

1st Place

Wishful Curses

By A.S. (JHS 1)

she needs to go.

Sorry. That wasn't very nice of me to say. Long story short, I need a certain ~~she~~ ~~devil~~ girl out of my life. I've been looking for a solution for a very, very long time.

That solution may come ~~now now now now~~ right at this moment. I trudged to the house everybody called "The Manor"; nothing more, nothing less. Contrary to expectation, it's just a normal house (albeit empty and crumbling) on a street taken over by weeds. Rumor has it, a *thing* lives there.

That unreliable piece of information was crafted by a scattering of ~~idiots~~ people who went there to explore, and the result was *something* is in there. One thing was related about all of the sightings; the *thing* said that it would grant a person one wish ~~from their deepest desires~~. That's why I was standing here at this moment, right in front of the house.

I crashed down onto the ground, my rib cage aching from a perfectly placed kick. No, not *her*—

"What are you *doing* here?" laughed Nimue, flicking her perfect red-gold hair in an overly dramatic fashion. "Maybe you're the monster that everyone's talking about. You *are* perfectly creepy-looking, standing out here in the rain." Her eyes, the color of rotting grass, flickered with malice.

~~I wanted to kill her.~~

I ground my teeth, and ran into the manor, white-hot with anger.

I found myself knee-deep in sand. The house didn't have any furniture, save for a small pot perched on top of the miniature dunes, which seemed to roil slightly in my presence. My knees shook as I saw ~~my liberation~~ a withered hand reaching out from the pot, followed by a head with wild, straggly clumps of hair. Its eyes glared at me, sharing a tale of sorrow and regret and pain and anger and revenge—

"Please get rid of Nimue! I-I'll do ~~anything and everything~~ for you to get rid of her anything!"

It smiled. "*It is done.*"

The following day, I sighed in relief as she didn't show up to the classroom. The same, however, couldn't be said for the day after. I stared at her when she strutted past her admirers—with a cast on her arm.

I ran back to the creature and its pot, seething.

"You promised me that you would get *rid of her!*" I raged.

It gave me a wolfish smile. "*Did you specify 'how long'?*" I gritted my teeth, my knuckles whitening. "*And...what will you do for me in return?*" It croaked, showing its rotten, cracked teeth.

I froze as I recalled my words. "*I-I'll do anything!*"

"That was a lie! Of course I didn't mean that!" I blubbered, knowing that anything I said was useless.

"*Let's...trade lives.*"

I gaped in horror as i felt my life slipping out from within me.

...and stared, helpless, as it walked out with my body.

i can't remember how long i've been stuck here. decades? centuries? ~~an eternity?~~ maybe more.

i needed a ~~victim~~ friend..somebody to set me free.

footsteps sounded outside.

"I know you've gone through hardships just like me...so please, help..."

a straggly-looking boy stumbled through the front door, bruised and bleeding.

i breeze out the front door, stretching my arms, and i smile. not the best body, but i still have a job to do.