

Part 1

Leo

It was cold, very cold.

Well, at least Leo Nightingale thought so, as he lay in his cot in the 1 star inn. Rain was pounding against the windows. Leo thought it was more like bowling balls than rain. It was very loud. The sound of the TV in the living room was like a distant call for help, the TV was very old fashioned and had many old coffee spills on it. Leo was a scrawny 10 year old with bony legs and arms, and deep brown eyes. His fluffy brown hair was soaked from walking in the rain, and his pale skin was speckled with raindrops.

The Nightingale's had won a trip to Scotland, so they got a 5 star apartment as part of the trip they'd won. But a horrible fire broke out in one of the rooms and spread across the whole Peak Hotel. As if that could get any worse, Leo's family had to evacuate the building (after many pushing and shoving of the crowd) and drive to the "Best Inn" to stay the night.

Worst. Day. Ever.

Leo's older brother, Lucas, sat awake scribbling in his journal, no doubt writing about what had happened today. Lucas was a tall lanky 16 year old boy with curly black hair and pale skin like Leo's. His father and stepmother lay asleep in the pull-out couch on the other side of the curtain dividing them. His older sister, Kathy, a rather short, tan, blonde-haired 15 year old, scrolled on her phone with her AirPods in. (Leo could hear the country music she was listening to.)

He rolled over on his cot.

"AAGH!" Leo yelped in surprise. An owl was outside his window, carrying something in its beak.

Lucas turned around and Kathy pulled off her AirPods.

"What?" They both said. Leo pointed to the window to where the owl was.

But it was gone.

"Oh, *Leo*, stop fooling around! Penny and dad are trying to sleep, and your nonsense isn't helping! They've already had enough stress for one day, don't you think?" Kathy scolded him. Leo was about to say something, until Lucas hushed him with a stiff wide-eyed stare. Leo huffed and lay back down on his cot. He was pretty sure someone spilled something, that was not coffee, on it.

He stared at the framed photo of his mother and father together with him and his siblings. They looked so happy, until Leo's mother had died mysteriously. Leo's father refused to tell him and his siblings how their mother died. His father then met a new girl named Penny.

She was the worst step-mom ever. She always treated Leo and his brother like rubbish. Kathy thought she was *amazing*, just because Penny favoured Kathy. Penny doesn't like Leo and Lucas. She pretends she does to get all lovey with Leo's dad. But she actually is very unfair to them and she would always threaten them.

Leo's arms still hurt from being made to carry all his step-mothers bags when they had evacuated Peak Hotel. He had a huge burn mark on his leg. His father cleaned it up for him while Penny sat around, fussing over her bags and trying to get her husbands attention to get Leo in trouble for getting dirt on them.

So now, he sat in this musty cot. At least his leg felt better. Leo really was curious how fast it healed, but he had no idea, since he had spent most of the time being passed out.

He rolled around in his cot again, facing the window.

The owl was back.

"Look! Kathy! Do you see it? It's there!" Leo loudly whispered to Kathy, who had now taken her AirPods out and was texting someone. She looked over at the window. "Oh my *gosh!*" She whispered, and turned to Lucas and silently pointed at the window. Lucas looked over and his jaw hung open. He turned to Kathy.

"Do you know what this means?" Lucas whispered excitedly to Kathy. She nodded vigorously and climbed out of bed hurriedly and opened the window to let the owl in. Leo held his hands up to his mouth to keep himself from screaming. He stared wide-eyed at the owl.

"*WHATDOYOUTHINKYOURDOING?!*" He whispered in a terrified, quick voice to Kathy, who beamed at him.

"It must be a letter to dad." Lucas whispered and winked at Kathy. Leo did not like the idea of being excluded from this secret. Kathy took the envelope from the owl. It clicked its beak in annoyance and held out its leg to Kathy. It had a small brown pouch strapped to its leg, and Kathy put a shiny silver object in it. The owl nipped her arm in affection and flew out the window.

Kathy turned the letter over and looked at the writing on it. She scanned it and her eyes went wide.

"Oh wow!" Kathy whispered excitedly. "Lucas, I think we should wake up dad for this!" Lucas was already ahead of her, he yanked open the curtain, ignoring Penny's protests, and went over to his dads side of the bed.

"Dad! Wake up! We have got something to show you!" Lucas shook his father, and he woke up.

“What is it mates?” Their father asked groggily. He was a kindhearted man (Leo had no idea why he wanted to date Penny) at the age of 37 with the same pale skin as Lucas and Leo, but blonde hair like Kathy. He looked at the envelope in Lucas’ hand and raised his eyebrows. He jumped up from his dusty couch-bed and took the envelope from him. Leo looked at all of them, he had no idea what was going on, and who that letter was too and what it meant to them. His father handed the envelope to a surprised Leo, who accepted it and looked at the words written on the front:

Mr. L. Nightingale

Room 6

Best Inn

Topandale

“For me?” Gaspd Leo. Who would write to him? He had no friends to write to, plus if anyone wanted to write to him, he had a phone for a reason. He ripped open the letter and unfolded the paper inside.

*HOGWARTS SCHOOL
of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY*

Headmaster: Albus Potter

*(Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock, Supreme
Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)*

Dear Mr. Nightingale,

*We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts
School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list
of all necessary books and equipment.*

*Term begins on September 1. We await your owl by no later than July
31.*

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Rattlepole

Josephine Rattlepole, Deputy Headmistress

“Ah, Leo! You’re a wizard mate!” Leo’s father boomed. Penny clapped her hands

in a peppy sort of way, “oh Leo, that’s great!” She said with mock joy. Leo scowled at her and focused on the letter. Was this some kind of joke? He looked up at his dad, “what’s going on? Is this real, or is this some sick joke?” Mr. Nightingale looked down at his son. His expression softened when he saw the worried but disappointed look in his face.

“I think it’s about time I’ve told you our family secret.” His father started. *Great, more secrets they’ve been keeping from me.* Thought Leo selfishly. His father began, “so.. how do I put this.. basically, you’re a— you know, wizard! And— okay what about this,” his father stuttered. “When I first met your mother, it was at that place, Hogwarts. The school for witches and wizards to learn everything there is to know about the wizarding world. There was a terrible wizard there, you see. Let’s call him— um.. the Dark Lord, okay?”

Leo interrupted him, “the *Dark Lord*?” Leo sounded worried.

“Oh no no no, it’s okay, Leo. He’s just an old uh— legend. But anyways, here, we’ll call him Darkie. So, Darkie got, well, defeated by a very powerful wizard by the name of Harry Potter, and his son is your headmaster. And—“

“So that’s why you always leave me here with Penny!” Leo yelled. “To go to this stupid made-up school that you used for an excuse!”

“No, no, Leo, that’s not—“

“You watch your mouth young man!”

“And you never thought to tell me? I’m your son! What, do Kathy and Lucas go to this *school* too? Huh? So this rubbish is why you’ve been leaving me for so long, with my stupid old hag of a stepmother!”

Penny got up from the bed and pulled out a strange looking stick with many designs carved on it.

“Honey put that down! That’s my son!” Mr. Nightingale roared.

“No, no! It’s okay, let her beat me with that stupid old stick of hers! We can add that to the book of Penny’s many abuses!” Leo screamed, tears rolling down his cheeks.

