

**THE GUARDIANS  
OF  
ST. GILES BOOK 2**



**OLIVIA  
STONE AND  
THE  
DREAD OF THE  
DREAMERS**

by  
Jeffery E Doherty

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Olivia Stone and the Dread of the Dreamers

The Guardians of St. Giles Book 2

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# **PART 1**

## **Dreams**

# CHAPTER 1

## Mixed Messages

**O**livia rubs her tired eyes and yawns.

“I’m not boring you, am I?” Yip says, tugging on her ear.

“Ouch!” Olivia glares at the tiny grotesque sitting on her shoulder. “This is the eighth night in a row you have dragged me out of bed to chase shadows.”

“Shadows?” Yip’s voice jumps an octave higher and he glares right back at her, their noses almost touching. “There is a monster loose in the city and you are worried about your beauty sleep.”

“At this stage, I would settle for a nanna-nap.”

*Humph.* Yip snorts and his pug face quivers with disgust. “Protecting the city is not a hobby. It is a full-time job, a calling...”

“I should have left you locked in the storeroom,” Olivia mutters.

“What?”

“Nothing.” Olivia’s mind flashes back to the day the giant grotesque statue fell from the roof of St. Giles Old Priory School. The accident changed her entire life. It left her scarred with crippling injuries to her left arm and leg, but somehow infused her with part of the magical energy that animated the shattered guardian statue. Her rescue of Yip, the smallest living grotesque ever carved, opened her life to the darkness and danger. In her new world, monsters are real, and she is part grotesque with a responsibility for protecting the city.

“Are you paying attention?” Yip pulls her ear again.

“Stop that.” Olivia pokes the grotesque in the chest with one finger. “Do that again and you can get down and walk.”

Yip’s nostrils flare wide and he twists his sinuous neck around, sniffing at the air. “It is close,” he declares. His arm jabs out, the jagged stump of his missing little finger is a reminder of the dangers they face in the darkened streets of Haven. “This way.”

Olivia turns to where Yip is pointing. The laneway runs along the outskirts of the oldest parts of the city between the twisting cobbled streets and terraces of Old Haven, and the wider grid of New Haven’s streets with their detached homes and yards.

Something moves in the shadows. Olivia catches sight of it out of the corner of her eye. It is gone when she turns to look.

“Strange,” Olivia starts walking toward the spot.

Yip taps her impatiently on the top of the head.

“Um...monster.” He uses his little taloned hands to steer her back in the direction he had pointed.

“But...”

Yip’s glowering stare cuts off her protest *It’s probably nothing anyway*. She thinks.

“Of course it is something. I can smell it.” Yip grumbles. He points again, away from the shadowy figure Olivia thought she saw on the opposite side of the street.

She glances back but hurries along in the direction Yip is pointing.

Trees line the sides of the street making a tunnel of dark leaves over the path. Olivia ducks under a branch, her face tangling into a spider web.

“Ar ara ar YAH!” She screeches, becoming an instant karate master. Her hands flash about her head, one elbow cracks into Yip, sending him



sprawling to the path. A stab of electric pain shoots from her funny bone to her fingertips.

Olivia's karate dance degenerates into frantic swatting at her own head.

Yip bellows out a battle cry and swoops past her face on his stony wings, slashing his claws in glittering arcs around her. He swoops in again and again.

"What on earth are you doing?" Olivia asks, pulling another strand of web from her hair.

Yip's wings beat furiously as his eyes dart continuously about, searching the empty air. "I'm fighting the monster." "What monster?" Olivia glances nervously about.

"Shhh," Yip puts a finger to his lips. "It's invisible."

"An invisible monster?"

"No wonder it has been hard to track." He slashes his claws through the air again. "You were lucky to stumble onto it."

“Me?”

“I knew you had the makings of a guardian.”

Yip darts past several more times making little yaps and growls.

“What do you mean, me?”

Yip looks puzzled. “You found it but don’t worry, I think I scared it away.”

Olivia sighs and shakes her head.

“What?”

“I walked into a spider web.”

“You what?”

“I don’t like spiders...they give me the shivers.” Olivia shivers to prove her point.

“Oh...” Yip drops back down onto Olivia’s shoulder, looking a little embarrassed. “I thought you were...invisible mons... never mind.”

Olivia glares.

Yip rubs the back of his head. “So it was you who punched me?”

“I really don’t like spiders.” Olivia gives another involuntary shudder and the crawling sensation along the back of her neck starts again.

