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Advisor: Mr. Varga



## THE WINTER ISSUE

### L.I.M.E Ceremony

By Justin Rodriguez, Photo by Kai Medina

### High School Quiz Show

By Sahil Malhotra

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Chelmsford High School's L.I.M.E Club is a group of dedicated and hardworking students that strengthens not only the high school, but the Chelmsford community as a whole. L.I.M.E. stands for more than Leadership In Motion Everywhere. It stands for a purpose and a cause meant to benefit the students and citizens of Chelmsford. L.I.M.E focuses on school-run events that can positively impact others, while teaching its members to be leaders in the community. The club is led by Mr. Bartos and Mrs. Leary, both faculty at Chelmsford High, as well as by the club's presidents, Tatum Hobby and Ruchi Sane.

L.I.M.E.'s most prominent event is the 24 Hour Relay. This event helps raise money for charities, such as the Lowell Wish Project, Chelmsford Food Pantry, Senior Center, Police Department, Live Smart, Alumni Association, Principle Fund, and Chelmsford Safe. The 24 Hour Relay takes place towards the end of May each year, and the checks are presented to the charities sometime in early December. It's an important tradition for Chelmsford High, L.I.M.E, and the organizations that benefit from the fundraising, as it shows all the devoted faculty and students involved with the club that they are making a difference in this great town.

The dedication displayed by L.I.M.E.'s members shows that anyone can make a difference in their community, and that even small acts or events can make all the difference in the world for those who need help.



Every year, WGBH showcases a series called The High School Quiz Show. The television program follows representatives from different high schools in the Massachusetts region as they compete against each other in a quiz bowl, essentially a statewide high school trivia competition. Topics can encompass almost anything, and range all the way from sports to science to art. At the end of each round, the team with the highest score wins, and proceeds further into the bracket. The show is currently on its 8th season, and for the past several years, Chelmsford High has taken part in this competition. Last year, we made it to the quarter finals.

CHS students Ben Carey, Peter Cassels, John Lambert, and Melanie Foo are representing our school in this season's competition. They have been preparing diligently with the event adviser, Mr. Vitalli, since late September, and are motivated and determined to give it their all.

The competition begins on Sunday January 22nd at the WGBH studio in Boston, where everything will be filmed. Any CHS student who would like to come show their support for this year's contestants are more than welcome to attend the filming of the competition.

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**Musings from the Editor**

We've almost made it to midyears! Our half-year courses are wrapping up, we have projects to complete, and we're up to our ears in study material. It seems that next semester is so close... and yet, so far. Keep your eyes on the horizon; believe it or not, we *will* make it through the next week, and we have a fresh start waiting for us on the other side of all these tests.

To the freshmen- midyear exams aren't bad. You'll be fine.

To the seniors- midyear exams still count! Don't start slacking now.

And to everyone- well done, CHS, we're halfway there! Keep it up!

--Bethany Ward  
Editor in Chief

**Welcome to Whittier, Dean MacIsaac**

By Julia Blair

John MacIsaac was first introduced to Chelmsford High when he attended back in 1997. He graduated in 2001, and knew he wanted to have a career with teaching. Dean MacIsaac has spent most of his career as a middle school teacher, so being a dean is something new for him.

As dean, Mr. MacIsaac has discovered many things about Chelmsford High School. First, he noticed that, while the grades at CHS haven't changed much over the years, CHS students have an abundance of team spirit and are proud of their town. He's noticed that reflective teaching (a method of consciously mending and modifying one's teaching), in combination with the incredibly caring teachers, seems to have the biggest positive impact on our students. However, he thinks we could improve CHS even more by adding more clubs and upgrading the physical education department.

As a new member of the Chelmsford High faculty, and more specifically, as a dean, he focuses on data collection, tardiness and attendance, and of course, helping students when needed. He's learned the ropes from the other deans (Mr. Joshua Blagg and Dr. Robert Lyons), and he enjoys interacting with the students and faculty most at Chelmsford High and says he has settled in comfortably.

