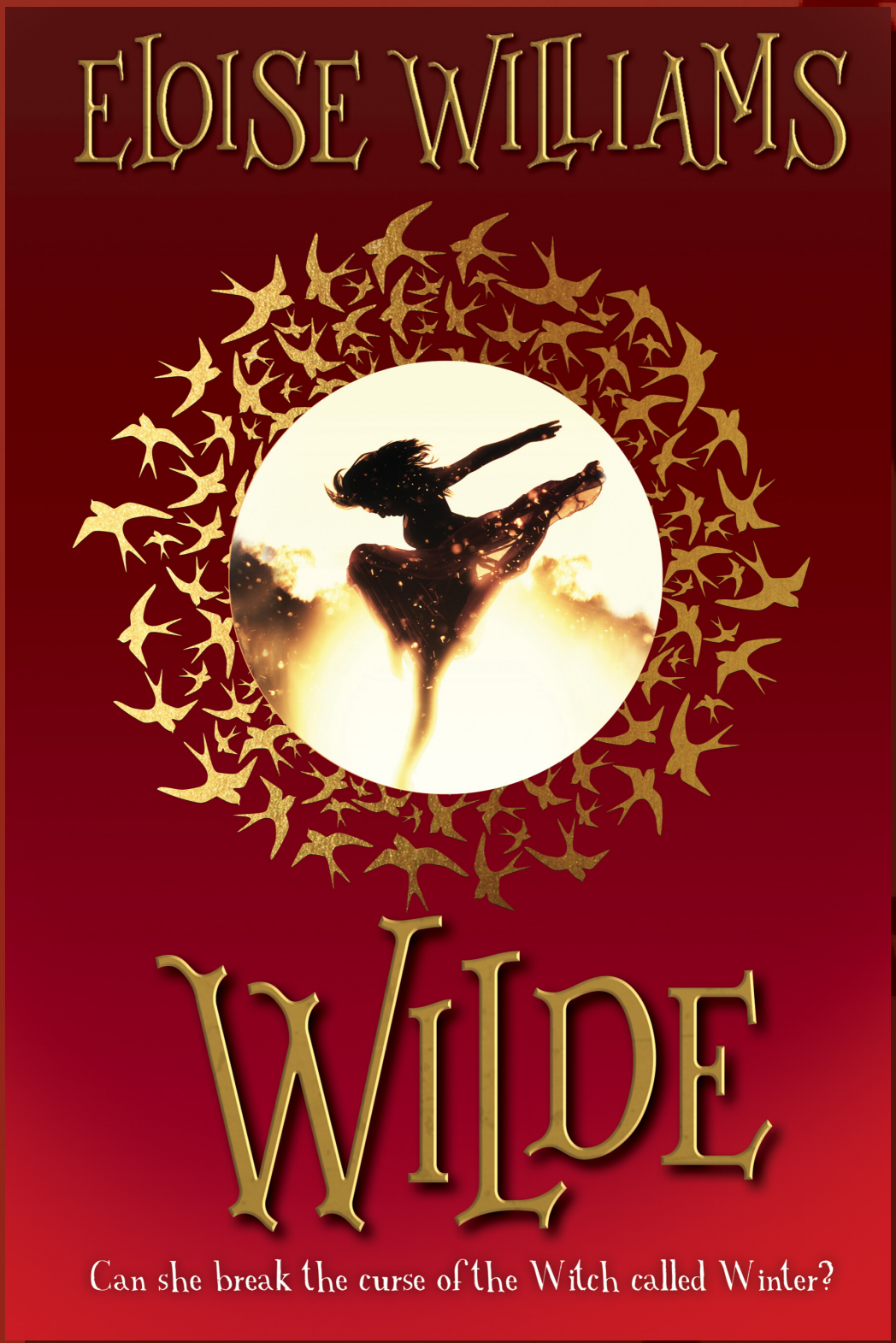
KS2 Activity Pack



CHILDREN'S LAUREATE WALES.

