To Thine Own Self Be True

Summary

It seems that history is repeating itself as with each passing year at Hogwarts, the threat of a long forgotten prophecy is set into motion with the attendance of Laura Hollis and one, Carmilla Karnstein. Not everything is as it seems, as alliances and profound friendships are formed, rivalries are forged in fire, and harrowing secrets are kept within the hallowed halls of the school for witchcraft and wizardry. With these trying times at hand, their choices will either ultimately lead to a great fate of fortune or shall unleash an unspeakable evil onto the world once more.

Notes

Hello everyone! This is my first Carmilla fic and Hogwarts AU (also my first crossover fic!) so please feel free to give me any and all feedback on this work. I will warn you all now that I did take some liberty with the lore of magic within the realm of Harry Potter (for the sake of the plot line!), although nothing should be too drastic of a change that it would disrupt the charm of writing within the world of Harry Potter. Let me know what you think of this. Enjoy!
See the end of the work for more notes.
Year One

From the night Laura had been told that she was a witch she had been dreaming of the moment when she could buy her first wand. Practically dragging her disgruntled father behind her through the door, the sound of a bell alerting the room to their presence rang out as the young girl gazed around the dimly lit room in wonder. A large desk stood directly in front of her as shelves littered with rows upon rows of thin aging boxes surrounded the room and stretched out into an adjoining hallway.

“Hello? Is anyone here?” Her voice called out to the empty room in wonder. At the sound of boots hitting the wooden floorboards, both Laura and her father turned to stare at the aging wizard that had appeared before them. He smiled and clasped his hands together in greeting.

“Well what do we have here? Another muggle-born, I see.” His voice was rough, but not unkind as he stared directly into her eyes. Laura's breath caught as she felt like she was being examined on a personal level.

Instead of being perturbed by his gaze, she flashed him a warm smile, putting on a braver show than she felt as she extended a thin hand out to him. “Hello, sir. My name is Laura Hollis and this is my father, Sherman. I take it you are Mr. Ollivander? We are here so that I can buy a wand, please.” The man seemed to be fighting a grin as he raised an eyebrow at the youthful face before him.

He grasped her offered hand, his calloused hand seemed rough from years of his craft. “Yes, I am Mr. Ollivander and welcome to my shop. Let's measure you up and get you started.” Pulling out a dark wand of his own, he gave it a flick and a measuring tape zoomed out of the back room and came to a holt inches from her face. “Hold out your wand arm, please.”

“Er… I'm right handed so…” She jabbed her arm out in front of her. Taking its cue from another flick of the wand, the tape began measuring the length of her arm, then her forearm to wrist, the length of her fingers, and even the space between her thumb and pointer finger.

A breathless gasp made Laura turn her attention away from the magical tape to glace back at her father. He sighed in awe at the display before him before he said to no one in particular, “I love magic.” Laura smiled as she watched her father’s eyes gleam in wonder. Normally overprotective and a bit paranoid about the safety of his daughter, he had taken to learning his daughter was a witch in stride. After an appearance by the Headmistress of Hogwarts herself to explain Laura’s magical abilities on the night Laura had turned eleven, he had come to accept his daughter’s uniqueness remarkably well. Laura turned her attention back to the measuring tape as it had wound itself around her head before measuring the space between her eyebrows.

“Uh… Mr. Olivander, what exactly are you measuring for?” She jerked her head at the wandering tape which was drawing its length along her sternum.

“Oh a little of this and a little of that.” He chuckled at her bemused expression. “The arm and hand are practical measurements. I'll use that to determine your wand’s length. As for the rest of this…” He gestured to the floating tape measure, “I am measuring your magical limits.”

“Limits? Laura has a magical limitation?” Her dad looked away from the tape in shock.

“Yes, Mr. Hollis. As with every wizard or witch that is born into our world, each person has a limitation, or a natural talent towards a particular type of magic. Where one witch might be lacking in say charms work, she might have a natural talent for defensive magic. This too will help me determine which wand is the best tool to help channel your daughter’s magic.” The old wizard
chuckled to himself, “Then again, we don’t choose the wands for ourselves, really. But rather they choose us in the end, Miss Hollis.” He winked at her as if she knew this information, but she frowned slightly in confusion.

He eyed the young witch for another minute before he nodded to himself, seeming satisfied. “Right then, off you go.” He flicked his wand and the measuring tape disappeared out of thin air. He briefly left his patrons as he skimmed the shelves, muttering to himself as he pulled down a long box. Gently unwrapping the wand, he held out the handle to her. “This one should do it. Maple, dragon heart-string core, nine and a quarter inches, slightly springy, and good for Charms work.” She tentatively grasped the handle and had no sooner gripped the wood before it was plucked from her hand.

“No, that won’t do. Try this one instead. Walnut, unicorn hair, eight and three-fourths inches, nice and taunt. Excellent for Transfiguration work.” The hand of her wand seemed to vibrate briefly before white hot pain shot across her hand. “Ouch!” She held her hand and rubbed her blistered palm. The wand had burned her hand.

“Oh my, I haven’t had such a negative response from one of my wands in a long time. Let me see your hand, child.” Gently taking her injured hand into his own, he waved his wand over the wound. Within moments the blisters had receded and the burning pain had faded. “I do apologize for that wand’s behavior, after all it was no fault of your own.”

“So what, the wand chose to burn her?” Her dad had reacted violently when the wand had burned his daughter, knocking back the stool he had been sitting on.

“I’m afraid so. You see, Mr. Hollis, the wand chooses the wizard, or in this case the witch. Clearly the wand refused to be bonded with you.”

Laura cocked her head to the side at the term. “Bonded? What do you mean?”

Mr. Ollivander gently placed the offending wand back inside its case before answering her question. “The relationship one forms with their wand is very special. It is a special bond between the witch and the wand that is unique to their own pairing. Hmmm… I had been so sure about that one, here let try another one.”

Laura attempted to pair with several more wands with little to no results. She sighed in frustration before clearing her throat. “Mr. Ollivander, are there any two wands that are alike in your shop?”

“No, while I tend to use the same materials to build my wands, each wand has its own unique core, which in turn makes that wand unlike any other in existence. Unless of course, your wand has a shared core source.” He had gone back to rooming the shelves, pulling more boxes down and with a wave of his wand, they stacked up in front of Laura in a neat pile.

Laura’s inquisitive nature got the better of her, so she continued to talk while trying the various wands presented to her. “I’m sorry sir, but I still don’t understand. What’s a shared core source?”

“That’s quite alright, child. A shared core source means that it is the magical animal that gave up their core material might have donated more than one materials’ worth and thus coming from the same source this creates twin wands. Brother or sister wands, if you will. This tends to happen with some materials that are more common, such as unicorn hair, compared to say dragon heart-string, or even a phoenix feather. Research is still being conducted on how this relationship between cores affects the wizards or witches in questions, often making the pairs stronger or weaker together when dueling.”

Laura nodded slowly as she followed along to his speech. “So let me get this straight, to put it
plainly, the bond that you have with your wand is like that of a soulmate, which in turn can create a special relationship with another person if your wand has a shared core, correct?”

The old wizard blinked as he stared down the young witch in front of him, pausing as he took away yet another wand from her hand. “I’ve never heard of a wand’s bond described in such a poetic way, but essentially you are right.”

She huffed in frustration. “Well no wonder this is so hard for me, I need to have the perfect wand!”

Mr. Ollivander smiled down, much to her chagrin. “You need a wand that is perfect for you.” Without looking back for her response he walked down the dimly lit hallway before stopping in front of a lone box that was shelved a little way from the rest of the stock. He turned the box slowing in his hands, as if weighing it. “Yes, this could work. It would be quite the match…” Shaking himself slightly, the old wizard gently laid the dust covered blue box in front of his customer. Slowing unwrapping the inner cloth, Laura couldn’t help but gasp as he removed a beautifully carved wand, the handle inlaid with a shell-like material that shone like a rainbow in the dim light. Reaching out with a hesitant hand, she firmly grasped the intricately carved handle.

The wave of warmth and power that hit her felt like lightning as the magic from the wand spread throughout her body. Instinctively raising her wand above her head, several bright white sparks shot out of the tip of her wand and fell like shooting stars around her. Her dad clapped excitedly while Mr. Ollivander broke into a large smile. “Yes, that’s the one for you. Willow, phoenix tail feather core, nine and a half inches, flexible, with inlaid ammonite fossil imported from abroad for extra power. A great wand for the defensive arts.” Taking the wand back from her, he placed it back into its case, wrapping the wand with care. “It suits you. Although it is curious…yes, to have been sold so soon.” The old wizard continued to mutter to himself as he accepted the gold from Laura’s father.

Laura held the offered wrapped box with gentle hands before looking into Mr. Ollivander’s eyes. “Pardon me sir, but what’s curious?”

For a few seconds the wand maker stopped his movements as he considered her words. He hid a grimace at the shadow of recognition that flickered across his face as if haunted by her words.

“I would be most careful while at Hogwarts, Miss Hollis. You now posses a very powerful wand and many students might be drawn to that power. I should warn you, what is curious is that you posses that wand whereas I just sold its sister earlier this morning.”

Laura stroked the packaging with her thumb in thought. “You mean my wand shares the same core source with someone at school?”

The wand maker nodded slowly. “The phoenix that donated its feather for your wand only gave me one other feather. It should be said that phoenix feather cores are extremely rare and very powerful. And to share such power with another… It seems history is repeating itself.” He shook his head and waved off Laura’s questioning look. “Forgive me for being ominous, I have lived through difficult times and it has made me weary.”

Bowing slightly to the young witch and her father, the wand maker turned away from them as he shelved the other wand boxes back to their proper spots. He continued mutter to himself as they made their way to the door. “Curious indeed, and to be sold on the same day. Cleary this is a matter of fate.” He turns suddenly and called out to them, hesitating only slightly before addressing Laura again, her body already halfway outside the shop’s entrance. “Again I implore you to be careful, Miss Hollis. If you find yourself on the receiving end of your wand’s twin, you shall meet your match.”
Laura frowned slightly taking in his words before nodding. The bell attached to the door tinkled as
the door closed with a flourish. With a small wave of his wand, a sheet of parchment, quill, ink, and
sealing wax appeared before him, laying to rest on the warn desk. Mr. Ollivander took his time as he
wrote out his message before sealing the letter with a stamp bearing his shop’s emblem.

“Link, could you come here please.” His voice had barely dissipated before the room was filled by a
loud CRACK! An old house elf wearing a leather apron stamped with the shop’s emblem appeared
before him holding a stack of various wood lengths and smelling strongly of wood polish. His
squeaking voice cut through the air, “You called, sir?”

The wand maker smiled fondly at his assistant. He had grown quite fond of house elves after his
rescue from Malfoy Manor many years ago and was thankful for the elf’s help and company. “I’m
sorry to distract you from your task, but I was hoping you could deliver this letter for me.”

The elf bowed, holding his hand out for the letter in question. “Of course sir. Destination?”

Giving the sealed letter to his assistant he cleared his throat in answer, “Hogwarts. To the
Headmistress, please.”

Link glanced up from the letter. “Would you like me to tell her anything else, sir?”

“Yes.” Mr. Ollivander stared out the window where the young witch and her muggle father
wandered down the winding streets of Diagon Ally, continuing their shopping for the day. He
continued to watch her retreating form as she disappeared among the sea of witches and wizards
milling about the alleyway. “Tell her ‘they are coming’.”

Link bowed deeply before disappearing with a loud CRACK! The old wand maker’s eyes never left
the view from the window. His voice seemed to shake as he whispered into the now empty room,
“Good luck…”

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After their visit to Ollivanders, Laura and Sherman continued to buy the other required items on her
school supplies list; all save for a pet (which her father had deemed she wasn’t old enough for yet)
and her text books. After stopping at Fortescue’s Ice Cream Parlor for two chocolate dipped cones,
they found themselves entering the famed bookstore of Diagon Alley, Flourish & Blots.

“Wow! Look at all the books, Dad! Every spell in existence must be recorded somewhere between
these covers.” Laura’s face broke out into a toothy grin as she spun around in a small circle taking in
the atmosphere of the bustling room.

“It’s simply incredible isn’t it?” Her father reached out and laid a hand on her shoulder to halt her
movement. “Let me see your list again, will yah?” Reaching into the pocket of her khaki pants she
pulled out a multi-folded piece of parchment that had been given to her by the Headmistress as well
as her acceptance letter. “Hm… I’m sure if I ask for help these will be simple enough to find. Why
don’t you leave these books to me to find and you go and pick out one more as a belated birthday
gift.”

“Really?!” Laura spun around in excitement as she jumped into his arms gripping him in a tight hug.
“Thanks, Dad!” She gave him one last squeeze before she let go and ran to the nearest shelf to stare
at the mystical titles in question, her father’s shouts of caution far behind her.

She wandered around the book laden shop, pulling down various titles as she made her way up a
spiral staircase. The young witch slowed her ascent as the following book titles caught her as she ran
her fingers across their leather bound spines: *Ancient Magical Wonders of the World, 101 Curses and Jinxes for Your Enemies,* and *Transfigure Your Future: A Self-help Guide to Beginners’ Transfiguration.* Laura had just picked up a book that sounded promising, *Into Thin Air: Advanced Illusion Charms for the Inclined* by Thalia Natawati, when she noticed a young girl around her age that was leaning up against the wall with one leg braced against the stone.

She had dark brown hair that framed her pale face in waves, her bangs covering dark eyes that were utterly focused on the opened book in her hands. However it wasn’t her striking features that captured Laura’s attention, nor was it her dark muggle clothing complete with leather pants and matching leather arm band. No, it was the book itself that grasped the muggle-born’s attention for the girl was reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde.

She found herself drawn to the young girl and couldn’t help but speak her mind, “How could you be reading a muggle book in here?”

The girl looked up from her book and arched an eyebrow at Laura, clearly annoyed at the interruption.

“Sometimes it’s nice to have a change of pace.” Her voice was low with a slightly raspy drawl. “Besides I need to catch up on muggle literature.”

Laura nodded slightly at her answer, but she continued to approach the girl until they were only a few feet apart. She sighed heavily as she noticed the dark haired girl eyeing her warily at her approach. “I guess I just don’t understand why you would choose to ignore, well… all of this?” Using the book of charms she still held in her hand, she gestured to the walls of magical books, tomes, and scrolls that covered every surface inside the shop.

The girl shrugged before looking back down at her book, clearly intent on ignoring Laura. “I see nothing wrong with expanding my horizons. After all, the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown. Now leave me be, Cupcake.”

Laura crossed her arms and screwed up her face in frustration at the girl’s dismissal. “I should have taken you for an H. P. Lovecraft kind of girl.”

This caught the girl’s attention as she closed her book abruptly, her eyebrows raised in surprise. “You know his works?” She inquired softly.