“Besides, it was an elbow.”

Yip glances down and his hand darts forward, snatching the fat black spider out of Olivia’s hair.

“Ow! What are you doing?” she demands.

“Um, nothing.” Yip tucks his hand behind his back. The spider’s legs wriggle between his fingers.

When Olivia is not looking, he pops the spider into his mouth and bites down with a sound halfway between a crunch and a squelch. A *squnch*.

“What was that?” Olivia whispers.

“Muffinn.” Yip tries to swallow and bursts into a coughing spasm. Finally he clears his throat.

“Nothing,” he repeats.

Olivia narrows her eyes at the little grotesque.

“What, I swallowed a bug,” he adds lamely, then sniffs loudly at the air to distract her. “There,” he says, pointing along the street.

Olivia starts to walk, rubbing absently at her elbow and flexing her tingling fingers.

# CHAPTER 2

## In the Shadows

**T**here is something unnatural about the

dark-hooded shape slinking through the quiet suburban streets. It is stooped, and although it shuffles along at a slow unsteady pace, its movements hint at a barely contained speed. The figure pauses from time to time, raising its head as if sniffing the air. After each pause, it adjusts its direction and moves on.

It reaches a crossroad and scents the night air again. For a moment it can't decide which direction to turn. Several rounded bumps on the figure's

shoulders move and slide under the rough fabric of its robe, creating a faint scuttling scrape. Finally it turns and shuffles toward a side street.

At the sound of voices, the figure becomes deathly still. A shimmer of dark light ripples across it and it vanishes from sight, fading into shadow. Less than twenty metres away, a dark-haired girl turns to face it. She stares right at...no, right through the figure as if it isn't there at all. A small stony creature crouches on the girl's shoulder. It takes hold of her face with its clawed hands and turns her head back around and they hurry away.

After the girl disappears from sight, the figure moves and the shimmer hiding it wavers and dissipates.

The side street is lined with dark shadows. Street lamps are widely spaced and only on one side of the roadway. The cones of dirty yellow light don't reach the far side where the figure lurks. It slips easily through the shadow side with no fear of being seen. It sniffs the air more frequently now, increasing

speed and moving with a rippling, unnatural grace.  
Its goal is near now.

The figure stops.

A large birch tree spreads its branches over the roof of number 17 Marriott Street. The scent of sadness wafting delectably from the house is bordering on despair. A strange *chittering* escapes the figure and it shivers in anticipation, raising its head.

Inside the hood, there is nothing human. The creature has no face. A smooth yellow-white orb fills the space where its face should be. The fragile illumination from the street light reflects off something shiny and faceted at the figure's throat as it steps forward and enters the yard.

The creature doesn't move towards the door. It lumbers, bear-like, up to the overhanging tree. Long, lumpy arms stretch out from beneath the robe and delicate fingers caress the trunk of the tree. Suddenly, the creature scrambles, catlike into the upper branches and drops soundlessly to the roof of number 17. It stands there for several seconds then

seems to crumple in upon itself and disappears from view.



# CHAPTER 3

## On the Scent

“It is definitely something canine,” Yip

announces, sniffing again.

“A dog?”

“It could be a Cerberus...”

“Like Fluffy from Harry Potter?” Olivia asks.

“Who is Harry Potter?”

“Never mind.” Olivia sighs. “You need to get out more.”

“I’m out every night and I am a statue during the day, so how can I possibly get out any more.”

“It’s an expression,” Olivia doesn’t bother adding the sarcasm to her tone of voice. It would be a waste on Yip.

“A Cerberus is a large three headed hound native to Greece,” Yip explains. “They are often used to guard magical places. They are very unpredictable...”

“Yes, I know.” Olivia cuts the lecture short. “And they love music.”

“They do?” Yip asked, astounded. “I wonder if Brother Westerman knows about that. He might need to add that to the reference books.” Olivia sighs.

“Could be a Devil Dog or a Hell Hound,” Yip continues.

Olivia looks down at her wristwatch. 02:14am.  
Her hand reaches up to cover a yawn.

“Stop!”

Olivia freezes in mid stride, glancing frantically about in the shadows for some kind of danger.

Yip licks one finger and holds it up above his head testing the direction of the wind. "Cut across here and run," he says. "We have to stay down wind of the creature and get in front of it. If it smells us, it will go to ground again."

Olivia starts to run but skids to a halt after only a dozen strides.

"What are you stopping for now?" Yip demands.

"You have wings, Yip," Olivia says, her eyes alight with excitement.