Firefly

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illustrated by Guy Manning

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illustrated by Guy Manning

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First chapter of *Wilde*

This activity pack is designed for KS2 pupils

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TITANIA

...The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

The Fairies sing

I

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

Chorus

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

II

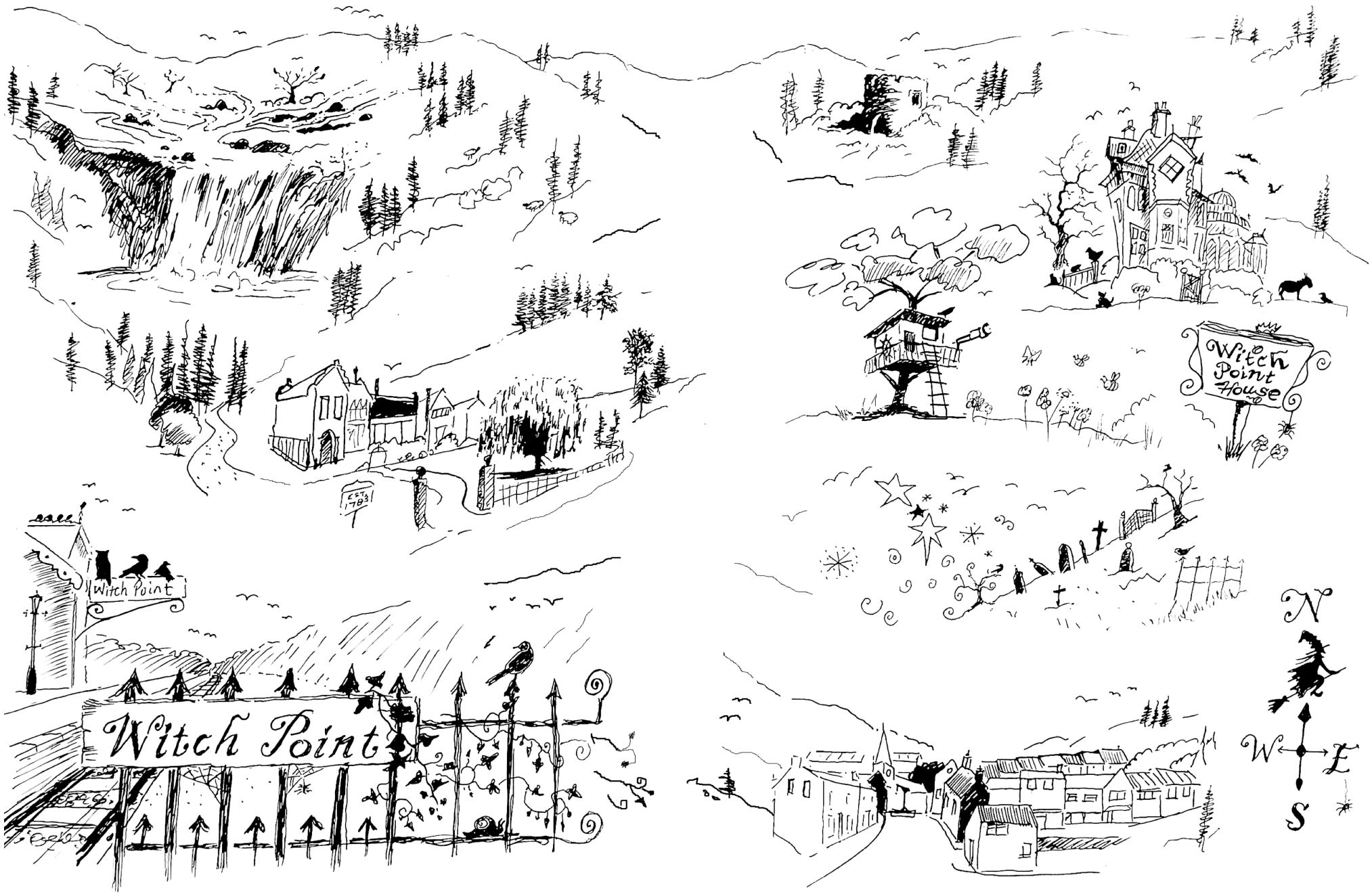
Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

Chorus

Philomel, with melody, &c

FAIRY

Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.


