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Writing a Time Travel Novel

Kailen Nourse

Honors Project

Submitted to the University Honors Program
at Bowling Green State University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with
University Honors

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1. Sarajevo

It was a beautiful summer day in Sarajevo. The savory smell of baking bread and melted feta filled the air, as did the chatter of excited people: the Archduke of Austria was in town on parade. All seemed well that day, unless you knew what was coming. In the ten years they had been together, Henry and his apprentice, Isaac, had ensured many historical events, but nothing like this. And never had they done it with sandwich boards.

Isaac shifted uncomfortably beneath his sandwich board. “What are we doing here, Henry?”

“Advertising a sandwich shop,” Henry said calmly before covering his English with some Croatian promotions to passers-by. “*Sendvi i! Nabavite vaše sendvi a!*”

“Not what I meant.”

“Shh,” Henry admonished, “not so loud.” They were trying to blend into the texture of Sarajevo, and speaking English when they were trying to pass for locals was not going to help.

“I mean, should we be doing this?” Isaac asked. After a moment had passed and Henry had not answered, he shouted, “*Burek! Sendvi i!*” for good measure.

Henry sighed. “It’s for the good of the order, you know that.”

“But,” Isaac whispered, “is it worth—”

Henry knew what his apprentice was thinking. They had been through this before. “Everything happens for a reason. *Kupi naše sendvi e! Najbolji sendvi i u gradu!*”

Just then, a scruffy-looking man in his twenties walked by, looking distracted and disappointed— though maybe Henry only thought the latter because he knew the young man’s story. Henry recognized the man’s face from the history books, the articles he had

read, the research he had done preparing for this very moment—he knew the young man’s name even though they had never met, because later that day, he was to change history forever. *For better or for worse*, as Henry always told his apprentice. Henry looked over at Isaac, prodding him to say something, to keep doing what he had been doing. Isaac hesitated. He had to have recognized the man, too. Maybe Isaac could not tell, as Henry could, when history was about to change. There was something in the air that he could not quite explain to someone without his many years of experience. Henry had wondered before if it was all in his head. Either way, he knew he had to act.

Henry stepped out towards the young man, crying out his usual phrases. The world stopped for a moment: it was always this way when History was about to change. Everything slowed just slightly—people’s chatter, insects’ humming, cars and carriages moving out on the street. It was as if the entire world were eavesdropping on a conversation, pausing to listen and see what would happen. After a moment, time resumed again, ticking on as if it had never stopped. The young man glanced at the board fastened around Henry and kept walking. Henry elbowed Isaac, who took the cue to look back and observe the young man.

“He went in,” Isaac reported.

Henry looked at his watch. “Good. Looks like we have about twenty minutes.”

Isaac nodded. *Before the motorcade comes around*. They had just given Gavrilo Princip an opportunity to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand. If Princip succeeded, it meant the deaths of over 8 million people around the world. Isaac stuffed his hands in his pockets. Henry knew he was feeling guilty about hesitating, and about what they were doing, though the two of them had spent months preparing for that small moment.

They stashed the sandwich boards in a nearby alley and Henry bought some *burek* from a street vendor. Henry offered Isaac one, but he did not eat it. It was almost as if Isaac was the one who had to go through with the assassination, considering how nervous he was.

They waited on the riverbank near the Latin Bridge. Henry knew they could not be much closer without attracting attention. After all, it would be difficult to explain to the Guild why two of its members ended up in photos in a history book—the conspiracy theorists did not need any more fodder. Henry pulled a small pair of fold-up binoculars from his pocket. They stood there for a while as Henry finished his *burek* and pretended to watch the birds. If anyone knew what they were looking for, the two of them would look suspicious to the authorities, and Henry could not have that. Henry listened the familiar sound of Isaac wrinkling his rolling paper and smelled his tobacco. It made Henry itch for a cigarette, but he could not distract himself today. Henry took another bite of his *burek*. Isaac struck a match and coaxed his cigarette into burning.

In his peripheral vision, Henry noticed Isaac checking his watch repeatedly—a nervous tic he knew all too well—and glancing down at the river racing by below. Isaac always hated the waiting around that went along with their surveillance duties. Henry did not mind it so much, and Isaac could survive with the help of a cigarette or two, but today Isaac was more on-edge than usual. To be fair, they did not usually deal with assassinations that had the potential to change the world, and they had twenty minutes to kill.

Henry knew that Isaac was wondering if they had made a huge mistake. Henry himself knew that kinds of things were bound to happen eventually, no matter the trigger. He knew that Isaac was wondering if only he could prevent this one tragedy—but Isaac

knew better than that. Henry frequently reminded his apprentice that they were not heroes: if anything, they were glorified journalists.

Henry knew as he watched through his fold-up binoculars what he was to see across the Latin Bridge. His apprentice, Isaac, knew it, too, but rather than face the horrible reality of what was to happen, he leaned back against the embankment which separated them from the Miljacka river.

Henry kept his eyes fixed on the images through the binoculars: a couple crossing the street hand-in-hand, a gaggle of street urchins slipping into an alleyway between two buildings, a woman hanging the wash out on a line. It was no good to have them both tense on the job. Usually it was Henry's job to be tense, and Isaac's to make him laugh it off.

"I think you're over-thinking it," Henry said.

"I don't," Isaac said. "Any thinking is over-thinking to the Guild."

"That's not true." Henry adjusted his binoculars. "You know that."

Isaac did not answer right away: he took a long drag on his cigarette. He had to know Henry was tenser than usual because of the job, so it would be best not to push it, that he ought to wait until they had done what they came for... but that was not Isaac. Henry sighed and prepared for the worst. Instead, all that answered him was silence. Occasionally Henry compelled himself to mutter something in Croatian to keep up their charade. Twenty minutes passed very slowly.

"I'm sorry," Isaac said at last, smoke pouring from his mouth. "About before. I shouldn't have hesitated."

Henry did not remove his gaze from what was about to happen across the river: the motorcade had turned the corner, coming into range. "It's all right."

Two gunshots punctured the membrane of happiness that had settled over the city, a remnant of the morning's celebration. Henry fixed his eyes on the blood blooming through the archduke's shirt, his wife collapsing onto him, the others in the car screaming at the gory sight of the two of them. He scanned the crowd for Gavrilo Princip, to no avail. Just as expected.

"Mortal wounds to both Franz and Sophie, from the looks of it," Henry said after a moment, lowering the binoculars and offering them over his shoulder to Isaac. Isaac shook his head. Henry shrugged and pocketed the binoculars. "Our work here is done."

Isaac nodded, hastily putting out his cigarette, and followed Henry in the opposite direction of the gunfire. They walked in near silence until they reached a shabby looking apartment building. It appeared to be abandoned—of course, it was supposed to. All of the Guild's safe houses were set up in abandoned buildings with city ordinances dating back too long still protecting them. Henry pushed through the door of the building—unlocked—and Isaac followed him inside. Both of them pulled out identical pocket watches and made to adjust them.

"Back to 1891, yeah?" asked Isaac.

"Yes. March 13th. We're expected at 4:30, so let's shoot for 3:25 to be safe." Isaac nodded. Sometimes the time stream was a little unreliable, so it was better to be safe than sorry—plus, Henry believed that since they had the ability to time travel, there was no excuse not to be punctual.

The two men adjusted their watches to read 03/13/1891, 15:25:00. Their watches could be set much more specifically than most, and they had to be that way. As they synchronized their watches, they began synchronizing their breathing patterns. They had been trained, like snipers, to strike between breaths for the best accuracy. Once their

watches were synched, Henry took Isaac's watch and vice versa. With each watch attached to both men (either by its chain or the man's hand), they would not get separated when they traveled back.

“Ready?”

Isaac nodded, and they began counting down in unison: “Three, two, one—”

At the very same instant, they hit a plunger on their watches, and everything in the present moment ground to a halt. The pair of them were stuck in limbo for several long moments—a time when everything was still, not past, present, or future, just was, where they could not turn back—before everything started moving backwards, except, of course, for them. People, animals, and even buildings around them moved and shifted through time. Time sped past in reverse, faster and faster until everything and everyone became a blur.

Then Henry blinked, and suddenly everything had shifted back into place. They were twenty years into the past now, and in what the average person would assume was the lobby of an extremely average hotel. There were modest heather gray draperies all around the room, and a few rectangular couches were positioned carefully along the walls. Above the reception desk, there was a polished silver sign that read, “Welcome Travelers!” above the seal of the Time Travelers' Guild. As simple as it was, Henry recognized it immediately: it was home. Or, at least, as close as he had to a home.

Henry squeezed his apprentice's shoulder, pulling him out of his usual post-travel daze. “Come on, let's get cleaned up. Debriefing in an hour.”



Henry always cleaned himself up after exiting a time period. He believed it was important to move on, to get the smell of that other time and place off before embarking

on something new. There was something therapeutic about washing the day off of himself. He was just toweling his hair dry when he heard a knock at his door. It was Isaac, dressed but disheveled: his shirt was hanging out of his trousers, his dark hair was going everywhere at once, his sleeves were rolled up, his suit jacket was folded over his arm. Henry knew it had been too good to be true. He opened the door, but kept the chain secured.

“Isaac, can this wait?”

“No.”

By the look on Isaac’s face, Henry knew he would not get to his meeting on time unless he heard Isaac out. He closed the door, undid the chain, and let his apprentice in. Henry’s room was about the size of a standard hotel room, and it contained all of his personal effects. To an outsider, it might appear to be the residence of an eclectic collector of anachronisms. Travelers did not take much on a given journey, unless they would be living there for a considerable amount of time, like Henry had in revolutionary France. He had collected quite a few relics from that time period, including his tea set and wing-backed chairs. The room felt smaller with all the large furniture, but Henry liked having it there all the same. The room consisted of a larger living area where all the furniture was crammed— a single bed, a nightstand, a large armoire, a polished writing desk, two wingback chairs, a coffee table, a chaise lounge, a bookcase full of books, and a small kitchen area in one corner, where Henry kept his tea paraphernalia (teapot, several teacups (bone china), a tea kettle on a tiny gas burner)—and a small bathroom.

Isaac sat down on Henry’s bed, despite the fact that there was other seating in the room. Henry settled into one of his wing-backed chairs.

“What’s bothering you?” Henry asked.

Isaac dug the heels of his hands into his eye-sockets. “Henry, this is really hard.”

Henry really did not want to have this conversation now. He and Isaac were expected downstairs in twenty minutes to go over what they had done in Sarajevo.

Isaac looked up and continued, “I know how much you trust in the Guild, but... they can’t be right about everything. What if we hadn’t been there? Maybe Franz and Sophie would have survived, maybe all those people would have—”

“I understand that you’re having doubts,” Henry said. He placed a reassuring hand on his apprentice’s knee. “Especially at this point, before taking the trials. After all, it’s frightening to make a lifetime commitment to anything. They say a man often experiences this same feeling on the eve of his wedding.”

“I never will.”

He was right, of course. Travelers associated with the Guild were not supposed to make that kind of emotional connection to anyone. They had to be able to come and go freely from different time periods, and a relationship like that would only tie them down. They were also discouraged from inciting that kind of emotional attachment in another person: Travelers took an oath of celibacy upon their official initiation to the Guild, though not all kept it.

“Is that what this is about?” Henry asked.

Isaac shifted uncomfortably. “Partly. I can’t even see straight lately. I’ve been able to ignore feelings like that before, or at least suppress them, but I don’t think I can go on for much longer like this.”

“Let’s not get drastic,” Henry said. He would not normally suggest what he was about to suggest, but he knew that Isaac had to be going through hell right now. At 18, Isaac’s body was pulling him in all kinds of directions that did not coexist well with his

sensible mind. Not to mention that biologically this was when he would be at his sexual peak, and he had no real outlet for that. “Maybe you just need to... get it out of your system.”

“How do you mean?”

Henry had to say this carefully. “You could go someplace where the services you need are rendered. And use a prophylactic. No harm done.” He said this convince himself as much as his apprentice. He knew he should not be giving Isaac this advice, but it would be better than what his own mentor had made him go through.

Isaac considered this. “I suppose.”

“All right then, problem solved,” Henry said, rising from his chair. “Look sharp, we’re going to see the Council. Tuck in your shirt. Comb your hair.” He mussed his apprentice’s hair affectionately on his way back into his bathroom.

“Henry—”

“We’ll talk more about this later.” He made sure Isaac would hear the note of finality in his voice. Isaac seemed to understand and straightened himself up.

The two of them tied their ties side by side in front of the mirror. It was always odd to associate something so mundane with so many times and places: they had done this in Paris in 1790, before serving at a state dinner in the 1810s, for a business meeting in Japan in the 1970s. Even after all of these years, it was one of the few aspects of time travel that Henry was never able to wrap his mind around. He and Isaac both had their coping mechanisms in dealing with the constant feeling of flux: something constant that they seldom had to adapt to suit the time period. Henry’s was tea and Isaac’s had recently become cigarettes. Henry figured that it was part of becoming a full member of the Guild: nothing official, but every man needed something to hang onto throughout time and space.

