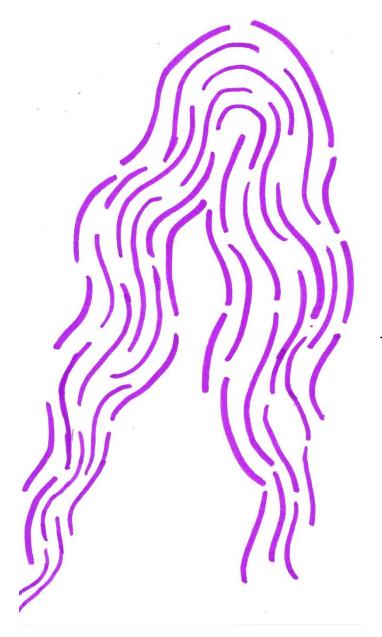


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It was a chilled autumn evening when the boy found the rat. A scruffy, fat, filthy vermin he was. And he was just sitting right nex to the worn tire the boy liked to play with. This would never do.

Stricken with a thought, the boy ran back into the house and into his suffocating bedroom. He went to work rummaging through his closet and drawers. Now where could it be? The boy searched under his bed and there it was! Right next to the deflated football.

He pulled out the empty fish bowl and blew away some dust. Perfect! He ran back out to take care of his rat problem. It was still there. Sitting on its hind legs, twitching its creepy, little nose.

The boy set down the bowl and cautiously crept closer to the pest. With one sudden swoop, he nabbed the rat and held it by the tail. "Gotcha!" he declared triumphantly.

The rat shrieked and began to curl itself around the boy's hand in an effort to stay right-side up. Its tiny legs scrambling through the air all the while.

With a soft thud, the boy dropped the rat into his old fish bowl. The rodent squeaked again before attempting to climb up the smooth walls of the bowl. The boy watched through the glass as the rat slid down the side, only to try in vain as the same thing happened again.

His smile was thin as he lowered himself onto his stomach. He gazed through the cloudy glass at the balding, gray rat. Its left front paw twitched like a wrinkled-up worm.

Without warning, the boy placed his hand over the top and wrapped his left arm around the circumference of the glass. He gave the bowl one swift jerk and listened to the thud of the rat as it hit the walls of the prison.

"Wham! Wham! Wham!" the boy yelled with each shake. His ragged tire was long forgotten.

The rat cried along to the rhythm of the thuds created by its own body, and the boy's shrill laughter tied in with the gruesome melody. His smile was strong as he watched his entertainment slide around the bowl.

A gruff voice forced his amusement to a halt. "Ge'in here! C'mon, now, ge'in here!"

The boy slowly sat upright. He scowled down at the rat and pointed a finger at it. "Don't move! Be quiet and don't move!"

The balding man placed his open bottle on the end table, its legs barely able to support the weight. He shifted his gaze from the television to a point just above the boy's head. "Where's ma lighter?"

The boy, with eyes glued to the stained carpet, pointed to the barely-standing side table. A red lighter lay next to the half-empty bottle and some old lottery tickets.

The man shook his head slowly, as if too much movement would knock it off his square shoulders. "Nah, not that one. Ma good one. Ya know? The black one with the white stripe."

There was no answer. The television glowed, flashing bright images of advertisements with spokespeople jabbering away as background noise.

"I know ya took it. Ya always takin' stuff that don't belong to ya. Now, I'm gonna ask you one more time, ya filthy vermin. Where's my lighter? Huh?"

The boy managed to muster out an "I don't know" before he dodged the man's lunging arms. He bolted to the door in a failed attempt to flee before hands wrapped around him and plucked him from the ground.

"Where is it? Huh? Where is it, ya filthy vermin?" The man shook the boy six times before he managed to cry out another "I don't know."

