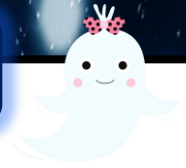




Winter's Ghost



"How do you feel today?" Dr. Blake asks, a concentrated look in her eye. I dodge her gaze, hoping more than anything for this to be over. 'Oh, I feel fine', 'I am exactly where I'm supposed to be at', 'Oh life is wonderful'. Sarcastic thoughts swirl around in my mind, fogging up my brain. I stare at the only place that will make me feel even relatively safe: the window, fresh snowflakes dancing to the ground like ballerinas on the other side of its glass.



"Isabella?" The distant voice asks, a hint of concern etched into the sound. For just a moment she hears her Mum speaking, but as her head swivels to the voice's owner, a mousy woman with brown hair looks bewildered at her instead. She blinks and remembers where she is. "I'm sorry, what were you saying?" I try to make it sound upbeat and strong, but my words tumble out catching on one another. She just smiles sadly but I can sense pity, almost oozing out of her skin.

"Look, Isa, I know you're going through a lot, what with what happened last winter, and I know it's hard-" She began, but I cut her off with a vicious glare, like knives stabbing into her. "Don't, don't you dare tell me you know how it feels, you have no idea what it's like," I half shout at her through gritted teeth. I blink away the tears and look outside again and that's when I see her. Long strawberry-blonde hair billows gracefully over her shoulders, her pale skin a ghostly complexion. But of course, she's like that, she is a ghost!

I shake my head, squeezing my eyes shut, telling myself that it is just the snow playing tricks on my 'fragile' mind. I take a peek, but she is still there, almost a shade of blue in the strengthening wind. She is wrapped in a shawl, wearing a solemn expression upon her beautiful face. I am speechless, although it's probably best if I don't say anything to Blake because 'hello more therapy'. I look straight into the eyes of the woman I once hugged every day. My mum, a winter's ghost in my heart.

