A Test of Time: A Victorian Era Love Story

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Her name is Fiona. She is whisked away from a dingy orphanage in London to a fairy tale mansion owned by an uncle she's only met once. Why is she here? Is there more to Glover's story than what he claims? And who is the boy in the woods? Time travel is impossible isn't it?

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Table of Contents

New beginnings

Strange Happenings

New and missed faces.

Growing suspicion.

A rain storm.

The meetings.

Torn loyalty.

Open wounds.

Dark secrets.

A Prisoner.

Chapter 1: New beginnings

Fiona Vivian Conners sat in the worn seat of the carriage, being jostled this way and that until she felt that her head would split in two. She stared out the window, falsely admiring the autumn scenery while trying to avoid the gaze of her orphanage mother. "Sit up straight child." Demanded miss Evensbee. Her voice had always sounded like a cat screeching. Fiona obeyed, not making eye contact. There was a whinny from the horses. The old carriage came to a squeeling stop, and out the window Fiona could see a strange bronze gate set in the way. It was covered in dials and gears and pulleys, made of various colored metals. "Hoy! Anyone home?" Shouted the driver. Pause. A loud creak resounded through the cab as all of the little parts on the gate started turning, steaming or spinning. The curious contraption swung open with some difficulty and much complaining. "Well I never!" Miss Evensbee said, obviously flabbergasted. Fiona smiled. She got a glare from the aged woman. She returned her gaze out of the window, where she got a small scare. There was a boy, off in the woods, watching her intently. He was probably 75 yards away, so Fiona was unable to see him clearly. She could just make out his funny looking hat when the vehicle moved forward. They traveled only another mile through over-grown pine forest before they came to another marvelous sight. A clearing of about 3 acres was laid out before them, with the cobblestone driveway coming to a round about in front of the castle. Well, it was a castle to Fiona- she had never seen anything but the shaggy suburban houses of London. To a modern girl it would have looked like a scruffy abandoned plantation house. The structure itself was in great disrepair, but that was possibly made it more beautiful. It was built of stone, it seemed, in a great array of hues. Sea green and coral and lilac and others that could not possibly had had names yet. A large front walk way led up to a pair of French doors carved with elegant floral designs inlaid with silver. The grass was well overgrown and weeds sprouted up in the flower beds that lined the whole building. The cab came to another stop and they all climbed out. Fiona was enchanted. She felt like this was one of her story books that she would stay up past bedtime reading. This was the castle, she was the princess, and should would eventually find her price charming. If only- The girl's thoughts were cut short by the opening of the massive doors. A tall handsome man stepped out of them and came down to meet the couple. "Mr. Conners." The lady said sourly. "Harriet." He acknowledged, looking just as displeased. The woman gasped, terribly offended. "Well i see that you have most CERTAINLY not changed." Scanning her, he retorted, "Neither have you, to my dismay." He turned to Fiona. "Look at you. Dear girl do you remember me? Uncle Glover?" "Don't bother with that one. She hasn't spoken a word since her bitch of a mother passed-" "Watch your tongue." Hissed Glover. Miss Evensbee indignantly turned on her heel and got back into the carriage. The cabby handed Over Fiona's only bag, gave a word of apology and a wink to the girl, and climbed back up into the seat. The uncle and niece watched the buggy drive off. "I hate that woman." Glover mumbled under his breath. Fiona nodded. The headmaster was a fat, wrinkly pig, as the girls at the orphanage had decided. Miss Evensbee never said a kind word, gave a compliment or had ever loved anyone but herself. She was sour. Always stuffing her face while the girls got barely enough to keep from looking sick. Fiona just wondered how her uncle knew her... Mr. Conners ushered the red-headed girl into the mansion. They came into a large foyer, the walls peeling with cream colored paint. A single mahogany coat rack stood dusty and unused to the right. Next they came to a sitting area, with couches that looked ahpolstered in gold thread and natural fibers. A fireplace roared, the orange flames fighting back the nippy October air. A woman scurried down a flight of stairs that lined the left wall. She was tall and lean, with sandy blonde hair and wild green eyes. Her dress was a mosh posh of fabrics that trailed out behind her. "Ah! Miss Fiona ! Dear girl, what a pleasure!" The woman embraced Fiona like they had been friends forever. "My name is Miss Edihoth Favier, but you may call me Edith." She held Fiona out at arms length, scrutinizing every detail. "Well aren't you a pretty thing! But dear goodness, what a dull dress! Uniform I suppose? Have you got any other clothes?" Uncle Glover put a hand on the woman's shoulder. "Let her breathe, Eddy. And no, she's only got one bag. Show her her room. I'm going to get some coffee." He smiled at Fiona, a sad smile, and she realized how tired he looked. "Don't worry, she doesn't bite." He said reassuringly, motioning to Edith. Fiona was whisked away to her bedroom by the ever chatting Nanny. The room was fit for a princess. A queen sized bed dominated the middle of the area, with real Ivey vines growing up the posts and forming a canopy above. The walls were painted with a lovey mural of a romantic garden full

of blooming daisies and golden-rod, forget-me-nots and purple roses. The ceiling was covered in a million stars that almost seemed to twinkle... Edith showed Fiona her closet that was filled with dresses made by the nanny herself. The girl put on a long emerald gown that had creamy lace at all hems. Fiona twirled and smiled, not being able to remember having worn such a fine garment. Edith seemed quite pleased. After being shown the lavatory, Fiona was left to herself. She paced the room for some time, admiring the mural on her wall and the jewelry in a case on the mahogany dresser. Although extraordinarily pleased with the situation, Fiona couldn't help but wonder why she had been suddenly taken away from that hell-hole of an orphanage in dingy London to this fairy tale mansion owned by an uncle she had only met once. Fiona's parents had been extremely Wealthy when she was first born, inheriting a great sum of jewels and gold when her grandfather Edward the Fifth had passed away. They had all of the luxuries of the time, including a mining business run by her father Alexander Conners. The little happy family was even more joyed when a baby brother came into the world when Fiona was 3 years old - Calvin. Everything seemed perfect.... ~14 years previously~ A little red headed girl sat on the edge of her mother's bed, silently weeping over the dying body of the pale woman. "Fiona - my darling...." Began Mrs. Conners, her breath coming in short spurts. "Yes mu-ma?" She closed her eyes and smiled. "I love you sweet heart. I want you to listen to your papa and be a good girl. Here - this is for you." Little Fiona sniffled and wiped her green eyes. Her mother held out a shaky hand. A golden key inlaid with a single black opal hung from her finger tips on a blue ribbon. "This darling - this is a very special key. Maybe you'll find out why someday." Mrs. Conners' eyes drifted to the ceiling as she went into a hysterical coughing fit. It subsided suddenly. Her arm slipped out of Fiona's hold and fell limp on the bed. Alexander kneeled next to his dead wife, burying his face in her dress. The woman doctor, who had silently watched the whole ordeal, gently escorted Fiona out of the room, giving her over to the nanny. Fiona held the key to her heart, careful not to lose this piece of her mother. Things went down hill from there. Mr. Conners turned to drinking and gambling. He drained the family's wealthy and his business eventually went bankrupt. Although he never hurt them, physically or verbally, Fiona and Calvin were taken away from him and raised up by Nanny Annabeth. When the sweet old woman died, Fiona was given away to the girl orphanage, and Calvin went to the streets. Her father was in an insane asylum, and her uncle at the time could not take them on. Seven years to the day, the girl had been in that horrible place. Now she was free - from backbreaking chores and cramped living quarters, from abuse and London sicknesses. She was free from all of this and possibly more. If only she knew how much she was going to have to sacrifice for this freedom.