We wish him all the luck in this year and many more to come.

***Into The Woods***

By Sonya Voloboi

After months of rigorous rehearsals, the CHS Theatre Guild proudly performed *Into the Woods* from December 8<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. The musical presented a unique concoction of everyone's favorite childhood fairy tales, and explored the dark twists and turns of the character's lives after happily ever after.

The story begins with a childless baker and his wife, who encounter other storybook characters whose own personal struggles lead them into the woods. As the stories of Little Red, Cinderella, and Jack and the Beanstalk fuse together, the characters are forced to make some difficult decisions in order to fulfill their wishes.

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## PLUS Block or Prison?

By Hetil Patel

Imagine. It's near the end of the term and you need to earn those few extra points to boost your grade. Perhaps you need to make up a test or quiz, finish a lab for science, or even just turn in an assignment for a class. What if I were to tell you that you have 30 minutes in the middle of the school day to catch up on the work you've missed? This is what we all know as PLUS block. It sounds like an awesome time to finish up any homework or assignments that you missed—right?

The snag in this plan is that you aren't permitted to leave your assigned classroom. You cannot exit the classroom unless you have to use the restroom or get a drink of water. This is totally ludicrous. It feels like we're being taunted. You are presented with time for rejuvenation, the time to complete extra tasks, but you are confined to your classroom.

PLUS block supposedly stands for: Prepare, Learn, Understand, and Study. The students are supposed to interact with each other and help their fellow classmates with their work. This is not at all what happens, as students are so consumed in their own activities that they have no time to interact. The students end up using their phones to surf social media or to play games. PLUS block was initially created to seek help and complete task that's you couldn't fulfill when you were home, but has instead become time to stare mindlessly at a screen or goof off with friends.

I personally am involved in a sport that begins right after school ends. Since sports and clubs usually consume a great portion of the afternoon, students are often unable to seek extra help after school, as this is the same time teachers remain in their classrooms to help

students. The kids who are involved in sports or clubs are at a disadvantage. PLUS block is the most efficient way for these students, who are unable to seek help after school, to get the extra practice or attention they need. Unfortunately, they aren't permitted to leave their assigned classroom.

This is ridiculous. One could argue, well, why don't the students just come into school early to seek help? This is because there is no bus that can take the students to school earlier. Most high schoolers can't drive, and most of the ones who can still don't have their own car. This makes it merely impossible to commute during the mornings. Coming in early for help is impractical or impossible for many students.

In addition, if a group of students have a group assignment that they need to finish, but are unable to meet up outside of school, they could (in theory) finish up during PLUS block! But, once again, they are confined to their classrooms, unable to meet and be productive with their time.

On the other hand, while leaving PLUS block would be a positive thing, some students may use this privilege for negative purposes. Some might fabricate an excuse to leave PLUS block, and instead just socialize with their friends. This would be a negative aspect, but it can easily be solved by having written notes from teachers being mandatory. The PLUS block teacher could also call the teacher the students wants to visit, to let them know ahead of time.

We should permit students to leave their classrooms and visit teachers for extra help during PLUS. It's undoubtedly the most logical time; students are already in school, so they don't need to find a way to commute, and their teachers will definitely be in their classrooms, which they often vacate shortly after school ends and are late to during FLEX block. It just makes sense.

### *Chocolate-Hazelnut Diamonds* by Fiona O'Hearne

My mom makes these scrumptious cookies around Christmas time. It's a buttery cookie dough, with a layer of tempered chocolate over it, and roughly chopped hazelnuts on top. You can also use almonds instead, and the Diamonds come out just as wonderful. If you don't have superfine sugar, you can take a cup of granulated sugar, blitz it in the food processor for 30 seconds, and measure out the  $\frac{3}{4}$  you need.

