

## 7. Annexes

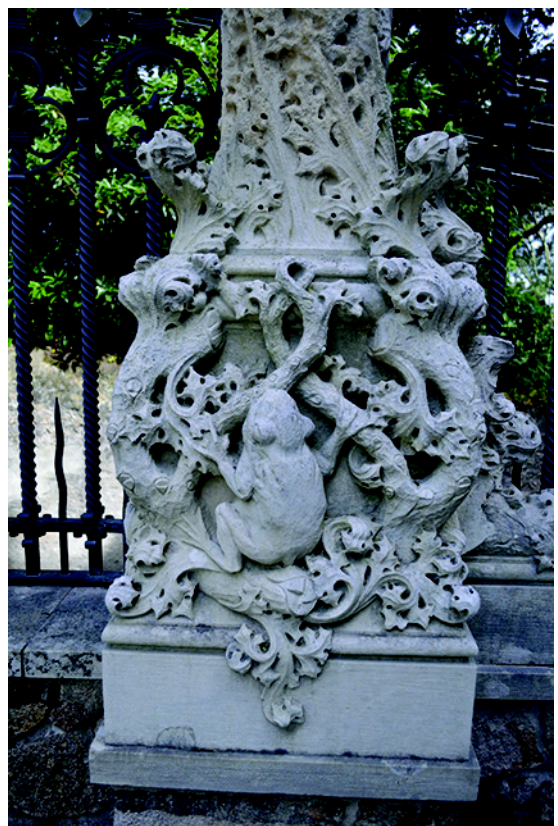
### 7.1. Photographic Portfolio



*Table 1:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Water fountain.



*Table 2:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Sculpture.



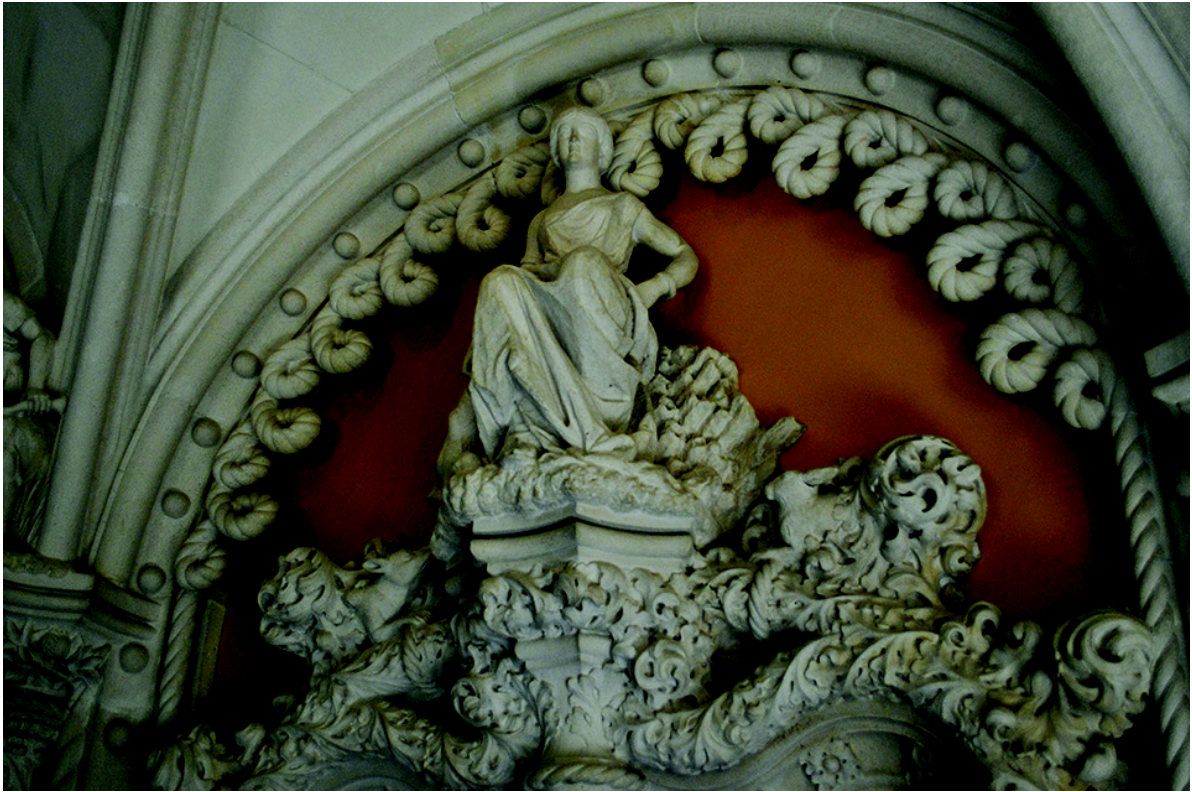
*Table 3:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Column.



Table 4: Quinta da Regaleira. Palace. Sculpted wall.



Table 5: Quinta da Regaleira. Palace. Sculpted apron.



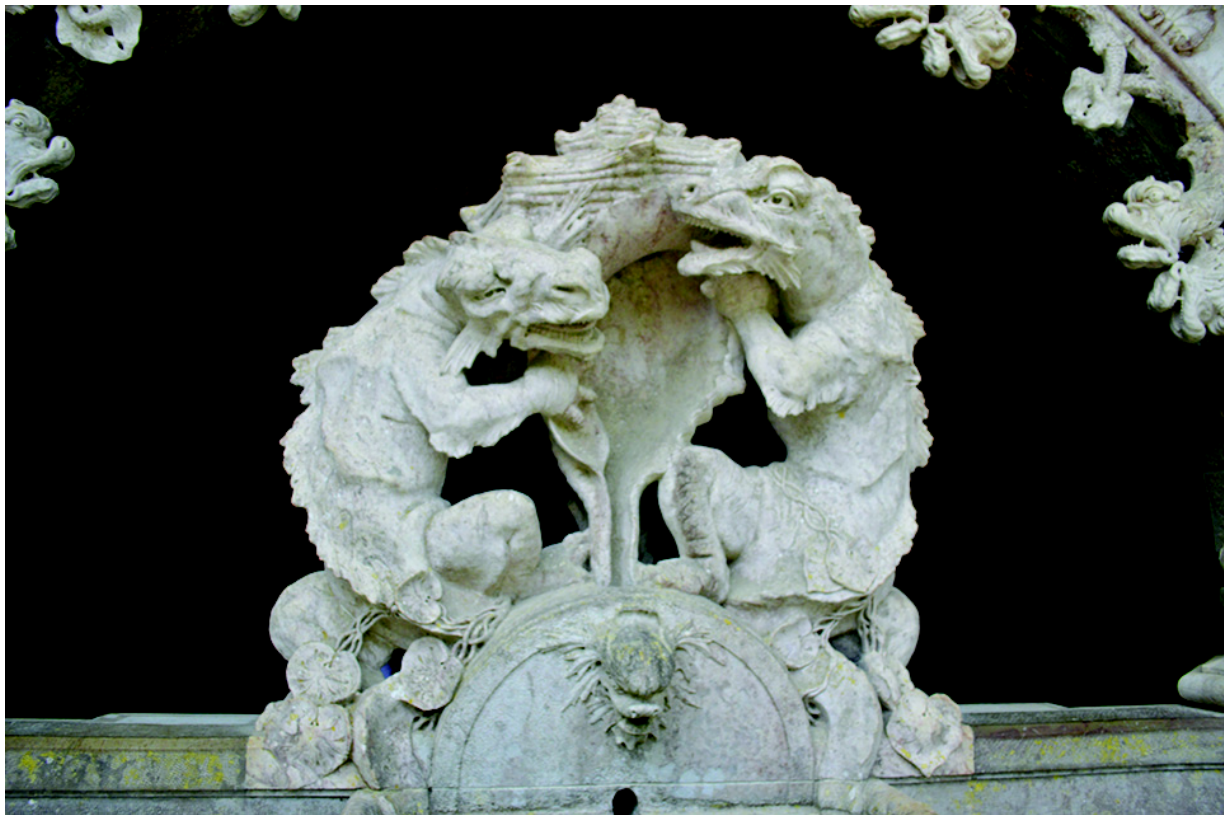
*Table 6:* Quinta da Regaleira. Palace. Sculpture of tympanum.



*Table 7:* Quinta da Regaleira. Palace. Portrait of António Augusto Carvalho Monteiro.



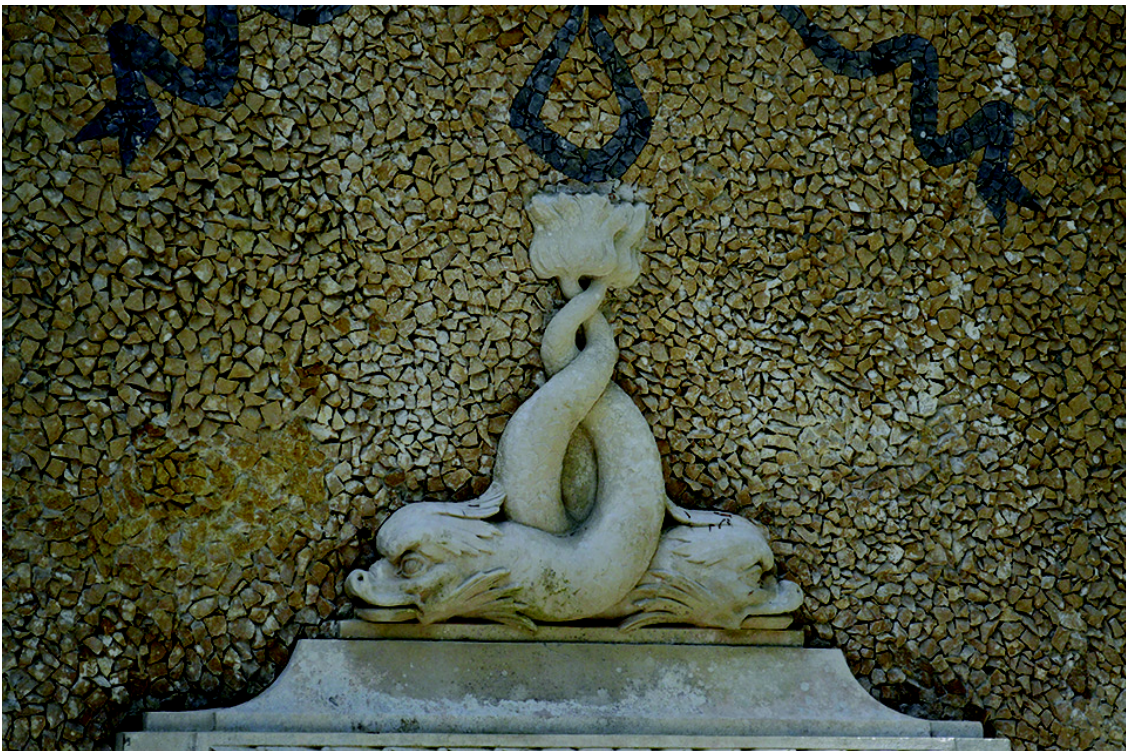
*Table 8:* Quinta da Regaleira. Chapel. Entrance Porch.



*Table 9:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Guardian's Gate.



*Table 10:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Fountain of Regaleira.



*Table 11:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Fountain of Regaleira. Detail.



*Table 12:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Bench known as "Bench 515".



*Table 13:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Pair of the "Bench 515".



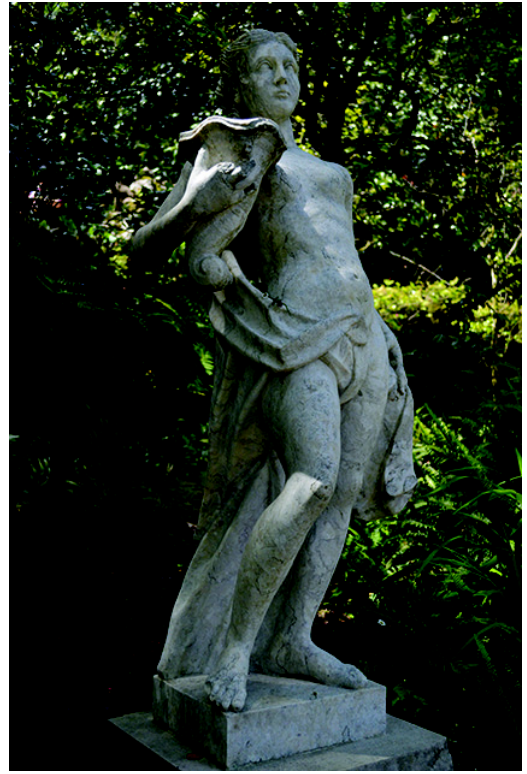
*Table 14:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. "Bathhouse Fountain".



*Table 15:* Quinta da Regaleira. Palace.



*Table 16:* Quinta da Regaleira. Chapel. Ornament.



*Table 17:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Goddess.



*Table 18:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Lion.



*Table 19:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Snail.



*Table 20:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Frog.



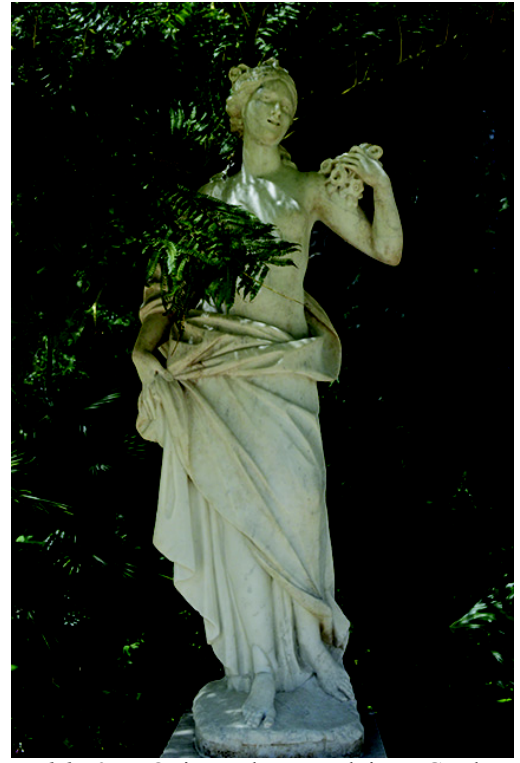
*Table 21:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Salamander.



*Table 22:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Turtle.



*Table 23:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Orpheus.



*Table 24:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Goddess.



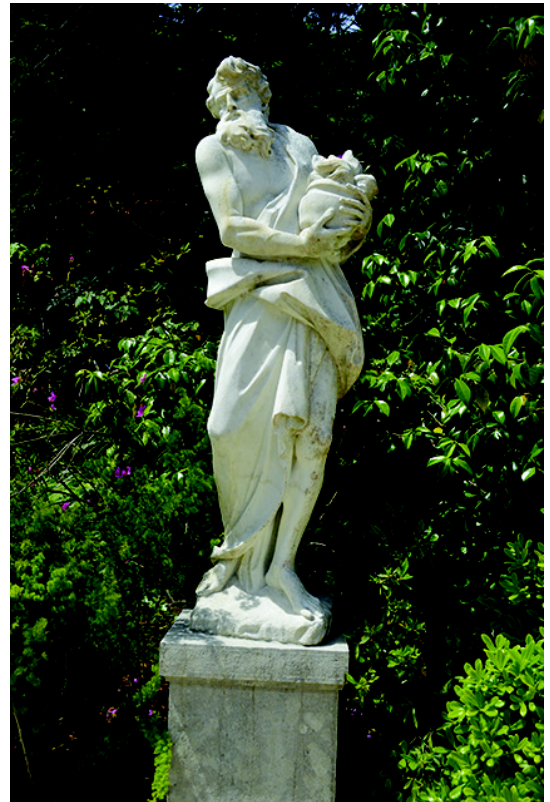
*Table 26:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Goddess Demeter.



*Table 25:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Pan.



*Table 28:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Bacchus.



*Table 27:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Vulcan.



*Table 30:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Sculpture of Hermes.



*Table 29:* Quinta da Regaleira. Garden. Alleyway of the Gods. Porch.

## 7.2. Process



Table 31: Graphic Journal.

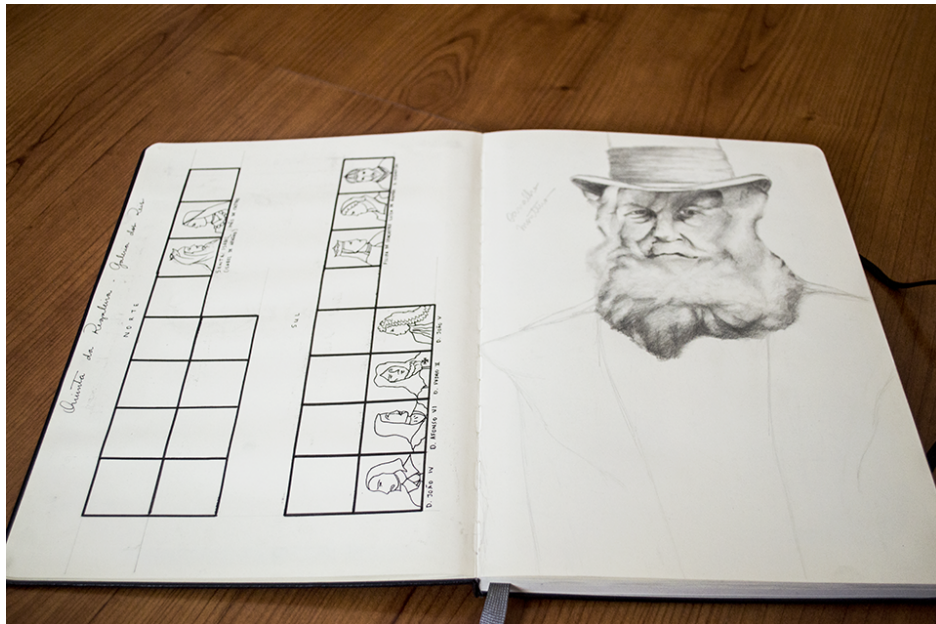


Table 32: Graphic Journal.

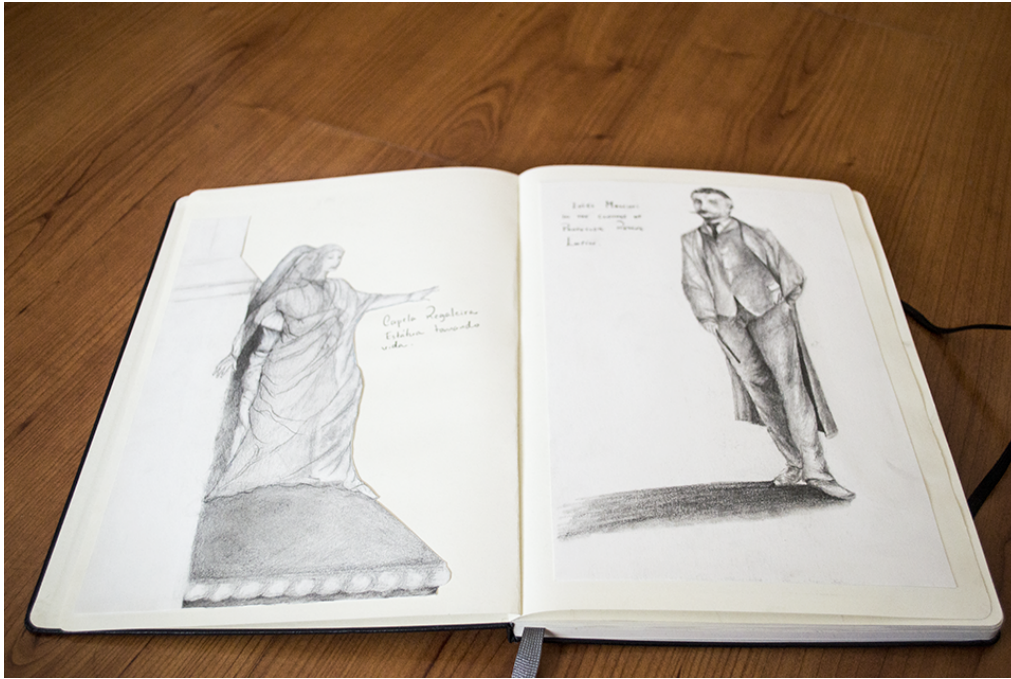


Table 33: Graphic Journal.

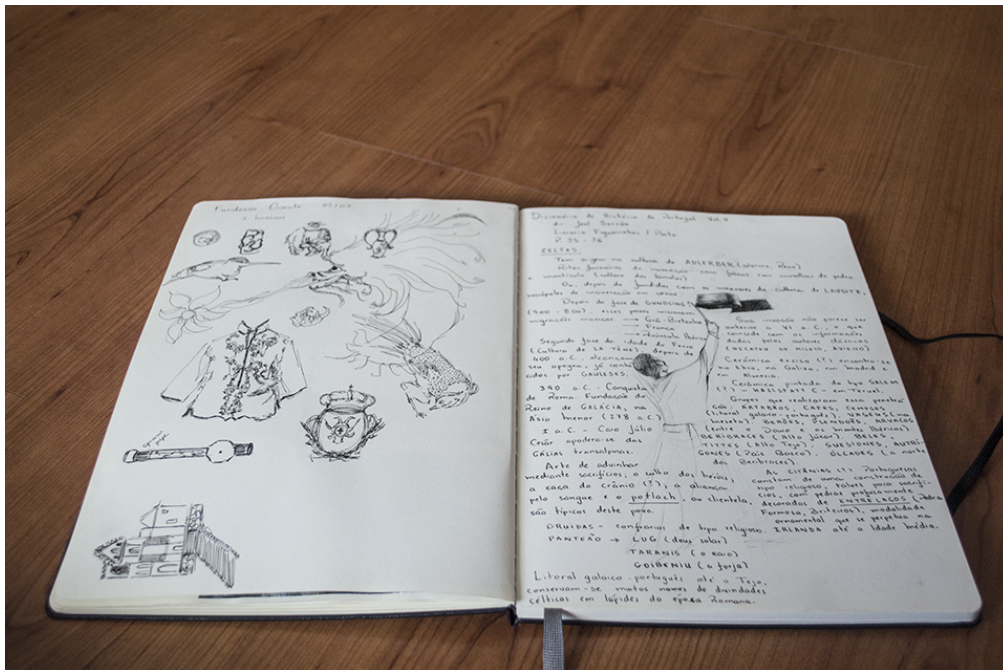


Table 34: Graphic Journal.



Table 35: Graphic Journal.



Table 36: Graphic Journal.



Table 37: Sketches and Research Material.



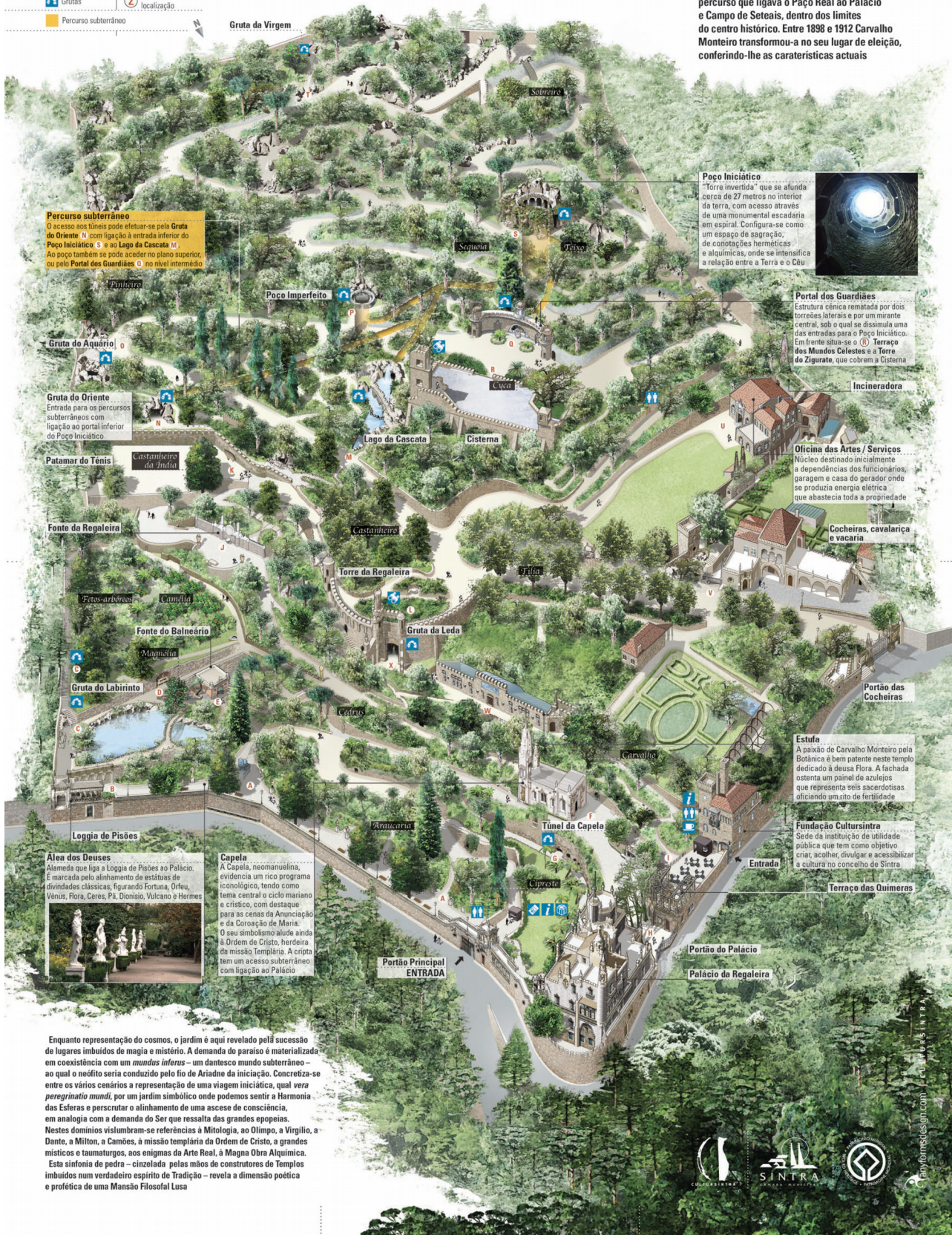
Table 38: Sketches and Research Material.

