

RILEY ADDAMS

NATURE'S FATE



Nature's Fate

And we all know, there's no messing with nature once it's decided your fate.

Riley Addams

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Dedicated to my best friend, L. E. Knight. Love your girl.

Contents

Chapter 1	1
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Chapter 1

“Annabelle Jane Wellington released from a sentence of ten years early on good behavior. Court will be held in two months to release her from parole. Court dismissed.”

People shuffled quietly out of the room, leaving Annabelle to be escorted out by two policemen. They brought her to a room down the hall where her personal belongings were kept. The handcuffs were taken off her wrist, though the two men still stood by the door as she collected her clothes and items. She hadn’t seen them in years; it felt nice to hold actual clothes in her hands. Deciding to ignore the guards who had their eyes firmly planted on her, she quickly changed out of the orange jumpsuit and into the jeans, tank top, and leather jacket she had on before she was arrested. She marveled at how they still fit perfectly. Annabelle slipped the black boots onto her feet, turning around to face the policemen.

“Can I leave now?” Her voice was kind, but Annabelle was not in a happy mood. She wanted to leave the place that she had been trapped in for seven years of her life. And whose fault was it? William’s.

“Yes.” A fast reply came from the taller guard as he stepped away from the door, even opening it for her. She flashed him a thankful smile before walking quickly out of the horrid building.

“I’m finally free.” Annabelle couldn’t help but grin at the chilling wind that met her when she opened the door. She did a little spin, spreading her arms out as she did. Unfortunately, her grin disappeared as soon as she was met with the sight in front of her.

“*William?*” Annabelle knew she sounded very rude, but honestly, she was very taken aback by his arrival. The boy (or man) smiled, showing his dazzling white teeth.

“Annabelle Wellington, fancy seeing you here?” He asked, an arrogant smile plastered on his face. Annabelle stared at him for a moment, blinking at how much older he looked. I guess seven years can really change a person... His usual freshly shaven face now had slight stubble beginning on it, and he had let his hair grow out longer, while also styling it differently. Not only that, he looked thinner and very sleep deprived.

“Go away, William.” Annabelle told him, scowling as she did. She started to walk away, heading down the sidewalk. She didn’t have any idea where she was going, but she knew she wanted away from him.

“Come on Belles, I just want to talk.” William kept up his arrogant smile, jogging to catch up with her quick pace. Annabelle glared at him, looking away from the entrancing smile that she used to melt into. She did, however, like it when he called her Belles. Or rather, she used to like it.

“But you see, I don’t want to talk to you. I want you to punch you in the face right now. Unfortunately, that would

get me chunked back into prison.” She told him, crossing the street at a faster pace, though William quickly caught up to her.

“Fine, we don’t have to talk, we’ll just walk.” He caught in step with her, shoving his hands in his pockets. Annabelle ignored him, putting her own hands in her jacket pockets. Soon, though, her resolve disappeared as William began to whistle.

“What do you want?” She snapped at him, stopping in her tracks. William smiled at her with fake innocence.

“I told you. I just want to talk.” He repeated. Annabelle rolled her eyes, knowing he wanted more than what he said. William was a schemer, and a good one at that.

“And I want you to leave me alone, William. I want to go home.” Annabelle said matter-of-factly, putting her hands on her hips and giving him a very fake smile.

“Okay, okay, I know you should rest, I just have one question.” William shrugged again, raising his eyebrows at Annabelle.

“What?” She sighed, narrowing her eyes at the mischievous look on his face.

“I’m only wondering where you plan to go? After all, last time I checked you were broke and living in my apartment.”

There it was; his scheme.

“I can stay with a friend.” Annabelle went to walk away from him again, but he caught her arm in his hand.

“Annabelle, just come stay with me. There’s really no need to be so stubborn. Besides,” William smirked cockily, “you don’t have any other friends.”

“You are not my friend.” Annabelle pronounced each word clearly, narrowing her eyes at the man.

“Is that a yes?” William ignored her previous statement, raising his eyebrows hopefully. Annabelle only stared at him, not wanting to admit that he was right.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” He smirked, holding his arm out for her to grab. She glared, ignoring the gesture as she continued to walk down the sidewalk. Annabelle barely remembered where the old apartment was, so she, though reluctantly, let William lead her.