Henry looked on as Isaac tied his tie, as he had already finished with his own tie. His apprentice had a slight silhouette, but he still had muscle. He was really starting to look and behave like a man. It was hard to believe how quickly he had seemed to grow up. Isaac turned to Henry as he finished his four-in-hand knot, searching his mentor's gaze for approval. Henry smiled like a proud father and straightened his own tie. They shrugged into their suit jackets and started down to the hearing room.



The hearing room is far larger than necessary: at least it seemed that way to Henry. There were only two tables and three chairs in the cavernous room. It made Henry feel small. It reminded him of how insignificant they were in the grand scheme of things, of all History. That was probably the point, now that he thought about it.

Gray draperies stretched the length of the crème colored walls, making the cathedral-like ceilings seem even higher than they already were. The dark hardwood floor was polished within an inch of its life. Other than that, the room was pretty non-descript. The only object of visual interest in the room was the painting that was behind the high chair where the Council member sat. It depicted two knights clashing in battle, and one knight was clearly dominating the other. The stronger knight bore the seal of the Time Travelers' Guild on his chest plate, and the other's had an hourglass whose sand flowed upwards: the symbol of the Carpe Heri Society.

The painting was a familiar one to members of the Guild, as a copy hung in every safe house's hearing room. It was propaganda, Henry knew, but most people in the Guild accepted it as fact. Loyal Travelers, anyway. It was a reminder of the schism. Originally, there was only one secret society of Time Travelers. Long ago, a group of particularly dedicated historians decided they should study history from close up. All was well at first,

but some of the men began questioning whether they should just sit and watch events unfold if they could do something, and potentially change the world for the better. Naturally, there was some disagreement, thus the Carpe Heri Society was born, and the Time Travelers' Guild had to follow. Because of this, the Guild became tough on loyalty. Deserters were not tolerated. Once a man joined the Guild, he was in it for life. Recruiting was done in orphanages, places where a missing child or two wouldn't be missed. The Guild painted themselves as the more moral and gentlemanly organization. After all, the CHS let women and blacks in. White men could melt more easily into the crowd, were less likely to be noticed. White men were the ones who made history so they should be the ones to ensure it stayed the way it did. It was in their best interest to do so.

Henry looked up the tall table at the acting Council member, his white hair was combed back neatly and his suit looked crisp: Henry was glad they had given themselves time to freshen up. Council members were the equivalent of nomadic business executives in the Time Travelers' Guild. There was a Council member stationed in each of the 16 regions around the globe, and he was responsible for the history of his own region. He tended to camp out in a specific year that was relatively quiet for his region, where he could oversee the Travelers ensuring history in his area. When he was first admitted to the Guild, Henry wanted to work his way up to the Council or maybe even being one of the Four Masters, but now he felt sorry for them, stuck in one time period doomed to hearing about other Travelers' adventures. *Poor old codger*, he thought. *He'll be at this until he dies.*

The Council member shifted what Henry assumed was the pre-mission paperwork on his desk, peering down at it through his reading glasses.

“Henry Ellison and Isaac Storey... Archduke Franz Ferdinand?” he asked. Henry clarified with a quick nod. “Please,” he added, gesturing to the squat table and chairs intended for the Travelers. On it sat a high-tech recording device from a time Henry had not been to yet, he guessed early 21st century. But he never was good with technology.

“No,” the Council member amended as Henry and Isaac sat, looking at his paperwork again, “we’ll be interviewing you one at a time today.”

That was not completely unusual. Periodically, mentors and apprentices were separated for questioning. Henry could tell that this would not help Isaac’s nerves, though.

Henry put a hand on Isaac’s shoulder. “You can go first.” Waiting would only make it worse for him.

Isaac nodded, and Henry rose from the table and left the room. As he waited outside the large door to the hearing room, Henry worried about Isaac. Isaac was nervous, but he did not need to be. They had done their job, and they had done it well. This hearing was just a formality. They had no reason to believe Isaac was having doubts so close to his trials. That would be a serious accusation at this point, they would need substantial evidence to move forward with an investigation or charge him with anything. They had no reason to worry. And yet....

Isaac opened the large wooden door to the hearing room, loosening his tie. He had sweat through his shirt, a sheen was glistening on his brow, and he looked almost feverish. He pushed his dark hair back from his forehead.

“Are you all right?” Henry asked.

Isaac shrugged out of his jacket. “I need to smoke.”

Henry looked at his apprentice, concerned. “Mind if I join you?” Henry did not smoke as a habit, and he hardly ever smoked cigarettes. But he needed to be sure Isaac was all right.

Isaac blinked at him, pausing in working the top of his shirt open. “I don’t have any cigars.”

“I don’t mind. Wait for me?”

“All right,” Isaac said.

Henry nodded and patted Isaac’s shoulder before reentering the hearing room.

“Welcome back, Mr. Ellison,” the Council member said. “Sorry for the inconvenience.”

“Not at all,” Henry replied. “Any reason we’re being separated today? My apprentice was a bit nervous about it.”

“I noticed. But I’ll be the one asking the questions today, Mr. Ellison.”

Henry did not know what to say to that. He had never been treated as anything but a good soldier for the Guild. This was very odd.

“Could you summarize your mission for the record?” the Council member asked.

“Of course,” Henry said. He leaned in to the recording device sitting on the table and spoke clearly while still maintaining eye contact with the Council member. Henry had done enough of these to know what was expected of him. He described all that happened in Sarajevo in detail. All the while, the Council member scribbled a few notes in the margins of the paperwork. The hearing ended with Henry answering a standard series of questions posed by the Council: *Do you feel your mission was successful? Do you feel it was the right thing to do? Do you have any regrets? If you could go back and do it again, would you do the same things? What changes would you make in the future?*

The Council member stacked his papers into a neat pile in front of him. “This hearing is finished, you may return to your room to await further orders.”

Henry thanked him and exited the hearing room. He still thought it was a little odd that they were comparing his account and Isaac’s. They usually only did that if there was something for them to investigate, some discrepancy.

When Henry opened the door to the hearing room, Isaac was there waiting for him, completely disheveled. Henry followed Isaac to his room in silence and sat on the bed as he rolled them each a cigarette. Isaac’s room was barren compared Henry’s, but Isaac was not the sentimental collector Henry was. Though the Guild allowed them one souvenir that would not be missed for every journey they went on, the possessions Isaac kept were very utilitarian, though not entirely easily replaceable: his monogrammed tobacco pouch, a silver Zippo lighter, a worn copy of *The Odyssey*. Isaac tended to only keep what he could carry on his back anyway: he did not like to leave things that mattered behind. Even when he was a kid, still living in the same room as Henry, he kept everything in a knapsack in a corner of their room. As Isaac held his cigarette between his lips to light it, he could still see the kid he had rescued ten years ago, though the firelight showed how much his face had changed. Isaac handed Henry his cigarette and helped him to light it.

“So,” Henry said after exhaling a long stream of smoke, “you seemed a bit nervous in the hearing today.” Isaac made a noncommittal noise. “Something on your mind?”

“You know what was on my mind,” Isaac hedged.

“Are you sure that’s all it was?” Henry asked.

Isaac did not answer. His cigarette had nearly burnt up already with his anxiety, and he was busy rolling a new one.

“Isaac.”

“Isn’t one existential crisis enough for one day?” Isaac snapped. He strode over to his window and stood there, arms crossed, looking out over Sarajevo.

Henry sighed. “Fine.” He finished his cigarette in silence, then put it out in the ashtray on Isaac’s nightstand. “I’ll let you know our new assignment once I find out,” he said, making his way to the door. He glanced back at Isaac who aimed a curt nod out the window. Henry left the room and turned to his coping mechanism, leaving his apprentice to grapple with his own.



The nicotine had finally ebbed and Henry had relaxed into his wingback chair. A tea set from Revolutionary France sat on the coffee table, the teapot still half-full of Darjeeling oolong. Henry had not realized he had dozed off until he heard a knock at the door. Reluctant, he rose from his chair to answer the door, only to find that a thick envelope had been pushed under it: their new assignment. He retrieved his letter opener from the lap drawer of his desk and carefully opened the envelope. Inside were several heavy papers detailing the aliases they would assume, the locale, time period—basic background. They would obviously have to prepare more extensively before entering a whole new time period. Though, now that Henry was looking closely at the paperwork, he noticed it was not too far removed from the time of their last mission: still early twentieth century. Another large metropolitan area should be easier to adjust to. Henry read on: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, New York City. He groaned.

The Carpe Heri Society had evidently prevented the fire that happened there on March 25, 1911 that claimed 146 lives but also acted as a wake-up call for industry safety since many safety regulations were passed as a result of the tragedy. Henry understood that the CHS wanted to prevent death and suffering, but this was not the way to do it: conditions would never improve if people could not learn from their mistakes. He feared Isaac would not see it quite the same way he did.

All the same, he ventured down to Isaac's room to relay the information. Isaac answered after the second knock, clearly still on edge. Henry could smell that Isaac was still smoking. How many cigarettes must he have had now?

"You're going to make yourself sick."

"What is it, Henry?" asked Isaac through the chain.

Henry held up the envelope. "New assignment."

Isaac closed the door to undo the chain and let him in. "When?"

"March 1911, New York City." Henry paused to let Isaac rack his brains. Isaac did not necessarily have to know already where they were going, but he wanted Isaac to squirm a bit.

"Triangle Fire?"

Henry nodded. "Apparently the CHS thinks saving 146 lives was worth sacrificing hundreds of others down the line because of lower safety standards."

Isaac extinguished his now spent cigarette. "I can't completely blame them. They don't think as much about later consequences as we do."

Henry was taken aback at Isaac's response. Yes, he was still questioning the Guild's methods, but at least he did not agree with the Carpe Heri Society. "True. The CHS isn't known for its foresight. Anyway, we'll be undercover as immigrants looking

for work, the Guild has already set everything up. We're to travel forward to February of 1911, go to Liverpool, then cross the Atlantic by ship. We'll be in steerage so as to keep a low profile."

Isaac groaned. "Do we have to?" Steerage was the part of the ship where the ship's steering mechanism and the lowest-class passengers were housed. It was damp, hot, loud, and crowded: not exactly a luxury cruise, but many of those hoping to immigrate to America traveled in the belly of the ship.

"I don't like it either, but it's necessary to keep our cover. Once we get to New York, we'll stay in the safe house, as usual."

Isaac nodded. "We'll still get our dinner, right? Before we go."

As a reward for a job well done and as incentive to do well on their next mission, Travelers got a meal of their choice. Henry tried not to relate it to the experience of inmates awaiting execution, but it was something of a *memento mori*: they never knew for sure whether they would come back alive.

"Of course. It's scheduled for tomorrow evening, after our briefing, and then we leave for England first thing in the morning."

"All right," Isaac said. A sly smile crept onto his face. "Stay for a drink?"

Henry returned his smile. "I'd love to."



The bar of the safe house was practically empty at 2:15 AM, local time. Travelers often had early mornings, and could not afford to be night owls. Nevertheless, Henry sat on one of the boxy grey couches nursing half a glass of scotch. He could not sleep, though he was not sure why. His mission was finished successfully, he had good food in his belly, and the Guild had given them a new assignment without resistance. He

supposed that was what was bothering him: it had been too easy. Even if the Guild had a slight inclination that Isaac might be guilty of treason, they would start investigating under the radar. He could not rest when he was waiting for the other shoe to drop.

All the same, sleep did its best to claim him, tugging at his eyelids like draperies. He was considering returning to his room and abandoning what was left of his drink when he heard a familiar voice from behind him.

“Evening.”

He turned to see a man who reminded him of a hawk: he had golden eyes, a hooked nose, and tawny hair. Henry grinned. “Edgar Stubenrauch. It’s been far too long.” He extended a hand for Edgar to shake.

Edgar returned Henry’s smile and shook his hand. “Agreed. What have you been up to in the past 12 years?”

“A little of this, a little of that. Saving the world, training an apprentice. The usual stuff.”

Edgar’s gold eyes shone with interest. “An apprentice?”

Henry nodded. “Though he won’t be for much longer. He’s taking the trials soon.”

“I’m sure he’ll do well. I bet Sly would be proud.” Henry’s smile faltered a fraction. The time that had separated them had been a nice cushion between Henry’s life now and with Sly.

“I’m sure he would be.” Thinking of Sly and the people in his life then brought up too many painful memories. Henry decided to change the subject. “What have you been up to, then? Have you found yourself an apprentice?”

