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Ms. Griffin

World Lit

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### Brogden Way

It was a dark night, the darkest of the year, and a persistent breeze chilled Nathaniel Moore to the bone as he rode along Brogden Way. It was well known that a sensible man did not travel along this particular road at night lest he wished to be cursed by the ghosts that resided in the thick woods. Nathaniel, however, did not associate with the superstitious “sensible” men that lived in these parts and had no trepidation in traveling on Brogen at all.

As he was thinking these self assuring thoughts, lightening struck and thunder echoed across the black clouds. Before Nathaniel could take in his surroundings, his horse bucked sending him sprawling in the dirt. He did not stir until dawn was breaking.

It was some time later when Nathaniel trudged through the open gates of the first town he came upon. He had the most peculiar feeling, as if he had been here before. This couldn't be the case, seeing as he'd never traveled past Brogden Way. The people milling about stopped to notice his arrival. *How odd*, Nathaniel thought to himself when he was greeted with wide, warm smiles. He was too far from them to see if he recognized anyone.

“Randall!” One man called to him with a grin. “I see you've returned to us, old fellow!” Nathaniel was getting prepared to assure the man that he was, in fact, *not* Randall, and had never

been here in his life, but before he could utter a word, the crowd was surrounding him. “Come this way,” the same man called, beckoning him. Nathaniel followed warily.

He was led to a looking glass and stopped short when he saw his reflection. The face was the same, along with the hair and features that came with it. But the eyes- the eyes shone a pure horrifying black that covered his pupils, irises, and whites. With a start, Nathaniel was suddenly aware that all the other faces reflected in the mirror had eyes of the same terrible black. This wasn't his face anymore, he realized. This was no longer his body. There was now another presence, someone else had taken hold of him and was not letting go.

“What the-” he started to say but was cut off by a round of laughter at his expense.

“One never travels alone on Brogden Way,” said one lady with a spine-tingling cackle. “For the ghosts will get you! The ghosts will get you, that they will!”

And with that horrible shriek echoing in his ears, Nathaniel evaporated into nothing but smoke and dust and ashes. His body remained behind him, standing and aware. But the thing, the soul that made him Nathaniel Moore was now nothing more than an empty spirit. Nathaniel was certain then that there was only one place to flee, for ghosts do not reside in the land of the living. With one final look at the world, he fled and hid among the ghosts on Brogden Way.

*Some day, his thought echoed through the empty air. Some day I'll catch another arrogant man traveling along this road. And when I do, justice will be mine.*