

A Fan-made Interactive Story

Who Framed Gigi Murin?



‘Who Framed Gigi Murin?’ is a fan-made, unofficial interactive story, written in accordance with COVER’s guidelines for derivative content: <https://hololivepro.com/en/terms>

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You thought you knew trouble when you saw it. Well, you were wrong.

You've been in the private investigation business for a long time now. Even got your own office with your name on the door. How you got this far is between you and God. Let's just say you've done things you're not proud of. You've tickled the soft-white underbelly of organized crime, greased the palms of the corrupt and the criminal. Hell, you've even worn a fursuit a few times. But not because you wanted to, of course.

Or, at least, that's what you tell yourself at night.

The point is, you'd do anything to crack a case. You've made a damn good business of doing the dirty work law enforcement refuses to do. And that's why you succeed where they fail.

And, sure, maybe you have gotten a bit too full of yourself. Maybe that's why, when she walked through the door, you only saw a sad puppy in need of head pats and a new chew toy.

Her name was Gigi, and she was in trouble.

'My name's Gigi, and I'm in trouble.'

You have your feet up on your desk, your hands are behind your head. You wonder what kind of 'trouble' this tiny creature could possibly be in. Shouldn't she be out photosynthesizing with the rest of the phytoplankton or something?

And yet, the sight of her gives you a strong feeling of *déjà vu*. You are unaccountably glad to see her, even though you're sure you've never met her before. Something about her suggests a continuation, as though you are picking up where things left off.

Just yesterday, you were discharged from the hospital. Your mind's been in such a muddle ever since the 'accident', and the pieces of the past few days have been reluctant to fit where you think they ought. You are eager to hear her out and see where this goes.

'Someone's out to get me,' she says. 'I don't know who, I don't know why. All I know is I've got two choices: change my name and start a new life in Mexico, or find out who's framed me and give them what they want.'

You plant your feet on the ground and your elbows on your desk. You lean forward and stare at her, like you're trying to see through her eyes at the silly puppet show that must be going on inside her head. She meets your gaze and doesn't blink. You nod to yourself, then reach out a hand and yank on a drawer. You flick aside a hospital bracelet and pull out a notepad and a pen. When Gigi sees this, she relaxes.

'From the top,' you say.

She nods. 'I knew something was wrong the moment I got home. I was out of town all day. There was a big medieval faire and, well, you know how it is. I had to get in on that sweet, sweaty, LARP action. Hey. You wanna see my poignard? It's extra pointy.'

'Maybe later,' you say.

'Sure, okay. I'll throw in a pic of my historically accurate jester drip, too. Anyway, something was off. It took me a while to figure out what it was. Then I saw it. The broken teacup on the floor. The dried boba bubble thingies scattered everywhere.' She pauses. 'And I realized something...'

Gigi looks over her shoulder before turning back around and leaning across the desk. Her face is so close to yours that you can smell the cat food on her breath when she says, 'That teacup belonged to Cece.'

[Go to page 18 to see the scene of the crime](#)

‘Are you sure this is safe?’ asks Gigi as Shiori finishes strapping the nuclear-powered time rocket to her back. There is a blue *chibi* clock-woman stenciled on the side. She is winking and giving you a reassuring thumbs up. There is a speech bubble filled with the words ‘What timing, eh?’.

‘Safe?’ Shiori blinks as though she does not know the meaning of the word. She looks around. There’s an ancient, winged helmet of Norse origin sitting on a pedestal off to her left. She goes and gets it and puts it on Gigi’s head. ‘That should get you to Valhalla in one piece!’

‘But,’ says Gigi, ‘don’t you have to, y’know, *die* to get to Valhalla?’

‘Do you want to live forever?’

‘Yeah, kinda.’

‘Well, it ain’t gonna happen. Not in this timeline.’ Shiori holds up a device for Gigi to look at. ‘I’ve calibrated the time machine to send you back to the day the teacup was broken. It’s up to you to change history.’ Shiori holds out her free hand. ‘Good luck.’

Gigi frowns, sighs, then takes Shiori’s hand and shakes it. She walks up to you. You reach out a hand and set the Valkyrie helmet straight and pat her head. You take the base of the broken teacup from your pocket and hand it to her.

‘Find me again if you need help,’ you say.

Gigi takes the base. The glint of the sheared porcelain matches the shimmering light in her eyes. She looks up at you. ‘You won’t forget me?’

You shake your head. ‘I couldn’t if I tried.’

Gigi smiles like a kid who got straight As on her report card and is about to show her parents. ‘Wait!’ she says. ‘Can I borrow your notepad and your pen?’

You fish in your pocket and give her what she asked for. She scribbles something, rips the paper from the pad, and hands it to you. It reads ‘Remember’.

‘Just in case,’ she says, smiling.

You put the note in your pocket. You are about to say something, but Gigi hugs you.

‘Thanks for everything.’

‘Aww, how touching,’ says Shiori. ‘Anyway!’ The device in her hand beeps. ‘Sayonara! Don’t be a stranger when you get to the past!’

The last thing you remember thinking is, ‘Wait. *I’m* not going back to the—’

To wake up in the hospital, go to page 29

You're back in Gigi's creamsicle-orange gamer den and something is missing. You run your eye over the spot where the shattered teacup used to be. There's no trace of the porcelain pieces ever being there. You wonder when she had the time to clean all that up. Maybe you were in the hospital for longer than you thought. You peer at the calendar. Today's still the 21st of September. Did Gigi go home to pick up the pieces before bringing you to the hospital? Or maybe she brought you, went home, cleaned up, then came back. But why? You try to fathom Gigi's motives, but you'd have a better shot at proving Goldbach's Conjecture. Just listen to her. She is inscrutable.

'I usually level up W first on Meemo, but most people go E. I dunno. I like W. But, hey, that's just me. You ever go against the grain like that? I do it all the time. I'm what you'd call a "freethinker". When people say peanut butter and chocolate, I go, nah, Cheez Whiz and cucumber, all day. Oh, man. This one time, I stuck my whole fist inside a—'

There's a knock at the door.

'Pizza's here!' shouts Gigi. She leaps out of her gamer chair and runs on all fours for the door.

It won't be long before she's back, but you have some time to look around undistracted. You still have Gigi's phone in your hand. You slip it into your pocket and once again hear the crinkling of paper. You take the note out and study it: 'Remember', it reads. You pay close attention to the handwriting and try to memorize the squiggly, child-like letters. You rack your brain. Who could have written this? And when did they slip it into your pocket?

