

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.