All the while, William talked and talked, asking her all sorts of questions and commenting on everything. Annabelle stayed stubbornly silent, only occasionally nodding or shaking her head.

“I see you let your hair grow out.” William noted, taking a lock of her un-brushed blond hair in his hand. She jerked away from his touch, glaring at his hand. For one glorious moment, William went silent, only staring at her as they neared the apartment. Annabelle looked away from his gaze, glaring at the ground as if it was its fault she was in this mess.

“You’re awfully quiet today. I seem to remember that you were the chatty one.” He wasn’t wrong about that. However, Annabelle ignored his following attempts to get

her to talk.

“Welcome home.” William grinned, opening the red painted door to reveal the same mix-matched and cluttered living room that she had always adored. It just awakened bad memories now.

“So I thought we-“ William started to ask her something as he shut the door, but Annabelle ignored him, walking past the kitchen and living room. She then walked down the hallway, past the study, past William’s bedroom, and into the guest bedroom. That had to be the cleanest room in the whole apartment, though it still carried on the tell-tale signs of it being decorated by a guy. Nothing in the room matched, not even the bedspread and the pillow cases. Annabelle liked that, though, it seemed homier.

“Belles wait-“Again, Annabelle ignored William, shutting the door in his face. She then stood behind the door, waiting to hear the retreating sounds of his footsteps. After five minutes of silence, Annabelle walked over to the queen-sized bed, took off her jacket and shoes, and then collapsed into the warmth of the bed. Pulling the yellow comforter up to her chin, Annabelle was asleep within seconds.

* * *

Annabelle was awoken by a loud noise, which she soon discovered to be the sound of snoring. Rubbing the sleep from her eyes, she sat up to see the sleeping, and snoring,

face of William, sitting in the rocking chair that rested in the corner. If she wasn't in such a daze, she would've woken him up and yelled at him for ten minutes straight. However, she was in a daze. So she crawled out of the bed, grabbing her shoes and coat, and then left the room quietly.

Once out of the guest room, Annabelle made her way to the kitchen as she slipped her shoes and coat on. She looked for some food to eat, as her stomach would not leave her alone, but William seemed to only eat the weirdest food she'd ever heard of. Of course, the only reason he'd eaten normal food before was because she ate normal food...

"He still keeps it here." Annabelle chuckled, taking the extra cash William always kept hidden in his copy of *Little Red Riding Hood*. She pocketed the money, put the book back on the shelf, and then crept quietly out of the apartment.

Annabelle spent the next half an hour, trying to find someplace with food. She seemed to remember there being plenty of restaurants around William's apartment, but they were nowhere in sight now. Eventually, she ended up eating at a diner a few blocks away.

"Can I have some coffee? Oh, and some waffles! Yeah, waffles sound good. Does that come with bacon?" Annabelle couldn't help herself at the sight of all the delicious looking foods on the menu, going into a rant when the waitress asked her for her order.

"Yeah, it does come with bacon." The waitress replied, walking away to turn in Annabelle's order. Looking around

the surprisingly crowded café, as it was probably around midnight, Annabelle realized how different she was. At least, compared to people now. She seemed so...old fashioned.

“Coffee.” The waitress set down Annabelle’s coffee, along with some cream, before walking off again. Annabelle couldn’t help but narrow her eyes at the girls retreating back. She was right about being old-fashioned, even after only seven years people had become so rude.

“Haven’t had coffee in a while, have you?” Annabelle jumped at the sound of a voice, looking up from her delicious coffee to see the unwanted face of – you guessed it – William.

“What are you doing here?” She asked him angrily, setting her cup down and making the table shudder. William let out what sounded to be a lazy sort of chuckle, making him look very tired.

“You know, you really shouldn’t walk around the streets of Chicago at one in the morning by yourself.” He told her, accepting the cup of coffee the waitress had kindly brought over. *Now she has manners.*

“Why not? You did.” Annabelle questioned impatiently, drinking the last of her coffee. William shrugged, taking a small sip of his own.

“I’m older.” Annabelle raised her eyebrows at his excuse, and settled on ignoring his existence. “Would you like anything?” The waitress almost dropped the plate of waffles

in front of Annabelle, turning immediately to William and smiling at him kindly. Annabelle rolled her eyes, stabbing at her waffles with a fork. She remembered this happening all the time when they were dating. It was ridiculous.