Chapter 2: Strange Happenings

The next morning breakfast in the Crumbling dinning hall consisted of cheese omelets, hash, and ham. Fiona ate until she felt her belly would burst or Edith would run out of food to serve. Mr. Conners wiped his mouth, commenting on the lovely weather and asked the girl if she would like a tour of the grounds. They strolled out the front door after the meal was finished and the table was cleared. They crossed the lawn in silence, following a sliver of a path up to a mound of earth. On top sat a big glass building. The sun rays bounced off, making it seem like it was glowing. "This here is the green house." Stated Mr. Conners. They climbed the hill. Fiona went in the double doors to find a maze of greenery. Multicolored roses blossomed up in the first flower bed: pink, orange, crimson, blue, purple and white. "Edith paints them. If you were wanting to know. She's an odd one, I'll give her that. She says it reminds her of her childhood." Uncle Glover strolled past with his hands on his hips, acting as if painting roses was an ordinary chore. They next came up to an orchard in a large planter box suspended from the roof by braided vines. Inside were miniature trees - full grown apple trees, not more than two feet tall. "Ah, these are my favorite. Bite sized apples. Nothing sweeter." He picked one and popped it in his mouth. Fiona cautiously did the same. The juice from the fruit was warm and rich - it filled her stomach and sent tingles down to her chilly toes. It was like candy. Swallowing it made her throat tingle in a minty way. The rest of the green house plants were either oversized or the taste was exceptional compared to normal fruits and veggies. The tomatoes were the size of cantaloupes, the strawberries tasted like the finest any summer could brag, and the watermelon. The watermelon was easily the size of a cow. Mr. Conners explained that the fruit had been growing for 3 years and would finally be sliced for this upcoming Christmas. They left the magical green house, moving on next to the barn and stable. There were stalls running along every wall, each sized differently depending on it's animal occupant. The pigs had the biggest stall - a huge mud pit littered in freshly dumped scraps. Free roaming Goats nipped at Fiona's dress while she walked the hall. Upon entering a large airy room, there was a good many whinnies and foot stomping. Seven horse stalls each housed one of the incredible beasts. They danced around excitedly upon seeing the humans. "Yes, this is my happiness." Uncle Glover patted the muzzle of a black Arabian affectionately. "This is Melody. She rides so gracefully and delicately it sounds like her hooves actually make music." Fiona smiled at her uncle and then met the other horses: two fillies, three stallions and a fowl not yet named. "You can name him if you like. You may want to get to know him first though." Although she didn't say anything, Fiona nodded politely. She didn't think it would be necessary for her to get to know him: the sweet look in his eye. His energy. His loving nature. She would name him Calvin. After the little brother she hadn't seen in years but missed very dearly.

Chapter 3: New and missed faces.

The next few days were spent learning the routines of the household. It went something like this: 8:00 AM ~Breakfast 8:45-12:00 ~ lessons (history, French, Grammar and etiquette) 12:15- luncheon 1:00-2:30- more lessons (piano and horse riding). And the rest was down time. Fiona spent every moment of free time in the library. It was the biggest room in the mansion and full of dusty old books well forgotten in time. She read four altogether that first week - but planned to read all of them at least once each in her lifetime. During the morning lessons, Uncle Glover was usually in his study, the first room in the hall Fiona's bedroom shared. He would lock himself in there until lunch. No sound ever escaped the doorframe, nor light shown under it. Fiona wondered about him sometimes. She could see the happiness Edith showed from having another female about the vicinity. She would fuss over her clothes, hair, and shoes constantly. The woman hand made all of the dresses in the wardrobe and had the latest hair fashions straight from London. Not that Fiona cared for many of them. She preferred to let it hang in a braid or loose over her shoulders. On Wednesday, Mr. Conners interrupted lessons to summon Fiona into his study. As she slowly peeked her head in the door, she let a gasp escape her lips. On the walls were mounted a variety of exotic animal skulls- bears, saber toothed cats, dogs, birds, snakes, alligators and even a dinosaur skull. All things she had seen in biology books but never in real life. Along side these were terrific paintings and marble statues. The Mona Lisa stared her down while a copy of the Discus thrower stood posed on the opposite side of the room. The plush red carpet brushed the bottom of her heal as she entered the study completely. The furniture was black - a massive desk, at which her uncle sat beckoning for her to come forward, a lounge couch wrapped in a colorful Indian cloth, and a three-legged stand that had a fish aquarium set upon it. "Come in my dear, don't be shy. I need to have a word with you." He smiled gently as Fiona closed the French door behind her. She sat down daintily on the chair that had been provided. "Now, Fiona." Uncle Glover scratched the stubble on his cheek. "Tell me - do you like it here?" She nodded with a wide smile. "I know Edith treats you well. She enjoys your company far more than you know. And I can tell, you look more of a healthy weight now. Are you lonely?" Fiona grinned wider, shyly looking down at her hands. Not wanting to disappoint the man, she shook her head no. Uncle Glover laughed. It was a sad laugh. More of a chuckle really. "Surely my dear, you could use more company? I've sent for someone - someone I believe you will be very happy to meet." He grinned at her weakly, rising to his feet. She gave him an inquiring look. There was nobody else in the universe she would like to acquaint with. She was quite happy in her current little world. But still, she was eager to find out. Uncle glover caught Fiona's look and wagged a finger at her. "You'll just have to wait and see. Tomorrow at noon they will arrive." Fiona took out Achilles, Glover's black lab, during the evening, when the sun was sinking into the horizon. She was still pondering the mystery guest. Who was she? Certainly nobody from the orphanage. Maybe a family friend from years ago? Or maybe... Fiona pushed a painful thought from her mind. They aimlessly trotted up the hill to the green house, passing through the doors. Achilles became alert as soon as they entered. There was a shuffling of at least two pairs feet and a shatter. Fiona jumped. There was a slight whisper and all went quiet. Achilles growled deeply, stepping further into the building. The girl followed cautiously, drawing the knife she always carried in her petticoat pocket. A broken pot of strawberries on the stone floor; Boot prints tracked through the spilled soil; A flicker of movement in a shaded corner. The dog tensed. He stalked over to the corner and started wagging his tail. There was a pause. "Damn you Achilles." Hissed a male voice. Fiona held the knife and her chin high as two boys came out of hiding. They were probably in their late teens or early twenties. Both wore black leather clothing covered in an assortment of buckles, studs, and chains. On top of their heads sat bowler hats. They looked at her and smirked. The taller and probably older one snickered. "Weeell, if it isn't the princess herself. Might want to put that down sweetheart - wouldn't want you to hurt yourself." The younger one chuckled. After she didn't move or speak, he pursed his lips. "I guess it really is true. Cat got your tongue?" Fiona pointed to the door, her cheeks flushing in anger. They got the message. "Sorry about the mess. You might not want to mention this to Glover..." She held the knife steadily as they paced around the shards of clay and towards The exit. With a swift movement, the older boy grabbed both her wrists and pulled her close. The knife clattered on the floor. "Father will be pleased to see you." "Rory, don't you dare! Let her go!" The other growled. "Are you really gonna' let her slip through our fingers like this, Robin?! Don't you