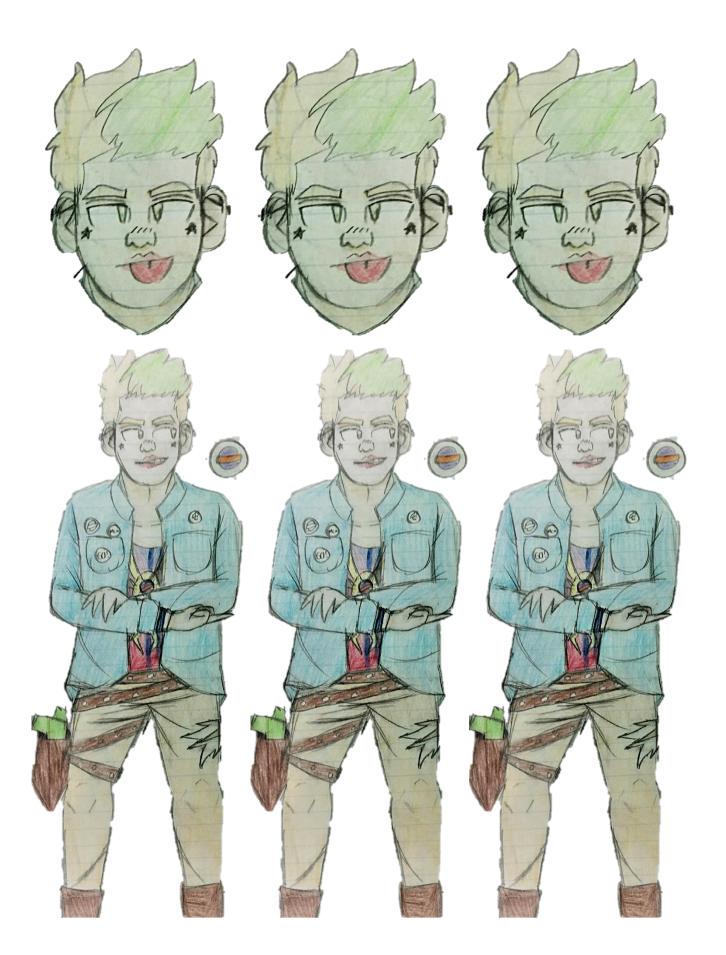
The boy tumbled to the ground like a fallen angel. The man erupted in a hacking fit and returned to the deep indent in the couch cushion. His attention turned back to the television, the lighter seemingly forgotten along with the boy's presence.

The boy scrambled out the door with as much quiet as he could muster. The bright sunshine mocked his glossy eyes as he mindlessly trudged own the gravel driveway. The light bounced off something shiny and hit the boy in the eye. He blinked away the blindness and searched for the source of the brightness.

There, right where he left it, was the fish bowl and the captive rodent inside. The boy veered off to the bowl and lowered his head to study the rat sitting inside. Its nose twitched with the same frequency of its paw.

The boy placed a finger against the glass. His fingertip measured the size of the rat's head.

With one swift movement, the boy grasped the top of the bowl with both hands. He gently tipped it over and stood up, watching as the rat scurried off into the sun.



Edge Lord – by Genevieve Poirier

If You Give a Cadence Coffee - by Olivia Schlossmann

If you give a Cadence a coffee she will want some cream.

If you give her cream she will want it from an Irish cow.

If you go to Ireland to get cream from an Irish cow she will want some Irish soda bread.

If you give her some Irish soda bread she will want some butter from an Australian goat.

If you give her some Australian goat butter she will want some sea salt from the Gulf of Mexico.

If you and the Cadence go to the Gulf of Mexico to get some sea salt she will want to swim with the dolphins.

If she swims with the dolphins she will want to be a mermaid.

If you tell her she can't be a mermaid she will throw a tantrum.

If she throws a tantrum, you will have to give her coffee to calm down.



The 700 Club (Part 5) – by Melanie Andersen

Chapter 8

Yesterday night, before I finished my phone call with Amorie, I asked her one more thing: to get Amy's number somehow and call her. She could ask her how she's been, prank call her, anything really, as long as I know that Amy is safe. Once we confirm it's her number, we can periodically check up on her to make sure that she's not in danger, and then when this whole thing blows over we can leave her alone.

Initially, Amorie sounded a bit reluctant about the idea, but realizing her old friend could potentially be in danger she decided to comply. No matter how awkward that phone call might be, it's worth it to sacrifice comfort in order to stop someone's life from being ruined.

It's also worth it to sacrifice homework, because the second all my classes are finished, I toss my backpack on my bed and take a seat at my desk. I open up my laptop without even mumbling a "hi" to Gigi, who doesn't have any classes today. When I walked in, she was eating instant noodles and watching *Friends* off her laptop, and now she's scoffing at me.

"No hello?"