“Could I have a bagel, please?” William, of course, enjoyed it when girls flirted with him, so he went along with it. He flashed his arrogant smile, practically causing her to melt right there on the spot.

“They’ll be right out.” The girl said, looking back at him with another smile. William chuckled again, but the coffee seemed to have some effect on him.

“Aren’t you going to share?” He asked Annabelle as she ate her waffles. She looked up at him with raised eyebrows.

“Oh come on, we used to share food all the time.” William smirked, picking up his fork and taking a huge bite out of her waffles. Annabelle glared at him, pulling the plate closer to her.

“Yeah, we used to.” She snapped sarcastically. The waitress sent her an almost angry look as she set down William’s bagel, though she quickly turned back to him and smiled once more.

“Is there anything else I can get you?” She asked in her fake nice voice. Annabelle, temper flaring, shook her head.

“No.” She snapped at the waitress, who glared at her before stalking away. William turned to Annabelle, raising his eyebrows at her temper.

“Touchy, touchy.” He made a clicking noise with his tongue, spreading cream cheese on his bagel. Annabelle took one more bite of her waffle, slammed her fork down on the table, got up from the table, and stalked out of the café.

“Belles!” William called in an annoyed voice, putting some money down on the table for their food before chasing after Annabelle with a bagel in his mouth.

“Annabelle please wait!” He shouted, seeing her retreating figure as she crossed the street. Annabelle ignored him completely, walking quickly down the sidewalk away from him. She was going the wrong way, heading away from the apartment, but she didn’t even stop to think about where she was going, only that it was away from him.

“Don’t be stupid!” William called in a know-it-all voice. Annabelle scoffed, though she could only hear his voice not see him. He did, however, sound a lot closer. So she quickened her steps, turning onto another street and taking a shortcut down an alley.

“Hello.” Annabelle, surprisingly, did not jump at the sound of a man’s voice as he stepped out of the shadows of the alley. She nodded to him, still walking and glancing over her shoulder for any signs of William.

“Hi.” She subconsciously replied to the tall man. Annabelle heard William calling her name, so she hurriedly quickened her step towards the exit. She was soon stopped by the man.

“In a hurry are we? What are you running from sweetheart?” He reached his hand towards her shoulder, but

Annabelle jerked away with a scowl.

“Belles!” William’s voice sounded a lot closer and she really did not want a lecture on how he was late and why being out alone was bad. Unfortunately, the big brute refused to move.

“Move.” Annabelle’s commanding voice set in as she looked the man in the eye. For a moment, he stared back at her, not moving an inch. But then he began to laugh, putting both hands on Annabelle’s shoulder and started to pull her in the direction of a door.

“I’ll scream.” She warned, struggling to get out of his grip. She suddenly didn’t care about getting away from the mocking clutches of William; even he was better than this creep.

“Sure about that, sweetheart?” His question was rhetorical, so Annabelle simply shrugged. Then, however, she opened her mouth to scream. Though she immediately regretted doing so.

“Oh my-“

“There you are!” William came running into the alley, panting only slightly as he stopped next to the frozen Annabelle.

“What did you do?” He had caught sight of the man, who was now knocked on a fire escape two stories up. Annabelle couldn’t answer him, frozen in shock.

“Oh God, oh God; this cannot be happening!” William

kicked a trash can in anger, shaking Annabelle from her daze as he did. She stared at the spilled contents of the can, then at William with wide eyes.

“What can’t be happening?” She asked, her voice laced with curiosity. William ignored her, grabbing her wrist roughly and dragging her in the direction of the apartment.

“William! What’s going on? What did I do to that man? Slow down already!” Annabelle burst out, tripping over her own feet as he walked, almost running, down the sidewalk.

“It wasn’t supposed to happen for another three years.” William muttered to himself, only slowing down slightly. Annabelle, temper rising, dug her heels into the ground so as to bring him to a stop.

“*What is going on?*” She asked irritation clear in her voice. William turned to her, a very dramatic and grim look on his face.

“The spell has been broken.”

