

Superstition. Society's accepted paranoia. Knocking on wood, certain patterns, not walking underneath a ladder or crossing a black cat. These superstitions have never done anything to protect or help the user yet they've engrained themselves into society. But superstitions didn't appear overnight. Whether it's common sense not to open an umbrella indoors or trying to avoid patterns of threes, Archer never really believed in those things.

Growing up, it seemed like luck and fate had never truly affected Archer. No matter which superstition he broke, the gods of luck never struck him down. He never truly questioned it. Family members and friends all had their little personal beliefs and ways, hoping for luck or to prevent some action. It seemed so silly to him, how the little paranoia could entirely change someone's thought process.

A gust of wind blew through his black curly hair as he sighed, readjusting a curl that fell in front of his face. His favorite green and white hoodie clashed with the warm tones around him, his dark skin standing out against the red and orange leaves in the trees and scattered against the ground.

Archer huffed as his breath condensed in the crisp autumn air. The crunch of leaves underfoot and the occasional sound of cars driving by were the only sounds that followed him. Usually, his walks home would be much louder and have a happier tone than this quiet walk. One month ago, his old friend group had asked him if he wanted to go on a quick adventure to a supposedly haunted manor, trying to lure him in with pizza and his curiosity. Archer declined due to a test the next day but he promised to go on the next one. Now, they were gone.

Jun. Miss. Marsh. All three of them just dropped off the face of the earth. The town was set ablaze with the disappearance of rumors and stories thrown all around the small town. A serial killer, a cult sacrifice, murder, all different cards thrown around the table, and he was smack dab in the middle. The school became the hotbed of rumors ranging from mundane to evil. The investigation went on for two weeks before something came in. A note. The note said that they were all fine and were going on a road trip.

The rumors began to die down as police and the town's interest faded. While there will still call for an investigation, there was little the sheriff's office could do with very few leads. So, the trio of kids that were 'missing' were slowly forgotten by the town. But not for Archer. From the moment he saw the note, he knew something was up. Jun's handwriting had similar characteristics but it was much too messy. The pen stayed on the paper longer than Jun usually did. Admittedly, the only reason he noticed is due to the number of times they studied and the occasional copy of his homework.

But another major thing was there were no calls. To him, to their parents, to anyone. One of them would have called beforehand, let alone before deciding to send a letter of all things. Sure, the reception around the town wasn't the best, especially when you got out to the forest but it was enough to at least make a call.

So, Archer went digging a bit. He checked in with his friend's parents and slowly put a timetable together, figuring out the group left around 930 pm. Luckily, Archer was able to find a lead. With the help of his parent's Archer was able to check on Jun's office beside his bedroom. What he found, slightly surprised him.

The room was much more of a mess than what Jun would usually allow. Copies of paper and books were thrown around with a laptop on the desk shut off, having lost its battery days ago. However, it was on the sidewall that pulled his attention. Hung up were pictures and string, connecting like a red web of information. Looking closer, Archer was able to find the interest that had pulled Jun into some sort of mystery. Blackwood Manor.

So, carefully, he collected all of the information he could gather from Jun's office and made his way back home, trying to piece together his friend's thoughts. While some of Jun's ideas were sometimes scribbled down in a notebook or on a scrap of paper, he still had very little solid information even about the manor. Maybe that's what had drawn in Jun and the others.

So, after school, he began to investigate, reading the evidence and slowly getting more frustrated. The information he had at hand was either vague, contradicting, or just plain false. Everything led to Jun's final piece, the directions to the manor. No solid backstory, no witnesses, no evidence. Just rumors. So, with a sigh, he had to find some new area to gain information. After a day of searching, Archer had finally found another possible lead. One which he was heading to right now. The old library.

The old library loomed off in the distance as Archer walked forward, the autumn breeze flowing against him. The old gothic structure seemed so bleak compared to the rest of the buildings, standing out like a big sore thumb. The weathered stone building loomed over the rest of the buildings nearby. A small park slithered around the building in front of the library with Archer following along its trail. After weaving his way through, he finally walked up the stone stairs and entered the library.

