The Forgotten Library

Ryan was a young teenager, with chestnut hair and dark eyes. He was an orphan from birth – he appeared one day on the streets. People say he smelt of aged leather. He knew no last name, just Ryan, only Ryan. Silver Oaks orphanage had gentle caretakers. They taught him all that he needed to know, took him everywhere. The town was deserted, cobwebs stretching far and wide. One day, Rosalea, a kind old lady, took him to the church-like library.

Just as they entered, the towering ceiling loomed over the tiny specks of people. Marble pillars gleamed dully after centuries of wear. Leather covered items with golden pages held secrets which no one had even knew for centuries. The shelves embraced golden etchings which ran through libraries for decade, the beauty of the long-forgotten library had been bound by the dust, hidden in the shadows. The air was thick with the scent of old vellum, mingled with traces of mildew and the faint, sweet musk of decaying leather bindings, just like people had said he smelt like. Columns of books rose like petrified trees, their spines cracked and flaking, while narrow aisles lay cloaked in a hush that tasted of dust and memory. Delicate cobwebs stretched its silken arms across the polished shelves.

Golden light oozed through the open window, colouring everything a dark sepia like an ancient document. Flaky tomes scatter their seeds through the musty air. One corner has been overrun by ivies that had snaked their way into the library. Ancient dust swirled through the dry air. Antique books sat on the lonely shelves inhaling every movement he took. As he sat on a cobwebbed infested cushion, the pages of a rustic story flew in his hands and settled with a gentle breeze. Magnificent spiral staircases stood proudly, the stairs creaking and groaning in complaint. The only light were the glass windows, stained wine red and verdant green and milky white. Dust blended into the clandestine air as he decided his first step on the spiral staircases, the testament to unveil the secrets behind the pages.

Rosalea showed Ryan through the infinite corridors, flickering spots of flame revealing themselves to be candles. Graceful archways towered over the pair, and small cauldrons filled with otherworldly liquids bubbled and glowed beautiful colours, illuminating the dim space with gentle light. A small man was hunched over an antique book, golden lettering still sparkling on its spine. A silk bookmark dangled from the pages, and the binding seemed weathered. Pages spilt out of the book, an invisible gale sending them spinning away. Rosalea, who had been as silent as the library itself, spoke up.

“Mister Lewis. This is Ryan, orphan from Silver Oaks.” Lewis smiles, cocks his head at Ryan. His expression turns to shock.

“Sir? Are… are you all right?” Rosalea asked, clearly concerned.

“Ryan…” Lewis flips the name on his tongue like the most precious sweet in the world. He seizes Ryan’s shoulders. His eyes aren’t mad. They’re not blazing. They’re wet with tears. But what comes next shatters him.

“Ryan Lewis. You’re my son.”