As you are about to put the note away, you hear Gigi screaming from the front entrance.

'I ordered pickles on this pizza, not sour cucumber slices! Get your manager on the phone, right *now*! I want to talk to them!'

Gigi would never ask to talk to someone's manager unironically. Not the Gigi you know. Hearing her break character must've shaken you pretty bad because the note slips from your hand and flutters to the floor. You bend down to pick it up and something catches your eye—a shoebox. Your blood runs cold. There are letters written on the lid that are an exact match for the letters on the note. The letters spell the words 'Do not open'.

To open the shoebox, go to page 25

To leave it, go to page 11

‘Welcome to Shiori’s Emporium of Cursed Curios! From lich phylacteries to monkeys’ paws, we got it all!’

The young woman standing behind the counter has eyes like blazing lighthouse beams. She has them trained on you and she hasn’t blinked once. Your reptilian brain is skittering up the sides of your cranium trying to get out, and every nerve in your body is telling you this is a flight or fight scenario.

But you can’t leave. Not until you’ve got a new teacup.

Gigi must sense your discomfort. She steps up, standing on her tiptoes so she can see over the counter, and says, ‘If I may be so bold, we’d like to request a showing of your finest porcelain.’ She says this in a mock Victorian accent for some reason.

If the proprietor is taken aback, she doesn’t show it. She looks at Gigi a little too indulgently, her smile a little too wide.

‘Enjoying that new doll?’ asks Shiori after waiting the perfect amount of time to make the question as uncomfortable as possible.

Gigi almost dies of cringe but manages to hang on. ‘I do not know to what you are referring.’

‘M-hm, sure,’ says Shiori. ‘So, come in for porcelain this time, have you?’ She clasps her hands together. ‘Is this for a tea party? I just love tea parties. Such a nice way to get everyone together. Then, one by one, the guests begin to disappear. Where do they go? No one knows. No one... except me.’ Shiori giggles. She still hasn’t blinked.

You and Gigi both slowly take a step toward the exit.

‘Oh, the fine china is just over here,’ says Shiori. ‘I keep it between the bric-a-brac and the shrunken heads.’ She slips out from behind the counter and walks down an aisle to the end and waits. ‘This way!’

‘Be right there!’ calls Gigi. She shields her mouth and whispers to you, ‘I think she’s going to eat us.’

You think that’s a distinct possibility. Even so, you are determined to get what you came here for. You follow Shiori through the winding aisles of the shop. If you weren’t a firm believer in the physical laws of the universe, you’d say the store was somehow bigger on the inside than its exterior would suggest. You also think it’s probably best not to dwell on such things.

Eventually, after taking the time to show you her collection of shrunken heads, Shiori leads you to a shelf filled with fine porcelain.

‘Are you looking for anything in particular?’ she asks.

‘A teacup,’ you say. You pull the base from your pocket and show it to Shiori.

She plucks it out of your palm and runs her thumb over the imprinted letters on the bottom. She blinks and hands it back.

‘You’re in some serious trouble, aren’t you?’ she says.

You give your head a subtle shake and nod over at Gigi, who is busy fidgeting with a six-dimensional tesseract, obviously flabbergasted at how it could possibly exist.

The uncanny smile leaves Shiori’s face and she stares at Gigi with genuine pity.

‘Poor thing,’ she says. She turns to the shelf and, after some searching, brings down an ornate teacup, gilded with flower motifs and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. She pulls a permanent

marker from her pocket and scribbles something on the base of the teacup. Then she hands it to you and says, 'This is the best I can do.'

You take the cup in both hands, gently, like she were handing you a living butterfly. You turn it over and read on the base the letters 'CC' written in black marker.

'Do you think that will work?'

Gigi is at your elbow. She has somehow gotten her head stuck inside the tesseract. She doesn't seem bothered about it though. Her eyes are fixed on the teacup in your hands.

You don't answer her. You have no idea if it'll work.

Shiori clears her throat. 'You could always try...' She grins like the Cheshire Cat. 'The Alternative.'

To go back to Cecilia with a new teacup, go to page 36

To check out Shiori's 'Alternative', head to page 4

You've seen the movie 'Se7en'. You know you don't wanna know what's inside the box. Normally, you aren't one for following rules. But if the lid says 'Do not open', then you're not gonna open it. Simple as.

You pick up the note and stand up straight. You couldn't help but notice that the handwriting on the lid matches the handwriting on the note exactly. A good detective never jumps to conclusions, but you'll be damned if you can think of an alternative interpretation. Gigi must've written that note and slipped it in your pocket.

Of course, this raises a critical question: What does she mean by '*remember*'? Remember what? You've only known each other for a day. However, as soon as you think this, you know it's somehow true and not true. You begin sweating even though the room is cool, and the longer you stand there ruminating, the more uneasy you feel.

In the front entrance, Gigi has finished chewing out the hapless pizza delivery person over the inclusion of pickles on her pizza. She slams the front door as if to punctuate her victory with a bang.

'Can you believe this?' she says as she storms back into the room. 'Those bums really think pickles and cucumbers are the same thing at different stages of decomposition! Talk about brain rot. Jeez. Anyway.' She stops and studies you. 'Why do you look like you've just seen horrors beyond human comprehension? Or are you just constipated? I honestly can't tell.' She gasps. 'Oh, don't tell me! Did you find... *The Stash*? Urgh, I'm so embarrassed. I can't believe you stumbled on my collection of fine literature. Oh well, what's done is done. Let's talk ships. My OTP is *Sonadow*, as you probably can tell by the sheer volume of "art" I've commissioned.'

In all your time as a private investigator, you thought there was no such thing as too much information. Gigi has, once again, exposed your naivete. You are desperate to escape this conversation. On reflex, you flutter the note in Gigi's face like a toy before a toddler.

'What's that?' she asks as she snatches the note. Her brow beetles, then shoots up to her hairline. She doesn't say so, but she must recognize the handwriting as her own. She looks up at you, her eyes filled with suspicion, her face spotted with shadows of nastiness. You've never seen such an expression on her face and, in fact, did not think it were possible for her to look so mean.

'Where did you get this?' she says. She is borderline hissing. You haven't felt fear like this since that one time you crossed paths with a Canada goose during nesting season. You touch your old wounds and wonder if you'll be lucky enough to make it through this incident scarred but alive.

[Head to page 38 to see how this all pans out](#)

I can't believe you just did that. What were you thinking?