The library smelt musty, filled with old paper and stale air. Rows of books littered the floor as Archer walked by, flashed his library ID, and made his way into the maze of books. While Jun's notes said he had searched the library, he only mentioned the first two floors. Pretty normal except there was no mention of him going down to the basement level archives. So, he walked past isles of books and literature before coming across a large, dark staircase. Taking a breath of the stale air, he walked down the stairs, into the unknown.

The basement level was dark and even staler than the ground floor. The dust made his eyes water as he fanned his hand, trying to get any airflow to little success. Sighing, Archer walked forward. The basement didn't have large isles like the upper level but instead had large grey cabinets that came to around chest height. The old lightbulbs lit the darkroom a faint orange as he navigated through the main walkway.

“Alright....Where to start.”, Archer said as he looked around slowly before beginning his slow search of the files.

It had taken him three weeks. Three weeks of searching through tiny files and rolls of old photos before he found something. While most of the old newspapers had faded with time, some brave or very thorough fool decided to catalog every day of newspaper printed that they could get their hands on back to the beginning of the town in 1886. While the original order was slight of order due to years of rare visitors and even rarer staff, it was still easy enough to find in the basement. He was also lucky enough to find the projector needed for the rolls of film, though it took a day of cleaning before he was able to make it work. So, day by day, he slowly made his way through the slides, trying to find any information in the film haystack. Now, he had finally got his first clue. In 1955, the Blackwood manor was mentioned in a small article on the front page mentioning its closure and possible future demolition. Except for the demolition never happened. The manor was abandoned and left to rot on the wooded outskirts of town. The article talked about claims of haunting figures still roaming the halls and spirits driving away anyone who dared approach the manor. While the bottom bit was slightly faded out and very vague, Archer was able to find his next big break. A year. 1898.

Carefully following back up the film, Archer felt the excitement burning in his chest. Something new, something to help break whatever this mystery was open. Quickly but carefully taking out the film, Archer rushed over and began to look through the years before finding a tin with the year, fadedly written across the top of the tin. Sadly, it was the only tin. Nervousness began to wash over him as his confidence began to wane. But before he could let his fears take over, Archer shook away those thoughts before rushing over and loading up the film.

Slowly going through each page, Archer noticed that there weren't as many photos or scans saved, though considering that these were from over 200 years ago, he considered himself lucky. Scrolling past article after article, he could feel the anticipation and hope building after each slide. Suddenly, one of the front pages stood out, a much more preserved paper, through brown with age. The title read '*Witch burns in front of family manor.*' Archer's eyes widened as he began to read the article.

Last night, on July 17, 1898, Leanor Elizabeth Blackwood was taken from her family's manor by a local mob and was burned at the stake in front of her family and home. Leanor had been accused of witchcraft and unlawful actions by the local priest and so the townsfolk, wrapped in their fury, became the executioner last night. Leanor had just turned 24 last week and such an accusation seems wild for a daughter of a man who holds such high prestige in our fair town. Though she claimed she was not a witch in her final moments, she angrily spoke to the crowd. "For all those here, I curse thee! For you shall not control our land. I curse all who shall enter my home a most painful experience, and I shall protect this here till you have come to see the errors of your ways!". Mere minutes later, she was set ablaze and after hours of waiting, the

mob dispersed, leaving the broken family behind to mourn the loss of the heir to the Blackwood manor.

Archer sighed as he ended the article. Finally something new but also something absurd. Sure, witch hunts were a thing thrown together by paranoid people but something about it felt off. Archer huffed as he leaned back from his notepad and slumped down in his chair.

Something was up with the Manor. It could be haunted, it could not. It could have a curse on it or it could be just an abandoned old house. He didn't know. All he knows is that three friends went in and now, they were gone. Archer closed his eyes as he leaned forward and sighed. Looks like he needed to check out the paranormal section of the library for some curse removal ideas.