#### **Ingredients (makes 50 cookie)**

**2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups** all-purpose (normal) flour

**$\frac{3}{4}$  cup** superfine sugar

**$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon** salt

**16 tablespoons (2 sticks)** unsalted butter, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch pieces and softened

**2 tablespoons** cream cheese, softened

**2 teaspoons** vanilla extract

**1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups** semisweet chocolate

**1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups** hazelnuts, toasted and chopped fine

(Recipe continues on page 5)

## The Value of Positivity

By Hannah Kunze

As I've gotten older, I've come to realize that I live in an increasingly pessimistic world. Every year brings with it more negativity, from friends, teachers, coworkers, family, even the random strangers who scowl at me from across the street as I walk past. And instead of putting in the effort to find that hidden source of happiness, most people let the stress and pressure overcome them, killing their positivity with it. And it shows. It's written all over their faces - the dull, tired eyes, the sneer that's replaced the old grin. I get it, staying positive all the time isn't easy. But people hardly try anymore. The sullen attitudes are resulting in an overly negative atmosphere that isn't healthy for the mind or the body. How can you possibly get anything out of school or work when all you can think about is how much you want to be home? How can you be seen as a good friend if all you do is complain to your peers? Positivity is the key to being happy, as well as to making others happy.

Ever since I was little, I've always tried to keep a smile on my face and an open outlook towards the world and the people in it. I've grown up with a desire to see the positive in everything. But actually staying positive has been a struggle for me, as it is for so many others. Gradually I realized the key was to look on the bright side of things. The important word there being learned. I hadn't always been able to do this. It took a long time before I realized that being pessimistic wasn't doing me any good. I took a step back and really thought about the benefits of dwelling on the negatives. I couldn't think of one. I promised myself I would change, and even though it's been hard at times, it has been one of the most valuable life lessons I've learned in my sixteen short years of existence.

It's made me an overall happier person, and it's made it easier not to let stress get to me like it used to. Concentrating on the negatives of a situation will only make a problem appear worse. However, when you always try to look for that silver lining, even if it's the smallest detail, I can guarantee that your whole outlook on life will change for the better.

Another, even more difficult change, is to learn to care less about the insignificant things. It's incredibly important. When you stop living for others and start living for yourself, you will ultimately make both parties happy- you're happy to be yourself, and the people who surround you are happy to have your positive influence on their lives. In the long run, if you do what makes you happy, you automatically begin becoming a more positive, likeable person.

The value of positivity in daily life is tragically underrated. Not only can it make you more happy and amiable, but being positive can make a huge difference for others, too. It adds value and depth to friendships. A friendship is based off of mutual happiness and affection for another person. Nobody hangs out with people who make them upset; people seek friendships in which the other person lifts them up. Positivity and respect are the foundation of friendship, but being positive can make a difference in the life of a stranger as well. Instead of scowling at the next person who walks by you on the street and frowns, offer a smile instead. What good will it do you to sneer back?

An easy change to work towards being a more positive person is to stop bragging about your negativity, and to stop speaking ill of others. Though this should go without saying, I've encountered many people who constantly verbalize their spitefulness, pettiness, or ongoing grudges against other people, in the

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## The Value of Positivity

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hopes that it will make them appear justified in their frustration and that it will bring people to their side of the issue. Oftentimes, however, it does the exact opposite. These qualities and habits make others want to avoid even a friendly relationship with these people. Instead, most people choose to spend time with other, happier people that will brighten their day, instead of rain on it by trash-talking. The significance of positivity in day to day life is rarely acknowledged, but increasingly important.

To many people, this probably seems cliché. Oh look, another article about staying positive during difficult times, I've heard it all before. That's not the point I'm trying to make. I know from experience that it's hard to be positive when you're surrounded by negativity on a daily basis. And a change isn't going to happen overnight, or by itself. It requires effort, which many people refuse to expend. Genuinely happy, positive people can be hard to find. But when a happy soul is discovered, people tend to latch on to that person, and soak up the positivity that they carry with them. Imagine if more people tried harder to be less negative, and put in more effort to become a happy, loving soul. School and work would be so much nicer to go to everyday, tasks would be made easier, parties and social events would be more fun. The whole atmosphere of the world would feel different, better, and happier. It would definitely be a wonderful, welcomed change of pace.