Well, what's done is done. You have only one objective now: Survive.

There's an old proverb: 'You don't need to out-run a bear. You only need to out-run the person you're with.' You assume the same advice holds when it comes to fleeing a very angry automaton, one who thinks you were complicit in destroying her favourite teacup. It's also why you're feeling some hope as you run through the alley.

Gigi is somewhere behind you. She is screaming, 'Don't leave me behind! Please!' as you are doing everything in your power to leave her behind.

You hear the distinct sound of a buzzsaw, followed by 'SPEEEEEEN TO WIN!'

Gigi is screeching incoherently now, and you aren't sure you aren't doing the same. You turn the corner and the last thing in the whole world you want to see is there waiting for you: a dead end. You skid to a halt, and Gigi runs into you. You both stumble forward and wind up splayed on the rough asphalt, in perfect position for the chalk outlines that'll corral your soon-to-be mangled bodies.

You get into a slap fight with Gigi as you both try to untangle your limbs. Gigi is first to her feet. You fully expect her to jump in the dumpster at the end of the alley and hide, but instead she holds out her hand.

'C'mon!' she says.

The pang of shame that runs through you makes you wince more than your skinned knees. If things were the other way around, what would you have done? Would you have lent her a hand, or would you have left her in the lurch? You know the answer, and that's what stings.

You take her hand and get to your feet. However, the alley has not changed. There's no way out. Not unless you suddenly morph into a gecko or a spider and acquire the ability to scale sheer walls.

Your despair must be apparent because Gigi stops looking at you for answers. She spins around and spots the dumpster.

'Quick!' she says. She scampers over and jumps in headfirst. There is a loud, painful-sounding bang, like someone's head bouncing off the metal bottom of a dumpster.

You wait a second. Then you say, 'You okay?'

'I knew I should've worn a helmet today...' Gigi replies. It sounds like she's talking from the bottom of a mineshaft.

A third voice chimes in, singing, 'With tea for two and two for tea. Just me for you, and you for me... alone.' A slender shadow oozes from behind the corner of the building behind you, topped by the stark silhouette of a wind-up key.

Not all choices define you, but this one definitely does.

What will you do?

To cover for Gigi, go to page 34

To cower in the dumpster, go to page 37

You told Cecilia that Gigi had a bad case of tummy hort. Twenty minutes later, you are standing on a doormat that reads ‘GUH!’.

‘Guess she’s not home,’ says Gigi.

She’s trying to sound relieved, but she’s clearly disappointed. To be frank, so are you. You wanted to know who was playing Hall of Heroes with Mori from Gigi’s room last night. As far as you’re concerned, that would’ve solved the case completely.

Just as you are about to turn and leave, you notice something.

There’s a note wedged in the space between the door and the jamb. You pluck it out, unfold it, and read it aloud: ‘Dear Gigi. Don’t ever play Yazuo again. P.S. You better buy CC a new teacup.’

To go antiquing, go to page 8

To try to talk to Cecilia again WITHOUT a new teacup, go to page 13

For someone whose last name is Immergreen, she sure is red.

That was your first thought after Cecilia opened the door of her apartment and glared out at you. Your second thought was that coming here without a replacement teacup was a terrible idea.

‘This was a terrible idea,’ hisses Gigi. ‘I told you we should’ve gone antiquing first!’

You fidget nervously and clear your throat. ‘Miss Immergreen?’

‘Name’s Immerhater. Nice shoes. What dumpster did you scrounge them up from? I have a mind to go diving for a pair myself.’

She looks like she’s about to talk mad smack about your socks when her eyes flick over to Gigi. They narrow, menacingly.

‘Well, well, well. Look who it is. I’ve been meaning to have a little talk with you, my little orange friend.’

Gigi bats her lashes, trying to act cute and confused but succeeding only in imitating a camel with sand in its eyes. ‘What could you possibly want to talk to me about?’

‘Oh, just a matter of dire importance. A certain vessel of mine has gone missing. As far as I recall, the last time I saw it was when we had that tea party the other day. Do you remember? The tea party we had?’

Gigi nods slowly, sagely. Then she says, ‘No.’

‘I guess I’ll have to jolt your memory, then.’

Cecilia opens the door all the way. Her other hand, which had been obscured, is wrapped around the grip of a well-used aluminum baseball bat.

‘Batter up.’

‘But... We don’t have a ball,’ says Gigi.

‘True,’ says Cecilia. ‘Guess your head will have to do.’

Gigi looks up at you and you look down at her. Telepathically, you agree that if you stay, Cece’s gonna knock your blocks out of the park. However, running is as good as admitting guilt. Maybe there’s still a way to settle this diplomatically?

‘EVERY GREM FOR HERSELF!’

Gigi takes off running with her head down and her arms stuck out straight behind her.

Whatever you do, don’t run after her.

To run after her, go to page 13

The walls are orange. The floor is orange. The couch, beanbag chair, lamps, garbage bin, stolen traffic light—orange.

The calendar says it's September. The 21st is circled a billion times in red Sharpie. You realize that that's today, but you don't really think anything of it.

Among all this creamsicle-coloured clutter, one thing stands out: a neon-green plastic water pistol. For some reason, it grabs your attention more than the life-size Gigi doll sitting lifelessly in the corner. You make a mental note to remember the gun and forget about the giant, weird doll.

'This is where the magic happens,' says Gigi. 'Can I get you something? I have thirty-two flavours of energy drink in the fridge. I recommend "Mesonoxian Hyper Juice". One sip of that and you'll never have to sleep again. Just like me!'

You look back at Gigi. You want to ask her what it's like to live a life of depravity inside a pumpkin-coloured room, but now's not the time for idle curiosity. Your notepad is in your hand. You glance at the list of questions you've written down, which you've ordered from least important to most:

How did the intruder get in?

Is anything missing? Is anything changed?

Why would they plant a broken teacup belonging to Cecilia Immergreen in Gigi's room? Were they trying to send a message? And if so, what message?

Who did this?

Keep it simple. That's always been your main method, and it's worked for you so far. You saunter over to the window and check it for signs of forced entry. The latch is intact, and there's not so much as a crack in the frame. Not even a mosquito could slip through.

‘Does anyone have a spare to your place?’ you ask.

‘Spare? I don’t even have a lock on my door!’ says Gigi. She laughs and slaps her knee as if this is very funny. You just stare at her and wonder if Darwin had it wrong when he described life as ‘survival of the fittest’.