"Hello, Gigi," I grumble, opening up my email. I've been looking up the name Clovis Witt for the past few days, desperate to uncover any and all information about him. Amorie's supposed to call Amy as soon as she figures out her number, but in the meantime I have to do my part to figure out what exactly Clovis plans on doing. I've basically been running off of a hunch this whole time, and it'd be nice to find some solid proof that I'm not crazy, because while Gigi is very curious in nature and wants justice for Amorie, it's quite easy to tell that she's becoming annoyed.

"What's so important that you can't talk to me this time?"

I rip my eyes away from the screen in order to glare at her.

"Don't be like that. You know how important this is. A crime was committed against my sister-in-law, and I'm supposed to let it slide? That's not happening."

"I understand that, Alexis, I do. But you let it consume pretty much your every thought and waking hour. Aren't you falling way behind in your classes?"

Yes.

"Of course not. I'm not that irresponsible," I lie. Gigi raises an eyebrow.

"You barged into a guy's house with absolutely no plan just because you thought he was related to your sister's kidnapping. Sounds pretty irresponsible to me," she retorts.

"I thought you wanted to help me get Clovis in trouble. Two nights ago you were helping me theorize about Clovis, and now you're being all..." I try to search for a nicer word than annoying. "Difficult."

This ignites a flame within Gigi that I wish I could have avoided. Her eyes light up with anger and she snaps her laptop closed.

"Difficult? Me? Difficult? I can't even say one freaking sentence around you without you turning it into some theory about Clovis! And I am trying to help! I'm sorry if I'm not some sort of super genius, but all you've been doing these past few days is researching and you've come up with basically nothing. You've been completely ignoring me these past few days for your useless research, but the first time I complain about it you start being a brat," she yells, her voice raising, then lowering towards the end as if she just realized that she doesn't want to fight.

"I'm sorry about being a bra, okay? My mind's just all over the place. And you're right; I've been spending all my time trying to dig up information about Clovis, but it's as if this guy never touched a computer in his life. There's absolutely nothing. I've found nothing, and it's pissing me off. So, I'm sorry if I'm snapping at you, but I'm not having the best time either," I respond, trying to remain calm. The reality of the situation is that I wouldn't have a current plan of action without Professor Lontelle, and if Amy isn't touched by Clovis at all, then I've got nothing on him and there won't be anything I can do.

He and his alluring brown eyes and cocky smirk will win.

"You're not to blame," Gigi says, pushing her laptop off of her lap and pulling her legs up to her chest. She sighs. "I just don't like being alone. And when you're with me now, you're not really with me, you know? You're off fighting Clovis in your mind or whatever."

I wish I could defend myself, but she's right. At the moment, the most important thing to me is punishing Clovis, which now that I think about it, is a little bit terrible. The second Amorie came back and I knew she was safe, I decided to punish whoever did this to her. I haven't had a real, non-kidnapping-related conversation with Amorie since she

came back home, even though it seems to bother her. In fact, she doesn't really seem to want me to pursue Clovis at all; the only one who really, fully supports this is Andrew, and he has seemingly limitless amounts of anger.

Maybe I really should give this up. Maybe this really is stupid. Maybe Clovis really *isn't* the one who kidnapped Amorie. And even if he was, congratulations? He got a week forty dialoids of magic and made a woman cry. If Amorie can get over it, so can I.

Just then, my phone rings, and Gigi rolls her eyes and pulls her laptop back on her lap in an attempt to give me some privacy while I answer.

"Alexis."

Amorie's melodic voice comes clear through the line. Hearing it's her, I perk up. Hopefully there's some good news.

"Yes? Did you contact Amy?" I ask.

"I sure did."

"And...?"

"There's good news and bad news," she states, then takes a breath. "What do you want first?"

"Bad news."

"Well then, the bad news is that I couldn't talk to her. Her husband answered the phone and said no one was allowed to speak with her, even after I explained to him that it was urgent and we were old friends," Amorie informs.

What can possibly be the good news, then? How can she have good news without even knowing how Amy herself is doing?

"The good news is that her husband, Mr. Walford, said we can talk to them in person tomorrow, since it's Friday," she says, which swells my heart with joy. After all, my classes on Friday end fairly early, so I can probably join them for the discussion, which would make things a lot easier for me, since Amorie won't have to relay a bunch of information to me afterwards.

