

Where Writers Go After 8PM

I sit in the upstairs of the centuries old Boston Library. Staring at my cursor blinking on my computer screen. The only thing written is my name, Laurie Alcott, in the header, as I start the last five-ish chapters of my novel.

I have a deadline to complete and my brain has decided to go blank. I can't even focus. My eyes keep wondering. Ears keep jumping from noise to noise.

I can hear other hands on keyboards typing. The yawns of people who have been here far longer than I have. I can hear the low whispers of those with friends, trying to get things done but talking instead. I am far more focused on the noises around me than the sight in front of me.

I have no idea how to get from Chapter 27 to the end. The wheels in my brain have simply just turned off. How do I get the Prince to regain the trust of his people and lead them into battle, all while his twin brother is poisoning the minds of his subjects? I don't even have an ending yet. Will the Prince succeed in building back his kingdom? Or will his brother triumph and reign over all?

I thought having a name like Alcott meant I was supposed to be paving the way in society. Louisa May Alcott introduced society to strong female leads and continues to impact American Literature.

I have no relation to Louisa May Alcott. That I know of. There are a lot of similarities between the two of us though. I have three sisters and I am the second born out of the four of us. We also have the same birthday. November 29, although I was born 170 years later.

Growing up my parents definitely fed into the illusion that Louisa May Alcott and I could have some kind of ancestorship. Little Woman room theme. Bookshelves galore. Not that I minded the books. I've never actually read Little Woman either. Maybe as an act of rebellion

against my parents for forcing the influence on me. I am not unaware of the impact that book had during the 19th century though.

Being fed the constant idea that Louisa and I could have a smidge of relation, I strived to be like her, wanting to make an impact with every word I wrote. I've always wanted to be a writer. Always wanted to achieve greatness.

If I don't write, what will I become then? The four years of college will mean nothing if I cannot complete this piece. There's so much doubt spiralling through my head. My heart beats quickly in my chest thinking of amounting to nothing.

I can't write like the authors being published today. I definitely can't write like my namesake. But I've always wanted to write. I've always wanted a book published, my name at the bottom and underneath that, *New York Times Best Seller*. But are these just the dreams of a child? Am I reaching too far? Do I even have the talent to get there?

The doubt is a constant whirlwind in my head and my heart. Making me spiral into thinking I have no place being a writer. My chest constricts. My breathing comes out short and winded.

This is not the first novel I've written, however, this is the first novel that is being published. Even more pressure to add to my shoulders.

I put my left earbud back in. The lyrics of *Storms by Fleetwood Mac* sing through my earbuds. I finally start typing. The sound of *my* fingers now hitting the keyboard is a satisfying song. My clicking is mixed in with the other productive people sprinkled throughout the library.

I'm finally making some progress. I'm maybe a third of the way done. The Prince found the scrolls that tell him the truth of what his kingdom is built on, lies. His father killed, lied, cheated to become the ruler of the kingdom.

So I've made some progress, but this is what's been happening. I get into my writing groove, write a chapter or so. And then get stuck. Is this a problem for everyone? Or is this just a sign writing and I are not meant to be?

I think my anxiety tired me out. One second I'm having writer's block and the next my head is rising off of my keyboard. The screen is now black, in contrast to the white screen I remember seeing only moments ago. I must have fallen asleep. When my laptop turns on I check the time. In bold across the middle of my laptop reads 8:53 PM. I blink again, thinking maybe I read the time wrong.

My constant overthinking must have worn me out. I don't even remember laying my head down. But anxiety really wipes you out, I guess.

It's Tuesday. The Boston Library closes at 8:00PM today. Meaning, no one woke me up and the library is now closed. I rub my eyes. Trying to clear the foggiess from my brain.

I got up from the cubicle I was sitting in for the last six hours. My legs aching when I stand. I don't hear any clicking of keyboards, no hushed whispers, no rustling through purses or backpacks to find something. All I hear is silence.

The lights flicker as if to say, 'You're trapped in the best place.'

I get up to walk around. Searching for someone. Searching for an unlocked door. Searching for *anything*. Why would they just leave me to sleep and lock up?

The library has a total of ten stories. Only four are open to the public. I was trying to complete the rest of my novel on the top floor. Which means I have to go down and check every floor to see if there is someone here to help me.