Witch Point House
Witch Point
Witch Point
N
W
E
S

Wilde Wordsearch

M R L Y G Q S G M O D H M F A X J B C F P G D U
S D M X H H E T L I B E R R B W Z U I Q S O J X
H Z Z X V X Y H I I N L S O Q D E V L V E R N I
A X M Y J A Z Z R B Y J D B L G P R R I P W N M
K X E W U C U D P C E O A I N K U H S H C D B A
E C B M I A S G L C N Y N E C Y P L K H M P Q E
S U D L X M N B X U S R V H L D M J E L J V C R
P J M U F M E M M U L B E U Q L M U E T D M X D
E V L G C A W E T E V L R N O O U R L R V A H S
A W V U B G E S I H L F S I O F J U S E G Q R T
R W R C J W F B M O S O W P Q L A S E E Q O A H
E L K A X Q I C D A G T I K S E Y A H H P D V G
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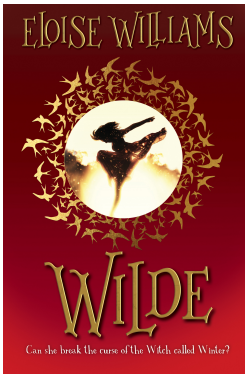
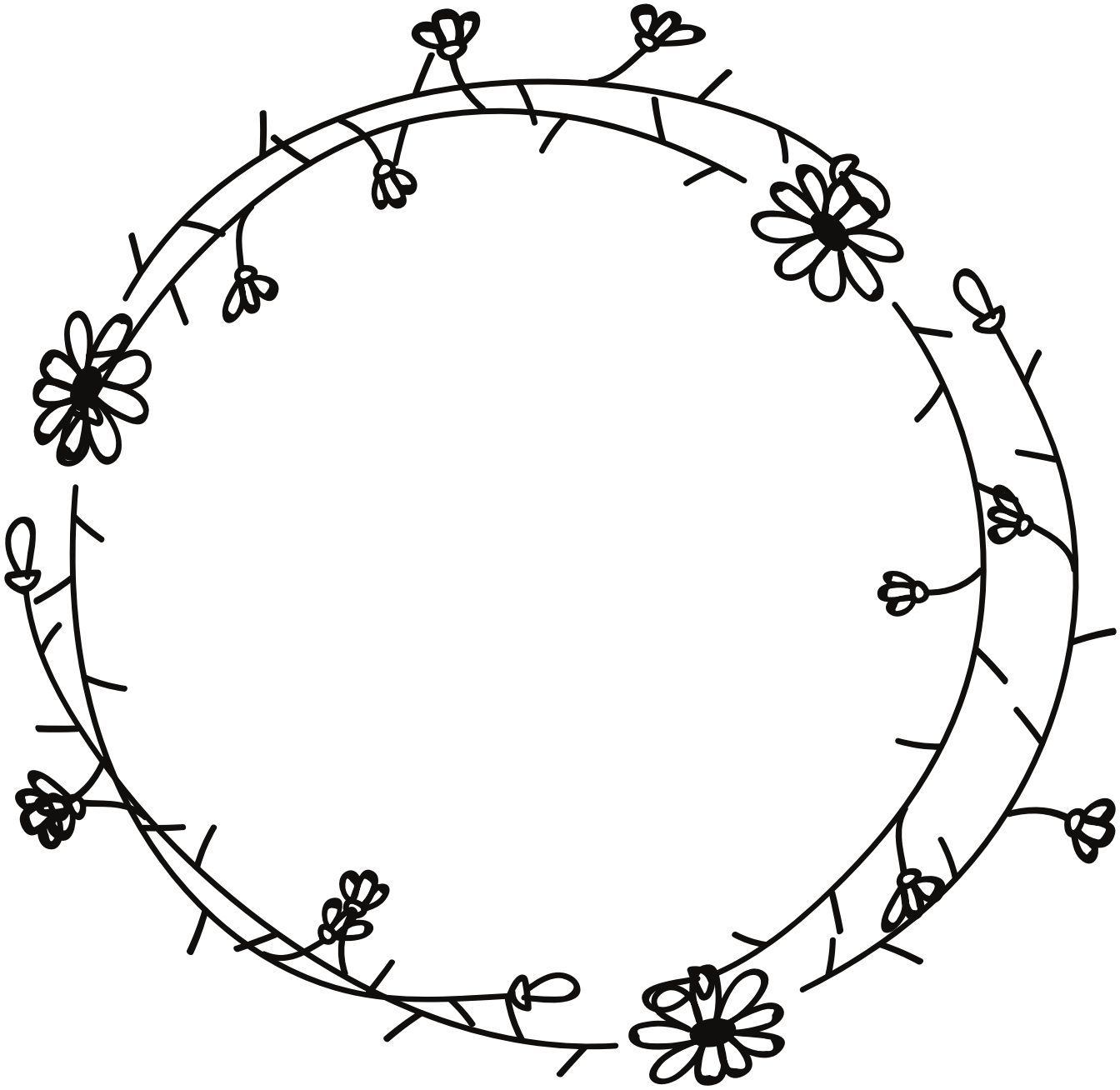
X I R Z W G N R D M J E T I E L V J G U D D S N
R P E G N Y O J G E O Q J U A W N F G S Q H Q R
X A H R H D Y V F V H N U E E M I O N E I X A E
R N E I Z D E U L Z I K K D S I A L M N E Q U M
E E A Q Y J T H R P L U U N I J J W L C L M W M
V V R A N R B L N O W D X X L O W F I I R W Q U
A I S A W I T C H P O I N T H U G A N T A T Y S
A D A R J L O I L H T V Y R L M Y M N Z C M A D
G K L Q L L A F R E T A W I I Q Z Q Z Y F H S I
Y E S B M C U E V A W T A E H N B U C A A I A M
Y V O T H E W I T C H C A L L E D W I N T E R N