Though it may be difficult to attain, being positive alters life in so many ways. People see you as a kinder, more personable being who brightens up their days. You learn how to get through life's difficulties with a genuine smile on your face. Choosing to find the light in every situation instead of focusing on the negativity makes it easier to live in the moment and stop wishing for the final bell to ring, or for the next vacation. Positivity is what makes the world a wonderful place to live in.

## High School Quiz Show

(continued from page 1)

Tickets are free and can be obtained via the link below. The event will also be televised on WGBH, starting on February 4th.



There is a lot of weight riding on the shoulders for this year's contestants, among which include bragging rights for their school if they win. Let's hope for the best and wish the best of luck to this year's CHS representatives in the High School Quiz Bowl.

[http://www.wgbh.org/support/hsqs\\_day2\\_1030.cfm](http://www.wgbh.org/support/hsqs_day2_1030.cfm)

## Chocolate-Hazelnut Diamonds Recipe (continued)

Adjust an oven rack to the lowest-middle position and heat the oven to 375 degrees. Whisk the flour, sugar, and salt together in a large bowl. Beat the butter into the flour mixture, one piece at a time, using an electric mixer on medium low speed. Then continue to beat the mixture until it looks less crumbly and slightly wet, about 1-2 minutes. Beat in the cream cheese and vanilla until the dough just begins to form large clumps, about 30 seconds.

Press the dough in an even layer into a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet. Bake the cookies until they are light golden brown, or for about 20 minutes.

Immediately after removing the baking sheet from the oven, sprinkle evenly with the chocolate chips and let stand until melted, about 3 minutes. Using an offset spatula, spread the chocolate in an even layer, then sprinkle evenly with the chopped hazelnuts.

Cool on a wire rack until just warm, or for 15 to 20 minutes. Using a pizza cutter, cut into 1 1/2 inch diamonds. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and cool completely.

*Into the Woods* (continued from page 2)

During their time in the woods the characters undergo some drastic changes. The baker decides to sacrifice his morality for a chance at fatherhood, and steals, lies, and tricks the other characters into giving him the items necessary to reverse the curse of infertility a witch had placed on his family. Little Red now wears a cape made out of the slayed wolf's fur and is armed with a knife, Cinderella and Rapunzel contemplate their relationships with their respective Prince Charmings, and Jack goes from being a poor farmer to a rich man, using a giant beanstalk to climb to a realm of giants in the sky and steal from them.

By the time Act Two rolls around all the characters are living in their own happily ever afters, but are all somehow discontent. Cinderella is getting bored of Prince Charming, the baker and his wife are having relationship issues (despite the arrival of their baby boy), and Jack misses his kingdom in the sky.

Their struggles are magnified when a giant, enraged by Jack's murder of her husband, descends from the clouds to raid the kingdom and wreak havoc on all. As the group tries to assign blame and come up with a plan, Jack's mother is killed, Rapunzel is trampled, and the Baker's wife is killed. The Giantess, too, is eventually killed with the assistance of Cinderella's birds, which peck out her eyes. In the end, the survivors resolve to band together and rebuild their lives together. The characters join together to present a final message: we must all venture into the woods and pursue our dreams, despite the challenges and fears they present.

Overall, the theatre guild's execution of *Into the Woods* was stellar. Despite some issues with the microphones in the Saturday performance, the actors still managed to put on a memorable show. The costumes were detailed and clever, and the set, with its fairy-tale themed decorations, set the perfect mood for the show. *Into the Woods* served as a reminder that life rarely ends in a happily ever after, but that despite the struggles, happiness is still out there- even if it's not in the form we initially expected.