“Nah, I thought I would wait on that a little longer. I don’t want to deal with that now. Sometimes I feel like disappearing for a while, you know? Saving my own life is

enough responsibility.” Most Travelers their age did not have apprentices yet, it was true. Henry had taken an apprentice at an exceptionally young age: he had only just taken the trials himself, and the Guild probably allowed him to have an apprentice because of the situation with his mentor. His situation was particularly unique because he hand-picked Isaac as well, whereas most apprentices were assigned to mentors who volunteered to train them.

Henry had to chuckle. “I suppose. But you do want to take one?”

Edgar shrugged. “Eventually.” There was something in his voice that told Henry he never intended to take an apprentice. Not because he did not want to, but for some other reason. Henry decided not to press the matter.

“What ever happened to your mentor, then?”

“He’s up for Council Member of Region 12, if you can believe it.”

“Frederick’s not that old, is he?” Council Members had to be at least 40 years of age.

Edgar nodded. “Sly did always prefer companions who were more *mature* than he was.”

“True.”

The two men laughed good-naturedly for a moment. The subject of Woodstock weighed heavy on Henry’s tongue. He seldom saw the men involved in the events of that weekend, and he had a near-overwhelming urge to discuss it, even though it would bring back pain and guilt. Henry finished off his scotch for good measure.

“Well,” Henry yawned, rising from his chair, “I’d best be off to bed. Early morning tomorrow, you know.”

“Of course, I should be, too,” Edgar said.

“Let’s not wait 12 years to get together again, all right?”

“Agreed! And next time we’ll have cigars. I haven’t had one in a long time, because I haven’t had the occasion to. Remembering the good old days with you would be a fit occasion for me.”

“Yes, sounds terrific.”

“Good,” Edgar said. “Well, I won’t keep you. Good night, then.”

“Good night.”

Henry walked back to his room and keyed inside. Once he lay in bed, however, sleep still would not claim him. His mind was too busy trying to forget.

2. Steerage

Henry stepped onto the dock to board the *R.M.S. Caronia*, a steam ship that was to transport himself and Isaac to America. The Cunard Line ran trips from Liverpool to New York about every four days, so procuring a ticket had been easy enough. Henry brought with him only a suitcase of things, mostly clothing and food, since steerage passengers were responsible for their own meals. He felt uneasy, since familiar objects surrounding him was a comfort. Isaac was completely at ease—at times like these, Henry envied his apprentice’s ability to travel light. He rubbed his chin, a nervous habit he adopted when he started to grow a beard. Isaac adjusted his rucksack and hefted his own bag of clothes.

“Ready?”

“As I’ll ever be.”

They boarded the ship and made their way to their room in steerage, deep in the belly of the ship. All the way down, people chattered in the excited way people do when they are hiding the nervousness they feel when embarking upon something new. Most of their fellow passengers in steerage were hoping to start fresh in America—their ticket aboard this ship took all that they had. Henry suspected that passengers in this part of a ship would be more nervous and less excited a little over a year from now, when the unsinkable Titanic lay at the bottom of the Atlantic ocean, along with half of her passengers. But for now, most of the people in steerage were young and naïve... including his own apprentice.

They reached their room, down the hall from the communal bathroom. The room was cramped, two bunk beds built into the walls and not much else. There was not even

room on the floor to keep their bags—this was not much of a problem for a light traveler like Isaac, but Henry was already beginning to regret packing such a large suitcase.

Isaac tossed his rucksack on his bunk above Henry's. "I think I'm going to have a look around," he said, grinning in a way that was slightly more mischievous than usual for him.

"Go ahead, I think I'll stay here a while."

"Suit yourself, old man," Isaac teased on his way out the door. "I'll be back later."

Henry nodded, then busied himself settling into the room, little of it that there was. Four bunks were crammed into the small space, and it looked like the other set of bunk beds were occupied, judging by the bags sitting on the edges of both, atop the ship-supplied bedding. As he sat on his own bunk, he felt pieces of straw poking him through the thin fabric of the crude mattress. He had slept on much worse.

Henry unlatched his suitcase and pulled out an unmarked phial which contained dimenhydrinate, a drug to ease nausea caused by motion sickness. It was times like this Henry was very thankful for the Guild's access to technology of the future. He tended to get horribly seasick, so preventative measures were necessary in order for him to focus on his work. He dry-swallowed a couple of pills and nestled the phial back into its hiding place.

Henry could not help but think about what his mentee had said: even though he was only 28, he felt much older than that. He had seen more than most 28-year-olds, he granted himself. His own mentor, Sly, had told Henry that traveling with the Guild aged men prematurely. Sly took it as an excuse to live more vibrantly, to keep himself young, but Henry had more or less accepted it. He wondered how Isaac was taking it—he

seemed to be adopting Sly's approach of late. That worried him, since living that way killed his mentor.

Henry realized then that there was no way he could boil water to make himself tea. He'd have access to cold water, so a cold-brewed tea was his only option, unfortunately—it was, after all, February, and any bit of warmth he could get would be a luxury. He wrapped himself in the rough wool blanket the Guild had supplied him for the journey, thankful he was only playing the part of a poor emigrant, and tried to sleep, since he knew he would not sleep well for the rest of the journey. It was going to be a long two weeks.



When Henry awoke the next morning, his cabin mates were there. The older of the two men was already awake, lacing up his shoes. The man was probably in his early thirties, and he assumed that the younger boy still sleeping in the bunk was his son. Henry righted himself on the bed and rubbed his eyes.

“Good morning.”

The older man looked up from his laces. “Oh, good morning. Sound sleeper, are you?” He spoke with a Scottish accent.

Henry chuckled. “I suppose I am. Was there a lot of excitement?”

“My boy was sick most of the night.”

“Ah.” Henry glanced at the floor. It had been cleaned roughly, but the stench of bile clung to the floorboards. “Is he feeling any better?”

“He's sleeping now, at least. I haven't had to clean the boy's sick since he was an infant.” He smiled in a way that Henry knew well: one that showed the love he felt for his

son, in a nostalgic kind of way. It was strange to feel a connection to this man, like he was a father himself.

The cliché slid out of his mouth before he could stop it: “They grow up so fast.”

The man raised an eyebrow, then glanced up at Isaac still sleeping in his bunk. “Is he your son?”

“No,” Henry said, dusting off an old story, “he’s my younger brother. I practically raised him, though. After our parents died, God rest their souls.”

“Life is hard,” the man said knowingly as he finished lacing his shoes.

“Hopefully in America will be better,” Henry said. He figured it was time to start playing the role of the optimistic immigrant.

“Where are you from, son?”

“Call me Henry. I’m from Bristol, originally.” It was always easier for Henry to tell a different truth. Bristol is where he grew up, but it had probably changed quite a bit since he was last there in 1334. “And you?”

“St. Andrews,” the man replied. “And I’m Tom Gibson, by the by.” He shook Henry’s hand. “My son’s called Charles.”

“My brother’s name is Isaac.”

Tom ended the conversation with a nod and a smile. Both men finished dressing themselves and woke their charges. It was a bit dangerous making friends with locals, but as long as they remained unattached emotionally, all was well. Henry always had to remind himself of that when traveling: just as he could impact others’ lives and history, they could impact his. As long as they remained mostly unlinked, their separation would not cause damage.

Isaac, though he was a man himself now, still behaved like a child sometimes. When Henry tried to wake him, Isaac defiantly curled his blankets tighter around himself, refusing to leave the bed just yet. There was something boyish that lingered in his face, too—his cheeky smile, the mischievous twinkle in his eye, the way he could not grow a proper beard. Henry hoped that Isaac would stay that way a bit longer.

Charlie was a stringy boy of about twelve, and Henry already feared he might not survive the journey. If he was already so seasick that he was vomiting most of the night with good food in his belly, there was no way he would be able to stomach the food of the ship. Even if he did, he probably would not pass the rigorous inspections at Ellis Island to be admitted into the country.

Even so, Henry could not say or do anything. Not that Tom would believe him, but if he did end up perishing on the journey, questions would come his way. As always, he had to watch as events unfolded, no matter the consequences.

Since it was mid-February in the North Atlantic, passengers on the ship tended to stay inside as much as possible. That made for crowded cabins, pungent with the odor of its unwashed occupants, but at least it was warm.

They fell into a routine: Henry would read, and Isaac would chase after girls. They would meet for lunch and talk about their work, then socialize with other passengers. Henry would typically pass the time with Tom, since talking to him was easy. He and Tom would then bring the boys' their dinner, often returning to the room to find Isaac and Charlie playing cards. The two of them had been spending a fair amount of time together since Charlie became solidly bedridden by the end of the first week. Henry could not quite understand why, since they were not too close in age. Maybe he felt a connection to Charlie the way Henry felt connected to Tom. Maybe he wanted to mentor

someone himself. Maybe he sympathized with a child who could not leave his sickbed. Whatever the reason, they were getting too close for Henry's comfort.

"Don't get too attached," Henry reminded Isaac one evening as they were all preparing for bed.

"I'm not," he said before climbing into his bunk.



The *Caronia's* served its passengers one hot meal per day at dinner, and the passengers were responsible for any supplemental food. During the day, Henry and Isaac would have to make do with the hard tack the Guild had provided for their rations.

Isaac gnawed on the rough biscuit Henry had given him. "Why couldn't the Guild have sprung for second class, at least?" he grumbled.

"We have to play the part we're given," Henry answered, dipping the hard wafer into his coffee. At least warm drinks seemed to be unalienable rights according to the ship. He didn't care too much for coffee, but it made his food at least edible. Only a few more days, he kept reminding himself. Soon enough, he'd get a lobster dinner as a reward for a job well done. He imagined the crisp first bite into the succulent lobster tail, the juice and butter flooding his mouth, running down his chin... he licked his lips despite everything. Reality reclaimed him once he bit into the (now slightly softer) biscuit.

They stood on the upper decks of the ship, bundled in their wool coats, braving the cold to get a break from the confinement of steerage. The coffee was keeping them warm enough, but it was a bone-chilling February in the North Atlantic. Even so, there were several other clusters of people on the decks around them.

Isaac's face was just beginning to darken with the beginning of a beard, even though they had been at sea for nearly a week and a half. Isaac had not had to grow a

beard before because he had always looked young enough not to have one when they were traveling. It reminded Henry again that his apprentice was growing into a young man, someone who he could consider an equal. Someone he could depend on.

“So,” Isaac said, “when we get to America, how are we going to get through Ellis Island?”

“We’ll go through like any other immigrants. Records can be altered later.”

“Is that—”

“Necessary? Yes.”

“But what about—”

“Isaac,” Henry said, his tone sharp. Henry did not want to go down this path again. He knew his apprentice was having doubts, but he did not want to deal with it now. He wanted to focus on the task at hand: the mission.

Isaac had managed to break off a bit of his hard tack. “Henry,” he said around the hard wafer in his cheek. He chewed, swallowed. “I don’t mean to question *you*.”

Henry dropped his hard tack into what remained of his coffee. Said nothing.

“I’m only questioning the Guild because... some things we do don’t sit well with me. I don’t know why, exactly, but they just feel wrong.”

Henry knew how that felt. He experienced that himself at Woodstock with his own mentor many years ago. Some of the things he did went against all he believed in, ripped at the very fabric of his nature. And his own mentor had told him the entire time that everything was okay, that they had done nothing wrong. Henry still did not know if he believed Sly, even now. He felt hollow even thinking about that time of his life.

“Everything happens for a reason,” he said softly, a prayer. He did believe that, at least. The Guild’s motto. Their experiences would teach them something, even if they

hurt, even if they failed. Pain was a great teacher, Henry had found. It had taught him more than his mentor ever had. Isaac would have to figure it out in his own time, too. History was meant to be a lesson: that was why the Guild had to keep it intact, so that people could learn from it in their own respective futures—so history would not repeat itself.

Isaac dropped the subject after that, and they were silent for a long time. He rolled a cigarette, and after lighting it, he slid his free hand into his pocket to keep it from the cold. Henry fished the wafer out of his coffee with a spoon. It had not softened much, but enough to make it edible. He downed the rest of his coffee for good measure.

After a long pull on his cigarette, Isaac broke the silence. “What will we do for employment?”

“I was thinking I’d be an organ grinder, but you’d have to be much younger to play my monkey.” Isaac rolled his eyes. Henry smirked. “The Guild has secured us employment at a local saloon. The pay isn’t great, but our schedules will be more flexible than working in a factory.”

Isaac nodded, staring out at the sea. “How far to the Triangle factory?”

“A couple blocks. But we should be able to case the place easily. Plus, food’ll be cheap.”

“Good.”

Henry scratched at his beard. “Saloons are pretty infamous for having loose women around,” he said, watching his apprentice’s face for a reaction. “You’ll have to be careful.”