# Quinta da Regaleira

Constituiu um dos mais surpreendentes e enigmáticos monumentos da Paisagem Cultural de Sintra. Situa-se no elegante percurso que ligava o Paço Real ao Palácio e Campo de Seteais, dentro dos limites do centro histórico. Entre 1898 e 1912 Carvalho Monteiro transformou-a no seu lugar de eleição, conferindo-lhe as características actuais

**LEGENDA:**

-  Bilheteira
-  Informações
-  Sanitários
-  Grutas
-  Percurso subterrâneo
-  Miradouro
-  Loja
-  Restaurante
-  Marcas de localização



**Percurso subterrâneo**  
O acesso aos túneis pode efetuar-se pela Gruta do Oriente (1) com ligação à entrada inferior do Poço Iniciático (2) e ao Lago da Cascata (3). Ao poço também se pode aceder no plano superior, ou pelo Portal dos Guardiães (4) no nível intermédio.

**Poço Iniciático**  
"Torre invertida" que se afunda cerca de 27 metros no interior da terra, com acesso através de uma monumental escadaria em espiral. Configura-se como um espaço de sagração, de conotações herméticas e alquímicas, onde se intensifica a relação entre a Terra e o Céu

**Portal dos Guardiães**  
Estrutura cônica rematada por dois torreses laterais e por um mirante central, sob o qual se dissimula uma das entradas para o Poço Iniciático. Em frente situa-se o Terraço dos Mundos Celestes e a Torre do Zigueate, que cobrem a Cisterna

**Gruta do Oriente**  
Entrada para os percursos subterrâneos com ligação ao portal inferior do Poço Iniciático

**Incineradora**  
Núcleo destinado inicialmente a dependências dos funcionários, garagem e casa do gerador onde se produzia energia elétrica que abastecia toda a propriedade

**Palatamar de Ténis**  
Castanheira da Índia

**Cocheiras, cavalarica e vacaria**  
Portão das Cocheiras

**Fonte da Regaleira**  
Castanheira

**Estufa**  
A paixão de Carvalho Monteiro pela Botânica é bem patente neste templo dedicado à deusa Flora. A fachada ostenta um painel de azulejos que representa seis sacerdotisas oficiando um rito de fertilidade

**Fonte do Banheário**  
Mansueta

**Fundação CulturSintra**  
Sede da instituição de utilidade pública que tem como objetivo criar, acolher, divulgar e acossibilizar a cultura no concelho de Sintra

**Gruta do Labirinto**  
Cipreste

**Terraço das Quimeras**  
Portão do Palácio

**Loggia de Pisões**  
Alameda que liga a Loggia de Pisões ao Palácio. É marcada pelo alinhamento de estátuas de divindades clássicas, figurando Fortuna, Orfeu, Vénus, Flora, Ceres, Pá, Dionísio, Vulcano e Hermes

**Capela**  
A Capela, neomanuelina, evidencia um rico programa iconológico, tendo como tema central o ciclo mariano e cristico, com destaque para as cenas da Anunciação e da Coroação de Maria. O seu simbolismo alude ainda à Ordem de Cristo, herdeira da missão Templária. A cripta tem um acesso subterrâneo com ligação ao Palácio



Enquanto representação do cosmos, o jardim é aqui revelado pela sucessão de lugares imbuidos de magia e mistério. A demanda do paraíso é materializada em coexistência com um *mundus inferus* – um dantesco mundo subterrâneo – ao qual o neófito seria conduzido pelo fio de Ariadne da iniciação. Concretiza-se entre os vários cenários a representação de uma viagem iniciática, qual *vera peregrinatio mundi*, por um jardim simbólico onde podemos sentir a Harmonia das Esferas e perscrutar o alinhamento de uma ascense de consciência, em analogia com a demanda do Ser que ressalta das grandes epopeias. Nestes domínios vislumbram-se referências à Mitologia, ao Olimpo, a Virgílio, a Dante, a Milton, a Camões, à missão templária da Ordem de Cristo, e grandes místicos e tanmatúrgicos, aos enigmas da Arte Real, à Magna Obra Alquímica. Esta sinfonia de pedra – cinzelada pelas mãos de construtores de Tempos imbuidos num verdadeiro espírito de Tradição – revela a dimensão poética e profética de uma Mansão Filosofal Lusã

Table 39: Map of Quinta da Regaleira.

## VISITAS

### HORÁRIOS

| Abertura                     | Última entrada | Encerramento |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Janeiro, Novembro e Dezembro | 10h00          | 17h00 17h30  |
| Fevereiro, Março e Outubro   | 10h00          | 18h00 18h30  |
| Abril a Setembro             | 10h00          | 19h00 20h00  |

### VISITA LIVRE

Visita auto-guiada com mapa, durante todo o dia

### VISITA GUIADA

| Abertura                     | Última entrada                | Encerramento            |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Janeiro, Novembro e Dezembro | 10h30 11h00 12h00             | 14h30 15h00 19h30       |
| Fevereiro, Março e Outubro   | 10h30 11h00 12h00             | 14h30 15h30 19h00       |
| Abril a Setembro             | 10h30 11h00 12h00 14h00 14h30 | 15h30 19h30 19h30 17h30 |

Temática Especializada  
Mínimo de 8 / máximo de 30 pessoas  
Mínimo de 16 / máximo de 30 pessoas

### PASSAPORTE

Anual ou trimestral

Inclui todas as visitas livres e gerais no período correspondente. **Desconto de 20%** em eventos culturais e em todas as visitas temáticas e especializadas

### PACOTES DE VISITA

Janeiro

Escolar

Senior

### LEGENDA



### Terraço panorâmico

É rematado por oito pináculos profusamente decorados com figuras naturalistas e fantásticas. Num dos pináculos, virado ao oceano, figura o poeta Luís de Camões

### PISO 2

No ângulo Sul destaca-se o volumetria da sala octogonal que sugere o charola do Convento de Cristo em Tomar. Para além desta sala e do escritório, este piso destinava-se a alguns quartos e a arruados.

### Sala octogonal

### PISO 1

Mais intimista, nele se concentravam os quartos e espaços reservados à família, como as salas de estudo e dos brinquedos e a sala Lisíada, o espaço de estar integrado nos aposentos privados do casal.

### PISO NOBRE 0

Eclectica, a exuberante decoração das salas inspira-se nos períodos manuelino, renascentista e barroco

### Sala da Renascença

Antiga sala de estar, cuja decoração recupera referências do renascimento italiano. A sua iconografia celebra a união entre Carvalho Monteiro e sua esposa, Perpétua Augusta

### Hall da Escada

Ampla zona de circulação onde outrora figurava a imponente escadaria em madeira de castanho e artisticamente entalhada, que dava acesso aos pisos superiores

### Alpendre

A caprichosa ornamentação, lavrada em calcário de Coimbra evoca a epopeia dos Descobrimentos Portugueses e o arquétipo da Viagem

### Sala da Caça

A Sala de jantar é dominada pela monumental lareira rematada pela escultura do monteiro. Neste fogão de sala, sobressai o tema da caça, de excecional execução em cantaria. Da policromia do mosaico veneziano às misulas da abóbada, transparece o tema do ciclo da vida

# Quinta da Regaleira

Sintra Portugal

Residência de veraneio da família Carvalho Monteiro foi concebida em estilo neomanuelino. A exuberância decorativa envolveu artistas de grande mérito como António Gonçalves, João Machado, José da Fonseca, Costa Motta e Rodrigo de Castro, nas cantarias e Júlio da Fonseca, na talha de madeira

### Torrinha

Destruída de uma panorâmica surpreendente sobre a serra e o oceano o miradouro é rematado com uma esfera similar e um catavento com a cruz da Ordem de Cristo

### PISO 3

A torre neomedieval no ângulo Norte incluía espaços reservados ao proprietário, como o escritório, com ligação directa ao seu laboratório e aos terraços

### Sala dos Reis

Antiga sala de bilhar, nela estão representados 20 reis e 4 rainhas da monarquia portuguesa e os escudos das cidades de Braga, Porto, Coimbra e Lisboa. Sobre a lareira encontra-se o brasão de Carvalho Monteiro onde hoje figura o antigo brasão de Sintra

### PISO 1/2

Zonas destinadas aos serviços como cozinha, despensa e copa, engomadoria, camaratas e refeitório

1877 Após a aquisição e venda de 1817 da propriedade por diversas vezes, passa a designar-se por Quinta da Torre

1840 Adquirida pela **Baronesa da Regaleira**, a propriedade transforma-se num galante refúgio estival, com palacete, capela e jardim. Passa a ser conhecida por Quinta da Torre da Regaleira



1893 Vendida em hasta pública é rematada por **António Augusto de Carvalho Monteiro** que lhe junta outras parcelas de terrenos, tomando a forma atual

1895 Primeiros planos para o parque e palácio, em estilo neogótico francês, pelo arq. paisagista Henri Lusseau (1854-1931), que não foram executados

1898 Início da construção do parque, com o edifício das Cocheiras sob os planos do arquiteto-cenógrafo italiano, **Luigi Manini**

1904 As obras passam a 1911 concentram-se na Capela e Palácio e na sua exuberante ornamentação

1946 A Quinta da Regaleira é comprada por **Waldemar Jara d'Orey** (1887-1974) que entre 1949 e 1956 introduz várias modificações ao seu gosto, nos edifícios e no parque

1987 A propriedade é vendida à empresa Japonesa Aoki Corporation

1997 A Câmara Municipal de Sintra adquire a propriedade

1998 Sob gestão da Fundação CulturSintra dá-se início a um amplo programa de recuperação patrimonial. A Regaleira abre ao público, em 27 de Junho de 1998

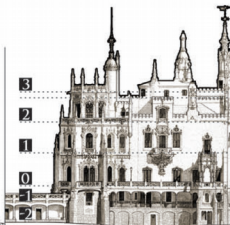
### 1848 Carvalho Monteiro

De ascendência portuguesa, o célebre capitalista nasceu no Rio de Janeiro, no tempo do Brasil Imperial. Licenciado em Leis em Coimbra, foi um notável bibliófilo e colecionador exercendo actividade filantrópica. Homem de espírito científico e grande cultura detemiu o misterioso programa iconológico para a sua residência na Serra de Sintra



### 1838 Luigi Manini

Arquiteto, pintor e cenógrafo, trabalhou no Teatro Scala de Milão e, a partir de 1879, no Real Teatro de São Carlos, pintando para o Teatro D. Maria II e para quase todos os palcos portugueses. Distinguiu-se como arquiteto na construção do Palace Hotel do Buçaco e de importantes projetos residenciais. A Quinta da Regaleira foi a sua última grande obra em Portugal, absorvendo-o durante 14 anos até ao seu regresso a Itália, em 1912



Quinta da Regaleira  
2710-567 Sintra  
Informações: 21 910 66 56  
Reservas: 21 910 66 50  
regaleira@mail.telepac.pt

CULTUR SINTRA

www.cultursintra.pt

Sintra Portugal

Table 40: Map of Quinta da Regaleira: verso.

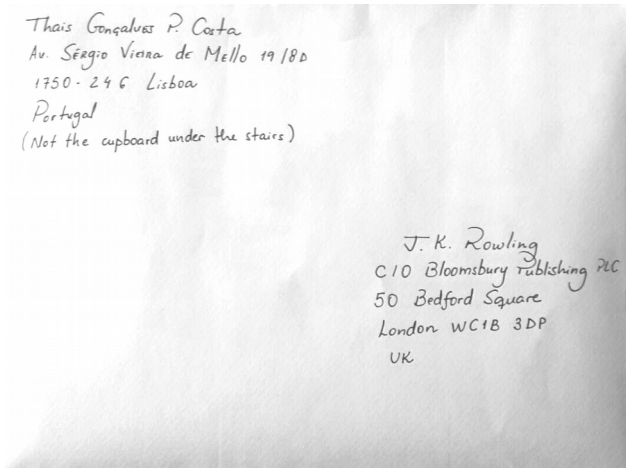


Table 42: Photograph of Letter sent to J. K. Rowling.

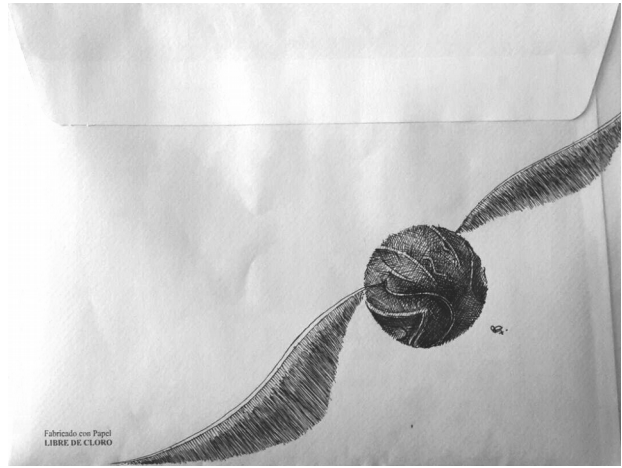


Table 41: Photograph of Letter sent to J. K. Rowling: verso.

Gmail - Pause ← 📧 🕒 🗑️ Move to Inbox 🔍 More Boomerang 1 of 1 < > Fr ⚙️

**COMPOSE** **Re: [creepy scrawlers ltd.] Contact** Inbox x 📧 📧 📧

**Inbox (9)**  
 Starred  
 Important  
 Chats  
 Sent Mail  
 Drafts (6)  
 All Mail  
 Spam (64)  
 Trash

**Categories**

Sign in  
 Signing in will sign you into Hangouts across Google [Learn more](#)

**Jim Kay** <jimedkay@gmail.com> to me 10/25/17 ☆ ↶ ↷

Dear Thais,

Thanks for the email. When I was young I was very fond of Arthur Rackham, hard to avoid his work really if you like children's books. I am particularly a fan of his contemporary, Edmund Dulac. He was a wonderful illustrator, if you ever get to see his original works I recommend it. So while I was working on Potter I was looking at the illustrators Ian Miller, Kit Williams, and Alexis Deacon. Also I love the work of Brecht Evens. The portraits are influenced by Holbein. Lots of different influences really.

Many of the illustrations are inspired by actual places I visited, such as Newark Park (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/newark-park>), and also Calke Abbey (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/calke-abbey>)

Best Wishes

Jim

On Tue, Oct 24, 2017 at 6:51 PM, Thais Costa <[donotreply@wordpress.com](mailto:donotreply@wordpress.com)> wrote:  
**Name:** Thais Costa  
**Email:** [thaisgpcosta@gmail.com](mailto:thaisgpcosta@gmail.com)  
**Website:**  
**Comment:** Good evening, Mr. Kay and Mrs. Clark.

My name is Thais Costa, I'm a Brazilian Art student doing now a Master in Graphic Design, in Lisbon. I wish to become an illustrator and I'm currently working on a master project which consists on making an illustrated book that I'm writing myself and that is inspired by J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter.

For illustrating this book, I'm very inspired by the work that Mr. Kay produced for the Harry Potter books, as well as by great fairy-tale illustrator Arthur Rackham. I was very curious to know if Mr. Kay looked back at the work of Arthur Rackham when drawing the Harry Potter illustrations, so I decided to come here and ask.

So, Mr. Kay, can you tell me what were your inspirations when illustrating Harry Potter?

I thank you in advance and wish you both all the best.

Best regards,  
 Thais Costa.

Time: October 24, 2017 at 6:51 pm  
 IP Address: 89.115.151.73  
 Contact Form URL: <https://creepyscrawlers.com/contact/>  
 Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

Table 43: Print screen of email correspondence with illustration artist Jim Kay.

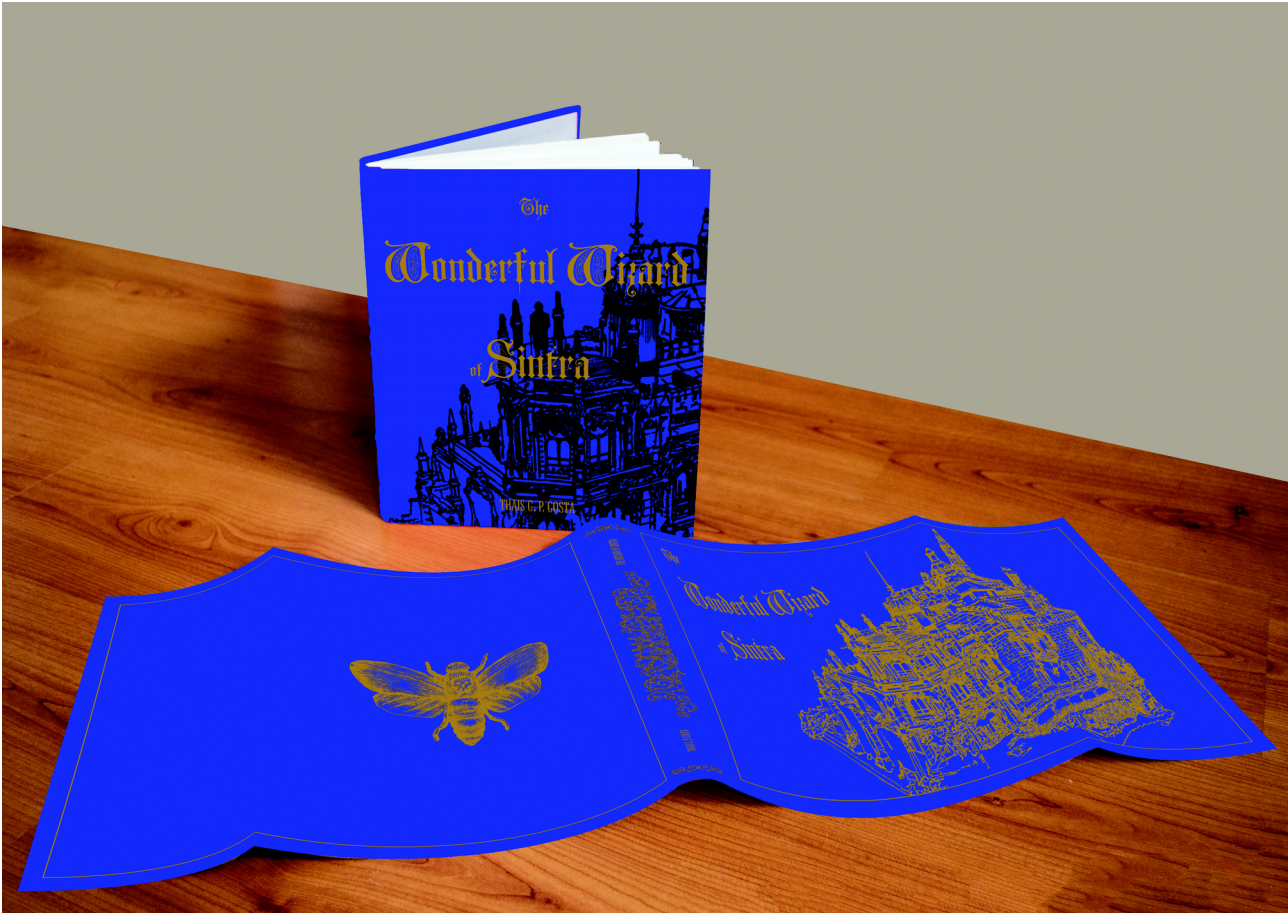


Table 44: Mockup Book Cover and Envelope.



Table 45: Mockup Envelope (verso) with Map of Lisbon and Opened Book.

### **7.3. Narrative**

This narrative is entirely fictional and its contents do not reflect historical accuracy. Neither does it possess any affiliation to Warner Bros. or J. K. Rowling, being developed exclusively for academic purposes.

## Chapter One — Meeting point.

A cold morning in December 1909. Two cloaked men stood on the edge of an alley, half covered by what seemed to be a second-hand, modest-sized *Clarence* carriage, soberly decorated and lead by two horses of nut-brown color and a driver. One of the men had a young, sympathetic face, however contorted by dark shades dropping from each one of his eyes and wrinkles that suggested a serious concern. He was wearing a brownish homburg hat and had a half smoked cigarette hanging from under his humble mustache. The other, on the contrary, was rather old, though he looked far more at ease. He had bushy grey hair, which partially accused his advanced age, along with a long, generous beard and mustache that disguised his lips completely. He had a long down-pointed nose and eyes that twinkled timidly from behind the brim of a black belled-top hat. He was being supported by a peculiarly adorned metallic stick, while his younger companion muttered him some words in a low hesitant voice, right after throwing his cigarette aside.

‘Ar... Are you sure that this place is safe?’, he asked while looking over his shoulders compulsively. He had cold sweat running through his forehead.

‘No place in Lisbon is safe these days, my dear friend. Specially for someone with the name *Bragança*’, the elder man replied with a pitiful sort of gaze.

‘Still, we should have met somewhere more private. Either at the *Necessidades* or at your palace, since you are so convinced that *he* has eyes inside the royal house.’

‘Forgive me for saying this, my friend, but even though you are king, you are still too young not to allow your fear from clouding your judgement. This is the best place for us to be. No one would expect us to meet here.’

‘You know I would never dare questioning your common sense. But you have to understand... This place brings too many unpleasant memories. Standing here, only a few steps away from where it happened... Brings it all back to me. I can see their bloody bodies, I can hear my mother’s screams, I can feel the bullet piercing my arm. I thought I would be able to do this, but now -’

‘Manuel, I am very sorry for what happened to your family. You know better than anyone else how much I admired your father. And your brother, he was a fine young man whose life was taken too abruptly. However, you must stay strong. That is the only way we’ll be able to stop *him*.’

‘I... I know’, the young king said before taking a deep breath, ‘I have what you asked for.’

‘Did you have any problems bringing it from France?’

‘Not really... I called a bit of attention when entering the shop — you wizards act sometimes as if you’d never seen a... How do you call us again?’

‘A *Muggle*.’

‘Yes! You act sometimes as if you’d never seen a *Muggle* in your lives. However, I followed your instructions precisely and the manufacturer packed it for me.’

‘Good. And how did the French receive the latest news?’

‘People are afraid, Monteiro. Word is the Germans and the British are arming themselves to their teeth. They already have enough fire-power for a massive killing.’

‘It is as I feared.’

‘Do you believe that wizard you call “Crow ” might be behind all this?’

‘I have no reason to doubt his interest in a Muggle war. What better way to weaken you than have you fighting amongst yourselves?’

‘And do you have any idea where he might be now?’

‘The closest I ever got to him was years ago. Now he’s a *Bowtruckle* on a tree.’

‘A *what?*’.

‘Never mind...’, the older man continued, ‘Manuel, as much as it pleases me to see you again, it is not wise to prolong our encounter. I thank you for going through all this trouble to bring me the device. I don’t know how I could ever repay you.’

The king D. Manuel moved his cloak’s drapery aside and took from his pocket what appeared to be a small, round package. He gave it a quick, curious look and then placed it on the hands of his companion.

‘Can you at least tell me what is it for?’

‘I am sorry, Manuel, but the least you know, the better.’

‘Of course, of course. I was only curious.’

‘I will have to leave you now, my friend. Will you be safe?’

‘Probably not. Both your people and mine would rather have me overthrown. However, I must remain firm, if I am to regain this country’s trust.’

‘You can count with my support. Are you coming back to *Estrela* now? Wouldn’t you be more secure somewhere a bit more distant from the center? *Mafra*, perhaps?’

‘If I leave now, the Monarchy wouldn’t last a day. No, I have to stay here. But don’t worry, I can take care of myself. What about you, going back to *Quintela*?’

‘Not really. I’ll be leaving to *Sintra* as soon as we finish this.’