It had taken him one month before he began his investigation. Three weeks of scrounging through old papers and film in the darkest recesses of the library. One week of preparing a bag of supplies filled to the brim with notes, recipes, materials, and gear. Now, he was ready. He had feigned a stomach ache and went to bed early. Carefully, he grabbed his bag and opened his bedroom window before slowly climbing down the roof. Grabbing his bicycle he left out for the night, he silently rode on his bike towards the setting sun and the location of the ominous manor.

It was a bit of a ride in the cold but Archer pushed forward, not letting the autumn air get to him. The paved road slowly began to become rougher the farther he got out. The lights of the city seemed dim from his spot on the empty country road. He turned and stopped in front of an old dirt road, overgrown and nearly hidden by the road. This was it. With a heavy sigh, Archer slowly began to pedal into the brush. It wasn't long before Archer had finally come across the big mansion and his first clue.

In front of him sat a small silver sedan, covered in dust and fallen leaves. Brushing away the fine layer of dust on the back window, Archer confirmed it. This was Jun's car, the Silver Wolf. They went here and they stopped here. But where did they go? Looking over to the manor looming behind an old wrought fence, Archer shuttered in the cool wind. It seems like all of the clues had led him here. Taking a step forward, he walked towards the fence and made his way down the dark path.

The forgotten years hadn't been kind on the manor, faded, cracked paint and splintered wood surrounded the entrance in front of him. The door seemed to have fared just a bit better, shielded a bit from the elements but rust and age still wore down the old door. With a firm tug on the handle, the entrance opened up, much to his surprise. Well, Jun did claim he had lockpicking skills.

The foyer was rather big, the ceiling vaulting over him and leading over to the grand staircase in the middle. The old dark manor was cold and the ruins around him helped add to the tension in the air. Footsteps walked around the foyer, like invisible people leading the way for Archer. The footsteps seemed normal until their stride broke at quick speed into the manor.

“What happened...what did you see...” Archer muttered as his flashlight shone down the hallway. Taking a few slow steps, Archer tried to follow the footprints but he slowly began to lose the trail. As almost they had disappeared from reality. Scratching his head, Archer sighed as he closed his eyes, trying for any other hint to lead him on. The manor still felt cold but as he scrunched his eyes, he tried to listen to the sounds of the manor. A rustle of the wind, creaking of boards, his breath slowly billowing out in front of him. But, there was something faint. A...voice? It sounded like it was “Jun!”

Archer ran forward, trying to catch up with the voice. It changed from faint to close then back to faint, leading him deeper and deeper into the manor. Turns blurred together as he ran forwards until nearly collapsing on the side of a wall. Gasping for breath, he looked up to find a dead-end in front of him. Turning around, he wasn't met with the hallway he ran down but instead a large open room, littered with debris and overgrown plants. “I didn't run through that, what in the world is going on?” Slowly taking his breath back in, an old sign hung down in front of him, barely hanging onto the ceiling in front of him. The old metal sign read ‘Aviary’ with faded black letters on dirtied white paint.

Walking into the aviary, it was worn down and abandoned like the rest of the manor. The few trees scattered around had been overgrown for some time and leaves and branches had been scattered above the floor almost as if he had walked back into the forest. The voices had died out, only leaving the soft echoes of crickets in the background. Looking over some old bird posts, Archer carefully explored the area before coming to a small plaza.

The plaza was the midsection of the Aviary with a large oak tree in the middle, with many holes made in the side for tiny burrows. A rather quaint sight but the thing that caught Archer's attention were three faint balls that circled in front of the tree, slowly orbiting each other. The wisps looked light green as they danced around, not noticing him walk closer. Archer was at a loss for words as he watched the orbs fly around. Slowly, Archer began to walk back, and hopefully find the owner of the voices he heard. However, the peaceful serenity was broken by the snapping of a twig underfoot.