I am about halfway to the stairs that lead me to the level below.

THUD.

The sound of a book hitting the library floor startles me. I walk over to where the book fell. As I turn into the aisle titled mystery, there is a man bending down to pick up the fallen book.

I take in the sight in front of me. His back is facing me. My eyes meet the raven black hair at his head. I do not see the front of his clothing, but from behind it looks as though he has just stepped out of a Jane Austen novel.

He examines the book that just fell and turns to put it back on the shelf. As he is turning, I catch a glimpse of his face. His hair is parted to the side, favoring the right side of his head. A black strip of hair rests above his lip. From the side it looks as though his mouth is in an eternal snarl.

He looks so familiar. Like someone I've read about. Seen in my history books. But I can't place the familiarity.

He finally realizes my presence. Jumping a little at the sight of me. He seems to be just as shocked as I am to see another person in the library. As he turns to face me, my eyes go wide.

My mind screams. *Edgar Allan Poe. Edgar Allan Poe.* Over and over again.

I have to grab the shelf next to me to steady my balance. The resemblance is uncanny. Edgar Allan Poe's living doppelganger is standing twenty feet away from me.

He quirks a brow at my bewilderment.

"Are you alright ma'am?" Gosh his voice sounds exactly how I imagined. Melodically pleasing with a southern twang to it.

The LARPer (live action role players) are really going all out this year. The special effects on his face make him identical looking to Poe. Every book he's written, book I've read

about him, picture I've seen has made me imagine Poe exactly like the man standing in front of me. I almost want to applaud him for how into the Edgar Allen Poe character he is.

He's staring at me blankly because I have yet to respond and I'm almost positive my mouth is gaping open.

"Y-yes. I'm fine. You just look identical to *him*." I say. Waving my finger up and down. Gesturing to his outfit.

His eyebrow goes up again.

"Identical to who?" The melodic tone of his voice made his words sound sung.

I give a laugh. Thinking he is pulling my leg. You don't walk out of the house dressed as Edgar Allen Poe and not *know* you're dressed as Edgar Allen Poe.

He's just standing there. A scowl painted on his face. Staring at me. Again.

"Edgar Allen Poe. You are the spitting image of him" I finally reply.

He scoffed.

My eyes continue to examine him. From his shoes to the sideways part in his hair. My brain jumps to the possibility of this being the *real* Edgar Allan Poe. But how would that even be possible?

My mouth must have been hanging open because he makes a disgusted face towards mine.

His hand goes out to shake mine. "What's your name, strange girl?"

"Laurie." I say as I shake his hand. "What was your name again?" Thinking maybe this time he will stop this joke.

“Edgar Allen Poe. You said it yourself, I’m the spitting image of him. Which makes sense because I *am* him.” He rambles. My mouth is still gaping open. There is no way this is the actual, real life, Edgar Allan Poe.

“Like the actual Poe?”

“As opposed to the fake Poe? Of course I am the actual Edgar Allan Poe.” I just laugh. There is no way I am standing in front of Edgar Allan Poe. How can this be real?

Maybe I’m still dreaming. This has to be a dream.

I close my eyes and pinch myself. Thinking that will wake me up. Isn’t that what Alice in Wonderland always did. My eyes opened, hoping to find myself back at my laptop, with barely anything written on it. However, when my eyes open, they meet Poe’s raven blue eyes. He’s staring at me yet again. I must look like such a weirdo to him. The man who is praised for inventing gothic literature. I am probably a freak in his mind.

“You are a very strange girl. You remind me of myself. Not all there.” He says as he swirls his fingers around his head. His comment makes me laugh.

“How did you get in here? The library closes at 8PM.”

“I always sneak in after closing. Breaking into the library really helps me get out of the agonising writing catacomb. When my intolerable mind cannot think of what to write, I know it's time to head to the library. The library is a magical place afterall.”

I am still in shock over what is happening right now. Edgar Allen Poe is standing in front of me. Telling me to break into the Boston Library after hours to help myself write.

“Are you also here to write? It does really help.”

“No. I’ve never thought to sneak in after hours to help myself write. I fell asleep in one of the cubicles. And I guess they closed up without checking the entire library.”

“It is simply the best. No wretched noises. When the library is simply desolate. It’s the perfect atmosphere to write.”