## The Santa Claus Myth

By Artem Fischer

While tucking little Tommy into bed, he said to me, "Hey Dad? Can you tell me the story of Santa Claus?" I knew I had to tell him, because he probably wouldn't go to bed unless I did. I finished tucking him in and pulled up a chair to sit in. I said to him, "Let's go back to where it all began. The story of Santa Claus is quite magnificent. It all started a long time ago when..."

Hundreds of years ago, there lived a lonely old man at the edge of a small village. Nobody knew him that well. All they knew is that his wife died three years back, and he stayed in his house for the majority of his time. He was very rude and sad, according to a passerby. He would yell at anyone who came near his house. When it came around to Christmas, he would never come to the village Christmas gathering. He never had any Christmas spirit. That all changed in the winter of 1883. A man by the name of Noah Macallister stopped at his house and asked if he wanted to buy cookies to support the village. He opened the door and yelled at the man, but Noah was very stubborn, and wouldn't leave the old man's front steps. After a very long time, the old man opened the door and asked in a rational tone, "What in Sam Hill do you want?" Noah replied that he was with the town's helping hands committee, and that he wanted to sell cookies in an effort to raise money for the town. The old man replied politely, "No."

After an awkward period of five or so minutes, the old man asked Noah if he wanted to come into his house. The young man graciously accepted. Once in the old man's house, he introduced himself. The man said that his name was Jonathan Claus and said that he had a wife with the name of Rebecca Claus. Out of curiosity, Noah

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asked Jonathan why his last name was Claus. He said that his parents gave him the name because it has relevance to his future. They told him that when they died, he would be given a great power. Well, his parents passed away 40 years ago, and all that had happened to him was that his wife followed suit. Mr. Claus eventually came to the conclusion that his parents just wanted to make him feel special. Noah asked Mr. Claus if they left him anything, and surprisingly he said yes, but that it was just an old Christmas card from many years before. Eagerly, Noah asked if he could take a look at it. Mr. Claus told him to follow him down into the basement to retrieve it. It took about 5 minutes to rummage around and find the card. When he finally found the letter he handed it over to Noah. Carefully yet swiftly, Noah opened the envelope. He pulled out the card and read it aloud. The card contained the following message:

*Dear Jonathan,  
The power is death.  
Love,  
Mom and Dad*

Noah was mystified as to what the message could have meant. He asked Mr. Claus if he had any idea. He wasn't sure, but suggested that perhaps, in order to possess the power, he had to die.

Secretly, Mr. Claus knew what the card meant, but he just didn't want to accept it. Noah thanked the old man for his troubles and hospitality, and left, hoping that the next time they met, Mr. Claus would be a bit happier.

A year had passed since Noah had been to Jonathan Claus's house. He was going back to see if he had changed to be nicer, loving, caring, positive, and welcoming. As he approached Mr. Claus's house, he noticed a huge change. The first of which being the array of Christmas decorations spread throughout the yard. The second was that there was a huge line of children outside his house. The last thing he noticed was a big sign hanging from the door. The sign read as follows: *Santa Claus loves everyone! Come and meet the happiest man on earth, Jonathan Claus!*

Noah approached the house and walked right through the front door. There were people talking and laughing all throughout the house. There was food set neatly on tables spread throughout the house. Most of the commotion was in the living room. As Noah turned the corner into the living room, he couldn't help himself from laughing. Seated in the center of the living room there was a bright red velvet chair. On that chair sat a big man in a bright red velvet suit. He looked closer at the man, and saw that it was indeed the same Mr. Claus that he had met last year.

Upon seeing Noah, Mr. Claus slowly got up out of his chair and walked over to give him a firm handshake. Noah and *Santa Claus*, as Mr. Claus told him to call him, talked for a minute or so, but soon enough, Santa had to go back to work. Noah socialized, ate, and then left. As Noah was walking away, he feared this would be last he would see of Mr. Claus. As it turned out, Noah was right yet again. On December 7, 1884, Jonathan Claus passed away. His house was engulfed in flames in the middle of the night. The cause of the fire is still unknown to this day.