want to get out of this hell hole?! Achilles growled at the boys, baring his teeth. Robin calmed himself, watching the dog. "If you force her, she won't help us." Rory seemed to understand whatever this meant. Fiona watched wide eyed as he released his grip. She backed away from him quickly, bumping into a planter box. "You've scared the living shit out of her. Good job." They scowled at each other. Fiona guessed they were brothers. Just by looks, but also by actions. A voice resounded through the yard, calling her name. "We'll meet again. Maybe next time it will be more pleasant." Robin stated simply. Whether as an apology or omen, she didn't know. And with that farewell, Fiona was left alone. ~ Noon: A carriage pulled up into the gravel drive. It was a fancy one, surprisingly. It looked like it was from the richer districts of london. Fiona watched from her bedroom window as two well-dressed passengers climbed out. She almost screamed when she recognized one of them... She flew out of her bedroom and hopped down the stairs in the most unladylike way. She didn't care though. All she wanted to see was her brother. Uncle Glover leaned against the door frame. He was watching the both of them. Fiona stood in the foyer, eyes glistening with tears as the fourteen year old boy climbed the stairs. A pleasant older man was with him. Brother and sister caught sight of each other. It seemed like time stopped. There was nobody else besides the two of them. Memories flooded back into her head of all the times they had shared - whether good or bad. Fiona flung her arms around Calvin and placed a kiss on his cheek. He looked almost the same as when she had seen him last: when he was seven and she ten. He had thinned out though, and he was much taller than her. "Oh, Fiona. I've missed you so much." He laughed into her hair. She pulled away from him, scanning his face before laughing also. "I've missed you too. It's been far too long Calvin." She glanced over at her uncle. He grinned Smugly. "Thank you Uncle Glover." He nodded. He didn't say how he had done it. Or when. He didn't say anything about her speaking for the first time since she was three. All he said was, "You are very welcome my dear. You are MOST welcome."

Chapter 4: Growing suspicion.

Lessons were aborted for the rest of the week to give time to Fiona and Calvin to catch up. It turned out that he had been homeless for only a few months until a kind childless couple adopted him. They had treated him as their own and even sent him to school. Up until only a month ago, Clavin had heard nothing of his sister. Uncle Glover had sent the couple a letter asking if they would give up the boy to come live with his newly found sister. And here he was. Words couldn't describe the joy radiated from the mansion. Everyone was happy. Even the usually depressed Glover seemed in high spirits. Fiona thought all of these things over as she sat at her desk, painting a rose blue as Edith had taught her. A knock at the door startled her out of her thoughts. "Come in." She called. Uncle Glover popped his head in. "My dear, a word?" She nodded, smiling pleasantly. The man slipped in and plopped down on the stool in front of the window. "You really pleased me yesterday." He began, a wide grin on his face. "I didn't have much faith that you would come around, but you proved me wrong. Why now?" Fiona knew he was talking about her finally coming out of her shell. She pursed her lips, gathering the correct words. Nobody had ever heard her story before. She paused, then began slowly. "When my mum died, I suppose I felt like I had no one to love. My father did away with me, and my brother was left to fend for himself on the streets after nanny Annabeth died. But anyways, I felt so worthless. I felt like nobody cared enough, so I started caring little for people.... I heard it once said that you should only give your time and thought to those worth giving it to... I felt like nobody at the orphanage was worth it, so I never spoke to them. The girls were horrid, the headmaster worse. But then I came here.... To you and Edith. I suppose now I feel... I feel like I have a purpose. I'm loved. I myself haven't loved in years, Uncle. Not until yesterday. I realize that you do want to help me. Us. Calvin and I. You are worth my time and thought. I know this all sounds extremely selfish, but it IS difficult to put into words..." He nodded. Mr. Conners sat in silence, staring out the window into the distant woods. "I understand what you mean. I've felt that pain before." Fiona cocked her head, curious. He caught the look in her eye and began his story. "When I was a lad, I had a childhood friend name Valentia. A beautiful girl: long blonde hair, piercing blue eyes. A tomgirl- we played together out in the fields for hours, rode horses, had races. We loved each other as brother and sister until we got older. We fell deeply in love. Her parents and mine had been best friends for years, But our fathers got into an argument that caused our families to go separate ways.... Me and Valentia were 16 when her family moved away 10 miles down the coast. I would ride down there at least once a week to see her. We planned to elope. Your father, my brother, found out about it, and being older, didn't see fit that our plan should go through. They were going to stop us no matter what. We were riding back into town-" Glover cut off shaking his head furiously. Fiona swallowed the lump in her throat and allowed the story to seep in. He took a deep breath and went on, "we were coming back in when we were ambushed... My father thought that it was Velentia's brothers coming to get me. They shot at us - hit us both." He rolled up his left shirt sleeve to reveal a massive scar going up his forearm. "Pa got me here." Fiona gazed at her uncle, whose eyes were full of misery. "They killed her, didn't they?" She whispered. He nodded, as if in trance. "I held her until her heart stopped beating. She would have died, even if I could have gotten her to a doctor. Right through the lungs. I watched as my love suffocated from her own blood." His grip tighten on the window sill. Fiona's eyes glistened with tears. "She was only 18. So much life to be lived..." There was a deathly silence as the two watched the last of the sunlight fading away. An hour passed before another question came up. "What did you do?" Glover sighed. "I left. I hated them both, my brother and father. I thought I could never forgive them. I made my way out to London, worked in a factory. I eventually found out that Pa had died, and left me money. A big chunk too. I guess he felt bad for what he had done. So I bought this place and moved in. I haven't left in over 5 years now. I used to pay Edith to come in from town and clean, but eventually I just gave her a room and she stuck around. She didn't have any family either. All dead in an earthquake back in '35." Fiona took thought to her next question. She wasn't sure whether the answer would be pleasant or not. "Is that why you couldn't take me in? You were still upset with my papa?" Glover looked at her and took her hand in his own. "I was still too angry to, yes. And I was dealing with some... other things. I thought that any offspring of my brother must have been the devil himself." He smiled. "I wish I knew then how wrong I was. I've taken you in as a recompense, so to say. To make up for those years wasted in hated. Im glad of that choice now. We both