At this point I decide to just go along with it. Sleeping or not, dreaming, or not, Edgar Allan Poe is standing in front of me. Telling me to sneak into the library after closing because it will help me write. I laugh to myself because I’m either drunk, not in the right headspace, or I’m just still sleeping.

Poe starts walking down the aisle away from me.

“Where are you going?” I ask. Jogging to catch up with him.

“To find everyone else.”

Everyone else? Who in the world is everyone else. Are there more LARPers in the Boston Library? Maybe there’s an event that I was unaware of.

We continue walking around the various aisles of the fourth floor. Not quite sure who we are looking for, but we turn the corner of one of the aisles and are met with a sign hanging above the aisle.

American Literature.

There is a poster hanging on the front wall of the aisles. It’s a poster of Poe. The resemblance is astonishing.

Although I am standing here, looking back and forth between the poster and the man standing next to me. The scowl is eerily similar. Is this even possible?

Throwing all logic out the window. I will wake up eventually, but for now, what the heck. Entertaining the thought of the real Edgar Allan Poe being in the Boston Library with me is kind of exciting.

“Hey that’s me!” Poe says, which results in me laughing. “Is that really what my side part looks like?” Another laugh erupts from my throat. I always imagined Poe to be this dark, brooding, scary man. I must have judged the book by its cover. It’s a classic cliché that happens to all of us.

I can hear rustling around in one of the nearby aisles. Poe perks up, which I assume means he hears the movement too. Our eyes connect and we are in silent agreement to go check it out.

We round the corner of yet another aisle of books. I stop dead in my tracks. I can feel the blood drain from my face. There is a woman standing in the middle of the stacks. She has a book in her hand, the title reads, *The Bell Jar*.

Her short reddish-brown hair hovers above her neck. Her sharp blue eyes look back and forth between Poe and I.

I swear my eyes are about to pop out of my head with how wide I’m looking at her.

Sylvia Plath. She is standing in front of me. Her lively and energetic presence is radiating off of the shelves.

“Hello there!” Her greeting is directed towards the both of us. Her voice sounds like an old English lady who enjoys sitting on a porch swing and watching the sunset.

“Hi, who are you?” Poe goes straight into detective mode, resembling Dupin. I wonder if that’s how Poe came up with the detective character in his various short stories. Putting a part of himself into each character. Not a bad idea.

“This is Sylvia Plath.” I say before he can interrogate her as though she’s just committed a murder. There is a sense of familiarity in his eyes as his eyebrow goes up into the quirked

expression I have grown accustomed to over the mere minutes I've been touring the library with him.

"Yes. I am Sylvia Plath. And who might you be?" She has a slight Bostonian accent to her words.

"My name is Laurie." I say with a wide smile plastered across my face. I get another look from Poe, eyebrow still planted high on his face.

"You are an odd girl" Poe's comment is directed toward me, with a scoff at the end. "I am Edgar Allan Poe." He says. Same melodic tone to his introduction. Same familiarity in his eyes. His hand goes out to shake hers.

"Well it's very nice to meet you, Laurie and Edgar Allan Poe."

"What are you doing in here?" I ask. Still bewildered. First Edgar Allan Poe, now Sylvia Plath. This is all so much. What am *I* even doing here? I feel very out of place standing in the aisle with the two of them.

"Well I was in search of a new book and came across this peculiar thing. My name is on it and the title is the same as that draft I wrote years ago." Plath says.

I try to stifle my laugh because this is amazing. Edgar Allan Poe. Sylvia Plath. Next I'm going to find Rober Frost in the poetry section. Now that would be wild.

"What is so funny now?" Poe scoffs, yet again. I'm starting to think whatever comes out of his mouth always has a scoff to it.

"My subconscious is really toying with me now. Two of my favorite writers. In one library. This just feels like a reverie. As you would call it Poe."

"Ah. You've read my poem! How did you like it?" No scoff to his question. I stand corrected.

“Oh yes! I thought it was absolutely brilliant. The way your words flow together. I am quite jealous of how nicely you can get your words onto paper. As well as place different themes hidden inside the stanzas. The way your poem starts with the theme of nature as a destruction cycle because of the forceful taming of mankind. And then flows into the theme of restoring hope in life. The poem was beautiful.” I have to catch my breath after my long monologue.