‘I don’t see your carriage though...’

‘No need for that... I’m getting there in a... *Different way.*’

‘You and your secrets... My father used to tell me stories about how secretive you used to be in your younger days... I see you haven’t changed.’

‘Well, what did you expect? Old habits...’

For the first time during the entire conversation, Manuel seemed to draw a tiny smile on his face.

‘I wish you good fortune in your enterprise. You will need it’, Manuel said.

The king turned to his carriage, opened its door and was just about to step inside, when he turned back again to his friend, who was still standing there at that alley, but now with an expression of what seemed to be contentment.

‘Monteiro!’

‘Yes, Manuel?’

‘Send Perpetua my regards!’

## Chapter Two — The Flying Crow.

After touring the desert from the Tunisian border to Alger, the wizard many knew only as “Crow”, had left his accommodations along with his traveling companion and disciple, *Troutmouth*, for a trip to the *Tell Atlas* mountain chain, guided by a young Algerian Muggle. The reason for the journey was that — according to the Crow — they had been summoned to the summit of that particular mountain by an incorporeal entity to which he referred only as the *Lord*.

As it happens, Troutmouth had accompanied his master before in such expeditions — which would usually end at the most deserted and unusual of places. This time, all signs indicated that it wouldn’t be different. What Troutmouth hoped would change, however, was the outcome of those campaigns, that until now had required in every instance the sacrifice of a non-magical human, followed by an impressive, terrifying kind of trance.

In truth, that was an image that continuously haunted Troutmouth’s dreams: after casting the *killing curse* on its target, his master would make an incision on a specific artery of the body, so the victim’s blood could flow abundantly. Then, he would bath his left thumb in it and draw a red stripe from the top of his bald head until the edge of his chin, while speaking some words in a language Troutmouth did not understand. After a given point, his body would start floating slightly above the ground as his eyeballs would turn completely white, both covered in a dense milky fog — as if a very tiny Hookah-smoking caterpillar lived inside of each one of his eyes. At the end of this ceremony, the Crow would magically summon a roll of parchment and place his left hand on top of it, causing some strange characters to appear. Finally, his body would surrender to gravity again, making him fall unconscious.

Coincidentally — and to Troutmouth’s despair — that was precisely what happened on this occasion.

‘M – master?! Master?!’, muttered Troutmouth, while helping his master to stand up on his feet. ‘W – what happened? How d – do you feel?’

‘Silence, Troutmouth!’, the Crow replied at once, as he got back to his senses. ‘Summoning the *Lord* with blood-magic is physically extremely demanding. Something you, with your mediocre magical skills, will never understand.’

As he spoke, drops of sweat fell through his face, in spite of the fact that they were surrounded by a forest of snowy-peaked mountains. His eyes had now gone back to normal and one could see they were actually dark as ripe plums, although his pupils were excessively dilated, giving the impression his eyes were even darker than usual. They were crowned by two abundantly hairy and severely shaped eyebrows and under each eye, flaccid skin fell in the shape of two flabby bags cut apart by his long, bony nose. His lips were very thin; however, they were not quite as thin as when they were to spit bitter words at his disciple. He had a scar on his left cheek that was so tiny, one would confuse it for a birthmark. His hands — in contrast to his face — were far more elegant, but that fact went unnoticed, of course, now that they were covered in blood as he handed a piece of parchment to Troutmouth.

‘I need you to attach this to my leg once I’m transformed’, he said after placing the document in his disciple’s hands. ‘The Lord spoke to me, Troutmouth. He revealed to me his great work and he wants me to put it into action. The others must be ready.’

‘O – o – of course, master!’, said Troutmouth, with a clear ton of terror in his voice, while rolling the parchment and sealing it with a quick flick of his wand. He gazed at the horizon, the sun about to set beyond the mountain. ‘Wha – What about the Muggle’s bo – body?’

‘Get rid of it.’

The wind was howling like never before, piercing Troutmouth’s clothes and freezing his bones. The snow was thick enough to cover a regular-sized man up to the knees. Moving with difficulty in the snow, Troutmouth approached the motionless body of the young Algerian man, lying there on the snowy peak, now tainted in bright red. He waved his wand above the body and prepared to cast the curse: ‘*R – re – d – du -*’, but had no success. He looked over his shoulder, throwing a glimpse of embarrassment to his master’s impatient eyes, took a deep breath, cleared his throat, and said ‘*Reducto!*’

A blue ray of light left Troutmouth’s wand, hitting the dead man’s chest, making his body disintegrate in the blink of an eye. Soon, there was nothing but red-colored snow in the place where the body once reposed. Troutmouth pointed one more time to that spot, now saying ‘*Tergeo*’, and the snow went white again.

‘M – master, why don’t you co – come down with m – me and have some re – rest before -’

‘No, Troutmouth! I will fly back to Europe tonight. I need to find someone back in Lisbon. However, I leave you here to take care of our interests. I hope, for your own sake, that you will not disappoint me again.’

The trembling Troutmouth seemed anxious to reassure his master that he would not fail him, but before he had the chance to stutter one more word, the Crow engaged in some sort of transformation — he wrapped his dark cloak tightly against his body, closed his eyes and curved his neck down so his chin would touch his chest. Then, as he slowly lowered his body closer to the ground until his knees would touch the cool pearly snow, black feathers sprouted from the bald crown of his head, spreading through the entire face and neck. Over his left cheek, where the scar once was, a single tiny white feather appeared. His nose and mouth joined together as they assumed the shape of a pointy, sharp beak. The fibers from the fabric of his cloak turned into black feathers too as it stretched along his body into two long wings. And as his body got compressed to reduce in size, completing the transformation, his eyelids opened, revealing two round blackened eyes.

The bird remained still as Troutmouth fixed the small roll of parchment to its leg. Then it spread its wings and took flight at once, heading north towards the Mediterranean sea and leaving his servant behind.

### **Chapter Three — Santa Justa.**

After watching his friend Manuel enter his carriage — which was, for the purpose of that specific occasion, of an extremely poor aspect when compared to the luxuriant royal models — Monteiro left the alley by turning right into the *Rua dos Bacalhoiros*. He followed the street, heading east until arriving to *Rua do Ouro*, where he turned right again, continuing in direction of the square of *Rossio*. Only one block before arriving at the square, he stopped in front of a gigantic construction: a metallic tower that seemed to have just landed from the skies, splitting the *Rua de Santa Justa* in two.

He approached the tower, which was actually a lift, hit his walking stick once at the floor and, suddenly, the few Muggles who were passing by started scattering, until Monteiro was the only person left in that area. He waited for the lift to open its doors, stepped inside, gave one quick look to its operator (a well-dressed robust woman, probably on her forties), spoke the words ‘*Codfish fins*’, and the lift started moving. However, instead of moving upwards, it was going down, vanishing into the earth.

Since the conclusion of the elevator’s construction in 1902, Monteiro had already used it a few times in order to arrive at his residence in *Sintra*. Before that, he would have just apparated

somewhere in the Oak Forest — a large wooded area located in the vicinity of Monteiro's property — and walked the remaining way back to his palace — whose area was protected by anti-apparition charms. Though the elevator journey took obviously longer than apparating, it was definitely less uncomfortable. Even the claustrophobic feeling of penetrating the earth inside an iron box was by far more pleasant than having your apparated body squeezing itself in between of the air molecules.

Monteiro looked satisfied to see that his cooperation with Raoul Mesnier du Ponsard, the wizard architect of the lift, had worked perfectly. As a matter of fact, Raoul and Monteiro had been friends since their common years at the *Coimbra University for Wizards and Sorcerers*, the single school of witchcraft and wizardry in Portugal at that time. They both got their letter of acceptance during the summer of 1859, when the two of them were only eleven years old. For seven years they studied at Coimbra, Raoul having been sorted to the *Fragua house*, while Monteiro was designated to the *Kurma house*.

In effect, the Coimbra University, just as the famous wizarding schools of *Hogwarts*, in Britain, or *Ilvermony*, in America, preserved the ancient tradition of allocating its students into *houses*, those houses being: *Fragua*, *Kurma*, *Frogga* and *Gastropoda*. The sorting ceremony, as a rule, was executed at the first day of their first school year, in a very specific method: the students were taken to the school's garden, where resided a particular rock. At the first sight, this rock had absolutely no remarkable quality. However, once a magical being blew upon it, the moss covering its surface took the shape of a human face, and the rock came to life. It became what the magical community called an *Oraculum*: an entity capable of glimpsing into the future. That is how it always knew in which house each student should be assigned.

After graduating, the two friends went their separate ways. Raoul spend a few years traveling through France, Switzerland and Germany, working with some of the most renowned wizard architects of the time. Monteiro, on his turn, married Perpetua, a kind-hearted witch from one of the greatest Portuguese wizard families. Soon after that, Monteiro and his wife travelled to Brazil, where they lived in Rio de Janeiro (Monteiro's hometown) until 1876 — establishing, after that year, permanent residence in Lisbon.

In spite of the distance, Raoul and Monteiro maintained correspondence, sending each other letters through owl post every once in a while. When living in Rio de Janeiro, Monteiro was surprised by a barn owl flying above his head inside of the wizarding section of the National Library (where he used to go often for a bit of reading), right before landing on a pile of books a few centimeters in front of him. The library staff was not pleased, considering the fact that *Elissa*, Raoul's owl, dropped a viscous liquid over the books before taking off once again.

Finally, the two comrades would meet again in the end of the nineteenth century, under very different — and rather unfortunate — circumstances. In fact, Portugal was then going through a period of political instability. The national wizarding newspaper — *O Escriba* — was the main source of information for Portuguese wizards at the time. And since the year when the direction of the paper fell in the hands of a wizard called Apolidorus Scarabis, in 1893, the periodical started working hard to defame the current Minister for Magic. It did not take long before the opposition — lead by the wizard Lazarus Oldfox — gained the favor of the masses. Soon enough, Oldfox replaced the recently deposed Minister, becoming the highest authority for the magical community. What few people knew was that Oldfox was a strong supporter of the Blood-supremacy philosophy; and since he came to power, he gradually managed to shape the country more accordingly to his personal inclinations.

One of his preoccupations was to surround himself with wizards and witches who shared his ideas. One of his greatest achievements was, with no doubt, the nomination of Samuel Boleskine as Headmaster of Coimbra in 1899. Ironically, Boleskine was also what might be considered a “dark wizard”, or a practitioner of the Dark Arts. His first ruling was to prohibit the admission of Muggleborn students into Coimbra, as well as expelling the ones who already attended the university. That measure represented a huge regress for Portugal, which was a country famous for its *Muggle-wizard cooperation policies* and *Muggleborn-refugee protection act*.

After uncountable unsuccessful attempts to revert this situation through the legal system, Monteiro decided to take the matter into his own hands. He initiated the construction of a vast residence on a terrain in *Sintra* he had previously acquired, located far enough from Lisbon’s busy center — and the eyes of the Ministry of Magic. His intention was to provide an alternative to the students who had been denied magical education, by offering them refuge and instruction.

Still, if he was to engage in such a project without any formal authorization and practically under the Minister’s ugly nose, he had to think of a way how the students could move from Lisbon to *Sintra* without raising too many questions. That is the reason why he arranged an encounter with his old friend Raoul.

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‘Merlin’s beard, Monteiro! That is quite a plan! A very risky one, of course. But still, if done carefully, it might just work...’

‘It has to work, Raoul. Why do you think Boleskine has banned all the Muggleborn students? He obviously doesn’t want them to know how to defend themselves!’

‘And how do I fit in all this?’

‘Well, that is why I summoned you here. I hear you have a new project here in Lisbon. Just nearby, actually.’

‘Yes. Remember that affair with Henry Lusseau and Lisbon’s Company for Mechanical Lifts? They have finally given me concession!’

‘So, when do you start building it?’

‘With all the paperwork and the Muggle bureaucracy, probably only next year.’

‘And how many years do you estimate it would take to have it done?’

‘Well, if everything goes according to planed... I’d say... Two to three years.’

‘That long?’

‘I know... But I have to follow strictly Muggle rules for this project. There will be Muggle workers, Muggle politicians involved... Too many to *oblivate*. And, as you know, I have to keep in line. The Ministry is still very sensitive to the slightest transgression of the Statute of Secrecy. So, after what I did in Braga, one more mistake and they will have my head.’

‘Can you blame them? You never seemed to give much importance to the Statute. What happened in Braga was very predictable.’

Raoul gave a loud laugh and looked at Monteiro’s disapproving expression with a hint of amusement. ‘My friend, you worry too much! When are you finally going to start enjoying life?’

‘I am pretty satisfied with the way I live my life, thanks.’ Monteiro answered firmly. ‘But that doesn’t matter now, Raoul. There are people who need our help.’

‘Do you really believe they might start attacking Muggles? Or, even worse, Muggleborns? I mean, despite their parents’ condition, they are just as capable of magic as we are.’

‘Their parents’ *condition*?’

‘Please, Monteiro! You know I don’t mean it like that!’

‘Fine. Enough with the chit-chat. We need to discuss more important matters.’

‘I’m all ears.’

‘Two years for building the lift, you said?’

‘Two would be the best scenery. Three if there are any *contretemps*.’

‘Don’t worry. I will ensure it takes the least possible time.’

‘May I ask why the sudden interest in this lift?’

‘I need you to enchant it for me.’

‘Did you not just hear me when I said I must stay in line this time?! That means no magic!’

‘You can apply the spells after working hours, when the workers are gone. These are not my strong suit, but I can help you... We can go late in the night, or very early in the morning, when there are almost no people in the streets. And if anyone sees us, we can oblivate them.’

‘I have known you for a long time, but now I am definitely sure you are insane.’

‘Tell me you will help me... Please, Raoul.’

‘Alright. I’ll do it. But first, what kind of incantation do you have in mind?’

‘Transportation.’

‘*Transportation?* It’s a lift, Monteiro... Where else do you want it to go?’

‘Down.’

#### **Chapter Four — Pessoa.**

Fernando Pessoa was only a twenty-one years old young wizard by the time the present days of December 1909 came blowing their bitter, cutting, shivery winds. Those days could get specially nasty for a summer child like himself, born under the mediterranean heat of mid-June, in the Portuguese capital, only twenty-one and a handful of months ago. His early days in Lisbon, however, did not last long, since — following his father’s sudden death at age forty-three — his mother married again and they all moved with her new husband to the city of *Durban*, in South Africa. There, Pessoa spent his childhood, being taught in magic at the *Uagadou School of Magic*, located in the Mountains of the Moon, in western Uganda.

It was actually during the summer of November 1899, in South Africa, when Pessoa, lying deeply asleep, was contacted by a *Dream Messenger* sent by the Uagadou Headmistress, Mrs. Namukwaya Gamisha, notifying him that he had been accepted into the school. By the time he woke up, he couldn’t believe what had happened, concluding it had all been just a delusional dream. However, to his surprise, the Messenger had left him a small token: an inscribed stone wrapped around his fingers, proving that the whole nocturnal experience had been, indeed, real.

After that night, Pessoa was sent to Uagadou, where he spend the following years of his life, until graduating in 1905. Throughout his education, Pessoa was rewarded with many awards of distinction for his unique magical abilities as a *Kalliopákos* — a descendant of Kalliope — which corresponds to a very rare, barely known condition in the magical world. In short, a Kalliopákos is a wizard or witch who is able to induce people into a profound state of hypnosis only by the use of a specific set of words or poetry. The very first acknowledged Kalliopákos in Magical History was the Greek poet and musician, Orpheus (son of the muse Kalliope herself), who happened to be not only capable of hypnotizing human beings, but also wild animals, using both his talents as a poet

and musician. Depending on the degree of expertise of a Kalliopákos, one might even succeed in affecting another person's behavior, therefore enjoying the possibility of controlling someone's actions as efficiently as an *Imperius curse*. According to the legend, Orpheus was the only wizard of the kind so far to be able to do so, having once escaped Death itself thanks to this uncommon aptitude. Nevertheless, his abilities did not prevent him from ultimately dying in an atrocious, barbaric manner, which came by the hands of a group of savage *Maenads* — mythological female beings who are highly resistant to any sort of magic.

These Maenads, however, had been extinct for centuries, thus posing absolutely no risk to the young, prodigious Pessoa, who was, in fact, the only registered Kalliopákos of his time — once his skills became of public knowledge, Pessoa was required to register under the Department of Magical Law Enforcement of the South African Ministry of Magic. Still, in regard to the magnitude of his hypnotic influence over humans and other creatures, no wizard — perhaps not even Pessoa himself — could offer a precise evaluation of it, for Pessoa's academic performance, as brilliant as it might have been, did not reveal the exceptional (not to say unethical) ability of behavior manipulation; not until the present time, at least.

And in respect to present time, at this point Pessoa had settled permanently in Lisbon, moving to the city where he had taken his first breath of life immediately after concluding his formation at Uagadou. His mother, who had chosen to remain in Durban with his step-father and siblings, paid him some occasional visits since then, but the truth was their relationship owned its fragile endurance mostly to a few letters delivered along the year by the Owl Postal Service. The reason behind this deliberate austerity on both parts was one which they never allowed themselves to speak about, for the matter had become too unpleasant to be unveiled. So mother and son preferred simply to leave things as they were: untouched, unclear, unspoken, hoping that the most urgent, physical distance between the two would help conceal the general awkwardness which their relationship had acquired — being constantly haunted by the hollow which the absence of honesty had dug to be filled with false smiles and frivolous discussions.

Pessoa, however respectful of the fact that his mother would rather avoid the conflict than just face it, was well aware of the real motive that lead her to assume a somewhat icy behavior. He knew that, as much as a loving mother she was, something deep inside of her had been awoken since she realized Pessoa's unparalleled powers; something shame would never allow her to confess: she was scared. More precisely, she had been scared for a long time; scared that, one day, her son might use his influence on her. After all, what kid wouldn't have enjoyed the opportunity of hypnotizing their parents, even for a few seconds, if they could? Which son or daughter with such a gift would resist

slightly shifting their parents' decisions, when the situation was convenient for them? Pessoa could not blame her; he understood her fear, as well as he foresaw her reaction. Indeed, that was the general reaction. His professors at Uagadou, his family, his friends: all those who knew enough about Pessoa would, as a defense mechanism, keep a safe distance from the boy. For years people had approached him in one of the two ways: either maliciously, expecting him to make use of his magical capacity for their own personal benefit, or hesitantly, dreading the next word he said would put them in a state of complete vulnerability.

It was a solitary life, as one might imagine. In many instances Pessoa had even preferred not to reveal his peculiarity, so he could feel, at least for a little while, how it was to have a sincere, unpretentious conversation with another human being. Evidently these occurrences never lasted long, since almost every wizard and witch in the African continent knew about the young Kalliopákos from Uagadou. Moreover, if one would expect the magical community to be somehow more understanding towards the uncommonness of others, one might (sadly) realize wizards and Muggles are not so different after all.

After some time enduring the progressive social exclusion, as if he was a tumor of some sort, not to mention the similar, excruciating feeling of being castaway in his own home — which was made explicit every time his mother, step-father and half-brothers threw him a look of indisputable horror — Pessoa decided it was time to leave Africa for good. During the two final years of his education, he planned his departure, dreaming with the day when he would be far away from that land where roughly every magical being knew what he was and what he could do. In truth, all he needed was a fresh start, away from everyone and everything. He had tried that in the past, by taking on new identities which he had created for himself. It never went too far, though; many people already knew who he was. But this time it would be different, he would be in a brand new city, where the only people who knew him was his grandmother and a couple of aunts from his father's side. In addition, he had guaranteed they would not expose him in any way once he was there — as a matter of fact, Pessoa had been exchanging correspondence with his grandmother for many years and, once he explained to her his situation, she promised him he would have her full support, and that his aunts, however gossipy, would keep their mouths shut on his grandmother's request.

It appeared that Pessoa's grandmother was the only person to whom he could speak about how he felt, about how lonely he was, how he wished he was just like every other young wizard of his age. She was the only one who seemed to understand, who was more concerned about him than afraid. She was his father's mother, and according to her descriptions of him, he had been quite a wizard. She used to compare the two of them very often, saying Pessoa was just like his father when

he was a teenager — not only physically, but also mentally. Sometimes she sent him moving photographs of his father through the mail, so he could observe the resemblance himself. Those letters would be of great comfort to Pessoa, since they made him see he was not completely alone in this world. There were people who still cared for him, there was even something to which he could relate: his father's memory. This was a thought to which he clung with all his might, even though his mother did not seem to want to talk about it. He appealed to his grandmother then, who would usually welcome the subject with a lot of enthusiasm. She would write pages of parchment narrating his father's exploits — how he, just like Pessoa, was a man with a special talent for words, a talent that insured him an envied job position as First Editor for the Portuguese national wizarding newspaper *O Escriba*. Every curiosity Pessoa might have had regarding his father's life was given away by his grandmother throughout the letters she sent to him. Every curiosity but one (ironically the one Pessoa was most eager to know): the one concerning how he died.

Pessoa was only five years old when it happened. But apart from being such a small child by then, he still remembers that day, or, at least, parts of it. They sometimes appear to him in his dreams like blurry fragments from the past. In those dreams, he sees his father kissing him and his mother good-bye before heading to work. Although Pessoa had no clue of it, that was actually the last time he would see his father, since he never managed to return to them that night. When Pessoa thinks about it, he wishes he could go back in time, hold his father close in his embrace for a little while more, memorize the features of his face. He knew that wizards before him had attempted to do so — time traveling, that is. He also knew their outcome: despair, death, madness. So, however tempting, this idea flew across his mind as quickly as a golden snitch.

Still, Pessoa could not help himself from fervently desiring that day of his father's decease to have been different somehow. But what else could he have done, being merely a child? In retrospect, he recalls that, on that night, after many hours waiting for her husband to appear, his mother kept walking back and forth around the house (the same house in Lisbon where his grandmother lived now), calling his father's office repeatedly, to no answer. She seemed extremely worried, although she maintained a smile on her face so the little Pessoa wouldn't notice anything. It wasn't the same kind of smile as she now had acquired, but it was just as fake. And then, someone arrived at their doorstep, but, to their disappointment, it wasn't Mr. Pessoa. It was a bearded man wearing a black cape and a belled-top hat whose face young Pessoa could not recognize, specially considering that the bottom half of it was completely covered in hair, while the top half was shaded by the brim of the hat. He stood outside whispering some words in his mother's

ear. Then, judging by his mother's reaction, Pessoa knew at once he would never see his father again.

Two days after, he accompanied his mother to the funeral. And that was just about all recollection he had from that disturbing moment in his life. Nothing more. And no one from his family seemed to want to collaborate by telling him the truth; not his mother, not even his grandmother, what was ultimately surprising. In the end, if he was to find out what really happened on that night sixteen years ago, he would have to do it on his own.

That is why moving back to Lisbon meant such an important change for Pessoa. Not only would he be able to have a more quiet life — or so he believed — he would also have the chance of investigating the circumstances which lead to the lost of his father, straightening out this issue once and for all.

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‘Wake up, sweetie! I just baked beetroot tart pastries! They are still warm, straight out of the oven! Don't you want some? I know you love your grandma's pastries!’

‘Grandma...’, said Pessoa in a sleepy voice while slowly lifting his head from his typewriter's keyboard, revealing a right cheek carved with the imprints of the keys. ‘Did I fall asleep?! What — what time is it?!’

‘Quarter past four... Why?’

‘No, no, no! I have to be at the office at five! And I still haven't finished my review on *Faustus Nefas: the truth behind Necromancy*, which Mr. Scarabis wants to have printed on this evening's edition!’

‘Calm down, little ibis...’ — Pessoa's grandmother, Madam Dionisia, used to affectively call her grandson *little ibis*, since, according to her, he reminded her of the bird: he had two long, skinny legs, a long, down-curved nose and was always wearing an old, dusty black coat that once had belonged to his father and was so big for him, it looked like he could stuff two large wings inside. ‘I see you have already done most of the work, so why don't you come to kitchen, have one beetroot tart or two, come back, finish writing and then go to the office? I believe forty-five minutes is plenty of time for all of that.’

‘I'd love, grandma, but I'm behind schedule! I have to get back to my review right away, or Mr. Scarabis will have me fired.’

‘*Ha!* I'd bet my house and your aunts' entire wigs collection as he would never fire you. You're his best writer. Apolidorus Scarabis might be a distasteful man, but he's not stupid.’

‘I appreciate the faith, grandma, but still, I prefer not to test his patience... But could you wrap some of those pastries for me, please? I can have them at work...’

‘Of course, little ibis! And I’ll add some more for your friend Eneas.’

‘That’s very kind of you, grandma! Thanks a lot!’

