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 around one broomstick 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 this inside lane 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 instead of doing their warmups as Lily had instructed. 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."

After a short bow to the students, Lily was back in teacher mode. "Well I'm glad you all got to see my victory, but I didn't see much warming up whilst we were flying! Ten press-ups each!" She commanded onto the crowd.

Evelyn watched on as the students began dropping to the floor in a sweat. Once they had finished, she joined the crowd and stood before Lily who was ready to begin the trials.

Lily stepped forward glared at the crowd, giving each student and once over before she began to speak. "We will have three makeshift teams during these trials and each person will play their chosen position. I will be monitoring you for every game you play, remember this is a team sport!" Lily wouldn't usually have to repeat this point but after the injuries during last seasons trials, she knew it was better to be safe than sorry.

Quickly, the crowd fell into three groups of players. Evelyn found herself in the third group as she slid on her notorious Keepers gloves and stood beside the other students. Luckily for her after such an intense warm-up, her team would be watching first allowing her time to catch her breath.

"Nice flying back there." Daniel emerged from the crowd with a smile on his lips.

"Thank you. I haven't seen you at trials before." She noted, taking a seat on the grass beneath her.

Daniel joined her, "I guess I never had the courage until now."

"What position are you going for?"

"I like the idea of being a Beater, but I'll just be happy if I make the cut honestly, I know that the other students here are team regulars so I wouldn't want to intrude in that." Evelyn smiled at how considerate he seemed, he looked like the kind of person Evelyn could see herself becoming good friends with.

"I'm sure you'll get on, we could probably do with some more muscle on our team." The Ravenclaw team never excelled at Quidditch, although they weren't as bad as Hufflepuff, they couldn't even consider competing with the other houses.

"Time to swap, team three you're up!" Lily gave Evelyn a reassuring pat on the back before sending her up to the pitch.

Once in the air, Evelyn lost sight of Daniel in the crowds as she positioned herself in front of the three goals posts behind her. The September air was so thick that Evelyn had to squint to even begin to make out who was who on the pitch. As soon as everyone was in position, the game began with the hoot of a whistle and the Quaffle was released. She could just about make out her team gaining possession of the Quaffle, whoever was carrying it weaving their way across the pitch and making a shot. By the sound of the cheers, Evelyn could tell that the shot had gone in, meaning that possession went to the other team.

Evelyn blinked and by the time she opened her eyes again, there was a silhouette rushing towards her. She saw the Quaffle resting under their arm as she sped towards the goalposts. Evelyn could tell where she was going to try and score simply by tracking her eyes and as she saw the Quaffle begin to move through the air, she darted in front of the goal, smashing it away with the front of her room.

Evelyn watched on from her post as the Quaffle floated between the two teams, never coming close enough for her to move in preparation for an attack. The game ended the minute Eloise Carrow's fingers grasped the notoriously small snitch.

"Good game everyone, look out for the official team sheet as I will be posting it in the common room tomorrow morning." Lily clapped the students as they flew down from the pitch, smiling as Evelyn walked over. "I think we've got a good team this year! Not Slytherin good, but definitely better than last year"

"You never know, 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.

School 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 assessment 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 M. Rivers
Ravenclaw Prefect.*

Evelyn sealed the envelope with a cobalt blue wax seal and handed it to Olympia who obediently stood on the window perch, her claws wrapped tightly around the wooden handle. She placed the envelope inside of Olympia's beak, her beak clutching it tightly as she flew off around the castle. Despite Professor Slughorn being inside the castle, she felt it more professional to reply via a letter. Additionally, her love of Olympia made her all too willing to send unnecessary post as it gave her the opportunity to spend time with her.

Despite the frosty chill in the air, the upcoming Quidditch game against Hufflepuff was still continuing as planned. Only once she stood in the wings of the pitch did she feel as though the game was truly happening. Practising in such harsh conditions had made her feel confident about the team's success, regardless of how much Hufflepuff had been practising.

As Captain, Lily stood in front of the team, inspecting their uniforms to ensure they were ready to make her proud and win. "Right!" Her voice echoed throughout the small wooden box in which they were stood. "Anyone that doesn't play to the best of the ability will get hexed. We need to win this match if we want a chance at winning the cup." Winning the cup was almost definitely out of the question but nobody thought to bring that up and burst Lily's bubble.

A few students nodded their heads in acknowledgement of her words before mounting their brooms and getting ready for the match to begin. 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- Lily successfully swooping down and picking it up.

Lily flew forwards, waiting for the other Chasers to get free, she weaved between the defence and fairly easily threw the Quaffle towards the central goal. The central goalpost was never usually a safe bet as the Keeper should be closest to the centre however Lily managed to score with ease due to the slow reactions from the Hufflepuff Keeper.

"Ten points to Ravenclaw!" Evelyn heard from the stands where the announcer, a loud third year, stood watching the match unfold.

Squinting was the only way Evelyn could see far enough up the pitch to anticipate the opposing teams' next move. Players shot across her path of vision, blurring together into one. Not one Hufflepuff player gained possession of the Quaffle for long enough for Evelyn to need to move, allowing her an easy game with little skill required. In a short space of time, the game progressed greatly for her team. Ravenclaw scored three more goals and from what Evelyn could see, their seeker, Eloise, was hot on the tails of the golden snitch. She weaved her way around the pitch, narrowly missing other players as she sped past them in a daze towards the golden snitch.

"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 Daniel call from behind her.

Evelyn froze like a deer caught in the headlights. "Daniel, 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."

"It's like that, worse when you lose but it still makes you feel all warm inside. You played really well today Daniel, anyone would think you'd been playing for years not months."

His 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, he 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 enough for Evelyn to see. 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, but if you must know I was studying to escape the party in my common room."

"I heard that you won your match, though I'm not sure how much you contributed to that. You didn't seem to move during the game." Evelyn was sure she hadn't seen him at the match, he wasn't the kind of person that cared about Quidditch, and especially since it was a team sport and he did not seem like the type to work well with others. "You should probably get back to your common room, it's not safe to be out alone this late."

"Hogwarts, not safe? 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 as he began to walk away.

Evelyn sighed as he left. As the book in his hands swung beside him, Evelyn caught a glimpse of the title and found herself confused. In Tom Riddle's hand was a book about the dark arts, a book she would have sworn belonged in the restricted section.

Evelyn thought about Tom Riddle's book for far longer than she would have liked to.

The next evening, she found herself pacing up and down the Ravenclaw common room, still thinking about why he had that book.

"You seem troubled Evelyn." She turned to see Rowena Ravenclaw speaking to her through the almost life-size painting on the wall.

"I'm just stressing about exams! They feel like they're much sooner than I thought!"

"You still have many months left to prepare. From what I've heard about you, I doubt they'll be any trouble for you at all." Rowena smiled sweetly at Evelyn, her voice playing like a melody.

Although Evelyn wasn't telling the full truth, she did find herself consumed by the thought of her life-altering exams in May. If she wanted to become an Auror like her parents then she gave to exceed all expectations when it came to her exam performance.

"Besides," Rowena began, "I'm sure things will turn out much different than you expect." With that, she turned away and left down the path in the middle of the painting.

"Talking to Rowena?" Sara called from behind her, seating herself on the couch that sat opposite the fireplace. "Did you get any good advice? I heard from the sixth years that Rowena gave the best advice."

"Nothing crazy, she just told me not to worry about exams." Evelyn took a seat beside her friend.

"You shouldn't be worrying! If anyone should be it would be me, I still haven't finished my homework from the start of term." Sara smiled, seemingly not bothered by her lack of academic proficiency. "Haven't you got that strange meeting with Professor Slughorn later?"

Evelyn sighed. Quidditch practise had been cancelled tonight due to the bad weather which meant that she had unexpected free time before the meeting. "Yes, it's in a half hour. I should probably start getting ready soon."

"Can I help? I don't really fancy doing any homework." Sara looked down at the pile of parchment she'd left in the common room with a sigh. "I can keep it super simple," She knew Evelyn wouldn't want anything fancy for the meeting so keeping it simple would be the best way to go to keep her happy.

Once the two were in their dormitory, Sara dove straight into Evelyn's wardrobe and began searching for the perfect combination. Eventually, Sara settled on a long-sleeved grey knit dress with a necklace, something simple that she knew would make Evelyn look good. At the end of the silver chain sat a small eagle, with a sapphire gemstone sat where the eyes would be. After a short while, Evelyn was

changed and ready to go. Her hair fell past her shoulders in loose curls, and a hint of pink was placed in the centre of her lips. Stepping out of her bathroom, she gave a shy twirl before Sara.

"Wonderful. Go impress them with some fancy words and knowledge." Sara smiled at her friend, similarly confused as to what the meeting would entail.

Evelyn took a leisurely stroll towards the dungeons, knowing with absolute certainty that she would be the first one there. When she arrived at Professor Slughorn's office, she found herself waiting outside, anxious to be the first one there. Minutes passed until she heard another set of footsteps in the dungeons, footsteps belonging to none other than Tom Riddle.

"I was hoping you would be here." She smiled politely at him as he got closer to her, halting in his tracks when he felt too close. "I was hoping to ask you a question."

"And what would that be Evelyn? Is it about how I have such wonderful hair or how I am exceptionally talented?" He shot her a light smirk.