* * *

“You’re insane.” Annabelle threw her jacket down on the sofa once William had opened the apartment door. She then began to pace back and forth across the floor, hands on her hips. Meanwhile, William sat in an armchair with his head in his hands.

“I’m not insane.” William didn’t bother to convince her any more than that one sentence, too stuck in his own thoughts. Annabelle scoffed at him.

“So I’m just supposed to believe that there’s a spell and now it’s broken and evil is going to go kill everything in the world?”

“There’s a bit more to it than that but yeah, basically.”

The room was suddenly icily silent as Annabelle processed this new information. She wasn’t sure whether to trust William or not. After all, he had claimed to love her and then framed her for something that he’d done. He’d proved himself to be a pretty good actor.

While Annabelle continued her pacing, William’s brain raced at a million miles per hour. He was told to keep her safe until she turned thirty, which is when he would take her to the witch and he would receive further instructions there. But now, three years early, she needed to see the witch.

“We have to leave, it’s not safe here.” After ten minutes of awkward silence, William finally made up his mind. However, Annabelle was not so much in agreement.

“I’m not going anywhere with you. How do I know you aren’t making all this up? What if you’re taking me to join a cult?” Annabelle’s worrisome side came out as she stopped pacing, staring at William with wide eyes. She would have walked out right then, but she knew something was up. Whether it was a spell or just William being crazy,

something was wrong. That did not, however, mean that she was going anywhere with him.

“You can’t know that. You just have to trust me.” He shrugged, getting up from the armchair and heading towards his bedroom. Annabelle stared after him, blinking at his sudden change in attitude. She quickly hurried after him, though, after hearing a rather loud crash from his room.

“What are you doing?” Annabelle frowned at the sight before her.

Apparently, William had a secret room hidden behind his closet.

She then found herself gawking at his rather large collection of guns, bows, crossbows, knives, and even suspicious looking bottles toward the deeper end of the cramped room. William was busy loading a large duffel bag full of weapons, while Annabelle looked curiously through the many rows of weapons and items.

“Keep it, you’ll need it.” William glanced at her and then at the knife she held in her hand. Well, it was more of a dagger than a knife. Either way, Annabelle nodded and carefully tucked it into her boot.

“Take this too.” He then threw her a handgun to her with ease, though she fumbled quickly to catch it.

“Why do I need these? And where did you get them? Have you robbed a gun store or something?” Annabelle

questioned, tucking the gun into her waistband. She was very confused and astonished that he had all of this hidden back here, yet it seemed like something William would do, the more she thought about it. He'd rob a gun store just to say that he had and then hide it all.

William chuckled, tucking his own gun in his belt. She felt clumsy and out of place having the gun in her waistband, but plenty of years watching police shows had taught her that was the best place for it.

“Now that you have your powers, people will be coming to kill you. That’s why we’re leaving.”

“Thanks for sugarcoating it. And may I ask what powers these are?”

“No problem Belles.” William winked, swinging the bag over his shoulder. She rolled her eyes, finding it typical of him to not answer the important questions. Annabelle did seem to feel calmer, though, at the sight of William’s normal smirking face, but at the same time it told her that he was not kidding. That may sound odd, as his remark actually was a joke. But she knew William, though she liked to forget that, and he was definitely not himself.

“I’d go pack if I were you; it’s going to be a long trip.” William had moved into his actual closet, packing another bag full of clothes. Annabelle nodded, taking a step out of the little room. She reached her hand out to shut the hidden door when something caught her eye.

“Where did you get this?” Annabelle’s large eyes blinked

down at the familiar photo that brought up so many questions. The photo of William and the mystery girl was soon, however, plucked from her hands with ease.

“Touché.” William noted, tucking the picture into his pocket. Annabelle narrowed her eyes, following him when he walked into the bedroom.

“Did you take that out of my jacket pocket while I was sleeping?” She asked, raising her eyebrows with hands on hips.

“Don’t ask me questions when you stole it from me in the first place.” William didn’t sound angry, but he was trying hard not to. Annabelle could see his jaw clenched in anger as he finished packing his clothes. She, however, continued to question him.

“Is that why you were watching me sleep last night?” Her tone was icy as she narrowed her eyes at the irritated William.