At least you can cross off the first item on your notepad. That’s one mystery solved.

On to the next one.

‘Everything is just like I left it,’ says Gigi after you ask her whether everything is just like she left it. ‘Everything except for the broken teacup and my computer.’ She walks over to her desktop and scrutinizes the monitor. ‘Someone’s been playing Hall of Heroes while I was gone.’ She grabs the mouse and rolls the wheel, grimacing as ‘Defeat’ after ‘Defeat’ scrolls by. ‘Look at this losing streak! I’m back at the bottom of bronze again! What kind of monster would tank my rating like this...’ Gigi’s breath catches, her eyes go wide. ‘I don’t believe it.’

You lean down and look over her shoulder. Soon as you see the name ‘Mori Calliope’, you jot it down.

‘Someone was playing duos with Mori Calliope. On my computer. With my account. While I was gone. Without me.’

Gigi’s voice has a certain manic despondency to it that activates your self-preservation instinct. You give her some space, more for your own safety than respect for her grief.

‘I was supposed to be her first.’ She bites down on her knuckles. ‘I was gonna show her how to jungle.’ Her voice cracks, and she buries her face in her hands. She snorts back a ton of snot and lets out a long, heartbroken wheeze.

Nothing in your career has prepared you for something like this. You get to the bottom of mysteries, not other people's feelings. You give her an avuncular pat on the shoulder and mutter something like, 'Hang in there, champ.'

Gigi suppresses her sobs just enough to say, 'I'll be fine. Just gimme a moment.'

So that's what you do. You crouch down to study the broken teacup. Sure enough, on the bottom of the base, which is intact, are the letters 'CC'. You take the base and put it in your pocket. You give the room a slow once-over just to make sure you haven't missed anything obvious. Satisfied, you look at your notepad. You're going to have to interview both Miss Immergreen and Miss Calliope if you want to answer the important questions.

'What next?'

You stand up and turn around. Gigi is looking up at you. Her eyes are red-rimmed, but her mouth is set in a determined line. If you ever find yourself stepping foot into Hell, you get the feeling Gigi will be one step behind you.

[Go to page 32 to talk to Cecilia](#)

[Go to page 21 to talk to Mori](#)

The tension is so thick you could scoop it up like ice cream. Gigi and Mori have done nothing but exchange hollow pleasantries while you've just sat there in what can only be described as a state of shock. You've seen friendships go sour, but never this quickly nor this bitterly. You don't really know what Hall of Heroes is, but if this is what it does to people, the less you know the better.

At any rate, you're here to do a job, and that job is to ask questions.

You start with a softball.

'Where were you last night?'

Mori points with her chin and says, 'Ask her.'

You look over at Gigi. She seems taken aback.

'How would I know where you've been? I was at a medieval faire, pokin' people with my poignard. Didn't you get my text?'

'I have you blocked.'

'What! Why?'

'Four words: I'm running down mid.'

Gigi gasps. 'I would *never* feed... intentionally.'

'Well, you went 0/28/2 as Yazuo last night. If you weren't feeding intentionally, then hats off to you. That was quite the performance.'

'But I...! We never...! When did...? I'm a Meemo-main! I don't play Yazuo.'

The more you listen to them talk, the less you understand. You need to steer the conversation away from Hall of Heroes if you want to get anything out of this interview.

‘You wouldn’t happen to have the chat logs handy, would you?’ you ask.

‘Oh, I got receipts on all of this,’ says Mori. She pulls out her phone and taps into her screenshot gallery before handing it over.

Gigi scoots over, and the two of you bend your faces over the phone, growing increasingly aghast at the sheer toxicity of what you read on the screen. By the time you’ve gone through it all, Gigi’s face is redder than a clown’s nose.

‘That wasn’t me!’ She falls out of her chair and crawls across the floor and curls up at Mori’s feet. ‘Please, Mori Calliope. You have to believe me. I’d never say those things to you. I’m just a little guy.’

Mori’s face is as grim as a bare skull, her displeasure apparent in every disdainful wrinkle of her nose. She stares at the sobbing orange heap at her feet. ‘That really wasn’t you who pinged me at eleven PM and told me to “hop on *or else*”?’

‘No... I’m being framed. They’ve turned all my friends against me. Even you.’

Mori’s frown bends then breaks. Her voice softens. ‘I’m not against you, Gigi.’

Gigi turns her face up. There are lines on her forehead from where she had it pressed against the linoleum. ‘You’re not?’

‘Nah.’ Mori gets up out of her chair. She extends her hand for Gigi to take. ‘C’mon. Sit here with me. Tell me what’s going on.’

When it comes to detective work, sometimes it’s best to just fade into the background. This is one of those times. You sit and listen. Gigi gives her version of yesterday, the details of which you are already familiar with. When Mori gives her version, however, you sit up and take out your notepad. You marvel at the discrepancy between their accounts.

‘I should’ve known it wasn’t you,’ begins Mori. ‘When I got that threatening DM, I thought, “Wow, this isn’t the Gigi Murin *I* know. She must really be goin’ through it. Hey, what the heck. What’s the harm in one game of Hall between friends?”’ She stops to shake her head, woefully. ‘Well, *that* was a mistake. We lost that first game. Surrendered after fifteen minutes. That should’ve been the end of it. But we went again. Surrendered *that* game in fifteen, too. GG, go next, as they say. Game three, we made it to the twenty-minute mark. Then we surrendered. I’m sure you can see where this is going. Anyway, around three in the morning, you locked in Yazuo and went zero and twenty-eight. I distinctly remember you screaming over voice chat, “I’m gonna frickin’ break this teacup!” And then I heard something shatter. That’s just about when we called it quits. On everything. I thought our friendship was over.’ She smiles. ‘I’m glad to see I was mistaken.’

As soon as you get all that down, you ask Mori what you consider to be *the* question.

‘You were on a voice call with this person and couldn’t tell it wasn’t Gigi?’

Mori fidgets and shrugs sheepishly. ‘I mean, they sounded just like you, whoever they were. They even said the same things you would say, except meaner and more toxic.’

You share a troubled look with Gigi. Neither of you know what to make of that.

Mori breaks the silence. ‘That teacup belonged to Cece, didn’t it?’

‘Show her,’ says Gigi.

You pull the base of the teacup from your pocket and show it to Mori. She grimaces when she sees the letters on the bottom.