have fresh starts. New adventures awaiting us. And what with your brother here now... We're one big family." With that, He bid her a goodnight's rest and left her to ponder the stories just told. After readying herself for bed, Fiona peeked out the window. The full moon was rising up. Everything was illuminated, Including the figure of a boy with a funny hat, not 100 yards off down below. This was the third time this week she had seen him out in the yard or woods. He was watching them. Why, she didn't know. But she intended on finding out.

Chapter 5: A rain storm.

The following day was glum and cloudy. Sleet fell for hours, so Fiona had to lock up Achilles until she could walk him. He sat patiently by her bedroom door as she lay on her bed reading Gulliver's Travels. She was halfway through the book when there was a small thump outside her window. She cautiously got up and tiptoed over to The glass. A huge crash of thunder and lightning roared through the room. Fiona jumped back with a screech. Don't be silly! She chided herself. There was another thump - right against the glass panels. She went up to it and threw open the window. She poked her head out and looked down below. There was Robin, on the ground throwing pebbles, looking up at her. She glanced back inside at Achilles. He had his ears pricked up attentively. Looking below again, he beckoned for her to come down. She shook her head vigorously. He nodded in return, pointing down. He got on one knee and made a gesture of begging. This was her chance to get some answers, but with this weather... Fiona sighed and shut the window. She pulled on her waterproof red cape and rain boots, then commanded Achilles to heel as she tip-toed down the stairs. "Where are you going in this blasted weather?" Glover asked from his chair in the sitting area. His back was facing her and he was reading. Fiona quickly created an excuse. "Achilles really can't wait any longer to go out. He needs to take care of some business. I'll be back in about 20 minutes." He waved a hand in reply, obviously engrossed in his book. She slipped out the front door. A massive blast of icy wind took her breath away. She stood in the door frame, pondering whether this had been a good idea. Fiona put up her hood and follow Achilles into the muck. They went behind the house and into the garden full of puddles. Robin was there, looking up at the window still, throwing pebbles. He jumped when Fiona walked towards him. "I didn't think you'd come." He shouted over another rumble of thunder. "I need some answers from you." He wiped his wet black hair from his face and spat out rain water. "Yah? Well i need some answers out of YOU..." "Such as?" "Have you noticed anything... Odd since you came here?" She squinted at him. "A few things. Why do you ask?" Robin smiled and cocked his head. "Do you believe in magic?" "Magic is silliness. Only found in books and children's bedtime stories. Who are you and what do you want? Why do you stalk my family?" He shook the water from his face like a dog. "As official greetings," he held out a clammy hand, "my name Is Robin Gibson." Fiona took it cautiously. He planted a kiss on her knuckles, grinning broadly. "Fiona Conners." She replied simply. "Fiona, I need your help." She shook her head. "How can I possibly-" "Please, you have to listen to me. I understand that I'm a complete stranger and you have no reason to trust me, but I NEED your help. You are my only chance of getting out of here." Fiona thought for a moment. "Where do you live?" "In the woods over there, along with my pa and-" "Precisely why I shouldn't trust you. You're a ruffian. A thug. I shall inform my Uncle immediately-" He facepalmed exasperated. " GAAHH! I'm none of the sort!" He spat again. Fiona took a step back. "This is going to sound insane: I'm from the year 1903. There's this-this-this portal thing. I don't know what the hell it is! It sent me, my pa, and my brother here. I'm from London, in the future. There's others in the same predicament - some have been here for centuries! A band of Arab slave traders, two medieval knights, a Roman - I swear I'm not lying! There's some key that you have, I heard your uncle talking about it, it unlocks a door. I don't know all about it, but Fiona please! I want to go home. I've been here for 110 years." This took Fiona back in a wave of doubt. "How can I believe that ridiculous story?! You are deranged! And let's not forget how that other boy tried to take me hostage." "Oh, Rory. He didn't mean to startle you, honest miss. All he wants is to get home." Robin took a step forward, pulling her closer by the arms. "So do I." They stared at each other for a long time. Fiona finally shook her head. "Meet me back here tomorrow, at midnight. We'll talk then. I have to go." Fiona left him alone in the garden. So she thought. Little did she know that they weren't the only two present.

Chapter 6: The meetings.