"As much as those two topics interest me, Tom, it's not about that. You know last night when I saw you outside the library?" He nodded. "I was just wondering why you were reading such a book, and how you had been able to get it out of the restricted section? I'm really rather curious."

"Evelyn, I do think you are mistaken. I was simply reading a collection of tales, certainly not the kind of novel you would find in the restricted section of a school library."

Before Evelyn had the chance to press him further on the book, 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. Although Tom sat across from her, she was still interested in questioning him about the book. "I don't think it was for a subject Tom, we don't do that kind of magic at Hogwarts and I know what I saw."

"I don't think you do or you wouldn't be questioning me. My reading habits are far from exciting, I would rather you didn't keep pestering me on the matter, Evelyn." He turned his face away from her, surveying the room.

Seeing no use in continuing to pester him, she found herself doing the same. Her eyes scanned the room, taking in every small detail that she could see. Dainty crockery was arranged on the table, set up for a three-cours 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 in tuxedos 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. "Eleanor, I heard some things about your lineage that simply fascinated me, would you care to divulge?"

A tall Hufflepuff student sat beside Evelyn smiled at Professor Slughorn. "Over the summer, my family received some interesting information through the mail, it suggested that we should take a closer look at my family tree so my family and I did just that. It turns out I might be descended from Helga Hufflepuff! We're just waiting on a confirmation from specialists but my parents are pretty sure it's true." Professor Slughorn was rightly excited by her discovery; Evelyn knew it was rare to meet a descendant of any of the Hogwarts founders, especially Helga who until recently had been thought to be without family.

"How very incredible Eleanor, you must let me know when you hear back. 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 question her next. 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-leafed 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."

Evelyn was almost falling asleep at the table. After a few bites of salad, her eyelids were already threatening to close. Glancing across the table at Tom, she saw him sat solemnly, picking slowly at his salad.

Suddenly, Evelyn pressed her hand to her head—a sharp pain occurring in her mind. It felt as though someone was pushing needles through her skull, drilling into her brain and sucking the life out of her. Evelyn was in such pain she thought she could die, although she would have usually been polite enough to excuse herself from the situation, she truly felt as though she didn't have the time. Abruptly she stood up, pushing her chair back and darting towards the door in a flurry: she had to get out.

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.

The hospital wing was fairly empty considering the amount of reoccurring Quidditch injuries that usually resulted in a short stay in the wing. It was fairly common for a player to be constantly in and out of the Hospital wing however the recent weather had forbidden any Quidditch from being played leaving the wing almost empty. Evelyn was perched up on the side of her bed, flicking through her copy of the Daily Prophet which was slowly crumbling down from the corners from multiple uses.

"Miss Rivers, you may leave when you are dressed. You should proceed directly to the Great Hall where lunch is still being served" Madame Truckle stood at the end of Evelyn's bed surveying her. "You look much better than when you were brought in." She smiled lightly at Evelyn before leaving her to attend to the other patients.

Evelyn's lips curved upwards with glee, she had been waiting to be discharged since the moment she awoke in the morning. Pulling a screen around her bed, she quickly slid into her dress from the night before and made her way out of the wing. "Thank you." She smiled as she passed Madame Truckle who looked up briefly before returning to folding sheets.

With everyone at lunch, the corridors were silent. Evelyn trawled through them slowly, her eyes and mind wandering more with every step she took. Before she got to the Great Hall, Evelyn heard her name called down the corridor.

"Evelyn." She turned to see Professor Dumbledore stood behind her with a puzzled look on his face. "Perhaps we could have a word."

Evelyn followed him without a second thought when a professor called you had to answer. The pair walked silently through the corridors until they reached his office. Dumbledore's 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.

"Do take a seat, Evelyn." He pointed her to the red sofa where she collapsed almost instantly, melting into the sofa. An uncomfortable silence fell throughout the room as Dumbledore took his seat.

"In all your years at Hogwarts, you have never once been on the hospital wing until last night. You play Quidditch, yet you've never been injured and suddenly last night you became unwell." He paused, unwrapping a liquorice lace and popping it between his lips.

Evelyn expected him to say something else but instead, he simply enjoyed his liquorice lace and gave her a blank stare. "It was very hot. I got a headache." She toyed with the sleeves of her dress, pulling them over so that they enveloped her hands. She wasn't lying, the office had been hot, but there had been something else going on that she didn't wish to share.

He finished his sweet slowly, leaving another awkward silence between them. "Evelyn. "I believe this would be a whole lot easier if we both agreed not to lie to each other, don't you?"

"Of course professor, but I'm not lying. I had a headache, perhaps it was simply the heat."

"But..."

"It could have been something else professor, I'm not sure what but my skull felt as though it was being cracked open." Evelyn shivered, recalling the pain that she had felt last night.

Professor Dumbledore knew exactly what Evelyn meant, he knew what had happened to her. "Evelyn, I believe you were a victim of someone using legilimency on you, whereby they accessed your mind in an attempt to harvest information from you."

Evelyn's eyes widened at her professor, "Why would someone do such a thing?" Evelyn held no secrets, no dark past, no information that anyone could possibly desire from her.

"Perhaps you have something they desire, something you do not know that you have." Dumbledore pocketed another liquorice lace as he rose from his seat, stalking out of the office without another word.

"Professor!" She called out with no response as she was left alone with nothing but her thoughts.

As Evelyn walked into the Great Hall, a few students murmured and turned their heads towards her. Evelyn could feel the eyes on her back, as though they were burning a hole straight through her.

"Evelyn!" Her two friends called as soon as they laid their eyes on her. She sat down beside them with a smile, instantly feeling safer once she sat between them.

"People are looking." She sighed, glancing around the hall at the countless heads turned towards her.

"Someone fainting is possibly the most exciting thing to happen at Hogwarts Evelyn!" Sara began, "Hogwarts is boring."

"What happened last night?" Lily placed her hand on Evelyn's, as though it was acting as a shield.

"I'm not sure, I think I just got overwhelmed, it was very loud and busy in there."

Sara found herself smiling, "I would have got overwhelmed too if I'd been around all those boys! I heard Joshua was there with Rudolphous and Tom! You were spoilt for choice."

Although Evelyn appreciated Sara trying to lighten the mood, she found herself feeling drained. She nibbled at the plate of sandwiches in front of her, making polite conversation with those around her until she was done. Half a sandwich and a handful of sentences later, Evelyn needed to leave.

"Do you need one of us to come with you to the next lesson?" Lily began standing up, ready and willing to help her friend.

"I'm alright, it's not too far." Her eyes looked across the hall, tracking Tom Riddle as he made his way out through the entrance. Evelyn took a few hurried steps, speed walking out of the Hall hot on Tom's tail. He was the only one at the meeting who knew her, the only one who would have answers about what happened last night.

"What happened last night?" She called to him, causing him to stop in his tracks.

"Why would I know? We were all having a lovely discussion when you ran out of the room. The next thing I knew, someone heard a thud and it was you on the floor. You interrupted a rather great time Evelyn." He started walking towards her.

"Don't act like you were enjoying it there, you looked almost as bored as me Tom." She could see straight through his facade. Although she had no evidence that he was guilty, there was no evidence against anyone else.

"I admit I wasn't having the greatest time Evelyn. Although your little episode did spice things up." He smirked at her, eyeing up her outfit from last night.

"I don't know what you're doing Tom." She admitted truthfully to him. "But something is going on and you need to leave me out of it, I don't have time for this rubbish, Tom."

After her encounter with Tom, Evelyn made her way to the Owlery. She hurried up the stairs with her quill at the ready. Once she was at the top of the tower, she unfolded a piece of parchment and got to work on a slightly impulsive letter.

Dear Granny and Gramps,

Although I usually return for Christmas break this year I shall be staying in Hogwarts. As much as I enjoy our time together, with my OWLS looking I think I need to be at school in order to revise effectively and perform to the best of my abilities. I hope you have a wonderful time.

—*Evelyn*

Sealing the letter with the signature Ravenclaw crest, she handed it off to Olympia who willingly took it in her beam and took off in flight.

Evelyn adored her grandparents but she felt as though there were more important things to do this Christmas than open presents. A mystery was brewing in Hogwarts and she wanted to be the one to uncover it.

Evelyn spent the following week stalking Tom Riddle as subtly as possible. She had no evidence of anything he was doing or had planned but she knew he wasn't exactly an open book, answers wouldn't just come to her willingly. After a week, Evelyn would barely be able to fill a page if she wrote down all of her findings.

Evelyn's week had been filled with disappointments until she received a letter from Professor Slughorn inviting her to an annual Christmas party which she knew Tom would be attending. Since beginning to follow and observe him, she hadn't spoken to Tom and hopefully, the party would be the chance to do just that.

Evelyn had spent the first few days simply following in Tom's literal footsteps. She had spent hours on end in the library, simply watching him sit and write in a small black book. With hundreds of students revising for their upcoming mock exams, Evelyn blended right in whilst she was watching Tom, even managing to sneak in a few hours of revision whilst she waited for him to make his move.

Evelyn sat in her usual seat in the library with charms homework spread out in front of her. Since beginning to investigate Tom Riddle, she had found herself with less spare time than she desired, leaving her barely able to complete her homework, something she had never experienced before. Through a gap in the bookshelf beside her, she could just about make out Tom Riddle once she slid her glasses onto her face. His attention was once again captivated by the book before him, his hands scribbling down notes as though they were in autopilot. Evelyn had tried to steal the book, but with Tom keeping it within arms reach at all time, the task was impossible.