Laura nodded sharply. The girl placed a bookmark in her book, before setting it aside and turning her attention entirely on her for the first time. “Well call me impressed, Cupcake.”

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“What did you call me?” Laura balled her fists in anger at the nickname.

The brooding girl rolled her eyes at Laura’s outburst. “Well you haven’t exactly introduced yourself yet, so I made do.” She gestured towards Laura’s necklace. Looking down at her chest, she realized that she was still wearing a small silver cupcake pendant with matching chain necklace. Her father had given it to her a year ago as a gift in honor of her sweet tooth. With all the excitement from today, she had forgotten she had chosen to wear it.

Sighing in acceptance, Laura reluctantly grinned at her companion before sticking out her hand in greeting. “My name’s Laura, by the way. Laura Hollis.” The dark haired girl popped an eyebrow at the gesture before hesitantly reaching out and shaking her hand. “Carmilla Karnstein.”

Laura was pleasantly surprised by how warm her hand was in her own. For the first time since they met, Laura smiled at her new found companion, who after a heartbeat of hesitation, smiled back at
her in turn.

“Laura, sweetie! It’s time to go!” Both girls jumped apart at the sound of Sherman’s call from several floors below. Laura rubbed the back of her neck while attempting to avoid Carmilla’s gaze. “I-I gotta get going. I guess I’ll see you around then.” Carmilla smirked at her flustered performance. “Yeah, I’ll see you around, Cupcake.” Laura rolled her eyes at the nickname before she descended the staircase taking her book of charms with her.

Carmilla leaned against the railing of the balcony overlooking the patrons milling around below her. Her dark brown eyes followed the small form of Laura as she joined a balding middle aged man that could only be the girl’s father. Carmilla couldn’t help but smile as she watched the pair make their way to the front of the store, their arms heavy laden with new text books.

“My, my, my… What do we have here? Carmilla darling, who is the object of your affections today?”

She turned to greet the beautiful tall dark skinned teenager who joined her at the balcony’s railing. “Mattie, I thought you were with Mother and Will?”

“I don’t share Maman’s taste in the more… grotesque wares at Borgin and Burkes. I prefer keeping to this side of Diagon Alley.” Mattie shrugged as she followed Carmilla’s gaze and landed on Laura and her father as they paid for their books. Mattie nodded down at the crowd below. “Who is she?”

Carmilla shrugged and turned away from the scene below her. “Her name is Laura Hollis.”

“Hollis… I don’t recognize that name. Is she a muggle-born?” Mattie turned to look at her adoptive sister, raising a perfectly shaped eyebrow in question. Carmilla shrugged again and grunted slightly. “Must be, I don’t recognize the name either.”

Mattie smirked as she gestured back at the small blonde who had just left the shop chatting animatedly to her trailing father. “And what is she to you?”

Carmilla sighed as she glanced back at the building’s entrance before shaking head. “I don’t know, but I’m tempted to find out.”

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When Laura walked into the Great Hall for the first time, she forgot to breathe as she took in the purely magical scene that greeted her. Four long tables filled with students clearly separated by their houses based of the colors of their robes, were placed in front of the main table where the staff was seated. Centered directly in front of this table was a small three-legged wooden stool bearing an old and frayed pointed wizard’s hat. A warm-hearted woman with a cheery smile and a gentle wave, whom had introduced herself to the first years as Professor Sprout, beckoned the black robed students to the front of the room. Producing a long scroll from the sleeve of deep green robes, she cleared her throat before addressing the hall.

“As I call your name, please come forward and you will be sorted into your houses.” A hush fell upon the hall. “Abernathy, Charles.” Laura watched in fascination as a small boy stumbled his way to foot of the stool. She hadn’t been able to learn what sort of test they would have to take in order to be sorted into their respective houses, although Professor Sprout had assured them all that it wouldn’t hurt them. Watching as the hat suddenly opened a large rip in the brim that formed a mouth that shouted, “Hufflepuff!” Seeing the boy walk away from the talking hat unfazed seemed to reassure the young girl and as more of her class mates were sorted into their respective houses, her nerves were slowly replaced with growing excitement.
Glancing around at the various students sitting at the house tables she determined that the so called Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, and Hufflepuff tables seemed welcoming. Laura could see some of the people she had sat with on the train were already seated at their respective houses; Perry at the Hufflepuff table and Danny, catching her eye, waved from the Gryffindor table. Laura leaned over to the two other first years whom had joined her on the train and whispered, “Where do you think you’ll be sorted?” The nearest one, whom Laura only knew by their last name as LaFontaine shrugged before replying in a slightly monotone whisper, “Not sure, to be honest. Gryffindor would be cool, but Ravenclaw has its appeal. What do you say, J.P.?!” The dark haired boy smiled, “My hopes are set on Ravenclaw, but I’m not sure if we get a choice in the matter.” The ginger nodded in response. “Anywhere is better than Slytherin.” They nodded to the students dressed in black robes with green trim, and after taking in their annoyed demeanor, Laura had to agree with them that they looked like a particularly nasty sort. Keeping the pretense of watching the sorting, Laura turned to both of them and whispered, “Come on, they can’t all be bad. Surely some of them must be genuinely nice.” LaFontaine snorted in disbelief. “Whatever you say, Hollis.”

When ‘Armitage, James’ was called on, J.P. gave them a nervous smile before walking up to the stool and placing the hat firmly on his head after sitting down. No sooner had the hat touched his hair was, “Ravenclaw!” shouted out of the hat’s brim. Laura and LaFontaine clapped for him as he joined his new housemates, happy that he was placed in his first choice house. After several more students were sorted then Laura’s name was announced. Taking a deep breath to shake her nerves, she walked up to the front of the Great Hall. Giving her an encouraging smile, Professor Sprout lowered the hat onto her head as soon as she was firmly seated on the stool.

Laura couldn’t help but jump at the unexpected voice that entered her ear, for the hat was talking to her.

‘Hmmm…What do we have here? There’s courage and bravery in you, that’s very clear. You seem to have quite the adventurous spirit and often leading the charge. Yes, that tends to get you into trouble. Let’s see, although you are immensely loyal and hardworking, you are head strong and prideful…Hmm… While rather well rounded, at your core you must always do what is right. And with that, the choice is clear.’ “Gryffindor!”

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When Laura’s name had been called from the scroll, Carmilla couldn’t help but sigh as she watched the little ball of sunshine dash across the room once the sorting hat had placed her in Gryffindor. The dark haired girl shifted from foot-to-foot as she waited for her own name to be called. “Come on, come on…” She muttered under her breath as she impatiently waited for her name to be announced. At this point she was just delaying the inevitable. Every member of her adoptive family was a member of the Slytherin house, and while Carmilla was unsure of which houses the members of her direct bloodline were placed in, the witch knew she was a pureblood; ‘Otherwise…; she scoffed, ‘mother would have never had adopted me’, she thought with bitterness.

Her impatience was short lived. After a few tense minutes of waiting, she heard her name being called. She strode with her head held high to the front of the room and sat down on the three-legged stool to face the house tables. Carmilla glanced over at the Slytherin table just in time to catch the eye of Mattie, who winked back at her before the large brim of the hat blocked her view. Unlike Laura whom had been startled by the voice that whispered in her ears, Carmilla had been forewarned by Mattie of what to expect as the hat began to assess her mind and weigh her soul.
'My, my… it has been a long time since I’ve sorted a Karnstein… Let’s see here, you’re wise beyond your years and you possess an old soul. Your stubbornness and pride shall make you enemies… Your heart is brave and you love with a passion that burns not only yourself but those around you… Your willingness to do what must be done will set you apart from your classmates… This will make your peers fear and distrust you… Yet there is good inside you, and you strive to prove them wrong… You are quite the conundrum, Miss Karnstein…’ Had Carmilla been focusing on her surroundings she would have noticed that her sorting was passing by the five minute mark. Muttering broke out among the other students once they realized that they were witnessing an event that was rather rare in Hogwarts’ history: a hat-stall. The sorting hat continued with their examination of her character.

‘You are loyal only to those you deem worthy, but you are not unkind. However, your ambition to prove yourself is unparalleled… I can sense your fear Carmilla, for you know which house I wish to place you in. You would do well in Slytherin… However, if it is your wish I can place you elsewhere.’ Carmilla straightened in her chair as she realized that she was being offered a choice for a different path than the rest of her adoptive family. This was her chance at freedom. And yet… There was something that stopped her from making such a request. She had heard from her sister over the last six years how she faced opposition and hardship simply because she was a Slytherin. The hat spoke to her once again, ‘The choice is yours in the end. But remember that your house does not define who you are. Rather it is your actions that define your house. What is your answer?’ Carmilla remained silent as she reminded herself that to be a Slytherin did not mean that she would be a force for darkness. The hat was right; her house status would not control her actions, nor her destiny. It had seen her soul and weighed her heart true. She whispered back to the old ratted hat, her voice soft but unwavering, “I accept.” She felt the hat nod in return before its voice echoed throughout the hall, “Slytherin!”

“Welcome to the family sis.” Her brother’s voice was laced with sarcasm as she sat down across from him. Turning away from his snide remark, Carmilla allowed her sister to pull her into a rare, but fierce hug. “I’m so proud of you, Carmilla.” She whispered in her sibling’s ear. When Carmilla pulled away from Mattie, she had to smirk down at her robes that had changed to dark green. She eyed the Hogwarts crest that shifted into the silver serpent with juxtaposed feelings of trepidation and pride. Carmilla hoped she had chosen well.

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It was the end of their first week of classes, with only the first years’ flying lessons taking place within the hour. Laura’s knee was bouncing up and down as she ate her toast at breakfast, waiting for the meal to finish before they could head outside towards the opened courtyard. “Hollis you need to relax, you’re making the whole bench move.” LaFontaine groaned in annoyance as they sat down next to her and pulled the plate of bacon closer.

“Leave her alone, Laf. You know she’s been talking about flying lessons all week.” Perry sat down across from her friends as she took out her charms homework and poured herself a goblet of pumpkin juice. She was joined a few moments later by Danny and J.P. who took up the remainder of the bench space. Laura had been shocked to find Perry and J.P. sitting at the Gryffindor table the next morning after the welcoming feast. It was soon explained to her by a prefect that after the Battle for Hogwarts well over a decade ago, students were allowed to sit among each other’s house tables except during formal events. And thus for the last week her friends had joined her and the other Gryffindors at the same table.

“Speaking of which, which house are you sharing the lesson with?” Perry asked as she glanced up from her textbook.

Laf pulled out their schedule and swore. “Shit, we’re with the Slytherins. And I was looking forward
to attempting to fly without looking like an ass in front of a patronizing audience.”

Perry rolled her eyes. “I’m sure you’ll be fine.” A thundering sound filled the air as hundreds of owls flew through the windows and landed along the long tables. “Looks like the mail is here. I should have the paper delivered today.” Sure enough a large tawny owl swooped down and placed a rolled up newspaper next to her plate. Turing back to her toast and eggs, Laura listened to her friend as Perry read out the latest news from the wizarding newspaper, *The Daily Prophet*. She therefore jumped as a barn owl gracefully landed in front of her producing a small parcel and a letter. Saying a quick thank you to the owl, she tore open the letter and couldn’t help the grin that appeared on her face. Laf raised an eyebrow at her friend’s enthusiasm. “What did you get, Hollis?”

She placed the letter down and pulled the parcel closer to her, undoing the string that held the packaging together. “It’s a letter from my Dad. I wrote to him a few days ago about the sorting and my classes. He said he made this for me in his workshop when he heard the news.” Quickly opening the wrapping, her grin widened as she removed a beautifully worked leather wand sheath. The oiled deep brown material was expertly cut and tooled with an inlaid gold Gryffindor seal. It was styled after a sword’s sheath holder, whereas this sheath had matching two leather straps and golden fastenings that would attach to her belt, keeping her wand at the best angle to reach during a duel. It was beautiful craftsmanship, she would have known that her father spent the last week making her the sheath and would have probably visited Diagon Alley again to get the details of the house crest just right. Not caring that she was in the middle of the Great Hall, she quickly stood up and whipped off her belt so that she could properly attach the leather straps. She hesitated only slightly when she recognized the drawling voice that approached her from behind.

“What do you know, breakfast and a show?” Laura turned so that she was directly facing the brooding form of Carmilla as she smirked, her eyes straying to the belt in her hands. “Normally you let a girl take you out on a date first before you strip for them, Cupcake.” Laura blushed as Carmilla brushed past the flustered girl, throwing her a wink as she disappeared into the corridor.

Laf’s eyebrows shot up as she watched the dark haired girl disappear out into the corridor. “Hollis, how do you know Karnstein?” The ginger asked just as Danny asked, “Cupcake? Care to explain that?” Laura finished putting her now belted sheath on as she sighed and waved after the young Slytherin. “Oh, Carmilla? We met by accident in Diagon Alley. As for the nickname, just ignore it. It’s a long story anyway.” She avoided their eyes as she slid her wand into its polished leather home, her hand dropping to rest on the gilded sheath placed on her left side of her hip. She made a mental note to send back one of the school’s owls with a thank you note for her father.

“She’s in most of your classes isn’t she?” Perry asked, returning her book into her bag. “After all, don’t you guys have most of your classes with the Slytherins?” Laf groaned. “Unfortunately. Including this next one. Come on, Hollis, let’s get this over with.”

Together the pair packed up their things and headed towards the open courtyard to meet with the other Gryffindor first years. Their instructor, an older witch with short spiky grey hair named Madam Hooch, forced the students to form two lines facing each other as they stood next to their allotted school-own broomsticks. Laf and Laura quickly paired up with each other, with Carmilla and a particularly unpleasant looking Slytherin standing directly to Laura’s right. After being instructed in the basics of flying technique, everyone was surprised when at the first shout of, “Up!” Laura’s broom zoomed up to her waiting hand right away. A few calls later and Carmilla’s broom followed suit along with a very shocked LaFontaine. Their lesson consisted of hovering in mid air, proper technique and grip, and once they were all in the air, leaning to control their flight trajectory.

It was clear after only an hour of the lesson, Laura was a natural. She possessed a grace and precision as she flew through the sky that left the Gryffindors in awe and the Slytherins in envy.
Carmilla’s partner sneered at the muggle-born whom was zipping around the sky, while the majority of their classmates had returned to the earth. Madam Hooch had pulled aside some of the more struggling students for more instruction several yards away.

“Well would you look at that, kitty? The tiny blondie is showing off.” The boy’s comments made a few of the Slytherins turn their attention on him, while Laf and the other Gryffindors were still focusing on their talented peer. Carmilla locked her jaw. “Shut up, Will. You’re just jealous that she’s a better flyer than you.” The dark haired boy laughed. “Jealous? I don’t think so. What do you think, boys, should we teach this girl a lesson about showing off?” He grinned at his friends in malice before lazily pulling out his wand and pointing it at Laura’s direction. The moment he started muttering to himself, Laura’s broom started vibrating before skyrocketing farther into the air. It was like the broom had a mind of its own as the broom buckled and rolled in the air, Laura gripping the wooden shaft for dear life. Laf ran to get Madam Hooch’s attention while the rest of the students crowed around to watch the spectacle. Reaching for her own wand she pointed it straight at her adoptive brother, her face contorted in pure anger. “Let her go, Will!”