birds
Dorcas
Eloise Williams
heatwave
I am a witch
Midsummer Nights Dream
Mrs Danvers
rehearsals
Shakespeare
The Sleeks
The Witch called Winter
treehouse
waterfall
Wilde
Witch Point



Draw a self-portrait in the garland and write what makes you magic in the box



'We are all witches because we are all magic
... let's celebrate our weirdness.' Wilde

Write a letter to yourself like Wilde.
What would you say? Remember to be kind.

Dear .....

Yours hopefully,

.....

Design a spell. You'll need a name, ingredients and instructions. Are there any cautions to beware of? How do you break this spell?

Spell Name

Ingredients

Instructions

WILDE

Eloise Williams

‘Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.’
Oscar Wilde

‘Though she be but little, she is fierce.’
William Shakespeare

1

Yes, I got kicked out of school on purpose. No, I did not want to be sent to Witch Point.

I thought I'd be sent home, but Dad can't get out of his work in America, so I have to stay with his sister Mae. I'm not speaking to him. I don't think he's speaking to me. I've never been to Mae's house before, because Dad has never let me, and I don't want to go there now. Witch Point is legendary for all the wrong reasons. I wanted to get away from all the weird things that were happening to me and have ended up in the weirdest place in the world.

It's not so bad to look at. The sky is the brightest blue and the fields are a warm, happy yellow. A heatwave in Wales. That's how weird things have got. Extra strange because it was raining and not hot at all where I got on the train and it's only a couple of hours away. I can't wait to

go travelling like my dad does. Today I would go to Alaska and cover myself with snow. Closing my eyes against the blistering glare I remember that the world is a very big place and one day I'm going to see lots of it. I force myself off the train. The carriages judder and hiss, then pull away towards freedom. Standing back, I am fried like an egg by the sun.

I find a spot in the shade and try to think calm thoughts. I'm so thirsty, my mouth tastes disgusting: like chewing a dirty sock.

There's a noise just above my head and, squinting up, I see an owl staring down at me from the top of the Witch Point station sign. It spins its head around 360 degrees. It should be asleep in the day. Here we go again.

Birds follow me; I don't know why. They just do. When I look up again, it's been joined by a jackdaw and a crow.

No. Go away. Leave me alone. I'm not going to be weird here. I'm going to be Normal.

I look again and they have vanished. Good.

I worry a lot as I wait. Perhaps Mae has forgotten about me? Or she doesn't want me to stay with her after all? I pace the platform to

drum the thoughts out with my feet. She wouldn't leave me here, would she? I check my phone for messages. The small of my back is sticky from effort, so I stop to watch a buzzard as it loops the distant field and warn it away with my finger when it changes direction towards me.

Maybe Mae is worried that people will think I'm peculiar. She needn't worry. I'm not going to admit to anyone all the weird things that happen around me. I'm not going to tell anyone that some people have called me a…

'Wilde!' Mae's silver sequinned flip-flops make it hard for her to run. She flump-trip-flumps towards me, stubs her toe and swears. 'I'm late. I'm so sorry.'

'It doesn't matter, Mae.' It matters.

'The car. It's the heat. She's temperamental. It's so good to see you. My goodness, you've grown.'

She grabs me in a hopping hug which lasts too long. Releases me. Hugs me again. Half releases me so that we are standing too close together. Awkward. We carry the awkwardness with us as we walk to the car.

'Why are you wearing all black? You must be boiling.'

‘I like black, that’s all.’

‘Where is Mrs Lee?’

‘I told her to go.’ A lie. Mrs Lee was snoring like a cow when I scarpered. I left her a note so she wouldn’t worry. I had to haul myself through a window and shin down a tree. It’s not easy to break out of a boarding school, though I’m getting better at it. Some of my plait still hangs on a branch as a final goodbye. When you have to leave, do it quickly. Not escorted out under a shame cloud and definitely not accompanied by a disapproving adult on a three-hour train trip filled with tea and tuts.

‘She needed to go because you were late – she had to get back to teach Latin. Et cetera.’ My lie fizzes and stings. Lies always hurt.

I’m not good at school. I don’t fit in. Things always go wrong and I have to cause trouble and leave.

‘You have a twig in your hair. Shall we go home?’

Home.

Mae clambers in through the passenger side and scoots across to the driver’s, getting one of the rips in her jean-shorts caught on the gearstick, so

she has to tear them a bit more to free herself. 'I'm glad,' she says, as I get in. 'I could do with a bit more ventilation.'

She is a silver-lining finder, that's for sure.

Flapping at her face with one hand, she unwinds her window with the other. 'Come on, Vera. You can do this, old girl,' she tells the car, patting the steering wheel. 'This heat is intolerable. I feel like a tomato.'

I could tell her that she doesn't look like one, but I've lied enough already.

'Vera is a little terror to get going but once she's started, she's a dream.'

The car hacks into life. Chill-out music plays over the engine, pan pipes and chimes. As we get going, the wind blasts in through the windows like a hairdryer stuck fast on hot.

'I'm so glad you are here. I mean, I'm not, obviously, because you should have done well at that last school. It took a long time for your dad to find someone who'd take you. But I am as well. You know?'

Mae looks different from when she used to visit during the holidays. Older. I think of the thing she told me about my mum that I keep hidden

way, deep down inside. I swallow it deeper. My stomach churns. I should have eaten something. Too nervous. I take in a long burning breath, unstick my legs from the seats, blow out slowly.