“Look, I get that you don’t like me. And I understand why you refuse to trust me. But this is real life, Belles, and you can’t go around acting like a sneaky little thief, okay?” He didn’t expect an answer, and she did not intend to give him one. Instead, she glared harshly at the back of his head, and then walked quickly to the guest room. Annabelle wasn’t entirely sure what she was supposed to pack, but she figured checking the dressers in the guest room for some remnants of the clothes she had when she lived here. Luckily, William had kept a good amount of her clothes. So

she threw them into a backpack, grabbed some necessities from the bathroom, and finally got some water bottles and food from the kitchen.

“Good, you’re ready.” William seemed to be ignoring whatever awkwardness had settled in between the two, acting completely normal. Annabelle glared at him from the bookshelves, grabbing a book entitled *_Fact or Fiction_* to read. She doubted it would be interesting, but she threw it into her backpack anyway.

“Come on.” William held a hand out to Annabelle impatiently, waiting for her to walk in front of him. She ignored his gesture, walking quickly out the door and inched away from the protective hand he put on her lower back.

“The plane leaves in two hours.” William stated calmly as he hailed a taxi. Annabelle raised her eyebrows at him, just as the taxi pulled up to the curb.

“We’re flying?” Her voice shook a bit at the thought. William laughed, sliding into the taxi after her. Annabelle glared at him, crossing her hands on her lap.

“That’s right; you have a fear of planes.” He teased, lips twitching into a smile. She ignored him, turning her back at the ignorant man.

“Oh come on, I’m just teasing you.” William smiled playfully, bumping shoulders with Annabelle. She pushed herself farther into the window, away from William.

William, sighing, leaned his head on his hand to look out at the empty streets of Chicago. He had to admit, he wouldn’t

miss the city. It was too crowded for his liking. He had, after all, grown up in the country.

“Honeymoon?” The taxi driver’s attempt at breaking the ice didn’t seem to work well, which became obvious when Annabelle let out a mocking laugh.

“Please...” She mumbled, emphasizing the “p”. With one roll of the eyes from Annabelle, the car was sent into silence for the next twenty minutes.

As they drove, Annabelle seriously considered taking the clothes that William had fortunately kept all these years, and jumping out of the cab. But the more she thought about, the more saddened she became. Annabelle literally had nowhere else to go. Her two sisters lived in California, along with her dad while her mom had died while Annabelle was in prison. She was out of options.

She soon realized, though, that this was the perfect opportunity to plan her revenge on William while also learning what exactly he had done to her that had caused that man to go flying. Annabelle would do exactly what he’d done to her. Gain his trust, and then break his heart.

“Thanks.” William told the driver, handing him some cash before turning to look at the large and crowded airport. Annabelle grabbed the one backpack she had, letting William follow her into the airport. He was obviously trying his best to obey her clear wishes of silence, but neither of them was ever good at staying silent. Annabelle, at least, had gotten some practice in prison.

“We can’t stay quiet forever, Belles. I know you, and you can’t stay quiet for five minutes let alone a whole plane ride.” William had almost lasted until the gate, but he just couldn’t help himself. And it took Annabelle all of her will to not let her temper get the best of her.

“First of all, you don’t know me. You haven’t even talked to me in seven years, and I doubt you even listened to what I said before then. Secondly, don’t call me Belles.” She didn’t look at him when she spoke, looking at the ground as they walked and then at her hands when they sat down to wait at the gate, “and I refuse to speak to you until you tell me what’s going on.”

William had no response to that. He would never admit it, but she was right. He hadn’t uttered a word to her in seven years. But he also knew that she hadn’t changed much, in some ways.

“Where did you get that?” William suddenly questioned, pointing at the iPod Annabelle had pulled out of her backpack. She made a small shrugging gesture, her lip twitching into a smirk as she put an ear bud in her ear.

“Fine, you win. I’ll tell you what’s going on, just don’t steal my stuff anymore, ‘kay?” William took the iPod from her hands, stuffing it into his pocket. Annabelle grinned triumphantly and turned in her seat to look at him.

“Where are we going?” She asked, raising her eyebrows expectantly. William shuffled his feet before replying.

“London.”

“London as in London, *England*?” Annabelle’s eyes widened in surprise at his answer. She didn’t think they would be going so far. William nodded, putting his arm on the back of her chair.