The boy laughed, his wand still pointed in the air, before turning to look at her. “What are you going to do about it, kitty? You can’t even perform a basic shield charm to stop me. You should have listened to mother better on dueling.”

She ground her teeth in fury, before pointing her wand at Laura’s rampaging broom. “I might not be good at the defensive arts, but mother did teach me the same curses as you. Which means, I can stop you.” Concentrating on Laura’s flailing form, she hurriedly muttered the counter-curse as a means to control the broomstick. After a few seconds the broom had begun to steady, although it was hard for Laura to hold on.

“What is the meaning of all this?!” Madam Hooch had run back to the horrific scene of the two Slytherins with their wands pointed at Laura. “Her broom’s been cursed, professor!” A Gryffindor shouted as she pointed at the Will who was still cursing Laura’s broomstick and Carmilla who was too focused on the counter-curse to notice the intrusion. Eyeing the two Slytherins with their wands pointed at Laura, LaFontaine broke into a run and shoulder checked Will to the ground, which consequently forced Carmilla to fall and be trampled by both their forms. However, even with the curse broken Laura had been buckled off her broom and fell three stories to the ground with a sickening CRACK!

“Oh my Lord, get out of my way!” Madam Hooch roared as she pushed back the group of students to reach an unmoving Laura, Laf crouching down next to her injured friend. Madam Hooch checked her pulse and waved her wand over Laura’s unconscious form. “She’s alive, just knocked out. She has several cracked ribs, a broken arm, and a possible concussion. I’ll let Madam Pomfrey know that we are coming.” Pointing her wand towards the inner castle walls, a silver streak of light in the form of a falcon flew past the courtyard and deeper into the castle.

Turning her wand at the two Slytherins, her voice shook from rage. “And you two will wait right here while I take her to the hospital wing, before I march you straight to the Headmistress’ office. In all my years at Hogwarts… Never have I seen such a disgusting display of violence towards another student. The rest of the class is dismissed. LaFontaine, if you will follow me please.” With a wave of her wand, Laura’s body floated in midair as she was ushered by the two witches into the castle, leaving a trail of students behind them.

Immediately Carmilla rounded on her brother. “How dare you, William! You almost killed her!” Her eyes burned with barley suppressed fury. A group of Hufflepuff second years had entered the courtyard and were making their way over to the arguing Slytherins.
Ignoring their growing audience, Will laughed and waved off her anger. “Kitty, it was all in good fun.”

Carmilla gripped her wand tightly. “That was entirely uncalled for. What would Mother say?”

Will scoffed before twirling his wand between his fingers. “Simply, that I need to work on my technique.”

Carmilla bristled in anger. “Laura could have died!” One of the Hufflepuffs stepped forward and raised his hands in protest. He spoke in a soothing voice that did little to lessen the tension between the siblings. “Now let’s have everyone calm down. Dude, you need to take a step back, and you too, scary hottie, I need you to lower your wand until the Profesh’ gets back.” Another Hufflepuff stepped up and laid a hand on his arm in vain. “Stay out of this Kirsch.” He shrugged his friend’s hand off his shoulder and took another step closer to the Slytherins. “No can do, bro. We can’t have these first years breaking out in a duel. Too many people nearby. Someone could get hurt. Now put your wands away.”

Ignoring the interruption Will stepped forward, his wand rising to meet Carmilla’s stance. “So what? Have you gone soft for a mudblood?”

Kirsch shouted. “Whoa, dude! Uncool.” Right as Carmilla lunged at Will, her wand slashing through the air in a red streak of light. Will ducked and blasted the spell back with a shout of “Protego!” Carmilla jumped to the side to avoid her own rebounded spell. Before she could raise her own wand, Will had cast another spell, “Mortem spiritus!” and a streak of purple light shot at her shocked form. She dove to the side just as the spell hit the grass with the sound like a gun shot. She raised her wand and shouted “Relashio!” just as Will shouted “Segmentum!” Before the streaks of light could collide, the Hufflepuff pushed himself between them and shouted “Protego!” The spells collided with his shield spell with so much force that it physically threw back the two dueling Slytherins. Kirsch lowered his wand just as Madam Hooch ran back to their side of the courtyard.

“She leave you for less than three minutes and you break out in a duel on top of cursing a fellow classmate!?? With me, you two now!?” Without further debate she ushered the glaring Slytherins into the castle and down the long stone walls. They walked briskly, but quietly with only their footsteps echoing off the walls following their wake. Within minutes they reached a gargoyle of a griffin in which Madam Hooch simply said, “Lemon Drop”. At these words, the gargoyle rotated forming a spiraling stone staircase that lead to a large wooden door. Knocking briefly, they were answered by a slightly muffled, “Enter!” as all three people walked into the Headmistress’ office.

“Madam Hooch? This is unexpected.” The short hair witch approached an older woman with her grey hair pulled back in a tight bun, her deep green robes contrasting with the large dark desk separating them. “Headmistress, I apologize for the interruption, but there is something that needs your attention. These students cursed one of the Gryffindor first years during our lesson while she was still in the air.”

The Headmistress leaned forward in her chair, her glasses reflecting in the light of the candles that lit the room. “This student, Rolanda, was she injured?”

The flying instructor nodded. “A few cracked ribs, a broken arm, and a mild concussion. We were lucky it wasn’t fatal. She fell from at least three stories in the air. And then, when I left these two to get Miss Hollis to the hospital wing, I found them in the middle of a duel.”

“You say this student was cursed?” Madam Hooch nodded. “Her broom, yes. I saw what they did to her…” She lowered her voice, but Carmilla could still make out what was being whispered to the Headmistress. “It was dark magic, Minerva.” The older witch frowned as she stared at her students.
Carmilla cleared her throat to catch their attention and crossed her arms. “For the record, I did not curse Hollis. I was trying to stop my idiot of a brother here, before the ginger tackled us.” She glared at Will. “Professor McGonagall, please understand. He could have killed her and then he called her a mudblood.”

The Headmistress narrowed her eyes before she spoke. “That being said, there was no need for you to interfere. You should have allowed Madam Hooch to take care of the situation.” Carmilla scoffed in indignation. “I should expel you both for endangering a student. However, since Miss Hollis will make a full recovery, I will be more lenient. Consider this your first warning and you will both receive a month’s worth of detention with me. No more dueling while at Hogwarts and if I catch either one of you risking the life of another one of my student’s again, I will have you expelled. Do I make myself clear?”

“Crystal.” Carmilla bristled in anger, not at her words, but rather at her brother for getting her involved. Will echoed her statement, smirking at his sister’s fury.

McGonagall nodded and ushered them towards the door with a wave of her hand. “That is all, you may go. Miss Karnstein, a word, if you will.” Carmilla relaxed her posture as her brother and instructor left the round office. “Please sit.” McGonagall gestured to the lone wooden chair that was placed in front of her desk. Carmilla sat down and glanced around the office, taking in the décor for the first time since she had entered. The walls were lined with bookshelves and cabinets, and were covered with portraits of past Headmasters, all of whom were sleeping in their frames.

McGonagall leaned on the desk as she spoke, her voice calm. “Miss Karnstein, I have a few questions for you before you are dismissed. I ask that you please answer them honestly and to the best of your ability.” After a short pause, Carmilla nodded. “Good. Now from what Madam Hooch has told me, your brother was performing a curse on Miss Hollis’ broomstick and you were performing a counter-curse, is this correct?” Carmilla nodded. “Yes, Professor.”

“Hmm… I see.” McGonagall laced her fingers together in front of her in thought. “You must understand our worry, Miss Karnstein. No first year should have been able to place a curse on a broomstick, let alone perform a successful counter-curse. Madam Hooch was correct, this was very powerful, and very dark magic indeed.” She paused as she stared at the young witch that sat before her. “Is there anything you wish to tell me…? Anything at all?”

Carmilla forced her face to appear relaxed as she tried not to flinch at the memories that flooded through her mind. Her mother forcing her and her siblings to force magic out of them before they had even acquired a wand. How her mother once locked her in the cellar for extended periods of time for disobeying her orders, with only Mattie sneaking her food and water to ensure her survival. How she had spent the remainder of the last summer being taught spells long into the night, alongside her brother and sister. Or the screams that echoed off the walls late in the night while Carmilla and her siblings slept. Mattie clinging to her small frame when they realized that their house wasn’t haunted, but they could never find the person pain, and thus questioned their own sanity.

Carmilla closed her eyes and took a deep breath, before forcing herself to stare back into the older woman’s eyes. “No Professor, nothing at all.” McGonagall’s gaze seemed to bore into her own. Carmilla had the distinct sensation of being x-rayed. The Headmistress sighed. “Very well, Miss Karnstein. You may go.”

With a brief nod in farewell, Carmilla walked across the office and closed the large oak door behind her. McGonagall sighed deeply and rubbed her face with her palms as she considered the events that had unfolded. She had an unnerving feeling that something of importance had just transpired in her office. The sound of a cleared throat caught her attention. “Yes, Albus?”
The portrait of Albus Dumbledore hung directly above her desk. She gave a small smile to her old friend’s likeness that had watched the whole affair. “History is repeating itself, Minerva. Surely you noticed this too?”

McGonagall sighed deeply and seemed to age by ten years as she sat further in her chair. “She is just a child, Albus.” Her voice was soft as she pleaded with the portrait.

“So was Tom Riddle once.”

“Consider me old fashioned, Albus. But I will always try to believe in the good in people.”

Albus smiled sadly down at his old friend. “You are not old fashioned, Minerva. Merely, kind and hopeful. As for these events, the question is, can we interfere? And if so, will it be enough?”

McGonagall frowned. “Albus, we do not even know if the prophecy will come true.”

“Be that as it may, we must do all that we can to ensure for the best outcome. Keep an eye out for them, Minerva?” McGonagall nodded, her brow furled and lips pressed tight in determination. “Of course, Albus.”

Carmilla spent the rest of the day avoiding her fellow classmates by hiding in the library. Word had spread among the Slytherins about the duel between the siblings, and most of the house either sided with Will or chose to ignore the situation entirely. Unfortunately, that also meant avoiding Carmilla too. Not that she had made any friends within her own house; she could never really bring herself to care enough to attempt such a relationship. She had hoped of maybe striking up a companionship with the Hollis girl, or rather an acquaintanceship at the very least. However, after the events of today it had seemed that such an opportunity was gone forever.

After Professor McGonagall had released her from her office, Carmilla had hurried to the hospital wing. Laura’s limp body haunted her thoughts the entire time she was ushered into McGonagall’s office. Carmilla frowned as she thought back to the reason she had started her duel from earlier. They were not even friends, just two people whom had a brief conversation nearly a month before and now shared these hallowed halls and crowded classrooms. But when her brother had called Laura that…name… She had seen only red. The brooding Slytherin told herself that she was just going to check and make sure that Laura was ok and then leave for a quiet dinner back in the Great Hall. And thus she had walked with purpose to the large double doors only to be barred from entry by the ginger giant, buzz cut ginger, Raggedy Anne, and the William look-a-like. She really couldn’t be bothered by their names, but she had to smirk at the collection of gingers Hollis had obtained as “friends”.

“Move, now.” Carmilla crossed her arms as Laura’s friends blocked the entryway.

“Make me.” The buzz cut ginger stepped forward so they were eye-level, drawing their wand with a flourish. Carmilla just raised an eyebrow at the display of protectiveness. “Don’t get your panties in a twist; I just want to speak with Hollis.”

“Hell no!” The tallest ginger moved so that she too block Carmilla’s direct path, her wand already pointed straight at Carmilla’s chest. “Laf saw what did you Laura, how do we know you aren’t going to finish her off?”

Carmilla huffed in frustration as she rubbed her temples with her right hand, looking away from the Cupcake fan club. “Why would I hurt Hollis? She’s the only person in this school besides my sister
who doesn’t hate me. Listen, I really don’t have time for this. Just move aside and give me five minutes with her to explain.”

The last ginger grabbed the two others by the wrists and tried (with little success) to force them to lower their wands. “Guys, maybe we should just let her in. We could keep an eye on her, just in case.”

The Slytherin gave the Raggedy Anne Hufflepuff, ‘What was her name again, Perry?’ a nod of gratitude. But she turned to look at the gingers whom still blocked her path. “I would prefer to see her alone. But I can make do. Now move aside.”

The two Gryffindors glanced at each other and then reacted in two very different ways. Laf had lowered their wand, while the tall ginger raised her wand until it was only inches from Carmilla’s chest. “I’m sorry, but I still can’t let you do that. I don’t trust you.”

Carmilla’s calm demeanor broke as she sneered at the girl before her. “I get it. Who would ever trust a Slytherin, one whom you all saw curse your friend with their brother, no less?” I’ll see you around, Zena.” With a quick turn on her heel, Carmilla briskly walked away from the hospital wing. She had forgone dinner in her hast and her stomach growled in protest as she stared at the opened transfiguration book that lay before her in a dark corner of the library.

“Looks like someone is hungry. I noticed you skipped dinner, so I brought you something.” Carmilla gratefully accepted the napkin wrapped ham and cheese sandwich offered to her by the tall dark girl who sat down across the small desk from her. “Thanks, Mattie.”

“What’s on your mind, darling. Clearly you are hiding from something, or perhaps, someone?” Mattie smirked as she watched her little sister groan and lay her head on the desk in frustration. Mattie’s smirk widened into a full smile as she raised a perfectly shaped eyebrow at her sister’s behavior. “Is it that girl again? I heard that you had dueled with William over the Hollis girl.”

Carmilla groaned in annoyance. “That idiot cursed her broom and tried to kill her. I was performing the counter-curse when I was interrupted by one of her friends. Laura got hurt.” Carmilla shrugged in defeat. “I went to see her and her friends wouldn’t let me through the door.”

Mattie patted her sister’s back in exaggerated pity. “So what’s stopping you from going now? Besides, a little birdie told me that she’s staying the night in the hospital wing.”

Carmilla looked up from the desk in disbelief. “Go, as in right now? Mattie, it’s in the middle of the night. I should be going to bed. Besides, I can’t go into the hospital wing after hours.”

“Do you really want to see her, or are you planning on sulking around here all night?” Mattie gestured to the walls of books that surround the two witches. Carmilla scowled at her older sister. “I do not sulk.”

“Of course not… you only brood.” Mattie laughed at her sister’s scowl. “Now go, I’ll help cover for you.”

Carmilla placed her head on her hand in thought. “Fine, I’ll go.”