With Lily and Sara sat beside her, she had to appear subtle when glancing over at

Tom, limiting the knowledge she was able to collect from him. "Are you both coming to Hogsmeade this weekend?" Sara questioned, dropping her quill.

Lily and Evelyn both nodded. "I need a dress for the Slug Club Christmas party."

"Oh that's so exciting!" Lily beamed at her. "You'll have to let us help you find one, you can do a little fashion show in the shop for us

"Okay, but nothing too crazy; it's not a wedding." Evelyn knew what would happen if she didn't set any boundaries for the day, she would end up coming home with a white wedding frock and tiara as opposed to a formal dress. Glancing down at her watch, Evelyn realised she was late to the prefects meeting and as she looked up for a final glance at Tom she realised he was already gone.

By the time Evelyn arrived at the prefects meeting, she was far more than fashionably late. She shot the Head Girl, Evangeline, an apologetic as she took a seat on the closest available sofa.

"As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted." Began Tom, staring at Evelyn briefly who found herself sinking further into the sofa. "Prefects are being far too harsh on the students, taking away house points that are rightly gained by others. Everyone needs to take a step back and realise that they aren't God, they can't just control everyone around them."

"Tom, I completely disagree!" She cut in before anyone else could comment on his proposition. "We aren't being harsh enough on the students, so many first years are getting away with the kind of things they would have lost fifty house points for last year. It's incredibly inconsistent from the prefects."

"How about we come up with some sort of baseline rules for all prefects to follow? Over the next few weeks, we'll compile a list of what behaviours warrant the addition or removal of house points so that all the prefects are on the same page." Evangeline smiled at the prefects sat around her. "We can regroup in two weeks with our ideas." She rose from her seat and opened the door, smiling at each prefect as they walked past her.

Almost instantly after leaving the common room, Evelyn spotted Professor Dumbledore at the end of the corridor. Placing his glasses on the end of his nose, he shot Evelyn a concerned look as she made her way along the corridor. "Evelyn. I believe we may be overdue a conversation."

She followed him down to his office hesitantly, unsure of what the next few moments would entail. "Evelyn, you really must work on your spying skills."

Evelyn felt her cheeks immediately flushing red, "I've been observing, not spying."

"Nevertheless, you have been watching the boy. You have been watching with nothing to show for it yet. You have no evidence, nothing to support that inkling feeling inside of you and you are unlikely to find anything. He's a clever more, much cleverer than you or I could possibly imagine if he wants something hidden I can assure you it would be hidden well." He began pacing across his office, eventually coming to a halt before an object that Evelyn could only recognise from textbooks as a pensieve. "Before you progress any further, you must see what he will become, you must see what you are trying to stop."

"I think you are mistaken. I'm not trying to stop anything, I am simply trying to get inside his head and find out what he is hiding."

"He is hiding some things you are not ready to see, but this you must." 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. That boy was Tom and that boy was 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 dragged me into something you could solve yourself?"

"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." He stood up again, strolling over to the door of his office. "Now I do believe you should be in your dormitory, it's getting rather late."

"Yes, professor." She didn't bother trying to dispute what he was saying, that was a problem for another day. With a light yawn, Evelyn made her way out of his office and towards her dormitory. As soon as her head hit the pillow, she was out like a light.

Almost all of the fifth-year gathered in the courtyard the next day, ready for their trip to Hogsmeade. The crisp winter's air nipped at Evelyn's nose as she made her way into the crowd. As Evelyn's eyes wandered across the crowd, she spotted Tom Riddle stood across from her, clutching his small black book to his chest.

"Anything, in particular, you're hoping to find in Hogsmeade Tom?" She locked onto the book in his hands, attempting to search for any markings.

As soon as Tom caught wind of Evelyn's wandering eyes, he tucked the book into his coat pocket. "Perhaps."

"Would you like any help finding it?" Evelyn gave him a smile.

"No." He replied simply, walking away to another part of the courtyard.

After a short journey, the students all arrived at Hogsmeade, disbanding as soon as they saw the familiar shops in the distance. As soon as Evelyn arrived, she followed Lily and Sara into Madame Puddifoots for a traditional hot chocolate.

Evelyn's nails tapped impatiently against the wooden table in Madame Puddifoots, the crockery moving slightly with every tap. The three girls sat in the corner of the shop as they always did, with three hot chocolates sat in front of them.

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

"It has to be simple. Maybe something long and black?" She said, as more of a question than a suggestion.

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

Evelyn smiled back, taking one last swig of her hot chocolate and getting up from her seat. "I'm just going to pop and get something else for the ball, I'll meet you at

Gladrags Wizardwear in thirty minutes!" Before they could object, she scurried out into the snow.

It didn't take her long to spot Tom trudging through the snow, his book still firmly held in his hand. He walked like a robot, barely allowing his arms to move with each step he took. From where Evelyn was stood, she could see all the way down the main street in Hogsmeade, allowing her to watch Tom as he continued to walk down through the snow. He didn't walk for long until he came to a halt, directly outside the Hogs Head.

Tom didn't stay inside for long, clearly whatever he wanted was easy to find. When he eventually came out, he immediately made a beeline towards her. "Find what you were looking for Tom?"

"Indeed I did Evelyn. I'm glad you asked." As Evelyn looked at him, she could see that he had moved his book into the opposite pocket.

"Are you excited for the Christmas Ball?" She knew he wasn't before she asked the question but nevertheless, she wanted to talk to him.

"Not particularly Evelyn. Balls aren't exactly my scene, I'm not all too fond of dancing. However, since Professor Slughorn has made it compulsory, I will, unfortunately, be attending."

"Alone?" She asked hesitantly, regretting the question as soon as it left her lips.

"Actually now that you mention it, I was wondering if perhaps you would like to attend with me?" He stared at her blankly.

"Well that sounds like an excellent proposition but why would you wish to take me? You could have your pick of anyone?"

He took a few moments to think, leaving Evelyn almost certain he wouldn't answer. "It would be good for my image. Two academically able prefects attending together paints a marvellous picture."

Evelyn couldn't deny he made a good point. He was well-liked by many teachers, as was she, and attending together would likely benefit her impression on others. "I suppose it does."

"Meet me outside a few minutes before it starts." He turned away from her and left again, leaving before she could even acknowledge his request.

Sensing it had already been thirty minutes since she had left Lily and Sara in Madame Puddifoots, Evelyn glanced down at her watch before starting to walk along the street. As she walked, the snow began to fall harder on her face, swirls of white

flashing across her furred of vision. Every step she took towards the shop left light footsteps in the snow until she spotted her friends in the window and her footsteps became heavy as she ran.

"It's absolutely awful out there!" She exclaimed, shaking the snow off of her coat. "I could barely see a thing!"

"Did you find what you wanted in the shops?" Lily asked from one of the seats opposite the changing room.

"No luck sadly." Evelyn found not telling the truth much easier than she had thought. Suddenly, a pile of dresses were pushed into her hand by Sara, who had been collecting them the second she entered the shop.

"Here, try these few on!" She smiled as she took a seat beside Lily. "We'll wait here for you."

With a light smile at the girls, Evelyn made her way into the dressing room and began changing. 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. Everything was far too much like a bridal frock and Evelyn did not want to turn up looking like Tom Riddle's bride. Evelyn 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 plain 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 positioned 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.

After a confusing week, Evelyn found herself sat in the library. Usually, on a Sunday, the library was packed with students attempting to finish their homework from the previous week, however, Evelyn found it unusually quiet. Almost every table was empty, with those with students on only having one seat taken. Upon scanning the library, Evelyn found herself surprised to not stumble across Tom Riddle as he usually sat in the far corner of the library and spent the majority of his time there.

With mock exams coming soon, Evelyn found herself revising. She opened up a difficult ancient runes book and began to work, knowing she would need to get her act together if she had any chance of even passing her OWLS, let alone doing well in them. Although she felt prepared for other subjects, ancient runes were far too complex for her to understand with ease and with her partner being less than willing to support her, she found it impossible to see herself getting any better at it before her exams.

"Speak of the Devil." She muttered to herself, closing her ancient runes book and glancing up at Tom Riddle, who strutted into the library and straight towards her. He made an instant beeline for her table, sitting down opposite her and staring her dead in the eyes.

"I wouldn't exactly call myself a Devil Evelyn, that's rather rude."

"How on earth did you even hear that?" She began to stack her books into a pile, making an effort to be silent to avoid the glare of the librarian who commonly had to discipline the students.

"What can I say," He smirked, "I'm far superior to most others."

"I find that hard to believe Tom, but you keep your ego strong. Anyways, what are you doing in the library today?"

"The same as any other student, revising." From his bag, he pulled out a book: Salazar Slytherin and the Creation of Hogwarts. He flicked through the first few pages, eventually settling halfway through the book.

"And what subject would that be for Tom?" Evelyn eyed up his book, glancing at the title. "That doesn't seem like something we're covering this year, or anytime soon for that matter Tom."

"Well, Evelyn. Some of us are smarter than others in this school so therefore we qualify for a slightly higher level of academics." His eyes began scanning the pages of his book, glancing upwards at Evelyn as she spoke.

"Well if you were chosen, then surely I would be too. You can't deny that I'm almost academically identical to you."