His father wrestled with Penny, trying to get the stick from her hand. Lucas and Kathy stared in horror and pulled out their sticks too.

Leo started again, “my family! MY FAMILY! STOP KEEPING THINGS FROM ME. ITS NOT AN EXCUSE THAT YOU’RE A STUPID OLD WIZARD OR WITCH! YOU LEFT ME HERE WITH THIS ABUSIVE OLD STEPMOTHER. YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT SHE’S DONE TO ME?” Leo screamed.

Penny fought out of her husbands grip and pushed Lucas and Kathy away.

“HE’S LYING!” She shouted. Leo lunged at her but before he was even 4 feet from her, Penny shouted, “*stupefy!*”

Leo’s eyes felt like closing, “stupid-fly?” He asked dazedly, and everything went black.

Part 2

Elliot

“What the heck, mom, stop it!” Elliot called from the living room.

“You’re blocking the TV with the plates!” He shouted. His mom ran downstairs, “I told you 5 times, that’s not me!” Mrs. Otter said, annoyed by Elliot’s constant accusations. His mom waved her wand and the dishes flew back into the cabinet. She turned quickly and ran back upstairs, yelling at Elliot’s 18 year old sister, Annabelle, for bewitching the plates.

Elliot was a quiet 11 year old boy. His fluffy white hair blended so much with his pale skin, but his light brown eyes really stood out.

“Elliot, where did we put your new robes?” His mom asked from upstairs.

“Ugh, mom I don’t know! William kept using them for some stupid new spell he learned.” Elliot called back, “man, I just wanna watch some TV.” He muttered. William, Annabelle’s twin brother, tiptoed into the living room, carrying Elliot’s brand new robes, which were now pink and glowing.

“WILLIAM, WHAT DID YOU DO? I NEED THOSE YOU MORON!” Elliot hopped off the couch and ran to his robes and frowned, “mom’s gonna kill you, MOM!” Elliot ran up the stairs to his room, where his mom was still looking for his robes.

“Mom, William tried his stupid spell on my robes! Now they’re all pink and ugly!” He cried, threw down his robes, and sat down on his bed and covered his eyes. Elliot’s mother, a rather pudgy but a kind motherly figure, stood up and bent over to pick up his robes. She tapped her wand onto them, and they turned back to normal.

“Mom, what spell was that?” Elliot asked. His mom gave him his robes back and picked up his new books, “you’ll learn that one in school, El.” She told him. And she went back to picking up new school books. Elliot frowned. He wanted to know what spell that was, but another question burned on his mind.

“How come we didn’t go to Diagon Alley this time?” Asked Elliot, he was curious because they always make a trip to Diagon Alley to buy all his brothers new stuff, like books, brooms, and robes. It was Elliot’s first year at Hogwarts. Elliot’s mom’s smile faded a bit.

“Hey mom! Are you going to kill me yet? Elliot said you would!” William shouted

from downstairs and roared with laughter.

“Don’t give me any ideas!” His mother retorted. And William became quiet.

“Anyways,” his mother went on, “Diagon Alley’s been shut down for some time, something about a rogue hippogriff, but I think that’s just a coverup.”

“So what’s it covering for?” Elliot asked.

“Well if I had to guess, it would be—“

“Mom! Mom! Look at the latest issue of *Magic Nation!*” Annabelle yelled as her feet thumped up the stairs. She ran into the room and thrust the paper in front of her mother’s face. Mrs. Otter grabbed it and read the front page.

“Wow, I should totally try this recipe!” She said. Annabelle looked at where her mom was looking and groaned. “Mom, not that, this!” She pointed. Her mother read the section. Her mom scanned the page and turned to a shocked expression when she put down the paper. Elliot leaned forward and looked at the section she was reading.

The last Minister of Magic, Rio Xelion, has been sent to Azkaban for threatening to destroy a precious treasure to the wizarding world. So the Ministry has appointed a new Minister, 43 year old Gordon Otter. Will the Ministry finally have a break from all this nonsense the old Minister has put upon them? Or will this finally be the start of a new era? Everyone remembers the time when the Ministry was all made up of Voldemort’s followers, who called themselves “Death Eaters.” Now that Voldemort is gone, all his followers, who were under the imperius curse, are now freed and work at the Ministry without any fear. Thanks to the teen who saved us all, Harry Potter.

(See page 7 for fun facts about Harry Potter!)

Elliot couldn’t help it but smile. His father has been made the Minister of Magic. His mother finally came out of her shock and squealed happily, “oh! Oh! Minister of Magic! How amazing! We need to have a party! Celebrate! I’m ordering ice cream!” she wheeled around Elliot and Annabelle and thundered downstairs to tell William what had just happened. Elliot looked up at Annabelle, who was still rereading the section their father was in.

“Is Hogwarts hard?” He asked, as if that answered the many questions he had about the wizarding school.

“Not really, last I remembered, we got to transform our books into ice cream at the end of the year. In short, it has its downsides like *boring* classes and homework, but there’s also rewards for that and some fun stuff swiveled in between.” She smiled at him warmly. Elliot guessed she saw the worried look on his face, because she then added, “overall I had a great time there! And we’ll still love you even if you’re a Slytherin, which is actually doubtful, because you’re one of the most kindest people I know, and I’ve met a lot of kind people. She put an arm around

Elliot's shoulder.

"Now, let's go see some of that ice cream!" And she ran downstairs. Elliot did not follow, something had caught his eye on the newspaper Annabelle left there.

On June 17th, a Squib man named Rio Xelion, also known as the former Minister of Magic, has escaped Azkaban, threatening to steal and destroy the House Gems as he said on the day before he left, which, as we all know, could stop us from being witches or wizards all together. But, as we also all know, that is merely impossible, since the four gems are hidden in places only Albus Dumbledore knew, and he is not here with us anymore. But in precaution, we are shutting down Diagon Alley to ensure that Xelion cannot get his hands on any information that might want to be kept secret.

(Check page 3 for information on the HOUSE GEMS)

(Check page 9 for information on AZKABAN)

Check page 6 for information on ALBUS DUMBLEDORE)

Elliot flipped to where page 3 should've been, but it was ripped out.

"Who could've done this?" Elliot whispered.

"Hey Elliot! Come downstairs! Dad's home!" William called. Elliot ripped the page he read out and stuffed it in his pocket. "Coming!" He ran downstairs. He grinned at the scene around him, his baby sister, Marina, scarfing down chocolate ice cream, his dad wearing a party hat that said "*Minister of Magic*" on it, Annabelle and William making Phoenix sculptures with ice cream, and his mother congratulating Mr. Otter over and over again as if she had forgotten each time she did. Elliot sat down at the table and grabbed a bowl of chocolate ice cream. Elliot loved chocolate.

"Ah, Elliot!" His father boomed, and got up from his seat and ran over to hug Elliot. Mr. Otter was a thin man and very young looking for his old age, with curly blonde hair and an almost otter like appearance. He jumped up and hugged his dad. "I can't believe it dad! I- I'm so happy! What did you do on your first day as Minister?" Elliot asked. His father let go and sat down again. He looked almost worried.