“Why are we going to England?” She asked him, glancing cautiously at his arm. He didn’t move his arm anywhere aside from the slight tensing of his muscles. Annabelle frowned at him, started to become really confused.

“I can’t tell you.” His voice was not shaken by that at all. Annabelle became angry, however.

“What do you mean you can’t tell me?” She bit her cheek in an attempt to keep her anger down. William only looked around them suspiciously.

“I can’t tell you. Not here.” His voice was significantly quieter now, causing her to frown in confusion.

“What’s going on, William?” The hairs on the back of her neck suddenly stood up and Annabelle’s eyes darted around them, looking for something suspicious. Within seconds, though, she locked onto a man sitting in a chair a few rows over. Annabelle’s vision slowly faded in and out and she started to hum something under her breath. She wasn’t sure what made her do it, but she knew somehow what she was doing. The humming increased to a quiet singing and the man’s head turned towards her.

“Annabelle, stop it.” William seemed to know what was going on as he put a hand on her shoulder, tempting her to stop. But Annabelle ignored him, chanting her song a

little bit louder. The man's head suddenly turned around and he looked right into her eyes. A smile escaped her lips as she continued to sing. The stranger was out of his chair, now, walking towards her.

"Annabelle!" William hissed, waving his hand in front of her eyes. She couldn't even hear him this time. She had gone into a trance somehow, singing an unknown song to get this man to come near her.

"Come on." William decided to take action when he stood up from his chair, grabbed their belongings, and pulled Annabelle out of her chair. Eye contact between her and the man broke, but she still continued to sing as William dragged her off to the restrooms. Annabelle's vision suddenly sharpened and she blinked, stopping in her tracks.

"What did I just do...?" She whispered to William. He glanced behind them, then back at her with a frown.

"I can't explain now. Follow me." He went to walk away again, pulling on her hand. Annabelle ignored his request, pulling her hand out of hers.

"No!" She whispered loudly, knowing people would hear them, "What is going on?"

"I promise I'll tell you, just not here. It's not safe." William looked over her head as he spoke, glancing down at her to raise his eyebrows.

"Okay? Now come on, the flight's boarding."

Annabelle slept for the majority of the plane ride, only waking up when they had to exit the first plane and quickly head to their connecting flight. She wasn't the biggest fan of planes, so it was easier for her to sleep. It helped clear her head, too. A lot was going on that made absolutely no sense to her, so sleep helped to forget for a while.

"Are you hungry?" William asked her, watching as she blinked her eyes open from a nap. Yawning, Annabelle shook her head. William went ahead and ordered himself some food from the flight attendant, collapsing into silence after that. Annabelle stayed silent also, staring at the seat in front of her.

"Here you go, sir." The attendant set William's food down on his tray, along with a glass of what looked like beer.

"Thank you." He thanked her, digging quickly into his food; which was composed of a club sandwich, chips, yogurt, and a cookie. Annabelle, not realizing her own hunger, stared wide eyed at the other half of his sandwich.

"You're hungry now, aren't you?" William had caught her staring, causing her cheeks to heat up embarrassingly. He didn't say anything as he handed her the other half of his sandwich, continuing to eat his own. Annabelle couldn't help but smile, taking a bite of the savory delight.

"Thanks." She muttered, swallowing. William nodded, staring out the window, deep in thought as he ate. Annabelle decided to leave him that way, rather than dealing with his snarky remarks. So she finished the sandwich, lying back

in an attempt to sleep. Luckily, for her, she fell asleep just as turbulence began to bounce the plane around.

“Belles, wake up; we’re landing.” William’s loud voice roused her from her sleep. Her eyes blinked open to see the frowning face of William looking at her. Annabelle furrowed her eyebrows in confusion as to why he looked sideways. Soon, however, she jerked up at realizing she had been sleeping on his shoulder. He smirked at that, grabbing both his bag and hers in one hand.

“We’ve places to be, you know?” The smirk still plastered to his face, William pushed her out into the aisle. Annabelle scowled, begrudgingly following the other passengers out of the plane.

“So where exactly in London are we going?” She asked William as they exited the plane. The exotic and foreign sound of people’s voices had surprised her, but reminded her that she had come all the way to London for a reason. She was intent, now, on finding out what she had done to that man. It was definitely not natural, and Annabelle needed to find out what it was.