"Yes," Yip says very slowly like he is talking to an idiot. "Your observational skills are amazing." Unlike Olivia, Yip doesn't try to hide his sarcasm.

Olivia huffs. "You can fly ahead of it and I can sneak up on it from behind."

"Oh."

"Well?"

Yip puffs himself up to protest but doesn't speak right away. His expression softens. "That's not a bad idea. See, I knew you weren't completely stupid."

He launches himself into the sky and Olivia winces in pain as his claws prick into her shoulder.

“Ouch.”

Yip doesn’t even glance back.

Olivia works her way down the street until she hears Yip’s challenging yowl. She sprints toward the sound, hurdling hedges and garbage bins. There is a yelp of pain and she doubles her efforts, putting on a dazzling burst of speed. Olivia leaps a tall paling fence. Her foot tangles in a long tendril of a thorny rose bush on the far side. Wickedly sharp thorns rake bloody lines along her shin and send her sprawling onto the wet grass.

“Olivia, look out!” Yip shouts.

Olivia grunts and slowly rolls over onto her back. A set of slathering jaws stretch wide open. Rancid breath makes her gag and cough. A tremendous weight crushes down on her chest and needle-sharp teeth draw slowly toward her face.

Olivia gulps.

# CHAPTER 4

## False Alarm

**T**he dog's warm pink tongue lashes across

Olivia's face tickling lines of slobbery drool from her chin to her forehead.

"Snuggles?"

Snuggles starts to whine piteously and snuggle his big boofy head into the side of Olivia's neck.

"Where have you been, boy?" She rakes her fingers through his rough knotted fur and scratches the big dog behind the ears.

Snuggles whines again.

“Snuggles?” Yip asks, landing cautiously beside her, hefting a sharp pointed stick.

Snuggles glares at Yip and bares his teeth.

“He’s Mrs Mannings’ dog. He’s been lost for over a week and she has been worried sick,” Olivia explains. “Haven’t you seen the posters?”

“Posters?”

“They’re on nearly every second light post in town.” Olivia points to a light post just behind Yip. Large bold letters read MISSING, followed by a description and picture of Snuggles.

“Oh...” Yip says.

“So, this is the hell hound we have been tracking for the last eight nights?” Olivia’s eyebrows draw down into a disapproving frown.

Yip smiles bashfully and scuffs his taloned foot in the dirt. “It could have been a hell hound.”

Olivia scrambles to her feet and strides back the way they came. She pats her leg and calls to Snuggles. “Come on boy, let’s get you home.”

The huge scruffy dog leaps up and bounds after her.

Olivia glances back at Yip. "And I'm not coming out to play again until there is a real monster to deal with."

The middle terrace, three houses up from Olivia's house has a magnificent garden. Mrs Mannings has a green thumb and could grow gooseberries in a pot full of sand. Her roses have won prizes every year in the annual flower show. The yard is tiny but every inch is full of colour and the heady scent of flowers in bloom.

Olivia carefully opens the gate and winces as the hinge squeals. Snuggles is jumping with excitement at being home. She holds tight to his collar but the huge dog drags her forward, up onto the veranda.

"Sit," she says and taps Snuggles on the back.

He drops quietly into a sitting position and waits for his next command.

Olivia rings the doorbell and turns to the dog. "Stay." She then hurries down the narrow path and jumps over the gate. From the shadows of a tree across the road, she watches the terrace door swing open.

Mrs Mannings looks out cautiously, then down. She drops into a squat and throws her arms around the big boofy dog.

"You naughty boy. Where have you been?" she scolds, then hugs Snuggles again and leads him inside.



**O**livia slips back into bed, pushing her teddy bear decoy out onto the floor. As her head touches the pillow, she sighs. It is only just after 3am and



she is home in bed. She might even manage four hours sleep tonight. Being a guardian of the city is slowly wearing her out. She can't carry on roaming the streets all night with almost no sleep.

Something has to change.

The nagging guilt she felt after yelling at Yip disappeared. He had nothing to do all day while she dragged herself around school then came home to do her chores. She even nodded off to sleep in class today. If Kellyanne hadn't nudged her awake, Ms. Hellings would have seen her and lost it. As it was, she had to wipe up the drool puddled on her work book. It left a smudge right across her page. No, things definitely need to change.

Olivia drifts guilt free, off to sleep. She wakes feeling refreshed. Five hours sleep is not nearly enough, but it is double what she has averaged over the last four days.