"Well, I sent search parties for some lunatic who escaped Azkaban," he saw Elliot's expression, "it's no big deal, really, he just waltzed out of it, the dementors must've been on something." He added, which made Elliot feel even worse.

"So Azkaban isn't heavily guarded anymore, and the people inside can just escape whenever?" He asked, his voice cracked at the last few words. His father thought fast, "oh no no no, that's not what I meant!" He started, then sighed. "Okay, it really wasn't what I meant, but I was telling the truth. Really, it was just some guy who wanted to destroy this absolutely made up legend about something called the

“House Gems.” Which, doesn’t exist.”

Elliot’s stomach lurched. His hand went immediately to his pocket. To his utter shame, his father had seen him do so.

“What’s in there?”

“Nothing.”

“Strange, then why is there a lump there?”

“Lint.”

“Are you hiding something from us, son? If you are, it’s okay to tell us if something’s bothering you.”

“I’m not hiding anything.” Elliot told his father. His siblings and mother had stopped what they were doing and looked at them, except Baby Marina who banged her high-chair with her fork.

“I need to use the bathroom, if you really should know.” Elliot said, with a surprisingly convincing tone. He swallowed hard as he got up from his chair and headed to the bathroom. He could feel all his family members eye’s on him, like bugs crawling on his back. As he went up stairs he walked a bit faster. He locked himself in the bathroom, he could hear his family chattering below.

Why was this bothering him so much?

It’s not like I’m going to have to stop him.. and it’s really not my concern, it’s the Ministry’s. He thought.

So why was his stomach churning?

It’s not my problem.. I don’t even know him. Elliot looked into the mirror, but his reflection wasn’t there. It was a strange animal, he turned on the light and screamed. He was an otter.

He could feel himself shrinking in size as his legs began to morph into otter legs. He ran to the door before he could get too small to reach the handle. He tried opening it but it wouldn’t unlock, he turned his hands over and saw that they were now paws. He was shaking.

“MOM! DAD! HELP!” He screamed and scratched the door to make enough noise to make them hear him. His scream was censored by his father laughing loudly, and his mother had turned up music. He didn’t feel too good. He banged on the door but it wouldn’t budge, his stomach churned even more and he ran to the toilet and began to throw up in it. Elliot shook violently as he began to shrink even more to the point he was hanging off the edge of the toilet bowl. He assumed he was about one and a half feet. But he didn’t care.

“M-mom!” He yelled, his voice crackling from his vigorous shaking. He lost his grip on the toilet bowl and fell a small way. He could hear his parents thumping upstairs now, probably realizing he’d been in the bathroom for too long. He yelled and cried. He ran back to the door on all fours and scratched the door.

“Elliot! Are you okay? Honey, say something! Are you hurt? Are you sick?” His

mother called from the other side of the door. He tried to speak but his voice was tired from all the yelling, all he could manage was “let me out.”

“*Alohomora!*” His father yelled from outside. The door handle turned and his father burst in, aiming his wand as if there was someone he would need to harm. His mother behind him. Mr. Otter looked around and saw no one was there.

“Elliot?” He asked loudly. Elliot found his voice.

“DAD! HELP! I’VE BEEN CURSED!” He cried and ran to his father and hugged his leg. His father looked stunned, then completely excited.

“Oh, honey, do you know what this means?” His father picked Elliot up and held him out to Mrs. Otter. She was overjoyed.

“Oh! Honey! We’ve got another animagus in our family!” Mrs. Otter exclaimed. Elliot wriggled in his fathers arms.

“CHANGE ME BACK INTO A HUMAN, PLEASE!”

His mother pulled out her wand and said “*Homorphus!*” And in a second, Elliot was back to normal, with his father holding underneath his shoulders. He regained his balance and let go of him.

“Mom, dad, why are you happy about this?!” He asked terrified. Elliot sank to the floor and stared at his outstretched fingers. His mother and father seemed to be having a quiet conversation with their eyeballs. Finally, his father left and his mother sat down next to Elliot. She put an arm around his shoulder and hugged him.

“Do you know what animagi are?” She asked.

“No.” Elliot replied. His mother gave a thoughtful look as if she was debating whether or not she should tell him what it was.

“Well,” she began, “an animagus is someone who can transform into any animal they’d like. But as for you, me, your father, and possibly Baby Marina, we can only transform into one animal. Sometimes you have to learn to morph into an animal, other times it gets passed down the family line through generations. Some people are lucky, and are born as an animagus, but others don’t get that gene, and they either learn to become one or just accept it.” She added, “your older brother and sister aren’t animagi, but they don’t care.”

Elliot buried his face in his hands.

His mother began to speak again. “Sometimes it’s hard work, being an animagus. You’re either really loved, or not. You just need to show people a reason to like you for who you are. Being an animagus also makes you very brave. Some people are too afraid of trying to become one, or using that ability when it was passed down to them.”

Elliot didn’t look up. “So why has it happened now?” He asked. Hoping the answer was simple, and it was.

“Well, it’s part of growing up for us. When you get to a certain age, things start to

change. For instance, you—

“Okay, okay! Too much information, mom.. how do I control it? What happens if I accidentally turn into an otter at Hogwarts? Are animagi allowed there?”

“Slow down, Elliot. First off, you can simply control it by not thinking about it, and if you think too much about it— well.. actually, it’s different for everyone.

Morphing into an animal has its ways for each individual person, shifted to make them more comfortable, it’s hard to explain though. Second, you won’t turn into an otter at school. And third, yes, animagi are allowed at Hogwarts, at least, they were when I went there, and Hogwarts doesn’t change much, trust me.” There was a note of uncertainty in her voice at the last few words. She got up from her spot beside the wall.

“You’ll figure out how to transform in no time. It’s really simple, I bet you could do it right now. Just concentrate.” She told him. Elliot stood up too. He stiffened and shut his eyes tightly, concentrating too hard. He did that for about 10 seconds and loosened.

“Can’t you just teach me?” He asked. His mother shook her head. “I can’t, like I said, the ways of transforming are all different for each animagus. You’ll get it, try again.”

Elliot stood there. A second later, he felt himself shrinking and growing fur. He closed his eyes and concentrated harder, and when he opened them, he was a albino one and a half foot otter. He looked up at his mother, but she was gone. Elliot heard her downstairs yelling at the twins. He looked down at his furry paws.

Man, was he cool.

He morphed back and checked the clock hanging on the wall, it was nine o’clock. He knew he felt tired, he walked across the hall and turned to his bedroom. His bedroom was rock-themed with wizard rock band posters on his walls and ceiling, and a whole bulletin board of pins. His mooncalf, Peachy, was sleeping on her bed, that Elliot had put together himself by sewing old pillowcases and stuffing them with fuzz so that it looked like a cool patched bed.

He laid down on his own bed and looked up at his posters. Most of them were of his favorite rock band, the Poison Needles. The band had 4 members, Natsuki Crowfeather, Jordan Loxley, Walker Sherman, and Elliot’s favorite member, Scott Solace. Solace played the keyboard, and he was Elliot’s idol. Elliot wanted to be just like him, able to create his own tunes with his magic. He turned over on his side and closed his eyes, hoping he would fall asleep soon.

He heard Peachy growl in her sleep. Elliot knew she was dreaming, because when she did, she would make all kinds of noises.