It was indeed a very warm feeling to be taken care of with such unconditional devotion. For the first time in years, Pessoa could finally outline how it was to feel home, to feel protected and loved, to feel like he *belonged*. Yet, since nothing is perfect, he still had to deal with the disapproving looks of his aunts, who made sure to remind him every now and then that he was nothing but a freak. In reality, he did not expect less from his father’s twin sisters, who had been envious of their brother all their lives. Besides, if not even his own mother could handle her son’s uniqueness very well, how could he demand a better treatment from any other? Still, sometimes he caught himself feeling highly frustrated, having to tolerate their daily torture in respect of his grandmother, who, of course, would put an end to it every time she noticed something. However, the fact is she was an old woman already and, in spite of her unarguable dexterity, she wasn’t as sharp as she used to be. As for Pessoa, who had been his own man for a long time now, he did not find in his nature to crawl behind his grandma’s robes.

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As the minutes passed, Pessoa frenetically dictated the last paragraphs of his book review to his typewriter, which was enchanted to follow his voice command, typing whatever he said by itself. ‘Therefore we must conclude that in Faustus Nefas: the truth behind Necromancy, the reason exceeds the dream by virtue of Madam d’Endor’s unequivocal quill. A true necromancer who has been developing some outstanding material after years of intense research in the field. Needless to say, but it is quite possible that we will soon see her name filling the shelves of wizarding school libraries and bookshops worldwide, for her most recent publication is, without a doubt, the most reliable source in necromancy to this date.’

‘Eureka! Finished!’, Pessoa told himself with excitement when his grandmother’s wall clock marked ten minutes to five p.m. ‘Grandma, I have to go!’, he yelled in the corridor before rushing to get all his things packed and leave to the office. ‘Grandma? Are you there?’, but there was no answer. No little dragged step sounds coming from the kitchen. Something wasn’t right. ‘Grandma?’, called Pessoa persistently while making his way to the kitchen. And when he was just about to enter the room, ‘Grandma, can’t you hear me?’

But she couldn't hear him. At that moment, she wouldn't hear the sound of a Mandrake even if it cried right next to her ears. She was lying on the floor, motionless, covered in beetroot tart pastries, her eyes opened as wide as they possibly could, as if she had just had a very shocking sight.

'Grandma?'

## Chapter Five — Quinta da Regaleira.

Monteiro was starting to get impatient after a few minutes of lift traveling and was just about to ask the woman who operated the machine if they were approaching their destination, when he noticed the cabin had stopped moving sideways and was now going up. A couple minutes more and the elevator finally stopped. The robust woman announced '*Quinta da Regaleira*', opening the lift's refined wooden doors right afterwards and then pulling its metallic grid out of the way so Monteiro could exit the compartment. 'Thank you, Sara', he said before placing a silver coin on her hand — which Iberian wizards knew to be a *fida* (worth approximately five times a British Sickle). Then he tipped his hat and stepped out of the cabin into a humid, enclosed environment just as dark as the interior of the subterranean iron box. He stood there, watching as the elevator penetrated back into the earth and its tunnel was being gradually covered by an ivory and light pink colored marble pavement, decorated in the shape of a compass rose. After the pavement was completely settled, showing no trace that a big elevator cabin was ever there, Monteiro stepped on top of it and looked up, to the only source of light there was. It appeared, in fact, that he was now standing at the bottom of a twenty-seven meters deep, waterless well. He walked through an arch that gave passage to a narrow spiral staircase, composed of one hundred and thirty-five steps, which were distributed alongside the well's walls, according to a rhythm of fifteen steps per level, in a total of nine levels. He climbed up the staircase and landed on the top, where an entirely different scenery revealed itself: the sun was now shining in a cloudless sky above Monteiro's hat, providing a nice, treasured warmth to soften December's chill. As he walked in direction of the palace, an immense bucolic garden stretched itself around him, displaying as much green as the winter season allowed. The landscape was marked by a forest of leafless trees, hibernating flowers and pillars made from limestone rocks that remarkably resembled pallid, lifeless corals. The palace rose up in the middle of this exceptional scenery as a large solid structure, provided with three regular floors — including the ground floor — a basement, a sub-basement, an attic and three towers — a bigger one to the south and two smaller ones to the North, in addition to an exterior furnished with refined arabesque ornaments, which crowned the building in the shape of slim, pointy pinnacles. Tall, enchanted walls enclosed the property, protecting it from outsiders and intruders, thanks to a series of *unplottability* spells.

At that moment, Monteiro was about to take the main entrance's stairway — a structure leading to a symbolically conceived front porch, southwest of the palace — when he got suddenly interrupted by the sound of a familiar sharp female voice.

‘Monteiro! Monteiro!’, shouted a distinctively looking woman at the same time as she ran towards him. She was neither too tall nor short and she seemed to be on her thirties. Her body was rather massive, although it moved with an undeniably elegance, exposing different curves at each step she took. But no matter how strong her body might have looked from the distance, her facial features were of a delicate tenderness, with two naive, candor eyes as green as the vegetation that surrounded her, and a pair of thick hazel eyebrows. She had a heart-shaped face, cut in half with an almost exact symmetry by a reasonably proportional straight nose that lead to a set of full, reddish lips. Her hair — which she let fall down as a shiny chocolate cascade — was long enough to reach the leathery strap around her waist, that held long, heavy, emerald color robes covered all over with dirt. She was also wearing a couple of old stained gardening gloves, and holding a tiny shovel on her right hand, which lead to believe that she was either a common gardener, or perhaps, a *herbologist*.

‘Good morning, Isadora! How are you doing this morning?’, inquired Monteiro.

‘Good morning to you, Mr. Monteiro’, she greeted him before making a short pause to catch her breath. ‘*Cipulus* is giving a hard time to the children since Nuno tried to take one of his leaves to put in his sandwich this morning... We need the *herbanarium* so I can teach them about healing herbs and the divinatory properties of henbanes, but now if anyone but me gets closer to the greenhouse, *Cipulus* just loses his temper! He starts throwing soil everywhere and breaking vases! And if that wasn't bad enough, the other plants have taken his side too — the *Basil brothers* have already started discussing about what they call *the Bill of Rights for the Plantae!* Just absolute nonsense!’

‘Well, I cannot blame Nuno... *Cipulus*' leaves are quite delicious. I sometimes go there myself when he's asleep and take some. Over time I developed a technique that makes it quick and painless — so I'm happy and *Cipulus* has no idea what happened!’, Monteiro said while patting his protuberant belly, with a smile that could not at all conceal his pride for coming up with such a trick.

‘Could you come to the greenhouse and try to reason with the plants?’, asked Isadora. ‘I know they are my responsibility since I brought them here, but, unfortunately, nothing I say or do will calm them down, and I'm quite sure *Cipulus* fears you a little bit.’

‘Of course, Isadora. Let me just go inside for a couple of minutes and inform Perpetua of my arrival and I'll meet you at the greenhouse.’

‘Thank you, Monteiro’, she said, relieved. ‘And how was your journey? Did you get the... *Thing?*’

‘It’s right here in my pocket. I will meet with Manini to make sure it’s safe and I’ll let you know when we’re ready.’

‘I have to say I never thought it would have been a good thing to have met that man.’

‘From the ashes rises the phoenix...’

‘Indeed. And how is the king?’

‘Worried, afraid... His eyes look ten years older. Frankly, I fear for his safety, Isadora.’

‘After what happened to his father and brother last year, who wouldn’t... I was shocked to hear what the Muggles were capable of.’

‘I’m not convinced the Muggles were alone in this, Isadora. If you think about it, after the British Ultimatum, the Monarchy’s greatest efforts have been invested in order to maintain the peace in this gunpowder barrel. And who do you think this displeases the most?’

‘Are you implying that *he* is behind the murder of Carlos and Luís too?’

‘I believe that these latest events — the Muggle regicide, the death of Joaquim Pessoa, the rise of Lazarus Oldfox and the nomination of Boleskine — are all connected and pointing directly at him.’

‘*Oh*, Monteiro... How can we fight an enemy such as this?’

‘Have faith, Isadora. Sooner or later, the light always triumphs over the night.’

Faith was not a foreign concept for Monteiro. That was due to the fact that not only had he been raised by a witty, talented wizard — Monteiro’s father — but also by a very catholic, Muggle mother. They were only a young couple who had just gotten married when they left an economically scarce Portugal in order to establish themselves in the fruitful city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. That was the tropical setting where Monteiro would later be born. His father was a trader of rare magical artifacts, such as *Contracalvorio* lapis-lazuli talismans, popularly known as “hair-loss repellants” — pendants found in multiple shapes, usually made of lapis-lazuli, and that are able to repel the *calvorio* curse. They are known to be used since Ancient Egypt, when envious witches would frequently curse each other so the victim would lose all her hair. *Blood-malediction* ruby pins also composed his repertoire, and were designed to shield their possessors against the *Blood-bourne* curse — these pins were first manufactured by the French after the death of their king Philipp the Fair, who had been cursed with the blood malediction by Jacques de Molay. And one of his best-sellers was the valuable *Lycacomia prohibere* — enchanted amethysts capable of preventing a werewolf transformation to those who carry them.

In effect, the commerce of such items to wealthy Brazilian wizarding families had made Monteiro’s father a very wealthy man himself, consequently leaving an immense fortune to his only

son. That is how Monteiro could afford his life, specially now that the Regaleira's construction was almost at its end.

Truly, Monteiro's father left him a rich heritage, both in terms of material conquests and magical training. His mother, on the other hand, had left him all that which she could have given him, being a Muggle woman restricted by the normative gender roles of the nineteenth century. She raised him, teaching him to be respectful and tolerant with people's differences and to be kind to those less fortunate than he was. She showed him how to be an extraordinary being without the use of magic, and she presented God to him, as well as Christ, The Virgin Mary and all the apostles. She made him understand that they were all very special individuals capable of magical things, who had been called by different names over the centuries. She would tell him tales about these different religious and mythological entities, as well as their deeds — about how Zeus was an *Animagus* capable to transform into any animal of his choice; or how Christ had overcome death. And when he would ask which one of these incredible stories was her favorite, she would only say: 'My son, it doesn't matter which one is my favorite — I am just an ignorant human being. What matters, child, is that all these gods, all these deities wished to communicate one single message, one universal truth. And to unveil this truth is the very purpose of our existence — I cannot tell you what it is, you will have to find it for yourself. Have faith, my child, for that is the source of all magic.'

*Indeed, thought Monteiro to himself, faith is, in some sort of way, nothing less but magic. A very primitive one, but very powerful as well. One that we all share, magical and no-magical folk alike. Maybe we all should, indeed, have more faith.*

Lead by these contemplative ideas, Monteiro crossed the front porch into the entrance hall, where the staircases were located, and again into the *Hunting room*, a spacious chamber decorated with many paintings, sculptures and mosaics depicting the Hunt, that constantly moved at their will, gaining life. This room was not only remarkable for its moving decor, but also for the presence of a great, cautiously sculpted fireplace and a gigantic wooden diner table that would magically stretch itself as more people would gather around it.

'Beatrice?', called Monteiro when standing in front of the sculpted tympanum of a wooden door that connected that room to the entrance hall.

The sculpture of a sitting woman wearing a *peplos* rested confidently above that passage. After Monteiro's appeal, the statue seemed to slowly awake from its inanimate state, answering to his call. It was actually the ghost of that same woman, who started moving further apart from her lithic replica. In fact, the ghost woman's name was Beatrice, the remaining spirit of an Italian noblewoman who died at that location during the fourteenth century. Since then she has haunted that specific domain, being later recognized by Monteiro as matron of the palace. Acquiring that

title made her responsible of a series of duties, such as the palace's surveillance, guiding newcomers or assuring that other resident ghosts, alive sculptures or visitors wouldn't create any trouble.

'*Salve, mio caro Monteiro! Cosa può fare per te in questa bella mattina?*', the ghost of Beatrice replied, in her native language: *hello, my dear Monteiro! What can I do for you on this beautiful morning?*

'Salve, Beatrice! Do you happen to know where my wife is, by any chance?'

'*Signora Perpetua legge sulla terrazza della torre sud.*', *Lady Perpetua reads on the terrace of the south tower.*

'The south tower, of course. *Grazie mille, cara mia!*', said Monteiro affectively in Italian: *Thank you, my dear*; immediately before taking the door in direction of the staircase.

After climbing up what felt like an infinite number of stairs, Monteiro, who was not a young wizard anymore, arrived at the South tower terrace slightly out of breath, finding his wife, Perpetua, sitting quietly under the immense blue, enjoying the warm feeling of the gentle rays of sunlight on her skin and the softened cool winter breeze. Monteiro could see that she hadn't lost her youth habits, having always preferred to have only the skies above her head. And, of course, her usual embroidered and flowery bonnet. In fact, even now, after thirty-six years of marriage, Perpetua still looked like the bright young witch with an endless passion for the movements of the cosmos, who Monteiro once took for a bride. She had the same voluptuous body, dressed in a long, fluffy, black gown with a French lace (also black) scarf, attached around her mighty neck by a diamond pin. Her round face still bore the same resolute, self-assured expression, with eyes as blue as the limpid waters, or the cloudless morning sky. Her bony respectful nose still bent itself around the tip. Her upper lip still outpaced slightly its lower neighbor, and the brownish curls of her hair could still be seen falling like springs over her forehead. She had an opened book on her hand, on which Monteiro could read *The Role of Astronomy during Portugal's Age of Exploration*.

'Interesting book... But, if I remember correctly, you already read that one, my darling', said Monteiro in a very low, soft voice to his wife, almost sounding like an intimate confidence.

'Hello, my love! You came back!', Perpetua replied in a surprised, though equally loving ton of voice, while standing to give her husband a warmhearted embrace. 'Yes, in fact I was just briefly going over it a second time so I'm better prepared for tonight's Astronomy class. The students are so clever, Monteiro. It's a pity not everybody sees that.'

'Some people need to rely on things such as blood purity or racial superiority in order to fill the emptiness they have inside.'

Perpetua sighed.

‘Anyway, did you meet Manuel? How was it?’, she asked.

‘I did, and he brought me this...’, he said while taking a round package from his pocket. ‘This is the device I told you about. The one I requested to that renown Time-spectrum specialist in Besançon thirteen years ago. It has finally arrived.’

‘Can I see it?’, inquired Perpetua as her eyes carefully examined the small, round, mysterious package.

‘I’m sorry, my love, but I don’t think that is a good idea. I believe it might be dangerous. I have to show it to Manini so we figure out exactly how it works and we make sure it is safe, before I let it pass from one hand to another.’

‘Yes, yes, naturally. Are you going to see Manini now? He went for a walk in the woods a while ago.’

‘First I have to go to the Herbarium. Isadora wants me to help contain her pet plants.’

‘*Oh*, then good luck! Cipulus has been hysterical. I told her to just move him away from the other plants before he raises a mutiny, but you know how she is... She pities him.’

Monteiro allowed himself a generous laugh and then, looking at his wife with glowing, affectionate eyes, he said: ‘*Oh*, I missed you, my dear. And this place.’

## Chapter Six — The *LeRoy 01*.

Reuniting with his wife after days apart had given back to Monteiro, even for a brief moment, the long forgotten, almost unfamiliar feeling of a weightless, light-hearted mind. As he climbed down the stairs, he could feel the corner of his lips contracting itself into a closed smile, provoked by the recent memory of his wife’s strong temper. That was one of her qualities which fascinated him the most, because, in all those years, he had never come across a more “let’s-cut-to-the-chase-and-speak-our-minds” kind of woman. He believed that her unrestricted truthfulness was a sign of great courage (though some would call it rudeness), and that was why he fell in love with her in the first place.

When his mind made a pause from fishing more nostalgic recollections from his relationship’s youth, he realized he had arrived at the greenhouse, where his colleague Isadora was expecting him. He knocked on the door and waited for her to open. ‘CALM DOWN, CIPULUS!’, he heard she screaming as sounds of broken pottery echoed from the back of the greenhouse. ‘It’s only Monteiro, for Maugis’ sake!’

‘My friend! Thanks for coming...’, she said to Monteiro while sliding the door open. ‘I apologize for this mess... Apparently *someone* cannot control himself!’, she said with a heated tone of voice while looking over her shoulder, in direction of a group of plants on the table behind her.

‘It is not a problem, Isadora. Let me speak to him.’

She led Monteiro across the room, passing by a large variety of plants of many sizes and colors, one more bizarre than the next. The place looked quite messy, indeed, Monteiro thought. Dirt and broken vases covered the floors; even Isadora herself looked undeniably sloppy. Finally, at the opposite end of the greenhouse, laid a long wooden table on top of which a series of small vases had been arranged side by side.

‘Say hello to Mr. Monteiro’, Isadora said towards the group of vases.

‘Hello, Mr. Monteiro’, the plants in the vases replied in unison while moving their leaves in what could only be understood as a greeting gesture.

‘Hello, my green comrades! It’s been a long time... Where are the Basil Brothers?’

‘Here, Mr. Monteiro’, a couple of tall basil herbs answered in chorus.

‘Good. Now, where is Ariadne?’

‘I’m here, Mr. Monteiro’, answered a coriander plant in a shy, girly voice.

‘Don’t forget me, Mr. Monteiro!’, called the plant with narrow green leaves next to Ariadne in a muffled female voice.

‘Oh, hello, Ginger!’, Monteiro said right before resting his eyes on a vase in the middle. ‘Aren’t you going to greet me, Cipulus?’

‘You must take me for a nutmeg!’, said a voice coming from the vase of chives. ‘I know why you are here. She asked you to...’

‘Behave, Cipulus!’, ordered Isadora.

‘It’s fine, Isadora. I will handle this. Now, my dear friend, what is the matter? Isadora says you’ve been misbehaving, is that so?’

‘It’s those kids who have been misbehaving! The other day that boy with the fuzzy brown hair came here to cut my leaves with absolutely no regard for my feelings! The others are my witnesses! Tell him, Ariadne!’

‘Er... Don’t be mad with me, Mr. Monteiro... But, what Cipulus says is true... I saw it’, confirmed Ariadne hesitantly.

‘I’m not mad, Ariadne. And Cipulus, I understand your frustration. But please, make an effort to get along with the young ones. They have been through a lot, and I was hoping they could continue to visit the greenhouse... Some of them have never seen speaking herbs before... I’m sure that is why Nuno thought he could take some of your leaves.’

‘*Humph...* I doubt it! For a long time I suspected somebody was sneaking in here and taking my leaves during my sleep. Now I caught him in the act!’

‘*Err...* I’m sure you are just imagining things... *Anyway*, I will talk to him and make sure it doesn’t happen again. Do we have an understanding?’

‘Wait a minute! We haven’t even presented our demands yet! We have written a bill of rights for the Plan -’

‘Cipulus!’, Monteiro interrupted, ‘Listen to me. I will personally make sure you all remain safe and untouched. Can we please skip the formalities?’

‘Can we at least participate in the herbology classes?’, inquired one of the Basil Brothers.

‘That is a decision for Isadora’, Monteiro said while giving her an interrogative look, along with all her pet plants.

‘*Uh...* of course! You can assist me during the classes, how about that?’, said Isadora. ‘But you must behave!’

‘Deal!’, all the plants answered together, except for Cipulus.

‘Cipulus?’, called Monteiro.

‘Deal.’

\*

After settling the greenhouse situation and helping Isadora clean the place with a flick of his wand, Monteiro went on a walk inside his property, heading south, in direction of the Oak Forest. He was just about to contour the lake when he heard voices. He looked around and saw beyond the bushes, on the opposite side of the lake, a group of five teenagers — three boys and two girls — seating together and talking by the water.

‘*Oh*, hello! Enjoying the sun?’

‘Hello, Mr. Monteiro!’, each of them replied. ‘It’s such a beautiful morning, we thought it would be a waste to lock ourselves inside the palace’, said a young man with fuzzy brown hair called Nuno Laranjeira.

‘Shouldn’t you be in class?’, Monteiro asked, frowning.

‘Actually, Mr. Monteiro, our next class is *Arithmancy* with Mr. Manini and it’s only after lunch’, explained the young witch called Leonor Valente.

‘I see... In that case, go back to enjoying the sunlight. I would just like to have a quick word with Nuno, if he’ll allow me.’

‘Of course, Mr. Monteiro’, Nuno said while standing up. ‘I’ll be right there.’

Monteiro watched while Nuno walked towards him. He was a fifteen years old boy with average height, shiny wavy brown hair and big brown eyes, born into a family almost entirely composed by Muggles. As far as he knew, his only magical relatives were a few people from his grandmother's family, who have all been deceased for ages. So when he first got his letter from Monteiro in 1905, all his relatives were taken aback, since nobody really believed the wizarding gene would manifest itself again in their family.

In fact, after Boleskine's election as new Headmaster of Coimbra, followed by the expulsion of all Muggleborn students, it took Monteiro still a few years to open the doors of the Regaleira to the people who needed it. For once, Raoul's lift (and direct mean of transportation to Monteiro's property) was only ready for use in 1902. Monteiro profited from that waiting period to commission the construction of his new palace, along with all the necessary installations for welcoming the students. He placed the project in the capable hands of the architect wizard, Luigi Manini, who at present time lived in the Regaleira both for teaching and finishing the property's final arrangements. Therefore, it was only later, by the year 1903, when Monteiro and Perpetua started sending letters in secret to the young wizards and witches who had been expelled, as well as to the ones who turned eleven years old after the year 1899.

Since then, every year Monteiro addressed letters to new Muggleborn wizards who came of age. However, not only had him sheltered wizards from Muggle parents, but also Half-blood wizards who had refused to assent with the new doctrine from Coimbra's Headmaster. Further still, a number of former professors who taught at Coimbra resigned in order to go teach at the Regaleira instead. They were not many, truthfully — only a handful Isadora had managed to convince to accompany her. Indeed, Isadora Bégonia had taught Herbology at Coimbra since she graduated from the very same school. She became a friend of Monteiro's, and that's how she found out about his plan to initiate an alternative school of wizardry. And even if they had to work twice as much there — sometimes teaching more than one subject to compensate for the lack of professors — they were all glad to contribute to that silent, thought powerful, rebellion.

'Hi, Mr. Monteiro. Did you want to talk to me?', said Nuno, pulling Monteiro from the ethereal land of his thoughts and back down to Earth.

'Er... Yes, Nuno. I just came from the Herbarium and managed to appease the whole "Cipulus situation", but I have to ask you -'

'I am deeply sorry, Sir!', Nuno hurried to say. 'I had no idea -'

‘Calm down, Nuno’, said Monteiro. ‘I am not blaming you. Circe knows how moody Cipulus can get... I only ask you not to try taking his leaves again. If you like them so much, let me know and I’ll get them for you. I have a more... Diplomatic technique.’

‘*Oh...*’, Nuno said with relief. ‘Great then, Mr. Monteiro, thanks!’

‘Good. So now go back to enjoying this marvelous morning with your friends, I should get back to my private affair -’

‘*Err*, but... Before you go, Mr. Monteiro, I have a request myself, if there’s no problem...’

‘Sure. What is it, Nuno?’

‘I was talking to the others and we would all like to visit Lisbon’s wizarding market sometime... Maybe get us a few mugs of cherry mead at Kvasir’s, buy some sweet – I mean, books!’ Nuno said while trying to contain his giggles. ‘Of course, only if you are fine with it.’

‘Don’t you kids think you are too young to go to Kvasir’s? Or to order any alcoholic drinks, for that matter?’

‘But, Mr. Monteiro, cherry mead is almost the same as cherry juice! And we wouldn’t order more than one mug each... *Pleeease?*’

‘You all realize that by going somewhere that close to the Ministry of Magic, you must be responsible for the secrecy of this place, I expect?’

‘We do! We won’t say a word about it! We really just want to have some fun...’

‘Do you really believe you’ll be able to conceive the importance of this issue after a couple of cherry mead mugs?!’

‘We promise we’ll be careful, Mr. Monteiro. Please...’

‘*Hmm... Fine*. But I have a couple of conditions.’

‘Anything’, now Nuno was shaking with excitement.

‘First of all, I cannot grant this favor to all of the students at once, for it would be too obvious if a small crowd of young people appear at the Alfama Market at the same time. I want you to go through your colleagues — only the ones who are fifteen or older — and make a list of the names of those who would like to go on such a trip.’

‘Noted!’

‘I will later divide you into smaller groups so you can go on different days of the week.’

‘Anything else, Mr. Monteiro?’

‘An adult will escort you.’

Although the thought of having an adult person controlling their every step was not promising, Nuno was far too enthusiastic to let that be an issue, so he agreed with Monteiro’s conditions promptly and hurried to tell the good news to his friends.

Meanwhile, Monteiro continued his walk in direction of the Oak Forest, still considering if he had made the right decision by giving consent to Nuno's risky request. But before he could speculate enough to make him change his mind, he saw in the distance the tall, slim figure of a mature man like himself walking towards him.

'Good morning, my friend!', the man shouted to Monteiro as he got closer. 'Have you just arrived?'

'Manini, good morning! Yes, just arrived from my meeting with Manuel. I was actually hoping to find you here.'

'Did Manuel bring it for you?'

'He did. It's right here in my pocket. Do you want to test it right away?'

