

SCENE 1: ROWAN'S LOG

SOUND: TAPE RECORDER STARTS

SOUND: OUTSIDE WALKING SOUNDS

ROWAN

(sounding like they don't want to
be there)

This is Rowan Green, recording, once again, alone in the middle of a field. Unfortunately. Well, unfortunately is pretty relative. If you're Corin and you've decided to go through my things and listen to my secret private logs, then it's not unfortunate for you because you're the reason I'm out here in the first place. Also, don't go through my stuff. I may go through yours, but that's only because you're absolutely keeping secrets from me. But if you're , then yeah this is me unfortunate.

For the first time in weeks, this is probably the last thing I want to be doing. Believe it or not, I'd actually rather be back at Corin's house, reading through more of their old books, maybe even learning a useless spell or two if I'm lucky. And it's not that I don't want to be doing any of this anymore, that's kinda the opposite of what's going on.

SOUND: ROWAN SIGHS

ROWAN

You remember how at the end of my last tape, after I found that weird rift thing in the garden, all of the staircases started to crumble and fall apart? Well, I thought it was just because I'd been walking around in there, disturbing the way things had been set up, just because I was probably the first person who even went near that place in decades. And now I'm not so sure that's the case. I mean, maybe it is. Maybe it's normal

for old staircases to fall apart and then for those same staircases and the garden around them to disappear without a trace.

Now, you might be saying to yourself, "Rowan, you've seen enough weird magic stuff happening in the past weeks. An entire garden disappearing shouldn't be too surprising." And maybe you're right. Maybe all of this is my new normal and I should be used to it by now. But I'm not and that's clearly not even the biggest problem here. The biggest problem isn't that the garden disappeared, not even when you add in the fact that that weird rift was there. No, the biggest problem with all of this is that nobody even remembers the garden was there in the first place.

The day after I was in the garden, I mentioned to my parents that I walked past there the day before. Nothing specific, I wasn't looking to make any major mistakes. I just kinda wanted to see how they'd respond when I told them I went to the one place I'm not supposed to go. I was expecting irritation, maybe a few questions about why, but the last thing I expected was for them to not even know what I was talking about. I tried to figure out what was going on with them, but I couldn't do much. They may not remember the garden, but they're still my parents, and they'll still get mad at me if I, in their words, "act like I deserve more than I already get from them." I haven't spoken to either of them since then. After all of that happened, I checked in with Corin, but they still remembered it, so I knew there had to be something weird going on. Long story short, I went over to where the garden is. Or, well, used to be. Because it's not there anymore. Gone without a trace. Like it was never even there. Ever since that whole

incident, Corin's been trying to keep me from going out on these little trips, and honestly I can't blame them. After what happened at that place, I'm not looking to get myself killed just because Corin wants me to look for traces of magic that they could just as easily find on their own.

And yet, here I am. It was nice at first, getting to stick around Corin's house a little bit more. They, um, they actually started teaching me some more magic, like the useful stuff. I still have to read through their books, of course, they haven't changed much, but now I'm starting to that understand how all of that abstract theoretical stuff in the books works when you actually do the magic. And Corin's a surprisingly good teacher, all things considered. Like, they clearly know what they're doing and when they finally get over their inability to willingly communicate with me, they're pretty fun to be around. They haven't told me anything about that ring I found or where they came from, but we'll get there eventually. My inability to leave something alone once I want answers can be very persuasive.

(a little sadder, like Rowan doesn't want to think about this, doesn't want to talk about it, but they know they have to)
It should be easy, especially since I've been spending so much time at Corin's house.

SOUND: SHORT PAUSE

ROWAN

My, uh, my parents, the other day, I mentioned to them how much I've been learning by being around Corin. It was a mistake and I should have known it, but I'd just gotten a spell to work that I'd been having trouble with and

I was too excited, so I messed up. They didn't like hearing about that, they haven't liked hearing about Corin at all, but I guess this was the last straw. They decided that me learning magic was just too much for them, they didn't want me to be doing it anymore. But, um, I told them that I wouldn't stop, so they told me that my only other option was to pack my things and leave.

SOUND: SHORT, HEAVY PAUSE

ROWAN

So now I live with Corin. And it's not that bad. It's not too much different from normal, I just don't leave Corin's house at the end of the day. I'm pretty lucky that they were alright with letting me stay at their place, I just...