He thought about Hogwarts, and how he would make friends, and if he would make a good first impression and become a popular kid. Elliot has always wanted to be popular, because the neighborhood kids dislike him for his family background. Tyler Kriff, a neighborhood kid, would always walk around with Skyla Washington and Luke Kingsley and make fun of every little detail about Elliot that made them jealous, because their families were just a tiny bit lower class than him. He wondered if tomorrow, when he went to go play a cool Muggle game called “football” with his best friend, Westley Malfoy, they would pop up and start insulting him for his dad becoming Minister of Magic. Probably saying stuff like “maybe they had no one else to look to, since the Ministry *has* been faulty over the years.”

Sadly enough, they were wizards too, and he’ll have to deal with them when he joins Hogwarts.

He thought about Westley. His father was Scorpius Malfoy, who was the son of Draco Malfoy, who was the son of Lucius Malfoy, one of the worst Death Eaters in history. Elliot was surprised though, because Westley was actually the shy smart type. He was a bit of a rebel though, in a good way. He would always sneak into Muggle towns and spy on this one 7th grade school tackle football team called the Blue Bolts. He always found out the times of their games and invited Elliot to watch them. They even made their own jerseys from their favorite players’ numbers. Westley’s favorite player was Charles Davis, a stocky brown haired boy who played Quarterback. Elliot’s favorite was Hudson Hood, a small ginger haired boy who played Running Back. They always argued who was better at football.

Elliot and Westley even created their own team with the other neighborhood kids and they would practice and play games with the other made-up team including Kriff, Washington, and Kingsley. They thought they’d steal Elliot’s idea of making their own football team, but they made Elliot’s team, the Thunderclouds, look bad. There was no other made-up neighborhood teams besides Kriff’s team, the Lightningbolts. Elliot assumed they thought it would be funny to name their team the Lightningbolts because theirs was the Thunderclouds. But unshockingly, the Thunderclouds have beaten most of the games they’ve played against the Lightningbolts. He thought that football was a bit like Quidditch, and he was good at Quidditch. He chuckled softly at the thought of him beating Kriff and his cronies if they ever joined the team. Then his eyelids felt heavy, and he began to sleep.

Part 3

Yuki

It was the day Yuki Ito was going to Hogwarts. She had packed all her stuff including her owl, Athena, her Cleansweep 29, and her robes and school books. She was a bit excited and a bit nervous, for her parents were Muggles (humans or non-wizards) and did not know anything about being a wizard or witch, but they tried their very best to support Yuki and her older sister Kira. She was waiting in the car, for her sister and father.

“Kira, Dad, hurry up! We might miss the train? It must be horrible to miss the train! Do you know it’s my first day? You *must* hurry up so I can be there early! Oh, I hope I can make friends easily,” Yuki went on and on. She loved to talk.

“Yuki, talking.” Her mother called from the front seat.

“Oh, right, mum sorry, I forgot.” Yuki adjusted the bandages on her arms and palms. She thought they looked cool, and she hoped that the kids at Hogwarts would think they are.

“Alright, let’s get going!” Her Dad hopped into the car with Kira jumping in the backseat.

“Off we go!!” Yuki bounced up and down excitedly. Penelope hopped into her lap.

“Kira, what happens at Hogwarts? When do you start learning to fly? Will we really be turning frogs into plates? What if I’m a Slytherin? What house are you aga-“

“Calm down, Yuki! Geez, that’s a ton of questions, let me answer those and I’ll answer any more you have left!” Kira said, annoyed, but she smiled.

Yuki looked at her expectantly as the car rumbled and bumped along the road to the train station, where they would be going to platform nine and three-quarters.

“Well, tons of things happen at Hogwarts, we get to turn pinto beans into gummy worms, we learn spells that actually work, oh, and there’s the annual

Tri-Wizard Cup! Oh, wait, no... the Ministry had that removed ever since what happened the last time they held the Cup..”

Yuki nodded, her parents had told her stories about old Hogwarts, she loved to hear their stories about how they met there, and the old events they used to do. Kira went on.

“Oh! I’m so *stupid!* I forgot, they replaced the Cup with a relay race! Oh, I think I participated last year. I think you had to have a team of three, you get to choose your own teams by the way, your whole team has to ride brooms the whole time. It takes like 2 hours for it all to end, it’s really long, considering there’s many obstacles on the way and the route is super long. But it was fun!”

Yuki thought about that.

“I wanna try that too!” She told Kira.

“Well good thing! First years can try it. But I won’t guarantee that you win, since you only just start riding a broom in the first year.”

Yuki’s smile faded a bit.

“Well, I might be good at riding a broom, I mean, come on! I can rollerblade, skateboard, unicycle, and bike! I’m pretty sure a broom won’t be too hard, right?”

The car bumped along the road. Kira smiled.

“Oh, yes, the broom is really easy! Well, at least for me. All you do is get on it, say some magic word that I forgot, and boom! You’re in the air! And it’s pretty easy to steer, you’ll definitely get the hang of it. I can feel it.”

Yuki pumped her fist.

“Yes! I’m so excited! Now answer my other questions!!” Yuki exclaimed excitedly.

“What were they again?”

“Uhm.. I think I asked if we’ll really be making bugs into earrings!”

“Oh, yeah definitely! We can also make rats into goblets, bricks into shoes, and paper into a hedgehog! It’s actually super cool, the last one, because it’s super hard to do, and if you get the spell right, you get to keep the hedgehog! And the school supplies all the things you need for it so you don’t need to pay a thing! I think my friend Leelah got to keep one.” Kira loved talking as much as Yuki, possibly even more. Yuki grinned widely.

“I can’t wait.” She said, and stared out the window. It was about a one and a half hour trip to the train station, Yuki wished they lived nearer but that was just the way things were. She pulled out her pocket mirror and stared into it. *I hope people like this face.* She thought. Because, well, it was the only face she had. She stared at her slightly tanned skin and light black hair. She hoped

people would like her for who she is, even if she's worrying about it too much. She smiled into the mirror.

"Ew, why's my smile like that?" She thought aloud, then realized she actually said it out loud. Her dad frowned.

"There's nothing wrong with your smile. It's the prettiest smile I've ever seen."

"Hey!" Piped in Kira.

"And yours, obviously. You're both beautiful, and if anyone tells you otherwise, beat them up." Her father said

"Honey, you don't actually mean that! He doesn't mean that." Yuki's mom said.

Yuki smiled a small bit and when her parents turned back around she noticed little details about them. Her father, a strong, dark brown-haired man, with little freckles behind his ears. And her mom, a tall, thin, blonde-haired woman, also had freckles behind her ears. Why was that?

"Mum, Dad, why do you both have freckles behind your ears?" She asked her parents.

Her dad replied first.

"It's a symbol of love. When we got married, we took an oath, you know? And we decided to show our love by dotting hearts behind our ears, like our ancestors did."

Her mom nodded and smiled in the review mirror

Yuki stared behind her father's ear, it did look like a heart.

"I guess it does look like a heart! That's cool!" Yuki said. Kira had her headphones in so she couldn't hear what was going on, but she took them off when she noticed Yuki talking.

"What's cool?" She asked.