Isaac remained stone-faced, his expression unreadable. “I’ll be fine.”

“Are you sure?” Isaac had been much more upset about this a few days ago.

Isaac looked Henry in the eye. “What’s the point of being with some woman if I’m not allowed to fall in love with her, even for the night? I can’t let my guard down. How is that supposed to ‘get it out of my system’?”

Henry did not have an answer for Isaac. He had never really experienced sexual desires, at least not in the same way everyone else seemed to. He had chalked it up to being introduced into the Guild at such a young age, but Isaac was younger than he was when the Guild brought him in, so now he was not so sure. He never really thought about it much, since it was not a part of his everyday life, since the Guild required that he be celibate. He had not asked himself whether it was his loyalty to the Guild or what he was that kept him that way.

Isaac tossed his now spent cigarette into the North Atlantic with a sigh. “I know it’s not your fault. You aren’t the one imposing these rules... I just don’t understand them. Well, I understand them...”

“But you wish things could be different?”

Isaac nodded.

Henry had wondered periodically what his life would have become if he had been able to marry someone, settle down, buy a little house, carry out a normal occupation. Every time, he was happy for the life he had. He did not want to imagine a life different from what he was doing: noble work, ensuring history, getting to see the world throughout its life. But he understood not everyone was like him.

Did Isaac picture himself settling down with some woman, living a normal life? It was hard to imagine, since he had known Isaac since he was so young.

“Do you think about it often?” Henry asked. “What things could be like?”

Isaac looked at him, eyes shining like polished mahogany, and smiled for a fleeting moment before he returned his gaze to the ocean. “All the time.”

Henry never felt so separated from his apprentice as he did at that moment, standing side by side on the deck of that ship. For then he knew that he was the odd man out: that Sly was right about him. *It's not natural, Henry.* He had not felt this kind of loneliness since his mentor had died over ten years ago.

After a moment, Isaac clapped him on the back and said, “I think I’m headed in. It’s getting too cold for me out here.”

Henry nodded, but remained leaning against the railing at the edge of the deck. “I’ll be there in a bit.” Henry felt colder after Isaac left.

He stared out into the ocean and wished for a moment it would swallow him whole. But then he remembered the job he still had to do. Henry pulled the phial from his coat containing the dimenhydrinate and dry-swallowed a couple of pills, though his nausea had little to do with seasickness, then turned to seek shelter from the cold.



When Henry returned to his room that evening, Tom was hunched over Charlie’s bed, looking down on his sleeping son, watching his small chest move up and down with each breath. Tom turned upon hearing Henry enter the room.

“Charlie’s gotten worse,” said Tom. His voice was weary, as Henry would expect from a father who had been through so much. “I’m not sure what to do.”

“Could I take a look at him? I know a little bit about medicine,” Henry said. Tom nodded and stood so Henry could get in closer. Henry gently moved the blankets covering Charlie and saw just how thin the boy had gotten. He could see the boy’s ribs protruding from his chest, and could practically make out the individual bones in his arms.

“He’s emaciated,” Henry murmured, then amended: “He’s lost nearly all of his body fat. He really needs to eat.”

“I could’ve told you that,” Tom snapped. His gaze was trained on the floor. “I’m sorry. The sea’s just gotten to him so much... it’s been hard to keep anything down. I don’t know if I can get him to eat anything.”

A thought entered Henry’s mind, only to be shooed out a moment later: he could give Charlie some of his motion sickness drugs he had brought on board. At least then he would not have to wake up every morning to a boy’s sick on his cabin floor. But if he did, and managed to do it inconspicuously, he may have altered history permanently by saving someone who should not have been saved. After all, Henry knew that so many people died on ships like this one from emaciation caused in part by seasickness. Henry decided it would be best to keep quiet about it all. He knew it was the right decision, but he was not eager to see it play out.

“Do your best,” Henry said, putting a hand on Tom’s shoulder. “It’s all you can do.”

Tom nodded, the beginnings of tears beading in his eyes. Henry decided to make himself scarce, to give the father and son some time alone together: God only knew how much time they would have left.



Since Charlie was steadily getting worse, Tom stayed by his side. Isaac and Henry went to dinner and promised to bring them back something. On the way, Isaac made a confession.

“I feel so alone.”

“You’re not alone, you’ve got me,” Henry said, putting a hand on Isaac’s shoulder in what he hoped was a comforting, brotherly gesture.

“You’re all I have,” Isaac said, his voice suddenly quiet. “I know we won’t travel together forever.”

Henry did not know how to respond. What he said was true, and Henry had been avoiding it since Isaac had started preparing for the trials. He had not wanted to think about it, either. “All mentees have to leave their mentors eventually,” he allowed, “but we could travel together for a long time. Lots of mentors and apprentices do.”

Henry had traveled with his own mentor for many years after he had completed his trials—up until the older man met an early end. Fortunately for both of them, the day his mentor, Sly, had died was the day that he had rescued Isaac from his burning house nearly ten years ago. Isaac’s parents had been consumed in the fire, and Isaac was to be sent off to an orphanage. Henry did not believe in things like Fate, but he knew that through all of time and space, they were meant to be together. It was the fear Henry saw in his eyes that gave Henry no choice: they were both so afraid, so alone in the world. The fear Henry saw in Isaac’s eyes that day had returned, despite the fact that his eyes had seen so much since then.

“And maybe one day, you’ll get a apprentice you like even more than me,” Henry added good-naturedly. He hoped he was right, but at the same time, he hoped Isaac would be by his side for many years to come. Brotherly bonds were acceptable between mentors and apprentices, Henry reminded himself, so long as they did not interfere with the task at hand.

Isaac smiled. “Not likely.”

Henry smiled, too, and clapped him on the back. “Shall we have some dinner?”

Isaac nodded and the two of them entered the dining room.



Henry walked into the cabin the penultimate afternoon of the voyage, hoping to catch some sleep, only to find Isaac strewn about his sheets, a hand shoved down his pants. It was clear what Henry had walked in on, but Isaac was not as ashamed as Henry hoped he would be. He did not meet Henry's eye, nor did he show remorse. He just adjusted himself and climbed down from his bunk.

"I don't know how you do it. How all of you eunuchs do it," was all he said before he left the cabin. Henry thought briefly to go after him, but could not will himself to move. Instead, he lay in his own bed, but could not sleep. His mind would not rest.

He could not stop himself from remembering the night at Woodstock when he had come to tell Sly he was not going to take part of any of this, only to find him in the middle of intercourse with some young woman. He did not know how he could have been so naïve. Sly had shown no shame, but Henry had felt so embarrassed that his face burned thinking about it even now, so many years later, after Sly was dead and gone. He feared this would be another moment that stained his memory, despite how hard he would try to wash it out.

He must have dozed off at some point, for when he woke again, Isaac's coat and rucksack were missing from the corner post of the bunk. Isaac did not return to the cabin until much later, after Tom and Charlie were both asleep in their bunks: his hair was no longer damp with sweat but wind-blown, and the ashy smell of spent cigarettes clung to his clothes. For the first time in years, Henry dreamt about Woodstock.



It was the summer of 1969 in White Lake, New York. Sly and Henry had met a couple of friends from the Guild there to make sure Woodstock went off without a hitch. At least, that is what they were supposed to be doing.

“We’ve got to blend in, Henry,” said Sly. “If we’re not doing the things everyone else here is doing, we’ll look suspicious.”

This was a valid point. It *would* seem odd. It still was not entirely enough to convince 16-year-old Henry. “You three have fun. I’ll be the designated Traveler,” he said.

Sly rolled his eyes. “Killjoy. You deserve to have fun, too, you know.”

“Yes,” Henry considered, “but who’s going to make sure—”

“That’s not why we’re here, Henry.”

Henry blinked at him. “It’s not?”

“No. It’s to enjoy ourselves. We all deserve a break. We just prevented Hitler from being killed, for Christ’s sake. We save the world every single day. When’s the last time you had a little fun?”

Henry could not believe what he was hearing. “What do you mean? We have fun. Don’t we?”

Sly chuckled. Henry was missing something.

“Sometimes I forget you’re a virgin.”

Henry felt his cheeks coloring. Was he not supposed to be? He had not taken the vow of celibacy yet. “W-what does that have to do with anything?”

Sly put a hand on Henry’s shoulder. “This is when you’ll become a man.”

Henry’s heart beat frantically. Was this because he was too young to have completed the coming-of-age rituals back in his home time period? He was only 9 when

he was taken into the Guild. His father had not told him about the bond between a man and a woman: the Guild had educated him about that. They told him that sexual intercourse was a deeply personal, emotional connection: one that Travelers were not allowed to make with anyone.

“But—” Henry began. He did not realize he was shaking until Sly steadied him by putting a hand on Henry’s other shoulder.

“I know you’re scared,” Sly said, his tone soft but urgent. “I was, too. But you don’t need to be.” Sly smiled sideways at him, drawing his apprentice’s gaze back to him. “Sometimes breaking the rules is worth it, right?”

Henry looked into Sly’s hazel eyes. They were almost hypnotic: if Sly looked at Henry long enough, he could convince him to do just about anything. Especially at this distance. Henry had to force his eyes shut.

“I don’t—know.”

“Think about it?”

Before Henry really knew what he was doing, he nodded.

“Atta boy,” he said. His voice regained its usual edge as Sly tousled Henry’s hair.



When Henry woke the next morning back on the *Caronia*, it was so early that no one else should be awake, but they were. A candle flickered from Charlie’s bedside. Isaac and Tom’s silhouettes danced along the wall with the candle flame. Henry realized groggily that something must be terribly wrong.

He joined Isaac and Tom beside Charlie, and saw that Charlie’s breathing was labored. He was so thin Henry could see the outlines of the bones in his face, his skin stretching across them like paper. He blinked up at Henry, and their gazes met for a

moment. Henry could not help but think once again how he could have prevented all this with a few tablets of dimenhydrinate. A father would not be losing his son, a child would live on in a new country with more opportunities than ever before. Instead, Charlie took his last breath and his glassy eyes rested upon Henry Ellison. Henry would never be able to forget those eyes staring at him in the half-dark.

The rest Henry only remembered in a blur. Tom weeping, tears etching through the filth caking his cheeks. Isaac closing Charlie's eyes. Henry hearing himself give his condolences.

Isaac and Henry gave Tom some space to grieve over his son and went to notify the proper authorities on the ship. Isaac wept silently, while Henry compressed his emotion inside. It was never the time to grieve over someone he should not care about. Henry put a hand on Isaac's shoulder, hoping to comfort him.

"There was nothing we could do," Henry said too quickly.

Isaac blinked up at him. "Are you sure?"

Henry hesitated. "Of course. It was meant to happen, Isaac. Everything happens for a reason."

"How can you say that? A child is dead."

"That's not our fault, Isaac."

"But we could have—"

"There's *nothing* we could have done," Henry repeated. It was becoming a mantra to convince himself as well as Isaac.

"What about your motion sickness drugs?" Isaac asked quietly. Henry was taken aback. He should not have been surprised, but the blow hurt all the same.

“Those were given to my by the Guild expressly for my use so I could focus on our mission.”

“Surely you could have spared a few.”

“We can’t alter the timeline. Think of what might happen if he survived.”

“Yes, think of what he could have done! He could have lived a long, full life in a brand new country—”

“You’re beginning to sound like the *Carpe Heris*.” The blow was meant to hurt, but did not do the work Henry intended: Isaac turned the blade against him.

“At least their hearts are in the right place.”

Henry shook his head. “I can’t believe you.”

He stormed ahead of his apprentice, leaving Isaac behind as he searched for a member of the crew to inform of Charlie’s death. He finally found the captain in the wheelhouse, and he told Henry someone would be down to administer last rights. When Henry opened the door to return to his cabin, Isaac was sitting there on the floor like a child, his face stained with tears, the residue of acceptance. Henry offered Isaac a hand and pulled him to his feet.

“We can’t save anyone,” Henry said.

“You saved *me*.”

Henry stuffed his hands into the pockets of his wool coat. “That’s different.”

“How?”

Henry thought for a moment before saying, “Your parents had just died and you were going to be sent to an orphanage. You wouldn’t be missed, and there was nothing left then for you. And you ended up being an asset to the Guild, besides.”

“I see, so we’re not allowed to save people who matter,” Isaac said hotly.

Henry stopped. “You do matter, you just didn’t belong then. You’re too important to have wasted away in that orphanage. You belong in the Guild, with me.” *I need you.*

“And Charlie didn’t belong with his father?”

“He did, but everyone dies, Isaac. It might not seem like it now, but there’s a reason for all of this.” Henry felt he was trying to convince himself as well as his apprentice of this point. “There are no accidents. Everything happens for a reason.”