"Almost." He emphasised. "Barely in ancient runes, you seem almost incompetent at that"

"Well, maybe that's because you won't help me. If I had a better partner then maybe I would be more successful."

With that, the two fell into a comfortable silence; Tom reading his book and Evelyn reading hers. Both students were fully engaged by the words on the parchment pages before them, leaning closer in an attempt to better intake the information: hours passed before they spoke again.

"Mind if I borrow that book after you, Tom?" Evelyn shut her book, glancing up through the window at the sun as it began to dip behind the horizon.

"Well Evelyn, I highly doubt you are of the academic capability to truly understand it. Unfortunately, I will be keeping this copy to myself." He slammed the cover shut, glancing over at the librarian whose expression changed from stern to kind once she saw him.

"Well, that is a shame, Tom."

"It really isn't." With that, he picked up his book. "Anyway Evelyn, I'll see you around." Tom Riddle made his way out of the library with haste, quickly vanishing from Evelyn's line of sight.

Once she could no longer see Tom, Evelyn rose from her seat and began making her way through the library. She walked up and down the aisles until she found herself stood in front of a section on the history of Hogwarts. Scanning the shelves, she eventually found the book that Tom had been reading. Evelyn quickly took the book in her hands, made her way back to her table and opened the book. She flicked through the book until she found the page she recognised and began reading.

Slytherin didn't trust muggle-born students, and he expressed his opinion by proposing that they should not be accepted at Hogwarts. However, when the other didn't agree, Slytherin created a chamber, hidden inside the castle, concealing a basilisk inside. and only to be opened by a true heir of Slytherin. He left the school soon afterwards, never to return and died at some point in the Middle Ages.

Evelyn's face fell in horror as she read the passage. She knew once she read it exactly what Tom wanted to do, he wanted to open the chamber. He wanted to purge the school of all muggle-born students and nobody had any idea. Evelyn flicked the page over, almost recoiling in horror as she read the next passage.

Of the many fearsome beasts and monsters that roam our land, there is none more curious or more deadly than the Basilisk, known also as the King of Serpents. This snake, which may reach gigantic size, and live many hundreds of years, is born from a chicken's egg, hatched beneath a toad. Its methods of killing are most wondrous,

for aside from its deadly and venomous fangs, the Basilisk has a murderous stare, and all who are fixed with the beam of its eye shall suffer instant death. Spiders flee before the Basilisk, for it is their mortal enemy, and the Basilisk flees only from the crowing of the rooster, which is fatal to it.

Evelyn couldn't believe her eyes. She slammed the book closed, earning a stern look from the librarian. It was all too much for her. Feeling tears well in her eyes, she stormed out of the library and began walking towards someone she suspected would know about this chamber: Professor Slughorn. Wiping at her eyes, she knocked firmly on his door.

"Come in." Evelyn could barely Professor Slughorn from where she was stood. She slipped into the classroom and walked towards his desk. Upon seeing Evelyn's faces, Professor Slughorn felt relieved, "Evelyn I'm glad it's you coming through my door rather than another first-year student." He chuckled lightly, pointing her to the seat opposite his desk. "What was it you wanted?"

"Well, I was doing some reading in the library and I came across something about Salazar Slytherin hiding a chamber in the castle. Would that be true?" She spoke cautiously, asking enough to get information but not enough to give anything away. "It's for a project." She added for good measure.

Professional Slughorn stared curiously at her, as though he was trying to piece together a puzzle in his mind. "Well, Evelyn it seems I haven't. Why would there be such a chamber in the castle? He wrinkled his nose as he spoke.

"That's what I'm trying to find out, for my project." She could tell he was lying, he had been at this school longer than she'd been alive, it would be impossible for him not to know, especially since Evelyn knew he often let his curiosity get the better of him.

"Well, that does sound truly curious. Do let me know if you find anything dear, you have me rather intrigued." He smiled at her lightly. "Apologies but I am rather busy tonight, perhaps it's best asking another Professor."

"Well thank you anyway, sir, I'll see you in Potions." Evelyn strode out of the office with only one thought: she had to find that chamber.

Evelyn found the next day flying past 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 Ball 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 the dance had been moved to a far greater location: the Great Hall.

Evelyn began her preparation 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.

Shortly after, 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. If she had any chance of retrieving information from him tonight, she had to leave a good impression. "I have to go early, Tom will be waiting for me." Evelyn already knew that Lily and Sara disapproved of her date, even though they never mentioned it, she could tell just by their reactions once she said his name. She gave her friends a brief smile and fled from the common room.

Evelyn knew the ball was the perfect chance to interact with Tom. She knew he wouldn't be an easy code to crack but with enough perseverance, hopefully, she would be able to remove his masquerade and reveal his plans: whatever they were, they needed to be stopped. As Evelyn hurried through the corridors, she felt her heart racing; tonight was make or break for her. 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, his lips making their way to her hand and placing a cold kiss onto it. "It looks nice."

Before Evelyn even had a chance to be shocked at Tom's compliment, he had taken her hand and began leading her into the Hall, walking slowly as they both explored their surroundings. Evelyn knew that Hogwarts usually went all out on events, but she had never in her time at the school seen such extravagant decorations. Emerald, crimson and gold fabrics hung from the ceilings, intertwining as the wind blew in across the all. Gold ornate lamps dangled from the ceiling, their centre's housing groups of tiny fairies, lights streaming from their iridescent wings and illuminating the hall. Evelyn and Tom made their way deeper into the Great Hall, eventually finding themselves stood on the dancefloor just a few feet apart.

Tom looked at Evelyn, as though he was assessing her, before sliding his hands onto her waist. Evelyn hung her arms around his neck in response, beginning to move in time with the beat of the music, which unfortunately for the pair, was slow. 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. Despite the closeness, there was no tension between the two, their bodies moved as one, forgetting all of their histories.

Abruptly, Evelyn pulled away, her hands pressing themselves against her head as a sharp pain coursed through her body. "It was you." She called, staring him in the eyes. "I'm not a book, you can't just pick and choose to read me whenever. If you want something just ask." Her voice was filled with anger as she spoke.

"Tell me about your parents." Tom didn't say another word as he changed the topic, taking Evelyn's hand and leading her to one of the golden tables scattered across the Great Hall.

Evelyn was taken aback by his calmness. His voice was quiet, yet confident; his eyes locking onto hers with not a glimmer of anger present. "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 grandparents had told her of their fate.

Tom looked her up and down for a few moments. "That's not 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.

"I used legilimens on one of the reporters for the Daily Prophet. They couldn't publish the truth, Evelyn."

"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. "What do you want in return?"

"I want you, Evelyn." He tilted his head, analysing her expression.

Evelyn's mouth fell open, a puzzled look plastering itself across her face. "Me? Why? What for?"

"You can feel things. You can understand people, you know what other people want. I need you to be my emotions." His face remained expressionless as he spoke, his eyes staying locked onto hers.

"I don't understand."

"I've been watching you, as you have me, and I've learnt more than you would imagine. You can feel emotions that I cannot, you can understand animals in ways I do not care to. You will be a useful asset to my team. I have the powers to grant you anything you desire Evelyn, anything at all."

"Could you bring my parents back?" She wiped the tears from her face.

"I could. I could tell you more about their death as well. If you join me, once we are done, they will be back with you." Evelyn didn't doubt him. His magic was far superior to anything she'd ever seen before, he could do things that nobody else could. "Evelyn, will you join me?"

Evelyn paused. She could say no, she could turn around, go to sleep and never think of her encounter with Tom again. Saying no was the hard option, saying yes would be easy. If she said yes, she would be one step closer to stopping him, she could have everything she ever wanted; she could have her parents back. Mustering up all the courage she could, she rose from her seat, wiping away the final tears from her eyes.

"Do you wish to help me ?" He hurried her.

Taking a deep breath in, she whispered the answer she knew would change her life.

"No."

Evelyn felt empowered, but she also felt terrified. She had just told the person she knew would become a monster, the exact answer she knew he didn't want to hear. Evelyn kept uneasy eye contact with Tom, almost hoping he would respond but instead there was silence. Evelyn pulled herself away, quickly exiting the Great Hall in an attempt to stay calm. As she walked, she felt the panic begin like a cluster of sparks in her abdomen. Tension grew in her limbs, her mind replaying what Dumbledore had shown her.

Evelyn couldn't turn back, she kept walking, navigating her way through the winding corridors. She wanted to stay strong, but the tears in her eyes were threatening to fall. Her whole body felt as though it was being torn in half, torn between what she should have chosen and what she did choose. An invisible hand was clasped over her mouth, her breaths becoming more and more shallow by the second. Evelyn felt her body slowly falling to the ground, her body falling into a foetal position in an attempt to self-soothe.

At the sound of footsteps, Evelyn glanced upwards, wiping the tears away from her eyes. "Stop crying." He called, looking down at her.

Evelyn thought she was calm, but her trembling lip and shaking hands said otherwise to any passers-by. She didn't want to face Tom, she didn't think she would be able to cope if she did, but it was too late, he was already there.

"I want you to know that my question earlier, was not so much a question Evelyn, but more of command; you will help me get what I want." Tom reached his hand out, pulling Evelyn up to his level.

Evelyn wiped her tears away once more, looking away in an attempt to calm herself. Her eyes traced the corridor walls, focusing on the details as she attempted to control her breathing. "You can't make me do anything." She tried to sound confident but every word was followed by a raspy breath.