The older Slytherin clasped her hands together in excitement. “Right then, stand up and let’s get this over with.” When Carmilla stood in front of Mattie the older girl tapped her wand on her head. A feeling like an egg broke over her head and when she looked down at her body it matched her surroundings like magical camouflage. She grinned as she held up her unnoticeable hands in front of her face. “Now that’s a neat trick.”
Mattie reached out and gave her sister a hug, before reaching out to cup her face with a delicate hand. “I don’t know what this girl means to you, but I know she’s special. Go to her, darling.”

Fifteen minutes later, Carmilla found herself silently slipping through the double doors of the hospital wing. By moving slowly and hugging the walls, she moved around no more visible than a dark shadow. She made her way to the lone occupied bed, and leaned against the wall as she watched the steady rise and fall of Laura’s chest. She looked peaceful with the moonlight bringing out the sun kissed highlights in her blonde hair.

“I’m so sorry, Cupcake.” Carmilla fought the overwhelming urge to tuck a loose lock of hair behind the sleeping girl’s ear. She knew that she should leave before the illusion charm dissipated, but she couldn’t help but stay, the sight of the peaceful girl calmed the Slytherin. She knew that she risked discovery if she stayed, as the illusion charm had long since faded, but instead of leaving she sat on the nearby windowsill and watched the stars as the hours slipped away into the night. After several hours slipped by Carmilla glanced back at the sleeping girl one more time, before slipping out the hall. However, her departure was not unnoticed as Madam Pomfrey smiled as she watched Carmilla’s retreating form disappear into the night.
Hello everyone, I already have this chapter written out and ready to go so I figured I would post this now. A little clarification on the character LaFontaine, I decided to have their character use the they/them pronouns from the beginning of the story even though we shall assume that Laf choose this identity relatively soon before we are introduced to their character in the original web series (since Perry, their best friend, still struggles with the name/identity change). Instead of having Laf go through an identity crisis towards the later part of this series as they got older, I chose to have Laf identify as non-binary from the moment we are introduced to their character. I hope I do not offend anyone (that was never my intention), but rather since this identity is so crucial to making LaFontaine as authentic of a character as possible (as I know them to be from the web series, at least), I couldn't imagine writing them any other way. Enough of my long winded rant about identity... I hope you enjoy this next installment. Please feel free to leave me a comment with your thoughts. I always love hearing from my readers. Enjoy!

“This is utter bullsh-…bull-…Bolshevik!” Laura shouted in exasperation as the rat she was supposed to be turning into a tea cup scampered off her desk after being engulfed in a flash of light and blue smoke.

“Bolshevik? Really Hollis, is that the best you could come up with? I would think a proper swear word is acceptable. After all, you’ve been trying to get this spell to work for the last hour.” LaFontaine smirked as they waved their wand at their own rat that shifted into a cup-shaped object. “Shit, mine still has fur, whiskers, and a tail.”

Laura sighed and laid her head down on the table in frustration. “At least yours is changing shape. I never get any results in this class.”

Laf shrugged. “I can’t help that you suck at Transfiguration. How you passed the exam last year is beyond me.”

Laura picked her head up from the table to glance over at her desk partner. “We both know that the only reason I passed Transfiguration last year was because Danny tutored me through the exam prep.”

Laf place their wand down as they gave their friend a skeptical look. “Tutored…. Right…”

Laura huffed in frustration. “Laf, what exactly do you mean by that?”

“Nothing, Hollis. It’s just you two seem really chummy to me.” Laf shrugged, before gesturing their wand at the furry cup before them. With a flash of white light, the fur and whiskers disappeared forming a battered old tea cup. “Damn! I can’t get rid of that stupid tail.”

“Where did that rat go?” Laura glanced around the room for her missing rodent. “Besides, Danny and I are just friends. She wanted to help me study and I am not going to turn down an offer like that.”
Laf scoffed. “Well, as long as that’s the only thing she’s offering you.”

Laura stared at her friend in confusion. “What else would Danny be offering me?”

LaFontaine laughed at the blonde’s naïveté as a strict voice cut into their conversation. “Hollis! LaFontaine! I urge you to do less talking and more wand waving. After all, your classmates are having more progress than you two. Look at Miss Karnstein, she’s already perfected the technique and she can change the tea cup’s pattern at will.”

Both Gryffindors snapped to attention in their seats as Professor McGonagall stared at them over her wired rimmed spectacles before gesturing to a nearby table. Following her movement with their eyes, Laura heard Laf groan as they watched the Slytherin wave her wand. With a flash of white light, the small rat had turned into a beautiful ornate tea cup with a color coordinated floral design. Both Gryffindors scowled as Carmilla caught them staring and winked in their direction.

Laura growled in frustration. “I hate her.” Laf nodded and patted her on the back in reassurance. “You and me both, Hollis.” Their attention was drawn back as McGonagall cleared her throat.

“While I am sure you both have your reasons, I suggest you go back to the lesson at hand. After all, you both could learn a thing or two from Miss Karnstein.” An amused smile graced her lips, as both students shamelessly scowled at her suggestion. “I believe you are forgetting something, Miss Hollis.” With a graceful wave of her wand, Laura’s rat flew through the air and landed on the desk before her. “Now back to work you two.” Nodding to them, McGonagall continued to roam around the room to evaluate her other students, leaving the Gryffindors to their own devices.

Laura sighed as she waved her wand at her rat with flourish; the white light that shot out of her wand momentarily blinded the two Gryffindors. The rat retained its shape, while its fur had changed to be pale blue. “It’s hopeless! I’ll never get it right.”

“Only you could fail so miserably at Transfiguration.” Laf laughed as Laura’s rat began to run in circles around the desk in a blue blur. Laura’s head whipped around at the sound of laughter from across the room. Carmilla was twirling her wand between her pale slender fingers as she watched Laura’s attempt at Transfiguration remain animal in its existence. The Slytherin continued to smirk in their direction as Laura scowled in response to the unwanted attention. Laf grabbed Laura’s arm to turn her attention away from Carmilla. “Relax, Hollis.”

Laura sighed deeply. “I’m trying. It’s just she makes me so mad. As if all that crap she pulled last year wasn’t bad enough, but having to share almost every class with her is infuriating.” She mimicked strangling the Slytherin from across the room, which only prompted Carmilla to laugh more at the blonde’s frustration. Laura felt heat creep up her neck as she turned away from the dark eyes that followed her moment.

Laf nodded in understanding. “Well if it helps, you are ten times better than her in Defense Against the Dark Arts. Not to mention you can fly in circles around her, literally. She’s a good flyer, but you’re a natural on a broomstick, Hollis.”

“Thanks Laf, and speaking of flying, quidditch tryouts are at the end of the week and I’m think of trying out for the team.”

“That’s awesome! What position are you going for?”

Laura smiled at her friend’s enthusiasm. “Seeker. According to Danny, the position just opened up.”

Laf gripped her shoulder and squeezed it in assurance. “Go for it, Hollis! You have the build for it.
Plus you are wicked fast on a broom. They’d be mental not to take you.”

“Thanks Laf, but please try to keep this between us for now. I don’t want anyone to know until after tryouts, just in case I don’t get the position.”

“Alright, Hollis. Your secret’s safe with me.” And with that, the ginger waved their wand at their rat. With a flash of white and a yelp in triumph from the caster, a ceramic white tea cup had materialized before them. Invigorated by her friend’s success, Laura waved her wand while announcing the spell as clearly as she could. LaFontaine laughed at Laura’s cry of indignation as her rat was blasted into the air and fell sprawled onto their shared wooden desk. The shaking rodent’s fur had turned bright orange.

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It was Saturday evening when Perry and LaFontaine’s quiet dinner had been interrupted by a frantically running Laura, who practically threw herself down on the bench as she jumped her friends in group hug. “I got it! Laf, Perry! I got the position. I’m the new seeker!”

“Way to go, Hollis! I never doubted you.” Laf slapped the smaller girl’s back excitedly.

“This is clearly a cause for celebration.” Perry pressed the plate of chocolate chip cookies closer to the blonde, whom immediately shoved a cookie into her mouth. “A second year on the house team, you must be one of the youngest quidditch players in Hogwarts’ history.”

“Second only to the great Harry Potter.” Laura mumbled around her dessert filled mouth. She swallowed and used the back of her sleeve to brush the crumbs off her lips. “I’ll have to use a school-owned broom until I can look for my own. They’re really expensive though, so I’ll need to talk to my dad about getting a pre-owned broomstick.”

Laf nodded. “I think I remember seeing a cheap pre-owned Nimbus 2000 at Quality Quidditch Supplies in Diagon Alley. You can always write to them to inquire on a price and order one by owl.”

Perry glanced over at her friend in curiosity. “Why were you looking at broomsticks, LaFontaine?”

Laf shrugged off her comment as they piled more mashed potatoes onto their plate. “Laura isn’t the only one here who is interested in playing quidditch. I just want another year of experience before trying out for the team.”

“Well if you ever want to fly around the pitch together, let me know. I’m sure Danny would join us too, since she’s always looking for more practice time. That girl can’t put her quaffle down.”

“I’m more interested in the beater position, myself. But I’ll take you up on that offer.”

“Hey guys, isn’t that Matska Belmonde?” Perry interrupted as she gestured towards a tall dark skinned woman who entered the Great Hall.

Laf stopped eating to watch the women in bottle green robes as she made her way to the front of the room and bent down to converse with McGonagall. “Carmilla’s sister? I thought she had graduated last year. What’s she doing back here?” They watched as the two women conversed in low voices, the Headmistress frowning slightly. They stopped abruptly as a woman in a dark blue muggle-styled pantsuit with her hair barely contained in a high bun, entered the room and walked with purpose to join the two witches in hushed discussion. At the appearance of the second witch, a low hum of whispered conversations broke out among the house tables. Laura had a faint feeling of recognition as she stared at the woman.
Laf tapped her shoulder as they nodded to the woman in question. “That’s Hermione Granger. What’s she doing here? And with Mattie?” Laura’s curiosity only increased as she switched her gaze to watch Carmilla’s reaction to her adoptive-sister’s sudden appearance. The dark hair girl placed a marker in the book she had been reading before frowning at the scene before her. After a few seconds of quiet discussion, all three witches moved away from the high table and made their way over to the Slytherin table. Carmilla’s frown deepened as the women approached her and her brother. Laura’s eyes narrowed as Mattie leaned over the table to whisper to her sister, who quickly packed away her things and followed McGonagall, Mattie, and Hermione Granger out of the hall. Her brother, Will, followed more leisurely behind the women as he took his leave.

Without hesitation, Laura grabbed her book bag and grabbed Laf’s arm while gesturing for Perry to follow her. “Come on guys, we need to hurry if we want to follow them.”

Perry shoved her books reluctantly back into her bag as Laf shoved a roll into their mouth in their haste to follow their short friend. “Laura, where are you going?

Laura speed-walked out of the Great Hall as her friends followed suit, making sure to keep enough a distance behind Carmilla and the other witches to not be noticed. “I’m going to find out what’s going on. It’s not every day that the Deputy Director of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement comes to Hogwarts. Besides, Carmilla is involved and it must be serious enough to call in her sister and a Ministry official.”

Laf chuckled. “Maybe Karnstein is going to be expelled. Has she been cursing anyone recently?” Perry shook her head. “Not that I know of. Will’s always getting detention, but Carmilla seems to be flying under the radar recently. Although I heard that she did get yelled at in class the other day for reading a muggle novel during a lecture.”

Laf shrugged. “Not exactly Death Eater material.”

“Come on you two, they’re heading for McGonagall’s office.” Laura whispered as she waved at them hurriedly. Turning around the corner in a not-so-subtle movement, she craned her neck to check for students before turning to address her friends. “If we want to listen in to their conversation, we’ll need to jump onto the staircase after they give the password. Although how we will be able to hear them is beyond me.”

Laf patted their side bag in reassurance. “Leave that part to me, Hollis. I got a few tricks up my sleeves.”

Perry watched them with pursed lips. “Are you sure we should be doing this? We could get into a lot of trouble and I am sure the Headmistress wanted to have this discussion in private if she’s taking them to her office.”

Laura shook her head. “Normally I would agree with you, Perry. But this is too weird to ignore. Even you must be a little bit curious as to what’s going on.”

Perry hesitated, visibly struggling with their decision. “Fine. But let’s go before somebody spots us.”

Together the three friends waited until the group they were following paused in front of the stone griffin gargoyle. With a soft spoken word, a staircase appeared and the group traveled up the stone steps towards the circular office above.

“Come on!” Laura, Perry, and LaFontaine quickly walked across the hallway and jumped on the revolving staircase, far enough behind the original group to be blocked from view. Waiting for the door to McGonagall’s office to shut behind the witches and Will, Laura and her friends crept up to
door and remained quiet as a muffled voice broke out behind the stained oak door. Pushing Laura and Perry slightly to the side, LaFontaine removed a flesh colored string from the inside of their bag and held it to the bottom of the doorway. Slowly the string crawled under the doorway and the voices inside were magically amplified and cleared up.

“It’s an extendable ear. I bought it from Weasley’s Wizards Wheezes. Best purchase I’ve made in months.” Laf whispered to their friends.

Taking out her wand, Perry pointed it at the door in front of them and whispered, “Muffliato.” Laf raised an eyebrow at the Hufflepuff who whispered in response. “It muffles the sound around us, so we can talk more freely now.” She shrugged. “I read it in a book I found once.”

Laf looked at the Hufflepuff in awe. “I need to see this book.”

“You can’t.” She shook her head. “I found it by accident in a room full of junk once, but I haven’t been able to find it again. The place just disappeared.”


“Guys, pay attention.” Laura whispered crossly. They fell silent as the conversation from inside had finally moved past pleasantries.

“Headmistress, I must apologize for the late intrusion, but it was imperative that we all meet before the tomorrow’s post arrives.”

“So you were saying,” McGonagall’s voice was calm. “What has happened, Miss Granger?” There was a brief pause as they heard the shuffling of papers. When Hermione spoke, her voice had lowered. “I wish we could be meeting under better circumstances, but it is my duty to inform you of any official Ministry business that may interfere at Hogwarts. Headmistress, it’s Lilita Morgan. She’s been arrested.”

“What?!” A voice whose’ drawl they recognized as Carmilla’s broke the tense silence. “Mattie, what’s going on? Why did this happen?”

Matska’s voice was calm, but somber when she replied. “This only happened a few hours ago, darling. Maman’s manor was raided for evidence. We wanted to tell the both of you in person, so that you would not hear it from someone else.”

Laura turned to face Perry and Laf. “Maman? Who’s that?”

“Maman is a term for ‘Mother’, often used in French.” Perry shrugged. “I guess it must be their adoptive mother.” Laura’s comment was cut off by the voices inside the office.

“Mattie, what did she do?” Carmilla’s voice shook, although with anger or fear, the eavesdroppers were unsure without being able to see the Slytherin’s face. Mattie sighed deeply. “Lilita was arrested for the torturing of, experimenting on, and killing of muggles.”