'Definitely! Follow me.'

Without a word, Monteiro accompanied his friend through the same path he had taken earlier that morning when coming out of the well. This time, however, they were heading towards it. His friend, Luigi Manini, was an Italian wizard who, like Raoul, had pursued a career in enchanted architecture, working more specifically with *animated settings* for events such as quidditch matches, concerts, or Sabbaths (wizards' opera). For years he had been living in the Portuguese capital, where he met Monteiro one night in 1893, during the staging of Beedle the Bard's *Babbitty Rabbitty*, for which Manini had worked. Since then the two of them became close friends. At Monteiro's invitation, Manini took the leadership of the Regaleira's ambitious enterprise, which by this point was practically all complete, except for a few final arrangements in the quidditch pitch.

'Here we are', stated Manini once they had arrived at the bottom of the waterless well, after taking an underground shortcut which lead straight to it. Both of them held their wands — after casting the wand-lighting charm — for illuminating the absolute darkness that was the way over there. 'Can I see the device?'

At these words, Monteiro instantly took the small, round package out of his pocket and started unwrapping it. What laid inside appeared to be a golden, intricately ornate pocket watch, with a transparent dial on its front and a circular metal lid closing the dial on its back. Very carefully, Manini stretched his hand to reach for the watch while still holding his wand with the other. He leaned the ignited tip of the wand closely above the watch, so he could analyze it better.

'This is very fine work, indeed', Manini said, breaking the silence. 'It seems they followed my instructions precisely... Shall we test it?'

'I'm ready if you are', said Monteiro with a confident expression.

'Good. Now, this side covered in crystal, this is the front. Underneath you have a number of settings which are very important. Here you have the seconds, minutes and hours', Manini showed

by pointing with the tip of his wand. ‘Here you have the days, months and years. And here, finally, you have a chronograph — which is probably the most important setting of all.’

‘Why is that?’

‘Well, let’s try it and see. Take the watch and place the end of your wand over the center of the opposite side — the one covered with the golden lid, yes — and repeat after me: *Locumens*.’

‘*Locumens*’, said Monteiro. For a moment, Monteiro could not believe his eyes. The small chiseled figures of three women started to move, releasing a golden string which each of them was holding before. The string kept gradually detaching itself from the watch, further and further apart, and increasing in length as it danced in the air in spiral movements. Suddenly, it was going up towards the top of the well, still spiralling, aligned with the equally spiral staircase. When it was about to go beyond the well’s walls, it stopped, standing still in the air like a long, golden piece of ribbon, falling from the top down in the shape of a snail shell. Both Monteiro and Manini stood there perplexed, silent, only brave enough to keep looking up, not paying attention to the slight pain in their necks, fearful they would miss the world’s greatest wonder if they blinked.

‘This – is – incredible’, said Manini after finally taking courage. ‘Monteiro’, he now looked down to his friend, who was still looking up. ‘This is your *thread of life*.’

‘What — what do you mean?’, asked Monteiro, though still not daring to look away.

‘Those three women figures, those are the *Parcae*, the incarnations of destiny. And this thread... This is your life. Your life until the present moment, at least. You see how it starts on the top of the well and ends here, in the watch on your hand? That’s because here is *now*, and whatever is above us already *was*.’

‘You’re saying that this thin, glowing golden thread shows... My past?’, at this point Monteiro had become so intrigued he had to look into his friend’s eyes to make sure he wasn’t playing a joke at him.

‘Not only shows... How can I explain this in simple words... My friend, Time is a very mysterious thing. Being Wizard or Muggle, Time possess some sort of magic few of us — perhaps even none of us — can fully understand. Some believe it is linear like this thread — Past, Present and Future, flowing like a river, never standing still. Others, however, believe it is more... more like Space.’

‘Like Space? As if it was possible to visit a specific moment in time like you visit your aunt’s house?’

‘*Uh*... sort of. This thread gives us a better image: look at it. It is linear. Your past spreads chronologically along its length until it reaches you — the Present.’

‘But what about the Future?’

‘Oh, Monteiro... The Future is uncertain. It can change anytime. Depending on how the Present turns out...’

‘But didn’t you say these... Parcae are the incarnations of destiny?’

‘So?’

‘So destiny is supposed to be fixed, right?’

‘Well... It’s more complicated than that, actually... Destiny, if understood as the capital events which lay ahead — in the Future — is fixed, yes. But the ways in which these capital events may come to past are many.’

‘So the results are certain, but the means are variable?’

‘Exactly.’

‘Then why can’t we see these results, at least, along this thread?’

‘That’s because the Parcae won’t reveal it to you.’

‘You speak as if they were alive, when they are just sculpted figures in the metal.’

‘Don’t let the appearances fool you, my friend. They are as living and breathing as you and me.’

Monteiro’s expression gained goggly, terrified eyes in addition to his overall astonishment. He quickly became very aware he was holding an object which, according to Manini, hosted three living tiny witches.

‘Ho – *hem* – how can they be living in the watch?!’, he asked, still incredulous.

‘Oh, don’t be ridiculous, Monteiro. Of course they don’t live inside your watch.’

‘But -’

‘Nobody really knows where they live... Maybe some forgotten cave in Greece... It doesn’t matter, really. What we must know is that they have eyes *everywhere*, including your little watch.’

‘Right...’

‘But where was I? Oh, I was explaining to you the concept of Time... So, as I already told you, this thread represents linear Time. However, it also converts Time into Space.’

‘Come again?’

‘You heard me. It converts time into physical, sensory Space. It means you can walk through your past as if you’re walking up that river. You can see it, even dive in it, but you must be careful not to *drown*.’

‘Can you please not speak in metaphors? This is complicated enough as it is...’

‘Er... Sorry. Maybe it will be clearer if we try it for real... Think of a day in your past you’d like to visit.’

‘Hmm... What about my wedding day?’

‘Perfect. What day was that?’

‘The fifth of February 1873.’

‘Good. Now set the day, month and year hands on the front of the watch to that date.’

Monteiro turned the watch over to do as instructed. The golden thread stayed in place, levitating over their heads.

‘Done’, he said.

‘Now set the seconds, minutes and hours hands too. If you don’t remember the exact second and minute when you said “I do”, it’s fine... It won’t change much...’

Monteiro obeyed.

‘Very well. At last, as I had told you, the chronograph. It is the most important hand to set because it defines how long you will stay in the past. Without it, you might be trapped there for years...’

‘How long should I stay?’

‘The lesser, the better. See, the Parcae are proud women... If you meddle too much in their affairs, they will feel cheated. And we don’t want that. They are vengeful ladies.’

‘How about one minute?’

‘I reckon that’s reasonable.’

Once again Monteiro did as told. Afterwards he stood frozen as ice, looking at Manini, waiting for the magic to happen, but nothing did.

‘It doesn’t work.’

‘Of course it doesn’t. Did I say we were finished? Okay. Now turn it over again and press this small button hidden inside the crown on the top.’

Monteiro searched for the said button for a minute and then pressed it. The metallic lid that covered the watch’s back opened on a *click* and he saw what was concealed inside.’

‘A compass?’

‘You are perceptive, my friend’, said Manini before drawing a provocative smile.

‘Very funny, Manini... Have your impeccable wit help you realize it’s broken?’

‘It’s not broken.’

‘It’s not pointing at the right direction.’

‘*Oh*, but it *is*. It points where you should go. The compass on the back of the watch will guide you to the exact segment on the thread where the moment you set in the front of the watch is.’

‘It’s pointing to the stairs.’

‘So you must climb them, then.’

With a skeptical look, Monteiro faced the first steps of the long spiral stairway which contoured the well and started climbing. He wasn’t sure yet if the whole thing was in fact reliable, but again,

he had spent a small fortune for fabricating such a device — around 1911 *nubias* (Iberian golden coins), which roughly corresponds to 546 galleons.

As he continued climbing the stairs, the compass' needle started shifting its position until it was pointing straight into the well's abysm.

'Manini', shouted Monteiro from above, 'It wants me to break my neck!'

'Beg your pardon?'

'The needle is pointing to the center of the well!'

'Of course! It's pointing to the thread! You have to jump!'

'*WHAT?!*'

'Jump! You have to jum -'

'I understood that part! You must have mistaken me for a hippogriff!'

'You have to do it, Monteiro! Trust me!'

Not very willingly, Monteiro climbed on top of the staircase's stone handrail by holding on a pillar and looked down. The truth was he wasn't high enough to die from the fall; but for a man on his sixties, that kind of adventure would cost him a hip, on best odds. He could hear his heart pounding heavily inside his chest, drops of sweat falling from his forehead right into the abyss. He had no idea what he was doing; the mere contemplation of jumping shocked his most primitive survival instincts. But then, again, he had come too far to turn back.

He jumped.

\*

'Do you, Perpetua Augusta Pereira de Melo, take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?'

'I do.'

'And do you, António Augusto Carvalho Monteiro, take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?'

Monteiro felt dizzy. His legs were tingling, his chest was burning up with heat and his head was stinging with pain. He couldn't stop blinking since his eyes were so dry and he could only see dark spots in front of him. He only remembered falling into what seemed to have been a tunnel made of pure light, going down faster and faster as his body got stretched to its limit.

Slowly he started getting back to his senses. The foggy images around him started to get sharp, and then he could see he was surrounded by people, many of whom had familiar faces.

He looked at his own hands and there was something very strange about them. They weren't as wrinkled as they used to be. As a matter of fact, they weren't wrinkled at all; the skin was soft and

smooth rather than flaccid and blotchy. He was holding another person's hands in his — a woman's hands. He looked up to see whose hands were those and had a delightful surprise.

They were his wife's. And she looked breathtaking. He was assured that lady was his wife, Perpetua, for she had the same hypnotizing cerulean eyes; the same timid brownish curls; the same candor smile. However, she was much younger than the last he had seen her. She looked exactly the same as when they met for the very first time, though now she was wearing white rather than her usual black attire.

'*Hem, hem...*', falsely coughed the priest in order to call for Monteiro's attention. 'Mr. Monteiro, do you take lady Perpetua to be your lawfully wedded wife?'

Monteiro seemed to finally have noticed the priest's presence, considering he was so bewildered before by the whole situation. He looked back to his wife's face, who now seemed a bit apprehensive.

'I do.'

It was only enough time for him to see the smile back on Perpetua's face before he got sucked out of that lovely memory and dragged back into the agonizing light tunnel. Before he knew, he was falling like a ripe apple next to Manini at the bottom of the well.

Immediately afterwards the golden thread got pulled back into the watch in a quick movement, before the device closed itself to its inanimate state and the well was again filled with nothing but air.

'*Ow, my hip...*', complained Monteiro.

'Are you okay, my friend?', asked Manini.

'Yes, yes... Nothing broken I suppose...'

'So... Did it work?'

'It was unbelievable, Manini! I was there, but I was thirty-six years younger, and Perpetua... *Aah*, Manini... You should have seen her... She looked like an angel...'

'I imagine... But, Monteiro, do you realize what this means?'

'Now, with Isadora's help, we can finally find out what the prophecy says! Should we bring the watch to her?'

'No. Remember: the magic of the watch only works when combined with the well.'

'*Oh*, that's true... So, when should we do it?'

'Let's wait for the celebrations to be over, so we can concentrate on our plan.'

Monteiro looked down at the exquisite pocket watch in his hand, marveled that something so small could be so powerful.

‘You and that specialist in Besançon came up with something truly extraordinary’, said Monteiro. ‘Do you have a name for it?’

‘Naturally. This is the *LeRoy 01*— the first of its kind.’

## Chapter Seven — The Old Convent.

Christmas had come and gone as fast as Isadora’s famous pumpkin pies at the Regaleira’s feast. The palace and its gardens looked like a fairyland out of a tale — the trees glowed in the night with the multiple-colored lights which Perpetua had so carefully arranged. Magically-created snowflakes fell from the skies above the property, painting the entire scenery with a gentle layer of frosted white. Even Beatrice, the matron, had prepared for the occasion, setting the dinner table in the Hunting Room with the best, finest china the palace could provide. On the night of Christmas Eve, all the students and staff met at the property’s chapel before dinner in order to celebrate the birth of Christ and thank for all the many blessings they had been given. Then each of them proceeded to the palace and joined at table for a delicious meal together. A great variety of local dishes — including baked codfish with sour cream and egg tart pastries for dessert — had been prepared by the property’s house elves. Around midnight, the feast ended with a gathering around the burning fireplace to exchange the presents which laid under a magnificently decorated Christmas tree.

Outside of the Regaleira, not all Christmas had been so cosy and homely. Pessoa, for instance, had spent this supposedly magical holiday drinking himself to inebriation with no one for company but Kvasir’s bartender, a dwarf named Galar. He had just lost his dear grandmother few days before in a very strange, unexpected manner. The doctor who had examined her body assured him she had been a victim of a sudden heart attack, but for some reason Pessoa did not quite believe him. And since that shivering night — almost as cold as Christmas eve — his life started to slowly fall apart.

But since time pays no respect to our suffering, the twenty-fourth went by, carrying the twenty-fifth with it, and soon Christmas was over, making way for the freezing night of the twenty-six, one which displayed the biggest, brightest, fullest moon any of the Lisbon inhabitants had ever seen.

Nevertheless, the full moon — though unquestionably glorious — was not the most amazing thing to compose the sky’s dark canvas that night: a couple of human silhouettes appeared flying along the moon’s diameter, heading towards the old Carmo Convent in their brooms while projecting behind them the fluttering shapes of cloaks. Whomever those two figures were, their presence did not pass unnoticed, for, at that precise moment, two equally cloaked men happened to be standing inside the church of the said Convent, glancing at the sky. Though the church had been

in ruins for centuries, it still possessed its admirable gothic vestiges, which presided over a nearby (now completely deserted) square.

‘Is that Boleskine and his wife?’, asked the first man.

‘I believe so’, the other replied.

‘How discreet’, the first one said sarcastically.

‘It almost sounds like you... *Disapprove* of him’

‘Believe me, Apolidorus, disapproval is the kindest sentiment I’ll ever nourish for that man.’

‘But, Lazarus, you were the one who arranged his appointment in the first place...’

‘Please, Apolidorus, if the choice had been really up to me I’d have never put Coimbra in the hands of that incestuous piece of – *oh*, hello, Samuel! Hello, Juliette! Did you have a good flight?’

The two flying figures — a man and a woman — appeared walking towards the two men, carrying their brooms. The man — Samuel Boleskine, current Headmaster of Coimbra — was strong as a bull. His face was pear-shaped and his jaw was covered by a dense layer of thick dark hair. The woman was a lot shorter than her companion, and mainly looked like a speaking porcelain doll. She was Boleskine’s wife and deputy Headmistress — not to mention, cousin — Juliette. And though the two showed an obvious difference in terms of stature, their general features were oddly alike.

‘Good evening, Lazarus. Good evening, Apolidorus’, said the couple almost simultaneously. ‘The weather was a bit too windy for my taste, but overall good... Had a small delay at Tomar, though’, said Samuel.

‘What happened?’

‘We had to stop for recalibration’, explained Juliette. ‘How’s the paper, Apolidorus?’

‘*Ugh*... I feel like I’m surrounded by idiots. The other day some filthy half-blood called Eneias came sticking his nose into matters that did not concern him.’

‘What do you mean?’, asked Juliette.

‘I was at my office with Marisa — who should be arriving any minute now — and we were revising the paper’s evening edition. We were, you know... Cutting away whatever did not harmonize with the paper’s general spirit... And then that brainless troll burst in protesting the fact we had rejected his article about werewolves.’

‘*Ew*’, the others reacted in disgust. ‘Only half-bloods can sympathize with these obnoxious creatures’, added Lazarus.

‘And Lazarus...’, said Boleskine after turning a cynical look to Oldfox. ‘How’s the Ministry?’

‘Impeccable, I have to say’, he replied promptly. ‘We just managed to catalogue dwarves as beasts instead of beings, which will certainly put those barbaric imps in their rightful place. You’d

be surprised with the number of establishments here in Lisbon which are run by dwarves... Anyway, how's Coimbra?'

'Eh... Same boring job... I never enjoyed much the company of children, myself.'

'Is that the reason why you don't have children? I mean, who's going to carry on the good Boleskine blood? Or perhaps the reason is a more... Biological one?', asked Lazarus sarcastically, causing Samuel and Juliette to exchange outraged looks.

'At least we separate the magic beans! How can you keep breathing the same air as those *Blood-traitors* from the Ministry, Lazarus? Do you happen to sympathize with them?', Samuel said with a scornful laugh.

'Of course I don't', Lazarus replied with a heated voice. 'Things are more complex at the Ministry, Samuel. They're not defenseless children, you see...'

In the meanwhile, two more witches suddenly appeared out of thin air at the square in front of them.

'Look! Marisa arrived', remarked Apolidorus. 'And she brought Pandora.'

'If it isn't the Scarlet woman!', said Lazarus.

'Good evening, gentlemen', said Marisa, who approached the group before her colleague. 'Juliette', she said while bowing her head.

'Good evening to all', said Pandora, catching up. The two women seemed to be on their late twenties and bore a similar body figure, being both at least ten centimeters taller than the average, with slim silhouettes like two enchanted snakes. Pandora Alexander had short silvery hair and very fine facial features. She worked for the Ministry of Magic's department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. Marisa Leão, however, worked with Apolidorus Scarabis for *O Escriba* newspaper; she had long straight black hair, with a fringe falling over her forehead down to her light-green eyes, which were half-covered by a pair of oval glasses.

'Good evening, ladies', the group said in unison.

'Where are the others?', Pandora inquired.

'Well, Namukwaya is in Uganda', reminded Lazarus.

'And since Gomorra is still locked in *Baalbur*, I'm assuming he's not coming', Boleskine said with a ton of irony in his voice.

'Do not joke with me, Boleskine', said Pandora while giving him a harsh look.

'If I was Minister at the time, Gomorra would have never ended up in Baalbur', said Lazarus.

'Minister or not, he was caught in the act. There's nothing we can do for him', added Boleskine.

‘And it was all Troutmouth’s fault. That sorry excuse for a wizard... I will never understand why the master would keep him by his side after what he did... And I’ve seen he kill for less’, said Marisa.

Not long afterwards four more sorcerers joined the group by apparating there.

‘Good evening, Ambassadors’, they all greeted each other.

‘Now that we are all here, shall we enter?’, asked Boleskine rhetorically. The ten wizards and witches were already standing at the crossing of the church, gathering closer in a circle where they all faced each other. Then each of them raised their wands, pointing them at the sky, and short, blueish rays of light left their tips with constant intervals. The result was that a convex, very thin translucent layer started appearing high above the building’s ruins, gradually enveloping it from top to bottom in a hemispherical shape, as the rays of light kept being released. Simultaneously, the convent’s structure reappeared as if it had never been destroyed in the first place — at first the vaulted ceiling covered their heads, then the thick stone walls rose around them, then the portals, the buttresses, the stained-glass windows, the sculpted capitals, the pavement and the whole interior decoration magically materialized itself. After the building was whole and solid, the choir area got furnished — but not with liturgical objects. Instead, a wide round ebony wooden table divided into thirteen sections established itself where the church’s altar usually stands. Each one of the thirteen sections of the circle possessed an inscription at the edge. These inscriptions had the aspect of some ancient, gothic writing, though the language used did not correspond to any known language. Apparently, their purpose was to provide some sort of identification in regard to where each wizard should sit, because, as they did, they all seemed to know precisely where their place was. Three chairs remained unoccupied, however. Behind the table, stood a tryptic painted with oil. Its subject was terrifying — Muggles and “impure” magical beings such as Muggleborns and Half-breeds being tortured in the most cruel ways by cloaked, masked wizards. The individuals depicted moved around the painting’s surface, offering a very realistic portrayal of the subject.

After some minutes waiting, a large crow with a tiny white spot under its left eye came flying inside the church through the gap of a broken window. It flew in circles a couple of times above the eleven wizards’ heads, before landing on the floor. Its claws turned into long human fingers; its wings into arms; its white spot turned into a dot-shaped scar defiling the left cheek’s skin; its black feathers gained the shape of a long robe embracing its now human body. The bird had turned into a man. He walked towards the others — who were now standing up — taking a seat around the table. When he sat, the others did the same. The church remained in absolute silence, until the crow-man opened his mouth to speak.

‘*ee-ow-san-fow-mi-ow-m-neb*’ *The blood is the seed of the Lord*, he said, in an unidentified language.

‘*ee-ow-san-fow-mi-ow-m-neb*’, the others repeated solemnly.

‘*ee-ow-ee-harr* — the man continued speaking in that same language — *Good evening.*’ The others remained silent paying the man their full attention. None of them looked either surprised nor puzzled by the peculiar sounds he was making. ‘I apologize for my delay’, he continued, ‘but we have important matters to discuss’.

The people in the painting behind them were now howling with pain so loudly, the man’s voice could not be properly heard.

‘*SILENCIO*’, he shouted at the picture, pointing his wand at it. Even the torturers in the composition seemed to quiver at the man’s voice. After that, no more sounds came from those tormented souls.

‘As I was saying, I have important news from Africa: I have met with our local supporters in Tunisia and Algeria in order to discuss our strategies concerning the Muggle war. They have promised to invest all their efforts to our cause.’

‘Excuse me, Master, but... How can you be sure they won’t betray us?’, asked Marisa in the same language as the man with the scar on his face was speaking.

‘Namukwaya is supervising them personally’, he answered. ‘Anyhow... They have already made arrangements to meet with the native Muggle leaders in order to incite them against their European oppressors. It won’t be long before the whole thing breaks down into chaos and the Muggles do what they do best: kill each other. Also, I left Troutmouth there to ensure everything goes as planned.’

‘Pardon, Master... *But*... Do you think Troutmouth is the right person to intrust such an important task?’, inquired Lazarus. ‘I mean, after the *Gomorra* incident -’

‘Do you dare questioning my judgement, Lazarus?’, asked the man coolly.

‘Never, master, never’, muttered Lazarus.

‘That is... very clever of you’, the man said in disdain. Lazarus could see Samuel’s lips twitching timidly into a smile.

‘Now, there is one more reason why I summoned you here tonight’, the Crow continued. ‘I believe we all remember very well the name *Pessoa*, am I right?’

‘Wasn’t that the name of the man who *Gomorra* went to prison for murdering?’, asked Boleskine.

‘He is. His son works for me’, confirmed Apolidorus. They all spoke the same mysterious language as their leader.

‘Exactly. Pessoa — the Father — was the man who died sixteen years ago under my orders. He held your job back then, Apolidorus, though he wasn’t quite as cooperative to our intentions as you might imagine... He had to go.’

‘I don’t believe his son is any better... He asks too many questions, that boy... Well, at least his grandmother’s death seemed to have silenced him for now’, said Apolidorus.

‘Well... That’s what I wanted to speak about, actually. I am the one who killed his grandmother’, admitted their leader.

‘Wha – What? Why, master?’, asked Apolidorus, surprised.

‘I have been watching the boy for some weeks now. As a crow, I observed from the windows patiently, until the old witch saw me and recognized my *mark*. She raised her wand against me and I killed her.’

‘Sorry to ask, master’, said Pandora, ‘but why were you watching this boy exactly?’

‘Because, while in Tunisia, I was informed by Namukwaya that this boy possesses a very unique talent, which might become very valuable to us.’

‘And what talent is that?’, asked Apolidorus incredulously.

‘He is a Kalliopákos’, the man revealed, though the others still didn’t seem to know what he was speaking about. ‘He has the power to control and manipulate another creature’s behavior — Muggle, wizard or beast — only by using words.’

All looked perplexed, specially Apolidorus. Perhaps it would have never crossed his mind that the skinny 21-years-old boy that worked for him was so far from being an ordinary wizard.

‘Master, are you sure?’, Apolidorus insisted. ‘He doesn’t look like -’

‘I am certain, Apolidorus. If that boy wanted, he could arrive at your office and order you to give him your job, and you would do it with a smile on your face.’

‘So why hasn’t he?’

‘Because he doesn’t know how much power he has. When he was a student at Uagadou, there was one major incident which made perfectly clear he is the next most powerful wizard of this kind since Orpheus. However, when he was sent to the Headmistress’ office, Namukwaya obliterated his memory of that incident, judging it would be better for him to remain ignorant.’

‘Well, she was right, wasn’t she?!’, said Marisa.

‘So, that means’, interrupted Boleskine, ‘with this boy’s help, the war could start any day now.’

‘With this boy’s help, Samuel, there wouldn’t be no one who could stop us. Not even that old Muggle-lover, Monteiro’, added their master.

‘*Blergh*... If it wasn’t for that old twit, Gomorra would be sitting here with us’, said Lazarus.

‘Right. But how do we get this boy to cooperate? I doubt he will do it on his own free will. We murdered his father and grandmother and, sincerely, he doesn’t seem to share our ideals, for what I’ve noticed’, said Apolidorus.