They continued to meet every night at midnight, in the garden. Every night they would swap stories and give accounts of their lives. Every night Robin would beg Fiona to believe his words. Every night she would shake her head no. But it didn't seem to bother him too much. "You'll believe me one day. Soon, I hope. Or else bad things will happen to me." He had said, somewhat sadly. Fiona would listen to him repeat the story over again - "My family and I ran an Antique Shop - Gibson Antique Emporium. We had customers from all over the world. We were pretty successful. One particular Saturday, me, pa and Rory were working the shop and a strange fellow came in. Egyptian by the look of him. He was jabbering on and on to my papa about something he had wrapped up in a bag. I couldn't understand a word of it, but when my father tried to take a peek, the man ran out of the shop. He left the thing. Out of curiosity, we looked. It was a marble, about the size of my fist. Nothing too unusual, except for the fact that it changed colors. When I held it, it glowed blue. When Rory, my brother came stomping in, it got hot and turned red. I dropped it, and The next thing I knew we were here, in the middle of nowhere. I can't explain it any more than you can understand it." Fiona COULDN'T understand it. Time travel was impossible. "I think how it works is this," he went on, "there are these orbs that send people to 'checkpoints' in time. Whether forward or backward it's not known. But when activated, it sends these individuals or groups to places like this. They stay for years, watching the land be developed and populated. Take us, for example. We've been here for 110 years now. We've watched your town evolve. We go in and visit every once in a while. But then there's, for example, Pontus Maximus. He's an ancient Roman. There's no telling how long he's waited to go home. But there is a way out - Rory and I found a door that Leads into a chamber containing a clone of the Orb. It's in a booby-trapped cellar right below our Camp. We've just been waiting for our key out. The thing is locked up in some enchanted storage room. We can see it, but cant get in. It's a queer situation, and it doesn't make much sense, but I've been thinking it over for a century now." She got up off of the stone bench and started pacing in front of him. "And this key i have opens it?" He nodded, hope forming in his eyes. "How would you know?" That seemed to strike him like lightning. Robin looked like he had gotten caught with his hand in a cookie jar. "That's... ANOTHER... Queer situation.... Erm..." Fiona stood there and waited for him to explain. After seeing she wasn't going to take no for an answer, Robin divulged a tale of Uncle Glover and Mr. Gibson. "You see, the orb has to charge. Every time someone is sent here, it drains it's power for about 90 years, from what my father has calculated. We believe that one huge teleportation of all of us will drain it completely. Your uncle, he has his own plans. The only reason he bought that house is because he found out about the portal and how near it was. He's been trying to access it for years now. He and my father became fast friends when they met - working together to try to get in. We lost a few men doing so. But then we found out we needed a key. Glover knew it immediately - that key your mother had. He looked for you for two years... When he found you, he revealed his purpose of getting it - to stop his long dead love from reaching the grave so soon. He would rather bring back a lost memory than help many friends in need. So they went separate ways. That's why we need you. That's why he's forbidden you to even enter the woods, and has such a close eye on you. It won't be long before he asks about it -or even steals the thing. That's all he wants from you Fiona." She shook her head. This was NOT the Uncle she had come to know over the past month. "I'm sorry Robin, but that is crossing the line. I know my uncle misses Valentia, but he is not a conniving liar. He loves me. Despite what you believe he really does. He brought me and my brother back together for God's sake! Nobody would go through that much trouble just to get something he could have stolen. I need time to think about this. I will speak with him. If what you say is true, I cannot simply join a side. Give me until tomorrow, and you shall have your answer. At Noon. I swear it. If you find the key hanging from my window sill by a sowing thread, then take it. If not... Then I am sorry for my unbelieving heart. I really must be going." Robin jumped up and took Fiona by the hand. "I can prove it." She stared at him unsure. "How so?" "I'll show you our camp! When we came here, it teleported the whole lot with us. The shop is sitting out there in the middle of the woods. I'll show you. Come on." Robin laced his fingers between hers and pulled Fiona towards the forest. "Robin, I don't know-" He smiled reassuringly. "Don't worry. I'll keep you safe." They exited the garden. The couple trotted across the lawn and disappeared into the line of trees. A shaded figure took it's leave of the shrubbery in the garden and

snuck back into the mansion, with nobody to see it but the stars and full moon.

Chapter 7: Torn loyalty.

There was a big clearing illuminated by a massive bonfire in the center. This light allowed Fiona to make out most of the camp from the top of the hill they were on. There were two huge tents to the north- colored red and orange and green with middle eastern patterns decorating them. The flaps of their loose hanging fabrics swayed in the light breeze. To the south was a low wooden and cobblestone building - a horse stable by the looks of it. Immediately to the right of it was a building that sat a little crooked. It was a brick, two-storied structure, with a british flag hanging by the entrance. Robin pulled Fiona closer to the place that seemed void of human life. They scurried up behind the stable and entered. Inside was pitch black. "Robin..." She started to say after he let go of her hand. A beam of light pierced the darkness and Fiona found herself face to face with a camel. "Dear heavens!" She jumped. Robin laughed. He held up a rusty old lantern to the creature. "This is Aba-Katara. The finest Arabian Camel in all of Europe... Well, probably the only one." He smiled at the creature. It affectionately nuzzled his hair. "Hullo Aba." Fiona said gently, holding up a hand to the 9 foot tall animal. It sniffed her pale skin and licked her. Fiona giggled loudly. "Shhhhh. Don't want to alarm anyone." Robin breathed, holding a finger up to her mouth. They smiled at each other as they passed a couple of muscular steeds and went through the barn door. They were out in the winter air again. Next they creeped over to the tents and silently walked by the back, careful not to let the fire create their silhouettes against the fabric. Finally they came to the building. Fiona glanced at the words inscribed in the window: Gibson Antique Emporium - Established 1903. The boy watched her closely. Would she finally believe him? Or somehow conclude this was a massive hoax? All the proof was there, now it just took a little faith... They stood there for a long time. "Robin..." He smiled at her tone. He knew what she was going to say. "It's true...?" Fiona laced her fingers into his. He nodded as they headed back towrpards the tree line. The pines and evergreens swayed above them and a gentle snowfall began. The temperature was low enough for it, but there was something odd - no clouds "Magic?" Robin pulled her in front of himself. They stared up at the stars and let the delicate little flakes fall on their noses. "Magic." He breathed. Fiona stood on her tiptoes and planted a sweet but gentle kiss on his lips. He wrapped her arms around his neck and passion flooded them both. Their lips moved together perfectly, and all of the bitter coldness seemed to melt away from their skin... A twig snapped behind Robin and he was wrenched away from his lover. "What the hell are you doing?!" Robin yelped as the intruder smashed a knee into the boy's stomach. The hooded figure threw a punch, missed and was kicked to he ground. A gunshot rung out behind them, somewhere back at camp. Fiona gazed down on her brother, who was gushing blood at the nose. Robin looked very worried as he pinned the other boy under his foot. Another shot rang out. "Cal-Calvin?! What are you doing here?" She gasped. He glared up at her maliciously. "Fetching you." He spat. "I can't believe you would betray us like this." Another shot - then another. Barking echoed through the forest. Robin grabbed Fiona by the hand and they made a dash towards the noise leaving Calvin in the dust. They exited the woods and stopped at the edge of the clearing. "WHERE IS SHE?!" Bellowed Glover. Fiona had to catch her breath. The man had his back turned to them. Robin glanced at her, and then back at her uncle, who was holding his shot gun up to another man's head. "Rory..." Breathed his brother. "Who in god's name are you talking about?!" Shouted a fellow in front of the shop. He was tall and had a messy beard, presumedly because he had just rolled out of bed. Fiona guessed that it was Robin's father. There were a group of about ten others wielding swords ten yards off of Glover. They were dark in skin and light on foot. Nobody dared move, for fear of getting the boy's brains blown out. "MY NEICE! WHERE'S FIONA?" He bellowed again, waving the gun in the air. He sounded... Drunk. His words were slurred. Robin did a courageous and maybe even stupid thing: "She's right here Glover!" Time seemed to stop. All eyes turned towards the two teenagers. Fiona had never felt so exposed or scared in her life. What was her uncle going to do? Never had he been so violent. Never had she seem him drunk. Glover shoved Rory away and marched across the grass. He reeked of whiskey. Why had he been drinking so much? "What do you think you're doing?" He seethed, yanking Fiona's chin up so she had to look at him square in the face. "Didn't I tell you, to stay away from here? Out of the woods? I took you in. I fed you. I clothed you. I loved you. And this is how you repay me? Messing around with these hoodlums?!" Tears welled up in her eyes. "Uncle-" "SHUT UP!" He held the gun up to Robin's head. Fiona choked on her words. "No-" "If I have to exterminate the