Long gardens, garages, a trampoline on its side, an abandoned trike and a kid using a dustbin lid as a shield against the sun. According to legend, Witch Point is cursed. Everyone tries to leave and if they escape, they hardly ever come back. This is where my mum and dad grew up. This is where I lived till I was two. I don't want to stay in a place where they talk about witches. I don't want to think about curses. I stare out of the window, concentrate on what's outside, to stop the pain inside.

We pass a cemetery which is slowly sliding down the hill. Most of the shops and cafés on the high street are witch-themed or boarded up. I count the smells: melting plastic; suffocating exhaust fumes: all the roasting aromas of Vera.

'Eww. What's that doing there?'

A gallows stands, dark and macabre, in the town square.

'Just an attraction to bring tourists in.'

'I would think it would send them straight back out.'

The noose is missing and only part of a threadbare rope remains. Someone has hung something from it. When we get close enough, I'm relieved to see it's a toy. *Sick thing to do, all the same.*

'It's the curse,' Mae mutters under her breath.

'I don't believe in curses,' I insist.

'Tell that to the clockmakers.'

I don't know what that's supposed to mean so I don't say anything.

'Whenever there's a funeral in that church, the clock strikes thirteen times.'

'It's just a broken clock. Nothing to do with a curse.'

'Margaret Morris was crossing here and she got hit on the head by a fish. It swam straight out of the sky.'

'A freak event. They happen everywhere.'

'In the same spot, Jonathan Jones got hit by lightning; then exactly a year later his son got hit by lightning.'

'They should avoid that spot then.'

'They put it down to coincidence and a year later…'

'Don't tell me, his wife got hit by lightning.'

'No, his dog.'

'Oh, that's awful.'

'It survived, but it went from a red setter to white.'

I hate it when bad things happen to animals.

'And, as you know, the legend says that in the end the town will be plagued by a terrifying heat and everyone will die. I don't know if you've noticed Wilde but it's pretty hot at the moment.'

The curse sounds more convincing than I'd expected, but I'm not going to admit it.

Vera starts up the lane, then stops. The engine rattles and groans like my stomach.

'I hope you like the house.' Mae struggles out and retrieves my case from the back seat. I take it from her. The clasp is fragile and I don't want it to pop and scatter my belongings all over the lane. There isn't much in the case. I've just brought the important things: a seagull's skull, the *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, a photo of my mum and me when I was a baby, two sticks of rock, a folder of my favourite future travel destinations, basic clothes and a broken raven brooch I never leave behind.

We pant up the last bit of the hill and turn the

corner. The house scrutinizes me. I feel smaller than a toddler under its inspection.

'It's OK. Witch Point House has been waiting for you.'

Gulp.

Craning my neck, I take it all in. It's imposing. It has three chimneys and a weathervane in the shape of a stretching cat. The windows are all slanted, as if the house is leaning, and there are lanterns and bells hanging from every ledge.

'It's different.' I'm doing my best.

'Different is good.' Mae strides ahead and I trot the path behind her, holding my suitcase together.

'Why are the windows wonky?'

'They are witch windows. Slanted to stop a witch from flying in. Hilarious, really.'

'Stupid.' I laugh. I'm glad we agree it's ridiculous.

'As if a witch can't fly sideways.'

The arched-back weathervane cat moves without a breath of wind, then springs off, and I realise it is Mrs Danvers, Mae's cat. The weathervane she has been sleeping in front of is a girl riding a bear.

'She's being a bit of a sourpuss, because she likes to have all the attention. She'll calm down in

a bit.' Mae flip-flap-flops up the steps and adjusts a telescope on the porch. I hang back.

Home.