McGonagall’s outcry of, “Dear Heavens!” was partly covered by Carmilla’s burst of outrage. Perry held a hand over her mouth to block her own shout of surprise. LaFontaine looked pale. After a few moments of silence, Carmilla spook in a low voice. “I always knew that woman was a monster, but this is just sick.” Her drawling voice was laced with hatred.

A voice they recognized as Will’s spoke for the first time since entering the office. “Where’s your proof?”
“As you can see from these documents, we have several eyewitness reports and testimonies describing these horrific events. Photographic evidence and multiple dark magic objects were recovered from the site as well.” Hermione sighed deeply. “I’m sorry. I know this must come as a shock, but we wanted to deliver the news to you both before the press got wind of these events. Unfortunately, we need to ask all of you if you have any information regarding to this arrest.”

“It was no secret that Maman despised all things muggle and muggle-borns as well, however we never saw anything that would suggest this. We had an – ah – difficult upbringing, but never to this degree of violence.” Mattie replied.

McGonagall’s voice broke through the conversation. “Miss Karnstein, do you have something you wish to say?”

“It’s just, there was the screaming… Mattie, Will, don’t you remember? We used to think the manor was haunted. Apparently, we were wrong.” Carmilla’s voice seemed to echo in the room at her statement.

McGonagall’s voice was grim when she finally responded. “So it would seem. Miss Granger, is there anything else you wish to discuss with my students? It has been a long day and I am sure they will need time to process all of this.”

“Yes, Headmistress. This was written several times on Lilita’s notes and on various relics that were found. Does this mean anything to you?” There was a shuffling sound that Laura assumed that meant various documents were being shown to the people inside.

Carmilla was the first to speak. “Mother forced each of us to learn a different dead language. She said it was part of our training…”

Perry turned to glance at her friends. “Training? What does she mean by that?” Laf and Laura shook their heads in confusion.

Carmilla’s voice drifted over them once more. “Latin is Mattie’s forte. Will knows Ancient Greek and I can read Ancient Sumerian. Most people’s hobbies don’t include dead languages.”

There was a brief pause before Mattie’s voice was picked up by their extendable ear. “It says, Quia non mortui, qui aeternam potest mendacium, et ad mortem usque novis praeteriti latuerunt secula, ut moriatur. A rough translation would be: That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even death may die.”

“I know Mother was morbid, but even that was a bit too doom and gloom for my taste.” Carmilla spoke.

“Miss Karnstein, do you have any idea what your mother meant by this?”

“I’m afraid not, Deputy Director.”

Hermione continued in her questioning. “Miss Belmonde and Mr. Luce?”

“I apologize, but I do not know not what is meant by this either. Of course, you have our full help during this investigation.” Mattie voice was calm as she addressed her superiors.

“How well, thank you for bringing this to our attention. If there is nothing else…” McGonagall’s voice was drowned out as LaFontaine wrapped the extendable ear in their hand.

“We need to leave now.” All three friends quietly climbed down the spiraling staircase and they ran
to the nearest empty classroom. Closing the door behind them, Perry waved her wand over the door performing the same muffling charm.

Laura turned to address her friends and waved her hands frantically in the air. “What the frilly hell was that?!?”

“I’m not sure, Hollis. But I am sure by tomorrow’s post we’ll know far more than we were ever meant to.” Perry nodded at Laf statement. “So what do we do now?”

Laura took a deep breath and nodded to herself. “We be the bigger person. It sounds like shit’s going to hit the fan tomorrow, might as well be there to help with the clean up.”

“Are you sure, Hollis? After all, you and Karnstein aren’t exactly simpatico, if you get my drift.”

Laura laughed at Laf’s use of air quotes around the Spanish term. “I know Laf, but it’s the right thing to do.” Without a backward glance at her friends she left the room, closing the door in her wake.

Perry faced her friend with a deep frown on her face. “I have a bad feeling about this…”

Laf nodded before linking their arm with the taller ginger’s and led them to the door. “I’ll bet you three Sickles that this ends in a fight.”

Perry stopped in her tracks and raised her eyebrows at her friend’s statement. “Placing bets on your friends, I would think we are above such things.”

LaFontaine scoffed at her remark. “Not when I can make a quick Sickle.” Perry leaned closer so that she was whispering in Laf’s ear. “Well then, how about we make a long term bet. We could up the stakes a bit, if you’re into taking risks.”

“What do you have in mind?” Laf smirked. “Does this have to do with Hollis and Karnstein?”

“Oh yeah,” Perry smiled at Laf’s peaked interest.

“Oh do tell, what do you have in mind?” Perry leaned over and whispered the terms of her bet as they walked down the hallowed halls of Hogwarts towards the Gryffindor common room, where Laf would sneak their Hufflepuff friend inside.

LaFontaine’s smirk turned into a barking laugh at Perry’s proposition. “Well in that case, I’ll bet five Galleons that it will happen by the end of their seventh year.”

Perry paused as the portrait hole opened at Laf’s password. “I’ll raise you ten Galleons that it will happen by the end of their sixth.” Together the gingers climbed into the common room to sit with their friends by the roaring fire.

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The next morning hundreds of owls flew into the Great Hall delivering the morning’s post. All four house tables were buzzing with conversation as the Daily Prophet’s front page featured a large moving mug shot of a woman with jet black hair, striking features, and a sneer that distorted her once elegant face. The headline, "Ministry Official Arrested for Muggle Murders!" flashed up and down the tables as the students read the intimate details of the arrest and interrogation of the Ministry of Magic official, Lilita Morgan, along with dozens of statements from the Magical Law Enforcement Department, Auror Department, and even a brief interview with an Unspeakable. For the majority of that morning’s paper, each article focused on some aspect of the arrest of the rouge witch in question. Every detail of Lilita’s life was analyzed by half of dozen witches and wizards that were conducting
the on-going investigation.

Unfortunately, this meant that all three of her adoptive children were mentioned by name, so when Carmilla entered the Great Hall less than an hour after the morning paper had arrived, all conversation died as hundreds of students stared at the young girl. Carmilla, who normally entered the room with a confidence that made Laura seethe with jealousy, gloomily trudged her way to sit at the far end of the Slytherin table. Those few Slytherins whom happened to be seated by stood up and walked away from the approaching moody girl.

Slowly conversation filled the air as the students began to talk among themselves. However this increase of noise did not drown out the comments that reached the Gryffindor door table where Laura sat with her friends. The short blonde’s eyes narrowed as various phrases caught her attention:

“Did you hear about her mother? The Prophet claims she’s killed over thirty muggles over the last fifteen years.”

“Did you see the pictures? There was so much blood; I didn’t even recognize the thing as a body. I wonder how the paper got a hold of those crime scene photos, let alone permission to print them.”

“Do you think Karnstein knew about the abductions?”

“I bet she helped torture them all, filthy Slytherin…”

“She’s a monster – ”

The bench scraped against the stone titled floors as Carmilla grabbed her bag and briskly walked out of the Great Hall. With a brief nod to her friends, Laura followed after the brooding Slytherin, LaFontaine and Perry in quick pursuit.

“Carm – Wait!” Laura shouted as she reached the end of a deserted corridor. “Where did she go? I swear we were right behind her.”

Laf looked around the hall before grabbing a nearby tapestry and pulled back the thickly woven material to reveal a hidden staircase. “Secret passage way. The whole school is crawling with them.”

“You never cease to amaze me, Laf.” Laura patted her friend on the back as all three of them climbed the dark spiraling staircase into another corridor where they found the Slytherin lounging on one of the stone window sills overlooking the grounds, a muggle novel clutched in her pale hands.

“Carmilla!” Laura slowed her decent until she was only a few feet away from the dark eyed Slytherin.

“Cupcake… and crew. To what do I owe this honor?” Carmilla’s voice was laced with sarcasm as she popped an eyebrow at the short Gryffindor’s sudden appearance.

“Carm…” The dark haired girl couldn’t hide the shock on her face at the nickname. Laura scowled and threw her hand in the air. “What? Only I can have the weird nickname here. I figured Carm was better than Cthulhu Chick.”

When Perry and Laf shot Laura questioning looks, she waved them off. “Carm has a tendency to read the more macabre literature. Don’t ask.” She gestured to the novel in the girl’s hands. “What is it this time, Paradise Lost? Frankenstein? The Turn of the Screw?”

The Slytherin twisted the book so that the cover could be seen. “Actually it’s a novella called Carmilla by Sheridan Le Fanu. Mattie gave it to me a joke last year for my birthday. I think she
thought the title was funny. Nothing like a vampiric woman seducing virginal girls and leading them
to their deaths to make for a good bedtime story. My sister certainly has a sense of humor; although I
doubt you three followed me all this way to ask about my reading habits. Come to look at the freak?"

Laura took a step closer. “No, Carm. What your mother did was horrible, but it’s not who you are.”
Carmilla’s face softened. “Thanks, Cupcake.”

“Laura! What are you doing?!”

“Danny?” The tall ginger in question had appeared along with another dark skinned Gryffindor girl
out of the hidden staircase as both girls made their way over the clustered pack of students.

“Oh shit…Not now, Lawrence.” LaFontaine muttered under breath. Perry squeezed their arm in
reassurance, while their other hand sought the handle of her wand. Laura and Carmilla together
already spelled trouble on the best of days, but Laura, Carmilla, and Danny in the same room spoke
of certain death.

The two older Gryffindors pushed themselves until they were standing between the brooding
Slytherin and Laura. All three girls glared at each other before Carmilla spoke. “Lawrence.” “Callis.”
They glared back in response. Carmilla smirked as she returned her attention back to her novel. “If
you two don’t mind, I’m having a really shitty day and I don’t have the patience to deal with either of
you right now.”

Danny narrowed her eyes, her hatred of the Slytherin evident by her body language. “Stay away
from her, Karnstein.”

“Hey! I’m right here.” Laura shouted on deaf ears.

“Or what?!” Carmilla bristled in anger as she slid off the window sill. She jabbed a finger at the taller
Gryffindor. “You are not her keeper.”

Danny cocked her head towards the shorter girl. “That’s beside the point. I’m not going to let you
cast another curse on her. You won’t be hurting anyone anymore. Isn’t that right, Mel?”

The dark skinned girl nodded. “I might not like you much, Lawrence. But I hate Slytherins more,
particularly muggle torturing ones at that.”

“You’re a monster, just like your mother.” Danny spat, her loathing for the Slytherin seeping into her
speech.

If looks could kill, both Gryffindors would be dead where they stood. Carmilla whipped out her
wand and pointed it straight at Danny, her face contorted in rage. “Shut up!” Both older Gryffindors
pulled out their wands in response.

“Stop it!” Laura ran to stand in between them, her arms outstretched in a plea for peace. “All of you,
stop it right now! Carm, calm down. They’re not worth it. And the both of you will apologize to
Carmilla.”

“Like hell I will.” Mel scorned.

“Move aside, Hollis.” Carmilla’s raspy drawl was laced with malice.

“No! I won’t let you hurt her.” Laura faced the Slytherin as she stood directly in front of Danny.
“I said, move aside!” Carmilla yelled.

The tension in the room was broken by a sound of a gunshot going off behind them. Everyone in the vicinity jumped as they turned face the source of the noise. Reluctantly, all parties lowered their wands.

“Professor!” Laura shouted just as Perry called out, “Headmistress, thank God you’re here!”

McGonagall towered over them all, her nostrils flaring in anger as she glared at her students. Lowering her wand, she crossed her arms sternly. “I expected better of my students, two against one?! Really Miss Lawrence, Miss Callis. I expected better of you.”

Her eyes softened as her eyes locked with the cornered Slytherin. “Miss Karnstein, if you will follow me please, we have much to discuss.”

Carmilla nodded in response before turning to glare at Danny. “This isn’t over, Lawrence.”

“Agreed.” Danny practically spat out the two syllables in reply.

As Carmilla turned to follow the Headmistress, she caught a glimpse of something silver being exchanged between Perry and LaFontaine. But before she could get a better view, McGonagall had turned around the corner and the young Slytherin quickly followed suit. Together the pair made their way up to McGonagall’s office and with a wave of her hand, McGonagall gestured for Carmilla to sit opposite her on the other side of her desk.

“Now Miss Karnstein, I know this is a difficult time for you, but I can’t be having my students dueling in the halls. What am I going to do with you?”

“Difficult times… right.” Carmilla scoffed as McGonagall’s eyes narrowed.

“This is no laughing matter, Miss Karnstein. It is clear that your relations with your peers are strained at best, and since you clearly have time to duel in the hallways, I don’t see why you wouldn’t have the time to further concentrate on your studies.”

Carmilla sat up straighter in her chair. “I’m afraid I don’t understand, Professor.”

McGonagall pressed her fingertips together as she stared at her pupil above wire-rimmed spectacles. “I am proposing extra tutoring sessions with me in Transfiguration. I have been watching your progress in class over the last two years and I must admit that you are very talented. Perhaps additional lesson with me will help your temper as well as hone your skills in the subject.”

Carmilla crossed her arms as she slouched back into her chair. “What would I be learning with you, compared to our normal classes?”

“I would be willing to go over some of the more finer points of Transfiguration, as well as teach you some of the more advance spells. To master the techniques will require a lot of time and concentration on your end. But in time and under my guidance, you can become a very skilled witch.”

Carmilla cocked her head. “What’s the catch?”

McGonagall stared at the young witch before her before her eyes narrowed. “You have great potential, I would being willing to take you on for lessons only if you follow my instructions and you promise to avoid dueling your enemies while at Hogwarts.”
Carmilla smirked. “I make no promises…but I am intrigued.” To Carmilla’s surprise, McGonagall’s stern face broke into a smile.

“I supposed that is the most I can hope for.” McGonagall gestured for Carmilla to exit. “I will be expecting you, starting tomorrow night at 8 pm in my office. You need only bring your wand.”

Carmilla touched two fingers to her forehead in a mock solute as she reached out for the door. “See you around, Professor McGonagall.”

McGonagall waved off the informal gesture with a crooked smile. “Until then, Miss Karnstein.”
Hello everyone! Thank you all for your support, either via leaving comments or kudos. They mean the world to me and your comments inspire me to write more. Sorry for the rather short chapter in comparison with the previous two other, but these next few chapters are only supposed to be glimpses into their lives throughout their Hogwarts years (until we get to year 6 where the main plot line will pick up). I hope you enjoy this next installment. Let me know what you think. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura ducked as a Bludger came barreling passed her head. Using her left leg to guide her Nimbus 2000 into a hairpin turn, she shot up in the air abruptly; her crimson Quidditch robes a blur to the spectators in the stands. A high piercing whistle halted the two teams followed by the commentator’s shouting that was partially drowned out by the roar of the student section dressed in crimson and gold. “Foul! That, my friends, was a deliberate hit of the Bludger by Fredrick Johnson towards the Gryffindor Seeker, Laura Hollis, while it was clear she was not interfering with the play. Abigail Balinski is lining up to take the foul shot against Slytherin Keeper, Jack Slavewright.”