problem, I will. Calvin tells me you've been meeting this boy at night for the past, what? Week and a half? Tell me, Fiona... do you love him?" Her knees were shaking now. She stared at the black haired boy that she cared for. There was fear in his blue eyes - something she hadn't seen from him. Daring in spirit, proud in words. And now here he was - life threatened and he was completely terrified. "Yes." She whispered finally. Both men looked at her. A cruel smile played on Glover's lips, while Robin's expression momentarily lifted. Glover chuckled. He first asked Fiona quietly, "Do you know how it feels to lose a loved one?" With a loud voice, he invited anyone else present to answer, "DOES ANYBODY KNOW HOW IT FEELS, TO LOSE A LOVER?" Rory ducked out of the clearing while Glover wasn't looking. "I DO!" He continued. "IT HURTS LIKE HELL! BUT IF I HAVE TO TAKE AWAY SOMEONE SHE LOVES TO KEEP MY WHOLE FAMILY SAFE I WILL!" "Why would you do this?" Fiona wailed. Glover staggered a bit. "Tell him good bye, love. Because you won't see him-" Rory startled them all, tackling him to the ground. "RUN!" He bellowed as a gun shot rang through the air. Six men were produced from the woods: Calvin and the rest strangers. Fiona didn't have time to get a good look at them though, or wonder where they had come from. She was whisked away from the site before all hell broke loose.

Chapter 8: Open wounds.

It was a small shack half hidden in a wall of rock and buried into the earth. Over-all it looked like a hobbit house. This is where the two refugees stayed the night. When one walked in they would immediately come into a small area with a cooking stove, and then into a closet sized room with a bed. Everything was surprisingly fresh - the quilt on the mattress was crisp and clean. The stove was polished. There was fresh wood stacked up in the corner. This was because Robin had a tendency of staying there while he was out hunting. It was a good, safe area in the woods, a bit more than a mile away from the camp and manor. Fiona and Robin had arrived at the building shortly before dawn. Gun shots had echoed through the woods for hours, with dogs barking viciously and men shouting far off. The two had run most of the way. How Robin was able to find the shack in pitch black, Fiona never knew. But they had made it. Once inside, she collapsed onto the bed. She was desperate for oxygen - it wouldn't come into her lungs. The Winter air seemed to have scraped her throat raw. Fiona clenched at the quilt, inhaling painfully. Robin came over and scooped her up into his lap. Her asthma was flared worse than any other time. "Breathe, honey. Breathe." He whispered. The boy wrapped the quilt around their bodies. "You're safe now. I promise." Fiona let a few tears slide down her flushed cheek. "Why... Would he do this?" Robin ran his fingers through her long fiery hair. "People tend to do crazy things when they're hurt so bad as he. Your uncle wasn't trying to be violent - he was drunk." She shook her head gripping his jacket tightly, inhaling again. "He doesn't... He doesn't drink.... Like that..." They sat there for another 30 minutes, bathing in warmth from the other's body. When Fiona could finally breathe somewhat decently, Robin got up and started a fire in the stove. "This is all my fault." She mumbled. "No, it's not. I should have stayed away from you - not because I wanted to, but because I knew this would happen." He stated simply, sitting back down at the end of the bed. "I wish I hadn't come. It would have been better if I had stayed in that damned orphanage, instead of causing so much trouble." Robin laughed at her usage of a swear word. "Girls shouldn't curse. But no. Fiona, no matter what happens, you will never regret you coming here. Don't tell me other wise, because I know you love me. I know you love your uncle and Edihoth. As for me... I would suffer a thousand tortures, just so I could have spent this time with you. I believe you feel the same." He pulled her close and kissed the top of her head. They laced their fingers together, and with beams of the dawn's sunlight peaking into the single window, they fell asleep. ~ THUMP THUMP THUMP. Robin jolted awake at the noise on the wooden door. He carefully lifted Fiona off of his lap and pulled out his hunting knife. "Robin, it's me!" "Dear god!" He unbolted the door and flung it open to find a beaten up Rory. Blood trickled from his mouth and there was a huge gash on his forehead. His shirt soaked in blood. "How's it going little brother?" "Get inside and let me look at you." The eldest boy didn't argue. He limped inside and slipped down to the floor, completely exhausted. "After you two left, Glover and some... of his neighbors raided camp. I don't know how the fuck he got so many guys to help him, but they beat us pretty bad. Baba-ra, Simbi, and Alahruse are dead." He was referring to three of the Arab slave traders. "Tristan is wounded," one of the knights, "and pa is close to a mental break down. He sent me to look for you after we beat back Glover. Robin, we HAVE to leave. If we don't, we will die." Fiona came from the other room, awoken by Rory's voice. He looked up at her and smiled, inclining his head. "Hullo there, miss." She held back tears. "Let me tend his wounds, Robin." He backed off and kindled the fire up. Fiona tore off his shirt and assessed the damage. "Warm up some water, Robin." He poured some of the contents of his canteen into the kettle. "How bad is it?" "He'll live. Its not too deep, but he needs stitches." She ripped some of the hem off her dress to blot the blood away. "I'm so sorry." She whispered. Rory smiled gently, watching her face. "Don't worry about me. I'm a big lad. I can take care of myself. And besides, it's not your fault. I'm more sorry about this situation for YOU. To be betrayed by your brother like that. He's the one who told Glover, anyways. . . So, Will you help us?" Fiona nodded. "I don't have the key though. It's back in my room." He groaned. "We have to leave in two days." Robin turned around inquiringly. "Why? It doesn't matter when we leave..." His brother sighed. "There's something father didn't tell you." There was a pause. "What?" Robin asked in a hard tone. Rory rolled his eyes and watched Fiona as she continued blotting his wound. "When people from the present come to the past, they can't die by age right? Only by mortal wounds... Well, there's another way." Robin squatted down to look him in the face. "What are you talking about Rory?" "Father didn't want you to worry." He