"Mum and Dad have hearts behind their ears, see?" She pointed.

"Ah yeh, I guess it kinda does look like a heart." Kira replied, then put her headphones back on and closed her eyes and leaned against her seat.

Yuki looked out the window, they were zooming semi-fast. She could see plain grass and bushes. There was a blue shiny looking object in the middle of the plain. She stared at it, but it went away quickly since they were driving fast. Yuki thought it was her imagination, but it kind of looked like a diamond bird.

She shrugged and reclined her seat.

“We’re here!” Yuki’s mother called from the front seat, as she unbuckled her seatbelt. Yuki hadn’t realized but she had fallen asleep during the drive. She unbuckled her seatbelt and got out of the car. She walked to the trunk of their car and opened it.

“Come here, Athena.” She told her owl as she picked up her cage.

“Mum, do I have to put Athena in a crate? She’s possibly the most calm, controlled, peaceful-est owl around!” Yuki complained as she fumbled with the cage, trying to find a good spot to hold it.

“Yuki, it’s standard policy that we keep owls in cages, you know that.” Mrs. Ito told her daughter.

“Ugh, fine.”

She put Athena’s cage down and stacked her trunks onto her cart.

“Come on guys, if we get there early we can catch up with friends!” Kira said impatiently. Her bags, trunks, and her cat, Remi, were already packed onto her cart.

“I’m trying to stack all this and it won’t work!” Yuki cried and kicked the cart, which was a bad idea, since all her luggage came tumbling off onto the parking lot.

“Yuki, you need to stack it biggest to littlest, remember?” Her dad came over and heaved the heaviest luggage and put it at the bottom, putting smaller luggages on top.

“There, you see?” Mr. Ito told her.

“Finally, let’s get going, we don’t want to miss the train!” Kira shouted, she was already walking ahead of them. Kira checked her phone, it was an hour until the train left.

“Geez, guys, we’re *early*. How many friends did you want to catch up to?” Yuki said.

They walked across the parking lot. She saw two witches chatting against a car. One of them was dark-skinned with very long dark brown hair, and an interesting expression on her face. The other one was like the other girl, but curvy, a lighter skin color, and short hair. The short-haired one made a swinging motion with her hands as if she was swinging a bat. And the long-haired one laughed. She caught Yuki staring at them, and she waved. The short-haired witch nudged the other one and said something to her.

They started walking towards Yuki.

“Greetings! My name is Clementine, that’s Clementine Winifred Dune, but you can call me Clam.” The long-haired girl walked along with Yuki with her

own cart, along with the other girl. Clam smiled a bit nervously, as if the other one had forced her to say that.

“And I’m Cece! Cece Vazquez. It’s nice to meet you, are you Yuki, the one Kira told my brother about?” The short-haired witch said enthusiastically.

“Um, ye-“

“Ah, that’s great! I’ve heard from my brother that you’re pretty smart huh? Say, where’s Kira? I’ve always wanted to meet her, ever since my brother told me about her!” Cece said.

“Uhm, I think she went ahead to meet with her friends.” Yuki told Cece.

“Aw man, I guess I’ll meet her later.” Cece replied. Clam spoke, “sorry about her, which House do you think you’ll be in?”

Yuki thought about that question. She remembered Kira telling her about the four Houses. Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, and Slytherin. Kira had said that people who got put in Gryffindor were brave, Ravenclaws were smart, Hufflepuffs were loyal, and Slytherins were a bit cunning, but most of the dark witches and wizards came from there, and there has been few that were actually good people.

“I don’t really know.” Yuki told Clam. She really didn’t know

“That’s okay, I hope I’m in Hufflepuff, my older brother was in Hufflepuff, and he’s really successful now, so I wonder if Hufflepuff brings good fortune!”

Yuki smiled.

“Do you want to be friends with us, Yuki?” Cece asked. “I know that’s a bit of second-grade talk but I really mean it, you seem like a good fellow to me, and I think we’ll get along really splendid!” Cece grinned.

Yuki also already liked these people.

“Sure, why not? It’d be great to have friends already.” She told Cece and Clam. Cece whooped in joy.

“You hear that, Clammy? We have a new friend!” She skipped ahead of them and twirled.

Clam smiled shyly.

“It’s nice to have a new friend, I like your wrappings by the way, they look cool.” Clam told Yuki. Yuki felt glad someone noticed them and thought they were cool, just what she wanted.

“Thanks! Is that an owl in there?” Yuki pointed at the small glass box on the top of Clam’s trunks.

“No, I’m not too fond of mammals and pretty much just animals in general, I don’t really know why, but I just like lizards better. I bought a bearded dragon.

I named him Ash, because he looks like soot from a chimney, and I thought it was a cool name for him.” Clam looked sideways into the tank and smiled at it.

“He likes to hide in his log. He’s a bit shy, like me.” Clam looked down and blushed a little, probably realizing she’d said too much. Cece pranced back over to them.

“We’re *heeeeeere!*” She commented loudly as they walked into the train station.

“I’ll race you lot!” Cece yelled as she ran away quickly to platforms nine and ten.

“You’re on!” Yuki called back as she pushed her cart quickly after Cece.

“Come on, Clam!”

Clam started running after her. Yuki zoomed through the station, occasionally calling out a few *sorry*’s and *excuse me*’s. There were so many people she had to swerve and tell them to get out of the way so she could catch up to Cece. She ran fast and her legs didn’t get tired at all. She eventually caught up with Cece, she passed her and ran to the platforms. Yuki could hear Cece calling behind her and a wheezing Clam a bit farther back. She sprinted until she saw a big plastic nine and ten and skirted to a halt. Cece caught up and stopped, she was gasping for air.

“G-geez, you’re—fast!” She wiped her forehead and used her other arm and put her hand on Yuki’s shoulder for support. Yuki felt proud of herself.

A few moments later, Clam wobbled over, huffing and wheezing. She groaned and dropped on her knees onto the floor, still huffing and puffing.

“D—did you—guys—really h-have—too race—that *far*?” She asked as she got back up again.

“Yes! We did!” Cece stood up proudly and put her hands on her hips in a superhero-like way. Yuki half expected a cape to be flopping around behind her.

Yuki looked around and spotted a few other witches and wizards with the same cart and trunks. One of them was a tall boy with fluffy milk-tea long hair and little blonde streaks in it. She saw his mother hug him tightly and say a few words to him, she also saw that she was carrying a baby, and next to her was another milk-tea colored hair girl at about the age of seven. Standing next to her, clutching a very pretty doll that had laces and bows all over it. Yuki looked around some more.

She saw another family. A mother, a father, a teen boy, a teen girl, a boy about her age, and a baby, too. The boy about her age was talking to the two teens,

which she assumed was older siblings. They looked a lot like each other, so she also gathered they were probably twins. The boy had very light blonde hair, he was wearing a rock-band T-shirt and in his hair was a blue raccoon-extension. He laughed with his older siblings. Yuki also noticed he was wearing a black scarf, even though it wasn't very cold out.

"I think it's time you went through to platform nine and three quarters, we only have five minutes left." Yuki's father, mother, and older sister appeared. "Yes, I think we should," Yuki told them. "Oh, also, these are my new friends! This is Clam—" she pointed to Clementine. "—and this is Cece!" She pointed to Cece.

