

In the afternoon, Olivia is standing in front of a shelf near her bed. The shelf contains an assortment of little-girl treasures that, over the course of her childhood, Olivia has discovered in her father's attic. The most beloved of these objects is a small, beautifully delicate copper-wire cross. Olivia keeps it hidden, tucked away behind two other items from the attic. A portable record player and a stack of old record albums.

Olivia has put the soundtrack of a Broadway show onto the record player's turntable. She waits for the music to begin. Then lowers herself out of sight. Into the sliver of space between her bed and the wall. There is no lock on her door: this is the only place she can find privacy. She has brought along a pencil and the book in the white dust jacket—and she's opening the book to its first page. On that page, written in the perfect cursive taught to her by her father, is the book's title:

“The Book of Someday”

The pages beneath the title page have been filled with what is essentially an evolving map of Olivia's heart. Every sentence a dream being born, a vow waiting to be kept. Among them are notations such as:

Someday I will have a birthday party with people and singing.

Someday I will go to ballet lessons and wear pink ballet shoes. I will have a friend and we'll hold hands and she'll think I'm nice.

Someday after the century changes, when it's in the 2000s and I'm all grown up, I won't stay in the hills out by Santa Ynez, California any more. I'll go to a place that is somewhere else. I will live in a house with a red door and roses.

Someday I will be pretty and not have long, heavy hair that aches my head.

Someday when I'm a mommy I'll never run away because I'm selfish and bad. I'll stay and I'll say I love you. I'll say it all the time, and give hugs. And I won't hit, especially not with a wooden hairbrush because of the hurt not ever stopping, even after the bruises go.

Someday I will attend a real school.

Someday I will be brave and tell Mrs. Granger how much I love her. Maybe she will let me come and live with her and she will smile at me and let me have a dog. One that's little, and is white with a curly tail.

Olivia is abruptly looking up from her book. The song coming from the record player is describing a concept she has never thought of before. A “someday” that needs to be added to her list.

Someday I'll go to town in a golden gown and have my fortune told.

Olivia's pencil is flying across the page—spelling out this new promise. And there is unbridled bliss.

* * *

When the day has faded, and night has come, there is unbridled terror.

Olivia is waking from a horrific dream. Screaming and at the same time burying her face in her pillow. Trying to stop the sound so he won't hear. But her father is already on the other side of her doorway. In the darkness. She can feel him there with the look in his eyes that is soft, like sadness, and then harsh, like the sharp edge of a stone.

Her father knows about her nightmare. Olivia has told him exactly what she sees when she dreams it and that it has been with her for as long as she can remember. She doesn't understand why, but she senses the knowledge of these details is what brings that strange

look to her father's eyes. That look of sorrow, and of stone.

Once her father is gone from the doorway, Olivia crawls into the frigid space between her bed and the wall. Desperate to stay awake. To keep the nightmare at bay.

The dream is ghastly in its silence and its simplicity. A void. And a woman. Floating in an eerie kind of sleep. Draped in a shimmering garment that flows from her shoulders to her knees like a column of starlight. Wearing pale-colored, high-heeled shoes fastened with a strap at the instep, each strap anchored by a single pearl button. Her arms outstretched. A silver band encircling her head. In the band, a plumed white feather. Her hair is short. Chestnut brown. Her face is in shadow. Only her lips are visible. Fiery red and slowly parting. Making way for a noise. A shrieking howl. Which, when it comes, will be the sound of unadulterated horror.

Olivia's fear of her nightmare is colossal. Her only defense is to gaze toward the window—waiting anxiously for the protection that morning will bring.

This will become a habit with Olivia—her passion for morning. As an adult, she will greet each new dawn by walking briskly toward the rising sun. And on one of these walks, almost twenty years from now, Olivia will again encounter the fiery-lipped woman in the pearl-button shoes. But she will no longer be an apparition haunting the night. She will be a reality. Existing in the cold clear light of day.