But wait a second. What exactly did Amorie say to them that makes it so the husband can't let the two talk over the phone, but in person? Very rarely do people invite others to their homes anymore.

"Amorie," I start, my voice already dripping with dread and suspicion. "Is there something more you're not telling me?"

She exhales loudly into the phone, causing me to wince.

"So, there's one more piece of bad news I need to share with you," she admits, and my heart drops to my stomach. I can see where this is going, but I hope it's not true. "We can't talk to her over the phone, since Mr. Walford wants us to be there in person, to support her."

"Wait." That wasn't the answer I was expecting. "What?"

"Let me put it this way," Amorie says, taking a pause. "It's very important to be with friends and family when you're dealing with amnesia and the loss of three-thousand dialoids of magic."

* * *

This class can't end fast enough. The second after the final bell rings, I'm driving to Amorie's to pick her up, and then we're going to Amy's house in order to "support her." Though I feel bad about Amorie and I pretending to be closer to her than we really are, she'll figure it out as soon as we get there, and hopefully once I explain that we want to help catch the person who did this to her she'll be cooperative in telling us all she knows. If I even figure out a small hint as to how to get Clovis in hot water, I'll be happy.

I just have to wait five minutes for class to be over.

Mr. Poctree drones on and on about Shakespearean literature while I stare at the clock on the wall, watching the second hand slowly tick by. I definitely like school, but lately it's been nothing but a nuisance and what Shakespeare really intended for the fate of his characters sounds like the least appealing thing I could be listening to.

On the bright side, Gigi also has this class with me, and she's sitting one desk over, sketching what appears to be Shakespeare with a backwards hat on his head and dollar sign chain around his neck. I stifle my laugh, and she snaps her head in my direction. Seeing that it's me, she gives me a mischievous smile and a thumbs-up.

The tension from our small spat yesterday pretty much disappeared, but I'm still a bit hesitant to smile back.

I turn back to the clock. Five...four...three...two...one...

And I'm out the door.

"As of right now, Amy's husband thinks we're Amy's old friends coming to check up on her. While I am technically her old friend, I haven't spoken to her in over ten years and you're a complete stranger to her. She has amnesia of the past few days, not decades. Won't her husband kick us out once he realizes we're not close friends or family?"

Amorie and I are parked a couple houses down from Amy's two-story Colonial style home, not that it's very easy to see due to the massive oak tree sprouting out of her lawn. It's almost as tall as the house itself, and it provides shade to the multitude of cars parked on her driveway. There's more on the side of the road, so there must be a large gathering to visit Amy today. Hopefully we won't be seen as intruding, and we'll still get to talk with her.

"We'll have to see," I reply, opening the side door and stepping out into the sunshine despite Amorie's protests. She leaves the car, too, and races to my side as I briskly make my way to Amy's house.

"We can't just barge in there without a plan. You're far too reckless, Alexis. No wonder Clovis kicked you out before you could get anything useful out of him."

"He admitted to his crime."

"You told me he was sarcastic."

"Well, he sure sounded like it, but I could've been wrong."

"All you let him know is that you're on to him," Amorie points out. She's right, of course, but I refuse to admit it. Because plan or no plan, I had to speak with Clovis, to know what exactly I'm up against. Sadly, what I'm up against is a little bit more...clever than I'd hoped.

I shrug off Amorie's comment and continue towards the house. Soon enough, we're walking up to her front door, passing by the tree. Up close, you can see its gnarly trunk and crisp, browning leaves, and it's the very picture of fall. Despite how pleasing it is to the eye, surely now the tree will symbolize something sad, given that the magic used to grow it is now gone.

Once we're at the door, I let Amorie ring the bell and not more than a second later a tall, solemn-looking man opens it. His face seems droopy, like the grief he is experiencing is weighing it down. His eyes are gray and though he can't be any older than thirty, as I assume this is Amy's husband and she is only twenty-five, he certainly looks like he's wise beyond his years.

"Are you Amy's friends?" he questions, not even bothering to say hello. We nod. "Please come in."

He holds open the door for us and we enter the house. The first thing I notice is a wooden staircase leading to the next level, the second being the multitudes of photographs hanging on the light brown walls. There's a bench to the left of the door with some purses lying on it, and on the right is a coat rack with jackets of various colors hanging on it. The air of the house is heavy and quiet, almost as if this were a reception for a funeral, and I hear hushed murmurs coming from upstairs.