The witch windows throw out diagonal sky sapphires. In the Victorian conservatory, healing plants wilt. Heady scents of lavender and jasmine, saffron and rambling rose swirl out. Colourful homemade potions sparkle like rock pools. Mae makes cosmetics and remedies with natural ingredients. She cured me of whooping cough when I was a baby and mended Dad's broken leg when he fell off his bike. Or so the story goes.

Further across the garden I can see a treehouse. Now that is something to be excited about.

'Your room is right at the top.' Mae hangs over the balustrade and points to a slanted window at the very tip of the house. 'You can see the sea in the distance from there.'

'Perfect.' I am already planning my nights in the treehouse.

Mae pushes open the door. 'Welcome, Wilde. We've been expecting you.'

Shadows skitter and still. Pentacle tiles, blue against silver, nestle under my feet. A breeze tickles the back of my neck.

I turn and something flies up the stairs.

'I've told the animals to give you a chance to settle in before they welcome you. They can be a bit overwhelming *en masse*.'

'I'd like to meet them all now.' The only animals I can see are the birds painted on the walls. 'Why haven't I been here since I was a baby?'

'That, Wilde, is complicated.'

Mae's phone makes a noise like a werewolf howling at the moon and she goes outside to answer it.

The hall is gloomy cool with the blue stained-glass panels filtering the light. Almost like swimming. Drowning.

I watch the shadows shuffle. Something moves in the mirror, in the corner of my eye. I feel the shiver of strange all over me. I plunge down into the azure depths, searching for a slippery-fish memory I can't quite catch. Mae brings me back to the surface.

'That was Mrs Lee informing me of how you left. What a stupid and dangerous thing to do, Wilde.' Mae puts her phone on the hallstand and I prepare myself for an argument. Instead she turns around and extends her hand for my phone. 'At least you aren't grounded.'

I give it over and sulk.

'Don't worry. Your dad has given me the times he'll call, so you'll be able to speak to him.'

As if that's the only thing people use their phones for.

Mae takes my suitcase and I snatch it back.

'The clasp is a bit faulty. It's an old one. I just want to make sure nothing falls out.' I don't like people having my things, in case I need to run. 'I'll take it up.'

'Just keep on going till you can't go any further. It has a picture of a llama on the door so you can't miss it.'

'Why a llama?'

'Why not?'

I start the Everest stairs.

'I'll put the kettle on. No, wait. You're young. I'll make us lemonade. I've never done it before, but it can't be that difficult.' Mae's flip-flops slap away then stop. 'Wilde?'

I halt mid-flight.

'I'm not very good at this but I'm going to give it my very best shot.'

I nod to show I'm going to do the same.

At the top of the stairs there is a photo of Mae acting. She is wearing a tiara and impossibly high heels. Along the threadbare carpet, up another flight, followed by another – smaller for servants who didn't get as much to eat, so didn't need fat stairs.

The door creaks open. Laid out on a chair is a school uniform in green and gold. Bleurgh. Mae and Dad want me to go to Witch Point Primary, even though the term is almost over, so I can make some friends before the summer holidays. It's the most ridiculous idea anyone ever had. I can't really argue because Dad is already livid with me. I meant it when I promised him I'd be on my best behaviour while he was away working. He's researching cures for diabetes, so other people won't die of it like Mum did. It's important. Dad is the best dad and I've let him down. I should have stuck it out, but the bullies were just too much. Again. Is it my fault? If I could be normal, would they stop picking on me?

I put my suitcase near the door, where I can grab it quickly if necessary, and sit on the bed. The springs squeak, so I bounce a bit for fun and make a horrendous noise.

Home.

A single word has so much power.

I practise being Normal. Cross my legs and tilt my head as if I'm listening to someone. Fold my arms and pretend to be having a scintillating conversation. Stand up and walk about at different speeds. I'm going to have to practise lots.

Peering through the slanted window, I long for that shiver of sea on the horizon.

'Lemonade.'

Mae comes in and puts the tumbler down on an old worn desk. 'It's like drinking washing-up liquid so I brought you a jug of water to swill the taste away.'