Archer's attention shot down to the snapped branch underneath him before looking up in horror. The orbs had stopped their dance and changed from a ghostly white to a forest green before quickly shooting towards him. Not wasting a moment, Archer bolted around the tree and ran towards the exit, trying to get the wisps off of his tail. Ducking down and avoiding a low-hanging branch, he was close enough to see the exit. As he sprinted forward, his foot was grabbed from underneath him. Looking down, his right foot was caught in a root. By the time he freed himself, it was too late. The three orbs shot into his body as Archer's spine shook.

Silence once again fell over the aviary as Archer tried to catch his breath and stand up. Those orbs were not natural and he needed to get out. Though if the same thing happened to the others, he might not escape. As if confirming this theory, Archer's body began to shake and spasm as he tried to gain control of himself. Pain shot through his leg as his feet began to cramp, curling his shoes back farther than he thought possible. As the spasms continued, he felt pressure rise in his feet, causing his tennis shoes to slowly bulge out. However, the pain he felt in his feet was quickly overshadowed by a loud crack below him.

Archer let out a pained scream as he put all of his weight on his other leg, which let out a snap as he fell, forcing him to the ground. Taking in deep breaths, the pain quickly faded as Archer looked down in horror to see that his knees were inverted. His jeans are barely held in place from the odd angle as small pops emanate from his shoes. With a grunt, his shoes burst and fell apart, revealing the shredded remains of his socks and two large sharp talons facing forward. Archer looked down at his raptor-esque claws as they began to turn white as feathers began to sprout out from his ankles. Leaning back, Archer tried desperately to get away from his changing feet but only succeeded in ripping the cuffs of his jeans.

With a quick tug, Archer unbuckled his belt and wiggle his way out of the denim prison revealing that most of his legs had started to turn. His thighs had slightly shrunk in size as they were covered in plumage. The sprouting feathers raced into his underwear as he desperately tried to stop the changes. Through, a tingling in his hands drew him away from his changing waist. Though the room was rather dark, Archer could see his skin turn into a lighter brown and sprouting feathers. His fingers slowly began to stick together and flatten out, becoming three large feathers that were surprisingly flexible. The tips bleached to a similar white and began crawling up his legs. He flexed his new feathery fingers with confusion. While half of him was utterly terrified, trying to scream, another voice was questioning what was happening and if his friends suffered a similar fate. Or maybe he was in shock, that is possible considering his situation.

Archer could feel the feathers and plumage crawl up his arms as he awkwardly pulled off his jacket and shirt. Large brown feathers dropped down from his arm, almost as if he was wearing a large cloak. The inside of his feathered arm contained a few feathers accented by orange triangles while the outer layer contained a few splotches of white. As the large feathers began to grow from out of his arms, the plumage had made its way up to his chest and slowly began to fluff out into a more prominent upper chest plumage. The feathers bloomed outwards as the dense packing of feathers gave it a nice soft quality against his feathered fingers.

The feeling of his ears melding into his head caught Archer off guard as his feathers headache up to try and feel them. What he didn't expect was to be met by some leaf-like hood growing around his head. The hood snaked around before jumping up and chomping down on top of his head, coming to rest over his hair which soon was replaced by feathers. The leaves draped down, covering his shoulders as a crest of orange leaves tied his hood together, dropping two vine drawstrings below him. A single white and orange feather grew out of his hood as he began to feel his face cramp up.

Archer felt his nose pull back into his body as his gums were pressed back, revealing a small black beak extending from his face. He could feel his eyes grow larger as he tried to shut them closed. A black and orange falconer cap clamped over his head as it tightened down before fusing into his body. His inhuman hands reached up as they tried to pull at his face, trying to save any sliver of his humanity. Sadly, his struggles were futile as the last patches of skin around his eyes changed and his mind sparked with new information. Letting out a shriek, Archer collapsed onto the ground, falling onto the forgotten floor of the aviary.