"She'll be happy to see you," Mr. Walford says, taking off our coats and hanging them up. "After she finishes speaking with her mother, you can go into the bedroom. I'll show you where it is when they're done talking. Then you can speak privately with her."

"Um," I interject, feeling out of place in this stranger's house. "I don't think I've ever formally introduced myself. I'm Alexis Fowell, and this is my sister Amorie. We've known Amy for quite a while now."

"Thank you for having us over," Amorie adds, a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

Though, technically, what she and I are doing isn't really against any set of laws or rules, there is something about crashing a person's family gathering that must go against some sort of moral code. There is justification in that we are trying to get information to apprehend the person who did this to her, but the thought that we are some place we're not supposed to be is clearly exciting gAmorie, who tends to abide by most rules.

For me, rules are more of a suggestion. I'll follow them in general, but if I have some reason to break them I have no problem doing so.

"No, thank you. Amy really needs the support of those she's close to right now. Not only is she a bit shaken from the amnesia, but the loss of all of her magic is really taking a toll on her," Mr. Walford explains. "Oh, and I forgot to introduce myself also. I'm Jim, Amy's husband."

"It's very nice to finally meet you," Amorie responds with a smile.

"The pleasure is mine. Now, let's head into the kitchen. The others are in there," Jim instructs, leading us past the staircase and through a small hallway into the kitchen.

The kitchen itself is fairly large; there's a lot of counter space and appliances against the walls and an island in the middle, which is covered with plates of appetizers like various cheeses and hors d'oeuvres. However, there's at least ten other people in here, sitting on barstools around the island and milling about the counter, so it feels a bit crowded.

Amorie looks shocked at the amount of people, almost offended by it. Maybe she wishes we threw a "sorry you lost your powers" get-together for her, too.

Amy's family and friends have mixed reactions to us entering the room. A couple of them glance over at us for a second before going back to talking, some grin at us like we've known each other for years, and others look downright confused. A middle-aged man who was speaking to a short, stout woman in front of the sink approaches us with a small smile. He shakes both of our hands firmly.

"Pleased you two could make it. I'm Richard Pierson, Amy's father. And you are?"

"I'm Alexis and this is my sister, Amorie," I introduce us. Richard nods.

"Have you spoken with Amy yet?" he asks, and I shake my head. "I don't suppose either of you are Enchanted, huh?"

I quickly glance at Amorie, wondering what we should do. I'm not entirely sure why he would ask this question, but I'm even more unsure of how we should answer. Amorie looks slightly pained by the question, so I decide to worm our way around it.

"I'm not," I answer, which is true. Richard accepts this and continues.

"Well, that's probably for the best. Amy's not in a good place right now, and the idea of other people still having magic is not too pleasing to her. She's not a mean person, but...you know how she gets when she's upset," he says. Amorie and I lock eyes. We're a bit handicapped here, since we really don't know how she gets. We nod anyways.

"Since she got her magic from my side of the family, she's not too happy with me at the moment. In fact," he lowers his voice, and it sounds pained, "she won't speak to me. I was hoping you might be able to ask her again if I can see her when you go in, and tell her that I love her."

"Of course. It'd be no problem," I answer, but in my head gears are spinning. Richard's side of the family has magic, too. It makes sense, since Enchanted powers run in the blood, but this means that Richard could be a target, too, if he lives nearby.

"Thank you very much, girls," he responds, turning away. Just before he returns to his conversation with the chubby lady I shout, "Hey, do you live around here?"

He turns back to me and raises an eyebrow. "What?"

"Um." I struggle to explain. "I just thought that it's very nice of you to drive all the way here. I can't imagine you live too close."

Amorie gapes at me, not understanding why I care so much. Richard laughs.

"Two hours driving is a small price to pay to see my daughter. Besides, at least I'm not my brother." Mr. Pierson gestures to a well-built man in the corner, sipping out of a mug and speaking to a small boy. "He drove five hours to come here."

"Ah," I nod. "Is he your only sibling?"

Amorie still looks quite confused as to why I'm so interested in Richard's personal life, but I ignore her stares.

"Yeah. The only one who couldn't make it here from my family is my father, but he's quite a ways away," Richard tells me. "What about you two? Are you from around here?"