SOUND: ROWAN SIGHS

ROWAN

I always figured this would all be temporary, ya know? Since all of this started, since Corin showed up, I kept telling myself that none of this would be permanent. That Corin would eventually leave, and I'd have to figure out how to deal with that. I assumed I'd just stay with my parents until I could get out of here, because without a way out and with Corin gone, I don't really have any other options. But now...now things are different. And I don't know what to do with that. If Corin ever does leave, then I don't know where I'll be able to go. Sure, they like me enough to keep me around for now, but who's to say if they'll still want to be stuck with me once they decide they're done with this place?

SOUND: SHORT PAUSE, LIKE ROWAN'S TRYING TO THINK OF WHAT TO SAY

ROWAN

(quietly, but heavily)

I'd thought everything was gonna be okay. I'd thought I could do what I've been doing and nothing would change. And the problem is that I like living with Corin more than I liked living with my parents. They actually take me seriously, they talk to me, even if it's not about their past...and I don't know what it says about me that I feel more at home there than in the house where I grew up.

(absolutely refusing to feel sad from here on out)

But, that's not why I'm here today and I think I may absolutely lose it if I think about any of that stuff any more than I absolutely have to.

SOUND: SHORT PAUSE

ROWAN

I probably should explain what I'm doing here today. I mean, maybe you don't really care about any of that, but I don't know what I'm gonna do here if I don't have some sort of distraction, so you, whoever the hell you are, are gonna get to hear about what Corin's sent me out to do this time.

At least I don't think anything too weird should be happening today. Not like what happened in the garden, or the cemetery, or in the woods that first day. I certainly hope not. I think I've had my fill of almost dying for reasons that nobody will tell me about. Maybe I'd be a little more open to the idea if I was getting some answers out of it, but until that's the case, I'm not exactly excited to be doing this today. I'm just lucky it doesn't look as likely to kill me as the last trip. The other day, Corin told me that they heard about some weird cottage in the woods and they wanted me to see if there was anything going on there. If I can be honest for

a second here, there's nothing in there. I've been around there a few times when I was wandering around the woods, and it's just a run down old shack, not enough to be considered a cottage really, but Corin seemed so excited, I didn't have the heart to tell them the truth just yet. Plus, I wasn't looking for them to send me somewhere any more dangerous than a rundown shack just yet.

SOUND: SHORT PAUSE

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS STOP

ROWAN

(confused)

Wait a second, it should be right around here. I was here just a few weeks ago and it was . Is right here that...?

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS START UP AGAIN

ROWAN

Is that it? Back there? No, it can't. It's supposed to be right here. Alright, I take it all back, this may end up getting me killed after all. If I die out here and someone finds this tape, it was Corin's fault. That's only sort of a joke. But, um, no, that looks like the place that was here before. Or, like the place that was here it all fell apart. I may before regret this later, but I'm gonna go see if the door's unlocked. For the first time ever, I think I may prefer Corin's boring old books to all of this.

SOUND: PAUSE AS ROWAN WALKS OVER

SOUND: DOOR OPENS

SOUND: ROWAN STEPS IN THE BUILDING, SWITCHING OUTSIDE WALKING SOUND FOR INSIDE WALKING SOUND

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES

SOUND: OUTSIDE SOUNDS FADE OUT

SOUND: ROWAN KEEPS WALKING DOWN THE HALL

ROWAN

(even more confused than before)
Ok, there is something definitely wrong here. You can't see any of this, and I'm honestly not so sure you'd want to if you could. I mean, there's no way I'm in the same little shack that used to be here. This is almost like...a . And not a normal sort maze of maze. The whole place is made out of stone, and it's definitely been here a while, there's moss all over the walls. There's not even a ceiling, just an open night sky, the only light coming from the stars, but it's not dark at all in here. Um, on all of the walls, there are mirrors. But not normal mirrors. They all have different frames and don't even show the same things.

Like, this one over here just shows me, nothing different about it, but another one looks like it's almost a window to somewhere else in the woods. I don't even want to know what happens if I touch any of them. That's practically a guaranteed way for me to die in here.