The crowd of green and silver booed and hissed as the Gryffindor Chaser successfully shot the Quaffle through the far right hoop. It was a clean shot, much to the delight of the Gryffindors and to the severe frustration of the Keeper.

“Balinski scores! Our current score is 70 – 50 to Gryffindor.” Laura cheered along with the rest of her classmates although her attention was drawn to the new Slytherin Seeker who had rested to a halt and hovered next to the tiny witch. Her drawling voice cut across the howling wind, while her dark eyes searched the stadium for the telling elusive flash of gold.

“Careful there, Creampuff. Or you’ll be more creamed than puff.” Winking at Laura’s scowl, Carmilla zoomed to the far end of the pitch, her billowing emerald robes hiding her Nimbus 2001 from sight in her pursuit of her search for the Snitch.

“It was one time!” Laura growled as she thought back to the unfortunate moment where Carmilla had spied her across the Great Hall as a simple charm that LaFontaine had been practicing had caused a minor explosion in the surrounding area. The cream puff Laura had been trying to consume had promptly exploded all over her face. Of course, the nickname “Creampuff” had been added to Carmilla’s repertoire, much to the chagrin of the pissed off Gryffindor.

Laura flew after her rival, her eyes searching the stadium for the winged golden ball. She felt her shoulders relax slightly when she realized that Carmilla was still circling the pitch, having not spotted the Snitch yet either. While she was happy to hear that her team was ahead in the match, Laura knew she had to catch the Snitch soon to end the game as quickly as possible. It was no secret that the two teams had a heated rivalry between them and, as the rogue Bludger was any indication, the match was becoming more dangerous for the players as the teams were fouling each other with reckless abandon. Laura continued to circle the pitch, keeping one eye on her Slytherin counterpart, while still listening to the commentator’s exciting narrative as the match continued around them.

“And Slytherin’s in possession of the Quaffle with Philip Striker in the lead. He passes to Bradford
McGregor. Nice dodge around the Gryffindor chasers leaving only Keeper, Susan Evans, in their way. McGregor draws back his arm for a shot and – He’s knocked aside by a Bludger expertly hit by the new Gryffindor Beater, LaFontaine! They’re really playing well for their first début, acting only as a reserve for the earlier part of this Quidditch season.”

Laura held out her hand as LaFontaine flew by, showing off to the crowd by spinning into a well-placed high-five before lining up their club for another hit to a nearby Bludger. Right as Laura shouted in glee at her friend’s behavior, her eyes locked in on a flash of bright gold at the far end of the stadium. Leaning forward on her Nimbus 2000, Laura shot off like a rocket toward the elusive ball of gold.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that Hollis from Gryffindor has spotted the Snitch. Look at her go! Carmilla Karnstein seems to have spotted the Snitch too as she is only feet behind Hollis. Look at them go!”

Refusing to let her eyes leave the Snitch, Laura could see Carmilla creeping up on her right side as she drew parallel with the other witch. The Snitch quickly changed direction so that the golden ball shot up at a ninety-degree angle into the air. The girls climbed into the air together as a blur of red and green, their roller coaster-like movements creating a graceful arch of color at their gaining momentum. The crowd’s cheering was lost to the Seekers as the wind whistled around them as they climbed into the sky. Arms outstretched towards the glittering winged ball their flight pattern changing from a straight path into a graceful double helix as they flew around each other trying to gain the upper hand. Time seemed to slow down as they flew in tandem in a spiraling dance as they soared closer towards their goal. Slender fingers encased in hardened leather gloves closed around the golden Snitch in triumph.

“Yes!” The cry escaped from Carmilla’s lips as the dark haired Slytherin proudly held the winged ball in victory. Together the witches slowed their decent as the emerald clad Seeker was incased in a group hug from her fellow teammates while still in midair. LaFontaine clapped Laura on the shoulder muttering words of reassurance over the roar of the crowd, although Laura had noticed none of this. The young Gryffindor’s brown eyes were trained on her Slytherin counterpart who was laughing at something her team captain had said, the gold Snitch twinkling in the afternoon sunlight between her gloved fingers. Laura couldn’t remember the last time she had seen her smile. It was an oddly soothing sight and as she watched Carmilla interact with her teammates, she felt her own lips turn upwards in response in hint of a smile.

“What are you smiling about, Hollis? We just lost the match!” Laf squeezed her companion’s arm to gain her attention, their eyes following their friend’s lurking gaze. Laura looked away from the Slytherins and shrugged. “It was a good match. Carm’s a good flier.”

Laf nodded. “She sure is… Both of you looked amazing on that climb. The way the two of you were flying up there… It was rather poetic to witness, I must say.”

Laura nudged her friend in the ribs with her elbow. “Don’t be going soft on my now, Laf.”

Laf chuckled. “Never, Hollis.” Laura laughed with her friend as her eyes flickered back to the lone Slytherin who was now walking back towards the changing rooms. Laf’s eyebrows rose as they noticed their friend’s attention had shifted elsewhere once again. They smirked. “You should go talk to her.”

Laura arched an eyebrow in response. “And why would I do that now? We have Potions with the Slytherins tomorrow.”

The ginger shrugged. “It just seemed like it was important. There’s nothing wrong with saying hello
and congrats, even if she did beat us. Clearly you like her – ”

“Just because I want to talk to her doesn’t mean I want us to be besties,” Laura shook her head. “She’s still annoying.”

LaFontaine shook their head and smirked. “Whatever you say, Hollis…”

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Defense Against the Dark Arts was one of Laura’s favorite classes, if nothing else because of the interesting topics, but also because it was taught by her favorite teacher, Professor Cochrane. Laura hurried to choose a seat at the front of the classroom while LaFontaine followed at a more leisurely pace before pulling out their textbook only to be interrupted by their professor.

“No need for your textbooks today. This will be a practical lesson. Please move your things to the far wall and stand aside as we wait for your fellow classmates. We will be joined by the other houses in your third year shortly. You need only your wands for this lesson.”

Following the professor’s instructions, Laura and LaFontaine grabbed their school bags and placed them off to the side. With a wave of Cochrane’s wand, the rows of desks and benches where pushed aside and neatly stacked on the far side of the room. Their attention was drawn to a battered wooden chest that was shaking slightly that was placed directly centered at the front of the room.

Laura nodded toward the chest. “What do think is in there?” The wooden chest gave a violent jerk in their direction making both students jump back in response.

Laf shrugged. “I’m not sure, Hollis. But I highly doubt it’s a pygmy puff.”

“Oh joy…” Laura sighed, refusing to take her eyes off the opposing chest. After only a few minutes of intense staring at the chest, the sound of thundering footsteps broke their attention as the Gryffindors and Slytherins were soon joined by their fellow classmates from the two other houses.

“Excellent. Now gather around everyone.” The older witch in deep purple robes waved the third years into a semi-circle facing the chest. “As you can see, I have called you all here today simply because I have obtained a rather reclusive creature, curtsy of our game keeper. This particular creature normally takes up residence in urban environments, particularly found in common wizarding households. Does anyone want to take a guess as to what resides within this chest?”

A tall boy with sandy blond hair raised his hand in the air with confidence. “It’s a boggart.”

Cochrane nodded. “That is correct, Mr. Walker. Take five points to Ravenclaw. Now as you should have all read for your homework, a boggart is defeated using the Riddikulus charm combined with the power of laughter. I want you all to form a single-file line where you will each face the boggart before casting the charm. Now be warned…this creature will transform into an embodiment of your greatest fear. It is best to prepare for this by planning ahead how you will counter this attack by using the charm to force the boggart to transform into a humorous or less threatening version of their former self. Now off you go.”

Together the third years shuffled into a long line facing the rattling chest. At the front of the line was a Ravenclaw girl with sharp features, her face grew pale as she raised a shaking wand towards the target. Professor Cochrane nodded her head in encouragement. “Right then, on the count of three. One…Two…THREE!” With a sharp wave of her wand the chest burst open as a swarm of wasps formed in the air and flew right at the girl who responded by shouting with a clear voice, “Riddikulus!”
The swarm of wasps burst into flying popcorn kernels as they exploded in midair, the room smelling of melted butter popcorn. The room burst into laughter at the strange sight. J.P. was next in line and as the dark-haired boy approached the creature, the pile of popcorn shifted into a blur of color before changing into the form of a 7ft tall clown. With a cry of, "Riddikulus!" the clown was suddenly an inflatable tub-man found in most muggle car-sales lots flailed in the air, with its wacky movements gaining a chuckle from the muggle-borns in the classroom.

With a shaky smile Laura stepped to the front of the line muttering to herself, “Girl up, Laura. You’ve got this!” while squaring her shoulders in preparation for the boggart. The inflatable tub-man suddenly shifted into the dark and foreboding form of a medieval witch doctor. Laura stiffened as she took in the curved leather crow-like mask with glass eye windows as the figure pointed in her direction. Laura took a deep breath before she shouted the spell. With a loud CRACK! The omen of death and disease transformed into a large cartoonish raven stuffed plushie.

Following her lead, a Hufflepuff stepped in front of the plushie which was shifting into multiple forms. CRACK! The boggart had changed into a vampire. CRACK! A large spider. CRACK! A screaming banshee. Clearly the boggart was being affected by the multiple casters. The Hufflepuff raised her wand in assurance as the shifting creature focused on the young witch. CRACK! A black wolf with glowing red eyes with a haggard appearance growled in response. "Riddikulus!" The grim changed into a black puppy that started chasing its own tail.

With a grin and passing fist bump to Laura, LaFontaine shuffled to the front of the line. Immediately, the puppy shifted into a mist-like cloud of pure darkness. The shadow shifted in vague patterns before seeping out further into the room, the darkness creeping closer to the ginger. "Riddikulus!" A giant light bulb appeared in the middle of the creeping darkness, the light dissipating the darkness completely. With a slight incline of their head to the Slytherin behind them, Laf took their place in the back of the room with Laura and J.P. to watch with the rest of their classmates as Carmilla slowly approached the boggart. With a grim expression on her face, the young witch raised their wand towards the dark creature.

CRACK! A tall dark haired woman with striking features, dark burning eyes, and grimace gracing their lips toward over the Slytherin. The room took a collected gasp and mutters broke out among the students as they recognized the woman in front of them as the notorious witch whose face had been plastered across the cover of the Daily Prophet over the last year and a half. It was none other than Carmilla’s adoptive mother herself, Lilita Morgan. Carmilla was frozen in fear; her wand shook in her hand as her classmates expected the protective charm that would never come.

After a few moments of hesitation, Professor Cochrane stepped before the grimacing witch, effectively blocking Carmilla from the creature’s view. CRACK! The boggart changed into a mummified corpse whose eyes were shrunken into pinpricks of fire. "Riddikulus!" CRACK! The corpse had collapsed into a pile of dust before exploding into a cloud of smoke. Before Professor Cochrane could address the class about their success, the door to the classroom creaked open and slammed shut, Laura barely making out the dark mane of hair of the shaken Slytherin before the door had shut completely.

Ten minutes later, the rest of the third years had been dismissed. The hum of their chatter and gossip flooded the corridor as they dispersed into the castle, recounting the events they had witnessed in class to their fellow peers.

“Laura! Where are you going?” Laf called after their friend’s retreating form as they ran down the corridor. “You’re going to be late for Quidditch practice!”

“Go on ahead. I’ll catch up with you later!” Laura shouted as she rounded a corner and sprinted to a
hidden passageway that led to a hidden outcove that overlooked the central courtyard. But the brooding Slytherin was nowhere to be found at her usual hang out spot.

“Come on, Carm… Where are you?” Laura huffed to no one in particular as she scoured the castle for her elusive classmate. Sure enough after a few minutes of searching, she found the Slytherin curled up against the stone wall away from the prying eyes of the other students.

“Oh Carm…” Laura walked up to her crying classmate, but stopped abruptly at the glare the Slytherin shot her. “Leave me alone, Laura.”

“Carm, please…Let me help you.” Laura reached out with a tentative hand which was promptly ignored as Carmilla shrunk back further in the wall. Fear flashed in dark eyes, causing the Gryffindor to hesitate in their actions. “Carm, I – I’m sorr –.”

“Leave. Now!” Carmilla spat out, not even bothering to wipe away the tears that streaked down her sharp cheeks. Laura’s eyes locked with the Slytherin’s before she nodded in understanding. With a deep sigh Laura glanced back at the frightened witch before slipping through a secret passageway that led into the heart of the castle.

Without an audience Carmilla allowed herself to sink further into her grief. Time seemed to pass by in a crawl, her sobs echoed off the stone walls. She did not know how much time had passed before her tears slowed and her breathing returned to an almost even cadence. Refusing to look up from between her hands, Carmilla growled at the sound of footsteps that interrupted her solitude.

“I said leave me alone, Laura!” She lashed out in a withering voice.

The footsteps slowed to a halt directly in front of the hunched-over Slytherin. “But I am not Laura.” The voice that answered her was calm and smooth, with the barest trace of a smile heard in the response. Carmilla looked away from her hands and gasped as she stared into a pair of stunning green eyes and a warm smile. Carmilla felt her heart flutter as she took the inviting smile of her companion. She couldn’t help her breathless response for the older Ravenclaw girl who stood before her was simply beautiful.

With a slight wave with her intricately carved wand, the Ravenclaw produced a stunningly white lace handkerchief and held it out to the shocked Slytherin.

“It looked like you needed this.” The girl before her smiled even wider at Carmilla’s nod of thanks as she dabbed at her eyes. “What’s your name?”

The Slytherin gripped the lace cloth until her knuckles were white. “Carmilla… Carmilla Karnstein.” She waited for the look of hatred that she was sure would cross the girl’s face at the mention of her name. After all, she had been mentioned in the newspapers in connection to her notorious adoptive mother’s name all year. Rumors had spread through the Hogwarts like wild fire causing many of its inhabitance to either spit words of disgust and distrust her way, or ignore the Slytherin completely.

But at her confession neither negative reactions were formed as the girl nodded and held out her hand in greeting.

“Hello, Carmilla. My name is Elle.”

Chapter End Notes
Feel free to yell at me on tumblr @blacklabyrinth07, or leave a comment on here. I love hearing from all of you!
Hello, everyone! I know it's been forever since I posted a chapter for this, but I just got back into Harry Potter and Carmilla fandoms and felt inspired to write (which worked out since I have the entire story arch notes written down so it's just a matter of writing the chapters out in full). Thank you to those who wrote a comment or reached out to me, I love hearing from you! To those of you who are returning, welcome back. To those of you who are just joining us now, welcome! Special thanks to my Beta mysteriesofthislife who is used to me jumping around fandoms and fics and have been amazing at nitpicking even the finest detail so I can write the best story for you all to read. It's been fun to look back at this work and see how much I've grown as a writer. :) I hope you like this next installment! As always, let me know what you think. Enjoy!