"Evelyn." His hand grasped onto her arm, his fingers pressing deep into her wrist. "I can make you do all sorts; there are simply curses I could use that would make you my puppet."

Evelyn finally caught her breath. "Those sorts of curses are illegal, the Ministry would have your wand for that."

"You really think they'd ever find out Evelyn? I'm very good at dark magic and I'm even better at keeping secrets." He increased the pressure in his grip. "Nobody could stop me because nobody would ever find out."

"They would, I would tell them." But as soon as she said the words, Evelyn wasn't sure that she truly would.

"You wouldn't. I'm sure there would be some very serious consequences if you chose to defy me. In fact, I would reconsider your earlier answer." His words send chills down Evelyn's spine and before she had a chance to respond, he had gone. Once he was gone, Evelyn could barely think. It was as though he was a dementor and he had taken her soul when he left.

Evelyn knew she wouldn't be able to go back to the Great Hall so once she had regained control of her emotions, she made her way back to her common room. Immediately after she entered, she wiped away her makeup, wishing she was wiping away all traces of the night before. She slid out of her dress and into her nightdress, flinging herself onto her bed.

Evelyn knew that if she had any chance of beating Tom Riddle, she would have to be much more powerful than she currently was; she would have to learn magic she had never dreamed of. Evelyn leant over towards her drawer, pulling out a selection of books and assessing their titles. Anything she thought could keep her safe from Tom or could help her take him down, she read. Evelyn felt as though she was

drowning in a world she didn't understand, losing sight of the surface as she delved deeper into the books. Soon she would be a master of magic that even Tom Riddle wouldn't expect.

After reading for hours, her body felt heavy with exhaustion and soon her eyelids fell 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"

Evelyn awoke trembling. Her entire body coated in sweat and tears. *It was just a nightmare:* she tried to convince herself. It was no use because it wasn't just a nightmare, it could soon become her reality. It could become anyone's reality with Tom being allowed to roam the castle.

Evelyn *had* to stop him. There was no other way.

He wasn't going to stop *ever*.

The Christmas holidays passed by in a blur, with little interference from Tom Riddle in her dreams or her reality. Over the course of the holidays, Evelyn received several books from her family and friends which kept her busy for the whole two weeks. She

had also utilised the library every single day, delving deeper into dark magic with each book. Although she had struggled, Evelyn had even made her way into the restricted section of the library, securing herself books that she could never have imagined reading at the start of term.

Ever since school had re-started for the spring term, Evelyn, Lily and Sara had spent the majority of their time inside the library. Both Lily and Sara had failed to do the majority of their holiday schoolwork which had left them in the library as soon as they got back. For hours, the girls had been working on the vanishing spell, with Sara getting nowhere despite Evelyn's best efforts.

"I can't believe you've already done a mouse, Evelyn," Sara said in hushed tones. "I can't even do this quill." Sara stared angrily at the quill, still placed evidently in front of her. "Evanesco." She whispered, staring down at the quill which was still sat in front of her.

"You're not saying it right Sara!" Evelyn exclaimed, the annoyance in her voice evident.

"I can't do it!" Sara declared, shoving the quill into her bag. "I give up."

"Well I give up as well, I have prefect duties." Evelyn sighed, placing the book she had been reading away on the shelf behind her. "Keep going Sara, Lily will help you." She gave a smile to Lily, hoping she would take over. Lily willingly obliged, lifting up her own wand and beginning to repeat the incantation.

By the time Evelyn got to the third floor, it was silent. She passed through as she usually did, without a problem. As the hours passed, she felt her body beginning to tire, her eyelids getting heavier with every step she took. Mustering all of her energy, she made her way down the staircase and onto the second floor, hoping it would be as empty as it usually was. Although Evelyn suspected that the second floor would be empty, she knew that she still had to inspect all the rooms for students in order to maintain her good moral conscience.

Evelyn peered into the girl's bathroom, her eyes briefly scanning the room for students before turning away. She was about to leave when suddenly she heard the muffled sobs from inside. Slowly, she made her way back inside the bathroom, following the sound of the crying until she was stood outside the bathroom stall.

"Hello." She called out, unsure whether she truly wanted to hear a response or not "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 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. 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 knew who it was instantly upon laying eyes on him, he had such distinctive characteristics that no other could match. Tom stood in the bathroom, a hissing noise escaping his lips: Tom was speaking parseltongue. As he spoke, she watched on, the rocks that made up the sink slowly separating with a rumble. He had found the chamber, and now so had she. Evelyn knew she had enough, she had enough information to finally take him down.

Peering out of the stall once more, she saw Tom 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.

Madame Truckle was rather disappointed to see Evelyn in the Hospital Wing later that night. When she returned from her short break to find Evelyn's unconscious body sprawled across one of the beds, her face fell. Nevertheless, as a healer, it was her job to heal Evelyn and return her to her usual state.

Evelyn was unconscious for days, no matter what Madame Truckle tried, her condition didn't improve. She looked as though she was a porcelain doll, her face the colour of a moonbeam with her bone-white hands hanging lifelessly beside her body. Upon opening her eyes several days after being admitted, Evelyn saw Madame Truckle hurrying towards her with Headmaster Dippet following closely behind her. Dippet waited by the end of her bed as Madame Truckle began mixing a variety of herbs into a paste and shovelling them into her mouth. Evelyn was too weak to chew, instead, letting them dissolve on her tongue and slip down her throat.

Evelyn was disoriented to her surroundings, barely able to match the audio to the visuals around her. "Headmaster, I would wait before you question her." Madame Truckle stood protectively beside Evelyn.

"But-" He began to object, stepping closer to Evelyn.

"No. But nothing, she is still weak. Nothing she says will be of any use to you." Madame Truckle turned him away, leading him to the door. She gave Evelyn one last glance before hurrying away to tend to the other patients.

Evelyn slept for hours, yet when she awoke, she was still plagued with tiredness. When Evelyn 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

– T.M.R

Evelyn barely had a chance to think before Madame Truckle walked up to her with a smile, "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 thought about what she would be able to say to her Headmaster. She couldn't possibly consider telling him about Tom but she wasn't sure she would be able to lie to him and conceal everything that she knew. If she spoke, she knew there would be consequences from Tom, she knew that she wouldn't be able to pretend she hadn't said anything and either way she had no evidence.

"Miss Rivers, would you care to tell me about the night you were cursed?" Dippet asked her, helping her down to her seat before taking his own.

Evelyn paused for a moment to compose her thoughts. "Well, sir. I was just finishing my prefect duties when I realised that I had to speak to Professor Dumbledore, so I was going towards his door when suddenly everything went black. The next thing I knew, I was in the Hospital Wing."

"Why were you needing to speak with Professor Dumbledore?" He questioned without hesitating.

"I was going to ask him about doing something for extra credit, you see I've been slipping behind in my studies due to stress." She said with as much confidence as she could muster. She wasn't entirely lying, the stress had begun to take over her whole life and she knew her grades would soon start slipping if she didn't get back onto the right track.

"Now do you have any ideas as to who it could have been that curse you?" He spoke in a hurried manner, a quill hovering behind him and documenting their conversation on parchment.

"No, sir."

"Now two nights ago, somebody brought you to the Hospital Wing, do you happen to know who that was?" He paused, watching as she began to get flustered. "Take your time."

"No sir, I was unaware that somebody had brought me there," Evelyn said, her voice faltering slightly as her cheeks began to colour.

"Well, I suggest you try your hardest to remember. It's not safe to have someone practising the kind of magic that you were struck by inside this castle, or anywhere for that matter. I do hope this is not a case of female hysteria Evelyn, I heard of how common it is in muggles and I hope we haven't got a case on our hands." Evelyn nodded lightly, almost glad that she thought he was crazy. "Now off to your common room, your friends have been worried," He ordered with a more friendly tone.

Evelyn finally 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 every single day but he wouldn't budge. They were looking at sending you to St Mungo's if you hadn't woken up last night!" Lily felt herself becoming emotional at the thought of her friend being transferred hours away. "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.

She could tell Lily was about to ask for information but 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.

Evelyn did the best she could to avoid Tom all day. She took longer routes to class (much to Lily's dismay who had to walk with her everywhere) and sat with other people, in anywhere other than her assigned seat in Potions; but when it came to Study Of Ancient Runes, she had no alternative.

With as much confidence and strength as Evelyn could muster, she strode into the classroom, opening her book and keeping her head down. "Today we will be working on some more difficult Runes, turn to page 160 and complete the exercises."

Professor Griffth bellowed from the front of the class once everyone was seated. For once, Evelyn was disappointed that her Professor was such a passive teacher.

Evelyn turned to the page with a sigh, trying to keep her eyes forward and away from Tom, but she couldn't help but look at him: it was as though he was magnetic. Despite usually struggling with her Runes, Evelyn worked through the beginning of the page with ease. However, the same couldn't be said for the rest of it.

Evelyn knew that she needed to talk to Tom, she needed to tell him that she changed her mind, she had to. Even if she could never agree with what he was doing, at least she would be able to understand him better from the inside, she would have a better knowledge of his plans and taking him down would be easier.

"Tom." Her voice quivered as she spoke in a hushed whisper. When she got no response, her shaking hand touched his shoulder. "Tom."