"Very nice to meet you! I'm glad Yuki's already started making friends." Yuki's mother shook their hands, and so did her father.

"Wait, where are your guys' parents?" Yuki asked.

"Ah, they only drop us off here, they're super busy, my parents and Clam's work at the Ministry of Magic." Cece told Yuki. Clam nodded.

"That's a shame, I guess we could meet them another time." Yuki's mother chimed in.

"Alright kids let's go on! We're gonna be late!" Kira told them. She hugged her parents and zoomed through the pillar dividing platforms nine and ten.

"Love ya, Mom, Dad." Yuki squeezed her parents. Yuki then realized she was super nervous.

"Why can't you come through the barrier?" Yuki asked her parents.

"Sorry mate, they switched it so humans, or shall I say *Muggles* can't enter." Yuki's father told her.

"Come on, we'll be late!" Cece called and ran through the wall with her cart. Clam grabbed Yuki's arm and pulled her with her.

"Love you Mom and Dad!" She called as she ran through the barrier to platform nine and three quarters.

As she appeared through the wall, she could see all kinds of wizards and witches, chatting with each other and boarding the train.

"We should've just went through the barrier right when we got here." Yuki said.

Train departure to Hogwarts, five minutes.

"You hear that, Yuki?" Cece asked. "Only five more minutes, then Hogwarts!" She exaggerated the last word which made it sound like fifty syllables.

Clam smiled shyly and looked around as if she was embarrassed by her friends

behavior.

“Maybe we should hop on the train now, no?” Cece asked them.

“Yeah, let’s hop on.” Yuki told them.

Train departure to Hogwarts, one minute. The voice echoed through the speakers in the station

They all picked up their luggage and boarded the train.

It was bustling with witches and wizards, all short, tall, skinny, pudgy. Yuki saw the same boy with the rock-band shirt on, he was talking to the lady who sold the snacks, and it looked like he’d bought some stuff.

Yuki and her new friends peered in the compartments.

“They’re all full!” Cece complained.

“No, let’s go ask him if we can sit with him.” Yuki pointed at the boy with the rock-band shirt.

“Woah, mate! Don’t you know we have to change in our compartments? I can’t get into my robes with a boy in the room!” Cece told Yuki. Yuki just realized that Clam and herself were already wearing their robes, while Cece wasn’t.

“Ugh, just change into them now! Isn’t there a bathroom on the train?” Yuki looked around and saw one.

“See? There. Just meet us back at the compartment!” Yuki pushed Cece forward and she shuffled to the bathroom to change into her robes.

The train started moving.

“Come on.” Yuki grabbed Clam’s arm and she let out a little yelp as she dragged her to the compartment the boy was in. Thank goodness he’d already changed into his robes.

She slid the door open, where the boy wasn’t sitting alone, but with that brown and blonde streaked hair boy she saw at the station. They both looked up at them quizzically.

“Hi! I’m Yuki Ito, this is Clam, her last names’ hard to remember.” She put her arm around Clam and pulled her closer so they could see her. Clam looked down shyly. “May we sit here? All the other compartments are full.”

The two boys looked at each other. The blonde one raised his eyebrows as if silently agreeing.

“Sure, come on in.” He said.

“Oh, thank you!” Yuki pulled Clam along and she packed their trunks into the storage above them. She sat down.

“So, are you two first years too? What are your names?” She asked the boys.

The blonde one spoke up. “Yeah, we’re first years too. My name is Elliot

Otter, I know.. freaky last name. And this is Aster, what's your last name?" He asked the blonde streaked one.

"Mintz. It's spelled M-I-N-T-Z. The 'z' is silent, so it's basically mint." Aster told them, and shrugged.

"I heard you're from a Muggle family," Aster continued. "What's it like, you know, living with Muggles?"

Yuki didn't really know how to respond.

"Uh, I don't really know how to explain, since I don't really know the difference. I heard you're allowed to take Muggle Studies this year though?" She asked.

"Oh, yeah, I might take that one. Muggles seem very interesting. Say, you should take it too, since you're from a Muggle family! I bet you'll get the highest grade in that class." Aster told Yuki.

"No, there's a ton of people born from Muggle families, Aster." Elliot said.

"How old are you guys anyway? If you don't mind me asking." He asked them.

"Eleven." Aster replied.

"Ten." Said Yuki.

"Ten.." Clam said quietly.

"Oh, that reminds me! We also have a third coming in. She left to change into her robes. Her name is Cece Vazquez, I think you'll like her."

"Cool!" Said Elliot. "It's great to be able to form a big friend group beforehand." And he smiled.

Yuki grinned widely.

Part 4

Cece

“Ugh, it’s impossible to put these stupid robes on.” Cece complained as she shuffled across the hall looking for the compartment her friends were in. She looked in each one.

“No, no, no, no— what the..” Cece peered in one. Inside, there were three boys and one girl. The tallest, who had platinum blonde hair and a hardy-like body was standing above the other three. The second tallest boy, who had black hair, clear glasses, and a gangly body, was holding on to the tiniest boys shoulder. The girl, with dark red hair and a rather pudgy body, was holding onto the other boys tiny shoulder.

Cece pressed her ear to the wall to hear what they were saying.

“Say, Tyler.. I think we should Confund him, no?” The second tallest boy asked the tallest one, who must’ve been Tyler.

“No, Luke.” Tyler told the second tallest one, Luke. “We need a very, very, good spell to teach this little guy a lesson.”

“All I did was bump into you! I didn’t mean to, im sorry! Please!” The little boy pleaded. He was indeed very small, with pale skin, fluffy brown hair, and he was very skinny, as if his parents had starved him.

“Ugh, this little midget needs to quiet his mouth!” The chubby girl snarled.

“*Levicorpus!*” She said aloud. The little boy yelped as he suspended into the air swiftly. It looked as if an invisible hand was holding onto his left ankle.

“Me brother taught me that one.” She told the two boys with her Scottish accent. They all grinned manically and laughed. Tyler poked the little boys stomach and he swayed around.

“Stop— let me go!” The little boy waved his hands frantically and tried to hit them.

Cece had enough of this and barged in.

“You can’t do that!” Cece pulled out her wand, she didn’t know any spells, but she hoped she looked intimidating enough.

“Skyla, do that spell on her!” Tyler told the chubby girl, Skyla.

“Nah, I’ve got a better one.” She flicked her wand at the little boy, who fell

down head first. He got up and tried running away but Tyler caught his collar. “We keeping him?” He asked Skyla.

“Yeah, he’ll do.” Skyla waved her wand at Cece, without saying a word.

“Wow, that’s sure an amazing spell! Do it again!” Cece told her mockingly.

“Sorry laddy, let me try again.” She waved her wand furiously at Cece and in a blink of an eye, the little boy flew towards her like a magnet. Cece looked for him.

“Where’d you put him?!” Cece shouted. Tyler and the rest started laughing.

“It worked— i- HAHA!” Skyla rolled around with laughter. Cece looked for the little boy.

“Im-I’m stuck!”

Cece recognized the little boy’s voice and reached over her head. She felt another head behind her own. They were stuck back-to-back.

“I can’t feel my legs..” the little boy whined.