‘I don’t reckon the Imperius curse would work on him... Still, there’s nothing a little torture or threatening won’t do’, their leader said. ‘I am ultimately convinced, though, that we need this boy if we are to get through with our mission. The Lord himself told me so.’

‘And how do we get him? I mean, if he does what Namukwaya says he does, he is not exactly an easy pray’, said Marisa.

‘Master, I am at your disposal for this task’, said Apolidorus. ‘I think I am the most qualified for -’

‘The Lord has given me his orders, Apolidorus. Here’s how we shall proceed...’

The Crow reached for a small roll of parchment from under his cloak, unrolled it and started reading it to the others. The characters on the piece of parchment looked exactly the same as the characters engraved on the wooden table they were now gathered around.

He started revealing to them the content of the letter, still talking in that unidentified language. After some minutes, when he was about to reach the end of the letter, he said:

‘... The king will soon fall; the blood of the tainted will be spilled; the stars will be the witnesses of our Lord’s great work; and we, as his Ambassadors, will be rewarded with the first golden rays of the new Dawn, one longer and brighter than all others; the blood is the seed of the Lord.’

‘The blood is the seed of the Lord’, they repeated.

And above the soundless screams of the tortured figures, the full moon bathed the sleeping city with its brightness.

## **Chapter Eight — He with Half the Blood**

‘Monteiro, are you sure there’s no other way? Perhaps you could ask one of your connections in the British Ministry of Magic to let us borrow a Time-Turner?’, asked Isadora apprehensively.

‘Please don’t tell me you’re backing down now, Isadora! It’s perfectly safe! I tried it on myself before Christmas... Moreover, if borrowing a Time-Turner was really an option, do you seriously think I would have spent that many nubias on this?’, Monteiro replied slightly impatiently. He, Manini and Isadora were standing somewhere along the stairway of the well, closer to the top. The LeRoy 01 laid open on Isadora’s hand, while her thread of life danced in the air inside the well. She had one foot on the stairs and another on the handrail.

‘Isadora, you read Pessoa’s letter. You know this prophecy is the key to defeating them. Pessoa died for knowing that. And if they ever find out he left a letter to Monteiro, we’re next on the list’, said Manini.

‘Why can’t one of you do it, again?’, she asked, looking at the gentlemen.

‘We’ve never met him!’, they both answered.

‘Isadora, it will be alright’, said Manini, trying to calm her down. ‘We wouldn’t put you up to this if we weren’t completely certain this would work.’

‘All right’, she said. ‘Let’s just review the plan one last time.’

‘Okay’, said Monteiro, ‘so, first of all, you’ll arrive there in your younger body, around the moment when the prophecy is told. You’ll need to wait for the ceremony to finish and, while the others go straight to the feast, you have to find a way of breaking in the Potions master’s office to steal a flask of *Veritaserum*. I’d provide one from my personal storage, but there’s no way you can take any object from the present.’

‘Then you’ll have to find him and trap him alone somewhere’ Manini continued explaining. ‘Immobilize him with the wand you had with you back then.’

‘Make him drink a few drops of the potion and ask him to reveal the prophecy to you’, Monteiro completed.

‘We’ll give you a couple of hours there. Is that enough?’, asked Manini.

‘I hope so. If not, we can try it again, right?’, inquired Isadora.

‘Isadora, if anything goes wrong, whatever happens will replace the past you’ve known to become the *only* past. If you fail, he will know what we are up to’, explained Manini.

‘Right. That’s encouraging’, she said sarcastically.

‘You can do this’, said Monteiro.

Isadora climbed with her other foot on the stone handrail, with the help of Monteiro and Manini. She looked down at the bottom of the well. It was a considerably higher fall when compared to Monteiro’s attempt before Christmas. She did not seem to want to stay there, looking down and thinking long enough to lose her courage — she jumped.

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When Isadora opened her eyes, her sight was blurred by multiple dark spots. She felt her head heavy as an *Erumpent*, while her fingers tingled incessantly. Little by little, her senses seemed to readjust; she could now distinctively see where she was — she was standing in the garden of the Coimbra University for Wizards and Sorcerers. She recognized the trees and flowers, as well as the

buildings enveloping the yard. She could see she was surrounded by children whose faces she could easily identify. Only then she realized she was a child herself — eleven years old, wearing her hair in a long, chocolate-colored braid. She could hear the voice of the university's Deputy Headmistress at the time, Mrs. Antigone Domdaniel, calling the first-year students by their name for the sorting ceremony.

'Crowley', Isadora heard the Deputy Headmistress call.

*That's him*, she thought. She looked in the direction of Mrs. Domdaniel, who was standing beyond the small crowd of children, in the center of the garden, where reposed the Oraculum stone.

Then she saw him: a skinny pallid-faced boy with hair as dark as the night diffidently walking towards the Oraculum. His eyes resembled two ripe plums bearing the weight of days of sleepless nights. He looked frightened and out of place and, for a moment, Isadora thought she could almost feel sorry for him. He kneeled in front of the rock while Mrs. Domdaniel gave him instructions of what to do. He then blew upon the rock's surface, and a human face outlined by moss appeared.

After that, all Isadora could see was the moving lips of the Oraculum revealing its prophecy to the ill-looking boy. However, there wasn't a sound she could hear herself. That owns to the fact that the Oraculum, being a mystical entity which possesses very ancient magic, reveals its prediction exclusively to the one it is about. So no one but the boy himself would ever know the secrets the divinatory stone had disclosed. Unless, of course, he would himself share those secrets with someone else.

It took a particularly long time for the Oraculum to finish his sorting. Indeed, all signs indicated that both Joaquim Pessoa and Monteiro were right to believe the prophecy contained crucial information. When it was over, the boy looked completely overwhelmed. So overwhelmed that, when the Deputy Headmistress asked him which house the Oraculum had placed him, he did not pay her the slightest attention. She had to ask a second time, in a louder voice, so he would wake up from whatever hallucination he was having to say 'Gastropoda', with a tone that suggested absolutely no interest. As if being sorted into a house had become something so incredibly insignificant.

Even Mrs. Domdaniel seemed to notice there was something strange about his behavior, but she moved on anyway with the sorting ceremony.

After the ceremony was over, they were guided by the prefects of their houses to the interior of the main building, where they should join the older students for the welcoming feast. Isadora knew she had no time for feasting, though. She was walking among a group of Frogga students like herself, desperately looking around to find a way of escaping the prefects' surveillance.

Unfortunately, apparating inside the university's grounds was not an option — *how easy it would have been otherwise*, she thought.

Then the idea struck her; she twirled her wand around herself as discreetly as she could, casting the *Disillusionment charm* on herself. Then, being camouflaged thanks to the spell, she separated from her group and started running towards the Potions' classroom which, as she remembered, was located in the ground floor of the building opposite to the one she was now.

She ran across the garden as fast as she could, entered the building and hurried to find the door which sign indicated "Potions". When she found it, she turned the knob to find out that it was predictably locked. She pointed her wand at the knob and whispered '*Alohomora*' and, to her relief, the door opened without further effort.

She knew the Potions master's office was located in the back of the Potions' classroom. As she entered the room, she immediately spotted the rusty back door of the office which coincidentally belonged to Mrs. Domdaniel — who, besides from being Deputy Headmistress, was also Coimbra's Potions Master.

Isadora couldn't have asked for a more perfect diversion: all the professors and students were gathered in the Great Hall, enjoying the welcoming feast, completely unaware of her absence. She again opened the office's door with the unlocking charm and, already inside the room, started searching the shelves for the potion she needed.

After some minutes which felt like hours to an increasingly nervous Isadora, she was able to find a tiny crystal flask which label indicated that was the substance she had been looking for.

She hid the flask under her robes, locking the doors behind her, and ran back to the main building.

When she arrived at the Great Hall's closed gates, she realized the feast was not over yet, so she found a dark corner to hide while waiting for the students to leave the room.

About a quarter of an hour later, the tall wooden doors from the Great Hall started creaking as the caretaker pushed them open. Isadora, who had made herself more comfortable by taking a seat against the cool stone wall of the entrance hall, began to slowly put herself up, taking care not to make any loud noises or to move too abruptly so the *Disillusionment charm* would remain effective.

During the few minutes while she laid there waiting for Crowley to leave the feast, she had come up with a strategy to separate him from the rest of the students. She positioned herself close to passage from which the students were about to exit the feast, being guided by the prefects of their houses to their respective common rooms.

First came the Fragua group, immediately followed by the Kurma students. Then the group from Isadora's former house, Frogga, exited the room. Lastly came the Gastropoda students and, amongst them, the Crow.

'*Accio*', Isadora whispered, pointing her wand to Crowley's hat. The hat immediately lifted from his head and flew over Isadora's spot. Crowley looked confused, touching the hatless top of his head with his long fingers. Assuming a gust of wind had blown his hat away, he looked around to see if he'd find it.

'What are you doing?', one of the Gastropoda prefects asked to Crowley.

'My hat flew off...', he explained.

'What are you waiting for, then? Go look for it!', the prefect said, impatiently. 'And be quick if you want to catch up!', he warned before continuing his way to their common room.

That was the chance Isadora had been waiting for. There she was: alone with the pallid, eleven-years version of the Crow, the wizard who had managed for the past decade to articulate coups d'état, wars and murders, never leaving as much as a single trace behind.

As he approached the place where she was standing, he saw his hat laying on the floor, only centimeters next to her feet. He bent right in front of her to reach for his hat, ignorant of her presence.

A swift flash of blueish light left the tip of Isadora's wand and hit the boy before he could touch the black cloth of his hat. He fell unconscious to the ground instantly. She started dragging him by the arm to the nearest cupboard compartment. However, halfway through the cupboard's tiny door, Isadora could hear the sound of steps growing louder and louder as someone walked towards them.

She hurried to carry Crowley's fainted body inside the tiny cubicle, but, for a child, he was a lot heavier than he looked — or perhaps she was a lot weaker than she remembered. After successfully fitting him in, she carefully stepped inside herself, trying not to knock down the old school brooms which were leaning on the back wall of the cupboard. She closed the door behind her only fast enough for the prefect to appear in the hall.

'Where is that silly boy?!', the prefect thought loudly, clearly irritated. 'He must have gone back to the common room through the service staircase...', he said before vanishing again.

Isadora sighed, relieved.

She waited a few minutes in order to make sure the prefect was gone and turned to Crowley. She searched his robes and took his wand before tying his hands and legs with some ropes she found in the cupboard. Then she faced the compartment's door and — by drawing the door's outlines with the tip of her wand — turned it soundproof. Lastly, she took the flask of Veritaserum from her pocket and dripped three drops inside Crowley's mouth.

'*Rennervate*', she said, pointing her wand at his chest.

The boy gradually started to wake up from his unconscious state.

'Hello, Crow', Isadora said.

The boy, who was still recovering from her stunning spell, scanned the room with his half-opened eyes, searching for the source of the female voice he was hearing.

'You won't be able to see me, so I wouldn't waste my energy...', she continued. 'It's useless to scream too... I made the door soundproof. So you can scream as loud as you want, no one will hear you.'

Crowley finally seemed to realize he was tied up, for his breathing became heavier and louder, and his facial expression got even more paler and terrified.

'Now, I don't have any time to waste', said Isadora. 'What did the Oraculum tell you?'

Regardless of his will, his lips started moving as his voice reverberated inside his throat: 'The Oraculum gave me a prophecy.'

'And what does the prophecy say?!'

*'Boy of hairiest haughty heart,  
feral as your fowl counterpart;  
Thought for one reason you blew,  
there is more that I should tell you.  
Yes, your days were covered by night skies,  
darkness which you still carry in your eyes.  
However, that's nothing to compare  
to the racking pain which you will bear.  
Under the ravaged house of the chaste,  
you will meet your advocates.  
Thirteen will be their number,  
though only one will not go under.  
However faithful he will be,  
your love won't be guaranteed.  
And in the end you will regret  
not paying up that debt.  
For it is he, with half the blood  
who will take you down to mud.  
So if you continue on this road,  
great power on you will be bestowed.'*

*But make no mistake: as certain as fate  
is the sentence that awaits.  
If you decide otherwise  
to listen to an old rock's advice  
and change the course of your revue,  
then Gastropoda is the house for you.'*

\*

“Fowl counterpart”... That must refer to his Animagus’ form — a crow’, said Manini.

“Thirteen will be their number” — he must have thirteen supporters!’, said Monteiro. ‘Now, who can they be?’

‘Oldfox, for sure... *Oh*, and Boleskine’, suggested Manini.

‘Boleskine’s wife must be one as well. And Scarabis was the one who manipulated the news so the former minister would be deposed and Oldfox would take his place. He’s obviously on the game too’, pointed out Isadora.

‘Then there’s Gomorra, of course. Pandora Alexander — the witch who drafted the new dwarf legislation — is a strong candidate...’, Monteiro added.

‘And Scarabis’ second-in-command, Marisa Leão’, said Isadora.

‘That’s seven already’, said Manini. ‘I have a few more guesses, but I don’t see how we can prove anything... Besides, as long as they have the Ministry, Coimbra and *O Escriba* in their hands, I don’t know what we can do.’

‘We don’t need to prove anything to anyone, Manini’, said Monteiro firmly, ‘but to ourselves.’

‘If acting according to the legal system was my biggest concern, I wouldn’t have started the Regaleira in the first place’, Monteiro continued. ‘No... This is up to us. We need to find out who they are, where they are, and take them down.’

‘But we cannot go after people just because we believe they are supporting him, Monteiro’, said Manini, who seemed swamped in frustration. ‘I thought the prophecy would be enlightening — Pessoa’s conviction about it definitely made me think so — but I feel even more confused now.’

‘Manini, you seem not to have noticed — the prophecy gave us a location’, reminded Isadora.

“Under the ravaged house of the chaste”, she continued. “You will meet your advocates” — that’s where he meets them!’

‘And where is that?!’, asked Manini skeptically. ‘That can be anywhere!’

‘Not anywhere, my friend’, said Monteiro, who seemed to be immerse in his thoughts. ‘It’s the “house of the chaste”. Now, who are these “chaste”?’

‘There’s only one famous chaste which I know — The Virgin Mary’, said Isadora.

‘So, it’s a church’, said Manini, still incredulous. ‘Do you know how many churches there are in Lisbon?!’

‘Wait: what if this “chaste” doesn’t refer only to the Virgin, but to a plurality of people?’, suggested Monteiro.

‘Like a plurality of virgins?’, Manini added ironically.

‘Exactly!’, exclaimed Monteiro, making Manini look at him as if he was completely delusional. ‘Don’t you see, Manini?! Nuns! Nuns are chaste! And where do nuns live?’

‘A convent’, answered Isadora.

‘There is still more than one convent in Lisbon’, Manini said.

‘But this one was *ravaged*...’, said Isadora.

‘Could it be the *Carmo*?’, inquired Monteiro.

‘It’s one possible option...’, Isadora replied.

‘Isadora, you obliterated that memory from his brain, right?’, asked Monteiro.

‘Of course.’

‘Than we must observe this and other convents in Lisbon which match the prophecy’s description’, instructed Monteiro. ‘Since he won’t remember ever telling the prophecy to you, he will gather with his associates once again at the convent. And when he does, we’ll know.’

‘How are we going to maintain surveillance over these buildings without having the slightest idea of when they are to meet again?’, asked Manini.

‘I believe Isadora has the answer for that.’

‘I can implant *Eavescreepers* on those sites’, she said.

‘All right’, asserted Manini. ‘Still, what about that “half-the-blood” wizard who, according to the Oraculum, will eventually betray and defeat the Crow?’

‘That can be any one of his followers who — from my assumptions — is a half-blood’, Monteiro said.

‘But Monteiro’, said Isadora. ‘His whole philosophy is built around the concept of blood-purity... Do you really believe any of his allies are anything less than Pure-bloods?’

‘I don’t know, Isadora. I wouldn’t doubt it, thought... Many wizards seemed to have conveniently forgotten their Muggle ancestry so they can call themselves “Pure-bloods”... Is there even such a thing as a Pure-blood?’

The three friends looked at each other with interrogative eyes — perhaps hoping one of them would find out the missing piece to that increasingly complex puzzle. None of them dared to speak, however. Instead, each one laid back in their chairs, enjoying the warmth radiated by the lit fireplace in the Hunting Room, where they could finally have a well-deserved rest, after a wearing adventure through Time.

### Chapter Nine — *Kvasir's*.

‘Hugo, wake up!’, ordered Mafalda while poking him in the arm so he would open his eyes. All she managed, though, was for him to mumble some indiscernible noises before sinking his head against the pillow again, getting back to snoring. ‘Hugo! Get up! We’ll be late for our visit to Lisbon’s wizarding market’, she warned him. At those words, Hugo’s eyes opened with the speed of a flying hummingbird. He got up at once, dried the corner of his mouth with his sleeve and hurried to put on his shoes while asking Mafalda ‘Are we leaving *now*?! Who’s taking us there?’

‘Mrs. Perpetua is going with us’, she answered.

‘Perpetua? Why not Isadora?’

‘Because Isadora’s face is too easily recognizable by anyone from Coimbra, of course. It would raise too many questions...’

‘I see...’, Hugo said after putting on his left shoe. ‘I’m ready. We can go.’

‘The others are already waiting by the stables. Let’s go.’

The couple left their dormitory in direction of the staircase hall. They went down the stairs in such a haste that Mafalda almost stumbled on a step on the first floor. When they finally arrived at the stables building, southwest of the palace, they found Perpetua and Monteiro standing by the gates with the other young wizards, who looked rather impatient.

‘Finally!’, said Nuno, complaining.

‘We’ve been waiting for Mr. Sleeperson for at least twenty minutes!’, added Leonor.

‘I’m sorry, all right?!’, said Hugo in a way that showed he was in fact more annoyed than sorry. ‘I overslept.’

‘Well, now that you are all here, I’d like to establish a few ground rules before I let you sneak into the lion’s den’, said Monteiro. ‘As agreed beforehand, an adult must accompany you, and Mrs. Perpetua has kindly volunteered to do so’, Monteiro continued speaking, ignoring the disappointed looks the five teenagers exchanged amongst themselves. ‘Since the floo network is surveilled by the Ministry, you will have to make a much longer trip by carriage — that’s why you had to wake up so early’, he explained before pointing towards an enclosed black *Landau* coach standing before the

gates. ‘I know it doesn’t look big enough to fit all six of you, but I’ve placed an extension charm on it. And please – yes, Prospero?’ , Prospero’s hand was waving in the air.

‘Mr. Monteiro, why can’t we use the elevator? Wouldn’t it take less time?’

‘It certainly would. However, Mrs. Perpetua — being very claustrophobic — prefers not to travel inside that cabin. I’m sure you all understand.’

‘As I was saying’, Monteiro continued, ‘Before I release you from my tedious speech, I have a very serious request to make: please, do not mention the Regaleira to anyone, not even amongst yourselves. Remember: it is also your responsibility to preserve the secrecy of this place. Do we have an agreement?’

‘Yes, Mr. Monteiro’, the youngsters confirmed in unison with clearly bored voices.

‘Oh, Monteiro, relax’, said Perpetua. ‘I’ll take good care of them. Shall we go, then?’, she said to the five teenagers, causing them to react excitedly, rushing towards the carriage. ‘Wait for me!’, she shouted at the kids, who were already entering the vehicle with the coachman’s help.

‘Perpetua!’, called Monteiro.

‘Yes, my love?’

‘Please be careful.’

‘Everything will be fine! We’ll come back by the end of the day, all safe and sound. Trust me.’

She gave him a gentle kiss on the cheek and left to join the others, who had already accommodated themselves in the carriage, waiting anxiously for their departure.

\*

The trip from *Sintra* to Lisbon by carriage was a long one — it took them at least five hours to arrive at the city center, having stopped a few times so the horses would be able to drink and rest. When they finally turned on *Rua do Alecrim*, Perpetua’s pocket watch marked already five minutes to midday — a perfect time for a lunch break at the *Quintela* Palace before they could proceed to the wizarding market.

The palace — a three-level structure crowned by an attic — faced a small square in which stood a limestone statue representing the Portuguese author *Eça de Queirós*. The building was known among Monteiro’s contemporaries as *Palácio Quintela*, due to the name of its first owner, *Luís Rebelo de Quintela*. There currently lived Monteiro and Perpetua’s daughter Maria, along with her own husband and children, and her brother Pedro.

The vehicle gained access into the building through its coach gates, south of the main pedestrian entrance. They were welcomed at the courtyard by the butler, Mr. Jacques Desbals, who had

received an owl earlier that week, informing of their upcoming arrival. After their horses were taken care of by the local groom and their possessions were unloaded, Perpetua and the five youngsters proceeded into the palace, accompanied by Jacques. Indeed, having eaten only a few pastries they had packed for breakfast, the group was starving at the moment when they entered the bright halls of Monteiro's urban residence. They climbed the main staircase into the second floor, where a well-deserved meal awaited them at the dining room.

'Jacques', called Perpetua, 'Where are my children? Aren't they having lunch with us?'

'*Madame* Perpetua, I'm afraid your children are not 'eere at zee moment. *Marie* is out on a *promenade* with 'er 'usband and zeir children, and *Pierre*... Well, 'ee 'asn't yet returned from 'is last night's – *err... Récréation*', said the elegantly dressed thin French man.

'I see...', said Perpetua with a sigh. 'I haven't seen them for so long...'

'*Je suis désolé, Madame*', said Jacques in French.

After filling their bellies with the bountiful lunch the house's servants had prepared, the group departed again in their carriage in direction of *Praça do Comércio*. Arriving at the square from the *Rua do Arsenal*, they kept going straight in direction of the colossal, pearl-colored stone arch which marked a central axis in the square. The arch — a remarkable commemorative piece finely sculpted in the (Muggle known) neoclassical style — opened a passage connecting the *Praça do Comércio* and the *Rua Augusta*.

As they were about to cross the arch to the sound of the galloping horses, Perpetua advised the children to concentrate their thoughts on where they wanted to go. Though initially skeptical, they did as instructed, and just before the vehicle could reach *Rua Augusta*, a strange thing happened: the shapes and colors of the scenery that laid ahead started to blend like the brushstrokes on a canvas. The gray of the imminent rain started to melt down, fusing with the clay of the houses' rooftops. The human silhouettes along the sidewalk faded into the air like smoke. In the blink of an eye, the whole picture turned into an abstract mix of shapes and colors, before it started to readjust itself into a complete new composition. Now, they were driving on a broad network of subterranean galleries instead.

The place was heavily illuminated by a series of magically lit, colorful crystal chandeliers, hanging down from the ceiling like multiple stalactites. Its convex walls simulated both the color and texture of a cork tree trunk, converging on the top on a sequence of Gothic rib vaults. Small pieces of shiny *azulejos* of many colors and shapes were embedded in the walls, providing another source of emanating light and being often mistaken for tiny living fairies.

Altogether, this underground set of alleyways was known in the magical community as the “Cork Cave”, being established as a considerably effective wizarding route in Lisbon since 1755. The entire zone was, of course, out-of-bounds for Muggles, which made it possible for all magical beings to stroll, fly, apparate or drive any vehicle freely, as long as they respected the wizarding Traffic laws.

The main chamber of the Cave rested exactly below *Praça do Comércio*. From there, four separate tunnels spread beneath the city. Overall, it was a structure of colossal dimensions provided with two separate roads — one for vehicles only and another for pedestrians. Many were the ways of accessing the main chamber: some simply crossed the *Augusta*’s arch portal like Perpetua and the kids had just done; others preferred to apparate there instantly; some, still, chose to use the floo network, emerging from the cavities in the cave’s walls with a *whoosh*.

From the thin gap between the carriage’s curtains, the teenagers bunched together to get a better look of the magical world which laid outside: street vendors were trying their best to catch the pedestrians’ attention with Glow Worms glass pendants or bird-singing feathery purses. Little witches and wizards accompanied by their parents passed by holding their fluffy puffskeins. Goblins rushed in their short legs to get to work, as owls flew in all directions carrying letters or bigger packages. Wizards mounted on brooms, carpets or sleds pulled by a shoal of winged sardines passed flying in high speed only a few centimeters from the top of the carriages. The sleds, in particular, caused the five kids to react with consecutive “*wows*”.

While they observed with amazement the movement beyond their carriage’s windows, the vehicle took a narrower passage east, leaving the busy chamber behind. That was the tunnel which lead to the *Alfama* wizarding market: a route accessible to the entire magical community all year long — even during holidays like Christmas or *Debarkation day* (when Vasco da Gama and his crew arrived back in Lisbon after their journey to India).

Three other tunnels were connected to the Cave’s main chamber: one leading to *The House of Spikes* — Ministry of Magic headquarters — also to the east; one northwest, to the national newspaper “O Escriba” headquarters; and lastly, one southwest conducting to an underwater passage popularly called “the lizard’s throat” — leading to the Portuguese wizarding prison, the island of Baalbur. While this last passage remained blocked and guarded for almost all year, the other two were accessible to employees carrying their credentials — whilst visitors would need to identify and submit their wands to registration at the security desk.