"Evelyn. I think you know how I feel about you, I don't believe we have anything to discuss." His face remained forwards at all times, his attention staying on his translation work as he spoke.

"Tom, I changed my mind." She put down her quill and stared at him, his focus remaining on his work.

"You haven't, I can tell."

She knew she couldn't fool him- it was futile to even try. "I know what will happen if I don't change my mind. I know you're capable of far darker magic than what you used on me a few days ago. We might not want the same things yet, but I'm sure we could get there."

"Evelyn, tell me why you were running to Dumbledore after you were in the second-floor bathroom. That doesn't seem like you trying to get there."

"Tom, I was scared. What else was I supposed to do? I've never seen the things you have and I didn't know what I could possibly do. Besides, you stopped me, didn't you?" Evelyn knew he was unlikely to ever fully trust her, but the closer she could get, the sooner this would all be over.

"Evelyn, if you truly want to join me, then I believe you should have to prove it to me. Meet me outside the library after dinner for your first task." Tom finally turned to face her, smirking as the ideas of what he could make her do ran through his mind. "I'll see you later."

Evelyn wasn't sure what she would be doing later that evening, but she barely cared. She knew she had to be willing to do anything if she was going to bring him down. Tom Riddle wouldn't give up easily.- that much she knew.

The rest of the day passed ever so slowly. Making her way between lessons took so long that by the time she got there, it was almost time to leave. With no other lessons with Tom and long journey's between lessons, Evelyn had hours to process what she had just done. Evelyn had just made a deal with the devil, and soon they would be dancing together.

Evelyn spent as much of the day as possible revising any dark magic she already knew, not even bothering to glance at new speels as she knew she would never know them in time. By dinner, Evelyn's mind was fried: she had revised so many spells that she could recite them in her sleep. She sat with Lily and Sara at the end of the Ravenclaw table, smiling lightly at them as she took her seat, planting her books beside her in a tower, hiding the ones containing dark magic at the bottom.

"How was your day?" Sara asked whilst plating up food for the three of them, collecting three generous servings of pasta and placing one in front of Lily, Evelyn and herself.

"It was good; it's a lot harder getting back into everything though." She replied with a smile. "I didn't realise how far behind I would be, or how much people would look at me." She added the last part in hushed tones, aware that students were still watching her.

"I guess they're just curious, we would be too if someone was in the Hospital Wing for three days for a mysterious reason." Lily laughed uncomfortably, clearly aware that there was much more going on than what Evelyn was telling her.

"Professor Splint gave us pages and pages of homework today- there's no way I'll get this done for two days time!" Sara complained between mouthfuls of her pasta. "I'd much rather be with Daniel! Whilst you were away Evelyn, he asked me on a date and it was magical. I really like him."

Evelyn found herself finally surprised by Sara's actions. It had only been three days and she was already attached to a new boy, one that she had never spoken to before their fifth year.

Lily leaned in closer to the girls, "You know what I heard recently, and Evelyn I can't believe you didn't tell me yourself, but apparently there's something between you and Tom. Everyone said there was so much chemistry at the Christmas Ball, I can't bel-"

Evelyn quickly cut her off. "That's not true Lily: whoever told you that was lying." Evelyn would never be able to fall for someone so empty, so toxic, so dangerous: she wasn't foolish enough to develop feelings for a psychopath.

Evelyn quickly shovelled down the rest of her dinner, levitating her books as she rose from her table. "I have to see Professor Dumbledore about extra credit." She

left the Great Hall as quickly as she could, making her way towards the library after dropping her books in the corridor and out of sight from others.

"You're late." Tom hissed at her as she walked down towards him.

"Actually I'm here after dinner after I finished my dinner." She retorted to him.

"Don't think you can act like this when we get where we're going!" He warned sternly, taking off.

With a brisk jog, Evelyn caught up with Tom and managed to slow to a walk alongside him. "What's the plan?" She felt unusually calm, as though she almost believed that this could be some big joke.

"I haven't decided yet, whatever springs to mind." He said with an inviting whisper.

Tom led her out of Hogwarts castle and towards a place that Evelyn was all too familiar with from all of her Care of Magical Creatures lessons. "Why are we going to the Forbidden Forest?" She asked him, her eyes exploring the forest for any potential dangers.

"It's where we meet." He stated simply, leaving it at that and picking up the pace.

Evelyn thought it best to not question him, so instead, she stayed in silence until they reached a clearing. It was too dark for Evelyn's liking, her hands in front of her were barely visible.

Abruptly three figures joined her and Tom in the clearing, appearing from behind the tree line. Astrea Black, Abraxas Malfoy and Theodore Nott stood before her dressed head to toe in black, hoods draping over their faces, the back trailing behind them through the snow.

"Welcome my Knights." Tom began, walking around the clearing. "As you all know Evelyn has been very interested in my mission lately. In fact, she is planning on joining our little group" Three gasps echoed across the clearing. "I have decided that I would consider her offer since she may prove valuable later on in my quest. Before any of us can even consider trusting her, she needs to prove her loyalty to the Knights of Walpurgis, now has anybody got any suggestions?"

"Give her the mark." Offered Theodore.

"No!" Astrea and Tom snapped back in synchronisation. "She is not worthy of it." Tom dismissed the suggestion immediately, stepping closer to Theodore as though he was ready to curse him "Has anybody any valuable suggestions?"

Silence fell over the clearing, all of Tom's associates glancing away from him as they stood without ideas. "Tom I am a very trustworthy person, perhaps no initiation is needed."

"Perhaps not."

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 see you completed the task, I must say that you made a bit too much of a mess." He gestured to the blood pooling at his feet.

"What did I do? What did you make me do?" At the rate her heart was beating, Evelyn was almost certain it would burst from her chest any second.

"Even Astrea is pleased with the outcome. I must say, I'm surprised you had it in you."

"What did you make me do?" She screamed at him, repeating it as though it was a mantra in her head. "What did you make me do? What did you make me do?" She fell to the floor curling up into foetal position, her body instinctively rocking itself back and forth. "What did you make me do? What did you make me do?"

"Evelyn you have done what is necessary," He dropped down to her level, tilting her chin up so that their eyes were locked. "Welcome to the Knights of Walpurgis."

Evelyn knew that there was nobody she could ask about the night before. Even thinking about it made her feel sick, her whole body paralysed with fear as she imagined the state of her dorm only a few hours earlier. She had barely had time to think about anything other than what she had done last night but one thing she knew was that she needed a plan. Evelyn needed the sort of plan that even someone as brilliant as Tom wouldn't be able to decipher, the kind of plan that was impossible.

By late February, her plan was no closer to completion. She felt as though she hadn't made any progress: nobody in the Knight's of Walpurgis liked her any more than they ever had before, in fact, Astrea seemed to dislike her more than ever before after her acceptance into their group. Despite now being physically closer to Tom more, she felt even more emotionally disconnected than usual, she felt as though he almost spoke to her less. Although Tom was still evidently distrusting of Evelyn, he was clearly the most believing of her conversion to his team.

One night, past curfew, Evelyn felt curiosity brewing inside of her, bubbling over as though it was an itch that wouldn't go away without scratching. Evelyn had no idea where she was going but once her feet hit the ground, they were the ones in control. She trusted her body, wherever she was going was safe enough for her body to take her there. Evelyn kept walking until she was back inside the second-floor girl's toilets and her heart began to race, her mind flashing back to the events that unfolded the last time she entered this bathroom.

Once she entered, she saw exactly what she had the last time she had met with the Knight's of Walpurgis: Tom Riddle stood in front of his fellow students. "Wonderful that you finally chose to join us, Evelyn." He began with his silky voice, earning a few groans from Astrea Black, who was clearly not content with Evelyn's presence at the meeting. "Silence Astrea."

Evelyn positioned herself alongside Theodore Nott, mimicking his posture and facial expression in an attempt to fit in. She didn't have to wait long before Tom spoke again, this time began circling her.

"Tonight is the night. Tonight is the night that the blood traitors will perish and feel my wrath. You each have been given your job— I expect you all to succeed."

"We will." Astrea, Theodore and Abraxas replied in perfect synchronisation, suddenly dispersing out of the bathroom and vanishing from Evelyn's sight.

"Evelyn. I'd like to show you something." He whispered as he passed her, taking her hands and moving her into position. Evelyn opened her mouth, ready to speak, only to be stopped by Tom's finger pressing against her lips. "Don't speak. Close your eyes."

At that moment, she trusted him. Closing her eyes was the easiest thing she had ever had to do for him and she knew not seeing was better than seeing whatever was about to happen. A 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 she knew was to come. As she felt the basilisk coming closer towards her, her legs began to shake, her whole body beginning to vibrate as the panic began to rise inside of her. 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's nothing to be afraid of, keep your eyes closed. I just want you to know that if you ever even think about double-crossing me, she will protect me. She wants blood, and she won't hesitate to take yours, Evelyn." He muttered a phrase that Evelyn didn't understand and suddenly, the basilisk was gone. "You can open your eyes now Evelyn. She's gone, for now, you should go too." He released his arms from around her as she opened her eyes.

As soon as Evelyn opened her eyes, the anxiety was gone. "Goodbye Tom." She hurried back to her dormitory, sneaking into her bed as quietly as possible in order to not wake Lily and Evelyn. The night passed slowly, and with every noise, Evelyn's anxiety began growing, slowly taking over her body, every inch of her was frozen with fear and terror. She knew what was travelling around the school, she knew what was travelling through the pipes, ready to strike at any muggle-born student she found. When Evelyn woke up, she knew that there would be fewer students at Hogwarts, she knew that Tom wouldn't let his basilisk be unsuccessful.