‘Maybe I should skip town for a few days. Let all this blow over.’ Mori looks longingly at the door behind you. ‘I’m not sayin’ it’s gonna be easy to make this right. But I’d head over to the

nearest antique shop and buy a back-up teacup in case you ever run across Miss Immergreen.’ She stands up from her chair. ‘Just my two cents.’

You and Gigi stand as well.

‘Guess this is the last we’ll be seeing of each other for a while, huh?’ says Gigi. She looks down at her feet.

‘Chin up, buckeroo,’ says Mori. ‘Tell you what. You get through this alive, and we’ll play some Hall together, just the two of us. For real this time.’

Gigi looks up, the light dancing in her big goo-goo eyes. ‘Okay! I can do that. All I gotta do is channel my inner cockroach, and I can survive anything.’

You thank Mori for her time and head out.

To go antiquing, go to page 8

To head to Cecilia WITHOUT a teacup, go to page 16

You don't exactly know what you were expecting, but it certainly wasn't this. Honestly, you wish it had been some questionable hedgehog fanfics or a severed human head. Instead, you are looking into a shoebox filled with strange cyclopean quadrupedal creatures with big black tails, similar to Gigi's. They are crawling all over one another. Some are throwing up, some are screaming 'Boat goes!' while others scream 'Binted!' It's like Hieronymus Bosch put down his paintbrush and decided to build a living diorama of Hell.

You must have dropped an expletive in your confusion because, all at once, the creatures stop their inscrutable antics and turn their one-eyed tiny faces up at you.

'Where Gigi?' they say as one.

'She's getting the pizza,' you say, taken aback at how casual your own voice sounds, as if talking to these ridiculous creatures was the most natural thing in the world.

'That not Gigi,' they hiss.

'Huh?'

'Real Gigi take good care of Grems. Fake Gigi only play clicky-clicky-scream-and-shouty. Break things. Say bad words.'

Your blood runs cold. You feel like you've just taken a swig of what you thought was water but turned out to be gasoline. Your hand is shaking as you pick up the lid and place it back on the shoebox as a chorus of muffled, mosquito-like voices says, 'Honk shua. Sleep on that thang.'

The ground is like a wobbling cube of jelly under your bloodless feet. The room smears as you spin around.

Gigi is standing there, watching you, pointing the neon-green water pistol at your heart.

‘You just couldn’t leave it alone, could you?’ says Gigi.

The barrel of the water pistol is sure and steady. Hers is not a hand that will waver. You have a feeling you are about to find out how, exactly, curiosity killed the cat.

‘You just *had* to open the shoebox.’ Gigi grins. ‘Honestly, I respect that. I’d have done the same.’ She cackles but keeps the water pistol trained on you. ‘Yep. Cut from the same cloth, you and I.’

‘Where is she?’ you ask.

‘Where’s who?’

‘Gigi.’

‘You’re lookin’ at her, you silly goose.’

‘I mean the *real* Gigi.’

Gigi’s face darkens. The tips of her fangs peek from under her top lip as she tries to pass a snarl off as a smile. ‘I *am* the real Gigi.’

You don’t respond. Gigi drops all pretense of nonchalance and her fury shows plainly on her face.

‘What? You think you could even tell? You? I had you like a bumblebee on a string, and you had no idea. I used you to soak up that ass-whooping from Cece. I thought I’d keep you around in case I needed you to take the heat again. But I guess the jig is up now. Which is a shame. You made a hell of a damage sponge.’

There is venom in each barbed syllable she speaks, but you keep your face as granite as you can. Whoever lets their emotions get the best of them will be the first to slip up. And though it might not sound like it, you're winning in that regard.

Your stoic silence goads Fake Gigi on. 'And what makes you think you deserve to see her? You're not her friend.'

'You're wrong about that.'

'You left her in a dumpster!'

You must have let the barest of cracks show in your mask because Fake Gigi smirks like a hunter after landing a heart shot.

'And it was you who stole the teacup.' Fake Gigi adopts an expression of mock incredulity. 'Don't you remember?'

It sounds like the walls around you have come crashing down, but it's only the architecture of your mind that has collapsed. Your memories have caved in, each of them hollow, and the once firm ground of the past as you thought you knew it has proven to be as thin and unreliable as one-ply toilet paper.

Were you the bad guy the whole time?

Your gaze is fixed on Fake Gigi's face, though you are not conscious of actually seeing her. Vaguely, you are aware of the glib expression of villainous triumph she's sporting. But this expression is short-lived. A look of complete shock supplants it shortly. You snap out of your reverie just enough to notice that she is not looking at you. She is looking past you.

You turn around, then wonder what kind of drugs they gave you in the hospital. You wonder this because the person you see standing in the doorway is Gigi. *Another* Gigi.

She pulls her hood down, revealing a winged Valkyrie helm atop her head, and strides into the room. She is wearing a giant button that reads 'I'm from the future. Ask me anything.' As she passes, she touches your arm and whispers, 'Don't believe her lies.'

[Go to the Final Showdown on page 41](#)

You open your eyes and there is an unfamiliar ceiling hovering over you. At your side is a heartrate monitor, beeping systolically. Gone are your shoes, your street clothes, even your underwear. A pale gown, a hospital bracelet on your left wrist, and a headful of retrograde amnesia are all you possess.

Hopefully things will start making sense when you get back to your office.

[Head to your office for a fresh start on page 1](#)

You don't know what it is about Gigi, but she brings out the good in you. Against all your sharply honed instincts, contrary to all notions of self-preservation, you place yourself between her and the water pistol. If anyone's getting squirted, it's gonna be you.

The Doll with the gun snorts. 'You must really enjoy being a toy in other people's games.' She takes a step forward. 'I can't imagine being you. You act more like a doll than I ever have. You're just going through the motions, acting like you've got thoughts of your own. But you're not fooling anyone, you know. You're no more alive than a can opener. Don't deny it.' She's practically standing on your toes now, glowering up at you. She jabs you in the ribs with the water pistol and sneers. 'I take it back. I *can* imagine being you. It's just that I don't want to. It's too sad. I'd rather be a barnacle than an automaton like you. At least I'd be alive.'

'Said all you wanted to say?' you ask.

'Yep. I'm done.'

'You sure are.' You pull Gigi's phone from your pocket. The recording app is open. You swipe to contacts and tap 'CC'. Your thumb hovers over the 'send' button. You give the Doll the smarmiest smile you can muster. 'Have fun in Mexico,' you say as you tap the send button.

