

Chapter IV

I sit there, frozen, watching Brother Ethel's chest, hoping that once again it will move up and down. I want to touch his body, to wake him up from his daze, but I make no movement forward. All I do is stare, but seeing nothing. I realize I am shaking, slightly, but I can't stop. I pull my hands forward, trying to stop the shiver snaking down my body. Feeling faint, I reach forward, my fingers hanging over Brother Ethel's body. My hand dips unsteadily downward as I touch Brother Ethel's forehead. The feel is cold to the touch and hard like clumped clay. I gulp in a socket of air, trying to fill my deflated lungs.

After steadying my breathing, I go down to the barn, where Brother Bruno sits, awaiting my return. Surprised, I take a step backwards. His eyes twinkle kindly, as he beckons me. I sit down on a stool next to him. "Listen, my child. It is not my business to invade your thoughts and feelings, nor your personal matters. But it comes to me, and I say this fondly, that you appear uncertain, dazed, these past few days." I hang my head, saying nothing. Brother Bruno replies with pity showing through his eyes, "Arthur, you did

everything possible for the man- "No, no, NO, I could've saved him Brother Bruno, oh, please forgive me, please forgive me, please forgive..." I say rocking back and forth, as he cradles me in his arms. "I can't forgive you for something you haven't done, my child, Little Arthur. It is up to you to realize that, and then you will be able to forgive yourself, but only you can do this. One last thing, before you leave." *Where shall I leave to?*, I wonder. "Brother Ethel left a message to me, so I could save it until the time came. Now, the time has come. Take it, Arthur, and guard yourself wisely." Brother Bruno hands me a piece of parchment, before turning to leave.

The single piece of parchment floats weightlessly in my hands. Slowly, carefully, I open up my future and the words of Brother Ethel. As I read the letter, tears that I never let fall before, glide in steady streams down my face, washing away dirt, along with remorse, regret, and heartache. I take in all the words and their meanings, like a sponge, collecting water and not letting go. When I finish reading, happiness spreads through my body as vines would crawl around a building.

Below: Page XI of *Arthur's Journal*, original copy of the letter written by Brother Ethel.

Dear Arthur,

Congratulations, for all the wonderful accomplishments you have made in your life, no matter how others belittle them. I know how much you have done for me and everyone, and soon the world will recognize your achievements. Arthur, of everything I could say to you, it would be to thank you for helping me enjoy my life, something almost impossible to do. I could not tell you that enough. Here, I have left twenty-two farthings, for you to use to leave the cathedral. I know this has been one of your many hopes for your life ahead, and I have chosen to use the savings of my life to help with your journey. I know you will succeed, Arthur Finnigan. Good luck.

Brother Ethel