The blistering wind whipped the snow around the trio in a gust of freezing air. Three sets of boots squeaked as they crunched their way through the two inch layer of snow down the main street of Hogsmeade. Even wrapped in a warm scarf, hat, and mittens (all bearing the colors of her house, of course) Laura shook violently in her thick muggle-styled coat, the warm black cotton doing little to protect the short Gryffindor against the brisk November air.

"Guys, it's freezing out here! Can we take a break from shopping to get out of the cold?" Laura asked her friends

"How about the Three Broomsticks?" Laura asked as she gestured with a gloved hand at the welcoming pub at the far end of the street.

"Sure, I could go for a nice butterbeer." Perry agreed as she crossed her arms in an attempt to keep out the wind in the seams of her thick cloak.

"Besides, we are supposed to meet JP and Danny there in a half an hour. We can try to get one of those large tables in the back." LaFontaine reminded them as they quickly made their way around the groups of huddling students and patrons that lined the streets.

"Any chance we can stop by there on the way back to the castle? I'm in need of a new quill." Perry pointed to Scrivenshaft's Quill Shop that was tucked away behind a cauldron's shop and an apothecary.

"Sure, I want to check out the Hogsmeade branch of Weasley's Wizard Wheezes for some dungbombs." Laf stated as they rubbed their gloved hands together in eagerness.

"And what are you planning to do with those, LaFontaine?" Perry asked, the prefect badge flashing on her outer coat as she gestured to her friend with a hand. Her eyes were narrowed, with a stern expression as the Hufflepuff turned to stare at her friend in the eye.

LaFontaine had the decency to look sheepish as they grabbed the back of their neck with a small grin. "Nothing that won't get me in trouble…"

Perry shook her head, a few snowflakes falling from her knitted cap from the action. "What am I
"What would you ever do without me?" Laf countered with a smirk to which Perry rolled her eyes at her best friend.

"Come on you two; let's try to grab a table before it's too late." Laura remarked as she led her friends out of the street and held open the door to the pub.

A soft chime of silver bells over the door's frame announced their arrival. The pub was packed with students and other patrons, with lines going up to the bar for steaming mugs of butterbeer or firewhiskey for the older customers. The cozy room was a little hazy from a group of witches in the corner who were sharing a cured pipe with billowing purple smoke. A large fireplace crackled in the center of the room, next to a line of booths that lined the walls.

Laura and Perry made their way to an empty circular booth that was tucked away in one corner of the room. After taking their drink orders, LaFontaine moved to the line at the bar.

Once their ginger friend was lost to the crowded room, Perry turned to the young Gryffindor as they took off their heavy coats.

"So… Danny mentioned earlier that she wanted to bring someone with her, is that alright with all of you?" Perry asked, as she adjusted her yellow and black striped scarf.

A moment later LaFontaine returned with three pewter mugs full of butterbeer. Laura nodded her thanks and smacked her lips, as the warm frothy liquid warmed her frostnipped body.

"Yeah, sure why not… The more the merrier." Laura spoke through gritted teeth as she reached to her side bag and pulled out a knitting project she was working on. Using her wand as a knitting needle, the purple yarn began to knit itself in a furious tempo.

Whether her gritted teeth were from her mood or from the cold, neither of her friends could tell. Perry nudged her friend with her arm, catching Laf's eye before nodding towards the brooding Gryffindor.

"Well, that wasn't sarcastic or anything… Everything alright there, Hollis? I thought you and Danny were on better terms." LaFontaine raised an eye at their friend's moody behavior.

Laura sighed deeply, her knitting project jerking as it slowed down to a more leisurely movement. "I'm sorry, guys. I know Danny and I have, well, come to an understanding…"

"More like a truce," Laf interjected, eliciting a small snort from the older Hufflepuff.

Laura waved off their laughs. "Danny means well and she already apologized for her behavior, like, over two months ago." The Gryffindor sighed deeply, resting her chin on a hand that was propped up on the wooden table. "I'm just really tired and stressed from mid-terms and with Quidditch practices starting up again, I really don't want to add any more drama to my life as is."

LaFontaine sat up straighter and cleared her throat as she noticed a particular pair of girls enter the building, the soft chiming of bells announcing their presence to the room packed with people. "Speaking of drama, it seems she just walked in the door."

"Danny?" Laura asked, looking up from her self-pity party to scan the room for a flash of ginger hair.

While things had started off rocky between them over the last year, the older Gryffindor had taken great strides to apologize and attempt to be better friends with Laura. Hollis had happily accepted an
offer of tutoring for Transfiguration again, seeing the peace offering for what it was. And since their lessons were becoming harder as they focused on O.W.L. prep school work, the added help was much welcomed. Laura had quickly found that she rather enjoyed Danny's loyal friendship and companionship, something that she had missed when they had been so close for the first two years of Laura being at Hogwarts.

"No, Karnstein." LaFontaine answered, gesturing to the Slytherin in question with their pewter tankard.

"And with her little girlfriend too." Perry spoke while pointedly looking at their friend's reaction, hiding her smile behind her own tankard.

"Girlfriend? What girlfriend?" Laura asked, almost upsetting their table with how quickly she jumped up in her seat.

"Whoa, careful there Laura…" Perry reprimanded as she used nearby napkins to clean up the spilled drinks that had gotten jostled by the smaller girl's exuberance.

LaFontaine rolled their eyes. "Really, Hollis? Even you can't be that oblivious… Karnstein has got herself a squeeze."

"Her name is Elle Sheridan, if you really must know. She's a Ravenclaw in my year." Perry remarked as the trio watched the two girls crawl into a booth after obtaining a pair of butterbeer bottles. "She's really nice and is an expert in wizarding history."

"How do you know so much about her?" LaFontaine asked, their eyes narrowing in suspicion at their friend.

"Well that's because Elle is a Prefect, just like me and Danny. We often have to go on rounds together around the school after hours, patrolling the halls and the like. Elle seemed really fond of Carmilla, last time we spoke."

"Yeah, fond enough to be snogging." LaFontaine quipped as she nodded to the Ravenclaw who had left a chaste kiss on Carmilla's lips.

Perry rolled her eyes at her friend's theatrics. "Must you really use such a vulgar term?"

Laura tuned out her friends' bickering as she felt her eyes narrow at the sight of the pretty Ravenclaw laugh at whatever Carmilla had just said. Carmilla, for lack of a better term, looked happy. Far happier that she had seemed over the last few months.

Not that she had been keeping tabs on the normally cocky and brooding girl, but Laura had noticed that for the greater part of two years Carmilla had mostly kept to herself. Not only that, but her rival could be found lurking around the castle at strange hours, the other Slytherins in her year often gossiping on how she would disappear for hours on end, only to show up for classes, meals, and Quidditch practice.

Carmilla remained an enigma of sorts to the Gryffindor, a puzzle that she was bound to figure out when all the pieces would fall neatly into place.

LaFontaine's voice broke Laura from her thoughts.

"And how did you and Elle just happen to talk about Carmilla? A bit on the nose there, don't you think? Not exactly subtle…"
"Well, unlike you and Laura, I don't have an unhealthy obsession with Carmilla. And therefore can have a civil conversation about her and her current paramour." Perry stated, crossing her arms at the pair in front of her. She loved the two Gryffindors, but they sure were at the heart of a lot of trouble - intentional or not.

"Fine, have fun with your little chats. Besides, it's more entertaining to piss Karnstein off…” LaFontaine replied as they stared over at the Slytherin.

Before Laura could comment on Laf's previous comment, they were interrupted by the arrival of three tall figures wrapped in warm cloaks, each person covered in a light dusting of snow.

The trio stood up to great Danny and JP as they set down a tray of butterbeer tankards, and began to strip themselves of their outer winter gear before taking their seats around the circular booth.

"Hello everyone, I want you to meet a friend of mine, Wilson Kirsch." Danny gestured with gloved hand over a tall, muscular boy roughly around her age. He had a wide smile and short cropped brown hair with a yellow and black striped scarf that marked him as a Hufflepuff.

"My friends call me, Kirsch." The boy corrected as he quickly shook hands with each person as they introduced themselves.

"I know you from somewhere… Let me think." LaFontaine scratched their chin in thought, before gesturing widely in midair. "You play Keeper for Hufflepuff!"

"That's actually how Danny and I met, she found me after a game to congratulate me on my expert save against her scoring attempt last season." Kirsch flexed his biceps for his captive audience.

"I still think you slid off your broom by accident! No fourth year can make a save one-handed while hanging off their broom during a rainstorm." Danny retaliated with a roll of her eyes, but a small smirk took the bite out of her tone. "Besides, we were paired up as potions partners at the start of term."

They talked for a short while, old friends catching up about their trip to Hogsmeade and plans for the winter holidays, while Kirsch became engrossed in a deep conversation on the finer points of the Quidditch World Cup that had happened last summer.

"I still think that the USA was robbed of a penalty shot in the knockout phase against Spain. Their Keeper totally had a Chaser in a headlock before the quaffle was in play." LaFontaine gestured wildly with their butterbeer, causing Perry to duck beside them to avoid getting hit.

"Still it was pretty cool to see the United States flatten Thailand. And that was before Lloyd caught the snitch…” Kirsch's voice trailed off as something caught his eye behind the Gryffindor Beater's head. "Wait a minute, isn't that scary hottie?"

"Who?" LaFontaine turned in their seat to squint through the smoky haze towards the table where the Keeper was pointing.

"The hottie in the leather pants! With the other hottie." Kirsch waved a hand at the booth occupied by Carmilla and Elle.

"Kirsch, what did I say about calling girls hottie?" Danny reprimanded, crossing her arms as she gave her friend a withering look.

"Sorry, Danny." Kirsch seemed to visibly deflate, his broad shoulders slouching as he leaned forward into their booth.
LaFontaine pointed at the romantic couple across the room with their pewter tankard. "Right… So do you mean Carmilla? The Slytherin Seeker?"

Kirsch nodded vigorously. "Yeah that's her… Wow, she really hasn't changed since the last time I saw her."

"And when was that?" Danny asked, genuine curiosity creeping into her voice.

"Let's see… it was about four years ago, right after the start of term. She was dueling her brother in the middle of a busy courtyard."

LaFontaine scoffed. "Yeah, Carmilla and her brother, William attacked Laura during flying lessons and then turned on each other when they failed. The whole school talked about it for weeks."

Kirsch's eyes widened, his mouth hanging open in shock. "Wait, is that what you think happened? Carmilla didn't attack Laura; she was trying to stop her brother!"

There was a brief pause as everyone in the booth took a moment to consider his words before the group erupted in unison.

"... What?!"

"Are you serious?"

Kirsch nodded as he took a sip of his drink. "Yeah, did no one tell you? Carmilla and Will were dragged off to the Headmistress' office for dueling. I was there, and let me tell you, Carmilla was trying to save you." He pointed his bottle to Laura, whose mouth was opened with shock.

While Carmilla and she had not exactly been on the best of terms, they had become at least civil to each other in the last four years. Although to be fair, their rivalry and initial mistrust (at least on Laura's end), had always been the consequence to the flying incident that involved the adoptive brother-sister duo. While Laura had always been hurt and a little confused as to why she deserved such treatment from the more elusive Slytherin girl, Laura was surprised to hear these turn of events. Maybe Carmilla wasn't as bad as she thought; maybe she was just a girl like her… And not what the rest of the student body labeled her: a girl with murderous intentions, just like her mother.

"Well now I feel like an asshole…" Laura's voice was muffled as she held her head in her hands.

"You're not the only one." Laf agreed as they took a long sip from their butterbeer, wishing it was something stronger like firewhisky.

"Wait, so if you thought Carmilla had helped curse little hotti- I mean, Laura…" Kirsch trailed off on the receiving end of one of Danny's death glares. "... Then what have you been doing around her all this time, you do have classes with the Slytherins, right?"

"Well… you see…" Laura began awkwardly, shifting in her seat as her eyes flickered to where the Slytherin in question had leaned in to whisper something in Elle's ear. Laura quickly glanced away, feeling her ears burn.

"We've been avoiding her." LaFontaine concluded with a sense of finality.

Perry leaned in her seat towards the newcomers. "Well, as much as we can, really. Our little band of friends have a nasty habit of running into to her."

"That's one way of putting it," Laf scoffed at her friend's tame description. "More like Laura and
Karnstein hate each other."

"We don't hate each other!" Laura exclaimed, resisting the urge to choke on her butterbeer.

"No... you're just rivals in every subject and always have to try to one-up each other in even the most menial of tasks." Perry answered in a snarky tone as she recalled the tension between Carmilla and Laura from the first week of classes four years ago. After years of careful observation, their rivalry consisted of light banter that just towed the line of playful, to sometimes a heated streak of malice towards the other girl. Honestly, it made Perry's head spin at the constant mood-changes between the Seekers.

"In my house, we just call that flirting." Kirsch replied, not noticing the glares from around the table and the cut-off gesture that LaFontaine was giving him out of Laura and Danny's view.

Danny pointedly ignored the Hufflepuff that was being lightly slapped by Perry in the arm. "Well, I'm still not sure how I feel about Karnstein. But if what you say is true, Kirsch, then I'll lay off her for now."

"I guess that's as good as I can hope for." Laura sighed as she thought over the messy situation.

"I still feel like an asshole..." LaFontaine concluded, finishing their butterbeer in one swallow.

"Great, just great! Now we can pile that on top of the list of things stressing me out right now! I have to apologize to Carm of all people on top of midterms?!" Laura exclaimed, her voice reaching an octave that would surely catch the attention of the other patrons if she continued on this self-destructive path.

"I'm sure you can wait till after the holidays. After all, what's a few more weeks compared to years of misunderstanding?"

Everyone stared at Kirsch, each person a little stunned at the boy's sudden wisdom.

"Well, maybe there's something we can do to keep your mind off everything?" JP suggested to Laura, dragging his eyes from the Hufflepuff boy to the Gryffindor. He spoke again while draining the last of his frothy drink. "A challenge or fun activity to keep off the edge."

Always up for a challenge, Danny quirked an eyebrow at the younger Ravenclaw. "What do you have in mind?"

JP smiled as he cocked his head at his friends, their full attention now trained on him.

"What do you know about the Patronus charm?"

[-][-][-]

Carmilla was leisurely strolling along the empty halls towards the library, a rare smile on her face as she recalled several fond moments from her date with Elle earlier that afternoon.

They had laughed with abandon and held hands as they entered the different shops that lined Hogsmeade, the scene before them almost picturesque in that each snow-covered shop looked like it belonged on a Christmas card. After visiting the infamous Shrieking Shack, they stopped by the Three Broomsticks for a pint of butter beer to warm up near the fire. Not long after, they lost track of time as they walked around the frozen shoreline of the lake before heading back to the castle. Once inside the castle, they had kissed goodnight in the Entrance Hall and promised to sneak off to somewhere more private sometime soon.
All in all, it had been perfect in almost every way.