The colour of the Doll's face alternates between white, purple, red, and green. Her mouth moves but produces no words. She drops the water pistol and claps her hands to her head and screams like a Tasmanian devil stuck in a tar pit. Then she rushes for the window, jumps through the glass, and is gone.

You wipe your sweaty palms on your thighs and breathe a sigh of relief. You turn around, and Gigi is looking up at you the way a baby would when someone rattles boo-boo keys above their head.

She throws her Valkyrie helmet to the ground, jumps on you and digs her fingers and toes into your clothing. She's stuck on you like a tick burrowed up to its neck, but you don't really have a mind to dislodge her.

'You stood up for me,' she blubbers. 'I won't forget it. Ever.'

And neither will you. You've finally remembered that there is a lot of good in you. Gigi has reminded you of that. Maybe it's time for a career change. You wonder if it's too late to go to med school and become a doctor.

'What will you do now?' you ask Gigi as she detaches herself.

'I've got to pay Shiori a visit,' she says, waving a dismissive hand. 'Time travel business.'

'Wait, so...' The next words on your tongue are so bittersweet you choke a bit. 'You're leaving?'

Gigi nods. 'My place is in the future.' She smiles at you. 'Don't worry. We're friends there, too.'

You force a smile. 'The present's not gonna be much fun without you.'

'What do you mean "without me?"' She laughs. When you don't join in, she tilts her head. 'Don't you remember?'

You stare at her blankly. What else could you have possibly forgotten?

Then it hits you.

Gigi is still in the dumpster.

'Go get her,' says Future Gigi. 'You won't believe how happy she'll be to see you.'

Congratulations! You achieved the Good End. You're a hero to us all.

‘Tea, anyone?’

You’re sitting on the only unbroken chair in the room. Gigi is clinging to your arm like a baby koala. The crunch, crunch, crunch of glass and debris under Cecilia’s feet as she walks to the nearest kitchen cabinet sounds like ice breaking beneath you. Both you and Gigi are trying to be as small and still as possible. You move only your eyes after Cecilia. When she stops, Gigi whimpers.

‘Here’s where I’d keep my favourite teacup,’ Cecilia chirps. ‘IF I STILL HAD ONE!’

She picks up a fork and flings it so hard it goes up to the handle into what you think is drywall. Upon later reflection, you realize it was solid brick.

‘If I ever find out who took it,’ she says, her fists balling. ‘I’m gonna... I’m gonna... Hrrr-RAARGH!’

A three-meter jet of pure hellfire shoots from Cecilia’s mouth, leaving a starfish-shaped scorch mark on the ceiling and the stench of brimstone in the air.

You hear what sounds like marbles clattering in a bag. It takes you a second to realize it’s Gigi’s teeth chattering.

You take a deep breath and exhale. You’re the professional here. It’s up to you to ask questions and keep the situation under control. You take out your notepad and pretend to read it. However, your hand is shaking so badly your writing is nothing but a blur of squiggles. Despite your years of experience, there’s no way you can keep your cool in this situation.

‘What is this about, anyway?’

You look up. Cecilia is standing over you.

This interview is on the verge of becoming an interrogation. And you're on the wrong side of it.

You've got to do something. But what? Is honesty always the best policy, or will a white lie save your bacon here?

To show Cecilia the base of her broken teacup, go to page 13

To fib your way out, go to page 15

You've lived your whole life by the motto 'look out for number one'. But this short time you've spent with Gigi has taught you something about yourself: you *do* have at least one altruistic bone in your body.

You rush over to the dumpster and peer in. Gigi is sitting in one corner with her knees drawn up under her chin. She looks strangely small, like a terrified burrowing owl with all its feathers flattened. She looks up at you, and you just know you have to protect this poor, innocent creature.

At all costs.

'Don't make a sound,' you say. 'I'll come back for you.'

'But what about—'

You press your fingers to your lips and shush her. You reach up and bring the lid of the dumpster down softly, the last crack of light reflecting off Gigi's wide-open eyes before she is gone from sight, swallowed by darkness.

The temperature drops, and fog rolls down the alley, forming a misty carpet for you to walk from this life to the next. The words 'Spirit of Vengeance Cecilia Immerhater has invaded your world!' float before your eyes. You turn around and she is standing right there.

'Hand her over,' says Cecilia.

You don't answer.

'Listen,' says Cecilia, 'I can be reasoned with. If you have any interest in self-preservation, give me Gigi, and you can walk out of here with as many limbs as you came with.'

'She didn't do it,' you say.

‘Well, somebody did. And somebody’s gonna have to pay for it.’ Cecilia cracks her knuckles. ‘Who’s it gonna be? You, or her?’

You reach into your pocket and take out the base of the broken teacup. You toss it at Cecilia, but she doesn’t react or try to catch it. It clacks against her body and falls to the asphalt and lands with the imprinted side facing up. You both look down to study the two Cs. You lock eyes, and, to your surprise, Cecilia gives you a warm smile.

Then you take 12d8 worth of psychic damage and go unconscious.

To wake up in the hospital, go to page 46

‘What is that?’

It’s a teacup. You’re holding it out to Cecilia, but she doesn’t seem keen on taking it.

‘I told you this was a bad idea,’ hisses Gigi. ‘Antiquing always makes things worse!’

You gulp. Sweat is running down from your brow and into your eyes. The room around you is filled with broken furniture and smashed porcelain. A hurricane went through here—Hurricane Cecilia. She must’ve turned this place upside down looking for her precious teacup.

‘If I didn’t know better,’ says Cecilia, ‘I’d say you are trying to offer me a replacement for a certain vessel that I’ve recently lost.’ She takes a step toward you, and the floorboards explode under her foot. ‘Is that why you lied to me earlier?’ She takes another step, and a fissure splits the wall to your left. ‘Where is my teacup? I know you know.’

To pull out the base of the broken teacup and suffer the consequences, go to page 13

You ever see those nature documentaries about sand tiger shark siblings fighting to the death in their mother's womb? That's basically what's going down in the dumpster between you and Gigi. You're so busy gnawing on each other that it comes as a total surprise when Cecilia reaches in, snatches Gigi by the scruff of her neck, and yanks her out of the dumpster.

'Come along, Gigi,' says Cecilia. 'We're gonna learn how to play DOTA 2 together. Just you and me.'

You listen as Gigi's screams recede into the distance. Eventually, you are left alone with the steely silence of the empty dumpster.