'Thank you.'

'You won't say that once you've tasted it. It's so good to have you here. Properly. I'm really thrilled, and we are going to have so much fun.' She runs her hand along the empty bookshelf and loads her fingerprints with dust. 'It's going to be fine. Fun,' she repeats. 'And there's plenty of room for your things.'

Talking of fun: 'How do I use your wi-fi without my phone?'

'I'm afraid, Wilde, that I find having wi-fi on all

the time in my house completely unmanageable. The waves in the air give me a headache. Also, I have no willpower when it comes to online shopping, so, for the most part, I manage without.'

I search for an answer and come up with nothing. Taking a sip of lemonade to be polite, I have to suck my cheeks to hold the disgust in.

'I'll introduce you to the animals tomorrow.' Mae is notorious for letting any waif and stray into her house. 'Of course, you know Mrs Danvers, because I brought her on holiday with me.'

'Yes, she's adorable.' The lie ricochets, whizzes past my ear, then bounces off the wall to clip the back of my head.

'Isn't she?' Mae pats a space for me to sit, smoothing the choppy waves of duvet. 'Let's meditate.'

Let's not, I think, but I sit and let her close her eyes. I want to show I'm grateful to her. The Witch Point uniform sits on the chair like it already has a person inside it. I wish it would walk away. The jitter of first day nerves jolts through me and I bite one of my nails too low. I've been to lots of schools. Why am I still so scared?

Outside the window, the day burns itself out. A fox slips through the bushes at the end of the garden, bushy tail quivering. The day pinks into lavender, stars button the sky, a chitter rises from the brittle parched grasses. The sea lines the edge of the distance and pulls at me. Soon everything is shadows and I am full of ache.

Mae gets up and flicks on the light. 'Now. Isn't that better?'

'Yes, much.' This time, the lie gnaws the inside of my cheek, as vicious as Mae's lemonade.

'Will you be OK up here?'

I nod.

She blows a kiss and leaves the door ajar.

Wrestling my daps off, I wriggle my swollen toes. I could try to make the most of it here. It's not long till the holidays and surely Mae won't mind if I don't go to school? I can tell her I'm too traumatised, or simply be honest. Some people don't make friends easily because they are too shy. Some people are weird and mess everything up. Some people have to cause trouble and leave even if they aren't troublemakers at all and doing it terrifies them.

The ceiling of my room is v-shaped, so I duck

into the corners to check for spiders. I feel better when I find some. I like to watch them knit their webs and dangle on the draughts. Not that there is any draught. The skylight is open to the stars. Not a breath of air for anyone in Witch Point.

Emptying my possessions from my case I place them on the shelf. One of the raven's legs is broken and its silver is so tarnished it looks more like gold. When I have enough money, I'm going to get its leg soldered. For now, I put it back in its box to sleep.

The sticks of rock ooze inside the cellophane, but they remind me of the yellow flat where I live with Dad, so I open one and bite off the end to combat the taste of bitter lemons.

My Shakespeare book is heavy and takes up lots of space in my case, which is why I can never pack many clothes when I run. I lift it up and brush the travel fluff from the cover. I take the seagull skull out and delicately kiss it. I flick through my travel plans to make sure they are undamaged. One day I'm going to set off around the world and never come back. The photo of my mum goes next to the bed. She looks happy there caught in a rectangle of waterfall and river.

Claiming the room with my things makes it feel better. Music swans its way up the stairs. I've heard it before. It's called 'Fly Me to the Moon' and the singer is a crooner called Frank somebody or other. I lie back on the bed and let the song filter through my body. I wish I had my phone so I could listen to something good instead. I concentrate on choosing where I'm going to live when I have my own life. Venezuela, near Angel Falls? Canada, somewhere with bears? Norway, so I can see the Northern Lights? For now, I'm here, like it or not.

Another chapter starts. Will it be a good one?

The question keeps me from falling asleep. Until it doesn't.

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