Carmilla had to admit that she was a bit off put to notice that Laura and her usual group of friends had been caught staring at Elle and herself halfway through their date. Carmilla couldn't hear what they were saying, but judging by the prickling sensation that tingled on the back of her neck, she somehow knew they were talking about her. Not one for the attention during such an intimate moment, she and Elle left the local pub as soon as they had finished their drinks.

Now lost to her own thoughts, Carmilla almost missed the peal of laughter that came from an empty classroom a few doors down from the Slytherin's current position. Making sure to avoid making any extra noise, Carmilla quietly tiptoed down the hallway until she stood just outside the door, which had been left partially open, giving her a good view of the room within.

"What do we have here, Creampuff?" Carmilla whispered to herself as she watched the scene unfold before her, curiosity making her stay.

Laura and her gang of friends were standing in a circle, their wands pointing forward as they repeated the same incantation with limited success.

"Remember everyone! A Patronus is the physical embodiment of the soul." The young teenager that Carmilla recognized as the Ravenclaw, JP, correcting Danny's wand movement as he traveled around the circle giving instructions. "The Patronus represents that which is hidden, so the true form of your Patronus will only be revealed once you produce a corporal Patronus. You need to think of the happiest memory you have to reveal its form."

"Why is this so difficult?" Perry asked as she perfectly copied his movement, but still having no results.

"Well, this technique is extremely advanced, and very hard to master even as a fully fledged witch or wizard." JP explained as he watched the Hufflepuff's technique with a critical eye, but on finding no fault he moved on.

"Expecto Patronum!" Laura shouted, a burst of silvery mist erupting from the end of her wand. Carmilla felt herself smirk as she watched the silvery mist swirl in indistinguishable shapes, but dissipating.

"Well, if you know so much, why don't you perform it?" LaFontaine inquired, frustration creeping into their voice as they swished their wand in a neat circle without a trace of mist.

"Very well…" JP flicked his wand in a circular motion. "Expecto Patronum!"

With a flash of blinding light, a dazzling silver animal burst forth from the tip of his wand. The winged creature flew in a wide circle around the group of friends, the Patronus swooping dangerously close to the door where Carmilla watched in awe. Holding his arm out, the silvery Red-tailed Hawk latched onto JP's forearm with sharp talons and a mighty screech.

"Wow!" Laura's eyes widened in excitement as the Patronus flapped its wings.

"Bloody wicked." Laf spoke with admiration, clearly impressed with the Ravenclaw's success.

"How did you do that?" Kirsch asked, wiggling his fingers at the bird of prey that snapped its beak at the intruding digits playfully.

"Lots of practice… And a bit of private tutoring from an old family member. " JP replied as the hawk opened its beak in a final screech before dissolving in a burst of mist. "Having confidence and a
clear, joyful memory is essential to making this work. Anything less will only result in mist."

Carmilla watched in fascination from behind the cracked door as the students attempted the spell with renewed vigor under the watch of the experienced Ravenclaw.

"Good! Very good, Danny!" JP praised as the Gryffindor Prefect's wand produced a wisp of silver mist, a first for the long haired ginger. "Now hold on to that memory. Let it."

But whatever the Ravenclaw was going to say, he was cut off as a bright flash of light emitted from Laura's wand.

The Gryffindor gasped as waves of light pulsated from the willow, ammonite inlay wizarding tool. A jet of silver mist sprung forth until the Patronus took a corporeal form, the little creature gliding around the room before landing on her shoulder.

"It's a flying squirrel..." Laura said in awe as the little inquisitive creature crawled up her shoulder to nibble at her ear in an affectionate manner.

Danny appeared at her side, her own wand lowered as she smiled at the glowing creature with awe. "It's beautiful Laura, just like you."

Before Laura had a chance to answer, Carmilla turned away from the cracked door and quickly made her way to the nearest secret passageway that would lead her to the Slytherin dormitories in the dungeons. It had been a long day, and Carmilla suddenly found herself much needing the rest.

Or at least, that is what she told herself. Any other reason for her behavior would simply be ridiculous...

... Right?

-[-][-][-]

It was early April when Laura and LaFontaine were walking back into the Entrance Hall, soaking wet in their Gryffindor Quidditch robes. That afternoon's practice session had been brutal, but much needed as their team was slated to face Hufflepuff in the Semi-Finals for the House Cup in less than a month. And so, with the wind howling, and rain coming down in sheets, both players trudged back into Hogwarts hoping to sneak a plate of food for dinner before retiring to well deserved warm showers.

What both players did not expect upon entrance to the school was the buzz of conversation that followed them as they gingerly walked across the stone tiled flooring. The sound only intensified as they turned towards where hundreds of students and staff finished their dinner, the hall alive with hushed conversations. As they reached the double doors that were opened to the larger hall, several students watched the pair with frowns before they returned to their hushed conversations.

"Do I have something on my face?" LaFontaine asked as they wiped at their face with a gloved hand. There was a tension in the air which only came with misfortune that could stir up the student body like this.

The answer would be 'yes', as the Beater was covered head to toe in mud. Laura also having her fair share of an accidental mud bath as a mid air collision with her teammate had forced both of them to land in the dirt around the north goal posts. Luckily, neither person was badly hurt, but their Quidditch robes had seen better days. They left a trail of muddy water in their wake as they rushed into the Great Hall and made a bee-line for the Gryffindor table where their friends sat, talking in rapid hushed tones.
"Laura! LaFontaine! Thank goodness you're alright!" Perry stood up from the table and tackled the ginger in a hug, ignoring how their robes were soaking the Hufflepuff.

"Perry, what's going on? It looks like you've seen a ghost!" Laura exclaimed as she watched the Prefect release her death grip on her best friend.

"You mean you haven't heard?" Kirsch asked, setting down his chicken leg to lean across the table in shock.

"Heard what, Kirsch? We've been at Quidditch practice, remember?" LaFontaine gestured to their destroyed robes, a muddy puddle accumulating at their feet as they stood to the side of the bench.

"Scary hottie put someone in the hospital!" Kirsch exclaimed, ignoring the slap to the arm by Danny for his description of Laura's rival.

"... What?!"

Kirsch nodded in seriousness. "Yeah, apparently something happened just inside the Headmistress' office. Rumor has it that Carmilla was in a meeting with Professor McGonagall when something happened that made the room explode."

"Are you serious?" Laura asked in disbelief, having to grab onto LaFontaine for support at the news.

Perry gave the girl a brief nod in agreement. "Yes, a First year named Abigail Turning was caught in the blast. She was rushed off to St. Mungo's in a stretcher."

"And McGonagall?" Laura asked with trepidation lacing her voice.

"She somehow was able to put-up a defensive shield in time to protect herself." Danny answered since Kirsch mad his mouth full of mashed potatoes. "The Headmistress was being tended too in the Hospital Wing along with Carmilla herself, last I heard."

Perry frowned, lowering her voice as everyone leaned into her next sentence. "They're saying that it wasn't an explosion, but some form of dark magic..."

"Well I heard that Carmilla turned into a vampire and attacked them both and the explosion is just a cover up!" Kirsch explained around a mouthful of potatoes.

"Who told you that? Was it the same guy who's been shouting that Carmilla's a werewolf to anyone near the Charms corridor?" Danny asked, rolling her eyes at her friend's antics.

"Well, yes... but-" The Hufflepuff Keeper stuttered.

"Kirsch, just drop it." Danny chided as she rested a hand on the slouched boy.

JP set down the book he had been reading to glance over at the two soaked Quidditch players. "The only thing we know for sure is that everyone was ushered into the Great Hall while the Ministry of Magic investigated the incident."

"Then we should try to figure out what happened for ourselves." Laura slammed a fist on her open palm in determination.

"And how do you propose we do that, Hollis? A mass of students rushing to the Hospital Wing won't draw suspicion at all." Danny asked as she took a sip of pumpkin juice from her goblet.

Laura rolled her eyes at the Beater's sarcasm. "No, I'll go by myself."
Danny lowered her drink in surprise. "Really? I was kidding…"

Laura placed her hands on her hips in determination. "Well I'm serious. I'll go now and see if I can get in. It's like they always say, one's company but two's a crowd. I might be able to convince them to let me in if it's just me. I'll report back to you all when I get back. Besides, I should probably make sure my rival isn't dead or anything..." Laura finished awkwardly, looking down at her nails as she picked away at the stubborn mud that had accumulated around the nail-beds.

"Sounds like a solid plan to me." LaFontaine answered with a nod as they reached for a chicken wing on a platter nearby.

"I'll be right back!" Laura exclaimed as she grabbed a sandwich in one hand and ran down the hallway toward the Hospital Wing. She munched on the snack quickly and brushed her hands on the front of her already ruined Quidditch robes before rounding the final corner that led to her destination.

The Gryffindor Seeker frowned in frustration as she noticed that the closed double doors were being guarded by none other than Madame Pomfrey herself. She skidded to a halt just before she ran into the frowning healer.

Laura cleared her throat awkwardly and placed a gloved hand on the back of neck. "Good evening, Madame Pomfrey. I was hoping I could visit the Hospital Wing tonight."

"Do you have an injury sustained from practice that needs to be taken care of tonight? Although I highly doubt that since you ran here in such haste."

"No, I'm afraid not. I'm actually here to see a... uhh, friend of mine." Laura explained, hoping that her charming smile and honesty would grant her admission into the room beyond.

"I'm afraid I can't let you in there, Miss Hollis." The healer spoke firmly as she clasped her hands in front of her bright white uniform.

Laura cocked her head in confusion. "Why not? I just want to check and see if Carmilla's okay."

Madame Pomfrey gestured to the doors behind her with a wave of her hand. "I'm afraid no one is allowed inside right now except for staff, Ministry officials, and family."

"They called in her family?" Laura asked in concern, her eyebrows pinching together at the news.

"Yes, it seems the Headmistress and I agreed that the incident should be reported to Miss Karnstein's next of kin, Matska Belmonde."

Laura winced, realizing how bad the situation must be for Mattie to be called back to Hogwarts once more.

"Shall I inform Miss Karnstein of your visit?" The healer watched in fascination as a range of emotions flitted across the girl's face before her words sunk in.

"NO!" Laura half-screamed, as she coughed to try to cover up her actions. "I mean no thank you. I'll just be on my way then."

Madame Pomfrey raised an eyebrow at the young Gryffindor's outburst. "Well then, if you're sure. Best to be off before curfew. Off you go now!" The healer made a flapping gesture as she ushered the student from the Hospital Wing doors.
Laura scurried away from the watchful gaze of Madame Pomfrey, resolving to come back tomorrow and try her luck again in the evening once things had settled down in the castle.

True to her word, Laura waited until after dinner the next night and snuck away before the dessert plates were cleared away before making her way down the Hospital Wing. She was only two turns away from the doors when a sound of two pairs of rushing footsteps could be heard about to round the corner where Laura stood.

Not wanting to be seen sneaking her way into the Hospital Wing by a Professor, Laura quickly glanced around for somewhere to hide. Luck seemed to be on her side as to her right was a tapestry that had a secret passageway behind it.

The last of Laura's black uniform flitted behind the tapestry before the owners of the footsteps rounded the corner and stopped right where she had been standing seconds ago. Laura clasped a hand over her mouth to hide the gasp that had escaped her mouth as Carmilla practically crashed into Elle Sheridan in the Slytherin's frantic state as she came to a shuddering stop before the Ravenclaw Prefect.

"Please, Elle! I can explain!" Carmilla yelled as she bent over, gasping for breath and clutching at a stitch in her side. Her voice was strained and her eyes pleading as the Ravenclaw rapidly spun on her heel to face the red-faced Seeker.

"Then explain!" Elle roared, her hands shaking at her side as they gripped so hard that her knuckles were white.

Carmilla opened and closed her mouth several times, trying in vain to find the words to comfort her enraged lover. Her throat straining as if the action physically pained her. After a few seconds of trying, Carmilla finally spoke two broken words through gritted teeth.

"I - I can't…"

Elle closed her eyes and breathed sharply through her nose in frustration. When she next spoke her voice was calmer, but felt hollow as if devoid of emotion. "You know, I vouched for you, Carmilla. But, in the end… They were right about you."

"Elle…” Carmilla's voice cracked as her eyes watered at the Prefect's words.

Laura remained rooted at the spot, a war raging in her chest on what to do. She knew that this was a private conversation that she shouldn’t be listening to, but what else was her choice? To step out now would only cause more harm than good for the fighting pair. And to retreat down the wooden staircase behind her would only alert the quarreling girlfriends to Laura's presence too. Mustering her resolve, Laura gripped her hands at her side as she tried not to make a sound from her hiding spot.

Meanwhile, not knowing they had and unwilling audience, Elle shook her head and chuckled to herself humorlessly as she threw up her hands. "Don't trust a Slytherin, they said. Karnstein will only lie and hurt you. Do you even know what they say about you? That you are from a family of muggle murderers. I defended you because I never thought you could have done such a thing… Until yesterday."

"Elle, please…”

"Carmilla, they're saying you attacked someone! A First year girl!" Elle's voice reverberated around the stone hallway. Laura had to take shallow breaths to avoid being heard from behind the tapestry directly next to the arguing pair of girls.
"It - it was an accident!" Carmilla took a step towards the other girl, Elle in turn stepping backward as if afraid to let the Slytherin get too close. Carmilla's face drained of all color as her hand closed around the empty air before falling uselessly to her side.

"She had to be taken to St. Mungo's! You were lucky they didn't expel you!" Elle shouted as she jabbed a finger at the girl who was now openly crying, tear tracks now adorned Carmilla's ashened face.

"I didn't mean to hurt her!"

"But you did, didn't you… And, for some unknown reason, you can't tell me why. Was it even an accident?"

"...What?" Carmilla looked taken aback as if she had been physically slapped. "How can you say that? Elle, you know me."

"Do I?" Elle spoke, her lower lip quivering with anger as she spoke through gritted teeth. "You never opened up to me, not even once! Not really… And now, I don't even know who you are, what you are."

Carmilla choked back a sob, both hands covering her quivering jaw. "Elle, I…"

A sharp look of hardened narrowed eyes stopped the Slytherin from completing her sentence. Elle took a moment to glance up and down at her now ex-girlfriend. When she next spoke, her voice was cold.

"You're a monster."

"Elle, wait! Please… Elle! ELLE!"

Carmilla's cries echoed off the hallowed halls as she pleaded with her lover to stay. Tears streamed down her face and sobs shook her body as Carmilla fell to the floor, wrapping her arms around her chest in pain.

But the girl's cries went unanswered, as the Ravenclaw's footsteps faded away.

Elle was gone.

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End Notes

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