It is said that when he died, his spirit flew up to the North Pole, where he remains, and that he delivers his gifts to good little boys and girls on the night before Christmas, while everyone is fast asleep. Nobody knows how he delivers those gifts, but people throughout the years have claimed to see a man in a bright red velvet sleigh, pulled by eight tiny reindeer, on December 24. Noah's great-great-great-grandson claims that, flying in a sleigh pulled by reindeer, is a man by the name of Jonathan Claus. Noah Macalister died in the year of 1892 from a heart attack. It is said that since then, Noah has helped Mr. Claus, his spirit flying to the North Pole to help his friend.

"...And never be a bad little boy, Tommy. The boys and girls who are naughty don't get gifts from Santa, but rather get coal, from Krampus the devil Santa. Now, Krampus's story also began a long time ago, when..." I looked down at little Tommy's bed, and saw that he was fast asleep. The story of Krampus, my son, is a story for another time.



I was just starting in on a tale about how Mr. Gertend became a ninja (how else does he always catch me when I'm making mischief?), when I saw one of the bushes in Mrs. Henley's yard twitch. I stopped right there in the middle of the street and looked at the bush, but it was completely still. I kept walking, but then it started shaking again. So, having nothing better to do, and being a curious child, I crept closer to investigate. I was expecting to find a stray cat or a wild rabbit. Instead, I saw a pair of green eyes, gazing out at me from the branches of the bush. And they weren't just any green, they were the most vibrant, beautiful green I had ever seen, the exact color of the Atlantic Ocean. Then, those beautiful eyes screwed themselves up into little jade slits, and a pale foot kicked out, knocking me into the bush. I somehow managed to fall forward, tackling the owner of the magnificent eyes to the ground. I found myself gazing into those sea green eyes, which happened to be set in an equally stunning face. He had high cheekbones and a face shaped a bit like a diamond (well...not a literal diamond, but his chin did come to a pleasantly graceful point). He had long, straight blond hair that fanned out around his head like a glowing halo, and there were glossy leaves twirled into his ruffled hair. Somehow, they made him even handsomer....and more unusual. For a second, I lay there, just staring at this strange boy while he stared back at me.

I sputtered out an apology. "I-I-I'm sorry for falling on you."

His eyes expanded into perfect green discs, but he stayed completely silent. What did he want from me? He had tripped me, and by all rights, he should be the one apologizing. My eyes narrowed at this injustice, and I added on to my earlier statement.

"However, in all fairness, you did trip me."

Then, he did something I hadn't expected. He laughed! His mouth spread into an adorable crooked smile as he looked up at me, his eyes sparkling. I really should have let it go and just returned his smile, but I was a stubborn child. All right I still am a stubborn child. Anyway, I countered his smile with a dark frown. I growled at him, lowering my face until our noses touched.

"Stop laughing at me. That's incredibly rude you know."

His laughter dropped off, and my anger flew away with the summer breeze. He gazed into my face, methodically inspecting my every freckle, as if he was searching for something, for an explanation. I held my breath, my curiosity taking over. His eyes rose to mine, holding me in place.

"Could you please put your hair behind your ears for me?"

My face screwed up in confusion. Out of all the things to ask me, he chooses "Could you please put your hair behind your ears?" Why not, "Could you please get off of me," or "Who are you," or even "Do you come here often?"

The only thing I could think to say was, "Why?"

He tried to shrug, but I was pinning his shoulders to the ground. "No particular reason."

I glared down at him, not at all convinced by his feeble explanation. "Then why do you care?"

He sighed, and I felt his chest sink beneath me. "I'm just trying to figure something out."

What exactly could he learn from me pushing my hair behind my ears? "Perhaps I would feel better if you told me your name. I don't really know anything about you," I replied, still eyeing him carefully.

He nodded. "Fair enough." He gently pushed me off of him and rolled to a sitting position. I was mildly embarrassed, seeing as I had forgotten that I hadn't, as my mother would say, 'removed myself from his person' after tackling him. I sat up, facing him inside the warm dome of the large bush. His eyes centered on me, and he began speaking. "My name is Luca Séduire, and I am thirteen years of age. I am also, as you may have guessed," a quick smile flickered across his face, gone in an instant. "French."