Both Plath and Poe are staring at me like I’m *the* writer from a whole nother century.

“What? Is that not the poem we were talking about?” I ask.

“No. That’s exactly the poem I was referring to. It just shocked me that anyone has actually read my writing.” Poe remarks.

“What do you mean? You’re Edgar Allan Poe. You’re one of the most famous writers of your time. Revolutionizing different genres of mystery, horror, and you’re known for nearly inventing gothic literature. Everyone around the world knows who you are.” I really need to start breathing between sentences. But seriously how could Edgar Allan Poe have doubts about his writings becoming something.

Looking between both Poe and Plath. They are both in shock *again*. I think Poe has tears in his eyes. The man of horror. Has tears in his eyes. Because I read one of his poems?

“Um. Are you okay?”

“I never imagined people would read my work. Let alone analyze it the way you did. I really only started writing as an outlet for what my own life has become. Writing has always been a way for me to express what I feel. I only ever wrote for myself. I never really imagined my writing was good enough for other people to enjoy.”

I can see a bit of myself in his eyes. How the doubt just consumes you into thinking your passion is not good enough for the world to see. Now I’m the one with tears in my eyes.

“That was beautiful.” Both Poe and I look over to Sylvia. She's sniffing a little too.

“Now isn't that the truth, Poe. We write with fear in our head of whether or not it will be loved. We are writers for Pete's sake. We hold the pen! We decide how the fear will shape us!”

Now I'm the one staring at her. That is exactly what I wish I heard when I started writing. I'm years into my writing career and no one has ever said anything like that to me. Sylvia Plath just squashed all my anxieties about becoming a successful author.

If both Plath and Poe can struggle with this doubt. And write pieces that still shape society. I can overcome my own anxiety and write something that will change society too.

“Enough with all this mooshy-gooshy encouraging stuff.” Poe is the one to end the sentiments. “Alright now let's go find my old pal Emerson.”

Emerson. That name sounds very familiar.

Poe leads the way and Sylvia and I follow closely behind. She is still holding *The Bell Jar*. Well she more so has a death grip on the book.

“The book won't wander off. You can loosen your grip.” I mention.

She gives a little chuckle. “Oh yes. I know. This just feels surreal.” She has no idea. “This book has my name on it. And I gave up on this draft years ago. How did the library get this book? Is someone impersonating me?”

It hits me then. My dream, or whatever this skewed reality is, has brought these writers to the present. I'm not in the 19th or 20th century, they are in the 21st.

“Well Sylvia Plath. This is your book that you gave up on. Almost ten years after the first draft you got a fellowship in 1961 and then completed *The Bell Jar* five months after you restarted it. You kept meticulous track of your writing process, keeping details of the plot and different character's actions. Your novel brought much needed attention to mental health

struggles, especially among young women. You used your own struggles as well as an article you had read suggesting beauty treatments could cure mental illness. *The Bell Jar* also critiqued societal expectations regarding gender roles. You helped shape society and the way mental health is viewed today.” I say. Yet again out of breath because I have yet to learn how to breathe between sentences.

“My novel caused all that commotion?” She asks. Poe is still leading the way in front of us.

“Oh yes! Your novel made a lasting impact on society and still continues to define the role of a woman. Though there are certain roles women fit into better than men, you gave women a voice. You also gave everyone the ability to talk about their mental health. You gave women and the rest of the world the boost to defy societal expectations. You gave *people* a voice.”

She is staring at me blankly as we are weaving between the stacks now. Not sure if Poe really knows where he is going, but following anyway.

Sylvia Plath’s eyes are glistening in the library lighting. More tears.

“My novel did that?” Her voice weak with astonishment. I guess I always assumed because they are famous writers, they never actually struggled with writing.

“Yes.” I say, “*You* did that.”

Her mouth opens to say something again. But as the words are about to come out of her mouth, we both run into the back of Poe. His head turns. Scowl planted on his face. Yet again.

“Sorry Poe.” Plath and I say in tandem. We look around his broad shoulders to see the reason for his abrupt stop.

Looking past the 5'8ths of Edgar Allan Poe there stands a tall man with dark brown hair and sideburns that extend down to his neck. He has a book in his hand, but with Poe's head in the way I can't see which book he has. Maybe *Concord Hymn*. Or perhaps he found *Nature*.