# CHAPTER 5

## Dark Dreams

**A**n eerie sound plays on the very edge of perception.

It wafts on the air like sad music half heard and half imagined in the quiet suburban house.

Emmett Mayse tosses in his sleep making a soft moaning sound. Sometime during the night he has kicked most of the covers away from him. He rolls from his side to his back, a cold sweat-damp sheet clinging to his skin. One arm flies up behind his head and he goes very still.

All except for his eyes.

Emmett's eyes dart back and forth under his closed eyelids. He has entered a state of REM sleep, that deep part of sleep where dreams and nightmares live.

*Emmett is in the water. Darkwater cold seeps into his bones. He kicks to keep his head above the surface. He's not a bad swimmer but his saturated clothes and shoes are heavy, dragging him down. He can see Erik stroking powerfully out to the overturned boat.*

*Erik is the best swimmer at their high school. He wins all the races, even against the older boys. Emmett can still see the young girl clinging to the boat. Waves of dark hair spill out around her. Her arm raises weakly and she slips from the boat and disappears under the water. Erik's muscular arms dig deep and he races forward.*

*He reaches the boat less than ten seconds after the girl vanished. Erik takes a deep breath and dives under.*

*Emmett holds his breath, waiting. He holds it as long as he can then gasps for air. Erik still hasn't surfaced. Seconds pass, ten...twenty... Emmett's panic grows.*

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As the nightmare builds in Emmett's mind, tiny black, white and red fleck-like shapes drift down from a crack in ceiling where it meets the wall above the bed. The shapes pass through a blade of pale moonlight. Light silvers the whisperthin threads trailing behind them. Over a dozen of the shapes pass through the moonlight.

As they near Emmett's head, eight thin legs stretch out clasping onto strands of hair. Creatures as small as pinheads scramble towards his scalp.

*Erik's head bursts out of the water. He takes two quick breaths and dives under again. He does this three more times before finally giving up.*

*Emmett reaches the boat and clings to the edge, teeth chattering with cold.*

*The look on Erik's face says it all. The girl is gone.*

*The water boils up around Erik. Something jerks him under. A few seconds later Erik breaks the surface gasping for air. He has a bloody scratch along the side of his face.*

*“Swim,” he calls to Emmett, the terror clear on his face. He is jerked under again.*

*Emmett hesitates for a second and then swims for his life.*

*Halfway back to shore, something brushes against Emmett’s leg. He kicks harder, arms flailing madly to gain speed. His breath is ragged and his lungs burn with exertion. There are only three metres to go to reach the shore when something cuts into his ankle dragging him back and down.*

*Emmett’s head dips under and lake water fills his mouth and nose. He kicks and thrashes. His foot connects with something solid and whatever has his leg lets go. He breaches the surface, coughing and spitting water from his mouth. He sucks in half a breath before being pulled under again. Claws bite into his knee, his*

*thigh, his hip, drawing him ever downward. Whatever has him turns him around and the claws bite higher, into his chest and shoulder. Emmett opens his eyes and looks into the beautiful, serene face of a young, wideeyed little girl.*

*His chest is tight like something is sitting on it and his lungs burn*

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*for air. The girl's eyes start to glow red and she opens her mouth to reveal wicked fangs.*

*Emmett screams and water rushes into his lungs.*

Emmet wakes holding his chest, gasping for breath. He tries to sit up but the tangle of wet sheets traps him. After struggling out of them, it takes him twenty minutes to calm down enough to think.

This is the second night in a row he's had the nightmare, and each night it gets a little worse. They started the night after Erik's funeral.

Erik had drowned trying to save a young girl clinging to an overturned boat in the middle of the lake. Even though the police believed the boys had been drinking and stole the boat from the rental shack. They said the boys were drunk and fell in. They didn't believe there was a girl. Divers had searched the whole lake and found no sign of her.

Emmett wasn't there when it happened but he knows in his heart that Erik would never have taken the boat. The only reason he would have gone into the lake at night was to try and help someone in need. They might have been drinking, but Erik wasn't stupid enough to go into the water drunk unless he had a darn good reason. Trying to save a little girl would be one reason Erik might have done it.

Emmett thinks back to his dream. Was that what Erik felt when he was drowning? Was he filled with terror and despair, choking on bitter cold lake water? The thought makes Emmett sick. Tears stream down his cheeks as he absently scratches his head.

He misses his big brother so much. It is like he lost his parents too. They roam aimlessly around trapped in their own private pain and sorrow. None of them have really spoken since the accident. They make all the motions, they say words to each other, but they don't *really* speak. Emmett misses them too.