3. New York

The day the *Caronia* arrived in New York was a cold one. The immigrants aboard the ship were no doubt expecting the sun to greet them upon their arrival to this land of opportunity. Instead clouds did, looming over them like death, the death that awaited or had already come for many of the *Caronia*’s passengers.

Tom Gibson was trying to keep his composure as a few of the crew carried his son’s body off the ship. Tom insisted that his son be preserved so he could be buried on land. He told Henry that he did not want his son’s body to disappear into the sea, for it to swallow him whole—though he should have realized it already had. The boy’s personal belongings were kept with his father’s. Henry knew somehow that Tom would talk to his dead son in his sleep, weep over the boy’s toy soldiers, constantly feel a hollow place in his heart.

Henry felt the cold and loneliness radiating off of Tom. He saw it in his eyes. Henry had been through something similar himself—he had lost someone he loved—but he could not imagine what it would be like to lose a son. He thought it must be something

like losing part of himself in the process. Feeling inadequate, that something he created had not lasted. Henry hated Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest that day.

The entire time they were going through the inspections at Ellis Island, Henry detested the whole weeding-out process. In the current time, the United States had particularly strict immigration laws, so many people who had survived the journey over the Atlantic were still sent away, unwelcome in the Land of the Free, a country of immigrants. Henry still had to remain calm and neutral throughout the process, however: he had to think of the reason they were there: the mission.

Henry and Isaac made it through the inspections with little trouble at all, partly since they knew what to expect coming in. It was only a few hours before Isaac and Henry stepped into the old tenement building to find the drab gray décor they had encountered so many times before. It was one of the safe houses on the island of Manhattan, but inside it was almost identical to the one in Sarajevo. Right away, Henry felt at home again, despite knowing that an unfamiliar metropolis bustled on outside these walls. Each safe house had as identical a layout as possible: if nothing else, the Guild was consistent.

They approached the front desk, where there was a young woman seated. She was one of the many people involved in the Guild operations who did not know what she was involved in. The higher-ups in the Guild believed women could not be trusted with the whole truth, but they could always use more help, and men's work was in the field, where it was important. The woman probably believed that she worked in a hotel. She gave them the keys to their rooms, none the wiser, and they took the elevator up to their usual third floor rooms.

As Henry and Isaac paused before parting ways to their own rooms, Henry said,

“Now remember, you’re going to be on your own for this mission. I, as well as the local Master, will be watching you for the duration.” He put a hand on his apprentice’s shoulder. “I’ll be here if you need me, but... I know you can do this. You’re ready.”

Isaac smiled. “I know.”

“Just remember what I’ve told you.”

“What, use a prophylactic?” Isaac laughed.

Henry grabbed Isaac’s shoulder. “You have to take this seriously.”

Isaac rolled his eyes. “I am.”

“I mean it,” Henry said. “This mission means a lot. I know you can do it, if you focus. I know how you can get distracted.”

“I’ll be fine,” Isaac said firmly. “I need to smoke.”

He stormed past into his own room, leaving Henry alone in the hall. Henry stood there for a moment taking in the fact that Isaac did not have to rely on him. He was so lost in thought he did not notice someone had come up behind him until he spoke.

“Ah, Henry Ellison, at last.” A stocky blond man stuck out his hand for Henry to shake. “Floyd Stevens, Internal Affairs division.”

Henry shook Stevens’ hand, trying not to seem too nervous. Internal Affairs agents always made him anxious, although he knew he had no reason to be. For all they knew, he was an upstanding Traveler. “To what do I owe the pleasure?”

Stevens indicated a folded paper from his blazer’s inside pocket. “Orders. I hear your apprentice is taking the trials?” Henry nodded, feeling a little wary. “You might not be familiar with this procedure, it’s fairly new, but Internal Affairs observes all the new members completing their trials. It’s completely standard, I assure you.”

Henry did not feel very assured. New protocol indeed. Isaac was already nervous enough about completing the trials and figuring out where his loyalties lie, he did not need an Internal Affairs agent breathing down his neck. Not to mention the whole issue involving the oath of celibacy. But there was not much Henry could do about it without raising suspicion, so he gave Stevens a smile and a nod. “Anything I can do, just say the word.”

Stevens clapped him on the shoulder good-naturedly. “I appreciate that, Ellison, thank you.”

Henry nodded and made to leave, but Stevens clamped his hand tighter on Henry’s shoulder.

“One more thing before you go,” Stevens said, “don’t tell your apprentice about this. He needs to behave how he normally would.”

Now Henry felt like he had to tell Isaac. “Of course.”

“Good man.” Stevens released Henry’s shoulder. “See you bright and early tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?”

“Oh yes,” Stevens said, “I’m going to observe him with you periodically, and I thought I might as well get an early start.”

Henry smiled politely. “Wonderful.”

“I’ll be in touch.” With that, Stevens turned on his heel and started down the hall.



Henry felt the familiar weight of the small binoculars in his hands. He was perched on a fire escape about half a block from where Isaac would be casing the factory. It felt strange knowing that he would be watching over his apprentice in this way, the

way he usually watched historical events happen. Isaac was now something Henry could not control. Henry supposed he always was, but he was only just learning to swallow it.

He peered through the binocs and caught sight of Isaac leaning against a lamppost, smoking. If Isaac knew anything, it was how to blend into a crowd. Henry only spotted Isaac because he was looking for him. Isaac flicked his cigarette a little more often than necessary, especially when he was nervous. And he checked his watch fairly often, too.

The late February wind whistled through the city, between buildings that were currently some of the tallest in the world. Among them was the Met Life tower, dwarfing the rest at 700 feet tall. Henry smiled despite himself—in a few decades, it would just be another wave in the sea of concrete, nothing like the tsunami it was now. It seemed ridiculous to Henry that so many men concentrated so much on making buildings taller than anyone else, and that they had all seemed to congregate in this city. He pitied the bricklayers, the ambitious architects. Why did they focus on such trivial things when so much more was at stake? These buildings would crumble someday, but Henry's work would always be relevant.

The fire escape creaked next to him, and Henry knew he was not alone. He turned to see a wispy man wearing a tattered suit had just climbed from the window. His limbs all looked much too big for him, as if they too were hand-me-downs. He smelled faintly of pipe tobacco and Columbian-brewed coffee.

“Ah, Henry Ellison, I hoped I would find you here,” he said, his voice eerily calm. “Not to worry, I'm here on official business, just as you are.”

Henry nodded warily. The man looked vaguely familiar to Henry, but he could not place his face. It was unsettling to recognize someone since he was, after all, a time traveler—especially since the man knew him.

The man must have sensed that Henry did not recognize him, because he laughed and extended his hand, saying, “Oh, where are my manners. Phineas Turner, Master of the Future.”

Henry felt immediately embarrassed. Of course he should have recognized one of the Four Masters. They were the leaders of the Guild, watching over everything. He hastily shook the Master’s hand.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, sir,” Henry managed.

Phineas nodded and gestured for the binocs.

“I thought I’d make an appearance,” he said calmly, “but I don’t think there’s much you need to worry about. Your credentials are quite impressive, and I’m sure your apprentice has been well-trained.”

“Thank you sir.” Henry was not sure what to make of this. Yes, it was nice that he and Isaac looked good on paper, but that hardly seemed reason enough for the local Master to bow out of observing them. He thought again of Stevens claiming that his presence was “standard procedure.”

He and the Master watched for nearly an hour before the latter suggested that they head in out of the cold.

“After all,” he said, “it’s nearly time for dinner.”

“If you don’t mind, sir, I think I’ll stay a bit longer,” Henry said.

Phineas shrugged and disappeared back through the window.



Stevens met him in the lobby early that morning. They walked together to a new stakeout position—they had to switch every day or so in order to keep covert—huddled in their wool coats trying to keep out the early March chill. Henry decided to initiate

some friendly conversation, partly because the silence had made their brief walk even colder, and partly because he was curious.

“If you don’t mind me asking, Stevens, when are you from?”

“Not at all,” Stevens said. “I was born in 1974 in Vermont, the Guild recruited me when I was 13, so my home period is the 1980s.”

Henry swallowed. The same period as his mentor. And he looked about 35, too—how old Sly would have been. “Did you happen to know a Sylvester Maloney?”

Stevens squinted into the sunrise for a moment, thinking. “I think so... dark hair, rebel without a cause type?”

Henry smiled. “That’s Sly.”

“He was in my training class when I first joined the Guild. How do you know him?”

“He was my mentor.”

“Oh yeah? I can’t picture that man teaching anyone... though I didn’t know him long. It looks like he did a fair job with you. How is he?”

Henry’s smile faded. “He died in the field about 10 years ago.”

“Oh.” Stevens dug his hands into his pockets. “That’s a shame.”

“Everything happens for a reason. As they say,” Henry replied. “If he hadn’t died, I would have never met my mentee, so it’s not all bad.” He hoped he sounded more positive than he felt.

“That’s true.” He smiled. “When are you from?”

Henry had a feeling that Stevens already knew the answer. “1330s, England.”

“I’ve never been... Second Scottish War of Independence, though, right?”

Henry nodded. “That’s a big landmark.”

“What’s it like then?”

Henry never knew how to answer this question. It was impossible to do the entire decade that he considered his home time period justice in a few sentences. That would be like summing up Stevens’ home time period as the MTV generation with big hair who listened to synthpop music. Every traveler knew the stereotypes for a given decade, but he had to go then to experience it himself before he could understand it.

“It was mostly good. My family was out of the way of most of the fighting, so we lived a fairly pleasant life. Although I do like the benefits of more modern technology.”

“I bet,” Stevens said. “I can’t imagine what it must’ve been like back then.”

“How far back have you been?” Henry asked.

Stevens thought a moment before answering. “A ways.”



Henry thrust a cup out wordlessly to passers-by. He was dressed in tattered clothes, sitting on a stoop near the factory. Some people dropped a coin or two in, but no more than they could part with. Some people tossed bitter remarks his way instead, but Henry was not focused on them. He had disguised himself as a homeless man to watch Isaac from a closer distance, since his last approach was not working so well. The dawn had been his companion for the walk here this morning—Stevens wanted to observe on his own today, thank God—and Henry was growing weary as it was nearly quitting time for the factory workers, who no doubt had a long day, too. At least Isaac seemed oblivious to the fact that Henry was there, watching.

Isaac was dressed quite well for this part of town, but he somehow made it look natural. He was wearing a suit coat, well-cut trousers, shoes with spats, a scarf, leather gloves, and a hat with a small brim. He flicked his cigarette toward the gutter. Henry

marked him more closely. He was about to do something, but Henry did not know what. A throng of young women was leaving the factory, finished with their shifts for the day. For a reason Henry could not sense, Isaac singled out one auburn-haired girl who looked about sixteen.

“You stick out like a sore thumb,” he told her.

What are you doing? Henry thought. Isaac should not be interacting with people directly connected to the event unless there was a good reason for it. What was he playing at?

"How long have you worked here? Two months?"

The girl paused with a vulnerable air. “How did you—”

“If there’s one thing you learn when you become a master of disguise, it’s how to spot someone trying to blend in when you see them.”

“But I wasn’t—”

“Not all disguises are masks, you know.” Isaac winked. Oh lord. Was *this* who he deemed appropriate to copulate with? Not only that, but this was some of the worst romancing Henry had ever seen. Which is quite sad coming from a man from a society sworn to celibacy.

She flushed with anger. "Who are you?"

"It's not important," said Isaac as he tightened the collar of his coat around him and made to leave. "Evening."

"Wait!" she said. He turned back, looking at her sideways over his coat collar. "How did you know that I just started here?"

He turned and stepped toward her again. "Do you really want to know?"

"Yes."

"Well, for starters, your accent keeps changing. Even when you manage to retain it, it's slightly off from everyone else's. You're always at the back of the group when you're walking, because you're following everyone else. You refused when that gem Beatrice offered you some cigarettes after her shift, not only because you aren't much of a smoker yourself, but because her cigarettes were lower quality than you are used to." *No*, Henry thought, *he can't give away our methods! Isaac, what the hell are you doing?*

The young woman looked partly horrified and partly intrigued. Henry could not blame her.

"Don't worry, people wouldn't notice these things unless they were looking for them," Isaac added. "Besides, everyone probably knows anyway, because of all the rumors milling around. Factories like these are notorious for gossip."

The young woman raised an eyebrow. "What are people saying about me?"

Isaac shrugged. "I'm not one for idle gossip myself." He started rolling another cigarette. "Want one?"

"No, thank you, er—?"

"Isaac Storey." He licked the rolling paper to hold the cigarette together. "Your loss." He lit his finished cigarette, took a drag on it, and then breathed out a sigh of smoke. "Well I won't keep you," he said, turning to go.

Was that all for nothing, then? Henry wondered.

"Wait!" she said again. *Apparently not.*

He looked at her expectantly over his coat collar again.

"Will I ever see you again?"