“Are you stuck to my back?” Cece asked him.

“It appears so.. hurry, while they’re being idiots and laughing, get out of here!”

Cece ran out of the room. She could feel the little boy’s legs hitting her own as she ran out. Since he was smaller, his feet wouldn’t touch the floor, so he dangled from her back. He started pushing his hands against her back to try to get free.

“OW! Stop, that’s obviously not working!” Cece told him and pushed his hands off her.

“Sorry.” The boy said.

“Look, maybe my friends can get us unstuck. Let’s find them.” Cece reassured the boy. The bathroom was a long way from the compartment that her friends were in.

“What’s your name? Just curious. I’ve never seen you before.” Cece asked the boy, who was swaying behind her trying to cover his face from all the people in the compartments they were passing.

“Leo, uhm, Nightingale.” The boy said. He hesitated for a moment as if he’d forgotten his own last name.

“Well okay, Leo. I’m Cece, and I’m going to get us out of this! YAHH!” She started running past the compartments. Leo’s legs kept hitting the back of her legs.

“Can’t you put your legs up?! I’m trying to get us there quickly!” Cece told him.

“Uhm.. NO! That would look *really* weird.”

“Our backs being stuck together is already weird!” Cece called back.

“So you want us to look even more weird?!” Leo said grumpily and kept hitting her legs, one time he hit her hard that it made her think that was on purpose.

“OW DUDE! STOP THAT. I KNOW THAT’S ON PURPOSE!” Cece shouted and skidded to a halt.

“How would you like to be the one carrying a human-being on your back!?” Cece told him, annoyed.

“Finally, my shortness has saved me!” Leo kicked his legs as if he were trying to run away.

“I- okay, just be quiet for the rest of the way, I can’t believe I’ve already got a random kid stuck to my back.” Cece muttered.

“I thought you were trying to save me, no? Isn’t that why you came into the compartment? I could’ve taken those three you know..” Leo said skeptically.

“In your dreams buddy, maybe grow about.. a foot? Then you’ll be able to take on at least one of them!” Cece said with mock enthusiasm. She started walking again, but stopped.

“Dude. What are you DOING?!” Cece asked Leo, who was holding onto a rail to keep Cece from walking.

“I could’ve taken them! You’re just jealous!” Leo said and kicked Cece’s leg, again.

“You’re KIDDING?” Cece was infuriated. She tried walking and pulled Leo.

“LET GO! THIS IS SUCH A STUPID THING TO BE MAD ABOUT!” Cece called back and reached above her head and pulled Leo’s hair.

“Ow! Stop that!”

“Only if you LET GO!”

“No! Only if *you* stop being mean!”

“Stop speaking like a kindergartner! Well, I suppose that’s not surprising, since you’re as small as one.” Cece told him and yanked him off.

“HA!”

She heard something behind her, it sounded like running water, but that was impossible, since there was no water near them.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!” She yelled at Leo.

“Uhm.. whoops..” he said.

Cece turned around and saw water spraying out of a hole.

“DID- Y-WHAT?! DID YOU JUST BREAK THE RAILING?! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?!” She screamed and jumped up and down which made Leo flail around behind her.

People started to come out of their compartments. They all started laughing.

“Haha! You guys are stuck? Who did that?” One of them laughed. Cece turned around, red in the face, and saw that Tyler was heading towards them.

“Uhm.. it was like that!” Cece pointed at the spraying water and dashed off away from them.

“Leo, drop the stupid rail!” Cece growled at Leo. He dropped it, it made a clanging sound.

Leo gasped, “oh no! My luggage is in Tyler’s compartment! And so is Bandit!” He cried.

“Who’s Bandit?” Cece asked.

“My pet ferret!” Leo cried.

“We’ll get him later!” Cece felt something wriggle in her shirt.

“Oh my gosh, WHAT IS THAT?!” She squirmed and a light brown medium sized ferret popped out and ran into Leo’s arm.

“EWWWW!” Cece said.

“He’s not ew! He’s adorable!” Leo said angrily, and plopped Bandit onto Cece’s head. Cece stopped running and did not move.

“Get. Him. Off. NOW.” She told Leo.

“Only if you say he’s the cutest thing in the whole wide world!” Leo complained.

“But he isn’t!” Cece said.

“Then I won’t tell him to get off you.” Leo told her. Cece was cornered, either have to touch the ferret, or say something that will make Leo get him off.

Cede sighed.

“Fine, he’s the cutest.” Cece said quietly .

“Anything else?” Leo objected.

“IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLDNOWGETHIMOFF!” Cece cried.

“Hooray! You hear that, Bandit?” Leo said happily and scooped the ferret off her head. She continued walking she looked around at the compartments, hoping one of them would be the one her friends were in. Leo was silent for a while, which was peaceful. Cece kept on walking.

“Be free, young one!” She heard Leo say behind her. She noticed something walking next to her, Leo had put the ferret down. She sighed and ignored it, she’d had enough.

“I need to use the bathroom.” Leo said a while later.

“SHUT. UP. NOW.” Cece said through gritted teeth.

“Gee, okay, Mom.” Leo said mockingly, then started doing jumping jacks.

“ARE YOU TRYING TO ANNOY ME?!” Cece shouted.

“Is it working?” Leo asked smugly.

“YE- NO. ITS NOT. SO STOP IT BEFORE I BACK INTO A WALL.”

That seemed to put Leo off, he stopped doing goofy jumping jacks and began to quiet down.

Cece finally made it to the compartment her friends were in. She wrenched the door open, panting.

“I’m—back.” She said.

“What took you so long?!” Clam chided and got up and hugged her.

“Ow, my stomach.” Leo said from behind Cece.

Clam stumbled back. “What the heck was that?” She asked nervously.

“Oh, right, uhm.. I got into a little bit of a.. predicament. So now I have a kindergartener stuck on my back.

“Hey!”

Yuki got up. The two other boys in the room looked at each other.

“Uhm.. why’s there a kindergartner on the train?” One of them asked.

“Oh, hold that thought,” Yuki interfered. “Cece, this is Elliot and Aster, Aster, Elliot, this is Cece.”

“Hello, Cece nice to finally meet you!” Elliot shook her hand.

“Hiya, Cece!” Aster said joyfully.

Elliot got back on track again. “Okay, back to the kindergartner thing. Wh-“

“I am *NOT* a kindergartner!” Leo complained.

“Turn around, Cece.” Yuki told her. And so she did.

“See? You see that little caterpillar, his names Leo. He’s been bugging me all the way back! Ha, see what I did there, caterpillar.. bug..”

Aster was confused. “Wait, is he actually in kindergarten? Why is he wearing our school’s robes?”

Elliot poked asters shoulder.

“She was joking..” He told him.

“Oh! Are you sure? He looks tall enough to maybe be in second grade though.” Aster frowned. He walked closer to Leo.

“Hi.” He said creepily.

“Yeah okay-HYAH!” Leo kicked Aster’s thigh, hard.

“OWWW! What was that for?!” Aster cried and flung back into the seat.

“What do you mean ‘what was that for’?! You said I’m tall enough to be in second grade! I’m actually four feet and three inches!!”

“It was a compliment!”

“NO IT WASN’T!”