The attic of the Blackwood manor was a place that was rarely visited. Not many even approached the fence surrounding the manor so someone getting as high up as the attic was something that hadn't been done since the manor was abandoned. It was mostly empty, with a few dusty boxes and cobwebs littering the attic. Overall it was a dry, musty, and even more, forgotten place than the rest of the manor. So, Jun decided that it would be the perfect place for their base.

Not only was it one of the easiest places to find in the confusing manor, but it was also rather large and spacious. Sure it was dusty and had poor ventilation but who cares? They technically didn't breathe cause of the whole ghost situation so, no allergies excuse either. Jun had converted it into a mix of a laboratory, book hold, and meet-up room for the trio which made the creepy attic just a bit more homely. They covered the scratch marks with a carpet, hung up some old art, fixed the single light. Overall, though a bit creepy, it was a nice little base.

"So Marsh...got any...threes?"

"... go fish"

"Dammit."

Jun lets a vine slowly creep down to pick up a card and pulled it back to his hand. His eye slowly narrows as Miss lets out a tiny chuckle.

"So Jun, got a Jack?"

Sighing, Jun let one of his vines pick up one of his cards and slowly passed it over to Miss who set down her new pair with a giggle. Miss was winning judging by the number of pairs beneath her with Jun and marsh having a lack of cards. It was near the end of the game and Jun only had one card left. A card that everyone knew.

"Hey Jun, got a thr-"

A loud shrill stick echoed through the manor beneath them cutting off the entire group from their game. It sounded inhuman, almost as if a bird gave out its final wailing call. The group froze for a moment as the silence crept back in. Jun looked over to the others who were looking straight at him.

“Uh-oh.”

Quickly, Jun stood up and bolted to the stairs, while Dismal and Marsh both phased through the floor. As Jun muttered about dumb ghost fazing, Miss and Marsh were already scouring the halls and surroundings. Marsh ran past a window before stopping and backtracking. Nothing outside of the manor had changed for the past two months that they had been held up in. Nothing, except for something far away against the iron gate that served as their boundary. It was a cyan cruiser bike and a fairly familiar one at that.

“Oh-no...”

As Marsh dove through the nearby wall and floor using her spectral powers to arrive down in the first-floor hallway, she let out a breath as she steadied herself. A familiar gust of wind blew by as the form of Miss stopped next to her. “Marsh, the front door was open and there were new footprints in the foyer.”

“There was a bicycle left outside the gate. Looks like the poor fool came in and judging by the screams, we were too late.”

“Where is Jun?”

The two were interrupted as the door next to them slammed open as Jun ducked his head into the hallway and his wooden brow raised as he motioned the two ghost pokemon over to him. “Over here...I found him.”

The two rushed over to Jun who lead them down the hall towards a rather large open room. It was overgrown, much like the room Jun had shown the group where he was changed, but more open. The area seems faded, having lost all sense of life inside it other than the trees which grew around it. Miss moved the aviary sign up and then lowered it back down as they approached the down figure.

The thing wasn't or was not human anymore. It had brown feathers across its body, hiding most of its chest from view. It looked almost like a brown cloak with a hood made of green leaves. At the end of its feet were huge raptor-like talons that pointed out dangerously. Its wingspan was huge as it laid down in front of them.

“It seems like he passed out from the change. Judging by the scream, the change wasn't fun.” Jun said as he rolled the body over, revealing a rather eloquent plumage adorning his chest. Underneath the hood looked like the owl was wearing another hood underneath, though it

looked more like it was a part of him. Through the words caused Marsh's eyebrow to rise, "What do you mean by him?"

Jun sighed as he let one of his vines down and pulled up a cyan hoodie adorned with two stars. They all knew only one person would wear that design. Miss and Marsh's faces had fallen a bit in sorrow as they looked down at Archer laying unconscious on the floor. The three silently looked over their friend as they all waited for the owl to wake. "Well, at least most of his clothes made it." Said Miss as she gathered the clothes, sweeping away the shoes and socks that didn't survive the transformation.