"Sure are. I go to Belheart University," I say, nudging Amorie so she knows she can rejoin the conversation, too.

"I live a few subdivisions away with my husband, Andrew," Amorie informs. "He's sorry he couldn't make it. He thought this might be better left a more private thing."

"I understand," Richard replies. "Quite honestly, I have not heard of you girls or Andrew before today."

This statement causes a noticeable panic in Amorie. Her widened eyes search me for help. I'm not so easily deterred, however.

"Well," I shrug, "You know how Amy is."

Richard laughs again. "Isn't that right?"

I feel a small tap on my shoulder and turn around to see Jim standing next to who I assume is Amy's mother. She's a rather frail woman with thinning hair and the beady eyes of a mouse. She doesn't say anything, but goes to stand next to her husband while Jim leads us out of the kitchen without a word. We head to the staircase, and he instructs, "It's the third door. Let me know when you're done," and heads back into the kitchen.

Amorie and I quietly make our way up the steps, drinking in this house. On a regular day, I suppose this house feels warm with all of its wood and browns, just like Amorie's, but today it feels cold and dark. There are no lights on in the upstairs hallway, but we just follow the light peeking out from under the third door.

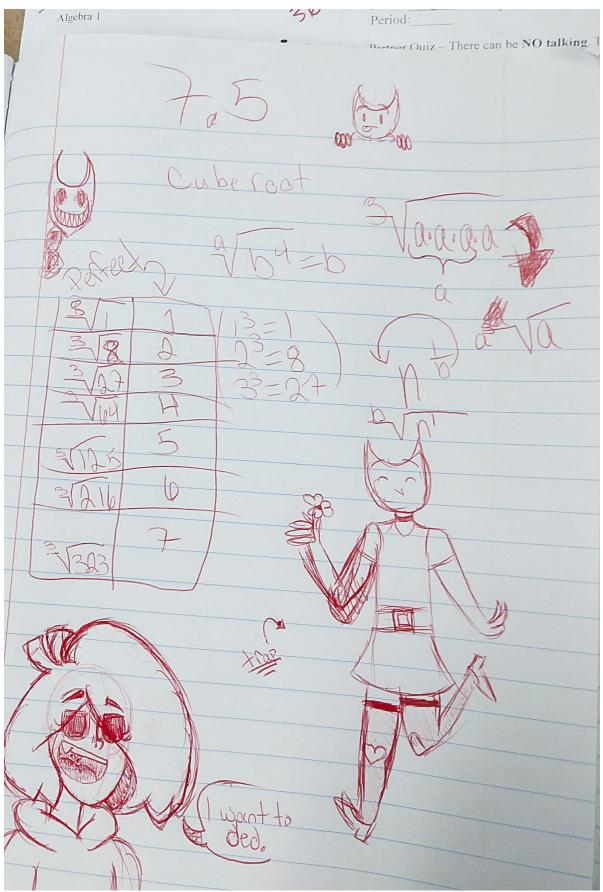
Amorie and I lock eyes once more time before she nods and I gently turn the doorknob and push it open. It's an understatement to say that Amy looks pale. In fact, if I didn't know better, I'd say she was dead.



They Found Me – by Genevieve Poirier



Mask – by Hannah Bradley



Mask 2 – by Hannah Bradley



Mask 3 – by Hannah Bradley

Death - by Olivia Schlossmann

I was a young girl

my family loved me

Here I am dead

1 am dust

And ash

The dust and ash is the earth

But if the earth is a goddess

And if I am the earth

Then I am a goddess too

if that is so

1 am not dead



Death Stabbed by Life – by Olivia Schlossmann

Welcome to Netharre – by Hannah Bradley

Based off of the game Manual Samuel

Chapter 1: THE BEGINNING

Darkness. Just, a pure black abyss. I was falling, and I was... confused. Where am I? Why am I here? Who am I?

A sudden flashback appears in my mind. My name is Finch Flynn, but all my friends call me Flinch, because I'm afraid of quite a few things. Spiders, clowns, animatronics, The Deep Web, dragons, the list keeps going, but then that would take up the whole book.

I was born in 2002, making me 14. I lived in a mansion with my mom, my homicidal fish named Cuddly, my butlers, and my dog, Bork. I remember how I fell.