Elliot frowned at Aster.

“See? He’s small! I’m five feet. And it was a compliment!” Aster pointed out.

“That’s not a very nice compliment, then. Also, you’re taller than everyone else in this room.” Elliot told him.

Cece rolled her eyes and turned around. Leo crossed his arms and scowled.

“So, how do we get unstuck?” Cece asked. Everyone looked at each other in an *I don’t know how to get them unstuck, do you?* sort of way.

“Amazing.” Cece scoffed.

Elliot sat forward.

“Is that even a spell? I mean, I’ve never heard of that one before, and I read the whole spell book.”

Everyone stared at him.

“What? I had a lot of free time.. and I was bored..” he sat back down.

“What if, you guys pull Cece, and I hold onto the door?” Leo suggested from behind Cece.

“No, you’re not breaking more stuff on the train.” Cece chided.

“More stuff?” Clam asked.

“Yeah, this kid broke a railing on the train. It’s leaking and there’s water spilling out from it. Everyone laughed at him.”

Cece could feel Leo slump down. She realized she’d been making fun of him the whole time, and on top of that she’s telling her friends about it. She felt kind of bad for that last part, but she didn’t say anything else. She decided she’d lay off on the making-fun-of-Leo.

“What happened though, Cece, the full story?”

Cece sighed and recalled what happened.

“Tyler and his stupid cronies!” Elliot roared.

“You know them?” Yuki asked.

“Boy, I know them. They live in my neighborhood, they’re a bunch of wet rats.” Elliot huffed.

Aster giggled.

Cece sat sideways on the bench, letting Leo sit on the other side.

Yuki sighed, she sat down across from them in deep thought.

“is it possible that people can make their own spells?” She asked.

Cece thought about that. It sounded believable, but how would the person make sure the spell did what it was supposed to? What if they made a spell for shredding stuff, but it cleaned it instead? Was there unknown spells?

“I don’t really care if it’s a spell or not, I want to get unstuck from this stranger and leave this compartment.” Leo groaned.

“I know we just met, but can you please start talking like a normal human being, and not like some gloomy seven year old?” Elliot put his hands on his hips.

“How about this, hooray! I’m so happy, I’m stuck to the best person on earth! What a lovely day it is.” Leo overexcitedly thrust his hand at the window, where the sky was gray.

“I hope we’ll do rainbow-surfing today!” Leo said with mock happiness. Aster giggled. Leo put his hands behind his head in a relaxing sort of way.

“Do you mind?” Cece said grumpily.

“What? I’m trying to make the most out of being stuck to you, I’ve already been through enough, let me relax.”

“Been through enough? Wow, okay mate. You’ve definitely been through—“ Cece caught herself, but kept on talking. “All those guys did to you was hang you upside down for maybe two minutes, and you’re just stuck to me for a little while, I don’t think you’ve been through enough, it’s me who has been through enough. Carrying this child on my back because he’s too small to touch the ground.”

“Can we please stop talking about my hei—“

“Next thing, you humiliate me by breaking a railing in the train, put a creepy animal on my head, kick my legs, and do anything to annoy me, basically.”

Leo grunted. “You don’t know my life at home.”

Cece chuckled.

“What? Did your dad forget to make your favorite cereal?” Cece mocked.

Clam stood up.

“Cece, we don’t know him, we really *don’t* know his life at home.”

“Okay,” Cece started. “What’s your life at home then, if it’s so bad?”

Leo turned beet red.

“It’s- I- I don’t wanna talk about it.”

“See? He’s lying, he has a perfectly fine life.” Cece said.

“Just because I don’t want to talk about it doesn’t mean I’m lying!” Leo shouted, his voice cracking. Everyone in the room stared at Cece disapprovingly. She shrugged.

“He’s just trying to get us to feel bad for him.” Cece told them.

She felt Leo shuffle behind her, she glance behind her and saw he was hugging his knees with his face buried in between them. He was crying.

Aster scowled at Cece and went to Leo.

“You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to. We all have bumps in our life.” Aster comforted him.

“I bet your life’s not like mine.” Leo muttered.

Elliot flipped the pages of a spell book, and Clam came over with Aster. Yuki sat there, not knowing what to do.

They all sat there for a while, the only sounds were Elliot flipping pages and Leo sobbing quietly.

Cece sighed. “Look, I’m so—“

“I found the spell!” Elliot turned the book around and pointed at the page.

“*Unlockulus*” Elliot read aloud. He pulled out his wand.

“Okay, guys. This is the first spell I’ve ever tried, so please don’t get mad if it doesn’t work.” Elliot told them. Cece felt Leo sit up.

“Finally.”

Elliot swished his wand.

“*Unlockulus!*” He said loudly. “Did it work?” He asked them.

Cece tried getting up, but she still felt Leo’s back stuck the hers. She shook her head. Elliot cleared his voice.

“*Unlockulus!*” He shouted as he swished his wand. Cece could feel the light weight of Leo off her back, she got up.

“Woohoo! It worked!” Cece rubbed her back and danced around.

Leo got up.

“Finally.” He mumbled, and went to the door of the compartment.

Yuki sat up.

“Where’re you going?” She asked.

“I’m leaving, obviously, and getting my luggage out of that morons compartment, he’s probably stolen some stuff, but it’s no matter for me, since my life is awesome.” He glared at Cece.

“I’m sorry Leo, I really didn’t mean to say that stuff, I was just really annoyed that I got stuck to you, no offense, and I didn’t like what the Tyler kid did to you.” She said.

“I’m sorry. Please?” She looked down at him.

He thought for a moment.

“Fine, I forgive y-“

“Oh, amazing! Does this mean we’re friends now? Are we all already part of a group?” Cece squealed and picked Leo up and hugged him.

“Too—tight.” He gasped. Cece put him down.

“Sorry.” She smiled sheepishly.

“Also, I don’t even know you guys good enough to be friends.” Leo said.

Yuko shuffled.

“Well, you could get to know us if you stay here with us.” She said.

“Whatever, but I really need my stuff.” Leo started to open the door of the compartment.

“Wait.” Someone said behind him. Leo turned around, and Cece saw Aster speak up.

“I’ll get them.” He said, and watched below as Bandit wriggled up onto the seat.

“Sorry, I can’t ask you to do that, we’ve only jus—“

“Nah, it’s okay, I want to try something.” Aster grinned widely. He pulled a small pearly-white jellybean out of his pocket.

“See, I bought this at a store, it makes you invisible for twenty-four hours, but if you want it to stop early, you eat this orange one.” He pulled an orange jellybean out of his pocket. Leo shrugged.

“Fine, whatever, but it will look weird seeing flying suitcases.” Leo shrugged.

“That’s also okay, since whatever I touch becomes invisible too.” Aster said. Cece furrowed her brow.

“And how do you know this works?” She asked Aster.

“I’ve tried it before, it’s totally safe and foolproof.” He replied, then he turned to Leo.

“So, can I try? Pleaaaaase?” Aster asked, doing a sad pleading face. Leo raised his eyebrows.

“Sure, whatever. I don’t want to go over there anyway.” He let go of the door handle and sat down.

“Have fun.” He said unenthusiastically.

“Hooray!” He popped the white jellybean in his mouth.