

# The Only One Left Standing

*by vaega*

Her only memory is from her three-year-old self. Who is she? Where is her family?

## Prologue

*Chapter 1 of 1*

Her only memory is from her three-year-old self. Who is she? Where is her family?

To say I had an odd childhood is to oversimplify this story greatly. The beginning of my story would have to start in the middle of a forest. Many highlights in my life have led me to many different forests. When people mention large forests as dark, silent, and gloomy, I am never sure if I want to correct them, or simply leave them in the dark, so to speak. The many voices I have encountered throughout my life enjoy most humans' misconceptions of nature and her denizens. Scientists have believed for many years that wild animals are more afraid of people than people are afraid of them. I have it on unarguable authority that animals do not feel fear. Fear is a human conception tacked onto a hunted animal. Animals are far smarter than humans give them credit for. Unsurprising, considering the average human never learns to commune with nature.

Though I never asked for the great power I held, various events in my life have forced many abilities upon me. In the beginning, I was no different than the average four-year-old girl. In the wizarding world, anyway. My parents were both powerful wizards, as well as teachers of a very prominent wizarding school. The oldest of my three brothers, at nine years, Julien, was already focused on following our father's footsteps in potions making. The middle brother, Kendrick, who was seven years of age, was intent on becoming an Auror. At three, my twin, Aurelius, was the only one who spoke to me. He never seemed to care that I was the only girl in a house full of boys. But, of course, he was still a boy and therefore hung out with my brothers. When Julien wasn't experimenting with his potions, he and Ricky would hunt me down and force me to play "Death Eater" to their "Auror." As a small three-year-old girl, I really couldn't do much else. Or I would be hunted down as a "stand-in" for Julien's latest experiment. As a result of this, I acquired a sense of whenever one of my older brothers came looking for me. Unfortunately, before I found this new ability of mine, my eldest brother's experiments changed me in many ways, some of which he never knew about. Julien used Ricky to frighten me and Aurel to silence me about the whole of his experiments. Mother and Father were often gone, teaching at their school, leaving an old, crotchety nursemaid behind.

Nurse Tirah certainly seemed blind to what my brothers were doing, but now as I think back on those distant days, I realize she may have known more than we ever guessed; although I still believe she never knew the truth of it all.

Before Julien began using me as his guinea pig, my eyes were as normal and green as any girl my age. But thanks to the various experiments of my eldest brother, they shifted to a bright and icy silver. Nowadays their color has faded to an intermittent gray, a color which my friends tell me darkens to pitch black whenever I become upset.

I also acquired a heightened sensitivity to--and awareness of--my surroundings. My odd-colored eyes could see better, in day or night, and my hearing and sense of smell picked up many things I had never known existed. It started out a brisk summer day before the beginning of autumn. I was once again hiding from Julien and Ricky. Aurel and I had split up, as being chased in separated directions often led to our elder brothers giving up rather quickly. I was waiting for him beside one of our usual meeting posts, the old, run-down barn in the back of beyond near the edge of our property and the beginning of the woods. He never came. Instead, Julien found me and dragged me to his laboratory. After that "session" it became markedly more difficult for my brothers to track me down for their own enjoyment.

The last time my older brothers caught me, Julien gave me the voices. Suddenly, I could hear more than my family and Nurse. The voices sounded in the back of my head, similar to the Legilimency Father taught the four of us children. The voices led me outside to them, into a whole new world that I had only dreamed about before. For a very long time, I never told anyone about my new friends. They told me no one would believe me. Not that I had anyone to tell other than my twin, Aurel.

The estate was out in the country, on the edge of a fairly good-sized forest. The manor itself was huge. In my explorations and trying to stay away from my brothers, I found a lot of secret hallways and stairs I'm sure only Father knew about. I knew several ways into the mansion, one that even took me to the closet in my room. Most of the carpets were green with gold trim, and the tapestries were light colors, inducing the light from the windows to enter in. Mother and Father had their own chairs in the front room in front of the fire, both black.

I spent most of my time outside with the animals. The songbirds were rather flighty creatures, but they always had the most interesting stories. The few times I got away at night, the nocturnal creatures would tell stories as well. I would later realize that not all of those stories were simple fiction and fun. In fact, all the animals I have spoken to throughout my life had the ability to teach without the student even being aware of the fact. I learned to join in on the lives of the animals by shifting my form to match my friends. Their voices told me how, taking me through each change step-by-step. When the teaching was finished, I could soar with a hawk by days, and owls by night, I could run with the deer, or race through the higher branches with my fellow squirrels. The few times my brothers tried to catch me out in the forest, I could hide up in the trees or sometimes even in plain sight until they gave up and returned to their own play.

Although they began their teachings early, the night I lost my family interrupted those lessons.

It was raining, but not yet dark. Both of my parents were still at school in a late teachers meeting. Ricky and Julien had given up on finding me by that time and had turned on Nurse. She had managed to confine them to their own separate rooms in each corner of the manor and had collapsed in Mother's big easy chair in front of the fire. Because of the rain, I was hiding in Mother's domain: the library. Aurel was with me, and we were looking at the newest books Mother had gotten. Several of them had quite descriptive drawings of each plant that was written about. That night has been branded in my mind's eye so deeply that I can still see clearly those pictures. I remember my brother pointing to something in his own book. I never saw just what he had been pointing at because at that moment Mother's familiar hissed from his spot on the mantle above the brightly burning fire. The cat rarely moved from the mantle shelf, so Mother would always find out if my older brothers bothered me or Aurel there. The library was the only place either of us were safe from their teasing. Mother always threatened Julien and Ricky with reading lessons, so they avoided the library like the plague.

I heard a noise as if someone was moving around out in the halls. Then Mother's familiar looked up, his eyes narrowed, and he hissed. His fur puffed out like some strange orange spitting ball of fur.

I heard muffled voices, and then the double doors flew off their hinges and crashed to the floor in flames. The mutilated doorway framed two figures, robed in complete black. Each sported an alabaster skull mask, half hidden by the huge, black hoods.

*"Avada Kedavra."*