I had not guessed that, but it did make sense. He had a peculiar, charming turn of phrase. And while I wished I knew more about him, at least I could now put a name to this mysterious boy. I rolled it around in my head, trying out the feel of it. *Luca Séduire. Have you met my friend Luca? It's a funny story really. He was hiding in a bush on my street, and he tripped me when I stared at his eyes, so I ended up lying on top of him in a bush. You know, like you do.*

The peculiarity of talking to a strange French boy, in a bush, who I had just tackled, hit me then, and I almost burst out laughing. I was able to restrain it to just an answering smile. “Jamie Flitz, eleven years old.”

I thought I saw a flash of surprise go over his face, but it was gone in a second, replaced by his neutral expression. “Well Jamie, I’m very pleased to make your acquaintance. Now that the formalities are out of the way, can we get down to business?”

I bit my lip, wondering if this was such a good idea, but my stubbornness won out (as it often does), and I nodded decisively at Luca. “Of course.”

He eyed the large space between us, his eyes flicking back to me.

“You’re going to have to come a bit closer.”

I scooted the tiniest smidge towards him. He sighed, chuckling softly under his breath. “I swear, it’s like you think I’m going to stab you or something.”

Seeing how my eyes suddenly grew very wide, he tacked on to his statement, “I’m not, of course.”

Slowly, I slid closer, until our knees almost touched.

He smiled, “Thank you. Now, can you put your hair behind your ears for me Jamie?”

I hesitated at first, but then I brought my hand up, pushing away my hair. He only frowned, his brow darkening.

“Could you tilt your head up, and turn it from side to side please?”

I did as he said, pondering what he was looking for. He shook his head sharply, his face growing even gloomier.

“And your teeth? Would you allow me to see those as well?”

I pulled my lips away from my teeth, seriously doubting the character of the boy seated across from me.

“Your hands, perhaps?”

I brought up my hands, turning them slowly and spreading each finger. He absentmindedly motioned for me to drop my hands. His inspection was complete, but he didn’t appear to have found what he was looking for. He mumbled to himself, counting off on his fingers. He kept shaking his head, growing more and more frustrated. I shifted my position, looking at him curiously. His head rose up, and his troubled eyes met mine.

“You don’t have wings, do you?” His tone was hopeful, wheedling, even.

“Not last I checked. Why?”

He ran a hand through his pale silky hair, dislodging several leaves which swirled to the grassy ground.

“Because you can see me! And I don’t know why.”

I frowned. “Is that unusual?”

He nodded quickly. “Ighly! No one can see me, unless I choose to be seen! ‘Owevah, you can some’ow see me, yet you do not seem to be any sort of creature that could detect me when I am invisible.” His accent had grown with his agitation, as well as the amount of hand gestures he used. He raised his hand to rub his chin.

“Ça, Je ne peux pas comprendre.” My face screwed up, trying to decipher what he had said. Realizing his mistake, his eyes widened and his hand flew out in front of him. “Pardon me, Jamie, I lapsed into French.” He winked at me, smiling his crooked smile. “It’s the language of my family, and my ‘ome.”

I blinked rapidly, suddenly very out of sorts. “I-It’s okay, Luca. Don’t worry about it.” My hair had escaped, so I once again pushed it behind my ears, trying to regain order. “What do you mean by ‘no one can see you’?”

“Precisely what I said! No ‘umans can see me unless I wish to be visible. My family, and others like them, can see me, as can some magical and supernatural creatures, but they are easy to detect.”

Seeing how my eyes grew wide at the mention of magical and supernatural beings, Luca nodded, smiling. “Oui, Jamie, they are out there.”

And so, I met my best friend, learned about other realms, and was told that I was, for some reason, gifted with the sight, all in one day.

It only gets stranger from here, trust me.