"Looks like he did come prepared at least," Marsh said as she held up his brown worn backpack and set it down next to the clothes. The bag seemed pretty full of supplies, though the group waited to open it, not wanting to rummage around in his stuff. After the three were done, they waited there for Archer to wake up and join them.

Archer groaned as he began hearing hush voices dance around him. Where was he? He definitely wasn't home, considering he wasn't on his nice cold bed. It was a mix of dirt and tile? Oh right, he had gone to that manor to follow his friend's trail. Then he got attacked? Oh no.

Archer's eyes shot open as he flipped around and met with a terrifying sight. Three huge monsters were staring him down. The first one looked like a huge purple blob with a wicked grin etched across its face. It looked down at him with cold red calculating eyes. One wrong move could cause it to act and Archer definitely didn't want to see what that thing was capable of.

Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted something semi-clear swoop beside him. His head turned before his brain could warn him about not facing the purple creature is when he locked eyes with the second one. The reptile's figure was huge, looming over him with a color that faded away from the lower he went. It floated above the ground, its eyes piercing him his a strong gaze as if to read his soul. Its flat triangle-shaped head made the being even more inhuman than the shorter blob behind him. Covered in dark blue and teal scales, the beast floated lazily around, not caring that its feet weren't touching the ground or the fact they weren't even there.

Finally, Archer turned his head back to the middle was the most inhuman out of all of them. Multiple wooden legs stood in front of him as the tree looked down at him with a bright red eye. Its craggy mouth was twisted into a permanent grin as vines slowly whipped behind it. The Creature slowly taped its thin spindly root legs as if almost waiting for him to respond. Its wooden hand slowly rose towards him as the three ghosts looked down at him. "Hey Archer, are you alright?"

He didn't know what shook him more, the deep rumbling voice that emerged from the monster or the fact that it knew who he was. Archer pushed back away from them, sliding against the

floor, trying to get any amount of distance he could get. "S-stay back! H-how do you know my name!" Archer's eyes widened as he heard a voice that wasn't his come out of him. Looking down, the memories of the transformation rush back to him. He was some sort of bird thing, a monster himself.

"Archer...It's me, Jun" The ent said with what appeared to be a tinge of sadness as the group looked down at him. This thing was supposed to be Jun? No way, that's impossible! Then again, he was now something impossible so...could it?

"Jun? I don't believe it, prove it." Archer shakily demanded as he looked up towards him. If he was truly Jun, then were the others also his friends, suffering from the same thing that happened to Jun? To him?

The tree stood there for a moment, seemingly going through its mind before speaking. "We use to have long text chats where I would be in the bathtub cause it felt like the place that would give me the most privacy and it kept throwing my back out of wack."

Archer's mouth dropped open as he stopped pushing himself back. They used to have late-night chats where Jun would somehow always end up in the bathroom while they texted each other. It was a little weird but it was funny how embarrassed Jun would get when Archer could guess he was in the tub. It was something of a little joke between them, one that not everyone knew. "Fuck...Is that really you Jun?"

The ent chuckled deeply as the bird finally accepted the wooden hand in front of him, lifting him. Archer stumbled as he tried to regain his balance as his talons clicked against the floor. It felt foreign, so unnatural, and yet so familiar. "Yup bud, it's really me. Miss became that floating lizard and Marsh became that purple humanoid ghost."

"Hey," Miss and Marsh both said as the floating lizard waved back and the purple humanoid relaxed a bit in her posture. It seemed as if the harsh and scary tension around the room disappeared as the three led the owl out of the aviary and out into the rest of the manor. They all had a lot of stuff to catch up on.

It had been a few hours since the sun had gone down, but the manor's occupants were still active. Through the initial interaction had been rather awkward, the now four ghost pokemon made their way back up to their hangout spot in the attic and caught up with each other. They had been gone for two months and the entire town was in disarray, for a few weeks. Jun, Marsh, and Miss all told the story of what had happened when they arrived and Archer told them about his investigation over the months. All of the little mysteries and hidden history of the Blackwood Manor were told as the group shared notes. Miss had found some diaries down in the study while Jun tried to help analyze and test what their bodies could truly do. Through the feeling of stagnation had slowly crept up, the boost from Archer's research proved invaluable.