His light brown eyes dart between the three of us.

It occurs to me then. Poe was talking about finding Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"Poe! My old friend." Emerson says with excitement. "It's good to see you." Poe walks over to give his friend a hug.

Once they move apart, I reach out my hand to introduce myself. "Hi. I'm Laurie. It's so great to meet you." I shake his hand with so much enthusiasm.

"Oh hello Laurie. I'm--"

"Ralph Waldo Emerson." I cut him off. "Prominent American writer, poet, and philosopher. You practically led the Transcendentalist movement."

Emerson shoots a shocked look at Plath. "How do you know that?" Emerson asks me.

"She knows all this stuff about each of us." Sylvia Plath says. I'm not sure if I looked away too fast, but I swear I saw Sylvia wink and both Emerson and Poe.

Emerson turns to look at Edgar Allan Poe, "This is her?" The question is whispered to Poe, but both Sylvia Plath and I overhear it.

I give Sylvia Plath a confused look.

"Who?" I ask.

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Poe gesture for Sylvia to go with them.

"Let's talk around the corner. Laurie, stay here." Emerson says with a hand in the air. Gesturing for me to stay put.

Poe and Emerson start to walk around the aisle of books where we are standing in front of. Sylvia gives me a sorrowful look and then goes with them. I am left there with my mouth gaping open.

What in the wannabee inklings writing club is going on?

I'm just left in front of the poetry section by myself. While three of the most famous writers are talking about who knows what, just around the corner.

I hear some footsteps behind me. I turn around expecting to find the three of them returning from their secret meeting.

Instead, I find myself face to face with Robert Frost.

I can't believe the sight in front of me. *Robert Frost*. Walking out of the poetry section. I laugh to myself.

"Hello. Who are you?" His tone of voice is very direct. Very straightforward.

"Hi! My name is Laurie. You're Robert Frost. I can't believe you're here."

"Yes, I'd say it is pretty fascinating I'm here as well." He says gently. His voice is extremely undeviating. Robert Frost gazes up at the library ceiling.

"Strange how time can fold itself into place." What an odd thing to say. I think to myself.

My mouth opens to say something in response, but the three inklings come walking around the corner.

"Ah! Robert, nice of you to join us." Poe says, a nice melody to his voice.

"It is good to see you all. Emerson. Plath." Frost gives a nod as he mentions the other two writers.

"Wait. How do you all know each other?" I ask, pointing my finger between the authors, connecting a few dots. I'm not surprised that Poe and Emerson know each other. But Edgar Allan

Poe died in 1849 and Robert Frost was born in 1874, nearly 25 years later. I mean sure maybe Robert Frost knows who he is, but Poe said it was nice to see him *again*. They were never alive during the same time period.

The four of them are now exchanging glances. I think they can see the wheels turning in my head.

“Well?” I ask. I raise my eyebrow and give them my best Poe scowl. “Is someone going to explain? Because this feels like a dream—unless I’m dead and we’re all haunting the Boston Library together.” I look around the library as if a ghost is going to fly through the walls to prove my point.

“Grotesquely fun,” the man of horror says.

Ralph Waldo Emerson gives him a sideways glance, “As much fun as that does sound, no we are not all dead and haunting the Boston Library.”

“Then what is going on?”

“We are here to bring you back to the 1800s with us.” Robert Frost says matter-of-factly.

I stare at him blankly. Did he just say they time traveled here—to bring me back with them?

“What?” I say with so much disbelief in my voice.

They are all blinking at me. Like I’m the one who told them they are supposed to time travel to the past for who knows what reason.

“Look at this.” Emerson hands me the book he has been holding since we found him.

Little Women. By Louisa May Alcott.

“Why are you handing me Little Women? Do you want me to read it or something?”

“Turn to the acknowledgements. In the back.” Robert Frost says, always a direct tone to his voice.

I do as he says. Turning the pages to get to the acknowledgements.

“Read this part. Out loud.” Sylvia Plath points to a paragraph on the page.

I give her a confused look. But read anyways.