Evelyn watched as the wall clock ticked like the timer on a bomb, unable to be reversed, stopped, or slowed down. Every minute that went by was sixty seconds of agony where all Evelyn could do was wait. She knew that there was nothing left for her to do, no spell she could cast that would reverse the past few months from her life. Soon, people would be dead.

Evelyn felt the panic begin like a cluster of spark plugs in her abdomen. At first, she thought she'd be able to control it but as it grew, she realised she had to submit. With each raspy breath, it felt as though she was drowning, a colossal wave toppling over her and pushing her below the surface, the sand choking her, tears streaming down her face; there was no escape. Her head was pounding, every cell in her body screaming for oxygen, it seemed almost impossible to fight but she fought until she felt as though she was about to explode. She fought it until she doubled over, clutching her stomach in pain, until she could no longer cry any more tears, and until everything went black.

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 and 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. As she was about to speak, she was stopped by another piercing screech, shivers running down her spine as she realised what was likely happening: she was either hearing someone die, or hearing someone discover

them. 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 Toms. 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 and she could have stopped it. She knew there would likely be more to follow if she didn't stop him, Tom was ruthless.

"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," Evelyn 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 how to stop Tom and all I have done so far is act as an accessory in his plans. I am a liability to him and I know he still does not trust me yet I am not aware of how to gain his trust. 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 bloody 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't you?"

"Yes," She stuttered.

"And why is that exactly?" He questioned, pacing up and down the room.

"I've been doing an extra credit project if you must know." 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 somebody with your level of supposed intellect need to be doing extra credit?" He said, beginning to loosen his grip on her.

"I've been slipping behind in lessons because of you," She snapped, finally breaking free from his clutch. "You have been constantly calling me to pointless meetings and now I'm struggling to focus in lessons."

"I did not know,"

"Well, next time don't even question it." She thundered, a smirk playing on her lips as she stormed out of the Room of Requirement.

Evelyn breathed a sigh of relief as she stormed through the castle: she had managed to deceive Tom for the second time, he thought he had her wrapped around his finger, but she was slowly beginning to wrap him around hers. She didn't plan on playing by anybody's rules; she made her own.

After her encounter with Riddle, he called her too far fewer meetings and Evelyn threw herself into revision for her OWLS, barely stopping to breathe. She revised for hours on end, missing several hours of prefect duties and neglecting her friends, who didn't believe in studying as much as she did. Although they were thought to be one of the most challenging exams they would ever do, revision was deemed pointless by Sara and Lily, who instead passed their time gossiping or playing Quidditch together.

Evelyn had recently lost her interest in Quidditch; instead, all of her efforts had been focused on Tom and her OWLS. Despite still attending matches and games, she was only ever at practice to show her face and then vanish away again for revision.

As the week of Evelyn's OWLS approached, her stress levels were at their highest. The stress spread through her mind like a forest fire on paper as she took her seat in the Great Hall for her final exam. She had finished all her most simple OWLS yet it was time for Ancient Runes; the one exam Evelyn was not prepared for. As much as she studied the subject, her mind could simply not piece together the runes.

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.

The exam ended far too quickly for Evelyn's liking, she had strangely enjoyed every second of it and there had been so much more she had wanted to write about. She felt a small smile growing on her face as she exited the Great Hall yet her happiness was quickly snatched away as a tense hand pulled her to the side. Evelyn fought to pull her arm away, letting out a small sigh of relief upon the realisation that it was only Tom.

"Evelyn," Tom stated, releasing his grip on her arm.

Evelyn instantly found her eyes rolling as she caught sight of him, "What do you want Tom?"

"It's not a case of want, it's a case of need," He began smoothly.

"Oh and what exactly is it that you need?"

"I need you to accompany me over the holidays," He stated.

"And where exactly would we be headed?" Evelyn, placed a hand on her hip, tapping the sole of her shoe against the cobbled floor along to the beat of her heart.

"Little Hangleton. You will get off the Hogwarts Express at Yorkshire and accompany me to the Gaunt Shack." He turned hot on his heels and took off, quickly disappearing from Evelyn's eyesight.

"It's always a mystery with him," Evelyn muttered to herself as she took off towards the Ravenclaw common room. She entered the common room to find Lily and Sara sat impatiently on the cerulean sofa and watched them quickly stand at the sight of her.

"Everything alright?" She asked, strolling past the sofa and towards her dorm.

"We need to talk to you, Evelyn." Lily began, walking towards her and placing a warm hand on her shoulder.

"We're worried about you, you've been" Sara paused, looking for the right word, "distant. Evelyn, you've changed"

The three girls took a seat on the sofa, Lily and Sara sandwiching Evelyn tightly in the middle of them. "I don't know what you mean. I've been the same as I was before." Evelyn retorted with a sharp tongue.

"Before what exactly, before Tom?" Lily was tired of the pretence she had been witnessing for the past few months.

"No! Before you started interrogating me whenever my personality shifts! People change, I'm not going to be the same weak little girl I was last year, even last month. Weak girls get hurt and I am *not* getting hurt. I am stronger than you two could even imagine and I've done things you wouldn't want to even let cross your minds. 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 got out of her seat and headed straight for her dorm, wiping away the tears from her eyes with the back of her hand: they weren't worth the tears.

Evelyn 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.

She closed her eyes and let her mind take control. She let it lead her wherever she wanted. Evelyn's dreams took her to a rain-forest. In the soft light and humid air, she would tune into the noises like they were an auditory jigsaw puzzle. On each conjuring of her sacred place, she felt a frisson of joy, the same kind as she felt when her owl greeted her after a long day, only many times more intense. The leaves would feel wet and tougher than they appeared, the aroma went right to her brain, intoxicating, rich. Then with a steady gaze, she'd pick one small place and stare until she had unmasked the camouflage of the creatures hidden in plain sight.

Evelyn's dream was cut short like a thin stream of light shone through her window awakening her, her vision was groggy as she opened her hazel eyes and glanced around the room before collapsing onto the comfort of her pillow. As much as she didn't want to wake up, today was the last day of her fifth year at Hogwarts. Today, the chapter was coming to a close.

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. She levitated her trunk and Olympia's cage alongside her as she made her way out of the common room. It felt strange to Evelyn, saying goodbye to Hogwarts, even if it was only for six weeks: a lot could change in six weeks.

Evelyn made it to the Hogwarts express with plenty of time to spare. She leisurely 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 palpating uncontrollably with the fire of a thousand suns and the thoughts that rode the carousel around her mind did not want to stop.

What would be the dangers of going to Little Hangleton? Why on Earth had she even agreed to this godforsaken task from Dumbledore? 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 Riddles 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 Toms' 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 the 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 the 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 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. On her journey to Hogwarts, she purchased a copy of the Daily Prophet and when she clutched it in her hands, she had to do a double-take to read the headline without gasping.

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....)

Although Evelyn knew it had happened, she hadn't expected everybody else to now be aware of the events that unfolded over the holidays. With a deep sigh, she folded the paper and placed it on the floor beside her other belongings. The carriage was empty aside from Evelyn so she could do anything she wanted. However, the only thing Evelyn 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. Evelyn 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," Lily 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."

"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." Sara finally spoke.

"You 100% fancy Tom Riddle." Lily 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 the 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.

Evelyn was fuming: the memory of last night was still playing on repeat in her head. She couldn't cope, she could still feel the pain from last night coursing through her body.

The next morning, Evelyn awoke before the sun could creep up from the hills. She quickly snuck out of the common room and headed to where she assumed Tom would be. She wound through the corridors until she was outside, where she searched across the walls until she found the stern silhouette that belonged to Tom.

"What the hell!" She yelled, shoving Tom's shoulder against the cobbled wall.

"Evelyn, how kind of you to visit me," He began calmly, releasing his shoulder from Evelyn's cold grip. "What brings you here?"

"You know exactly what!" She lowered her voice "Astrea Black used an unforgivable on me last night!"

"Well, that is rather unfortunate." He said, staring at her blankly, not a single trace of emotion crossing his face.

"What are you going to do about it?" She snapped. "You let that happen to me Tom, do you understand how horrible it was?"

"Oh Evelyn, can't you protect yourself? I have no issue with what Astrea did, you need disciplining before our trip."

"Is this some sort of joke? What trip? You're deluded if you think I am going anywhere with you after last night!" The anger had been brewing inside of her for far too long and she knew it wouldn't stay contained for much longer.

"We are going to Albania over the holidays and that is not a request. You are coming with me there will no fighting. If you so much as breathe a word of this to anyone," He pinned her arm against the wall, leaning in close to her ear, "If you do, it will be a different unforgivable next time."

Evelyn felt paralyzed. If Dumbledore had never spoken to her last year, none of this would have happened: Evelyn was a shell of the girl she once was. She hadn't made many mistakes in her time but the few that she had seemed to be colossal. She stormed away, unable to reply to Tom's outrageous request. She couldn't keep doing this, she had to tell Dumbledore that it was over. Evelyn was done.