"Wait, hold on. You said she cursed the land?" Jun said as he sat, his wooden legs folded onto each other.

"Yea," Archer said as he pulled back one of his notepapers from his bag, "Anyone who enters and 'see's the error of their ways. I would say it's a load of hoopla but then again." He pointed his feathers at his body as he handed Jun his notes.

"I mean, isn't there like a time limit on curses or something? Besides, we aren't even the original people, nor even related to them." Miss said as she floated above the carpet, her hands slowly fidgeting with each other. "Miss isn't entirely wrong per se," Archer continued, "But how would we know what to do?"

Jun stood up, rising above the sitting group, "Simple. We don't follow it. We break it."

"Uh, what do you mean by that?" Marsh said as she leaned back, letting one of her arms propping her up against the floor. Archer's eyes widened at Jun's idea. There could be something there. "Wait, I think he's onto something."

"Well, we have no connection to the manor, lady, or curse other than poor circumstances. There is probably nobody alive we could get to even do it the way it was intended. But if we break the curse instead of following it, we could end it and get us all back to normal." Jun said as he began to pace back and forwards. "Heya Miss, do you think you could find that old spiritual book you found a few weeks ago?"

Miss quickly nodded as she phased through the floor. Archer turned to Jun as the ent walked back and forward, pacing in front of a desk that had become his little workstation. "So Jun, how do you plan on breaking the curse?" Miss appears from the floor holding an old weathered book and hands it over to Jun who uses some vines to hold the book open and slowly flip through the yellowed pages. After a few minutes, Jun stops his vines and displays the book for everyone to see.

"Ok, by the looks of this, we are going to need a few items. First, the place in which the binding of the curse connected it to the location. This could be anything from a circle to a cursed item, though it would have to be rather large to connect the whole property to it." Jun said as he leaned forward, his one eye slowly traveling across the page. The group was quiet for a moment in thought before Marsh broke away from the group. She slowly walked over to the carpet they were sitting on and yanked it back, causing a plume of dust to erupt. The group turned around to find the scratches on the wooden floor they had covered up before forming a large intricate circle.

"Oh, Nice! Thanks, Marsh." Jun said as the ghost nodded in acknowledgment. "Ok, number two is some ingredients, salt, incense, chalk, and local flowers. Ok, rather easy to get. The third is

those affected by the curse to take part. Done. Finally, we would need to mention the previous events and apologize to the spirits and those who cursed.” Jun said as continued with reading.

As Jun ended, silence filled the attic as the group sat there in small silence. It seemed like the possibility of going home was finally within their grasps. Jun let out a small chuckle and his wooden moth slowly smirked. “Alright team, let’s get to work.”

The energy that seemed to have been lost by the group came back tenfold as they read and planned for the ceremony to break the curse. While Jun and Archer prepared the circle, Miss and Marsh gathered the materials needed from around the manor. After around thirty minutes, the materials were gathered and placed. The salt was poured along the edge of the circle, effectively trapping their ghostly forms inside the circle. Through a bit of a tight fit with all of them inside it, the materials were placed and the candles ignited, the ceremony was ready to begin. Archer set down the book in the middle of the circle Carefully as they all grabbed each other’s hands. “Oh great spirits,” Archer repeated from the book, the other three joining along after the owl as the darkness seemingly flickered around them. “Please head our call. The curse that was set upon this land has fulfilled its purpose, those affected have learned, the spirits pleased. Now, we call upon those spirits who placed said curse to remove it from this plane.”