# CHAPTER 6

## Tannith Revisited

Olivia is over the whole Tannith debate. Every lunchtime one of her friends, usually Darcy brings the topic up again. Olivia knows exactly where Tannith went. It has been nearly a fortnight since she battled the trixie leader on the roof of the school.

The theories are getting wilder each day, but even the most unlikely suggestions of her friends don't come close to the truth. Olivia could tell them Tannith was really an otherworldly monster who was wreaking havoc on the city, and that she and Yip had fought her on the roof of the school and

out-tricked her, sending her back to the shadow realms.

*No.* They wouldn't believe her even if she did tell them. Olivia groans when Darcy starts sharing her newest theory about mobsters and the witness protection program.

"Maybe she just moved," Olivia suggests.

"Why would she do that?" Darcy asks. Her tone is sharp edged.

"Well, the things happening in the city over the last few weeks might have scared her family off," Kellyanne offers.

"Exactly," Olivia adds her support.

"Or she could have just gone on holidays," Kellyanne suggests.

Olivia groans again. "Can we please talk about something else?"

Darcy gives Olivia a strange look. "You never liked Tannith.

Did you?"

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Olivia thinks she hears a hint of accusation in Darcy's voice. "I hardly knew her," she says. *I knew more about her than any of you.* Her inner voice reminds her.

"Have you seen Emmett Mayse today?" Olivia asks, changing the subject.

Darcy sits up, there is gossip and she doesn't know anything about it.

"He looks really bad," Olivia says softly. "I'm worried about him."

"Well, his brother did just die." Darcy's tone is condescending.

"I think it's more than that." Olivia takes a bite out of her sandwich and looks away. It is no use trying to talk seriously when Darcy is in one of her moods.

Health is the only class Olivia has with Emmett so she can at least try to keep an eye on him in their lesson after lunch. She has an odd feeling that

something unnatural is happening to Emmett. She can't explain why she thinks that, maybe it is her superhero senses kicking in.

*Some superhero I am.* The thought makes her laugh bitterly.

Olivia has the best secret identity. During the day she has a dreadful limp and her left arm is almost useless. Who would think Olivia could be a super hero. Sure, she does have pretty cool night vision, and if she sits on the roof at moonrise the stony flesh down the left side of her body comes back to life. When she is moon-touched, she is stronger than normal, and her reflexes and coordination are better. But she is just twelve years old and isn't allowed out on the streets after dark. If her mum and dad ever catch her sneaking out at night, she will be grounded for life.

That is if she wants to continue with the hero thing. It would be so much easier just to give up and leave it all to Yip. The problem she has to solve

now is to decide what to do. Besides, despite Yip's fixation on finding his invisible, imaginary monster, the city has been strangely quiet since the defeat of the trixies.

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"Olivia!" Darcy shouts. Her voice is laced with annoyance. "Are you ignoring me?"

"Sorry Darcy." Olivia is a little embarrassed. "I was just lost in thought."

"Were you thinking about Emmett Mayse?" Darcy's lips quirked up in a malicious smirk. "Do you *like* Emmett?" She even makes quotation marks in the air with her fingers as she says *like*. "Now I am ignoring you," Olivia says.

Darcy makes several more comments but Olivia acts like she is not even there. Kellyanne and Lollie do their best to stay out of the situation. They put

their heads down and concentrate very hard on the contents of their lunch boxes.

Darcy jumps up in a huff and storms off.

# CHAPTER 7

## Infested

Olivia glances across the classroom at Emmett Mayse. He looks terrible. His cheeks are hollow: his eyes are red and puffy. The dark smudges under them look like bruises. He is taking the death of his brother hard and Mr Disanto isn't helping in the slightest.

Everybody dreads Personal Development and Health at the best of times, but today is even worse than the sexual education lesson. At least that was just embarrassing. Olivia watches Emmett's hands clench into fists, as the teacher drones on and on about the dangers of alcohol, especially on young, developing bodies.

"Children aren't mature enough to know when it is inappropriate to drink and they make even worse decisions than usual when affected by alcohol." He taps the smart

board and several graphs with facts and figures pop up.

“Children think ‘bad things won’t happen to me.’ But when they drink, they take even more stupid risks than normal.”

Mr Disanto is fired up with self-righteousness, shaking his finger in his *thou shalt not drink* sermon.

Emmett’s foot starts tapping under the desk.