“There is no easy road to successful authorship; it has to be earned by long & patient labor, many disappointments, uncertainties & trials. Remember that. I also want to give a special thanks to Laurie. Without which I would not be here. Writing for all of you. In more ways than one, Laurie resides in me—’ Okay what am I reading? Louisa May Alcott is talking about the character, who clearly resembled a real person in her life.” I say. Fed up with whatever sick joke they are playing on me.

“*Laurie.*” Sylvia says with a strange tone to her voice. A focused attention in her gaze as she looks at me. “She is not simply speaking about the character.”

The lights flicker as if to tell me something astonishing as well.

I look up for a moment, checking the changing lighting of the library. I look away for only a moment. Barely time to blink. As I look back down at the authors I can hear Plath say, “The library does not just house stories...sometimes it creates them.”

When my eyes return to the four in front of me, the scenery around them has entirely changed.

We are no longer standing in the magical atmosphere of the Boston Library.

No. Impossible.

I can feel the year deep within my heart. I clutch my chest. My body knows, but my head has not yet caught up to the unfathomable idea.

1868. I am standing in a room in 1868. With four of the world's most famous writers. I know this is no longer a dream because my subconscious has never blessed me with such an amazing experience.

The five of us are now in the kitchen of a small house. No longer roaming the stacks of the Boston Library. The inside of the house is very warm and homey. There is a big sense of belonging in my heart for this house. My heart aches at the sense that I've been here before.

I look around this very familiar home. The inside of the house feels like the inside of a long forgotten dream. Like a jewelry box that has not been opened for ages.

The kitchen has this big creative feel, like someone's dreams were started and accomplished here. I feel as though I'm standing in a room where someone grew up. The vibrancy of the kitchen makes me feel cheerful and pleasant.

The four writers are watching me observe the room. I walk into the living room. A memory with my sisters in our own living room dances across my mind. Plays. Stories. Laughter.

I turn back to acknowledge the four. Astonishment is plastered on my face.

They all look at me with knowing faces.

"Who's house is this?" I ask. I need to know if I'm going crazy or not.

Sylvia Plath reaches out and grabs my hand. A very motherly gesture. I can feel how she longs to carry the title of mother, in the way she comforts and speaks to me. Another ache in my heart knowing she will get what she always longed for only to be overcome by the sadness of this world a few years later.

"It's yours." She whispers.

“No.” I say disbelief clouding my voice. “No. That’s impossible. I know whose house this is. And I’ve never been here before. And an even bigger reason to prove this is impossible, I’m not her.”

If this night has taught me anything, it’s that what seems impossible really can be possible. I was just in the Boston Library with four of the most famous writers. I traveled back in time to 1868. Sylvia Plath is implying that *I* am Louisa May Alcott. The ship for what is possible and impossible has set sail and I have been left at the dock.

“Okay. Let’s entertain this idea for just a moment then. If I’m Louisa May Alcott, how was I born in 2006? How is Little Women already published if this is the first time I’ve been here?” I ask, still not believing there is any possibility of this being real.

Robert Frost steps up to talk to me now.

“Your book has already been published because of this moment. Because you traveled back with us and wrote a book that changed society. That inspired generations of young women.” Frost explains.

“I think I need a moment.” Feeling like I’m about to throw up because of disbelief. I remove myself from the room. I head upstairs to the bedroom I assume is “mine”.

The room has two beds. There is such a grown up feeling in this room. I am reminded of my childhood. Growing up with three sisters and sharing a room with my older one.

My eyes dance across the room. Taking everything in. My eyes land on the desk. A typewriter, a journal, and a stack of paper sitting on top of it.

I sit down at the desk and I have all these memories of my childhood flooding my mind. My sisters. My mom. My dad. All influences in my life.

I feed the typewriter paper. Feeling sentimental and needing an outlet.

“Christmas won’t be Christmas without presents,” I type. The clicking of the typewriter is far more satisfying than my laptop keyboard. The margin bell dings and I slide the typewriter to move on to the next line.

Click. Click. Ding. Slide.

This becomes the new anthem of my writing.

I have no concept of time. No idea how long I have been clicking the typewriter. However, I can see the sun start to rise over the hills. The upper edge of the sun appears over the horizon.

Part 2: Chapter Twenty Four is the sight displayed across the next page in my typewriter.

Click. Click. Ding. Slide.

The typewriter's song continues to echo through the room.

Click. Click. Ding. Slide.