October 27, 201Γ. I woke up, my butler assisted me out of my bed. I put on the shirt that my maid set out the day before, then my pants from Banana Republic.

I walked out the door, sporting my gold covered backpack with silver zippers and platinum buttons. As usual, once I got off the bus, the bully of the school greeted me.

"Ay Flinch. Give me your money or else," the tallest, skinniest bully I've ever seen said. His name was one of the worst, Naszt. He prefered to be called Biggi though.

"Move it, you dummy!" I passed him quickly, throwing \$500 at him. I didn't feel like dying that day.

I went quickly to my first class. High School Freshmen get no respect, because I arrived a second after the bell! And by a second I mean 20 Minutes, but there's really no difference. Mrs. Bhronchiski said nothing, she just coughed and sniffled throughout the whole class period. What did I expect, that's all she ever does.

School ends, and of course, me and my friends all meet at the ever popular 'Ditch'. Coolest spot in town! People always throw things in Ditch. Matches, old cigarette butts, broken glass, rusty knives, rabid squirrels. Fun things like that. Hasn't been cleaned out since 2007, people are too scared of the squirrels. My friend's names are Aven, Parrie, and Jacqueline, or Jaqie for short.

Jaqie was playing Happy Wheels on her phone. Aven was playing around by the edge like the insane idiot he is, and Parrie was telling him to stop. Of course, Biggi had to ruin our fun. He grabbed me by the collar and said, "Where's the money, Flinch?"

"I gave it to you this morning, you pebble."

Biggi stood silently and set me down. "... Well I'm still mad, so I'm gonna take it out on you to hide my insecurities!" Biggi pushed me towards Ditch, and I stood on the edge, about to fall in.

Jaqie looked up from her game, grabbed my wrist and saved me from falling.

"You ok? You could have died and went like, straight to Hell!"

She asked kindly, her sweet voice warming my heart.

Aven's voice ruined it. "What was that? I didn't see it, do it again."

"... Aven, he almost died. Biggi tried to push him into Ditch." Parrie said, hoping to clear things up for Aven.

"I wanna see it, though!"

I chuckled, from terror, embarrassment, and because I was glad I still could. I said bye to all my friends, and began walking home...I forgot about Ditch Jr.

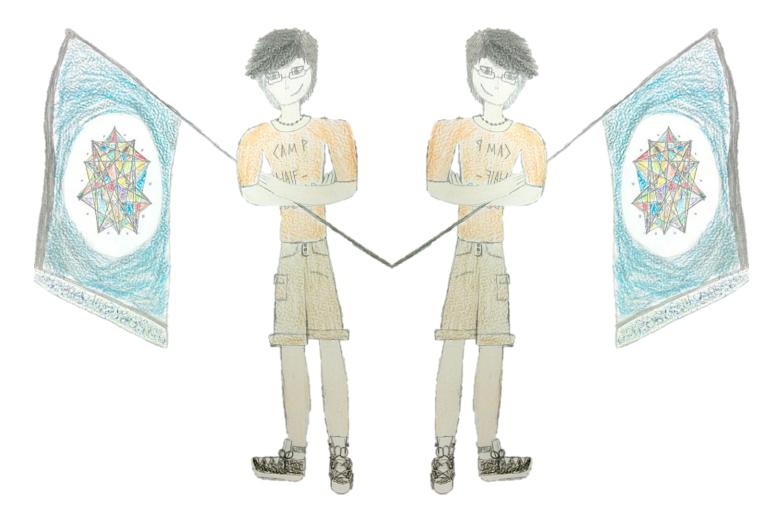
Falling...

Falling..

I face planted in a place where I had no idea what place I was in. Or if it even was a place.



Artwork – by Hannah Bradley



Ash - by Olivia Schlossmann

teen zine contributors:

Melanie Andersen, Samantha Andersen, Hannah Bradley, Taylor Bradley, Erin Lynch, Rachel Miller, Genevieve Poirier, and Olivia Schlossmann

Please join us at our next meeting!

teen zine is a publication of the Huntley Area Public Library's teen writers' club and includes members' work as well as submissions from area teens in grades 6 – 12. If you would like to submit your writing or artwork for review and possible inclusion in a future issue of the zine, please fill out a submission form (available at the library's Information Desk), or use our online submission form http://www.huntleylibrary.org/teen-zine/.