Isaac considered, hands in his pockets, before drawing his lips into a smirk. "I should expect so. Goodbye, Miss Andrews." He tipped his hat to her and melted into the

crowd so that even Henry could not pick him out. The girl stood there, awestruck, for a moment before smoothing her skirt and walking past Henry to toward what he assumed was home.



Isaac looked at Isabelle. She smiled brazenly at him and bit her lip to unsuccessfully stifle a grin. As Henry looked on from afar, he could tell she wanted to kiss Isaac: the way her eyes kept flicking between Isaac's eyes and his lips, the close proximity she was standing to him—but of course Isaac was unschooled in these signals. Henry knew these things because he was a very observant person, a bit because of Sly, but probably most notably because he was a third party observer. Isaac was too nervous to notice these things, so it came as a surprise when she dragged him down into a kiss. Isaac visibly tensed when she pressed her mouth to his, but relaxed into her after a few seconds. They drew back and looked into each other's eyes for a moment, sharing a secret smile, and for a moment Henry wanted that kind of human connection.

He thought of Sly, which surprised him. Thoughts of his late mentor snuck up on him in moments he would never expect to think about him. Only once in a blue moon, when he was in danger of forgetting him. He remembered Sly's shaggy black hair, his bright laughing eyes always twinkling with mischief. The man had been his companion for so many years only to meet his demise because of something that should have never happened.



"So, Henry," Isaac said finally, waiting for his tea to cool. Henry always gulped his down while it was still steaming hot, so it burned in his throat like whiskey. Isaac liked to wait for the right moment, but Henry wanted to get things over with.

Just as Henry hardly smoked cigarettes, Isaac hardly drank tea. So naturally when Isaac asked him to talk over evening tea, Henry knew something must be awry. He carefully measured the tealeaves into the infuser on the teapot, one of his favorites, a peach-flavored white tea. He picked it partly to irk his apprentice, because he knew Isaac was not a fan of fruity teas. He was half-expecting him to demand a teabag of Earl Grey, but Isaac accepted the tea, two sugars, thank you very much. Henry squinted at him but dropped two sugar cubes into his cup anyway.

Henry sighed, and set his cup back in its saucer. “Yes?”

“You know what you said earlier, about if I experienced it, I’d get it out of my system?” Henry nodded. *Christ, what could you have gotten yourself into?* “Well,” Isaac said, “I don’t know that it helped.” He looked uncomfortably between the cream and the sugar, as if they would somehow be able to save him from his current circumstances. “I think... I think I may have done something—” He couldn’t bring himself to say the word “wrong,” but Henry understood anyway.

“What is it?” he asked, trying to remain calm.

Isaac took several moments to figure out what to say. “I think I’ve grown emotionally attached to someone.”

Henry was horrified. “Who?” he asked, though he feared he could guess.

“A girl from the factory,” Isaac said, a blush creeping into his complexion. Before Henry could admonish him, the words came to his defense: “I figured, if I changed anything, she’d be gone in the fire, most likely—besides, she’d be nothing special, an immigrant or someone, no one to be missed. But she turned to be someone else all together. Her parents disowned her and she was making it on her own as a factory worker, at one her father didn’t own. And I realized I couldn’t do it—I couldn’t let her die.”

Henry gaped at him. “So what did you do?”

When Isaac met Henry’s gaze briefly, he had tears in his eyes. “I told her.”

“Told her what, exactly?”

“That she can’t go to work tomorrow.” Isaac braced himself for Henry’s reaction.

“*What?*”

“I didn’t give a reason,” Isaac said quickly. “I don’t know if she’ll even follow my advice.”

“I hope to hell she doesn’t,” Henry said. Isaac looked directly into his mentor’s eyes, a helpless shock present in his gaze. “Well, she can’t tell other people. This needs to happen, as horrible as it is. 146 people need to die tomorrow.”

“Why can’t it be 145?”

“Isaac—”

“What would be so bad about saving one person, just one?” he demanded. “Why can’t anyone do even a little good?”

“We are doing good,” Henry said. “It’s our job, Isaac. We have to do our duty.”

“Why does our duty have to include letting innocent people die? You don’t even know for certain if she does.”

“She can’t survive. She can’t come out of that event unscathed. Even if she does live, she’ll be changed by what’s happened. She’ll be horrified at the death of co-workers, of friends, and then she’ll remember you hinting that this might happen. If she goes to the police, the case will be dismissed as arson instead of addressing what really happened and fixing problems in the workplace. In that case, we all lose—the Carpe Heris or the Guild will find out and come after you, and have you both killed. Is that what you want?”

Henry paused for breath and Isaac just looked back at him. They both leaned back in their chairs.

“Christ.”

“Yeah.”

It was quiet for a long time before Isaac spoke again. “So she can’t keep going if she survives. She has to cease to exist.”

“You can’t kill her—”

“That’s not what I was getting at,” Isaac said. “What if she comes with us?”

“No.”

“But—”

“No. Women don’t belong in our society. What we do is hard work, no place for the fairer sex.” Henry looked at his apprentice and realized, “She’s already approached you, hasn’t she?”

Isaac didn’t have to answer, but he did anyway: “She’s agreed to disguise herself as a man—”

“Absolutely not!”

“What choice do we have?”

“You just want to bring her along because you’re attached to her, nothing more,” Henry reasoned. “You don’t care about history, you never have. But I can’t believe you would do this.”

Isaac did not bother arguing. “If you don’t want to help me, that’s fine,” he said. “But even if you aren’t for me, please don’t act against me. Just give her a chance.”

Henry got up from the table and started cleaning his dishes in the sink. Isaac pushed his own cup and saucer to the middle of the table. His tea was bound to be cold by now.

Henry fingered the thin handle of his teacup, considering. “How attached are you, exactly?”

“Enough that I care if she lives or dies.”

Henry remembered that he, too, had made mistakes like this when he was Isaac’s age—not to this extent, but still. The evidence of this was sitting at his kitchen table. Henry did not regret that decision. “This is a lot to take in.”

Isaac blinked up at him. “I understand.”

Henry sat back down, his hands still soapy from the dishes. He watched Isaac drink his cold tea unconsciously as he thought.

Finally, Henry said, “I couldn’t go against you, but I’m not sure what I can do to help you.”

“Could you help me to convince everyone that Isabelle is a young man hoping to join the Time Travelers’ Guild?” Isaac asked.

Henry shook his head, thinking of the thick file Stevens had accumulated for Isaac’s mission. “They would see through it in an instant. They would assume you were going rogue and if I help you—”

“What choice do I have?” Isaac demanded. “I can’t leave her here, lest she reveal our secrets, and I can’t take her with us because the Guild would find out, and I can’t kill her. What the hell am I supposed to do?”

“Is she really that important, that you would forsake everything that meant something to you to protect her?”

Isaac was silent for several long seconds before answering, "Yes."

Henry did not know what to say. This was his fault: he had pushed Isaac towards sexual encounters, thus leading to his meeting this woman. And now they were caught in this impossible situation, and Isaac's loyalty was turning. He could not just stand by while his apprentice went rogue, could he? Isaac was like his brother.

"I need time to think this over," Henry said.

Isaac nodded, looking a bit defeated. "Fair enough." He rose from the table and started towards the door. "Good night, then."

As the door clicked shut behind his apprentice, Henry finished putting the dishes away and sat down at his desk. He found a blank piece of paper and began frantically writing out all the possibilities he could think of to solve the current dilemma.

Even after hours of deliberation, he could not come up with a feasible solution that would leave everything intact. Isaac and Isabelle dropping off the map of space and time seemed to be the only option that would fulfill that, but doing that seemed impossible. Henry was just about to scrap everything when he heard a knock at his door.

It is not often that a time traveler gets an unexpected visitor, but tonight's visitor was a surprise even to a seasoned traveler like Henry. His guest appeared on his doorstep wearing a three-piece suit and carrying a box of cigars, his overcoat dripping wet from the evening rain: Edgar Stubenrauch.

"For you," he said. "Cubans, your favorite."

"You didn't have to."

Edgar grinned and pressed the box into Henry's hands. "I wanted to."

"Ah, very well," Henry decided, accepting the box. "Care to join me?"

"Don't mind if I do."

Henry took Edgar's coat and showed him inside. He pulled out a silver Zippo from his desk drawer and lit their cigars. As the light flickered across Edgar's face, Henry was reminded again how much Edgar looked like a hawk, with his golden eyes, tawny hair, and hooked nose. Despite that, Edgar was not a dangerous man. Not any more dangerous than Henry, anyway.

They sat in silence for a while, enjoying each other's quiet company as they savored the rich smoke.

"So, what brings you now?" said Henry.

His companion pulled at his moustache, a familiar nervous tick.

"Henry, old boy, there are a lot of things we don't know," he said, staring up at the smoke as it began to circle toward the ceiling.

"I happen to know a great deal," Henry said, his voice dry and his lips curling into a smirk.

"That what I'd thought, too," Edgar sighed, "but that's not how it is. Not really."

"What kind of things are you talking about exactly?"

"Well." Edgar paused. "Do you remember Woodstock?"

Henry blew out a smoke ring. "How could I not."

"The things that happened there were supposed to remain there," Edgar said.

Henry nodded: he knew all manner of things he and his companions had gotten to during that three days, but he had not breathed a word of it since, partly because of his own shame in the matter, and partly because Sly had persuaded him that no one would think anything of what they had done, considering the circumstances.

"But... well, things do no always work out as planned."

Henry felt a flutter of panic in his throat. He hoped his voice would not betray it.
“Who knows?”

Edgar held up a hand, barely visible through the smog. “It’s not like that. One of the women we were involved with... apparently she gave birth to a daughter in the May of 1970.”

Henry could not manage to say anything. He just released the smoke from his mouth with a shaky breath.

“I have a feeling she’s mine. They say she has my eyes.”

Henry tried not to sound too relieved. “I’m... sorry. Who told you about it?”

“Friend of a friend,” Edgar said. “Naturally, I’m going into hiding. But I couldn’t go without warning you. After all, they might come after you, too.”

“Thank you. Is there anything I can do?”

Edgar shook his head. “It’s my mess to clean up now.”

“What will you do?”

“I feel I should warn the woman and her child. After all, they may be killed because of me. Other than that, I’ll do my best to disappear.”

“I see.” Henry could not imagine hiding from the Time Travelers’ Guild. They have eyes and ears everywhere throughout the planet and its history. He knew Edgar did not have a chance of surviving his next birthday. Hell, Edgar knew this as well as Henry did.

“I hear your mentee may be involved in a similar scandal.”

The smoke shrouded them both now. Henry knew he should probably open a window. “Where did you hear that?”

“A reliable source.”

Edgar could not hide behind his secrets forever. It was useless to keep secrets from the Time Travelers' Guild. Everything came out one way or another. Henry knew that he would not get anything else out of Edgar—he clung too tightly to his secrets—but he had to try.

“Any chance you could get me in touch with this informative friend of yours?”

Edgar extinguished his cigar: the conversation was over. Henry followed suit and proceeded to show his guest out.

“Thank you for letting me know, anyway. And for the cigars, of course.”

“Not at all, my friend.”

The two men shook hands, the picture of two gentlemen bound by duty and friendship.

“Good luck,” Henry said. Edgar merely nodded before he disappeared into the fog. Henry wondered as he closed the door whether the night would swallow him whole or if he would live to see the morning. Guild members were trained to disappear—maybe Edgar could do it. Maybe he—and Isaac—could escape their Fate.



Henry had come over to Isaac's to discuss his plan. Edgar had inspired him to consider disappearing as an option. He explained to Isaac that he remembered a friend who had successfully gone off the Guild's radar.

“I can't go with you,” Henry said. “You are a full-fledged Traveler now, so I can't protect you, but... what can I do to help you?”

Isaac smiled faintly at him. “So you will help?”

“As much as I can.”

Isaac nodded, then thought a moment. “Is there any way to turn off the tracking on our watches?”

“I’m not sure.” He was beginning to realize this would require a lot more work than he thought.

“Can’t you ask your friend?”

Henry shook his head. “He wouldn’t be easy to find now. Besides, finding him would kick up dust, and we don’t need attention when you’re trying to disappear.”

“Right...” Isaac shifted in his chair.

“You could travel to another period and destroy your watch,” Henry considered. “Then they would not be able to track you. And even if they tracked you to a particular time period, you would have the entire earth to hide in. It’s not as big of a net as all of time and space, but it’s feasible.”

“But even that plan needs two watches at minimum to work,” Isaac pointed out. “I only have one to work with. Stealing a watch wouldn’t exactly be easy.”

Henry dug into his pocket. “Unless you knew your target.”

“What?”

“You could steal mine,” Henry said, indicating the watch in his hand. He placed it on the table, and for a moment all either of them could hear was the watch’s delicate ticking, gently reminding them that time was going on without them.

