Write a 500-word narrative based on the prompt "The Last Key," incorporating the techniques we've studied to create compelling conflict and tension.

"She had found many keys in her lifetime- brass ones, silver ones, ancient ones with teeth like jagged mountains. But this one... this one hummed with malevolent energy, its metal refusing to warm to her touch, as if it existed partly in another world where heat had no meaning and time flowed backward."

# Just A Girl

There was a day when the wind whistled across the evergreen trees, the birds chirping in a graceful symphony that echoed across the forest.Past the snuffling boars that ate under combs of feathery moss, past the berries that lay ripening under the leafy canopy of the woods and to the ears of an unfortunate boy, that was as thin as a skeleton and was cooped up in a wrought iron cage.

He lay as still as stone, listening to the hum of the kitchen, wondering when his capturer would exit through the door made of gingerbread and stare at him, with her blood-red eyes. Struggling to his knees, he opened his eyes expecting the worst, but was instead greeted by a familiar face. It was the face of Gretel, his sister.

He stared at his sister, hope radiating from his face. What was this blissful miracle? What were the chanced that he would be freed today? But Gretel didn’t share the same excitement as him. She looked at him sadly, her eyes brimming with tears. “I’m sorry, Hansel.” Gretel whispered. “tomorrow, the witch will come and boil you alive. I’ve come to say… Goodbye.”

Gretel walked back in a brisk trot,hiding her quivering chin. She entered the witch’s house, andd started her weekly set of chores. Her behaviour was perfect today, but was interrupted by the witch, her red eyes glinting and her mouth curling into a sly grin. “I want you to prepare Hansel’s roasting.” The witch said in a raspy cackle. “if you want the key to his cage, feel free to find it. It’s in the oven.”

Gretel, possesed with a sense to powerful to describe, crossed the room, a tornado of emotion whirling within her. She opended the oven, a gust of heat almost meltiung her face. Gretel grasped for the key, her legs flailing in frustration. In one desperate motion, Gretel reached for the key. Counting down the seconds before her death. Three. Two One. Now.

She had barely uttered the last word before the oven door clanged shut behind her. She looked out of the oven window, regret spilled over her face. She was no use to anyone. She tried to be a hero, but instead suffered her brothers fate. She was just a girl.