chuckled. Fiona started to think he was slightly deranged from hitting his head. "But it turns out that once a time traveler reaches the day of their original birthdate, they will die. It really screws up the future. Father's birthday is in two days you know..." Robin got up and started pacing. Rory ran his dirty fingers through Fiona's hair. "Get some water will you sweetheart?" His eyes fluttered around, drooping desperately for sleep. She obliged, handing him the canteen. She sat down next to him against the wall. "So what do we do?" They all exchanged looks, but ended up staring at Fiona. "What?" Rory laughed again, nuzzling his face into her shoulder. "You have to sneak in and get it." No. That wasn't possible. No doubt there would be people guarding the house and the whole yard for that matter. Fiona didn't want to face her uncle. What if he hurt her? He was willing last night to hurt Robin, so would it change now for her? What about Calvin? He would tattle if he caught her. Why did he care so much anyways? "I don't know how. It's in my room, under the mattress. How can I get in there without getting caught?" Rory laughed again, clearly delusional from loss of blood. They moved him to the bed where Robin brought over the heated water. Fiona started to cleanse the gash across his chest. He winced every time she touched him. Slowly, his breathing slowed down and he fell into unconsciousness. "I should sow him up now. Do you have a needle?" Robin produced one from the other room. Fiona ripped a single tread from her already tattered dress and stitched up the wound. After that, they sat on the floor. They came up with the simplest but most effective means of getting in - Robin would distract the men. Fiona would retrieve the key. She didn't say it aloud, but there was a horrible feeling in her gut. A feeling that they would lose.

Chapter 9: Dark secrets.

While the trio sat in their little shack, things were going badly back at Uncle Glover's manor. He had gotten the help of several of his neighbors and old friends to help him get his niece back from "kidnappers". After they had attacked the enemy camp, four of the men sat on the porch wounded, being tended by the others and he hysterical Edith. Glover paced back and forth in the yard, thinking over the situation. He knew they hadn't kidnapped her. No, she had turned her back on him and was helping that boy. He spat at the thought of Robin. The No-good hoodlum. How had he earned her trust so easily? Then he remembered that crazy thing called love. He remembered Valentia. Glover had been willing to risk everything for her. His family, his comforts, his own body - even now he was taking chances getting her back. He had paid for love once - SHE had paid. He didn't want to see Fiona get into that situation. If Glover went back to stop Valentia from dying, then he wouldn't be here. Fiona wouldn't have come. None of this would have happened. He pitied his Niece. She would be back in that orphanage, more than likely. She wouldn't be loved or cared for. She would go back to being mute. As for Calvin... That was another story. Glover shook his head in frustration. He headed back towards the house. The words of his once allied friend rang through his head. "Odds are, if you want something badly enough, you'll hurt a few people, break a few laws, make some new regrets. You just need to ask yourself, is it worth it?" Jules had told him while they were looking for that hidden orb. Was it worth it? Who would he pick - Fiona or Valentia? ~ Even at mid afternoon the sun provided no warmth. There was a thin sheet of snow on the ground and leaking into the little shack. Fiona and Robin decided that they HAD to go back - neither had eaten since the day before and the temperature was dropping. Besides that, Rory was getting a fever. He had woken up in a cold sweat and he still wasn't thinking clearly. He needed help. Rory wrapped himself in the quilt and both his brother and Fiona put an arm around him to support him while he walked. They slowly made their way through the foreboding forest. Fiona had never been so far. The thick trees were bare of their leaves, making the entire area look like a wasteland. Shadows formed in every crook and cranny, making it seem like they were being watched by ungodly creatures. The undergrowth tugged at the girl's skirts and made the three of them stumble. The occasion crow broke the silence with his mocking tone. Robin directed them by little notches in the trees. They steadily made their way, heads and eyelids drooping in exhaustion. Fiona would start to cough uncontrollably at times. The cold was irritating her lungs and making it hard for her to breathe again. During a coughing fit, Robin would hold her hands in his own, warming them. With those interruptions along with Rory's slow progress, it took them two hours to reach camp. A shout went up as soon as their presence was made known. Mr. Gibson ran out to meet them and shouted something incoherent. His eyes spat venom at Fiona. He seized her by a handful of her tangled hair and started to drag her away. She screeched and struggled. "Father! What are you doing? Let her go!!" Robin commanded. Jules poked a finger in his chest as a man in armor started to help Rory away. "Don't you DARE tell me what to do boy! She's the reason for all of this! I will hold her hostage until I get what I want! UNTIL WE GO HOME! She almost got you killed. She almost got me and your brother killed! Because of this little devil child, three of my best men are dead and we are STILL IN THIS HELL HOLE!" Robin winced at these words. Fiona was clawing at the man's fingers. "You don't understand. She doesn't have it, but she was gong to fetch it-" "YOU BELIEVE THAT?! SHE'S GOING TO RUN OFF BACK TO THAT SON OF A BITCH AND LEAVE YOU IN THE DUST! SHE'S BEEN USING YOU TO GET INFORMATION! SHE'S A SPY!" The bearded man bellowed. He waved a gun at her head. "THE PLAN WAS TO KIDNAP HER, GET THE KEY, AND KILL HER! DO YOU SEE WHAT PROBLEMS ARISE WHEN YOU DON'T LISTEN TO ME?" Fiona stopped her struggling and Jules pushed her to the ground. She gazed at Robin, whose eyes widened. "Were you...?" He seemed to have been struck by lightning. All the blood drained from his face and a single tear fell from his eye. "No... Fiona I swear I wouldn't hurt you-" She stood up to look Robin in the face. Jules smirked Evilly. He had hit home. "Robin... You would have killed an innocent girl to get something you wanted?" Her voice faltered at the word 'killed'. "No, it's not like that. I didn't want to - and... And after we met and I started to get to know you... Please, no. I love you Fiona. I would never hurt you... You should know that..." Robin stepped forward to try to embrace her. She only stepped back. Tears welled up in her eyes. "All my life I've never known love. Not since i was three years old, and Not until the last few

weeks. I thought I had fallen for a sweet boy." She shook her head in disappointment. "I was wrong. I fell for a monster... I knew you were desperate..... But not to that extent."