“We have to go see a friend of mine.” Annabelle was surprised at how vague William had become. He wasn’t one for silence and vagueness. He loved to rub things in her face and make her wait for the mystery, but he would never completely ignore her.

As it was, he did continue to ignore her. No matter how many times she asked him exactly where they were going,

he just kept walking through the airport.

“You’re not going to tell me are you?” William didn’t acknowledge her question at all, simply slid into the awaiting cab and motioned for her to follow. She groaned and begrudgingly followed.

The cab ride was a short ride, lasting only fifteen minutes at the most. The odd little British cab pulled to a stop in front of an old looking store, beneath what looked to be apartment buildings.

“Come on.” William finally spoke, urging her out of the cab and quickly into the building. Annabelle almost tripped over her own feet, struggling to keep up with his pace. He led her into the shop, which looked like a store selling odd knick-knacks, and towards the back where a doorway hidden by hanging beads was.

“Maggie? Are you here?” William called out, ducking past the long train of beads. Frowning, Annabelle followed him into the dark and musty room. She coughed on the intense smell of incense, looking around as she did.

“Who’s Maggie?” She found herself whispering in the eeriness of the shop, but William still shushed her.

“Maggie?” His voice was suddenly cautious, rather than curious, when he saw a glass jar on the ground. A mysterious looking liquid oozed out of it, surrounding the broken pieces of glass.

“What-“ Annabelle looked up at William with fear in her eyes. She went to ask what was going on, when she

was quickly interrupted by an excited squeak from behind them.

“Oh, William, it’s only you.” The small woman held a hand to her heart, bending down to sweep up the broken bottle with the broom she was carrying. William politely bent down to help, sending the lady a smile

“Hey Mags, what happened here?” Annabelle watched in confusion as the lady, Maggie, laughed at her clumsiness and William laughed with her. He didn’t seem cautious or nervous anymore, instead he was very comfortable with the grey haired old lady.

“William...” Annabelle trailed off uncomfortably, glancing between Maggie and William, who stood up at her voice. The woman’s jeans and blouse hugged her small, bony figure nicely, which seemed to contradict the wrinkling face and grey hair.

“Annabelle, this is Maggie. Maggie, this is Annabelle.” William’s face turned to a slow smile as he watched Maggie’s face turn to realization. She grinned at the small girl in front of her.

“Annabelle? It’s really you?” Maggie’s voice was full of excitement and sadness all at the same time. Annabelle frowned at this, furrowing her eyebrows in confusion.

“Have we met before?” She asked uneasily. Maggie nodded and then shrugged.

“Only briefly, when you were young. I knew I would see you again, though, the Fates told me so.” Annabelle raised

her eyebrows at the gibberish coming from this woman's mouth.

"The *Fates*?" She asked pointedly. William nodded along with Maggie, both of them smiling.

"Maggie is a witch and she called upon the Fates to ask of the future." He explained. Annabelle nodded as if that made sense. Luckily, Maggie and William seemed to see that she didn't understand. Annabelle honestly thought William had gone insane while she was gone and met this mad old woman. That was until that mad, old woman said something that changed her mind and gave her yet another reason to stay.

"We'll explain it all later. For now, I'd like to get to know my own kin." Maggie grinned especially bright at saying that, putting a hand out to lead Annabelle up a flight of stairs in the corner.

"What?" Annabelle asked eyes wide. Maggie continued to pull her up the steps, chatting as she did.

"I live upstairs. This shop is only a way for me to make money. I also double as a psychic but—" Annabelle cut her off there, stopping her step.

"What do you mean that I am your kin? Are we related somehow?" Annabelle asked, voice rising. Maggie frowned, ignoring Annabelle's question as she turned to William.

"You didn't tell her?" She asked him. William let out a

nervous chuckle, scratching the back of his neck. Annabelle frowned, crossing her arms over her chest.

“Tell me what?” She asked. Maggie, a small smile appearing on her worried face, held onto Annabelle’s hands. She felt the urge to pull away, but there was really nowhere for her to go, as she was backed into the wall.

“Sweetie,” She paused, glancing at the guilty looking William, “I’m your mother.”