Isaac hesitated. “I don’t want you to suffer—”

Henry put a hand over his watch and pulled it back towards him. “Then break into my room before you leave. If it’s theft, I won’t be reprimanded much.”

Isaac still looked unsure. “But if you help me—”

“You said it yourself, Isabelle needs a watch to travel,” Henry reminded him.
“Don’t worry about me. I want you to be safe. Now what’s your plan?”



There was a loud knock on Henry’s door that morning that should have startled him awake. The truth was, he had been awake for hours, nervously waiting for that knock to come. He had to play the part of a groggy, slightly disgruntled man who knew nothing of what was going on.

He opened the door to find Stevens standing there red-faced in striped pajamas. “Ellison,” he said urgently, “your apprentice is missing.”

“Christ,” Henry said, hoping he sounded shocked, “what happened to him?”

“He’s gone rogue. His room’s been cleaned out and one of the girls from the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory isn’t accounted for, either.”

“Now let’s not jump to conclusions—”

“Ellison, you know as well as I do that I know there was something going on with that girl.”

“I never denied that,” Henry said, “but my apprentice would never go rogue. The Guild is all he knows. Besides, he wouldn’t betray me like that.” Henry saw Stevens looking at the doorframe. Isaac would have left marks there when picking the lock.

“Well if I’m right,” Stevens said, pushing his way into Henry’s room, “he’d have needed two watches to take him and the girl somewhere. Where’s your pocket watch?”

“Should be in the drawer of the nightstand,” Henry said. “Why do you ask?”

“Don’t play dumb, Ellison. If Storey knew where you kept your watch—” He opened the drawer and rifled through its contents. “—he might have stolen it.” He righted himself. “It’s not there.”

“It has to be somewhere,” Henry said frantically. They tore apart his room, but—as Henry knew would happen—they could not find his pocket watch.

“You’re suspended until further notice, Ellison,” said Stevens crisply. “Stay here to await further orders.” He shut the door, and Henry heard it lock from the outside. He was stuck, but Isaac was free. He and Isabelle were probably already on a ship across the Atlantic by now. They were safe for the moment... only when they used the watches could the Guild track their whereabouts. He wondered what time period Isaac would choose to disappear to—he had never told him when he was going, which was probably for the best.

Henry spent many days locked away in his room. Someone would bring him a meal about once a day: nothing special, just a stew or a sandwich. Every night he went to sleep without further orders he slept a little better. No news was good news, right? He grew restless with so little to do, endlessly looking at the same four walls.

It had been at least two weeks when Stevens brought Henry his meal for the day.

“Thought you might like an update,” Stevens said, lifting the lid of the silver platter and waving it to waft the smell in Henry’s direction. Henry knew something was up when he saw what was under the lid: lobster with butter. They were bribing him, though for what, Henry was not sure yet. All he knew was that he would not be swayed by food, no matter how meager his portions had been the past few days.

“That would be nice. News doesn’t seem to penetrate these walls,” he said, “and I’m worried about Isaac.”

“Well isn’t that sweet,” Stevens said. “In that case, you’ll be happy to know that we’ve found him.”

Stevens was bluffing. He had to be. Why would they be giving him lobster in an attempt to gain information if they had already found him? There must be something else.

Henry decided he should sound relieved. “When is he?”

“The Italian Renaissance,” Stevens said slowly, deliberately, circling Henry. “July of 1503 in the Vatican City, as a matter of fact.”

Why would he go then? Henry wondered. He had not realized he had said it aloud until Stevens responded.

“We were hoping you could tell us.”

Henry stared, stone-faced, across the coffee table at Stevens. “Why would I know anything about that?”

Stevens circled back around Henry again, stopping behind him. “You are his mentor, and anyone who has spent more than a minute with you knows you two are close.”

“That doesn’t mean he’d tell me anything. I loved him like a brother, sure, but he apparently didn’t feel that way for me.”

Stevens leaned down and tied a napkin gently around Henry’s neck. “I highly doubt that.” He clicked a recording device into motion beside Henry’s ear. Henry’s heart leapt when he heard Isaac’s voice crackle over the recording.

“I feel so alone.”

“You’re not alone, you’ve got me,” he heard his own voice say.

“You’re all I have.”

Stevens stopped the recording with a click. “Not anymore, apparently.”

That conversation on the *Caronia*: how did he have access to that? Had he been following them since they left Sarajevo? Henry looked down at the lobster on the plate in

front of him. It was never about bribing him. It was about showing who had control over the situation.

“What do you want?”

“It’s not about what I want, it’s about what the Guild wants,” Stevens said coolly.

“And the Guild wants Isabelle Andrews dead. How that happens is up to you.”

Henry swallowed hard. “Am I being ordered to kill someone?”

“That depends on how you take the following information. If you eliminate Andrews, you will be reinstated with no black marks on your record. As it stands now, you have a case against you for treason and aiding a fugitive. If you convince your apprentice to assist you with the operation, you’ll both be reinstated, no questions asked. Do I make myself clear?”

Henry nodded towards his plate. “Yes, sir.”

“There’s a good man,” Stevens said, clapping him on the shoulder. “Now eat up, you’ve got a lot of hard work ahead of you.” With that, he left the room, locking the door behind him.

Henry picked up his fork and nutcracker and got to work. It was not because it was his favorite meal, or even because he was hungry: he did it because if the Guild put a task before him now, he was sure as hell going to do it, especially if it meant redemption for him and Isaac. The sooner he finished, the sooner this whole ordeal would be over. So he cleaned his plate efficiently, and when he was done, Stevens had returned, dangling a shiny new pocket watch from its chain.

“Welcome back, Mr. Ellison.”

4. The Vatican

The journey to the Vatican City was a blur. Henry tried not to think too much about the *Caronia* when he was on the ship to Italy: about little Charlie's glassy eyes, the tearstains on Tom's filthy cheeks, about the tablets of dimenhydrinate rattling in their phial as he disembarked the ship. It was difficult to manage since he knew that by the end of this journey, someone else would be dead and he would be the one to blame for it.

The Guild had given him second-class accommodations—it was easier to manage on a ship to Italy in late March, after all—and Stevens, who was acting as his handler, was the only other person in his room. It was a bit strange to be sharing a room with just one other person—he had not done that since Isaac had lived in his room in the safe house. Getting used to another person's habits was always an adjustment, but that was not what occupied Henry's thoughts.

The multi-week voyage gave Henry a lot of time to contemplate what he was going to do about Isabelle. He thought he would try to convince Isaac to see reason and let the girl die. Isaac would not have to be the one who had to pull the trigger, so long as

he helped it along somehow. As Stevens had said, if he assisted in the operation, he would be reinstated. Even so, he could not help but feel sick about the whole situation. He had nothing personal against the girl, knew no reason her life should be cut short. Well, besides the fact that his apprentice had broken the rules and brought her into their world.

One night, as Henry was smoking one of the cigars Edgar had given him, Stevens decided to strike up a conversation.

“Have you ever killed someone, Henry?”

The question startled him, partly because he did not see where Stevens’ voice was coming from: his cigar had created a smokescreen in the room, and Stevens was lying on his bed. More importantly, Stevens had said hardly anything to Henry the whole trip, let alone about what he was going to do.

“No.” His mouth felt dry.

“Neither have I,” Stevens confessed. “I don’t know how anyone can do it.”

Henry was not sure why Stevens was opening up to him. Maybe he liked Henry more than he had let on. Maybe he figured Henry was a dead man, so he had nothing to lose.

“If you’re trying to convince me not to go through with it—”

“No, not at all. The Guild wants her gone, and you deserve to be reinstated,” Stevens said quickly. “I just wish there were another way.”

Henry could not believe what he was hearing. Floyd Stevens, a trusted Internal Affairs officer, questioning the Guild? Granted, it was not a direct statement opposing the Guild, something that could earn him Treason, but it had opened a door. Henry had to tread carefully through it.

After blowing out a long stream of smoke, Henry said, “What would you do? Hypothetically, of course.”

Stevens gave Henry a hard look. “I don’t think we should discuss that, Ellison.”

Henry remembered the recording of his and Isaac’s conversation onboard the *Caronia*. The Guild had eyes and ears everywhere, even on their own Internal Affairs officers. He swirled the smoke around his mouth, contemplating his next words. “Right. Why should we discuss the hypothetical when we can discuss fact?”

Stevens sat upright on his bed. “Such as?”

“How did you find them?” The question had been on his mind since the night Stevens had come bearing news and lobster.

“They made it hard for us,” Stevens said, seeming glad of the change of subject. “They got rid of their watches once they arrived in the Renaissance—we had to fish them out of the ocean, actually—so we had to search all the major events in Europe before we found them near the Vatican. Our best guess is that they were there to see Michelangelo paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.”

Henry smiled slightly, despite everything. “That does sound like Isaac.” Going to a part of History he did not see the point in changing, that he would fight to ensure. Showing Isabelle something beautiful in the sunshine of an Italian summer.

Stevens met his eye through the smog. “I know you must miss him.”

“Of course I do.”

“But that’s why we have to get him back. To get rid of this woman.”

Henry nodded, though now he was not even sure. A feeling he had suppressed for twelve years was bubbling up again: doubt.

“So where are they specifically?”

“In a shared house on Via Ostia, a few blocks from the Vatican.”

“And as for the weaponry of the time,” Henry said, trying to keep his voice level, “I suppose we will be using daggers, or one-handed swords?”

Stevens’ gaze faltered for a moment, but he nodded. “Yes. A dagger would be more practical for the task at hand, since it could be more easily concealed.”

“I figured as much.”

They were both silent for a moment as the gravity of what Henry had to do sunk in again.

“I always forget there are times before guns,” Stevens said, trying to sound lighthearted. “It seems like they’re the easiest method...”

Henry nodded, humoring him. “Well, it helps when you’re from the 1330s, I suppose.”

“True. I guess you’re somewhat in your element, then.”

That would be like saying Stevens was in his element in the 2100s. Henry wanted to laugh, but could not bring himself to. Instead, he shrugged and extinguished his cigar.

“I’m going to bed.”

Henry picked up his cigar box to replace it in his suitcase when he saw a paper sticking out of it. He had gotten these cigars from Edgar—perhaps it was a message from him? At any rate, he could not read it with Stevens around, so he tucked it back into the box, hoping his companion had not noticed. That would have to wait.



Over the next few days, Henry hardly found time to himself to get a chance to read Edgar’s letter. Stevens kept him busy with quizzes about the local culture and customs, as well as practice with wielding a dagger, both on a dummy in their room and

against Stevens himself with a dulled blade. Their relationship had shifted back to a business one, with no further talk about sentiments connected with the mission or a possibility of an alternate plan. At night, Stevens hardly slept: he turned down his lamp only after Henry was in bed, and he was always awake before Henry woke.

The night before they reached Italy, Stevens went to bed early under a pretense Henry quickly forgot. He snuck the letter from the cigar box and brought it up to his own bunk to read. Edgar, careful as he was, wrote it in code, one that he and Henry had used to exchange messages in the past. Once Henry decoded it, the message read:

H,
I cannot speak of this aloud, since it seems the Guild has eyes and ears everywhere in time and space, and I do not need more evidence against me. But I am writing to tell you that I had no informant because he is me. Allow me to explain.

My knowledge of the mistake I told you about at Woodstock is not a recent phenomenon. It was brought to my attention maybe a year after we left White Lake, and since then I have been doing everything in my power to protect the woman and child. Part of this included dividing my loyalty between the Guild and a Society that could protect me and my charges.

I have not been in direct contact with my charges since that might put them in danger, but the Society has ensured me that they are in capable hands.

Recently, certain facts have come to light on the Guild's side, which have made me vulnerable, hence my recent disappearance. The Guild would say I have gone rogue, much like your apprentice, but I do not agree that protecting those I am responsible for should be considered Treason.

If you need assistance in tidying up your own little problem, the Society is willing to help you. You know how to find them.

E

P.S. Beware of standard-issue clothing and handouts from the Guild. They aren't safe: sometimes they're miced.

So Edgar had been working for the Carpe Heri Society all these years, as a double agent. It was hard for Henry to absorb everything, even after rereading it several times. And the postscript: that could explain how Stevens had overheard them. Henry destroyed the decoded message by slowly feeding strips of it into his lamp, and as he watched the

paper burn up, he wondered for the first time if the Carpe Heri Society did have something to offer his apprentice.



They arrived in Italy before the sun in early April of 1911. After they disembarked the ship, they found a remote spot around the docks and traveled back to July 15th, 1503. Once they were in the Renaissance, Stevens found passage on a wagon from the coast into Rome, which was about 50 miles.

Once they had secured everything aboard the wagon, Stevens told Henry, “We’ve got to do this quickly, before you lose your nerve. As soon as we get into the city, we’re doing the job.”

