

Before I Forget (Notes from the Oubliette)

by Frank Vander Rasky

Are you there? It's been so long since I had someone to talk to. Besides Oscar and Wilde, I mean. I feed them crumbs of bread. They're my pet rats, my only friends. Besides you, of course. How kind of you to remember me! How shall I begin?

I haven't always been here, you know. Not in this dark place, like being locked in a closet. Once I was like you. I lived in a world of sunshine, flowers, fresh baguettes, morning coffee, unlocked doors, places to go to, people who saw me, smiles, and I smiled, too.

Then the black bulldog grabbed me. That's how my misery began. It got me in its grip, pulling me down to where I couldn't find myself, and the more I struggled to get free, the more it locked onto me tighter, until I couldn't breathe. Now I don't fight it anymore. It's easier that way.

I don't remember how long I've been here. I'm just so glad you visited! I apologize for the mess. Please, eat these crumbs of bread! Somewhere in the darkness is a key. I misplaced it, has that ever happened to you? If you find it on your way out, give it to Oscar and Wilde. They'll know what to do.

Closet doors frighten me. That's why I'm in the far corner of this forgotten place. But it'd be nice to know the key is with my two dear friends, before I forget.

