

Prologue

Flames engulfed the boat. I struggled off the dirty makeshift bed and shuffled to the floor. The cable ties binding my hands and feet ^{making my} made progress slow. There was a ~~deafening bang outside. The sound ricocheted off the steel walls.~~

My lungs ached as ~~the~~ dark, noxious smoke filled the air. Then a wall of water smashed through the cabin, the flames ^{ing} dulled and ^{clearing} some of the smoke ^{cleared}.

Seizing my opportunity, I threw myself towards the wooden stairs where the remains of the fire licked their way upward to freedom. I gritted my teeth and reached over to hook the cable tie at my wrist on a jagged piece of scorched metal that I could see through the flames. Turning my face away from the searing heat, I tugged down sharply and felt the tie snap. I screamed out as the flames burned my skin, but I didn't have time to inspect the damage. I needed to get out, to warn the others. I had to make sure they were okay.

~~Things had gone quiet outside; I felt the panic inside me reach up and take hold.~~

With my hands free, I released my ankles and scrambled up the still burning stairs to the deck. I was on a half sunk old fishing trawler that was listing at an odd angle. The thick smoke ^{had} curled its way up from the wreckage and ^{was} slowly ^{ring} started to clear. Through the haze I could see a group of people ^{just} on the shore line. ^{They} stood motionless, looking at the ground. My eyes followed their horrified gazes to the body lying face down on the water's edge.

love this phrase!

rep -

feels a little flat - rephrase?

← references to outside feel a little confusing - cuts ok?

Chapter I
First Day Blues

Six Months Earlier...

My first day at a new school... again. The relocation company arranged for my uniform to be ordered, and it was waiting for me at the house when I got here. A uniform!

Word choice?
Not sure
what this
is.

I couldn't believe it. ~~This I found hard to fathom.~~ Back in Boston, only people who went to ~~posh~~ fancy private schools had uniforms. In Ireland everyone wore them; a royal blue v-neck sweater (or jumper as they call them), grey skirt and a blue and yellow striped tie. Hideous, of course,

but it could be worse; at least I'd blend. School here started a week ago, and the later I started, the more conspicuous I would become.

I scowled at myself in the mirror and tugged ~~out~~ at the elastic holding up my wavy brown hair. I seriously needed some enhancements. Mascara and lip gloss would have definitely improved the overall effect, but there was a strict no makeup policy in the school a throw-back to ~~the school's~~ ^{it's} convent roots.

Word choice?
does this
just mean
make up?

Downstairs, my dad was in the kitchen playing ~~with~~ ^{on} his laptop and mumbling about cables.

"Morning, Dad, did you get that thing working?"

"Hey, Meg," he said, looking confused. "Yeah, it was working fine and then just died on me."

"It helps to plug the charger ~~cable~~ into the wall, Dad. That's what actually charges the battery." I walked over to the socket, plugged it in and flicked the switch.

what
switch?

feels a little flat; maybe rephrase along the lines: the school had called it jumper-guess I was going to have to get used to Irish phrases

mine was going to be ed
stand out at

"It's back!" he cried.

ha!

"The wonder of science," I said over my shoulder. "So ^{how do you like you} ~~are you settling into the~~ new job?" I popped two pieces of bread into the toaster.

(a little more casual)

"It's great ^{There's} so much to learn and catch up on. Come down to the club after school and I'll show you around. I have a feeling about this place, Megan. This could be the one."

I ~~certainly~~ ^{that true} hoped ~~it was the one~~. It would be nice to be able to see out a full year in the same school, even if it meant living in Kinsale ~~instead of the US~~.

"Sure, Dad," I said, humoring him. "I'll stop by ~~straight~~ ^{and I} after school." My toast popped. ~~Burning my fingers, I dropped it on the counter and~~ buttered it quickly. "I should get going," I said, my mouth full. "I have to figure out where all ~~the~~ ^{my} classes are."

"Good luck," he said glancing up from his computer. "You'll be fine ~~they seem to~~ ^{The} ~~be nice~~ ^{seem nice} kids around here. I'm sure you will fit right in."

~~I gave him my little trooper smile and threw my bag over my shoulder. "See you~~
~~later."~~ I walked out the door, toast in hand.

← insert line break here to show time passing

The school itself was not far from my house, ^{and on my walk over} ~~Thankfully, it was all downhill (on the~~
~~call downhill, thankfully) I saw lots~~ ^{way there, anyway; coming home would be a different story}. Lots of kids of various ages ^{that} ~~were~~ making their way in the direction of the school. Nobody ^{really} paid any attention to me; in fact, people didn't even ^{seem to notice I was there} ~~look in my direction~~, probably due to my unexceptional appearance. At five foot five, with a ~~smallish build and~~ pale skin with a sprinkling of freckles, I blended nicely into the sea of faces. I guess I could even pass for Irish, with dark green almond shaped eyes, courtesy of my dad, and my mom's small oval face.

~~Dad had always said I was just like my mom, but I doubted that; she had been really~~
~~beautiful. The small photo I kept in my wallet assured me of that.~~

← doesn't feel quite right here - ok to cut?

I wondered how I would fit in with the Irish. New schools and kids I could deal with, but ~~Ireland was a new one on me~~ ^{I had never had to deal with a new country} I didn't want to stand out as different, ^{Luckily} but the school sweater and tie seemed to be working ~~a charm~~ ^{This uniform gig is pretty impressive}, I thought ~~to myself~~ ^{perking up}. Turning the corner, I caught sight of the school gates and my stomach fluttered a little. ~~It was very busy with buses pulling in, depositing kids from the smaller neighboring towns and students everywhere.~~

The school, a long low building all on one level, had a parking lot to the front, flanked by basketball courts and grassy soccer fields ^{in back} to the ~~rear~~ ^{back}. I took a deep breath and made for the ~~two double doors at the centre point of the school~~ ^{main entrance}, when a pair of eyes caught my attention. Just inside the gate, a tall boy, leaning against a lamp post, was staring at me. A chill ran through me and my hands tingled ~~and started to shake~~ ^{and started to shake}. I balled them into fists and glanced down at them, ~~wondering what the hell had just happened~~ ^{wondering what the hell had just happened}. Not looking where I was going, I took a step forward, straight into another girl ~~walking by~~ ^{walking by} ~~and walked~~.

Haley's circled phrase

"I'm so sorry," I yelped, as we stumbled and caught each other. I looked back at the lamp post, but the boy was gone.

"No problem," a friendly voice chirped back. "Looking for someone?" she ~~said~~ ^{asked} following my gaze.

"Oh no ~~no~~ ^{well} yes actually, I need to find the principal's office."

"New?" She smiled.

"Am I that obvious?" I laughed.

"I'm Caitlin," she introduced herself. "Are you in fifth year?" ^{Another term I was going to have to get used to. I was a junior back home. Fifth year sounded weird to me, I was junior back home.} "Yes, I am. My name is-

"Megan," she finished for me and laughed at my shocked face. "It's a small town.