Chapter 10: A Prisoner.

"Why would you do that?" Robin hissed at his father. Fiona had just been taken away to be locked up until Jules could deal with her. She hadn't fought, or even pleaded. She just went. Robin knew she had lost her trust in him. It was true, at one point he would have been prepared to dispose of her, but not now.... Not since he laid eyes on that pretty little face in the green house. But she was gone, and he probably wouldn't be able to see her again. Oh, the foolishness of young lovers. "I did it because you are weak. WEAK! If you form attachments, then you endanger yourself and us by losing focus! If you had listened to me, we would have been home by now! You are a selfish boy!" Jules yelled. He spun around on his heel, leaving Robin in the middle of camp. There was nothing he could do. His Father would doubtless have Fiona guarded, so there was no chance of smuggling her out. He could go to Glover... No. He wouldn't understand. He would believe it was a trick. With no reason to be standing out in the cold, Robin made his way to one of the big Arabian tents. He pushed his way in. Rory and Harabi, the most skilled physician in medicine that was available, were in the corner. Robin walked over and stood over his brother. His chest was bleeding again and the boy was drenched in sweat. Harabi glanced up at Robin, and in decent English said, "he is not well. The blade that cut him was bad." By this he meant rusty. "He needs better physician. I cleaned the wound and will put fresh bandage on, but that is all I can do. It is spreading quickly. He will be dead by tomorrow." Robin shook his head and frowned. He knelt down next to the cot and clasped his brother's hand. Harabi left the two alone to talk. "You'll be fine. I'm going to get us out of here by dawn." He said quietly. Rory turned his head to look at him. His blue eyes were glazed and had a far away look in them. "How?" "I'm going to get the key myself." Rory leaned his head back against the cot and sighed. "That's a bad idea." "It's my only chance at not having father kill Fiona. He's got her locked up right now. But if he doesn't get what he wants by morning, he WILL kill her, Rory. I know he will. Father's gone crazy. If I sneak in and get the key, We can leave without alerting Glover and causing any more trouble." "What about her?" Rory asked with a frown. Robin's heart sunk deeper. He didn't reply. He didn't want to acknowledge the fact that she would stay, and he would leave, and they would never be together. Even if they did find each other in the future, she would be well grown and much older than himself. An elderly woman by then, if not dead. Rory sensed Robin's thoughts. He clenched his brother's hand tighter. "Then bring her." "No... Father would never-" "Forget father! He is just a grumpy old toad. If you love that girl, you'll bring her goddammit!" Rory abruptly stood up and pulled his coat back on. "What are you doing?" Robin asked, standing up. Rory almost fell over. He right sided himself, then quietly exclaimed, "You are going to get that key. I'm going to get your girl." ~ Fiona was in a dark windowless room. It was small enough to be a pantry or broom closet, but it had a bunch of locks and latches on the outside. She had been put there by a much gentler and kinder man by the name of Lancelot. He was a medieval knight - he had a polished suit of armor, a stubby beard, and dazzling green eyes. Lancelot had kindly given Fiona a bowl of hot soup and a blanket. He had even stayed and spoken with her for a while. She had asked him if he had known of a King Arthur. "Ah, yes. My king. A valiant man. I am a knight of his table - a most honorable position. Well... I was. Tristan and i were sent here long ago while we were out hunting. I have heard of the legends of modern times about him. They don't even contain all the splendid acts of my most Glorious king." But then Jules came in and kicked the Sir Knight out. The man gave Fiona a small nod and left. She had a hunch that he would be nearby if she was to be hurt or molested. He had yanked Fiona up to meet his gaze. "Damn you, witch. You have no clue what trouble you've heaped on my head." Fiona had cowered away from his whiskey scented breath and venomous words. "Tell me where the key is." She whimpered as he yanked her hair a bit more. "It's under the mattress, in my bedroom." Jules let go and watched her for a moment. He said finally, "if it isn't there... You'll be in for it." Now she was huddled in the corner, thinking about the circumstance. Her body quaked - not from cold, or anger, or sadness. But from shock. The past few days had hit hard. Everything was lovely, and then it was like life had been stuck with a knife. Fiona was most shocked about Robin. The sweet lad had had the potential and intentions to hurt and kill her. But... Why hadn't he? Fiona knew that he loved her. With all of his heart. They had only known each other for a few weeks, but it had been sufficient. Now, they would be ripped away from each other. By the time he was to reach the time he had been taken from, she would be an elderly woman, if not dead. Fiona

tugged at the necklace that laid across her chest. It was a blue cameo her uncle had given her. The jewel had been Valentia's. On the night she had been murdered, he had taken it from her neck and had always worn it on his wrist. Now, it was in the girl's possession. What about him? Robin had been right. All he had wanted was the key. He may have played his cards indirectly, and maybe not said it aloud, but his intention had been revealed the other night when he was drunk. Fiona believed that he DID love her. Maybe not planning to, but he ended up doing it. What if he was just trying to prevent her from suffering the same fate as his dead lover? And Clavin... What the hell was his problem? Why would her brother betray her like that? The boy should have come directly out and spoken to her about the situation. Not tattled to Glover. That was a childish thing to do. But now it was too late to change anything. Fiona sensed that she would be dead by morning. Whether Jules got the key or not, he would kill her. He wasn't the man to provoke - and Fiona had done just that, stretching his limits until they were almost snapped. She prayed that the accursed key was still there and hadn't been found by Glover. She didn't want him hurt, and especially not Edith. There was nothing she could do but wait for the results.

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