It didn’t take too long before their carriage left the undergrounds and started emerging at the surface again. According to Lady Perpetua, that meant they were nearly arriving at the market.

Though the sky on that day was heavy with clouds, there were a few rays of sunlight which now managed to pierce the coach's windows. Nuno could not understand how it was possible for a wizarding market to remain undetected by the Muggles, providing it was held at broad daylight. It took Perpetua a few minutes to explain to them how that location was made unplottable to Muggles a long time ago; how it could not be found on an ordinary map; how that kind of complex spells bore the same principle as the ones protecting the Regaleira. By the time she was done, the carriage had already turned into the market's main street: the *Rua das Três Marias Chorasas*.

Again, the sidewalk was infested with street vendors selling all kinds of magic thingamabobs. Behind them, a row of different shops and other establishments followed the street through all its length. As the horses slowed down their pace, Mrs. Perpetua lifted the curtains to point at them which building was what.

'See there? Behind that cauldrons' vendor? That's *The Alchemist's Workshop*, a store with all possible potion ingredients you can imagine... And right next to it you have the *Arraiolo Voador*, a shop for magic carpets... *Oh*, and look here, on the other side — that's the national bank, *Lusitania*... Looks like a fortress, right? And that building there, behind that truck selling beetroot tart pastries and chocolate sardine sticks — that's *Circe's Island*, a theater specialized in transfiguration shows...'

'Lady Perpetua, can we go outside to take a closer look?', asked Leonor.

Perpetua asked for the coachman to stop at the next parking spot he could find. The main street was too busy, so he had to enter one of the smaller crossing ones. After they disembarked, Perpetua guided them back to the main road. A few meters before they reached it, she showed them what she claimed to be a very popular hotel for wizards: *The Old Caravel* — though Nuno could not imagine why anyone would like to stay lodged in a ruined ship stranded in the middle of the street.

Back at the market's central axis, the group continued walking slowly from one shop to the next, with Perpetua still acting as a touristic guide.

'And here on your right, you have *Condão & Co.*, which is certainly the most traditional wandmaking house in Portugal. They are supposedly in the business since the Middle Ages... And here, on your left, you have *Sweep & Swoop*, a shop specialized in broomsticks.'

'Can we go inside, Mrs. Perpetua?!', they asked avidly.

'I don't see why not... Go on, I'm right behind you...'

They entered the shop. If there was something like a broomstick's paradise, that was it, thought Nuno. Different models of handmade brooms stood still above their heads, varying from national models, such as the *Besta Açoreana*, to the more expensive, imported ones, such as the Moontrimmer and the Silver Arrow. Quidditch team posters decorated the walls, causing an

enormous noise to echo all over the shop as each team tried to sing its own anthem louder than the next. Pennants hanged from the ceiling like a kaleidoscope of colors — the red and green from the Portuguese national quidditch team surely prevailed, but the white and blue from the regional *Braga Broomfleet* was also very present. Golden snitches flipped their wings incessantly across the shop, projecting a blinding glow every time the sunlight got reflected on their polished metallic surface. Quaffles and bludgers — held against their will — were exposed in showcases, along with a series of tools such as Tail-Twig clippers, broom compasses and small cans of polish. In the back of the shop, there was a section for selling quidditch-themed t-shirts, scarves, hats and all kinds of other accessories, not to mention custom made uniforms. Collectible figures of famous players filled the shelves next to copies of *Hélas, Je me suis Transfiguré Les Pieds*, *The Noble Sport of Warlocks*, *The Official Guide to the Quidditch World Cup*, and *Seeker Weekly*.

‘What are you getting, Prospero?’, asked Leonor after approaching him on the queue for the cashier.

‘This collectible figure of Augusto Bracaro, the Braga Broomfleet’s seeker. See how he’s waving at us?’, he pointed at the player’s miniature with a smile.

‘So *cool!*’, said Leonor. ‘I’d love to get a new broom... Mine is infested with termites... I tried everything, but it seems like a lost cause...’

‘So why don’t you get a new one?’, asked Prospero. ‘The *Besta Açoreana* is one of the best national models and a lot cheaper when compared to a Silver Arrow...’

‘Still, I don’t have enough nubias for that... But maybe next year...’, she said in a melancholic voice.

‘Sixteen nubias and five fidas, please’, said the lady at the cashier.

‘There you go’, said Prospero while handing the coins to the lady.

‘*Oh*, there you are!’, said Perpetua in relief. ‘Let’s move on, shall we?’

The group left Sweep & Swoop and continued their walk along the market. They passed still a few vendors with some peculiar merchandise displayed on carrying trays and pushing carts before reaching their destination: Kvasir’s — the busiest wizarding pub in Lisbon, according to Lady Perpetua.

‘Okay, listen: we are about to enter a very risky place’, she warned the kids. ‘It’s very easy to run into – *err* – undesirable acquaintances in this bar. So keep your voices down, alright?’

Kvasir’s was a dusty stone house squeezed in between of a library — *A Camoneana* — and a pet shop — *Morcegus*. The building hid behind a glorious *ombú* tree with monstrous roots. Hugo could have sworn he saw a human visage appear on one of the tree’s branches and look right at him.

The pub's façade was narrow enough to fit an entrance door on the ground floor, a panel composed by four *azulejos* on the first floor and one tiny window in the attic. Many cracks could be seen spread across the façade, and the roof seemed to have lost a considerable amount of tiles.

‘What’s that panel, Mrs. Perpetua?’ asked Mafalda.

‘That’s a reproduction from the page of an old manuscript which describes the legend of *Kvasir*’, she started to explain, ‘a Norse god killed a long time ago by two dwarves — Fjalar and Galar. According to their mythology, the blood of Kvasir mixed with honey resulted in what today we call mead.’

‘*Ewww!*’ was their reaction. ‘Is that what the people inside pay to drink? *Blood?*’, asked Nuno.

‘Well... I’m *pretty* sure that’s not how they make mead anymore...’, Perpetua answered hesitantly.

They walked towards the entrance — a wooden double door with decorated jambs closed the building. Carved on its lintel was the name “Kvasir’s”, ornate with golden lines. A metallic knob in the shape of a human hand with its palm turned down hanged from the center of the right panel.

‘Don’t touch that!’, Perpetua warned Hugo only seconds before he could touch the hand-shaped knob. ‘If you do, it will grab your hand and not let go’, she justified. Then she knocked on the door three times, moved Hugo aside and stood in front of the metallic hand, waiting.

The hand started to move. Each one of its fingers started to crack, making terrible creaky sounds from the rusty metal in the process. Then the hand turned its palm up, towards the spot where Perpetua was standing, and the young ones could see a bizarre eye in the center of the palm, opening its copper eyelids. It looked straight at Perpetua at first, and then it moved its reddish iris to take a quick scan on her surroundings, where the other five stood.

The door opened right afterwards and the hand went back to its resting position.

The interior matched with an impressive accuracy the outside’s sloppiness. Iron medieval chandeliers almost entirely covered in candle wax provided most of the room’s illumination — which wasn’t much really. Hanging sausages swung in the air every time a person accidentally hit them with their head. A giant purple toad rested motionless at the edge of the bar counter. Wizards and witches occupied long wooden benches, looking avidly engaged in their conversations, next to numerous half-empty mugs laying over their tables. Moving portraits of different sizes covered the stone walls leaving barely enough space for a nail to fit in between. It seemed like the people in those portraits moved from their frames to their neighbor’s to gather to drink. In an ironic sort of way, the people in the pictures reflected the behavior of the people in the pub: some sat quietly with their single goblets, isolated in their own frames. Others joined in a large number around the same table, laughing, singing and toasting nonstop. Some couples had enough to drink to start behaving

in a very indiscreet manner while others, instead, manifested their drunkenness by arguing madly. Finally, a few people had drunk so much, they were fallen over the floor unconscious.

‘Who is that little man behind the counter, Mrs. Perpetua?’, asked Mafalda.

‘That’s the barkeeper, the dwarf Galar’, she said.

‘Wasn’t that other dwarf’s name also *Galar*? The one who killed Kvasir?’, inquired Nuno.

‘It was...’, confirmed Perpetua absently. ‘Shall we take that table there?’, she asked already moving towards it.

They all followed her to a wooden table placed against the wall, only a few steps away from the counter, at the end of the barrel-vaulted room. The five young ones took their seats below the picture of a hooded witch.

‘Stay here. I’ll go order us six cherry mead mugs. *Oh*, and don’t talk to any strangers!’, warned Perpetua before going to the counter.

‘Seriously guys... Don’t you think they worry too much?’, whispered Nuno to his friends.

‘*They?*’, asked Mafalda.

‘Lady Perpetua and Mr. Monteiro, of course’, Nuno explained. ‘I mean, why would anyone care about where we are or what we’re doing?’

‘Because’, said Mafalda, ‘Mr. Monteiro is breaking the wizarding laws to ensure we get some proper education... If the Ministry would find out -’

‘Then why don’t we do something?!’, asked Nuno impatiently. ‘Instead of hiding like cowards?’

‘Don’t be silly, Nuno’, said Leonor, ‘We’re not even fully capable wizards and witches yet.’

‘Besides, what exactly do you propose we do? Go after the Crow ourselves? Where would we even start looking?’, interrogated Mafalda.

‘I know, I know... I’m just so tired of having to hide like a fugitive!’, Nuno unburdened himself as the others nodded, for they seem to know the feeling only too well.

‘Nuno, you have to trust Mr. Monteiro.’, Leonor said, trying to console him.

‘I feel so exhausted from all of it’, he continued, ‘and to top everything, we had to make a five-hours trip to come here, instead of just using the lift -’

‘*SHHHH!!!*’, Mafalda and Leonor were both ordering Nuno to keep quiet at the same time.

‘WHAT?’, he asked furiously.

‘You shouldn’t speak about the lif – about *that* in here!’, said Mafalda reproachfully.

‘Nobody’s listening... They’re too drunk’, said Nuno.

In the meantime, Mrs. Perpetua returned slowly, walking very carefully, trying to balance the three mugs she held against her chest. The dwarf Galar followed her carrying three more, though with an evident easiness.

‘Thanks, Galar!’, said Perpetua. ‘Put them here, please... That’s it, thank you.’ Nuno could have sworn he saw a grin drawn under the dwarf’s bushy beard before he returned to his post behind the bar counter.

The five teenagers exchanged disapproving glances which seemed to put an end to their argument.

‘Mrs. Perpetua?’

‘Yes, Leonor?’

They all took sips from their mugs.

‘Where is Mr. Galar from? Is he from Portugal?’

‘Actually, he’s from Iceland, Leonor. He came to Lisbon a long time ago.’

‘Bet it was too cold for him over there’, said Nuno giggling.

‘Well, nobody knows really why he left Iceland... He’s a private man, see... Doesn’t speak much’, explained Perpetua. ‘All I know is, wherever he goes, that ugly bullfrog goes with him’, she said whilst pointing at the giant purple toad on the counter.

‘And where does he live?’, asked Mafalda.

‘Right above us. He lives in the building’s attic...’

‘Does he have a family?’, Mafalda’s curiosity kept her making questions.

‘If he does, they’re all in Iceland’, said Perpetua, ‘for I’ve never seen him with anyone here.’

‘Not even other dwarves?’, now Hugo was asking.

‘Well...’, Perpetua lowered her voice, ‘dwarves, though much more civilized than giants, are not as... Sociable as us. They prefer to maintain the company of their own relatives, if at all...’

‘I’ve read there’s a huge dwarf colony here in Portugal’, mentioned Mafalda.

‘Indeed there is’, confirmed Perpetua, ‘Portugal is a very welcoming country to all magical beings who, elsewhere, might suffer a lot of prejudice. It used to be like that, anyway...’

‘...Since Lazarus Oldfox took the job of Minister of Magic’, continued Perpetua, ‘he and his comrades have managed to pass all sorts of nonsense in the legislature. For instance, their latest absurdity was to classify dwarves as *beasts*, not beings, therefore qualifying them as deprived of human intelligence — which is far from being true.’

‘But how does that affect their lives, really?’, inquired Nuno.

‘Well, Nuno, the thing is — and I bet all Jupiter’s moons that this is the reason behind Oldfox’s scheme — a beast cannot retain any personal property. Which means now the Ministry is free to confiscate their belongings.’

‘That’s rubbish!’, shouted Mafalda indignantly. Perpetua immediately threw her a “keep-it-quiet look”, for a few people around seemed to have noticed them.

‘Anyway...’, continued Hugo, looking stunned at Mafalda’s reaction. ‘How come Galar still owes this bar, then?’

‘This change of status happened only a few weeks ago... There’s a lot of paperwork to deal with before they can put it into action’, clarified Perpetua. ‘But believe me: sooner or later, the persecutions will start.’

‘They have already started, Lady Perpetua...’, said Prospero in a sorrowful tone of voice while looking around at his Muggleborn and Half-blood friends.

A mournful silence followed.

‘What is it, Lady Perpetua?’, Leonor asked, interrupting the melancholic mood of the table. She noticed Lady Perpetua continuously looking over her shoulder towards the bar counter.

‘*Shhh!* See that young man sitting at the bar?’, she whispered. ‘The one with the mustache and glasses’.

They all looked at the man’s direction and nodded.

‘I believe I know who he is’, Perpetua explained before quickly finishing her drink. ‘I’ll go fetch us more drinks’.

‘But we still haven’t finished -’, Nuno started saying, but Lady Perpetua had already got up and moved towards the counter, apparently not listening to a single word he said.

She took one of the higher seats in front of the counter, next to where the man was, and stayed quiet, listening to what the man was saying.

‘... And then, Galar, I found her there, laying lifeless on the floor, cold as ice...’, the man said to the dwarf in a very disturbed voice. He was clearly drunk, for he didn’t seem to notice how loud he was speaking. Neither did he notice Perpetua’s presence. Tears fell from his face, watering the counter’s wooden surface. He held a large mug on his hand, dropping considerable amounts of liquid every time he gesticulated with a bit more enthusiasm.

‘... One of my aunts was there too — she thought I was the one who did it... Can you believe it, Galar?! ME!’, the man continued, with Lady Perpetua listening closely. ‘... I would have never killed her, Galar... NEVER! She was my grandma and I loved her...’, tears fell compulsively while he spoke. ‘She was the only one who loved me as I am...’

‘Would you like another drink?’, asked Galar.

‘Yes, ple – *gup* – ease’, he answered, leaning his mug.

‘I always knew my aunts did not care for me’, the man kept talking, ‘... but to even suggest such an atrocious thing! Ho – *gup* – how could they?!’

‘I don’t know, Fernando... I don’t know...’, said Galar.

‘The – *gup* – they think it’s because of my spe – *gup* – special powers... They think I’m some out-of-control troll or some – *gup* – thing.’

‘Have you tried explaining it to them?’, the dwarf asked.

‘They won’t let me! Threw me out of the house even before the dirt covered my grandmother’s co – *gup* – ffin.’

‘But if the doctor said it was a heart attack... Why do they blame you?’

‘*Ohh no no no no no* – *gup* – that doctor is lying, Galar... I don’t know why, but he is. I saw her body with my own eyes – *gup*. And that was no heart attack... That was the work of a killing curse!’

‘How can you be so sure?’, asked Galar.

‘I saw it before... Those opened petrified eyes, the instant body rigidity — considering she couldn’t be dead for more than a few minutes... Those aren’t symptoms of natural causes, Galar... No... *Someone* took her life. I know it, even my stupid aunts know it — though they think that someone was me...’

‘Do you need something, Lady Perpetua?’, said Galar, now turning to Perpetua and revealing her presence to the young man, whose face also turned to face hers.

‘*Err*... Ye – yes! Yes, Galar, I’d like six other cherry mead mugs, please’, she replied nervously.

‘Sorry, Madam. Didn’t see you seating there...’, said the man, ‘let me introduce myself... My name is Fernando António Nogueira Pessoa. And you are?’

‘I’m Perpetua Augusta Carvalho Monteiro’, she said, offering her hand for him to kiss.

‘Pleased to meet you. From your name, I’m assuming you’re the wife of the acclaimed wizard António Augusto Carvalho Monteiro?’, Pessoa asked.

‘Indeed I am.’

‘Is your husband here with you? I’d love to meet him too... He is an inspiration for us, younger wizards... Specially during these times, when strange things are happening...’

‘I’m afraid he is not here, Mr. Pessoa’, said Perpetua.

‘*Oh*, well... I guess I’m not in the most presentable state for meeting anyone anyway... I apologize for the alcohol smell in my breath... And beforehand for anything indiscreet I might say.’

‘You have no reason to apologize, Sir. I’m afraid I’m the one who should apologize for overhearing your conversation... I’d be drinking my problems too if they were as bad as yours...’

‘Thank you, Madam’, Pessoa said while looking down at the mug on his hand, with an air of profound grief.

‘She was your grandmother, right? I mean... The person you lost...’, asked Perpetua, who seemed to want to keep him talking.

‘Yes. Greatest witch I’ve ever known.’ He sighed. ‘Greatest person, too.’

‘How did she go?’

‘She was murdered’, Pessoa said with an expression which quickly turned from sadness to anger.

‘Murdered?!’ Perpetua repeated with shock. ‘By who?’

‘I don’t know. Whomever they were, they fled before I could catch them, leaving no trace whatsoever.’

‘I’m sorry for you... And you were saying your aunts blame you for this awful crime? How come?’, Perpetua continued her inquiry.

‘My aunts are two old hags! They’ve always hated me as much as they hated my father — their own brother! They couldn’t forgive him for his success. He was once Editor-in-Chief for O Escriba, you see...’

‘Now I know who you remind me of!’, said Perpetua, ‘You are the son of Joaquim Pessoa!’

‘You knew my father?’

‘Of course! He and my husband were good friends! He used to bring your mother and you — you were only a baby, though — for dinners at our palace all the time!’

‘I can’t believe it! What a small world! Who would say I’d meet a friend of my father’s here at Kvasir’s!’, said Pessoa.

Perpetua smiled for a minute before focusing again on extracting every bit of information about Pessoa she could.

‘So, your aunts... They kicked you out of your grandmother’s house, is that so?’, she asked.

‘Yes...’, Pessoa’s first excitement for speaking about his father was gone as soon as Perpetua mentioned his aunts again.

‘Do you need a place to stay? You could come stay with us, if you like... I’m sure Monteiro would be more than happy to help the son of Joaquim.’

‘Thank you, Lady Perpetua, but I’m renting a small flat at the Carmo square for now... It’s not much, but it’s home...’

‘Are you sure?’, she insisted.

‘Yes, yes. I’d love to meet Mr. Monteiro sometime, though.’

‘That can be certainly arranged’, ensured Perpetua.

‘Here’s your drinks, Lady Perpetua’, interrupted Galar. ‘Do you need help to bring it to your table?’

‘Six cherry mead mugs... I dare say you have company?’, asked Pessoa.

‘Uh, yes... I brought some distant relatives to have a taste of Kvasir’s traditional cherry mead...’, explained Perpetua.

‘The best in town!’ , added Pessoa before taking another sip of his own drink.

‘Galar, could you take these to my table over there, please? I’d like to keep talking to the gentleman here’, said Perpetua.

Galar raised his eyebrows while looking at Perpetua, making it clear he found it very unusual that a lady like her would rather talk to a drunk than go rejoin her own family. In any case, he did as asked, moving towards the teenager’s table with their drinks — two of the mugs followed him, floating in mid-air.

‘So...’, Perpetua said looking back at Pessoa, ‘Why on Maugis’ name do your aunts think you are the one to blame for your grandmother’s murder?’

‘They think my powers are deadly dangerous. They also think I have no control of them’, he said.

‘Powers? What powers?’, Perpetua asked eagerly.

‘I can -’

‘Lady Perpetua!’, Galar interrupted once more, ‘I believe you should take the children and leave now’, he said urgently.

‘Why?’, Perpetua asked with a hint of annoyance in her voice.

‘Marisa Leão is about to come in.’

## Chapter Ten — Mermaid’s Song.

‘You have to go now, Perpetua’, repeated Galar anxiously. ‘She knows who you are. If she sees you with those kids, she’ll do the math...’

Perpetua looked back at the table with the five young students and horror struck her. If Marisa Leão walked through that entrance door now, she would recognize her in a heartbeat. For years she and her husband have been fighting the propagated lies of *O Escriba*, the newspaper for which Marisa worked as Senior Editor. Needless to say they were not exactly on Marisa’s good side.

‘Galar’, said Perpetua apprehensively. ‘What about him?!’, her eyes turned to Pessoa.

‘I’ll look after him, Lady Perpetua’, he ensured. ‘Don’t worry. Now call the children and come with me. You can sneak out through the back door.’

Perpetua did not have to be told twice. She ran towards their table, grabbing Mafalda’s arm tightly, who was sitting at the edge, closest to the counter.

‘We have to go *now*’, Perpetua whispered to them.

Perhaps the urgency on Perpetua’s expression had more of an effect on them than her words, for none of them dare question her command. They’ve always known Lady Perpetua to be a composed

woman, master of her own emotions. For the first time, however, she seemed truthfully shaken, her eyes wider than the usual; her breathing stronger and louder as if there wasn't enough oxygen in the air. Those symptoms required no further explanation — they knew at once there was a really serious reason behind it.

The six of them followed Galar hastily to the back of the bar, where he helped them out of the building through a dwarf-sized wooden door.

‘Galar, take this’, Perpetua said while detaching the diamond pin from her collar and placing it on Galar’s hands. ‘Give it to Pessoa. We’ll be able to know if he’s in danger.’

‘I will, Lady Perpetua’, he replied.

‘Be safe, my friend’, said Perpetua before hurrying to join the five teenagers on the alley behind the building.

They walked rapidly a few meters on the alley before a couple of horses emerged from the nearest corner, revealing their carriage right behind them. The teenagers seemed confused with the fact that the coach conveniently appeared in front of them when they most needed it, but were too agitated to ask any questions.

The driver helped them inside of the vehicle, and after each of them had taken a seat, they departed back to the Regaleira palace.

‘Mrs. Perpetua’, said Hugo after catching his breath; the imminent danger having passed. ‘What happened back there?’

Perpetua took a few seconds to compose herself and then started explaining the reason why they were forced to make such a quick escape.

‘*Ohhh*’, said Hugo as a sign of understanding. ‘From your behavior I imagined something like that must have happened...’

‘And Lady Perpetua’, said Leonor, ‘how did the coach driver know where to find us?’

‘Do you remember that diamond pin I used to wear at all times?’, said Perpetua. ‘The one I gave to Galar just before we left the pub?’

They nodded.

‘That is one of Monteiro’s father famous merchandises. Monteiro gave it to me a long time ago. It is called “the guardian angel” — each pin has a perfect replica, to which it emits a glowing red light when the person carrying it is in danger. Monteiro gave me one and kept the other so we’d know when the other is in need of help. The pin also provides the exact location of the replica — in case the person needs to be rescued.’

‘Wicked!’, said Nuno.

‘It’s very helpful indeed, Nuno’, said Perpetua. ‘Monteiro confided his pin to the coach driver when we left. That’s how he knew where to find us.’

‘And why did you give yours to Galar, Mrs. Perpetua?’, asked Leonor.

‘Because that young man I was talking to is the son of an old friend’, explained Perpetua. ‘I asked Galar to give him the pin, because I believe he might be in trouble.’

‘What kind of trouble?’, Hugo inquired.

‘His father — Joaquim Pessoa — used to run the wizarding paper during the 1890’s, before he was murdered — on what we believe was the Crow’s orders’, she said. ‘Monteiro helped catch the man who did it and gave the bad news to Joaquim’s wife personally after the tragedy... But she was too scared for her and her son to remain in Lisbon after that... She took her family and moved to North Africa and we never heard of them again. Monteiro kept sending letters, asking how they were, if they needed anything, but she never wrote back. I think she just wanted to forget all about that period in her life.’

‘But why did they kill Joaquim, Lady Perpetua?’, asked Mafalda.

‘Because Joaquim was not coping with them. He was convinced someone was behind the strange disappearances and “accidents” involving Muggles that were happening back then. He started publishing in the newspaper many theories about it. Some called him insane for doing that — spreading rumors on what they called a “once respectable gazette”. But he didn’t care. His intuition told him he was on the right track. And he was right: one day, when visiting a Muggle house which had been presumably smashed by a large tree — killing all inside — he found a bit of Floo powder left on the floor, next to the Muggle’s fireplace. There was no question then: a wizard had been at the house, for no Muggle in the world could have possessed Floo powder. From that point, he kept digging deeper and deeper, reuniting all piece of evidence he could find. Eventually, he discovered that a wizard who called himself “Crow” was the one orchestrating those attacks, along with a number of followers. He reported his findings in the paper and, progressively, more and more people started to see the logic behind his words. Monteiro was, of course, one of those people. That made the Crow furious — as you can imagine — for until then he had been able to remain in the shadows, fulfilling his schemes without any resistance from the Ministry. And even if those reports might have turned him angry, they also made him more reckless. In his thirst to kill the man responsible, he and his associates were not careful enough, and Monteiro — who held the job of Head Auror at the time — was able to track one of them down and have him arrested. Still, it was too late. Joaquim was killed and his son was left fatherless.’