“Look at what happened the other week with those boys...” Mr Disanto trails off as Emmett’s chair scrapes loudly on the floor. In his excitement, he must have forgotten Emmett’s brother was one of those boys.

“He wasn’t drunk!” Emmett shouts. “He was trying to do the right thing.”

At least Mr Disanto has the good grace to look embarrassed as Emmett storms out of the room. He doesn’t call Emmett back.

One of the boys at the back of the room claps slowly. “Cold dude,” he says.

That snaps Mr Disanto out of his sheepish pose. His redfaced embarrassment turns to purple anger.

“Mr Bohman, you can see me second half of lunch tomorrow.”



Kurt Bohman stops clapping and groans.

Olivia raises her hand tentatively.

“Yes, Miss Stone?”

“May I go to the bathroom, please?” Olivia asks.

He waves his hand at the door, dismissing her.

Olivia limps out through the door and starts looking for Emmett. She checks the door out into the rear quadrangle but can't see him.

He had gone in this direction from the classroom, so he was either heading for the front door or seeking sanctuary in the toilets. She had done the same thing a few times herself.

There is an empty classroom that looks out onto the front courtyard. She slips inside and hurries to the window. If Emmett is skipping out of school, he should be out in the courtyard already. It is deserted.

Olivia stops at the door to the boy's toilet and listens. She can't hear anything.

“Emmett,” she hisses, trying to keep her voice low enough so as not to attract the attention of a teacher, but

loud enough to carry to anyone inside. She waits and calls again.

Olivia feels bad for Emmett. No one but him believes the story of the boys trying to rescue a young girl from the water. The police decided the surviving boys had made up that story so they wouldn't get in trouble. The newspapers had run with the official version of the story too. Boys experimenting with alcohol and making a tragic decision is a much more popular story. Olivia knows there was a girl, and she knows why the police never found her.

A trixie had lured the boys into the water and dragged them under. All three had narrow bruises on their lower legs that the coroner couldn't explain.

She has to find Emmett and let him know at least someone believes him.

Olivia calls a third time before glancing up and down the corridor. She steps into the boys' toilets and rounds the tiled wall. The wash basins are the same as in the girl's washroom but there are only four cubicles down one side of

the room. The other side has a long shiny metal trough. The tiles in front of it are splashed with what she is sure isn't water. The place smells awful. Her shoes stick to the floor and peel up with a wet ripping sound.

*Boys are so gross.*

For one thing, how can they go to the toilet while standing next to someone else? And how can they actually miss such a big target as the trough? It is the size of half the wall for goodness sake and they still manage to pee on the floor.

Olivia is glad she doesn't have brothers.

Olivia looks at the cubicles. One of the doors is closed. She walks over and taps on the door. "Emmett?" "Go away," Emmett replies.

"Are you okay?"

"I will be if people would leave me alone."

Olivia remains quiet for a moment. "I believe the story about the girl," she finally says.

The door bangs open and Emmett's face is contorted with anger. He storms out of the cubicle, forcing Olivia back towards the trough.

Olivia stops before her feet step in any more splashy bits.

Emmett stops too but leans forward until their foreheads actually touch.

*Several tiny creatures crawl into Olivia's shiny dark hair.*

"No...one...believes." Each word is snarled out into her face.

"No one else might, but I do," she says. Her voice softens.

"I really do."

Emmett's shoulders slump and he shuffles back into the cubicle and latches the door.

Olivia stares at the closed door for almost a minute but Emmett doesn't come back out. *Fine!*

As Olivia is walking back out to the corridor, a younger boy with red framed glasses rushes in, nearly colliding with her. He skids to a halt and hurriedly checks the sign on the wall to make sure it says Boys.

“Hey,” he says.

Olivia pats him on the shoulder. “Try not to miss,” she encourages. “And don’t forget to wash your hands.”

The boy just stands there with his mouth agape as he watches Olivia limp back to class.

*Great, most of the school thinks I’m weird enough as it is.* She sighs as she heads back into Health, absently scratching at her head.

As she sits back in her seat, Olivia realises she really does need to go to the toilet.

*Wonderful, she thinks. It’s a long time until the home time bell.*



**I**nside one of the cubicles in the boy’s toilet, a dozen tiny creatures scamper out of Emmett Mayse’s hair and up the wall. Once they reach the top they spread out and get to work, busily spinning an almost invisible web above each cubicle.

Three of the creatures spiral down to their new home in the hair of a young boy with red rimmed glasses.