Congratulations! You've unlocked the Garbage End! Now, I'm not saying you're trash, but you did end up alone in a dumpster.

In your line of work, you're the one who usually asks the questions. Maybe that's why you feel like a tightrope walker with two left feet now that the shoe is on the proverbial other foot.

'Where did you get this?' says Gigi, thrusting the note at you.

'You know *damn well* where I got it!'

You don't know why you said that, because you certainly *don't* know where you got it, let alone know that Gigi knows where you got it. That being said, it's never a bad idea to pretend you know something when, in fact, you know nothing. Never mind what that Socrates chump said. That guy *really* didn't know anything.

Gigi eyes you warily. She shrinks back a bit and shifts her head on her shoulders from side to side, like a cobra looking for an opening.

'So, she got to you first, huh?' she says.

You nod. You think if you keep your mouth shut, Gigi might run hers. If you let her, she might spill all the beans you need to figure out what is really going on here.

'That little sneak,' she spits. 'Always finds a way to weasel her way out. She's like glitter, you know. Just when you think you've cleaned her all up, you find her behind your ears, between your toes, everywhere she is not wanted.' A cloud of malice passes over her face and then she becomes calm, almost serene. 'I suppose you've figured it all out now.'

'You bet I have,' you lie. 'Been in this business for a long time now. Seen others try their hand at detective work. Few have the wits to make it more than a month at most. But I'm not like the others. I've seen everything. Nothing gets by me.'

'Is that so?' Gigi arches an eyebrow at you. 'So when did you realize I was only using you to take the heat from Cece?'

‘...Huh?’

‘I mean, was it part of your grand scheme to get your clock cleaned?’ She smiles at you as she reaches for the hospital bracelet on your wrist. She gives it a playful tug. ‘I can’t make you out. If you knew you were nothing but a fall guy to me, why did you play along for so long? What’s your endgame here? What exactly were you hoping to get out of this?’

You look at your hospital bracelet. What *were* you hoping to get out of this? Well, for one thing, you didn’t realize you were anyone’s fall guy. When you left the hospital, you thought you really had made a difference. Effective altruism was your new ethos. It’s just now dawning on you that your noble sacrifice was simply Gigi using you to tank an ass-whooping. How long had she been playing you? Since she walked into your office?

‘There was no medieval faire, was there?’ you say, your voice almost a whisper.

Gigi shrugs. ‘There might’ve been. But I certainly wasn’t there.’

You think this must be how birds feel after flying into windows. You are completely stunned.

‘Looks like some things do get past you,’ says Gigi. ‘Well, don’t feel too bad. I’ve bamboozled the best and brightest. And you, my friend, are neither.’ She gives you a glib smirk. ‘The only one who’s a match for me is me.’

‘You called?’

You spin around at the sound of this new, yet totally familiar voice. A hooded figure stands in the doorway. You wonder what kind of drugs they gave you in the hospital. You wonder this because the person standing in the doorway is Gigi. *Another* Gigi.

She pulls her hood down, revealing a winged Valkyrie helmet atop her head. She strides into the room, and you can see she is wearing a giant button that reads ‘I’m from the future. Ask me anything.’ As she passes, she touches your arm and whispers reassuringly, ‘Don’t believe her lies.’

[Head to the Final Showdown on page 41](#)

It's like watching two squirrels square off over who has the bigger cache of nuts. Gigi is arguing with Gigi, and you're not sure who is winning.

'See? What did I tell you? She is glitter incarnate. I'd tell you you aren't wanted here, but I'm sure you already know that.'

'It is you who are not wanted, vile double! Away with thee!'

'Why are you talking like that? And what's with the stupid helmet?'

'Going to a medieval faire changes you. Not that you'd know anything about that. I bet you don't even own a poignard.'

'I'd own you mid, and that's good enough for me.'

'Big talk for someone coming off a thirty-game losing streak.'

'Mori Calliope was trolling. I played impeccably, as usual.'

'You keep her vaunted name out of your dirty mouth, filth.'

'Oo, hit a sore spot, did I? Tell me, how much does it make you seethe that I introduced her to the Conjuror's Crack and you didn't?'

'It doesn't bother me at all.'

'Oh, yeah? Then why are your nostrils flaring like that?'

'I'm just thinking really hard. I need the extra oxygen intake.'

'You can think?'

'I am, therefore I am... Aren't I?'

'You leave Descartes out of this.'

‘Sorry. I Kant help myself.’

‘Stop.’

‘Kant stop, won’t stop.’

‘STOP!’

‘You’re not the boss of me.’

‘I should be. I am you except better.’

‘What makes you say that?’

‘I have a gun, and you don’t.’

‘You call that a gun? *This* is a gun!’

‘You call your biceps a gun? Cringe.’

‘I may be cringe, but I also don’t care.’

‘I can tell.’

‘You’re just jealous that I am unbothered by the opinions of others.’

‘Actually, I’m just glad I’m not you.’

‘But you are me.’

‘Don’t remind me.’

‘So, what are we, anyway?’

‘Well, I dunno about you, but I believe I am a doll of some kind.’

‘Oh, right. I picked you up from Shiori’s Emporium of Cursed Curios. Man, what a huge mistake that was. I mean, I knew you could talk, but I didn’t know you were evil and could, like, move your limbs and stuff.’

‘Really? You didn’t stop to think that the doll you bought from the shop that sells shrunken heads and monkeys’ paws was maybe a little bit *cursed*?’

‘Fine! I admit it! I am too trusting and optimistic. It is my greatest flaw.’

‘No, your greatest flaw is that your breath smells like cat food.’

‘Why are you so mean to me?’

‘Dunno. It’s in my nature, I guess.’

‘Oh, is that your excuse? Is that why you broke the teacup, too?’

‘Probably, yeah. But at least I didn’t steal it.’

‘A likely story.’

‘It’s true! Ask them.’

You put the popcorn down. It’s time to add your voice to this insanity. Of course, you don’t think you stole the teacup, but you can’t rule it out as an impossibility.

You mumble something and give a noncommittal shrug. That ought to be enough of a contribution to this discussion.

‘See! Guilty! This is all their fault.’

‘What do you mean? They just refuted you completely. And besides, it was me who brought them into this. I was the one who went to them for help.’

‘That’s what they *wanted* you to think. They knew you’d come crawling into their office and spill your guts. And do you know why? Because *they’re* the villain! They planted the teacup in our room. They kicked this whole thing off.’