‘And after his death’, continued Perpetua, ‘the paper fell in the hands of Scarabis and the subject was swept under the rug ever since.’

‘And Lady Perpetua’, said Leonor, ‘do you think they might go after Joaquim’s son?’

‘I don’t believe they would commit the same mistake and kill Fernando out of the blue... That would expose them too much. And even having control over the Ministry to a certain extent, they wouldn’t last long if the uncorrupted Aurors — like Emmanuel Gaspar, to name one — would raise together against them — it would make too much noise and the International Confederation would have to intervene.’

‘So, why don’t we expose them at once, Lady Perpetua?’, asked Nuno, whose voice started to sound more energetic again.

‘Because, Nuno, we still don’t know who they are, where they are, and how many they are’, explained Perpetua. ‘The Warlocks tried to persuade Gomorra with every possible deal so he would reveal their names at the time — or the very existence of such organization, as a matter of fact. That was before the Ministry fell in the hands of one of them, of course. But he wouldn’t tell us a word. He preferred a life sentence in Baalbur instead. And now that almost every powerful institution is contaminated with this nasty virus, it is very difficult to know whom to trust.’

‘I see’, said Nuno in a lower, more disappointed tone of voice while Mafalda stared at him with a “I-told-you-so” kind of look.

‘So... Why do you think Marisa Leão was at Kvasir’s, Mrs. Perpetua?’, asked Hugo.

‘Fernando said something about having “powers”. He also happened to tell me he believes his grandmother has been murdered recently... I still haven’t figured out how those things connect — I wish I had more time to hear what he meant when he spoke about those *powers*... Either way, Marisa was one of the top names in Joaquim’s list of the Crow’s possible allies. Maybe the Crow sent Marisa there to get some information... Maybe his grandmother — being one of the most talented witches I’ve ever had the pleasure to meet — was too much of an obstacle, so they thought it would be better to get rid of her...’

Perpetua stopped to realize the youngsters around her were growing more scared at her every word.

‘*Er*... But those are all assumptions, really... Now the best we can do is to get back to Regaleira so I can talk to Monteiro about it and make sure you’re safe again.’

\*

‘What is that dwarf still doing here?’, whispered Marisa Leão when spotting Galar standing behind the bar counter, drawing an expression of pure disgust.

‘I guess the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures hasn’t knocked on his door yet’, replied a young woman with puffy cheeks and wavy purple hair.

‘Ugh... Anyway... Do you care for a mug of cherry mead?’, asked Marisa.

‘Sure... But only one — we have to go back to the office later’, the woman said.

‘Not I... I’m done for the day’, said Marisa.

‘Privileges of being Senior Editor, *huh?*’, the woman said.

Marisa did not say anything in return, but instead gave her co-worker a crocodile smile and stood up from her seat, swinging her long, shiny ebony hair on her way to the bar counter.

‘Two mugs of cherry mead’, Marisa ordered to Galar, once she reached the counter.

Galar knew well Marisa’s opinion on his kind. He could smell contempt and repugnance being exhaled from her body like an acrid odor as soon as she approached him. He wondered why of all places she had ended up at his establishment, considering it must be very difficult for her to tolerate his very presence. Still, he wasn’t going to ask, so he filled the two mugs and laid the drinks in front of her, on the counter.

Oddly enough, she did not bring the second drink back to the person she had arrived with, but instead offered it to a young man sitting next to her at the counter.

‘What a coincidence!’, said Marisa. ‘It’s Pessoa, right?’

‘Yes, Lady Leão’, Pessoa replied.

‘Can I buy you another drink?’

‘Sorry, but no. I already had too many.’

‘That is a wise choice, I have to say — *Err*, excuse me’, she turned to speak to Galar, ‘would you be a good dwarf and take this to my friend over there? *Oh*, and tell her I won’t be joining her.’

Galar did not look pleased at the way she spoke to him, but did as asked anyway.

‘His name is Galar’, said Pessoa.

‘I’m sure it is’, she said inattentively.

‘So, what brings you here, Lady Leão?’, Pessoa inquired.

‘Please, call me Marisa’, she corrected him in a mellow voice. ‘I’m here to rescue my employee from a painful hangover tomorrow’, she said giggling.

Pessoa’s jaw fell on the counter in front of him. His expression revealed both shock and confusion. If he wasn’t convinced his drunk mind was playing a trick on him, he would swear Lady Marisa Leão — his very boss — was flirting with him.

‘What do you say if we go to my place, where we can relax and talk more... *privately?*’, she said in such an intimate tone, it almost sounded like a whisper. As she did, she also leaned her body closer to Pessoa’s, placing her hand on top of his.

Pessoa could not believe his ears. It was not possible that he was drunk to the point of imagining that whole situation; specially because it all sounded — and felt — very real. His boss' hand was undoubtedly holding his; her breath was like a gentle breeze blowing on his face. He looked around him to check if perhaps she wasn't talking to someone else, but nobody except for Galar — who was back at the bar counter — was standing close to them. He noticed Galar looked also shocked and confused, and as he stared at the dwarf hoping he could provide some clarification, he actually realized that Galar was indeed trying to murmur him something.

‘WHAT IS IT, *DWARF?*’, Marisa burst out.

Galar turned to face Marisa, startled, as she maintained a fixed, inquisitive gaze over him.

‘Nothing, Madam.’

His answer did not seem to satisfy her, but she did not insist; she was clever enough to perceive that her abrupt and undeniably rude interruption had shaken Pessoa, causing him to instantly question her charming figure, as well as her invitation.

‘I'll be going home, Mrs. Leão’, said Pessoa. ‘Enjoy the rest of your day.’

‘WAIT!’, she called out, grabbing Pessoa by the arm. ‘Fernando’, she returned to speak in a more smooth, seductive voice, ‘you don't know what you're missing -’

‘I'm fine on my own, thanks’, he said before releasing his arm from her grip. He then laid some fidas at the counter — which should pay for his many drinks — and started to walk away, when Marisa reached for his arm again.

‘I know who killed your grandmother!’, she said.

There was nothing she could have said at that moment which would have regained his interest except for those words. Indeed, as soon as she revealed knowing who his grandmother's murderer was, Pessoa's body froze at the spot. It took him a few seconds to digest the gravity of her words — *how could Marisa, of all people, know who killed my grandmother?*, he thought. It was a mystery to him how she could have anything to do with that matter. However, whether she was lying or not, he did not care; if there was the slightest chance she was telling the truth, he would listen to what she had to say.

‘What did you say?’, he asked intrigued.

‘I said I know who murdered your grandmother.’

‘What – Why – *How* could you possibly know that?!’, Pessoa inquired, looking more anxious than ever.

‘I saw the killer leaving your grandmother's house at the time you claim she died.’

‘What were you doing outside her house anyway?’

‘I was there because Mr. Scarabis had asked me to go get the review you were writing for that day’s evening edition of the paper.’

‘Why would Mr. Scarabis assign you — his Senior Editor — to do a task so far below your level? Why not send someone less important? Or even someone like Eneas, who’s a good friend of mine?’

‘Well... He didn’t want to send me at first, of course... But I... kind of... Asked him to’, said Marisa before throwing Pessoa a provocative look, while biting her lip.

‘You... Asked him to? Why?’, he asked bewildered.

‘Because... I always admired you, Pessoa... For quite some time I’ve been reading your columns and I really believe you have a... *Gift* with words... I’ve been waiting for a chance to get to know you better — to talk to you outside the office, so you won’t look at me as your boss, but rather as a... Friend. It seemed to me that was the perfect opportunity... I had no idea what I was about to walk into...’

Pessoa’s eyebrows came together as he frowned. Marisa’s tale was not very convincing, for after all the time he had been working at *O Escriba*, not once did he notice the smallest sign of affection coming from her. Actually, it was quite the opposite: on numerous occasions he had felt a look of haughty disdain being shot at him and his colleague Eneas every time Marisa crossed them at the office: never a “good morning”, a “how are you doing”, not one gesture of courtesy — only silence and arrogance.

Nevertheless, Pessoa could see there was at least one trace of truth in her speech — and that was impressive, considering he had been drinking for the past couple of hours and his senses were not as sharp as they could have been. Even so, he was very inclined into thinking that she actually knew who had killed his grandmother on that gray afternoon. If nothing, she knew it was murder, and that fact could only lead to two conclusions: either she believed him, even with everyone else telling he was a drunk fool who thought the world was conspiring against him. Or, indeed, she knew exactly what had happened. Pessoa didn’t think she’d believe him. Therefore, there was only one possible answer left.

‘Okay’, he said. ‘I believe you, Marisa. Now tell me what you know. Who killed my grandma?’

‘I cannot speak in here’, she explained, looking over her shoulders to check if they were being observed. ‘Somebody might be watching.’

‘So what do you suggest?’

‘Let’s go somewhere more private... We can go to my house... It’s not that far, and I know a way to get there which is impossible to track. There I’ll tell you everything I know.’

He did not like at all the idea of going anywhere with Marisa. Specially her own private home. Still, he didn't see how he had a choice — he had to know what had happened on the day he lost the one person in the world who had loved him in spite of everything.

'Fine', he conceded. 'Let's go, then.'

Marisa showed an expression of outmost satisfaction at the sound of those words — which made Pessoa doubt even more the prudence of his decision. However, it seemed like that was the only way of getting answers, and, after all, what could she really do to him? He was a big boy and he could defend himself. In the case she really did try something, he could still use his abilities to hypnotize her long enough to run away.

They took their belongings and prepared to leave. Marisa's co-worker was no longer seating where she had left her — she had surely left a few minutes before to get back to work. They walked in direction of the main entrance when Galar appeared in front of them, blocking their way.

'Mr. Pessoa!'

'Yes, Galar?'

Marisa looked more annoyed with the dwarf's presence than ever.

'You forgot your hat.'

'Oh, thank you, Galar.'

Pessoa took his black Fedora hat from Galar's hands, doffing it to him shortly before placing it on the top of his head. He then continued his path to the exit, accompanied by Marisa Leão, slowly vanishing from the dwarf's sight.

Little did he know, Galar had pinned the liner of his hat with the Guardian Angel.

## **Chapter Eleven — The Breach.**

Monteiro was sitting peacefully in Regaleira's gardens, enjoying a cup of *Haluk's very fine Turkish tea*, when a formidable brown-black eagle owl with orange red round eyes came swooping towards him like a flying stingray. It brought on its beak an official letter from the Portuguese Ministry of Magic, signed by the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement himself, Mr. Emmanuel Gaspar — an auror who Monteiro had trained himself during his days as Head Auror for the Ministry of Magic. In that letter, Gaspar summoned him for an inquiry that would take place the very next day at the Aurors' Office, located within the House of Spikes, at *Rua dos Bacalhoeiros*.

'Perpetua', called Monteiro when entering their private chambers, on the first floor of the palace. 'Look what just arrived for me from the Ministry.'

Perpetua walked towards her husband, still in her nightgown, grabbing the parchment from his hands.

‘...*Being investigated...*’, she muttered as she read the letter. ‘*On the grounds of suspicious illicit activities?* Monteiro, do you reckon they somehow found out what we’re doing here?’

‘How could they? This property is heavily protected with unplottability spells. Unless one of the children mentioned something when you were in the market?’

‘No, they did not. I was with them the whole time.’

‘Even when you were talking to Pessoa?’

‘Well, no... But even so, I was watching them and they never left the table once! Neither did any stranger come talk to them...’

‘This is very odd... However, I guess I should go...’

‘Be careful, my love. It might be a trap...’

The next day, Monteiro packed a suitcase with whatever he judged would be necessary and left for his inquiry at the Ministry of Magic. He walked to the bottom of the well, where he hit his walking stick once against the marbled floors. He stepped aside as the pavement slowly opened like a blooming flower, uncovering the dark tunnel which laid below the earth. From the said tunnel emerged an iron cubicle, which doors opened to Monteiro once it had stopped moving.

‘Hello, again, Sara’, Monteiro said to the robust woman inside the elevator. ‘Take me to Lisbon, please’.

The lift vanished again in the hole it had come from. Few minutes later, Monteiro was exiting the *Santa Justa* tower in the center of Lisbon and walking towards the arch of *Rua Augusta*.

He crossed the arch, appearing inside the Cork Cave main chamber soon afterwards. He then approached the security desk located at the entrance of the east alleyway conducting to the House of Spikes, where he knew he had to identify before continuing his path to the Ministry. He handed over his wand to the security wizard, who started analyzing it with a strange, brass, vibrating instrument. A strip of parchment came out of a slip in the base before the wizard tore it off and started reading it.

‘Twelve inches, made of pine, with a – Merlin’s beard! That’s a long name. A *Vi – Victoria a-ma-zo-ni-ca* petal core. Never heard of that before. Did you acquire this wand with a Portuguese wand maker?’

‘No, this one is Brazilian. I was born there... Actually, in Brazil, this type of core is quite common, a bit underrated, even... *Pink Boto*’s tooth core, now that’s singular.’

‘Fine. What is your business with the Ministry today, Sir?’

‘I’m here for a hearing. My name is Monteiro. I’m expected by Emmanuel Gaspar at three sharp.’

‘Very well. Here’s your wand back and your visitor’s badge. Please attach it to your chest now and return it here after your hearing is done. The House of Spikes is at the end of this tunnel, there’s no way of missing it. Do you wish to rent a broom, carpet or a flying sardine sled?’

‘It’s a short way, I rather walk, thanks.’

‘This way then, Sir.’

As the security guard had said, it was indeed not possible to miss the House of Spikes at the edge of the tunnel. First of all because it wasn’t at all far from the main chamber — Monteiro must have walked for ten minutes at best when he stopped in front of the solid, slightly suffocating structure that was the Ministry of Magic headquarters. Its façade was composed of numerous diamond-shaped, chalk-colored stones which earned the building its name. It was so tall, Monteiro could not see its roof from where he stood. That was an obvious fact, since the house prolonged itself for many meters above the city’s surface, therefore being partially visible to Muggles. This attribute, however, did not present any danger to the International Statute of Wizarding Secrecy, for the house was protected with complex spells, making it impossible for any non-magical being to intrude. Moreover, its available entrances were only accessible through the subterranean passage and its windows were enchanted to reflect the aboveground landscape.

Monteiro entered the building, moving directly towards the reception desk. There, a young and very thin woman, with a long pointy nose and bony cheeks, sat absently, flipping through a copy of the latest edition of *O Escriba*.

‘Good afternoon, Madam. I’m here for a hearing in the Auror’s office’, said Monteiro.

The woman didn’t seem to note his presence.

‘*Hem hem.*’

‘Just a minute’, said the woman in a clearly annoyed voice. ‘Let me just finish reading my horoscope.’

‘Madam, I have an appointment. Furthermore, you shouldn’t be reading that rubbish.’

The receptionist gazed at Monteiro over the pages of the paper, utterly miffed. ‘What do you want?’, she said.

‘Could you kindly point me the direction to the Auror’s office? Much has changed around here since last I remember...’

‘Auror’s office, *huh?* What did you do?’

‘Madam, with all due respect, I’m afraid that’s not your business.’

‘End of the corridor, to the right. Second door on your left’, she said coldly.

‘Thank you very much.’

Monteiro walked through what seemed to be an endless corridor. The more he walked, the further the corridor seemed to stretch itself in front of him. When he finally reached its end and turned right according to the information he had been given, he spotted the richly decorated wooden door on his left bearing the sign “Aurors’ office”.

He prepared to knock, but the door opened itself in front of him. He stepped inside and saw a distinctive-looking dwarf woman walking in his direction.

‘Good afternoon, Mr. Monteiro. Mr. Gaspar has been waiting for you. Follow me, if you please.’

He followed the tiny woman to the back of the room, passing by the cubicles of the other aurors, who were so concentrated on their tasks, they did not even glimpse at Monteiro.

In the back, another wooden door remained closed, exhibiting the engraved letters of “Head Auror’s Office”. The lady — who Monteiro could only assume was Gaspar’s secretary — opened the door carefully to sneak her head inside.

‘Excuse me, Mr. Gaspar, Mr. Monteiro is here’, she informed.

‘Good. Please let him in, Ophelia. Thanks’, Emmanuel instructed.

The woman pushed the remaining way for the door to open and indicated with her arm for Monteiro to walk inside. As he did, she closed the door behind him.

‘Take a seat, Mr. Monteiro’, Emmanuel said. Monteiro immediately sat in the armchair in front of the auror’s desk. He stared at Emmanuel for some time, expecting him to take his own seat and start the inquiry, but instead, the unusually tall, slim young man remained standing up and looking over some papers in his hands, ignoring Monteiro completely.

When the silence had been going for too long, Monteiro decided he should be the first to speak.

‘If you don’t mind me asking, Emmanuel, but how did you get to keep your secretary after the new dwarf legislation?’

‘My employees will stop working for me if or when I tell them to’, he replied severely. ‘But I believe, Mr. Monteiro, it is I who should ask the questions here.’

‘Very well. Then ask’, said Monteiro.

‘Mr. Monteiro, where were you in the morning of the thirteenth of December?’

‘I was meeting an old friend.’

‘May I ask the name of this friend?’

‘Naturally. His name’s Manuel.’

‘Manuel who?’

‘Manuel Bragança.’

‘You mean the Muggle king?’

‘The very same.’

‘For what purpose did you meet the Muggle king?’

‘As I said: he’s a close friend of mine. And I was friends with his father before him.’

‘Is there a particular reason for you to keep such a close friendship with the royal family?’

‘I guess I merely appreciate their company.’

‘*Hmm...* It surprises me that, being so keen of your friend’s company, you seemed to be in a bit of a haste last time you saw him.’

‘How do you know that?’

‘I’m the one who asks the questions, remember, Mr. Monteiro?’

‘Alright... Yes, I could not stay for long on that particular morning. Neither could he.’

‘And why was that?’

‘Well, I’m not sure if you follow the Muggle news, Mr. Gaspar, but after what happened last year, the king doesn’t feel so safe anymore.’

‘Then why would he agree to meet you in the first place? Why didn’t you meet in his palace, for example?’

‘We had brief affairs to discuss and I did not want to bother the king at his home.’

‘So now he is “the king” again?’

‘Mr. Monteiro’, Emmanuel continued before Monteiro could speak, ‘I believe you are familiar with the International Statute of Wizarding Secrecy of 1692?’

‘Indeed.’

‘And I also believe you are aware of the latest Ministry’s decree, which denies any Muggle authority, therefore keeping wizarding secrecy from even the Muggle chief of State?’

‘I am aware.’

‘So I am to understand that, during this friendship which you — yourself — qualified as “close”, you have never mentioned as much as a word to the Muggle king about the magic community?’

‘Never.’

‘You confirm that?’

‘I do.’

‘And -’

‘Listen, Emmanuel’, Monteiro interrupted. ‘I’ve known you since you were nothing but an intern at this place and I understand you are only doing your job — but let’s lay the cards on the table, shall we? Do you have any legitimate proof for dragging me here? Because if you don’t, it almost looks like you’re a...’

‘A what?’, asked Gaspar impatiently while Monteiro’s expression gained an evident flash of realization.

‘A... *Diversion.*’

Monteiro looked at Gaspar with the most terrified eyes the young man had ever seen on that face. In the next second, Monteiro got up from his chair in one quick movement, as if he was really a man with half his age. He took his walking stick — which seemed to be completely useless next to a man with such energy — and, despite Emmanuel’s loud protests, he walked away from the office and out of the room.

He continued walking firmly through the long corridor, when he noticed Gaspar’s screams behind him. Apparently, the auror was not going to give up easily. Monteiro’s resolute steps became quicker and quicker to the point he was running, with Emmanuel not far behind him. Without a second thought, Monteiro drew out his wand from his walking stick, like a knight draws out his sword, and stunned Emmanuel Gaspar in one perfect strike.

The sound of Gaspar’s body hitting the ground warned the other aurors in the room that something irregular was happening. As they walked through the corridor and became aware of the situation, they too started to run after Monteiro with their wands raised. They shot stunning spells at the distance, but Monteiro managed to deflect them all with a powerful Shield Charm. As he approached the end of the corridor, he could see the receptionist desk not far ahead. That was until a couple of security wizards blocked the corridor’s exit, pointing their wands at Monteiro. Before they could cast any incantation, however, a strong blast of wind left Monteiro’s wand, removing them from his way instantly.

Monteiro passed the frightened receptionist and turned towards the same gates he had crossed a while ago to enter the building. Being delayed by the aurors who kept attacking him, Monteiro did not reach the doors before the building itself would animate and the diamond-shaped stones from the façade would rearrange, blocking his passage. Then, with a single gesture of his wandless hand, he pushed the aurors away, making them fly across the corridor and land against the back wall. Soon afterwards, he pointed his wand to the obstructed gates and, by saying: ‘*Bombarda Maxima*’, he created a violent explosion which forcefully opened a gap in the wall for him to pass.

He exited the House of Spikes long enough to watch as a larger number of security wizards ran to the entrance, and apparated away from there, disappearing in the air.

\*

A cracking sound echoed across the Oak Forest as Monteiro reappeared. Though he had left the aurors from the Ministry behind, he was still running with an urgent conviction still visible in his eyes. He entered his property, crossing the surrounding vegetation, holding his wand with a tight grip.

As he got closer to the greenhouse, his heart began beating faster and stronger inside his chest, as if it could jump out through his mouth. The building was almost entirely burned. The air around it was still contaminated with the suffocating smell of smoke. Isadora's plants were nothing but ashes; and a great sadness started to fill Monteiro's chest as he realized that Cipulus, Ariadne, Ginger and the Basil Brothers were gone.

Nevertheless, he had no time to mourn; he had to know if the others were safe. He ran to the palace.

He could see the palace's front porch, when Manini appeared hurrying in his direction.

'Monteiro! You need to come with me! Something happened!'

'Wha – what happened, Luigi?! Is everybody okay?! Where is Perpetua?!'

Manini had tears in his eyes.

'You need to come with me now.'

He entered the hall behind Manini, climbing the stairs as fast as he could. When they arrived in the first floor, he could see the students gathered in the corridors, whispering to each other words he could not properly understand. He did not pay any attention to their faces, for the only thing he could look at was the opened door to his private chambers, where stood a small crowd of more students, accompanied by their professors and other members from the staff.

Most of them gave Monteiro a pitiful look; others had their heads turned down, as if they were staring at the carpet. Some, like Manini, couldn't contain the tears rolling down their faces.

Before he could cross the doors of his chambers, Isadora appeared — looking completely devastated — and gave Monteiro a warm embrace.

'Mo – Monteiro, th – there was a – a *breach*', she could barely end a sentence for constantly sniffing, due to her crying.

'He – he was here', she continued. 'He somehow got inside and – and – he put fire on the greenhouse – and – we saw the fire – and – we all ran there to put it out – we – we did – did not know...'

'Let him pass, Isadora', said Manini solemnly.

Monteiro entered the chamber next to Isadora and Luigi. Nuno, Leonor, Mafalda, Prospero and Hugo were crying not too far from the doors. Beatrice was also there, standing by the bed. Through her transparent, incorporeal form, Monteiro could see the body of a woman laying on the bed. He

could recognize the curls of her hair, the black attire, the round, resolute face. He could see the golden jewel on her ring finger — the same jewel he had offered her thirty-six years ago. He could see her eyelids gently veiling the limpid, cerulean eyes which would sparkle with life no more.

He could see the woman he had married — twice.

There she laid. One of the brightest witches he had ever known.

Never to stand again.

**Here ends the first part of this tale.**

## 8. Curriculum Vitae



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### EXPERIENCIA

NOV 2016 **PALESTRANTE** NA EXPOSIÇÃO "ESPAÇO, TEMPO E BANDA DESENHADA", REALIZADA DURANTE A 27ª EDIÇÃO DO "AMADORA BD" - LISBOA, PORTUGAL

JUN 2015 **ESTAGIARIA** NA ESCAVAÇÃO ARQUEOLÓGICA DO SÍTIO PRÓTO-HISTÓRICO DE "CUCIURPULA" - CORSEGA, FRANÇA

SET 2013 **COAUTORA** DO PAPER "LES FEMMES DE LA BIBLE: UM ESTUDO DE CASO DE PRÁTICAS INTERVENTIVAS DE RESTAURO",

APRESENTADO DURANTE A "XXXV JORNADA GIULIO MASSARANI DE INICIAÇÃO CIENTÍFICA" - RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASIL

NOV 2012 **VOLUNTARIA** NA ORGANIZAÇÃO DA "III JORNADA DE CONSERVAÇÃO E RESTAURO DA CASA DE RUI BARBOSA" - RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASIL

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