

November 3, afternoon

Genevieve had been magically body-swapped with an actual teenage girl. The person in the rearview was still whispering, but she was moving, gesturing, even *smiling*.

"Why do you need your phone? Why don't you just talk to everyone like this?" Will asked as they stopped at a red light.

Genevieve froze. She kept her eyes fixed on Sage, who spoke: "That's not how it works. Like, at all. If you're scared of heights, nobody says 'Just jump off a building?'"

"Yeah, 'cause you'd die," Will said.

"Ugh. No one says, 'Get a pet snake?' to someone afraid of snakes." The light turned green. "Gen wants you to explain how you found her sister. And what – right at that stop sign – is your special ability?"

Will laughed. "Special ability?"

Genevieve smacked Sage's shoulder in the rearview; Genevieve's face made it clear that her friend had added that last part.

"Yeah." Sage did not break eye contact.

"Well," Will lowered his voice. "I shouldn't tell you this, but –"

"Next left, then it's two blocks down on the corner," Sage interrupted. Genevieve hit her again. "What? He was gonna miss the turn! Anyway, go on."

"My ability is that, if I concentrate real hard, I can recharge my phone." Will paused. "As long as I have a phone charger."

"Lame," Sage said. "Just up here, past the minivan. I expected better from you, crazy man."

"Fine, what are your special abilities?"

"I can vanish, kinda. For a time, anyway." She stared at him, face defiant. "Genevieve has a bird sidekick."

Will rolled his eyes as he parked in front of Sage's house. "I think mine's more useful. Unless – does the bird have wifi?"

Genevieve leaned over and whispered to Sage. Will waited. Sage relayed the message: "Gen says that's not funny, she's worried because he was following you in the forest and she lost him after he saw you faint. She also says that you don't need to play hard to get just because -- ow!"

Fine!" Genevieve stopped her assault on Sage's shoulder. "Let's get inside, I wanna get into my brother's room before my mom gets home."

Will got out of the car. *Did he even have a special ability?* The first thing he thought of was Sophie. *Her voice in my head. That would be a shitty ability -- "You hear your worst enemy when you don't want to." But she doesn't think it's hers, either.*

He followed the girls into Sage's house. *And then there are the dreams...the dreams were mostly just me and Anna until that last one. And the things that happened, the things I was told, came true...*

There was a big flat-screen TV in the living room and a dingy sofa opposite. *Genevieve. She had been there when I regained consciousness. He hadn't thought about how coincidental it was.*

They headed up the stairs. *And Genevieve just happened to be there when I regained consciousness. Which is more likely, that Sophie and I are the only two people who have abilities, or...*

Sage's room was a nightmare of pink and stuffed animals. Will sat at Sage's desk. "Did, um, your bird have a name?"

The spell was over, Genevieve's mask back in place. A poster of a floppy-haired boy kept watch over the bed.

"Motley. Like a jester's outfit. The colors," Genevieve's phone said.

"A starling," Will said, only half realizing what he was saying.

Sage was rummaging next door. Genevieve nodded once, slowly. She tapped quickly on her phone: "Explain."

"Sorry if it was weird what I said in the car," Will said.

Across the street, a garage door opened, and an SUV pulled in.

"Which time?"

Will smirked. "Fair. The thing about being 'crazy.' I saw you kind of pull away. Um," he hesitated. Genevieve's eyes were wide. "Sophie has been talking to me. In my mind. Like...her thoughts."

"That's. So. Wild." Sage said as she walked back in, carrying a pink notebook. "So...she told you how to find the body? But that's weird that she didn't tell us. Or Genevieve, anyway. I wonder how she knew?"

Sage sat down next to Genevieve, the notebook in her lap.

“Why does your brother have a pink notebook?” Will asked.

Sage wrinkled her nose. “Boys can like pink, don’t be so stereotype-y. But it’s not his, he found it a while ago but only just told me about it. I guess he was scared of the police.”

“I thought he didn’t do anything.”

Sage and Genevieve shared a look. “So, that would work out great for him if he looked like you. But things aren’t so simple when you’re brown. So...”

Sage broke off. A loose piece of paper was under the front cover of the notebook. “What...the hell,” she said. Genevieve leaned over, her brow creased, then whispered something.

“I know it’s not her handwriting, it’s *mine*,” she said, frowning. “It’s how it looks when I write with my left, to disguise it. But why would I sign it as her?”

Sage beckoned Will over. “I have no memory of writing this,” she said, and pointed to the slip of the paper.

River. This is strange to ask. Please do me a favor and go meet Will at Table Rock tomorrow. It’s important. – Anna

This was why they had met. And that day, River had grabbed something just before Will had arrived.

“Did your brother say when he found the notebook?”

“About a month ago.” Sage’s voice shook.

The facing page of the notebook had a caption: *The mark of The Dark One, The Skull Beneath the Skin, The Devourer.*

Will’s stomach folded inward like the flap of a cardboard box. Above the caption was a sketch of a square spiral, two lines coiled around each other at right angles.

Just like the one he had seen on Anna’s body.