

Junior Division, Prose
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The Escape of Annabelle and Ada (an excerpt)

The closet in Anabelle and Ada's room had a trapdoor and ladder leading to the attic, where all the luggage was kept. The Valentines had always gone to the seaside during the summer, but that was before Mother had gotten sick and everything changed. Anabelle coughed as she emerged into the dusty, cobweb filled room with low sloped ceilings and porthole windows. The sun had gone down, so she had brought up an oil lamp, and set it on a nearby table. She spotted the two matching leather suitcases that belonged to her and Ada. She leaned down to grabbed them, but stopped when she noticed a trunk marked with the name Cynthia.

Her mother's name.

The trunk housed Mother's wedding dress and a vast collection of trinkets too numerous to count, as well as her sewing box and watercolour kit. Anabelle eyed a file with her mother's name on it and upon being opened, it contained a picture of Mother, as well as her birth certificate.

And an administration form with the crest of the local asylum. Anabelle clearly remembered the day Mother had been taken

to the hospital. It had been the last time she ever saw her. It had never occurred to her what hospital she had been taken to.

Reading the form, she saw the unthinkable. It was signed with a doctors' signature, and her father's.

And Aunt Dorothy's.

Anabelle was horrified. Her mother had not been taken to a hospital at all. She'd been taken to an asylum. Mother was not crazy. Anabelle knew it.

This, however, meant that Mother may not have died. Anabelle immediately knew where she and Ada were going.

They were going to rescue their mother.