As Archer spoke, he could see the orbs that once attacked him begin to float around the circle, but seemingly would not cross the barrier of the circle. The flames burned brighter as the circle beneath them began to faintly glow. Shadows moved outside but he continued. “For the curse has brought ruin and pain to those not intended to be. We ask the spirit of Leanor Blackwood and those who answered her call to please break the curse you have brought upon us and return us.”

The glow beneath them brightened as the candles outside of the circle were blown out by a large gust of wind. More gusts followed around the circle, swirling like a vortex around the four as they held hands. The purple glow beneath them expanded past their circle, lines fractured as they snaked out against the floor surrounding them. “The people who have brought you to harm have long since passed. We are here to end their mistakes, please head our call spirits.”

The wind was deafening as the group held desperately onto each other. Squinted eyes could barely continue reading the final lines as the glow slowly began to encircle each ghost, keeping them in place. Archer could barely hear himself yell the final words. “The shackles of this curse shall be broken and shall set us free!”

A blind light grew from the middle of the circle as everyone closed their eyes. It was just for a flash but, Archer saw what was in the middle. An outline of a feminine woman stood there, its features impossible to make out, except for a faint smile. As soon as he saw it, it flickered away and the white light consumed his vision whole.

When Archer opened his eyes again, the first thing that truly stood out was the wonderful clear sky outside, A full moon staring down overhead looking over him. The second was the aged wood beneath him that felt cold and stiff as his body ached. The third was the fact that there was now a giant hole in the roof of the manor. Archer pushed himself up Groggily as he looked down and found his human body once again beneath him. Well...mostly.

The feathers and down that had covered his body were now gone but, the orange triangles and white dots that had been on his feathers now seemed etched into his dark skin. Looking down, he noticed the orangish leaf brooch that held his leaf cowl had also been emblazoned on his skin. The final thing he noticed was his feet. While the rest of him was rather unchanged, his feet looked drastically different. His toes were still melded together into two big talons, through the hind talon was luckily gone. It also appeared that some of his clothes had been put on or replaced, his hoodie sat nicely folded beside him. His attention was pulled from his changes over to a groan.

Turning to his left, he saw the familiar figure of Jun rise from the floor, pushing himself up to a sitting position. He was missing a shirt but he was wearing a pair of jeans that seemed to have been patched together. One of the things that drastically pulled Archer's attention was a huge jagged black crack against his midsection. Two more cracks rolled across his shoulders as he rubbed his head, trying to shake himself awake. As he opened his eyes, Archer noticed one of his eyes had turned a deep red, and shoots of green were scattered amongst his brown hair. As Jun focused, he turned to Archer and let out a small smile. "Looks like it worked...sorta." Raising his arm, he felt a small vine crawl up his arm and move under his command.

"Ugh, too loud...shhh," The two boys turned to see Miss push herself up and roll over onto her stomach. Her nails had darkened into a faded maroon color as they held them against her now human head. Yellow eyes peered behind her glasses as she wiggled her feet. Through, something seemed off to the two former ghosts watching her. There was something there, moving. As she stopped stretching, they found out what it was. Miss still seemingly had her ghostly tail behind her. Through it was now next to impossible to see, it still was there and solid as it thumped against the ground, much to Miss's surprise.

The thump awoke the final person of the group as marsh shot up with a gasp. Her hair had now been turned a deep purple as she took some deep breaths in and out. Both of her eyes had turned a light red as her breaths slowed and looked at the others. Something seemed slightly off, much like Miss's tail, through Archer couldn't tell what it was exactly. Like she still had some ghost in her. Taking a moment, Marsh pulled up her hand and stared deeply into it before the hand disappeared from view.

More chuckles began to fall out of Jun's mouth as he flopped back down onto the ground. As Jun let out some chuckles, it seemed to infect Miss and marsh who also began to let out some snickers. Finally, Archer joined in the cackles as they all looked up to the stars and moon above. They had made it. They could leave, go home, leave the manor for good.

As their chuckles died down, the four sat down in contempt as they all breathed a sigh of relief.
“Heya Jun?”

“Yea Miss?”

“You still owe us some pizza.”