Henry was not sure he even *had* the nerve to go through with it. Edgar’s idea was sounding more appealing by the hour, even though it went against everything Henry believed. He doubted he could convince Stevens to go along with it, though, so it seemed there would be blood on his hands no matter where he turned.

Henry asked, “Are they still on Via Clemente?”

Stevens nodded. “I haven’t been told otherwise. They probably don’t suspect that we’re closing in.”

A thought struck Henry then: did Isaac know that the Guild could be after him? Was he keeping his eyes open for their usual methods? Was he already looking into the Carpe Heri Society? It was all Henry could think about while Stevens dozed in the heat of the Mediterranean sun. Their journey took the majority of the day, and when they finally arrived in Rome, the sunlight was just beginning to fade.

Henry and Stevens thanked the driver once again and set off into the city. Rome was beautiful, even in the dying light. Henry had not been since Nero torched the place,

so it was nice to see it as it was bursting into its prime, as a hub for culture, art, and enlightened thinking for centuries to come. It almost made him forget what he had come there for.

They made their way to the Northwest corner of the city, where the Vatican was nestled. It was crowded and busy by the time Henry and Stevens arrived. Mothers were gathering the rest of their supplies for dinner, artists on the street were packing up their wares: everyone was heading home. Stevens pushed through the crowd with Henry behind him. Stevens knew quite a bit more about the city's geography than Henry did, even after all of their study on the ship. Of course it was imperative that they navigate it without a map, blending in with the locals.

The house the rogue lovers had been reportedly staying in was on a quiet street, considering it was in the middle of a bustling metropolis. Stevens told Henry to go in alone to lower suspicion, and he would be watching from close by in case he needed to intervene. He knocked at the door and the auburn haired girl from the factory answered it.

"*Buona sera,*" she said. Her Italian accent was surprisingly good. Isaac had taught her well.

"*Buona sera, signorina.* My name is Henry Ellison. Is Isaac at home? I need to speak with him."

She seemed taken aback. He wondered if it was solely to do with his speaking English, or if she already knew who he was. All the same, she nodded and lead him upstairs.

"*Tesoro,*" Isaac's voice carried through the stairwell, "*cosa sta succedendo?*" Henry nearly wept at the sound, despite it having an unfamiliar Italian flavor.

Isabelle shared a knowing smile with Henry, and she said nothing in response to Isaac's call. She must think this is a surprise visit from Henry. Maybe Isaac did not tell her everything.

As they stepped into the shabby one-room apartment, Henry imagined what Isaac and Isabelle's lives must be like here. Somehow he knew that this place held happier memories for Isaac than his room at the Guild's safehouses.

"*Salve,*" Henry said. Isaac turned his head at the sound of Henry's voice, and then grinned hugely, leaping up from his seat at the table to greet him.

"Henry!" Isaac embraced Henry with unprecedented excitement. "I was sure I'd never see you again," he added into his shoulder.

"Same here," Henry replied as Isaac released him.

"What are you doing here?" Isaac asked. Henry's face fell at the question that jerked him out of his reverie and reminded him what he had come to do. Isaac added, as if he had forgotten his manners, "Do you want some dinner?"

"I need to talk to you first."

Henry glanced over at Isabelle, busying herself with finishing dinner. "Care for a smoke?" he asked Isaac softly. Isaac looked uncertainly back at him, and then to Isabelle.

"You boys go ahead and catch up. I can handle this," she said good-naturedly.

Isaac nodded, and Henry lead the way back outside.

"What's this about?" Isaac asked once they had reached his stoop. "How did you find us?"

"I didn't. The Guild did."

The color drained from Isaac's face. "They sent you."

Henry gave him a solemn nod in response. “You’re wanted for Treason. They all think you’ve gone rogue.”

“Well I have, haven’t I?” Isaac said, exasperated. “They’re going to kill us.”

“That’s part of why I’m here,” Henry said. “They sent me here to reason with you.”

“Reason with me how?”

Even though he had gone over it so many times in his head, Henry was having trouble finding the words. “The Guild said that if you helped in... eliminating Isabelle, you could come back. Be reinstated, with no black marks on your record.”

Isaac stared back at him, horrified. “Why the hell would I come back?”

“At least you would not have a target on your back. You could live a full life saving the world. You and I could travel together again, just like we talked about before.”

“Well that was before,” Isaac said. “I can’t go back now. I can’t do that to Isabelle. We’ve got a life together here. Why can’t they just leave us be?”

Henry regarded Isaac sadly. “Because you both know too much.”

Then Isaac understood. “You’re here to kill her, aren’t you?”

“It’s for the best, Isaac. Believe me, I wish there was another way—”

Suddenly there was a flash of Isaac’s fist, and a sharp pain in Henry’s nose. Henry fell backwards against the ground. Blows continued to come, one after another, until suddenly they stopped. Henry opened his eyes and saw that Stevens was restraining Isaac, pulling his arms behind his back. Henry knew Stevens must have a knife at Isaac’s back to be keeping him so still and quiet. He looked at Isaac, tears streaming down his cheeks. He did not want it to end this way, for either of them.

“What are you waiting for?” Stevens demanded. “Finish the job!”

Henry felt at the dagger sheathed on his hip, then reentered the house.

Isabelle was standing in the kitchen when he returned. “Where’s Isaac?” she asked. Henry unsheathed his dagger. “What are you doing?”

“I’m sorry, Miss Andrews, but I can’t let you leave here alive.”

Her eyes widened, and she reached for a kitchen knife.

“It’s for Isaac’s own safety,” Henry said, trying to keep his composure. He calmly walked over towards her. “This isn’t personal, I promise. I know that doesn’t change much for you, but I thought you should know.” He went to disarm her, but she whipped her elbow across his face. There was a cracking pain in Henry’s nose, and he knew it must be broken. Blood started spilling out, but he had to go on. He grabbed her knife and threw it away from them.

“I’m so sorry,” he murmured, pressing the blade of his dagger to her throat. “I wish there was another way.”

Sweating under the pressure of the knife and Henry’s hot blood dripping on her, she cried out, “I’m pregnant.”

Henry was skeptical, but loosened his hold on her. “How do you know?”

“I’m a woman, I know my own body. I missed my last period,” she said frantically. “I think it happened even before we left New York.”

“Are you sure?”

“As sure as I can be.”

“Does Isaac know?”

“No, I haven’t found the right moment to tell him yet.”

Henry closed his eyes a moment, thinking. It was one thing to kill his best friend's lover, but his child? There had to be another way. But Isabelle had to die in order for them to be free. Or, at least, the Guild had to think she was dead.

His eyes snapped open. "Has Isaac mentioned anything about the Carpe Heri Society?"

She nodded. "They're the other society of time travelers, right? Yes, told me how to recognize them, because that was how he could tell I was out of place."

"Have you seen anyone in the city who is Carpe Heri since you've gotten here?"

Isabelle's breathing quickened a little as she racked her brains. "Er, I think Isaac said that some of the nuns at a convent nearby might be Carpe Heri. He saw they had been spending more time than necessary around the Sistine Chapel."

"Which convent?"

"Piccole Suore Della Sacra Famiglia. Why?"

Henry's mind was racing ahead of him. He removed the blade from Isabelle's neck and took off his shirt. "Isabelle, you're going to have to trust me."



Henry's shirt was soaked with blood when he came out of the house.

"I did what I had to do."

Stevens nodded and secured the bonds he had made on Isaac's hands. Isaac gave him a pained and desperate look, and Henry had to look away.

"Miss Andrews did have a final request," Henry added casually, "and I feel we should honor it. She wanted one of the priests from a convent near here to come and perform last rights."

"Which convent?" Stevens asked.

Henry looked directly at Stevens. “Piccole Suore Della Sacra Famiglia.”

Stevens consulted his mental map. “That’s not too far out of the way. What did you plan to tell them?”

“You could pose as an officer of the law and say that there has been the murder of a young woman nearby. You can even say you’re taking us into custody if you want,” Henry said, indicating himself and Isaac.

Stevens nodded, and they made their way to the convent in silence, except for Isaac’s muffled sobs through his gag. Once they arrived at the convent, Stevens played the part of jailor and had them both restrained. He knocked at the door, and a nun answered, appalled at the sight of all the blood.

“*Suora,*” Stevens began, “*mi scuso per la sorpresa.*”

He explained that he was taking these two men to jail because they had killed a young woman in her home nearby, and she needed to be tended to. The nun agreed to help, Stevens thanked her, and they were on their way. Though Stevens did not know, he had just helped Isabelle Andrews to fake her death. When a priest came later to administer last rights, he would find a young woman who was very much alive and who needed protection. She would ask to be admitted into the convent, and they would protect and shelter her throughout her pregnancy, and she had a chance to get in contact with the Carpe Heri Society. *At least now she has a chance,* Henry thought. He wished he could tell Isaac, but at this moment, the less he knew, the better. And besides, Stevens was keeping a close watch on both of them.

Stevens led the two of them to a safe house, and escorted each of them to their rooms. Before he left Henry, though, he told him that in the official report, it would say that Isaac assisted in the operation, and that he would be under close watch to make sure

he did not relapse into old habits. Henry thanked him, though he suspected Isaac would formally deny that statement soon. Henry hoped he could get to Isaac before he sealed his fate.



Henry knocked on Isaac's door. It was a little strange going to visit his apprentice with two armed guards outside his door. Then again, nothing had been the same since they returned from the Renaissance.

A muffled response came from within, something along the lines of *I'm not taking questions today*. Isaac was probably tired of all the interrogation he had been getting; Henry knew he would be himself. So much for being reinstated, no questions asked.

"It's Henry," he said before rapping on the door again. When there came no answer, one of the guards nodded and let him into the room. Inside, it was dark: Isaac had pulled the curtains closed and none of the lights were on. Henry found Isaac sprawled across his bed with a bottle in his hand. Henry had heard that Isaac ordered a very large bottle of vodka for his victory meal, and was surprised to learn he had already emptied it.

Isaac squinted at Henry's silhouette against the light from the hallway.

"What are you doing here, murderer?" His voice was slurred.

Henry shut the door behind him. He was wearing his own clothing, so he was not afraid of being personally miced, but the guards were just outside, and Isaac's room was probably bugged. He could not speak freely here.

"I came to talk to you," Henry said. "I don't like seeing you like this."

"Then maybe you shouldn't have done what you did."

"I did what I had to do," Henry said, knowing he sounded callous, but it was true: he had done what he had to in order to keep Isaac and his child safe, and that included

protecting Isabelle. He could not say anything about her being alive, lest he put her in danger again. As far as he knew, she was safe. “Listen,” Henry continued, “you need to say *exactly* what happened that night when you testify.”

Even through the drink, Isaac seemed to catch his meaning. “I won’t have the death of the woman I love on my conscience.”

“Even if—” The bottle flew at Henry, crashing over his shoulder. “Christ, Isaac!”

“No.”

There was no convincing him, at least not in this state.

“I’ll be back later. Get some rest and try to sober up so we can talk, okay?” Henry made a hasty retreat, telling the guards outside his door that they should keep an eye on him since he has consumed so much alcohol. The guards agreed, but Henry still felt uneasy.

When Henry returned the next morning, he found a swarm of people in the hallway. “What’s going on?”

One of the guards who had been standing watch last night answered him, “I’m sorry, we were too late—”

Henry froze. “What happened to him?” Henry pushed through into his apprentice’s room. “Isaac? *Isaac?*”

He ran into Stevens instead. “Henry, I’m so sorry.”

“Sorry for what? What happened?”

Stevens could not quite meet Henry’s eyes. “Isaac... he’s gone.”

Henry’s emotion silenced him, but Stevens trudged on.

“He blacked out, and choked on his own vomit. I don’t know where the other alcohol came from, but—”

Henry did not wait to hear the rest. He pushed past Stevens and saw his apprentice just as the medics were placing a sheet over him. He looked so much like Sly had when he had died: sweat dried onto his forehead, his dark hair going everywhere at once, his eyes forcefully closed. The worst part is that Isaac died without knowing that Isabelle and his child were safe.

Isaac Storey's body was cremated later that day, per Guild tradition. Henry asked that part of his ashes be put into an urn so he could keep a part of his apprentice close to him. He set the small urn next to Sly's on his too-large mahogany writing desk, and thought grimly that he did not want to start this kind of collection.

After a few months the Guild allowed Henry for a grieving period, Stevens gave him his next assignment: a new apprentice.

"I know it's a bit soon after your apprentice passed, but we thought you might be interested in this trainee."

Henry wrinkled his brow. "Who?"

"A kid by the name of William Storey, from 1515. His mother just passed, our recruiters just picked him up from an orphanage."

Henry's breath caught in his throat. *1515. Could it be—?* "When can I meet him?"