Evelyn powered down the corridor, her feet colliding forcefully with the tiles with every step. She was fuming. She sped towards Dumbledore's office and without any regard for knocking, she threw open the door. She flung herself into the large seat and took a deep breath.

"Professor, I am done."

Dumbledore took a deep look at Evelyn, her reddened stare burning through him. "You are not done Miss Rivers. You cannot be for the sake of wizard-kind."

"I don't want to do it anymore, find someone else, please." She could feel the tears forming in her eyes as she begged to be free. "It is impossible to help someone who does not wish to be helped"

"Nothing is impossible, just difficult. And eventually, we must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy." He unwrapped a liquorice lace and placed it into his mouth, allowing Evelyn to process her thoughts.

She knew that she couldn't give up now, she had to stop Tom but at what cost? Evelyn was unsure if the small possibility of stopping Tom from travelling down a more dangerous path would be worth unravelling her entire life for. "I have to do it don't it?" She finally concluded.

"I cannot answer that Evelyn, but you must do what you feel is right. You must go with the boy to Albania and you must do whatever he asks."

"How do you know about Albania?" Evelyn had only found out herself a few moments ago, it seemed impossible that Dumbledore would have been able to overhear,

"Evelyn, I am aware of far more than you know." He simply replied. "Now if that is all, you have some packing to do." He ushered her out of his office with a quaint smile and shut the door behind her, relaxing back into his seat as though she was never there.

Evelyn made her way to her lessons for the day, struggling to concentrate as the teachers gave lectures. She couldn't grasp simple concepts all because of Tom. When her lessons finally ended, she headed straight to the Ravenclaw Common room and entered her dormitory, immediately collapsing on her bed and closing her eyes, waiting for the abyss of sleep to envelop her.

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. Even the soft susurrations of the branches felt heavy in the ears. The sense of smell was sensitized; the loam in the earth and the decomposing leaves made the atmosphere close and thick. The blackness nurtured a sense of claustrophobia inside you even though the woodland stretched unbroken for miles. The narrow path, which was made uneven by the knotted roots that crossed it, branched at intervals. There was no map to follow, but even if there was the perpetual dark would prevent you from using it.

In the corner of her eye, Evelyn spotted a small sapphire glow emerging from high up in a tree. Although the rest of the forest was fully submerged in the dark abyss, the tiny light from up high illuminated a passage in the forest that could not before have been seen. Evelyn followed the passage of light until she was standing just below the tree, beaming up at it.

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. As she got nearer the top of the large oak, she noticed a silvery peak peering out from the tree, a diadem. Just as Evelyn reached out her hand, her fingertips grasping at 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 ragdoll.

The holidays came faster than Evelyn was anticipating. She had barely finished packing by the final day of term and wasn't at all ready for her trip to Albania. She had spent the majority of her time at school researching Albania as Tom had not given her any more information. She didn't meet with Tom or Professor Dumbledore again; instead, she kept to herself, barely finding the time to speak with her friends.

She packed inside a large camping rucksack, unsure of how they would be travelling or where they would be staying, she decided to play it safe. Her bag was packed with all the essentials as well as several books in case she had time to practice her spells since she was falling behind in her NEWT classes.

She had arranged to meet Tom at the Leaky Cauldron in London, where they would take the Floo System to Albania. Evelyn had never before used the Floo System however she knew that it was likely to be the least risky thing that she and Tom would be doing during their time together over the holidays. Travelling by the Floo Network would probably be the safest thing she would ever do with Tom, and even so, there were risks within the Floo Network.

Evelyn found the train journey uneventful; she sat alone in a compartment, watching as the Scottish hillside faded into office blocks. As the train pulled up to the London station, she rose from her seat, throwing her backpack over her shoulder and exiting the train onto the busy platform. She hustled through the crowds of people, clutching her backpack to prevent anyone from taking it, clutching her backpack to prevent anyone from taking it when suddenly the whole world spun and she fell to the floor with a thud.

When she finally had enough energy to lift her head up, she realized that she was no longer in the crowded train station but instead she found herself in an unfamiliar setting. She felt a strong hand pull up her shoulder, "Where am I?" She asked, looking around until she found a familiar face, Tom.

"Come on we're late." He said impatiently, turning hot on his heel and entering the Leaky Cauldron. Evelyn quickly followed him, sticking close to him in the unfamiliar surrounding as they walked towards the bar. As they got closer to the bar, the smell of alcohol pounced on Evelyn's sense.

"Welcome to the Leaky Cauldron! How may I help you?" Questioned a cheerful elderly man from behind the bar.

"We're here to use the Floo Network," Replied Tom bluntly.

"Albania is it?" Tom nodded. "Right this way," The old man led Tom and Evelyn towards a large stone fireplace in the corner of the pub. "I assume you've both travelled by Floo Network before,"

Before Evelyn could muster a response, Tom nodded, sending a chill of terror down her spine. How on earth did Evelyn travel by Floo? She had never done it before and had no idea what to do.

"I'll go first," Tom said glancing at Evelyn before stepping into the fireplace in one swift step. "The Wizard Inn, Albania," Tom said clearly and carefully, before dropping a grey powder and being engulfed in emerald flames.

Evelyn let out a quick gasp as Tom vanished into thin air. "Not scared are you?" Said the old man with a grin, ushering Evelyn into the fireplace.

"No, of course not," She lied. Evelyn dropped a pile of the grey powder causing a large flame to engulf her and transport her to Albania. As the flame disappeared, she took a step forward into the Inn, scanning the room until she found Tom, stood over the desk.

Evelyn quickly hustled towards the desk and stood beside Tom as he collected their room keys. He handed one copper key to Evelyn and took off up the wooden stairs, glancing briefly at the proud portraits of witches and wizards on the walls before continuing up the staircase. Evelyn found herself following Tom again, trailing behind him until they both stopped outside a large, oak door.

"Get changed into something warm and meet me outside with your bag in ten minutes. Don't forget your wand," He warned, leaving her and opening the door to his room, quickly closing it as soon as he was inside.

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 Ravenclaw's Diadem?"

"So you figured it out, took you long enough. Why I want it is none of your business though Evelyn."

"Why am I even here then? Why do you keep stringing me along on your silly little adventures?" Tom stopped in his tracks. Had she upset him? Evelyn prepared herself to be reprimanded but nothing happened.

Tom turned to look at Evelyn, his face softening slightly. "Because, Evelyn, I need you." For a split second, Evelyn believed that Tom was fond of her until he re-opened his mouth and ruined it all. "I know that you saw the Diadem in a dream, I know you know where it is,"

"You've been using Legilimency on me *again*?" An immense wave of fear took over her, did he know *everything*?

"Of course, it's all too easy for the most part: you have a very weak padlock on your mind. Except for in one area, one zone that I cannot access."

"And that's just how it will stay Tom. If you need to know anything, ask me, don't delve into my mind without permission." She stated strongly, staring him deep in the eye.

"Well now that we have cleared everything up, can we move on?" He asked impatiently, walking ahead again.

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 had 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 face 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." Evelyn 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 was becoming far too attached to someone that she fully well knew despised her. She had to distance herself before she got too involved and got hurt.

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.

The forest was one of those places which had no palpable reason to exist. It was a creaking shack created by nature to serve as a reminder that things could always be much, much worse. The unnatural, choking mist that swirled and sprawled on the forest floor was the first thing that spoke of a strange sort of wrongness. The sickly white substance seemed to possess liquid properties which only reminded of the maggot-like texture of the eyes of a dead man who had been forgotten in his apartment for a few months, ready to burst at the slightest touch. The smoke made no sound however and only parted to swallow up her feet as she marched upon the

giant dead, festering eyeball of the forest floor. The sound of mushy and dead leaves whispered from under the skin of the mist.

She was walking unusually slowly, almost robotically, as if her brain was struggling to tell each foot to take the next step. It was as if she were in a stupor; like someone under hypnosis. Her body pulled her out of the clearing and led her back along the path they took into the forest, Evelyn was retracing her steps. It didn't take long for the mechanics inside her to cause her body to grind to a halt. There was a tree whose bark swirled like water as if it had flowed from the deep earth rather than grown there. She followed the eddies and curls, half expecting them to move, or perhaps a beetle to float by in an acorn boat. She reached out to feel it upon her skin and felt her next breath go in a little deeper.

It wasn't until Evelyn had circled the tree four times that she realised what she had found. The eerie blue glow was focused on a far up branch and Evelyn knew she had to get it. Every bone in her body was tingling with excitement as she pulled out her wand and began scaling the tree. She felt young again. Climbing brought back memories of her parents and she cherished every moment, finally, she hauled her body up to a thick branch and breathed a heavy sigh.

Just visible by the light from her wand was a box. A box that to any other being would have seemed the most ordinary thing, but not to Evelyn. This was exactly what they came here looking for, what Tom desired so greatly, and now it was hers. Slowly, she opened the box, and before her shining brighter than the smile of a child on Christmas was Rowena Ravenclaws Lost Diadem.

Her hands reached forwards for it hesitantly, shaking from a combination of nerves and excitement. *Tom would kill me*, she thought. She shook her head, attempting to erase the thought before latching her fingertips onto the icy surface of the Diadem. A surge of power rushed through her body and everything felt just how it should. This was where the Diadem belonged, not with Tom, not with anyone else, but with her.

A rustle nearby startled her as though she were a frightened deer, her hands instinctively grasping onto the Diadem with a force like no other. 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 "