The doubts that consumed my mind earlier are no longer weathered in my chest. I know I can write this book because I already have. This makes me sound as crazy as Poe.

I am the author I have always aspired to be. I am making the impact I have always wanted to make.

I sit back in my chair. Looking out of my window to find the sun has fully immersed herself in the sky.

How long have I been up here? I look at the clock hanging on the wall. The clock reads 8:03. It occurs to me then. I have not slept since my brief nap in the library.

The floor creaks. The wood of the house notifies me that someone is walking up the stairs. The door opens only moments later. I turn in my chair to see who of the four authors has come to see me.

Sylvia Plath is walking through the door with a plate in her hand and a delicious aroma coming from it. A brass mug occupies her other hand.

“That smells delicious.” I say with my eyes closed. Smelling the air.

“I bring fuel. And a few answers as well.” She says. Handing me the plate that is home to a handful of chocolate chip cookies. As well as a mug of pomegranate honey tea from the smell of it. My favorite.

“Mmm. Thank you!” I say, taking another sniff of the cookies and tea.

“Take as many as you want! How’s the book coming along?” Plath asks.

“It is going very well. I didn’t think I was able to write something like this, but knowing I already have gives me this weird confidence. You know what I mean?”

She gives a very motherly chuckle before saying, “I know exactly what you mean Laurie. It doesn’t feel that long ago when I first started writing my book. I remember all the doubts I had as a semi-young author. I felt as though nothing I wrote would ever be good enough for readers. But I remembered reading something at the end of a book once and the author had said, ‘*There is no easy road to successful authorship; it has to be earned by long & patient labor, many disappointments, uncertainties & trials.*’” She gives me a wink after emphasizing her piece of advice. She continues on, saying, “This piece of advice lives inside of me, as it should in many other authors. Because writing is no easy task.”

I’ve heard those words before but I can’t place where. The wheels in my head continue to turn. There *is* no easy road to a successful career. And I’m not alone in my writing journey. My parents may have been hard on me growing up, but they are cheering me on. My publisher only wants to see me succeed. There are thousands of authors out there struggling just like I am.

I look at Sylvia with tears in my eyes. Like a light bulb has just gone off in my head. I'm not alone.

"Thank you Sylvia. This is all so crazy. One second I'm in the Boston Library trying to finish my book, next I'm running through the same library finding four of my favorite authors. And then in a blink of an eye I end up back in time to start writing a book that has been famous for the last hundred-fifty seven years. This is all so unimaginable." I take a deep breath. I still haven't learned how to breathe between sentences.

Another laugh comes from Sylvia. "It is a very wild concept when you put it that way."

It's crazy how some of Louisa May Alcott's books will have such an impact on people in the present, or I guess the future. This time travel thing is a hard concept to grasp. But Sylvia Plath has influenced me and the way I write in 1868 and will continue to influence the way I write back in 2025.

"You said you had some answers as well?" I ask.

"Hm. Oh yes. I know this is all unimaginable as you said before. I'm sure you're wondering how we got here in the first place?" She asks, more so in a rhetorical way. I just nod my head. "So when you read the acknowledgements at the end of Little Woman and you read out the part where you talk about yourself, the book sent you back to the year it was written. To actually write Little Woman."

"It was all the book. We were only sent to the library to make sure you came back to write tonight." I didn't even hear anyone else enter the room. But in the doorway stands Poe, Emerson and Frost.

Wow.

“Thank you guys. For taking me back. I should probably get back to writing.” A hint of sadness in my voice. What will happen once I finish writing Little Women? How will I get back to the 21st century? All the unknown is something I can worry about once this book is finished.

“Alright. We will leave you to it. Keep writing.” Edgar Allan Poe tells me, in his southern melodic voice.

They all turn to head out of the room. I jump up out of my chair. “Wait!”

Each of them stops and turns back to me. I run over and give them a giant hug. I have this feeling in my chest that the next time I see them will be on a poster hanging in the Boston Library.

“Thank you.” I whisper into the hug. “For everything.”

“My sweet Louisa, you are meant for greatness.” Ralph Waldo Emerson says as he tucks a piece of hair behind my ear.

Tears well in my eyes as we let go. They walk out of the room and I close the door slowly. Not wanting this moment to end.