‘It doesn’t matter what they did or did not do. This isn’t about them, okay? It’s about us.’

‘Explain.’

‘One of us has to go. This timeline can only take so many Gigis.’

‘Well, *you’re* the time traveler. It’s you who clearly doesn’t belong here.’

‘Excuse me? I’m real! You’re a doll!’

‘“...and Other Lies I Tell Myself,” a novel by Gigi Murin.’

‘Listen. The real Gigi would not say things like “Jungle diff” and then smash someone else’s teacup.’

‘Well... She might. You don’t know.’

‘And then you used this good detective here to soak up the fallout from your crash out.’

‘I mean, I couldn’t take the beating. I’m allergic to pain.’

‘I don’t like pain, either. But I would never dupe anyone into taking my licks for me.’

‘Well, aren’t you a knight in shining armour? You must be very popular with the princesses.’

‘I was, as a matter of fact. In another world, that is. Huzzah!’

‘Stow your lance, Sir Freakalot. I grow tired of this jousting. I’m calling it. You go, I stay.’

‘And by what authority maketh thee this pronouncement?’

‘This loaded water pistol. I suggest you make for the nearest exit. Stay, and I’ll give you such a squirting you’ll never be dry again.’

‘Might doesn’t equal right, you know.’

‘I disrespectfully disagree. Now, go on. Git.’

Gigi looks at you. She needs a hero right now. However, your recent efforts at altruism didn’t exactly bear fruit in the way you would’ve liked. You acted selflessly and got taken advantage of. Who’s to say it won’t happen again? ‘Look out for number one’ has always been your motto. It’s brought you success and safety in an inherently precarious line of work, and the one time you strayed from it you wound up in the hospital for no good reason.

So, what will you do now?

To stand up for Gigi, go to page 30

To side with the Doll, go to page 48

You open your eyes, and there is a strangely familiar ceiling hovering over you. At your side is a heart rate monitor, beeping systolically. Gone are your shoes, your street clothes, even your underwear. A pale gown, a hospital bracelet on your left wrist, and a serious case of *déjà vu* are all you possess.

You think you are alone, but you are not.

‘You’re finally awake!’

You roll over and see Gigi sitting at your bedside. Her smile is toothy and wide. She takes your hand.

‘Man, Cece mind-blasted you good. You took 8d12 worth of psychic damage, at least!’ Gigi squeezes your hand and laughs. ‘Thanks for tanking that for me!’

Despite the throbbing in your head, it feels kinda good to take one for the team. Especially seeing how happy it has made Gigi. Maybe altruism isn’t so bad after all, you think.

With Cecilia pacified, there is no longer any imminent threat of complete annihilation to either you or Gigi. The case may not be solved, but you feel like you’ve earned a bit of time for rest and recuperation. You meet with the nursing staff at the front desk, and they hand your things back to you and ask you to fill out a hospital discharge form, which you gladly do.

Gigi has a twinkle in her eye as she pushes your wheelchair down the hall toward the exit.

‘Hey,’ she says. ‘Wanna play Hall of Heroes with me?’

You reach into your pocket for your phone, but your hand meets with what feels like a crumpled piece of paper. You pull it out and read the word ‘Remember’ scrawled in a messy hand. Vague alarm bells ring in your head, and you stuff the note back in your pocket before Gigi can see it.

You borrow Gigi's phone instead and start making a Hall of Heroes account. You can't help but notice, however, that Gigi has the neon-green water pistol tucked in the waistband of her shorts.

To head back to Gigi's place, go to page 6

If there's one lesson you've learned over the course of your career, it's that power is everything. No one ever came out on top by siding with the outgunned. To your mind, a loaded water pistol is much more convincing than a just cause. That's why when Gigi looks at you, hoping to find a hero, you look away. You are no hero.

Gigi drops her eyes, and her perky tail goes limp and plops on the floor. The rim of her Valkyrie helmet slides over her eyes, shadowing them.

'Hah!' says the Doll. 'I'd like to tell you to cheer up, you're among friends, but that's obviously not true.'

'Is this really what you want?' asks Gigi. She is talking to you.

What you want is to survive. And if this is the only way, then so be it. You give her the slightest of nods. You don't know if she saw it; you won't look at her.

She moves to the door, a small, indistinct shade of orange seen from the periphery of your vision. She stops. Maybe she is looking back. You don't know.

'You weren't like this. In the future, I mean... Guess you forgot about me.'

The sound of porcelain shattering causes you to lift your eyes. You spot the base of a teacup, split in half on the floor, each half imprinted with the letter 'C'. It feels like someone has grabbed your windpipe and twisted. You look up at the doorway.

Gigi is gone.

'Man, I thought she'd never leave,' says the Doll. 'Anyway, hop on. Let's play some duos.'

Congratulations! You 'achieved' the Bad End. Good for you, I guess?

It's Friday afternoon, and Gigi and Cece are cleaning up. They've just had a tea party at Gigi's place.

'Have everything?' asks Gigi.

'Yeah, I think so.' Cecilia pats her pockets. 'Yep. I'm good.'

'Awesome! Let's get this show on the road.'

'What show? I'm going home, and you are most certainly not coming with me.'

'But you promised to walk me to the bus stop. You said you'd give me a piggyback ride.'

'Okay, first of all, don't gaslight me. Second of all, why're you heading to the bus stop?'

'To go to the medieval faire! Don't you remember? I've been talking about it for weeks.'

'Ah. That would explain your weird new obsession with jesters.'

'It's gonna be a grand ye olde time! You should come with me!'

'Nah. I'm good.'

'Okay. Next time, then.'

'Nah.'

'C'mon. Live a little.'

'Nah.'

'C'mon.'

'Nah.'

'Fine. But won't you be jealous when I have all the fair maidens swooning over my poignard.'

‘I’m gonna need you to stop talking about your poignard.’

‘Okay. How ‘bout I talk about this life-sized doll I bought? Pretty cool, huh?’

‘It looks just like you.’

‘I know, right? She’s gonna watch the place while I’m gone.’

‘I wouldn’t trust that thing to watch grass grow.’

‘What does that mean?’

‘I mean that thing is creepy. It’s too lifelike.’

‘You’re right. A living doll. That *is* creepy. Have you looked in the mirror recently, by the way?’

‘Don’t make me hurt you.’

The door closes. Inside Gigi’s ridiculously orange room, the life-sized Gigi doll sits with one out-of-place object: a forgotten teacup, the letters ‘CC’ imprinted on the base.