SOUND: PAUSE AS ROWAN KEEPS WALKING DOWN THE

HALL SOUND: WALKING ABRUPTLY STOPS

ROWAN

Wait a minute. This-this mirror. Some of these mirrors have shown places I've never even seen or heard or read about before, but this one...this one has the crest from Corin's ring on the other side. I don't...I don't know where this is or what's going on. But maybe, maybe if I can get through to the other side, then I can figure out what's going on with them and why they sent me here. I know, I said I I know wouldn't do anything stupid, I wouldn't do anything that would just get me

killed, but I can't leave this
place without knowing where they were
before they were here, where that ring
came from, I can't leave without
knowing who Corin really is.

SOUND: SHORT PAUSE

ROWAN
I'll do it. I don't care enough right
now. I'm tired of not knowing what's
going on.

SOUND: WEIRD PORTAL SOUND

ROWAN
What the hell?

SOUND: MIRROR GLASS SHATTERING

SOUND: ALL THE OTHER MIRRORS SHATTERING

SOUND: ROWAN STARTS WALKING AGAIN, THIS TIME A LITTLE FASTER
THAN BEFORE

ROWAN
(a little scared)
I shouldn't have done that. I need to
get out of here.

SOUND: PAUSE AS ROWAN GETS OUT (MIRRORS KEEP SHATTERING AT
DIFFERENT VOLUME LEVELS)

SOUND: DOOR OPENS

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES

SOUND: OUTSIDE NOISES COME BACK AND MIRROR SHATTERING SOUNDS
STOP

ROWAN
I have no clue what that was, but
whatever it was, it wasn't good. I
don't think I should tell Corin about
that.

SOUND: TAPE RECORDER STOPS

SCENE 2: CORIN'S LOG

SOUND: TAPE RECORDER STARTS

CORIN

Rowan should be getting back soon, so I don't have too much time for this, but this is Corin Thorne, back for another log.

(sarcastically, this is really the first time we're hearing Corin make a joke)

I know it's unlikely that anyone will ever hear this, but if someone does I'd like to formally apologize for being an absolute mess, but if you have any idea of who I am, you should have expected this.

SOUND: CORIN LAUGHS. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THEY'VE LAUGHED SINCE THEY LEFT THEIR HOME. IT FEELS GOOD, BETTER THAN THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD

CORIN

But, back to why I'm talking to myself alone in this house...I'm actually not entirely sure what I'm doing here, I just needed to do something to keep the quiet from getting too bad, and having some way to get my thoughts out of my head is the best I can do right now. At least lately it hasn't been as bad. For a little over two weeks now, Rowan's been living here too. I know it's not great, why they're here to begin with. They only had to come to me for help because their parents kicked them out for wanting to learn magic, but it's a lot better than being stuck alone all the time.

SOUND: SHORT PAUSE

CORIN

I just don't want them to get caught up in anything they don't want to just because they don't have anywhere else to go. Hopefully they won't want to leave once they find out why I'm really here. I don't think they have anywhere else to go, and even if they end up hating me for what I've done, and I wouldn't blame them if they do, I don't want them to get hurt.

It's stupid, caring about them so much, I know I'm the last person who should be forming any sort of attachments right now, but...

SOUND: CORIN SIGHS, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO WORD THEIR THOUGHTS

CORIN

Rowan reminds me of myself when I was younger. They know less than I did then, and they've been through a lot less, but they're not too different. I may be selfish, but I wish I didn't have to leave this behind. I mean, think about it. This is what I wanted to do, to teach magic. And that's what got me sent here in the first place. So why should I have to leave it? Isn't this a fitting fate?

But I can't. I have to fix what I broke or else a lot of people might get really hurt. All those rifts that have been popping up? The ones that Rowan found in the woods and the cemetery and the garden? Those sorts of rifts only show up when a powerful spell has been done extremely wrong. I'm the reason they're here, and I'm starting to realize that the only way to get them not to tear apart this world, erasing everyone and everything in it from existence, is to go back to where I'm from.

I just, for once, don't want to leave. Rowan may not trust me all the way yet, but they're the closest thing to family I've had since...since I had to leave. But I can't let them die. Not because of me. I won't be the reason any more people get hurt. And if that means I have to leave this all behind soon, then that's what I'll do, as long as it keeps everyone else safe.

SOUND: TAPE RECORDER STOPS