The door shuts and I am left alone with my typewriter and tears.

I take a deep breath. Thinking of the night I’ve had. Wiping my tears and lifting my head because I am Louisa May Alcott. And I have a book to finish.

I head back to my desk. Tea and cookies still occupy the other half of the terrain. I take a sip of the pomegranate tea and get back to typing.

Click. Click. Ding. Slide.

My anthem continues.

Not sure how much time passes. But I can see the sun begin to seep behind the mountains as the moon arises from them.

Continuing to write until I type...

The End.

As I hit the final keys on my typewriter. A sensation of overwhelming satisfaction washes over me. I know this will become a critically acclaimed piece of literature. And I was the one to write it.

I look over to check the time again. 8:53 PM.

Sleep must have overtaken me as soon as I hit the final letters on my typewriter.

Someone is shaking me awake.

“Ma’am. Please wake up. What are you doing here?”

“Hmmm.” I groan. My eyes flutter open as the person continues to shake my shoulder.

I jolt awake as my eyes focus on the security guard in front of me.

“Where am I?” I ask. Taking in everything now. My laptop. The book cases surrounding me. He doesn’t need to answer my question.

“The Boston Library ma’am. I’m not quite sure how you got in here. But when I was doing my routine sweep this morning I found you sleeping here.” He explains.

The memory of last night comes back to me quickly. Sylvia Plath. Edgar Allan Poe. Ralph Waldo Emerson. Robert Frost. All of them here in the Boston Library. All of them with me back in 1868.

“I’m so sorry. I must have fallen asleep writing last night.” I laugh to myself because that is not at all what happened. Or maybe it really was all a dream. “Let me collect all my things and I will get going.”

I close my laptop and see a book behind it.

Little Women. By Louisa May Alcott.

The same worn copy Emerson handed me. I know it without checking. I put my laptop in my bag and reach for the book. My thumb grazes the back pages, flipping instinctively to the acknowledgments. I read the nine words that changed my reality.

“In more ways than one, Laurie resides in me—”

A smile tugs against my lips. I sling my bag over my shoulder, tucking the book inside.

I head out of the library with a smile plastered across my face.

Was it real? Maybe it was just a dream. Or maybe I did travel back. Maybe I *was* Louisa May Alcott—for a single night, a single story, a single moment that changed everything.

As I head toward the exit, I can see that the sun through the windows has yet again immersed herself in the blue sky. I walk past a mirror on the bottom floor. My reflection in the glass looks the same—but something deeper, unnameable, has changed.

Outside, the city breathes like nothing happened. But the inside of the library holds its breath. Awaiting its next struggling author.

Everything keeps replaying in my head. Traveling back in time. Realizing I’m Louisa May Alcott. That I wrote *Little Women*.

I head home to get some actual sleep. And when I wake up in my apartment, it still doesn’t feel real. Mere hours ago I was in the Boston Library with some of the greatest writers in history. Walking with them, hearing them share the struggles they faced as writers. Making me feel less alone. Hearing that they too feel the pressure to succeed. They all made me feel so understood. Knowing that even the greats get writer's block. Finding out that I *am* one of the greats.

Not just the Boston Library though, mere hours ago I was in 1868 writing *Little Women*.

I get a few hours of sleep. The thought of being Louisa May Alcott is still fresh in my mind. As well as the thought of my deadline approaching.

When I awake, I try to settle into my routine: teeth brushed, toast burnt, makeup applied. Still, the memory lingers. Sylvia's motherly voice. Emerson's quiet strength. Poe's sharp wit. Frost's certainty. *It still does not feel real*

I head back to the Boston Library after my internal battle of whether or not I was actually stuck in a library and time traveling with Robert Frost, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Sylvia Plath.

I sit down at my laptop and open the same document I have been staring at for the past couple of months. The cursor blinks, waiting. For the first time, I'm not afraid to meet it. I know who I am. I am Louisa May Alcott—past, present, and future.

Somewhere, deep within the library. There is a faint echo of a quiet song.

Click. Click. Ding. Slide.

I can hear it in the depths of the stacks. In the deepest parts of my heart. And with the quiet anthem playing. I start typing. No longer consumed by my anxiety. No pit lodged in my chest. Ready to face the uneasy road of successful authorship head on.

The End.